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Sawdust carpets, 40 Hours, Eucharistic procession — you’re invited

Laura Keener
Editor

The three-year Eucharistic Revival makes a major shift on the solemnity of Corpus Christi, June 11. On that day, the Year of Diocesan Revival will end, and the Year of Parish Revival begins.

In November 2021, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) called for a National Eucharistic Revival, “To renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.” This is a three-year effort, which began June 19, 2022, on the Feast of Corpus Christi and will culminate with a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 17–21, 2024.

To celebrate the transition to the Year of Parish Revival (June 11, 2023–July 14, 2024) in the Diocese of Covington, parishes are being encouraged to participate in the diocese’s annual Corpus Christi services and procession and a subsequent 40-Hour Devotion.

Beginning the morning before the feast, Father Jordan Hainsey, bishop’s administrative assistant, invites parishioners to assist with making sawdust carpets. This centuries-old tradition was reestablished in the Diocese last year. Several hundred pounds of sawdust are dyed and fashioned into large carpet-like squares along the route of the Eucharistic procession. The colorful carpets feature designs and symbols inspired by the Cathedral’s decoration.

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DIOCESE of COVINGTON



St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica

Sunday, 11 June 2023, 2 pm

Join the faithful of Covington for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and an Outdoor Procession through the streets of Covington.

Come and Experience

- Adoration and Confessions
- Sawdust Carpets
- Outdoor Procession



Scan the code to find out how you can get involved. Also visit: [COVDIO.ORG](https://covdio.org)

During discernment, the priesthood always came out ‘on top,’ says Deacon Elmlinger as he prepares for ordination

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On a Lenten evening, at around eight years old, Deacon Michael Elmlinger recalls his parents walking in through the front door. “My dad said to all of us,” Michael Elmlinger said, “it would be nice if there was a priest in the family.”

While Deacon Elmlinger, as one of four boys in his family, knew that the comment wasn’t “singling him out,” the words stuck with him.

The discernment of Deacon Elmlinger’s vocation to the priesthood was a “buildup throughout the years,” he said, but, now, years later, the diocese prepares to welcome him into the presbyterate with his ordination to the priesthood scheduled for Friday, June 2, at 6 p.m.

Throughout high school and onwards, Deacon Elmlinger said that whenever he would consider what he wanted to do with his life, the idea of the priesthood always would “come out on top, even if it



Deacon Michael Elmlinger

Parish: St. Paul Parish, Florence

Seminary: St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, PA

Mass of Thanksgiving: Saturday, June 3, 2023 5 p.m., St. Paul Parish, Florence

seemed that I was going in another direction.”

“It just seemed like there was a tug of war going on between the priesthood and whatever other vocational path I was thinking about,” he said. “And then, going into seminary that tug of war just continued.”

Despite this, Deacon Elmlinger said that as he began to go through seminary, “slowly over time”, he

began to feel more at peace with the decision.

Going through seminary, one of the most difficult challenges was the lifestyle adjustments he had to go through, he said — such as daily Mass and Holy Hour. “It was very different from what I was used to, and I think there was a little bit of an adjustment period there in the beginning ... and discernment in the very beginning of

(Continued on page 15)



With praise and thanksgiving to the eternal Triune God, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington requests the honor of your presence at the ordination of

Michael Kenton Elmlinger

to the sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the imposition of hands by the Most Rev. John C. Iffert, Bishop of Covington

Friday, June 2, 6 p.m.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 1130 Madison Avenue, Covington



You are cordially invited to a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving for Priestly Ordination Celebrated by

Father Michael Elmlinger

Saturday, June 3, 5 p.m. St. Paul Parish, 7301 Dixie Hwy., Florence



Deacon Michael Elmlinger

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Call the circulation desk,
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Serrans welcome Bishop Iffert; honor Pauline Baumann at luncheon

Laura Keener
Editor

At its annual membership luncheon, April 25, the Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky, honored Pauline Baumann as the Serran of the Year. Bishop John Iffert also addressed the Serrans offering an overview of the new Program for Priestly Formation, 6th edition, which will be implemented in the Diocese of Covington this year.

Nick Winnike, president of the Serra Club, introduced and presented Mrs. Baumann the Serran of the Year Award, noting her 9 years of service as a Serran and her many other accomplishments, including being named a 2014 Woman of the Year by the Cincinnati Enquirer for her service to St. Elizabeth Healthcare and to low-income students.

Mrs. Baumann has also served as the 2016 chair of the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal and continues as a DPAA solicitor. She also serves on the advisory board for the Diocese's Alliance of Catholic Urban Education. For the Serra Club, Mrs. Baumann gathers and assembles the gifts for the annual Priests Appreciation Dinner; assembles snack bags for the golfers attending the annual Serra Club Golf Outing and orders flowers which are presented to the local communities of Women religious on their feast day.

"Pauline attends virtually everything we put on," said Mr. Winnike. "She's really a model to the Serrans for her attendance and active participation in all that we do."

As she accepted the award, Mrs. Baumann acknowledged that it was her husband who encouraged her to join the Serra Club.

"I have really, really appreciated not only the work that we do but the people that I have met who are very committed Serrans, very committed Christians. Honestly, if we're not going to jump into our faith and be active why call ourselves Catholics?," she said. "I truly appreciate the members of this committee and I really appreciate this (award)."

Alan Pickett, Serran and executive director, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, welcomed and introduced Bishop Iffert. As Bishop Iffert began his talk, he mentioned that six men are currently in formation for the priesthood for the Diocese. He has called one of those seminarians, Deacon Michael Elmlinger, to the priesthood. Deacon Elmlinger's priestly ordination will be June 2, 6 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Father Elmlinger's first Mass of Thanksgiving will be June 3, 5 p.m., at St. Paul Church, Florence. (See related story page 1.)

Five men will continue in seminary in the Fall at St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Penn. Additionally, one man has completed an application and a second is expected to complete an application to join the seminary. Both of the applicants would be at the pre-college stage.

"If I accept both of these men we will have seven seminarians for the coming year," Bishop Iffert said.

Bishop Iffert also announced his decision to send two seminarians for a two-month immersion experience in Guatemala to study Spanish. He is also developing several programs for Spanish language and cultural education "so that we can begin to grow in our ability to serve that com-

munity on Sunday," said Bishop Iffert. "I want to begin making sure that our seminarians have at least some basic formation to work with the Hispanic communities in our diocese."

About the 6th edition Program for Priestly Formation, Bishop Iffert said that while it is new to the United States, it is actually more than 10 years old and "has been the norm around the world."

"The United States bishops, quite honestly, have been slow to adopt this position because it means some changes for us that causes us to readjust the way our seminaries function and that has been a challenge," he said.

The major revisions, he said, are at the beginning and end of seminary life. He also said there is a shift from academic terminology — college, pre-theology and theology — to an emphasize on the processes of each stage. These four stages are: propaedeutic, discipleship, configuration and vocational synthesis.

The propaedeutic stage is new to the priestly formation program in the United States. In this stage the seminarian comes to know the Church, the diocese and the bishop, develops a heart for service and a life of prayer. Part of this stage will include a technology fast, including no mobile phone. "These men are seminarians, but they won't really be engaging in seminary studies at this point," Bishop Iffert said.

The discipleship stage corresponds to the college years and pre-theology, Bishop Iffert said. "It's all about growing in intimacy with Christ, growing in Christian virtue, and then the study of philosophy and preparation for theology."

The configuration stage largely corresponds to the current theology years. "This is about developing priestly identity, being configured to Christ — the shepherd and servant — in a special way," said Bishop Iffert.

The vocational synthesis stage is another new stage. "It's all about integration and transition," Bishop Iffert said, and not evaluation. The seminarian will work full-time in a parish or other pastoral setting and includes a minimum of 6 months pastoral duties following diaconate ordination.

"All four stages are required for every seminarian no matter when they start, no matter what age they are, no matter what degrees they have ... and the four stages have



(above) Bishop John Iffert was the invited guest speaker at the Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky membership luncheon, April 25.



(left) Bishop Iffert congratulates Pauline Baumann on being named this year's Serran of the Year.

to occur sequentially; they may not overlap," he said.

Having non-overlapping formation programs is a big adjustment in the U.S. "That's really why the bishops were slow to adopt this process," Bishop Iffert said.

Four of the Diocese's current seminarians have already begun Theology studies and will continue with the current formation process and, God willing, be ordained on the usual schedule.

One current seminarian, who begin theology studies in August 2023, will complete theology in 3.5 years with the new program, instead of four years with the former program, and then enter the vocational synthesis stage. This shortened schedule will affect ordination dates in the Diocese of Covington. Transitional Deacon ordinations, which are usually held in May, will shift to January; priest-hood ordinations will likely shift from June to September.

Any newly accepted seminarians will begin with the propaedeutic year beginning August 2023. Bishop Iffert has decided to send the diocese's new seminarians to the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio for the propaedeutic program.

In a nutshell, the outline of formation with the new priestly formation program is:

Propaedeutic stage: one year;

Discipleship stage: four years of college, if the seminar-ian does not have a college degree, or

Two years of pre-theology, if the seminarian already has a college degree;

Configuration stage: Three-and-a-half years of theolo-gy;

At least six months as a deacon.

"If a person comes to us today, the soonest they are going to be ordained is 7 years, and it might be longer than that," said Bishop Iffert. "I can talk more another time about all these formators due for priests, but I wanted you to have the outline."



The With One Heart timeline — on schedule and on target

Here, with updates, is the timeline for the With One Heart initiative as reported in the Sept. 30, 2022, edition of the Messenger.

Completed as scheduled

Sept. 30

On his first anniversary as Bishop of Covington, Bishop Iffert, the Core Team and Planning Commission host a party at St. Mary's Park launching the "With One Heart: Igniting Parishes. Empowering Priests. Enlivening the Faithful." campaign. Many Catholic organizations, local businesses and individuals volunteer to provide food, refreshments and entertainment.

Completed as scheduled

Oct. – Dec.

Priest, Deacon and lay leader Focus Groups and Deanery Strategy Sessions are held. The Strategy Sessions are open to the public.

Completed as scheduled

Jan. 10 and 11

Teams and parish leaders are trained on how to implement the Disciple Maker Index survey.

Completed with extension, DMI survey closed April 3

Lent 2023

The Disciple Maker Index survey is launched diocesan-wide. Everyone in the Diocese is invited to participate. The survey opens Feb. 22, 2023 and closes March 30, 2023.

On target with an accelerated start date of May 9

Week of May 15, 2023

Post Disciple Maker Index webinars begin. Parishioners are trained how to access, understand and take action on the data collected.all 2023

Moved to Sept. 2023

Bishop Iffert and the Planning Commission unveil the Diocesan strategic pastoral plan.

On target

Oct. 2023

"Good Leaders, Good Shepherds," a leadership development program for priests begins.

Completed ahead of schedule

Occured in April 2023

Parishes are chosen to go deeper with Virtual Disciple Maker Index and Next Generation Parish programs.

After the Disciple Maker Index, ‘With One Heart’ prepares for next steps

Laura Keener
Editor

The priests and people of the Diocese of Covington can take a collective breath now that the data gathering phase of the “With One Heart: Empowering Priests. Igniting Parishes. Enlivening the Faithful.” initiative has been completed. The work of analyzing the data and creating parish pastoral plans will begin at the end of May.

Since its inception in September, the With One Heart pastoral planning and leadership development project has focused on gathering feedback from as many people as possible throughout the Diocese. This feedback is being used to fuel three projects: the development of the four-year Diocesan pastoral plan; the development of parish pastoral plans and the leadership development of priests.

The Development of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan

From October through January, Bishop John Iffert together with the WOH Planning Commission, a group of 11 clergy and lay faithful from across the diocese, have hosted and participated in listening sessions to help develop a diocesan pastoral plan. Five Deanery Strategy Sessions, open to everyone, were held across five locations, with 43 parishes/missions represented, and over 375 participants attending. They also hosted 23 Focus Groups across six locations, with over 150 people attending. These Focus Group sessions were specific to priests, deacons, young adults, lay leaders, and Spanish-speaking lay leaders.

And since January, with the guidance of Bishop Iffert, the Planning Commission has been meeting regularly with Brendan Menuey, leadership consultant for Catholic Leadership Institute, to review the feedback to identify common themes, insights and priorities that could be used to develop pastoral plan for the Diocese of Covington.

“There’s a wide variety of people from different states in life and different locations in the diocese with different talents and passions,” said Mr. Menuey about the Planning Commission. “Obviously, they’re shaped heavily by their parish and their experiences but they’re able to see the diocese as whole. They’ve worked really well together.”

Their work is nearly complete. The Planning Commission will meet for a final time, May 12 and 13, to finalize their recommendation.

“We know it’s just a recommendation to the bishop, but we want to make a strong recommendation, that then will need tons of adjustment,” Mr. Menuey said.

Bishop Iffert will present the recommendations to the priests of the Diocese at their gathering May 24 and 25 to gather their feedback. Over the summer, Bishop Iffert and Curia staff will work to finalize the plan. It is expected that the final Diocesan Pastoral Plan will be presented to the people of the diocese in late September, on or around Bishop Iffert’s second episcopal ordination anniversary.

The Development of Parish Pastoral Plans

During Lent 2023, pastors and their appointed Parish Point of Contact worked to implement the Disciple Maker Index. The Disciple Maker Index is a 75-question quantitative survey used to gather the thoughts and experience of parishioners. The DMI helps to identify the strengths and opportunities of the spiritual life of a parish, allowing pastors and parish leaders to make data-driven decisions.

Parishioner engagement to the DMI has been extremely strong, with over 40 percent of parishioners diocesan-wide completing a survey. Those parishes with over 30 percent of participation from parishioners will have sufficient data to help drive decisions to enliven their parish communities.

“I think they’ve done a fantastic job,” said Carla Molina about the pastors and Parish Points of Contact. Ms. Molina is a leadership consultant with the Catholic Leadership Institute, who, together with Deacon Jim Fortner, chief operation officer, are co-leading the WOH campaign. “The fact that we’ve got over 40 percent participation on DMI it’s a really good sign that the diocese communicated and the priests and parish members heard what needed to be done. And then they did it.”

Bishop Iffert has instructed that every parish develop and submit to the Chancery a pastoral plan. Pastors and their parish teams will have access to the data collected through the DMI to develop that pastoral plan.

Ms. Molina and Deacon Fortner will host three webinars for pastors and Parish Points of Contact to learn how to access and analyze the DMI data. These webinars will be held in May and June. The schedule is:

Webinar 1 — Accessing the DMI data: May 9, 10 a.m. or 7 p.m.; May 10, 2 p.m.

Webinar 2 — Understanding the DMI data: May 30, 10 a.m. or 7 p.m.; May 31, 2 p.m.

Webinar 3 — Making decisions based on the DMI data: June 20, 10 a.m. or 7 p.m.; June 21, 2 p.m.

During the summer, the pastor and Parish Points of Contact will work with other appointed parish leaders to develop the parish pastoral plan for their parish. The parish pastoral plans are expected to be shared with parishioners at large in late September, on or about the same time that the diocesan pastoral plan is revealed.

Additionally, 13 parishes have been designated as a Next Generation Parish. For three to four years, these parishes will have the assistance of a CLI leadership consultant as they develop and implement their pastoral plan.

Separately, 11 parishes have been designated Virtual DMI parishes, and will participate in four training webinars with one-on-one virtual assistance from a CLI leadership consultant as they develop their parish pastoral plan.

Leadership Development of Priests

Also during Lent 2023, every priest in the Diocese of Covington has completed a self-assessment using CLI’s comprehensive Priest Leadership Inventory. The inventory helps

(Continued on page 13)

Preparing wine and sacred vessels for consecration

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.

This week the Messenger turns to the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, Chapter VI, “The Requisites for the Celebration of the Mass,” for requirements on preparing wine and sacred vessels for consecration.

322. The wine for the celebration of the Eucharist must be from the fruit of the vine (cf. Lk 22:18), natural, and unadulterated, that is, without admixture of extraneous substances.

328. Sacred vessels should be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, they should generally be gilded on the inside.

330. As regards chalices and other vessels that are intended to serve as receptacles for the Blood of the Lord, they are to have a bowl of material that does not absorb liquids. The base, on the other hand, may be made of other solid and worthy materials.

Getting to know the chimeras that have been atop the Cathedral for many years; part 2

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

It has been over a month since the iconic chimeras from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington’s, roof were removed from their perch. After years of damage from the elements, the statues known as chimera (or gargoyles), will be recreated in terra cotta to preserve their iconic image for years to come as part of the Cathedral’s “Restored in Christ” initiative to maintain its outer beauty.

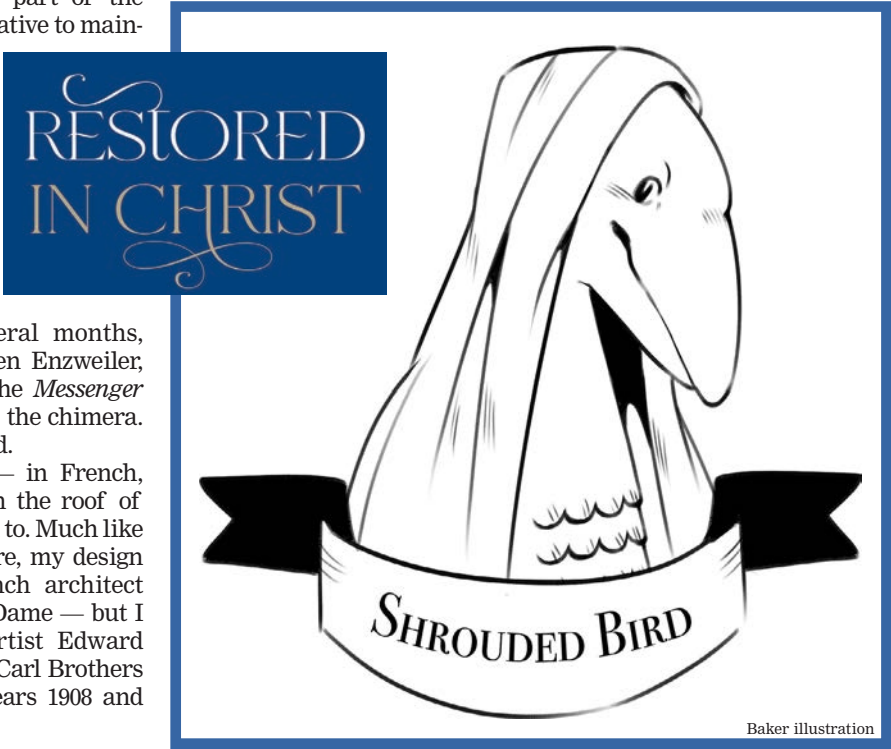
After being safely and tightly secured in plastic and lowered via a crane, the chimera will soon be loaded onto a truck for their destination — Boston Valley Terra Cotta in Orchard Park, New York, who will be responsible for this restorative project.

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 the Shrouded Bird.

My name is the Shrouded Bird— in French, *Osieau Enrubanne*, as my cousin on the roof of Paris’s Notre Dame would be referred to. Much like my fellow rooftop friend, the Vampire, my design was originally a creation by French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc for the Notre Dame — but I was recreated by the hands of artist Edward Johnston, and brought to life by the Carl Brothers in Cincinnati, Ohio, between the years 1908 and 1910.

Unlike some of my fellow chimera, some of which weigh well over 500–600 lbs., I can brag that I did not “strain the crane” this March when I was brought down from the Cathedral rooftop, as I am on the lighter side at 312.5 lbs. After all, a bird needs to be light in order to fly.

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





Bishop's Schedule

May 7 Mass, First Communion/May Crowning, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.	May 11 Directors meeting, 9:30 a.m. Deans meeting, 1:30 a.m. Confirmation, Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.
May 8 Confirmation, St. Catherine Parish, Ft. Thomas, 7 p.m.	May 12 Baccalaureate Mass, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, 2 p.m.
May 9 Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m. Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 2 p.m. Confirmation, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 7 p.m.	May 13 Commencement, Thomas More University, Thomas More Stadium, Florence, 10:30 a.m.
	May 14 Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 5:30 p.m.

COMMENTARY

Deacons are called to serve

In the early days and years of the Church, the newly named “Christians” shared their food, money and resources. As the Church grew and began to spread, this sharing became a problem. The Hebrews who had become Christians hadn’t fully adopted the Gentiles as their brothers and sisters. The Hellenist Gentiles were not receiving an equal distribution and sent a complaint to the Apostles.

The Apostles — our first bishops — were dedicated to liturgy and to preaching the Word. Recognizing that they could not fulfill their ministry to the Word and simultaneously tend to the needs of the people, the Apostles asked the disciples to select seven men from among them — men who were filled with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom. The Apostles appointed these seven selected men to go out and serve the people of the Church. These were the first deacons.

There is not enough space here to discuss the history of the deacons in the Church. However, over time, the ministry and role of the deacon disappeared.

In 1963, the Second Vatican Council restored the role of the deacon in the Church, leaving the implementation up

to each conference of Bishops. As part of their priestly formation, seminarians are first ordained deacons. For them, this is considered a “transitional” step, as eventually these deacons will be ordained priests. What the Second Vatican Council restored is now known as the “permanent” diaconate. Permanent deacons can be married or single however, except under extraordinary circumstances, the word “permanent” means that these deacons are not further ordained priests.

Permanent deacons are one of three types of men in the Church who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Each “level” of Holy Orders has different “faculties” or abilities of ministry. Deacons are considered the first level to receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The next level is priest, and the third level is bishop.

To be clear, all men who receive Holy Orders — including permanent deacons — are clergy of the Catholic Church.

In 1968, the Bishops of the United States voted to petition the Holy See to restore the diaconate in the United States. The Holy See approved their petition, and the ministry of deacon was restored. Their reasons became the outline for the role of deacons in the Church today:

- a. To complete the hierarchy of sacred orders and to enrich and strengthen the many and various diaconal ministries at work in the United States of America with the sacramental grace of the diaconate.
- b. To enlist a new group of devout and competent men in the active ministry of the Church.
- c. To aid in extending needed liturgical and charitable services to the faithful in both large urban and small rural communities.

d. To provide an official and sacramental presence of the Church in areas of secular life, as well as in communities with large cities and sparsely settled regions where few or no priests are available.

e. To provide an impetus and source for creative adaptation of diaconal ministries to the rapidly changing needs of our society.

Jesus came to serve, not to be served. The role of the permanent deacon has three main pillars: liturgy, the Word, and service.

You may be blessed to have a deacon assigned to your parish but, like a priest, deacons are responsible to the bishop of the diocese. Deacons take a vow of obedience to the local bishop — and to his successors. I was ordained by Bishop Roger Foys and gave him my vow of obedience, which now carries over to obedience to Bishop John Iffert.

Diaconate ministry in the Church has only been restored for a little over 50 years. There is still a lot that many people don’t understand about the role of permanent deacons. Feel free to ask me, or any deacon in the Diocese of Covington, questions about our ministry.

And, if you feel that Christ is calling you to further serve the people of the Church as a permanent deacon, contact the Diocese of Covington’s Office of Deacons and Deacon Formation, 859-392-1500. The new formation process starts this Fall.

Deacon Peter Freeman is assigned to St. Philip Parish, Melbourne.

Blessed Henri de Lubac?

arguing in his gentle way that Vatican II was not summoned to reinvent Catholicism, but to renew it for mission by deepening the Church’s understanding of the Gospel so that the Church might more effectively offer Jesus Christ to the world.

For it was Father de Lubac who ignited the War of the Conciliar Succession: the fierce struggle — not between stereotypical “progressives” and “traditionalists” but among the reformist theologians at the Council — over the meaning of the entire conciliar experience. The French Jesuit stood with his younger German colleague, Joseph Ratzinger, and others in insisting that Vatican II was a council of reform in continuity with tradition, not a council of rupture with the tradition — what some today call a council effecting a “paradigm shift.” And for this, Father de Lubac paid a considerable price.

When he was named a cardinal by John Paul II in 1983 — the first in a series of influential Vatican II theologians so honored by the Polish pope — his Jesuit brethren in France, many of whom regarded him as a theological turncoat, behaved abominably. Initially furious at the nomination, then indifferent, they dismissed this as “not our affair” and refused to help the 87-year-old cardinal-designate prepare for the consistory at which he would receive the red hat. De Lubac’s young friends in the circle of the French edition of *Communio* (a journal he helped create) stepped in, buying him the new robes appropriate to a cardinal and dunning de Lubac’s provincial into providing him a return ticket to Rome and a companion for the journey. On returning from the consistory, Cardinal de Lubac was given a reception by the Parisian Jesuits, at which only soft drinks were served.

Throughout this trial, as during the years when he

was held in suspicion by Church authorities in the Vatican, Henri de Lubac behaved like a gentleman. He was more than that, though. He was a true churchman, as demonstrated by his memoir, “At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings” (Ignatius Press). Whether beset by misunderstanding, slander or maliciousness, he remained a paragon of reason and charity. Scholars will continue to debate de Lubac’s teaching on the relationship of nature and grace, the natural and the supernatural. But there can be no question of the French theologian’s devotion to the cause of Christ or his fidelity to the Church.

He took seriously St. Ignatius’s command that the men of the Society of Jesus should “set the world ablaze.” He understood that the tools for igniting evangelization must be refined over time, for the truths Christ had bequeathed to the Church could not be confined to a single set of formulas. Those truths were enduring, however, and it was the theologian’s task to harness his thinking to them, not to imagine himself their master.

Henri de Lubac knew that the great totalitarianisms of his time — Nazism and communism — were false, ultramundane religions that had to be fought with what he called “weapons of the spirit.” Those same “weapons” could also serve to renew the Church for mission. His was a grand vision, well lived. Whether he is eventually beatified or not, it is right to honor him for articulating it.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His column “The Catholic Difference” is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

On March 31, the bishops of France announced that they would petition the Holy See for permission to open a beatification cause for Father Henri de Lubac, SJ.

Whatever the outcome of the cause, paying such a tribute to one of the great figures of 20th-century Catholic theology was a fitting way to continue celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Council’s opening. For without de Lubac’s pioneering work in recovering the Fathers of the Church and the riches of medieval biblical commentary for contemporary Catholic thought, the key texts of Vatican II texts — its dogmatic constitutions

on divine revelation and on the Church — would not be so richly scriptural and patristic in content and style.

Who was Henri de Lubac? He was a veteran of the French army in World War I, during which he was severely wounded. He was, as just noted, a leading figure in the movement to revitalize Catholic theology by a “return to the sources.” He was a leader in the French Catholic resistance to Nazism after the fall of France in 1940 and a keen student of modern atheism. Exiled to the theological sidelines during the last years of Pius XII, he was rehabilitated by John XXIII, who appointed him to one of the commissions planning Vatican II. During the Council, he played a pivotal, if under-appreciated, role by

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Understanding faith

The readings for the fifth Sunday of Easter — Cycle A — are: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9 and John 14:1-12.

In the days and weeks leading up to my priestly ordination, my focus was one of celebration and gratitude to the Lord for having called me to the sacred ministerial priesthood. But, before I could celebrate my “first Mass,” I was required to plan my “last Mass” — that is, my funeral Mass.

It just so happens that the Gospel reading for this 5th Sunday in the Season of Easter is the one I have chosen

GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

to be proclaimed for my last Mass. I have been particularly drawn to the line: “Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

The reality of death is hard — even for people of faith. And Jesus’ statement here is very confusing, to the point where I want to respond with some indignation — “Excuse me!”

“What do you mean, Jesus? How can my heart not be troubled! Someone I have loved and who has loved me has died. My

heart is broken, of course it is troubled.”

Elsewhere in Scripture, Jesus reminds his disciples (us) that we are called to live in the world, but not be of the world. While we live in the here and now, our focus must be on what is to come — heaven.

It is the Lord’s great desire that we experience the abundance of life — now. But, more so in the life to come! St. Benedict of Norcia famously wrote in his “Rule” for monks: “Keep death always before your eyes.” (4.47)

Let’s be honest, death is scary. And yet, as Christians, we don’t have to be afraid — a statement made in sacred Scripture, in one way or another; 365 times. Jesus has gone before us — he has made the journey — and he promises to “come back again and take [us] to [himself].”

Let’s be very clear, when Jesus makes a promise, he NEVER breaks it. For the one who is true to the Lord, to his Word, and to his Church — one who has authentic “faith in God” — Jesus will reveal the Father in all of his glory. Heaven is where we will see God “face-to-face” and “enjoy forever the fullness of [his] glory, when [he] will wipe away every tear from our eyes.” (Eucharist Prayer III, Commendation of the Dead)

Jesus was not ignorant of the suffering of humanity. He knew (and knows) that his disciples would struggle with things like illness and death; and so, he offers us comforting words – “have faith.” Jesus’ words are still confusing, and yet if we are going to “get it,” we must as St. Augustine says: “Seek not to understand that you may believe; but believe that you may understand.”


As we continue to celebrate the wonderment of the Resurrection in this Easter season, let us give assent to the faith of the Church (all and every teaching), even if we don’t understand — understanding will come, because of our belief.

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

Having it all – motherhood!

Ahh, there is something about the month of May. I love (except for the allergies) all the newness of Spring — green grass, the buds on trees and flowers. What a beautiful time to celebrate the month of Mary and Mother’s Day.

VIEWPOINT



Faye Roch

Mary is such a beautiful witness in celebrating motherhood. One of the first examples of Mary celebrating the joy of motherhood and new life is when she was newly pregnant and learned that her cousin Elizabeth was also pregnant; Mary “went in haste” to visit her cousin. This wasn’t like hopping in a comfortable SUV and driving

to Lexington. No, Mary traveled over rough terrain for almost 100 miles to welcome this new life with great joy.

Motherhood, a life of love and self-sacrifice, the absolute definition of greatness.

So much pressure is put on our girls and young women when it comes to their future and having it all. Yet, rarely is embracing motherhood thought of as “having it all.” Think about it, moms are the center of this greatness in bringing new life into this world.

As I write this column, my daughter-in-law recently gave birth to my second grandchild and first granddaughter. I look at my daughter-in-law as a superhero, nurturing that tiny life from conception, carrying this beautiful baby for 9 months and giving birth. What a wonderful gift every new life is created in God’s image and likeness.

I know it’s not all butterflies and roses, there are many struggles and difficulties that come with motherhood. And my heart breaks for those women not able to carry a child. There is much suffering and many tears, but again,

let us turn to our Blessed Mother to give us strength; she watched her beloved Son give the ultimate sacrifice.

Being a mother today is difficult, we live in a culture where everything needs to be perfect — our bodies, our homes, our families, our job even the meals that we cook. The stresses that social media puts on having it all, and it all being “Instagram worthy” can seem overwhelming.

As I left one of our diocesan elementary schools recently, the carpool line was forming, and I remembered those days when I had the opportunity to pick up my children from school. The moms would gather in their jeans and sweatshirts with toddlers in tow hanging out the windows, drinking Capri Suns and eating fruit snacks and maybe a Pop-tart they found under the back seat.

That day, sitting in my car looking at these moms of the 2020s, I thought of me in the carpool line back in the 1990s and was a bit happy that my children were grown, and I didn’t have to compete with the pressures of social media. I was happy being ordinary and doing what I thought was unremarkable, doing small, basic things to keep everyone alive for another day.

I know I was not the perfect mother; there were so many ups and downs, and it was the grace of God that pulled me through. I’m sure the Holy Family had some ups and downs too, Jesus was lost for three days when he was 12 years old. Mary must have had a lot of faith as she endured those three days. We, too, must have faith to endure the days of imperfection and struggle.

We cannot define our success as mothers or parents by comparing ourselves to others. As Catholic moms and parents, our main goal is to get our children through life and then someday to heaven.


Remember, as a mother, we do the smallest, most basic tasks — day in and day out — we are partaking in something so grand!

Faye Roch is director for the Pro-Life Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky

Post Easter experiences

I am always struck by the Gospels that are read after the Resurrection. We find in Luke that the disciples were walking away from Jerusalem to Emmaus when they met Jesus and failed to recognize Him. Jesus opened their recognition of Him by referring to the Scriptures about Him and in the breaking of the bread. Their hope in Him had been restored.

GUEST



Sister Barbara Woeste, O.S.B.

In the Gospel of John on Easter Sunday night, Jesus appears to the apostles. He says, “Peace be with you.” “Receive the Holy Spirit whose sins you forgive they are forgiven them and whose sins you retain they are retained.” Thomas is absent and later must prove his faith in the risen Lord by touching his wounds. Faith is restored.

The words of Jesus that are repeated in the Gospels are “Peace be with you.” “Do you have anything to eat?” (Jesus seems to be always hungry) “Believe.”

Are these words of Jesus relevant also in my life today? Is Jesus speaking these words to me in the time and space in which I live?

I truly believe He is. The context of our living is different from the first century, but the message of Jesus is the same. Jesus is truly risen from the dead and is alive in our lives.

Our faith and hope in the risen Jesus enables us to believe, to touch His wounds.

Our faith in the risen Jesus enables us to live in peace and bring the peace of Christ to others.

Our faith in the risen Jesus enables us to share meals with each other. It enables us to receive Jesus in the Eucharist and to take His love and life of service to others.

Peace be with you!
Benedictine Sister Barbara Woeste is a professed member of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills. Her article was original published on the community’s blog <http://stwalburg.blogspot.com>.

St. Anthony students honor Mary at annual ACUE appreciation luncheon

Laura Keener
Editor

May is Mary’s month. And with the annual Alliance for Catholic Urban Education (ACUE) donor appreciation luncheon held just days before the month May, students at St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill, turned minds and hearts to the Blessed Mother. St. Anthony School hosted the ACUE luncheon. The upper classmates enlightened the nearly 100 donors, including Bishop John Iffert and Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, with a presentation featuring her apparitions under the titles Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima. In between presentations, the lower grades entertained those present singing songs about light — “Christ Be Our Light,” “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” also known as the “Thank You Song” and “This Little Light of Mine” — in both English and Spanish.

In her opening remarks, Mrs. McGuire expressed gratitude to the ACUE Board members, for their “work throughout the year to advance the mission of our ACUE schools” and benefactors for their support of the diocese’s six urban elementary schools that make up ACUE. Those schools are: Holy Cross School, Latonia; Holy Family School, Covington; Holy Trinity School, Bellevue; Prince of Peace School, Covington; St. Augustine School, Covington; and St. Anthony School.

She also shared a true story that demonstrates the life-changing influence Catholic schools have on not only the life but also the faith life of students. This year, a parishioner approached an ACUE principal, complimenting her on an eighth-grade student who attends Mass alone on Sunday. The principal was not immediately sure who the student was, but later learned his identity and that neither of his parents are Catholic. She and the pastor talked to the student who confided



(above) Bishop John Iffert and (above, center) Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, welcome and thank donors and board members to the annual ACUE donor appreciation luncheon, April 27. The luncheon was held at St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill, one of six elementary schools that make up the Alliance for Urban Education. St. Anthony School students were both entertainers and hosts.



(above, right) The primary grade students sing “This Little Light of Mine” in both English and Spanish.

(right) Junior high students sat among the guests engaging them in conversation and assisting when needed.



that, “through his learning at his Catholic school he really has fallen in love with the Catholic faith ... That child was welcomed into the Church receiving the sacraments of baptism, First Communion and confirmation this Easter.”

“I share this story with you because I want everyone to see that our ACUE schools, although they are small, they truly are places of learning and places where our children encounter Christ each day.”

Mrs. McGuire equates the mission and ministry of Catholic schools to Jesus’ parable about the sower and the seeds. “Just like the parable, we really don’t know how those seeds are going to be received. But we have to trust that God will take those seeds and bear fruit, whether that’s today or tomorrow or 40 years down road.”

She closed her comments in gratitude. “We serve a very high purpose here in the ACUE schools and without you we would not be able to support and educate the more than 500 students who walk through our doors each and every day.”

Continuing the agricultural reference of “bearing fruit,” Bishop Iffert said, “In places where our Catholic soil is thin, these are especially places that need our witness. So, I thank you for all you do to support the ACUE schools and to nourish the life of the children who attend them.”

As hosts, about 18 junior high students sat among the ACUE supporters assisting anyone who needed assistance and sharing in conversation. CJ Hyde, a seventh-grade student, shared how important St. Anthony School has been for him. This is his first year at St. Anthony School, after transferring from a large public school. He said that he is really enjoying the more one-on-one academic support at the smaller school. “I’m pretty happy, the school has helped change me as a person,” he said. Like a lot of young men his age, he has a goal of playing college football and one day for the NFL. “But If that doesn’t work out, I know there are a lot of opportunities and that with the support I’ve experienced at this school, I can achieve.”

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(above) First graders at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, celebrated the Solemnity of Christ the King by creating crowns to remind them that Christ is the king of all things. The Solemnity of Christ the King is celebrated on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time and marks the change to the season of Advent.

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. Henry District High School, Erlanger, celebrates an all-school Mass on the first Friday of every month. Students participate in the Mass as they prepare and celebrate following Christ.



(above) Fourth Grade students at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Burlington, KY pray at the foot of the cross during their retreat at Our Lady’s Farm in Falmouth, KY.



(above) The children at St. Patrick School in Taylor Mill were eager to answer Father Jeff VonLehmen’s questions at the First Friday prayer service.

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



(top left) Deacon Jim Fortner, COO for the Diocese of Covington, and John Gedney, Curia Maintenance, help load a Catholic Charities truck with diapers and other supplies bound for the Pregnancy Care Network's 'Community Baby Shower' in Covington, April 25.

(top right) Curia staff stand in front of a Catholic Charities truck. Before the Community Baby Shower, staff helped load the donations onto the truck.

(bottom left) A mother speaks to the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, members of the Pregnancy Care Network, at the Life Learning Center in Covington.

(bottom) A baby sleeps in a stroller during the shower.

(bottom right) Women religious stand for a photograph at the Community Baby Shower.



‘Community Baby Shower’ offers assistance to moms, families in need

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Curia staff loaded a Catholic Charities truck full of diapers, baby clothes, blankets and other necessities for moms and babies, April 26. The truckload of supplies was delivered to the Life Learning Center in Covington for distribution to families in need.

These supplies were gathered from members across the diocesan community, from both parishes and schools at the urging of the diocesan Pro-life Office.

This “Community Baby Shower” was hosted by the

Northern Kentucky Pregnancy Care Network, a network of non-profit agencies and ministries collaborating to improve the health and well-being of childbearing families in Northern Kentucky. Around 160 people registered to attend the event. But, Faye Roch, one of the collaborators for the shower and director for the diocese’s Pro-Life Office, estimates over 200 people in attendance.

In addition to providing the physical necessities for infants, members of the Pregnancy Care Network also set up tables at the shower, where families could walk around and learn about the multitude of services provided by

these agencies and ministries — such as St. Elizabeth Healthcare, the Rose Garden Home Mission, Catholic Charities and Care Net.

“It was a huge success,” said Mrs. Roch about the shower; “I think probably bigger than anticipated.”

While challenges were faced, they were also overcome — and the Pregnancy Care Network intends to meet again to streamline the process; and intend to hold more community showers in the future, looking towards other counties in Northern Kentucky to host them in.

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Cathedral parishioners work on green thumbs

Nineteen parishioners of the St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption Parish volunteered, April 29, in beginning to beautify the gardens of the Cathedral. Each volunteer has adopted a plot to maintain. This is a general maintenance project which is hoped to undertake over the course of the summer months and includes the gardens behind the Cathedral and its north and front gardens.

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.

The Sisters of Notre Dame need items for its 101st Annual 4th of July Festival, including services, sports items, jewelry, gift certificates and antiques. Call

Margie at (859) 392-8229 or, e-mail mschnelle@sndusa.org. Items can be dropped off during the day at 1601 Dixie Hwy. in Park Hills or arrangements can be made for pickup.

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.



Lunch and more for guests at Parish Kitchen

Seventh graders from Mary, Queen of Heaven School partnered with Bill and Debra Croyle, Mary, Queen of Heaven parishioners and founders of the nonprofit Walk the Mile, to put together 125 bagged lunches and hand them out to guests at Parish Kitchen. They also handed out toiletries and flip flops.

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

2023 Parish Festivals

- St. Anthony Parish,** Taylor Mill, June 2–3, 6–11 p.m.
- St. Augustine Parish,** Covington, June 9–10, 5–11 p.m.
- St. Paul Parish,** Florence, June 9–10, 6–11 p.m.; June 11, 3–7 p.m.
- St. Pius X Parish,** Edgewood, July 14–15, 6 p.m.–12 a.m.; July 16, 4–10 p.m.
- St. Therese Parish,** Southgate, June 15, adult night 6–10 p.m.; June 16–17, 6–11 p.m.
- Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish,** Erlanger, June 23–25
- Holy Cross Parish,** Latonia, July 21, 6–11 p.m.; July 22, 5–11 p.m.
- St. Thomas Parish,** Ft. Thomas, July 28, 6–11 p.m.; July 29, 5–11 p.m.
- St. Joseph,** Cold Spring, August 4–5, 6–11 p.m.
- Blessed Sacrament School Boosters Corn Roast,** Ft. Mitchell, August 11, 5:30–11:30 p.m.

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.

Mount St. Mary’s Seminary & School of Theology will host a seminar, “Leading a Liturgical and Vocational Household” for parents and future parents June 3, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Participants will receive insights about how to raise a vocationally aware family with consistent prayer routines; includes Mass, breakfast and lunch. Register online athenaeum.edu.

Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky day at the Florence Y’Alls Thomas More Stadium, June 29, 6:30 p.m. Vouchers are \$10 with half going to support the Serra Club. Tickets available online <https://www.ticketreturn.com>; use the code “SerraClub” in the special offer code field. The Y’Alls will be playing the Trois-Rivières Aigles from Canada. Contact Mike Murray at (859) 630-4228 or mmurray@covdio.org.

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St. Augustine’s unknown muralist finally has a name

Stephen Enzweiler
Cathedral Historian

Part 2 of 2

It is rare in the art world to have masterful murals and religious works decorating sacred spaces and not know who the artist was. But for nearly a century, such has been the case with the church murals of St. Augustine in the Peaselburg neighborhood of Covington, Ky. They are some of the more well-known and noteworthy examples of church mural art from the early part of the 20th century. Two murals attributed to artist William Blank decorate the lower apse behind the main altar. But a greater body of work surrounds the visitor on all sides, a motherlode of visual wonders in an ecclesiastical style that has the effect of drawing one out of the self and into the greater experience of the divine.

There are four major wall murals in the sanctuary and transepts that portray events in the lives of Jesus, Mary

and Joseph; there are angels praising God across a high and massive sanctuary arch; a shimmering golden dome featuring cherubs in adoration of a triumphant Christ the King; decorative medallions of evangelists, saints and angels along the nave walls, and masterfully colorful and realistic wall stencils made to look like Italian mosaics. They are as masterful in their execution as any work by Lippert, Duveneck or Svendsen, but the identity of this artist has eluded art historians for almost century.

St. Augustine is arguably one of the finest examples of that highly decorated style of late Gothic Revival architecture still standing. Built in 1914 during the episcopacy of Bishop Maes, it belongs to that era of church building when communities strove to keep up with the growth of their immigrant populations. Nearly every community in Covington had its own church with its own saint and its own identity, and each sought to fill their church with beautiful art.

Photographs from its 1920 Jubilee booklet show a spacious, handsome church interior, but with large, blank wall areas absent of any decoration. In those early years, its pastor, Rev. William F. Kathmann, had devoted much of his energies to building and growing its school. But with his death in March 1926, the guiding hand of the parish passed quietly to the Rev. Charles A. Woeste. Father Woeste would serve as its pastor for the next 31 years and oversee most of the sweeping artistic changes in the decoration of the church.

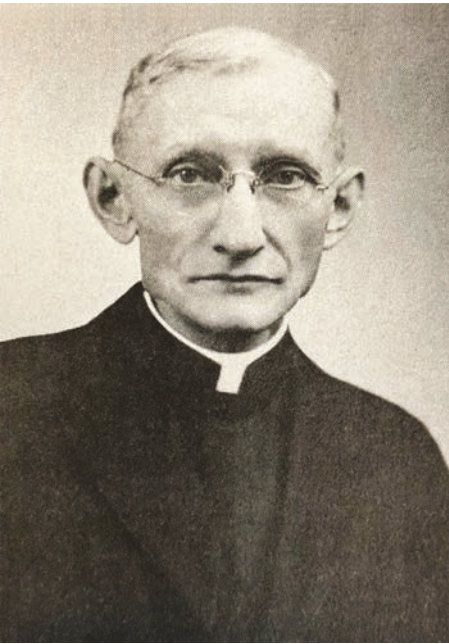
By the end of his first year as pastor, Father Woeste began making plans for long-needed upgrades to St. Augustine’s buildings, principally the rectory, school, and church structures, much of it out of necessity to repair roofs, foundations, plumbing and electrical wiring. But his parish staff pressed him hard on the issue of decorating the church interior with new art. In response, Father Woeste appointed a committee to oversee the project, and bids subsequently went out for the proposed work.

But the question of who would create the church’s new art remained unanswered. Almost a century later, the question of who ultimately painted the murals of St. Augustine was still a mystery. But it wouldn’t be a mystery for long. Buried deep in the St. Augustine Parish archives,

At the time of its dedication, St. Augustine’s interior was relatively plain and undecorated.



(left) St. Augustine sanctuary and transepts showing Braasch’s historic murals.
(above) The golden apse dome.
(below left): Rev. Charles A. Woeste. (Archives of the Diocese of Covington)
(below center) “The Lord gathering the little children.”
(below right) “The wedding of the Blessed Mother & St. Joseph.”



a previously undiscovered letter gave up the secret and finally revealed the answer.

It was early in 1927, when a man came to Father Woeste with a proposal to paint the church’s long-desired murals. Like any artist, he would have come with samples of his work, most likely a portfolio of photographs, along with ample business and character references who could be called upon if desired. There would have been across-table discussions about subjects to be portrayed and where each mural would be placed in the church. As we know today, the volume of work to be created was daunting and the price tag would be high. But in the end, Father Woeste and his committee must’ve liked what they saw, because on May 27, 1927, Father Woeste took up his pen and wrote a letter to Covington’s Bishop Francis W. Howard.

“The necessity of having the interior of St. Augustine Church painted and decorated is becoming more apparent from day to day,” he wrote, “and ... our people are literally clamoring for the frescoing of the church, which will cost approximately \$10,000.00 dollars. Mr. Theodore Brasch [sic] of Cincinnati has submitted specifications, which I shall be pleased to submit to your Lordship whenever convenient. May we have your kind permission, Dear Bishop, to go ahead with this new project?”

In his letter dated June 22, the Bishop replied: “I have considered your letter of May 27th requesting permission to expend ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for the purpose of decorating and painting the interior of St. Augustine’s Church. The permission you request ... is hereby granted, and I trust your artist will produce results that will simulate the piety of your good people.”

Theodore Braasch was not an unfamiliar name in Northern Kentucky. He was the same artist who had worked with Leon Lippert painting Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue from 1922-24. Most literature refers to him being from Cincinnati; but Braasch wasn’t from Cincinnati at all. He actually lived in Kansas City, Mo., and only came to Cincinnati to work on the Sacred Heart Church murals with Lippert.

Among his known early works are dozens of murals that still survive, such as his work in St. Elizabeth Church in Pocohontas, Va.; in St. Joseph’s Church in Kay County, Ok.; St. Benedict’s Church in Atchison, Ks.; and St. Joseph Church in Tonkawa, Ks. Church murals were his stock in trade. As it turns out, by the time he came to Cincinnati, Theodore Braasch was already the most famous church

artist west of the Mississippi.

He was born Theodore Heinrich Adolphe Braasch on Sept. 24, 1881 in Preetz, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, the son of Theodore Joachim and Anna Schumacher Braasch. Lutheran by birth, he was orphaned at nine and converted to Catholicism when he was apprenticed to a fresco artist. He later studied in Berlin and the Royal Academy of Art in Munich.

After arriving in the United States in 1904, he lived briefly in Newark, New Jersey, where he made his living as a church artist. It is possible he knew William Blank — the other St. Augustine muralist — who also worked as a church painter in Newark. Within a few years, Braasch headed west to Kansas City, where he set up his studio and continued painting the new

and express the sacred through art. Art reflected man’s concept of the divine in symbol and story, and it had the ability to attract and catechized people with lessons of the sacred that would lead them to salvation and eternal life. The mural form was the ideal choice for this purpose,

(Continued on page 14)



(above left) “The Nativity of the Lord.” (above right) “The Ascension of the Lord.”



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(Continued from page 3)

priests identify their passions and preferences so that they can use that information to leverage their strengths as they lead parishes. At the priest meeting May 24 and 25, the priests will learn more on how to analyze and implement information gathered from the inventory.

“I would hope that we’re bringing hope to the pastors, the

priests,” said Ms. Molina.

Ms. Molina said that parishioner response to the DMI clearly shows that they are excited for their parish and that they love and support their priests. “They’re working really hard,” Ms. Molina said about the priests, “We want them to know that we’re walking with them ... we want to help them to see the results of their efforts.”

To date, every project of the With One Heart campaign as been completed or is on target for completion as scheduled. (See timeline on page 2.)

“What we’ve said we were going to do we’ve been doing and that’s a huge thing,” said Ms. Molina. “A lot of it is thanks to Bishop’s leadership. But I think, also, that’s the Holy Spirit working with us. Grace builds on nature. We’re bringing what we know on a human level, but grace is leading us.”

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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.

St. Augustine's unknown muralist

(Continued from page 11)

because murals — whether fresco or oil — were a large visual medium that could grab a viewer's attention and hold it as the catechesis played out visually before them.

When Theodore Braasch came to Cincinnati in 1922, he lived at 1826 Esmonde Street in Cincinnati's west end with his wife Julia and baby daughter. By the following year, he had moved to 1604 Harrison Avenue (today a BP station). Then in September 1924, with the mural work at Sacred Heart completed, Braasch packed up his family and went home to Kansas City. But within two years, he would return when the St. Augustine opportunity became known.

When Father Woeste received permission from Bishop Howard to proceed with the decoration of his church, he most likely approached the well-known Leon Lippert first. But Lippert was unavailable, already engaged in a job painting the Stations at St. John the Baptist Church in Wilder. Charles C. Svendsen, the only other church muralist capable of producing such large-scale work, was in Colorado. In the end, it's likely Lippert may have simply recommended Braasch to Father Woeste.

From what we know, Theodore Braasch began the St. Augustine murals in the late summer of 1927. His plan was ambitious to say the least and included the following major works: The Nativity of the Lord (east transept); The Lord gathering the little children (sanctuary, St. Joseph's side); The wedding of the Blessed Mother & St. Joseph (sanctuary, BVM side); The Ascension of the Lord (west transept); Christ the King (apse dome); The angels praising God (sanctuary arch). He also executed 12 large medallions of saints throughout the nave and stenciled the bottom five feet of the transept and nave walls to give the appearance of Italian mosaics.

When the last bit of paint had dried and the work was finished, Braasch packed up his paints, his family, and went home to Kansas City. By 1930, he was living in the Los Angeles community of North Hollywood, Ca., living less than two miles from both Warner Brothers and Universal Studios. There is no evidence he ever worked for the studios, but he owned his own house and always had a good income. We know he attended St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church (only blocks from Warner Brothers) and for many years after, he traveled the west coast painting major works for more than a dozen Catholic churches as far north as Tacoma, Wa. In his later years, he became even more famous for his religious work with the city of Pasadena, especially his murals in the city's St. Elizabeth Church (the "Our Lady of the West") and for his annual Christmas tableaux and Nativity scenes that annually drew over 200,000 spectators as they paraded through the city.

What eventually happened to Theodore Braasch is unknown, for no record of his death has been found. Yet he will always be with us in the works he left us, still preserved and cherished in the dozens of churches and chapels across the country. But he will be with the faithful of St. Augustine Parish in a special way, because he was an artist whose identity was once lost to us, but today is found.

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Parishioner Holy Cross Church

Deacon Michael Elmlinger

(Continued from page 1)

seminary was very difficult.”

“It was really hard at first to know where it was God was trying to lead me,” he said, “It took a lot of time. But, luckily, I had a great spiritual director while I was in Columbus, and a great spiritual director up here. They really helped me to discern where it is that God is calling me.”

Deacon Elmlinger began his seminary studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, completing them at St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Penn.

His father’s death also proved to be a challenge. “That was one of the hardest points in my life,” he said, “There was a brief moment where I had considered stepping away from seminary.”

“But, as I continued to pray about it, it just didn’t seem like the right decision—the person who planted the seed of my vocation was gone like that,” but he stuck to the seminary and continued his studies to the priesthood.

Two saints will be included in the litany at Deacon Elmlinger’s ordination: St. Dymphna, and St. Peregrine.

“St. Dymphna is the patron saint of people with anxiety and mental disorders,” said he said about the saint, “Which, anxiety is something that runs in my family, so

she’s been a great intercessor for us.”

“And St. Peregrine, being the patron of those with incurable diseases and cancer,” and, since Deacon Elmlinger’s father had died due to lung cancer, “St. Peregrine also became a major part of our devotional life and my family.”

Deacon Elmlinger’s family will also be participating in his ordination Mass, with his siblings presenting the gifts to Bishop John Iffert.

“I’m very excited,” Deacon Elmlinger said, “because this is something that I’ve been preparing myself for, for the last seven or so years. It’s also kind of surreal, in the sense that it (the ordination) is about here. I remember when I first entered seminary, it seemed like it was a long time away, and all of a sudden, here we are.”

“There are so many people I have to thank for getting me to this point. I would not be here without the support of the people of the diocese or the support of my family,” he said, “It’s really encouraging, especially in those difficult times when it feels like you’re not really sure what you’re supposed to do. It’s really encouraging seeing all the support that comes your way, amidst it all, and I don’t think I could thank people enough for everything they’ve done.”

Solemnity of Corpus Christi

(Continued from page 1)

Everyone is welcome to join in the creation of the sawdust carpets beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the gardens of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, June 10.

On the day of the solemnity, June 11, Eucharistic adoration will begin following 10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral. Confessions will also be heard. At 2 p.m., the priests, deacons and faithful of the Diocese will begin a liturgy of the Word service that culminates with Bishop John Iffert leading the Eucharistic procession.

This year’s First Communicants are encouraged to wear their dresses and suits in the procession. To accommodate the expected crowd, the Diocese is asking the City of Covington and State of Kentucky to close the streets of the procession route.

The procession will exit the Cathedral through its front doors on Madison Ave., travel one block down Madison and turn right on Robbins Street, then right on Scott

Street, re-entering the Cathedral campus through the Scott Street parking lot adjacent to Covington Latin School, traveling past the North side of the Cathedral and re-entering the Cathedral back through the front doors on Madison Ave.

Later that evening 40-Hour Devotion will begin after 5:30 p.m. Mass and continue until Vespers, 6 p.m., Tuesday, June 13. Confession will also be available Monday from 6–9 p.m. To ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is never left alone, adorers are asked to select a time using the online link on the Diocese of Covington website, www.covdio.org/corpuschristi. Private security detail will be present at the Cathedral during the overnight hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., Sunday and Monday.

To assist parishes in their participation of the Parish Year of Revival, the National Eucharistic Revival website has made available a Leader’s Playbook, online at EucharisticRevival.org.

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OFFICE STAFF

St. William/St. John Mission Parish is seeking Office staff. This is a part-time position of approximately 15 hours per week. Pay is commensurate with experience. Job duties include: Answering parish phone calls, sorting incoming mail and correspondence.

- Inventory of supplies and ordering
- Processing invoices and issuing payments
- Data entry/church records
- Participate in the preparation of scheduled reports to the Diocese
- Work with vendors
- Work with members of the Diocese when necessary/attend meetings
- Provide backup with other office staff as needed
- Assist with parish events (Fish Fry, Festival, etc.)

Requirements for this position: MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook), Accounting software, answering phone calls professionally and being helpful to those who may stop in the office with questions or needing assistance. If interested, please contact Fr. Benton Clift at St. William Church 859.824.5381

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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.

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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 resume to Dennis Hicks at dhicks@stcatherineofsiena.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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CUSTODIAN -
MAINTENANCE PERSON

St. Joseph School located in Cold Spring, Kentucky, is seeking a custodian / maintenance man. The position can be full or part time but requires a minimum of twenty hours per week, 11 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday. Responsibilities include school janitorial duties as well as basic repair and general maintenance of the school facilities, buildings and equipment under the supervision of the Maintenance Manager. **Interested candidates may submit a letter of interest and resume to the parish office at: jruwe@stjoeparish.net.**

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St. William Parish is seeking a Director of Religious Education. 15 – 20 hours per week. Pay is commensurate with experience.

Job duties include:

- To run the CCD program, Children’s liturgy, VBS program
- Monitor / teach the RCIC / RCIA programs
- Monitor / run the adult faith program and Youth group
- Update religious section of St. William / St. John’s church website
- Monitor Virtus compliance
- Update Camino program regarding the sacraments
- Update the bulletin boards with educational information

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National/World

Cardinal Gregory receives Order of Lincoln honor from home state

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. —Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington made a special homecoming to Illinois April 29, where the Chicago native was among six 2023 recipients of the Order of Lincoln, the state’s highest honor for professional achievement and public service. “I have always been proud to be a native Chicagoan and proud to have been born and raised in the state that is responsible for so many remarkable American leaders,” Cardinal Gregory said after receiving the honor during a ceremony in the House of Representatives Chamber of the Illinois Capitol in Springfield. The Illinois city was Abraham Lincoln’s home for nearly a quarter century where he served as a state legislator and lawyer and began raising his family before leaving for Washington after he was elected president in 1860. During the ceremony, Cardinal Gregory received the Lincoln Medallion from Ronald Spears, the chancellor of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois, and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker presented him with a certificate recognizing Washington’s archbishop as a Lincoln Laureate.

After praying for peace, pope greets Russian Orthodox official

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Shortly after urging people to pray the rosary for peace and entrusting the people of Ukraine to Mary’s care, Pope Francis met briefly with Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, director of external relations for the Russian Orthodox Church. The pope’s prayer requests and his meeting with the Russian Orthodox official came just three days after he told reporters the Vatican has a “mission” under way to promote peace in Ukraine, although he said it was too soon to provide details. Ukrainian and Russian officials said their governments were not involved. At the end of the pope’s weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square May 3, Metropolitan Anthony was the first of the special guests to greet Pope Francis. The two shook hands and Pope Francis reached out and kissed the metropolitan’s encolpion, an icon Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic bishops wear instead of a pectoral cross. The Russian Orthodox official spoke to the pope briefly before giving him an encolpion of his own. The Vatican press office did not provide information about Metropolitan Anthony’s visit. A brief statement on the website of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church said Metropolitan Anthony traveled to Rome, with the blessing of Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, “for a brief working visit.”

Abortion bans fail in GOP-controlled Nebraska and South Carolina

LINCOLN, Neb. —Abortion bans failed in Nebraska and South Carolina, two Republican-led states, while passing in North Dakota in the final week of April. After the U.S. Supreme Court’s Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision in June that overturned prior rulings by the high court — including Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v Casey, which found abortion access to be a constitutional right — many states moved to either restrict or expand access to the procedure. In Nebraska, lawmakers in the unicameral Legislature came one vote short of breaking a filibuster April 27 to vote on a six-week abortion ban. In a post on its Facebook page, the Nebraska Catholic Conference said the state’s Legislature “failed to protect mothers and babies from abortion. ... The bill may have died, but we’re not done. We have all shown up and given our greatest of efforts.” In South Carolina, state senators rejected a bill April 27 that would have banned nearly all abortions in a 22-21 vote. Meanwhile, Republican North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum signed a law April 24 banning nearly all abortions, with narrow exceptions in the first six weeks for cases of rape or incest, and narrow exceptions beyond six weeks for medical emergencies. If North Dakota’s law goes into effect, it is not immediately clear how much impact it would have in a state with no remaining abortion facilities.



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