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



(above) The newly ordained Deacon Heskamp, along with Bishop Iffert, hold up the consecrated Body and Blood.

(right) The Heskamp family watches the ordination from the front pew.

(far right) During the Calling of the Candidate, Joshua Heskamp rises to affirm his presence, willingness and readiness to be ordained.



Bishop Iffert calls newly ordained deacon to live God's 'vocation of love'

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

A sunny Saturday morning, May 18, met with a full congregation in the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to celebrate the ordination to the transitional diaconate of seminarian Joshua Heskamp — a student at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Penn.

The ordination Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Iffert, Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys in choro and concelebrated by many of the diocese's priests. The vesting minister, who dressed the newly ordained Deacon Heskamp in his stole and dalmatic, was Father Jeffrey Von Lehmen, pastor, St. Patrick Shrine, Taylor Mill — and Deacon Heskamp's uncle.

"Two Christmases ago," Bishop Iffert began his homily, "Josh Heskamp spent his break from school writing a book that he titled 'Being and Love: An Ontological Investigation into Human Existence.' A little light work for the holiday," Bishop Iffert joked. "The work ultimately asked the question 'is life worth living?'"

Bishop Iffert addressed the soon to be ordained Deacon Heskamp, saying, "I'm very grateful, Josh, that you found a way to answer that question in the affirmative. I love that you exist and that you are here with us today."

Bishop Iffert commented on how, while reading Deacon Heskamp's book, he "couldn't help but think" in addition to answering fundamental questions and love and life, how Deacon Heskamp was "also providing structure for the late stages of [his] vocational discernment."

"Here's how our candidate for Holy Orders answers the question 'What is love?'" he said, "We must answer that love is our fulfillment of being with others in a subject-subject relationship, whereby the subject being of the other is affirmed in my subject's being and vice-versa."

Bishop Iffert continued, saying, "Love recognizes that existence is not a special privilege that must be learned. Rather, love embraces all life. No matter the circumstances, as a gift received, not as a right to be obtained."

During his homily, Bishop Iffert recalled a recent trip he took to Jamaica to visit the Mustard Seed Community, there. He said, "I wanted to see why and how so many people from our diocese are drawn to that holy mission of caring for people with disabilities in Jamaica." He commented on how, written prominently on many walls and above the chapel were the words "Jesus is here."

"I've been reflecting on that simple statement and I've come to think of it as a distillation of the mission of the Church," said Bishop Iffert.

Bishop Iffert then affirmed the commitment Deacon Heskamp was making at his ordination, "The mission you pledge yourself to participate in, not only today, but for the rest of your life. To live your life assisting in the prayer and worship of the Church. Even around the altar, so that we who are in desperate need of being grounded and healed and the one who is love may know that he is with us and for us. To teach God's word of never-ending love and self-emptying to all who have ears to hear."

As Deacon Heskamp continues his journey to priestly ordination, Bishop Iffert said that he will "not surrender being a deacon." "Rather," he said, "your ministry will always be founded like Christ's own. On compassion for those who are overlooked."

As he concluded his homily, Bishop Iffert addressed Deacon Heskamp, saying, "Help us to live the vocation of love that God intends for us. I charge you, even as I call you to be a deacon, I charge you to be the loving person God has created you to be."

Following his ordination, Deacon Heskamp's assignment for the year between now and his priestly ordination next year will be at St. Anthony Parish in Taylor Mill.

(See more photos on page 2.)

Baker and Keener photos



(above left) Joshua Heskamp walks through the Cathedral garden to the front doors to process in, with him is Father Daniel Schomaker, the ordination's Master of Ceremonies.
(above center) Laying his hands on Joshua Heskamp's head, Bishop Iffert prays the prayer of ordination to ordain him as deacon.
(right) Bishop Iffert and Deacon Heskamp embrace during the fraternal kiss.
(below left) Young members of the Heskamp family carry the gifts to the altar.
(below right) Bishop Iffert and Deacon Heskamp place hands on the Gospel, affirming the deacon's duty to proclaim the Gospel and preach its meaning.



(right) Joshua Heskamp lays prostrate before the altar during the Litany of Supplication.
(far right) The newly ordained Deacon Joshua Heskamp kisses his stole. Father Jeffrey Von Lehmen, his uncle and the vesting minister, holds it.



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

Regardless of the availability of the Purple People Bridge, the Cross the Bridge for Life festivities will be held on **Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.** Join us to celebrate the gift of life. It will be a festive time of family-friendly fun including live music, face painting and food.

Baker photos

Detective says police can't stop human trafficking alone, the community is the eyes and ears

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

In a presentation entitled, "Human Trafficking; what it is and what to look for — a parent's guide to keep their children safe," Det. Eric Higgins with the Independence Police Department taught mothers, fathers, healthcare workers and others on what could be indicators and warning signs

of human trafficking.

Det. Higgins, a product of the Diocese of Covington school system after attending St. Augustine School, Covington, and Holy Cross District High School, Covington, was invited to give this presentation by Julie Feinauer, the director of the Safe Environment Office and Victim Assistance coordinator. The invitation was extend-

ed in an effort to increase community outreach.

"We have been trying to host a couple of events each year that would bring the community together and give them information. Tonight, we are so glad to have Det. Eric Higgins here with us," said Mrs. Feinauer.

Det. Higgins is considered an expert on the subject of human trafficking. In addition to 15 years teaching college-

level criminology and forensics courses and 26 years of law enforcement experience, Det. Higgins has been part of the United States Secret Service, Marshal's Fugitive and Federal Bureau of Investigation task forces. Now with the City of Independence Police Department, Det. Higgins is passionate about educating the public about what is happening in our area.

From the Your Eyes Save Lives website, an official website of the Kentucky government, reports that "In 2022 alone, Kentucky received 344 reports of human trafficking involving 399 child victims. This is a 67 percent increase in reports and 71 percent increase in victims

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(above left) Det. Eric Higgins presents to the audience on the warning signs of human trafficking. (above center) Audience members listen attentively to the presentation by Det. Higgins. (above right) Julie Feinauer, director of the Safe Environment Office and Victim Assistance coordinator, introduces Det. Eric Higgins.

Campaign of Mercy invites people to encounter, reflect and invite as means for transformation

Laura Keener

Editor

After two years of data gathering, listening to parishioners, discussing and planning, Bishop John Iffert is poised to kick off an essential initiative of the With One Heart pastoral plan — the Campaign of Mercy. This campaign, identified by the WOH Planning Commission as an integral and strategic evangelization effort, focuses on service to others as a means for personal and communal transformation.

The Campaign of Mercy will launch on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally referred to as the Feast of Corpus Christi, with a prayer service and Eucharistic procession, June 2, 2 p.m. at the



Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Following the liturgical celebration, an ice cream social and kick-off event will be held at neighboring St. Mary's Park. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

The Campaign of Mercy incorporates three critical experiences to transformation — encounter, reflection and invitation.

First, to recognize a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and how that experience is calling a person to encounter and serve others — "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do," Jesus commissioned his apostles at the Last Supper and commissions his followers today (John 13:15)

Then through reflection and prayer allowing the Holy

Spirit to move the mind and heart to recognize how that encounter in serving others is life-giving, not for the receiver but for the doer — to transform good works into relationships. Finally, after experiencing that joy, inviting others to join in service, reflection and encounter.

"This is where I can see transformation, when people realize the goodness of our faith, that we are all called to be the hands and feet of Christ," said Faye Roch, director, diocesan Pro-Life Office.

Mrs. Roch is one of 16 committee members, led by Chris Goddard, director, Catholic Charities, who are developing and implementing the Campaign of Mercy. These members were selected not only for their professional and ministerial expertise but also as representatives from across the Diocese.

"It wasn't an exact science, but we wanted to have a nice cross section of people," said Mr. Goddard noting the diversity of clergy, religious, parishes, schools and Catholic organizations that make up the committee.

The two most immediate projects the committee is

(Continued on page 7)

Youth and young adult ministry summer events provide opportunities to grow closer to God through fellowship

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

In a report released by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, it was found that in 2022 only 17.3 percent of Catholics are attending Mass weekly. This number is down from 54.9 percent in 1950.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have emphasized the importance of youth catechesis in an effort to ensure Catholic children become practicing Catholic adults. It is this that spurred into action Angie Poat, diocesan youth minister, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Together, Mrs. Poat and her team organized three youth and young adult ministry events that she says are, "an opportunity to experience a positive culture of faith, and a place where teenagers can just gather and have fun. It is a connecting point to grow in faith, grow in relationships and to do something meaningful ... It is an environment that

provides a place of encounter."

The first event takes place June 18, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at St. Barbara Church, Independence. Called, "Connect! Junior High Day," the event is a follow up to the Connect Retreat that took place in February, though those who did not attend are still welcome to attend this event. For \$25, all upcoming sixth, seventh and eighth graders, are invited to "a lot of socialization, a lot of games that have a purpose, it is going to be good summer fun. We will end with prayer, music and adoration at the end of the day," said Mrs. Poat. To RSVP by June 4, follow the link on the youth ministry page of the Diocese of Covington website.

The second event, "Fully Alive! High School Retreat," is an overnight and is meant to "jumpstart a school youth group or peer ministry team, so diocesan youth groups are going to come together," Mrs. Poat said. Though Mrs. Poat

(Continued on page 7)



Bishop's Schedule

May 25

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

May 27

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

May 28

Curia Closed — Memorial Day Holiday

May 29

Mother of God's Young Adult group grill out, Mother of God Parish, Covington, 6:30 p.m.

May 30

Catholic Charities Board meeting, 1 p.m.

June 1

Cross the Bridge for Life, 10 a.m.

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

June 2

Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ procession and Campaign of Mercy kick-off, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 2 p.m.

Rolling out the red carpet: Jesus on the big screen

As a columnist with a case for press credentials in the Catholic space and a close friend in public relations, I've attended a few movie premieres. But I had never been to a

"Red Carpet" event until the one held for "Jesus Thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist," a new limited theatrical release documentary.

I wasn't sure what to expect — or what to wear. The fact that it was taking place in Orange County, close to the epicenter of the film industry was a little intimidating. Yet, I knew I'd be among friends, some of whom I haven't seen in a while, comfortably at home in a Catholic crowd. But honestly,

what made me buy the airline tickets was the insistent little voice inside telling me that I should go.

That little voice never disappoints. And neither does this film. There has been a more-than-usual number of faith-based movies in theaters over the past year, and we've managed to see most of them. But this documentary is special. That's because it offers unabashedly what the rest have soft-pedaled: substantial catechesis.

Accompanied by beautiful cinematography and an on-the-mark balance between information and inspiration, "Jesus Thirsts" reveals the power of the Holy Eucharist

with both reverence and warmth.

But it also does something else. "Jesus Thirsts" brings the breadth and depth of what we believe about the Most Blessed Sacrament to life through personal faith witness. By exploring the lives of Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Van Thuan, the evangelical fervor of Chris Stefanick and Father Donald Calloway, the expertise of Scott Hahn and Father Robert Spitzer, and the ministries of Sister Briega McKenna, Curtis Martin and Jim Wahlberg, this movie exposes audiences to the unity and diversity of the Catholic faith.

But this movie connects to audiences even more powerfully through the lives of ordinary Catholics whose names are not familiar: Deacons who serve in parishes and prisons. A priest who brings Eucharistic adoration to Ugandan villages. Italian monks who tend vineyards and make wine. And the Polish religious sisters who bake the hosts that are used at Mass. Their love and devotion is palpable.

The stated purpose of the "red carpet" event was to create an opportunity for Catholic media to interview the film's writers, producers, distributors and cast to provide an official kick-off to getting the word out. But something much deeper occurred. The premiere of "Jesus Thirsts" was an experience in miniature of what the Eucharist does and always has done: gather the Church.

With this film, Spirit Filled Hearts' Deacon Steve Greco and Bishop Kevin W. Vann of the Diocese of Orange have created something of lasting value. "Jesus Thirsts" is capable of reminding us all of what matters most: Jesus Christ remains with us in the gift of the Eucharist.

This film shows us how receiving his body, blood, soul and divinity makes us more intimately bound to one another. It joyously celebrates the truth that together, we are the body and bride of Christ. It teaches us why we don't need to wonder what it would have been like to "be there" when Jesus walked the shore of the Sea of Galilee or the streets of Jerusalem. For he is still with us, not just spiritually, but physically in the sacrament of the altar. God longs to be with us. The Good Shepherd comes to lead and feed us, guard and guide us.

Catholics have been scattered for too long. If there is one thing our Church needs in these years of Eucharistic revival, it is to learn the difference between circling the wagons and gathering the sheep. Jesus does, in fact, thirst for souls. He thirsts for unity. He thirsts for authenticity, perhaps even more than we do.

This film gives us all a chance to roll out the red carpet for Christ. We don't need to spend lots of money on designer dresses or suits. (Like everything I wear, mine was from a thrift shop.) We don't have to be "Catholic celebrities" with well-known names. We don't need exceptional talent or expertise of any kind. We only need the humility to know just how much we need Jesus, and enough compassion to realize that the rest of the world does, too.

"Jesus Thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist" is showing in theaters June 4, 5, 6. See <https://jesusthirstsfilm.com/> for more information.

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans. Her column has been provided by OSV News.

CALLED TO HOLINESS



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Harrison Butker and JP II on the dignity and vocation of women

There is little needed to set fire to the world of online Catholics — and last week's commencement speech from Kansas City Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker to an audience of Benedictine

College graduates seemed to riddle Catholic social media with fractures, as traditionalists and liberals, Catholics and non-Catholics, and even men and women came to loggerheads over how to digest the controversial remarks.

The real tragedy may be, though, that lost in the greater discourse is how many of Butker's beliefs are not those of the Catholic Church at large

— certainly Natural Family Planning is not simply a form of "Catholic birth control," and priests are not called to live lives set apart from their flock, both things Butker suggested. Butker's apparent vision of the role of women in society, while not entirely incorrect, is an overly simplistic version of the church's own vision, which is rich, nuanced, deep and beautiful. And not centered on biological motherhood alone.

Butker's remarks, in context, suggest that while the women in his audience had achieved great things, they had done so under the auspices of a "diabolical lie," which led them to seek corporate achievement instead of a life in the home.

"Congratulations on an amazing accomplishment," he said to the women in the audience, before suggesting that they have "had the most diabolical lies told to you." While

they may go on to "successful careers in the world," he suggested his wife's life only "truly started when she started living her vocation as a wife and as a mother."

As Catholics, we see a difference between a job and a vocation — the latter being a call from God Himself, and a purpose for life that aligns with God's plan. For many women, including myself, our vocation includes marriage and biological motherhood. For many women, it is a call to holiness, to chaste singleness or to the acknowledged highest calling of a woman, religious life.

Butker's comments, many Catholic and non-Catholic women believe, suggest that he believes the role of a stay-at-home spouse to be the highest, if not the only legitimate calling, for women — or at least, as Emily Stimpson Chapman smartly noted in her own essay earlier this week, many women who are familiar with online Catholic traditionalists and the so-called Man-o-sphere interpreted it that way.

Whether that was Butker's intention or not, his remarks, and perhaps his beliefs, seem poorly constructed in light of Catholic social teaching, articulated so boldly in St. John Paul II's work on the subject of the vocation of women, "Mulieris Dignitatem."

Popes have spoken only infrequently on the subject of women's roles in society. In the 1500s, the Catechism of the Council of Trent suggested women should remain at home, exiting to the outside world only with their husband's permission.

The church is largely silent again until the early 20th century, when Pope Pius XI authored "Casti Connubii," "Of Chaste Wedlock," which gave passing thought to women as keepers of the home, among its more strident proclamations on abortion, birth control and the sanctity of marriage.

Pope John Paul II, however, devoted an entire apostolic letter to the subject of the dignity and vocation of women

in the early 1980s — at a time when women were moving in large numbers into the working world, and feminism was well within its third wave. But his words are not designed to chastise women, but to remind them — and society at large — of the significant and, more importantly, vital role that women play in the world, not just as biological mothers, but as spiritual, societal, temporal mothers as well.

Many protestants — particularly those who have built careers and followings off of the idea of "Biblical Masculinity" — may view women as subservient to men from the beginning. Pope John Paul II entertains no such thought, elevating instead the "mutual relationship" of man and woman in marriage, and noting that "domination" of either sex threatens civil stability. To find inequality and enmity in the relationship between men and women not only disadvantages women, subjecting them to all manner of crimes against dignity, but it also "diminishes the true dignity of the man," as it goes against the ethos "which was originally inscribed by the Creator in the very creation of both of them in his own image and likeness."

Women, he says, are different than men — significantly so — but no less made in His image.

Even Jesus Christ, Pope John Paul II notes, exhibited no qualms about speaking frankly to and with women — a rarity in Jesus' time — and that the "order of love in the created world of persons first takes root in a woman." Mary, the mother of Christ, is intensely maternal, undoubtedly the paragon of femininity, and it is her free will assent to God's purpose for her life that ushers in salvation, "impossible with men, but not with God."

There is no doubt God believes women have dignity and that they are made in His image, but what of their vocation? Pope John Paul II speaks to that, as well, in

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GUEST



Emily Zanotti

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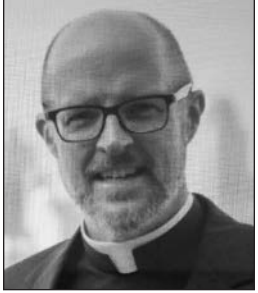
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The wondrous mystery and the life of faith

The readings for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity — Cycle B — are: Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40; Romans 8:14-17 and Matthew 28:16-20.

“God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery...”

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Phillip DeVos

These are the lustrous words of our opening collect for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

I fear this extraordinary revelation of nature of God, and by extension, of all existence and being itself, is something that falls rather flat, and seems rather ephemeral — rather than central — to contemporary renderings of the life of faith. In my view, this is what happens when the central spiritual, theological truths of the faith are overwhelmed by the concerns of the Church —bureaucratic and “the church of what’s happening now,” an attitude I sum up as “Catholic Inc.”

The most Holy Trinity, far from being a distant, rarified theological truth or a merely academic concern to keep theologians occupied, “is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in Himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them” (CCC 234).

In contemplating this great mystery, we must grapple with the call to have a personal communion of divine truth, love and life with the communion of Persons that is the most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This great mystery of our faith is not just some tenet of our relationship to God, which we call faith, but rather it IS the very center and goal of faith itself.

Considering the Solemnity of Pentecost we celebrated last week, I think it is important to note a warning offered by the theologian, Tracey Rowland, concerning the misuse of the Holy Spirit which, in turn, distorts our understanding of the Holy Trinity. She noted: “Some contemporary theologians say, ‘there is what Christ said, but now we live in this age of the Holy Spirit and have these new insights.’ There is no division of opinion within the most Holy Trinity. They are always on the same page.”

Precisely because the divine persons of the Holy Trinity are on the same page, we can confess with certainty the “eternal Holy Trinity and undivided unity” that is at the center of the Church’s evangelical mission to make known this wondrous mystery and to draw all mankind into this eternal communion with the Triune God. It is through this sharing in the Trinitarian Communion, offered through the sacramentality and ministry of the Church, that “we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory” and in so doing, find our fulfillment as human persons.

So much of the materialist sensibility which finds its expression in the “Catholic, Inc” mentality treats the purpose of faith — the believer finding his destiny and fulfillment in living within the Trinitarian communion of divine love — as either too “spiritual” for committee work or too “heady” or “theological” to matter to everyday life. It tends to reduce evangelization to “recruiting new church members.”

This reductionist temptation, if succumbed to, leads the Church down the path of chasing after sociological trends and not communicating divine life, which is her purpose.

The theologian, Archbishop J. Augustin DiNoia, OP, has written profoundly about this point of the Trinitarian essence and purpose of the Church: “The Church is a creation of the triune God. From the Father, who sends his Son and His Spirit to transform creaturely persons so that they come to share, with the uncreated Persons of the Trinity and with one another, a communion of divine life.”

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Stone and flesh (Jer 31:31-34)

Kermit, the frog, asserted, “It ain’t easy being green.” Isaiah, Jeremiah and most of those who spoke or speak for God could say, “It ain’t easy being a prophet.”

Jeremiah had an especially difficult life. He and his message were rejected continually. He lamented that he had been born (Jer 15:10-21), accused God of duping him into announcing the message (Jer 20-1-18), was thrown into a cistern to die (Jer 38:1-13). An entire book entitled Lamentations records his cries of distress. Each of the five complaints in Lamentations has a turning point when his cries about God’s treatment of him turn to acceptance and praise.

As a result of his life of struggle, Jeremiah came to a moment when his relationship with God

moved from fidelity to the written rules to finding God in his heart.

Every commitment exhibits a movement from struggling to keep rules to the joy of deeply satisfying relationships. Important pursuits begin with learning and observing stated rules. I have experienced joining a new group, beginning a new job, moving to a new neighborhood. Each venture has begun with an amount of anxiety which I have dealt with by being careful and trying hard to keep all the written rules and to pick up on the expectations others have of me. I want to prove my worthiness, to win acceptance.

This first stage, learning and observing rules, gives way to a more joyful participation as my involvement deepens. Relationships develop. As they do the exaggerated importance of following rules fades. Anxiety lessens and rules become somewhat mundane while others in the group become more important to me. It becomes easier to respond from the heart. Relationships gradually take the place of the rules in order of importance as I become more involved and committed.

MUSINGS



Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

Who is the Beloved Disciple?

For Lent I read James Martin’s new book “Come Forth: The Promise of Jesus’ Greatest Miracle.” In it he focuses on Lazarus and Jesus’ raising him from the dead. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, appear only in John’s Gospel. And the Beloved Disciple appears only in John’s Gospel. Martin theorizes about Lazarus being the Beloved Disciple and what that might mean to us.

VIEWPOINT



Sister Deborah Harmeling, O.S.B.

For many scholars, the relationship of Jesus to Lazarus, Mary and Martha indicates that friendship was important to Jesus. They speculate that when Jesus needed to be refreshed, he went to their home, outside Jerusalem. When Lazarus was dying, Martha sent word to Jesus, “He whom you love (*hon phileis*) is sick.” At the tomb the onlookers proclaim, “See how he loved him?”

The Beloved Disciple is mentioned only after the story of the raising of Lazarus, which stands at the center of John’s gospel. One scholar proclaims, “the raising of Lazarus as the climax of the public life of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.”

After the raising of Lazarus comes a dinner in Bethany at Lazarus’ home and after that comes the Passover dinner when “the one whom Jesus loves” (*hon egapa*) reclines on Jesus’ chest.

Jeremiah was faithful to his life as a member of God’s chosen people. He kept the rules and lived faithful to his commitment. He responded even when the response led to pain. After a long life of struggling to announce an unacceptable message, frequent moments of rejection, doubts about his call or God’s care, Jeremiah finally comes to say, that the rules that were written on stone must make way for the rules that are a response to a loving relationship.

This realization came at a great cost. Suffering and persistence were the prelude. Had Jeremiah given up or turned away because of suffering, he never would have realized how deep and abiding his love for God was.

Fidelity to a call, even when the efforts seem futile or only lead to pain and a sense of God’s absence elicit a temptation to turn away, to abandon our call, to become someone other than who we really are. The written rules are important and moving beyond them to heartfelt response comes only after faithful attention to them. But it is finally love that marks a fulfilling relationship.

In addition to fidelity is honesty about what we are experiencing. Jeremiah complained to God. That was honest. All true relationships involve the ability to be honest with each other, even about our disappointments with the other.

Acknowledging our disappointments, our frustration with God’s apparent lack of response to our calls for help, complaining to God about God’s perceived absence in times of anguish all form part of a relationship that eventually leads to finding God writing in our heart. If we deny our disappointments about God’s apparent deafness to our pleas and pretend that we always experience God as near and responsive, we will never find the God whose law is written in flesh.

Jeremiah teaches us that responding to God’s call does not lead to immediate glory, that faithful life will hold moments of pain and rejection. He shows that fidelity in the face of perceived rejection leads to a mature relationship with God and that honesty with God about all these experiences leads to finding God and God’s law in our hearts.

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

When at the Crucifixion Jesus asked the Beloved Disciple to take his mother, Mary, into “his own home,” it suggests a home nearer to Jerusalem — Lazarus’ home where Mary would also receive the support of both Mary and Martha.

The identification of Lazarus as the Beloved Disciple explains part of the story of the empty tomb. When Mary Magdalene announces that the body of Jesus is not in the tomb, Peter and the Beloved Disciple run to the tomb. The Beloved Disciple reaches the tomb first, as would a person who lived in the vicinity would have, peered in the tomb but does not enter in deference to Peter. When they note the burial clothes and the head covering, we are told that the Beloved Disciple saw and believed. Of course, he would be familiar with burial clothes.

Finally, there is the strange question Peter asks Jesus at the end of the Gospel. After answering three times to Jesus’ question, “Do you love me?” Peter asks about the Beloved Disciple, “What about Him?” and Jesus replied, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” The question indicates that there is something different about the Beloved Disciple. It would be natural for Peter to wonder if someone who had been raised from the dead would die again.

I’m not sure why it is important to me that the Beloved Disciple be Lazarus. It gives me a greater appreciation of the Gospel of John and gives the gospel a human dimension. It has brought me to reflect upon what it means to be a Beloved Disciple who has been called forth from death into new life. And that has been an Easter blessing.

Benedictine Sister Deborah Harmeling is a member of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky. Her reflection is available on the community’s blog, “Reflections from the School for the Lord’s Service,” online at stwalburg.org.

Be Witnesses

*“Wake up the world!
Be witnesses of
a different way
of doing things,
of acting, of living!”*

— Pope Francis

Religious Communities in the Diocese of Covington

Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg
Monastery www.stwalburg.org

Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis
www.brothersofthepoorofstfrancis.org

Passionist Nuns
www.erlangerpassionists.com

Sisters of Divine Providence
www.cdKentucky.org

Sisters of Notre Dame
www.sndusa.org

Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker
www.ssjw.org

Public and Private Associations

Franciscan Daughters of Mary
www.fdoMary.org

Missionaries of St. John the Baptist
www.msJB.info

A space safe for finding a way forward

Karen Kuhlman
Correspondent

The women religious of the Diocese of Covington are among those to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for so much of what we enjoy today. Establishing schools, hospitals and a university created opportunities that continually move us forward to benefit the entire region. Their mission may look different today, but the goal remains — they seek to serve God through service to his people.

Sister Kimberly Porter is a professed member of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery. A cradle Catholic, she grew up in northern Virginia and studied psychology at Virginia Tech. Sister Kimberly said, “I always wanted to be able to give back and serve. There are many ways to serve, but I wanted to pursue a vocation in community with others, one that would allow me to focus more broadly,

While on retreat at St. Meinrad, she got to know the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and lived among them for several years in Cincinnati. But her ministry at Welcome House in Covington led her to St. Walburg Monastery. While volunteering at Welcome House, she met Sister Cathy Bauer and accepted her invitation to the Monastery for dinner. Meeting and spending time with the Benedictines spurred an intense discernment. Sister Kimberly entered St. Walburg six months later; her discernment process continued five years beyond her initial formation.

A counselor for 19 years, she counsels people dealing with grief at St. Elizabeth Healthcare’s Community Grief Center (adjacent to Hospice Care of St. Elizabeth located on South Loop Road). Some are in hospice, while others are those in the community who have experienced loss. Sister Kimberly said, “I was drawn to working with kids and their families and have done so in different capacities. I saw that as working with a whole system, similar to a Benedictine community. Seeking God through community means everything is done in relationship with other people. I worked in administration, serving families in that capacity for several years, but I was drawn to working with children. I wanted to get closer to direct service as prescribed by St. Benedict: serving the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the stranger and the guest. I can do so through the St. Elizabeth Hospice and the Community Grief Center. It proves the perfect way to use my skills, focus on children and families, and give back to the community.”

The Grief Center’s mission is to serve those who have lost a loved one in hospice. Children, adults, and anyone grieving can participate in individual counseling, support groups, and other community programs. The support groups can serve families, children PK through 18, and their caregivers. Participants come together for a six-week program that allows them to work through their grief in the company of others. They are comforted by the knowledge that they are not alone.

A registered play therapist, Sister Kimberly finds that coun-

seling for children looks very different from counseling for adults: “Working with play or other creative media becomes a way of meeting children where they are developing. Children may need to work through loss differently as they grow and hit other developmental milestones. When working with a grieving family, everyone is dealing with the loss. Providing each a space allows them to give voice and receive the support they need. Part of what you are working with in a child’s early life is often a natural curiosity, openness, and willingness to change and grow.”

Sister Kimberly explained that normalizing the idea of therapy is most important. Just as we may need physical support, we may sometimes need emotional support. Sometimes, people will tell the same story over and over, just trying to make

sense of things. It is important to normalize the grief experience, to know that loss is a part of life, and to lean on the support in our community that can help us navigate the losses we all encounter.

Sister Kimberly continued, “Sometimes, we try to be helpful, but we don’t have the necessary skills or the safe space to offer. If I have a friend who has experienced a loss, I might say, ‘I can see that you are struggling. I am not sure how to help, but I know of a resource that could offer some help. So, I can best help by supporting you and helping you look at another choice.’

The connections we make with each other make us stronger. Even

when a friend or loved one is mired in grief and has already said no to counseling, there may be a gentle approach to consider. We might say, ‘I am noticing you are having a harder time at work.’ When a we has been struggling with a loss, we might say, ‘We both have been struggling. What about talking to someone to see if there is something that might be helpful?’ Sometimes, it is beneficial to offer to go with another for counseling. I can say to a friend who has experienced a loss: ‘I can see that you are struggling. I am not sure how to help, but I know of a resource that could offer some help. So, I can best support and help you by looking at another choice.’ Sometimes, we try to be helpful, but we don’t have the necessary skills or the safe space.

It is rewarding, over time, to see the impact you can have on others. I am so blessed every day. I know it is not just me. I have a strong sense of God. There are moments when I don’t know how to respond. And then I feel that the Spirit has intervened, and the words will come somehow. I know that the Benedictine lens has shaped the way I do the work that I do. In any way we can, we want to be hospitable to one another and remember that we never know another person’s story.

When I look at the therapeutic work that I do, I look at it as creating a space for people to feel safe and to do the work they need to do. That is a reflection of the Benedictine influence of hospitality and community. It is about creating a welcoming space, and though I may have some experience or an idea of what might be helpful, it is a partnership that unfolds and doesn’t look the same for two people. Sometimes, we need the ear of another to listen and to hold that space for us as we move for-



Sister Kimberly Porter, OSB

Human trafficking

(Continued from page 3)

compared to 2020.”

Throughout the two-and-a-half-hour presentation, Det. Higgins explained what human trafficking is, what circumstances constitute trafficking, the types of trafficking and how to help if you believe you see someone being trafficked.

Det. Higgins emphasized that if commercial sex was being performed by an adult under force, fraud or coercion, then it would be considered human trafficking. For those under the age of 18, any act of commercial sex is human trafficking, even if there was no presence of force, fraud or coercion.

“Most anything that involves children we could throw a human trafficking charge on,” he said.

Det. Higgins also explained that a person does not have to be moved across state lines for human trafficking to take place. From the website of Your Eyes Save Lives the official definition of human trafficking is, “the forced exploitation of someone for labor or sex ... oppresses adults and children of all races, genders, ages, occupations and backgrounds.”

Det. Higgins shared some visible signs that may suggest human trafficking — unexplained injuries or malnourishment, truancy, few or no personal items, fear of authorities, and monitored or reserved movements. These are all signs that someone could be a victim of human trafficking. He also explained what to do when you might suspect someone is a victim of human trafficking.

“Get the license plate, make, model, get a good description ... I do not want you to confront them, that is our job.

Be our eyes and ears, gather the facts and then relay those facts back to us,” he said.

Human trafficking is a growing epidemic with 24.9 million people entrapped and \$150 billion in profits per year. The business disproportionately affects women — 71 percent, or 17,679,000, of its victims are women and girls; 29 percent, or 7,221,000, victims are men and boys. Across both sexes, 25 percent of all victims are under the age of 18.

To report suspected sex or labor trafficking, call 1(888) 373-7888, the national trafficking hotline, or text BeFree to 233733, where you will be immediately connected to the hotline. To report immediate danger call 911.

“We wouldn’t be able to solve crimes if it wasn’t for you all ... you are the eyes, ears and the pulse of this community. We need your help; we can’t do this alone,” said Det. Higgins.

Campaign of Mercy invites people

(Continued from page 3)

focusing are the kick-off ice cream social on June 2 and the beginnings of a webpage. The ice cream social will be an opportunity for folks to meet Bishop Iffert and Chris Goddard, to hear from committee members and to chat with other attendees about what they are learning about the Campaign of Mercy.

The website, covidio.org/mercy, will act as the digital home of the Campaign, providing information on ways to reflect and prepare for ministry, suggestions on what ministries are available at parishes and in the community and sharing the stories of those actively involved in ministry and how it has changed them. Campaign developments will also be pushed out to parishes to share on their social media accounts and featured in the *Messenger*.

“I’m just really excited for the transformational stories to be shared,” said Mr. Goddard.

Mr. Goddard points out that the Campaign of Mercy is “a work in progress” and that momentum will build as more and more people get involved.

“There’s plenty of opportunities for everyone,” Mr. Goddard said. “We’re all very serious about being the hands and feet of Christ, sometimes we’re just not intentional about how we go about doing it ... to grow in our own relationship, first and foremost, but to truly grow in our love and understanding of our brothers and sisters.”

Campaign of Mercy Committee

Chris Goddard, committee lead and director, Catholic Charities

Vicky Bauerle, institutional advancement manger, Catholic Charities

Ruth Coronado, Spanish teacher, St. Hendry District High School

Deacon Adam Feinauer, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright

Casey Guilfoyle, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell

Laura Keener, diocesan Communications director

Heather Konerman, Mt. St. Joseph marketing coordinator

Notre Dame Sister Ruth Lubbers

Kristen Mary Meiser, All Saints Parish, Walton

Ken Olenek, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood

Angie Poat, diocesan Youth Minister

Bridget Price, teacher, Notre Dame Academy

Dustin Reed, St. Paul Parish, Florence

Faye Roch, director, Pro-Life Office

Ben West, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs

Karen Zengel, director, Society of St. Vincent DePaul and St. Mary Parish, Alexandria

Zack Zvoseck, teacher, St. Henry District High School

Youth and young adult ministry summer events

(Continued from page 3)

encourages those who are not in a youth group to attend in hopes that a fire will be lit in their hearts to return to their parishes and start or join a youth group. The event will be held at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, July 13-14. Cost is \$75 per person. It is requested to RSVP by July 1 through the link on the youth ministry page of the diocesan website.

The last event of the summer will be “Revive!” a music and adoration mix for high school and college students. On August 10, 7-10 p.m. at Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, these students will engage in games, activities, ice breakers, sports, music and adoration. There is no cost and no RSVP necessary for those interested in this event.

To RSVP for Connect! Junior High Day and Fully Alive! High School Retreat, go to: www.covidio.org/youth. For any questions that may arise reach out to Mrs. Poat whose e-mail can be found on the diocesan website.

Mrs. Poat and her team believe that these events will help youth grow closer to God, “we’re providing opportunities for parishes and schools to grow in faith and network together, there is a lot of power and strength in the collective body of Christ,” she said.



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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.

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.

St. Agnes parish, Ft. Wright, is hosting a free dinner date for married couples. June 15, 7–9 p.m. Come for good food, a short talk, a little music and a night to enrich your marriage. Jack Beers, a certified Catholic Mentor, will be speaking on the art of listening and how it can elevate any marriage. For information or to RSVP (limited seating) contact Anita Dunn at adunn@saintagnes.com. Deadline to register is June 10.

Introductory online group classes for the Marquette method of Natural Family Planning (NFP), Tuesday, June 18, 7 p.m. and Tuesday, July 30, 7 p.m. For more information and to register, contact Angela Hobbs, BSN, RN, MMCP, at angela@giftofyourfertility.com or (270) 735-3883. Visit www.giftofyourfertility.com.

"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 col-

2024 Parish Festivals

St. Augustine, Covington
June 7–8, 5–11 p.m.

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.

St. Joseph Academy, Walton
June 14 and 15,
5:30–11 p.m., Pig Fest

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. Cecilia Parish, Independence
Aug. 30–31, 7–11 p.m.,
Sept. 1, 6–11 p.m.
Family Day, Sept. 7,
1–10 p.m.

St. Benedict Parish, Covington
Sept. 20 and 21, 5–11 p.m.

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

laborate 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.



Knights distribute inaugural scholarship

The Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, Knights of Columbus Council 14993 —recently presented its inaugural eighth grade \$500 scholarship to Sophia Foltz for her essay on "The Importance of Continuing My Catholic Education at MQH School." Congratulations to Sophia and the Foltz family pictured with members of the MQH KofC council.

“Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.”

— John 16:22



GRIEF

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MESSENGER
MAY 24, 2024

A statue of an angel displayed at the front of the “Todtengruftdes St. Johannes”— a crypt in St. John cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Baker photo

The celebration of grief

Father Stephen Bankemper
Contributor

Grief, although it can affect us physically and in other ways, is a psychological experience that stems from our earthly life. It is a natural reaction to loss, and so it is also an experience that focusses one on oneself, on the pain of separation and the emptiness that used to be filled by whatever one has lost.

Grief is particularly poignant when the loss is of a person one loves. Psychological experts offer no real solution to grief; the best advice from psychology seems to be to realize that one cannot control the grieving process, to be patient and gentle with oneself, talk with others and deal with unresolved issues with the departed. This is not to denigrate psychology or psychologists, but merely to recognize the limitations of dealing with grief merely on an earthly level.

Does religion offer the grieving person anything more? Many Catholics do not realize that there is a rite in the Catholic Church specifically for the dying. Priests are commonly called to give someone “the last rites,” but what is expected is that he will anoint the dying person, and say some prayers connected to death. The true “last rites” in the Church are something more than this, and although the rites are not specifically intended to help survivors grieve, I believe, based on the times that I have celebrated them with dying persons and their families, that they can help the survivors with the grieving process.

We should begin by clarifying the term “Last Rites.” Although it is not an official Church term, most people mean by it the sacramental anointing of an actively dying person. There are still many living Catholics who remember the term “Extreme Unction.” The name itself – *in extremis* in Latin means “at the end,” and the English “extreme” just meant “last” or “end” — contributed to the



CNS photo/Riley Greif, The Western Kentucky Catholic

Bishop William F. Medley of Owensboro, Ky., administers the sacrament of anointing of the sick to Chris Johnson during Mass, at the pastoral center of the Diocese of Owensboro May 10, 2022. Johnson received a lobe of liver donated by his son Todd, May 17 to treat his hereditary cirrhosis.



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Dave Middendorf, Noah Middendorf, Nick Dorman, Dave Rees, Julie Carter and Leslee Hatter

GRIEF

idea that one received anointing at the point of death. In 1972, the Church changed the name of the sacrament to "Anointing of the Sick," a more accurate term that indicates the sacrament is not just for the dying, and lay Catholics are slowly coming to understand the sacrament in this way. Yet the faithful still ask for the "last rites" thinking only of an anointing.

The true "last rites" of the Church are something more than that. The difference is clarified in the Church's instruction to *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*: "The sacrament of the anointing of the sick should be celebrated at the beginning of a serious illness. Viaticum, celebrated when death is close, will then be better understood as the last sacrament of Christian life." (Introduction n. 175)

While the celebration of Viaticum can include anointing and even confession, it is fundamentally a last reception of the Eucharist. The word itself — *via*, "on the way"; *tecum*, "with you" — indicates what is happening. Yes, viaticum is "food for the passage through death to eternal life," as the Church puts it (ibid.), or "food for the journey" as we commonly say, but it is not just sustenance; this food is our Lord Himself, who does not leave us to find our own way, but travels with us.

Viaticum is "the completion and crown of the Christian life on this earth, signifying that the Christian follows the Lord to eternal glory and the banquet of the heavenly kingdom." (ibid.) It can be celebrated within Mass or outside it, at church or at home, whatever is appropriate.

At the beginning of this article, I wrote that my experience of the celebration of viaticum is that it has not only helped people in the process of dying, but also lightened the process of grieving, for those who survive them. I would like to share some thoughts on why this might be so.

Grief is an experience of self, what I have lost, the difficult or painful emotions I feel. Grief centers me on myself. While feeling and acknowledging emotional pain is good and helpful, it often puts me in a spiral from which it is hard to extricate myself. Notice how long some people can grieve, and how inconsolable they can become. Add to this our complicated relationship with death and dying, and how the death of a loved one can trigger our unconscious fears of our own death, and it is no wonder that grief is such a powerful and altering experience.

In the celebration of viaticum, on the other hand, we are focused on the other, on helping them prepare well for death. In addition, the sacrament itself focusses us away from ourselves toward Jesus, away from earth to heaven, away from death to eternal life. In viaticum the person renews her or his baptismal vows, reminding us that we have already died, as St. Paul put it, in baptism, and renewing our hope in eternal life.

Viaticum reminds us that death, while difficult, is ultimately good. Think of Jesus' words in John's Gospel: "But because I have said these things to you [that He is going away], sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if

I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you." (John 16:7)

The celebration of viaticum reminds us that, while we can be sad that our loved one is going away, there is good in it. He or she is heading toward the true fulfillment of his or her life. If one genuinely loves another, what sorrow can remain when one is contemplating the joy that the other may soon experience? As St. Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that

Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thess 4:13-14)

The celebration of the Church's true "last rites" can pull us out of ourselves to focus on the other; take our minds from only thinking of earthly things to thinking of heavenly things and renew our hope. I believe these things can keep us from becoming overwhelmed by our grief and shorten the grieving process.

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

More than just a groundskeeper, cemetery foremen provide comfort and relief during times of grief

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

After the loss of a loved one, the world may feel as though it has been turned upside down — the next steps becoming unclear. Questions need answered, arrangements must be made, all while dealing with the waves of grief that come with loss.

During the confusion and sadness that must be navigated there are few that hold the answers that serve as a guiding light during this time of darkness. Providing the consolation and answers needed during such a time is the cornerstone of cemetery foremen.

Brad Knochelmann, cemetery foreman at St. Stephen Cemetery, Ft. Thomas, takes pride in providing this service to grieving families. "It is a very rewarding experience to be able to help families in their time of need. It can be a difficult job, and at times a bit of a sad job, but it is definitely a rewarding experience," said Mr. Knochelmann.

Mr. Knochelmann is not alone in this sentiment. When asked what makes his job so rewarding Ed Kruemplman,

cemetery foreman from St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell, said that "helping the people," is the most rewarding part of his job.

While the role of cemetery foreman exists largely to support families in their time of need, their official responsibilities do not end there. Foremen are also responsible for the upkeep of the headstones, cemetery grounds and gravesites, the burial of the deceased, and general maintenance of the cemetery facilities.

"We do everything from start to finish. We meet with the facilities, we maintain all the grounds, all the grave spaces and headstones on the property. We will go out and prepare the grave space for the burial to have it ready, we are even there to lead them when the funeral procession comes in. We are right there to assist with the whole funeral process," said Mr. Knochelmann.

The work of a cemetery foremen is multifaceted. From manual labor, making sure the grounds are kept in order, to being guidance to families in difficult times, the work of a foremen is a crucial part of someone's final moments.

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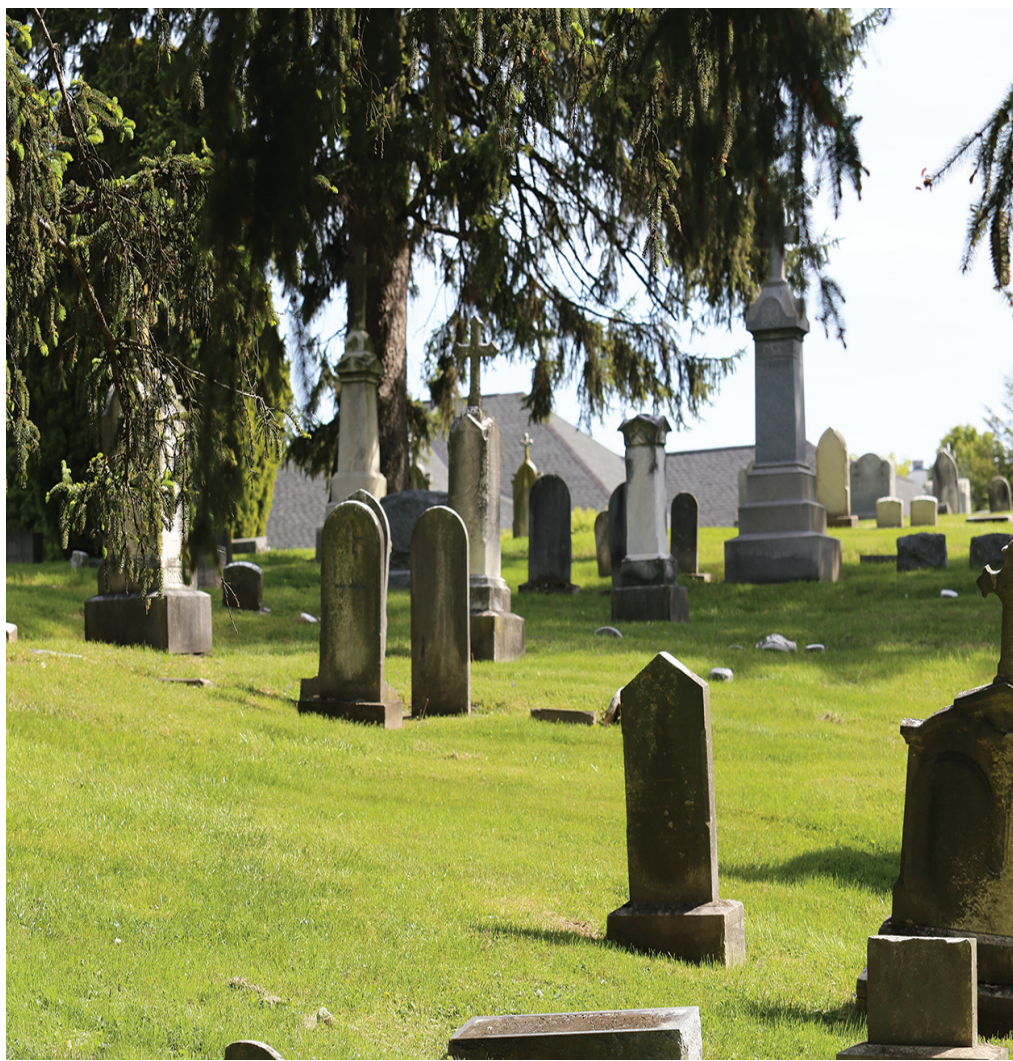
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The pictures above were taken at diocesan cemeteries.

Top left: Grave markers lining the grass at St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Left center: A monument depicting an angel as seen in St. Joseph Cemetery, Wilder.

Above: Detail of a grave marker in St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Top: A sign hangs in tribute from a columbarium at St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Top center: Flowers line the ground at the columbarium at St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Top right: A statue of the Blessed Virgin sits under a stained glass window behind the crypt at St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Above center: The top of a grave marker featuring a statue of Jesus carrying the cross overlooks a columbarium at St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Above right: Flowers are placed beside a grave at St. Joseph Cemetery, Wilder.

Bottom right: An ornate grave marker at St. Mary Cemetery, Wilder.

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- St. Mary (Morningview; St. Matthew, Kenton) (859) 356-6530
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Harvey and Messenger file photos

Navigating grief through tradition: Finding hope and practical support

Chadwick Seiter, Attorney at Law
Contributor

Grief is a journey that touches us all, eventually. As an elder law attorney, I've walked alongside many families during their most challenging seasons, offering legal support and gaining valuable insights into grief.

Grief manifests uniquely for each person. One family mourns a loved one lost too soon, another may struggle with the gradual separation wrought by dementia and still others face fractured relationships made poignant by life's end. These experiences often amplify the challenges of estate planning, long-term care and probate. The Catholic response to grief is rooted in both communal and personal practices that help us navigate these trials.

Practical support is crucial during times of grief. Estate planning is the foundational step to articulate your wishes and ensure that your estate is distributed according to your intentions. Creating a will or trust prevents unnecessary disputes and simplifies the process for your beneficiaries, easing their burden during an already challenging time. It's also important to prepare power of attorney documents that grant someone financial and healthcare authority if you're incapacitated. This step ensures that bills, taxes, healthcare decisions and other obligations

continue to be managed smoothly, preventing further stress.

Placing a loved one into a long-term care facility is particularly challenging, both emotionally and financially. The grief of parting with familiar routines and the guilt that often accompanies this decision can be overwhelming. Proper long-term care Medicaid planning can help families avoid exhausting their entire estate, ensuring high-quality care without significant financial strain. Even if planning hasn't been completed before placement, much can still be done to preserve assets at the eleventh hour—or even after a loved one has been placed in such a facility. As an elder law attorney, I've helped many families secure their financial stability by using long-term care Medicaid effectively while safeguarding their legacy.

The probate process is often perceived as a daunting legal hurdle, but proper preparation can significantly streamline it. Clearly outlining your estate with documented beneficiaries and guardianship decisions will help minimize complications and legal disputes during this sensitive time. This preparation provides

peace of mind and allows loved ones to focus on grieving, knowing that their affairs are in good order.

Grief is never easy, but solace can be found in faith, supportive traditions and available resources. Seeking legal guidance and planning carefully enables us to care for our loved ones while protecting their legacy. As we navigate the challenges of mourning, let us remember that every family's grief is unique, but practical assistance and preparation can help ease the burden. Together, we can ensure that our loved ones receive the care they deserve while preserving what they worked so hard to build.

Chadwick Seiter, in partnership with Matthew L. Darpel, is dedicated to serving the Northern Kentucky community at Darpel Elder Law in Crestview Hills. Chad is a proud alumnus of St. Henry District High School, the University of Kentucky, and Chase College of Law. This advertiser article was submitted by Darpel Elder Law.

Grief and aging at the St. Charles Senior Resource Center

Margie Volpenhein
Contributor

Life is a journey marked by change, and as we grow older, significant events involving loss become more frequent—the loss of friends and family members, the loss of independence, and cherished relationships. The grief that can accompany these losses may, over time, take a toll on our mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

As I witnessed my own 90 year old father suffer the loss of independence, the loss of his bride of over 50 years, the loss of his cherished roles as husband and provider, I realized that the grief accompanying these losses can have a significant impact, but more importantly, I have come to understand that allowing my dad time and space to grieve in his own way and being a listening ear for him are the most important ways for me to help. Through this personal experience, I have come to also realize that many other seniors in our community have these same needs. In my role at St. Charles Senior Resource Center, I am privileged to minister in helping to address these needs.

In addition to providing education related to available resources, the Center also helps to alleviate worries that seniors have when they lack necessities, such as personal care items and equipment that many cannot afford. The Center's staff receives calls daily from seniors and their families with tough questions and a variety of needs. The staff consider themselves blessed to have the opportunity to minister through patient listening, timely assistance and most of all, through compassionate understanding.

The St. Charles Senior Resource Center's services are free of charge. Whether you need guidance, support or just someone to listen, they are there for you. You can reach St. Charles Resource Center by phone, email or by stopping in at the Center, located at 3705 Winston Ave., Latonia, Ky. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. The phone number is (859) 261-0746, and the e-mail address is at Seniorresource@stcharlescommunity.org.

This advertiser article was submitted by St. Charles Senior Resource Center.

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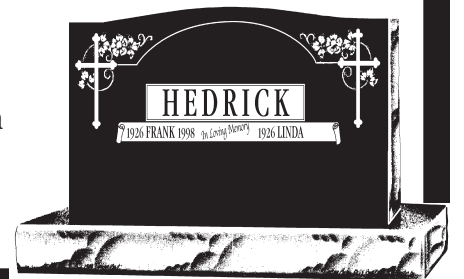
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Memorial Day called a reminder to nation ‘we better protect’ our freedom

Jennifer Barton
OSV News

The inception of Memorial Day goes back to the bloodiest conflict in U.S. history, when Americans slaughtered their countrymen by the thousands in single-day battles — the Civil War.

Even prior to the end of the war, civilians — particularly women — in both the North and the South began decorating gravesites in honor of those lost in the deadliest days the nation has ever seen.

In the years following, numerous cities on both sides of the conflict began holding “Decoration Day” services at various times throughout the year, honoring military servicemen from any war. This gradually came to be called Memorial Day. These celebrations eventually merged into a nationally recognized holiday falling on May 30, before being codified into law in 1968 to fall on the last Monday of May.

People still uphold this practice of remembering and praying for loved ones who have died.

“Most people visit the cemetery one time a year and that’s Memorial Day,” stated Casey Miller, executive director of Divine Mercy Funeral Home and Catholic Cemetery in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Miller and his staff are dedicated to presenting immaculate grounds when families come out to honor their departed loved ones. They provide flags at both entrances to the cemetery for families to place at the gravesites of veterans.

Memorial Day is “for everyone who’s departed — military, nonmilitary, moms, dads, children,” stated Miller.

Typically, it is intended as a time to honor those soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, though any veteran who served in a military branch for at least two years is eligible for a military funeral.

When a veteran’s family makes funeral arrangements for their loved one at Divine Mercy, Miller’s team arranges for military honors for that person, he told Today’s Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. “That’s a burden we take off the family.”

The honor guard he usually contacts is the American Legion Post 241 in Fort Wayne. John Smeltzer is the honor guard director for the post, and it is his duty to set up the veteran-comprised guard for each military funeral that they are called to serve.

“I love what I do. We feel it’s our duty to do that for fallen veterans,” he said.

Some honor guards will only serve certain branches of the service, but Smeltzer is proud that his post will honor any veteran with the proper respect and formality due to them. “We are there for the veteran.”

The honor guard itself is “a team of eight people: the commander, chaplain, bugler, rifle commander and four riflemen” who carry M1-A1 carbines, the weapon typically used by soldiers in World War II and the Korean War.

After the commander recounts the veteran’s time in the service and the chaplain recites a prayer over him or her, the commander issues the call for the riflemen to render a three-volley salute.

Then the U.S. flag that has draped the service member’s coffin is folded and presented to the closest family member with the words: “On behalf of the president of the United States, (service branch) and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.” The family is presented with a ceremonial brass shell casing.

This is probably the most emotional part for families. Smeltzer remarked, “Some people break down, others are pretty stoic.”

Miller also has witnessed many such military funerals and the reactions of families.

“What I find is it’s different for older people versus younger people,” he said. “For older people that have lived through wars ... there’s a certain respect when it comes to the honor guard or the military service that you recognize the sacrifice that that individual made of their early life to serve and protect our freedoms. Younger people, however, I find that it’s a learning experience — and a good one, at that.”

He described younger generations seeing “the folding of the flag and hear ‘Taps’ being played and it drives home the sacrifices that they haven’t experienced or seen firsthand ... and it brings home that that person gave up two years



A member of the U.S. Armed Forces places flags in front of headstones at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., May 27, 2021. CNS photo/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters

plus of their life for our freedoms and we better protect it, and we better show respect for that individual.”

Vince LaBarbera, former director of communications for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, is a member of a group called Buglers Across America. Founded in 2000, Buglers Across America’s purpose is to honor every fallen veteran with the proper ceremony due to him or her by having an in-person bugler at funerals.

In an article for The Waynedale News, a local paper, LaBarbera said he was a student at Central Catholic High School in Fort Wayne in the 1950s when he began playing “Taps” for funerals.

As a member of the school band, the school’s principal at the time, Msgr. William Lester, requested that LaBarbera play “Reveille” during the morning announcements.

“As part of the privilege of sitting first chair in the trumpet section, it was my honor to often play ‘Taps’ at the burial of a military service veteran,” he said. An American Legion honor guard would drive him to various cemeteries, where he would play the melody, then return him to school.

“Not only was it an honor, of course, but I was thrilled to get out of classes for a couple of hours,” he joked.

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Mother Seton a ‘seeker, servant and saint’ more relevant than ever, says shrine director

Gina Christian
OSV News

The first canonized saint born in the U.S. is nearing her 250th birthday — and she’s more relevant than ever, said the executive director of her national shrine.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph and a pioneer in Catholic education in the U.S., was “one of us” who “walked on the ground where we walk,” Rob Judge of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Maryland, told OSV News.

The shrine marked the saint’s Jan. 4 feast day with a televised Mass celebrated at its basilica by Auxiliary Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski of Baltimore. The feast day also kicked off a two-year commemoration of both Mother Seton’s milestone birthday and the 50th anniversary of her canonization, which will fall in 2025.

The two-year commemoration features several events connected to the National Eucharistic Revival, launched in 2022 by the U.S. bishops to increase devotion to Jesus Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist.

The eastern route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage — one of four that will be traveled from May 17 to July 21, converging at the July 21-24 National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis — has been named for the saint. From June 5-6, the Seton shrine will host the pilgrims for two days of prayer, worship and acts of charity, with a Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

During the pilgrims’ visit, the shrine will debut a new short film on the saint, detailing how the Eucharist led Mother Seton, raised a devout Episcopalian, to come into full Catholic communion.

That Eucharistic devotion, along with a deep trust in

God’s providence, defined an extraordinary woman whose sanctity “came about by doing very ordinary things, but ordered towards God,” said Judge, citing the “everyday experiences” of joy and suffering that shaped Mother Seton throughout her life.

OSV News photo, CNS file

A youthful St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native-born American to be canonized, is portrayed in this painting by Joseph Dawley. A widowed mother of five, she founded the Sisters of Charity. Her Jan. 4 feast day in 2024 kicked off a two-year commemoration of both Mother Seton’s milestone birthday and the 50th anniversary of her canonization, which will fall in 2025.



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GRIEF

Mother Seton was born as Elizabeth Ann Bayley in New York City Aug. 28, 1774, to a prominent Episcopalian family. Her mother died when she was 3, and as a teen, the future saint “felt a lot of loneliness,” Judge said.

She “fell madly in love” with — and at age 19 married — William Magee Seton, said Judge. However, the wealthy shipping magnate’s death from tuberculosis in 1803 left her a widow with five children. (Her daughter Anna would succumb to the disease in 1812.) In Italy, where the Seton family had been residing at the time of William’s death, Elizabeth Ann Seton discovered Catholicism, and after returning to the U.S. embraced the full faith in 1805.

The ensuing years were difficult, but Mother Seton persisted in the belief that “God had a plan for her life,” said Judge. In 1809, Mother Seton relocated to Emmitsburg and founded her religious congregation — the first community for women religious established in the U.S. — as well as St. Joseph’s Academy and Free School.

Mother Seton died of tuberculosis in 1821, having “lived her life with purpose, very simply,” said Judge. “God did beautiful things with her ‘yes’ (to his will).”

Canonized in 1975 by St. Paul VI, Mother Seton continues to resonate with American Catholics, with many parishes and schools named after her, said Judge. She is also venerated as the patron saint of grief and mourners.

At the same time, younger generations “don’t necessarily know a lot about her, and they’re eager to learn more,” said Judge, who spoke with OSV News on Mother Seton’s feast day while hosting an exhibit on her life and legacy at SEEK24, an annual Catholic youth and young adult conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

Judge summed up Mother Seton as a “seeker, servant and saint.”

“We have people coming up to our booth and saying, ‘She’s my confirmation saint,’” said Judge. “And young women are coming up and saying, ‘She’s my girl.’”

This article has been edited by Messenger staff.

Whom to call

- Kelly Linkugel, Administrative assistant, Diocesan Cemeteries, (859) 392-1585
- St. Mary Cemetery, (859) 414-2204
- St. John Cemetery, (859) 414-2380
- St. Stephen Cemetery, (859) 414-2567
- St. Joseph Cemetery, Cold Spring, (859) 414-2567
- St. Joseph Cemetery, Wilder, Ed (859) 414-2380

Pre-planning in the Diocese of Covington

Pre-planning for burial occurs before you or a loved one has passed away, and oftentimes is necessary so that the deceased can be buried in the most suitable area. Some people like to pick a spot near family or friends, while others may prioritize a “nice” or “scenic” part of the cemetery of their choosing — and others may prefer a niche or an urn or placement in a mausoleum as opposed to a standard casket burial. All of these decisions come as a part of pre-planning.

In the Diocese of Covington, pre-planning begins by reaching out to the specific cemetery yourself or a loved one is interested in, or by calling the Curia Buildings & Properties office. From there, arrangements can be made based on individual needs and availability within the cemetery of choice.

*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let
perpetual light shine upon them.
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of all the faithful departed,
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Catechetical Awards return

(Continued from page 21)

Alexandria and a middle school religion teacher at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring.

The Outstanding Junior High Teacher/Catechist award was awarded to Karen Rabe, the seventh-grade evening religion teacher at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright. Ms. Rabe began in 2008, volunteering when a seventh-grade teacher was needed. Following Ms. Rabe, Megan Abbott, a member of the Notre Dame Academy Religion Department, received the Outstanding Senior High Teacher/Catechist award.

Four individuals received the next award, called the Outstanding Catechetical Leader Award. First to be awarded was Joanie Lecoy, a recently retired Curia employee and a catechist at Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow, for over 14 years. Her fellow awardees were Veronica Schweitzer, the spiritual and academic leader of St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill, Rosanne Thomas, parishioner and DRE at Blessed Sacrament Parish and Janet Wadsworth, a teacher at Immaculate Heart of Mary

Parish, Burlington.

Ashley Marshall, who runs youth group twice a month on Sundays at St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, as well as runs small faith groups for middle school students and high school sports and adoration nights at Covington Catholic High School, was awarded Outstanding Youth Minister.

Lisa Faulhaber, a parishioner at St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs and Chris Holmes, from St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, were both awarded the Outstanding Catholic Retreat Minister.

Jeanne Hicks was the recipient of an award new to this year's Catechetical Awards, the Outstanding Homeschool Educator award. A parishioner at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ms. Hicks was nominated for this same award by five different people. Jeanne has been involved with homeschooling for more than 20 years and is involved in education and catechesis in her parish.

The final award of the evening was the Sister Ann Adele Fritz Catechetical Award, which was initiated in 1998 to honor the memory of Sister Ann Adele Fritz, a Notre Dame Sister and former director of Religious

Education at St. Joseph Parish in Cold Spring at the time of her death.

"The recipients of this award remind us that we are all called to be joyful witnesses to Jesus Christ," according to the evening's program, "They are willing to make personal sacrifices so that others may come to know and love Jesus, all the while ministering in his name. They embody what it means to be a missionary disciple."

Recipients were Paula Fritz, the RCIA/OCIA coordinator at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, in 2012, Patricia Pope, St. Henry Parish, Elsmere and Vincent Zwick, a lifelong parishioner and lay volunteer at Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow.

At the end of the evening, Bishop Iffert thanked all in attendance.

"We haven't been able to have this kind of a recognition banquet for a few years because of COVID," he said. "We missed that, and it makes it all the more meaningful and joyful for us tonight ... to be able to thank and acknowledge all the great witness and work that you do ... Thank you so very much for that."

The dignity and vocation of women

(Continued from page 4)

depth in his apostolic letter where he lays out the several callings given to women and how both biological and spiritual motherhood are consequential and necessary — but it is perhaps his Letter to Women in 1995 that puts it more concisely.

In this letter, Pope John Paul II calls upon women to participate in "every area of life — social, economic, cultural, artistic, and political," and he suggests that a "greater presence of women in society will prove most valuable," for "it will help to manifest the contradictions present when society is organized solely according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity, and it will force systems to be redesigned in a way which favors the processes of humanization, which mark the 'civilization of love.'"

His words get to the heart of how the church views women. While traditionalists, conservatives and often Catholics, may be tempted to dismiss "feminism" out of

hand, Pope John Paul II reminds us that women are in fact equal in dignity and called to all sorts of vocations and involvement. Their womanhood, their feminine genius and their maternity — things often seen as weaknesses by radical and secular feminism — are, in fact, strengths. Women, by their very maternal nature are assets to every part of society, as long as we don't deny our female nature, but embrace it.

Although biological motherhood and stay-at-home parenthood are perfectly wonderful — and perhaps among the most vital — vocations, Pope John Paul II and the church, are clear: the "diabolical lie" is not that women are meant to be in the corporate world, but that their womanhood does not matter in the corporate world.

The "diabolical lie" of feminism is that women have nothing unique to offer to society that differs from what men offer; rather than assets, intrinsically linked to their womanhood, that make them essential to every area of life.

We can't reduce Catholic thought on how women do

that to a shallow, bumper-sticker observation on a single woman's vocation, nor can we say that "life" begins for women when they become wives and mothers. Certainly, for me, despite years in the workforce, and my position writing to you now, raising my children remains the most significant job of my life. It is, as many women know, the greatest job I could have hoped for.

But that is not to say that my life only began at their birth. As humans, made in the image of God, our lives begin the moment we come into existence as an individual thought of our Creator, and there are as many plans, purposes and vocations as there are people.

That is, of course, very hard to fit in a commencement speech.

Emily Zanotti is a humor writer and political communicator who focuses on the joys and trials of life as a Catholic mother. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee with her husband, three children, two cats and four chickens. Her column has been provided by OSV News.

The wondrous mystery

(Continued from page 5)

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity calls us back to the true center of reality itself and to the central grace of the life of faith. As we confront a growing number of false gods, the abundant ideologies of personal disintegration, and rapacious narcissism as a norm, we must be anchored in the eternally real and true. As St. Paul teaches us: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear; but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."

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Father Phillip W. DeVous is the pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Flemingsburg and St. Rose of Lima Parish, May's Lick, Ky.

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Baker photos

(above) Bishop John Iffert stands for a picture with catechetical award recipients.

(above right) Father Ryan Ruiz, S.L.D., dean of the School of Theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary was the keynote speaker for the 2024 Catechetical Leadership Awards.

(right) Rosanne Thomas, a retiring catechist and DRE at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, receives flowers from Father Suraj Abraham, parochial vicar. Ms. Thomas was a recipient of the Outstanding Catechetical Leader Award.

(far right) Karen Rabe, from St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, accepts the Outstanding Junior High Catechist Awards from Bishop Iffert.



Catechetical Awards return from hiatus, honor leaders in catechesis

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

After a several year hiatus post-COVID, the Diocese of Covington Office of Catechesis and Evangelization's Catechetical Leadership Awards returned with a 2024 ceremony, May 16. The well-attended event was held in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium in the Covington Curia, and 18 catechists from across the diocese were recognized for their contributions and work in their schools, parishes and community.

The event's keynote speaker, Father Ryan Ruiz, S.L.D., dean of the School of Theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary, emphasized the importance of "wisdom and truth in leadership," sharing the stories and witnesses of

St. Scholastica and St. Benedict, St. Augustine and the Holy Family in Nazareth as a kind of "school."

The award ceremony began by recognizing recipients of the Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher/Catechist Award. Recipients were Sheree Kelly, who has been teaching fourth grade in the Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) at St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, for 25 years and Michael Witt, the fourth-grade evening religion teacher at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright.

The second award was the Outstanding Middle School Teacher/Catechist award, awarded firstly to Deacon Adam Feinauer, the fifth grade evening religion teacher at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright. Other recipients of this award were Sharon Phillips, who has contributed 29 years of service to St. Patrick School, Maysville and 35 years overall as a teacher in Catholic Schools, as well as Don Zengel, the fifth-grade catechist at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish,

(Continued on page 18)

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Acts of spiritual Communion

Father Luke Spannagel
USCCB

When we looked at the guidelines for receiving Communion, we noted that there are several circumstances where a person might not be able to receive Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, such as someone who doesn't share the Catholic faith or belief in the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist; someone who does believe but is unable to receive because of illness; someone who is living outside the moral teaching of the Church; or someone who needs to partake of the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Communion. For many in these situations, abstaining from receiving the Holy Eucharist can be a great sacrifice. What should we do when we aren't able to receive the greatest possible gift in the world?

In the "Source and Summit of the Christian life," we encounter Jesus, God with us, who offers us the greatest gift we could ever receive: himself. Without question, not being able to receive Communion can be an incredible challenge and sacrifice. The fact that this is a hard sacrifice is a good thing! The difficulty shows us where our hearts really are and that we understand the truth of the Eucharist. If we didn't believe Jesus was really present, this sacrifice wouldn't be nearly as hard to offer. Besides the genuine reverence we show for the sacrament, not being able to receive can offer us a unique opportunity to become even more aware of God's presence in our lives and his call for us to turn away from sin and allow his grace to work in our lives. For those who are longing for the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, this time also offers the opportunity to practice making a "Spiritual Communion" to unite with Jesus in the Eucharist.

What is Spiritual Communion? As the Guidelines for Reception of Holy Communion state: "All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1996). This practice is called a Spiritual Communion. While reception of Holy Communion is incredibly significant and our fullest participation in the Mass, those who are not able to receive the Eucharist sacramentally can unite themselves spiritually to Christ through prayer. We can still pray and thank God in that moment for the wonderful love of Jesus and his saving sacrifice. We can acknowledge through prayer that we believe



Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. We can express true longing from our hearts that we will be able to receive the Eucharist in the future. We can express the desire in the moment of being able to receive graces from Jesus in the Eucharist, even though we are unable to receive him sacramentally. So, those who cannot receive Communion can still gain spiritual fruit from the Mass, uniting themselves to Christ through desire and prayer.

At various times in our Church history, Spiritual Communion was really more the norm than the exception. Many saints lived during eras when reception of Communion was very rare, arising from many factors such as the legality of Christianity, the availability of priests, or a humble sense of unworthiness to receive our Lord. In his book *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, Father Michael Muller talks about spiritual union with the Mass even from a distance: "It is well for those who can do so in the course of the morning to retire to their room nearly at the time which they know to be the hour when the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being offered in the Church, and, after having implored the grace of God, to perform with recollection and fervor the duty of religion, to kneel down before the Crucifix, and with all the sentiments of devotion possible to unite heart and soul to the Heart of Jesus in the holy Mass, and then read or say the same prayers which they would have said had they been actually present

in the church, never forgetting to make the spiritual Communion, which may be made in any place, and at any hour of the day or night" (*The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, p. 392).

Spiritual Communion allows us all to be participating in the prayer of the Mass, either from our pew or from a distance. If you are unable to receive the Eucharist, just after the priest receives Communion (at what would be the normal time people come forward for Communion), you can tell Jesus in your heart of your desire to receive him. This can be in your own words or, if you prefer, this commonly known prayer from St. Alphonsus Liguori:

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You were already there, I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You. Let me not be ever separated from You. Amen."

Our faith tells us that, by the grace of Christ, we will navigate the challenges of our lives. Let's unite ourselves in mind and heart to Jesus this day, trusting in him and his love for us!

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National/World

New EPA standards may help ensure a basic right to safe water

WASHINGTON — “Access to safe drinkable water,” Pope Francis said in his milestone 2015 ecological encyclical “Laudato Si’,” “is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights.” Approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide don’t have regular access to clean water. Among them are 46 million Americans with no running water, or water that’s unsafe to drink. On April 10, those statistics expanded even further — but with an accompanying promise of decline — as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standards to protect Americans from exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, also known as ‘forever chemicals.’ “The final rule will reduce PFAS exposure for approximately 100 million people, prevent thousands of deaths, and reduce tens of thousands of serious illnesses,” announced the EPA. The new EPA drinking water standards “will save lives and protect the health of our and future generations; and go even further to protect our children today. This ruling will reduce suffering and upholds and protects the common good,” said Anna Johnson, North America senior programs manager for the Laudato Si’ Movement. The EPA ruling is expected to face legal challenges.

New York upholds abortion coverage mandate; Albany Diocese to appeal

ALBANY, N.Y. — The Diocese of Albany said May 21 it planned to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court after New York’s highest court ruled the Empire State can continue to require companies with health insurance plans to cover what it called medically necessary abortions. The Diocese of Albany, alongside other religious groups, challenged the regulation, arguing its exemption for religious employers was too narrow and could force some employers to violate their religious beliefs. “While we respect the decision issued today by the New York State Court of Appeals we will again seek review by the United

States Supreme Court of this critical challenge to religious freedom by filing a timely petition for a Writ of Certiorari,” a statement from the diocese said. “The United States Supreme Court previously granted our petition for a Writ of Certiorari on this constitutional challenge and vacated the New York lower court decision with a remand direction for further review.” The challengers argued that the original regulation was intended to exempt employers with religious objections, however, it was later narrowed to cover religious groups that primarily teach religion and mostly serve and hire only those who share their faith. In effect, groups such as Catholic Charities, which seek to serve those in need regardless of their faith, wouldn’t qualify.

Pope calls Texas’ suit targeting Catholic nonprofit ‘madness’

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis called Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s attempt to shut down El Paso’s Annunciation House, a Catholic nonprofit serving migrants, “madness” during an interview with CBS News. During the interview, the pontiff’s first one-on-one interview with a U.S. broadcaster, CBS journalist and interviewer Norah O’Donnell asked, “The State of Texas is attempting to shut down a Catholic charity on the border with Mexico that offers undocumented migrants humanitarian assistance. What do you think of that?” “That is madness. Sheer madness,” Pope Francis replied. “Over there in Texas there is a great bishop, Bishop Seitz, he is right there at the border. That man does the impossible to help the migrants, right?” Pope Francis added, referring to El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz. Paxton’s renewed effort to shut down Annunciation House comes just months after his previous effort was blocked by a state judge. Paxton’s office said May 8 it filed an application for a temporary injunction against Annunciation House, accusing it of “systemic criminal conduct in Texas” with respect to migrants. Annunciation House’s lawyer said those are false allegations. Paxton’s filing also claimed Annunciation House’s members “appear to subscribe to a more Bohemian set of ‘seven commandments,’” which, upon review of a document by OSV News, appears to refer to what the Catholic Church calls the “seven corporal works of mercy” commanded by Jesus Christ in the Bible. A spokesperson for the attorney general did not immediately respond to OSV News’ request for comment.

Fathers Andrzej Juchniewicz, chairman of Major Superiors, Delegates and Representatives of Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Belarus, and Pawel Lemekh. “No one from the Catholic Church was represented at their court hearing, and no details or access were provided,” said Father Pawel Gomulak, spokesman for the religious order’s Polish province. “We’re still seeking reliable information about their current status and detention conditions, as well as about the penalties they face and how we might help them.” Both priests worked at the northeastern Vitebsk Diocese’s sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima at Shumilina, and were given 15- and 10-day detention orders, respectively, on May 10. Father Gomulak said options for assisting the two priests were limited since both are Belarusian citizens of Polish descent, while the Oblates have no legal status in the country. “Those detained are told the reason, under the Administrative Code — but can’t communicate this to others — and since this court hearing was conducted online via Skype, no one could attend it,” explained Natallia Vasilevich, coordinator of ecumenical Christian Vision organization. The Catholic church makes up a 10th of the 9.4 million inhabitants of Belarus, a former Soviet republic.

Foreign agent law could jeopardize services says Caritas official

TBILISI, Georgia — The leader of a Catholic nonprofit in the nation of Georgia is speaking out after that country’s parliament passed controversial legislation on foreign agents — a measure she said “risks jeopardizing the provision of services to the beneficiaries who need them the most.” Anahit Mkhoyan, director of Caritas Georgia, issued a detailed statement shortly after Georgian lawmakers approved a bill on “Transparency of Foreign Influence” May 14, despite massive demonstrations that saw tens of thousands gather in Tbilisi to oppose the legislation. Georgia’s president May 18 vetoed it, but her veto was expected to be overturned. The legislation creates what Mkhoyan called “several difficulties” for Caritas Georgia and other charitable organizations that provide vital social services to vulnerable populations, with more than 20% of their funding from foreign donors. Mkhoyan warned that administrative restrictions, reduced funding, stymied international collaboration and abuses of power in enforcing the law were all looming risks — with the nation’s neediest standing to pay the ultimate price, she said. As part of Caritas Internationalis, the universal Catholic Church’s global federation of more than 160 humanitarian organizations, Caritas Georgia “has never exerted foreign influence in Georgia,” said Mkhoyan. Founded in 1994, the agency has over the past 30 years assisted thousands, including children without parental care, the poor and homeless, elderly individuals, the disabled and victims of domestic violence.

New clergy arrests, information blackout spark consternation

SHUMILINA, Belarus — Leaders of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate have deplored an information blackout surrounding the arrest of two of their priests in Belarus,

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At Pentecost Mass, Bishop Iffert confirms adults to ‘share in the work of creating’

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Every pew of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, was packed as parishioners and visitors alike joined together to celebrate Mass on Pentecost Sunday, May 19 — as well as the confirmation of over 40 adults from parishes across the Diocese of Covington, having completed the period of *mystagogy* between the Easter Vigil and Pentecost.

Bishop John Iffert celebrated the Mass and, in his homily, recalled “one of his favorite sayings” that he had told Cathedral parishioners before. “God is not God in the way I would be God if I were God. Thank God,” he said, followed by laughter from the congregation.

Bishop Iffert emphasized how God allows us, his people, to be involved with his work of creation. While, if he was God, he’d be a bit more of a “control freak,” God “insists out of love for us ... in all of our weaknesses ... he invites us to engage with him and the work of his creative love.”

“When God first created Adam,” Bishop Iffert said, “What did he set Adam about doing? He said, ‘Your task is to name all of my creation.’ To categorize it, to do the work of understanding. Involving Adam, and the children of Adam, in the work of creating.”

Bishop Iffert continued, saying, “Today at Pentecost, we proclaim that even now in the covenant of Jesus Christ, in this grand testament, in this age of the Church, God is still inviting his beloved children to share with him the work of recreating and saving all the peoples of the world. He sends his Holy Spirit upon his people to gift them, so that they may fulfill the mission he has sent them to do ... to be his living mission and voice on Earth.”

“God loves you so much,” he said, “he will not leave you sitting on the bench.”

Concluding, Bishop Iffert stated that God “gives us the gifts so that we can follow the saints in making small progress towards discovering his ways and embodying them here on earth ... God loves you so much, he refuses to redeem you without your help.”



(above left) Bishop John Iffert greets the congregation at the beginning of morning Mass, May 19, celebrating Pentecost Sunday and adult confirmation.

(above right) Sealing them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Iffert confers the sacrament on confirmation for candidates from Cristo Rey Parish, Florence, (bottom left) and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. (bottom right)

(bove right) Bishop Iffert, following the sacrament of confirmation, washes the Chrism from his hands using bread and lemon.

(below center) A candidate for the sacrament of Confirmation rises as his parish is called.



Fun June events!

Father’s Day Car Show
Friday, June 14 • 5 – 8 p.m.
Family fun with food, drinks, music and cars.

Music at the Manor
Thursday, June 27 • 5 – 7 p.m.
Bring your chair and appetite.

Madonna Manor
2344 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills
For details, call 859.426.6400.

CHI Living Communities
Madonna Manor

Free and open to the public!

Hello humankindness

Regardless of the availability of the Purple People Bridge, the Cross the Bridge for Life festivities will be held on Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Join us to celebrate the gift of life.

NEW DAY SATURDAY JUNE 1ST

Scan to Register for FREE T-SHIRT

- ♥ Check in at 9am
- ♥ Walk begins at 10am
- ♥ Followed by Family Fun Festivities
- ♥ Event closes at 1pm

Follow on FACEBOOK for Updates

NEW FREE T-SHIRT
Limited supply for Walkers registered after May 13

FESTIVAL PARK, NEWPORT
Behind Newport on the Levee

CrosstheBridgeforLife.org