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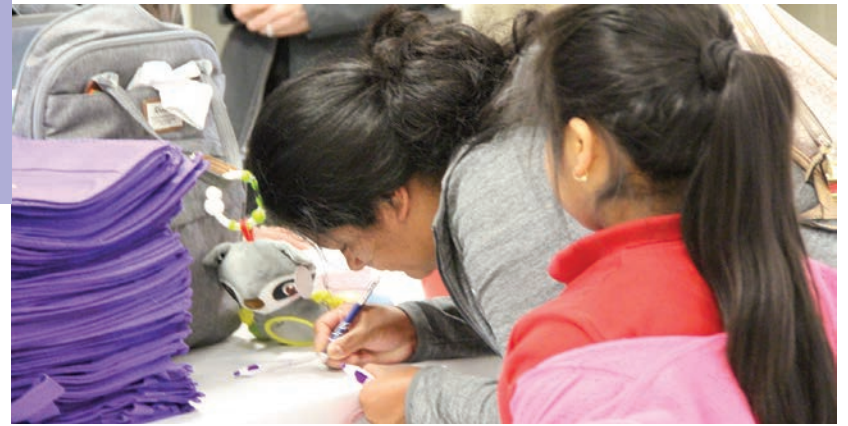
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Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covdio.org/messenger](http://covdio.org/messenger).



(above) The Franciscan Daughters of Mary pose in front of the board explain the Rose Garden Home Mission (above right) A young mother learns about how the agencies can help.  
(right) A mother and her daughter sign into the event.



## The community comes together to help families in need

Bella Young  
Multimedia Correspondent

It was a day of fellowship and service as volunteers and agencies gathered to host a Community Baby Shower at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. In participation with this event the Diocese encouraged people to donate baby items. On April 25, the employees of the Curia loaded a St. Vincent de Paul truck full of items to be dropped off at St. Joseph Church in preparation for the baby shower.

Hosted by the Pregnancy Care Network of Northern Kentucky, there were 20 different agencies represented, united under a common goal of helping families in need. Representatives from the

Campbell County Public Library passed out books to the children walking, or tottering, past the tables. Books entitled, "Families Belong" and "The Three Little Pigs" put a smile on both the parents and children's faces as they loaded these books into their bag.

Also in attendance were the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, representing the Rose Garden Home Mission and its ministries. "A full pregnancy care center, helping moms make good choices in their pregnancies and assisting them with material needs for them and

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Parish Missionary Disciples training complete — how will the Holy Spirit move?

Laura Keener  
Editor

Over 60 people from parishes across the Diocese of Covington have completed Parish Missionary Disciples training, April 27. Parish Missionary Disciples training might best be described as an invitation to a personal Pentecost, to encourage and develop a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Practically speaking, the sessions help participants identify times in their life when they have encountered the Holy Spirit and to be able to share that experience and its impact on their faith life with others. Additionally, participants learn to pray with and for one another, to teach others to pray and to accompany others on their Catholic discipleship journey.

"One of the coolest things that I've been thinking about ever since the training ended was how we took a whole session to practice and to talk about good conversation and how to take conversation deeper ... to have more intentional conversation," said Anna Wells, parish secretary, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, who was one of the participants.

As a young adult, Ms. Wells is beginning to set down roots at a parish and is eager to be actively involved in parish ministry. PMD training was an opportunity to meet parishioners from other parishes with decades of parish-life experience, who are equally on fire for



Kyle Hatfield, ministry development manager, Catholic Leadership Institute, welcomes participants to the final Parish Missionary Disciples session, April 27, at Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington.

the faith. "Everyone across the board is on fire and that was really awesome," she said. "I'm just grateful for the whole experience and I'm grateful that we were able to be given this opportunity to come together as a diocese."

Mark Johnson, youth minister, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas,  
*(Continued on page 13)*



## Curia and Cathedral thank retirees for their service to the Church

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

Four individuals who have devoted part of their lives to the Diocese of Covington's Curia and the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption will be retiring, and their vocations were celebrated with luncheons, April 28 and April 29, in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington.

April 28's luncheon celebrated the retirement of two long-time Cathedral staff members. Jerry Landry, maintenance director, who served the Cathedral for 17 years, and Benedictine Sister Barbara Woeste, pastoral associate, who served for 26 years. The celebration was shared among family, friends and parishioners alike.

April 29 celebrated the retirement of Joan LeCoy, chancery administrative assistant after 16 years, and the *Messenger's* own advertising manager, Chuck Brinkman, after two years. Curia staff gathered to celebrate their accomplishments.

At the Cathedral's retirement luncheon, Father Ryan Maher, rector, thanked the two retiring staff members for their service. He referred to Mr. Landry as the "ultimate fixer."

"Jerry has put his many talents at the service of the Church," said Father Maher. "He has taken care of the Lord's house."

"It was an honor and a privilege," Mr. Landry said as he was handed the microphone to follow.

About Sister Barbara's service to the Cathedral, Father Maher commented on how she "very much had a preference to be in the background, and never taking credit for herself."

He said, "Sister has been a great stabilizing presence over the years, kind of keeping us in an even keel. Reminding us that prayer is the most important thing that we do."

At the end of the luncheon, Bishop John Iffert also thanked both Mr. Landry and Sister Barbara for their service, and congratulated them on their retirement. "...many people here, they will tell you," he said, "you have stolen

their hearts and your example takes their breath away."

The next day, at the Curia's retirement luncheon, Bishop Iffert also thanked both Mrs. LeCoy and Mr. Brinkman. "We hate to see both of you go," he said, "but we will always hold that love and respect for you in our hearts and look forward to your visits when you drop back by."

Laura Keener, editor of the *Messenger*, also expressed her appreciation for Mr. Brinkman's work. Hired on as the advertising manager following the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Brinkman was the "perfect fit," said Mrs. Keener. "He was the easiest hire we ever did, and we really appreciated having [him] there."

Mr. Brinkman expressed how, despite having worked 42 years in sales the Curia was the first place to work that "felt like a family," to him. "Thank you all," he said.

Jamie Schroeder, chancellor, commented on Ms. LeCoy's 16 years of service, the last three as Chancery secretary. "We really threw her into the deep end," she said, "because it was right when we were planning for the consecration and installation of Bishop Iffert ... She was a trooper and a good sport. Joanie is a hard worker ... she has the heart of servant."



(top left) (from left to right) Jerry Landry; Father James Schaeper; Father Ryan Maher, rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption; Msgr. Kurt Kemo; Benedictine Sister Barbara Woeste; Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys; Bishop John Iffert; Deacon Gerald Franzen.

(top right) Father Michael Maher smiles for a photo with Jerry Landry during the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption's retirement luncheon.

(above center) Sister Barbara Woeste, OSB, embraces Father Ryan Maher, rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

(above bottom) Bishop John Iffert, Joan LeCoy, Chuck Brinkman and Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys stand for a photograph at the Curia retirement luncheon.



### The Solemnity of Corpus Christi

Bring the family

Liturgy of the Word service and Eucharistic Procession

Sunday, June 2, 2 p.m.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington



### Human trafficking: The impact, and how to help

May 14

5:30-9 p.m.

Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Curia, Covington

# Eucharistic pilgrimage through Cincinnati provides opportunity for Eucharistic experiences

**Bella Young**

*Multimedia Correspondent*

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is going to be making its way through the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Walking what is known as the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton route, the perpetual pilgrims will be arriving in the Archdiocese on July 1 and stay through July 7. Perpetual pilgrims are a group of committed young adults who are walking the entire pilgrimage route beginning in New Haven, Connecticut and ending at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana. Local Catholics are encouraged to meet the perpetual pilgrims, support them and walk with them on short routes as they pass through nearby neighborhoods. At its passage through Cincinnati, to celebrate the occasion, there will be a Eucharistic Festival and Mass celebration on July 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The day will begin with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains at 10 a.m. Following Mass, the faithful will process with the Blessed Sacrament through downtown Cincinnati to fountain square. The Eucharistic Festival will kick-off with a Holy Hour that will include praise and worship music by Damascus Worship, a Eucharistic reflection by Father Jacob Lindle, and Benediction, according to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati website. There will also be games, food trucks and activities, making for a family fun day.

July 6 is not the only day to participate in the pilgrimage, there will be events held every day from July 1 to through July 7 at different locations throughout the Archdiocese. On July 1 a Eucharist procession will start at the Greene County Expo center and arrive at St. Brigid Church, Xenia. Upon arrival at St. Brigid there will be a holy hour and priests will be available to hear confessions. There will also be a community meal after holy hour. According to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati website the



event will feature a display of Eucharistic Miracles by St. Carlo Acutis. Also, at St. Brigid Church there will be overnight adoration and confession until Mass the following morning at 7:30 a.m. After Mass there will be a Eucharistic procession that will travel to Xenia Station, with a stop along the way to pray outside Greene County Jail.

On Tuesday, July 2, there will be a Holy Hour from 5 to 6 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales Church, Lebanon. The Holy Hour will include music and

a rosary led by the Holy Family School of Faith, and Benediction. Following the Holy Hour there will be a parish potluck. On the following day, July 3, there will be a morning mass at St. Francis de Sales Church and a continental breakfast to follow. There will then be a Eucharistic procession to Harmon Park.


Ending the day on July 3 at St. Gertrude Church, Cincinnati, there will be an evening prayer vigil for the nation during Eucharistic adoration. There will be Benediction to follow. Resting a day on July 4, the events continue to July 5 with 7 a.m. Mass at St. Gertrude Church, followed by a Eucharistic procession through downtown Madeira. That evening there will be a Holy Hour at St. Cecilia Church, Cincinnati, with a cookout to follow. After the cookout there will be a Eucharistic procession to St. Mary Church, Hyde Park, where the Eucharist will be placed in the tabernacle and vespers will follow.

On July 6 the pilgrimage will continue from Holy Cross-Immaculata, Cincinnati, to St. Peter in Chains, Cincinnati, with a 1.6-mile walk. There will then be Mass at St. Peter in Chains with the Eucharistic festival following.

July 7 will begin at St. Lawrence Church, Cincinnati, with a morning Mass and Benediction. A Eucharistic Procession will then travel from St. Lawrence Church to St. William Church, Cincinnati, where a bilingual holy hour will take place. This will be followed with food from

the Knights of Columbus and music from the local Hispanic community, according to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Website. July 8, the last day of the Pilgrimage in Cincinnati will begin with Mass at St. William with a short procession to St. Teresa of Avila Church, Cincinnati.

As part of the pilgrimage, the perpetual pilgrims will walk between each location listed. For the information on times, addresses, and more go to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's website.



**With praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God,**  
**the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington**  
**requests the honor of your presence**  
**at**  
**the Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate of**  
**Joshua David Heskamp**  
 +++  
**through the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**and the imposition of hands by the**  
**Most Reverend John C. Iffert**  
**Bishop of Covington**  
  
**on Saturday, May 18, 2024**  
**at 10 o'clock in the morning**  
  
**Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption**  
**1130 Madison Avenue,**  
**Covington, Kentucky**

## New members welcome — Serra Club for Vocations

**Staff report**

At its annual new members luncheon, April 23, Jeff Jehn, president, and Mark Guilfoyle, secretary, Serra Club for Vocations of Northern Kentucky, welcomed potential new members and keynote speaker, Father Rob Jack. Father Jack is the host of Sacred Heart Radio's local afternoon show Driving Home the Faith.

The Serra Club for Vocations has as its mission to promote and support vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In the Diocese of Covington, Serrans fulfill this mission through prayer and by hosting dinners, cookouts

and picnics for priests, seminarians and women religious of the diocese. They also host the annual Server Awards, recognizing seventh-graders for the dedicated service at the altar.

Serrans meet twice monthly — on the first Tuesday of each month for a breakfast business meeting and on the third Tuesday of each month a business lunch meeting. A Catholic speaker is invited to the lunch meeting to share news of their ministry or their vocation story with the Serrans.

Mr. Guilfoyle mentioned that the fees charged to be Serran is the \$200 annual dues, 50 percent discounts are offered to first-year members, spouses of members and members under 35 years of age. Dues are waived for priests, sisters, brothers and deacons.

"We have fun," said Mr. Guilfoyle to the potential new members. "We enjoy one another's company, we enjoy growing in faith with one another, we enjoy hearing from others ... We hope you will join us."

*For information on the Serra Club for Vocations of Northern Kentucky visit [serranuky.org](http://serranuky.org).*



(above, left) Father Rob Jack, host of Sacred Heart Radio's "Driving Home the Faith" afternoon show, was the guest speaker at the Serra Club for Vocations of Northern Kentucky's new member luncheon, April 23.

(above, right) Jeff Jehn, president, Serra Club, welcomes Serrans and potential new members.



### Bishop's Schedule

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>May 4</b><br/>Diocese of Covington Pastoral Council meeting, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>May 5</b><br/>First Communion Mass followed by May Crowning, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>May 6</b><br/>Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>May 7</b><br/>Priest Formation Day, St. Joseph Heights, Park Hills, 10 a.m.</p> <p>Sacrament of Confirmation, St. John Parish, Carrollton, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>May 8</b><br/>Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 7 p.m.</p> | <p><b>May 9</b><br/>Directors meeting, 9:30 a.m.<br/>Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>May 10</b><br/>St. Timothy School Mass/May Crowning, St. Timothy Parish, Union, 8 a.m.</p> <p>Thomas More University Baccalaureate Mass, Mary Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Crestview Hills, 2 p.m.</p> <p><b>May 11</b><br/>Thomas More University commencement, Thomas More Stadium, 9:30 a.m.<br/>Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 4:30 p.m.</p> |
|---|---|

# 'Tortured Poet' Taylor Swift offers troubled tales of our time

When Taylor Swift sings, people pay attention. Over the past two decades, her words have become the backdrop of movies, life milestones, wedding dances and long car rides. Love her or hate her, the pop star's cultural influence is undeniable. Swift grapples with the weight of her words in her latest offering "The Tortured Poets



GUEST

Laretta Brown

Department," a 31-track double album that explores heartbreak, fame and longing.

The album is written in a confessional style with blunt lyrics that are also gritty and insightful.

Disappointingly for those who preferred Swift's cleaner tracks from her teens and 20s, the new release has the most explicit tracks of any of her albums and is definitely intended for more mature audiences.

The songs contain many direct and indirect references to sex and drugs.

While listeners should approach her latest offering with caution and discernment, Swift's songs explore interesting cultural themes with scathing criticisms and more lighthearted self-examination.

In her song "Who's Afraid of Little Old Me?" Swift appears to playfully mock the critics baffled by her success.

"I'm always drunk on my own tears, isn't that what they all said / That I'll sue you if you step on my lawn / That I'm fearsome and I'm wretched and I'm wrong / Putting narcotics into all of my songs / And that's why you're still singing along."

The point is that people are still singing along — to the tune of \$1 billion in revenue for her Eras Tour, the highest grossing concert tour ever. "Poets" became the most-streamed album of 2024 on Spotify within a week.

What keeps people singing along? Swift's imagery and knack of capturing complex sentiments in pithy turns of phrase continue to resonate, whether the listener is searching for insight into Swift's past relationships or whether it captures a moment or romance in their own lives.

An ancient Greek philosopher, a doomed prophetess and references to classic children's literature are all tools of her craft in "Poets" as she processes the past with wit and self-awareness.

"You know how to ball / I know Aristotle," Swift sings in "So High School," a song that is likely both about high school nostalgia and her new romance with Kansas City Chiefs' tight end Travis Kelce.

Can Taylor Swift name Aristotle's four causes from memory? The depth of the pop star's familiarity with the ancient philosopher is unknown, but at the very least, for many, her work seems to bring about the catharsis he talked about in his "Poetics," a purging or purifying of emotions highlighted in his writing on tragedy.

"I cry a lot / but I am so productive / it's an art" is a line that many on social media embraced from her eerily upbeat "I Can Do It With a Broken Heart" about moving forward with hidden wounds, likely inspired by her tour following the 2023 ending of her six-year relationship with British actor Joe Alwyn.

"Poets" features more religious imagery than her past albums. Some of the references may be troubling to many Catholics, particularly in "Guilty as Sin?" where she sings about hidden longings and guilt over sexual fantasies.

"What if I roll the stone away / They're gonna crucify me anyway / What if the way you hold me / Is actually what's holy?"

Her blending of religious imagery with sexual references is reminiscent of "False God" from her 2019 "Lover" album. However, she also appears to be referencing the harsh judgment she gets from the public regardless of her actions.

This theme is apparent throughout the album, including in the song "But Daddy I Love Him," where Swift's ire

is very particularly aimed at hypocritical Christians who act not out of love, but from hatred towards others.

"Sarahs and Hannahs in their Sunday best / Clutching their pearls, sighing 'What a mess' / I just learned these people try and save you / ... cause they hate you."

She asks God to "save the most judgmental creeps," saying that she doesn't need the prayers of those "sanctimoniously performing soliloquies" about her.

Swift also appears to express vulnerability and self-doubt in her references to religion. In the somewhat tongue-in-cheek "I Can Fix Him (No Really, I Can)," she sings "They shake their heads sayin', 'God, help her' / When I tell 'em he's my man / But your good Lord doesn't need to lift a finger / I can fix him, no, really I can / And only I can."

But by the end of the song, she acknowledges "Woah, maybe I can't."

In "The Black Dog" depicting a struggle to get over a former lover, she sings about hiring "a priest to come and exorcise my demons."

A biblical reference is featured in "The Prophecy," where she sings of failures in love and wanting "someone who wants my company," lamenting, "And it was written / I got cursed like Eve got bitten / Oh, was it punishment?"

As Eve was metaphorically "bitten" by the consequences of her own action of biting into the forbidden fruit, Swift seems to be singing of her fears that she is the reason why she hasn't found her soulmate: "I'm so afraid I sealed my fate / No sign of soulmates."

Swift actually recognizes how valuable it would be to have faith here, praising the woman of faith and acknowledging her superiority. But she confesses her impatience and paints her search for answers as becoming increasingly unmoored.

"And I look unstable / Gathered with a coven 'round a sorceress' table / A greater woman has faith / But even statues crumble if they're made to wait."

This is one of several references to witchcraft in the album, which seem to be tied more to her embrace of

(Continued on page 6)

## Let's cut graduates a break

Last year, my oldest son graduated high school with flying colors. He received a great college scholarship and had a lot to be proud of. So, you'd think he wouldn't look utterly fatigued each time an aunt, uncle, hairdresser,

Sunday School teacher, the guy at the deli, our priest, the trashman — literally everyone — asked him: "What's next in your life?"

I chalked up my first-born's conversational reticence to the fact that he's quiet by nature, which is why I'm finding it curious that the same exact phenomenon is now happening with my second son who's a total extrovert. This graduate is following in his big brother's foot-

steps. He has a great GPA and a few college scholarships lined up in the fall, and yet he grimaces at the "what's next?" question, too.

"I just get sick of it," he explained when the subject came up at the dinner table the other night. He had a few friends over and they chimed in as well.

"It's nerve-racking," one of the girls said, "I mean, I think I know what I'm doing after graduation, but that

might change. Also, I don't want to go to college and lots of people find that disappointing."

My oldest son who was home for the weekend added his voice to the mix: "All this focus on what we plan to do next gets old. I know everyone means well — they're genuinely curious and just want to show they care. But yeah, it gets old."

The teens and my husband launched into a meaningful conversation about how as Christians we should find our true value in who we are — children of God — not in what we do, or how much (or how little) we accomplish. This dinnertime chat brought St. John Paul II's wisdom to mind, specifically from times when he was addressing teens at World Youth Day.

"Only in Christ can [we] fully understand [our] dignity as persons created and loved by God," he said at the 1993 gathering.

"We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son," he reminded young people in 2002.

I'd wager that this late, great pope would agree that we are not the sum of our successes either, but again, "we are the sum of the Father's love for us."

I'm certain my teens and their friends aren't the only ones struggling with this issue of being questioned ad nauseam about their future plans by well-meaning adults (who are not being rude or immoral in any way). I've heard the subject discussed among fellow parents and a

little on social media. But, in general, I don't think there's enough awareness of how we should be more sensitive to our graduates' emotional needs.

So, how's a genuinely curious, well-intended relative supposed to connect with that awesome grad in his or her life?

The teens at my dinner table made the following suggestions:

"Just say, 'It's great to see you!'" Or, "You look good!" Or, "How are you today?"

"Focus on the here and now," seemed to be the consensus, "Just say, 'congratulations!' And don't forget to give us money!"

There was a lot of laughter and even a few quirky ideas: "Ask grads about their favorite sugar cereal or video games for a change!"

Personally, my biggest takeaway is that even a highly accomplished graduate with great potential often feels unintended pressure by receiving such a high volume of questions about his future.

So, seize the opportunity to be an awesome aunt or a fun uncle and ask about something else instead. Say a prayer for the graduate and throw him some cash if you're able. Go ahead and ask the grad's mom about his plans if you're dying to know. If she's anything like me, she'll be more than happy to fill you in.

*Sarah Robsdottir is a Catholic convert and homeschooling mom to seven sons. Her column has been provided by OSV News.*



VIEWPOINT

Sarah Robsdottir

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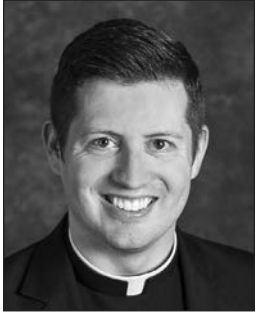
## To be found

The readings for the sixth Sunday of Easter — Cycle B — are: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4:7-10 and John 15:9-17.

On this sixth Sunday of Easter we hear, in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus say: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you...” Lately, my prayer has been focused much on this concept, given to us in so many different ways throughout sacred Scriptures.

When I read this particular line my mind goes to

### GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

something I have been preaching on a lot lately. As Christians, we are not called to seek God. Now, don't stop reading because you think I've gone crazy. Christians aren't supposed to seek God, they are supposed to allow themselves to be found by God.

The Gospel reminds us that our God is very close and intimate and personal, not some hidden deity who got things started and headed off somewhere. Jesus, who is the

God-man, put on human flesh and became one of us in all things except sin.

The analogy that I like to use is the game of hide-and-seek played with young children. Little children are really bad at hide-and-seek. This is because there is an innate desire within them (the human person) to be found. As an adult calls out their name, “wondering” where they might be, the child giggles, maybe with feet sticking out from under a blanket or from behind the drapes. Most of the time the adult doesn't even get to “find” the child because they jump out in laughter. They want to be found. Or if by chance they can stay hidden, they are greeted by the loving adult with “I found you!” And there is joy!

Sadly, having made a mistake or a bad choice, a child may also hide — out of sight or even behind their hands. It's not that the innate desire to be found is gone, but that shame has turned them away from, blocked them from the one that loves them. The adult knows of the mistake and goes looking for the child. To be found, the child only needs to turn around or open their hands.

In our lives as adults, we tend to follow the example of the shameful child, allowing past bad choices to dictate our relationship with the God who IS love — we hide from him. We hide, even when he is right in front of us waiting to embrace us.

How many times have I heard: “Father, you don't know what I've done. God could never forgive me.” WRONG!

God wants to, longs to forgive you, but instead we have hidden ourselves from him. My friends, Jesus is the one who has chosen us. We don't have to search or seek him out, we just have to let ourselves be found.

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

## April showers

Now I am getting close to the age that they were when they died. Memories of both Mom and Dad remind me that they laid the foundations of my values, gifts, hopes and actions. Easter is a good time to be light-hearted. Alleluia!

### April Showers

By Louis Silvers, B.G. Desylva, c.1920

Life is not a highway strewn with flowers  
Still it holds a goodly share of bliss  
When the sun gives way to April showers  
Here's the point you should never miss  
Though April showers may come your way  
They bring the flowers that bloom in May  
So if it's raining, have no regrets  
Because, it isn't raining rain, you know  
It's raining violets  
And when you see clouds upon the hill  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils  
So keep on looking for a bluebird, and listening for his song  
Whenever April showers come along  
And when you see clouds upon the hills  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils  
So keep on looking for a bluebird, and listening for his song  
Whenever April showers come along.  
Benedictine Sister Dorothy Schuette is a professed member of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky

I was five years old when my father returned home from The War. At that time Mom, my sister and I lived with Granny, my aunt and her daughter in downtown Covington.

### VIEWPOINT



Sister Dorothy Schuette, O.S.B.

On the day I want to tell you about, Dad was working outside, the rest of us inside. It started to rain and Dad wanted to come in. He ran to the side door and found the screen door locked. He yelled to open it.

Mom came to the door, but before she started to open it she sang the currently popular tune “April Showers” to Dad while he stood there getting wetter by the moment. Then she

dry off. He finally started laughing with her and then we joined in.

I fondly remember this playful incident every year when it rains in April. It was a privileged moment of witnessing their light-hearted love for each other. As our family life matured their relationship seemed to grow more serious. At least that is how I remember it, as a self-absorbed youth.

## Living with a naked soul

When I was participating in the three-month long orientation program to be a Maryknoll missionary, one of the requirements was to acquire a spiritual director, and we were given a list of names and bios from which to

choose. After several sessions together, my new SD was aware that I had served in West Africa as a Catholic Relief Services volunteer and that I was very focused on returning to mission work in Africa as a personal goal. She asked me what it was about my experience in The Gambia that now draws me back?

Other than the obvious responses of “serving God” or “working to further God's kingdom”

(these, after all, can be done anywhere one is living), I was unable to articulate the elements of transformation that I had experienced the first time that I lived and worked in Africa.

Although I have only been living in Kenya for a few months, and I have not yet entered my actual work assignment, I have been reminded of those beautiful elements of personal transformation that occur: I recently described this to my sister as “having a naked soul.”

Living within one's own culture (whether good or bad), we unconsciously experience the comfort of the familiar, much like a swimming fish is unaware of the

medium which supports it. At home, the proximity of family members and friends, adds a shielding layer of predictability to our daily life.

Entry into and daily living within a new culture, especially in a country of extreme poverty, strips one of the layers which cushion small shocks and aggressions, and exposes one to feel instantly and deeply, small strains, uncertainties and anxieties.

Now, I realize that this does not sound like something to be desired; however, what accompanies the negative aspects of the removal of one's protective layers, is an unencumbered awareness of God's graces, blessings and presence in one's life; a conduit that opens and thrills at the sound of a Scripture reading, at the words of the Consecration.

Recently at the Mass for Ash Wednesday, the words “For dust you are and to dust you shall return” rippled through my naked soul, prompting a kaleidoscopic flash of spiritual understanding. What is of any importance in our lives other than serving God's will?

I am inspired by this quote from Father Walter J. Ciszek in his book, “He Leadeth Me,” “Across the threshold I had been afraid to cross, things suddenly seemed so very simple. There was but a single vision, God, who was all in all; there was but one will that directed all things, God's will. I had only to see it, to discern it in every circumstance in which I found myself and to let myself be ruled by it.”

Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Maryknoll Lay Missioners. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. For a photo see page 18.

### GUEST



Theresa Glaser

## Immaculate Heart of Mary mission trip looks to help students grow closer with God

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, is hosting a youth and young adult mission trip to Pikeville, Ky. According to its website, the mission trip is “a chance to touch lives and help those in need while growing in your relationship with God.”

“For five days, youths and adult volunteers will be working on projects around the Pikeville area to help improve the lives of those in need. In addition, there will be daily opportunities for fellowship and spiritual reflection, including Mass and adoration.”

Angie Poat, diocesan Youth Minister, says that the trip

offers a chance for personal and spiritual growth for those who attend. “They’ll experience first-hand that more than half of Kentucky children live below the poverty line, and that they don’t have to go far from home to make a difference.”

The work being completed by the volunteers will be home repairs and making sure everything is in accordance with building codes. Each group will have a site supervisor, someone skilled in the area with which they will be working. The students at each site will be, “entrusted and trained on how to approach home repairs ... and be left to do the work by the site supervisor.” Mrs. Poat continued to say that the more experienced the students become

the more input they will be asked to give, partaking in what she called strategy meetings. The students will be able to think through the home repair from solution strategizing to implementation and completion.

The mission trip is open to incoming eight graders through college freshman, adults are also able to attend as site supervisors. The trip is July 10-14, costing \$200 with a \$50 registration fee. The cost includes hotel, transportation, food and drinks, fellowship activities and a t-shirt. There are 15 spots left. To register, e-mail Amy Malventano, amalventano@ihm-ky.org.

## ‘Tortured Poet’

(Continued from page 4)

witch hunt imagery than an actual sympathy for the occult. She began using such imagery in her 2017 “Reputation” album after she faced intense harassment on social media following a feud with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian over his inclusion of explicit lyrics about her in his song “Famous” without her permission.

“The Prophecy” is also just one among many songs in the album that show a deep yearning for committed love in marriage.

In the song “lomi” — an acronym that typically stands for “love of my life,” but in the song ultimately means “loss of my life” — Swift remembers “talking rings and talking cradles” with a former love, wishing she could forget “how we almost had it all.” In the titular track “The Tortured Poets Department,” Swift sings about how “At dinner, you take my ring off my middle finger / And put it on the one people put wedding rings on / And that’s the closest I’ve come to my heart exploding.”

In “So Long, London,” she sings, “You swore that you loved me but where were the clues? / I died on the altar waiting for the proof” in an apparent reference to hoping for a marriage that never happened.

As Swift continues to wrestle with her past, the song “Clara Bow” turns her gaze to questioning society’s idols in a critique of the entertainment industry that also prompts reflection on the culture’s dangerous tendency to deify performers.

An aspiring artist is told “You look like Clara Bow / in this light” in a reference to the silent film star who was the first “it” girl after she starred in the 1927 silent film “It.” Bow was a flapper icon in the Roaring Twenties and her success continued through 1933, but she left Hollywood to start a family and suffered from severe mental health issues which she struggled with the rest of her life, attempting suicide and spending some time in an asylum.

Bow was snubbed by the Hollywood in crowd and deemed lower class with her Brooklyn accent, despite being wildly successful with audiences. “All the time the flapper is laughing and dancing, there’s a feeling of tragedy underneath,” Bow once said. “She’s unhappy and disillusioned, and that’s what people sense.”

The star in Swift’s song is told, “You’re the new god we’re worshipping / Promise to be ... dazzling.” The weight of that expectation becomes apparent as Swift sings, “Only when your girlish glow / Flickers just so / Do they let you know / It’s hell on earth to be heavenly.”

Finally, the rising star is told she looks like Taylor Swift, but “you’ve got edge she never did.”

Swift’s self-exploration comes full circle in “The Manuscript,” a song where she reflects on the story of a past love.

“And the years passed / Like scenes of a show / The Professor said to write what you know / Lookin’ backwards / Might be the only way to move forward.”

After all of these years, Swift continues to write what

she knows of heartbreak, life in the public eye and facing her darkest fears and deepest longings. The singer who once swore to be “overdramatic and true” fulfills that pledge in her confessional album, poking fun at herself along the way.

Amid her biting critiques and purging of past wounds, Swift sees the painting of these tragedies as part of her journey forward.

She said of the album that “there is nothing to avenge, no scores to settle once wounds have healed. And upon further reflection, a good number of them turned out to be self-inflicted. This writer is of the firm belief that our tears become holy in the form of ink on a page. Once we have spoken our saddest story, we can be free of it.”

While these “saddest stories” show dark moments of disillusionment with the false gods of fame and men with “impressionistic paintings of heaven” that “turned out to be fakes,” they also illustrate a recognition of the value of faith and lasting love — even if that value is mostly apparent through the suffering their absence causes.

Lauretta Brown is culture editor for OSV News.

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covidio.org/messenger](http://covidio.org/messenger).



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# Catholic Schools in Action



## Catholic Schools in Action



(above left) High school students who take business classes can join the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Club at St. Patrick School, Maysville, which promotes leadership, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. The club takes field trips and participates in competitions associated with business fields such as agribusiness, finance, computer science and human relations. (above right) Elementary students participate in Lego Club at St. Patrick School, Maysville, an activity where students can learn the principles of science and logic, while at the same time stimulating their creativity and artistic talent.



(below) St. Timothy School, Union, had its first annual Student Achievement Showcase. Students presented their leadership binders, which included their wildly important goals, leadership skills, academic achievements and personal celebrations with their families.



(above left) Students from St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, held a diaper drive to collect diapers for families in need. Student Council members delivered the donations to CareNet and to Rose Garden Home Mission. (above right) St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, junior high students are enjoying their Culinary Arts elective. They have created pizzas, pretzels, yogurt parfaits and many more yummy treats.



Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, third grade students pose with some of the many items that were collected during their "40 Days of Giving" service project.

(above) During Lent, the eighth-grade students at St. Timothy School, Union, presented the "Eye Witness Stations of the Cross" in preparation for Easter.

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

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

**The prayer intention for May, as recommended by Pope Francis**, is for the formation of men and women religious, and seminarians so that they may grow in their own vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, that leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

**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.

**Deacon Ministry information meeting** May 4, 9 a.m.–noon, Bishop Howard Memorial Hall, Covington. Men interested in discerning a call to Diaconal Ministry in the Diocese of Covington are invited attend an information session with the directors of the Deacon Formation Program. Wives are encouraged to attend. Reservations are requested. Contact: Deacon Brian Cox, BCox@covdio.org, or Msgr. Gerald Reinersman, GReinersman@covdio.org, (859) 392-1500.

Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, Ft. Mitchell, Foster Care/Adoption free **Open House**, May 5, 1:30–3:30 p.m. Learn more about the need for foster and adoptive parents, mentors and respite providers. There are many ways to support children. Visit DCCHCenter.org or call (859) 331-2040 but no registration is required.

It is time for Spring cleaning! **The Sisters of Notre Dame are in need of items for their 102nd annual 4th of July festival**. We are looking for services, sports items, jewelry, gift certificates, antiques, anything you can think of. Re-gift to the sisters. If you have items to donate call Margie at (859) 392-8229 or e-mail mschnelle@sndusa.org. Item drop offs during the day at 1601 Dixie Hwy, Park Hills or arrange a pickup.

**Graduating seniors connect here** — the Newman Connection connects graduating seniors to the Catholic campus ministry at their chosen college before they get to campus. To connect, students or parents simply visit <https://signupnc.newmanministry.com/> and fill out the form.

**The Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community of NKY sponsors a monthly Third Tuesday prayer gathering** 7-8:45 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament's Parish Center, Ft. Mitchell. Join us May 21 for praise & worship music, teaching, witness and healing prayers. Call Carol at (859) 341-5932.

**St. Mary's Ladies Society's Indoor Yard and Bake Sale** will be held June 1, 8 a.m.–2 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, Memorial Hall. Donations of household items can be dropped off May 30 and May 31, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. No clothes or TV's. Call (859) 380-1727 for more information.

**"An Evening of Catholic Culture" an art show** featuring the work of some of our region's most talented Catholic artists. Cocktails, live music, and dinner-by-the-bite will be provided. Keynote speaker is Father James Sullivan, O.P. and Holly Schapker is the first-ever Fra Angelico Award honoree. Cincinnati Club, Cincinnati, June 13, 6 p.m. Complimentary parking at Garfield Garage, 13 W 9th St. Register online at [angelicoproject.org](http://angelicoproject.org).

**Thomas More Summer Theatre Workshop**, July 8-19, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. This two-week long workshop is for students (grades 10-12) to explore and enhance their performing arts skills in a fun and supportive environment. The workshop will provide a unique blend of

acting, voice, movement, and stagecraft workshops. Participants have the chance to collaborate with their peers, build confidence, and create lasting memories. To register, visit <https://form.jotform.com/240565535346055>.

**Parents of Addicted Loved Ones, (PAL)** is a support group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:30–8 p.m. at Catholic Charities, Latonia. It provides continuing education and support, at no charge, for parents with a son, daughter or spouse suffering from addiction to alcohol or drugs. No cost. Just come — 3629 Church Street, Latonia. For more information contact Client Care at (859) 581-8974.

Donate a bike —Change a Life! **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington started a new ministry, Pickett's Corner in 2023**. The new ministry distributes and repairs bicycles to those in need in the area. Most people receiving a bike use it for transportation to work, store or doctor appointments. Adult-size bikes need. E-mail [pickettscorner23@gmail.com](mailto:pickettscorner23@gmail.com) if you have a bike to donate. The volunteer team will pick it up.

**Bishop Brossart High School Theatre Summer Camp for students** in grades K-9, a one-week camp to learn about all aspects of theatre and put on a full production musical, "The Lion King." Call the school for information.



*Community spring cleaning*

On April 20, over 40 parishioners and school families joined forces for the annual "spring spruce up" on the grounds of St. Henry Catholic Parish. Volunteers spread two truckloads of mulch, pruned/trimmed bushes and picked up trash on the campus grounds.



**Celebrating administrative professionals**

Students at Prince of Peace School, Covington, celebrated school secretary Miss Karen Middendorf for Administrative Professionals Day, April 24.



(above) Mustard Seed Communities has multiple properties around the island of Jamaica. Pictured here is Jacob's Ladder with 165 residents, all of whom have a physical or developmental disability. The blue building is the chapel, the gray building is the kitchen and administrative office.  
(right) Bishop Iffert with a resident of Jacob's Ladder.



## Bishop Iffert joins mission leaders from TMU, St. Elizabeth and Curia on a 'come and see' visit to Mustard Seed Communities Jamaica

Laura Keener  
Editor

Several weeks ago, global news networks shared a dramatic story coming out of Haiti. "Fifty-nine Haitian children with disabilities and 13 caregivers were evacuated by boat to Jamaica ... fleeing the ongoing gang conflict that has severely disrupted essential services in their home country. The children are under the care of the nonprofit organization Haiti Children, which coordinated the trip with Mustard Seed Communities (MSC) Jamaica," reported NBC News, March 22.

For many, this was another among many of tragic headlines filling the morning and evening news. But for some men in the Diocese of Covington, behind the headline they could see the hand of God's Divine Providence.

For over 15 years, teams of local men, many parishioners of Catholic parishes in Northern Kentucky, have made mission trips to Jamaica. These men, members of Northern Kentucky Men Missionaries, are helping Msgr. Gregory Ramkissoon build and sustain a loving community of care for Jamaica's most vulnerable — poor and abandoned children and adults with moderate to severe physical or developmental disabilities.

NKY Men Missionaries have built over 40 homes. Each home houses 16 residents. A community is made up of several homes. There are seven communities that make up MSC Jamaica's continuum of care.

For a while now, one community has sat empty, not because there are no residents to fill it, but because there are no caregivers to staff it.

"Now we know why we didn't have anybody living in this new community, because we were able to rescue 59 children along with their caregivers (from Haiti) and move them into this new community. It was remarkable to know that you are involved in life saving work," said Guy Linnemann, parishioner, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Cincinnati and co-leader of Northern Kentucky Men Missionaries.

Invited by Jim Dressman, St. Paul parishioner and co-leader, NKY Men Missionaries, Bishop John Iffert, accompanied by Dr. Dave Johnson, vice president of mission, St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Dr. James Camp, professor and Sociology and Criminal Justice chair for Thomas More University, made a trip to Mustard Seed Communities Jamaica. The trip was arranged by Jim Hess, diocesan director, Stewardship and Mission Services, who also accompanied the group.

"Knowing that there were such deep connections here with Northern Kentucky, I just thought it was a good idea for me to get to know the ministry and to see what was happening there," said Bishop Iffert.

Mustard Seed Communities is a Catholic non-profit dedicated to serving the most vulnerable populations. It was founded in 1978 by Msgr. Gregory in the outskirts of Kingston, Jamaica, as a haven for children with disabilities who had been abandoned. Today, MSC serves over 600 vulnerable children and adults in Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Malawi, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe.

In Jamaica, MSC has seven residential communities. These residential programs address a spectrum of challenges, including schizophrenia, autism, hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy. They also offer a program for teen moms and their babies and operate schools for children. Striving for self-sufficiency, they employ agricultural and nutritional education programs at all its facilities. MSC regularly host mission trips. A typical mission group from NKY would include eight to 20 men and a Catholic priest.

"They're doing wonderful things," said Bishop Iffert. And while the Catholic population in Kingston area is only about 2 percent, "it's a very Catholic spiritual place. Their Catholic faith and belief in Christ are right at the center of everything they do."

MSC Jamaica is inspired by two phrases that Msgr. Gregory has prominently inscribed on the walls of the buildings, including the chapels — "He is Here" and "Thank You Lord." "That's at the center of everything they do," said Bishop Iffert.

Dr. Camp is very familiar with mission trips. He routinely leads Thomas More University students on immersion experiences to the U.S. southern border. Dr. Camp considers these types of mission or humanitarian trips as a form evangelization.

"Through studying about migration patterns or how international policies create inequalities, especially in the developing world, when they become more sensitive to that then they become more sensitive to the plight of those who are less fortunate than us," said Dr. Camp. "In many ways, that kind of increase sensitivity calls us to love our neighbor, especially those that we don't know."

Dr. Camp came home from the trip thinking of the



(above) A view of the interior dorm room of one of the residences at Jacob's Ladder. The buildings are designed to maximize space, with community facilities located in the center and four dorm rooms occupying the surrounding quadrants.

many opportunities available to students at TMU, the educational possibilities for TMU and the missionary development of the entire Diocese of Covington.

"I'm a believer in Divine Providence," Dr. Camp said. "I was so thankful to be able to spend time with the individual that I did. I hope we can harness that energy and move on in terms of doing something meaningful in the Diocese ... You've got to dream it first."

Dr. Johnson was equally grateful to have met the administrators, caregivers and residents of MSC Jamaica. One resident in particular, a non-verbal woman with profound disabilities, was clearly experiencing anxiety at their first meeting. Not knowing what to do, he lowered himself to her level, placed his hand on her arm and looked her in the eyes. Her body physically relaxed.

"That interaction was profoundly beautiful and moving," said Dr. Camp. "You're reminded of the power of touch. You are reminded of the power of just looking someone else in the eyes and giving them all of your attention and then giving you back that attention, even just for a few minutes, it was just beautiful" he said.

Dr. Camp was also impressed by the impact the men from Northern Kentucky have had at MSC Jamaica. "The number of facilities that have been built by parishioners of our Catholic parishes, it's unbelievable the footprints and the impact that they've had. It was just aweing," he said. "It's where faith intersects social commitments."



Hess photos

(top left) Jim Hess with a resident of Jacob's Ladder.

(top center) Bishop Iffert with a resident of Jacob's Ladder.

(top right, from right) Dr. Dave Johnson, vice president of mission, St. Elizabeth Healthcare; Jim Hess, director, diocesan Stewardship and Mission Services; Bishop John Iffert; Dr. James Camp, Thomas More University and Father Baiju, pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood. The group visited a newly rebuilt house, which will house 16 residents.

(above left, from left) Msgr. Gregory Ramkissoon, founder of Mustard Seed Communities; Bishop John Iffert; Colleen O'Hara, associate director of volunteer engagement, Mustard Seed Communities; Father Baiju, pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood; Archbishop Kenneth Richards of Kingston; Thalia Lyn, board member, Mustard Seed Communities enjoy dinner at the M-10 Bar and Grill.

(middle right) The NKY contingency with Father Garvin Augustine, executive director, Mustard Seed Communities, after the celebration of Mass.

(above right) Outside Holy Trinity Cathedral in the Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica. (from left) Dr. Dave Johnson, vice president of mission, St. Elizabeth Healthcare; Jim Hess, diocesan director, Stewardship and Mission Services; Jay Schilling, Guy Linnemann, Mark Grahe, Colleen O'Hara, associate director of volunteer engagement, Mustard Seed Communities; Bishop Iffert and Father Baiju, pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood.

# 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 Paoello.

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



# Spring Home Improvement



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## Parish Missionary Disciples training

(Continued from page 11)

also appreciated the opportunity to meet parishioners from other parishes and to share struggles and successes.

“One of the biggest issues I think we face as a Diocese is kind of this atomization of parishes where they are totally separate from other parishes,” said Mr. Johnson.

Recognizing that there are parishes that are doing some ministries very well and others that are struggling, Mr. Johnson saw the training as a beginning for parishes to “cross-contaminate” ministries and to help each other: “We need to come together to do this mission together,” he said.

When thinking about evangelization and Jesus’ Great Commission for all Christians to “go and make disciples of all nations,” Mr. Johnson’s heart and mind turns to the example of the martyrs. “To have given their lives, their whole self, for the mission of Christ is a wakeup call to us to realize that the saints didn’t give their lives just for us to sit around and keep the faith for ourselves. That would be offensive, really, when you think about it,” he said.

The bond between the participants of this first group was evident. Deacon Jim Fortner, diocesan chief operating officer and leader of the diocese’s With One Heart initiative, has agreed to gather the group together again in August to reconnect and share what each has been able to accomplish

or are struggling with at their parish.

Looking ahead, as parishioners begin to be invited to participate in cohort 2 of PMD training in 2025, both Ms. Wells and Mr. Johnson encourage others to be open to the invitation and take that leap of faith.

“No matter how unequipped you feel like you are, God is calling you to be on mission and to be an evangelist,” said Mr. Johnson.

“It’s free! It’s just given to you as a gift,” said Ms. Wells noting that generous donors are paying for all the data collection and training being presented by the Catholic Leadership Institute.

“I would really suggest to stick it out, even if you’re a little scared at the beginning and feel like, ‘Oh, I can’t do this.’ Because that’s the whole point — we can’t do it. But Jesus can. And so, we’re just giving him the space to do things with us if we just commit,” Ms. Wells said.

Parish Missionary Disciples is one of three training programs that make up the leadership development emphasis of the diocese’s With One Heart initiative.

Parish Missionary Disciples is leadership and evangelization training for parishioners who are actively involved in ministry at their parish. The other two leadership development programs are Good Leaders, Good Shepherds, which is for priests

and Tending the Talents, which is for parish and Curia staff. Cohort one of Good Leaders, Good Shepherds began in the Fall of 2023 and will conclude this June. And, pastors are now inviting parish staff and regular volunteers to participate in Tending the Talents, which will begin in August.

These programs were developed and are implemented by leadership consultants from the Catholic Leadership Institute. A second group for each program will be offered again in 2025.

Looking at the timeline announced in the Sept. 22 edition of the *Messenger*, the With One Heart initiative is a little ahead of schedule. The first group of Parish Missionary Disciples training was slated to begin in Fall 2024. Instead, the days-long, six-session training began in February and was completed April 2024.



(above left) Deacon Peter Freeman, St. Philip Parish, Melbourne and Steve Kopyay, diocesan Human Resources consultant, engage in a discussion during a breakout session. (above right, from left) Katelyn Cottingham, parishioner, St. Cecelia Parish, Independence, Sarah Wells and Anna Wells, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, practice praying with and over one another.

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# Fear is the great nemesis of faith, pope says at general audience

Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

The greatest enemy of faith is fear, Pope Francis said at his weekly general audience.

That is why faith is the first gift “that must be welcomed and asked for daily, so that it may be renewed in us. It is seemingly a small gift, yet it is the essential one,” he said May 1 in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

Continuing a series of audience talks about vices and virtues, the pope reflected on the virtue of faith, reiterating the difference between “cardinal” virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance and the “theological” or New Testament virtues of faith, hope and charity.

The three theological virtues, he said, “can be lived only thanks to the gift of God.”

“Without them, we could be prudent, just, strong and temperate, but we would not have eyes that see even in the dark, we would not have a heart that loves even when it is not loved, we would not have a hope that dares against all hope,” he said.

Faith is the act by which a person freely commits him- or herself to God, the pope said.

Pope Francis recounted the story of the disciples crossing the lake in a boat with Jesus, but beginning to panic when the boat started to fill up with water in a storm. They woke Jesus who had been sleeping and were upset he seemed not to care they were in danger.

Jesus rebukes them, saying, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?”

Pope Francis said, “Here, then, is the great enemy of faith: it is not intelligence, it is not reason, as, alas, some continue obsessively to repeat.” The enemy is “simply fear.”

“We who are believers also often realize that we have only a short supply” of faith, he said.

“But it is the happiest gift, the only virtue we are permitted to envy,” the pope said, “because those who have faith are inhabited by a force that is not only human; indeed, faith ‘triggers’ grace in us and opens the mind to the mystery of God.”



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis looks at a jersey from the University of Kentucky’s men’s basketball team during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican May 1, 2024.

“Faith is the virtue that makes the Christian. Because to be Christians is not first and foremost about accepting a culture with the values that accompany it, but welcoming and cherishing a bond” between God and oneself, he said.

After his main talk, the pope noted that for the church May 1 is the feast of St. Joseph the worker. It is a major hol-

iday in many countries, including Italy, as it marks Labor Day or International Workers’ Day.

The day also begins “the Marian month,” he said. “Therefore, to each of you I would like to re-propose the Holy Family of Nazareth as a model of domestic community: a community of life, work and love.”

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■ April bulletin: posted Sunday, April 7; due Tuesday, May 7.

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■ Sunday, May 19, 1–3:30 p.m., St. Edward School, cafeteria, Cynthiana

■ Tuesday, June 18, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, June 18, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, July 18, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, July 18, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, July 30, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, July 30, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Aug. 7, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Aug. 7, 6–8 :30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, Aug. 27, 6:30–9 p.m., St. Francis Xavier Parish, parish hall, Falmouth

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# Participating in Christ's perfect sacrifice

Father Luke Spannagel  
USCCB

As we continue through the Communion Rite, the long-anticipated moment has arrived. Finally, it is time for Holy Communion. This is the moment we have been preparing for throughout the whole Mass.

Whenever I think about the joy of Holy Communion, I remember very vividly the thrill of my First Communion. I think of the song we all learned and the wonderful party afterward. But I especially remember the moment of Communion. Although I was small at the time, in second grade, I remember feeling a special closeness to God that I never had felt before. I don't know if I grasped what Holy Communion meant on an intellectual or even theological level, but I certainly felt a true spiritual union with our Lord.

As Father Joseph McGloin teaches, "The word 'communion' is almost self-explanatory. Literally, it means 'union with.' It suggests a sharing, a mutual participation. Holy Communion, is, then, an intimate sharing in the life of Christ" (*How to Get More Out of the Mass*, p. 128).

That is exactly what takes place in Holy Communion. We receive the Precious Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ into our bodies, and he unites us with himself. Unlike regular food which becomes part of our bodies, the Eucharist unites our bodies to the Lord.

Father McGloin continues, "While the other sacraments bring us the grace of Christ, this one brings us the grace of Christ himself along with himself. Truly, a person with any faith in Christ would be foolish to neglect this great gift" (*How to Get More Out of the Mass*, p. 133).

Did you notice he said sacrifice? Hopefully, this word reminds us of one of the names for the Mass — the Holy Sacrifice. As we have journeyed through the Mass, we have noted that the Mass is a true sharing in the Last Supper and in the Cross of Jesus. In the Mass, we are invited to



participate in the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus.

Father Guy Oury tells us how sacrifice and Holy Communion fit together in the Mass. He says, "The Mass is a sacrifice but also a repast, or rather, a sacrificial repast. It would not have meaning, at least not the meaning given it by the Lord, were it not also Communion." He goes on to say, "The meal symbolizes the union between the God of the covenant and the people of God."

This becomes clearer if we look at meals and feasts in Jewish history. According to Father Oury, "In the [Traditional Jewish] meal God is present as a tablemate, invisible to be sure but still present. He lives with human beings, shares their common interests, and welcomes them as intimates. People are the invited of God ... At the time of Christ, the image of a feast was one of the most common to portray the kingdom that was to come. The Lord used it repeatedly in the parables. It stood for the

kingdom of heaven both in the terrestrial form that is the Church and in the ultimate and definitive form that is paradise. The Eucharist itself was instituted in the context of a sacred meal, that of Passover" (*The Mass*, pp. 105-6).

See how Holy Communion is so much more than just a meal? True, it is a Sacred Meal, Holy Thursday, the Last Supper, where we are guests of the Lord, who gives of his very self for our nourishment. But, this meal is also the sacrifice of the Cross, where our sins are overcome and conquered once and for all.

The meal is also an anticipation of the heavenly banquet, where we will celebrate with the Lord and the Communion of Saints forever. Finally, this special meal is also a means of unity among the faithful — the Body of Christ, the Church.

With all this meaning, the Eucharist is the greatest celebration of all time. Not only are we present at this wonderful celebration, but many of us are also invited to receive the Lord in the Eucharist.

In the weeks ahead, we will look more closely at receiving Communion properly, who can receive Communion, different forms of Holy Communion, and what to do when we aren't able to receive Our Lord.

## PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption Parish invites qualified individuals to apply for the position of Pastoral Associate. The Pastoral Associate fulfills a role integral to the life and effective functioning of the Parish and its ministries, partnering with the Rector of the Cathedral to provide overall leadership and direction for faith formation. Responsibilities will include assisting in the process and implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan; meeting and consulting with parish committees and teams; communicating and coordinating with parishioners, groups, and other parishes within the deanery; direct pastoral care of parishioners; adult faith formation; Order of Christian Initiation of Adults; children's religious education; and diocesan Safe Environment requirements. Preference will be given to candidates with prior experience, and with at least an undergraduate degree in pastoral ministry, religious education, theology, or a closely related field. Prospective candidates may send a cover letter and comprehensive resume, including compensation history and references with email contacts, to Very Reverend Ryan Maher, V.F. by email to [rmaher@covdio.org](mailto:rmaher@covdio.org), or by mail to 1101 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011.

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Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Maryknoll Lay Missioners. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. (See her column page 5). This is a photo she shared.

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a small adoration chapel within walking distance from where I am staying in Nairobi. It is open to the public from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. At the times when I have attended, there can be close to standing room only. The priest in charge is Father Jeffrey Inira, of "The Apostles of Jesus" congregation.

## Community comes together

(Continued from page 1)

their babies; a no-questions-asked food pantry where families may receive food every day the Mission's open; a free primary care clinic called the Rose Garden Center for Hope and Healing; and a free dental clinic," according to the Rose Garden Home Mission website.

It was not only a variety of agencies that were in attendance, but also a variety of students who gave up their night to help those in need. Students from Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, Newport Central Catholic, Newport, St. Henry District High School, Erlanger, and Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, were in attendance as part of a volunteer opportunity. Aiding in a variety of tasks from passing out diapers and blankets to some being translators for those who did not speak English.

Faye Roch, director of the diocesan Pro-Life Office, estimates there were upwards of 250 people from the community who were provided resources. This number is an increase from the previous year where it was estimated 200 people were in attendance. For those in attendance it was a night of camaraderie, fellowship and smiles as the community came together to help those in need.

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covdio.org/messenger](http://covdio.org/messenger).

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National/World

**Archbishop Blair retires, is succeeded by Archbishop Coyne**

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, who is automatically succeeded by Coadjutor Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne. Archbishop Blair is 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the pope. Archbishop Coyne was named coadjutor by the pope June 26. He had headed the statewide Burlington Diocese since his installation Jan. 29, 2015. Before that, he was an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis from 2011 to 2015. The resignation and the coadjutor's succession were publicized in Washington May 1 by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. At a welcome Mass Oct. 9, Archbishop Blair warmly welcomed Archbishop Coyne on behalf of the clergy, women religious and lay faithful of Connecticut's archdiocese. "Our welcome extends to all his family members and friends who are here for this joyful occasion, and we join them in praying for him and wishing him God's blessing as he makes his home with us in Connecticut," Archbishop Blair told a packed Cathedral of St. Joseph.

**Legislature successfully overrides governor's vetoes of 4 pro-life measures**

TOPEKA, Kan. — Kansas lawmakers voted to override Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly's vetoes on pro-life legislation, a victory hailed by Catholic and pro-life advocates that comes just two years after voters in Kansas rejected a push to remove abortion protections from their state constitution. Jeanne Gawdun, director of government relations at Kansans for Life, said in a April 29 statement that those measures include efforts to combat coerced abortions and human trafficking, tax credits for donations to pregnancy help centers and an increase to the adoption tax credit, bolstering anonymous abortion data reporting, and reauthorizing \$2 million in grant funding for pregnancy centers. "We had four life-affirming pieces of legislation that had been vetoed by the governor, and yesterday, with the help and support of our legislators, we were able to override the governor's vetoes," Lucrecia Nold, policy specialist for the Kansas Catholic Conference,

told OSV News April 30. Critics of the reporting measure called it invasive to ask women for their rationale for abortion — but the Catholic conference pointed out the reporting measure provides data on how to help women in difficult pregnancies while keeping their personal information safe and secure.

**Ukrainian archbishop meets with military officials on missing priests, detained civilians**

KYIV, Ukraine — The head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church recently met with Ukrainian military officials to discuss a range of issues, including Russia's detention of two Ukrainian Catholic priests whose fate remains unknown. Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk sat down with Dmytro Usov, secretary for Ukraine's headquarters on the treatment of prisoners of war; members of Usov's team; and Andriy Yusov, spokesman for Ukraine's military intelligence. Also on hand was Father Oleksa Petriv, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's external relations department. News of the meeting, which took place at the archbishop's residence, was posted April 25 to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's website, with several photos showing the officials gathered around a conference table in the archbishop's offices. Along with pastoral support for Ukraine's armed forces, the meeting also focused on Russia's extensive detention of Ukrainian civilians in occupied areas of Ukraine, especially clergy — among them, two Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests, Redemptorist Fathers Ivan Levitsky and Bohdan Geleta. Both have been in Russian captivity since November 2022 for refusing to leave their parishioners in Berdyansk, a city in the Zaporizhzhia region. Major Archbishop Shevchuk said shortly after their capture that information indicated the two priests were being subjected to torture. "Our goal is to free all Ukrainians from captivity," Usov told Major Archbishop Shevchuk.

**Kenyan archbishop appeals for humanitarian aid as floods devastate the country**

NAIROBI, Kenya — Amid severe floods, a leading Catholic archbishop in Kenya appealed for humanitarian support to aid thousands of displaced people, as he expressed the church's closeness to the

affected populations. By April 29, rescue operations were continuing as the death toll surpassed 120 people due to excessive rains and floods linked to the continuing El Nino phenomenon in East Africa. El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that starts with unusually warm water in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific and then changes weather worldwide. Floodwaters have submerged homes and public installations, and bursting rivers have swept into villages, making roads temporary riverbeds over the last several weeks. Many roads have been cut off as dams burst due to the heavy rains that began in mid-March. On April 29, a dam collapsed in western Kenya, killing at least 45 people, including 17 children after a wall of water swept through houses. "We want to be very close to you as you go through the pain of loss and as you feel the weight of these floods," Archbishop Anthony Muheria of Nyeri said in a recorded appeal April 28, delivered in Swahili and obtained by OSV News. Archbishop Muheria said God was calling on Christians and people of goodwill to help — in all ways — the people who have been affected by the devastating floods.

**As women, children starve, Sudan in desperate need of help**

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Catholic agencies, along with other Christian charities in Sudan, have intensified their food distribution campaign across the country to save hundreds of thousands of suffering Sudanese people from extreme hunger as the civil war entered its second year. The agencies are urging the international community to include the suffering people of Sudan among its priorities even as they attend to the needs of victims of violent conflicts in other regions of the world. "As we speak, the situation is dire, and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate rapidly. ... Urgent action is needed to avert the looming famine because women and children are starving, and they need immediate help," said Telley Sadia, country representative for Sudan for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, or CAFOD. The northeastern African nation of more than 46 million people erupted into a bloody civil war a year ago as a result of a power struggle between the generals that head the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces following the ousting of longtime dictator Omar Hassan al-Bashir. The war was initially concentrated in Khartoum, the country's capital, but spread quickly to other parts of the country, including Darfur. One year on, the conflict has displaced more than 8.6 million people from their homes, and killed over 14,000 people.

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Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky

**ANNUAL BANQUET**  
Thursday, May 9

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carenetky.org/banquet-online  
or scan the code. Program begins live at 7 pm May 9 or watch the replay later.

**Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**  
Joshua 1:9

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to wait to have  
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