

Special Pages
Back to School
page 11 – 18

- 2 NCCHS blesses site**
Future athletic complex underway
- 2 You're invited**
Life's a Ball
- 2 Campaign of Mercy**
Instruct the ignorant
- 3 Spiritual Motherhood and Fatherhood**
- 3 Mentor workshops**
- 3 Srodowisko Club**
- 4 SJW postulant**
Sister Philomena Marie Suenran
- 8 TMU**
Religious liberty
- 9 Parish festivals**
- 20 TMU Board of Trustees**
New members
- 22 Obituary**
Sister Mary Jonita Schlueter, SND

Bishop's Schedule3
 Commentary6
 People and Events9
 Shopper's Guide19
 VIRTUS19
 Classifieds20
 News Briefs23

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



Back to school
 St. Therese School, Southgate, opened its doors for the first day of school on Thursday, August 8. Welcoming 161 students K-8 and 43 students in their preschool, it was a busy morning as teachers welcomed students with smiling faces and students recounted tales of their summer. While waiting for the announcements to begin students kept themselves busy with Playdoh and drawing their favorite moment of the summer. The last school to open its doors this summer was Sts. Peter and Paul, California, opening on August 19. With all schools back in session, join in prayer for a safe and fun school year.



Young photos

Bishop Iffert to lead Covington faithful on a pilgrimage to Rome during the jubilee year

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

“You shall treat this fiftieth year as sacred. You shall proclaim liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to your own property, each of you to your own family.” (Leviticus 25:10)

The first mention of jubilee in the Bible is found in Leviticus — one of the five Books of Moses. Pope Boniface VII proclaimed the Church's first ordinary Jubilee in 1300, with the intention for a Jubilee year to be celebrated every 100 years. Responding to requests to celebrate a Jubilee earlier, the second Jubilee was held 50 years later. The years between jubilees fluctuated until 1470 when Pope Paul II issued a Papal Bull fixing the Jubilee for every 25 years. The year 2025 will be the 28th jubilee year the Church has celebrated.

The practice of the jubilee year was originally meant as a time of “forgiveness and restoration of freedom from servitude and debt.” Bishop Iffert explained that though this was the original intention of the jubilee year there is not such a need for the everyday person to forgive someone of servitude or debt. The general spirit of forgiveness, however, remains true to this day.

“It is a time for mercy, a time of repentance, a time for being set free, a time for letting go of grudges ... a time for deepening faith, seeking freedom, a time for letting God free us from grudges that we hold against one another,” said Bishop Iffert.



This theme of forgiveness and restoration is common throughout past jubilees as it is the biblically prescribed meaning of jubilee, but each jubilee has a special focus in addition to forgiveness. For the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, the theme focused on the anniversary of Jesus' death; the theme for the extraordinary jubilee year of 2015 was mercy, and the theme for the 2025 jubilee year, as announced by Pope Francis, is Pilgrims of Hope.

“The focus by choosing that theme,” Bishop Iffert said, “the Pope has brought that tradition of pilgrimage together with the tradition of the jubilee year.”

It is the spirit of being pilgrims that the Diocese of Covington will be hosting a pilgrimage to Rome during the jubilee year. From October 22–30, Bishop Iffert will be leading a group of faithful from the diocese to Rome, living out the theme of jubilee year, Pilgrims of Hope.

During the pilgrimage, stops will include major historical sites such as the Holy Stairs, the tomb of St. Paul the Apostle, the catacombs underneath the church of St. Sebastian and the Sistine Chapel.

“There is something about an experience like that,” Bishop Iffert said, “where you come to incorporate that into your being — not just in an intellectual way, but in a bodily way ... you stand in that space and that experience of that moment becomes part of your body. You can remember the smell of the air in that place, you can remember what it was like to be with others in that place and that is part of what fuels our hope.”

(Continued on page 19)

Newport Central Catholic High School hosts a blessing for the site of the future NCCHS athletic complex

Bella Young
Multimedia Correspondent

Kenny Collopy, principal, Newport Central Catholic High School, welcomed students, friends of the school and benefactors at the site of the future Newport Central Catholic athletic complex for a blessing of the site. Just off to the side of the “city on the hill” that is Newport Central Catholic, is a plot of land large enough to house a football field, track, soccer pitch and practice facilities for baseball, softball and basketball.

This ambitious project is part of the Looking Up Campaign which has already proved fruitful with a repaved driveway, new roof, HVAC system and a state-of-the-art science center. The athletic complex, however, would be the crowning achievement for the campaign, Mr. Collopy said to those in attendance.

“We held nothing back. Beautiful locker rooms, coach’s offices, a giant lighted cross on the backside of a huge press box, a blue track, a plaza and much more,” said Mr. Collopy.

we use ... changing the type of fencing that goes around the complex ... or using cinder blocks in the bathroom instead of tile,” he said.

The groundbreaking for the athletic complex will take place once the value engineering is complete and the contracts have been signed, and it will include those who Mr. Collopy say are most deserving.

“This also gives the opportunity to give those who are most deserving to put the shovel in the ground. On the day that our contract is finalized I am inviting 230 plus of my closest teenage friends out of the school building, and we are going to have a BYOS, Bring Your Own Shovel, day. They’re going to come down here and they are going to break ground for us,” Mr. Collopy said.

Mr. Collopy looks forward to the day that the complex is complete and the lights that shine down on the field can spread out across the Greater Cincinnati area and all who can see them will know that Newport Central Catholic is there.

“Remember this. When you are in the Greater Cincinnati area and you look up and see the bright lights beaming down on this hill; you are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light and candle and out it under a bushel but on a candle stick and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in Heaven,” said Mr. Collopy.

With such a large project comes a large price tag which is why the future athletic complex is currently undergoing a process that Mr. Collopy referred to as value engineering. This is to ensure that the money given by friends and benefactors is being used to its fullest extent.

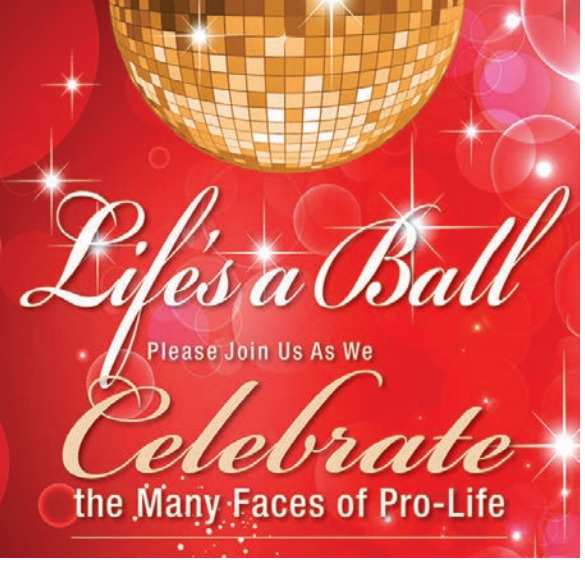
“For those not familiar with the term value engineering, it is cutting or finding alternatives to certain aspects of the project to save costs. This could be changing the specific type of turf



(above) Kenny Collopy addresses the crowd at the Newport Central Catholic High School athletic complex site blessing.

(right) From left to right: Deacon Jim Fortner, chief operating officer, Diocese of Covington; Father AJ Gedney, chaplain, NCCHS; Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Catholic Schools; Father Ross Kelsch, pastoral administrator, NCCHS; Kenny Collopy, principal, NCCHS; pose for a picture in front a rendering of the future athletic complex.





Join the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office

For an evening of celebration at the biennial Life's a Ball Event.

Enjoy cocktails, dinner, awards, and live music

Saturday, September 7,
from 6-11:00 p.m.

Radisson Ballroom, Covington, Ky

Tickets are \$80 per person. Please RSVP by August 30 at <https://covdio.org/pro-life/>

School volunteers say being a part of devoted community is its own reward

Laura Keener
Editor

The month of August is Back to School month and the perfect opportunity for the Campaign of Mercy to focus on the corporal work of mercy “to instruct the ignorant.” No one likes to think of themselves or others as ignorant. But the truth is, everyone needs someone to show them the right way to accomplish tasks, to help them develop skills, to think critically, to develop their faith life and at times be corrected. It is an act of love to help others to learn the truths they need to know to save souls — their own and others.

Using a broad definition of “instructing the ignorant” to include any opportunity to support Catholic schools in its mission to teach and form students, Catholic schools offer a cornucopia of volunteer opportunities. Tutors, room assistants, cafeteria servers, fundraisers, school promoters, social media coordinators, coaches — the list accommodates just about any interest. And volunteers are always welcome.

Marci Schroder is a parent volunteer at St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, where two of her three children attend. She got involved at St. Thomas School two years ago when her daughter started school.

“I was just looking for an opportunity to meet other par-

ents and get involved,” said Mrs. Schroder.

At the time St. Thomas School was planning for its first Green and Gold Gala, its largest fundraising event. Organizers asked Mrs. Schroder if she would co-chair the event. She agreed.

“And it’s kind of just took off from there,” Mrs. Schroder said, “and the next thing you know, I’m getting plugged into everything else.”

In addition to co-chairing the Gala, Mrs. Schroder coaches cheerleading and is a room parent. “I just help out wherever they need me to,” she said.

If you follow Northern Kentucky high school sports, it’s likely that you have met, heard or

held a program in your hand produced by Dave Schabell. Mr. Schabell is the voice of Bishop Brossart High School’s boys’ basketball and football as anchor of the Meridix Broadcast team. The 1965 Brossart alumni also operates the BMustangs.com website, serves as business manager and traveling secretary for the BBHS basketball program, edits the basketball program’s Media Guide and organizes fundraisers for the athletic program.

His lifetime of coaching, and now volunteering, has earned him a spot in six Hall of Fames and for one year, in 2022, the road to the BBHS Mustang Athletic Complex bore his name. And while he appreciates being appreciated, he

(Continued on page 5)



Spiritual Motherhood to gain new counterpart in Spiritual Fatherhood

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

Forty new spiritual mothers joined the ministry of spiritual motherhood in a commitment ceremony, Aug. 15, at St. Therese Church, Southgate. Following the 7 p.m. Mass on the Feast of the Assumption, Mary Ann Gronotte, founder of the Diocese of Covington Spiritual Mothers, along with a few already established spiritual mothers, welcomed those seeking to join the ministry.

“Since 2012 we have had this program ... it has been around for a long time and I am glad we have it in our diocese, so thank you for being a part of it and making it a success,” Mrs. Gronotte said.

and asking his protection over the priest and deacon sons that are soon to be adopted, the residing priest stands and prays over the spiritual mothers.

“May God, our Father, look with favor on these spiritual mothers, whom He has called to a life of prayer, sacrifice, and Eucharistic Adoration for the spiritual benefit of our Priests and Deacons,” said Father Michael Grady, pastor, St. Therese Parish.

With 40 new spiritual mothers in the diocese, the growth of the ministry has been steady since 2012, but there has been a space missing for men that would like to take part in spiritual parenthood. This issue has since been resolved by David Schlachter, organizer of Spiritual Fatherhood. Mr.



Young photos



(far left) A group of new spiritual mothers read the petitions.

(left) Father Michael Grady hands a new spiritual mother the name of her priest son and a rose to place at the Marian altar.

(right) A new spiritual mother prays at the Marian altar for her priest son.

ways.”

For those interested in becoming a spiritual father Mr. Schlachter invites you to reach out to him, dschlachter1120@gmail.com for information about the prayer ceremony on October 12. Mrs. Gronotte invites women who may be interested in spiritual motherhood to reach out to her as well, magronotte@gmail.com or (859) 468-4732.

Spiritual Motherhood has existed in the Diocese of Covington for only 12 years despite this ministry being practiced as early as 1870 by the Venerable Conchita of Mexico. What many consider to be a “hidden vocation” became a little less hidden when the 2007 Congregation of Clergy, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, invited lay women to “adopt” a priest-son or a deacon-son. This adoption is what gives spiritual motherhood its name.

As part of the commitment ceremony the intended spiritual mothers stand and say petitions together, asking God to help them in their prayers. One of these petitions is asking God to protect the spiritual mothers assigned priest or deacon son.

“My God and Father, please protect our Priests and Deacons from every evil. Sanctify them in the love with which you have loved your only begotten son.”

After praying six total petitions for Gods healing grace

Schlachter recognized the potential for this new ministry when speaking with a spiritual mother at St. Timothy, Union. Just as men and women are different, so are their programs.

“We made some adjustments to it right from the beginning,” said Mr. Schlachter. “Instead of praying for a specific priest we’re praying for any priest that has a particular challenge going on. Every week it’s a new challenge we are praying for; I think it is a nice supplement to what the women are doing.”

Some of the problems the spiritual fathers are going to pray on could concern mental or physical illness, theological questioning or even times of personal turmoil.

“I am looking at in practical terms,” said Mr. Schlachter, “I think our priests, deacons, and everybody has special needs. I think about how they have dedicated their lives, especially in the case of priests ... they need support in other



Bishop Iffert meets with Srodowisko Club

A group of students at Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, have put together what they are calling the Srodowisko Club. Led by Jake Kleier, religion teacher, and Father Michael Hennigan, chaplain, the students visit different churches throughout the Diocese of Covington. Having been inspired by the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, the students invited Bishop Iffert to one of their meetings. While there Bishop Iffert spoke to them about his vocation journey and his experiences during his priesthood.

Mentor Workshops

The month of August is Back to School month and the perfect opportunity for the Campaign of Mercy to focus on the corporal work of mercy “to instruct the ignorant.” No one likes to think of themselves or others as ignorant. But the truth is, everyone needs someone to show them the right way to accomplish tasks, to help them develop skills, to think critically, to develop their faith life and at times be corrected. It is an act of love to help others to learn the truths they need to know to save souls — their

own and others.

The Diocese of Covington, in conjunction with Franciscan University’s Catechetical Institute, is offering In-person Mentor Formation Workshops. A mentor is someone who accompanies a learner through the process of formation through encouragement, discussion, insight, and presence. Build your parish and school community by becoming a Mentor.

Being Guided and Guiding Souls
Saturday, Sept. 14, 28, and Oct. 5, 9–11:30 a.m.
St. Timothy Parish, Union

Catholic formation. This is a three-part Workshop.

Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium

Explore what it means to be guided and the fundamentals of what it means to guide another soul in a catechetical context. This is a three-part Workshop.

Building the Mentoring Relationship: Asking Good Questions

Saturday, Jan 11, 18, 9–11:30 a.m.
St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, Meeting Rooms, PMR 1,2&3

Empathic listening is the counterpart skill to asking good questions that enables mentors to truly understand another person intellectually as well as emotionally. This is a two-part Workshop.

Personal Vocation and the Mentoring Relationship

Saturday, Nov. 9, 30, and Dec. 21, 9–11:30 a.m.
Diocesan Curia Offices, Covington, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium

An important part of being a mentor is getting to know the person under your care. Explore various kinds of questions related to this work of discovery. This is a two-part Workshop.

Register online at <https://covdio.org/register> or scan the QR code.

Discuss the meaning of personal vocation and the pressing need for integrating personal vocation into all

Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening

Saturday, Feb 8, 22, 9–11:30 a.m.
Diocesan Curia Offices, Covington,



Bishop's Schedule

Aug. 25
Catholic Charities CaSSBa Event, Drees Pavilion, Covington, 3 p.m.

Aug. 27
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Aug. 28
Mass, Catholics Embracing All God's Children, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, 7 p.m.

Sept. 2
Diocesan Curia offices closed in observance of the Labor Day holiday

Sister of St. Joseph the Worker postulant Annie Suenram becomes Sister Philomena Marie Suenram, novitiate

Bella Young

Multimedia Correspondent

The Sisters of St. Joseph grew by one when their former postulant, Annie Suenram, took the next step in her discernment journey and became St. Joseph the Worker Sister Philomena Marie, novitiate. After six months and two weeks of postulancy Sister Philomena said she only became more certain of this next step.

“I am more secure in my discernment process but it’s also an ever-deepening relationship with Christ and that is more of what religious life is,” she said.

Sister Philomena grew up in Edmond Oklahoma where there were not many religious communities.

“So it was, ‘okay, I am possibly called to religious life, how do you find nuns?’”

Prompted by the desire for religious life and her work in Southwestern Oklahoma State University’s campus ministry Sister Philomena signed up to attend SEEK 2023.

“I went to SEEK which is like the national Catholic conference for college students,” she said.

It was here that Sister Philomena found the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and the place she would soon call home. Her initial appeal to them was because of their unique ministry of both education and healthcare. Before starting her postulancy and ceasing secular studies Sister Philomena was a pharmacy student at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

“Most communities are primarily teaching but the Sisters teach and do healthcare and I thought, ‘oh that’s interesting.’ Usually, all the communities said, ‘what am I supposed to do with a pharmacy student.’ The Sisters said, ‘Oh a pharmacist would be awesome!’ When they said that I thought, ‘okay I have to visit this because it must be something.’”

The very first visit for prospective postulants is only a weekend so that both the community and the woman can decide if this is something that has potential. The second visit is a weeklong stay with the community where a

woman becomes more familiar with the everyday life and ministry of the sisters. Though Sister Philomena utilized her second visit to make sure, she said did not need to because she felt at home as soon as she crossed the threshold of the small house.

“It was kind of a feeling of ‘I’m at home.’ It was a feeling of peace that didn’t make sense why, but it was still there,” Sister Philomena said.

After submitting her application for postulancy to the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker, Sister Philomena prepared for her move from Oklahoma to Kentucky. Still in Oklahoma are Sister Philomena’s older brother and parents, all three of whom were very supportive of her discernment journey and postulancy.

“They’ve been very supportive which is something I am

really glad about. I think when I told my parents for the first time they said, ‘What? I mean great, go for it,’” she said.

Their support was very important during Sister Philomena’s postulancy and now her novitiate, though she is only able to contact them through letters four times a month. Despite this Sister Philomena says she does not get homesick often, and it is because of her chosen family, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker.

“It can be difficult sometimes and you do get homesick but then you remember you also have a family here,” she said.



(above) The Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker welcome Sister Philomena Maria.



(right) During the novitiate ceremony Sister Philomena Marie is presented with a habit.



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School volunteers

(Continued from page 2)



(above left) Marci Schroder, parent volunteer, St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, is inspired by the commitment of school and parish members for Catholic education. (above right, from left) Dan Schultz and David Schabell broadcast the Bishop Brossart High School basketball live on BMustangs.com.

is more humored than boastful by all the accolades, saying that "it's just what I do."

"I may swing by, watch the soccer game that night, get a Subway sandwich, sit in the press box, eat dinner, write a little story, go home, put it on the website ... one day leads to another, days to weeks, weeks to months, months to years," Mr. Schabell said.

The 77-year-old bachelor with no children of his own finds his unique position with the BBHS athletic program, which is void of any disciplinary responsibilities, a unique opportunity to help students. His relationship with students spans the generation gap, with the students accepting him as a trusted mentor.

"I got a good rapport with the kids," Mr. Schabell said. "I try to keep them out of trouble if I see problems occurring. They trust me. I can sit down and talk to a kid and say, 'Hey, let's chat. I need to know what's happening here.'"

That's amazing how you can keep your finger on the pulse of the program, whereas if I were the head coach or the hammer or the disciplinarian, I wouldn't have that same relationship that I have with the kids."

For both Mrs. Schroder and Mr. Schabell being a part of a devoted and supportive community is a blessing.

"It's been very fulfilling for me just to be involved in my children's school, and really it's helped me," said Mrs. Schroder. "I was brand new to the St. Thomas community, so it really helped me to get to know other parents and other families, and just to get to know the community in general. There are so many people here that volunteer. It's unbelievable the commitment from not only the parents, but the parishioners too, and that's very inspiring."

Last December, Mr. Schabell stepped off the curb in front of the Alexandria Post Office and suffered a severe knee injury. He said he is now in his 36th week of what he

was told would be a 13-week rehab. After surgery, a one-week hospital and a two-week stay at a rehab facility, Mr. Schabell returned home to find generations of folks eager to help him.

"Our people set up a meal train and for three weeks, every night at six o'clock I'd hear a knock on my door and in they come with dinner, which usually I ordered," he said. "People will rally behind you if they believe in you, or they trust in you," adding that he was never at a loss for a needed ride or groceries. "It's nice to be appreciated. Volunteering is not a monetary reward, but just the fact that you are appreciated and realizing that you're making some sort of an impact in a positive way is rewarding."

For information on volunteer opportunities at your parish school or any of the nine Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Covington, contact the school's office. They will be happy to get you started.

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I grew up in a very Catholic family. As far back as I can remember, my Mom and Dad were involved in the activities and services of our local church, St. Joseph Parish in

VIEWPOINT



Marianist Brother
Thomas Pieper

Covington and later at St. Paul Parish in Florence. For us kids, helping out at church was what you always did whenever the sisters and or parish priest called. This involvement was my first experience belonging to a larger faith community beyond my family. The Marianist Brothers, who taught at Covington Catholic High School, where my Dad and uncles had gone to school, lived right around the corner from our house in

Covington, and we were all part of that Catholic faith community.

After eighth grade, I followed in my Dad's and my older brother's steps in going to Covington Catholic High School. The Marianist Brothers were so welcoming and full of life, inviting me and others to join the Sodality of our Blessed Mother, opening the gym on Saturdays and inviting us to help around the school.

High school was an excellent place for my faith to grow and live within the Marianist community spirit.

Marianists: Brother George Deilinen, Father George Cerniglia, and Father Bill Behringer were real inspirational people of faith and prayer for me at the school. Brother George, back then, was even my cheerleader moderator.

During April of my senior year, two of my friends told me they would join the Marianist Brothers. I thought about it and asked Father Bill Behringer if I could join, too. Before graduation, my friends decided not to follow this call; I then decided to at least try this "religious life

thing" for four months. I believe the spirit set this scenario up because God knew I would never have decided this on my own.

What attracted me to Marianist life? The Marianist brothers and priests who taught in my high school inspired me to live this life. I liked how they went out of their way to help others, treated everyone as equals and lived a strong faith and community life. They were the teachers who were really alive at the school. They made me and everyone else feel important and worthwhile. I liked how they prayed, lived in community and were very happy with their lives.

The novitiate was a time of growth in prayer, meditation, Marianist history and the charism of our founders, especially Blessed Chaminade. During this year of the novitiate, my love for Mary moved beyond devotions to an understanding of her mission of bringing Jesus to others in our world. I loved hearing this and wanted to be a part of her mission.

I have been most grateful and honored for being able to serve and continue to serve God and Mary as a Marianist brother in the Marianist community and the ministry to and with young people. It's an honor to help young people in the formation of their faith through education in a classroom and working side by side with them in many service programs and projects. Ministering to high school students was challenging, exciting and lots of fun! Thus, as a Marianist Brother, I was privileged to hear, see, and share in the many joys and pains of mentoring teenagers and young adults as they grew in faith and Christian values for their lives.

In my ministry as assistant Director of Novices, I worked with young men interested in living Marianist religious life, in community and service to others through the Gospel. I had the privilege of journeying with these men, helping them discern God's call in their lives to be Marianists. What a great, humble and sacred honor this was. What a great and challenging experience too — I learned so much from delving into our Marianist spirit and charism to share Father Chaminade's life, ministry

and prayer.

In my ministry at the University of Dayton, I am privileged to journey and walk with students in their search to live out their faith and to become the best persons they can be. I also had the privilege of moderating the University of Dayton Summer Appalachia Program (UDSAP!). It is a great program of service to children, teens, the elderly and the families in Salyersville, Ky.

In all these ministries, I try to listen with my heart and my head to what each person is saying. I try to be open to seeing how the spirit is already present in each person's life and then, through prayer, speak words of courage, challenge and support. I consider what I do a very sacred and wonderful ministry.

Throughout my many years of ministry and living in several Marianist communities, I have tried to live my religious life in service of Mary's Mission, bringing others to Jesus. I tried to accomplish this through teaching in a high school, directing novices toward their commitment to our religious life, journeying with college students in their faith and service to the poor and developing strong relationships with Lay Marianists and their communities.

In all of these ministries, I focused on Mary's Mission in building communities of faith.

As a side note concerning community, I have always had a gift or eye for decorating and fixing up the common areas of the communities that I have lived in. Having a welcoming and hospitable place where my brothers can gather as a community and, at times, gather with their family and friends. These places become very sacred spaces for being together and sharing the concerns and joys of life.

As I celebrate this 60th year of my Marianist profession, I am so grateful for my Marianist vocation and for the many brothers, family and friends who helped, challenged and walked with me to live this sacred and wonderful Marianist life each day.

Marianist Brother Thomas Pieper is a campus minister at the University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio and a son of the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Redemptive suffering

25 years.

I believe with whole my heart that suffering helped my wife to be like Jesus Christ. She never did anything to avoid suffering. She quietly accepted it. She was willing and prepared to do God's will. She always told me that suffering helps us to focus on Jesus Christ and avoid sin. She was completely and totally devoted to Jesus Christ and his mission.

One day, I remember getting incredibly angry with God. I was close to abandoning my faith. God was doing this to us to destroy us, I thought. I told Mary Kay that due to cancer God made us incapable of bearing children. I was lamenting like Job's wife in the Old Testament. In Job 2:9-10 we learn that his wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die." But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" In all this, Job said nothing against God. In all the 25 years that my wife Mary Kay suffered from cancer, she never complained about God, not even one time.

Reflecting on her life and the joyful way she endured cancer changed my life forever. Because of Mary Kay, I now totally rely on the Lord during troubled times and good times. This was a true moment for me to turn to God, and not to turn away from him. Mary Kay made me realize that even in our darkest, scariest moments God is right there. He himself fights for us; we just need to stay calm.

There is no other name for cancer except to call it a

demon. To fight this demon, we must be totally devoted and immersed in the life of God. We use the Word of God against it because the Word (Jesus) is truly the Sword of the Spirit that goes between bone and marrow.

If we want to experience healing in our lives, we need to know and experience Jesus in his Word and in his Sacraments, especially in the Sacraments of Healing — penance and Eucharist. Jesus did not offer us his Body and Blood for nothing. He offered it because he wanted us to be healed, body and soul.

I believe my wife Mary Kay is no longer sick of cancer. She is healed and enjoying eternal life with her Lord and Savior. I am truly glad that she received the last rites from Bishop John Iffert and Father Louie Gasparini, a Comboni Missionary Priest. Her death was a holy death.

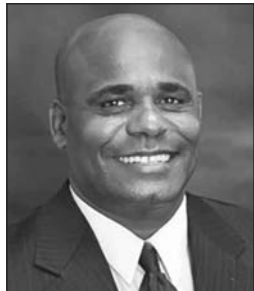
When I reflect on Mary Kay's suffering due to cancer, the words of St. Paul to the Colossians 1:24 come to mind. St. Paul said, "I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Jesus Christ that continue for his Body, the Church." It seems to me what St. Paul is saying to us is that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people around us.

Mary Kay brought this Good News to me. She told me that Jesus Christ feels this suffering with us. Right before she passed away to heaven, she read to me Acts of the Apostles chapter 26:14-15 that says, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Paul asked, "Who are you, lord." And the response was, "I am Jesus, the one you are perse-

(Continued on page 19)

I met my wife, Mary Kay Reuss in 1995 while I was studying with the Comboni Missionaries as a missionary student in Chicago, Illinois. Though I was born and

VIEWPOINT



Isaak A. Isaak

raised in Eritrea, East Africa, and Mary Kay was born and raised in the United States of America, the minute I saw her, I immediately fell in love with her. At the time, she was working for the Comboni Missionaries at their Mission Center in Anderson Township, in Cincinnati. She was an exceptionally beautiful young lady, and thus, I could not help but fall in love with her.

We were married in 1999, and she became ill with cancer in 2000. We both were devastated by this news. However, her illness and suffering changed our lives and brought both of us to our knees to fight it with prayers and life in the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Eucharist.

I lived with the Comboni Missionaries since I was 10 years old and knew the Bible very well, however I did not know and experience Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the way that my wife, Mary Kay, knew them. She was a woman of deep faith, even as she suffered with cancer for

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Do you also want to leave?

The readings for the twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B — are: Proverbs 9:1-6, Ephesians 5:15-20 and John 6:51-58.

Perhaps because we associate idolatry with images of golden calves on the lawn, or with a basket of naughty “no-no’s,” like carnality, money, power or recognition that WE obviously do not want too explicitly, we tend not to think of it as real force at work on us. The bracing text of our opening collect for the Holy Mass sets us aright on

this matter when it offers, “O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and desire what you promise ... that ... our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.”

Now, I am sure most of us are reluctant to admit it. The truth is we do not naturally love what God commands, we are seldom united in a single pur-

pose, and we do not always desire what God promises. Further, given the power the uncertainties of the world hold over us, and the propaganda that increasingly imposes those uncertainties upon us, we tend to list away from what the Gospel teaches, and what Christian morality — the embodied and lived grace of Communion with Christ — requires.

Consequently, an honest spiritual inventory reveals we all tend, in various degrees, to “naturally” desire some version of our preferences and passions untutored by the Truth, distanced from grace, sanctioned by our ego and the ambient social milieu. And we hope with some holy water sprinkled on, all will be just fine. Therein lies the path of idolatry!

All idolatry begins with failing to recognize God, not me, as the primary constituent of reality. God and His Christ are not an extra, an add-on to our self-defined good intentions, a comfort or a piety. Rather, God and His Christ ARE reality, who discloses Himself as the “Really REAL” through salvation history, the Gospel — the words of the Incarnate Word — and in the sacramental, mystical, and moral life of the Church, which is the Incarnation extended through time. Precisely because Christ is primary, we humans are subordinate to Him, to His self-disclosure, to His Gospel, to His words of “Spirit and life,” and to the order of creation, which our communion of faith, hope and charity with Christ perfects.

St. Paul speaks of the essential subordination of the self to Jesus Christ which is the very substance of the life of faith. Many today object to St. Paul’s words because they superficially interpret them through the distorting lens of our contemporary culture war.

However, the deeper reason St. Paul’s words are bracing and controversial have nothing to do with culture war contrempts, but rather because he strikes at what lies at the heart of modern man’s fundamental idolatry, which he is reluctant to admit: I will not submit to Christ. I will not embody submission to Christ in my life, except where it pleases me.

I find St. Paul’s words convicting. They stop me in my tracks, “as the church is subordinate to Christ.”

As those who would be disciples, it is our failure to subordinate ourselves to Christ in the real order of life where idolatry rear its ugly head. It does not involve a golden calf. Rather, it shows itself when we start to judge revealed truths from the perspective of our limited perception, according to our willfulness, and reducing the words of eternal life to what is conformable to our weaknesses. From that, our human tendency to be more social

Possum Trot inspiration — adoption story

Wondering if you may have seen the recent movie titled, “Sound of Hope, the Story of Possum Trot?” Being a social worker in the field of adoption and foster care at DCCH Center for Children and Families, I knew I wanted to see it. This true story turned movie is one that inspires.

I have spent my career recruiting, training, and counseling families who have discerned the call to care for children from the foster care system. I pray the story will bring to light the need in our own Northern Kentucky community and garner a similar response from our Church.

If you did not see it, let me recap. Donna and Pastor Martin, parents to two children from a small rural Baptist Church in Possum Trot, East Texas, led the charge and encouraged their congregation to recruit 21 more families to adopt a total of 77 children. As Bishop W.C. Martin said, “I never dreamed there were so many children in the system. We’re just a little church. But this problem is all of ours ... their lives matter!”

Initially Bishop Martin was dead set against adoption, but his wife was persuasive, making it personal, telling him to think about their two children being in such conditions. He relented and they adopted four children altogether.

The film honestly depicts the trials, questions, sacrifices and pain of the tough times the parents faced as they worked to heal the trauma the children had experienced. When the families struggled — many of them feel-

ing they could not succeed or even continue another day — the Martins pulled the church community together to support one another. The unity of the church family is what brought them through it. The whole story is miraculous.

Here in Northern Kentucky, our Covington Diocese has allowed the Pro-Life Office with DCCH Center to set in motion the St. Joseph Ministry. The Catholic Dioceses of Texas, because of the Possum Trot story, created the first St. Joseph Ministry. As St. Joseph was the foster father of Jesus, what better model and intercessor to help find and support foster/adoptive families from our church community?

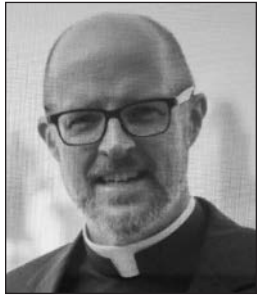
As a representative of DCCH Center, I have spoken to over 15 parishes in the Covington Diocese and have plans to reach many of the remaining churches as the pastors allow. My message is the same, I share about the services and programs at DCCH, and ask three things. First, consider fostering, adopting or mentoring a child. Second, pray for the children and families. Third, help spread the message of the need and offer support to the families who can and do answer the call to fostering and adopting.

Just like in Possum Trot, our church community, through the Holy Spirit and intercession of Holy Mother Mary and St. Joseph, no doubt can meet the needs of all the children. As Pastor Martin says, All lives matter!

Contact DCCH at (859) 331-2040 or www.dcchcenter.org. Our next free informational meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 10, 6:30pm at DCCH, Ft. Mitchell. In August, the Nathe family from St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, finalized the adoption of twin boys they fostered. Please be the next foster/adoptive family, mentor, pray or help DCCH recruit more families to care for children victimized by abuse and neglect.

Ronald M. Bertsch is director of Therapeutic Foster Care/Adoption for the DCCH Center for Children and Families, Ft. Mitchell.

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Phillip DeVous

VIEWPOINT



Ronald M. Bertsch

Women in John’s Gospel

We closed our annual retreat, June 26, with evening prayer. The content of the retreat centered on the Women

in John’s Gospel. The director was Bonnie Thurston, a New Testament scholar, a poet, a spiritual director and an ordained Episcopal Minister from the Appalachian region of West Virginia. Bonnie is an experienced, energetic and gifted scholar and presenter.

I will give you a very brief sampling of the ideas offered. The pattern is to describe the scene and the relation Jesus has

with each of John’s women. What meanings for us are held in each one?

VIEWPOINT



Sister Mary Rabe, OSB

For example, Jesus had a mother. Therefore, he had a grandmother. Whether he only knew her through stories or was able to sit on her lap — how does this form him? How does this help us?

Jesus met the woman at the well knowing she was a Samaritan and he a Jew, and that Jews did not interact with Samaritans. He also would have known that the fountain is a place where boys meet girls, often illicitly. How does this knowledge alter your idea of Jesus?

At Cana, Jesus’ mother tells him there is no more wine. She does not tell him what to do. The mother tells and Jesus acts on what is needed. Are we open to doing what we discern Jesus needs from us and we need from Jesus?

In John’s Gospel the women are not named. What message might the author (John) want us to discover?

In addition, the five days of quiet were enhanced by the homilies at Eucharist each day. With gratitude for all who made the retreat possible.

Sister Mary Rabe, OSB, is the monastery coordinator for the Benedictine Sisters at St. Walburg Monastery.

than truthful leads us down the path of conformity to the manias of the moment, all of which we justify to ourselves with a misguided and malformed empathy, which misleads even as it self-satisfies.

This is how actual idolatry works. That is why we pray for the grace to love what God commands and to desire what Christ promises.

What God commands and desiring what Christ promises stands in stark contrast with priorities of the present and the manias of the moment. We must understand that embracing the priorities of the Kingdom of God and answering the call to holiness will put us at odds with the

world, which is why the Psalmist reminds us, “many are troubles of the just one.”

When the Lord spoke the words of Spirit and life to His disciples, many did not believe, returned to their former way of life, and no longer accompanied Him. They simply could not or would not subordinate themselves to Him.

Jesus, our master, places the question always before us, “Do you also want to leave?”

Father Phillip W. DeVous is the pastor of St. Charles Parish, Flemingsburg and St. Rose of Lima Parish, Mayslick, Ky.



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Founded in 1921, Thomas More University stands as a beacon of academic excellence and innovation, challenging students to Make It More. Deeply rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, this timeless foundation supports a transformative educational experience as students looking to Be More are guided in the pursuit of knowledge, ethical leadership, and the integration of faith and reason. Through the high-quality, liberal arts education provided at Thomas More, students examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others which leads to the ability to think critically and contribute meaningfully to the world. Serving more than 2,000 students, Thomas More takes its place as the premier Catholic university in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region, being named one of the 2024 Best Colleges in the U.S. by the Wall Street Journal. To find out more, visit thomasmore.edu.

Advancing religious freedom through interfaith dialogue

Submitted by Thomas More University

Thomas More University's Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III '67 Institute for Religious Liberty (IRL) will host an interfaith event entitled "Who's My God? Part II" on Sept. 19, 7-9 p.m. in Ziegler Auditorium, located inside the new Academic Center. All are welcome and encouraged to attend; no pre-registration is required.

Since its establishment in 2015, the IRL has played an active role in advancing the American concept of religious freedom as an unalienable right, and the protection of that right for all people. The IRL has accomplished this mission through education and dialogue in the form of academic symposia and lectures featuring distinguished and internationally renowned speakers.

In recent years, topics covered by IRL events have included: "Civil Dialogue: An Antidote to Polarization," a discussion of instances that demonstrate successful promotion of civil dialogue; "Understanding Anti-Semitism — Then and Now," examining the dangers and challenges of a rise in anti-Semitic acts; and "Fleeing for Freedom: Local Impact and Responses," exploring refugeeism as a result of religious persecution.

In February, the IRL introduced its first "Who's My God?" interfaith panel, which took a different approach than previous events by focusing on the personal aspect of faith and the individual relationship with God held by each panelist. Panelists included two men and two women, who represented the Abrahamic religions. "Who's My God: Part II" continues this conversation and introduces four new expert panelists, including:

— Imam Ayman Soliman, representing the Muslim religion, is a local imam, scholar and currently serves as Muslim chaplain at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Soliman holds two master's degrees in Islamic studies and Muslim chaplaincy and is a doctoral candidate in the same field. His focus is on interfaith, Islamophobia and bioethics. Soliman has served as an imam for over two decades and is a member of the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America.

— Brady Lighthall, representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the current Stake President of the Cincinnati Ohio Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He earned his Juris Doctorate and Master of Business Administration degrees from Northern Kentucky University and the Salmon P. Chase College of Law (2005), and undergraduate degrees from Utah Valley University (2001) and Brigham Young University-Idaho (1995). In addition to his voluntary church service, Lighthall is a managing attorney with the Law Office of

Sarah A. Okrzyński, LLC, located in Northern Kentucky.

— Msgr. William Cleves, representing the Roman Catholic faith, presently serves as pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Newport and is director of Ecumenism for the Diocese of Covington. He entered seminary studies after graduating from Covington Latin School in 1970, studying at St. Pius X Seminary, the Athenaeum of Ohio, and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. In October 1979, St. John Paul II awarded him the Papal Silver Medal in Theology for his research on miracles at the Gregorian University. He taught at Thomas More for 24 years and served as president for nine.

— Representing the Jewish religion is Rabbi Meredith Kahan who serves the 200-year-old Rockdale Temple. She earned her bachelor's degree in social work at The Ohio State University and returned home for her rabbinical education at Hebrew Union College (HUC). She was ordained from HUC in 2013, completing her thesis focused on the use



Panelists for the February 2024 Institute for Religious Liberty interfaith event (from left): Hannah Keegan (Roman Catholic), Rabbi Gary P. Zola (Jewish), Shakila Ahmad (Muslim), and Brett Greenhalgh (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Moderator Brian Adams speaks as the event on the Thomas More University campus begins.

of sacred music in teaching children how to pray as Jews. Following ordination, she served as associate rabbi and educator at Rockdale before being elected the congregation's 10th senior rabbi.

The discussion will again be moderated by Brian Adams, Ph.D., chair of the governing board for A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), an international NGO supporting youth leadership in interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Adams is a specialist in interfaith dialogue and is the former director of the Center for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue in Brisbane, Australia.

"We have concluded that many who attend our events, especially among the students, have not had adequate exposure to the four religions (Catholic, Muslim, Jewish and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), or at least three of them, to be able to effectively participate in a true interfaith dialogue," Raymond G. Hebert, Ph.D., executive director of the IRL and dean of the College Emeritus, says.

"A major goal, then, is the practical one of expanding the knowledge base and understanding of the four religions among those present in the audience. What we are most looking forward to on Sept. 19 with this panel is the sharing of details and personal stories that bring to life what is most important to each of the panelists within their respective faith structure or worlds: customs, holidays, traditions, foods, view of the afterlife and more."

For more information about the Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III ('67) Institute for Religious Liberty at Thomas More University, and its past events, please visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III ('67) Institute for Religious Liberty at Thomas More University to host "Who's My God? Part II," Sept. 19, 7-9 p.m. in Ziegler Auditorium, inside the new Academic Center. Four panelists will share details and personal stories that bring to life what is most important to each within their respective faith.

Panelists are:

- Imam Ayman Soliman (Muslim)
- Brady Lighthall (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
- Msgr. William Cleves (Roman Catholic)
- Rabbi Meredith Kahan (Judaism)

All are welcome and encouraged to attend; no pre-registration is required. Visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

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.

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.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult volunteers to tutor children in grades K–8 one day a week in the Homework Plus Program, Monday–Thursday from 3–5 p.m., (openings available every day). Program begins Sept. 3 and runs through May 16.

NDUEC also needs volunteers in the Early Learning (pre-K) Program on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8–11:30 a.m. For information, call Brandi at (859) 630-9475, visit <http://www.nduec.org/>, or e-mail blenihan@nduec.org. Volunteers 18 and older must be VIRTUS compliant.

The Diocese of Covington, in partnership with Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute is offering FREE in-person Mentor Training Workshops. These workshops will take place August 2024 through February 2025. Register at <https://covdio.org/register/>. For information contact Isaak A. Isaak, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, (859) 392-1529 or iisaak@covdio.org.

"Bystander, Enablers and Institutional Complicity," a webinar for survivors and those who care for

them, Aug. 26, 6:30–8 p.m. CDT. Dr. Amos Guiora will lead an examination of the role of institutions who have allowed victim/survivors to be further abused. For information contact Paula Kaempffer, coordinator for Restorative Practices and Survivor Support, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, kaempfferp@archspm.org. Register in advance to receive a confirmation e-mail with the link to join the meeting.

Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Mass, Aug. 28, 7 p.m., St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring, for Catholics Embracing ALL God's Children, a support group for LGBTQ+ individuals, their parents, friends and allies. All are welcome. A reception will follow Mass in Kelley Hall, in the undercroft.

Newport Central Catholic High School invites you and your family up on the school hill, Sept. 1, to watch the Western & Southern/WEBN Labor Day Fireworks at its 30th Family Fireworks Fest. Food Trucks, drinks and fun begin at 5 p.m. and continue until the Big Blast. (No cans, bottles or coolers permitted.) Admission \$5, visit <https://gofan.co/event/1578999%3FschoolId=KY6479>. For information, contact Tessy Krebs at (859) 292-0001 ext. 528 or tkrebs@ncchs.com.

St. John the Evangelist will host Baby Fest, a special celebration for parishioners with a child up to four years old, on Sep. 1. The celebration will include a blessing at Mass and then a playful gathering in the Parish Hall from 10:40 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

Pro-Life Office hosts the Biannual Life's a Ball Event. Please join us to celebrate our honorees on Sep. 7. The event will be held at the Radisson Ballroom, Covington. Cost is \$80 per person or \$800 per table of ten.

The Fire Foundation of NKY invites everyone to a Mass on Sep. 12, 6:00 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The Mass is to create a sense of belonging for those with learning differences and disabilities.

Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Vespers at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to

St. Augustine, Augusta Aug. 23 and 24, 5–10 p.m. Aug. 25, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

Holy Cross District High School Aug. 23, 6 p.m.–12 a.m. Aug. 24, 5:30–12 a.m.

St. Cecilia, Independence Aug. 30, 7–10 p.m., Aug. 31, 5–11:30 p.m., Sept. 1, 4–11:30 p.m., Sept. 2, 1–10 p.m.

2024 Parish Festivals

St. Patrick Parish, Maysville Fall festival, Sept. 6–8

St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, Festival Latino Sept. 7, 6–10 p.m. Sept. 8, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

St. Barbara, Erlanger Rocktoberfest Sept. 13, 6 p.m.–12 a.m., Sept. 14, 5 p.m.–12 a.m., Sept. 15, 2–7 p.m.

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

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

honor couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries in 2024. Married couples celebrating their 1st, 25th, 50th, or 60+ wedding anniversary in 2024 are invited to the Vespers celebration on Sunday, Sept. 15, 2 p.m. Anniversary couples RSVP by July 16, at covdio.org/wedding-vespers/ or contact Lisa Taylor at (859) 392-1533 to register. Reservations are only required for anniversary couples; family members and guests are welcome to attend.

The 2024 Serra Club Golf Outing is scheduled for Sep. 12, at Twin Oaks Golf Club, Latonia. The start is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and the cost to play is \$125 per golfer and \$500 for a foursome. For more information contact Serra Club President Jeff Jehn, jeffJehn54@gmail.com.

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 needed. E-mail pickettscorner23@gmail.com if you have a bike to donate. The volunteer team will pick it up.

New Beginnings is an 8-week, faith-based support group that provides separated and divorced individuals the opportunity for healing and growth. In this group, participants find new understanding of themselves and their relationships and gain courage to discover new life. Evenings, 7-8:30; location varies. Registration is required. Visit <https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1500, ext.1592. Summer/Fall schedule is consecutive Tuesdays – Aug. 20, Aug. 27, Sept. 10, Sept. 17, Sept. 24, Oct. 1, Oct. 8, and Oct. 15; Time: 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Catholic Charities — 3629 Church St., Covington.



Serrans welcome Deacon Heskamp
The June Membership meeting for the Serra Club for Vocations of Northern Kentucky met on June 18 at St. Walburg Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters in Villa Hills. The featured speaker was newly ordained Deacon Joshua Heskamp. Deacon Heskamp is a seminarian studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Covington and is expected to be ordained a priest in May 2025. Pictured (from left) are Serra programs director Alan Pickett, Notre Dame Sister Ruth Lubbers, Deacon Joshua Heskamp, host Benedictine Sister Cathy Bauer and Serra president Jeff Jehn.

Olympic bell will ring inside newly rebuilt Notre Dame Cathedral during every Mass

Caroline de Sury
OSV News

During the Paris Olympic Games, track and field champions rang the bronze bell located close to the finish line at Saint-Denis' Stade de France. In December, that same bell will ring in the newly reopened Notre Dame Cathedral during the most sacred part of the Mass.

"We were contacted a few months ago by the Paris Organizing Committee, to see if we would be interested in this bell for Notre Dame," the cathedral's rector-archpriest, Father Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, told OSV News. "And we

accepted this proposal."

The bell, weighing 1,103 lbs., was made for the occasion of the Olympic Games by the Cornille Havard foundry, dubbed "the last bell makers of France," located in Normandy at Villedieu-les-Poêles, a small French commune, some 24 miles northeast of famous Mont Saint-Michel.

The foundry produces bells for France's largest churches and cathedrals. In 2013, it produced nine new bells for Notre Dame to mark the cathedral's 850th anniversary. Installed in Notre Dame's north tower, their role was to ring for the



OSV News photo/Aleksandra Szmigiel, Reuters

Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic rings the Olympic bell Aug. 10, 2024, as she celebrates after winning gold and setting a new Olympic record in the women's 400-meter final during the 2024 Paris Olympics. The bell, specially cast for the Games by France's Cornille Havard foundry in Normandy, will be placed inside the newly restored Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris during every Mass once the cathedral officially reopens in December.

cathedral's daily services. The same company was responsible for the restoration of eight of these nine bells, after they had been damaged during the fire of April 15, 2019.

The cathedral's largest bell, known as "le bourdon Emmanuel," is located in the south tower. It dates back to the time of King Louis XIV, at the end of the 17th century, and it rings for historic events, as it did at the end of both World Wars. Emmanuel was not affected by the fire in April 2019 and on special occasions continued to be operated manually as the electrical system overcame renovation.

"It has rung several times since the fire, at Easter and Christmas, and for special occasions such as the death of Pope Benedict XVI," Father Ribadeau Dumas told OSV News.

"The Olympic Games bell is not destined to join those of two cathedral towers," Father Ribadeau Dumas explained. "It will join two other bells, newly cast by the same company, which will be placed inside the cathedral, in the gallery, not far from the organ. These three bells will ring together during Mass, at the moment of the consecration. They will replace the bells that were used for this purpose at the crossing of the transepts, before the fire completely destroyed that site."

Father Ribadeau Dumas confirmed that the cathedral bells did not ring during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, contrary to what media reports stated. "What is important is that these two weeks of Games have been a strong moment of fraternity and unity," he insisted. "This fraternity is very precious."



"These Games have celebrated life, and ... relationships", Father Ribadeau Dumas said. "The unity created by what was experienced in Paris during this period is important, and we need to emphasize what forges bonds. We will try to do the same when we host the Paralympic Games, which will show the strength of life at the heart of vulnerability." The Paralympic Games in Paris take place Aug. 28-Sept. 8.

STARS SUPPORT GROUP FOR KIDS AND TEENS

The St. Elizabeth STARS Grief Support Group for Kids & Teens, is a 5-week session that offers activities and educational resources about grief and healthy coping skills. This group is open to children and teens in grades PreK-12 and their caregivers, who have experienced a death of someone significant.

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Students at St. Therese, Southgate, say goodbye to their parents as they head in for their first day of school, Aug. 8, 2024.

Back to School Supplement

THE MESSENGER • AUGUST 23, 2024





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A MASS OF BELONGING

Thursday, Sept. 12

6:00 p.m.

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Representatives from FIRE Foundation of Northern Kentucky will be in attendance. FIRE's mission is to champion the inclusion of students with disabilities in Catholic schools by providing educational resources, fundraising and promoting a culture of belonging.

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Time passes quickly — make this a year for Spirit-filled growth in holiness

Most Rev. John Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Welcome back to school students, teachers, disciples and catechists! Of course, by the time you read this most of you are already two weeks into the school year. The average school year in the United States is 36 weeks of classroom time. That means that you are already one-eighteenth of the way toward earning the reward of next summer. Time passes quickly! Do more than watch it go by.

As we begin this new school year, we have a unique opportunity to seize the day. Three overlapping movements invite us to make the most of the coming year.

Locally, I am encouraging all Catholics to engage in a *Campaign of Mercy*. This is an invitation to make the performance of works of mercy a



Bishop John Iffert

regular part of our Christian life, and especially to reflect and pray on how we meet Jesus Christ when we do something merciful for any of the least of His brothers and sisters. As we grow in our commitment to mercy, we will eventually focus on inviting those who are not actively living the faith and those who have no church home to join us in doing mercy and seeking Christ. This is a part of our diocesan plan for evangelization.

July's National Eucharistic Congress inaugurated the third year of the National Eucharistic Revival. This effort invites us to grow as *Missionaries of the Eucharist*. To be a Missionary of the Eucharist means that nourished by the Eucharist and filled with the Holy Spirit, we go out to others to bear the good news of Jesus to others in word and merciful deed.

Globally, Pope Francis has announced

that 2025 will be a Jubilee Year in the life of the Church. This is a time of special celebration of the mercy of God and the freedom from sin, death, and oppression that is God's will for all people. The Jubilee begins in Rome on the First Sunday of Advent this year. The theme of the year is *Pilgrims of Hope*. While announcing this theme Pope Francis emphasized the importance of Works of Mercy in opening oneself to the graces of the Jubilee Year. He noted that spending time with a brother or sister in need is itself a kind of hopeful pilgrimage to meet Christ in the other.

Each of these three movements reinforces the others, inviting us to cultivate trust in Christ by receiving His mercy and becoming mercy for others. We prepare for this journey of faith through an active life of prayer, accepting the *Our Father* as the pattern of Christian life and the form of our relationship with God.

This year, I invite all our students in Catholic Schools and Parish Religious Education programs; all our faculty, staff, and catechists; and all the Faithful throughout the Diocese of Covington; to live as *Pilgrims of Hope* and *Missionaries of Mercy*. We can live by the conviction that every work of mercy is a work of hopefulness in the world.

Please, during this year, help one another enter this period of Revival and Jubilee through prayer, mercy, and the journey toward trust in Jesus. Time passes quickly. Make this a year for Spirit-filled growth in holiness!

Models of Christ's love

Kendra McGuire

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

A few days ago, I pulled into the school parking lot behind a long line of cars. The sun was just coming up and beautiful colors were filling the morning sky. The first day of school had arrived and the feelings inside my car included excitement and nervousness, the conversation about lunch and afternoon pickup. It felt like we just left for summer break — a time that always passes too quickly but is just long enough to relax and get refreshed for another school year.

With the long days of summer behind us, our lives over the next 10 months will center around school. We will be filling out forms and paperwork, assisting with homework, attending practices and driving to



Kendra McGuire

games and afterschool activities for our children. For parents, the school year means busy schedules, shorter days and logistical challenges.

For our children, the school year is a time to grow and pursue new opportunities. Each day the faculty and staff will teach new academic content and challenge students to work harder. Students will be invited to join clubs and afterschool activities that will help them learn new skills and make new friends. There will be opportunities to lead and be part of a community. Students can participate in athletics, theater, music or other programs that will enrich their academic growth.

And in our Catholic schools, students will also be invited to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Through prayer, reading Scripture, receiving the sacra-

ments and attending Mass, students will learn how God is working in their lives. They will learn how to be part of a Christian community where we show love for God and for one another.

This school year, to ensure the success of all students, we need to encourage them to try new things. We need to offer support when school is challenging and let them make mistakes, which are sometimes the best lessons. We need to support the teachers who will help push our children to reach their fullest potential. But most importantly, we need to be models of Christ's love ourselves.

Our Catholic school communities and the students they serve will be at their best when we are all putting Christ first. This means parents, guardians and teachers who fill their homes with Christ's love. Homes where Sunday Mass and daily prayer are priorities. Homes where we seek truth, knowledge and understanding.

As we begin this new school year, let us resolve to be better followers of Christ. This will ensure the best year for our children, ourselves, and the community around us. For Jesus himself told us, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Yes on Amendment 2 is great for Kentucky education and Catholic schools

David Cooley
Contributor

There's nothing quite like the excitement that surrounds the back-to-school season. This time of year, I can't help but praise God for Catholic schools. Catholic education is such a vital ministry of the Church. It is a ministry that began because the Church was the first to recognize that all people are beloved children of God, have inherent dignity and deserve to have access to the fullness of the truth.

In a Catholic school students encounter Jesus every day. They pray, receive sacraments, learn the faith and participate in ancient traditions. Children grow together, guided by loving adults and learn what it means to be in a Christian community. They are taught to love their neighbors, serve one another, strive for justice and peace and to show mercy and forgiveness.

While it is true that Catholic schools are known for academic excellence and do a fantastic job of preparing young people for college and careers, we recognize that these are just happy byproducts of a school centered on Christ that teaches students about eternity.

Worldly success has its place, but it is nothing compared to our universal call to holiness. Catholic students learn that God created every single person for a unique purpose in life, but ultimately to be happy with Him forever in heaven. It's a beautiful message, but it's also the truth, and it cre-

ates an environment where all people can flourish and be joyful.

There is an added level of excitement and anticipation this year in Kentucky with the prospect of Amendment 2 on the ballot in November. This amendment to the state's constitution will enable legislators to implement school choice programs.

The passing of this amendment would be a win for everyone, but it will especially be a win for parents who want to send their child to a Catholic school but otherwise might not have the means to do so. This amendment should lead to allowing all parents to make decisions that reflect their family's faith and values, ensuring that their children receive an education that aligns with their moral and spiritual worldview.

My hope is that in Kentucky's near future parents will

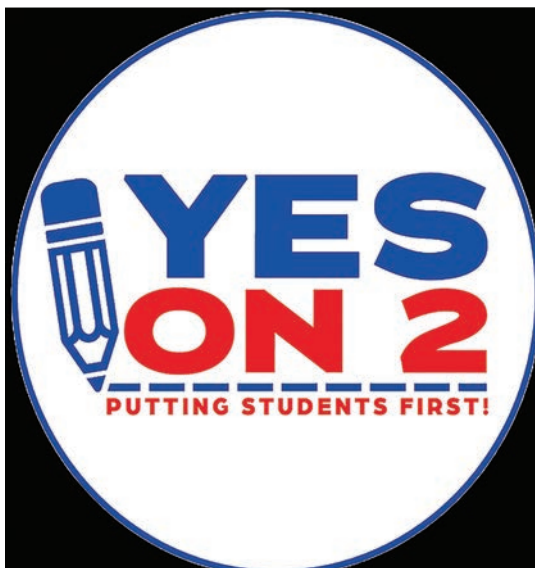
be able to send their children to whatever school they think is best for them. This could be a public school or a nonpublic school, but all the obstacles that hindered them in the past, such as a financial burden, will be removed. We all want what is best for children and for our society.

School choice ensures that children, regardless of their background or neighborhood, receive an education that prepares them for a bright and hopeful future.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation out there. I encourage everyone to read the amendment and see that it is designed to support all students and families no matter where they are or what their needs might be. If you believe that parents should be able to find the type of education that works best for their child for them to be successful, you can confidently vote YES on Amendment 2. It doesn't implement a school choice program, but it is a big step in the right direction.

A school where students are taught that they are beloved children of God, that they are called to love and serve their neighbors, strive for justice and peace, and to show mercy and forgiveness to one another is a blessing for all. Catholic schools benefit society in so many ways. We should do everything we can to preserve them for the future.

David Cooley is co-director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.



The Fire Foundation invites everyone to come together and celebrate differences

Bella Young
Multimedia Correspondent

After a year of business logistics, the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky is ready to start making change happen. To kick off the beginning of the new school year, Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Mass, Sept. 12, 6 p.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. An ice cream social will immediately follow Mass in St. Mary Park, Covington.

With what is being called a “Mass of Belonging” the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky invites everyone to come together and attend the Mass dedicated to those with learning differences.

“The Mass is really inviting everybody, the whole diocesan community, but definitely hoping our families who have children or adults with disabilities would come,” said Kendra McGuire, superintendent, Catholic Schools “We’re hoping with the Mass to tell people about the Fire Foundation and hopefully bring people in and celebrate as a Church community that everyone is welcome.”

The goal of the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky is to “champion inclusion through advocacy, fundraising and providing those grants and resources out to the schools,” said Jeannett Hasselbeck, co-founder and vice president of the Board of Directors of the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky. For Mrs. Hasselbeck being a champion of the inclusivity of learning differences is not just a passion project, but rather something that was spurred out

of necessity.

Her daughter Lucy was born with severe speech apraxia, a rare disability in which the brain cannot properly communicate with the muscles needed to form words. Mrs. Hasselbeck wanted her daughter to have a Catholic education, though no schools had the ability to accommo-

date Lucy and her learning differences. Because of this she was placed in St. Rita’s School for the Deaf, Evandale. On the first day of school, Lucy was the only one of her 15 relatives not wearing a St. Agnes School uniform. “The one thing that didn’t fit was the first day of school, Lucy was the only one not in the uniform,” said Mrs. Hasselbeck. Spurred by the desire for Lucy to have the same experience as her relatives and continue the generations-long tradition of attending St. Agnes School, Mrs. Hasselbeck left her career of 22 years to champion for the inclusivity of learning differences in Catholic schools. It was at this point she joined forces with Missy Hail, co-founder and president of the Board of Directors of the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky. Together they gained support from other mothers going through the same journey. It was this group of moms that reached out Kendra McGuire, superintendent, and asked for help. With the help of Mrs. McGuire, the group of mothers became a committee and together they decided that the next best step was to become a Fire Foundation Affiliate.

The Fire Foundation started in 1986 in Kansas Missouri. It was a grassroots effort by parents who wanted their children in Catholic schools. They recognized that for schools to accept students with moderate disabilities, support services needed to be funded. The Fire Foundation of Kansas City has raised millions of dollars to help fund those support services.

Mrs. McGuire said that the rampant success by the Fire Foundation of Kansas City, other dioceses wanted help doing something similar; this spurred the affiliate program.

“You can apply to be an affiliate and then you get their name, all their marketing material, it brings a lot more recognition to your program,” said Mrs. McGuire.

After approval from Bishop Iffert the committee applied for affiliation status, which was granted in July of 2023.



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“The one thing that didn’t fit was the first day of school, Lucy was the only one not in the uniform,” said Mrs. Hasselbeck.

Spurred by the desire for Lucy to have the same experience as her relatives and continue the generations-long tradition of attending St. Agnes School, Mrs. Hasselbeck



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The Diocese of Covington welcomes two interim principals for the 2024–25 academic year

As the school bell sounds the start of the 2024–25 academic year, Covington Latin School and St. Patrick School, Maysville, welcome two seasoned principals to lead them through transition.

Dr. Rachael Noll
Covington Latin School, Covington

Dr. Rachael Noll has been a teacher on the high school or college level for 13 years and this year will be her fifth year as a principal/head of school. She holds a B.A. in Social Studies (1995) and an M.A. in Secondary Education



Dr. Rachel Noll

(2000) with a concentration in History from Northern Kentucky University. Dr. Noll also holds a Ph.D. in Educational Studies (2007) from the University of Cincinnati where her dissertation research focused on how administrative leadership affects teacher job satisfaction. She worked for the E.W. Scripps Company in downtown Cincinnati for four years, which gave

some insight into business-related practices, advanced technologies, what is expected of an employee in the current workforce and effective management of employees and resources.

Although she had some stops in teaching public high schools such as Scott, Beechwood and Ryle, Dr. Noll's passion is for Catholic education. She considers teaching and administration in Catholic schools a vocation that God has allowed her to pursue throughout various times in her life. Dr. Noll was proud to serve as a teacher and coach at Villa Madonna, as well as a principal of St. Patrick School in Maysville.

Dr. Noll has 14 nieces/nephews and 5 great-nieces/nephews, along with 9 brothers and sisters, who she is excited to spend more time with this year as she moves back to Northern Kentucky. Dr. Noll enjoys watching and playing sports, reading books on history and faith

and doing activities with family and friends. She actively spreads the Gospel through her work with schools and involvement in the Covington Cursillo Movement.

Dr. Noll said she is "pleased to take on the challenge of leading Covington Latin and instilling in students a love of God, of neighbor, and of learning. Covington Latin's motto, 'Teach me goodness, discipline, and knowledge,' is more than just a saying; it is a way of life that should permeate the school and be a guiding force in our lives."



Anne Poe

Anne Poe
St Patrick School, Maysville

Anne Poe will be the new interim principal at St. Patrick School, Maysville. Mrs. Poe served as principal for the school from 2009-2016 prior to this term.

Mrs. Poe is entering her 45th year in education. She taught at Cincinnati's Summit Country Day School as well as in the Kentucky public school system. While in the public system

she served in various administrative positions such as curriculum coordinator, assistant principal and principal. She was accepted twice into the Kentucky Department of Education's Highly Skilled Educator Program.

Mrs. Poe is a life-long member of St. Patrick Parish, and an alumna of St. Patrick, as was her mother and four siblings. All four of her children graduated from St. Patrick High School.

When asked about her new position, Mrs. Poe said, "As an educator, I'm thrilled; as an administrator, I'm challenged; as an alumna, I'm honored; as a member of St. Patrick community, I'm humbled. We have God's work to do — let's be on our way."

Mrs. Poe and her husband Scott are understandably proud of their 12 grandchildren. Mr. Poe has served as a volunteer organist at St. Patrick Church for 42 years.

Thomas More university announces five new academic degree programs



Staff report

Thomas More University's board of trustees approved five new degree programs, expanding Thomas More's academic offerings, contingent on accreditation and state approvals. As Thomas More responds to trends in the job market, community and workforce needs, and student demand, these new programs underscore Thomas More's commitment to academic innovation and excellence.

Within the School of Education, two advanced degrees are designed to meet the needs of K-12 teachers seeking educational advancement to pursue principal licensure. They include: Master of Education Leadership (EDL) and Education Specialist (Ed.S.) in Educational Leadership.

The addition of these programs is poised to address immediate state and local demand for school principals. According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), nearly four out of 10 principals expect to leave their profession within the next three years, and additional research shows that roughly half of principals are not retained beyond their third year of leading a school.

"Regionally, schools and districts recognize the need for strong leaders as demand increases," says Alissa Ayres, director of graduate programs in education at Thomas More. "With the addition of these degree programs, Thomas More continues support of both public and private schools in Northern Kentucky with a new emphasis on strong instructional leadership."

Thomas More's well-established partnerships with schools and school districts, both locally and across the state, are set to enhance both academic programs, providing support and expertise from practitioners in the field, mentorship opportunities and connections with potential employers.

"Thomas More got its start as a teaching college in 1921, educating schoolteachers within the Diocese of Covington. This tradition of excellence has continued for over 100 years, and Thomas More continues to create personal, supportive experiences for students in the field of education that cannot be found elsewhere," Ayres says.

The addition of these graduate degree programs is an integral part of Education VILLA, which launched in 2023. Education VILLA is Thomas More's innovative education model that seeks to meet the region's education workforce needs through advanced degree programs, providing continuing education opportunities for teachers and administrators, establishing the first Dyslexia Institute in Kentucky, and increasing programming opportunities for incoming college students seeking to graduate in education.

Three programs are also planned to launch in Thomas More's Robert W. Plaster College of Business, contingent on accreditation and state approvals: Bachelor of Science in management, bachelor of Arts in hospitality management and master of Science in information technology management.



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BACK TO SCHOOL

Why it's important to welcome kids with disabilities at Catholic schools

Katie Yoder
OSV News

When Olivia Eggleston arrived for her first day at St. John Paul the Great Catholic High School, she spotted a group of cheerleaders out front. They were there for her.

"That was something," said her father, Mark Eggleston, smiling as he remembered the school in Potomac Shores, Virginia. "They cheered for her and did all sorts of things to welcome her in."

Her journey to the school was a long one: Olivia came to the Eggleston family as an undernourished newborn with Down syndrome from Guatemala. As she grew up, she went to various schools and ended up in Virginia after attending one school in Texas where, her parents found out at the end of the year, she had not spoken a word.

That changed at St. John Paul the Great, said Eggleston, a perinatologist in Stafford, Virginia. It demonstrated how a Catholic school can open its doors to students with disabilities and different learning abilities, both as students and as human persons beloved by God.

Teachers tailored lessons to her, peer mentors supported her, every boy danced with her at junior prom after she was hesitant to attend alone, a teacher asked her to be a bridesmaid, and the chaplain met with her every week for two years as she prepared for first holy Communion.

The cheering never stopped. She graduated last year.

Today, estimates indicate that only a low percentage of U.S. Catholic schools include students with disabilities and learning differences. Educational leaders and experts are working to change that. With creativity and dedication, schools can overcome hurdles, from funding and staff to the fear of the unknown, experts say. They are not alone: A wealth of groups and nonprofits want to help schools open their doors to children of all ability levels.

And they should, leaders say. Welcoming these students is not only a pro-life issue but also a Catholic one.

According to a report by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), the largest, private professional education association in the world, close to 1.7 million students attended nearly 6,000 U.S. Catholic schools for the academic year 2022-23.

Only a low percentage of those schools include students with disabilities or learning differences, according to available estimates. The National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion, a nonprofit that supports inclusive education, finds that about 2% of Catholic schools include students with intellectual disabilities, while the NCEA estimates that 6.9% of Catholic schools have students with a diagnosed disability or learning difference.



OSV News photo/Tom Tracy

Special needs student Peter Marvin, a freshman, completes an assignment on his laptop with the assistance of Landon Lewis, a senior and one of his peer mentors, during homeroom at DeSmet Jesuit High School in St. Louis Sept. 6, 2023.



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colleges, universities that plan to attend.

"We think that that's an underreport, by the way, because several dioceses with large numbers of participating students have not supplied data to us," NCEA President and CEO Lincoln Snyder said. "We also know that there's a lot of children with learning differences that may not be diagnosed or may not be reported."

Looking at the data, Colleen McCoy-Cejka, co-founder of Inclusion Solutions, which equips schools to educate all learners, also emphasized that around 20% of the population is neurodivergent, which simply means that differences in their brains affect how their brains function.

"That means every classroom everywhere is neurodiverse," she said. "What we really want to know is: How many Catholic schools are intentionally addressing the learning differences that are present in their schools with excellence?"

Multiple experts expressed concern about the lack of good data and highlighted the challenges of collecting accurate data, beginning with schools defining "disability" differently.

"Everybody has a different definition when they say, 'We do accept students with disabilities'" said Mary Brogan, the vice president of the Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE), which supports special education programs in Washington, D.C., and Maryland. "Even when you have the numbers, you don't know if the schools are talking about the same thing."

The estimates, as they stand, appear in stark contrast with public school numbers. According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, 15% of all public school students received special education and/or related services for the academic year 2021-22 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which requires a free and appropriate public school education for eligible students with disabilities.

Catholic schools began with the intent to provide both an academic education and spiritual development for all students through a Catholic worldview, McCoy-Cejka said, referring to the U.S. Catholic bishops' 1978 pastoral statement on persons with disabilities.

She, along with Mary Pat Donoghue, the executive director of the Secretariat of Catholic Education for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, noted that the bishops recently approved the drafting of a new statement addressing persons with disabilities in the life of the

(Continued on page 18)

Welcome kids with disabilities

(Continued from page 17)

church.

“My office will be collaborating on that new pastoral document and we will be working toward guidance to schools on just this issue,” Donoghue said of schools not fully equipped for students with special learning needs.

“We see this really as a pro-life imperative, particularly in the post-Dobbs church,” she said, referring to the Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade and freed states to decide abortion policy.

She called the ruling a charge to assist families.

“In many cases, children who are identified in utero as having some sort of disability are often aborted,” she said, “and if they’re brought to life, we really want to receive them and to care for them in our schools.”

Nearly all of the experts interviewed for this story identified the effort to include students with disabilities and learning differences in Catholic schools as a pro-life issue.

“It’s a pro-life issue because we are affirming the dignity of each individual and honoring the life that God gave them by welcoming them into our schools and meeting them where they are,” said Mary Desmarais, the founder of Catholic Inclusion LLC, which helps schools through coaching, consulting and professional development opportunities to support all learners.

“By providing inclusive education,” she added, “we are sending a message that no life is more important than another and a student shouldn’t be excluded just because of the way they learn.”

Multiple experts noted that when schools do not accept certain learners, they impact not only those children but also their families. CCSE’s Brogan, who fields calls from parents who want their children included, acknowledged the pain some parents feel.

“They feel like when the Catholic school says ‘no’ to them, then their church is saying ‘no’ to them,” she said.

That changes when schools say “yes.” Brogan remembered when St. John the Evangelist in Silver Spring, Maryland, began preparing for Theresa, her daughter with Down syndrome, when she was born.

“To have all of our children attend the same Catholic school and to receive the same kind of spiritual preparation was fantastic, and it really spoke to not just my husband and myself but to all of Theresa’s siblings that — just as at home she was accepted and loved as one of us — in her parish and school community that was also true,” she said. “She was a child of God as they were.”

As a teacher who works with students with intellectual disabilities at St. John Paul the Great, Emilia Foster instructs students like Olivia. She, like Arnold, embraces her job as a calling.

“Inclusion works. Having a faith-based education works,” Foster said. “It works because when they come to our school, they know they’re enough. They know they’re loved,” she said.

With Foster’s help, Olivia — a student who was once silent — now brings joy to strangers, her father said.

He recalled when, one day, she accompanied him to the local grocery store. As he drove into the parking lot, she begged him to stop.

“Stop right now, Daddy!” he said she insisted.

She opened the door and flew out. Bewildered, he saw her running toward an elderly man in a wheelchair. He parked the car as quickly as he could and jumped out to see what she was doing.

“She goes, ‘Hi, my name is Olivia, and I’m from Guatemala-mala-mala-mala!’” he remembered her words gushing out. “And that’s the kind of girl she is.”

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Diocesan Policy states that “No person shall be refused admission to any church, school or institution or membership in any Catholic society or organization solely on the grounds of race or nationality.” In keeping with this policy, the schools under the auspices of the Department of Catholic Education, Diocese of Covington, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national or ethnic origin. Students of any race who meet the individual school’s eligibility requirements are admitted to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to students at that school and that school does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships and loan programs and other school-administered programs. The names and addresses of these schools are listed below.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- Bishop Brossart - 4 Grove Street, Alexandria, Kentucky 41001-1295
- Covington Catholic - 1600 Dixie Highway, Covington, Kentucky 41011-2797
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Pilgrimage to Rome during the jubilee year

(Continued from page 1)

For those unable to spare nine days away from everyday life for a pilgrimage to Rome, the diocese is organizing several local pilgrimages, giving everyone the opportunity to be pilgrims of hope.

Visiting these historical sites reaffirms the message of hope says Bishop Iffert. "Hope is a kind of certainty, a kind of way of knowing. To be on a pilgrimage that way means we are going to rehearse living these nine days of our lives that way and allowing our confidence in our hope to be strengthened by remembering the places, letting those places help us to remember what God has done for us through people like St. Paul. It will allow us to have that sense of trust and belief."

To learn more about the Jubilee year and the 2025 pilgrimage to Rome go to covdio.org/jubilee.

Redemptive suffering

(Continued from page 6)

cuting." When we suffer, Jesus suffers with us.

Let me end with "Your Cross to Bear" by St. Francis De Sales: "The everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost heart. This cross He now sends you He has considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms, and weighed with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His holy Name, anointed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, alms of the all-merciful love of God."

Isaak A. Isaak is co-director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization

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■ Thursday, Aug. 29, 6:30-9 p.m., Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, Miller Building, Ft. Mitchell

■ Saturday, Sept. 7, 9-11 a.m., St. Patrick Church, Taylor Mill

■ Tuesday, Sept. 10, 6-8:30 p.m., St. Edward School, Cafeteria, Cynthiana

■ Wednesday, Oct. 2, 9-11:30 a.m., Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Oct. 2, 6-8:30 p.m., Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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Thomas More University welcomes three new members to its Board Of Trustees

Staff report

Thomas More University welcomes three new members to its board of trustees. Frank Fritsch '73, James Horn, and M. Scott McIntyre '97 have been appointed for terms that began Aug. 1, 2024.

"Thomas More has entered its second century dedicated to building upon our legacy of academic excellence

ernance is essential to achieve these goals, so we are pleased and grateful to welcome our new trustees joining us to contribute their considerable skills and experience in service to the university."

Frank Fritsch '73 is operating partner at Cressey & Company, a private equity firm focused on investing and building leading businesses in the healthcare services and

Thomas More Chapel in June of 1971. Frank and Mary Fritsch are avid supporters of the School of Nursing at Thomas More University, funding service-learning trips to the southern border led by Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer the last two years and upgrades to the nursing skills lab. In 2022, the lab was named for Mary's sister, Kathleen McLane, a nurse at the University of Cincinnati who lost her life suddenly in 1982.

James Horn, M.D. is executive vice president and chief clinical officer for St. Elizabeth Healthcare, where he leads medical staff, clinical integration, quality and patient engagement efforts. Horn is board-certified in emergency medicine and is a fellow in the American College of Emergency Physicians. In addition to his service to Thomas More, Horn is a board member of the Mayfield Education and Research Foundation, SUN Behavioral Health, and is a member of the Clinical Services Committee of the Northern Kentucky Health Department.

Scott McIntyre '97 is partner at BakerHostetler LLP. He is a certified specialist in employment and labor law by the Ohio State Bar Association. McIntyre studied history and pre-legal studies at Thomas More before attending the J. David Rosenberg College of Law at the University of Kentucky to receive his Juris Doctor. As a student at Thomas More, McIntyre was highly involved on campus, including serving as student government president, was a James Graham Brown scholar and fellow, and won the top leadership award for graduating seniors. Among his many accolades, McIntyre is a life fellow of the American Bar Foundation. McIntyre was appointed by the Supreme Court of Ohio to two terms on the Ohio Commission for the Rules of Practice and Procedure, is a pro-bono volunteer representing veterans before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and is a mentor to many new lawyers.



Frank Fritsch



James Horn, M.D.



Scott McIntyre

through strategic leadership that advances our mission by focusing on student success, academic innovation, and responsible stewardship to ensure an even brighter future," said Dr. Judith Marlowe '69, chair of the board of trustees of Thomas More University. "Highly effective gov-

healthcare information technology sectors. Fritsch studied psychology at Thomas More and during his time as a student was involved in the student government association, serving as president from 1971-72. Fritsch and his wife, Mary McLane Fritsch '73, were married in the

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Christians are called to spread 'fragrance of Christ,' pope says

Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Cleansed from original sin by baptism, Christians are called to spread the "good fragrance of Christ" throughout the world by their kind actions and joyful attitudes, Pope Francis said.

At his weekly general audience Aug. 21, the pope said Jesus was "anointed with the Holy Spirit" when he was baptized in the River Jordan, whereas Old Testament kings, prophets and priests were anointed with perfumed oil.

Just as those leaders received the oil on their heads, "Christ is the head, our high priest, the Holy Spirit is our perfumed oil and the church is the body of Christ in which it spreads," he told thousands of people who had joined him for the gathering in the Vatican audience hall.

During the chrisms Mass each year, he said, bishops bless the sacred oils used in baptisms and confirmations by praying that recipients of the oils may "be made fragrant with the innocence of a life pleasing to you."

He related the prayer to a passage from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: "For we are the aroma of Christ for God."

"We know that unfortunately, sometimes Christians do not spread the fragrance of Christ, but the bad odor of their own sin," the pope said.

"Let us never forget: Sin distances us from Jesus; it makes us bad oil," he added. "And the devil — do not forget this — usually enters through one's pockets. Be aware."

Sin, however, "should not distract us from the commitment of realizing, as far as we are able and each in their own environment, this sublime vocation of being the good fragrance of Christ in the world," Pope Francis said. Referencing St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, the pope said that the "fragrance of Christ emanates from the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

"If we strive to cultivate these fruits, then, without our being aware of it, someone will notice some of the fragrance of the Spirit of Christ around us," he said.

After his main talk, Pope Francis told his guests that Aug. 21 is the feast of St. Pius X, patron of catechists, and noted that many places celebrate catechists on that date to commemorate the saint. In 1905, Pope Pius mandated all parishes to teach catechism classes, and he compiled a simple, brief catechism, known as "The Catechism of Pius X," which was used around the world for instructional purposes.

"Let us think of our catechists who advance so much work and who are, in many places in the world, the first to carry forward the faith," Pope Francis said. "Let us pray for catechists today that the Lord may make them courageous and that they may continue."

The pope also asked attendees at his audience to pray for peace in Ukraine, "which suffers so much," as well as in Myanmar, South Sudan, Congo, Palestine and Israel.



Brother Thomas Pieper celebrates 60 years as a Marianist Brother

Brother Thomas Pieper (center) is surrounded by his family at St. Henry Church, Elsmere, as he celebrates 60 years of religious life as a Marianist this August.

Brother Tom, along with his family, attended St. Paul Parish, Florence. He attended

Covington Catholic High School (1959-1963), where he met the Marianist brothers and priests. After graduating from Covington Catholic, Brother Tom joined the Marianist religious order, making first profession of vows in 1964. Brother Tom graduated from the University of Dayton in 1968. In his ministries he has taught religion at Purcell Marian High School, Cincinnati, was the assistant and director of novices in Dayton, Ohio and is presently a campus minister at the University of Dayton, Dayton.

"As a Marianist Brother, I continue to assist Mary in her mission of bringing Jesus to others by journeying with young men and women helping them to discern God's call in their lives through service and faith community" said Brother Tom. "I have been so blessed by God and Mary all these 60 years!"

For a reflection on his life as a Marianist brother, see page 6.

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Obituary

Sister Mary Jonita Schlueter, SND

Janice Thelma Schlueter was born into the loving family of Thelma and Elmer Schlueter on March 27, 1944. She was their only child.

She described her childhood as “drenched with goodness and love of God.” Janice attended St. Martin School in Cheviot, Ohio, where she came to know the Sisters of Notre Dame. By the eighth grade Janice was convinced that she wanted to follow them and become a sister. After graduating from Mother of Mercy High School, her heart was still set on the same goal.

She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame on August 22, 1962, and made her first profession of vows in 1965. Sister Joenita was then assigned to assist at St. Joseph Heights infirmary, Lourdes Hall, while pursuing an education in practical nursing at Northern Kentucky Vocational School of Practical Nursing.

Upon receiving her degree sister continued her ministry as staff nurse at Lourdes Hall and then worked three years at St Charles Nursing Home. She then went to Morehead State University to earn her RN associate degree and worked at St. Claire Hospital on the surgical floor and in the emergency room. In 1977 Sister



Sister Mary Jonita Schlueter, SND

Joenita returned to St. Charles Nursing Home as Director of Nursing for nine years, after which she attended Northern Kentucky University for her bachelor’s degree in nursing. She continued at St. Charles Nursing Home, working as the evening shift supervisor. In 1994 she returned to Lourdes Hall as head nurse.

Sister Joenita returned to St. Claire in 2002. She continued to serve there as a Registered Nurse, a bedside nurse, a Clinical Research Analyst in Oncology, and then as a Patient Satisfaction Liaison. She felt that working for the Morehead community was an honor. She enjoyed bringing loving care and compassion to all she helped in the 13 years that

she ministered there, sharing the talents that God gave her, so she could help others. Sister Joenita retired from St. Claire in 2015 and returned home to St. Joseph Heights.

Shortly after her return, she moved to Lourdes Hall where she continued to share her kindness, sense of humor, and creativity, as well as her care for her community and family. Sister Joenita will always be remembered for her selflessness, always putting other’s needs above her own.

Sister Mary Joenita went home to God peacefully on July 30, 2024. May she now rejoice in the embrace of our good and loving God.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her stepmother, Henrietta Schlueter. She is survived by her stepsister, Patricia McMillan and many beloved cousins.

Visitation was Aug. 2 at St. Joseph Heights Chapel, followed by Mass of Christian Burial. Father Robert Ross, S.J. was the celebrant. Interment took place in the convent cemetery after Mass.

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Jerusalem cardinal: Interreligious dialogue currently in 'crisis'

VATICAN CITY — Three hundred days after the outbreak of war in Gaza, the cardinal at the heart of the Holy Land said interreligious relations have reached a low point. Dialogue between religious communities in the Holy Land is "in crisis," Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, patriarch of Jerusalem, said Aug. 20 during a presentation at the Meeting in Rimini, an annual event sponsored by the Communion and Liberation movement. "Right now, Christians, Jews and Muslims cannot meet with one another, at least not publicly," he said. "Even at the institutional level it is a struggle to talk to one another." While praising the many documents on interreligious dialogue produced in recent years, particularly the Document on Human Fraternity signed in 2019 by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar, the cardinal said that after the war in the Holy Land "we will need to begin a new phase" of interreligious dialogue and relations. "In one way or another the war will end, and to rebuild the trust from these attitudes of distrust, of hate, of deep disdain will be an enormous effort," he said. Yet he noted that "interreligious dialogue should be less for 'elites' and more among communities; it must reach the grassroots."

Nicaragua extinguishes legal status for religious orders

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Nicaraguan government has extinguished the legal status of more than 25 Catholic organizations, including religious orders such as the Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustinians, another diocesan Caritas chapter, and lay Catholic groups, as part of an attack on civil society with the closure of 1,500 nongovernmental organizations. The closures, announced Aug. 19 by the Interior Ministry, targeted religious and civic groups ranging from Protestant churches to the Rotary club to agricultural producer associations and even the national chess federation. A source familiar with Nicaragua described the Aug. 19 actions as "an extraordinary effort by the Nicaraguan State to crush nongovernmental organizations across Nicaraguan society." The attack from the increasingly totalitarian regime of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, further eliminated civic spaces beyond their control, while further attacking freedom of worship. The regime has closed at least 5,000 nongovernmental organizations and silenced independent media

since 2018, when the protesters took to the streets to demand the president's ouster — only to be met with violence from police and paramilitaries. Martha Patricia Molina, an exiled lawyer who tracks aggressions against the Nicaraguan Catholic Church, has counted 9,688 attempts at thwarting processions and religious activities since April 2018. Her latest report on church persecution was released Aug. 15 and documented 143 clergy — including a nuncio, three bishops, 136 priests and three deacons —, 11 seminarians and 91 nuns unable to work in Nicaragua, having fled the country, being forcibly exiled or simply denied reentry after traveling abroad. The exiled priests and bishops were sent to either in the United States or the Vatican.

Supreme Court temporarily blocks Biden administration's new Title IX rule

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court Aug. 16 declined to allow the Biden administration to enforce portions of a new regulation expanding Title IX protections from sex discrimination to include students who identify as transgender while legal challenges to the rule proceed. In April, the Department of Education released its finalized regulations under Title IX, the 1972 federal civil rights law requiring women and girls have equal access and treatment in education and athletics, which department spokespersons argued broaden the rules governing educational institutions that receive federal funding to ensure that no person experiences sex discrimination. The regulation was challenged by several states, which argued that broadening the scope of the law could dilute its intended purpose of protecting women's athletics. In its unsigned opinion, the Supreme Court found that all of the justices agreed the disputed changes, including the central issues involving sexual orientation and gender identity, could remain blocked, although four justices would have favored allowing unchallenged portions of the rule to go into effect. Administration officials have argued the new regulation is necessary to make sure students can

access schools "that are safe, welcoming, and respect their rights." However, Jonathan Scruggs, Alliance Defending Freedom's senior counsel and its vice president of litigation strategy and the Center for Conscience Initiatives, welcomed the high court's decision in a statement and said the administration was "ignoring biological reality, science, and common sense."

Sudanese humanitarian situation 'can't wait,' says bishop

KHARTOUM, Sudan — As talks in Geneva aimed at ending the 16-month Sudanese conflict began Aug. 14, a Catholic bishop in the region stressed that addressing the humanitarian situation in the northeast African country cannot not wait for "tomorrow." Bishop Stephen Nyodho Ador Majwok of Malakal, South Sudan, a diocese bordering Sudan, spoke amid a warning that the conflict that started in April 2023 had created the world's largest humanitarian crisis and triggered famine-like conditions across the country. His diocese is shouldering the burden of new refugees and returnees forced out by the Sudanese war. Bishop Majwok said, "The suffering is really terrible. Nobody can wait for tomorrow." The war between the Sudan Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces started in the capital Khartoum on April 15, 2023. According to the International Rescue Committee, the war casualty estimate is hard to count, with the organization saying the conflict may have killed between 15,000 and 150,000 people. More than 10 million people have been displaced; more than 25 million — half of Sudan's population — need humanitarian assistance, according to IRC. Meanwhile on Aug. 4, the army and the General Intelligence Service evacuated five Italian nuns, a priest and 20 South Sudanese nationals who had been trapped in Khartoum, the capital, for a year and four months. They were the last missionaries still living in Sudan amid the conflict.

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AUGUST 23-25, 2024
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FOOD & DRINKS
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The People's Golf Outing
September 5th & 6th
Twin Oaks Golf Club
Latonia, KY
All proceeds benefit Be Concerned's food pantry. Scan the QR code or go to beconcerned.org to register your team or consider a sponsorship.
ORG0000820



2024
DIOCESAN PARISH
ANNUAL APPEAL

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR GENEROSITY!**

APPEAL TOTALS —

Goal: \$2,700,000

Total Commitments as of 7/31/24:

\$3,817,577.84

Number of gifts: 7,289

Parishes over Goal: 41

WAYS TO GIVE —

- Cash/Check
- Stock
- Matching Gifts
- Pledge (final payment due 3/31/25)
- Online at www.covdio.org

Numbers reflect pledges and gifts recorded as of July 31, 2024

Parish	Donors	2024 Goal	2024 Commitment	Over Goal* (Under)
Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption	145	\$45,800	\$129,733.64	\$83,933.64
All Saints Parish	71	\$58,800	\$38,779.35	(\$20,020.65)
Blessed Sacrament Parish	314	\$158,600	\$188,858.27	\$30,258.27
Cristo Rey Parish	29	\$55,000	\$12,050.00	(\$42,950.00)
Divine Mercy Parish	75	\$39,600	\$28,134.00	(\$11,466.00)
Holy Cross Parish	132	\$19,800	\$63,079.44	\$43,279.44
Holy Redeemer Parish	13	\$2,800	\$4,653.85	\$1,853.85
Holy Spirit Parish	140	\$38,800	\$70,200.00	\$31,400.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish	314	\$134,900	\$167,922.00	\$33,022.00
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish	259	\$74,400	\$157,038.03	\$82,638.03
Mother of God Parish	209	\$58,600	\$132,538.00	\$73,938.00
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	8	\$44,000	\$1,710.00	(\$42,290.00)
Our Savior Parish	19	\$3,600	\$7,830.00	\$4,230.00
St. Agnes Parish	346	\$140,700	\$191,092.08	\$50,392.08
St. Ann Mission	33	\$8,800	\$19,310.00	\$10,510.00
St. Anthony Parish	67	\$16,800	\$31,400.00	\$14,600.00
St. Augustine Parish, Augusta	69	\$29,800	\$28,395.00	(\$1,405.00)
St. Augustine Parish, Covington	132	\$25,300	\$83,238.56	\$57,938.56
St. Barbara Parish	329	\$104,300	\$164,217.90	\$59,917.90
St. Benedict Parish	71	\$23,200	\$34,533.00	\$11,333.00
St. Bernard Parish	47	\$19,000	\$16,270.42	(\$2,729.58)
St. Catherine of Siena Parish	132	\$71,000	\$90,940.00	\$19,940.00
St. Cecilia Parish	162	\$74,100	\$62,617.00	(\$11,483.00)
St. Charles of Borromeo Parish	30	\$11,800	\$15,010.00	\$3,210.00
St. Edward Mission, Owenton	15	\$3,400	\$7,907.57	\$4,507.57
St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana	59	\$15,200	\$25,003.00	\$9,803.00
St. Francis Xavier Parish	62	\$19,500	\$28,799.30	\$9,299.30
St. Henry Parish	244	\$58,700	\$104,057.00	\$45,357.00
St. James Mission, Minerva	19	\$4,700	\$3,585.00	(\$1,115.00)
St. James Parish, Brooksville	26	\$13,100	\$17,550.00	\$4,450.00
St. John Mission, Dividing Ridge	10	\$3,800	\$2,650.00	(\$1,150.00)
St. John the Baptist Parish, Wilder	22	\$3,000	\$8,610.00	\$5,610.00
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton	35	\$27,300	\$48,987.00	\$21,687.00
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington	81	\$23,500	\$42,120.89	\$18,620.89
St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs	88	\$51,800	\$70,620.00	\$18,820.00
St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring	383	\$82,600	\$135,699.42	\$53,099.42
St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs	286	\$160,100	\$220,616.56	\$60,516.56
St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw	28	\$8,400	\$6,730.00	(\$1,670.00)
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish	441	\$132,000	\$158,917.15	\$26,917.15
St. Matthew Parish	25	\$13,000	\$10,844.00	(\$2,156.00)
St. Patrick Parish, Maysville	127	\$55,300	\$56,915.00	\$1,615.00
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill	177	\$59,100	\$65,600.07	\$6,500.07
St. Paul Parish	213	\$108,200	\$142,665.55	\$34,465.55
St. Philip Parish	75	\$14,200	\$36,170.40	\$21,970.40
St. Pius X Parish	583	\$207,500	\$308,112.95	\$100,612.95
St. Rose of Lima Parish	25	\$10,000	\$11,805.00	\$1,805.00
St. Therese Parish	167	\$23,600	\$62,274.00	\$38,674.00
St. Thomas Parish	297	\$101,800	\$135,151.19	\$33,351.19
St. Timothy Parish	379	\$173,300	\$251,164.48	\$77,864.48
St. William Parish	57	\$22,900	\$27,845.00	\$4,945.00
Sts. Boniface & James Parish	44	\$14,300	\$19,675.00	\$5,375.00
Sts. Peter & Paul Parish	143	\$27,600	\$57,320.00	\$29,720.00
Transfiguration Mission	7	\$2,600	\$1,505.00	(\$1,095.00)
Friends	25	\$-	\$9,126.77	\$9,126.77
Totals	7,289	\$2,700,000	\$3,817,577.84	\$1,117,577.84

QUESTIONS: PLEASE CALL THE DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP OFFICE AT 859-392-1500.