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

MESSENGER

Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926

Go forward and serve others “in truth and in constant love,” said Bishop Iffert at Mass celebrating 100 year anniversary of Covington Latin School

Baker photo



At a Mass celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Covington Latin School, September 10, Bishop Iffert raises the chalice during the consecration.

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The afternoon of Sept. 10 brought students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption to celebrate a Mass in honor of Covington Latin School's 100 year anniversary.

Covington Latin School, founded in 1923, is an accelerated, co-ed Catholic college preparatory middle and high school in the Diocese

of Covington. The school's unique program caters specifically towards academically “gifted and talented students in the tristate area,” with forming Christian leaders as its declared central purpose.

Bishop John Iffert celebrated the Mass, concelebrated with Father Ryan Maher, rector of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Father Dan Noll ('68), vicar general of the Diocese of

(Continued on page 7)

Historic first — Bishop Iffert meets with newly created Diocesan Pastoral Council

Laura Keener
Editor

Bishop John Iffert welcomed 10 members of the newly formed Diocesan Pastoral Council for its first gathering, Sept. 9, at the Curia. The Diocesan Pastoral Council is an offshoot of the five Deanery Pastoral Councils.

As Bishop Iffert begins his third year leading the Diocese, he has come to realize a need for direct communication with a group of lay faithful that is small yet representative of the entire diocese.

“I’m a person who processes things in conversation with others. I can think things through better in conversation with others than I can on my own,” Bishop Iffert told the DioPC as he began the meeting. “For me to have an opportunity to have a back and forth with you is a very productive time.”

Members of the DioPC were selected from members of the Deanery Pastoral Council by their peers and recommended by the Dean. Two DPC members from each Deanery were chosen for the DioPC for a term of four years. The DioPC members remain members of the DPC and remain ex officio members of their Parish Council. There are five Deaneries, or geographical areas, in the Diocese of Covington.

These deaneries are:

The Covington Deanery, which serves the parishes of Bellevue, Covington, Dayton, Latonia, Ludlow, Newport and Taylor Mill.

The Campbell County Deanery, which serves the parishes of Alexandria, California, Camp Springs, Cold Spring, Falmouth, Ft.

(Continued on page 6)



Bishop Iffert is surrounded by members of the newly formed Diocesan Pastoral Council: (in front of and beside Bishop Iffert, from left) Ed Schaffer (guest), Patricia Brennan, Lisa Wright, Marybeth Bosko, Ellen Staverman (behind Bishop Iffert, from left) John Gedney, John Humpert, Father Mark Keene, Don Fromme, Philip Stowers and David Doyle.

Villa Madonna Academy breaks ground for facility renovations

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

A crowd of around 100 individuals gathered to celebrate a ceremonial groundbreaking on the campus of Villa Madonna Academy, Sept. 9.

Among those in attendance at the groundbreaking were Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington, Villa Hills Mayor Heather Jansen and Villa Hills police chief Matt Hall.

The groundbreaking marks the start of renovations to Villa Madonna Academy's Center Building. Built in 1907, renovations are expected to be complete by the start of the next school year, August 2024. The renovated Center Building will house Villa Madonna Montessori and Grades K-6, complete with 21st century learning spaces and technology. Much of the original work (tile floors, stained glass windows, etc.) will be preserved in the building.

The renovations allow the high school and junior high to occupy the main building on VMA's campus. In addition to the Center Building's renovations, a "state-of-the-art" STEM wing will be added to the main building as well, featuring new science classrooms and laboratories.

Pamela McQueen, principal and executive

director of Villa Madonna Academy, spoke at the ceremony. "On this beautiful September afternoon, filled with God's bounty of beauty and wonder, welcome to this much-anticipated day! A strategic plan, a feasibility study and the Villa spirit of courage and determination set us on the way to transform the future of the academy while holding close our treasured traditions rooted in the Benedictine way of life," she said, beginning her presentation to those gathered.

While the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the project for months, "when it was time, we focused again on this multi-phase campaign that would see extensive renovations to our iconic center building, a STEM wing in the main school building, and endowment funds to support future generations of Villa students," she said.

"Let us take up the pen, then, and write a new chapter in the history of our beloved Villa. And as we do, we do so with hearts full of love, unending anticipation, and the calling to see the beauty in the world and love life. Because that is Villa. And we are Villa," Mrs. McQueen concluded her speech.

In an interview with the *Messenger* in the days following the ceremony, Mrs. McQueen said, "We are so excited for this project that will continue the legacy of the Benedictine sis-



Photos courtesy of Polly Stringer of Snapshot Treasures
(above) With shovels in hand, proponents of Villa Madonna Academy partake in a ceremonial groundbreaking for renovations to the campus's "Center Building."



(above) Bishop John Iffert speaks at the Villa Madonna Academy groundbreaking ceremony.

(left) A rendering showing what the projected renovations to the Center Building's top floor will look like, showing classrooms and STEM rooms.



SUMMIT23

A High School Eucharistic Retreat

SUMMIT 23

Eucharistic retreat for high school students

Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills

October 6-8

Early bird registration until September 20.

More information and registration available www.covdio.org/Summit23.

SEMINARY BALL

You're invited

Join the Diocese for the 2023 Seminary Ball!


An evening of drinks, dinner and dancing in support of our seminarians.

Oct. 27, 6-11 p.m.

Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Covington

RSVP's available until Oct. 13 at <https://covdio.org/seminaryball/>.

RESPECT LIFE MONTH



radical solidarity

You're invited

Diocesan Pro-Life Mass

with Bishop John Iffert, celebrant

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 7 p.m.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

Reverend Baiju Kidaagen, V.C., pastor of St. Pius X will be the homilist.

Rosary begins at 6:30 p.m.

Invite your family and friends as we join together in our greatest defense of life — Celebrating the Eucharist

For information call the Pro-Life Office (859) 392-1500

"Radical Solidarity"

To be courageously pro-woman, promoting a choice that truly protects, accompanies, and supports women and their children. — USCCB

Respect Life Theme 2023-2024



ACUE Leadership Appeal gets thunderous start

Staff Report

Several of this year’s ACUE Leadership Solicitors braved strong storms to attended an early morning orientation, Aug. 24, to kick off the upcoming ACUE Leadership Appeal. Chairing this year’s ACUE Annual Fund is Juan Aviles of Alexandria and St. Mary Parish (fourth from right, seated). Mr. Aviles retired in recent years from Fidelity Investments as a vice president, and ACUE is honored to have his dedicated leadership.

At the kickoff, Mr. Aviles spoke of the tours he took at each ACUE grade school and how deeply he was touched

by that experience. He is joined in support of this year’s appeal by 62 additional solicitors including Paul Smith of St. Pius Parish, Edgewood.

Mr. Smith will be this year’s honorary leadership chair, having served twice previously as the ACUE annual fund chair. He is retired as GM at Fidelity Investments and VP at TriEd (now BE NKY).

In addition, Julie DuPont, Ft. Thomas resident and Holy Spirit Parish (front row, third from left), completes the ACUE Annual Fund Cabinet as immediate past chair. Other past chairs present were: Steve Novak, Joe Mayer,

Jim Danneman, Pauline Baumann (honorary), Mike Desmond (honorary).

All of the above mentioned volunteers are members of the ACUE Development Advisory Board. Also pictured in the back row (far right) are Father Michael Hennigen, pastor at Holy Cross Parish and Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Catholic Schools; as well as Mark Guilfoyle (center), chair, ACUE Development Advisory Board. The ACUE Annual Fund solicitation will commence in late September through the month of October.

Check out and share the new video series, ‘Around the Diocese’



Laura Keener
Editor

Bishop John Iffert together with the *Messenger* has recently created a new video feature “Around the Diocese.” Episode one, which started as a test run, features Bishop Iffert interviewing Pam McQueen, principal, Villa Madonna Academy, about the Villa Madonna Academy renovation project.

In the video, Bishop Iffert introduces the series saying, “This new feature, Around the Diocese, is just an opportunity for you to meet some of the great people that work here and build up the Church here in Northern Kentucky.”

The feature will be presented regularly as Bishop Iffert visits the schools, parishes, motherhouses and Catholic organizations around the diocese. Following Bishop Iffert’s schedule, the *Messenger* will call ahead to the places he is already scheduled to visit to uncover interesting people and little-known treasures.

Around the Diocese is one of several new digital features that Curia offices are developing to increase the social and digital presence of the diocese. The offices that are collaborating on this campaign — known collectively as the Digital Media Envisioning Team — include: Catechesis and Evangelization, Communications, Liturgy and Worship, *Messenger*, Schools, and Vocations.

The feature can be found on the diocesan website www.covdio.org. Everyone is invited to share the feature on their digital and social media platforms.

CDP sponsored talk tackles dealing with our biases

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The Congregation of Divine Providence welcomes Brice Mickey, vice president of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Beech Acres Parenting Center for a talk, Sept. 23, discussing “Dealing with our Biases: Working Toward Equality and Justice.”

The talk is set to occur at the sisters’ Province Center, Melbourne, from 1 to 4 p.m.

“It’s an invitation to join the Sisters of Divine Providence in this endeavor — we have been looking at different issues that shows we all have some prejudices or preconceived ideas about people or events that may not be complete,” said Divine Providence Sister Alice Gerdeman and chair of the Peace and Justice Committee of the

Sisters of Divine Providence. “We just absorb them out of the atmosphere from the time that we’re children and we find then that they are a real hindrance to doing what Pope Francis has asked us to do, and that is to really see everybody as made in the divine image.”

The talk will be interactive, Sister Gerdeman said, with time for discussion and to ask questions. “We thought there are other people too, who could join us and add a richness to the discussion that would go beyond the experiences we’ve had as women religious,” she said.

Registration for the talk is open until Sept. 18, and while attendance is free, donations are accepted. Those interested in attending can contact Maria at secast@cdp-kentucky.org



Bishop’s Schedule

- | | |
|--|--|
| Sept. 16 Mass, Jubilarian Sisters of Notre Dame Covington, St. Joseph Heights, Park Hills, 10 a.m. | Sept. 21 Director’s meeting, 9:30 a.m. Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m. Priest Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica, 3 p.m. |
| Sept. 17 Wedding Vespers, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 2 p.m. | Sept. 23 Red Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 5 p.m. |
| Sept. 18-20 St. Vincent Seminary visit, Latrobe, Penn. | Sept. 23 Mass for St. Vincent de Paul feast day, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m. |
| Sept. 19 Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m. | |

‘Our Father’: transcending time into an eternal flow of mercy

Pope Benedict XVI spoke often of our beliefs becoming ossified, turning into stone, no longer living. The Catholic novelist Walker Percy similarly saw that, in the modern world, words are often deprived of their meanings. When

the phrases in which we profess our faith become just words, when they no longer have life within them, how do we recapture their meaning so that they can move us once more?

These thoughts were far from my mind as I knelt in a pew in St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rockford, Illinois, a decade or so ago, completing the penance assigned by my confessor, reciting the Lord’s Prayer with my

eyes fixed on the crucifix at the front of the church. But I have pondered them often in the years since, because that priest, in giving me that particular penance that day, stirred something within me that I can only describe with the Greek word anamnesis, the act of memory, central to the Christian liturgy, that makes what we remember truly present for us again.

—Give us this day
“Give us this day” ... When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he knew how he would die. And he knew that, before he did so, he would leave them with a perpet-

ual gift, the sacrament of his body and blood, to be offered on the altar before me and on altars all around the world every day until the end of time, and that on those altars his sacrifice on the cross would become present once again. Through the Eucharist, that sacrifice never ends. For us, every day is the evening of Holy Thursday, the afternoon of Good Friday; the world is continually redeemed this day by his sacrifice re-presented on this altar.

—Our daily bread
“... our daily bread” ... “[A]nd the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). You may have heard a homily in which a priest explained that the word which we normally translate here as “daily” also means something like “supersubstantial,” the bread beyond all other breads, which is certainly a fitting description of the Eucharist. But there’s a deep truth to be found in the ordinary translation as well. We are nourished every day by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, through which he makes all things new. Whether we receive the Eucharist daily or not, Christ’s sacramental sacrifice is truly our daily bread. To keep that sacrifice before our eyes, to mark it on our body when we make the Sign of the Cross, to unite ourselves to it by, in the words of Walker Percy, “eating Christ himself to make me mortal man again and let me inhabit my own flesh” — these are the acts that sustain us on our pilgrimage through this life. The Eucharist is truly viaticum – food for the way – and not just at the end of our lives.

—Forgive us our trespasses
“... and forgive us our trespasses” ... As I said each of those words slowly while looking at the crucifix, I recog-

nized that my trespasses — my sins — are what put Christ on that cross. God forgave me at the cost of the life of his own Son, the same Son who gave us the memorial of that sacrifice as our daily bread. This is what true forgiveness looks like, which is something we must always keep in mind as we continue to pray: ... as we forgive those who trespass against us ...

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Mt 5:7). We think of mercy most often as something God grants us, not something we give, but the mercy and forgiveness we receive both flow from and demand the mercy and forgiveness we show to others. And mercy and forgiveness come with a cost. Are we willing to lay down our lives, to unite ourselves to Christ’s sacrifice, to forgive those who trespass against us? If not, what do we think we are doing when we receive his Body and Blood, offered to God the Father as the supreme act of mercy and forgiveness?

—Lead us not into temptation
“... and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This is the ultimate temptation, the greatest evil: to consume the body and blood of Christ as cheap grace, not recognizing his sacrifice or acknowledging that it must call forth our own. Because this is the heart of the sacred mysteries we celebrate in the Mass, presented to us on the crucifix and summed up in the Lord’s Prayer: to rise with Christ, we must first die with Christ. Unless those words have life within them, we shall not have life within us.

Scott P. Richert is publisher for Our Sunday Visitor. His column has been provided by OSV News.

School choice is the answer

A new school year brings excitement, new routines and the chance for success. But for too many parents across Kentucky, they’re sending their children back to a school they know just isn’t meeting their needs.

The results are pretty staggering.

More than half of Kentucky students can’t read at grade level. Even fewer are proficient in math. Only 29 percent of elementary school students are where they should be in science.

Clearly, something in our education system isn’t working.

It’s time for Kentucky to enact a meaningful school choice program that lets parents design

the right learning environment for their children. At the most basic level, school choice is about recognizing that the goal of education is the success of students, not the funding of a school.

Kentucky must begin funding students, not systems. Every child learns differently.

We wouldn’t be the first to do it either. In fact, our lack of innovative educational options puts Kentucky outside the mainstream. Every one of our neighboring states had a working school choice program during the last academic year:

Indiana actually has three educational choice programs, and 52,000 students have participated. Families received scholarships for everything from tuition assistance for non-public schools to services like special needs therapies, individual classes, testing fees and transportation.

More than 60,000 Ohio students used school choice last year. Then, pro-student leaders in the legislature expanded the state’s program so that every single student was eligible for a scholarship up to \$8,400.

The West Virginia Hope Scholarship is open to 93 percent of students in that state and covers everything from private school tuition, tutoring, AP exam fees, afterschool or summer education programs and more.

Seven states around the country have a universal school choice program, meaning every student — regardless of family income — is empowered to find a learning environment that fits their needs.

We have the opportunity to learn from the best practices of states around the country that have tried various school choice programs. That means, when school choice comes to Kentucky, we’ll have a program ready to foster student success.

Kentucky’s kids aren’t just falling behind. They are behind. and the effects will be felt across our economy and society for generations to come.

Earlier this year, the Kentucky General Assembly considered an amendment to our Commonwealth’s constitution that would explicitly allow for school choice. The legislation passed a key committee, and leaders in Frankfort have already signaled that this bill will be a top priority during the next legislative session.

We are so grateful to the pro-student leaders, parents, and advocates in Kentucky who are ready to make school choice a reality in our state. It can’t come soon enough. Kentucky students need our help, and they need it now.

To learn more about the school choice movement in Kentucky and how we can help every child thrive in the classroom, visit EdChoiceKY.com.

Moe Lundrigan is the president of EdChoice Kentucky. He previously served as the Christian Academy School System executive director.

The choice to forgive

The readings for the twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Sirach 27:30 — 28:7; Romans 14:7-9 and Matthew 18:21-35.

The most obvious lesson from today’s first reading and Gospel is that if we expect or want God to forgive us our sins, we must forgive others their sins against us.

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

“The vengeful will suffer the Lord’s vengeance.” “Forgive your neighbor’s injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.”

“Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself, can he seek pardon for his own sins?”

“So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”

Many homilies this weekend will focus on this important lesson. There

are other ideas worth pondering, however, around this topic of forgiveness, one being, “Why do we find it difficult to forgive?” If we look closely at the Scriptures for this Sunday, we can find answers to this question, some of which might be surprising.

One reason we find it difficult to forgive is that we have a tendency to forget our own sins, and that God always offers forgiveness. “I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?”

Who of us has not sinned? This is one of the ancillary benefits of regular confession. Regular acknowledgement of our own sinfulness, and the regular bestowal of God’s forgiveness, makes it easier to be forgiving of others.

Another somewhat ironic reason is our own sinfulness, and the fact that we sometimes even like our sin: Sirach writes, “Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight,” and “Set enmity aside ... and cease from sin.”

We tend to focus on the sin committed against us, and forget that if we withhold forgiveness, we ourselves are sinning. If we were less comfortable with being attached to anything sinful, we would not want any connection with hate, would certainly not want it within us.

A third reason we can infer from these Scriptures is our tendency to be caught up in ourselves — our own lives. We forget that after baptism, our lives are no longer about us: “If we live, we live for the Lord.”

If our focus were more on living for the Lord, perhaps we would be less caught up in holding on to hurts.

Our shortsightedness can be another reason we find it hard to forgive: “Remember your last days, set enmity aside; remember death and decay, and cease from sin!”

Regularly reminding ourselves of the shortness of life and the, well, eternity of eternity, might help us to forgive.

We can take a lesson here from earthly life itself. How many times have we looked back on how upset we were about something as a child or a teenager, and with the perspective of time realized how ultimately unimportant it was? From the perspective of eternity will even the gravest of sins against us stand up?

In addition to this, we want to remember that there will only be saints in heaven. Only people comfortable in God’s presence, as George Weigel puts it, will be able to share God’s life. Would we truly rather hold on to our “rights” as an offended party than be with God?

A common reason we often withhold forgiveness is that we somehow feel that forgiving someone is saying what they did was OK. The very fact that we are forgiving them says the opposite. The very act of forgiveness acknowledges that someone did something wrong against us.

None of this is meant to invalidate anyone’s feelings of hurt or nullify the real and sometimes serious wrongs that people do to us, but holding on to those wrongs and to our own unforgiveness is, at the end of the day, our choice, and it is a choice that not only is not helpful to us but can possibly be sinful as well.

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

Pass it on

family dinner. By the end of the meal the table was empty. My closets need the same kind of treatment.

Last year’s American Benedictine Academy conference title was “Give me a Word.” That title intrigued me. It had to do with the desert amma’s & abbas passing on their words to others who came to learn from them.

Benedictine Sister Laura Swan of Lacey, Washington, was one of the speakers whose talk I listened to. Later I picked up her book, “The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives and Stories of Early Christian Women,” where she shares many of the sayings of these women and comments on them. These have been passed on from the earliest centuries after Christ. There is also a section of the deaconesses of the early Church, a topic being discussed in the Church today.

Isn’t that what we do in our e-mails, Facebook entries, phone calls, letters, cards? Pass on good news, hopefully, and words of encouragement.

I find myself saying, “God bless you,” as I leave someone’s presence — in the grocery store, to the mailman, etc. and often hear them echo it back.

What is it you pass on?
Benedictine Sister Mary Tewes is a professed member of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky. Her reflection is available on the community’s blog “Reflections from the School for the Lord’s Service,” online at stwalburg.blogspot.com.

Each month when I leave my chiropractor appointment I drive over to my sister’s flower shop for my monthly beauty fix.

A couple years ago one of my sister’s showed me a new planter dish that had come in. It had various plants in it. One was new to her and me. She called it a “Pilea.” At its base it sprouts new little ones.

She pulled one out and gave it to me. “Here, plant it, and then pass them on to others.” On the tag it said, “Pass it on Plant.” So that is what I did.

I have a stack of small pots I use just for those little plants and have given many away. The original in 2022 is two-feet tall,

with a new one nearby on the windowsill, ready to pass on.

There are many things we pass on in life. I’m thinking of all the things I have accumulated over the years that gather dust in my room. At my age it is time to “Pass them on.”

I gathered a box of them recently and took them to a

The Wedding at Cana — A slice of parenting life

As a parent my favorite story in the New Testament is the feast at the Wedding in Cana. It seems like a typical anecdotal interaction between a mother and son.

Can you just imagine Jesus hanging out with his buddies talking, laughing, when out of the corner of his eye he sees his mother, Mary, questioning a waiter over the thirsty guests who are now scandalously talking about the lack of wine. Imagine his thoughts as her look of frustration changed to resolve as she turned and settled her gaze upon him.

I’ll bet he knew exactly what was going through her mind before she even spoke, “Jesus,” I can hear her calling over the music and the crowd. “Jesus!”

“Here comes your mom!” one of his friends would chide. I’m sure Jesus took some ribbing as she approached.

Mary never hesitated. She moved swiftly hoping to spare their friends the embarrassment of running out of wine for their guests. Her faith in that moment complete. “They have no wine, she stated.” Jesus replied, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not

yet come.”

Ignoring his statement, Mary turns to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you,” she states.

I can almost see Jesus rolling his eyes. Though Jesus had not yet performed a public miracle, she had no doubt that the son she raised would do as she asked. And of course, he did. I’m sure he smiled as she hugged him in thanks before directing them with the wine.

She knew the fate of her son — to be the Savior of the world. What a burden for a mother. But one she lovingly and faithfully carried.

We can learn so much from Mary. Not only the love for her son and the faith in his word, but she also gives a perfect model of parenthood, and what it really looks like. It is beautiful, and difficult, exhilarating and heartbreaking.

If we have done our job, we may frustrate, embarrass or even anger our children at times when we make our expectations known. But instilling morals and values in our children is worth the work. We can then send them out into the world to prove who they are. I’m not saying that our kids will turn water into wine, but just by being children of God, they are the miracles.

Mary and Jesus show us that parent child relationships today are much the same as they always were. We will continue to frustrate (and love!) our children and they will continue to tolerate (and love!) us.

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

Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington

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

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

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diócesis 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.”

Keener photos



(top right) Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council listen as Bishop Iffert talks about the role of the newly formed council. (above) Philip Stowers (center), Covington Deanery Pastoral Council member, introduces himself at the DioPC's first meeting. (left) Bishop Iffert listens as Ed Schaffer introduces himself to the Council.

Diocesan Pastoral Council Members

| Ex Officio | Covington Deanery | Southeast Deanery |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Notre Dame Sister Marla Monahan, Vicar for Religious | Patricia Brennan Philip Stowers | David Doyle Lisa Wright |
| Father Mark Keene, Vicar General | Northern Kenton County Deanery | Southwest Deanery |
| | Marybeth Bosko Ellen Staverman | Don Fromme John Gedney |
| Campbell County Deanery — TBD | | |
| John Humpert - interim | | |

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Diocesan Pastoral Council

(Continued from page 1)

Thomas, Melbourne, Southgate and Wilder.

The Northern Kenton County Deanery, which serves the parishes of Crescent Springs, Edgewood, Elsmere, Erlanger, Ft. Mitchell, Ft. Wright, Independence, Park Hills and Taylor Mill.

The South East Deanery, which serves the parishes of Augusta, Brooksville, Cynthiana, Flemingsburg, Mays Lick, Maysville, Minerva and Vanceburg.

And the South West Deanery serving the parishes of Burlington, Carrollton, Dividing Ridge, Erlanger, Florence, Kenton, Owenton, Perry Park, Union, Walton, Warsaw and Williamstown.

Acknowledging the polarization and vociferousness of the current culture — the secular culture in which the Church ministers and, unfortunately, sometimes the culture within the Church — Bishop Iffert laid as groundwork the obligations every bishop has, as they live out their threefold ministry to teach, govern and sanctify God’s people.

“We really are a Big Tent Church. One of my favorite definitions of the Catholic Church is ‘Here comes everybody,’” Bishop Iffert said. “Every bishop has a responsibility to guard orthodoxy and promote legitimate diversity — both. The bishop has a responsibility, both, to protect orthodoxy — that is the faithfulness to the dogma of the Church. But where people express that true teaching in a variety of ways, the bishop has a responsibility to make room for that diversity.

“So, if we disagree with one another around this table, it’s not that the other person is stupid or evil. We’re all people who are trying to follow Jesus here. I want to practice that in the life of the Church, practice building the muscles for that kind of conversation.”

Bishop Iffert explained that the function of the DioPC is that of “a consulting, listening kind of body.”

“Sometimes I’ll just tell you stuff,” he said. “Other times, I’ll really be looking for your opinion and then reserving that decision for myself. There may be times where ... I’m willing to allow you all to guide that decision making process.”

In each case, Bishop Iffert said, he will make it clear on what he is needing from the DioPC.

Bishop Iffert ended the meeting in gratitude for their willingness to be of service to him and the Church of the Diocese of Covington.

Covington Latin School

(Continued from page 1)

Lexington; Father James Schaeper, faculty member of Covington Latin School and pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Covington; Father Albert Ruschman (‘45) and Father Michael Elmlinger (‘16), Covington Latin School chaplain.

“If your brother fails to listen to the Church, then listen to who’s speaking,” Bishop Iffert said in his homily, regarding the Gospel of Matthew, “then, Matthew says, treat him as a tax collector.”

“Too often we read this passage as permission to be tough on love on someone,” Bishop Iffert continued, “Remember that the apostle who writes this passage is Matthew — the tax collector, whom Jesus approached and loved and invited into community event as he sat at his tax collector station.”



“If this lost sheep, who you pursue through fraternal correction, Matthew reports Jesus saying,” said Bishop Iffert, “Matthew the tax collector says, treat him the way Jesus would treat a tax collector. Treat him the way someone who follows Jesus would treat a gentile ... treat one another that way.”

Bishop Iffert continued on this point, saying, “There is a tendency among those who are extraordinarily bright and among those dedicated to seeking holiness to become easy correctors of those around them. Correct those who have truly gone astray. Those who are lost in the wilderness. And this is how you do it: with respect and with love.”

Bishop Iffert finished his homily in congratulating Covington Latin School on its 100 year anniversary, saying, “always prepare gifted people to go forward and to serve others. In truth and in constant love.”

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(above) Bishop Iffert preaches the homily.

Appeals Court says Catholic group can install ‘prayer trail’

Kurt Jensen
OSV News

A Stations of the Cross display on privately owned wooded land seems an unlikely subject for a federal case.

Yet, just such a case has come out of Genoa Township in Livingston County in southeastern Michigan, escalating from a local government dispute over a special-use permit all the way to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals based in Cincinnati.

On Sept. 11, a three-judge panel ruled unanimously in favor of Missouri-based Catholic Healthcare International, which controls the 40-acre parcel purchased from the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan.

The ruling said the township was violating Catholic Healthcare International’s right to install the “prayer trail” honoring the day Jesus Christ was crucified, dead and buried. Three days after this event, Christ rose from the dead, according to Scripture and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

“We are now allowed to gather to pray and return the Pray, Hope & Don’t Worry Altar Table, the Our Lady of Grace Mural Wall, and the Stations of the Cross,” the organization said in a statement. It will now seek a permanent federal injunction to allow the displays. The dispute had dragged on for three years.

Plans for the “Casa USA” campus — with backing from other Catholic health care organizations, individuals and the patronage of Lansing Bishop Earl A. Boyea — call for duplicating Padre Pio’s hospital complex for the first time outside of Italy,

including an exact replica of the original friary church of the Capuchin Franciscan who is also known as St. Pius of Pietrelcina.

Jere D. Palazzolo, director, chairman and president of Catholic Healthcare International, also founded Marian Medical Services.

Township officials had claimed that the “prayer trail” was the equivalent of a church building, and the Missouri-based health organization responded with two revised plans, both of which were denied.

In May 2021, the township board denied the second special-use-permit application.

The township sued Catholic Healthcare International that September, after which the religious displays were removed from the trail.

Writing for the three-judge panel, Judge Raymond Kethledge noted, “None of the religious displays were visible from outside plaintiffs’ 40-acre parcel.”

According to the township’s zoning code, “the religious displays are ‘structures’: the Stations of the Cross are structurally akin to large birdhouses, and the altar and mural were indeed set on the ground,” Kethledge wrote.

“But a church is a structure ‘wherein’ people gather to worship. And no person — much less ‘persons’ — could gather to worship inside any of these structures. The ordinance’s definition of ‘church’ comports with the term’s ordinary meaning. The ordinance therefore gave plaintiffs no reason to think the township would treat their trail (with) religious displays as a church.”



9/11 — always remember

At the Catholic Charities Mobile Food Pantry “Food for Friends” Grant County, St. Williams Parish, Pantry volunteers who are former or current first responders wore their department shirts in honor of their fallen brothers and sisters lost in the attacks on Sept. 11, 2011.

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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.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center is seeking to hire a part-time van driver to bring children from local schools to the Center from 2–4 p.m., Monday through Thursdays. Driver must be VIRTUS compliant. Call (859) 261-4487.

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.

You're invited to the Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, "Cheers to a New School Year" open house, Sept. 21, 5–7:30 p.m. Learn about its mission, tour the Center, enjoy good food and drinks, and meet the staff and Board of Directors.

The St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild of Greater Cincinnati (former St. Thomas More Society) will be holding its annual Red Mass Sept. 21, 5 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, with celebrant Bishop John Iffert. This year's St. Thomas More Award honoree is Dr. Raymond G. Hebert, one of the original founders of the Thomas More Society and a longtime member of the Planning Committee.

The 4th annual St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, Chili Cook-

Off, Sept. 23, after 5 p.m. Mass.

Save the date — Sept. 23, a day of reflection 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.

The Sisters of Divine Providence welcome Brice Mickey, vice president of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Beech Acres Parenting Center for a discussion on "Dealing With Our Biases: Working Toward Equality & Justice," Sept. 23, 1–4 p.m., Province Center, Melbourne. Register by Sept. 18 at secast@cdpkentucky.org.

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/religiousliberty.

DCCH Children's Home Flea Market, Ft. Mitchell, year-round, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; (Dec.–April,

2023 Parish Festivals

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 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. Agnes Parish , Ft. Wright, September 22–24 | Sts. Peter and Paul , Sept. 23, Octoberfest 6–11 p.m. |
| St. Matthew Parish , Morning View, Sept. 17 Noon–7 p.m. | St. Benedict Parish , Covington, September 22–23 | DCCH Center for Children & Families , Sept. 30, 2–10 p.m. |

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.

St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, PTO Craft Show accepting vendor applications for its craft show Nov. 4, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Table prices include 8-foot tables and two chairs. One table: \$30; two tables: \$50, electric available for an additional \$2.50 per table. Set up the evening before the craft show available. Contact Rebecca Stidham at fawn.stidham486@gmail.com.



Learning more about prayer

Students learn about the Our Lady of Knock Novena at St. Patrick School, Taylor Mill.



CCD Program prepares for a new year

The catechists for the St. Henry parish CCD program gathered for a meeting prior to the start of classes in September. The CCD program provides religious education for students in first through eighth grades that do not attend a Catholic school or are homeschooled.

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St. Cyprian of Carthage on the Blood of Christ

St. Cyprian of Carthage was the bishop of Carthage in the mid-200's AD, as well as an early Christian writer. Today he is regarded as a Father of the Church. The feast day of St. Cyprian of Carthage is celebrated Sept. 16.

In *Epistle 62*, St. Cyprian writes to Caecilius on the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord. "Know then that I have been admonished that, in offering the cup, the tradition of the Lord must be observed, and that nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as that the cup which is offered in remembrance of Him should be offered mingled with wine. For when Christ says, 'I am the true vine.' (John 15:1) the blood of Christ is assuredly not water; but wine; neither can His blood by which we are redeemed and quickened appear to be in the cup, when in the cup there is no wine whereby the blood of Christ is shown forth, which is declared by the sacrament and testimony of all the Scriptures."



The Novena to St. Therese of Lisieux, The Little Flower

Please join us in the praying of the powerful Novena to St. Therese, The Little Flower. We will be gathering at the Diocesan Shrine of the Little Flower, located at St. Therese Church, Southgate, KY 41071. **The praying of the Novena will begin at 7pm beginning on September 22 and will culminate on September 30th**, the eve of the feast day of St. Therese. Mass will be available on day 5 of the novena, September 26. Confessions will be available each night. All present will receive a blessing with a first class relic of St. Therese. Come and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birthday of the saint who promised to send a shower of roses upon the world.



Mother of God Cemetery announces VISITATION DAY

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An image of St. Cyprian of Carthage formerly displayed at St. Martin's Church in Meßkirch, Germany.





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Pope praises ‘doctor of the poor’ for putting faith into action

Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Christians are not called to merely notice and criticize the social, economic and political issues of the day, but, like Blessed José Gregorio Hernández, they must “get their hands dirty” and commit themselves to action, Pope Francis said.

“So many talk about (issues), so many criticize and say that everything is going wrong. But Christians are not called to that, but rather to deal with them and get their hands dirty,” the pope said during his general audience Sept. 13 in St. Peter’s Square.

He held up the example of Venezuela’s “doctor of the poor” as someone who, by caring for sick people unable to afford medical care, “puts into practice the will of God, helping the needy, giving hope to the poor; bearing witness to faith not with words but by example.”

Continuing his series of talks on apostolic zeal, Pope Francis said the 19th-century doctor was motivated by an “interior fire” to live in service of God and neighbor; and that fire was sparked by his mother.

“Mothers are the ones who transmit the faith; faith is conveyed in dialect, that is, in the language of mothers,” the pope noted, departing from his prepared text.

Although Blessed José Gregorio Hernández wanted to become a priest, health problems forced him to leave the seminary on two occasions. Yet, the pope said, those health problems “made him more sensitive to the needs of others” in his vocation as a doctor.

“This is apostolic zeal; he does not follow his own aspirations, but is open to God’s plans,” he said. “How important it is not to suffer things passively, but, as Scripture says, to do all things in a good spirit to serve the Lord.”

While working as a prominent physician, university professor and scientist in Caracas, Venezuela, Hernández was “above all a doctor close to the weakest,” and one who is said to have treated poor people for free and tended to contagious patients during a flu outbreak in Venezuela.

“To the riches of money, he preferred that of the

Gospel, giving his existence to help those in need,” Pope Francis said. “In the poor, the sick, migrants, the suffering, José Gregorio saw Jesus.”

Blessed José Gregorio Hernández’s ability to care for those in need came, in part, through the recognition of his own need for grace, the pope said.

“It was natural for him to care for those who were begging on the streets and were in dire need of the love he freely received from Jesus every day,” Pope Francis said. “This is where he drew strength from: intimacy with God.”

In his greetings to visitors in St. Peter’s Square, the pope thanked a group of Polish pilgrims for bringing to

Rome the relics of the Ulma family who were killed during World War II for sheltering a Jewish family. The nine members of the family were beatified Sept. 10 in Markowa, Poland.

At the end of the audience, Pope Francis blessed a painting of the Ulma family, each member depicted with a halo — including the unborn child in his mother’s womb.

Pope Francis blesses a reliquary containing relics from the Blessed Ulma family at the end of his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Sept. 13, 2023.



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Mental Health Agency Counselor

We are seeking a full-time counselor for our agency's mental health program. The position includes general counseling services to individuals, couples and families. This is 40 hours a week, some evening hours. Necessary qualifications include MSW or Master in clinical counseling and State Licensed (preferred) or license eligibility, experience with assessment, diagnosis, and treatment and solid record-keeping and organizational skills.

Jail Ministry Coordinator

include: Develop and maintain resources that address needs of the incarcerated, the newly released, and their families; Provide a diocesan framework for the recruitment, certification and training of volunteers to participate in jail/prison ministry; coordinate and lead the jail ministry advisory committee and engage with members to provide support to jail ministry volunteers; participate in the Northern Kentucky Reentry Team; and monitor and provide support to the family support group. Necessary qualifications include bachelor's degree in a human service field; Experience in pastoral ministry preferred; Ability to network and coordinate activities with community partners dedicated to working with prisoners, ex-offenders, and their families; Knowledge and understanding of community resources in Northern Kentucky; Strong boundaries, communication skills and excellent with details.

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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Challenge revealed behind Mother Teresa’s ‘Gospel on five fingers’

Kimberley Heatherington
OSV News

WASHINGTON — For those who have never heard Mother Teresa’s famous “Gospel on five fingers,” simply imagine the petite and wizened founder of the Missionaries of Charity counting out these words on the digits of a hand — your hand: “You. Did. It. To. Me.”

Intoning Jesus Christ’s words in English from Matthew 25:40 — “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” — she was not only offering a vivid visual demonstration of Christ’s pronouncement. Mother Teresa, St. Teresa of Kolkata, also was issuing both an invitation and a challenge.

That invitation and challenge have deep Scriptural roots, explained Bradley Gregory, associate professor of biblical studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, in a Sept. 7 lecture presented by the Mother Teresa Institute at Catholic University.

Gregory’s lecture opened a three-day series of events culminating in a Sept. 9 celebration honoring the saint in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception’s Crypt Church.

“In nearly every public talk she gave, Mother Teresa mentioned Matthew 25:40,” Gregory told his audience. “It would not be going too far to say that her life was modeled on this verse.”

“In some modern translations, this sentence from Matthew is translated, ‘You did it for me,’” Gregory explained. “Is it ‘You did it to me,’ or ‘You did it for me?’ The Greek of the verse is ambiguous; it can be translated either way. But the difference in these two renderings is significant.”

One little word, Gregory emphasized, has a very big impact.

“The translation ‘You did it for me’ would suggest that believers should see themselves as Jesus’ ambassadors and do works of mercy on his behalf,” said Gregory. “And that is certainly true. But the translation ‘You did it to me’ is not only more probable but much more arresting.”

Gregory noted, “In this reading, Jesus is so identified with the poor and the suffering, that anything that is done to them is — at a deeper level — an action done directly to Jesus. Notice it’s not ‘as if you had done it to me’ — it’s ‘you did it to me.’”

“As Mother Teresa deeply grasped,” said Gregory, “this is a very sobering thought: that Jesus considers acts done to the needy as actually being done directly to him. Most scholars agree that this second interpretation is likely the intended sense. Actions done to the poor are — in some mysterious way — acts simultaneously done to Christ.”

Matthew 25:40 appears near the end of that Gospel, Gregory said, as part of a series of parables intended to teach what happens in the final judgment. They include the foolish bridesmaids (Matt. 25:1-13); the talents (Matt. 25:14-30); and judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46).

“An honest reader might ask, ‘Does this mean we are judged solely on works and our faith isn’t that relevant?’ After all, faith is never mentioned in this passage,” Gregory pointed out.

To illustrate his answer, Gregory explained the concept of Catholic Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor’s “social imaginary”: the way people imagine their own social existence; the assumptions, expectations and filters employed as they interact with the world.

It’s how, in Gregory’s example, over a thousand harried rush-hour commuters on Washington’s subway system hurried past world-famous, Grammy-winning musician Joshua Bell when in 2007 — in a baseball cap, jeans and T-shirt — he offered an impromptu, 30-minute-plus concert with his multimillion dollar Stradivarius violin.

Just one woman truly recognized Bell. Only a handful stopped to listen to him play. All the rest missed what was happening, a deeper reality of which they were unaware.

Context and conversion of imagination is important, Gregory said. The subway riders didn’t expect to see Bell busking in the station; it defied their expectations. “Because these commuters were unaware of the experiment being done, their social imaginary prevented them from seeing the true person right in front of them,” observed Gregory.

“Mother Teresa’s living out of Matthew 25:40 is very much like this woman who recognized Joshua Bell — in her ministry to the poorest of the poor, she is a witness to a different view of the world,” explained Gregory. “A different social imaginary. A witness to an encounter with Christ where others might see nothingness.”

Her vision of the call of the Gospel, Gregory said, is hard for the modern Western outlook to grasp.

“Works of mercy are not about earning God’s favor — but about entering into the mystery of the kingdom,” Gregory stressed. “In Scripture, the poor have a completely different value in the social imaginary of God’s economy.”

God has a special concern for the poor, Gregory added.

“In Proverbs 14:31, we read, ‘Those who oppress the poor insult their maker; but those who are kind to the needy honor him.’ Notice what this verse implies,” said

Gregory. “God is so identified with the poor that our attitude toward God will be revealed by how we relate to the poorest around us.”

“It’s a package deal,” Gregory advised. “Biblical authors present our relationship to God and our relationship to the needy as two sides of the same coin.”

“Care for the poor,” Gregory continued, “is not simply a good deed or an obligation. It is an integral declaration of faith that one believes in Jesus’ kingdom, which is not of this world. Mother Teresa understood this theological truth deeply,” he said. “In the book ‘A Call To Mercy,’ she explains why she takes the call of Matthew 25:40 this seriously. She says that she does this ‘because I love God, and because I believe his Word.’”



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Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said Sept. 12 that the cardinal, accompanied by an official from the Vatican Secretariat of State, would be in Beijing Sept. 13-15 as “a further step in the mission desired by the pope to support humanitarian initiatives and the search for paths that can lead to a just peace.” The Vatican confirmed in late May that Pope Francis had chosen Cardinal Zuppi, the archbishop of Bologna and president of the Italian bishops’ conference to lead a peace mission. As a priest and member of the Community of Sant’Egidio in the early 1990s, he helped facilitate the peace talks that ended the civil war in Mozambique. As part of his new mission, the cardinal traveled to Kyiv in early June and met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He went to Moscow in late June, where he met with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill and with a Kremlin foreign policy adviser. In July, he went to Washington where he had a private meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden.

Abortions rise in most U.S. states where the procedure remains legal, data shows

WASHINGTON — Legal abortions most likely increased in the United States in the first six months of 2023 compared with 2020, according to a New York Times analysis of data from the Guttmacher Institute, which opposes abortion restrictions. The data from Guttmacher, which is based on what it calls a representative sample of legal abortion providers, is from the first half of 2023; it follows the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 decision in Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision that overturned prior rulings by the high court making abortion access a constitutional right. Following the Dobbs ruling, 22 states have moved to ban or restrict abortion, although not all of those efforts are currently in effect amid court challenges. The analysis found that about 511,000 abortions were estimated to have occurred in states or territories where the procedure was legal within the first six months of 2023, an

increase from about 465,000 abortions nationwide in a six-month period of 2020. Most states where abortion remains legal saw increases, the analysis found, particularly states like Illinois that border states greatly restricting the procedure. The data does not account for what may be illegal procedures,

such as abortion pills ordered from overseas, but may also reflect other efforts to broaden access to abortion by the Biden administration, including through telemedicine.

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UK teenager wants to fight for her life, but court denies her wish

Simon Caldwell
OSV News

LIVERPOOL, England — A Catholic bioethics institute has criticized a court for denying an “alert and conscious” teenager the legal right to fight a move to put her on end-of-life care against her will.

The Anscombe Bioethics Center, an Oxford-based institute serving the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, said the ruling by the Court of Protection in the case of a woman known only as “ST” for legal reasons represented a “lethal form of paternalism.”

The 19-year-old student has been in an intensive care unit in an English National Health Service hospital, which also cannot be named, since last year after she suffered respiratory arrest while infected with COVID-19.

She also suffers a progressive mitochondrial illness and

is now entirely reliant on a ventilator to breathe, a tube to receive nutrition and a hemodialysis machine.

Doctors at the hospital want to move her from intensive care to palliative care, in which the woman will be sedated and denied hemodialysis, resulting in her death from kidney failure within days. Hemodialysis is a procedure that uses a dialysis machine and a special filter called an artificial kidney, or a dialyzer, to clean one’s blood when the kidneys are not working normally.

The patient has instructed her lawyers to oppose the plan and to press for permission to go to either the United States or Canada to take part in clinical trials for experimental “nucleoside bypass therapy,” a treatment for her mitochondrial illness that might give her an improved chance of survival.

She told a psychiatrist who examined her: “This is my

wish. I want to die trying to live. We have to try everything.”

But in a written judgment issued at the end of August, Justice Roberts, the judge, ruled that ST is “unable to make a decision for herself in relation to her future medical treatment ... because she does not believe the information she has been given by her doctors.”

The judge concluded: “In my judgment, and based upon the evidence which is now before the court, I find on the balance of probabilities that ST’s complete inability to accept the medical reality of her position, or to contemplate the possibility that her doctors may be giving her accurate information, is likely to be the result of an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, her mind or brain.”

The court will soon consider the application to place ST on palliative care, with the patient represented by the Official Solicitor, a state appointment, rather than by her own lawyers.

Anscombe Bioethics Center said in a Sept. 4 statement that the ruling denies ST not only the right to be heard but also “the right to litigate against the decision to take away her voice.”

“The judge has taken a perilous step in interpreting ST’s disagreement with her doctors as tantamount to an inability to use the information she has been given about her condition. She can use it. She just disagrees with it,” it read.

The statement added: “Her wish to continue to receive life-sustaining treatment, such as dialysis, is not only being ignored, but that very wish is being seen as a reason to deny her dignity as a mentally capable adult. This is a lethal form of paternalism.”

None of the doctors who interacted with ST or treated her claimed that her condition had affected her brain, and the judge “accepted that ST does not suffer from any recognized psychiatric or psychological illness.”



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