Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I give thanks to God for you!

The welcome I have received here in the Diocese of Covington has been extraordinary. I pray that I will be able to respond to your warm reception with a fervor for ministry among you, so that laboring together we will be graced by God and bear fruit for the building up of the Kingdom.

First, thank you to Bishop Roger Foys. From the first moment we spoke, Bishop Foys has been encouraging and gracious. Thank you for your warm welcome and generous spirit of hospitality.

Before they knew who the Eleventh Bishop of Covington would be, the Consecration and Installation Planning Committee worked diligently to plan and arrange the details of the events. Thank you to all involved. A special word of thanks to The Very Rev. Daniel L. Schomaker for his attention to detail and for serving as my point of contact for every aspect of the celebration.

The liturgy of Ordination and Installation was magnificent! I especially loved the devoted service of the Masters of Ceremony who always kept me where I needed to be. Their knowledge of the liturgy and repeated rehearsal freed me, allowing me to focus on prayer and maintaining an open disposition to receive the Holy Spirit. Thank you! And thank you to the readers, Diocesan seminarians, and Pontifical Servers from the Covington Latin School for their dignified assistance.

Of course, my out-of-town guests were most impressed with the amazing music throughout the liturgy. Special thanks to Dr. Gregory J. Schaffer and the Cathedral Basilica Bishop's Choir. The beauty of your harmonies brought tears of joy to my eyes several times. Thank you.

The Very Rev. Ryan Maher, rector of the Cathedral Basilica, together with his staff, did an amazing job preparing the Basilica and grounds for the Mass and the reception of hundreds of guests. Our cathedral is one of the Church's great treasures in the United States. It shone beautifully. The ushers and staff were most gracious and hospitable to all our guests. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

The way that so many people around the country experienced the liturgy and the wonders of the Cathedral and its choirs, was through video production streamed live on the internet and aired on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). Thanks to all who worked so hard to make that happen, and to Msgr. Gerald Twaddell for his commentary throughout. Many of my neighbors in my hometown were able to participate in the liturgy only because of these efforts. Thank you.

I am most grateful to the deacons, priests and bishops who joined in the liturgy. Over the past three months I have learned that the bishops of the United States share a warm and supportive fraternity. I am grateful to my consecrators: Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Bishop Roger Foys, and Bishop Michael McGovern of the Diocese of Belleville. Sixteen bishops were present, including Archbishop Christophe Pierre (the representative of Pope Francis to the United States) and two Cardinals — Cardinal Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Cardinal Rigali, the retired Archbishop of Philadelphia. Thank you to Pope Francis and these bishops for calling me to a share in apostolic ministry.

Finally, thanks to all of you. For every prayer, note and blessed thought; for your presence; for viewing at home; for your intercessory prayers at Sunday Mass; for each kindness and encouragement, thank you. It makes all the difference.

I take my episcopal motto from St. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, “in all things give thanks” (5:18). Gratitude allows us to stand honestly before God, recognizing that every good gift comes from God and not from us. Gratitude fosters humility and keeps us united in Christ.

The grateful heart recognizes that every blessing is for our salvation. You, the priests and people of the Diocese of Covington, are that kind of gift in my life. I thank God for you!

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington
My dear Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever! Amen!

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad!” (Ps 118:24).

As we celebrate the consecration and installation of Father John C. Iffert as the 11th Bishop of Covington, we give thanks to God for the gift He has given us in the person of our new shepherd. We have the promise of the Lord that He will never abandon His people but that He will always provide us with shepherds after His own heart: “I will appoint you shepherds after my own heart, who will shepherd you wisely and prudently” (Jer 3:15). This is certainly true in the shepherd He is now providing us as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Covington.

From the very first time I spoke with our new Bishop, I was convinced that he will be for us a good shepherd who will seek to minister to us with total commitment and total self-giving. Among the different images of a bishop, that of the shepherd illustrates perhaps better than any other the breadth of the episcopal ministry and expresses its meaning and purpose. The model of Christ the Good Shepherd suggests to the bishop daily fidelity to his mission, total dedication to the Church, joy in leading to the Lord the people of God entrusted to his care, and gladness in gathering into unity the people of God. (cf. Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, #3)

I find our new shepherd to be a man of joy and of peace; a joy and peace born of prayer and of the commitment to the priestly promises he made almost a quarter century ago. Far from abandoning His people, the Lord has indeed provided us with a shepherd after His own heart! How blessed we are!

For myself, I pledge Bishop Iffert my loyalty, my obedience, my respect, and, always and especially, my prayers. I look forward to his leadership guided by the Holy Spirit and am inspired by his dedication to and love of Christ and of His Church as he works to build up the Church in Covington. I look forward to supporting him in any way I can to build up the body of Christ in our beloved Diocese.

I ask all of you to join me in welcoming our new shepherd.

May we revere him as a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God, for he has been entrusted with the task of bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel and with the ministry of the Spirit and of justice. (Rite of Consecration of a Bishop)

Welcome, Bishop Iffert! Ad multos annos!

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

Most Rev. Roger J. Foys
Bishop Emeritus of Covington
The Parishioners of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish
Welcome you Bishop John Iffert
to the Diocese of Covington and to the Cathedral Parish.

Know of our prayers and support as you begin
your Episcopal ministry
as the 11th Bishop of Covington!
The Christian minimalist

The readings for the twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B are: Wisdom 7:7-11; Hebrews 4:12-13; and Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27. “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” In the sermon when we read this passage from the Gospel of Mark, Father Patrick Boyle shouted out, “He’s a minimalist!”

Father Boyle said this rich young man just wanted to get into heaven. Keeping the commandments are something we all strive to do in life. We struggle with sin and temptation in our life. We do what we can to become holy people through prayer and reception of the sacraments. It seems that I fall short of my goal to become holy. For me, and maybe for you, it seems to be a never-ending battle with sin. I wish I could say like the rich young man, that I have kept the commands from my youth.

The rich young man went away sad. He had too much. Jesus was inviting him to give up everything, to put it aside, to lay it down and follow him. It wasn’t going to happen. For me this passage tells me there is something else I need to work on besides the commandments. I need to work on giving up everything and following Jesus closely.

Peter says, “We have given up everything and followed you.” The apostles were rewarded for giving up everything. How hard it is to give up everything. That is exactly what we are called to do.

In the seminary I lived on the third floor. It was referred to as 3 Boulevard. The men who lived on the floor would gather for Mass, prayer, cuttings and retreats. One year we went on retreat to a house that was owned by a priest. I really don’t remember much about the retreat but what I do remember is almost giving up everything.

We gathered on the deck of the house for a picture. I was seated on the railing with a few other people while some sat on the built-in benches. As we were finishing up, the pictures the railing cracked and I fell about six or eight feet and landed flat on my back. Within seconds a guy named John landed on top of me. It knocked the breath of me and I thought I was dying. I thought I was giving up everything and that I saved John’s life.

Thank the Lord I didn’t have to give up everything that day. Who knows, maybe it was the cushion that saved John’s life that day.

From our Gospel we are called to become holy by keeping the commandments and giving up our lives to serve the Gospel. At Mass this weekend let us look to Jesus Christ and see the perfect example of one who was obedient to death on the cross and who gave up everything so that we might win.

Father Gregory Bach is pastor St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, Ky.

St. Stephen Parish demonstrates the transforming nature of the Word and Eucharist

Laura Keener

Editor

When Father John Iffert was appointed vicar general for the Diocese of Belleville, it became apparent that he would need to be assigned a new parish. Managing two parishes that were located nearly an hour drive from the Chancellor would not benefit Father Iffert or the parishioners he was called to serve.

In January 2019, Bishop Michael McGovern appointed Father Iffert pastor of St. Stephen Parish, Caseyville — a mere six months before Pope Francis would elevate him to the episcopacy.

You could hear the concern for the parish and its parishioners in Father Iffert’s voice when asked to gather parishioners for an interview with the Messenger. “The concern mostly because he knew this would be another pastor change for the parish,” change — even in the best circumstances — is almost always a challenge.

Another concern of his was that he hadn’t had the time to get to know the people at St. Stephen Parish and minister to them as they should be. When he came to the parish, COVID protocols were still in force — there were no gatherings outside of Mass and everyone was required to be distanced and masked. When the announcement came, the reaction was shock, not leaving soon for Covington, he was just beginning to recognize unmasked faces and to plan for RCIA, CCD and parish discipleship groups.

“All we’ve really been able to do is celebrate Mass,” Father Iffert said.

“We love having him. He has changed the parish for the good. I think, and he’s only been here six months,” said Susan Cluley.

Sister Tinu Joseph Iffert celebrated Mass, Aug. 5, at St. Stephen Parish, Caseyville, Illinois. Parishioners there said that his inspiring homilies and reverent celebration of the Eucharist has lifted the faith life of the parish.

(Continued on page 47)
A look back — a photo album of Bishop Iffert, his family and path to Covington

(left) In 2020, John and Mary Iffert celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. The two met at a roller rink. Mrs. Iffert invited him to ask her to skate. “It was love at first sight,” Mr. Iffert said. A year later, they were married.

(above center) John Curtis Iffert was born on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23, 1967 in DuQuoin, Illinois. The holiday devoted to gratitude has colored his life, including his episcopal motto, “In All Things Give Thanks.”

Parishioners and friends describe Bishop Iffert as being joyful and always wearing a big smile. (above right) Even as a toddler he could be found with a beaming smile.

(below left) Bishop Iffert is the youngest of three children and the only son. Below left are the Ifferts (from left) Kathy, Mary, Kim, Johnny and John.

Pictured below right is Kim’s favorite photo of her brother. When she thinks of her younger brother this is the smiling face she sees.
Even at a young age, Bishop Iffert was very involved at the parish. From the age of eight, Bishop Iffert was a reader at Sunday Mass and later an altar server.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory (then Bishop Gregory of Belleville) ordained Father John Iffert a priest for the Diocese of Belleville on June 7, 1997.

A year earlier, Mrs. Iffert missed his diaconate ordination because she was being treated for leukemia. The Ifferts were not offered much hope, with doctors estimating that she might have two weeks, maybe five months. “I just said, ‘God walk with me,’” Mrs. Iffert said. “Whatever you’ve got in mind, if you stay with me, I can do it.”

Newly ordained Father Iffert offers Bishop Gregory his first priestly blessing. “Cardinal Gregory really shaped those first six years of my priesthood,” Bishop Iffert said. “When you work with him, you know you’re working with somebody special.”
How are bishops selected?

Bishop Michael McGovern
Messenger contributor

On behalf of our entire diocese, I congratulate Father John Iffert on the good news that our Holy Father has appointed him the eleventh Bishop of Covington in Kentucky. I thank Pope Francis for appointing such a pastoral, compassionate and dedicated priest to the office of bishop. Father Iffert was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Belleville by Bishop Wilton Gregory in 1997 and has been a terrific shepherd to many people ever since. We will miss Bishop Iffert, but trust that this is the will of the Holy Spirit and for the good of souls.

With this good news there can also come some questions. One of which is simply: how are Catholic bishops appointed? As many readers know, the Catholic faith has spread over the world and the Church is organized in units named dioceses. A diocese is a geographic territory which has a diocesan bishop appointed as shepherd for the clergy and faithful who live in that geographic area. There is usually an “archdiocese” in a region along with several dioceses nearby that are connected with the archdiocese. An archdiocese has an archbishop as the local shepherd, and a diocese has a bishop who presides over the local community.

When a diocese becomes vacant, such as when the bishop is retiring or dies in office, the Holy See begins a process of searching for a successor. In many nations, the Holy Father has a representative (the exact term is “papal nuncio”) who is an archbishop and a diplomat, who interacts with the Catholic Church in that country and also represents the Holy See to the nation’s government. In the case of the United States, Ambassador Pierre is the Holy Father’s representative (the exact term is “papal nuncio”) who is an archbishop and a diplomat, who interacts with the Catholic Church in that country and also represents the Holy See to the nation’s government. The Pope alone makes the decision of appointing a new bishop. The nuncio then brings all of the information to the new pope for review and discussion.

The Pope alone makes the decision of appointing a new bishop. He may choose any of the three candidates or, in some cases, the Pope may ask for a different list of names (which means the process may take longer while a new list is created).

Once the Holy Father makes his decision about the appointment of a new bishop, the decision is communicat

ed to the papal nuncio who then contacts the priest who has been nominated. The priest may either say yes and accept the nomination to the episcopacy or he may decline (for instance, a priest may have a serious medical issue that no one knows about and he declines the appointment due to his health).

Once a priest accepts the Pope’s appointment as a bishop, the priest cannot tell anyone until there is an official announcement. The nuncio will coordinate with the new bishop and the diocese receiving a new bishop an appropriate date for an announcement of the appointment. In the case of Bishop-elect Iffert, the announcement was made on July 11 in Rome and Washington D.C., with subsequent press releases in Covington and Belleville. A date is then set for the new bishop’s ordination; Bishop Iffert was ordained and installed as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Covington, Thursday, Sept. 30, at St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

I hope that this column is helpful to readers in understanding this important process. The goal is to identify a good priest who can fulfill the bishop’s mission to teach, govern and sanctify. I hope that people are encouraged that the process involves consultation with the lay persons, trustees, parish council members, and others, so that the best possible candidate emerges. Please pray for Bishop Iffert and all of our bishops, that we can live with integrity as successors of the apostles and be good shepherds of the Lord’s flock entrusted to our care.

Most Rev. Michael McGovern is Bishop of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. His column was originally published in The Messenger, the Catholic newspaper for the Diocese of Belleville and is reprinted with permission.
Faith, family, friends plant seeds of vocation

Laura Keener  
Editor

Bishop John Iffert was born on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23, 1967 to John and Mary Iffert. Being born on a day focused on gratitude and giving thanks to God has colored Bishop Iffert’s life and vocation.

He has two older sisters, Kim and Kathy. Mr. Iffert was a farmer, working 650 acres. They lived two-thirds of a mile from Mr. Iffert’s parents. Bishop Iffert said that he spent a lot of time running back and forth from his house to his grandparents’ house. Like seeds planted in fertile Illinois farmland, his grandparents’ devotion to faith, family and their vocation has impressed Bishop Iffert.

“Grandpa was kind of my hero for a long time,” Bishop Iffert said. Grandpa Iffert was a carpenter and worked in construction. A favorite building project of his was Holy Cross Church in Weldonia. His job was to hang on the ropes and push blocks into place. “There’s a photo of him studding the cross on top of the steeple. ‘He was really a daredevil,’ said Bishop Iffert.

“Those were the days long before Bishop Iffert was born. ‘When I knew them, they were the steadiest people you would ever want to know,’ he said of his grandparents. ‘They had that ordinary kind of faith Catholics lived. Their church was just everything to them.’”

Bishop Iffert can point out the pew his grandparents always sat at in Sacred Heart Church, DuQuoin, where his parents are still active members. Grandma and Grandpa Iffert prayed a rosary every day. “If you were there in the evening, everything stopped and you prayed a rosary together,” he said.

Bishop Iffert said his grandparents had a habit of napping after lunch; grandma would lay on the couch and grandpa on the floor beside her. He would reach up and pull her hand and they would pray together. “They had that affection,” Bishop Iffert said. “They weren’t overly demonstrative people, but you could see in them their lives that their marriage mattered to them.”

“Grandma died as Bishop Iffert was entering high school; Grandpa died as Bishop Iffert was entering high school; grandma followed about six years later.”

Mrs. Iffert said that for the longest time, as a boy, “Johnny” would say, “I’m going to be a priest.” Mr. Iffert and Bishop Iffert would “practice” consecrating the host at the dinner table. She said when he was in seventh grade, he asked if he could attend “Discovery Week” at St. Henry High School, which was a seminary high school in Belleville. “Mom said, ‘They had already paid for me to go to Camp Oesdoulsson and couldn’t afford both,’” Bishop Iffert said.

Mrs. Iffert thought that was the end of it, until weeks later she received a letter in the mail from Bishop William Cosgrove explaining how important it is for parents to support and encourage their children when they express an interest in a vocation to the priesthood.

“A classroom assignment had students at Sacred Heart School writing a letter to someone they admired, asking for an autograph. Bishop Iffert chose Bishop Cosgrove, whom he said everyone loved. ‘Apparently I ended the letter by saying, ‘PS. I want to be a priest and my mom won’t let me.’ And so he reacted to that,” Bishop Iffert said with a laugh. “I told Johnny, ‘You can write the Pope, I don’t care. The answer is no.’” Mrs. Iffert said. She wrote Bishop Cosgrove back explaining that she felt Johnny was too young to make a life decision and that she would pray and have him pray for a vocation. “If, after graduating high school, he wants to be a priest, we will see that he goes,” she said.

Bishop Cosgrove’s involvement also prompted Mr. Iffert to write Angelo Lombardo to spend several weekends talking about vocations. Bishop Iffert did attend Discovery Week on a scholarship from the parish.

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“Family was also important to Grandma and Grandpa Iffert. They would often have the entire family—unts, uncles and cousins—over especially around harvest seasons. ‘As long as Grandma was alive, we’d have a butchering weekend and a sausage making weekend and a butter churning party we would render lard one weekend. Everyone would come together and everybody would leave with packages. It was that kind of a family experience,’ he said. ‘So they did shape me in that way’”

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Bishop Iffert,
We welcome you to the
Diocese of Covington!
Many Blessings.

MOTHER OF GOD CEMETERY
AND CHAPEL MAUSOLEUM
WWW.MOTHEROFGODCEMETERY.COM

St. Philip Parish

BISHOP JOHN IFFERT,
ST. PHILIP PARISH WELCOMES YOU TO
THE COVINGTON DIOCESE.
MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND YOUR
TIME HERE AS OUR SHEPHERD.

Bishop John C. Iffert
we welcome you
to the Diocese of Covington.

Sts. Peter and Paul Parish

Welcome, Bishop John C. Iffert!
Prayers for your success as
Bishop of the Diocese of Covington!
from the Knights of
Father Bealer Council, #3908
Elsmere, KY 41018
859-342-6643
representing Knights from the parishes of St. Henry,
St. Pius X, St. Barbara, and Blessed Sacrament

BISHOP JOHN C. IFFERT
Saint Joseph Parish
Cold Spring
GRATEFUL for our past
FAITHFUL in our present
HOPEFUL for our future
And
excited to welcome you as
our new Shepherd in Christ

St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky would like to
welcome Bishop Iffert to the Diocese of Covington!

We look forward to partnering with you and you are in our
prayers as you begin this new chapter!
Congratulations!

Welcome to the Covington Diocese
Bishop Iffert
We are here to serve
with Sacramental Gifts, Books, Bibles, Greeting Cards

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Welcome, Bishop Iffert
MAY NORTHERN KENTUCKY EMBRACE YOU WITH OPEN ARMS
Our community is a mighty one. Because of their dedication to the children living at
DCCH Center, generous donors give strength and peace of mind, volunteers give
compassion, comfort, and care; foster families give joy and unconditional love; and
now, your prayers, leadership, and support give them hope. Together, we all can give
these children a brighter future.

DCCH CENTER
859-331-2040
dchcenter.org
St. Paul — principal patron of the diocese — a model for new evangelization

Msgr. Ronald M. Ketteler
Episcopal Liaison to the Messenger

On the occasion of the centenni-
al of the Diocese of Covington in 1953, Father Paul Ryan published “The History of the Diocese of Covington.” In his conclusion to the Preface, the author counseled that a historical review of the growth of the diocese should also inspire appreciation for the interior life of the Church originating from its apostolic constitution and mission.

In this context, Father Ryan wrote: “For the Church, like the tree that sprouts from the grain of a mustard seed, however far it may spread its boughs over the earth, and however varied its outward growth may be in particular regions or periods, ever remains fundamentally identical with the seed from which it sprang.”

That Preface was dated — “Feast of the Diocese, June 30, 1953.”

The identification of the dioce-
sian church with the patronage of St. Paul, Apostle to the Nations, is consonant with the rich history of evangelization and missionary outreach since the formation of the diocese.

St. Paul holds a unique place in the history of Christianity and stands with St. Peter as one of the twin pillars of the faith. He is regarded as the greatest Christian preacher and the first theolo-
gian of the Church. The pastoral theology of St. Paul in his New Testament letters passes on a reliable memory of the evangelical tradition, one which at the same time is an original and cre-
ative proclamation of the Risen Lord in the apost-
olic era.

In the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul reveals that zeal which marked his apostolic preaching and journeys. “For me life is Christ, and death is gain” (Phil. 1:21). At the core of his being, the Apostle Paul was “possessed by Christ” — “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

The wisdom and power of the letters of St. Paul are a treasury of theological understanding and vision which continues to enrich Christian life in the 21st century. Sulpician Father Raymond Brown (d. 1998) comments that St. Paul was “the apostle whose preaching unchained the gospel.”

Pope John Paul II has summoned the Church to engage in a “new evangelization” or “re-evan-
gelization.” That theme has been consistently woven into his encyclicals and other pastoral writings, especially during the preparation for the Great Jubilee. The Holy Father singles out the thought and ministry of St. Paul as a model for evangelization — “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16).

The missionary mandate of the Church places evangelization at the very center of the Church’s life. The procla-
mation of the good news about Jesus is not only directed outward towards all peoples and all cultures but also inwards, especially towards Christians who are alienated or disengaged from church life.

Thus, in “Mission of the Redeemer” (1993) Pope John Paul II called attention to nations with ancient Christian roots “where entire groups of the baptized have lost a liv-
ing sense of faith, or no longer consider themselves mem-
bers of the Church, and live a life far removed from the gospel” (RM n.33).

Earlier in “The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People” (1988) the Holy Father describes the goal of re-
evangelization as “the formation of mature ecclesial com-
munities in which the faith might radiate and fulfill the basic meaning of the person of Christ and his Gospel...” (OF, n.34).

In the apostolic letter “On the Coming of the Third Millennium” (1996) Pope John Paul II exhorts Catholics to be supported by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit who is the principal agent of evangelization. Living out the virtue of hope rooted in the presence and light of the Holy Spirit — a Pauline insight — sustains the work of evangelization by presenting “solid and profound reasons for a daily commitment to transform reality in order to make it correspond to God’s plan” (TMA n.46).

In “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis commented on a passage from St. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians. It narrates his inquiry to the apostles in Jerusalem concerning the authenticity of his mission. He notes that the criterion given to him was “that he should not forget the poor” (Gal 2:10).

The Holy Father notes: “There is one sign which we should never lack the option for those who are least, those whom society discards.” There is a risk that we would fall prey “to the self-centered lifestyle of the pagans.” Otherwise we would not be aware that “a new self-centered paganism is growing” (BG #196).

A statue of St. Paul, patron of the Diocese of Covington, was recently installed on the façade of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.
The Parish Community of Saint Thomas in Fort Thomas welcomes with great joy Bishop John C. Iffert as 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Covington. We promise our love and prayers as you begin your ministry in Covington.

Bishop John Iffert, Congratulations and welcome to the Diocese of Covington! Carmelite Sisters & Carmel Manor

Carmel Manor
A MISSION TO CARE

Most Reverend John Michael Botean and the Eparchy of Saint George in Canton, Ohio extends many blessed years to Most Reverend John C. Iffert as he becomes the 11th Bishop of Covington, Kentucky.

God Bless You Bishop Iffert and Welcome!
The Office of Deacons and Deacon Formation and the Deacon Community

Properful best wishes and congratulations to Bishop John C. Iffert on your installation as Eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Covington.

Diocese of Biloxi
Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman, III and the clergy, religious and laity of the Diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi.

His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A. Bishop of Lake Charles, with the clergy, religious, and laity of the Diocese of Lake Charles extend congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Bishop John C. Iffert upon his Episcopal ordination and installation as the 11th Bishop of Covington.
Congratulations!

Manifold blessings to my brother bishop, +John C. Iffert, on his Consecration and Installation as the 11th Bishop of Covington

Most Reverend Roger J. Foys
Bishop Emeritus of Covington
The Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
and the clergy, religious,
and lay faithful of the
Archdiocese of Louisville
send prayers and best wishes to
Bishop John C. Iffert
on his ordination as the
eleventh bishop of the
Diocese of Covington, Kentucky.
Welcome to the
Province of Louisville
and
Ad multos annos!

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE
archlou.org
The Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr and the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Offer a Warm Welcome and Prayerful Best Wishes to
Bishop John C. Iffert and the Faithful of the Diocese of Covington.
Wilton Cardinal Gregory
Archbishop of Washington
together with the
Auxiliary Bishops
The Most Reverend
Roy E. Campbell, Jr.
The Most Reverend
Mario E. Dorsonville
the Archbishop Emeritus of Washington
Donald Cardinal Wuerl
and the
Clergy, Religious and
Lay Faithful of the
Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of Washington

congratulate

Bishop John C. Iffert
on his Episcopal Ordination
and Installation as the Eleventh
Bishop of Covington

We wish you every grace and
blessing in Covington and
assure you of our prayers.
Congratulations Bishop Iffert

St. Timothy Church and School are pleased to welcome you to the Diocese of Covington. May the Lord bless you in your role as our shepherd!
When a bishop is ordained, the Church invites him to declare a motto and design a coat of arms. The purpose of the motto is to reflect the bishop’s beliefs and convictions within the Christian faith. The coat of arms utilizes symbols to identify the bishop. Bishop Iffert’s coat of arms combines a design of his own choosing with the coat of arms of the Diocese of Covington.

The diocesan design on the left hand side of the shield was commissioned by Bishop William T.穆洛伊 following the 1953 elevation of Covington’s Cathedral to the status of a minor basilica. It was devised by William F. J. Ryan of New York, N.Y. and West Chatham, Mass.

Imposed on the blue upper portion is a gold fleur-delis within the arms of a silver crescent moon. Both are symbols of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Their juxtaposition in this fashion indicates her Assumption, or, as the artist conceived it, “the Blessed Virgin elevated above the sublunary world.” It is under this aspect that Mary is patroness of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. Below it is a red cross on a white field. Pointing upward on the vertical beam of the cross is a gold sword, the symbol of St. Paul, patron of the Diocese of Covington.

The right hand side of the shield identifies Bishop Iffert and reflects his hopes for his episcopal service to the Diocese of Covington.

A green background symbolizes hope, evokes the fertile land, and calls to mind the bishop’s childhood on a family farm. It also alludes to the coat of arms of the Diocese of Belleville, which shows a beautiful city atop a green hill. A wavy, silver barrulet bisects the green field, representing a river. The Ohio River forms the northern border of the Diocese of Covington and the southeastern border of the Diocese of Belleville, connecting the diocese where Bishop Iffert will exercise episcopal ministry to the diocese where he served as deacon and priest.

The upper portion features an eight-pointed star within the arms of a carpenter’s square. They honor Our Lady and St. Joseph the Worker. This title for St. Joseph especially emphasizes the dignity of those who labor. The star also appears on Pope Francis’ coat of arms. Together, the symbols attest that Bishop Iffert was appointed by Pope Francis in the Year of St. Joseph.

The lower portion features a bundle of wheat bound in the middle as at harvest. This symbol carries multiple meanings. First, Bishop Iffert is from a region in southern Illinois nicknamed “Little Egypt.” The grain calls this to mind because “the whole world came to Egypt to buy grain” (Gen 41:57). Harvest imagery also alludes to Thanksgiving Day in the United States. The bishop was born on Thanksgiving Day. Most significantly, the wheat reminds the Christian of the bread that becomes the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. Christ makes himself and his self-emptying love fully present to his people in this central act of worship and thanksgiving.

Above the shield is a gold cross surmounted by a green pontifical hat called a gallero. The cross and hat with six tassels on either side portray the rank of a bishop. The phrase on the scroll beneath the shield, “In all things give thanks,” (Thes 5:18) is Bishop Iffert’s episcopal motto. It reflects his conviction that turning to Christ with rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving — especially encountering Christ in the midst of the Church and receiving him in the sacrament of his Most Holy Body and Blood — is God’s will for Christians in every circumstance.

The personal Arms of Bishop Iffert were devised by Rev. Guy Selvester, Washington, New Jersey, in consultation with the Most Rev. John C. Iffert, 2021.
Making a profession of faith and an oath of fidelity to the Pope, the Universal Church, and the priests, deacons and people of the Diocese of Covington

In the days leading up to his consecration and installation as Covington’s 11th bishop, Father John Iffert made a profession of faith and oath of fidelity to the Pope, the Universal Church, and the priests, deacons and people of the Diocese of Covington. Bishop Roger Foys, Father Ryan Maher and Father Daniel Schomaker witnessed the recitation and signing of the oath, Aug. 26. Canon 833 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law requires a profession of faith, “in accord with a formula approved by the Apostolic See,” to be made by among others, “persons promoted to the episcopacy and those equivalent to a diocesan bishop.” The Oath of Fidelity encapsulates the awesome responsibilities, practiced in humility, of the episcopacy. Here is the oath:

I, John C. Iffert, having been promoted to the See of Covington will always be faithful to the Catholic Church, and the priests, deacons and people of the Diocese of Covington.

I will acknowledge and respect the prerogatives and duties of the Legates of the Roman Pontiff, who act in the person of the Supreme Pastor.

With the utmost diligence I will carry out the apostolic duties entrusted to Bishops, namely to teach, sanctify and rule the People of God, in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the College of Bishops.

I will watch over the unity of the Universal Church, and thus will make every effort to ensure that the deposit of faith handed down from the Apostles is preserved pure and entire, and that the truths to be held and put into practice will be passed on and clearly explained to all, as they are proposed by the Church’s Magisterium.

I will show paternal affection to those who err in faith and I will make every effort to guide them to the fullness of Catholic truth.

Having before me the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, I will conduct myself conscientiously and reverently and thus fulfill the ministry entrusted to me, so that, having become myself an example to the flock, I will be able to confirm the faithful in the pursuit of Christian perfection.

I will uphold the discipline common to the whole Church and will carefully promote the observance of all ecclesiastical laws, particularly those contained in the Code of Canon Law.

I will be ever vigilant to prevent possible abuses, especially with regard to the ministry of the word and the celebration of the sacraments.

I will diligently look after the administration of the Church’s temporal goods, especially those destined for divine worship, for the proper sustenance of the clergy and other ministers, and for the works of the apostolate and of charity.

In carrying out the mandate entrusted to me I will show particular affection to all priests and deacons, the prudent cooperators of the order of Bishops, and to men and women Religious, sharers in the one work.

I will likewise take great care to promote sacred vocations, so that the spiritual needs of the whole Church will be appropriately met.

I will recognize and promote the dignity of lay people and their proper role in the Church’s mission. And I will be especially concerned to promote missionary works aimed at the evangelization of peoples.

Unless impeded, I will personally attend or promptly respond when called to Councils and other legitimate collegial actions.

At determined times or as the occasion demands, I will give an account of my pastoral office to the Apostolic See, and to the best of my ability I will respectfully accept and carry out its mandates and counsels.

So help me God and these Holy Gospels which I touch with my hand. — Most. Rev. John C. Iffert
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Don Brockmeier
Messenger contributor

In his introductory news conference, Bishop John Iffert mentioned that he was greatly impressed by the book “Poverty of Spirit” by the German theologian, Father Johann Baptist Metz. The title is an obvious reference to the first beatitude in Matthew: “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (5:3). Father Metz’s 1963 work is not some highbrow academic tome, but a short reflection that has become a modern classic in Christian spirituality on “a necessary ingredient in any authentic Christian attitude toward life.”

I remember how I felt the first time I read this little book. Sitting on my deck on a warm summer evening, after reading only the first few pages I was astounded by the clarity and wisdom of Father Metz’s insight about how poverty of spirit and self-emptying (kenosis) are unequivocally essential to sincere discipleship. He explains that “poverty of spirit is not just one virtue among many. It is the hidden component of every transcending act, the ground of every ‘theological virtue.’” For me, Father Metz brought into sharp focus a key to our faith that had been hiding in plain sight in the Scriptures.

Father Johann Baptist Metz (1928-2019) was a theology professor at University of Münster for most of his career. As a theologian of his generation laboring to illuminate and champion the riches of Vatican II, he advocated a dynamic faith that moves us past our self-reliance and complacency toward greater compassion for the suffering and for those left behind in society’s dizzying rush toward advancement.

Spiritual poverty is the “obedient acceptance of our natural impoverishment,” and it is “the doorway through which we must pass to become authentic human beings.” We are not born into the fullness of humanity. Rather, gifted with freedom and the capacity for self-reflection, our life develops as a “spiritual adventure” in this process of becoming. Jesus demonstrated the most perfect path to becoming authentically human: “Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:6-8).

However, we are naturally repulsed and frightened by the thought of being intrinsically needy; it threatens our ego-instinctive sense of self-sufficiency and independence so venerated by contemporary Western culture. “We are always a potential rebel,” drawn to exercise our freedom in ways that betray our humble acceptance of this truth. But through prayer, imitation of Jesus (the frighteningly simple man, whose only talent was to do good!), and God’s providence, our embrace of spiritual poverty draws us ever nearer to God. “A human being with grace is a human being who has been emptied, who stands impoverished before God.”

As we integrate spiritual poverty into our lives and our worldview, we begin to shun extravagance and separation from others and live with a “readiness for sacrifice” stemming from our love of neighbor being an extension of our love of God. Every human encounter is approached with openness to the other. “To be able to surrender oneself and become ‘poor’ is, in biblical theology, to be with God, to find one’s hidden nature in God; in short, it is ‘heaven.’ ‘To stick to oneself’ and to serve only one’s own interests is to be damned, it is ‘hell.’”

None of us is able to be fully obedient to this call, nor can we totally comprehend the true nature of “our impoverished being.” Nonetheless, practicing the surrender of spiritual poverty brings with it a joy, contentment and fullness of freedom that stems from living harmoniously with our truest self, with others, and with God. Bishop Iffert shared how, after having read Father Metz’s book, he adapted the prayer of St. Isaac Jogues for his own devotion: “Wherever I go from here, Lord, let me be strong in faith and poor in spirit. Make me a man after your own heart.” This prayer can be a reminder to ask God for the grace to grow in this most challenging virtue — poverty of spirit.

Don Brockmeier is a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist, Covington.
Welcome, Bishop Iffert!

Our students and staff look forward to having you as our Shepherd!

Welcome Bishop Iffert

to the Diocese of Covington!
Welcome Bishop John Iffert!

May our Provident God guide you as you lead and guide the people of God here in the Diocese of Covington.

The Sisters of Divine Providence have a long history of 132 years of presence in this Diocese, having been welcomed here by the third Bishop of Covington, Camillus Paul Maes, in 1889. Throughout those years, our relationship with the many Bishops and priests has been a close and collaborative one.

Bishop Maes made many trips to the Provincial House in Newport to pray with and offer support to those early Sisters. Bishop Ferdinand Brossart, the fourth Bishop, found solace and healing at the convent in Melbourne while he was extremely sick. After his recovery, he returned, often for days at a time, and eventually retired there until his death. Upon his request, he was buried in a mausoleum that he designed in the convent cemetery.

For many years priests of the Diocese made their annual retreat at the convent in Melbourne! Bishops and priests continued to be welcomed many times for various occasions at the convent or faithfully serving as chaplains.

Over the years, Sisters have worked closely with our Bishops in serving the people of God in this Diocese and responding in various ways to meet the needs where they existed. We invite you, Bishop Iffert, to continue to rely upon us for the needs of the local Church.

Most especially, we assure you of our prayers as you enter such a difficult and challenging ministry as Diocesan Shepherd. You will be confronted with issues and decisions that will require decisiveness, consultation and wisdom. We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon you during the months and years ahead. We are confident that you will commit yourself to furthering the Kingdom of God here in the Covington Diocese.

Most especially, we assure you of our prayers as you enter such a difficult and challenging ministry as Diocesan Shepherd. You will be confronted with issues and decisions that will require decisiveness, consultation and wisdom. We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon you during the months and years ahead. We are confident that you will commit yourself to furthering the Kingdom of God here in the Covington Diocese.

The People of DIVINE MERCY and ST. BERNARD would like to warmly welcome our new Bishop, John Iffert!
Making God’s goodness and presence felt

The Sisters of Notre Dame, largely in exile as a result of Bismarck’s Kulturkampf, were welcomed by Bishop Toebbe to the diocese of Covington in 1874. Bishop Toebbe was a member of the large German immigrant population in Covington at the time.

We have been privileged to live among and work with the people of northern, central and eastern Kentucky for almost 150 years. (Early on, our ministries expanded across the Ohio River, and we had a significant presence in the Cincinnati archdiocese.)

Our earliest ministries were in education and childcare, but expanded into healthcare and eldercare when those unmet needs became apparent.

We have been blessed in many warm relationships and partnerships with people working in the Diocese of Covington, regardless of their creed.

We welcome Bishop John Iffert and are confident that he will receive the same generous welcome that has been our experience. We look forward to sharing faith and mission with Bishop Iffert as together we make God’s goodness and presence felt in the Covington community.

We assure Bishop Iffert of our prayer and support.

Notre Dame Sister Margaret Mary Gorman, provincial
Sisters of Notre Dame of the USA

Sharing the saving love of God

The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker extend a warm welcome to Bishop John C. Iffert. We welcome you to the Covington Diocese and want to assure you of our prayers for you.

The Diocese is a special place for women religious with five religious communities. This wealth of charisms of religious communities is a blessing for the people of the Diocese. The prayers of the religious, as well as our examples of charity and concern for others, bring many graces to the people of the Diocese.

The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker are a small, diocesan community. Our charism is to share the saving love of God through our apostolic works of charity. We work in the healthcare and education fields. We have a nursing home, Taylor Manor, in Versailles, Ky. and St. Joseph Academy in Walton, Ky.

Although we are small, we have a big heart for the people God sends into our lives. Our main concern is to support the Diocese through our apostolate.

Prayer is the way we spiritually support both the works of the Diocese and the Bishop.

Mother Mary Christina Murray
Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker

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

Dr. Gregory J. Schaffer

The choice of sacred music for any liturgical celebration should, hopefully, provide a suitable complement to the liturgy of the day, whether it be for a small vigil Mass or a major celebration on the diocesan level. During more typical times, one may have a specific calendar of repertory for use over the three liturgical cycles.

Choosing the music for an occasion such as the consecration and installation of a bishop is richly rewarding. The only real challenge is selecting a small set of repertory from so many wonderful options for a singular liturgical event. The music minister is rewarded by working through the process, refining multiple versions of the music list to its final version. I have often discovered better options, meaningful to the occasion, which had not been previously considered.

The Bishop’s Choir repertoire is vast — spanning centuries of themes, styles and traditions. Whittling those down to a handful of titles is a great exercise. I feel blessed having actively participated in the installation of three previous bishops, this being the first celebration as choir-master choosing the repertory. There are also long-time choir members who sing at those events.

Included in the Prelude are three choral selections centered on our presence, God’s Goodness and the saints. “Blessed Jesus, We are Here!” is a florid chorale (Lobseder Jesu), with text centered on our mindful presence at the Altar Examinandum Sancti — “The Saints will rejoice in Glory” (Paul Huber) is a festive anthem with full organ accompaniment acknowledging the saints of God and their watchful presence on this occasion. Many of them are depicted in the stunning stained glass windows above the ciborium of the Basilica. This piece is heard on the Feast of All Saints, and has been sung on numerous occasions by the Bishop’s Choir since its very early days around 1950.

The Responsorial Psalm 89: “Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord,” is a new setting composed in honor of Bishop John Iffert. It is a fine anthem with text focused on the importance we have felt by being a part of the consecration and installation of the new Bishop. No words can convey the honor, blessing, and gratitude we have felt by being a part of the consecration and installation of the Most Rev John C. Iffert as Eleventh Bishop of Covington.

During the Preparation of the Gifts, after the great hymn “O God, Beyond All Praying” is sung by all, the choir sings “The Truth Your Word Imparts,” a very simple musical setting with text focused on the Word of God. This theme was requested by Bishop Iffert for his wedding anniversary which a feast day is Sept. 30. While modest in form and harmonic structure, this piece provides a profound message of faith, and thanksgiving for God’s Word which guides us on our path.

At Communion, the choir sings “Very Bread” by Randolph Curry. The text is taken from the beginning of Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi (“Very Bread, Good Shepherd tend us; Jesus with thy love befriend us…”). A flowing, chant-like melody is supported by a rich harmonic texture, providing a reflective moment in the liturgy. Bob Hurd’s “Ubi caritas est vera” and Stephen Dean’s setting of Psalm 34, “Taste and See,” are a universally appreciated Communion processional hymn, as is. Both are good choices for their singable melodies, as well as thematic choices for their singable melodies, as well as thematic

The Bishop’s Choir has worked very hard in weeks of preparation. We have felt the joy of the occasion, the importance to the Christian life.

For the Choral Thanksgiving, the choir sings “Rejoice in the Lord, Always!” The text is taken from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Phil 4: 4-8). Composed by Dr. Robert Schaffer (1980), it was commissioned by the choir at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (Cincinnati). The anthem would honor his wife, Rita Schaffer’s 10th anniversary as music director there. Since then, has been sung by the Bishop’s Choir on numerous occasions at Mass in the Basilica, and for concerts in America, Europe and Canada. Recently, I have added a trumpet score to the original organ accompaniment. It is fitting to include my father’s music for this occasion — at the Basilica he loved and served, under five Bishops, for 63 years. One would be hard-pressed to think of a more meaningful text to sing in summation of this Rite of Consecration in its joyous conclusion. Whatever is true, whatever is right, whatever is loving, whatever is generous, if there is something of excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, give yourselves to these things.

As the new Bishop is led by the co-consecrators through the Basilica, blessing all who are present, the traditional setting of the Te Deum is sung.

Concluding the celebration, a second setting of the Te Deum is sung in the form of “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”; followed by the triumphant postlude with trumpet: “The Heavens Declare the Glory of God” (Benedetto Marcello). We have all been humbled by this experience. The Bishop’s Choir has worked very hard in weeks of preparation. No words can convey the honor, blessing, and gratitude we have felt by being a part of the consecration and installation of the Most Rev John C. Iffert as Eleventh Bishop of Covington.

Dr. Gregory J. Schaffer is principal organist and choir-master for the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Ky.

May your days be filled with the peace of Christ, which is beyond all human telling.
The prayer intention for October, as recommended by Pope Francis, is for Missionary Disciples—that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavor of the Gospel.

Fifth annual St. Joseph Academy, Walton, Craft Show, Oct. 9, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact at 485-6444 or sjanews@gmail.com. Vendors, register and pay online at sjawalton.com/Events/Craft-Fair.

The fourth annual Rosary Coast to Coast event will be held Oct. 10, 4 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Grotto of the Two Hearts. This is an international event praying—under the protective mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe—for the spiritual health of the United States. Rain or shine. Bring a chair.

Join the Covington Diocesan Division, World Apostolate of Fatima, USA, Our Lady’s Blue Army to commemorate the “104th Anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun” Oct. 13, at Our Lady’s Farm, Falmouth. Rosary begins at 11 a.m. followed by a procession of Our Lady of Fatima and Mass at 11:30 a.m. Contact jeanegermani@gmail.com.

Reunion for anyone who attended St. Timothy Catholic School or Church in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 15, 6-10 p.m., Mike Linnig’s Seafood Restaurant. Call or text (270) 791.6624.

The 7th annual St. Joseph Academy golf outing, “Tee off for the Kids,” Oct. 15, at The Willows Golf Course, Independence. Shotgun start at 10:30 a.m., cost $100/golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf with cart, lunch buffet, refreshments, and dinner. Proceeds to replace outdated A/C units. Contact 485-6444 or linix@sjawalton.com, or register and pay online at https://sjawalton.com/Golf-Outing.


Our Savior Parish, Covington, annual Homecoming, Oct. 17, 9:30 a.m., Mass followed by finger foods and fellowship. Everyone welcome.

Newport Central Catholic High School Open House, Oct. 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (join us at any point between these times). The Open House will feature academic department exhibits along with Fine Arts, athletic and extracurricular activity displays. For details, contact the NCC Development Office at 292-0001.

Are you or someone you know, a Veteran? Since 2016, the St. Elizabeth Hospice Program has made an ongoing commitment through the national We Honor Veterans program, to recognize the unique needs of veterans and their families through an annual Veteran Appreciation Event. Join St. Elizabeth Hospice Nov. 8, Penner Park, Covington, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. for a free drive-thru resource event honoring and celebrating veterans. Service recognition certificates, giveaways, military-themed music and resources for veteran services will be provided. RSVPs kindly requested for certificate recognition. Contact natalie.ciulla@stelizabeth.com or call 446-0538 for information.

The 19th annual Bishop Brossart High School Emerald Gala is Nov. 13, Seither Sports Center, 7 p.m.–12 a.m. The theme for the night is Totally 80s. For information, visit BBHSGala2021.GiveSmart.com or e-mail gala@bishopbrossart.org.

St. Bernard and Divine Mercy parishes 14th annual Women’s Tea is Nov. 13, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Garvey Hall, St. Bernard Church, Dayton. Presale tickets $10; $15 at the door. Call (513) 325-3259 or (513) 702-4456.

Willkommen zu St. Agnes

St. Agnes’ Oktoberfest had a special guest over the weekend. Willkommen zu St. Agnes Oktoberfest, Bishop Iffert. May we continue to follow your spiritual leadership and “in all things give thanks.”

Reading enriches all creation

Students at Holy Trinity School love to help God’s creation grow. Holy Trinity School third graders took time to read to the plants in Ms. Schulte’s classroom.

Welcome Bishop Iffert

Students at Mary, Queen of Heaven School, Erlanger, created a poster welcoming Bishop John Iffert.

Achieving more together

Eighth graders from St. Agnes School had a successful outdoor field trip at Camp Joy. The Class of 2022 participated in a wilderness survival activity and a challenging ropes course. The ropes course allowed students to pursue individual goals and encourage their classmates to achieve those goals while the survival course used required teamwork and collaboration to problem-solve.

Welcome Bishop John C. Iffert!

May the Diocese of Covington be continually filled with the Holy Spirit!

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At the vigil Vespers, the evening before the installation Bishop Roger Foys blessed the insignia of the bishop — the episcopal ring, miter, and crozier. In his homily, Bishop Foys welcomed Bishop-elect Iffert and all those attending from the Diocese of Belleville. He asked for everyone to join him as he pledged his support to his successor.

“In one more day the Lord has given us the answer to our prayers — a new shepherd to lead us, to guide us, to walk beside us, to give us strength, to preach to us the Gospel, administer the sacraments, to love us, as we pledge our love, our loyalty and our fidelity to him,” said Bishop Foys. “Bishop-elect Iffert, welcome to the Diocese of Covington.”

At the close of Vespers, Bishop-elect John Iffert addressed those in attendance.

“Thank you,” Bishop-elect Iffert began. “Of course, thank you is the first words I am speaking in this beautiful cathedral, and I want it to be the first word, the last word, and always my word to be thank you. Thanks be to God, thanks for you and thanks to you. Thank you for being here today and thank you for being where God has planted you firm in faith. Always, always thank you.”

Bishop-elect Iffert shared how this morning Bishop Michael McGovern celebrated Mass in the private chapel at the bishop’s residence. Bishop-elect Iffert assisted as the altar server.

“It was almost the perfect way, I discovered, for me to celebrate this last Mass before I will be by God’s grace consecrated a bishop, because it reminded me of where this all began,” Bishop-elect Iffert said. “This is not a new journey. This is a new step on a journey. And I remembered all those thousands of Masses I served for Msgr. Lombardo back in DuQuoin.”

Bishop-elect Iffert acknowledged that some of the people gathered for Vespers have known him for a long time and some “were getting there first look.”

“The thing I remembered, today, as I served is, that God is constant, God is trustworthy, God is present. And one of the most tremendous ways God has made himself known in my life has always been you,” Bishop-elect Iffert said. “Thanks be God and thank you, those who are gathered here and those who were unable to gather.”

Blessing of the Insignia

**Miter** — the wearing of a headdress is an ancient practice when a headdress was worn by one consecrated to the Lord — one set aside, set apart, not for his own sake but for the work of the Lord. The two sides of the miter represent the Old and New Testaments, and the lappets in the back are the letter of the Spirit and the Word of God.

**Ring** — twofold meaning, in Old Testament times it was a sign of authority but even more importantly for bishops it is a sign of his spousal relationship to the people to whom he has been sent. It symbolizes the union of the bishop with Christ and the union of the bishop to those to whom he’s been sent.

**Crozier** — shepherds’ crook. Symbolizes the bishop’s duty to protect those entrusted to his care, to bring them in when they stray and to lean on the staff when tired.
Some behind the scenes and bird’s eye view snapshots:

(top left) Bishop-elect Iffert emerges from the Cathedral garden to enter the procession for the consecration and installation. (top right) Bishop Robert Muench, ninth Bishop of Covington, gives the thumbs up as he prepares to enter the Cathedral.

(above left and center left) Bearers of the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice are part of the honor guard. (from left) Divine Providence Sister Fran Moore, Margaret Schack, Claire Quagley, Notre Dame Sister Mary Ethel Parrott, Benedictine Sister Mary Catherine Wenzlup, Divine Providence Sister Stallmeyer, Karen Riegler and Clare Ruehl.

(above center right and right) Mary Iffert with lifelong family friend, Opal. John and Mary Iffert hold hands as their son, John Iffert, is installed eleventh Bishop of Covington.

(left) Joshua Heskamp, seminarian, carries the miter during the procession; (far left) Tim and William Broering man the cameras for the livestream.

(right center top) Msgr. Gerald Twaddell was commentator for the installation livestream. (right center bottom) Priests enter the Cathedral for the installation.

(left) Bishop Iffert and the congregation as seen from above.

(right) Knights of St. John, Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Knights of Columbus and Catholic Order of Foresters make up the honor guard.
The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption overflowed with prayer as the Diocese of Covington asked you to ordain this priest, John Iffert to the archbishop for ordination. “Most Reverend Father, we gather with praise and thanksgiving to God,” said the Rev. Gregory Schaffer, organist and choirmaster, filled the Cathedral with praise and thanksgiving to God.

The principal consecrator and homilist was Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville and the co-consecrators were Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys of Covington and Bishop Michael McGovern of Belleville. Witnessing for the Holy See was Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys of Covington and Bishop Michael McGovern of Belleville. Witnessing for the Holy See was Monsignor Marvin Bailey, Gillespie, Keener and Schroeder photos.

“Bishop-elect John,” Archbishop Kurtz concluded, “preach the word of God with all patience and sound teaching.”

In his first public remarks closing the installation ceremony Bishop Iffert offered his thanks to all of those gathered, especially his parents, Bishop Emeritus Foys, Archbishop Kurtz, Bishop McGovern and all those who had a hard to planning for the celebration.

And reflecting on the third question Archbishop Kurtz said, “In every circumstance, wherever we find ourselves — give things.”

“The pastoral cross you place near your heart everyday will be your time to remember that in order to listen to the people of God and serve them, you will first need to begin with listening to Jesus,” Archbishop Kurtz said as a way to respond to the first question.

After which, Archbishop Kurtz read the mandate from the Apostolic notificating the appointment of Bishop-elect Iffert as the eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Covington. He then handed the crosiers to Bishop-elect Iffert, who presented it to the bishops and priests and then, coming down from the sanctuary presented the document, at times raising it above his head, to the congregation as they erupted in continuous and thunderous applause.

Archbishop Kurtz opened his homily thanking John and Mary Iffert for the gift of their son. "You show great love and affection for your dear son, and we do too. We already have begun to see the good gifts that God has given to him." "My motto comes from St. Paul ... we remember it as the formula for discipleship — rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all things, in every circumstance, even now, even here, under every strain, under every threat of division, in the midst of the pandemic — give thanks. It is the proper Christian response to everything. Today I want to proclaim that,”

As we gather around this altar and we bring every need, every strain, every stress, every alienation, and offer it to God and give thanks, we know what God does with that. He takes, he blesses, he breaks and makes plenty for us. In all things, in every circumstance, even now, even here, under

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Bishop Kurtz placed the miter on Bishop Iffert’s head. (below right) The Handing on of the Insignia - Archbishop Kurtz hands on the crosier, the sign of your pastoral office: and keep watch over the sheep of God which you belong. (above) Laying on of Hands - Bishop Michael McGovern of Belleville, as co-consecrator, imposes hands on Bishop-elect Iffert.

We're excited to have prayed with you and I beg you to pray for me, for the diocese, the priests, the faithful in the diocese and this congregation.”

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Peter’s response to the second question, Archbishop Kurtz said, demonstrates fidelity. “As you put the episcopal ring on your finger it will be a sign of fidelity reminding you, and all who will see it, of your duty to be a witness to fidelity that is not only a Church but a people.”

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Bishop Kurtz concluded, “praise Jesus boldly; celebrate the sacred sacraments and mysteries ever-present serve those entrusted to you to carry on, and joy that you might, in all things, give thanks to our God.”

As we gather around this altar and we bring every need, every strain, under every threat of division, in the midst of the pandemic — give thanks. It is the proper Christian response to everything. Today I want to proclaim that,”

“I rejoice with you today and I rejoice in the Church gathered and I rejoice in God’s gracious mercy I am ready. I am excited to have prayed with you and I beg you to pray for me, for the diocese, the priests, the faithful in the diocese and finally, the faithful.”
October 8, 2021

Bishop Michael McGovern, Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys and the hundreds of witnesses in attendance, applaud as Bishop Iffert is seated in the cathedra, officially taking possession of the Church of Covington.

Bishop Iffert blesses Claire and Joseph Collopy, the young couple are expecting their first child very soon.

The Ifferts (from left) Mary, Kathy, Bishop John, Kim and John.

Mother Marie Michelle Mudd, C.P. greets Bishop Iffert.

Patricia and Stephen Enzweiler, cathedral parishioners, at the welcoming reception.

Deacon Jim and Julie Fortner meet Bishop Iffert.

Deacon Barry and Cathy Henry at the welcoming reception.

Elementary school principals (from left) Meg Platt, Mary, Queen of Heaven School; Joanne Neermith, St. Paul School and Sally Zick, St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs, greet Bishop Iffert.

Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker Celeste Marie Downes, Mother Mary Christina Murray and Patricia Jean Cushing welcome Bishop Iffert.
Friends and co-workers share what qualities they respect and admire in Father Iffert

Laura Keener

What’s Father John Iffert like to work with? What qualities does he possess that will serve him well, as he takes up the office of bishop? The Messenger asked some friends and co-workers to share their thoughts on Covington’s newly appointed 11th Bishop.

Bishop Michael McGovern of Belleville, Illinois said he has known Father Iffert since seminary. Father Iffert was three years his junior at Mundelein Seminary, Illinois. After being appointed Bishop of Belleville in July 2020, Bishop McGovern was in search for a vicar general. The 81-year-old Msgr. John McEvilly, who had served as vicar general for 13 years, had asked for retirement.

“He shared with me that he would like at least a week of retirement. I can’t really fight that,” Bishop McGovern said.

Father Iffert came highly recommended and graciously accepted the assignment as vicar general. “He’s a very respected priest,” Bishop McGovern said. “He has great experience as a pastor but also he has a great reputation as a pastor. It’s not just a title, but he certainly lives it — he’s a shepherd.”

Bishop McGovern said that Father Iffert is a great listener: “That’s good for a diocesan bishop to be a good listener,” he said. “He is also able to reconcile people. In situations where there is tension, both parties can talk with him and know they’re being listened to, being cared about, that their opinion matters and to find a good way to go forward.”

Father Iffert is also someone who thinks with the Church. He will be able to help people understand the role of the pope and the life of the Church and lead them to unity with the Church, Bishop McGovern said.

Bishop McGovern was co-consecrator at Father Iffert’s consecration and installation, Sept. 30. When asked if he had thought about that moment he said that he had.

“I think St. Paul speaks about this more in terms of the Eucharist, ‘whatever is handed on to me, I’ve handed onto you.’ But there is a sense of the imposition of hands that helps to understand apostolic succession. This act goes back to apostolic times, when the apostles replaced Judas with Matthias … They understood the influence of the Spirit, Matthias was chosen, and they imposed hands on him … this unbroken action of the Holy Spirit that goes back to the Lord himself. I take that very seriously.”

Another aspect of the imposition of hands that impresses Bishop McGovern is that the action is done in silence. “It’s a moment to remember that it’s really Christ doing this, it’s not Michael McGovern. I think that’s important. I’m looking forward to it. There are some things that really bring you back to the mystery of God’s Son having come to save us, that he established the Church, and in every generation there are men and women called to holiness in their particular ways of living.”

For John Curtis Iffert, his way of living will be as a Bishop of Jesus Christ.

Father Dwight Ezop, a priest for the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan and editor for FAITH magazine, is a dear friend of Father Iffert’s from the seminary. He was also a chaplain at the consecration and installation, kneeling beside Father Iffert during the Litany of Supplication. Despite the time and distance separating the two, both have come to cherish each other’s company and counsel.

“You learn pretty quickly that there are some guys who are easy to talk to and then there’s other guys that are not so easy. Father John was somebody I could rely on for real good advice,” said Father Ezop. “We made that conscious decision to put in the work to maintain the friendship. It’s been a real blessing in my life to be able to have his friendship and his counsel. And hopefully to be that for him, too.”

Father Ezop said that Father Iffert possesses three qualities that will make him a good bishop: he’s a man of deep faith, he has the rare talent of being able to talk to just about anyone and he’s a great thinker who’s very perceptive.

“He’s one of those people who can look at a situation, see its complexity and size it up pretty quickly,” Father Ezop said. “That’s not to say that he would rush to solutions, but if you give him a little bit of time, he will have a pretty accurate read on what’s going on.”

A fourth quality is that he likes to eat. Father Ezop quipped, adding, “He enjoys the company of a good meal.”

Father Mark Reyling, pastor, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Herrin, Illinois attended seminary with Father Iffert. He said he was a serious student, very well respected by his classmates and a “good all-around guy” with a listening ear.

(Continued on page 35)
Helping community heroes serving those in need is at the heart of St. Mary Parish

Laura Keener
Editor

Co-founder of Lifeboat Alliance Family Shelter is an interesting entry on Father John Iffert’s curriculum vitae. Located in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, the Lifeboat Alliance Family Shelter’s tagline is “helping the homeless weather life’s storms.”

At the shelter, men, women and families not only find a place of refuge — sometimes for as long as 90 days — but also are provided meals, access to shower and laundry facilities, transportation for job interviews, work and doctor appointments. They are also assigned a case worker to help them apply for wrap-around services and programs to which they are entitled.

“All of this is done to get them from this crisis to a stable and healthy place to call home,” Father Iffert said.

“About half of the people served at the shelter are veterans and are entitled to government services,” said Father Iffert. “Another large group is children; there are a lot of families with children served by the shelter.”

Father Iffert was director and then president for the Shelter for nine years (2009-2018), however, he puts a strong emphasis on the letters “co” in the word co-founder.

“My part was very small,” he said. “It mostly involved showing the neighborhood around us that we were taking their concerns seriously and in the end it’s a place where homeless people can go and get shelter.”

When Father Iffert first arrived at St. Mary Immaculate Conception Parish in Mt. Vernon, the town was struggling to establish a shelter and program to assist its homeless population. A few community business leaders approached Father Iffert about getting his parish involved in helping get a shelter established. Father Iffert went door-to-door talking to businesses and neighbors, having one-on-one conversations and hosting meetings at the parish to answer questions and concerns. Eventually business leaders, school administrators and other supporters developed a plan working with the local Habitat for Humanity which had acquired a former nursing home, to bring the shelter into reality.

There were meetings — zoning board meetings and City Council meetings — where progress was slow. But as support grew, so did the city’s confidence that the shelter could serve a vulnerable population without becoming a bad neighbor.

“At our first meeting there were maybe 20 of us and there were a lot of questions. At the next meeting, there were 50 of us and they were a little nicer. At the City Council meeting we had 100 people there … the more people we would get to these meetings, the better they would treat us. Finally, I just asked, ‘How many people is it going to take? How many hundreds of people do I need in this room before you say, yes?’”

Father Iffert said that Mt. Vernon is classified by the Census Bureau as a rural population center. “It’s a small town,” he said.

“Rural homelessness looks different from urban homelessness, he said. Not many people are living on the street but instead do not have their own safe place to live. “They are living in the woods in a pop-up trailer and we have a lot of people who are sleeping on their cousin’s couch,” said Father Iffert. “Of course then, that puts them in terrible danger of lots of different abuse.”

Growing up on a farm, Father Iffert said that he knows many would consider his family poor. But, he said, he was “farm poor.” He always had food, always had clothes, always attended private school, always had a home and most importantly, always had the support and love of a family.

“When he was in college, he and a group of students volunteered for a place called Personal Assistance Telephone, which was a drug and suicide prevention hotline. There he learned the meaning of desperate poverty and developed a heart for people in need.

“I talked with a lot of people who were taking bad drug trips or people who had mental health issues and were not receiving appropriate care,” Father Iffert said. “I can point to that experience as being a real eye-opener for me, that there were people who did not have a loving family and a safe place.”

Again, Father Iffert deflects any kind of adulation for his efforts and instead praises the counselors, the social workers and police officers who every day spend their lives serving the poor and vulnerable.

“I’m not heroic, I’m not,” he said. “We have people in this diocese who spent their life poured-out to serve the poor. I’m not one of those people. I spend a lot of time in very well-to-do parishes. But I want to support those people. I want to make sure those people have as much help as they can get.”
A quick look at the shepherds of the Diocese of Belleville

Rob Langenderfer
Messenger Contributor

The Diocese of Belleville, Illinois was established in 1887, more than 200 years after the first church in the area. John Janssen was named the first bishop of Belleville, and was formally ordained April 25, 1888. In the 1890s when Bishop Janssen tried to name a German priest as pastor of an Irish parish, an Irish guard stopped the new pastor from entering, and the bishop excommunicated the whole parish. After several years the Vatican compelled Bishop Janssen to appoint an Irish pastor. Bishop Janssen died on July 2, 1913.

Rev. Henry Althoff was ordained as the second bishop of Belleville on Feb. 24, 1914. He served as bishop during all of World War I, all of World War II and all of the years in between. He held a diocesan synod in 1920. He bought land for a diocesan seminary. It is noted that he had Vespers and Benediction in all of the churches on Sunday afternoons. He was fluent in six languages, and people recall that he had a sense of humor that he showed in one-on-one interactions. He died on July 3, 1947.

Rev. Albert Zuroweste was named the third bishop of Belleville and was ordained on Jan. 29, 1948. Four new high schools were built during Bishop Zuroweste’s tenure. He served as bishop for almost 29 years. The Catholic Youth Organization was started during his era. Catholic Charities was incorporated in 1947, and an ecumenical outreach group, Operation Understanding, was started in Belleville in 1956, several years before Vatican II. The United Front of Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and women religious supported efforts for racial justice even as many Catholic families moved out of the inner city and racial tensions exploded in Cairo in 1969. Catholic Urban Programs, based in East St. Louis, was started in 1973 to try to help with a broad range of needs. Bishop Zuroweste retired on Sept. 3, 1976 and died on Mar. 28, 1987.

The Most Rev. William Cosgrove was installed as the fourth bishop of Belleville on Oct. 28, 1976, having previously been an auxiliary bishop in Cleveland. He was known as a very friendly and down-to-earth person. He lived for six months in an area that had experienced racial conflict and actively worked to bring healing to East St. Louis. It was during his tenure that the first class of 23 lay deacons was ordained in 1980. A number of new programs started during Bishop Cosgrove’s episcopate, including a parish renewal exercise in which 90 percent of the parishes took part. Teens Encounter Christ, Quest Cursillo, Worldwide Marriage Encounter and Residents Encounter Christ weekends were other spiritual growth programs that first happened under Bishop Cosgrove’s episcopate. Bishop Cosgrove retired because of ill health on May 19, 1981 and died Dec. 11, 1992.

(Continued on page 37)
Welcome Bishop Iffert from the Newport Central Catholic High School Family!

Bishop Iffert,
Welcome to the Diocese of Covington! We look forward to working closely with you serving the people in the Diocese of Covington in the various ministries of Catholic Charities as the hands and feet of Christ. The volunteers and staff at Catholic Charities.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you to the Diocese of Covington!

St. Pius X Parish and School
The Most Rev. John Wurm was installed as the fifth bishop of Belleville on Nov. 4, 1981, having previously served as an auxiliary bishop in St. Louis. He was able to visit a vast number of diocesan institutions, but two years into his tenure, he developed liver cancer. He died April 27, 1984.

Rev. James Keleher was ordained the sixth bishop of Belleville Dec. 11, 1984. A highlight of his episcopate was the celebration of the diocese’s 100th anniversary with the publication of its history, “A Time of Favor,” by Betty Burnett. There were a number of challenges that he faced during his tenure. Declining seminary enrollment and the moving of people from farms to the city were stressful problems that did not bring forth easy answers. A number of schools closed and merged. Ten percent of the clergy in the diocese were removed from ministry due to the sexual abuse crisis. Still, positive events continued to occur in ministry, as the Daughters of Charity opened an after-school ministry in East St. Louis housing projects in 1985 and the Poor Clares began a monastery in 1986. Bishop Keleher was installed as Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas, Sept. 8, 1993.

The Most Rev. Wilton Gregory was installed as the seventh bishop of Belleville on Feb. 10, 1994, having served for 10 years as an auxiliary bishop in Chicago. Later that year, the diocese’s first parish life coordinator was appointed at one of the parishes. Six parish life coordinators would later serve at parishes in the diocese. A Diocesan Messenger October 8, 2021 37

The Most Rev. William M. Cosgrove (deceased)
Born: Dec. 26, 1916
Ordained: Dec. 18, 1943
Ordained: Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, Sept. 1, 1968
Installed: Fourth Bishop of Belleville, Oct. 28, 1976
Retired: May 19, 1981
Died: Dec. 11, 1992

The Most Rev. John N. Wurm (deceased)
Born: Dec. 6, 1927
Ordained: April 3, 1954
Ordained: Auxillary Bishop of St. Louis, Aug. 17, 1976
Installed: Fifth Bishop of Belleville, Nov. 4, 1981
Died: April 27, 1984

The Most Rev. James P. Keleher
Born: July 31, 1931
Ordained: April 12, 1958
Ordained: Sixth Bishop of Belleville, Dec. 11, 1984
Installed: Third Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas, Sept. 8, 1993
Retired: Jan. 15, 2005

His Eminence Wilton Cardinal Gregory
Born: Dec. 7, 1947
Ordained: May 9, 1973
Installed: Seventh Bishop of Belleville, Feb. 10, 1994
Installed: Seventh Archbishop of Atlanta, Jan. 17, 2005
Installed: Seventh Archbishop of Washington, May 21, 2019
Elevated to the College of Cardinals: Nov. 28, 2020

The Most Rev. Wilton Gregory was installed as the seventh bishop of Belleville on Feb. 10, 1994, having served for 10 years as an auxiliary bishop in Chicago. Later that year, the diocese’s first parish life coordinator was appointed at one of the parishes. Six parish life coordinators would later serve at parishes in the diocese. A Diocesan Messenger October 8, 2021 37

Congratulations on your appointment as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. Miter wishes you well as you lead the Diocese into the future.

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THE MOST REVEREND
ROBERT J. BRENNAN
AND THE PEOPLE OF THE
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS
EXTEND CONGRATULATIONS
AND PRAYERS TO
THE MOST REVEREND
JOHN C. IFFERT
AS THE 11TH BISHOP OF THE
DIOCESE OF COVINGTON
MAY GOD’S BLESSINGS BE WITH YOU

The Most Rev. Edward K. Braxton was installed as the eighth bishop of Belleville on June 22, 2005, having served as the bishop of Lake Charles, Louisiana since 2001. He wrote two pastoral letters to the diocese as he continued to manage reducing parishes. He welcomed 20 extern priests to the diocese to help with the situation. He retired April 3, 2020.

Rev. Michael McGovern, the ninth bishop of Belleville, grew up in a Chicago neighborhood. He has been a priest since 1994. He served as the pastor of St. Mary in Lake Forest, Illinois from Dec. 15, 2004 until he was named pastor at St. Raphael the Archangel Church on Old Mill Creek, Illinois July 1, 2016. He also served as vice-chancellor for the Archdiocese of Chicago. He was installed as bishop of Belleville on July 22, 2020.
Belleville is home to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows

Margaret Schack

The Messenger arrived for Mass at St. Stephen Church, Caseyville, Aug. 5, to meet Bishop-elect John Iffert and his parishioners. Providentially, it was the feast of Our Lady of the Snows. In his opening remarks, Bishop-elect Iffert reminded parishioners that the Diocese of Belleville has a unique connection with Our Lady of the Snows.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows is a Catholic shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary located in Belleville, Ill., nine miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri. The Shrine is in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Belleville, but is not part of that diocese; rather, it is operated by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Shrine name refers to the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, where legend says snow fell in the summertime.

Bishop-elect Iffert said that one of the places that the Oblates served was Alaska and that many of them were pilots because of the great distances and because they ministered in the snowy Alaskan wilderness. When Oblates migrated south to Illinois and built a retreat and conference, they named it Our Lady of the Snows after their Alaskan experience.

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were founded in 1816 by St. Eugene De Mazenod. Now nearly 4,000 Oblate priests and brothers serve the people of God in more than 60 countries. The Oblates were called “Specialists of the Most Difficult Missions” by Pope Pius XI.

One of the largest outdoor shrines in North America, the Shrine includes a restaurant, a hotel, an apartment complex for retired persons, a residence for the Oblates, a visitors and conference center, and a large gift shop. During Advent and Christmas, the Shrine hosts the “Way of Lights,” an outdoor display that features over 1.1 million white lights and attracts over 350,000 visitors annually. During the summer months, people from all over the world gather to worship and pray during the Our Lady of the Snows Healing and Hope Novena, beginning July 28 and ending Aug. 5 on the feast of Our Lady of the Snows.

The Oblates make possible a number of spiritual and family programs for the enrichment of the local community, for the Midwest region, and for North America. The Shrine’s Youth Ministry, Adult Spirituality, Hispanic Ministry, Liturgy, and Events departments host a variety of programs year-round, tailored to meet the needs of the Shrine’s many pilgrims.

The Shrine also includes a church, a natural outdoor amphitheater, Stations of the Cross, a Resurrection Garden, a depiction of the Lourdes Grotto, an Annunciation Garden and a devotional site for Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Daily and weekend Masses at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows are open to the public. To participate register at SNOWS.ORG. Masses are live streamed daily and available online throughout the day.

Day 9 Novena Prayer

**Feast of Our Lady of the Snows**

Mary intercedes for us with her Son to answer our prayers.

We bring our needs to the altar, offering them up to God. This is our act of humility, our acknowledgment that we are not the most powerful force in the world, that there is One who is greater: Our Lady, by her willingness to do God’s will, gave us an example of such humility. At the moment of her Annunciation, she sang praise for all the gifts of God: “For the Mighty One has done great things for me.” (Luke 1:49)

God showers us with blessings. All that we have comes from this one Source: Our blessings are abundant; so should our thanks be. How can we give less than our all to the God who has given us everything?

To be sure, there are some lives in which the darkness seems overwhelming, in which the suffering seems endless. But we believe that no life goes untouched by God’s goodness. Even the smallest mercies are worthy of gratitude.

It is good to reflect on the ways God has blessed us — when we feel we need healing, it reminds us that God has eased our suffering before, and this too shall pass. When we feel that we have been blessed by healing we thank God who is the Source of all healing and hope.
The Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky,
Congratulates
His Excellency, The Most Reverend John C. Iffert
on his installation as eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Covington.
We hold you in our prayers.

Welcome
Bishop John Iffert
May God bless you!

Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker
Saint Joseph Academy
Taylor Manor
In a tiny corner of America, change has come once more. In the Diocese of Covington, a new shepherd has arrived to assume the episcopal post held by his predecessor of 19 years. With his consecration, he becomes the eleventh bishop of the diocese to hold the position as an Apostle to the faithful. He becomes the eleventh voice of the Gospel, the eleventh light to be set upon the stand, chosen by the Holy Spirit and sent into the diocese by the successor of St. Peter.

Ten bishops have served the Diocese of Covington since the First Plenary Council of Baltimore recommended its creation to the Holy See in 1853. The Diocese of Covington ultimately owes its origins to the westward spread of pioneers coming across the Appalachian Mountains and descending the Ohio River looking for a new life in Kentucky. Throughout the early 19th Century, the Council had witnessed this westward expansion as swarms of Irish and German immigrants settled river cities like Covington and Newport. In 1830, the U.S. Census recorded just 1,458 residents living in both cities. By 1850, the number was more than 15,000.

Missionary priests like Father Stephen Baden and Father Charles Nerinckx (both immigrants themselves) began the work in the 1790’s. As Catholicism spread west, the Diocese of Bardstown was established in 1808 to manage the immense frontier expansion, but by 1847, as the flow of immigrants increased down the Ohio Valley and into Kentucky, the American bishops in Baltimore saw that a new diocese was necessary. With the Council’s recommendation in hand, Pope Pius IX authorized a new diocese for the region, and on July 29, 1853, he named the scholarly Father George Aloysius Carrell, S.J., as its first Bishop of Covington.

Father Carrell came to Covington at age 50 with a reputation as an academic and an adept administrator. He was a Jesuit and the only Bishop of Covington in the 19th Century who wasn’t an immigrant himself. Born in Philadelphia on June 13, 1803 and ordained there on Dec. 20, 1827, he was received into the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in 1835. Sanguine and zealous throughout his early years, he won the esteem of both the people and his superiors as a pastor and educator. He became president of St. Louis University and later came to Cincinnati as rector and president of St. Xavier College (today Xavier University). He was consecrated the first Bishop of Covington on Nov 1, 1853.

From the beginning, Bishop Carrell’s episcopacy was a difficult one. “The mitre has truly been to me a cross of thorns,” he wrote to a friend. The new Diocese of Covington was an immense territory and was virtually churchless and priestless, prompting him to question whether a diocese should be established at all. Only six priests attended to six permanent parishes, and he personally had to ride by horse a circuit to reach 16 mission stations spread across 20 rural counties of Kentucky. Across the eastern and southern portion of the diocese stood the rugged Appalachian Mountains with a meager number of communities that made up a decentralized population scattered among the wooded creeks and valleys.

Yet, Bishop Carrell was to approach his new see with characteristic apostolic zeal. He set out to build the first Covington Cathedral in the autumn of 1853 on a plot on the north side of Eighth St. in Covington. (Continued on page 42)
Dedicated on June 11, 1854, it was modest in its design and appointments, owing to the poverty of the new diocese. Desperately short of priests, he began laying the foundation for growing a native clergy rather than focusing on importing more foreign-born priests. He founded the Diocesan Preparatory College at White Sulphur in Scott County, Ky., and established an annual diocesan collection for the education of young men studying for the priesthood. He further undertook to bring in religious orders, which included the Redemptorist Fathers of the American Province and the Franciscans from St. Vincent Monastery in Beaver, Penn. The establishment of a Benedictine Priory at Covington in 1858 was a source of consolation to Bishop Carrell, who saw the order extend their missionary work throughout the northern part of the diocese.

As an educator, Bishop Carrell insisted on good parish schools. He brought to Covington the Sisters of Charity, the Sisters of St. Benedict, the Sisters of St. Francis, the Ursuline Nuns from Louisville, and the Visitation Nuns for this purpose. The bishop also helped establish St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1861 under the care of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis.

Yet, in the path of his early successes, Carrell’s efforts were met by a bigoted backlash, fomented by movements such as the “Know-Nothings,” an anti-Catholic group that emerged out of the political unrest of the 1850’s and known for rioting, plundering and bloodshed. At the risk of his life, while men had pistols primed and ready sitting on the desks before him, he met the bigotry courageously, defending the truth in courthouses and community halls, explaining the Catholic teaching with natural eloquence, taste and learning.

The coming of the Civil War was the greatest source of great suffering to Bishop Carrell. The conflict and violence pierced him like an arrow, and the invasion of the Confederate army in 1862 divided the diocese and created partisan divisions among both laity and clergy. At war’s end, the Diocese of Covington was financially ruined and Carrell’s health was broken. In late 1867, he tendered his resignation to the Holy Father, citing failing health and the deteriorating conditions of the diocese. But before the matter could be decided, Bishop Carrell died on Sept. 25, 1868.

Covington’s second bishop was Father Augustus Maria Toebbe, a sensitive, pastoral priest born on Jan. 15, 1826 in Meppen, Germany. In early life he worked briefly as a merchant, then sought to join the army as a soldier. After acquiring a religious disposition, he requested and was sent to America to study for the priesthood, eventually coming to Mt. St. Mary Seminary in Cincinnati. Ordained by Cincinnati’s Archbishop Purcell on Sept. 14, 1854, he served several parishes as pastor, most notably at St. Philomena Church in downtown Cincinnati, where he gained a reputation for outstanding executive and pastoral abilities. His selection as Bishop of Covington was seen as a surprise by many, and on Jan. 9, 1870, he was consecrated at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Covington.

Bishop Toebbe’s episcopacy was generally to expand upon what his predecessor had begun. He possessed a profound sense of the people as Church, which made him a leader of his clergy, brought a renewed confidence to parents and inspired the youth of his day to a renewed sense of the faith. He was not the detailed administrator Carrell had been; yet his pastoral zeal quickly made him a favorite of his flock. When he had no priests to send to the missions, he went himself, traveling from one part of the diocese to another, cheerfully enduring the hardships involved. He visited missions to

(Continued from page 41)
the most remote of regions on horseback, carrying his pontificals and vestments in saddlebags. He personally sought out Catholics anywhere he found them. He faced his greatest challenge after three parishes engaged in business dealings that resulted in financial failure and bankruptcy causing public scandal and placing the diocese itself in jeopardy. Eventually the litigations were resolved, but the experience caused the bishop to call the First Diocesan Synod, which established rules for sound fiscal management of parishes. Although his episcopacy was otherwise uneventful, when Bishop Toebbe died on May 2, 1884, he left his successor an enviable pastoral legacy.

During his 14 years as bishop, he built new churches, increasing their number from 42 to 52 and growing a Catholic population to over 40,000. He also established St. John’s Orphanage, increased the number of schools, and welcomed the Sisters of Notre Dame to the diocese.

The late 19th Century saw a marked growth in Catholicity in America, with the continued establishment of religious orders and the expansion of church building amid an American renaissance in art and architecture. Into this rich church Catholic culture came the third Bishop of Covington — the Most Rev. Camillus Paul Maes. Best remembered as the builder of the present Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, he also came from the Old World. Born March 13, 1846 in Courtrai, Belgium, he was an only child and was orphaned at age 14. Feeling the call to the priesthood, he attended the American Seminary at Louvain and was ordained on Dec. 19, 1868. Desiring to become a missionary in America, Father Maes received his first appointment to the Diocese of Detroit, where he served for 16 years.

In Detroit, Maes earned a reputation as an excellent pastor, administrator and financial manager. In 1873, he founded and built St. John Parish near Monroe, Mich., became chancellor and secretary to the archbishop, and penned a highly acclaimed biography of Kentucky missionary and fellow countryman Father Charles Nerinx.

Upon being informed of his selection as Covington’s third prelate, he briefly considered turning it down. “I had been taught to fear the episcopacy,” he wrote to a friend. Yet he went on to accept it, and became one of the American Church’s most beloved figures. Bishop Maes has the distinction of serving the longest in Covington’s episcopal office — 30 years (1885–1915). As he settled in to his bishopric, it was evident that Catholicity was rapidly spreading westward across the United States. But in the Diocese of Covington, he found just the opposite: the faith was slowly dying. Parishes simply withdrew into their own identities and ignored belonging to the diocese at all. In addition, the old cathedral built by Bishop Carroll had been outgrown by population growth and the building itself was falling down. Maes remained undaunted by the challenge. A man of deep faith and trust in God, he immediately set out to repair the diocese and put it back on track. He held a prominent position in the American hierarchy as a pre-eminent educator, and one of the most notable features of his episcopacy was his care and concern for the education of the young. He invited the Sisters of Divine Providence to the diocese in 1889, and took measures to create new parish schools that had none. He also built new churches and established a policy that each parish must have a school. By the time of the observance of the diocese’s Golden Jubilee in 1903, Catholicity was flourishing once again in Covington and the Catholic population had grown to nearly 50,000 faithful. The people also found in him a capable leader and promoter of the American Eucharistic Movement, establishing the Priest’s Eucharistic League in 1894 and serving as a co-architect of America’s first Eucharistic Congress in 1895.

But his crowning achievement was the construction of the present cathedral church to replace the original one.
The community of Notre Dame Academy is pleased to welcome Bishop John Iffert as the eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Covington.

WELCOME, BISHOP IFFERT!

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Catholic Diocese of Covington
built by Bishop Carrell. When work halted on the new St. Mary’s Cathedral in 1910, nothing like it had ever been seen in Covington before, and nothing like it has been seen since. Today, it commands the title of “America’s Notre Dame” and is one of the most beautiful cathedrals in America. Bishop Maes died on May 11, 1915 and today rests within the cathedral he built.

Bishop Ferdinand Brossart followed Bishop Maes as Covington’s fourth bishop, the only local priest in the history of the diocese to assume the position as its Chief Shepherd. Born in Büchelberg, Bavaria on Oct. 19, 1849, his parents emigrated to Cincinnati in 1851 when he was two years old, later resettling the family at Gubser’s Mill in Campbell County. He felt the call to priesthood at an early age and received most of his education at St. Francis, a German school in Cincinnati. He attended Mt. St. Mary Seminary in Price Hill and in 1868 was sent to Louvain, Belgium to complete his theology studies. But having not yet reached canonical age for ordination, he was sent home to America. Bishop Toebbe ordained him in St. Mary’s Cathedral on Sept. 1, 1872.

Bishop Brossart was consecrated as bishop on Jan. 25, 1916. He came to the episcopacy with an almost legendary pastoral reputation. Stories abounded of his early years when he braved the cholera and smallpox epidemics to attend to the spiritual and physical needs of the afflicted. When physicians refused to enter an isolation ward filled with 27 infected patients, one doctor remarked that he “wouldn’t go in there for a thousand dollars.” Father Brossart replied, “Neither would I — for a thousand dollars. But if good can be done for the salvation of an immortal soul, I’ll go.” Grateful patients kissed his hands as he administered the sacraments and instructed them, one account states. All 27 patients died.

Brossart’s early years as bishop were largely dedicated to finishing the new cathedral and reorganizing the diocese. He finished the installation of 82 stained-glass windows in the cathedral, installed a new Communion railing and ordered the present Venetian-made mosaic Stations of the Cross. At the same time, Covington’s population was stabilizing, prompting him to call a Second Diocesan Synod, wherein he reorganized the deanery structure, defined parish boundaries that were long in dispute, and formed “canonical parishes” for the proper enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline. He also established the Boy Scouts and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul within the diocese.

During World War I, he traveled to army camps within the diocese to bring the Mass, sacraments and spiritual comfort to soldiers, and he went anywhere else he felt he was needed. But after seven years of hard traveling and faithful service, ill health forced him to tender his resignation and retire to St. Anne’s Convent on Oct. 15, 1923, becoming the first Bishop of Covington to retire in office. When death finally came on Aug. 6, 1930, he was interred in the mausoleum at St. Anne’s Convent. Bishop Brossart’s replacement was the erudite and eloquent Bishop Francis W. Howard. Born in Columbus, Ohio on June 21, 1867, he was only the second Bishop of Covington to be American born. He served his early priesthood in the Diocese of Columbus and became known principally for his work in Catholic education, founding the Columbus Diocesan School Board (1901) and the National Catholic Educational Association (1902).

Bishop Howard was preeminently a scholar. Consecrated on July 15, 1923 in St. Mary’s Cathedral in Covington, his entire episcopate can be characterized by a constant and earnest work for the welfare of the Church and the education of the individual. Like St. Francis, his patron saint, he understood he had inherited a mountain diocese, and he sought the people from the largest parish to the lowliest mountain cabin. At age 64 and without food, he rode on horseback into the mountains to reach communities in “hollers” that few besides (Continued on page 46)

(Continued from page 43)
himself and mountaineers knew existed. He personally directed the Mountain Apostolate for discussing problems, policy and approaches to pastoral care in the Appalachian regions of eastern Kentucky.

He also established two Latin schools still in operation today — Covington Latin School (1923) and Lexington Latin School (1924) — each to teach a specially adapted classical curriculum along traditional lines. He transformed Villa Madonna into a diocesan college that would one day grow to become Thomas More University. He created the Teacher’s Institute and in 1926 established the Messenger, a diocesan newspaper that would be the channel for expressing his ideas and aims for education in the diocese. In October 1943, Bishop Howard suffered a physical collapse, the first in a series of them that would result in his death on Jan. 18, 1944. He was the second longest-serving bishop in the diocese’s history.

When Father William T. Mulloy first arrived in Covington as the new Bishop-elect, he had been a capable and active priest of the Diocese of Fargo for more than 28 years. Born on Nov. 9, 1892 in Ardoch, North Dakota and ordained on June 16, 1916, his ministry began as one of active service, notably marked by numerous achievements in the fields of pastoral education and rural sociology. His mission work often brought him into contact with the native Sioux tribes of the Northern Plains, and there he grew to love and appreciate the rural and native peoples and their way of life. His later ministry in the Rural Life Movement would ultimately earn him national and international recognition. From this came his elevation to the episcopate by Pius XII. He was consecrated on Jan. 10, 1945 at the Cathedral in Fargo and was later installed as Bishop in Covington on Jan. 25, 1945.

With its far reaches of rural territory along the forested rivers and Appalachian foothills, Bishop Mulloy had found a home in Kentucky. He instituted many diocesan rural programs to assist the spiritual and material well-being of farmers, and he became president of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, which helped programs for Catholics in rural areas of eastern Kentucky. He purchased property in Erlanger that became Marydale camp and retreat, and on it he also built Pius X Seminary.

Bishop Mulloy may be best remembered for his sweeping renovation of the Cathedral during the 1950s and its elevation to the status of a minor Basilica in 1953. He also established the Bishop’s Choir in 1946 to elevate and expand liturgical church music. Bishop Mulloy died on June 1, 1959 and was the last Bishop of Covington to die in office.

The seventh Bishop of Covington — the Most Rev. Richard H. Ackerman — was only the second Bishop of Covington to have come from a religious order, the Holy Ghost Fathers. He also holds the distinction of having participated as a Council Father in all four sessions at the Second Vatican Council in Rome, where he was a member of the Coetus Internationalis Patrum, one of the most conservative or “traditionalist” groups.

Born in Pittsburgh on Aug. 30, 1903, Ackerman entered the order of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost in 1921, made his religious profession at Ridgefield, Connecticut on Aug. 15, 1922 and was ordained on Aug. 28, 1926 at St. Mary Seminary, Norwalk, Conn. His early work and ministry gained him broad recognition from his superiors, and in 1951, he was presented with the Grand Cross “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice,” by Pope Pius XII. In 1956, he was appointed the first Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego, California and Titular Bishop of Lares. He was named seventh Bishop of Covington on April 6, 1960 and was installed at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington on May 17, 1960.

Ackerman came to the episcopacy at a time in the history of the American Church when the various divisions...
church from the narthex. The former church bell has a place of honor outside the church in a tower-like structure made from the wood of the former bell tower.

Parishioners at St. Mary, Father Iffert said, are proud of what they have accomplished — in building a new church, operating a school, being a friendly and welcoming parish and in providing outreach to those in need. St. Mary Parish is one of the organizations that helped found the local Lifeboat Alliance Family Shelter (see related article page 34).

“From his first day on campus Father John brought an exuberance to our parish and I think that’s why we’re sitting in this relatively new church,” said Brett Heineman, parishioner and principal, St. Mary School. “Our parish needed a jolt of adrenaline to get over a hump and he had that.”

Karen Rosicky talked about Father Iffert’s charisma. “The first time I met Father John was at choir practice in the old church. We just knew he was going to be great.”

Rick Seitz said that Father Iffert’s homilies inspired him to become more active at the parish. “I’ve helped him in a number of different ways but he’s helped me in so many more ways by increasing my faith and encouraging me,” he said. “He makes you feel like you are the most important person that he is dealing with that day, even though he had hundreds of people to deal with.”

Brad Forsberg credits Father Iffert for his conversion to the Catholic faith. “My wife brought me this little card of his, that if anybody was interested in becoming Catholic or knowing more about the Catholic faith to come to RCIA,” he said. “I went the first night and came home so happy. Father made RCIA so exciting.”

Mr. Forsberg’s wife, Donna, was Father Iffert’s housekeeper when he was pastor at St. Mary Parish. And while she delights in being a thorn in his side, “He tells me I...”

(Continued on page 48)
St. Barbara Parish is a small rural parish in Scheller, Illinois. Its families are a good mix of older and younger families. It’s not uncommon to hear the sounds of infants and toddlers at Mass. There is no Catholic school in Scheller. The children at St. Barbara either attend the local public school or make a half-hour commute to St. Mary School in Mt. Vernon.

Despite the parish’s vibrancy, the idea that the small parish might close is never far from the minds of parishioners. Change often elevates that concern. In 2014, Father John Iffert led the process of partnering St. Barbara Parish with the much larger St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in neighboring Mt. Vernon and became pastor for both parishes.

At first, Father Iffert thought it would be best to merge the parish groups and a meeting day was scheduled. At the last minute, Father Iffert changed course and decided that each could stay in their own parish groups. “I think it was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,” Father Iffert said.

The parishioners at St. Barbara have what Father Iffert calls “heritage values.” “They are all about family and generations and connections,” he said. “I learned that new is fine, new can even be great, but you’ve got to respect where communities are coming from. I try to do that.”

“I was baptized at this parish and went to eight years of Catholic school here,” said Walter Wagner, Aug. 5 in a group interview with the Messenger. “I didn’t go anywhere else. I’ve been to Mass here at this church somewhere between 3,500 and 4,000 times. In that time, 10 priests have served this parish. About the second Mass Father John celebrated here, I could see right away that we weren’t going to keep this pastor long. He was a person who had good common sense. He was a farm boy raised in DuQuoin and you just knew he was moving on. I don’t think I’ll ever see the day, but, if there is ever a pope from North America he would be it.”

Father John is not the first Father Iffert at St. Barbara.
and St. Mary parishes. Father Bert Iffert, Father John’s uncle, assisted at the parish for 23 years after his retirement from active ministry. Father Bert died in 2012 and his nephew celebrated the funeral Mass. “Father Bert was the most lovable man next to Father John,” said John Kolwaski. “He was just a kind, loving, jovial person — you knew they were from the same cut. That’s why Father John was so approachable. He was willing to listen to the old parishioners while at the same time trying to keep the new parishioners involved and making it interesting for them and keeping the children involved. He’s a good guy and we’re going to miss him.”

John Kabat said he sat with and was holding Father Bert’s hand three days before he died. Father Bert was in a coma but, despite his lack of awareness, Mr. Kabat believes someone needs to be holding the hand of a priest when they die. After six hours, Father Bert awakened and said, “John, you are in a place to get all those people to work for the one God.” Then he slipped back into the coma.

“I had the heebie-jeebies all over me,” Mr. Kabat said.

Mr. Kabat is a teacher at the local public high school, so it is not surprising that Father Bert felt so strongly about his ability to draw people closer to God. And Mr. Kabat doesn’t shy away from sharing his faith with his students. Often, he said, he would share Father John Iffert’s homily message.

“Father John, in his homilies would say ‘Let’s be joyful, prayerful and grateful,’” Mr. Kabat said. “I have high school students who complain about the silliest things and I tell them, ‘Let’s just stop for a second and be joyful, prayerful and grateful!’ There were a lot of things that I learned at Mass from Father John that I passed on to my students.”

Two teenagers stopped by to say hello to their former pastor — Allana and Brady Anderson. They were on their way to the funeral.

(Continued on page 55)
Bishop Iffert, We welcome you to the Diocese of Covington. May God bless and guide you.
CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

BISHOP JOHN C. IFFERT

May the Lord bless you with every grace and blessing
as you begin your new ministry

From
Bishop J. Mark Spalding,
the Priests, Deacons, and Faithful
of the
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**SCHOOL CAFETERIA MANAGER**

The School Food Service Office of the Diocese of Covington Department of Catholic Schools seeks candidates for School Cafeteria Manager at Blessed Sacrament School. Monday - Friday, during the school year. The School Cafeteria Manager’s primary responsibilities involve overall supervision of the School’s meals program, including:

- Managing employees.
- Ordering, receiving, and managing inventory.
- Preparing and serving meals, operating the point-of-sale system.
- 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 addresses and compensation history. Applications may also be faxed to 859/392-1589.

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**CLIENT SERVICES SPECIALIST**

The Diocese of Covington Catholic Charities is seeking to hire a client care services specialist. The position is 40 hours per week. Its primary purpose is to assist, serve and support clients and inquirers seeking services and assistance, manage their case files and provide customer service through the entire process. Also, provide other office administrative support. To apply, e-mail or fax a letter of interest along with a C-V with compensation history and at least five references with contact e-mail addresses, to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org, fax 859-392-1589.

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**PARISH KITCHEN MANAGER**

The Diocese of Covington Catholic Charities ministry is seeking to hire a Manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of its Parish Kitchen community outreach program. This position is full-time, generally 5 days M-F from 7:00 am-2:00 pm. The Manager coordinates and manages on-site activities of the Parish Kitchen, including the deployment, coordination, and supervision of all staff and volunteers, and also oversees day-to-day activities in a way consistent with its mission, values, and personnel policies. Interested individuals should submit a detailed resume, including five references along with a cover letter and salary history by email or fax to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR, at skoplyay@covdio.org or 859-392-1589.
Appeal to help fund many needed Commission, and others. He instituted a greater inclusivi and Development, the Permanent Diaconate, Pro-Life diocese. These included the offices of Communications that more effectively served the ministerial needs of the principally for his instituting new offices and programs on May 8, 1979.

Bishop Hughes arrived to become the eighth Bishop of Covington. A native of Youngstown, Ohio, Hughes was ordained April 6, 1946. His early years in Youngstown were marked by a staunch commitment to education. He became the founding principal of Cardinal Mooney High School and later served as superintendent of Catholic schools. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of Youngstown in 1974 and installed as Bishop of Covington on May 8, 1979.

The episcopacy of Bishop Hughes will be remembered principally for his instituting new offices and programs that more effectively served the ministerial needs of the diocese. These included the offices of Communications and Development, the Permanent Diaconate, Pro-Life Commission, and others. He instituted a greater inclusivity by opening these positions to lay people and women religious. He restored the Permanent Diaconate and staffed parishes and missions with women religious as pastoral administrators. He also created the Diocesan Annual Appeal to help fund many needed projects. Most notably, he initiated the process that led to the establishment of the Diocese of Lexington in 1988. Bishop Hughes retired on July 4, 1988, but remained active in the diocese until shorty before his death on Feb. 7, 2013.

Bishop Robert W. Muench’s time as bishop was brief but distinctive in several ways. He was the first bishop born in Kentucky and he served the shortest of any episcopacy — yet, all of them ultimately went on to serve, perforce recalling the words of St. Paul to the young Timothy: “Whoever aspires to the office of a bishop desires a noble task.” (1 Tim 3:1) In the end, it is the faithful who are the fortunate ones, for it is they who become the recipients of the gift of an Apostle, a gift the Holy Spirit chose to send to the fortunate ones, for it is they who become the recipients of the gift of an Apostle, a gift the Holy Spirit chose to send to the fortunate ones, for it is they who become the recipients of the gift of an Apostle, a gift the Holy Spirit chose to send to them at a particular time and place in history.

Welcome Bishop Iffert! We can’t wait to meet you and promise you our prayers! Saint James Mission, Minerva

Bishop John C. Iffert. We welcome you as our shepherd. May the years ahead be productive and rewarding.

AFTERSCHOOL CARE PROGRAM STAFF
Mary, Queen of Heaven School is seeking to hire 2 responsible adults to assist with our Afterschool Care Program. Candidates must be 18 years of age or older, and enjoy working with children. Please contact Mrs. Jill Jett at jlett@mhcschool.com or call the school office 859-371-8100 for further information.

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SCHOOL CAFETERIA STAFF
St. Henry District High School cafeteria is in need of a full-time staff member, Monday through Friday during the school year. Duties include food preparation, serving, daily cleanup, helping with deliveries, and other tasks as needed. Candidates may contact Jackie Kaiser at jkaiser@covcdio.org or call 859-392-1536.

Allegations List
In 2021, the Diocese of Covington released the names of priests, religious, deacons and lay employees who have served in the diocese against whom one or more allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been substantiated.

An outcome of the crisis was the calling of a Fifth Diocesan Synod in 2003, and Foy ensured that lay persons had a prominent role in it. “This made sure the synod was a truly consultative process, giving participants the oppor-
tunity to come together and help set the direction for the diocese. Afterward, Bishop Foy focused principally on priestly vocations and Catholic education. Under his lead-
ship, priestly vocations increased. He visited schools, and as chancellor at Thomas More College, he helped to grow the student enrollment to more than 2,000 over the years while working to transition it from a college to a university. In 2004, Bishop Roger Foys announced the forma-
tion of a new Latino parish — Christo Rey. Foys has left his personal mark on the Cathedral Basilica as well. In 2019, he brought its builder — Bishop Camillus P. Maes — back to the cathedral where he is interred in the Maes Chapel. He also finished the cathed-
al’s façade, installing the decorative statues and tympa-


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October 8, 2021 53
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Make It More.
Father Reyling said that he expects his friend, now Bishop Iffert, to be fair, especially with his priests. “He’s going to set a bar. He won’t expect them to work any harder than he works, but he works hard,” he said. “He will make sure that everybody is in the same boat, that everybody’s got an oar in hand and everybody’s rowing in the same direction, because that’s who he was as vicar general, that’s how I know him as a pastor and that’s really how I know him as a friend.”

Father Carl Schrage is a newly ordained priest (July 2020) for the Diocese of Belleville. He got to know Father Iffert as a seminarian. Their bond is atypical for a newly ordained priest and a nearly silver jubilarian. Primarily because they are the same age and partly because Father Schrage is now pastor of Father Iffert’s childhood parish, Sacred Heart Parish, DuQuoin, where his mom and dad are still active members.

“Everyone at the parish is just super, super excited,” said Father Schrage about the upcoming consecration as their parish son. He along with parishioners are planning to have a watch party in the school cafeteria.

About Father Iffert, Father Schrage said, “He’s a pastor. He’s going to be fair, very understanding and will meet people where they are to help them. He will be there for celebrations, too!”

Father Iffert’s first assignment was as parochial vicar at the Cathedral of St. Peter, Belleville (1997–2000). While there he worked with and became good friends with School Sister of Notre Dame Sister Theresa Markus, a.k.a. Sister Tess.

Sister Tess considers herself a “priest trainer,” since so many vicar generals have come and gone during her 31 years at the Cathedral. Her real title is director of religious education and pastoral associate.

Father Iffert admits that, during the time he worked with Sister Tess, he was a young priest, somewhat naïve and maybe overly ambitious. Sister Tess, on the other hand, is an organizer, who knows that the devil is in the details, with a penchant for neon colored notecards.

“We would have these discussions about what we wanted to do,” said Father Iffert. “Then in the morning, she would have a row of about a dozen or more neon postcards lined up with different things we needed to do, step by step. It became a warning. When I saw a group of neon colored postcards I’d think, ‘Oh no.’ It was a joy to work with him,” said Sister Tess. “If he didn’t like something he told me. Then we might not do it that way but maybe we would. We worked as a team.”

Sister Tess said she was not surprised at all when she learned Father Iffert had been elevated to the episcopacy. “He’ll bring a sense of humor,” she said. “He’s very faithful to the Church and to its teachings. I think he will be very collaborative in his work with people. That’s what I have found when I worked with him.”

Robert “Robbie” Dodson is a seminarian for the Diocese of Belleville. Last summer he was assigned to St. Stephen Parish where Father Iffert was pastor.

“When he began he oriented everything towards my formation,” said Mr. Dodson. “What impressed me is how he instituted a schedule of prayer and brought orderliness to the day, which I appreciate. The idea was to have a house of consecrated men, which is nice to have that direction and focus.”

When asked what he wishes for Father Iffert, Father Ezop said, “I wish for him to stay exactly who he is. I want him to be as a bishop the same good servant he has been as a priest. If he can do that, and God willing that can be true, then he’s going to be a great bishop.”

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Bishop Iffert:
The lawyers and staff of DBL Law welcome you to our Diocese and to your new home:

“In all things, give thanks.”
Congratulations
Bishop John C. Iffert

Saint Vincent Seminary
ST. ELIZABETH WELCOMES VERY REV. JOHN C. IFFERT AS BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF COVINGTON.

On behalf of our 10,000+ associates and healthcare ministry, we look forward to joining him and the Diocese of Covington in helping to lead a healthier Northern Kentucky region.
In my own name and in the name of the clergy, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Belleville, I offer our congratulations to Bishop John Iffert as he is ordained Bishop of Covington.

I trust that the clergy and faithful of Covington will quickly discover that their new shepherd is totally dedicated to the Lord and to the people he serves. Bishop Iffert has always impressed me as a man with a grateful heart; grateful to the Lord and grateful to the people around him. He says “thank you” many times each day and he will express his gratitude frequently. We will miss Bishop Iffert and his ministry here in Belleville, but we trust in the Lord and his plan. May the Holy Spirit guide Bishop John Iffert and the people of Covington into a future filled with hope.

—Bishop Michael McGovern
Diocese of Belleville
‘In All Things Give Thanks’
With praise and thanksgiving to our Good and Provident God, we, the Curia staff, welcome Bishop John Iffert and pledge our support to the care of souls in the Diocese of Covington.

Ad multos annos!