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### Alleluia! He is risen!

In celebration of Holy Week and Easter the Curia is closed until April 11. There will not be a *Messenger* April 14. The *Messenger* will resume publication April 21. The *Messenger* staff wishes its readers and their families a joyous and blessed Easter.

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Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covdio.org/messenger](http://covdio.org/messenger).



Easter 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

He is risen! He is truly risen!

Happy Easter! May your joyful celebration this day help you to come to know the Risen Lord and to be his witness among your family, friends, the Church and even to the ends of the earth.

Because many parishes have (beautifully) embraced the tradition of song and hymnody, there is a text of the Easter Mass that you may not hear on Easter Sunday. It is the Easter Antiphon, the first words that the Roman Missal offers to be spoken (or sung) to God's people on Easter morning.

*I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia.*

*You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia.*

*Too wonderful for me, this knowledge, alleluia, alleluia.*

(Cf. Ps 139:18, 5-6)

Who is the one who speaks these words and proclaims himself risen from the dead? Clearly, it is the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who breathed his last on the cross takes air and speaks once more.

And to whom does he speak? Who does the risen Jesus acknowledge with wonder and thanksgiving? God the Father, of course. To the one who loves him and to whom he responds with complete love and fidelity, Jesus cries with welcoming joy. He trusted completely in the Father's assurances. Now Jesus, the firstborn of the new creation, sings his love and awe.

The words of the antiphon are borrowed from Psalm 139, but the Church uses these words to invite Christians into the encounter between God the Father and God the Risen Son. Resurrected life is, first and always, a relationship with the living God.

Among us there are those of you who God has been drawing with bands of love toward baptism. We rejoice for you! By baptism and incorporation into Christ, you receive the gift of adoption as sons and daughters of God. By that same gracious action, God gives us to one another as brother and sister in Christ. We are awed and grateful.

Inspired by the newly baptized, we all renew our baptismal promises at Mass on Easter Sunday. The text that introduces those promises reminds us that we are committed to serving God in the Church. Our life of grace flows from our relationship with the living God and is lived in the community formed by Jesus. We have new life in the love of God, so that we can love God and one another.

As you renew your baptismal promises, please remember this truth and join your heart to Jesus' song of greeting and joy: *You have laid your hands upon me, alleluia. Too wonderful for me, this knowledge, alleluia, alleluia.*

Happy Easter everyone! Because Christ has sought us out and called us into relationship with himself, we now have a share in his resurrection. May the realization that our eternal life with God has already begun, lead us to love one another as Jesus loves.

Yours in the awe and joy of the Resurrection,

+John C. Iffert  
Bishop of Covington



PALM SUNDAY

# Palm Sunday: ‘The Lord Jesus has drawn close to us and accompanies us’

Laura Keener  
Editor

The 10 a.m. Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, began outside. Holding their palms, worshipers stood in prayer as Bishop John Iffert invited them to walk with Jesus into Jerusalem as the Church begins to commemorate and celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. “...with all faith and devotion, let us commemorate the Lord’s entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps, so that being made by his grace partakers of the Cross, we may have a share also in his Resurrection and in his life,” Bishop Iffert said.

Sprinkling the crowd with holy water, Bishop Iffert blessed the people and palms. Afterward, the Bishop’s Choir led both the singing and the procession around the back of the Cathedral, through the Cathedral gardens then through the Madison Ave. doors, with Bishop Iffert at the end carrying a large spray of palms and greenery.

Palm Sunday Mass begins Holy Week, the most sacred week in the liturgical year. The Palm Sunday liturgy quickly turns from the triumph of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem to the Gospel reading of his passion and death — the only Gospel reading in which the congregation has speaking parts. “Let him be crucified!,” the congregation will exclaim twice when in the Gospel Pontius Pilate asks, “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?”

The Gospel passage also shares how Peter, one of Jesus’ most trusted and loved disciples, denies Jesus three times as he is taken away to death on cross. It is Peter who Bishop Iffert focuses on in his homily.

“Peter was following Jesus at a distance,” Bishop Iffert said. The same Peter who, when Jesus said “Come,” dropped his fishing net to follow Jesus and who jumped from a boat in the middle of a stormy sea.

“The teaching given by Jesus, the signs worked by him, even the authority he shared with them (the apostles) when he commissioned them to go out into the

world to proclaim the kingdom of God ... had spoken in Peter a devotion such that he ceased to call Jesus rabbi. Now he called Jesus Lord and Master.”

And, when Jesus asks Peter, who do you say that I am? “The answer had welled up in Peter like a gift from heaven,” said Bishop Iffert. “He couldn’t help but speak it — you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

And now, as the moment of Jesus’ death approaches — a reality that Peter at first refused to believe and now dreads and fears — Peter is following at a distance.

“In my own life this pattern is so clearly visible to me. I know from some of you that you see it in yourselves as well,” said Bishop Iffert. “We have an early experience of Jesus’ call, an encounter with the Lord and Master. For a season our hearts are on fire, expanding ... And then, life happens. The same anxieties that cause Peter to look away from Jesus and sink into the sea, they take hold of us too. The same dread of insecurity that will lead Peter to deny that he even knows his Lord — fear — takes hold of our minds and hearts ... how many times did Jesus say to Peter and to us, ‘Do not be afraid?’”

Bishop Iffert gave some examples of what following Jesus from a distance looks like today. Instead of praying, distractions like sleeping-in, reading a book, watching a program or completing a task take precedent. The inability or unwillingness to forgive. When the needs of others are unseen or unmet. When others are seen as different or inferior from oneself.

“Sometimes these patterns harden into racism, ageism, sexism or other patterns of closing ourselves off from the real lives of others,” Bishop Iffert said. “Jesus never observes our suffering from a distance. In his passion, Jesus draws near to the pain of the world, he embraces human suffering ... He empties himself out, he draws near; that’s what the love of God is like.”

Bishop Iffert invites everyone to enter Holy Week with confidence that “the Lord Jesus has drawn close to us and accompanies us. Let us recognize his concrete presence in our suffering and in our sorrows. Let us accept his merciful gift of faith.”

Keener photos



(above top) The Bishop’s Choir led the singing and the outdoor procession at the beginning of Palm Sunday Mass, April 2, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

(above) During the procession, worshipers carried blessed palms, representing the palms that were placed before Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. The procession began at the Cathedral’s north door; and ran through the Cathedral gardens.

(below) Surrounded by pontifical servers, Bishop Iffert carries a spray of palms and greenery representing Christ’s triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, as he brings up the rear of the procession.



(far left) Bishop Iffert blesses the palms and people by sprinkling them with holy water.

(left) A young worshiper listens as Bishop Iffert begins the prayers for the Palm Sunday procession.

(below left) Bishop Iffert raises the chalice during the consecration of the Precious Blood.

(below) The Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre joined in the Palm Sunday procession.





# You're invited to an introductory gathering of now-forming Squires of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre

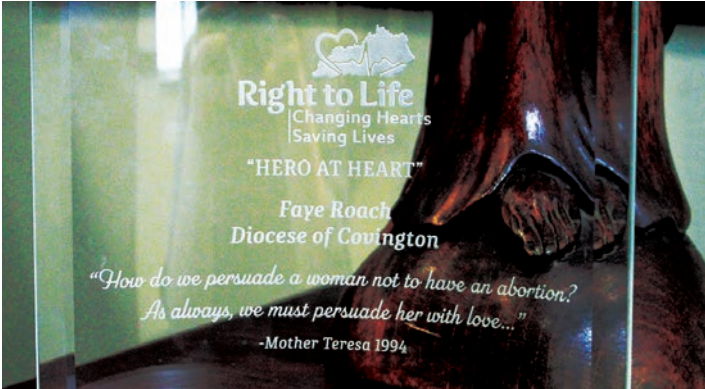
**Messenger Staff Report**  
Deepening the spiritual life. Formation in Catholic doctrine. The practice of prayer and charity.  
If these things feed your yearning for greater meaning in your life, then mark your calendar for April 19.  
The Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem invite you to an introductory gathering for young Catholics ages 20 to 35 who are interested in learning about the now forming Squires of the Holy Sepulchre, an auxiliary of the Order in the Diocese of Covington. The gathering will be held Wednesday evening, Apr 19, 6:30 PM at Mary Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University. Once established, discerners will meet every other month for Mass at the TMU Chapel, with liturgical events of the Order held throughout the year.  
“The Squires are an auxiliary of the main Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre with-



Photo: Courtesy of the EOHSJ.

The Squires movement in France and Canada has inspired other Lieutenancies around the world.

Baker photos



**Diocesan leaders presented with 'Hero at Heart' award**  
Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington and Faye Roch, director of the Office of Pro-life (left), were both presented with the 2023 “Hero at Heart” award sponsored by Kentucky Right to Life. Commemorating 50 years of “saving hearts and lives,” the award’s recipients are the “tapestry of pro-life Kentucky,” according to Addia Wuchner, director of Kentucky Right to Life. “They are a woven fabric of hope reflecting the heartbeat of our pro-life mission, past, present and future.”  
The Hero at Heart award is named for Admiral Bill McRaven, author of *The Hero Code*. The award recipients “reflect all the characteristics Admiral McRaven wrote about,” not the powers of a fictional superhero, but the “magnanimity of heart and passion to stand unwavering in defense of pre-born children.”



**Ministry of Lector**  
Twelve seminarians from St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Penn., were recently instituted into the Ministry of Lector by Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington, Ky. The seminarians are from the dioceses of Pittsburgh, Covington, Ogdensburg, and Charleston, as well as Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond, Virginia, and St. Vincent Archabbey. The lector reads the word of God in the liturgical assembly, except the Gospel, in the Mass and other sacred celebrations, recites the psalms between the readings, and can also present the intercessions.  
From the Diocese of Covington (from left) are: Henry Bischoff, seminarian; Bishop Iffert; Bradley Whittle, seminarian; and Benedictine Father Edward Mazich, Seminary rector.

in the structure of the Covington-Lexington Section,” said Msgr. Gerald Twaddell, Prior of the Section. “They were established to provide a path for young Catholic men and women to engage in a deeper spiritual life experience through association with the Knights and Dames so that they may grow in the virtues that lead to a true following  
(Continued on page 20)

## Official Appointments

Effective June 1, 2023

**Dr. Rachael Lemkuhl**  
To: Board of Trustees, Thomas More University  
Term: Three years

**Joseph Roesel**  
To: Board of Trustees, Thomas More University  
Term: Three years

**Susan Sturgeon**  
To: Board of Trustees, Thomas More University  
Term: Three years

**Ted Zalla**  
To: Board of Trustees, Thomas More University  
Term: Three years

Appointed by the Most Rev. John C. Iffert  
Bishop of Covington

*Jamie N. Schroeder*  
Jamie N. Schroeder  
Chancellor



## Bishop's Schedule

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>April 7</b><br/>Celebration of the Lord's Passion, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 3 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 8</b><br/>Easter Vigil, Cathedral Basilica, 8:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 9</b><br/>Easter Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>April 11</b><br/>Diocesan Curia re-opens<br/>Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>April 17</b><br/>Good Shepherd dinner, Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, 6 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 18</b><br/>Pontifical College Josephinum Board of Trustees meeting, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>April 19</b><br/>Confirmation, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth, 7 p.m.</p> | <p><b>April 20</b><br/>Directors meeting, 9:30 a.m.<br/>Priest Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica, 3 p.m.</p> <p>Confirmation, St. James Parish, Brooksville, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 21</b><br/>All-school Mass, St. Timothy Parish, Union, 8 a.m.</p> <p><b>April 22</b><br/>Mass for the Spiritual Motherhood of Priests, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 10 a.m.</p> <p>Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 23</b><br/>Mass, St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>April 24</b><br/>Confirmation, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.</p> |
|--|---|



# An outpouring of Divine Mercy

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

Divine Mercy Sunday (known also as the Feast of Divine Mercy) is a yearly feast taking place on the second Sunday of Easter. This year, the feast takes place on Sunday, April 16.

Divine Mercy  
Sunday Vespers

Cathedral Basilica of the  
Assumption, Covington

3 p.m.

“mankind’s need for the message of Divine Mercy took on dire urgency in the 20th Century, when civilization began to experience an ‘eclipse of the sense of God’ and, therefore to lose the understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of human life. St. Faustina received visions of Jesus, who requested her to paint the iconic ‘Divine Mercy’ image — featuring that mercy pouring out in rays from his Sacred Heart. Jesus also requested to St. Faustina that the first Sunday after Easter Sunday be established as the Feast of Divine Mercy, according to St. Faustina’s diaries; ‘I want the image solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it.’” ( *Diary*, no. 341)

The official designation of the feast occurred alongside the canonization of St. Faustina, on April 30, 2000, and the devotion was actively promoted by the pope at the time, Pope John Paul II. Since then, the devotion has garnered rapid growth and is now widely celebrated by Catholics.

Images of the Divine Mercy are often set prominently in churches for veneration during Masses and vespers on that day.

The origins of Divine Mercy Sunday reside with St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun living in the early 1900s. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s website,



Divine Mercy by  
Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, 1934.

## Chaplet of Divine Mercy

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy was also given to St. Faustina to be prayed to intercede for Christ’s mercy: “Encourage souls to say the chaplet which I have given you” (*Diary*, no. 1541). “Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. ... Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy” (*Diary*, no. 687).

### Opening prayer:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty yourself out upon us.

### Repeat three times:

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!

### Pray one Our Father

### Pray one Hail Mary

### Pray The Apostles’ Creed

### For each of the five decades

On each “Our Father” bead of the rosary, pray:

V. Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,

R. in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

### On each of the 10 “Hail Mary” beads, pray:

V. For the sake of his sorrowful Passion,

R. have mercy on us and on the whole world.

### Conclusion

### Repeat three times:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

### Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself. Amen.

### Or:

O God, whose mercies are without number and whose treasure of goodness is infinite, graciously increase the faith of the people consecrated to you, that all may grasp and rightly understand by whose love they have been created, through whose Blood they have been redeemed, and by whose Spirit they have been reborn. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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# At first signs of abuse, getting professional help is critical

Laura Keener  
Editor

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Each week during the month of April, the *Messenger*, in collaboration with the diocesan Safe Environment Office, will share information to help parents and all responsible adults to gain a greater understanding of child abuse, its effects and ways to prevent or cope.

To learn more about the short-term and long-term effects of child abuse, the *Messenger* reached out to Dr. Marilyn Schleyer. Dr. Schleyer has 30 years' experience as a psychology and mental health professional. She is also an Associate member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Melbourne, and is a member of the Diocesan Review Board.

"Trauma has a profound neurobiological impact on the child's brain. It will change the structure and function of the brain," Dr. Schleyer said.

Bonding and attachment are one of the most important brain processes needed for a child to learn and grow. It is an instinctual process and develops a very healthy brain. Abuse and its related trauma interrupt the bonding and attachment process.

"When trauma happens that child's brain, over time, will start changing in terms of the size of the structures and the functioning of the brain. As a result, the child's entire worldview of what is safe, what is trustworthy, is shattered," Dr. Schleyer said. "It will dramatically impact how the child is relating to everything that goes on in the child's world. That's the backdrop."

This trauma can be the result of emotional, verbal, physical and or sexual abuse. When people hear the word child abuse, they routinely think of the most horrific cases of physical or sexual abuse and neglect — rape, sexual exploitation, bruises and broken bones. But constant verbal and emotional abuse — repeatedly referring to a child in negative terms, like "dumbass" — is often inapprecia-

ble, referred to as teasing, but can have no less traumatic effect on a young brain.

Trauma not only has negative effects on a child's physical, emotional and behavioral wellbeing but it also effects a child's spiritual wellbeing. "Their whole worldview of who a loving God is, who a merciful God is, is shattered," Dr. Schleyer said.

There is no "cookie cutter" response to abuse. "This is about how a child's brain responds to what's happening to them," said Dr. Schleyer. "We're all unique and children's brains are unique." Yet there are still some common signs of abuse.

"Sadly, the child feels profound shame that this is happening to them and there is an almost a fear-based silence that starts developing in the child," said Dr. Schleyer.

Often, children who are being abused are told by their abuser that if they disclose any information to anyone that they or someone they love will be harmed. So, the child "starts isolating, they become withdrawn,

they start developing symptoms of anxiety and the social isolation is going to set up a certain level of depression," Dr. Schleyer said.

As the child's "fight or flight" response kicks in, both in the acute stages and long term, they can become aggressive — verbally and physically lashing out at family and friends, cutting themselves, destroying objects or abusing animals.

"They're not going to lash out at the perpetrator or the abuser because that's dangerous," she said. Dr. Schleyer said it's important to remember that this is not a behavioral problem, instead it is part of the brain's coping response to what is happening.

"Remember the child's brain interprets what is happening or has happened to that child through a worldview. So, it's not just the perpetrator, it is the entire world that becomes dangerous, which is devastating to see," Dr. Schleyer said.

"The brain is amazing," she said, explaining that the brain develops certain coping mechanisms to help the child deal with the frightening and overwhelming experiences.

"The coping mechanisms are actually just survival tools. When the child's feeling helpless, terrified, afraid and sometimes unable to escape the dangerous situation, the child's brain develops coping mechanisms and the one that is the most pronounced is dissociation," Dr. Schleyer said.

Dissociation is a way that the brain mentally blocks off thoughts and feelings and memories. "Teachers, parents, friends may start noticing that they just seem spacey. It's a daydream effect," she said. "It numbs the child; they are not feeling."

And while this does help a child get through what they are experiencing, it has detrimental long-term effects. It interferes with their ability to function in school, their ability to function socially and their ability to complete the daily activities of living.

"Parents think they're disobeying but they are not — they're dissociated. This isn't something they are trying to do, it is something their brain is doing for them to protect them," she said.

"As the child grows into adolescence and adulthood with a dissociative brain, all of the mental blocking-off has interfered with the developmental stages of what a person needs to go through in order to be a healthy, functioning adult human being," Dr. Schleyer said.

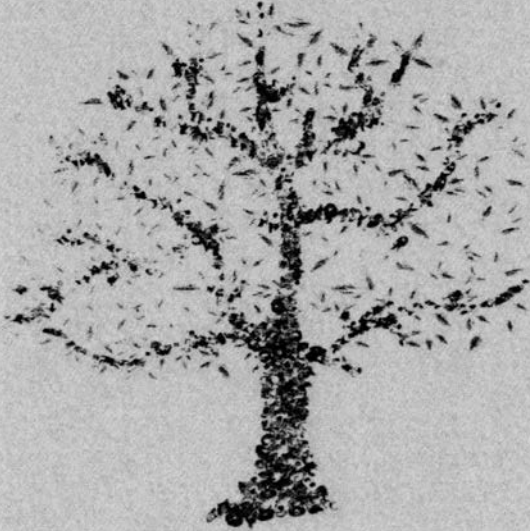
This can affect dating relationships, the ability to function in the workforce and the ability to take care of their own children. "So, while in childhood, to an extent, it is an effective survival tool, it becomes a detriment over time."

What is difficult for parents and caregivers is that the child will rarely share that the abuse is happening to them. Sometimes, they never disclose even after years or decades of therapy. Dr. Schleyer's recommendation is that, at the first signs of a child becoming withdrawn or exhibiting unusual behavioral changes, "see your pediatrician." A pediatrician will rule out any physical reasons for the changes and then make a referral to a qualified child counselor.

"It takes a profound amount of intense psychotherapy to get the child back on the developmental railroad track," Dr. Schleyer said. But it is possible with loving parents or caretakers who are willing and able to work with the child in a stable and safe environment.



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# Four ways to grow the Church

Last October, I met with the deans of our diocese to discuss a number of issues, the most prominent of which was the ongoing process of merging some of our parishes and reorganizing others into clusters. These moves, which have been happening over the past several years,

WORD ON FIRE



Bishop Robert Barron

are necessitated by a number of factors: the diminishing number of priests, demographic shifts in our cities and towns, economic pressures, etc.

Even as I expressed my approval for some of these changes, I told the deans that, for every strategy of consolidation, I want a strategy for growth as well.

I simply refuse to accept the proposition that I, or any other bishop, should be presiding over the decline

of our churches. By its very nature, Christianity is centrifugal, outward-tending, universal in purpose and scope. Jesus didn't say, "Preach the Gospel to a handful of your friends," or "Proclaim the Good News to your own culture." Rather, he said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:18-19).

He also instructed his followers that the very gates of hell would not prevail against the fighting Church that he established. Therefore, maintaining things as they are, or managing decline, or treading water is absolutely not what Jesus wants or expects of us.

Let us never settle for maintenance of the status quo. Permit me to say, right away, that the expansion of our Church is by no means the exclusive responsibility of bishops and priests. As Vatican II clearly teaches, every baptized Catholic is commissioned to be an evangelizer; so we're all in this together. Therefore, what are some of the strategies of growth that can be employed by any

Catholic?

A first one I would highlight is simply this: every family that comes regularly to Mass should make it their evangelical responsibility to bring another family to Mass this coming year. Every faithful Mass-goer reading these words knows people who should be going to Mass and aren't. They might be your own children or grandchildren. They might be coworkers who were once ardent Catholics and who simply drifted away from the practice of the faith, or perhaps people who are angry at the Church. Identify these wandering sheep and make it your evangelical challenge to bring them back to Mass. If we all did this successfully, we would double the size of our parishes in a year.

A second recommendation is to pray for the expansion of the Church. According to the Scriptures, nothing great is ever accomplished apart from prayer. So ask the Lord, insistently, fervently, even stubbornly, to bring back his scattered sheep. Just as we have to beg the harvest master to raise up workers to gather in his harvest, so we have to beg him to increase his sheepfold.

I would encourage the elderly and the homebound in a parish to take on this specific task. And I might ask those who regularly do Eucharistic Adoration to spend 15 or 30 minutes a day asking the Lord for this specific favor. Or I would suggest that liturgy planners include petitions for the growth of the parish in the prayers of the faithful at Sunday Mass.

A third enjoiner is to invite seekers to raise their questions. I know from lots of concrete experience over the past 20 years that many young people, even those who claim hostility to the faith, are actually deeply interested in religion. Like Herod listening to the preaching of John the Baptist in prison, even the seemingly anti-religious will go on religious websites and attend carefully to what is being discussed.

So ask those who have disaffiliated why they no longer come to Mass. You might be surprised by how ready they are to tell you. But then, you have to have followed the recommendation of St. Peter: "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope" (1 Pet. 3:15).

In other words, if you elicit questions, you better be ready to give some answers. This means that you have to bone up on your theology, your apologetics, your Scripture, your philosophy, and your church history. If that sounds daunting, remember that in the last 25 years or so there has been an explosion of literature in just these areas, focusing precisely on the kinds of questions that young seekers tend to ask — and most of it is available readily online.

A fourth and final suggestion that I would make is simply this: be kind. Sherry Waddell, whose "Forming Intentional Disciples" has become a modern classic in the field of evangelization, says that a crucial first step in bringing someone to the faith is the establishment of trust. If someone thinks that you are a good and decent person, she is far more likely to listen to you speak about your faith.

May I be blunt? Even the most casual glance at Catholic social media reveals a plethora of obnoxious behavior. Far, far too many seem intent upon trumpeting their own correctness, focusing on narrow issues that are unintelligible and irrelevant to most people, and tearing down their enemies.

I fear that this reality on social media may be an amplification of attitudes in the Church outside of the digital space. These attitudes are inimical to evangelization. A colleague of mine has related that in his conversations with the alienated and unaffiliated that what keeps them away from the Church is their experience of what they describe as meanness from believers. Both online and in real life, be kind. No one will be interested in hearing about the faith life of obviously bitter and unhappy people.

So, we have our marching orders: proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ to all nations. Let us start with our own parishes, our own families. And let us never settle for maintenance of the status quo.

*Bishop Robert Barron is bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota. Article originally published at WordOnFire.org.*

## Choosing our own storm

"We only live, only suspire, consumed by either fire or fire."

T.S. Eliot wrote those words and, with them, suggests that our choice in this life is not between calm and storm, but between two kinds of storms.

IN EXILE



Father Ron Rolheiser

He is right, of course, but sometimes it is good to vary the metaphor: We live in this world caught between two great gods, very different from each other: chaos and order.

Chaos is the god of fire, of fertility, of risk, of creativity, of novelty, of letting go. Chaos is the god of wildness, the god who brings disorder and mess. Most artists worship at his shrine. He is also the god of

sleeplessness, of restlessness and disintegration. In fact, chaos works precisely by disintegration of what is stable. Chaos is the god more worshipped by those of a liberal temperament.

Order is the god of water, of prudence, of chastity, of common sense, of stability, of hanging on. He is the god of pragma. He likes systems, clarity and a roof that doesn't leak. He is more worshipped by those of a conserva-

tive temperament. Few artists pay him homage, but the corporate and ecclesiastical worlds more than compensate for this. By and large, he is their god. He can also be the god of boredom, timidity, and rigidity. With him, you will never disintegrate, but you might suffocate. However, while he does not generate a lot of excitement, this god keeps a lot of people sane and alive.

Chaos and order, fire and water, don't much like each other. However, both demand the respect accorded a deity. Unfortunately, like all one-sided deities, each wants all of us, but to give that submission is dangerous.

Allegiance to either, to the exclusion of the other, not infrequently leads to a self-destruction. When chaos reigns unchecked by order, moral and emotional disintegration soon enough unleash a darkness from which there is often no recovery. That's what it means to fall apart, to become unglued.

Conversely, when order totally dispels chaos, a certain self-annihilating virtue, posturing as God, begins to drain life of delight and possibility.

It is dangerous to worship at only the shrine. Both gods are needed. The soul, the church, practical life, the structures of society and love itself need the tempering that comes from both fire and water, order and chaos.

Too much fire and things just burn up, disintegrate. Too much water and nothing ever changes, petrification sets in. Too much letting go and the sublimity of love lies prostituted; too much timidity and love shrivels up like a dried prune. No, both gods are needed — in practical life,

in romantic life, in ecclesiology, in morality, in business and in government. Risk and prudence, rock music and Gregorian chant, both contain some whisperings of God. It is not by blind chance that we are caught between the two.

This should not be surprising because God, the God of Jesus Christ, is the God of both — fire and water, chaos and order, liberal and conservative, chastity and prodigal love. God is the great stillpoint and God is also the principle of novelty, freshness and resurrection.

Thomas Aquinas once defined the human soul as made up of two principles, the principle of energy and the principle of integration. One principle keeps us alive and the other keeps us glued together. These two principles, while in tension with each other, desperately need each other.

A healthy soul keeps us energized, eager for life, but a healthy soul also keeps us solidly glued together, knowing who we are when we look at ourselves in a mirror. Our souls need to provide us with both energy and integrity, fire and glue.

God is love, and love wants and needs both order and chaos. Love wants always to build a home, to settle down, to create a calm, stable and chaste place. Something inside us wants the calm of paradise and thus love is about order. It wants to avoid emotional and moral disintegration.

But love is also about chaos. There is something in love that wants to let go, that wants to be taken, that



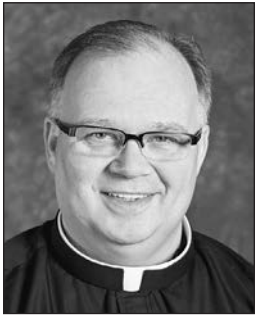
# A celebration of God’s love

The readings for the Mass of Easter Day — Cycle A — are: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4 and John 20:1-9.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Happy Easter!

I’ve told a story about an Easter Vigil I attended years ago. I was sitting in a pew close to the front of church. An

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Gregory Bach

older gentleman was on the opposite end of the pew. I don’t recall his name but he’s the type of person that would never go to a party for fear he might have to smile. As the Easter Vigil continued, we get to the sign of peace. I walked to where he was and put my hand out. He growled at me and said, “Get back down there.” What a wonderful expression of Easter joy! I just smiled and returned to my seat.

I kind of doubt that Mary or the Apostles expressed their feelings that way on the first Easter morn. They hear the word that Jesus has risen. It wasn’t instantaneous that they spread the gospel but in their time, filled with the Holy Spirit, they would burst forth with a teaching about a God who loves us so much that he sent his Son into the world. God bent down over us. That is what we celebrate at Easter — a God who loves us unconditionally.

“But let us look more closely at that man crucified between earth and heaven. Let us contemplate Him more intently, and we will realize that the cross is not the banner of the victory of death, sin and evil, but rather the luminous sign of love, of God’s immense love, of something that we could never have asked, imagined or expected: God bent down over us, He lowered Himself, even to the darkest corner of our lives, in order to stretch out His hand and draw us to Himself, to bring us all the way to Himself.” (Pope Benedict XVI – Way of the Cross in the Colosseum – 22 April 2011)

I love that quote, “God bent down over us.” What great love from our God who cares for all people, of all times.

As we have just finished the season of Lent and we move on to the Easter season with great joy in our hearts, let us continue to thank God for all the blessings bestowed upon us as God continues to bend down over us.

*Father Gregory Bach is assistant director of seminarians for the Diocese of Covington and pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Covington, Ky*

wants to surrender its boundaries, that wants the new, the foreign and that wants to let go of its old self. That’s a fertile principle within love that has kept the human race going.

Our God hallows both of these gods, chaos and order; and that is why it is healthy that both be kept in a healthy tension. To be healthy, we need to bring them together within ourselves and we need to bring them together not as we would bring two parties to meet at a negotiating table, but as a high and a low-pressure system meet to produce a storm. After a storm, the weather is clear.

In the tempest there is life and there is God. In it we are initiated, initiated through immersion into the intense fires of desire and the ecstatic waters of surrender.

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

# NO Cross — NO glory

Father Jonathan Meyer repeated this mantra, “No Cross, No Glory” at the E-6 Men’s Conference, mid-February. A fitting reflection for Lent and Holy Week. Father Meyer is the organizer for a vast gathering of men

— many fathers and sons at the annual Ephesians: 6, “Armor of God” Men’s Conference at East Central High School, St. Leon, Indiana.

Everyone can try to unite themselves to Christ on the Cross. Contemplate the union with Jesus in the Eucharist; give thanks for Christ’s ultimate love for us. We can strive to imitate the words, “This is my body and blood given up for you,” as we make our own sacrifice.

Everyone suffers the pangs of grief, hardship, illness and pain sometime in life. How one tries to cope and our attitude toward such things matters. People may look upon ailments and losses as a true blessing, and easily recognize redemptive value and God’s gift with such struggles. Others can become angry, disillusioned, feel betrayed and maybe turn away from God in those tough moments, but they risk missing the whole point. There can be no glory without the cross.

This theme was manifested at the National Men’s Conference on March 25 too. One speaker at Xavier’s Cintas Center, Father Robert Spitzer, shared from a scientific perspective about the true presence of the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ in the Eucharist

VIEWPOINT



Ronald M. Bertsch

# ‘Sacrifice’: A word wholly connected to the Holy Eucharist

One of the most quoted descriptions of the Eucharist is from the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, “Lumen Gentium,” which calls the Eucharist the “source and summit” of Christian living.

GUEST



Michael R. Heinlein

But what is sometimes overlooked is the specific context of that famous line — that of sacrifice. “Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the source and summit of the whole Christian life,” the line reads, “they (“the faithful”) offer the Divine Victim to God and offer themselves along with It” (No. 11).

The intrinsically sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is reinforced, too, at the very start of the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s section on the Eucharist, which states that we “participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist” (No. 1322).

In short, sacrifice is at the heart of the Eucharist, the source of our living. “The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (John 6:51).

What does this mean for us? At the end of Mass, we often hear the familiar words “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” It seems to me this instruction contains a blueprint for how to live Eucharistically, and therefore sacrificially.

We give God glory in offering our lives as Christ did. This is to live as St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, instructed Christians: “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship” (12:1). Each one of us is called to live a life of sacrifice in imitation of Christ.

Not one of us is without the burden of our own crosses in life. In some way, we each know suffering and selflessness. But what we do with these realities is what defines our lives of discipleship.

through three recent Eucharistic miracles.

The actor portraying Jesus in the video series “The Chosen,” Jonathan Roumie was another speaker at the National Conference. He provided the audience with scenes from the hit docu-series. With intense emotion, one scene from Episode 2 of Season 3, depicts Apostle James, son of Alphaeus. In the show, Little James, as he is affectionately nicknamed, suffers a physical disability. He wrestles with his insecurities and feelings of unworthiness since he has witnessed Jesus heal so many other people but not him. Little James conjures up the courage to ask Jesus why he has not been cured. Jesus lovingly responds and outlines the rationale and promises, “one day, Little James you will be healed.” Jesus asks him to marvel at the good that will come from his suffering and his upcoming missionary journey.

Roumie was asked about his interpretation of the scene, and he shared his understanding of God’s work in his own life. He believes God always answers prayers, he gives us one of three answers, “Yes; Not yet; or No, I have something better for you.” Again, how challenging it is for us to accept the second and third responses.

In my work at DCCH Center for Children and Families many youth struggle with processing the intense trauma and hardships in their lives. Without much faith or a relationship with Jesus, understanding the No Cross — No Glory concept seems nearly impossible. Please pray these youngsters find a foster family or caring mentor to help them.

Let us all come to a better union with Christ on the Cross so that the Easter glory of the resurrection can soon follow.

*Ronald M. Bertsch is director of Therapeutic Foster Care/Adoption for the DCCH Center for Children and Families, Ft. Mitchell.*

Jesus said to take up our cross and follow him. He also told us to lay down our lives for others.

When we offer our lives for God and others — joined through the Eucharist to the pattern of Christ’s sacrifice — our struggles, anxieties, fears, difficulties, pains and sufferings are all transformed and given their meaning and purpose. And Jesus’ sacrifice was rooted in love for others. He told us, “No one has greater love than this” (John 15:13). In short, “whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it,” says the Lord (Matt 16:25).

In the Eucharistic sacrifice, where we encounter and receive Jesus Christ, we are conformed to the only way of life worth living and given the grace we need to sustain our efforts in doing so. The sacrament shows us how to offer our lives to God with Christ and draw from the source of all life as the means to gain life forever.

At Mass, we are drawn up into the sacrifice of the Lord who died to set us free. We lay down our very selves with him. Bread and wine are changed and transformed, but so too are our lives and sacrifices — into something good and life-giving.

As the late Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. once said, “The freedom Christ gives us with himself in the Eucharist is more than freedom to do; it is also freedom to give ourselves totally, even to the point of self-sacrifice, as Christ gave himself to death on the cross.”

Like Jesus, if we accept and carry our crosses well — allowing the Eucharist to reveal what must be the heart and goal of our lives — then they will bring nothing but good things. By offering ourselves with Christ, we can transmit his abundant graces and blessings for others in their quest for conversion, sanctification and friendship with God. The Eucharist shows us how, by making a sacrifice of our lives — in union with Christ’s, we can carry God’s life to ourselves and others.

*Michael R. Heinlein is author of “Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I.” and currently in formation for the Association of Pauline Cooperators. His commentary has been provided by OSV News.*



# Serra Club IGNITE workshop helps ‘spark’ vocation ministry

**Maura Baker**  
*Staff Writer*

“The Holy Spirit is moving, not just in our diocese, but across the United States, to inspire people to be more aware of the need for us to be more intentional about vocation ministry,” Donna Heim, Vocations’ Committee Chair for the Diocesan Serra Club for Vocations in Diocese of Covington said, promoting the Serra Club’s upcoming IGNITE Vocation Ministry Workshop. “As Pope John Paul II said, vocation ministry is everyone’s business.”

Upcoming on August 5 of this year, this workshop is being held in collaboration between both the Diocese of Covington and Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and is endorsed both by Archbishop Dennis Schnurr and Bishop John Iffert.

“Its mission is to be intentional about building a culture of vocations in every parish,” said Ms. Heim.

According to Nick Winnike, former Serra Club president for the Diocese of Covington and current coordinator for the IGNITE workshop, the event is catered towards parish leaders and community members, to inform them about the resources, programs and ministries offered by



the Serra Club to help promote and inspire vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

“Serra Club USA developed this IGNITE program to help individual parishes with vocation promotion,” said Mr. Winnike, “and then, Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky were together at a regional meeting — and decided that, if the workshop would be hosted on either side of the river, we ought to invite the other side of the river to participate as well, and that’s how it came to be.”

Thanks to Serra Club USA, the workshop is not only free to the Diocese of Covington and Archdiocese of Cincinnati, but is also free to attend, as well. Additionally, every resource, tool and ministry introduced at the workshop is free to the parishes and diocesan communities, as well. These programs include the Melchizedek Project, priest Holy Hours and altar server awards; all of which are already active within the Diocese of Covington.

Registration for the workshop opens April 10. The workshop lasts 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. on August 5, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains, Cincinnati. Individuals interested in participating are encouraged to reach out to their pastors or parish office.

# National Eucharistic Revival aims to form disciples on mission with new Easter series

WASHINGTON — The National Eucharistic Revival announced it will release what it called the “first-of-its-kind” mystagogy series of weekly catechetical reflections throughout the Easter season to “invite all Catholics deeper into the mysteries of Christ by reflecting on the truth, goodness and beauty of the Mass,” a news release on the series said. “Mystagogy” is an intentional deepening of a disciple of Jesus Christ’s understanding of the faith following the reception of the sacraments — particularly in the period between Easter and Pentecost. The series, titled “Beautiful Light: A Paschal Mystagogy,” is being offered through the Heart of the Revival Newsletter, a weekly publication of the National Eucharistic Revival, which was established in June 2022 to provide resources to reaffirm and deepen the Eucharistic faith of Catholics across the country. It begins April 13, the Thursday before Divine Mercy Sunday, and runs through May 25, the Thursday before Pentecost. Seven prominent Catholics will write articles for the series: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis; Sister Maria Miguel Wright of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist; biblical scholar and author Jeff Cavins; Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle; Canadian priest and author Father Harrison Ayre; Kately Javier, coordinator for Adult Formation and Hispanic catechesis for the Washington Archdiocese; and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To access “Beautiful Light: A Paschal Mystagogy,” subscribe to the Heart of the Revival Newsletter at [eucharisticrevival.org/heart-of-the-revival-newsletter](http://eucharisticrevival.org/heart-of-the-revival-newsletter).



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# Catholic Schools — Following Christ



## Catholic Schools – Following Christ



(above) Students at Villa Madonna Academy High School, Villa Hills, follow Christ through the Benedictine commitment to prayer, stewardship and community.

In the Gospel of John 8:12, we hear Jesus say, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Each day our Catholic schools are teaching students how to be followers of Christ. We do this not only through the lessons in the classroom but also through our words and actions.

In today’s world, the culture is telling us and our children to follow all sorts of people and groups — especially online and on social media. But we are called to follow Jesus first and to be wary of others who may lead us astray.



This school year, we invite you to journey with our students and staff to see all the ways we are following Christ. And we encourage you to join with us in following Jesus each day through your words, actions, and prayers.

Kendra McGuire  
Superintendent of  
Catholic Schools,  
Diocese of Covington



(above) St. Mary School, Alexandria, Saints worked hard collecting new and gently used toys to donate to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to share joy with children in the community as they build God’s kingdom all around.



(above) Students at St. Augustine School, Covington, follow Christ by planting seeds, caring for the plants as they grow and then sharing the produce and flowers with the Parish Kitchen and Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



(above) Fourth grade students at St. Henry Catholic School, Elsmere, create fleece prayer blankets for homebound and nursing home parishioners as one of their service-learning projects. After making the blankets, the students pray a decade of the rosary into the blanket, so the receiver is not only wrapped in warmth, but also in prayer.

For more information about the Department of Catholic Schools, call (859) 392-1500 or e-mail [asmorey@covdio.org](mailto:asmorey@covdio.org).



# Students at NCCHS discover Holy Moments throughout Lent



Laura Keener  
Editor

This Lent, the Newport Central Catholic High School community kicked off its partnership with Dynamic Catholic Institute supplementing its religious curriculum. Headquartered in Erlanger, the Dynamic Catholic Institute has as its mission to “re-energize the Catholic Church in America by developing world-class resources that inspire people to rediscover the genius of Catholicism.” These include both print and digital resources for individuals and parish sacramental preparation programs as well as parish retreats and pilgrimages.

At NCCHS on Ash Wednesday, the entire school community began collectively reading Dynamic Catholic’s most recent publication, “Holy Moments,” written by Matthew Kelly, founder of Dynamic Catholic. They also sent the book to parents and alumni so that they, too, could participate. Father A.J. Gedney, chaplain, talked to the students about Holy Moments in his homily at the all-school Ash Wednesday Mass.

Holy moments, Father Gedney said, can be moments of blessing when something good happens or we experience moments of success. But they can also be moments “when things are less than ideal; even when bad things happen. We can choose to turn those into a holy moment.”

Whenever we suffer or are grieving or are embarrassed or are betrayed, “we have two options. One is to sulk ... Why this? Why now? Why me?,” said Father Gedney. “The other choice is to turn it into a holy moment. To acknowledge the suffering saying, ‘Lord, I don’t want this to happen. This is awful.’ Then to accept it, to consent to the suffering, it doesn’t make the suffering worse, but it gives our suffering meaning.”

Taking Father Gedney’s instruction to heart, every Friday the students at NCCHS identify a holy moment — good or bad — that they experienced during the week. They write it down and post it on the bulletin board in the cafeteria.

“We try to help them visualize that this really can have an impact on our everyday lives and on other people around us,” said Patty Grothaus, religion teacher.

NCCHS plans to continue offering Dynamic Catholic faith-building reading material in its summer reading selections. Then, they will pick up again with a collective reading project and activity when school starts in the fall.

Students at NCCHS are already familiar with Dynamic



(above left) In his homily on Ash Wednesday, Father AJ Gedney, chaplain, Newport Central Catholic High School, introduces the group Lenten reading project “Holy Moments” to students.  
(above) Each week during Lent, students document a holy moment they experienced that week and post it on the bulletin board near the cafeteria.

Catholic offerings. For the last several years they have participated in both the Best Advent Ever and the Best Lent Ever programs.  
“The students love Matthew Kelly, they already know

who he is,” said Mrs. Grothaus. “And when you find something that the students respond to, you want to keep doing it.”

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# Chrism Mass

**Priests, through their ‘strengths and weaknesses’ call the Holy Spirit into the faithful through Christ, Bishop Iffert preaches at Chrism Mass**

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

People from parishes, schools, religious institutions and Catholic organizations from across the Diocese of Covington gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate the annual Chrism Mass, April 4. In this special celebration, the Bishop consecrates Chrism and other blessed oils which are taken back to parishes for use in liturgical celebrations throughout the coming year.

The Chrism Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington, his second year presiding over this Mass. The Mass was also attended by priests from across the Diocese who not only assisted in the consecration of the Holy Chrism, but gathered to celebrate the Eucharist in the midst of their fellow priests and people from all over the diocese.

“We used to say in the seminary that men became seminarians and considered the priesthood for one of two reasons,” Bishop Iffert began his homily to a congregation that filled nearly every pew of the Cathedral. “They either knew a priest in their life who they admire so much and they want to be like, or they knew one they didn’t admire and thought, I can do better than that.”

Bishop Iffert would continue to tell the story of a priest he admired from his own diocese, known for his “loud” and “brash” personality and penchant for whiskey. However, while a young Bishop Iffert admired this priest, his mother was always “cold towards him.”

As Bishop Iffert’s mother was hospitalized later in life, this priest would come to her every Tuesday with candy and sit with her.

One day, Bishop Iffert asked his mother why she was always cold towards him, to which she would recall a story in which an early harvest led her to move up her wedding. In the back of the Church, the priest asked her, “When’s the baby due?,” assuming this was the reason for moving up the wedding—a grudge that sat with Mary Iffert all of those years.

The following Tuesday, the priest came with the bag of candy and she told him the story of what he said to her at her wedding. “And he looked at her with just all of the love in the world,” said Bishop Iffert, “and he said, ‘Yeah, that sounds like a stupid thing I would say,’ and he told her he was sorry.”

“And this man, now well on in years, got down on one knee and said ‘Mary, forgive me,’” he continued, “and my mom, with all of her cancerous weakness, raised her head from the bed, leaned over and kissed him on the forehead and said, I forgive you. I love you. And my soul grew larger.”

Bishop Iffert would continue off that story, saying “We priests are people who, in our strengths, and especially in our weakness, can reveal the love of God.”

As his homily continues, Bishop Iffert would recall a story shared by Pope Benedict XVI and St. Pope John Paul II about a time in Eastern Europe, still under Soviet oppression, people starved for the Eucharist would come to the tombstone of a priest, “and then, in turn, they would take up the text of the Eucharistic prayer and take turns reading the words; except for the words of institution.”

“The words at that moment, the words that only the priests says, and then they would fall silent, because they have no one to say those words,” Bishop Iffert said.

“In response to the need of God’s people for his invoked presence; ‘This is my body,’ the priest says. Who would dare? By the grace of Christ, bestowed upon the apostles, handed down in the life of the Church ... the priest is a man who, by his strengths, but especially in his weaknesses, can call the Holy Spirit into the lives of the faithful — enlarging the souls of those who believe.”

Following the homily, the priests renewed their commitment to the priestly ministry. “Pray for them, my brothers and sisters, that they will know their value ... that they will know their worth ... that they will know that Christ is with them when they do good, and when they err.”

During the Renewal of Priestly Promises, the priests stood before God, the bishop and the congregation as Bishop Iffert addresses them. After renewing the vows to be united in Christ and serve as “faithful stewards of the mysteries of God in the Holy Eucharist,” Bishop Iffert prays that the “Lord may keep us all in his charity and lead all of us, shepherds and flock, to eternal life.”

It is then, following this renewal, that the namesake oils of the Chrism Mass were blessed. The Oil of the Sick, used in the pastoral care of the sick, the Oil of the Catechumens, used in rites of Baptism and Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Holy Chrism, used at Baptism, Confirmation, the ordination of bishops and priests and for the consecration of churches and altars, are all presented to be blessed.

After the Oil of the Sick and Oil of Catechumens were blessed by Bishop Iffert, the priests of the diocese gathered raised their hands to bless the Holy Chrism.

The oils were then distributed to parishes and religious agencies across the Diocese for use in their religious rites.



The Knights of St. John and Knights of Columbus flank the main aisle of the Cathedral as the deacons and priests process to the sanctuary. (far left and left) Deacon Tom Murrin and Brad Whittle, seminarian, are pictured in the procession.

(right) Banners of all the parishes and schools of the Diocese of Covington were placed around the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.



(above) Dale Henson and Divine Providence Sister Margaret Stallmeyer read Scripture.

(below center) Deacon Mike Keller presents the Oil of Catechumens to Bishop Iffert.

(above) Deacon Michael Elmlinger incenses the Book of the Gospels.



(above) Bishop Iffert breathes on the Chrism, recalling the Spirit of God “moving over the face of the waters” at creation (Gen 1:12) and Jesus’ breathing on the disciples saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (Jn 20:22)

(left) Bishop Iffert blesses the Oil of the Sick.

(right) Deacon Timothy Britt places the Oil of the Sick on the table.



(above) Bishop Iffert preaches the homily.

(below right) Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys and the deans raise their hands in blessing as the Chrism is consecrated.



(above) Bishop Iffert pours aromatic balsam oil into the olive oil before consecrating the Sacred Chrism.



(left) After the blessing and consecration, seminarians (from left) Justin Schwarz, Brad Whittle and Michael Schulte remove the oils so they can be prepared for distribution.





# Pope says be close to those ‘abandoned’ like Christ: unborn, migrants

Justin McLellan  
Catholic News Service

The unborn, migrants, the elderly and the disabled are “living icons” of Jesus that call Christians to draw close to those who feel abandoned just as Christ did on the cross, Pope Francis said.

In his homily for Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square April 2, the pope reflected on the phrase Jesus uttered on the cross in St. Matthew’s Gospel, and which echoed through the square when sung in the responsorial psalm: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The pope said, “Christ, in his abandonment, stirs us to seek him and to love him and those who are themselves abandoned, for in them we see not only people in need, but Jesus himself.”

According to the Vatican gendarmes, some 60,000 people were present in St. Peter’s Square for the Mass. Fighting off coughs as he began his homily but otherwise speaking without difficulty, Pope Francis said that in his Passion, Jesus experienced the distance of God so he could be “completely and definitively one” with humanity.

The pope was released from the hospital April 1 after a four-day stay for treatment of bronchitis. He processed into St. Peter’s Square on the popemobile wearing his winter coat on an early spring day in Rome.

CNS photo/Chris Warde-Jones  
Pope Francis, carrying a woven palm branch, rides in the popemobile to the altar at the beginning of Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican April 2, 2023.



## An Easter Octave challenge

Gretchen R. Crowe  
OSV News

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

Easter is here! Alleluia, he is risen! We have made it through our Lenten fast, we have walked with the Lord during his passion and death, and we rejoice now in his resurrection. It is, quite rightly, a time for feasting and celebration.

But how might we appropriately celebrate the Easter season? Too often, I find that my efforts of growing in the spiritual life that begin on Ash Wednesday abruptly end with the Triduum. Sound familiar?

It may be worth considering, as we enter into this new season, how we might use the coming weeks to intentionally continue to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ? What fruit might we carry over from our Lenten experiences? How might we be able to have the best Easter yet?

To do this, we might start by considering the Church’s great gift of the Easter Octave. There is no better time in the year to celebrate than Easter Sunday and the week that follows.

For eight days in a row, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Easter in what is “an unparalleled opportu-

nity for celebration and reflection,” D.D. Emmons writes at SimplyCatholic.com.

If your Lenten commitment was to attend daily Mass throughout the season, don’t stop now! As Emmons explains: “During the Octave Days of Easter the Mass readings tell us the beautiful Resurrection story so that we can take time to ponder the reality that Calvary was not the end. Each of us can relate to the sadness, confusion and then elation of the disciples on the Emmaus road. Like Mary Magdalene we can encounter the risen Lord in the garden. In our hearts we can race with



Peter and John to see the empty tomb.”

Continuing to attend the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

Gretchen R. Crowe is the editor-in-chief of OSV News.

daily Mass during the Easter Octave is a powerful way to enter into the new season and to reflect upon the gift of the Resurrection.

There are other ways, too, of celebrating the Octave. Perhaps your family can have ice cream every day? Perhaps you pick one thing you really love to do, but never make time for, to do every day: a hobby, a nap, time with a good book.

Perhaps, too, you can involve your parish community in your Easter Octave challenge. How might you be able to celebrate together? One parish I know advocates for turning Easter Friday into “Meating Friday” — a chance for the community to come together, after weeks of meatless Fridays, to celebrate with a feast on the Friday during the Easter Octave.

We might also use the Easter Octave to read Scripture — the Resurrection narratives in all four Gospels are a great place to start — or commit to additional devotions. Or pick up a new spiritual book? Any healthy habits that we forge during the Easter Octave can be carried over into the whole Easter season, and hopefully beyond.

Alleluia, he is risen! What a gift we have in our risen Lord. “This is



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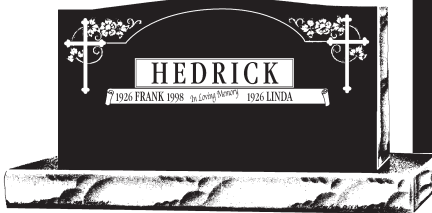
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# Eucharistic meditation 7: Waiting for the Lord

**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 longs to bring me into his rest in the fullness of time

**Pray:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Become aware of the silence and emptiness of this Holy Saturday. Let yourself imagine Jesus in his suffering and death, now enclosed in a cold tomb. He did it for you.

Thank Jesus for the gift of himself in in the Paschal Mystery.

**Ask for the grace:** Jesus, help me to believe you will give me rest.

**Scripture Meditation**  
“Therefore, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God. And whoever enters into God’s rest, rests from his own works as God did from his. Therefore, let us strive to enter into that rest.” (Hebrews 4:9–11a)

**Reflection Question**  
In the busyness of life, is there an area of your heart where you have stopped waiting for the Lord? Where do you most long for rest? As you imagine yourself waiting outside of Jesus’ sealed tomb, share this with him. Ask Jesus to give you rest in his perfect timing

**Spiritual Meditation**  
“Something strange is happening — there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness ... Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven ... The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.” (An ancient homily on Holy Saturday, Liturgy of the Hours)



**Reflection Question**  
Jesus Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension have won salvation and eternal life for us. Uniting your heart to Jesus, ask for the grace to believe he has prepared a place for you for all eternity. Ask for the courage to wait in hope for the fulfillment of this promise.

**Closing Prayer**  
All-powerful and ever-living God, your only Son went down among the dead and rose again in glory. In your goodness raise up your faithful people, buried with him in baptism, to be one with him in the eternal life of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. (Liturgy of the Hours, Prayer from the Office of Readings for Holy Saturday)



## Stewardship and Mission Services

Due to a planned retirement, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, KY ([www.covdio.org](http://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 Kopyay, SPHR**, at [skoplyay@covdio.org](mailto:skoplyay@covdio.org) or **859-392-1589**.



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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Catholic groups back UN on climate change

UNITED NATIONS — Various Catholic groups praised a United Nations’ resolution that calls on the International Court of Justice to outline countries’ obligations for protecting the earth’s climate, and the legal consequences they face if they don’t carry these out. The resolution was pushed by Pacific Islander youth and by the small island nation of Vanuatu, whose future is threatened by rising sea levels and cyclones. The U.N. General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus March 29. ICJ opinions are nonbinding but hold significant moral and legal weight. Supporters of the U.N. resolution hope the international court’s forthcoming advisory opinion regarding climate protections-expected in about two years-will urge world governments to speed up their climate action. Carmelite Father Eduardo Agosta Scarel of the Laudato Si’ Movement told OSV News the resolution “is asking the international court to issue an informed opinion on the legality or otherwise of the current failure of States to comply with the existing normative framework to care for the earth’s climate, and to highlight inconsistencies, noncompliance and loopholes.” Ambassador Paul Beresford-Hill, the Order of Malta’s permanent U.N. observer, told OSV News at the U.N. March 30, “what that resolution stands for, we stand for.” He added, “at the end of the day, if you are an island state, and you’re facing the possibility of the extinction of your island” with its people forced to migrate to higher ground.

Kenyans relieved deadly anti-government protests suspended

NAIROBI, Kenya — Catholics in Kenya began Holy Week with a sigh of relief after the opposition called off violent anti-government protests. Protests that started March 20 left at least three people dead, property destroyed and places of worship torched. On April 2, amid Catholic bishops and other religious leaders’ relentless push for dialogue, President William Ruto and opposition leader Raila Odinga agreed to talk. Ruto had offered an “olive branch” and proposed a bipartisan parliamentary process. Odinga had agreed to the process, but warned of further protests if this failed. On April 2, Archbishop Martin Kivuva Musonde, president of the Kenyan bishops’ conference warned in a statement that Christians were entering the most sacred time in their calendar and that it should be respected. Referring to previous calls for truce from the side of the bishops he said, “We are greatly disappointed that our ardent plea to our leaders to respect this holy time by suspending demonstrations for respect of God ... has been totally ignored and

even mocked.” “Many people have been hurt, others have lost their lives. People’s property has been destroyed and goods looted. Goons seemed to roam freely. People have lost their livelihoods,” Archbishop Kivuva Musonde said. “Innocent children have found themselves in the middle of the mayhem and suffered injuries. And still more, some places of worship have been set ablaze by arsonists,” the statement read.

Florida Senate advances six-week abortion ban with increased pregnancy center funds

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (OSV News) – The Florida Senate April 3 approved a bill to ban abortions after six weeks, a proposal supported by the state’s Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is widely expected to launch his bid for the Republican presidential nomination soon. Senate Bill 300, the Heartbeat Protection Act, would prohibit most abortions in the state, with exceptions for women who are victims of rape or who face a mortality risk associated with the pregnancy. The bill would also make exceptions for cases of a diagnosis of a fatal fetal anomaly until the third trimester. SB 300 also allocates some funds to crisis pregnancy centers, and restricts the use of abortion drugs via telemedicine, requiring in-person visits rather than the distribution of those drugs by mail. If signed into law, the new bill would only go into effect if the state’s current 15-week ban is upheld amid an ongoing legal challenge before the Florida Supreme Court. DeSantis, a Catholic, indicated in March he would sign the bill if it reaches his desk. In an April 3 post on their website noting the bill’s Senate passage, the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops noted that while the bill is “imperfect,” the conference “strongly supported” the legislation calling it a “tremendous improvement over current law.”

Texas Catholic bishops back school choice bill amid public funding debate

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has backed a set of bills in the state’s Legislature supporters say would give parents more say in their child’s education, but critics argue would strip crucial funds from public schools. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has identified school choice as one of his top priorities for the state’s current legislative session. In March testimony before state lawmakers, Bishop Michael Olson of Fort Worth backed the legislation under consideration, SB 2354/HB 4339, saying the effort meets the criteria the state’s Catholic bishops use to vet education legislation for their support, including ensuring the bills have a preferen-

tial option for the poor and vulnerable, as well as protections for the privacy, autonomy and religious freedom of participating schools. The legislation has advanced out of the education committee in the state’s Senate, but it faces steeper odds in the state’s House where rural Republican lawmakers have previously rejected school choice proposals.

Pope adjusts canon law appeal period for members of religious orders

VATICAN CITY — Saying he wanted to protect the rights of members of religious orders facing expulsion, Pope Francis made small changes to canon law, giving them more time to appeal their dismissals. The changes, announced by the Vatican April 3, apply to both the Code of Canon Law for Latin-rite Catholics and to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. Even when a serious reason motivates the dismissal of a member of a religious order, canon law gives that person a right to know the reasons, to offer a defense and to appeal a decision. The current Latin-rite code said that for a decree of dismissal to be valid, it “must indicate the right which the dismissed possesses to make recourse to the competent authority within 10 days from receiving notification.” A similar paragraph in the code for Eastern-rite Catholics gave a period of 15 days for the person to appeal. Pope Francis ordered the change of both codes to give a person 30 days to appeal. The change goes into effect May 7.

Arrests made at Virginia university that disrupted pro-life meeting

RICHMOND, Va. — Two people were arrested March 29 after causing a disruption at a pro-life event on the Richmond campus of Virginia Commonwealth University, according to multiple local media reports. The group Students for Life held an event in its “Lies Pro-Choicers Believe” Tour at VCU. The group said its event was shut down after its president, Kristan Hawkins, and student ambassador and Turning Point USA contributor Isabel Brown, were shouted down by protesters, eventually leading to an altercation. Hawkins said in a statement that her group “will be demanding that VCU invite me and Isabel back to hold an event that is safe for all to attend.” “The free speech rights of pro-life Americans and especially pro-life students are at stake,” Hawkins said. “We can’t stop meeting for fear of opposition.” The next event on the group’s tour is scheduled for April 18 at the University of New Hampshire, followed by an event scheduled for April 20 at Georgetown University in Washington.

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS



**Saving lives with blood donations**  
Bishop Mulloy K of C 1301 in cooperation with Hoxworth Blood Center held a blood drive. Shown here (l-r) are Bruce Mirrieless, Grand Knight Bob Hassman, and Carl Luersen.

**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.

**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.

**Thomas More Saints take on the University of Cumberlands Patriots at its new baseball home, Thomas More Stadium,** Florence, April 15, starting at noon in a double header. Arrive early and see former major league player David Justice throw out the first pitch. Bobby Young, former Thomas More player who was later drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, joins Justice to catch the first pitch. The University will honor all previous baseball championship teams at the game as well. Admission is free. For more details, visit [tmukyus/tmstadium](http://tmukyus/tmstadium).

**Emmet Cahill returns to Mother of God Church in concert,** 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](mailto: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:**



**Catholic Family Movie Night**  
A Weekend of Beauty  
St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, in partnership with The Angelico Project, hosted a Catholic Family Movie Night Feb. 5, featuring the movie “Encanto.” The evening included discussions on discovering the talents God has given us. The evening concluded Catholic Schools Week with fun, food and fellowship.

**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](http://fatimaconsecration.org) or call (859) 394-74720 or e-mail [Theresa@bluearmy.org](mailto:Theresa@bluearmy.org).

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**VMA receives STEM grant**  
Villa Madonna Academy High School/Junior High received a \$10,000 STEM grant from the National Society of Professional Engineers — Northern Kentucky chapter. The grant will help modernize Villa’s chemistry equipment with hotplates with magnetic stir bars, glassware, and scientific equipment that can interface with computers for advanced data collection. David Mavricos, VMA physics and AP capstone teacher, wrote the grant and accepted the check on Villa’s behalf at NPSE-NKY membership meeting at Sanitation District No. 1 in Ft. Wright. Pictured (from left) are: Tyler Means, NSPE-NKY president-elect, Terracon Consultants; Nick Hamberg, NSPE-KY president, Jedson Engineering; and David Mavricos.



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Obituary

**Sister Mary Belle Borros, C.D.P.**  
Sister Mary Belle (aka Sister Paul Marion) Borros died peacefully at Holy Family Home, March 28, 2023. Born Mary Belle Elizabeth to Marion and Pauline (Wichmann) Borros of Covington, Ky. in 1934, she was a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence for 68 years. Sixteen years of teaching ministry saw her serve at four elementary schools in Kentucky and Ohio, as well as principal of St. Michael School in Ripley, Ohio (1968-1970). A deeply spiritual woman, in 1973 she was one of five Sisters missioned by the Congregation to begin its Aletheia House of Prayer in Melbourne, Ky. Called in 1978 by her Provident God to



Sister Mary Belle Borros, C.D.P.

minister to the more than 140 women living at the Congregation's Jeanne d'Arc Residence in New York City, she took up her new mission with love and enthusiasm. To better serve its residents, during the next eight years she became an auxiliary police-woman with the NYC Police Department, learned to speak Spanish, and earned a certificate in Spiritual Development from the New York Archdiocesan School of Spirituality. In 1986, Sister Mary Belle began what she described as "one of the most privileged times of my life, to minister to and learn from our elderly Sisters." Her gentle demeanor, great kindness, sense of humor and ability to "go with the flow" recommended her well for appointment as

Animator of the Congregation's Holy Family Home in Melbourne. Serving the Sisters there until 1997, after a brief sabbatical she responded to yet another call of Providence, becoming Assistant Director of Activities at St. Charles Care Center in Northern Kentucky. Sister Mary Belle retired to Holy Family Home in 2014, where she took up a full-time ministry of prayer. Health issues recommended her move to the Holy Family Health Care Center in 2017. She will be missed by her religious community, the Sisters of Divine Providence, and her nieces, nephews, cousins, and many friends, especially her close friend and CDP director of Associates Donna Esposito. Her brothers Hodge, Thomas and David preceded her in death. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in the Immaculate Conception Chapel, Holy Family Home, Melbourne on Saturday, April 1. Burial in the convent cemetery followed. Memorials may be sent to the Congregation of Divine Providence, 5300 Saint Anne Drive, Melbourne, KY 41059.

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# Squires of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre

(Continued from page 3)

of the Lord.”

Candidates participate in a discernment and formation period of from six months to a year. Squires make formal promises and a commitment to remain a Squire for at least one year and to share in the life and spirituality of the Order through participation in the community of the local Section. This commitment, according to Msgr. Twaddell, is founded on three pillars: a solid formation in Catholic doctrine, a deepening of the spiritual life, and the practice of works of charity and prayer in favor of the Christians of the Holy Land. There are no dues or financial obligations asked of a Squire.

A Squire’s participation in the Section can include assisting at the Order’s liturgies and Masses as an usher, lector, Eucharistic Minister, or altar server. They may also assist at the Lieutenancy’s Investitures, participate in the

Section’s retreats, or organize pilgrimages. In addition, Squires have access to mentors from whom they can find guidance in their spirituality as well as in life experience.

“Our Squires will have two mentors available to them,” said Sir Nelson Rodriguez, who along with Msgr. Twaddell, serves as the Co-Vice Chancellor of Squires for the Order’s North Central Lieutenancy. “Squires will have one member of the clergy for regular spiritual guidance and one lay Knight or Dame who is a seasoned professional in their field from whom Squires can choose to learn and grow.”

Squires of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem were originally established in 1923 by Baron de Lormais, chancellor of the Lieutenancy of France, who wanted to interest young people in works of charity and prayer in favor of the Christians of Palestine. Its statutes were adopted and approved by the Latin Patriarch of

Jerusalem, who encouraged their adoption by other countries. The Squires disappeared during the Second World War, but in March 1999, France re-established the Squire movement, which continues to grow today.

Since then, the Squires movement has spread to Toronto and Montreal in Canada, and most recently to the United States, where the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, His Eminence Cardinal Fernando Filoni, KGCHS, approved its formation in the North Central Lieutenancy, with the first Squires attached to the Covington-Lexington Section in the Diocese of Covington.

“Young Catholic men and women should find being a Squire exhilarating and having the potential to give a deeper meaning to their lives,” said Msgr. Twaddell. “We hope this is what our future Squires will discover who will join us.”

For more information, visit [www.eohsjcovington.org/squires](http://www.eohsjcovington.org/squires).

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# Supplying Food to Hungry Families Is the First Step in Transforming Communities

When ministry leaders with Cross Catholic Outreach set out to transform the impoverished communities of Santa Rosa de Lima, Guatemala, they knew addressing the urgent need for food would have to be their priority.

“You can rarely succeed with long-term mission work if you ignore basic human needs. Desperately hungry people are understandably focused on survival, and their first goal is always to make sure their children are fed. Only



when that need is addressed can they focus on programs to break the cycle of poverty and build a better future,” explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the largest and most successful Catholic charities serving the poor in Latin America.

Within Guatemala, one of the countries that Cross Catholic Outreach serves, the ministry is currently working with Catholic leaders in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima. There, extreme hunger and the medical hardships it creates have been impacting thousands

of Guatemalans without drawing much attention from the world at large, even though most of the victims are babies and young children. Fortunately, through Cross Catholic Outreach — and the support of compassionate Catholics in the U.S. — the local clergy now believe helping families escape the hardships of chronic hunger is possible.

“Malnutrition has a terrible impact on poor children, and this crisis is particularly deadly in Guatemala’s remote, rural regions. There, families live too far from hospitals and clinics capable of helping them. A serious lack of resources and inadequate food production create the perfect conditions for malnutrition to thrive,” Cavnar said. “Poor mothers are forced to choose which of their children to feed on a given day, and they watch in despair as their sons and daughters weaken, grow gaunt and lose the will to live.”

Cavnar went on to explain the major difference between hunger and malnutrition.

“Most Americans think of hunger as a temporary thing — a pain that will eventually be relieved — and, praise God, that’s often the case. A child in the U.S. may go hungry at times, but that hunger isn’t usually a life-threatening issue,” he said. “The poorest Guatemalan children may have to endure hunger for weeks or months on end, and at that point, they begin to manifest signs of mental and physical damage that may become irreversible.”

Stunted growth is one of the most common physical problems Cavnar has seen, and the harm it does to a child’s body is lasting.

Thankfully, Church leaders in Guatemala have been working with Cross Catholic Outreach on an ambitious plan



*Families in Santa Rosa de Lima have great faith, but the poverty in their communities is making their life a daily trial. Nutritious meals will help restore their hope.*

to distribute food where it is needed most. [See related story on opposite page.]

“Santa Rosa’s Catholic leaders are eager to feed the vulnerable in their diocese, but they need our help and they depend on the support of compassionate American Catholics. Contributions will allow Cross Catholic Outreach to ship large quantities of donated food to the diocese for distribution through feeding programs, schools and other diocesan outreaches.

“The more who contribute to this mission of mercy, the more we can accomplish. So we are asking for people to be generous in their response,” Cavnar said. “I’m confident we’ll have a

major impact on hunger in Santa Rosa if American Catholics get involved.”

***Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach food programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02442, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write “Monthly Mission Partner” on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.***

## Cross Catholic Outreach Endorsed by More Than 115 Bishops and Archbishops

Cross Catholic Outreach’s range of relief and development work to help the poor overseas continues to be recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S. and abroad.

“We’ve received more than 115 endorsements from bishops and archbishops,” explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach. “They’re moved by the fact that we’ve launched outreaches in almost 40 countries and have undertaken a variety of projects — everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless

to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. The bishops have also been impressed by Cross Catholic Outreach’s direct and meaningful response to emergency situations, most recently by providing food, medicines and other resources to partners in Haiti, El Salvador and areas of Guatemala impacted by natural disasters.”

Archbishop Thomas Rodi of Mobile, Alabama, supports this mission, writing, “It is a privilege for me to support Cross Catholic Outreach. This organization

funds ministries to our neighbors in need in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and the Pacific. Through the generosity of so many, the love of God is made visible to many who are coping with the most difficult of daily living conditions.”

In addition, many of the bishops and archbishops are encouraged that Pontifical canonical status was conferred on Cross Catholic Outreach in September 2015, granting it approval as an official Catholic organization. This allows the ministry to participate

in the mission of the Church and to give concrete witness to Gospel charity.

“Your work with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a strong endorsement of your partnership with the work of the Universal Church,” Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said. “By providing hope to the faithful overseas, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, delivering medical relief to the sick and shelter to the homeless, and through self-help projects, you are embodying the Papal Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.”



# Catholic Leader Laments the Impact of Guatemala’s Hunger Crisis: “You Can See the Pain in Their Eyes”

In the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima, Guatemala, most poor families rely on farming for survival, and because their remote villages are isolated, many are dependent on the success of their local harvest. This becomes a dangerous gamble in years when nature does not cooperate.

“When harvests are poor, household incomes can also dry up, leading to a critical shortage of food,” explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic charity working in the region. “In no time, children become hungry and start missing more meals, and the signs of malnutrition start to appear. It’s tragic, and you can see the pain in their eyes.” [See related story on opposite page.]

*“This suffering must end.”*

Jim Cavnar,  
Cross Catholic Outreach

When Cavnar encountered this crisis on a visit to the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima in Guatemala, it immediately reminded him of a passage in Chapter 16 of the Gospel of Luke, he said.

“There, in Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a poor man living on the doorstep of a man with plenty. The poor man’s needs are ignored, though he longs for something simple — just the scraps from the rich man’s table. When both die, the affluent man is rebuked for turning away from a situation he could easily have helped solve. Simply put, he ignores a neighbor in need. I believe we are faced with a modern-day example of that parable today in Guatemala, a country so close to our own.”

Statistics certainly back up Cavnar’s view. Guatemala — less than a three-hour flight from Houston or Miami — has the highest levels of extreme hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the fourth-highest level in the world. With their limited access to employment and educational opportunities, many of the country’s remote indigenous people have begun feeling hopeless. Some have resigned themselves to eating one small meal of tortillas each day, and they are in anguish seeing their children languishing on the brink of starvation as a result.

Thankfully, in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima, Catholic leaders are working with Cross Catholic Outreach to end extreme hunger through an ambitious



*Most of Santa Rosa’s poorest families rely on subsistence farming to survive, and when the weather or pests damage their crops, they have no savings to get through the hard times. That is when the struggle with daily hunger becomes unbearable.*

plan that will also set local families on the path to long-term health through improved nutrition. In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach, large shipments of food will be secured and distributed to those who need help most.

“My team is committed to providing the food these desperate families need, and I’m confident Catholics throughout the U.S. will join our cause by helping to sponsor those shipments,” Cavnar said. “This suffering must end.”

Cross Catholic Outreach’s plan is simple but very cost-effective because it relies on obtaining and delivering nutritionally formulated meal packets known as Vitafood. This fortified rice product is specifically designed to improve the health of malnourished children and is distributed to the parishes. In the parishes the food is distributed by the parish priest and local community leaders, who determine which families have the greatest need in the community. A single container of Vitafood can make a big impact, according to Cavnar.

“Vitafood is extremely flexible. It is rice- or lentil-based, and it comes in several different varieties. It can be

prepared straight from the package or flavored with additional ingredients to suit local tastes,” he explained. “Providing the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child’s hungry body needs. What’s more, because these Vitafood meals are donated to us, we only need to cover shipping costs to deliver the food to our partner in Guatemala. That means every dollar donated to this project can put 14 nutritious meals in the hands of a family in need.”

Cavnar’s current goal, is to secure the support of American Catholics to fund

the effort.

“The diocese is eager for the help, and we have the logistics settled. All we need now is the support of compassionate Catholics willing to help a neighbor in need,” Cavnar said. “And once we have fully addressed the hunger issues in Santa Rosa, more can be done to ensure the long-term prosperity of these people. We have big plans for Santa Rosa, and I believe the world will be stunned by the transformation of that area when our work is done. Our expectation is that thousands of lives will be changed.”

## How to Help

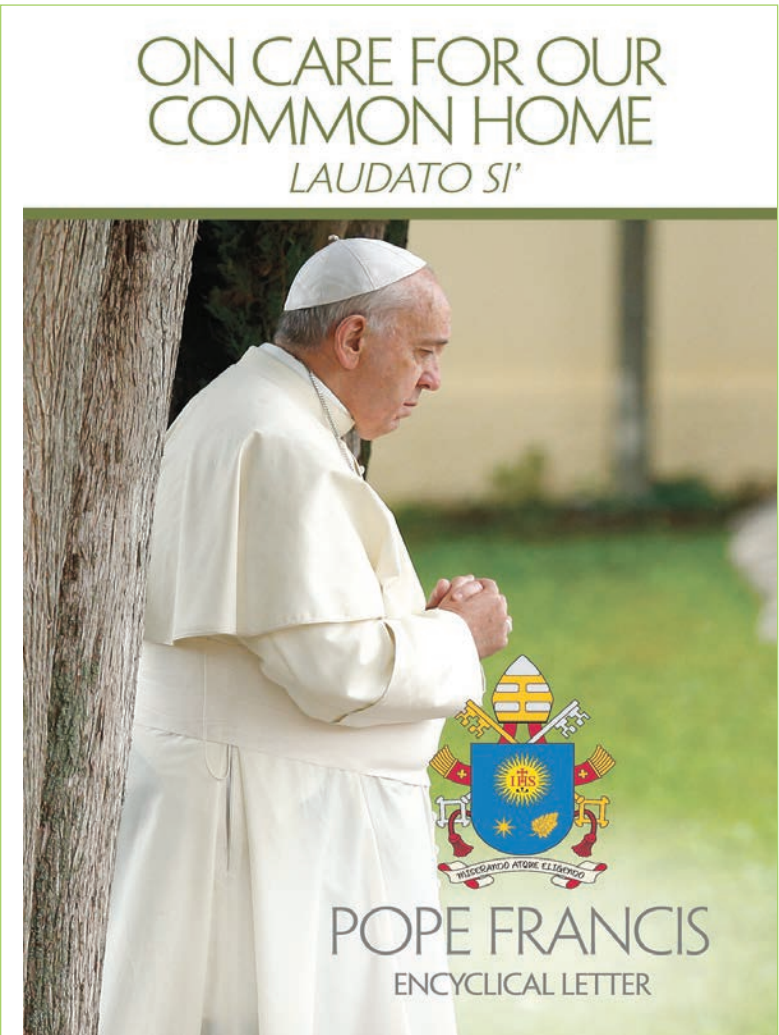
To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02442, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.





# The Christian Community – from inhabitants to caretakers



**Divine Providence Sister Lynn Stenken**  
*Messenger Contributor*

Has it ever struck you that when Jesus relates stories and tells parables, he often uses the natural world and seldom, if ever, tells stories about his profession?

I would think somewhere along the line, he would tell a parable of the kind of wood needed for a job, or the necessity to plane down a log and what that does to the log. Seems like there should have been one about success or failure in making a piece of furniture, doesn't it?

Instead, Jesus compares us to sheep who know the voice of the shepherd. He tells about a sower and where seeds land. "Look up at the sky," he says and see the colors — it will give you a clue. Jesus encourages the people to ponder the wildflowers and the birds of the air to get a sense of God's gracious providence. It's obvious that Jesus loved this Earth.

In 2015 Pope Francis wrote the challenging encyclical "Laudato Si." It begins, "'Praise be to you, my Lord.' In the words of this beautiful canticle, St. Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. 'Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.'"

Pope Francis reminds us in this letter of the appeal of St. John Paul II, who wrote in his very first encyclical, "Redemptor Hominus," "The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our

world entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies."

Pope Francis calls Earth, "Our Common Home." He challenges us to protect it and to work together to seek ways to change the destructive practices that are destroying it. All of the last three popes have written in various encyclicals about their concern for the future of our planet.

Because of the seriousness of this crisis, the Vatican Office for Promoting Human Development created a plan for dioceses, parishes and families to adopt. It's called the "Laudato Si Action Platform." The Sisters of Divine Providence have taken seriously the adoption of the Platform in our communities and have pledged to spread the word about what parishes and families can do in their ordinary lives to care for our common home.

The Sisters of Divine Providence invite families, parish representatives, young adults, youth and any interested person to its Province Center, Thursday evening, April 20, 7-8:30. Father John Converset, MCCJ will share reflections on God's call to humans to care for his creation. Following will be a panel discussion on the Action Platform — a sharing on one parish's experience in implementing it, suggestions on ways to excite children and high schoolers to live responsibly to preserve our planet and a sharing on simple suggestions of things we all can do to make a difference for our Earth.

For more information check out the website [cdp-kentucky.org](http://cdp-kentucky.org) or our Facebook page Sisters of Divine Providence, Melbourne, Ky.

*Sister Lynn Stenken, CDP is the director of Religious Education at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, and a member of the C.D.P. Laudato Si Platform Committee.*



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