Faye Roch, director of the Pro-Life Office, welcomed nearly 180 guests for a “great evening,” as the sixth annual Life’s a Ball got into full swing, Feb. 12, at the airport Marriott, Hebron. The event, organized by the Diocese of Covington’s Pro-Life Office, recognizes individuals and organizations that protect the sanctity of life. Alan Pickett, executive director of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington was the master of ceremonies.

This year’s Life’s a Ball recognized three local pregnancy centers—Care Net, New Hope and the Rose Garden Home Mission. Lyndi Zembrodt, executive director, Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky, Karen Class, executive director of New Hope Center, and Franciscan Daughter of Mary Mother Seraphina Marie Quinlan, Rose Garden Home Mission, accepted the award on behalf of their organizations.

Bishop John Iffert praised the pregnancy care centers and the people that support them for the important work done supporting and healing women. Bishop Iffert called this work “very powerful, because they focus right where God wants us to focus, on relationship.”

Those involved with the pro-life movement are called to, by their love and care for others, witness to the dignity and sanctity of life. “This is a testimony that we are not one-issued people on legalized abortion, but we are people who love. We are not angry, we are not judgmental, we are witnesses that everyone is loved by the Church and by Christ,” Bishop Iffert said.

Part of this witness is to ask of the nation and its leaders to form a society and structure of law that supports and encourages respect for all life. Bishop Iffert said that there is a lot of hope that Roe v Wade — the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal, essentially on demand, in the United States — could be overturned this summer. He also mentioned that it is time to prepare locally for an unknown future should the Dobbs v Jackson’s Women’s Health Organization case, popularly known as the Dobbs case, be upheld.

The Dobbs case was argued last fall before the Supreme Court, (Continued on page 13)
Protecting the most-valuable asset, children, is not only accomplished by educating adults about the problem of sexual abuse but also teaching children how to stay safe. By providing children with age-appropriate lessons that help to set boundaries and identify unsafe behaviors, the safe environment for children program is giving children tools to use for a lifetime.

Last November the Diocese of Covington adopted the VIRTUS Empowering God’s Children to educate children on how to identify and avoid people who would choose to harm them. This new program replaces all children’s programs previously in place and builds on the many years of hard work that has already been done to help create safe environments for children in schools and parishes.

“In order for us to better meet the needs of our schools and religious education programs we decided that what we were using previously could be more cohesive and relevant for our children,” said Julie Feinauer, director of the office of Safe Environment.

Mrs. Feinauer highlighted several advantages of the Empowering God’s Children:

— It offers more training for catechists and teachers who will be facilitating the program.
— The lessons are more current, covering topics such as internet and social media safety.
— The new program is online, allowing it to be more accessible to users and is easily and readily updated.
— It can also be used in both the school and parish settings so that all children are given the same and most relevant lessons in the timeliest manner possible.

“The new training program ties into the Catechism of the Catholic Church and relies on the moral teachings of the Church to help focus each lesson,” said Mrs. Feinauer.

The Safe Environment program seeks to provide a safe environment for all vulnerable adults and children connected with the Diocese of Covington. According to a Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People developed by the United States Conference of Bishops all children must be offered a training program.

Pope Francis has called a synod entitled “For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, mission,” as a way for all of God’s people — including those on the margins — to share their voice on how best the Church can, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, journey together on the path to Christ.

The local phase or listening phase is currently underway in parishes. The main question being asked is, “How is this journeying together happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?”

Check your parish website and bulletins to attend a listening session. Or complete a survey online by visiting www.covdio.org/synod or scan the QR code and click the “Share Insights” button. The deadline to participate is March 31.

Information gathered during the local phase will ultimately set the agenda for the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in 2023.

A Synodal Church — all of God’s people share their voices

A Catholic approach to ‘Empowering God’s Children’
Register now to attend Catholics@TheCapitol, March 10, with Bishop Iffert

Laura Keener
Editor

The Kentucky General Assembly is already more than a third of the way through its 2022 Regular Session and several bills of interest for Kentucky Catholics have been filed and are moving through the legislative process. To help Kentucky Catholics get involved, Bishop John Iffert and the Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) are hosting Catholics@TheCapitol, March 10. Buses will leave from the diocesan Curia, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, at 7 a.m., returning at about 5 p.m. Participants may also choose to provide their own transportation. There is no cost to attend. Registration is available on the Diocese of Covington website, www.covdio.org. The deadline to register is March 4.

The CCK is the official voice for Kentucky’s four bishops and the Catholic Church. Jason Hall, executive director, and Andrew Vandiver, associate director, will greet constituents from the Diocese of Covington as they arrive in Frankfort. Before visiting with legislators, Mr. Hall and Mr. Vandiver will talk to constituents about the bills and issues that the CCK and Kentucky’s bishops are supporting and offer some tips on how to best share their viewpoint with their senator and state representatives.

“This is a very low-stress way of getting your feet wet in the advocacy world,” said Mr. Hall. “For anyone that has an interest in advocacy but doesn’t know how to get started, this is a great first foray into it because we provide training, we provide talking points, we help set up appointments to try to get people with their legislator. And it’s a way to do it in union with your fellow Catholics and with your bishop. It’s really a way for a local Church to engage in the legislative process.”

The CCK is hosting a Catholics@TheCapitol for each archdiocese in Kentucky. Faye Roch, director, diocesan Pro-Life Office, (859) 392-1500.

The CCK is following the legislative process, and sign up for legislative alerts on the CCK website, www.cckky.org.

For more information visit covdio.org/catholic-bible-study or call (859) 392-1529.

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The Good Samaritan … ‘the image of Jesus Christ’

From a narrative perspective, the parables of Jesus engaged the hearer in a dynamic of “imaginative shock.” In the encounter with the divine love disclosed in such “stories of God,” mistaken operating assumptions about one’s relationship to God and to others are shattered and turned upside down. The horizon that then opens up calling for an ensuing moment of conversion enabled the hearer to reimagine life and the world in a radically new way. Now reality can be seen in the light of the kingdom of God. Of all the parables of Jesus, the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-42) illustrates how dialectics in an unparalleled way it is difficult for modern readers to appreciate the depth of the centuries-old hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Its origi- nal historical setting of the first century, a faithful Jew would find it to be utterly unthinkable to identify with the despised Samaritan who was regarded as a foreigner, a heretic.

However, a Jewish layman could not identify with the other travelers, temple personnel, for he was neither priest nor Levite. The only possible option, then, would be to see oneself as the victim in the ditch, robbed, stripped, beaten, and near death.

And, there’s the shock! Jesus’ parable stands in con- trast to an anticipated story line of the time, a triad of travelers with a typical cast of a priest, a Levite, and an Israelite. Yet, in Jesus’ parable, “the non-neighbor” who is not an Israelite acts as neighbor to one in desperate need. Expectations are reversed: the hero lives outside covenant solidarity. In effect, the concept of “neighbor” has been broadened beyond the traditional understand- ing of the Law that had limited covenant responsibilities to Jews and resident aliens.

In the words of Benedictine Abbot Jerome Kodel, a dimension of the after-shock emerges in the unimaginable awareness that a Samaritan, one who was excluded from the covenant, was “performing a loving service avoided by Jewish religious leaders.” Abbot Kodel comments: “Neighbor” is not a matter of blood bonds or nationality or religious communion; it is determined by the attitude a person has toward others.

In the same vein, the late Passionist Father Carroll Stuhlmueller (d. 1996) stated: “Hatred was a mild word for the attitude a person has toward others.” According to the parable, to consecrate one’s life to God, to consecrate and continue to consecrate their lives to God, freely giving of themselves out of love for their neighbor, especially for the weak and needy.

Deeds strengthen the bases of the “civilization of love and life.”

— Pope St. John Paul II, Evangelium Vite (The Gospel of Life, 1995), n. 27

In his theological study, “Jesus of Nazareth” (2007), Pope Benedict XVI engages in a lengthier reflection on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. His exegesis of the text highlights the conventional religious viewpoint in Jesus’ time which limited the circle of concern by defining “neighbor” as “a fellow member of one’s community” a “community of solidarity.”

But, after his exegetical interpretation of the biblical meaning of the story the Holy Father explains several allegorical readings beyond the literal meaning of the text. For example, a Christological standpoint was one such accommodation of the text developed by the ancient Christian writers. The great patriarchal writers identified the victim in the ditch as “the image of Everyone” and the Samaritan as “the image of Jesus Christ himself, who for us in foreign and distant, has set out to take care of his wounded creature.”

Through the prism of the redemptive incarnation, the Church Fathers envision God as seeing “man alienated” and helpless by the roadside of history and God himself becoming man’s neighbor in Jesus Christ.

The theme of love in this parable prepares us to real- ize that we are all “alienated,” in need of redemption.

Moreover, the parable creates a consciousness that “we are all in need of the gift of redeeming love our- selves, so that we too can become lessers in return.”


The encyclical states: “In the Church’s liturgies; in her preaching, in the lives of her priests, bishops, we experi- ence the love of God, we perceive his presence, and thus we learn to recognize that presence in our daily lives.”

The core of Christian love is rooted in the reality that God “has loved us first, and he continues to do so; we too can respond with love.” The initiative of God’s love “makes us use and experience his love, and since he has loved us first, love can also blossom as a response within us” (DCC, n. 17).

Therefore, according to Deus Caritas Est, what is cent- ral to Jesus’ teaching on love is the encounter with God’s agape that weaves “faith, worship, and ethos” into “a sin- gle reality.” Agape also became a term for the Eucharist, for in the sacrament “God’s own agape comes to us bodily, in order to continue his work in and through us.”

Here Pope Benedict XVI stressed that “[w]henship itself, Eucharistic communion, includes the reality of being loved and of loving others in turn.” If the Eucharist does not engender the practice of love concretely, worship becomes “intrinsically fragmented.”

In this regard, Pope Benedict XVI referred to the para- ble of the Good Samaritan to illustrate that “love can be commanded” because it has been first given to us (DCC, n. 14).

In her comprehensive study “Parables for Preachers” (2009), Dominican Sister Barbara R. Reid notes that hero- ic acts of mercy are rooted in the very mystery of God’s steadfast love portrayed in the parable “… because this is how God acts. And so, who wants to keep God’s Law does the same.”

Reflecting upon the patristic allegorical interpretation of the story of the Good Samaritan, the new Testament scholar spells out the implications of the metaphor of “the view from the ditch.” It becomes an invitation “to see the hated enemy as the merciful face of God.” She notes that “for some it is only possible to accept this message after having reached the depths of need, having been stripped of one’s own resources.”

The transformation effected by the inbreaking of divine compassion by “[a]ccepting godly mercy opens the wellsprings of compassion that so many of us regard as too great or powerful to approach, but which in turn become a bearer of mercy across boundaries.”

In concluding his meditation on the parable of the Good Samaritan, Pope Benedict XVI stresses an ethical and spiritual insight drawn from the graciousness of God’s love incarnate in Jesus Christ. He writes: “Everyone is already, especially from love … everyone must first be healed and filled with God’s gifts. But then everyone is called to become a Samaritan … to follow Christ and become like him. When we do that, we live rightly We love rightly, when we become like him, who loved all of us first.”

Msgr. Ronald Ketteler is director of ecumenism, episco- pal liaison to the Messenger and theologian in residence at Thomas More University.
When our world is falling apart

The early years of my adulthood and priesthood were spent teaching theology at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Canada. I was young and energetic, loved teaching and was discovering the joys of ministry. For the most part, these were good years. However, they weren’t always easy. Restlessness and inner chaos find us all. The demands of ministry, the tension inside community, the obsessions I’m forever prone to, the infrequent departure of cherished friends from the community, and the constant movement of people through my life, occasionally left me in emotional chaos, gasping for oxygen, struggling to sleep, wondering how I was going to still my soul again.

But I had a little formula to help this handle. Whenever the chaos got bad, I would get into my car and drive four hours to our family farm just across the border in Saskatchewan. My family still lived in the house I’d grown up in and I was able to eat at the same table. I’d eaten at as a child, sleep in the same bed I’d slept in as a boy, and walk the same ground. I walked while growing up. Usually it didn’t take long for the house to do its work. I’d only need a meal or an overnight stay and the chaos and heartache would subside — I’d begin to feel steady again.

Coming home didn’t cure the heartache but it gave the heart the care it needed. Somehow home always worked.

Today the same kind of emotional chaos and heartache can still unsettle me on occasion and leave me unsure of who I am, of the choices I’ve made in life, and of who and what to trust. Home seems not to drive my childhood home anymore. I need to find the steadying that going home once gave me in new ways. It isn’t always apparent where to find this, even amongst a good community, a still supportive family, loving friends, and a wonderful job. Home can be elusive on a restless night. What one needs to steady the heart isn’t always easy to access. Once you’ve left home, it’s sometimes hard to find your way back there again.

So what do I do now when I need to go home and retouch my roots to steady myself? Sometimes a trusted friend is the answer; sometimes it’s a call to family member; sometimes it’s a family that has become family to me, sometimes it’s a place in prayer or in nature, sometimes it’s immersing myself in work, and sometimes I can’t find it at all and have to live with the chaos until, like a bad storm, it blows over.

Through the years, I’ve discovered that a special book can take me home in the same way as driving there once did. Different people find home in different places. One of the books that does this for me, almost without fail, is “The Story of a Soul” by Therese of Lisieux. Not surprisingly, it’s the story of a recursive journey; the story of THERESE’s own effort at recapturing what her house, home and family once gave her. But her recursive journey in itself is not what gives this book (which I highly recommend for anyone whose heart is aching in a way that unsettles the soul) such a special power. Many autobiographies unsettle more than they settle. This one soothes your soul.

However, remembering alone doesn’t necessarily care for the heart and sometimes our memories of home and childhood carry more pathology and pain than steadying and healing. Not everyone’s home was safe and nurturing. Typically one’s initial home can also be the place our trust and steadiness are irrevocably broken, as is the case often in sexual and other forms of abuse. I was fortunate. My teachers or coaches were it, but for those who were not as lucky, the task is to find a home, a place or a person, that will convey a steady soul.

What is the place for a home that cares our soul? Home is where you are safe. It’s also the place where you experience both your beauty and your wounded soul. The demands of ministry, the ten- dynamic internal chaos find us all. The demands of ministry, the tension inside community, the obsessions I’m forever prone to, the infrequent departure of cherished friends from the community, and the constant movement of people through my life, occasionally left me in emotional chaos, gasping for oxygen, struggling to sleep, wondering how I was going to still my soul again.

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Mission driven, Thomas More University relies on partnerships to make it more

Contributed by Thomas More University

Thomas More University relies on community partnerships as it strives to achieve its mission to challenge students of all faiths to examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others. The University is able to leverage these partnerships to provide students with meaningful experiences or resources that complement their education in the form of networking opportunities, internships, scholarships, and learning opportunities.

One long-standing partnership that the University enjoys is with the Covington Rotary. The Rotary celebrated its centennial in 2020 and is the longest standing service club in Northern Kentucky. Chartered in Dec. 1920, it is dedicated to “Service Above Self” and is known for its Four-Way Test, a non-partisan and non-sectarian ethical guide to professional and personal relationships. Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? The alignment of their guiding principles to Thomas More’s own mission is evident.

In addition to a similar mission, there are decades of shared members as part of this partnership. Covington Rotary presidents include several Thomas More trustees and administrators. Many former vice-president of Institutional Advancement at Thomas More, was one of the first two women admitted to Covington Rotary in 1969, when membership was no longer limited to men. More recently, Covington Rotary established a Rotaract Club under the leadership of Thomas More’s John Wolper, Ph.D., to develop the community service interests and skills of students from local colleges and universities.

With roots in downtown Covington, a history of shared leaders, and a mutual commitment to service, Rotary was key in support of the inaugural Saints Serve — a day of service to the community. Thomas More students, faculty, and staff worked alongside Covington Rotarians, including Thomas More alumni, and even former Secretary of State and State Representative Ken Harper the longest serving Covington Rotarian. The Rotary Club connected Thomas More with several of its ongoing service projects and facilitated additional opportunities to serve the community.

"What an exciting and inspiring day for everyone who participated," said Brenda Kelly Fauber, service chair of the Covington Rotary. "Rotarians were able to demonstrate their commitment to service, meet and share the day with wonderful Thomas More students, faculty and staff. Best of all was the chance to enjoy seeing how the community benefited from their joint efforts as they viewed the results of their completed work."

Building meaningful relationships with industry leaders allows TMU to present unique opportunities as a way to support the University’s students. One key example of this is the continuing relationship with Duke Energy; Duke has been instrumental in supporting the research activities at the Thomas More Biology Field Station, located in California. In 2018, the field station was named a recipient of a Powerful Communities Nature grant from the Duke Energy Foundation in fall 2021.

"For over 10 years, Duke Energy has partnered with us to advance our understanding of the natural world, train students in the STEM fields, and improve the quality of life in our region through education, environmental protection, and ecological research," said Chris Larentz, Ph.D., director of the Biology Field Station and Thomas More professor. "Through this grant, we will be able to continue our long-term studies on the water quality of the Ohio River and nearby tributaries, while developing our students to become the next generation of biologists, ecologists, and environmental scientists." Another powerful partnership that continues to grow is with Republic Bank. Republic Bank has been the official bank of Thomas More University since 2016. The bank also has sponsored the University’s Institute for Career Development and Graduate School Planning (ICG) for several years. The ICG is instrumental in assisting students with career exploration, job search and strategy, identifying experiential learning opportunities, and researching graduate school opportunities. This work has a direct impact on student success immediately out of college.

"We are grateful for our partnership with Republic Bank and for the generosity of the Republic Bank Foundation. Their generous investment in our students is emblematic of the bank’s strong commitment to leadership, service, and education in the greater Cincinnati region," said Dr. Joseph Chiola, president, Thomas More University. In fall 2021, Republic Bank made a significant investment to the University’s second century campaign, resulting in the turf field, which is home for the football, soccer, rugby and lacrosse teams, being renamed Republic Bank Field. Their generosity has been essential to the early success of this ambitious capital campaign.

Another innovative partnership began in spring 2019 between the University and an up-and-coming pharmaco-economic consulting firm named Gravity Diagnostics. Gravity was established in 2016 and it found it was in need of a pipeline lab that could supply high-quality talent for many areas of its business. As a result Gravity was tapped as the first work-ready incubator site for Thomas More — housing students onsite as they enhance the skills necessary to be successful in their work environment. The partnership is alive and well today as Gravity continues to recruit students to fill their workforce needs, which has exploded due to the impact of the pandemic on the healthcare industry.

The Thomas More community is incredibly thankful for the commitment of community partners which aid in student success. To honor this commitment Thomas More introduced the Saints Salute in 2017. Since that time eight partners have been recognized for their continued support of the University with a Saints Salute. The recipients include: VonLehman CPA and Advisory Firm; Gravity Diagnostics; Republic Bank; and Alpha Delta Gamma fraternity.

"We wanted to take the opportunity to honor VonLehman for their contributions to the University and dedication to bettering the community," says President Chiola. "Their continued work as the University’s auditing agent and their support for our students through internship opportunities and jobs, in addition to their philanthropic support sponsoring different on-campus initiatives, makes them an invaluable member of the Thomas More community." The University has always been interested in building relationships with local companies, agencies, or groups that can assist with successful outcomes for both students and the community. There are many opportunities available and we encourage those interested in making a difference to contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at (859) 344-3344 or advancement@thomasmore.edu.
“The Problem with Religious Liberty”
featuring the David A. Potenziani Memorial Chair of Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame

Patrick J. Deneen, Ph.D.

Patrick J. Deneen, Ph.D., is professor of political science and holds the David A. Potenziani Memorial Chair of Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Deneen’s previous teaching experiences were at Princeton University (1997-2005) and Georgetown University where he also held an endowed chair in Hellenic Studies. From 2005-2007, he also served as the principal speechwriter and special assistant to the director of the U.S. Information Agency. Deneen’s intellectual interests and publications range from ancient political thought to American political thought, liberalism, conservatism, religion and politics, and literature and politics. He was the Founding Director of the Fouquaileville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy, the author of five books, and editor of three others including “Why Liberalism Failed” (2018) which has been translated into 20 languages. He received his doctorate in political science from Rutgers University, and his dissertation received the American Political Science Association’s Levi Strauss Award for Best Dissertation in Political Theory in 1995.

For more information, visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

Religious freedom: an unalienable right
VATICAN CITY — People have a right to life, not to death, which must be welcomed but never provoked, Pope Francis said.

“The right to care and treatment for all must always be prioritized, so that the weakest, especially the elderly and the sick, are never discarded,” he said Feb. 9 during his weekly general audience.

The pope also criticized a problem he said is real for older people “in a certain social class” of not being given all of the medicine or care they need since they lack the money.

“This is inhumane. This is not helping them, this is pushing them more quickly toward death,” he said. They must be cared for and not marginalized.

The pope’s remarks were part of his series of audience talks about St. Joseph and his role as the patron saint of a “happy” death, a term used to describe a last stage of life that is peaceful and full of faith and hope.

Pope Francis praised a recent comment by retired Pope Benedict XVI, who, at nearly 95 years of age, recognizes his own presence before “the dark door of death.”

It is “good advice” for everyone, Pope Francis said, because today’s “so-called ‘feel-good’ culture tries to remove the reality of death.” People seek to ignore “our finite existence, deluding ourselves into believing we can remove the power of death and dispel fear.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the reality of death back into focus, he added, and so many people “have lost loved ones without being able to be near them, and this has made death even harder to accept and process.”

The Christian faith is not about removing the fear of death; “rather, it helps us to face it” with trust in Christ’s promises, he said.

“We cannot avoid death, and precisely for this reason, after having done everything that is humanly possible to cure the sick, it is immoral to engage in futile treatment,” the pope said, referring to the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s teachings on the legitimacy of refusing “overzealous” treatment not to cause death but to accept it (paragraph 2278).

When it comes to the experience of death itself, of pain or of suffering, he said, “we must be grateful for all the help that medicine endeavors to give, so that through so-called ‘palliative care,’ every person who is preparing to live the last stage of their life can do so in the most human way possible.”

However, the pope warned against confusing such care with unacceptable interventions that lead to killing people. “We must accompany people toward death, but not provoke death or facilitate assisted suicide.”

This ethical principle, he said, applies to everyone, “not just Christians or believers.”

At the end of his main audience talk, the pope reminded people of the church’s celebration of the World Day of the Sick Feb. 11. He asked that all people experiencing illness be guaranteed health care and spiritual accompaniment.

He urged people to pray for those who are ill, their families, health care and pastoral workers, and everyone who helps care for their needs.

People have the right to life, needed health care, pope says at audience

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

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The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally on The CW Sundays, noon to 1 p.m. Viewers can tune in on the following channel: Spectrum 117 or 25, Cincinnati Bell 17 or 017, and DirectTV 23.

Catholic Courses for Adults — the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization offers courses for teachers, parish and school catechists, deaconate aspirants, and all adults who would like to expand their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Cost $35. Call Isak A. Isak at 513-1500, ext. 3529.

Wildcats go for Gold
Kindergarten students at St. Agnes school, Ft. Wright, have been following the Winter Olympics very closely. Every few days they update the Gold Medal count where they learn about the different flags, compare and contrast the number of medals and incorporate math problems into their learning.

Candlelight Mass — experience the beauty of the Mass in a powerful new way, hosted by the Diocese of Covington’s Young Adult Ministry, Holy Cross Church, Covington, Feb 18. Conferences, 6 p.m.; Mass 7 p.m. All are welcome. Social for young adults (18–39) follows at Molly Malone’s, Covington. Contact Brad Torline at btorline@covdio.org.

The Wm. T. Robinson III Institute for Religious Liberty welcomes Prof. Deneen Borelli, Feb. 24, 7 p.m., The Wm. T. Robinson III Institute for Religious Liberty, Covington. Tickets $25 per player. Contact cksrmer11@icloud.com or 786-7884 to register.

Bishop Brossart High School euchre tournament, March 11, Hegenanuer Hall, Doors open 5:30 p.m.; tournament 7 p.m. Cost $25 per player. Contact ckremer11@icloud.com or 786-7884 to register.

St. Henry Parish celebrates new members of the faith
St. Henry Parish, Erlamore, parishioners celebrated the Rite of Welcoming with Katharine Rowekamp and Salinae Miller. The two are pursuing full communion with the Catholic Church. The Rite of Welcoming is one of several steps in the the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Showing their stripes
Fourth-grade students at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, embraced the strength of the Bengals spirit. The students made Bengals bracelets and keychains to sell to raise money for Strikes for Kids.

The New Manna Retreat, Feb. 20, join Father Matthew Oshing and Father Thomas Picchioni to explore the four different faces of the real Manna come down from heaven. Cost $35, check in 8 a.m.; retreat begins 9 a.m. RSVP appreciated, e-mail sproutingstumpministries@gmail.com or call/text 860-8890.

New Hope Center’s Father Daughter Dance, March 5 & 6. 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Fort Thomas Mess Hall. 6th-12th graders and their fathers, $45 per father-daughter couple — $35 each additional daughter. Semi-formal attire, scholar-
Authors: Find moments of silence this Lent, connect three pillars of season

Anna Capizzi Galvez
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON — How can Catholics and Christians approach Lent this year in a fresh way?

In interviews with Catholic News Service, two authors provided their insights on how to make Lent meaningful in 2022 — especially since this is the third Lent the church will observe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Think of Lent as a season of rest, said Paul Jarzembowski, author of the 2022 book “Hope from the Ashes: Insights and Resources for Welcoming Lenten Visitors.”

Many people come back and connect to the Church during Lent because “there’s something that’s weighing heavy on their hearts,” Jarzembowski said.

“Lent is a time where the Church invites people to lay a lot of those issues at the feet of the Lord and to go through Lent alongside Jesus who is also, we see in Lent, is walking that journey too,” added Jarzembowski, associate director for the laity in the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Tsh Oxenreider, writer, podcaster and author of the 2022 devotional “Bitter & Sweet: A Journey Into Easter,” said that this third Lent of the pandemic is unique in that many are saying they are ready to reembrace Lent again.

“It was almost like the first Lent snuck up on us” at the beginning of the pandemic and “we were just in survival mode,” Oxenreider said. “Then the second Lent came around and it was like, what we just had Lent. We’ve been in Lent this whole time; it feels like it.”

But now in 2022 many are realizing the value of the rhythms of the liturgical calendar and are acknowledging the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said.

One way to refresh your Lenten practice this year is to connect how you observe the three traditional pillars of Lent: fasting, almsgiving and prayer.

“One way to reconnect with these pillars is to find ways to give and pray together,” Oxenreider said. “See if there are creative ways you can do what you sense God calling you to fast from with your prayer and your giving,” she said. Together with fasting, “is there some sort of giving you can do toward local food situations? ... Focus some of your prayer on food insecurity around the world.”

“Not only does that check those boxes with giving and prayer, but it actually provides more meaning to the fast,” Oxenreider said.

To approach Lent with a fresh perspective, try to find moments of silence, Jarzembowski suggested.

“Lent affords us some time to really be quiet. If that’s quiet in one’s personal prayer space, if that’s quiet getting in the car and going over to a church or a sacred space; if that’s online. Wherever someone can find that quiet and you know that you have the time to do,” he said.

Jarzembowski compared Lent to baseball’s spring training in that both are practice seasons.

“During spring training, you practice on the fundamentals. You try things out you’ve never tried before so that when it’s time for the regular season, what we call after Easter, you’ve had this time to practice. During Lent, (practice) moments to just shut it down to gift yourself with moments of silence, pause and reflection,” he added.

But while it’s important to find moments of quiet, it’s also important to connect with others.

“Lent is often about that inner journey; it is often about our personal commitment but we sometimes go too far in personal and privatize Lent,” Jarzembowski said.

More people are observing Lent than we realize, he said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe someone who doesn’t go to church often, who might be having peanut butter and jelly sandwiches alongside you. Maybe they’re giving up chocolate just like you.”

This year, “ask the Lord for the gift of boldness to...”
be a little more free to talk with our friends and our family with about what we're doing and ask what they're doing,” Jarzembowski said.

“There’s something to be said about making it a season that helps us remember we’re a church, we’re not just individual Christians and walking around earth and just coincidentally at the same time,” Oxenreider said. “We are a body and this is something that we do together for whatever reason. God set it up so that we need each other and so it makes sense that we would need each other for Lent.”

For Oxenreider, art and music are two avenues to fostering a shared Lenten experience.

In her book, “Bitter & Sweet,” Oxenreider includes titles of songs to listen to daily as well as pieces of art to contemplate weekly. Art and music “can be a source of talking among your family and your friends about your Lenten experience and it doesn’t all have to just stay in your head,” she said.

Parishes are key in creating community during Lent, and parishes should consider devoting careful attention to planning thoughtful Lenten programs.

“Amy Lenten program should have a first impression where someone should feel it’s accessible. For instance, a stress relief night could be something we could use,” Jarzembowski suggested.

“It’s language that accessible. You can feature prayers, songs. There could be opportunities for devotion, for rosary,” he added. “Helping people understand that this is how we in our faith traditionally relieve stress.”

“Any Lenten program should have a first impression where someone should feel it’s accessible. For instance, a stress relief night could be something we could use,” Jarzembowski suggested.

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“Lent is a time to reflect on what is important to us and how we can use those insights to help others.”

“The other ideal Lenten program is one that speaks to people’s needs. We are overstressed. We are anxiety-ridden. Do our Lenten programs provide a response to that? (Are) there opportunities for spiritual direction or mentorship? Is there a place for people to know they can go for even clinical support?” Jarzembowski said.

Ultimately, Jarzembowski encourages people to be patient with themselves during Lent. “Do something. You don’t have to do everything.”

While many can begin Lent with great enthusiasm, they can lose steam by the third week, Oxenreider said. She suggests navigating the season slowly and steadily: “To make it through Lent takes a lot of grace on ourselves, grace that God gives us.”

Paul Jarzembowski is associate director for the laity in the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington. He is author of the book “Hope from the Ashes: Insights and Resources for Welcoming Lenten Visitors.”
STAFF WRITER/ MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPER

The Messenger, the Diocese of Covington’s official weekly newspaper, is growing its mission and is adding a full-time Staff Writer/Media Content Developer to its editorial staff. This position requires a broad range of abilities, including excellent writing, proofreading, organizational skills, photography and digital content development. The successful candidate will be a practicing Roman Catholic and will have a commitment to teamwork. The ideal candidate will be self-motivated and imaginative, with working knowledge of Photoshop and Illustrator. In addition to regular office hours, evening and weekend assignments do occur. Start date: Immediate. Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail: skoplyay@covdio.org, (859) 392-1500. EOE

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Step 3: 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.

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Thomas More University, Steigerwald Hall, Crestview Hills

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Pope amends canons to give greater authority to bishops, conferences

VATICAN CITY — Saying he wanted to promote a “healthy decentralization” of some aspects of Church life, Pope Francis made several changes to Church law, granting greater authority to individual bishops, bishops’ conferences and synods of bishops of the Eastern Catholic churches.

The changes, the pope said, should “foster a sense of collegiality and the pastoral responsibility” of bishops and religious superiors who are closest to the matters being decided and therefore have a better understanding of what is appropriate.

Pope Francis’ amendments to both the Code of Canon Law of the Latin-rite Church and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches were published by the Vatican Feb. 15, the day they were to go into effect.

The modifications, the pope said, “reflect even more the shared and plural universality of the Church,” which includes many legitimate differences, but preserves its unity in communion with the pope.

At the same time, he wrote, the changes “encourage a more rapid efficacy of the pastoral action of governance by the local authority, which is facilitated by its very proximity to the persons and situations which require it.”

For setting up an interdiocesan seminary, drafting a local or regional law, or authorizing the use of a local or regional treasury to be raised by the diocese, the bishop can now make a decision without the approval of the Vatican.

The pope also made other changes to the Code of Canon Law books for the Latin and Eastern Catholic churches.

In another change, Pope Francis gave local bishops the authority to determine when there is “a just and necessary cause” for reducing the number of Masses to be said in fulfillment of a will or legacy left to the church. Previously such a decision was reserved to the Vatican.

In the case of the Code of Canon Law, Pope Francis said that local bishops “should foster a sense of responsibility and involvement on the part of the persons and situations which require it.”

The pope said the Code of Canon Law “includes many legitimate differences, but preserves its shared and plural universality of the Church,” which recognizes that over time, especially if the money be used for the donor’s intentions, but recognizes that over time, especially if the money is left decades ago, adjustments may be necessary.

Pope Francis also added a new paragraph to the canon dealing with consecrated virgins to make clear that a bishop may establish an association for consecrated virgins in his diocese and a bishops’ conference may do the same on the national level.

In addition, he gave religious superiors, when acting in consultation with their councils, broad authority for authorizing long absences from the community or for dismissing or accepting a request of a member with temporary vows to leave the community permanently.

Pregnancy care centers honored

(Continued from page 1)

Pregnancy centers are expected to make its ruling this summer. The case challenges the constitutionality of a Mississippi law — the “Gestational Age Act” — that prohibits all abortions, with few exceptions, after 15 weeks’ gestational age. A ruling upholding the law will essentially overturn Roe v. Wade, sending the legal question of abortion back to the states.

In Kentucky this year, voters will make their decision known on whether or not the Kentucky Constitution supports the right to abortion. The “Kentucky No Right to Abortion in Constitution Amendment” is on the ballot, Nov. 8, as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment. A “yes” vote supports amending the Kentucky Constitution to state that nothing in the state constitution creates a right to abortion or requires government funding for abortion.

“Here in Kentucky, we have a special opportunity to vote for a constitutional amendment to make it clear that there is no right to abortion,” Bishop Iffert said. “I can speak for all four bishops when I say we are behind this effort to vote yes for life here in Kentucky.”

In regard to the legal questions surrounding abortion, Bishop Iffert said it is important to remember that there is no connection between what is legal and what is moral.

“For that human life, to expose our infants, to expose our elderly, to expose life in the womb is a grave moral failure whether it is legal or not. Challenging the assumption that because something is legal it is moral, that’s also a very brave witness. That is to be hoped for, that we can break that connection. So that people can choose life in their own lives and help others,” Bishop Iffert said.

Bishop Iffert closed by saying that nobody converts anyone, but that hearts are converted by the Holy Spirit when we make ourselves available to be instruments of God’s grace.

“Through all the work done by pregnancy centers, and those sharing in the witness of the March for Life, and through pro-life fraternities, all sharing in the fundamental belief of the right to life, that it will be enthroned in our society and constitution as an absolute moral truth that must be defended, all of this gives a witness that we can make ourselves available, so that God can work his witness through you and me,” Bishop Iffert said.
Entertainment

‘Death on the Nile’ (20th Century) The tangled relationships linking an heiress, her newlywed husband and the embittered woman who was once both her best friend and his fiancée may or may not be the cause of fatal events during a cruise on the titu-
lar river. With an ensemble of sus-
pects to choose from among his fellow passengers on the excursion acclaimed Belgian detective Hercule Poirot will need all his skill to unravel the mystery. This visually elegant peri-
drama, adapted from the 1937 novel by Agatha Christie, gets off to a skittish start but settles down into an intrigu-
ning whodunit that, as scripted by Michael Green, gains

In Matthew’s version of this teaching, Jesus ends, “You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Jesus gives us as our standard, not human capability, but God himself. The Church holds up to us the same standard of perfection. Just two weeks ago we prayed in the Collect that we may “love everyone (stalics mine) in truth of heart.” Everyone? Really?

Perhaps God has more confidence in us than we do. Perhaps the fact that Jesus teaches love of enemies from the beginning speaks of God’s hope in us. Yes, we are weak, selfish and sinful, but God does not expect us to rely on our own strength. As we sing in the hymn “A Mighty Fortress” “Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing”

Jesus gives us his own Holy Spirit and grace in the sacraments. Relying on that grace, desiring Christian perfection and working diligently towards it, we can become what God calls us to be. As St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Now to him who by the power at work with in us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or imagine…”

Finally, let me propose this: perhaps love of enemies is the only real love, in this sense — true love is for the good of the other. We love pizza, baseball and, too often, even people for our good. Perhaps Jesus is teaching us what love truly is.

Perhaps the phrase “unconditional love” is a redun-
dancy. Perhaps there is only unconditional love, given without consideration of the worthiness of the other, even of who the other is. If we could learn to love our enemies, then perhaps we could learn to love.

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

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**SHOPPER’S GUIDE

**NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

In Lebanese crisis, religious also function as relief, social workers

ROME — Italy’s Constitutional Court has blocked a national referendum on legalizing euthanasia, saying it would violate con-
stitutional protections of human life. The court, which ruled in
2019 against punishing a physician for assisting with the death of a terminally ill patient experiencing intolerable suffering, had urged parliament to draft clear legislation regulating euthanasia
and assisted suicide. But a delay in parliamentary action led a coalition of right-to-die groups to launch a drive to collect signatures to put an euthanasia referendum on the ballot. The drive collected more than 1 million signatures, and the supreme court declared almost 500,000 of them valid — more than what was needed to have the question reviewed by the Constitutional Court. The referendum would have modified Italian law so that causing anyone’s death with his or her consent would no longer be punishable with a prison term of six to 15 years. Instead, the only acts of euthanasia or assisted suicide that would remain punishable would be those involving persons under the age of 18, persons coerced into giving consent or those incapable of giving consent because of mental infirmity or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. While the Constitutional Court’s full ruling and explanations were not published immediately, its press office released a statement saying: “The court deemed the referendum question inadmissible because, following the repeal, albeit partial, of the law on the killing of a consenting party, which is the purpose of the question, the constitutionally necessary minimum protection of human life in general, and of weak and vulnerable persons in particular, would not be preserved.”

Grant of $3.65 million will fund network of institutes of Catholic thought

CHICAGO — A national network of institutes of Catholic thought will soon launch as part of a new $3.65 million grant, issued by the John Templeton Foundation Feb. 1. The In Lumine Network will include six Catholic institutes, located at top university campuses across the country, to start. They include the Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago, the Nova Forum at the University of Southern California, the Collegium Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, the St. Anselm Institute at the University of Virginia, COLLIS at Cornell University, and the Harvard Catholic Forum at Harvard University. Each of these institutes operates independently of the university but serves the secular university’s faculty students and staff with programming that sets a range of disciplines in dialogue with the Catholic intellectual tradition and forms participants in that tradition. The entire grant was awarded to the Lumen Christi Institute to administer over three years. In addition to establishing the network, funding will support science and religion programming — some open to the public — at each of these institutes. Members of the In Lumine Network also will receive training and workshops on sustainable nonprofit management, including strategy development, fundraising, marketing, program management and evaluation, event planning and campus engagement. Michael Le Chevallier, acting executive director of the Lumen Christi Institute, said the network will expand after its first year to welcome new members from across the United States, including ecumenical partners.
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