

- 2 Rose Garden Mission Center**  
Vehicle comes a-knocking
- Ash Wednesday**
- Catholic Schools Week Open Houses**
- 3 Catholic Conference of Kentucky**
- March for Life**  
Day of Prayer & Penance
- Priestly ordination**  
Deacon Joseph Rielage
- Corona Report**
- Corrections**
- 6 We Choose Life**
- 14 Obituary**  
Notre Dame Sister Jean Clare Lamping

**Moving? Wrong address?**  
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 (859) 392-1570

Bishop's Schedule .....	3
Commentary .....	4
Did You Know .....	8
People and Events .....	8
Classifieds .....	12
Entertainment .....	13
VIRTUS .....	13
Shopper's Guide .....	14
News Briefs .....	15

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covdio.org/messenger](http://covdio.org/messenger).

(below) Kendra McGuire, superintendent, gives principals updates and answers questions on protocols for COVID-19 in schools.

(right) Dave Gish, principal, St. Henry District High School, Erlanger; takes notes at the all-principals meeting with the Department of Catholic Schools and Bishop Foys.



## Reimagining ways to celebrate brings Mass for March for Life and Catholic Schools Week into classrooms

**Messenger staff report**

As schools returned to in-person instruction, Bishop Roger Foys and Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, met with the principals to share information on COVID-19 case trends in the diocese, update the principals on available funding and to gather their thoughts on how best to celebrate the upcoming Catholic Schools Week, Lent and Easter.

Mrs. McGuire noted that based on the cases reported during the first week back to in-person instruction, small family gatherings

and sporting events remain the primary source of quarantines in the schools. During the extended break from in-person instruction, the Northern Kentucky Health Department updated its guidance for quarantines for close contacts. The new guidance allows three options, which principals may choose to offer families based on what each determines is best for the health of their school communities.

Both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the NKHD acknowledge that the recommendation for quarantine for close contacts is still 14 days. However, based on data both organizations collected over the last nine months, a 7-day and 10-day quarantine option could be used in some circumstances. These shortened options are especially useful in controlled environments where social distancing and mask wearing can be confirmed, like in a classroom.

Mrs. McGuire clarified the guidance in the protocols noting that the 7-day quarantine requires a negative COVID-19 test on day five from date of last exposure. The 7-day option will not be used when groups of students or teams are quarantined. Both the 7-day and 10-day quarantine options require that the student be free of any symptoms.

Principals also had questions about possible exemptions from quarantine, including the use of antibody testing and the 90-day immunity period for cases who have recovered from the virus.

Mrs. McGuire said that the only exemption from quarantine for students and faculty who have recovered from the virus is if they

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Restructured senior retreats give students opportunity to fall in love with faith

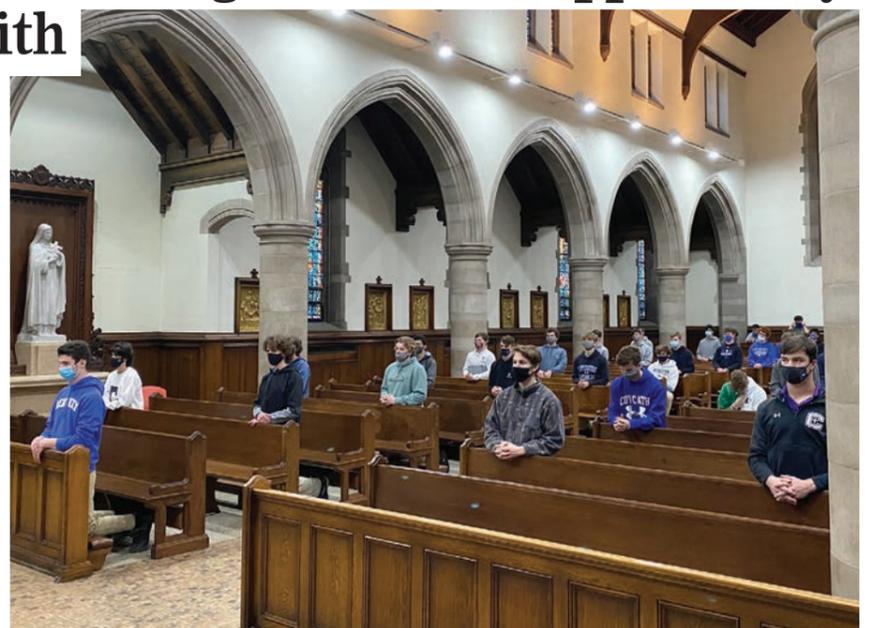
**Allegra Thatcher**  
*Assistant Editor*

The hallways of St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne, echoed with voices once again as retreatants passed through its doors for the first time the week of Jan. 11 since the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020. The annual Senior Retreats are underway, with a great deal of restructuring and planning on the part of the center and the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

David Cooley, co-director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, shared that the retreat seeks to get to the heart of the Catholic faith for the senior class, beginning with four fundamental life questions and structured the talks around them. The questions are: Who am I as a human person? Who am I as a Christian? Who am I in service to the Church? Who am I before God?

The retreats were designed a specific way because of COVID-19 and the office has gone to great lengths to make sure it could happen.

"We have to do the best we can to somehow  
*(Continued on page 7)*



The senior retreats included Mass and adoration for participants at St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne.

## Vehicle crash damages Rose Garden Mission Center for Hope and Healing

### Messenger staff report

In the early evening hours of Sunday, Jan. 17, a single vehicle crashed into the front window of the Rose Garden Mission Center for Hope and Healing, Covington. No details about the circumstances surrounding the crash were immediately available. No one was in the Center at the time of the crash.

"We are just so grateful to the Lord that no one was hurt," said Franciscan Daughter of Mary Mother Seraphina Quinlan. The Franciscan Daughters operate and sponsor the Rose Garden Mission and its free health clinic the Center for Hope and Healing.

Mother Seraphina said that the owners of the building, The Friends of the Rose Garden Mission, will be following up with their insurance company to assess the damage and reconstruction. The reception area of the health clinic sustained most of the damage leaving the clinical areas intact. The Center for Hope and Healing opened for normal operation Tuesday, Jan. 19.



(left) A car crashed into the Rose Garden Home Mission Center for Hope and Healing, Sun. Jan. 17. (above) Before the night ended volunteers of the center had boarded up the exposure and cleared debris.

## For Ash Wednesday, Vatican asks priests to 'sprinkle' ashes on heads

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.

The congregation's note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published on the congregation's website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say "the prayer for blessing the ashes" and then sprinkle "the ashes with holy water, without saying anything."

"Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.'"

"The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places," it said. "The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying any-

thing."

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula — "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" — to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. Given the spread of the coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also

specify that the mask should cover the priests' "nose and mouth."



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

Glass cups containing ashes are seen on an altar between Ash Wednesday services at St. Ignatius Martyr Church in Long Beach, N.Y., in 2019. This year Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the season of Lent, is Feb. 17.

## Primary schools to host open houses for Catholic Schools Week

**Allegra Thatcher**  
Assistant Editor

Primary schools in the Diocese of Covington are hosting an open house for prospective students during or around Catholic Schools Week. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year's celebration will look different. Schools are requiring pre-registration from prospective families for personalized tours in order to promote safe spacing in the school building. Masks will be worn at all times, and all

school safety protocols remain in place.

Catholic Schools Week (CSW) will be celebrated this year Jan. 31–Feb. 6. Sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association, CSW is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. In addition to hosting open houses, schools typically observe the week with Masses, special themes for each day and fun activities for students, families, parishioners and community members.

Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to Church, local communities and the nation.

This year's theme is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service."

### Saturday, Jan. 23

St. Timothy School, Union, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Call for reservations.

### Thursday, Jan. 28

St. Catherine of Siena School, Ft. Thomas, 6-8 p.m. Call for reservations.

### Sunday, Jan. 24

Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, 1 p.m. grades K-2, 2 p.m. grades 3-6. Call for reservations.

### Saturday, Jan. 30

St. Pius X School, Erlanger, 9:30 a.m. Call for reservations.

### Sunday, Jan. 31

Mary, Queen of Heaven School, Erlanger, 11:30-3 p.m. Call for reservations.

St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, 1-3 p.m. Call for reservations.

Prince of Peace Montessori, Covington, 12-2 p.m. Call for reservations.

St. Paul School, Florence, 1 p.m. Call for reservations.

### Tuesday, Feb. 2

St. Cecilia School, Independence, 5-7 p.m. Call for reservations.

### Thursday, Feb. 4

St. Therese School, Southgate, 5-7 p.m. Registration online at school.sainttherese.ws.

### Thursday, Feb. 25

Covington Latin School, Covington, 6:30 p.m. Call for reservations.

St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright — Call for more information.

St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill — Call for personalized tour.



Catholic Schools  
Faith. Excellence. Service.

**CELEBRATE CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS WEEK 2021**

January 31 - February 6

#CSW21

# CCK champions bills for life, criminal justice and school choice at Kentucky General Assembly

Allegra Thatcher  
Assistant Editor

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is once again advocating for Catholics to be involved in public policy through the Kentucky General Assembly this year. The 2021 Regular Session of the General Assembly began Jan. 4 and bills are already moving through the process. Legislators will meet through Jan. 13 and then break until Feb. 2 and adjourn in late March.

CCK is also working on several bills dealing with criminal justice reform. One is HB 126, sponsored by Rep. Ed Massey, which would raise the threshold for felony theft from \$500 to \$1000. If a minor were to steal an item under \$1,000, for example, he or she would not be convicted of a felony and have a criminal record for life.

Additionally, the CCK is thrilled that school choice legislation is making large strides in the courts. Rep. Chad McCoy filed HB 149 and Sen. Ralph Alvarado filed SB 25.

The bills would create an Education Opportunity Account program, which would provide financial assistance to families for K-12 educational expenses. This includes tuition at Catholic and other non-public schools, but would also provide funds for tutoring, special education and college courses. The bills garnered sponsorship from 25 legislators in the first week, and continues to seek support.

Andrew Vandiver, associate director, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, said, "This really exceeded my expectations as far as the level of support that we were going to see this early on ... We have legislators from every part of the state, the Speaker of the House joined on, the House Majority Whip, the Senate Majority leader ... so members from leadership, and I think that sits us very well for February when they come back and vote on the legislation."

Catholics are encouraged to contact their legislators to co-sponsor HB 149 and SB 25. They can use the link on CCK's webpage and email legislators or call the LRC message center at 1-800-372-7181 Monday-Friday.

School Choice Week will be celebrated Jan. 24-30, 2021. To celebrate this week, EdChoice Kentucky is sponsoring a virtual watch party with a screening of "Miss Virginia" featuring a virtual interview with Virginia Walden Ford, whose story inspired the movie. EdChoice is also promoting family testimonies on digital platforms, educational materials available online and "Reverse Civics Day," when schools can invite local legislators to come and present for students. Local schools are encouraged to find ways of celebrating.



The CCK has an eye on the bills addressing life, criminal justice and school choice.

SB 9, the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act, passed the House and Senate. This bill, sponsored by Sen. Whitney Westerfield, requires the same standard of medical care for all born-alive infants, even if they are born due to a failed abortion, or any other means. This now goes to Governor Beshear for his consideration. In 2020, the bill passed but was vetoed by Governor Beshear as unconstitutional due to its wording.

The other pro-life bill is HB 91, sponsored by Rep. Joe Fischer. This would add language to the Kentucky Constitution making clear that there is no state constitutional right to an abortion. This would prevent future state supreme courts from finding a right to an abortion in the state constitution, particularly if Roe v. Wade, the federal constitution's claim of a right to an abortion, were ever overturned. If passed, this bill would go on the ballot in 2022 elections for citizens to vote on it.

Also critical to the pro-life cause are SB 60 and HB 148, regarding criminal law. SB 60, sponsored by Sen. Stephen Meredith, abolishes the death penalty. HB 148, sponsored by Rep. Chad McCoy, would prohibit the death penalty in cases where the defendant has a severe mental illness.



## Bishop's Schedule

- Jan. 22**  
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
- Jan. 23**  
Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting (virtual), 9 a.m.–noon  
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.
- Jan. 24**  
Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
- Jan. 25**  
Confirmation for St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, at the Cathedral Basilica, 7 p.m.
- Jan. 26**  
Thomas More University Executive Committee meeting, 10 a.m.  
Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m.  
Confirmation for St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, at Cathedral Basilica, 7 p.m.
- Jan. 27**  
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
- Jan. 28**  
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.  
Bishops of Kentucky (virtual) meeting, 11 a.m.  
Rehearsal for priesthood ordination, 4 p.m.
- Jan. 29**  
Pro-Life Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 9 a.m. (live-streamed)  
Ordination of Deacon Joseph Rielage to the Order of Priest, Cathedral Basilica, 6 p.m. (by invitation only; Mass will be live-streamed)
- Jan. 30**  
Mass of Thanksgiving of Father Joseph Rielage, St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, 6 p.m. (by invitation only; Mass will be live-streamed sthenrychurch.net)
- Jan. 31**  
Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

### March for Life and Day of Prayer and Penance for Life

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, pilgrims from the Diocese of Covington will not be traveling to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life. Instead, all students in the diocese will participate locally, Friday, Jan. 29, in the Day of Prayer and Penance for Life.

Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Mass, Jan. 29, 9 a.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. This Mass will be live-streamed from the Cathedral website, [www.covcathedral.com](http://www.covcathedral.com), into all Catholic schools in the diocese so that all students — especially those who would have traveled to the March for Life — can participate. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to begin this day of penance by joining the livestream from their homes.

In conjunction with the March for Life, the Diocese of Covington will pray for an end to legalized abortion in our country. This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 10 Holy Hours throughout the Diocese will not be held. However, parishioners are encouraged to observe the day with prayer and an act of penance.

### Corrections

In the January 15 issue, an informational box on page 1 incorrectly labeled COVID-19 as COVID1-9.

The informational box on page 1 concerning Deacon Joseph Rielage was unclear on the date of his Mass of Thanksgiving. It will take place **Saturday, Jan. 30, 6 p.m.** at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere.

The *Messenger* apologizes for these errors.

### Coronavirus Report (as of Monday, Jan. 18)

**Positive Cases**  
Active positive cases: 172  
Recovered positive cases: 825  
Total ever positive cases: 597

**Currently Self-quarantined**  
Close Contacts: 401  
Close Contacts with COVID case in household: 293



#### With praise and thanksgiving to the eternal Triune God,

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington requests your spiritual participation in the

#### Ordination of Joseph Rielage

to the sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the imposition of hands by the Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, D.D., Bishop of Covington

**Friday, January 29, 2021, 6 p.m.**

at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event is invitation-only. The Mass will be live-streamed and recorded for future viewing on the cathedral's website, [covcathedral.com](http://covcathedral.com).



The newly ordained

#### Father Joseph Rielage

will celebrate a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving for the Priestly Ordination

**Saturday, January 30, 2021 6 p.m.**

at St. Henry Church, Elsmere.

The Mass will be live-streamed on the St. Henry Parish website, [sthenrychurch.net](http://sthenrychurch.net).

## What is love asking of us now?

“You can safely assume you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.” Anne Lamott

### IN EXILE



Father Ron Rolheiser

Those are words worth contemplating, on all sides of the political and religious divide today. We live in a time of bitter division. From our government offices down to our kitchen tables there are tensions and divisions about politics, religion and versions of truth that seem irreparable. Sadly, these divisions have brought out the worst in us — in all of us. Common civility has

broken down and brought with it something that effectively illustrates the biblical definition of “diabolic” — widespread lack of common courtesy, disrespect, demonization and hatred of each other. All of us now smugly assume that God hates all the same people we do. The polarization around the recent USA elections, the storming of the USA Capitol buildings by a riotous mob, the bitter ethical and religious debates about abortion and the loss of a common notion of truth, have made clear that incivility, hatred, disrespect and different notions of truth rule the day.

Where do we go with that? I am a theologian and not a politician or social analyst so what I say here has more to do with living out Christian discipleship and basic human maturity than with any political response. Where

do we go religiously with this?

Perhaps a helpful way to probe for a Christian response is to pose the question this way: What does it mean to love in a time like this? What does it mean to love in a time when people can no longer agree on what is true? How do we remain civil and respectful when it feels impossible to respect those who disagree with us?

In struggling for clarity with an issue so complex, sometimes it can be good to proceed via the *Via Negativa*, that is, by first asking what should we avoid doing. What should we not do today?

First, we should not bracket civility and legitimize disrespect and demonization; but we should also not be unhealthily passive, fearful that speaking our truth will upset others. We may not disregard truth and let lies and injustices lie comfortable and unexposed. It is too simple to say that there are good people on both sides in order to avoid having to make real adjudications vis-à-vis the truth. There are sincere people on both sides, but sincerity can also be very misguided. Lies and injustice need to be named. Finally, we must resist the subtle (almost impossible to resist) temptation to allow our righteousness morph into self-righteousness, one of pride’s most divisive modalities.

What do we need to do in the name of love? Fyodor Dostoevsky famously wrote that love is a harsh and fearful thing and our first response should be to accept that. Love is a harsh thing and that harshness is not just the discomfort we feel when we confront others or find ourselves confronted by them. Love’s harshness is felt most acutely in the (almost indigestible) self-righteousness we have to swallow in order to rise to a higher level of maturity where we can accept that God loves those we hate just as much as God loves us — and those we hate are just

as precious and important in God’s eyes as we are.

Once we accept this, then we can speak for truth and justice. Then truth can speak to power, to “alternative truth” and to the denial of truth. That is the task. Lies must be exposed and this needs to occur inside our political debates, inside our churches and at our dinner tables. That struggle will sometimes call us beyond niceness (which can be its own mammoth struggle for sensitive persons). However, while we cannot always be nice, we can always be civil and respectful.

One of our contemporary prophetic figures, Daniel Berrigan, despite numerous arrests for civil disobedience, steadfastly affirmed that a prophet makes a vow of love, not of alienation. Hence, in our every attempt to defend truth, to speak for justice and to speak truth to power, our dominant tone must be one of love, not anger or hatred. Moreover, whether we are acting in love or alienation will always be manifest in our civility or lack of it. No matter our anger, love still has some non-negotiables — civility and respect. Whenever we find ourselves descending to adolescent name-calling, we can be sure we have fallen out of discipleship, out of prophecy and out of what is best inside us.

Finally, how we will respond to the times remains a deeply personal thing. Not all of us are called to do the same thing. God has given each of us unique gifts and a unique calling — some are called to loud protest, others to quiet prophecy. However, we are all called to ask ourselves the same question: Given what is happening, what is love asking of me now?

*Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher and award-winning author.*

## ‘Creative courage’ for the new year

Thank God we’ve finally left 2020 behind! We’ve entered a new year with great hopes for better times, along with a little trepidation. For many of us, V-day — when we roll up our sleeves and get vaccinated — will likely be the biggest event of 2021.

In 2020 we learned to embrace “the adventure of living one day at a time” rather than counting on “best-laid plans.” We maintained constant vigilance and drafted policies and procedures for every likely scenario — even as circumstances changed every day.

The irony is that our frail seniors are teaching us how to face the fear and uncertainty of each day with patience and humor.

The elderly have surrendered nearly all of their independence, personal autonomy and direct contact with loved ones, in exchange for safety, unguaranteed though it may be.

Their patience, resilience and perspective are stunning. A researcher on healthy aging has termed these qualities “crisis competence” and the elderly are experts at it, even when they need assistance to meet basic daily needs.

I have found solace in the basics of our Catholic faith,

even when the sacraments have been out of reach.

Resting with Jesus, Mary and Joseph at the manger during the Christmas season — even as we were forced to go back into lockdown — helped me to find meaning in the midst of our trials.

On Dec. 8, 2020 Pope Francis announced a “Year of St. Joseph” to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Joseph as patron of the universal church. The focus on St. Joseph is timely.

With his customary realism, Pope Francis reflects on Joseph’s acceptance and courage in the face of inexplicable circumstances. “Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is,” he writes, “even when we fail to understand it completely.”

The pope suggests that God chose Joseph to guide the beginnings of Christ’s earthly life because of his “creative courage.” The carpenter of Nazareth “was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.”

Likewise, when God seems not to help us — and for some that is how it seems like the pandemic death toll rises — this does not mean that we have been abandoned, says Francis, “but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative, and to find solutions ourselves” like Joseph did.

During the first days of this new year, I’ve turned to another figure as well — that of Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Hope. January 17, 2021 marks the 150th anniversary of a Marian apparition in the small French village of Pontmain.

For over 30 years the pastor of this village of 500 inhabitants taught his parishioners to pray to Mary with confidence and perseverance under the title of Our Lady

of Hope in all their needs.

But in January of 1871, France was losing miserably in a war they had started against the German states. With the Prussian army within 50 miles of Pontmain, the villagers feared annihilation. As they gathered with their pastor for Sunday afternoon devotions on Jan. 15, they voiced their desperation: “What is the use of praying? God no longer hears our prayers!”

Yet just two days later Our Lady appeared over Pontmain, writing a message in capital letters across a starry night sky: “BUT PRAY MY CHILDREN. GOD WILL ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS VERY SOON.”

That same night the Prussian forces turned back, reporting an invisible Madonna in the sky barring their advance. All of Brittany was spared; an armistice was signed just 11 days later and all 38 of the young men from Pontmain who had been conscripted into the army returned home unscathed.

The apparition of Pontmain, though little known in the United States, teaches us to pray with confidence and perseverance because Jesus and his Mother really do hear our prayers, even when we feel they are not listening.

This winter let’s pray to Our Lady of Hope with confidence and perseverance, asking her to deliver us from this 21st century plague. And let’s look to St. Joseph as an example of creative courage and effective action, so that we will envision and employ every means within our reach to keep ourselves and those who depend on us safe and healthy in 2021.

*Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.*

### GUEST



Sister Constance Veit, L.S.P.

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# Reflections of a downhill skier

The readings for the third Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle "B" are: **Jonah 3:1-5,10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; and Mark 1:14-20.**

Winter finally arrived. While we weren't getting any snow, it was at least cold enough to allow the local ski areas to begin making enough to satisfy the longings of people like myself who felt that the start of the season was already too long delayed.

For me, part of the fun of skiing is watching and listening to those who are attempting the sport for the first time. As I ventured out on the slopes, I encountered many such persons. After falling off the chairlift at the top of the hill (getting on and off the lift is probably harder to learn than is skiing itself.), I overheard one "first-timer" remark as she looked down the hill, "Oh my God, I'm going to die! How did I ever get talked into this?"

Her outcry caused me to chuckle to myself as I glided down the slope. I recalled my own reaction after having fallen off the lift the first time, only to encounter what appeared to me to be the steepest and most slippery mountain God had ever made. "How did I ever get myself into this?"

Today's liturgy has much to say about people getting themselves into situations they could never have imagined or even wanted to see themselves in.

We begin today a continuous reading of the Gospel of Mark, which will take us all the way through the year until the beginning of Advent. This reading of Mark will be interrupted only by the Lent and Easter seasons. The first words we hear coming from Jesus' mouth in Mark's Gospel are these: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Today's Gospel)

Those three sentences spoken by the Lord are, for Mark, a summary of the whole life and preaching of Jesus. He spends the whole rest of the Gospel giving specific instances from Jesus' life that demonstrate that this is indeed the time of fulfillment and that the reign of God is near and that people are reforming their lives.

He begins immediately with the stories of Simon and Andrew, James and John. (Today's Gospel) This is our Gospel example of people finding themselves in situations doing things they would never have imagined themselves doing. All four men were found by Jesus doing what they knew best — fishing. All four of them "immediately" found themselves doing something different — following an itinerant rabbi who would train them for ministry.

I am sure that Zebedee, father of James and John, who was "abandoned" by his sons, who left him in the boat with the hired men, thought his sons had lost their senses, seduced by some cult guru. I am also sure that James and John were asking themselves, "How did we ever get ourselves into this?"

The hero of today's first reading was a bit more reluctant. Jonah, when first told by God to go and preach to the Ninevites, flatly refused and headed off away from the city. Nevertheless, God persisted and Jonah preached to those pagans whom he disliked very much and whom he hoped God would destroy. He had to be wondering how he ever got involved in that ministry.

Surprisingly, the citizens of Nineveh, accustomed to getting their way by means of torture and cruelty, found themselves fasting, repenting and turning to the Lord — all things they would never have imagined themselves doing.

So how is it that they and we find ourselves doing all these things we never imagined? I know that what got me to the top of that first ski slope was the gentle persistence of a friend who wanted to share that enjoyable part of his life with me. I suspect it's the same with the Lord.

We sense when we are loved and will blindly follow the lead of one whose care for us is obvious.

*Father Daniel Vogelpohl is a retired priest of the Diocese of Covington.*

# It's good to be back

It has certainly been awfully quiet at St. Anne Retreat Center over the past nine months. Other than the sound of our staff working to improve the facility and our resident priests, the halls have been devoid of noise and energy. That came to an end this week and we could not be happier.

The high school senior retreats have returned, and it has been a wonderful and busy week. It has been especially rewarding to be able to present them with a message of hope and the future during this difficult year. The students were receptive, engaged and brought us a much-needed reminder of how important St. Anne Retreat Center is to the spiritual renewal for the Diocese of Covington.

When the students first arrived at St. Anne, I couldn't help but notice the vast difference in how they initially arrived from prior years. They were subdued and were not the usual noisy and high energy kids we've been accustomed to. Once we began the retreat, they did begin to loosen up some and as we moved through the day, they started to get into the retreat.

In some ways it is hard to call this a retreat. They don't get to spend the night, and all of the COVID-19 protocols are in place. My staff has done an excellent job preparing the facility for the social distancing and sanitizing requirements we need to meet. We've reconfigured meeting spaces and the dining hall to make sure the safe-

ty of the students is in place. Their masks are just a standard part of their wardrobe and I admire the way they handle it.

In working with the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, we've developed a retreat around these difficult circumstances. Our intent is to give them an uplifting experience, to show them there is hope in Christ and in the beauty of our Catholic faith. Their engagement at the daily Mass and their attention and focus during adoration was a wonderful witness to the faith. It is a great joy for me to see these students go to the sacrament of reconciliation, to experience the healing grace of the sacraments.

I must tell you that I have a great hope for this generation of youth. They have such a concern for the welfare of their classmates and a great commitment to social justice. It is imperative that we continue to stress the need to include Christ and the Church in their pursuit of these noble ambitions. We certainly look forward to seeing them in the future at St. Anne on retreats as young adults as they move on in their lives.

There was a great deal of work that went into the preparation of the retreats. The cooperation between the Retreat Center and the diocese has resulted in a well thought out retreat in a safe and beautiful environment. I ask all in the diocese to pray for these young people, the team that is delivering the retreats and for our staff at St. Anne that we all may be safe and authentic witnesses to the truth, beauty and goodness of our Catholic faith. Pray that the noise and energy we experienced this week will only increase. I know we missed it and are blessed to have it back.

*Deacon David Profitt is director of the St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.*

## VIEWPOINT



Deacon David Profitt

When the students first arrived at St. Anne, I couldn't help but notice the vast difference in how they initially arrived from prior years. They were subdued and were not the usual noisy and high energy kids we've been accustomed to. Once we began the retreat, they did begin to loosen up some and as we moved through the day, they started to get into the retreat.

In some ways it is hard to call this a retreat. They don't get to spend the night, and all of the COVID-19 protocols are in place. My staff has done an excellent job preparing the facility for the social distancing and sanitizing requirements we need to meet. We've reconfigured meeting spaces and the dining hall to make sure the safe-

# Children with special needs

Once upon a time there were three couples: Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Miller. These three couples were best friends. People called them "The Six Musketeers" because they spent so much time together.

Even after they married, they continued to spend a great deal of time together — going out to restaurants in the evenings, camping or to the beach on weekends and once a year they all went away on vacation together.

Then, all at the same time, they became parents. Each had one child and for a time nothing changed. They enjoyed each other's company so they brought their children along and made it work.

Then one evening, as they were talking, Mr. and Mrs. Smith announced that they were no longer able to travel like they had in the past. They wouldn't be able to go out so much to restaurants or to the movies. They explained that their child had been diagnosed with a condition, and that the time that they spent with the other couples and the money that they spent going out to dinner or on vacation now had to be spent caring for their child. They said that the child had special needs — medicines, treatment, therapies and maybe even surgeries; they said that they might even have to go out of state to see specially trained doctors. They expected that they would have to pay for therapists to come to their home.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith said that when you love your child and your child has special needs you must do whatever you must do.

After a moment Mr. and Mrs. Johnson spoke up. They said that they would not be able to spend so much time with the other two couples, either. Their child had special needs, too. Even though the child was still very young they said that the child displayed remarkable abilities to play the piano. Also, the child could do math, read books beyond the

child's age-level and even play chess. Specialists called the child a genius whose talents and abilities would need to be nurtured. They said that they'd have to buy a piano and hire tutors and that they'd better start saving their money for college and grad school.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson said that when you love your child and your child has special needs you must do whatever you must do.

Finally, Mr. and Mrs. Miller spoke up. They said that they were planning to return to the Catholic Church that they grew up in and they were going to have their child baptized. They said that, even though their child did not have a condition like the Smith's child or that their child was not a genius like the Johnson's child, the way they saw it, their child would have special needs, too.

Mr. Miller said that, in asking for baptism for their child, they were undertaking the responsibility of raising the child in the faith, to love Jesus, to live according to God's will, and to love their neighbor as Christ has taught us. Mrs. Miller said that raising a Christian child was a great responsibility and she cited a Gospel passage that said that if they failed in that, it would be better for her and her husband to have a great millstone tied around their neck and that they would be cast into the sea.

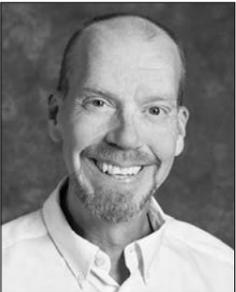
They both talked about not being able to take weekend camping or beach trips because it was important for them to attend Mass every weekend. Mr. Miller said that getting their child to Sunday Mass would be at least as important as getting their child to school or to soccer practice. Mrs. Miller said that they would endeavor to protect their child from the evil that they saw in the world today and they would teach their child to see the glory of God in everything and everyone.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller said that when you love your child and your child has special needs you must do whatever you must do.

All three couples did their best to love their children and attend to all their special needs. They all did for their children everything that had to be done. In the end, in spite of some troubles and heartache, they all lived (as most of us do) reasonably happily ever after.

*Deacon Timothy Britt is assigned to St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Ky.*

## BELIEVE, TEACH, PRACTICE



Deacon Timothy Britt

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# We Choose Life



## Pro-Life Office

of the Diocese of Covington

### 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.

### Resources

#### **Encyclical on 'Christian Hope' — Pope Benedict XVI**

(35) If we cannot hope for more than is effectively attainable at any given time, or more than is promised by political or economic authorities, our lives will soon be without hope. It is important to know that I can always continue to hope, even if in my own life, or the historical period in which I am living, there seems to be nothing left to hope for . . . However, even when we are fully aware that heaven far exceeds what we can merit, it will always be true that our behavior is not indifferent before God and therefore is not indifferent for the unfolding of history.

God does not call us to be successful, only faithful.

— St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.

— Isaiah 41:10

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

— 2 Chronicles 7:14

## Our changeless mission

### Meg DeBlase

Contributor

The year 2020 has brought more challenges to our country and homes than many of us have ever seen or even imagined. As I reflect upon life issues, specifically in the past year, my first response is sadness.

Valiant efforts were made to close abortion facilities during the shutdown, yet an estimated 900,000 preborn people were still killed by abortion last year. More than 20,000 abortions were committed in Ohio and more than 3,000 in Kentucky, which means that over 23,000 parents and their families suffered the loss of a child “by choice.”

Throughout the year advocates of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide have continued to push their agenda. They have already won in eight states and the District of Columbia — the workplace of so many politicians who still refuse to protect infants born alive after abortions.

Considering all these grave assaults on human life, some might lose hope in the success of our pro-life mission. However, one of the hallmarks of the pro-life movement is its limitless perseverance.

Things have looked bleak before. Take for instance, the year 1973 when Roe v. Wade was decided, forcing unlimited abortion on every state. It was a dark time — yet it catalyzed the rise of the national pro-life movement. Church by church, city by city, heart by heart the movement grew, rising on the shoulders of giants to stand stronger than ever today.

Even if abortion advocates lead our country for the next several years, our mission remains the same. Always and everywhere the goal of the pro-life movement is to make abortion illegal, to provide tangible and emotional support to women and men facing crisis pregnancies and to end abuse of the elderly, disabled and vulnerable.

Where, then, do we begin to lay out a strategy toward this goal? Let's start by taking stock personally: What can I do today? Where can I begin, and what comes after that?

In my role as executive director of Cincinnati Right to Life, I ponder this question often. In my work, I've had the opportunity to hear Sarah Quale, president of Personhood Education at the advocacy group Personhood Alliance, speak. Her extensive research into effective pro-life strategies has not confirmed a direct link between restrictive abortion laws and the decline in abortions over the past decade. Crucially, however, Quale has proven that local approaches are undeniably effective. In



Meg DeBlase, executive director  
Cincinnati Right to Life.

brief, meeting women where they are and engaging in real human interaction truly changes the hearts and minds of abortion-determined women.

Reflecting on her analysis, I have come to believe that the same holds true for every pro-life issue. Where we can connect with another mind and heart, we can change a life.

Isn't this good news? It means we do not have to undertake monumental works to defeat the culture of death. In fact, it is rather the opposite. Right here on the home front, our time and effort can save lives.

Some of us will stand outside abortion facilities ministering to women. Some will be at pregnancy centers counseling women and mentoring men. Others will help establish pro-life educational programs in high schools and reach out to teenagers in crisis. In our churches and communities, we will support our neighbors in need through efforts like baby showers and material assistance. And always, we will pray.

Best of all, Quale's message encourages us not to lose hope. Regardless of what politicians say or do, the pro-life movement still

has the power to save lives, born and unborn, whatever their circumstance. Each of us serves on the frontline in some way, defending those in greatest need.

I am not dismissing the importance of pro-life legislation. We must still advocate for laws that end abortion. We must still fight the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide and defend freedom of conscience. We must still support pro-life advocates in our communities. Every pro-life advance in the public arena matters, and every step counts. But in the meantime, we can save lives today in our own communities and on our own streets.

None of us can say we lack the resources for this battle. Whatever our gifts, let's never forget the most powerful weapon: prayer. St. John assures us that “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4b)

So our mission remains the same. Regardless of politics, we must still fight for the most vulnerable and strive daily to put an end to the abortion holocaust. We have the tools at our fingertips and we have the strategy — to convert hearts.

Resolve in 2021 to recommit to the changeless mission of upholding the sanctity of life against every attack. May you be ever blessed in this mission with the perseverance and fortitude exemplified in the lives of the saints and of our valiant pro-life forbears.

*Meg DeBlase is executive director of Cincinnati Right to Life.*

**O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life. Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy. Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time. Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.**

— St. Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae

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/](http://www.covdio.org/prolife/) or call (859) 392-1500.

## St. Anne Retreat

(Continued from page 5)

meet them where they are, understand the things they're going through in their lives and right now," said Mr. Cooley. "Their senior year has been not like anyone else's senior year ... it's the year you look forward to for a long time, you're the king of the school, and they're missing out on all that. So it was really important, from the Catholic school perspective, that they not miss out on their senior retreat."

The retreat team is made up of Mr. Cooley, Brad Torline, associate director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, Deacon Dave Proffitt, director, St. Anne Retreat Center, Father Ryan Maher, vicar general, Isaak Isaak, co-director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization and Father Stef Bankemper, pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas.

As the retreats consist of two days instead of four, with no overnight stay and hours just from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the team had to be very intentional with their time and their space. Everything is very structured, including numbered seats for the talks, six-foot distance while traveling between rooms, and social distancing during breakout sessions. No more than 50 retreatants are allowed at the center at one time, so the bigger senior classes are divided up into three retreats of two days — six days total for one school.

Mr. Cooley said the retreats have definitely felt different this year, but they've had some good encounters so far.

"The students seem a little beat down, a little mellow because of everything they've had to endure this year," he said. "But they really started, after the first couple hours, to relax and react. ... There's normally a lot of time to get people to open up, and give them the feeling that they're away from the world. That's an important aspect of a retreat, that prayerful atmosphere," he said. "We wanted to make sure it was Christ-centered and uplifting, because of all the difficulties that teenagers go through these days anyway and all the craziness of (this year)."

The goal, said Mr. Cooley, is for the students "to fall in love with the Catholic faith, before they go out into the world and leave their Catholic schools behind. We want them to know that God loves them and the Church has a lot of wisdom to offer as they make their way through the world."

The team hopes to accomplish this by talks, Mass, adoration and the sacrament of reconciliation, broken up by some outside no-contact sports and meals. There's a focus on understanding the Mass and the sacraments, as well as "finding the why" of what they do on a regular basis.

"The key to the Catholic Church, and why people keep coming back to it, is the sacraments, because you won't get



Brad Torline, associate director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, gives a talk on the second day of Senior Retreat for Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills.

them anywhere else because they're safeguarded by the Church," said Mr. Cooley. He hopes to convey the message that God wants the students to be happy, and it's not oppressive but liberating to follow the faith.

"We're hoping that we're sowing some seeds, that they're hearing something new, rethinking some things ... they're facing a lot of choices and what they do matters, so I hope we're making them think of things they haven't thought of before."

Deacon Proffitt said the retreats are meant to be a powerful and meaningful encounter with Christ. "We want to give these students a sense of meaning and purpose in their life and that is in Christ Jesus," he said.

He spoke of the power of the retreats so far, after week one. The number of students who went to the sacrament of

reconciliation was very high, which gives him hope.

"One of the young men said to me, 'You don't know how much this has meant to me. I've been trying to figure out how to make sense out of this year and you gave me the direction I need to go.' Another said 'This isn't what I expected. You gave me a lot of good stuff to think about.' I don't think I could have wanted anything more than that," he said.

Mr. Cooley said the restructuring has given him and the team ideas about how to move forward in future years, even post-pandemic.

"We're going to take everything we've learned about meeting the kids where they are and bringing them up to where they need to be. It's still a work in progress."

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## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

## Newsworthy

Happy Birthday to **Deacon Charles Hardebeck**, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, Feb. 6; **Deacon Steve Durkee**, St. John the Evangelist, Covington, Feb. 7; **Father Elmer Nadicksbernd, S.V.D.**, chaplain, Holy Family Home, Feb. 8; **Father Joseph Shelton**, pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Augusta and St. James Parish, Brooksville, Feb. 8; **Father Matthias Wamala**, Feb. 8; **Msgr. Donald Enzweiler**, Feb. 9; and **Father Baiju Kidaagen, V.C.**, pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, Feb. 13.



## New Year's resolutions

Second-graders at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, welcomed in the New Year by making goals for 2021! Some of their goals were reading more books, staying positive around others and being more patient.



**Wise ones seek Jesus**  
Recently the kindergarten students at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, spent some time with Msgr. Gerald Reinersman, pastor, in church where he shared wisdom with them about the Nativity.

## Did you know?

## Ways to honor the Holy Name of Jesus this January

Annabelle Moseley

*Did you know that in the Catholic Church, each month of the year has a devotional theme? January is the month of the Holy Name of Jesus, and it's an ideal time to strengthen our connection to the beautiful name of the Lord. In fact, all names are to be treated with respect. Do you know the meaning of your own name? It's interesting to discover. A name is an emblem of one's dignity but the name of Jesus in particular should be held in the highest regard, spoken and heard only in a sacred way.*

The beautiful name "Jesus" means "God saves." So the name of Jesus is not only the name of our Savior but also, by its meaning, states the purpose of his existence, reminding of the incredible blessing of salvation. Let us therefore give that name great honor! Also, let us remember that Jesus's name in Aramaic is "Yeshua" So that is what Jesus was called in his own native language (the name Joshua is derived from this name, too).

#### Here are 10 ways you can honor the Holy Name of Jesus this January.

##### Take a stand against taking the Lord's name in vain.

Turn the channel, turn off the television, or walk out of the movie theater when you hear God's name taken in vain, which has become all too frequent. Vow never to take the Lord's name in vain (sounds like a perfect New Year's resolution!) and to make reparation immediately if you accidentally do or if you hear someone else do so. How can you make reparation? One way is to have this perfect aspirational prayer at the ready (it's so easy to memorize): "Admirable is the name of God." That prayer of praise for the Holy Name of God given to Sr. Marie of St. Peter is also a prayer of reparation for blasphemy.

##### Bow your head when you hear the name of Jesus.

Adopt the pious practice (that used to be more widely practiced and is so meaningful and fitting) of bowing your head whenever you say or hear the name of Jesus (just as we should bow or genuflect before the Real Presence in the tabernacle or make a sign of the cross as we pass a Catholic Church). Scripture tells us: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil 2:10). The Council of Lyons in 1274 stated: "Each should fulfill in himself that which is written for all, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow; whenever that glorious Name is recalled, especially during the sacred

Mysteries of the Mass, everyone should bow the knees of his heart, which he can do even by a bow of his head." This devotion also helps to make amends for blasphemous use of the Holy Name.

##### Decorate your table.

Decorate in colors of white (the first half of January is the liturgical season of Christmas, represented by liturgical color of white for purity) and green (the second half of January begins ordinary time with the liturgical color green representing hope as a sprouting seed) and the letters IHS, perhaps decorated and framed. You can make this yourself with colored pencils, or gold and silver markers. IHS is a Christogram (combination of letters representing the Holy Name). St. Bernardino, a saint devoted to the Holy Name of Jesus, would hold up the monogram of Christ's Name — the letters "IHS" surrounded by rays — for veneration. Why not try this in your own home?

##### Write his name on your house — literally!

As Mary's son is adored and worshiped by the three Wise Men, let us adore him, too. Literally write the name of Christ upon your house as you celebrate Epiphany! For the Feast of the Epiphany, it is beautiful to bless your home with the "CMB" written in chalk over your front door; which not only stands for Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar; the traditional names of the three kings, but is also an abbreviation of "Christus mansionem benedicat" (may Christ bless the house). And when the blessing of the house is done, why not enjoy some Epiphany Cake, otherwise known as King Cake in New Orleans (in France, Galette des Rois), to usher in the Mardi Gras season that will lead up to Shrove Tuesday, just before the start of Lent. Recipes abound online.

##### Daily ask for Mary and Joseph's intercession.

The name of Jesus, which means Savior, was revealed to



Joseph in a dream and to Our Lady at the Annunciation. Pray to Joseph and Mary to increase your love for their Son, along with your reverence for His Holy Name.

##### Add a special prayer this month.

Pray or begin a novena to St. Bernardine of Siena, who had a special devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. Or pray one of the prayers to the Holy Name of Jesus found here. Or pray the Golden Arrow Prayer in reparation for blasphemies against his Most Holy Name.

##### Sing a praise song!

Listen (and even sing along) to the Catholic hymn "At the Name of Jesus" and/or to "What a Beautiful Name Is This" by Hillsong Worship. Both are great songs to give the Holy Name praise and honor:

*This article was originally published at aleteia.org. It is reprinted here with permission.*

# ‘For the love of God, send us oxygen,’ plead bishops in Brazil’s Amazon

Lise Alves

Catholic News Service

SAO PAULO — With the news that dozens of people were suffocating to death due to a lack of oxygen in hospitals in the Amazon city of Manaus, Catholic bishops made a plea for the supply of an essential element for survival.

“We, bishops of Amazonas and Roraima, make an appeal: For the love of God, send us oxygen,” Archbishop Leonardo Steiner of Manaus said in a video released Jan. 15.

“Provide oxygen. People cannot continue to die for lack of oxygen and for lack of beds in the ICUs,” said the visibly shaken archbishop.

The archbishop said that during the first wave of COVID-19 in the Amazon region, people died due to a lack of information and lack of beds in Intensive Care Units. Now, during this second wave, people are dying not only because of overcrowded hospitals but from a shortage of oxygen.

The situation in Manaus made headlines as family members of those in hospitals, with COVID-19 and other ailments, were shown trying desperately to purchase oxygen cylinders to save their loved ones.

As of Jan. 15, more than 60 premature infants were said to be in danger of dying for lack of oxygen. Oxygen tanks provided by the federal government were expected to last only days.

During the weekend of Jan. 16-17, hundreds of patients were airlifted to other states for treatment as oxygen supplies continued to diminish.

The plea made by Archbishop Steiner, who was secretary-general of the Brazilian bishops’ conference between 2011 and 2019, was followed by appeals and promises of help from other Brazilian bishops.

Bishop Walmor Oliveira de Azevedo, president of the bishops’ conference, asked business leaders, entrepreneurs and politicians to offer their assistance.

“In view of the very serious situation in the city of Manaus, it is urgent to call upon Christians and all sensitive people faced with the suffering of others; it is time to help,” he said.

Retired Bishop Erwin Kräutler, president of the Brazilian branch of the Pan-Amazonian Church Network, also expressed his support for the bishops’ calls for help and asked local and federal governments to provide oxygen cylinders for hospitals in Manaus and the Amazon.

“We are seeing our sisters and brothers die of suffocation; a terrible death,” said the bishop, known for his work with the Indigenous population of the Amazon.

“It is not possible for Brazil to forget the peoples of the



CNS photo/Bruno Kelly, Reuters

A man carries a cylinder as relatives of patients hospitalized or receiving health care at home gather to buy oxygen at a private company in Manaus, Brazil, Jan. 15, 2021. Bishops in Brazil’s Amazonas and Roraima states are pleading for oxygen tanks to help fight COVID-19.

Amazon at such a cruel time and to close our ears to the clamor of people who are dying; and (to) their families and health professionals, who cannot care for patients due to lack of oxygen and have to look passively as patients die, suffocated by lack of oxygen, in terrible conditions,” said Bishop Kräutler.

“For the love of God and of Our Lady: Manaus, the Amazon, are (part of) Brazil. Please wake up, for the people who live here and want to survive this pandemic,” he said.

## ‘9 Days for Life’ novena for the protection of human life set for Jan. 21-29

WASHINGTON — Catholics across the country are invited to take part in the “9 Days for Life” novena Jan. 21-29 for the protection of human life. Each day’s intercession is accompanied by prayers, a short reflection and one or more suggested actions for novena participants to take to help build a culture of life, such as pledging to participate in a parish-based program called Walking with Moms in Need. Participants can go to the website [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com) to sign up for emails or texts about each day’s intercession, in English and Spanish. Sponsored by the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the novena encompasses the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children Jan. 22, the day the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Roe and its companion case, Doe v. Bolton. It coincides with the annual March for Life usually held in Washington every January to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion. However, this year’s Jan. 29 national rally and march will be livestreamed because of the pandemic and high levels of security following the Jan. 6 Capitol violence.



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# Praising God purifies the soul, is like breathing ‘pure oxygen,’ pope says

Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — It may seem illogical, but Christians are called to give God praise — not complaints — in times of darkness and difficulty, Pope Francis said.

Jesus and the saints “show us that we can always give praise, in good times and bad, because God is the faithful friend — this is the foundation of praise, he is the faithful friend and his love never fails. He is always by our side; he always waits for us,” the pope said Jan. 13 during his weekly general audience.

This is why, he said, “praising God is like breathing in pure oxygen. It purifies the soul, it helps you look at the horizon” and not see oneself as imprisoned or trapped in the current moment.

Livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, the pope continued his series of talks on prayer, reflecting on the prayer of praise.

He reflected on the time in Jesus’ early ministry when his great works and miracles were still met with unbelief: St. John the Baptist, who had been imprisoned, was unsure whether Jesus was truly the Messiah; some towns remained unrepentant; and the wise and learned had rejected his preaching.

According to St. Matthew, “Jesus does not lift up a lament to the Father, but rather a hymn of jubilation” and praise during this time of crisis and disappointment, he said.

“Why?” the pope asked.

“First and foremost, he praises him for who he is: ‘Father, Lord of heaven and earth.’ Jesus rejoices in his spirit because he knows and he feels that his father is the God of the universe” and he is “my father,” he said.

“Praise springs from this experience of feeling” that he is the son of God and is loved.

Jesus’ prayer and praise should also teach everyone who reads the Gospel “to judge our personal defeats in a different way, the situations in which we do not see clearly the presence and action of God, when it seems that evil prevails and there is no way to stop it,” the pope said.

“Jesus, who recommended the prayer of asking questions so much, at the very moment when he would have had reason to ask the father for explanations, instead begins to praise him,” Pope Francis said. “It seems like a contradiction, but this is where the truth lies.”

Praising God adds nothing to his greatness, he said, rather it allows one to experience the same happiness “of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory.”

“Paradoxically it must be practiced not only when life fills us with happiness, but above all in difficult moments, when the path becomes steep,” he said, because “we learn

that, through that ascent, that wearisome path, those demanding passages, we get to see a new panorama, a broader horizon.”

For some reason, God willed that it would be “the little ones,” the pure of heart who would be most receptive to him, while the “learned” and the “wise” remained suspicious, closed and calculating, he said.

Jesus rejoices in this fact, and “we too must rejoice and praise God because humble and simple people welcome the Gospel.”

“In the future of the world and in the hopes of the

church,” the pope said, “there are the ‘little ones’ — those who do not consider themselves better than others, who are aware of their own limitations and their sins, who do not want to lord it over others — who, in God the father, recognize that we are all brothers and sisters.”

Pope Francis asked people to take inspiration and courage from the examples of Jesus and the saints, who lived in a world that did not fully change with their preaching and who themselves would ultimately face death.

“Let us have the courage to say, ‘Blessed are you, Lord,’ and praise the Lord,” he said. “This will do us good.”



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis leads his weekly general audience from the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Jan 13, 2021. In his main talk, the pope focused on the importance of praising God in times of darkness and difficulty.

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# Supreme Court says abortion drugs must be obtained in person, not by mail

Carol Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court Jan. 12 reinstated a federal requirement that women who are seeking abortion-inducing drugs must do so in person, not by mail, as a federal judge had allowed last year due to the pandemic and the high court had let stand.

In its 6-3 order, the justices said women must follow previous Food and Drug Administration requirements that they had to visit a doctor's office, hospital or clinic in person to obtain Mifeprex, the brand name for mifepristone, also called RU-486, which is used to end pregnancies during the first 10 weeks.

FDA regulations initially required patients to receive the drug in person after signing a form acknowledging risks associated with it.

"We welcome the Supreme Court's reinstatement of the FDA's ability to enforce important and long-standing health and safety requirements related to chemical abortion drugs," said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

In a Jan. 15 statement, he said: "Mail order mifepristone compounds the risks and trauma of abortion by encouraging women to end the lives of their children in their own bathrooms, often without any medical attention or follow-up care. This dangerous, painful and emotionally bleak process results in the death of innocent unborn lives and often has lasting negative impacts on women."

"The inalienable dignity of women and their unborn children deserves so much more," he added.

Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, said in

a Jan. 12 statement that she was "pleased that the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the serious nature of chemical abortions and the need for the FDA to have protocols in place to protect women from potentially life-threatening and devastating side effects."

Catholic Church leaders have been vocal in their opposition to this drug since it was given FDA approval in 2000 and in 2016 when the FDA relaxed rules for its use, saying it could be administered with fewer visits to a doctor.

The question about how women can obtain these drugs started with a challenge to requirements for their distribution made last year by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The group argued the in-person visits to obtain these pills during a pandemic violated the Constitution by creating a substantial obstacle to women being able to get an abortion.

U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang of Maryland agreed, ruling last summer that keeping the FDA requirement during the pandemic would "place a substantial obstacle in the path of women seeking a medication abortion and that may delay or preclude a medication abortion and thus may necessitate a more invasive procedure."

Instead, he said, the pills could be sent by mail during the pandemic.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit rejected the FDA's request to put this ruling on hold and the FDA took the case to the Supreme Court, which declined to take it up last October. The justices suggested the FDA go back to the District Court to ask the judge to modify or freeze his order and on Dec. 9, Chuang issued a new order denying the FDA's request.

Less than a week later, the FDA came back to the Supreme Court arguing that the in-person requirement does not impose a substantial obstacle for a woman seeking to obtain an abortion.

On Jan. 12, almost one month after the FDA request, the court agreed to allow the government to enforce the in-person rule for obtaining abortion drugs while the agency continued its appeal of Chuang's decision.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote a separate opinion agreeing with the court's decision but stressing that the question was not so much about the potential burden of the in-person requirement to obtain the drugs than it was about Chuang's view about the impact of the pandemic on women seeking to obtain the drug. He said the judge should not have ordered the FDA to relax its requirement.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, writing an opinion joined by Justice Elena Kagan, said: "The FDA's policy imposes an unnecessary, unjustifiable, irrational and undue burden on women seeking abortion during the current pandemic." She also said that during the pandemic, government agencies have eased restrictions on picking up other drugs in person.

A post in the scotusblog, which writes about the Supreme Court, said the court did not offer an explanation for why it took almost a month to respond to the FDA's request.

It also said that although the ruling "gives the FDA the green light to reinstate the in-person requirement immediately, the Biden administration could opt to waive the requirement, either for the duration of the pandemic or more permanently."



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### CAFETERIA STAFF

Various schools in the Diocese of Covington currently have openings for full-time, part-time and substitute workers. Hours would occur during the school day. Duties include food preparation, serving and general cleanup. Interested individuals may contact Jackie Kaiser at [jkaiser@covdio.org](mailto:jkaiser@covdio.org), or call her at 859/392-1536.

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ENTERTAINMENT

**“Pinocchio”** (Roadside) Italian director Matteo Garrone’s live-action version of Carlo Collodi’s 1883 novel, which he also who co-wrote with Massimo Ceccherini, is scrupulously faithful to the grotesqueries of its source material. As such, it falls well short of what anyone might regard as straightforward family entertainment.

A woodcutter carves the marionette of the title from a log with a strange life force within it. The resulting quasi-human figurine then faces a series of dangerous situations involving, among other threats, repeated brushes with fire, the wicked impresario of a puppet theater, swindlers and a gigantic dogfish. He cheerfully ignores the warnings of a large talking cricket and so has to be rescued over and over by a fairy. Eventually, he learns a lesson about the importance of empathy and sacrifice. But the journey that gets him there is dark one. Dubbed in English. Intense action sequences, frequent, potentially fatal, peril. CNS: A-II; MPAA: PG-13.

**“Promising Young Woman”** (Focus) Vengeance-driven vigilantism is the order of the day in this black comedy-tinged drama from writer-director Emerald Fennell. Traumatized and embittered by the sexual victimization and

subsequent death of a childhood friend during their time attending medical school together, a barista who has abandoned her ambition to become a doctor spends her nights in various watering holes pretending to be too drunk to care for herself, then punishing the men who try to prey on her vulnerability. Romance with a pediatric surgeon, another colleague from med school with whom she accidentally reconnects, leads her to consider abandoning her vendetta. But the chance to exact revenge on the physician she holds most responsible for her pal’s demise proves a difficult temptation to resist. While Fennell invites viewers to take her heroine’s campaign of often-fatal feminism lightheartedly, the underlying message that her targets had it coming remains, wasting the opportunity for this cinematically impressive work to make morally legitimate points about a genuine social evil. Skewed values, intense but almost bloodless violence, a rape theme, a premarital situation, drug use, a few profanities, several milder oaths, pervasive rough and some crude language, an obscene gesture. CNS: O; MPAA: R.

**“Wonder Woman 1984”** (Warner Bros.) This follow-up to the 2017 outing for the DC Comics superhero, helmed by returning director Patty Jenkins, is an entertaining, old-fashioned popcorn movie that conveys good messages about self-sacrifice, helping one’s neighbor and the twin evils of greed and selfishness. Seven decades have passed since the action of the first film, and the heroine — who, being immortal, hasn’t aged a day — is working, under the guise of her alter ego, Diana Prince, at Washington’s Smithsonian Institution. There she befriends a co-worker, and together they unlock the secrets of a magic crystal that, like Aladdin’s lamp, grants the wishes of whoever holds it. This leads to unexpected consequences as, at the protagonist’s behest, her true love, an air ace who died in World War I, reappears inhabiting someone else’s body and a wicked megalomaniac uses the artifact to try to seize global domination. Probably acceptable for older teens. Frequent stylized violence, implied nonmarital sexual activity, a single crass term. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

**“Herself”** (Amazon) Emotionally complex Irish drama chronicles the struggles and aspirations of a single mother living in Dublin. Having escaped her abusive husband, she’s dissatisfied with life in the cramped government subsidized hotel room assigned to her and her two young daughters but the prospect of obtaining better housing seems remote. So, through the generosity of the doctor for whom she works as a housekeeper and with the help, among others, of a building contractor, she sets out to construct her own modest home. Powerful cinematically, director Phyllida Lloyd’s profile in endurance also features details faithful and pro-life movie fans will appreciate. Yet repeated depictions of a harrowing physical assault, though dramatically justified, make this challenging material even for grown-ups. Harsh scenes of spousal abuse, several uses of profanity, about a half-dozen milder oaths, much rough and occasional crude and crass language. CNS: A-III; MPAA: R.

**“Greenland”** (STX) With the fragments of a huge comet on a collision course with Earth and threatening to wipe out most of humanity, an Atlanta-based structural engineer, his estranged wife and their young son are among those selected by the federal government for evacuation to a network of underground bunkers on the island of the title. But their exodus is hampered by the swift breakdown of the social order and by other factors, leaving them to fend for themselves. The highs and lows of human nature are revealed by the crisis and screenwriter Chris Sparling keeps the proceedings grounded both in the ordeals through which the trio passes and in the spouses’ effort to reconcile. Implicitly pro-life, director Ric Roman Waugh’s engaging action drama also showcases positive values via the courageous concern Butler’s character displays toward those in peril. But the mayhem the celestial fireballs unleash is too unsettling for kids while the vocabulary of the endangered will lead most parents to conclude that this quest for survival is not a journey for teens either. Mostly stylized but disturbing violence with occasional gore, a few gruesome sights, an adultery theme, brief scatological humor, several instances each of profanity and of milder swearing, about a dozen crude terms. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholicnews.com and click on “Extras,” then choose “Movies.” Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:

- A-I — general patronage;
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**Obituary**

**Notre Dame Sister Joan Catherine (Mary Jean Clare) Lamping** was born into the loving family of Joseph and Mary (Peter) Lamping on August 16, 1933, in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was the youngest of four daughters. Early on, Joan developed a sense of patience and compassion for her family and those around her. After graduating from St. Agnes Elementary School, Cincinnati, she attended Regina High School in Norwood, Ohio for two years. With the encouragement of her oldest sister, Notre Dame Sister Mary Thaddeus, and urged by her strong calling to religious life, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame Aspirant school in Covington, Ky. in her junior year. As a senior, Joan entered the Sisters of Notre Dame on Feb. 2, 1951 and pronounced her first vows on Aug. 25, 1953.



**Sister Joan Catherine (Mary Jean Clare) Lamping, S.N.D.**

Continuing her education, she majored in biology and mathematics at Villa Madonna College (Thomas More University). Although Sister Jean Clare began her ministry teaching elementary and high school students, she is most remembered and loved for her ministry in health care as a physical therapist. To prepare for this new role, she studied at the Mayo Clinic, qualifying to join the staff of the new St.

Charles Care Center.

Sister Jean Clare was at St. Charles for eight years until she was called to minister at St. Clare HealthCare (St. Claire Regional Medical Center) where she worked for over 19 years. She then returned to Northern Kentucky as the director of Physical Therapy at St. Charles Care Center and later joined the team at St. Elizabeth Home Therapy Department.

After over 67 years of religious ministry in education and health care, Sister Jean Clare retired to Lourdes Hall. There she enjoyed corresponding with family and friends. Sister Jean Clare was a woman of prayer who cherished her community, family, friends and everyone she inspired each day.

Sister Mary Jean Clare went home to God very peacefully on Jan. 2. She is preceded in death by her parents and her sisters, Sister M. Thaddeus, SND and Betty Graessle. She is survived by her sister, Marian Biele, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Due to the current health-care restrictions on gatherings, a private Catholic Mass took place at St. Joseph Heights chapel on Jan. 6, followed by burial on Jan. 7 in the convent cemetery.

**Ways to celebrate**

*(Continued from page 1)*

are exposed to a case at school within 90 days. There is not an immunity exemption for travel. Additionally, the Northern Kentucky Health Department has advised that antibody testing does not grant a quarantine exemption at this time.

Acknowledging that adapting to COVID-19 requires that everyone — administrators, teachers, students and families — make changes and sacrifices both in the classroom and at home, Mrs. McGuire said, “Our goal, what we’ve been striving for all year, is to keep our schools open for in-person instruction.”

Bishop Foys thanked the principals for their hard work, persevering for in-person instruction. He encouraged the principals to continue to work with each other and their school communities to reimagine safe ways to celebrate academic achievements and liturgical seasons.

“We have to think about what we can do for them and what we can do positively. We can’t think with pre-March 2020 mindsets, we have to think about now — in the midst of this pandemic.”

Bishop Foys said that he is looking forward to celebrating Mass for both the Day of Prayer and Penance for Life, Jan. 29, 9 a.m., and the Catholic Schools Week, Feb. 3, 10 a.m. Both Masses will be live streamed into the classrooms and everyone in the diocese is encouraged to watch from the Cathedral’s website, [www.covcathedral.com](http://www.covcathedral.com), in their homes. This will allow the entire diocese as a Catholic school system to pray and celebrate together.

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National/World

**‘We are better than this,’ deacon says before Johnson’s execution**

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court Jan. 14 cleared the path for the federal government to execute Corey Johnson after denying his two last-minute appeals. The nation’s high court denied Johnson’s appeal for a postponement of his execution since he was suffering from COVID-19 and his appeal to seek a reduced sentence based on his intellectual ability under a 2018 prison-reform law. Johnson, 52, was pronounced dead by lethal injection at 11:34 p.m. EST Jan. 14 at a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. His was the 12th federal execution since last summer. Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan said they would have postponed the execution because of his COVID-19 diagnosis, and Sotomayor and Kagan also separately said they would have granted a stay based on his intellectual disability. In his final statement, Johnson, a former drug trafficker, said to the families victimized by his actions that he was sorry and he listed the names of the 1992 Virginia murder victims, asking that they be remembered. “I would have said I was sorry before, but I didn’t know how. I hope you will find peace,” he wrote.

**Lisa Montgomery put to death after Supreme Court reversal**

WASHINGTON — After a flurry of court decisions, the Supreme Court reversed a pair of rulings from federal appeals courts that had put death-row inmate Lisa Montgomery’s execution on hold, and it denied two other last-minute requests to postpone the execution. Montgomery was put to death by lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, soon after the court’s decision at 1:31 a.m. (EST) Jan. 13. She was the first woman to be put to death in federal prison since 1953. After the court’s decision, Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille and longtime death penalty opponent, tweeted: “In yet another after-midnight ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the federal government to proceed with Lisa Montgomery’s execution immediately. This decision will forever be a scarlet letter for the SCOTUS — a complete failure to protect our most vulnerable citizens.” Kelley Henry, Montgomery’s attorney, said in a Jan. 13 statement: “The craven bloodlust of a failed administration was on full display tonight. Everyone who participated in the execution of Lisa Montgomery should feel shame.” Catholic leaders have been pleading for an end to the death penalty and urging leaders to stop this practice.

**Daily podcast that leads listeners through Bible’s narrative is No. 1 in U.S.**

ST. PAUL, Minn. — If great minds had brainstormed how to create a podcast that would jump to No. 1 in Apple’s podcast rankings, they never would have landed on “The Bible in a Year,” joked Jeff Cavins, a Bible scholar and creator of the Great Adventure Bible Timeline. Yet, two weeks into 2021, “The Bible in a Year” with Father Mike Schmitz tops the charts —

and has since 48 hours after its Jan. 1 launch. With the backing of Ascension, a multimedia Catholic publisher, Cavins and Father Schmitz, a priest of the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota, and popular Catholic speaker and author, created “The Bible in a Year,” a daily podcast that leads listeners through the Bible’s narrative. The aim is for listeners to understand how God’s plan for mankind’s salvation undergirds biblical events and the lives of its central figures. Each episode is about 20 minutes and includes Father Schmitz reading several chapters from Scripture, often from different books, and then giving a short reflection on the readings. “The Bible in a Year” is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast platforms, and through Hallow, a Catholic prayer App.

**U.S. putting Cuba on list of state sponsors of terrorism called wrongheaded**

WASHINGTON — The head of the U.S. Catholic bishops’ international policy committee expressed “profound disagreement” Jan. 12 with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s decision to add Cuba to the list of state sponsors of terrorism. “For decades, in conjunction with the Holy See and the majority of the international community, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has urged collaboration and mutually beneficial relations between the United States and Cuba, as well as the full lifting of the economic embargo against the island nation,” said Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois. The bishop said the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace, which he chairs, has said many times “we need more relations between the United States and Cuba, not less, in order to construct mutually beneficial trade, cultural and scientific ties that will yield a lasting prosperity for both our nations.” He added, “I pray that we never tire of working toward these goals and that both sides recognize the need for friendship and collaboration.” In his Jan. 11 announcement about Cuba, Pompeo said the Trump administration was designating it as a state sponsor of terrorism “for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism” by “granting safe harbor to terrorists.”

**Cardinal Pell: Vatican financial reform making progress**

ROME — While questions remain about dubious financial dealings in the past and about future uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vatican’s steady move toward financial transparency is on the right track, said Cardinal George Pell, former prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy. During a Jan. 15 webinar on transparency in the Catholic Church, Cardinal Pell said that Pope Francis’ efforts to reform the Vatican’s finances, including a recent measure that removed financial assets from the control of the Vatican Secretariat of State, would hopefully bring much-needed accountability. “There’s no doubt that if implemented appropriately and well, it represents massive, massive progress,” Cardinal Pell said at the webinar sponsored by the Global Institute of Church Management and the church management

program at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. In the new law, published Dec. 28, the pope ordered the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, also known as APSA, to manage all bank accounts and financial investments belonging to the Vatican Secretariat of State.

**Popes Francis, Benedict receive their first doses of COVID-19 vaccine**

VATICAN CITY — Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents Jan. 13. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed the news Jan. 14. While it was reported widely that Pope Francis received the vaccine Jan. 13, the retired pope’s secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot the morning of Jan. 14. The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 11 that the 93-year-old pope, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State. He told Vatican News that the retired pope has been following the news “on television, and he shares our concerns about the pandemic, about what is happening in the world, about the many people who have lost their life because of the virus.” “There have been people he knows who have died because of COVID-19,” he added. Archbishop Ganswein said the retired pope is still very sharp mentally but that his voice and physical strength have weakened. “He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker.” He rests more, “but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens,” he added.

**Trump signs anti-Semitism bill into law, creating ambassadorial post**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, a week before leaving office, signed into law a bill that elevates to a full ambassadorship the rank of a special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Christopher Smith, R-New Jersey, also prevents the ambassador-at-large from being saddled with duties irrelevant to combating and anti-Semitism, or being conferred with other positions or responsibilities that distract from the central focus of anti-Semitism. In a Jan. 14 statement, Smith said the ambassador-at-large will report directly to the secretary of state. “The official rank of ambassador comes with greater seniority and diplomatic access not only here in Washington, but equally important, overseas in dealing with foreign governments,” he added. “In short, it gives the special envoy the clout required to do the job more effectively.” A bipartisan, bicameral team of lawmakers voted for the bill. Final approval came Dec. 16 in the Senate. “Anti-Semitism is on the rise in many countries around the globe over the past 10 years. We’ve seen members of the Jewish community harassed, intimidated, assaulted and even killed. We’ve seen sacred places like synagogues and graves desecrated,” Smith said.



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# Heavy security in D.C., ongoing pandemic means March for Life will be virtual

Kurt Jensen  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home.

Like the satellite events connected to the annual National Mall rally and march to the Supreme Court, including the Rose Dinner, a youth conference and the Mass for Life, the rest of it will be online only Jan. 29.

March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and to enforce mask wearing and social distancing.

But the plan was still to have as large a live rally as could be arranged. Many of the bus caravans from the Midwest, long a staple of the event, were canceled last fall as a result of the pandemic, and the assault on the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 and threats of subsequent violence by domestic terrorist groups, as reported by the FBI, made security impossible.

“The protection of all of those who participate in the annual March, as well as the many law enforcement personnel and others who work tirelessly each year to ensure a safe and

peaceful event, is a top priority of the March for Life,” Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund, said in a statement issued late Jan. 15.

“In light of the fact that we are in the midst of a pandemic which may be peaking, and in view of the heightened pressures that law enforcement officers and others are currently facing in and around the Capitol ... the annual rally will take place virtually and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the march virtually.”

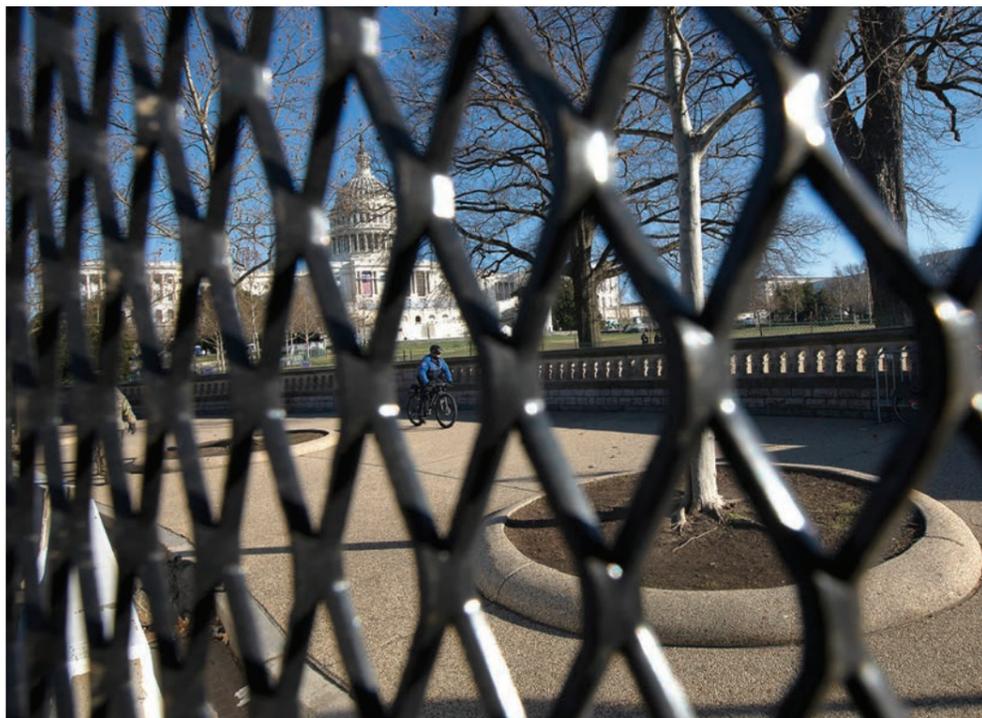
There will still be a small in-person presence. “We will invite a small group of pro-life leaders from across the country to march this year,” Mancini said.

“These leaders will represent pro-life Americans everywhere who, each in their own unique ways, work to make abortion unthinkable and build a culture where every human life is valued and protected,” she added.

Marches in recent years had drawn at least 100,000 participants, and last year’s event, when President Donald Trump spoke at the rally, was believed to have had the largest attendance in its history. The smallest March for Life previous to this was in 1987 during a snowstorm, and drew an estimated 5,000.

The march is held on or near the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion on demand.

The National Park Service closed “core areas” of the National Mall Jan. 15. They will remain closed at least through Jan. 21.



A Capitol Police officer patrols the U.S. Capitol in Washington Jan. 9, 2021.

CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn



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