January 3, 2023

In This Issue

2 Midnight Mass
3 A year in review
3 MLK discussion breakfast
3 Holy Spirit cold shelter
10 Annual finance report
12 Feast of the Epiphany
13 Pope Benedict XVI
20 Making spirits bright

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With faith and hope in eternal life, we give thanks for the life of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. As the funeral liturgy teaches us, the blessings of his life are signs to us of God's goodness and of our fellowship with the saints in Christ.

As teacher of the Christian faith and Universal Shepherd of the Church on Earth, Pope Emeritus Benedict, taught us above all to keep our hopes and desires focused firmly on Jesus Christ. Jesus is the source of our trust and confidence. He emphasized Sacred Scripture (the Bible) as an essential starting point for theology and the spiritual life.

In continuity with St. John Paul II and in union with Pope Francis, Benedict explicitly called us to the work of evangelization — sharing the Gospel of Jesus with others. He demonstrated by his life that worshiping and glorifying God is the central purpose of life and the key to happiness and fruitfulness. He taught us to follow the path of Love, Hope, and Faith. After laying down the papal ministry for selfless reasons with the good of the Church in his mind, Benedict lived out his life in humility and prayer.

I encourage everyone to pray daily in thanksgiving to God for the precious gift of Pope Emeritus Benedict's life, scholarship, sanctity, and leadership. Pray also that one who has taught us so powerfully about the centrality of Jesus may now know the mercy and joy of eternal life with Christ.

I invite Catholics to offer at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the Pontiff Emeritus each day through January 13, 2023 (nine days of prayer beginning on the day of the Funeral Mass). It is a worthy practice to offer some work of direct service for the poor during this time of mourning. I welcome all who love Christ and all people of good will to join your prayers and works of mercy to those of your Catholic neighbors. Thank you for your kindness.

With confidence in Divine Providence and certain hope in the Resurrection, I remain . . .

Yours in Christ,

* Bishop John Iffert
  Bishop of Covington

** VATICAN CITY ** — Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and defender of the basics of Catholic faith, is likely to go down in history books as the first pope in almost 600 years to resign.

He died Dec. 31 at the age of 95, nearly 10 years after leaving the papacy to retire to what he said would be a life of prayer and study.

Pope Francis was scheduled to celebrate his predecessor's funeral Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said the funeral rites would be simple in keeping with the wishes of the late pope.

As the retired pope neared death, he was given the anointing of the sick Dec. 28 in his residence, Bruni said.

(Continued on page 16)
Like characters in a nativity scene — faithful draw to Christ at Midnight Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On a snowy Christmas night, family and friends gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord at Midnight Mass. Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington was the celebrant.

The doors opened at 11 p.m., and by 11:30 the Bishop’s Choir, dressed in blue, sang a concert of Christmas hymns and carols welcoming the congregation — including traditional French and German carols. The Cathedral was decorated in red ribbons and evergreen, with a scene of the Nativity displayed beside the altar.

As Mass opened, with lights lowered, Deacon Michael Elminger, seminarian, chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Christ, and Bishop Iffert kneels before the scene of Christ’s Nativity, anointing it with holy water and incense.

During his homily, Bishop Iffert equated the diverse attendees of the Mass with those figures present at the Nativity, asking the congregation the question, “Why are you here?”

“Some people come to this Mass, I know, because of family connections,” said Bishop Iffert. “You know who else thought family was important? Jesus, Mary and Joseph.”

It was a family connection that brought them to Bethlehem, Bishop Iffert continued. “If you are here because of a family connection, you have a friend in Jesus. He’s the one that was born into the world, bonded to a human family with his own body and blood … family is important, and God gives himself to nourish our families and build us in the gospel.”

“Sometimes it is beauty that draws us to this Mass,” Bishop Iffert would continue his connection, mentioning how he knew individuals who were not even religious, but still attended the Mass for the “beauty of the night” and the “glorious music.”

Bishop Iffert compares these individuals to the shepherds in the field.

“Seeing the glory of the Lord — this magnificence surrounding these shepherds … their response is fear, followed by curiosity … and, when they are approaching the manger and the child they are moved to worship the most beautiful, commanding, peaceful and gentle presence they have ever seen.”

In the third connection, Bishop Iffert addresses the members of the congregation who “may not know” why they were present at the Mass, drawing connections between them and the Magi who followed the star in the sky to Bethlehem.

“They saw the rise of the star and recognized that meant the birth of a new king for the Jews — who knows what instigated them to follow that star all the way to Bethlehem. Perhaps they were so disillusioned with the state of the empire they were a part of, that they just had to look for something else, someone else, a worthy leader to receive their loyalty,” he said.

“You don’t have all the answers, and you don’t know why you’re here … but, I’m grateful that you are.”

Concluding his homily, Bishop Iffert would unite all three of these comparisons together.

“These things draw us together this Christmas. They lead us here. They respond to the question, ‘why?’ In fact, they pose a new question for us. Why would we be anywhere else?”

“Christ responds to our human minds. Not just on Christmas day, but on every day of our lives. He came to us today to be our Christ … Today, Christ is born for you. Whatever your reason, I’m so grateful for your company.”

Like characters in a nativity scene — faithful draw to Christ at Midnight Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On a snowy Christmas night, family and friends gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord at Midnight Mass. Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington was the celebrant.

The doors opened at 11 p.m., and by 11:30 the Bishop’s Choir, dressed in blue, sang a concert of Christmas hymns and carols welcoming the congregation — including traditional French and German carols. The Cathedral was decorated in red ribbons and evergreen, with a scene of the Nativity displayed beside the altar.

As Mass opened, with lights lowered, Deacon Michael Elminger, seminarian, chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Christ, and Bishop Iffert kneels before the scene of Christ’s Nativity, anointing it with holy water and incense.

During his homily, Bishop Iffert equated the diverse attendees of the Mass with those figures present at the Nativity, asking the congregation the question, “Why are you here?”

“Some people come to this Mass, I know, because of family connections,” said Bishop Iffert. “You know who else thought family was important? Jesus, Mary and Joseph.”

It was a family connection that brought them to Bethlehem, Bishop Iffert continued. “If you are here because of a family connection, you have a friend in Jesus. He’s the one that was born into the world, bonded to a human family with his own body and blood … family is important, and God gives himself to nourish our families and build us in the gospel.”

“Sometimes it is beauty that draws us to this Mass,” Bishop Iffert would continue his connection, mentioning how he knew individuals who were not even religious, but still attended the Mass for the “beauty of the night” and the “glorious music.”

Bishop Iffert compares these individuals to the shepherds in the field.

“Seeing the glory of the Lord — this magnificence surrounding these shepherds … their response is fear, followed by curiosity … and, when they are approaching the manger and the child they are moved to worship the most beautiful, commanding, peaceful and gentle presence they have ever seen.”

In the third connection, Bishop Iffert addresses the members of the congregation who “may not know” why they were present at the Mass, drawing connections between them and the Magi who followed the star in the sky to Bethlehem.

“They saw the rise of the star and recognized that meant the birth of a new king for the Jews — who knows what instigated them to follow that star all the way to Bethlehem. Perhaps they were so disillusioned with the state of the empire they were a part of, that they just had to look for something else, someone else, a worthy leader to receive their loyalty,” he said.

“You don’t have all the answers, and you don’t know why you’re here … but, I’m grateful that you are.”

Concluding his homily, Bishop Iffert would unite all three of these comparisons together.

“These things draw us together this Christmas. They lead us here. They respond to the question, ‘why?’ In fact, they pose a new question for us. Why would we be anywhere else?”

“Christ responds to our human minds. Not just on Christmas day, but on every day of our lives. He came to us today to be our Christ … Today, Christ is born for you. Whatever your reason, I’m so grateful for your company.”

Like characters in a nativity scene — faithful draw to Christ at Midnight Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On a snowy Christmas night, family and friends gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord at Midnight Mass. Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington was the celebrant.

The doors opened at 11 p.m., and by 11:30 the Bishop’s Choir, dressed in blue, sang a concert of Christmas hymns and carols welcoming the congregation — including traditional French and German carols. The Cathedral was decorated in red ribbons and evergreen, with a scene of the Nativity displayed beside the altar.

As Mass opened, with lights lowered, Deacon Michael Elminger, seminarian, chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Christ, and Bishop Iffert kneels before the scene of Christ’s Nativity, anointing it with holy water and incense.

During his homily, Bishop Iffert equated the diverse attendees of the Mass with those figures present at the Nativity, asking the congregation the question, “Why are you here?”

“Some people come to this Mass, I know, because of family connections,” said Bishop Iffert. “You know who else thought family was important? Jesus, Mary and Joseph.”

It was a family connection that brought them to Bethlehem, Bishop Iffert continued. “If you are here because of a family connection, you have a friend in Jesus. He’s the one that was born into the world, bonded to a human family with his own body and blood … family is important, and God gives himself to nourish our families and build us in the gospel.”

“Sometimes it is beauty that draws us to this Mass,” Bishop Iffert would continue his connection, mentioning how he knew individuals who were not even religious, but still attended the Mass for the “beauty of the night” and the “glorious music.”

Bishop Iffert compares these individuals to the shepherds in the field.

“Seeing the glory of the Lord — this magnificence surrounding these shepherds … their response is fear, followed by curiosity … and, when they are approaching the manger and the child they are moved to worship the most beautiful, commanding, peaceful and gentle presence they have ever seen.”

In the third connection, Bishop Iffert addresses the members of the congregation who “may not know” why they were present at the Mass, drawing connections between them and the Magi who followed the star in the sky to Bethlehem.

“They saw the rise of the star and recognized that meant the birth of a new king for the Jews — who knows what instigated them to follow that star all the way to Bethlehem. Perhaps they were so disillusioned with the state of the empire they were a part of, that they just had to look for something else, someone else, a worthy leader to receive their loyalty,” he said.

“You don’t have all the answers, and you don’t know why you’re here … but, I’m grateful that you are.”

Concluding his homily, Bishop Iffert would unite all three of these comparisons together.

“These things draw us together this Christmas. They lead us here. They respond to the question, ‘why?’ In fact, they pose a new question for us. Why would we be anywhere else?”

“Christ responds to our human minds. Not just on Christmas day, but on every day of our lives. He came to us today to be our Christ … Today, Christ is born for you. Whatever your reason, I’m so grateful for your company.”
**January**
At his first midnight Mass celebrated at the Cathedral, Bishop John Iffert repeats the message of the angel to explain the message of Christmas. “For you the Savior came into the world — for you.”

After 20 years of broadcasting on WLWT’s MeTV and its local cable channels, the Cathedral’s Sunday Mass moves to Local2’s subchannel The CW, Sundays from noon to 1 p.m.

As temperatures dip into the single digits the first five days of January, Mother of God Parish, Covington, offers its underground as emergency shelter for overflow guests of the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky.

“Be Witnesses,” the feature page of the Office of the Vicar for Religious, highlights the peace and justice work of Sister Alice Gerdeman, CDN.

Our Savior Parish, Covington, hosts its annual Martin Luther King breakfast. This year speakers Joan Fernande and Lynnissa Hillman of the Mournings the Creation of Racial Disparity of the healthcare system, which was the history of the Margaret Garner family; Phil Stowers talked about the racial disparity of the healthcare system, which was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Covington, prepares to welcome and resettle 30 Afghan refugees to the Northern Kentucky area and seeks volunteers and supplies.

Dave Schroeder, executive director of Kenton County Public Library, discusses the history of how nuns shaped Northern Kentucky at the Behringer-Crawford Museum virtually.

St. John Vianney, Cincinnati, was preparing for a winter storm. Beverly Schroeder, pastor, said: “Volunteers from Welcome House and from our parish opened the shelter to anyone who needed it. We were able to serve three hot meals a day to the homeless staying at Holy Spirit. The menu included vegetable and chicken noodle soup, chili, pizza, breakfast sandwiches — as well as two coffee machines going 24/7. “Volunteers from Welcome House and from our parish staffed the shelter, and we kept the doors open around the clock,” said Mgr. Cleves.

The doors were open until Dec. 28, with volunteers attending to the guests day and night even through Christmas day. Mgr. Cleves spent Christmas Eve at the shelter, between Masses and confession.

“As we look at the need in our community, we see that it’s growing,” he said. “I think we should continue to support local shelters and organizations that are providing shelter in our community.”

**February**

The Messenger highlights the Northern Kentucky University Knights of Columbus, a new council that began in the summer of 2021.

The Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, receives a $1.5 million grant from the Allen Fund to support the center’s mission of providing education opportunities to students to be light to the world.

Bishop Iffert celebrates Catholic Schools Week and Candles Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, encouraging students to be light to the world.

Bishop Iffert honors nearly 50 couples who gathered for a Wedding Anniversary Vespers celebrating milestone years of marriage in 2021. The celebration and bishop Iffert blesses the new location and ultrasound machine.

Three years after director of the Office of Liturgy and Worship, Deacon Peter Freeman retires.

Obituary
Sister Mary Bonita Schack, S.N.D., Jan. 2

April — Deacon candidates Michael Elminger (transitional) Kevin Cranley, Adam Feinauer and Eric Ritchie (permanent) are called before the faithful and in the name of the local Church, requested the bishop ordain the candidates.

**MLK Discussion Breakfast**
Our Savior Parish, Covington, hosts its annual Martin Luther King Discussion Breakfast, Jan. 14, 9:30-11:45 a.m. Speakers include Diversity Providence Sister Alice Gerdeman, who will provide information on The Doctrine of Discovery, along with Joan Ferrante, Sociology professor, Northern Kentucky University and John Fisher, field supervisor, Kentucky Human Rights Commission, will examine the roots and growth of White Supremacy in America. The breakfast is free and open to the public.

**Bishop’s Schedule**

Jan. 6 Celebrate all-school Mass, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, 9:30 a.m.
Jan. 8–12 Region V Bishops retreat
Jan. 14 Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.
Jan. 16 Diocesan Curia offices closed in observance of the Martin Luther King holiday

**2022 – A Year in the life of the Diocese of Covington**

**April**

Holy Spirit community comes together to provide shelter to those in need

Maureen Baker
Staff Writer

The Wednesday before Christmas, Dec. 21, the Greater Cincinnati area was preparing for a winter storm. Beverly Merrick, director of Housing for Welcome House Northern Kentucky, reached out to Mgr. William Cleves at Holy Spirit parish, Newport, seeking shelter for the homeless. Mgr. Cleves agreed to let Welcome House use the gym at Holy Spirit as a temporary shelter for the homeless of Northern Kentucky, who would otherwise be stuck out in the oncoming snow and life-threateningly cold weather.

“We had some tables set up in one end of the gym from a family that had been there. They still had the holi-day tablecloths and flowers,” said Mgr. Cleves. “We kept those out, and we opened the concession stand. Our first night we had 34 people,” he said, with their biggest night consisting of over 70 individuals sheltering in Holy Spirit’s gym.

Local parishes, Protestant and Catholic alike, “chipped in the food,” reported Msgr. Cleves. As a result, the community was able to serve three hot meals a day to the homeless staying at Holy Spirit. The menu included vegetable and chicken noodle soup, chili, pizza, breakfast sandwiches — as well as two coffee machines going 24/7.

“Volunteers from Welcome House and from our parish staffed the shelter, and we kept the doors open around the clock,” said Mgr. Cleves.

The doors were open until Dec. 28, with volunteers attending to the guests day and night even through Christmas day. Mgr. Cleves spent Christmas Eve at the shelter, between Masses and confession.

“My feet were sore, my back was killing me,” he said, “but I thought, this is the best Christmas I’ve ever had. There was something really wonderful about the community about the way people helped each other, took care of each other. We were a community for those days, and, by Wednesday morning, after Christmas, everybody was gone. It was difficult to say goodbye. We had formed a really deep, tight-knit community over those few days.”

**January 3, 2023**

**Items are listed in the month they occurred; in several cases, the news appeared in the Messenger the following month.**
The true Joseph Ratzinger

The Joseph Ratzinger I knew for 35 years — first as pre- fect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, later as Pope Benedict XVI and then Pope Emeritus — was a brilliant, holy man who bore no resemblance to the caricu re that was first created by his theological enemies and then set in media concrete. The cartoon Ratzinger was a grim, rainless ecclesiastical inquisitor/enforcer, “God’s Rottweiler.” The man I knew was a consummate gentleman with a gentle soul, a shy man who, nonetheless, had a robust sense of humor and a Merchant of Venice fundamentally a happy person, not a sour crank.

The cartoon Ratzinger was incapable of understanding or appreciating modern thought. The Ratzinger I knew was arguably the most learned man in the Catholic Church who, at the beginning of his theological career and long before the restoration of the monastic past, his more vincible enemies hinted at Nazi sympathies (hence the nasty sobriquet “Panzerkardinal”). The Ratzinger I knew loved the Anglican Church, who, on site visit to the United Kingdom in 2010, thanked the people of the UK for winning the Battle of Britain — a Bavarian Christian Democrat (which would put him slightly left of center in U.S. political terms) whose disdain for Marxism was both theoretical (it made no sense philosophically) and practical (it never worked and was inherently totalitarian and murderous).

The cartoon Ratzinger was the enemy of the Second Vatican Council. The Ratzinger I knew was, in his mid-30s, one of the three most influential and productive theologians of Vatican II — the man who, as CDF prefect, worked in harness with John Paul II to give the Council an authori- tative interpretation, which he deepened during his own papacy.

The cartoon Ratzinger was a liturgical troubadour deter- mined to turn back the clock of liturgical reform. The Ratzinger I knew was deeply influenced, spiritually and theologically by the 20th-century liturgical movement. Ratzinger became a far more generous pope in his embrace of legitimate liturgical pluralism than his papal successor, because Benedict XVI believed that, out of such a vital plural- ization, the noble goals of the liturgical movement that formed him would eventually be realized in a Church empowered by reverent worship for mission and service.

The cartoon Ratzinger was yesterday’s story; an intellec- tual throwback whose books would soon gather dust and crumple away, leaving no imprint on the Church or on world culture. The Ratzinger I knew was one of the few contemporary authors who could be certain that his books would be read centuries from now. I also suspect that some of the homilies of this greatest papal preacher since Pope St. Gregory the Great will eventually find their way into the Church’s official daily prayer — the Liturgy of the Hours.

The cartoon Ratzinger craved power. The Ratzinger I knew tried three times to resign his post in the Curia, had zero desire to be pope, told fellow churchmen in 2005 that he “was not a man of governo [governance],” and only accepted his election to the papacy in obedience to what he regarded as God’s will, manifest through the overwhelming vote of his brother cardinals.

The cartoon Ratzinger was indifferent to the crisis of clerical sexual abuse. The Ratzinger I knew did as much as anyone, as cardinal prefect of CDF and then as pope, to cleanse the Church of what he brutally and accurately described as “filth.”

The true Joseph Ratzinger, and to his greatness, was the depth of his love for the Lord Jesus — a love refined by an extraordinary theological and exege- tical intelligence, manifest in his trilogy “Jesus of Nazareth,” “Jesus of Nazareth” was the beginning, the sine qua non, of the Christian life. And fostering that friendship was the whole purpose of the Church.

The last of the monumental figures of 20th-century Catholicism has gone home to God, who will not fail to reward his good servant.

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

Pope Benedict XVI: A committed but principled ecumenist

Pope Benedict XVI was a notable contributor to the ecu menical scene from the beginning of his papacy. He was often asked about his intentions to reconcile Christian churches and moral issues. The CDF’s responses affirmed the doctrinal, ecclesial and moral issues that were seen as the effects of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, later named the Secretariat for Doctrine and finally the Dicastery for Doctrine.

The constitution is, nevertheless, an important mile- stone in achieving Pope St. Paul VI’s vision that nothing of the same body of doctrine established in the Church’s ecumenical agreements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was to be fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The constitution is, nevertheless, an important mile- stone in achieving Pope St. Paul VI’s vision that nothing of the same body of doctrine established in the Church’s ecumenical agreements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was to be fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The document “Dominus Iesus,” produced by the CDF under Ratzinger, acknowledges the ecclesial reality of the separated Christian communities, especially of the West whilst noting what prevents them from being fully “church” in the Catholic sense of the term. As Pope Benedict is supposed to have said to an Anglican bishop, “It is never nothing.” This is fully in accord with the teaching of Vatican II which recognizes the reality of life and wor- ship with a sensitive ear in Cardinal Ratzinger, who sent them a message of solidarity at one of their first gatherings in Phoenix. It was a message that mentioned a young idealist who had led him to establish a commission, with two Anglican bish- ops as full members, to consider how Anglicans desiring full communion with the Catholic Church could be accommo- dated. The commission offered some very far reaching rec- ommendations. Their conclusions were found acceptable to the whole Roman Curia. The resulting Apostolic Constitution, “Concordatutum Coeptum,” provided for Anglicans to enter full communion with the Catholic Church through personal ordinations, whilst keeping their legitimate patrimony of liturgy music, pastoral methods, ways of doing theology and much else intact. It is yet a work in progress as some of its provisions have not been fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The constitution is, nevertheless, an important mile- stone in achieving Pope St. Paul VI’s vision that nothing of the same body of doctrine established in the Church’s ecumenical agreements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was to be fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The document “Dominus Iesus,” produced by the CDF under Ratzinger, acknowledges the ecclesial reality of the separated Christian communities, especially of the West whilst noting what prevents them from being fully “church” in the Catholic sense of the term. As Pope Benedict is supposed to have said to an Anglican bishop, “It is never nothing.” This is fully in accord with the teaching of Vatican II which recognizes the reality of life and wor- ship with a sensitive ear in Cardinal Ratzinger, who sent them a message of solidarity at one of their first gatherings in Phoenix. It was a message that mentioned a young idealist who had led him to establish a commission, with two Anglican bish- ops as full members, to consider how Anglicans desiring full communion with the Catholic Church could be accommo- dated. The commission offered some very far reaching rec- ommendations. Their conclusions were found acceptable to the whole Roman Curia. The resulting Apostolic Constitution, “Concordatutum Coeptum,” provided for Anglicans to enter full communion with the Catholic Church through personal ordinations, whilst keeping their legitimate patrimony of liturgy music, pastoral methods, ways of doing theology and much else intact. It is yet a work in progress as some of its provisions have not been fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The constitution is, nevertheless, an important mile- stone in achieving Pope St. Paul VI’s vision that nothing of the same body of doctrine established in the Church’s ecumenical agreements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was to be fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The document “Dominus Iesus,” produced by the CDF under Ratzinger, acknowledges the ecclesial reality of the separated Christian communities, especially of the West whilst noting what prevents them from being fully “church” in the Catholic sense of the term. As Pope Benedict is supposed to have said to an Anglican bishop, “It is never nothing.” This is fully in accord with the teaching of Vatican II which recognizes the reality of life and wor- ship with a sensitive ear in Cardinal Ratzinger, who sent them a message of solidarity at one of their first gatherings in Phoenix. It was a message that mentioned a young idealist who had led him to establish a commission, with two Anglican bish- ops as full members, to consider how Anglicans desiring full communion with the Catholic Church could be accommo- dated. The commission offered some very far reaching rec- ommendations. Their conclusions were found acceptable to the whole Roman Curia. The resulting Apostolic Constitution, “Concordatutum Coeptum,” provided for Anglicans to enter full communion with the Catholic Church through personal ordinations, whilst keeping their legitimate patrimony of liturgy music, pastoral methods, ways of doing theology and much else intact. It is yet a work in progress as some of its provisions have not been fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The constitution is, nevertheless, an important mile- stone in achieving Pope St. Paul VI’s vision that nothing of the same body of doctrine established in the Church’s ecumenical agreements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was to be fully implemented, and it needs further development if it is to be witness to what early ecumenists in the Catholic Church saw as a “united but not absorbed” model of future unity.

The cartoon Ratzinger was indifferent to the crisis of clerical sexual abuse. The Ratzinger I knew did as much as anyone, as cardinal prefect of CDF and then as pope, to cleanse the Church of what he brutally and accurately described as “filth.”

The true Joseph Ratzinger, and to his greatness, was the depth of his love for the Lord Jesus — a love refined by an extraordinary theological and exege- tical intelligence, manifest in his trilogy “Jesus of Nazareth,” “Jesus of Nazareth” was the beginning, the sine qua non, of the Christian life. And fostering that friendship was the whole purpose of the Church.

The last of the monumental figures of 20th-century Catholicism has gone home to God, who will not fail to reward his good servant.
As Christians we are also called to renewal in our baptismal promises. Each time we enter a church we are reminded of these promises as we bless ourselves with holy water. We symbolically cleanse ourselves, to wash away the worldliness that separates us from God, our Father. This worldliness leads us to believe that we must never suffer, that we should live lives of perfect happiness, but this is not the reality of humanity.

People today are afraid of self-sacrifice. It is understandable, as it is undesirable, can be difficult, exhausting or painful. But it is through sacrifice that people stretch and grow to become more. My childhood priest, Father David Shokey, used to say, “We must die to ourselves.” In this he meant that these self-sacrifices are in a small way, our daily “cross” to bear. Through these acts of self-sacrifice, we are strengthening our resolve to become more Christian.

In our search for renewal, we must be willing to challenge ourselves and not fall back into old patterns that keep us from transformation. The road less traveled often leads us to the perfect destination.

To make it “The Best Year Ever”, make each day “The Best Day Ever.” Treat each day like the first day on your life’s journey. Wake each morning and start anew, resolving to truly belong to the Lord. Daily, request the love and favor of the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with light and love and begin the day in prayer that you will be able to “take up his cross.” Take it one day at a time and remember, you can do anything for a day.

Julie Feinauer is director of the Safe Environment Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

 compounded by pressures like climate change and war, we are seeing this impact now on the flow of migrants to wealthier countries.

The Past notes that sometime in this century we are likely to see population growth plateau, and the editorial ends with a warning that Paul Ehrlich certainly did not foresee: “Instead of population growth and growing birthrates, the fast-approaching new demographic challenge is societal aging.”

Indeed, populations in several European countries are now shrinking, meaning more and more people over 65 and fewer under 18. Even the U.S. is not immune, although its immigration rate can mask its decline in births. This foretells what demographers call a “demographic winter.”

Exhibit A would be Japan, where some say the country is irreversibly withering. Notoriously hostile to immigration, Japan has no ready means to increase its population, which will put the economy and social services under grave stress as its population ages. Diapers for the elderly now outsell diapers for babies there.

Italy also has had a below average birth rate for generations. This has put the economy and social services under severe stress as its population ages. 

Father Gregory Bach is assistant director of seminarian formation for the Diocese of Covington and pastor St. Benet's Parish, Covington, Ky.

As we celebrate the birth of the Savior Child, it seems fitting to note that in many parts of the developed world, the lack of babies is a growing concern.

This is a surprising change for those of us raised on “The Population Bomb,” a wildly inaccurate prediction that the world’s population would be headed to an irreversible collapse. The book appeared in 1968, and its author, Paul Ehrlich, with help from a largely uncritical media, for years convinced many countries that children — in the form of population growth — were the problem.

So imminent was this disaster, Ehrlich’s mind, that he predicted the starvation death of hundreds of millions of people in the 1970s. In 1968, the world’s population was 3.5 billion. This past November, planet Earth’s population surpassed 8 billion.

Which makes a recent population editorial in The Washington Post noteworthy for its lack of handwringing. While recognizing the impact of the population growth on environmental and man-made infrastructures as well as on Africa and Asia, it concluded that “living standards, but this is not the reality of humanity.

People today are afraid of self-sacrifice. It is understandable, as it is undesirable, can be difficult, exhausting or painful. But it is through sacrifice that people stretch and grow to become more. My childhood priest, Father David Shokey, used to say, “We must die to ourselves.” In this he meant that these self-sacrifices are in a small way, our daily “cross” to bear. Through these acts of self-sacrifice, we are strengthening our resolve to become more Christian.

In our search for renewal, we must be willing to challenge ourselves and not fall back into old patterns that keep us from transformation. The road less traveled often leads us to the perfect destination.

To make it “The Best Year Ever”, make each day “The Best Day Ever.” Treat each day like the first day on your life’s journey. Wake each morning and start anew, resolving to truly belong to the Lord. Daily, request the love and favor of the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with light and love and begin the day in prayer that you will be able to “take up his cross.” Take it one day at a time and remember, you can do anything for a day.

Julie Feinauer is director of the Safe Environment Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

compounded by pressures like climate change and war, we are seeing this impact now on the flow of migrants to wealthier countries.

The Past notes that sometime in this century we are likely to see population growth plateau, and the editorial ends with a warning that Paul Ehrlich certainly did not foresee: “Instead of population growth and growing birthrates, the fast-approaching new demographic challenge is societal aging.”

Indeed, populations in several European countries are now shrinking, meaning more and more people over 65 and fewer under 18. Even the U.S. is not immune, although its immigration rate can mask its decline in births. This foretells what demographers call a “demographic winter.”

Exhibit A would be Japan, where some say the country is irreversibly withering. Notoriously hostile to immigration, Japan has no ready means to increase its population, which will put the economy and social services under severe stress as its population ages. Diapers for the elderly now outsell diapers for babies there.

Italy also has had a below average birth rate for generations. This has put the economy and social services under severe stress as its population ages. 

Father Gregory Bach is assistant director of seminarian formation for the Diocese of Covington and pastor St. Benet’s Parish, Covington, Ky.

As we celebrate the birth of the Savior Child, it seems fitting to note that in many parts of the developed world, the lack of babies is a growing concern.

This is a surprising change for those of us raised on “The Population Bomb,” a wildly inaccurate prediction that the world’s population would be headed to an irreversible collapse. The book appeared in 1968, and its author, Paul Ehrlich, with help from a largely uncritical media, for years convinced many countries that children — in the form of population growth — were the problem.

So imminent was this disaster, Ehrlich’s mind, that he predicted the starvation death of hundreds of millions of people in the 1970s. In 1968, the world’s population was 3.5 billion. This past November, planet Earth’s population surpassed 8 billion.

Which makes a recent population editorial in The Washington Post noteworthy for its lack of handwringing. While recognizing the impact of the population growth on environmental and man-made infrastructures as well as on Africa and Asia, it concluded that “living standards, but this is not the reality of humanity.

People today are afraid of self-sacrifice. It is understandable, as it is undesirable, can be difficult, exhausting or painful. But it is through sacrifice that people stretch and grow to become more. My childhood priest, Father David Shokey, used to say, “We must die to ourselves.” In this he meant that these self-sacrifices are in a small way, our daily “cross” to bear. Through these acts of self-sacrifice, we are strengthening our resolve to become more Christian.

In our search for renewal, we must be willing to challenge ourselves and not fall back into old patterns that keep us from transformation. The road less traveled often leads us to the perfect destination.

To make it “The Best Year Ever”, make each day “The Best Day Ever.” Treat each day like the first day on your life’s journey. Wake each morning and start anew, resolving to truly belong to the Lord. Daily, request the love and favor of the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with light and love and begin the day in prayer that you will be able to “take up his cross.” Take it one day at a time and remember, you can do anything for a day.

Julie Feinauer is director of the Safe Environment Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington

Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victim assistance coordinator (951) 392-1515. Professional assessment and pastoral support will be provided in confidentiality and with respect.

A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (513) 392-1515 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diócesis de Covington

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordinadora diocesana para dar asistencia a las víctimas. Teléfono (951) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

Una copia de “Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada” está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Canonilla, Teléfono (951) 392-1515, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”
Bishop Iffert congratulates the top three finalists of the 2022 Eighth-grade Pro-Life Essay Contest: Lila Harris, Blessed Joseph Parish, Cold Springs, shares her faith journey in the “Living Christ” feature.

Tom Rose is awarded the 2022 Noll Service Award at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Springs, Ms. Rose said all the men of the Holy Name Society deserve the Noll Award.

Troy “TJ” Cherry, a fifth grader at St. Cecilia School, Independence, honors his mom, his faith and the military with one service project — “Bibles for the Brave.”

In a ceremony drawing over 600 worshipers to the Cathedral, Bishop Iffert consecrates Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: an international event celebrated in Rome by Pope Francis and all dioceses throughout the world.

In a letter to Alan Pickett, executive director; Catholic Charities – Diocese of Covington, Bishop Iffert accepts the recommendation of discontinuing Catholic Charities’ adoption program.

Bishop Iffert celebrates a farm blessing in Flemingsburg. Seminarians Joshua Henkamp and Justin Schwartz are instituted into the Ministry of Lector at St. Vincent Seminary.

Bishop Iffert attends the installation ceremony of Archbishop Febres in Louisville.
**April**

Bishop Iffert celebrates Chrism Mass, Holy Week, Easter Vigil and Easter at the Cathedral.

St. Timothy School, Union, breaks ground on a gymnasium and classroom expansion project.

Julie Feinauer and Marylu Steffen of the Diocese of Covington Safe Environment Office and Msgr. William Cleves were among the attendees of the Child Abuse Prevention Month kick-off event at Tom Gil Chevrolet.

Kentucky’s First Lady Britannia Bekey was the keynote speaker.

Over 200 parish altar servers are recognized for their service receiving ribbons from the Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky.

In the final installment of “Living Christ,” Mirianne Assam, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, shares how her grandson led her to the faith.

Bishop Iffert blesses the new fourth-floor addition at St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, that is home to St. Patrick Primary School.

“Fleeing for Freedom: Local Impact and Responses” is the topic for TMU’s Institute for Religious Liberty spring panel discussion featuring guest speakers: John A. Elmlinger, executive director of Kentucky Refugee Ministries; Dennis Caffrey, Spanish-speaking volunteer medical interpreter with Siboa Health in Nashville, Tenn., and Father Athanasius Habtu Ghebreab, Ph.D.

Bishop Iffert ordains Kevin Cranley, Adam Feinauer and Eric Ritchie permanent deacons for the Diocese of Covington. In the same ceremony, seminarian Michael and Eric Ritchie permanent deacons for the Diocese of Covington.

St. Timothy School, Union, breaks ground on a gymnasium and classroom expansion project.

**June**

June — Through the laying on of hands by Bishop John Iffert and the praying of the prayer of ordination, the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred on Father AJ Gedney.

June 10 — Through the laying on of hands by Bishop John Iffert and the praying of the prayer of ordination, the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred on Father AJ Gedney.

Homes of Hope is available through the month of May at Cathedral.

“Maes: 107 Years,” an artifact exhibit observing the 107th anniversary of the death of Bishop Camillus Maes, is available through the month of May at Cathedral.

Father Raymond Enzweiler is awarded the “Good Shepherd Award” from the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus.

Bishop Iffert blesses the new fourth-floor addition at St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, that is home to St. Patrick Primary School.

The Sisters of Divine Providence welcome three new associates: Emily Patt, Molly Morgan and Robin Koehlinger, executive director of Kentucky Refugee Ministries.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is re-elected prior and 2023 Governor’s Scholars Program.

Father Raymond Enzweiler is awarded the “Good Shepherd Award” from the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is re-elected prior and 2023 Governor’s Scholars Program.

**Official Assignments**

Father Eric Andriot to parochial vicar, St. Paul Parish, Florence.

Father Paul Prabel celebrates Mass at his alma mater, Father Eric Andriot to parochial vicar, St. Paul Parish, Florence.

Father Paul Prabel celebrates Mass at his alma mater, St. Timothy School, Union, breaks ground on a gymnasium and classroom expansion project.

Bishop Iffert blesses the new fourth-floor addition at St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, that is home to St. Patrick Primary School.

The Sisters of Divine Providence welcome three new associates: Emily Patt, Molly Morgan and Robin Koehlinger, executive director of Kentucky Refugee Ministries.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is re-elected prior and 2023 Governor’s Scholars Program.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is re-elected prior and 2023 Governor’s Scholars Program.
Newport Central Catholic High School in recognition of his 50th jubilee.

Bishop Iffert blesses the new Mary grotto at St. Augustine Parish, Augusta, a gift from the Charles and Mary Rita Appleman family.

Foster parents David and Katy Sullivan share the rewards and challenges of foster parenting.

Foster care and adoption services are just two of the many supportive programs DCCH Center for Children and Families offers for individuals and families at every age.

Donna Hampton, Chancery secretary, retires after 28 years of service.

Mike Murray, director, Stewardship and Mission Services, announced that $26,000 has been collected for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe to assist the Church in its response to the Ukraine war.

Baby formula is among the items in short supply due to supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic. Rose Garden Home Mission, Covington, continues to provide for mothers and their babies thanks to a large donation of formula right before the shortage began.

“Be Witnesses” highlights Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer and her senior nursing students on a recent mission trip to The Humanitarian Respite Center, Texas.

Bishop Iffert presides at the graduations of TMU and all nine Catholic high schools. “It is fascinating to learn about the traditions and the character of our schools,” he said.

Official Assignments

Ward Blakefield, Diocesan Finance Council

Father Daniel Schomaker, director, Office of Worship

June


After a two-year hiatus, nearly 2,000 people gather for the Cross the Bridge for Life, Newport.

On the feast of Pentecost, Bishop Iffert confirms 21 adults.

Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow, kicks off its 150th anniversary.

The Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, transforms its parking lot into an interactive outdoor space for student activities.

On feast of Corpus Christi, Bishop Iffert leads a Corpus Christi procession, which included the introduction of a tradition decorating the path with saw dust carpets. The celebration also launches the national three-year Eucharistic Revival in the diocese.

Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys consecrates the altar at the Franciscan Daughters of Mary new formation house chapel.

The Supreme Court issues its decision in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, overturning Roe v. Wade and returning the issue of abortion to State legislators.

“The Supreme Court’s decision in Dobbs, that there is no constitutional or human right to artificially abort an unborn child, is an achievement for our nation. I add my voice to so many who are grateful to God this day,” wrote Bishop Iffert in his response.

Catholic Charities makes its first mobile food pantry stop in Owen County at St. Edward Mission. “Food for Friends” provides canned and fresh food for low-income residents. On its first visit, 12 volunteers served 201 people in 68 households.

Bishop Iffert consecrates a new altar at the Franciscan Daughters of Mary House of Formation.

Obituary

Benedictine Sister Victoria Eisenman, June 28

July

The Kentucky Colonels award a grant to the Rose Garden Center for Hope and Healing, Covington, for eye exams and glasses.

St. Ann Mission, Covington, continues a long-standing devotion by celebrating its 135th annual novena to St. Ann.


(Continued from page 7)

October—Bishop John Iffert announces his vision for the With One Heart strategic pastoral plan and leadership development initiative, Sept. 30, at St. Mary’s Park, Covington. Nearly 300 people attended the event, which included a celebration of Bishop Iffert’s first year in Covington.

Foster parents David and Katy Sullivan share the rewards and challenges of foster parenting.

Foster care and adoption services are just two of the many supportive programs DCCH Center for Children and Families offers for individuals and families at every age.

Donna Hampton, Chancery secretary retires after 28 years of service.

Mike Murray, director, Stewardship and Mission Services, announced that $8,000 has been collected for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe to assist the Church in its response to the Ukraine war.

Baby formula is among the items in short supply due to supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic. Rose Garden Home Mission, Covington, continues to provide for mothers and their babies thanks to a large donation of formula right before the shortage began.

“Be Witnesses” highlights Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer and her senior nursing students on a recent mission trip to The Humanitarian Respite Center, Texas.

Bishop Iffert presides at the graduations of TMU and all nine Catholic high schools. “It is fascinating to learn about the traditions and the character of our schools,” he said.

Official Assignments

Ward Blakefield, Diocesan Finance Council

Father Daniel Schomaker, director, Office of Worship

June


After a two-year hiatus, nearly 2,000 people gather for the Cross the Bridge for Life, Newport.

On the feast of Pentecost, Bishop Iffert confirms 21 adults.

Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow, kicks off its 150th anniversary.

The Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, transforms its parking lot into an interactive outdoor space for student activities.

On feast of Corpus Christi, Bishop Iffert leads a Corpus Christi procession, which included the introduction of a tradition decorating the path with saw dust carpets. The celebration also launches the national three-year Eucharistic Revival in the diocese.

Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys consecrates the altar at the Franciscan Daughters of Mary new formation house chapel.

The Serra Club for Vocations Northern Kentucky hosts the annual picnic for women religious.

The sixth phase of the Official Assignments

Father Ryan Maher to rector, Oratory of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Franciscan Daughters of Mary House of Formation

Obituary

Benedictine Sister Victoria Eisenman, June 28

July

The Kentucky Colonels award a grant to the Rose Garden Center for Hope and Healing, Covington, for eye exams and glasses.

St. Ann Mission, Covington, continues a long-standing devotion by celebrating its 135th annual novena to St. Ann.

Bishop Iffert receives a letter from Bishop William Medley of the Diocese of Owensboro, Ky., thanking the people of the Diocese of Covington for their generous donation in support of
September

For the first time in the school’s history, St. Therese School, Southgate, has been honored as a Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education for 2023.

Close to 200 bishops at the beginning of their ministries in dioceses and eparchies around the world, including Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington, meet Pope Francis Sept. 25 at the end of a week of conferences.


The diocesan-wide “With One Heart” campaign launches at St. Mary’s Park, Covington, on the one-year anniversary of Bishop Iffert’s installation as Bishop of Covington. Nearly 300 people attended the event, including Bishop Eminent Under the Diocese of Bishop Iffert to hear his vision for WHO — an initiative that’s goal includes the bolstering of diocesan parishes and priests.

An additional special edition of the Messenger is published alongside the event.

Official Assignments

Father Mark Keene to vicar general, Diocese of Covington

Obituary

Edward Nicholas Cleves, Sept. 28

October

The second annual Walk for Life at the Kentucky state capital in Frankfurt, had a singular, focus and urgent mission — the passing of the Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2 in the Nov. 8 election. Bishop Iffert was the key Catholic speaker at the event.

Nearly 150 couples celebrating milestone wedding anniversaries gathered for Vespers and Bishop John Iffert’s liturgy at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

The celebration was organized by the diocesan Office of Catechesis and Evangelization and the Office of Worship and Liturgy.

The Equestrian Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, Diocese of Covington, hosts its annual Bishop’s Strategy Session at St. Agnes Parish in Ft. Wright. Over 150 parishioners from across the diocese attend the session.

姮ter held the first Bambinelli blessing within the diocese, Iffert blessing the new and cuts the ribbon.

The “With One Heart” campaign holds its second Diocesan Strategy Session at St. Agnes Parish in Ft. Weight. Over 150 parishioners from across the diocese attend the session.

Bishop Iffert celebrates Mass for religious sisters celebrating jubilees. Celebrating 50 years is Sister Cynthia Feidenhans, CDP. Celebrating 60 years are Sister Dorethy Schutte, OSA.

November

Sts. Peter and Paul Parish adds a second access road on property adjacent to parish. Bishop Iffert blesses the new road and cuts the ribbon.

The “With One Heart” campaign holds its second Diocesan Strategy Session at St. Agnes Parish in Ft. Weight. Over 150 parishioners from across the diocese attend the session.

Bishop Iffert celebrates Mass for religious sisters celebrating jubilees. Celebrating 50 years is Sister Cynthia Feidenhans, CDP. Celebrating 60 years are Sister Dorethy Schutte, OSA.

December

Newport Central Catholic High School launches “Looking Up” capital campaign. In a letter to Kenny Claypool, principal, Bishop John Iffert approves a $3 million capital campaign that will bring updates and improvements to the school’s campus and programs.

A Christmas tree erected in St. Mary’s Park, Cathedral Square, Covington, is blessed and lit. During the event, Bishop Iffert held the first Bambinelli blessing within the diocese, praying that the baby Jesus’ would be a sign of God’s “abiding presence and love” to all who attended.

Thomas More University celebrates the 10-year anniversary of its Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel on the Feast of St. Juan Diego, Dec. 9, with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Iffert.

Obituaries

Sister Mary Elaine Krebs, SND, Dec. 6

Sister Maria Grace Rein, CF Dec. 19

 Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Dec. 31
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray that you find the following letter to be a helpful and timely reflection of the work of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington. We encourage all of us to support each other in gratitude and faith. It is an honor to serve as your Bishop in the Diocese of Covington.

I want to affirm that professionalism and good faith judgment are the rule of the day in using the financial and programmatic data presented here.

Yours devotedly and gratefully in the Lord,

[Signature]

The people of the Diocese of Covington have been extremely generous with their support of various agencies and relief efforts in our country and around the world. The following table is a listing of those Special Collections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>Amounts Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky tornado relief</td>
<td>$420,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and domestic relief</td>
<td>$102,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrade Retirement Center</td>
<td>$15,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Council (ACUC)</td>
<td>$119,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti Disaster Relief</td>
<td>$21,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Rice (Bishop’s Fund)</td>
<td>$20,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other special collections</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respectfully Submitted,

Chief Financial Officer
Diocese of Covington

---

**Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, Diocesan Cursor CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Ended June 30</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Diocesan expenses</th>
<th>Diocesan expenses</th>
<th>Other expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Donor Restricted Assets</td>
<td>$9,914,152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulated Net Appreciation</td>
<td>1,566,058</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Donor Restricted Assets</td>
<td>$9,914,152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$13,876,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tillings</td>
<td>$5,065,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to various parishes, schools and other Diocesan institutions from the Annual Appeal and</td>
<td>$4,766,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Diocesan institutions</td>
<td>$4,766,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Life</td>
<td>$20,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldwide charities (Peter's Pence)</td>
<td>$63,755</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Annual Report of the Finances for the Diocese of Covington – June 30, 2022**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray that you find the following letter to be a helpful and timely reflection of the work of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington. We encourage all of us to support each other in gratitude and faith. It is an honor to serve as your Bishop in the Diocese of Covington.

I want to affirm that professionalism and good faith judgment are the rule of the day in using the financial and programmatic data presented here.

Yours devotedly and gratefully in the Lord,

[Signature]
History and science can tell us much about the Epiphany’s magi

Stephen Enzweiler
Cathedral Historian

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany which commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child in Bethlehem and their recognition that Jesus is both a royal king and the Son of God. This story of these mysterious visitors from the east has been known since at least the middle of the first century A.D., when the Apostle Matthew first included them as part of his gospel account of Jesus’ birth.

It is a familiar story: one we have become conditioned to know and accept as part of the canon of Christmas tradition, rich in its details and as much a part of the season as tinsel on the tree. But who were these magi, and what was the star they followed? Were they real people, and is their story based in history or, as some have hypothesized, are they merely a literary invention?

As it turns out, magi are historical figures and were plentiful throughout the ancient world. Accounts of their activities can be found in numerous ancient texts, including the Old Testament Book of Esther (Est 1:13), Daniel (2:48) and Jeremiah (Jer 39:3), and in the New Testament Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:9). Descriptions of their activities and travels are also recorded by Roman historians like Pliny the Younger, Strabo, and Tacitus, and by Jewish historians Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus. Historians tell us that no Persian was ever able to become a king without first being approved and crowned by their magi.

The word “magi” originally comes from the Greek word ἀρχηγοί (archegetai), which refers to “marshals, commanders, leaders,” or “chiefs.” Magi were magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and Chaldeans. (Dan 2:49). Matthew identifies his magi simply as “wise men” (Mt 2:2). Bernhard Bischoff (1954) has suggested that it is significant that the “wise men” in Matthew’s Gospel are Jewish rather than pagan lies in the fact that one from their country “would soon become ruler of the habitable earth.”

One telling detail that reveals the magi of Matthew’s gospel were Jewish rather than pagan lies in the fact that when they arrived in Jerusalem, they sought to worship the “newborn King of the Jews” first rather than pay respects to King Herod. Had they been pagan magi, the protocols demanded would have been to first pay tribute to Herod before asking any favors. Instead, they virtually ignored Herod’s royal status and shift their focus toward finding the child first “to do him homage.” This would explain in part why Herod “was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him” (Mt 2:3).

Another telling detail is that according to Matthew’s account, only the Magi see the star, indicating it was not a physically bright star in the night sky but some other phenomenon, perhaps an observation of an unusual series of conjunctions between stars and planets in the night sky. Astronomers have recently discovered just such a series of triple conjunctions beginning in 3 BC between Jupiter the king planet), Regulus (the king star), and Venus in the constellation of Leo (the symbol of the tribe of Judah) and Virgo (the Virgin). Between September 3 BC and June 1 BC, these celestial bodies went into conjunction on three different occasions, with Jupiter and Venus both standing in the sky, a maneuver called “retrograde motion.” A search of the ancient skies reveals this particular series of conjunctions with their associated movements had never happened before in the astronomical record.

Whether it was a rare conjunction or some other means of discovery, how the magi knew just when to travel to Jerusalem is still a subject of debate among scientists, scholars and historians. However, based on the above astronomical evidence, their visit to Judea was likely in

The traditional magi by James Tissot.

It is important to remember that only a small number of Jews returned from exile to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:64) and that by the time of Christ’s birth, roughly 1.2 million Jews still lived in the eastern provinces that had become the Parthian empire. The only historical description of these magi comes from the historian Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – 40 AD). Writing to his friend Theodotus around the time of Jesus’ birth, he notes that the Persian magi “investigate the works of nature for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the truth … and initiate others in the divine virtues by very clear explanations.” (Quod Omnis Probas Liber Sextus).

At the time of Jesus’ birth, magi came “from the east.” In the ancient world, the term “from the east” was understood to refer to the region of the Near East occupied by the Seleucid and Parthian Empires, today’s Iraq and western Iran. Other kingdoms of the region — namely the Parthians, the Nabataeans, and the Persian king of kings and a revealer of mysteries. ...” (Dan 2:46). In appreciation, Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel’s Hebrew friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to replace the “wise men” and appoints Daniel himself as “chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” (Dan 2:49). This act of Nebuchadnezzar is historically significant, because it gave Daniel the power and the opportunity to make significant changes in the way the magi operated throughout the Babylonian empire. He likely held this position as chief magus for the rest of his life, and the rabbinical schools he founded in Sanaa and elsewhere (notably Nishih and Nehardea) would ensure that his magian influences would endure down through the centuries. It is
December of 2 BC. An almost unknown lunar calendar system called the “Sabbatical Year” may also have been the key for their understanding of Daniel’s prophecy of the “Seventy Weeks of Years” which also dates their arrival to 2 BC.

But the why they came is crystal clear: the Messiah who would redeem the world had been born in Bethlehem! They would have set out from their capital and followed the trade routes of the day — probably by caravan with an ample number of members and an armed escort to avoid any trouble.

They would have traveled northwest along the Euphrates River and crossed the vast Syrian Desert until they reached Tadmor (Palmyra). From there the road turned south to Damascus and ran through upper Galilee through small towns like Capernaum and Magdala on the Sea of Galilee, then down a high mountain road through the grasslands of Shechem.

Arriving in Jerusalem, they undoubtedly would have entered the city from the north through the Gate of Benjamin, which was within sight of a deep limestone quarry to their right. Thirty-three years later, that same quarry would become notorious as the Roman site of execution called Golgotha.

Pope Benedict XVI remembered in the diocese — a glimpse of holiness

Staff report

The Messenger reached out to several local priests and others who knew or were inspired by Pope Benedict XVI. Here are their reactions to his life, teachings and death.

Msgr. William Cleves, pastor, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport:

I spent seven years in Rome, from 1974 to 1981. I knew Benedict as Joseph Ratzinger. He was loved by the children of the neighborhood. He never ever dressed as a cardinal, he always dressed in a simple black cassock. And when he came out of his apartment, he always had coins with him that he would give to the children so they could go buy ice cream. When he was elected Pope, I was watching Televisio Italiana to see what the Italians were saying about him. There was a restaurant in the neighborhood named Roberto and Roberto was on the screen being interviewed, hawking. He said, “there goes my best customer.” Everybody in the neighborhood knew him. He was just Father Ratzinger. He was a very, very humble man.

Father Michael Hennigen, pastor, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia:

I got to serve for him — I was with the class of 2013 seminarians of the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus — it was on January 1, 2012, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. It was amazing because our flight was supposed to leave out of Newark on December 30th so we could arrive for the practice. We had taken off, but we had to turn around because the autopilot went out. We thought, oh, man, we’re not going to make it to the practice to serve the Holy Father. If we missed the practice, then we couldn’t serve for the Holy Father. Sure enough, when we got back to Newark, they had another plane for us, so we could arrive for the practice. We had taken off, but we had to turn around because the autopilot went out. We thought, oh, man, we’re not going to make it to the practice to serve the Holy Father. If we missed the practice, then we couldn’t serve for the Holy Father. Sure enough, when we got back to Newark, they had another plane for us, so we made it to the practice. I was chosen to do the lavabo, which is the washing of the hands. I didn’t realize that I was going to be able to
Father Bill Appel, Father Eric Boelscher, Father Ryan Stenger and Claire Thérèse Heyne were studying in Rome when Pope Benedict resigned and witnessed him flying out of Vatican City the day of his departure, Feb. 28, 2013.

Father Eric Boelscher, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Croscott Springs:

Pope Benedict XVI is one of the great silent heroes of our faith over the last century. His influence over the Church extends well beyond his papacy since he served the universal Church first as an influential theologian at Vatican II and then for decades as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In that role he helped guide the teaching of the Church and provided a consistent and clear presentation of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Benedict XVI was Pope Saint John Paul II’s most trusted collaborator and carried on his legacy. As much as I love Pope John Paul II and as much as a gift any Holy Father is to the universal Church, I will always feel like Pope Benedict XVI is, in a sense, my Pope. The way that I read Scripture, celebrate the Mass, engage with parishioners, and so much more in my spiritual life is taken from his good example. He was the first Pope I met, and his kindness and humility were like a noticeable halo around him.

I know there is so much to say about Pope Benedict XVI’s impressive contribution to the Church, but the one thing I like to point to is that his papacy was the modern “highwater mark” for seminaries. It doesn’t really make sense to some of why in the years following the worst scandal in the Church’s history, when religious life had been dismissed from most minds, why in those years seminaries would grow in number. For those of us who joined seminary at that time it was obvious. No one wants to give their life over to a question, and Pope Benedict XVI was crystal clear on what he was asking of priests. He expected us to be faithful to our studies, faithful to prayer, evangelically evangelical, and for Christ alone to be the answer to the searchings of our heart. He did not present an easy path to the priesthood, as beautiful a theologian as he is, but I just took this words really, “Lord, I love you.” What I really took from him, as beautiful a theologian as he is, but I just took this great peace from him and that he knew Jesus.

Father Ryan Stenger, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs:

Pope Benedict XVI is a major part of the reason that I’m a priest today. His papacy was the modern “highwater mark” for seminaries. It doesn’t really make sense to some of why in those years seminaries would grow in number. For those of us who joined seminary at that time it was obvious. No one wants to give their life over to a question, and Pope Benedict XVI was crystal clear on what he was asking of priests. He expected us to be faithful to our studies, faithful to prayer, evangelically evangelical, and for Christ alone to be the answer to the searchings of our heart. He did not present an easy path to the priesthood, as beautiful a theologian as he is, but I just took this words really, “Lord, I love you.” What I really took from him, as beautiful a theologian as he is, but I just took this great peace from him and that he knew Jesus.

His teachings have a great depth to them, but there is also a great simplicity, especially in his first encyclical “Gaudium et Litera.” Really you know love is what it all comes down to — the whole mission and even the Church itself — everything’s oriented towards love. That is the one thing I really took from the Holy Father.

Father Ryan Stenger was completing my final year in high school. Beforehand Father Bach and I were talking about the priesthood and I was sharing some concerns I had and some fears that were holding me back — worries of what I might be giving up. Father Bach was great, he shared what some of his concerns had been, too, and how God had blessed him through that and often in unexpected ways. He also said, “But make no mistake, it can be hard. It’s the cross. We rely on Christ for all of it and it will take some real faith.”

When Pope Benedict XVI came in he was carrying his papal ferula — it’s the staff the pope carries with a cross at the top — and I just watched how he leaned on that as he walked but how it also seemed to be this triumphant image of Christ’s victory. There was just something really beautiful in that moment of God asking something of me in my life that was bound up with His cross and then giving me an image of a man who carried it so well.

I pray that Pope Benedict XVI will continue to be a guide for the Church from heaven and that he will help me take up my cross as the Lord asks, but also carry it triumphantly in the sure knowledge of God’s love. Pope Benedict is truly a great man and a great gift from God. Eternal rest grant unto him o Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him!

(Continued on page 18)
‘A great athlete and a great Christian gentleman’: Catholic high school prays for critically injured Bills safety and alumnus

Gina Christian
OSV News

The Central Catholic High School community in Pittsburgh is joining in prayer for NFL player Damar Hamlin, a 2016 school graduate, who was critically injured during a Jan. 2 game between the Buffalo Bills and the Cincinnati Bengals.

Hamlin, a safety for the Bills, collapsed after tackling Bengals receiver Tee Higgins during a routine play. According to a statement by the Bills, Hamlin was hospitalized after he collapsed on the field during the Monday Night Football game with the Cincinnati Bengals Jan. 2, 2023. Hamlin, an alum of Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, was in critical condition after suffering cardiac arrest following a hit by a Bengals player.

Central Catholic president Christian Brother Mike Andrejko asked in the statement that “the Lord be with Hamlin (and) hold him in the palm of his hand.”

The school’s recently retired head football coach Terry Totten described Hamlin in the statement as “a great athlete and a great Christian gentleman who is a man for others,” one who is “an essential part of the community at Central Catholic.”

Totten also pointed to Hamlin’s “unparalleled” work in the Pittsburgh community through the athlete’s charitable foundation, The Chasing M’s Foundation Community Toy Drive, which he started just before his selection in the sixth round of the 2021 NFL draft.

On its Facebook page, Central Catholic posted a message stating its community “is praying for the well-being and swift recovery” of Hamlin, adding: “May the Lord be with him and his family during this most difficult time.”

As of Jan. 3, the post had garnered some 2,500 shares and almost 400 responses, which included a number of heartfelt prayers.

“We humbly pray to Thee, Dear God, in Jesus’ Name, to heal Damar Hamlin,” wrote Miran Liza Mientus. “And please, Dear God, provide comfort for his dear Parents and Family, the Bills, the Bengals, and All who love him. How beautiful to see countless people come together in prayer for him.”

Amy Smyth Miler posted the text of the Memorare prayer to Mary, while others invoked the intercession of St. John the Baptist, St. Jude, St. Sebastian, Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos and the late Pope Benedict XVI.

One poster added a link to an undated video of Hamlin recorded during his high school years for the Pittsburgh Steelers Youth Football Show. As part of the interview, Hamlin shared that he had chosen the player number three because it was a “family number,” one his own father had worn.

He also said that Central Catholic was “big on tradition,” and that “the name and the school … means a lot not just to the coaches, but the alumni. … You know you’re not playing for just yourself and your family; you’re also playing for the name and the tradition.”

Hamlin’s Twitter timeline over the past two years includes multiple expressions of faith and gratitude, along with support for friends and fellow athletes.

“I see myself through God’s eyes, not anyone else’s,” he wrote Dec. 30, 2022.

A post from the previous month read “From losses to lessons to blessings. Thank you, God!”

Football fans pray outside the University of Cincinnati Medical Center in Cincinnati for Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who was hospitalized after he collapsed on the field during the Monday Night Football game with the Cincinnati Bengals Jan. 2. Hamlin’s Twitter timeline over the past two years includes multiple expressions of faith and gratitude, along with support for friends and fellow athletes.

“I see myself through God’s eyes, not anyone else’s,” he wrote Dec. 30, 2022.

A post from the previous month read “From losses to lessons to blessings. Thank you, God!”

Football fans pray outside the University of Cincinnati Medical Center in Cincinnati for Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who was hospitalized after he collapsed on the field during the Monday Night Football game with the Cincinnati Bengals Jan. 2. Hamlin’s Twitter timeline over the past two years includes multiple expressions of faith and gratitude, along with support for friends and fellow athletes.

“I see myself through God’s eyes, not anyone else’s,” he wrote Dec. 30, 2022.

A post from the previous month read “From losses to lessons to blessings. Thank you, God!”
Pope Benedict
(Continued from page 1)

His body was to lie in St. Peter's Basilica beginning Jan. 2 as that people could pay their respects and offer their prayers, he said.

Immediately after the pope died at 9:34 a.m., Bruni said, his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, phoned Pope Francis, who went immediately to the late pope's bedside to pray and to offer condolences to those who had cared for him in the last years of his life. Archbishop Ganswein told Vatican News Jan. 1 that Pope Benedict's last words were, "Lord, I love you."

It was about 3 a.m. the day he died, the archbishop said. "In a faint voice, but in a clearly discernable way, he said in Italian, 'Lord, I love you!' I was not there at the time, but the nurse told me shortly afterward. These were his last comprehensible words, because afterward he was no longer able to express himself."

A close collaborator of St. John Paul II and the theological expert behind many of his major teachings and gestures, Pope Benedict came to the papacy after 24 years heading the doctrinal congregation's work of safeguarding Catholic teaching on faith and morals, correcting the work of some Catholic theologians and ensuring the theological solidity of the documents issued by other Vatican offices. As pope, he continued writing as a theologian, but also made historically important gestures to Catholics who had difficulty accepting all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly about the liturgy. In 2007, he widened permission to use the "extraordinary" or pre-Vatican II form of the Mass and, a short time later: extended a hand to the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X. Besides lifting the excommunications of four of the society's bishops who were ordained illicitly in 1988, he launched a long and intense dialogue with the group. In the end, though, the talks broke down.

His papacy, which began when he was 78, was extremely busy for a man who already had a pacemaker and who had wanted to retire to study, write and pray when he turned 75. He used virtually every medium at his disposal — books and Twitter, sermons and encyclicals — to catechize the faithful.

---

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS**

**STAFF WRITER/MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPER**

*The Messenger,* is seeking a Staff Writer/Media Content Developer to join its media team. In this role, you will use your communication and web design skills to increase reader engagement, primarily through creating content for — the Messenger, the diocesan website, and diocesan social media platforms. Duties and responsibilities include creating content for various print and social media formats; proofreading content before publication; attending, taking photographs and reporting on events; and recording and editing short videos. Knowledge of Adobe Creative Cloud software is preferred. Candidates must be practicing Catholics with strong organizational skills, and the ability to meet deadlines and handle stress is an absolute requirement.

Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail: skoplyay@covdio.org, (859) 392-1500. EOE

---

**PLEDGE COORDINATOR**

The Diocese of Covington's Stewardship and Mission Services Office invites qualified individuals to apply for the support position of Pledge Coordinator. This role requires an individual who takes pride in performing detailed work with an absolute minimum of errors. Primary responsibilities include recording financial pledges, gifts, payments, etc. for the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal, and also fund-raising campaign reporting, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up. Ideally, we are seeking Catholic candidates who relate well to others, are extremely detail- and confidentiality-oriented, are comfortable with a team approach to projects, and can manage deadlines under a steady workload.

Interested individuals may send a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail to skoplyay@covdio.org, by fax to 859/392-1589.

---

**NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIED ADS**

*The Bill & Betty Scheence Care Center*

As a medical model adult day care, we also provide daily transportation to and from not only our center, but also for individuals who have jobs in the community and we need you! We have a part-time split shift driving position with an immaculate opening. Early morning shift and then part of the afternoon shift. Ability to drive a bus a plus. This is a wheelchair accessible bus. Does not require a CDL. No holidays, no weekends, no evenings! Training provided. Contact Ken Hodge, Transportation Manager at 859-575-1128 or email her at Hodge@cuoldmfd.org

SEE THE ABLE, NOT THE LABEL.

*Part of the National Family of Parishes*

---

**ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, COLD SPRING AFTERCARE DIRECTOR**

St. Joseph School in Cold Spring is looking for an after-care director. Monday through Friday from 3:00pm-6:00pm. During the after-care program students have a snack, complete their homework, play games, and participate in any other activities planned by aftercare staff. The director is also responsible for keeping records of attendance, payment and communicating with parents and aftercare workers.

If interested please contact principal, Emily Uriage at euilage@stjosphschool.net or 859-441-2025.

---

**Moore's Painting**

The Company you feel safe with

**Interior & exterior painting.**

In business since 1988. Members of St. Augustine Parish.

Moore's Painting — Union, Ky. — (859) 512-7398

---

**GERSDE CONCRETE & MASONRY**

CONCRETE - Driveways, sidewalks, steps, patios, stamped concrete. MASONRY — Cultured stone, retaining walls, brick pavers, foundations, fireplaces, brick & chimney repairs. MUCK — Nine-encrater, Bob Cat & skidsteer-work. Quality work & ref. Call BILL, (859) 339-4793

*Messenger ad rates (2015):*

---

**CALL CHUCK!**

Call Chuck at the Messenger for information on placing your ad in the Classified Advertisements. (859) 392-1500
Pope Benedict was the first pope to meet with victims of sexual abuse. He charged church leaders to examine cases and mandated that bishops’ conferences put in place stringent norms against abuse.

Although he did not expect to travel much, he ended up making 24 trips to six continents and three times presided over World Youth Day mega-gatherings in Germany in 2005, Australia in 2008, and Spain in 2011.

On a historic visit to the United States in 2008, the pope brought his own identity into clearer focus for Americans. He set forth a moral challenge on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion. He also took church recognition of the priestly sex-abuse scandal to a new level, expressing his personal shame at what happened and personally praying with victims.

While still in his 30s, he served as an influential adviser during the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, and, as pope, he made it a priority to correct what he viewed as overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings that stressed the council’s continuity with the church’s millennial traditions.

Under his oversight, the Vatican continued to highlight the church’s moral boundaries on issues such as end-of-life medical care, marriage and homosexuality. The pope honed that message, asking readers to discover the truth and the Gospel of Christ.

In his encyclicals and in his books on “Jesus of Nazareth,” he consistently warned the West that unless its secular culture builds on the Christian foundation, it is floundering.

In 2015, he made it a priority to correct what he saw as overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings that stressed the council’s continuity with the church’s millennial traditions.

The retired pope moved back to the Vatican May 2, 2013, living in a monastery near the Vatican’s Castel Gandolfo, the pope’s residence outside Rome, when he submitted his resignation on Feb. 11, 2013. In April 2016, the Vatican apologized for an error in describing the pope’s second year of his “hidden” life in Rome.

Mercy was a prominent topic in a 2013 interview Pope Benedict gave in the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Benedict once lived and worked. Pope Francis, top officials of the Roman Curia and a few friends gathered with him to mark the 60th anniversary of the retired pontiff’s priestly ordination.

Pope Benedict told Pope Francis that with him in residence, the monastery in the Vatican Gardens “emanates tranquility, peace, strength, faithfulness, mercy, faith, dedication and loyalty, which does so much good for me and gives strength to me and to the whole church.”

Pope Francis told Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, “More than the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place I live; I feel protected.”

In recent years, the retired pope’s humility and wisdom continued to “lead us all on this path of divine mercy that shows the path of Jesus, to Jesus and to God.”

Some of Pope Benedict’s most memorable statements came when he applied simple Gospel values to social issues such as the protection of human life, the environment and economics. When the global financial crisis worsened in 2008, for example, the pope insisted that financial institutions must put people before profits. He also reminded people that money and material goods are meaningless unless they build his life on these things — on material things, on success, on appearances — is building on sand.

He consistently warned the West that unless its secularized society rediscovered religious values, it could not hope to engage in real dialogue with Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

In his encyclicals and in his books on “Jesus of Nazareth,” the pope hoped that message, asking readers to discover the essential connections between sacrificial love, works of charity, a dedication to the truth and the Gospel of Christ.

The retired pope looked in depth at his papacy and resignation, his relationships with St. John Paul and Pope Francis, including his command to spread by the sword the faith he continued to practice their faith more clandestinely. In 2015, he made important contributions to the church — criticism that would become even more controversial when Archbishop Ganswein even more on the risk of losing the basic relationship between the human being and the Creator.

In 2013, the Catholic focus on mercy really began with St. John Paul, the retired pope told Belgian Jesuit Father Jacques Servais in the written interview, which was not released until March 2016.

Pope Benedict’s work as a youth during World War II and his ministry under communism in Poland, St. John Paul “affirmed that mercy is the only true and ultimately effective reaction against the power of evil. Only where there is mercy does cruelty end, only there evil and violence stop,” said Pope Benedict, who worked closely with the Polish pope for decades.

Pope Francis, he said, “is in complete agreement with this line. His pastoral practice is expressed precisely in the fact that he speaks continuously of God’s mercy.”

Pope Benedict said he planned to live a “hidden” life in retirement — and to a large extent he did. But when he did make contributions to public discussions, they became headline news. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016, the pope noted that he had written a book by the title pontificium on the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. He was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as “notes” on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.
get the teacher wheeling the TV cart into our classroom at Covington Latin to watch the announcement of Pope Benedict’s election and I’ll never forget standing in St. Peter’s Square for his final papal audience. Even as a teenager, I was inspired by the clarity and courage of his teaching and by the witness of his reverence and love for the sacred liturgy. He seemed to me to be heroic in his stand for the enduring truth and transcendent beauty of our faith against the tide of superficiality and relativism that still sweeps over our culture today. And the manner in which he took that stand touched me as well. He was never harsh or polemical in his words, but rather he spoke always with gentleness, humility and love.

I’ve always been struck by the centrality of friendship with Christ of Pope Benedict’s thought and by the tender-ness and love with which he spoke about that friendship. In his homily at the Mass before the conclave that elected him to the papacy, Cardinal Ratzinger said, “An ‘adult’ faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ.” He concluded his first homily as pope by proclaiming, “Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation.” He knew that what the human heart needs above all is a love that endures and never runs out, which we receive only in our friendship with Jesus Christ. It was evident that he spoke about that friendship from great personal experience and I have no doubt that he is already experiencing the fullness of that friendship in heaven. While Pope Benedict’s passing is a great loss for the Church, I also firmly believe that we have gained a powerful friend and intercessor who will continue to serve the Church through his prayers in the heavenly liturgy.

Father Bill Appel, chaplain, Archdiocese for the Military Services:

I have been comforted by a lot of good articles on Pope Benedict XVI recently. I think, when someone passes, we take a long look at the good and the bad, and too often we hear about the bad. I’m grateful that so many people have sent me such uplifting things. That, in itself, has been a lesson to me — have the class to build someone up in their absence. Perhaps it’s the antithesis of the cancel culture.

One of the things that struck me was that he had spent more time as “Pope Emeritus” than in his active papacy. It could seem that he had more to give, but on the contrary, I believe he healed, and perhaps none too soon. We cannot deny a difficulty — in some cases a difficulty near death — just because someone has healed. I’ve long thought of not only the papacy but also the move to step down as a “death unto self,” humbly doing what one feels is morally right over one’s own will. I hadn’t considered what effect active ministry physically took on the minister. Even in my relatively short time as a priest, I feel like I have a front row seat watching selfless priests give their all in ministry. Many of those priests have told me that I can be as busy as I want to be. By that, they were clear — I can find relaxation as a priest if I seek it. Conversely, and more to the point, I can find a nearly endless amount of work as a priest if I seek it. Pope Benedict XVI was a gifted intellectual and a conscientious worker. He showed a humble knowledge of himself and ministry. I believe he and many others have taken themselves to the breaking point — a true example of Jesus Christ.

Claire Thérèse Heyne is a consecrated virgin in the Covington diocese and operates a...
subito! pray that we do the same, by the grace of God. Santo died focused on Christ. Dear Pope Benedict XVI, please and died. He lived for Christ with the Heart of Christ. He despite much suffering, he simply said, “I love you, Jesus” then, at the end of a life full of brilliant accomplishments Jesus,” he asked Baby Jesus for Christmas as a child. have struck me to the core. “Please give me the heart of dox and clear teaching, especially in the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.” After his resignation — and God alone knows fully why he resigned — I appreciated his humble, Catholicism. It makes sense; despair is a reasonable response to the nothingness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to into the world and proclaim, as Benedict did, “The happiness and despair and the Church needs to go out confidently faith can be. So many people nowadays seem to think we need to be embarrassed of so much of what makes us who we are as Catholics. Benedict did not have this sickness. He wore the “funny outfits,” donned the “funny hats” and embraced the “smells and bells” with zero apology. In doing so he excused authenticity and confidence and showed us: “You have nothing to be ashamed of. This is our heritage. Our culture. Our tradition. Be Brave. Be Different. Be Catholic.” He told us, “See, you are part of something big and beautiful that survives the tides of time. Move the world, do not be moved by the world.” In this way Benedict is instrumental not only to my past but also to my future. He has not only helped lay the foundation on which I have built my life, he has also outlined for me the path I believe we should take forward.

Truth, humility, reverence, tradition, hope, love, gentleness, meekness, beauty, authenticity, unity, continuity. These are the chief lessons Benedict manifested for us and, if there is a path forward for the Church in the West, I think it will be through these principles: If I aspire to them or attain any of them in my life, it will be because Benedict first inspired me to.

The world is struggling with meaningless, confusion, and despair and the Church needs to go out confidently into the world and proclaim, as Benedict did, “The happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to enjoy, has a name and a face: it is Jesus of Nazareth.”

What is unique to my story, however, is that I miraculously found my way back. Pope Benedict XVI was one of the most influential players in that return. In high school he became my hero and remains so to this day. Contrary to the image painted of him by the media, Pope Benedict had a way with young people. He understood us. I think he went to his grave genuinely unaware of the affect he had on us. He understood that what we are really crying out for is stability. Overwhelmed with constant information, doubt and uncertainty, we need to know that there are some truths we can count on and build our lives around. In a world where everything changes so rapidly, we need to know that some things remain the same.

Any good father knows that a mark of adolescence is to test limits and that the proper response is to show firmness and dependability — to provide firm ground to stand on. Benedict did this for me. He showed me that Catholicism is a sure foundation upon which I can build my life. For me this has made all the difference. I devoured his books, homilies, and writings. With his radical intellectual robustness he showed how intellectually engaging and defensible Catholicism is. Read any of his works and you will discover this for yourself. But he also showed me how beautiful and emotionally engaging the faith can be. So many people nowadays seem to think we need to be embarrassed of so much of what makes us who

Brad Torline, director, Angelico Project, Cincinnati: I lost my faith by middle school. Catholicism failed to engage me either intellectually or emotionally. In fact, it was often downright grating on my mind and nerves. There was just no way some- thing so lifeless could be true. This loss of faith led to struggles with meaninglessness and depression. If there is no God, no life after death, if everything comes to nothingness in the end — then what is the point? My expe- rience is not unique. Over 90 percent of children baptized lose their faith before age 14. Talk to them and you will likewise find that anxiety and depression are not rare. It makes sense; despair is a reasonable response to the meaninglessness of life without faith.

With every home I sell, a contribution is made to the Children’s Miracle Network “Helping local kids.” FOR RESULTS, CALL MARIE WIEDER OF RE/MAX Victory + Affiliates (859) 801-9762

Marie Wieder, ABR, SFR, e-PRO Parishioner Holy Cross Church
Making spirits bright

Christmas 2022 was merrier and brighter as Curia staff resumed the in-person celebration of the Regency Manor Christmas, Dec. 15. Faye Roch and Peggy Piccola of the diocesan Pro-Life Office organize the annual gift giving and dinner party. The Curia staff pick tags from the giving tree bearing the Christmas wishes of the residents of Regency Manor. The gifts are delivered to the residential care facility where students from Bishop Brossart and Covington Catholic high schools deliver them to the residents. Adding to the cheer, the students lead the singing of Christmas carols. (left) Bishop John Iffert joined the Curia staff for a photo as gifts were being loaded into cars for delivery.