

SPECIAL  
EDITION  
JUBILEE 2025



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December 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we approach the dawn of the New Year, I am filled with joy and anticipation to announce the beginning of the Jubilee Year 2025.

Jubilee Years, which occur every 25 years, offer us a unique opportunity to deepen our faith, renew our commitment to Christ, and experience the boundless love and mercy of God.

This Jubilee, themed "Pilgrims of Hope," is a time for us to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another and with all of Creation.

To mark the beginning of this holy year, I invite all the faithful of our Diocese to join us for the Opening Mass of the Jubilee Year at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington on Sunday, December 29th, at 2 p.m. This Mass will coincide with the Feast of the Holy Family, a fitting occasion to begin our spiritual journey together.

The texts of the liturgy call for the opening Mass to begin with a procession. We will follow the Jubilee Cross from St. Mary's Park (across the street) to the Cathedral Basilica. I encourage everyone to dress appropriately for the weather for this solemn procession and Mass.

As we embark on this Jubilee Year, let us embrace the spirit of renewal and reconciliation. May this be a time of spiritual growth, forgiveness and hope for all.

Discover more about the special Jubilee Year and how our Diocese is celebrating at [www.covdio.org/jubilee](http://www.covdio.org/jubilee).

Please continue to pray for the Church in Covington and for me.

Yours in the Joy of the Jubilee Year,

Most Rev. John Iffert  
Bishop of Covington



# St. Mary's Park Christmas tree to feature custom ornaments

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

In preparation for the 2024 Baminelli Blessing and Christmas Tree Lighting, parishes, schools and institutions from across the Diocese of Covington were invited to design ornaments to be displayed on the Christmas tree to be lit in St. Mary's Park, Covington, on the night of the Baminelli. Ornaments spoke to the mission, culture and history of these diocesan facilities — some examples provided as we prepare for the Baminelli and the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

(right) The ornament by Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, was hand-painted by student Kendra Yurt, class of 2026. Amidst the gold patterns is an image of the belltower of the campus's Mary, Seat of Wisdom chapel.

(right center) St. Patrick school, Maysville, features a Celtic "trinity knot" over a green background — representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This imagery ties to the school and connects to the parish's Irish heritage, as well as to its patron, St. Patrick, who is also the patron saint of Ireland.

(far right) The red ornament designed by Our Savior parish, Covington, is decorated with repeating designs in Pan-African colors black, gold, white and green. These designs represent and point to the parish's black and African American history.



## 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.

# Divine Providence sister, like many religious, recalls a life of love and service

Maura Baker  
Staff Writer

As a young girl, the prospect of becoming a religious sister was one Divine Providence Sister Carleen Schumacher avoided. "I kept thinking 'no, no, that's not for me,'" she said. Years later, in 1968, Sister Carleen overcame that avoidance and joined the Sisters of Divine Providence, and she "never regretted it a day."

"Thank goodness God kept nudging at me," said Sister Carleen, "I did finally follow through."

Sister Carleen served in schools for 30 years, 17 years as a primary teacher, and 13 as an administrator. However, in 1994, Sister Carleen was elected to the CDP's provincial council as part of the leadership team full time, and left teaching. She was re-elected in 2004 but decided not to go back to teaching following her second term.

"I worked from 2009 to 2014 in Parish Kitchen," a Catholic Charities run organization that provides food and other necessities, "and I would still be there today if I didn't get re-elected in 2014," Sister Carleen said. At the Parish Kitchen, Sister Carleen said she learned "far more from the people at Parish Kitchen" than she believed she helped them. "It was five wonderful years," she said.

Sister Carleen said that she has loved each of her ministries, from teaching, to leadership, to serving the poor — and, now, Sister Carleen serves as the administrator for

**The collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will occur during Masses the weekend of Dec. 14–15. Thank you for your generosity.**

Holy Family Home, the retirement home for the Sisters of Divine Providence.

Reflecting on her life as a sister, Sister Carleen says that, while she would have loved to have gotten married, she was "called to a deeper life of prayer."

"It's really wonderful to live with women who are committed to the same thing I am," she said, "They're all committed to community life like I am, to a life of prayer, a life of living the vows. I think there's a deep satisfaction for me and knowing I'm doing what I really felt God called me to do."

Now, as she works closely with her fellow retired sisters, Sister Carleen recognizes the importance of supporting retired religious. "We really count on everybody's prayers, naturally," she said, "but there's a really big financial piece to any nursing home."

Contributions to collections like Dec. 14–15's Retirement Fund for Religious provides care for women religious as they age, and, while Sister Carleen stated that she would "never want our sisters to live an extravagant life, we weren't called to that," many retired religious have medical needs which are often costly to meet.

The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) estimates an annual care cost of over \$1 billion for the nation's more than 20,000 retired religious. In 2023, parishioners of the Diocese of Covington contributed \$43,198.43 to the Retirement Fund for Religious in the diocese.

Assistance with these needs is greatly appreciated, said



Sister Carleen Schumacher, CDP

Sister Carleen, as well as the "support of the Diocese, and gratitude for what these sisters have done all their years."

**Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 8**

**Third Sunday of Advent**  
The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; he will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love. —Zephaniah 3:17



## Bishop's Schedule

**Dec. 14**  
Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

Third annual Diocesan Christmas Tree lighting /Baminelli blessing, Diocesan Curia, St. Mary's Park, Covington, 5:30 p.m.

**Dec. 15**  
Thomas More University's President's Society Christmas open house, 3:30 p.m.

**Dec. 17**  
Priest Continuing Education and Formation luncheon meeting, 11:30 a.m.

**Dec. 17 (continued)**  
Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 2 p.m.

**Dec. 19**  
New community building blessing, Catholic Charities St. Joseph Apartments, 10:30 a.m.

**Dec. 19 (continued)**  
Priest Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 3 p.m.

**Dec. 22**  
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.

# ‘Pilgrims of Hope’: Vatican prepares to welcome millions for Holy Year

Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The celebration of a Holy Year every 25 years is an acknowledgment that “the Christian life is a journey calling for moments of greater intensity to encourage and sustain hope as the constant companion that guides our steps toward the goal of our encounter with the Lord Jesus,” Pope Francis wrote.

Opening the Holy Door to St. Peter’s Basilica on Christmas Eve, the pope will formally inaugurate the Jubilee Year 2025 with its individual, parish and diocesan pilgrimages and with special celebrations focused on specific groups from migrants to marching bands, catechists to communicators and priests to prisoners.

Inside the Vatican basilica, the door had been bricked up since Nov. 20, 2016, when Pope Francis closed the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

Dismantling the brick wall began Dec. 2 with a ritual of prayer and the removal of a box containing the key to the door and Vatican medals. The Holy Doors at the basilicas of St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major and St. Paul Outside the Walls were to be freed of their brickwork in the week that followed.

In January 2021, as the world struggled to return to some kind of normalcy after the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis announced that he had chosen “Pilgrims of Hope” as the theme for the Holy Year.

“We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and farsighted vision,” the pope wrote in a letter entrusting the organization of the Jubilee to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the then-Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

The pope prayed that the Holy Year would be marked by “deep faith, lively hope and active charity.”

A holy year or jubilee is a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy, based on the Old Testament tradition of a jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. Holy years also are a time when Catholics make pilgrimages to designated churches and shrines, recite special prayers, go to confession and receive Communion to receive a plenary indulgence, which is a remission of the temporal punishment due for one’s sins.

Crossing the threshold of the Holy Door does not give a person automatic access to the indulgence or to grace, as St. John Paul II said in his document proclaiming the Holy Year 2000. But walking through the doorway is a sign of the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish.

“To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us. It is a decision which presumes freedom to choose and also the courage to leave something behind, in the knowledge that what is gained is divine life,” St. John Paul wrote.

Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Holy Year in 1300 and decreed that jubilees would be celebrated every 100 years. But just 50 years later, a more biblical cadence, Pope Clement VI proclaimed another holy year.

Pope Paul II decided in 1470 that holy years should be held every 25 years, which has been the practice ever since — but with the addition of special jubilees, like the Holy Year of Mercy in 2015-16, marking special occasions or needs.

The Jubilee of Mercy had a special focus on encouraging Catholics to return to confession, but the sacrament is a key part of every Holy Year.

Pope Francis, in his bull of indiction for the 2025 Holy Year, said churches are places “where we can drink from the wellsprings of hope, above all by approaching the sacrament of reconciliation, the essential starting point of any true journey of conversion.”

The pope also asked Catholics to use the Jubilee Year to nourish or exercise their hope by actively looking for signs of God’s grace and goodness around them.

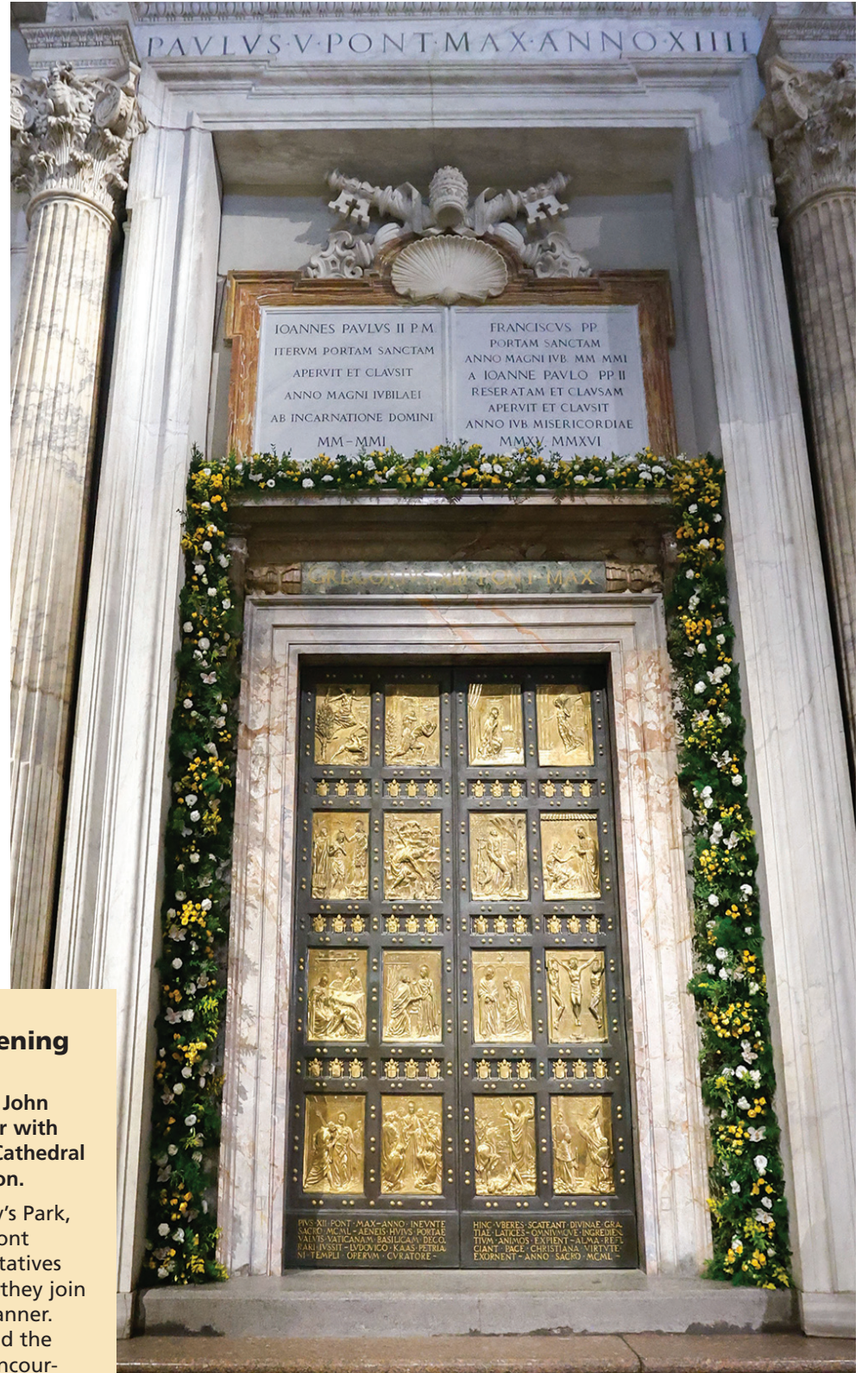
“We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves over-

whelmed by evil and violence,” he wrote. “The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God’s saving presence, ought to become signs of hope.”

Even in a troubled world, one can notice how many people are praying for and demonstrating their desire for peace, for safeguarding creation and for defending human life at every stage, he said. Those are signs of hope that cannot be discounted.

As part of the Holy Year 2025, Pope Francis has announced the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis April 27 during the special Jubilee for Adolescents and the proclamation of the sainthood of Blessed Pier Giorgi Frassati Aug. 3 during the Jubilee for Young Adults.

The lives of the two men, active Catholics who died young, are emblematic of Pope Francis’ conviction that hope, “founded on faith and nurtured by charity,” is what enables people “to press forward in life” despite setbacks and trials.



CNS photo/Lola Gomez

The Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican is adorned with flowers in this file photo from May 9, 2024. The Vatican announced Nov. 25 that a webcam will be installed above the door for the Holy Year 2025.

## Diocese of Covington Opening Jubilee Mass

In the Diocese of Covington, Bishop John Iffert will open the Jubilee 2025 year with Mass, Dec. 29, 2 p.m., at St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

The procession will begin at St. Mary’s Park, directly across the street from the front entrance of the Cathedral. Representatives from every parish will participate as they join the procession carrying the parish banner. The designated Jubilee Cross will lead the procession. All Mass attendees are encouraged to gather at St. Mary’s Park to join-in the procession. For more information visit [www.covdio.org/jubilee](http://www.covdio.org/jubilee).

Both young Italians knew that the hope they drew from faith had to be shared with others through their words, their way of acting and their charity.

Pope Francis, in the bull of indiction, told Catholics that “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.”

In addition to individual acts of charity, love and kindness like feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger or visiting the sick and the imprisoned, Pope Francis has continued his predecessors’ practice of observing the jubilee by calling on governments to reduce the foreign debt of the poorest countries, grant amnesty to certain prisoners and strengthen programs to help migrants and refugees settle in their new homes.

Italy and the city of Rome are keeping one of the messier and tension-producing traditions of a Holy Year: Roadworks and the restoration or cleaning of monuments, fountains and important buildings. With the opening of the Holy Door just three weeks away, none of the major

projects had been completed, but Mayor Roberto Gualtieri promised in late November that most of the roads would open and most of the scaffolding would come down by Jan. 1.

Archbishop Fisichella, the chief Vatican organizer of the Jubilee Year, said in late November that the Vatican had commissioned a university to forecast the Holy Year pilgrim and tourist influx. They came up with a prediction of 32 million visitors to Rome.

The multilingual jubilee website — [www.iubilaeum2025.va](http://www.iubilaeum2025.va) — has been up and running for months and includes the possibility of reserving a time to pass through the Holy Door at St. Peter’s and the other major basilicas of Rome.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also has a special section on its website — [www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025](http://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025) — with information about traveling to Rome for the Holy Year and for celebrating the special jubilees in one’s own diocese or parish.

# There's only us: Becoming the church we want to see

My young sons were forever at war with each other, punching and kicking and otherwise giving their school some very good reasons to closely question me about the origins of various scabs and shiners.

I would warn the battle-bots that someday their parents would be dead, so they should stop trying to destroy each other and risk being alone at exactly the time they'd really want a brother:

This made no impression at all. One afternoon, the rampaging got to me. Announcing that mother had had enough, I commanded through gritted teeth that they were no longer permitted to talk to each other: "You will not talk to, you will not look at, each other."

"For how long," they wondered, eyes wide.

"Two whole days!" I seethed.

The younger son's face immediately crumpled as he burst into tears. "But I want to talk to my brother!"

"Yeah, well," said this mother of all compassion, channeling Baby Jane Hudson, "Ya can't."

The imposed silence lasted only a few hours before I heard them whispering, "Let's ask together." They came into the kitchen as unified supplicants, applying to me as I often apply to Jesus: "Please? We'll be good! Promise!"

Both have grown into gentlemanly adulthood, and it's lovely to see how close they have become. So, prayer works. Maturity helps.

I've been thinking this while watching good Catholics screaming at each other on social media — the uncharitable accusations, the vicious name-calling and the nasty, gossipy infighting that goes on daily between people who love the church, have strong feelings about how she should comport herself and minister to the world, and seem to believe that everyone who thinks differently is not just mistaken but sinfully-wrong-and-headed-to-hell.

In retrospect, I know my sons fought because they were

strong minded and committed to their perspectives. They were also immature works-in-progress. My job was to teach, encourage, correct with a balance of justice and mercy and to help them to advance in both faith and reason.

In truth, I wasn't a clear and careful enough parent to help them bring their best thoughts and energies forward in all of their wild eccentricities and compassionate generousities. Because I was not, our house was often roiled and the children sometimes led with reckless anger and destructive behavior that advanced them in goodness and maturity not one iota.

You see where I'm going with this, right? I don't have to paint you a picture?

We Catholics are fighting too much amongst ourselves. Our sometimes unclear, not-careful-enough leadership doesn't always help the faithful bring our best selves forward, so that we may be a church speaking credibly to the world of Christ.

All the uncharitable anger we're spewing at each other makes it feel as though we're not advancing as a church, as a people or as a family.

Last November, Pope Francis addressed this very topic, saying to the assembly at Bahrain National Stadium, "If we want to be children of the Father and build a word of brothers and sisters, the real challenge is to learn how to love everybody, even our enemies." He pointed to Jesus, "Jesus gives us the power to love this way." Then, like a good father he urged us to "implore insistently, 'Jesus, you who love me, teach me to love like you. Jesus, you who forgive me, teach me to forgive like you.'"

"I want to talk to my brother ..."

I believe we Catholics do want to talk to each other, constructively and respectfully, but the bad habits ingrained upon us through a few tumultuous decades of culture warring have made us wary and unsure how to do that.

Still, we are a family. Our ancestry as Christians is long and if inadequate formation has left us feeling poorly parented, well, Jesus is always there. Mary is always there. We can look to them, and be molded by their examples as we strive to deal well with each other; that we may become as holy as we are called to be, and build the Church we wish to see.

We want a church of cooperation; let us emulate Mary who cooperated with the creator for the salvation of all.

We plead for a church of courage; let us, again, follow Mary, who said "yes" to unknowing and to mystery.

We want a church of justice; let us track Jesus, who is just. We seek a church of mercy; let us learn from Jesus, the merciful.

We want a church in peace, let us study and internalize the ways of Jesus, who is peace.

The Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman said it succinctly: "Be woman. Be man. Be priest. Be Irish-American, be Italian-American, be Native-American, be African American, but be one in Christ."

It is good to be united in Christ, so let us try. The alternative is to continue fighting amongst ourselves and — as I warned my sons all those years ago — face an emptier church with an emptier future, one without brothers or sisters to talk to.

*Elizabeth Scalia is culture editor at OSVNews.com.*



GUEST

Elizabeth Scalia

## Media mindfulness — following Christ as content creators

Do you consider yourself a media maker? Perhaps a better way to put it would be: Are you a content creator?

You don't have to be a social media "influencer" to be a content creator. In today's digital society where social



GUEST

Sister Hosea Rupprecht

media interactions might be the norm, especially for the younger generations, many of us who might have never considered ourselves "media makers" or "content creators" in the past find ourselves in that position. Often, we make media to communicate with family and friends. Other times we create content as part of our work or ministry experience.

We might not be Steven Spielberg, Taylor Swift,

Khaby Lame or Charli D'Amelio when it comes to content creation, but most of us are media makers of some sort, even if it's only using text messaging for communication, posting photos of your parish's liturgical space decorated for Christmas, or taking video of your child's reaction to getting a puppy on Christmas morning and sharing it on family chat.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are responsible for making sure that what we put out into the digital world reflects what we believe and the values we hold as Christians. If your Christmas wish list (or your kids') contains media-making technology, here are some things

to keep in mind as you make media.

Actor and filmmaker, Jon Favreau once said, "I don't think I'm egotistical as much as I'm taking responsibility for what I'm putting out there." How do we take responsibility for what we "put out there"? Even more importantly, how do we teach our teens and little ones to take responsibility for what they put out there (when it is age-appropriate to do so)?

Our first responsibility as media makers is to value human dignity. As content creators, it's easy to get so focused on creating that we can forget that there are people on the other end of our communication who deserve our consideration and respect. If we're creating for social media, we may even find ourselves interacting, via the comments section, with people espousing beliefs or opinions very different from our own. Our responsibility to be kind and respectful extends to all, even those who may not give us the same courtesy.

In a recent pastoral letter by the Canadian Catholic Bishops entitled, "Let Your Speech Always Be Gracious," on the topic of social media, they say, "It is important that there always be an alignment between the truth we are trying to share and how we go about sharing it. We will not come to know a God of love through any communication that is not itself loving."

Another responsibility we have as creators is to be curious and seek greater perspective. Any media creation has a purpose. We want to say A, B or C to our audience in an attractive and attention-getting way. However, have we considered X, Y and Z?

It is our responsibility to do our research and consider how others may receive our message. Do our media creations, as complex or as simple as they may be, reflect

who we are as disciples of Jesus? Who will benefit from my message? Who may be harmed by it? Are there voices I'm favoring? Whose voices am I choosing to ignore? It's up to us to responsibly answer these questions as best we can as we create.

Lastly, taking responsibility for what we "put out there" means we must always seek to serve the common good of all in whatever media we create. Of course, our media making may only be communicating to Grandma and Grandpa that the grandkids sat on Santa's lap through sharing of photos via the family text messaging thread, but many of our communications reach beyond ourselves or our families into the community around us. Do we seek the good of everyone when we create?

Why is this important? Because by taking responsibility when we create content, we provide an example for others to do the same, especially the young.

The Canadian bishops put it well in the pastoral letter quoted above. They say, "Our expectation is that our own Catholic institutions and media outlets will hold themselves to the highest standard in assuring that their online posting adheres to the greatest degree of accuracy and truthfulness possible, while also prioritizing Christian charity and human dignity. Others will model what they see us doing, and we want to demonstrate great virtue in this regard."

As individuals, we hold ourselves to the same high standard, exercising the virtue of responsibility in our media creations, following the call of Christian discipleship.

*Sister Hosea Rupprecht, a Daughter of St. Paul, is the associate director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies.*

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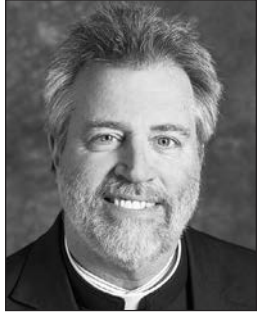
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## Sharing lasting joy

The readings for the third Sunday of Advent — Cycle C — are: Zephaniah 3:14-18a, Philippians 4:4-7 and Luke 3:10-18.

### GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

The readings and prayers for this weekend's Mass are replete with expressions of, or exhortations to, joy. From the Collect: "... enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation/ and to celebrate them always/ with solemn worship and glad rejoicing." From the first reading: "Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!/ Sing joyfully, O Israel!/ Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter

Jerusalem!" (Zephaniah 3:14) From the psalm: "Cry out with joy and gladness . . ." From St. Paul: "Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!" (Phil 4:4) No wonder we call this Sunday 'Gaudete Sunday,' Gaudete meaning 'rejoice.'

But this joy is not for ourselves alone. In the responsorial psalm we are encouraged to share this joy with others: "Give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name;/ among the nations make known his deeds,/ proclaim how exalted is his name." "Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement;/ let this be known throughout all the earth."

The leaders of our parish plan of renewal suggested that we go caroling this year as a parish activity. We are putting together caroling groups to visit the sick, those confined to their homes, former parishioners who have left the parish but still live in the area, and anyone else who crosses our path. I have been thinking about the reasons we are going, pondering a theology of caroling.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," John wrote. (John 1:14) Just as God came to us, who could not come to Him, so we reach out to those who still belong to us but cannot join us in worship and community events. The psalmist reminds us that God "heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds;" (Ps 147:3) so we hope to bring God's healing love to others.

People leave their parish for many reasons, and it is often hard to return. To them we want to say that we have not forgotten them, that they would be welcomed back. Again, we want actively to reach out, not just wait passively and hope they return.

In today's world many people celebrate a secular Christmas. There is nothing evil about it, but it is a Christmas deprived of all but a cultural meaning, and eventually no real meaning at all. Many yards will display Santa and reindeer and Frosty and flashing lights but no manger. Our Christmas carols will be a reminder of what Christmas is, not all about, but first and most about — the birth of our Savior and the beginning of our salvation. This is not defensive or militant, but a service. If Christmas is only about secular things, it will not change anyone's life but be merely a pleasant interlude and weaken faith. Hopefully our caroling will remind people of the profound and religious meaning of the season and attract them to it.

But mostly: The Christian life includes a call to be evangelists, to go out from our churches and proclaim the Good News. Many carols repeat the story of the angel of the Lord appearing to the shepherds, and the words the angel spoke: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy . . . for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Lk 2:10-11) Caroling is at its heart evangelization, continuing the proclamation of the centerpiece of the Gospel, that God has come to dwell with us forever and free us from sin and death. So we not only need no longer be afraid, but indeed, even in the darkness and sin and anxieties of this world, we have reason to be joyful.

Without originally meaning to, it appears that our carolers will be doing what the Church is encouraging us to do this Sunday. However you do it, share with others this year, not just the festivities of a secular Christmas, but the Good News, the true and lasting joy of our Savior's birth.

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

## Hail Mary: 'Now, and at the hour of our death'

Catholics love tradition, and that's a good thing. The treasures of the church are a rich spiritual inheritance for all God's children and a great source of consolation and hope. But sometimes, we forget that even the greatest hallmarks of our faith — the most common ways we practice what we believe — didn't always exist. The "Hail Mary" is a case in point.

While it may be hard to believe, the "Hail Mary" developed over time. Originally, it included only the words of the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation as recorded in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. Elizabeth's prophetic words at the Visitation were added by the end of the first millennium.

During the papacy of Pope Urban IV (1261-1264), the prayer was expanded to include the name of Jesus. But the second half wasn't in use until the 14th or 15th century. Our "Hail Mary" wasn't the church's official form until St. Pius V revised the breviary in 1568. That was just three years before Lepanto, the victory enshrined by dedicating the month of October to the Holy Rosary. Strangely, the ultimate Catholic prayer, as we pray it, was approved by the church less than five centuries ago.

Imagine praying the "Hail Mary" without "Mother of God" or "pray for us, sinners," or "now, and at the hour of our death!" Yet, that is exactly how our earliest saints called out to the Blessed Virgin.

Death was certainly not a stranger to the earliest Christians; many were persecuted and martyred. But for them, perhaps, the most important part of invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary was the reassurance that because the Lord was with her, he would be with them, too.

After the fall of Rome and the rise of Islam, Catholics looked more and more to Mary as their Mother and Queen. To them, she was indeed "blessed among women."

As the church sought ways to reaffirm the real presence of Christ in Holy Eucharist, Urban IV presided at the first feast of Corpus Christi. It seems natural that he would also add the name of Jesus to this Marian prayer.

For me, the "Hail Mary" would not be complete without its final line: "now and at the hour of our death."

I can imagine that Christians in the 14th and 15th centuries were intensely aware of death. They had every reason to be. Between one- and two-thirds of Europe's population was wiped out by the Bubonic Plague in the mid-1300s. And if the Black Death wasn't enough to make people think about their own mortality, there were dozens of wars. We may remember some — like the Hundred Years' War and the fall of Constantinople — from Western Civ. Other more obscure localized conflicts are called more colorful names, like the Hook and Cod wars, the Battle of the Golden Spurs, and the Salt War.

Today, we live in a culture that has largely succeeded in sequestering us from death. We do everything in our power to keep death at a distance, so we don't have to think much about it. Most of us live our daily lives as if the present moment will always run parallel to the one in which we breathe our last. And yet, we all know that simply isn't true. For every one of us, at a time known only by God himself, "now" and the "hour of our death" will intersect.

The "Hail Mary" reminds us that life is short. By asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to pray for us not only now but when we will need her intercession most, we prayerfully place the rest of our earthly lives in her maternal hands. We entrust our eternal destination to her prayers, and in the process, we learn to live on earth with hearts that are fixed on heaven.

Catholic traditions and institutions are mighty and deep; they don't change much, and they don't move fast. But every once in a while, we tweak something, add a few words to a prayer — or come up with an entirely new set of mysteries. And when we do, it's because the Holy Spirit wants to give us something more, something we may not yet know that we need.

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.

### CALLED TO HOLINESS



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

During the papacy of Pope Urban IV (1261-1264), the prayer was expanded to include the name of Jesus. But the second half wasn't in use until the 14th or 15th century. Our "Hail Mary" wasn't the church's official form until St. Pius V revised the breviary in 1568. That was just three years before Lepanto, the victory enshrined by dedicating the month of October to the Holy Rosary. Strangely, the ultimate Catholic prayer, as we pray it, was approved by the church less than five centuries ago.

Imagine praying the "Hail Mary" without "Mother of God" or "pray for us, sinners," or "now, and at the hour of our death!" Yet, that is exactly how our earliest saints called out to the Blessed Virgin.

Death was certainly not a stranger to the earliest Christians; many were persecuted and martyred. But for them, perhaps, the most important part of invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary was the reassurance that because the Lord was with her, he would be with them, too.

After the fall of Rome and the rise of Islam, Catholics looked more and more to Mary as their Mother and Queen. To them, she was indeed "blessed among women."

## What is an indulgence?

Q: Please explain what an indulgence is and how it can reduce or eliminate the time a soul must spend in purgatory.

### QUESTION CORNER



Jenna Marie Cooper

A: Indulgences are perhaps one of the more misunderstood parts of Catholic practice. But indulgences are deeply rooted in several key Catholic theological concepts, such as the nature of purgatory, the church's authority, the spiritual power of prayer and sacrifice and the communion of saints.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us a quick working definition of an indulgence when it states: "Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory" (CCC, No. 1498).

Canon 992 of the Code of Canon Law further tells us: "A member of Christ's faithful who is properly disposed and who fulfills certain specific conditions, may gain an indulgence by the help of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, authoritatively dispenses and applies the treasury of the merits of Christ and the Saints."

Breaking this down into more practical terms, an indulgence is a spiritual benefit attached to certain pious acts specified by the Holy Father — such as, for example, visiting a designated pilgrimage site during a Jubilee year — which can eliminate (in the case of a "plenary

indulgence") or reduce (with a "partial indulgence") the amount of time a soul spends in Purgatory.

In addition to devoutly completing the pious act in question, the one seeking to earn a plenary indulgence must also: 1. Pray for the pope's intentions; 2. Make a good confession and receive Holy Communion close to the time of earning the indulgence; and 3. Be sincerely repentant of their sins, to the point of no longer having any sense of attachment to sin.

While the process of earning an indulgence is relatively straightforward, the spiritual mechanics of how and why indulgences work can be a bit more subtle.

First of all, it's important to keep in mind that souls in purgatory are all destined for heaven, and thus that they have already repented of and been forgiven for their sins. We also need to understand that, strictly speaking, purgatory is a state outside of linear time as we experience it on earth. So even though we speak of purgatory as a time of "temporal punishment," this does not mean that purgatory is akin to a jail sentence with indulgences being like a sort of parole.

Recalling the catechism's reminder that "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death" (CCC, No. 1472), we can more accurately understand purgatory as a phase of spiritual purification to prepare souls still affected by the spiritual consequences of their sins to enter eventually into the full presence of God in heaven.

Just like our prayers and sacrifices can help ourselves and others grow closer to God in this life, the church teaches that we can help the souls in purgatory move farther along on their spiritual journey even after their

(Continued on page 12)

## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

December, as recommended by Pope Francis, is that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

**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.

**The Infancy Narratives with Father Michael Comer**, Wednesday, Dec. 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.

**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).

**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 date is 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.

**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).



**Jolly ol' St. Nicholas**  
"St. Nicholas" visited students at Prince of Peace school, Covington, on his feast day, Dec. 6.

**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.



#### Curia service awards

(above right) The Diocese of Covington Curia staff gathered with Catholic Charities at the Metropolitan Club, Covington, for the annual Service Awards luncheon. To honor those who have given five, 10, 15, 25 and 40 years of service to the Diocese of Covington and Catholic Charities. Celebrating five years: Liz Champ, Dionne Couch, Linda Dietz, Mindy Garcia, Lisa Taylor. Celebrating 10 years is Brian Harvey. Celebrating 15 years is Anna Phillips and Jamie Schroeder. Celebrating 25 years is Laura Keener, and celebrating 40 years is Steve Kopyay. Pictured above are the honorees, excluding Ms. Dietz and Garcia who were unable to make it. (above left) Mr. Kopyay took a moment to share some remarks about his time with the Diocese of Covington.

# The Processional Cross: a catechism of sacrifice and revelation

Sir Stephen Enzweiler  
Cathedral Historian

It has been a part of the Cathedral Basilica's pontifical liturgies for decades. It is a golden, bejeweled work of sacred art carried by gloved crucifers in high ceremony and with great solemnity leading the entrance processions of each Pontifical Mass. It is a striking object, made of fine hammered gold and gold filigree, enameled inlays, and enconced with precious and semi-precious stones.

It is the Episcopal Processional Cross of the Bishop of Covington. Also known as a "processional crucifix," the cross is larger and heavier than most and dates back more than 70 years to 1953 and the episcopacy of Bishop William T. Mulloy. It was in that year that St. Mary's Cathedral was elevated to the rank of Minor Basilica by Pope Pius XII. Bishop Mulloy, who was known for his predilection for highly decorative sacred art, commissioned the cross for the occasion.

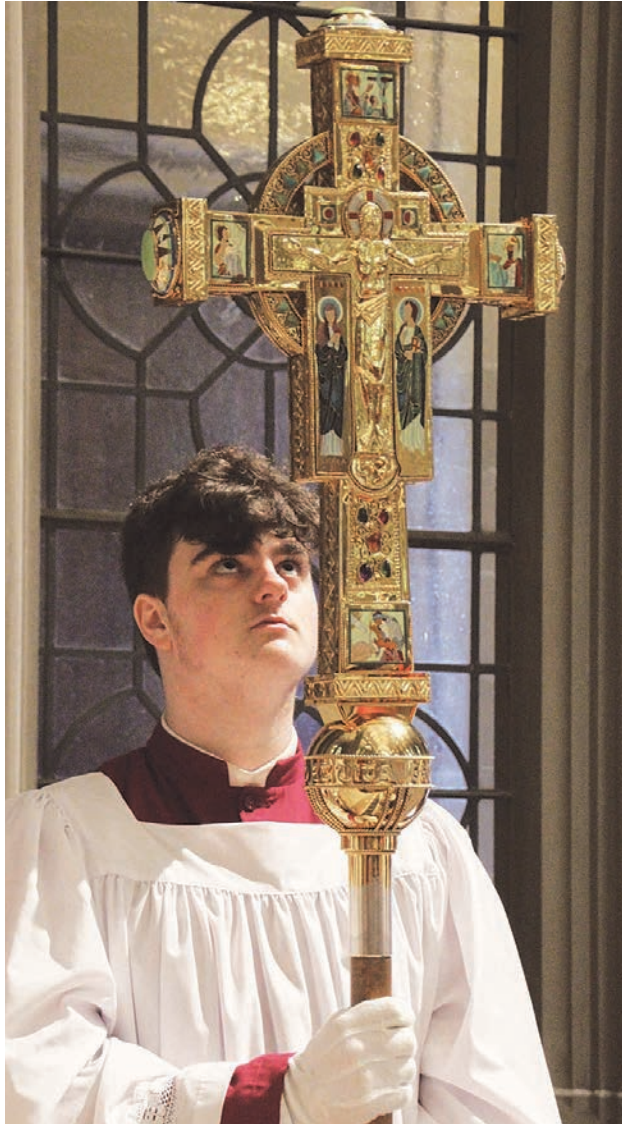
It is said to have been made for him at the Benedictine Abbey of Maria-Laach in Germany. The cross is elaborately decorated on both sides. The front, or crucifix side, depicts the sacrificial themes of the Old and New Testaments, while the reverse, the Marian side, depicts symbols of Mary and themes related to Revelation and her Assumption and Coronation.

The crucifix side is dominated by the central figure of Jesus Christ in his sacrifice on the cross. Beneath his feet we see the serpent crushed in defeat by the victory of the cross. On either side of Christ's head are depicted the sun and the moon, titles the Church has given to Jesus and Mary. The sun is the source of light, and Jesus is "the light of the world," while Mary, like the moon, can only reflect the light of her son. Standing beneath the dying Jesus are the weeping figures of his mother and St. John the Evangelist.

At the ends of the cross are four enameled medallions illustrating sacrificial themes found throughout the Bible. At the top, Moses stands with the bronze serpent mounted on a pole, a reference to Numbers 21:9. Here Yaweh relents and heals the sin of his people, so that anyone bitten by a snake who gazes upon the bronze serpent would live. The passage also prefigures Jesus' own crucifixion and promise of salvation: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:32).

On the right is depicted the sacrifice of bread and wine offered by Melchizedek, the "priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:18). A messianic Psalm written by King David a thousand years later would compare the coming Messiah with Melchizedek: "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4). To the left, another medallion depicts Aaron holding a lamb in offering to God, reflecting the passage in Exodus 12 that describes the sacrifice during the Passover ritual. This ritual is repeated in the New Testament, where Jesus fulfills his role not only as high priest but as the Lamb of God who sacrifices himself for his people. A fourth medallion on the bottom speaks to us of the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. We see God's hand reach out to stop him, pleased with Abraham's unwavering faith.

Six kinds of precious and semi-precious stones enconce the cruciform front. These include Chrysolite (a type of yellow quartz), Topazos, Calcedony, Beryl, Amethyst, and Chryoprase. Each stone was selected because each decorated the breastplate of the high priest Aaron in the Old Testament; they were also chosen because they are listed in Revelation as among the foundation stones in the New Jerusalem (Ex 28:15-30 & Rev 21:20). Encircling the figure of Jesus are twelve individual stones made of Beryl and Calcedony, a reference to the 12 stones of Aaron's breastplate, the 12 tribes of Israel, 12 Apostles, and the 12 foundation stones in the New Jerusalem.



(above left) Pontifical server ready to process. (Messenger Photo)  
 (above) Detail of the Crucifix side of the cross. (Photo by the author)  
 (above right) Detail of the Marian side of the cross. (Photo by the author)  
 (right) The Processional Cross in procession. Bishop Iffert has dedicated the Cathedral's Processional Cross as the Jubilee Cross for 2025. (Messenger Photo)

Inscribed on the round stem node beneath the cross is the promise of Christ himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the Life."

The reverse side of the processional cross is devoted to Marian imagery and evokes her as the Mary of the Book of Revelation. In the center, surrounded by gold filigree and 12 semi-precious stones, she ascends in the glory of her Assumption and Coronation as the woman clothed with the sun, the sun and moon beneath her feet (Rev 12:1). Above her, two angels with the Holy Spirit gently place the crown of glory upon her head. Four gold medallions surround the scene with images of her royal titles: the New Ark of the Covenant, the Tower of David, Mystical Rose, and Gate of Heaven.

Together, both sides of the processional cross speak to Revelation history, the prophecy and prefigurement of the

Old Testament revealed in the new sacrifice made in Christ and brought about through Mary, the premiere member of the Church whose Fiat brought about Emmanuel, God with us.

# Jubilees throughout History

In ancient Judaism, the Jubilee Year (which was called the year of the y b l, “of the goat”, because the holiday was proclaimed by the sound of a goat’s horn) was a year that was declared holy. During this period, the Mosaic law prescribed that slaves could regain their freedom, and that land, (of which God is the sole master), should be returned to its former owners. A jubilee year was typically celebrated every 50 years.

In the Christian era, after the first Jubilee of 1300, Pope Boniface VIII fixed the frequency of Jubilee celebrations to every 100 years. Following a plea from the people of Rome to Pope Clement VI (1342), the frequency was reduced to every 50 years.

In 1389, in remembrance of the number of years in the life of Christ, Urban VI chose to

## 2015: Francis

With the Bull *Misericordiae Vultus* of 11 April 2015, Pope Francis declared a Jubilee for the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council. The Jubilee was dedicated to mercy. Before the official opening, as a sign of the Church’s closeness to the civil war-stricken Central African Republic, Pope Francis opened the holy door of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Bangui on 29 November, during his apostolic trip to Africa, anticipating the start of the Extraordinary Jubilee. The holy door of St Peter’s Basilica was opened on 8 December 2015, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. For the first time a ‘door of mercy’ was opened in the world’s cathedrals, sanctuaries, hospitals and prisons. For the occasion, the Pope established a group of priests known as Missionaries of Mercy to whom he entrusted the power to forgive sins usually reserved to the Holy Father.

## 2000: John Paul II

The same Pope, on 29 November 1998, with the Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium*, proclaimed the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. In the course of the year, St John Paul II made several pilgrimages and symbolic gestures not included in the usual celebratory practices. These included a public request for forgiveness for sins committed in history, and the publication of a Martyrology of Christians killed in the 20th century. One of the main events of the Jubilee was the holding of World Youth Day in Rome: more than two million young people participated. The Pope also made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, encouraging dialogue between the Catholic Church, Islam and Judaism.

## 1983: John Paul II

With the Bull *Aperite Portas Redemptori*, dated 6 January 1983, John Paul II proclaimed a Jubilee to celebrate the 1950th anniversary of the death and resurrection of Jesus

## 1975: Paul VI

Pope Paul VI decided that this Holy Year should be dedicated to reconciliation. He called it with the Bull *Apostolorum Limina* of 23 May 1974. At the opening of the Holy Door on Christmas night 1974, Buddhist monks were also present. It was the first Jubilee to be broadcast worldwide and saw the lifting of historic excommunications with the Church of Byzantium and the participation of the Patriarch of Alexandria Melitane. During the Holy Year Rome was threatened by drought, and in view of the large influx of pilgrims to the city, water rationing was imposed.

## 1950: Pius XII

On 26 May 1949, the Holy Year of 1950 was proclaimed with the Bull *Jubilaum Maximum*. During the Jubilee celebrations Pope Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven and transformed the College of Cardinals into a sort of universal representation of the Catholic world, drastically reducing the Italian presence and increasing the number of cardinals from other nations. During the year, modern mass religious tourism really manifested itself for the first time. The De Gasperi government of Italy worked hard to ensure proper facilities were put in place for millions of pilgrims, who were given a ‘Pilgrim Card’ which was recognised as having the same validity as a passport within Italy.

## 1933: Pius XI

Pius XI proclaimed an ‘extraordinary Jubilee’ on 6 January 1933, with the Bull *Quod Nuper*, to mark the 1900th anniversary of the death of Jesus. The event was celebrated with particular grandeur. The Pope gave as many as 620 speeches and more than 2 million pilgrims poured into Rome. Over 500 railway carriages were used to transport the faithful from all over the world.

## 1925: Pius XI

Pope Pius XI, emphasizing the commitment of the Church and all Christians to a better society, proclaimed the Jubilee of 1925 with the Bull *Infinita Dei Misericordia* on 29 May 1924. He gave an impetus to missionary activity around the world, which earned him the title ‘Pope of the Missions’. The Pope banned political symbols in the Vatican but was nevertheless the first to bless the Unified Italian State.

## 1900: Leo XIII

*Properante ad Exitum Saeculo* was the Bull with which, on 11 May 1899, Leo XIII proclaimed the universal Holy Year of 1900. For the first time since the unification of Italy, the King also announced the Jubilee in his ‘Speech of the Crown’. The Pope sent out an appeal for a reawakening of faith in the Christian people throughout the world. The main intention was to meet the twin challenges of the modernization of Christian life and the Christianization of modern life. Responsibility for welcoming pilgrims fell for the first time to the Italian authorities. The mountains of Italy also reflected the Holy Year: monuments to commemorate the Jubilee were erected on peaks from Piedmont in the north to Sicily in the south to pay homage to the Redeemer.

set the Jubilee cycle to every 33 years and called for a Jubilee in 1390 — though it was only celebrated after his death by Pope Boniface IX.

Despite this, in 1400, at the end of the previously fixed 50-year period, without having declared a Jubilee ahead of time, Boniface IX granted a Jubilee indulgence to the pilgrims who had flocked to Rome.

In 1425, Martin V celebrated a new Jubilee, opening the holy door of St John Lateran for the first time.

The last to celebrate a Jubilee on the 50-year cycle was Pope Nicholas V in 1450. Paul II extended the inter-jubilee period to 25 years, and in 1475 a Holy Year was celebrated by Sixtus IV. From then on, ordinary Jubilees were held at regular intervals. Unfortunately, the Napoleonic wars prevented the celebrations of the Jubilees of 1800 and 1850.

The Jubilees were resumed in 1875, after the annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy, although that year it was celebrated without the traditional solemnity.

## 1875: Pius IX

After returning from exile and resuming the government of the Papal States, Pius IX was able to proclaim a Jubilee on 24 December 1874 with the Bull *Gravibus Ecclesiae*. The troops of King Victor Emmanuel II occupied Rome, however, and because of this it was not possible to hold the opening and closing ceremonies of the Holy Door.

## 1825: Leo XII

During the Jubilee of 1825, proclaimed on 24 May 1824 with the Bull *Quod Hoc Ineunte*, Leo XII did his utmost, despite his illness, to establish a closer bond between the Pope and the Christian people, through a program that aimed to involve all the resources of the Church in the struggle against the errors that threatened the faith. More than 325,000 pilgrims from all over Europe came to Rome. Since the basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls (destroyed by fire in 1823) was unusable, the Pope substituted it with the basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere, for the Jubilee visits of the faithful.

## 1775: Proclaimed by Clement XIV, presided over by Pius VI

This Jubilee was proclaimed on 30 April 1774, with the Bull *Salutis Nostrae Auctor*, by Pope Clement XIV, but unfortunately on 22 September that year he died of natural causes.

Pius VI was elected Pope on 15 February 1775 and a few days later, on 26 February, he solemnly inaugurated the Holy Year, which could not be opened as usual on Christmas Eve because the Papal See was vacant.

## 1750: Benedict XIV

On 5 May 1749, the Holy Year 1750 was proclaimed with the Bull *Peregrinantes*

*a Domino*. Records from the time state that more than a million pilgrims flocked to Rome, including several ambassadors, and groups from as far afield as the West Indies, Egypt and Armenia. The influx was so large that Roman charitable and hospital institutions were forced to rent royal palaces to cope with the number of pilgrims. For the first time, St. Peter’s dome and Bernini’s Colonnade were illuminated by thousands of flaming torches. 3000 crosses were built all over the city. Pope Benedict XIV also instituted the Good Friday Via Crucis at the Colosseum, thus consecrating the iconic amphitheater as a sacred space set aside to honor the memory of the martyrdom of the early Christians.

## 1725: Benedict XIII

During the Holy Year of 1725, proclaimed with the Bull *Redemptor et Dominus Noster* of 26 June 1724, Pope Benedict XIII regularly visited the Roman basilicas himself, travelling in modest carriages and taking part in the various practices required to obtain the indulgences. On 15 April 1725, he inaugurated the Roman Synod in St John Lateran’s Basilica, whose deliberations ran to 32 volumes. During this year the steps at Piazza di Spagna (the Spanish Steps) were opened to connect the square with the Church of Santissima Trinità dei Monti (Holy Trinity of the Mountains).

## 1700: opened by Innocent XII, concluded by Clement XI

This Jubilee was proclaimed by Innocent XII on 18 May 1699, with the Bull *Regi Saeculorum*. At the opening the Pope, due to his precarious state of health, was unable to preside personally. On Easter Sunday of that year, however, despite

being seriously ill, he imparted the solemn blessing from the balcony of the Quirinale on account of the large number of pilgrims who had gathered there. He died shortly afterwards on 27 September 1700 without being able to conclude the year

The conclusion of the Jubilee year was presided over by Clement XI (elected Pope in November 1700). It was the first time that the Holy Door had been opened by one Pope and then closed by another. The influx of pilgrims in the city was such that some writers of the time compared Rome to Paris in terms of visitor numbers.

## 1675: Clement X

During this Holy Year, proclaimed by Clement X with the Bull *Ad Apostolicae Vocis Oraculum* of 16 April 1674, the Colosseum was reconsecrated, and the permission granted in 1671 to hold bull fights there was rescinded. One of the most prominent pilgrims was Queen Christina of Sweden, who had abdicated her throne in 1655, converted to Catholicism, and moved to Rome to take up residence at the Palazzo Farnese. About one and a half million pilgrims came to Rome this year.

## 1650: Innocent X

To mark this Holy Year, proclaimed by the Bull *Appropinquat Dilectissimi Filii* of 4 May 1649, Innocent X had the basilica of St. John Lateran restored by the famous architect Borromini. A novelty was introduced for this Jubilee: the Jubilee indulgence was extended to the Belgian provinces and the West Indies thanks to the Bull *Salvator et Dominus* of 8 and 12 January 1654. About 700,000 pilgrims arrived in Rome, mainly from the areas around the city.





CNS photo from Reuters

Pope John Paul II carries the Gospel as he enters St. Peter's Basilica through the Holy Door Dec. 24, 1999, ushering in the great Jubilee 2000.

Numerous Protestants also converted to Catholicism during the year.

#### 1625: Urban VIII

On 29 April 1624, with the Bull *Omnes Gentes*, Urban VIII proclaimed the Jubilee of 1625. On 28 January 1625 he extended the Jubilee indulgence to those who were unable to travel to Rome, as well as to prisoners and the sick (Bull *Pontificia sollicitudo*). On 30 January, with the papal encyclical *Paterna dominici gregis cura*, given the danger of the plague that was threatening Rome, the traditional visit to the Basilica of St Paul was dispensed with for safety reasons to be replaced with a visit to the more central church of Santa Maria in Trastevere. Additionally, he decreed that for the traditional pilgrimage to the seven

Churches of Rome, three churches inside the walls (Santa Maria del Popolo, Santa Maria in Trastevere and San Lorenzo in Lucina) could be substituted for those outside the city walls (San Sebastiano, San Paolo and San Lorenzo). About half a million pilgrims came to Rome that year.

#### 1600: Clement VIII

The Holy Year was proclaimed by the Bull of 19 May 1599, *Annus Domini Placabilis*. During this Jubilee Clement VIII offered good example by hearing confessions during Holy Week, climbing the Scala Sancta on his knees, serving meals to pilgrims who had come to Rome, and eating with 12 of the city's poor each day. Likewise the cardinals renounced wearing their traditional red regalia as a sign of penitence.

Many flocked to help the Pope's jubilee efforts. The Jewish community in Rome, for example, provided him with 500 bed blankets for pilgrims. On 31 December 1600 more than 80,000 people attended the opening of the Holy Door and millions of pilgrims came to Rome for the Jubilee year.

#### 1575: Gregory XIII

The Jubilee of 1575 was announced on 10 May 1574 with the Bull *Dominus ac Redemptor*. Celebrated after the turmoil of the Protestant reformation, it was an excellent opportunity for Gregory XIII to renew Catholicism in accordance with the decisions of the Council of Trent. This Holy Year gave the Pope the opportunity to highlight the renewed role of the Church in the modern world. The Church's model

of a devout life combined the service of God with the fulfilment of the duties of one's own state in life and service of one's neighbor. He cancelled the budget which had been set aside for the carnival celebrations that year, reallocating the money to the establishment of a Pilgrims' Hospital under the care of Philip Neri. The total number of pilgrims for the Holy Year of 1575 was estimated by the authorities to be around 400,000 people — a significant total given that the city of Rome only had a population of about 80,000 at the time.

#### 1550: Proclaimed by Paul III, presided over by Julius III

A few days after his election, Pope Julius III opened the Holy Year promulgated by his predecessor Paul III, with the issuing of the Bull *Si pastores ovium*, dated 24 February 1550. He also announced the resumption of the Council of Trent for May of the following year.

#### 1525: Clement VII

The Bull of proclamation, *Inter Sollicitudines*, issued by Clement VII, was published on 17 December 1524.

#### 1500: Alexander VI

A special effort was made to mark the Jubilee Year of 1500, given the extra significance of the turning of the new century. On 12 April 1498, the Bull *Consueverunt Romani Pontifices* suspended all further indulgences for that year, and this was later confirmed by the Bull *Inter multiplices* of 28 March 1499. The Bull of 20 December 1499, *Pastores Aeterni Qui*, established that only the penitentiaries of St. Peter's Basilica were granted the faculty to absolve sins. In this year Alexander VI definitively established the complex ceremony of the opening and closing of Holy Years, which until then had not followed any specific liturgical rites. The Pope wanted the beginning to be marked by an event with a powerful impact and he thus implemented the tradition of the opening of a Holy Door. This ceremony is an explicit reference to the words of St John's Gospel: "I am the door. Whoever passes through me will be saved."

Alexander VI also ordered that the custom of setting aside a door for Holy Year pilgrims should be extended to the other three Patriarchal Basilicas, with the understanding that such doors should be bricked up for the rest of the time. The opening of St Peter's Holy Door was only to be carried out by the reigning Pontiff, while the doors of the other three Basilicas were to be unsealed by his legates. The Holy Doors were to remain open night and day, guarded by four clerics in turn throughout the Jubilee year.

#### 1475: Proclaimed by Paul II, presided over by Sixtus IV

On 19 April 1470, the Bull *Ineffabilis Providentia*, expressly established that the Jubilee pilgrimage should include visits to the basilicas of St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major, and stated that from 1475 onwards, jubilees should be celebrated every 25 years at the behest of Pope Paul II.

With the Bull of 29 August 1473 *Quemadmodum operosi*, Sixtus IV confirmed the Jubilee proclaimed earlier by Paul II, who had in the meantime died.

#### 1450: Nicholas V

Nicholas V proclaimed the next Holy Year in 1450 with the Bull *Immensa et Innumerabilia*, dated 19 January 1449. This brought the jubilee tradition back to celebrations every 50 years. Thanks also to the Pope's canonization of the great Franciscan preacher, St Bernardine of Siena, the number of pilgrims to Rome increased dramatically.

#### 1390: Proclaimed by Urban VI, presided over by Boniface IX

On 8 April 1389, the Bull *Salvator noster Unigenitus* of Urban VI established that the celebration of the Jubilee should take place every 33 years, thus bringing forward the celebrations to 1390 (they would have been set to take place in 1400). Unfortunately, the schism which was happening in 1390, with Antipope Clement VII taking refuge in Avignon, greatly affected the number of pilgrims flocking to Rome, since he had forbidden French,

Spanish, Catalan, Scottish, southern Italian and all those who followed him from paying homage at the tombs of the Apostles in Rome.

#### 1350: Clement VI

With the Bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, in 1343, Clement VI, after having received a delegation representing the people of Rome asking him to bring the Apostolic See back to the city and to hold a Jubilee before the typical 100-year period, proclaimed a Holy Year for the year 1350. Despite the scourge of the plague and a disastrous earthquake that struck the Eternal City in 1349, more than one and a half million pilgrims poured into the city for the celebrations. This was thanks, in large part, to the intercession of the Pope, who had managed to obtain a truce in the war between France and England to ensure the safety of pilgrims making their journey to Rome.

#### 1300: Boniface VIII

With the Bull *Antiquorum habet*, of 22 February 1300, Boniface VIII proclaimed 1300 as a Jubilee year, decreeing that Romans who visit the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul 30 times within the year would be granted a plenary indulgence, while pilgrims arriving from outside Rome would only need 15 visits.

At least two million faithful arrived in Rome that year. Giotto, who at that time was commissioned to paint the frescoes in the Loggia delle Benedizioni — or balcony of the blessings — in the Vatican, was one of the prominent figures who took part in the Jubilee with the celebrated artist Cimabue. Giotto's ancient fresco commemorating this event is preserved in the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

Finally, among other significant figures who came to Rome that year was almost certainly the great poet Dante Alighieri, who in some passages of the Divine Comedy makes reference to the Jubilee.

Content provided from the official Jubilee 2025 website <https://www.iubiliaeum2025.valen.html>.

## How the Jubilee year and diocesan pastoral plan are intersecting with works of mercy

Laura Keener  
Editor

*In June, Bishop John Iffert launched in the Diocese of Covington a Campaign of Mercy, an initiative of evangelization coming out of the With One Heart diocesan pastoral plan. As part of the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis has announced that a person can receive as many as two indulgences a day by completing acts of mercy. The Messenger sat down with Bishop Iffert to gather his thoughts on how the Holy Spirit may be working in the life of the local and universal Church through the theme of mercy.*

**Question:** Even going back to the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis was already writing about how service is a journeying to Christ, or a pilgrimage to the face of Christ. This year, Pope Francis is allowing for an indulgence for corporal works of mercy performed. How has the Bull (Pope Francis' official pronouncement of the Jubilee Year) incorporated the corporal works of mercy as part of the Jubilee Year?

**Bishop Iffert:** On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis will inaugurate the Jubilee year 2025 in Rome by opening the first Jubilee door. He has chosen the motto of the Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope, and it's really interesting.

Unlike during the Year of Mercy, where he authorized Jubilee doors all over the world and you could receive the Jubilee indulgence just by passing through one of these doors and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father with all the usual requirements of receiving an indulgence, this year, he has not authorized those Jubilee doors in any diocese outside of Rome.

In one way, you might think, well, he's really narrowed that offer of mercy, but what he's really done is broaden this. What he's doing is, he's keeping the Jubilee doors and the connection to that indulgence in Rome. But then he's allowing folks to be able to gain that indulgence in a variety of ways — by visiting any diocesan cathedral or by visiting any other historic church designated by the local bishop, or visiting any number of shrines or and this, I think is very important to us, in performing a work of mercy, especially for a person who is needy.

There is this wonderful sentence, and I'm paraphrasing, I believe it is the letter in which the pope establishes the indulgence for the Jubilee Year, and he says, whenever we spend time with a person who is in need doing a work of mercy for that person, we are entering on a pilgrimage to encounter the face of Christ in our neighbor. I just think that's beautiful. That is a sentiment that I'm going to be living with for a long time and a truth that I'm going to be living with and teaching for a long time.

This pilgrimage of hope, where we emphasize hope, this virtue that is a kind of fortitude, a kind of an expression, a kind of courage lifted to a supernatural level, this hope that is certain and constant and that knows that God has a plan for us and is bringing it to good, this hope is connected with our acting in a loving and compassionate and merciful way to others.

We know that faith, hope and love they all blend. Faith and hope lead us into love and charity and mercy and compassion. Well, this is, this is the journey we're on. We're on this hope-filled journey, not only that God's compassion will rule in our world, but that we will be made over in the image of that compassion and that mercy.

There are three great things that are happening this year for us here in the Diocese of Covington. One is the inauguration of the Jubilee year. We're also completing the last year of the Eucharistic Revival, which is focused on walking with another in Eucharistic faith, accompanying another in Eucharistic faith. And then here locally, as part of our pastoral plan, we are inaugurating a Campaign of Mercy. We're inviting Catholics to enter more fully into regular works of mercy, to make this a regular part, a monthly part, a weekly part, a daily part of our life to be doing works of mercy for those around us.

These kinds of great themes come together; to me, it all speaks of one thing, which is the Church is awakening to this reality that we are the mission of Jesus, the mission of Jesus to be mercy for the world, to be mercy for one another; to proclaim the kingdom and the mercy of the Father; the love that the Father has for each one of us. This is our mission.

Everything about these great celebrations and so much of what we find in our pastoral plan and everything that the Church speaks these days seems to be clarifying that and reinforcing that we're the living mission of Jesus, and

that that mission is a mission of mercy for everyone.

That's what the point this Jubilee Year is making by connecting that pilgrimage motif with the theological virtue of hope and with the work of mercy. And I'm just inspired by it.

**Question:** You mentioned that the Campaign of Mercy, the Eucharistic Revival and now the Jubilee Year as having a common theme of serving and journeying with each other. That seems to me to be a work of the Holy Spirit. With the Campaign of Mercy, we're using the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as tools for evangelization. Tell me more about that concept.

**Bishop Iffert:** In the Campaign of Mercy, that comes out of our pastoral plan, which came out of consultations with people at the grassroots level, what we're doing is, we're inviting, first, ourselves to enter into works of mercy so that we can be more deeply converted to Christ. Not only to do volunteer work, but to do it specifically as a work of mercy for another inspired by the love of Christ. In other words, we love Christ, and so we're going to, in action, love our neighbor, especially our neighbor who is in need. We're going to commit to that, and we're going to live that way.

Then we're going to do the next step, too, which is we're going to reflect on that experience, both alone and with others, with other Catholics. We're going to reflect on that. We're going to ask ourselves, where did I encounter Jesus in my neighbor? Where did I encounter Jesus in this work of mercy? Where did I meet the crucified Jesus who suffers on the cross for us for mercy? Where did I meet that Jesus? And what is Jesus asking of me? What is that merciful Jesus asking of me in my attitude towards others? Then at some point, I'm going to invite people to say, okay, let's reach out to someone who we know is a Catholic person, but who maybe isn't as connected with the life of the Church, maybe isn't as connected with this life of merciful care of others. Let's invite this person to join us in doing that work of mercy and then join us in reflecting on it and encountering Jesus there. We'll take that risk.

The whole idea, of course, is that we encounter Jesus in this way of life. And so, we're going to invite people back to this way of life, trusting that they, too, will encounter Jesus there, and that meeting Jesus face to face in service to those who are in need, that that will be an impulse for conversion, for deeper conversion in Christ.

At some point, we're going to, again, put out a call and say, okay, now think of somebody in your life who is not churched at all, who maybe even hasn't heard much about Jesus, and invite them, take the risk of inviting them to do this work of mercy with you. And then maybe dare to invite them to pray with you about it. And again, the whole idea being that we believe that we will encounter Jesus in the face of our neighbors, and that that encounter with Jesus calls us to deepening conversion.

We're going to employ this doing of these works of mercy, as a way to invite people to meet Jesus and to respond to His invitation to love others. It's going to become really one of the great strategies for evangelization. That's a 50-cent word that just literally means sharing the good news of Jesus, sharing the good news of Jesus with others. That's going to be a primary strategy for us for three or four years of the Diocese of Covington. That's a response to what we see as coming out, that it is this work of the Spirit.

Another thing, you said that all of this coming together really does seem like it's the Holy Spirit. You know, there's this theological concept, we speak of two offices in the Church — the magisterium, which is the teaching office, which is primarily the bishops around the world teaching in union with the Pope, but

also, this office that we call the "sense of the faithful."

The Church believes and proclaims that the whole body of believers cannot be misled. That the Holy Spirit speaks, yes, through our pastors, through the magisterium, but also in the body of believers. And that while individual believers can be misled, that the Holy Spirit dwells within the temple that is the whole Church. The whole Church, the temple of the people of God, cannot, as a body, be completely misled about the work of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit and the life of the Church, especially about anything that would jeopardize our salvation.

I really do think that this rediscovery that we're the living mission of the Spirit of Jesus, that we're all called to carry on his mission of mercy, compassion, self-sacrifice, gifted self-donation, we're all called to be that. I really do believe this is a sense where the Holy Spirit is inspiring the sense of the faithful and inspiring the magisterium towards the sense of truth to bring new life and new birth to the Church.

**Question:** You've said before about acts of service performed during the Campaign of Mercy and then here again with the indulgences, that we're not doing these things to tick boxes. I often hear people say that when they're involved in works of mercy that they get more out of the experience than what they give. How can acts of mercy, then, develop someone's personal faith life?

**Bishop Iffert:** That's exactly right. The Church does offer an indulgence for the Jubilee Year. Indulgences are an important category that bring not only a remission of sin, but also a healing of the effect of sin in our life, a healing of that destructive effect that sin can have on us.

An indulgence is not just a formality. It's not a trick. It's not a get-out-of-purgatory-early card, right? What is it? It is an expression of a desire for God's grace to work in us in a direct and powerful way. To really change us and to help us to grow closer to the heart of Jesus. That's what this is all about.

When we talk about the Jubilee indulgence, Pope Francis, another way he has made this is, he says you can receive an indulgence as often as twice a day during the Jubilee Year; as long as one of those you are applying not to yourself, but to the poor souls in purgatory — the suffering Church. This is the spirit. It's not about bean counting. It's not about adding up the number of days, right?

What is it about? It's about inviting the Spirit of God to heal us and to draw us into deeper conformity with Christ. That is really what assures our salvation.

We believe that the more we live like Christ, the more the grace of God will be unleashed in our lives. That's why we're emphasizing this aspect of being part of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. These are powerful actions that change us from the inside out; that help us to encounter Jesus. By entering into this pilgrimage to encounter Jesus in our neighbor; we're making ourselves available so that Christ can meet us, that we can see him face to face, and that he can change us and heal us, and by healing us, heal our world. That's what it's all about.



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# Jubilee pilgrimages and indulgences in the Diocese of Covington

Going on a pilgrimage during the Jubilee 2025 is a way to work toward obtaining a plenary indulgence. (For more information on indulgences for the Jubilee 2025 see an article on page 13). In the Diocese of Covington, Bishop John Iffert has identified several pilgrimages for the people of the Diocese of Covington to take part. These include local, regional and international pilgrimages.

## Local Pilgrimages

### Pilgrimage to the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption

Individually, or in parish groups, Bishop Iffert would like to encourage the faithful of the Diocese to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral Basilica during the Holy Year. Tours are scheduled to take place after 10 a.m. Mass on the following Sundays in 2025:

January 19	June 15	October 12
February 9	July 13	November 9
March 23	August 24	December 14
May 18	September 14	

Other than these scheduled tours, all guided tours, as well as self-guided tours of groups of ten or more, must be scheduled in advance by contacting the Cathedral Parish Office at (859) 431-2060.

## Annual Lenten Pilgrimage

Encourage groups from your parish or ask someone from your parish to organize a group to take part in the annual Lenten Pilgrimage of five historic Churches in Covington. This takes place on the Saturday of Palm Sunday weekend, April 12, 2025. You start or end your journey on foot or by car at any of the five participating Covington Churches — Cathedral, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, St. John the Evangelist or Mother of God.

## Regional Pilgrimages

Bishop Iffert will be leading four regional day pilgrimages by bus (no overnight) quarterly during the Jubilee Year. Each pilgrimage takes place on a Saturday. Each pilgrimage has a 100-person capacity. Sign-ups for laity will sell out quickly. Check the website <https://covdio.org/jubilee> for information when sign-up opens.

**Saturday, March 1, 2025**

### The Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana (about 3 hours from Covington) Sign-up opens January 13 at noon at <https://covdio.org/jubilee>.

**Saturday, May 31, 2025**

### Abbey of Gethsemani

Trappist, Kentucky

(about 2.5 hours from Covington)

Check the website <https://covdio.org/jubilee> for information when sign-up opens.

**Saturday, August 16, 2025**

### St. Meinrad Archabbey

St. Meinrad, Indiana

(about 2.5 hours from Covington)

Check the website <https://covdio.org/jubilee> for information when sign-up opens.

**Saturday, November 22, 2025**

### Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics

Maria Stein, Ohio

(about 2 hours from Covington)

Check the website <https://covdio.org/jubilee> for information when sign-up opens.

## International Pilgrimage

Bishop Iffert will be leading faithful of the Diocese on a 9-day Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, October 22–29, 2025. Learn more about the Rome trip and itinerary at <https://covdio.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Brochure.pdf>.

There is a waiting list to join this pilgrimage. To add your name to the waiting list e-mail Jim Hess at [Jhess@covdio.org](mailto:Jhess@covdio.org).



CNS photo/Katie Breidenbach

(above) The crucifix and rosary beads used by St. Mother Theodore Guerin are on display at her shrine Oct. 6. The Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind., planned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of their congregation's foundress Oct. 15.

OSV News photo/Roy Horner, The Record

(below) A file photo shows crosses marking the graves of Trappist monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Trappist, Ky.




Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics is home to one of the largest documented Holy Relic collections in the United States. Additionally, the Shrine provides faith nourishment and spiritual renewal through prayer, pilgrimage and inspiration from the lives of the Saints.



CNS photo/Katie Rutter

The Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Ind., is seen March 8, 2021.



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## The Jubilee Logo

The logo shows four stylized figures, representing all of humanity, coming from the four corners of the earth. They embrace each other to indicate the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples.

The figure at the front is holding onto the cross. It is not only the sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned, because we are always in need of hope, especially in our moments of greatest need.

There are the rough waves under the figures, symbolizing the fact that life's pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That's why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor which is let down into the waves.

The anchor is well known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon the "anchor of hope" refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency maneuvers to stabilize the ship during storms.

It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim's journey not as an

individual undertaking, but rather as something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one ever closer to the cross.

The cross in the logo is by no means static, but it is also dynamic. It bends down towards humanity, not leaving human beings alone, but stretching out to them to offer the certainty of its presence and the security of hope.

At the bottom of the logo is the motto of the 2025 Jubilee Year: Peregrinantes in Spem (Pilgrims of Hope), represented in green letters.

### The Jubilee Prayer

<p>Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of chari- ty enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.</p> <p>May your grace trans- form us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds trans- form from within both humanity and the whole cosmos</p>	<p>in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the pow- ers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eter- nally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen</p>
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## What is an indulgence?

(Continued from page 15)

deaths. While our simple prayers can always help the souls in purgatory, indulgences are an especially powerful means of providing this kind of spiritual assistance.

Indulgences work because we believe that many of the church's saints already prayed, sacrificed and patiently suffered enough during their earthly lives to have already been purified enough to enter heaven; and that all

their additional good deeds on top of what was needed for their own salvation created a kind of "surplus" of grace which the catechism refers to as "the Church's treasury" (CCC, No. 1476).

Because the Holy Father, as the successor to St. Peter, shares in St. Peter's power to "bind and loose" (Mt 16:19), the pope therefore has the power to distribute the extra

grace in the church's treasury to souls that need it. Indulgences are essentially the means by which the pope distributes these spiritual goods.

*Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osu.com.*

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# Jubilee year to open with special rite and celebration — all are welcome

**Maura Baker**  
Staff Writer

On Christmas Eve, the Jubilee year opens in Rome — the following Sunday, Dec. 29 — every church is called to offer that celebration in the cathedrals of the world.

Following suit, the Diocese of Covington's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, will be home to a special Jubilee opening Mass on that day, inviting all to join in the special occasion.

Father Daniel Schomaker, the Mass's master of ceremonies, points out some of the unique features of this celebration.

celebration.

"It's not just a Mass," he said, "but the opening rites of the Jubilee year." The gathering will begin outside of the Cathedral, across the street at St. Mary's Park. Here, the congregation will gather together for a special *collectio*, and a procession that will lead them into the Cathedral for Mass. Joining the procession will be representatives from each parish, motherhouse and Catholic organization carrying the banner.

The significance of this procession — and of processions in general — ties innately to this jubilee year's

theme, "Pilgrims of Hope." According to the USCCB, the scene "evokes in a sense the logo and theme." Processions call back to the Catholic tradition of pilgrimage, and the Church's status of pilgrims on a journey to Heaven.

Notably, the procession will be led by a cross lofted high (see related story on page 7.) The same cross will be displayed in the Cathedral throughout the Mass, and the whole of the jubilee year.

To join in on this celebration and the first steps of the Jubilee 2025 pilgrimage, all faithful are invited to gather in Cathedral square for the Opening Rite, Dec. 29, at 2 p.m.

# Vatican norms for Jubilee indulgence include pilgrimage, penance, service

**Cindy Wooden**  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pilgrims passing through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica during the Holy Year 2025, going to confession, receiving Communion and praying for the intentions of the pope can receive an indulgence, but so can inmates in prison and those who work to defend human life or assist migrants and refugees.

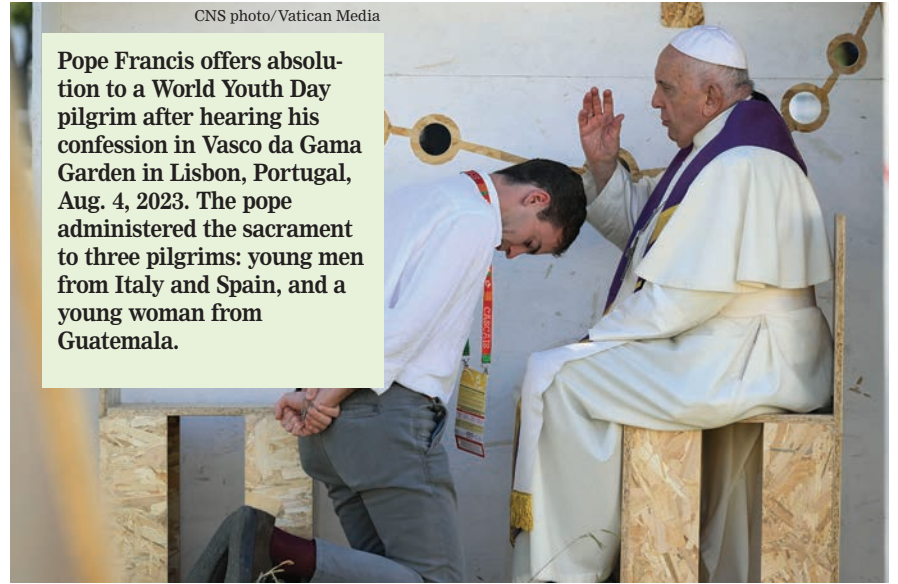
Fasting "at least for one day of the week from futile distractions" such as social media also can be a path toward a jubilee indulgence, according to norms published by the Vatican May 13.

Pope Francis said he will open the Holy Year at the Vatican Dec. 24 this year and close it Jan. 6, 2026, the feast of Epiphany. But he also asked bishops around the world to celebrate the Jubilee in their dioceses from Dec. 29 this year to Dec. 28, 2025.

For centuries a feature of holy year celebrations has been the indulgence, which the Church describes as a remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for their sins.

"Every sin 'leaves its mark'" even after a person has received forgiveness and absolution through the sacrament of reconciliation, Pope Francis wrote in the document proclaiming the Holy Year. "Sin has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, inasmuch as 'every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory,'" he wrote, quoting the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The norms for receiving an indulgence during the Holy Year were signed by Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, the new head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court dealing with matters of con-



**Pope Francis offers absolution to a World Youth Day pilgrim after hearing his confession in Vasco da Gama Garden in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 4, 2023. The pope administered the sacrament to three pilgrims: young men from Italy and Spain, and a young woman from Guatemala.**

science and with the granting of indulgences.

The basic conditions, he wrote, are that a person is "moved by a spirit of charity," is "purified through the sacrament of penance and refreshed by Holy Communion" and prays for the pope. Along with a pilgrimage, a work of mercy or an act of penance, a Catholic "will be able to obtain from the treasury of the Church a plenary indulgence, with remission and forgiveness of all their sins, which can be applied in suffrage to the souls in Purgatory."

The Rome pilgrimage, Cardinal De Donatis said, can be to the papal basilicas of St. Peter's, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran or St. Paul Outside the Walls. But also to one of the churches connected to outstanding women saints and doctors of the church: St. Catherine of Siena at the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva; St. Brigid of Sweden at Campo de' Fiori; St. Teresa of Avila at the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria; St. Thérèse of Lisieux at Trinità dei Monti; and St. Monica at the Church of St. Augustine.

Pilgrims to the Holy Land also can receive the Holy Year indulgence by praying at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in

Jerusalem, the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

For those who cannot travel abroad, local bishops around the world can designate their cathedral or another church or sacred place for pilgrims to obtain the indulgence, the cardinal wrote, asking bishops to "take into account the needs of the faithful as well as the opportunity to reinforce the concept of pilgrimage with all its symbolic significance, so as to manifest the great need for conversion and reconciliation."

People who cannot leave their residence — "especially cloistered nuns and monks, but also the elderly, the sick, prisoners and those who, through their work in hospitals or other care facilities, provide continuous service to the sick" — can spiritually join a pilgrimage and receive the indulgence, according to the norms.

Visiting the sick or a prisoner, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked or welcoming a migrant, "in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them," can be another way to receive the indulgence, the cardinal said, adding that an indulgence could be obtained each day from such acts of mercy.

"The Jubilee Plenary Indulgence can also be obtained through initiatives that put into practice, in a concrete and generous way, the spirit of penance which is, in a sense, the soul of the Jubilee," he wrote, highlighting in particular abstaining on Fridays from "futile distractions" like social media or from "superfluous consumption" by not eating meat.

"Supporting works of a religious or social nature, especially in support of the defense and protection of life in all its phases," helping a young person in difficulty or a recently-arrived migrant or immigrant — anything involving "dedicating a reasonable portion of one's free time to voluntary activities that are of service to the community or to other similar forms of personal commitment" also are paths toward an indulgence, he said.

"Despite the rule that only one plenary indulgence can be obtained per day," Cardinal De Donatis wrote, "the faithful who have carried out an act of charity on behalf of the souls in Purgatory, if they receive Holy Communion a second time that day, can obtain the plenary indulgence twice on the same day," although the second indulgence is "applicable only to the deceased."



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# Eight ways to celebrate Jubilee 2025 without leaving your diocese

Maria Wiering  
OSV News

As many as 35 million visitors are expected in Rome in 2025. Many of them will be pilgrims for the upcoming jubilee, a holy year the church celebrates every quarter-century. While numerous events are planned in Rome and at the Vatican to mark the Jubilee 2025, this Holy Year is for the whole church. Here are some ways to celebrate without traveling farther than your local cathedral.

## 1. Go to reconciliation.

The idea of a jubilee or holy year is rooted in the jubilees marked by the Israelites, who saw every 50th year as a special time for forgiveness and reconciliation with God and others. They would leave their fields fallow, replenishing the soil, allow those under slavery to regain their freedom, return land to its former owners, and forgive debts that could not be repaid. Reconciliation and righting relationships are also at the heart of the church's holy years, making the sacrament of reconciliation a key component of this year. In the papal bull announcing the year, Pope Francis called the sacrament of reconciliation "the essential starting-point of any true journey of conversion." During the Jubilee, in local churches "special care should be taken to prepare priests and the faithful to celebrate the sacrament of Confession and to make it readily available in its individual form," he said. Expect many dioceses to hold a period of round-the-clock confessions for the Lenten initiative 24 Hours for the Lord March 28-29, 2025.

## 2. Read the jubilee document.

Issued in May, "Spes Non Confundit" is the papal bull of indiction Pope Francis promulgated for the 2025 Jubilee Year. With the Holy Year's theme being "Pilgrims of

Hope," it includes a scriptural reflection on hope, as well as an explanation of the meaning of a jubilee year; ideas and encouragement for Christians living out the Holy Year; appeals for accompaniment, mercy and charity for various people in need; and some of the key events and anniversaries the Holy Year will observe.

Among Pope Francis' words of wisdom is a reflection on patience, which he calls "both the daughter of hope and at the same time its firm foundation," but which, he said, "has been put to flight by frenetic haste" in an age of "now." "Were we still able to contemplate creation with a sense of awe, we might better understand the importance of patience" which "could only prove beneficial for ourselves and for others," he wrote. "Patience, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, sustains our hope and strengthens it as a virtue and a way of life."

## 3. Make a pilgrimage.

In "Spes Non Confundit," Pope Francis counts among the Jubilee Year's "pilgrims of hope" those "who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches." "Pilgrimage is of course a fundamental element of every Jubilee event," he wrote. "Setting out on a journey is traditionally associated with our human quest for meaning in life. A pilgrimage on foot is a great aid for rediscovering the value of silence, effort and simplicity of life." While traditional pilgrimage routes to Rome and in Rome itself are expected to be well trod during the Holy Year, Catholics can also make pilgrimages to local holy sites, or even their own parishes, for prayer, confession or Mass. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also provides special formularies and readings for a Mass for the Holy Year approved by the Holy See.

Many U.S. dioceses have designated particular parishes or holy sites to serve as pilgrimage sites during the Holy Year. These sites provide the opportunity for pilgrims to receive the Jubilee Indulgence, a grace that remits the temporal punishments of sin. The plenary indulgence can also be received through pious visits to sacred places and through performing works of mercy. Details about the indulgence are outlined in a special decree Pope Francis issued May 13.

## 4. Visit your cathedral.

Unlike the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy 2015-2016, diocesan cathedrals will not designate Holy Doors to correspond with the traditional Holy Doors in Rome and at the Vatican. However, cathedrals are where diocesan bishops will officially open the Holy Year locally with Mass Dec. 29, the feast of the Holy Family. They will also be where bishops close local Holy Year celebrations Dec. 28, 2025. In the meantime, cathedrals are likely sites for diocesan Jubilee events. The Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for example, is planning seven pilgrimages to its Cathedral of St. Andrew over the course of the Holy Year for different groups, such as youth, parents and grandparents, and the Vietnamese and Hispanic communities.

## 5. Pray the Jubilee prayer.

Pope Francis has issued a special Jubilee prayer. At 139 words in English, the prayer is easily incorporated into the daily prayers of an individual or a family. Among its stanzas is the phrase, "May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven." It can be found by searching "Jubilee Prayer" at usccb.org.

## 6. Perform works of mercy.

In "Spes Non Confundit," Pope Francis asks Catholics

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YOU DREAM IT, WE BUILD IT



CNS photo/Lola Gomez

The dome of St. Peter's Basilica is seen over a cloth barricade reading "Rome Jubilee 2025" that surrounds a construction site at the beginning of the broad boulevard leading to St. Peter's Square Dec. 4, 2024. The city of Rome is preparing for the Holy Year with hundreds of roadworks and restoration projects.

"to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind." He specifically mentions prisoners, a group he has highlighted by designating a Jubilee Holy Door at Rome's Rebibbia Prison. He also mentions signs of hope are needed by the sick, the young, migrants, the elderly and grandparents, and the poor. The Holy Year should inspire Catholics to increase their exercise of the corporal works of mercy — feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned and burying the dead.

**7. Review the resources.**

The Vatican, the USCCB and many dioceses have online resources with information about the church's global and local celebrations of the Jubilee. They include information about the Jewish roots of jubilee years, their history in the Catholic Church, and how to spiritually prepare to receive the Jubilee Indulgence. The Vatican website ([iubilaeum2025.va](http://iubilaeum2025.va)) includes a video of a choir performing "Pilgrims of Hope," the Jubilee's official hymn. With text

written by Msgr. Pierangelo Sequeri, an Italian theologian and musicologist, the refrain focuses on the theme of hope: "Like a flame my hope is burning, may my song arise to you: Source of life that has no ending, on life's path I trust in you."

**8. Practice hope.**

In "Spes Non Confundit," Pope Francis underscores that the hope the Jubilee offers is for the universal church. "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not know-

ing what the future may bring," he wrote. Hope, he said, comes from Christ, and Christians deepen their hope through prayer, the sacraments and growing in virtue. "For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as 'our hope' (1 Tim 1:1)," he wrote.

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The Messenger file photos show the Knights of St. John setting up the live nativity scene

## The Knights of St. John keep alive the 30-year tradition of a live nativity

**Bella Young**

*Multimedia Correspondent*

Thirty years ago, the Knights of St. John answered the call of, the now late, Bishop William Hughes, who requested that a live nativity be constructed for the Diocese of Covington.

The Knights of St. John continue in answering that call today, with the live nativity opening Dec. 14 after the 4:30 p.m. Mass at St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood. The live nativity will be open until 7:30 p.m., at which point the volunteers and live animals will retire for the evening and be replaced by statues, ensuring that all are able to see a nativity scene. The animals and volunteers will return on Dec. 15, 20, 21,

22 and 23 from 6-8 p.m., giving people multiple opportunities to experience the live nativity scene.

Dave Schriever, a Knight of St. John and one of the volunteers who coordinates and sets up the live nativity, said that the ample opportunity is an important part of the work being done. "Wisemen still seek him," Mr. Schriever said, "it is the desire to make sure that, whether young or old, they know that Christ child born, and it is hope for all of us."

The nativity scene includes live animals and volunteers from the school and parish that help bring the scene to life. A structure itself was built in sections so it could be deconstructed at the end of the season and put back up at the

beginning of the next. It takes a group of volunteers from the Knights of St. John six hours to set it up. Mr. Schriever said this is one of his favorite parts of the process, "...the coming together of everyone to help set up the nativity," he said.

Set up on the St. Pius X campus next to the rectory, the live nativity is in a prominent spot and cannot be missed, said Mr. Schriever. The parking spots directly in front of the nativity have been blocked off to allow adequate viewing opportunity of the nativity scene. There is no need to register for the live nativity, it is a walk-up viewing attraction open to all.

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