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‘Take and drink’

In a letter to priests, March 29, Bishop John Iffert has lifted the last of the COVID-19 restrictions by returning to the local pastor the decision to distribute the Precious Blood. Distribution of the Precious Blood may resume on the solemnity of Corpus Christi, June 10–11.

Printed here is Bishop Iffert’s letter.



March 29, 2023

Dear Reverend Fathers,

Peace be with you.

For the past three years, our Diocesan response to COVID-19 precluded the distribution of the Precious Blood of Christ. This action was taken as a precaution against contagion during the height of the pandemic. Though the pandemic is still with us, our situation is considerably improved. Considering the input from public health authorities, and after consulting with the Presbyteral Council, I am prepared to lift the prohibition on sharing the chalice and the Blood of Christ.

With this letter, I authorize the use of the common chalice and distribution of both eucharistic species, beginning on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (June 10–11, 2023). From that time, pastors, administrators, and chaplains may allow the distribution of the Blood of Christ to the Catholic faithful at all celebrations of the Eucharist.

I ask that priests consult the people you serve regarding this return to regular practice. I encourage any priest who may be particularly susceptible to severe COVID to consider your own health. While the lay faithful may choose not to partake of the Precious Blood, it will almost always fall to the priest or deacon to purify the sacred vessels. I implore all the faithful to be understanding and respectful of a priest’s evaluation of his own risk of severe COVID, even if it means he does not offer Eucharist under both kinds at every Mass.

In the case of Masses celebrated at hospitals, care facilities, and religious communities, I urge priests to consult with administrators and leaders of religious communities to seek guidance on the appropriateness of reintroducing the common chalice in these environments. Please give significant weight to their input.

In the weeks between now and *Corpus Christi*, please attempt to recruit, train, and update necessary numbers of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. To facilitate this process, I am happy to allow pastors to provide for the training of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their own parishes or in cooperation with neighboring pastors. An outline for recommended training sessions is available from the Diocesan Office of Worship. After training is complete, please submit to the Office of Worship the names of those you have selected and trained, along with your affirmation that they possess the necessary qualifications. This will allow me to grant the mandate.

It will be important throughout the Easter Season to provide catechesis about the reception of Holy Communion. This catechesis should include the importance of frequent Communion and the significance of receiving Eucharist under both kinds. It should also include assurance to those who are precluded from receiving the Precious Blood because of age, illness or concern, that they receive the fullness of Christ’s gift of self under either Eucharistic species alone.

As this last COVID-19 restriction on the liturgy is lifted, I give thanks to God for each of you. I frequently hear from those who were homebound during the pandemic for many months, how important your streamed Masses, phone calls, virtual meetings, and efforts at pastoral care were in maintaining connection to the Church and continuing to rely on God’s divine providence.

Thank you for all you did to be the loving, patient face of Christ during a most traumatic time.

I am grateful that we will soon be able to share again the Blood of Christ with our brothers and sisters. May our ongoing for Christ’s mercy and a share in His Passion never be sated in us until we arrive at the eternal banquet of the Kingdom of God.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington



Extended — take the Disciple Maker Index

The time to complete the Disciple Maker Index survey has been extended. Parishioners, 18 years of age and older, now have until April 3, 11:59 p.m. to complete the 75-question survey. By completing the survey, parishioners are helping their pastor and parish leaders make data-driven decisions on how best to manage resources and serve others. The survey is available online at CovDio.org/WithOneHeart.



Holy Week at the Cathedral

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 2, 10 a.m.
Pontifical Mass

Chrism Mass

Tuesday, April 4, 7 p.m.
Mass

Holy Thursday

Thursday, April 6,
Mass of the Lord's
Supper, 6 p.m.

Adoration of the
Blessed Sacrament to
follow until 10 p.m.

Good Friday

Friday, April 7,
Confessions 12–2 p.m.

Choral Stations of the
Cross, 12 p.m.

The Bishop's Choir will
offer choral responses
to each Station.

Celebration of the
Lord's Passion, 3 p.m.

Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 8,
8:30 p.m.

Easter

Sunday, April 9,
7:40 a.m. Mass
10 a.m. Mass

Cathedral hosts special Passion relics veneration and Shroud of Turin replica

Staff Report

The Cathedral Basilica will host a special veneration of relics associated with the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus in the St. Paul's Relics Chapel beginning Easter Sunday, April 9, through the following Saturday, April 15. The centerpiece of the devotional exhibit will be an exact copy of the Shroud of Turin, the cloth believed to be the burial shroud of Jesus Christ, along with the Sudarium of Oviedo, the cloth believed to have covered Jesus' head when he was taken down from the cross.

"The relics of the passion, death, and burial of Jesus are the 'first' relics of the Church," says Father Jordan Hainsey, custos of relics for the Diocese of Covington and co-curator of the Cathedral's passion relics display. "From our earliest days of the Church, veneration of the relics of the suffering and death of Our Lord were central to the observances of Lent, Holy Week, and the practice of pilgrimage. The desire to see and touch the objects of his passion and death and offer prayers at the site of the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus was buried were catalysts for deep faith."

The Shroud of Turin is believed by Christians to be the burial shroud that wrapped Jesus' body when it was placed in the tomb on Good Friday; it was also present at the moment of his resurrection. Scriptures say that Peter and John both "saw the linen cloths lying there" when they came to the tomb (John 20:5). The Shroud is made of linen and measures fourteen and a half feet long and three



Passion relics. Photos courtesy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

and a half feet wide. It shows the front and back image of a crucified man with scourge marks over his entire body, nail wounds in his wrists and feet, and prick-like injuries to his brow and scalp consistent with the "crown of thorns" pressed onto his head. In the man's right side, a gaping oval wound can be seen from which a stream of blood and clear fluid flows.

The Sudarium of Oviedo is the Shroud's companion artifact and is believed to be "the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head" (John 20:7). Jewish tradition required that the face and head of a deceased person be

(Continued on page 13)

Chris Goddard is named next executive director for Catholic Charities

Laura Keener
Editor

At the annual Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington volunteer appreciation dinner, March 28, Chris Goddard was introduced as its next executive director, the organization's tenth. Mr. Goddard, currently a religion teacher at Notre Dame Academy, comes to the position with over 30 years of executive experience in health care.



Chris Goddard

"I guess my heart still is in leadership and wanting to affect change, maybe at a macro instead of a micro level," said Mr. Goddard about his decision to after four years move out of the classroom and back into executive level, non-profit administration.

Alan Pickett, current executive director, had announced that he would be retiring this spring. Mr.

Goddard is expected to assume the position May 26, the day after the school year ends at NDA.

Mr. Goddard holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Miami University, Ohio; and three master's degrees — Hospital and Health Care Administration, Xavier University; Business Administration, Xavier University; and Theology, Athenaeum of Ohio. He and his wife, Diane, will celebrate 35 years of marriage in October. They have three children and one grandchild. Their first son, James, was born with a heart anomaly and lived for nine days. Son, Adam, and daughter, Grace, are in their late 20s. Adam and his wife, Rachel, are the parents of four-month-

old granddaughter, Lucy.

Interestingly, Mr. Goddard said, that throughout his entire life, even when at age 27 he accepted the Chief Executive Officer position at Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital in Irvine, Ky, he was never searching for a job. Instead, people who knew him, his character and his qualifications, would recommend that he apply for an open position that they had learned about. Such was the case at Catholic Charities when he submitted his resumé for the executive director position.

"I always stay close to God, I try to be a good person and I guess by God's graces, by skills I developed, people saw things in me and they approached me," Mr. Goddard said.

Mr. Goddard was CEO at Marcum & Wallace Memorial for seven years when a friend told him about the open position of vice president of Regional Development at St. Claire Medical Center, Morehead. He served in that position for two years when another person said they thought he should apply for the Chief Executive Officer position at Northern Kentucky Family Health, now HealthPoint Family Care, Covington.

For 20 years he led HealthPoint as its CEO serving the healthcare needs of vulnerable populations — low income, uninsured, homeless, immigrant and migrant children and families. During his tenure, HealthPoint dramatically grew the number of patients served by adding mental health, behavioral health and addiction services and expanding its existing medical, dental and women's health services.

As his children grew and their interests and conversations matured, especially around the subject of religion, Mr. Goddard felt the urge to leave healthcare administration and return to the classroom as a religion teacher. His first assignment was as Notre Dame Academy as long-term substitute for a teacher who was on maternity leave. The next year (2020–2021) he taught at Seton High School, returning full-time the following year to Notre Dame Academy.

Mr. Goddard has served on a number of Boards including the Covington Diocesan Board of Education and

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington Board. He has also coached basketball and soccer for his children's teams.

"I love soccer. I've coached my kids all the way up into until they needed a better coach. The family, as a whole, love soccer," he said. And while he doesn't have a bucket list, he would like to attend an English Premier soccer game someday.

Mr. Goddard said that he doesn't have a true hobby. He and his family — both his wife and children and his Dad and six siblings (Mr. Goddard has a twin sister) — like to travel. He's been to eight European countries and each year his Dad, son and brothers travel to a family fishing cabin in Canada for a guys fishing weekend. The guys also made a pilgrimage to Camino Santiago de Compostela, walking 100 miles and driving the remaining 400 miles of the 500-mile pilgrimage. "It was my absolute favorite trip. My dad was 86 years old then and really couldn't walk all that much, but we figured it out," Mr. Goddard said.

He also enjoys woodworking focusing more on projects, like building a jungle gym for the children or a mantle for the fireplace, than "tinkering around."

About being named executive director of Catholic Charities, Mr. Goddard said, "I feel really honored to be selected as Alan's successor and, and I find it to be a true privilege to be able to serve the people of the diocese, whether they're a practicing Catholic or not. That has always been the history of my career not to ask questions, but just to serve and try to meet the need. Hopefully people will keep me in their prayers as I start this new journey and as Catholic Charities begins a new chapter."

As Bishop Iffert introduced Mr. Goddard at the Catholic Charities volunteer appreciation dinner, he said, "We have a man with great talent and acumen, a man with a love for his faith, who has taken the time to study his faith and be formed in his faith, and who has always had a heart for the poor, who is stepping up now to take leadership of Catholic Charities. I am very pleased and hopeful for the future and I welcome you with great joy."

The sacred Triduum — being lifted from time into eternity

Msgr. William Cleves
Messenger Contributor

Because we conceive time as moving in a straight line, we speak of timelines. I was introduced to these during the time I spent in elementary school. There, on the wall above the chalkboard, lay the story of humanity — the past to the left, the future to the right, the present somewhere between. I wish to clarify one point; I am not arguing against this conception of time. We need it for the order necessary to thrive as human beings. I do wish to claim, however, that its benefits, while necessary, are limited.

One of the consequences of the linear concept of time is that we tend to think that time comprises units: years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds and their ever-increasing subdivisions (if you must know, Planck time is 5.39×10^{-44} seconds). Thus, events in the distant past are conceived as having little or no influence on today (Was it not Henry Ford who said, “History is bunk?”).

Indeed, there are some historians who suggest that one of the principal causes of the Reformation was that our concept of time changed. The question naturally arises, “Changed from what?”

Biblical people tended to think of time as comprising events, not measurable amounts as we do. An event has a timeless quantity to it. We tend to remember events; they commemorated them. Our ancestors in the faith believed that commemoration means: 1) telling the story, and 2) engaging in ritual.



In this *Messenger* file photo, pontifical servers carry the crucifix at the 2022 Good Friday service.

When these are solemnly accomplished, those celebrating them are lifted from time into eternity. Telling the story without ritual often leads to an impoverishment of the imagination, for in mere recitation of the past words are not made

flesh.

In the Sacred Triduum we leave our world of measuring and problem-solving; we enter the world of mystery. We proclaim the story of the Paschal Mystery, the passover of Jesus from death to life, that we might experience in the flesh our passover from death to life.

We hear of his surrender in the garden, so that we who refused to surrender in Eden might surrender now.

We hear of his betrayal, suffering and death, so that our thankful hearts might be moved by the suffering and death of others.

We hear of his burial and resurrection, so that our old selves can be buried with him to rise to new life, hope and joy.

The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper does not end with a blessing and dismissal, for ours is a three-day celebration of God’s providence. The Celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday does not begin with the sign of the cross, nor does it end with a blessing and dismissal. The Easter Vigil is the end of the sacred three days; at its end we are blessed and sent forth.

These three days are one celebration, the commemoration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In them we are swept up into God’s time, and brought back to ours, to make flesh what we have celebrated and received.

Msgr. William Cleves is pastor, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, Ky.

Pontifical Good Friday Collection maintains ancient bonds and supports struggling Christians in the land of Christ

Sir Stephen Enzweiler, KCHS
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Each year on Good Friday, the Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection is taken up in Catholic Churches around the world to help support the work of the Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land. The Franciscans have the historically unique responsibility of preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land as well as maintaining the Sacred sites for the millions of pilgrims who visit them each year.

Also known as the “Collecta pro Locis Sanctis,” the Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection is the result of the wishes of Popes throughout the centuries to provide for the needs of Christians in the Holy Land, helping to maintain the fraternal bonds that unite all Christians the world over. Offerings collected by the parishes in our Diocese of Covington, along with the collections from dioceses around the world, are sent by the Commissars of the Holy Land to the Franciscan Custody.

The Collection allows the Franciscans to staff and maintain the many sacred sites and devotional shrines throughout the Holy Land. This enables those who live in the region and visitors from around the world the opportunity to make pilgrimages to these sites, which deepens

faith and reinforces the spiritual and cultural connection to salvation history.

The Custody also operates and supports schools that are open to all faiths regardless of religion or nationality, and it provides scholarships for young men to answer the call to become Franciscan priests and brothers.

The Collection also provides the means for the Custody to build thousands of residential units for the poor and for young couples. It allows for the continued operations of senior and elderly care facilities and to make medical care available to the needy.

Pastoral care is provided in 29 parishes throughout the Holy Land, offering worship, Christian formation, and necessary youth and family programs, especially in regions affected by war. The Custody also notes that in the parishes, they are able to continue to care for Arabic, Hebrew and Greek-speaking Christians, migrant workers and unwanted refugees.

In fact, through the Terra Sancta Schools, approximately 10,000 children, teenagers and young adults are able to benefit from a quality education, which is only provided by the Franciscans of the Custody. All the costs just mentioned are covered by donations to the Good Friday Collection each year.



Children of St. Anthony School, Jaffa, Israel.

Photo Courtesy of the Franciscan Custody

But the support it provides does much, much more. In many respects, the Collection is a lifeline that helps ensure the very survival of Christianity in the lands where Jesus lived, died and rose from the dead. Decades of political, socio-economic, and religious persecution by governments, religious extremist militants, and other groups has taken its weary toll, forcing Christians to simply leave the land of their birth and seek a new life in another country.

The sobering reality is that the Christian presence — which has been in the Holy Land since the time of Christ — is in danger of disappearing, and it could happen in our lifetime. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, Christians made up roughly 24 percent of the total population, the same percentage as in 1898. Today,

they make up less than 1.5 percent, or roughly 400,000 people, and the numbers are still falling.

A 2012 statistical survey published by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem showed that there were then only about 130,000 Christians in Israel; 50,000 in the Palestinian territories and Gaza; and another 200,000 living in Jordan. Without the kind of support provided by the Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection, this decline is projected to continue; and if this happens, we may see the day when the only Christians in the Holy Land will be the pilgrims who visit there.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem directly assists the Franciscan Custody and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in providing for the Christians of the Holy Land. Each Lenten season, knights and dames of the Order work with the Diocese of Covington and with individual parishes to increase awareness of the Christians’ plight, an effort which has the blessing and appreciation of the Custody and the Commissariat of the Holy Land in the United States. More information can be found at www.eohsjnorthcentral.org/GoodFriday. Please consider giving generously this year to the Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection.



Bishop's Schedule

- | | |
|---|---|
| April 2
Palm Sunday Mass,
Cathedral Basilica of the
Assumption, Covington,
10 a.m. | April 6
Mass of the Lord’s Supper,
Cathedral Basilica, 6 p.m. |
| April 4
Advisory Council meeting,
9:30 a.m. | April 7
Celebration of the Lord’s
Passion, Cathedral Basilica,
3 p.m. |
| Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m. | April 8
Easter Vigil, Cathedral
Basilica, 8:30 p.m. |
| Chrism Mass, Cathedral
Basilica, 7 p.m. | April 9
Easter Mass, Cathedral
Basilica, 10 a.m. |
| April 5-10
Diocesan Curia offices closed
in observance of Holy Week
and the Solemnity of Easter | |

COMMENTARY

With five children in our family, we have had our share of hilarious, “Kids Say the Darndest Things,” incidents throughout the years. My now 20-year-old daughter is associated with most of these events. Examples include: forgetting she wasn’t wearing shoes until arriving at the dentist’s office; getting really angry at Santa for not bring-

VIEWPOINT



Julie Feinauer

ing her a pet pig for Christmas; yelling at the neighbor’s dog, Gloria, for talking to our dog, Sidney, who was her “boyfriend” not Gloria’s; or when asked by her father to, “shake on it,” instead of extending her right hand, she shrugged and shook her tiny body like she was making a milkshake. She has always brought us a lot of laughter.

One of our favorite moments has also become a

great lesson for our family.

“Can I have a cookie?” my four-year-old daughter pleaded.

“No, Mommy is making dinner right now. You can have two cookies after dinner though.” I kindly told her.

She walked away after a little huffing and puffing. I heard the washer buzzer go off, so I ran downstairs to move the laundry over. As soon as I got back to the kitchen, I noticed that the cookie package had been peeled back a few inches. Two cookies had been perfectly removed from the tray. I was none too pleased and yelled for my daughter.

The ‘Blame Game’

“Macy, did you eat the cookies? I told you no.”

“I didn’t eat two cookies. It must have been Sidney (I am sure she was implicating him because of his goings on with Gloria).”

“Macy, the dog cannot carefully remove two cookies and put the package back on the counter, and besides, I didn’t tell you it was two cookies that were missing.”

“Then it must have been Dad.”

I yelled to my husband, who was mowing the grass, asking if he had eaten the cookies. Wiping the sweat off his face and looking at me perplexed, and I sensed a little annoyed, replied, “No, I didn’t eat any cookies.”

Macy knew she had been had, but she still would not admit taking them. I explained that she would not get any cookies after dinner while the others ate theirs since she chose to take the cookies without permission, and that even though I didn’t see her, Jesus did, because he watches over us all the time.

At dinner that night Macy sat quietly as everyone talked and laughed.

Abruptly Macy interrupted, “Mom, did Jesus make Sidney?”

“Yes.” I stated.

“And you and Dad, did he make you?”

“Yes.”

“And me, did he make me?”

“Well of course he did!” I said, thinking that my talk about taking the cookies was getting through to her: “He made each of us and he made us all different. That’s what makes us all special!” I said, all the while thinking, I’m killing this Mom thing!

A few beats pass, and then with impeccable comedic timing she sadly states, “Then Jesus must have made me a liar.”

Wouldn’t it be nice if only we could “pin” it on Jesus. My little 4-year-old had hit upon the ultimate target in the “Blame Game” — God. We start off as kids blaming our siblings, friends or sometimes the family dog, for what we have done. As adults it is more convenient to pass off ownership of our own faults and foibles and blame God when something doesn’t work out as we planned, when we fail, when we don’t get what we want. If I lie, cheat, steal, gossip — whatever my vice — I blame God because he created the circumstances that made me do it.

He created us in his image and likeness, all different but innately the same — having his life inside us. That pesky little gift that God gives us — free will — implicates us in our own wrong doing.

If we know right from wrong, if we have heard the message of God, read about the works of Jesus, and felt the fire of the Holy Spirit, why are we still seeking to point to someone else instead of owning our sins and trying to learn and grow from our failures?

“No one, when tempted, should say, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it. (James 1:13-14)

Get to know your vices. Be aware of what tempts you and avoid these lures. Don’t be a player in the Blame Game. Jesus isn’t making you take the cookies, blame the dog or your dad. He isn’t making you lie about it — God doesn’t make liars, cheaters, thieves or gossips. He makes fallible humans that he loves and adores despite our flaws.

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

Parish life is not always easy, but it is always ‘home’

Back when I worked as a pastoral associate, I especially enjoyed worshipping at different parishes while on vacation. It felt like the beginning of a romance — the parishioners seemed nice, and all I knew about the community came from the church decor, the celebrant’s homily and the bulletin. Vacation Mass experiences were carefree

GUEST



Claire Henning

because I didn’t see how their “sausage was made,” so to speak, as I did at home. When the holidays ended, the romance was over, and off I’d go, never to see them again.

A parish is like an organism — a living, breathing thing. Like all complex organisms, it has its visible and invisible parts. We can see the buildings, programs and staff. We can’t see varying degrees of faith and doubt, or institutional

memory. Like other organisms, parishes must constantly adapt to their environment and be responsive to economic downturns, changing neighborhoods, secularism and pandemics. As Pope Francis once said: “If a parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be ‘the church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.’”

Above all else, though, a parish is its people. For my parish, community is the living organism that communi-

cates the Gospel message. “Now, you are the Body of Christ, and individually members of it” (1 Cor 12:27). For most of us, the parish is our entry point for living out what St. Paul means by being the Body of Christ.

In this age of global connectivity and deep division, what other organization or chat group can you belong to that includes Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, sick and strong, newborns and the dying, the immigrant and the mayor, the deeply committed and those whose faith is hanging on by a thread? As James Joyce wrote, “Catholic means ‘here comes everybody.’”

All that diversity is good; all the division, however, can sometimes make it feel like we don’t all belong to the same church. Traditionalists long for the “pre-Vatican II church.” Progressives are frustrated at how long it can take the church to change. Proudly ethnic Catholics rely on cultural traditions and advocate for their inclusion. Christmas and Easter Catholics just want to know when to stand and when to kneel. There also are Catholics who no longer practice but — unable to resist the gravitational pull of the church — are still orbiting the parish, but from a distance.

Members of a parish do not assemble because they like each other. Rather, we gather together around the person of Christ, and do our best. Being part of a parish challenges us to grow in faith and charity by overriding our egos and opinions. That can mean hanging in there when you and the new pastor don’t see eye-to-eye, or the Mass schedule changes and your preferred time disappears.

Then again, sometimes belonging to a parish means hot dishes delivered to your door by people you barely know,

but who are praying for you.

Forming his first faith community, Jesus chose a hot-head, a tax collector, a traitor, a doubter, a fanatical nationalist, and various thickheads and pessimists. Like the Apostles, each of us have stories of being graced and wounded. None of us is whole, nor fully mature. Hence, there will always be a great variation in the commitment and participation of people in a parish.

We are all so different, and yet, miraculously, here we are, 2,000 years later, still gathering around the Scriptures and the Eucharist, as Jesus asked of us at the Last Supper. We’re doing it, even if sometimes it’s with a heavy sigh. And whether celebrating with stranger-Catholics while on vacation or in the comfort of our most familiar pew spots, we have a home in our parishes.

I always think of that when my holiday has ended. Working in parish ministry sometimes drew me deeply into the lives of fellow parishioners. At Mass, I would glance about, knowing a little of the personal struggles of the people around me — marriage troubles, loneliness, health concerns — and I would silently pray for their intentions.

That meant I wasn’t just invested in the liturgy — I was invested in the lives of the people of my parish. I had moved from “attending” to “belonging.” It is not always easy, but it is always “home.”

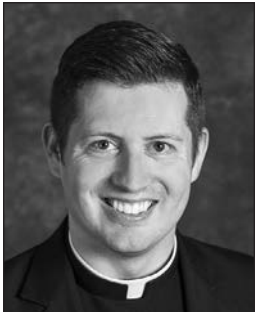
Claire Henning, D. Min., worked as a pastoral associate in her home parish for many years before leaving to co-found parishcatalyst.org. She currently writes at catholic-conversations.com. Her commentary has been provided by OSV News.

Three words

The readings for Palm Sunday — Cycle A — are: **Isiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11 and Matthew 26:14—27:66.**

This weekend we begin Holy Week, with the celebration of Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord. The reading from Matthew’s Gospel bring to mind haunting memories for me — of the past and of the present. Every

GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

day the news tells more and more stories of violence and death and destruction. This news brings sadness and heartache, distress and fear, and questions like: “Where is God?”

When I was in the 8th grade at St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs, we did a mime of the Passion of Jesus. Within the context of that “production,” I recall only three words being vocalized by the “actors.” To

this day these words bring a chill to my heart. They are painful and hurtful and deadly words.

“BARABBAS!”
“CRUCIFY HIM!”

We will hear these words at Mass — you and I will speak them as the “crowd.” In the course of our recollection, we will demand to save Barabbas, and to condemn Jesus. We will (like the crowd in the story) choose death over life, hatred over love, fear over peace, sadness over joy.

As I pray, I wonder how often I call out to Barabbas instead of Jesus? How often does the world call out for Barabbas over Jesus? All too frequently I’m afraid, to both questions. And it is this lack of Jesus on our lips that leads to the hurt in our lives and in the world.

The Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition teach us that salvation comes only through the holy name of Jesus, for he is the Christ, the anointed One, the Messiah, the King of the Universe, the One through whom all things have been made and the One through whom all of creation is remade.

It is through his blood shed on the Cross that you and I have access to heaven.

This is the great mystery of God’s love for us. Even though we reject him; he never rejects us. Even though we stop loving him; he does not (and cannot) stop loving us.

As we enter into this Holy Week, may we be more and more aware of our sin and may the haunting words for our past be dispelled by the grace filled words:

“JESUS!”
“SAVE US!”

Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington and director, Office of Worship and Liturgy for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

Here’s to the Lunch Ladies!

Almost every morning for the past 28 years, I pass by the school cafeteria and kitchen on the way to my classroom. “Good morning! What’s for lunch?”

It is a flurry of activity: one person is chopping, one is baking, another making a list of supplies needed from the storeroom. It is only 7:30 a.m. but the lunch ladies already have a half an hour or so under their belt. And secretly ... I want to be one!

I love to cook, to bake, and, ultimately, to feed people. Feeding people is very biblical in nature. Meals most often consisted of bread, fruit and vegetables. Meat was reserved for guests and special occasions such as weddings.

Remember Abraham’s hospitality when he had

three unexpected guests in the middle of the day? He offers them “a little food.” That little food amounted to cheese, milk, bread made from a half a bushel of flour (that’s quite a bit — about 20 loaves), and an entire calf. One assumes that Abraham didn’t get many visitors.

Offering a meal meant more than food, albeit food could be a life and death situation then. It was news about family and friends, what was happening in the world, companionship and conversation. It was also a Hebrew

custom to not kill the person you were dining with — always a plus.

In the New Testament, one only needs to look to Jesus for the importance of a meal. He loved eating with people, even tax collectors and sinners. He cooked fish for his apostles. He fed the crowd of 5,000. Something always significant was going to happen when Jesus shared a meal, even a simple one.

It is a foreshadowing technique in the Gospels and fun to watch for, when I am aware. When Jesus wanted us to understand his life, death and rising, he didn’t give us a theological treatise. He gave us a meal.

It is now lunchtime here at school. The lunch ladies have planned and cooked making sure everything is ready. They do not want anyone to go without. They are very aware that people, especially children, bond over meals.

Our students are their guests — even if only for 20-30 minutes a day. I suspect that the lunch ladies know that lunchtime is, in fact, sacred. We gather around a table as a source of gift and grace. It is a foreshadowing of the heavenly banquet, a glimpse into what is to come.

Is that a stretch? Maybe. Friends, food and others that have planned for our arrival. Maybe not so far-fetched. Here’s to all the lunch ladies!

Benedictine Sister Eileen O’Connell is a professed member of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills and a teacher at Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, Ky. She and other members of the community contribute to the community’s blog “Reflections from the School of the Lord’s Service” online at stwalburg.blogspot.com.

The grace to change

If there is one thing I’ve learned in my 64-plus years of life, change is inevitable and is a normal part of life. Our ability to manage and adapt to change is something that will determine how it impacts us — to the good or bad. This is especially true in the life of the Church.

This has come especially relevant in the light of my new role as a Leadership Consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute. Part of my duties include visiting other dioceses and parishes around the country. It has given me a greater appreciation for the universality of the Church. It has also given me a greater appreciation for the ways pastors and parishes are preparing for and managing change within the life of the Church.

According to recent studies, approximately 30 percent of the people in the United States now identify themselves as having no religious identity even though they did grow up with a faith tradition. This number continues to go up and will do so for the foreseeable future unless we all begin to live out our call to the Gospel of Life.

The change that is needed is for we, as a Christian community, to begin to exhibit the joy our Catholic faith brings to us, even among the chaos of change. That joy is the missing ingredient in so many of the lives of the people who have rejected their faith tradition.

Joy is that deeply rooted, intrinsic knowledge that our lives are pointed in the right direction. We are walking the narrow path, knowing the challenges we face, yet doing so with a great sense of appreciation for the presence of a loving and merciful God in our life. If you want proof of the reason for our joy, go to the last pages of the Bible and you’ll see that, in the end, we win.

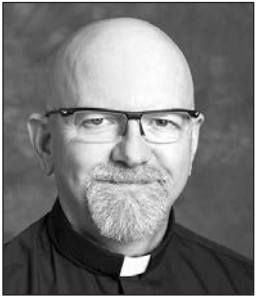
The different places I’ve visited do give me a real sense of gratitude for our diocese. We’ve been blessed with vocations both to the priesthood and the permanent diaconate. We’ve had an excellent sense of stewardship of time, talent and treasure by our people. We see this demonstrated in the work of Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys and our current Bishop John Iffert. This has placed us on firm footing and has kept our parishes moving forward. It is imperative for us to continue to pray for vocations and especially pray for those who have left the Church.

There’s been a lot of talk over the last several months about being missionary disciples. A simple and effective way to demonstrate missionary discipleship is by sharing joy. Each day, take a moment to offer your joy to someone you may not know or to someone who is struggling on their walk of faith. Let them see what you have — that alone can have a major impact on someone’s life. When they see your joy, your sense of peace, they’ll want that too. Help them to see the need for change in their life by being a witness to grace of God in your life.

That’s how we use change for the benefit for the life of the world.

Deacon David Proffitt is a leadership consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.

BELIEVE, TEACH, PRACTICE



Deacon David Proffitt

Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington

Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confidentiality and with respect.

A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1510 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diócesis de Covington

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordindora diocesana para dar asistencia a las víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

Una copia de “Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada” está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Child Abuse Prevention Month kicks off with the power of ‘Yes’

Andrew Vandiver
Messenger Correspondent

“Abuse thrives on a culture of silence,” said Brittany Bischoff, president of the Family Nurturing Center. “We need to shatter the culture of silence.”

Ms. Bischoff was one of several speakers at the annual Blue Ribbon Ceremony held on March 24 at Tom Gill Chevrolet, Florence. The event, sponsored by The Family Nurturing Center, kicks off Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. The showroom-turned-auditorium was full of public officials and representatives from local organizations working together to protect children, including the Diocese of Covington. Each year the *Messenger* begins its support of Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month with the Blue Ribbon Ceremony.

Attendees were encouraged to raise awareness about signs of abuse. State Senator Shelley Funke Frommeyer (Alexandria) discussed how the Protecting God’s Children Program used by the Diocese of Covington increased her awareness of the issue of child abuse. “We need to get

upstream on the issue” and “stop abuse before it happens.” she said.

As part of the event, Evelyn McLendon was named the Family Nurturing Center’s 2023 Children’s Art Contest Winner. She is a 5th-grade student at Villa Madonna Academy. The contest was available to local 4th–8th grade students and the theme was “Communities that Care.” When asked what inspired her, Ms. McLendon said her art-work featured “activities she does with her family to form a strong bond.” Her parents, Hank McLendon and Stacey Vest, were in attendance along with her teacher, Elizabeth Barker.

The event featured Curtis Clemons as the keynote speaker. Mr. Clemons is a member of The Family Nurturing Center board of directors and an adult survivor of childhood abuse. He was raised by a single mother in rural Grant County. According to Mr. Clemons, his mother “did all the right things” and worked hard to put a good group of people around him to help.

While in 3rd grade, Mr. Clemons attended a school

assembly called “Kids on the Block” which uses life size puppets to educate children about child abuse and neglect. It was this event that helped him and two other students recognize that they were being abused by a family friend.

“It not only changed my life, but it saved my life,” said Mr. Clemons. After one of the other boys came forward, his mother asked him if he had also been abused. At first, he did not want to admit what had happened. She asked again and “that time I said yes.”

“There is power in saying yes,” said Mr. Clemons.

The “Kids on the Block” program is still used today by the Family Nurturing Center. “My story has hope,” said Mr. Clemons. “We can end the cycle of abuse.”

The diocesan VIRTUS program teaches adults to recognize signs of possible abuse and the moral and legal duty to report to the proper authorities. For more information about VIRTUS and the diocese’s Safe Environment Program call (859) 392-1500, visit www.covdiocese.org.



(above left) Curtis Clemons, member of The Family Nurturing Center board of directors and an adult survivor of childhood abuse, was the keynote speaker at the annual Child Abuse Prevention Month kickoff event March 24.

(above right) Evelyn McLendon, student, Villa Madonna Academy, was this year’s art contest winner. Pictured from left are: Elizabeth Barker, Evelyn’s teacher; Evelyn and Mayor Julie Metzger Aubuchon, Florence.

Don’t treat Jesus as an idea, invite him into your heart, pope says

Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Like St. Paul, Christians must not only know Jesus with their heads but invite him into their hearts through a personal encounter with Christ, Pope Francis said.

“An encounter with the Lord is what changed a life,” the pope said during his March 29 general audience in St. Peter’s Square in which he reflected on St. Paul’s conversion and praised him as a model of what it means to have a “passion for the Gospel.” “Becoming Christian is not a type of makeup that alters your face,” said the pope. “True change takes place in the heart, and that’s what happened to Paul.” He explained that while studying the faith has its value, developing a passion for the Gospel like St. Paul had is “not a matter of understanding or study,” but of lived experience. “You can study all the theology you want. You can study the Bible, all that, and become atheist or worldly,” he said. “Studying is important, but it doesn’t generate a new life of grace.”



Pope Francis pets a dog after his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican March 29, 2023.

CNS photo/Vatican Media

Catholic Charities Volunteer Appreciation Dinner — a night of gratitude as a new chapter begins

Laura Keener
Editor

About 250 volunteers, staff and friends of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington attended the 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, March 28, at Receptions, Erlanger. The evening included not only the annual presentation of its Marcella Strategier Angel of Hope and Community Partner awards but also thanks and recognition to the current executive director, Alan Pickett; the announcement of a new ministry — Pickett’s Corner; and the introduction of its new executive director, Chris Goddard (see related article page 2).

Bishop John Iffert joined Mr. Pickett and Randy Rawe, Catholic Charities Board Chair, for the presentation of the awards.

Msgr. Gerald Reinersman is the recipient of the Marcella Strategier Angel of Hope award. Mr. Pickett said that Msgr. Reinersman has been a board member since 2006 and has never refused to assist Catholic Charities in any



(above, left) Bishop John Iffert and Alan Pickett present Msgr. Gerald Reinersman (left) with the 2023 Marcella Strategier Angel of Hope award, March 28.

(above, center) On behalf of St. Elizabeth Healthcare, Matt Hollenkamp accepts the Community Partner award.

(above, right) Alan Pickett shows his delight as Randy Rawe, Catholic Charities’ Board chair, presents him with a certificate in honor of his eight years leading Catholic Charities as executive director. Mr. Pickett is retiring at the end of May.

capacity.

Personally, Mr. Pickett has known Msgr. Reinersman since he moved to Northern Kentucky in 2007, joining St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, where Msgr. Reinersman is pastor.

“When he heard that I was interested in applying for the Catholic Charities job in 2014, he counseled me and encouraged me to pursue that possibility,” Mr. Pickett said.

“I’m grateful for his commitment to serving the poor, encouraging us in the work that we do and providing a guiding light to those that we serve,” said Mr. Pickett about Msgr. Reinersman’s service at Catholic Charities. “I can’t think of a more worthy person than Msgr. Reinersman to receive this special award.”

Msgr. Reinersman said that his first affiliation at Catholic Charities was washing dishes at Parish Kitchen in 1990. “One day I thought I had washed every dish in the place three times,” yet more kept coming, he said. “It occurred to me that every one of those plates and every one of those pans, represented nourishment for somebody who did not have that ... it represented that somebody enjoyed another person’s company ... Each one of those little things that we do in the course of our work with Catholic Charities represents a great deal more. I think we should, as you congratulate me, you should congratulate yourselves for whatever way you have given to the work of healing and hope for the people of Northern Kentucky.”

St. Elizabeth Healthcare is the recipient of the Community Partner Award.

Recognizing its humble beginnings in 1861 with an investment of \$2,200 and 10 patient beds, Mr. Rawe said that today St. Elizabeth Healthcare has grown to six hospitals and over 10,000 employees.

“St. Elizabeth is one of the most respected hospitals systems in the country,” Mr. Rawe said. “Their vision is to lead our community to be one of the healthiest in the nation ... it is their focus on our community and each individual

patient that is most notable.”

In addition to being a premier sponsor of Catholic Charities’ fundraisers like CaSSba and the annual golf outing, St. Elizabeth nurses provide health monitoring and evaluations to guests at the Parish Kitchen. St. Elizabeth primary care offices also distribute Mercy Mats — mats crocheted by Catholic Charities volunteers using recycled plastic grocery bags — to patients in need. And through the years, St. Elizabeth Healthcare collaborates with the pregnancy and adoption programs offered at Catholic Charities. “In other words, we just couldn’t do many things without St. Elizabeth,” said Mr. Rawe.

Mr. Rawe presented the award — a bronze statuette depicting Jesus as a homeless man asleep on a bench — to Matt Hollenkamp, vice president of Marketing. “This is an incredible honor for us,” said Mr. Hollenkamp. “We cannot alone care for the health of Northern Kentuckians; it requires partners like Catholic Charities to do that.”

Mr. Rawe also presented Mr. Pickett with a certificate in



Pickett was not only able to bring it to life, but he did so during the pandemic.

Mr. Pickett is an avid bicyclist. In his honor, Catholic Charities will begin a new ministry at Parish Kitchen known as

Pickett’s Corner. Pickett’s Corner will be a bicycle repair shop for guests of the Parish Kitchen.

“So many people in our inner-city community rely on their bike for basic transportation. When the bike breaks down, they sometimes don’t have the money to fix it,” Mr. Rawe said. “The purpose will be to teach and coach bike owners to fix and repair their bikes.”

In his remarks Mr. Pickett praised the selection of his successor, Mr. Goddard. “I’ve known Chris for a while. He’s a quality person and an outstanding leader and I think he’s going to be a joy to work with.

“We’ve got so much more to look forward to, there are many more people to serve. It’s great to see the leadership transition coming together ... I want to thank God for the gifts he has given me and allowing me to serve here. I want to thank Bishop (Roger) Foys for having hired me and Bishop John that has supported me in the year and half I’ve known him. I thank all of you for the support you have given me, and the staff, especially, for the work you do every day, tirelessly and selflessly, it’s remarkable.”

In his closing remarks, Bishop Iffert thanked Mr. Pickett for his many years of service. “I’m looking forward to Pickett’s Corner ... what a wonderful idea for a ministry and what a wonderful way to pay tribute to Alan’s great service.”

Bishop Iffert also thanked the volunteers for “being shining lights.” Bishop Iffert said that at this time in history the Catholic Church has all of the best catechetical resources available — podcasts, Bible studies, catechetical books, “all beautifully done. And we’re still losing people. We’re still failing to reach people ... it’s clear to me that what the

world needs is the light of Christians shining. Period. ... And so, I thank you for everything you do to strive to be those shining lights. I really appreciate it very, very much.”



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PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Welcome 2.0

Welcome team 2.0 from St. Henry Catholic Parish, Elsmere, presented the Welcome retreat to 16 fellow parishioners, March 11/12. Welcome 2.0, formerly known as Christ Renews His Parish (CHRP), is an overnight weekend experience with guests housed in the parish office building. Through fellowship, faith sharing, hospitality, music, individual and group activities, a candlelit Mass, and more, participants step back from the everyday to reflect on their lives and their spiritual journeys and build meaningful relationships with other women in the parish.

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.

Flea Market, Diocesan Catholic Children’s Home, Ft. Mitchell, year-round, 8:30 a.m.– noon, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; (Dec.– April, Monday, Thursday and every 3rd Saturday). Donation drop-off during Flea Market hours.

A personal Lenten Pilgrimage of five historic churches of the Diocese of Covington, April 1, rain or shine. Walk (or drive) any part of the 4.3-mile pilgrimage route. Start at any church on the route, any time. The churches: Cathedral Basilica of Assumption, St Benedict, St Augustine, St John Evangelist and then Mother of God — open at 9 a.m. for Eucharistic Adoration, with closing Benediction, 2 p.m. Mother of God offers Mass at noon. An informational booklet will be available at the church where you start your journey. RSVP CovLentenPilgrimage@gmail.com.

“A New Manna Retreat: Dining in the Desert” with Father Thomas Picchioni, April 1, St. Cecilia Church undercroft, Independence. This one-day retreat will explore the four different faces of the Real Manna come down from heaven, how with each face comes a different understanding, a different response, and a different relationship. Registration: 7:30–7:55 a.m.; retreat 8 a.m.–3 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch provided. No cost to attend, free will offering accepted. RSVP: e-mail psr@stcindependence.org. Morning of reflection — a mini retreat on discernment — with Father Conor Kunath, April 15, Undercroft, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 9 a.m., presentation and discussion; 10 a.m., Mass; and 11 a.m. Holy Hour with confession available.

St. Mary’s Ladies Society’s Indoor Yard and Bake Sale, April 15, 8 a.m.—2 p.m., St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, Memorial Hall. Donations of household items can be dropped off April 13 and 14, 10 a.m.—4 p.m. No clothes or TVs. Call (859) 635-2051.

Emmet Cahill returns to Mother of God Church in con-



cert, April 19, with a meet-and-greet at 6:15 p.m., concert at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Cahill is a soloist and lead singer in Celtic Thunder: The Mother of God Contemporary Ensemble will also perform, starting at 7:10 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for the meet-and-greet and concert, and \$35 concert only. Purchase tickets online at or at the door. Contact Cindy Duesing at cduesing@twc.com or (859) 512-1063.

The Thomas More University Observatory and Professor Wes Ryle invite you to a lecture/night sky viewing: “JWST: At Work At Last!” on April 29. Lectures are at lecture in Steigerwald Hall – Saints Center, with a 9 p.m. night sky viewing at the Thomas More Observatory. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required.

Our Lady of Light Ministries Youth Rosary and Mass, May 6, 11 a.m., Our Lady’s Farm, Falmouth. Sign up to be part of the rosary or Mass, call (859) 331-9919. Bring a picnic lunch and spend the day.

The World Apostolate of Fatima 33-day Fatima Consecration to Jesus through Mary starts April 10. Consecration Mass will be held May 13 at Our Lady’s Farm, Falmouth. Register at fatimaconsecration.org or call (859) 394-74720 or e-mail Theresa@bluearmy.org.

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.

Fish Frys
Friday March 31

Holy Cross District High School, Covington, 5–8 p.m.

Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 4–8 p.m.

Our Savior Parish, Covington, March 31, noon–6 p.m.

St. Augustine, Augusta, 5 p.m. until fish runs out.

St. Augustine Parish, Covington, 4–7 p.m.

St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 4:30–8 p.m.

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 5–7 p.m.

St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, 5–7 p.m.

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.; 5–7 p.m., (859)-298-5932

St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth, Knights of Columbus, 4–7:30 p.m., (859) 321-9733

St. James, Brooksville, 4:30 p.m–6:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Academy, Walton, 4:30–8 p.m.

St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, 4–7:30 p.m.

St. Matthew Parish, Morning View, 4:30–7 p.m.

St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, 5–8 p.m.

St. Timothy, Union, drive-thru, credit card only, 4:30–7 p.m., Dine-in 5-7:30 p.m.

St. William Parish, Williamstown, drive-thru only, 4:30–7 p.m.



Science Fair winners continue to state competition

Eight St. Pius X seventh graders competed in the Regional Science Fair on Saturday, February 27th. Six students received awards and those who earned 1st and 2nd place were invited to the state competition in March at EKU.

High schools seniors celebrate brother and sisterhood in Christ at annual senior Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

High school seniors in the Diocese of Covington gathered, March 24, to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington to celebrate the annual senior Mass. They arrived in busses, alongside teachers and administrators alike, and joined their peers in celebration and commemoration of their high school careers and upcoming graduation.

“After graduation you will be on this journey as an adult,” Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, said as she addressed students prior to Mass. “As you prepare for this change in your lives, you must also make sure you are equipping yourselves with the things you need to stay on the right path towards heaven. In preparation for your

journey, let’s take time to reflect on some of the knowledge and wisdom God has shared with us.”

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington. In his homily, Bishop Iffert notes a line in the liturgy that “speaks of Jesus’s brothers.”

“Some people link on that language and they read it in a fundamentalistic way,” said Bishop Iffert, saying that the line is often used as proof against Mary’s perpetual virginity.

“We use these familial names, these familial indicators, to indicate close relatives and neighbors who we grow up

with. Even in churches, we speak to one another as brother and sister,” he said, “We are brother and sister to Jesus, and that makes us brother and sister to one another.”

“We are called brothers and sisters of the Lord, and we allow the cross of Christ to overcome whatever impedes us, and we take it up, in his great mission.”



(far left) Senior students present the gifts to Bishop Iffert.

(left) Bishop Iffert greets students and teachers gathered for the Senior Mass, March 24.

(above) Senior students in their pews listen to the homily.

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St. Augustine’s muralists may finally have names

Stephen Enzweiler
Cathedral Historian

Part 1 of 2

The construction trucks are gone. The piles of material no longer darken the parking lot. The sharp pounding and whirrs of hammers and drills that once echoed inside St. Augustine Church during its recent renovation are also silent. Inside, the scaffolding has come down and the construction crews are no more.

In their wake, they have left the people of Peaselburg and Covington a restored masterpiece of Italian Renaissance architecture, dazzling in its reborn beauty and sweeping in its ability to inspire. Enter its doors and one is quickly carried away into another world of lofty spaces beneath broad arches and blue, star-bemused ceilings.

The structure was designed by architect David Davis, who Bishop Maes had previously hired to design St. Patrick’s Church in Maysville and the Cathedral Basilica’s façade in Covington. “The church has been declared by many to be the most beautiful in the diocese,” reported the *Catholic Telegraph* after its dedication in 1914, “and was highly praised by the Rt. Rev. Bishop (Maes) for the devotional atmosphere supplied by the simple beauty.”

Like most churches erected during the episcopate of Bishop Maes (1885–1915), art and architecture, and the spiritual value they contained for the faithful, was of the highest importance. When Davis presented the plans to him in 1913, the bishop was eager to approve the Italian approach, a style with which he was familiar from his own study of architecture as a young man, and which he enjoyed sumptuously in his later years on trips to Rome after he became a bishop. It was a style he especially appreciated, not just for its symmetry, proportion and classical elements, but also for its sense of air and light, which gives this style of architecture the mystical ability of drawing one into the experience of heaven on earth.

Among the inspiring art decorations we see today are the beautifully sculpted Stations of the Cross, crafted in Italy and imported in 1914. There is its traditional statuary made by the renowned Daprato Rigali Studios, a company founded in 1860 in Italy by four brothers who emigrated to the United States from the Tuscan town of Barga, hoping to bring the Italian craft of statue-making to the New World.

Then there are the ethereal murals that decorate the apse, dome, sanctuary and transepts, each executed in the neo-classical style then in vogue during the 19th and 20th century era of church-building.

But unlike known works of art in St. Augustine, the identities of who painted its beautiful and much-admired murals has always been a mystery to art historians. It was not an uncommon practice for churches of earlier times to record the cost of works of art while simultaneously forgetting to note the names of the artists who created them.

To the trained eye, St. Augustine’s murals belong to two different painting styles, indicating two different artists were involved. Additionally, the apse murals were known to have been painted in 1914 for the dedication, and the remaining murals in the sanctuary, transepts, apse dome, and nave — were completed in 1927 during a major renovation led by the parish’s new pastor, Rev. Charles A. Woeste.

The 1914 apse murals situated behind the altar were originally three separate murals, each painted along the theme of “The Tomb of Christ.” Sadly, the original center painting is lost to us, having been covered over as a result of a later redecoration effort. However, the two side murals that remain are original and unretouched.

The left mural is titled, *The Lords Tomb on Good Friday*, and the right one is *The Lord’s Tomb on Easter Sunday*. A new center mural was added in 2019 to return the set to its original configuration of three. It shows a darkened Golgotha and Jerusalem, which was composed in such a way as to work visually with the altar crucifix in front of it and make it appear a complete crucifixion scene to anyone viewing it.

Discussions among some historians during the recent church renovation yielded no name for the artist who might have painted them. The usual suspects included Leon Lippert, Charles Svendsen, Theodore Braasch, and even Frank Duveneck, all of whom were well-known church muralists and actively painting at the time. But problems arise immediately with each artist.

In addition to important stylistic differences, Duveneck was already an old man in 1914 and painting had become less important to him as he focused on his teaching at the Art Academy. Leon Lippert is also eliminated not only for stylistic reasons, but also because he was already employed painting Blessed Sacrament Chapel in Cincinnati. Theodore Braasch, who would later co-paint Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue with Leon Lippert, lived in Kansas City at the time and would not move to Cincinnati until 1922. The murals are not in the style or color palette of Charles Svendsen either; who in 1914 was newly married and preoccupied running the family business, The Charles Svendsen Company.

So, who could have painted the apse murals?

There is one other artist with sufficient evidence to suggest he could be the creator of St. Augustine’s apse murals. Evidence has been found that points to a little-known Cincinnati artist named William E. Blank. He is the same William E. Blank who, in 1920, was hired by Rev. Joseph Flynn of St. Mary’s Cathedral to save the priceless Duveneck murals which had begun to deteriorate badly.

Blank’s brilliant restorative work on the Duveneck murals is one of the



Enzweiler photos

(above) St. Augustine Sanctuary with its historic apse murals.
(below) “The Lord’s Tomb on Good Friday,” believed to be the work of William Blank.





Enzweiler photos

(above) “The Lord’s Tomb on Easter Sunday,” believed to be the work of William Blank.
(below) The new 2019 center mural, designed for the altar crucifix and painted scene to visually work together, creating a unified scene of the crucifixion of Christ.



great stories in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky art history. His letter to Father Flynn regarding his work contains technical details that only a highly trained and capable church artist would’ve known. In it he criticized the original hanging of Duveneck’s murals as “inferior,” and the materials used as “defective.” His solution was to create his own glue and glaze which he stated, “would act as an everlasting preservative” and “restore the colors to their natural lustre. If in years to come any dust may accumulate on the surface,” he wrote Flynn, “it can be removed by anyone, regardless of artistic ability, by using ivory soap, luke warm water, with sponge or cloth, without fear of injuring the colors, canvas or processes.”

Who was this artist and why is he still a mystery? Probably because he is not listed in any artist directory of the time and there are no known original works by him. The Cincinnati Art Museum has never heard of him, either. Yet, could William Blank be our mystery muralist?

William Edward Blank was born in the Saarland region of Germany on May 30, 1877, the fifth of seven children born to Nicholas and Barbara Blank. The family emigrated to the United States in 1883 and settled in Newark, N.J., living in a small two-story frame house located at 74 S. 8th Street. The entire family were devout Catholics and attended the nearby St. Antoninus Church. At a young age, William began working with his father who owned a small family business as *painters* and *decorators*, terms loosely defined to mean someone who painted houses or provided painting and detailing services to churches and commercial businesses; but the terms do not refer to one who was an artist.

In 1900, William turned 23. According to the 1900 Federal Census, he was still working for his father as a *decorator*. But he disappears from the record after this and reappears six years later in the 1906 city directory under his own name and listed for the first time as an *artist*. The gap in the record and change of work suggests he may have taken this time to go to school to study art. After this date, the directories list him only by that profession.

But in 1914, William Blank disappears from the record in Newark. The 1915 city directory (which worked from the previous year’s resident data) only noted his name and the phrase “removed to Ohio.” The following year he shows up in Cincinnati listed as an artist and living at 2385 Kemper Lane in Clifton. What had caused him to move to Cincinnati, when did he move, and how could this move be related to the murals of St. Augustine?

The answer begins with a tragedy. In 1911, William Blank was working as an employee for his two brothers, Frank and August Blank, who owned and ran a painting and decorating business in Newark called F.J.J. Blank & Brothers. On May 16, 1911, the company was contracted to paint and redecorate the interior of St. Dominic Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., a large, tall, steepled structure with a high gothic interior. On Sept. 11, 1912, one of the contracted decorators named Branislav Rykcsnski, was standing on a high scaffold painting some of the church ornamentation with gold, when he stepped back a little, lost his balance, and plunged precipitously to the church floor. According to court testimony, the poor man broke his back, splintering his spinal cord, and paralyzing him for life. Crippled and unable to work, Rykcsnski filed suit against the company in January 1913, alleging negligence and asking for \$50,000 in compensation.

Under oath, William claimed to have been the one in charge of building the scaffolding Rykcsnski fell from and was also the one on duty and in charge the day of the accident. During the course of the trial, William became the focus of the prosecuting attorney’s case against the Blanks. The lawsuit would eventually find its way to the New York Supreme Court of Appeals, but in the end, F.J.J. Blank and Brothers was found guilty of negligence and ordered to pay \$10,000 to the injured man.

The judgment’s effect seemed to be immediate ... and devastating. Newark city records reveal the company went out of business almost immediately after the trial’s conclusion and that Frank, August and William parted ways. A tax lien was imposed by the court on Frank, garnishing his wages to pay the judgment against the company. As earlier mentioned, the 1915 city directory noted that William Blank had “removed to Ohio.” Not surprisingly, the 1915 New Jersey State Census also listed Frank and August living in the state, but not William. The date of William’s travel to Cincinnati, it turns out, was finally discovered in his own testimony before the New York Supreme Court in 1917. When asked by one attorney where he was living at the time the suit was started, he answered that he was living in Cincinnati, Ohio. The date happened to be March 3, 1913.

The evidence strongly suggests William Blank

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)



The home of William Blank at 74 S. 8th Street, Newark, N.J.

Enzweiler photos

to be the artist who painted St. Augustine’s apse murals. He probably chose to move to Cincinnati for a number of reasons, one of which was to get away from the legal unpleasantness, but also because of Cincinnati’s reputation as the “Paris of the West.” It was the place in America where the arts and German culture flourished and where there was ample work for an artist like himself.

So, when the news was announced that St. Augustine would be building a new church in Peaselsburg, William Blank was already established in Cincinnati. And because none of the other church painters were available at the time, Blank seems to have been the only available church artist with experience for the job. Yet, while there has been no specific document found with his name on it that directly ties him to St. Augustine’s apse murals, the research continues...

Next time: The other muralist of St. Augustine is revealed.

Eucharistic meditation 6: Setting Captives Free

USCCB/Eucharistic Revival Team
This Eucharistic Meditation is designed to help you spend 30 minutes to an hour in meditation and silent prayer with Jesus during Eucharistic adoration. Even if you cannot be physically present in a church or adoration chapel with the Blessed Sacrament, you can unite yourself spiritually to the Eucharist as you spend this time in prayer.

The grace I seek: To believe that Jesus will grant me true freedom.

Pray: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Jesus, the Lord of Life, has given himself to you in the Eucharist. He is gazing upon you, his beloved child, with great love at this very moment. Pause for a few moments and wonder at his gift for you. Allow yourself to rest in his loving gaze. Thank Jesus for the gift of himself in the Eucharist.

Ask for the grace: Jesus, help me believe that you will set me free.

Scripture Meditation
“The LORD God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.” (Isaiah 50:7)

Reflection Question
How have you felt misunderstood and judged—even by those closest to you, your own family? How have you been imprisoned by the words and deeds of others—and even your own words and deeds? How has sin played a role in this unfreedom? Speak to Jesus about this sin, suffering, and pain. Be honest about your experience with him, especially feelings of anger, shame, resentment, and abandonment.

Scripture Meditation
“Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus



called Christ?’ They all said, ‘Let him be crucified!’ But he said, ‘Why? What evil has he done?’ They only shouted the louder, ‘Let him be crucified!’” (Matthew 27:22-23)



Reflection Question
Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, takes on the burden of our sin. Imagine how he felt as he heard the crowds shout mercilessly, “Let him be crucified!” Gazing upon Jesus in the Eucharist, allow yourself to enter into Jesus’ experience of rejection and sorrow that he bore for your sin. Ask him to help you experience sorrow for your own sins and seek forgiveness, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Closing Prayer
Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Savior to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. (Collect, Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion)

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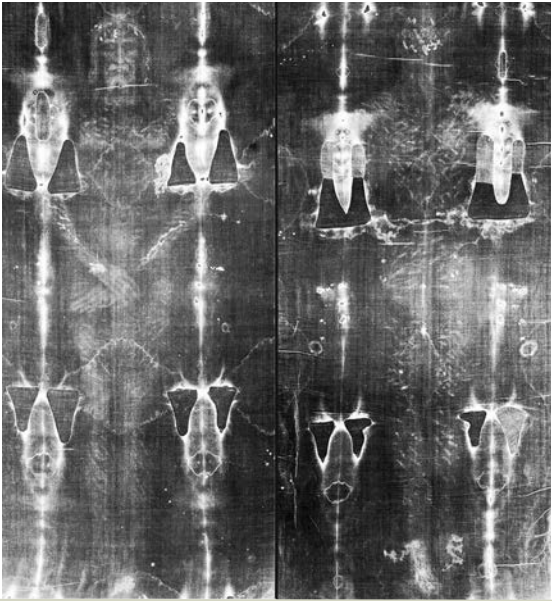
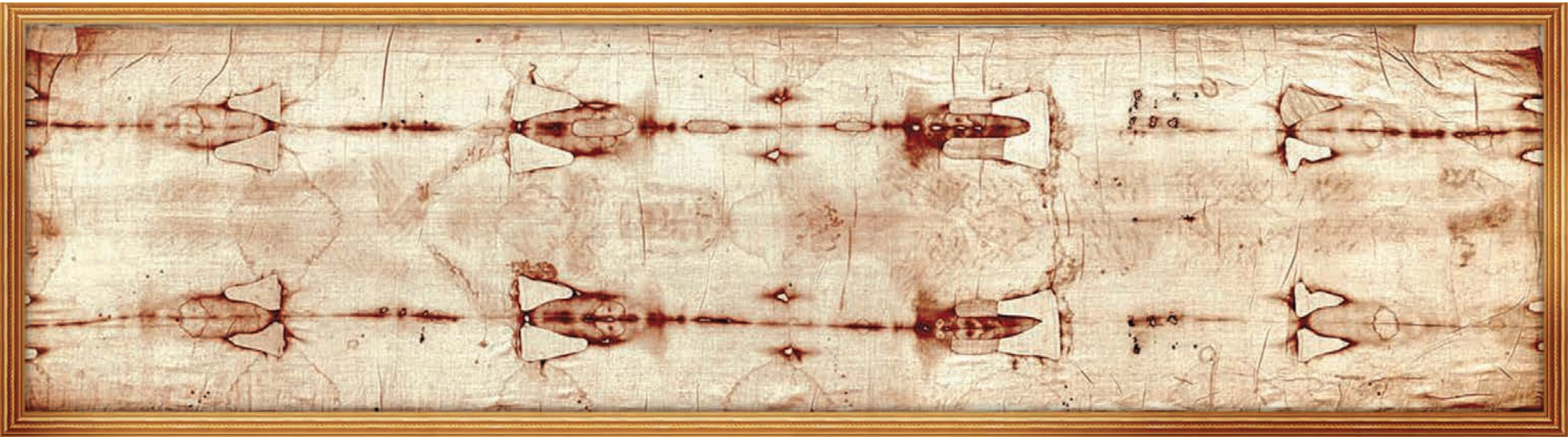
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(Continued from page 2)



Photos courtesy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem
(above top) The full-length of the Shroud of Turin.
(left) Passion relics.
(above) The image on the shroud in negative showing the crucified figure.
(right center) The face on the Shroud seen on the cloth and in negative.
(right) The Sudarium of Oviedo.

covered after death. About the size of a large pillow case, the Sudarium shows patterns of blood and fluid that flowed from Jesus’ lungs and mouth when he was taken down from the cross. Scientists have confirmed that these patterns of the blood and fluid match the face and head image on the shroud. Most intriguing is that the blood found on both cloths has been tested and found to be Type AB blood that came from the same male individual.

“It is an honor to be able to host an exact copy of the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo in the St. Paul’s Relics Chapel at the Cathedral Basilica during Easter week,” says Father Ryan Maher, rector of the Cathedral Basilica. “These items along with the Passion relics provide the faithful, especially those who may never have the chance to visit the Holy Land, the opportunity to experience in prayer and devotion a spiritual participation in Our Lord’s suffering and death on the cross on Calvary.”

Believers worldwide venerate the Shroud as the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. The Holy See, which has had custody of the Shroud since 1983, has never taken a definitive stance on its authenticity, but many popes have visited it and attested to its devotional power. Since 1978, the Shroud has been the object of extensive scientific and forensic scrutiny by scores of scientists who hoped to determine its origin, its history, and particularly who the man in the image might be. Most scientists approached the cloth determined to prove it was a fake. But the accumulated evidence over 44 years of scrutiny has only generated more questions than answers.

“Scientific investigation has produced thousands of

data points that support the Shroud and Sudarium as being the actual burial cloth of Christ,” said Sir Stephen Enzweiler of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and co-curator of the Cathedral’s passion relics display. “I’m not aware of any credible evidence that supports the claim it could be anything else.”

He noted that scientists recently threw out the controversial 1988 Carbon-14 test that purported to show the Shroud dated to medieval times after it was found the samples used had been contaminated by medieval material. Last year, a new scientific test called Wide Angle X-ray Scattering (WAXS), considered more accurate than the Carbon 14 method, definitively dated the Shroud to the 1st Century.

Scientists have found no evidence of paints or oils on the cloth, and the image of the crucified man is not the product of “vapors” or any natural process. Tests of the blood revealed a serum chemistry that indicated an individual who was suffering greatly as if being tortured. Most mysterious of all is the image itself. According to several scientific teams that investigated the Shroud, the image was formed by a process unknown to science, but resembling an instant burst of high energy that “scorched” only the top one or two micro-fibers of the cloth’s surface.

Could the Shroud be a snapshot of the resurrection that Jesus left for us to rediscover in our modern times? “Why not?” says Sir Enzweiler: “With God all things are possible. It seems we in the modern era have lost that sense of what the first century Christians experienced when they encountered the risen Christ. We hope the shroud will

bring some sense of that experience to those who come and visit the passion relics and the shroud.”

The passion relics, Shroud of Turin and Sudarium of Oviedo will be on display at the St. Paul’s Relics Chapel from Easter Sunday through the following Saturday and may be visited during normal Cathedral hours. The Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo are provided courtesy of the Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

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Pope hospitalized for respiratory infection, Vatican says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — After having difficulty breathing, Pope Francis went to Rome’s Gemelli hospital March 29 where he was diagnosed with a respiratory infection that will be treated in the hospital for several days, the Vatican press office said.

In the past few days, the statement said, “Pope Francis complained of some respiratory difficulties and this afternoon he went to Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic for some medical tests.

The outcome of these showed a respiratory infection — a COVID-19 infection was excluded — that will require several days of appropriate medical treatment in the hospital.”

“Pope Francis is touched by the many messages he’s received and expresses his gratitude for the closeness and prayer,” the press office said.

About six hours earlier the press office had said the pope was at the hospital for “previously planned tests.”

Before acknowledging the pope would be hospitalized for a few days, a Vatican official said audiences with the pope scheduled for March 30 and 31 had been canceled “to make room in his agenda for the tests to continue” if needed.

Several Italian media outlets and the Rome correspondent for the Argentine newspaper *La Nacion* reported, however, that Pope Francis was taken to Gemelli by ambulance.

La Nacion said that “a source close” to the pope told the newspaper that after his weekly general audience that morning, the pope began to feel chest pain and was advised to go to the hospital immediately.

The Gemelli hospital, part of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, keeps a suite of rooms reserved for the



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis greets hospital workers at Gemelli hospital in this file photo taken in Rome July 11, 2021, when the pope had been in the hospital for 10 days to recover from a scheduled colon surgery.

popes on its 10th floor.

In a late January interview with the Associated Press, Pope Francis had said that the diverticulitis, or bulges in his intestinal wall, had “returned,” but he insisted he was in good health for his age, which is 86.

Pope Francis had spent 10 days in Gemelli hospital in July 2021 after undergoing a three-hour surgery that included a left hemicolectomy, which is the removal of the descending part of the colon, a surgery that can be recommended to treat diverticulitis.

Three days after surgery, the Vatican said, “the final histological examination has confirmed a severe diverticular stenosis with signs of sclerosing diverticulitis,” a hardening of the tissue. The statement seemed to indicate that the biopsy showed no cancerous cells, although it did not say so explicitly, and rumors began.

Interviewed by the Reuters news agency in July 2022, the pope was asked about rumors that doctors had found cancer.

According to Reuters, Pope Francis laughed and said: “They didn’t tell me about it. They didn’t tell me.”

But, really, he said, “they explained everything to me well — full stop.”

The cancer rumor, he said, “is court gossip. The court spirit is still there in the Vatican. And if you think about it, the Vatican is the last European court of an absolute monarchy.”

In 1957, at the age of 20, Pope Francis was hospitalized after being misdiagnosed with the flu. In the book, “Let us Dream,” written with Austen Ivereigh, the pope said, “Straightaway they took a liter and a half of water out of the lung, and I remained there fighting for my life. The following November they operated to take out the upper right lobe of one of the lungs.”

While the pope can sometimes be heard breathing heavily, he has insisted the surgery had no lasting impact on his health.



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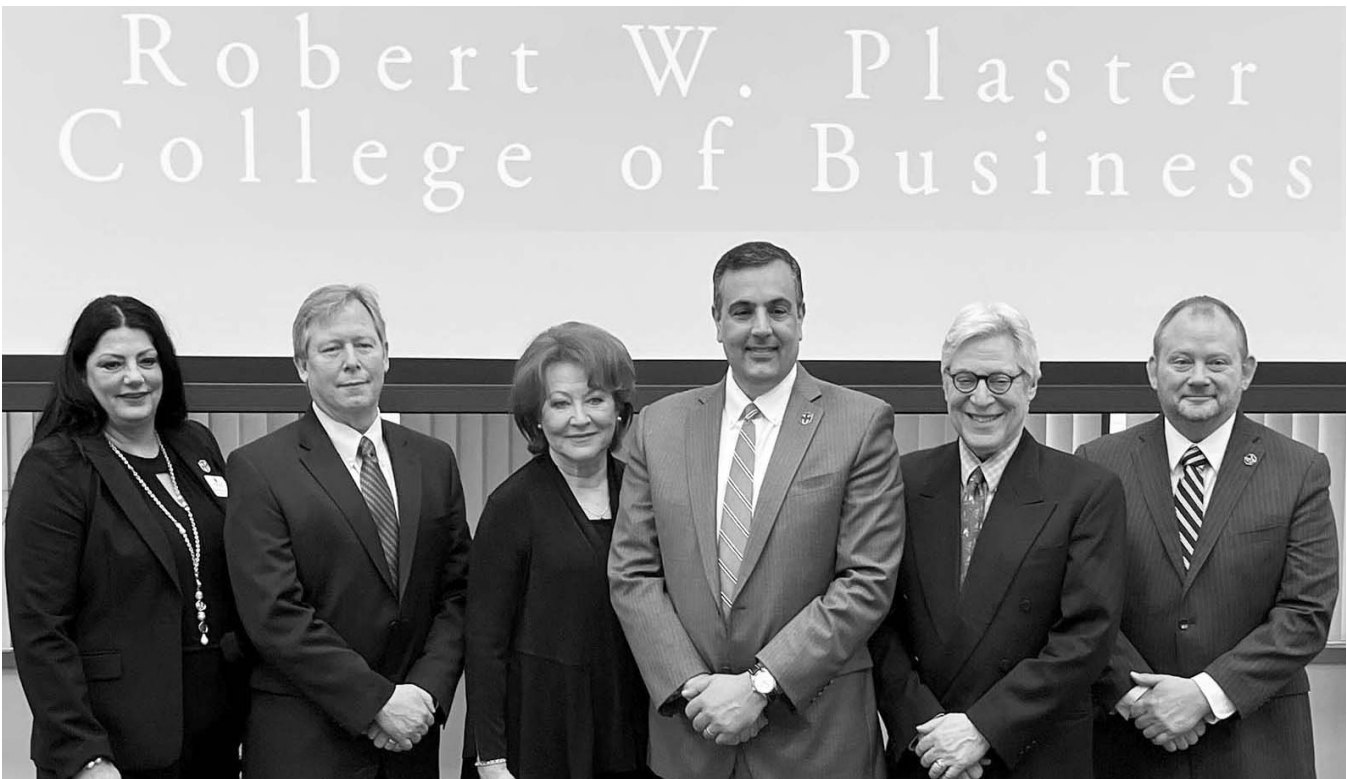
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Staff report

“The support shown to our University from the Robert W. Plaster Foundation has been monumental in the progress made within the College of Business,” said Thomas More University President Joseph Chillo, to those gathered in celebration of this success. “Together, we act on our shared vision to shape business leaders to understand the complexity of our free-enterprise markets, the importance of sustainability, and the need for ethical business leaders in tomorrow’s economy.”

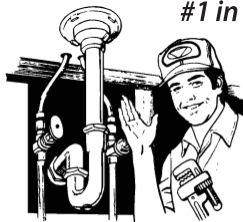
The Robert W. Plaster College of Business recently announced two new programs set to launch in the 2023-24 academic year. The Bachelor of Science in finance and the Bachelor of Arts in tourism and recreation management programs were created in response to regional workforce needs and student career goals.



(left to right) Melinda Kellam '22, student and alumna of the Robert W. Plaster College of Business, Dr. David Rose, professor of economics at the University of Missouri-St. Louis; Dr. Judith Marlowe '69, chair of Thomas More Board of Trustees; Dr. Joseph L. Chillo, president, Thomas More University; Dr. Bruce Rosenthal, dean of the Robert W. Plaster College of Business, TMU; and Jason Hannasch, executive director of the Robert W. Plaster Foundation.

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After record setting 2022 DPAA, this year’s DPAA on pace to do it again

Laura Keener
Editor

As Mike Murray looks at the response to both the 2022 and 2023 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal his heart fills with gratitude.

“I have to applaud the pastors, the parochial administrators, our parish life collaborator for being advocates of the appeal at the local level,” said Mr. Murray.

This year’s DPAA is the 14th and final appeal Mr. Murray will lead as he has announced his retirement. Mr. Murray will continue assisting Bishop John Iffert as director of the Office of Stewardship and Mission Services until his successor can be found.

Mr. Murray said he was fortunate enough to inherit the “good foundation” that was put in place by his predecessor, Sue Grethel, and Bishop Roger Foys. “I know that the foundation continues to be in place, and we’re well positioned for the future to continue to move forward and continue funding the ministries of the Diocese,” he said.

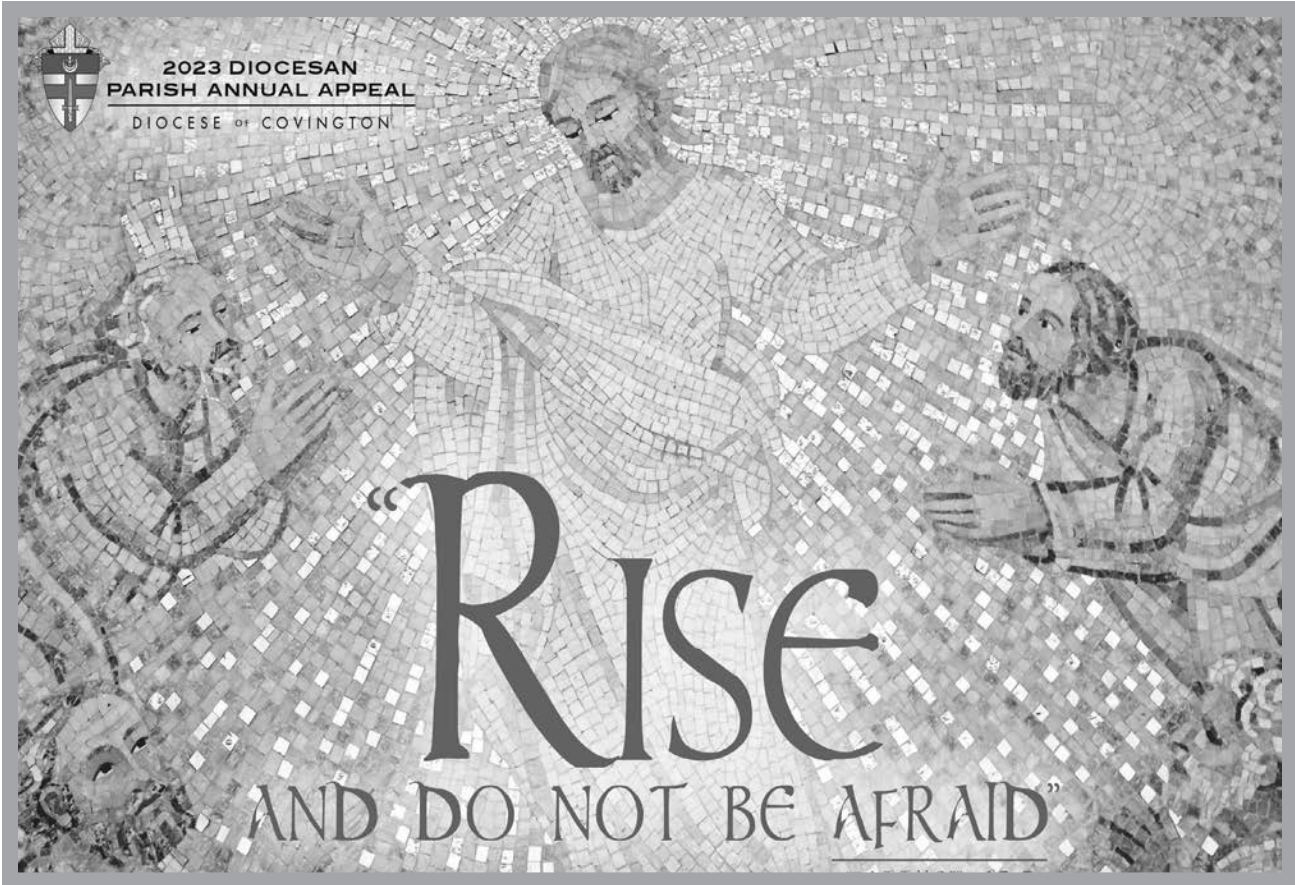
The 2022 DPAA saw record setting success. The goal for DPAA 2022 was \$2.65 million and, as of the end of February 2023, \$4,078,000.14 has been pledged and \$3,926,020.75 collected. All but four of the diocese’s 53 parishes have exceeded their parish goal. Pledges and gifts are still being accepted until March 31.

“I think two or three of those that are remaining will probably get to their goal number by April 30,” said Mr. Murray. “So just a very positive, positive appeal in 2022 across the board.”

The 2023 DPAA is on course to surpass the 2022 DPAA, with pledges and gifts from the Leadership Gifts phase eclipsing the pledges and gifts of that record setting year. Since commitment weekend, March 11-12, Mr. Murray said his staff have been “feverishly” processing pledges and gifts. So far, over \$3.5 million in pledges and donations have been entered into the donor database, but not yet reconciled with the Finance Office, towards the 2023 DPAA goal of \$2.65 million.

“We’re blessed to have had really strong leadership from our volunteers,” said Mr. Murray. Last year, Karen Riegler and Matt Hollenkamp were general chair and leadership gifts chair, respectively. This year, Mr. Hollenkamp accepted the general chair role, with Linda Rawe stepping up as the leadership gifts chair.

“Kudos to the 2022 chairs and to Bishop Iffert for having such a successful appeal. This year, with Matt and Linda, we are doing incredibly well. It’s a little early, but we’re still positive that we’re doing incredibly well with the numbers that we currently have. We’re very thankful for their effort and leadership,” Mr. Murray said.



“I am so thankful that we have such a faithful and responsive faith community who continue to answer the call. They continue to make special things happen in our diocese for our ministries and the people that need it the most. Thank you to all who participate — you’re all angels.”

In late April, the Stewardship Office will begin publishing parish goals and totals in the *Messenger*.

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Bishop Álvarez proved alive as he appears in staged TV interview

David Agren
OSV News

MEXICO CITY — Imprisoned Nicaraguan Bishop Rolando Álvarez appeared unexpectedly on Nicaraguan television March 24, more than six weeks after refusing to be exiled from his country, opting instead to face his sentence of 26 years behind bars.

Pale, gaunt and dressed in blue, Bishop Álvarez was reunited with his brother and sister for a meal at the La Modelo prison, where he has been held since hastily being convicted in a secret trial of conspiracy for “undermining national integrity” and spreading false information.

The appearance followed weeks of Catholic leaders and human rights groups demanding proof of life — with the last photos of Bishop Álvarez dating back to a Jan. 10 court date. He had previously been held under house arrest after being detained in an August 2022 raid on his diocesan headquarters.

Government-friendly media showed Bishop Álvarez

breaking bread with his siblings, then switched to a coerced interview with him. Bishop Álvarez was asked to confirm he had received “dignified treatment” — something he confirmed, though other political prisoners have described their conditions as squalid.

The interviewer then told Bishop Álvarez, “We’re glad to see you doing well,” to which the smiling bishop responded, “How do I look? Healthy? And my face, how does it look?”

Bishop Álvarez’s response ignited a social media storm among Nicaraguans — many of whom have fled the Central American country as the Ortega regime turns increasingly tyrannical and suppresses all dissenting voices.

“It overjoys me to see photos of my brother, Monsignor Rolando. I give thanks to God that he’s alive!” tweeted Auxiliary Bishop Silvio José Baez of Managua, who is exiled in Miami. “The dictatorship’s staging of this has been repugnant and cynical and



OSV News screenshot/Canal 4 Nicaragua

Imprisoned Nicaraguan Bishop Rolando Alvarez appears unexpectedly on Nicaraguan television March 24, 2023, more than six weeks after refusing to head into exile and being sentenced to 26 years behind bars.

doesn’t erase its crime. The force of the people’s prayers and international pressure has been revealed. Release him now!”

Bishop Baez said in his March 26 homily, “Those who have locked up and have wanted to silence Rolando’s voice, don’t be deceived: you are the true prisoners, prisoners of evil, of ambition, of cruelty. Remove the stone from the prison door and release the bishop.”

Nicaraguan lawyer Yader Morazán told OSV News that the regime likely considered international pressure in presenting the bishop, as human rights lawyers are investigating the forced disappearance.

He also noted the bishop’s attire didn’t match the clothing given to inmates in Nicaraguan prisons.

“We can see this as using the justice system for political propaganda, having now exhibited a person this way,” said Morazán, who fled Nicaragua in 2018 and was recently stripped of his citizenship.

Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, have branded Catholic bishops “terrorists” and “coup plotters,” and recently severed diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The Vatican closed its embassy in Managua in March with the chargé d’affaires, Monsignor Marcel Diouf, leaving the country.

“We have a bishop in prison, a very serious and capable man, who wanted to give his testimony and did not accept exile,” Pope Francis told the Argentine media outlet Infobae just prior to relations being severed. “It is something from outside of what we are living, as if it were a communist dictatorship in 1917 or a Hitlerian one in 1935.”

Nicaragua released 222 political prisoners Feb. 9, sending them to the United States and stripping them of their Nicaraguan citizenship. Bishop Álvarez refused to board the plane and was subsequently convicted and sentenced.

NEWS BRIEFS

Suspect in slaying of Mexican Jesuits found executed

MEXICO CITY — The suspect in the June 2022 slaying of two elderly Jesuits and a man they were sheltering in their parish has been found dead after being killed execution-style. Such closing of a case for which the Society of Jesus expressed deep dissatisfaction, reinforced Mexico’s ruinous reputation for impunity and rampant violence in regions controlled by drug cartels. The suspect’s death “in no way can be considered a triumph for justice, or a solution to the structural problem of violence” in the Sierra Tarahumara region, the Jesuit province in Mexico said in a statement. “The lack of an adequate legal process in the murder case would only imply the Mexican government has failed in its basic duties and confirm that the authorities do not have control of the territory,” the Jesuits wrote on March 23, referring to the region where the priests worked. “The government had this criminal perfectly located, where he moved, what he did,” Jesuit Father Javier Ávila , who has worked in the Sierra Tarahumara for 48 years, told OSV News. “If they had located him, why did they never detain him? Why did he fall off the map at the time of the homicides?” he asked.



Stewardship and Mission Services

Due to a planned retirement, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, KY (www.covdio.org) seeks candidates for the position of Director of the Office of Stewardship and Mission Services. The message of stewardship has been part of the salvation history of the Church. All of the teachings of stewardship come directly from the Gospels, the Old Testament, and the letters of the New Testament. Stewardship is the way God expects us to live, with gratitude and with awareness that everything we have is a gift. The goals of this office are straightforward and include: stewardship formation and education; research and planning; development of diocese-wide support for parishes, ministries, and schools in areas of programs; and business and fund development, especially the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal which makes so many diocesan services possible. This office also works to spread the message of Mission through prayer, education, works of justice, and providing financial support to activities and organizations such as the Seminarian Education Fund; Religious Retirement; International and Domestic Needs; Peter’s Pence; and Operation Rice Bowl. The Director represents the Bishop of Covington and the Office throughout the Diocese and the community at-large to develop relationships and support. S/he provides a wide variety of services to pastors and parishes, including stewardship conferences, programs for school children, and estate planning seminars. We seek an outgoing, creative, faith-filled Catholic individual with a servant’s heart and the expertise and experience to lead, manage, and inspire others to support diocesan initiatives. We require an individual with significant experience in comprehensive fundraising at a senior level, including experience with planned giving, major gifts, and annual giving programs. Those interested in this opportunity may submit a letter of interest along with a comprehensive resume or C-V, including compensation history and a list of references that includes contact email addresses, by email or by fax to **Stephen Kopolyay, SPHR, at skopolyay@covdio.org or 859-392-1589.**

NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Pope’s message of hope headed to space, audio beamed back to earth

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis’ message of hope for humanity will be shot into earth’s orbit as a “nanobook” embedded inside a small satellite and his words will also be transmitted back to earth each day for ham radio reception. The new space mission, called “Spei Satelles,” is being promoted by the Dicastery for Communication and coordinated by the Italian Space Agency (ASI). The project was unveiled at the Vatican March 27, the anniversary of Pope Francis’ prayer service he led in an empty St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Msgr. Lucio Adrián Ruiz, secretary of the Dicastery for Communication, said at the Vatican news conference that they have found many ways to spread the pope’s words and images from that historic evening three years ago: first as a global livestream, then a book “Why Are You Afraid? Have You No Faith?” which gathers together Pope Francis’ most significant speeches and comments during the pandemic. Now the book has been turned into a “nanobook” that will be housed in a low earth orbit satellite as a symbolic gesture of extending the pope’s loving embrace even farther. The satellite is scheduled to be launched from Vandenberg Base (VSFB) in California June 10.

Supreme Court to consider if making Christians work Sunday violate religious liberty

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is scheduled to consider a case April 18 that could have broad implications for employees seeking religious accommodations from their employers. The high court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in Groff v. DeJoy, a case concerning Gerald Groff, an evangelical Christian and former U.S. Postal Service worker, who was denied an accommodation to observe his Sunday Sabbath by not taking Sunday shifts. Federal law prohibits employers from firing employees for who request religious accommodations unless the employer can show that the worker’s religious practice cannot be “reasonably” accommodated without “undue hardship.” The Supreme Court issued a 1977 decision in Trans

World Airlines v. Hardison finding that the “undue hardship” standard is met even at a minimal cost. Randy Wenger, chief counsel of the Independence Law Center, a group representing Groff, told OSV News that Groff “has a very strong conviction about Sunday being the Lord’s Day,” which caused him to seek employment at a place that was closed on Sundays. He said, “In a pluralistic society, it’s really important to be able to find those ways to accommodate so that we can all work together effectively.” Mark Rienzi, president and CEO of Becket, a religious liberty law firm that has filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case, told OSV News he is optimistic the Supreme Court will revise its previous ruling.

Catholic leaders express sorrow, outrage over dozens of migrants killed in fire

MEXICO CITY — A fire in a Mexican immigration detention center has claimed the lives of at least 40 migrants, who appeared to be abandoned by guards as flames engulfed their locked cells, according to a leaked video from the facility near the U.S. border in Ciudad Juárez. The tragedy provoked sorrow and outrage from Catholic leaders and laity working on migration matters in the United States, Mexico and across Central America, along with calls for a rethinking of immigration policy which criminalizes migrants streaming through Mexico toward the U.S. border. “The pain and suffering from abandoning their homes is already too much, and we cannot allow their transit through Mexico to become an ordeal for those who leave their family and country in search of a better life,” said a March 28 statement from the Mexican bishops’ conference.

Study: American Catholics unfamiliar with church teaching on Catholic-Jewish relations

PHILADELPHIA — A new study shows that American Catholics largely have favorable or at least neutral opinions of Jews, but many faithful remain unaware of church teachings on Jews and Judaism, almost 60 years after the Second Vatican Council explicitly rejected antisemitism, and after extensive post-conciliar teaching has called for a deepening of Catholic-Jewish dialogue. The results of “American Catholic Attitudes toward Jews, Judaism, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”

were unveiled March 22 during a panel discussion with the study’s authors, hosted by the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. The detailed findings of the study, which represented more than 1,200 participants, suggest that Catholics have embraced the Second Vatican Council’s call to dialogue with Jews — but culture, rather than catechesis, may play a greater role than church teaching, with positive attitudes toward Jews emerging more naturally through regular social contact rather than detailed knowledge of church teaching. In addition, Catholics under 30 are less likely to be aware of the special relationship with God enjoyed by Jews, or to be seriously worried about antisemitism.

Church leaders welcome move on Russian war crimes in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian church leaders have warned Russians they will have to answer for savagery inflicted on their country, following the International Criminal Court’s indictment of President Vladimir Putin for war crimes. “The world is gradually waking up to what we are suffering and giving a name to it,” said Bishop Stanislav Szyrokoradiuk of Odessa-Simferopol. “It suited the perpetrators very well when the world resolved not to take note of the great many crimes being committed here, since this helped them spread their lies. Now, thank God, people are grasping what they’re doing more clearly.” The bishop spoke as international investigators continued amassing evidence of war crimes following the ICC’s March 17 arrest warrant for President Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, his commissioner for children’s rights, on charges of abducting Ukrainian children and deliberately targeting civilians. Ukraine’s National Information Office says it has evidence that Russia has so far illegally transported over 16,000 Ukrainian children, although other sources put the figure much higher. In a March 26 national message, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic church, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, said officials from various countries had recognised the “real number” of deported children could reach “tens or hundreds of thousands,” and thanked international institutions for branding the abductions a war crime.



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Mass of Perpetual Profession of Vows welcomes Franciscan Daughter Sister Veronica Mary as spouse of Christ

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On a Lenten spring morning, March 25, friends and family of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate Mass and Perpetual Profession of Vows of Sister Veronica Mary of the Holy Face of Jesus, fdm.

The celebrant of the Mass was Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington, with concelebrants Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys, chaplain for the Franciscan Daughters, alongside five other priests from both the Diocese of Covington and Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Mass was also assisted by Deacons Barry Henry and Eric Ritchie. Ralph Arnsperger, the grandfather of Sister Veronica Mary, served as lector for the Mass.

In his homily, Bishop Iffert drew upon the connection between the vows taken by sisters and the sacrament of marriage, citing the spiritual “espousal” to Christ taken on by religious sisters such as the Franciscan Daughters.

“I love weddings,” said Bishop Iffert in his homily, “when a young man and a young woman come before the Church, before God and everybody, and ask them to witness their exchange of vows,” akin to the vows taken for sisters, as well.

In taking up these vows, said Bishop Iffert, Sister Veronica Mary, along with every perpetually professed sister; “take all the possibilities of life, all the unknowns, and give them up as gift — as sacrifice to God.”

During the vows themselves, a ring was placed on the finger of Sister Veronica Mary, and a crown of thorn placed on her head — further symbols of her relationship to Christ. Verbal and written vows are taken, as well.

The vows conclude with the *embratio*, in which Sister Veronica Mary embraces both her fellow Franciscan Daughters, and other religious sisters in the diocese who gathered for the Mass.

Before the Mass’s conclusion, Mother Seraphina, Mother Superior of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, took a moment to extend her thanks to Bishop Iffert, Bishop Foys and all the others who helped celebrate Sister Veronica Mary’s vows and make the Mass possible.



(above left) Sister Veronica Mary professes her vows before Mother Seraphina of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary.

(above right) Sister Veronica Mary lies prostrate before the altar during the Litany of the Saints.

(left) A crown of thorns is placed by Bishop Iffert onto the head of the newly professed Sister Veronica Mary — a symbol of her espousal to Christ and a sign of unity with him.

(above center) During the *embratio*, sisters gathered for the vows welcome Sister Veronica Mary with an embrace.

(above right) Sister Veronica Mary embraces her grandmother, Joan Arnsperger, during the *embratio*.

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