# MESSENGER

Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926

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# Lenten pilgrimage to Covington Churches encourages a 'process of prayer'

Maura Baker Staff Writer

Five parishes spanning less than a mile apart each across Covington welcome, for the second year running, pilgrims to walk together on a Lenten pilgrimage between each of the churches.



(above) Pilgrims walk the path, marked by signs bearing the scallop shell—an international symbol for pilgrims between Covington churches during 2023's Lenten pilgrimage.

(right) Pilgrims of all ages visit St. Benedict Church, Covington.

Last year, this local pilgrimage saw around

300 individuals, according to a count done by the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

"That was a beautiful outpouring, there," commented Margie Springelmeyer, one of the individuals who helped to organize the pilgrimage and a parishioner of St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger. "We're hoping for the same this year." This year's pilgrimage will be held March 23, with Churches opening their doors to pilgrims by 9 a.m. and up until 2 p.m. Adoration will be held in each of the Churches, with closing Benediction at 1:45 p.m. This year, Ms. Springelmeyer added, some of the churches plan to offer confession during the pilgrimage

hours, as well.

Those interested in undertaking the pilgrimage have the option to either drive or walk along the path between the churches, which will be marked by signs indicated with a "scallop shell" symbol — an international symbol for pilgrims and pilgrimages.

"What's beautiful about it..." said Ms. Springelmeyer, looking at the whole process of a pilgrimage, "...in ancient times, people would take pilgrimages for days and months, and you had time to rest. And so, like that, you have time to rest at each Church and absorb the beauty of the Church and God's presence through adoration."

This Lenten pilgrimage came about when Ms. Springelmeyer, along with some friends, had the idea to follow the very path between these five Covington parishes — and she considers that it was "no coincidence" that the five parishes match the five decades of the rosary, an option for prayer that she considers makes for a "beautiful prayer process during the pilgrimage."

"This year, we want to emphasize the process of prayer," said Ms. Springelmeyer, "this isn't necessarily a tour of the art and architecture of these beautiful Churches — it's an opportunity

to truly go into a prayer process for a special intention you might have."

Booklets will be available in the different churches for pilgrims as well, with stamps to collect at each parish to record the journey. More information, including a map of the pilgrimage route, can be found via the QR code at right.



# General Assembly update — HB 5 passes House, moves on to Senate

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

Heading into the second half of this legislative session comes with movement on many notable bills. Perhaps the most striking is House Bill 5, "An ACT Relating to Crimes and Punishments." This bill effectively criminalizes homelessness, expands the death penalty and restructures the penalty system for vandalism.

In an e-mail sent to the *Messenger* and others Jason Hall, executive director, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, said "this sweeping criminal justice contains a provision criminalizing homelessness."

The provision he is referencing is in section 17, lines 10 to 16. It says, "A person is guilty of unlawful camping when he or she knowingly enters or remains on public or private property." The bill goes on to say that these places include but are not limited to bridges, underpasses, benches, parks or "any areas designated for use by pedestrians or vehicles."

Under the bill, the first offense for unlawful camping is classed as a violation with each subsequent offense a Class B misdemeanor. Each offense would carry a fine of up to \$250. The difference between a violation and misdemeanor is the length time it would stay on a person's record. A misdemeanor would stay on a person's record indefinitely, making it difficult to apply for loans, housing and jobs. A violation would stay on record for 3 to 5 years.

One concern would be the inability for the homeless to pay these fines and thus go to jail. In the case Bearden vs. Georgia, a Supreme Court case in 1983, a judge cannot jail someone if they do not have the funds to pay the fine. A person may only be incarcerated if they

have the means to pay a fine and refuse.

Currently the bill has been approved by the House and has made its way to the Senate. Should the Senate pass the bill, its last stop is on the desk of Governor Andy Beshear.

Mr. Hall also provided information regarding other pieces of legislation the Catholic Conference of Kentucky is following — Senate bills 13, 20 and 142 along with House bill 2.

HB 2 is, "An ACT proposing to create a new section of the

Constitution of Kentucky relating to education funding." This bill is awaiting a hearing in the house.

SB 20 is, "An ACT relating to crimes and punishments," and

though, despite the same name, is a different bill than House bill 5. The Catholic Conference of Kentucky also opposes Senate bill 20. SB 142 is, "An ACT relating to paid parental leave," the Catholic

Conference of Kentucky supports this bill as senate hearings start in a few days.

SB 13 is the Crisis Aversion and Rights Retention (CARR) bill.

This law would allow for targeted intervention to prevent gun violence, especially mass shootings and suicides. CCK strongly supports this effort. The CCK asks parishioners to reach out to their state Senator to support and, if they do support, to co-sponsor the bill.

To find your legislator visit https://legislature.ky.gov/findyourlegislator.aspx. Then click on the link for your senator, you will find their bio page, including his or her e-mail address. Or, you can call 1-800-372-7181 and leave a message for your senator. The operator will transcribe your message and deliver it to the correct legislator.

# Negotiations to return Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to its Park Hills home begin

Editor

In a letter to parishioners dated Feb. 24, 2024, Bishop John Iffert announced that he is actively negotiating with the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist and its Board to return Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Park Hills. The letter was posted on the Diocese of Covington website, www.covdio.org.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish lost access to the Park Hills church building when, after Bishop Iffert removed the faculties of the parish's pastoral leadership, the priests initially refused to allow the parish or the diocese to use the church. The church is owned by the Board of the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist. They have since

offered to allow the parish to return.

For the "best interest of the parish," the agreement, Bishop Iffert said, "must protect those values" of "stability and fidelity." The agreement, he said, "must include some actionable assurance that the Diocese of Covington would have some stewardship of the church building. And, I must have absolute confidence that the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist will not interfere in or influence the life of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish."

Bishop Iffert said that he was moved to pursue this agreement because of his conversation with parishioners at their meeting, Jan. 28.

"For me, our meeting was graced by getting to know you and of your devotion to your parish community ...

(H)ow you value daily Mass and frequent confessions. How attending Mass on Sunday was more than a weekly obligation but also a family celebration of community lasting hours after Mass had ended," he said. "It is my sincere intention to assist you in reclaiming that full parish life."

In his letter, Bishop Iffert also shared that, effective Feb. 12, he had accepted the resignation of Father Shannon Collins, MSJB from the office of pastor of our Lady of Lourdes Parish. At the same time, Father Matthew Cushing has been appointed administrator of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Father Cushing will continue as pastor of All Saints Parish, Walton.

"I appreciate the sacrifices of both these priests because of their love and care for you," Bishop Iffert said.

## Individuals from four religions answer the question of 'who's my God?' at TMU interfaith event

An interfaith dialogue was held, Feb. 21, in Steigerwald Hall in the Saints Center on Thomas More University's Campus, Crestview Hills. Hosted by the William T. (Bill) Robinson III '67 Institute for Religious Liberty, the dialogue brought — like many of the institute's events — individu-

> als from different religions together for a night of friendly, intercultural dialogue and discussion.

Established in 2015, the mission statement of the

Institute for Religious Liberty states a desire "to advance the American concept of religious freedom as an unalienable right and the protection of this right for all people," and hosts such discussions multiple times a year.

This event was moderated by Dr. Brian Adams, PH.D., chair of the governing board for A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) — an international NGO supporting vouth leadership in interfaith dialogue.

Four panelists were present for the event, including Hannah Keegan, a Roman Catholic and adjunct professor of theology at TMU; Rabbi Gary P. Zola, PH.D., of the Jewish faith and executive director emeritus of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives; Brett Greenhalgh, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Shakila T. Ahmad, a Muslim and board chair of Cincinnati COMPASS — a collaborative group "advancing economic and cultural inclusion of immigrants and refugees to enhance the overall

vibrancy and economic growth of the Cincinnati region."

Each of these four individuals were asked to answer the question "who's my God?," and gave personal witness to their religious experiences and relationship to God.

While most of the interfaith dialogues hosted discuss subjects that are more "academic," according to Dr. Raymond Hebert, director of the Institute of Religious Liberty, the most recent event was, "above all, personal."

The speakers were "baring their souls," sharing perspectives that were entirely based on their journey with religion, not necessarily their religion's doctrines.

'The purpose of the process that is dialogue is to begin to build understanding that can lead to relationships that can strengthen community," said Dr. Adams, moderator. introducing the evening, "So, that when any challenge comes along ... we have the ability to work together to address them.'

Baker photos



Hannah Keegan, adjunct professor, Thomas More University and a Roman Catholic; Rabbi Gary P. Zola, of the Jewish faith; Shakila Ahmad, a Muslim; Brett Greenhalgh, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Dr. Brian Adams, the event's moderator.

(left) A prayer, led by TMU's chaplain Msgr. Gerald Twaddell, was said at the start of the interfaith dialogue — and was joined in by people of all faiths in attendance.

"24 Hours for the Lord"

Confessions and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

March 8, noonmidnight, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue

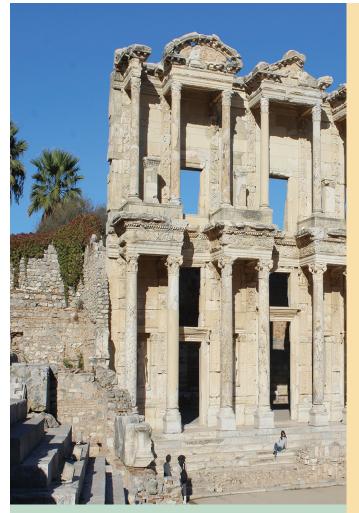
No registration needed.

Baker photos



Day of Reflection for deacon aspirants

Men aspiring for the diaconate, alongside their wives, gathered for a day of reflection, Feb. 11. The day began with Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington and a tour of the premises — after, the aspirants came together in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium in the Curia offices, Covington, for two talks given by Father Matthew Summe, LC.



(above) Ephesus in the modern-day province of Izmir, Turkey, is where St. Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians

## Greece: In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle

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## Information contact

Collette

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Refer to booking #1221094



## Bishop's Schedule

### March 2

Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

## March 5

Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Pro-Life Essay Banquet, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, 6:30 p.m.

### March 6

Confessions, St. Henry District High School, Erlanger, 1:30 p.m.

#### March 7

Diocesan Review Board meeting, 10 a.m.

Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m.

#### March 8

Confessions, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, 10 p.m.

## March 10

Mass and install permanent Deacon candidates to Ministry of Acolyte, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.



#### 'Dine in or Drive Thru, a Fish Fry!'

Watch episode 2 of Dine in or Drive Thru, a Fish Fry! In this video Bella and Maura visit St. Joseph Academy and see what makes their fish fry so loved by all. Check it out at covdio.org/messenger.

#### **COMMENTARY**

In my office I have a painting of St. Padre Pio holding a rosary with the words "Prayer is the oxygen of the soul" written next to him. Pope Francis has declared 2024 to be the Year of Prayer, which will end when the 2025

# VIEWPOINT

David Cooley

Jubilee Year begins. I am so thankful for this emphasis on prayer — I need it, my family needs it, my friends need it, my country needs it, the world needs it and the Church needs it.

Everything we do should begin with prayer, and the importance of prayer cannot be overstated. We are amazed by saints like Padre Pio, Frances Xavier Cabrini and Mother Teresa, and

all that they were able to accomplish, but we can do even greater things. The holy men and women of the past all began the same way — in prayer. They handed their lives over to the Lord, and they maintained a very close relationship with him. To do what we are called to do — to grow the kingdom of God, here and now — we must, as the Holy Father said in January, "recover the desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and adore him."

## Prayer is like oxygen

It's still early in our Lenten journey. Lent is a special time in the Liturgical Year, where we are invited by the Church to allow our hearts to be converted even closer to the Lord. That's the meaning behind praying, fasting and almsgiving, ridding ourselves of anything that hinders our relationship with God.

Lent mirrors Jesus' 40 days in the desert. He left the city and went into the wilderness with nothing. He had nothing but his Father. He is teaching us that the Father's grace and love are all we need, and we need to get away from worldly things to hear God's voice. Imagine Jesus' prayers at night in the desert. Those are the prayers our hearts are yearning to say. More than food and water, we need God; more than air, we need prayer.

It's interesting, Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness harkens back to the 40 years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. It should not have taken them that long to get from Egypt to the Promised Land. It took them 40 years because that is how long it took them to let go of their former life (conversion) in Egypt. As soon as Moses, through the power of God, rescued them, they forgot the agonies of slavery and only remembered the delicious food and beautiful idols in that exotic land. It was the life they were comfortable with.

Their journey lasted for years and years because, as Bishop John Iffert said in his Ash Wednesday homily, that's how long it took them to understand that all that really mattered was their relationship with their God. It's painful and difficult for us to let go of what we can experience with our senses. It takes a leap of faith to put our lives and our trust in God.

So, we can use this Lent and this Year of Prayer as a time for us to try and detach ourselves from evil and to assess whether we are placing things in our lives where only God should be. By beginning with prayer, we are ordering our lives toward the sacred.

When our lives are properly ordered, and we are journeying toward God, we can more clearly recognize God's love for us. The more we recognize God's love for us, the more we can share that love with others.

We live in a time where we are too busy, we are too distracted, we are too anxious, we are too overwhelmed. We are all in desperate need of faith, peace, joy and love. Jesus told us that there is only one thing necessary.

Forty days is not enough for us to spend praying. A year is not long enough. We need a lifetime rooted in prayer. Use this time the Church is giving us to develop good, lasting habits.

Pray together as a family every day. Pray for others who need your prayers. Pray for those who hate you. Remember, the object of prayer is holiness. We pray to draw closer to the Lord as the center of our life; to pause and remember the God who loves us. The God who loves us so much he sent his beloved Son to rescue us from sin and death, because there was no way we could have saved ourselves.

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

## If Catholic media doesn't share Christ's teachings, who will?

This June will mark 202 years since Bishop John England started the United States Catholic Miscellany in 1822. Lies were being spread about the faith, and Catholic

GUEST



Gretchen R. Crowe

immigrants were finding themselves the subject of Nativist attacks. Bishop England will forever be remembered as the first bishop to take a stand in defense of the church by starting a local Catholic newspaper.

Many other church leaders followed in his footsteps at the diocesan and the national levels. Ninety years after Bishop England, Father John Francis Noll began publishing Our Sunday

Visitor, also to defend the faith from those who were attacking it. The first print run was 35,000, and circulation peaked at over 1 million. The Church in the United States was facing a crisis — an attack on both its people and on its teachings — and communication was effectively used as a tool to combat it.

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council encouraged this kind of "good" Catholic press to "instill a fully Christian spirit into readers" (Inter Mirifica, No. 14). This press has two main objectives, they said: to share and explain what's happening in the life of the Church, and to

form, support and advance public opinion that was in line with Catholic teaching and with the natural law.

Though the attacks on the Church — the attacks against Christ himself — have changed in nature over the years, they are far from over. The devil's tentacles are long and relentless. Research released in January by Pew indicates that 28 percent of U.S. adults are now religiously unaffiliated. Even with the defeat of Roe v. Wade, the gospel of life is incessantly under attack at the state level, where protection for abortion is finding general support.

Forces in our culture, much of them through social media, are loudly and persuasively convincing our children that a person's biological identity comes not from the Creator, but from one's whim of the moment. Pornography is rampant. Human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry. The poor continue to be marginalized.

The Eucharist — Christ's gift to the Church by which to remember him, and the source and summit of what it means to be Catholic — is so forgotten that we have to spend millions of dollars on a National Eucharistic Revival.

Within the Church, we face our own reckonings, the most wretched of which is without a doubt the clergy sexual abuse crisis, which continues to rear its ugly head even 20 years after the Dallas Charter and five years after a global abuse summit at the Vatican.

The mission of the Catholic press to share Christ's truth with the world has never been more critical.

And yet it is also a time of great transition within Catholic media, where changes in media consumption

and decreasing readership are leading to revisions of strategy in how content is being delivered on a local and national level.

On the whole, this is a healthy practice. If current strategies aren't effective, they should be examined and improved upon. But what we cannot do — what we must not do — is change what we are communicating, even amid our bankruptcy-era belt-tightening. We cannot stop using the media to tell the story of the Church and to share the teachings of the Church in a way that helps Catholics "formulate Christian judgments for themselves on all events" (Inter Mirifica, No. 14).

If we don't do it, who else will?

I was blessed recently to attend a talk given by Deacon Larry Oney of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, founder and president of Hope and Purpose Ministries, who called for a reinvestment of resources in evangelization and truth-telling through media.

"If we're going to do Catholic media the right way, let's do it in an excellent way," he said. "The Church has to be reoriented (as to) where we are going to spend our money. Some of it needs to be spent in the new frontier, and part of that frontier for evangelization is definitely media — written media, digital media, all of it. We can't abdicate that. It's too important, because the battle is being fought there principally."

And he is so right. Catholic media is too important to abandon, despite the many challenges associated with it. For it is through Catholic media that we communicate Christ.

Gretchen R. Crowe is the editor-in-chief of OSV News.

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COMMENTARY

## Being a zealous Christian

The readings for the third Sunday of Lent — Cycle B — are: Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 and John 2:13-25.

On this Third Sunday of Lent, we hear in the Gospel of the "Cleansing of the Temple." It is a very visual account that evokes the imagination. In my mind's eye, I am drawn to the overturning of the money changers' tables. I see (and hear) the coins go flying in all directions as Jesus —



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

sometimes with one hand and at others with two—flings tables this way and that. My visions are enhanced thanks to movies, which in this case I don't think is a bad thing. Sometimes I desire to just give it a try myself but, I'm afraid of breaking something and getting in trouble.

These images that grow in the mind from hearing Sacred Scriptures are a very good thing. The Sacred Liturgy calls us beyond space and time to a true encounter of the Lord

Jesus and his ministry as lived out on earth. In our celebrations of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, we re-present those many revelations given to us by God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is expelling from the "outer court" of the Temple in Jerusalem those who have turned it from being a "house of prayer" into a "marketplace." Why? What is His motivation?

We are given the answer: "Zeal for your house will consume me." (Psalm 69:10) Zeal isn't a word we use regularly anymore, unless we are describing a religious fanatic — we call them a zealot (by the way, this is what the apostle Simon was). And so "zeal" has a rather negative connotation in our society.

The word translated into English as "zeal" comes to us from the Greek word zelos and the Hebrew word אָרָאָה (qinah). I'm not a linguist, but when you look at the etymology of these words you also get ardor or passion or fervor or jealousy.

So, we could say that Jeus is "jealous for the Temple." Remember the Temple was believed to be the physical/tangible dwelling of the most high God. Or we could say that he has a "passion for the Temple." Or "an extreme ardor or love for the Temple."

Jesus is the manifestation of God in the world — he is revelation itself. We are therefore called to emulate him in all things. We need to have zeal for that which is good, that which is holy and true and just and right. It must be made clear that Jesus was not angry when driving out the merchants from the Temple. Anger is a loss of control of the emotions and passions. It becomes sinful in the extreme when it becomes wrath, or a hostile attitude towards another. In these moments it is fueled by hate.

We have to be careful not to consider all anger sinful. The Scriptures remind us "Be angry, but sin not." (Eph 4:26) Hence, we often hear of "righteous anger," which can often be the foundation of zeal. Righteous anger responds to a perceived wrong. It is important that we have a properly formed conscious in order to have the correct perception. It is the result of love. This is what we see in Jesus—love for those who must be rebuked or corrected; and a willingness to forgive when there is authentic contrition.

Be on guard in your own lives not to give in to anger, but instead be zealous and passionate and jealous Christians for the good, who are filled with righteous anger when there is injustice and hate and discord. Let us correct the wrongs in the world with a love that always forgives.

Jesus loves and forgives us — even from the Cross!

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

## Observing Lent—Rule of Benedict Ch. 49

I am writing this on Ash Wednesday. On this day, at Evening Prayer, the Prioress reads chapter 49 of the Holy Rule each year, and gives a reflection, encouraging the community to put themselves to the work of preparing for Easter. (This chapter could guide the instructions of

**VIEWPOINT** 

Sister Mary Tewes,

O.S.B.

the leader of every household of the faith on this day annually.)

"The monastic life should always be a Lenten observance. However, since few have such strength, we urge that during these days of Lent the entire community keep the purity of their manner of life and wash away during this holy season the negligences of other times. We can do this worthily by restraining all evil habits and devoting ourselves to tearful prayer,



reading, compunction of heart, and self-denial.

"During these days, therefore, let us add something to the usual amount of our service, private prayer, and abstinence from food and drink so that each one will have something above the prescribed measure to offer to God in free will 'with the joy of the Holy Spirit' (1Thess 1:6). Let them deny themselves some food, drink, sleep, need-

less talking or jesting, and look forward to holy Easter with the joy of spiritual longing.

"Let each one, however, make known to the superior what is being offered and let it be done with blessing and approval. For whatever is done without permission of the

spiritual leader will be counted as presumption and vain-

Following the Prioress' reflections and at the comple-

glory, not reward. Therefore, everything should be done with the approval of the superior."

tion of Evening Prayer, we receive a form to be completed before Evening Prayer on Saturday evening. Then the completed resolution forms will be blessed, having been signed by the Prioress.

This is a sample of the resolutions we are asked to commit ourselves to:

- During this Lent I will abstain/fast/deny myself:
- My additional Prayer:
- My works of love and charity:
- What areas of monastic living am I open to examine and reset?
  - My Lenten book is:

One of the ordinary ways we pray the Scriptures, either alone or in groups, is called "lectio divina." Not the study of Scripture, but the praying of a short section and listening for what God is calling us to through that verse or section.

As I was looking ahead to the first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel caught my eye. Mark 1:15 was the first of "The Most Important Words of Jesus" that was researched by Gerhard Lohfink in the book I just completed by that title.

Just after Jesus leaves his time in the desert, he proclams, "The time is fulfilled, and the reign of God has come near. Repent and believe this Gospel."

What a very special message for our lectio divina for the first Sunday of Lent. Jesus knew what his mission was, and set about helping others, especially the 12 he soon gathered around him, to open themselves to the reign of God in their midst. We are those disciples today.

Let us use all the helps at our disposal to hear God's Word, serve those around us, and look forward to holy Easter with the joy of spiritual longing.

Benedictine Sister Mary Tewes is a professed member of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky. Her reflection is available on the community's blog "Reflections from the School for the Lord's Service," online at stwalburg.blogspot.com.

## Waking up to a new view of Church

In a recent Sunday sermon ("The voice of conscience") from Bishop Robert Barron, he states, "...especially in the West an awful lot of people have fallen asleep. This bland secularism, this materialism ... That's



Theresa Glaser

equivalent to being asleep in the presence of God."

Staying in Nairobi, attending classes to learn Kiswahili at the beautiful Our Lady of Consolata school of languages and philosophy campus, has awakened me to a hopeful, if not thrilling fact — the Catholic Church is thriving outside of the West.

The campus contains a seminary headed by Father Cyrus Karuthi and a school of philosophy and languages with

Father Karata as rector. Besides seminarians, the school of language student population is made up of religious and lay missioners from all over the world who are about to go into service.

I have met priests, nuns, brothers and lay people from Madagascar, Mozambique, Mexico, South America, D.R. Congo, Colombia and parts of east Africa. Many are studying English, some studying French or Italian, still others, like me, less prominent languages.

Each student I have met has spoken of their upcoming mission with an unmistakable excitement for serving God's Kingdom.

The school also teaches philosophy courses to seminarians. Seminarians here routinely take philosophy classes at the university which they attend, but in addition, for their priestly formation, they are required to take philosophy classes in a Catholic institution, courses that incorporate the concept that humans are creatures of a Creator God.

And I only wish that I could send an audio recording from Sunday Mass at Consolata along with this written description. Sitting behind 55 young men answering the call to the priesthood is cause enough to feel hopeful.

The service had an infectious liveliness. Songs in both Kiswahili and English, accompanied by African drum and the shaken "kayamba" made even this old, white lady want to get up and move. The homily was long and inspiring. Leaving the church an hour and a half later, there was no doubt that God had been praised.

Attending a very early daily Mass in a smaller, intimate chapel near my lodging on campus has also broadened my view of the Church in the world. Recently on a morning when a heavy rainfall was battering the roofs of the buildings, there were six people present, including the priest. At the end of Mass, Father asked each of us to recite the "Hail, Mary" prayer in our own language. And as it turned out, the prayer was recited in six different languages.

Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Glenmary Home Missionaries. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. For photos see page 6.



Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Glenmary Home Missionaries. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. (See her column page 5). Here are some photos she shared.

(above) Consolata seminarians 2024, Nairobi, Kenya.

(right) In Nairobi, Father Patrick Assanga, Consolata missionary, celebrates Mass in the seminary chapel with 55 young men and others.



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## Catholic Schools in Action

## **Catholic Schools in Action**





(above) Father Hennigen, chaplain, offers Mass at 7:25 a.m. each Friday morning before school begins at Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills. These Masses are not required by any class or teacher and students do not receive any extra credit for attending, however each week there are 80-100 students in attendance — a true testament to the priorities and spirituality of these students.





(above left) Kindergarten students at Holy Trinity School, Bellevue, show off the rosary bracelets they made in class. (above right) A student at Holy Trinity School receives ashes on his forehead on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14.





(above left) In preparation for Lent, the religion classes at St. Edward School, Cynthiana, learned about the celebration of Mardi Gras with Mrs. Haas, religion teacher. They learned what the colors of gold, purple and green represented — gold, frankincense and myrrh. They learned the significance of the masks and the meaning behind the "Kings Cake." In the photo, second and third graders model the Mardi Gras masks they made. (above right) On Ash Wednesday, St. Edward students processed into Mass carrying a cross with folded hands nailed to it. The hands represent the sacrifice that students are going to make during Lent as a reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made for them. As a school, during Lent the students are collectively donating a food item each week to be taken to a local food pantry during Holy Week.





(above) During Advent, Mary, Queen of Heaven School's House Council organized a collection of school supplies and toiletries. MQH families donated hundreds of items, along with new and gently used backpacks. House Council representatives were able to fill over 30 backpacks with supplies, and the backpacks were donated to a diocesan ACUE school.

## Restoration of Communion: Admonish the sinner

Bishop Andrew Cozzens *USCCB* 

When I was a student priest studying in Rome, I was invited to become a confessor for the novices of the Missionaries of Charity, young women who were in forma-

in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (1 John 1:8–9).

This is why Jesus' invitation to everyone, no matter who they are, is to repentance. As we hear on the first the Lord," adding that this person "eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor 11:27-29). Thus, any willful, direct violation of one the 10 Commandments — missing Mass on Sunday; telling a deliberate, serious lie; and deliberately looking at impure things on the internet; to name a few

common sins today — means I should not go to Holy Communion until I have first gone to confession.

The power of the Sacrament of Penance is that when sin has separated me from God, I can experience the power of the Resurrection of Jesus restoring me to life. Then, when I receive Holy Communion, I am filled and strengthened with the life of God to live for him again.

However, all of us sin every day. Frequent Communion gives us great help to overcome our lesser, venial sins which, although they don't separate us completely from God like mortal sins, still wound our relationship with God.

Through the celebration of Mass, I ask forgiveness for my sins in the Penitential Rite, I am enlightened with his truth in the Liturgy of the Word, I offer myself to him anew at the Offertory, and I receive his life anew in Holy Communion. All this is an incredible help to purify my heart even from those smaller sins which keep me from loving God fully. Frequently attending Mass helps me overcome sin.

Additionally, frequent confession is a help to overcome venial sins too. The Sacrament of Penance gives a special grace which applies to the particular sins that I confess. If I say things simply to impress others, if I have judgmental thoughts, or if I have trouble forgiving, then confession gives grace to help me overcome those very particular struggles. This again strength-

ens me to receive Holy Communion with a pure heart and to receive God's life more deeply.

The truth is we never completely overcome our sins; St. Teresa of Calcutta went to confession every week until she died. Not because she was obsessed, but because living close to God allowed her to see the ways she failed. Frequent confession helps us live this path of continual and deeper conversion.

Additionally, as we struggle with sin, we grow in humility and the knowledge of our need for God. Aware of our weakness, which God allows, we are forced to live close to him through frequent confession and Communion.

If you ask me, this is the best way to admonish the sinner: the first sinner to be admonished is myself. As I begin to live the beauty of frequent confession and Holy Communion, then I will be able to testify to others about the incredible power of God's mercy in my life.

This will help others to realize they, too, need the Sacrament of Penance so they can receive fully the life of the Eucharist. I'm convinced there will be no revival of Eucharistic life in the Church without a revival of the Sacrament of Penance.



tion to become religious sisters in the religious community Mother Teresa founded. I would hear their confessions every week. Helping them grow in their spiritual lives had a profound impact on my own. In fact, as I would listen to their sins, I would often think to myself, "Oh my, I do that too, and I never thought of it as a sin." These sisters did not know it, but they were doing for me a great Spiritual Work of Mercy: they were "admonishing the sinner." They were convicting me of my own sin and helping me grow closer to the Lord each week. As a result, I started going to confession more often myself so I, too, could grow in freedom

I can't imagine living without regularly confessing my sins in the Sacrament of Penance. It is such a great help to deal with the reality of sin in my life.

Anyone who begins to truly seek a relationship with Jesus realizes that sin is a profound reality in their life. As we spend time with God's Word and in prayer, we realize that we don't love the way he does. We often fail to relate to ourselves and others in the truth of his love. If we don't realize that we fall short in our life with Jesus, it is a sign we are not seeking to live a real relationship with him.

St. John the Evangelist says in the Bible, "If we say, 'We are without sin,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not

Sunday of Lent, which summarizes his whole message, "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

To repent is to turn away from my sin and to turn towards God. It means to confess that I am a sinner and I seek forgiveness as I begin to make efforts to break free from sin. This is part of our lifelong journey to heaven that takes us deeper and deeper into the inner attitudes of our hearts, which often are not in accord with the attitudes of Jesus' heart. We need to allow Jesus to transform us so that we share in his attitude. Frequent confession is a great aid throughout this journey.

There is a beautiful relationship between the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Eucharist, especially with respect to our communion with Jesus and his Body, the Church. The Sacrament of Penance repairs any rupture in our relationship with God and the Church and strengthens us to receive more from the Eucharist.

First, if I am aware of having committed a grave sin, I should not present myself for Holy Communion. To do this would be to lie with my act of Communion, as St. Paul says: "whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of







#### PEOPLE AND EVENTS

The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally on The CW, Sundays, 10 —11 a.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

Bishop Iffert and the priests of the Diocese of Covington will pray a Holy Hour for survivors of sexual violence and for the sanctification of priests, 3 p.m., every third Thursday monthly, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. All are welcome.

**St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, offers Veneration of a relic of the True Cross**, on the first Friday of every month, from noon–1 p.m. Confessions are offered concurrently. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic. The monthly veneration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Life Learning Center, Covington, will host the Gabi Deaton "Black Balloon Project Art Exhibit," March 2, noon–3 p.m. In addition to remarks from Gabi, Tami Bobblitt, who lost her son Chase to a fentanyl overdose in 2021, will also speak.

**Bishop Brossart High School Girls softball and volleyball Euchre Tournament**, March 2 at BBHS cafeteria. Doors open 5:30 p.m.; tournament begins 7 p.m.; \$25 pre-registration by Feb. 24, \$30 at the door; \$10 optional skin game. Food, soft drinks and water included in admission. Cash bar available. Contact Kari Bezold (859) 391-5119 or kariebb1@gmail.com.

Join popular singer and Catholic educator Mike Davis as he presents "Come Watch With Me: The Perfect Storm" at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Burlington, Saturday, March 2, 2024, at 7 p.m. This will be a powerful evening of prayer, meditation and music as visitors walk the Via Dolorosa focusing on the life, death

and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no cost to attend

**2024 Thomas More Women's Conference**, March 15, 8 a.m.–1 p.m., Steigerwald Hall, Saints Center. An interactive conference designed to enlighten, engage, and challenge women to seek more within their lives and careers. The 2024 Women's Conference explores the topic of "Responsibility to Others." Information available at tmuky.us/tmwc. Cost: \$50 for alumni and friends; free for current students/faculty/staff. Special rates available for high school groups.

The 2nd annual Lenten Pilgrimage of five historic Covington churches is March 23, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., rain or shine. Start your journey at any time, at any one of these Covington churches — Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, St. John the Evangelist and Mother of God. The route will be clearly marked. Walk (or drive) any or all the 4.3-mile pilgrimage. For questions, e-mail: CovLentenPilgrimage@gmail.com.

The Center of Spirituality at St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, will host Sister Tonette Sperando who will speak on "Hospitality: A Gospel Way of Living," March 23, 9:30–11:30 a.m. All are invited.

Holy Cross District High School, Covington, 26th annual mulch sale. Students will deliver mulch to your home, business or rental property anywhere in Kenton, Boone and Campbell Counties and will put it anywhere on your property, starting March 30 and continuing for at least four weeks. Call (859) 392-8999 for information.

**St. Augustine Parish, Covington, will celebrate Tenebrae**, Spy Wednesday, March 27, 6 p.m. All are welcome.

New Beginnings is an 8-week program for separated or divorced individuals, which provides an opportunity to heal and move forward despite a complicated situation. Led by facilitators who have been through their own personal losses, this program invites participants to move toward their own new beginning. The next session will be





Thomas and Hazel Stamm celebrated 70 years of marriage on January 23, 2024. They were able to celebrate with family and friends on February 10, 2024 at St. Agnes Church which is the church they were initially married.

They met in Atlanta, GA. This is where Hazel is from. While Tom was in the army they met first time when at a dance. It has been a beautiful love story since then. Many interesting and fun stories have been shared.

They have 4 children: Ron Stamm (Bev Stamm), Peggy Stamm Eisenmenger (Mike Eisenmenger), Terry Stamm (Sally Stamm), Beverly Stamm Ruth (Jim Ruth). Their spouses are very supportive and loving part of this special family. The family has 11 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild.

 $Tom\ was\ co-owner\ of\ the\ Ft.\ Mitchell\ Garage\ located\ in\ Park\ Hill,\ KY\ with\ his\ brother\ Leo\ Stam.\ The\ business\ continues\ in\ the\ family\ with\ Tom\ and\ Hazel"s\ son\ Ron\ Stamm.$ 

held on consecutive Tuesdays – March 19, March 26, April 2, April 9, April 16, April 23, April 30, and May 7, 2024, Time: 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Catholic Charities – Diocese of Covington, 3629 Church St., Covington. Register at covdio.org/new-beginnings.

**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.

#### **Fish Frys**

#### Fridays, Feb. 16-March 8

St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

#### Fridays, Feb. 16-March 15

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, 5-8 p.m.

#### Fridays, Feb. 16-March 22

- St. Augustine Parish, Augusta, 5–7 p.m.
- St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 4:30–8 p.m.; drive-thru closes 7:30 p.m.
- St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, 5–7 p.m.
- St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4:30–7 p.m.
- St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana, 5-7 p.m.

Father Bealer Knights of Columbus, 605 Lytle Ave., Elsmere, lunch 11 a.m.–2 p.m., dinner 4:30–8 p.m.

St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth, Knights of Columbus, 4–7:30 p.m.

Holy Cross District High School, Covington, 5–8 p.m.

St. Joseph Academy, Walton, 4:30–8 p.m.

St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, 4–7:30 p.m.

Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 4–8 p.m.

St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, 4:30–7:15 p.m.

St. Paul, Florence, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, 5–8 p.m.

St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4–7:30 p.m.

St. Timothy Parish, Union, dine in 5–7:30 p.m.; drive thru 4:30–7 p.m.

### Fridays, Feb. 16–March 29

St. Augustine Parish, Covington, 4–7 p.m.

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 4:45–7 p.m.

### Fridays, March 8, 15 and 22

St. Matthew Parish, Kenton, 4:30-7:00 PM.

#### Friday, March 22

Our Savior Parish, Covington, starts at 12 p.m.

## A story of hope from Indonesia

Located in Southeast Asia between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Indonesia has beautiful beaches, diverse cultures and nearly 280 million people — the fourth highest population in the world.

Many of the country's more than 17,000 islands are in the Ring of Fire, a region around the rim of the Pacific Ocean where volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are common. Climate-related disasters such as cyclones also threaten the islands and are becoming more frequent and destructive.

Strong rains and wind from these storms — combined with long periods without rain, called drought — make it difficult for people like Evita Tiro Wada to grow food. Evita and her family live on Flores Island, where she keeps a home garden for food and income.



A traditional Indonesian sour soup known for its sweet and sour flavor. Sayur means vegetables, and asem refers to tamarind, which is the key ingredient that gives the dish its distinctive tangy taste. The dish is typically served with steamed rice.

#### Sayur Asem

- 4 cups water
- 1 vegetable bouillon cube
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 red chili pepper, seeded and diced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup peanuts, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 chayote squash or zucchini, peeled, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup frozen green beans
- 1/2 cup frozen corn
- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 1 teaspoon tamarind paste or lemon juice

recipe is meat-free for Lent.

In a large pot over medium-high heat, add water and vegetable bouillon.

In a food processor, blend shallots, garlic, ginger, chili pepper, salt and 1/4 cup of chopped peanuts.

Add mixture to the pot of water, along with the brown sugar and remaining peanuts. Stir to combine and cook for 15 minutes

Add the chayote or zucchini, green beans, corn and spinach. Increase heat to high and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in tamarind or lemon juice just before serving.

Makes 4-5 servings

Lenten Receipe Provided by CRS (Catholic Relief Services) Rice Bowl, this





To help her family and community become more resilient against natural disasters and have more reliable access to food, Evita participated in a Catholic Relief Services' program, through which she joined a disaster preparedness group.

The group helps their community stay safe during emergencies like cyclones and earthquakes. They created a system to warn people to evacuate and identified evacuation routes, assembly points and resources they can use during a crisis.

The group also maintains a community garden. They grow vegetables like beans, eggplant and water spinach to provide healthy food for their families. They use a drip irrigation system that conserves water so the vegetables can grow even during a drought. Evita and her group members use the garden to teach people from other communities how to start their own.

To protect their garden from the wind and prevent erosion from the ocean waves, Evita and her group planted trees. They also cleaned up the river and other areas in their town by picking up trash, which helped prevent flooding.

Evita says, "When I first joined the village disaster preparedness group, I thought, 'What will I do or give to help the community?' After I've been involved, I see the benefits of what the community and I did."

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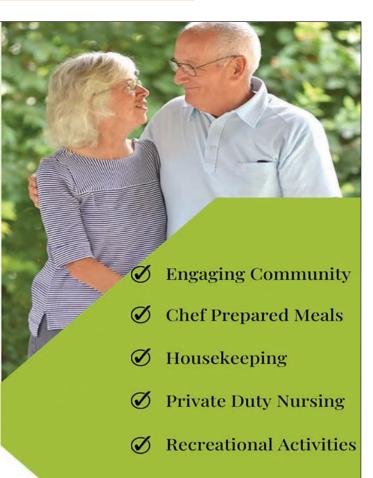


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## Still sick, pope has aide read his audience talk on envy and pride

**Cindy Wooden** Catholic News Service

Arriving in a wheelchair instead of walking with his cane, Pope Francis began his weekly general audience by telling visitors and pilgrims, "I'm still a bit sick," so an aide would read his prepared text.

The pope had canceled his appointments Feb. 24 and Feb. 26 because of what the Vatican press office described as "mild flu-symptoms," but Pope Francis led the recitation of the Angelus prayer Feb. 25 without obvious difficulty.

At his general audience Feb. 28, his voice was hoarser and softer. Besides briefly telling the crowd he would not be reading his prepared text, he took the microphone only to pray at the beginning and end of the gathering and to read his appeals for peace and for an end to the use of landmines.

The Italian news agency ANSA reported that Pope Francis went from the audience to Rome's Gemelli Isola Hospital for a checkup before returning to the Vatican. In late November when he was suffering similar symptoms, he had gone to that hospital for a CT scan of his lungs.

Pope Francis' main audience talk focused on envy and vainglory, or exaggerated pride, as part of his continuing series of audience talks about vices and virtues.

Envy and vainglory "go hand in hand," the pope wrote. "Together these two vices are characteristic of a person who aspires to be the center of the world, free to exploit everything and everyone, the object of all praise and love."

Reading the Book of Genesis, envy appears to be "one of the oldest vices: Cain's hatred of Abel is unleashed when



CNS photo/Vatican Med

Pope Francis gathers with a group of religious sisters for a group photo at the end of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Feb. 28, 2024.

he realizes that his brother's sacrifices are pleasing to God." he wrote.

"The face of the envious man is always sad: he's always looking down, he seems to be continually investigating the ground; but in reality, he sees nothing, because his mind is wrapped up in thoughts full of wickedness," he said. "Envy, if unchecked, leads to hatred of the other. Abel would be killed at the hands of Cain, who could not bear his brother's happiness."

The root of the vice and sin of envy, he said, "is a false idea of God: we do not accept that God has His own

'math '

As an example, Pope Francis cited the parable from Matthew 20:1-16 about workers hired at different times of the day to work in a vineyard, but the owner pays them all the same.

When those who worked longest protest, the owner says, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?"

"We would like to impose our own selfish logic on God; instead, the logic of God is love," the pope's text said. "The good things he gives us are meant to be shared. This is why St. Paul exhorts Christians, 'Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor' (Rom. 12:10). Here is the remedy for envy!"

Pope Francis described vainglory as "an inflated and baseless selfesteem," which leads to having no empathy and to seeing others only as objects to be used.

The vainglorious person "is a perpetual beggar for attention," the pope wrote, and when recognition is not given, "he becomes fiercely angry."

Usually, he said, the remedy for such pride comes automatically when people offer criticism rather than praise.

matically when people offer criticism rather than praise.

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

A wise person recognizes, as St. Paul did, that freedom comes from recognizing one's weaknesses and failures, relying only on God for strength, Pope Francis' text said.





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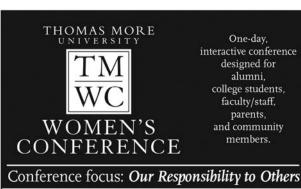
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## Heading to the National Eucharistic Congress in July? Here's what to expect

NATIONAL

**Eucharistic** 

Congress

Maria Wiering OSV News

The tens of thousands of Catholics planning to attend the five-day 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in July will experience large-scale liturgies, dynamic speakers, and opportunities for quiet prayer and

faith-sharing, with six different "impact session" tracks tailored to their peer groups or faith journey.

Leaders hope attendees become "a leaven for the church in the United States as Eucharistic missionaries going back to their parishes, but also sort of a gathering of people who are standing in the breach, or in proxy, for the entire church across the United States, inviting that new Pentecost, and that new sending (of) healing and life to the full," said Tim Glemkowski, CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., in a January meeting with media.

The event is the pinnacle of the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year initiative of the U.S. bishops to inspire a deep-

er love for Jesus in the Eucharist that began in 2022. The revival focused its first year on dioceses, the second and current year on parishes, and the final year, beginning after the congress, on "going out in mission."

Catholic leaders have described the National Eucharistic Congress as potentially transformational for the Catholic Church in the U.S.

"I believe this event and the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage leading up to it will have a generational impact on our country," wrote Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, and chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., in a commentary published by OSV News in January.

The congress will be held at Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts, and the adjacent Indianapolis Convention Center. The congress distinguishes itself from other Catholic conferences because it "invites the entire church to come to pray together for revival," said Joel Stepanek, the National Eucharistic Congress' vice presi-

dent of programming and administration.

"We're going to gather with those there to pray for the Holy Spirit to fall on us, to pray for revival in the church in the United States, to pray for healing in our own lives so we might be Eucharistic missionaries, and we'll do that through powerful experiences of prayer and with the encouragement of a wonderful keynote speakers," Stepanek

Registration is open for fullevent and single-day passes at eucharisticcongress.org/register

The congress' theme is centered on Luke 24, which describes Jesus meeting two disciples on the road to Emmaus following his death and resurrec-

tion. The disciples did not recognize him at first but listened to him explain Scripture, only to later realize their companion was Jesus during their evening meal "in the breaking of the bread." They raced back to Jerusalem to tell others what they had seen.

Day one, Wednesday, July 17, is themed "From the Four Corners." The congress is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. that day with an opening ceremony in Lucas Oil Stadium. The evening's speakers include Bishop Cozzens; Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S.; and Sister Bethany Madonna, a Sister of Life who is the local superior and mission coordinator of the sisters' Phoenix foundation.

Day two, Thursday, July 18, is themed: "The Greatest Love Story." The morning schedule begins with 8:30 a.m. Mass, with options to worship in English or Spanish, including an additional Mass for youth.

Mass is followed by impact sessions, where attendees can choose from six options with "dynamic preaching and music tailored to their state in life and mission," according to the congress' website. Following lunch are breakout sessions and "special experiences" tailored for specific groups or interests.

The evening includes a three-hour "revival session" with Father Francis "Father Rocky" Hoffman, Relevant Radio's CEO and executive director, leading a Family Rosary Across America live from Lucas Oil Stadium. Father Michael Schmitz, host of the popular podcast "The Bible in a Year," also will speak.

Day three, Friday, July 19, is themed "Into Gethsemane." Friday's schedule mirrors Thursday's, with morning Mass and impact sessions, afternoon breakout sessions and an evening revival session with the Family Rosary Across America's keynote speaker Sister Josephine Garrett of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Day four, Saturday, July 20, is themed "This is My Body." Saturday's morning and early afternoon schedule follows the order of the previous days. In the mid-afternoon, attendees will form a large Eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis, which Stepanek described as "a profoundly impactful experience."

"A lot of folks who will be out on a Saturday afternoon in downtown Indianapolis will encounter the Lord and will receive the witness that we have, as a Catholic community, of prayer and joy in that city," he said. "It's really one of the biggest outward facing pieces of the congress itself."

The evening includes a revival session featuring the Family Rosary Across America and speakers Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota; Mother Adela Galindo, founder of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary religious order and lay Apostles of the Pierced Hearts; and Gloria Purvis, host of "The Gloria Purvis Podcast." Musician Matt Maher will lead worship.

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Day five, Sunday, July 21, is themed "To the Ends of the Earth." The morning schedule begins with a revival session with speaker and author Chris Stefanick, founder and president of Real Life Catholic, followed by the revival's closing liturgy celebrated by a papal delegate, with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

"This is our big commissioning as a Catholic community, where we will go forward then and take what we have been entrusted with as being part of this experience back to our homes, our communities, our schools, our parishes and our families to really be that salt and leaven in the world that is in need of the joy that we're going to bring," Stepanek said.

The congress' main events will be emceed by Montse Alvarado, president and chief operating officer of EWTN News; Sister Miriam James Heidland of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity; and Father Josh Johnson, a speaker, author and priest of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dave Moore, co-founder of Catholic Music Initiative, will provide music throughout the congress.

The morning impact sessions planned for days 2-4 are organized into six tracks: Encounter, Encuentro, Empower, Renewal, Cultivate and Awaken.

Encounter is the group of general sessions held in Lucas Oil Stadium. With a focus on deepening a person's relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist, it will feature speakers including Katie Prejean McGrady, Sister Mary Grace Langrell, Mary Healy, Edward Sri and Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers.

Encuentro sessions are in Spanish, with speakers including Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas; Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio; Andrés Arango; Mabel Suárez; Kathia Arango; and Dora Tobar.

Empower sessions are designed to be smaller and "more intimate," with a focus on practical tools for becoming a "Eucharistic missionary" in one's community. Speakers include Deacon Larry and Andi Oney, Father



OSV News illustration/courtesy National Eucharistic Congress

This is an updated map showing the four routes of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress in 2024. Pilgrims traveling in "Eucharistic caravans" on all four routes will begin their journeys with Pentecost weekend celebrations May 17-18, 2024, leaving May 19. They will all converge on Indianapolis July 16, 2024, the day before the five-day Congress opens.

John Burns, Chika Anyanwu, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph A. Espaillat of New York, Meg Hunter-Kilmer and Paul Albert.

Renewal sessions are for people who work or volunteer in a parish, diocesan or other ministry role "to explore new and creative possibilities of accompaniment, evangelization, and catechesis," according to the congress' website. Speakers include Damon Owens, Sarah Kaczmarek, Julianne Stanz and Curtis Martin.

Cultivate sessions are focused on families to attend together, with speakers including Father Leo Patalinghug and Ennie and Cana Hickman. Awaken sessions are designed for high school youth, with large-group sessions in the mornings and smaller breakout sessions in afternoons. Speakers include Oscar Rivera, Brian Greenfield and Jackie Francois Angel. Teenagers attending the sessions must be part of a youth group or accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The congress also will include an exhibit hall and a display of a replica of the Shroud of Turin, art exhibits, opportunities for confession and adoration, and music performances.

Leading up to the congress is the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, a two-month pilgrimage beginning at four different points of the U.S. where groups of pilgrims will primarily walk Indianapolis with the Eucharist in a monstrance. The congress' opening event will include pilgrims from the four routes converging for a procession into the stadium.

Glemkowski said the congress shares the goal of the revival: "the idea that we need a spiritual movement of God in our church to bring about renewal in this time."

"The bishops have prophetically inaugurated or invited the church to this time of encounter with Jesus, a deepened encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, which has everything to do with belief and relationship and what ... (St.) John Henry Newman would call 'real assent' — a sacrificial gift of your heart to Jesus in the Eucharist which bears fruit for the life of the world."

Large-scale Eucharistic congresses have been part of the fabric of devotion in the Catholic Church for nearly 150 years, and continue to be regularly convened by U.S. dioceses and in other countries. The 10th National Eucharistic Congress is the first Eucharistic congress in the U.S. 83 years, with the most recent national congress held in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1941.

The Diocese of Covington has tickets available for purchase to the National Eucharistic Congress. For information visit https://covdio.org.

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## Woe to those who end up in media 'meat grinder,' papal preacher says

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The media and social networks can be crueler than wild beasts, the preacher of the papal household told top Vatican officials and Vatican employ-

"When they point out the distortions of society or of the church," he said, then "they deserve all the respect and esteem," Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa said Feb. 23, offering his first Lenten meditation of 2024 in the Paul VI

But there should be no praise when "they attack someone out of bias, simply because he does not belong to their side" or when they are driven by "malice and with destructive, rather than constructive, intent," the Capuchin friar

The reflection came after Pope Francis and members of the Roman Curia suspended their usual activities to par-

ticipate in a week of personal spiritual reflection for the beginning of Lent Feb. 18-23. A number of chairs reserved

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the papal household, presents a Lenten meditation for members of the Roman Curia and Vatican employees in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Feb. 26, 2021.

for curial officials and Pope Francis were empty.

"Unfortunately, today there exists in society teeth that grind without mercy, more cruelly" than the teeth of wild beasts, Cardinal Cantalamessa said. "They are the teeth of the media and the so-called social networks.'

"Unfortunate indeed is whoever ends up in this meat grinder today, be it a layperson or clergy!" he said.

"In this case, it is legitimate and necessary to assert one's reasons in the appropriate forums, and if this is not possible, or it is seen that it is of no use, all that remains for a believer is to join Christ scourged, crowned with thorns, spit upon," he said.

"It is a difficult and painful thing to say the least, especially if one's natural or religious family is involved," he said. "But the grace of God can make — and often has made — all of this an opportunity for purification and sanctification."

"It's about having faith that, in the end, as happened with Jesus, the truth will triumph over lies. And the triumph will be better served, perhaps, with silence than with the most aggressive self-defense," he said.

The papal preacher said he would dedicate each of his five Lenten reflections to five of the seven "I am" declarations Jesus revealed in the Gospel of John, starting with "I am the bread of life."

"How did he, Jesus, become the bread of life for us?" Cardinal Cantalamessa asked.

Jesus provided the answer in the Gospel of John (12:24) when he said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit," the cardinal said.

The image of grain falling to the ground and dying, he said, indicates not only Jesus' destiny, but also "that of every one of his true disciples."

On his way to Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote how he was willing to become "food for the wild beasts, for they



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March 15 - 17 | Men & Women's Retreat with Fr. Michael Graham, SJ

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are my way to God. I am God's wheat and shall be ground by their teeth so that I may become Christ's pure bread," the cardinal said, quoting the saint.

"This has something to say to us, too," the cardinal said. "Each of us has, in our environment, these teeth of wild beasts that grind us" given that — quoting St. Augustine human beings are "vessels of clay that are damaged by the slightest nick."

"We must learn to make this situation a means of sanctification and not of hardening of the heart, hatred and complaint," Cardinal Cantalamessa said.

"There are many opportunities not to be wasted if we, too, want to be ground to become God's flour, and everyone must identify and sanctify what is offered to him in his place of service," he said.

'One opportunity is to accept being contradicted, to give

up justifying oneself, and to always want to be right when this is not required by the importance of the matter," he

The other is "to put up with someone whose character, way of speaking or acting gets on our nerves, and to do so without ourselves becoming irritated internally, thinking, rather, that we too are perhaps such a person for someone,'

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## 'Abuse of power': Catholic leaders, local officials blast Texas lawsuit targeting migrant ministry

OSV News

Catholic leaders and local officials condemned Feb. 23 an attempt by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to shut down a Catholic nonprofit serving migrants and asylum-seekers at the Southern border, calling it an abuse of power and a violation of religious liberty.

Paxton's office accused Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas, of "facilitating illegal entry to the United States" and "human smuggling," filing a lawsuit in an attempt to shut it

Paxton's lawsuit sparked immediate outrage from Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, who vowed in a Feb. 22 statement supporting Annunciation House that the church would "vigorously defend the freedom of people of faith and goodwill to put deeply held religious convictions into practice." He wrote, "We will not be intimidated in our work to serve Jesus Christ in our sisters and brothers fleeing danger and seeking to keep their families together."

Ruben Garcia, director of Annunciation House, told reporters at a Feb. 23 press conference that the nonprofit has been providing basic resources like food, shelter and water to migrants and refugees who arrive at the border for nearly 50 years in consultation with the U.S. Border Patrol.

"There are individuals who have decided that that should be illegal," he said.

In a Feb. 20 statement announcing his lawsuit against Annunciation House, Paxton's office alleged the group was a "stash house" facilitating illegal entry to the United States, a charge Garcia took particular umbrage with.

"I personally am taken aback by the use of words like 'smuggling,' to call our houses of hospitality 'stash houses," he said. "Is there no shame?"

Jerome Wesevich, a Texas RioGrande Legal Aid attorney representing Annunciation House, said Paxton's office sent representatives to Annunciation House demanding the group hand over documents within just one day and without judicial review, which he said was outside appropriate legal norms and requirements.

Wesevich said that courts, not the attorney general's office, are the appropriate arbiters of whether documents should be turned over, and, if so, then which documents.

"This should be an orderly process," Wesevich said. "What has turned into this, a roomful of people," he said, gesturing at those gathered for the press conference, "could have been handled in a few emails between reasonable people. Instead, it appears that Attorney General Paxton wants to use this request for documents simply as a pretext to close Annunciation House, and he did not realize what he was getting himself into. So we feel that the law is pretty strong on

Wesevich said, "Attorney General Paxton compounds his abuse of power by focusing it on a religious organization that is putting the Catholic faith into practice."

Annunciation House, Wesevich said, "does not decide who gets to come to the United States and who gets to stay here."

"Other people worry about those things," Wesevich said. "Annunciation House only provides basic services to vulnerable families. Food, clothing, a place to lay their heads. America remains a free country where the law protects Annunciation House's right to do this work."

Wesevich quipped that it wasn't just the law on Annunciation House's side, but the Gospel as well.

"It's all in the Bible," he said. "Attorney General Paxton may want to dust off his Bible and read through it sometime."

In comments at the press conference, Bishop Seitz reiterated his pledge that his El Paso Diocese and the Catholic Church would stand by Annunciation House.

"This is not about politics," Bishop Seitz said. "It's about the Gospel."

Paxton's suit targeting Annunciation House comes as some Republicans have grown increasingly hostile toward nongovernmental organizations, including Catholic ones, that provide resources such as food and shelter to migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Asked for comment on Annunciation House's response to the lawsuit, a spokesperson for Paxton's office referred OSV News to Paxton's Feb. 20 statement, in which his office accused Annunciation House of "facilitating illegal entry to the United States" and "human smuggling."

In that statement criticizing the Biden administration's immigration policy, Paxton, a Republican, alleged some NGOs "facilitate astonishing horrors including human smuggling."

Annunciation House operates several shelters in the El Paso area, assisting migrants and refugees with food, housing, and other assistance, as well as information about how to fill out the required legal documents to claim asylum in the

# Night to Remember

Join the St. Elizabeth Foundation and the St. Elizabeth Hospice team, as we raise a toast to honor those loved ones who have passed. Enjoy a night of shared memories, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and a silent auction. Our special evening will be emceed by WLWT News 5 Anchor Sheree Paolello.

Night to Remember
May 16th, 2024
6:30 to 9 p.m.
Drees Pavilion
790 Park Lane
Covington, KY

This event is free to attend. Donations for Hospice Programs are welcome. Registration is required. Please RSVP at www.stelizabeth.com/hospicersvp or contact Natalie Ciulla at (859) 301-7878.



## Cardinal Dolan: 'I think our cathedral acted extraordinarily well'

Julie Asher OSV News

Five days after mourners filled the iconic St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York for an irreverent "homecoming" funeral for actor and author Cecilia Gentili, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said he believes the "cathedral acted extraordinarily well."

In a recording released Feb. 20 of the SIRIUS XM radio show "Conversation with Cardinal Dolan," the cardinal praised the priests at St. Patrick's for making a quick decision "that with behavior like this we can't do a Mass. We'll do Liturgy of the Word — the readings — and the sermon and prayers of petition and the Our Father." The service "got worse with the eulogies that were very irreverent and disrespectful," he added.

The 52-year-old Gentili, an Argentine native who had battled sexual abuse from age 6 and trafficking, as well as homelessness, heroin addiction and incarceration, died Feb. 6 of unnamed causes.

Gentili was the founder and principal consultant of Trans Equity Consulting and an advocate for the decriminalization of sex work.

OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

The exterior of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City is seen in a nighttime file photo. Five days after mourners filled the iconic cathedral for an irreverent "homecoming" funeral for actor and author Cecilia Gentili, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said he believes the "cathedral acted extraordinarily well" in cutting the service short because of mourners' behavior.

The service featured "Mass cards and a picture near the altar showed a haloed Ms. Gentili surrounded by the Spanish words for 'transvestite,' 'whore,' 'blessed' and 'mother' above the text of Psalm 25," The New York Times reported. Many mourners, it said, sported attire that included "glittery miniskirts and halter tops, fishnet stockings, sumptuous fur stoles and at least one boa sewed from what appeared to be \$100 bills."

At one point in a livestream video from the service uploaded to Trans Equity's YouTube channel, a male voice is heard, apparently speaking to Maryknoll Father Edward Dougherty, the presider, and saying, "What we'll do is move to a funeral service — no Mass — so after that, we'll do the final commendation and we're done."

Two days after the service, the cathedral's rector, Father Enrique Salvo, labeled the behavior "scandalous." He acknowledged that many people "have let us know they share our outrage over the scandalous behavior" that took place at the service. He said in a Feb. 17 statement that at Cardinal Dolan's "directive, we have offered an appropriate Mass of Reparation."

"That such a scandal occurred at 'America's Parish

Church' makes it worse," Father Salvo said. "That it took place as Lent was beginning, the annual 40-day struggle with the forces of sin and darkness, is a potent reminder of how much we need the prayer, reparation, repentance, grace, and mercy to which this holy season invites us."

On the radio show, which is co-hosted by Paulist Father Dave Dwyer, executive director of Busted Halo, Cardinal Dolan praised Father Salvo for his statement, adding that "when scandal (and) acts of disrespect toward the church go on, it does cause us a lot of anguish. I think our cathedral acted extraordinarily well."

The LGBTQ group that arranged the funeral said Feb. 20 it wants "accountability" from the cathedral for shortening the service from a full Mass to a shorter liturgy without the Eucharist.

"A public apology will also be requested from the Archdiocese of New York for the painfully dismissive and exclusionary language used in their recent statement," said GLITS Inc. (Gays and Lesbians Living in a Transgender Society) in a news release announcing it will hold a news conference with political and religious leaders and community members about the matter at City Hall Feb. 21.

In its Feb. 20 news release, GLITS said the "rash decision made by clergy members" at the cathedral "abruptly cut short ... this joyful and celebratory commemoration of (Gentili's) powerful legacy." The service "ended an hour earlier than had been scheduled, thus denying her the full funeral Mass that was agreed upon," it said.

The community Gentili served "requests a public apology to heal from the pain," it said, and added that the rector "alluding to the presence of trans and the LGTBQ+ community at large as 'forces of sin and darkness'" in his statement "is incendiary rhetoric that contributes to further discrimination against

LGBTQ+ communities."

The release cited Pope Francis' call "for a more open and inclusive church," adding, "We hope that LGBTQ+ parishioners and mourners won't be left to feel abandoned yet again by the faith that they still want to call home."

But Gentili was a self-professed atheist who had been "reexamining (a) relationship with religion for a long time," according to a November 2023 interview. Gentili had come "from a family of so many different faiths," including Catholicism, that the activist didn't feel "attached to any of them."

Ceyenne Doroshow, founder and director of GLITS and organizer of the funeral, told the NY Times Feb. 15 she had not disclosed to the cathedral's pastoral staff that Gentili identified as transgender, saying, "I kind of kept it under wraps."

The GLITS news release said the funeral organizers had "advised" the cathedral staff "to look up Gentili, her work and the community she served." Expecting the funeral's organizers to "affirmatively disclose the gender identity of their loved one would not be expected of a non-transgender person," it said.

In his statement, Father Salvo said, "The Cathedral only knew that family and friends were requesting a funeral Mass for a Catholic, and had no idea our welcome and prayer would be degraded in such a sacrilegious and deceptive way."

Cardinal Dolan on the podcast echoed what Father Salvo said, noting that priests at St. Patrick's Cathedral "first of all didn't know the background of the person who died."

"They got a call that 'our dear friend died and she's a Catholic, and it would be a great source of consolation to have the funeral at the cathedral' ... and of course the priests said, 'Come on in, you're welcome' — which is beautiful," he said. "We don't do FBI checks on people who want to be buried from there."









#### **NEWS BRIEFS**

#### **National/World**

## Doctors, pro-life leaders, others oppose assisted suicide bill

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Minnesota lawmakers in the state's House and Senate are considering a bill that would allow people to request medical aid in dying under certain circumstances. The Minnesota Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy interests of the state's bishops, said in a recent action alert the bill is "one of the most aggressive physician-assisted suicide bills in the country" and violates the teaching of the Catholic Church. "As Catholics, we are called to uphold human dignity," the conference wrote. "Legalization of assisted suicide works against this principle because death is hastened when it is thought that a person's life no longer has meaning or purpose." Under the measure, to be eligible for physician-assisted suicide, one must be 18 or older, be diagnosed with a terminal illness and a prognosis of six months or less to live and be mentally capable of making an informed health care decision. Committees in the Senate and the House must act favorably toward the bill by a March 22 deadline to keep the legislation in play. Despite the opposition of pro-life leaders, many physicians, people with disabilities and mental health experts, the House Health and Finance Policy Committee passed the bill Jan. 25. The bill will have to clear other committees before a full vote on the House floor. As of Feb. 27, no additional hearings had been scheduled.

## Washington state bill requiring clergy to report child abuse fails again

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Legislation that would require clergy to report child abuse or neglect in Washington state failed for the second year in a row in that state's Legislature. Some have expressed concern that without exceptions for clergy-penitent privilege, the bill could place Catholic priests at odds with civil law in order to uphold church law regarding the seal of the confessional. Senate Bill 6298, a bill that sought to make members of the clergy mandatory reporters, or people required by law to report suspected or known instances of child abuse or

neglect, was recently passed by the state's Senate but died in a House committee Feb. 21. The state Senate's version of that legislation contained an exception to the requirement that would have exempted sacramental confessions. However, the House rejected that exception, so the legislation did not proceed. Similar legislation failed in the state last year after lawmakers could not reach consensus on the exception. Jean Welch Hill, executive director of the Washington State Catholic Conference, told OSV News Feb. 26 the conference "supports clergy as mandatory reporters, provided anything heard in the sacrament of confession is excluded from disclosure."

## Priest, 6 religious brothers, lay teacher kidnapped in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — As the wave of violence torments gang-decimated Haiti, six male religious, a lay teacher and a priest were kidnapped in two separate incidents Feb. 23 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital. The six members of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart were abducted on their way to the John XXIII School, which is run by the order. A teacher who was with them was also taken, the pontifical charity Aid to the Church in Need confirmed. "In view of this painful event, the John XXIII institution is closing its doors until further notice. The other institutions of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart throughout the country will continue the work of raising awareness among the new generation of the values of living together in harmony, with a view to the emergence of a new society that is more humane, more caring, and more united," said the congregation in a statement sent to ACN. Only a few hours later, a priest was also kidnapped in Port-au-Prince. He was taken from his parish church, alongside some of the faithful, soon after celebrating morning Mass. Despite the tireless work of the church, clergy and religious have not been spared the violence of armed gangs. The latest kidnappings took place five weeks after a group of six religious sisters were abducted, only to be released the following week.

## At least 15 Catholics dead in attack during Mass in Burkina Faso

DORI, Burkina Faso — At least 15 people were killed in an attack by gunmen on Catholics gathered for Sunday Mass in a

Burkina Faso village Feb. 25, according to multiple news reports. Twelve Catholics were dead at the scene in the village of Essakane, with another three dying while being treated at a health center, and two others wounded, according to a statement from Bishop Laurent Birfuoré Dabiré of the Diocese of Dori in Northern Burkina Faso, which includes Essakane. "In these painful circumstances, we invite you to pray for the eternal rest of those who have died in the faith, for the healing of the wounded and for the consolation of sorrowful hearts," the bishop said in the statement, written in French and shared on the bishop's behalf by Father Jean-Pierre Sawadogo, the diocese's vicar general. "We also pray for the conversion of those who continue to sow death and desolation in our country. May our efforts of penance and prayer during this period of Lent bring peace and security to our country, Burkina Faso," the bishop said. According to AP, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but jihadis who have perpetuated similar violence are suspected of carrying it out. Christians in Burkina Faso have been increasingly targeted in recent years by terrorist groups amid political and social upheaval.

## After meeting with Masons, bishop reaffirms Catholics cannot join

VATICAN CITY — After participating in a seminar on the Catholic Church and the Freemasons, an Italian bishop reaffirmed that Catholics who belong to Masonic lodges are in a "serious state of sin" and cannot receive Communion. Bishop Antonio Staglianò, president of the Pontifical Academy of Theology, spoke to Vatican News Feb. 24 after participating in the seminar Feb. 16 with the leaders of Italy's three main Masonic lodges, Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan and Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, retired president of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts. The seminar was sponsored by GRIS, an Italian Catholic research group founded in the 1980s to promote research about cults and religious sects. News that the seminar was taking place — behind closed doors — made headlines across Italy, particularly because in November the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith reaffirmed church teaching that membership in Freemasonry is incompatible with being Catholic, pointing to the longstanding church position, explained in detail in the office's "Declaration on Masonic Associations" in 1983.



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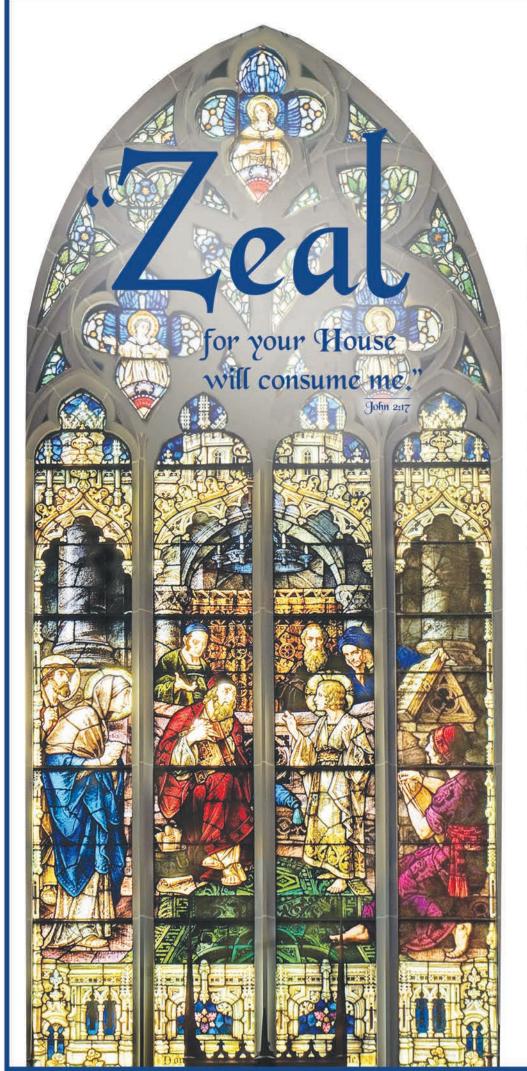
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