November 5, 2021
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For about five weeks now, I have been journeying with you in the Diocese of Covington. It has been an absolute joy!

I have been praying with you, presiding at Mass, and I have just begun to confirm our young people. Parish or school visits are an important part of most days. November began with cemetery blessings and the United Nations International Day of peace. I have visited the sick at the hospital, attended and hosted gala fundraisers, visited the Parish Kitchen and St. Vincent De Paul, and sang around the “burning bush” at a youth retreat. I have cheered for our young people at soccer and football games. I have begun visiting and introducing myself to our retired priests and celebrated jubilees with our religious sisters. I have sampled brats, metts, the goetta reubens, and Holy Donuts at parish picnics.

Most significantly, I have been hearing your stories and the stories of our diocese. Stories about priests and sisters of ages past and the influence they exerted on you. Stories about your blessings and your losses; your families; your high school days; your grandparents’ wedding day.

You have shared stories about why you are so rightfully joyed to be Catholic and stories about how the Church and its people have sometimes harmed you. Some of you have identified issues that you currently struggle with. Others have shared ministries that you hope to strengthen or start. A few have already asked me to change something. Some have challenged me. A handful have expressed disappointment. Many have offered encouragement when the day got long. That’s all part of being Church together too. It is all good. It is exactly what I had in mind when I said at my first introduction to the diocese that I wanted to listen, to get to know you, and to be invited to be part of your life. It’s the way I can get to know our local Church and her genius. It’s the only way I can begin to develop a vision for future action together.

The synod begins with an extended period of consultation at the diocesan level, focused on how we are doing as we journey together. The goal is to generate the broadest and most meaningful consultation possible from the Church’s pastors, deacons, consecrated religious, and lay faithful. It is to include those of us who are at Mass every Sunday, but also those who are no longer here, the poor, those on the margins, and even Christians from other faith traditions. We will assemble that input to forward to a national and multinational level of consultation. Finally, a group of bishops and observers will meet October 2023 to discuss the lessons that can be learned from this consultation. Presumably, the Holy Father will then write a letter to the Church to help us set a direction for future synods and our ongoing journey together as Church.

Pope Francis has said that the purpose of this synod is not to develop new policies or procedures, but “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.” By strengthening our ability to listen to one another and journey together, it is expected that the Church will strengthen the bonds of communion that unite us, increase participation in worship and the ongoing life of the Church, and equip the Diocese of Covington and the Church universal to carry on Jesus’ mission.

We are getting a bit of a late start on this process in the Diocese of Covington, because of my recent arrival and the resources that were devoted to my consecration and installation this past year. Our process will be implemented between now and April 2022. It will involve training discussion leaders, facilitating small group discussions, consultations with Catholic groups and associations, opportunities to submit individual comments, and more. Every parish is to participate and to strive for prayerful and understanding dialogue that includes the broadest possible array of voices.

For myself, I believe this local consultation is an excellent way for me to come to know our local Church more fully in a short period of time. I hope that it will build relationships that will serve the Church well for years to come. I would be happy if we could begin to build bridges and develop skills for listening and becoming a little quicker to empathize with our brothers and sisters, and slower to criticize or label.

I invite you to pray for the success of the synod and our local consultation. On our website, covdio.org/synod is a prayer calling on the Holy Spirit to inspire us during the synod process. Print it out and pray for our Church regularly during this consultation. Look for opportunities to participate in this local phase of the synod process. Invite those whose voices are too rarely heard to take part. Finally, reject the temptation to be jaded or cynical. Remain, as best you can, in a prayerful, respectful space with regard to the process and those who may have a vision that differs from one’s own.

For myself, I am loving getting to know you. This is another way for me to hear from you and to learn what you value and hope for the future. May this consultation help us journey together on the path God sets before us and make us more completely devoted to the mission of Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

[Signature]
Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

November 12, 2021
In This Issue

2 TMU students
Welcome Bishop Iffert
2 Jubilarians
Celebrating women religious
3 Synod opens
3 VIRTUS update
6 ‘We Choose Life’
8 Obituary
Sister Rose Rauen, O.S.B.
9 Turkeyfoot Trot
St. Vincent de Paul
10 Schedule
High school placement test

Moving? Wrong address?
Call the circulation desk,
(859) 392-1570

Bishop’s Schedule 3
Commentary 4
People and Events 11
Classifieds 12
Entertainment 13
Shopper’s Guide 14
VIRTUS 15
News Briefs 16

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On Halloween night TMU students treat Bishop Iffert to evening of fun and faith

Laura Keener

Students with Thomas More University’s Campus Ministry invited Bishop John Iffert for an evening of fun and faith, Oct. 31. The night began with dinner and a game of Jeopardy. One of the categories was “Bishop Iffert,” and, to Bishop Iffert’s surprise, students already knew a lot about him. The evening concluded with Mass.

“Thank you for your warm welcome,” Bishop Iffert said as he began his homily, which focused on Jesus’ instructing his apostles on the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28-34) — to love God with your whole heart, mind and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself.

“How can it be a command that we love?,” Bishop Iffert asked. “We can’t make someone love us. We can’t make ourselves have positive feelings about someone. We can’t make ourselves be attracted to somebody … But that’s not the kind of love Jesus is talking about. Jesus is talking about a love that is so fundamental that it flows from our most basic relationship with our Creator — where we recognize God’s magnanimity to us, his graciousness, God’s goodness. We recognize that God has loved us first, that God has sacrificed for us.

... And this is how we will witness to the world that we love God,” Bishop Iffert said. “We will recognize that every human being that God puts in our pathways, God loves in exactly that intensive way ... And as awed by that reality as we are by the fact that God loves us so powerfully and intensely, what do we do? We decide that we will love our neighbor. We decide that we will respect each person. We decide that if we would not let ours and our children go without that we will not let them and their children go without. We make a decision and we apply ourselves to it because we love the Lord and our beloved loves that one, and that one, and that one ... and all the others. So we love, because God has loved us.”

This sacrificial love, Bishop Iffert said, is not a burden but “the path to fulfillment.”

“It is the path to joy,” he said. “Love Jesus, love Others, love Yourself.”

Jubilarians celebrate 470 years of consecrated life

Bishop John Iffert and Divine Providence Sister Fran Moore, vicar for religious, honored this year’s jubilarians, Nov. 6, at the annual Women Religious Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Eight women religious from three local communities — Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Congregation of Sisters of Divine Providence and Sisters of Notre Dame — celebrated a cumulative 470 years of consecrated life.

In his homily Bishop Iffert defined what a jubilee is by identifying what it is not: it’s not the end of the race, it’s not the end of the line — “there’s more to do, more prayers to share for your sisters and for the Church.” It’s not a graduation or an award for endurance. It’s not simply a celebration of nostalgia or a thanksgiving day — “we can do that on many days.”

“What we celebrate today is what it has always been about for you — witness,” Bishop Iffert said. “To proclaim to the world that the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and Father of all is your homeland. The only place where you can plant your energies and your life’s work and your dedication. Whatever fruit is to be given or flow from that one divine relationship is the center and the core of your life ... Today is a day where you stand again and give your witness to the world that God is all in all.”
Global synod process opens in Diocese of Covington

Bishop John Iffert officially opened the global synod process in the Diocese of Covington, Nov. 7, at Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. In parishes throughout the diocese, pastors read a letter from Bishop Iffert explaining what a synod is and what Pope Francis is asking for with the establishment of the current synod “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.” (See page 1 for Bishop Iffert’s letter) Also at parishes, parishioners received a prayer card with the synod prayer, “Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus.”

David Cooley, director, Catechesis and Evangelization, and Jamie Schroeder, chancellor, are leading the synod process in the Diocese of Covington. Right now, pastors are asked to designate two parishioners to lead small group discussions at their parish to gather information for the synod’s Preparatory Document, which will be presented at the Synod of Bishops in 2023. Training dates for parish leaders has been set for Dec. 2 and 4. Parish discussion groups will meet between January and March 2022. To keep up to date on the synod process in the Diocese of Covington visit www.covdio.org/synod.

Diocese of Covington volunteers and employees can transfer their Cincinnati VIRTUS account to remain active

Laura Keener

There are 1,047 individuals in the VIRTUS system that either work or volunteer in both the Diocese of Covington and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Until recently both the diocese and archdiocese have been using the VIRTUS program to train employees and volunteers in Creating a Safe Environment in parishes and schools. In July, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati switched to a program called Safe Parish.

How does this change affect those individuals who work or volunteer in both the archdiocese and Diocese of Covington?

In the Diocese of Covington, relatively little will change for anyone already setup with a VIRTUS account. The individual only needs to continue logging into their VIR TUS account to remain active.

New Diocese of Covington employees and volunteers that are only registered in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with Safe Parish, will need to create and maintain a VIR TUS account. Conversely, Archdiocese of Cincinnati employees and volunteers who are only registered with VIRTUS will need to create and maintain a Safe Parish account and attend a training session.

Everyone working and volunteering in both the Diocese of Covington and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will need to complete monthly bulletins (with VIRTUS) and quarterly modules (with Safe Parish) to remain active in both archdioceses as the accounts are no longer linked.

“Having those accounts being linked made it so easy for the individuals, whether they be employees or volunteers, because they could read one bulletin and that bulletin was recorded in both the Diocese of Covington and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati,” said Marylu Steffen, VIRTUS coordinator for the Diocese of Covington. “Now, those individuals have to maintain both accounts. They have to log into VIRTUS for the Diocese to Covington and read the bulletin for us. Then login to the Archdiocese account that they have with Safe Parish to meet their requirements.”

Mrs. Steffen said that one thing that is still very helpful is that background checks are still shared between the archdiocese and diocese, reducing duplication in both reporting and expense. Also, the Archdiocese is still sharing VIRTUS training records all the way back to 2014. So, any Archdiocese of Cincinnati VIRTUS account can be transferred to the Diocese of Covington without the individual having to register for a new account or attend another training session.

“Some people are confused,” Mrs. Steffen said. “They might think now that they are with Safe Parish in the Archdiocese, they cannot have an account with us, but they can.”

Some of the confusion may be because a VIRTUS account is suspended or locked due to one or more monthly bulletins not being completed. Anyone who has fallen behind in completing their monthly VIRTUS bulletin will need to contact their school or parish VIRTUS coordinator to have the account reactivated.

Also, because of a technology glitch, anyone with a Cincinnati Bell e-mail account — @fuse.net or @zoomtown.com — are not receiving their monthly VIRTUS reminder. The diocese is working to rectify the problem with Cincinnati Bell and its third-party processor.

For now, schools and parishes are asked to post in bulletins and newsletters when VIRTUS bulletins are posted and due. The information is also included in the VIRTUS schedule published in the Messenger (see schedule on page 14).
The conundrum of ‘liberty’ in the ‘mystery passage’

Thus, the Court concluded that “the asserted ‘right’ to assistance in committing suicide is not a fundamental liberty interest protected by the Due Process Clause.” In its opinion the majority affirmed the legitimate government interests for limiting personal autonomy in choices about end-of-life choices. Among those countervailing interests, the Court enumerated the following: the state’s unconditional “interest in preserving life,” the defense of “the integrity and ethics of the medical profession,” and the protection of “vulnerable groups” — including the poor, the elderly, and disabled persons — from abuse, neglect, and mistakes.

Philosophical and theological critiques by commentators have scrutinized the “mystery passage” in Casey in the light of Catholic philosophy and social teaching.

In “Looking for ‘Persons’ in the ‘Law’” (First Things, 2006), Mary Ann Glendon contends that in “Casey” the plurality of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court proposed “a vision of the self as invented through the exercise of the individual’s will, limited by nothing but subjective preferences.” In that journal article, Professor Glendon observes that both the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Catholic social teaching view rights “not only as protected by fair procedures but also as grounded and substantive core of personhood.”

In “Planned Parenthood v. Casey,” the Supreme Court had formulated a legally and philosophically troublesome concept of “liberty” in the “mystery passage.” That debated passage reads: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of the meaning of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

However, in its 1997 “Washington v. Glucksberg” decision the United States Supreme Court reversed the Ninth Circuit ruling on the Washington state law banning assisted suicide. The Court held that “Washington’s prohibition against ‘assisting’ or ‘aiding’ does not violate the Due Process Clause.”

The Supreme Court specifically rejected the lower federal court’s rejection of the Casey majority’s substantive application of a “liberty interest” in aid to assisted suicide. “The Court stated ... although Casey recognized that many of the rights and liberties protected under the Due Process Clause sound in personal autonomy,... it does not follow that any and all important, intimate, and personal decisions are so protected.”

Chief Justice Rehnquist, who delivered the opinion of the Court, noted that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment which guarantees rights and liberties in the exercise of personal autonomy “does not warrant the sweeping conclusion” of the Ninth Circuit’s argument which overturned Washington’s ban on assisted suicide.

...We should recognize how in a culture where each person wants to be bearer of his or her own subjective truth, it becomes difficult for citizens to devise a common plan which transcends individual gain and personal ambitions.

Changing hearts and drawing souls to Christ

Catholic Charities has long been known for compassion and service to the marginalized, the forgotten, the disfranchised, and the lonely. As the director for Catholic Charities in our diocese, I see and hear so much of the good works of mercy we offer to those in need, seeking our help. We feed the hungry, we house the homeless, we also teach parenting skills and provide faith-based, clinical mental health counseling.

A friend reminded me recently that it is not so important how many people we serve and what outcomes are achieved. What is important is how our hearts and drawing more souls to Christ. We do this by being love of neighbor, witnessing the love of God we become the hands and feet of Christ. We change hearts through the people who work and volunteer at Catholic Charities. We change the hearts of those we serve, and also those who are called to serve. Funny how our hearts are changed while we change the hearts of those we serve.

Why do staff and volunteers come to Catholic Charities to serve? Some return who were previously served, to “pay it forward” for the grace they received; many others come to serve simply from a desire to serve. I believe this desire comes from gratitude. Gratitude is learned from an attitude of humility when we recognize that all our gifts and blessings come from God. This gratitude is not primarily about the satisfaction or the joy that we, as men and women of faith, receive from our offerings of service to others. It is an attitude of selflessness.

Anything the bishops say about the ecclesiastical and layministry that is not represented what the bishops are doing is useful. A recent proposed statement is not primarily about politicians. The Catholic Church is a eucharistic Church, however, requires a new clarity of thought often stirs up a desire to share our blessings with others. I believe this desire can also be explained in a Catholic social teaching.

The issue of worthiness to receive holy Communion is not confined to the question of whether or not someone is in a state of mortal sin. It is hardly news that the notices of grave sin are seriously attenuated in 21st-century Catholicism. And it is certainly true that, if one is scious of being in a state of grave sin, one should seek reconciliation with God and the Church through the sacrament of penance and not receive Communion; this is bedrock Catholicism, rooted in 1 Corinthians 11:27-28: “Whoever ... eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner ... will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord ... [and] eats and drinks judgment upon himself.”

Bishops, public officials, and holy communion: once again

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops prepares to meet in Baltimore, misconceptions about a proposed conference statement on the Eucharistic, Church — and call these estranged Catholics to eucharistic vitality and integrity of the Church in America abund. The confusion originating from online Catholic sources and social media have been exacerbated by a mainstream press that has consistently misrepresented what the bishops are doing. I hope the following clarifications are useful.

As I have proposed a statement is not primarily about politicians. The Catholic Church is a eucharistic Church, however, requires a new clarity.

The readings for the thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B are: 1 Kings 17:10-16; Hebrews 9:24-28 and Mark 12:38-44. The Gospel was about the Temple tax. The Jews were required to give one coin to the temple. Peter and Andrew had one penny. Peter told Jesus he would give it. Jesus told him to look. Peter saw a fish and asked Jesus: “Deny yourself and follow me.”

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

An eternal flame

The readings for the thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B are: 1 Kings 17:10-16; Hebrews 9:24-28 and Mark 12:38-44.

We entered the gates of St. John Cemetery and followed the road that led to the chapel. On the back exterior wall of the chapel were two beautiful marble angels each holding a torch in which a candle can be placed. I have been to St. John Cemetery many, many times over the last 20 years but for some reason have never noticed them. I was riding in the car with someone one from the funeral home. I saw the angels and simply said they were beautiful. And of course the next thing out of my mouth was, “I have to come back and steal them.” The angels’ torches reminded me of a symbol that was used on monuments at one time. The symbol was an inverted torch. If you are like me it is hard to see when you first look at a monument. The inverted torch signifies death, but the still burning flame represents eternal life.

On All Souls Day and through November we remember those who have gone before us. “Where they have gone we too must follow.” The fleeting moments of our lives give way to the bright promise of immortality.

In Mark’s Gospel this weekend we read, “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” St. Mark is speaking of the end times and what will take place. It sounds as if the torch of our life is about to be turned upside down and extinguished. The symbol of the inverted torch tells us there is hope because the torch will never be extinguished. No, the torch will burn. The torch will burn for all eternity. We will live in peace.

We are often hard to see in our daily toils, our worries, our suffering how things will end. Maybe we feel as if the sun and moon have lost their light. That the stars are no longer there. That things have been shaken up. Many people do not have hope. It is when we allow God to break into our lives and bring light to our darkness, that we can see the promise of eternal life.

The light of Christ can lead us through the darkness of our life into a land of peace.

Father Gregory Bach is pastor St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, Ky.
Help for moms — the answer to abortion

Faye Roch
Directs Pro-Life Office
Kentucky has dozens of pregnancy help centers, and our Northern Kentucky region is especially blessed with resources for pregnancy, parenting and adoption. Cardinal Timothy Dolan said, “Pro-life pregnancy care centers embody everything that is right and good in our nation: generosity, compassion and love that is offered to support both mother and child.”

Recently I had the privilege of attending an open house at New Hope Pregnancy Center where each guest enjoyed a glimpse of what happens when a client walks in the door. I saw how the encounters non-judgmental, compassionate care that goes far beyond a simple pregnancy test and ultrasound. Thanks to loyal donors, her worries about the cost of maternity and infant supplies are eased with tangible items like clothing, car seats, formula and diapers. And thanks to passionately pro-life volunteers, her emotional and spiritual distress is acknowledged and soothed.

As with every center I have visited, trained workers and licensed professionals offer desperate women a rich experience of wraparound care — supporting, at no charge, her and her child’s total wellbeing. Pregnancy care center services typically include medical care and referrals, tangible goods, prenatal and parenting information and education, sexual risk avoidance education and community referrals for further needs. Anyone suffering after an abortion — whether mother or father — finds consolation, counseling and aid.

As I walked through New Hope’s open house, I tried to imagine facing an unexpected pregnancy during uncertain circumstances without support from the father or my family. Abortion may feel like the only way out when you are alone and have no one to talk to about your fears and anxieties.

That’s when having a pregnancy care center nearby is literally lifesaving. The staff and volunteers are eager to answer every question, calm anxieties, walk with you through your pregnancy and offer information and education about parenting or adoption — the two choices that “pro-choice” advocates so often fail to mention.

Seeing your baby in an ultrasound is a happy moment in any pregnancy, but in a crisis pregnancy it helps women choose life. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus Ultrasound Program, seven ultrasound machines have been funded in the Diocese of Covington for local pregnancy care centers.

What about dads? Studies show that a mother is less likely to choose an abortion when a father is involved. These centers welcome fathers, invite them to participate as the pregnancy progresses, and teach them parenting skills.

Both mom and dad have personal mentors — trained volunteers who listen, counsel and advocate. This ministry is often a lifeline during difficult times.

One young man I spoke to said that he never had a strong fatherly presence in his life and had no idea what a supportive family life is like. The Father’s Program and his mentor showed him loving ways to be a parent and the importance of having faith when raising a family.

Pregnancy care centers rely on volunteers and funding from donors, especially local businesses and churches. The pandemic posed a terrific challenge, because demand for services stayed high yet fundraisers had to be cancelled. Wonderfully, staff have found ways to support clients at multiple locations and even remotely, online.

I urge you to consider asking one of our many local pregnancy resource centers how you can help. Perhaps you can volunteer or donate material goods such as diapers, wipes, formula or clothing. Perhaps your parish already partners with a pregnancy care center, and you can help host a baby bottle campaign or collect supplies.

In his “Gospel of Life,” St. John Paul II wrote: ‘Newborn life is also served by centers of assistance and homes or centers where new life receives a welcome. Thanks to the work of such centers, many unmarried mothers and couples in difficulty discover new hope and find assistance and support in overcoming hardship and the fear of accepting a newly conceived life’ (EV no. 88).

Let us be, like St. John Paul II, strong pro-life witnesses by helping women in need and educating our community on the lifesaving mission of pregnancy care centers.

U.S. Bishops advocate ‘Walking with Moms in Need’

Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods. As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes need to be “islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.” Everyone in the parish community should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need.

The 25th anniversary of “Evangelium Vitae” gave us a wonderful opportunity to begin to assess, expand and communicate resources to pregnant moms and families in need. Parishes are invited through the support of their bishop and pastors to join this nationwide effort entitled Walking with Moms in Need.

Pregnancy Help Appreciation Week Nov. 8-12

Pregnancy Help Appreciation Week was designed by Heartbeat International to honor those working within the pregnancy help movement. They walk alongside families throughout the pregnancy and beyond, blessing them with pregnancy tests, emotional support, ultrasounds, parenting classes, and so much more at no cost. Through their work, women and men receive the compassionate support they need when facing a life-changing decision.

From volunteers to executive directors, nurses to receptionists, each person working in a pregnancy help organization has a passion to advance the culture of life. Well done, good and faithful servants!

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroup, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (859) 392-1160.
Educator, missionary disciple, advocate for cultural awareness and racial harmony

“We unite ourselves with Christ’s redemptive work when we reconcile, when we make peace, when we share the good news that God is in our lives, when we reflect to our brothers and sisters God’s healing, God’s forgiveness, God’s unconditional love.”

Sister Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A., shared these words a few weeks before dying of cancer in her home in Canton, Mississippi as part of a reflection on Holy Week, entitled, “Let Us Resolve to Make This Week A Holy One” in the Diocese of Jackson’s newspaper, Mississippi Today. These would be the final public words of a religious woman who dedicated her life to spreading the joy of the Gospel and promoting cultural awareness and racial reconciliation.

A self-proclaimed, “old folks’ child,” Thea Bowman, was the only child born to middle-aged parents, Dr. Theon Bowman, a physician and Mary Esther Bowman, a teacher. At birth she was given the name Bertha Elizabeth Bowman. She was born in 1937 and reared in Canton, Mississippi. As a child she converted to Catholicism through the inspiration of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity who were her teachers and pastors at Holy Child Jesus Church and School in Canton. These religious communities nurtured her faith and greatly influenced her religious vocation.

Growing up, Thea listened and learned from the wisdom of the “old folks,” the elders of her community. Ever precocious, she asked questions and gained insights on how her elders lived, thrived and survived. She learned from family members and those in her community coping mechanisms and survival skills. These skills proved essential as she navigated through the horrid experiences of blatant racism, segregation, inequality, and the struggle for Civil Rights in her native Mississippi.

At an early age, Thea was exposed to the richness of her African-American culture and spirituality, most especially the history, stories, songs, prayers, customs and traditions. Moreover, she was cognizant that God loved and provided for the poor and the oppressed. Her community instructed her, “If you get, give — if you learn, teach.” These life lessons instilled in her an abiding love for God and to be charitable to those most in need.

For Thea Bowman, her conversion to Catholicism was rooted in what she witnessed: she was attracted to the Catholic Church by the example of how Catholics seemed to love and care for one another, most especially the poor and needy. For Thea, she was impressed by how Catholics put their faith into action. At the age of 15 she told her parents and friends she wanted to join the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and left the familiar Mississippi terrain to venture to the unfamiliar town of LaCrosse, Wisconsin where she would be the only African-American member of her religious community.

At her religious profession, she was given the name, “Sister Mary Thea” in honor of the Blessed Mother and her father, Theon. Her name in religious life, Thea, literally means “God.” She was trained to become a teacher. She taught at all grade levels, eventually earning her doctorate and becoming a professor of English and linguistics. The turbulent 1960s was a period of transformation for a nation torn by racial strife and division. The United States was confronted by the quest for justice and racial equality for all Americans. The late 1980s was also a time of transformation for Sister Thae Bowman, both a spiritual and cultural awakening. The liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council encouraged Sister Thae to rediscover her African-American religious heritage and spirituality and to enter her beloved Church “fully functioning.” She emphasized that cultural awareness had, as a prerequisite, intentional mutuality. She was eager to learn from other cultures, but also wanted to share the abundance of her African-American culture and spirituality.

(Continued on page 8)
Benedictine Sister Rose Rauen was born Jan. 27, 1929 to Lawrence and Rose (Griphover) Rauen and named Anne Elizabeth. She was the second of three daughters. Rose Mary Gray died in 1971 and Ruth Richardson died this past summer.

Anne Elizabeth entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1947, became a novice the following year and given the religious name Sister Rose. Her first profession occurred in 1960 and perpetual profession in 1952. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1974, Golden in 1989, Diamond in 2009. Her higher education included a B.S from Villa Madonna College, a M.S and a Ph.D from St. Louis University and an M.A. in Religion from the Athenaeum of Ohio.

Sister Rose taught math and science at St. Henry High School for several years until she began graduate study in math at St. Louis University. After receiving her Ph.D, she taught in the math department of Villa Madonna College/Thomas More College from 1961 to 1981 and served as chair from 1986-72. In her last few years at TM/C she studied in the Lay Pastoral Ministry program at the Athenaeum while she continued to teach.

Sister Rose became adept at serving in two ministries at once. She became treasurer of St. Walburg Monastery in 1982. From then until 1991 she also worked in the diocesan programs of RENEW and in Ongoing Renewal and Evangelization, and later became a pastoral associate at St. Agnes Parish. Her years as treasurer spanned 32 years, from 1982 to 2014.

Sister Rose had a keen sense of humor and a twinkle in her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye.

Sister Rose was devoted to her family. She is survived by many nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community. After a period of declining health she died peacefully on Oct. 28, 2021.

Mass of Christian Burial was held Nov 3 with burial Nov 4 at St. Walburg Cemetery.

Sister Rose and her housemates hosted many a New Year’s Eve and Derby Day party at St. Mary’s. Following supper there was always a card game. She enjoyed travel, whether to a cabin at Edisto Beach, South Carolina or an annual treasurers’ meeting — both with old friends. She moved to the infirmary in 2014 after her retirement as treasurer.

Sister Rose had a keen sense of humor and a twinkle in her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume her eye.

Sister Rose was devoted to her family. She is survived by many nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community. After a period of declining health she died peacefully on Oct. 28, 2021.

Mass of Christian Burial was held Nov 3 with burial Nov 4 at St. Walburg Cemetery.

Sister Rose became adept at serving in two ministries at once. She became treasurer of St. Walburg Monastery in 1982. From then until 1991 she also worked in the diocesan programs of RENEW and in Ongoing Renewal and Evangelization, and later became a pastoral associate at St. Agnes Parish. Her years as treasurer spanned 32 years, from 1982 to 2014.

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The Turkeyfoot Trot 5k run/walk is back live and in person for its 14th year. This year’s event is presented by Commonwealth Bank & Trust Company and Payroll Partners Inc. All proceeds from the event benefit St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky. The 5k will be held at Thomas More University, Nov 20 beginning at 9 a.m.

This event is for all ages and includes a kid’s fun run immediately following the 5k. John Lomax, anchor of Good Morning Cincinnati on WKRC/Channel 12, will be emceeing the event. Stay after the 5k race for a special after party with race awards, great food from Chick-fil-A, Izzy’s and Poseidon Pizza and over 50 door prizes.

All proceeds support St. Vincent de Paul programs in Northern Kentucky that provide emergency financial assistance, basic necessities and hope to those who are struggling to make ends meet.

“I look forward to this event every year,” said Karen Zengel, executive director, St. Vincent de Paul, Northern Kentucky. “I love seeing so many from our community come together to have fun and know their participation helps our neighbors in need. It is the perfect way to kick off this season of giving.”

Pre-registration is available online by visiting www.svdpnky.org. Cost is $25 for adults; $20 for children 14 years or younger. T-shirts are sold separately for $15 while supply lasts.

In-person registration is also an option at Tri-State Running Company, Edgewood, during packet pick-up days on Nov 18, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. and Nov 19, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Race day registration will start at 7:30 a.m. in Steigerwald Hall – Thomas More University’s Saint Center. The cost increases to $30 adults; $25 children on race day.

For more information visit www.svdpnky.org or contact Lou Settle, advancement director at St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky, (859) 446-7727 or lou.settle@svdpnky.org.

Participants from the 2020 Turkeyfoot Trot are (from left) Susan Vetter, Deacon Bill Thots, Ryan Deckert and Linda Deckert.
Look in the mirror before correcting others’ mistakes, pope says

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — To believe in Jesus means to follow him and avoid going “the opposite way,” following one’s own interests and inflating one’s own ego, Pope Francis said.

Similarly, when Christians see one of their brothers or sisters has strayed, they must be humble, gentle and compassionate, the pope said Nov. 3 during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI audience hall.

“The supreme rule regarding fraternal correction is love: to want the good of our brothers and sisters” by praying, being patient and accompanying them to help them correct themselves, he said.

However, he added, “This is not easy. The easier path is tattling, skinning the other alive as if I were perfect.”

The pope continued his series of talks on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians by reflecting on an excerpt from the apostle’s exhortation on the “freedom of service,” that is, how Christians are called to fulfill the law by loving their neighbor and by walking in the Holy Spirit.

Walking in the spirit “is letting oneself be guided by the Holy Spirit, following the path of Christ, the pope said.

“This stupendous but difficult journey” begins in baptism and lasts an entire lifetime, he said. “We can think of it as a long excursion on the mountain heights: it is breathing, the destination is attractive, but it requires a lot of effort and tenaciousness.”

To master challenges, difficulties and temptations to sin along the journey, Christians are able to acquire “a positive vision of life” because they know, no matter what, “God is always stronger than our resistance and greater than our sins,” he said.

St. Paul also shows what a good disciple does by putting himself at the same “level” as the Galatians and including himself in God’s command that “we” — not just “they” — must all walk according to the Spirit, the pope said.

The apostle knows “this exhortation is necessary for himself as well,” he said.

“The apostle does not place himself above his community,” Pope Francis said. “He doesn’t say, I am the boss. I have reached the mountaintop and you all are still walking. He doesn’t say this, but he places himself in the midst of the journey everyone is on in order to provide a concrete example of how much it is necessary to obey God, corresponding better and better to the Spirit’s guidance.”

Departing from his written remarks, the pope said, “It’s beautiful when we find shepherds who walk with their people, who don’t separate themselves, (thinking,) I am more important, I am a shepherd, I am a priest, I am a bishop, with their noses held high. No, shepherds who walk with their people — this is very beautiful.”

“Walking according to the Spirit is not only an individual task — it also concerns the community as a whole,” which is “exciting, but demanding,” he said.

Everyone in the community must “bear each other’s difficulties,” because everyone has the same temptations, “that is, our jealousies, prejudices, hypocrisies and resentments” and the temptation to seek out “a rigid set of precepts” as the solution, he said.

St. Paul said, “If someone should make a mistake, use gentleness,” and “Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted,” the pope said.

“How easy it is to criticize others,” Pope Francis said. “There are some people who seem to have a degree in tatting, criticizing others every day. Hey, look in the mirror” and reflect on one’s own weaknesses and fragility.

Instead of gossiping or tearing the other down, the Spirit points the way of humility and being gentle with one’s brother or sister in correcting them, but it is also “good to ask ourselves what drives us to correct a brother or a sister, and if we are not in some way co-responsible for their mistake,” he added.

Being in solidarity with others is to bear the other’s burdens, and “how many burdens there are in a person’s life: illness, lack of work, loneliness, pain. And how many other trials that require the proximity and love of our brothers and sisters” he said.

Commenting on this teaching, St. Augustine said others must be corrected “with gentleness. And if you raise your voice, love within. If you encourage, if you present your self as a father, if you reprove, if you are severe, love, always love,” Pope Francis said.

Often, the pope said, this also means tolerating people’s problems and defects “in silence and in prayer in order to find the right path for helping them correct themselves.”

“Meekness, patience, prayer, accompaniment” are the keys for walking with “joy and patience along this path, allowing ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit,” he said.

Pope Francis is pictured with U.S. military chaplains during his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 3, 2021.
Newport Central Catholic is pleased to offer a two-hour course to help prepare for the high school placement test. The prep course is offered Dec. 2 or 5, 4:30–6:30 p.m. This course is available to all 8th grade students in the Diocese of Covington, regardless of where they plan to take the exam on December 11. Cost $20. Pre-register: https://forms.gle/sDBH8kdGth5wvHf97.

The NKU Catholic Newman Club Knights of Columbus have weekly meetings Tuesdays, 6 p.m., at the Newman Center. Contact manzos1@mymail.nku.edu if you’re a Catholic man interested in joining.

Do you have family or a friend in jail or prison? Are you looking for a safe, welcoming community where you will be accepted without judgment? Come to Catholic Charities, Latonia, the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Questions, contact Dave Capella at dcapella@covingtoncharities.org or (859) 561-8974 ext. 117.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Day of Recollection Dec. 4, 9–11:30 a.m., with Father Conor Kunath. Learn St. Ignatius’ ‘Examen’ a devotional exercise used to see God’s work in your life. No charge, no sign-up required.

Newsworthy

The Northern Kentucky Tribune names Thomas More University President Joseph L. Chillo, L.P.D., among its 2021 NewsMakers. This recognition is bestowed to five high-achieving, community servants in recognition of the significant roles they play in the Northern Kentucky community.

State champions

(right) The Notre Dame Academy soccer team won the KHSAA state title, Oct. 30, over South Oldham High School with a score of 1-0. They end the season with a record of 28-0-1 setting state records for most total wins in a season, most shutouts in a season and fewest goals allowed in a season.

(above right) The St. Henry District High School boys cross country team competed in the KHSAA state championships in Bourbon County, Oct. 30, bringing the state championship home to SHDHS. Dixon Ryan was the 1A State Runner-Up while runners Lake Durrett (4th) and Mark Ryan (15th) earned individual medals. Rounding out the top five are Jeff Stewart (14th) and Camden Fedders (22nd).

(above) For the third time in school history, a non-division state championship is making its way back to St. Henry District High School. The SHDHS girls volleyball team defeated Mercy Academy, Nov. 6, for the 2021 State Championship title. Congratulations to the teams and coaches on their State Championship season.

New Year’s Day, January 1, 2022

Drawing will be held at 11:00 AM at the St. Cecilia Undercroft in Independence, KY.

Grand Prize: $50,000.00

For New Year’s Day, January 1, 2022

Tickets: $100 each

A maximum of 1,000 tickets will be sold!

This is a second chance raffle for the $50,000.00 Festival Big Raffle Grand Prize.

The winner of the Labor Day Festival Big Raffle chose the Corvette. Subsequently, we’re offering a $50,000.00 cash New Year’s Day raffle.

Tickets are available now through the following:

St. Cecilia’s Big Cash Raffle
3313 Madison Pike
Independence, KY 41015

Scan QR code to purchase online.

Check us out on

Regardless of the number of chances sold, the drawing will be held on January 1, 2022 at approximately 11:00 AM at the undercroft of St. Cecilia’s 3313 Madison Pike, Independence, KY.

Winners responsible for all taxes.

Questions? Call 513-864-6133 or visit www.stctfr.com

Winner need not be present. Must be 18 to purchase ticket.

Drawing is overseen by Barons, Earning & Company, a CPA firm located in Cincinnati, OH and Crestview Hills, KY.

Mail this form with your check

3 Convenient ways to get tickets:

1. Mail this form with your check
2. Phone 513-863-4311
3. Online at www.stctfr.com
SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
Lawn and garden equipment, ATV’s, Chainsaw Sharpening. We also sell lawn and garden equipment and supplies.
ECHO, TORO, Country Clipper.
STEEL’S OUTDOOR POWER 859-415-4777

GERDES CONCRETE & MASONRY
CONCRETE – Decorative, siloforms, steps, patios, stamped concrete.
MASONRY – Cultured stone, retaining walls, brick paver foundation, fireplace, brick & chimney repairs. MRC – Mini-aturant, Bob Cat & Eoling work. (859) 314-4770

St. Vincent de Paul NKY has the following opportunities available:

- Human Resources Business Partner. Responsible for aligning our human resources initiatives with our mission, strategic plan and business needs. The HRBP provides a model for positive company culture, encouraging employee engagement, growth and development.
- Part-time Cashiers at our Erlanger location. Our cashiers greet and then help our customers at check-out, providing an experience that shares the kindness and compassion emblematic of our ministry.
- Part-time Donation Center Associates at our Erlanger location. Our donation center associates greet our material donors, sort and organize donations to prepare for the retail environment.
- Full-time Truck Driver. Our transportation team is responsible for donation pick-ups, representing our work and choosing to support SVDP with their material donations.

Interested candidates can apply online at https://www.svdpnky.org/employment-opportunities/

Marco Island, FL
3 mins. walk to beach. 1st Floor Fully furnished 2BR, 2 bath w/AC, Internet. 30 day minimum, $1200,M. (859) 801-4961 for pricing, pictures & availability. View at: flx37@roamin.com or Facebook.

Good Job Remodeling LLC and Handymen
Now accepting small to large jobs. Free Estimates. Licensed and insured.
Call Steven at (859) 801-9925

CAREGIVER FOR HIRE
Caregiver for your loved ones needs. Graduate of Mount St. Joseph College with 17 years experience specializing in elder care. If you need a break from caregiving please contact Angie Garrison. $18 per hour / min. 25 hrs week. References and police check available.
(859) 801-4344 / Agarrison1351@gmail.com

Call Kim at the Messenger for information on placing your ad in the Classified Advertisements. (859) 392-1500

HOUSE CLEANING
Isn’t it time you come clean? We don’t cut corners, we clean them. Insured and bonded.
Discount for senior citizens and first-time clients.
Call (859) 760-6408.

FULL-TIME CUSTOMER SERVICE/ORDER FULFILLMENT POSITION
SILA information technology, reliable, detail oriented individual who has experience working in Customer Service, Filling, and Shipping. Must be able to lift up to 25 lbs. Job duties will include, but are not limited to answering phones, receiving customer orders and resolving inquiries, order entry and invoicing, pulling, packing, shipping orders. Friendly, casual atmosphere. Quickbooks knowledge preferred but is not required. If interested please send your resume to Renee Murphy at Renee.Murphy@milaint.com.

PART-TIME CUSTODIAN
Notre Dame Academy (NDA) is searching for a part-time custodian to assist with facility cleaning, trash removal, event setups, and other routine housekeeping and maintenance tasks. Regular hours are from 8:30PM to 9:00PM, Monday through Friday, but schedule can be somewhat flexible. This position requires the physical ability to walk and stand for long periods of time, as well as, the ability to lift, move and supplies up to 50lbs. Custodial experience is preferred. A high school diploma or GED equivalent, background check, valid driver’s license and Virtus training is required.
Please submit letter of interest, resume, and salary requirements to ndahr@ndapandas.org.

ASSEMBLER
A small company in Florence, KY with more than 30 years experience producing medical products for veterinarians is seeking workers for permanent full-time or permanent full-time positions, up to 40 hours per week. This production position involves the assembly and packaging of lightweight items in a clean room environment. Candidate must be detail oriented, able to handle small parts, and dependable.
Please email resume or work history to Renee Murphy at Renee.Murphy@milaint.com.

Music Director
St. Catherine of Siena parish in Ft. Thomas. 3 Masses per weekend and other occasional services such as holy days, penance services, etc. Must be a good general musician, have good vocal and keyboard skills (prefer organ and piano), and be able to direct our adult and children’s choirs. Must be familiar with the Catholic Liturgy, and be willing to be educated in it. Please direct inquiries or resumes to Fr. Stef Bankemper, at 1803 N. Ft. Thomas Ave., Ft. Thomas, 41075, or e-mail at sbankemper@stcattherineofsiena.org.

Opportunities to Serve at Catholic Charities
Do you have a desire to find your purpose? Are you passionate about witnessing your faith by serving others? Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington has a few open paid positions that may be the perfect opportunity to fill your calling.
School-based Counselor is a master’s level position in our school-based counseling program, which works together serving 11 Northern Kentucky schools. If you enjoy helping teens, are positive, and enjoy working with a team, this is the career opportunity for you! We have an immediate opening in our School-Based Counseling Program serving two Northern Kentucky High Schools. This is a Full or part-time position during the academic year and could be extended over the summer.
Parish Kitchen Manager – Parish Kitchen in the heart of Covington, KY, is open year-round serving a wholesome lunch to anyone who is hungry. The ideal candidate would have experience or aptitude for both food services and social services ministry. The Parish Kitchen Manager oversees the entire operation and ministry, supervising 6 fulltime and part-time staff, and over 200 volunteers. You would immediately make an impact, and your heart will grow. This is a full-time position.
Client Services Specialist is on the front-line, assisting, serving, and connecting clients and insurers seeking services and assistance at our office in Latonia, KY. Other duties include managing case files and providing customer service through the entire process.
Mental Health Counselor is a master’s level position in our Mental Health and Pregnancy/Adoption Programs. Includes general counseling services to individuals and families, including pregnancy and adoption cases. Must be independently licensed or pursuing independent licensing.
Additional details about each of the above opportunities can be found on our website at https://www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events/job-opportunities.

Facilities Cleaning Technicians
Call or text Mike Jones at 859-512-6304.

Music Director
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GOESLING LANDSCAPING
New installations, maintenance and tree removal. Find us at GoeslingLandscaping.com
Call Norb at (859) 912-0340

12 November 2021 Messenger
“Eternals” (Disney) Director and co-writer Chloé Zhao’s big but empty Marvel Comics adaptation follows an ensemble of alien superheroes dispatched to Earth by a higher power thousands of years ago to protect humans from marauding monsters. After discovering in the present day that the purpose of their mission is not what they have always believed it to be, they face a moral dilemma based, in part, on the connection they have formed with humanity. While some of this sci-fi adventure’s values are on-target and the banter in the dialogue draws the occasional laugh, neither the emotional ins-and-outs among the principals nor the somewhat pedestrian battles in which they zap dinosaur-like predators with beams and balls of energy are likely to engage discerning grown-ups. As for youngsters, the Mouse House’s insistence on waving the rainbow flag is one factor making this inappropriate for them. Frequent stylized combat, a suicide, semi-graphic premarital sexual activity, an adulterous situation, a benignly viewed homosexual relationship, a same-sex kiss, at least one mild oath, a few crude terms, a single crass expression, an obscene gesture. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

“Last Night in Soho” (Focus) What begins as a paean to the London of the swinging 60s rapidly turns into something more menacing as a psychic fashion student in the present-day British capital who is obsessed with the earlier era journeys back to it in a series of dreams during which she witnesses scenes in the life of an aspiring actress and singer of the time. Though the would-be star’s career gets off to an apparently promising start, her suave manager is not at all what he seems, and her existence rapidly degenerates into the stuff of squalid nightmares. Haunted by what she is seeing, but powerless to intervene, the protagonist becomes a neurotic mess. Her erratic daytime behavior drives the diadum of one classmate, the sympathy of another, who would like to make her his girlfriend, and the ire of her elderly landlady. Director and co-writer Edgar Wright’s psychological thriller shifts gears along with the narrative as its initially sunny tone first intensifies, then becomes feverish as it reaches a gory, mayhem-ridden conclusion. Much harsh bloody violence, fleeting but strong sexual content, including glimpses of aberrant behavior and full nudity as well as a premarital bedroom scene, vengeance and prostitution themes, drug use, a few instances of profanity, at least one milder oath, considerable rough and crude language. CNS: L; MPAA: R.

Movie Capsule

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

- A-I — general patronage;
- A-II — adults and adolescents;
- A-III — adults;
- L — limited audience;
- O — morally offensive.

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the Messenger are available online at covdio.org/messenger.
For all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children.

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

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

Step 3: Join the virtual VIRTUS session. The day before the session, you will receive an e-mail with 4 documents attached to print. On the day of the session you will receive an invitation to join the session. No children, please.

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

Bulletin:

- October bulletin: posted Sunday, Oct. 3; due Tuesday, Nov. 2.

If your Virtus account is inactive please contact your primary location for assistance.

To login: www.virtus.org, enter user id and password.

VIRTUS Training

- Saturday, Nov. 13, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana, School Cafeteria
- Monday, Nov. 15, 6–9 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
- Wednesday, Dec. 1, 6–9 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

Play Like A Champion

Elementary Coach Training

- Tuesday, Nov. 23, 6–9 p.m., St. Henry Parish, Elemers, Ayres Family Parish Center

How to access Virtual training

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

Note: If your Training Tab is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution.

For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covdio.org.

For a related article on the VIRTUS program, see page 2.
Church leaders call attention to Ethiopia as troops approach capital

NAIROBI, Kenya — One year into the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region, Father Joseph Mussie Zerai is urging the international community to accelerate efforts to stop any risk of ethnic cleansing, avoid balkanization of Ethiopia and stop a food catastrophe underway. “The international community should be ashamed of the protracted war,” Father Zerai told Catholic News Service. “Everything that we find written in the international treaties and conventions on the prevention and protection of civilians in the event of a conflict” has been disregarded. He spoke as fears of all-out war in the country grew, amid reports that the Tigray Defense Force was on the outskirts of the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The conflict, which began in Tigray Nov. 4, 2020, has killed thousands and displaced more than 1 million people, as it destroyed villages and towns. It has turned women and children into targets of violence by armed men as it spread to other regions. An Ethiopian priest who is an expert in peace and security and who had been following the Tigray crisis echoed Father Zerai’s sentiments. “My word to the international community — shame on you ... when people are being exterminated, you did not have a word to say. This is a second Rwanda. They have failed us,” said the cleric, who cannot be named for safety reasons.

Christian, Muslim leaders launch appeal to protect places of worship

AMMAN, Jordan — Spearheaded by Jordan’s Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, a group of Arab and international scholars, thinkers and religious figures — Muslim and Christian — have launched a global appeal to protect worshippers and places of worship. “In the face of what we see as the continuation of repeated attacks on places of worship and on the souls of safe worshippers in several places in this world, and based on a common human and moral responsibility, we call upon a group of religious leaders, scholars and thinkers ... to urge all people to reject all forms of extremism, hatred and painful practices against the spirit of faith and human dignity,” the more than 40 signatories and in their Nov. 2 appeal. They stressed that “hate speech and polarization that provokes hatred and justifies bloodshed continues to escalate” and is accompanied by some who resort to “the misuse of religions and beliefs as a pretext for violence, exclusion and discrimination.” The Muslim and Christian signatories continued: “These abhorrent targets also include historical and archaeological sites and architectural heritage, including museums, libraries and manuscripts, which is an erasure of the memory that preserves the civilizations of peoples and their value core from extinction.”

Catholic hospital in Lebanon losing staff as many nurses resign

BEIRUT — The health care sector in Lebanon is being crushed under the weight of multiple crises that are only getting worse, say the co-administrators of one of Lebanon’s most important hospitals. “We are struggling,” said Holy Family Sister Hadia Ah Chelbi, who directs the Lebanese Hospital Geitaoui with Dr. Pierre Yared. Geitaoui, a teaching hospital affiliated with Lebanon University’s faculty of medical sciences, was heavily damaged by the Beirut port blast in August 2020 to the tune of $7 million. Just over one year after the blast, 80 percent of the damages are repaired and 260 of its 280 beds are operational. However, the hospital is now facing a crisis greater than the blast, said Sister Hadia: “Our greatest concern now is the retention of our staff.” Yared reported that nearly 90 nurses among the hospital’s 600-member staff resigned in the past year and immigrated to Europe or other countries in the Middle East in search of stable work amid Lebanon’s ongoing sociopolitical unrest and economic collapse. The hospital has been unable to find replacement staff fast enough. “It is a matter of life and death. We cannot function without our nurses and doctors. They are crucial,” said Sister Hadia.
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