Easter Message 2021
My dear Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ!
Now and forever! Amen!

Imagine the joy that filled the hearts of the Apostles when they heard that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Until they heard that news their hearts were broken, they felt abandoned, disappointed, deserted by the Lord in whom they had placed their trust, for whom they had given up everything and everyone. He was dead and buried and with Him all their hopes and dreams for a brighter future.

Jesus is indeed risen from the dead and our hope is sure and our dreams can be realized.

There are times in our own lives when we can feel abandoned, disappointed, deserted — when our hearts are breaking. In those times we turn our thoughts to Jesus who is our hope, our salvation, our God! He will never abandon us, never desert us, never disappoint us.

This past year has, without a doubt, been a challenging year for all of us. There were times, to be sure, when perhaps we felt abandoned, deserted, disappointed — when our hearts were breaking. But it is especially during times like this that we must turn to the Lord. Crises such as the pandemic are times when we need to draw closer to the Lord and to each other. These are times when our faith should not be weakened but strengthened. God does not abandon us, does not desert us.

So, we rejoice in the Lord and praise His Name! He is raised from the dead and has conquered sin and death for all time. We put our trust in Him because we know His word is sure.

I wish each of you and your loved ones a truly blessed and joyous Easter! I assure you of my prayers each day and ask that you pray for me.

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, D.D.
Bishop of Covington
Bishop Foys ordains seminarian to the Order of Deacon

Alexander Gedney ordained a deacon, answers challenging call from God

Laura Keener

April 2

Compared to last year’s ordinations with no congregation, the reduced capacity congregation at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, March 28, felt like a full house as Bishop Roger Foys ordained Alexander (A.J.) Gedney to the transitional diaconate.

Family and friends, including educators from Deacon Gedney’s alma mater, St. Henry District High School, showed their prayerful support as he made the diaconate promises of celibacy, prayer and obedience. Deacon Gedney is a seminarian for the Diocese of Covington and his diaconate ordination is a step on his formation to the priesthood.

“We still celebrated Mass and live-streamed it on the internet. We still celebrated the Eucharist. We still baptize, we still anoint people who are near death, couples still get married, I still confirm and administer the sacrament of confirmation and I still ordain,” Bishop Foys said. “The essence of our faith and the sacramental life of the Church has not changed; that should give us great comfort and consolation, that there is something in our life that does not change, that is constant upon which we can rely.”

The readings for today’s ordination Mass, Bishop Foys said, were chosen specifically for the celebration. The first reading is from the book of the prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 61:1–3)

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me … to bring glad tidings to the lowly and to heal the brokenhearted.’ The minister of God’s word is to bring glad tidings and to heal the brokenhearted,” Bishop Foys said.

The second reading, from St. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor 4:1–7), instructs God’s ministers not to be discouraged.

“During this year there was more than enough discouragement to go around, but Paul says this ministry is given to us through the mercy of God and so we are not discouraged,” said Bishop Foys. “The ministry we have, the ministry into which A.J. will be ordained today, is given to us through the mercy of God, he is its author and therefore we are not to be discouraged. ‘For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord.’ That is key. Every minister indeed preaches Jesus Christ as Lord and master of us all, then the words he says are the words of the Lord.”

St. Paul also talks about the paradox of ministry, that “this treasure is held in earthen vessels.”

“Earthen vessels — I think that’s a wonderful image that Paul uses,” said Bishop Foys. “This treasure that we preach (Continued on page 14)

For the first time as deacon, Deacon Gedney serves at the altar.

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Bishop’s Schedule

April 2

Good Friday Liturgical service, Cathedral Basilica, 3 p.m.

April 3

Holy Saturday Vigil and Mass of the Lord’s Resurrection, Cathedral Basilica, 8:30 p.m.

April 4

Mass of the Lord’s Resurrection, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

April 8

Individual meeting, 9 a.m.

April 10

Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.

April 11

Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
Run, don’t walk, to empty tomb


This Sunday, and the subsequent eight days, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord. It is the celebration of the Church par excellence! We read at the Masses for Easter Day from the Gospel according to St. John. In my own reflection on this sacred text, I am drawn to three images or themes.

The first is “running.” When Mary Magdalene discovered that the stone covering the tomb of Jesus had been rolled away, and that His body was missing, she ran to find the apostles to tell them what she had found. In turn, Peter and John run towards the tomb to see for themselves. The second is when John finally enters the tomb and he “sees and believes.” And finally my mind rests on the cloth that had covered the head of the Lord, “rolled up in a sepulcher.”

Jesus Christ is the salvation of the world and it should be our greatest desire as human beings to know him, to believe in him, and to be happy with him forever. Our “pace” in encountering Jesus, should not be slow or wishy-washy, it should be fast, intense and with great inner intensity. And this encounter with Jesus, (finding the empty tomb — the Lord risen from the dead should spur us on to share this encounter with others.

Having heard the Good News, however is not enough. *Fides quaerens intellectum!* Faith seeking understanding! The Church never asks us to follow and believe blindly — we have to desire to know more, we have to want to come to the fullness of the truth. However, at some point in time reason will only get us so far and we are to take the rest of the way. After we have run as far as we can to find and meet Jesus, eventually we will have to take that final step into the tomb and discover that “he is not there.” And we, like John, will have to “see and believe.”

It is important to remember that faith has to be an act of the will, it must be a conscious decision to seek out the Lord every day. What is beautiful about seeking out Jesus, is that he desires to be found, and he leaves little indication of his presence. For example, when they came to the tomb, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the Jesus’ brother were the first to find the empty tomb — Jesus had risen from the dead.

The Cross and the Big Dance — victory in defeat

After having the NCAA Basketball Tournaments canceled last year, hasn’t it been great to have them back? They’re the crown jewels for the biggest of all basketball enthusiasts and they get many of those who don’t follow basketball all year interest in March Madness.

We love the big upset like little Abilene Christian defeating their much larger and more dominant in-state opponent, Texas. We enjoy great storytelling like how the 16 seed亲人 who continually strive to provide spiritual leadership for the team from Loyola (Chicago).

The Joy and celebratory moments that have symbolized the 112 years of the men’s tournament and 38 years of the women’s tournament returned, even if almost every fan had to watch on television this year. For many players and coaches, as well as their fans, reaching “The Big Dance” was the goal they set out for when their season began, even if they didn’t know how COVID-19 would impact the season.

I can probably speak for many of them that the cancellation of last year’s tournament and having to make it more special to just be able to participate in one this year. I can probably speak for many of them that the cancellation of last year’s tournament and having to make it more special to just be able to participate in one this year. I can probably speak for many of them that the cancellation of last year’s tournament and having to make it more special to just be able to participate in one this year.

But for every great finish, surprising tournament run, and great story there are also those that had great expectations and had their seasons end in great disappointment.

Iowa’s Luka Garza comes to mind.

Garza had two of the most historic college basketball seasons in recent memory. He recently became Iowa’s all-time leading scorer. He won his conference (the Big Ten) player of the year award in back-to-back seasons. Many organizations awarded him their national player of the year honors last year and he will once again receive some of those this year.

Garza’s Iowa team had great expectations in the tournament entering as a #2 seed, but they ran into a really good Oregon team who played much better during their second round game and defeated Iowa. Garza entered game in overtime...
Being loved, cared for and listened to

Whenever I visited the homeless in Cincinnati with my parents, they always enjoyed just having the company. They appreciated feeling cared for and listened to, and they deserved a second chance at living a successful life, even now. Watching and listening to people talk about their past and present lives leads me to understand all those people need is to be loved, cared for and listened to.

If you ever come across a homeless person, you might notice how sad their eyes look. When you offer them help, or maybe even just a listening ear, their eyes always seem to lighten up. For me, that glowing look always makes it worth giving a few dollars. Not long ago, I drove to the river to help my grandparents. On the way, we reached an intersection with a man holding a “help me and God bless” sign. We handed him a dollar, and we walked on. On the way, we reached an intersection.

Garza ended his career having never made it past the second round of the tournament. But that is not what should define his career, nor the thousands of others who were unable to attain their ultimate goal of cutting down the nets and winning a championship. I credit Garza, his teammates, the other teams in the tournament, and even the teams who did not make the tournament but put in all the hard work and make all of the physical, mental and emotional sacrifices that they do in order to compete.

Isn’t it coincidental that the NCAA Tournament falls during Lent, the season each year where we remember Jesus’ sacrifice? Lent is a season of preparation and suffering, which could be considered analogous to what these athletes experience.

The disappointment I see in these teams makes me think of the Garth Brooks song “The Dance”: “And now I’m glad I didn’t know how his day was. He smiled, looking touched at my small donation. I remember his beaming smile, and I ache to see someone else display that same grin again.”

Another moment I encountered happened after my family watched a Reds game. My parents let us stop for the Ferris wheel, and my dad saw a man sitting in a chair holding the “help me please” sign. My dad strode over and started talking to him, we thought they never stop talking. “This man, who turned out to be a veteran like my dad, finally found someone to talk to after the countless people that already walked carelessly around him. My dad mentioned the veteran looked slightly dazed; like he didn’t expect someone to walk up to him and ask how his day was.”

Psalms 38:18 says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Bible Gateway) I believe people in the world always, in some way, feel forgotten. I can’t imagine what it feels like for a veteran to see people brush away his story when they rush by him. I imagine it might lead him to feel broken and ashamed to sit alone, as many people like him do. But when my dad stopped to listen, God showed through a little in that moment. Even my dad talking to him for a short 30 minutes could mean the world to the veteran. It lets him know despite everything, God hasn’t forgotten about him. He stays close to him. That small piece of love my dad shared with the veteran saved his spirit a little. To me, it’s powerful how a small act of love impacted the veteran’s life. His stunned expression showed how affected he felt by my dad’s gesture of love.

I recall my parents and I driving to Cincinnati to give a traditional Thanksgiving meal to the homeless. My dad walked up to one man, Troy, and started chatting. Where I stood, I saw Troy’s cheeks sparkle with tears. I found out he would be a father: Jeremiah 31:11 tells us, “For I know the plans I have for you; declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Bible Gateway) describes this situation perfectly. He gains a child to love as his own. I think part of it included the gratitude he felt towards God. God gifted him a second chance, a future filled with love and life. Because of his tears, I believe his gratefulness and affection is immense towards God and his family.

Watching and listening to people talk about their past and present lives leads me to understand all these people need is to be loved, cared for and listened to. I can always try to give to the homeless. It helps them feel more love and respect. It helps them feel like they do matter; they do deserve help. If we show them we listened to them, hopefully they’ll pick their lives back up. They deserve the same care we get daily. We obtain the ability to give it to them.

Ray Smith

Along the Way

Spring into home safety

Somewhere along the way, some of you who read last month’s column might have said to yourself, “Surely, he’s not serious about writing a column on home safety?”

Wrong.

Now, that being settled, I also have the ongoing help from family members and friends and neighbors, especially in one’s later years, is an encouraging gift from heaven. Surely many of you wholeheartedly agree.

About this particular topic, I find no difficulty establishing a valid connection between home safety and this faith-based writing. Remembering one of my deceased mother’s frequent quotes, “God helps those who help themselves,” sealed the deal. And she was not talking, “Pass the sweet potatoes!”

Families who pray together for a safe and healthy domicile are wise beyond their collective years. Would that prayers alone were enough. For your consideration, here are some clear and simple, noteworthy truths of my research on home safety:

— Have emergency numbers in clear, bold print next to your land phone and/or your cell phone.
— All exposed electrical outlets should be covered when and if unused.
— Be sure and certain that you know how to turn off the electricity and gas in an emergency.
— Make sure that you have fresh batteries in the smoke detector and the carbon monoxide detector. Coordinate this with the time changes to and from daylight savings time if it applies to your residential area.
— If you have fire extinguishers, make sure that all are readily to use.
— Check to see if your floors are non-slip. You may wish to investigate ways to make them safer.
— Do your best to make your floor coverings and rugs secure.
— Keep adequate and sufficiently sized protective screens in front of all fireplaces.
— Always keep candles safely away from walls, curtains and tables or areas easily reachable by children.
— Interiors doors should have safety-release locks so they can be opened from either side.
— This is a big one. If there are small children in your home or those who frequently visit with friends, family or neighbors, all windows on all floors should remain secure.
— Furnaces and thus should be inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.
— Destroy dry cleaner bags or keep them out of children’s reach.
— Showers and tubs with non-skid surfaces or mats are much safer than those without.
— I personally consider this a “must have.” Grab bars should be securely installed alongside the bathtub, shower and toilet, especially if someone in the household is elderly or disabled.
— Keep all electrical appliances away from water and unplugged after use.
— Keep all medicines (including vitamins) in locked cabinets— out of children’s reach.
— Make sure that all bathroom doors can be unlocked from inside and out.
— Keep your steps and sidewalks clear and free from abandoned toys, tools, miscellaneous debris and cleared from ice and snow as soon as possible.
— Periodically check play equipment and lawn furniture for safe use, especially after extended periods of harsh, severe weather.
— Keep gas and charcoal grills clean and light carefully when in use.
— May this checklist help you and yours remain safe and alert you to some of the important ways to be even safer in your home. Allow me to close with wise words often spoken by my sainted mother in the home of my youth, well taken then and often inspirational now: “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

Ray Smith is a commissioned Lay Pastoral Minister for the Diocese of Covington.

(Continued from page 4)

When one puts forth their full energy, makes sacrifices, and suffers for others, the pain we feel when we suffer defeat, as painful as it may be, becomes worth it. Our lives are better left to chance, even if we miss the Dance—or make an early round tournament exit.

Proverbs 23:16 tells us, “Though they fall seven times, they will rise again.” The experiences these young people gain from participating in sports help them to deal with failure. It is this failure that will allow them to succeed. Rich Hoyt is an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati, a parishioner at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, and a longtime youth and high school coach. He is the lead trainer for the Play Like A Champion Today program in the Diocese of Covington.
Students’ insight on ‘Gospel of Life’ amazes essay organizers

Each year the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office invites eighth graders to participate in the annual Pro-Life Essay Contest. The theme for the essay is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops theme for Respect Life Month: “Live the Gospel of Life: To imitate Christ and follow in his footsteps.”

Approximately 250 essays were received on the many topics encompassed in the Gospel of Life. The Pro-Life Office enlisted the help of 20 volunteers to read and narrow down the entries to 20 finalists. From these 20 finalists the Pro-Life Board selected the top three winning essays.

“In this unprecedented year the teachers and students continue to step up to the plate and amaze me with their insight on the topic presented,” said Faye Roch, director, Pro-Life Office. “We asked students to keep in mind the pandemic, which we were all experiencing, and apply the ‘Living the Gospel of Life’ theme. Students wrote about the many who are suffering during this time, especially the most vulnerable of our society.”

Subjects students wrote about included: abortion, adoption, homelessness, care for the elderly and infirmed, people with physical handicaps, Down’s Syndrome, Autism, mental illness, depression and anxiety, bullying, assisting the poor and the death penalty.

Maddie Krieg, Villa Madonna Academy High School, Villa Hills, is awarded first place for her essay on homelessness. Her entire winning essay is on page 5.

Elizabeth Casey, St. Henry School, Elsmere, placed second. Her essay highlighted the importance of caring for the elderly. “All human life is valuable, no matter their age or circumstance. Some elderly are isolated from society which causes many diseases such as dementia. This shows that those of old age need to be cared for as they become weak and lonely. The solution is to stop judging and start loving, no matter the challenges. Love is an infinity symbol, never ending. God’s love is never-ending so why can’t ours be the same?”

Grace Gulla, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington and Kate Harris, Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell, tied for third place.

Ms. Gulla’s essay envisioned molding a civilization through sacrificial love. “No matter the age or circumstance, by faithfully living and promoting the Gospel of Life, we can mold a civilization of sacrificial love. We are called to allow every one of God’s children to reach his or her highest potential. This also means entrusting them to the Father’s care as life fades. For the woman who feels hopeless, the couple who faces insurmountable pain, or the elderly spouse who must bear witness to their beloved’s suffering – there is a better option. A more grace-filled way. As God’s children, let’s be a light to those living in darkness and promote life.”

Ms. Harris shared how adoption is the redemptive path when a single mom or couple is faced with an unexpected or challenging pregnancy. “Abortion is the generous gift of a deeply loved life bringing much joy to others. The world often misinterprets adoption as neglectful. Truly, adoption is a great act of love. In adoption, a birthmother chooses to provide her child with a better life, putting their child’s future ahead of her own. Adoption is not neglect, it is choosing the narrow path out of love. There is great selflessness in adoption; it’s choosing God’s will instead of choosing sin to avoid hard consequences. Abortion is wrong in the eyes of God. … The selfless act of adoption is a redemptive path provided by God.”

“Each and every student is a winner!” said Mrs. Roch. “These young people are our hope in turning the tide in this culture of death. My prayers are that they will continue to be leaders in promoting the Gospel of Life. Also, I am so grateful to the Knights of Columbus for providing the funds for our scholarship and for all of the support they provide in our efforts in promoting the Gospel of Life within our diocese.”
Finalists in the 2021 Eighth Grade Pro-Life Essay Contest include (above, left) St. Henry Elementary School, Elsmere, students Charlie Bihl and Elizabeth Casey – 2nd place; (above center) St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, student Delaney Menner and (above right) St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs student Austin Wood. (below, left) Finalists from St. Pius X School, Edgewood, Andrew Vonlehman and Rachel Rovito and (below right) from Sts. Peter and Paul School, California, Zoey Woosley.
As the Church prepares for Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum — the great Three days, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Resurrection of the Lord — the Messenger offers the following meditations and prayers for the Stations of the Cross written by then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI), for Good Friday 2005.

In these final days of Lent, as God’s people journey with Jesus on the path to Calvary, it is important to remember that Catholic liturgies are not simple reenactments of something that happened over 2,000 years ago but actual participations in the events themselves through living faiths.

The Messenger invites you to consider the Stations of the Cross as an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection in our own lives today. As you meditate on each station, let the images and words offered here inspire you to take time for prayer, reflection and action in your own faith journey.

**FIRST STATION**

**SECOND STATION**

**THIRD STATION**

**FOURTH STATION**

**FIFTH STATION**

**SIXTH STATION**

**SEVENTH STATION**

**EIGHTH STATION**

**NINTH STATION**

**TENTH STATION**

**ELEVENTH STATION**

**TWELFTH STATION**

**THIRTEENTH STATION**

**FOURTEENTH STATION**

**JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM WHO WEEP FOR HIM**

Jesus is condemned to death. Lord, you were condemned to death because the love and sacrifice of your divine heart were not suitable to the hatred and brutality of the world, the hatred of our own condemnation. Do you hear the cries of mercy of the world, which are like those of the women of Jerusalem who weep and pray for you? Help us to resemble those women and to raise up a cry of hope and mercy to you, the Judge of the world, even as those women raised up for you. Lord, you were condemned to death because the people of the world were moved by hatred and cruelty. Help us to raise up a cry of hope and love in your name, even as they did in yours. Lord, you were condemned to death because the power of the world, the power of the priests and the power of the people, was determined to detach you from the love they wished you to have. Help us to raise up a cry in your name, that you may be loved and not feared by all people. **SECOND STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus takes up his cross. Lord, you willingly submitted yourself to mockery and scorn. Help us not to yield ourselves over to those who look down on the weak and suffering. Help us to acknowledge your face in the body and in the world. May we never lose heart when faced with the suffering of others. Help us to be strong, and to be loved, even as you were loved. Lord, you were always the bearer of joy. Help us to be always the bearers of joy. **THIRD STATION**

**REMEMBERING THE SORROW OF MARY**

Jesus falls for the first time. Lord Jesus, the weight of the cross made you fall to the ground. The weight of our sins, the weight of our guilt, brought you down. But your fall is not a tragedy or a human weakness. You came to us when, in your glory, we were said to be the arrogant and haughty. We were said to be the proud. But now we are brought down, and the human being has turned a man into a kind of drudge, to be bought and sold, to be stored to provide parts for experimentation. In doing this, we hope to complete death for our crossbears; you truly attacked our pride and our arrogance. Help us, Lord, not to become so condescending to your death, and not to become so condescending to you. Help us, Lord, not to allow our destructiveness and labors to swindle to the demands, to fill true joy. **FOURTH STATION**

**VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

Jesus meets his mother. Holy Mary, Mother of the Lord, you remained faithful when the darkness of death. Just as we believe the angelic, incredible message — that you would become the Mother of the Most High, so too we believe at the hour of your greatest abandonment. In that hour of your great abandonment, you were left alone. No one could be found to accompany your anguish and your weakness. The world’s darkest night, you became the Mother of all believers, the Mother of the Church. We long to touch you in faith, and grant that our faith may bear that it is impossible to separate the thought of a humanity that suffers and the thought of a humanity that loves. Help us, Lord, to share suffering and to offer assistance. **FIFTH STATION**

**THE CYRENIAN HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS**

The Cyrenian helps Jesus carry the cross. Lord, you opened the eyes and heart of Simon of Cyrene. And you gave him, for his share in your Cross, the grace of faith. Help us to see in our dearest and best friends that faith, which you gave to Simon of Cyrene. Help us to see that faith, which you gave to Simon of Cyrene, is capable of being a part of us. Help us to recognize and to accept that faith, which you gave to Simon of Cyrene, is capable of being a part of us. Help us to recognize and to accept that faith, which you gave to Simon of Cyrene, is capable of being a part of us. **SIXTH STATION**

**VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

Jesus dies on the cross. Lord Jesus Christ, at the hour of your death the day was darkened. Your sun was not being hidden in its course. All the previous hour of your sacrifice has been brilliant. Now light has gone completely out. The darkness has changed your world, the darkness has not thrown you, the darkness has not cast you down. You were once the light of the world and now you have become a lamp that is being blown out. Help us to share in your death and in your sacrifice, in order that we may also be able to share in your glory. **SEVENTH STATION**

**JESUS IS LAIED IN THE TOMB**

Jesus is laid in the tomb. Lord Jesus Christ, in your burial you have taken on the death of the world. Thus your body is laid in the tomb. Your body is laid in the tomb. The world is laid in the tomb with you. The world is laid in the tomb with you. The world is laid in the tomb with you. **EIGHTH STATION**

**VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

Jesus is nailed to the cross. Lord Jesus Christ, you let yourself be nailed to the Cross, accepting the reality of this suffering, for the salvation of the world. Lord Jesus Christ, you have shown us your love in the hour of your greatest humiliation. Help us to reveal your love in the hour of our greatest humiliation. Help us to reveal your love in the hour of our greatest humiliation. **NINTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is stripped of his garments. Lord Jesus, you were stripped of your garments, exposed, and out of society. You took upon you the shame of Adam, and you suffered. You suffered the ignominy of the world, and you absorbed the contempt of the world. You absorbed the contempt of the world, and you absorbed the contempt of the world. **TENTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is rejected by his people. Lord, your Church often seems like a desert that is attacked by the nations of the world. But we can do no other than to love your Church. Help us to love your Church, and to love your Church, and to love your Church. Help us to love your Church, and to love your Church, and to love your Church. **ELEVENTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is abandoned by his family. Lord Jesus, you became the Mother of the Most High, so too you abandoned your family. Lord Jesus, you became the Mother of the Most High, so too you abandoned your family. Lord Jesus, you became the Mother of the Most High, so too you abandoned your family. **TWELFTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is condemned to death. Lord Jesus Christ, you were condemned to death because you did not abandon your humanity. Lord Jesus Christ, you were condemned to death because you did not abandon your humanity. Lord Jesus Christ, you were condemned to death because you did not abandon your humanity. **THIRTEENTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is nailed to the cross. Lord Jesus Christ, you let yourself be nailed to the cross, accepting the reality of this suffering, for the salvation of the world. Lord Jesus Christ, you have shown us your love in the hour of your greatest humiliation. Help us to reveal your love in the hour of our greatest humiliation. Help us to reveal your love in the hour of our greatest humiliation. **FOURTEENTH STATION**

**THE PASSION OF THE LORD IS SHOWN**

Jesus is laid in the tomb. Lord Jesus Christ, in your burial you have taken on the death of the world. Thus your body is laid in the tomb. Your body is laid in the tomb. The world is laid in the tomb with you. The world is laid in the tomb with you. The world is laid in the tomb with you.
Christianity has used symbols from its very beginnings. Think of the fish (ichthys) made by two intersecting arcs. It stood for Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter, i.e. Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. Aside from the theological overtones of the Eucharist and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, it was a secret symbol used to identify one’s self as a Christian. The fish pointed to a deeper reality — an identity. The same is true of saints in artwork. How they look, what they hold, how they are dressed and even the colors they are shown in are highly symbolic, revealing their identity. Much of the information that comes down to the Church in this regard comes from her Hagiography, the body of literature that describes the lives of saints and their cult tradition.

In the early days of the Church, St. Joseph appeared only in images related to the Nativity, drawing on scriptural references. In the 5th-century arch mosaic at Rome’s church of Santa Maria Maggiore, St. Joseph is young, bearded and garbed as a Roman. Other depictions came to be derived from the “Protoevangelium of James” — a 2nd-century work, not part of the Christian biblical canon. Artists following this tradition depicted St. Joseph as an old man, grey and balding. By the 16th century though, artists were returning to more youthful depictions.

Joannes Molanus, a Catholic theologian during the Counter Reformation, worked to make the Council of Trent’s “decrees on sacred images” the marching orders for a generation of artists to follow. Molanus advocated that it was far more appropriate to show St. Joseph as a young man — one capable of restraining his carnal urges, one fit enough to take his wife and child into Egypt, and one strong enough to support them with his labor as a craftsman.

Neither visual tradition has remained a constant though. St. Joseph continues to be shown old and young, from statues to holy cards. He is almost always shown carrying a flowering staff of lilies. It alludes to the flowering rod of Aron (Numbers 17) and a miraculous account from a 13th century hagiographical work titled “The Golden Legend.” Garbed in brown, the color of earth, and green, the color of new life, the robes of St. Joseph evoke the ideas of humility and hope.

The Diocese of Covington has chosen “The Chaste Heart of St. Joseph” by Giovanni Gasparro as its image for the Year of St. Joseph. Born in 1863, Gasparro is a young artist from Bari, Italy. Gasparro draws on the traditional iconography of St. Joseph while offering a contemporary depiction that is accessible to the faithful of today. The strength of St. Joseph’s character extended to all aspects of his life and person — including his heart.

With his whole being illuminated by God, Gasparro depicts St. Joseph’s heart on fire with the love of God, and a flowering staff points to his purity. Together the heart and staff remind the viewer that purity of heart lies within reach, thanks to the grace of God and the intercession of Joseph.

However an artist depicts St. Joseph, the point is the same: to draw the faithful into contemplation of the man at the heart of the Incarnation story, the man Pope Francis has called a “minister of salvation.”
April is Child Abuse Prevention month time to recommit to protecting children

**Messenger staff report**

April is Child Abuse Prevention month. Typically the Family Nurturing Center, Florence, would kick-off the month by bringing together local leaders from the public, private and faith sectors to Redecorate their collective efforts to ending child abuse and building a community that is safe for children to grow, learn, work and play. This year, because of the need to limit gatherings in order to mitigate the spread of the coron-

avirus, that gathering has been suspended. However, the mis-

sion of ending child abuse continues.

During this month, the Family Nurturing Center invites busi-

ness, schools, churches and families to participate in its Blue Ribbon Tree and Blue Pinwheel Garden campaigns. Decorate a tree with blue ribbons or stake blue pinwheels in your lawn or landscaping to show the importance of child abuse prevention education.

Faith communities are encouraged to mark April 25 on the calen-

dar as Blue Sunday. Blue Sunday is a day to join together to pray for those who help abused or neglected children and for children and families who have experienced abuse. More information about these two campaigns can be found on the website www.familynurture.org.

In the Diocese of Covington, Margaret Schack is director of the Safe Environment Office. Her office implements safe environment training for everyone who works or volunteers in any Catholic parish, school or organization in the Diocese of Covington. VIRTUS is a safe environment training pro-

gram offered by The National Catholic Risk Retention Group and is the flagship safe environment training program for workers and volunteers utilized by the diocese. For elementary and high school coaches and parents of student athletes, the diocese employs the University of Notre Dame’s Play Like a Champion Today program. Play Like a Champion shifts the focus of youth sports from a winner-take-all mentality to a form of youth ministry where through team play everyone is built up and respected.

In parishes, schools and sports all members agree to the following Diocesan Code of Conduct:

As someone who ministers where minors/vulnerable adults are present in the Diocese of Covington, I will maintain a professional role and be mindful of the trust and power I possess to provide a safe environment.

To achieve this I will:

1. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and confidentiality.
2. Make a deliberate effort to affirm the child who is inter-

large and perceived as an outsider.
3. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, com-

petition, or comparison.
4. Support my co-worker to attain the highest level of Christian behavior.
5. Be attentive to the warning signs of abuse.
6. Report all inappropriate behavior and signs of abuse to the appropriate authority.

I will:

1. Always use a team approach in dealing with minors and vulnerable adults.
2. Never touch a minor/vulnerable child in a sexual way or other inappropri-

ately.
3. Never be alone with a minor/vulnerable adult in a resi-

dence, rectory, sleeping facility or in any isolated room.
4. Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor/vulnerable adult. Never lie in bed with a minor or vulnerable adult.
5. Never participate in group activities for minors/vul-

erable adults that do not have at least two supervising trained adults present as well as an adequate num-

ber of supervising adults.
6. Never provide illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vapor product to a minor/vul-

erable adult.
7. Never engage in physical discipline for behavior management of minors/vul-

erable adults. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. I will not use any discipline that frightens or humiliates.
8. Never give expensive or inappropriate gifts that single out specific minors/vul-

erable adults.
9. Never introduce sexually explicit or pornographic topics, vocabulary, music, recording, films, games, websites, computer software, or entertainment.
10. Never photograph or use photos of minors or vulnerable adults without the explicit permission of their parents or guardian and the rele-

vant supervisor.
11. Never participate in chat rooms such as Facebook and the like via personal electronic media with minors/vulnerable adults.
12. Never post compromising, immature, inappropriate material on public sites where minors also have access. Once material is posted on a public site, I am aware that it is public information.
13. Send all regular electronic communication with minors through a business address or through parents with the communication monitored by more than one responsible adult. It is particularly important for coaches to have a monitored means of communication.

**Virtual Safe Environment Trainings**

For all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children.

**Step 1: Contact parish/school administration leader to review the Policies and Procedures and fill out the Application and Acceptance Forms.**

**Step 2: Go to www.virtus.org and click on Registration. Follow the prompts to create an account and request the background check. Selection.com is a secure site; the background check is posted on your account and you receive a copy if you request it during the registration process. You will sign up for a virtual VIRTUS class during the registration.**

**Step 3: Join the virtual VIRTUS session.** The day before the session, you will receive an e-mail with 4 documents attached to print. On the day of the session you will receive an invitation to join the session.

No children, please.

**Step 4: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.**

**Virtual VIRTUS Training: Virtual Play Like A Champion — Elementary Coach Trainings**

- Thursday, April 15, 6-9 p.m.
- Virtual Play Like A Champion — Secondary Coach Trainings
- Monday, April 12, 6-9:30 p.m.

**How to access Virtual training**

- Go to www.virtus.org
- Enter id and password
- Click on Live Training on left column
- Click on pre-register for an upcoming session
- Choose your training

**Note:** If your Training Tab is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution. For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or mlu@covol.org.
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Email: hr@bawac.org EOE

**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.

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**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**
The Diocese of Covington’s Catholic Charities is seeking to hire a full-time (40 hours a week, M-F) Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator is involved with all aspects of volunteer recruitment, training, appreciation, and retention. The Coordinator identifies, engages, cultivates, and maintains volunteer relationships so that volunteers have positive and meaningful experiences. Our ideal candidate will be a practicing Roman Catholic in good standing with the Church, with a Bachelor’s degree or the equivalent in a business or human services field, plus prior experience in program management. Other desired qualifications include experience with community outreach; demonstrated communication, organization, and human relations skills; and a familiarity with MS Office and general database software. Salary and benefits are competitive. To apply, or to nominate a candidate, email or fax a letter of interest, C-V or comprehensive resume with compensation history, and a minimum of five references with contact e-mail addresses to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org, fax 859/392-1589.

**STAFF WRITER**
The Messenger, the Diocese of Covington’s official weekly newspaper, published 44 times per year, seeks a full-time Staff Writer. Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church. The position requires a broad range of abilities, including excellent writing, proofreading, and organizational skills; basic photography skills; a commitment to confidentiality and teamwork; a passion for completing diverse projects accurately, thoroughly, and reliably; and adaptability to interactions with colleagues, other Diocesan employees, and interviewees. The ideal candidate will be self-motivated and imaginative, with a readiness to explore multimedia platforms. In addition to regular office hours, evening and weekend assignments occur regularly and are considered part of the job. Anticipated start date: immediate. Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail: skoplyay@covdio.org, (859) 392-1500. EOE

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Diaconate Ordination
(Continued from page 3)
and teach in Jesus’ name … the Gospel message, the good news … we hold it in earthen vessels, why? So that the surpassing power may be from God, not from us, it’s not about us … it’s all about Jesus and bringing the message of Jesus to his people.”

In the Gospel reading from St. Matthew, Jesus tells his apostles that they are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” (Matt 5:13–16)

“Then Jesus says, and this is very dear to me because it is the motto I chose, ‘your light must shine before others,’ he said, ‘that they might see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.’ Again, not for oneself, no, but so that others may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. It is all about giving the Lord the glory, giving the Lord the praise,” Bishop Foys said.

These readings, Bishop Foys said, offer good meditations for every ordained minister. “Today, it is for A. J. Gedney to thing about and to pray about.”

Bishop Foys ended his homily with words of congratulations and gratitude.

“We give thanks to God that A.J. heard the Lord’s call and then answered it … I can safely say that we are all here to pledge to you our prayers and our support, that you live day by day, year by year, decade by decade, the ministry entrusted to you.”

(Continued from page 3)

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National/World

Mary comforts all those who die alone, pope says at audience

VATICAN CITY — Mary, the mother of God, has been pres- ent during the COVID-19 pandemic, and she was by the side of all those who died alone, Pope Francis said. “If someone is alone and abandoned, she is the mother and she is there near by just as she was next to her son when everyone else aban- doned him,” the pope said March 24 during his weekly general audience. “Mary was and is present in those days of the pan- demic, near the people who, unfortunately, concluded their earthly journey in isolation, without the comfort of or the closeness of their loved ones,” he said. “Mary is always there, near us, with her maternal tenderness,” the pope said. During the audience, which was livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis continued his series of talks about prayer by looking at prayer in communion with Mary and her role in people’s lives.

Judge strikes down District of Columbia’s limits on houses of worship

WASHINGTON — The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in a March 25 ruling struck down the District of Columbia’s COVID-19 pandemic limits on attendance at houses of worship — set at 25 percent capacity or 250 worshippers, whichever is less. The ruling by Judge Trevor N. McFadden was effective immediately, meaning houses of worship are no longer bound by caps on congregation size. The ruling noted that with Holy Week and Easter approaching, the Catholic archbishop of Washington sought emergency relief from those regulations under the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. “The District contends that its restrictions on houses of worship are lawful and indeed neces- sary to fight the COVID-19 pandemic,” McFadden wrote. “Though the court acknowledges the District’s interest in stem- ming the spread of the virus, it finds that the archdiocese is entitled to relief.”

Border surge straining shelters, says Mexican bishops’ migrant ministry

PALENQUE, Mexico — The Mexican bishops’ migrant min- istry says people are arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border with illusions of easily entering the United States, but they risk being returned to Mexico under rules for expelling people rap- idly during the pandemic. In a four-paragraph statement issued March 26, the migrant ministry said the situation is creating battlegrounds along the northern border as migrants, encouraged by stories of possible U.S. policy changes, are unable to apply for asylum and resort to crossing illegally into the United States. The surge of migrants through Mexico has strained Catholic-run shelters, which are operating at limited capacity due to COVID-19 precautions. Donations have dropped due to the pandemic, the statement said. “We look optimistically on the new migration policies being implemented by the present United States government,” said the statement, signed by Bishop José Guadalupe Torróros Campos of Ciudad Juárez, who oversees the migrant ministry. “We know these processes take time … and we hope that legislators allow the implementation of policies proposed by President Joe Biden,” the statement continued. “If these policies have caused too much opti- mism in the migrant population, who are hopeful of being able to soon enter the United States or finding work in the country, disillusioning in various countries, especially in Central America and Mexico.”

Speakers say Equality Act ‘overly broad,’ will harm religious liberty

WASHINGTON — A March 22 online webinar on the Equality Act focused on criticism that the legislation is so vaguely worded it would harm religious liberty and obscure religious practice. The measure would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, pub- lic accommodations, public education, federal funding, the credit system and jury duty. The webinar was sponsored by the archdioceses of Los Angeles and New York, the dioceses of Arlington, Virginia, and Green Bay, Wisconsin, and the Catholic conferences of Colorado and Virginia. On Feb. 25, the House of Representatives passed the Equality Act, also known as H.R. 5, in a 234-206 vote. Now it will be taken up by the Senate; the first hearing was March 17 by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The webinar’s moderator, Ryan T. Anderson, who is currently president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, said of the bill: “It’s overly broad and doesn’t define all kinds of actions that are truly discriminatory.”

After Bloody Saturday, Myanmar Catholics pray for peace, those who died

YANGON, Myanmar — While Catholics in Myanmar observed Palm Sunday; many in the Buddhist-majority country were crying at the funerals of more than 100 people killed the previous day. At least 114 people were killed by security forces March 27, the bloodiest day since the military seized power Feb. 1, reported ucanews.com. The day has been labeled Bloody Saturday. Dozens of victims were bystanders — including chil- dren — who were not taking part in anti-coup demonstrations. Ucanews.com said local media reported a man from Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, was shot and burned alive by security forces. Auxiliary Bishop John Saw Yaw Han of Myanmar’s second-largest city was shot and burned alive by security forces. Another bishop in charge of Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, was shot and burned alive by security forces. Another bishop in charge of Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city was shot and burned alive. At least 114 people were killed by security forces March 27, the bloodiest day since the military seized power Feb. 1, reported ucanews.com. The day has been labeled Bloody Saturday. Dozens of victims were bystanders — including chil- dren — who were not taking part in anti-coup demonstrations. Ucanews.com said local media reported a man from Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, was shot and burned alive by security forces. Auxiliary Bishop John Saw Yaw Han of Myanmar’s second-largest city was shot and burned alive by security forces. Another bishop in charge of Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city was shot and burned alive by security forces. Another bishop in charge of Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city was shot and burned alive.

Suicide bomb attack disrupts Palm Sunday Mass at Indonesian cathedral

MAKASSAR, Indonesia — A suicide bomb attack on a Catholic cathedral compound shattered the calm of Palm Sunday Mass, leaving two bombers dead and at least 26 people wounded. A destroyed motorbike and the body parts of a man and a woman were found after the bombers attacked the main gate of Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral around 10:30 a.m. March 28, reported ucanews.com. “We were suspicious because two perpetrators riding a motorbike tried to get into the churchyard, but our security guard stopped them, and several seconds later the bomb exploded,” Father Wilhelmus Tulak, who witnessed the incident, told ucanews.com. Father Tulak, parish priest of the cathedral, said five cathedral security guards and several congregation members suffered burns and injuries from the blast, but no one was killed. South Sulawesi provincial police chief Meriady said, “We have coordinated with church leaders in the province to tighten security during Holy Week Masses until Easter, so such an incident doesn’t happen again.”

Russian bishops’ official concerned about new religion regulations

OXFORD, England — The secretary-general of the Russian bishops’ conference said new legal regulations will give state officials extra powers to intervene in church life and revive communist-era restrictions. Amendments to Russia’s 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations passed March 24 by the Duma, require foreign-trained clergy to obtain “recertification from a Russian religious organization.” Clergy already working in Russia are exempt from the “recertifica- tion” requirement. The amendments, awaiting final approval by Russian Federal Assembly’s upper house, also require churches to submit membership lists annually to the Justice Ministry and prevent “local religious organizations” from breaking away from larger churches. “The new provisions all come from Soviet times and bring us closer to the Soviet sys- tem,” said Iosif Father Stephan Lipik. “Certainly, these rules will ensure our clergy are prepared for conditions in Russia,” added the priest, who also directs Moscow’s St. Thomas Institute. “But they will also require more work, as we prepare the necessary adjustments. At any stage, officials could say we’re not complying, giving the state additional means to intro- duce new repression.”
TMU Institute for Religious Liberty to host virtual discussion on America’s higher education legacy

Paul Gaston, Ph.D., will be the host and guest speaker for the next Thomas More University Institute for Religious Liberty discussion, “Reclaiming the Publick Happiness: America’s Higher Education Legacy.” The virtual event will be held Thursday, April 15, 7 p.m. on Zoom. The event is free and open to the public. To register visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

“I am excited to be bringing Paul Gaston back to Northern Kentucky,” said Dr. Ray Hebert, executive director of the IRL. “Paul is a former provost at Northern Kentucky University and deacon at Trinity Episcopal Church in Covington. He has been recognized as a nationally known expert in the field of higher education.”

Dr. Gaston is a frequent speaker at national conferences, an Association of American Colleges and Universities Distinguished Fellow, and a consultant to the Lumina Foundation. He is the author of several books, including “General Education Transformed,” “Higher Education Accreditation,” “General Education and Liberal Learning,” and “The Challenge of Bologna.” He is completing a book on higher education credentials scheduled for publication in 2021. Dr. Gaston earned a master’s degree and doctorate from the University of Virginia, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow.

“Dr. Gaston’s return is another example of the collaborative efforts that flourish locally among the area’s post-secondary institutions,” Dr. Hebert added.

Debra Humphreys, Ph.D., one of the two commentators for the event, is currently the vice president of strategic engagement for the Lumina Foundation of Indianapolis where she directs efforts to assure the quality of education beyond high school.

Kim Haverkos, Ph.D., the second commentator of the evening, is the dean of the College of Education and Health Sciences at Thomas More. The IRL serves to advance the American concept of religious freedom as an inalienable right and the protection of this right for all people.