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(top left) Bishop Iffert stands for a photo with Notre Dame Sister Mary Sharron Goller after receiving a grant on behalf of Holy Cross District High School. (bottom left) Shaking hands, Bishop Iffert distributes a service grant to Maria Schappert, program director, for the Notre Dame Urban Education Center. (top right) Matt Hollenkamp, 2023 DPAA general chair, and (bottom right) Linda Rawe, 2023 DPAA leadership gifts chair, address attendees at the 2023 DPAA reception.

DPAA celebrates 2023 campaign with reception; distributes service grants

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Supporters of the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA) gathered for a reception in the Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, Aug. 24, to celebrate the success of the 2023 campaign.

Service grants were also awarded as a component of this reception, wherein schools, parishes and charitable organizations within the Diocese of Covington received the funds to continue to serve the people of the Diocese of Covington.

In attendance at the dinner were donors and grant recipients, but also DPAA leaders such as Jim Hess, director, Office of Stewardship and Mission Services; Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington; Matt Hollenkamp, 2023 DPAA general chair and Linda Rawe, 2023 DPAA leadership gifts chair.

“Our goal for the 2023 DPAA campaign was \$2,650,000,” Mr. Hollenkamp said at the reception, “but, when you look at the back

of the *Messenger*, you’ll see that the dollars total raised is over \$3.8 million, so far... we had a record setting year last year, and we are on pace to exceed that,” Mr. Hollenkamp added, “I’m very blessed with what we’ve achieved here.”

As of the night of the reception, there have been 7,730 donors to the 2023 DPAA campaign, and 44 out of the 53 diocesan parishes have already exceeded their goal — that extra money goes back to the parishes at the end of the campaign.

“This is a celebration that points out that when we live that life dedicated to prayer, and we bring all our needs of our neighbors and ourselves to God in prayer, God motivates us to let all of that pour out of us into the world around us,” Bishop Iffert said about the DPAA campaign and the reception during his closing remarks. “We offer these grants because we’re Catholic, and God invites us to that kind of response to our neighbors in need.”

For a full list of grants awarded at this year’s DPAA reception, see page 9.

SUMMIT returns for 2023 retreat, celebrating the Eucharist Revival

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

SUMMIT, a yearly Eucharistic retreat for youth held in the Diocese of Covington, returns for its 2023 session this October. The retreat this year has been restructured, now geared exclusively for high school students across the diocese to have their own encounter with the Eucharist and engage with their peers.

“We’re taking away some of the barriers that make it hard to come (to the retreat),” said Angie Poat, diocesan Youth Minister, about SUMMIT23, the full name of this year’s retreat, “...we’re restoring it to its original vision and making it a place only for high school students. All they have to do is show up, they don’t

have to bring a chaperone, they can leave and come back if needed... we’re trying to make it as accessible as possible.”

“It has a new approach, a new paradigm,” Ms. Poat continued, “There’s a joy and excitement to bring people from all over the diocese together, so we’re really reaching out to Campbell County and Boone County and inviting them to climb the summit of their faith with the whole diocese.”

Ms. Poat views this year’s retreat as a ‘kickoff’ for youth for the

(Continued on page 14.)



With One Heart progresses Parish Envisioning Teams and priest coaches/mentors meeting

Laura Keener
Editor

The With One Heart campaign is quietly making behind the scenes progress as coaches and teams continue to meet.

Carla Molina, leadership consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute; Deacon Jim Fortner, diocesan chief operating officer; and Jamie Schroeder, diocesan chancellor, met with a dozen potential coaches, Aug. 22, via Zoom. These volunteers were asked to discern if the Holy Spirit was inviting them to be a coach or mentor to priests, as part of the Called For More initiative, as priests implement their self-created, individualized growth plan. Volunteers have until Sept. 1 to confirm their participation.

The Envisioning Teams of the Next Generation and Virtual DMI parishes are currently meeting with their Catholic Leadership Institute consultant to begin identifying priorities and setting SMART goals for their parish pastoral plan. Parish pastoral plans are due to Bishop John Iffert by mid-December.



Father Matthew Cushing, far right, pastor, All Saints Parish, Walton, gathered with members of parish's With One Heart Envisioning Team for its first meeting. With the assistance of Ximena DeBroeck, consultant with the Catholic Leadership Institute, the Envisioning Team will identify priorities and Smart goals that will make up the parish's pastoral plan.

Keener photo

All parishes are required to submit a pastoral plan. Next Generation parishes will have the in-person assistance of a CLI consultant for the next three years — not only with the creation of the pastoral plan but also with the implementation, assessment and revision of the plan.

The Envisioning Team at All Saints Parish, Walton, met with their consultant, Ximena DeBroeck, for the first time Aug. 24. It was a reunion of sorts as Father Matthew Cushing, pastor, and Dr. DeBroeck were classmates at St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Penn.

The role of the Envisioning Team is to prayerfully consider the responses parishioners shared when completing the Disciple Maker Index survey last Lent. Then, using that data and with a mutually shared vision, create a parish pastoral plan that is exciting, engaging and challenging. The Envisioning Team has three-and-a-half months to complete the plan. Then, the plan will be passed off to the parish's Implementation Team.

Dr. DeBroeck reminded the Envisioning Team that the parish pastoral plan is “not something that is dropped out of the air but is informed by data. Then your job is to successfully pass the plan on to the next team, which is the Implementation Team.”

Eight parishes have chosen to be Next Generation parishes, with each being assigned a CLI consultant for the three-year process. Ten parishes have chosen to be Virtual DMI parishes, meeting virtually with a CLI consultant over the next three months to develop a parish pastoral plan. The remaining parishes are independently using CLI tools and the data collected from the Disciple Maker Index to develop a parish pastoral plan.

“Our hope is that you learn this process so that you can do it periodically,” said Dr. DeBroeck. “Just like it happens in our homes and our lives, we're never finished, we

are in the process of continuous growth towards flourishing as people, as individuals in our relationship with the Lord, in our relationships with each other and our families and also in our communities.”

Next Generation Parishes

All Saints Parish, Walton
Mother of God Parish, Covington
Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue
St. Bernard Parish, Dayton
St. Cecilia Parish, Independence
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth
St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs
St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas

Virtual DMI Parishes

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell
St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption Parish, Covington
Cristo Rey Parish, Erlanger
Holy Cross Parish, Covington
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger
St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright
St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill
St. Augustine Parish, Augusta
St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana
St. James Parish, Brooksville
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria
St. Therese Parish, Southgate
St. Catherine of Sienna Parish, Ft. Thomas

Workshops on the Prophets



The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization will host “Workshops on the Prophets” presented by Father Timothy Schehr. The workshops will be held in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium (Curia building), 1125 Madison Ave., Covington.

Workshop on the Prophet Isaiah — Sept. 23, 9–11:30 a.m.
Children have a very special place in the oracles of the prophet Isaiah, including the familiar Emmanuel prophecy: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14) For this reason, Isaiah is our Advent prophet. Let's spend some time enjoying his wonderful message.

Workshop on the Prophet Jeremiah — Oct. 28, 9–11:30 a.m.
We can think of Jeremiah as a potter prophet. When called to serve as a prophet, Jeremiah was entrusted with the Word of God to build up the people, just as an artisan builds up a clump of clay on a potter's wheel.

Father Timothy Schehr leads the workshops. He is a retired biblical scholar and former professor at Mount St. Mary's School of Theology at the Athenaeum of Ohio. He has a B.A., M.Div. and an M.A. from the Athenaeum of Ohio. He also has a Ph.D. from Hebrew Union College.

The cost for is \$35 per workshop. To register visit <https://covdio.org/bible-workshops/> or call Isaak A. Isaak, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, at (859) 392-1529. Walk-ins welcome!



Notre Dame Academy installs its fourth president, Trish Miller

Laura Keener
Editor

In a small but august celebration, Notre Dame Academy installed its fourth president, Trish Miller; Aug. 26, at the school’s Mary, Mother of the World chapel.

Bishop John Iffert, Jack VonHandorf, principal; Dr. Laura Koehl, director; Sisters of Notre Dame USA National Sponsorship and Network Office and former NDA president; Notre Dame Sister Mary Lynette Shelton, second NDA president; Notre Dame Sister Maria Francine Stacy, faculty; and Mark Hausfeld, chair, NDA Board of Directors, were in attendance and gave remarks. The NDA PandaTones — a student choir — sang the opening and closing hymns.

“Today we gather not only to celebrate the installation of Mrs. Trish Miller as the new president of Notre Dame Academy but also to celebrate our visionary founders, the Sisters of Notre Dame and their commitment to an enduring mission to meet the needs of the times,” said Dr. Koehl in her welcoming remarks. “The mantle of leadership passes from one dedicated leader to another and it is a moment of anticipation, hope and unity. ...The leadership

of Notre Dame Academy is not merely a title it is an embrace of the values we all hold so dear.”

The search for a new president was necessitated by the resignation of Dr. Koehl in February 2021 as she accepted a position with the newly formed SND USA. For the last two years, Mr. VonHandorf has held the dual role of principal and president as Notre Dame Academy searched for its next president.

At the ceremony, the Board recognized and thanked him for his leadership. In his remarks, Mr. VonHandorf thanked the Board, “it’s huge to have such a supportive board. The faculty and staff, we put in a team effort” to get through these last two years, he said.

In his remarks, Bishop Iffert said that values, like numbers, are abstractions.

“We name our values, they are abstractions. We only know them because we have seen them in the lives of others. We know them because we have seen them, specifically in this situation, in the lives of the Sisters of Notre Dame,” said Bishop Iffert. “This academy is built on their values and tradition. This academy is in a very real way built on them – on their life, on their blood ... You can now

identify these values that drive the future of Notre Dame Academy because you have reflected on their lives and the witness they’ve given. You’ve seen where their lives touch the life and witness of Jesus Christ and made Christ apparent to you.”

Speaking directly to Mrs. Miller, Bishop Iffert said, “We transfer this leadership to you, Mrs. Miller. You’ve been selected because those responsible for the selection see in you a person whose life is very marked by those values and is capable of growing in those values and virtues so that we can see the long history of those who have served, we can see the future of the women going forth here at Notre Dame, we can see the love of Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity. These values and virtues must be incardinated. They only exist in the world when they exist in our lives. If not, they’re abstractions ... Congratulations today. Welcome to the team.”

Mrs. Miller addressed those present with confidence and in gratitude.

“This moment is not just a personal milestone but a collective celebration of the enduring spirit of NDA and ded-

(Continued on page 13.)



During the installation ceremony, Notre Dame Academy students presented three gifts to new president Trish Miller; (far left) a crucifix and rosary, (below) a stuffed Panda and NDA spirit wear, and (not pictured) a bouquet of sunflowers.

(left) In a spirit of gratitude, Mrs. Miller addressed those present saying, “As I step into this role, I am mindful of the legacy that has been entrusted to me.”

Official Assignment

Effective August 29, 2023

Rev. Suraj K. Abraham, C.M.I.

To: Parochial Vicar, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Fort Mitchell

From: Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, Kerala, India

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

Jamie N. Schroeder
Mrs. Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor



Bishop's Schedule

- | | |
|--|---|
| Sept. 2
Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m. | Sept.9
Diocese of Covington Pastoral Council meeting, 10 a.m.

Building renovation ground-breaking and blessing, Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, 4 p.m. |
| Sept.4
Diocesan Curia Offices closed — Labor Day Holiday | |
| Sept.5
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Priest Continuing Education and Formation meeting, 1:30 p.m. | Sept.10
Mass, 100th anniversary of Covington Latin School, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 2 p.m. |



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.

Spiritual grandparenting

As a kid I always associated two things with the first day of school — getting new shoes and having to write about what I did during summer vacation.

My siblings and I never really had exceptional summer adventures, but I have fond memories of beach outings, camping trips, museum visits, swimming lessons and hours spent playing with the other kids in the neighborhood.

It's been many years since I got new school shoes or wrote about my summer vacation but this summer, I did something exceptional. Although I have been a Little Sister for over 35 years, in July, I went away to camp for the very first time.

Along with another member of my community and 15 other women religious, I participated in a discernment camp for high school girls sponsored by the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia.

Our days at camp were filled with sports activities and team challenges, crafts and plenty of Gen Z-centered conversation. We also had daily Mass, rosary, Eucharistic Adoration and lively spiritual talks given by the sisters.

Along with college-age volunteers, each pair of women religious was responsible for a dozen or so high school girls throughout the week.

Our days were jam-packed with activities and the heat was sweltering but I thought I was doing pretty well keeping up with the girls. Then towards the end of the week, one of the young women — a very lively, outgoing teen —

called me our team's grandmother! That was a blow to my ego — “Not an older sister or your mother, but your grandmother?” I asked. “Really?”

“Grandmothers are so kind and supportive,” she replied. “They try to make each person feel special. That's what you've been doing for us.”

This young woman's insight was a real consolation to me.

Later, during adoration, I reflected on this conversation, a bit ashamed of myself. I realized that the ageism that infects our society has also affected me.

As someone who has devoted my life to advocating for older persons, I should have been honored to be identified as grandmotherly.

I thought about our foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan, who identified completely with the elderly poor to whom she had offered a home.

Although she was accustomed to stopping by the local charity office to pick up the provisions to which her elderly were entitled, on one occasion an impatient aid worker rebuked her, directing her to get in line with the other beggars. Jeanne complied, rejoicing to truly be poor among the poor.

I was also reminded of the testimonies of the young Little Sisters who had lived with Jeanne Jugan during the long years at the motherhouse when she was no longer recognized as the foundress.

Her young companions thought she was just another elderly Sister living among them but they loved her dearly because she was so good to them. Many years later

they still remembered her kindness, many testifying for her canonization process.

“Ah! If you only knew how good she was! She was so gentle ... She spoke firmly when necessary but she thought no more about it afterwards ... Her charity touched the hearts of all; we were at ease with her, like a mother in her family, and each one could say to herself: ‘How kind she is; she loved me!’”

As I continued to reflect on the life and example of our foundress, I felt honored to be identified by a young person as “grandmotherly.” Realizing I would never make my mark on either the soccer field or the volleyball court, I really had been trying to take an interest in each young woman and lend each one a listening ear and I was grateful to know they had appreciated my efforts.

This is what young people are really looking for as they mature into adulthood and seek to discern their vocation in life. We can do them and the Church a great service by honing our skills as wise elders, spiritual grandmothers and grandfathers.

Pope Francis often speaks of just this.

Talking to journalists at World Youth Day, he said the main issue related to the young is knowing how to accompany them and that grandparents are better at this than parents.

Speaking directly to young people in Lisbon, he said that grandparents are “rays of light” and “the roots of our joy.”

To be a ray of light or a root of joy — what beautiful ideals for which to strive as we age.

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



Living an examined spiritual life

To say that the fifth century B.C. was not kind to ancient Athens would be an understatement. The Athenian people went from the heights of glory and fame to the very bottom of infamy.

During that cursed century, Athens reached the heights of its political and cultural power. The Persians had been soundly defeated and repelled from ancient Greece not once, but twice. When the dust settled on those conflicts, the Athenians were the leading power in Greece. Their naval superiority and dominance allowed them to become an empire. But, by the end of the century, Athens had lost everything.

Sparta, Athens' famed nemesis, defeated the Athenians in a nearly 30-year-long conflict called the Peloponnesian War, and installed a dictatorship over the fabled democracy of Athens.

It was in the midst of this tumultuous century that Socrates arrived on the scene in history. The father of philosophy witnessed the rise and fall of Athens and was an important figure throughout. The Athenians famously executed Socrates by administering a lethal dose of hemlock.

During his trial, which is recorded in The Apology, Socrates famously said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

This saying sums up the way in which Socrates lived his life; but even more than that, it gives us much to think about when we consider our own lives, especially our spiritual lives.

I can't tell you how many people I have encountered in my priestly ministry who think that the spiritual life is a totally impenetrable mystery. This foundational human experience remains locked away for most people, and the

already difficult climb towards salvation becomes infinitely more grueling because people can't see or hear what God is asking or directing.

Fortunately, the spiritual life is intelligible. We can know with great certainty what God is asking of us, and the climb towards salvation is doable. During his life, St. Ignatius of Loyola unlocked the doors of the spiritual life and set down simple rules for people to follow in their spiritual lives.

St. Ignatius was a great saint of the post reformation era in Spain. He spent his early life working as a courtier and soldier in the court of the Spanish King. After a battle, in which his leg was shattered by a cannonball, Ignatius was convalescing, and the only available reading was the life of Christ and the stories of great saints.

Initially, these books put Ignatius off because he was accustomed to reading stories of knights, heroes and chivalry, but as he read them, he found himself utterly entranced. Slowly, Ignatius began to develop the insight that would become the key to understanding the spiritual life.

When Ignatius read stories of knights and heroes or spent time thinking about them, he would initially be filled with enthusiasm and joy, but after just a little while he would be left cold and without joy.

On the other hand, when Ignatius read about the great saints or the life of Christ, his heart would burn with a desire that would not go away. This experience led directly to his crucial insight. In the spiritual life there are consolations and desolations.

Consolations are experiences of joy and closeness to God, one's heart is on fire, and faith, hope, and love grow into a blaze.

Desolations are exactly the opposite.

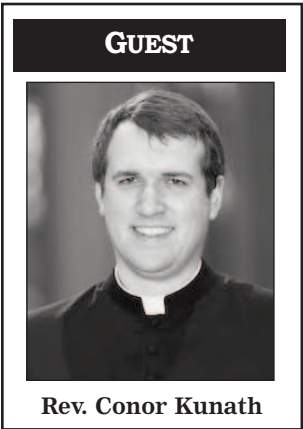
They are moments of spiritual coldness and sorrow, where faith, hope and love grow cold. These two spiritual experiences form the basis of understanding our entire spiritual experience.

Generally, when our lives are filled with consolation, or consolation accompanies thoughts about a particular decision or path, then one can know that he is on the right path. If the opposite happens, if desolation comes upon and every thought of action fills one with dread then she can know that she took the wrong path, or that this is not where God is calling her to go.

Obviously, there is a great deal of nuance that goes into understanding and using consolation and desolation in our spiritual lives. St. Ignatius wrote 22 rules to help us understand how consolation and desolation are to be understood, but coming to grips with consolation and desolation in our lives is foundational to understanding every other experience we have in our spiritual life.

I invite you to reflect on your day through the lens of consolation and desolation and, as Socrates would suggest, really begin to live an examined life.

Father Conor Kunath is parochial administrator, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow and vocations director for the Diocese of Covington, Ky



The mystery of humanity

The readings for the twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2 and Matthew 16:21-27.

The Church, on this twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, calls us to reflect on discipleship with a rather striking statement from the Lord Jesus: “Get behind me Satan!”

Satan is the father of lies, he is the lack of or distortion of the true, the good, and the beautiful, which is what makes him evil. Peter is being called out by the Lord for trying to limit or stop these “transcendental,” which are ultimately brought to completion through the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

And this can be very confusing to our humanity. Although I don’t know if I could “rebuke” the Lord, I get where Peter is coming from — how can the humiliation of the cross, which brings with it so much physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual suffering, bring about something beautiful and good and true? In my own life I try to avoid pain and I pray often that the pain of others would be taken away.

What we (myself included) need to remember is that we are called to conform our way of thinking to that of the Lord God, not the other way around (as wonderful as that might sound). “You are thinking not as God does...”

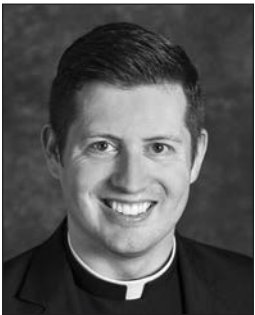
Pope St. John Paul II reminds us in his Apostolic Letter “*Salvifici Doloris*” that the mystery of humanity, including suffering, can only truly be discovered or understood in the mystery of the Incarnate Word. In order to understand ourselves, our lives, our hopes, our dreams, our difficulties, our sufferings, we have to look to the Lord Jesus and be his disciples — students of his ways. Not just learning, but by imitating.

Jesus places two conditions on those who wish to be his disciples: 1. They must deny themselves; 2. They must take up the cross.

I think many of us get the idea of denial, but we don’t quite understand the meaning of “take up his cross.”

(Continued on page 13.)

GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

Spiritual direction — it works!

Twenty years ago, I was introduced to the Christian practice of spiritual direction through the Catholic lay movement of which I had become a new member. Spiritual direction was one of the commitments members agreed to take up on a regular basis.

At the time, I was not acquainted with this practice and thought it was something reserved for clergy and religious. I soon learned that spiritual direction is for anyone who is serious about growing in holiness. In my case, growth has been painfully slow, but within the last 10 years or so, I have begun to see the fruits.

Spiritual direction, for those who are not familiar, is the practice of meeting regularly with a spiritual director to form and cultivate a relationship with God. It involves three persons, the director, the directee, and most importantly, the Holy Spirit. Over time, it helps one deepen his/her prayer and become more aware of God’s presence and action in daily life.

This practice has ancient roots going back to the early Church. Spiritual direction is not the Sacrament of Reconciliation, psychological or pastoral counseling, self-therapy, or self-discovery. Instead, it is an ongoing conversation about discerning God’s voice.

The spiritual direction I receive is greatly influenced by the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. I have been learning about the discernment of spirits (recognizing good or evil impulses) that cause consolation (feelings of love, praise, gratitude, inspiration, etc.) or desolation (feelings of hopelessness, turmoil, doubt, anxiety, etc.). Being able to discern the spirits makes it possible to respond to God’s voice, to God’s will, more easily.

A recent experience demonstrated the fruit this training has begun to bear in my life. During our latest monthly meeting, my spiritual director asked me how I was doing. I shared with her what a good summer my family and I had been having. We celebrated the college graduation of a son, the wedding of a daughter and had been blessed to take a family vacation. Everyone in my immediate family was healthy and happy.

There were the usual crosses, things that had been going on for some time with jobs or with extended family. But, overall, we had been experiencing several months of consolation. Reflecting on that experience prompted me to say to my director, “It makes me wonder what’s coming!”

She reminded me that the spiritual life typically con-

VIEWPOINT



Jamie Schroeder

sists of consolation and desolation that come and go in cycles. When desolation comes, I need to stay the course in my prayer and sacramental life and to recall the times of consolation until they return.

Sure enough! The following weekend, literally days after spiritual direction, I received several pieces of very distressing news, all within a matter of hours. Normally, this would have had me in an emotional tailspin: doubt, fear, anger, judgement, blame, even despair.

However, because of the knowledge gained through spiritual direction and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I was aware of what was happening spiritually and was prepared to respond. I felt sadness and concern, which were perfectly normal emotions given the circumstances. But I was less likely to allow those feelings to drag me into desperation, anxiety or hopelessness. Rather, I was able to turn more readily to God in prayer and to ask others

to pray.

I recalled that “God’s got this,” and that I do not need to worry. A sense of peace and stability returned much more quickly than in times past. I found myself giving thanks to God, in a kind of “a-ha” moment, that “spiritual direction actually works!” — a moment of consolation in itself.

Spiritual direction requires effort and dedication. Perhaps the most difficult part is getting started. The first step is to seek God’s will in this area and ask the Holy Spirit to show the way.

The second step is to find a spiritual director that is a good fit. This can be a challenge as the number of qualified spiritual directors is somewhat limited, though a greater number of lay people are becoming trained in this ministry.

Thankfully, there are resources that can help in the meantime. One good resource is the Discerning Hearts digital apostolate available at discerninghearts.com, on YouTube, and through the Discerning Hearts app.

Is spiritual direction right for you? God bless you as you discern!

Jamie Schroeder is chancellor for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

60 years after the march, Martin Luther King’s dream lives on


Sixty years is a very long time — a lifetime for many people. Yet the event that occurred 60 years ago and that we commemorate this week, the March on Washington, has to embrace years of struggles, accomplishments and exasperation.

The quarter of a million people who gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial to listen to and to be inspired by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were not disappointed with the loftiness of his rhetoric. Portions from that celebrated speech have been quoted numerous times during these past six decades. Many people consider the speech itself to be among the most historic and eloquent statements ever made by any prominent American social leader.

While the speech itself is iconic, many of the challenges that it contained are as yet not completely fulfilled. We Americans have made noteworthy progress in the areas of social justice. People of Color have since attained positions of authority unimagined in 1963.

Still too many Americans, however, await the realization of the dream referenced to in Dr. King’s speech. Far

GUEST



Cardinal Wilton Gregory

too many people in this great nation do not feel comfortable with each other across races, economic classes, religions, political affiliation, language, or sexual orientation.

Some might suggest that the many accomplishments of the past 60 years ought to have quenched Dr. King’s aspirations. His dream was never for the achievements for a few, but for the emancipation of all Americans from fear, poverty, hatred, violence and threats. And clearly we are not there yet. Sadly, each day the broadcast news and social media platforms confirm just how far we have to go to bring that dream to fulfillment.

Those living today who were present at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 have important stories to impart — not simply as witnesses to history but by recalling the enthusiasm and the hope that dominated that wondrous event. We should listen to them and take courage in their voices.

Today’s young people, in a special way, need to recapture the hope that was electric during the March on Washington in 1963. Theirs will be the challenge of working to achieve what remains incomplete from the words

of Dr. King.

Much of Dr. King’s oration was dedicated to the young and referenced them. His oratorical skill painted an amazing image of our nation, citing places and monuments that captured the imagination of his listeners.

I have been blessed to have lived in many of the places to which he made reference and to have seen glimmers of the fulfillment of his dream. However, for far too many people, Dr. King’s vision for America remains “a dream deferred” [Harlem, by Langston Hughes].

Nevertheless, I know, as does every honest person, that we have not thus far reached the final victory of our nation’s promise. Still, we cannot lose hope because all has not yet been accomplished.

The great men and women of every race, culture and creed who came to stand before the Lincoln Memorial 60 years ago deserve our allegiance to the principles that inspired them – and can and should inspire us as well. His dream is still alive!

Cardinal Wilton Gregory is the archbishop of Washington, D.C.

Pope extols Native saint as model for responding to God’s call

Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Like St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first native North American woman to be canonized, all Christians must embrace their unique call to service of God and neighbor as well as the personal crosses that come with it, Pope Francis said.

“The life of Kateri Tekakwitha shows us that every challenge can be overcome if we open our hearts to Jesus, who gives us the grace we need,” the pope said during his

weekly general audience Aug. 30. Continuing a series on zeal for evangelization, he centered his talk on the example of the Native American saint canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012.

A 17th-century Algonquin Mohawk born in present-day New York State, St. Kateri converted to Catholicism at 19 after her family died in a smallpox epidemic that left her face scarred and her vision impaired. In addition to her physical challenges, the “misunderstandings, persecutions and even death threats she suffered following her baptism” gave St. Kateri

a “great love for the cross, the definitive sign of Christ’s love,” the pope said.

“Bearing witness to the Gospel does not only concern what is pleasing,” Pope Francis said. “We must also know how to carry our daily crosses with patience, faith and hope.”

“Patience is a great Christian virtue; one who is not patient is not a

good Christian,” he said, underscoring the need for “patience to tolerate challenges, but also to tolerate others who are sometimes tedious or put you in difficulty.”

After seeking refuge in a Jesuit mission in nearby Montreal, St. Kateri participated in the spiritual life of the community while teaching children and caring for the sick and elderly.

“Faith is always expressed in service,” the pope said putting aside his text. “Faith is not meant to be makeup for oneself or for the soul; no, it’s for service.”

St. Kateri realized her desire to serve the church by resisting efforts to force her to marry, and eventually making a vow of perpetual virginity in 1679, the pope said.

“Of course, not all are called to make the same vow as Kateri; still, all Christians are called each day to commit themselves with an undivided heart to the vocation and mission entrusted to them by God, serving him and neighbor is a spirit of charity,” Pope Francis said.

St. Kateri’s life, he said, shows that “apostolic zeal entails both a vital union with Jesus nourished with prayer and the sacraments and a desire to diffuse the beauty of the Christian message through fidelity to one’s particular vocation.”

“Let us not forget each of us is called to sainthood, to everyday sainthood, to the sainthood of ordinary Christian life; each one of us has this calling,” he said.



(left) Pope Francis receives Kbito, a teddy bear dressed in a Colombian military uniform, from a visitor at the end of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Aug. 30, 2023. The teddy bear has become a symbol of the Colombian military’s commitment to providing better health services to soldiers injured in the line of duty.



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The prayer intention for September, as recommended by Pope Francis, is for people living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance.

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.

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization in collaboration with the Angelic 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.

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.

Join the Sisters of Divine Providence on Sept. 10, 12:30 p.m., for a hike, either in the woods or on the pavement/level ground. The hike begins in front of St. Anne Province Center. At 2 p.m., we will gather in the Mary Garden for a prayer service to celebrate the Season of Creation. Refreshments to follow. All are welcome — children, young people, and not so young people — for any or all of the activities. No RSVP required.

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, welcomes all parents to attend its inaugural Family Faith Formation Speaker Series, Sept. 13, 6:30-7:45 p.m., in the church. The first topic is “Why Belong? The Importance of a Church Community” with speaker Allen Hunt. Mr. Hunt is a former mega church pastor and is now a member of the Dynamic Catholic Board of Directors. Mark your calendar for the next in the series, “Imaging the Divine in Parenthood in the Everyday,” with Jack Beers, Oct. 4, same time, same place.

2023 Parish Festivals

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, Sept. 2, 5-11:30 p.m.; Sept. 3, 4-11:30 p.m.; Sept. 4, 1-10 p.m.

St. Barbara Rocktoberfest, Erlanger, Sept. 8-10

St. Patrick School, Maysville, Sept. 8, 6-10 p.m.; Sept. 9, 6-10 p.m.; Sept. 10, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Timothy Oktoberfest, Union, Sept. 15, 6-11 p.m., Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m.-12 a.m., Sept. 17 12:30-6 p.m.

St. Matthew Parish, Morning View, Sept. 17 Noon-7 p.m.

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, September 22-24

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, September 22-23

Sts. Peter and Paul, Sept. 23, Octoberfest 6 -11 p.m.

DCCCH Center for Children & Families, Sept. 30, 2-10 p.m.

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 holylistening24@gmail.com.

A Marriage Encounter Experience will be held on September 29—October 1 at the Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center in Norwood, Ohio. Sign up at esharing.org or call Andy and Melanie Reinersman at 859-653-8464.

St. Joseph Church, Camp Springs, will be hosting their Oktoberfish Fish Fries, October 6, and 13, 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/religious-liberty.

DCCCH 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.



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Catholic Schools in Action



Catholic Schools in Action



(above) As a community, students at St. Philip School enjoy lunch outside on the beautiful final days of summer. Seventh and 8th grade girls enjoy lunch on the rectory porch, and 3rd and 4th grade students enjoy lunch with their teacher at new picnic tables.

(right) St. Pius X School, Edgewood, celebrated the first day of school, and a Eucharistic Adoration procession. The school's theme this school year is "We Are Called to Be Servant Leaders" emphasizing Mother Teresa's quote "Do ordinary things with extraordinary love."

(above) St. Therese is proud to have three alumni educating the next generation of Mustangs.

(right) Students in the 8th grade at St. Therese create cards to send cheer to parish members. Students made the cards as part of their Service-Learning elective class.

(below) Serving Mass is one way the students show their faith and serve the community at St. Joseph, Cold Spring. Another way students practice their faith by serving others is being Theme Team Leaders. Students in the eighth grade and several in the seventh give of their time and talents by leading others. These young people lead a team of students and demonstrate how they can achieve more when they work together.



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

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Covington Latin School \$6,000	Newport Central Catholic High School \$10,000	St. Boniface and James Church \$4,000
Diocesan Catholic Children's Home \$7,000	Notre Dame Urban Education Center \$1,000	St. Cecilia School \$8,500
Divine Mercy Parish \$9,500	Our Savior Parish \$10,000	St. Edward Parish \$4,000
Emergency Shelter of NKY \$10,000	Parish Kitchen \$9,000	St. James Parish \$6,000
Faith Community Pharmacy \$7,000	Rose Garden Mission \$3,500	St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carroll. \$8,500
Holy Cross Parish \$3,500	Safe Environment Office \$2,000	St. Patrick Church and Schools, Mays. \$16,500
Holy Cross District High School \$4,000	St. Ann Food Pantry \$3,000	St. Philip Parish and School \$7,000
Holy Cross Elementary School \$2,500	St. Anthony Parish \$7,000	St. Vincent de Paul Society, NKY \$10,000
Holy Trinity School \$9,000	St. Anthony School \$1,500	Welcome House \$4,000
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October 27 - 29 | Men's Retreat with Fr. Michael Graham, SJ

November 3 - 5 | Women's Retreat with Fr. Tom Krettek, SJ

November 24 - 26 | 12-Step Men's Retreat with Fr. Del Staigers

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This is the way: The Eucharistic pilgrimage of the Mass

Will Peterson
OSV News

We have the Bread of Life. What more could we desire? And yet, our Lord presented this supreme gift to a community of apostles, so we also give thanks for the body of Christ that is the community of the Church. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes, “And he (God) put all things beneath Christ’s feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way” (Eph 1:22-23).

Our Church is the community in which, to quote St. Augustine, “we become what we receive.” Thus, there is nowhere more fitting for us to express our gratitude for the body of Christ than at Mass.

As someone who leads an apostolate for Catholic pilgrimage, I often get asked which one pilgrimage journey is my favorite. Easy answers recount long, arduous pilgrimages between California missions, or through the Wisconsin farmland that leads us to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a local girl.

My favorite pilgrimage, however, is the one I make each time I attend Mass.

The pilgrimage is not only spiritual but a true physical pilgrimage toward Christ. As I walk up from my pew to

participate in Communion, I pray with my whole being — I give praise with each step I take, for God made me, body and soul.

I come forward, publicly demonstrating my belief in the Real Presence. During the brief journey from my pew, I lift my intentions, my struggles, my desires to God. God receives them and lifts his Son before me, allowing me to receive the Eucharist, the Bread of angels, the Bread of Life.

That movement is crucial. As the 20th century Trappist and spiritual writer Thomas Merton once wrote, “The geographic pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out of an inner journey ... One can have the one without the other. It is best to have both.”

Our physical journey to receive Christ during the Mass teaches and prepares us to spiritually journey toward the heavenly Jerusalem.

I pray first and foremost that in this time of National Eucharistic Revival we all might mindfully make the crucial pilgrimage of thanks and praise to receive the Eucharistic Christ at Mass.

We then go out into the world, becoming what we have received.



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Church environmentalists worry about oil drilling in the Amazon

Eduardo Campos Lima
OSV News

SÃO PAULO — Church activists in the Amazon are worried about the Brazilian government’s plan to exploit oil in a marine area close to the mouth of the Amazon River.

Oil drilling, an issue discussed in different meetings over the past months by ecclesial movements and environmentalists, has been a problem in several regions of the Amazon.

While there was relevant progress recently in the struggle to restrain the oil companies’ operations in the rainforest, the pressure from those corporations is immense, and it will take too much effort from Catholics inspired by Pope Francis’ “Laudato Si” encyclical to secure the protection of the common house their “common home” in the Amazon, activists say.

The project of exploiting oil about 300 miles northeast from Amazon River’s mouth has put top government officials on opposite sides: On one side is Environment Minister Marina Silva, who argues that technical studies showed that the operation would have a huge impact on the environment and local communities, and on the other is most of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s cabinet.

Lula is himself among the ones who think that it is possible to go on with the project without harming the environment. The plan was among the topics discussed by Lula and the presidents of the other nations of the Pan-Amazon region during an Aug. 8-9 summit in Belem, in Brazil. The region consists of nine countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana and French Guyana.

“The summit’s final document failed to address key elements concerning extractivism in the Amazon. All decisions should be unanimous and there was no consensus on those issues,” explained Father Dario Bossi, a member of

the Integral Ecology and Mining Commission of the bishops’ conference.

While Colombian President Gustavo Petro argued that oil drilling should be forbidden in the Amazon, the other leaders avoided discussing the issue.

Social movements and church groups had campaigned since January to gather as many members of the civil society as possible in parallel activities held during the summit. About 40,000 people gathered in Belém, according to Father Bossi, and were able to hand their demands to the presidents.

Although they were disappointed with the final document — not only due to the oil theme, but also due to the absence of a collective goal of reducing deforestation — the simple fact that they were there is a reason to celebrate, Father Bossi stressed. He said that parallel summits of the Amazonian social movements are being planned to happen in the next encounters.

Members of the Bishops’ Conference of the Amazon, which met for their general assembly earlier in August, also were disappointed with the Amazon summit. (Known by the acronym CEAMA, in Portuguese and Spanish, the conference was created in 2021.)

“The region’s governments are not trying to put an end to extractivism and look for economic alternatives,” Franciscan Sister Laura Manso, one of CEAMA’s vice presidents, told OSV News.

According to Sister Manso, social resistance to the “economy of destruction,” as she defined, has not always been enough to cancel extractivist endeavors, given that large companies, politicians, and even organized crime are behind them.

The assembly’s final message mentioned CEAMA’s repudiation to oil drilling in the Amazon’s mouth and in Yasuni National Park, in Ecuador. The continuity or not of

oil exploitation in that reservation, considered to be among the most biodiverse in the Amazon, was submitted to a referendum Aug. 20. The majority of the Ecuadorians approved the end of oil exploitation in Yasuni.

“That victory is certainly an important symbol. But only a small portion of that area will now be free of oil drilling. In most of the Ecuadorian Amazon, mining and oil exploitation keep polluting the environment,” said Carlos Azcona, a Spanish-born lay missionary who works in the Aguarico vicariate, in the Orellana province.

Another referendum was promoted on the same day for the residents of Ecuador’s Quito region, called Pichincha, concerning mining. The voters also showed their repudiation to new projects.

“The harms caused by those extractivist operations cost more than the wealth they produce. People get sick and die as a result of them, but the governments do not care,” Azcona told OSV News.

The local bishops were very active in the campaign against oil drilling and mining, as were some groups of laypeople.

“Our hope is with those groups. They are small, but they will bear fruits,” Azcona said.

For Father Bossi, the repudiation of extractivism in the Amazon by the Ecuadorians should inspire all church and environmental activists in the region.

“It was historical. The people’s voice was heard and prevailed over the extractivism’s false promises. The governments always say that oil will bring wealth, but such wealth never gets to the poor,” the priest told OSV News.

Father Bossi said that if Lula approves oil exploitation in the Amazon, “his reputation as an international leader in the protection of nature will be disputed.

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NDA president

(Continued from page 3.)

ication of all the individuals who have shaped this journey,” Mrs. Miller said. “As I step into this role, I am mindful of the legacy that has been entrusted to me — a legacy of excellence, empowerment, and a commitment to nurturing young women who will make an impactful difference in the world. I am deeply honored to be a part of an institution that has been a beacon of transformative education for over a century.”

Mrs. Miller began her presidency at Notre Dame Academy on July 1. She has both educational and business leadership experience. She began her career as principal owner of Brands Insurance and subsequently co-founded West Chester Permit and Transportation Marketing Services in West Chester, Ohio. After 20 years, Mrs. Miller joined Teach for America giving her the opportunity to develop as an educator, which she found to be both challenging and humbling. Her experience enhanced her passion for teaching. She went on to teach at Withrow University High School and Aiken New Tech High School. She subsequently joined the La Salle High School community as associate principal, a position she held until being name president of NDA.

In an interview, Aug. 29, Mrs. Miller said that she is committed to Catholic, single-gender education because she, herself has benefited from such an education.

“The mission of this school resonates very deeply with me because I went to an all-girls school. It felt more like a calling,” she said.

Mrs. Miller said that, in her experience, an all-girls school environment offers girls greater encouragement and more leadership opportunities. Research, she said, shows that students educated at an all-girls school outperform their peers in standardized testing. Single gender high school education is also her legacy — her mother attended Mercy High School, Cincinnati, and she, her sisters and her daughter have all attended Ursuline High School.

“It was the opportunity to really start to lean into the potential and power we are as women and really embrace leadership roles,” she said about her high school education. “For me it really informed all my professional life, from a confidence standpoint and from competency standpoint. For me it is the reason I am here.”

Mrs. Miller said that what she sees as NDA’s greatest strength is its Catholic identity. “It is a very tight knight and supportive community ... when we outreach to community partners we get a really positive response and a lot of respect for the Sisters who are still here and for the legacy of the Sisters,” she said. “I think the strength is in that legacy and the community support that we continue to receive.”

Mrs. Miller and her husband, Howard, have been married for 25 years. They have four children. Both Mrs. and Mr. Miller enjoy scuba diving and have been blessed to scuba dive at many places around the world. Yet, her favorite place to dive is in Florida.

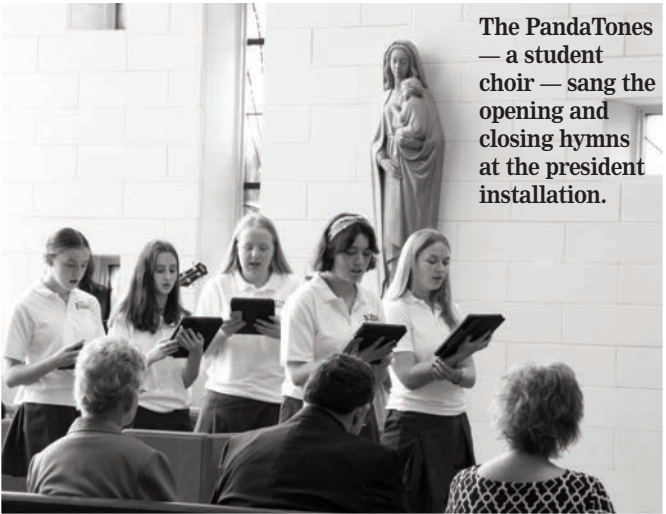
“My absolute favorite place is off the Keys of Florida,

it’s beautiful and there’s a reef out there that is just wonderfully colorful and beautiful and totally accessible because it’s in Florida,” she said.

She also is collegiate athlete, playing lacrosse for Northwestern University. And while the lady Wildcats have gone on to be a NCAA Division I Big Ten powerhouse, as a member of the inaugural varsity team, Mrs. Miller smiles as she recalls her teams 2 and 11 record.

“I like to say that we were the founding members for a really strong program,” she said.

At Notre Dame Academy she has inherited a really strong program from its very strong founding members — the Sisters of Notre Dame.



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Humanity’s mystery

(Continued from page 5.)

That’s because we are living in the Christian era, and the Cross is a symbol of hope, of faith, of love ... it was not so for the first followers of Jesus. To take up the cross literally meant, go suffer and die! The paradox of the Cross, that it brings salvation, is also the paradox of discipleship — it brings salvation.

Please do not misunderstand, the Lord and His Church do not ask us to go looking for ways in which we might be caused pain and discomfort and suffering, but when it comes (which it does in one way or another in every life) we have to pick it up and use it for good — to bring about the beautiful and to proclaim the truth.

One final thought, discipleship is completely free and yet will cost you everything.

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



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SUMMIT23

(Continued from page 1.)

Eucharistic Revival, as SUMMIT retreats are Eucharistic retreats at their core. A Sunday Mass, which the whole family is invited to, and adoration, are staples of the retreat and will be prominently featured as in years past. In addition to this foundation, SUMMIT23 aims to form a more “interactive” experience, according to Ms. Poat, with different zones within the retreat. SUMMIT23 will feature “different stations to experience community (with other high schoolers), whether they’re outside playing games or walking.” Other zones include a zone for young people to “play their musical instruments and jam togeth-

er,” and an art zone. “Everything will be focused on drawing young people to the source and summit of our faith,” said Ms. Poat, “which is the Eucharist, but there will be intentional fun and community building.” This year’s retreat is set to be held at Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, October 6-8. Early bird registration is available until Sept. 20, with more information and registration available at www.covdio.org/Summit23.



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Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confidentiality and with respect. A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1510 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diocesis de Covington

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordindora diocesana para dar asistencia a las víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto. Una copia de “Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada” está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

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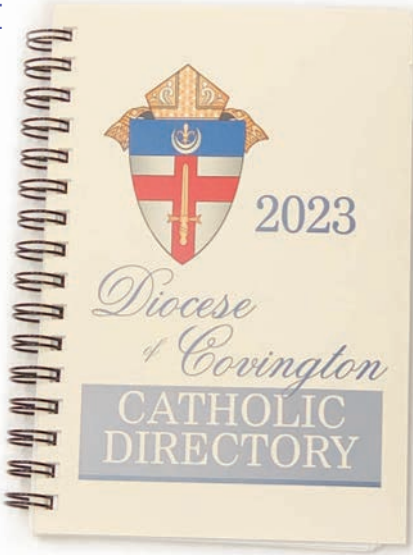
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National/World

Pope urges young Russians to sow seeds of peace

VATICAN CITY — Although Russia’s continuing war on Ukraine may make peace seem an impossible dream, Pope Francis urged young Russian Catholics to sow seeds of reconciliation and peace however they can. “I wish you, young Russians, the vocation to be artisans of peace in the midst of so many conflicts, in the midst of so many polarization on all sides, which plague our world,” the pope said during an hour-long video call Aug. 25 with 400 participants in a Russian Catholic youth festival. “I invite you to be sowers, to sow seeds of reconciliation, little seeds that in this winter of war will not sprout in the frozen ground for the time being, but will blossom in a future spring,” he told them. “Have the courage to replace fears with dreams. Replace fears with dreams. Replace fears with dreams,” Pope Francis repeated. “Do not be stewards of fears but entrepreneurs of dreams. Allow yourself the luxury of dreaming big!”

Pope says there is a ‘strong reactionary’ element in U.S. Catholic Church

ROME — The Catholic Church in the United States has “a very strong reactionary” element that is well-organized and refuses to see how Catholic doctrine can and must grow and mature, Pope Francis told Jesuits in Portugal. “I would like to remind those people that ‘indietrismo’ (being backward-looking) is useless, and we need to understand that there is an appropriate evolution in the understanding of matters of faith and morals,” the pope said in response to a question about U.S. Catholics during a meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 5. La Civiltà Cattolica published the transcript of the Lisbon encounter in Italian and English Aug. 28. A Jesuit brother had told the pope he spent his sabbatical year in the United States and something that made “a great impression” on him was how many Catholics, including bishops, were “criticizing your leadership of the church.” The pope responded, “In the United States the situation is not easy: there is a very strong reactionary attitude. It is organized and shapes the way people

groups you talk about, so closed, are isolating themselves. Instead of living by doctrine, by the true doctrine that always develops and bears fruit, they live by ideologies. When you abandon doctrine in life to replace it with an ideology, you have lost, you have lost as in war.”

Calif. AG sues school district over gender change parental notification requirement

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a lawsuit against a school district in the state Aug. 28, asking a judge to block that district’s requirement that parents be notified if their child seeks to change their pronouns or gender identity at school. The Chino Valley Unified School District Board of Education’s policy, adopted in July, requires schools to inform parents — with some exceptions — if a student requests to use a name or pronoun that differs from that on their birth certificate or other official records, or if a student requests to use facilities or participates in athletic programs opposite their biological sex. That notification does not require the student’s permission, Bonta’s office claimed. Supporters of such parental notification policies argue that parents have the right to know about changes in their child’s life if they take place in the classroom. Opponents argue that transgender students have a right to privacy, such notification policies force them to “out” children, or reveal their sexuality or self-professed gender identity, including those who may have a difficult home life. Chino Valley Unified President Sonja Shaw told The Associated Press the state’s lawsuit came as no surprise as state officials previously attempted “to shut parents out of their children’s lives.” She added, “Parents have a constitutional right in the upbringing of their children.”

Mental health crisis demands church’s integrated response, says Virginia bishop

ARLINGTON, Va. — With National Suicide Prevention Month approaching in September, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia — just a few miles from the nation’s capital — is urging mental health discussion and engagement, rather than avoidance and evasion. “Who of us do not know someone — even in our own families or maybe ourselves — who are struggling with significant mental health issues,” Bishop Burbidge asked in the latest edition of his “Walk Humbly” podcast, “including anxiety and depression — and even, sadly, despair; loneliness for some.” Statistics demonstrate Bishop Burbidge’s question is anything but rhetorical. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness. Of youth ages 13-18, one in five — either currently, or at some point during their life — have had a seriously debilitating mental illness. In 2022, at least 49,449 Americans took their own lives, according to the CDC. That reality requires an integrated response, said Bishop Burbidge. “We recognize the whole person — we’re body; we’re soul; we’re spirit — and mental health is part of who we are,” Bishop Burbidge said. “And we know that people are struggling. So first of all, we want people to be able to acknowledge that; to talk about it.” The Diocese of Arlington hosts a special Mass and conference Aug. 26 — “Beloved of God: Overcoming Stigma and Finding Community, A Day of Prayer for Mental Health” — dedicated to solidarity with those experiencing mental health challenges.

Mercenary leader’s death stirs Catholic reflections in Russia and Ukraine

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — A Ukrainian Catholic bishop has urged Russians to learn lessons from the fate of mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, and choose “true democracy” rather than “an unstable dictatorship.” “Prigozhin showed total ruthlessness, using unprincipled methods which deserved no respect from civilized states,” said Auxiliary Bishop Jan Sobilo of Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhia. “Although he loyally undertook President Vladimir Putin’s dirty work in Africa and elsewhere, he was still destroyed, getting what he deserved. This should be a warning light to anyone counting on Putin. Isn’t it better to declare for a true democracy rather than risk their lives for an unstable dictatorship?” The bishop spoke after Prigozhin and other members of his mercenary Wagner Group were presumed killed in an Aug. 23 plane crash outside Moscow. In an OSV News interview, he said Prigozhin’s death revealed the “graphic truth” of Christ’s words in St. Matthew’s Gospel, “All who take the sword will perish by the sword,” and also signaled “growing problems at the heart of the Russian state.” However, a Russian Catholic university professor warned peace in Ukraine still remained “a long way off,” and said he doubted

Prigozhin’s death would significantly impact Russian attitudes. “Some viewed Prigozhin as an opponent of Putin, who wished to change the power system here — but he was also a radical enemy of Ukraine, insisting on a brutal war,” the Catholic professor, who asked not to be named, told OSV News.

Russian occupiers seize Roman Catholic church in Skadovsk in eastern Ukraine

LVIV, Ukraine — Russian occupiers launched an attack Aug. 22 on St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Church in the town of Skadovsk, located in the Kherson region in eastern Ukraine, Bishop Stanislav Szyrokoradiuk of Odessa-Simferopol confirmed on Facebook. “A group of armed special forces, cloaked in masks and wielding weapons, encircled the Roman Catholic chapel,” the bishop said, describing the dramatic event. With determined force, they “broke down the door and broke into the chapel and began a search,” Bishop Szyrokoradiuk said. Russians, who are occupying the region, declared that their actions constituted a deliberate operation designed to counteract terrorist activities. “Fortunately, there were no people in the chapel at the time, otherwise they all would have been captured as terrorists,” stated the bishop. “Therefore, I ask everyone for prayers, so that the good Lord may shorten the days of the devil’s actions and the days of suffering for our people,” emphasized the bishop. Parishioners previously gathered in the church for prayer, but now they no longer have such an opportunity. The chapel is closed and no one is allowed in, the bishop said, asking for prayers for Catholics, who are being persecuted by the Russian occupiers. Skadovsk has been occupied almost since the beginning of the Russian invasion. Russian troops entered the city at the beginning of March 2022.

USCCB argues protecting innocent life must be priority in gun rights case before high court

WASHINGTON — Protecting the innocent “is a proper consideration” in the government regulation of firearms, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said an amicus brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in a case over whether the government can prohibit a person with a domestic violence restraining order from possessing a firearm. In the fall, the court will hear oral arguments in the case, United States v. Rahimi. Besides the USCCB, members of Congress and a number of faith-based organizations and other groups that advocate for victims of domestic violence also filed amicus briefs in the case. “As the Church teaches, and this Nation’s historical traditions demonstrate, the right to bear arms is not an unqualified license that must leave vulnerable family members to live in fear,” said the USCCB’s amicus, or friend-of-the-court, brief, which was filed Aug. 22. “Abused victims are precisely the people whom a just government is tasked with protecting. The Second Amendment does not stand as a barrier to their safety.” The Biden administration petitioned the high court to reverse a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit that invalidated one of the provisions of 18 U.S. Code Section 922 — 922(g)(8) — that bars anyone “subject to a court order” in which they were found to be a threat to a domestic partner or child from possessing firearms.

Catholic bishops, faith leaders appeal for debt relief to help African countries

NAIROBI, Kenya — Ahead of major meetings of world leaders in September, such as the Africa Climate Summit, the G20 New Delhi Summit and the 78th session of the U.N. General Assembly, Catholic bishops and faith leaders in Africa are calling for debt relief for the continent to give Africa a “life line” to escape the multiple crises plaguing its population. Amid discontent linked to the rising cost of food and living and growing inflation in Africa, economic burdens have been frustrating development, swelling poverty, and triggering conflicts and protests in some of the countries, according to the leaders. The keyword for them to fix many pressing needs of African people is debt, or rather its reduction. External debt in Africa stands at a total of \$1.1 trillion, with 25 of the countries hard hit by serious debt crises. “External debt” is the portion of a country’s debt borrowed from foreign lenders, including commercial banks, governments or international financial institutions. African countries have been borrowing to finance their national budgets (debt financing) but have been incurring an exorbitant interest rate in the process of repayment, frustrating their efforts to achieve the global sustainable development goals and climate goals, according to faith leaders. The leaders are confident that debt reduction would come as a relief and benefit millions of ordinary people.

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belong, even emotionally.” He added that “those American

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Synod is ‘truly important’ for the Church, pope says

Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis asked a group of Italian journalists to shun fake news and a love of scandal, including when covering the Catholic Church and the upcoming assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

“Help me to narrate this process for what it really is, leaving behind the logic of slogans and pre-packaged stories,” he asked the group Aug. 26 as he accepted the “E Giornalismo” prize, which recognizes outstanding contributions to journalism.

Pope Francis told the group he realizes how “speaking of a ‘synod on synodality’ may seem something abstruse, self-referential, excessively technical, of little interest to the general public,” but the whole process, which began in 2021 with listening sessions on the local, national and regional levels “is something truly important for the Church.”

At a moment in history “when there is much talk and little listening, and when the sense of the common good is in danger of weakening,” he said, “the Church as a whole has embarked on a journey to rediscover the word ‘together.’”

All the baptized must “walk together, question together, take responsibility together for communal discernment, which for us is prayer, as it was for the first apostles: this is synodality,” the pope told the group.

The synod assembly Oct. 4-29 at the Vatican, he said, will bring together bishops, priests, religious and laypeople from around the world with the purpose of “listening

together, discerning together, praying together.”

With so much of the world experiencing a “culture of exclusion,” the pope said, the Church can model a better way, one in which everyone finds a welcome and no one echoes the prayer of the Pharisee in Luke’s Gospel who says, “I thank you, Lord, because I am not like this, I am not like that” rather than thanking God for his gifts.

Pope Francis explained to the group that St. Paul VI reinstituted the Synod of Bishops at the end of the Second Vatican Council “because he realized that in the Western church synodality had disappeared, whereas in the Eastern church they still have this dimension.”

“Please, let us get used to listening to each other, to talking, not cutting someone’s head off over a word,” but rather learning “to listen, to discuss in a mature way”

“This is a grace we all need in order to move forward. And it is something the Church today offers the world, a world so often so incapable of making decisions, even when our very survival is at stake,” Pope Francis said.

The Catholic Church, he said, is “trying to learn a new way of living relationships, listening to one another in order to hear and follow the voice of the Spirit.”

“We have opened our doors, we have offered everyone the opportunity to participate, we have taken into account everyone’s needs and suggestions,” he said. “We want to contribute together to building a Church where everyone feels at home, where no one is excluded.”

The Church is for everyone, he said. “There are no first-, second- or third-class Catholics, no. All together. Everyone. It is the Lord’s invitation.”

CNS photo/Vatican Media



Pope Francis listens to Giancarlo Aneri, one of the founders of the Italian “E’ Giornalismo” prize, during an audience in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Aug. 26, 2023. Pope Francis asked Italian journalists to help him communicate effectively about the upcoming Synod of Bishops.



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