April 21, 2023 In This Issue

2 **Holy Week** At the cathedral

3 **First Friday veneration**

- Meet the chimeras 3
- Mark your calendar 3
- **Thomas More University** 6 Student ready
- 7 With One Heart Work continues
- **Eucharistic Revival** 10
- **Child Abuse Prevention** 11
- 'We Choose Life' 12
- 15 Obituary Sister Andrea Collopy, OSB

Moving? Wrong address? Call the circulation desk, (859) 392-1570

Bishop's Schedule
Commentary4
People and Events9
VIRTUS
Shopper's Guide15
Classifieds16
News Briefs19

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Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926





and the end.







(above) Bishop Iffert plunges the Paschal Candle into the baptismal font, representing the light of Christ through the waters of baptism.

(far left) Patty Enzweiler, Dame of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, lights taper candles held by the congregation using a bundle of candles brought by the Order from their recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

(left) Children hold taper candles, lit from the Easter fire.



'Run, don't walk!'— Jesus is risen, Sishop Robert Barron, bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, and founder of Word on Fire, was then mentioned by Bishop Iffert for his time as a teacher at Mundelain Seminary.

Maura Baker Staff Writer

Mass opened in total darkness as the Easter Vigil begins, April 8, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. With not a candle, lamp or fixture, the congregation waited in silence before the Lucernarium began — a fire lit and blessed by Bishop John Iffert, celebrant of the Vigil Mass. The Easter Fire was placed near to where, just the day before, a life-sized statue of Jesus had laid, as if in a tomb, covered by a shroud. The new Paschal Candle is blessed and lit from this fire before the procession of the Mass.

From the Paschal candle, Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, use bundles of candles received from the Holy Land to light small candles held by the congregation as well, and the Liturgy of the Word begins following the Easter Proclamation, or Exsultet.

"Happy Easter, everyone. Jesus is risen, he is risen indeed-and, everyone begins to run," Bishop Iffert's homily began. "Have you ever noticed that before? How often the disciples of Jesus are running in these Resurrection accounts?"

In the coming weeks, Jesus "will make himself known in the

Mundelein Seminary. "At least once each class period he would get excited about some great book that crossed his mind and he would say run, don't walk, to the library to get your hands on it ... for Bishop Barron, there is nothing more important than encountering the living Jesus in the minds of the great Christian scholars and saints," said Bishop Iffert, "Run, don't walk, was his way of conveying urgency to act quickly and without hesitation to let the holy ones lead us to Christ. Urgency, urgency of purpose. That's one reason for Mary to run on this Easter night."

"She is sent. She is a woman on a mission. Her teacher and Lord is risen from the grave and her heart is bursting with the news. Urgency," Bishop Iffert continued later in his homily, "Living Water," like that used at Baptism, "runs but never walks. Tonight, as we witness these three catechumens baptized, we know that they will be restored to innocence and invigorated in faith. They will put out the old self, die to it, and be reborn in Christ."

"So run, don't walk, run the race of faith and live the power of the Resurrection. Jesus is risen. He is coming to claim the one he has loved.'

Following the homily, the Rite of Initiation took place. In the

breaking of the bread." The disciples will hear those stories, and "run back to Jerusalem." Jesus will appear to Peter and the other disciples while fishing, and Peter will "jump out of the boat and run to Jesus." Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb on Easter morning, and upon discovering the tomb with the stone rolled away, she "runs and tells the apostles."

"Everyone's running around here," said Bishop Iffert.

Cathedral, three candidates were welcomed into full Communion with the Catholic Church through the rites of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. Baptismal promises were also renewed among the congregation.

As the Mass concluded, an Apostolic Blessing was extended from Bishop Iffert to the congregation, who expressed his gratitude to everyone who helped with the Easter Vigil.

Jesus 'chooses to love us,' said Bishop at Mass of the Lord's Supper

Staff Writer

In the early evening of April 6, people gathered to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington to celebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday — the first day of the Easter Triduum.

Bishop John Iffert, celebrant and homilist for the Mass, spoke in his homily of Jesus's love for us, as his people. "Son of God and Son of Man, Jesus unites his will perfectly to the depths of humanity," he said as his homily began.

With the will of God the Father, Satan chooses to reject God's love for God's human creatures, and Satan takes it as his mission to spite God's determined love for the children of Adam and Eve," he said. "God's holy love for us is Satan's pain."

"Jesus," he said, "fully God and fully human, unites his will to the Father's divine will. He chooses to love us."

As he continues, Bishop Iffert asks the question, "What

does God's love look like? How far will God's love go? For my sake, and for yours?"

The washing of the feet, as performed by Jesus in Scripture and again by priests on Holy Thursday, is meant to help disciples understand the meaning of the cross. "He knows the apostles don't yet get it ... they will not understand this night, or noon the next day ... but when the Spirit comes down to them, then they will understand what he has done for them."

"The Spirit will explain the parable," Bishop Iffert said, "they will know just how extensively and expansively God loves them. We will know just how extensively and expansively God loves us- and, we will know how to love God in return."

Following the Liturgy of the Word, the ritual of the Washing of the Feet took place. Bishop Iffert, with a towel around his waist as similarly described of Jesus in the Gospel, washed the feet of 12 individuals mirroring the 12

apostles.

Unlike every other Mass throughout the year, Holy Thursday Mass does not end with a final blessing. Instead, the Church symbolically follows Jesus' agony into the garden as the altar is stripped bare — the altar cloth, candles and cross are removed. The Mass ends with a procession to the Altar of Repose, in which the Holy Eucharist is hidden away for the rest of the Triduum, until Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. The congregation disperses in silence.



(left) Bishop Iffert carries the ciborium, a receptacle holding the blessed Eucharist, wrapped in the altar linens, to the Altar of Repose. (above) Bishop Iffert greets the congregation at the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. (above right) Bishop Iffert washes the feet of one of the twelve people chosen for the Washing of the Feet.

Like Judas, Jesus loves us to the end, says Father Maher

Laura Keener Editor

The sacred silence continued as Good Friday services opened with a procession without music. When they came to the barren altar, Bishop John Iffert, Father Ryan Maher, rector; Msgr. Kurt Kemo, vice rector; Father Jordan Hainsey, master of ceremonies; Deacon Gerald Franzen and Deacon Michael Elmlinger, seminarian, lay prostrate in silent prayer — a sign of identification with Christ who "was obedient even to death on the Cross."

Good Friday is the only day in the liturgical life of the Church where the Liturgy of the Eucharist is not celebrated. Instead, hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday are taken from the altar of repose and are distributed. The service includes the showing of the holy Cross, with a veiled cross being revealed in three intervals while chanting, "Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." After the revelation of the Cross, beginning with

Bishop Iffert, everyone is invited to come forward to venerate the cross.

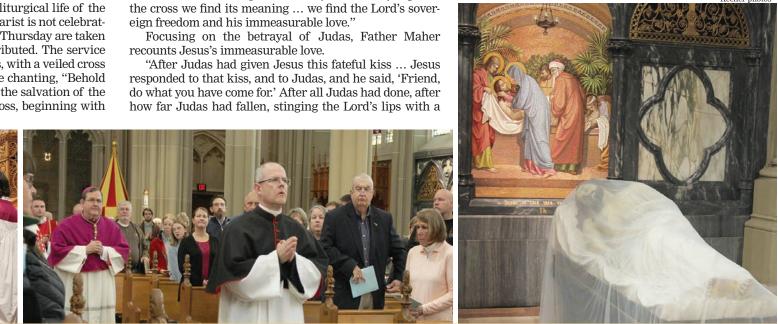
The account of Christ's passion is read, with all kneeling in silent prayer after the passage where Jesus breaths his last, commands his Spirit into his Father's hands and dies on the Cross.

"One of the many beautiful and moving gestures of this celebration of the Lord's Passion is that moment where we kneel ... commemorating that moment of salvation," said Father Maher as he began his homily. "In the very depth of



kiss, Jesus says 'Friend.' Almost as if to say, Judas I love you. Judas I forgive you. Judas it's not too late ... Jesus loved Judas to the end and he loves us to the end, in our sins and our rebellions, in our neglects of the Lord, in our brokenness and in our weaknesses, which the Lord knows so well, Jesus calls us friend."

In closing Father Maher encouraged the faithful to "die to our sinfulness ... so that we can experience the Divine Friendship ... so that we can experience His immeasurable love.'





(left) Bishop John Iffert venerates the cross during Good Friday services, April 7, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. (above center) The church is silent as Father Ryan Maher, rector, and Bishop Iffert process in to begin the service. (above right) As if it has emerged from the Cathedral's 14th station "Jesus is Laid in the Tomb," a life-sized statue of Jesus covered with an opaque shroud rests before the station.

First Friday Veneration of the True Cross to begin May 5 at the Cathedral Basilica

Staff Report

The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption will begin offering First Friday Veneration of the True Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ beginning Friday, May 5 from noon to 1 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Cathedral Basilica, Covington. A relic of the True Cross will be shown for veneration in a special throne in front of the main altar for both faithful and pilgrims to venerate in prayer.

The First Friday veneration is brought to the Cathedral Basilica through the combined efforts of Father Ryan Maher, Cathedral rector, and Msgr. Gerald Twaddell, prior of the local section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. The relic has been made available by Father Jordan Hainsey, a Priest Knight of the Order and custos of Relics for the Diocese of Covington.

The relic will be shown in a new reliquary donated to the Cathedral Basilica for the monthly veneration. The cross reliquary features the traditional implements of the passion.

"People have prayed before the Cross of Jesus ever since the earliest days of the faith," said Father Hainsey. "It is one of the oldest and most devout practices in the Christian tradition."

"This is a great way for the faithful to continue to receive graces we received during Lent and at Easter," said Father Maher. "In praying before the True Cross, we are paying the highest honor to the Lord through the instrument of our salvation. The Cross is inseparable from his sacrifice, so in reverencing his cross we, in effect, adore Christ himself."

From the very beginning of Christianity, the cross of Jesus has been an object of special veneration. The Apostles considered it the most important object in their lives and in the life of the world.

"O precious Cross!" cried St. Andrew as he was being martyred, "How long have I desired thee! How warmly



The relic of the True Cross

have I loved thee! How constantly have I sought thee!"

Saints throughout history have all identified the cross as the only path to salvation. "Apart from the cross, there is no other ladder by which we get to heaven," wrote St. Rose of Lima.

St. John Vianney, patron of priests, observed: "Everything is a reminder of the Cross. We ourselves are made in the shape of a cross."

Even St. Paul, patron saint of the Diocese of Covington, wrote to the Galatians: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." [Gal 6:14).

"The cross is the symbol of our Order of the Holy Sepulchre, but more importantly, the cross is at the center of our faith," said Msgr. Twaddell. "Whether one is able to spend five minutes or the whole hour praying before the True Cross, we hope people will come and take advantage of the opportunity to get closer to the Lord."

The relic to be used in the First Friday veneration is from the same cross found in 324 A.D. by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine. Tradition holds that she found three crosses buried at Golgotha but didn't know which was the one on which Jesus had been crucified. To test and see which was the true cross, members of her courtiers searched for a leper at the outskirts of Jerusalem. Once one was found, they returned to the site of Golgotha, where the leper was instructed to touch each of the crosses one by one. He touched the first one and then the second, but nothing happened. When he touched the third cross, the leper was instantly healed of his leprosy. From that time on, the cross was known as "The True Cross."

As the years passed, tiny fragments were distributed to the care and protection of many Catholic churches around the world.

"The First Friday veneration will be held at the same hour as we have confessions," said Father Maher. "I'm so pleased we can provide this opportunity for people to partake in both the Sacrament of Confession as well as be able to pray before the True Cross where they can unite not only their sufferings with the Lord, but also their joys and hopes."

Getting to know the chimeras that have been guarding the Cathedral for many years

Staff Report

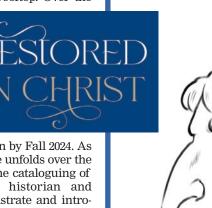
Visitors to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington may notice that the chimeras are missing from the rooftop. Over the

years, the iconic figures had experienced much wear and tear and were removed from the Cathedral on March 16. As part of the "Restored in Christ" initiative to maintain the cathedral's outer façade, each of the chimeras will be recreat-

ed and cast in terra cotta to return by Fall 2024. As the "Restored in Christ" initiative unfolds over the next several months, thanks to the cataloguing of Stephen Enzweiler, Cathedral historian and archivist, the *Messenger* will illustrate and introduce many of the chimera. This week we meet Le Stryge.

Bonjour! My name is "The Vampire," or "Le Stryge" in French, and I am a chimera (known colloquially as "gargoyle") who lives at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. I am modeled after a chimera that shares my name from the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. I was sculpted by the Cincinnati company Carl Brothers between 1908 and 1910. At the Covington Cathedral, many have seen me as I had a front row seat facing Madison Ave., positioned to the left of the south portal door.

My cousin in Notre Dame was created in 1843 by







April 22

Mass for the Spiritual Motherhood of Priests, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 10 a.m.

Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

April 23 Mass, St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, 10 a.m.

April 24 Confirmation, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.

April 25

Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m

Serra Club for Vocations luncheon, Thomas More University, noon

Confirmation, St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, 7 p.m.

April 27

ACUE donor luncheon, St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill, noon

Confirmation, Mother of God Parish, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, St. John Parish, and St. Ann Mission held at St. John Church, Covington, 7 p.m.

Mark your calendar Feast of Corpus Christi, Sunday, June 11

Adoration begins after 10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption,

French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, famous for his restoration of the most prominent medieval landmarks in France — including Notre Dame. My design is regarded as Viollet-le-Duc's most famous creatures, and possibly the most famous chimera in Europe.

For information visit covcathedral.com/Restored-In-Christ/.

THE VAMPIRE Baker illustration

Covington.

Annual Corpus Christi procession at 2 p.m. marks the beginning of "40 hours Devotion," concluding Tuesday, June 13.

When most Hispanics were Catholic...

The trend is clear. As the Hispanic population grows quickly and steadily in the United States, fewer Hispanics self-identify with Roman Catholicism. There are nearly 63



million Hispanic people in our country.

On April 13, the Pew Research Center updated its estimates reporting that about 43 percent of all Hispanic adults in the U.S. self-identify as Catholic. Just a decade ago, in 2010, that estimate was 67 percent. The drop is rather breathtaking.

Yes, there was a time within very recent memory when most Hispanics were Catholic. That is not the case today. It is unlike-

ly that the trend will reverse in the foreseeable future.

Contrary to popular belief, most Hispanics who stop self-identifying as Catholic do not join Protestant communities or other religious traditions. A good number do, however, and there is a sense that they do so searching for something that they did not find in the religion of their childhood, or at least the institution that mediates it.

The biggest phenomenon affecting Hispanics in

America is this: they are religiously disaffiliating, which has become a de facto highway into secularization. About 30 percent of Hispanic adults are religiously unaffiliated; most of them are former Catholics - another breathtaking piece of information.

The last half a century has been a roller-coaster for the Catholic Church in the U.S. vis-à-vis the Hispanic experience. Hispanics went from being about 10 percent of the Catholic population to becoming the major source of demographic vitality for our church. Today, nearly half of all Catholics in the country are Hispanic.

During the 1980s and 1990s, immigration from Latin America and the Caribbean was the main engine of growth for the Hispanic Catholic population. Since millions and millions of immigrants from these regions in the continent were Catholic, it was natural that their presence would tilt the demographic scales of U.S. Catholicism.

When most Hispanics were Catholic, pastoral leaders at all levels, from bishops to catechetical leaders and pastors in parishes, viewed this population as a breath of fresh air, injecting new life into faith communities and structures. That's still the case in our day.

But the positive reception of this breath of fresh air has not always been of one mind. There have been pockets of resistance among some Catholics who see the fast growth of Hispanics as a threat. Others seem to have adopted a "let's wait and see," attitude.

Resistance and inaction to embracing the blessing of a young, dynamic and profoundly Catholic population, and integrating it in all our Catholic structures, including parishes, schools and organizations, has led to the lack of appropriate investment in the evangelization and retention of millions of Hispanic Catholics.

When most Hispanics were Catholic, we took them for granted. That is perhaps the best assessment I can offer at this point, and after dedicating much of my career as a theologian studying Hispanic Catholicism.

The fact that only four in 10 Hispanic adults self-identify as Catholic changes the rules and calls for fresher conversations. Most Hispanic children in the United States born henceforth will not grow up in Catholic households.

Hispanics are a lifeline to the vitality of U.S. Catholicism, especially as the Euro-American Catholic population ages and declines numerically, and the Catholic presence dwindles in parts of the country where Catholic life strongly defined local cultures.

Recently the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry research team, under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, estimated that in 2021 nearly 31 million Hispanic Catholics lived in our country. That's a sign of hope. Let's not take them for granted.

Hosffman Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College. His commentary has been provided by OSV News.

Resist the temptation to hyphenate yourself and go narrow. Instead, enjoy the fact that there's room for all valid

forms of authentic Christian discipleship in the church.

Make holiness your goal. Be patient with yourself but

persevere. Recognize that the things most likely to keep

you from becoming a saint are deficits in human forma-

things you don't like. In the great scheme of things, per-

9) Keep praying. When it seems like no one is listen-

are following someone who was persecuted and put to

sion of the church to be Christ in the world. Those who

never leave the loft will always be preaching to the choir.

12) Faith is personal, not institutional. Keep Jesus

first. Not even the church can (or should) take his place.

Sometimes we forget that while the church is a treas-

ury of God's grace, it was meant to be lived in. Welcome

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a Catholic convert, freelance

writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and

mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.

The Eucharist draws people to the church and the

home, new Catholics, (and sorry about the mess).

Eucharist is what keeps us here. Nothing else comes

10) Don't expect Catholic life to be easy. Remember: we

11) Don't become a Sacristy Rat. Participate in the mis-

sonal preferences, tastes and opinions don't matter.

7) Find a spiritual director and a posse of go-to saints.

8) Root yourself in a parish and decide to live with the

That's what makes us catholic.

tion, and we all have them.

death when he didn't deserve it.

ing, pray more.

close.

Welcoming new Catholics with 12 pieces of advice

Becoming a Roman Catholic was one of the best decisions I ever made, and certainly the most life-changing. But in truth I had only a vague notion of the deep waters



ble freedom that we have as individual persons" ("Pastores dabo vobis," No. 69). The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is a guided process of intense catechesis and prayer aimed toward baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. After that, the training wheels come off and you are ready to ride. But remember: the best way to keep your own faith growing is to contribute to the formation of others.

2) There are some people who seem ready to canonize new Catholics while the chrism is still wet on their foreheads, and others who are equally ready to view them with doubt. Worse than either, though, are those who will

I was wading into. What would have been helpful over the past 40 years?

Here are a dozen things I wish I had heard and internalized sooner, and some concrete items that established Catholics ought to consider.

1) Formation never ends, but you'll be (mostly) doing it yourself from here on out. As St. John Paul II said, "All formation ... is ultimately a selfformation. No one can replace us in the responsi-

push new Catholics into leadership roles too quickly. Don't ask. And don't say yes. New Catholics need to allow themselves some time and space to acclimate.

3) Those who enter the church through OCIA probably know more about the Catholic faith than many of their co-religionists. If you're a cradle Catholic, don't let that discourage you. If you're a convert, don't let it make you feel proud - or frustrated. It's a sad reality that the formation catechumens and candidates receive is almost always superior to what is provided to everyone else.

4) The church is even bigger than you thought, and it's easy to get lost. Newbies would do well to find a few tour guides who can show them around what they know and love, but without pushing it as the best-or-only path for everyone. Each of us should discover our leading grace. That means trying on different types of Catholic spiritualities — and there are dozens — until we find one that fits. All of us should be careful not to impose a veneer of monastic spirituality over our secular lives. Our task, as St. Francis de Sales puts it in his "Introduction to the Devout Life," is to "be who you are and be that well.

5) When the church hurts and/or disappoints you and she will - love her anyway. Popes, bishops, priests, deacons, religious and fellow parishioners will all fall short. Some will admit their errors and do what they can to correct them. Others will ignore bad behavior and continue to justify it or cover it up. Loving the church doesn't mean excusing anything that is contrary to the Gospel. It does mean avoiding anger and the desire for revenge. Speaking or acting prophetically can be costly. Integrity, however, is always worth the price.

6) There are all kinds of self-described Catholics.

Misconduct Policy."

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diocesis de Covington

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordindora diocesana para dar asistencia a las

víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

Her column is provided by OSV News.

Una copia de "Normas y Procedimientos sobre

Conducta Sexual Inapropiada" está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando "Sexual Misconduct Policy."

in the Diocese of Covington Anyone who has experienced

sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked

Reporting Misconduct to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confidentiality and with respect.

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

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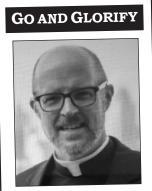
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COMMENTARY

Stay with us

The readings for the third Sunday of Easter -Cycle A — are: Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Peter 1:17-21 and Luke 24:13-35

I was recently reading the novel, "The Shards," by Bret Easton Ellis. It is a dark and nihilistic novel, and I certainly cannot recommend it to everyone. There is, however, an affecting scene where the main character, Bret, — a 17-year-old fictionalized version of the author - realizes that no one had been moved by the death of



Messenger

Father Phillip DeVous

that no one notices their pain. One could cite many different studies and statistics illustrating this, but I think it is enough to note that barely a week goes by without some news item dealing with what is now a formal sociological category of analysis: "Deaths of despair."

It is precisely to the pain of the world — to our own pain — that the Church cries out, "Keep me, O God, for in vou I take refuge." I note in my own 19 years of priestly ministry a correlation between the exponential rise of pain — especially psychological and spiritual pain — and the ongoing mass abandonment of a living relationship with Jesus Christ. When we move our gaze off Jesus Christ; when we lose or give up seeking an orientation to faith, hope, love and truth, we become overwhelmed by the chaos and darkness that are part of the fallen world. We lose our ability to navigate life according to hope.

Consider the episode from the Gospel when Peter steps out of the boat into the stormy sea to walk on water towards the Lord. He can do it only when he keeps his gaze fixed on Christ. The moment he averts his eyes from Jesus is when he begins to sink into the chaos.

St. Luke's Gospel indicates the Lord — who they did not recognize - stayed with the apostles at their invitation. The apostles were demoralized at the crisis of the crucifixion. They thought it was an end to the work of redemption. They were confused by the empty the tomb. They assumed all Jesus' suffering was for naught. They seemed to think their own suffering was meaningless. They appeared to think Jesus had abandoned them, even if Jesus were alive. Even as he was among them, they did not perceive Him. Until...

'And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread said the blessing, broke it and gave to them. With that their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.'

Amidst the crisis, the confusion, the pain and the suffering of the apostles, Jesus was with them. He had not abandoned them to the netherworld or left them alone.

Considering all this puts in mind of that profound thought by the French writer, Paul Claudel: "Christ did not come to do away with suffering; he did not even come to explain it. He came to fill it with His presence."

This is precisely what he did for the apostles. He told them that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer so that he could enter into his glory. Through the Paschal Mystery of Christ, suffering is no longer a path of meaninglessness and nihilism, but a road to eternal life in God paved with grace.

Jesus Christ fills our suffering with his presence and

notice your pain."

Though we live in a very different world than the one rendered in the novel, it strikes me that that there are many indicators in contemporary life that an extraordinary number of people are in pain. They are convinced Mother Teresa's toes

If you have never Googled Mother Teresa's toes, do it. You'll be shocked. Gnarled, crooked and folded over each other, it's a wonder she was able to stand on them at all. The story goes that she would rifle through all the

shoes donated to the

Missionaries of Charity and choose the worst ones for herself. Years of doing this resulted in horribly deformed feet.

What made me think of her toes the other day was a reflection I was reading during morning prayer. I have been meditating, for years now, on a remarkable book entitled "Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word." The author, a literature professor turned trappiest monk, draws on his vast literary and spiri-

Bradley Torline

ANGELICO

PROJECT

tual experience to produce pages of commentary on just a few short words at a time in the Gospel of Matthew.

One such reflection is on the Lord's striking admonition that if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better to lose one member of the body, than the whole body be cast into hell.

Father Simeon's reflection is: "The Lord suggests that the Christian life is a battlefield. Only the squeamish and cowardly return untouched and 'whole' from the battle. Wounds make the hero. He who does no violence to himself is either spiritually dead, apathetic, ... or narcissistic ... this body of ours has been given us to engage it in adventures, odysseys, in warfare and in heroic deeds for the common good."

Of course, neither the Lord nor Father Simeon (nor I for that matter), want you to hurt yourself. But we also don't want you to overemphasize the role of comfort or "wholeness" in this life.

Our current culture believes that there is no God, there is no life after death, there is only nothingness which we are hurtling closer to each and every day. This life is all we have. These feeble bodies and their pleasures are all we have. Ergo our "wholeness" needs to be preserved at all costs.

Following this logic, you get the mindset that you need to care for yourself above all else. Don't try to fix your strained relationships, just flee from them lest they cause you mental strain. Don't go to Mass on Sunday mornings, go to the gym. And, good God, whatever you do don't get married or have children. The lack of sleep, increase in

stress, etc. etc. will surely put you in an early grave. This last point is why this meditation hit me so hard. In the middle of praying, I looked up from Father Simeons book and caught a glimpse of my wife on the other end of the couch. She was also doing her morning prayer, reading a book about Mother Teresa.

My wife has given us two children in the last three years. All while launching a new career and working 12hour shifts in the hospital caring for the sickest of the sick. She does not get much sleep. She rarely gets to run or exercise anymore. She had told me a few days ago that it was starting to bother her. The Lord had given me, through my prayer, some words of consolation to her.

Yes, we should strive for virtue, to have temperance, to care for our own health. But not for its own sake. The body must be preserved only for the sake of sacrifice, only so that we can offer more and more of it for love.

The mantra of the world is "My body, my choice." The mantra of the Christian is "My Body, given up for you."

Life is good and we should strive to preserve as much of it as we can — not for its own sake, only so that we can have more of it to give. And, ironically, paradoxically this is the secret to a happier, fuller life. How much better a life spent giving and spending itself out in love rather than stressfully, anxiously, frantically trying to preserve itself at all costs.

This reminds me of Bishop Fulton Sheen's famous sermon on how Christians should be having more fun than atheists. He likened life to playing with a tattered old beach ball on a summer holiday. If we thought this old beach ball is all we will ever have, we will play with it less, be more careful with it, horde it, hide it. Conversely, if we know that when we are done with this tattered old ball, we will be given a new and better ball, we will play more recklessly, more joyfully with it. We will have more fun and be less anxious.

He who seeks to save his life, shall lose it. He who loses his life out of love, love of God most of all, will save it. The Christian life is a battlefield. It is an adventure. If you don't want to scrape your knee, then this life is not for you. In this life, wounds make the hero. They are the marks of the saints.

In heaven, Christ still bears the marks of his crucifixion. They are his glory. Perhaps Mother Teresa will still have her gnarled toes. Perhaps mothers will still bear the marks of the sacrifices they made.

In heaven it will be the exact opposite of how it is here. In heaven the marks of our sacrifices, our wounds will be our glory. And any lack of them will be our shame

Brad Torline is executive director for The Angelico Project, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A new intergenerational covenant

Among the important issues involving the dignity of



Veit. L.S.P.

human life, abortion is of prime importance — but it is not the only pro-life issue.

As Little Sisters we are deeply concerned about the "other end" of the prolife spectrum — the care of the sick, the elderly and the dving.

In his landmark encyclical, "Evangelium Vitae," Pope John Paul II wrote, "Neglect of the elderly or their outright rejection are intolerable. Sister Constance Their presence in the familv or at least their closeness to the family in cases where limited living space or other reasons make this impossible, is of fundamental importance in creating a climate of mutual interaction and enriching communication between the different age-groups. It is therefore important to preserve, or to re-establish where it has been lost, a sort of 'covenant' between generations." Today our society is very far from Pope John Paul II's

vision.

Pope Francis often speaks of the "throwaway culture" to describe the neglect and abandonment of those considered useless, particularly the very young and the very old.

Francis' concept of the throwaway culture aligns with what John Paul II termed the culture of death.

I am convinced that the scarcity of religious vocations, including vocations to our Congregation, is related to this culture of death. A decrease in the number of young women joining our community may also be related to the fact that many young people today grow up far from their elders, without roots, as Pope Francis often says.

From Little Sisters who share their vocation stories, it is evident that a close and loving relationship with grandparents or other family elders is often the spark that lights the flame of a vocation at the service of the elderly.

For several years now, the Little Sisters have also been grappling with the same workforce issues faced by other providers of senior care.

his close friend. No one even noticed his anguish. In this painful moment of realization, he senses that everything is futile and there is no hope. It becomes his conviction that "the world didn't

draws us forward in hope. And His presence is found, encountered and lived, "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him." in the breaking of the bread — the Eucharist.

In a society that is filled with so much pain and is con-

(Continued on page 15)

In the aftermath of the pandemic 99 percent of U.S. nursing homes and 96 percent of assisted living communities are dealing with staffing shortages.

Over 300 U.S. nursing homes closed during the pandemic and two-thirds of the remaining nursing homes are at risk of closing.

(Continued on page 14)



About Thomas More University For 100 years, Thomas More has created a university for the student who wants to Be More, Do More, Seek More, Win More, Achieve More, and Create More.

Since its founding in 1921, Thomas More has provided a mission-driven, liberal arts education that is based in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Students learn to harness the power of human reason to solve problems and discover truth, which allows them to begin the journey to become the person they were created to be.

Entering into the second century, it's time for More. Serving more than 2,000 students, Thomas More aspires to be the premier Catholic university in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region, to build upon the #1 ranking for long term gain in Kentucky (2019 Georgetown study) and share with this generation the transformative power of the Thomas More experience.

> For more information about Thomas More University, visit www.thomasmore.edu.

Thomas More University focuses on being student ready with new programs and initiatives

Contributed by Thomas More University Thomas More University announces several new academic programs and a health and wellness focused initiative to ensure that the Thomas More experience sets students up for a meaningful life and career. Rolling out in the 2023-24 academic year, these new additions spring from goals set forth in Thomas More's five-year strategic plan — Lighting the Way.

Two new undergraduate program offerings from the Robert W. Plaster College of Business are set for the 2023-24 academic year. University administration sought community input to build a Bachelor of Science in finance program that answered both employer and student needs. The result is a program that offers students the option to choose one of two tracks — financial services or corporate finance. The Robert W. Plaster College of Business also introduces a Bachelor of Arts in tourism and recreation management, which recognizes an area with the potential for significant career growth while there are few other programs in the region offered.

The St. Elizabeth College of Natural and Health Sciences seeks to offer students interested in STEM careers greater flexibility and

options with their two upcoming offerings. A truly studentcentered degree, the Bachelor of Arts in life science delivers content in an extremely flexible framework. The program is designed for students who desire a working knowledge of life science, flexibility in course selection within the major, or the ability to pair it with programs in other disciplines.

Adding more flexible options for Thomas More University students interested in a STEM career, the Bachelor of Arts in physical science program is designed with career preparation in mind. The curriculum focuses on an interdisciplinary approach to the physical sciences, blending courses in physics, chemistry, mathematics, and computer programming to prepare students for technical jobs immediately after graduation.

A new graduate program is also on the horizon at Thomas More. The Master of Public Health program, set to launch in fall 2023, prepares students with skills in a wide range of areas necessary to address complex and ever-changing public health challenges. Programming explores a wide range of topics reflecting current societal challenges such as climate change, educational disparities, poverty, racial inequalities, health justice, chronic diseases, physical activity, air pollution, maternal/child health and more.

"In strong alignment with the University's mission, the Public Health program is dedicated to encouraging, challenging, and supporting future public health professionals to strive





(above and above top) Thomas More University students on campus.

Ph.D., assistant professor of health sciences at Thomas More. "Public health is a rapidly growing field with continued projected job growth; therefore, the need to train future public health professionals is critical."

Thomas More University photos

Outside of academic programming, the University launches an innovative new cost structure to offer students greater value and ensure transparency. The "Saints Essentials" program begins in the 2023-24 academic year for all new students. Under this new campus initiative to promote student health and wellness, what other colleges tack on as extra "fees" are consolidated and included in the price of tuition with every student receiving a full suite of benefits. These benefits include an all-access dining pass, expanded access to the Northern Kentucky Five Seasons Family Sports Club, a \$300 credit per semester toward the purchase of textbooks and course materials, parking, year-round TANK bus transportation, intramural sports programming, unlimited access to wellness services, secondary insurance for all active student athletes, unlimited printing, and admission to all home athletic events.

"We want to ensure that our students can fully focus on what is important — their education," said Thomas More University President, Dr. Joseph L. Chillo. "Students at other institutions have the added stress of worrying about costs related to food, transportation, gym memberships, and even basic needs. With Saints Essentials, Thomas More University is taking an innovative approach to college costs by providing

for health equity by promoting public health at the local, national, and even global level," says Kaitlin Vollet Martin,

every student with what they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond."

This page is in collaboration with Thomas More University. Content for this page has been provided by TMU.

With One Heart Planning Commission is closer to recommending diocesan pastoral plan

Staff Report

The Planning Commission met this past weekend, April 14 and 15, at Cristo Rey Parish, Florence, to continue its work drafting recommendations for the diocesan priority plan. This group, appointed by Bishop John Iffert and guided by Brendan Menuey, Leadership Consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute, has been meeting regularly since August.

The Planning Commission is charged with proposing a plan that the Diocese could use to guide its mission over the next several years. In developing the plan, the

Commission has reviewed the feedback from the Deanery Strategy Sessions and the Focus Groups that were held in the Diocese throughout the fall and winter.

From October through January, five Deanery Strategy Sessions were held across five locations, with 43 parishes/missions represented, and over 375 participants attending. Additionally, 23 Focus Groups across six locations, with over 150 people attending were held. Focus Group sessions were specific to priests, deacons, young adults, lay leaders, and Spanish-speaking lay leaders.

In addition to reviewing the feedback from the people of

the Diocese of Covington, the Commission has reviewed the plans of other dioceses to see a variety of approaches to this important work. Their work this past weekend was to identify priorities and to propose goals, strategies and actions that will help the Diocese in its mission.

The Planning Commission will present its recommendations to Bishop Iffert in late May. Over the summer, Bishop Iffert and his leadership team will review the plan and make any necessary adjustments. The diocesan priority plan is expected to be presented to the people of the Diocese on or near Sept. 30, 2023.







(above and left) Members of the With One Heart Planning Commission met at Cristo Rey Parish, Florence, the weekend of April 14 and 15 to continue its work drafting recommenda tions for the diocesan pastoral plan.

(right) Brendan Menuey, leader ship consultant, Catholic Leadership Institute, is guiding the Planning Commission through the process.

WITH ONE HEART



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A GREEN ENTERPRISE

PEOPLE AND EVENTS





Helping hands for Palm Sunday The St. Pius X 7th grade religion classes provided service to their church by helping to prepare the palms for Palm Sunday Mass.

Making sure others experience an Easter tradition The St. Pius X 5th and 6th grades collected items to make Easter baskets for children to be distributed through the Rose Garden Mission. Together they brought in supplies and made over 150 Easter gifts!

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.

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 or (859) 512-1063.

Thomas More University's Spring Band Concert, April 20, 7 p.m., in Steigerwald Hall, Saints Center, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. Stop in for this free performance by the Thomas More University Band directed by Ken Carr as they celebrate all things spring.

Thomas More University Music Department presents "Song of Purple Summer," April 26, 7 p.m., Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University. Join the Thomas More Chamber Choir, Women's Chorus, Men's Chorus, Chamber Winds and the Boone County School System — IGNITE Choir for the final concert of the year. Free admission. The Thomas More University Observatory and Professor Wes Ryle invite you to a **lecture/night sky viewing: "JWST: At Work At Last!"** on April 29. Lectures are at lecture in Steigerwald Hall – Saints Center, with a 9 p.m. night sky viewing at the Thomas More Observatory. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required.

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

St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, Ladies' Spring Tea, May 13. 2:15–4:30 p.m., in the parish's Fleming Hall. Tickets are \$10 and available at parish office.

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

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, indoor flea market, June 2–3, 8 a.m.–3 p.m. in Noll Hall. Donations can be dropped off: May 27, 10 a.m.–4pm, May 29, 10 am.–2 p.m. or May 30–June 1, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. NO adult clothing, mattresses, entertainment centers or china cabinets. Call (859) 341–6609.

Have you ever considered going on a pilgrimage? **"Journey to Egypt, a special part of the Holy Land,** where Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the Holy Family walked. Make your way through the Holy Land to follow in Jesus' foot-

steps. Celebrate votive Masses in the very places where miraculous gifts became pages in the Gospel. If interested in learning more, please contact St. Henry parishioner Michael Portwood, (859) 878-6905 or e-mail pamarinedad@yahoo.com.



Reading is winning A 1st grader from Holy Cross, Lationa, was a winner in week 5 of Read Across Covington, a city-wide early literacy initiative that promotes and supports resources to prepare young children for Kindergarten–3rd Grade.





Sister speaks to young retreatants First graders at Saint Agnes, Ft. Wright, went on a retreat to St. Joseph Heights, April 18. On the retreat, they met Sister Marla Monahan, the Vicar for Religious for the Diocese of Covington, and learned about her life and vocation.



A fun Easter visitor The Easter bunny greeted the students at St. Henry School, Elsmere, on their last day before Easter break.

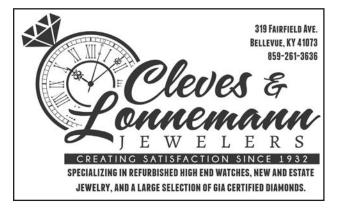
As restriction is lifted, contemplate the Most Precious Blood

Bishop John Iffert is returning to pastors the decision to distribute the Precious Blood. Distribution of the Precious Blood may resume on the solemnity of Corpus Christi, June 10–11. In the weeks leading up to this momentous occasion in the life of the Diocese of Covington, the Messenger will focus on the Precious Blood in its Eucharistic Revival offerings. We begin this week with prayer — the Litany of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

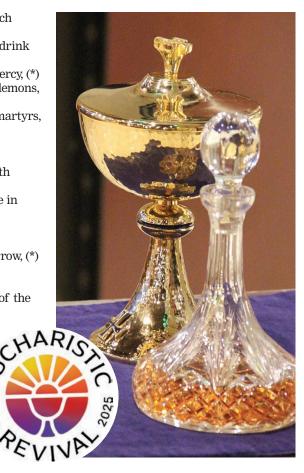
Litany of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us. God the Father of Heaven, (have mercy on us.) God the Son, Redeemer of the world, (have mercy on us.) God, the Holy Ghost, (have mercy on us.) Holy Trinity, One God, (have mercy on us.) Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, (* save us) Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, (*) Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, (*) Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in Agony, (*) Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, (*) Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns. (*)

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, (*) Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, (*)



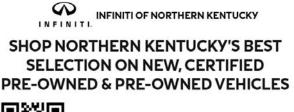
Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness, (*) Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, (*) Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, (*) Blood of Christ, victor over demons, Blood of Christ, courage of martyrs, (*) Blood of Christ, strength of confessors, (*) Blood of Christ, bringing forth virgins, (*) Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, (*) Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, (*) Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, (*) Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent. (*) Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, (*) Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, (*) Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, (*) Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, (*) Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and

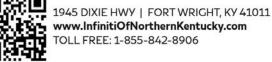


honour, (*) Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, (spare us, O Lord.) Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, (graciously hear us, O

Lord.) Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, (have mercy on us.) Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy Blood. (And made us, for our God, a kingdom.) Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, Thou hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world and willed to be appeased by His Blood. Grant, we beg of Thee, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. (Amen.)



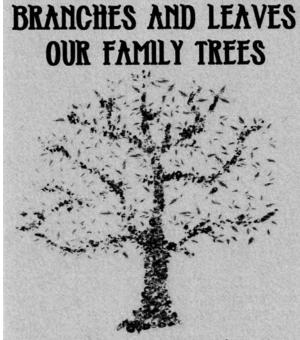


Here to lend a hand.



St. Charles Charlie's Club, Adult Day Health Program





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References Available Upon Request

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The war on child sexual abuse: The most powerful weapon is education

Julie Feinauer Contributor

Did you know that nearly 10 percent of children will report being victims of sexual abuse before they reach 18? Unfortunately, it is estimated that only about 38 percent of victims ever report. This means that the true impact of the problem may not be known. Also, those who are victims of voyeurism, exposure to pornography, sexting or other types of grooming where there is no touch but are harmed none-the-less, are not counted here, and would only raise the numbers of those affected.

Recently the CDC stated that child sexual abuse is a national public health crisis due to the lifelong impact to health, opportunity and well-being. They state that the estimated lifetime economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States alone is around \$10 billion. These numbers are staggering, but together we can fight to bring about change.

In the prevention of child sexual abuse, education and training are powerful weapons. When communities are educated about the tragic epidemic of child abuse, a new group is armed to aid in the protection of God's most precious gifts.

The Diocese of Safe Covington **Environment Office** is proud to share that nearly 34,000 employees and volunteers have completed VIRTUS -Protecting God's Children training. These individuals have been instructed on how to identify deceitful grooming behaviors, how to calmly listen to a child who discloses abuse, and how to make a report of abuse to the proper authorities.

These skills are invaluable and may save the life of a child. This training,

Did you miss Steve Smith's presentations but would really like to learn more

about how to keep the children in your life safer? Follow the QR code or the

link below to access seven FREE modules that will help you be better informed and give you tools to navigate the online world with your family.

The modules will be accessible from April 24 to May 8.

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/1434b17e/zqErj0YQdESqqKuLUHU9D w?u=https://bit.ly/3x4Sie7

Password: dc2023#

Or scan the QR code, then click on the yellow button labeled "qrcodes.pro." Then enter the password.

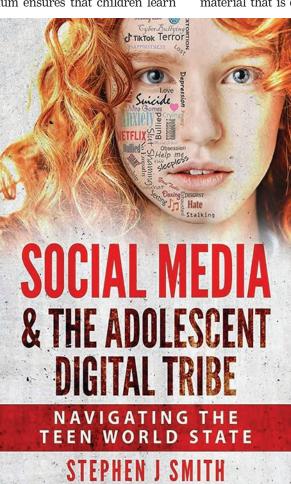
For more information about Mr. Smith and "A Wired Family" visit awiredfamily.org.

followed up by the monthly bulletins and "refresher" modules help keep each user of the VIRTUS system up to date on the latest issues in child protection. In addition, principals, counselors, teachers, and Parish School of Religion teachers are further trained to educate children using the VIRTUS — Empowering God's Children program (EGC).

EGC, the children's training platform, has made safe environment education equitable across all classrooms, Catholic school, Parish School of Religion (PSR/ CCD) and home school (by request and with their pastor's approval). The lessons are designed to help children learn boundaries and safety in a non-threatening way that meets the needs of each grade level.

The spiraled curriculum ensures that children learn

about important topics over the course of their time in schools and PSR programs. We know that no child is responsible for their own safety; that is why a vital part of the program is assisting them



in identifying those trusted adults in each of their lives. Children then know who they can turn to if they need to discuss difficult issues like physical or mental health issues, bullying or abuse.

In addition to the EGC program, schools and PSR programs are encouraged to conduct training on (age appropriate) related issues such as bullying, drug and alcohol use, suicide prevention, and internet safety.

Community programming is an important part of education. The Safe Environment Office kicked off the year with two outstanding presentations by Steve Smith with "A Wired Family." Mr. Smith spoke about not only the dangerous predators that lurk behind the screen, but the illicit material that is easily attainable with just the click of a

key. By discussing difficult but timely topics, everyone is better prepared for difficult situations that may arise in the community and maybe even in our own homes. The Safe Environment Office looks forward to providing additional community speakers and workshops in the coming year.

Do your part to help win the war on abuse. Get educated about the topic, take the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children training, attend a community program, or do some research on reputable websites like RAINN, The National Center for Victims of Crime, Darkness to Light, or the CDC. Support agencies that help children and families dealing with abuse, especially those in our area — the Family Nurturing Center, Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center, or the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home are just a few of the places that work to ensure brighter futures for everyone.

Above all, don't be afraid to talk to others about what you have learned. Enlist others to the call of advocating for children. When we join in the army to protect God's children, we are becoming allies to create a better world and a safe environment for all.

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

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje

June 12-22, 2023 with Priest Chaplain

Package price from Cincinnati is only \$2,795. Price includes transportation, tours, accommodations, and daily breakfast and dinner.

DCCH CARE FOR KIDS

GRAND PRIZE: **\$10,000** Additional cash prizes valued at \$2,500 & \$1,000



Tickets are only \$20 ea. Drawing will be held on April 29, 2023 at the Swing Into Spring event. Proceeds benefit the children living at DCCH Center.

Participants need not be present to win.

e-mail: lpifher@hotmail.com or Call Lisa Pifher at (513) 377-6780 Must be 18 years of age or older to play.

Purchase tickets online at **DCCHCenter.org/Raffle**

We Choose Life



Mission Statement

The Pro-Life Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, guided by our bishop, promotes the sanctity and legal protection of human life from conception to natural death through prayer, pastoral care, public policy and education.

Prayer for Pregnant Mothers (from the USCCB)

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

Amen.

RESOURCES

Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky: Cold Spring: 859-781-0043. Florence: 859-282-0029. Williamstown: 859-824-0123. 24-hour hotline 859-282-9878. carenetnky.org

Diocese of Covington Catholic Charities: 859-581-8974. covingtoncharities.org

Madonna House of Northern Kentucky: Shelter for pregnant women and single mothers. 859-344-1191. madonnahousenky.org

New Hope Center:

Alexandria: 859-341-0766. Covington: 859-431-0011. Crestview Hills: 859-341-0766. Falmouth: 859-341-0766. 24-hour hotline 859-341-0766. newhopecenter.com

Northern Kentucky Scholar House: Shelter and family programs for single parents in post-secondary schooling. 859-491-8303 ext. 2801. brightoncenter.com

Rose Garden Home Mission: Medical, material, spiritual aid. 859-491-7673. fdofmary.org

Walking with Moms in Need: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Pro-life at the parish level: Walking with Moms in Need at St.Thomas

Ellen Curtin Contributor

All mothers struggle. That is the one unalterable truth of mother-hood.

Older mothers struggle when grown children suffer financial woes, marital strife and spiritual emptiness. Mothers of teens struggle with children enmeshed in peer pressure and social media frenzies. Young mothers struggle to balance hectic school schedules, job demands and family obligations.

But it is our youngest and often most vulnerable mothers who may struggle the most, particularly when they lack emotional and financial support.

Imagine someone who is unexpectedly pregnant or faces unanticipated complications. She has grown up hearing that inconvenient children are disposable, that success and motherhood are opposites. Even if she lives where elective abortion is restricted, mail-order pills and out-of-state abortion sites may tempt her. In her desperation will she sacrifice her own child?

Thanks be to God, your parish and mine can save them both! An all-parish rescue effort launched by the US Catholic Bishops and called "Walking with Moms in Need" (or WWMIN, pronounced "women") aims to provide tangible and spiritu-

al help from coast to coast. When St. Thomas pastor, Father Ross Kelsch, called a parish meeting last August to discuss WWMIN, I was one of a dozen women who showed up, eager to explore this powerful and urgently needed pro-life opportunity.

We are all ages, with children of all ages and families of all sizes, united in our belief that Walking with Moms will be life-changing and life-saving for every life we touch. Our e-mail list quickly grew to over 50 supporters. It has been thrilling to see how quickly our group moved into action to support, comfort and aid young families before and after birth.

Walking with Moms starts with taking stock of local resources, then reaching out lovingly and concretely to women in need. We began by not re-inventing the wheel: that is, by finding out what help already exists. Members contacted our parish St. Vincent de Paul Society, the nearby Care Net Pregnancy Center in Cold Spring, the Rose Garden Home Mission in Covington and neighboring parishes to ask how we might work with them.

The traditional Baby Bottle Campaign helps Care Net fund a wealth of resources from free ultrasound and adoption planning to parenting classes and material aid. But because some clients have so few belongings, Care Net counselors suggested we organize virtual (online, anonymous) baby showers, to fill gaps while respecting personal privacy. Our Springtime showers will soon welcome and celebrate these new lives.

Patty Kues, a Care Net nurse and parish grandmother, said, "I am excited and honored to be able to be a part of St. Thomas Parish serving moms in need." When Patty and her niece Kaitlin Marks coordinated a fish fry for WWMIN in early Lent, they first invited the



"WWMIN has been a blessing to St. Thomas Parish. I am grateful for the creativity and enthusiasm our group has shown as we work to support and respect the dignity of all life, and I look forward to the many ways that WWMIN will help those in need in the future."— Father Ross Kelsch, pastor parish to donate specific baby items Care Net was short of. An empty crib set up in the cafeteria quickly overflowed. Proceeds from the event will help as we plan more ways to help moms in and outside the parish.

For the Rose Garden's family resource center, we want to go beyond the usual call for diapers and formula. A fun and practical parish project will be to use their list of recommended mom and baby items, filling "Welcome Baskets" with themed outfits, blankets and toys (an animal, flower, sport, etc.) plus mommy needs like lotion and shampoo.

The parish St. Vincent de Paul leaders were glad to meet with our WWMIN coordinator, Jaime Middendorf. "They gave us a lot of information about ways we can partner with them," Jaime said. "We actually came up with a feasible, effective way we could make a big impact for them and the moms they help."

In fact, one of the first group efforts was a Meal Train using online sign-up for a St. Vincent de Paul client. Homemade meals delivered with love are one of the easiest things to do to support a young mother through those difficult first weeks. In December alone we were able to serve a young, single mother without any family support in our community, a mom who had just welcomed her third child, one who had suffered a devastating pregnancy loss, another unexpectedly blessed with two young foster children, and a mom with small children who had just undergone major surgery.

Every family is different and every need is different, but every smile of thanks comes from a mom's over-full heart. It can be hard not to cry sometimes when you drop off food.

Last November the Pro-Life Office invited parishes to meet and share plans and challenges

for Walking with Moms. We took away lots of ideas, such as parishlogo blankets and other ways to welcome newborns, pregnancy blessings after Mass, group rosaries and the Spiritual Adoption program for students. Hearing about St. Elizabeth's "Fourth Trimester" post-partum support group to assist fragile and stressed moms in a physically and emotionally difficult time was truly exciting news.

People need to know we exist, so Father Ross invited a member to describe the program after each Mass one weekend. He also made prayer cards for us to hand out. Bulletin reminders raise awareness that pro-life, pro-mom help is close at hand. And although more volunteers are always welcome, we continue to lay new plans and feel confident that we can provide a range of support even on short notice.

Everyone can help in some way, especially with prayer and encouragement. When you praise a mom's courage with an unexpected pregnancy, you are helping her say, "Yes, the path may be hard, but my child and I are going to be alive together to face whatever comes our way."

I have been deeply moved to see such a great parish response to WWMIN, especially from young moms with their own families to tend. Walking with Moms in Need lets us apply our different skills and talents, practice our Catholic faith and together show our commitment to the sanctity of human life.

As one of our founding mothers said, "How could I not join?" I pray every parish will say the same.

pro-life parish program. walkingwithmoms.com

Walking with Moms in Need Action Guide. For parish use. Download pdf at usccb.org/resources/walking-moms-needaction-guide Ellen Curtin and her husband Dan raised their four children in St. Thomas Parish and since retirement volunteer regularly at the Rose Garden Mission. Ellen is on the We Choose Life Committee.

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroups, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (859) 392-1500.

Martyrs witness to the power of love

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

Martyrdom is primarily an act of love, not heroism, and while it often comes in the midst of persecution, it should motivate Christians to seek peace and reconciliation, Pope Francis said.

Persecution and martyrdom are not a thing of the past, he told people at his weekly general audience April 19. "Today there is persecution of Christians in the world. A lot. There are more martyrs today than there were" in the first centuries of Christianity.

As part of his series of talks about "zeal" for evangelization, Pope Francis spoke about the witness of "the host of martyrs - men and women of every age, language and nation who have given their life for Christ."

"The martyrs, in imitation of Christ and with his grace, turn the violence of those who refuse the proclamation (of the Gospel) into a supreme occasion of love, which goes as far as forgiving their persecutors," the pope said. "This is interesting: martyrs always forgive their persecutors. Stephen, the first martyr, died praying, 'Lord, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.' Martyrs always pray for their persecutors.'

To illustrate his point about modern martyrdom, Pope Francis drew attention specifically to Yemen, "a land that has for many years been afflicted by a terrible, forgotten war, that has caused many deaths and still causes many people, especially children, to suffer today."

Out of a population of about 31.6 million people, the Vatican estimates the number of Catholics in Yemen to be about 1,000.

In a situation of war and dire poverty, Pope

Francis said, "there have been shining witnesses of faith, such as that of the Missionaries of Charity. They are still present today in Yemen, where they offer assistance to elderly who are sick and to people with disabilities. They welcome everyone, of any religion, because charity and fraternity have no boundaries."

The sisters' witness of love to others has cost them dearly though. The pope reminded the crowd in St. Peter's Square that three of the sisters — Sisters Aletta, Zelia and Michael were "killed by a fanatic" in July 1998 as they were returning home from Mass.

"More recently, shortly after the beginning of the still ongoing conflict, in March 2016, Sister Anselm, Sister Marguerite, Sister Reginette and Sister Judith were killed together with some laypeople who helped them in their work of charity among the least," the pope said.

The dozen laypeople included "some Muslim faithful who worked with the religious sisters," he said.

"It moves us to see how the witness of blood can unite people of different religions," he continued. "One should never kill in the name of God, because for him we are all brothers and sisters. But together one can give one's life for others."

Pope Francis praved that Christians would "never tire of bearing witness to the Gospel, even in times of tribulation."

"May all the martyr saints be seeds of peace and reconciliation among peoples for a more humane and fraternal world as we await the full manifestation of the kingdom of heaven when God will be all in all," the pope said.



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A new intergenerational covenant

(Continued from page 5)

Today over 800,000 needy older adults and people with disabilities are languishing on Medicaid-funded state waiting lists without caregivers to provide needed services.

By 2030, 3.5 million new workers will be needed in long-term care services just to keep pace with our rapidly aging population.

Without dramatic changes, thousands of older adults and their families will lose access to quality care, creating fertile ground for the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

I share these frightening statistics not to be a prophet of doom but to issue a call to prayer and action.

There are many things we can do today to nurture a covenant between generations and a more caring culture.

If you are a young person, OPEN YOUR HEART to the seniors in your life, and to the possibility that God is call-

ing you to a career or a vocation of service to the elderly. Don't be afraid to contact the Little Sisters! Our life

shared with the elderly, lived in the spirit of the Beatitudes, is a beautiful, joy-filled life!

PRAY that young people will be drawn to careers in geriatrics/gerontology ... and even better, to life-long vocations at the service of the elderly.

CREATE opportunities for intergenerational encounters and ENCOURAGE youth to explore a caring profession, or ... a priestly or religious vocation.

AFFIRM LIFE by helping the seniors you know to pursue what is most meaningful to them.

Spend time with the elders in your family; volunteer in a home for the elderly. Show esteem and support to those who work in caring professions and thank them for their service.

DEFY DEATH by voting against assisted suicide and

euthanasia and by helping others to understand the inherent evil of these acts.

Support initiatives and policies in favor of increased compensation, benefits and incentives for aging services professionals.

Support immigration reform to make it easier for

qualified caregivers to enter the workforce in our country. Support reform of restrictive long-term care regulations and inadequate financing.

Two years ago, Pope Francis instituted a day honoring grandparents and the elderly, to be celebrated each year on the fourth Sunday of July. It is my dream that this day will evolve to the point where the streets of our major cities are filled with families and people of all ages joyfully celebrating the covenant between generations.

Sister Constance Veit is the communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.

Stewardship and Mission Services

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



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Benedictine Sister Andrea Collopy died peacefully on Monday, April 3 at St. Walburg Monastery at age 96. She was born to Edward Collopy and Marie Schawe Collopy on April 7, 1926. She was the oldest of eight — three brothers and four sisters.

A Benedictine sister for over 76 years, Sister Andrea served as teacher for 40 years at Villa Madonna Academy, including five as director of the boarding school. She completed her bachelor's degree in English and History at Villa Madonna College in 1950, and her MA in English at the University of Notre Dame in 1955.

Sister Andrea taught English, History and Latin at VMA. To one Current Events student, Sister Andrea seemed to have comprehensive knowledge of the entire world; it was daunting to take one of her exams. She invited students to meet her high standards with warmth and understanding. In 40 years of teaching Sister Andrea taught generations of students who remember her with love and respect.



Sister Andrea Collopy, O.S.B.

Sister Andrea took on several roles within the Benedictine community: the community's secretary, procurator, sub-prioress and house and infirmary coordinator. Sister Andrea's file gives 2003 as her "retirement," although her generous and hard work persisted. Humble, honest and gracious, she

good enough for heaven. She is preceded in death by her parents Edward C. and Marie Schawe Collopy, her brothers, James, Thomas and Edward, Jr. She is survived by her sisters Mary Wright, Rita Thaman, Ann Egbers, Claire Heringer, many nieces and nephews, VMA alumni, friends and her Benedictine community.

still worried that she might not be

A vigil service and Mass of Christian Burial were held Tuesday, April 11 at St. Walburg Monastery. Memorials are suggested to St. Walburg Monastery, 2500 Amsterdam Rd., Villa Hills, KY 41017.

Stay with us

(Continued from page 5)

vinced that no one cares about their anguish or notices their pain, we must pray for an increase in personal faith in Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist. As the Church, we must labor to bring those who are in pain to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread so that he can fill their suffering with his presence.

It is that lack of Christ's presence amidst the pain of the contemporary world that compels us to cry out again and again as the apostles did, "Stay with us." And he does, "showing (us) the path to life, abounding joy in your presence..."

Father Phillip W. DeVous is the pastor of St. Charles Parish, Flemingsburg, and St. Rose Parish, May's Lick.





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St. Catherine of Siena Parish seeks candidates for the position of Facilities Manager. The successful candidate for this full-time, first shift position will be responsible for the care and maintenance of our campus. Experience not required but welcome. Will train with our current Facilities Manager until his retirement in mid-June. Work will include, but not limited to, light maintenance, landscaping, carpentry, electric, plumbing and repair; painting; leaf and snow removal; custodial and other cleaning. Will direct and supervise a small permanent staff plus summer helpers. Must be honest, punctual, and dependable for this responsible position, willing to learn and work. Must be able to lift and carry 75 pounds. Competitive wage, insurance package and generous pension contributions; friendly and relaxed work environment. Will interact with parish and school staff, as well as volunteers and parishioners, in a friendly and helpful manner. Need not be Catholic, but must be living in a way consonant with Catholic values. Interested candidates are asked to please send a cover letter and



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Interested candidates can apply online or send their resume to Lou Settle at lou.settle@svdpnky.org.



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St. Agnes Parish is dynamic community started in 1873 by the Sisters of Mercy in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1892, the Passionists were granted parochial rights to the Parish, and continue to support the faith ministry today. Currently, the Parish consists of a growing school and faith-based worship and service. We currently have 11 staff members and are looking to add to our team!

The Parish is looking for someone who can lead the business aspects of the Parish, focusing on financial administration while leading the Parish Office staff. Strong organizational skills, financial savviness, ability to handle high volume and time sensitive requests, empathy and awareness of self and others will allow for success in this position. The position is designed to be fully in person, but a hybrid work schedule may be considered for the right candidate.

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PRINCIPAL

The Saint Agnes Catholic Community, Louisville, is presently conducting a search for a principal for the 2023-2024 school The mission of Saint Agnes School is to embrace and educate students in a Catholic community, empowering them to lead faith-based lives. Candidates should be Roman Catholics active within their own parish and strongly committed to the mission of Catholic education. Excellent communication skills and proven administrative abilities are also essential requirements necessary to continue the strong academic program and Catholic tradition of our school.

Saint Agnes School is a four-time Blue Ribbon school and a recipient of the United States Department of Education's Green Ribbon Award. Saint Agnes has a current enrollment of 507 students, comprising two classes of each grade Pre-K-8th. The new principal will lead a dynamic staff that includes an assistant principal, counselor, resource teachers for elementary and middle school, an admissions coordinator, and special area teachers in Art, Music, PE, Spanish, STEAM, and Library.

Applicants must have both strong classroom and administrative experience and must meet the Archdiocese of Louisville requirements for principalship. Salary and benefits will be commensurate with experience and Archdiocesan guidelines.

Please send to: Principal Search Committee Saint Agnes Catholic Community 1800 Newburg Road Louisville, KY 40205 Or email to: apply@stagneslouisville.org

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Vatican to bring pope's encyclicals to life in architecture exhibit

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Commemorating 10 years since the election of Pope Francis, the Vatican will physically represent the teachings of his encyclicals at the Venice Biennale international architecture exhibition May 20 to Nov. 26. The Vatican's exhibit, titled "Social Friendship: Meeting in the Garden," will take visitors through scenes in which person-like "figures," holding their arms open in welcome and acting out scenes of dialogue, convey themes inspired by the encyclical "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship." The exhibit will then lead to a garden constructed of reused materials with plots growing vegetables from different parts of the world, chicken coops, seed storage facilities and rest areas. The space is intended to be one of contemplation and represent Pope Francis' ecological encyclical "Laudato si', On Care for Our Common Home."

Supreme Court hears arguments over Christians' right not to work on Sunday

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in a case April 18 that could have broad implications for employees seeking religious accommodations from their



employers. The high court heard oral arguments in Groff v. DeJoy, a case concerning Gerald Groff, an evangelical Christian and former U.S. Postal Service worker, who was denied an accommodation to observe his Sunday Sabbath by not taking Sunday shifts. Federal law prohibits employers from firing employees seeking religious accommodations unless the employer can show those accommodations cannot be "reasonably" met without "undue hardship." In a 1977 decision in Trans World Airlines v. Hardison, the high court found that the "undue hardship" standard is met even at a minimal cost. Groff alleged in federal court that USPS failed to provide him with reasonable accommodations for his religious practices after he sought a religious accommodation not to work Sunday shifts. During oral arguments, the justices were inquisitive about the facts of the case, with some pondering whether Groff's accommodation was possible for a large employer like USPS, but would place an undue burden on a small business open seven days a week, such as a rural grocery store. They also questioned how such an accommodation for some Christians who observe the Sabbath like Groff might impact other Christians who wish to attend church services on Sundays but feel they don't meet the requirements for a similar accommodation

Church leaders call for return to dialogue in Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Catholic bishops have joined diplomats and other leaders across the world in urging fighting factions in Sudan to down arms as the death toll during four days of violence continued to rise. Fighting between the regular army and a paramilitary broke out in the northeastern African country April 14, with the two sides firing tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons. In Khartoum, the capital city, giant mushroom smoke clouds were seen billowing as fighter jets and attack helicopters dropped bombs. Anti-aircraft fire could be heard cracking in response. The latest fighting has raised fears of a civil war for the country, which has been trying to return to democracy after decades of military rule."There is fighting all over the country. We are indoors," Bishop Tombe Trille Kuku Andali of El Obeid told OSV News April 17 from Khartoum. "Right now, there are gunshots all over. Thank God, we are safe." In Juba, Archbishop Stephen Ameyu Martin Mula said Catholic bishops in neighboring South Sudan were

saddened by the fighting in Khartoum and other cities. He expressed deep concern over the loss of lives and properties. "We are aware many people are trapped by the fighting away from their homes, many in their homes, with no way to access basic needs for their survival and their families. Many have been injured and others have died," Archbishop Mula wrote in a statement April 17. He also called for prayers for Sudan in the spirit of Easter. "We pray for the protection of all people caught in the conflict."

Steady decline of U.S. Latinos identifying as Catholics sounds alarm

WASHINGTON — The percentage of Hispanic adults identifying as Catholic declined from 67% in 2010 to 43% in 2022, according to a Pew Research Center study released April 13. At the same time, U.S. Latinos who identify as religiously unaffiliated (describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular") increased from 10% in 2010 to 30% in 2022. Hosffman Ospino, a Boston College professor with years of experience examining the role of Hispanic Catholics in the future of the Catholic Church in the U.S, said that this decline has been "in the works" for decades and that younger generations of Latinos are less likely to identify as Catholic, mirroring trends across other ethnicities. Despite the 24% decline over the last decade, Catholics remain the largest religious group among Latinos in the United States, the Pew report said.





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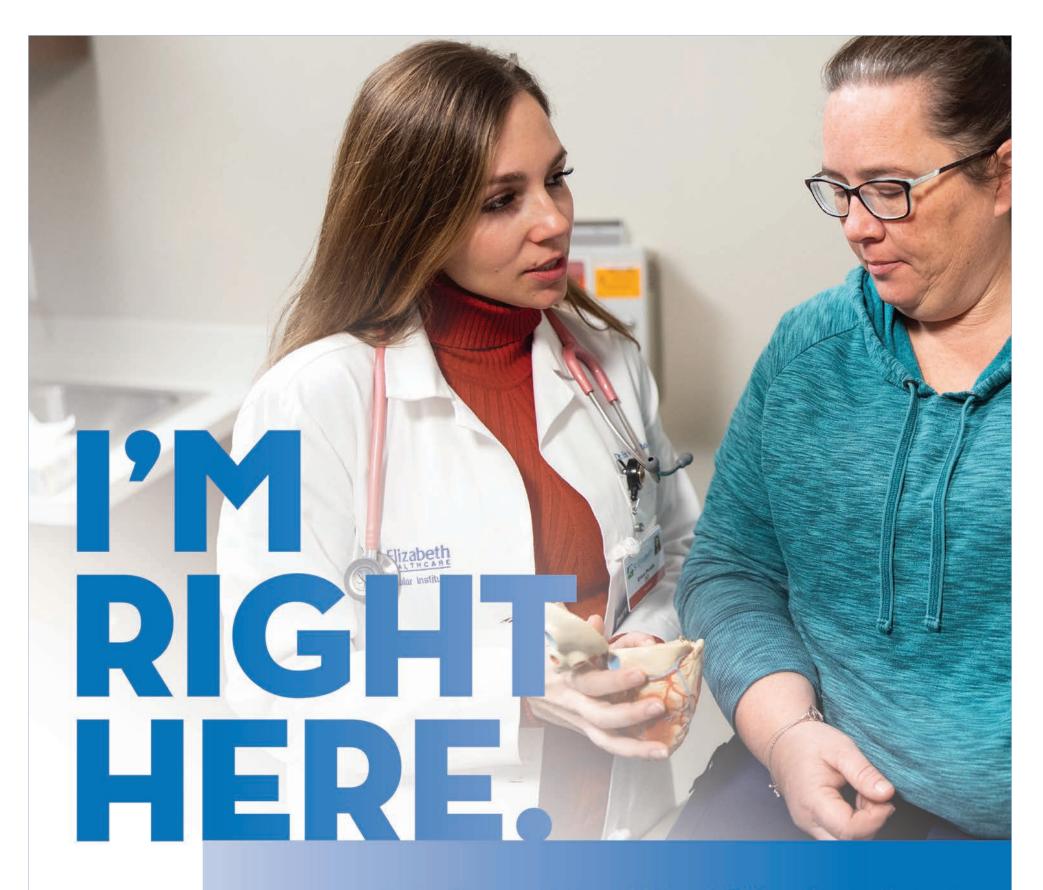
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