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MESSENGER

Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926

Parish Points of Contact have one plea: take the Disciple Maker Index survey this Lent!

Laura Keener
Editor

The With One Heart initiative is preparing for its major and most foundational step — the implementation of the Disciple Maker Index.

The With One Heart initiative is a multi-faceted, leadership development program Bishop John Iffert launched in September 2022. It is led by the Catholic Leadership Institute, who has 17 years of experience in assisting bishops in their mission to develop priests, parishes and parishioners for missionary discipleship. In the Diocese of Covington, the four-year initiative has as its stated goal: “Empowering Priests. Igniting Parishes. Enlivening the Faithful.”

The Disciple Maker Index, or DMI, is one tool CLI uses to help bishops, pastors and parish leaders make data-driven decisions. The DMI is a 75-question survey used to collect that data. All parishioners are encouraged to take the DMI survey, which opens Feb. 22 and lasts through March 27. The questions not only ask demographical questions but also asks parishioners to evaluate their own involvement in the parish, what their parish does well and what opportunities they think could be explored. The more people that take the survey the better the data will be, which would lead to better decisions at both the diocesan and parish levels.

Each pastor was asked to appoint a Parish Point of Contact (PPOC). The primary role of the PPOC is to assist the pastor in implementing the DMI at their parish. In three sessions, Jan. 9 and 10, Carla Molina, relationship manager and leadership consultant with CLI, introduced the PPOC’s to the With One Heart initiative and a plan on how to implement the DMI.

“I think using the DMI will be very helpful,” said Jenni VonLehman, PPOC, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs. “Each parish is unique, and the DMI will enable pastors to hear directly from their parishioners. It gives people the opportunity to be heard, but it also empowers them to begin supporting their pastor and their fellow parishioners in a more concrete way.”

David Doyle, PPOC, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville and St. James Mission, Minerva, said that Father Andrew Young, pastor, is very engaged and routinely asks Parish Council for feedback and assistance. Using the data from the DMI along with the feedback collected at the Deanery Listening Sessions and Parish Strategy Sessions, two of the initial strategies of With One Heart held last fall, will help parish leaders “to take action to improve the overall experience in our parish,” he said.

“This will now give them an opportunity to better communicate their feelings, wants, desires at the parish level,” Mr. Doyle said about the DMI.

As a retired business professional, Monica France, PPOC for St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, has seen the benefits of surveys, especially as a way of building trust.

“In my line of work, that’s what they did, they would do surveys every five years and that’s how they would set plans and that’s how they would measure progress,” Mrs. France said. “It was a very good way to kind of capture the feelings of the people.”

But, Mrs. France said that trust can be broken if results of the survey are not shared or if there is no follow-up on the information provided by the survey. “It only works if you give them feedback, and then respond in a way to address what you learned,” she said.

With the DMI, pastors and parish leaders will be able to login into a dashboard to see the aggregate results of surveys completed by their parishioners. They will also be able to see the aggregate results of other parishes. This will allow everyone in the parish to work together to make data-driven decisions to help support parishioners on their faith journey as missionary disciples of Christ. The survey is completely anonymous — no one at the parish or the diocese will have access to the names of any individual respondent.

“All of us have so much to offer, and it’s exciting to think about how we could transform our parish together,” said Mrs.



What’s on your heart?

Take the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey

The DMI invites parishioners to reflect on where they are on their journey of discipleship and enables parish leadership to make data-driven decisions to help parishioners grow in their faith.

The DMI online portal opens Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22 and closes March 27. Visit www.covdio.org/withoneheart.

VonLehman. “There are also a lot of programs that I really believe in — programs that have changed my life — and I would love to find a way to make these more accessible (and attractive) for families who lead very busy lives. Ultimately, I would love to see our parish more energized and on fire for our faith. That kind of energy is contagious, and Christ has made it clear that this ‘fire,’ in turn, spreads to the wider community. I think most of us have seen it ourselves, and we know it’s true. This is an exciting opportunity for the entire diocese.”

Mrs. VonLehman, Mrs. France and Mr. Doyle all agreed that their biggest challenge as PPOC will be getting people to take the survey and/or staying with the 75-question survey to its completion. Mrs. Molina has provided a publicity template that will help the PPOC’s get the word out. Bulletin and pulpit announcements have been written and provided to the PPOC’s. Soon, social media posts and flyers to print will be made available on the With One Heart website, www.covdio.org/WithOneHeart. Parishioners will also have the option of completing the survey online or on paper.

“We’ll have to find ways, you know, having a place open after Mass where they can go and they can get coffee and doughnuts and complete the survey, if you do that a couple of times, that would be helpful,” Mrs. France said. She also will be seeking the assistance of other parishioners to help promote the DMI by greeting parishioners and talking with them about the DMI after Mass.

“With God’s help we will move this forward and make every parish better off for having participated,” Mr. Doyle said.

‘We are not yet done’: March for Life holds first national event after overturn of Roe v. Wade

Kate Scanlon
OSV News

Tens of thousands of pro-life advocates descended upon the nation’s capital for the 50th March for Life Jan. 20 — the first national march since the overturn of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that initially prompted the annual demonstration.

Standing on the event stage at the National Mall, with the U.S. Capitol visible in the background, Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, told attendees at a rally prior to the march that “the country and world changed” when Roe was reversed in June 2022. But she said the annual March for Life would continue in Washington until abortion is “unthinkable.”

“While the March began as a response to Roe, we don’t

end as a response to Roe being overturned,” Mancini said. “Why? Because we are not yet done.”

The march took place on a sunny and unseasonably warm day in Washington. A headcount of attendees was not immediately available, as the National Park Service does not release crowd size estimates.

The national March for Life first took place in Washington in 1974 in response to the Roe decision legalizing abortion nationwide the previous year. The protest has taken place in Washington each year since, with a smaller-in-scale event during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

The 2023 event was the first national March for Life since the high court’s June 2022 ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization that overturned Roe and returned the matter of regulating or restricting abortion to state legislatures.

At the pre-march rally, the Christian band “We Are Messengers” performed, followed by a number of speakers, including Gianna Emanuela Molla, the daughter of St. Gianna Beretta Molla. Canonized in 2004, St. Gianna gave her life for Giana Emanuela, choosing to move forward with her fourth pregnancy even after doctors discovered a tumor in her uterus.

Molla told the rallygoers that she thanks her “saint

mom” for the gift of life. “I would not be here now with all of you if I had not been loved so much,” she said.

Prior to speaking to the sea of pro-life marchers on the National Mall, Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch, who argued the Dobbs case before the Supreme Court, told OSV News that “empowering women and promoting life” were the next steps post-Roe.

“Some of the things that we’re talking about in Mississippi and promoting legislation on are workplace flexibility options, particularly for mothers,” she said. “We lose young mothers because they don’t have any options. They don’t have that flexibility. We’ve got to have childcare. It’s got to be affordable, accessible and quality.”

Fitch said she wants to see the pro-life movement do “some heavy lifts” to push laws enhancing child support enforcement and reforming the adoption or foster care systems.

“(These systems) are failing our children; they’re broken,” Fitch said. “We’ve got to make those (changes) happen and put those children in these loving families.”

Speaking with OSV News at the march, Kristan Hawkins, president of the pro-life group Students for Life of America, said the next front of her organization’s activism will focus on fighting the spread of medication abortion. Hawkins said the pro-life movement should also focus on broadening the social safety net and its remaining goals at the federal level, such as stripping Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest single abortion provider, of taxpayer funds.

“We’re walking and running and chewing gum all at the same time,” she said.

“There is a lot for us to do as a nation, especially raising awareness among its citizens,” Isalyn Aviles Rodríguez, who came to the march from Miami, told OSV News. Rodríguez said she was motivated to march because “the nation needs to know that children are part of God’s plan from conception until natural death.”

At various events leading up to the march, pro-life advocates joined together in prayer and solidarity.

At the Jan. 19 opening Mass for the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life, the night before the march, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of



Pickett photos
(left) Catholic Charities employees Donna Pickett, Karen Riegler, Paul Meisenhelder and Clare Ruehl take a “selfie” with actress Ashley Bratcher, who played Abby Johnson in the film *Unplanned*.
(below) Students carrying banners at the 2023 March for Life.



Priests celebrate monthly holy hour

On the third Thursday of each month, priests across the Diocese of Covington come together to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to observe a monthly Holy Hour.

This hour, which begins with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and ends with Benediction, gives diocesan priests a chance to pray before the Eucharist in adoration together.



(above left) Bishop John Iffert and Father Jordan Hainsey kneel before the monstrance at the beginning of the monthly priest’s Holy Hour at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.
(above right) Diocesan priests pray in the Cathedral’s pews during the Holy Hour.

Arlington, Virginia, said in his homily that the pro-life movement has “much to celebrate” because Roe v. Wade “is no more.”

But, he added, a “new important phase” for the cause of life “begins now.”

“Our efforts to defend life must be as tireless as ever” not only to change laws but also hearts “with steadfast faith in the grace and power of God to do so,” said Bishop Burbidge, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

The event, held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, drew between 6,000 and 6,500 people, with most of the congregation filling the Great Upper Church. Dozens also viewed the Mass via screens in the lower level of the basilica.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., read a message from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, issued on behalf of Pope Francis, who imparted his blessing on all those participating in the March for Life.

“His Holiness trusts that Almighty God will strengthen the commitment of all, especially the young, to persevere in their efforts aimed at protecting human life in all its stages, especially through adequate legal measures enacted at every level of society,” the message said.

Across town, at the Entertainment & Sports Arena in Washington’s Congress Heights neighborhood, another new pre-march event welcomed a sold-out crowd of pro-lifers. Sponsored by the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus, the early morning Life Fest drew some 4,200 people — most of them teens and young adults — for a program of prayer, worship music, and personal testimonies that concluded with Eucharistic adoration and Mass.

“The law has changed ... (but) hearts need to change

(Continued on page 22)

Chosen program prepares children for Confirmation

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

A need to strengthen the relevance of the sacrament of Confirmation was the foundation for the “Chosen” program at St. Mary’s Parish, Alexandria.

With 26 sessions of 90 minutes each, the program started six years ago as an inspired discussion based on a book and program by Ascension Press. Led by volunteers, the program has since evolved based on feedback from participants to include plenty of hands-on activities, prayer, and Eucharistic adoration.

Chosen starts while students are still in seventh grade and prepares them for Confirmation into the eighth-grade year.

“Our schools do a great job of teaching what Confirmation is,” said Brett Ruschman, one of the parents involved with leading Chosen’s sessions, “but this program is really a refresher on the entire Catholic faith.”

“We’ve added a lot of activities over the years to get them more involved. We’ll play an activity that seems like it’s just a playground game, but then we’ll tie it in to a spir-

itual meaning,” he said, “hands on activities to teach religious concepts.”

According to Maria Code, another one of Chosen’s volunteers, the program, which started with 22 participants its first year; proudly had 39 students this past year; and the percentage is “getting higher and higher.”

“This is the first year where we had kids ask to sign up after the deadline because they heard about it from their friends,” she said.

In addition to the program, the volunteers that organized Chosen also organized 39 “prayer pals” for the participating students— “prayer warriors” who responded to ads put into the parish bulletin to pray for the students every week. “They were praying that the stu-

dents received what the Holy Spirit needed them to in order to deepen their faith and expand their understanding of Confirmation ahead of the sacrament,” said Mr. Ruschman.

“I think the word is out that this a fun religious thing these kids can do,” Mr. Ruschman said. With just a few more sessions to go, this year’s Chosen class’s confirmation is set for the February 2.



(left) Students attending the Chosen program at St. Mary’s, Alexandria play a game of “human foosball.” Mimicking the classic table game, students kick a ball representing day to day decisions bringing the soul closer to Heaven, or closer to Hell.

(above) Chosen participants attend adoration.

St. Augustine parishioners serve as beacons of light to homebound community members

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

After a 2019 homily at St. Augustine Parish, Covington, the takeaway that the parish community needed to “go out and serve others” affected a group of St. Augustine parishioners who would found the “Be Their Light” ministry.

“We felt that we should serve those who can no longer make it to Mass,” said Suzanne Ritchie, one of these

parishioners who takes care of the ministry’s database, “just because you can no longer make it to Mass on a regular basis because you physically cannot, you don’t stop being a part of the Church family,” she said.

The ministry is made up entirely of volunteers from the parish who serve 18 individuals from their community who cannot make it to in-person Mass.

One key part of the ministry is the making and delivering of cards to these community members— each one containing a personal note and hand-written by volunteers. Be Their Light also visits these individuals, and even has a Eucharistic minister in their ranks to bring to them the Eucharist at home.

A member of the ministry also tries to attend every funeral related to those whom they serve, whether it be the individual themselves or a family member, said Ms. Ritchie.

“I can’t say enough that it is truly the epitome of people working together as the body of Christ,” she said. “If it wasn’t for each person, this program would not work.”



Green Chameleon photo



Bishop’s Schedule

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| <p>Jan. 28
Mass, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, 5 p.m.</p> <p>Jan. 29
Mass, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.</p> <p>Feb. 1
Catholic Schools Week Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.</p> <p>Building Commission meeting, 2 p.m.</p> <p>Confirmation, St. Bernard/Holy Spirit/Divine Mercy Parishes, held at Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, 7 p.m.</p> | <p>Feb. 2
Catholic Charities Corporate Board meeting, 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Confirmation, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria, 7 p.m.</p> <p>Feb. 3
All-school Mass, St. Henry District High School, Erlanger, 10 a.m.</p> <p>Cursillo on Tap, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.</p> <p>Feb. 4
Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 4:30 p.m.</p> |
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PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Glory to the newborn King

St. Anthony 7th and 8th grade students, led by their teacher Mrs. Simon, performed the story of the Nativity for the rest of the students and staff. They led the student body through the Bible from the story of Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus and the Epiphany.

The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally on The CW, Sundays, noon to 1 p.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

24th annual Jack and Pat McGarr Euchre Tournament, Feb. 4, Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria. Register online, McGarrEuchre23.givesmart.com. Contact jackmcgar-reuchre@gmail.com or text/call (859) 250- 4924.

Come celebrate a **First Friday Candlelight Mass** with Sacred Music, Feb. 3, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, hosted by The Angelico Project. Mass starts promptly at 7 p.m., followed by individual prayer for healing with the Mustard Seed Charismatic prayer teams in the left nave of the church.

Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III '67 Institute for Religious Liberty Spring Event, Feb. 16, 7-9 p.m., Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. **The IRL presents "Political Partisanship and Its Impact on the Future of Religious Liberty"** featuring keynote speaker Asma Uddin and commentator Dr. William Madges. Ms. Uddin is a religious liberty lawyer and scholar working for the protection of religious expression for people of all faiths in the U.S. and abroad. She is currently the visiting assistant

professor of law at the Catholic University of America. Dr. Madges is the chair of the theology department and the faculty director of the Brueggeman Center for Dialogue at Xavier University. All are welcome, RSVP not required. Visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty for details.

Newport Central Catholic High School's twenty-second class Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held Feb. 18, Newport Central Catholic gymnasium, social hour, 6 p.m.; dinner and ceremony 7 p.m. Inductees are: Vince Bonhaus '01, Whitney Cundiff Smith '08, April Gibson Gilesie '08, Brian Haigis '87, Brady Hightchew '12, Steve Pangallo '91 and Jerry Turner '79. The 2010 Girls All A State Champion Basketball Team will be named if "Team of Distinction;" Rob Detzel will receive the Coach Jim Connor Award and Jerry Schneider '52 the Fr. John Hegenauer Community Service Award. Cost \$30. Visit ncchs.com.

Diocese of Covington **Regional Dual-Credit Information Night** presented by James Catchen, Feb. 23, 6-7:30 p.m., Thomas More University, Steigerwald Hall, Saints Center, Crestview Hills, for high school students (and their guardians), who would benefit from dual credit courses. During the presentation, attendees will hear from KHEAA on scholarship opportunities to pay for dual-credit courses as well as how dual-credit courses can impact students after high school. Dual-credit representatives from Thomas More,



Letters of gratitude

Students at St. Pius X School, Edgewood, have been practicing the virtue of gratitude during the month of November. To show their gratitude, students wrote a letter to someone special for whom they are thankful. At the all-school Mass before Thanksgiving break, the letters were addressed, blessed and are ready to be sent out.

Gateway, and NKU on available dual-credit opportunities. Visit thomasmore.edu/preview.

The Thomas More University Women's Conference, March 3, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Steigerwald Hall, Saints Center, Crestview Hills. This one-day, interactive conference is designed to enlighten, engage and challenge women to seek more within their careers. The Conference explores the topic of "Women Who Innovate" within different industries. This conference is geared for alumni, college students, faculty/staff, parents, high school students, and community members. Cost \$50. Reserve your space at tmukyus/tmwc.

Have you ever considered going on a pilgrimage? **"Journey to Egypt, a special part of the Holy Land,** where Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the Holy Family walked. Make your way through the Holy Land to follow in Jesus' foot-steps. Celebrate votive Masses in the very places where miraculous gifts became pages in the Gospel. If interested in learning more, please contact St. Henry parishioner Michael Portwood, (859) 878-6905 or e-mail pamarinedad@yahoo.com.

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Be Witnesses

*“Wake up the world!
Be witnesses of
a different way
of doing things,
of acting, of living!”*
— Pope Francis

Religious Communities in the Diocese of Covington

- Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery www.stwalburg.org
- Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis www.brothersofthepoorofstfrancis.org
- Passionist Nuns www.erlangerpassionists.com
- Sisters of Divine Providence www.cdpkentucky.org
- Sisters of Notre Dame www.sndusa.org
- Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker www.ssjw.org

Public and Private Associations

- Franciscan Daughters of Mary www.fdoofmary.org
- Missionaries of St. John the Baptist www.msjb.info

Carefully considering the path

Karen Kuhlman
Messenger Correspondent

The pace of the world is so fast that it takes your breath away. Schedules and deadlines need constant attention; decisions are required at the drop of a hat. Taking time to give careful consideration to life decisions can seem old-fashioned.

Erin Nagy is a postulant of the Sisters of Notre Dame and the path she has taken on her vocation journey has been carefully and purposefully traveled.

She grew up in a Catholic family, attending public school as well as religious education classes through her parish in Monclova, Ohio. Her only exposure to women religious was through the sister who ran her parish religion program. Erin remembers thinking in the 4th grade, “It might be interesting to be a nun. But! I couldn’t do that because Sisters don’t get paid!”

So, she put that thought out of her mind — temporarily. During high school, she became active in her parish youth group, spending more time in church, and learning more about her faith.

“My lay youth group director was really good at discipling and showed me how to pray more deeply,” said Erin.

He modeled it well, teaching her that personal prayer is a conversation with God — a personal connection to Jesus and a way to draw closer to him. Before that, she had only known the Mass and memorized prayers. Her youth group became very important to her, and she found herself changing her schedule and giving up other opportunities so she could be more active. The youth group was instrumental in her formation, and she continued that association through college.

Thoughts of a religious vocation took root and deepened during her years at the University of Toledo. She graduated with a major in communication and a minor in world religions that included a few Catholic-specific studies as well as those in Christianity, atheism, Islam and Eastern religions. The opportunity to learn about the religions of the world gave her an understanding of how to have conversations with people of different faiths.

When Erin inquired about becoming a youth minister following college graduation, her youth minister asked if she had ever considered a vocation to religious life.

“It had crossed my mind a few times, but I had never really done anything with it. When I said yes, he said that he had seen a lot of things in me that made him think a religious vocation was something I should consider. He suggested that I get a spiritual director and visit a few religious communities to see what it was like,” she said.

That was the push Erin needed to begin taking thoughts of a religious vocation seriously. She followed his advice and met with a spiritual director once a month. She visited a few communities and decided to enter a contemplative community.

“I was a postulant for eight months but found it was not a good fit. There were restrictions, such as how I could contact

my family, that were a challenge for me. When I discerned through prayer that the Lord was asking me to leave the community, I wasn’t sure what He was calling me to do. I wasn’t certain that religious life was still on the table,” Erin said.

Her next four years were focused on working for the Church, living a single life, and trying to discover where God

wanted her to be. When the pandemic slowed everything down, thoughts of religious life returned. She gave a lot of consideration to how her life as a member of a religious community, versus a member of the laity, might be and began praying more intentionally.

She encountered the Sisters of Notre Dame through their online book study for young adults. She enjoyed the books and loved experiencing the sisters’ personalities and spirituality through Zoom meetings. She entered the postulancy in September 2022 and lives at the Novitiate House of the Sisters of Notre Dame in the Toledo area.

Postulancy lasts for six months to two years, depending on the woman and her needs. During the two-year novitiate, the first year is a canonical

year, focused on the interior life and devoted to study, prayer, volunteer work and learning about community life. The second year offers various ministry experiences and the opportunity to gain an understanding of the community’s mission. After two years, a novice makes temporary vows, usually renewed annually for five years.

Now four months into her postulancy, Erin works full-time as a classroom aide in a charter school in Toledo. She has come to enjoy this new experience. Erin meets weekly with her director, reading through and discussing different books and documents such as her current read, “Fratelli Tutti,” an encyclical by Pope Francis.

To Erin, the isolation of COVID was retreat-like, with more time to pray and think about what God was leading her to. She would recommend to other young women discerning a religious vocation that they find a spiritual director with whom they can reflect on their journey. Erin believes that can be very important, just having someone to walk with you and to talk over the things you are thinking about.

Additionally, she recommends spending time with members of the community you are considering whether volunteering with them, going on a retreat or just talking to them.

“That can be a scary step, but the only way to know is to engage with them. The more you move forward, the more you can see the path God is leading you towards. You can’t go wrong if you let God lead you. I can see all of the ways I have grown and realize that God had some things he wanted to teach me. If God can do that for me, he can do that for others, too,” she said.

Erin shares that her parents had a few concerns and were initially a bit scared when she first took steps toward a religious vocation. Now, they are at peace with her decision and consider the Sisters of Notre Dame part of their family.



Erin Nagy, postulant of the Sisters of Notre Dame

How serious is laughter?

In a homily, Karl Rahner once commented that in the Beatitudes in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus makes a rather stunning statement. He says, “blessed are you who are now weeping, for you shall laugh.” Rahner suggests that Jesus is teaching that our final state of happiness in heaven



will not just lift us out of our sadness and dry away our tears, it will bring us to laughter; to “an intoxication of joy.” Laughter is integral to the final ecstasy. Further still, if laughter constitutes the final happiness in heaven, then it should follow that whenever we are laughing, we are on good terms with reality. Laughter, Rahner submits, is part of the eternal praise of God at the end of time. However, this can be glib and misleading. Not all

laughter gives God praise and not all laughter suggests that we are on good terms with reality. Laughter can also be cheap, glib and wrong. The final joy of heaven is not always found at that place in a room where folks are cracking up with laughter. There are many kinds of laughter and not all of them are healthy or godly. There is the laughter of drunkenness, of deadening your senses and jettisoning your moral compass and normal sensitivity. That kind of laughter will not be heard in some noisy little corner of

heaven. Then there is the laughter of sarcasm, laughter that belittles others, that delights in others’ problems, and sees itself as superior. That, too, won’t be heard in heaven. Then there is the laughter that’s predicated on being insensitive and blind to the pain of others, that can enjoy itself even while Lazarus is starving just outside the door. The Gospels are clear as to where that kind laughter lands us. As well, there is the laughter of pure superficiality, laughter that comes easy because it really doesn’t care about anything. Such laughter, though harmless, speaks of nothing.

However, there are other kinds of laughter that speak of health and of God. There is the laughter of pure spontaneous energy, seen most clearly in the natural joyous bubbling over of the life-principle inside of a young person, like the delight you see in a toddler delighting in her first steps. This is the laughter of sheer delight, one that says, “It’s great to be alive!” When we laugh in this way, we are honoring God and thanking God for the gift of life and energy — since the best way to thank a gift-giver is to enjoy thoroughly the gift and delight in it.

This kind of laughter is most spontaneous is us when we are young and, sadly, generally becomes more difficult for us as the wounds, failures, pressures and anxieties of adulthood begin to depress our spontaneous energies. We still laugh, but when we stop feeling spontaneous delight in our lives, when healthy laughter dries up, we tend to turn to unhealthy kinds of laughter to try to lift ourselves out of our depression. Hence, the loud, boisterous, cranked-up laughter we hear at our parties is often only our attempt to keep depression at bay. See how happy I am!

Peter Berger once wrote that laughter is one of the proofs for the existence of God in that our capacity to laugh in any situation shows that, deep down, we are aware that no situation ultimately binds us. Our capacity to laugh in any situation, no matter how grave or threatening, shows that on some level we are aware that we transcend that situation. That’s why a prisoner being led to his execution might still joke with his executioner and why a dying person can still enjoy a bit of irony. Healthy laughter isn’t just godly. It manifests transcendence inside us.

The kind of laughter spoken of by Jesus in the Beatitudes is a laughter that simply delights in the joy of being alive and (in that delight) intuitively its own transcendence. That kind of laughter is a key component in love and sanctity. It will be one of the “intoxications of joy” that we will feel in heaven.

If this is true, then the holiest person you know is not the humorless, dour, easily offended, over-pious person you deem as serious, deep and spiritual whom you do not necessarily want as your table companion. The holiest person you know is probably the person you want beside you at table.

When I was a novice in religious life, our Assistant Novice Director, an over-serious, fearful man, frequently cautioned us against levity and humor, telling us, that there isn’t a single recorded incident in the Gospels of Jesus laughing. Now deceased, I suspect the man is in heaven. I also suspect that from that vantage point, he would drop that caution.

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

Don’t worry, be happy

God loved you so much that he sent his Son to save you. Be happy!

Who in this world doesn’t want to be happy? Rich or poor; young or old, powerful or powerless, good or bad? But so often we look for happiness in all the wrong places. And that’s when divisiveness and competitiveness, pettiness and comparing ourselves to others, slander and gossiping — all those things and more of the world creep in. OF THE WORLD. So, where do we find happiness — TRUE happiness? Where do we look? What do we do? Is true happiness — real happiness — achievable in this life?

YES! But we must look in the right places. And we need go no further than the Scriptures. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he says that we don’t boast before God, because it is due to Him that we are in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that . . . Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord. (1Cor 1:30-31)

And Jesus himself gives us a blueprint for happiness in today’s Gospel passage from St. Matthew — he gives us the beatitudes. The beatitudes are a shocker, because it is contrary to everything the world tells us will make us happy. Jesus talks about being poor in spirit; mourning; being meek; hungering and thirsting for righteousness; being merciful; being clean of heart; being peacemakers; being persecuted for the sake of righteousness; being insulted and persecuted and having every kind of evil and slander against you. And now the good news: “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.” (Matt 5:3-12)

In the ‘80’s there was a hit song by Bobby McFerrin called “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.” It won Song of the Year and Record of the Year at the 1989 Grammy Awards. Its

message is one that we Christians can take to heart. We worry and fret about so many things. We let our life be upended by constant worry about things over which we have no control. We look for happiness and can’t find it. We look in the wrong places and we put our hope, faith and trust in things that cannot deliver the happiness, the real joy, the real peace of mind for which we are searching. And so is born division, dissension, unhappiness, competitiveness, gossip — and more — all of which do not bring happiness. We need to place our hope, faith, and trust IN THE Lord.

As I grow older and reflect on a full life, I find so many instances that I worried about things that didn’t really matter — so many superfluous things, things that didn’t bring happiness but just the opposite, things that really weren’t necessary. Recall the words of Jesus to Martha when she complained that her sister Mary wasn’t helping her and instead was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to Him: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42)

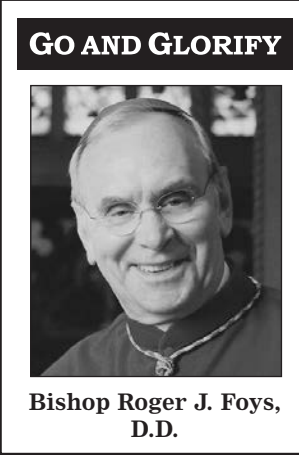
So, have we chosen the better part? Are we listening to Jesus? Have we made the beatitudes our own? Are we the cause of dissension, divisiveness, competition, slander, gossip? Are we living like the early Christian community of Corinth or truly as the community of Jesus?

In short, are we happy? If not, we need to look deep within our hearts as only we can. Happiness is not elusive. Jesus gives us the way. The burning question of the day is will we embrace it.

Most Rev. Roger J. Foy, D.D. is Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

The readings for the fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and Matthew 5:1-12a.

There is trouble in Corinth. St. Paul, writing from Ephesus, takes the Corinthians to task. We saw the beginning of this in the passage from this letter last Sunday.



Now we see Paul expanding on it. He reminds the Corinthians that they are a community. He pleads that there be no dissension. He reflects on their calling. “Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of

the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God.” (1 Cor 1:26-31)

Wow! That’s telling them, Paul! It’s as though St. Paul is saying: Hey, get your act together! Fact of the matter is everyone is welcome in the Kingdom of God and we, all of us, are nothing without God. So, get off your high horse, stop boasting, trust in the Lord. Stop your divisiveness, stop comparing yourselves to each other; be happy that you have been chosen, that you have the gift of faith, that

The Good Samaritan

(Luke 10:29-37)

He lay in a ditch, clothes torn and bloody, perhaps dead. They passed by on the way to important tasks and duties. Hurried steps and focused gazes. They had miles to go, people to see, places to be, promises to keep. Looking nei-

MUSINGS



Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

ther to left or right, they did not even see. Therefore, this stranger lay in the ditch, unseen, unattended.

I watch the evening news and am moved by all the people who are in drastic need of help. There are people on the West coast who suffer first from drought, then from storms and flooding, landslides, all sorts of disasters. There is a terrible war in Ukraine. People are displaced, killed, devastated. There is no end to tragedy.

I see and am moved with compassion. For the most part, the tragedies do not affect my day-to-day life. I go on after the news as focused on my chores and goals as any priest or Levite. Even if I choose to respond with monetary support and prayer, my daily life goes on untouched. I've lost no time, spent no energy, exhausted no emotions.

Then there are the people next to me — family, coworkers, neighbors, community members. It would make sense that I would readily see the needs of those closest to me. But these are the very people I take for granted, whose needs I do not see. Sometimes, their very habits annoy me. The fact that I can predict what they will say or do, keeps me from seeing them as they really are. While they are right in front of me, I am often blind to their hurts. Before I judge the priest and Levite, it might be appropriate for me to examine my response to the needs of my nearest neighbor. Am I blind or do I see?

Or maybe the priest and the Levite do see but are firmly convinced that they do not have the time to stop. The needs of this stranger would keep them from fulfilling their important tasks. Other people were counting on them to be on time, to minister to their needs. They had to get to the temple and to get there ready to serve. Touching a dead body or blood would have made them unclean and unable to fulfill their duties. Often, I choose not to respond to those nearest to me because I am busy about my own plans. I could even resent the way the people around me demand my time and effort. My tasks are important. At least I think so. I could get them done so much more efficiently if the needs of those around me did not demand my time and energy. Like the priest and the Levite, I may see and make a decision not to stop. Should I judge the priest and the Levite harshly when they had promises to keep?

Fear of contamination sometimes keeps me from responding also. In this time of contagion, I may fear to touch the stranger who is in need. Occasionally I am afraid of the stranger in need who is not like me. Fear of the unknown paralyzes me, or fear that I am not equipped to help. What kind of attention is required? Am I qualified to help? Fear may be what keeps the priest and Levite from approaching this stranger.

Each of us is surrounded by people who have needs, people who are hurt, disappointed, lonely. In the parable it is the Samaritan, the one scorned in the community, who understands needs, who understands rejection who sees and responds. Is it the Samaritan's experience of pain and hurt that makes responding possible? Would vulnerability make me more able to act as the Samaritan in this parable?

It is not just the leftovers that the Samaritan gives. It is generous, copious outpouring of goods, time, energy, personal support that is offered. Surely, this response left the Samaritan with a depleted bank account, but also with the loss of a day's time, incompleteness of the planned activities of the day and emotions drained. What would make me able to give all? What would soften my heart to those nearest me? Help me to see!

Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy is a retired theology professor at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky.

Beauty is a controversial topic in Christianity and has had a long history of being so. From the literal battles and bloodshed brought on by the early Christian iconoclasts to the infamous stripping of the altars brought about by the rise of Protestantism, the issue of beauty has always been a difficult topic for the followers of Christ.

ANGELICO PROJECT



Bradley Torline

Even up unto this day this controversy seems to be alive and well. It revolves around the question: What is the proper role and place of beauty in the life and worship of Christians?

Some say that focusing on beauty is superficial, worldly and vain. Others say it is a path to God and even one of his divine attributes.

I would like to say a few words in defense of beauty.

As a devotee of Pope Benedict XVI and Bishop Barron, I have long been a defender of what is known as the Way of Beauty — the theory that beauty is, perhaps, one of the best ways we can reach a modern world that is not very interested in appeals to objective truth or moral goodness. While many priests and ministry leaders my age and younger also believe strongly in this approach, stark opposition to it seems to still be relatively common.

I confess that recent years have given me pause — Am I wrong? Are attempts to beautify our churches and liturgies just vain superficialities that make us look ridiculous and unapproachable to people? Should we rather be opting for simplicity and focusing on what really matters.

One of the most prominent Catholic evangelists in the United States once seemed to openly mock the “Way of Beauty” by pointing to the churches of Europe. If beauty

The beauty controversy

is so powerful at drawing people to the faith, he asked, then why is Europe, which has churches of unspeakable beauty on every corner, losing its faith faster than even the U.S.?

This argument hit me hard. I spent a long time thinking about it before I came to the conclusion that it is misguided.

Every year, millions upon millions of unbelievers — people who would otherwise never darken the door of any kind of worship service — pour into the churches of Europe. Why? Because they are beautiful.

Beauty is doing its job in Europe. It is drawing people through the door. If we are failing to engage even a small percentage of the millions of people that come in, maybe that is our fault and not beauty's.

Even if beauty is the most superficial part of the faith (which I do not grant), that does not mean it is not important or should be discarded. Remember, the woman battling hemorrhages was healed by touching only the hem of Christ's garment. The Church is the body of Christ. The “smells and bells,” the beautiful art, architecture and music may only be the “Hem of Christ's garment,” but who are we to cast aside his garment? Would that not make us like the soldiers at the foot of the cross?

What the beautiful churches of Europe teach us is that beauty DOES work — it has the power to draw people in by the millions. But they also teach us that beauty is not enough.

I believe it would be a great mistake to de-emphasize beauty — one of the few things that still seems to have the power to make people interested in Catholicism. The answer is not less beauty. The answer is to keep beauty, but to DO MORE. When people are drawn in and opened up to the faith we must then “be prepared to give an account of the hope” that is in us (1 Peter 3:15); and in a way that is compelling and encourages people to stay engaged.

God help us!

Brad Torline is executive director for The Angelico Project online at www.AngelicoProject.org.

Our Mother's home

VIEWPOINT



Sarah Torres

There are places that seem to draw out reverence and awe — even from nature itself. Places like Arlington Cemetery, Pike's Peak, Auschwitz and Bryce Canyon. Places where we feel the need to whisper or be silent, and just try to take in the overwhelming beauty or spiritual profoundness that surrounds us. Being the mother of two little girls under the age of two, it's a little harder to find these kinds of places. An eight-month-old and an 18-month-old don't understand that certain places deserve our complete respect — or do they?

While visiting Washington, D.C. with my family this past December, we chose to visit the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. We arrived later in the day and the girls had been touring different tourist destinations all day. They were hungry, they were tired; and as I stood at the bottom of the stairs gazing upon this massive cathedral — the largest in North America — with the 26 carved saints looking down on me, my honest first thought was “they are going to echo really loudly in there.”

I think every parent has had that moment in church. You hear a child scream out, normally during the Consecration, and in horror realize that it's your child screaming. Now you're stuck with what to do. You try to quiet them immediately, debate if it's more disruptive to try to get up and take them out and no matter how kind the people around you may be, you are convinced that everyone is judging you. So, with a deep breath and my

eldest on my hip, I climbed the steps reassuring myself that every Catholic in America is a member of this cathedral, even my loud little girls. As I pushed through the large wooden doors and walked down the aisle to stand under the breathtaking Trinity Dome, I felt a blanket of peace fall over me and my daughter.

We explored the cathedral and the crypt beneath for nearly two hours. I was able to point out to my girls their baptismal patrons — St. Maria Goretti and St. Joan of Arc — carved on the pillars lining the aisle. I smiled with childish glee to see St. Sarah, wife of Abraham, depicted in mosaic on one of the domes after being told my whole life she wasn't a “real saint.” My husband and I knelt with our girls before the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and saw the recognition in our daughters' eyes at the vision of Mary they cuddle in plush form every Sunday.

Perhaps it comes with the territory of being a historian, but I am the person who wanders slowly through museums and historic sites reading every single plaque. Eventually, my sisters and their spouses came and took the girls and my husband ventured off on his own as I continued at my leisurely pace. I visited every one of the over 80 chapels and oratories, stood under each of the seven domes, paid my respects to Mary, depicted in titles for nearly every Catholic immigrant group in America: Ireland, Vietnam, Africa, Poland, India and so many more. I touched the cornerstone that was laid in 1920. The same stone that would have to wait nearly 40 years for the rest of the structure to be complete. In the crypt, I found artifacts from the popes who have visited and a magnificent grotto chapel where Mass is regularly held.

Throughout this experience, one of the most profound things that struck me was the silence — even from my girls. My two babies, who have little to no understanding of the history and significance around them, did not

(Continued on page 22)

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St. Joseph School in Cold Spring is looking for an after-care director, Monday through Friday from 3:00pm-6:00pm. During the aftercare 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.
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The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery seek a part-time advancement director to head our ongoing fundraising and operational needs. Reporting to the executive director (prioress), this professional must have an established background in coordinating nonprofit donation strategies and staff/volunteer leadership. Applications will be accepted through February 15. Please send application materials (resume, cover letter, references and salary requirements) to kybenedictines@gmail.com.

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

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The gift of Catholic Schools — our future is our past

Bishop John Iffert
Diocese of Covington

This week we celebrate the tremendous gift of the Catholic School system in the United States and the Diocese of Covington. I think it's important that we remember with gratitude that these schools were created and are now sustained by personal and communal sacrifice.

In the early days, as the Catholic school system grew, the sacrifice required to support Catholic Schools fell disproportionately on a very small group of dedicated people — consecrated religious, mostly women. Typically, the people of Catholic parishes built and maintained the school buildings, provided utilities, textbooks and a few supplies. (Though in some schools sponsored by religious orders, the sisters and their benefactors did this as well.) The religious sisters staffed the schools, basically working for their sustenance or as I call it, "toothpaste money."

Today, our schools are primarily staffed by dedicated and skilled lay employees who are paid modest but real salaries and benefits. These employees also sacrifice since their salaries and benefits are considerably less than their peers in public schools. Every school differs, but today the cost of wages, salaries and benefits generally comprise 80 percent to 85 percent of a typical Catholic grade school budget. We put most of our money into our people. At the same time, our people sacrifice to work in our Catholic



Bishop John Iffert

schools; our schools will always require missionary zeal.

Tuition is the economic sacrifice our school families are asked to bear to help fund our schools. Lately tuition has increased more quickly than other sources, so that now tuition may provide 50 percent or more of the funding for a Catholic grade school. The reason for this growth in tuition is straight forward: costs of education continue to increase rapidly, new educational services are desired, while the income of most parishes is flat or shows only modest growth. Our school families are feeling the pinch.

We call the economic sacrifice that all Catholics make together through their parishes "school subsidy." Tuition and fundraising cannot cover the full cost of Catholic education, so money from the Sunday collection (and other parish sources) subsidize the school. Generally, the Diocese of Covington recommends that our parishes limit school subsidy to 40 percent of total revenue. Higher rates of support for a school can gut a parish budget and prevent our churches from maintaining their buildings, worshipping well, or providing other basic ministries. Still, many parishes choose to provide much higher rates of subsidy. A couple of our small parishes struggling to maintain a school spend 80 percent or more of their parish budget to subsidize their school.

Parishes also provide for the cost of my ministry and

the functions of the Diocese of Covington. They do this through a 6.75 percent assessment on most revenues. A good part of that revenue supports Catholic schools through the offices of the curia. How?

The Schools Office and the Superintendent of Schools, funded by this parish assessment, provide support and coordination for the entire Catholic education system that few Catholic schools could manage on their own.

The Department of Catechesis and Evangelization promotes quality religious formation in our schools. They organize religious education in-services and review and approve religion textbooks.

The Finance Office provides a variety of professional supports to our schools, including management of the school lunch program, insurance programs, payroll services, and more.

The Safe Environment Office assists our schools in training and background checks for employees and volunteers, and in complying with state training requirements.

The Buildings and Properties Office assists in developing large maintenance and capital projects. They usher the school or parish through the process of planning, design, bidding, selecting contractors, and construction management. They have the expertise to help parishes and schools to avoid expensive mistakes or high costs for future maintenance.

I could go on, but it is enough to make the point that parishes also subsidize schools by providing for the Diocesan curia. So why doesn't the Diocese or the Bishop just relieve the parish burden and provide more money for Catholic Schools from diocesan funds?

The answer is that everything I have is yours — literally. The Diocese and the Bishop have no source of income except the contributions of Catholics in our parishes. My ministry is dependent on your generosity to your parish church. Any additional diocesan assistance to schools can

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What is the future? Am I tempted to despair? No. Like our ancestors we live in Christian hope. Christian hope is not optimism. It is not pie-in-the-sky thinking. Christian hope is the conviction that God can be trusted. That God's promises are even now being fulfilled. We are called to pass on the faith to each succeeding generation. We believe that where God calls, God also provides the way.

Our future is in our past. Our ancestors worked diligently, thought creatively, sacrificed personally and communally to build a Catholic school system the likes of which the world had never seen. Over the next decade and more, I will need your help to continue their work. Together we will do our best to balance obligations and sacrifices, to help find funds for tuition assistance for those who need it, to expand the pool of resources where we can, to find ways to save and remain on the forefront.

We will trust in God and one another. We will sacrifice and strive and make prayer-filled choices. I am confident that God will take what little we bring, bless it, break it, return it to us as gift, and it will be plenty.



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to be more than I ever imagined
I could be, including inspiring
me to attend college."

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trajectory of not only my career,
but my life."

JOHN HELMLE
Class of 2002



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Officer
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sharpened my mental acuity.
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childhood dreams. A good
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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

An environment of faith

Kendra McGuire
Contributor

A few years ago I had a conversation with another parent as we waited for our children at soccer practice. We talked about the school our children attended and when he learned my child was in Catholic school he asked how much it cost to attend. At the time, it was probably around \$4,000 and he was shocked that we paid that much to attend elementary school. This was the first time I really thought about *why* we were willing to pay this much. As soon as we had children, my husband and I both agreed that Catholic school was the only option for our children no matter the cost. We both had the opportunity to attend Catholic school and we wanted them to have the same experience. But this question is just as rele-



Kendra McGuire

vant today as it was 10 years ago. Why pay thousands of dollars for your children to attend Catholic school? Is there a really a difference? As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, let's take time to think about why Catholic education is different and why it is worth the financial sacrifice. When most of us think about K-12 schooling, we think about preparing our children to learn the knowledge and skills needed to start a career or attend college after high school graduation. If that is our only goal, any school will suffice. But if we want our children to find true joy and success in life, we must teach them about God — their creator. They must learn that he loves them and created them for a purpose. In Catholic schools, children are immersed in an environment of faith. Every day they learn to speak to God through prayer. They read sacred Scripture, receive the sacraments, and participate in the traditions of our Church. Through these faith-filled environments they are being taught what is good, true and beautiful.

Unfortunately, the world today is filled with sin, ugliness, lies and temptations. It is hard to protect our children from these things as they are often unwelcome guests even in our homes. The devices our children carry expose them to the good and the bad through social media, video games and television. The world is constantly teaching them that materialistic, selfish and lavish lifestyles will bring us success and happiness. Now, more than ever, our children need to learn how to discern what is the truth, how to seek true good and what is real beauty. As parents, we do our best to teach our children morals and values. Having these reinforced every day at school compliments our efforts. At a certain age, children are eager to hear from people other than their parents. Catholic schools offer a community where the faculty and staff are sharing these same values, not only in the classroom, but also modeling them in all aspects of the school life. Our Catholic schools are focused not just on educating children but forming them as disciples of Christ. This formation goes outside of the classroom and into the community. They reinforce Jesus' message of serving one another as brothers and sisters. Caring for members of our community includes everything from filling food pantries, raking leaves, visiting the sick, and collecting supplies for the needy. This work helps our children to learn that we are called by God to serve others throughout our lives. In this work, they realize the joy that comes from giving.

We know that Catholic schools offer excellent educational programs. The test scores speak for themselves. But education is more than just test scores. The formation of the whole person truly prepares children to live their earthly life as God has called them. And this formation shines a light on the path to eternal life, which should be the ultimate goal of every Christian mother and father. To spend eternity in the loving arms of our Heavenly Father, united as one family. This is the value of a Catholic education. Kendra McGuire is superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Catholic Schools — ‘What are you looking for?’

Dave Cooley
Contributor

There are three moments from the Gospels that I reflect on often. These are moments when Jesus turns to his disciples and asks them very poignant questions. These three questions from Jesus are meant for all of us and we should return to them often.

The first question is: “Who do you say that I am?” from the Gospel of Mark (8:29).



David Cooley

The world has many opinions and images of Jesus Christ, but it all comes down to what we say about him and how well we really know him and nurture our relationship with him. What place does he have in our hearts and lives? Do we know him and love him so much that we can't help but spread the Gospel to others?

The second question Jesus asks us is: “Will you also go away?” This is from the Gospel of John (6:67).

It is a sad fact that many people walk away from their Catholic faith. While it is true to say that it is not easy being Catholic these days, it's also true that it has never been easy. It's difficult, and so many give up.

I have spoken to a lot of people who have left their faith behind — left the Church — and I have surmised three

(Continued on page 15)

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main reasons why people go. Most of the time they are scandalized by the behavior of others. This is often understandable — think of the sex abuse crisis and other failures of the members of the Body of Christ. Any way you look at it, hypocrisy is a very powerful roadblock for people when they are trying to get to know and have a relationship with God.

Another reason people leave is that their own behaviors drive them away (even if it is on a subconscious level). Usually nobody is harder on us than we are on ourselves. We recognize that we are unable to live up to the life we are called to. We are not conditioned for the great Christian adventure, our faith is weak, and we don't trust fully in the grace of God. We know we can't do it, so why even try — it's impossible, and so we leave.

A final reason people leave is a result of one or many of the "hard teachings." Common examples are the Eucharist, the dogmas of Mary, the primacy of the pope as the successor of St. Peter, etc. It was the Eucharist that Jesus was teaching about when many walked away from him prompting him to ask the few remaining if they were going to walk away too. Let's face it, it's hard to believe that Jesus gives us his body and blood to nourish our souls, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. The Catholic Church safeguards the hard teachings of Christ and no matter how much some people want them to change, they never will.

So back to that second question from Jesus. When I am having a hard time handling what I hear in the news about the Catholic Church and I see the failures of all

of us who are supposed to be God's hands and his feet; when I am struggling with my faith, questioning if I really believe, and wondering if all of this is worth it; I can hear Jesus ask me, "Are you going to leave me, too?" On my hardest days my answer is simply the same as Peter's: "To whom (to where) shall I go?"

The third question comes from the moment in the Gospel of John when Andrew and John first run up to Jesus and he turns to them to say: "What do you seek?" in other translations he says, "What are you looking for?" (1:38).

Believers and non-believers alike can start with this question. What is it that we are looking for? Why are we here? What do we want out of life? Most people will eventually recognize that we are all striving for happiness. But, how can human beings find happiness, everlasting joy? Ultimately, it circles back to that first question: who do you say Jesus is?

So, when it comes to the education of our children, what should we be looking for in a school?

My answer is a school not afraid to explore the big questions of life, such as: Who am I? What is the meaning of life? How am I supposed to live, and why?; a school that recognizes that there is a right and a wrong, good and evil, and that children need to be challenged to live a moral life so that they can flourish and promote the common good; a school where not only is a child allowed to pray — it's essential. My answer is a thoroughly Catholic school.

When a Catholic school is living up to its

(Continued on page 16)



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(Continued from page 15)

name it will help students answer those three straightforward questions from Jesus in a way that enables them to discover who they really are, reach their fullest potential, and bear witness to God’s glory in a world that has been turned upside down. Catholic students need a strong foundation that will help them know and love their Catholic faith, ensuring that they won’t leave Christ when times get tough.

Catholic schools are different from all other schools because faith stands at the center. It is a community of believers striving to know God and live out their faith. A Catholic school adheres faithfully to the teachings of Christ and embraces its mission of bringing the faith to others in service of the Church and the world.

David Cooley is co-director and office manager of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Catholic schools — communities of learning, serving, leading and succeeding



BBHS a family of Mustangs

At Bishop Brossart High School, is committed to fostering an environment that cultivates the growth and development of students in every aspect of their lives — spiritually, academically, physically and personally. As Mustangs, the community embodies the values of faith and “Charity First,” academic excellence, character development and a family-focused community throughout the educational experience. This empowers students to be confident and compassionate leaders fully prepared to


embrace the challenges of today’s society. At BBHS, students engage in a rigorous and diverse curriculum that challenges them academically and supports their individual and communal growth. Through extensive course offerings — including many advanced placement, dual credit, and elective courses — our broad academic programs inspire students to pursue their interests, earn college credit and become global leaders ready to tackle issues of the modern world. Learning is a multifaceted experience and BBHS strives to support students as they become well-rounded individuals. The BBHS learning environment celebrates God’s unique vision for each student, encourages them to discover their talents and passions, and supports them as they uncover a greater sense of self, purpose, and confidence.

Beyond the classroom, extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to pursue their interests, build leadership skills, and achieve success in all their endeavors. BBHS sports teams have a proud and accomplished history of state and regional championship titles and the other extracurricular activities — from intramural sports leagues to the distinguished robotics and academic teams — inspire and unite students in shared curiosities and goals. Along the way, students know they’ll always have the support of the BBHS community. Whether it be the cheering applause at the crux of a state championship or the congratulations of a classmate upon the conclusion of a successful student-run worship service, BBHS unite as a family to celebrate successes and students thrive because of the unwavering support.

BBHS faculty and staff know that every student is fully capable of becoming the greatest version of themselves and they invest in each student’s success. Faculty work tirelessly to ensure an education of the highest caliber tailored to each student who enters their doors. In addition to providing a stimulating course, many teachers adopt roles outside of the classroom as coaches, club moderators, service coordinators, tutors, and intramural teammates. Teachers inspire students to remain steadfast in the pursuit of knowledge, faith and themselves, instilling them with the confidence to face a changing world with faith. This dedication to students has not gone unnoticed, as we are proud to be honored with Blue Ribbon status after decades of quality instruction.

This strong, personal pursuit of success for the whole student stems from familial love. Without the aspect of family that binds the BBHS community together, the extraordinary growth students achieve would be difficult. But by embodying Catholic values, each student finds a home at BBHS. Being a Mustang means being part of a family that remains a part of students’ lives long after they leave the building for the last time, a family that cheers them on relentlessly and becomes a motivating factor behind every achievement they accomplish. Secondary education is about people as much as it is academic excellence, and what makes BBHS a truly singular institution is that same spirit of community and collaboration which can be seen in the actions of every student who spends their weekdays at 4 Grove Street in Alexandria.

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Covington Catholic High School: WE pray. WE learn. WE serve.

WE lead. We are CovCath.

Using the Covington Catholic Mission “to embrace the Gospel message of Jesus Christ in order to educate young men spiritually, academically, physically, and socially” as its guide, CCHS utilizes many structural elements and experiences to cultivate community within its school while also preparing students to be inclusive leaders of integrity in college and beyond. A publication titled “We Are CovCath” illustrates many of these programs and traditions, including:

Campus Ministry: A dynamic program with active leadership of our campus minister and others provides reflective as well as energetic opportunities for fellowship,

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(Continued from page 16)

worship, and faith formation, including well-attended “Sports and Adoration” nights.

Retreats: Each grade level has an annual retreat, featuring leadership from upperclassmen and alumni, plus a week-long Wyoming trip for rising juniors which is often counted as the top bonding experience and highlight of a student’s four years at Covington Catholic.

Social and Civic Awareness: We routinely bring speakers and experiences to the students to broaden their perspectives and support outreach efforts by our students in the community, such as food and fund drives and participation in civic and social essay and art contests.

Service to Others: Instituted in 2001, the community service program identifies real needs from local organizations, tracks student service hours, and awards those with exceptional commitment with Varsity letters. Total completed hours typically exceed 100 hours per graduate.

House System: Established in 2018, the CCH House System fosters interaction and camaraderie to cultivate relationships and bonds across grade levels. Student leaders are responsible for motivating and role modeling within large and smaller subgroups of the school population.

With over 500 students from over 50 grade schools at CovCath, we continuously evaluate new and additional ways to advance student body diversity, curriculum, spiritual development and community service, and social experience and practice to strengthen the education and experience of CCH students regarding social issues, as part of our Mission.



**Covington Latin School:
Exceptional students
require exceptional
educational opportunities**

Ranked by “Cincinnati Family Magazine” and “Niche” as the number one private school in Northern Kentucky, Covington Latin School has developed an unparalleled reputation by fostering an atmosphere of academic and spiritual leadership through its accelerated curriculum.

Acceleration, or grade skipping, is a distinctive hallmark of Covington Latin School and offers an avenue for bright and enthusiastic fifth, sixth and seventh grade students to advance one to two years; to move at a pace, level and complexity appropriate to their individual needs, while surrounding them with like-minded and engaged peers who share their intellectual curiosity. Covington Latin also accepts students through regular matriculation.

Last year 55 percent of students entering CLS skipped one grade, 12 percent skipped two grade levels and 33 percent choose no acceleration.

But a premier Catholic education is more than cultivating intellect and accomplishments alone. Covington Latin maintains a deep and abiding commitment to its Catholic identity. Offering an in-depth theology coursework builds on the foundations developed within families and provides a comprehensive understanding of the Catholic faith. This knowledge is put into practice by Covington Latin School’s Campus Ministry through weekly all-school Masses at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, class retreats and

humanitarian service work including required service hours and a school-wide Day of Service in the community. Wide-ranging athletic and extracurricular involvement reflects CLS students’ commitment to academic, social, spiritual, and personal aspects of their total formation. A broad spectrum of clubs and organizations, ranging from Ski Club, Junior Classical League, and Yearbook, to Academic Team, Choir, and Drama Clubs, reflect the wide-ranging extracurricular interests of Covington Latin School students.

Covington Latin School offers KHSAA-recognized competitive, varsity athletic teams in archery, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross-country, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and volleyball. Several CLS student-athletes go on to compete at the state and national levels and earn scholarships to play for collegiate teams. Latin School values the lessons taught by athletic participation: leadership, strength of character, teamwork and sportsmanship — respect for one’s opponents, acknowledging victory with humility, and acceptance of defeat with grace.

Students are best prepared for college and the world beyond by having a strong spiritual foundation and learning in a supportive, diverse, coeducational atmosphere reflective of, and therefore preparatory for, the world they will inherit. Covington Latin School students come from

varied economic, educational, cultural and geographic backgrounds, drawing enrollment from throughout Southern Ohio, Indiana and nine counties in Northern Kentucky.

Covington Latin School believes that financial wealth should not determine access to the best education, nor should it shape a learning community. Covington Latin offers tuition assistance to families across a broad spectrum of financial circumstances to ensure the Latin School experience is accessible to all deserving students.

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(Continued on page 18)

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(Continued from page 17)

have been expansions in curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the campus. And yet, despite this growth, HCDHS has retained the virtues and advantages of the small school fondly remembered by alumni — small classes, a supportive family atmosphere, individual attention and a high level of involvement.

The student body of HCDHS is diverse, with students coming from an amazing range of socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. Over the years, the school’s curricu-

lum has grown to match this diversity. Five levels of study and individualized scheduling allow students to take courses that will challenge them. The flexibility and variety of the curriculum enable students to move back and forth among different levels as their preferences and development dictate.

HCDHS has continued to expand its curriculum. Advanced Placement courses are offered in English and Physics. HCDHS works with Thomas More University,

Northern Kentucky University and The University of the Cumberland’s to offer dual credit courses in calculus, American history, foreign policy, world history, Spanish, and biology. Students earn actual college credits while at HCDHS and transfer these credits to other colleges. A skilled and motivated student, taking full advantage of this curriculum, can get a tremendous head start on his or her college education — a financial and educational benefit.

Beginning in the 2019-20 school year the Practical Engineering and Design program was introduced. Here, students interested in careers in engineering, architecture, graphic/product design, as well as technical careers, are given a foundation.

Additional programs are in place to aid students at HCDHS. The award-winning Academic Enhancement Program, the first of its kind in the diocese, permits students with learning disabilities to have a full high school experience and receive the benefits of a Catholic education. Over the past four years the Academic Transitions Program has been developed to aid students who do not have a diagnosed disability but still need academic support in areas of time man-

agement, organizational and study skills as they transition into high school.

The benefits of HCDHS’s diversified and challenging curriculum can be seen concretely in other areas as well. The average composite ACT score for all students was above the national (20.8) and state (20.2) averages. In addition, 35 students have scored 30 or higher over the past five years — a threshold mark that all students dream of achieving. College scholarships in general have also grown dramatically. Last year 60 percent of the senior class accepted scholarships to over 30 different colleges and universities. These scholarship offerings open tremendous opportunity for students to achieve their dreams of a successful college career.

HCDHS has achieved many dreams — expansion and growth of our campus, improvements to our facilities, and remarkable academic success and curriculum development. However, despite all of this change, our distinctive character and core traditions have remained intact. Its priority remains — producing Catholic adults and well-rounded citizens who live their faith.

HCDHS offers a wide range of extracurricular opportunities, which allow students to develop and discover talents, friendships and experiences. Almost 90 percent of the students participate in at least one extracurricular activity and 75 percent participate in one of the 21 athletic teams. More important, every graduate of HCDHS has performed a minimum of 100 hours of community service, with many students going far beyond that figure. National Honor Society members perform at least 10 additional hours each year. Students perform service on their own time, helping to make HCDHS an integral part of Northern Kentucky and fostering a community spirit that will last a lifetime. What also lasts forever is a deep-rooted connection to the HCDHS family, forged in a thousand different ways during a student’s four years here.

HCDHS provides students with a spiritual and educational foundation so that each can develop his or her dreams into the brightest future.

Article submitted by Holy Cross District High School.



Newport Central Catholic: Building uphill momentum.

Newport Central Catholic High School sits high atop The Hill in Newport, Kentucky overlooking the primary skyline of Cincinnati. The view is arguably the most panoramic south of the Ohio River. It is a steep climb to the top and NCC has called its community to “Look Up” to the school on The Hill, “Look Up” to a brighter and more hopeful future, and “Look Up” to a new and improved educational and community experience. Master planning, feasibility studying, strategic planning, changes to academic programs, and campaigns have all occurred recently or

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Diocesan Policy states that “No person shall be refused admission to any church, school or institution or membership in any Catholic society or organization solely on the grounds of race or nationality.” In keeping with this policy, the schools under the auspices of the Department of Catholic Education, Diocese of Covington, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national or ethnic origin. Students of any race who meet the individual school’s eligibility requirements are admitted to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to students at that school and that school does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships and loan programs and other school-administered programs. The names and addresses of these schools are listed below.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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- Covington Catholic - 1600 Dixie Highway, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2797
- Covington Latin - 21 East Eleventh Street, Covington, Kentucky 41011-3196
- Holy Cross - 3617 Church Street, Covington, Kentucky 41015-1498
- Newport Central Catholic - 13 Carothers Road, Newport, Kentucky 41071-2497
- Notre Dame Academy - 1699 Hilton Drive, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2705
- St. Henry - 3755 Scheben Drive, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-3597
- St. Patrick - 318 Limestone Street, Maysville, Kentucky 41056-1248
- Villa Madonna Academy - 2500 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills, Kentucky 41017-3798

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Blessed Sacrament - 2407 Dixie Highway, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky 41017-2994
- Holy Cross - 3615 Church Street, Covington, Kentucky 41015-1430
- Holy Family - 338 East Sixteenth Street, Covington, Kentucky 41014-1304
- Holy Trinity School - 235 Division Street, Bellevue, Kentucky 41073-1101
- Immaculate Heart of Mary - 5876 Veterans Way, Burlington, Kentucky 41005-8824
- Mary Queen of Heaven - 1130 Donaldson Road, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-1088
- Prince of Peace - 625 Pike Street, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2148
- St. Agnes - 1322 Sleepy Hollow Road, Ft. Wright, Kentucky 41011-2795
- St. Anthony - 485 Grand Avenue, Covington, Kentucky 41015-0219
- St. Augustine - 1840 Jefferson Avenue, Covington, Kentucky 41014-1165
- St. Catherine of Siena - 23 Rossford Avenue, Ft. Thomas, Kentucky 41075-1298
- St. Cecilia - 5313 Madison Pike, Independence, Kentucky 41051-8611
- St. Edward - 107 North Walnut Street, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031-1299
- St. Henry - 3825 Dixie Highway, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-1863
- St. Joseph - 6829 Four Mile Road, Camp Springs, Kentucky 41059-9507
- St. Joseph - 4011 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, Kentucky 41076-1817
- St. Joseph - 2474 Lorraine Avenue, Crescent Springs, Kentucky 41017-1493
- St. Joseph Academy - 48 Needmore Street, Walton, Kentucky 41094-1028
- St. Mary - 9 South Jefferson Street, Alexandria, Kentucky 41001-1398
- St. Patrick - 318 Limestone Street, Maysville, Kentucky 41056-1248
- St. Patrick - 3285 Mills Road, Taylor Mill, Kentucky 41015-2480
- St. Paul - 7301 Dixie Highway, Florence, Kentucky 41042-0366
- Sts. Peter & Paul - 2160 California Crossroads, California, Kentucky 41007-9713
- St. Philip - 1400 Mary Ingles Hwy., Melbourne, Kentucky 41059-9701
- St. Pius X - 348 Dudley Road, Edgewood, Kentucky 41017-2698
- St. Therese - 2516 Alexandria Pike, Southgate, Kentucky 41071-3298
- St. Thomas - 428 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue, Ft. Thomas, Kentucky 41075-2295
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are now ongoing. Major collaborative labors are beginning to bear fruits and cause a momentum shift.

This past fall, Newport Central Catholic High School officially launched the “Looking Up” Capital Campaign. The Campaign Chairman, Pat Burke ’73 announced that Bishop John C. Iffert, Bishop of Covington, approved a \$13 million campaign. “Looking Up” will fund extensive renovations and significant new construction at the school which includes: STEM Labs, Increased Budget Revenue, Upgrades to Existing Assets and a Multi-Purpose Athletic Complex on Campus. The school now has commitments of \$8 million through a Silent Phase and will be hosting an official kickoff event in early February to begin a more public phase of the campaign.

At the event in February, world-renowned spiritual leader and speaker, Matthew Kelly of Dynamic Catholic Institute will give a keynote speech launching a partnership between NCC and DCI. Details on this partnership will be announced near the beginning of Lent.

In addition to improving the Faith experience on The Hill, various Academic Programs are forming and being improved including the St. Joseph Institute. In the SJI at NCC, students are exposed to career and technical fields such as electric, plumbing, HVAC, carpentry, welding, mechanics, and more. “The Shop” houses training stations for the students to become familiar with various fields of study. After a semester or more within the program, the students then take part in off-campus internships, co-ops, and dual credit studies with local community businesses such as H & R Real Estate, Boden Plumbing, Sumerel Tire, Gateway Community & Technical College, Edgewood Electric, Whiterock Woodworking and AMS Electric. Other non-traditional Academic Programs including a leadership track will be introduced into the curriculum at NCC in the upcoming years.

With all of the community and student involvement, NCC is projecting its first enrollment growth in over 15 years for the 2023-24 school year. The goal of the Strategic Plan to 2030, the campaign, the relationship with Dynamic Catholic, the new construction, and academic programming is to build further momentum in attracting more students, better serve those who are currently at NCC, and to help surpass the high standards that NCC has continually held in its longstanding tradition of Catholic education and service to Northern Kentucky.



**Notre Dame Academy:
Our family of faith.**

Notre Dame Academy (NDA) is an all-girls, college-preparatory high school within the Diocese of Covington and deeply rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church and in the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame. As a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States (SND USA), Notre Dame Academy is impelled by Jesus Christ, His mission and the school’s rich educational heritage, providing a Catholic-Christian environment of educational excellence for the transformation of individuals and society.

A Notre Dame Academy education is truly transformative. At Notre Dame Academy, young women come to realize all that God made them to be. They discover their spiritual life, their academic potential and their purpose for the future.

As the only Catholic college-preparatory high school exclusively for young women in Northern Kentucky, NDA is proud of its century-long tradition of providing an excellent Catholic education to young women empowering them to make a difference in the world. Over 10,000 NDA alumnae serve their local, regional and national communities in a variety of vocations and professions. Each of these women is an integral part of the sisterhood of Notre Dame Academy and its family of faith.

At Notre Dame Academy, students “Discover It All” including how they can live the mission of Notre Dame Academy by making difference in the world. NDA students are ignited with a passion for learning and a deep desire to serve others. NDA’s service program puts Gospel values into action. Through service efforts with many social service agencies, schools and organizations, NDA students become socially aware servants of Christ.

Notre Dame Academy is dedicated to providing a holistic education to the young women of its community that develops their God given gifts and prepares them to be life-

long learners. Through the culture of innovation at NDA, students become critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and skillful collaborators.

Each school year the Notre Dame Academy community celebrates one of the four Educational Principles of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Focusing on a central theme unites the NDA community and enables meaningful learning empowering students to become intelligent and compassionate leaders. This school year NDA’s theme is Discovering our purpose – Transforming the world.

The atmosphere of family and faith is prevalent in many ways at Notre Dame Academy. The NDA community is provided with many opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection through the celebration of the Mass, morning rosary services, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and annual retreats. The NDA school community is also

offered many collaborative academic opportunities such as its annual Common Reader Day. This unique shared experience brings students, faculty, staff and administration together through a captivating literary exercise each school year. NDA also cultivates a community environment through its fine arts programs, athletics and in the many extracurricular opportunities offered at NDA.

At Notre Dame Academy, students receive an education that combines the timeless wisdom of the Catholic faith with the necessary skills that students will need to adapt to a continuously changing world. With an innovative approach that integrates academics, arts and athletics, Notre Dame Academy forms young women to have a vibrant faith and a passion for learning.

To learn more about the advantages of a Notre Dame
(Continued on page 18)



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(Continued from page 19)

Academy education, visit www.ndapandas.org.
Number of students: 518
Graduation rate:100%
National recognition: United States Blue Ribbon School of Excellence: 1996, 2012, 2019 Southern Association of Secondary Schools Accreditation: 2018-2023
Teacher/student ratio: 1:12
Extracurriculars offered: 40
Sports offered: 13
Website: www.ndapandas.org



St. Henry District High School — a place for everyone

At St. Henry District High School (SHDHS), there’s a place for everyone; the competitive team player; the high academic achiever; the faith-focused soul, the budding artist and the future leader.

St. Henry’s counseling department works with every new incoming student and their parents to develop individualized educational plans to meet each student’s goals.

St. Henry District High School students have the opportunity to earn college credit through multiple avenues, including Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, Technical, and Vocational courses. In last year’s AP program alone, 244 exams were given to SHDHS students with 88 percent earning college credit. This is approximately 28 percent higher than the national average per the College Board website. Crusaders also consistently score well above both state and national averages on the ACT (for more about these, and other, interesting facts and figures, please see “SHDHS by the Numbers” at the bottom of this article).

St. Henry’s extremely proud of their SHDHS faculty and staff, all of which work tirelessly to help students find success at every level. The Crusaders Check & Connect program is designed to identify potential academic and social-emotional issues before they happen. The peer-tutoring program meets the needs of every student throughout the school year. The AAIMS program helps students who are navigating a variety of learning obstacles find success.

It’s clear that all the programs mentioned above are highly successful. Not only are we a two-time National Blue Ribbon School, but St. Henry District also High School was the only high school in the state of Kentucky to earn this prestigious distinction in 2021.

At SHDHS, they are more than just a school — they are a family. St. Henry faculty and staff care about every student, encouraging and supporting their individual talents. Yes, Crusaders are high academic achievers and champion athletes, but they are so much more. They are young men and women taught to follow Christ’s example and are well-rounded individuals with diverse interests.

At SHDHS, there truly is a place for everyone. Come find YOUR perfect fit at St. Henry District High School. Visit us online at www.shdhs.org/admissions, call us at 859-525-0255, or email us at enrollment@shdhs.org to learn more.

SHDHS BY THE NUMBERS...
\$12+ Million in recent STEM, Fine Arts, Religion, & Athletic facility enhancement
450+ Co-educational student population
12:1 Student-to-teacher ratio
20,000+ Service hours performed annually
Weekly Reconciliation, monthly All-School Masses, grade level Grandparent Masses, grade level Retreats
Classroom + online World Language options

100+ Course offerings
4 Dedicated science labs
100+ student leadership opportunities
30+ freshman scholarship opportunities
40+ different grade schools represented by current SHDHS students
25.8 composite ACT score
41 recent AP scholars
\$14.2 million in recent college scholarships
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COMING in 2026-2027 Varsity Football



St. Patrick High School: ‘Pursuing Knowledge, Serving Others, Living Faith’

St. Patrick High School in Maysville strives to live out the school’s motto of “Pursuing Knowledge, Serving Others, Living Faith.” Since its founding in 1864, the school has prided itself on delivering a quality education, creating a family atmosphere and developing students to be followers of Christ. This mission continues today and is the centerpiece of all they do at the school.

St. Patrick High School’s family atmosphere is created through small class sizes, where teachers and students can create strong bonds with each other and teachers know students by name. With over 135 years of teaching experience, teachers have the expertise and the knowledge to equip students with the skills and values they need to be successful in the workforce or on a college campus once they graduate from St. Patrick. The family atmosphere extends to students, who know each other and create long lasting friendships, across ages and across grades, through daily learning and worship together.

St. Patrick heeds Christ’s call to serve others with great passion. Each high school class is assigned a project, group or organization to partner with throughout the school year and engage in activities that help promote the mission of the partner group. Service involves the local women’s crisis center, the local senior living center, upkeep of the parish cemetery and providing items for local food pantries and homeless shelters. In addition, students perform individual service hours, taking care of neighbors and friends in the community.

Most important to St. Patrick’s mission; faculty, staff and students live out the faith. Every student attends mass twice a week, including all-school mass on Fridays. St. Patrick transmits the faith from oldest to youngest through its senior/kindergarten buddy program. Each senior student has a kindergarten buddy, and the groups get together for field trips, picnics, and sit next to one another in church every Friday. St. Patrick’s High school also has a junior/prekindergarten program that functions in the same way. Through study of the faith, they learn about God’s love for us and his ultimate sacrifice of salvation for the world.

The school may be small, but they are mighty in the faith of God. St. Patrick embraces the invitation to pursue knowledge, serve others, and live the faith given as part of the universal family of those who follow Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Number of students: 66
Graduation rate: 100 percent
Teacher/student ratio: 7:1
Extracurriculars offered: 5
Sports offered: 11
Website: stpatschool.com

Villa Madonna Academy: Here, we belong



Villa Madonna Academy High School is an award-winning co-ed, Catholic, Benedictine high school educating students in grades 7-12 in the Benedictine tradition. Founded in 1904 by the Benedictine

Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, the Benedictine tradition of scholarship, service, hospitality, and respect provides a strong foundation for students to succeed in universities from Harvard to USC, from MIT to Pepperdine — and everywhere in-between. Villa’s community of students represents the Tri-state area and countries that span the globe — truly a global community learning together on Villa’s beautiful 68-acre campus overlooking the Ohio River.

What motivates a student to fly from Germany or drive across a river to attend Villa’s high school? Results are one reason. Villa students score above local, state, and national averages on standardized tests. Graduates in the Class of 2022 earned an average scholarship offer of \$346,974.00/senior, and 10% of the class signed to play sports at the collegiate level.

Parents say it’s the people behind the results that make the difference. The welcoming community, engaged faculty, and values-based approach to education are the top reasons for choosing Villa. Villa’s dynamic teachers are dedicated to helping students find their best path to success, and the Benedictine values upon which Villa is founded create an environment where everyone is welcome and challenged to grow academically and spiritually. Even the Benedictine Spirituality Program is unique to Villa’s high school:

- Benedictine Mentor House System
- Benedictine Exchange Program with US Benedictine High Schools
- Benedictine Student Ambassadors
- Benedictine Retreat Program

Equally as important, Villa’s welcoming community extends outside the classroom. With an inclusive sports and extracurricular policy, all students have the opportunity to play on the Villa Vikings sports teams, perform on stage, or participate in one of Villa’s many clubs. In fact, more than 90% of students participate in an extracurricular activity, all contributing to Villa’s history of success.

The Villa Vikings athletic teams compete at regional and state levels as do our academic and youth-in-government clubs. In addition, artists and authors at Villa are recognized regionally and nationally for the quality of their work.

Villa is Catholic, co-ed, close to home and affordable. Scholarships and financial assistance are available to qualifying families. You are invited to explore Villa Madonna Academy High School as an option for your family. Observe the students, talk to parents and meet the faculty. You will see why it is Here, We Belong.

Learn more by visiting villamadonna.org or by contacting Janet Baugh, admissions Director, at jbaugh@villa-madonna.net or call (859)

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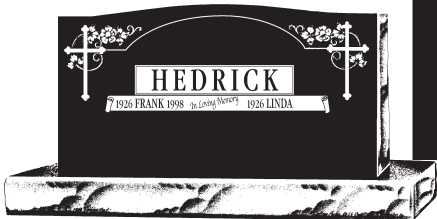
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YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR

The Diocese of Covington's Office of Catechesis and Evangelization is adding the new full-time position of Youth Ministry Coordinator, whose primary purpose will be to launch, support, and coordinate vibrant youth ministry programs in our parishes and in our nine high schools. We seek faith-filled, energetic, dynamic candidates with the communication and organizational skills to jump-start this venture. knowledge of the Faith and previous experience in ministry. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry is preferred. Interested individuals may send a cover letter and resume, including compensation history and references with contact e-mail addresses, to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR, at skoplyay@covdio.org or by fax to (859) 392-1589.

March for Life

(Continued from page 2)

toward advancing a culture of life in this nation," Sister of Life Mariae Agnus Dei told OSV News. "Some of the biggest battles are in front of us."

Celebrating "the gift of life and the beauty of the human person" is essential to that task, she said.

Alan Pickett, executive director, Catholic Charities – Diocese of Covington, was among a group of Catholic Charities employees and Northern Kentucky University students who attended the March for Life in Washington.

"The actress who played Abby Johnson in the movie *Unplanned* approached us," he said, explaining that Ashley Bratcher, the actress, was volunteering for a pro-life ministry and was asking attendees of the march the simple question "Why were they there?" The best answer they gave, said Mr. Pickett, was that "The work is not over. It's just beginning. By reversing the (Roe v. Wade) decision, it became an issue state by state." Mr. Pickett has attended eight total Marches for Life, and said that the crowd was "very peaceful, and much larger than I expected."

Andrew Cole, director of Campus Ministry at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, accompanied a group of TMU students to the march. About the experience of this year's March for Life, Mr. Cole said it was "invigorating" and represented an "optimistic pivot in the same fight that continues, but changes strategically."

The Messenger contributed to this article.

Our Mother's home

(Continued from page 7)

make a sound. My fears had been unfounded, and, in a way, I feel I should have known better than to worry. Where else would my girls, or any of us, be more welcome than in our Father's house, especially, one wrapped in the love of our most Blessed Mother.

Next time you are in D.C., whether you have visited before or it's your first time, take a few hours to explore the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. And remember: no matter who you are, what you have done or not done, or where you are from — you are always welcome in your Mother's home.

Sarah Torres is the archivist for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

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National/World

Archbishop calls for ‘new awakening of love’ at first post-Roe Requiem Mass

LOS ANGELES — Some 3,000 people packed the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels here on the evening of Jan. 21 to pray for children lost to abortion at the annual Requiem Mass for the Unborn, the first since the overturning of Roe v. Wade last summer. “As we know, our work for mothers and children and families has not ended. It is only changed,” said Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, referencing the U.S. Supreme Court’s Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision in his homily. “We still need to work every day to build a city and nation where it is easier for people to be born and to raise families, where the strong help the weak, and the vulnerable are protected.” The liturgy closed the daylong OneLifeLA event, which included a Walk for Life through the streets of the Chinatown area of Los Angeles and a pro-life festival with music, prayer and speeches at Los Angeles State Historic Park. The event drew an estimated 7,500 pro-life advocates from around the state, many of whom traveled in groups by bus. The Mass was celebrated on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s Roe decision, the same weekend as similar pro-life rallies around the country. For pro-life Californians, L.A.’s OneLife and San Francisco’s annual Walk for Life – held on the same day – signaled ongoing resolve in the face of the passage of Prop. 1 by voters last November to enshrine a “right” to abortion in the state constitution.

Pope, bishops call for peace as violent protests in Peru turn deadly

LIMA, Peru — Peru’s bishops pleaded for peace as violent protests against the country’s current president and legislature have claimed the lives of dozens of people. “We deplore the violence that has been unleashed because violence only begets more violence,” the Peruvian bishops’ conference said in a message published Jan. 20. “The death of more than 50 Peruvian brothers and sisters is a deep wound in the heart of our people, as well as the suffering of all the wounded, civilians and police.” According to The Associated Press, the

protests and violent clashes between police and protestors have led to the indefinite closure of Machu Picchu, the 15th-century Incan citadel. The civil unrest blocked transportation to and from Machu Picchu, resulting in hundreds of visitors left stranded at the ancient site. In their message, the bishops of Peru said the violent protests are a source of “great pain” and said the senseless deaths “must not go unpunished.” “In Peru, we are all needed to build the homeland,” the message said. “Let’s stop hurting each other! No more confrontations! This situation demands dialogue, listening and resolve.” Citing “Fratelli Tutti,” Pope Francis’ encyclical on fraternity and social friendships, the bishops offered to mediate the conflict in order to “build bridges of encounter.”

Tens of thousands turn out for Walk for Life West Coast to speak for unborn

SAN FRANCISCO — Jesus Garcia, 24, a Cal-State East Bay student from Newark, California, was attending his fourth Walk for Life West Coast in a row Jan. 21. “I want to speak for the unborn who don’t have a voice,” he said, holding a hand-made sign that read: “Abortion is violence against a human life. Not health care or a woman’s right!” The first Walk for Life West Coast since the June 24 U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade drew an outsized crowd of tens of thousands of pro-life supporters, apparently undaunted by California’s newly approved constitutional amendment — Proposition 1 — removing all restrictions on abortion. “Both Dobbs and Prop. 1 have reignited the pro-life movement in California and today’s turnout shows it,” said Eva Muntean, co-chair of the Walk for Life. The walk stretched more than a mile along Market Street, the city’s main downtown thoroughfare, which was closed to traffic for the event. “After Roe, we

decided to come and bring the prayer here where it was needed,” said Deacon Kevin Stephenson of St. Benedict Parish in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, who with his wife, Monica, brought 20 high school students from the parish youth group, including two of their own children. Last year, they went to the March for Life in Washington. “It’s our kids who wanted to come here. We just followed the Holy Spirit.”

Outpouring of grief, prayers as Lunar New Year massacre latest U.S. mass shooting

MONTEREY PARK, Calif. — “With the whole family of God here in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, I am praying for the victims of this violence,” said Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez in a statement following a mass shooting that left 10 people dead and at least 10 more wounded in Monterey Park, California, late Jan. 21. Archbishop Gomez, who was already scheduled to celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. local time to mark the Lunar New Year at St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church in LA’s Chinatown, added: “We pray for those killed and injured in this shooting; we ask that God stay close to their families and loved ones. We pray for the wounded to be healed, and we ask that God give strength and guidance to the doctors and nurses who are caring for them.” A shooter fired into the crowd at a dance ballroom as guests celebrated on the eve of the Lunar New Year. The wounded were taken to local hospitals around the city, which is east of Los Angeles. Their condition ranged from “critical to serious,” said Capt. Andrew Meyer of the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department. He told reporters in a news briefing early Jan. 22 that it was too early in the investigation to know the motive of the shooter, who remained at large.

Protecting God’s Children for Adults Safe Environment Trainings

For all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children.

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

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

Step 3: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at

system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

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- January bulletin: posted Sunday, Jan. 1; due Tuesday, Feb. 7.

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- Tuesday, Jan. 31, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
- Wednesday, Feb. 1, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

www.virtusonline.org, enter user id and password to access your bulletins. If your Virtus account is inactivated please contact your primary location for assistance.

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

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God’s word, mercy must be shared with everyone, pope says

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

The Word of God, which heals and raises people up, is meant for everyone, Pope Francis said. Jesus “wants to reach those far away, he wants to heal the sick, he wants to save sinners, he wants to gather the lost sheep and lift up those whose hearts are weary and oppressed,” the pope said. “Jesus ‘reaches out’ to tell us that God’s mercy is for everyone,” he said in his homily during Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 22, the church’s celebration



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Jan. 22, 2023.

of Sunday of the Word of God. During the Mass, the pope also formally installed seven men and women in the ministry of catechist and three others in the ministry of lector. Pope Francis gave each of the lectors a Bible and the catechists a crucifix. In his homily, the pope said the Lord invites everyone to conversion and invites his disciples to actively “spread the light of the word” to everyone. “May it not happen that we profess a God with an expansive heart yet become a church with a closed heart — this, I dare say, would be a curse,” he said. “May it not happen that we preach salvation for all yet make the way to receive it impractical; may it not happen that we recognize we are called to proclaim the kingdom yet neglect the Word, losing ourselves in so many secondary activities or discussions.”



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