

- 2 Letter from Bishop Iffert**  
Yes on 2
- 2 Cemetery visitations**
- 2 Franciscan Daughters**  
Celebrating 25 years
- 2 Official assignment**
- 3 Campaign of Mercy**  
Parish bereavement committees
- 3 Seminarian Education Fund**
- 3 You're invited**  
Safe Environment speaker
- 6 TMU**  
Celebrating alumni
- 7 NCC breaks ground**  
New athletic complex coming soon
- 8 Tiny Saints fundraising**
- 8 Season of Creation**
- 10 Mustard Seed missionaries**

**Moving? Wrong address?**  
 Call the circulation desk,  
 (859) 392-1570

Bishop's Schedule .....	3
Commentary .....	4
People and Events .....	9
Classifieds .....	12
VIRTUS .....	13
Shopper's Guide .....	14
News Briefs .....	15

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



Young photos

(above) A St. Mary School student waves hello to Sammy the Saint.  
 (above right) Father Gallenstein speaks to the community members and students in attendance.  
 (right) Bishop Iffert speaks to the attendants about what makes the Church holy.



## The St. Mary Stadtmiller Family Parish Activity Center is dedicated and blessed in an October 2 ceremony

Bella Young  
 Multimedia Correspondent

After a fruitful first phase of the St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Cultivating Legacy capital campaign, which included the installation of a church elevator and the expansion of the parking lot, phase two officially concluded Oct. 2 with the dedication and blessing of the new Parish Activity Center.

"Today we ask God's blessing on this Parish Center. We ask God that those entrusted with the education in this parish and school may teach how to join human wisdom with the truth of the Gospel, so that they will be able to keep the true faith and live up to it with their lives," said Bishop Iffert in his blessing. "We also ask the Lord that students find in their teachers, the image of Christ. So that, enriched with both human and divine learning, they are ready and able to enlighten and assist others."

The new Parish Activity Center, or PAC, contains access to the main school building, three new preschool classrooms each at 750 square feet and a new gymnasium with a capacity for 500 adults or 700 children, making it double the size of the previous gymnasium.

Looking forward, the third and final phase of the Cultivating Legacy capital campaign will include the renovation of the previous gymnasium into "a much-needed STEM classroom space," said Father Joseph Gallenstein, pastor at St. Mary Parish.

During the planning process of the Cultivating Legacy capital campaign, it was determined that it would be feasible for the parish to raise \$3.5 million.

"We said \$4.2 million is needed," said Father Gallenstein, "Then comes COVID and that went up to \$5.9 million. At each turn, all the way, they met the fundraising challenges with confidence, creativity and enthusiasm ... More than 900 people contributed, large and small donations, to make this facility possible," said Father Gallenstein, standing in front of the emblem at center court.

The Stadtmiller family, for whom the PAC is named, was the lead donor to the capital campaign. "There is one family, who in fact, was the lead donor. In addition to their own personal generosity, they helped secure other large donors during the campaign. Without which, this project would not be possible — Jim and Connie Stadtmiller," said Father Gallenstein.

To those in the St. Mary community the name Stadtmiller will sound familiar. Mr. and Mrs. Stadtmiller sent their four children to St. Mary School and have been faithful parishioners to the church for just as long.

"They have been tireless and generous supporters of St. Mary Parish and School," said Father Gallenstein.

Now three of those four children are raising their own families

at St. Mary Parish, and their daughter is investing her time and talents as a teacher and campus minister at neighboring Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria. Father Gallenstein concluded his remarks, "The Stadtmillers are a family of deep Catholic faith ... this facility will bear the name Stadtmiller."

Jennifer Geiman, principal, St. Mary School, explained to those in attendance why this Activity Center was so desperately needed.

"The road to this moment was very challenging. Having to navigate a worldwide pandemic that exponentially changed the completion timeline and cost. In June 2022 when I stepped in as principal, the circumstances were dire. The lack of space for our rapidly growing student body ... hard decisions were happening, such as eliminating our thriving preschool program," Ms. Geiman said.

Those preschool students now have three classrooms in the PAC. "We are so blessed that our community provided us with such a beautiful new learning and activity space for our students and parishioners," said Ms. Geiman.

"When we say that the Church is holy, it doesn't mean I'm all that," said Bishop Iffert. "Jesus calls us together to eat his body. Jesus is the holiness of the Church. His life, his word, his ministry flows on in the mission that we share here at St. Mary's. That is what makes the Church holy."

"Today we are here to bless this building. What we are really doing when we are blessing the building is we're blessing you. We're asking God to beat every evil, every temptation, every tendency to be divided, or to hurt one another, away from us. Instead, in this building, in this place you have created — you have made by your efforts and your sacrifices — to make this a place where you come to know Christ. Where he converts us and changes our hearts and helps us to be Christ to one another. That's what we do when we bless this space. We say, 'Make this a space where holy people gather in the image of Jesus and treat one another like Christ.' Everything that happens in this building, we want to be leading toward Christ. The way you play here on this floor, the way you treat one another when you play, even when you are in competition with one another, the way you help one another learn, the way you assist one another ... That's what will make this building holy."

Taking the aspersorium and aspergillum, Bishop Iffert blessed those in attendance, as well as the physical building with holy water raising screeches of delight from the preschoolers and kindergarteners as Bishop Iffert passed them, and more reverent signs of the cross from the older students, all of whom are on their way to making the St. Mary Stadtmiller Parish Activity Center a holy place.



October 11, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Election Day, Kentucky voters will have a unique opportunity to expand educational opportunities for all Kentucky families.

Following the successful passage of HB 563 in 2021, which was the fruit of 25 years of diligent effort on the part of the Catholic community and many others, the Kentucky Supreme Court struck down the Educational Opportunity Account program, preventing its implementation. The proposed Amendment 2 on this year's ballot will enable programs like this one to be considered in the years to come.

Along with my brother bishops in Kentucky, I am encouraging all people of goodwill to vote YES on Kentucky Amendment 2. The amendment is a vital step toward empowering parents to ensure that every child has access to quality education that best matches their educational, social and developmental needs.

By supporting Amendment 2, we advocate for a more equitable education system where resources and opportunities are not limited by geography or income. It aligns with our shared values of empowering parents as the primary educators of their children, promoting educational equity, nurturing potential, and giving every child a chance to thrive.

Amendment 2 does not establish any educational choice program. It does open the door for Kentucky's governor and General Assembly to include non-public schools in the conversation of state educational funding.

Every student should receive a quality education in the school that best fits their educational needs. Our faith tradition affirms that parents are responsible for fostering and directing the education of their child. Amendment 2 can help secure true parental choice for all Kentuckians.

For more than 100 years, our Catholic schools have provided an invaluable service to our local community. It is our hope that the general assembly will recognize and affirm the important work we have done through innovative education and community service. Voting Yes on Amendment 2 is about supporting our families and putting all Kentucky students first.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Bishop John Iffert  
Diocese of Covington



### Official Assignment

Effective Oct. 1, 2024

**Very Rev. Ryan L. Maher, V.F.**

To: Vicar for Priests  
Continues other duties

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

Jamie N. Schroeder  
Chancellor

### Cemetery Visitations

Families and friends of our beloved dead are invited to join Bishop John Iffert for a prayer service, **Saturday, Oct. 19**, at the following diocesan cemeteries:

**10 a.m., St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell**

**11 a.m., St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell**

**12:30 p.m., St. Stephen Cemetery, Ft. Thomas**

At each cemetery, the names of those interred from October 2023 through September 2024 will be proclaimed.

*"Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen."*

## Franciscan Daughters of Mary celebrate 25 years with Mass on the feast day of their patron

**Maura Baker**  
Staff Writer

Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys recalled the founding of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, 25 years ago when one of the diocesan priests recommended a small group of women who were "looking to follow the footsteps of St. Francis" — with hopes of being received into the Diocese of Covington.

Bishop Foys remembered asking them what they were about, to which the sisters replied with their special concern — "To care for others. To preserve life in any way."

The rest, he said, is history.

On the evening of Oct. 4, the feast of the sisters' patron, St. Francis of Assisi, a Mass was held celebrating not only this feast day, but the 25-year anniversary of the sisters'

founding.

Celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Bishop Foys served as celebrant and homilist. Joining him in concelebrating were priests from the Dioceses of Covington, Cincinnati and Indianapolis — representing all from the tri-state whom the sisters have come to serve through their charism of stewarding and preserving life.

Joining in the celebration was a crowd of individuals all gathered to celebrate the sisters and their work, and to pray for them.

In his homily, Bishop Foys recalled the story of St. Francis — how he was born to a wealthy family, his conversion and turning to a life of prayer, solitude and meditation.

In addition, he shared a story of St. Francis from the "Little Flowers of St. Francis" — a collection of vignette stories from the people who knew him.

With the congregation, Bishop Foys recounted the story of the Wolf of Gubbio — a vicious wolf who was attacking all the animals, and eventually, the people, of the village.

"Francis visited Gubbio when he heard of this, and told the villagers that he wanted to see the wolf," said Bishop Foys. And, although the villagers advised St. Francis not to, he made the sign of the cross, and insisted.

As the wolf rushed at St. Francis with open jaws, "Francis made the sign of the cross and commanded the wolf to cease his attacks in the name of God," Bishop Foys recanted from the "Little Flowers."

*(Continued on page 11)*

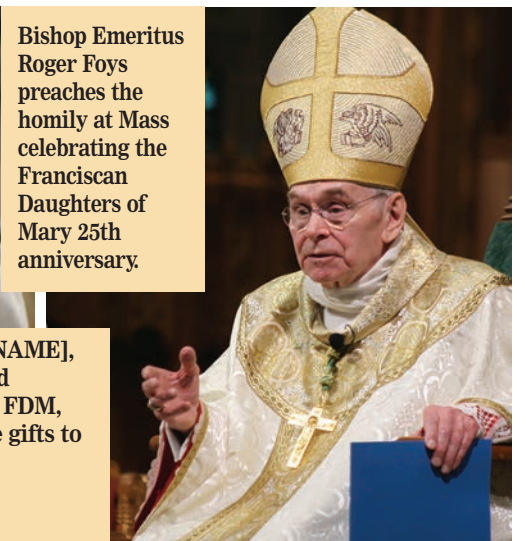
Baker photos



(above left) Sister [NAME], FDM, cradles a child during the Mass.  
(above right) Mother Seraphina Quinlan, FDM, thanks the supporters of the Franciscan Daughters at the end of the Mass celebrating the order's 25-year anniversary.



Sisters [NAME], FDM, and [NAME], FDM, bring the gifts to the altar.



Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys preaches the homily at Mass celebrating the Franciscan Daughters of Mary 25th anniversary.

# Parish bereavement committees offer comfort and support to grieving families in difficult times

Bishop John Iffert launched a diocesan-wide Campaign of Mercy in June 2024. This campaign invites people from across the Diocese of Covington to make a Corporal and Spiritual Work of Mercy a part of their spiritual life and then to evangelize others by inviting family and friends to join in that service. Each month, the Messenger is featuring a work of mercy. For the month of October, the Messenger will focus on the corporal and spiritual works of burying and praying for the dead.

**Maura Baker**  
Staff Writer

Canon Law dictates that “deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law” — bringing with it the importance of planning. Readings, hymns and



other arrangements fall onto the family to organize if not pre-determined when a loved one dies.

For many parishes, bereavement committees, dedicated volunteers, step up to help with this often emotional and difficult stage — walking with family members and friends to plan the liturgy  
*(Continued on page 11)*

# A donation to the Seminary Education Fund supports the future of the Diocese

**Bella Young**  
Multimedia Correspondent

The average cost of a seminarian in the Diocese of Covington to attend seminary is approximately \$60,000 per year. This cost includes room and board, textbooks, tuition and health insurance, all of which are vital to the successful formation of priests. The steep cost of seminary could serve as a deterrent for young men who are on the already

difficult path of discernment.

In order to remove the obstacle of cost on the path of discernment and priestly formation in the Diocese of Covington “a seminarian has all their costs paid for to attend seminary. We want that to continue as we continue to get more seminarians,” said Jim Hess, director of

*(Continued on page 11)*



## Growing up in a Porn Culture: How Social Media, Gaming and Pornography Harms Our Youth

Presented by Dr. Mandy Sanchez, director of programming at Culture Reframed.

Sponsored by the Diocese of Covington offices of Safe Environment and Catholic Schools.

Since 2000, the internet has become the main vehicle for porn. Hardcore porn is just a click away — it is free, violent and based on the degradation and abuse of women and children. The proliferation of the smartphone, together with the growth of teen-targeted social media sites, has opened yet more avenues for teens to access hardcore porn. This presentation will explore the most popular social media platforms accessed by young people today, linking the social media, and porn industries and the harmful effects of their

exposure on young people.

**A must-see presentation for anyone who cares about children and the vulnerable in the world today.**

**Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2024**

**Time: 6 p.m. doors open; 7 p.m. program begins.**

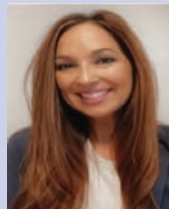
**Place: St. Henry District High School Drees Homes Auditorium, Erlanger**

**Who: All adults (18+) are welcome!**

**Preregistration preferred, but not required. Registration link: <https://forms.gle/jgeLwrkQRZiu35oX8>**

**Questions? Contact Julie Feinauer, director, Office of Safe Environment, [jfeinauer@covdio.org](mailto:jfeinauer@covdio.org)**

Dr. Mandy Sanchez, Director of Programming, Culture Reframed



Dr. Mandy Sanchez

Dr. Sanchez joined Culture Reframed as the Program Coordinator in the spring of 2021. She holds a doctorate in Sociology with a specialization in Criminology and

Women's Studies from the University of Hawaii and has been a professor of sociology and criminal justice since 2013. For more information about Dr. Sanchez and Culture Reframed visit: <https://culturereframed.org/>.

## Mentor Workshops

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.

### 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

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

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.

### Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening

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

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.

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



## Bishop's Schedule

- Oct. 12**  
Religious Jubilarians Luncheon, Metropolitan Club, Covington, 12 p.m.
- Oct. 13**  
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.  
St. Henry Elementary School Library blessing, Elsmere, 12:30 p.m.
- Oct. 15**  
Permanent Deacon rededication Vespers, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 5 p.m.
- Oct. 17**  
Diocesan Review Board meeting, 10 a.m.  
Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 1:30 p.m.  
Priest Monthly Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 3 p.m.
- Oct. 18**  
Mass, Holy Spirit Parish, 8 a.m.  
Seminary Ball, Receptions, Erlanger, 6 p.m.
- Oct. 19**  
Concelebrate Mass prior to the Men's Eucharistic Procession, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 8 a.m.  
St. John Cemetery visitation, 10 a.m.  
St. Mary Cemetery visitation, 11 a.m.  
St. Stephen Cemetery visitation, 12:30 p.m.  
Youth Minister dinner and concert night, Northern Kentucky University, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct. 20**  
Mass, Holy Spirit Parish, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Oct. 22**  
Footsteps of St. Paul Pilgrimage

## As I leave for the second session of the synod

As I compose these words, I am preparing to depart for Rome for the second session of the Synod on Synodality. I was elected by my brother bishops two years ago as a delegate to this gathering, and I participated in the first round last October.

### WORD ON FIRE



Bishop Robert Barron

As I shared with you a year ago, the synod is a lot of work! It lasts four full weeks, and we meet Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. Though many of us asked the organizers to adjust the calendar this year and give us a bit more free time, they have kept it pretty much the same. In line with Pope Francis' instincts, the synod is an exercise in dialogue, and

these conversations take place in small groups, in the plenary sessions, and perhaps most effectively, during the coffee breaks. That last comment is not a joke. I found last year that the informal time spent mingling among the nearly 400 delegates from all over the world allowed for the most fruitful and interesting encounters.

For me, the best part of the synod is precisely this opportunity to make connections with an extraordinary variety of Catholic leaders. I look forward to reestablishing my friendship with Bishop Stefan Oster of Passau in Bavaria, a man I've come very much to admire; with Archbishop John Wilson, whom I've known for many years and who is one of the most eloquent and effective leaders of the Catholic Church in the UK; with Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, one of the most pivotal figures in the English-speaking Church; with Ms. Kelly Paget, a wonderful lay leader of the Church in Australia; with Cardinal Chow of Hong Kong, who, I discovered last year, did his undergraduate study in Duluth, Minn.; and indeed with Bishop Georg Bätzing, the head of the German bishops' conference, a man with whom I frankly disagree on most theological issues but with whom I established a friendly rapport last year.

Well, what will we talk about? The parameters of our conversation have been set by the "Instrumentum Laboris" or "working document," which all the delegates are encouraged to read carefully in advance of the meet-

ing. There are a few themes in the "Instrumentum" to which I would like to draw your attention.

First, the "hot-button" issues of women's ordination, married clergy, and outreach to the LGBT community are basically off the table, for they have been relegated to the deliberations of study groups. Since they will not be the focus of our discussion, the synod can return to the theme that the pope originally assigned to us — namely, synodality itself.

Indeed, the title of the "Instrumentum Laboris" is precisely "How to Be a Missionary Synodal Church." As such, it is an exercise in what I would call practical ecclesiology — that is, it seeks to explore how we make our understanding of the Church concrete in terms of institutions and practices. For instance, it calls for the development, across the international Church, of lay pastoral councils, finance councils, various organs of accountability, etc. A point that I made often in the first round of the synod is that, in our country, most of these "synodal" institutions are already in place. In any case, how to implement and strengthen them will be a major focus of our conversations.

A related motif of the "Instrumentum" is the involvement of more laity, especially women, in the governance of the Church, in both "decision-making" and "decision-taking." At all levels of consultation prior to the first round of the synod and very much at the synod itself, the question of women's participation in the life of the Church was brought forward with energy.

I was gratified to read in the "Instrumentum" that the role of the bishop as principle of unity and final decision-maker was clearly reaffirmed as part of the apostolic heritage of the Church, but I was also pleased to see that both lay men and lay women were being summoned to take part in the governance of the community. Here, again, I frequently pointed out at the last synodal gathering that, at least in the American setting, women already play a very prominent role in ecclesial life.

Based on my experience in the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and now in my own diocese of Winona-Rochester, I can say that women occupy central, even dominant, positions on most parish staffs and chancery offices. In the case of Winona-Rochester, of the 38 people who work in the chancery, 23 are women. This, of course, is not to imply that all is well in this regard, but it is to suggest that perhaps the American model might be one to imitate in other parts of

the Church.

Another topic that runs through the new "Instrumentum" is that of listening. As you undoubtedly know, the pope has rather consistently stressed that listening to one another is essential to synodality. But what emerges with particular clarity in this year's preparatory document is that the first and most important listening we undertake is not to one another but to the Holy Spirit. And if we do listen to each other, it is so that we might together discern the voice of the Spirit.

I think this is an important corrective to a tendency last year to construe synodality in a congregationalist or democratic manner, as though the Church is governed by the consensus that emerges from the dialogue among the baptized. This time, the more robustly supernatural dimension of synodality is brought into the light.

I would like to make a final observation with respect to the method used throughout the synodal process — namely, the so-called "conversations in the Spirit." The "Instrumentum" states, boldly enough, that there was practically universal celebration of this method. I, for one, would not share such unrestrained enthusiasm.

On the positive side, the method compels us, at key moments in the conversation, to pause and pray. This is all to the good, and for reasons both practical and spiritual. Furthermore, in insisting that each member of the discussion circle is obliged to make a substantive opening statement, it holds off the possibility that the more articulate and extroverted participants might dominate the conversation.

On the negative side, I found that the tight control over the dialogue and the hyper-insistence on mutual listening often made things a bit stilted and obviated real exchange, argument and engagement of the issues. Perhaps it was good that we did a good deal of listening to each other in the first round, but my hope is that we might get into some creative disagreement this time around.

All of that said, I leave for Rome with real eagerness and enthusiasm. Could I ask all of you please to pray for the hundreds of us who will be assembling in the Paul VI Audience Hall to listen, speak, argue and decide — all under the gaze of the successor of Peter?

*Bishop Robert Barron is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries and bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota.*

## Lovely memories of Mater Ecclesiae Monastery at the Vatican

How can one visit Assisi and Rome and not write a blog about the experience!

It was an amazing time. From Sept 1–20, I was a Benedictine delegate from North America, and participant in the CIB (Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum) conference in Assisi. What a sacred place to hold meetings.

Following this gathering, the delegates were invited to attend the Congress of Abbots meetings held at St. Anselmo's in Rome. In this blog I would like to share just one lovely experience, of many.

At the invitation of Mother Maria Cristina, a delegate from Argentina, we were invited to Mater Ecclesiae



Sister Aileen Bankemper, O.S.B.

Monastery for lunch, a tour of the Monastery and the Vatican Gardens. Last summer, Pope Francis desired to have contemplative sisters live in Mater Ecclesiae and made the request to Mother Christina. Six sisters from her community moved to Vatican City in early January and will continue their residence for the next three years.

Following his resignation from the papacy, Pope Benedict lived at Mater Ecclesiae until his death in 2022. Located on a hillside behind St. Peter's Basilica, many of the rooms have the same furnishings as when Pope Benedict lived in the dwelling.

I had seen the movie "The Two Popes" and was delighted to tour the building and recall scenes from the movie. A memory I carry, is that

each window had a marvelous view of the gardens and many showcased the back of St. Peter's Basilica.

Following a delicious meal prepared by the sisters, we prayed midday prayer in their simple yet elegant chapel. Though a small number, the chanting of the office was beautiful. The tour of the Vatican gardens followed.

The sisters' hospitality "spoke" true Benedictine. Their joy, kindness and openness made each of us feel very welcomed. To top it all off, myself and another delegate who planned a visit to St. Peter's that afternoon, was given entrance to the Basilica at a special door. What lovely memories.

*Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is provincial superior for the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Ky. Her commentary was first published on the community's blogspot online at stwalburg.org.*

# What's possessing you?

The readings for the twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B — are: Wisdom 7:7-11; Hebrews 4:12-13 and Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27.

Think it's easy to gain eternal life? Think again. That message lies at the heart of this Sunday's Gospel, the familiar story from St. Mark about a rich young man who approached Jesus with a sincere question — but who got an answer he didn't expect or, frankly, want.

Getting into heaven, it turns out, involves more than just being good and following rules. It involves a kind of complete surrender — and for the rich young man, it was more than he bargained on.



Deacon Greg Kandra

"You are lacking in one thing," Jesus told him. "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

That's hard enough for someone young and rich with many possessions; but what about the rest of us? Christ's message here

goes beyond money and wealth. It is not only about the things we possess, but about the things that possess us.

"Children," Jesus explained, "how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" Only after he said that did Jesus qualify it to refer explicitly to someone with great wealth. The fact remains: salvation doesn't come easily, no matter what your circumstances in life.

Confronted with this provocative episode, it's worth asking ourselves: what are the things we own — or that own us — that make it hard for us to enter the kingdom of heaven? What is holding us back or weighing us down?

For some, of course, it might be material wealth. But for others, it may be harder to name. Are we being held back by fear? Are we anxious or unable to place our trust in God? Are we too attached to our own sins — pride, greed, pettiness, bigotry, anger?

Do we measure our lives by what we get, win, achieve, earn — rather than what we sacrifice or give for others?

Among our possessions, do we think at all about our capacity to love God and serve one another?

It's notable that when Jesus addressed the rich young man, he didn't ask him to simply do away with worldly things; no, he commanded him to do something else, to sacrifice for others in a very particular way. Here, as he did so often, Jesus was showing his compassion and preferential option for the poor.

It's also worth remembering there are many kinds of poverty and many types of need. How do we try to address those needs in our own world? What about those who need consolation or empathy or prayer? Do we strive in our own lives to help those who are poor in self-esteem or hungry for dignity? Do we make an effort to defend the defenseless or help the helpless?

A lot of us are wealthy in ways that have nothing to do with material possessions or money. We may have loving families, supportive spouses, a sense of peace and self-worth that might elude some of our neighbors. Do we open our arms and our hearts to those who feel cut off, marginalized, alone, lost?

Here and elsewhere, Jesus showed that gaining the kingdom of heaven requires more than simple piety and faithful obedience. It demands a sense of charity and surrender — not just giving what we own but giving who we are. It demands, in a real sense, to be like Christ.

Are we ready to do that?

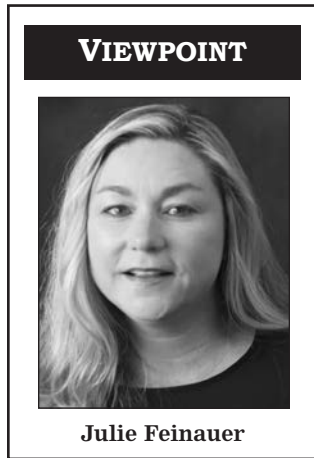
Among other things, the Scriptures this Sunday call on us to remember what really matters. The first reading, from Wisdom, compares gold to sand and silver to mire. Wisdom and prudence are what have the most value.

Likewise, in Christ's teaching, generosity, sacrifice and charity are priceless. They point the way to eternal life, and this invaluable lesson we are saved not by what we get, but by what we give — and how we love.

Deacon Greg Kandra is an award-winning author and journalist, and creator of the blog "The Deacon's Bench."

# There is light in the storm

My brother is waiting for a hurricane. That might sound crazy, but he has a job where others depend on him, so he is sitting in his office marking time until the storm is over so they can begin the difficult job of



Julie Feinauer

rebuilding and restoring. He is already thinking about the aftereffects and what that will mean for himself and his crew. He knows his family is safe, and they have done the best they can to secure their home and now he sits with anticipation building. I can't help but think of all those who are in their vehicles heading North, or maybe West. Each trying to get to safety worried there may be no gas, no way to get money. They take off with what they can pack in their vehicles. Leaving behind precious heirlooms, photos and for some even friends and neighbors who aren't able or willing to leave. As a human being it is difficult for us to understand how God can bring both great joy and sorrow. Such devastation as the many terrible tragedies amassed already due to storms and flooding do not make sense. We wonder how God can allow these things when we are his children, and he loves us. But it is because we know his love for us that we know that he must allow these events so that we can grow in holiness. This is not to say that God wishes hurt or harm on any

one of his own. We must understand that without darkness there is no light. Through these difficult situations people are able to serve those injured and in need to become closer to him. Through our own suffering, we too provide the path to God for one another.

Many of us don't know what to do to help in these situations, especially if giving financially is not possible. Often, we feel like we are so detached that we can't be of any use to those in need. But our solemn prayer is so important to the spiritual wellbeing of all those involved, victims, first responders, those cleaning up and rebuilding, and those making decisions about how funding will be spent. We must also continue to pray for ourselves as we take in all the negativity that we might see on the news or in social media. Continue to have faith and hope in the Lord to guide us through it all.

Some dear friends of our family who just recently moved to a now devastated and difficult to access area in South Carolina are finding God in the little things. Even after having a tree fall on their home, they find blessings in their family, being close to parents who are in need of care and support and helping others to secure supplies. The resilience and resourcefulness of humanity is humbling and beautiful. We all weather different storms in our lives, both literal and metaphorical. If we remember that God is light, and he is lighting our way through the storm, we can transform our difficulties into growth for our soul and the souls of those around us.

Please continue to pray for all those affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Julie Feinauer is director of the Safe Environment Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

# After one year of great suffering in the Middle East, here's how to help

Oct. 7 marks the grim one-year anniversary of the latest war in the Middle East, the date when the Hamas Palestinian terrorist organization attacked Israel out of the blue, killing nearly 1,200 and capturing 251 hostages.



At the time, the outrage from the international community was loud and righteous.

In the months since that initial attack, escalation after escalation on multiple fronts has led to what Pope Francis has called "a spiral of violence" in the region, focusing dramatically on the Gaza Strip for almost a year and culminating most recently in Israeli airstrikes and attacks via bombs in handheld electronics in Lebanon and the launching of missiles at Israel by Iran.

Yet despite the severity of the ongoing war, which bears a larger death toll than previous conflicts in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian battle, and despite the disturbing escalations, the newest conflict in the Middle East risks becoming "business as usual" white noise for the West — with too many long-suffering civilians paying the steep price.

"As we approach the one-year mark, and as we look at statistics out of Gaza, the world has forgotten that there is a life behind every number," said Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in his September reflection, after the death toll passed 40,000 in the Gaza Strip. On his way back from Asia Pope Francis said that "when you see the bodies of killed children ... a school is bombed — this is ugly." And in July, U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is "a moral stain on us all."

According to data published Sept. 18 by the U.N., 96 percent of the analyzed population of the Gaza Strip is facing crisis levels of food insecurity, water sources are compromised, hospitals are only partially functioning, and a shocking 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated from families.

Over the summer, children in Gaza who had been spared death by bombing began dying from malnutrition, with devastating pictures being posted by news agencies of mothers mourning their children after watching them

die slow and painful deaths.

Catholic charities such as Caritas, the Order of Malta and Catholic Relief Services are trying to assist as much as possible to Gaza through the delivery of aid kits with food and sanitary and medical supplies through the Catholic parish of the Holy Family and the Orthodox St. Porphyrios church. The patriarchate in Jerusalem is cooperating with parishes to provide help to Christians in the region, which is also being devastated by a lack of tourists. Despite this assistance, the humanitarian situation remains dire.

We must not forget, too, those individuals whose fates remain unknown. As of late September, 97 hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, remain unaccounted for. At the funeral of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, whose body was recovered Aug. 31, his mother, Rachel, prayed that the death of her son "will be a turning point in this horrible situation in which we are all entangled."

In light of such great suffering, Catholics should respond to the plea of Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and dedicate this Oct. 7 to prayer, penance and fasting.

"For the past year the Holy Land ... has been plunged into a vortex of violence and hatred never seen or experienced before," Cardinal Pizzaballa wrote in a letter to his diocese Sept. 26. "The intensity and impact of the tragedies we have witnessed in the past twelve months have deeply lacerated our conscience and our sense of humanity."

While the cardinal called on leaders to "a commitment of justice and respect for every person's right to freedom, dignity and peace," he also called on everyone to "commit ourselves to peace" through promoting "every action of peace, reconciliation and encounter" and through prayer, bringing "our desire for peace to God."

"We need to convert, to do penance, and to implore forgiveness," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Pizzaballa correctly directs our attention to the Blessed Mother, as the month of October has historically been dedicated to the Holy Rosary and Oct. 7 is the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. It is deeply appropriate to invoke the intercession of Our Lady, who is also

(Continued on page 13)



THOMAS MORE  
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### About Thomas More University

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](https://thomasmore.edu).

## Thomas More University celebrates outstanding alumni

Submitted by Thomas More University

Thomas More University recognizes the recipients of its 2024 Alumni Awards, presented by St. Elizabeth Healthcare. A tradition for over 55 years, Thomas More University Alumni Association celebrates the significant career achievements of Thomas More alumni, their dedication to the mission of the University, and the impact alumni make on the communities in which they live and serve.

"I am so grateful for all the individuals who took the time to nominate someone for an award," says Courtney N. Kleier '17, director of alumni engagement and annual giving. "In a busy world, it is

incredibly significant to be deliberate in recognizing members of our community who have made a difference and deserve distinction."

Seven outstanding alumni were honored in six award categories during the Alumni Association Awards Ceremony, Sept. 27. The honorees are as follows:

**Michael Gieske, M.D. '80** and **Scott McIntyre '97**, both received the Professional Achievement Award, recognizing a level of excellence in their respective career fields.

Dr. Gieske, a family medicine physician for over 37 years, serves as director of Lung Cancer Screening and Physician Advisor Advocacy at St. Elizabeth Healthcare. Under his leadership, over 710 cases of lung cancer have been discovered through over 45,000 screenings. Two-thirds of those cancers were found early, resulting in a 90 percent cure rate. The screening program hit a milestone this spring, with 400 Stage 1 cases diagnosed. Dr. Gieske graduated from Thomas More with a Bachelor of Arts in biology.

Mr. McIntyre is partner at BakerHostetler LLP, where he leads the Cincinnati labor and employment practice and the employee privacy team. Among his many professional accolades, Mr. McIntyre is a life fellow of the American Bar Foundation and holds the highest rank awarded by Martindale-Hubbell, signifying professional achievement and adherence to ethical standards by peers in the legal community. He is engaged in the community through service, including serving as a past board member of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington. Mr. McIntyre studied history and pre-legal studies at Thomas More.

**Kenneth Reis '72** received the Citizenship Award, recognizing the significant impact he has made on the community through service and leadership. Mr. Reis has dedicated much of his life to preserving and sharing history, particularly that of his community in Grant's Lick, Kentucky. Mr. Reis co-founded the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society in 1990, serving as president for 27 years. He played a key role in opening the Society's office, research library, and



(from left) Terry Connor '92; Sierra O'Bryan '13; Michael Gieske '80, M.D.; Sister Barbara Rohe, CDP; Thomas More University President Joseph L. Chillo, LPD; John Cimprich '71, Ph.D.; Scott McIntyre '97, Esq.; Kenneth Reis '72 and Brian Ruschman '00.

Faculty Emeritus **John Cimprich, Ph.D. '71** received the Lasting Influence Award for the positive and lasting impact he has made on the lives of Thomas More students. He taught at Thomas More University from 1985 - 2016 and held the positions of chairperson for both the History Department and the Humanities Division. His professional achievements include three books and numerous essays on the American Civil War period. Dr. Cimprich earned his Bachelor of Arts in history from Thomas More.

The Emerging Leader Award went to **Sierra O'Bryan '13** in recognition of excellence in her post-collegiate life and commitment to Thomas More as a recent alumna. Ms. O'Bryan is a software engineer at Clubhouse and a Google developer expert. She is highly involved in nonprofit organizations that empower women to excel in technology careers, including getWITit and the Cincinnati network of Women Who Code. She takes pride in building user-facing products that help people. Ms. O'Bryan earned her Bachelor of Science in physics from Thomas More.

The final honor, the Legacy Award, was awarded posthumously to **Sister Loretto Marie Driscoll, CDP, Ph.D. '39** for the lasting legacy and deep impact she has made on the University community. She served as an English professor, chair of the English department, and head librarian during her tenure at Thomas More. Sister Loretto Marie graduated from Thomas More (then Villa Madonna) with a Bachelor of Arts in English.

"We had some robust competition this year, and the committee had to weigh many great alumni stories," says Ms. Kleier. "This is our chance to elevate the impact of what our mission calls us all to do as alumni: to examine the ultimate meaning of life, our place in the world, and our responsibility to others."

Thomas More University Alumni Association welcomes ongoing nominations of outstanding alumni online at <https://tmuky.us/25nominate>.

# Newport Central Catholic breaks ground on a new multi-purpose athletic complex

**Bella Young**  
*Multimedia Correspondent*

The last, and largest, objective of the Looking Up Capital Campaign officially broke ground, Oct. 4, with the help of all 231 Newport Central Catholic students, plus faculty, staff, alumni, community members and Bishop John Iffert. The final objective, now underway, is a state-of-the-art multi-purpose athletic complex.

“We are going to have this incredible new facility which will have a turf field for football, boys and girls’ soccer, track and field, all field events, stands for about 1,500 people, locker rooms, coaches offices, concessions, restrooms, a plaza and more,” said Ken Collopy, principal.

Mr. Collopy took a moment to explain to the students and those in attendance, the decision to have the students break ground. “We’re extremely grateful for the opportunity to have our students break ground today. This space is a communal space, but it will highlight our student athletes,” speaking to the students he continued, “it will highlight you. So, this day is about you.”

Not mentioned by Mr. Collopy, the complex will also

include stadium lights, raised viewing areas, storage and a press box. “Everything we planned,” Mr. Collopy said, “should go back to our mission statement of forming men and women of Christian service, leadership and evangelization ... Within athletics we strive to be the best versions of ourselves. This is what God calls us to do every day, maximize our talents. We will not be perfect in this pursuit. Our teams and individuals will strive for perfection, but there will be losses and challenges along the way. Sometimes we learn a little bit more from a loss than we do a win. We develop character, aligned with faith, through our sports.”

This sentiment of Catholic formation was echoed by Bishop Iffert. “When we talk about Catholic formation, what it means for us to be the people we’re called to be, we’re really talking about a number of different aspects. Human formation, the development of the whole human person. Body and mind, everything, so human formation becoming the healthiest person you can be. Intellectual formation, learning to become a person of reason, a person who trusts that God has given you gifts, and that God is

developing those gifts in you. Spiritual formation, having that relationship with Jesus Christ the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit that leads us to the Father that allows us to know who we are, and whose we are ... that is what Mr. Collopy was talking about when he talked about this athletic complex serving not just sports ... being a place where we want all of that development — human, academic, spiritual — to come together for you here.”

The groundbreaking of the athletic complex “is a significant moment in the development of the history of this school,” said Bishop Iffert.

The final objective of the Looking Up Capital Campaign is knocking on the door of completion and the Newport Central Catholic community is excited to answer. “I hope that this complex will be the spark for you, to not only help you participate in athletics, but to bring you closer to God,” said Mr. Collopy.

In February of 2022 Bishop Iffert approved Newport Central Catholic’s proposed Looking Up Capital Campaign. This approval officially launched the silent portion of the campaign which paved the way for the public launch of the campaign one year later. Since the beginning of the Looking Up Capital Campaign, Newport Central Catholic, Newport, has raised over \$15,000,000 allowing for multiple infrastructure improvements to the school and its property.

Young photos



(right) Ken Collopy, principal, stands behind a row of shovels to speak to those in attendance at the groundbreaking.

(below) Bishop Iffert blesses the ground on which the athletic complex will be built.

(left) The students of Newport Central Catholic were invited to bring their own shovels and take part in the groundbreaking.



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# Tiny Saints makes fundraising easy with online campaign for parishes, schools and ministries during October

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

“Fundraisers can be a serious headache,” Ben West, creative director of Tiny Saints — a company whose bread and butter is producing small charms depicting saints and other Catholic figureheads — humorously described.

Logistics like managing inventory and volunteers can make fundraising a challenge for many organizations, big or small. Which is why Tiny Saints aims to make its fundraising program as “plug and play” as possible.

“People are in the trenches of evangelization,” said Mr. West, “we’re just enablers.” He continued, saying, “I’ve had this role as creative director since January, and it’s been a real joy to get to know the customers ... it feels like a simple thing — we’re just selling keychains — but it’s so much more than tchotchkes. It’s their connection with these heroes of faith and the

people they make relationships with.”

Building these connections and growing evangelization efforts are key factors of the company’s mission, according to Mr. West, which contributes to the philosophy of the fundraising campaign.

“All you do is set up an account and then you tell people about it, we handle all the logistics and all the shipping,” said Mr. West. “You list your school, parish or ministry and, then, during the checkout process, they load up their cart, select your organization at check out and you receive a portion of those proceeds.”

The fundraiser can be set up anytime during the month of October, and lasts until the 31. Tiny Saints also offers free promotional materials if requested, and Mr. West welcomes organizers to contact the company with any needs.

For more information on fundraising or the Tiny Saints company, visit their website at <https://www.tinysaints.com>.



Tiny Saints photo

A Tiny Saints charm depicting St. Joseph is featured in this promotional image.

# Congregation of Divine Providence responds to Pope Francis’s challenge to ‘protect our common home’

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

In 2015, Pope Francis’s letter “Laudato Si” — “Praise be to you” — named for St. Francis the Assisi’s canticle, called

Christians around the world to an “urgent challenge to protect our common home” — the earth and all creation in it.

The Season of Creation responds to this call, designating September and the early

**THE TENTH ANNUAL CATHOLIC MEN'S**

# Eucharistic Procession

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024**

8 AM — Mass with Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis Schnurr and Covington Bishop John Iffert at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains.

Following Mass — 2-Mile Procession through downtown Cincinnati

11 AM — Final Benediction at Old St. Mary’s Church led by Fr. Jon-Paul Bevak and the priests of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri.

**All men are invited to join in a spirit of reverence and prayer.**

For more info, contact David Willig at (513) 305-6719 or Doug Jaeger at (513) 417-2503 or visit [facebook.com/HolyNameCincinnati](https://facebook.com/HolyNameCincinnati)



(above left) After exploring the creek across the road from Sts. Peter and Paul School, a BBB club member found this little frog — proof of the health of the creek.



(above right) BBB Club members planted four dogwood trees along Sts. Peter and Paul parish’s new road, California. Extension agent D.J. Scully gave a lesson on tree planting and care before the planting.

part of October as a time, in particular, to act on Pope Francis’s challenge. In the Diocese of Covington, the Congregation of Divine Providence, both sisters and associates, particularly have taken up the mantle of Laudato Si’ and the Season of Creation.

Divine Providence Sister Lynn Stenken, a member of the congregations’ Laudato Si’ committee, describes the origins of the Season of Creation.

“It was thought of originally by the Orthodox Church,” she said, “but the idea of this Season of Creation was particularly embraced by the Catholic Church after Laudato Si’ was written by our Holy Father ... he has embraced this call for everyone to preserve all of creation.”

The season, which began mid-September, ends officially on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, said Sister Lynn. “He was a saint who was inspired by God to see God in all things,” she said, “but it’s much broader than that.”

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul

writes that “all creation is groaning, waiting for the coming of Christ,” said Sister Lynn. “So there has been a sense since the beginning of the Church that God is present in creation, and we need to understand and respect it. The Season of Creation is just a specific time of year where we honor this idea.”

While the Season of Creation is set aside particularly for this mission, the Congregation of Divine Providence attends to the mission of Laudato Si’ and stewarding creation year-round.

Laura Schafer, an associate of the Congregation of Divine Providence, leads the community garden at Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, which also directly donates produce to Holy Spirit’s Outreach Pantry.

The food pantry and community garden are one way of bringing sustainable food to the community, said Ms. Schafer.

(Continued on page 14)



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.

**Youth and families are invited to participate in the Trail of Churches Pilgrimage**, Oct. 12, hosted by the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting. Participants will learn about local Catholic history, art, and faith. You do not need to be a Scout to participate. More information at <https://covdio.org/youth/>

**St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, invites youth and families of the diocese to an encounter with Jesus and others** through music, witness, Eucharistic adoration, and confession, followed by games and refreshments, Oct. 13, 2:30–5 p.m. RSVP by e-mailing [mjohnson@stthomasnk.org](mailto:mjohnson@stthomasnk.org).

**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/newbeginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1592. Fall/winter schedule is Consecutive Thursdays – Oct. 17, Oct. 24, Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Nov. 21, and Dec. 5; Time: 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Catholic Charities — 3629 Church St., Covington.

**The Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community of NKY sponsors a monthly Third Tuesday prayer gathering, “Spirit & Grace”**, 7–8:45 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament’s Parish Center, Ft. Mitchell. Join us Oct. 15 for praise and worship music, teaching, witness and healing prayers. For information, call Carol at (859) 341-5932.

**St. Henry Craft Show**, Oct. 19, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., St. Henry Athletic Complex, Florence. Entry fee \$5; concessions and raffles available.

**Inclusive Education Sacramental Strategies Workshop**, Oct. 19, 9–10:30 a.m., St. Pius X School, Edgewood, for catechists and all who desire to empower and minister to all learners. Presented by the FIRE Foundation and Janie Zembrodt. RSVP by Oct. 14.

**“Studying the Milky Way Galaxy with Gaia Space Telescope,” with Dr. Austin Hinkel**, Oct. 19, 7–9 p.m., Ziegler Auditorium, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. Join us for a lecture on the groundbreaking work of the Gaia Space Telescope, which has transformed the understanding of the Milky Way Galaxy. By precisely measuring the positions and motions of nearly two billion stars, Gaia has created the most detailed map of our galaxy to date. Discover the innovative technology behind this mission, the incredible data it has collected, and the profound discoveries that are reshaping our knowledge of the Milky Way’s structure, formation, and evolution.

**St. Barbara parish’s, Erlanger, Holy Name society, will be hosting their annual “Turkeyshoots”**, Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2 on the parish’s campus. 12 gauge only. Cash-only concessions will be available. For more information, call Larry at (859) 380-9260 or e-mail [turkeyshootstbarbara@gmail.com](mailto:turkeyshootstbarbara@gmail.com).

**“Morning of Reflection – Confession,”** Oct. 19, 9 a.m.–noon, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. Mass, adoration and confession will be offered. Many Catholics feel they have been poorly catechized when it comes to the Sacrament of Confession. Father Conor Kunath will address questions about this critical piece of our salvation story.

**Campus Ministry Night**, Oct. 22, 6–8 p.m., Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University.

**“Help Your Child Manage Stress — Parent Education Session,”** Oct. 23, 7 p.m., Villa Madonna Academy, theatre. Two counseling interns from the Northern Kentucky University Counseling Program will provide a parent education session covering the following topics: Helping your child manage stress; Noticing signs of depression/anxiety in your child; and Talking to your child about his/her mental health. Themes will focus on

social skills, emotional well-being, coping strategies, and stress management. Both interns are currently in a master’s level program working on their degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Both are counseling interns at Integrative Counseling Solutions where they see children and adults for a variety of mental health concerns.

**High School “SUMMIT 24 Eucharistic” Retreat “Rejoicing in Hope”** at Thomas More University. (Not an overnight retreat). Early bird registration by Oct. 30, at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

Are you looking to make your faith journey a part of your college experience? Do you want to learn more about the Catholic faith in a welcoming, open environment — and make lifelong friendships while you’re at it? **Thomas More University’s Campus Ministry invites you to this special evening event, Oct. 22, 6–8 p.m., where you can meet our campus ministers, find out about the Bishop Foy’s Ministry & Service Scholarship**, and discover the many opportunities for service, fellowship, and spiritual development that we offer students of all faith backgrounds. We will encourage you to examine the meaning of life, your place in the world, and your responsibility to others ... all while having a fun and unforgettable college experience! Please RSVP by visiting: <https://tmukyus/CampusMinistry24>

**“The Psychology of Grooming — Part I,”** a webinar for survivors and those who care for them, Oct. 28, 6:30–8 p.m. CDT, with Mitch Mueller. Sex offenders engage in a variety of strategies to target potential victims and prepare to offend against them. In this talk, Mr. Mueller begins to explore the different types of offenders and the different kinds of strategies they use for their crimes. Mr. Mueller holds licenses in mental health and addiction counseling in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Visit <https://www.archspm.org/the-psychology-of-grooming-part-i/>.

**Bingo social**, St. Augustine Parish, Augusta, Nov. 17, 1–5 p.m., bingo, pull tabs, split-the-pot raffle, drinks and snacks, with a meal following bingo. Entry fee \$10. Additional bingo cards optional. Must be 18 or over to participate. Proceeds benefit the Emergency Benevolent Fund. Weather permitting.

**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.

**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.

**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 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](mailto:iisaak@covdio.org).

**Catholic Charities volunteer opportunities:** Volunteer Receptionist — Be the welcoming face for visitors and clients. Most shifts are four hours long. Mason County Jail Ministry Volunteers - Prayer/Scripture Ministry — Join a group of inmates in the detention centers for prayer and Scripture discussions during scheduled evening sessions. Commitment is flexible; volunteers are not required to attend every week. Visit <https://covingtoncharities.org> and click on the volunteer tab, or e-mail [jwalch@covingtoncharities.org](mailto:jwalch@covingtoncharities.org).



**Muffins, moms and Miraculous Medals**  
Holy Trinity 1st Graders invited their moms to Muffins, Moms and Miraculous Medals, Sept. 27. It was also the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, whose work inspired the Sisters of Charity. Students learned about Sister of Charity St. Catherine Laboure and the story of the Miraculous Medal. Father Martin blessed the medals and encouraged the moms to rely always on the blessed Mother. Each student was gifted a Miraculous Medal and then each student placed a Miraculous Medal around their mom’s neck. After Mass, the students shared artwork they created about St. Catherine and the Miraculous Medal of Mary. Everyone enjoyed a sweet treat of muffins.



**Knights ‘fore’ Catholic Charities Lifeline Fund**  
The Northern Kentucky Knights of Columbus Golf Committee presented Chris Goddard, executive director, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, with a check for \$19,000 — the proceeds of its annual Golf Outing held in July. For 15 years the Knights of Columbus have donated \$168,000 to Catholic Charities Lifeline Fund. This fund provides clients with support during untimely financial hardships. “Catholic Charities is so thankful for the dedication and support from the Knights, sponsors and golfers,” said Mr. Goddard. Pictured (from left) Knights of Columbus Committee: Suanne Ledonne; Tim Buerger; Deacon Bill Theis; Vicky Bauerle, Catholic Charities; Chris Goddard, Catholic Charities; Keith Cahill; Dennis Elix; Carl Biery and Eric Oberschmidt.

# Mustard Seed missionaries find joy and Christ in Jamaican home

**Maura Baker**  
Staff Writer

Earlier this year, Bishop John Iffert and representatives from the Curia, St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Thomas More University visited the Mustard Seed Community in Mandeville, Jamaica, to visit the facility and with the residents there.

More recently, women missionaries from St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, accompanied by Father John Paul, parochial vicar, have also returned from the mission.

Called the “Gift of Hope Home,” the community in Mandeville is a “nurturing home” to children and adults with disabilities, with ages ranging from 2 to 34. It describes itself as “providing opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the mission of caring for the most vulnerable.”

“There was a point when I stopped seeing the child’s disabilities and I was able to look into their eyes and into their soul — I saw them as a true child of God,” said Barb Michalowski, one of the missionaries. “I saw Jesus in them and realized how grateful I was to be there and be in their presence.”

“To me, mission means reaching out, going beyond oneself, and at times beyond your comfort zone to serve God’s people,” said Ms. Michalowski.

The mission was “Christ centered,” said Debbie McQuade, another one of the missionaries, and, in addition to their primary responsibilities of caring for and feeding the children in residence, the facilities included a Church that was used daily for “song, praise, reading Scripture and Mass when a priest was available.”

“You could see the calmness of the children, the smiles on their faces and joy,” Ms. McQuade said. “The Holy Spirit was present in all and especially in the hearts of the caregivers (or “aunties”). The aunties had beautiful voices praising the Lord. What a gift!” she commented.

However, amongst all the joy, the mission trip was not without its trials, as described by missionary Tricia Gribben. “During our trip the staff at Gift of Hope were struggling with a sick child who was hospitalized. When we arrived the staff apologized for being distracted but they felt very worried for this child’s health. They loved this child as they would their own and this was immediately evident,” she said. “Having Father John Paul on our trip was a blessing as we were able to offer Mass in the sick child’s name. Ultimately, the child passed on our fourth day of mission. The staff were overcome with grief but felt that it was divine timing that we were there.”

Ms. Gribben, an occupational therapist in a pediatric hospital, “had prayed over ways that I would use my skills

as an occupational therapist but did not realize that God intended us to be there for the staff. His plans were different from anything I imagined ... Mission means surrendering all of yourself to God, in order to serve in whatever way God asks of you.”

Alicia Pence, who also attended the mission, recalled in a reflection words shared to discerning missionaries before the trip by pastor Father Baiju Kidaagen. “Our pastor said, ‘it is not about what you can do for these people but what the experience will do for you; these individuals do not know what they don’t have but they have joy,’” she said.

While she initially struggled with worrying if her interest in the trip was “selfish,” citing opportunity to travel and chance to be seen, these words reassured Ms. Pence and cemented her decision to join the others to Jamaica.

“It will be hard to relay the experience to others,” she said, “but I hope that my presence will be enough to encourage others to consider supporting or even actively participating in a future mission trip. There are opportunities to build, to retreat and to love. I still have much growth but reflecting on the experience, the memories, and most importantly the joy shared with the residents will motivate me to keep trying.”

McQuade photos



(above, top row) Missionaries smile for photographs taken of them with residents at the Mustard Seed Community Gift of Hope Home in Mandeville, Jamaica.

(above left) Statues depicting Jesus and the Blessed Mother stand on the property of the Mustard Seed Community.

(above right) Missionaries pose for a picture with some of the residents outside of one of the buildings.

(right) A chapel at the Jamaica community exhibits the phrases “Thank you, Lord” and “He is here” above the sanctuary.

# Rose Garden Home Mission thrives through generosity of volunteers — Jesus' love made manifest

Mother Seraphina Quinlan, FDM  
Contributor

“So that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete ... love one another as I love you.” John 15:11-12

When we began the Rose Garden Home Mission, a ministry of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, we learned early on that we need volunteers to help us with all that we do. Without them, there is no way six sisters could do the work of running a pregnancy care center, food pantry, free medical clinic and free dental clinic.

We LOVE our VOLUNTEERS! We are so grateful for their love for Jesus, for their gifts and talents, love and friendship and gifts of themselves to Jesus through all of the Works of Mercy they generously practice at the Rose Garden. They are a vital part of the Sisters' ministry to our needy neighbors, and we would be absolutely unable to follow God's inspirations and works at the Mission without them.

The Mission came to birth as an extension of the Sisters' prayer life, and a way to live out the vow we each make to Jesus to uphold the dignity of every human person from the moment of conception until natural death. This is the Mission's lifeblood and primary reason there is a Rose Garden.

Our neighbors love coming to the Mission. In a note from one of our neighbors right before Thanksgiving,

“Thank you for all of the smiles, prayers and comfort you deliver in the Name of Our Divine Father. Not to mention how grateful I am for being so generous in what you give.” She signed the note, “With sincere love and gratitude!”

When God inspires a new volunteer to come and help, we show them around and share with them that all we ask of our volunteers is help us uphold people's dignity by giving everyone they meet the love of Jesus. Initially, this begins with a smile, it's a way of your heart saying, “Hi! Glad to see you!” Of course, it's important to try to be positive and uplifting — no one enjoys being around someone looking or sounding grumpy. We seek to build each other up in the love of Christ, “so that they may see your good works and glorify your Heavenly Father.” (Matt 5:16)

Two vital virtues that are good to practice at the Mission are patience and compassion. How easy it is to fall in to being critical toward the neighbors we serve, a temptation that we need to resist out of our love for Jesus Christ. Often, our neighbors get their dignity trampled upon by others, so that initially they expect the worst from us — that is until they come to know us.

It takes courage and great love for Jesus (who always gives us the grace) to be gentle, compassionate and patient with someone who may be rude or disrespectful or demanding. These neighbors, to quote a great saint, must be to us, “Christ in His distressing disguise.” (Mother

Teresa of Calcutta).

One recent event helped us to realize how important it is to love our neighbor. One of the sisters was speaking to a neighbor, sharing about how we promise God to give the love of Jesus to everyone. The neighbor replied, “You all sisters do that, but your volunteer didn't.” Sister replied that most of them do. He shrugged his shoulders and said, “Yeah, you're right, most do.”

As Christians, we are ambassadors for Christ to the people we serve. Everything we do for our neighbors should be a reflection of the kind of love our Lord has for each of them. So, if we are kind, loving and compassionate this gives witness to them that God is kind, loving and compassionate. If we are harsh, uncompassionate and critical, they will think of him like that.

No one is perfect, and we all have our off moments. However, if I find myself being tempted to being critical of others, or complaining, or just being plain negative, I try to remember to think of our neighbors as Jesus in his “distressing disguise,” and be inspired to change. “So that (my) works may be clearly seen as done in God.” (John 3:21)

*Mother Seraphina Quinlan is superior for the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, Covington. For related article on see page 2.*

## Seminary Education Fund

(Continued from page 3)

Stewardship and Mission Services, which coordinates the Diocese of Covington's Seminarian Education Fund.

Currently, there are five seminarians in the Diocese of Covington, ranging in stages of formation from the transitional diaconate to the propaedeutic year. With five seminarians currently enrolled, the yearly cost for the formation of the Diocese of Covington's future priest is approximately \$300,000. People of the Diocese of Covington are asked to support the formation of seminarians by donating to the annual Seminary Education Fund.

“The Seminary Education Fund is an investment in the future of the Diocese. If you care about the priests of our Diocese and their well-being, their formation, then making a gift to the Seminary Education Fund is one of the most important things you can do. These men will be the future priests of the Diocese of Covington,” said Mr. Hess.

“Everybody in the Diocese is getting an envelope to their house with a letter from Bishop Iffert. They will also be getting a brochure, along with a giving envelope that they can drop off at their parish or mail in,” said Mr. Hess. The funding of our seminarians is vital in the discern-

ment process and priestly formation; without the \$60,000 roadblock young men have the ability to explore their vocation free from the pressures of the world outside of seminary.

William Fuller, a second-year seminarian at the Pontifical College Josephinum, said in a video about vocations, “Even if you're really not sure about your vocation, it's still very much worth looking into the propaedeutic year; looking into applying for seminary. Here, you'll have a lot more opportunity to pray than you will anywhere else, and prayer is really where discernment lives.”

The opportunity for a young man to explore his vocation can be provided through a donation to the Seminary Education Fund, allowing him to discern more fully to the priesthood.

Deacon Joshua Heskamp, a seminarian in his final stage of formation at St. Vincent Seminary, was a paralegal at a law office when he felt the call to the priesthood. “I wasn't fully satisfied with my work in the law office,” he said in a video on vocations, “I felt like there was something missing from my life. That there was this deeper thirst within me, a deeper meaning, a deeper calling that God was calling me too ... the seminary gives me space to grow as a person through prayer and through study and

through ministry experiences that I wouldn't have otherwise.”

The brochure being sent out to homes explains in detail that without the financial and prayerful support of our faith community, many seminarians would find it impossible to pursue their vocation. If you want to support the future priests of the Diocese of Covington, there are two significant ways to help. The first is to pray for our current seminarians and for an increase in men willing to accept the call. The second is by financially supporting seminarians' education. Donations can be made by check or online at [covdio.org/give](http://covdio.org/give), then choose the option for the seminarian fund.

“This is the only fundraiser that we have during the year for our Seminarian Education Fund,” said Mr. Hess, “this kind of goes beyond just helping to pay a student's tuition, you're investing in the education of these men for the future of the Diocese.”



Scan QR to make a gift to the Seminary Education Fund

## Franciscan Daughters of Mary

(Continued from page 2)

Calling him “Brother Wolf,” St. Francis was able to make peace between the wolf and the people of Gubbio — saying that the wolf played “one of his forepaws on Francis's outstretched hand.”

“Is it any wonder that Francis is such a popular saint?” Bishop Foys asked the congregation. “He is genuine. He is real. He is committed by his actions to the words he preaches and teaches. Francis saw God's hand in everything and everyone.”

He continued, saying, “Everything and anything we have comes ultimately from the hand of God. And, so, you see God's beauty in a sunrise or a sunset, in a bird or a dog or a wolf.”

Circling back to the sisters celebrating their anniversary, Bishop Foys commented on their “remarkable” mission to “care for anyone who comes. No questions asked — because anyone who comes is a child of God to be treated with dignity and respect.”

“We pray that the ministry will continue to flourish and to grow,” Bishop Foys concluded, “and just as Francis brought peace to the wolf and the people of Gubbio, may the sisters bring peace and reconciliation to all who walk through their door.”

## Support to grieving families

(Continued from page 3)

to ease the burden of grieving.

Bereavement committees not only plan liturgies but help organize receptions and offer much-needed support as well.

Michelle Braun, secretary at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, also is currently the head of the parish's committee. “It brings a helping hand to people during a difficult time,” she said. As a gift from the parish, parishioners at St. Henry also bake goods for the families of the deceased.

Similar is true for many parishes who have bereavement committees, with some individuals devoting large parts of their lives to the ministry. One committee head, who wished to remain anonymous and out of the spotlight, began her work in bereavement and planning funerals almost 40 years ago.

At the time, she had attended a funeral in Cincinnati that was organized by a bereavement committee — something uncommon in Northern Kentucky at the time, where most funerals were organized by parish priests.

After presenting her ideas to her pastor at the time, she initiated one of the first bereavement committees in a Northern Kentucky parish.

In the present day, she is one of nine planners who serve on the bereavement committee at St. Pius X Parish in Edgewood. The planners take turns attending to the families that reach out, going through the Mass with them either in person or over the phone. “Depending on what's more comfortable for them,” she said.

In addition to the nine planners, other individuals on the bereavement committee prepare food for receptions, do set up and clean up or serve as altar servers, ministers, lectors or anything else that the family needs for the deceased's funeral Mass.

“We try to get as many people from our parish as possible to help with things,” said the committee's head, “to bring comfort to the family.”

“You're so happy when there's a wedding,” she said, “there's so much planning, and your mind is going every which way. With a funeral, you don't have that much time. These families wonder ‘what do I do?’ and ‘what do I need to do?’ ... that's where the bereavement committee really takes a lot of that off of them, which gives them comfort in knowing somebody else is helping them. There are times when the family cries, and I do too,” she said. “It comforts your heart, plus gives them comfort, knowing

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# Suffering in the Middle East

(Continued from page 5)

our queen of peace, for an end to the suffering and conflict in the Holy Land, for who understands suffering better than she whose heart was pierced by a sword?

At the end of his homily at the Oct. 2 Mass opening the 2024 Synod of Bishops on Synodality, Pope Francis announced that he will go Oct. 6 to the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome to pray the rosary “for the gift of

peace” and encouraged synod delegates to join him. He then joined Cardinal Pizzaballa in encouraging all people to “live a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world” on Oct. 7.

One year into this terrible conflict, let us not forget all those who continue to suffer in the Middle East — in the holiest of lands where Jesus himself walked. Let us work

for an end to violence through prayer and fasting and by offering repentance for the ways in which we have failed to live and act with love. May peace reign in our hearts and in our world.

*The members of the OSV Editorial Board include Father Patrick Briscoe, OP; Gretchen R. Crowe; Paulina Guzik; Matthew Kirby; Peter Jesserer Smith and Scott P. Richert.*

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### Bulletins:

■ October bulletin posted Sunday, September 1; due Tuesday, November 1.

The monthly e-mail reminder of a new bulletin posted will come from system@pub.virtus.org.

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■ Thursday, Nov. 14, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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# 'protect our common home'

(Continued from page 2)



Mothers Angie King, a gardener, and Mandy Lauer, entomologist, joined Divine Providence Sister Lynn Stenken in founding the BBB Club. Here they pose with the club members after all had prepared the land and planted the pollinator garden in 2022.

"People visiting the pantry can see the garden out front when they go back to get food. It feels a little nicer that way, and forms a little extra connection because of the effort and the freshness," she said.

Sister Lynn, as spiritual director at Sts. Peter and Paul school, California, has also helped support the mission of Laudato Si' and the Season of Creation through the "BBB

Club" — which she helped form with school mothers Angie King, a gardener, and Mandy Lauer, an entomologist. The BBB Club — which stands loosely for bulbs, butterflies, birds, bees and "all of God's beautiful creation," invites grade school students to participate in ideas that care for and invite them into the natural world — such as planting trees and flowers, or exploring the nearby woods

together.

"I'm grateful to those who understand the importance of teaching kids the beauty of where they live and the responsibility they have for being a steward so that it continues to be beautiful," said Sister Lynn.

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National/World

**As church prepares for Jubilee, 'Holy Land is bleeding,' Palestine ambassador says**

ROME — Without a ceasefire, the upcoming Jubilee year in Rome will be marred by the suffering and bloodshed in the Holy Land, Palestine's ambassador to the Holy See said. In an interview with OSV News Sept. 27, Ambassador Issa Kassissieh said that he hopes that "the war will be behind us" by the time Pope Francis opens the Jubilee year on Christmas Eve because "we have to remember that the cradle of Christianity is in the Holy Land. It is the birthplace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is also where our Lord was crucified in Jerusalem." "We cannot have the celebration of the Jubilee of 2025 and the Holy Land is bleeding and crying and the people are suffering," he said. "We must say, 'Enough of wars,' and give space for the peacemakers, as our Lord asks of us," he said. Regarding the war expanding into neighboring Lebanon, Kassissieh said that in order to "de-escalate the situation in Lebanon, the war must stop in Gaza" and that true peace in the region cannot be achieved without tackling the root cause of the problem, which is the continued "occupation in the Palestinian Territory." The Palestinian ambassador to the Holy See also urged the Vatican to ramp up its diplomatic efforts for the sake of Christians in the Holy Land, who are also "paying the price" as the war continues.

**Vatican appoints youth advisers, including U.S. member**

VATICAN CITY — Selected from different regions and international Catholic movements active around the world, 20 young people will advise the Vatican on topics related to the pastoral care of young people as well as other issues. The Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life announced the appointment of 20 new members of its international youth advisory body Oct. 7. Wyatt Olivas, an undergraduate student at the University of Wyoming, was appointed to the board from the United States. At 20, Olivas is the youngest member of the Synod of Bishops on synodality. The board was formed in response to a request from the final document produced at the 2018 Synod of Bishops on the youth. "The group will play an important advisory and proactive role, collaborating in synodal style with the Dicastery, to further explore issues related to the pastoral care for youth and other topics of more general inter-

est, including in cooperation with other Dicasteries of the Roman Curia," the dicastery said in a statement announcing the appointments.

**Amid Helene's destruction, heartache, survivors need prayer, support and love, says Tennessee bishop**

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The people of upper East Tennessee near the North Carolina border are working to piece their lives back together amid the devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene. And the Catholic parishes of this region are joining together to lead disaster-relief efforts as communities find themselves without water, basic necessities, and even roads to access assistance. "They need prayer. They need our support and love, and they need to know they are not alone in the journey ahead," Bishop Mark Beckman of Knoxville said after an Oct. 2 visit to affected communities. The survivors are suffering "immense grief and sadness," the bishop said. "They are really traumatized." The disaster unfolded on Sept. 27 as Hurricane Helene blew northeastward after making landfall in the Florida panhandle. With high winds and dark clouds swollen with record amounts of rainfall, Helene unloaded on the mountains of western North Carolina, which sent torrents of water rushing down mountain tributaries and into the Nolichucky, Pigeon and French Broad rivers that flow through East Tennessee. Almost without warning, the rivers spilled over their banks and consumed everything in their path, including businesses, services, roads, bridges, and most importantly, residents. The towns of Erwin, Newport, Mountain City, Hampton and Greeneville in East Tennessee are still dealing with the devastation a week later. The communities have been without water, and some roads that connected the towns have been washed away.

**Speakers note legal, moral concerns over abortion amendment on Maryland ballot**

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Changing or repealing constitutional amendments is not impossible, but it is rare and can be difficult, according to a law professor who participated in a panel

about Maryland's Question 1, the "Right to Reproductive Freedom" amendment. The question, which will be on the state ballot for the November election, would "enshrine that 'fundamental freedom,' without really any meaningful limits," said Elizabeth Kirk, of the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America in Washington. The Sept. 23 webinar on Question 1, presented by the Maryland Catholic Conference, also featured Erika Bachiochi, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, also in Washington. Jenny Kraska, executive director of the Catholic conference, based in Annapolis, moderated the discussion. The conference is the public policy arm of the state's Catholic bishops. Constitutional amendments "tend to be much more significant and serious than statutes or laws in terms of their permanence," Kirk said. "Maryland, of course, unfortunately already protects abortion to the fullest extent, but this amendment would enshrine it in the state Constitution permanently, as well as usher in a whole new set of protections for whatever else might be meant by the term 'reproductive freedom,'" she said. Bachiochi said constitutional amendments such as Question 1 are "Band-Aids put on something that is gushing, and we haven't dealt with the things underneath." Those include building strong family structures, and this encompasses the community at large.

**Georgia Supreme Court reinstates six-week abortion ban**

ATLANTA — The Georgia Supreme Court temporarily reinstated Oct. 7 the state's six-week abortion ban while it reviews an appeal of a previous lower court ruling that had struck down the law. Georgia's so-called "heartbeat law" on abortion, which prohibits most abortions after six weeks, went into effect after Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022. It has been the subject of litigation after opponents filed suit shortly after its passage. Previously, Judge Robert McBurney of Superior Court of Fulton County in Atlanta ruled Sept. 30 that Georgia could no longer enforce the six-week law, permitting abortions in Georgia until about 22 weeks of pregnancy. The state of Georgia appealed, and the state's highest court found the law is enforceable while it considers the state's appeal. The legislation, known as the LIFE Act, prohibits — with some exceptions — abortion after fetal cardiac activity can be detected. The law was signed by Gov. Brian Kemp in 2019, but it did not go into effect immediately because Roe v. Wade was still in place at the time it was passed.

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