Diocese enters next phase of With One Heart initiative — one of planning and progress

Laura Keener

The With One Heart four-year pastoral plan and leadership development initiative for the diocese and its priests and parishes is transitioning from the data gathering and analysis phase into its planning and implementation phases. The initiative is being guided by the leadership of the Catholic Leadership Institute, using their entire array of tools and processes.

The process to develop the diocesan pastoral plan began in the fall of 2022, with the WOH Planning Team hosting five Deanery Strategy Sessions. These sessions were open to the public allowing attendees to share their experiences and dreams for the Catholic Church in the diocese and at their parish. The Planning Team also led several Focus Group Sessions — priest group sessions, deacon group sessions and parish leader group sessions — that were held concurrently in each of the five deaneries.

After several team meetings this spring, the Planning Team has identified three priorities and has proposed goals, strategies and actions that will help the Diocese in achieving its mission to spread the Gospel. These have been presented to Bishop John Iffert.

The three priorities identified by the Planning Team are: ongoing, faith formation, evangelization and forming and equipping leaders. ‘That’s the broadest outline of the plan right now,’ Bishop Iffert said.

Bishop Iffert and a team of Curia leaders are reviewing these priorities to develop, with the input from parish leaders, a pastoral plan for the Diocese. It is expected that the pastoral plan will be presented to the people of the Diocese at the end of September.

In parishes, the process to develop parish pastoral plans began with the implementation of a 9-question survey known as the Disciple Maker Index. During Lent, pastors and their appointed Parish Point of Contact encouraged parishioners, 18 years and older, to complete an online survey or paper survey. During May and June, pastors and selected parish leaders attended three webinars to learn how to access the DMI data, understand the data and use the data in making decisions.

Pastors will soon be meeting with their parish leadership team to develop a parish pastoral plan. Many parishes will be assisted by a consultant from the Catholic Leadership Institute. Thirteen parish boards, known collectively as Virtual DMI Parishes, have been assigned a consultant to assist in developing its parish pastoral plan. Another eight parishes, known as Next Generation Parishes, will not only have a CLI consultant to help assist in developing a pastoral plan but also with reviewing and revising that plan as it is implemented over the next three years. (For a listing of the Virtual DMI and Next Generation parishies see box above) All parishes will present a pastoral plan to Bishop Iffert in December.

Recently the Messenger followed up with Bishop Iffert to gather his thoughts on the WOH process.

“Our response to the Disciple Maker Index was 45 percent, which is very high,” said Bishop Iffert. “Remember, our goal was 25 to 30 percent of the October Mass count and we far exceeded that goal.

“We’ve got a lot of useful material from that tool.”

Bishop Iffert said that the DMI and the listening sessions are, in part, a way that “I’m listening to get to know the diocese. It is a part of the way that I’m listening to hear what’s important to people and the path they would like to see the diocese take,” Bishop Iffert said.

In a very real way, Bishop Iffert sees the WOH initiative as being an extension of Pope Francis’ Synod on Synodality.

“When Pope Francis invited that consultation, he didn’t mean for that to be a one-time thing, he meant for it to be an exercise — a training program — on how we listen and discern together,” Bishop Iffert said. “That’s more thanvoices answering. It’s really facing what in our lives are our assets? What are the challenges that we face? How can we journey together on this journey towards Christ and the kingdoms? And then, engage in prayerful consideration and discernment of what’s the most prudent thing for us to do right now? When I talk about pastoral planning, that’s what I’m talking about. That’s what this process is about.”

Unfortunately for many people in the Church, priests and people alike, the term “pastoral planning” have come to be known as code words for closing and consolidating parishes. Bishop Iffert wants it to be clear that’s not his vision of pastoral planning.

“This is about trying to be the active, mission church that Christ calls us to be. It’s planning for that mission. Planning for how do we use what we have to serve the Gospel in the most wholesome way that we can? That’s what I intend this process to be,” he said.

Through the process, though, parishes may learn some difficult truths.

“If you find yourself in that place where all of your energy is being directed at institutional maintenance and you’re not able to be Jesus to anyone because you are just too tired and drained and you have nothing left, then that’s a place where parishes should begin to look at are they viable. It seems there is another way that they could organize with neighbors to become a more evangelizing, life-giving parish? That’s the sort of thing that I would want people to look at,” said Bishop Iffert.

“It’s for people to develop a Christ-like heart, a generous heart. The purpose of the Church is to reach out beyond its walls and to be Christ to the communities and the neighbors God has given us. That’s where I would put the emphasis, on becoming those kinds of generous, charitable, mission-focused communities.”

TWO UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WITH ONE HEART INITIATIVE ARE DESIGNED TO HELP PRIESTS DEVELOP THOSE LEADERSHIP SKILLS THAT WILL HELP TRANSFORM THEMSELVES AND IN TURN THEIR PARISH INTO MISSION-FOCUSED DISCIPLES. FOR PRIESTS THAT OPPORTUNITY COMES IN THE FORM OF A LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM CALLED “GOOD LEADERS, GOOD SHEPHERDS.” FOR PARISH LEADERS, IT’S “TENDING THE TALENTS.”

Tending the Talents is one of the final phases of the WOH initiative, coming in late 2024. More information on Tending the Talents will be available as it gets closer.

Good Leaders, Good Shepherds will begin this fall and priests need to register now. Good Leaders, Good Shepherds is voluntary, although Bishop Iffert is enthusiastically encouraging priests to take advantage of this 17-day leadership training for priests. It builds on the Called for More self-evaluation skills inventory that all active priests completed during Lent. With both, priests are developing their own personal development plan, using trusted mentors to help them as they work their plan.

“The goal of this is to help priests be happy priests,” said Bishop Iffert. “To develop skills to help priests be happier, to share the work-load with others. We’re all happier when we are functioning well and when we’re not caught in situations where we don’t have support in responding. The goal is to help priests develop those skills and those resources that will help them to share some of that load and be able to respond effectively when the need arises.”
New Beginnings – hope after divorce or separation

New Beginnings
An eight-week, peer-led, faith-based support system, for divorced or separated Catholics. The next session begins Tuesday, Aug. 29, 7–8:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Elementary School, Bellevue and runs for eight consecutive Tuesdays.

To learn more or to sign-up, visit https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/ or call David Cooley, co-director, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at (859) 392-1500.

Beginning sessions
The first thing Catholics should know is that a divorced or separated individual can still be a Catholic in good standing,” said Jay Buckley, who has been a New Beginnings facilitator for more than 20 years and is a parishioner of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. “When you go through a divorce you feel like you are alone, but the bottom line is you are not. One of the great things about New Beginnings is you get to meet people who share the same struggles, hear their stories, and understand they are not alone.”

The program is truly a “fresh start,” according to Vicki Bruegeman, longstanding facilitator and a parishioner at St. Timothy Parish, Union. “It’s a place where people understand what you’re going through. They listen to you, and they don’t expect you to ‘just get over it,’” she said. “It’s nice to be in a place where everyone is going through the same thing. They’re supportive, caring, understanding, and they don’t judge you.”

Another facilitator, Russ Thacker, a parishioner of St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, agrees. “Twelve years ago, I went through a very nasty and unexpected divorce. I was at the lowest point in my life. A friend suggested New Beginnings. Sharing my story with the other members helped me to realize I was not alone. The weekly small group meetings allowed us to support each other as we progressed through the different stages of the healing process.”

Two others who went through New Beginnings at different times in the early 2000s have been happily married for 13 years and are also facilitators of the program. “We learned many things from our first marriages, our divorces, our annulments and from New Beginnings,” agreed Rick and Marianne Dammert, parishioners of St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger. “We apply those lessons to our marriage every day to make it successful.”

Most Catholics understand the importance and reverence of the sacrament of marriage within the faith. Jesus chose a wedding, off all things, to launch his ministry with his first public miracle. So, you may wonder what he would have done if the husband or wife from that wedding approached him sometime later and asked for help due to a separation.

Recalling how Jesus spoke to the five-times divorced Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well with resonating sympathy and compassion, we suspect he would have offered counsel on a spiritual, emotional and practical level. That’s exactly what New Beginnings strives to do, by giving participants the tools they need to deal with the pain, grief, fear and anger that can come from a separation, whether they are divorced for 20 years or newly separated.

New Beginnings sessions, which are administered by two facilitators, are offered four times a year. The next session begins Tuesday, Aug. 29, 7–8:30 p.m., at Holy Trinity Elementary School, Bellevue and runs for eight consecutive Tuesdays.

To learn more about New Beginnings or to sign-up, visit https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/ or call David Cooley, co-director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese of Covington, at (859) 392-1500.

Vocations night at the Y’Alls
Members of the Serra Club for vocations and their supporters came out to the Y’Alls stadium in Florence for a game of baseball in support of the Serra missions and vocations. Deacon implement various vocations. Deacon Buckley from Canada, the Serra Club sold 525 vouchers for the game—with the money raised going back to the Serra Club’s ministry. “First pitches” at the game were thrown out by Notre Dame Sister Marla Monahan, vicar for Religious for the Diocese of Covington; Deacon Brian Cox, campus minister for the NKU Catholic Newman Center and Father A.J. Gedney, parochial vicar, St. Joseph Parish, Covington and assistant chaplain, Northern Kentucky University.

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Venerating the True Cross
All are invited to join for a peaceful hour of prayer and veneration each month at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, from noon to 1 p.m.
Sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a relic of the True Cross is displayed for veneration on the first Friday of each month, with the last veneration held Friday, July 7, and the next on Friday, August 4. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic.

Restored in Christ

Getting to know the chimera that have been atop the Cathedral for many years; part 4

With the chimeras still missing from the Covington skyline, the 2021 Cathedral Campaign “Restored in Christ” is underway, with the goal to “preserve and restore the stone and masonry exterior of the Cathedral just as Bishop Maes and his architects had visualized and seen it over a century ago,” according to campaign materials.

Currently, the chimeras are being recreated by Boston Valley Terra Cotta, a company specializing in architectural terra cotta, out of Orchard Park, New York. Boston Valley Terra Cotta, founded in 1981 following the Kreinik family’s purchase of Boston Valley Pottery, “combines advanced technology with traditional craftsmanship” to “contribute to the successful preservation of some of the most architecturally significant buildings in the world,” with contributions by the company made to terra cotta buildings around the globe, such as Louis Sullivan’s historic Guaranty Building in Buffalo, New York, and the restoration of Battersea Power Station in London, England.

Architectural terra cotta, such as the kind created and installed by Boston Valley Terra Cotta, uses a clay mix that helps withstand climate conditions such as consistent freezing and thawing weather, which has been part of the original chimeras’ weathering over the years.

As the “Restored in Christ” initiative unfolds over the next several months, thanks to the catalyzing of Stephen Enzweiler, Cathedral historian and archivist, the Messenger will illustrate and introduce many of the chimera. This week we meet the Howling Demon.

I am the Howling Demon— in French, Hurlant. While my name may sound macabre and frightening, many of my fellow chimera are modeled after classically gothic creatures, such as demons and dragons. While scholars have not been able to pin point an exact reason as to why some of us are created in such a scary image, some theories include having monstrous gargoyles remind those who enter the church building of the temptation of sin, or that our existence is merely an example of whimsical medieval humor.

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

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

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

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

Offical Appointments

Effective June 22, 2023
Kathy Stevie
To: Diocesan Review Board, Diocese of Covington
Term: Five years

Stacy Tapko
To: Diocesan Review Board, Diocese of Covington
Term: Five years

Effective July 1, 2023
Nicholas Wirnke
To: Development Advisory Board, Alliance for Catholic Urban Education
Term: Two years

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

Mrs. Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

Official Assignments

Effective July 1, 2023
Rev. John Paul, V.C.
To: Parochial Vicar; St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood
From: Vincentian Congregation, India

Rev. Jordan M. Hainsey
To: Leave of absence
From: Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, Episcopal Master of Ceremonies; Assistant to the Chancellor; Rector, Oratory of St. Paul, Diocesan Curia
Term: Six months

Rev. Gregory J. Bach
To: Ecclesiastical Notary
Continues other duties
Assigned by the Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Mrs. Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

Thrive! Retreat
For youth and youth ministers interested in strengthening youth ministry
July 20–21, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
RSVP online at https://covdio.org/locie, walk-ins welcome. $15 at door.
Jesus: Is he who claimed to be?

“I and the Father are one” (John 10:30)

Jesus of Nazareth existed. He was a real person. An actual historical figure that lived and breathed and changed the course of history forever after just three years of public activity.

He was not at all what most people think he was. He was not exactly a “nice guy.” At one point he was called a witch doctor. He was not exactly “non-violent” either. He once attacked an entire crowd with a weapon he had made himself.

He certainly didn’t have blue eyes, blonde hair, or red rosy cheeks dotting up many of our embarrassing images of him.

He was mysterious, challenging, mystical and threatening. But who was he really? Where did he come from?

According to the famous “quadrivium,” there seem to be four possible answers to this question. He was either a legend, a liar; a liar or he was who he said he was.

Let’s start with the theory that he was a legend.

Some people think that Jesus never existed or if he did his story has been exaggerated and embellished beyond recognition. This is called the myth of myth.

The vast majority of historical scholars admit that Jesus existed. I cannot find evidence of many contemporary, serious scholars who claim that Jesus never existed. There’s a reason for that.

The evidence for Jesus’s existence and the manuscript reliability of the New Testament documents is greater than perhaps any other ancient text. The New Testament documents were written between 25 and 70 years after Jesus’ public activity and they were based on the eyewitness accounts of people who had actually been there.

We possess more than 500 New Testament manuscripts. Most of them have been in place and space of formation.

We possess more than 500 New Testament manuscripts. Most of them have been corrected and revised. The decision to write the New Testament was made by a group of women and girls. It was a decision to make the history of Jesus stand to gain from this lie? He was persecuted, hated, beaten and tortured and killed as a direct result of his claims. Multiple times he was given the opportunity to admit that he was lying and thereby escape pain, persecution and death — but he didn’t. Who would die for a lie?

Well maybe he was just crazy? The “divinity complex” is a well-known psychosis. Its common “symptoms” or “traits” are well documented. People with god-complexes tend to be narcissistic, egotistical, unenlightened even sociopathic; emphasizing their superiority; ignoring the needs of others; indifferent to how their actions impact others.

Does that sound like Jesus? Does that sound like the man who emphasized servant leadership, humility denying comforts and “pomp”?

The man who encouraged radical selflessness to the point of being willing to die for others? Jesus healed the sick, advocated for the marginalized and oppressed and wept over the suffering of others. If Jesus had just a god complex it was the weirdest god complex ever.

We can never absolutely disprove claims that Jesus was a myth. The vast majority of scholars who claim that Jesus never existed. There’s as reasonable, if not more reasonable, to simply take him at his word.

Especially when you consider the Resurrection.

Entire books can and have been written explaining why it is reasonable to believe that this mysterious, challenging, mystical and threatening man did in fact rise from the dead, exactly as he said he would.

I especially encourage you to check out the work Gary Habermas, William Lane Craig, and N.T. Wright have done on the Resurrection.

For now, suffice to say that something happened.

Something that convinced a lot of people once and for all that he was neither a liar nor a lunatic but that he was very much exactly what he claimed to be: God incarnate. In other words, were so convinced they were willing to suffer and die rather than deny him and this is exactly what launched a movement that forever changed the course of history; a movement called the Catholic Church.

Brad Turline is executive director for The Angelico Project online at www.AngelicoProject.org.

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Open letter to Catholic parents: You are vital to kid’s faith formation

Dear Catholic parents,

A human being’s first culture is his or her mother’s womb. We usually think of culture as being some formative influence on us — for good or all — and this is true, in spades, of a mother’s womb. It is not only the place where in society, away from home. We worry about how “the culture” is “out there,” influencing us — for good or ill — and this is true, in spades, of a mother’s womb. It is not only the place where all in the womb is the mother’s voice.

As Dr. Kristin Collier writes in the Church Life Journal, “The mother’s voice is reported to be the most powerful culture is much closer to home — in fact, it is about every seat at every gate in the terminal. Here’s a story about another environment. Some friends invited our family to their house for dinner. This isn’t a point about technology or not, except in that it was a tablet. I ordered and paid via the tablet, then I had the option of finding something to watch, read or play on the tablet. I looked around: every seat at the bar had a tablet, as did every table in the restaurant. The same was true of every seat at every gate in the terminal. I don’t remember anything else about that day passing through the airport. All I remember is the garden of tablets. It is very obvious what that space was inching and expecting people to do: engage all things through the tablets. Is this not a point about technology or not, except in

This is different than how we normally think about culture. “Culture” tends to think that “culture” is “out there,” influencing us — for good or ill. We worry about how “the culture” makes its way into the home, affects children at school or warps them through various media. We fall into assuming that there is only one culture in which we are all submerged in a given place at a given time and that the only thing to do is to critically analyze that culture and then, usually, resist what that culture offers. What is missing in that assumption is the realization that the more powerful culture is much closer to home — in fact, it is the home.

As the womb is the most intimate and powerful culture for the unborn child, so is the family home the most intimate and powerful culture for growth and development.

If it is true, then the question is how to make the family home into the kind of culture we would want to shape and nourish each other to our betterment. That question begins with thinking about space. What fills the space of the home, how those things are organized, and where attention is naturally drawn? A home are among the most important factors in fostering the culture of the home.

Consider this: Some years ago, I was making a connection at the Newark Liberty International Airport. This was not typically a place of bliss. I was surprised, though, when I walked into a new terminal that had recently opened. It was bright, and everything was shiny. I found a seat at a bar to order some food and an adult beverage. Instead of walking to the bartender, I found before me a tablet. I ordered and paid via the tablet, then I had the option of finding something to watch, read or play on the tablet. I looked around: every seat at the bar had a tablet, as did every table in the restaurant. The same was true of every seat at every gate in the terminal. I don’t remember anything else about that day passing through the airport. All I remember is the garden of tablets. It is very obvious what that space was inching and expecting people to do: engage all things through the tablets. Is this not a point about technology or not, except in

(Continued on page 15)
And that’s the truth

The readings for the fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Lk 8:4–15) speak of receiving the word and being open to its meaning. If we’re not open to the word, we’re closed to the truth. And that is a cause of sorrow. I am hopeful, however, that with some effort of prayer and openness we can correct that situation.

Father Stephen Bankeimer is pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky.

A foolish Sower

For a number of years I worked in central Louisiana. In my frequent trips to central Louisiana, I usually drove the first part of that trip on the back roads. On these back roads, I was always happy to see the Royal Wedding, as it always belongs to a person’s choice to receive the sword, for that is not true conversion. We speak the erring way; God does not turn him. We do not convert by Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Ez 33:11)

“Rather, we must have the that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Rom 2:4)

This meant all the more because I had most recently picked up a book I had been wanting to read for a long time. “Our One Great Act of Faithfulness: Waiting for Christ in the Eucharist” by Ronald Rolheiser, OMI. He says this is a very personal book. While it draws upon insights of various Scripture scholars, theologians, and Church teachings, this book is a resource I will read and reflect with over and over again.

This book is a resource I will read and reflect with over and over again. It is full of the presence of the seed and the love of the Sower. What a foolish God we have. God’s love is profligate, mercy abundant, grace overflowing and wasted. Even the sinner, even the hardened heart are blessed abundantly. And all creation calls for our care, for our respect and protection.

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**Be Witnesses**

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

— Pope Francis

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**Religious Communities in the Diocese of Covington**

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

**Public and Private Associations**

- Franciscan Daughters of Mary
  - www.fdofmary.org
- Missionaries of St. John the Baptist
  - www.msjb.info
- Sisters of Notre Dame
  - www.ssn.org
- Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker
  - www.sjsw.org
- Sisters of St. John the Baptist
  - www.msjb.info

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**A very fulfilling life**

Karen Kuhlman

Correspondent

The Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis, C.F.P. (Congregatio Fratrum Pauperum Sancti Francisci Seraphici) was founded by Brother John Hoover on Christmas Eve in Aachen, Germany, in 1857. He was urged to do so by Mother Frances Schervier, foundress of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis. (Coincidentally, the Sisters were also instrumental in founding St. Elizabeth Hospital in Covington, Ky.)

Today, the Brothers’ ministry is in the United States, Europe and Brazil. A Regular Third Order Roman Catholic congregation, its ministry is one of service to the poor, the powerless and the disadvantaged, with particular emphasis on the care and education of neglected youth.

Brother Rock Larsen is a member of the Franciscan Brothers of the Poor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. He entered the Order in 1967 at the age of 20 and, after formation of several years, finished his degree at Mount St. Joseph University.

His vocation journey began as a student at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana. He hadn’t entertained thoughts of a religious vocation because the beautiful priestly vocation didn’t seem to apply to him. He couldn’t see himself preparing homilies for Sunday Mass, saying daily Mass, hearing confessions, or officiating at weddings and funerals. He attended Mass at the Catholic Church in Terre Haute on the weekends and met a few Holy Cross Brothers there. He didn’t know much about the brotherhood, except that they were not priests or preparing to become priests.

The brothers described the life of a brother, what it meant to be a brother, and what their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were actually about. Brother Rock explains, “The vow of poverty means living a simple life, unattached to the many things of the culture. We don’t live extravagantly or take big vacations. Chastity may be difficult as it requires you to remain celibate for the rest of your life. The vow of obedience comes down to having someone to whom you must answer. Your superior may think something may be better for you than what you are doing or perhaps decides to send you to a new location. You may think, ‘Well, I really don’t want to,’ but you follow the superior’s request anyway. Fortunately, I have never been sent somewhere I didn’t want to go, so I guess my vow of obedience has never been tested in that way!”

He wanted to become a teacher, and most of the Brothers were teachers. He thought it over, realized the lifestyle agreed with him, and entered the Order. He taught at the Cure of Ars School in Cincinnati and later at the Brothers’ Morris School for Boys in Arkansas for several years before returning to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Brother Rock was a teacher in the Diocese of Covington’s parochial schools for 22 years. Before retirement, he taught Spanish to students at St. Mary School in Alexandria for 11 years and at St. Therese School in Southgate for nine years. He also taught Spanish as a volunteer at St. Augustine and St. John in Covington.

Today, he enjoys living in Covington and serving others through his ministry. He is one of two Franciscan Brothers residing in the Diocese of Covington: Brother William Anuszkiewicz is well into his 80s, so his ministry is now one of accompaniment through prayer and compassion to fellow residents of a local retirement community.

Brother Rock is kept busy in retirement. He gives tours of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption and looks forward to his role as a greeter there on Fridays. He enjoys meeting with visitors and answering questions about the beautiful Cathedral. He is a teacher in the Cathedral’s ROA program and wears his Franciscan habit as he lectors at the 4:30 afternoon Mass on Saturdays.

When Brother Rock reflects on his life and vocation, he says, “This has been a good life, a very satisfying experience. There might be difficulties that I find frustrating but regretting my vocation? Not at all. I have not had a day of regret in 56 years. I am sorry that we are such a small group now. I miss the ones who have died or have left. And, at least in the States, we may not be continuing much longer. Our youngest is in his sixties, some in their eighties, with an average age of 77. We have but two Brothers locally, 12 in the United States and Europe, while the community in Brazil is flourishing.”

Brother Rock continued, “A religious vocation can be very satisfying, but it is not for everyone. A young man can’t come and see, and it wouldn’t take very long to decide whether or not a vocation as a Brother would be for him.” He suggests that men discerning a religious vocation other than that of a priest or brother consider the diaconate. The important thing is to be open to God, in love and service.

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

On Thursday, July 6, Thomas More University celebrated a ceremonial kickoff of the changes to come for the university’s softball field and surrounding complex.

In December 2022, the University announced plans for extensive renovations to the current field and new construction, creating a state-of-the-art complex for its softball athletes. “This upgrade confirms our commitment to elevating the reputation and brand of Thomas More Athletics as we continue our transition to the NCAA DIII and to creating a student experience that is designed for success in the classroom and on the field,” said Thomas More University President Joseph L. Chillo.

At the event, Mr. Chillo addressed the crowd and provided details of the softball complex and its upcoming renovations. Afterwards, a ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony was held, where administrators, athletes and associates drove shovels into the soil to commemorate the beginning of construction.

These renovations are part of Thomas More University’s fundraising campaign entitled “The Second Century — It’s time for More,” announced when the university was celebrating its centennial in fall of 2021. This campaign provides financial support for the five-year Strategic Plan — “Lighting the Way.”

In July of 2022, Thomas More University announced that they have been granted provisional membership to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II, making them the only Division II University in the Northern Kentucky/greater Cincinnati region.

(below) Thomas More University President Joseph Chillo (third from left) participates in a groundbreaking ceremony celebrating renovations to the university’s softball field and surrounding complex.
The Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Melbourne, welcomed Bishop John Iffert, July 7, for Vespers and the blessing of a new columbarium.

The 48-niche marble structure is the first columbarium to reside in the Congregation’s cemetery, offering the Sisters a choice of cremation or traditional burial.

The decision to build the columbarium was not taken lightly by the Sisters and is certainly not for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine but, instead, inspired by it.

“We have been discussing over the past several years about ‘Laudato Si’ and it seemed to us that we wanted to look at some other way to bury our Sisters on the sacred ground in our cemetery,” said Divine Providence Sister Barbara Rohe, provincial superior.

“Laudato Si’ is Pope Francis’ encyclical ‘On Care for Our Common Home,’ a look at how Christians should care for the earth. And while, Laudato Si is silent on the topic of cremation versus burial, it does encourage everyone to consider how, in all aspects of life, one uses the earth’s limited resources and its effects on the environment, plant and animal life and the global community.

Sister Barbara said that the Congregation’s leadership invited the Sisters to consider whether or not they would be willing to be cremated or would prefer a traditional burial. “Many said that they were willing to be cremated,” she said, which is why they purchased and installed the columbarium. There is still plenty of space in the Congregation’s cemetery for burials.

“There’s also the consideration of why are we putting chemicals in our body to preserve the body when we know we have a virtue of simplicity that we try to live with and follow and use in every aspect that we can?” said Sister Barbara.

Sister Barbara acknowledged that the virtue of simplicity is not exclusive to cremation; the Church has long given honor to the virtue of simplicity in its funeral and burial rites.

Cremation is not new to the Sisters. “This is not something so strange or out of the ordinary,” said Sister Barbara.

Several Sisters have had their bodies cremated either because of their own wish or because they donated their body for medical research. Their cremains are buried in the cemetery.

Now, the Sisters will have the option for a traditional burial or to have their cremains interred below ground in a grave or above ground in a niche — whichever they choose, their final resting place will be on consecrated ground and in the company of their Sisters.
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 23.

St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, offers Veneration of a relic of the True Cross, on the first Friday of every month, from noon-1 p.m. Confessions are offered concurrently. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic. The monthly veneration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Notre Dame Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult and high school volunteers to tutor children in grades K-9 in reading, English, and math. For information, call (859) 861-3497 or e-mail Sister Maria Therese at smtheres@infocent.org. Volunteers 18 and older must be VIR-TUS compliant.

The Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community sponsors a monthly Third Thursday prayer gathering, 7-8:45 p.m., Blessed Sacrament Parish Center, Fr. Mitchell. Join us July 13 with praise & worship music, teaching, witnesses, and healing prayers. For information, call (859) 341-5661.

Family and friends will host the 7th annual Fly High Event – July 27, Jolly Plumbing, Wilder, 7-11 p.m. Entry fee $20, kids 12 and under are free. $5 corn hole tournament. Proceeds benefit the St. Mary School, Alexandria, Mitch Kramer scholarship. Contact Paige Kramer Schmidt (859) 391-3487 or e-mail flyhighevent12@gmail.com.

The third and final 2023 alumni exhibition is “Ameliorative Practice,” the artwork of Jennifer Baldwin ’76 in the Eva G. Farris Art Gallery at Thomas More University. July 7–Aug. 3, with a closing reception Aug. 3, 5-7 p.m. Visit thomasmore.edu/artgallery.

8 Week Discernment of Spirits study beginning Tuesday, August 14–September 36 at All Saints parish in Walton. Two sessions available: daytime at 10 a.m. and evening at 7 p.m., every Tuesday in the parish hall. Registration fee $35.00 (includes book and reader’s study guide), for more information contact Colen Hamilton at colen@ catholicsalt.org.

Statistical evidence proves that parishes with an intentional vocational ministry bear the fruit of holy marriages and single life, prayer and religious vocations. Learn more Aug. 5, when the Diocese of Covington and Archdiocese of Cincinnati Serra Clubs co-host “Ignite — a Vocation Conference,” full of information and brainstorming for a personalized parish plan, Mass and food. No cost to attend. Register at newvikes@gmail.com or donnahieus@gmail.com.

Catechist workshop “The Mission of Sharing the Catholic Faith,” Aug. 5, 9-11 a.m., St. Barbara Parish, Ft. Mitchell. All parish catechists are invited to join and receive practical ideas, spiritual formation, pre-serve new life. Registration is required.$35.00 (includes book and reader’s study guide), for more information contact Colen Hamilton at colen@catholicsalt.org.

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Save the date for Thomas More University’s fall interfaith event hosted by the Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III ’67 Institute for Religious Liberty on Oct. 19, 2023. The event begins at 7 p.m. with Stephanie Barclay as keynote speaker. Barclay directs Notre Dame University’s Law School’s Religious Liberty Initiative, which promotes freedom of religion or belief for all people through advocacy, student formation, and scholarship. More details to come. Visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty for more information.

Retrouvaille has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you, too. For confidential information or to register for the September 2023 program beginning Sept. 8-10, call (513) 486-6222, or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

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Obscure artist once saved Duveneck murals from total ruin

Stephen Enzweiler
Cathedral Historian

On a cold November day in 1911, a letter arrived at St. Mary’s Cathedral rectory addressed to the Very Rev. Joseph Flynn, Vicar General of the Diocese of Covington. It was from William R. Blank, a Cincinnati artist flown in to paint the cathedral’s chapel murals. Flynn had invited Blank, a celebrated painter of the American Impressionist movement, to Covington to renovate the cathedral’s sanctuary, which had fallen into disarray following the death of its most famous church mural, Frederick Duveneck. The murals had been left untouched since their installation in 1909, and Flynn was at a loss about what to do. However, Blank was given permission to do whatever was necessary to save them.

The murals were only ten years old, but they were deteriorating quickly. The cause was the byproducts of a cleaning that had been done a decade earlier by famed artist Frank Duveneck. In the ten years since their installation, the famous 1919 Duveneck murals had begun to show signs of significant deterioration. Flynn thought that perhaps a cleaning was all that was needed. But Blank explained in his letter that a cleaning wasn’t the answer: the murals were actually in a rapid state of decay, and that a crucial restoration and preservation effort was necessary in order to save them at all. The news must have stunned the hoped-for priest. The murals were the most famous in America, and with Duveneck’s death that summer, there was no one to save them. But there was never any hesitation in the priest’s reply about what to do. In the end, Blank was given permission to do whatever was necessary to save them.

The murals can trace their origins back to the summer of 1908 and Covington’s third bishop, the Most Rev. Camillus P. Maes. Frank Duveneck was one of the most famous church muralists in America at the time. Henry James called him “the unsuspected genius,” and famed painter John Singer Sargent similarly declared he was “the greatest genius of the American brush.” Bishop Maes, who knew and appreciated fine art, was a great admirer as well, and he was determined to acquire religious murals he wanted, in his new Cathedral. A dialogue between the two men ensued that summer. In reply to Maes’ initial request, Duveneck sent him sketches which the bishop called “troubling.” In his Sept. 24, 1903 letter, Duveneck explained his vision for the work.

“The central idea is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross,” he wrote. “This is admirably brought out in the central panel; to carry out the idea that before Christ, as well as after the Resurrection, that self-same Sacrifice is the perpetual obligation in the true Church of God; we will – if you please, depict in the smaller panel to the right the Sovereign High Priest of the Old Law (with atonement if you wish) offering the lances of Blood on the Altar of Propitiation; in the large, or panel to the left, a priest of the New Law in Bishop with attendant priests if you like) offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, both (central panels forming the Crucifixion.)

Frank Duveneck, a devout Catholic who studied as a youth under famed religious painter Johann Schmitt, understood the theology perfectly and went right to work. The layout of the mural itself would take the form of a “triptych” – a single painting comprised of three panels divided by engaged columns in the Blessed Sacrament wall. To accommodate the large, 21-foot high canvases, Duveneck executed the works in his Cincinnati studio at the Cincinnati Art Museum, a space given to him because of his teaching position with the Art Academy.

For four and a half years he worked on the murals at his Art Museum studio. In December 1909, he put the finishing touches on the last panel, then put down his brush. The triptych was finished, along with a second, smaller mural destined for the chapel’s upper west wall, depicting Christ breaking bread with his disciples at Emmaus. In January 1910, amid great fanfare and public excitement, the finished three-panel triptych and smaller mural were exhibited in the main entrance hall of the Cincinnati Art Museum. They would be installed in the cathedral’s chapel later that May.

Very few records exist that tell us about William Blank, the artist hired to restore them. Little is known of his artistic life, and few works, exhibitions, or newspaper articles exist. His only claim to fame here in Covington are two ape murals in St. Augustine Church in Rensselaer, which

(Continued on page 12)
The end of July marks the one year anniversary of floods that devastated communities in Eastern Kentucky last year. In the latest issue of Crossroads, the official magazine of the Diocese of Lexington, Lexington Bishop John Stowe wrote: “As we observe this first anniversary of the floods, we commend our beloved who perished to the mercy of God, we stand with those who are in the process of rebuilding and healing and we recommit ourselves to the spirit of fraternity and community that allows us to survive such events with hope intact and stronger than ever. The Catholic community is committed to these communities for the long haul. May we be strengthened in our solidarity and our hope.”

Commemorating this anniversary, the Diocese of Lexington invites parishes of the Diocese of Covington and beyond to two special events. The first, a Mass of Healing and Hope celebrated by Bishop Stowe, July 29, at 5 p.m. at SmileFaith Appalachia in Jenkins, Kentucky will include a blessing for survivors of the floods and special recognition to the Diocese of Lexington and Catholic Charities community partners who helped in flood relief and recovery. All are welcome. Parishes are encouraged to coordinate a group to join in “solidarity and prayer.”

In addition to the Mass, the Diocese of Lexington will be hosting two “volunteer days,” August 5 and August 12 — to construct four new homes for flood survivors in Eastern Kentucky sponsored by the Lexington Diocese.

“As part of our commitment to affected communities for the long haul, the diocese is sponsoring four new homes to be built by Housing Development Alliance and HOMES INC. for flood survivors and we are going to help build them,” wrote Joshua van Cleef, director of the Peace and Justice Office for the Diocese of Lexington.

Those interested in volunteering or with questions regarding either event can contact Mr. van Cleef at jvan-cleef@cdlex.org.

Floodwaters are seen in Jackson, Ky., July 28, 2022. Torrential rains fell late July 27 and into the next day in southeastern Kentucky, causing massive flooding that destroyed hundreds of homes and wiped out entire communities. Search and rescue teams, with the help of the National Guard, began searching for missing people July 29. More rain and storms were expected over the July 30-31 weekend.
Saints who can bring us close to the Eucharist

Arkansas Catholic Staff

OSV News

One would guess that most saints would have a devotion to the Eucharist, but here are 10 saints to learn more about and ask to intercede for us during the National Eucharistic Revival.

Blessed Carlo Acutis: Born in 1991, Blessed Carlo Acutis was a young Italian boy who had a great love for Jesus in the Eucharist. Though he died when he was 15, his devotion to the Eucharist, for he documented all known Eucharistic miracles and even created a website containing information on each miracle. Today all people throughout the world have access to his website to deepen their knowledge and love for the Blessed Sacrament. Feast day: Oct. 13

Blessed Juliana of Mount Cornillon: After her parents died, Juliana was brought up in an Augustinian monastery at Mount Cornillon, Belgium. She joined the community, which ran a hospital for leprosy patients. Elected prioress about 1226, she made known earlier visions in which Jesus told her he desired a special feast for the Blessed Sacrament. This became her mission, despite opposition; even some of her nuns doubted her and accused her of misusing funds. She was forced to leave her monastery in 1246 and died a hermit. Her work led to the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, also known as Corpus Christi. Feast day: May 17

St. Paschal Baylon: Born to a Spanish shepherd family, Paschal was said to have taught himself to read while tending sheep. At age 21 he joined an austere group of Franciscans, devoting himself to prayer and charity. He was sent on a dangerous mission to French Franciscans, a shoulder wound he received caused him pain for the rest of his life. Long hours of prayer on his knees before the Eucharist earned this lay brother the honor of being patron of Catholic Eucharistic congresses. His emblem in art is a monstrance. Feast day: May 17

St. Peter Julian Eymard: The patron saint of Eucharistic devotion, Peter Julian became a Marist priest and eventually became provincial of his congregation at Lyon. But, after making the point of arrival to which the whole of our existence is a pilgrimage, he stressed the need to heal Church conflicts, the authority of local bishops and the Eucharist as a source of unity. Feast day: Oct. 17

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque: This French saint, who increased devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, spent her life in Burgundy. A pious child, Margaret was bedridden from ages 9 to 15 with a rheumatic illness. She gradually understood a call to religious life, and already had a mature prayer life when she entered a Visitatin convent near Lyon in 1671. Between 1673 and 1675, she received four visions of Christ’s heart in flames, burning with love for humanity, with instructions to promote a special feast and First Friday devotions. Margaret, aided by a Jesuit priest, overcame disbelief and jealousy within her own convent and saw the feast celebrated there and in other French Visitatin convents in her lifetime. She was canonized in 1920. Feast day: Oct. 16

St. Tarsicius: Tarsicius was likely an acolyte, a deacon or even a layman in Rome during the time of Emperor Valerian’s persecution. He was martyred while taking the Eucharist to Christian prisoners — beaten to death with sticks and stones by a mob of pagans on the Appian Way when he would not surrender the Communion he was carrying. The tradition claims he was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus. Pope St. Damasus I suggested an early cult by describing his martyrdom in a fourth-century poem. His legend was further embellished in the 19th-century novel “Fabiola.” Tarsicius is the patron saint of first communicants, altar servers and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. Feast day: Aug. 2

St. Thomas Aquinas: Thomas so shocked his noble Italian family when he entered the Dominicans about 1244 that his brothers imprisoned him for a year. But he would not yield and studied under St. Albert the Great, becoming a master of theology in 1256. For the rest of his brief life, the “dumb, the ‘dumb,’ as he was dubbed, taught, preached and wrote, produc-
Father Joey Shelton of St. James Church in Brooksville invites you to our Festival July 21st - July 23rd.

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the sense of thinking about what the spaces we design incline or expect us to do. Our friends’ home was organized in such a way that the central space encouraged face-to-face conversation (other spaces inclined you to reading or playing music, etc.). The shiny new terminal at the Newark airport encouraged technologically mediated engagement — in fact, it encouraged the conditions for isolation and loneliness. In neither place did anyone have to tell you what to do or how to engage: the space itself led you down one path or another.

In his book that helps families to think about how to shape their lives and especially their living places, Andy Crouch writes about what it would mean to make our homes into places of intention. It begins, of course, with having intentions about what kind of people we hope our children might become (and thus what kind of people we, as parents, want to become). The point, then, is to make those intentions structural by building them right into how the family home is organized.

“The best way to choose character is to make it part of the furniture. Fill the center of your life together — the literal center, the heart of your home, the place where you spend the most time together — with the things that reward creativity, relationship and engagement. Push technology and cheap thrills to the edges; move deeper and more lasting things to the core. This was once natural, indeed unavoidable. Almost every home once had a hearth, the fire that gave warmth, light, heat for cooking — and entertainment too, with its dancing flames and distinctive glow. The Latin word for hearth, focus, reminds us that fire was once the center of our homes. … Homes still need a center, and the best things to put in the center of our homes are engaging things — things that require attention, reward skill, and draw us together the way the hearth once did” (“The Tech-Wise Family” Baker Books).

The question for all of us is: What do the most important spaces in our home say about what we consider most important?

I could have stood in the middle of that Newark airport terminal and yelled until I was blue in the face (or arrested) that people should look each other in the eye, but it wouldn’t have mattered. The space itself was inclining people in a different direction. I would have been fighting against the space, like telling people to embrace solitude in the middle of a football stadium on gameday. Rather than yelling against a space, it is more powerful to let the space itself echo your voice.

Sincerely,
Leonard J. DeLorenzo, Ph.D., works in the McGrath Institute for Church Life and teaches theology at the University of Notre Dame. His commentary has been provided by OSV News.
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Qualifications: Bachelor’s degree in your content area or field related to learning differences required. Excellent English communication skills required. Must possess the ability to interact with a diverse student population. Needs for Biology, Business, Computer Science, History, Mathematics, Psychology, and Sociology.

For more information, contact Dr. Andrea Milani (milanial@mthomsmore.edu) or the ILD department at 859-344-3582 (ild@mthomsmore.edu).

SAINT AGNES TEACHING POSITIONS
Saint Agnes, a K-8 school in Fort Wright, Kentucky, is currently interviewing for a full-time 2nd grade teacher and a full-time 5th grade teacher. Teachers are responsible for developing high-level lesson plans, delivering group and individual instruction within established curriculum guidelines, and collaborating with colleagues. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and references to Erin Redleski at eredleski@saintagnes.com.

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Thank you Mother of Perpetual Help for Prayers Answered. P.R.
are attributed to his hand. What we do know is that he was born Wilhelm Edward Blank on May 30, 1877 in Germany, the second youngest child of Nickolas and Barbar Blank. In 1883, the family of seven emigrated to America and settled in Newark, New Jersey where William grew up. His father was a “decorator and house painter” as was his older brother Gustav. Another brother, Louis, became a medical doctor. William moved to Cincinnati around 1908 and had a studio and residence at 2385 Kemper Lane in Walnut Hills. Only his WWI draft registration card and a 1918 city directory list his occupation here as a “church painter.”

But by the time William Blank was hired to clean and restore them in 1920, Duveneck’s famous works were in almost unrecoverable shape. “After careful inspection,” he wrote Fr. Flynn in his letter, “I found the paintings were in worse condition than at first expected.” He pointed out that the paintings had been “cut up in sections” before being glued to the wall, and that “an improper and impractical method was used in hanging them”, giving the murals a wrinkled appearance.

Additionally, he noted that the glaze used to protect the painting’s surface had “formed a soft scum on the canvas, and due to atmospheric conditions, blurred the pictures to such an extent that the subjects were almost beyond recognition.” He blamed the problem on a primitive glaze made from the “buttermilk process,” a popular French technique made by mixing milk, slaked lime and linseed oil which was thought to be a satisfactory substitute for more expensive glazes. But in the wet and humid weather so often found in the Midwest, the mixture tends to grow moist, soften and ferment, which damaged Duveneck’s original underlying paint. About the same time, this problem also degraded Duveneck’s original fresco and diaper design painted on the walls below the murals, which eventually had to be painted over completely. William Blank had his work cut out for him. He removed Duveneck’s original canvases from the chapel walls and stripped of the defective glaze and sizing. At his Cincinnati studio on Kemper Lane, he then set about carefully retouching the somewhat extensive damaged areas of surface paint laid down by Duveneck’s own hand. He cleaned the canvas backs, applied new sizing, then carefully rehung each section of canvas with a new, more permanent glue of his own creation. He preserved the work by applying “a hard and transparent glaze” of his own formulation that “not only acts as an everlasting preservative, but also restores the colors to their natural lustre.”

In his letter, William Blank concluded, “If in years to come, any dust that may accumulate on the surface can easily be removed by anyone, regardless of artistic ability, by using ivory soap, luke warm water, with a sponge or cloth, and without any fear of injuring the colors, canvas, or process.”

William Blank’s diligent restoration of Duveneck’s murals has lasted a full century. They have been cleaned only twice since with minor retouching, once in the late 1940’s and again during the renovation of 2000. The murals we see today are as bright and colorful as the day Frank Duveneck finished them in 1908, and they remain one of America’s great national treasures of sacred art. But that distinction almost didn’t happen. It was thanks to the ingenuity and skill of an obscure artist named William E. Blank that Frank Duveneck’s murals have been preserved for future generations to enjoy.
Parish prayer circles, activities, aim to address growing loneliness

DAVENPORT, Iowa — Candy Boucher’s heart ached when she read an anonymous prayer intention this past spring in which a youth described feeling alone and longing for others to know “who I really am.” Boucher, coordinator of adult faith formation at St. Ann Parish in Long Grove, asked daily Massgoers that morning to include the youth’s prayer intention as they prayed the rosary. It was one among the many prayer intentions submitted as part of a parish prayer chain project. Boucher shared the prayer intention with youth minister Julia Jones, who had collected prayer intentions in a basket the night before during the youth group meeting. The following week, Jones read the prayer intention during the youth group meeting and said, “I don’t know who wrote this, but I want to let you know you are not alone … we are praying for you.”

Along with prayer, she strives to invite youths to a variety of activities and service projects to build community. That youth is not alone in experiencing loneliness, which has become so pervasive that the U.S. surgeon general published an advisory in May. Its title is “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.” The advisory points out the power of community: “Social connection is an important social determinant of health, and more broadly, of community well-being, including (but not limited to) population health, community resilience when natural hazards strike, community safety, economic prosperity, and representative government.”

Biden declares state of emergency in Vermont

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Torrential rains brought up to 9 inches of rain to the Green Mountain State July 10, leaving Vermont highways closed, roads eroded, homes and businesses flooded and emergencies declared. But no significant damage to church-owned properties had been reported as of the next morning. According to Peter Beauregard, director of properties for the Diocese of Burlington, as of 8:30 a.m. July 11, there was “nothing major” reported for damage to church properties. There was, however, “light flooding in the basements” in church property in the central Vermont areas of Barre and Montpelier and the southern area of Wilmington. “At this stage we have several properties with minor flooding within the spaces below grade with minimum property loss. We are still waiting to see where the highwater mark will be on a few rivers that are still rising.” He asked parish staffs to “visit every site to be sure we have no damage from the deluge of rain the past few days.” President Joe Biden declared a state of emergency in Vermont July 11. Across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire, southwestern towns of Winchester and Swanzey were hard hit by flood waters that eroded roads and overflowed a dam. Father Alan Trembley, pastor of Parish of the Holy Spirit which includes the affected towns, said July 11 that no requests for aid had yet been made, “but that doesn’t mean it won’t happen.”
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