“The DPAA is a win-win for everyone,” said Karen Riegler, general chair for the 2022 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal.

The Southeast deanery’s largest crowd, roughly 130 people, attended the DPAA kick-off dinner in Maysville. Curia staff presented its work and greeted parishioners at a pre-dinner ministry fair. Mrs. Riegler, Matt Hollenkamp, DPAA leadership gifts chair and Bishop John Iffert welcomed guests and led the evening’s presentation.

Ms. Riegler began the program by recognizing and thanking the DPAA parish team leaders for their work in promoting the DPAA at the parish level.

“All of these volunteers are so very vital to the success of the DPAA, and from year to year, the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal could not happen without them. Which leads me to take this opportunity to thank you all for being here tonight. The DPAA cannot happen without every one of you. The DPAA has been and continues to be successful every year because you know that your sacrificial donation is used to help our diocesan ministries, from caring for our retired priests, to supporting religious education in parishes and schools, and so many more of our ministries in between,” Mrs. Riegler said.

Ms. Riegler described the DPAA as a “win-win for everyone.” She thanked Bishop Iffert for his leadership and heartfelt sincerity, allowing her to serve as this year’s DPAA chair, before turning the floor over to Bishop Iffert.

Bishop Iffert also expressed his gratitude for all those in positions of leadership for the DPAA, and everyone who supports the mission and ministry of the local Church.

“Whatever we collect of our goal will go directly back to the parishes, and the diocese. And we have found that we are able to give back to the parishes, money returned to the parish happened in a substantial way last year, and I know it will happen again this year, thanks to your generosity,” said Ms. Riegler.

Ms. Riegler continued by thanking everyone for the support of organizations throughout the diocese and local community that serve those who are marginalized, homeless and may benefit from the DPAA through the grant program.

Bishop Iffert visited tables to talk with guests.
been erected with a sort of subtlety behind the idea of fair-gious liberty and the idea of one city, saying that “it has necessarily expect religious liberty?” Dr. Deneen asked.

What more in the Condition of Thomas More, who didn’t expect religious liberty from this regime or are we some-today. “Are we living under one city or two cities? Can we closed with a question on the condition of Liberalism ‘two cities,’ the Church (the city of God) and the state. He reflected through St. Augustine’s philosophy that there are Christ into the world, which he believes is most strongly Deneen said.

The norm is the effort to make one city, to make the city’s religion the religion of all people in the city, making the religion, in some ways a support for the city,” Dr. Deneen said.

Dr. Deneen then moved into the revelation of Jesus Christ into the world, which he believes is most strongly reflected through St. Augustine’s philosophy that there are “two cities,” the Church (the city of God) and the state. He closed with a question on the condition of Liberalism today: “Are we living under one city or two cities? Can we expect religious liberty from this regime or are we some-thing more in the Condition of Thomas More, who didn’t necessarily expect religious liberty?” Dr. Deneen asked.

Dr. Schindler built on Dr. Deneen’s suggestions on reli-gious liberty and the idea of one city saying that “it has been erected with a sort of subtlety behind the idea of fair-ness, because we are told that we live in a neutral state,” Dr. Schindler said.

Dr. Schindler suggested that while law always dic-tates a form of reality in the world we live in, this idea could come back to the nature of man, of what is good and what is evil, which Dr. Schindler tied into the nature of human identity and the state’s metaphysical judge-ments on the nature of male and female as it per-tains to self-identification.

Lastly, Dr. Spence closed with remarks on the different definitions of liberalism over time. Dr. Spence defined his idea of liberalism as a “dynamic process,” a liberalism that has been changed by the views of each generation of people through history to the modern day. Dr. Spence suggested that the idea of two cities is a paradox in which people can co-exist and live in both, not having to occupy one or the other.

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 synod 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 see only problems.
— The temptation to focus only on structures.
— The temptation to look 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 — ‘A Family Crisis?’ — keeping home a safe place

Laura Keener
Editor

“Breakfast with Jill and Betsy” became the popular name that parents at St. Pius X School, Edgewood, gave the morning announcements — a prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a short message — that were being livestreamed into their home each day during the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States and, without warning, schools transitioned from in-person to virtual learning.

Throughout the transition and during the remaining months of the 2020 school year, Jill Leennon, principal, and Betsy Greenwell, assistant principal, wanted to stay connected to students and provide for them some semblance of a typical learning experience.

“It was probably the most impactful way for parents to get to know Jill and I. We had their trust because we were in their homes everyday forming them,” said Mrs. Greenwell.

Their experience was truly positive and has really planted a seed on how the St. Pius X School community is growing as a faith community. But what if, by using that same or similar technology it’s not “Jill and Betsy” praying, reciting the pledge and sharing a faith-filled positive message? What if it’s something hurtful? What if, it isn’t an “if” but an “is”?

“Our prevention measures at school prevent objectionable material from reaching the eyes of our children, and that can be at any grade level,” said Dan Steffen, principal, Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell. But, when students leave school those online protections are left behind.

“What we have caught and filtered, they now have unrestricted access to. That’s scary to me,” he said.

During the month of March, Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, and principals 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 have worked to develop a different topic for each week. The Messenger will be following along, exploring the weekly topic. This first week asks the question: “Too much technology; a family crisis?”

“As children, whenever we felt there was something that happened at school or somewhere else, we could always go home that evening to our safe place — our homes,” said Mrs. Greenwell. “Homes are safe places, they’re a place where we became assured; there was a beautiful sense of security.”

Today, that safe place, Mrs. Greenwell said, is being disrupted by phones, computers, tablets and laptops, because through these devices and the growing dependence on social and digital media, “you can be at home but somebody is infiltrating your secure place … nothing can ever just go away. If you missed a party, as a child or even as an adult, in the past you may have heard about it, but now it’s like you’re standing at the window looking in and you’re not invited in. I think that is the greatest frustration — we can’t even find a place for our children to be protected because it infiltrates all of our safe places that were naturally created by the home and by families.”

“It’s not difficult to see why, lacking an emotionally safe and secure place, children and parents both are experiencing greater stress and anxiety which can negatively impact a person’s mental health and wellbeing. This growing dependence on technology is also having an impact in the classroom.

Mrs. Leennon and Mr. Steffen said that students had become dependent on technology during COVID, which is now presenting some challenges to students. These challenges include: verbally expressing needs and emotions, reading non-verbal cues, collaborating with others, communicating with empathy and managing the routines of day-to-day life.

“Students need increased focus on executive functioning skills, peer relationships, grit, and rigor in order to catch up to where they need to be,” said Mrs. Leennon.

“arhelp address these challenges, principals and teachers in the Diocese of Covington have been looking at ways to scale back technology during the school day. “Going through the pandemic and shifting everything to technology we kind of left some things on technology that really are better suited for the real world, for face-to-face interaction,” said Mr. Steffen. “I think our students are having to relearn that and it’s just a slow process.”

For example, students — and parents — grew accustomed to online testing, which included multiple choice questions and an immediate grade. Now, they are needing to relearn how to show their work — the process they used to come to the answer — and redevelop the patience of waiting for their score while their teacher grades their paper.

“What we’re trying to do is dial back on technology, to look at the ways we are using technology and, when appropriate, provide alternatives,” said Mrs. Leennon.

School leaders are asking parents to do the same thing at home — to examine how technology is being used in the home and to scale back to a more appropriate level. Doing so will help parents to reduce the stress in their homes and the anxiety that they and their children might be experiencing.

There are simple “baby steps,” Mr. Steffen said, parents can take to help protect their children from the negative characteristics of technology. To start, set strict parameters in the house and stick to meeting them. Some suggestions Mr. Steffen offered include:

— no phone at the dinner table;
— no cell phones after a certain time at night;
— at night, cell phones kept and charged in the parent’s room, not a common area where children could sneak out and get them; certainly not in the child’s bedroom.

“We want to inform parents about how to best protect their children when they’re on technology,” said Mr. Steffen.

Next week’s topic: “Dangerous Content.”

CATHOLICS@THECAPITOL
Join Bishop John Iffert and Jason Hall, executive director and Andrew Vandiver, associate director, Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK), March 10, for a day of advocacy in Frankfort, Ky.

Learn more about bills and issues important to Catholics that are current before the General Assembly and meet with your state representatives to share views.

Buses will leave from the diocesan Curia, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, at 7 a.m.; returning at about 3 p.m. Participants may also choose to provide their own transportation.

There is no cost to attend. The deadline to register is March 4, online at www.covdio.org.

Priest formation day
At the priest formation day, Feb. 22, Bishop John Iffert led the discussion and shared his first five months as bishop. Priests then broke into groups to have conversations on how, in the context of fraternity, to promote healthy lives as priests — spiritually, socially and physically.

March 4
All School Mass, St. Philip School, Melbourne, 8:30 a.m.
Visit St. Francis Cemetery, 1:30 p.m.

March 6
Mass, cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.
Rite of election, cathedral Basilica, 2 p.m.
Rite of election, cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.

March 8
Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 1:30 p.m.

March 10
Catholics at the Capitol, Frankfort

March 11
All School Mass, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington, 1 p.m.

March 12
Mass, cathedral basilica, 4:30 p.m.

March 13
Mass, cathedral basilica, 10 a.m.

March 14-16
Seminary visit, Latrobe, Penn.
COMMENTARY

The Cross: The identity of Christ and of the disciple — Mark, Chapters 8-10, a Lenton reading

From ancient times to the present, Christians have been perennially tempted to follow a risen Lord of glory without the Cross. In particular, the Christology of the Gospel according to Mark serves as a corrective for such spiritual astigmatism that misconstrues the identity of Jesus the Christ as the triumphant “Thessos Aner” (“divine man”). The narrative core in chapters 8-10 of the Second Gospel revolves around two overarching questions: “Who is Jesus?” and “Who is a disciple of Jesus?” For Christians, Jesus’ radical question to his disciples — “Who do people say that I am?” (Mark 8:27) — is the challenge to conversion faced by disciples of all times.

Mark the Evangelist boldly proclaims that Jesus Christ is the crucified and risen Lord. That the Cross is the path to glory is the paradox of his Gospel message.

In chapters 8-10, Mark focuses on the questions pertaining to the identity of Jesus as well as the identity of the disciple of Jesus. The literary structure of Mark with the distinctive theological perspective on those questions creates an interpretive key to the unfolding narrative from Mark 8:27 to 10:42.

Since Mark’s Gospel is viewed as a type of conversion story, the contemporary reader is challenged to re-experience his or her own response to Jesus’ invitation proclamation of the in-breaking of the Kingdom: “Repent, and believe the Good News” (Mark 1:16).

The narrative core of Mark’s Gospel gravitates around Jesus’ assertion of his identity as the Son of Man. The disciples persist in blindness to the mission of a suffering messiah. Nonetheless, the paradox of the Cross will shatter the disciples’ personal projections and expectations that falsify the identity of Jesus and, in turn, the meaning of discipleship.

The narrative begins and ends with two stories of Jesus curing blindness — the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26) and the healing of the blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:41-52). The cures have been described as “parables in action” in the sense that the physically blind receive sight through Jesus’ healings while the disciples remain spiritually blind to the meaning of the Cross. These cures place in sharp contrast the following passages wherein Jesus attempts to open the eyes of the disciples to the reality of salvation through the Cross and Resurrection of a Suffering Messiah. “Do you not yet understand?” (8:21) — Jesus’ probing question to the disciples — “Do you not yet understand?” (8:21) — immediately precedes the cure at the Cross and Resurrection of a Suffering Messiah. “Do you not yet understand?” (8:21) — The Christian reader is offered the challenge given to the disciples and the disciples. You have seen and heard. Will you allow Jesus to heal your blindness and lose your tongue so you can confess as God’s envoy, the Messiah?” The exegesis of Mark 8:27 to Mark 10:42 unfolds a pattern of recurring elements that make up this central section.

First, there are three predictions of the passion and death of Jesus — Mark 8:31 at Caesarea Philippi, Mark 9:31 on the way to Galilee, and Mark 10:32 at the going up to Jerusalem. The passion predictions reveal the true identity of Jesus as the One who will suffer, die, and rise on the third day.

Secondly, the three predictions of Jesus’ fate are followed by three sections narrating the blindness and misunderstanding of the disciples — Mark 8:32, Mark 9:35, and Mark 10:35. The disciples must “see” the suffering Son of Man; yet the disciples characteristically fail to see the full reality of the Messiah.

Thirdly, Jesus’ instructions on the nature of discipleship form the last element of the pattern — Mark 8:34-38, Mark 9:35-37, and Mark 10:42-45.

These passages dealing with Jesus’ instructions on the meaning of discipleship rather clearly unmask the mistaken notions of the disciples regarding the identity of Jesus. To accept a suffering Messiah entails accepting the role of a suffering disciple.

After the first prophecy of the Passion, Peter rebukes Christ (8:32). This incident seems to invalidate Peter’s confession of 8:30. Moreover, in the same verse Jesus enunciates the disciples to be silent about that confession which serves another function. Those who have not perceived the true meaning of his identity Peter here represents all believers in his failure.

The confession of Peter, “You are the Christ” (8:29), his remonstration of Jesus after the first prediction of the Passion as the suffering Son of Man, and the ensuing confrontation of Peter by Jesus (8:33) seem to serve as a paradigm of the other two sections. In particular, verse 33 of chapter 8 provides the basis for the non-recognition of Jesus’ role — “Because the way you think is not God’s way but man’s.” Faith requires a reversal of human values.

According to Professor Marie Noonan Sahin, the root of such “human-minded” blindness is the misguided religious assumption that “a messiah,” as God’s agent, was always imagined as victorious in his work. “A suffering Messias” was unimaginable.

Dominican Father Wilfrid Harrington cautions: “The confession of Peter, ‘You are the Christ,’ is the faith profession of too many of Mark’s contemporaries: ‘You are the Christ’ (Mark 8:29-33). He observes: ‘They cannot have a risen Leed without a suffering Messiah. They cannot be his disciples without walking his road of suffering.’” In his Invitation to Mark, Paul J. Actemeier spells out the value of the “failed mission” of Peter’s confession. He writes: “If ‘nothing succeeds like success,’ what is left and indeed God’s beloved Son — and yet be destined to suffer — to give his life as the ransom for many?” (Mark 10:45).

Mark’s Gospel has been called “a Passion Story with an introduction.” From this perspective, Chapters 8-10 cannot be understood apart from the entire narrative of Mark’s Gospel and its climax in the Passion narrative. At this point in the story of Mark, the disciples remain blind until the Cross. Even though the disciples will fail at the moment of the Passion, they will be grasped to “see” after the Son of Man suffers, dies, and rises. Mark’s image of the disciples’ blindness projects the reader ahead to the key insight that the full identity of Jesus will be “seen” only in death and resurrection.

The story of the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-9) intervenes in the narrative at the midpoint of chapters 8-10 on the identity of Christ as a Suffering Messiah. Father Byrne points out that the destiny of Jesus to suffer, die, and rise for the salvation of the world triggers the disciples’ struggle to believe: “how can Jesus be Messiah — and indeed God’s beloved Son — and yet be destined to die?”

The title of Father Byrne’s theological commentary on the Gospel of Mark is apt — “A Costly Freedom.”

Mrgr. Ronald Ketteler, a pal liaison to the Messenger and theologian in residence at Thomas More University

Bishop John C. Hunt

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For 15 years, I taught a course entitled Theology of God. The students in that course were predominately seminarians preparing for ministry, along with a number of lay students who were preparing to serve as ministers in various capacities in their churches. I would always teach what the curriculum called for—the key biblical revelations about the nature of God and God’s actions in history, some salient perspectives from the Patristics on God’s nature and actions, the historical development of the dogmatic definitions about God, plus some speculative notions on the Trinity, ranging from St. Augustine to Karl Rahner to Catherine Laugnac. But my overriding emphasis, like a leitmotif, was always this. I would tell the students: whatever else you do in your pastoral practice and preaching, try not to make God look stupid.

Nothing is as important in our teaching, preaching and pastoral activities as it is the notion we convey of the God who underwrites it all. Every homily we preach, every catechetical or sacramental teaching we give, and every pastoral practice we enact reflects the God who undergirds it all. If our teaching is narrow and petty, we make God look narrow and petty. If our pastoral practice lacks understanding and compassion, we make God lack understanding and compassion. If we are legalistic, we make God legalistic. If we are tribal, nationalistic or racist, we make God tribal, nationalistic and racist. If we do things that befuddle common sense, we make God the enemy of common sense. Crassly stated, when we do stuff in our ministry, we make God look stupid.

In all of our preaching, teaching, and pastoral practice we need to work at rescuing God from arbitrariness, narrowness, legalism, lack of compassion and lack of common sense. It’s no accident that atheism, anti-clericalism, and most of the negativity leveled against the Church and religion today can always point to some bad theology or Church practice on which to base itself. Atheism is always a strange site feeding off bad religion. So, too, is most of the negativity towards the churches which is prevalent today. Anti-church attitudes feed on bad religion and thus we who preach, teach and minister in the name of God need to scrutinize ourselves in the light of those criticisms.

As we feel the honesty to admit that we have sincerely hurt many persons by the rigidity of some of our pastoral practices that do not reflect a God of understanding, compassion and intelligence, but instead suggest that God is arbitrary, legalistic and not very intelligent. I say this in sympathy. It’s not easy to reflect God adequately, but we must try, to try to reflect better the God that Jesus incarnated. What are the marks of that God? First, that God has no favorites. No one person, race, gender or nation is more favored than others by that God. All are privileged. That God is also clear that it’s not only those who profess God and religion explicitly who are persons of faith, but also those, irrespective of their explicit faith or church practice, who do the will of God on earth.

Next, that God is scandalously understanding and compassionate, especially towards the weak and towards sinners. That God is willing to sit down with sinners without first asking them to clean up their lives. Moreover, that God asks us to be compassionate in the same way to both sinners and saints and to love them both equally. That God does not have preferential love for the virtuous.

In addition, that God is critical of those who, whatever their sincerity try to block access to him. That God is never defensive, but surrenders himself to death rather than defend himself, never meets hatred with hatred, and dies on the cross meeting the one who is killing him. Finally, and centrally, that God is first of all good news for the poor. Anything that says that good news is not good news for the poor is not the Gospel.

Those are the attributes of the God who Jesus incarnated, and we need to keep that God in mind in all of our preaching, teaching and pastoral practices, even as we are sensitive to proper boundaries and the demands of orthodox teaching. Complex pastoral questions will always be with us and this is not suggesting that these issues be resolved simplistically. ‘The truth sets us free and the demands of discipleship are, by Jesus’ own admission, harsh. However, with that being admitted, the compassion, mercy and intelligence of God need always still to be reflected in every pastoral action we do. Otherwise, God looks arbitrary, aloof, cruel and antithetical to love.

Christianity, as Marilynne Robinson says, is too great a narrative to be undermined by any lesser tale and that should forbid especially its being subordinated to narrowness, legalism, lack of compassion and lack of common sense.

Oblast Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author.

We think of holiness during Lent, but not the holiness of perfection which is not what God asks. Indeed, perfection becomes a source of pride, “I do everything right, I’m so good.” St. Paul reminds us that the “law and perfection” means death. He acknowledges that throughout his writings. Instead, we must be reborn in the likeness of Jesus Christ, that rebirth! We are not about laws, but about service to others, because that is what he did.

Matthew Kelly talks about “holy moments.” A hug for someone sorrowful, a kiss for a crying child, a visit to an elderly person, an unexpecting smile, or “Have a good day” to a stranger—these are holy moments. Sometimes we are able to do even bigger and better things for others, but the Lord Jesus expects us only to respond to the immediate needs around us.

“Deeper, deeper” into our hearts is the cry for Lent. We look for any signs of life and rebirth beneath the surface. Signs of life, means signs of responsiveness. Who do we respond to? How do we respond to others? Who have we been badly wrong about or trying to reconcile? What of our neighbors? Immigrants? Hungry children around us? Those who hunger and thirst? Giving, with real attention to anyone we meet—that’s holiness.

How deep can we go this Lent? Lent is not about “faking” it. It is about a sincere desire to, “Act justly, love tenderly, deal honestly with our God.”

There is it again—humility. We cannot become holy without it, because it’s not about us.

Jesus is present in every single person around us. He lived service and care for others—for each of us. He says, “What you did to another, you did to me.” And the “measure with which you measure, will be measured to you.” We pray “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive others.” That is not scary.

Dig deeper this Lent. Look to the earth beneath our feet, beneath the secret desires of our hearts. Earth holds many secrets, even the secret of resurrection and new life at Easter. Let it be a child to remind us.

Sister Dolores Gohs is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Melbourne, Ky.

It’s in our nature

The readings for the first Sunday of Lent — Cycle A are: Deuteronomy 26:4-10; Romans 10:8-13; and Luke 4:1-13.

As I reflect on the Gospel for this first Sunday of Lent — that of the temptation of Jesus by the devil during his 40 days in the desert prior to his public ministry — I am reminded of this line from the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer: “Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, he shared our human nature in all things but sin.”

Sin—what is it? It is a word that is extremely controversial and one we would rather choose to ignore. Sometimes even the very word “sin” is offensive. But what is sin? Most simply, it is anything contrary to our nature.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us a much fuller definition: Sin is an offense against reason, truth and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law” (CCC 1848).

Sin is an offense against God. “Against you, you alone, I have sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight.” Sin sets itself against God’s love for us and turns our hearts away from it. Like the first sin, it is disobedi- ence, a revolt against God through the will to become “like gods,” knowing and determining good and evil. Sin is thus “love of oneself even to contempt of God.” In this profound self-exaltation, sin is also the rejection of the obedience of Jesus, which achieves our salvation. (CCC 1528)

We have been made in the image and likeness of God — this is our nature. We are mirrored in all ways of thinking, speaking and acting. And to do this we must strive to know God, not just about him. We use the Lord Jesus as our model and our example.

But, it must be understood, that the devil does not want us to live according to our authentic nature. He prefers that we live contrary to nature. He is the great deceiver — making us think that that which is evil is really good. And like Jesus, he will tempt us into that which is false.

During this Lenten season, we journey with Jesus in the desert, coming to understand ourselves — our true nature; and the mission with which he has been given — to evangelize all nations and peoples. Let us learn from the Lord’s example, and through his Word, and from his Church. In this way we, too, will overcome the tempta- tions of the devil — although he may deport us from only for “a time.”

Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington and vicar general for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.
Priest discovers Kentucky parish has ties to Father Augustus Tolton

Ruby Thomas
Catholic News Service

RHODELIA, Ky. — On a wintry January day at the old St. Theresa Cemetery in rural Meade County in Kentucky, Janice Mulligan laid a simple wreath of magnolia leaves on the grave of Matilda Hurd, a woman who died a slave and whose grandson is now a saint in the making.

Hurd, who died in 1836 at age 30, was enslaved on a farm belonging to John Henry Manning. She also was the maternal grandmother of Father Augustus Tolton — who was born into slavery and is the first recognized African American priest ordained for the U.S. Catholic Church.

Father Tolton was ordained April 24, 1886, in Rome, died in 1897 in Chicago and is on the path toward sainthood. Pope Francis declared in June 2019 that Father Tolton lived a life of heroic virtue, giving him the title of “Venerable.”

The next step is beatification, which requires verification of a miracle attributed to the sainthood candidate’s intercession. In general, a second such miracle is needed for canonization.

As she stood over Hurd’s grave, “her story felt like a part of my family’s story” said Mulligan, associate director of the Office of Multicultural Ministry of the Archdiocese of Louisville Kentucky.

On that January day Father J. Ronald Knott, a retired Louisville archdiocesan, led a small group, including Mulligan, in reciting the Confiteor before the wreath laying.

The penitential prayer seemed fitting for the moment, especially the words “in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,” said Father Knott, who grew up in rural Meade County.

Father Knott recently became aware that Hurd was the maternal grandmother of Father Augustus Tolton, the first recognized African American priest ordained for the U.S. Church.

“Having her (Matilda’s) name recognized, especially in the context of her grandson becoming one of the first African American priests ordained, is an honor,” he said.

“Father Knott is studying St. Theresa’s baptismal records to find the names of enslaved people baptized at the parish, he said. “We need to say their names — Matilda, Maria, Augustus, Sicilia. We didn’t even know their names and it’s right there in the baptismal records.”

His research eventually turned up the baptismal records of Hurd’s children — Charles, Anne, Sicilia, Sicilia — and said his first Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica.

He is the first recognized African American priest ordained for the U.S. church and who is now being considered for sainthood.

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www.stcharlescommunity.org
Parish community leads family to full communion this Easter vigil

For the last six months, Damien Tepe, parishioner, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, has been preparing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church at this year's Easter vigil. During the Lenten season, the Messenger will be sharing some of the stories of those preparing to enter the Church at this year’s Easter vigil. Mr. Tepe’s story is the first in this series.

Originally from Hebron, Mr. Tepe’s job took him down to the Dallas, Texas area for seven years before his family brought him back to the Hebron-Burlington area. Mr. Tepe grew up Christian. His wife is Catholic and the couple had a Catholic wedding, and their children were baptized in the Catholic Church.

When the family moved back to the Northern Kentucky area, and his children began attending IHM school, Mr. Tepe felt like it was a great opportunity to fully embrace the Catholic faith. Mr. Tepe described his decision to join the Catholic Church as “a natural progression.” Mr. Tepe said there was no specific moment or realization when he decided to join the Catholic Church, but there were contributing elements to this “natural progression.” His wife being Catholic, the opportunity to enter the Church along with his children and the open-armed welcoming from the IHM parish community made him decide that he wanted to be part of the Church too.

“The whole IHM family has been in embrace of everything, it really feels like I am joining a community,” said Mr. Tepe. “One of the big confirmations of the embrace was working on the IHM festival committee. As the new guy coming back from Texas, I didn’t know anybody here and they welcomed me in with open arms. It was a great group of people. I built some relationships this summer and it really was like a confirmation that for me felt like, you know, I am on the right path.”

Mr. Tepe has been preparing through the parish’s Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program and he said that he feels he has developed a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith.

“You know I thought I had a pretty good understanding as a Christian, but going through the RCIA program and really seeing how everything is done and the reasons why things are done in a certain way as Catholics has given me a lot deeper understanding of everything,” he said.

Damien Tepe shares his backstory and RCIA experience as he prepares to fully join the Catholic Church. During the Lenten season, the Messenger will be sharing some of the stories of those preparing to enter the Church at this year’s Easter vigil.

Thomas More University, Florence Y’alls – A match made in baseball heaven

Thomas More University and the Florence Y’alls, have been preparing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church at this year’s Easter vigil. During the Lenten season, the Messenger will be sharing some of the stories of those preparing to enter the Church at this year’s Easter vigil. Mr. Tepe’s story is the first in this series.

“With the opportunity to partner with the Florence Y’alls presented itself, we could not pass it up,” said Terry Connor, athletic director, TMU. “To give the baseball team the chance to play in a professional stadium is a great opportunity for our student athletes and coaches.”

For now, the Saints baseball team is playing its 2022 season on the Crestview Hills campus before officially calling Thomas More Stadium in Florence home in spring 2023.

“The whole IHM family has been in embrace of everything, it really feels like I am joining a community,” said Mr. Tepe. “One of the big confirmations of the embrace was working on the IHM festival committee. As the new guy coming back from Texas, I didn’t know anybody here and they welcomed me in with open arms. It was a great group of people. I built some relationships this summer and it really was like a confirmation that for me felt like, you know, I am on the right path.”

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Damien Tepe shares his backstory and RCIA experience as he prepares to fully join the Catholic Church. During the Lenten season, the Messenger will be sharing some of the stories of those preparing to enter the Church at this year’s Easter vigil.
St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, 5-6 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Augustine, Augusta, 5-6:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Augustine Parish, Covington, 4-7 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15
St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 4:30-6 p.m., Drive-thru closes at 7:30 p.m. March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1 and 8.
St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 4:45-7 p.m. March 4, 18, April 1
St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, 5-7 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Cecilia Parish, independence, 5-8 p.m., March 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Edward Parish, Cincinnati, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
Holy Cross District High School, Latonia, 5-8 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. James Parish, Brooksville, 4:30-6:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Joseph Academy, Walton, 4:30-8 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, 4-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
Knights of Columbus, Fr. Bealer Council #3908, Elsmere, lunch 11:00-2:00 p.m.; dinner, 4:30-8 p.m.
St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, 4-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
Our Savior Parish, Covington, noon-6 p.m., April 8
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, 4:30-7:30 p.m. March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Paul Parish, Florence, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4-8 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. Timothy Parish, Union, drive-thru, 4:30-7:30 p.m.; dine-in, 5–7 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
St. William Parish, Williamstown, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, carry out only

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 017; and DirectTV 25.

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 Isaak A. Isiaak at 392-1500, ext. 1529.

Mount St. Mary’s Seminary and School of Theology is offering classes for adults. Learn more at www.atenrasum.edu.

Bishop Brossart High School eucheum league, March 11, Hegeman Hall. Doors open 5:30 p.m.; tournament 7 p.m. Cost $25 per player. Contact ekrem1111@izod.com or 732-5034 to register.

Bishop Brossart High School Art Gallery presents: Ceramic Works by Charity Rust-Jordan, March 13–April 3, Sundays, noon–4 p.m.; Monday–Saturday by appointment 610-3874.

Thomas More University open house, March 22, 6-8 p.m. RSVP at thomasmore.edu/preview or contact admissions by e-mailing admissions@thomasmore.edu or calling 344-3132.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky is hosting its second annual art fundraiser event, “Creative Compassion,” March 31, Drees Pavilion, Covington. Tickets available online at www.svdpnk.org. Call 860-344 for information or e-mail marypat.behler@svdlnk.org.

Holy Cross District High School’s 24th annual Mulch Sale, deliver begins April 1, lasting minimum

Brews and Wild Game

St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, hosted its third annual Brews and Wild Game Night, Feb. 26, with special guest speaker Bishop John Iffert. Bishop Iffert presided at Mass and then enjoyed an evening of wild game dishes and socialization with over 100 men of St. Henry parish. To the delight of everyone, at the end of Mass, Bishop Iffert officially announced that Deacon A.J. Gedney, who is currently assigned to the parish, will be ordained to the priesthood on Friday, June 3, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. 

Pictured (from left) Bob Pritchett, event coordinator; Bishop Iffert; Father Gregory Bach, pastor, St. Henry Parish; Deacon Gedney; Rob Duncan, event coordinator; and Father Jordan Hainsey, administrative assistant to the bishop.

The Center at Fountain Square, Pritchel Barn

Spring Appeal

March 4, 2022

People and Events

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

2nd graders on 2-22-22
Second graders at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, celebrated 2's day 2-22-22. Students dressed up, completed math problems with numbers 2 and 22, shared 2 facts about 2 presidents, wrote about what they would be doing in 20 years, alphabetized words associated with the number 2, used a photo from when they were 2 years old to write clues for a guessing game and composed sentences using the words to, two, and too.

Award winning teachers
Tara Kelly, second grade teacher, and Sara Chalfant, third grade teacher, St. Paul School, Florence, have been recognized as 2022 Teachers of the Year by the Florence Rotary Club. The award recognizes teachers that inspire students to learn, have the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues, play an active and useful role in the community, as well as, in the school, are poised, articulate, and possess the energy to withstand a taxing schedule and exemplify the “Service above Self” standard of the Florence Rotary organization in his or her profession and community. The St. Paul School community celebrated the award, Feb 22. Ms. Kelly and Mrs. Chalfant will be recognized as a 2022 Florence Rotary Club Teacher of the Year at an awards luncheon, March 21.

Chess Party
Second grade students at St.Pius X School, Edgewood won a Chess Party with Father Conor Kunath, diocesan vocations promoter, in a Catholic Schools Week raffle. The students enjoyed some treats and learned the basics of chess with Father Kunath.

Retreat for women and men
April 8-10, St. Walburg Monastery Guest House, Villa Hills. Due to COVID restrictions at the monastery meals will be “on your own,” bringing food in or going out. Arrangements and fees are determined with reservation. Contact Sister Dorothy Schuette, 443-8515 or dorothyosb@gmail.com.

Thomas More University’s preview day
April 27, 6-8 p.m., for students beginning their college search. RSVP at thomasmore.edu/preview or contact admissions by e-mailing admissions@thomasmore.edu or calling 544-3332.

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VATICAN CITY — The elderly, who are often cast aside, are a treasure trove of wisdom that can help one discover the true meaning of life rather than be consumed by the unrealistic goal of remaining forever young, Pope Francis said.

“Being old is just as important — and beautiful — as being young,” the pope said Feb. 23 during his Wednesday general audience.

“Youth is beautiful, but eternal youth is a very dangerous illusion,” he said.

“Being old is just as important — and beautiful — as being young. Let us remember this. The alliance between generations, which restores all ages of life to what is human, is our lost gift, and we must get it back. It must be found, in this culture of waste and in this culture of productivity,” he said.

The day’s audience talk was the first of a new series dedicated to the meaning and value of old age. Noting that “there have never been so many of us in human history,” the 85-year-old pope said that now more than ever, the elderly face an increasing “risk of being discarded.”

“The elderly are often seen as ‘a burden,’” he said. “In the dramatic first phase of the pandemic, it was they who paid the highest price. They were already the weakest and most neglected group: we did not look at them too much when they were alive, we did not even see them die.”

The pope said that although the current demographic winter has led to a higher number of elderly than young people, the “dominant culture has as its sole model the young adult, that is, a self-made individual who always remains young.”

“The exaltation of youth as the only age worthy of embodying the human ideal, coupled with contempt for old age as frailty, decay, disability, has been the dominant image of 20th-century totalitarianism. Have we forgotten this?” he asked.

Instead of being “honored for the gifts they bring to everyone’s sense of life,” the pope said, old age, especially “in so-called ‘developed’ cultures,” is often disregarded “as an age that has no special content to offer; nor meaning of its own to live.”

Pope Francis warned that the world will be robbed of love if “old age is not restored to the dignity of humanly worthy life,” and he encouraged Christians “to invest their thoughts and affections in the gifts” old age brings to one’s life.

“Everything beautiful that a society has is related to the roots of the elderly,” the pope said. “For this reason, in these catechesis, I would like to highlight the figure of the elderly person, so people would understand the elderly are not something to be discarded; they are a blessing for society.”
Papal pleas for peace: Even if unheeded, Pope Francis continues tradition

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis knows his appeals for an end to the war in Ukraine carry little weight with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he also knows he has an obligation to continue speaking out and rallying others to join him in praying for peace.

In April 2021 — 10 months before Putin invaded Ukraine — the pope expressed his concerns about a buildup of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border and an escalation in the fighting between Ukrainian and Russian-backed separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

He did the same in December, in January and repeatedly in February as it seemed Putin was serious about launching an offensive.

Emphasizing the seriousness of his concern, Pope Francis did not summon the Russian ambassador to the Holy See, but instead went in person to the embassy Feb. 25.

One week before Putin launched the invasion, Pope Francis told members of the Congregation for Eastern Churches — including Eastern Catholic leaders from Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Ethiopia — that too often “the warnings of both popes and men and women of goodwill are unheard.”

Humanity, he said, seems to have “an attachment to war, and this is tragic.”

Still, Pope Francis noted, modern popes, beginning with Pope Benedict XV before World War I, have tried to appeal to consciences and to warn of the “useless slaughter” and the unforeseen consequences of going to war.

The pope also spoke of St. John Paul II’s plea to avoid the war in Iraq.

Those pleas in early 2003 involved much more than public appeals. He sent Cardinal Pio Laghi to Baghdad to meet with President George W. Bush, and he sent Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to Baghdad to meet with President Saddam Hussein. The United States and its coalition partners launched their attack three weeks later.

Papal appeals for peace and dialogue always look first to the importance of human rights and the protection of civilians seem to be difficult if not impossible to guarantee.

Leading prayers for peace Feb. 25, the first day of the Russian offensive against Ukraine, Andrea Riccardi, a historian and founder of the Community of Sant’Egidio, said the conflict “seems to me the biggest war on European soil since 1945, at least for the size of the country it involves and for the fact that it involves a superpower.”

Putin said Feb. 27 that he had put his nuclear forces onto a higher state of alert.

The most thorough papal examination of the folly of war to date is “Pacem in Terris,” published in 1963 by St. John XXIII.

Although it was an encyclical, it was addressed to all people of good will and not just Catholics, and it tried to address people’s hopes and fears at the height of the Cuban missile crisis.

The pope called for international cooperation in the promotion of world peace, emphasizing the importance of human rights and dignity.

In June, the Vatican publishing house released “Peace on Earth: Fraternity is Possible,” a collection of Pope Francis’ words and speeches on the importance of praying and working for peace.

In the final chapter, written specifically for the book, he moved closer than any previous pope to adopting a stance of total nonviolence.

Already in “Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship,” he questioned whether in modern warfare any conflict could be judged a “just war” because proportionality and the protection of civilians seem to be difficult if not impossible to guarantee.

“We can no longer think of war as a solution because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits,” one of the main criteria of just-war theory, he wrote in the document.

“In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a ‘just war.’ Never again war!”

And, in “Peace on Earth,” he wrote that nations and factions too easily turn to war, using “any kind of excuse,” including claiming they are attacking another as a humanitarian, defensive or preventative measure, “even resorting to the manipulation of information” to support their argument.

When Jesus was about to be arrested, Pope Francis wrote, he did not claim a right to self-defense and even told the disciple who drew a sword to defend him, “Put your sword back into its sheath."

“The words of Jesus resound clearly today, too,” he wrote. “Life and goodness cannot be defended with the sword.”
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: 5 pm Saturday, and 9 am and 11 am Sunday, plus availability 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 salcinia@STJOSEPHCSKY.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 Pre-school 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 Roman 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 859-392-1369. EOE

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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.
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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

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART
Mary 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 9 days. Thank you St. Jude. Amen. M.A.I.

NOVENA TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
O, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Fruit of the Vine, splendid 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 SAINT BENEDICT
Saint Benedict, O Love of Christ, Pattern of Perfection, at the beginning of each day, grant me to say my morning prayer and to persevere in prayer throughout the day. At the end of each day, help me to say my evening prayer and to persevere in prayer throughout the night. In all my work, guide me by your attentiveness and bestow upon me your strength and courage. In your home, grant me your abiding presence and the presence of your heavenly Father. In your home, I will find rest and peace and long for the Kingdom. Amen. M.A.I.

NOVENA TO SAINT JUDE
O Saint Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. 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.

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that our church does … so thank you for your part for being here tonight, for everything you do to support the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal,” Bishop Iffert said. The theme for this year’s appeal is “Stand Firm in the Lord,” which Bishop Iffert said is fitting because it is through ministry that we stand firm in the Lord. “Lots of people stand firm in all kinds of ways but for us, we stand firm alongside those who are neediest. We stand firm when we rejoice that Christ is our strength. When we accept our own weakness and need for the Lord’s strength — that’s how we stand firm,” Bishop Iffert said. Bishop Iffert said that the image of praying hands holding the rosary reminded him of his time with the Dominicans, who all wore a large rosary around their belts at their left hip, where a soldier’s sword would be, as a reminder that when we face trials and adversity we need to protect one another. “Not by pounding our chests and asserting ourselves … instead we reach for that prayer … for the Holy Spirit to reverse us, into that relationship, because he is the strong one,” Bishop Iffert said. Bishop Iffert continued by saying that standing in and for Christ allows us to do everything in unity with him. Christ can be our support; he can be the one to back us up. “We are here to say, ‘look what Jesus does in us when we do this.’ We are here to say, ‘look what Jesus does in us when we do that.’ We are here to say, ‘look what Jesus does in us when we do this.’ We are here to say, ‘look what Jesus does in us when we do that.’” Bishop Iffert closed by asking everyone to remember that standing firm in the Lord means we are standing on the rock — Jesus Christ. “And that’s what we stand for; trying to follow him and lay down our lives like he did. That’s the firmness of our faith. Standing firm in a gentle spirit of faith, and we can do that alongside our neighbors,” said Bishop Iffert. Mr. Hollenkamp said that the dinner in Maysville is to celebrate the ministries of the DPAA who serve thousands of men, women and children with the love and hope of Christ. The pledges made to the appeal are to help those in greatest need who are served by the Diocese of Covington. It will also demonstrate your commitment to religious vocations, Catholic education, religious formation of adults and children as well as to provide programs that strengthen marriages, promote respect for life, and offer consolations for those who are less fortunate.” Mr. Hollenkamp said. “I’m just blessed to be a part of this campaign.” At the dinner, Mr. Hollenkamp announced that during the month of February leadership gift solicitors raised $435,628.40, giving the 2022 DPAA a good head start as it enters parish phase. Announcement Weekend will be held in all parishes, March 12 and 13, where the DPAA video will be shown. During Commitment Weekend, March 19 and 20, DPAA parish teams will invite parishioners to make their pledge or gift at Mass. Ties to Father Augustus Tolton (Continued from page 6) African American saints in the U.S. … there’s a legacy and story there, rich and worth telling,” she said. “The work of this office is to promote and spread that African American legacy, whether in the 1800s or now.” Her story and others like it adds a fuller thread and a fuller context to the presence and contributions of African Americans to this American church,” she said. “It certainly can be better promoted and appreciated.” Part of Hurd’s story takes place on the farm in Rhodelia owned by Manning and his wife, Ann Goagh, who were members of St. Theresa Church. Hurd was married to Augusta Chisley, another slave on the Manning farm, said Emilie Leumas, an archivist who serves on the historical commission for Father Augustus Tolton — were moved to Missouri to live with their new owner. “How gut-wrenching that your two oldest children are being hauled away to Missouri,” said Leumas during a recent interview. When Anne Sevilla Manning married Stephen Elliott in 1819, she would have brought Charles and Martha Jane into her marriage as part of her dowry, Leumas said. More than a decade later, Martha Jane, now the mother of three young children, including Father Tolton, age 7 at the time, escaped slavery and fled to Quincy, Illinois, where Father Tolton grew up and was formed in the Catholic faith. Hurd’s death in 1836 came a year after Manning’s will was read. She is buried a few feet away from a large wooden cross that marks where the old church, a log cabin structure, once stood. The parish started out as a log cabin on the banks of the Ohio River, an area that was known as Flint Island in 1818. In 1836, a second log cabin was built on what is now the old cemetery grounds. Father Knott noted Hurd is buried among St. Theresa’s white parishioners, perhaps because she was baptized. A cemetery located in a wooded area off a highway about two miles from the parish was used by bury enslaved people owned by St. Theresa parishioners, as well. Those slaves, he said, may not have been baptized. He is leading a project to find all the headstones in that cemetery...
For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholionews.com and click on “Extras,” then choose “Movies.”

Classifications are:
- A-I — general patronage;
- A-II — adults and adolescents;
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Catholic leaders plead for clemency for Texas woman

WASHINGTON — Texas Catholic leaders and other opponents of the death penalty are urging Texas officials to grant clemency to a 15-year-old Latina woman set to be executed in late April. Melissa Lucio, a Catholic mother of 14, was given the death sentence for the 2007 death of her 2-year-old daugh- ter, Mariah, which Lucio has maintained was due to her daugh- ter's accidental fall down a stairs. The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops urged Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and the state's Board of Pardons and Parole to commute Lucio's April 27 death sentence and "reexamine the case to consider her his- tory as a victim of sexual abuse," along with the "troubling inter- rogation by law enforcement and the lingering questions regarding the manner" of her daughter's death. On Feb. 28, the state's bishops said Lucio's sentence was based on a process that lacked evidence and witnesses. They also said she was convicted based on coerced, passive admission of guilt after a rigorous interrogation the night her daughter died. The bishops said Lucio has "undertaken a spiritual journey while in prison" with her spiritual advisor, Deacon Ronnie Lastovica of the Diocese of Austin. They also expressed agreement with the statement of Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, where the Lucio family lives. "One tragedy is not somehow made bet- ter by killing someone else. Justice is not suddenly restored because another person dies," Bishop Flores said.

Dialogue is best antidote to extrem- ism, pope tells Iraqi Christian leaders

VATICAN CITY — Christians have a right to remain in Iraq and the obligation to contribute to the country's growth and recovery, Pope Francis said in a message about the collaboration among the churches and a commitment to interreligious dialogue. Pope Francis said. A group of Iraqi Christian leaders came to the Vatican Feb. 28 to mark the first anniversary of Pope Francis’ visit to their nation. As he did during that visit March 8-12, Pope Francis said to Iraqi Christians martyred in recent times by extremists purporting to act in the name of Islam. "I bow before the suffering and martyred women and men who preserved the faith, even at the cost of their lives," the pope said. "I think of the dozens who died out of love in their rec- onciliation and made the Church flourish, may the blood of these many martyrs of our time, belonging to different tradi- tions but united in the same sacrifice, be a seed of unity among Christians and a sign of a new springtime of faith. "Praying the Rosary is a way of defending the citizenship rights of their people and to provide health care, education and income to women and families," the pope said. "The Church has encouraged them to continue seeking Christian unity and engaging in interreligious dialogue. "To engage in dialogue is the best antidote to extremism, which is a danger for the fol- lowers of any religion and a grave threat to peace," he said.

Despite invasion, nuns say they'll stay in Ukraine to serve the people

PHILADELPHIA — Women religious in Ukraine are facing Russia’s full-scale invasion of that nation with determination and a commitment to service. Two sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great spoke with CatholicPhilly.com directly from Russia’s full-scale invasion of that nation with determination and a commitment to service. Two sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great spoke with CatholicPhilly.com directly from Russia on Feb. 28 that states that want to defend the rule cannot win. Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, one of several attorneys general in the coalition, told the justices.

The Supreme Court hears arguments in ‘public charge’ case

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court heard arguments Feb. 21 on whether Biden administration officials sought sufficient public comment and gave notice before ditching a Trump-era rule that denies a green card to recent immigrants who may need economic assistance. In 2019, the Trump administration announced plans to deny permanent legal immigration status to applicants who use public funds such as food stamps or pub- lic housing. It became known as the "public charge rule" and it faced legal challenges, which now continue but in a different state's Board of Pardons and Parole to commute Lucio's April 27 death sentence and "reexamine the case to consider her his- tory as a victim of sexual abuse," said Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty in a 48-48 vote, the Senate failed to approve a procedure known as cloture — which limits debate and ends a filibuster in order to move to a vote on a bill. Sixty votes were needed for cloture. In addition to codify- ing Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationwide, the bill would have eliminated pro-life laws at every level of government — including parental notifi- cation for minor girls, informed consent, and health or safety protections specific to abortion facilities. "H.R. 3755 also would have compelled all Americans to support abortions here and abroad with their tax dollars," a USCCB news release said.

Biden calls his Supreme Court nomi-inee a ‘proven consensus builder’

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden announced Feb. 25 at the White House that he has chosen a "proven consensus builder" by nominating Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, a feder- al appeals court judge, to serve on the Supreme Court. If con- firmed, she will be the first Black woman on the nation’s high court. Jackson, who was introduced by the president, said she was "truly humbly" by the extraodinary home of this nomi- nation" and thanked God for bringing her to this point in her professional journey, adding: "One can only come this far by faith." She said she hoped her love of this country and the Constitution would inspire future generations of Americans and also gave a shoutout to Justice Steven Breyer, whose spot on the bench she will fill if she is confirmed by the U.S. Senate Jackson clerked for Breyer in the 1999-2000 court term and said he demonstrated how a Supreme Court justice can demon- strate civility, grace and generosity of spirit. Jackson, 51, had previously clerked for Breyer in the 1999-2000 court term and said he demonstrated how a Supreme Court justice can demon- strate civility, grace and generosity of spirit. Judges who were introduced by the president said, she “was truly humbly” by the extraordinary home of this nomination” and thanked God for bringing her to this point in her professional journey, adding: “One can only come this far by faith.” She said she hoped her love of this country and the Constitution would inspire future generations of Americans and also gave a shoutout to Justice Steven Breyer, whose spot on the bench she will fill if she is confirmed by the U.S. Senate Jackson clerked for Breyer in the 1999-2000 court term and said he demonstrated how a Supreme Court justice can demon- strate civility, grace and generosity of spirit. 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VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis said his heart was “broken” by the war in Ukraine, and he pleaded again, “Silence the weapons!”

“Many times, we prayed that this path would not be taken,” he told people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the midday recitation of the Angelus prayer Feb. 27. But rather than giving up, he said, “we beg God more intensely.”

With many of the people in the square holding Ukrainian flags, Pope Francis greeted them the way they traditionally greet each other, “Slava Isusu Chrystu,” meaning, “Glory to Jesus Christ.”

Pope Francis has continued to personally express his concern about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and to appeal for peace. The previous evening, he phoned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The Vatican press office confirmed the call Feb. 26 but provided no details.

Zelenskyy tweeted that he had thanked Pope Francis “for praying for peace in Ukraine and a cease-fire. The Ukrainian people feel the spiritual support of His Holiness.”

The call to Zelenskyy came a day after Pope Francis made the diplomatically unusual gesture of going to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See to express his concern about the war. Usually, a head of state would have an ambassador come to him.

Pope Francis also had phoned Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, who remained in Kyiv with his people, taking refuge with others in the basement of Resurrection Cathedral and sending out daily videos of encouragement.

As Feb. 27 dawned with people under a curfew and many still sheltering in basements and subway stations, Archbishop Shevchuk promised that priests would be joining them underground to celebrate the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

“The church is with its people,” he said. “The church of Christ brings the eucharistic Savior to those who are experiencing critical moments in their life, who need the strength and hope of the resurrection.”

And he called on anyone who could to go to confession and receive the Eucharist, remembering those unable to go to services and, especially, the Ukrainian soldiers defending the nation.

But also, he said, make a “sacrifice for those who are wounded, for those who are discouraged, for the refugees who are on the roads fleeing the war.”

Speaking after the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis also remembered the Ukrainians in the bunkers and those fleeing the war, especially “the elderly, those seeking refuge in these hours, mothers fleeing with their children. They are our brothers and sisters for whom humanitarian corridors must be opened as a matter of urgency and who must be welcomed.”

“In these days we’ve been shaken by something tragic: war,” he told the people in the square.

One who wages war, he said, is not and cannot be thinking about people, but is putting “partisan interests and power before everything.”

One who wages war “relies on the diabolical and perverse logic of weapons, which is the farthest thing from God’s will, and distances himself from the ordinary people who want peace,” the pope said. In every conflict “the ordinary people are the real victims” and they “pay for the folly of war with their own skin.”

“With a heart broken by what is happening in Ukraine — and let’s not forget the wars in other parts of the world, such as Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia — I repeat: Silence the weapons!” Pope Francis said.

“God is with the peacemakers,” he said, “not with those who use violence.”

Military personnel and citizens take cover during shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine, Feb. 26, 2022. Russian troops stormed toward Ukraine's capital, and street fighting broke out as city officials urged residents to take shelter.