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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

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

Messenger staff report

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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)
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.

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,’” it said. “The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.”

The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also specify that the mask should cover the priests’ “nose and mouth.”

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

Primary schools in the Diocese of Covington are hosting open houses 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 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.

Saturday, Jan. 23
St. Timothy School, Union, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Call to 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.

Thursday, Jan. 28
St. Catherine of Siena School, Ft. Thomas, 6-8 p.m. 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 a.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, Milford — Call for personalized tour.

CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz
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 136, sponsored by Rep. Ed Massey, which would raise the threshold for felony theft from $500 to $1,000. 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 1-800-352-1783 Monday-Friday.

School Choice Week will be celebrated Jan. 24-30. To celebrate this week, EdChoice Kentucky is sponsoring a virtual watch party with a screening of “Mass Virginia” featuring a virtual interview with Virginia Walden Ford, whose story inspired the movie. EdChoice is also promoting digital testimonies on its website, 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.

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. Foyes, 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.

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.

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 Foyes will celebrate Mass, Jan. 29, 9 a.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The Mass will be live-streamed from the Cathedral website, 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 COVID-19. 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: 425
Total ever positive cases: 597

Currently Self-quarantined
Close Contacts: 401
Close Contacts with COVID case in household: 293
Thank God we’ve finally left 2020 behind! We’ve entered a new year with great hope of division along with a little trepidation. For many of us, V-day — when we roll up our sleeves and get vaccinated — will have the flavor of 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.

Their patience, resilience and perspective are instructive. A researcher on healthy aging has termed these qualities “courage competence” and the elderly exemplify them 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 troubles.

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 “courage.” The carpenter of Nazareth “was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.”

Lukewarm, when God seems not to help us — and for some that is how it seems — and that the pandemic death toll rises — this does not mean that we have been abandoned, says Francis, “but instead are being asked 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 one of my favorite saints — Joseph 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.

In January, 1859, France was losing miserably in a war they had started against the German states. With the Prussian army within 50 miles of Pontmain, the village feared annihilation. According to the pastor’s diary, our lady — the Virgin Mary — appeared to him and his assistant priest on Feb. 11 and Feb. 15, 1859. In each apparition an “invisible Madonna in the sky barred their path.”

The priests were told: “Our Lady of Hope will answer your prayers very soon.”

The apparition of Pontmain, though little known in the United States, teaches us to pray 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 Vet is a director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.
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 go to a great deal of time together — going out to restaurants in the evenings, camping to the beach on weekends and once a year they all went on vacation on vacation together.

All three couples did their best to love their children and bring them up in the faith. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson spoke up. They said that when you love your child and your child has special needs you must do whatever you can for them. 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.

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

Deacon David Profit

Deacon Timothy Britt

Deacon David Profit is director of the St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.
Our changeless mission

Meg DeBlase
Contributor

Cincinnati Right to Life.

The year 2020 has brought more challenges to our lives 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 22,000 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 abortion.

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 person. More than 22,000 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 abortion.

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you 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
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, Isak Isaak, co-director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization and Father Stef Bankemper, pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Fr. 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 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.”

NOW HIRING

St. Anne Retreat (Continued from page 9)
Did you know?

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 us 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.

1. **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. Why not 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.

2. **Bow your head when you hear the name of Jesus.**
   - In the 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.

3. **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?

4. **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 “Cald” 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 your 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.

5. **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.

6. **Add a special prayer this month.**
   - Pray or begin a novena to St. Bernadine 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.

7. **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 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 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.

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.

‘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 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.

Open House January 31st 12-2pm
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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.

Live-streamed 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.”
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 Mifepristone, 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 forcing women to end the lives of their children in their own bathrooms, often without any medical attention 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 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.”

PICTURE OF ADVERTISMENT

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, or call her at 859/392-1536.

PART-TIME SCHOOL CAFETERIA MANAGER
The School Food Services Office of the Diocese of Covington Department of Catholic Schools seeks candidates for a part-time School Cafeteria Manager position at Prince of Peace Montessori School in Covington, Ky. The position is for 4 ½ hours Monday - Friday, during the school year. The School Cafeteria Manager’s primary responsibilities involve overall supervision of the School’s meals program, including: managing employees; ordering, receiving, and managing inventory; preparing and serving meals; operating the point-of-sale system; and interacting with school staff, students, and their parents. Organizational and interpersonal skills are essential to this position. To request an application, contact Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org. Scan and return the completed application by e-mail, including references with contact email addresses and compensation history. Applications may also be faxed to 859/392-1589.

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PAYROLL/STAFF ACCOUNTANT
The Finance Office of the Diocese of Covington seeks candidates for the full-time position of Payroll/Staff Accountant. Responsibilities include accounts receivable, accounts payable, cash receipts, and general ledger, as well as maintenance of various spreadsheets, databases, and reconciliations. Payroll responsibilities involve assisting with data entry. A practical knowledge of basic bookkeeping principles and practices is essential, and other necessary requirements include experience with Microsoft Word and Excel. Qualified candidates should send a resume, cover letter, and at least five references by e-mail (skoplyay@covdio.org), fax (859/392-1589), or mail to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR; Diocese of Covington; 1125 Madison Avenue; Covington, KY 41011-3115.

ST. THERESA SCHOOL
Is currently seeking a candidate for a part-time maintenance position. Candidates will work Monday through Friday from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. Duties will include cleaning classrooms and cafeteria areas. Candidates must be Virtus trained. Please contact Katie Boruske at bonuksk@sttherese.ws.
“Pinocchio” (Disney) Italian director Matteo Garrone’s live-action version of Carlo Collodi’s 1883 novel, which he also wrote and co-directed with Massimo Ceccherini, is surprisingly faithful to the grotesques of its source material. As such, it falls well short of what anyone might regard as straightforward family entertainment.


“Promising Young Woman” (Focus) Vengeance-driven vigilandy 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, the protagonist, 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 pedicure, 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 false feminism heartilyondered 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 prematurity situation, drug use, a few profanities, several milder oaths, pervasively harsh 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 actions 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. She there 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 unpredicted 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 dominion. Probably acceptable for teens. Frequent stylized violence, implied non-marital sexual activity a single cuss word. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

“Herself” (Amazon) Emotionally complex Irish drama chronicles the allowances 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 exod us 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 celestial events through which the protagonists’ lives change and the survivors’ 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 and the eventual fireball’s lack of 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 isent 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.
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.

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.

Charles Care Center
Sister Jean Clare was at St. Charles for eight years until she was called to minister at St. Clare HealthCare (St. Clare 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.

She over 67 years of religious min-istry in education and health care, Sister Jean Clare continued to work with her 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 pre-ceded 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.

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

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 encour-aged 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 celebrat-ing 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, in their homes. This will allow the entire diocese as a Catholic school system to pray and celebrate together:

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Shopper’s GUIDE
‘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, 56, was pronounced dead by lethal injection at 11:34 p.m. EST Jan. 14 in a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. His was the 12th federal execution since last summer. Justice 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: “He was sorry, and he listed the names of the 319 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 her execution was set at 1:33 a.m. EST Jan. 15. 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 Jan. 14 cleared the path for the federal government to execute Lisa Montgomery after denying her two last-minute appeals. Montgomery, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, was put to death at a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, at about 1:33 a.m. EST Jan. 15. The execution was delayed because she was suffering from COVID-19 and the court would not allow a reduced sentence based on her intellectual ability. Montgomery is the first woman to be put to death in federal prison since 1953. We will never give up.”

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

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 USCCHB 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 cultural, 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 renames financial costs from the control of the Vatican Secretariat of State, would hopefully bring much-needed accountability. “There’s no doubt if it 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 Gänswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot the morn- ing of Jan. 14. The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 13 that the 95-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 a lot of people who have known who have died because of COVID-19,” he added. Archbishop Gänswein 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 ambassadorial rank the position of chief 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 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-at-large affords this important 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 client required do the job more effectively.” A bipartisan, bicameral team of lawmakers voted for the bill. Final approval came Dec. 14 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.
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.