Rite of Election — a sign of God’s love and path through temptation of doubt

Laura Keener

“We all want to be loved. It’s the secret of the human condition,” said Bishop John Iffert as he began his homily during the Rite of Election, March 6, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

Pastors from 32 parishes in the Diocese of Covington presented 65 catechumens and 113 candidates to Bishop Iffert for the Rite of Election. Catechumens are unbaptized individuals seeking to enter the Catholic Church. During the Rite of Election each was called forward by name, received a blessing from Bishop Iffert and had their name inscribed in the Book of the Elect, which Bishop Iffert signed, declaring them the Elect — God’s chosen people.

Candidates are baptized Christians seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. They too, were called by name and received a blessing from Bishop Iffert.

Since August, both the candidates and catechumens have been participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults program at their parish. At this year’s Easter Vigil they will receive the sacraments of initiation — baptism (catechumens), first Communion, and confirmation (catechumens and candidates) — and will become the newest members of the Church.

“We are created by love, for love,” Bishop Iffert said. “We are created by God because God wants to love. We are created by God so that God can love us. And, we are created to be able to perfectly receive God’s love and with rejoicing respond to God with love. The temptation — the result of the fall — is not to trust that love. Not to trust ourselves that we can be loved.”

That doubt, that mistrust of love, Bishop Iffert said, has been the question that God has put before his people since the beginning of time and will continue until the end of time.

“The entire history of salvation is one question. God asking, first the people of Israel and then the entire human race, will you trust me? Will you trust that I love you? Will you trust that I care for you? Will you trust that I have a purpose for you? Will you trust that I choose you and love you?” Bishop Iffert said.

These are the questions that God is asking of the candidates and catechumens present today.

“You can trust it.” Bishop Iffert said to the candidates and catechumens. “That’s what we’re here to mark today:

Those of you who are catechumens, I will call you and pronounce that you are the elect of God. Those who’ve already been baptized and are approaching the Church for confirmation and for Eucharist, I will pronounce that God has been working in your life with his mercy and that, even now, he draws you to a closer cooperation and walk with his Church; that through these sacraments he intends to feed you and nourish the works of charity and mercy in your life.

“I will pronounce for all the world to hear that God loves you! And together we’ll celebrate that you are among the elect of God. And so we are all.”

Bishop Iffert thanked the catechumens and candidates for responding to God’s love by accepting the invitation to draw closer to him through the Church. They, he said, are a reminder that the Church is God’s chosen people.

“When I look at you, I recognize that God has chosen you. I recognize that God loves you. I recognize that God respects and honours you and encourages you in faithfulness. And because you choose to be here — to be Church with us — you remind those of us who are already baptized, you remind those of us who are already initiated, that God chooses us, too,” Bishop Iffert said.

“You remind us that we are among God’s elect, that we have received his divine love; that he has a plan for us. You renew us and invigorate us so that we can say: ‘Yes, Lord, I will trust in you. I know your love is enough.’ You will bring a new light and a new renovation to this ancient but marvelous Church. Thank you for that. It’s a great gift to be reminded that God loves us, that God chooses us and gives us a path through the temptation of doubt. Thank you for that. That’s what you give to this Catholic Church in the Diocese of Covington.”
The circles of the Lenten seasons draw us deeper to Christ

Laura Keener  Editor

The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, was filled with worshipers, March 2, for Ash Wednesday Mass with Bishop Iffert.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. During Ash Wednesday Mass, worshipers present themselves to the priest and a cross of ashes is marked on their forehead as the priest says, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” This Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis asked everyone to join their prayers, fasting and almsgiving for the special intention of peace in Ukraine. Ash Wednesday marked the sixth day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the end of Mass, Bishop Iffert encouraged everyone to take to heart Pope Francis’ request and to pray not only for the people of Ukraine but also for the conversion of Russia and for those who are profiting from the war.

Bishop Iffert began his homily by sharing a story about a grandson who had been routinely stealing money from his grandma’s money jar. After attending a retreat, he felt remorse for what he had done and confessed to his grandma. To his astonishment, his grandma acknowledged that she already knew and thanked him for telling her. Puzzled, he asked why she hadn’t scolded and punished him. She said, because she was waiting for the day when he would tell her and apologize on his own.

“This holy season of Lent is a call for us,” said Bishop Iffert. “A call for us to understand the ways that we have offended against the one who loves us enough to wait for us to come to him ourselves; to wait for us to acknowledge the ways that we have offended him and offended against those he loves,” Bishop Iffert said.

Sharing the story of how a dad taught his son a lesson on the damage lies can be, Bishop Iffert invited parishioners to imagine a new wooden plank fence. The father tells his son to pound a can full of nails into planks and then remove the nails. The holes, the father tells his son, cannot be fixed; the nails — or the lies — have inflicted damage that cannot be fully repaired.

“Each time we sin against God and our neighbor; each time we allow ourselves to follow a wayward path, we leave a mark on the world and on ourselves,” Bishop Iffert said. “In this holy season we are called, certainly to seek forgiveness which God graciously gives, but more than that, we are called to seek healing, restoration … (unlike the wooden fence) there’s a hope for us to be healed.”

Oftentimes, people believe that they are running in circles and not making any progress in their spiritual life, Bishop Iffert said. Every Lent they take up the same or similar resolve and each time seem to fall back into the same pattern of sin.

“There’s more than one way to move in circles,” Bishop Iffert said. Unlike a dog chasing his tail or a track runner who always ends where he started, moving in a penitential circle is more like a screw, with each turn drawing a person deeper and deeper to Christ.

“We follow this cycle of seasons; we follow this pattern of repentance and seeking God’s grace; we turn in circles … to be drawn more deeply into the mystery of Christ, more deeply into the forgiveness and healing love of God,” Bishop Iffert said. “May this Lent be that kind of a season for you, where God draws you in.”

The Cathedral Concert Series

The Bach Ensemble serves as ensemble-in-residence at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, where it leads the monthly Bach Vespers, performing the cantatas of J. S. Bach in the context for which they are written. Featured works include: Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 227 and Singet dem Herrn ein neues, Lied BWV 190. All concerts are free and open to the public. Freewill offerings are gladly accepted.

2023 Synod on Synodality: What pitfalls do we need to avoid?

Synodality is a way of “journeying together” — of living out our faith — that calls for speaking and listening to one another and the Holy Spirit. As we follow the path of synodality, we must be aware of pitfalls that could hinder our progress and prevent the Synodal process from bearing real fruit.

The following should be avoided as we participate in the synodal consultation:

— The temptation to lead ourselves instead of being led by God.
— The temptation to focus only on ourselves and our immediate concerns.
— The temptation to allow ourselves to set the agenda.
— The temptation to focus only on structures.
— The temptation to focus only within the visible confines of the Church.
— The temptation to lose focus of the objectives of the Synodal process.
— The temptation to sow seeds of conflict and division.
— The temptation to treat the Synod as a kind of parliament.
— The temptation to listen only to those already involved in Church activities.

Continue to look for more information in parish communications, on social media, or on the diocesan website covdio.org/synod on how to share your experience.
Tech Tuesday: ‘Dangerous and Life Altering Content’ — the line between good and bad

Laura Keener
Editor

The internet is full of all kinds of really helpful information. Can’t remember the title of that song that’s been playing in your head? Google it. Need to brush up on some background information for your presentation at work? Google it. Want to start a novena for a special intention and need to find just the right one? Google it. Need to review the computation steps for your child’s math homework? Google it.

The usefulness and breadth and depth of information readily available on the internet shouldn’t be surprising. The internet was not constructed for children; it was not constructed for minors,” said Chris McKenna, founder of Protect Young Eyes. “Their brains cannot handle the god-like algorithms that we are putting in their pockets. It should be no surprise to us that they make the choices that they do.”

During the month of March, Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, and principals of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Covington are presenting Tech Tuesdays, a weekly communication to parents to engage them in identifying how technology is affecting their children and their families and to share strategies to mitigate its negative effects. A team of six principals has worked to develop a different topic for each week. The Tech Tuesday topic for March 8, “Dangerous and Life Altering Content,” is followed along, exploring the weekly topic. This second last fall, at the annual principals’ retreat, Mr. McKenna spoke about the dangers of social and digital media and how it’s impacting children. Of particular concern is the vast amount of pornography that is readily available to children. The McKenna Foundation, an internet pornography watchdog based in the United Kingdom, estimated that in 1999 about 27 percent of online content was pornographic. The age that children are first exposed to inappropriate sexual content online has been decreasing; the estimated range is from eight to 10 years of age.

“But let’s just all agree it’s too early,” said Mr. McKenna. “I believe there is a lack of respect for the maturity and the quantity of information that is at the fingertips of every single child who has a smartphone or that has a smart device.”

Mr. McKenna said that parents — good, loving, Christian parents — have lost sight of the fact that every single time they hand their child a device that is connected

(Continued on page 14)
Lent, Gianlorenzo Bernini, and the liberating lightness of truth

George Weigel

If you’ve not been in the Vatican basilica on Feb. 22, the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, by all means put that on your bucket list. Not only is Feb. 22 the day when the statue of the Prince of the Apostles, with its famously worn-down bronze foot, is clothed in a splendid cope and crowned with a papal tiara, it’s also the only day on which the Altar of the Chair — the massive sculptural composition in the basilica’s apse — is abased with the light of over a hundred tapers. Better still is to get into the basilica as early as possible and watch as the acrobatic San Pietro, the basilica’s maintenance staff, swinging from ropes and clambering about as they place and then light those six-foot tall candles, which remain lit all day.

It took 124 years, from 1506-1626, to build “New St. Peter’s,” which replaced the fourth-century basilica with the emperor Constantine enthroned the tomb of the first Bishop of Rome. When finished, “New St. Peter’s” was 730 feet long and 490 feet wide, its great dome soaring 448 feet above the floor. Taming this vast space was Bernini’s “art aims to reveal the physical world and the divine milieu in collusion: thus in the basilica’s apse, he created an experience of Pentecost. The oval window puncturing the masonry is filled with yellow glass, and as the sun sets, golden light pours in, just as the Holy Spirit penetrated the upper room. Its rays play off the gilt angels that cascade from the opening and billow into clouds around Peter’s throne: this enormous bronze chair, which ... contains the shards of Peter’s Roman cathedra. Standing alongside the bronze throne, their robes seemingly rustled by the winds of the Holy Spirit, are Sts. Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius, and John Chrysostom, who set the early Church ablaze with [their] zeal.

The positioning of these four great Doctors of the Church, two from the West and two from the East, makes an important theological statement. Each supports the colossal binnacle relay that evokes the Chair of Peter and speaks in doctrinal terms of the Church as its head — but that support is only the tip of a finger. Bernini’s point: while it may seem heavy and burdensome to an untutored eye or insufficiently converted soul, the truth of Catholic faith, of which Peter is the guardian, is actually quite light. Nor is that truth burdened, for it liberates us in the deepest meaning of human freedom: doctrine enters our encounter with the iner- nate Son of God, in whom we meet both the truth about and its noble destiny.

Gianlorenzo Bernini’s convictions about the liberating character of truth were recapitulated by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration on Religious Freedom. There, the bishops wrote that truth, including the truth about God and the truth about, “can impose itself on the mind of man only in virtue of its own truth, which wins over the kind with both gentleness and power.” As the Church enters Lent 2022, it is well to reflect on and pray over this Catholic understanding of the doctrine that is light and life-giving, which some parts of the world Church seem to have forgotten — just as these confused brethren imagine that what the world thinks is true is superior to what the Church knows to be true on the basis of both revelation and reason.

Examinaing conscience on whom each of us has been the missionary discourse we were baptized to be over the past year, and then considering how we might be more fully conformed to that vocation in the future, are the two reflections to which Lent calls us annually. Like the season of the Chair, that reflection should lead to a new appreciation of the liberating lightness of doctrine.

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

At a recent Sunday morning Mass, I noticed many young families with three or more children in attendance. This was a 9 a.m. Mass and I thought of the effort and sacrifice that these parents made to attend. As a mother of five, I know getting children out the door to make a 9 a.m. Sunday Mass is not an easy task, unless they are all in pajamas, hair and teeth not brushed.

In today’s world with many commitments and distractions, these parents are making the effort and probably many sacrifices to have a larger family and place faith as a priority in their family life.

This especially hit my heart a little more closely because my mom, and last remaining parent, died 10 days before Christmas this past year. My dad and I raised seven children, with ages spanning 20 plus years and they, too, made many sacrifices with an important effort of placing faith as a priority in our family. We always attended Sunday Mass as a family most of the time sitting in the front row. We attended Mass on Holy Days, and these were not “optional.”

Many times I recall having to leave my non-Catholic friends on Good Friday to sit in a dark church. We prayed before and after meals and our home had religious icons throughout. Our Catholic faith was a part of our everyday life.

As we gathered and reminisced in our family home at my mother’s death, we realized the many great memories we had growing up in a big family. My parents both worked beyond retirement age, my dad a butcher and my mom a medical office manager. We may not have had the latest style of shoes and clothes; however, there were no new and handmade clothing. Our family vacations were camping; on these trips the boys stayed in tents and the girls had the luxury of sleeping off the ground in a “pop-up” camper, which was a small metal box with slide out sections of St. Anne. It’s a 100-year-old building so there’s nothing that could be put in a bank account or used to buy lavish items; they left us with the gift of faith, knowing there is eternal life and the gift of each other — what a blessing it was to provide those memories for her in her later years.

During those difficult days immediately after her death and especially during the last few months my siblings and I discussed, we are not alone in our journey of grief. The legacy our parents left us is nothing that could be put in a bank account or used to buy lavish items; they left us with the gift of faith, knowing there is eternal life and the gift of each other — what a legacy of love we receive from our parents.

For me it’s hard to imagine what some must have been like. To stand in the presence of our transfigured Lord. It’s hard for me to get there. It’s hard to understand. Everyday celebrating Mass I stand in the presence of Jesus. Some days it’s easy and some days it’s hard to see beyond the broad and wine and what Jesus sees.

My mother’s perspective on living treasures is a legacy of living treasures. The view from the mountain top

The great reset

If there is a favorable liturgical time of year for me, it is Lent. It is a chance to pump the brakes and reset my life. Lent is an opportunity to assess where I am on my spiritual journey with Christ and the Church. That is particularly important this year in light of all the wonderful things that have been occurring at St. Anne Retreat Center. We just hosted a wonderful women's retreat that was sold out. Our schedule has been packed since this fall and my incredible team has been working non-stop to make sure we provide the type of service and environment that’s conducive for meaningful retreats. They have succeeded in that regard and I’m so thankful for their tireless effort. It does, however, come with a cost.

For me, there’s always the issue of the day-to-day operations of St. Anne. It’s a 100-year-old building so there’s always something that needs to be repaired or replaced. There’s the issue of trying to keep costs reasonable while keeping the retreat center running as smoothly as possible.

Deacon David Profitt

Sometimes those things can get in the way of our own spiritual growth and development. It’s the old “can’t see the forest for the trees” syndrome. When you go on a retreat to the nest without a break, you sometimes forget how wonderful and special this place can be. There are times when the staff is running on fumes, but that doesn’t stop us, nor can we allow it to stop us. For that matter, we don’t have the luxury of even slowing down.

New Lent comes along and we have the great gift the Church just gives us in our daily readings and liturgical events. I won’t say it forces us to slow down, but it does place an emphasis on a time for personal reflection on our spiritual health and well-being. I begin to focus more on what I need to be doing to draw myself closer to the Lord and look at my own failings in my role as a husband, father, grandfather, friend, and Deacon. Sometimes that’s not a pretty picture, but it is a realization that I can’t forget why I’m here, to be a disciple of Jesus and be willing to deny myself and take up the cross.

Without a doubt, my time here at St. Anne Retreat Center is one of the great blessings of my life. It has given me a greater sense of the need for time for spiritual and personal reflection. The experience of seeing people’s lives changed during and after a retreat is a great gift to all of us here on the staff. We see the impact that the Holy Spirit has on the lives of retreat participants. It’s not us, it’s God’s work that is going on here that is awesome to witness.

Deacon David Profitt is director of the St. Anne Retreat Center, Covington, Ky.

Deacon David Profitt is director of the St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.

The view from the mountain top


I once took a friend to the Smoky Mountains. We drove through town and finally entered the national park. We drove up the mountain to Clingman’s Dome, the highest point in the mountains. My friend got out of the car and looked around at everything else. He went and sat on a rock wall. As I sat next to him for a few minutes he didn’t say a word. I finally asked him if he was alright. He said nothing but was staring out over the beauty of all that surrounded him. I didn’t know what it was at the time, but he later told me that it was his first time on top of a mountain.

The Transfiguration, up on the mountain, filled Peter, James and John with awesome emotion and no doubt they were speckled with a white. It had nothing to do with the beauty of the mountain but had everything to do with the beauty of Jesus being transformed before them and Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus. For Peter, James and John this sight must have been the most incredible sight they had ever seen. Mountains more than the mountains and more beautiful than anything in creation. Filled with awe and speechless in the sight of Jesus.

For me it’s hard to imagine what some must have been like. To stand in the presence of our transfigured Lord. It’s hard for me to get there. It’s hard to understand. Everyday celebrating Mass I stand in the presence of Jesus. Some days it’s easy and some days it’s hard to see beyond the broad and wine and what Jesus sees.

When I was riding in my grandfather’s car, as we passed our church, he would always tip his hat and recognize that Jesus Christ was present in the church. Sometimes it’s just a small gesture to recognize the presence of Jesus. Sometimes it takes a mountain top experience to recognize Christ in our life. No matter how it happens we pray that we will recognize Jesus Christ present in our midst.

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

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The sanctity of life in the message of an angel

Father Andrew L. Young

The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated every year on March 25. This feast — importantly positioned nine months before Christmas — provides us with a beautiful opportunity to reflect on the reality of Christ’s incarnation and what that means for all human life. The Annunciation can sometimes seem like a forgotten feast. After all, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation and rarely falls on a Sunday, so unless one is a daily Mass attendee or just happens to attend Mass that particular day, many Catholics probably do not even know this feast exists. Nonetheless, the Feast of the Annunciation marks a moment of pivotal importance for all of human history.

The Annunciation is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:26–38). These verses tell of the angel Gabriel’s visit to an engaged virgin named Mary and the revelation of God’s plan for Mary to be the mother of the Son of God. We are told that after Gabriel first greeted Mary, she was very troubled. But despite her fears and uncertainty about what would lie ahead as a now-pregnant, unmarried woman, she embraced God’s will — and the world was forever changed.

The Scripture passage goes on to tell us that as soon as Mary gave her consent to God’s plan, the angel immediately left, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and God himself was conceived in her womb. This awesome moment was not the beginning of a series of events that would eventually lead to God entering the world as man. It is THE moment when God stepped down from heaven and humbled himself to become one of us — to save us from our sins.

Many people wrongly think Jesus Christ’s incarnation (his taking on flesh) refers to his birth. While it is certainly true that Christmas — his birthday — is the second-most important feast of the year (surpassed only by Easter), as we know, life begins long before birth — nine months, to be exact. Christ’s earthly life began at the moment of his conception in the womb of the Blessed Mother, and that is the world-changing event we celebrate on the Feast of the Annunciation.

The incarnation not only radically changed the life of Mary, but literally changed every aspect of human history. From that moment on, God would forever be joined to humanity in a new way. Although made in his image and likeness, we had damaged our dignity through sin; yet God chose to not only restore it to its original holiness but elevate it forever above all other creatures in heaven and on earth. From the moment of Christ’s conception at the Annunciation forward, God and humanity would be forever joined.

That awe-inspiring fact should make us pause. It should cause us to marvel at the goodness of our God. How valuable all human life must be to him, if he went to such incredible lengths to save it.

God is the author of all life. He created the heavens and the earth and filled them with many creatures. Among all these creatures, however, he chose to become a human being. He chose to enter the world as all humans do, through a mother’s womb.

The fact that God himself spent nine months in the womb of his Blessed Mother points out with undeniable clarity the sanctity of the womb and of all lives in the womb. Additionally, the fact that Christ experienced all parts of human life — birth, childhood, adulthood, loss of loved ones, suffering and his own death — points out the sanctity of life in all its stages.

The message of the beauty and sanctity of human life was clearly expressed in the events of the Annunciation and the life of Christ, but it was not simply declared and then left alone. The message was delivered to the world through the cooperation of those who had a radical encounter with the Lord.

If our Blessed Mother had merely received the message of the angel but never responded, the world might have never heard the Good News. If those who witnessed the life and ministry of Jesus had come to believe in him yet never told anyone else, the Church would have never set out to “baptize all nations.” Likewise, if we receive the truth of the Lord’s message about the sanctity of life but do nothing to help others come to understand it, then the lies that already permeate our society will continue to advance.

Father Andrew Young is pastor of St. Patrick’s Parish, Maysville, Ky.

What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say?

The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates “the fullness of time,” the time of the fulfillment of God’s promises and prepara-
tions. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom “the whole fullness of deity” would dwell “bodily.” The divine response to her question, “How can this be, since I know not man?” was given by the power of the Spirit: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you.”

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The sanctity of life in the message of an angel

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What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say?

The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates “the fullness of time,” the time of the fulfillment of God’s promises and prepara-
tions. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom “the whole fullness of deity” would dwell “bodily.” The divine response to her question, “How can this be, since I know not man?”, was given by the power of the Spirit: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you.”

(ICC 484)
DPAA funds support a variety of ministries in the local Church and community

Tom Ziegler
Staff writer

“Both kickoff dinners were blessed with wonderful attendance,” said Mike Murray, director, Stewardship and Mission Services with the Diocese of Covington.

Last week the diocese hosted two dinners—one in Maysville and the second in Erlanger—to kick off its Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA). Before each dinner, members of the Curia and other Catholic and community organizations participated in a ministry fair. Mr. Murray said the ministry fair is important so that directors and staff can speak directly to donors about the varieties of ministry available in the Diocese of Covington.

“I think it is important, because so many times I think people don’t really get an understanding of all the ministries involved and where their donations go with the DPAA,” Mr. Murray said.

The DPAA raises donations for the ministries of the Diocese of Covington. These ministries include, but are not limited to: adoptions and foster care, parenting classes, family counseling, unplanned pregnancy counseling, substance abuse treatment, support for widowed and the divorced, student counseling, care for retired priests, nursing and health care for priests, seminarian education, deacon formation, vocation workshops, Religious education in parishes and schools, Catholic schools, retreat programs, Pro-Life seminars, campus ministry, Thomas More University, Hispanic ministry, shelter for the homeless, soup kitchens and pantries, clothing and emergency assistance, medications for the needy, tuition assistance, and residential care for at-risk youth.

“The DPAA is a way to bring all these programs together, show the work we do, and bring the funds in, to help serve the public and the community because that’s what we are all about,” said James Wendeln, manager of the Parish Kitchen.

Mr. Wendeln said his favorite part about working at the Parish Kitchen is being around everybody. He worked as a volunteer at the kitchen for seven years before recently being hired as the kitchen’s manager, a ministry supported from donations by the DPAA.

Jenny Smith, prevention, and wellness specialist, for the Family Nurturing Center said, “The donation given to our organization allows us to send our programs into schools, keep the programs alive, educating children; giving them a voice and opportunity to talk if something (bullying) is happening.”

“It is easier for some children to communicate and tell you something with the puppet,” said Tonya Powers, prevention specialist for Kids on the Block, with The Family Nurturing Center. Ms. Smith and Ms. Powers both talked.

(Continued on page 13)
Candidate discovers refreshing new understanding; turns to Mary and saints as friends

Tom Ziegler
Staff writer

“I feel like St. Mary’s Parish and the Diocese of Covington as a whole just feel like home,” said Amanda Heineke. Mrs. Heineke is participating in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) program at St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, and described her joining as “refreshing.”

During the Lenten season, the Messenger will be sharing the faith stories of several candidates and catechumens preparing to enter the Church at this year’s Easter vigil. Mrs. Heineke’s story is the second in the series.

Mrs. Heineke grew up in Union and attended Ryle High School before heading to Ohio for a short time where she met her husband and returning to his hometown of Alexandria. Mrs. Heineke described her decision to join the Catholic Church as gradual. Her husband proposed in 2014, and they began attending church more regularly at St. Mary’s. Mrs. Heineke began considering joining the Catholic faith but did not want to join just because she was marrying a Catholic.

“My husband wanted a Catholic wedding, and I was completely fine with that … I was toying with the idea of converting, but I am also a very stubborn person. So, I didn’t want to make the decision purely because we were getting married in the Catholic Church,” Mrs. Heineke said.

Mrs. Heineke was raised Baptist, and there are some significant differences between the two faiths. Some of the more significant differences Mrs. Heineke experienced were praying to Mary and the saints, which is not done in the Baptist religion, and the celebration of Communion — which for Baptists is a reminder of the Last Supper — was only distributed on special occasions at the Baptist church she attended.

After her marriage in 2016, she became more exposed to the Catholic Church and grew fond of how the Church is deeply rooted in Scripture. “I found that to be really refreshing and [it] made me feel like I was connecting with the Church,” Mrs. Heineke said.

Then came 2020, which Mrs. Heineke described as a “mess of a year.” Mrs. Heineke admitted that it was a struggle, and she faced some doubts about joining the Church with all the looming political challenges and stigmas directed towards the Church and its people. “That’s when I decided if this is something that I want to do I need to learn more about it,” Mrs. Heineke said.

In January 2021, Mrs. Heineke joined a Bible study host ed by St. Mary’s RCIA director where she would eventually meet her RCIA sponsor. Getting background on the history of the Church and creating personal connections with people who could answer her questions became the final turning point that convinced Mrs. Heineke to commit to the process of joining the Catholic Church.

“I got involved with the food pantry for St. Vincent de Paul, started meeting people and discovered this profound appreciation for how Catholics celebrate God’s son,” Mrs. Heineke said.

Mrs. Heineke admitted that she was hesitant at first because of some of the political stigmas associated around Catholics — Christians in general — but meeting people and talking with them helped in her making the decision. Mrs. Heineke credited much of her understanding to her RCIA guide and sponsors, answering her questions many times through reference of the Catechism.

“You have a guide on how to live as a Catholic, the Catechism, and for me I want to live as Christ-like as possible and I love structure, having that guide through the Catechism — I love that. I had decided for sure in March 2020 that I wanted to join the Church,” Mrs. Heineke said.

Mrs. Heineke said the RCIA process has made her much more aware of her decisions and reactions. “I feel much more aware of how I want to be received and how I want to make others feel. I am so much more...” (Continued on page 13)
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 channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

Meet the Trojans Night, March 15, 6:30–7:30 p.m., open to prospective students looking to learn more about Covington Latin School.

Bishop Iffert will celebrate a candlelight Mass, March 18, at Holy Cross Church, Latonia, hosted by the Diocese of Covington’s Young Adult Ministry. Confessions start at 6 p.m.; Mass at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend the Mass. There will be a social for young adults (18–39) in the school gym following Mass. Additional info: contact Brad Torline at btorline@covdio.org.

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Through Facebook and global community, local nuns share plight of Ukrainian/Polish nuns

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Covington, have been closely following the stories surrounding the attack on Ukraine, including those of their fellow Benedictine sisters in Ukraine and Poland. On St. Walburg's Facebook page, Feb. 27, a post was shared from Vatican News which showed a video of the Benedictine Sisters of Immaculate Conception Abbey in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, taking refuge in the basement of their monastery as their city was bombed, Feb. 24th. “Continued prayers for our fellow Benedictines and all of Ukraine,” stated St. Walburg's post.

Through the Communion of International Benedictines (CIB), Benedictines around the world are connected and able to be informed on what's happening with their fellow sisters in Ukraine. Sister Aileen Bankemper, prioress, St. Walburg Monastery, wrote a letter informing others of how they can send aid to the sisters and their works with the people of Ukraine, and how that support will reach them.

Mother Blandyna Michniewicz, abbess of the monastery in Warsaw, Poland, is the CIB delegate for the region that includes Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania, and has stayed in close contact with the Ukrainian Benedictines. Because of this connection, she understands the needs of the sisters and ways to get aid to them.

Sister Aileen also mentioned in her letter the efforts of other Polish OSB (Order of St. Benedict) nuns, the Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict out of Otwock; 11 houses of them are serving in orphanages in Ukraine. These sisters have chosen to stay in Ukraine in order to care for the children instead of escaping to Poland where it's safer.

As more information poured in about Poland and Ukraine, another update was received concerning the Ukrainian sisters in Zhytomyr on March 4, which stated that they had to flee from invading forces. They were only able to send three short texts to alert others of their situation: “we are in flight,” “we are on the road running,” and “please pray for us.”

Several days passed before, on March 7, word was received that the sisters had arrived safely in Lviv, staying in a monastery about 30 miles from the border of Poland. After arriving, the sisters were able to communicate how grateful they are for the prayers and support they are receiving.

On March 8, St. Walburg Monastery received more information about the Polish OSB nuns from Sister Lynn McKenzie, the moderator of the CIB. Mother Blandyna has been sending communications to the CIB concerning Ukrainian refugees, who are being received by OSB nuns; 40 refugees were received by nuns from Jarosław, a town in southeastern Poland.

Sister Lynn, along with passing along this information, stated, “To date, from our region and around the world, through the CIB we have sent, over time, the equivalent of approximately $100,000. When I see the pictures on TV of the utter destruction in Ukraine, I wonder what our Benedictine sisters and the people of Ukraine will have to return to. I hope our sisters can feel our prayers and solidarity. There will be much more need for us to help in the future.”

In order for these sisters to respond to the increasing needs surrounding them, financial assistance is needed. The sisters at St. Walburg have received approximately $5,000, which they will be forwarding to Mother Blandyna.

To follow the story as it develops, visit the St. Walburg Monastery website, www.stwalburg.org and follow “Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery of Covington, Kentucky” on Facebook.
VATICAN CITY — Coexistence between older and younger generations can bring about a better appreciation for life that is often lost in today’s fast-paced society, Pope Francis said.

A pervasive “spirit of rejection” exists in the modern world that “tends to be hostile to the elderly and, not by chance, also to children” and “casts them aside,” the pope said March 2 during his weekly general audience.

“The excess of speed puts us in a centrifuge that sweeps us away like confetti,” he said. “One completely loses sight of the bigger picture,” and instead is tossed about by an attitude dictated by market forces “for which slower pace means losses and speed is money.”

The pope continued his new series of talks dedicated to the meaning and value of old age and reflected on the theme, “Longevity: symbol and opportunity.”

The long life of the patriarchs recorded in the Bible, he said, “confers a strong, a very strong symbolic meaning to the relationship between longevity and genealogy.”

The Bible, he said, describes how “mutual support among generations is indispensable in order to decipher experiences and confront the enigmas of life.”

However, today, “the excess of speed, which now obsesses every stage of our life, makes every experience more superficial and less nourishing.”

“Young people are unconscious victims of this split between the time on the clock, which must be rushed, and the times of life that require a proper ‘leavening,’” he said. A long life gives a person time to value the processes that take time and to see the “damages of haste.”

For this reason, the pope continued, the “slower pace” of old age helps young people and adults discover the true meaning of life and “makes everyone’s existence richer in humanity.”

“There is a need for dialogue between the generations,” he said. “If there is no dialogue between young people and the elderly, if there is no dialogue, each generation remains isolated.”

A young person “who is not bonded to his or her roots, which are the grandparents, does not receive the strength, like the tree, the strength of the roots, and grows up badly, grows up ailing, grows up without points of reference,” he said.

Greater life expectancy today, he said, should be welcomed as an opportunity to re-forged the covenant between young and old and help everyone understand “the meaning of life in its entirety.”

“The meaning of life is all of it, from birth to death, and you should be able to interact with everyone, and also to have emotional relationships with everyone, so that your maturity will be richer and stronger,” the pope said.
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Music Director
Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Crescent Springs is seeking talented keyboard musicians interested in the position of Music Director. The successful candidate will be proficient on the piano and/or organ, knowledgeable about the Catholic liturgy and sacred music, and capable of leading congregational singing/chant and of training and leading a choir. Must be available to lead three masses each weekend: 6 pm Saturday, and 9 am and 11 am Sunday. Possibility to lead on major religious feasts and holidays. This is a competitively-paying part-time position. Interested candidates may submit a letter of interest and resume to the Parish office by emailing salcin@STJOSEPHCRTCY.ORG.

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Elementary School Principal
St. Mary School (www.saintmaryparish.com/school) in Alexandria, KY is conducting a search for a new principal for the 2022-23 school year. St. Mary, a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School, educates students in Preschool 3 through 8th grade, with an overall enrollment of approximately 535 students. The school is fully accredited and certified by the state of Kentucky. Candidates must be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church. The ideal candidate would hold a current administrative certificate in Kentucky, or be willing to work toward it. To begin the application process, please send a letter of interest along with a comprehensive resume, including compensation history, and at least five references with contact email addresses by email or fax to Stephen Koplay, skoplay@covdio.org, fax 859-392-1389. EOE.

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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. Anticipated start date: immediate. Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplay by e-mail: skoplay@covdio.org. (859) 392-1500. EOE

Building and Property Custodian
The Diocese of Covington, KY is accepting applications for the position of Building and Property Custodian at the Offices of the Diocesan Curia. The Curia and the surrounding property will require the attention of an individual who will develop a sense of personal responsibility for its appearance and well-being. The position will involve a regular daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of routine cleaning and upkeep duties within the building and the chapel; setup of conference rooms; regular as well as seasonal upkeep of landscaping, walkways, and other exterior features; and other duties as needed. The successful candidate will be a personable self-starter who is dependable, trustworthy, and capable of prioritizing duties as circumstances require. This is a part-time position from 1.00pm-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Please contact Stephen Koplay, SPHR, to begin the application process: skoplay@covdio.org or call (859) 392-1500. EOE

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Novena to the Blessed Virgin
O, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Fruit of the Vine, splendorous of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God, immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. O, Star of the Sea, help me and show herein you are my mother. O, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in my necessity (make your request). There are none that can withstand your power. O, Mary pray for us who have recourse to Thee (three times). Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Amen. M.A.I.

Novena to the Sacred Heart
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified; loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer 9 times a day. By the 8th day your prayers will be answered. Say it for 8 days. Thank you St. Jude. Amen. M.A.I.

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I wish it were a dream (Continued from page 6)

"The will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Help us to protect and to provide for all who are hungry and homeless especially those deprived of food and shelter, family and friends, by the tragedy of war.

"Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us for neglecting to 'seek peace and pursue it' and, finding ourselves in each new crisis, for being more ready to make war than peace. 'We have not loved thee with our whole heart; we have not loved neighbors as ourselves.'

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Let us not seek revenge, but reconciliation. Let us not delight in victory, but in justice. Let us give ourselves not to pride, but to prayer.

"Lead us not into temptation. Be present to all thy children ravaged by war: be present to those who are killing and to those who are being killed; be present to the loved ones of those who are killing and to the loved ones of those who are being killed.

"Deliver us from evil. Subdue our selfish desires to possess and to dominate, and forgive our arrogance in victory. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen." (From the book "Prayers and Petitions" by Rev. Art Nelson.)

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

about cyber bullying and how to make discussions more relatable to children of this technology heavy generation.

Another organization that is assisted through DPAA donations is the NKU Newman Club. "The DPAA is what allows us to do our ministry at NKU," said Nick Osburg.

"The Newman Center for me, allows us as Catholics to live out our faith while learning and growing together as friends in Christ. Masses, bible studies, Thursday night fellowship and mission trips are parts of what we do here at the Newman Center."

"The work of these ministries, organizations and dedicated individuals is supported, in part, by donations to the DPAA."

"We were blessed with a wonderful ministry fair, and I think the remarks by Bishop Iffert were very powerful and bring home the point of how important this appeal is in our faith community," Mr. Murray said.

The 2022 DPAA kickoff dinner was held March 3. Over 370 people attended and 71 new donations were received that night. During the month of February, the leadership gift solicitors raised $426,628.48, giving the 2022 DPAA a good head start as it enters the parish phase.

"God tells us we have to give back and take care of those in need and those ministries are so focused on helping our community in so many vital ways," Mr. Murray said.

"Having the opportunity to do the kickoff dinners and bring the community together to pray for and support the appeal is a very powerful thing. We have a very responsive faith community, they respond to the annual appeal, second collections, programs, and ministries at the parish level … we are just very blessed." As the 2022 DPAA moves forward into the parish phase, Announcement Weekend will be held in all parishes, March 12 and 13, where the DPAA video will be shown. Commitment Weekend is March 19 and 20, when DPAA parish teams will invite parishioners to make their pledge or gift at Mass.

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to the internet, it is as if they are inviting 100 million people — with all of their words and thoughts and videos and images and versions of what they believe and their opinions — into the life of their child.

For the most part, Mr. McKenna said, parents have completely underestimated the ability of the devil to come in — cloaked like a sheep, but coming as a wolf — after the hearts and minds of children, through social media, through TikTok, through Snapchat, through Instagram, etc. There are, he said, a lot of very complicated reasons for that. Part of it is because things are so different from when they grew up. When they were children they were the children in the lines between good and bad were very clear.

“We see the world as either good or bad, and it was really easy to identify the bad things,” Mr. McKenna said. “The bad things were that porn magazine that was down the road under my friend’s mattress — it was obvious what it was.

The problem today is that a lot of this life-altering content lives in the exact same spaces where good content lives — the Chromebook students use to access their homework also allows access to pornography; the same app they use to connect with friends invites them to “discover” new content which questions their identity. “It’s a lot more complicated for young people to discern and to defend themselves against,” he said. “There are no bright lines that existed anymore between things that preserve and sort of wrap themselves around childhood innocence and the complicated for young people to discern and to defend themselves against,” he said. “There are no bright lines that existed anymore between things that preserve and sort of wrap themselves around childhood innocence and the things that rob children of their innocence.”

What’s the big deal? Isn’t sex a natural part of human nature? Protect Young Eyes identifies five life-altering harms that viewing sexual content has on children. Here are the top three that Mr. McKenna said, “break my heart.”

Number one, when children see porn, they practice porn. When young people see pornography, they are compelled to practice pornography on each other just out of a spirit of curiosity. Mr. McKenna said there has been a “horrible increase” in the number of child-on-child sexual abuse cases and the common denominator in all of them is an early exposure to pornography.

The second is objectification. Children, or anyone who views pornography, can begin to see people as objects for their satisfaction instead of as the uniquely and dignified individuals God created. “It robs us of our ability to appreciate the individuality and the uniqueness of human beings,” Mr. McKenna said.

Third, it causes great stress and anxiety. When a person, including children, views pornography, typically they can’t put it down. “Which means you’re looking at it all night long, which means you’re tired every single day,” Mr. McKenna said. “You’re seeing a lot of extreme content … you become less able to handle it, therefore you label yourself and you feel more depressed. There’s this cycle of behaviors that are all sort of swirling around and complicating each other.”

Next week the Messenger continues the conversation with Mr. McKenna exploring the upcoming Tech Tuesday topic: “Layers of Digital Protection. “Anyone who wants to learn more of look ahead can visit www.ProtectYoungEyes.com.

‘Dangerous and Life Altering Content’ (Continued from page 3)

“Don’t Look Up” (Netflix) Clever comedy in which an astronomy grad student discovers a comet that her mentor soon calculates is on a collision course with Earth. Teaming with a government official, they try to alert the president and later the public at large that this is a potential extinction event. But the chief executive is too focused on politics and the media and too anxious to look on the bright side of doomsday for anyone to respond appropriately. Even those who may not appreciate writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism may enjoy his skewering of pop culture. As for religion, global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism appreciated writer-director Adam McKay’s parable about global warming or his put-down of Trumpian populism.
TMU partners with Amazon to strengthen area’s workforce

CRESTVIEW HILLS — Thomas More University recently partnered with e-commerce giant Amazon to participate in the Amazon Career Choice program. Amazon hourly employees can take course work toward any Thomas More program or badge they wish with tuition waivers provided by the company in an effort to promote career success and strengthen skills in the area’s workforce. “We are thrilled to partner with Amazon on the Amazon Career Choice program,” said Thomas More University President Joseph L. Chillo. “Amazon hourly employees will now have the opportunity to benefit from the premier Catholic Liberal Arts education offered at Thomas More University at no tuition expense.” Amazon’s Career Choice program is an education benefit that empowers Amazon employees to learn new skills for career success at Amazon or elsewhere. In the U.S., the company is investing $1.2 billion to upskill more than 300,000 Amazon employees by 2025 to help move them into higher-paying, in-demand jobs.

Court: Kentucky attorney general can defend state’s abortion law

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court, in an 8-1 ruling March 3, said Kentucky’s Republican attorney general could continue to defend an abortion restriction measure struck down by lower courts. The court did not specifically weigh in on abortion, or the particular procedure affected by the law, but instead simply focused on whether Attorney General Daniel Cameron could continue to fight for the state’s 2018 law after a trial court and appellate court had called it unconstitutional and the state’s health secretary, Democrat Eric Friedlander, declined to review these decisions. The state law at issue banned an abortion procedure known as dilation and evacuation, which is often used to end a pregnancy during the second trimester. When the law passed, Republican Matt Bevin was governor. The state’s current governor, Andy Beshear, a Democrat, said his administration would not challenge court rulings blocking it. After abortion providers filed suit against the abortion ban, a trial court permanently blocked it and that decision was upheld in 2020 by a panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Cameron, who became attorney general in 2019, wanted the courts to reconsider their decision. He asked the full 6th Circuit to reexamine it. The appeals court rejected his case, saying he was too late with it, so Cameron brought it to the Supreme Court. The court’s opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, said courts should recognize the interest that states have in protecting their own laws.
THE DIOCESAN PARISH ANNUAL APPEAL...

Our DPAA is conducted as both a parish and Diocesan effort. The DPAA provides the necessary funding to support and promote Catholic education; parish and campus ministry; foster vocations; as well as promoting the Respect for Life Initiative. Additionally, through the Campaign’s support, Catholic Charities and many agencies in our Diocese are able to provide services to those individuals in northern Kentucky whose lives are affected by life’s challenges such as poverty, hunger, and economic hardship.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR PLEDGE OR ONE-TIME GIFT:

- Cash/Check (make checks payable to DPAA 2022)
- Make a pledge for up to 10 months (ending on March 31, 2023)
- To Donate Stock - Call: 859-392-1500
- Make a secure online gift at www.covdio.org (via credit card, direct debit or electronic funds transfer)
- Complete the DPAA pledge form mailed to your home or available at your parish
- Call the Stewardship Office 859-392-1500
- Matching Gifts - request a Matching Gift Form from your Human Resources Department