



Special Section:
Grief
pages 11–19

- 2 **Pickett's Corner**
- 2 **You're invited**
The Solemnity of Corpus Christi
- 2 **You're invited**
Cross the Bridge for Life
- 3 **St. Cosmas novices**
- 3 **FDM novice**
- 3 **Finding Gregory**
- 3 **Official assignments**
- 3 **Corrections**
- 5 **Catholic Schools**
Following Christ
- 8 **'Be Witnesses'**
- 9 **Parish festivals**
- 22 **Summer school lunch**

Bishop's Schedule	3
Commentary	6
People and Events	9
Classifieds	20
Shopper's Guide	22
VIRTUS	22
News Briefs	23

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at covdio.org/messenger.



CNS photo/Lola Gomez
Pope Francis, accompanied by Italian children, rides in the popemobile around St. Peter's Square before his weekly general audience at the Vatican May 24, 2023.

Pray at Pentecost for courage to evangelize, pope says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christians should pray on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit would give them the courage and strength to share the Gospel, Pope Francis said.

"No matter how difficult the situation may be — and indeed, at times it may seem there is no room for the Gospel message — we must not give up and we must not forsake pursuing what is essential in our Christian life, namely evangelization," the pope said May 24, the Wednesday before Pentecost.

Using the example of St. Andrew Kim Taegon, the 19th-century Korean martyr, Pope Francis continued his weekly general audience talks about the "zeal" to evangelize.

With thousands of visitors and pilgrims — including bands, flag twirlers and dancers — gathered in a sunny St. Peter's Square, the pope introduced his talk about St. Andrew by pointing out how Christianity was introduced to Korea 200 years before St. Andrew by laypeople who had heard the Gospel proclaimed in China and then shared it when they returned home.

"Baptized laypeople were the ones who spread the faith. There

were no priests," the pope said. "Would we be able to do something like that?"

Ordained in 1844, St. Andrew Kim Taegon was the first Korean-born priest and ministered at a time of anti-Christian persecution.

Pope Francis told the story of how when the saint was still a seminarian, he was sent to welcome missionaries who snuck into the country from abroad. After walking far through the snow, "he fell to the ground exhausted, risking unconsciousness and freezing. At that point, he suddenly heard a voice, 'Get up, walk!'"

"This experience of the great Korean witness makes us understand a very important aspect of apostolic zeal: namely, the courage to get back up when one falls," the pope said.

"Each one of us might think, 'But how can I evangelize,'" he said. Following the example of the "greats" of evangelization history, each Christian can find a way to witness to the Gospel — "talk about Jesus" — in his or her family, among friends and in one's local community.

"Let us prepare to receive the Holy Spirit this coming Pentecost, asking for that grace, apostolic grace and courage, the grace to evangelize, to always carry forward the message of Jesus."



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

As executive director prepares to pedal into retirement, Catholic Charities opens Pickett’s Corner in his honor

Laura Keener
Editor

The staff and board members of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, found a way to not only celebrate Alan Pickett, executive director, as he begins retirement, May 26, but also to begin a new ministry in his honor — Pickett’s Corner. Pickett’s Corner at Parish Kitchen, Covington, will repair and distribute bicycles to those in need. Mr. Pickett is an avid cyclist. In fact, one of his first retirement adventures includes an extended bicycle trip.

Bicycles are a cost effective and efficient form of transportation that many guests of the Parish Kitchen use as a primary means of getting around town, especially to their jobs. But like everything else, bicycles require proper maintenance and sometimes costly repairs — obstacles that can leave a person already struggling even further in the dust.

Through the generosity of donors and volunteers to Pickett’s Corner, the obstacle of bicycle repair will soon be a just a bump in the road.

“This is just another way to support the people we serve

beyond just a meal,” said Mr. Pickett in an interview with the *Messenger*.

Pickett’s Corner held its grand opening in early May, repairing a few bikes and receiving and distributing a couple of bicycles. The bicycle repair shop will be open on a more regular schedule when volunteer staffing is available. Volunteers are needed to be present at Pickett’s Corner during lunchtime, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., to repair bikes. Donors are also needed to collect and repair bikes at their home for distribution at Pickett’s Corner. For now, Parish Kitchen will post a sign announcing the days Pickett’s Corner will be open so that guests will know a day or two in advance when to bring their bike in for repair.

“Their hope is that they can come up with a plan that would enable them to be onsite on a regular basis,” Mr. Pickett said.

During his nine years leading Catholic Charities, a lot of challenges and changes occurred.

The Parish Kitchen moved from its longtime home on Pike Street to its new home on the corner of Madison Ave. and 16th Street. During the construction, COVID hit and

the Parish Kitchen, like every other culinary hospitality venue, transitioned from sit-down, indoor service to grab-n-go, carryout meals. The new Parish Kitchen began serving guests indoors in summer of 2021.

A n o t h e r achievement that was years in the making and that COVID threatened to stall even longer is the Food for Friends Mobile Food Pantry. The Mobile Food Pantry made its first stop in Bracken County in August 2020.

“I give Father Joey Shelton a large dose of credit for what we were able to do,” said Mr. Pickett.

Father Shelton was newly assigned pastor at St. Augustine Parish, Augusta and St. James Parish, Brooksville at the time. Mr. Pickett said that Father Shelton saw the Mobile Pantry as a way for him and his parish to be evangelists in “really a non-Catholic area.”

“He [Father Shelton] said, I’m ready. I want to do this, we can do this,” said Mr. Pickett. And they did, with some modifications to allow for social distancing and the safety of patrons.

After its initial stop in Bracken County the Mobile Food Pantry took off and now serves six of the southern and eastern counties of the Diocese — Gallatin County, Grant County, Owen County and Mason County.

“Our goal was to be in six counties, and we are now in those six counties that we serve once a month,” said Mr. Pickett, adding that there are two additional counties asking to be added. “So, we may expand beyond the six that we targeted,” he said.

One of the difficult decisions Mr. Pickett had to make was the dissolution of Catholic Charities’ foundational service, it’s adoption program.

“It’s been a year since we made that decision and I still get feedback from folks that are disappointed in us for not continuing that work. Our hearts go out to those families,” Mr. Pickett said.

While the decision to end the adoption program was difficult, the truth of the matter, Mr.


Meet Our New Executive Director!

All are welcome to meet Chris Goddard, executive director, Catholic Charities, at an Open House, Thursday, June 15, 4–6 p.m., at Catholic Charities, 3629 Church St., Latonia.




(above left) Jim Volz, Catholic Charities Advisory Board member, takes a test drive on a bicycle serviced at Pickett’s Corner at Parish Kitchen bicycle repair ministry.

(above, right) Jim Volz, and Steve Wilmhoff, volunteer, with Alan Pickett, executive director, Catholic Charities, are all smiles on the first day of service at Pickett’s Corner at Parish Kitchen, a newly created bicycle repair ministry.



DIOCESE of COVINGTON



CORPUS CHRISTI

The Solemnity of

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi

Bring the family

Sunday, June 11, 2 p.m.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

Schedule of Events

Sawdust carpet making

Saturday, June 10, 5:30 p.m., Cathedral garden

Liturgy of the Word service and Eucharistic Procession

Sunday, June 11, 2 p.m.

40 Hours Devotion

Sunday, June 11, following 5 p.m.

Mass through 6 p.m., Tuesday, June 13


Note: The Blessed Sacrament will be reposed for 8:30 a.m. Mass on both Monday and Tuesday.

Private security detail will be present at the Cathedral during the overnight hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., Sunday and Monday.


Confessions

Monday, June 12, 6–9 p.m.

More information including a parish digital and social media kit is available online at <https://covdio.org/CorpusChristi>.



2023



cross the bridge for LIFE

A Celebration of the Gift of Human Life

2023 Cross the Bridge for Life

You’re invited to this annual celebration of life

Sunday, June 4

Festival Park, Newport

Festivities including face painting and live music to begin at 1 p.m.

Walk across the Purple People Bridge at 2 p.m.

More information at <http://crossthebridgeforlife.org/>



St. Cosmas Deanery welcomes its first novices

(above left) Bishop Foys presented each of the novices with a crucifix on a chain as they begin a year of prayer and study on the Rule of St. Benedict. After at least a year of formation, the novices will each decide if they are being called to make an oblation. This is the first group of novices for the newly created St. Cosmas Deanery. For more information on both the St. Cosmas Deanery and the Oblates of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, visit <https://covoblates.org/>. (above right) Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys welcomed 10 men and women as novitiates to the Oblates of St. Benedict, St. Cosmas Deanery, May 20, at St. Benedict Church, Covington. “It is significant that we’re doing this here at St. Benedict Church because the Benedict monks, whose archabbey we follow, staffed this church from its very beginning over 100 years ago until 1980 when the last Benedictine pastor was called home,” said Bishop Foys. “This church is steeped in Benedictine history.”



Franciscan Daughters welcome new novice

On May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, the Franciscan Daughters of Mary welcomed its newest sister, Sister Sara, into the novitiate. As part of the ceremony, she received the habit of her community and a new name to signify her new life. Sister Sara’s new name is now Sister Agnes Mary of the Precious Blood. The first year of the novitiate, the Canonical year, is defined by the Church as a time of intense formation with the sole purpose of preparing for a vowed life. A novice is instructed regarding “the character and spirit, the purpose and discipline, the history and life of the Institute” (Canon 652 § 2). In addition to the Canonical year, there is an additional year spent as a novice living in community and serving in the apostolate. After the two-year period, the novice has an opportunity to make her first profession of vows.



Photo courtesy of Dave Schroeder

Finding Gregory

Four statues of the four Doctors of the Western Church: St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome and St. Gregory the Great, were on the pulpit of the former St. Boniface Church, Ludlow. Three of the four statues have found their way to the Chancery, only St. Gregory is missing (see related column page 7). In an appeal to the people of the Diocese, Jamie Schroeder, chancellor, is seeking to solve the mystery of the case of the missing statue so that the four statues may be photographed together and documented. Pictured here is St. Boniface’s pulpit, which shows St. Gregory and St. Augustine side-by-side. If you’ve seen St. Gregory, contact Mrs. Schroeder at (859) 392-1527 or e-mail jschroeder@covdio.org.



Bishop’s Schedule

- May 26**
Villa Madonna Academy graduation, Mother of God Church, Covington, 10:30 a.m.

Notre Dame Academy graduation, NKY Convention Center, Covington, 4 p.m.

Holy Cross High School graduation, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, 7 p.m.

May 27
St. Patrick High School graduation, St. Patrick Church, Maysville, 1 p.m.

May 28
Mass and adult Confirmation, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.

May 29
Diocesan Curia closed — Observance of Memorial Day holiday
- May 30**
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

May 31
Building Commission meeting, 2 p.m.

June 1
Thomas More University Board of Trustees meeting, Steigerwald Hall, Thomas More University, 1:30 p.m.

June 2
Priesthood ordination of Michael Elmlinger, Cathedral Basilica, 6 p.m.

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

June 4
Father Albert Ruschman’s anniversary Mass, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, 10:30 a.m.

Cross the Bridge for Life, Festival Park, Newport, 1:15 p.m.

Official Assignments

Effective July 11, 2023

- Rev. Augustine K. Aidoo**
To: Parochial Administrator, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, St. James Mission, Minerva, and Holy Redeemer Parish, Vanceburg
From: Parochial Vicar, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Fort Mitchell
- Rev. Gregory J. Bach**
To: Vice-Chancellor; Assistant to the Bishop
From: Pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Covington
- Rev. Edward J. Brodnick**
To: Retirement after 47 years of dedicated ministry in the Diocese of Covington
From: Parochial Vicar, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria
- Rev. Alexander J. Gedney**
To: Parochial Vicar, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring; Assistant Chaplain, Northern Kentucky University
From: Parochial Vicar, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia
- Rev. G. Michael Greer**
To: Retirement after 42 years of dedicated ministry in the Diocese of Covington

- From: Pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington and St. Ann Mission, Covington
- Rev. A. Conor Kunath**
To: Parochial Administrator, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow;
Diocesan Vocations Director
From: Diocesan Vocations Promoter; Residence, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood
- Rev. Thomas F. Picchioni**
To: Pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton and Transfiguration Mission, Perry Park
From: Parochial Administrator, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton and Transfiguration Mission, Perry Park
- Rev. Msgr. Gerald L. Reinersman, V.F.**
To: Retirement after 44 years of dedicated ministry in the Diocese of Covington
From: Pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring
- Rev. Joseph C. Rielage**
To: Parochial Vicar, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington
From: Parochial Vicar, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood
- Rev. Lawrence A. Schaeper**
To: Pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Covington
From: Pastor, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow
- Rev. Aby Thampi, C.M.I.**
To: Parochial Administrator, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington and St. Ann Mission, Covington
From: Parochial Vicar, St. Henry Parish, Elsmere
- Very Rev. Andrew L. Young, V.F.**
To: Pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring; Chaplain, Northern Kentucky University
From: Pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, St. James Mission, Minerva, and Holy Redeemer Parish, Vanceburg
- Assigned by the
Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Jamie N. Schroeder
Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

Corrections

In the May 19 edition of the Messenger two errors have been noted.

In the page 2 article celebrating Father Albert Ruschman’s 70th jubilee, St. George Parish, Jenkins, was listed as a parish he had pastored. That is incorrect. It should have been St. Edward Mission, Owenton.

The page 5 Viewpoint columnist, “They will know we are Catholic by our home,” is Sarah Torres (not Faye Roch). The *Messenger* apologizes for the errors.

WHO DEY

2023 Cincinnati Bengals
Season Ticket Raffle

\$50 per chance. Section: 224 Row: 29 Seats: 5 & 6



Raffle ticket purchase dates:

4/15/23-8/12/23

Winner will be drawn at 1100 Pike St., Covington, KY 41011 on
8/15/2023 at 4:00PM

Scan the QR code, or visit beconcerned.org for entry and details.



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Pickett's Corner

(Continued from page 2)

Pickett said, was that the program had already discontinued on its own. Due to a major cultural shift away from focusing on what could be the better environment for the child and towards a greater expectation that a mother should raise her child herself — even very young mothers and mothers struggling in poverty and with addictions — there were very few babies available to adopt.

“It wasn’t because we didn’t care. It’s because there were so many factors stacked against us it just made it insurmountable,” said Mr. Pickett.

“One thing that we will always do is offer free counseling to pregnant women and mental health counseling,” said Mr. Pickett. “We also provide support to any families who had adopted their children through Catholic Charities, whether that was the birth mom or the adoptive family.”

The challenge for Catholic Charities now, Mr. Pickett said, is to find ways to help break the cycle of poverty for mothers and their children.

“The reality is we have to find ways to support the needs in the current age with what’s going on out there,” Mr. Pickett said, adding that Catholic Charities has always found ways to do that. “If mothers are choosing to keep their baby, then let’s support those mothers.”

Mr. Pickett said that during his entire tenure he always felt and is grateful for the strong support of the staff, volunteers and benefactors of Catholic Charities and also the wonderful collaboration with the many private and public organizations serving the needs of the community’s most vulnerable citizens.

“Just wonderful collaboration in this city. That was really one of the things that made me feel encouraged throughout my tenure at Catholic Charities. Even when I was feeling like we were making slow progress I could see we were making progress. There were people out there to encourage us and in turn received encouragement from us,” said Mr. Pickett.

As Mr. Pickett prepares to pedal off into retirement, his heart is full of awe and gratitude in how wonderful God’s timing has been for Catholic Charities and for him.

“I thank all the volunteers and financial supporters that have always been positive and encouraging to Catholic Charities. I thank all the staff ... I felt like I learned and benefited from knowing every single one of the staff I’ve worked with. I’m thankful that God gave me the gifts that he gave me to allow me to be here. I thank Bishop Foys for hiring me and giving me the opportunity,” said Mr. Pickett. “It was perfect for me to be there during all the struggles and challenges and changes that we went through and it’s a perfect time now, with a new bishop (Bishop John Iffert) and a new executive director (Chris Goddard) — it’s God’s timing. I look back and say this was remarkable — I’ve been blessed.”

For information on Pickett’s Corner and ways to help, e-mail pickettscorner23@gmail.com.

Here to lend a hand.



Charlie's Club, Adult Day Health Program

Monday - Friday
8am - 5:30pm

MR. SPOTLESS CARWASH

2 Convenient Locations

4679 Alexandria Pike
Cold Spring, KY

515 Terry Lane
Crescent Springs, KY

mrspotlesscarwash.com

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

\$2 OFF EXPRESS
WASH
MON-FRI 8AM-9AM

Catholic Schools — Following Christ



Catholic Schools – Following Christ



(above) Eighth-grade students at St. Therese School, Southgate, follow Christ by taking time during recess to read to first grade students.

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 and above right) Students at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, are learning to follow Christ and to take that light out to their families and community. During Lent each student took home the classroom barbell as a reminder to pray for their classmates. This schoolwide activity served to strengthen each class on their faith journey and invite their families along in praying with them.



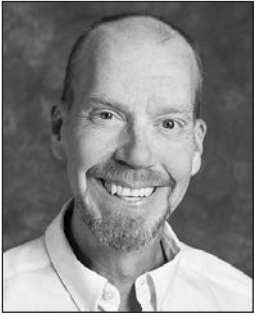
(above and right) Sixth-grade students at St. Pius X School, Edgewood, invited the parish community to a re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross.



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

When Jesus spoke with his disciples at their last supper together, he talked to them like an elderly parent might talk to adult children about their taking over the family business or carrying on the family legacy. The

BELIEVE, TEACH, PRACTICE



Deacon Timothy Britt

aging parent assures the children that they will do fine; in fact, they say, that they will do as good as they did and even better.

What Jesus says is, “You will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these.”

Imagine that; Jesus telling his Apostles that they will do even greater works than he did. We are Jesus’ disciples in the world today. His promises in these verses should encourage, comfort and even challenge us.

- Let’s make a list of the works Jesus did during his time here, on earth:
- He turned water into wine.
 - He gave sight to the man who was born blind.
 - He told the man who was lame to take up his bed and walk.
 - He raised Lazarus from the dead.
 - He fed 5,000 people with five loaves and 2 fish.
- Speaking for myself, I have never done any of these

things and I don’t personally know anyone who has. Jesus’ Apostles, of course, knew Jesus and they witnessed him performing miracles. Some of them, inspired by what they saw before their very eyes, did some amazing things themselves while Jesus was with them. But now, Jesus says that they would continue to do those things after he is gone and that they would do even greater things.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, sacred Scripture tells us that the apostles performed some spectacular miracles, like St. Peter’s shadow falling on the sick and healing them and his raising a woman named Tabitha from the dead.

And then there’s St. Paul. Scripture tells us, “God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of (St.) Paul, so that people were taking Paul’s handkerchiefs to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”

These are examples of God performing miracles — doing the works that Jesus did and doing greater ones — through the disciples of the early Church.

Keep in mind that Jesus did a lot of things that were not miraculous but still furthered the Kingdom of God.

There’s a place in John’s Gospel where Jesus sums up his life when he prays, “(Father,) I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

When Jesus talked to the apostles about doing the works he had done and greater, maybe he wasn’t talking about miracles at all. Maybe he was saying that their lives — and our lives — would give glory to the Father simply

by being obedient to him in all things, by revealing the Father’s love and mercy to people who might not know it otherwise, and by inspiring and challenging others to do the same.

It’s possible that the greater works Jesus talked about at the Last Supper might not have anything to do with spectacular miracles but are simply about the power of the Gospel to transform lives.

Through Peter’s preaching on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people were added to their number of those who believed in Jesus, probably more than Jesus saw converted during his entire three-year ministry.

The Book of Acts tells how the message kept spreading, first around Jerusalem, and eventually to the Gentiles around the Roman Empire. Scripture tells us that Jesus said there is more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent. Some people might say there is no greater work possible than the conversion of a soul.

I caution you not to get downhearted by your inability to feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Just do your best to be obedient to your heavenly Father in all things, reveal his love and mercy to people who might not know it otherwise, and inspire and challenge others to do the same.

In doing these things together we will glorify our Heavenly Father.
Deacon Timothy Britt is assigned to St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Ky.

Relationships (Luke 15:11-32)

The passage about the son who takes his inheritance and wastes it is a familiar and favorite parable from Luke’s Gospel. Some call it the parable of the prodigal son, others of the prodigal father. It is a rich telling of the

MUSINGS



Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

unfathomable mercy of God. As I muse about its richness, I sometimes dwell on the familial language and what it reveals of the characters.

I remember learning as a child that some ways of addressing people were not appropriate for me as a child. I was instructed not to call the adults in the neighborhood by their first names but to address them as “Mrs. or Mr. So and So.” I am also aware of the emotional impact titles can carry. “Your

honor” or “Reverend” inspire a modicum of distance and respect. The use of “mom,” or “dad,” holds a sense of care or of love. The language the two sons use to refer to the parent in the narrative is key to understanding the relationships.

The story begins with a heart-rending request a son makes of his father — to separate himself and begin a life of independence from the family. We know that the father has two sons, but it is the younger of the two who is eager to be on his way.

When the son addresses his parent as “father” there is an immediate sense of a loving relationship. But there is also an apparent abruptness in the request as he considers the inheritance as “what should be mine.” That may have torn at the father’s heart as it hinted that the son already considered his father out of his life.

Because of his wasteful living, this younger son was soon in the position of a hired servant, feeding pigs and going hungry himself. It is then that he ruminates about his sonship and his father.

In his need he considers the possibility of becoming a hired servant in his former home. At its heart this consideration is a change from father/son to hired hand/employer relationship. And clearly the young man knows how drastic this choice is. It is made only in the most horrendous of circumstances and there is sadness in the tone.

When he arrives at his former home, he finds a father who has apparently been looking for this son since the moment he left. The father throws aside all decorum, runs to him and throws his arms around him. This would have been shocking behavior at the time since the apparent betrayal of the child would normally have led to his being disowned.

The prodigal addresses the parent as “father” even as he asks to be considered a hired hand. The servants who inform the older son of this returned brother also use familial language, telling him that his brother has returned and that his father has welcomed him with a feast.

The older son’s refusal to enter the house or join the feast is a clear statement of his rejection of familial con-

nections. The father pleads with him to join the family feast.

His language reveals his disconnection. He never refers to the younger son as “my brother” but as “that son of yours.” He never says “father” when speaking with his parent. He has been dutiful out of servitude. He may even have labored with an expectation of a reward for his dutiful obedience.

While the younger son contemplates a change of relationship from son to hired hand, the older son has always considered himself a dutiful and obedient hired hand rather than as a loving son.

Both sons may have labored well and hard on the farm but the motive, reflected in their language, is different. One son acts as a son, the other as a hired hand. We, too, serve and speak in prayer and service with some sense of connection to our God. But what kind of connection?

Is my service dutiful or a loving response to love? When I examine my conscience is it primarily measuring duty and obedience or does it consider how I have been open to the love of a father/mother God? How often is prayer a simple abiding in love, basking in the love of my mother/father God?

Somewhere in the back of my awareness is there a little expectation of reward? Can I allow myself to be simply held by God in a loving embrace and bask in unmerited grace, with nothing but gratitude for the feast that God prepares for me?

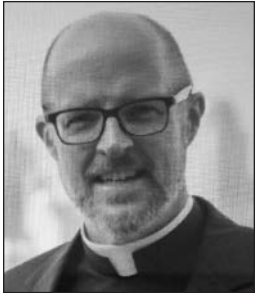
Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy is a retired theology professor at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky.

The Holy Spirit: The language and mission of truth

The readings for Pentecost Sunday — Cycle A — are: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 and John 20:19-23.

In an interview in the early 1980s the novelist Saul Bellow anticipated the coming era we now inhabit, which many describe as the “post-truth” era. With great brio of description Bellow called the emerging era and its ethos the “moronic inferno.”

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Phillip DeVous

The moronic inferno was described as a situation where “there was too much of everything ... too much history and culture to keep track of ... too much news ... too much influence, too many guys who tell you to be as they are, and all of this hugeness, abundance, turbulence, Niagara Falls torment.”

I had Bellow’s notion of the moronic inferno in mind when I was contemplating the scene from the Acts of the Apostles where all the various peoples with their various languages were gathered. The cacophony of sounds is easy to imagine, as is the confusion likely generated by such a gathering. For me, this scene is stand-in for the “Niagara Falls torment” of the crosscurrents of assertions, information, news, manufactured emotions and statements we are daily subjected to, making it hard to know what is worth paying attention to and what is true. I often end each day asking myself the question: What in the world is going on? Who is to be believed? What is true?

I imagine the many gathered there the day of Pentecost had a similar feeling.

On the day of Pentecost, amidst the confusion of the gathered peoples, “there appeared to them tongues of fire, which came to rest on each one of them (the Apostles). And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”

All of those who heard the Apostles proclaim somehow began to understand what the Apostles were saying about the mighty acts of God. Are we to presume that the Holy Spirit had turned the preachers into human simultaneous translation machines? I think not. The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak to the people the universal language of truth. A language that spoke directly to the hearts of the people.

The Holy Spirit is the Advocate whose mission it is to effect within us a living faith founded on the most central reality of the Cosmos itself — Jesus Christ is Lord. It is Jesus who is the Alpha and the Omega of the cosmos, and of us. It is Jesus who is the source, center, and summit of our lives.

In seeking the Holy Spirit to establish the Lordship of Jesus Christ within us, we see that the Holy Spirit speaks the language of truth to us. The Spirit sees to it that we really do know Jesus Christ. Then, the Spirit sees to it that the truth we now know becomes the mission we now live out: Growing in the spiritual gifts characteristic of our personal vocation in life and building up the Body of Christ within us and among us.

It is in being established in the truth of Christ’s lordship which gives us the discernment and the grace to live with integrity and truthfulness over and against the moronic inferno that gives every appearance of confusing and consuming everything. Yet, the gift of the Holy Spirit, descending as tongues of fire, reminds us that we have been given the fire of truth that “burns out” the fires of confusion, falsehood, and the disorientation of the torrent of “too much” that washes over us daily.

More and more each day I find myself praying to the Holy Spirit to teach me the truth I need to know today to

(Continued on page 10)

Finding Gregory

When I was a teenager in the 1980s, a two-foot, carved wood statue of St. Augustine stood watch over my bedroom from its place on my dresser. It was one of three

statues that my family acquired from St. Boniface Church in Ludlow, Ky, when the church closed and the parish merged with St. James.

The two other statues were of St. Boniface and St. Ambrose. As I recall, I asked to keep St. Augustine in my room because I loved his red vestments and the heart that he held in his right hand. I always liked the idea of having a saint to watch over me. When I became an adult and left home, St. Augustine stayed with my parents, but occasionally, I would remember the statue and its companions.

A couple of years ago, I was telling Father Jordan Hainsey about the statues. Father Jordan is the Custos of the Holy Relics for the Diocese of Covington and has a passion for restoring and preserving sacred art. He was interested in seeing the statues, so I brought them to the diocesan Curia where they now sit on top of the filing cabinets in my office.

After almost 40 years in storage, they had deteriorated, hands had broken off and a crosier was missing, but they were still beautiful. My mother, who grew up as a member of St. Boniface Parish, remembered that the statue of St. Boniface came from the St. Boniface School while St. Augustine and St. Ambrose decorated the pulpit in St.

VIEWPOINT



Jamie Schroeder

On Groff v DeJoy: Do we still want our Sabbath rest?

Both the extent and the limitations of the Supreme Court’s power are visible in a pending case raising the question of how far employers must go to accommodate employees’ religion. Underlying this dispute — yet obviously unreachable by the Supreme Court — is the larger reality of the sabbath’s de facto secularization in today’s America.

The case now before the court — Groff v DeJoy, it’s called — concerns a mail carrier who lost his job for refusing to deliver mail on Sunday because his Christian

faith forbids him to work on the sabbath. The justices heard oral arguments last month and will announce their decision before the court’s current term ends in late June or early July.

Immediately at issue here is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act barring employment discrimination on the basis of religion (as well as race, color, sex or national origin). When amending the law in 1972, Congress said an employer should make provisions for an employee’s religious practice unless that would involve “undue hardship” for its business. The question for the court now is what that means in practice.

Whatever the justices eventually decide, this question is all they can decide. The larger issue of sabbath observance will remain untouched. And since Sunday closing laws stand little chance of winning approval today, either by court order or societal consensus, we must settle for the kind of religiously pluralistic patchwork solution underlying Chapter VII accompanied by conflicts like the one that brought Gerald Groff and the U.S. Postal Service to the Supreme Court.

Boniface Church. She thought there had been two other statues on the pulpit besides the two she had.

Not long after his arrival in the Diocese, Bishop John Iffert visited my office, and noticing the statues, asked from where they had come. I told him the story. He revealed that he had been gifted a statue for his installation that very much resembled Augustine and Ambrose, particularly the inscription of the saint’s name at the base. The statue given to him was St. Jerome, on whose feast day Bishop was consecrated and installed as the eleventh Bishop of Covington.

Was this a third statue from the St. Boniface Church pulpit? I asked Bishop who had given him the gift. When he told me, I recognized the person as having lived in Ludlow. The statue of Jerome could only be one of the four! We then understood that the four statues on the pulpit were the four Doctors of the Western Church: St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory the Great.

So now, we have a mystery on our hands — the case of a missing statue, and this article is my appeal for help in finding Gregory. It would be exciting to reunite the four doctors, if only for a photograph. My brother-in-law, a current member of Sts. Boniface and James Church and historian, found a photo of St. Boniface’s pulpit, which shows St. Gregory and St. Augustine side-by-side (see photo page 3).

Does anyone know St. Gregory’s whereabouts? He was last seen wearing a papal tiara and carrying a Book of the Gospels and a staff with a cross. Anyone with information is invited to contact the Chancery Office of the Diocese. Sts. Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great, pray for us!

Jamie Schroeder is chancellor for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Meanwhile, of course, it will remain up to individual religious believers to determine for themselves whether and how they choose to observe their religious tradition’s weekly holy day (Sunday for Christians, Saturday for Jews, Friday for Muslims). Moreover — and this certainly holds true Catholics — it’s fair to say that we all need to examine our consciences on this matter of sabbath observance.

Let’s be honest about it. Is Sunday the day we typically devote to buying groceries, browsing for bargains at the mall, and/or long hours devoted to watching back-to-back sporting events on TV? Do we sometimes skip Mass because spending an hour in church would get in the way of these activities or others that we find more pressing or just more entertaining?

“The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (ccc 2181). But it also says quite a bit else: “The institution of the Lord’s Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives” (ccc 2184). And again: “Traditional activities (sport, restaurants, etc.) and social necessities (public services, etc.) require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure” (ccc 2187).

I wouldn’t presume to say who’s in the right in the case before the Supreme Court. On behalf of the United States Postal Service, I should point out that the present conflict grew out of the financially hard-pressed Postal Service’s contract with Amazon to deliver the giant retailer’s packages on Sunday. And there’s no denying USPS needs all the income it can get.

As for mail carrier Groff, an Evangelical Christian, there’s much to admire in the fact that he was prepared to fight the system because of his conviction that his faith forbids him to work on Sunday. To that extent, he’s a good example to us all — one that, no matter what the court says, we all can take to heart.

Russell Shaw, a veteran journalist and writer, is the author of more than 20 books, including three novels.

GUEST



Russell Shaw

Be Witnesses

“Wake up the world!
Be witnesses of
a different way
of doing things,
of acting, of living!”
— Pope Francis

Religious Communities in the Diocese of Covington

- Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery www.stwalburg.org
- Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis www.brothersofthepoorofstfrancis.org
- Passionist Nuns www.erlangerpassionists.com
- Sisters of Divine Providence www.cdpkentucky.org
- Sisters of Notre Dame www.sndusa.org
- Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker www.ssjw.org

Public and Private Associations

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

Receiving the stranger in our midst

Karen Kuhlman
Messenger Correspondent

The Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) provides newcomers to the United States with a unique opportunity that can help them integrate into the life in their new country. “I was a stranger and you made me welcome.” (Matt 25:30:)

In 2010, having assessed the needs of the local immigrant population, the CDP community took up a ministry that offers newcomers the tools necessary to become part of the fabric of their new country: education, resources and advocacy.

The Sisters know they are up to the task — for over 250 years, the Congregation has offered its assistance to people in countries around the globe. Over the past 13 years, the Sisters have invited adult immigrants who settled in the Northern Kentucky area to discover the opportunities available to them at El Centro de la Divina Providence (The Divine Providence Center).

Since its inception, over 700 have accepted the invitation and registered for classes. They hope to find a path toward a better future through the front doors of El Centro, located at 910 Scott St. in Covington. Divine Providence Sister Barbara Patrick, director for El Centro, said, “We are receiving the stranger in our midst, as we are called to do in the Gospel. We always want to be warm and welcoming to all who come to El Centro for the opportunities offered here. That is especially important, as many immigrants have not been treated kindly by some in their new country.”

Sister Barbara said, “The mission of El Centro is to teach students to speak, read and write English. And even though the name is Spanish, we accept students from any country who speak any language.”

In addition, El Centro provides the immigrant community with a gathering space for meetings and activities that foster personal and spiritual growth.

Students live in communities across Northern Kentucky; some come from Cincinnati. All who come to El Centro find a traditional school setting; the atmosphere is very professional, and the day’s activities are well-planned. Opportunities range from learning to read, write and speak English to acquiring basic math skills and understanding currency in the United States. These skills help smooth the path for immigrants as they learn to navigate life in their new country.

Sister Barbara said, “El Centro’s mission of teaching English to immigrants is accomplished through the efforts of many volunteers. They are an essential component of our ministry.”

The students come from many countries. Volunteers use El Centro’s learning system to teach English to Spanish-speaking students who have immigrated from countries such as Guatemala and Creole/ French-speaking students from Haiti. The Sisters



Sister

accept students from any country. El Centro can teach any student from any country who speaks any language to speak English!

Volunteers are delighted to learn that they do NOT have to speak their students’ native language to become a tutor. Anyone who can speak, understand and write English can become a tutor; no other language is necessary.

The 12-level program El Centro provides is user-friendly for students and tutors alike. The program moves through various levels of learning as students gain proficiency. Each student buys an English-only textbook and workbook that comes with a CD. That is their only cost. The textbook and workbook are supplemented with learning on El Centro’s computers.

Learning at El Centro complements students’ and volunteer tutors’ schedules. Sister Barbara records every student’s progress on a spreadsheet and keeps it on file indefinitely. Students may sometimes have to miss classes. The spreadsheets make it easy for students to track their progress and resume where they left off — regardless of the time between sessions.

The volunteers usually work one-to-one with students. Tutors have no preparation to do at home and no papers to correct; tutors select the day and the time that works for them.

El Centro sessions are available to students and tutors Monday through Thursday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Monday through Thursday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m.; and

Monday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m.. Students are not tied to any particular schedule. They can come to any of the sessions or makeup sessions they missed without worrying that an absence might be held against them, as it often does in other programs. Tutors are happy to discover that their schedules are flexible, as well.

Like all who pursue learning a new language, El Centro students express various reasons for acquiring a second language: One hopes to get a better job; another wants to communicate better with her boss; another wants to understand better the directions she receives at work. All are eager to learn the language of their new country and to move forward in their new lives in the United States.

Sister Barbara would like to aid more newcomers, but for that, she needs the help of additional volunteers willing to lend whatever time they can spare to El Centro. This ministry is one of accompaniment — tutors see for themselves the blessing they can be and the difference they can make in the lives of others. It is a mutual blessing to the tutors as well.

The need for tutors is increasing, and Sister Barbara can use all the helping hands she can get. All interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer tutor can reach Sister Barbara at (859) 431-3600 or elcentro@zoomtown.com.

For more information about consecrated life in the Diocese of Covington, contact Sister Marla Monahan at mmonahan@covdio.org or (859) 392-1569.



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PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Presenting ‘bottle buddy’ biographies

Second graders at St. Agnes, Ft. Wright, finished a unit on biographies. Each student chose a person to research and wrote an informational writing piece about them. Students shared their writing piece with the class and presented a ‘bottle buddy’ of their famous person.

The prayer intention for June, as recommended by Pope Francis, is for the abolition of torture. We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

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.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult and high school volunteers to tutor children in grades K-9 in reading, English and math in its Summer Academics program held in June. For information, call (859) 261-4487 or e-mail Sister Maria Therese at smtherese@nduec.org. Volunteers 18 and older must be VIRTUS compliant.

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.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center has open registration for the Summer Academics program for students in grades K-9, June 5-29, Monday-Thursday. The Early Learning program for 4- and 5-year-olds is now accepting registrations. Early Learning begins Sept. 5 and ends May 16. For information, call NDUEC at (859) 261-4487 or e-mail Sister Maria Therese at smtherese@nduec.org.

Mass followed by a healing service, St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs, June 9. Music by the Sacred Heart Praise Band starts at 6:30 p.m., with Mass at 7 p.m. Sponsored by the Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community of the Diocese of Covington. For information, call (859) 341-5932.

Marriage Encounter retreat June

9-11, Our Lady of Visitation, Cincinnati. Register at esharing.org or call Andy and Melanie Reinersman at (859) 653-8464. Learn how to make your marriage better.

Bishop Brossart High School Men’s and Women’s Golf Outings at A J Jolly Golf Course. 35th annual Ladies Outing, June 15, \$90. Call 781-4337 for reservations. 44th Annual Men’s, June 16 \$100. Call 635-2108 for reservations.

The Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community sponsors a monthly Third Tuesday prayer gathering, 7-8:45 p.m., Blessed Sacrament Parish Center, Ft. Mitchell. Join us June 20 with praise & worship music, teaching, witnesses, and healing prayers. For information, call (859) 341-5932.

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.

First Friday Mass followed by a healing service, July 7, St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs, 6:30 p.m. with music by the Sacred Heart Praise Band; Mass at 7 p.m. Sponsored by the Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community. For information, call (859) 341-5932.

Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Vespers, Sunday, Sept. 17, 2 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to honor couples celebrating milestone wedding anniversaries — 1st, 25th, 50th, or 60+ — in 2023. Anniversary couples RSVP by July 18 at covdio.org/wedding-vesters/ or contact Lisa Taylor at (859) 392-1533 to register. Reservations are only required for anniversary couples; family members and guests are welcome to attend.

A faith-based support group, New Beginnings provides separated and divorced individuals the opportunity for healing and growth. In this group, participants find new understanding of themselves and their relationships and gain courage to discover new life. Registration is required. Visit https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/ or call (859) 392-1500, ext.1592. The next session will be held on consecutive Tuesdays, Aug. 29 – Oct. 17, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Elementary School, Bellevue.

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Information (859) 635-2491 Lic #0603

2023 Parish Festivals

St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, June 2-3, 6-11 p.m.	St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, July 14-15, 6 p.m.-12 a.m.; July 16, 4-10 p.m.	Blessed Sacrament School Boosters Corn Roast, Ft. Mitchell, August 11, 5:30-11:30 p.m.
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Fort Thomas, June 2, 7-11 p.m., June 3, 5:30-11 p.m.	St. Therese Parish, Southgate, June 15, adult night 6-10 p.m.; June 16-17, 6-11 p.m.	St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, August 11, 6 p.m.-12 a.m., August 12, 5 p.m.-11 p.m.
St. Augustine Parish, Covington, June 9-10, 5-11 p.m.	Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, June 23-25	St. Philip Golf Ball Drop and Festival, Melbourne, August 19, 5-11 p.m.
St. Paul Parish, Florence, June 9-10, 6-11 p.m.; June 11, 3-7 p.m.	Holy Cross Parish, Latonia, July 21, 6-11 p.m.; July 22, 5-11 p.m.	St. Barbara Rocktoberfest, Erlanger, September 8-10
St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, Saturday, June 10, 4-11 p.m.	St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, July 28, 6-11 p.m.; July 29, 5-11 p.m.	St. Agnes Parish, Fort Wright, September 22-24
St. Edward Ice Cream Social, Cynthiana, June 11, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.	Sts. Peter and Paul July Picnic, California, July 29, 2-7 p.m.	St. Benedict Parish, Covington, September 22-23
St. Joseph Academy Pigfest, Walton, June 16-17, 5-11 p.m.	St. Joseph, Cold Spring, August 4-5, 6-11 p.m.	



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The Holy Spirit

(Continued from page 7)

do God's will. I ask the Holy Spirit to grace me with the truth I need to love as Christ commands, today. I pray throughout the day that the Holy Spirit would take me through the confusion and the madness that can invade even the simplest interactions. I pray the Holy Spirit would give me the wisdom I need to lead others into all truth.

The Holy Spirit, in speaking the language of truth to us, has sent us disciples on a mission of truth to the world around us. We respond to the confusing flames and noxious fumes of the moronic inferno with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Let us be confident that Jesus Christ is still standing in our midst, that the fire of truth still burns, and that His words to us remain both true and vital: "Peace be with you."

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

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*'Let your understanding strengthen your patience.
In serenity look forward to
the joy that follows sadness.'*

— St. Peter Damian

GRIEF

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MESSENGER
MAY 26, 2023



In our Catholic cemeteries we carry out sacred religious functions [canon law 1205], create a place of care and prayer and express the beauty of our relationship to God through graced environments that feature beautiful landscapes and mausoleums, spiritual artwork and sacred shrines. Here we can fulfill the Corporal Work of Mercy to bury the dead along with the Spiritual Works of Mercy to console the sorrowing and pray for the living and the dead. Your Catholic cemeteries:

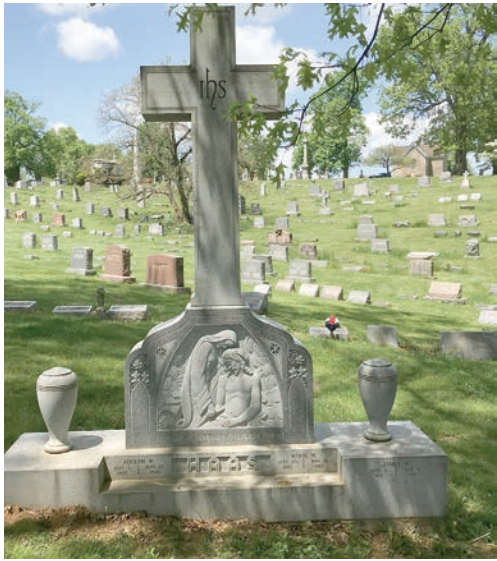
- Attest to the unity of the living and the dead — a sign of the “Communion of Saints” in our midst.
- Express in words, deeds and objects our belief in the sacredness of human persons, living and dead — whether male or female, rich or poor, powerful or ordinary.
- Provide a focus for the Christian community for prayerful remembrance of the dead.
- Speak of life beyond life, life after death.

Printed with permission from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Cemetery Office, www.cemeteries.org.

GRIEF

Catholic cemeteries are part of the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. Through the Church, the Body of Christ, we are touched with mercy, love, grace and goodness from the womb to the tomb.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, baptized with water, anointed with oil, nourished with the Body and Blood of the Lord, touched with healing and love. Christ himself shared not only our nature, but also our very mortal bodies; therefore, we should always treat human beings and their mortal remains with respect, dignity and honor.



Diocese of Covington

CEMETERIES



The pictures above were taken at diocesan cemeteries.
Top left: Blessed Virgin Mary statue in St. Mary Cemetery, Fort Mitchell.
Left center: Six of the Diocese of Covington's eight deceased Bishops are buried at St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell. In December, the graves are adorned with a traditional grave blanket. The two bishops not at St. Mary Cemetery are Third Bishop Camillus Maes and Fourth Bishop Ferdinand Brossart. Bishop Brossart is entombed at the Congregation of Divine Providence Cemetery, Melbourne. And while a grave marker exists at St. Mary Cemetery, Bishop Maes' remains were removed and entombed at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.
Top: A family grave marker at St. Mary Cemetery.
Top center: This large crucifix graces the top of a hill at St. Stephen Cemetery, Ft. Thomas.
Top right: Sacred Heart of Jesus statue created by George F. Yostel in the St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Above: The Communion of Saints Chapel at St. Stephen Cemetery was dedicated in 2000.
Above center: A crucifix and a canopy of trees mark the entrance of St. Stephen Cemetery.
Above far right: A chapel at St. Mary Cemetery will soon undergo restorations.
Above right: The columbarium located at St. Stephen Cemetery.
Bottom right: A Celtic cross at St. Mary Cemetery featuring a Christogram known as the Chi-Rho (pronounced “KEE-roe”).
Diocesan Cemeteries:
St. Stephen (Ft. Thomas) (859) 441-0067
St. Mary (Ft. Mitchell) (859) 331-1140
St. John (Ft. Mitchell) (859) 331-1394
St. Joseph (Cold Spring) (859) 441-0067
St. Joseph (Wilder) (859) 392-1585

Parish Cemeteries:
St. Mary (Alexandria) (859) 635-4188
St. Augustine (Augusta) (606) 756-2377
St. Joseph (Blanchet; St. William, Williamstown) (859) 824-5381
St. James (Brooksville) (606) 735-2271
Sts. Peter and Paul (California) Immaculate Conception (Stepstone) (859) 635-2924
St. Joseph (Camp Springs) (859) 635-2491
St. John the Evangelist (Carrollton) (502) 732-5776

St. Edward (Cynthiana) (859) 234-5444
St. Francis (Dayton; St. Bernard Parish) (859) 261-8506
St. John (Dividing Ridge; St. William, Williamstown) (859) 824-5381
St. Francis Xavier (Falmouth) (859) 654-8241
St. Charles (Flemingsburg) (606) 845-4601
St. Cecilia (Independence) (859) 363-4311
St. Patrick (Maysville) (606) 564-9015

St. Mary (Morningview; St. Matthew, Kenton) (859) 356-6530
Guardian Angels (Sandfordtown; St. Pius X, Edgewood) (859) 341-4900
St. Patrick (Verona; All Saints, Walton) (859) 485-6131
St. Joseph (Warsaw) (859) 567-2425
St. Patrick (Washington; Maysville) (606) 564-9015
Other:
Mother of God (Covington) (859) 431-0614



Harvey and Messenger file photos

In grief we are moved to tears of love

Father Daniel Schomaker
Contributor

As a priest, I have the privilege of encountering people at the most significant and vulnerable moments of their lives — the birth and baptism of a child, engagement and marriage, confession and, of course, the final moments of life on earth and the commendation of the faithful departed to the Lord.

Often times, at the passing of a loved one, I am confronted with the tears of mourners. These tears are almost always followed by an apology: “I’m sorry, Father.” To which I say: “For what?”

One of the most “humanizing” passages from the Sacred Scriptures about Jesus comes from the Gospel of St. John. Jesus has learned of the illness of his good friend Lazarus, he travels to Bethany, and upon arriving is confronted with the reality of death and grief. And we hear those wonderful words: “And Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

As a Sacramental Theologian, I find tears fascinating — sacraments at their most basic level are the tangible expressions of intangible realities. When confronted with loss, tears express grief — grief is a consequence of love; so then tears are an expression of love. And we know from the Bible that “God is love,” therefore tears are an expression of God and his presence amongst us.

One should never be ashamed or sorry for tears shed in times of sorrow. Tears are the tangible expression of God with us. I like to think that as the tears run down one’s face, it is the hand of the Almighty caressing our cheeks while whispering, “It’s ok.” Because it is “ok.”

The Lord Jesus reminds us: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should

raise it [on] the last day.” (John 6: 37-39)

We belong to God! Let that sink in for a moment — stop reading — you belong to God! YOU BELONG TO GOD! In the midst of hardship and pain and anxiety and hurt and grief, and <<fill in the blank>> of life, the God who made you out of nothing and who loved you into being and sustains you in being by his love, chooses you as his own! He longs for you! He desires you!

This longing that God has for YOU is what makes everything “ok.” And, I know, it’s easy to write and say but not always easy to grasp when one’s heart is troubled and broken. Death is hard.

One of the reasons that it is hard, is because death is contrary to our nature. We were made for paradise and to rejoice in the divine presence for eternity. But, the evil that is death entered into reality because of sin. Instead of basking in the Light of the World, we chose to be that which we were (and are), not God. God determines what is good and right and just and true.

Death is something we must now all deal with — it’s a guaranteed, just like taxes. St. Benedict reminded his monks to “keep death always before your eyes.” So, too, should we — not out of fear but out of love. Fear keeps us from being who we have been called to be and can turn us towards sin. A life lived in love turns the heart, the mind and the soul to the One who is Love.

We are all called to holiness of life — to seek virtue and avoid vice. A virtuous life lived should not be afraid of death but should welcome it, for although the path has yet to be trodden, we know where it leads — to Jesus! To heaven! Where “He will wipe every tear from [our] eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.” (Rev 21:4)

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

Saints accompany, intercede for Christians in prayer

Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

Christians are never alone in prayer but instead are accompanied by myriad saints who protect them and seek God’s intercession, Pope Francis said.

Whenever men or women open their hearts to God, they will always be in the “company of anonymous and recognized saints who pray with us and who intercede for us as older brothers and sisters who have preceded us on this same human adventure,” the pope said April 7, 2021, during his weekly general audience.

In his series of talks on prayer, the pope reflected on the connection between prayer and the communion of saints who are “not far from us” and are a reminder of Jesus Christ because they have also “walked the path of life” as Christians.

“In the Church, there is no mourning that remains solitary, no tear that is shed in oblivion, because everything breathes and participates in a common grace,” he said.

The tradition of having graveyards around churches is a sign of that sharing, he said. It is “as if to say that every Eucharist is attended in some way by those who have preceded us. There are our parents and grandparents, our godfathers and godmothers, our catechists and other educators,” who have not only transmitted faith but also “the way of praying.”

The saints, he explained, are “witnesses that we do not adore — that is understood, we do not worship these saints — but whom we venerate and who in thousands of different ways bring us to Jesus Christ, the only Lord and mediator between God and human beings.”

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope said the lives of saints also serve as a reminder that “even in our lives, though weak and marked by sin, holiness can blossom.”

“In the Gospels, we read that the first ‘canonized’ saint was a thief and he was ‘canonized’ not by a pope, but by Jesus himself,” he said. “Holiness is a path of life, of encounter with Jesus, whether long or short, or in an instant, but always a witness” of God’s love.

The pope also highlighted the need for Christians to pray for one another, which is “the first way of loving” others.

In times of tension, he said, “one way to dissolve the conflict, to soften it, is to pray for the person with whom I am in conflict. Something changes with prayer; the first thing that changes is my heart, my attitude. The Lord changes it to make an encounter possible, a new encounter, and prevents the conflict from becoming a war without end.”

Pope Francis said the first thing people must do in times of anguish is to ask “our brothers and sisters, the saints above all, to pray for us” because they will “give us hand to obtain from God the graces we need most.”

Christians who “have not reached the breaking point” and

(Continued on page 15)



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An attorney’s perspective: What to do when a loved one passes away

Chadwick Seiter
Messenger Contributor

Losing a loved one is an inevitable part of the human experience; yet, when confronted with the reality of death, many are unprepared to navigate the ensuing complexities. Today, I delve into the practical and legal aspects of managing the aftermath of a loved one’s passing and shed light on essential steps to take during this trying time.

First, notifying the appropriate authorities and obtaining a legal pronouncement of death are crucial. This step facilitates the generation of a death certificate — a document often required for legal and administrative matters. Especially for at-home deaths, promptly contacting the relevant healthcare professionals or emergency services will ensure the smooth transportation of the deceased to the funeral home.

After completing these immediate procedures, locating the deceased’s personal and financial information — such as a will, social security information and bank statements — becomes essential. These important documents will be



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foundational to any possible future legal proceedings. Practically speaking, funeral and burial arrangements must also be addressed. Review any prearranged funeral plans or wishes the deceased expressed. While making funeral arrangements can be emotionally challenging, having open and honest discussions can alleviate the burden on loved ones and ensure that the deceased’s final wishes are honored.

The primary legal consideration when a loved one passes is the probate process. Probate is a court process during which a judge reviews and accepts (or declines) a will, swears in an Executor or Administrator; and assets and debts are identified and distributed in accordance with the terms of the will. If the will is absent, the estate will be distributed according to intestacy laws.

Engaging a probate attorney can help one navigate the court process and ensure compliance with legal requirements. However, if the deceased had assets with valid beneficiary designations, which is often the case for insurance

policies and retirement accounts, those assets avoid probate administration entirely.

Consider seeking guidance on assessing the estate’s potential tax implications. While the federal estate tax typically only applies to estates of over \$12.92 million, the Kentucky Inheritance Tax may need to be paid, if nieces, nephew, cousins, and friends (among others) are beneficiaries to an estate. Discussing such matters with a probate attorney or tax professional is highly advisable.

Finally, remember that grieving is a deeply personal and unique process. Allow yourself and your family the time and space to mourn.

The practical and legal aspects of addressing a loved one’s passing can be overwhelming. By taking a systematic approach and seeking professional guidance where necessary, one can more easily tread this challenging terrain. While the grieving process cannot be simplified or rushed, addressing practical concerns can provide a sense of closure and facilitate a smoother healing process.

Chadwick Seiter is an attorney at Darpel Elder Law Services. This article was submitted by Darpel Elder Law Services.

Project Rachel — there is hope after abortion

Project Rachel, a ministry of the Catholic Church in the United States, offers help and healing to those who have been involved in abortion. The Project Rachel website, www.HopeAfterAbortion.com, provides resources and advice for those struggling after abortion and for those wanting to help a friend who is struggling. The website also includes the stories of those who have been helped through Project Rachel. From the website, here is Brenda’s story:

In June of 1987, I saw the last thing I ever expected to see — a positive result on a home pregnancy test. I had just turned 18 years old.

I had been raped four weeks before by an acquaintance at my prom. I hadn’t told anyone what had happened to me, and I told no one that I was pregnant. I simply dealt with it on my own. I stood up, went to the phone book, opened it up, and called the first abortion clinic I could find. I didn’t stop to think, to pray, to question. I didn’t consider any other option — I didn’t think I had another choice.

I went to the clinic a couple of weeks later for an abortion. I remember the feeling of complete isolation and utter terror as I sat in that waiting room. I was surrounded by other people, but completely alone.

I promptly put away all of my feelings and thoughts about what had happened to me — the rape, the abortion, the baby. I graduated from college, worked through my twenties, got married, got pregnant with my first child. My pregnancy was joyful but also tinged with fear. I didn’t deserve to have a baby. I had killed my baby — God would take this baby away from me as a punishment.

I went on to have three children. I rocked them to sleep, kissed away boo-boos, pushed them on the swings and caught them on the slide, took them to swimming lessons, soccer and school. Along the way, I always felt like someone was missing.

(Continued on page 16)



(Continued from page 14)

persevere in times of trial perhaps owe it to the intercession of the saints who are not only in heaven, but also the holy men and women here on earth, the pope added.

“They don’t know it, neither do we, but there are saints, everyday saints, hidden saints or as I like to say the ‘saints next door,’ those who live in life with us, who work with us, and lead a life of holiness,” he said.

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(Continued from page 15)

I thought that loss I felt was that first child. I didn't realize that loss I felt was God. There was a hole in my soul that could only be filled with God, and I felt separated from Him.

During my thirties, as I was outwardly being a wife and mother, I was also descending further and further into depression, anxiety and ultimately active alcoholism.

I struggled with alcoholism for almost a decade, looking for help from medical treatment and fellowship with other alcoholics. Nothing was touching it — nothing was helping me put down the bottle and take control of my life. I sought mental health treatment for the trauma I experienced around the rape and the abortion, but I was still suffering, and I was still drinking. It constantly weighed on my mind that I was in a state of mortal sin — I had killed my baby. I needed to go to confession, and so I finally did. Even though my priest granted me absolution, somehow I didn't feel forgiven. I continued to drink.

I had heard about Project Rachel somewhere, I don't remember where exactly. Should I call them? I had already been to confession for my sin, how can this be something different? I just hoped and somehow felt that it was.

I finally summoned the courage to contact Project Rachel. I got a call back from a beautiful woman, who simply and lovingly talked to me as if I were worthy of her time, and her help. What a gift!

I attended a one-day retreat in May of 2009. I was a mess, sick with fear and anger. I even took a few drinks that day to get myself to the retreat. Sitting in a room with other women who were in as much pain as I was, hearing their stories, sharing my own out loud, was an indescribable relief. I didn't know I could say, out loud, that I had had an abortion and have those words be met with acceptance and understanding.

I thought I was sitting in a room with other women. I really was sitting in a room with God, loving me and welcoming me home. His presence was manifest in the physical presence of the others in the room. It was a full circle from the day in 1987 when I sat in an abortion clinic, completely alone.

I didn't know it then, but that day at the Project Rachel retreat was the beginning of my journey back from the depths of alcoholism. Slowly, with work on my part, and help from others who suffer from the same spiritual malady, I found myself on the path to sobriety and in a relationship with God. I have found peace and forgiveness and mental wellness.

I know that my child is with God. I know that my living children and my husband and I are also with God. We are all together today, in God's hands. I hold that child and my children in my heart every day, and I am grateful for Project Rachel for bringing me to this place of peace.



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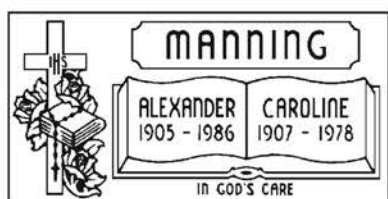
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Human composting, alkaline hydrolysis not acceptable for burial

Gina Christian
OSV News

Two new alternatives to burial and cremation fail to comply with the Catholic Church’s teaching on respect for the bodies of the dead, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine said.

In a March 23 statement, the committee said it had evaluated human composting and alkaline hydrolysis, and concluded that both “fail to satisfy the Church’s requirements for proper respect for the bodies of the dead.” The methods, which rapidly accelerate decomposition, have gained support in recent years as “eco-friendly” forms of treating human remains.

In human composting, the body of the departed is placed in a metal bin with plant material to enable microbes and bacteria, along with heat and oxygen, to break down bones and tissues. The resulting mixture is then offered for lawn or garden use.

Alkaline hydrolysis dissolves the body in some 100 gallons of water and alkali under high temperature and pressure. Within hours, the body is dissolved, except for some bone material which is then dried and pulverized.

Unlike flame-based cremation, which uses intense heat to reduce human remains to ashes, human composting and alkaline hydrolysis do not “show adequate respect for the human body, nor express hope in the resurrection,” said the bishops in the seven-page document that accompanied their statement.

Burial is “the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body,” wrote the bishops, quoting the 2016 instruction “Ad resurgendum cum Christo: regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation” by the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith. The congregation is now the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

According to the 2016 instruction, flame-based cremation is permissible, so long as the ashes are gathered and laid to rest in a sacred place, rather than being stored at home, distributed among loved ones, encased in jewelry or scattered broadly. In contrast, both human composting and alkaline hydrolysis leave nothing that could be properly interred, said the U.S. bishops.

Following alkaline hydrolysis, “there are about 100 gallons of liquid into which the greater part of the body has been dissolved, and this liquid has been treated as wastewater,” they wrote. “At the end of the human composting process (there is) ... nothing distinguishably left of the body to be laid to rest in a sacred place.” Currently, six U.S. states — California, Colorado, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington — permit human composting.

Katrina Spade, founder and CEO of Seattle-based Recompose, the self-described “first human composting company in the world,” said in a 2021 video interview that “you’re not human anymore at the end of this process.”

Alkaline hydrolysis is legal in several states as well, with the Cremation Association of North America having expanded its definition of cremation in 2010 to include the method, which also is known as “water” or “chemical cremation.”

NOTES: The full March 23 statement of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine regarding human composting and alkaline hydrolysis can be found at https://www.usccb.org/resources/On_Proper_Disposition_2023-03-20.pdf.



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GRIEF

Northern Kentucky Nurses Honor Guard honor the memory of deceased nurses

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On Facebook, Jody Schneider, LPN, founder and coordinator of the Northern Kentucky chapter of the Nurses Honor Guard, once saw an image of a tribute to a deceased nurse by a South Carolina chapter of the organization — dressed in their capes and caps.

“I feel very strongly about taking care of people with grief and in hospice,” said Ms. Schneider, who would then

members, including both working and retired nurses of nearly every type and discipline.

“We all feel very strongly that it’s an honor to be able to go into the funeral home or the memorial service and perform the ‘Nightingale Tribute’”— a tribute done by the Nurses Honor Guard to honor deceased nurses— “and that gives the family a start to recognize that nursing was a part of their life,” said Ms. Schneider.

The guard dresses in traditional uniforms, “cap

everything,” she said, “We’ve had people say that they remember when mom wore her cap ... and it brings back happy memories for them of mom being a nurse. We feel very honored to be able to offer that kind of service.”

The Nurses Honor Guard, outside of the Northern Kentucky chapter, exists in every state, including Hawaii and Alaska. Currently, the national coordinator is working to organize a national meeting for the guard, set to happen next spring at the St. Elizabeth Training and Education Center (SETEC) in Erlanger.

Those interested in the honor guard may contact Jody Schneider, coordinator, by phone at (859) 802-1161, or by e-mail at nkynursehonorguard@gmail.com.



reach out to the coordinator of the South Carolina chapter. From there, she was referred to the national coordinator of the honor guard and, in September of 2021, established the Northern Kentucky Chapter.

Ms. Schneider then reached out across Facebook and to every nurse she knew in the area — today, the guard has 35

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In the Diocese of Covington, pre-planning begins by reaching out to the specific cemetery yourself or a loved one is interested in, or by calling the Curia Buildings & Properties office. From there, arrangements can be made based on individual needs and availability within the cemetery of choice.

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O Lord, and let
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Interested candidates are asked to please send a cover letter and resume to Don Grothaus at dgrothaus@stcatherineofsiena.org.

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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 MUSIC MINISTRIES

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, is a vibrant and active Catholic parish, seeking a Director of Music Ministries (D.M.M). Candidate must be proficient in keyboard, organ, and vocals, have a working knowledge of Liturgical norms, as well as ability/willingness to work with volunteers of various ages and talents. Proficiency in additional instruments is helpful, but not necessary. Salary and benefits are commensurate with education, experience and schedule. Interested candidates please send inquiries and resume to Fr. Mark Keene at mkeene@saintagnes.com.

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Saint Agnes Catholic Community in Louisville, KY is seeking a Music Director.

Saint Agnes Catholic Church is seeking a spirit filled, liturgically trained musician to fill the position of Director of Music. This will be a full-time position offering a competitive salary commensurate with experience. Bachelor or Master's degree in music and a liturgical certificate is preferred. Must have knowledge of the Rites of the Catholic Church, a desire to continue to grow professionally, and enjoy working with others.

Duties include developing and directing cantors and choirs in both Church and school. Coordinating weekend, school, and other special Masses as well as Holy Days is required. In addition to Masses, the Music Director works with a team for funerals and weddings.

Please send your resume to pslagle@stagneslouisville.org no later than Friday, June 2nd.

Call Chuck at the *Messenger* for information on placing your ad in the Classified Advertisements. **(859) 392-1572**

PRINCIPAL

St. Henry Catholic School (www.sthenryschool.net) located in Elsmere, KY, is seeking a new principal to begin July 1, 2023. Since 1893, St. Henry Parish has been educating children in the Catholic faith and academics through its largest ministry, St. Henry Catholic School.

With Jesus Christ as our role model, St. Henry is committed to providing students with a strong Catholic education and to forming independent thinkers who follow His example. Within the St. Henry Catholic School community, each child is valued as a unique individual and is given every opportunity to meet his or her full potential.

As a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, our students learn to become deeply rooted in the Catholic faith by being connected to God and others, gaining confidence in their academic, social, and physical abilities, and contributing to the community through service and leadership.

The successful candidate will be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church and supportive of her teaching and mission, who holds or is eligible for Kentucky principal certification. The principal will oversee a staff of 40 and a student body of 350 in grades pre-K through 8.

To apply, or to nominate a candidate, email or fax a cover letter, resume with the contact email address of at least five professional references, and compensation history to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org, 859/392-1589, or send by mail to 1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011-3115.

CAFETERIA POSITIONS- DIOCESE OF COVINGTON SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The **Diocese of Covington School Lunch Program** is currently seeking dedicated individuals to join our team in various positions within our school cafeterias. These important roles contribute to the successful operation of our school lunch program, ensuring the provision of nutritious meals to our students.

Positions available are Cafeteria Manager, Food Prep Staff, Servers, & Dishwashers. These positions are available at various schools within the Diocese of Covington.

We offer competitive compensation and benefits packages for eligible employees. Exact details will be discussed during the interview process.

To apply please go to www.covdio.org/employment, School Related Openings, Employment Application Non-Teacher, send completed application to: Diocese of Covington Attn: Laura Hatfield SLP Director, 1125 Madison Ave. Covington Ky. 41011.

INTERNAL AUDITOR

The **Diocese of Covington** invites individuals with a degree and background in Accounting to apply for the position of Internal Auditor. This position reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer. This position updates/maintains the existing Parish and High School audit programs, schedules and performs parish/high school audits, writes audit reports, as well as other duties in the Finance Office. Minimal requirements include a degree in Accounting with at least two years of experience, including auditing. CPA licensure is preferred. Submit cover letter, resume, salary history, and five references with email address to: Stephen Koplyay by email or fax. SKoplyay@CovDio.org or 859-392-1589. EOE

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Lunch is just a call or click away for children this summer

Staff Report

As summer approaches, Laura Hatfield, director, School Lunch Program of the Diocese of Covington, wants to ensure that all children in the community have access to nutritious meals, even when school is out.

“We are excited to let parents and caregivers know about the USDA Summer meals for Kids Site Finder,” Mrs. Hatfield said.

The Kids Site Finder website, online at www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids, helps find nearby sites where children can

receive free meals during the summer months. These sites are available in Boone County, Campbell County, Harrison County, Kenton County and Mason County, and will operate from June 2 to July 28.

To find a nearby site, simply visit www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids and enter your zip code or address. The site will provide a list of locations and mealtimes, as well as any eligibility requirements. Help is also available by phone, call 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479) to speak to a representative who can help locate a site.

“It is important to note that these meals are available to all children under the age of 18, regardless of income or eligibility for reduced-price school meals,” said Mrs. Hatfield. “I encourage you to take advantage of this program to ensure your child receives nutritious meals throughout the summer. Prayers that you and your family have a safe and enjoyable summer.”

To read the *USDA Nondiscrimination Statement* visit <https://covidio.org/usda-nondiscrimination-statement>

Protecting God’s Children for Adults Safe Environment Trainings

For all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children.

Step 1: Contact parish/school institution leader to review the Policies and Procedures and fill out the Application and Acceptance Forms.

Step 2: Go to www.virtus.org and click on Registration. Follow the prompts to create an account and to request a background check. Selection.com is a secure site; the background check is posted on your account and you receive a copy if you request it during the registration process. You will sign up for a VIRTUS

training class during the registration.

Step 3: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

Bulletins:

■ May bulletin: posted Sunday, May 7; due Tuesday, June 6.

www.virtusonline.org, enter you user id and password. If your account is suspended contact your primary location where you volunteer or are employed. Your primary location contact information is found under your Contact Tab.

VIRTUS Training:

■ Tuesday, June 13, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, June 14, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

Note: If your **Training Tab** is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution.

For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covidio.org

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Nebraska pass bill protecting children from abortion, gender-altering procedures

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska lawmakers passed a measure May 19 prohibiting abortion at 12 weeks gestation and banning gender-altering surgeries for minors. The Let Them Grow Act, LB574, overcame a continued filibuster effort by abortion rights and transgender ideology advocates and was sent to the desk of Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen, who was expected to sign it. The act marks the first restriction on abortion in Nebraska since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last summer and the most significant step to protect the unborn in the state since 2010 when lawmakers outlawed abortion at 20 weeks. It also represents the first state effort to govern gender-altering procedures for children.

900 civilians died in Nigeria’s Imo state in just 29 months

ABUJA, Nigeria — A leading Nigerian human rights organization has published a report with sobering statistics on summary executions, maiming, forced disappearances and illegal detentions in Imo state of southeast Nigeria. Presenting the report during a press conference May 21, Emeka Umeagbalasi, a Catholic human rights activist and chairman of the Intersociety organization, said that in just 29 months, from January 2021-May 2023, “security forces and allied militias killed 900 unarmed citizens, wounded 700, arrested 3,500, extorted 1,400, disappeared 300.” In addition, the report says 1,200 civilian houses were burned down, displacing 30,000 owners and their family members and forcing 500,000 citizens to flee. According to the report, non-state actors, such as Fulani jihadists and other militias were responsible for most of the deaths, as well as for 900 kidnappings that occurred during the same time period. Most of those killed in Imo state and elsewhere in southeast Nigeria might have been targeted because of their Christian faith, authors of the report stressed.

Mexican priest murdered, archbishop attacked

MEXICO CITY — A parish priest was shot dead as he drove on a rural Mexican highway May 22, marking yet another attack in what has become the most murderous country for Catholic clergy. Augustinian Father Javier García Villafaña was killed at around 7 pm in the municipality of Huandacareo in Michoacán state to the west of Mexico City. Father García was found dead on the Capacho-Cuitzeo highway with gunshot wounds. The road leads to the Capacho community, to which he belonged. The Archdiocese of Morelia acknowledged Father García’s death, but provided little information and did not respond to a request for comment. The Catholic Multimedia Center, which tracks attacks on clergy, reported Father García had assumed responsibility for the Our Lord of Atonement parish in Huandacareo on April 23. The murder of Father García followed a May 21 attack on Archbishop Faustino Armendáriz Jiménez of Durango, who said an elderly man swung a knife at him in the sacristy of the Durango cathedral.

Leaders warn of ‘extremely detrimental’ effects bill legalizing assisted suicide

EDINBURGH, Scotland — The Scottish Catholic bishops have signed a public statement of protest against a bill to legalize assisted suicide in their country. They joined the Church of Scotland — part of the worldwide Anglican Communion — and the Scottish Association of Mosques to object to a change in the law because it would “put pressure on vulnerable individuals” to take their own lives. Bishop John Keenan of Paisley, vice president of the Scottish Bishops’ Conference, signed the statement with the Rev. Iain Greenshields, the moderator of the Church of Scotland and Imam Shaykh Hamza Khandwalla, of the Dundee Central Mosque, at the Scottish Parliament May 18. The three faith groups “remain firm in their opposition to assisted suicide and euthanasia,” they said in their statement. “We would call upon Members of the Scottish Parliament to consider carefully the implications of this Bill, to express their concerns, and to vote against it,” the statement said. Their intervention comes as the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill is being drafted for introduction into the Scottish Parliament later this year.

AI topic draws record number of participants to media ethics conference

KRAKOW, Poland — For 17 years, the media ethics conference at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland, has gathered media researchers from all over the country. This year it attracted a record number of academics. The reason? The main topic was the ethics of using AI in the media space. “The theme is gaining momentum,” Father Michal Drozd, dean of the university’s social sciences department, told OSV News. “So far we’re in the stage of

having fun with ChatGPT, we’re treating it as an adventure. But we see more and more that this is an issue of human ethical security, and we start our reflections from this point at the conference,” he said. What is at stake, Father Drozd said, is a threat of the objectification of man and empowerment of machines. Meanwhile, tech giants’ executives are calling for regulation of AI. On May 16, the chief executive of the California start-up OpenAI, Sam Altman, urged government to regulate the increasingly powerful technology in testimony before members of a Senate subcommittee. Many participants agreed that regulation is one challenge; the other is education of society. “We can’t stop technology, but we have to educate,” Natalia Hatalaska — author of “The Age of Paradoxes. Is Technology Going to Save Us?” — said at the panel closing the conference. “When we build a hotel, it’s clear and regulated where the plugs are going to be located.” But all the regulations are useless, she argued, if “I don’t teach my child that putting his fingers inside a plug or using a hair dryer in the bathtub is dangerous.”

Pope appeals for cease-fire, international assistance in Sudan

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has appealed for a cease-fire in Sudan and for the international community to help promote dialogue. “It is sad, but, a month after the outbreak of violence in Sudan, the situation continues to be serious,” he said after reciting the midday “Regina Coeli” prayer with about 25,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square May 21. The pope has been expressing his concern about Sudan after the midday prayer for weeks; fighting between forces loyal to two different generals has led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians and the displacement of hundreds of thousands more since April 15. Several humanitarian cease-fire agreements have been reached by the two sides engaged in the power struggle, but the fighting has continued. Pope Francis said May 21, “While encouraging the partial agreements reached so far, I renew my heartfelt appeal for the laying down of weapons, and I ask the international community to spare no effort to make dialogue prevail and to alleviate the suffering of the people.”



Be Concerned

The People's Pantry

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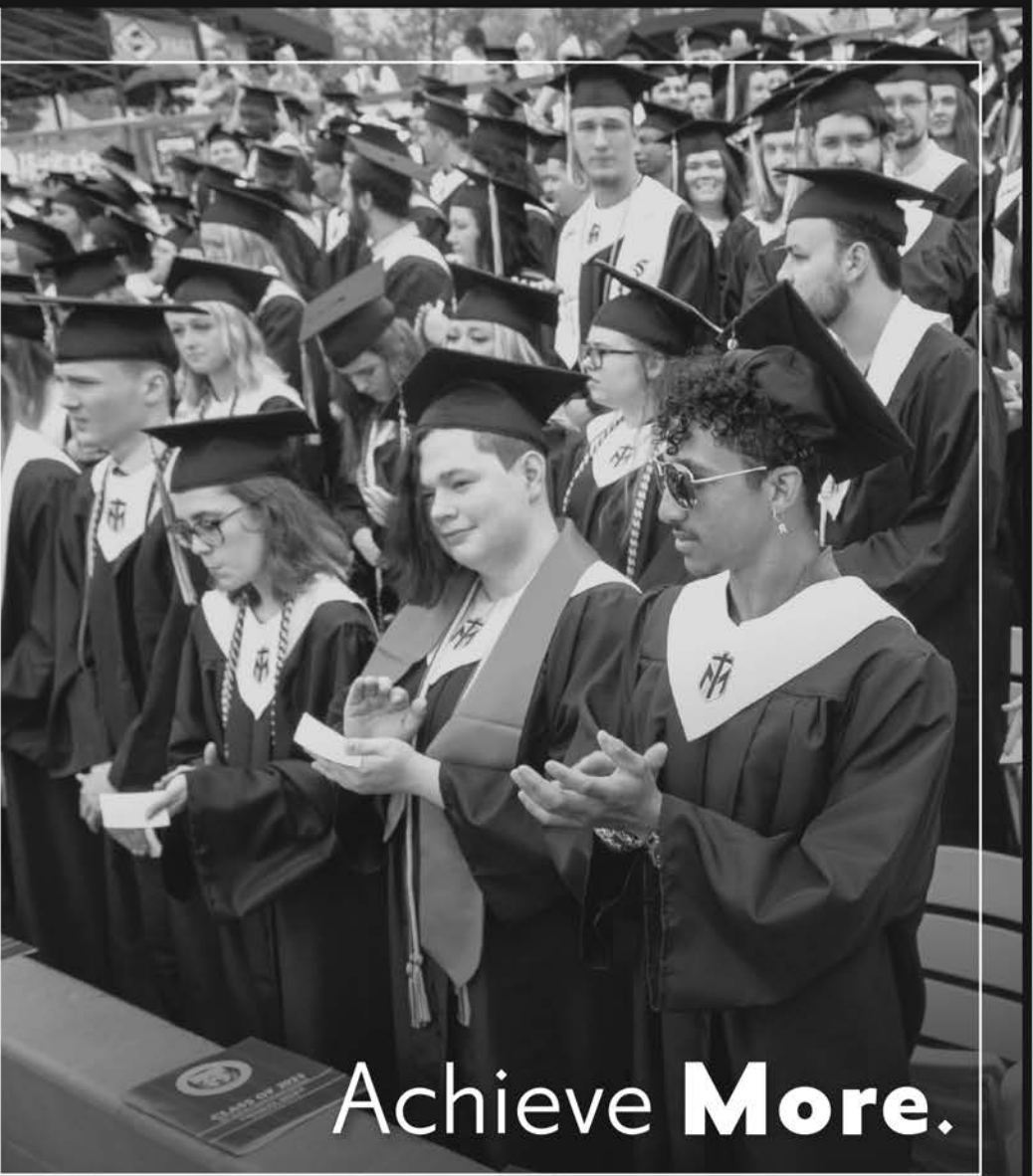
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