

MESSENGER

Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926



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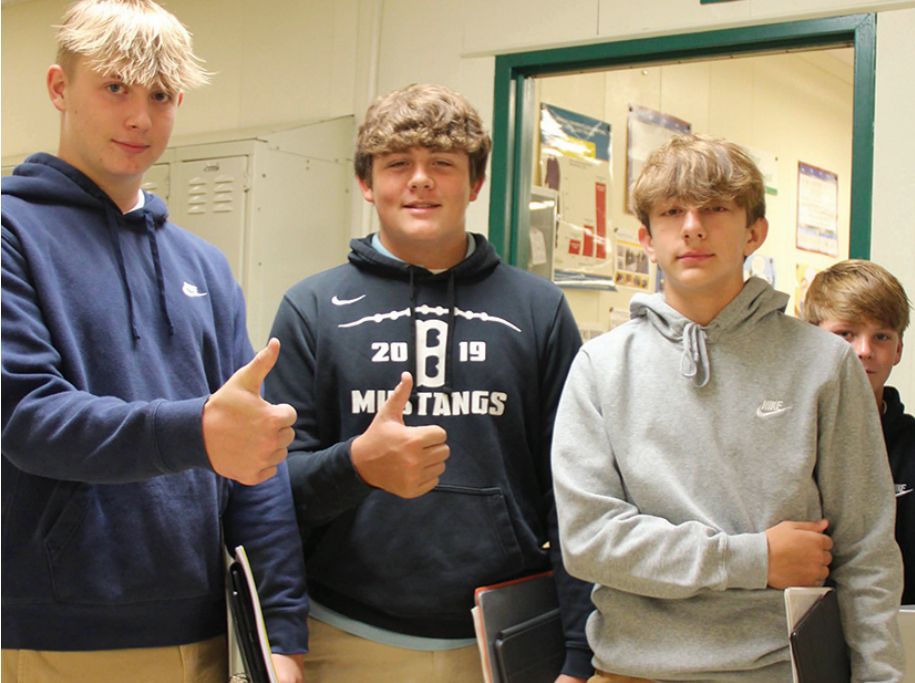
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Back to school
On August 9, the *Messenger* welcomed St. Mary, Alexandria, and Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, back to their first day of school! These were the first of the diocesan Catholic schools to return from summer vacation, with all schools returning to session by August 16.





Teaching in Catholic schools is a vocation, preaches Father Kidaagen at diocesan teacher Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Early August means the beginning of the school year, with teachers and school administrators preparing to re-open their doors to the hundreds of diocesan students who will be returning for 2023-2024 school year.

Educators gathered for Mass, Aug. 7, just days before the first schools were to return to session on Aug. 9. The Mass was celebrated at St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, and celebrated by the parish’s pastor Father Baiju Kidaagen. Chaplains from schools across the Diocese of Covington concelebrated the Mass, as well.

“Some students will be excited, others may be anxious and some might not want to come at all,” said Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Covington as she gave opening remarks before Mass. “Our job is to invite them all with great joy and to welcome them and instill in them a wonder and curiosity about the learning that will take place in your classroom this year.”

Mrs. McGuire continued, “Our job is to help nurture their gifts and to help them realize that God created each and every one of your students for a purpose. We have a responsibility to show them the beauty of God’s creation

— to seek the truth.”

In his homily, Father Kidaagen spoke of teaching in a Catholic school as a vocation, because “we know we cannot make it to Heaven alone and Catholic education involves all parties being united by God to a common goal, eternal life ... your job is a vocation because what you are doing has not only a temporal, but also a supernatural dimension to it,” he added.

“In your work as Catholic educators, you are asked to form young people not simply to be a successful person in this world, but to be prepared to take their place in the Kingdom of God as God’s sons and daughters. If your job is a vocation, then you proclaim in a definitive way that Jesus must be at the heartbeat of everything you teach,” he said.

Before the closing of the Mass, the teachers in atten-

(above left) Father Baiju Kidaagen preaches the homily.
(above center) Superintendent of schools, Kendra McGuire, greets educators gathered for the Mass marking the beginning of the school year.
(above right) Various school teachers sing along during the Mass service.
(below) School chaplains in attendance at the all-teacher Mass.



dance rose for a commissioning by Father Kidaagen on behalf of Bishop Iffert, “No matter which subject you will teach, remember that your task as a Catholic school teacher is to teach our students love of God and love of neighbor.”



Cathedral parish rejoices at vigil celebrating the Assumption

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The solemnity of the Assumption of Mary was celebrated Aug. 15. This feast day observes the Marian dogma of her assumption into Heaven, body and soul. Additionally, this is the feast day of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, the Dicoese of Covington’s mother church.

A vigil Mass was held at the cathedral commemorating this solemnity, Aug. 14. The Mass was celebrated by Father Kurt Kemo.

In his homily, Father Kemo referenced the reading for the Mass. He recalled when visiting Elizabeth, and greeted by her, Mary could have uplifted herself as the Mother of the Lord. “She prayed what is now called the Magnificat,” which many members of the Church, including all clergy and some lay people, pray every evening of the year. “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my savior.”

Father Kemo invited the congregation to look to Mary’s humility as exemplified by this act, “It has been said that the greatest form of flattery is imitation. Tonight, and tomorrow, take a deep look at Mary’s humility. Mirror your life on hers, and in all things give glory to God for all he has done for us.”

“This is a beautiful solemnity of the Church, but it is even more special to us as members of this Basilica, under whose patronage of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we rejoice today.”



(far left) A statue of Mary at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Candles are lit beside her to signify the feast of the Assumption as the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption’s feast day.
(left) Servers carry in the candles and crucifix down the center of aisle during the procession of the vigil Mass.
(above) Deacon Jerry Franzen reads from the Gospel at a vigil Mass celebrating the solemnity of the Assumption.

Parishes create unique Eucharistic encounters through 40 hour devotions

Laura Keener
Editor

In a recent Sunday Gospel, Peter and the other disciples are in a boat on the sea as the wind and waves are kicking up. Jesus, on the shore, proceeds to walk on the water towards them. Peter asks Jesus to call him to him. Jesus does, and Peter leaves the boat and walks on the water towards Jesus.

“Peter wanted to have a unique encounter with Jesus,” said Father Daniel Schomaker, diocesan director, Worship and Liturgy Office. “He had to get out of the boat in order to do that. He had to get out of the safety of the boat — his comfort area — in order to have an encounter with Jesus.”

Today, Jesus still invites his disciples — you — to a

honor Bishop Iffert’s request to host the 40 Hours devotion. The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, who held 40 Hours on the feast of Corpus Christi, was the first. St. Augustine’s 40 Hours will begin Friday, August 5, 7 p.m. continuing until Sunday, Aug. 27, 5 p.m.

Father Schomaker said that at least two people need to be present during Adoration. This, he said, can be difficult for small parishes. To help accommodate parishes, adorers from all parishes in the diocese are welcome and encouraged to volunteer for a half hour or more of adoration at as many parishes as their time allows. Adorers can reserve their time at St. Augustine’s 40 Hours by visiting the parish website, <https://www.staugustines.net>.

“40 Hours devotions are being held throughout this

Hours, or they can bring along some spiritual reading — a book of the saints or a saint, or bring a Bible.

“St. Augustine says that the Sacred Scriptures are love letters from home. Well, let’s read the love letters from the one who loves us,” said Father Schomaker.

The best part of Adoration is taking the time, putting oneself in the presence of the Eucharist, to have that unique encounter with Jesus.

“Peter had to get out of the boat. Sometimes we have to do that too, to get out of our comfort zone,” said Father Schomaker. “Today, the wind and the waves are oftentimes our culture that make quiet difficult. Silence is hard because we’re surrounded by all forms of noise. Get out of the boat. Enter into the silence. Go have an encounter with Jesus.”



40 Hour Devotion

- Aug. 25, 2023, St. Augustine Parish, Covington
 - Oct. 13, 2023, St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana
 - Oct. 20, 2023, St. Augustine Parish, Augusta
 - Oct. 27, 2023, St. John Parish, Carrollton
 - Nov. 3, 2023, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington
 - Nov. 17, 2023, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring
 - May 3, 2024, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs
- (The schedule will be updated as needed.)

unique encounter with him in the Eucharist — communally at Mass but also individually at adoration. The Catholic Church in the United States is in the middle of a three-year Eucharistic Revival.

This year, on the feast of Corpus Christi in June, the Eucharistic Revival transitioned from the diocesan phase to the parish phase. To help unite the parishes around the Eucharist, Bishop John Iffert, at the request of the diocesan Worship Committee, has asked pastors to host 40 Hours of continual Eucharistic adoration. (See related article page 4.)

These 40 Hours will be scheduled sometime during the year, from now until July 2024, when the revival culminates with a Eucharistic Congress, July 17–21, 2024, at Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis. Discounted tickets for the Congress are available through the diocesan Office of Worship and Liturgy; an application is online at covdio.org.

St. Augustine Parish, Covington, is the second parish to

Parish Eucharistic Revival year at different times so that the faithful will have the opportunity in their parish and at other parishes to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration,” said Father Schomaker. “This way, it’s a parochial celebration but it’s also a diocesan celebration, because we recognize that there is one local Church, which is the Diocese of Covington.”

Spending time in adoration may be new to some. The good news is there is no specific ritual to know, so it’s hard to do Adoration wrong. The only requirement is to come prayerfully and reverently to gaze at and listen to Jesus.

“The beauty of the Church is that her treasure trove of prayer is vast, and there’s not one way to pray,” said Father Schomaker. “In fact, most of the time, we need to remember that prayer requires listening. Prayer is not a monologue. It is a conversation. We have to be able to hear the Lord speak back to us.”

For anyone who likes a little structure in their prayer they are welcome to pray the rosary or the Liturgy of the



Call for testimonials

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky is celebrating 100 years of service to the people of the Diocese of Covington.

To share your story on how the Society has impacted you and/or your family, e-mail messenger@covdio.org with the subject line: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Your story may be featured in the upcoming *Messenger* supplement highlighting the Society’s centennial. The deadline for submissions is Sept. 14.

Candlelight Masses

- Held first Fridays, September through May.
Confessions at 6 p.m., Mass at 7 p.m. and young adult social at 8 p.m.
- Sept. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Spring
 - Oct. 6, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue
 - Nov. 3, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville
 - Dec. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs
 - Jan. 5, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright
 - Feb. 2, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring
 - March 1, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow
 - April 5, All Saints Parish, Walton
 - May 3, St. Pius Parish, Edgewood



Bishop’s Schedule

- | | |
|---|--|
| Aug. 19
Deanery Pastoral Council orientation, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, 10 a.m. | Aug. 25
Opening prayer/plaque presentation, Rose Garden Mission Golf Outing, Kenton County Golf Course, 9 a.m. |
| Aug. 22
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m. | Aug. 26
New President installation, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, 10 a.m. |
| Aug. 22–24
CCK/Province meeting, Archdiocese of Louisville | Aug. 27
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m. |
| Aug. 24
DPAA celebration, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. | Catholic Charities Cassba event, Drees Pavilion, Covington, 3 p.m. |

Pope of the Eucharist’

St. Pius X: Known as the “pope of the Eucharist,” Pius X was born Joseph Melchior Sarto in northern Italy. After being ordained for the Treviso Diocese in 1858, he served in small parishes before being named diocesan chancellor and spiritual director of the seminary. Pope Leo XIII named him bishop of Mantua in 1884 and a cardinal and patriarch of Venice in 1893. He was elected pope in 1903. During his pontificate, he lowered the age for receiving first Communion, encouraged daily Communion and daily Bible reading and promoted biblical study. Feast day: Aug. 21



How to bring the 40 Hours devotion to your parish

Rebecca W. Martin
OSV News
Imagine that Jesus Christ knocked on your door and

asked to stay with you for the better part of two days. How would you welcome him? What conversations would you have around the kitchen table? What transformations





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might occur; as you drew close to him in friendship and rested together in the living room? What incredible grace would be available to you?

Take that spiritual encounter and renewal, and multiply it by the number of people in your parish. Young and old, singles and families, lay and clergy, each experiencing the Lord’s love through his physical, tangible presence — it’s a lovely dream, and more than a dream.

In the words of Pope St. John Paul II in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: “The Eucharist is a priceless treasure: by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. A Christian community desirous of contemplating the face of Christ ... cannot fail also to develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship, which prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord” (No. 25).

How do we “develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship” in our parishes, inviting each member to “make contact with the very wellspring of grace”? One immediately available method is the ancient tradition known as 40 Hours. It’s a straightforward practice: expose the Blessed Sacrament publicly in the parish church for 40 hours, during which parishioners take turns keeping watch so that Jesus is never alone. Typically, the devotion begins and ends with Masses, and might include the Liturgy of the Hours, a procession or a homily series. Many parishes combine 40 Hours with a parish mission, drawing the community together for prayer and preaching.

40 Hours has been part of the parish life of the Church for well over 500 years. It flourished under the promotion of saints like St. Charles Borromeo, St. Anthony Maria Zaccaria, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis de Sales, St. Philip Neri, St. John Neumann and many others. In 16th century Milan, Italy, Eucharistic adoration would move from church to church every 40 hours, with parishes working together to keep the devotion running throughout the entire year.

In the Middle Ages it was celebrated as supplication in times of crisis; during the Catholic Counter-Reformation, as an effort at the renewal of popular devotion; in 19th-century America, as a way of unifying persecuted Catholics. In our own day, when so many Catholics don’t understand or believe in the True Presence, 40 Hours is the natural next step for our National Eucharistic Revival.

Why 40 hours? Scripture gives us repeated symbolic instances of the number: Moses’ years in Egypt, the years the Israelites wandered in the desert, the days of Jonah’s preaching in Nineveh, Jesus’ days of fasting in the desert and many more. We spend 40 days in prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent. Most importantly, from the crucifixion on the afternoon of Good Friday to the Resurrection on Easter morning, Our Lord lay in the tomb for roughly 40 hours.

Crisis, persecution, exile, penance, death — what do all

these dark themes have to do with Eucharistic adoration? The thread which binds them together is metanoia, that turning of the heart toward God which we also call conversion.

Those 40 years in the desert were an opportunity for the Israelites to be strengthened in faith. Jonah spent weeks pleading with the Ninevites to lay aside their sins and turn to God. Jesus’ own fasting prepared him to go out and bring souls to his Father, calling them to conversion. His death and resurrection opened the door for us not only to convert once, but to have an ongoing relationship with the God who loves us.

And that’s exactly what the 40 Hours devotion offers. In every era, in every cultural struggle, Christ comes in the Eucharist to be the heart of our communities. Made humble on the altar, he invites us to bring our troubled souls to him, and through him to the Father.

Pulling off the 40 Hours requires us to believe not only in the Real Presence, but in the power of that Presence. It’s all well and good to believe that Our Lord is there in the bread and wine at Mass. What do we do with that? How do we let that belief change us? I would argue that one concrete and effective way is this ancient tradition of the 40 Hours.

How do we make this daunting exercise in faith actually happen? To be sure, it requires commitment, buy-in from parish staff and parishioners alike, eager to share Christ’s welcome. That is the first requisite. (Though I use “parish” for brevity, the 40 Hours also works well for Catholic high schools, colleges and Newman Centers, parish groups, etc.) Assuming willing volunteers, the effort would look something like this:

—Assemble a core team, including a cleric, the music director, someone concerned with hospitality, and one or more with communication and marketing skills.

—Well in advance — 3-6 months, preferably — plan the dates of the celebration. You could start with Mass on a Thursday evening and finish at the anticipation Mass on Saturday evening; or begin on Sunday evening and run through Tuesday; any number of options are available.

—If preaching is desired, make arrangements to bring in a priest or lay speaker.

—Share a “save the date” with the parish and even the whole diocese.

—Start getting groups and organizations involved. You might ask the local Catholic schools to commit to an hour or more of daytime adoration; the Knights of Columbus to keep watch over the night alongside any other adorers for security; the Legion of Mary to make rosaries for a basket at the back of church; the youth group to distribute flyers after Mass to get the word out.

—As the days draw closer, plan beautiful, solemn Masses for the opening and closing. Plan the other paraliturgical events like Liturgy of the Hours and a Eucharistic procession, continuing to get various parish groups

involved.

—Consider organizing a potluck, reception or other community gathering after the closing Mass. 40 Hours should be an opportunity for the parish to worship as a whole body, and nothing gets people together like food.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, “In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and desires to become one with us; eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church’s supreme act of adoration” (No. 66).

He continues: “The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ. For this reason, besides encouraging individual believers to make time for personal prayer before the Sacrament of the Altar, I feel obliged to urge parishes and other church groups to set aside times for collective adoration” (No. 68).

Pope Francis echoed this same enduring truth of the Church on October 22, 2022, saying “It is good to adore in silence before the Most Blessed Sacrament, to be in the consoling presence of Jesus and there to draw the apostolic impetus to be instruments of goodness, tenderness and welcome in the community, the Church, and the world. ... Adore, immerse yourself in divine love and give it with full hands to those you meet on your path.”

Eucharistic adoration, whether personal or parish-wide through the 40 Hours, is never a solo endeavor. It is an outpouring of the Church’s efforts for the salvation of souls, and an invitation for us to enter into that effort. We rest with Jesus, spending time with him, and we are individually consoled and nourished. From him we receive the grace and strength to bring about renewal in our families, our workplaces, our parishes and our world.

Rebecca W. Martin is a trade book Acquisitions Editor for Our Sunday Visitor, and lives in Michigan with her husband. She is a perpetually professed Lay Dominican.



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Pray for Ohioans and for the opposition of November amendment

On November 7, 2023, Ohioans will have the opportunity to demonstrate how our state views the sacredness of life and the dignity of women. On the November ballot

GUEST



Archbishop
Dennis M. Schnurr

will be a proposed amendment (deceptively named “The Right to Reproductive Freedom with Protections for Health and Safety”) to the Ohio Constitution that would enshrine the “right” to take the lives of innocent children in the womb while harming women and families in the process.

An expectant mother of any age can face many challenges, including lack of support from the father, financial strains, concerns

about her own health and that of her child, and pressures from family and friends. Every woman, regardless of circumstances, should be able to depend upon a community of support. That is why Catholic social service agencies, in collaboration with many other faith-based and secular organizations, assist pregnant women in need with material resources and personal accompaniment, both during

pregnancy and after their child is born. By contrast, the proposed amendment does none of that. If enacted, it would amend the Constitution of Ohio to effectively:

- Put women at risk. This amendment would enable elimination of some of the most basic, fundamental safety regulations on abortion clinics, including the current requirement for an abortion to be performed by a licensed physician.
- Threaten parental rights. The vague language in the amendment opens the door to anyone under 18 having an abortion, or even beginning cross-sex hormone treatment, without parental consent or notification.
- Allow abortion through 9 months of pregnancy. The amendment provides caveats such that a healthy, fully formed infant in the womb who otherwise could be delivered with no issues would still be a candidate for a surgical dismemberment abortion.

We must reject this extraordinary and dangerous attempt to radically reshape Ohio through a constitutional amendment that does nothing to aid women or promote life.

The amendment’s supporters will claim that its passage is necessary to preserve medical treatment for women who experience miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies. This is not true. No Ohio laws — or the laws of any U.S. state, for that matter — prevent such treatment. Hospitals, including Catholic hospitals, and physicians

have always provided comprehensive miscarriage care, and will continue to do so regardless of the outcome of this vote.

Some may insist that the Catholic Church should not be involved in politics. However, the defense of life and care for women compels our participation in this critical moral issue. As Catholics, we are morally obliged to uphold the dignity of life of all vulnerable humans — immigrants, the poor, preborn children. We cannot remain silent on a direct ballot question like the one in November. The Church must not remain on the sidelines when confronted with such a clear threat to human life and dignity and the primacy of the family.

Ohio does not need a constitutional amendment that only perpetuates violence and a culture of death. I urge Catholics and all people of goodwill to pray earnestly for the defeat of this extreme amendment; to educate yourselves and your family and friends about the dangers of the proposed amendment; and to vote NO on November 7. Beyond that, we must continue our commitment to caring for women, children and families.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord and Savior, and St. Joseph, protector of the family, intercede for Ohio and its families in the weeks ahead.

Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr is Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Do you often feel the need to be right?

Have you ever questioned the value of always needing to be right? Long ago, the younger version of me would have to answer “No, I haven’t.” In school, at home, in games, the lessons were that being right was important.

VIEWPOINT



Sister Colleen Winston,
O.S.B.

Check your facts and your sources. There are consequences to being wrong, both for you and for others.

As I’ve gotten older, I have moved from that position to one of flexibility in lots of things, but every now and then I find myself wanting to be in the certitude camp again. Recently, though, I ran across a poem by the German-Israeli writer Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000) called The Place Where We Are Right.*

Within its brevity I found new thoughts about certitude. The poet begins:

From the place where we are right
flowers will never grow
in the spring.
The place where we are right
is hard and trampled.....
But doubts and loves
dig up the world
like a mole...
I find profound truth in this. Certitude tends to entrench us. Doors can get bolted and walls created, not on purpose but more like the side effects of our position.

On the other hand, the discomfort of doubt tends to keep us churning the soil of our thinking processes, unearthing new perspectives.

While thinking about doubt and certainty, the concept of faith intrudes. Where does it fit in this mélange? Certitude and faith are difficult companions. Isn’t faith only needed when something is not provable? Doesn’t it seem that doubt tends to diminish when we have faith in someone or something? Is it possible for faith and certainty to co-exist?

When I consider great people of faith like Abraham and Moses in Scripture, they asked questions, but then, with only God’s word, they accepted something not provable.

Jesus’ own mother Mary, and Joseph her spouse, both asked questions, but then, again with no proof, both accepted an unbelievable situation. In these holy people, faith and certitude seem to co-exist. How can this happen?

The poet Amichai may have hit quietly on the answer: not only doubts, but loves plow the ground of our certainty. For Abraham, Moses, Mary and Joseph, love allowed their kind of faith to survive and blossom. In my personal experience I do often find it easier to suspend my own certitude when it is a friend who disagrees with me; not so with someone with whom I barely get along.

This makes me think about human relationships, personal and international. How can we find wisdom and truth if we can’t even tolerate some people’s thoughts and opinions?

Those of us who are old enough to remember the Berlin Wall have a strong sense of what walls can create and what removing them can free within us. Powerful images of this same challenge are all around us today, from border disputes between states, floating barriers

between the US and Mexico, Russia invading Ukraine, etc.

The institutional Church is not exempt from these barriers. Consider the disruption that occurs within/between parishes when they are asked to merge. Questions of who loses or gains abound.

Recently the St. Walburg community made a retreat focused on major aspects of the Rule of Benedict, such as community and listening. Our retreat director, Benedictine Sister Cecilia Dwyer of the Bristow, Virginia, monastery, quoted international systems professional Margaret Wheatley’s striking reflection on world conditions: It’s not differences that divide us; it’s judgments about one another.

Don’t these judgments often involve a struggle for power or one-ups-man-ship? “I’m right and you aren’t?”

As Amichai says, in these conditions the soil is trampled and no flowers bloom, and I think Wheatley would add, “because there is no listening.”

The next time you hear a news story about one of the thousands of conflicts in the U.S. and abroad, ask if there is anyone trying to listen to both sides. Next time you find yourself in a disagreement, step back to see if there is an atmosphere of listening on either side, and if not, can you bring any love to break some of the trampled earth and encourage some flowers to grow?

If so, then maybe, as Amichai concludes: “a whisper will be heard in the place where the ruined house once stood.”

Benedictine Sister Colleen Winston is a professed member of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky. Her reflection was first published on the community’s blogspot “School for the Lord’s Service” online at www.stwalburg.org.

Faith is belief in action

The readings for the twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: **Isiah 56:1, 6-7; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32 and Matthew 15:21-28.**

The Gospel passage we heard last Sunday from the fourteenth chapter of Matthew and the passage we hear this Sunday from Matthew’s fifteenth chapter are stories of faith encounters with Jesus that end very differently.

Last Sunday Peter began to sink in the water and Jesus said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

This Sunday Jesus says to the Canaanite woman, “O woman, great is your faith!” and the woman’s daughter was healed. There is not space here for a full exposition of what faith is, but these two encounters, with the help of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict, can show us three fundamental elements of faith.

Part of the Catechism’s definition of faith comes in the glossary: “Faith: Both a gift from God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response ...” So the first fundamental element of faith is that it is a gift from God. Since God “desires all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4) we can assume that this gift given to all.

The Catechism says that faith is also a human act — a conscious, voluntary and therefore willed, action. Very often we use the words “faith” and “belief” interchangeably, but faith is not equivalent to belief, it is not only belief. The meaning of the word faith includes a person choosing to act on her belief. We recall James’ discussion of faith in his letter, the heart of which is verse 17 in the second chapter: “So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” This is a second fundamental element of faith.

Jesus, however, does not comment on the presence or absence of Peter’s faith or the faith of the Canaanite woman, but on one aspect of their quality, the size: to Peter, “O you of little faith.” and to the Canaanite woman, “Great is your faith!”

To understand this third element of faith, let us turn to Pope Benedict XVI, from his book, written when he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, “Introduction to Christianity.” In his long and thick discussion on the meaning of faith comes this rather bright little sentence: “Faith is thereby defined as taking up a position, as taking a stand trustfully on the ground of the word of God.” (p. 39)

In other words, faith is acting in such a way that if God did not “come through” for us, we would fall. We see both Peter and the Canaanite woman demonstrate this for us, Peter in a negative way, so to speak, and the Canaanite woman in a positive way.

When Peter says to Jesus, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus says, “Come.” Notice that Peter does not lack faith entirely; he comes to Jesus when Jesus calls him.

Now, stepping out of the boat and standing on the water, Peter has “taken up a position,” “standing trustfully,” not on real ground, but on “the ground of the word of God.”

Notice also that Peter is “responding” to God, our second element of faith. Contrast this with the devil inviting Jesus to throw himself off the parapet of the temple and expect God to save him. When we create the situation and expect God to save us from ourselves, we are tempting God. When we respond to God’s invitation to step off our ground and stand on the ground of his word, it is faith.

Where Peter gets in trouble is that he looks around and sees “how strong the wind was” and becomes frightened. Letting his fear overtake him, Peter is no longer “standing trustfully on the ground of the word of God,” and so begins to sink. Peter does not lack faith, but his faith is too small to sustain him on the water.

(Continued on page 19)

The time of my life

Recently I celebrated my 65th birthday and I’m grateful for that occasion. Like many people, when you come upon one of these milestone birthdays, it gives you cause to stop and reflect where you are in your life. The one thing that comes out of this milestone for me is that God has a great sense of humor:

I say this because of the things that I’ve begun to experience as I age. For example, I went through the process of signing up for Medicare and selecting an appropriate supplemental plan. This was a challenge I wasn’t prepared for. Between commercials from J.J. Walker to Joe Namath, it felt like I was negotiating a strategic arms agreement.

I do consider myself somewhat intelligent, but this was about as confusing as it gets. Between parts A, B, C, up through the rest of the alphabet, it was insanity. Thank goodness a good friend referred me to someone who could help, or I would probably be curled up in the fetal position in my house.

At times, I find myself in a room without remembering why I went in there in the first place. That’s not to mention the times I wake up with a sleep related injury of some kind. And let’s not even talk about car keys and wallets. As the saying goes “aging ain’t for wimps.” Amen to that one. But I’ve found a way to help with this aspect of aging.

Every day, I try to do something good for myself in four areas — physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. It’s a great way to spend time reflecting and acting on the things that all of us experience. We need to take care of our bodies, feed our minds, love those around us and remember that all the blessings of life are a gift from God. But for this article, I want to focus on the physical aspect of our lives.

Most anyone who knows me at all, knows the importance of physical fitness in my life. I have a B.A. in physi-

cal education and am also a Certified Personal Trainer through the National Academy of Sports Medicine. That’s all well and good, but there’s a deeper reason for my dedication to fitness.

We are told in St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 6 that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and that we are to glorify God in our bodies. Both the body and the Holy Spirit are a gift from God. My own philosophy on this is that I want my temple within my body to be as good as it can be. That means I need to take care of myself. I want to glorify God with my physical body.

I’m not referring to cult of the body or the aesthetic aspect of fitness. Instead, I’m referring to the ability to function in our daily lives to do what we need to do. That includes more than just exercise. Getting the right amount of sleep is essential. The food we eat is critical as well. Our prayer life helps with our mind and attitude.

When we take care of ourselves, we are practicing an important aspect of stewardship, caring for what God has given us.

Good habits of fitness are also an important part of our spiritual life. When we feel good physically, we are more energetic, have more ability to dedicate ourselves to our ministry, charitable acts and prayer life.

The good news is that there are ways we can accomplish both at the same time. For example, rather than sit and pray the rosary, take a walk and do it if you are able. You’re fulfilling both a spiritual and physical need. I find it easier to pray the rosary while moving so I’m getting great benefit from both. Listening to beautiful Christian music while exercising is also a great way to fulfill both needs.

Habits are more effective than motivation. I can’t tell you how many well-intentioned people start their New Year resolutions around fitness. It rarely works for multiple reasons but one of them is motivation. It’s hard to be motivated all the time. That’s why habits are more important. It’s been estimated to take 30 days to form a new habit. If you dedicate that time to forming habits, it’ll will be easier to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

There are any number of ways to get started. We’re blessed with abundant facilities for fitness, wonderful doctors who can assist as well as certified trainers in our

(Continued on page 19)

How our August gardens offer instructive spiritual notes

It’s late summer, when the temperatures are high and rain often sparse — or torrential and brief — and plants will reflect this seasonal drought; leaves of hardwoods are dull and drooping and herbaceous plants flag into the same semi-wilt. Plants will naturally stretch their roots more deeply into the soil, seeking out life-preserving water.

We all know what it’s like to feel parched and thirsting and will do anything to get relief.

When we dig up a plant and knock off the soil, we can see the larger and more obvious roots that emanate from the central crown, giving physical support. Attached to those are smaller branching roots that take up the largest share of water and nutrients; some are so tiny they look like delicate silk threads. When damaged, these smallest of roots can lead to a noticeable and, if unaddressed, a finally catastrophic decline.

Damage can occur to the plant through environmental conditions or by our own unwitting actions; we may have been careless and planted something in the wrong location, been inattentive and failed to add water when needed, or did not read the fertilizer directions carefully,

added too much of a good thing and utterly burning the roots.

When we look at our roots of faith, we can see something analogous to those tiny filaments that reach out for nourishment; in similar way our soul seeks sustenance from the Holy Eucharist and our hearts, minds and spirits look to the Lord for our consolation and peace.

Our thinnest spiritual threads feed and support the larger network of faith, but they can be damaged, also. We, too, become depleted and fragile from a prolonged experience of spiritual dryness or drought — those times when what seemed essential to our spiritual well-being appears to be lacking or feels blocked. In the spiritual desert, we thirst deeply for what is missing.

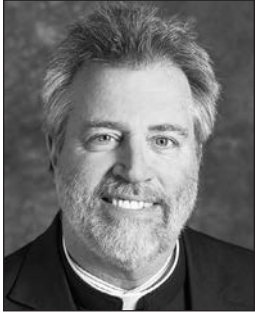
A healthy plant is resilient to minor root injury and can — with attention and patience — be restored to its original state. Even extensive damage, with proper care, is often reversible. The crux of the matter, though, is that the longer these less-than-optimal conditions go on, the more damage occurs and the more difficult it is to overcome the deterioration.

And here we see that the analogy holds. If I am not attentive to the smallest needs of my spirit, then decline is imminent and, if unchecked, can lead to catastrophic loss of faith. It can begin with an addiction given into, or moving away from the church because of scandal or ideology, or a sense of overwhelming apathy and a lack of hope.

When we are in a season of spiritual drought, we feel like we are not being given what we need to flourish in the faith — as if we are drying up. We simply stop our

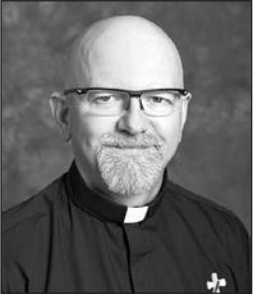
(Continued on page 20)

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

VIEWPOINT



Deacon David Profitt

GUEST



Margaret Rose Realy



About Thomas More University

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

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

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

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

The Center for Faith, Mission, & Catholic Education at Thomas More University, a fruit of the Holy Spirit

Kyle Isaack
Contributor

Thomas More has a long history of helping young people grow in the Catholic faith. It is no surprise that this work has become increasingly difficult with some studies showing that roughly two-thirds of college students stop practicing the faith that parents and communities have worked so hard to transmit.

In response to the phenomenon of secularization, the University is redoubling its efforts to directly bolster the faith-



(above) Detail from the large stained-glass window at Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel on the campus of Thomas More University.

(above right) The crucifix above the bell tower at Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel is shown in the background.

(right) Students pass Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel. The chapel sits front and center on the campus of Thomas More University exemplifying that Christ is the center of all we do.

development of college-aged students through the founding of the Center for Faith, Mission, and Catholic Education.

The mission of the Center is to serve as a catalyst for transformative faith experiences, intentional mission integration, and creative Catholic educational programs both on campus and in the wider community.

The University is experiencing immense success and growth as we celebrate a century of serving the community. Campus is alive with change and innovation as the entire Saints community works to achieve goals created in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan – Lighting the Way.

Through these initiatives, new facilities are being created and old facilities are being transformed to give students exceptional spaces to thrive, which translates into growing enrollment. The University desires to couple this attention to the exterior development of the campus with the interior development of students and community members through a deepened commitment to the mission of growing and sustaining challenging undergraduate, graduate and professional programs of study.

These academic offerings are marked by superior teaching and scholarship within the Catholic intellectual tradition in a way that meets the evolving needs of Thomas More's community amidst the changing realities of our culture.

The Center for Faith, Mission, and Catholic Education is a key element in helping to elevate the Catholic mission of the

University. The Center will develop innovative approaches to infusing mission into curricular, cocurricular, and continuing education programs coupled with community outreach. It will bolster Campus Ministry efforts to provide transformative faith experiences and evangelization through prayer, presence, and creative programming.

The Center will also expand the reach of the already established Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III '67 Institute for Religious Liberty, an entity devoted to advancing religious freedom as an unalienable right and the protection of this right for all



people by engaging the wider community in civil dialogue at yearly interfaith events. All these efforts are aimed toward the goal of forming faith-filled, virtuous and service-oriented students preparing to assume a vibrant, transformative role in their faith communities and society.

Once built, the Center for Faith, Mission, and Catholic Education will be housed in the newest academic center currently under construction on campus. A search is underway to find the inaugural center director to launch the Center's initial programming.

Ongoing work is being funded through the Second Century Capital Campaign and outcomes will be evaluated for efficacy using both quantitative and qualitative measures. This Center is inspiring and instrumental in providing support to college students as they explore and strengthen their faith during their time at Thomas More.

Kyle Isaack is associate director of development for Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

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.

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 Urban 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) 261-4487 or e-mail Sister Maria Therese at smtherese@nduec.org. Volunteers 18 and older must be VIRTUS compliant.

Knights of Columbus St. Timothy Council #15211 21st annual golf tournament Aug. 19, 1:30 p.m., Boone Links Golf Course. Cost is \$110 per player; \$400 foursome. Visit <http://www.sttimothygolfouting.com>.


To celebrate its parish feast day — the Queenship of Mary — Mary, Queen of Heaven parish, Erlanger, hosts its annual Queenship Rockin’ Eve event Aug. 19, 6:30-11 p.m. Three local music acts performing: Floyd and Don duo, Marty Connor Music, and Halfway Hammered. The annual parish picnic will be held on Aug. 20. All are welcome.

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization in collaboration with the Anglic Project invite all to attend a candlelight Mass the first Friday of every month, 7 p.m. The next is Sept. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Spring. Confessions available at 6 p.m.; a social for young adults ages 18–35 follows at 8 p.m.

The Class of 1963, St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, is celebrating its 60-year reunion. There is a luncheon planned for Sept. 10, 2023, 1 p.m., Summit Hills Country Club, Edgewood. Contact Carol Clear Combs at: cleargirl1008@aol.com or (513) 253-9273.

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 covidio.org/wedding-vespers/ 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.

To celebrate its parish feast day — the Queenship of Mary — Mary, Queen of Heaven parish, Erlanger, hosts its annual Queenship Rockin’ Eve event Aug. 19, 6:30-11 p.m. Three local music acts performing: Floyd and Don duo, Marty Connor Music, and Halfway Hammered. The annual parish picnic will be held on Aug. 20. All are welcome.



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2023 Parish Festivals

St. Bernard Parish , Dayton, August 18, 6–11 p.m., August 19, 5–11 p.m.	St. Augustine Parish , Augusta, Aug. 25–27	Sept. 15, 6–11 p.m., Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m.–12 a.m., Sept. 17 12:30–6 p.m.
St. Philip Golf Ball Drop and Festival , Melbourne, August 19, 5–11 p.m.	St. Cecilia Parish , Independence, Sept. 2, 5–11:30 p.m.; 3, 4–11:30 p.m.; 4, 1–10 p.m.	St. Agnes Parish , Ft. Wright, September 22–24
Holy Cross District High School , Covington, Aug. 25, 6 p.m.–midnight; Aug. 26, 5:30 p.m.–midnight	St. Barbara Rocktoberfest , Erlanger, September 8–10	St. Benedict Parish , Covington, September 22–23
Sts. Peter and Paul July Picnic , Aug. 26, meals 2–8 p.m., picnic 2 –11 p.m.; Sept. 23, Octoberfest 6 –11 p.m.	St. Patrick School , Maysville, Sept. 8, 6–10 p.m.; Sept. 9, 6–10 p.m.; Sept. 10, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.	DCCH Center for Children & Families , Sept. 30, 2–10 p.m.
	St. Timothy Oktoberfest , Union,	

Newport Central Catholic High School invites families up to the school hill, Sept. 3, for its 29th Family Fireworks Fest. Food, drinks, and games begin at 5 p.m. and will continue until the big blast. No cans, bottles or coolers will be permitted. Then watch the Western & Southern/WEBN Labor Day fireworks from one of the best views in Northern Kentucky. Admission is \$5; tickets can be purchased online at ncchs.com. Children age 6 and under no charge. Limited \$10 parking passes guaranteeing you parking on the hill are on sale. Select handicap space if needed. There are only 25 handicap spaces available. Contact Tessy Krebs at (859) 292-0001 ext. 528 or tkrebs@ncchs.com.

Save the date — Sept. 23, a day of recollection and exploration into the interconnectedness of the mind, body and soul at St. Joseph Heights, Park Hills, featuring speakers Msgr. William Cleves, Kathy Kramer and Jessica Muehlenkamp. This day will be one of growth and renewal. Cost is \$65, which includes the program materials, activities and a catered continental breakfast and lunch. For information e-mail holylisten-ing24@gmail.com.

St. Joseph Church, Camp Springs, will be hosting their Oktoberfish Fish Fries, October 7, 14 and 21, 4–7:30 p.m. Dine-in and carry-out available, more information at www.stjosephcamp-springs.org.

The Institute for Religious Liberty welcomes Stephanie Barclay, director, Notre Dame Law School Religious Liberty initiative, as the keynote speaker for its fall event, Oct. 19, 7 p.m., Steigerwald Hall in the Saints Center of Thomas More University’s campus. Guest commentators include Holly Hinckley Lesan, International Center for Law & Religion Studies at Brigham Young University (BYU) Law School and Gary

Greenberg, retired principal in the Cincinnati law office of Jackson Lewis P.C. and president of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. For information visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

DCCH Children’s Home Flea Market, Ft. Mitchell, year-round, 8:30 a.m.– noon, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; (Dec.– April, Monday, Thursday and every 3rd Saturday). Donation drop-off during Flea Market hours or at drop-off box anytime.

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://covidio.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.

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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Grace Marriage program takes off in Diocese of Owensboro, Ky., expands to other dioceses

Elizabeth Wong Barnstead
OSV News

OWENSBORO, Ky. — After taking off throughout the Diocese of Owensboro, a marriage enrichment program is expanding to other dioceses and parishes around the United States as leaders seek ways to embrace the Vatican’s proposal of a catechumenal model for marriage formation.

The program, called Grace Marriage, is for “making a good marriage even better,” according to Danny May, the



OSV News photo/courtesy Jamie Alexander

Brad and Marilyn Rhoads of Owensboro, Ky., pictured in an undated photo, are the co-founders of Grace Marriage. The couple started the marriage enrichment program in 2012.

Diocese of Owensboro’s director of marriage and family life, who helped provide the supplemental Catholic content for the curriculum, which was originally written from a nondenominational perspective.

“We don’t just want people to get married — we want them to stay married and have joyful marriages,” said May, explaining that parish marriage ministries tend to be limited to two areas: wedding and marriage preparation, and support for marriages in crisis.

But initiatives like Grace Marriage bridge the gap between premarital formation and trying to repair the damage of daily stresses and bad habits that have chipped away at a marriage.

“Marriage enrichment is what you do to keep a marriage thriving,” May told *The Western Kentucky Catholic*, Owensboro’s diocesan newspaper.

In January 2022, the western Kentucky diocese was one of the first five dioceses in the United States to receive a \$50,000 matching grant from the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund.

The diocese had already been offering Grace Marriage prior; but thanks to the grant, it has been able to expand to 13 locations — growing from 11 couples in the pilot program to 175 couples to date.

And while the Diocese of Owensboro was the first to begin offering the program to its parishes, other dioceses that have since gotten involved include the Diocese of Evansville, Indiana, the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, and the Diocese of San Bernardino, California.

Several parishes in Louisville, Kentucky, and a parish in Minneapolis also utilize Grace Marriage in their ministries.

May joined the Owensboro Diocese in December 2017, at a time when his office was undergoing a critical shift from being called the Office of Family Life to the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

Having marriage as the key component in his office’s objectives just makes sense, said May, explaining that “the heart of the church is the family, and the heart of the family is marriage.”

“We need to focus on both marriage prep and enrichment, and that’s directly from Pope Francis,” he said, referencing the catechumenal model for marriage formation described in the “Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life” document issued by the Vatican’s Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

Grace Marriage could not have come at a better time.

When May first learned about the marriage enrichment program, several local Catholics had already been involved with it, finding in Grace Marriage a resource that had been virtually absent in most parish life ministries.

By the time he sat down with Grace Marriage co-founder Brad Rhoads, May discovered that Rhoads had already read Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia” (“The Joy of Love”) to better understand Catholic perspectives on marriage.

Rhoads and his wife, Marilyn, founded Grace Marriage in 2012, after witnessing the breakdown of marriages and families in their respective fields — his as an attorney in the courtroom and hers as a counselor with a master’s in social work.

“On some level, everybody struggles,” Brad Rhoads told *The Western Kentucky Catholic* during an interview at the Grace Marriage headquarters in Owensboro.

He said the program helps couples realize that “we’re imperfect people who have struggles, but we’re built on the rock versus built on the sand” by having their marriage grounded in Christ.

(Continued on page 22)



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Lord our God,

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with the mysteries of the universe.

Send your Spirit upon these students and fill them
with your wisdom and blessings.

Grant that they may devote themselves to their studies
and draw ever closer to you, the source of all knowledge.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen



Back to School Supplement

THE MESSENGER • AUGUST 18, 2023

Make this new school year a new beginning in virtue

Bishop John Iffert
Diocese of Covington
Welcome back to a new school year!

I know that those words are not welcome by all students, but there are more than a few of you who are excited and eager for a new school year.

The thing I love most about school is that it is filled with opportunities for new beginnings. As the school year begins, older students will get to decide what classes to take as electives. Even younger students, with the help of parents and guardians, can decide again what sports to play, musical instrument to master, play to try out for, or club to join. Students increasingly come to know themselves and to choose the passion projects that motivate them and set them on new and exciting paths.

Our God calls us to new beginnings! Frequently we are asked to examine our lives, repent where we need to, and follow Christ more closely. God is certainly concerned that we learn to make the best use of our natural gifts — to reason and communicate effectively, to explore our world, and learn how to gather information and grow in wisdom — but God has shared with us that his greatest desire for us is that we learn to love God and neighbor more fully and completely. God — and all who really love you — are more concerned with **who you are** than what you can do.



Bishop John Iffert

I propose to students and teachers this year, that we place a focus on who we are and make a new beginning in growing our ability to do good and act lovingly. I propose that, along with grammar, science and math, our Catholic School students focus on growing in virtue.

I'd like to see us each choose a Christian virtue that we would like to progress in, devote ourselves to little actions and prayer that will help us grow in the habit of acting with that virtue. Let's each pick one virtue a term — or one each month — and intentionally practice it.

For example, if you find yourself more eager to speak than to listen to others, practice patience and humility by letting two or three people speak before you do. Or make the commitment that you're going to invite everyone to speak

at least once before you chime in a second time. When you fail, ask God for help. When you succeed, give thanks to God and ask God to help you make it a habit.

One helpful tool in this kind of endeavor is accountability. Perhaps we could share our desired virtue with a classmate or even a group within our class and share the ways that remembering our virtue has helped us respond in a more loving way to others or to situations.

Teachers, if it fits in your lesson plans, perhaps you can help students learn about the virtuous life, make choices,

be consistent, and learn to share examples with others in helpful and appropriate ways.

What are the virtues I am talking about? Christian virtues! Traditionally the Church speaks of four Cardinal Virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) that will help us develop the habits we need to grow in all natural virtues.

There are also three Theological Virtues (faith, hope and love). These are graces given by God, but we can practice living into them and begging God in prayer for them.

We can also look to the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5 for the kinds of Christian virtues that promote the vocation of the faithful. (Meekness anyone?)

The fruits of the Holy Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 may be ripe for our attention. The Church names 12 of these fruits: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity (CCC 1832).

Christian virtues help us be the people God created us to be. They also help us to do good and make a positive difference in the world. The proper end of the virtuous life is the highest virtue and greatest good — love. Once obtained, Christian virtues help us to love God and neighbor. They are treasures of great value that, unless we lose them by ignoring them, are ours for eternity.

Welcome back to a new school year and a new beginning! We love you, so we want to focus most of all on who you are — a Child of God (and a little bit on what you can do with those amazing talents God has given you).

May God bless you with every good gift in this new school year:

Christ-centered: at school, and at home

Kendra McGuire
Contributor
Another summer has come and gone and we find ourselves quickly settling back into the school year routines. As we begin this new school year, our school communities share similar hopes and expectations.

Our faculty, staff, parents, and students all long for a successful year with great growth in learning. We hope for positive relationships that are cooperative and share common goals. But above all, we long to be part of a school community where everyone is welcome, everyone is loved, and everyone feels that they are an important part of the school.

In order for our school communities to meet these hopes

and expectations, we have to recognize that Jesus Christ must be the center of all we do. In the book of James 1:17, we learn that “all good giving and every perfect gift is from above.” Together, we must put our faith first and be willing to serve where God calls us. By serving Him, we will become instruments through which God's gifts of peace, love and joy will flow and fill our schools.

In early August, the teachers in our Catholic schools gathered together to focus on putting our faith first. We learned about the importance of prayer in our lives and discussed new ways to increase prayer in our classrooms and in our schools. We studied Sacred Scripture through the lens of a teacher to learn how Jesus, the Master Teacher, models great

teaching. And we learned how we are all called to invite others to choose a relationship with Jesus Christ.

As I reflect upon the learning our teachers experienced, I believe it is helpful to think about this as parents too. We should stop and think about how we pray in our homes. Is it only before meals? Do we pray together as we head to school? This year, resolve to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) in your home and with your children.

Our homes should also include the study of Sacred Scripture. We are called to live as Jesus lived, to model our actions after Him. Reading a Bible passage together daily or in preparation for Sunday Masses would be a great way to learn about Jesus and open the door to conversations about God and how He works in our lives.

As parents, the primary teachers of our children, we have a responsibility to call them into communion with Jesus. How often does Jesus come up in our conversations? When our children are struggling with the daily challenges of life, do we invite them to pray, visit with Jesus in Adoration, or go to Mass? Do we take them to Mass every Sunday where we can remind them that we go to give glory and praise to God for all the good gifts He has given to us?

This school year, let's keep our expectations high and hold on to hope for great things. The faculty and staff in our schools are already working hard to help their students learn. We know they will lead our children in prayer and worship and create Christ-centered classrooms.

As parents, let us also make a commitment to strengthen our school communities further by making our homes Christ-centered too. When our communities are united in Jesus Christ, both at home and school, then they will reflect the love of Jesus Christ and become places where all will be welcomed, loved, and filled with great joy!

Kendra McGuire is superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Covington, Ky



Kendra McGuire

Latin School welcomes new chaplain!

Reverend Father Michael Elmlinger

Covington Latin Class of 2016

Covington Latin School

Prayer and gratitude will get you through school and life

David Cooley
Contributor

It's that time of the year again that's filled with both excitement and anxiety for students, teachers, and parents alike. For most of us the summer is already out of reach, but a new school year brings with it an opportunity for a fresh start and new adventures.

Still, August and everything that comes after can be a little overwhelming. There is always so much to do and lots of pressure to get the school year off to a good start. With all the paperwork, school rules, bus routes, uniforms, practices, homework, etc., it's important that we find balance each day. And there is only one way to ensure balance. Prayer, our ongoing conversation with God, must be our anchor in our day-to-day life if we are going to have any sense of peace.

The best way we can help our young people navigate through life is to teach them the art of daily prayer — the importance of finding a place to be quiet and shut out all the noise — and to challenge them to find things to be grateful for every day. Prayer and gratitude, these are treasures of a Catholic school.

I don't have to tell you that childhood today is very different than when we were growing up. But remember, it was a lot different for us than it was for our grandparents. Yet, it seems that many young people in our time are struggling with finding joy. Perhaps without all this technology it was easier to find the simple joys of life. The antidote to this problem is prayer and gratitude.

Children always have and will always need the same things. They need love and family; they need structure and recreation, they need friendship and a sense of understanding who they are in the eyes of God. They need to be humble, but also recognize they have a great purpose in life.

If we are to teach our children to be grateful, then we need to be grateful ourselves. Our gratitude and positive attitudes must be visible to young eyes. Teachers are, after all, witnesses. It is very fitting that in the Diocese of Covington, Bishop Iffert's episcopal motto is "In all things



David Cooley

give thanks," (Thes 5:18). It is not easy, but it is life changing.

I want to begin this year by expressing how grateful I am for Catholic schools.

First and foremost, Catholic schools provide opportunities every day for students and faculty to encounter Christ. Our schools are at their best when they are providing the opportunity to receive Jesus in the sacrament of His Most Holy Body and Blood — what a gift.

Catholic schools are a place where we find an extended family; people who understand that we are all on this journey together to get to heaven. As the culture becomes more and more secular, Catholic schools are safe havens and beacons of light in the growing darkness. There aren't many places left where we can trust our young people

aren't being bombarded with all kinds of unhealthy messages.

Catholic schools help our young people prioritize what is really important in life. By orienting their lives toward Christ and to serving others, things begin to make more sense. Sports, art, academics, video games, etc., all have a place, but a good school teaches children that God comes first. If a child learns early to put God first in everything they do, everything else will fall into place.

Catholic schools teach children that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore every individual is unique and has an undeniable dignity as a child of God. This is important because it helps them understand more profoundly why things like bullying is wrong, why we need to respect our bodies and the bodies of others. It isn't just, "This is wrong because the teacher said so;" it's a lot deeper than that. Seeing the world this way, helps people learn to love themselves and others.

I could go on and on about why I am grateful for Catholic schools. I am so thankful for the many years I spent in Catholic schools myself and that I am now able to send my own children to Catholic schools.

I think if I had to sum it all up, I would say that Catholic schools are a blessing because they minister to the whole person — mind, body and soul. There is a lot to unpack in that statement, and there are a lot of happy accidents in the results when you minister to children this way.

Graduating from our schools we see good citizens, we see artists, we see doctors, we see famers, we see firefighters, teachers, the list can go on and on. But most importantly, graduating from our schools we see disciples of Christ, who are going to go out and make this world a better place.

David Cooley is co-director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization in the Diocese of Covington.

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Yeah, sweat the small stuff (sometimes)

Julie Feinauer
Contributor

We often hear the phrase, “Don’t sweat the small stuff.” As a mom of five and a former high school teacher and counselor, I would say that this is a great piece of advice. Probably one that has saved my sanity over the years.

There are, however, a few times when “sweating the small stuff” might be necessary to keep children safe, healthy and happy.

“Sweat” small behavioral changes — it may indicate that your child has something going on that you should find out about. These might include changes in demeanor, grooming, grades and regressive or secretive behaviors. He won’t talk about his weekend with his grandparents. I don’t think he bathed this weekend. He doesn’t want me to look at his Snapchat. She started sucking her thumb again. Many times, these indicators are “tells” that give insight into a bigger issue. It does not necessarily indicate that something bad is happening, there just might be something your child needs your help to resolve.

“Sweat” small insights or observations — from teachers, caregivers or coaches. Many times, those who educate or guide our children are the first to recognize signs that a child needs help because they can see a behavior change as the child relates to other children on the field, or, in the classroom or day-care setting. Especially bullying, as this is often something that children won’t share with parents.

One of the most frustrating things that I experienced as a teacher and counselor was parents who would not listen when I shared information about what I had been observing. “Not my child” might be the phrase teachers dislike the most. Not because it angers us; it frustrates us to know



Julie Feinauer

that our student won’t get the help he or she needs. “Sweat” small pockets of time — that you can talk to your children. I used to think that I had to have a formal plan and “sit down” with my children to talk to them about big topics like boundaries, safety or drugs and alcohol. I realized that the best conversations we had were organic.

Use the time to and from sports, in the drive-thru, whenever you get a few minutes to ask what is going on in their lives. Allow them to help lead the conversation and don’t be afraid to answer questions. If you don’t know the answer, tell them you’ll find out together. It’s okay not to be an expert on everything. Remember if you aren’t talking to them about it, someone else will.

As we begin this new school year, take a fresh approach when dealing with the hassles of everyday life. Begin the day thanking God for the truly small things like

the way your son combs his hair into a style that frankly looks more like he just got up than when he just got up, or the way your daughter says, “whoops!” every time she bumps the curb when she parks. These are the quirks that make our children who they are. Parenting is hard, give yourself and your children some slack.

The small things stay small if you are willing to deal with them together.

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

Meet the new principals



Mrs. Kimberly Wagner
St. Henry Catholic School
Erlanger, KY

Kimberly Wagner will be the new principal at St. Henry Catholic School for the 2023-2024 school year. Mrs. Wagner is entering her 13th year in education and has served as the Student Life director at Notre Dame Academy for the last two years and was a religion teacher at Notre Dame for the last 12 years. She has been the faculty moderator for the Student Council for the last 10en years.

Mrs. Wagner earned her bachelor’s degree in theology from Xavier University and her master’s in religious education from Loyola University in New Orleans. She is currently finishing her M.A. in Education Administration at Xavier University and will complete her degree in the spring.

When asked about her new position Mrs. Wagner said, “I am excited to be a part of the St. Henry community! Everyone has been so welcoming, and I look forward to continuing to foster that community atmosphere where we teach students to be connected to their faith, confident in their abilities and to contribute to society.”

Mrs. Wagner and her husband, Tony, have one daughter. As a family they enjoy listening to music, cooking and going to Kings Island. They attend Holy Cross Parish where Tony is the music director.

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Mrs. Kristin Harper
Immaculate Heart of Mary School
Burlington, KY

Mrs. Harper has a long history of serving the families of Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington. Her 26 years in the Diocese of Covington have all been at IHM. She has served as a third-grade teacher; reading interventionist, a 7th grade Language Arts teacher; assistant principal and now, she is very proud to be the principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

Mrs. Harper is a product of the Diocese of Covington herself; attending St. Paul School for elementary school and graduating from Villa Madonna Academy in 1993. She credits the Diocese of Covington for her own professional success and feels

called to give back.

She graduated from the University of Kentucky (1997) with her BA in Elementary Education and Northern Kentucky University with her master's in education, with an endorsement in reading/writing for grades K-12. She is also certified in the Orton-Gillingham strategy and has tutored many students in reading over the years. She is currently enrolled and continuing to work toward her Rank I through the University of the Cumberlands.

Kristin and her husband, William, were married at Mother of God Church in 2000. Their three children have attended IHM: Will, a 2021 graduate of Covington Catholic and now a junior at the University of Kentucky, Caroline, a rising senior at Notre Dame Academy and Margo, a rising 8th grader at IHM.

Kristin and her husband, William, have been married for 23 years and enjoy traveling to Spain, watching their children play soccer and all UK sports.

Mrs. Harper says, "I am always up for the next challenge to serve; IHM means the world to me, in fact, it is part of my identity. I credit amazing IHM principals who have gone before me who have taught me so much. I vow to continue IHM's successful legacy and advance it even further academically and spiritually. Thank you, always, to the best parents, students and faculty anywhere!"

She looks forward to the 2023-2024 school year and continuing to serve IHM School and parish by sharing her passion for students, families and faculty.

Bishop Roger J. Foy's Ministry and Service Scholarship at Thomas More University

Josh Ostertag
Contributor

A foundational element of any Catholic university is an active faith life on campus. The Department of Campus Ministry at Thomas More University strives to foster just that, but in a way that offers a unique experience for our students.

The majority of the department's programs and events are led by students, under the guidance of staff members. This is intentionally designed as this format allows students to cultivate the seeds of leadership on campus in the realms of prayer, fellowship, service and faith development. Students who desire to use their gifts in service to the Thomas More community, grow not only in their own faith life, but also develop skills to use beyond their university years.

An important supportive element to student-led Campus Ministry initiatives is the Bishop Roger J. Foy's Ministry and Service Scholarship. This program has a two-fold purpose as it promotes scholarship through the development of faith, character, and learning for the individual and, for a select number of participants, pro-

vides funds to aid in making the cost of attending the University more affordable.

Formed at Thomas More in 2015, the program gives Catholic students a vehicle to intentionally pursue faith and leadership development to enhance Catholic identity on campus. By multiplying the student leaders who spread the Gospel and support the spiritual lives of fellow students, Campus Ministry has greater outreach and effect than if the staff members were working alone.

This multiplication of student leadership is evident in the growth in number of those taking part as scholars in the program. In 2016, there were two active students serving as leaders in one ministry-related group; that number has since grown to 92 students active

in seven regular groups performing various aspects of ministry and service. Each of the last two incoming classes has seen our highest number of students enter as scholars in the program: 34 in fall 2022 and 40 and counting in fall 2023.

Part of my job as Campus Minister is organizing and recruiting for the scholarship program

(Continued on page 17)



Josh Ostertag

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BACK TO SCHOOL

(Continued from page 15)

in support of our students. Participants are required to perform regular ministry and service, both on and off campus, and take part in regular faith formation and leadership development with the goal of being missionary disciples enlivened by the grace of Jesus Christ on campus and in the world.

On the recruitment side of things, part of my job is to establish stronger relationships with Catholic high

schools, especially in the Diocese of Covington. My task is to find Catholic students who are faith-filled, passionate about Jesus Christ and his Church, and who have been or want to be leaders in campus ministry during their time in college.

The Diocese of Covington is blessed to have a multitude of outstanding Catholic schools serving primary and secondary level students, and the blessing of Catholic education in the Diocese continues beyond high school. Thomas

More University is one of only 11 diocesan Catholic universities in the country.

Part of the mission of Campus Ministry is to find, educate, raise up, and send out faithful stewards of God’s kingdom in the Diocese of Covington, the Greater Cincinnati area, and anywhere else our students choose to live after graduation.

The seal of the

University bears the words “Light Conquers Darkness.” This prominent Christian theme expresses the reality that Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh, and he brought light to the world shrouded in the darkness of sin. As in the days of Jesus, all ages stand in need of spreading the light and joy of the Gospel to our world, our nation, our families and, in this case especially, our universities. Students are invited to do just that through the advantage the Bishop Roger J. Foys Ministry and Service Scholarship provides.

If you, your child, or someone you know is a Catholic high school student — whether at a Catholic school or not — invite them to check out Thomas More as they begin their higher education search. Come and see what is going on right in your backyard, what Campus Ministry is doing at the University, and how you can contribute. We invite you to enrich your faith during your college experience as you Make it More.

For more information and to view the application for the Bishop Roger J. Foys Ministry and Service Scholarship, visit thomasmore.edu/foys or call (859) 344.3399.

Josh Ostertag is campus minister at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Diocesan Policy states that “No person shall be refused admission to any church, school or institution or membership in any Catholic society or organization solely on the grounds of race or nationality.” In keeping with this policy, the schools under the auspices of the Department of Catholic Education, Diocese of Covington, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national or ethnic origin. Students of any race who meet the individual school’s eligibility requirements are admitted to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to students at that school and that school does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships and loan programs and other school-administered programs. The names and addresses of these schools are listed below.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- Bishop Brossart - 4 Grove Street, Alexandria, Kentucky 41001-1295
- Covington Catholic - 1600 Dixie Highway, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2797
- Covington Latin - 21 East Eleventh Street, Covington, Kentucky 41011-3196
- Holy Cross - 3617 Church Street, Covington, Kentucky 41015-1498
- Newport Central Catholic - 13 Carothers Road, Newport, Kentucky 41071-2497
- Notre Dame Academy - 1699 Hilton Drive, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2705
- St. Henry - 3755 Scheben Drive, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-3597
- St. Patrick - 318 Limestone Street, Maysville, Kentucky 41056-1248
- Villa Madonna Academy - 2500 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills, Kentucky 41017-3798

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Blessed Sacrament - 2407 Dixie Highway, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky 41017-2994
- Holy Cross - 3615 Church Street, Covington, Kentucky 41015-1430
- Holy Trinity School - 235 Division Street, Bellevue, Kentucky 41073-1101
- Immaculate Heart of Mary - 5876 Veterans Way, Burlington, Kentucky 41005-8824
- Mary Queen of Heaven - 1130 Donaldson Road, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-1088
- Prince of Peace - 625 Pike Street, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2148
- St. Agnes - 1322 Sleepy Hollow Road, Ft. Wright, Kentucky 41011-2795
- St. Anthony - 485 Grand Avenue, Covington, Kentucky 41015-0219
- St. Augustine - 1840 Jefferson Avenue, Covington, Kentucky 41014-1165
- St. Catherine of Siena - 23 Rossford Avenue, Ft. Thomas, Kentucky 41075-1298
- St. Cecilia - 5313 Madison Pike, Independence, Kentucky 41051-8611
- St. Edward - 107 North Walnut Street, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031-1299
- St. Henry - 3825 Dixie Highway, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018-1863
- St. Joseph - 6829 Four Mile Road, Camp Springs, Kentucky 41059-9507
- St. Joseph - 4011 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, Kentucky 41076-1817
- St. Joseph - 2474 Lorraine Avenue, Crescent Springs, Kentucky 41017-1493
- St. Joseph Academy - 48 Needmore Street, Walton, Kentucky 41094-1028
- St. Mary - 9 South Jefferson Street, Alexandria, Kentucky 41001-1398
- St. Patrick - 318 Limestone Street, Maysville, Kentucky 41056-1248
- St. Patrick - 3285 Mills Road, Taylor Mill, Kentucky 41015-2480
- St. Paul - 7301 Dixie Highway, Florence, Kentucky 41042-0366
- Sts. Peter & Paul - 2160 California Crossroads, California, Kentucky 41007-9713
- St. Philip - 1400 Mary Ingles Hwy., Melbourne, Kentucky 41059-9701
- St. Pius X - 348 Dudley Road, Edgewood, Kentucky 41017-2698
- St. Therese - 2516 Alexandria Pike, Southgate, Kentucky 41071-3298
- St. Thomas - 428 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue, Ft. Thomas, Kentucky 41075-2295
- St. Timothy - 10268 Hwy 42, Union, Kentucky 41091-9591
- Villa Madonna Academy - 2500 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills, Kentucky 41017-3798

Farm to School grant brings fresh Ky food to Ky students

Laura Keener
Editor

The distance between the farm and the food students will be served in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Covington has shortened. The Diocese of Covington School Lunch Program has received a grant from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to help plan, support and implement its Farm to School Program.

With the Farm to School Program schools and farmers find each other on an online hub so that in working together Kentucky’s students are served Kentucky food grown and raised by Kentucky farmers. Both schools and farmers post profiles on the Farm to School online hub so that schools can share their goals and what food is needed, and farmers can share what food they have available. It also provides school food service directors with resources on how to calculate the quantity of food needed and the safe handling of food.

“We want to serve fresher food and we want to support local farmers,” said Laura Hatfield,

(Continued on page 18)



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Farm to School

(Continued from page 17)

diocesan director of the School Lunch Program.

This first year, the diocesan School Lunch Office is working with Creation Gardens to connect with local farmers. All of the schools will be serving local produce, the high schools will also be serving local meats.

“It’s only going to get bigger,” said Mrs. Hatfield as she

Drawn into the Mystery: A grand slam for God

My parents sat down their thirteen-year-old son for what appeared to be an important conversation. What they told me was a complete surprise.

My parents explained that they weren’t happy with the public high school’s baseball program. Both Catholic schools in the area were known both for academic and athletic excellence, as well as discipline and family atmosphere.

Even as an eighth grader, I knew that this would be a significant financial expense for my parents. We didn’t have a lot of money, but my parents were willing to make this sacrifice for me and my future. I was touched that my parents even considered it. They believed in me.

Even though recruiting was not allowed, I heard from the baseball coaches at both Catholic high schools. I was honored that both coaches took a special interest in inviting me to different events. Providence invited me to a basketball game where I sat with the dean and some of my baseball friends. We watched a great Providence team — led by Walter Downing, who would go on to play at Marquette and DePaul — dominate the court. The crowd was electric and the feeling in the gym made me feel like I was at home. Although I had enjoyed my visit to Joliet Catholic, that night I decided to spend the next four years at Providence and began to prepare myself for success.

The dean explained to me that, even though I wasn’t Catholic, I would have to attend the all-school Masses and take the theology courses. I didn’t mind. I was willing to do whatever it took to further my baseball career and to get a good education. I had nothing against Catholicism. I just didn’t know much about it. That didn’t make seeing multiple priests and religious sisters on staff any less intimidating. I had never been that close to a priest or religious sister before, other than seeing them while attending an occasional Mass with my Aunt Judi. But at Providence they were walking the halls and teaching classes.

When I entered the school that first day as a freshman, I was scared to death. My fear didn’t last long, as the atmosphere of Providence made me feel like I belonged. Although I had enjoyed my public school experience, this was different. Providence seemed to radiate a family-like spirit. Even though I knew my teachers had cared about me in grade school, the teachers at Providence took it to a higher level. The students cared for one another, and the teachers cared for us like we were their own children. I was drawn into that environment and loved it.

My confidence plummeted, however, when I walked into my freshman theology class. As a child, I had heard some stories about Jesus, so I thought I knew a little about the Bible. I was a good student, and I believed I could figure it out. I soon realized I was way behind the curve.

My classmates, many of whom had gone to Catholic grade school, seemed to know everything about the faith and the Bible. On top of it all, a religious sister taught the class. Her name was Sister Margaret Anne. She wasn’t mean or scary — in fact, she was incredibly kind — but I was intimidated by her spirituality. When she looked at you, she seemed to look right into your soul. So, naturally, I tried to blend into the wall.

I listened intently but feared that at any moment she would ask me a simple question that I wouldn’t be able to answer. My biggest worry was being embarrassed in front of my peers for not knowing a basic tenet of the faith.

Sister never put me on the spot. I was always striving for perfection in the classroom, always at the top of my class, but I was way out of my league here. At the same time, the theology class intrigued me, and I found myself drawn to Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Sister Margaret Anne would stand at the doorway at the end of class and say goodbye to each of us. One day, I was the last one left after the bell rang, and I knew something was going to happen when I saw Sister waiting for me. “How can I sneak by her without any interaction?” I thought, dreading walking through the door.

As I tried to pass by her, Sister stopped me. She raised my

looks forward to the success of the program.

By serving fresher, seasonal produce it is anticipated that the food served will look and taste better, thereby increasing student participation in the school lunch program. The lunches will also be healthier by reducing, not eliminating, processed food, said Mrs. Hatfield.

“What I love about the program — right now we have melons, watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew — there are some children that never get exposed to these fresh foods. They will

chin, looked me in the eye, and said, “Burke, you are searching for something.” I didn’t know how to react, so I smiled, put my head back down, and tried to walk away. She stopped me again and gave me a Bible. “Start reading the Gospel of Matthew,” she said.

“Thank you,” I said, accepting her gift and walking quickly away.

What just happened? Her suspicion about me made sense. I guess I’d always known I was searching for something but had never been able to put into words what I was feeling. I was searching — but for what? And better yet, how did she know? And where in the Bible was the Gospel of Matthew? I was touched by her concern and thought she may be giving me answers to my deepest questions.

My mind raced during baseball practice that afternoon. I went home, ate dinner, did my homework, and went to my room. I shut the door because I didn’t want my brothers to know what I was doing. They knew that I was a good student and that I would study anything my teachers told me to. But I didn’t want to have to explain that I couldn’t wait to get to the Bible. I found the Gospel of Matthew and began to read the Bible for the first time in my life.

Even though I had what seemed like an idyllic upbringing, nobody’s life is perfect and nobody is without sin. I knew I was a sinner, and I honestly believed I was the only one. Was I the only one with a messed-up life? I thought that if people knew who I was — really knew — they’d run. I was still growing into my identity. Who was I? Was I the result of all my past mistakes? Was I the combination of all my sins?

now,” said Anita Neufelder, assistant director, School Lunch Program. “The produce is seasonal so at different times of the year our students will get the freshest food.”

Another welcome aspect of the program is that it gives school cafeteria managers an opportunity “to be a little bit creative,” said Mrs. Neufelder, assistant director, School Lunch Program. “This produce is beautiful. We are trying to stay within our budget but offer the students the best tasting food we can find.”

That’s why I unconsciously became a perfectionist. I thought that if I became this person that everyone liked, if I portrayed this perfect image, if I became this person that others wanted me to be, everyone, including God, would love me. Looking back, I realize how much I wanted to be known and to be loved. I couldn’t have articulated that at the time, but I was searching.

Reading the Bible was consoling me, and I could not get enough.

I didn’t read much that first night, but I enjoyed what I read. I decided I would read a little bit more every night until I got through the Gospel. My heart was open, and I started to hope that Jesus was going to give me what I had been searching for.

As the weeks passed, I felt lighter each time I read the Scriptures. I looked forward to the time I got to spend with the Bible. When I read about Jesus dying on the cross, I sensed great peace and joy. I realized that if Jesus willingly died on the cross to save me, it demanded a response from me. At the time, I didn’t know what Jesus would ask of me. But I felt a peace and joy that I had never experienced before.

The seeds of my vocation were planted during that time of reading the Gospel of Matthew. Sister Margaret Anne was right: I was searching for something. But not only that; I was searching for someone. I had found him, and I couldn’t get enough.

Father Burke Masters was born and raised in Joliet, Illinois. He became Catholic during his senior year of high school and played college baseball at Mississippi State University. This excerpt from his book “A Grand Slam for God” is from the Word on Fire website, www.WordOnFire.org.



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Belief in action

(Continued from page 7)

The Canaanite woman finds herself in a situation beyond her ability to remedy. Realizing that Jesus is her only hope, she is forced to “stand trustfully on the ground of the word of God.”

Just as Peter’s faith was tested by seeing the force of the wind, so the Canaanite woman’s faith is tested, first by Jesus’ lack of response, and then even further by Jesus’ first refusal. Unlike Peter, though, this woman refuses to let anything disengage her from Jesus. She passes her test and is rewarded, by Jesus’ affirmation and by the healing of her daughter.

There are many areas of our lives where we are called to live these three elements of faith, but a good example is the practice of tithing. The Israelites were taught that a tenth “of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” (Lev 27:30)

Whether or not one believes that one’s tithe literally should be 10 percent of one’s earnings, tithing is not about

money, but about faith. It is a response to God, and ideally the amount should be one that requires us to trust God. In fact, one suggestion I make to people, especially to people who are just beginning to tithe, is to choose an amount that you think you can afford, and then add enough more to make you nervous. When we choose an amount we can afford, we are making a contribution or a payment. When we choose an amount that makes us nervous, then we are forcing ourselves to “stand trustfully on the ground of the word of God.”

Choosing truly to tithe, to give 10 percent of our earnings back to God, is even better, because then we are not choosing the amount at all but allowing God to choose it, which certainly forces us to live in trust, to ignore “how strong the wind is.”

Truly living in faith is difficult, but the Canaanite woman is an example to encourage us. Let us believe in the words of the psalmist: “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. (Psalm 37:5)

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

The time of my life

(Continued from page 7)

area. It is important to first discuss with your physician if you have any concerns or conditions. It also helps to work with a fitness professional if you desire a designed program. Even better for some is to find a group to join. Group fitness is exploding around the area.

Ultimately, seek God’s help in the process. I start every workout session offering up the work I’m going to do for someone in need.

Fitness is an important aspect of my spiritual journey. As we read in Psalm 144, “Blessed be the Lord who trains my hands for battle.” The battle we fight today requires the best from us. Fitness helps us be the best version of ourselves. I encourage you to start those healthy habits as a way of thanking God for your life.

Deacon David Profitt is a leadership consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.

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Instructive spiritual notes

(Continued from page 7)

spiritual practices — we let go of prayer, stay home from Mass and otherwise assist in our own spiritual demise. As with our plants, the longer the damaging behavior goes on the longer and more complex the stages to restoration. But spiritual recovery, no matter how deep and pro-

longed the drought, is possible through grace, and through our willingness to take the necessary steps to heal. It may take time, and confession, and sacred reading and possibly even some one-on-one spiritual direction, but healing will come, and we will be all the more aware in the future of how to manage a spiritual drought and avert woeful damage. We can always stretch our spiritual roots more deeply

into the teaming soil of the church seeking the waters of lasting baptism. Even during a spiritual drought, if we are strongly rooted and committed to our spiritual self-care, we are assured that Our Lord’s grace will restore us to health. Margaret Rose Realy is a Benedictine Oblate and the author of “A Garden Catechism: 100 Plants in Christian Tradition and How to Grow Them” (OSV, 2022).

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Additional details about each of the above opportunities can be found on our website at <https://www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events/job-opportunities>. Please contact Shannon Braun directly at sbraun@covingtoncharities.org if you would like to learn more about any of these opportunities.

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WYD pilgrims showed the world faith can lead to peace, pope says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — In a world suffering from “diseases of the soul,” like pride, hatred and violence, the young people who traveled to Portugal for World Youth Day showed that another way of living and interacting is possible, Pope Francis said.

World Youth Day was not a vacation, but “an encounter with the living Christ in the church. The young people went to encounter Christ,” the pope said Aug. 9 at his weekly general audience.

Restarting the Wednesday appointments after a month-long summer break, Pope Francis used his main audience talk to share some reflections on his trip Aug. 2-6 to Fátima and Lisbon for World Youth Day, an event that saw 1.5 million people gather for a prayer vigil and for Mass.

In addition to the large events with young people from around the world, the pope said he had an opportunity for smaller, more intimate meetings, including with a group of



Pope Francis accepts a bouquet of flowers from a newlywed couple at the end of his weekly general audience Aug. 9, 2023, in the Vatican audience hall. Couples who recently married often attend the audience in their wedding clothes and receive a special blessing from the pope.

young people from Ukraine, “who shared stories that were painful” about their lives and the losses they have endured since Russia launched a full-scale war on their country.

“While in Ukraine and other places in the world there is fighting, and while in certain hidden halls war is planned — this is awful, isn’t it, wars are planned,” he said, “World Youth Day showed everyone that another world is possible: a world of brothers and sisters, where the flags of all peoples fly together, next to each other, without hatred, without fear, without closing up, without weapons!”

“The message of the young people was clear: will the ‘great of the earth’ listen to it, I wonder, to this youthful enthusiasm that wants peace?” the pope asked. “It is a parable for our time, and even today Jesus says: ‘He who has ears, let him hear! He who has eyes, let him look!’ We hope the whole world listens to this World Youth Day and sees the beauty of these youth moving forward.”

Pope Francis, who did not read a planned prayer for

peace in Ukraine while at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima, told people at the audience, “I prayed that God would heal the world of the diseases of the soul: pride, lies, enmity, violence — these are diseases of the soul, and the world is sick with these diseases.”

And, he said, while at the shrine, “we renewed the consecration of ourselves, of Europe, of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” he said. “I prayed for peace because there are many wars in many parts of the world.”

Addressing Polish speakers at the audience, Pope Francis offered his blessing to the thousands of people making the traditional August pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Jasna Góra in Czestochowa.

“I entrust you with a desire I have in my heart: the desire for peace in the world,” he told the pilgrims. “Present it to the one who is the Queen of Peace. Ask for this priceless gift, especially for the dear and tormented Ukraine.”

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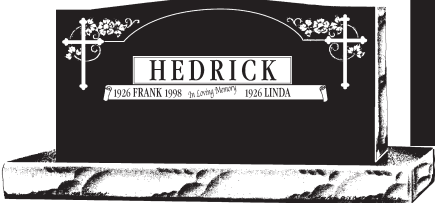
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Marriage program

(Continued from page 10)

He said the program stands out because it is ongoing — as opposed to most marriage coaching programs that have a beginning and a conclusion.

Instead, Grace Marriage sessions meet on a quarterly basis for several hours. The sessions include some video presentations and small group conversations, but prioritize time with the husbands and wives talking one-on-one through discussion prompts and workbook questions “because most of the time that’s not going to happen” amid life’s busyness, said Rhoads.

“Unless you fight to stay close together, life will quickly divide a couple,” he said. “It takes intentional investment.”

Renea Estes — today a marriage ministry consultant with Grace Marriage — and her husband, Jonathon, were among the first local Catholics to engage with the program.

After hearing about Grace Marriage from a friend and attending sessions in 2018 at a Baptist church, the Estes encountered several fellow Catholic couples who loved Grace Marriage. Together, they agreed that “we need this!” in the wider Catholic community.

The Estes met with May and Owensboro Bishop William F. Medley, and soon after the diocese decided to launch a pilot program in 2019 to see how it would be received.

“Then it took off,” said Estes.

She left the corporate world during COVID and began working with Grace Marriage in

2021 to specifically work with Catholic clients — and has seen the initiative bear fruit for the many parishes and couples she has encountered.

“We provide the tools for them to be able to add this ministry to their parish,” she said. “It can be lay-led and doesn’t have to take a lot of time or budget from the parish, other than having the parish help promote it.”

Estes said Grace Marriage’s adaptable nature has made it accessible for parish life.

Many parishes’ groups meet on Saturday mornings once a quarter, though one new group plans to meet every Saturday for a month, based on parishioners’ preferences. Some groups are limited to registered parishioners, while others share a group across a county or parish cluster.

Several parishes are already heading into their third or fourth year of Grace Marriage, and May is encouraged to see that “they still want it.”

Rhoads is pleased to see how Grace Marriage has taken off in the Owensboro Diocese and beyond.

“When people make time for their marriage and dedicate time to enjoy it — when people invest in it — they find there is more there than they realized,” he said, adding that the ages of participants are “surprisingly consistent among both younger and older people: we’ve seen people married for 60 years and people married for one month.”

He said his hope is to teach the new generation of married couples “a new way to do marriage.”



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National/World

Appeals court revives pro-lifers’ suit over arrest for chalk messages

WASHINGTON — A panel of judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on Aug. 15 revived a 2020 suit filed by pro-life activists who alleged the city acted unconstitutionally when police arrested them for drawing anti-abortion messages in chalk on a sidewalk outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in the nation’s capital. The protesters allege the city’s treatment of them in 2020 was disproportionate to racial justice protesters who wrote “Black Lives Matter” graffiti on public spaces, arguing that such instances were not met with comparable consequences amid protests over the death of Minneapolis man George Floyd while he was in police custody. The protesters, Erica Caporaletti and Warner DePriest, later filed a lawsuit alleging the city engaged in selective enforcement in their arrest, but a district court dismissed their lawsuit in 2021. But the three-judge appeals court panel issued a unanimous ruling that reversed the lower court’s dismissal of the lawsuit, allowing it now to move forward. The panel found that while a D.C. law prohibiting defacement of property is constitutional, the anti-abortion protesters can continue their lawsuit alleging that the law was unevenly applied to them during their arrest for writing “Black Pre-Born Lives Matter” outside the clinic located less than two miles north of the U.S. Capitol building. “The government may not play favorites in a public forum — permitting some messages and prohibiting others,” the ruling said.

Catholics appeal for help in Maui’s deadly fires

HONOLULU — Catholic Charities Hawai’i in the Honolulu Diocese has appealed for donations to help the agency meet housing, food and other needs of what could be thousands of victims from wildfires raging on the island of Maui that wiped out an entire town and drove people to seek refuge in the ocean. More than 11,000 people were evacuated as wildfires burned the historic town of Lahaina “to the ground,” as numerous news outlets reported. Maui County officials confirmed Aug. 12 that at least 93 people have died, though that number was expected to multiply, and dozens of others were injured. An assessment of the Lahaina fire by the Pacific Disaster Center and Federal Emergency Management Agency reported 2,170 acres burned and more than 2,200 structures were damaged or destroyed. Other Maui communities affected by the fires include the Kihei area and inland communities known as Upcountry. News reports said that wildfires also were affecting the Big Island (officially named Hawaii), and crews were battling a total of six fires, with three simultaneously torching Maui. Firefighting crews continued to extinguish flare-ups in Lahaina and Upcountry into the evening Aug. 12, and the Pulehu/Kihei area fire was declared 100% con-

tained to avoid further spread of the flames. “We can only imagine the distress and heartache that many are currently experiencing from the destructive wildfires on Maui, and our thoughts and prayers are with everyone impacted,” said a statement posted on the website of Catholic Charities Hawai’i, which urged people to make a donation to the agency for Maui relief at catholiccharitieshawaii.org/maui-relief. On Aug. 10, President Joe Biden issued a federal disaster declaration for Maui and the Big Island, ordering “all available federal assets on the Islands to help with response.”

In Colombia, priests and lay workers help monitor ceasefire

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — The Colombian bishops’ conference has welcomed the beginning of a six-month ceasefire between the nation’s military and the largest remaining rebel group, and began to train dozens of priests and lay workers from different parts of the country on how to help monitor the truce. In a statement published on Aug. 10, the bishop’s conference said

that 31 representatives from 18 different dioceses were briefed on the details of the ceasefire and on international humanitarian law. The group also discussed methods that would be most suitable to report breaches of the ceasefire. “We will take this knowledge to our territories,” said Father Jairo Alberto Rave, from the Diocese of Barrancabermeja, “so that we can make an important contribution” to the peace process. The truce started on Aug. 3, and seeks to facilitate peace talks between the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army — known as ELN by its Spanish acronym — a Marxist-oriented rebel group with approximately 2,000 to 5,000 fighters that is particularly influential in the west of Colombia and along its eastern border with Venezuela. It is the longest ceasefire ever between Colombia’s government and the ELN and is part of President Gustavo Petro’s plans to pacify rural areas of the country that are still affected by violence waged by rebel groups and drug cartels, that were not part of a 2016 peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla group.



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