

- 2 Bishop Brossard High School**  
Breaks ground
- 2 Campaign of Mercy**  
DCCH shelters the homeless
- 3 Obituary**  
Deacon Bernie Kaiser
- 3 Volunteer opportunities**  
DCCH
- 3 You're invited**  
Bambinelli blessing
- 7 St. John the Evangelist**  
100 year anniversary
- 8 St. John the Evangelist**  
100 years of history
- 9 Holy days of obligation**
- 10 Campaign of Mercy video**  
Turkey giveaway
- 16 Joseph's adoption story**

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

Bishop's Schedule .....	3
Commentary .....	4
People and Events .....	6
Classifieds .....	12
VIRTUS .....	12
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).



**Advent 2024**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Advent is a season of hope! A sacred time in which we allow and invite the Holy Spirit of God to nourish in us the great theological virtue of hope — the desire for eternal life and happiness and placing trust in God's promises. We do this by living these four weeks between the mountain peaks of two great missionary journeys of Christ toward His people.

On the First Sunday of Advent, we will be reminded of Christ's teaching of the end times. Looking ahead to our ultimate purpose and God's will for us, we strengthen our hearts' expectation of the Lord's coming in glory to reunite all who are faithful to his name in the great Kingdom of God.

In the following weeks, we hear of John the Baptist and his prophetic announcing of the one the world has been waiting for. Finally, we will hear Mary's great song of praise, magnifying the Lord God for the way he has prepared her to be the chosen instrument of Jesus' coming to be the Prince of Peace and the Light of the World.

Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash



Jesus Christ, born in the flesh, is the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, to David, and to Isaiah and the prophets. This promise fulfilled secures our certain hope that he will return to us in glory at the end of the age. Upon that return all hopes will be fulfilled, and every tear will be wiped away. War will be no more. All God's people will be united in mind and heart.

In the final moments of this Advent season, December 24, Pope Francis will open the Jubilee Year 2025 and the first Jubilee door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The next Sunday, December 29, we will join dioceses around the world in opening our local celebration with a 2 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Covington. I invite you to join me at this opening Mass ushering in the universal celebration of the Jubilee Year.

The theme of the Jubilee Year is "Pilgrims of Hope." It is a call to live with this solid foundation of hopeful expectation and to allow that expectation to become so rooted in our hearts and minds that it changes the way we live in the world.

The coming year will present several ways to live from the place of hope into a more hopeful stance toward the world. Three ways that come immediately to mind are:

- The ongoing wars in the Holy Land, between Russia and Ukraine, and in Sudan, as well as violence and division in our own communities, homes, and hearts, invites us to practice hope by becoming peacemakers.
- The 10th anniversary of "Laudato Si'" and the Holy Father's clarion call to care for our common home is an opportunity to foster hope by working for a more sustainable future for our young people and the planet.
- 2025 is also the 1700th anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed — the definitive statement of baptismal faith that we pray together each Sunday. This anniversary is an opportunity to strengthen our understanding of the faith and to live in sure and certain hope that the Lord's promises are even now being fulfilled. It also allows us to live hope by pursuing greater unity in the life of the Church.

After the New Year, I will write with suggestions for how these events might be part of our pilgrimage of hope during the Jubilee Year.

May this Advent season help us prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas, as well as for the announcement of the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the Jubilee Year. May it strengthen us with the grace-filled hope of taking our place among the Communion of Saints. May confidence in His future coming shape the way we live together in God's holy will and Jesus' Sacred Heart here and now.

Happy Advent! Come, Lord Jesus!

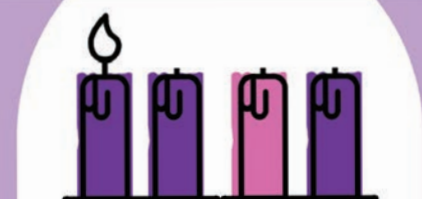
Yours Devotedly in Christ,

Most Rev. John Iffert  
 Bishop of Covington

**First Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1**

**First Sunday of Advent**

In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: "The LORD our justice." —Jeremiah 33:16





## Bishop Brossart High School breaks ground on softball and baseball fields

Bella Young  
Multimedia Correspondent

Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, officially broke ground, Nov. 22, in preparation for the completion of its state-of-the-art Mustang Athletic Complex. In light of the snowy ground and freezing temperatures the ceremonial groundbreaking was held inside the field house. Inside, a small structure, likened to a raised garden bed, was constructed and filled with dirt so ground could still be broken.

The complex, also referred to as “The MAC,” already houses a plaza, track, a football and soccer field and the field house. The addition for which ground was broken will add individual baseball and softball fields.

“I am looking forward to watching over the next several months as they start building and bringing this dream to a reality,” said Chris Holtz, principal.

Mr. Holtz continued, saying, “Our seniors are going to be out here playing this spring on these fields, it is going to be here forever, for generations to use these facilities. It means so much to be able to see that, see our kids have these opportunities ... We can enjoy, play the game and praise Jesus for all the gifts he gives us and the talents he’s provided to be able to do that together.”

Tim Machenheimer, co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, echoed the sentiment of Mr. Holtz. “We started this 14 years ago, we did it for the generations in the future to come,” he said.

The students of Bishop Brossart High School were permitted to leave class and come be a part of the groundbreaking. They stood and bowed their heads as Father Ryan Stenger, pastoral administrator, opened the ceremony in prayer.

“We beg you to accompany and strengthen with Your grace, the students who will play on these fields. Help them to cultivate the gifts You have given them. Teach them how to sacrifice for their own interests for the sake of others. Grant them humility, and charity in both victory and defeat, may the bonds of friendship that they forge here remind them always of the communion and love that await us in your kingdom where you reward your faithful servants with a crown of life,” Father Stenger said.

Bishop John Iffert also spoke to those in attendance, “Never underestimate what you can accomplish with your gifts. Never underestimate what you can accomplish with your talents, your willingness to serve, with your contribution. The biggest institutions have started with someone



Young photos



(left, from left) Don Knochelmann, diocesan director; Buildings and Properties Office; Chris Holtz, Bishop Iffert, Father Ryan Stenger, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, and pastoral administrator, BBHS and Anna Wessling, business manager, Level 4 Construction, ceremoniously break ground.

(above right) Bishop John Iffert prepares to bless the future site of the baseball and softball field.

(below) Chris Holtz, principal, addresses the Bishop Brossart High School community and students.



giving of themselves to some good work. Congratulations to what you have accomplished here.”

With that, Mr. Holtz, gave shovels to Bishop Iffert, Mr. Machenheimer, Don Knochelmann, Father Stenger and

other distinguished guests. The students and community broke out in a round of applause as the shovels drove into the dirt and turned it over, signifying the official beginning for the completion of the Mustang Athletic Complex.

## DCCH Center for Children and Families shelters the homeless year round

Bella Young  
Multimedia Correspondent

As part of the Diocesan wide Campaign of Mercy, the Messenger has been highlighting a different work of mercy each month. For the month of December, the focus is on the corporal work, sheltering the homeless.

Sheltering the homeless is not something that many people feel they can participate in. The image many conjure is of welcoming into their home a stranger; perhaps someone who sits on the corner or sleeps on the sidewalk. Opening your home to strangers can not only be dangerous but for many they feel wary about letting a stranger into their home. It takes specially trained people and organizations to meet the housing needs of this most vulnerable population. For individuals, its best to support these organizations in their mission and ministry.

However, there are other groups to consider when thinking of sheltering the homeless. Instead of picturing a stranger on the corner, picture a small child who had to be removed from his or her home because of unsafe conditions. Picture a teenager, whose whole life has been in and out of institutions, multiple homes and new people. These are the faces of the children in our local foster care and adoption system. And they have many ways for individuals to participate in their mission and ministry of provid-

ing shelter for homeless children.

DCCH Center for Children and Families, Ft. Mitchell,

receives 400 referrals a month for children that need to be placed with a foster or adoptive family. Ron Bertsch, Therapeutic Foster Care/Adoption/ILP director, said that every month they must turn

away referrals because they do not have enough families.

Mr. Bertsch, in his role, recruits families, trains them, does their home study and gets them approved so that he can help those 400 children who do not have a home to go to.

“Without the recruitment of resources and families it is hard to do the rest of our job, which is to match homeless children, that need a foster or adoptive family,” he said.

When the job is difficult, Mr. Bertsch said that remembering the work of mercy he is doing helps him stay motivated. “It helps me stay motivated in this job because I feel like it is a ministry that I am doing, and it is God’s work. There are a lot of days that are hard and frustrating, but I feel this is more than a job for me, it truly is a ministry.”

The DCCH Center for Children and Families also has a program that aids older children once they have aged out



of the traditional foster care system.

“In the history of our services, many kids turned 18 and aged out and had to fend for themselves,” said Mr. Bertsch. Recognizing the needs of these vulnerable young adults, in 2017 DCCH found some funding, and launched its independent living services.

“Kids that are 18 ... if they choose, they can extend their stay in foster care. We find them an apartment, we pay utilities and rent and offer case management and therapy ... I have had a lot of success with over a dozen kids since we have been doing that, I feel like I am another father figure to these young men and women,” said Mr. Bertsch.

The best part of the job, Mr. Bertsch said, is being able to tell a child that they found a family. “To be able to tell them, ‘Hey, we found you a family!’ I don’t know if I have the words ... but I can see it on their face, it is almost unbelievable, the excitement and the joy ... it is the excitement, ‘there is somebody out there in the world that is willing to give me a chance.’”

Anyone interested in learning more about foster care or adoption services, DCCH is hosting a no obligation, informational night, Monday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. at DCCH Center, 75 Orphanage Road, Ft. Mitchell, in its Miller Building — signs will direct you.

One-on-one ZOOM information meetings can be scheduled if the planned info meeting is not convenient. E-mail [fosterandadopt@dcchcenter.org](mailto:fosterandadopt@dcchcenter.org) requesting a meeting with someone from our team.

For a related story about an upcoming 175th DCCH adoption see page 16.



# Deacon Kaiser remembered for a lifetime of generosity and service

Deacon Bernie J. Kaiser, 83, died Nov. 13. He was ordained a deacon of the Diocese of Covington by Bishop William Hughes, 1985, in the diocese's first class of deacons. He was the husband of Linda Roaden Kaiser, and father to Tim Kaiser and Chris Kaiser, as well as a grandfather to 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Deacon Kaiser was preceded in death by his parents, his children Sandy Kaiser and Dave Kaiser, sisters Myrtle Vicars and Alvera McMillan and brother Robert Kaiser.

Deacon Bernie Kaiser grew up on Crescent Ave. in West Covington, attended St. Aloysius school and then Covington Catholic high school for half of his high school career before switching to Holmes and graduating in 1960, after which he married his high school sweetheart, Linda Roaden Kaiser, who was introduced to him by friends in high



Deacon Bernie J. Kaiser

school.

Deacon Kaiser worked several jobs, but landed eventually in a finance company, according to Mrs. Kaiser, helping to form and lead Consumer Credit Counseling, utilizing his professional and personal experience in finances.

Consumer Credit Counseling is a nonprofit, debt relief program dedicated to helping people regain control of their finances and plan for a debt-free future. Father Gerry Reinersman remembers visiting with Deacon Kaiser at Consumer Credit Counseling. "He very much saw his work as a ministry," said Father Reinersman. He saw in his work, "reducing stress in people's lives and as a healing ministry for them and their families. He was a good humble soul."

Deacon Kaiser grew up poor, according to Mrs. Kaiser, and, as such, "he knew what it was like hav-

ing these needs that people had. He understood that because he had been there. His father was like that, too. Even though he didn't have a lot, he was always willing to share what he had."

After his retirement, Mrs. Kaiser remembers Deacon Kaiser telling her that he wanted to become a deacon — and, while Mrs. Kaiser never foresaw herself becoming a Catholic deacon's wife, having grown up protestant, she noted how God has a "good sense of humor."

During his time as a deacon, Deacon Kaiser served his home parish, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger.

"He enjoyed being a husband and a father," she said, "he had loved being a deacon because he was in a position where he could help people in so many ways."

Towards the end of his life, Deacon Kaiser suffered from Parkinson's and Dementia before passing away — while at his visitation and funeral Mass at St. Barbara's Church, Erlanger, Nov. 22, Mrs. Kaiser recalls how many people came to her speaking of the help and aid that Deacon Kaiser had offered during their lives.

Deacon Kaiser was laid to rest at Floral Hills Memorial Gardens, Covington. Memorial donations may be made in Deacon Kaiser's honor either online or in person at services to St. Barbara Church or to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Cincinnati.

## Volunteer at DCCH Center for Children and Families

Nearly everyone can help shelter a child in need at DCCH. Here are some of the volunteer opportunities available.

### Direct Care Opportunities

#### Care for Foster Care Meeting

Volunteers provide childcare during the Therapeutic Foster Care support group meetings. These 2-hour meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. VIRTUS training is required.

#### Guardian Angels School Tutor

Volunteer at the Guardian Angels School, which is located on the DCCH grounds. You can support them in a myriad of ways, including reading with students, providing art or music lessons, and even clerical work. The school asks for set days and times. Follows Beechwood Independent School calendar. VIRTUS training is required.

#### Apartment Volunteer

To assist the residential staff during regularly scheduled activities, including things like tutoring, arts and crafts, daily living skills, and more. Will never be left unattended with residents. Must be at least 18 years of age and able to volunteer consistently, one time a week, for a minimum of 6 months. VIRTUS training is required.

#### Mentor

To support the residents in developing appropriate relationships with adults other than DCCH staff. Able to visit with your mentee regularly (2-4 hours, 1x weekly) and willing to build a long-term relationship. The commitment is for the duration of the youth's stay at DCCH. Must be 21 years old and have a valid driver's license and proof of auto insurance. VIRTUS training required.

#### Host a Movie Night

You and your family, friends, or work

peers can provide a meal for the kids at DCCH during their movie night. We can coordinate a date for the movie—you bring the meal, drinks, and stay for the show!

### Indirect care opportunities

#### Kitchen Volunteer

Lunch: Kitchen volunteers assist in the cafeteria with serving lunch to the residents and staff. 1.5-hour shift.

Dinner: Assist with preparing and portioning food for each apartment and assist in delivering each food cart. 1.5-hour shift.

#### Special Events

Assist in special events, such as Swing into Spring and Fall Festivus. Opportunities include set up, tear down, and event volunteer.

#### Grounds/Maintenance

Volunteers are needed for cutting grass, landscaping, and housekeeping. Also, there are situations in minor capital projects and seasonal projects, where volunteer assistance is needed

#### Administrative

Regular and substitute volunteers are needed for the front desk/reception area of DCCH. Regular volunteers are on a weekly schedule of 2-4 hours. This is a first impressions volunteer position; therefore, the ideal candidate will have a pleasant phone voice and a "can do" attitude.

### Join a group

#### Equine Sessions

Volunteers can participate in horse care, horse training, or sessions. They can choose to participate in one or all three volunteer areas. All equine volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and have experience in handling and caring for

horses. Must be able to complete stable cleaning tasks and have the ability to lift up to 40 lbs. VIRTUS training is required.

#### Flea Market

The DCCH Flea Market is open on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays (3rd Saturday only in the winter months) and offers a wide variety of merchandise/clothing both new and gently used. Items donated by the community are cleaned, sorted, priced, and then sold. All Flea Market profits go directly to supporting the children at DCCH. The flea market depends on volunteers. Hours are 8:30am-12pm. Some activities require the ability to lift up to 40 lbs. Working at the counter requires dealing with customers, helping them find an item, receiving payments, and bagging purchases.

#### HALO League

The HALO League meets on the third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. to plan monthly events for the DCCH residents. The monthly events are a mixture of on-campus and off-site activities. There are opportunities for direct and indirect care within the HALO League. VIRTUS training is required.

#### Club 1848

Club 1848 is a group of dedicated individuals from diverse backgrounds, who are committed to enriching the lives of children and families served by spreading the word about who we are, gaining donors through amazing events, and forging partnerships with individuals, families, and corporations to ensure a lasting impact for DCCH Center for Children and Families.

To learn more about DCCH and how you can help visit <https://www.dchcenter.org>.



## Baminelli Blessing and Christmas tree lighting

Dec. 14, 5:30-7 p.m.

Bring your baby Jesus from your home nativity for a special blessing from Bishop Iffert, and come together for an evening of celebration, Advent and heart.

Cookies, sandwiches and hot chocolate provided as well as live Christmas music by Diocesan school and parish choirs.



## Bishop's Schedule

### Dec. 3

Priest Formation Day, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 9 a.m.  
St. Elizabeth's annual Bishop's dinner, Ft. Mitchell Country Club, Ft. Mitchell, 5:30 p.m.

### Dec. 5p

Thomas More University Board of Trustees meeting, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, 1 p.m.

Serra Club Priest Appreciation dinner, Blessed Sacrament Church, Ft. Mitchell, 6 p.m.

### Dec. 6

Diocesan Curia Staff service awards luncheon, Metropolitan Club, Covington, 11:30 a.m.

### Dec. 7

Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

### Dec. 8

Advent Lessons and Carols, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 3 p.m.

### Dec. 9

Crosier Guild Mass, St. Agnes Church, Ft. Wright, 8 a.m.

## The Cathedral Concert Series

The Cathedral Concert Series continues its 48th season with the **Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols, Sunday, Dec. 8, 3 p.m.** Scripture and Sacred Song foretell of the coming Nativity. All are welcome to attend and participate.

Bishop John Iffert will be the presider. Choral pieces, sung by

the Cathedral Bishop's Choir, and Advent Hymns echo the seven readings which announce the coming Nativity. The Historic Matthias Schwab will be played by guest organist, Richard Redmon.

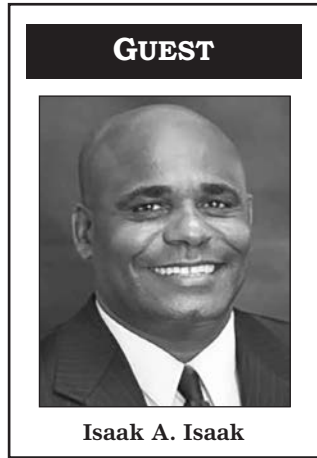
Since the date falls on Dec. 8, the theme will acknowledge

the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

All Cathedral Concerts are open to the public with no admission charge. A freewill offering is gladly accepted. Visit [cathedralconcertseries.org](http://cathedralconcertseries.org) for more information on the current season and series history.

# Workshops on the Old Testament with Father Timothy P. Schehr

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization is providing short workshops on the books of the Bible with Father Timothy Schehr, who is retired professor of biblical studies at the



GUEST

Isaak A. Isaak

Athenaeum of Ohio, Mount St. Mary Seminary of the West. These workshops are open to all catechists, teachers, catechetical leaders and to the entire faithful of the Diocese.

These short workshops are being offered in response to our Holy Father, Pope Francis's call to all the baptized to grow closer to our Lord Jesus Christ through his Word, and to accept our proper

role as "missionary disciples" in our homes, schools, parishes and even publicly, especially during this year of 2024.

This year (2024) is a year that will prepare us spiritually so that we can celebrate the jubilee year in 2025. No one can be a true missionary disciple of Jesus Christ during this year of jubilee unless we are equipped and trained in the word of God.

The books of Leviticus and Numbers will be presented in December 2024; whereas the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and First and Second Samuel will be offered in 2025.

The cost for each book is only \$35 dollars. This is an amazing opportunity for all of us to grow in our faith. Come to the first session of the workshop and see for yourself what Father Schehr offers. He is an expert on Scripture, and will help us understand the "intention of the writers," such as, what were they trying to say about God or about the people to whom they were writing?

What were their customs? What did written words mean to them at that time in history? After Father Schehr helps us to understand what the writers were trying to say, then we can apply these words to our own lives.

He will also cover the many types of writings found in the Bible, such as, poems, prayers, proverbs, letters, parables, prophecies, Gospels and the apocalypse or visions of the end of times in their original context. Each type of these writings expresses truth, but it would be incorrect to take some of them. For example, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says, "If your right hand is your trouble, cut it off and throw it away." Certainly, Jesus is not encouraging us to abuse our bodies, but to discipline our passions. In doing so, Jesus is using an exaggerated manner of speaking. We do this, for example, when we say, "I'm starving to death."

The Second Vatican Council's document on Divine Revelation also states that we should consider the content of all of Scripture and the sacred tradition of the Church if we want to understand the Bible properly. In other words, we should not take a passage out of the context of God's total revelation. For example, in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless." (John 6:63)

Some Christians claim that Jesus' statement about the flesh being useless means that He is not present in the Eucharist. Yet the passages that came before this one, and in many other places in the New Testament, speak of the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

Other writings from the time of the early Church indicate that the first Christians believed that Jesus was truly present, in a real and mysterious way, when they broke bread and shared the cup of wine with one another: You may also read the Emmaus Story in the Gospel of Luke 24:30-32 that says, "As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared."

The Bible is a great and wonderful book which we

should all read and study. We should try to understand properly the meaning of the Scriptures, and not simply give passages with our own interpretation.

To avoid this, I personally invite you to come on Saturday, Dec. 7 to experience Father Schehr's teaching. During these workshops Father will guide us through the meaning of the Bible. Through his teaching, the Bible will be a source of unity in the Church, rather than the division that follows when we interpret Scripture contrary to the Church's teaching.

Bishop John Iffert knows that the beliefs of those who have a fundamentalist, literal interpretation of the Bible can be a challenge to Catholics who have not studied Sacred Scripture and its interpretation. Therefore, he has called for these workshops to take place. With our faith under attack by fundamentalists, he wants us to know how to answer their questions truthfully and correctly. He wants us to be informed Catholics in the Word of God, and to be able to intellectually combat those who feel it necessary to condemn our faith.

These workshops offer a real chance for us to begin expanding our own knowledge. It is an opportunity for every Catholic in the diocese to rediscover Jesus in the Word of God.

I pray catechists, teachers, catechetical leaders, parents, and families in our diocese to take our Holy Father Pope Francis's and our bishop's call to heart and be fully engaged in this endeavor.

Workshop sessions are offered on Saturday mornings, beginning Dec. 7, 9-11:30 a.m., at the Curia Office Building, in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium. Each workshop consists of one session and will cover one book of the Bible at a time. For Registration, please visit the following Link: <https://covdio.org/bible-workshops/> or call Isaak Isaak at (859) 279-6589.

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

## When is enough enough?

To begin, let me say that I don't have any answers to the question I am about to pose. Kathy (my co-missioner here in Kitale) and I frequently go for a mocha coffee on the weekend. It doesn't matter the topic on which our conversation begins, at the end we find ourselves grappling with some variation of this question. I am posing it here because I have been asked to write periodic spiritual reflections prompted by my experiences here in Kenya as a Maryknoll lay missioner; and if I fail to write about this spiritual dilemma, I would be ignoring the proverbial elephant.



GUEST

Theresa Glaser

Let me back into the question by starting with a story. My ministry is teaching at the St. John Bosco

rehabilitation center in Kitale, Kenya: a place which rescues children from situations of extreme poverty and provides an opportunity for them to attend school and ultimately change the pattern of their lives. Because I wanted to understand more about the shining and scrubbed-up children I see in the classroom every day, I was given permission to accompany our social worker on home visits.

Most recently, we navigated a quarter mile of sloppy mud through an "unplanned settlement" (slum) to visit a mother of five. She was living in a mud house — dark, without windows. The slippery mud that we had followed on the road continued into her living area.

She sat barefoot on a makeshift couch, holding a baby who had a rumbling cough. She explained that the houses in that neighborhood all flooded each time it rained heavily. And since her "stove" was piled rocks and her cooking fuel sticks, the rain also made it impossible to cook on those days and the family went without food. She did odd jobs, such as taking in laundry, to earn money.

Kathy serves as a missioner-nurse at "Nyota ya Asubuhi" ("morning star") run by the Daughters of

Charity, an order founded by St. Vincent de Paul. The ministry builds mud houses for the homeless and/or handicapped, provides daily care for "street boys," gives nutritious supplemental food to clients who have essentially nothing to eat, and provides medical and nutritional help for families having children with sickle cell disease. On a daily basis, Kathy witnesses first-hand the dire poverty of the clients being served.

Each home visit I have been on has left me dazed, comparing the comforts, opportunities and relative wealth of my life with those of the very poor whose "couches" I have sat upon. And the spiritual dilemma question? *When is enough enough?* Do we need more than what we have already been given? And can we find ways to try to balance the equation and enrich the lives of those who are in greatest need?

Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missioner for Maryknoll Lay Missioners. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. For photos see page 14.

VOL. 94 **MESSENGER** NO. 41  
 Official newspaper of the Diocese of Covington  
 Cathedral Square • 1125 Madison Ave. • Covington, Ky. 41011-3115  
 Telephone: (859) 392-1500 E-mail: [messenger@covdio.org](mailto:messenger@covdio.org)  
[www.covdio.org](http://www.covdio.org)

(UPS-403-650) Published by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, Ky.; 44 issues a year (weekly except from June 1 to mid-August, when published every other week; not published the week after Easter and two weeks at Christmas/New Year's). Subscription rate: \$19 per year; \$40 foreign. Periodical Postage paid at Covington, KY 41012 and additional mailing office Cincinnati, Ohio 45203. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MESSENGER, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, KY 41011-3115.  
**Advertising deadline:** Wednesday noon, 9 days prior to publication date.  
**Editorial deadline:** Friday noon, 7 days prior to date.  
**Subscriptions, address changes:** Contact Circulation Dept. at above address.

Bishop John C. Iffert ..... Publisher  
 Laura Keener ..... Editor, General Manager  
 Laura Gillespie ..... Production Coordinator/Designer  
 Maura Baker ..... Staff Writer  
 Isabella (Bella) Young ..... Multimedia Correspondent  
 David Stutler ..... Sales Manager



## Be not afraid

The Pro-Life Office just finished a busy Respect Life Month, during which time I was honored to visit our diocesan elementary schools to speak to eighth graders about the upcoming Eighth Grade Pro-Life Essay Contest and about what it is to be pro-life.

Being pro-life is becoming a difficult topic to speak about. Prior to my school visits, I say a prayer to have courage and not be afraid to speak the truth. We are faced

### VIEWPOINT



Faye Roch

with many issues that threaten the sanctity of the human person, yet we live in a culture where we are afraid to proclaim and seek the truth. It is our fears that prevent us from bringing others closer to Christ.

We are afraid to tell a young woman who is facing an unexpected pregnancy not to seek an abortion. She is afraid to tell anyone, afraid it may bring embarrassment to her family or school, or

perhaps put a barrier in the college or career path that she has planned. Many times, she has lost hope and does not see a life-giving alternative.

In times of hopelessness there are many options available to those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. We have several resources available in our area to give those in distress hope: the Diocese of Covington Walking with Moms in Need ministry, Catholic Charities and several local pregnancy care ministries. Let's remember we are called to be a voice of hope.

Because of the stigma surrounding "giving a child away," we are afraid to support that same young woman who may want to choose the loving option of an adoption plan for her child. We often focus on the difficult loss instead of looking at the beautiful gift adoption is from the courageous and loving heart of the pregnant mom for her child and the couple who is suffering with infertility. Making an adoption plan can be one of the most difficult decisions a person will ever make. Again, we are called to offer hope, giving support in this decision, helping the mom realize that she is making a selfless decision based on what is best for her child now and for both their futures.

We are afraid to offer love and support to those who are suffering with an illness or simply aging. Our society gives the message that suffering is not okay, or if you are not perfect you are not okay. We have a culture that says it is okay to end someone's life because they are in pain or are no longer able to contribute to society. We are called to give hope, knowing that God is the only giver and taker of life, and we are all made perfect in His image and likeness. Through suffering we have the opportunity to

inspire others, and in supporting those who are suffering, we have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ.

We are afraid to talk to our children about chastity until marriage and living a life of grace because we don't want them to think that we are "old fashioned" or out of touch with reality. Our young people need to know that they are worth waiting for, that they are made for so much more. The teachings of Theology of the Body give older and young people, and those serving all vocations the challenge to live out lives in a way worthy of our great dignity as human persons.

We are afraid to make a stance that a true marriage is between a man and a woman. We don't want to appear to others as being judgmental, or not thought of as loving and understanding. Yet we can uphold this truth in a loving way. The Church's "yes" to authentic marriage is part of God's, our Creator, plan from the beginning. This plan is fulfilled in the personal joining of man and woman which culminates in the conjugal act within marriage, where they become "one flesh." Connected to this conjugal act is the power to "be fruitful, and multiply!"

We are afraid to openly believe the facts about the negative effects hormonal contraceptives have on women, both physically and mentally. Drug companies benefit from the billions of dollars spent annually on these drugs that alter a woman's fertility, and they release little information to women of the known long-term effects that hormonal contraceptives may have on their future health. This form of medication is used to cure headaches, acne, cramping and hot flashes, among other ailments, yet no one seems to notice that since the inception of the birth control pill there has been a dramatic increase in breast cancer diagnoses and infertility. Women deserve to know better when it comes to their healthcare.

We are afraid to support the Church's teachings on natural family planning, again, because we are not educated on its effectiveness and are afraid to be thought of as old school. Children are thought of as a burden. More importance is placed on having material things, than in having a family. NFP in a marriage should be thought of as a loving and sacrificial way to postpone pregnancy during times of fertility and respecting the gift of a couple's fertility. In our haste to have the greatest things in life, the great joy of a family as one of God's greatest blessings is lost.

In our small acts of "being not afraid" we can be a part of bringing the Gospel to modern society with renewed enthusiasm.

Let us not be afraid. Living the Gospel may not always be popular, and can be frightening, but this is what it means to encounter Christ, to give oneself completely to him, letting him form our hearts, our minds, our thoughts, our actions.

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

## The season of longing

The readings for the first Sunday of Advent — Cycle C — are: Jeremiah 33:14-16, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 and Luke 21:25-28, 34-36.

This weekend the Holy Season of Advent commences. This is a season of longing — of longing for the coming of the Lord into human history! We begin to hear the familiar hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* — In

### GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

Latin, *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*. The title "Advent" comes from the word venire, which as you can guess means "to come."

This longing for the coming of Jesus means that we have to wait and watch — requiring that we slow down. Have you ever been in a rush to get somewhere and find the person driving in front of you going EXTREMELY slow? Sadly, this happens to me all too often! After I've made my "comments"

to the driver in front of me, I'm usually reminded that I'm in the wrong, and that the Good Lord has placed that slow car in front of me for a purpose... that I slow down! This slowing down is of course for my own safety and the safety of those around me, but it is also, I believe, to slow me down interiorly — to focus on that which is important. It is in a real way, my own "advent."

Continuing with the car metaphor — what happens when you are driving too fast? You certainly get to your destination more quickly, but you miss everything along the way. We learn in the Sacred Scriptures that God has given us each a life that He desires we live "with abundance." If we just speed past everything in life (especially the spiritual life) we haven't been able to acquire that which is necessary for the great festivities to come when we reach our destination. In life, we miss the experiences and the stories that a life well lived brings. In death, we will be accused of squandering the gifts we were given.

Strangely, the Gospel reading for this weekend from St. Luke actually focuses our attention less on the first coming of Jesus and more on the second coming... that moment when death will come for us all. Have we been paying attention? Have we been living intentionally? Or have we just passed things by in the desire for the eternal that we haven't done that which is necessary to actually receive it?

As we begin this Holy Season of Advent, let us slow down — both with the externals and the interior life. Let us take the time to watch for the coming of the Lord — we have to be careful! If we are going too fast, we may miss the Lord when he comes — in those ever many "God moments" that occur day in and day out — eyes, ears, arms and hearts open!

*Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington and director, Office of Worship and Liturgy for the Diocese of Covington, Ky*

## Curing loneliness one bite at a time

Loneliness.

The subject comes up quite often in the media, especially during the holiday season, that "most wonderful time of the year."

Recently, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy released a study identifying loneliness as a growing public health epidemic.

Entitled "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation," the study's report asserts that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, about half of U.S. adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness. The physical consequences of this loneliness are serious — isolation increases the risk of premature death almost as much as smoking and obesity.

"Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation" identifies six "pillars of change" intended to combat loneliness. Dr. Murthy hopes these concepts will guide future social and health policy at every level.

The sixth of these pillars, cultivating a culture of connection, is something we can all work on.

Dr. Murthy observes that food is central to building a culture of connection. "When we gather with others around food, we not only feed our bodies but also nourish our spirits," he wrote.

Dr. Murthy has published a practical guidebook entitled "Recipes for Connection, Inspiring Social Connection One Bite at a Time."

One of the book's "inspirations for gathering" is most appropriate as we prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas. "Gratitude acts as a powerful glue, a reminder of love and kindness that brings us closer to our friends, family, and community. It feels good to show appreciation — for you and the person receiving your thanks. Who's someone you would like to thank?"

This is a very meaningful question as we prepare for Thanksgiving.

### GUEST



Sister Constance Veit, L.S.P.

We might also ask ourselves if we are aware of someone who is especially lonely and in need of attention and affection as the holidays approach, even if we may not feel naturally drawn to them.

If someone like this comes to mind, don't delay! Give them a call and suggest getting together for a meal or a cup of coffee.

Food can serve as a powerful force for forging deeper connections. Through the rituals of cooking and eating, we feed our friendships, creating lasting memories one bite at a time.

Hopefully, our commitment to practicing this ministry of presence will extend well beyond the Christmas season. Knowing how to walk with and listen to others mirrors Pope Francis' aspiration for the church.

Listening is more than hearing, the pope has said. "It is reciprocal listening in which everyone has something to

*(Continued on page 13)*



## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

**The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally** on The CW, Sundays, 10—11 a.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

**Parish Kitchen is collecting, Nov. 15–30, new sleeping bags and new blankets for its guests.** Many guests spend winter nights in unheated spaces or outdoors. A new sleeping bag or blanket will not only provide warmth but may even save lives. Donations can be dropped off at Parish Kitchen, Covington, 8–11 a.m., Monday thru Friday. Contact Parish Kitchen at (859) 581-7745.

**The Diocese of Covington, in partnership with Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute, is offering three FREE in-person Mentor Training workshops** to discuss the meaning of personal vocation and the pressing need for integrating personal vocation into all Catholic formation. Workshop dates are Nov. 30, and Dec. 21, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Covington. Register at <https://covdio.org/register/>. Questions? Contact Isaak A. Isaak, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, (859) 392-1529.

**Come and enjoy the holidays at Thomas More University's Winter Wonderland,** Dec. 3, 5–8 p.m. Enjoy Christmas dinner, crafts, movies, ice skating, Santa and more! Open to the community for all ages to enjoy. Adult admission is \$10, \$5 for children 4–8 years old. Fee includes dinner.

**The Infancy Narratives with Father Michael Comer,** Wednesdays Dec. 4, 11, and 18 at 11 a.m. or 6 p.m., Mother of God Church, Covington. The Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke introduce Jesus and prepare us for the fullness of God's saving message. These talks will deepen your understanding and experience of these passages, help you to see the models of faith present in them, and give you a renewed sense of hope this Advent. No RSVP required, just come, and bring a friend.

**THRIVE! a gathering for Youth Ministry Leaders,** Dec. 5, 6–8 p.m., Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington. The Diocese of Covington Office of Youth Ministry invites youth ministry leaders for dinner, Advent prayer and collaboration. RSVP at [www.covdio.org/youth/](http://www.covdio.org/youth/). Contact Angie Poat, Diocesan Youth Minister, for information at [apoat@covdio.org](mailto:apoat@covdio.org).

**A Women's Advent Day of Reflection** featuring the authors of "Universal Mother" — Holly Schapker and Cecelia Dorger — Dec. 7, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs. Free of charge, lunch provided. Check-in starts at 8:30 a.m. at church. Register by Dec. 3 to [mamamet@yahoo.com](mailto:mamamet@yahoo.com) or (859) 957-7595 and include name, e-mail, phone number and dietary restrictions.

**The Cathedral Concert Series continues its 48th season.** On Dec. 8, 3 p.m., the Bishop's Choir is featured in the "Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols," with a meaningful anticipation of the coming Nativity season through Scripture and song. Bishop John Iffert will preside at this annual observance in the Basilica. All are welcome with no admission charge. freewill offerings gladly accepted. Visit <https://cathedralconcertseries.org> for season 48.

**Advent REVIVE!,** Dec. 8, 7–8:30 p.m., Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, Munninghoff Theater. Youth, families and friends are invited to an encounter with Jesus and others through music, witness, Adoration, and confession. For information, contact Abby Hensley, campus minister, at [ahensley@bishopbrossart.org](mailto:ahensley@bishopbrossart.org).

**Over 200 Nativity sets from around the world will be on display at Bishop Brossart High School,** Alexandria, beginning Dec. 8, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. The display will feature nativity sets made by artists and craftsmen from 83 different countries. No admission cost.

**Advent gathering, "You Are Not Alone,"** Dec. 14, 9:30 a.m.–noon at St. Anne Province Center, Melbourne. RSVP by Dec. 9 to Cindi at (859) 801-3435.

No charge, free will offering accepted

**St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring, will host its "Christmas Collage" concert,** Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., featuring the St. Joseph Music Ministry — including the choirs, ensembles, handbells and instrumentalists. A reception will follow immediately after the concert.

**Rorate Mass, a candlelight Advent Mass to Our Lady at Dawn,** Dec. 14, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue. Rosary, 7 a.m.; Mass at Dawn, 7:15 a.m. followed by breakfast, Charity Hall, 8:15 a.m. Open to all, free will offering accepted.

**Join St. Benedict Church, Covington, for a healing harp concert with Dr. Diane Schneider,** Dec. 15, 3 p.m. Free will offerings accepted.

**Carols by Candlelight with Heri et Hodie,** Dec. 17, 7 p.m. Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue. Come enjoy an evening of sacred Advent music. Free and open to the public.

**Retrouvaille – hope for couples going through difficult times in their marriages.** Retrouvaille is a program of healing and renewal consisting of one weekend and six follow-up sessions over the course of two months. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on Jan. 3-5, call (513) 486-6662 or visit [www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org)

**REVIVE! Worship Night and Mass,** Jan. 12, 7–9 p.m., Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. TMU invites the local community to an encounter with Jesus and others through music and confession, followed by Mass at 8 p.m. Contact Josh Osertag, campus minister, at [ostertagj@thomasmore.edu](mailto:ostertagj@thomasmore.edu).

**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).

**That Man is You, fall 2024 and spring 2025 schedule:** Mon., 8 p.m., Blessed Sacrament Parish, Undercroft, [Justin.jehn@thinkchamplin.com](mailto:Justin.jehn@thinkchamplin.com); Tues., 6 a.m., Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish at Linneman Funeral Home, [blind@covcath.org](mailto:blind@covcath.org); Wed., 6 a.m., Mary Queen of Heaven Parish, gym, [tim@ryanlandsurveying.com](mailto:tim@ryanlandsurveying.com); Wed., 6 a.m., St. Agnes Parish, Murphy Hall, [hebsfarm@gmail.com](mailto:hebsfarm@gmail.com); Thurs., 6 a.m., Blessed Sacrament Parish, undercroft, [bill@deltarealtyusa.com](mailto:bill@deltarealtyusa.com); Thurs., 7 p.m., Divine Mercy/St. Bernard Parishes, Garvey Hall, Dayton, [dmsb.nickolas@gmail.com](mailto:dmsb.nickolas@gmail.com).

**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).

**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.



### Helping hands

Seventh grade students at Blessed Sacrament school, Ft. Mitchell, helped take down their parish's annual pro-life display. They worked hard, graciously offering their time and energy in the early morning.

Young photo



**A childhood hobby metamorphoses to this year's Thanksgiving card** Olivia Schuetz, senior, Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, considers art a hobby. A hobby she has enjoyed since she was little. When the time came during her senior year, she decided to explore that hobby and take an art class, during which she was asked to participate in drawing the front of Bishop John Iffert's Thanksgiving card. The design, which features flowers, a butterfly and a verse from Isaiah, was chosen by Bishop Iffert out of a select few that were sent to him. About her design, Ms. Schuetz said, "It just kind of came to me, I've always liked to draw flowers, so it seemed like a simple thing to do." She continued saying, "It is pretty amazing ... it was cool to see how it made everyone feel and it was my thing that everyone got to see."



# St. John the Evangelist Parish celebrates 100 years of God’s grace and loving service

**Maura Baker**  
Staff writer

A church of German Gothic design nestled in Covington welcomed a full congregation on the evening of Nov. 23 to celebrate its centennial anniversary. For the past 100 years, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington, has served its local community in faith.

The formation of the parish and building of the church began with a need, Bishop John Iffert, who celebrated the Mass, began his homily. *The History of the Diocese of Covington*, a book published in the 1950’s, has a brief but “interesting” entry on St. John the Evangelist’s Parish. “The reason the neighbors began gathering and began to work on founding a parish here,” said Bishop Iffert, “is because they wanted to build a school.”

The commute to the next closest school at Mother of God was “too long of a commute,” he said, “especially given the condition of the roads at the time. So, apparently, it was easier to build the school and start a parish than for

them to fix the roads!”

While the comment was made partially in jest, Bishop Iffert used this origin story to connect to the weekend’s liturgy — the Solemnity of Christ the King. In his homily, he spoke about the promises made by sovereigns and government leaders, such as the Michigan governor who ran on the platform of “fixing the expletive roads.”

“It seems like that’s been a feature of a need for our lives for a long time, especially for folks here in St. John’s Parish,” Bishop Iffert said. “It’s interesting how often our political campaigns, who takes political power ... how often it hinges on those very human rights.”

“Jesus remembers something that we and our rulers often forget,” he continued in his homily, “We hear the kings of the world speak of themselves in the third person: the royal ‘we.’ In our democratic age, it sounds officious ... that language comes from the idea that the king no longer has a private life, that the king no longer has a self-interest ... The king is supposed to be the one who does not promote

his own good, but instead lives for the good of others.”

Bishop Iffert said, “Jesus reveals to us that this is the way God cares for us. This is the way God loves us. This is the way God pours out his life, ruling from the cross, emptying himself for the love of us, you and me. This is the way we are called to govern our own lives in a way that we live in service to others.”

Circling back, Bishop Iffert concluded his homily, saying that while the origin of St. John’s Parish was so that “children didn’t have to walk on muddy roads for long distances, the purpose has always been the same. Share that power of love with everyone you meet.”

“That’s what we celebrate tonight,” he said, “100 years of God’s grace, supporting you in that kind of loving service — service that looks like the cross of Jesus, the cross on which he reigns. King of the universe, high priest and champion of our hearts.”

Baker photos



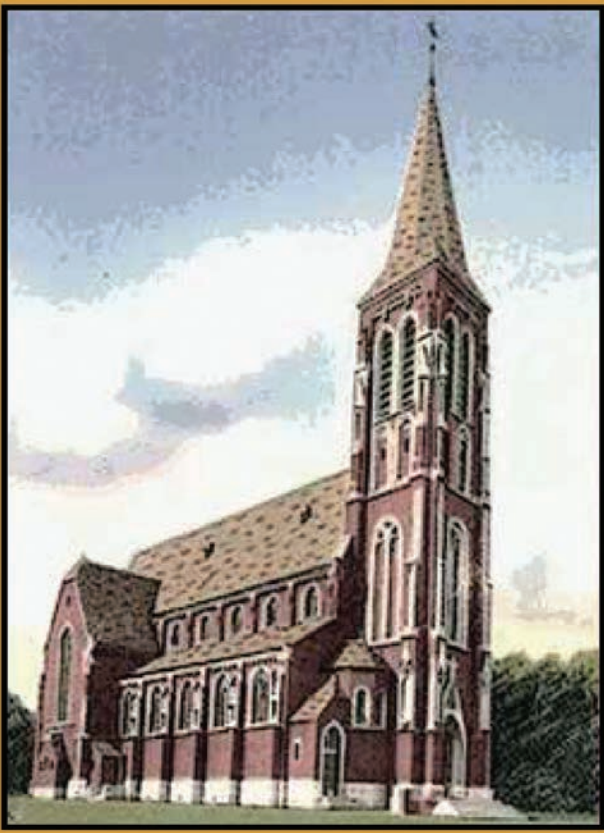
(left) Bishop John Iffert holds up the host during the Eucharistic blessing.  
 (above center, from left) Notre Dame Sisters Suzanne Rose and Mary Ellen Strunk sing the opening hymn for St. John the Evangelist’s centennial Mass.  
 (above right) A banner demarking the centennial anniversary hangs from the choir loft over the congregation.  
 (below left) A young child peers out from the congregation.  
 (below center) A server sets the offering basket before the altar.  
 (bottom right) Father Aby Thampi, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, shares some words of gratitude near the end of the Mass.





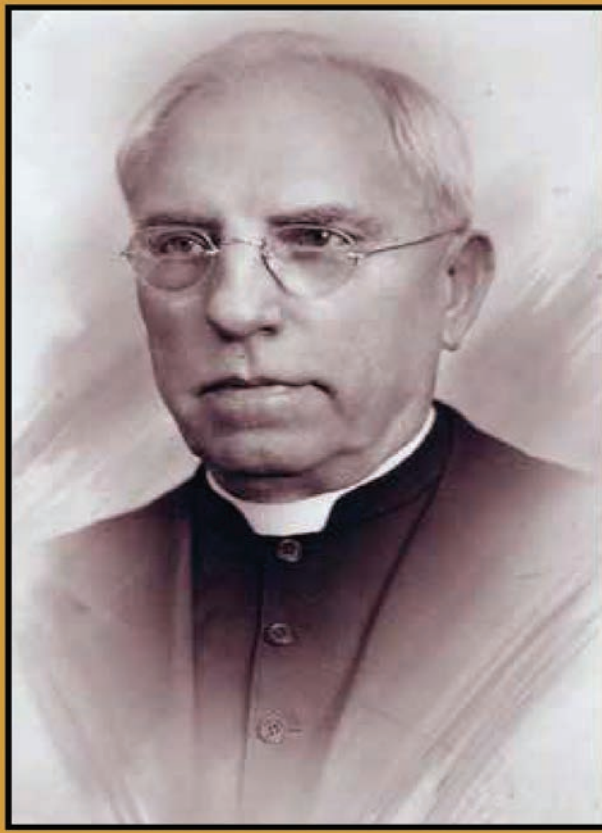
# St. John the Evangelist — a history in trading cards

These trading cards were created by parishioner Mike Hargis for the celebration of St. John the Evangelist parish's centennial anniversary.



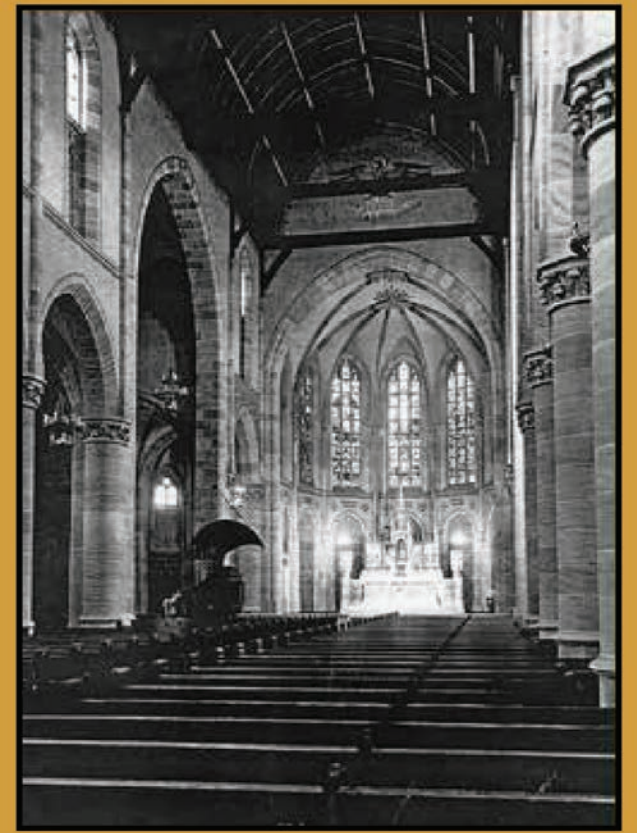
## St. John the Evangelist Church

Was designed by the nationally prominent architectural firm of Ludewig & Dreisoerner of St. Louis, MO. The German Gothic design was inspired by the parish churches in rural Germany and incorporates elements of the Arts and Crafts Movement which was popular at the time. The proportions of the church building adhere to standards demanded by the old masters of medieval religious architecture. The church seats approximately 800 people.



## Msgr. Anthony Goebel

Was born in a small village in Germany on November 27, 1869. He came to America at the age of twenty and was ordained into the priesthood in 1899. Father Goebel was appointed pastor of St. John Parish in 1909 and served in that position until his passing at the age of eighty-five in 1954. During his forty-five year pastorate, Father Goebel was both the spiritual head of the parish and the visionary behind the development of the current St. John's campus.



## New Church Interior, 1924

The beautiful and inspirational interior of St. John's Church has seen a hundred years of religious ceremonies within its hallowed walls. However, none would surpass that of Thanksgiving Day of 1924. On that occasion, over 800 parishioners and dignitaries celebrated the dedication of the new St. John's Church. Bishop Emeritus Francis Howard of Covington conducted the dedication ceremonies. Msgr. Anthony Goebel, assisted by Father Henry Hanses and 50 additional priests, celebrated the dedication Mass.



## Morgan's Hill

The Lexington Pike property known as "Morgan's Hill" was the estate of Colonel John Morgan, president of the Covington and Lexington Railroad. In 1907, Bishop Maes of Covington purchased the estate and dilapidated mansion for \$7,700. The property, along with the outstanding mortgage, was eventually transferred to St. John's Parish for the purpose of building a new school (1914) along with the current church and rectory. (1924)



## Church Construction

After a fifteen year fundraising effort, a groundbreaking ceremony took place in early June, 1922. By the end of August of that same year the cornerstone for the new church was laid. According to standards of classic religious architecture, the height of the steeple corresponds to the length of the church. Both measure 163 feet. The width of the church is 64 feet wall to wall. The general contractors were Math Rowen Co. of Chicago, IL and Joseph Carl of Covington, KY. Construction was completed within 19 months and the new St. John Church was dedicated on November 27, 1924 — Thanksgiving Day.





**Father Henry Hanses**

Was born in Detroit, MI in 1896. After the untimely death of his father, he traveled to northern KY with his mother to live with his uncle, Msgr. Anthony Goebel. Father Hanses eventually followed his uncle into the priesthood and was ordained in 1919. The young Father Hanses spent most of his early priesthood in the mountain missions of eastern KY. In 1948 he returned to St. John's to serve as assistant pastor. Upon the death of Msgr. Goebel in 1954, Father Hanses became pastor. He served until 1971 when health issues forced his retirement. Father Hanses passed away in January, 1982.



**The Blessed Virgin's Chapel**

The hand-carved Italian marble altar and statue of the Blessed Virgin were designed and manufactured by master artisans in Europe. A unique fundraising campaign was established to pay the total cost of the altar and statue of the Blessed Virgin. The campaign encouraged all parishioners who had someone in their family named Mary to contribute to the memorial fund. The effort was successful and raised the total of \$2,100. A similar campaign was employed to cover the cost of the other statuary and altars in the new church.



**The Art of Colored Glass**

The stained glass windows are considered the crown jewels of St. John's Church. They were designed by the art glass firm of Dr. Oidtmann of Munich, Germany, in collaboration with Msgr. Anthony Goebel, the pastor of St. John's Parish. The windows throughout the entire church serve to dramatically enhance the perception of being present in a house of God. Each window depicts a well known Biblical story and provides multiple functions of education, beauty and the creation of a spiritual atmosphere.



CNS photo/Lola Gomez

An image of the Immaculate Conception depicting a crowned Mary is seen in the Chapel of the Choir in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 30, 2023.

**Feast of Immaculate Conception, Dec. 9 this year, a day of obligation**

Gina Christian  
OSV News

The solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which commemorates Mary's preservation from original sin from the moment she was conceived, is observed annually Dec. 8 as a holy day of obligation.

However, this year the feast coincides with the Second Sunday of Advent, which in the ranking of liturgical celebrations takes precedence. As a result, the observance of the solemnity has been transferred to Dec. 9.

The Vatican's Dicastery for Legislative Texts affirmed that the obligation to attend Mass on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception still stands. In a Sept. 4 letter of clarification to Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois — who chairs the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' canonical affairs and church governance committee — the dicastery said that "the feast must be observed as a day of obligation on the day to which it is transferred."

The mystery of Mary's sinless conception, which the faithful have honored in some form from at least the seventh century, was officially proclaimed as doctrine by Pope Pius IX in his 1854 apostolic constitution "Ineffabilis Deus."





**Turkey give-away fills hearts and tables**

The Rose Garden Home Mission, Covington, started as a pregnancy care center, but through God's providence, transformed into a mission of feeding the hungry and providing medical and dental care for the uninsured. While still focusing on pregnancy care for expecting mothers, Franciscan Daughter of Mary Mother Seraphina said that another primary service is the distribution of food. This second mission becomes particularly important around the Thanksgiving season. As families gather to break bread together those who frequently go without food for their table feel the weight of their hunger. It was providential, Mother Seraphina said, that the Mission is able to give away turkeys every Thanksgiving.



The annual tradition began several years ago after a businessman donated 20 turkeys. Since then, the turkey giveaway has grown into an event of epic proportions. Watch here to learn more about the turkey giveaway and how the Franciscan Daughters of Mary manage such a large-scale operation.

**Four ways to follow St. Joseph this Advent**

Father Michael Ackerman  
*OSV News*

Socrates, in Plato's Apology, famously stated that "the unexamined life is not worth living." This axiom is certainly applicable to the spiritual life, and it is very relevant to one of our greatest patrons — St. Joseph. It is worthwhile to examine the lessons St. Joseph has taught us and consider how we can carry these into the great season of Advent.

A well-known American comic once said that "it's the quiet ones you have to watch out for." Now, I am confident that he was not referring to St. Joseph when he said this. However, when we reflect upon the life of St. Joseph, we really know nothing about him. St. Joseph is as stealth as an international spy. There is no recorded dialogue from him in the Scriptures and no substantial curriculum vitae of record. He would be an excellent case for "Unsolved Mysteries" or the "X-Files."

However, the silence of St. Joseph teaches us volumes. Pope Benedict XVI, in an Angelus address from Dec. 18, 2005, had this to say about St. Joseph's taciturn demeanor: "St. Joseph's silence does not express an inner emptiness, but on the contrary, the fullness of the faith he bears in his heart and which guides his every thought and action."

1. Silence of God

The first lesson of St. Joseph for Advent then is to enter into the silence of God, which is teeming with grace, intimacy and unconditional love. Joseph was not silent because he had nothing to say. He was silent instead because he wanted to listen to and follow God completely.

Pope Francis, in his apostolic letter "Patris Corde" ("With a Father's Heart"), writes about the silence of St. Joseph. "His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust."

Perhaps this Advent, we too can spend time in silent prayer, in quiet contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament, or even meditating on the words of Scripture in the recesses of our heart as did St. Joseph. Doing so does not bear futility, but instead, fertility and joyful anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

2. Service and self-denial

The second lesson that St. Joseph teaches us is one rooted in service and self-denial. Pope St. John Paul II in his 1989 apostolic exhortation "Redemptoris Custos" ("Guardian of the Redeemer") writes this about St. Joseph: "His fatherhood is expressed concretely in 'his



*OSV News photo/Bob Roller*

A statue of St. Joseph is pictured at Jesus the Divine Word Church in Huntington, Md.

having made his life a service, a sacrifice to the mystery of the Incarnation and the redemptive mission connected with it; in having used the legal authority which was his over the Holy Family in order to make a total gift of self, of his life and work."

St. Joseph did not allow his own passions or selfish wants and desires to dictate his actions. Instead, Joseph was docile and receptive to the will of God. His preparation for the coming of Christ was not filled with shopping, fighting with relatives and baking cookies. Instead, he invites you and me to be disciples who serve others first, not ourselves.

Now, this can take a variety of forms. We can volunteer our time at church or in our communities assisting at food pantries, homeless shelters or rescue missions. We can assist those around us who are struggling right now financially, emotionally and especially spiritually, either in person or through charitable organizations. Or, we can make visits to those who are homebound, in hospitals, in nursing homes or who are unable to celebrate the birth of Christ with family and friends for a variety of reasons.

**BRANCHES AND LEAVES  
OUR FAMILY TREES**



Let Us Trace Your Family Ancestry  
References Available Upon Request

(859)620-0177

kaxquin9239@gmail.com

**JEFF & CHERYL SISKA 859-816-7910**  
AUCTIONEER—APPRAISALS—ESTATE & COLLECTIONS BUYER  
WE HAVE AN IMMEDIATE NEED TO BUY THE FOLLOWING...

- JEWELRY
- JUKE BOXES
- SLOT MACHINES
- FENTON GLASS
- ADVERTISING SIGNS
- LICENSE PLATES
- STONE CROCKS & JUGS
- OLD SILVERWARE
- MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
- HADLEY & BYBEE
- LEGOS
- BEER & LIQUOR SIGNS & LIGHTS
- COINS & PAPER MONEY
- ROOKWOOD & ROSEVILLE POTTERY
- HOLIDAY ITEMS INC YARD DÉCOR, CERAMIC CHRISTMAS TREES, & ORNAMENTS
- REDS & SPORTING ITEMS BEFORE 1976
- TOYS & BANKS BEFORE 1980
- FIREKING & PYREX MIXING BOWLS & OVENWARE

**WE ARE PAYING FAIR MARKET PRICES—WE BUY COMPLETE & PARTIAL ESTATES AS WELL AS COMPLETE COLLECTIONS!**

**CDI Electric Inc.**

Quality Service Since 1997  
859-291-9189



(Continued from page 10)

There is no “correct” way to serve, but the desire to do so must be rooted in Joseph’s desire to serve God alone.

3. Simplicity

Third, St. Joseph teaches us a lesson of simplicity. The world in which we live is overly complex. We are so enamored with gadgets, technology, fashion and entertainment that we often miss what is essential. That is not the world of St. Joseph. Pope Benedict, in an Angelus address from March 19, 2006, says this about Joseph’s simplicity: “His greatness, like Mary’s, stands out even more because his mission was carried out in the humility and hiddenness of the house of Nazareth. Moreover, God himself, in the person of his incarnate Son, chose this way and style of life — humility and hiddenness — in his earthly existence.”

St. Joseph was not out to “make a name” for himself. He was no social media influencer. Instead, the *raison d’être* for his life was to remain humble before God.

St. Joseph invites us during Advent to slow down and to appreciate the people, blessings and encounters with God taking place in our lives. Presents, decorating and entering the wild world of retail are probably not the best ways to prepare for Christ. Instead, spending time with our loved ones, sharing faith and experiences, or even making a personal retreat is of benefit in keeping things simple. However, there is another thing that simplicity does: It allows us to increase our trust and dependence upon God.

In “*Patris Corde*,” Pope Francis writes about the “creative courage” of St. Joseph. “God finds a way to save us,” he writes, “provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.” St. Joseph, because he was not distracted by the trappings of culture, was able to have fortitude in God’s plan because of his simple trust in a God who loved him. This same trust is accessible to us if we keep it simple.

4. Sacrifice

Finally, St. Joseph teaches you and me the value of sacrifice. Sacrifice is necessary for all of us in our vocations, and any parent, spouse, priest, religious or dedicated single person knows the value and necessity of this. In his book “*The Mystery of Joseph*,” Father Marie-Dominique Philippe writes of St. Joseph’s suffering: “There is no doubt that the sword of sorrow penetrates Mary’s heart the most deeply, but it pierces Joseph’s heart as well. In their common suffering, in their shared sadness and anguish, Joseph and Mary come to know a new degree of intimacy; together they bear the first fruits of Jesus’ apostolic life.”

St. Joseph invites you and me in the struggles of life to unite our pain to the cross of Christ. Suffering is always a mystery, but it is not devoid of meaning. The more that we unite our pain and struggles to Christ, the more that we draw into the infinite love, mercy and forgiveness of God. Joseph in denying his own objectives, wants and desires makes his will one with God. We are also called, like him, to unite and sacrifice. This can be done through charitable giving, fasting, increased prayer or giving things away we do not need. Regardless, sacrifice is crucial to ready the way for Christ.

This Advent presents an opportunity to increase our desire to emulate this great saint so loved by Our Lady and Our Savior. Silence, service, simplicity and sacrifice are not easy pills to swallow, but they do lead us closer to Christ and salvation. May the anticipated joy of Advent lead all of us to a deeper love of the Christ Child through the intercession of St. Joseph.

*Father Michael Ackerman is a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.*

# Pope: Schools should be centers of formation, not ‘achievement factories’

Justin McLellan

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Culture and education must go hand-in-hand to form students into agents of social change driven by hope, Pope Francis said.

“There is no need for educational models that are mere ‘achievement factories’ without a cultural plan that enables the formation of people capable of helping the world turn over a new leaf by eradicating inequality, endemic poverty and exclusion,” he told participants in a plenary assembly of the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

The meeting Nov. 21 marked the first plenary assembly of the dicastery since it was formed in 2022 by combining the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture. The assembly focused on the theme, “Let Us Cross to the Other Shore.”

Pope Francis explained that he joined the culture and education departments of the Holy See into one dicastery not for economic efficiency, but to inspire dialogue and innovation between the two branches of the Church.

“The world does not need sleepwalking repeaters of the status quo,” he said, “but new choreographers, interpreters of the potential within humans, new social poets.”

Pope Francis said that schools, universities and cultural centers must teach people “to desire, to stay thirsty, to have dreams,” rather than to “passively accept” the current state of the world.

While noting the record number of students currently enrolled in schools, Pope Francis condemned the stark disparity between them and the 250 million children and young people who lack access to education.

“It is a moral imperative to change this situation, because cultural genocides do not happen only due to the destruction of heritage,” he said. “It is cultural genocide when we steal the future from children, when we do not offer them conditions to become what they could be.”

Pope Francis urged the dicastery officials to think of the many children worldwide who, instead of attending



CNS photo/Vatican Media  
Pope Francis speaks to members of the Dicastery for Culture and Education during a meeting at the Vatican Nov. 21, 2024.

school, are forced to “look through the trash for things to sell to be able to eat. Let us think about the future humanity of these children.”

He also stressed the need for Catholic universities to be involved in researching the consequences of the technological revolution of artificial intelligence.

Yet the pope insisted that as inheritors of the Church’s rich cultural and educational legacy, Catholics should “do away with the burden of pessimism — pessimism is not Christian.”

“Let us converge with all our strength to remove from the human being the shadow of nihilism, which is perhaps the most dangerous plague of today’s culture because it insists on erasing hope,” he told the dicastery officials. “Let us not forget: Hope does not disappoint; it is strength.”

The pope highlighted the opportunities that arise from periods of “complex cultural transitions,” which he said can be the most fruitful moments for advancing human thought.

“We must not allow the feeling of fear to prevail,” he said.

**LANDSCAPING DESIGN,  
INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE**

**Drainage Correction**  
**Seeding & Sodding — Retaining Walls**  
**Pavers — Walks & Patios — Decks — Grading**

**Stegman  
Landscape  
Services**

*“Making the world more beautiful,  
one yard at a time....”*

**(859) 393-3716**

*McHale's*  
EVENTS AND CATERING

Delivering exceptional catering and remarkable experiences throughout Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

The Cincinnati Club | Drees Pavilion | Music Hall  
The Gardens of Park Hills | The Grand Ballroom

Call today or scan the QR code for info about these and other amazing local venues!

859.442.7776 | www.McHalesCatering.com

**LONNEMAN  
PLUMBING INC.**

**859-341-7755** Nick Lonnenman  
Owner, Master Plumber  
Since 1960

**Water Heaters, Repair, Remodel**

**CHEF BARONE'S  
CATERING**

•Parties •Weddings  
•Company Picnics •Lunches, Dinners  
•25 To 1000 People

*“Our Foods Taste Good”*

Serving Greater Cincinnati  
Call Jill  
**491-6391**

1640 Dixie Highway Park Hills, Ky.

**IKW  
MECHANICAL, INC.**  
*“A Wischor Family Company”*

**(859) 261-1100**  
KWMechanical.com

- Electric
- Plumbing
- Heating &
- Air Conditioning

*Residential Service Experts Since 1987*



# Curing loneliness

(Continued from page 5)

learn.”

Through a shared meal with someone older and more experienced than yourself, you might even learn how to be a better cook!

Pope Francis’ vision is inspiring. For him, synodality’s goal is to “plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope ... and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.”

Although the Synod on Synodality is over, the Jubilee Year of Hope beginning on Christmas Day picks up where

it left off, encouraging us to reach out to others while at the same time helping ourselves.

As we read in the Vatican’s decree on the Jubilee Indulgence, “In a special way ‘during the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind’ (Spes non confundit, 10) ... The faithful, following the example and mandate of Christ, are encouraged to carry out works of charity or mercy more frequently, especially in the service of those brothers and sisters who are burdened by various needs.”

Such works of charity can help us to obtain the Jubilee indulgence, releasing us from the consequences of sin.

We ourselves thus benefit spiritually when we visit our brothers and sisters in need or difficulty, “in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. Mt 25:34-36).”

I love this phrase because it reminds me of the words of St. Jeanne Jugan, our foundress, “Never forget that the Poor are Our Lord ... It is Jesus whom you care for in them.”

“Belonging isn’t just a nice bonus — it’s a human necessity,” Dr. Murthy wrote in Recipes for Connection.

I think Pope Francis, and Jesus Christ himself — who came among us in his Incarnation to convince us how much he loves us — would concur.

So, let’s pull out our favorite recipes, or order a culinary favorite from Grub Hub, invite some friends or neighbors over and allow hope to flourish as we weave dreams together!

*Sister Constance Veit is the communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.*

## Protecting God’s Children for Adults Safe Environment Trainings

**For all employees and volunteers** of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children.

**Step 1: Contact parish/school institution leader** to review the Policies and Procedures and fill out the Application and Acceptance Forms.

**Step 2: Go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)** and click on Registration. Follow the prompts to create an account and to request a background check. Selection.com is a secure site; the background check is posted on your account and you receive a copy if you request it during the registration process. You will sign up for a VIRTUS training class during theregistration.

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

**Bulletins:**

■ November bulletin: posted Sunday, Nov. 3; due Tuesday, Dec. 3.

The monthly e-mail reminder of a new bulletin posted will come from [system@pub.virtus.org](mailto:system@pub.virtus.org).

**[www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), enter your user id and password.** If your account is suspended contact your primary location where you volunteer or are employed.

Your primary location contact information is found under your Contact Tab.

**VIRTUS Training:**

■ Wednesday, Dec. 4, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Dec. 4, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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

■ Tuesday, January 14, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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

■ Thursday, January 30, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, February 13, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, February 13, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, February 26, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, February 26, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, March 11, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, March 11, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, March 26, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, March 26, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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

# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

**GERDES CONCRETE & MASONRY**  
 CONCRETE — Driveways, sidewalks, steps, patios, stamped concrete.  
 MASONRY — Cultured stone, retaining walls, brick pavers, foundation, fireplace, brick & chimney repairs. MISC. — Mini-excavator, Bob Cat & drainage work. Quality work & ref. Call **Bill**, (859) 331-4733.  
*Messenger advertiser since 1993.*

**HOUSE CLEANING**  
 Isn't it time you come clean? We don't cut corners, we clean them. Insured and bonded.  
*Discount for senior citizens and first-time clients.*  
**Call (859) 760-6408.**

Call David at the *Messenger* for information on placing your ad in the Classified Advertisements.  
**(859) 392-1572**

**HOUSE FOR SALE BY OWNER IN CRESTVIEW HILLS**  
 House for Sale, by Ownver, in Crestview Hills. Across from the mall.  
 121 Sunset  
 Open 1:00 to 3:00 on Sundays  
**513-262-1626**

**FOR RENT**  
 Lakeside Park Townhouse. Newly Renovated.  
 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath. Equipped Kitchen. Garage.  
 \$1,100  
**(513) 236-2815**

**GOESSLING LANDSCAPING**  
 New installations, maintenance and tree removal. Find us at [GoesslingLandscaping.com](http://GoesslingLandscaping.com)  
 Call Norb at (859) 912-0340

**2 BEDROOM APARTMENT FOR RENT**  
 Senior Building in Heart of Ft. Mitchell  
 2nd Floor, Hardwood Floors Throughout  
 Includes Heat, Water, Sanitation  
**\$750 Monthly. 859-240-2205**

**JOE HARMELING (859)609-2513**  
 I'M BACK! I Don't Do Portraits  
 I Can Paint the Interior & Exterior of Your Home and More. Free Estimates. Fully Insured

**MAUSOLEUM BURIAL PLOT FOR SALE**  
 St. Stephen's Cemetery in Ft. Thomas, KY  
 \$4,000.00  
 Please call 859-781-0706



# Pope asks St. John Paul II institute to study threats to marriage, family

Justin McLellan  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Catholic Church must respond to cultural challenges facing marriage and family life with unity and compassion, Pope Francis said, and he called for a deeper integration of the Gospel into contemporary culture.

“The challenges, problems and hopes that pertain to marriage and the family today are inscribed in the relationship between Church and culture,” he told students, professors and staff of the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences.

Pope Francis referred to St. Paul VI’s affirmation that the “rupture between the Gospel and culture is the tragedy of our age,” and he noted that St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI deepened the question of inculturation in the Church by “focusing on the issues of interculturality and globalization.”

“The ability to meet these challenges depends on the capacity to fully carry out the mission of evangelization, which engages every Christian,” he said during the Nov. 25 meeting.

Pope Francis highlighted how the recent Synod of Bishops on synodality developed the idea that “the very unity of the Church requires the commitment to overcome cultural estrangements or conflicts, building harmony and understanding among peoples.”

To achieve that, he said, the institute should advance studies and research “that develop a critical understanding of the attitudes of different societies and cultures toward marriage and the family.”

Reminding them of the mandate he gave the institute in 2017, the pope said that he wanted them to expand their expertise to studying “developments in the human sciences and in anthropological culture,” which are “so fundamental for the culture of life.”

Unfortunately, Pope Francis said, “there are countries where public authorities do not respect the dignity and freedom to which every human being has an inalienable right as a child of God.”

Societal constraints and obligations “weigh especially on women,” he said, “forcing them into positions of subordination, and this is very ugly.”

From the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, women were among the disciples, he said, and St. Paul wrote to the Galatians that In Christ, “there is not male and female.”

“This does not mean that the difference between the two is nullified, but rather that in the plan of salvation there is no discrimination between man and woman: both belong to Christ,” he said. “They are descendants of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.”

Pope Francis then recounted a joke he



CNS photo/Vatican Media  
Pope Francis greets a baby and couple during a meeting with the academic community of the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences at the Vatican Nov. 25, 2024.

said an old priest told him about the need to be careful around women because “they have been in charge since that day in the Garden of Eden.”

Quoting his 2016 exhortation “Amoris Laetitia” on marriage and family life, the pope said that the Gospel of the family is a “joy that fills hearts and lives” and welcomes new members among its ranks.

Early Christian communities met in homes among families, making the Church an “open and welcoming dwelling place” that ensured “no economic or social constraints prevented people from living the path of Jesus,” he said.

The Church must not “close the door on those who struggle on the journey of faith, but rather open the door wide because everyone needs merciful and encouraging pastoral attention,” he said, adding that couples who “cohabit indefinitely” as well as divorced and remarried people need pastoral accompaniment to be integrated into the Church.

However, he said, “without excluding anyone, the Church promotes the family, founded on marriage, contributing in every place and in every time to making the marital bond stronger by virtue of that love which is greater than everything: charity.”

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



MIDWEST EYE CENTER

## TIME FOR CATARACT SURGERY?

Schedule a consultation with one of our experienced surgeons to discuss the latest options available. Find out if you are a candidate for the Catalys, the world’s most sophisticated laser cataract surgery system.

**\*\*Voted “Best Doctors” 2015-2023**  
as published in *Cincinnati Magazine!*

### WE OFFER DROP-LESS CATARACT SURGERY



Saif Jaweed, M.D.



Kristen Ann V. Mendoza, M.D.



Aaron R. Noll, M.D.



Jean M. Noll, M.D.



Jenny McKenzie, O.D.



Chris D. Thon, O.D.



Jillian Zimmer, O.D.

Crestview Hills • Florence  
500 Thomas More Pkwy. • Crestview Hills, KY 41017  
(859) 341-4525  
[www.midwesteyecenter.com](http://www.midwesteyecenter.com)



# When is enough enough?

(Continued from page 4)



Co-missioner Kathy Flatoff stands near the home of Nyota client, Stephen, who is unable to walk or even sit. Nearby neighbors contribute to his daily care.



Stephen, inside his home.

## SHOPPER'S GUIDE

### Hancock Drain Service Inc.

#1 in the #2 Business



Residential and Commercial  
 • All Types of Drains  
 • Problem Lines  
 • Preventive Maintenance  
 • Sump Pump Lines  
 • Jetting, Filming and Locating

(859) 356-6811

info@hancockdrainserviceinc.com

### Austin Kunz Construction

- ◆ French Drains ◆ Downspout Extensions ◆ Full Driveway Replacement
- ◆ Catch Basins ◆ Custom Patio Design and Build

EXCAVATING – LAND CLEARING – BOBCAT WORK  
 RETAINING WALLS – CULVERTS – GRAVEL DRIVES  
 SEWER LINE AND WATER LINE REPLACEMENT

(859) 815-0779

St. Barbara Parishioner

Free Estimates  
 Fully Insured  
 Residential  
 Commercial

**www.tomrechten.com**  
**(859) 261-8269**  
 Master HVAC #M04784

PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING • INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Over 95 Years of Family Owned Service!



Call 859.757.4779 • www.skpha.com

America's Choice in Homecare.  
**VisitingAngels**  
 LIVING ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Caregivers with character!  
 Reliable caregivers provide up to 24 hour non-medical care in your home. Hygiene assistance, meals, light housework, companionship. Affordable rates. Top Background Checks.  
 Cindy Sesher-Director  
 1099 Burlington Pike, Florence KY • (859) 647-6770

**ARC ELECTRIC**  
 AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING, INC.  
 24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE  
 Since 1953

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS • HEATING SYSTEMS • AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS  
 • New installations • Repair all makes and models  
 • Clean & Service • Humidifiers  
 • Oil or Propane • Radiant or Gas Heat  
 • Electronic Air Cleaner • Hot Water Heat Systems

**441-7161**  
 www.arcelevac.com

YORK  
 INSTALL CONFIDENCE  
 Licensed Master HVAC Contractor M02125

**Elite**  
 Tree & Construction Group

**TREE SPECIALIST**  
 Tree Removal \* Pruning \* Stump Grinding  
 Fully Insured  
 Call or Text (859) 308-9843

Looking for something to do?

Check out the diocesan calendar online now at <https://covdio.org/calendar/> to keep up with what's happening in the Diocese of Covington!

859.371.7444 www.GraniteWorldNKY.com

**CUSTOM CABINETRY & COUNTERTOPS**  
 Granite World  
 YOU DREAM IT, WE BUILD IT

**BLAU MECHANICAL, INC.**  
 Heating & Piping  
 Hot Water Steam Vapor  
 1532 Russell St., Cov. 291-3159

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

Call David at the *Messenger* to place your ad in the SHOPPER'S GUIDE.  
**(859) 392-1572**



National/World

**Vatican to study how to address ‘spiritual abuse’ in Church law**

VATICAN CITY — The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Legislative Texts are setting up a working group to study how “spiritual abuse” can be defined and punished in Church law, a note from the doctrinal office said. With the approval of Pope Francis Nov. 22, the note said, Archbishop Filippo Iannone, prefect of the office dealing with Church law, will set up the working group with members nominated by his office and the office of Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the doctrinal dicastery. The doctrinal dicastery’s norms for discerning and making judgments about alleged supernatural phenomena, which were published in May, included a line saying, “The use of purported supernatural experiences or recognized mystical elements as a means of or a pretext for exerting control over people or carrying out abuses is to be considered of particular moral gravity.” The new note, published on the doctrinal office’s website in late November, said that statement already allows for the misuse of spirituality to “be evaluated as an aggravating circumstance if it occurs together with delicts” or crimes, such as sexual abuse.

**Final synod document is magisterial, must be accepted, pope says**

VATICAN CITY — Doubling down on the centrality of synodality in the Catholic Church, Pope Francis said that it is now up to local churches to accept and implement proposals from the final document approved the Synod of Bishops on synodality. Approved by the pope, the synod’s final document “participates in the ordinary magisterium of the successor of Peter, and as such, I ask that it be accepted,” the pope wrote in a note published by the Vatican Nov. 25. “Local churches and groupings of churches are now called upon to implement, in different contexts, the authoritative indications contained in the document, through the processes of discernment and decision-making provided by law and by the document itself,” he wrote nearly a month after the synod’s close. The final document outlined key priorities for the Church, including increased participation of laity through new ministries and adjusted governing structures, greater transparency and accountability among church

leadership and creating space for previously marginalized groups. In his note, Pope Francis clarified that while the document is “not strictly normative” and must be adapted to contexts where it is applied, it still obligates “local churches to make choices consistent with what was indicated” in the document.

**Faith groups join forces in Britain against ‘deceptive’ assisted suicide bill**

OXFORD, England — Churches and faith groups across the United Kingdom have condemned a bill to allow physician-assisted suicide and stepped up efforts to block its Nov. 29 approval by parliamentarians. “The vote will be very close — many members of Parliament, elected only recently, are having to decide on a life-or-death ethical issue they haven’t considered before,” explained Timothy Dieppe, head of public policy for the ecumenical organization Christian Concern. “If they vote against this bill, it will send a powerful signal worldwide that assisted suicide isn’t inevitable and doesn’t constitute progress.” The theologian spoke as a joint statement from the English, Welsh and Scottish bishops’ urged opposition to the “Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill,” tabled by Kim Leadbeater from the governing Labour Party, which would allow life-ending medical help for the terminally ill over age 18. He said political and media momentum was growing against the bill, which would overturn Britain’s 1961 Suicide Act and violate “all major religious traditions and ethical codes.” In their Nov. 14 joint statement, the bishops said experience showed “promised safeguards are soon forgotten,” warning the bill would “fundamentally damage” doctor-patient relations and “radically alter the ethos of trust and support.” Dieppe said the rejection of legislation in Scotland and Wales had already “surprised and shocked” suicide proponents.

**Catholic priests face new pressures after nuncio departs Belarus**

MINSK, Belarus — Clergy in Belarus are deleting their social media profiles to avoid arrest, according to Church sources, as local parishes face pressure under a new religious

law. “With church communities required to re-register, all are vulnerable to new restrictions,” explained Natallia Vasilevich, coordinator of the ecumenical Christian Vision organization. Under the country’s 2023 Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations law, educational and missionary activity by churches is restricted, while all parishes must re-register by July 2025 or face liquidation. “Priests can be arrested and see their parishes deprived of legal status, if they post or share anything deemed extremist. This is why they’ve been asked by their bishops to cease social media activity.” The lay theologian spoke as two more senior clergy faced charges of distributing “extremist material” under Article 19:11 of Belarus’s Code of Administrative Offenses. A number of organizations are inviting the faithful to pray for persecuted Christians throughout the month of November, as more than 365 million believers in Christ worldwide suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination, according to a 2024 report by the advocacy group Open Doors. The pontifical charity Aid to the Church in Need said in its country overview that “most human rights, including religious freedom, are endangered due to the authoritarian nature of the government in Belarus.”

**U.S. bishops announce Prayer Vigil for Life to take place Jan. 23-24**

WASHINGTON — The annual Prayer Vigil for Life will take place Jan. 23-24, 2025, the U.S. bishops’ conference announced Nov. 22. The event is hosted each January by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Pro-Life Secretariat, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington and The Catholic University of America’s Office of Campus Ministry. It takes place on the eve of the March for Life, an annual protest of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which was overturned in 2022. The 52nd National March for Life will take place Jan. 24, 2025. The event will be broadcast on Catholic networks and livestreamed on the basilica’s website at [www.nationalshrine.org/mass](http://www.nationalshrine.org/mass). More information about the schedule can be found on the USCCB’s website, [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

*Back by popular demand ....*



# Cocktails & Candy Canes

*Benefitting the Senior Resource Center | Established by St. Charles Community*

---

**The Senior Resource Center guides seniors & their families through the maze of aging services. The Center connects seniors in need with resources to help them remain independent.**

 <b>December 10, 2024</b>	 <b>5:00pm – 8:00pm</b>	 <b>Receptions in Erlanger</b> <small>1379 Donaldson Hwy. Erlanger, KY 41018</small>
---	---	---

**\$20 Admission | Easy Access | Door Prizes  
Hors D’oeuvres | Vendor Tables | Frequent Raffles  
Music & Dancing | Silent Auction | Cash Bar  
Non-Alcoholic Drinks Included**



Scan QR code for tickets or call (859) 261-0746



Established by the St. Charles Community

Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.





Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky

Help women choose the miracle of motherhood. Help them choose life.

Join us for the 2024 Holiday Appeal. Scan the code or visit [carenetky.org](http://carenetky.org).

Donate by Dec. 15 and your gift will be matched.\*



\*to a total of \$15,000



# Is that your Dad? — soon, one prospective family hopes to answer with a resounding ‘yes!’

*“Following God’s will of caring for orphans can seem like a lot, but God will take your yes and meet you where you are at. My journey began with two years of mentoring Joseph. We got to know each other through Sundays at church and many other diverse activities and events.*

*“Then God saw fit to provide everything needed for me to foster Joseph with the intention of adoption. After 11 months, we have the final court date for adoption on Dec. 3. God is so good.*

*“So, wherever you are in your decision process with mentoring, fostering or adopting know that God will honor your yes and do more than you can imagine changing the life of a child for His Kingdom and glory.” Brian Menendez.*

These words were expressed from the heart and mind of Mr. Menendez as he finalizes the adoption of his son, Joseph. Below is the story of how Brian and Joseph will become the 175th family through adoption facilitated by DCCH Center for Children and Families.

Brian Menendez, a 40-year-old single man had recently moved and was getting to know the Northern Kentucky area. He read the bible verse James 1:27 which reads, “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows”. Something stirred, and Brian did an internet search for places to help orphans and came across DCCH Center for Children and Families, in Ft. Mitchell. He immediately began the process to become a mentor for a child.

DCCH just marked their 175th anniversary of providing care for children since starting in 1848 as St. John Orphanage. Merging with St. Joseph Orphanage forming the Diocesan Catholic Children’s Home focusing on the healing of children abused and neglected entering the foster care system.

Brian was matched with Joseph, a then 10-yr old boy in March of 2022. Brian and Joseph’s visits started on the DCCH campus together talking and building Lego sets. In time, Brian was able to take Joseph out during the day and they would attend church and do fun activities together.

Brian shared that he understood his role as a mentor. He wanted to be a safe and loving person for Joseph. During that time, Joseph was open with Brian about



Photo provided by DCCH

Joseph smiles for a photo with soon-to-be adoptive father Brian Menendez.

things that were occurring in his life. Brian was praying that Joseph would be able to leave DCCH Residential Program and be with a forever family. Brian shared that it never crossed his mind that he could become his family.

Months turned into years, and Joseph still was without the forever family Brian and Joseph were out in the community one day and someone asked Joseph if Brian was his dad. Joseph nodded his head yes, while cautiously looking at Brian. For the first time, Brian realized that maybe he could be Joseph’s father. Brian prayed and talked with his pastor and those in leadership at church. They agreed that Joseph had become part of the church family, and he needed to be with us.

Brian was introduced to Ron Bertsch, Foster Care and Adoption Director in the fall of 2023. Brian shared his heart and his desire to be a father and a safe home for Joseph. Brian started foster and adoptive classes through

DCCH. When Brian was able to inform Joseph of his intention, Joseph was surprised and excited but still reserved because many other family opportunities had presented for him but had always fallen through.

Joseph progressed to having overnight visits with Brian, and then weekend visits and even spending longer times during school holidays. By February 2024, Joseph and Brian were ready; Joseph moved into Brian’s home full-time.

It wasn’t the easiest transition as Brian and Joseph had to learn to become father and son rather than mentor and mentee, but the bond was well started. In addition, Joseph enrolled at a new school. Brian and Joseph worked together through many obstacles to grow in attachment and trust with one another.

This summer, Brian took Joseph to his family’s home in Florida to meet Brian’s extended family. This was Joseph’s first time flying on a plane and the first time seeing the Atlantic Ocean and beach. As a 13-year-old, that made for quite a memorable experience.

Brian and Joseph have an incredible community surrounding them. Good friends from their church attended DCCH’s respite training to further support Brian and Joseph, providing child-care and respite when needed.

Much of Brian and Joseph’s church family plans to attend the adoption finalization hearing on December 3. Joseph’s adoption marks the 175th adoption facilitated through DCCH, so a large contingency of DCCH staff will also attend the hearing. Celebrating this momentous occasion and being blessed to witness the young Joseph grow from the little boy in residential, to the young man in foster care to now being adopted by such a selfless, strong Christian man become father is another cherished gift from God.

*For anyone interested in learning more about fostering, adopting or mentoring, attend a free informational meeting on Monday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. at DCCH campus or contact (859) 331-2040 or [www.DCCHCenter.org](http://www.DCCHCenter.org).*

**FREE!**  
**DRIVE-THRU**  
**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DISPLAY**

Bright Lights

**OPEN EVERY**  
**FRIDAY & SATURDAY 6PM - 10PM**  
**SUNDAY 6PM - 9PM**  
**NOVEMBER 29TH - JANUARY 5TH**  
**ST. TERESA BRIGHT, IN**

23345 Gavin Lane, Bright, IN 47025  
[www.brightlightsindiana.com](http://www.brightlightsindiana.com)

Spend your fall days with us at  
**Charlie’s Club Adult Day Program!**

- ☀ Daytime Respite
- ☀ Chef Prepared Meals
- ☀ Recreational Activities
- ☀ Therapies
- ☀ Wellness Exercise
- ☀ Beauty Shop
- ☀ Medication Administration
- ☀ Podiatry Services

[www.stcharlescommunity.org](http://www.stcharlescommunity.org) (859) 331-3224  
600 Farrell Drive, Covington, KY 41011

St. Charles COMMUNITY