Laura Keener
Editor

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Distinguished guests who spoke at the dedication included Hon. Joseph U. Meyer, mayor of Covington; Hon. Kris Knochelmann, judge executive, Kenton County; Garren Colvin, president and CEO, St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Dr. Kevin Reynolds, vice president for Institutional Advancement, Thomas More University.

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(Continued on page 12)
Local Year of the Family resources and events are just a click away — begin with Mass, July 10

Laura Keener
Editor

Pope Francis declared the Year of the Family as a way for the Church to better understand the vocation, Church teaching and the evangelical mission of the family. The Year of the Family began March 12, 2021 and will conclude June 26, 2022 at the World Meeting of Families in Rome.

In the Diocese of Covington, the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization is developing resources and events to assist parishioners and families on its quest to live out this vocation. Parishes and families can access these resources through a newly created website: covdio.org/family.

“The website offers resources and ideas to help families better live out the faith within the context of the family,” said Brad Torline, associate director. “The Pope has called this year — the Year of the Family — every good effort begins with prayer. Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Mass kicking-off the diocesan celebration of the Year of the Family, Saturday, July 10, 10 a.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

Bring the whole family — including grandparents — all are invited to attend. Pope Francis instituted the Year of the Family to inspire Catholics across the world to rise up and transform the culture through family life. Will you and your family answer the call?

For information, contact the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at (859) 392-1500 or visit Covdio.Org/Family.

The efforts of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization are centered around four pillars — how to help families learn the faith as a family to live the faith as family to pray as a family and to serve as family. And while this seems like a monumental task for families to do on our own, Mr. Torline said that families can best achieve these goals simply by taking what they are already doing and reinventing it toward God. Most of all, he said, families should make this a fun year:

“We have a guide to ‘Live Liturgically’ and we give advice for activities that you are already doing that can be related to what’s going on in the in the life of the Church,” said Mr. Torline.

A good example, he said, is for families to consider making a trip to the local zoo or near the coast of St. Francis in October. ‘The trip to the zoo suddenly becomes a way for families to evangelize and grow in their faith by talking about St. Francis and learning more about the saint by reading a book or watching a movie together. Parents can also share how God created all of the animals or talk about the story of Noah — all by using a trip to the zoo.’

“The Bible is really walking in front of our eyes,” said Isaac A. Isaak, co-director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. “By going to the zoo, going to the movies — whenever families do those things, the family’s faith grows by experiencing these activities.”

(Continued on page 18)
Father Clarence Heitzman was ‘a priest’s priest,’ friendly with pastoral sensitivities

Father Clarence John (Jack) Heitzman, 91, a native son of Newport and resident of Southgate, died Tuesday, June 8, 2021. He was a priest for the Diocese of Covington for 65 years.

Father Heitzman was the son of Clarence F. and Stella Reinke Heitzman. He attended Immaculate Conception School, Newport; St. Benedict School and Holy Cross grade schools and was a graduate of Holy Cross High school. Father Heitzman attended Xavier University for two years then St. Mary Seminary, St. Mary Ky. for three years and St. Vincent seminary Latrobe, Pa. for four years. He was ordained a priest June 2, 1956, by Bishop William T. Mullen at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.


He taught religion at Covington Catholic High School for 12 years. In 1986 he organized Mass with Pope John Paul II in Rome and was inducted into the Northern Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame in 1988. Father Heitzman said his priesthood “has been one happy event because of the many good people I have met in all of my assignments and the many priests I have had as friends.” At his 60th jubilee Father gave this advice: “Just put your trust in God.”

“Was such a prayerful person,” said Dorothy (Dot) O’Leary former principal at St. Therese School, Southgate, of Father Heitzman. “His life revolved around his prayer life. He told the children all the time at Mass that ‘everything they did they did for the love of Christ.’ He was so good with those children. For the children he was the only priest they knew. He was such a good image of the Church for them to have and to get to know. He was good. He will be missed.”

Father Heitzman’s vocation parties were held Friday, June 11, followed by a vigil Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. Homilist at the vigil Mass was Msgr. Gerald Reinersman, dean of the Campbell Deanery and pastor; St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. The funeral Mass was held Saturday, June 12 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption with Bishop Roger Foyes celebrating. Homilist was Father Paul Berachi, retired priest, who had been parochial vicar at St. Therese Parish from 2008 to 2010.

While speaking to others about Father Heitzman, Msgr. Reinersman learned that Father Heitzman was “quick to accept people’s invitations into their homes” and parishioners were “just as quick to invite him into their family circle in a lot of different ways which speaks to his friendliness and pastoral sensitivity and people’s great respect for him.”

In his homily at the vigil service Msgr. Reinersman quoted Archbishop Charles Chaput who said, “We’re never as important as we think we are, and, in the end, our stories will be forgotten by everyone but God.”

That is how Father Jack lived,” Msgr. Reinersman explained. “He didn’t really care too much of how people thought of him. What he cared about is what God will remember about his life. As an indication of that he refused to let the hall at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, be named after him although he had directed the construction.

(Continued on page 18)

At jubilee celebration Bishop Foyes calls priests to follow Christ in their lives

Laura Keener

Editor

Bishop Roger Foyes and the priests of the Diocese of Covington gathered for vespers, June 8, to celebrate the jubilees of nine priests.

Three priests reached milestone anniversaries in 2021 but due to COVID restrictions were unable to gather for a celebration last year. They were honored at this year’s vespers with the jubilarians.

The 2020 jubilarians are: Father John Riesen, 60 years; Father Michael Greer, 40 years and Father Damien Hils, 25 years.

The 2021 jubilarians are: Msgr. Donald Kettler and Father Gerald Wittmann, 60 years; Father Maurice de Lange, 50 years; Father Michael Comer, 40 years and Father John Sterling, 25 years.

Father Clarence John (Jack) Heitzman, who died earlier that year, was Father Michael Greer (40 years), Msgr. Ronald Ketteler (60 years), Father Maurice de Lange (50 years) and Father John Sterling (25 years). Not pictured is Father John Riesen (60 years).

In his homily Bishop Foyes quoted extensively from a homily delivered by Cardinal Robert Sarah, former prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, on the occasion of his own 50th anniversary as a priest and 40th as a bishop in 2019, which focused on the mystery of the priesthood.

“The priest — here is the most magnificent work, the most glorious gift that God has given to humanity — is the most precious and inconceivable treasure that exists on earth,” Cardinal Sarah said.

Quoting St. John the bearer of the Good News, Father Sarah said, “If we had faith, we would see God hidden in the priest like a light behind the glass, like wine mixed with water. How great is the priest! If he really understood this, he would die. … God obeys him: he makes him tremble with terror, but it is true I am at the altar in His name and in His stead. It is in persona Christi that I consecrate the bread and wine, after having given him my body, my voice, my poor heart, prodiged so many times by my many sins and that I ask him to Christ, but at the altar, the priest himself becomes Jesus Christus — Christ himself.

“The priest, here is the most magnificent work, the most glorious gift that God has given to humanity — is the most precious and inconceivable treasure that exists on earth,” Cardinal Sarah said.

In his homily at the vigil service Msgr. Reinersman explained. “He didn’t really care too much of how people thought of him. What he cared about is what God will remember about his life. As an indication of that he refused to let the hall at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, be named after him although he had directed the construction.

(Continued on page 18)
Religious Freedom — The priority of civil society over state

“The Church’s social doctrine came into being in order to claim ‘common sense’ for the Christian religion.” — Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate (2009), n. 56.

Jesus Father David Hollenbach has contended that the writings of two towering figures in 20th century Catholic social thought in the United States were foundational for upholding a core principle in Church social teaching, namely that of the distinction between civil society and the state.


Father Murray’s classic “We Hold These Truths” (1963) has exercised a singular influence on Catholic thought on the issue of church and state, as well as the questions on pluralism and religious freedom as a civil right. His study is a selected collection of his important articles on the compatibility of the “American Proposition” of a pluralist democracy with Catholicism.

“The Search for an American Political Philosophy: The Contribution of John Courtney Murray” (1989), an earlier theological work of Bishop Robert W. McElroy, presented a comprehensive overview of John Courtney Murray’s defense of the American public pluralism. The concept of religion in the civil society stands as a correlative thesis. According to Father Murray, then, religious bodies in a pluralistic, democratic society are sustained as mediating institutions: “... the civil society enjoyed a common good which preceded the common good of the state and which was primarily achieved not through the labors of government, but through the action of the mediating institutions of society.”

Mediating institutions stand as buffers between the citizens and the family and government. Hence, government is constitutionally limited and not omnipotent. Nonetheless, at the same time, the social nature of men and women grounds an inherent and essential relationship to the state or the government. Murray’s theory asserted “... if the nature of the people logically preceded the notion of the state, it also logically entailed it. For there was a need in society to have a legitimate power to serve the common good through the maintenance of the public order. This power must be the state.”

On the question of religion and government, the interrelationship between civil society and the state can simply be formulated in the principle, “the priority of (civil) society over state.”

In Catholic social doctrine that interrelationship of society and state is guided by the principle of subsidiarity. The “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church” (2006) defines civil society as a network of relationships wherein “all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help (subsidiary) — therefore of support, promotion, development — with respect to lower-order societies.”

In other words, society is a broader and more inclusive reality than that of the state or government.

For example, Father Bryan Hehir views civil society as the product of the full range of relationships — political, economic, cultural and legal — that shape the social fabric of social life at the local, national and international levels. In contradistinction to society, the political community or state constitutes a distinct component of a society that holds a unique role, for it is “the center of political authority.”

Again, Father Hollenbach offers a specific interpretation of this tenet of Church social teaching: “Civil society is the more encompassing reality, composed of numerous communities of small or intermediate size such as families, neighborhoods, churches, corporations, professional associations, credit unions, cooperatives, universities, and a host of other associations. Note that though these communities are not political in the sense of being a part of the government they are not private either. They are social realities and form the rich fabric of the body politic.”

From the standpoint of subsidiarity, then, the Compendium synthesizes the distinction between civil society and the state: ”The political community is essentially at the service of civil society... Civil society, therefore, cannot be considered an extension or a changing component of the political community; rather, it has a priority because it is in civil society itself that the political community finds its justification.”

Moreover, the Compendium emphasizes that the state “must be ready to intervene, when necessary and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity, so that the interplay between free associations and democratic life may be directed to the common good.”

Among his extensive writings, Father Murray’s “The Problem of Religious Freedom” (1965) probed the conceptual question on the meaning of religious freedom in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council.

In setting forth his thesis on religious freedom, Father Murray’s response to the question — “What is constitutional government?” — became integral for structuring the concept of religious freedom.

The moral principle of the priority of civil society over state was an indispensable interpretive key emerging from the larger context of Father Murray’s groundbreaking scholarship on the issue of church and state and religious freedom.

In particular, “the distinction between society and state” is a principle that validates a limited role of the constitutional state to elucidate the competence to functions of “the coercive discipline of law and political power.”

Thus, the purposes of “society” are more expansive than those of “the state” inasmuch as society includes “an arena of freedom, personal and corporate, whereas state signifies the area in which the public powers may legitimately apply their coercive powers.”

After more than 60 years, Father Murray’s thought on religious freedom still reflects incisive insights into the meaning of religious freedom, especially in the circumstances of the present controversies on religious freedom that threaten religious freedom both nationally and internationally.

“We Hold These Truths” viewed the distinction between society and state as the foundation of the civil right of religious freedom in the American tradition. The “concept of a free people under a limited government” undergirds “the principle of the incompentence of government in the field of opinion.”

Father Murray identified the religious clauses of the First Amendment as “articles of faith but articles of peace.” He noted that “those provisions are the work of lawyers, not of theologians or even of political theorists. They are not true dogma but only good law.” Consequently, Father Murray emphasized that “the American Constitution does not presume to define the Church or in any way to supervise her exercise of author- ity in pursuit of her own distinct ends.”

In same vein, religious freedom as a civil right is a juridical protection of the relationships among citizens in a pluralistic society: “... government is not a judge of religious truth; parliament are not to play that role. In accord with this principle American government does not presume to discuss, much less rule upon, the objective truth or falsity of various religious confessions within society.”

Within this constitutional framework, the Catholic Church in America has enjoyed positive benefits for her life in society; “namely, her freedom in the fulfillment of her spiritual mission to communicate divine truth and grace to the souls of men, and her equally spiritual mission of social justice and peace.”

As a level of social teaching, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church affirms the Church’s need for freedom to engage in her spiritual mission: “The Church is organized in ways that are suitable to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful, while the different political communities give rise to relationships and institutions that are at the service of everything that is part of the temporal common good.”

In the governmental obligation “to respect religious freedom requires that the political community guarantee the Church the space needed to carry out her mission.”

In “Our First, Most Cherished Liberty: A Statement on Religious Liberty” (2012), the Ad hoc Committee for Religious Liberty of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops addressed the theme of religious freedom in civil society. The committee’s believers are part of American civil society, which includes neighbors helping each other, community associations, fraternal social clubs, sports leagues, and youth groups that Americans make their contribution to our common life, and they do not need the permission of the government to do so.

The statement advocated the case for defending against threats to religious liberty: “Restrictions on religious lib- erty are an attack on civil society and the American genius for voluntary associations.”

In his apologetic celebration “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel,” 2013), Pope Francis addressed the question of “social dialogue in a context of religious freedom.” (EG, n. 250-257). In this section he defends “a healthy pluralism, one which genuinely respects different values and seeks to administer such values to religious institutions in an attempt to relate them to the enclosed precincts of church, state and society.”

The Holy Father judges that such discrimination would not be generative of tolerance which fosters civil peace. He states: “The respect due the apostolic or non-believing minority should not be arbitrarily imposed in a way that silences the convivencia of the believing majority or ignores the wealth of religious traditions.” (EG, n. 255).

Monsignor Ronald Ketteler is director of ecumenism, episcopal liaison to the Messenger and professor of theology at Thomas More University.
Thirty years of Poland

It was a two-week whirlwind that changed my life forever; that first visit of mine to Poland in June 1991. Looking back on it, I’m reminded of something H.L. Mencken wrote of a similarly transformative experience: “It was brain-fagging and back-breaking, but it was grand beyond compare — an adventure of the first chomp, a razzle-dazzle superb and elegant, a circus in forty rings.”

My first weeks in Poland were all of that, and more. For what I learned in dozens of conversations during that fortnight became the crux of “The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism”; the publication of that book (the first to argue that John Paul II and the Church had played pivotal roles in the collapse of European communism) led to my first serious conversation with the Polish pope, our relationship ripened over the next few years to the point where, in 1996, I rather boldly suggested to John Paul that I write his biography; and the rest, as they say, is history.

Over the past three decades, I’ve spent about three years, all told, in Poland, much of it in Cracow; a city I’ve come to regard as virtually another home. On this, the 30th anniversary, however, my mind turns to some extraordinary people I first met in June 1991. Many are no longer with us but I cherish the memory of them, for their contributions to my education in matters Polish was incalculable.

I think of the former Solidarity activists, many of them political prisoners under martial law, who were then members of the Polish government, influential journalists, or academics finally able to teach as they saw fit in a free society.

I remember Cardinal Fransewic Macharski, a man of great natural dignity, shrewdly chosen by John Paul II as his successor in the See of Cracow Macharski, for his part, had the good sense not to try to be Karol Wojtyla 2.0 but to be himself — which was more than enough, for he showed himself full of grit and courage when Poland suffered under martial law in the 1980s. It was Macharski who told me of the tradition that the archbishop of Cracow is the Defender Civitatis, the last line of defense of the people and their rights. Like his predecessor, Franciszek Macharski lived that episcopal role magnificently, as had the wartime archbishop both he and Karol Wojtyla revered, Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha.

I think of Jerry Turowicz, a charming, elfin septuagenarian who for decades ran the only reliable newspaper in Poland, Tygodnik Powszechny (Universal Weekly), with the protection of the Archidioceze of Cracow. Its editorial staff included brilliant men and women who could not get the academic and professional positions for which they were qualified because they were serious Catholics. And in its pages, a future pope cut his literary teeth as a poet and philologist.

I remember Father Joseph Tischner, a bluff, hearty son of the Polish highlands, a tremendous joke-teller, and a world-class philosopher. His brilliant sermon on September 6, 1981 at the first Solidarity Congress — a meditation on what was happening in the Eastern Bloc in the Liturgy of the Hours as the second selection of the Office of Readings for the Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker. I remember visiting Auschwitz as the first Western priest in the first time and praying outside the starvation cell where St. Maximilian Kolbe had given his life for a fellow prisoner — and finding it, like the 12th station of the cross in the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, one of the easiest places in the world to pray.

I remember a lengthy Sunday afternoon talk with Father Kazimierz Jancazki, who looked like an NFL linebacker, mocked being called “the Pope,” and then

Happy Father’s Day

In the last 60 years.

In his book, “The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the ‘Trinitas’,” then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI), wrote: “The crisis of fatherhood which we are experiencing today is a basic aspect of the crisis that threatens mankind as a whole. Where fatherhood is perceived only as a biological accident on which no genuinely human claims may be based, or the father is seen as a tyrant whose yoke must be thrown off, something in the basic structure of ‘human existence has been damaged.’” (p. 29)

Fatherhood, and by extension motherhood and the whole family structure, are under attack. If we constantly tear young boys down with unhealthy messages, feelings of inadequacy and fear will drive out any confidence they might have had. Our culture, in supporting the worship of the self, encourages men to flee from the gift and responsibilities of fatherhood and by extension motherhood. If we do that, the future generation of leaders of our communities and the world will be a failure. Fatherless homes have a large impact on children’s understanding of the world, love and of the heavenly Father.

For a man, any man, to live out the fullness of his meaning in life he must discover his vocation to fatherhood. Living out one’s vocation to fatherhood can be a bound up in Holy Matrimony, spiritual marriage in the priesthood or religious life, and even single life. After all, we have Church Fathers, Desert Fathers, a Holy Father and even godfathers. We address our priests as spiritual fathers. And, of course, we have our biological fathers and our grandparents.

Pope Francis has said that fatherhood is about giving life to others. In an address June 15, 2015, he said, “Becoming mothers and fathers really means to be fully realized, because it is to become similar to God.”

St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and earthly father of Jesus, is the model of fatherhood. A good family man is a provider; protector; nurturer and sponsor. He is happy to

(Continued on page 19)
Parish Kitchen opens its doors to in-house eating

Monica Yeamans
Editorial assistant

Another sign the COVID-19 pandemic is waning: the Parish Kitchen is allowing guests to sit-down dining. Guests were welcomed inside, June 1, for the first time at the new Madison Avenue location on the corner of Madison and 16th Street. The Parish Kitchen opened at its new location in July 2020 under COVID-19 protocols, offering carry-out only lunches.

Parish Kitchen is sponsored by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington and provides a free meal to the hungry which is served daily seven days a week between 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Even during the move and the pandemic, service at the Parish Kitchen never faltered and guests were able to grab a meal and go. According to manager Maria Meyer, guests now have a choice of eating in or carrying out.

The new location offers seating for 48 which is about 20 percent more than what was provided at the former Pike Street location.

The numbers are down a little for this time of year, Ms. Meyer said, but during COVID guests were allowed to take home a second meal for a friend. That has stopped with the opening of eat-in dining. Carry-out is now one meal per person.

“It feels great to be able to open our new dining room,” said Ms. Meyer. “It’s a warm, welcoming space. It’s a lot nicer; it feels more dignified. The space is a lot brighter.”

The port-o-lets have been removed and patrons can use the restrooms inside.

“It was also very nice to see all the volunteers that came back,” Ms. Meyer added. “They were happy to see each other and the guests. We are getting back into the swing of things.”

St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky has witnessed God’s glory through the good works of the Northern Kentucky community.

Your generosity has provided hope for a promising future for those experiencing crisis during this unprecedented time. Together, we have been able to help thousands in need remain safely in their homes in the past year.

Your support ensures that those suffering are able to make ends meet and care for their families as they work toward a better tomorrow.

Thank you for being a neighbor we can count on.
We Choose Life

Pro-Life Office of the Diocese of Covington

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

Resources
Evert, Jason. ‘Green Sex: The Case for Natural Reproduction’ promotes morally and professionally informed educational programs; theologyofthebody.net
Reproduction: promotes chastity, engaged couples; ccli.org
One More Soul: nonprofit promotes chastity, faith nonprofit teaches NFP to married and engaged couples; ccli.org

Websites
Evert, Jason: ‘Contraception: Cracking the Myths’ video (2018) at janetsmith.org; video Smith, Janet: ‘Myths’ (CD), lighthousecatholicmedia.org
Myths” (CD), lighthousecatholicmedia.org
Shannon, Marilyn M. Fertility, ‘Cycles & Family Planning’ (CD), lighthousecatholicmedia.org

Natural Family Planning 2021 Schedule for the Diocese of Covington

Natural Family Planning Awareness Week: July 25–31, 2021
Register online at ccli.org or contact CCL offices to plan an event.

June 18, 2021

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroups, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (819) 392-1500.

Still full bloom: An NFP testimony

Sharon Dress

Natural family planning (NFP) has enormous benefits, all of which have blessed my husband and me in our nearly 15 years of marriage. Here are just a few.

— It is 100 percent natural and the healthiest option of family planning.
— It allows the woman’s reproductive system to function normally, and charting can alert her to potential health issues.
— There are no harmful side effects or waiting period if a couple decides they would like to conceive.
— It empowers the woman by allowing her to take charge of her reproductive health.
— If charting indicates there may be a problem with her cycle or ability to conceive, she can proactively take steps through nutrition and sometimes medical assistance to remedy the situation before it leads to serious health issues or becomes heartbreaking for the couple.
— Though the growing “Terreight” market uses apps and various modern technologies to assist a couple with NFP, it’s simplest—and perhaps most effective—form the only cost is the initial course which often includes all necessary tools.
— NFP fosters communication and respect for the health and well-being of both spouses and strengthens the marriage relationship.

These practical reasons were what drew my husband and me to try NFP. At that time, Catholic morality was not our main concern, but over the years we have grown in wonder and gratitude for the ways NFP has drawn us closer to God and to each other. There is something deep and rewarding in faithfulness to God’s design and living it together in trust. NFP, especially when applied in faith and love, has the power to change spouses from the inside out—spiritually and emotionally—for beyond its physical benefits.

My husband, five children and I live in a log cabin on the top of a hill surrounded by trees where I often take walks to exercise and pray the rosary after the kids are in bed. One night as I was walking in the dark, something near an oak, leafless tree caught my attention. When I shined my flashlight, all I could see were the dark, bare branches. Then I turned the light off the tree almost disappeared, and I saw the vast expanse of the deep blue night sky, full of twinkling stars. I stood in awe, thinking about how a simple shift in perspective drew my mind and heart from a dormant dark thing to something glorious and unlimited.

I needed that lesson during the notionous year of 2020. At the time, I did not realize how hopeless I was beginning to feel. As my husband dropped hints that we should take a chance on welcoming a new child, I was decidedly not interested, despite our practice of NFP and sincere belief that children are an incredible blessing. Life for a large, faithful Catholic family is difficult in our high-tech, highly connected, fast-paced, secular culture under normal circumstances, but given all the ugliness in our society recently, I hesitated to bring more children into the mess. Besides that, with my 40th birthday quickly approaching, I wondered if my aging body could still handle pregnancy, childbirth and the demands of a new baby.

Because my husband works at a hospital, in the early stages of the pandemic we had bottled ourselves up in our home, unwilling to risk potentially spreading any germs. This lack of connection was painful, because togetherness and the gift of touch are essential. Hugs and affection from grandparents, extended family and friends meant more than a million dollars.

Yet difficult situations often bring out the best in us. The strength and cheerfulness of our school community as we all muddled along through distance learning felt heroic. Every day I saw more clearly how often the seemingly inconsequential things in life make it more beautiful and give it rich meaning.

A little later in the year, I was struck to the core by Lacey Sturm’s song “Decree,” which describes faith and hope in the face of seemingly impossible and desperate situations. She sings about “twisted, broken” branches “still full bloom inside her head,” and her poignant question, “Do you believe and will you dream?” resounded in my heart.

This song, like my nighttime walk, was a powerful reminder to look beyond appearances, toward possibilities. Our incredible creator and Father, who has full control over every little detail, will see to it that every good thing that has been lost will be restored.

Despite all the recent challenges—and maybe even because of them—God was moving in surprising and delightful ways: my brother became engaged to his long-time girlfriend, my other brother continued to plan his wedding, and my sister unexpectedly but happily became pregnant.

All the good news, especially my sister’s pregnancy, seemed like a divine reminder that with every new child, hope is born. I felt God gently and lovingly inviting me to open my heart to another child, and I shared this with my willing husband. After all, the heart of NFP is simply being open to what God wants to do in and through us and a willingness to respect his designs.

With our nearly 15 years of experience practicing NFP and eight or so years of teaching it, I was sure I would become pregnant when we tried again—yet the pregnancy test came back negative and my cycle resumed. I went from disappointment to relief to feeling totally at peace and very blessed, knowing that my life is full. I am content with what I have. I am content to welcome what may come.

The grace of the sacrament of marriage and our willingness to walk the difficult path of honoring God’s will in the most intimate aspect of our lives has opened my eyes to the evidence that God is always doing something profoundly good. What seems like a challenge one day may really be an invitation to something greater the next. And just as important as being open to the blossoming of the new life of a child is the ability to be open to new life and hope in all circumstances.

Sharon Dress and her husband Brian are volunteer NFP teaching couples with the Couplet to Couple League. They and their fiveambitious children (ages 5–12) are parishioners at St. Mary Parish, Alexandria and St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill.
2021 jubilarians serve God’s people in a myriad of ministries

Monica Yoemans
Editorial assistant

On June 8, 2021, Bishop Roger Voss ordained the priest jubilarians of the diocese from 2020 and 2021 with Solemn Vespers at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. (See related story page 3.)

Celebrating jubilees in 2020 were Father John Riesenbarg (60 years), Father Michael Coner (40 years) and Father Damian Hills (25 years). All three were featured in the Messenger in 2020 articles.

This year Msgr. Ronald Ketteler and Father B. Gerald Witzemann are celebrating their diamond jubilees (60 years); Father Maurice deLange is celebrating his golden jubilee (50 years); Father G. Michael Greer is celebrating his ruby jubilee (40 years) and Father John Sterling is celebrating his silver jubilee (25 years).

Father Clarence Heitzman, pastor emeritus at St. Therese Parish, Southgate, who celebrated 60 years as a priest, June 2, 2021, is a native of the Lord the morning of June 8. (See obituary story page 3.)

60th jubilées

Msgr. Ronald Ketteler, diocesan director of Ecuemism, episcopal liaison to the Messenger and professor of theology at Thomas More University, was ordained by Bishop Richard H. Ackerman on May 20, 1961. Very shortly after ordination Msgr. Ketteler began his lifelong career in Catholic education while at the same time was assigned as associate pastor/administrator for several parishes including the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, St. Elizabeth, St. Joseph Parish, Cincinnati; Westminster, St. Joseph Parish, Cincinnati; St. Joseph Parish, Newport; Newman Center, Covington; St. Francis Xavier, Covington; and St. Joseph Parish, Cincinnati in 1961. He was incradinated into the Diocese of Covington in 1972 because as he said, “I chose being a diocesan priest because I had about seven moves in nine years and I wanted to have a more permanent life.”

He served at Good Shepherd Parish, Franklin (now a part of the Diocese of Lexington) and taught at Lexington Catholic High School. Father Witzemann then served in the parishes of St. Pius X, Edgewood; Corpus Christi Parish, Newport; St. Paul Parish, Florence; St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw and its missions and finally St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill until his retirement in 2006. But he was back, in service as pastoral administrator for St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw, and St. Edward Mission, Owenton, from 2003 to 2019 when he really retired.

In an earlier interview Father Witzemann said he has enjoyed everything about being a priest. “When you live in a community where people appreciate your presence and support, it’s an easier ministry,” said Father Witzemann.

50th jubilées

Father Maurice de Lange, a native of Brittany, France, now living in Indiana, was ordained at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption May 23, 1971, by Bishop Richard H. Ackerman after completing his studies for the priesthood at St. Pius X Seminary in Erlanger. After ordination Father de Lange served in positions at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell; St. James Parish, Ludlow; St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs; St. Anthony Parish, Bellevue and Madonna Manor. He also had served as diocesan director of Mission Aid Societies. In 1986 he earned a doctorate of philosophy from the University of Cincinnati and in 1990 earned a doctorate in ecclesiology from Laval University in Quebec. He had been working outside the diocese mainly in Ohio since the early 1980s until his retirement in 2006. Father de Lange had also served two years in English and others in French. One was titled “Contemporary Culture and Christianity” based on lectures he gave in Covington in 1976 with the final chapter by Bishop Ackerman; the second book, “Love is Contagious” was published in 1978 by the Messenger.

40th jubilées

Celebrating his ruby anniversary is Father G. Michael Greer, pastor at St. John Parish and St. Ann Mission in Covington. Father Greer was ordained by Bishop William A. Hughes at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption on May 23, 1981. After ordination Father Greer served St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, as well as teaching at St. Patrick High School, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, and Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell.

Father Greer then took a detour from parish life and served five years with the U.S. Navy as a chaplain. Upon his return he served a year at St. Paul Parish, Florence, before being named pastor of St. Barbara Parish where he served for 14 years. Father Greer was then appointed pastor to St. John and St. Ann parishes where he is currently completing his 41st year.

Father Greer once said he enjoys helping people. “I think if more people realized that our ministry is all about helping others, more would be attracted to a life of priestly or religious ministry,” said Father Greer. “Of being a part of so many lives or being of service to others on a daily basis.”

25th jubilées

Father John J. Sterling, a son of the diocese and pastor of St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, is celebrating his silver jubilee. Father Sterling was ordained by Bishop William A. Hughes on May 25, 1996 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. He came to his vocation a little later than most after having worked several years for Delta Air Lines. His assignments since ordination have been at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright; St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs; St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana; St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring and St. Barbara Parish since 2007. He had been chaplain at Covington Catholic High School, 1996-2001 and diocesan vocations director 2006-2004. From 2002-2004 he was priest-secretary to the Bishop.

“I just thank God that God called me and that I followed. He had called me for years,” said Father John Sterling. “The gifts that have come from the priesthood have been just amazing especially through God’s people and through God’s grace. The jubilee celebration at the Cathedral was just really moving and had reminded me of my ordination day. It was such an honor to be there with those who had celebrated longer than me and talk about the struggles we have been through and how we stuck with it amid those struggles through the grace of God.

We missed Father Jack Heitzman being with us but of course he is with the Lord in heaven. The last 25 years I’ve seen the love of God and the grace of God work through so many people in so many miraculous ways it’s been a total blessing.”
Cooler days ahead for St. Patrick Parish

Messenger staff report

The weekend of June 12–13 marked a true milestone in the life of St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, as Bishop Roger Foys blessed and dedicated the parish’s new HVAC system, bringing much desired air conditioning to the 111 year old church.

“We had a wonderful celebration of the Eucharist at St. Patrick Church in Maysville to mark the installation of a new heating and air conditioning system,” said Bishop Foys. “After more than 100 years the church has been air conditioned making it so much easier to celebrate the Mass and other sacraments in the church during the sweltering summer months. I congratulate Father Andrew Young, a native son and pastor of the parish, and all the parishioners on this latest addition to the church and express my gratitude to the donors who made this possible.”

For many years parishioners have been contributing to the church’s Air Conditioning Fund. “Yet, it always seemed like an impossible dream,” said Father Andrew Young, pastor, about the nearly $1 million project. “That was until 2019 when Jerry Lundergan and family made generous and continual gifts to complete the project, which included new cabinetry to conceal the system inside the church. With the project completed now all parish churches in the Diocese of Covington are air conditioned.

Father Young said that while air conditioning may seem like a luxury, “the ability to worship God in a space that is comfortable is important ... it allows us to focus on what is important and to give God our full attention,” he said.

“Every parishioner who has contributed toward our new heating and air conditioning system over the years,” he said. “I also want to thank Jerry Lundergan and the Lundergan family who so incredibly generously helped us to get past the finish line and make this dream a reality. I cannot thank them enough for the constant love and support they show to our parish and school.”

Those who worked on the project included Don Knochelmann, diocesan director of Buildings and Properties who oversaw the project; Elliott Lundergan, engineer, Ivey Mechanical; Mike Parker, project manager, Ivey Mechanical and Brian Weberding, carpenter, Weberding Woodworking.

“Overall, this new HVAC system was the work of many people coming together to give our parish a gift that will enhance and magnify the grandeur and beauty of our church for generations into the future,” said Father Young. “Please join me in thanking all who had a hand in the completion of this project and in thanking God for this exciting new chapter in the life of our parish.”
Principals turn in their keys after decades of teaching and administration

Laura Keener
Editor

After decades of service to the mission and ministry of education, three principals in the Diocese of Covington will retire July 1 — Ron Dawn, Newport Central Catholic High School; Nancy Marcos, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington and Dan Ridder, Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria. Before each locked their office door for the last time, the Messenger asked to share what each has learned through their roles as teacher and principal.

Mr. Dawn has been involved in Catholic education for 41 years as teacher, coach and principal. “My experience as principal has convinced me that we need to do everything that we possibly can to keep Catholic education available to our students,” he said.

Ron Dawn

Mr. Dawn is humble and was reluctant to have the spotlight on him. He offered a few heartfelt words when asked about his career.

“I have to say that I enjoyed being a teacher and coach much more than being a principal,” Mr. Dawn said. “In both teaching and coaching you get the opportunity to have so much more direct interaction with the students.”

Being close to students and their families opened the educator’s heart to both joys and sorrows.

“I have entirely too many fond memories to list,” Mr. Dawn said. “The saddest memories that I have are the passing away of several students due to illness. I will never forget these students or their families.”

Mr. Dawn has no immediate plans for his retirement, but, he said, “I love warm weather and beaches.”

Ms. Marcos came to Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington — and to Catholic schools — in 2000, after teaching for 10 years at public schools in Texas. “It was in a really challenged school, in a bad part of town but it was very rewarding,” said Ms. Marcos fondly. “I helped Spanish speaking families and you taught the parents as much as you taught the children. You see such hardships.”

Teaching at Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington, from a struggling public school in Texas was an “amazing” change, she said. “I never taught at a school where kids came to school not hungry, dressed and you could talk about faith.”

In fact, her fondest memories of teaching and as principal at IHM are when the students are all locked in the back of the school, reflect of time in the back of church, reflect and listening,” she said about her experience as an educator. “You really have to take the time to listen to people. Listening is more important than talking, that’s a huge lesson. When you walk in their shoes you can understand what motivates a person and once you know what motivates people, you have a whole new perspective.”

Mrs. Marcos said that her years as an educator have taught her to rely on faith.

“When you get into difficult situations, it’s better to walk away, take time, don’t react, take time to reflect and listen to what God is calling you to do. That was a big lesson. I’ve spent a lot of time in the back of church, reflect and listening,” she said about her experience as an educator. “You really have to take the time to listen to people. Listening is more important than talking, that’s a huge lesson. When you walk in their shoes you can understand what motivates a person and once you know what motivates people, you have a whole new perspective.”

Mrs. Marcos said that she is looking forward to spend more time with family and getting caught up on some things that she has had to put aside.

“I am so thankful that I was able to take that leadership role and work with so many amazing people — all of my fellow principals, Kendra McQuire (diocesan superintendent of Schools) and others — it’s time I will always treasure.”

Mr. Ridder doesn’t consider his seven years as principal at Bishop Brossart High School to be work, instead it was a vocation. “For me, being joyful and grateful about going to work should not be work, it should be your ministry — your vocation,” he said. “I was lucky, I felt blessed seven years ago when I was hired as principal to lead by example. My experiences were opportunities each time to extend yourself and to make education a valuable experience for students, teachers and parents.”

Before coming to BBHS, Mr. Ridder worked for 30 years at various public schools — 12 years teaching, nine years as assistant principal, three years as high school principal and six years in the central office. During those 37 years in education, he made more memories than he could share, but what stands out, he said, “are the relationships you make in education.”

“The old cliché — people, students, may not remember what you taught them or said to them but they will definitely remember how you made them feel” — is so true,” he said. “So, for me the numerous relationships with students, teachers and parents define my memories and are the grateful joys of education.”

The wisdom he has gained from his years as an educator is that, “We are all basically the same and want the same. We want to put two feet on the floor each day and have a good day.”

Dan Ridder

And, Mr. Ridder has discovered a way to reduce stress. “Being in tune to people’s wants and needs over your own will give you more joy and less stress,” he said.

His advice? “Be prayerful. Bring God into your daily life and not just at the beginning or ending of the day. Sit, pray and talk to him. The Holy Spirit has definitely given me so many insightful words of wisdom, but I work at listening to the insight.”

As he retires Mr. Ridder said he has no immediate plans, “other than to be a better husband, dad and grandpa.”

3 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULDN’T LOOK AT MODEL HOMES WITHOUT ME:

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Basilica I was both surprised and elated,” said Judge passersby the missing pieces went unnoticed. Tal, the Cathedral’s façade has stood nearly complete. To center portals. Also, tympana above the north and south por-
tresses and 20 to the niches flanking the north, south and
Knochelmann. “Like many of you here today are, I am sure,
we had become used to seeing the partially completed, yet
impressive it is.”

(Continued from page 1)

It’s providence that we dedicate this façade today on the solemnity of Corpus Christi because Bishop Magee had a
woman’s devotion to the Blessed Sacrament,” Bishop Frey said.

Building from “The History of the Diocese of Covington
Kenton,” Bishop Paul E. Ryan, Bishop Frey said, “An outstanding feature of the episcopal seat of Bishop Magee
was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament — the propa-
gation of devotion to the Holy Eucharist, as the remedy for the cold materialism and materialistic temper of modern
times, was a lifelong work of Bishop Magee. The artistic
Blessed Sacrament Chapel of Covington’s Cathedral stands
as a monument to the bishop’s devotion to the Holy
Eucharist. Bishop Magee was a leader in the Eucharistic
Movement.”

Bishop Frey said that the completed façade also shows
with its original construction the cooperation of the priests,
religious and people of the Diocese with the mission and
leadership in completing this façade. This is part of your
congratulations. (right) Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker view the “Speaking for Centuries:
Builder” inside the Cathedral are on display until June 30.

Mayor Meyer closed by offering his congratulations and
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THE 2021 DIOCESAN PARISH ANNUAL APPEAL . . .

Did you know that 100% of the money collected by your parish that is over your goal is given back to your parish? This Rebate Program ensures that both the Diocesan ministries and the parishes in our Diocese share in your generosity. In the past, some examples of how parishes have used this money are: pew repair, adoration chapels, playgrounds, stained glass window repair and albs for servers to name a few. How will your donation make an impact this year?

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• Complete the DPAA pledge form mailed to your home or available at your parish
• Call the Stewardship Office 859-392-1500
• Matching Gifts - request a Matching Gift Form from your Human Resources Department
Newsworthy

Happy birthday to: Father David Ludwig, pastor, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth; July 6; Father Jacob Straub, pastor, St. Matthew Parish, Kenton; July 8; Deacon David Profitt, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, and director, St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne; July 8; Father Jacob Varghese, V.C., pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California; July 11; Deacon Robert Stockle, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright; July 11; Father B. Gerald Witzemann, retired, July 19; Father Ryan Maher, vicar general and rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption; July 20; Deacon Richard Dames, Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger; July 20; Bishop Roger Foys, July 27; Deacon James Fortner, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell; July 27; Deacon Frank Kerst, St. Augustine Parish, Augusta, July 28; Father Kevin Kahanm, pastor, Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger; July 28; Mgr: Ronald Ketteler, director of ecumenism and faculty; Thomas More University, July 28; Deacon Stephen Bennett III, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, July 28; and Father Robert Rosing, retired, July 30.

Dr. Molly Smith, provost, Thomas More University, announced last week that after an internal search Joe Christensen, Ph.D., will serve as Dean of the College of Natural & Health Sciences and Kimberly Haverkos, Ph.D., as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Both will assume duties on June 16, joining Bruce Rosenthal, Dean of the College of Business, who also begins his tenure as Dean at Thomas More University on that date.

Upcoming study groups at St. Mary Parish, Alexandria: “Diary of St. Faustina,” Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the "Diary of St. Faustina," are available online at covdio.org. To order a subscription, visit the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at (859) 392-1500 or visit Cov Dio.Org/Family.

Bingo is back at St. Henry Catholic School, Erlanger! Every Thursday nights, doors open at 5 p.m., jitneys begin at 6 p.m., regular games at 7:30 p.m. Bingo hall is handicap accessible and non-smoking; concessions are available. Visit www.sthenrynky.com/news.

Job search assistance available for free at the Kenton County Public Library branches. Get help getting started with a 1-1 career coaching, resume assistance, workshops, and online classes to improve your job-hunting skills. Go to KentOnlineLibrary.org/job-search-central or call 982-4002 to learn more.

Newport Central Catholic High School is once again offering youth summer camps for boys and girls basketball and soccer and volleyball and baseball. For dates, times and locations of camps read more at: https://www.ncc.hs/news.

Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, is offering summer sports camps for girls and boys basketball and volleyball and girls soccer and youth baseball and football. For information visit http://www.bishopbrossart.org/page/summer-camps or call the school office at 655-2208.

The All Saints Parish Conference of St. Vincent DePaul, Walton, is hosting an online auction, June 13-30. With 100 items, there is really something for everyone including knitted and crocheted afghans, scarves, a layette; handmade quilts, pillows, and place settings; handcrafted toys, candles, wreaths, pet items, cookbooks, and much more. Navigate to the site https://www.32auctions.com/SVDP2021 and browse around and bid.

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

People and Events

Bishop Brossart High School summer K-9 drama camp will present “Annie Kids” in the BBHS Manninghoff Family Performing Arts Center. During the one week camp students we will learn about all aspects of theatre and put on a full production musical. Auditions are July 7 from 3-5 p.m. or July 8 from 10 a.m.-noon. Camp dates are Monday, July 12; Friday, July 16, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Camp cost $150 per child, add sibling for $100. Contact rtheater@sthenrynkycom for questions and to sign up by Monday, July 2nd.

Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Mass for the Year of The Family, Saturday, July 10, 10 a.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Bring the whole family; including grandparents, all are invited to attend. Pope Francis instituted the Year of the Family to inspire Catholics across the world to rise up and transform the culture through their family lives. Will you and your family answer the call? For information, contact the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at (859) 392-1300 or visit Cov Dio.Org/Family.

Parish Kitchen, a ministry of Catholic Charities is looking for more volunteers to help serve their lunch meal from 11:15 a.m.-1:40 p.m. Regular or sub opportunities are available for weekday and/or weekends, once a month or more. Volunteers must be willing to be VIRTUAL compliant. Virtus training is available through the Diocese of Covington. The volunteer application is available at www.parishkitchen.org. A staff member will contact you as soon as possible.

After a 24 year hiatus, the Ladies Stagette event, “Denim and Heels,” at St. Mary School, Alexandria, is back, Sept. 18. Food, drinks, raffles, silent auctions, split the pots, games, and music. Doors open at 7 p.m., ends midnight. Tickets $40. Contact allison.lee6y2@gmail.com.

St. Timothy School beneficiary of Foresters award

Agent Ryan Maschmeyer, St. Timothy Parish, Union, presents a check to Deborah Geers, principal, St. Timothy School, Union. Mr. Maschmeyer earned a Richard Tobin Award from the Catholic Order of Foresters. This award allows its recipients to choose an organization to receive a $500 donation from COF and Mr. Maschmeyer chose St. Timothy Catholic School to receive the donation. Mr. Maschmeyer, whose daughters attend the school, said, “Over the past crazy year we had the teachers and staff were amazing. The school went above and beyond expectations to help the students thrive during these times.” The donation will go towards the school’s capital campaign which is raising money to build new classrooms.

Summer Festivals

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, Sept. 24 and 25, 6 p.m. - midnight
St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, Labor Day Festival, Sept. 4, 6 p.m.- midnight; Sept. 5, 4 p.m.-midnight and Sept. 6, 1-9 p.m.
St. Joseph Academy, Walton, Pigfest, August 27 and 28, 5-11 p.m.
St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, August 13 and 14

DPAA chairs

Randy Rawe, general chair, and Karen Riegler, leadership gifts chair, met with Mike Murray and the staff of the Office of Stewardship and Mission Services, June 8, to review the success of the 2021 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal and to plan for follow-up efforts this summer. Parishioners are reminded that there is still time to mail a one-time gift or pledge to help their parish meet or exceed its goal. All monies collected over the parish goal are rebated back to the parish for parish projects.

St. Timothy Parish Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

E-mail the information to messenger@sthenrynky.com for questions and to sign up by Monday, July 2nd.

Parish Kitchen, a ministry of Catholic Charities is looking for more volunteers to help serve their lunch meal from 11:15 a.m.-1:40 p.m. Regular or sub opportunities are available for weekday and/or weekends, once a month or more. Volunteers must be willing to be VIRTUAL compliant. Virtus training is available through the Diocese of Covington. The volunteer application is available at www.parishkitchen.org. A staff member will contact you as soon as possible.

After a 24 year hiatus, the Ladies Stagette event, “Denim and Heels,” at St. Mary School, Alexandria, is back, Sept. 18. Food, drinks, raffles, silent auctions, split the pots, games, and music. Doors open at 7 p.m., ends midnight. Tickets $40. Contact allison.lee6y2@gmail.com.

St. Timothy School beneficiary of Foresters award

Agent Ryan Maschmeyer, St. Timothy Parish, Union, presents a check to Deborah Geers, principal, St. Timothy School, Union. Mr. Maschmeyer earned a Richard Tobin Award from the Catholic Order of Foresters. This award allows its recipients to choose an organization to receive a $500 donation from COF and Mr. Maschmeyer chose St. Timothy Catholic School to receive the donation. Mr. Maschmeyer, whose daughters attend the school, said, “Over the past crazy year we had the teachers and staff were amazing. The school went above and beyond expectations to help the students thrive during these times.” The donation will go towards the school’s capital campaign which is raising money to build new classrooms.

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The word "novena" comes from the Latin word for nine and refers to nine consecutive days of prayer, where a person or group asks God for a specific intention or favor, often through a saint’s intercession.

A biblical basis for this type of prayer can be found in the New Testament. Following the Ascension, Jesus gives the Apostles the Great Commission, and then tells them to return to Jerusalem to await the Holy Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles recounts: “[The Apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet near Jerusalem... Together they devoted themselves to constant prayer.” (Acts 1:12,14)

Nine days later, we’re told, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost. For them, it was after nine days of fervent prayer that the Holy Spirit filled them and imbued them with the gifts they needed to carry Christ’s message to the ends of the earth. In the Middle Ages, the tradition of a novena was further developed. For the Medievals, numbers were important and so was the numerical day-count of a novena. Nine days of prayer for them recalled how Mary carried Jesus in her womb for nine months. Oftentimes then, when a miracle or favor was granted — that is, when a prayer was answered — it was marked with a tangible “thank you,” what we know in the Church as an ex-voto.

In Etruscan and Roman temples, gifts, called “donaria,” were hung on the walls next to statues of divinities as signs of favors granted. Eventually, Christianity would baptize this pious tradition, making ex-votos a touching expression of faith for favors received, especially those received through novenas.

In the Church, ex-votos took many forms. They could be a silver arm or set of silver eyes left at a shrine symbolic of a healing. They may be a little painting showing the miracle and saint who helped effect it. They could even be the building of a Church or chapel. Small or large, ex-votos are tangible signs of thanks for a favor received after prayer.

While the tradition of ex-votos in its formal form has waned throughout much of the 20th and 21st century, the custom still remains — from unknown supplicants of the 19th century to the modern artist Yves Klein. Ex-votos call to mind an important facet of a novena — thanksgiving.

(Continued on page 18)
School choice challenge leaves program’s future uncertain

Marnie McAllister
Messenger contributor

School choice legislation, which has been a goal of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky for more than two decades, is set to become law at the end of the month. A lawsuit filed last week seeks to stop it before it takes effect.

The CCK, the public policy arm of the state’s bishops, says the law will give low-income families the financial means to choose for their children the educational tools they need — things that wealthier families can readily access. Opponents say the measure allows public funds to be funneled to private schools.

The legislation provides an incentive to individuals and businesses that make donations to certain organizations that disperse funds to qualifying students for educational services. The incentive is a state tax credit, capped at $35 million annually. When donations statewide amount to $35 million in credits, the tax relief will be exhausted for the year.

Under the measure, donors will be able to give funds to approved “account-granting organizations,” which will disperse the funds to Education Opportunity Accounts for students from lower incomes. Qualifying families may earn up to 175 percent of the federal income threshold for reduced-price lunch, but priority must first be given to those most in need — initially those whose income does not exceed the threshold for reduced-price lunch.

The accounts can be used by public and non-public school children for services such as special-needs therapies, tutoring, summer programs, dual college credit courses and other educational services. In counties where the population exceeds 90,000, students can also use the funding for tuition assistance to attend non-public schools.

The lawsuit filed on behalf of public school boards and a group of Kentucky parents last week challenges the constitutionality of the legislation. The lawsuit claims the tax credit is a scheme to “move state revenue through a private grant program.” As a result, it says, “state expenditures will impermissibly fund private schools.

In response to the lawsuit, the Institute for Justice, a non-profit firm that has defended school choice laws, said tax credits are a common incentive in Kentucky, but those offered for school choice are unique because they’ll help Kentucky’s children.

In his main audience talk, the pope continued his series on prayer by looking at the importance of perseverance and praying unceasingly.

How is it possible to remain in a constant state of prayer, especially when people’s lives are busy or filled with disruptions or distractions? the pope asked.

One tradition offers something called a “prayer of the heart” and is based on repeating with faith the words, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner,” until these words match the rhythm of breathing, and it is spread throughout the day, he said. “Indeed, we never stop breathing, not even while we sleep, and prayer is the breath of life,” he said.

Having a heart in a constant state of prayer, he said, is like having a flame perpetually lit even while carrying out daily tasks, taking a walk or standing in line. Even short, brief prayers, like “Lord, have pity on us” or “Lord, help me” are enough, he added.

“Prayer is a kind of musical score, where we put the melody of our lives,” he said. Prayer, then, is not meant to clash with everyday duties and obligations but that it acts as “the place where every action finds its meaning, its reason and its peace,” he said.

It is not easy to do, Pope Francis said, but just remember “that God, our Father, who must take care of the entire universe, always remembers each one of us. Therefore, we too must always remember” and find time for him.

Work and prayer are complementary, he said, like the symmetry of the human body with its two arms, eyes and ears.

So, while it is humane to have to work so much that it leaves no time for prayer, he said, it is likewise harmful to live a life of prayer alienated from real life. In that case, prayer becomes “spiritualism, or worse, ritualism.”

Remember, he said, that Jesus did not stay forever in his glory on Mount Tabor but came down from the mountain with his disciples to resume his daily journey.

That spiritual experience remained in their hearts as the light and strength of faith and a light and strength for the days of trial that were coming, the pope said.

Prayer revives faith, which supports daily life and nurtures prayer, making a positive feedback loop keeping “alive that flame of Christian life that God expects of us,” he said.

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“Is this a program that encourages individual donations to be given to families. Kentucky gives out so many tax credits — to people who make movies, who restore historic properties — to the tune of hundreds of millions. This is a program that’s helping families get the education and services they need for their children.”

“Just this session, the General Assembly passed $875 million in tax credits, I believe. Those may have merit. Ninety percent or more of every dollar of these (education) tax credits will go to families for therapies, tutoring, dual credit college courses, education technology, tuition for private school in certain counties, summer programming. Things that will tremendously help kids. Students in public schools can access this funding, not just private schools.”

He added that Kentucky families — from public and non-public schools alike — will be adversely affected if the law is delayed.

“There are parents right now trying to plan their children’s education and now they’re looking at this lawsuit,” he said. “The stakes are high. There are thousands of students who may not get the help they need next year.”

Mr. Vandiver added that he’s optimistic. “I think we are going to win, but it may take a while to get there. I feel confident the law is on our side.”

Marnie McAllister is editor for the Record, the official Catholic newspaper for the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky.
Cathedral façade
(Continued from page 1)

11 bishops in the United States to have in his diocese a Catholic medical center — St. Elizabeth Healthcare, and a Catholic university — Thomas More University.

“It is only fitting that both those organizations came together in an attempt to make this day possible,” Mr. Colvin said. “On behalf of the Board of Trustees of St. Elizabeth Healthcare we value bringing this together. We want to lift this community, so this was a very easy ask when approached for support. Such an event has brought this community together; not only today but for all of our lifetimes.”

Dr. Reynolds, speaking on behalf of Dr. Joseph Chillo, president of Thomas More University said, “Bishop, I was inspired by your remarks today about Bishop Mares’ hope that this would be a sense of pride for the diocese. In 97 days we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Villa Madonna College (the precursor of TMU) just a few streets over on 12th Street. We want everyone to know, especially you Bishop Foyes, that Thomas More University views being a diocesan college as a sense of pride. We are here to congratulate you, thank you and to wish everyone here the best.”

Bishop Foyes ended his homily by adapting Bishop Mares’ words spoken on the occasion of the dedication of the Cathedral and making them his own.

“Nineteen years of life in the 14 counties that comprise the Diocese of Covington have made me devoted to the spiritual and civic interest of this portion of God’s people,” Bishop Foyes said. “It has been my ambition to give the people a token of my love for them. When recently asked in an episode of the ‘The Chair,’ a program which tells the stories of the bishops of our country, I was asked what I would like my successors to say about me. I said that I would hope my successor would say that the 10th Bishop of Covington loved his people and cared for and loved his priests. That love, along with a fervent love of our God, has brought us to this day. I pray that as we move forward in making the Name of the Lord known, we do so as a united community of priests, deacons, consecrated religious and faithful filled lay. We see here today a concrete example of what working together can accomplish. Let us take a lesson from this day and move forward together, one people always united, with our eyes firmly fixed on the Lord.”

The website also suggests ways families can serve together — either within their own circle of family and friends or through local organizations that serve other families in need.

One of the most important ways families can celebrate this year is by engaging in the sacraments together — especially the celebration of the Eucharist by attending Mass together on Sundays and by going to the sacrament of reconciliation together.

The Word of God is not separate from the sacraments,” Mr. Isaak said. “You know who drives us to receive the Bible to see how families — especially the Holy Family: Mass together on Sundays and by going to the sacrament of reconciliation can be a tremendous thing for the world,” Mr. Torline said. “Just foster your faith in your family — just raise good kids, love your family.”

Father Clarence Heitzman
(Continued from page 5)

tution of the large hall.” The hall is known as simply “Memorial Hall” which serves the people of God. Among the priests he was known as a giant,” said Father Bierscheid. “He was one of the priests who helped to build up the diocese working with the bishops starting with Bishop Mulloy and up to the present time. He was a very simple man, very virtuous, extremely kind to everybody. He never talked badly about anybody: He was dedicated to working for the Church until he died. He gave of himself completely.”

“Father Jock Heitzman was a remarkable priest who always put the people to whom he was ministering first. He was kind and caring and always quick to lend a sympathetic ear to any who were experiencing any difficulty,” said Bishop Foyes. “His rectory was always open to any priest in need or who just wanted to enjoy a meal and good company. Father Heitzman has been described as a priests’ priest, and so he was. His hearty laugh spoke of a priest who was happy in his priesthood and who loved his ministry. We will miss him but our loss is heaven’s gain. May he rest in the peace, light, and love of the Lord he served so well in his 65 years of priesthood.”

Besides his parents Father Heitzman had been predeceased by his brother, Donald and sister, Carolyn Goohs. He is survived by two nieces and a nephew and two great nieces and one great nephew. Internment followed the Mass of Christian Burial in St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.
and meditated on them often: “Caritas Christi Urget Nos.” When one comes to know the love of Christ, and understand His life, one cannot help but be affected by it. As Paul writes a few lines later, “He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” The Church has taken these lines and incorporated them into Eucharistic Prayer IV. Most priests do not use this prayer, part of the reason I do is because of these words: “He gave himself up to death, and rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and rose again for us.” What is it you plan to do with your one, short, earthly life? The only real answer, it seems to me, is to give it back, and live our lives for him who died and rose again for us.

Father Stephen Bankemper is pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky.

Thirty years of Poland (Continued from page 5)

explained to me how his parish church in the industrial town of Nowa Huta had been a center of underground resistance activities during and after martial law — a place where people came to speak freely about a future they could only imagine, but for which they wanted to be educated and prepared.

None of this would have been possible without the assistance of my colleague and friend Rodger Potocki, who was the best of companions, a knowledgeable guide, and the man who made me read aloud all the road signs we passed, so that I could at least pronounce Polish (more-or-less) correctly.

Three decades of work and conversation in Poland have shaped me in ways I would not have thought possible 30 years ago. For that, I am deeply grateful to a nation that might yet become a model for 21st-century democracy, if it took the social doctrine of its greatest son seriously.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Happy Father’s Day (Continued from page 5)

play his part off to the side, out of the spotlight, increasingly overshadowed by others, often unheralded and unrecognized. He is not perfect, but he is irreplaceable. He works and fights out of love. He always puts others before himself.

Men are spiritual sons, brothers and husbands first, but the summit of being a man is being a spiritual father. The source of fatherhood is God the Father. Therefore, men, we must hold each other accountable. We should always strive to live holy lives and bring people to Christ, the true face of the Father in Heaven.

The fight to save the family, the building block of human society, is a worthy cause. It’s going to take men and women of courage, integrity and faith. Abraham in Genesis is our father in faith, let’s strive to put our faith in God and “go forth” to the unknown future the same way he did.

Happy Father’s Day!

David Cooley is co-director and office manager of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Moving? Wrong address? Call the circulation desk, (859) 392-1570
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RELIGION TEACHER
St. Edward Catholic School located in Cynthiana, Kentucky is seeking a Religion teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. Religion classes taught daily to grade Kindergarten through fifth grades, and three days per week to Preschool aged children. We are searching for an energetic and experienced, Christ-centered professional with concrete professional and interpersonal skills who will join the St. Edward School team in our mission to provide a high quality Catholic education for our students. Our school is a thriving, growing school at capacity with a waiting list. Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics, preferably with Basic-level certification from the Diocese. Interested individuals should email or fax a cover letter, Baptism Certificate, transcripts of academic preparation, and a list of references with contact e-mail addresses to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR, at skoplyay@covdio.org. Fax 859-392-1589.

MUSICIAN/MUSIC DIRECTOR
All Saints Parish, Walton, Ky., is hiring a musician/music director for all weekend Masses, as well as special occasions such as Holy Days of Obligation, weddings and funerals, etc. The successful candidate must be able to play the organ and sing. Choir direction is desired, as All Saints Parish is interested in organizing a choir. This position is part-time, but could be developed into a full-time position. Interested applicants may call (859) 485-4476, or visit at allsaintswalton.com and select the “Contact” tab to submit name, number and a message of interest.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA MANAGERS
The School Food Services Office of the Diocese of Covington Department of Catholic Schools seeks candidates for School Cafeteria Managers at Prince of Peace Montessori School, St. Agnes School, and Blessed sacrament School. Monday - Friday, during the school year. The School Cafeteria Manager’s primary responsibilities include overall supervision of the School’s meal 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 e-mail address and compensation history. Applications may also be faxed to 859-582-1085.

MAJOR GIFTS OFFICER
The Glenny Home Missionaries are looking for an enthusiastic fundraising professional to join our development team. The successful candidate will secure and raise funds through major gifts and planned gift programs. College degree preferred. Five years of practical experience in development with familiarity of planned giving instruments. Familiarity with fundraising software and windows applications. The successful candidate must be able to develop an annual plan for identification, cultivation, and solicitation of major gifts and/or planned gifts. Must be able to maintain and foster relationships with donors to successfully communicate the Glenny mission and secure major gifts or planned gifts. Position will be based in Glenny’s Headquarters with regular frequent travel required outside of normal work location to meet with Glenny supporters throughout the country. Submit your resume and cover letter to Michael Schreider, Glenny Home Missionaries, P.O. Box 46518, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246 or apply via email at m.schreider@glenny.org. No phone calls please.

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The Messenger, the Diocese of Covington’s official weekly newspaper published 44 times per year, is seeking a practicing Roman Catholic to join its editorial staff as a full time Staff Writer/Media Content Developer. This full-time position requires a broad range of abilities, including excellent writing, proofreading, organizational skills, and a working knowledge and basic skillset of photography and website content development. Working with colleagues, other diocesan employees, and interviewees, the Staff Writer will be responsible for written content and the development of the Messenger and diocese’s online presence. The successful candidate will have a commitment to confidentiality, 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, CV or comprehensive resume with compensation history, and a minimum of five references with their contact e-mail addresses to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org, fax 859/392-1589.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT WANTED
The Messenger, seeking a part-time (3 days a week) Editorial Assistant to assist its editorial staff in creating a quality, weekly Catholic newspaper and maintaining an organized work environment. The Editorial Assistant helps update the diocesan database (Camino) and creates the weekly mailing list for The Messenger. The Editorial Assistant proofreads each edition of the Messenger, maintains the office archives, prepares invoices for payment and assists editorial staff, when needed, with writing/photography assignments. The qualified candidate will be a practicing Roman Catholic and will be comfortable with Excel and Word (or comparable) office software with a solid foundation in writing skills and the ability to meet deadlines. Anticipated start date: June 2021. 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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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS continued on page 22.
“A Quiet Place Part II” (Paramount) This follow-up drains away the suspense, analogies and underlying message about family bonds from the 2018 original in order to set up a franchise reminiscent of an immersive dystopian theme-park ride. In the absence of the family patriarch he played last time out, returning director John Krasinski, who also takes over as sole screenwriter, puts the remaining members of the kickoff’s clan — mom Emily Blunt, deaf daughter Millicent Simmonds, son Noah Jupe and their infant brother — through their paces as they continue to struggle against marauding alien invaders endowed with super-sensitive hearing but vulnerable to high-pitched frequencies that send them into paroxysms of pain. With nothing new to reveal about the intruders and their behavior, the sequel merely repeats familiar sci-fi tropes. Although Blunt’s character turns out to be a pistol-packin’ mama with impeccable aim and abundant ammo, there’s not much on display stouthearted older adolescents won’t be able to handle. Gun and physical violence with fleeting gore. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

“Spirit Untamed” (Universal) After her antics become too much for the aunt and grandfather by whom she’s been raised, a rebellious city-bred girl is sent off to the small frontier town where her risk-loving mother’s career as a stunt rider was cut short by a fatal accident and where her still-grieving dad continues to live. There, she makes friends with two denizens of the local rodeo as well as with the mustang of the title and together the pals work to liberate a group of wild horses being held captive by a villainous set of wranglers. In extending a franchise that also includes the 2002 film “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron” and the Netflix series “Spirit Riding Free,” director Elaine Bogan and co-director Ennio Torresan Jr. have crafted a visually stunning, family-friendly animated adventure that highlights the importance of friendship, teamwork, respect for nature, education and love of family and that can be recommended for all but small fry who might find its action scenes too frightening. Perilous situations. CNS: A-I; MPAA: PG.
National/World

Pandemic recovery requires conversion, pope says

VATICAN CITY — Promoting the holistic development of everyone requires conversion, "and we cannot convert death into life and weapons into food," Pope Francis said. As many nations begin returning to a semblance of normal, even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, governments and economists and citizens must act now to carefully look at what that "normal" was, judge what was good or bad about it and act to make life better for everyone, the pope said in a message June 15 to the Brotfabrik Forum. The forum, sponsored by the thinktank GLOBSEC, brings together politicians, business leaders and others to focus on issues of importance for the people of Central and Eastern Europe. To work for a better future, the pope said, an honest assessment of the past, "including the acknowledgment of systemic failures, past errors and lack of responsibility with regard to the Creator, our neighbor and all creation, strikes me as essential for the development of a model of recovery aimed not only at rebuilding what was, but also correcting the things that went wrong, even before the advent of the coronavirus, and that ended up making the crisis worse." In looking around, he said, "what I see in a world that allowed itself to be duped by a false and arrogant sense of security based on a thirst for profit."

On DACA anniversary, bishop urges pathway to citizenship for ‘Dreamers’

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ migration committee marked the ninth anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program June 15 by urging Congress to act on a bill that would make Dreamers permanent residents. "Every day, DACA recipients make important contributions to their communities and the life of our nation," said Washington Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, DACA recipients have served as essential workers, and they continue to demonstrate their resilience during this period of recovery. Yet these young people have far too often faced uncertainty and expertise at the hands of our broken immigration system." DACA was created by President Barack Obama by executive order June 15, 2012. It allows a work permit and relief from deportation, among other benefits, for young adult immigrants in the country without documents who qualify — those brought into the country illegally as children. The program does not provide a permanent solution so that they can legally stay in the country through popular among Republicans and Democrats, efforts to pass a bill in Congress that would help put the group on a path toward permanent residency and eventual citizenship, have eluded past administrations. "The Biden administration has identified immigration reform as a priority, and we look forward to seeing it realize that commitment through congressional engagement," Bishop Dorsonville said in his statement.

Vatican orders term limits for leaders of lay movements

VATICAN CITY — In an ongoing effort to promote Catholic lay movements and associations and protect their members from possible abuse by the groups’ leaders, the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life has published new norms that limit the term of service for lay movements and associations to a maximum of two five-year terms. The dicastery will consider granting an exemption for the founder of a movement or an association to lead a group longer "if a dispensation correctly issued by the Ordinary of the diocese is requested." The new norms also state that "loyalty and fidelity to the Vatican is not automatic, the note said. The norms take effect in September and were approved by Pope Francis, said Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the dicastery.

Mexican priest killed in crossfire in north-central Mexico

MEXICO CITY — A Franciscan priest was killed in a hail of gunfire on his way to celebrate Mass and provide sacraments in a rural Mexican village known for drug cartel conflicts. Father Juan Antonio Orozco, 31, was struck June 12 in the late morning as he drove in a rural region of western Durango state, where “he entered the crossfire of two groups fighting” over the Durango to Zacatecas highway,” Bishop Luis Flores Caviedes of Tepejío said in a brief, social media post. The bishop included a photo of the victim, appearing to wear white robes, lying in front of a red pickup that identified the Franciscans’ parish ministry. The truck had several bullet holes. Franciscan Father Gilberto Hernández, spokesman for the Order of Friars Minor, said the slain priest had traveled to celebrate Mass in a rural village. Father Orozco was one of three Franciscan priests serving the Santa Lucía de la Sierra parish in a rugged and isolated part of Zacatecas state. The spokesman said no threats against Father Orozco had been made, even though the region has public security issues. “The death of our parish priest shocks us greatly,” said a statement on Santa Lucía de la Sierra parish Facebook page.

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