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

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 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, Pt.

(Continued on page 7)

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

Laura Keener
Editor

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(Continued on page 6)
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 school 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. 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 unmatched academic excellence in the Benedictine tradition. As Phase Two continues, we invite our community to invest in future generations of Villa students.”

You’re invited
Diocesan Pro-Life Mass with Bishop John Iffert, celebrate

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 attend 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).

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 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-lentucky.org
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 don’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.

School choice is the answer

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 to 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 81 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 thankful 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

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 “Flea.” At its base it sprouts new little ones.

She pulled out one and gave it to me. “Here, plant it, and then pass them on to others.” On the tag it said, “Pass it on.” 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 window sill, 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 family dinner. By the end of the meal the table was empty. My closets need the same kind of treatment. 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 the answer, 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 forgive 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 confession acknowledges the idea of our own sinfulness, and the regular bestowal of God’s 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 selfishness. “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 to live in a relationship with hate, which would certainly not want it within us.

A third reason we can interfere from these Scriptures is our tendency to be caught up in our own, our particular, selfishness, 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 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 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 Bunkemper is pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky.

Passion

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 changes to resolve as she turned and settled her gaze upon him.

I 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

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, “Whatever you ask for, believe that it is done, and it will be done.”

What is it you pass on?

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

that is what I did.

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, challenging 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 Feinaurer is director of the Safe Environment Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

The Wedding at Cana – A slice of parenting life

Anecdotal interaction between a mother and son.

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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 confidence and with respect.

A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1515 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Informativa sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diocesi de Covington

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

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

The readings for the twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Acts 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 our sins, we must forgive others their sins against us.

“The vengeful will suffer / for God’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 you despise 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 the answer, 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 forgive 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 confession acknowledges the idea of our own sinfulness, and the regular bestowal of God’s forgiveness, makes it easier to be forgiving of others.

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Father Stephen Bunkemper is pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky.
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
Notre Dame Sister
Marla Monahan, Vicar for Religious
Father Mark Keene, Vicar General

Covington Deanery
Patricia Brennan
Philip Stowers

Southern Kenton County Deanery
Marybeth Bosko
Ellen Staverman

Campbell County Deanery — TBD
John Humpert - interim

Southeast Deanery
David Doyle
Lisa Wright

Southwest Deanery
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“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.”

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.”

Thomas, Melbourne, Southgate and Wilder.

The Northern Kenton County Deanery, which serves the parishes of Augusta, Brookville, Cynthia, 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 threecold 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 “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 reserve 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.

The Covington Latin School choir sings at the anniversary Mass, directed by Mrs. Anna Little. Organist Sean Connolly can be seen on the right. (right) Priest concelebrants process into the Mass. From left to right are Father Ryan Maher, Rector of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Father Dan Noll (’68), Vicar General of the Diocese of Lexington, Father James Schaeper, a faculty member of Covington Latin School and Father Michael Emlinger (’16), Covington Latin School chaplain.

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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’ comport 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.”
Learning more about prayer
Students learn about the Our Lady of Knock Novena at St. Patrick School, Taylor Mill.
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."

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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.

“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.

“This is where he drew strength from: intimacy with God,” Pope Francis said.

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. CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope praises ‘doctor of the poor’ for putting faith into action
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Cafeteria Managers - Diocese of Covington School Lunch Program
The Diocese of Covington School Lunch Program is currently seeking dedicated Cafeteria Managers to join our team at St. Anthony, Taylor Mill, and St. Agnes, Ft. Wright. The position is to coordinate the successful operation of our school lunch program, ensuring the provision of nutritious meals to our students.
We offer competitive compensation and benefits packages for eligible employees. Exact details will be discussed during the interview process.
To apply please go to www.covdio.org/employment, School Related Openings, Employment Application Non-Teacher, send completed application to: Diocese of Covington Attn: Laura Hatfield SLP Director, 1125 Madison Ave. Covington Ky. 41011.

Job Opportunities at Catholic Charities
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington is adding services and growing, and this is an exciting time to serve in our Local Church. If you have a desire to work in an environment where you can truly make a difference by serving others, Catholic Charities seeks candidates to fill the following positions:
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 a 40 hour 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 incarcerated, the newly released, and their families. Provide a diocesan framework for the recuitment, certification and training of volunteers to participate in jail 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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Sacred Heart Prayer.
Dear Heart of Jesus—In the past I have asked for favors. This time I ask you for this very special one (mention favor). Take it dear Jesus, and place it with in your own heart where your Father sees it, then in your merciful eyes it will become your fa-vor, not mine. Amen.
Say this prayer for three days, promise publication and favor will be granted. Never know to fail. M.A.L.

Novena
Much like this woman who recognized Joshua Bell— in observed Gregory. From seeing the true person right in front of them, \"Because these commuters were unaware of the experience of busking in the station; it defied their expectations.\" Gregory said. The subway riders didn't expect to see Bell happening, a deeper reality of which they were unaware. All the rest missed what was with his multimillion dollar Stradivarius violin. Joshua Bell when in 2007—in a baseball cap, jeans and T-shirt—he offered an impromptu, 30-minute-plus concert as they interact with the world. The assumptions, expectations and filters employed \"An honest reader might ask, \'Does this mean we are judging solely on works and our faith isn't that relevant?\' \"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. \"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 the message of the Gospels. For the Catholic Church, 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 judging 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 concerto 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. Concept 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 experi- ment 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 relation- ship 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.\"
Pope calls for literacy in peacemaking, care for the environment

VATICAN CITY — If people can learn how to inflict suffering on others with ever more deadly weapons, they also can learn to stop doing so, Pope Francis said. “If we can hurt someone, a relative or friend, with harsh words and vindictive gestures, we can also choose not to do so,” he added. “Learning the lesson of peace means restoring the value of dialogue, the practice of kindness and respect for others.” 

Marking International Literacy Day, Pope Francis sent a message to Audrey Azoulay, director-general of UNESCO, encouraging efforts to teach reading and writing to the hundreds of millions of people in the world who do not have basic literacy skills, but he also focused on the education needed to help all people contribute to building sustainable and peaceful societies. The papal message, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, was published by the Vatican Sept. 8, International Literacy Day.

Seminar is burned to death in Nigeria in endless cycle of violence against Christians

ABUJA, Nigeria — In an endless cycle of violence against Christians in Nigeria, seminarian Na’Aman Danlami Stephen of the Diocese of Kafanchan was burned to death Sept. 7 when a terrorist group called Fulani herdsmen attacked the rectory of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. The latest killing is just one in a long list of attacks that have targeted churches and Christians in Africa’s most populous nation, and Kafanchan in particular has been hit hard by the kidnapping of clergy, seminarians and other Christians. According to a January report by the research organization SB Morgen Intelligences, not fewer than 30 Catholic priests were killed by gunfire in 2022, while 36 others were abducted. Meanwhile the April 10 report by Interociety said that more than 30,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria over the last 14 years.

Supreme Court is asked to weigh in on future of abortion pill

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department and the manufacturer of an abortion drug asked the U.S. Supreme Court Sept. 8 to overturn a lower court ruling that would limit access to the drug, setting the stage for the high court to weigh in on the future of the drug’s availability. A coalition of pro-life opponents of mifepristone, the first of two drugs used in a medication or chemical abortion, previously filed suit in an effort to revoke the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s approval of the drug, arguing the government violated its own safety standards when it first approved the drug in 2000. However, proponents argued mifepristone poses statistically little risk to women using it for abortion early in pregnancy and claim the drug is being singled out for political reasons. In its filing, the Justice Department called the appeals court ruling an “unprecedented decision,” arguing it would “threaten to severely disrupt the pharmaceutical industry and prevent FDA from fulfilling its statutory responsibilities according to its scientific judgment.” In a statement, Eric B픽, senior counsel for Alliance for Defense Freedom, which is representing the pro-life coalition opposed to mifepristone’s approval, said the FDA “has been entrusted to serve as the nation’s gatekeeper of legal drugs.” Baptist said, “By repeatedly and usually failing to correct safeguards in the chemical abortion regimen, the FDA has failed to protect the safety of women and girls.”

U.S. senators scrutinize controversial school book bans

WASHINGTON — The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing Sept. 12 to scrutinize recent controversies in an ongoing debate about the types of books children should have access to in public schools and libraries. At the hearing titled, “Book Bans: Examining How Censorship Limits Liberty and Literature,” senators discussed numerous recent school board controversies about whether certain books should be accessible to students. While some witnesses and senators argued that some books have been banned in schools erroneously — including “Maus,” a Pulitzer Prize-winning illustrated novel about the Holocaust — others argued that parents opposing books with graphic content does not rise to the level of constitutional scrutiny. The hearing took an explicit turn as some witnesses and senators read explicit passages from some books they said should be banned, which included descriptions of sex acts, while others claimed no one believes children should have access to inappropriate, pornographic materials in libraries. At least one participant argued senators shouldn’t be spending time on the issue at all and should consider immigration reform instead.

Cardinal Zuppi visits China as envoy promoting peace in Ukraine

VATICAN CITY — Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, who said Pope Francis tapped him to mediate but to encourage dialogue that could end Russia’s war on Ukraine, flew to China Sept. 12. Italian media reported. The Italian newspaper La Repubblica reported the cardinal could meet as early as Sept. 13 with Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang in Beijing. Matteo
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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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.”