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Feast of Corpus Christi to kick-off Campaign of Mercy with celebration in St. Mary's Park

Laura Keener
Editor

This year's Corpus Christi Eucharistic procession will begin a diocesan-wide Campaign of Mercy.

As in recent years, a Eucharistic procession will be held around the campus of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 2. Bishop John Iffert will be the celebrant, with services beginning at 2 p.m. The procession will begin and end in the Cathedral.

Following the liturgical service, everyone is invited to neighboring St. Mary's Park for an ice cream social, officially launching the diocese's "Campaign of Mercy." The Campaign of Mercy is an evangelization effort built around the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The concept of evangelization through works of service was borne out of the With One Heart pastoral planning and leadership development initiative. Members of the WOH Planning Commission presented as part of its key recommendations that such an effort be included in the five-year Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

"I had shared with the Planning Commission that I really wanted to focus on works of mercy," said Bishop Iffert in an interview with the *Messenger*, May 10. "They put it together with the thrust toward evangelization and came up with this campaign of works of mercy, really as a basis for us to grow in our own faith and then to invite others to share in that faith."

Service projects — helping others — is typically a very attractive way of living out the faith, especially among young people, but is true for everyone, Bishop Iffert said.

"We all want to be people of service, people who are authentic in our love for our neighbor," said Bishop Iffert. "The idea is to first focus on ourselves, make sure that we are doing the kinds of things that Jesus asks us to do. Then reflect on that, pray around that, let that strengthen our faith, and form connections with people who are ministering alongside us. Then allow that growth of faith and connectedness and zeal take hold of us to invite others to share that experience of being drawn closer to Christ through serving others; let that become a key part of our lives. That's the whole plan really."

Kicking off the Campaign of Mercy on the Feast of Corpus Christi demonstrates

the connectedness of the Eucharist — Jesus' invitation to share in his salvific love through his body and blood — with his commission to love and serve others.

"What we're really talking about is the way Eucharist is central to our lives and that our lives of Christian service flows from that," said Bishop Iffert. "Everything flows from that encounter with Jesus."

Bishop Iffert offered the conversion of St. Paul as an example of

how an encounter with Jesus causes an interior conversion that manifests in public action. Paul was an opponent of the fledgling Church, a persecutor of those who proclaimed the teachings of Christ. But then he encountered Christ on the road, was blinded and then healed. After this encounter, "he was compelled to proclaim the name of Jesus. He couldn't stop preaching Jesus," Bishop Iffert said of St. Paul.

"It's the same way for us," Bishop Iffert said. "The Eucharist is sort of the privileged way that Catholics encounter Christ ... we come back day after day, week after week, and receive Christ in the Eucharist and are strengthened by that sacrament. That experience with Christ compels us outward to proclaim Christ by word and by deed."

As a way of evangelization, service to others, doing good works, is more natural to most people than the act of preaching.

"For most of us, we're going to proclaim Christ by the way we live our lives," said Bishop Iffert. "The deeds that we do for others, that's going to preach Christ in our neighborhood and our community."

"If we are going to receive Him and be transformed by his presence, then that means that we are going to begin then to pour our lives out for others the way he did. It's a crucial, crucial connection," Bishop Iffert said.

As the Campaign of Mercy kicks-off June 2, Bishop Iffert said that this project is going to need time to grow. And will truly happen in three continually overlapping waves — to engage in works of mercy, to reflect on it and then to invite others.

First, the adage that you can't give what you don't have holds true. To begin, the focus for every Catholic is to be regularly engaged in doing some work of mercy — a corporal work of mercy or a spiritual work of mercy. Then to reflect on that.

"This is so important," said Bishop Iffert. "Sometimes we do a work of service,



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

Ice cream social following celebrating the kick-off of the Campaign of Mercy at St. Mary's Park on Madison Ave. across from the Cathedral.



(above left) Bishop John Iffert anoints the congregation with holy water from an aspergillum.
 (above center) Bishop Iffert pours chrism to anoint the altar, similar to baptism, five times in a pattern reminiscent of the five wounds of Christ.
 (right) Bishop Iffert lights a brazier on the altar; its smoke rising like prayers to God.
 (below left) Divine Providence Sister Margaret Stallmeyer, director and judge for the diocesan Tribunal, works with Deacon Jim Fortner and Father Daniel Schoemaker to dress the newly dedicated altar.
 (below center) Bishop Iffert offers a candle, lit from the altar's brazier, to Deacon Jim Fortner. Deacon Fortner then used the same fire to light the altar's candles.
 (below right) At the end of the dedication, Deacon Jim Fortner places an arrangement of flowers to decorate the foot of the altar.



Baker photos

New altar dedicated in Curia oratory reminds us of the importance of consecration

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

A new altar was dedicated, May 9, in the Oratory of St. Paul on the Covington Curia's upper floor.

Bishop John Iffert celebrated the dedication in the company of many of the Curia's staff, and concelebrated with Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys, who was bishop during the new Curia's buildings initial construction. Deacons Jim Fortner, chief operating officer, and Brian Cox, of the Office of Diaconal Formation and NKU campus minister, assisted.

Bishop Iffert began his homily mentioning a conversation he had with a religious sister regarding the "difficulty of vocations." He recalled how she told him how, at Notre Dame Academy, there are 600 girls who respect and love the sisters.

"They love the work that they do and they join us in our missionary efforts ... it becomes an important part of who they are," Bishop Iffert remembered her saying.

"The problem is," he said, "none of them see the need for consecration."

"We are dedicating this altar so that it is for a single pur-

pose," said Bishop Iffert.

Much like the Eucharistic gifts on the altar, we pray for God to "transform us, to transubstantiate us," said Bishop Iffert. "To remake us ... that's what this altar is dedicated too. That's what this oratory is dedicated to — the service of God with our whole being. Privileged service, that's what this space is about."

"We dedicate these spaces to our encounter with God ... to be the Body of Christ in the world. To be those people devoted in service to God — for calling the world to perfect love."



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!

Father Thomas Robbins celebrates his Golden Jubilee

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

It was 50 years ago that Father Thomas Robbins, pastoral administrator and Chaplain for Holy Cross District High School, Covington, was ordained a priest by the hands of Bishop Richard Ackerman. During these years, Father Robbins served as a chaplain in the air force, he was a pastor at St. Anthony, Taylor Mill, St. Pius X, Edgewood, and St. Matthew, Morning View, and he served as a chaplain for a local police force. To accompany his many pastoral and ministerial duties, Father Robbins taught high-schoolers throughout his 50 years, and continues to do so, where he estimates that he has served “thousands” of students.

When Father Robbins started seminary, he said there was not a “flash of lightning moment” where he felt called to the vocation of the priesthood. “I went through it with the idea of trying it for a year, I was going to stay one year. I just kept going back and back and back, the next thing I knew it was seven and a half years.” Despite not having that distinct moment of discernment, Father Robbins knew the priesthood was his calling. “There were originally 12 of us that started out from Covington and out of the original 12 that started there were only two left, me and one other guy.”

Holy Cross District High School, was



Father Thomas Robbins



Father Robbins’s first assignment after his ordination. Having previously taught at the school as a deacon, it was fitting that his first home should be there. Spending a dedicated 10 years at Holy Cross High School, Father Robbins was then sent to St. Joseph Parish, Cold Springs, where he lived in residence while teaching at Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria. After being in residence for four years he was assigned to be pastor at St. Matthew, though he remained a teacher at Bishop Brossart. Eventually becoming pastor at St. Anthony, Father Robbins was not yet ready to leave the classroom, so he volunteered to take on classes back where he started at Holy Cross District High School, where he remains teaching senior religion courses.

Throughout the years

of pastoral ministry and teaching, Father Robbins has found that he cannot pick a favorite, saying there are positives for both vocations. As a pastor, “when you baptize people and bring them into the church, the sacraments that you perform.” Having the unique experience of teaching and being a pastor, Father Robbins has been able to watch students and parishioners grow not only academically but spiritually, “I’ve seen a number of them that have become active in their parish, that is one of the rewards.” Teaching, Father Robbins says, also has its own sets of rewards, “you see people really progress and grow, some of the ones you thought would be troublemakers turned out to be good, solid people. You can never give up on anybody.”

Father Robbins was not just a pastor and teacher during his 50 years, in his spare time he was the chaplain to a local police force and the air force, where he was in the reserves for 10 years. While working with the police he ministered to “people who were in crisis.” Whether that be the people in handcuffs or the officers, “The officers — you see people at their worst, you see them when they don’t want to see you.” As for his years in the Air Force, Father Robbins said, “it was pretty much like parish ministry.”

Serving as both a priest and teacher for 50 years, Father Robbins has ministered to thousands of individuals both spiritually and academically. “To do 50 years as a priest and 50 years teaching — it is an accomplishment. It keeps you going, you don’t have a lot of time for sitting around.” After 50 years of work, Father Robbins says that he is still not done. “I found the right vocation. There are challenges in every walk of life, and I found the one that was suited to me.”

Newman Ministries helps college-bound Catholics stay connected to their faith

Maura Baker

Staff Writer

Data shows that anywhere between 50 percent to over 80 percent of Christian students stop practicing their faith in college. Newman Connect, a program through the non-profit Newman Ministries, hopes to reduce these numbers.

A nationwide initiative, Newman Connect allows for students or their family members to establish a relationship with their campus Catholic ministry — Newman Club or otherwise.

“Once you add your name to Newman Connection, they reach out and do the work,” said Angie Poat, diocesan youth minister and proponent of Newman Connection — with whom she hopes to re-ignite a diocesan relationship with after COVID-19. Newman Connect connects with on-

campus ministries, who, in turn, contact college-bound students directly.

“The campus ministries reach out to the student to introduce themselves and to invite them to a ‘come and see’ event,” said Ms. Poat. “The goal is to establish relationships in a place of safety, both spiritual and just on a basis of connection so that they know where to go to nurture their faith.”

She continued, saying, “The primary goal is to help students stay Catholic, live Catholic and be in a community of like-

minded people.”

Students or their parents wishing to establish this relationship can do so online at <https://www.newmanministry.com/highschool>.



Feast of Corpus Christi

(Continued from page 1)

especially a service for the poor, and we feel good about ourselves because we feel we’re doing something nice. But that’s not what Christian service is.”

A more important realization, Bishop Iffert said, “is for all of us to realize that no matter what our life situation, WE are poor ... no matter how rich we think we are and no matter how good we think we have it, we are poor.

Whatever we can share with another pales in comparison to what is being done for us in and through Christ — the gifts that we receive, the gifts that draws us to salvation ... That realization, that Jesus calls me to do what he does for me for others ... How everything that I have is gift from Jesus. That’s the place, I think, where we can be led into a deeper, more loving relationship with Christ and a deeper, more loving, more joyful life.”



Corporal Works of Mercy

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To harbor the harborless
- To visit the sick
- To ransom the captive
- To bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- To instruct the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To admonish sinners
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive offenses willingly
- To comfort the afflicted
- To pray for the living and the dead



Bishop's Schedule

May 18

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

May 19

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

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

May 20

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

May 21 -23

CCK/ Province meeting, Archdiocese of Louisville, 11a.m.

May 23

St. Henry District High School graduation, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 24

Villa Madonna Academy graduation, Mother of God Church, Covington, 10:30 a.m.

Notre Dame Academy graduation, Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Covington, 4 p.m.

Holy Cross High School graduation, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 25

St. Patrick High School graduation, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, 1 p.m.

Covington Latin School graduation, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 7 p.m.

May 27

Curia Closed — Memorial Day Holiday

Correction

The date of the Mission Trip to Pikeville organized by Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, was incorrect in the May 3 edition of the *Messenger*. The trip will be held June 10 – 14 (not July). Here’s some new information: there is an information meeting at IHM on May 19, 5-7 p.m. The trip is open to incoming eighth-grade students through college freshman. The *Messenger* apologizes for the error.

The three countercultural promises of a priest

In just a few weeks, I will ordain three men to the priesthood for the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. Ordaining priests is the greatest privilege that I have as a bishop. Period. When, at the high point of the ceremony, I place my hands on the heads of the deacons and call forth the Holy Spirit upon them, I will be standing in the tradi-

WORD ON FIRE



Bishop Robert Barron

tion of the Apostles, who similarly laid hands on those to whom they imparted authority. I can testify that nothing in my life has ever made me feel more humble and more grateful.

There are three great promises that a man makes when he accepts diaconal and then priestly ordination, and each one of them is a marvelous countersign to our culture today.

First, he promises to recite faithfully the Liturgy of the Hours, that wonderful compilation of Psalms, hymns, and prayers, offered at five points throughout the day. I have been engaging in this prayer for the past 38 years of my priesthood, and I can testify that, though sometimes challenging, it has been a tremendous source of spiritual strength. It involves, to put it simply, the steady and conscious consecration of time.

As so many studies have shown, younger people today in the West are rapidly secularizing themselves and disaffiliating from the institutional churches. They constitute, as Charles Taylor has argued, the first generation literally in human history that is coming of age without a keen sense of the transcendent. And as I have been insisting for years, this emptying out of the sacred has wreaked

havoc in the minds, hearts and souls of this generation, among whom the numbers measuring anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation have been spiking. Therefore, when a young man makes a solemn promise before God and his community that he will, for the rest of his life, pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day, he is standing athwart this soul-killing secularism. He is declaiming that God exists and that God matters.

The second promise that a man makes is to live celibately. I know it has been said a thousand times, but it bears repeating: Celibacy is not a denigration of sex and marriage! We ought always to avoid a dualistic or Platonizing interpretation of celibacy whereby the renunciation of marriage is construed as a sort of judgment on physicality or pleasure.

So what is the right way to read celibacy? It is, first, a path of freedom. Untied to spouse and children — and all of the responsibilities attendant thereto — the celibate man can dedicate himself entirely to God and the people he serves. As I type these words, I can see my bishop's ring, which is not simply a sign of my office but also a wedding ring, for it signals my untrammelled devotion to the people the Lord has entrusted to me.

St. Paul clearly teaches: "the unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided" (1 Cor. 7:32-34). Moreover, celibacy provides a witness, even now, as to the way we will love in heaven, where, as Jesus himself said, "we neither marry nor are given in marriage." This doesn't mean, of course, that heavenly love is less than married love here below; on the contrary, it is greater, more intense, fuller and richer. How indispensable that, in a society practically obsessed with sex and sexual freedom, there should be, living among us, men who embody a spiritualized form of love.

The third and final promise that a man makes at his ordination is to obey his bishop. "I promise obedience to you and your successors," he says as he places his hands, in the manner of a feudal vassal, in the hands of the ordaining prelate.

I vividly remember when I did this on the day of my ordination, placing my hands in those of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, whom I barely knew, and vowing to do, within the limits of law and morality, whatever he or his unnamed and unknown successors would ask me to do. At that moment, I surrendered my "career" — which is to say, any itinerary or trajectory that I would set for myself. I put my life in the hands of my bishop, trusting that, through his will, the Holy Spirit would direct me.

Once more, how strange this move seems today! One of the most fundamental values for people now is self-determination, and not only regarding the direction of one's life, but the very meaning of it. I have often referred to ours as "the culture of self-invention." We have even reached the point where the determination of one's gender and bodily identity is entirely a matter of personal choice. Whereas the default position of most young people today is that their lives belong entirely to them, the priest, on the day of his ordination, says that his life does not belong to him at all, but rather to God and for God's purposes.

If you're in the neighborhood of Winona this June 8th, I invite you to come to the beautiful basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka and watch three young men make a joyful and very countercultural commitment.

Bishop Robert Barron is bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota. Article originally published at WordOnFire.org.

Are you ready for the Spirit?

The readings for Pentecost Sunday — Cycle B — are: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 and John 20:19-23.

I admit that for years I have been troubled by our contemporary practice of confirming all children, whether or not they are practicing the faith in any meaningful way or even at all. Even though I conformed to our practice, I thought that it would be better if we waited until candidates were "ready." If pushed, I was a little unclear about what constituted "ready," but I still worried that we were giving the sacrament too indiscriminately.

While I still wish that more of our children being confirmed were practicing their Catholic faith, my attitude has changed about them receiving the sacrament. Two things in particular have brought about that change: two paragraphs in Canon Law, and an encounter with Jesus in prayer.

Canon 889 — § 1 reads, "Every baptized person who is not confirmed ... is capable of receiving confirmation." "Every baptized person who is not confirmed" — so much for my desire to be more discriminate about the

giving of Confirmation.

I read further, wondering if there were any restrictions at all. Canon 889 — § 2 reads, "Apart from the danger of death, to receive confirmation lawfully a person who has the use of reason must be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew the baptismal promises." Even taking into consideration that this canon is only specifying what is lawful, and not necessarily what is good pastoral practice, still it indicates that my vaguely formed ideas of "readiness" were my own creation, and far beyond the Church's ideas of it. I could hear one of my seminary instructors, who would caution us, "Don't be holier than the Church."

The second thing to change my attitude was an encounter with Jesus. One morning, during my regular prayer time, I asked him again about it, and this time I received an answer — as usual not one that made me feel warm and comfortable. "Ready?" Jesus asked me. "Were you ready when you were baptized *two weeks* after you were born? (His emphasis.) Were you ready to be confirmed when you were in the *third* grade? Were you ready when you were ordained?" More gently, He continued: "Do you think the apostles were ready (fit) when I poured out my Holy Spirit on them at Pentecost? It is not a matter of being ready to receive the Holy Spirit, although there should be some preparation [Canon 889 — "suitably instructed", "properly disposed"]; it is the Spirit that makes you ready — to fulfill the call and invitation I give, should you choose to do so."

What does Scripture say about the Holy Spirit and

Jesus' disciples? The Holy Spirit made them bold, who were huddled together; made them articulate, who were uneducated; courageous to face persecution. Paul writes that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness." (Rom 8:26) The gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, etc. (Is 11:2-3) — powers that make up for what we lack. Clearly, one does not receive the Spirit because of one's strength, but to make up for human weakness.

The question for us is not, are we ready to receive the Holy Spirit, but are we ready to use the gifts that the Spirit brings us to fulfill whatever the Lord calls and invites us to do?

As we celebrate this great feast of Pentecost, let us each ask ourselves, am I using the Spirit's gifts? Do I act even when afraid? Do I engage non-Catholics in conversation, even though I feel inadequate for it? (see Matt 10:19-20) Do I speak the truth, even when I may suffer for it? Do I humbly accept the Church's teaching on matters of faith and morals, even if I wish she taught otherwise? (John 16:13) Do I use my gifts for the good of the Church? (Today's second reading.) Do I work for peace and unity in the Church? (Today's Gospel)

Let us not celebrate Pentecost in vain. The apostles used the powers given them by the Spirit; let us do likewise.

Father Stephen Bankemper is pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

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The ones in the back of church

When you are a parent, you clock many hours in the back of churches. Pacing with fussy babies. Corraling rambunctious toddlers. Calming down restless children. But the hidden beauty found at the back of church?



GUEST

Laura Kelly Fanucci

You get close to the ones Jesus loves. Jesus loves all of us, of course. Make no mistake about the wild love which God lavishes upon every human being — each unrepeatable sacred soul, each imago dei that bears the imprint of our Creator, each beloved child loved by the Father. But when you read the Gospels, you can't help but realize how Jesus has a particular affinity for those left on the sidelines,

the margins and the back of the crowd. Sinners, lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, widows, orphans, children, the poor, the sick, the disabled, the suffering — he draws each outsider close and draws them out of themselves, embracing them into the abundant love and mercy of God.

Little wonder that I sometimes feel closer to the kingdom of God at the back of church than in the front pew.

Parishes often have a practice of bringing the Eucharist first to those who cannot come forward to receive. This simple act makes manifest Christ's words that "the last will be first and the first will be last" (Mt 20:16). Surely the Good Shepherd who leaves behind the 99 to seek out the one lost sheep would not hesitate to walk to the back of church and welcome anyone who felt uncertain if they belonged.

Dioceses around the country have long-standing traditions of televising Masses for those who are homebound. Many parishes continue their pandemic-era practice of streaming Mass online. A small but growing number of dioceses are now offering sensory-friendly liturgies with softer lights, quieter music, shorter homilies and the freedom to participate in the Mass free from judgment about noise or movement — simple accommodations that can make it possible for families, caregivers and all members of the Body of Christ to be included in the Mass.

Once I attended a workout class where the teacher would welcome late-comers with a smile, far from the sneers often side-eyed toward the tardy. "I always figure the last people here are the ones who need it most," she'd remind us as she'd make room for each person who showed up — especially first-timers or late arrivals.

Couldn't our churches strive to do the same, since we are the hands and feet of Christ here on earth?

As my children have grown, I have been blessed with a few remarkable friends who have taught me what it means to welcome the ones in the back. They cheer for the teammate who needs extra encouragement, invite the classmate who gets overlooked for birthday party invitations, and strike up conversations with new faces at church or school. In ordinary ways, they model Christ's inclusive love, seeking out the sidelined first.

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul reminds us of the essential welcome — even inverting the world's expectations — that is demanded of Christians: "We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up ... May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom 15:1-2, 5-7).

Whenever we get the chance to welcome another in the name of Jesus, we widen our embrace of the people Jesus loves.

Even and especially the ones in the back.

Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker, and founder of Mothering Spirit, an online gathering place on parenting and spirituality. Her column has been provided by OSV News.

Mothers saying 'yes' to God's calling

As I look back on a blessed Mother's Day weekend, I think so much of my own mother and the important role that our mothers and mother figures play in our culture.

The month of May is a special month dedicated to our beloved and Blessed Mother Mary. As Catholics, we know that Mary is unique. She was born without sin and was asked to be the Mother of God. In her young age she said "yes" to God's calling, and she has shown us the important role a mother plays in her child's life.

Mary was one of us, a mother gently guiding her child through their formative years. Just like all mothers, I'm sure Mary experienced great joy throughout Jesus' life, but she also made sacrifices and suffered greatly as she watched him die on the cross.

As mothers we have an important role to be like Mary and show our families to say "yes" to God. That does not mean that it will always be easy, and we will not suffer some difficulties and heartache along the way. But by using our Blessed Mother as an example, we can show our families that saying "yes" is the greatest choice we can make.

I was reminded recently that the Church does not put "rules" in place to make us miserable, but to protect us.

As a mother and parent, God gave me a great gift and responsibility, along with my husband, to raise our children to become saints. What a daunting thought, but we are all supposed to strive for sainthood, aren't we? For our children to reach this greatness we must lead and guide them to follow the rules of the Church, "rules" that shall lead us to true peace and happiness.

Mary was a mother; she guided Jesus! It was through Mary's prompting that Jesus performed his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. Through Mary's "yes" to God we are also reminded of the importance of answering our own vocations, whether it be as a married person, single life or as a priest or religious.

We must pray that our sons be strong men who respect the worth and dignity of all humanity and know that

their future spouse is waiting for them. A real man is not someone who has a fancy car, nice clothes or a million-dollar bank account. No, a real man is one who proves he is worthy of your trust, and that action speaks louder than words. A real man is guided by his faith and is not afraid to show that he has said "yes" to be a true follower of Jesus.

We also must pray for our precious daughters to know that they hold a priceless gift of themselves and that they are beautiful and made in the image and likeness of God. A true woman's dignity comes from respecting herself and letting others know of her beautiful, selfless soul. A true woman does not have to show off her body for someone to like her; it is through love for herself and for God that others will see her beauty. A real woman says yes to living the life of a pure woman in love with God and with hope.

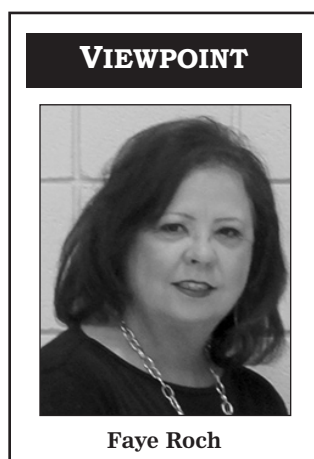
Today's parents are so worried and consumed about their child getting into a prestigious college on academics or earning a full ride to a D-I athletic program, thinking that this could gain them riches in material items. It is the education and formation to become a future saint that will bring them eternal riches in the kingdom of God.

When my children were young, I prayed for their vocation and for their future spouse. All four chose the vocation of marriage. Now I pray that they know and love Christ deeply, and that patience, sacrifice and self-denial are all required for a strong marriage.

Everyone, not just families, are very busy and over-committed. Our culture today lures us away from one of the greatest gifts of the Catholic Church, sharing the Eucharist on Sundays. While it is very easy to sleep in on a Sunday, or to make weekend activities and sports activities a priority over attending Sunday Mass, guiding our children and families to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days is guiding them to say "yes" to a taste of the heavenly banquet that we hope to feast on one day.

I know I am not always a perfect mother and know that I must always ask for forgiveness when I fail. But I also know that God's great mercy is much bigger than any of my sins or failings. I know that if I allow our Blessed Mother Mary to take a place in my heart, she will teach me and help me to grow in faith and lead my family closer to her son. I just need to say "yes" to her gentle formation of me.

Faye Roch is director of the Pro-life Office for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.



VIEWPOINT

Faye Roch

An Emmaus moment: The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

As the calendar inches closer to summer, my excitement for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage reaches new heights. This pilgrimage, set to commence the week-end of May 17-19,



GUEST

Chenele Shaw

Pentecost Sunday, is not just an event but a profound journey of faith, community and spiritual transformation. What makes this pilgrimage particularly special to me is not only my role as the route coordinator for both the Juan Diego and Seton routes but also my personal journey of faith that was ignited years ago on a pilgrimage much like this one.

The theme of this year's pilgrimage, "The Road to Emmaus," resonates deeply with the essence of our spiritual journey. Just as the disciples walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, unaware of his presence until their hearts were opened, this pilgrimage invites participants to walk together in faith, discovery and communion.

Reflecting on my own journey, I recall the pivotal moment when I embarked on my first pilgrimage as a high schooler. It was a humble beginning, fueled by a

spark of curiosity and a longing for something more profound in my spiritual life. Little did I know that this journey would become a cornerstone of my faith.

One of the most memorable aspects of that pilgrimage was the generosity of local parishioners who supported us along the way. From Florida to Alabama, their kindness and hospitality sustained our spirits, reminding us of the interconnectedness of the body of Christ. It was during this pilgrimage that I experienced a deep sense of renewal and encountered the profound presence of the Blessed Sacrament at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Now, as a coordinator for two of the pilgrimage routes, I am blessed with the opportunity to facilitate a similar transformative experience for others. The itinerary for each route is carefully planned to incorporate walking processions, community events at local parishes and moments of service that exemplify the spirit of selflessness and devotion.

The beauty of this pilgrimage lies not only in its structured events but also in the spontaneity of encounters and shared experiences along the way. As participants come together from diverse backgrounds and regions, there is a palpable sense of unity and shared purpose, echoing the disciples' realization on the road to Emmaus that they were in the presence of the risen Christ.

For those interested in joining this pilgrimage of faith and renewal, the website eucharisticpilgrimage.org pro-

(Continued on page 6)

Governor says faith leaders have ‘powerful’ role in climate action

Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Faith leaders must collaborate with public and private partners to set an example on combating climate change for the communities they serve, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said while standing in the Vatican Gardens.

“People look to their faith leaders”, she told Catholic News Service on the sidelines of a Vatican conference May 15. “It’s incredibly powerful and important for faith leaders to be talking about climate and to be working with others in government, in business, in philanthropy, in academe on these issues.”

The governor traveled to the Vatican for a three-day summit of scholars and government leaders to discuss developing climate resilience; six governors were scheduled to participate in the meeting including California Gov. Gavin Newsom and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, as well as 18 mayors, including Boston Mayor Michelle Wu.

After the summit’s first session, Healey told CNS that Catholic leaders such as Pope Francis and Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley of Boston are figures with “concern and care for the most vulnerable among us,” particularly those greatly impacted by climate change.

“Looking out for the poor, looking out for people who are disproportionately burdened by the climate crisis is who they are,” the governor said.

Healey also expressed her appreciation for the “human-centered approach” that the cardinal and Pope Francis have in confronting social issues, including migration and housing for vulnerable and low-income people.

Delivering a keynote address at the summit, Healey announced the launch of the Climate Careers Fund to train people for in-demand, skilled climate jobs such as electricians and EV mechanics in Massachusetts. The pilot program seeks to dedicate \$10 million in philanthropic resources and public funding to fill climate workforce gaps.

Massachusetts aims to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and to meet its greenhouse gas reduction mandates the state will need to train 34,000 workers for climate sector jobs by 2030, according to a statement from the governor’s office.



Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey speaks during a summit, titled “From Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience,” at the headquarters of the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences at the Vatican May 15, 2024.

CNS photo/Courtesy the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

Healey said she announced the training fund at the Vatican because “it’s so resonant with everything that Pope Francis stands for and represents,” namely, the “humanity” involved in the fight against climate change.

The Climate Careers Fund, she said, “is a human-centered approach to addressing climate change.”

“We can have all the goals and targets that we want, but we’re not going to get there unless we have the human capital and the human resources and the workforce able to do that,” the governor said.

The summit’s first session May 15 included speeches by the governor of Vihiga County, Kenya, and the mayors of Rome and São Paulo.

Melissa Hoffer, climate chief for the state of Massachusetts, told CNS that a unifying theme among local communities represented at the summit

is the need to find creative ways of financing climate-related initiatives.

“What to do is not really too much of a question,” she said, but finding the funds to implement action is. Hoffer said, for example, that “electrifying buses is expensive, finding the garage locations, the real estate, the infrastructure to charge them is expensive, so how are we going to do that?”

In his address, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, a climate scientist at the University of California, San Diego, said that while most of the focus on combating climate change revolves around mitigating emissions, more action must be taken to advance adaptation of communities to rising temperatures and sea levels — an effort in which local leadership will be key.

Ramanathan said he hopes that more local leaders will attend the next U.N. Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, and he asked that nations “facilitate a stronger voice for mayors and governors.”

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An Emmaus moment

(Continued from page 5)

vides information about public events, routes and ways to participate. Whether you are a seasoned pilgrim or someone seeking a deeper connection with your faith, there is a place for you on this transformative journey.

As I prepare for the upcoming pilgrimage, my heart is filled with anticipation and hope. I pray that each step taken, each encounter shared and each moment of reflection will be a catalyst for spiritual growth and a deepening of one’s relationship with God.

In the words of the Gospel of Luke recounting the Road to Emmaus, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” May this pilgrimage be a source of that burning passion for all who embark on this sacred journey, and may it lead us closer to the heart of Christ.

For those eager to join this transformative pilgrimage, visit eucharisticpilgrimage.org. Let’s make this journey a collective step toward spiritual renewal and connection with God. Together, we’ll walk in the footsteps of faith, igniting hearts and souls along the way.

Chenele Shaw is the route coordinator for the Juan Diego and Seton routes of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Her column has been provided by OSV News. The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage St. Elizabeth Ann Seton route will pass through Cincinnati July 3-8; the St. Juan Diego route will pass through Louisville July 8 and 9. Plan to meet the pilgrims and RSVP at eucharisticpilgrimage.org.

We Choose Life



Pro-Life Office

of the Diocese of Covington

Mission Statement

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

Safe Haven Baby Boxes: Choosing triumph over tragedy

We Choose Life Committee
Contributor

On March 1, 2023, an abandoned newborn was found deceased inside a house in Falmouth, Kentucky. The very next morning, Lisa Klee heard about the fate of the infant on the news. Lisa, who has tirelessly fundraised for Safe Haven Baby Boxes in Northern Kentucky, was on her way to the Pendleton County courthouse in Falmouth to plea for the installation of a Safe Haven Baby Box at the local fire station.

A Safe Haven Baby Box is a safety device that, under a state's Safe Haven Law, legally permits a mother in crisis to surrender her newborn safely, securely and anonymously.

Eight months later, on Nov. 9, 2023, at the Pendleton County Fire Station, a Safe Haven Baby Box was blessed in honor of the tragic loss of that newborn child. Monica Kelsey, the founder and

who assuredly had a plan for her. She knew that her faith was greater than the shock and shame of rape and deliberate abandonment.

While on a speaking tour promoting sexual abstinence in South Africa with her friend Pam Stenzel, Monica encountered the baby box idea. Immediately she felt called to bring this concept to America, starting in her home state of Indiana. Monica and her allies had to design the baby box, test it, train personnel, and achieve passage of Indiana's Safe Haven Law.

Being a paramedic, she had a sense of where to start logistically, then her passion took over, and in two years the first baby was saved in 2016. Currently, every state has a Safe Haven law, with some variation in who can surrender a child and at a what age.

Kentucky's Safe Haven law was put in place in 2021. KRS 405.075 allows for anonymous surrender of an infant to a staffed place of worship, police station, fire station, hospital or emergency medical facility.

A sign easily seen by the public must state: "This facility is a safe and legal place to surrender a newborn infant who is less than 30 days old. A parent who places a newborn infant at this facility and expresses no intent to return for the infant shall have the right to remain anonymous and not be pursued and shall not be considered to have abandoned or endangered their newborn infant under KRS Chapters 508 and 530."

Those taking custody of the newborn must "immediately arrange for the infant to be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room and shall have implied consent to any and all appropriate medical treatment."

Parental anonymity is ensured unless there are indications of physical abuse or neglect.

For Safe Haven Baby Boxes the law requires a dual alarm system, that is tested monthly, plus a twice-daily visual check; climate control; and location inside a fire station, police station or hospital that is staffed 24-hours a day.

The parent surrendering the newborn waives parental rights and legal standing. Unless the parent contacts the Cabinet for Health and Family Services within 30 days, the Cabinet will begin the process for involuntary termination of parental rights, permanent removal of the parents' rights to the baby, allowing the Cabinet to begin to seek an adoption arrangement. In Indiana, Kelsey said, families who are signed up for foster care with the intention to adopt typically adopt rescued babies within 30 to 45 days.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes also provides a 24/7 national Safe Haven Crisis hotline that a parent can call or text for counseling. Just like the boxes, calls are confidential and anonymous, although the caller's location is requested to pinpoint applicable laws and resources. The goal of the hotline is to provide the mother in crisis with help in stabilizing her situation, giving her more time to decide what is in the best interest of herself and her child.

Baby boxes continue to spread across Kentucky. In 2023, Monica Kelsey said 19 boxes were active, with more in production. Her hope was for 34 operational baby boxes in Kentucky by the end of 2024.

Father Britton Hennessy, pastor, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth, was a chaplain with the Pendleton County Fire Department when the tiny body was found on March 1, 2023.

He consoled those affected, especially the first responders shaken by the discovery. Father Hennessy was delighted by the speedy creation of the Falmouth Safe Haven Baby Box — a community project that brought triumph from tragedy.



Community members gathered Nov. 9, 2023, at the Pendleton County Fire Station for the blessing of its new Safe Haven Baby Box. The blue balloons honor an abandoned infant who was found dead in a Falmouth home in March 2023, which inspired community members to install the life-saving box.

Safe Haven Baby Box Crisis Hotline Text or Call (888) 742-2133

Safe Haven Baby Box Northern Kentucky locations

Ft. Mitchell #96
Ft. Mitchell Fire Department
2355 Dixie Highway
Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017

Hebron #149
Hebron Fire Department
3120 North Bend Rd.
Hebron, KY 41048

Edgewood #190
Edgewood Fire Department
385 Dudley Pk.
Edgewood, KY 41017

Ludlow #197
Ludlow Fire Department
234 Oak St.
Ludlow, KY 41016

Pendleton County #182
Pendleton County Fire Department
332 Hwy 330 W. Falmouth
Falmouth, KY 41040

Carroll County #181
Carrollton Fire Department
750 Clay St.
Carrollton, KY 41008

Gallatin County #198
400 Main Cross St.
Warsaw, KY 41095

chief executive officer of Indiana-based Safe Haven Baby Boxes, was present at the dedication.

While that baby's life could not be saved, there is now hope that in a crisis women will know there is a safe option for their child. She can surrender her baby with no shame, no blame and no name.

Monica is not a stranger to this story. Growing up, she knew she was adopted and loved, yet she still wondered about her birthmother and eventually began searching for information. What she discovered was a shock: a violent rape and a newborn — herself — abandoned in the hospital.

Monica was stunned. Was she really unwanted? Worthless? Shame, sorrowful pondering and prayer led Monica to the realization that she was a child of God,

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

The many faces of Mary that inspire devotion among Catholics of all cultures

Jean Parietti
OSV News

Apparitions, images of the Blessed Mother inspire devotions in our cultural communities. Honoring the Virgin Mary and seeking her intercession is an important part of being Catholic.

“To celebrate Mary is to celebrate the closeness and tenderness of God who is with his people, who does not leave us alone, who has given us a Mother who cares for us and accompanies us,” Pope Francis said in October 2023.

Catholics honor Mary in many ways and under many names. Most Catholics know about the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. But did you know there are Vatican-approved Marian apparitions in Africa that occurred in the 1980s? Other apparitions of the Virgin Mary, reported centuries ago in China, India and Vietnam, continue to draw the devotion of Catholics here and abroad.

With the help of the Seattle Archdiocese’s Multicultural Ministries team, the Northwest Catholic magazine reached out to the archdiocese’s diverse Catholic communities, asking them to share their special devotions to Mary.

Our Lady of Kibeho: Feast Nov. 28

Our Lady of Kibeho appeared to three high school students in Kibeho, Rwanda, between 1981 and 1989.

On Nov. 28, 1981, Alphonsine Mumureke reported seeing a lady of incomparable beauty who called herself “Nyina wa Jambo” (“Mother of the Word”). In 1982 and 1983, two other young women, Nathalie Mukamazimpaka and Marie Claire Mukangango, also experienced public apparitions of Mary.

During a vision on Aug. 15, 1982, Alphonsine described a disturbing scene of killings, believed to be a prophecy of the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s that claimed more than 800,000 lives, including some 12,000 in Kibeho.

Our Lady of Kibeho’s messages to the world included an urgent appeal for repentance and conversion, the need for suffering to attain heaven and requests for praying the rosary and renewing devotion to the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

Mary’s apparitions to Alphonsine ended exactly eight years after they began. They were approved by the Vatican in 2001 and are the only approved Marian apparitions in Africa. An estimated 100,000 pilgrims visit Kibeho each year.

Our Lady Of Peace & Good Voyage (Our Lady Of Antipolo): Feast Dec. 8

This 17th-century Roman Catholic wooden statue enshrined in Antipolo Cathedral is one of the most celebrated images of Mary in the Philippines. A form of the Black Madonna, the image represents Mary, the Immaculate

Conception.

The statue was brought from Mexico in 1626. The ship’s safe passage was attributed to the statue, so it was given the title “Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage.” The statue also traveled aboard galleons during six Pacific crossings from 1648 to 1748 and is credited with their safe passage.

During construction of a church to house the statue, tradition says the image would vanish from its shrine, only to reappear atop a tipolo tree. That was considered a divine omen, and the church was relocated to the site of the tree. When the Japanese invaded Antipolo during World War II, the statue was moved several times and even buried in a barrel to keep it safe until the war ended and it could be returned to the church in Antipolo. Today, millions of pilgrims visit the shrine annually.

Our Lady Of La Vang: Feast Nov. 22

During the persecution of Catholics in Vietnam in 1798, refugees hid in the jungle of La Vang in the Quang Tri Province. According to tradition, while praying the rosary one night, they had a vision of a woman wearing traditional Vietnamese garments and holding a baby. The woman consoled them, told them how to use the leaves of the trees to treat their ailments and told them, “From this day on, prayers said on this spot will be heard — and answered.”

They believed the apparition to be the Virgin Mary, and the story spread. A chapel was built on the site in 1820, followed by larger churches built to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims. La Vang became a minor basilica in 1961.

Although the apparition is not approved by the Vatican, in 1996 St. John Paul II commended Vietnam to the protection of Our Lady of La Vang. She represents hope, faith and promise to Vietnamese Catholics around the world.

Our Lady of Velankanni: Feast Sept. 8

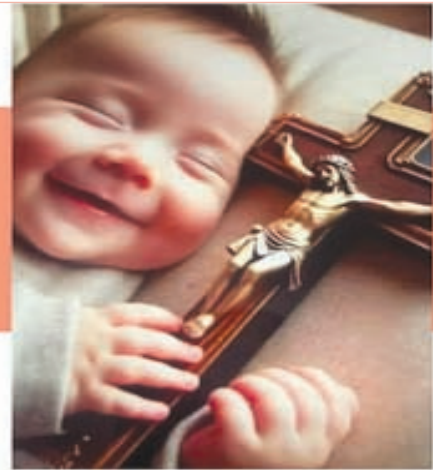
In the 16th century, Marian apparitions were reported at two sites near the village of Velankanni (Waylaan-kanni), India. In each case, Mary, holding the infant Jesus, asked a boy carrying milk or buttermilk if he would give some for her son, and each boy complied.

When the first boy delivered the rest of the milk to his customer, the pot was



OSV News photo/courtesy Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

A mosaic of Our Lady of China is seen in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Our Lady of China, also known as Our Lady of Donglu, was made more popular during the Boxer Rebellion of 1899 to 1901. She helped protect Catholic Chinese who were fleeing persecution by the government who wanted to expel foreigners and Christians from the country.



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Fun June events!

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Friday, June 14 • 5 – 8 p.m.
Family fun with food, drinks, music and cars.

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Thursday, June 27 • 5 – 7 p.m.
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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.

The Sisters of Notre Dame will be holding their 102nd festival on Thursday, July 4, and are looking for individuals or families that would like to volunteer from 11 a.m.—5 p.m. High School and middle school students can earn service hours and use them for the upcoming school year. Call Margie at (859) 392-8229 or email mschnelle@sndusa.org.

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, teach-

ing, 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 angelicoproject.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.



Celebrating Mary

CCD Students celebrating their first Holy Communion at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, performed a May Crowning. May is celebrated as the month of Mary.

2024 Parish Festivals

St. Augustine, Covington
June 7–8

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. Joseph, Cold Spring
Aug. 2–3, 6–11 p.m.

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

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

Jubilee countdown: Preparations for 2025 Holy Year move into high gear

Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

For more than 700 years, the Catholic Church has celebrated “jubilee” or “holy” years as special times to renew people’s faith and experience God’s forgiveness, particularly by going on pilgrimage.

The official Vatican website for the Holy Year 2025 — www.iubilaeum2025.va — says, “In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a ‘Holy Year,’ since it is a time in which God’s holiness transforms us.”

Popes typically announce a jubilee every 25 years,

although extraordinary holy years have been proclaimed for special anniversaries and occasions — for example, the Holy Year 1983 marked the 1,950th anniversary of Christ’s death and resurrection, and the 2015-2106 Jubilee of Mercy called all Catholics to reflect on God’s mercy and compassion.

While the main purpose and some of the key features of a holy year have remained unchanged over the centuries, each pope who called a jubilee has put his own spin on it, usually in response to changes he sees in the church or the world.

The preparations for the Holy Year 2025 officially began in February 2022 when Pope Francis announced the jubilee’s theme, “Pilgrims of Hope,” and said the focus would be on “restoring a climate of hope and trust” after the coronavirus pandemic and on helping people repair their relationships with God, with each other and with the Earth.

But the formal kickoff for a holy year is the publication of a papal “bull of indiction,” and the pope’s formal delivery of the document to the archpriests of the papal basilicas of St. Peter, St. Paul Outside the Walls, St. John Lateran and St. Mary Major and other church representatives.

The document is named for the round seal — a “bulla” in Latin — which used to be made of metal and is now simply an ink stamp. The bull officially announces the opening and closing dates of the holy year and outlines the aims of the celebrations.

Excerpts of the bull are read in front of the bricked-up Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in the presence of the pope.

The removal of the bricks, the opening of the Holy Door by the pope and pilgrims passing through the doorway are central symbols of a jubilee celebration and have been since the Holy Year 1500 during the papacy of Pope Alexander VI.

The current Holy Door, with its 16 bronze panels made by Vico Consorti, were consecrated and the door first opened Dec. 24, 1949, by Pope Pius XII in proclamation of the 1950 Jubilee, a scene represented in the bottom right panel.

For centuries, the doors were opened with a silver hammer, not a key, “because the doors of justice and mercy give way only to the force of prayer and penance,” according to “Mondo Vaticano,” a mini encyclopedia published by the Vatican.

The theme of human sin and God’s mercy is illustrated in the other 15 panels on the door, with episodes from both the Old and New Testament, including the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Annunciation, and the Prodigal Son.

Between the panels on the door at St. Peter’s are little shields with the coats of arms of all the popes that have opened it for a holy year.

Another key ingredient of a holy year — one that is much less tangible and often confusing — are the indulgences that pilgrims receive during a jubilee after making a pilgrimage or doing some sort of penance, going to confession, receiving Communion, making a profession of faith and praying for the intentions of the pope.

Perhaps as an indication of the confusion, Vatican News published a 3,200-word article about indulgences May 7.

The Code of Canon Law says, “An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment for sin, the guilt of which is already forgiven.”

With an indulgence, Vatican News said, “one can obtain more than simple forgiveness and, in fact, return to the state of grace one had with baptism. It is as if the slate were wiped clean, given a complete wash.”

“An indulgence is a mercy that, like abundant rain, falls on a person and transforms him or her, orienting the person to goodness, to love, to fraternity,” healing what sin had wounded, Bishop Antonio Staglianò, president of the Pontifical Theological Academy, told Vatican News.

In the modern era, a holy year is made up of dozens of specific jubilees. No matter how young or old, no matter what their vocation or profession, almost every Catholic will find a date set aside for him or her on the Vatican’s Holy Year 2025 calendar:

Journalists, artists, soldiers, grandparents, deacons, prisoners, government officials, missionaries and the poor all will have their day. The calendar is available on the Holy Year 2025 website.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican in this file photo from Dec. 8, 2015.

Mightier than the sword: Words are a Swiss Guard's best weapon

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

One of the oldest military corps in the world, the Pontifical Swiss Guard, has always armed itself with the best gear available in its 518 years of active service protecting the pope.

From 16th-century armaments of halberds, longswords and cannons to modern-day automatic assault rifles, Glock pistols, tasers and pepper spray, the guard's arsenal and tactical defense training have sought to be the most avant-garde to provide the best security for a high-profile, crowd-loving, globe-trotting leader.

While most tourists may only see the Swiss Guard as colorful and quaint — standing guard at papal events and surveilling entrances into Vatican City State — they are top-tier security specialists who actually find their most needed weapon is words.

"We have been trained in different combat techniques," as well as taken courses in psychology and situational assessment, said Corporal Eliah Cinotti, media officer of the Pontifical Swiss Guard.

But "nowadays you have to understand that the best weapon is talking. Until now we have had 100% (success) because we always manage to alleviate situations by talking," he told reporters April 30 in the courtyard behind the guards' barracks.

Thousands of people stream into St. Peter's Square, the basilica and the Paul VI Audience Hall for papal events and even more walk each day by the major entrances into the tiny city state where the guards are more at liberty to interact freely with the public.

While most passersby are inquisitive and curious, there has been "a significant increase" in the number of people experiencing some form of crisis, Corporal Cinotti said.

"There are more lonely people looking for comfort and maybe they see it in the Vatican," he said. There are also more individuals who might have some kind of psychological or mental disturbance "who come up to us and perhaps even ask for a word of comfort, a word of support."

While the 135 guards may work anywhere from six- to 12-hour days, he said the hardest part of the job is coming face-to-face, not with potential or actual troublemakers, but with those who are desperately seeking help.

Hardly distant sentinels, the guards, who are on average 22 years old, hear heart-wrenching stories from people.

Some people may have lost their job and have a large family to support, he said, or "there are people maybe who want to take their own life, and we have to stop this person

from taking their life."

Others might say they absolutely must see the Holy Father; "and we cannot allow everyone into the Vatican, so we are always trying to have a solution," the corporal said. Most often people are "looking for a specific kind of help," and the Vatican is seen as a kind of "last resort."

"When we are serving the entrances we are also there to be an ear that listens, too, and it is also part of our Christian formation," he said. The Swiss Guard is open only to Swiss male citizens who have graduated from high school, served in the Swiss Army, stand at least 5 feet 8 inches tall, are under 30 years of age and are Catholic.

"The pope always says that we are a calling card for the Vatican," he said, since the guards are such highly visible and relatively accessible public-facing figures. "But more importantly we are a bit like a messenger of the Gospel on the ground."

"We are also there to be Christians," which means trying to help others, he said. "We know what to do, but in the moment also sometimes a good word or even maybe putting yourself in the person's place helps. Listening especially helps."

The fact the Vatican is "a hot spot" for so many visitors is one thing that makes the job so unique, said Renato Peter, 24, who joined the Swiss Guard in September.

Most visitors are friendly, they might have a question or want a photo or information, he said, but that means it's also difficult to see which people might be trouble. While police officers typically head out to where a specific prob-

lem has been called in, for the Swiss Guard, "the problem comes to us" with no warning.

But working "on the border" at the entrances to Vatican City State is also one of the best parts of the job, he said, as it gives him a chance to meet people from all over the



New recruits of the Pontifical Swiss Guard receive assistance in putting on their armor in preparation for a training session at the Vatican April 30, 2024, ahead of their swearing-in ceremony May 6.

CNS photo/Lola Gomez

world.

Peter said he decided he wanted to be a Swiss Guard when he was 12 years old when his Diocese of St. Gallen organized a trip to the Vatican for a general audience in 2012. They visited the guards' barracks in the afternoon, "and then I said, 'Yeah, that's a cool job.'"

Peter, who will be officially sworn-in as a guard with 33 other young men May 6, said he thinks "it's really great" to serve Pope Francis who has been listed a number of times by Forbes magazine as one of the "Most Powerful People" in the world and is a "spiritual mentor" to 1.39 billion Catholics around the world.

The recruit likes the camaraderie and friendships he's made, but he is not a fan of Rome's heat, which can reach 107 degrees Fahrenheit or more. It's a job where sometimes "you don't do anything, but you sweat a lot."

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U.S. Catholics Help Deliver Powdered Milk — and Hope — to the Poor in Developing Countries

Malnutrition and infant mortality rates have become a serious concern in developing countries, including those that are geographic neighbors to us here in the United States. To provide relief, the Church has pursued many forms of humanitarian aid, from grain mixes to food vouchers, but one outreach continues to be essential in helping children: the distribution of milk powder.

Since the 1940s, aid organizations have used fortified milk powder to effectively fight hunger and malnutrition. Milk powders contain all 21 standard amino acids and are high in soluble vitamins and minerals.

What's more, milk powder is affordable, it doesn't spoil easily, and it is easy to pack, ship, store and reconstitute by those who receive it.

Years ago, the ministry partners of Cross Catholic Outreach requested shipments of powdered milk as a key tool for combating malnutrition among children in the communities they served. The ministry and its donors have been working hard to provide that resource ever since. In addition to shipping Vitafood — a special formula of grain, beans and vitamins — they fund the distribution of powdered milk in poor communities as often as possible.

"Meeting the needs of the poor and hungry is our core purpose," said Cross Catholic Outreach President Michele Sagarino, "and it is essential to engage in strategies that our in-country partners prefer because those will be the most effective."

One of those Catholic ministries in Guatemala is Amigos por la Salud y la Vida (Friends for Health and Life). Cross Catholic Outreach provides it with milk powder, which its teams then distribute through a network of 293

clinics countrywide. (See related story on opposite page.)

This milk powder is especially vital to young children who have been weaned from breastfeeding. It is a familiar food and can easily be incorporated into their diets.

"What I love most about milk powder is the great impact it has at a modest cost," Sagarino said. "Donors can provide the equivalent of an 8-ounce glass of milk for less than 26 cents. For \$60, we can provide a supply that becomes 14.5 gallons of milk and can last several months for a family."

These daily glasses of milk may not seem like much, but they are a true godsend for hungry boys and girls who might only get one meal a day. The nutritional value of the milk can pull them back from the brink of the lasting damage caused by malnutrition.

Without protein, vitamins and carbohydrates in their systems, malnourished children have little energy to pursue their education.

"Any desire they may feel to engage and learn is drowned out by a perpetual, gnawing hunger," Sagarino said. "Some lay their heads on their desks, unable to think about adding, subtracting or learning to read. They are more focused on whether there will be something — anything — to eat that day. They become desperate for a bowl of rice and beans. A piece of fish. A tall glass of milk. No child should feel that way."

If left untreated, malnourishment can also lead to lifelong health problems, including blindness, stunted growth and sometimes even death.

"Having visited villages of children struggling with hunger, I now have a deeply personal connection to their needs," Sagarino lamented. "I wish everyone could see their faces and



A young girl in Guatemala is given a nutritious glass of milk thanks to donations from Catholics in the U.S. to Cross Catholic Outreach.

know their names. I know that would give everyone the same drive I feel to end their suffering."

In the last year, global inflation and the impact of conflicts have made food programs even more important to the poor, according to Sagarino.

"Food shortages and inflation have definitely increased the risks of malnutrition, so our goal is to support Church leaders as they work to improve the health of the people," she said.

"As I see it, this is our opportunity to be a blessed instrument of mercy. It is our chance to further the work of the dedicated priests, sisters and Catholic

lay missionaries who are doing everything they can to respond to that threat."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach's water programs and other ministries to the poor can contribute to the ministry by using the brochure inserted in this issue or by sending a tax-deductible gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC03094, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner.

Dedicated Catholics Make Major Impact on Poverty as 'Mission Partners'

Consistency and reliability have always been recognized as important character traits in American culture, and most of us bring up our children to uphold those values, especially in the workplace. We do that because we know consistency and reliability produce stability and help us weather unexpected storms in life.

The same is true when it comes to charity, according to Jim Cavnar, co-founder and CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach. That is why his ministry cherishes its Mission Partners — donors

who have committed to monthly giving.

"Mission Partners represent the foundation of our ministry," Cavnar said. "Their commitment to helping the poor monthly gives us a steady, reliable way to serve. Without them, the missions we support in the developing world would never know whether they could rely on us to help with long-term projects, and it would be much more difficult for us to respond to disaster situations. When we can depend on the support of Mission Partners, we can move forward

confidently and take on every challenge that's put before us."

Because monthly giving is so important to Cross Catholic Outreach's work overseas, the ministry makes it as easy as possible for its donors to become Mission Partners. That option is included on appeals, on the charity's website and in the brochures it distributes at Catholic parishes and in Catholic newspapers.

"Ultimately, we ask people to become Mission Partners because monthly

giving has a huge impact on the priests, religious sisters and Catholic lay leaders working in the trenches, fighting to end hunger and alleviate poverty," Cavnar said. "When they face an unexpected crisis or a natural disaster strikes, their ministries know they can come to us for help because our Mission Partners have provided the resources needed to overcome those immediate challenges. We can make decisions in a matter of hours and send help within days — and the poor are blessed as a result."

Cross Catholic Outreach Nourishes the Poor in the Central American Nation Most Plagued by Malnutrition — *Guatemala*

In the small town of Santa Rita, an hour and a half drive from Guatemala City, young Marina sits outside the family's sheet-metal shack and takes care of her little sister, María.

Thankfully, a local Catholic mission has provided Marina's family with a fresh supply of milk powder, so the girls have something nutritious to fill their rumbling stomachs.

That's not something they can count on every day, even though their mother works hard doing other people's laundry for income. This recent supply of powdered milk will only last for several months. Then, the family prays compassionate Catholics in the U.S. will sponsor another gift like it.

Even though Guatemala has one of the region's most robust economies, nearly two-thirds of Guatemala's children live in poverty.

Impoverished families — especially those living in rural areas — lack the means to provide healthy, nutritious meals for their children, and, as a result, nearly 50% of Guatemala's children suffer from malnutrition.

Small children like María face the direst consequences. When they experience chronic undernutrition, they can become stunted, defined as having a low height for their age, and suffer other developmental setbacks.

According to UNICEF, stunting in the first three years of life is associated with poorer school performance — from both slower brain development and a higher likelihood of getting sick and missing school.

Fortunately, Cross Catholic Outreach has found a way to end this suffering and bring the love of Christ to these precious children. Founded more than

20 years ago to support Church-based missions around the globe, Cross Catholic Outreach mobilizes concerned Catholics in the U.S. to be champions for the poor.

"Children in Guatemala face heart-wrenching conditions every day," says Michele Sagarino, Cross Catholic Outreach president. "As with our other efforts around the world, we believe the best way to serve them is by partnering with local ministries who have existing relationships and infrastructure to reach the poor."

In this case, Cross Catholic Outreach partners with Amigos por la Salud y la Vida (Friends for Health and Life). This Catholic ministry was founded by Dr. Jorge Raul Gramajo, who works tirelessly throughout his home country to end childhood malnutrition.

Gramajo partners directly with municipalities and mayors across Guatemala to make the powdered milk donated by Cross Catholic Outreach available to those who need it most. He sets criteria for towns and cities before they can qualify for assistance. For example, he expects them to set up well-administered services for women as well as clinics and nutritional centers, and it is through these nutritional centers the powdered milk flows to impoverished families identified as those in greatest need.

This professional and Church-focused approach enables benefactors in the U.S. to confidently contribute to various Catholic programs in Guatemala, including the milk powder outreach that helps satisfy the hunger of children.

Like Marina and María, three sisters in another household — Ana, María and Carmen — are also growing up with



Marina holds her sister, María, while they enjoy a glass of milk provided by Cross Catholic Outreach.

proper nutrition, thanks to the efforts of Cross Catholic Outreach and Amigos por la Salud y la Vida. The older two girls attend a rural school and look forward to coming home to enjoy a glass of milk with their little sister. The nutrition it provides is critical to these girls too, because their family has little income and few modern conveniences. The milk represents God's love and helps restore their hope, and for that they are grateful.

Gramajo is also very grateful for the support he receives from Cross Catholic Outreach and its U.S. benefactors. "I

can tell you that chronic malnutrition would be 25% or higher from what it is right now, and infant mortality would be greater as well," he said. "The best results in Guatemala are the ones accomplished by Catholic organizations that are dedicated to supporting vulnerable children."

Sagarino and the team at Cross Catholic Outreach consider it a privilege to be part of the solution. "We see each child as a cherished gift from God," Sagarino said, "and when we help them develop into healthy adults, we do the work God intends for us."



Ana, María and little Carmen are receiving good nutrition and growing up happy thanks to the powdered milk made possible by donors in the U.S.

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC03094, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions for becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



USCCB guidelines for receiving Holy Communion



Father Luke Spannagel
USCCB

The three requirements for receiving Communion are: being a Catholic, in the state of grace, and observing a one-hour fast beforehand. To help people understand and to be clear, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops put together a listing of guidelines that would cover anyone who might happen to be at Mass. Sometimes you will see these guidelines printed on programs of special Masses or often on (or inside) the cover of the Missalettes. Since we covered them a bit last time, hopefully the first two sections will sound familiar. For a closer look at the USCCB guidelines, they are listed here:

For Catholics

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible ([Code of Canon Law] canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For our fellow Christians

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (John 17:21). Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

For those not receiving Holy Communion
All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encour-

aged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

What about those who are not able to receive Communion? As we can see here from the USCCB directives, we are asked to pray for true unity and a lessening of divisions. Recall that Jesus prayed for unity at the Last Supper, "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father; are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us" (John 17:20).

It is the Lord's desire for us to be united together. It is a great challenge for us to be mindful of this prayer of Jesus and to be joined with him in praying for a true growth in unity. For those not able to receive Communion at this time, there is also what is called a prayer of Spiritual Communion.

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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.

www.virtusonline.org, enter you user id and password. If your account is suspended contact your primary location where you volunteer or are employed. Your primary location contact information is found under your Contact Tab.

VIRTUS Training:

- 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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Due to an upcoming retirement, the Diocese of Covington is seeking a full-time ad salesperson for its official newspaper, the *Messenger*, beginning in May. The successful candidate will be a practicing, knowledgeable Roman Catholic who will be an excellent representative of the newspaper and the diocese. The successful candidate will be ready to embrace the mission of the diocesan newspaper, has some previous sales experience, works well as a team member, is attentive to detail, and will be energetic in serving existing customers as well as expanding sales to new customers. Interested candidates are asked to e-mail a letter of interest and a résumé outlining sales experience and other qualifications to

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The many faces of Mary

(Continued from page 8)

still full. In the second apparition, Mary asked a disabled boy to find a specific man in the next town and deliver her request that he build a chapel on the apparition site. The boy's leg was healed; he relayed the message, and the man erected a small chapel. A body of water at the site is believed to provide healing.

In the 17th century, Portuguese sailors caught in a storm arrived safely ashore at Velankanni on the feast of Mary's birth. Grateful for their rescue, they turned the chapel into a stone church, a place to venerate Our Lady of Velankanni, also known as Mother of Good Health. Today, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit the minor basilica.

Our Lady Of Guadalupe: Feast Dec. 12

One of the most well-known Marian apparitions occurred in 1531 on Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City.

The Virgin Mary appeared on Dec. 9 to Juan Diego, an indigenous man who converted to Christianity. She directed him to ask the local bishop to build a chapel in her name on the site.

The bishop didn't believe Juan Diego at first. After two more apparitions and visits to the bishop, the bishop requested a sign. On Dec. 12, Mary appeared again to Juan Diego, directing him to gather flowers from the hill, then arranged them in his tilma, or cloak.

Juan Diego returned to the bishop. When he opened his tilma, the flowers fell to the floor, revealing the Virgin's image on the cloak. This miraculous image is enshrined in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, visited by more than 10 million pilgrims each year.

Our Mother Of Africa: Feast Aug. 30 (US)

Our Mother of Africa, also known as Our Lady of Africa, is a Marian image that holds special importance for members of the archdiocese's Black Catholic Advisory Circle.

A chapel honoring Our Mother of Africa was dedicated Aug. 30, 1997, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The chapel features a bronze statue of Mary with African features.

A gift from the National Black Catholic Congress, the chapel "stands in remembrance of the painful history of slavery in the United States and the pillar of hope which Our Lady represented to enslaved peoples," according to the basilica website.

The devotion to Our Lady of Africa began when a statue of Mary as a Black woman was enshrined at Notre-Dame d'Afrique basilica in Algiers, Algeria, in the 1800s.

In Africa, Our Lady of Africa's feast day is April 30. In the U.S., the feast of Our Mother of Africa is celebrated Aug. 30, the anniversary of the basilica chapel's dedication.

Our Lady Of Czestochowa: Feast Aug. 26

Legend says the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa was painted by St. Luke the Evangelist and taken to Constantinople in the fourth century. It's known the image was brought from Hungary in 1382 and left in the care of the Monastery of Jasna Góra, Poland, where it remains enshrined.

In 1430, the icon was vandalized; despite restoration work, two scars from a sword remain visible on the Madonna's right cheek.

No Marian apparitions have occurred at Jasna Góra, but the icon became famous for miracles attributed to Mary's intercession, including some connected to important events in Polish history. Pilgrims leave items at the shrine in thanksgiving. St. Pope John Paul II left the belt of his cassock that was shot through and bloodstained during the attempt on his life in 1981.

The icon is also called the Black Madonna. Some attribute its dark appearance to centuries of soot deposits from candles and incense.

In the U.S., the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa is in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

Our Lady of China: Feast second Sunday of May

According to legend, a woman in white appeared above the small town of Dong-Lu, China, while it was under attack in April 1900. Although soldiers shot toward the woman, the apparition didn't fade, and a strange horseman — some say St. Michael — caused the soldiers to flee.

The original painting of Our Lady of China shows Mary

dressed in the royal robes of the pagan empress. This mosaic, depicting Mary and Jesus wearing traditional Chinese garments, is installed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

The mosaic is a copy of a well-known painting of Our Lady of China that was used on a holy card by Thomas Cardinal Tien Ken-Sin, China's first cardinal. After his exile,

the cardinal used the holy card to promote devotion to Mary and prayers for the persecuted church in China.

Chinese Americans in the United States pioneered and contributed to the mosaic project to show gratitude to Mary's maternal intercession for the people of China.

Jean Parietti is features editor for Northwest Catholic, the publication of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

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Christian love embraces the unlovable, enemies, the unborn, pope says

Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

While it is easy for people to love what is good and beautiful or to be generous and heroic for an ideal, Pope Francis said Christian love embraces what is not lovable, it offers forgiveness and blesses one's enemies.

This "greater love," which comes from God, "drives us where humanly we would not go: It is the love for the poor, for those who are not lovable, for those who do not care for us and are not grateful," he said at his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square May 15.

"It is love for what no one would love, even for one's enemy," he said in his main catechesis.

This "great selfless love" includes love for "the poor, the sick and the helpless, such as unborn children," he said in brief remarks to visitors from Poland, who had brought a bell, known as "The Voice of the Unborn," which will be taken to Kazakhstan. He also greeted representatives of the Yes to Life Foundation, which started the initiative.

The bell serves as a reminder of "the need to protect human life from conception to natural death," the pope said.

In his main audience talk, the pope continued his series about vices and virtues by reflecting on the "theological" or New Testament virtue of charity or love. Of the three — faith, hope and love — "the greatest of these is love," according to St. Paul the Apostle.

Many people consider themselves to be good people who love their family and friends, when in reality they may know very little about the love of God, he said.

"Christians are capable of all the forms of love in the world: they too fall in love, more or less as it happens to everyone. They too experience the benevolence that is felt in friendship. They too feel love for their country and the universal love for all humanity," the pope said.

"But there is a greater love, a love which comes from God and is directed toward God, which enables us to love God, to become his friends, and enables us to love our neighbor as God loves him or her, with the desire to share

the friendship with God," he said.

Love is charity, he said. And "we immediately realize that it is a difficult, indeed impossible love to practice if one does not live in God."

"Our human nature makes us love spontaneously what is good and beautiful. In the name of an ideal or a great affection we can even be generous and perform heroic acts. But the love of God goes beyond these criteria," he said.

"So much love is needed to forgive. Christian love blesses those who curse while we are used to responding to insults and curses with another insult and curse," he said.

"Love is the 'narrow gate' through which we will pass in order to enter the kingdom of God," he said. "We will not be judged on generic love, but precisely on charity, on the love we concretely had."



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis, with a young boy's help, rings a bell called "The Voice of the Unborn," before his general audience at the Vatican May 15, 2024. The bell was made for a parish in Kazakhstan by the Yes to Life Foundation, a pro-life group in Poland.

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National/World

U.S.-based relief organization supports pope's efforts in Gaza, Ukraine

VATICAN CITY — True change comes to people's lives and communities when both spiritual and material needs receive care, said the president of a Catholic relief and development organization based in Boca Raton, Florida. "When you see communities that integrate holistically, integral human development, the spiritual, the social and the material, you see people that care for one another," Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, told Catholic News Service in Rome May 9. Founded in 2001, the Catholic ministry partners with bishops, priests, religious and laypeople to provide food, water, housing, education, medical care, orphan support, microfinancing, disaster relief and God's love "to the poorest of the poor" in more than 30 countries around the world. Cross Catholic Outreach has also been partnering with the Vatican for years, providing direct financing for the pope's most pressing charitable activities. Most recently, they have been supporting refugees and internally displaced Ukrainians through the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, Sagarino said. Working with Cardinal Krajewski, the organization provided ambulances to Ukraine and now they are looking at financing a CT scan machine for a hospital there that had been bombed and was partially rebuilt, she said. Cardinal Krajewski also has asked the Catholic ministry to help support his efforts in getting desperately needed food and medicine into Gaza, Sagarino said.

Baltimore auxiliary, head of ministry to seafarers visit ship at site of bridge collapse

BALTIMORE — Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Adam J. Parker and Andrew Middleton, director of the archdiocesan Apostleship of the Sea, were transported May 1 to the Dali via a tugboat in the Patapsco River to visit members of the crew, who have remained on the ship since it struck a main support

of the bridge in the early morning hours of March 26. The bridge collapsed within seconds, causing eight road workers on the span to fall into the river. Two survived, and the body of the last of the six who died was recovered May 7. Bishop Parker and Middleton trekked to the Dali to deliver care packages and to celebrate Mass for Catholics in the crew. At that point, the bishop noted, the ship had been trapped under the wreckage for five weeks. The Key Bridge Response Unified Command used precision cuts made with small explosive charges May 13 to remove a large section of the Key Bridge wreckage from on top of the Dali, a ship registered in Singapore. Middleton and the bishop brought with them several boxes of donated care packages and other material for the crew, which had to be hoisted up by rope on the ladders. The pair met with most of the crew members, except for a handful who were still needed to maintain the working systems of the ship while it is stranded.

Louisiana bill would reclassify abortion drugs as controlled dangerous substances

BATON ROUGE, La. — Legislation in Louisiana would classify abortion drugs as controlled dangerous substances, which would criminalize improperly possessing the pills, such as lacking a valid prescription or outside a professional medical practice. The proposal is an amendment that was added in the state House to its version of legislation previously introduced by Republican state Sen. Thomas Pressly's legislation, SB 276. In its original version in the state Senate, the bill would make it a crime to intentionally give an abortion-inducing drug to a pregnant woman without her consent, something he said happened to his sister, Catherine Herring, in another state. The amendment to that bill would classify mifepristone and misoprostol—the combination of drugs used in a chemical or medication abortion—as controlled dangerous substances, a category also including medications that can be abused including narcotics. However, the bill states someone who poses the

drugs "for her own consumption" would be exempt. The FDA has argued the drugs pose statistically little risk to the mother in the early weeks of pregnancy. But critics have alleged regulations on the drug were improperly reduced in a lawsuit currently under consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Thousands rally at Canada's March for Life amid calls to act with courage, compassion

OTTAWA, Ontario — Thousands of pro-life advocates packed onto Parliament Hill and spilled out onto Wellington Street May 9 for Canada's 27th annual National March for Life. The diverse crowd gathered on the Hill at noon with its members bearing both homemade and professionally crafted signs pledging them to stand fast for unborn children and other vulnerable persons. The March's theme of "I will never forget you" was taken from God's poignant question to the people of Israel in Isaiah 49, emphasizing his enduring relationship with them: "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast?" The rally and march were broadcast live by U.S. cable network EWTN. Speakers included high-profile U.S. pro-life speaker and author Abby Johnson; President of 40 Days for Life Shawn Carney; and Campaign Life Coalition Vice-Chair Jeff Gunnarson. The opening prayer was led by Father Daniel Szwarc, a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, who had traveled to Ottawa from the Arctic Circle, together with three young women engaged in pro-life activities in their small Inuit village of Naujaat. Ottawa Archbishop Marcel Dampousse encouraged the marchers to act with "courage, compassion and conviction." March participant Christa Ranson, who had herself nearly gone through abortion, told The Catholic Register, Canada's national Catholic newspaper, that she was there to let women know they will be OK making a choice other than abortion. She said, "There are resources out there; there are doctors out there who will help."



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All Saints Parish	50	\$58,800	\$33,754.35	(\$25,045.65)
Blessed Sacrament Parish	235	\$158,600	\$160,229.77	\$1,629.77
Cristo Rey Parish	9	\$55,000	\$5,950.00	(\$49,050.00)
Divine Mercy Parish	53	\$39,600	\$15,264.00	(\$24,336.00)
Holy Cross Parish	99	\$19,800	\$50,119.44	\$30,319.44
Holy Redeemer Parish	11	\$2,800	\$4,503.85	\$1,703.85
Holy Spirit Parish	105	\$38,800	\$46,345.00	\$7,545.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish	217	\$134,900	\$149,896.00	\$14,996.00
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish	199	\$74,400	\$138,325.96	\$63,925.96
Mother of God Parish	151	\$58,600	\$104,533.00	\$45,933.00
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	4	\$44,000	\$650.00	(\$43,350.00)
Our Savior Parish	14	\$3,600	\$7,330.00	\$3,730.00
St. Agnes Parish	230	\$140,700	\$158,072.38	\$17,372.38
St. Ann Mission	21	\$8,800	\$15,260.00	\$6,460.00
St. Anthony Parish	55	\$16,800	\$28,620.00	\$11,820.00
St. Augustine Parish, Augusta	58	\$29,800	\$27,545.00	(\$2,255.00)
St. Augustine Parish, Covington	87	\$25,300	\$79,728.56	\$54,428.56
St. Barbara Parish	248	\$104,300	\$138,571.76	\$34,271.76
St. Benedict Parish	61	\$23,200	\$33,933.00	\$10,733.00
St. Bernard Parish	16	\$19,000	\$11,920.00	(\$7,080.00)
St. Catherine of Siena Parish	114	\$71,000	\$69,375.00	(\$1,625.00)
St. Cecilia Parish	126	\$74,100	\$55,772.00	(\$18,328.00)
St. Charles of Borromeo Parish	25	\$11,800	\$10,810.00	(\$990.00)
St. Edward Mission, Owenton	6	\$3,400	\$3,797.57	\$397.57
St. Edward Parish, Cynthiaona	45	\$15,200	\$23,175.00	\$7,975.00
St. Francis Xavier Parish	54	\$19,500	\$22,100.00	\$2,600.00
St. Henry Parish	171	\$58,700	\$100,262.00	\$41,562.00
St. James Mission, Minerva	15	\$4,700	\$2,885.00	(\$1,815.00)
St. James Parish, Brooksville	16	\$13,100	\$13,025.00	(\$75.00)
St. John Mission, Dividing Ridge	7	\$3,800	\$1,950.00	(\$1,850.00)
St. John the Baptist Parish, Wilder	19	\$3,000	\$6,410.00	\$3,410.00
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton	18	\$27,300	\$23,147.00	(\$4,153.00)
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington	68	\$23,500	\$41,225.89	\$17,725.89
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St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring	296	\$82,600	\$116,859.42	\$34,259.42
St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs	205	\$160,100	\$144,702.39	(\$15,397.61)
St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw	16	\$8,400	\$4,260.00	(\$4,140.00)
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish	333	\$132,000	\$128,973.81	(\$3,026.19)
St. Matthew Parish	7	\$13,000	\$3,175.00	(\$9,825.00)
St. Patrick Parish, Maysville	96	\$55,300	\$53,985.00	(\$1,315.00)
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill	131	\$59,100	\$54,497.54	(\$4,602.46)
St. Paul Parish	161	\$108,200	\$128,110.62	\$19,910.62
St. Philip Parish	64	\$14,200	\$33,750.40	\$19,550.40
St. Pius X Parish	463	\$207,500	\$260,633.67	\$53,133.67
St. Rose of Lima Parish	22	\$10,000	\$11,555.00	\$1,555.00
St. Therese Parish	132	\$23,600	\$58,099.00	\$34,499.00
St. Thomas Parish	257	\$101,800	\$121,981.19	\$20,181.19
St. Timothy Parish	274	\$173,300	\$201,085.00	\$27,785.00
St. William Parish	32	\$22,900	\$22,980.00	\$80.00
Sts. Boniface & James Parish	28	\$14,300	\$17,565.00	\$3,265.00
Sts. Peter & Paul Parish	89	\$27,600	\$52,790.00	\$25,190.00
Transfiguration Mission	5	\$2,600	\$305.00	(\$2,295.00)
Friends	16	\$	\$6,527.00	\$6,527.00
Totals	5,401	\$2,700,000	\$3,180,385.21	\$480,385.21

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