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 L. Ettler 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, parishioners and parishoners for missionary discipleship.

In the Diocese of Covington, the four-year initiative has as its stated goal: “Empowering Priests. Igniting Parish. 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 data. All parishioners are encouraged to take the DMI survey which opens Feb. 22 and lasts through March 27. The questions not only ask demographic questions but also ask parishioners to evaluate their own involvement in the diocese. "We hear from our parishes that their parish does well in 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 level."

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 DMI 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 surveys 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. 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 at the same time, the 75-question survey is 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 speaking to 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, Jeannie 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 2014, 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.

“...why we are here today,” she said. “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 many 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 those loving families.

Speaking with OSV News at the march, Kristian 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 strapping 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 Rodriguez, who came to the march from Miami, told OSV News. Rodriguez 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.”

“Some of the things that we’re talking about in Mississippi,” she said. “Some of the things that we’re talking about in Mississippi, such as stripping Planned Parenthood, the federal level, such as stripping Planned Parenthood, the

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 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 effort 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. Donna 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 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)
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 form 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.

In addition to the program, the volunteers that organized Be Their Light also organized 39 “prayer pals” for the participating students—“prayer warriors” who respond to ads put into the parish bulletin to pray for the students every week. “They were praying that the students 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 is 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.

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 spiritual 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.

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“Chosen program prepares children for Confirmation

Jan. 28  Mass, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, 5 p.m.
Jan. 29  Mass, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Feb. 1  Catholic Schools Week Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.
Building Commission meeting, 2 p.m.
Confirmation, St. Bernard/Holy Spirit/Divine Mercy Parishes, held at Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, 7 p.m.
Feb. 2  Catholic Charities Corporate Board meeting, 1:30 p.m.
Confirmation, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria, 7 p.m.
Feb. 3  All-school Mass, St. Henry District High School, Erlanger, 10 a.m.
Cursillo on Tap, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.
Feb. 4  Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 4:30 p.m.
St. Anthony 7th and 8th grade students, led by their teacher Mrs. Simon, performed the story of the Nativity for the rest of 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, McGarrEuchre.givesmart.com. Contact jackmcgarreuchre@gmail.com or text/call (859) 250-4924.

Come celebrate a First Friday Candelight Mass with Sacred Music, Feb. 3, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, hosted by The Angiulo 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.

Win. T. (Bill) Robinson III ’71 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 Ronhaus ’71, Whitney Cundiff Smith ’88, April Gibson Colegate ’88, Brian Haigis ’97, Randy Lightbourn ’12, Steve Pangallo ’81, and Jerry Turner ’79. The 2010 Girls All A State Champion Basketball Team will be named if “Team of Distinction.” Bob Detert will receive the Coach Jim Conner Award and Jerry Schneider ’72 the Fr. John Hegenauer Community Service Award. Cost $10. Visit recca.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.

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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 1, 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 $30. Reserve your space at muky.us/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’ footsteps. Celebrate eucharist Masses in the very places where miraculous gifts became pages in the Gospel. If interested in learning more, please contact St. Henry parishioner Michael Fortwood, (859) 678-6666 or e-mail pamarinedad@yahoo.com.

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Carefully considering the path

Karen Kuhman
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 minstry 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.

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.arlingtonpassionists.com
Sisters of Divine Providence
www.cdipkentucky.org
Sisters of Notre Dame
www.sndusa.org
Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker
www.sjsw.org

Public and Private Associations

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

Erin Nagy, postulant of the Sisters of Notre Dame
How serious is laughter?

In a homily Karl Rabacker 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." Rabacker remarks that Jesus is teaching that our final state of happiness in heaven will not just cut us off from our sadness and our tears, it will bring us to laughter. "An intoxication of joy." Laughter is integral to the final ecstasy of the kingdom of God. 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, Rabacker submits, is part of the eternal praise of God. However, this can be grief and malaise. Not all laughter gives God praise and not all laughter suggests that we are healthy or godly. There is the laughter of drunkenness, of deadening our senses and jettisoning our 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 of 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 spontaneity—so spontaneous and so close to the world joy that it's bubbling over in 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 joy — since the 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, safely, generally becomes more delicious as we grow older. However, there are other kinds of laughter that speak of depth and insight. This kind of laughter is most spontaneous is us when we are young and, safely, generally becomes more delicious as we grow older. However, there are other kinds of laughter that speak of depth and insight. 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 gossips— all those things most clearly in the natural realm of the things of the world—bubbling over in 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 joy — since the way to thank a gift-giver is to enjoy thoroughly the gift and delight in it.

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

"So, have we chosen the better part? Are we listening to Jesus? Have we made the beatitudes our own? Are we the holy people that Jesus described in today's Gospel passage from St. Matthew—be good to the poor, feed the hungry, visit the sick, go to table? 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 might boast before God." (1 Cor 2:6-31) 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 message is one that we Christians can take to heart. We worry and fret about so many things. We let our life be shaped by comparison, by jealousy, by envy. We want the world to look at us and say, "You have 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, the things that the world tells us will make us happy, the things that the world says will bring happiness, the things that the world promises, the things that the world gos — 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 superficial things, things that don'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 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 holy people that Jesus described in today's Gospel passage from St. Matthew—be good to the poor, feed the hungry, visit the sick, go to table? 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 might boast before God." (1 Cor 2:6-31) 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...
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 been a difficult topic for the followers of Christ.

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 stand that certain places possess the power to make people interested in Catholicism. The "smells and bells," the beautiful art, architecture and music may be the "Hem of Christ's garment," but that doesn't make them the proper place for everyone to worship.

Beauty is doing its job in Europe. It is drawing people to the beautiful churches of Europe. It is doing its job in the U.S. It is doing its job in cattle corrals, in my backyard...even in my own backyard.

Beauty is doing its job in Europe. It is drawing people to the beautiful churches of Europe. It is doing its job in the U.S. It is doing its job in cattle corrals, in my backyard...even in my own backyard. It is doing its job in the most unlikely places. An eight-hour tour of the Colorado Springs area surrounds us. Being the seat of the Pikes Peak Cemetery, Pike's Peak, Auschwitz and Bryce Canyon, Colorado Springs is a war ComboBox. Its congressmen, its citizens, its commuters, its tourists, its residents, its churches. There are places that seem to draw out reverence and awe — even from nature itself. Places like Arlington Cemetery, Pine's Peak, Auschwitz and Bryce Canyon. Even thisPagoda that is a war ComboBox. Its congressmen, its citizens, its commuters, its tourists, its residents, its churches. There are places that seem to draw out reverence and awe — even from nature itself. Places like Arlington Cemetery, Pine's Peak, Auschwitz and Bryce Canyon. Even this cathedral — the massive cathedral — the church that is a war ComboBox.

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.

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ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, COLD SPRING
AFTERCARE DIRECTOR
St. Joseph School in Cold Spring is looking for an after-care director, Monday through Friday from 3:00pm-6:00pm. During the 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. If interested please contact principal, Emily Uragle at euragle@stjoeshool.net or 859-441-2025.

ST. PHILIP, MELBOURNE
CAFETERIA MANAGER
St. Philip School is looking for a Cafeteria Manager, Monday through Friday. This position requires a general knowledge of preparation, cooking and serving food for students. Includes ordering, receiving, managing inventory, cleaning, and maintaining school kitchen. Must comply with health and safety standards. Prepare production records and necessary records and files. 4-6 hours per day. Benefits available for full-time employment.
Contact Diocesan School Food Service Director, Laura Hatfield at lhatfield@covdio.org or call 859-392-1551

DENTAL ASSISTANT
We are looking for a joyful, mature person with a passion for helping people and a love of hard work and team collaboration. This is a unique, special opportunity for an experienced person who enjoys making relationships and serving others. Must have a minimum of 20 years of stable, verifiable work experience, which can include periods of stay-at-home parenting. Please send letter of interest and resume to Linda.ju1412@gmail.com.

PART-TIME ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR
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.

STAFF WRITER/MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPER
The Messenger, is seeking a Staff Writer/Media Content Developer to join its media team. In this role, you will use your communication and web design skills to increase reader engagement, primarily through creating content for — the Messenger, the diocesan website, and diocesan social media platforms. Duties and responsibilities include creating content for various print and social media formats; proofreading content before publication; attending, taking photographs and reporting on events; and recording and editing short videos. Knowledge of Adobe Creative Cloud software is preferred. Candidates must be practicing Catholics with strong organizational skills, and the ability to meet deadlines and handle an absolute requirement.
Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplay by email: skoplay@covdio.org, (859) 392-1500. EOE

PLEDGE COORDINATOR
The Diocese of Covington’s Stewardship and Mission Services Office invites qualified individuals to apply for the support position of Pledge Coordinator. This role requires an individual who takes pride in performing detailed work with an absolute minimum of errors. Primary responsibilities include recording financial pledges, gifts, payments, etc. for the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal, and also fund-raising campaign reporting, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up. Ideally, we are seeking Catholic candidates who relate well to others, are extremely detail- and confidentiality-oriented, are comfortable with a team approach to projects, and can manage deadlines under a steady workload.
Interested individuals may send a resume with a cover letter, compensation history, and at least three references with contact email addresses to Stephen Koplay, SPHR by email to skoplay@covdio.org, or by fax to 859/392-1589.

CONTENT DEVELOPER
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Catholic Schools
THE MESSENGER • JANUARY 27, 2023
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 the sustenance or as I call it, “toothpaste money.”

“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 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...
only come from higher assessments on these same parishes. To give significantly more, I would have to take more. It would be a literal case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

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.
"Just as it did with me, St. Henry has brought out the best in my children. The entire SHDHS community has really encouraged, nurtured, and broadened their interests."

SUZI MCCLURE FRANCIS
Class of 1996
Manager of Ambulatory Clinical Pharmacy
St. Elizabeth Health Care

"I am forever indebted to SHDHS. The teachers there, and the friends I made, pushed me to be more than I ever imagined I could be, including inspiring me to attend college. SHDHS completely changed the trajectory of not only my career, but my life."

JOHN HELMLE
Class of 2002
Chief Financial Officer
Cincinnati Bengals

"The teachers and coaches at St. Henry strengthened my faith, honed my work ethic, and sharpened my mental acuity. From West Point to Brazil to Zimbabwe, those pillars have taken me places beyond my childhood dreams. A good moral and academic education is a priceless gift, and I appreciate the one that SHDHS gave me!"

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Romans 8:28

HOLY CROSS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

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 relevant 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.

An environment of faith 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.

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 education —al 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.

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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). 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 is 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)
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 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...
Catholic schools — communities of learning, serving, leading and succeeding

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.

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 is 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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Offering a classical education to 7th-12th grade students looking for a more challenging environment.

Now registering 5th-8th graders for our Entrance Exam & VIP Visit Days! CovingtonLatin.org/Admissions
Catholic Schools

(Continued from page 16)

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. Covington 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. Ranked #1 Catholic School in Kentucky by Niche.com Ranked #1 Private School in Northern Kentucky by Niche.com

Voted #1 Private School in the Tri-State by Cincinnati Family Magazine

205 Students (7th-12th grade)
9.1 Student Teacher ratio
$315K per student in academic college scholarships
15 KHSAA Sports & 21+ clubs/activities
30.2 Average ACT Score
52 percent receive financial aid

website: covingtonlatin.org

(Continued on page 18)
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(Continued from page 17)

have been expansions in curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the campus. And yet, despite this growth, HCDHS has remained true to the values 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 curriculum 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 developmental needs dictate.

HCDHS has continued to expand its curriculum. Advanced Placement courses are offered in English and History. HCDHS provides students with a spiritual and educational foundation so that each can develop his or her character and core traditions have remained intact. Its primary purpose remains — producing Catholic adults and well-rounded citizens who live their faith.

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

Your Official Class Ring and Graduation Supplier.

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Phone: 513-777-8600
Website: graduateserviceinc.com

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 added 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 are about to.

Newport Central Catholic Building uphill momentum.

The Catholic Newman Center at Northern Kentucky University supports Catholic Schools!
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. Efft, 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 DCL. 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, Edgewater 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 Institute, 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.

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 of 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 Academy education, read the "Looking Up" Capital Campaign article on page 19.
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, encouraging and supporting their individual talents. St. Henry's counseling department works with every student and their parents to develop individualized educational plans to meet each student’s goals.

Academy education, visit www.ndapandas.org.

20 Athletic facility enhancement more.

859-525-0255, or email us at enrollment@shdhs.org to learn how to find YOUR perfect fit at St. Henry District High School.

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.

SHHHS BY THE NUMBERS.

S: 12+ Students in recent STEM, Fine Arts, Religion, & Athletic facility enhancement

100+ 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

36+ 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

New for 2024-2025 Youth Football

COMING in 2025-2026 Junior Varsity Football

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 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 teaching and worship together.

St. Patrick needs 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, faith, 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 1984 by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, the Benedictine tradition of scholarship, service, hospitality, and respect provides a solid 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 $390,974.00 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 important, Villa’s welcoming community extends beyond the average student and 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-governmen t programs. 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) 302-2002.

Cognia School of Distinction Washington Post Top-50 Challenging High Schools (2014-Present)

100% Graduation Rate

Sports Offered: 12

11:1 Student-Teacher Ratio

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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.”

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.
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 dying 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 1,500 pro-life activists 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 calls across the country. For pro-life Californians, it was one of their 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,” the Peruvian bishops’ conference said in a statement Sunday. “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 bishops went on to say 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 handmade sign that read: “Abortion is violence against a human life.”

The walk was led by Archbishop José H. Gomez, referencing the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe decision, the same weekend as similar pro-life movements in California and today’s turnover 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 Docon 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

MONTREY 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 Jose 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 Jolley 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.
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 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."