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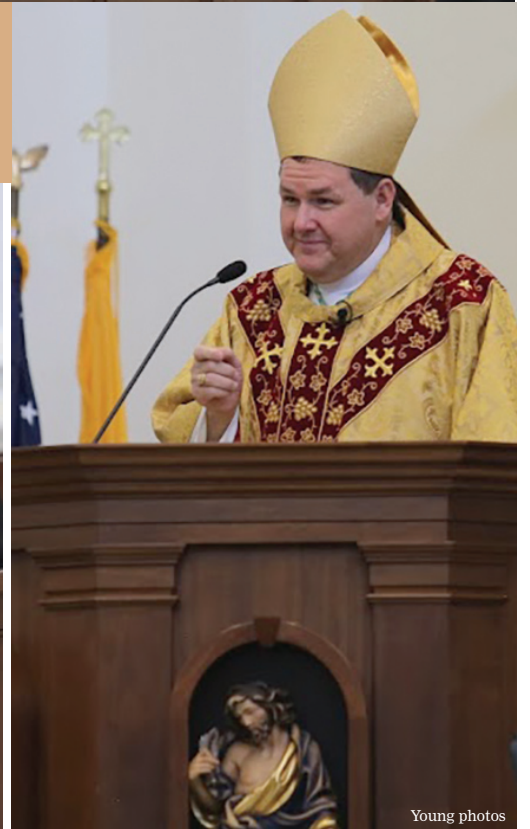
Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at covdio.org/messenger.



(above) The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker participate in a Devotional Renewal of Vows.

(right) Bishop Iffert gives a homily thanking the Sisters for all that they do.

(below) The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker enjoy Bishop Iffert's homily.



With joy and love, Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker celebrate 50 years of consecrated life

Bella Young
Multimedia Correspondent

The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker have been a part of the Diocese of Covington since its installation May 1, 1974. Now, 50 years later they are continuing their work in education, healthcare and community. To celebrate the order's golden jubilee, Bishop John Iffert celebrated Mass at All Saints Parish, Walton, May 1. Those in attendance consisted of family, friends and school children from St. Joseph Academy, Walton. Also in attendance was Bishop John Stowe of the Diocese of Lexington.

The six sisters and a postulate occupied the first two rows in front of the lectern, making it easy to partake in their many involvements throughout the Mass. First, Sister Patricia Jean Cushing read the first reading from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians, "And over all these put-on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another; singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giv-

ing thanks to God the Father through him."

It was Sister Therese Marie who lectured the second reading, Philippians. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice. Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, but prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God ... Keep on doing what you have earned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you."

When speaking to the sisters in his homily Bishop Iffert recalled the best and most natural way to honor the sisters for their life of prayer, service and community.

"I wish we could fit all the people here into your little chapel back home ... to thank you for your life of community, life of prayer, your life of service," he said.

With this message Bishop Iffert reaffirmed the sentiments of the Walton community, the school children from St. Joseph Academy and the parishioners of All Saints, saying thank you to the sisters of St. Joseph the Worker for their continued dedication to their charism. "To share Christ's saving love through our work to build up the body of Christ."

(See related articles on pages 8 and 9.)

Young photos

‘Do it in the name of Jesus,’ Bishop Iffert tells public and homeschool seniors at baccalaureate Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

For the first time in its history, the Diocese of Covington celebrated a baccalaureate Mass, May 10, commemorating senior high school students in public schools and homeschool.

The Mass welcomed 15 seniors and their families and friends to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Iffert.

The idea to hold this special Mass came about on behalf

of Angie Poat, diocesan youth minister, when she realized that “Public and homeschool seniors don’t have the opportunity to experience the capstone moment that a baccalaureate Mass is.” As a result of this idea, Mrs. Poat and the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization went to organize this Mass that will hopefully become a yearly fixture in the Diocese of Covington.

In his homily, Bishop Iffert commented on the “practical advice” given to graduates by many commencement speakers — advice such as “wear sunscreen” and “use den-

tal floss.”

“I wouldn’t rely on my own practical judgement enough to propose advice you should live by on my own authority,” he said, “but I do want to be a little bit more serious than sunscreen.”

To the seniors, Bishop Iffert offered this advice from the words of St. Paul: “Whatever you do, in deeds or in words, do it in the name of Jesus.”

As his homily proceeded, Bishop Iffert said, “I know

(Continued on page 10)



(far left) Bishop John Iffert preaches his homily from the center aisle of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

(left) Senior high school students and their families attend a Baccalaureate Mass, May 10, commemorating the accomplishments of the diocese’s home school and public school seniors.

(below) A student presents one of the gifts to Bishop John Iffert.


Baker photos



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




cross the bridge for LIFE
2024
A Celebration of the Gift of Human Life



Cross the Bridge for Life
Saturday, June 1
Riverboat Row, Newport

T-shirt pickup begins at 9 a.m., cross Purple People Bridge at 10 a.m.
Stick around after the walk for a festive time of family-friendly fun including live music, face painting and food!

Scan to Register for FREE T-SHIRT



Keeping OUR PROMISE TO Protect

Human trafficking: The impact, and how to help
May 14, 5:30–9 p.m.
Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Curia, Covington

Presented by Detective Eric Higgins.

Detective Higgins has been teaching criminology, criminal justice and forensics classes for 15 years and working in law enforcement for 26 years. He is currently working for the City of Independence, Ky, as a detective.

Detective Higgins retired from the Covington Police Department’s Crime Bureau in December 2019. Other assignments include the United States Secret Service task force, the United States Marshal’s

Fugitive task force and the Federal Bureau of Investigations task force.

In July of 2015, Detective Higgins was selected to co-present to colleagues an End Slavery 101 workshop, titled, “From Victim to Offender: The Response to Human Trafficking in Probation and Parole.” The presentation garnered continued interest by professionals in the field and requests for additional anti-trafficking presentations at regional events within the U.S and internationally.

UK Healthcare to acquire St. Claire HealthCare, SNDs to maintain Catholic presence in community

Bella Young
Multimedia Correspondent

In a press release, April 26, it was announced that UK HealthCare, Lexington, will acquire St. Claire HealthCare, Morehead, with a targeted close date of July 1. The announcement, SCHC said, is an “extension of a strong existing relationship between these two institutions.”

This expanded partnership comes on the heels of a retreat St. Claire HealthCare board members attended where they, “realized we need to do something to ensure the next 60 years,” said Notre Dame Sister Marla

and transfer their formal role within St. Claire to the University. This will permit needed capital investments, skills and expansion to be brought to the St. Claire operations that the Sisters alone could never have accomplished. It is no overstatement to say that the Sisters certainly see the hand of a good and loving God present in these opportunities and are grateful to everyone involved whose hard work, vision and commitment are allowing this expansion of mission to take place.”

About the process of finding a suitable partner to transfer SCHC, Sister Marla said, “we sent out requests for information from a lot of organizations ... the goals were to stabilize and ensure the future for the next 60 years.”

SCHC board members and administrators took an introspective look and an understanding of need when looking into potential partnerships.

“We made it known that we needed a new hospital ... we needed some kind of capital commitment. We wanted to make it clear that our Catholic identity, which means respecting the ethical and religious directives of the bishops in this country, was important,” said Sister Marla. As the largest employer in Morehead, Ky, “We

At the conclusion of what Sister Marla called “months of negotiation,” an agreement between the two parties was reached.

Among the negotiations, UK has pledged \$300 million in
(Continued on page 13)



Monahan, Board Member, St. Claire Healthcare.


The Sisters of Notre Dame have sponsored St. Claire Healthcare since it opened its doors in 1963 to provide for the healthcare needs of the underserved people of Eastern Kentucky.

“The Sisters of Notre Dame are very excited by this transformational change for St. Claire. This transition will allow a mission critical to the people of Eastern Kentucky and very dear to the Sisters to evolve, strengthen and grow in the years ahead,” SND USA said in the press release announcing the expansion. “As part of this process, the Sisters will ‘pass the torch’ to the University of Kentucky

wanted to keep some aspect of local control, because we felt we knew best the needs of this area.”

It was the willingness to negotiate these needs and the structure of a preexisting relationship between the institutions, that made the University of Kentucky an ideal candidate.

Once the acquisition is finalized, SCHC will operate under a new name, UK St. Claire. A name which honors the tremendous impact of St. Claire Healthcare has had on the region both economically and medically, but also the University of Kentucky, for their willingness to uphold the values of St. Claire.



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

Official Assignments

Effective July 9, 2024

Rev. Eric L. Andriot

To: Pastor, All Saints Parish, Walton
From: Parochial vicar, St. Paul Parish, Florence

Rev. Michael D. Barth

To: Pastor, Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger
From: Pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw and St. Edward Mission, Owenton

Rev. Matthew A. Cushing

To: Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Park Hills; residence, St. Agnes Rectory, Ft. Wright
From: Pastor, All Saints Parish, Walton; Parochial administrator, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Park Hills
Continues as chaplain to Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker

Rev. Michael C. Hennigen

To: Vocations promoter, Diocese of Covington; residence, St. Barbara Rectory, Erlanger; Chaplain, Covington Catholic High School
From: Pastor, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia

Rev. Kevin J. Kahmann

To: Pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California and Immaculate Conception Mission, Stepstone
From: Pastor, Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger

Rev. Trinity P. Knight

To: Parochial Administrator, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia
From: Parochial Vicar, St. Agnes Parish, Fort Wright

Deacon Joseph E. McGraw

To: Assistant chaplain, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills
From: Deacon, St. Therese Parish, Southgate

Rev. John K. Opoko

To: Parochial vicar, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright
From: Parochial vicar, All Saints Parish, Walton

Rev. James P. Schaeper

To: Parochial administrator, St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw and St. Edward Mission, Owenton
From: Faculty, Covington Latin School; residence, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

Rev. Jacob Varghese, V.C.

To: Recalled to the Vincentian Congregation, India
From: Pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California and Immaculate Conception Mission, Stepstone

Assigned by the Most Rev. John C. Iffert Bishop of Covington

Jamie N. Schroeder
Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor



Bishop's Schedule

May 11

Thomas More University Commencement, Thomas More Stadium, Crestview Hills, 9:30 a.m.

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

May 14

Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Finance Council meeting, 2 p.m.

May 15

Newport Central Catholic High School graduation, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 16

Presbyteral Council meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Priest Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 3 p.m.

Catechetical Awards event, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, 6 p.m.

May 17

Religious Superiors meeting, 10 a.m.

Rehearsal for transitional Deacon ordination, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 5 p.m.

May 18

Transitional Deacon ordination, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.

May 19

Adult Confirmation Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.

Bishop Brossart High School graduation, Thomas More University, 2 p.m.

May 20

Covington Catholic High School graduation, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

COMMENTARY

Pinocchio's journey to becoming 'fully alive'

As I searched for a movie to share with my high school senior religion class that effectively communicates the profound message that genuine joy and life's meaningful purpose require detachment from worldly desires and selfless acts of love, I stumbled upon Disney's



VIEWPOINT

Chris Goddard

"Pinocchio" after watching Dr. Jordan Peterson's lecture series on the movie. I was inspired to share it with my students, and it is worth revisiting now from a fresh, adult perspective.

I believe Thomas Aquinas, who emphasized detachment from worldly pursuits as the path to true joy, and St. Irenaeus, who wrote, "The glory of God is man fully alive," would endorse my movie selection. In this context,

the glory of God parallels Pinocchio's journey to becoming a "real boy" by detaching himself from the allure of fame sought from Stromboli's puppet show and escaping the pleasures of an island.

While his detachments were necessary, Pinocchio's transformation into a "real boy" did not occur until he sacrificed himself to rescue his father from Monstro, the whale. I apologize for the spoilers if you intended to watch the film with your family this weekend.

The movie opens with Geppetto's heartfelt prayer for a son, partially answered by the Blue Fairy, transforming Pinocchio from a marionette puppet into an animated boy. This transformation, however, is only physical. Pinocchio, still wooden, seeks adventure and independence outside the toy shop. Like a loving father, Geppetto

recognizes that for Pinocchio to be truly free, he must allow him to make decisions freely, just as God, our Father, allows us to make decisions for ill or good, with no strings attached. This narrative structure, emphasizing character development, is a key aspect of the movie's appeal.

Before leaving the safety of the toy shop, however, Pinocchio receives a gift from the Blue Fairy — a conscience in the form of the grasshopper Jiminy Cricket, symbolizing the moral guidance of Jesus Christ.

Despite the Fairy's instruction to let his conscience be his guide, Jiminy Cricket initially fails to explain to Pinocchio how he is to know right from wrong, so Jiminy Cricket cannot provide effective counsel to Pinocchio. Like Pinocchio, our consciences must be well-formed to avoid confusion and poor decision-making.

As Pinocchio begins his journey in the world with the noble intention of attending school, he encounters Honest John, a sly fox, who tempts him with the allure of fame and fortune in the theater. Without Jiminy Cricket's guidance, Pinocchio succumbs to the temptation and agrees to join Stromboli's puppet show, where he becomes enslaved until the Blue Fairy eventually liberates him.

Through this ordeal, Pinocchio learns two invaluable lessons. Firstly, he realizes the dangers of chasing after fame. Secondly, he understands the consequences of dishonesty when his lies are betrayed by the growing length of his nose, serving as a tangible reminder of the importance of honesty and integrity. Though Pinocchio gains wisdom from his experience, he exchanges the pursuit of fame for another vice, pleasure, as he continues making poor decisions while developing his conscience.

However, the stakes for Pinocchio increase drastically with his pursuit of pleasure. Having been warned by his conscience this time but ignored altogether and enthralled by the deceptive allure of the Coachman, a clear embodiment of pure evil, Pinocchio eagerly suc-

cumbs to temptation and embarks on a journey to Pleasure Island. The Coachman skillfully persuades him, just as the devil entices us, that Pleasure Island offers boundless freedom and self-indulgence, devoid of consequences. As the movie unfolds, we learn that despite its guise of paradise, Pleasure Island conceals the Coachman's evil scheme to exploit boys' desires.

In "Pinocchio," the boys' immersion in pleasure-seeking activities such as drinking, smoking and gambling precipitates their gradual metamorphosis into donkeys. Ironically, as Pinocchio succumbs to temptations in his quest to become a real boy, he unwittingly regresses to his former state, mirroring the control exerted by a puppeteer over their marionette, as he becomes entangled in the strings of his desires.

The reappearance of Jiminy Cricket provides Pinocchio with a crucial revelation — that their own reckless choices are responsible for their transformation into donkeys and that once fully transformed, the Coachman sells them as beasts of burden for profit.

Together, they escape from Pleasure Island through a symbolic baptism in the water, cleansing Pinocchio from his transgressions and providing him the opportunity for redemption. Having finally fully formed his conscience and filled with the grace from baptism, he freely risks his life to save Geppetto. His selfless act ultimately causes his transformation into the real boy he always desired.

One never knows, as a teacher, whether your students grasp the importance of the lesson taught, in this case, from watching Pinocchio — that true freedom, joy and genuine fulfillment (i.e., to become fully alive) come from living a selfless virtuous life and not from material desires and transient pleasures that the world has to offer.

Chris Goddard is executive director for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, Ky

I was today years old ...

It is very relaxed; very casual.

I know that there are other churches where preparation for baptism is more formal. In fact, I knew a deacon, years ago, at another church on the other side of a great river (not the Licking; the other river) who did baptism prep more like a job interview.

This deacon would sit behind his desk with the mom and dad on the other side and he would talk with them about baptism, and he would ask them questions. From their answers he would determine if the parents were likely to raise their child in the practice of the faith. If he felt like the parents were not up to the job, he would excuse them and suggest that they come back next year.

I can't say how many he turned away or how many came back next year? No one knows.

Everyone agrees that preparation for baptism is about the question: "Are the parents ready, willing and able to raise their child in the practice of the faith?"

While Baptism prep at my parish is more casual, we do sit around the kitchen table — the mothers and fathers and I — and we talk about that question. We talk at length about the immensity of the responsibility that mothers and fathers take on in the raising of a child who is a child of God through baptism.

At the end of our time together, I send those moms and dads home telling them, "This is when and where baptism prep truly begins." The moms and dads go home with instructions to discuss — very seriously, deeply and prayerfully — the question that might not have occurred to them before now: "Are we ready, willing and able to raise our child in the practice of the faith?"

I do not make that determination myself. I leave that to the Holy Spirit.

Most of the parents say, "Yes, we are ready, willing and

able to raise our child in the practice of the faith." They present their child for baptism and we begin the rite with the words, "Your families have experienced great joy at the birth of your child, and the Church shares your happiness!"

But sometimes the parents do not come back. These moms and dads left baptism prep, asking one another and discussing — seriously, deeply and prayerfully — the question, and the answer is "No, we are not ready, willing or able to raise our child in the practice of the faith."

And that brings us to my aha moment, my epiphany, my moment of sudden insight. Because several weeks ago I was today years old when I realized that if the church shares in the happiness of the moms and dads who present their children for baptism, shouldn't we also share in the sorrow of those who do not?

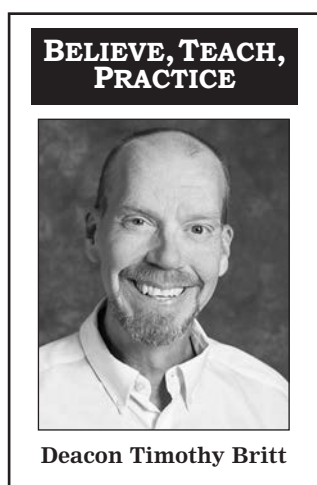
I thought I was doing good by not sending the people away and telling them to come back next year; but I could be doing better. Because there is another question that I should be asking the moms and dads as we sit together around the table in the parish office kitchen...

And I was today years old when I realized something that all of you who are reading this might have always known; that the question we should be asking in baptism prep is not only if the parents are ready, willing and able to raise their child in the practice of the faith; but there is also a much harder question: "What can I do to help parents to become ready, willing and able to raise their child in the practice of the faith?"

And I was today years old when I realized that baptism prep maybe just got a lot more difficult.

Deacon Timothy Britt is assigned to St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Ky

Have you ever had a moment of sudden insight or discovery or realized something that had never occurred to you before? I've heard it described as an AHA moment or an epiphany. I've seen people on social media say "I was



BELIEVE, TEACH, PRACTICE

Deacon Timothy Britt

today years old" when I realized this or when I learned that."

One woman was "today years old" when she realized that there was a thing on her stapler that could be turned around so that the prongs of the staples bend out instead of in. Somebody else was "today years old" when they learned that flames don't have shadows. Whatever.

Well, I had an "I was today years old" moment several weeks ago that I'm a little bit afraid to talk

about; let alone write about in a newspaper article that will be read by thousands of people. My fear is that what I realized might be something that everybody else already knows.

On the other hand, I suppose that what I realized several weeks ago might cause everyone reading this to have an "I was today years old" moment. Let's see ...

First, some background. One of the things that I do as a deacon is to prepare the mothers and fathers of my parish for the baptism of their children. They all come to me, and we sit together around a table in the parish office kitchen, and we all talk about baptism.

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 Maura Baker Staff Writer
 Isabella (Bella) Young Multimedia Correspondent

2024 Kentucky General Assembly review

The 2024 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly saw a large number of bills enacted, including many of great interest and importance to CCK and the Catholic community. Here are a few of the major highlights.



GUEST

Jason Hall

On the positive side, HB 2 was passed, which will place on the general election ballot in November a proposed constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to enact educational choice programs in Kentucky. After a series of court decisions striking down education programs, this is the clearest way forward for expanding educational options and opportunities for all Kentucky families.

Also, SB 74 became the vehicle for what was originally HB 10, the “Mominibus” bill. HB 10 was the result of months of bipartisan and bicameral study and discussion around improving and supporting maternal and infant health. Among other things, SB 74 helps connect mothers with mental health services when needed, increases education for breastfeeding and safe sleep, creates special enrollment periods within health plans for pregnancy, and ensures health plans offer comprehensive maternal health care.

Unfortunately, a number of bills also passed that cause us significant concern.

The legislature took a sharp turn away from evidence-based approaches to criminal justice, returning instead to the long-term trend of punitive measures and mass incarceration. HB 5, the “Safer Kentucky Act,” was the most significant bill passed along these lines. It addresses the increasing homelessness crisis by creating a new crime of “unlawful camping” for sleeping outside, while making no requirements that law enforcement attempt to place individuals in shelters before arresting or charging

them.

HB 5 also creates two levels of sentences for vandalism depending on the defendant’s financial resources (paying damages can buy down the offense from a felony to a misdemeanor). There are various provisions that could also result in increased application of the death penalty.

SB 20 is a juvenile justice bill that takes judges’ discretion away when considering whether to transfer a juvenile to adult court in cases where a firearm was used. Previously, a judge would consider the use of a firearm and the seriousness of the offense, but also could take into account the maturity of the defendant and any significant developmental disabilities that might indicate the case would be best dealt with in juvenile court. SB 20 removes those factors from the judge’s consideration and leaves the decision solely in the hands of the prosecutor.

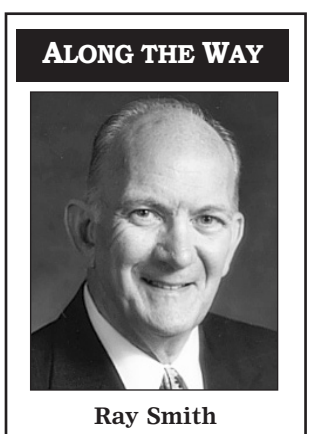
SB 299 is a sweeping reorganization of gaming regulation. It creates a new Horse Racing and Gaming Corporation, which will regulate all gaming activity except for the state lottery. Over our objection, the oversight of charitable gaming was including in this change. Going forward, the new Corporation’s Board, dominated by for-profit gaming representatives, will be the regulatory and licensing authority for all charitable gaming in Kentucky. We hope to have a positive relationship with the new Corporation, but a change this dramatic does put the long-term viability of charitable gaming in doubt.

Throughout this session, we issued several action alerts and received a very strong response. Your voice does truly make a difference. Our work in Frankfort would have very little effect if legislators did not hear from their own constituents on these and other issues we talk about with them. Thank you for your commitment to Faithful Citizenship.

Jason Hall is executive director for the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, the public-policy voice of the state’s four Roman Catholic bishops. Become a faithful citizen advocate. Get updates and action alerts to your e-mail and mobile device from the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, sign up at <https://www.votervoices.net/CCKY/Register> or visit cckky.org.

Stop the hate

Somewhere along the way, ever since the major newspaper headlines and major television news stories turned to violence and out-of-hand protesting in major cities and at more than 50 seasoned colleges and universities in the



ALONG THE WAY

Ray Smith

United States, I began to dread the witnessing of such developments day after day. How about you?

I for one, an elderly grandfather and great grandfather, keep asking myself where all the exploding and frightening hate came from and what does the future have in store for our offspring? Once again, how about you?

Some basic research opened my eyes. I decided to start with the Bible and basic fact-hunting and discovered this eye-opening Internet piece: “In the Bible, hate is an intense inversion to active hostility that is expressed in settled opposition to a person or thing. It is seen as a negative emotion that goes against the teachings of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. God’s hatred is toward all sinful thoughts and ways. It is a feeling of which all holy beings are conscious in view of sin and is wholly unlike the hatred which is mentioned in the Scriptures among the works of the flesh. Jesus Christ taught his followers to love their enemies and bless those persecuting them.”

Shifting now from the Bible, what exactly is hate?

Research revealed the following: “As a noun, hate refers to intense hostility and aversion, often stemming

from fear, anger or a feeling of being wronged. It can also mean extreme dislike or disgust. Hate can manifest as a systematic expression of hatred, especially when politically exploited, e.g., hate crimes or hate groups. As a verb, hate means to feel extreme enmity toward or to have an extreme aversion to something. Hatred is often linked to intense feelings of anger, contempt and disgust. It can also be seen as the opposite of love. Other examples: Hate crimes are motivated by prejudice and hate. People may harbor hates and fears that they struggle to overcome. Some individuals express hate through actions like hate mail or organized hate campaigns. It is important to remember that understanding hate allows us to address its root causes and work toward a more compassionate and empathetic world.”

For the record, I hate hate!

Several years ago, Andrea Mathews, LPC, NCC, posted a remarkable treatise in “Psychology Today” entitled “Why Do We Hate?” and it is my considered opinion that it will help us understand, as she put it, “What is it all about?” if it is indeed possible to ever understand “The Holocaust,” all the world wars, slavery, religious conflicts, “Auschwitz,” October 7, 2023, D-Day and the like.

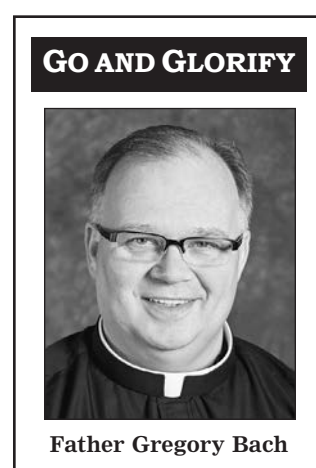
Ms. Mathews opens with “Haters, Haters everywhere! Why is there much hate still floating around in the collective consciousness, when we have evolved so much in so many other areas? In America many years ago, we began to create laws, which were meant to protect the civil rights of African Americans. All these many years later there are still shootings and riots and bigotry and hatred all over the streets of America. Why is that? Well, it’s pretty obvious that laws can’t dictate the human psyche. We put the laws into effect, but the people still hate.

“Projection means I have to do some work on myself

A love with no bounds

The readings for the seventh Sunday of Easter — Cycle B — are: Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26; 1 John 4:11-16; and John 17:11b-19.

Pope St. John Paul II recalls a time in his life, he was 9 years old, when his mother died. Going to his parish church he knelt in front of an image of the Blessed



GO AND GLORIFY

Father Gregory Bach

Virgin Mary. After spending some time in prayer he says to Mary, “You will be my mother now.”

Throughout his life we see how devoted he was to Mary. I recently saw a picture of young Karol Wojtyla with a scapular around his neck. We see in his papal coat of arms the letter “M” which stands for Mary, and it shows how devoted he was to the Blessed Virgin.

His devotion grew over time and he spoke often about the devotion to Mary through praying the rosary, and during his papacy he added the Luminous Mysteries.

St. John Paul II reflected, “I was already convinced that Mary leads us to Christ, but at the same time I began to realize also that Christ leads us to his mother.”

This weekend we celebrate the seventh Sunday of Easter, and we also celebrate Mother’s Day. The second reading is from the Letter of St. John and the Gospel is from St. John’s Gospel. In both readings we hear the word love.

We must love God and he in return loves us. It is an unconditional love, a love that has no bounds. God loves us more than we can imagine. As Karol Wojtyla loved his mother and the Mother of Jesus as an example of how we are to love, so we should love God and Mary unconditionally.

We do the same for our mothers here on earth. We reach out to them and feel that comforting love, a love which knows no bounds, a love that cares for our needs, and in turn we give them our love.

During this month of May I remember being in grade school and every year we would have a living rosary. It was either done in church or outside on the parking lot. The school children and parishioners would join together and pray the rosary. The school children would form a circle much like that of a rosary with every child taking one of the prayers.

This living rosary showed that we were learning to display our love for Mary at a very young age and asking her intercession. We remember during this month that we have two mothers to help us, our earthly mother and our heavenly Mother. Both love us deeply and that love is shown to us through Jesus Christ.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia! For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia!

Father Gregory Bach is assistant to the Bishop and vice-chancellor, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

to become a whole person. Projection means that I need to become conscious of those things I’m repressing so that I can own them as unique and meaningful aspects of the whole me.

“Hate it seems, sings with a different cadence throughout our lifetime. When we first learn of it, it’s foreign, formidable and forbidden, almost like a curse word. During hormone-fueled adolescence, hate suddenly becomes more accessible. All through adulthood, its catchy rhythms might linger on our screens and in our hearts. But as seasons pass, we yearn to distance ourselves from its jarring chords. Hate becomes too disso-

(Continued on page 13)

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.

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, witnesses and healing prayers. Call Carol at (859) 341-5932.

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, will hold an indoor flea market May 31–June 1, 8 a.m.–3 p.m. in the school gym. Donations can be dropped off: May 25, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; May 27, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. and May 28–30, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. No adult clothing, mattresses, china cabinets or entertainment centers. TV's? Flat screen only. Call (859) 341-6609 x4010.

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 angelico-project.org.

"Praise Fest," June 22, 2–8 p.m., St. Phillip Parish, Melbourne, featuring the

following musical groups: 2 p.m., Mother of God Contemporary Ensemble; 3 p.m., Thomas More Praise & Worship; 4:30 p.m., Mass, celebrated by Bishop John Iffert; 6 p.m., Dan Walsh & Friends and 7 p.m., Lee Roessler. Food trucks available. Bring a cooler and chair.

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 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.



Champions

The VEX Robotics team at St. Mary School, Alexandria, participated in the VEX World Championships in Dallas, Texas. Students collaborated with and competed against 491 teams from over 30 countries. St. Mary 8th graders qualified 27th in their division. The 7th grade team ended up 84th in skills out of 491 teams.



Last Supper art for the parish bulletin cover

A parish tradition at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, is to have our second graders draw the Last Supper in art class. The drawings are then turned into the parish office and one of the drawings is featured on the parish bulletin cover the weekend of First Holy Communion. Congratulations to Julia on her beautiful drawing.

2024 Parish Festivals

St. Paul, Florence
June 7, 5–11 p.m.
June 8, 6–11 p.m.

St. Catherine of Siena,
Ft. Thomas
June 7, 6–11 p.m., adults
only Music Fest
June 8, 5:30–11 p.m.,
festival

St. Joseph, Camp Springs
June 8, 4–11 p.m.

St. Therese, Southgate
June 13, 6–10 p.m., adults
only
June 14–15, 6–11 p.m.

Mary, Queen of Heaven,
Erlanger
June 21–22, 5–11 p.m.
June 23, 12:30–5 p.m.

St. Pius X, Edgewood
July 12–13, 6 p.m.–12 a.m.
July 14, 4–10 p.m.

St. Thomas, Ft. Thomas
July 19, 6–11 p.m.
July 20, 5–11 p.m.

St. Philip, Melbourne
Aug. 17, golf ball drop and
festival

St. Agnes, Ft. Wright
Sept. 27–29, Oktoberfest

Bishop Iffert speaks to first communicants, explains the conscience and Eucharist

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

Bishop Iffert broke from his routine of giving the homily from the pulpit, so that he could speak to the three young boys who were receiving their first communion. As he descended the steps of the altar he said to the congregation, "We're going to break our pattern a little bit this Sunday so I can come down here and speak to these three young men who are in their last moments of preparation to receive their first communion. I want to talk to them for a little bit, but the rest of you can listen if you'd like."

The homily began with Bishop Iffert asking the boys to close their eyes, though he did warn them not to fall asleep, and told them to think about someone who loves them very much, he told them to think about that person and imagine them in their hearts. "Can you feel that love? Can you feel where they love you, way down deep inside? Where that sense of being loved and being happy and this person comes from that, that way down deep inside place."

Once he was content that the three boys could feel the love inside their hearts, Bishop Iffert asked them to imag-

ine a hypothetical. "Imagine, if you would, someone having surgery, and the surgeon opens up their insides. That surgeon would be able to find the person's heart, wouldn't she? She would be able to find the person's liver, right?... But that doctor would not be able to find your way down deep inside. It doesn't correspond to any organ, right?" The way down deep inside that Bishop Iffert is speaking about is the conscience. "It's where we see who we are and what makes you, you. There are some places that only love can go...your love is the place where sometimes God speaks to you, right? The place where you recognize if you're doing good things or bad things...sometimes we call it the conscience."

Bishop Iffert also spoke to the boys about the Sacrament of First Communion. "Today you are receiving for the first time, the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus...Jesus who has already chosen you to be his home, right? Jesus who has already chosen you, to be a child of God chose you in Baptism, to be united in himself...He is going to allow himself to be consumed, for you to eat and drink his very presence his very self, you are going to

receive him physically into your body. He is going to enter into that place that only you know that way down deep inside...This sacrifice that you will receive is more than just a piece of bread, and it is more than a sip of wine. It is Jesus giving to you his whole self."

After the homily Bishop Iffert invited the three young boys to join him on the altar for the crowning of Mary. "She is exalted from the choirs of angels, and reigns in glory with her son, pray for us all, the queen of mercy pleading for grace...Merciful Lord, look upon foster service by counting the image of the mother of your son, proclaim him as king, king of all creation and approach her as our queen. Give us the grace to follow them in serving you to do what love demands for the sake of our brothers and sisters. To deny ourselves and spend ourselves so as to win our labors for you." After the prayer, one of the first communicants gently placed the crown atop Mary's head as the congregation looked on, revering our Blessed Mother.



Young photos



(above) One of the three young boys places the crown on Mary's head.
(right) The three first communicants look on as Bishop Iffert does the prayer of the May Crowning.
(below) The three first communicants receive the Eucharist from Bishop Iffert.



The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and their ministerial work

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

With ministries spread out across two dioceses — the Diocese of Covington and the Diocese of Lexington — the sisters of St. Joseph the Worker remain an integral part of their communities 50 years after its creation.

Born out of a desire to live a traditional religious life, Sister Ellen Curran, the order's founder, requested the help of Bishop Richard Ackerman, to assist in establishing a new religious community. Through both of their continued efforts, Sister Curran and her group of 18 sisters separated from the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth to form their own order. Upon the suggestion of Bishop Ackerman, the sisters decided on St. Joseph the Worker as their order's namesake. Very soon after the establishment of the order they began ministerial work in education and health-care.

that by loving God."

Throughout the schools 48 years over 1600 students have learned that very lesson, that God loves them. In an effort to ensure St. Joseph Academy is an option for all

families there is a hybrid school option and homeschooling support. This allows families with needs not suited to a traditional education, to still experience the Catholic education brought by St. Joseph Academy.

The order's other ministerial work is in the Diocese of Lexington, Taylor Manor, a nursing home in Versailles, Ky. Established before 1988 when Pope John Paul II made Lexington its own diocese, the sisters were asked by Bishop Ackerman to take charge of operations and care for the elderly at Taylor Manor. With a degree in nursing, Mother Christina splits her time between the nursing home and being a music teacher at the school.

The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker website reads, "we work at helping the elderly in their illnesses and advancing age through the work at Taylor Manor, our nursing home. Whether the Sister works in the nursing department, the dietary department, or in the office, all work for the elderly is done for God. At times, the Sisters are also involved in helping the elderly in the surrounding community."

Mother Christina says that while their work in the community is important, they must also focus on their own community inside the convent.

"Community is a big part of our religious life. We either play card games or board games or take walks ... we just kind of get together and enjoy each other ... We have to make sure that we're being a family and we're being a community," she said.

She said also, that while their relationship in community with each other is important, there is no relationship more important than the one they each have with Jesus.

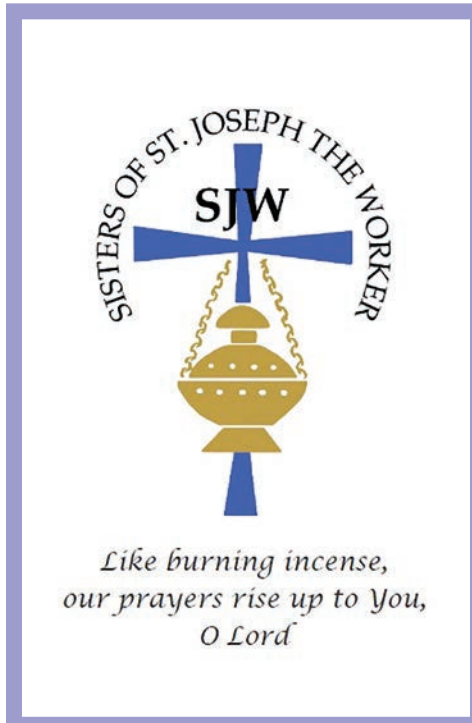
"Our life revolves around prayer, because if I don't have that consecration to Jesus, anybody can be a nurse, anybody can be a bookkeeper, anybody can be a cook," Mother Christina said. "Our consecration — that makes it so different for us. It is our prayer life where we get our graces to do what we need to do."

It has been 50 years of serving their communities, and the sisters of St. Joseph the Worker, have loved all of it.



(above) Sister Patricia, principal of St. Joseph Academy, Walton, spends time with the school children

(below) A Sister of St. Joseph the Worker speaking to one of the residents in their nursing home



In 1976 the sisters reopened what was once All Saints School, establishing St. Joseph Academy, Walton. About this ministry Mother Christina, superior general, said, "our charism is to share Christ's saving love through our work to build up the Body of Christ. So what better way to share Christ's saving love to children than to teach them that God loves them."

She continued saying, "although we do teach reading, writing, math ... We're also trying to teach them that God loves them and how they should respond to his love and to love him too. That is the whole purpose of Catholic education, to teach that they are loved by God, they are unique, unrepeatable. And they should respond to

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A history of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker

Tom Ward

Messenger files

For those of us who remember the immediate post-conciliar era, the most noticeable changes were to the liturgy. But others underwent a metamorphosis of their entire way of life. Women religious were deeply affected by the conciliar “Decree of the Renewal of Religious Life” (“Perfectae Caritatis”), which called for renewal in terms of returning to the original charisms of their founders.

Like all congregations, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (SCN) met together over time to discern what the council’s call meant for them. And as in all congregations, not all of the sisters agreed with the ways in which their call to renewal was implemented. Many changes that the SCN assented were similar to those of their fellow religious: new ministries and living arrangements outside of their traditional schools and convents; modification and even abandonment of their religious garb.

The Special General Chapter held by the SCN in 1969 instituted the changes in an interim constitution. But some sisters thought that these adaptations relinquished too much of what set religious apart, with the consequence that their consecrated life was becoming “secularized.”

Sister Ellen Curran headed a group who objected to the course of innovation undertaken by the SCN. This group submitted a petition to the 1971 General Chapter requesting that they could live as a separate province within the SCN congregation in order to practice a more traditional way of life.

This request was not granted, though the 1972 chapter allowed them to seek separate housing; no arrangement, however, could be found that was satisfactory to both parties. The disaffected sisters then sought other options that would allow them to live in what they regarded as an authentically religious manner.

Although the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth is in the Archdiocese of Louisville, many SCN taught in the Diocese of Covington. As one of those teachers, Sister Ellen was acquainted with Bishop Richard H. Ackerman. Bishop Ackerman was himself a religious, a Holy Ghost Father, and had attended all four sessions of the council in Rome. The bishop held views on religious life similar to Sister Ellen’s and he suggested that the sisters seek to found an entirely new congregation, a task for he offered his support.

As the process went forward, Bishop Ackerman invited Sister Ellen’s group to live in the Diocese of Covington, and Archbishop Thomas McDonough of Louisville gave his consent.

On Feb. 14, 1973, Sister Ellen’s group of 18 signed a petition requesting a complete separation from the mother congregation and sent it to the SCN Executive Committee. Sister Barbara Thomas, General Superior of the SCN, then forwarded the petition to Rome for the approval of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes.

The Sacred Congregation disappointed their hopes by responding on June 25, 1973 that the separate living arrangement suggested by the General Chapter of 1972 should be attempted before the more drastic step of complete separation be taken. Even in separate quarters, though, they would still be under the direction of the SCN. Sister Ellen and her companions had taken up resi-



The front page of the July 14, 1974 issue of the *Messenger* shows Bishop Ackerman presenting to Sister Ellen Curran, superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker, his official promulgation of the establishment of the new Congregation as a Diocesan Institute in the Diocese of Covington.

dence in the Diocese of Covington — first at the Seminary of St. Pius X, then at the old Speers Hospital in Dayton — but their interpretation of the arrangements made according to the June 25 mandate differed from that of the SCN administration.

In an attempt to settle things once and for all, Sister Ellen accepted Bishop Ackerman’s advice that she go to Rome to make her case personally. As it turned out, the Sacred Congregation had already sent letters asking that both she and Sister Barbara come to discuss the matter with them. They met together on Jan. 14, 1974.

Sister Barbara agreed with the request for separation,

after which the Sacred Congregation granted a complete religious and legal separation. The office promulgation became effective on May 1, 1974.

The new community that Bishop Ackerman gladly accepted was a diocesan institute under the authority of the Bishop of Covington. He also suggested the name that the sisters readily accepted, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker (SJW).

To no one’s surprise, they elected Sister Ellen as their first Superior General; ever after she was Mother Ellen. Their new constitution required that all sisters live in community with regular times for prayer and silence, receive their assignments from their superiors, be obedient to congregational and ecclesiastical authority, and wear the religious habit.

The sisters soon bought a house in Walton to be St. Joseph Convent and in 1979 built a house of formation, St. William Convent. They took over the closed All Saints Parish School in 1976 and rechristened it St. Joseph Academy. At Bishop Ackerman’s request they also took control of Taylor Manor, a nursing home in Versailles, from the daughters of St. Rita in 1977.

Both Mother Ellen and Bishop Ackerman believed that the new SJW were following the authentic call of Vatican II while preserving the essential elements of religious life that they believed so many other congregations had discarded. The bishop seemed to hope that they would draw others who were also disenchanted with the new trends of religious life.

Tom Ward is former archivist for the Diocese of Covington, Ky. This history of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker was written for the occasion of the communities 40th anniversary in 2014 and was originally printed in the May 9, 2014 edition of the Messenger.




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Baccalaureate Mass

(Continued from page 2)

that the Scriptures invite us to keep our mind centered upon him. I know that he promises his spirit to be with us and guide.”

“So based on that,” he said, “and my friendship with Jesus and my knowledge of his commitment to us, here’s what I offer to you — keep your mind focused on the peace of Christ. Strive to live with one another with heartfelt compassion.”

As students begin to discern their futures, Bishop Iffert encouraged them to “come to God in prayer and listen to how God responds to [them.]”

At the conclusion of the homily, Bishop Iffert reminded students to “stay close to Christ.” He said, “there is a Church and a community and your family who love you. We’re incredibly proud of your accomplishments so far.”

Following the Mass, students and their families were invited to Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium across the street in the Covington Curia for the reception. Guests enjoyed a meal together and received information on college formation from representatives of the Catholic Newman Center, both from Thomas More University and Northern Kentucky University.

As Mrs. Poat welcomed students to the reception, she said, “You are a very special and unique part of our Church, and we want you to know how important you are.”



Baker photos

(above right) Bishop John Iffert and the concelebrating priests and assisting deacons stand for a photo with seniors in attendance for the Baccalaureate.

(right) Following the Baccalaureate Mass, families were invited to a reception in the Curia’s Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium. During the reception, a game was played where students guess Bishop Iffert’s preferences on things such as vacation spots and favorite foods.



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Disposed to receive Communion

Father Luke Spannagel
USCCB

“The Body of Christ.”
“Amen.”

As we continue our discussion of Holy Communion, we consider who is able to receive Communion. The Diocese of Peoria reminds us: “Holy Communion is for all who are properly disposed to receive him. To be properly disposed we must be Catholic, in a state of grace and have fasted one hour prior to the reception of Holy Communion” (*A Study of the Mass*, p. 19).

Why Catholic? Reception of Holy Communion is the fullest sign of Christian unity. As we said previously, receiving Christ in the Eucharist binds us to him. Since there is one Christ, he draws us together as one.

However, what if one person who believes Jesus is truly present receives Communion while another person who believes in only a symbolic presence receives? That would be a problem. That would be two people making an outward sign of unity which would not be true unity.

This false unity would not respect the true presence of Jesus, as well as the unity he prayed for at the Last Supper. That is why reception of Holy Communion is first limited to those who believe that Christ is truly present: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Since this is the Catholic belief, Catholics (as well as Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches which maintain valid sacraments and believe that Christ is truly present) are eligible to receive Communion.

Also, limiting reception of Communion to Catholics protects the integrity of non-Catholics. When we receive Communion, we first hear: “The Body of Christ.” We respond with “Amen,” indicating that we do believe that Jesus’ Body and Blood are truly present and we wish to receive him. For non-Catholics who don’t believe the Body of Christ is really present, receiving Communion would contradict their beliefs. They would be saying “Amen” to a statement that they do not believe. Not permitting them to receive Communion actually respects their beliefs.

Why must we be in a state of grace to receive Communion? Simply put, because Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is God — all perfect, all holy, all love. To receive him in a state of sin is an offense against his goodness.

Charles Belmonte teaches, “We should never dare to receive the Eucharist in the state of mortal sin. To do so is to abuse sacrilegiously the mercy of God. Only a shallow and false love, based on mere sentimentality, can bring us to such a detestable course of action. This mistreatment of the sacrament is a grave offense against God. St. Paul’s warning on this issue is quite clear: ‘Anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be behaving unworthily toward the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone is to recollect himself before eating this bread and drinking this cup; because a person who eats and drinks without recognizing the body is eating and drinking his own condemnation’ (1 Cor 11:27-29). [...] Therefore, we cannot — and should not — receive our Lord with a soul dirtied by sin. If we realize we have a serious sin, even though we may seem to be contrite, we cannot go and receive the Holy Eucharist without previous sacramental confession” (*Understanding the Mass*, pp. 182-3).

Along these lines, Belmonte notes that St. Pope John Paul II taught, “The two sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist remain closely linked. Without a continually renewed conversion and the reception of the sacramental grace of forgiveness, participation in the Eucharist would not reach its full redemptive efficacy ... It is not only that Penance leads to the Eucharist, but that the Eucharist also



leads to Penance. For when we realize who it is that we receive in Eucharistic Communion, there springs up almost spontaneously a sense of unworthiness, together with sorrow for our own sins and an interior need for purification” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 184; John Paul II, *Letter of Holy Thursday* [1986], 8; DC, 7).

Of course, we know we are unworthy to receive such an amazing gift, but we are obligated to do our best to be as prepared as we can be. That’s why regularly making use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and striving to be in a state of grace is so important.

Why fast for an hour before Communion? When we don’t eat, we become hungry. When we eat a lot, even if it is our favorite food, we don’t want more. Fasting is an age-old way of growing in hunger, in this case for the living God.

Our hunger reminds us that we yearn to be filled up, that we yearn to have our hunger satisfied. This works for the body, but it also works for the soul. As we “clear out” room in our hearts through fasting, we realize that the empty space should be filled by God. As St. Augustine once famously said, the only one who really fills that hunger is God (“Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee”).

Fasting for an hour helps ensure that we are better focused on God for our nourishment and prepared to receive him in Holy Communion. Fasting before the Mass generally

covers food and non-necessary drinks such as alcohol, soda, etc. Water is allowed, as well as medicines.

For those who are seriously ill (hospital, nursing home, homebound) and for those who care for them, the rule of fasting does not apply. For example, a person in the hospital who is eating lunch when the priest comes is allowed to receive Communion. The same would be true for a nurse who just finished her lunch break when the priest arrives.

Having reviewed being properly disposed to receive Communion, next time we’ll review the official guidelines for receiving Communion. These guidelines continue to emphasize our belief in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist and provide guidance for people of various backgrounds who might be present at Mass.

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St. Claire HealthCare

(Continued from page 3)

infrastructure over the next six-and-a-half years. They promised to have a local board of 10 people, with SCHC appointing four of the 10. They promised to continue services such as behavioral health, dentistry and obstetrics and gynecology.

“They also pledged that all of our leadership and

employees would be employed with at least the same salary for at least a year,” said Sister Marla, and that UK, “promises to respect the Catholic identity by honoring the ethical and religious directives on the current footprint of the hospital.”

While the Sisters of Notre Dame USA will no longer sponsor St. Claire HealthCare, they will continue their ministry to the Morehead community through a newfound SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation. Per Article I of the

Foundations Code of Regulations its mission is to, “provide grants, contributions and any other forms of financial support to entities exempt from federal income tax, to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the people of Eastern Kentucky.”

In reference to the acquisition, Sister Marla not only believes but knows it is in the best interest of the hospital. “We made the deal to ensure the best future for St. Claire for the next 60 years.”

Stop the hate

(Continued from page 5)

nant of an opus to endure, or in Martin Luther King Jr.’s words, “too great a burden to bear.”

“Dealing with hate” was my gemstone in Ms. Mathews’s short, but powerful article. “There is a lot of confusion about hate and what it really means. If people realize that hate is something much bigger, that includes the desire to eliminate others, maybe they will change the way they use the word. It takes emotional intelligence to discern between feelings. But it is something that can be developed. Perhaps making people understand what they are actually thinking and feeling, and why, when they say, “I hate you,” or disentangling the different ingredients of their negative emotions, might be helpful.

For example, you could say, I know you are saying I hate you, which means there is nothing positive that you can detect about this person or group, nothing that you have in common. Is this really true? I think it’s better not to let your emotions reach the level of hate, and to start working on them while you are still angry.

Lesson of the day while at granddaughter’s First Communion Mass. Love one another.

Ray Smith is a commissioned Lay Pastoral Minister for the Diocese of Covington.

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, or by mail to 1101 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011.

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training class during their registration.

Step 3: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

Bulletins:

■ May bulletin: posted Sunday, May 6; due Tuesday, June 4.

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■ Wednesday, May 15, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, May 15, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ 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

Note: If your Training Tab is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution. For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covdio.org

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National/World

Without Christian hope, a virtuous life seems futile, pope says

VATICAN CITY — The world is in great need of hope and patience, Pope Francis said at his weekly general audience. Those who are patient “are weavers of goodness. They stubbornly desire peace, and even if others are hasty and would like everything straight away, patience is capable of waiting,” he said. “Even when many around us have succumbed to disillusionment, those who are inspired by hope and are patient are able to get through the darkest of nights,” he said in St. Peter’s Square May 8, the feast of Our Lady of Luján, patroness of Argentina. The pope continued his series of audience talks about vices and virtues by reflecting on the “theological” or New Testament virtue of hope. “If hope is missing, all the other virtues risk crumbling and ending up as ashes. If no reliable tomorrow, no bright horizon, were to exist, one would only have to conclude that virtue is a futile effort,” the pope said. Christian hope “is not an obstinacy we want to convince ourselves of, but it is a gift that comes directly from God,” he said. It is a belief in the future “because Christ died and rose again and gave us his spirit.”

Havana chapel restored, reconsecrated with U.S., international support

MIAMI — What some are now calling the most beautiful church in Cuba is a newly restored Catholic university chapel in Havana abruptly abandoned during the Cuban Revolution and in disuse for some 60 years. A half a century has passed since local students walked the grounds of Santo Tomás de Villanueva campus, and since a Mass was celebrated in the student chapel, situated in one of Havana’s suburban districts. It was founded in 1946 by the American-based Augustinian religious order with assistance from European Augustinians. Now, with support from the U.S.-based Catholic Extension Society and private donors here and abroad, the old Santo Tomás de Villanueva chapel has been fully restored and reconsecrated as Santo Tomás de Villanueva and San Charbel Parish. A delegation of bishops and clergy from the United States, including Miami Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, traveled to the Miramar district of Havana for dedication formalities at the end of April following a years-long planning process to restore the chapel and a number of other decaying churches around Cuba. More than a decade ago, the chapel was returned to the church after serving as a small storage facility for the Cuban government.

New York attorney sues pro-life groups over abortion pill reversal process

NEW YORK — New York Attorney General Letitia James sued Heartbeat International, an anti-abortion group, and 11 crisis pregnancy centers May 6, accusing them of misleading and potentially causing harm to women by claiming that they can provide a treatment that reverses the effect of the abortion pill mifepristone. The groups named in the lawsuit preemptively sued James April 30, arguing her threatened suit violated their rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

Proponents say administering a dose of progesterone in an attempt to stop the effects of a medication abortion, a process sometimes called abortion pill reversal, can halt the effects of mifepristone, the first of two drugs used in a medication or chemical abortion. But opponents argue that it is an unproven method. A 2019 study of the abortion reversal process was ended early due to safety concerns. In a statement, James accused Heartbeat International and the other crisis pregnancy center defendants of “spreading dangerous misinformation by advertising ‘abortion reversals’ without any medical and scientific proof.” Peter Breen, the Thomas More Society’s executive vice president and head of litigation, said James “has decided to proceed full steam ahead with her witch-hunt against New York’s pregnancy help organizations.” Breen called the lawsuit “baseless” and argued James “is seeking to keep in the dark women who desire to urgently try to continue their pregnancies.”

Cincinnati Archbishop Schnurr to begin chemotherapy treatment

CINCINNATI — Archbishop of Cincinnati Dennis Schnurr has been diagnosed with cancer, the archdiocese revealed this week, with the prelate set to begin preparing for chemotherapy treatment this week. An archdiocesan spokesman told Catholic News Agency on Wednesday morning that on Friday the archbishop “received a post-operation diagnosis of stage 3 small bowel cancer.” His doctor noted that, generally speaking, the archbishop’s health is excellent, and that is certainly a source of optimism for the success of the treatment, the archdiocese said. The treatment plan includes a regimen of chemotherapy over the next six months, preparation for which will begin this week. “We ask all Catholics and people of goodwill to please keep Archbishop Schnurr in their prayers,” the archdiocese added. The archbishop plans on continuing to work while receiving treatments.

Fertility decline a complex trend beyond any one policy solution, economists say

WASHINGTON — The U.S. fertility rate has slowed to a new record low, according to an analysis recently published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But experts said there does not appear to be any one policy that could reverse a complex trend. The report, which examined 2023 birth certificate data, found a 2% decline from 2022, with 3,591,328 births recorded in 2023. It coincides with broader declining fertility rates globally. The U.S. birth rate has generally fallen below what experts call replacement level, or the amount of live births necessary for a generation to reproduce itself, since 1971. A society that can’t meet its replacement rate might see adverse economic outcomes as well as a reduced tax base, economists said. “The trend line is pointing pretty much one direction and that’s down,” said Patrick Brown, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center’s Life and Family Initiative. Other countries with a similar trend that have implemented policies aimed at reversing the trend — such as Singapore or Sweden — have not had much impact on fertility rates, according to Brown. “I’m dubious that there’s a lot the policy can do, but there doesn’t that doesn’t mean there’s nothing we can do,” he said, pointing to a slight uptick in fertility around the COVID-19 pandemic when more companies adopted policies like flexible hours or work-from-home capabilities.

Pope Francis appoints priest of Nashville, Tenn., as bishop of Knoxville, Tenn.

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis has appointed Father James M. Beckman, a priest of the Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee, to be the bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee. Bishop-designate Beckman, 61, is currently pastor of St. Henry Parish in Nashville. A Tennessee native, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1990. The appointment was publicized in Washington May 7 by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. Bishop-designate Beckman succeeds Bishop Richard F. Stika, who resigned June 27 at age 65, 10 years earlier than bishops are required to submit their resignation to the pope. In a statement sent to media when the pope accepted his resignation, Bishop Stika, who was the longest serving bishop in eastern Tennessee, said he has “been dealing with life-threatening health issues most of his adult life” including Type-1 diabetes since 1980. After Bishop Stika’s resignation, Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of Louisville, Kentucky, was named apostolic administrator of the Knoxville Diocese and will continue in that role until Bishop-designate Beckman’s episcopal ordination in late July, according to a diocesan news release. The Diocese of Knoxville covers 14,242 square miles and has a Catholic population of just over 71,000 out of a total population of over 2.5 million.

Mexican church leaders denounce political persecution in case of abducted bishop

CUERNAVACA, Mexico — The Mexican bishops’ conference has questioned accusations of untoward behavior by Retired Bishop Salvador Rangel Mendoza of Chilpancingo-Chilapa amid conflicting accounts of his disappearance and subsequent reappearance in a hospital bed — with the conference secretary general saying the situation had assumed political overtones. “This situation has taken a turn toward a political orchestration that is far from seeking truth and justice,” Secretary General of Mexico’s bishops’ conference, Bishop Ramón Castro Castro of Cuernavaca, said in a May 5 video. “In these times of fake news and polarization, we deeply regret that speculations are being made lightly about the appearance of Monsignor Salvador Rangel, which, far from clarifying (things), confuse people of good will and harm those who are currently unable to share their experience,” Bishop Castro said. Bishop Rangel, who is well-known in Mexico for his work brokering truces with drug cartel bosses, disappeared April 29 and reappeared two days later in a public hospital in the city of Cuernavaca, 50 miles south of Mexico City. The circumstances of his disappearance have provoked controversy as the Morelos state prosecutor and local politicians — who analysts and press stories describe as being at odds with each other — offered conflicting accounts. The controversy engulfing Bishop Rangel comes as Mexico prepares for June 2 elections, in which the ruling Morena party has campaigned on the proposition that Mexico has become less violent under its administration and chastised voices countering that narrative. Bishop Rangel has been outspoken on the ineffectiveness of government security policy and alleged that politicians in Guerrero — and beyond — often colluded with drug cartels. “At least right now in Guerrero, all the elections in my area are almost settled,” he told OSV News April 1, referring to drug cartels settling on candidates to back.

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Sister of Divine Providence leads nursing students to experience Catholic social teaching at the border

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Every year, a group of nursing students from Thomas More University venture to the southern border of the United States. Led by Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer these students visit the Brownsville Diocese in South Texas to work at the diocese's refugee respite center, as well as the Holy Family Birth Center.

Sister Kay, a nurse and midwife herself, welcomes these junior and senior students, who have completed all their maternal child health coursework, to join her in this hands-on experience. She herself found a visit to the southern border years ago to be "life-changing."

"I brought this up to the faculty at Thomas More, and they agreed it would be a good experience for our students," she said.

Sister Kay said that the experience is centered and built around Catholic social teaching. "Particularly," she said, "Catholic social teaching as it relates to immigrants through the care of immigrants and working with immigrants."

"It's an experience for the students to really be stretched and to broaden their understanding of migration through the lens of this Catholic social teaching."

The foundation of Catholic social teaching, according to Sister Kay, is the "dignity of the human person, and the Church's commitment to life flows from the dignity of the human person."

Thus, she said, "the Church's approach to immigrants flows from our belief in that dignity ... there is a belief that people have a right to seek a safer, better life."

Sister Kay also said that Catholic social teaching also teaches that countries have a right to control their borders, but that countries have a responsibility to "establish immigration policy that is compassionate."

Prior to leaving for the border, Sister Kay has students reflect on these social teachings as an important part of the experience, as well as to "reflect on how dependent the economy in the United States is on immigrant workers."

In addition to this catechesis, students who travel to the border earn technical experience as well. At the Holy Family Center, an out-of-hospital birth center, students experience childbirth in a "different way," working alongside the center's nurse midwives and registered nurses. At

the refugee center, they help with donations and serving food to the people sheltered there.

"We play with the children," said Sister Kay, "we assist with providing prenatal care to the pregnant women who are there. The kind of professional work that we do really focuses on maternal child health as well as any of the other things that come up when you're volunteering in a shelter."



Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer, pictured second from left, with nursing students from Thomas More University who volunteered at the Diocese of Brownsville's refugee respite center this past March.

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