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(above left and center; below left) During the Wedding Anniversary Vespers celebration, Sept. 17, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, couples were invited to join their right hands and renew their wedding vows. (above right) In his homily, Bishop Iffert shared his delight in being with the couples, "This is one of those really remarkable events that we have each year, coming together to pray together and then getting a chance to meet you and to bless your married life." (below center and right) Bishop Iffert greeted each couple and offered them a personal blessing.



Couples celebrating milestone anniversaries 'show the way God loves'

Laura Keener
Editor

This year, 102 couples celebrating milestone anniversaries were recognized by Bishop John Iffert. (For a list of the couples see page 13.) The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization distributed a certificate signed by Bishop Iffert to each couple honoring their 1 year, 25 years, 50 years or 60-plus years of married life.

Many of these couples joined Bishop Iffert for Vespers and a blessing, Sept. 17, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

"This is one of those really remarkable events that we have each year, coming together to pray together and then getting a chance to meet you and to bless your married life," said Bishop Iffert as he

began his homily.

Bishop Iffert shared an experience from last year's Wedding Anniversary Vespers. Flanked by his daughters, an older man approached him carrying an 8x10 framed photograph of his wife. It was his wife who had made the arrangements to be a part of the Vespers and she was looking forward to coming. Unfortunately, she was in a rehabilitation facility recovering from a fall and was unable to attend in person. Bishop Iffert said that some people would say that, while her husband and daughters made a touching tribute, the reality is that she wasn't there at all.

"What we celebrate today about marriage is the union, the love that is so intimate, that over all of these decades and years, that hus-

(Continued on page 13)

Villa Madonna Academy Elementary School named 2023 National Blue Ribbon School



Villa Madonna Academy's elementary school was declared as one of the 353 schools nationwide recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Nation Blue Ribbon School for 2023. National Blue Ribbon recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups on assessments.

Villa Madonna Academy Elementary has earned National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards in 2007, 2017, and now in 2023.

VMA Elementary Principal Soshana Bosley said, "We are


(Continued on page 8)

‘To Heal, Proclaim and Teach’ a presentation for anyone wanting to bring others to Christ

Laura Keener
Editor

In a mission to provide resources to assist catechists and teachers, David Cooley, co-director, Office of

Catechesis and Evangelization, is welcoming Jared Dees for a presentation “To Heal, Proclaim and Teach.” Oct. 14, 8:30–11:30 a.m., at the Curia’s Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium. The presentation is open to everyone.




We invite you
to attend a special event featuring author

Jared Dees

October 14, 2023

8:30 am to 11:30 am in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium

**to
Heal,
Proclaim,
and
Teach**



Diocese of Covington
OFFICE of CATECHESIS
AND EVANGELIZATION

RSVP by Sept. 28, 2023 at covdio.org/register or call David Cooley at 859-392-1592

“We were hearing a lot of the same things from our teachers and catechists,” said Mr. Cooley.

The biggest issue that Mr. Cooley is hearing that for many families faith is often taking a back burner to the many other activities and events going on. This is frustrating for anyone trying to instill in a young person an understanding of Jesus and developing a relationship with Jesus.

Mr. Dees is an author, speaker, teacher and creator of the popular website The Religion Teacher, which provides practical resources and effective teaching strategies to religious educators. He is a graduate of the Alliance for Catholic Education program at the University of Notre Dame, where he also earned master’s degrees in education and theology. His presentation is based of his book by the same title, “To Heal, Proclaim and Teach: The Essential Guide to Ministry in Today’s Catholic Church.”

“In this particular book, Jared Dees is talking about how spreading the Gospel is different than teaching other subjects, like math or science,” said Mr. Cooley. “It’s not just about hearing the facts, it’s more about a relationship with Jesus.”



Around the Diocese
With Bishop Iffert

In Episode 2 of “Around the Diocese,” Bishop John Iffert talks with Notre Dame Sister Evelyn Reinke about her love of photography and how she is sharing that gift with others. Check it out online at www.covdio.org.

Mr. Dees’ message is not limited to teachers or catechists. On his website, Mr. Dees identifies a the many Catholics who might benefit from his book and in turn his presentation: if you work for the church, if you volunteer in your church or if your friends or loved ones have left the church, all of these would benefit from the practical resources presented.

Students and the people in our communities “a lot of times are hurting, or they’re broken in some way; they’re dealing with things that are just hard for young people to deal with,” said Mr. Cooley. “We have to approach them the way Jesus approached people. Jesus would meet people where they are, he would listen to them and find out where they are. If they needed to be healed, he would take care of that need first — whether it’s a physical healing or spiritual healing. From there you can bring them further along in their journey and start proclaiming the Word, introducing them to this idea of having this relationship with Jesus. Once you get past that point, is where you start the actual teaching, here’s where they’re engaged, and they want to learn more.”

Do you want to learn more? RSVP to attend “To Heal, Proclaim and Teach” by Sept. 28 at covdio.org/register or call (859) 392-1592.

Altar setup: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Father Luke Spannagel
USCCB

After the Creed and Intercessions, for which we use a standing posture of prayer, we sit down while the preparations for the Liturgy of the Eucharist take place. As the Diocese of Peoria teaches, “Before Jesus sat down with his disciples to celebrate the Last Supper, he instructed that various preparations be made. Preparations such as securing and preparing a room, making bread and purchasing wine all needed to be done before this sacred event could take place. The same is true when we celebrate Mass... Typically, there is music during the preparations—either instrumental, by the choir, or a common hymn. The music at this point should assist in our proximate preparation for the Liturgy of the Eucharist” (“A Study of the Mass,” p. 11).

Since we are about to participate in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, music can help us be more prayerfully prepared and in the right mindset. Have you ever noticed that songs at this point in the Mass are often slower in tempo and more flowing in words? No doubt, this is to help prepare us for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Singing and listening to meditation-type music can help us prepare to pray and meditate on the most beautiful mystery in front of us: Jesus Christ’s one perfect sacrifice before the Father is made present to his spouse, the Church, and the bread and the wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

In complement to the preparation for the people, what about everything the celebrant and the servers are doing in the sanctuary? The General Instruction for the Roman Missal reminds us that certain items are needed for the Liturgy of the Eucharist (GIRM, 117–118). Let’s take a quick look at each material:

- Two to six lighted candles.



- A crucifix on or near the altar (the altar should be covered by a white cloth.)
- The Missal (the big red book with all the prayers the priest says). This book contains words in black and red ink. The words in black are the words that the priest says and the words in red are instructions for the priest on what to do (how and where to stand, how to speak, what arm gestures to use, etc.).
- Corporal. This is a square white cloth that is unfolded and placed on the altar. Since it comes from the word meaning body, it makes sense that the Body and Blood of Christ will become present upon this cloth during Mass.
- Chalice. This special cup is made of precious metals (generally gold-plated or silver-plated) because we use the most precious materials we have to honor Jesus truly there in his most precious Body and Blood.
- Purificator. This is a long and narrower white cloth

- that is used to wipe the rim of the chalice.
- Paten. This item which looks like a small plate is also generally gold-plated or silver-plated and is used for the large host which the priest holds up during the Eucharistic Prayer. Note: In some places, you might see a deeper gold-plated dish used which is typically called a dish paten.
- Ciborium. This is another gold or silver-plated item that has a matching lid and which holds the smaller hosts. When hosts are reserved in the tabernacle, they are typically kept in a ciborium.
- There are other materials you might see depending on the local parish customs:
- Pall. This is a square white cloth stiffened with cardboard that is used to cover the chalice. This cover prevents flies, insects, dust, etc., from getting into the chalice.
- Chalice veil. This is a cloth cover for the chalice. It not only can protect the chalice when not in use, but it also helps heighten our sense of mystery by “veiling” the chalice from our sight until the time for the Most Blessed Sacrament draws near. Chalice veils can match the color of the priest’s vestments or can always be white in color.
- Burse. This “pouch,” which often matches the chalice veil/vestments in color, is placed on top of the chalice veil and is used for the keeping of corporals.
- Communion patens. Plates with handles that the servers hold during Communion. These patens are meant to help catch any particles of the Eucharist which may fall from a Host or help to catch a Host which accidentally falls.

As you can see, there are many items we use for the Liturgy of the Eucharist, each with purpose and meaning. No wonder the altar servers sometimes seem to be reviewing a checklist in their minds to make sure we have everything we need.

Cassba went Up, Up and Away!!
How is it that we outdo ourselves each year? We ask ourselves this question every year and it comes down to blessings. The blessings of our amazing staff, the blessings of our dedicated volunteers and the blessings of our generous donors and attendees.
The participation in our online silent auction bidding continues to grow and allows guests who are unable to enjoy the event in person the ability to support us from afar. Having said this, you sure can't miss the enthusiasm and excitement that comes from being in person at the event. When Bishop Iffert flips the coin during our popular "heads and tails split the pot game" and the crowd roars with laughter or as Marty Kamer, our auctioneer, convinces a bidder to bid higher. You had to see it to believe it! It is smooth sailing when our guests and supporters are all involved to help the clients and guests of Catholic Charities and Parish Kitchen. And congratulations to our Pappy VanWinkle Bourbon Raffle winner Wayne Hodges, and our Cassba Cash raffle winners, first place: Jon Voet; second place: Audrey Marron and third place ; Julianne Bruzina.



The cross reminds us of God’s presence, said Bishop Iffert at Mass celebrating vocation of St. Henry parishioner

Maura Baker
Staff Writer
A Mass was celebrated, Sept. 14, at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, celebrating the novitiate of parishioner Olivia

Staverman. Ms. Staverman, whose vocation story was covered in the July 28 edition of the *Messenger*, will be moving to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, later this month, and will officially enter postulancy with the Mercedarian Sisters,

September 24.
Bishop John Iffert celebrated this special Mass.
“Jesus died on the cross so that we may always remember; God is with us,” Bishop Iffert said in his homily. “The Cross reminds us, though we might forget God’s presence, God never forgets us ... we fill our churches with that sign and require that it always be on or near the altar, so that we might always remember that God never abandons us.”
“You will suffer; there will be sacrifices, you will have hardship ... you will be asked to lay down your life for a friend, in some way — and the Cross will remind you to trust in God,” he said, addressing Ms. Staverman as she prepares to set out onto the next step of her vocation journey.
Following the Mass, Bishop Iffert conferred a blessing to Ms. Staverman, before those in attendance gathered for a reception in celebration.



(above left) Bishop Iffert confers a blessing on Olivia Staverman. Ms. Staverman will be travelling to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this month to enter the postulancy of the Mercedarian Sisters.
(above right) Olivia Staverman addresses those gathered for a Mass celebrating her vocation at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere.



Bishop’s Schedule

- Sept. 23**
Mass for St. Vincent de Paul Feast, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.

Sept. 26
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

ACUE donor recognition reception, Receptions Banquet Center, Erlanger, 6 p.m.

Sept. 28
Thomas More University Board of Trustees Retreat, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, 9 a.m.

Presbyteral Council, Curia Boardroom, 1:30 p.m.
- Sept. 29 – Oct. 1**
Diocese of Covington Permanent Deacons and wives retreat, St. Meinrad Seminary

Sept. 30
2nd anniversary of the Bishop John C. Iffert’s Episcopal Consecration and Installation as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Covington

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/>.

COMMENTARY

Holding on to hope like the prophets

The prophets in the Old Testament are the unstrung heroes of the Bible. God was always calling His people to be holy, to live for more than the selfish lives that they were drawn to. People then and now get so wrapped up in themselves and their personal perspectives that somebody

VIEWPOINT



David Cooley

from the outside needs to step in and bring them back to reality. That's who the prophets were for ancient Israel. God's people were supposed to be a beacon of light for the rest of the world — not because they were better than other people, but because they knew a loving God existed, with whom they shared a covenant. Of course, sin always got in the way, and it was usually God's little

ones — those without worldly power — that suffered. When people lost their way, the prophets tried to steer them back toward God. A close reading of Scriptures reveals that when people put God first and were worried about doing what was right and just, the nation was


strong. When the people lost sight of God and indulged in sin, the nation was weak. The message here is not do good and good things will happen to you, do evil and bad things will happen to you. It's a lot more nuanced than that. However, sin is self-destructive. You cannot have a system or a nation that is totally corrupt that won't eventually collapse. You do good because it is the right thing to do, and the world may very well punish you for it. We can look to the prophets themselves as an example of this. It was usually not fun, profitable, or comfortable to be a prophet. Their messages earned them many enemies and they faced much adversity and discouragement. They did not tend to follow the popular fads of their eras and they themselves were not popular. There is so much we can learn from the prophets of Israel! Even when faced against incredible odds they remained faithful to God. Throughout the entire Bible, they are held up (by Jesus himself) as examples of goodness and might. No matter how burdensome their positions were, the prophets still managed to find joy in serving as the Lord's messenger. No one can ever take the voice of the Lord or the ability to serve Him away from us. That is where we can discover the deepest joys of our hearts. When you obey God, the times are always turbulent.

Worldly anxieties and desires lead many to turn away from the Lord. In the Old Testament the people turned to idols — the more things change, the more they stay the same. The stories of the prophets can be a comfort and an encouragement to us. Being a strong person of God does not mean that we will never feel discouraged, but rather, it means that we look to God and stay with God when we are suffering greatly. The prophets felt alone, they didn't always understand God's plan, but they still sought after God. Because of their faithfulness, they constantly saw God's power displayed in their weakness. It's hard to see sometimes, but God is always loyal and faithful. Yes, He is asking something of us, something that is not easy, and there will be times we will fail, but we are never abandoned. God's mercy is endless and the door for repentance is always open. The prophets challenge us to turn to God in our times of need and not to worldly securities. There is no escaping obstacles and hardships in life, but God protects those who make an appeal to heaven. No matter how bad things get, the prophets remind us to put our faith in God and hold on to hope forever. David Cooley is co-director and office manager of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, Diocese of Covington, Ky

A lesson from the James Gang

Somewhere along the way, a glaring example of grade school bullying hit close enough to home to set us wondering about the seriousness of it in America. It did not take long for us to realize and to learn that it is serious enough to cause the United States government to get involved in the investigation, including the establishment of an official website on the Internet called stopbullying.gov. Government's first federal definition of bullying includes three core elements:

ALONG THE WAY



Ray Smith

1) Unwanted aggressive behavior.
2) Observed or perceived

power imbalance.
3) Repetition or high likelihood of repetition of bullying behaviors. The vital research also discovered the following about bullying:
1) Bullying affects all youth, that is all who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who witness bullying. Check this! The effects of bullying may continue into adulthood.
2) There is not a single profile of a young person involved in bullying.
3) Solutions to bullying are not simple and zero tolerance and expulsion are not effective approaches.
4) Bystanders, or those who see bullying, can make a huge difference when they intervene on behalf of someone being bullied.
5) Studies also have shown that adults can help prevent bullying by talking to children about bullying, encouraging them to do what they love, modeling kindness and respect, and seeking help. Somewhere along the way, I was bullied, but only twice. I was one of the lucky ones. It did not happen because I was a "special needs" child, afraid and vulnerable or unable to take care of myself. In both instances, I was taken by surprise by supposed

friends. In the fourth grade, I was blindsided after classes by a classmate on a street-corner not far from school. Suddenly, there I was, flat on my back on a cold sidewalk. The aggressor's knees were on my chest and his right fist was drawn back. My only defense was to scream, "Get off!" He did, continuing his tirade of verbal threats, but with no fisticuffs. The next day, my mother mentioned the incident to my teacher, who just laughed it off. That whole, "interesting" school year is another story. The other bullying incident was another verbal threat from the cousin of one of my high school classmates who was about three years older than I. Unprovoked, he pushed me against a basement wall in my classmate's home and asked me how I would like having my face rearranged. I said, "I like my face as it is and I am wondering if you would like to hit first." That drew a laugh, his retreat, and the incident was over. To me, it was bullying, even if he was only kidding. If it feels like bullying, it is bullying in my opinion and also in the opinion of many behavioral experts. Maybe those two events helped my mother understand why I wanted to transfer to a school that had a boxing team. That "experiment" didn't work and I changed schools, not because of the boxing sessions, but because of the subject matter — Latin and Greek were not my friends. Given the above, I was not surprised that the following true Internet offering attracted my attention some time ago. Apparently, it has been viewed on YouTube more than fourteen million times. In Mankato, Minnesota, Franklin Elementary School had a zero-tolerance, anti-bullying policy. That's great on paper, but unfortunately, bullying was still happening there, the teachers admitted. Every morning, the students recited the Pledge of Allegiance together in their respective classrooms. The internet article highlighted the phrase, "And Justice For All" as the hallmark and chest plate, if you will, for five fifth grade classmates of James Willmert, a special needs student who was being pushed around, ridiculed and made fun of by other students on a regular basis. Two

words describe the motivating trigger for the eventual action taken by Willmert's five classmates — "not anymore!" The Internet piece featured an interview with the five other members of what had become the "James Gang," out to protect their fellow classmate, a former Colombia orphan who was adopted by an American family and had lost his adoptive father who was killed in a bicycle accident. In the interview, Willmert's newfound friends told how they had banded together to help, support, protect and teach James when they made him, let's say, just "one of the guys." His mother summed it all up this way, "They played and learned together." James summed it up this way, "They are the best friends anyone could ask for." The interview also recounted how "gang" member, Jack Pemble had asked, "Why pick on someone," and fellow member, Jake Burgess, quickly finished the question with, "who has special needs?" James's mother was amazed. "They've changed him," she said. She recalled that they taught him to play touch football and shoot basketball in the Willmert driveway. She said further that recess at school ceased being a struggle and became a joy, a daily place to play and learn. Those five classmates — dedicated to their classmate, James — went out of their way to prove it. Using some of their own funds, they collected enough money from friends, families and others to buy James his first-ever video games and a new Play Station. The "James Gang" was a model for what can happen when the Pledge of Allegiance becomes more than profound words and "Justice For All" becomes a reality. As for the bullying incidents that hit close to home, the former victim put a serious effort into exercising the one right and act that seems to work best in most bullying incidents — "IGNORE!" She also took two important steps further by praying for them and forgiving them in her heart. Now life goes on — better and better. Ray Smith is a commissioned Lay Pastoral Minister for the Diocese of Covington.

Don't be a member, become a disciple

The readings for the twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a and Matthew 20:1-16a.

I was recently chatting with a friend of mine who is something of a hard-core agnostic. During our conversation, he posed a bracing, straightforward question to me: “Why are you a member of the Catholic Church?”

Perhaps he was trying to rile me a bit, but it was a genuine question that deserved a serious answer.

The prophet Isaiah opens the path to an answer when he says, “seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near.”

Sunday after Sunday in the Nicene Creed we profess the Church as an object of faith. In that profession of faith, we are professing that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and that she is the communion of saints. Through the Church Jesus Christ is “near” in the Word of God and the Holy Sacrament. Because of that, we share in the ecclesial vocation to carry redemption into the midst of the world.

As Christians, our starting point is always that we belong to the Lord, not ourselves. That we are citizens of Heaven (God) and not the present age. We understand that the whole point is “life is Christ,” as St. Paul teaches us.

Therefore, we pursue the work of our lives differently than others. We devote ourselves to seeking the Lord, serving the Lord, and proclaiming the Lord and his Kingdom. We seek to live according to the priority of Christ. That is why we pray with confidence that “by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.”

For the Christian, life is about conforming ourselves to Jesus Christ and thus finding the fullness of our humanity in union with Christ. Through the Church we are given every truth, grace and spiritual blessing to achieve that transforming union with Christ, pulling us into the eternal life and divine love of the Most Holy Trinity.

Now we must not think that achieving this union will be easy. It will not. That is because the journey of transforming our life to union with Christ is cruciform in its shape. As Father Hans Urs von Balthasar notes, in his beautiful book “Prayer,” “It is to the Cross that the Christian is challenged to follow his Master: no path of redemption can make a detour around it.”

I think this gives us pause to consider something easy to forget. In the deepest theological sense, there is no such thing as “being a member of the Church” as we might be a member of the Kiwanis or a country club.

Since we belong to Christ, discipleship is not some specialized vocation for “mere members” or “mere believers” within the Church who want to move to some “higher level.” By definition, the believer must become a disciple and is constituted as a disciple by the very act of believing in Jesus Christ. This fundamental reality and relationship reveals the non-negotiable characteristics of Christian life: Denying ourselves, taking up the Cross, and answering the call we receive from Christ to be laborers for his vineyard.

Christ has willed that we cooperate in his work of redeeming the world, such that in all our efforts to seek God, to love God and our neighbor, redound to conforming our life to his. As such, everything we do can magnify the Lord, whether we are in a time of blessing or burden, success, or suffering.

When we offer all of our life, “through Him, and with Him, and in Him”, every moment of our life can become a path of union with God. Why am I a member of the Catholic Church? That is the wrong question. Let us get to the heart of the matter: What does the Church bring to the world? Jesus Christ.


What does Jesus Christ bring to the world? He brings God. The God who is gracious and merciful. The God who is just. The God who is holy. The God who is near to all who call upon him. Those are reasons enough to be, not a “member,” but a disciple.

Father Phillip W. DeVous is the pastor of St. Charles Borromeo, Flemingsburg and St. Rose of Lima, Mayslick, Ky

And then the angel left her (Luke 1:26–38)

And then the angel left her. Rug yanked unceremoniously from under her feet. No warning, no gentle transition. Abruptly, definitively, finally. Abandoned?

MUSINGS



Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

hint in them of the straw-covered floor in a messy stable, no view of the road to Egypt, no donkey, no cross, no words of Simeon.

My reflections on Scripture are often influenced by famous artistic depictions. DaVinci's “The Last Supper” comes to mind. It hardly depicts the historical reality. Why would all the participants be on the same side of the table unless someone asked them to gather for a picture? Yet, it is often what comes to mind when I reflect on the event. The famous paintings portraying the event of the annunciation show Mary in an elegant setting, hardly the reality for a poor, peasant woman of her day. Yet they flash before my mind when the annunciation is celebrated.

None of the great artistic renditions of the annunciation depict the moment of terror when the angel unceremoniously disappears and leaves Mary standing with her commitment. Terror would have been a natural response. In the masterpieces, Mary is serenely praying, the angel is surrounded with light or lilies. The depictions invite calm, and confidence. They are not like ordinary life for most of us and do not speak about my experience of God's daily invitations to fidelity. Never has a winged being with an aura of light come to me in the midst of invitations to

commitment. It is the moment of departure that speaks to me — the moment Mary is left with the life of commitment. It is here that I can begin to find a model in Mary.

And then the angel left her. Left her: Just when she begins to live the consequences of her “yes,” the angel left her: The “yes” of a commitment is but a moment spoken amid God's tangible presence. Commitment is a lifetime of “yes” and “no” to joy and sorrow, to struggle and challenge, to winning and losing, to strain and ease, to love and loss. Now it starts. And then the angel left her.

Before birth in a stable, before threats from kings, before long journeys, before presentations in temples, before sickness and social unrest. Unceremoniously, left. Before the task of learning to be a faithful spouse, a skilled parent, a frugal housekeeper, the mother of an itinerant preacher, before the road to calvary. The angel left her: Alone? Or not alone? Does recalling the ardent faith she had at the moment of commitment assure her of God's continued presence. Can she draw strength from past assurances and the words of her scriptures? Like me, does she live on promises and efforts to be faithful in the moment? A moment without an angel, lilies, light?

She lives by faith in a God who has not left. How else can she be a model for my life? I hear and see no winged, other-worldly being coming to me from God. There are no spoken words. There is only fidelity to a commitment made in a moment of awoken love.

God's voice is in the voice of the needy, in the duties of a life that is sometimes filled with passion and sometimes humdrum. God calls Mary to assist an elderly relative who is with child, to participate in the ritual of purification, to attend to the duties of her situation. The voice, the vision, the assurance is found in the daily comings and goings of neighbors and relatives, in the temple and in the home.

Mary is not alone, not abandoned. God speaks to her as God speaks to all those committed to a life of devotion. I am not alone. God speaks in the love of a friend. Angel wings appear in the presence of the needy. And the assuring words are heard in the voices of companions.


When life leads to a road on the way to Calvary, may Mary be the model of how to listen after the angel leaves.

Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy is a retired theology professor at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky

Turn to the cross when dealing with violence

As I exited off the highway on a recent Saturday evening on my way home to the convent after running errands, I was very disoriented by what appeared to be a person lying in the road. As I continued to drive and approach the body, it was clear that this person was no longer living.

VIEWPOINT



Sister Alicia Torres, F.E.

Sometimes I am numb to the innumerable stories of crime, violence, and death that plague not only my city but also our whole country and world. But the injustice of it all really came home when I saw the body of the man who lost his life Saturday night. At first it was shocking, then distressing, then deeply saddening. I happened to be the person who called 911 to report what I had seen, and an hour later I was called by a detective, trying to figure out the mystery of the hit-and-run homicide.

All I could do was pray and remember that this man was deeply loved by God the Father. Late that evening, I sat in my chair and prayed for him. My broken heart was further consoled at the thought that when I went to Mass on Sunday morning, I could offer my Mass for the repose of this unnamed person's soul.

How do we deal with tragedy and loss? Where do we turn when there are simply no answers? As the Psalmist writes, “Only in God is my soul at rest” (Ps. 62). In the face of violence and death, Jesus Christ truly is our only hope. Events like what I experienced Saturday night help us live the Eucharistic Revival in the reality of life — with all the

bad and good that may come. Running to the Lord together when our hearts are numbed by violence and loss is possible. When we lay our petitions and pain at the foot of the altar, even the most unbelievable tragedies are met with hope. For the foot of the altar is also the foot of the Cross, and upon the Cross Jesus literally conquered sin and death — as we celebrate in the liturgical feast, the Exaltation of the Cross. We are not alone: the Lord is with us. Alone, tragedy crushes us. Together with Jesus and each other, it becomes an opportunity for the presence of God to strengthen and console us, especially when we simply can't understand. Through the gift of faith, we come to realize Jesus is also there for the victims of violence and injustice that we intercede for. Alone, tragedy, sin, violence, and loss can feel like the end. But at the foot of the altar, at the foot of the Cross, all things truly are made new.

We need to know our faith and be inspired by the faith of others to stand strong when things get hard. Friends, this is exactly why the National Eucharistic Congress, in collaboration with the National Eucharistic Revival and the Augustine Institute, has produced Jesus and the Eucharist, a free, seven-week small-group study.

The first session was released today! I hope that you'll take time to read more about this new initiative and share it with your parish and/or other Catholic institutions you are connected to. I was personally moved to tears by the testimonies when I previewed Episode One. I am confident your own faith will be inspired and enlightened, especially if you journey through Jesus and the Eucharist with your faith community.

Sister Alicia Torres, F.E. is managing editor for the “Heart of the Revival” the newsletter of the National Eucharistic Revival, online at www.EucharisticRevival.org. Her commentary has been reprinted with permission.

We Choose Life



Pro-Life Office

of the Diocese of Covington

Mission Statement

The Pro-Life Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, guided by our bishop, promotes the sanctity and legal protection of human life from conception to natural death through prayer, pastoral care, public policy and education.

Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., paragraphs 2270 to 2301.

Catholic Conference of Kentucky, "Kentucky's Advance Health Care Directives and Organ Donation: A Catholic Perspective," rev. Sept. 2005.

Human Life Alliance, "Interviewing a Hospice Agency: What Questions Should I Ask?" HLA Action News, vol. 37, no. 1 (Winter 2015).

USCCB, Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 6h ed., 2018.

Matters of life and death: Who decides?

Father Raymond Enzweiler
Contributor

When a person is dying, how do we know when it is time to stop treatment? Must we strive to preserve life at all costs, or may we refuse a recommended procedure?

Families, patients and physicians face these questions every day, and no two cases are alike. Happily, the Catholic Church provides careful guidance for making informed, ethical medical decisions as we journey through the Valley of Death.

We honor the sanctity of life when we protect it. If a treatment offers a reasonable hope of benefit without excessive burden of cost or pain, it is a sensible and proportional course.

But the term "benefit" has emotional and spiritual dimensions, not merely physical. Let's consider some examples of what "benefit" can mean to individual patients.

Sam and Joe, age 60, have terminal cancer. The treatment is painful and would yield only several more months of life, so both men prayerfully weigh what good or harm may come, and how other good things may be impacted.

Sam forgoes the treatment as disproportional because it would prevent him from fully engaging with God, family and friends his last few months of life.

Joe accepts the treatment as proportional because the extra few months will let him witness his daughter's wedding. Each man weighed a nonmedical benefit that tipped the balance.

Trudy, a widow with grown children, is told she needs a lung transplant. But she decides not to go on the waiting list so that someone with a young family has a better chance of getting the

organ. For Trudy, giving the gift of life to another was the greater benefit.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla, a physician, refused a morally acceptable treatment for her illness because her unborn child would die from it. She and her husband decided the treatment was disproportional in their circumstances.

What benefit was weighed here? It was not just the likelihood of a cure or remission. It was the particular benefit, the particular good, chosen by the patient.

None of them was saying, "I want to die." Each was making a moral choice for the good — the particular good that they believed God wanted.

It takes a well-formed conscience to discern this "best good" that is in accord with God's will. You must weigh your own feelings as well as the needs of other people, the medical facts and the advice of physicians and the Church.

What happens when extreme illness or injury prevents your making a well-formed act of conscience? If you have talked to your loved ones ahead of time, they will know the benefits, the goods, that you believe God wants you to support.

You can bridge the gap by naming a health care surrogate who will speak for you and ensure that the goods you value are reflected in any decisions about your medical treatments.

I recommend studying the Kentucky Bishops' document on advance directives (see Resource list), which includes a form where you can state some of the goods you seek and, most importantly, you can name your surrogate to see that your conscience is followed.

Health care and Catholic teaching

Father Ray Enzweiler and Ellen Curtin
Contributors

From the first medieval abbey hospitals, the Catholic Church has developed health care and medical ethics far beyond the classic "First, do no harm." Today's Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes many general principles of medical ethics. For example:

2288: Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good.

2278: Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

Perhaps the best-known health care document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services," Part 5 of which concerns the seriously ill and dying. It guides American Catholic health care professionals and institutions, such as St. Elizabeth Healthcare, but can also help anyone responsible for another's care. For instance:

56. A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his or her life. Proportionate means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.

57. A person may forgo extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life. Disproportionate means are those that in the patient's judgment do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.

59. The free and informed judgment made by a competent adult patient concerning the use or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures should always be respected and normally complied with, unless it is contrary to Catholic moral teaching.

Basic care is what we learned from the Good Samaritan, who provided first aid, shelter, nutrition and supervision during recovery. Every patient deserves to be kept warm, clean, dry and nourished. Beyond this standard, the Church divides medical actions into proportional (ordinary and obligatory) or disproportional (extraordinary and optional) responses.

Which is which? The distinction depends on the circumstance.

Many healing and life-sustaining interventions are commonly used in medical practice. Other treatments offer high risk, high cost or low likelihood of success. Deciding whether an intervention is proportional or not requires us to weigh several points.

First, is the treatment effective? That is, will it do what it is supposed to do? If the pain medication eases pain or the chemotherapy stops the cancerous growth, then it might be a proportional means. If it is unproven or risky, we may refuse it.

Second, is the treatment routine? Is it commonly administered? Americans consider blood transfusions routine, but in societies where they are rare or unsafe they may be deemed disproportional. It is never amiss to accept ordinary care, whereas grasping at straws should give pause: what motive is driving our desperation?

Last, does the burden outweigh the benefit? Will the treatment be physically debilitating? Can the financial cost be borne? Is there an emotional or spiritual benefit to accepting or refusing treatment?

St. John Paul II's last words were, "Let me go to the house of the Father."

We are never obligated to pursue every hope, at all costs.

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroups, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (859) 392-1500.

Core Team gets pink t-shirts and is ready for SUMMIT 23

A group of high-school aged students known as the Summit Core Team have been preparing to lead the upcoming Summit 23, Oct. 6-8 at Notre Dame Academy. At the recent Core Team meeting the team practiced the song, "Trading My Sorrows." All high school students are invited to the SUMMIT 23 retreat to trade in their sorrows for the joy of the Lord! Visit covidio.org/summit23 to register for the retreat.



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‘Faith made us stable in our married life,’ says couple celebrating 60 year anniversary

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Sixty years ago in the Philippines, in the city of Manila, Pablo and Concordia Bautista got married at St. Andrew’s Church, now Cathedral, after meeting at a college picnic. Celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this year, Mr. and Mrs. Bautista are parishioners of St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, and have put all 5 of their children through Catholic schools.

Mrs. Bautista came from a Catholic family, having attended Catholic elementary and high school in the Philippines, citing her parents as a big influence.

Mr. Bautista also attended Catholic education in the Philippines, spending four years of high schooling in the seminary, as well as three years studying philosophy there.

“When I was young, and we got married,” said Mr. Bautista, “we got married of course, in the Church, and we raised our children as Catholics. Two of them were born in the Philippines, and three were born here after we immigrated in the 60’s.” Their children have attended high school within the diocese, at Notre Dame Academy, Covington Catholic and St. Henry.

Mr. and Mrs. Bautista are grandparents, as well, with 16 grandchildren and one more expected to arrive in January. On September 17, at the Cathedral Basilica of the

Assumption, Covington, Mr. and Mrs. Bautista attended vespers, celebrated by Bishop Iffert, recognizing many couples in the diocese on their wedding anniversaries— including their own.

“The bishop was talking about people who had been married for quite some time,” Mr. Bautista said, “and people are always curious about what keeps you married... he said, it’s actually their faith that kept them together. When he said that, it reminded me and reminded us that we had been married for 60 years— but, when we were getting close to 50, we weren’t sure we were going to make it to 50. Because, in any marriage, there are ups and downs.”

Mr. Bautista continued, “I decided, on my own, because of the difficulties... that I was going to take a two month sabbatical and went to the Philippines. So when we came back, one of the children asked me, what did I decide? And I said, I’m going to stay with my wife. And, I think the reason for that was the values of the faith that we retained, made us stable in our married life.”

“Don’t go to bed without making up,” Mrs. Bautista offered as advice to young couples starting their journey through marriage, “I know you fight all day, but you try to make up in the evening— even just a kiss. ...Of course, you know, we’re both mistaken but just make sure you made up before the day is over and you acknowledge your mistake and say sorry... you just have to stay together.”



Pablo and Concordia Bautista greet Bishop Iffert at the Wedding Anniversary Vespers held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, September 17.

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Villa Madonna Academy Elementary Blue Ribon

(Continued from page 1)

truly honored and excited to be recognized as a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School. I am so proud of our students, faculty, staff, parents, and community for earning this very special recognition. We are blessed with an incredible faculty. Our teachers challenge students to become lifelong learners who embrace the Benedictine traditions of scholarship, service, hospitality, and respect to make a difference in our ever-changing world. Receiving this award is a testament to the dedication, support, and passion of our entire Villa community.”

Covington Diocese Blue Ribbon Schools

Nineteen Catholic schools in the Diocese of Covington schools system have been designated Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence. They are:

- Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria 2018
- Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell 1994, 2007, 2015, 2021
- Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills 2007, 2016
- Covington Latin School, Covington 2003
- Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington 2006, 2018
- Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills 1996, 2012, 2019
- St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright 2009
- St. Cecilia School, Independence 2018
- St. Henry District High School, Erlanger 2012, 2021
- St. Henry Elementary School, Elsmere 2016
- St. Joseph School, Cold Spring 2018
- St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs 2006, 2017
- St. Mary School, Alexandria, 2016
- St. Paul School, Florence 2014
- St. Pius X School, Edgewood 2001, 2015
- St. Therese School, Southgate 2022
- St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas 2006, 2019
- Villa Madonna Academy Elementary, Villa Hills 2007, 2017, 2023
- Villa Madonna Academy High School/Jr. High, Villa Hills 2002, 2003, 2020

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News-worthy

2024 National Merit Semifinalists

The following students have been listed as 2024 National Merit Scholar semifi-nalists or commended students. The *Messenger* congratulates our diocesan high school students on their achievement.

Covington Catholic

Casey Bir

Alex Meagher

Alex Moening

Michael Zechella

Covington Latin School

Nathanial Novak

Holy Cross High School

Isabella Saalfeld

Notre Dame Academy

Isabelle Bailey

Clara Heberling

Mia Kent

St. Henry District High School

Emma Linkugel

Villa Madonna Academy

Adam Hassoun

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 ven-



Excited about meeting their ‘buddies’
First grade students at St. Paul School, Florence, meet with their eighth grade “buddies” for the first time.

eration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Join Thomas More University’s observatory for “A Pair of Solar Eclipses on the Horizon”, a lecture and night sky viewing Sept. 23, 7-9 p.m. in Steigerwald Hall | 8 pm. The U.S. will be graced with two solar eclipses over the next year: The first is an annular solar eclipse on Oct. 14, 2023, followed by a total solar eclipse on April 8t, 2024. Both eclipses are partially visible from our area, but you’ll need to travel to get the best view. Join us and get prepared for these celestial events! This event is free, open to the public, and appropriate for all ages. No reservations are required. For more information visit thomasmore.edu/observatory.

The 4th annual St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, Chili Cook-Off, Sept. 23, after 5 p.m. Mass.

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 6th Annual, international Rosary Coast to Coast event will be October 7 at 1 p.m., at the Grotto of the Two Hearts at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Burlington. Please join us as we pray to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary all four sets of mysteries, on the actual feast of the Holy Rosary, in reparation for the sins of our fallen world. Fr. Joe Rielage will be our main leader. This event will happen rain or shine. Please bring a chair. (And any priests who are able to join us please contact Fr. Joe). Questions: Jeanette at jmlandenwitch@yahoo.com, Joann at jodugan66@gmail.com

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 &



Showing extraordinary love at prayer service
St. Pius X School, Edgewood, held their opening prayer service to introduce the school year’s theme “We Are Called To Be Servant Leaders, Do ORDINARY things with EXTRAORDINARY love.” During the service, Fr. Baiju, Mrs. Jill Lonnemann, principal, and Mrs. Betsy Greenwell, assistant principal, modeled servant leadership by washing the feet of faculty representatives.

2023 Parish Festivals

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

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

St. Benedict Parish,
Covington,
September 22–23

DCCH Center for
Children & Families,
Sept. 30, 2–10 p.m.

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.

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.

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://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1500, ext.1592. The next session will be held on consecutive Thursdays, Oct.12 – Dec. 7, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Elementary School, Bellevue.

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

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Celebrating anniversaries

(Continued from page 1)

band and his wife, the two, had become so much one that when he came carrying her picture and the love he held for her in his heart, she was here,” said Bishop Iffert. “It was a beautiful moment and it really invited me to reflect on just what this extraordinary sacrament and mystery of marriage is all about. Those two become one. Wherever he

is, she is too. Wherever she is, his heart remains. It’s sort of the way we describe the Trinity.”

Bishop Iffert ended his homily in gratitude for the witness each couple is to their families, communities, and the Church.

“I thank you for what you do for the life of the Church,”

Bishop Iffert said, “You live as one and you show us that real community and unity in Christ are possible. And you reflect Gods love and his desire for every soul and his mercy, his compassion, his sacrificial love. You make one another present everywhere you are, and you make God present to us ... you show us the way God loves.”

St. Mary’s Parish Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington
Kevin and Emily Niehaus, 1 year
Lawrence and Sandra Andrzejewski, 50 years
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Rick and Charlotte Read, 60 years

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell
Bill and Kim Dehlinger, 1 year
Jacob and Bridgette Lentsch, 1 year
David and Lisa Laudenslayer, 25 years
Bernard and Cynthia Dusing, 50 years
David and Carol Hentz, 61 years
Robert and Joan Trame, 63 years
Leo and Patricia Salzman, 67 years
Jerome and Johanna Stegman, 68 years

Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue
Roy and Maureen Gibson, 50 years
Albert and Shirley Bricking, 72 years

Holy Cross Parish, Latonia
Michael and Amy Dusing, 25 years

Holy Spirit Parish, Newport
Karl and Eberle Nielsen, 1 year

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington
Bruce and Tina McMain, 25 years
Larry and Lisa Newport, 25 years
Bernie and Silvia Schmidt, 25 years
John and Carla Behymer, 50 years
Ray and Darlene Rehtin, 50 years
John and Margaret Portwood, 57 years
Terry and Dee Gaffney, 60 years
Leon and Carol Kruep, 70 years

Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger
Roger and Rose Hengehold, 50 years
Steve and Mary Ann Kidney, 50 years
David and Linda Stricker, 50 years
Ralph and Marcella Marsh, 68 years

Mother of God Parish, Covington
Gary and Kathleen Rosing, 50 years
Clifford and Carol Sue Wagner, 60 years
Chris and Angela Collins, 25 years

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright
Luke and Missy Hail, 25 years
Steve and Jane Lorenz, 50 years
Walt and Martha Witt, 64 years

St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill
Benjamin and Krista Braun, 25 years

St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger
John and Deborah Wood, 50 years

St. Bernard Parish, Dayton
Joseph and Elvera Enzweiler, 71 years

Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow
Tim and Linda Gormley, 50 years

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas
Ronald and Carol Ewing, 65 years

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence
Charles and Peggy Butler, 50 years
Robert and Donna Schroeder, 50 years
Gregory and Gwen Walters, 50 years
William and Betty Waymeyer, 68 years

St. Henry Parish, Elsmere
Kevin and Laura Ryan, 25 years
Dave and Debbie Blanchet, 50 years

St. James Parish, Minerva
Tony and Charlotte Wenz, 60 years

St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs
Laurence and Catherine Fritz, 25 years

St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring
Joe and Maureen Mayer, 25 years
Don and Ruth Harvey, 50 years
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Bill and Judy Rawe, 50 years

Joe and Jan Schwegmann, 50 years
Daniel and Beverly Walsh, 50 years
Ron and Sally Albrinck, 60 years

Larry and Gayle Voet, 62 years
Ed and Ruth Rawe, 67 years

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs

Albert and Melinda Kovacic, 25 years
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(continued on page 14)



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NKU Newman Club Family Picnic
Members of the Northern Kentucky University Newman Club held its first Family Picnic, Sept. 14. Over 30 people attended ranging in age from 18 months to over 90 years. The Newman Club gathers as a community for Mass every Sunday at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring.

- (continued from page 13)

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs (continued)
Joseph and Virginia Schmidt, 60 years

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria
Mike and Juliette Bezold, 25 years
Robert and Janice Garlich, 50 years
Gary and Debby Straus, 50 years
Tom and Maryanne Backscheider, 61 years
- Robert and Mary Louise Hill, 69 years

St. Patrick Parish, Maysville
Bill and Ann Gatherwright, 65 years

St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill
William and Barbara Hemsath, 50 years
Robert and Ruth Kemper, 50 years
Steve and Kathy Schaber, 50 years
- St. Paul Parish**, Florence
Paul and Mary Ann Fedders, 50 years
Steven and Debra Scott, 50 years
Phillip and Edith Trzop, 50 years
Gerald and Beverly Bailey, 60 years
Barry and Martha Neltner, Florence, 50 years

Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California
Anthony (Tony) and Mande Wells, 25 years
- St. Pius X Parish**, Edgewood
Brennan and Jennifer Hehman, 25 years
Bill and Marilyn Germann, 50 years
Allan and Peggy Haskell, 50 years
David and Diane Nutini, 50 years
Jack and Eileen Schroeder, 50 years
Scott and Noreen Seiter, 50 years
David and Lisa Tabeling, 50 years
Pablo and Concordia Bautista, 60 years
William and Theresa Averbeck, 63 years
- Bob and Martina Durrett, 67 years

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Song Hun and Esther Nam, 25 years
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Robert and Dolores Lorenz, 50 years
- Donald and Elsa Lee Frey, 60 years
Bill and Rita Burkart, 61 years
Gerald and Carol Ling, 65 years

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Pew: More Americans pessimistic about future of marriage/family

WASHINGTON — The American public’s views of the family are “complicated” and becoming “more pessimistic than optimistic about the institution of marriage and the family,” according to a new report from Pew Research Center. Social and legal changes in recent decades have increased the variety of households in the United States, data shows. A growing share of U.S. adults in recent decades have either delayed or foregone marriage, according to Pew’s analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. The survey about the future of the country found that when asked about marriage and family, 40% of Americans said they are very or somewhat pessimistic about the institution of marriage and the family. Just 25% are very or somewhat optimistic. Another 29% said they are neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Just 23% of Americans called being married as either extremely or very important to living a fulfilling life, while just 26% said the same of having children. Those trends hold across religious groups. Just 22% of Catholics identified marriage as either extremely or very important to living a fulfilling life; 31% said the same about having children. When asked to rank what factors were extremely or very important for a fulfilling life, most Americans pointed to career satisfaction (71%) and having close friends (61%). Most Catholics ranked having a job or career they enjoy (77%) and having close friends (59%) as extremely or very important to living a fulfilling life.

Russia’s goal is to destroy population in Ukraine

LVIV, Ukraine — “It destroyed a year and a half worth of work,” Auxiliary Bishop Edward Kawa of Lviv, said about a Russian aerial attack on the western Ukrainian city of Lviv that has killed one and destroyed a warehouse belonging to Caritas-Spes, the Roman Catholic mission of Caritas in Ukraine, in the early morning hours of Sept. 19. “Russia’s operations are satanic in a way. First, they destroy people’s homes. Then, they destroy the things that can help them in their misery,” he said. Some humanitarian items — like “Packages for Ukraine,” a huge load of humanitarian help from Caritas Poland — arrived at the warehouse only a day before they were blown up by a drone strike, Bishop Kawa said. Among the items destroyed were 33 pallets of food kits, 10 pallets of hygiene kits and cans, 10 pallets with generators and clothing — a total of about 300 tons of humanitarian goods.

The entire winter load that would have been distributed to all corners of Ukraine was there, only waiting to be sent where it was most needed. Now, the bishop said, the goal is that “people are not left without bread, without this help, the most urgent necessities. ... We will need really a lot of effort, and a lot, a lot, a lot of work.”

Bishop hopes ‘history will not repeat itself’ in Armenian enclave

GLENDALE, Calif. — Armenian Catholic Bishop Mikael A. Mouradian of the California-based Armenian Catholic Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg told OSV News he hopes that “history will not repeat itself” following a Sept. 20 ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan’s troops launched a Sept. 19 offensive in the historic Armenian enclave (known in Armenian by its ancient name, Artsakh), located in southwestern Azerbaijan and internationally recognized as part of that nation. The attacks, which Azerbaijani forces called an “anti-terror” operation, killed at least 32 people, including seven civilians, and wounded another 200. As part of the Russian-brokered ceasefire, Nagorno-Karabakh forces have acceded to Azerbaijan’s demands for complete disarmament, with Russia claiming to have evacuated some 2,000 villagers since the Sept. 19 offensive. Despite the ceasefire, explosions and additional clashes have been reported. “The ceasefire is what we were asking for, but I hope that Russia and Azerbaijan will keep their promise that the Artsakh Armenians will live in peace on their ancestral lands with the full rights of free citizens,” said Bishop Mouradian, noting that the latest aggression — which followed a nine-months-long blockade by Azerbaijan that created a humanitarian crisis — added to a long history of Azerbaijan efforts to eradicate Armenians and their culture from the region.

Nigeria sees priest, 36 others abducted in just a few days

ABUJA, Nigeria — In another chapter of an “evil scheme” plaguing Nigeria, the southern Enugu Diocese asked for prayers for Father Marcellinus Obioma Okide, who was kidnapped Sept. 17. The priest was reportedly abducted on his way to St. Mary Amofia-Agu Affa Parish, where he serves as a parish priest. Six other people who were traveling with him were also kidnapped. In a Sept. 18 release sent to OSV News, Father Wilfred Chidi Agubuchie, the diocesan chancellor and

secretary confirmed the abductions, and called on the Christian community to pray for the priest’s safe release and “a change of heart on the part of the kidnappers.” Christians in Africa’s largest nation have become prized targets for terrorist groups such as Fulani herdsmen, according to Emeka Umeagbalasi, chairman of Intersociety, a nongovernmental human rights organization. He said 22 communities and villages have been under the siege of the jihadist Fulani herdsmen and other assembled jihadists since 2022, accusing the government of former President, Muhammadu Buhari of using such Fulani attacks to enhance an agenda of “Islamizing Nigeria.” Johan Viljoen, Director of the Denis Hurley Peace Institute of the South Africa Catholic bishops’ conference told OSV News that “the situation in Enugu is particularly severe. Enugu state shares a border with Benue state, which has been under sustained attack.”

Migrants stream northward toward U.S. border in record numbers

MEXICO CITY — Dominican Brother Obed Cuellar has seen large numbers of migrants arrive daily in the Mexican border city of Piedras Negras, where they plan to cross the Rio Grande into neighboring Eagle Pass, Texas. But there’s still space available in the diocesan-run migrant shelter. “They head straight for the river,” he told OSV News. An estimated 2,200 migrants crossed the Rio Grande into Eagle Pass in the early morning hours of Sept. 18, one of the largest massive crossings on record, according to Fox News. It’s a scene playing at other crossings across the nearly 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border as migrants arrive in increasingly large numbers, straining the resources of migrant-assistance organizations and U.S. border patrol officials alike. The U.S. Border Patrol recorded more than 177,000 arrests in August, according to the Washington Post — roughly a 30% increase from the 132,652 migrants detained in July. The sharp increase in arrests followed a jump from 99,539 detentions in June — the month following the end of Title 42, the pandemic-era health provision which allowed for the immediate expulsion of migrants to Mexico. A record number of families also were taken into custody by Border Patrol in August, according to the Post. Analysts say the urge to migrate remains strong — with many people coming from countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. Some migrants are allowed entry into the U.S. and receive notices to appear in court. But many are sent back to Mexico and transported to destinations in southern states far from the United States border.

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Pope: Christians are called to fight ‘every form of slavery’

Justine McLellan
Catholic News Service

Inspired by the dignity of each human being as revealed by Jesus, Christians are called to fight “every form of slavery,” whether physical, social or spiritual, Pope Francis said.

“Jesus, God made man, elevated the dignity of every human being and exposed the falsehood of slavery,” the pope told people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his general audience Sept. 20. “As Christians, therefore, we are called to fight against every form of slavery.”

Continuing his weekly catechesis on zeal for evangelization, the pope discussed the life of St. Daniele Comboni, a 19th-century Italian bishop who dedicated his life to establishing and supporting missions in Africa, where Pope Francis said the saint witnessed the “horror of slavery.”

“Comboni, by the light of Christ, became aware of the evil of slavery; he also understood that social slavery is rooted in a deeper slavery, that of the heart, that of sin, from which the Lord delivers us,” he said.

Pope Francis stressed that “slavery, like colonialism, is not a thing of the past,” and recalled his address to South Sudanese political leaders during his visit to the country in February in which he called for an end to the economic colonialism that followed the end of political colonialism in Africa.

St. Comboni, the pope said, understood that those he evangelized in Africa were “not only ‘objects’ but ‘subjects’ of the mission” and praised the saint’s philosophy about evangelization in Africa contained in his missionary slogan: “Save Africa through Africa.”

“How important it is, even today, to advance the faith and human development from within the contexts of mission instead of transplanting external models or limiting oneself to sterile welfarism,” Pope Francis said. “Take up the way of evangelization from the culture of the people. Evangelizing the culture and enculturating the Gospel go together.”

The pope highlighted St. Comboni’s efforts to involve laypeople, families and catechists — “treasures of the church” — in evangelization as a way of “making all Christians protagonists of evangelizing action” and preventing clericalism.

After his catechesis, Pope Francis mentioned a meeting he had before his general audience with Brazilian lawmakers working on behalf of the poor. “They do not forget the

poor; they work for the poor,” he said. “To you I say, ‘do not forget the poor,’ because they will be the ones who open the door to heaven for you.”

The pope also noted the “worrying news” from the South Caucasus region “where the already critical humanitarian situation was aggravated by further armed con-

flict” after Azerbaijan attacked the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh Sept. 19.

“I call on all involved parties and the international community to silence weapons and make every effort to find peaceful solutions for the good of people and respect for human dignity,” he said.



Pope Francis greets visitors from the popemobile as he rides around St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican before his weekly general audience Sept. 20, 2023.

CNS photo/Lola Gomez

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