



Special Section:
Vocations
page 9-17

- 2 **Bishop’s Thanksgiving card**
NDA student artist
- 2 **Archive for women religious**
Preserving Benedictine history
- 3 **Allhallowtide**
- 3 **NCYC**
Pope’s digital encounter
- 6 **Obituary**
Paul Martin Pitstick



**Daylight Savings Time
ends Nov. 2**

It’s getting to be time to Fall back. On Nov. 2 daylight savings time ends, remember to turn your clocks back an hour. Also, at this time, your local fire department encourages all to change the batteries in smoke detectors.

Bishop’s Schedule	3
Commentary	5
People and Events	7
Classifieds	18
Shopper’s Guide	20
VIRTUS	20
News Briefs	21



(above left) An agency provider gives some of the children in attendance a toy while their mother reviews the agency’s resources.
(above center) A new dad reviews some of the services provided by an agency.
(above right) A mother, whose baby is strapped to her back, picks out baby clothes.
(below left) A community baby shower volunteer provides a young family with diapers.
(below right) As part of the community baby shower, big ticket items are raffled off. This mother examines her raffle ticket excitedly after realizing she had won.



Bailey photos

Community Baby Shower provides more than resources, it provides dignity

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

In a collaborative effort with the Pregnancy Care Network, an agency collective dedicated to pregnancy care, the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office hosted the biannual Community Baby Shower, Oct. 23, at the Holy Spirit Parish Center, Newport. These community baby showers serve those who otherwise may not be able to access care items for their children.

Peggy Piccola, administrative assistant, Pro-Life Office, said, “The goal of the event is to provide needed items of expecting parents, young families, who might not otherwise have the capability or the resources to have these items for their children.”

Over 220 expectant mothers were in attendance, with 22 different agencies tabling the event with resources for the expectant mothers and young families.

“We want them to have the tools to help them be successful in parenting,” said Faye Roch, director of the Pro-Life Office. “The agencies help people anywhere from giving them assistance to getting a GED and job placements, to car seats and health safety.”

Once the mothers or families have signed into the event, they are gifted a care package with “nice lotions, shower gels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and items for the baby,” said Mrs. Piccola. “Some of these families don’t have the resources to have nice showers thrown for them where they can get these gifts, so we want to make everybody feel special,” she said.

To provide an abundance of baby items to ensure that everyone is provided for, parishes, schools, and organizations rallied to collect donations.

Mrs. Roch said that this community involvement is, “one of the most amazing things about the baby shower.”

“It is generously supported by our diocesan parishes, and without all the help from these parishes who donate just a massive amount of items — from diapers, wipes, baby clothing, strollers, wagons, pack and plays — we would not be able to be this generous,” she said. “Everybody has a little hand in it. It’s a Holy Spirit moment.”

The location of the community baby shower rotates from county to county, ensuring that everyone has equal access to pregnancy care services.

“At a previous shower, a mom made the comment that her baby didn’t have any new clothes,” said Mrs. Piccola, emphasizing the impact of the baby showers. “That would have been her child’s first new outfit.”

While the impact of these new outfits, diapers, and community services cannot be overstated, there is another, equally as important, piece to these community baby showers, said Mrs. Piccola. “I think the most important part is for these women to feel that they’re accepted and that people care, and to provide them with things for their baby, it’s just the dignity of it. I think it’s helpful for them to know that there are people out there that care about them.”

Notre Dame Academy student emphasizes works of mercy in Thanksgiving card artwork

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent
Greidy Deleon's watercolor depiction of Jesus washing the feet of the apostles has been selected as the artwork for Bishop John Iffert's annual Thanksgiving card, sent to over 7,000 people throughout the Diocese of Covington. Ms. Deleon is a student of Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, her artwork was selected from that of her peers to represent Bishop Iffert's message of thanksgiving.

The Office of Stewardship and Mission services invites one of the nine Diocesan high schools to submit student artwork on the theme of thanksgiving to go on the Thanksgiving card. The chosen high school will submit artwork for two years before a new school is selected. This being Notre Dame Academy's first year, they will invite students to submit artwork next year as well.

When Ms. Deleon heard about the open submissions from her art teacher, she did not have high hopes. "I didn't really think I had a chance," she said. When her art teacher, Hunter Fleury, told her that her artwork had been selected, "I was shocked because I didn't really think I was going to make it," she said.

Ms. Deleon's artwork depicts Jesus washing the feet of an unknown apostle, an idea inspired by the virtue of



Bailey photo



(left) Bishop John Iffert meets with Greidy Deleon, a student at Notre Dame Academy. Bishop Iffert chose Ms. Deleon's artwork for the cover of his 2025 Thanksgiving card.

(above) Ms. Deleon's artwork was created by sketching and drawing before adding watercolors. Her favorite part of the piece is Jesus' sleeve, "I feel like it blends out good and you can really see the wrinkles of his clothing," she said. The artwork will be featured on Bishop Iffert's Thanksgiving card, which will be sent to all who have donated to the DPAA.

Archive for women religious to preserve Benedictine archives, promote the witness of vocation

Maura Baker
Staff Writer
National conversation sparks among religious congregations: historical collections, stories and legacies hang in the balance as an increasing number of religious communities and congregations are coming to completion, as members age with no new novices to replace the population. As a result, some of these important archives would end up lost, or thrown out, according to Ursuline Sister Susan Durkin, asking the questions: "How do we preserve them properly? How do we make them available in a responsible way for research?"

These questions are sought to be answered by the Women Religious Archive Collective (WRAC) — which, spearheaded by the work of Sister Susan, broke ground on the campus of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland, in July of this year.

The \$24 million project will support the archives of 44 congregations across the United States and Canada, with capacity to host up to 75 — among these congregations is the Diocese of Covington's own Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery.

The Benedictines came to the Diocese of Covington in 1859 with three German sisters dedicated to teaching

(Continued on page 8)



A collection of medals and relics under the care of the Women Religious Archives Collaborative.

Photo courtesy of Women Religious Archives Collaborative

Allhallowtide triduum honors the Faithful Departed

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

When talking about the turning of fall and end of October, the holiday of Halloween often comes to mind. Carving pumpkins, ghost stories, bright costumes and candy are all associated with “All Hallow’s Eve” — just one of the three celebrations actually part of the Christian triduum known as “All Hallowtide.”

All Hallowtide is a season intended for both celebration and prayer, honoring all the faithful departed — both those in Heaven and in purgatory.

For many who grew up Catholic, having a day off school the day after Halloween was a welcome treat. November 1, the day following, is known as All Saints’ Day, or “All Hallow’s” — a solemnity in the Catholic Church. As All Saints’ Day falls on a Wednesday this year, it is a day of obligation.

The origin of All Saints’ Day comes from the 4th century, where early Christians would sporadically hold festivals and commemorations for all martyrs. Years later, during the 8th century, on Nov. 1, Pope Gregory III would dedicate an oratory in Old St. Peter’s Basilica to the relics of “all saints.” This date would eventually become the celebration of all saints and martyrs that we celebrate today, as well as a day of obligation throughout the Catholic

Church. However, in 2025, as the holiday falls on a Saturday — the day is not considered a day of obligation for this year.

Similarly, the third day of the All Hallowtide triduum occurs on Nov. 2, a day of prayer and remembrance known as “All Souls’ Day,” or “Day of the Dead,” in some cultures. Prior to the establishment of this official date, Catholics would celebrate All Souls’ Day on various dates during the Easter season. These celebrations were much similar to how they’re celebrated today, mostly by remembering and praying for the deceased, specifically for souls in purgatory, and visiting cemeteries.

The Nov. 2 date that All Souls’ is celebrated on today was established during the 10th century by St. Abbot Odilo of Cluny, who originally bid members of his community to pray for the relief of souls in purgatory. This date would soon be adopted throughout the Catholic Church and persists to this day.

The painting “All Souls’ Day” by realist French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau features two women visiting a grave on all Souls’ day.



Pope Leo to make historic ‘digital appearance’ at US Catholic youth conference

Local teen among contenders to dialogue with pope

Gina Christian
OSV News

Pope Leo XIV will have a “real-time digital encounter” with participants attending the National Catholic Youth Conference this fall.

The news was announced Aug. 15 by the annual conference’s host, the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. The Washington-based organization, launched in 1981 with the support of the U.S. bishops, fosters collaboration among the country’s Catholic youth ministry leaders.



The Diocese of Covington has nearly 400 teens registered to attend NCYC in Indianapolis in November. Nearly 300 of those teens gathered, Oct. 26, at Newport Central Catholic High School to prepare for the trip.

During the gathering, which will take place Nov. 20-22 in Indianapolis, the pope will address an expected crowd of 15,000 or so young people ages 14-18.

The digital appearance — scheduled for Nov. 21 at 10:15 a.m. (ET) amid the event’s general session — will feature a 45-minute dialogue with a pre-selected group of young people. Brayden Pope, a senior at Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills and member of the Diocese of Covington’s Youth Commission Evangelization Team (YCET), is a candidate. Mr. Pope participated in a group discussion helping NFCYM prepare for the dialogue. In early November he and the others will learn if they have

been selected to participate in the dialogue. Details of that selection process will be released at a later time, said organizers. EWTN will broadcast and livestream the exchange.

“This historic moment will mark a powerful opportunity for young people to witness the universal Church’s care and concern for their voices, experiences, and hopes,” said the NFCYM in its press release, noting that it had timed the announcement’s date with that of the Aug. 15 feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as part of “entrusting this event to the Blessed Mother.”

While it did not issue a formal announcement of the pope’s scheduled appearance, the Vatican press office distributed copies Aug. 15 of the national federation’s press

statement in English, Spanish and Italian, according to OSV News partner Catholic News Service Rome.

NFCYM executive director Christina Lamas said her organization was “humbled and thrilled to welcome the Holy Father” to the upcoming conference.

“His presence is a profound reminder that young people are at the heart of the Church and that their voices matter,” said Lamas.

“Even in a globalized world, the Church can seem far away for young people,” said Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia, episcopal adviser and board member of NFCYM. “The Holy Father’s choice to encounter the American youth in this way is an expression of his closeness to Catholic youth, following in the footsteps of his predecessor Pope Francis who called the youth the ‘now of God.’”

NFCYM described Pope Leo’s participation in the event as “inspirational,” adding that it will “build on the hope-filled encounters with millions of young people both online through the first-ever Digital Influencers Jubilee, and in person at the recent Jubilee for Youth in Rome.”

The Diocese of Covington Messenger contributed to this report.



Pope Leo XIV waves to the crowd from the popemobile as he departs after celebrating a Mass concluding the Jubilee of Youth in Rome’s Tor Vergata neighborhood Aug. 3, 2025.



Bishop’s Schedule

- | | |
|--|---|
| Nov. 1
Return from Jubilee Year Pilgrimage to Rome | Nov. 5
TEC Team meeting, 3:30 p.m. |
| Nov. 2
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 5:30 p.m. | Nov. 6
Curia staff Day of Reflection, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, 10 a.m. |
| Nov. 3
Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, 7 p.m. | Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m. |
| Nov. 4
The Center for Faith, Mission and Catholic Education team, Thomas More University, 11:30 a.m. | Sacrament of Confirmation, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, 7 p.m. |
| Cristo Rey Parish Council meeting, 3 p.m. | Nov. 8-14
USCCB General Assembly, Baltimore |
| Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Therese Parish, Southgate, 7 p.m. | |



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VOL. 95

MESSENGER

No. 37

Official newspaper of the Diocese of Covington

Cathedral Square • 1125 Madison Ave. • Covington, Ky. 41011-3115

Telephone: (859) 392-1500 E-mail: messenger@covdio.org

www.covdio.org

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

Advertising deadline: Wednesday noon, 9 days prior to publication date.

Editorial deadline: Friday noon, 7 days prior to date.

Subscriptions, address changes: Contact Circulation Dept. at above address.

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Reflecting on death

The readings for the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls) — Cycle C — are: Wisdom 3:1–9, Romans 5:5–11 and John 6:37–40.

St. Benedict instructs, “keep death before your eyes always.” On the annual priests’ retreat a few years ago, the Retreat Master asked a very poignant question: “Do you pray for your death?” I’m going to make an assumption that most of us tend to avoid thinking about death, especially our own. It is not a particularly joyful subject to the modern mind. What is it that we are so afraid of? The unknown? Are we focused on what is lost or on what is gained?



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

Jesus makes a promise to his disciples — to us! And Jesus always keeps his promises: “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.” (John 14: 2-3)

When I was in my early 30s, I decided to purchase the casket for my funeral. I did this for the practical reasons: I knew what I wanted and didn’t want to leave the decision to anyone else — and, in the hope that I would live a long life, it would be cheaper versus when I’m in my 80s or 90s (or so I assume). I’ve also chosen the prayers and readings and music that I want at my funeral. In a way, this is keeping death before my eyes ... kind of.

The Retreat Master, however, was not encouraging us to do the practical planning, as good as that is. He was encouraging us to pray and talk to God about the type of death we would have.

What will it look like? What will be my attitude? Will it be a holy death? Will it be filled with grace? Will I accept it as a gift? Will I die as a witness to the faith? Will my death be a model for others? Am I willing to say: “Thy will be done.” Will I be angry if it doesn’t happen the way I want? How do I approach the reality of dying?

Remember, if you want to go to heaven, you have to die! It’s the only way. Oh, and you can’t escape it!

In this month of November as we pray in a special way for the faithful departed, that they may rest in the eternal peace and joy of God, let us also reflect on our own death, making it part of our daily prayer. In this way, we will be prepared for death whenever it comes. We are never guaranteed our next breath.

For the one who knows the Lord, there is nothing to be afraid of — death is just the journey into the fullness of life and love — God, surrounded by the angels and saints awaits us! Therefore, let us always be prepared to meet the Lord!

Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell and director, Office of Worship and Liturgy for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

VIEWPOINT



Laura Hatfield

As we are moving through this school year, I want to take a moment to reassure our families, especially those connected to Medicaid, TANF or SNAP, that we are here for you. Please don’t worry. If your child is eligible for free meals through these programs, we will continue to honor those benefits. No child will ever be left without a meal at our table.

Our lunch program has

Christ does not often reveal himself to us in lightning flashes or extraordinary circumstances. Instead, he leaves us free to pray, reflect and follow God’s will through our daily responsibilities. That’s hard to accept.



Sister Nancy Usselmann

When I discerned my vocation, I wanted clear direction from the Lord. I wanted absolute certainty, but I soon discovered discernment is all about surrender.

As a young woman, I was anxious to know the Lord’s will for my life. I wanted to choose the path he marked out for me; I just didn’t know how to hear his call. I prayed but I didn’t experience a major conversion or inspiration. For me, the call was a slow, steady movement to recognize the “still small voice” that Elijah experienced on the mountain as he waited for the Lord (1 Kgs 19:12). There were no absolute certainties, only a prayer of surrender.

I was a media and technology lover planning a career path in computer science. Even though I knew about many different orders of religious sisters, the consecrated life was far from my mind. That is, until I met the Daughters of St. Paul.

The first time I visited the sisters at their Pauline Books and Media center in St. Louis, they brought me into the chapel. It was a simply decorated sacred space with the tabernacle in the center and statues of Mary and St. Paul on either side.

I was struck by the words near the tabernacle: “Do not be afraid; I am with you. From here I want to enlighten. Be sorry for sins.” Those words reassured me, even though I didn’t understand the deeper meaning behind them. A vocational choice is frightening because, like any choice, you must leave behind the thousand other possibilities and put your whole self behind one decision without absolute certainty.

I later came to find out that those words were spoken by Jesus to Blessed James Alberione, the founder of the Pauline family. A priest of Northern Italy, Father Alberione began a new charism in the Church in 1914 by founding a congregation of Pauline priests and brothers and then an order of religious sisters, the Daughters of St. Paul, who would use media technologies to communi-

The table of grace

always been about more than just food. It’s about care, dignity and community. Each tray we serve is a reminder that God provides for us in so many ways, sometimes through a warm meal, a friendly smile or a helping hand.

We also have something very special called our Angel Account. This fund was created through the generosity of families who donated remaining balances to help others. We understand that some families may be affected by the shutdown or other hardships, please don’t hesitate to reach out. We’re here for you. That’s what community and grace are all about.

Laura Hatfield is the director of school Food Service for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

No absolute certainty

cate the Gospel to the world. He later founded seven other religious institutes and a lay association. Long before most people in the Church, Alberione saw communication technologies as “gifts of God.” He was a true media apostle, who paved the way for the Church to be an evangelizing presence in the media culture. That is something I could understand and relate to.

Only nine years after he began his new religious family, Father Alberione contracted a serious illness. He was just beginning his mission and did not want to leave his fledgling congregations and media apostolate at such a crucial time of development. He realized that there are no absolute certainties. He surrendered to the Lord and prepared himself for death.

In a dream, Jesus appeared to Father Alberione and uttered the words, “Do not be afraid; I am with you.” Then, from the tabernacle, Jesus continued, “From here I want to enlighten. Be sorry for sins.” At that moment, Alberione was completely cured of his illness. The experience so convinced him that the Lord willed the Pauline family and its mission into existence that he had those words placed in every Pauline chapel around the world. His surrender to Christ became a Pauline legacy.

Nearly 70 years later, I found those words challenging me to abandon my quest for absolute certainty in my vocational journey and surrender to the Lord. I tried to avoid the call, but a recurring thought that religious life was the way I would find the greatest peace and happiness persisted. I felt the desire to use my love of media to proclaim Christ as a consecrated religious.

There is no absolute certainty in discerning a vocational call. If we have certainty, we wouldn’t keep pursuing the mystery of God present in the silence and stillness. That is where the will of God is found. Yes, Christ calls us in significant moments such as a vocational choice. But most of life is made up of small things, the seemingly insignificant everyday experiences, encounters and situations.

The spiritual author Father Jacques Philippe writes that even if we seek Christ’s will for us with all sincerity, we will not often receive a clear answer. God treats us as adults, and he wants us to make our decisions in freedom and trust. Wanting only absolute certainties implies pride. Seeking God’s will is a struggle. It keeps us humble, always surrendering to God. Jesus assures us just as he assured Father Alberione, “Do not be afraid. I am with you. From here I want to enlighten. Be sorry for sins.”

Sister Nancy Usselmann, a Daughter of St. Paul, is director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles and a media literacy education specialist.

Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington

Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confi-

dentiality and with respect.

A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1510 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diocesis de Covington

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordindora diocesana para dar asisten-

cia a las víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

Una copia de “Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada” está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

Father of Father Martin Pitstick remembered as a humble man of faith

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

Paul Martin Pitstick, father of Father Martin Pitstick, pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, and St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, passed away Oct. 14, at the age of 102.



Paul Martin Pitstick

Mr. Pitstick was a humble man, devoted to his faith, who served in World War II as a bombsite technician before becoming a successful pork farmer. Returning home from the war, Mr. Pitstick married Mary F. Smith, together the two had seven children.

Father Pitstick remembers his father as, “a humble man, a hard worker, a man of faith,” he said. In a work entitled, “Hands of Hope,” Mr. Pitstick wrote of his devotion to Christ.

“Ultimately my hope rests not in the work of my own hands, but in the hands of Jesus. Jesus has been with me every day of my life,” wrote Mr. Pitstick.

Father Pitstick recalled a story of his late father. “I remember we were driving back to the farm after Mass, and I was telling dad how I felt happy. And he said, ‘that’s because you’ve been to Mass, you’re with Jesus.’ It’s one of

my early memories,” he said.

His father’s devotion to the Lord only grew after his deployment in Italy during the second World War, where he met St. Padre Pio, many times. “I felt closer to God when I was with Padre Pio,” wrote Mr. Pitstick.

Having met him a total of four times, Mr. Pitstick had the opportunity to kneel before St. Padre Pio as he celebrated Mass, even being able to kiss the stigmata on St. Padre Pio’s hands. “He gives me hope that my hands can do God’s work. Even through a simple Midwestern farmer, husband, father and son, God can bring hope into the world,” wrote Mr. Pitstick.

Mr. Pitstick practiced his faith often, attending daily Mass, leading home Bible studies and taking Communion to the homebound. He was also a member of many religious groups such as the Knights of Columbus, the Legion of Mary and the Incarnate Word Community.



Scan the QR code to hear Mr. Pitstick recall his encounters with St. Padre Pio.

‘A gift from God’: Parishes encouraged to start Liturgy of Hours

Katie Yoder
OSV News

Father Matthew S. Ernest still remembers when he oversaw evening prayer celebrated by Pope Francis at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City in 2015.

“It was a beautiful event, and we were very grateful to welcome the Holy Father,” Father Ernest, director of the Office of Liturgy for the Archdiocese of New York, said of the liturgy, which is part of an ancient prayer called the Liturgy of the Hours.

Ahead of a new English edition of the Liturgy of the Hours for the Latin Church, Father Ernest and other liturgical experts are encouraging parishes and other Catholic communities to embrace this prayer, which is said at different points throughout the day. They spoke with OSV News and shared practical tips for parishes to introduce the Liturgy of the Hours to their congregations. In particular, they advised communities to start small and integrate the prayer into their already established schedules.

Their comments came after they addressed the national meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, an organization established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops dedicated to liturgical formation, held Sept. 30-Oct. 2 in Baltimore.

The Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office, is the daily prayer of the church and sanctifies the day with prayer. This liturgical prayer also takes different set forms within the Latin and 23 Eastern Catholic churches that together make the Catholic Church, and each form has prayers that vary in accordance with each particular church’s calendar.

The standard Liturgy of the Hours in the Roman Rite of the Latin Church is divided into five “hours” or parts prayed at different times each day: the office of readings; morning prayer or lauds; daytime prayer; evening prayer or vespers; and night prayer or compline. These five parts, which draw from Scripture, particularly the Psalms, usually take less than 20 minutes to pray.

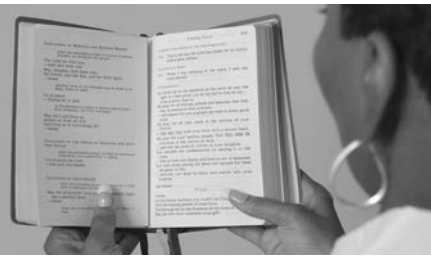
“It acknowledges that every hour that we have is a gift,” Carolyn Pirtle, program director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy in the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, said of the Liturgy of the Hours. “It’s a gift from God, and it’s a gift that’s meant to be offered in praise and thanksgiving back to God.”

Many of these experts emphasized that, while priests and other religious are required to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the laity are encouraged to pray it too, particularly the two principal hours of morning and evening prayer.

“The Liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole People of God,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church confirms before citing “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. “The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually.”

Pope St. Paul VI also expressed the wish that the Liturgy of the Hours, after its revision following Vatican II, would become “the prayer of the whole people of God,” and also recommended that it be prayed in parishes and by individuals at home in union with the church throughout the world.

Father Ernest added that Christ’s command to “pray always” is given to all Christians. He called the Liturgy of the Hours an opportunity for parishes to embrace that call.



OSV News/illustration Bob Roller

A woman is seen in an illustration praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

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

Festivals, prayer services, etc. Parishes, schools and Catholic organizations of the Diocese of Covington can now have their event featured on the Diocesan online calendar. Submit your event at <https://covdio.org/calendar/>.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, needs volunteer tutors for its Education Center’s Homework Plus Program (Grades K-8). Contact Brandi at (859) 630-9475 or blenihan@nduec.org.

The weeks of Advent are filled with Oracles from the Prophet Isaiah. Spend some time reading passages from his book and discover why Isaiah is the Old Testament prophet the Church turns to most often in this special time of preparation for Christmas. Oracles of Isaiah workshops with Father Timothy Schehr, Nov. 1 – Session 1 and Nov. 15 – Session 2, 10–11:30 a.m., Diocese of Covington, Curia Office, Covington. Cost \$35 cash or checks at the door. Visit covdio.org/bible-workshops.

An informative workshop on updates and resources on the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children (OCIA/OCIC) will be presented by Dr. William Keimig, deputy director, Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University, Nov. 8, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m., TMU’s Ziegler Auditorium, Academic Center. Register for the FREE Workshop by Oct. 29, at covdio.org/register/. Questions? Contact Isaak Abraham Isaak: iisaak@covdio.org or (859) 392-1529.

Newport Central Catholic High School will host “A Thoroughbred Affair” Winners’ Circle on Nov. 8, on the school campus. The evening features dinner, cocktails, silent auctions and raffles. Cost \$100. Reservations online by Oct. 22: <https://nccwinners2025.givesmart.com/>.

Candlelight Mass, Nov. 7, 7 p.m., St. Catharine of Siena Church, Cincinnati, hosted by the Angelico Project. Confessions start at 6 p.m. The First Friday experience will be extended with Angelico Pub Night. Stay for an evening of music, performances, talks, and fellowship over food and drink featuring Emma Fradd — Australian Catholic musician — sharing an intimate acoustic set of original songs that fuse alternative rock with stories of faith.

The Kenton County Veterans Memorial annual Veterans Day Memorial Service for the country, military and first responders is Nov. 9, 2–2:45 p.m., Lou Hartfiel Memorial Park, Villa Hills. Children and young adults including Scouts, athletes, etc. especially encouraged to participate in the patriotic and prayerful memorial service. Uniforms welcomed, yet optional.

Northern Kentucky Youth Choir (NKYYC), a regional choir serving people ages 7 (6 reading) to 17, welcomes new singers and families throughout the year. Programs: Nov. 11 (Holly Jolly Carolling at Behringer-Crawford Museum); and the Vatican initiated Pueri Cantores (“children sing”) Festival, Feb. 28 (all day). Autumn weekly rehearsals: Behringer-Crawford Museum. For information e-mail: nkyYouthChoir@gmail.com; text/msg/call: Rebecca Wells (859) 240-3738; Facebook: Northern Kentucky Youth Choir; website: nkyYouthChoir.org.

After Jesus, St. Peter is the most developed character in the New Testament. He is also, perhaps, the most human and most flawed, and the most courageous and remarkable of Jesus’ disciples. Peter’s story extends into the Acts of the Apostles, as we see him leading the early Jerusalem community, becoming the figure later known as the First Pope. **Join Father Michael Comer on a four-week series of talks on St. Peter,** Thursdays, 10 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., Mother of God Church, Covington. Dates are Nov. 13, 20, Dec. 4 and 11.

In celebrating 10 years as an institute promoting civil dialogue surrounding religious freedom, **the Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III ‘67 Institute for Religious Liberty at Thomas More University presents “Where are we now, 10 years later?”** The current state of religious liberty domestically and abroad,” Nov. 19, 7–9 p.m., Ziegler

Auditorium, TMU, Crestview Hills, featuring keynote speaker, Rabbi David Saperstein, and guest speaker, Msgr. William Cleves. Free and open to the public.

Women’s One-Day Retreat “Beloved by the Father, Rooted in the Son, Renewed by the Spirit,” Nov. 22, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Memorial Hall, St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring. \$25 registration fee includes continental breakfast, box lunch and retreat materials. Register by Nov. 16 at <https://stjosephcold-spring.com/church/view-only/adult-faith-formation-fall-retreats/> Questions? Contact Vicki Klocke at vklocke@stjoeparish.net or (859) 927-2291.

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization is offering workshops on Books of the Old Testament, presented by Father Timothy Schehr, retired biblical scholar and former professor at Mount St. Mary’s School of Theology at the Athenaeum of Ohio. Workshops are all held Saturday morning, 10–11:30 a.m., Diocese of Covington, Curia Office. 2025 Workshops – Isaiah: Nov. 1 – Session 1 and Nov. 15 – Session 2. Cost \$35 per session, cash or checks at the door. Register at covdio.org/bible-workshops.

An informative workshop on updates and resources on the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children (OCIA/OCIC) will be presented by Dr. William Keimig, deputy director, Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University, Nov. 8, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Thomas More University’s Ziegler Auditorium, Academic Center. Register by Oct. 29, at covdio.org/register/. Questions? Contact Isaak A. Isaak at iisaak@covdio.org or (859) 392-1529.

The National Catholic Youth Conference is a pilgrimage for Catholic high school students, Nov. 20-22, in Indianapolis. Teens spend three days at the nation’s largest Catholic youth gathering and experience the transformative power of the Church and God’s presence through music, talks, community and sacraments. The Youth Ministry Office coordinates the overall pilgrimage (conference ticket, transportation, housing and food). Parishes and schools register as a group. For individuals not identified with a group, contact Angie Poat, apoat@covdio.org. Bus space is limited.

The Diocese of Covington is coordinating a pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2027 in Seoul, South Korea, for young adults ages 18 to 35. Bishop John Iffert hopes to join the pilgrims along with a few priests and deacons from the diocese. The estimated cost is \$5,500.00 per person and includes round-trip airfare, transportation, lodging, meals (from WYD) and tours. To reserve your spot, the initial payment of \$350 is due Dec. 31, 2025. The full amount must be paid by March 15, 2027. If you are interested in attending, leading a group, or making donations to help the young adults of our diocese attend, contact Isaak Abraham Isaak at (859) 392-1529 or e-mail iisaak@covdio.org.

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 Holy Face of Jesus devotion, every Tuesday 6 p.m., St. Cecilia Church, Independence, with Benediction 7 p.m., for reparation of sins against the first three commandments: denial of God, blasphemy and the profanation of Sundays and Holy Days; includes praying the Litany of the Holy Face of Jesus, the Holy Face Chaplet, prayers of petition and silent devotion, all during Exposition.



During the month of the Rosary, the St. Paul School, Florence, students said a decade of the rosary for morning prayer. At the end of October, students and staff came together as a school for a living rosary led by the students.

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.

Zoom Support Group for family, relatives and friends of victims of clergy sexual abuse, second Monday of the month, 6:30–8 p.m. CST; 7:30–9 p.m. EST. Most often family members, relatives and friends do not have anyone to talk with about their loved one’s abuse. They are considered secondary victims of abuse. These meetings are confidential and no one is forced to contribute unless they want to. The support group is not there to give answers but to share experiences. Participants are free to bring a friend if that makes them feel more comfortable. Everyone is welcome to attend no matter geographical location. For information contact Paula Kaempffer, coordinator of Restorative Practices and Survivor Support, for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, at kaempfferp@archspm.org or call (763) 688-3978.

Are you interested in helping men and women change their lives? Catholic Charities **Jail Ministry Program is looking for people willing to volunteer to minister one of the county detention centers** (Boone, Kenton, Cambell and Mason Co). We are especially in need of Spanish-speaking volunteers in Boone County detention center. All training is provided. For information go to www.covingtoncharities.org/volunteer or contact Jill Walsh at (859) 581-8974 jwalch@covingtoncharities.org.

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

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.

Archive for women religious to preserve Benedictine archives

(Continued from page 2)

Photo courtesy of Women Religious Archives Collaborative

the German children of St. Joseph Parish. For more than 160 years, the Benedictine Sisters have been ingrained in the culture of the Northern Kentucky area, with their missions contributing to education, and care for the sick, poor and elderly. They founded Villa Madonna College (which has become Thomas More University), Villa Madonna Academy and Madonna Manor. These contributions and their histories are just part of the important stories that will be held in the collaborative archives.

The property for the project was purchased from Cleveland’s Sisters of Charity, who have served the city of Cleveland since 1865. “We wanted to be in a space where sisters have historically served,” explained Sister Susan, who additionally said that the WRAC also wanted the building to be “close to a freeway and accessible from an airport. We wanted to be within a nexus of institutions.”

This concept is realized due to the location being within a 20-mile radius of seven colleges and institutions, which ties into the space’s secondary mission to be an “investment to the community.”

“It’s really about preserving the history of the Catholic sisters and making it accessible in a variety of ways,” said Sister Susan. “It’s about inspiring people to know that the issues and problems that they may meet in their time are something that Catholic sisters have repeatedly overcome time and time again ... Our center is going to be able to



An aerial view of the campus of St. Vincent medical center, Cleveland, shows active construction for the Woman Religious Archives Collaborative Heritage Center, for which ground was broken in July.

inspire and give real time example to the Gospel call of passion.”

Besides housing archives and records for the various congregations the archive is partnering with, the space will also include permanent and temporary exhibits and meeting spaces — with hopes to house students and researchers alike. “There’s going to be all kinds of possibilities for us once the building opens,” Sister Susan said.

The archives are currently projected to be opened in the fall of 2027, and the successful campaign has so far raised over \$20 million of the \$24 million goal.

The most important aspect of the project is the “witness value that a center like this will bring,” said Sister Susan, “with having this many collections in the various charisms, this really is a promotion of the witness to mission and faith-driven service — the importance of a vocation.”

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

With the Laying on of Hands, Bishop John Iffert confers the office of the priesthood onto Father Joshua Heskamp, ordained June 2025.



VOCATIONS 2025

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MESSENGER
NOVEMBER 2025

“I ask that you continue to pray for our seminarians, and that God bless them and lead them according to his will as they continue their education and formation to the priesthood.”

Bishop John Iffert

VOCATIONS

From buzzword to bedrock: Forming disciples through true discernment

Father Conor Kunath
Contributor

There are many occasions for joy in seminary, there are also many occasions for frustration and irritation. I remember one of the biggest irritations for me personally throughout my entire time in seminary was the use of buzzwords. There would be some hot new fad or trend in the Church or in formation work, and we would have to hear people use the new buzzwords for a year or more. Every formation conference, meeting, or whatever else, would be loaded up with buzzwords to signal that we had all bought into the latest craze in the Church. Invariably, the craze would burn out in time for a new craze and shiny new buzzwords to come the next formation year. I imagine every field has buzzwords that get thrown around; words like “synergy” or “leverage” or whatever the new new thing is.

Truthfully, my problem is not necessarily with the words themselves, it’s the fact that most people who use them don’t even know what they mean. Even more than that, for all the energy or excitement about whatever the new thing is, nothing changes. We’ll talk about it until the next fad comes out and then jump on the new bandwagon and leave whatever we were doing for the new thing. It frustrates me.

A word that is becoming increasingly popular in Church circles is “discernment”, and as a Vocations Director I am deeply afraid that it will be relegated to the status of “buzzword”: a word people use to signal that they are in the know about the new fad. I would like, if possible, to stop that from happening because an authentic sense of discernment and how it works really is critical for all dis-



Father Conor Kunath

cipleship. Discernment in the Church is the process by which we make a decision. When a disciple comes to a point in life where the paths diverge and he has to choose between two apparent good choices, he begins a process of discernment. That process of discernment will eventually reveal to him the path that God is calling him to follow and he will be able to freely choose that path.

But before a disciple can embark on any true discernment of God’s will, there has to be an understanding of what discipleship looks like. True discipleship is not living the life I want to live and giving God some time on the weekend or at the end of the day. True discipleship begins with the understanding that God’s will is the foundational guiding principle of my life, and that everything I do has to be oriented towards the salvation of my soul.

Every decision I make is weighed on the balance of salvation. The good that I seek in making a decision is not a human, earthly good, rather it is the salvation of my soul. For example, if a soul is discerning between two job opportunities, the consideration is not about salary, but about how this job will affect salvation.

As a consequence, Ignatius of Loyola, the great master of discernment, tells us that we have to be like a scale at balance when discerning. This means that as we weigh the individual paths we could take, there must be nothing that is unduly influencing us to go in one direction or the other, and our only real consideration is God’s will and the salvation of our soul.

For example, if a soul is deciding which college to attend, being a party school or where our friends are going cannot be allowed to influence our decision. Rather, there

has to be a balance so that no option is preferred for the wrong reasons.

If we want to achieve these dispositions, we must be aware of what is holding us back. In one way or another, every inclination that goes contrary to the will of God can be traced back to some effect from, or attachment to, sin. Sin and attachment to sin are nearly always the obstacles that obstruct proper discernment.

Knowing this, it becomes clear that purifying ourselves of sin must be our highest priority. If we truly want to correctly discern God’s will and then have the courage to do it, then we must regularly use the sacrament of reconciliation, we must pray every day, and we must endeavor to free ourselves from worldly attachments. Once we have achieved this critical balance, we can begin to discern and to freely use the simple method of discernment that St. Ignatius taught.

The Ignatian method of discernment involves three actions that are taken in order. Those actions are to be aware, to understand, and to decide.

To be aware is to have a practiced sense of awareness about the spiritual movements of one’s life. Spiritual movements, more or less, take two forms: consolations and desolations.

Consolations are moments or experiences that set one’s heart on fire with love of God and brings one closer to God. Desolations are the exact opposite. These are moments where the love of God feels extinguished, and it feels like a chasm has opened between one’s soul and the Lord. Awareness of these movements helps one to later paint the picture about what God is calling one to do.

After we become aware of these movements, we then have to try to understand them. The question that we are asking when we seek understanding is: “Does this movement come from the good spirit or the evil spirit?” To

(Continued on page 11)

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as a grace-filled sign of the necessary relationship of the Eucharistic table and serving the many hungers felt so keenly by all God’s children.



VOCATIONS

(Continued from page 10)

answer this question, we need a little more background information.

In the spiritual life there are two directions: bad to worse and good to better. People moving from bad to worse are people who go from mortal sin to mortal sin, have broadly given up on prayer and the practice of the faith, and are moving further and further away from God. This might seem like a narrow group of people, but in reality it can include people who are not yet deep into mortal sin, but have started moving in that direction. Perhaps their spiritual life consists of minimal and irregular prayer, inconsistent use of the sacraments, and a lack of effort to build virtue or fend off vice.

On the other hand, people moving from good to better are those who are moving away from mortal sin. Although they might not yet be free of it, they have a consistent daily practice of prayer even if it is a small practice, they use the sacraments frequently, and they are trying to radically purify their lives of sin. This group can be anybody that has begun the process of truly being a disciple, even if they just started yesterday.

Understanding the general direction of one’s life is critical to understanding the movements of the good and evil spirits because, depending on the direction of one’s life, the spirits act differently. It might seem obvious, but it is important to keep in mind that the good and evil spirits are always moving contrary to each other. This makes sense because the good and evil spirits want two entirely different things. The good spirit is working for your salvation, and the evil spirit is working for your damnation. So, it is utterly natural that they would work against each other.

When a soul is moving from bad to worse, the evil spirit wants nothing more than for the soul to move even further in that direction. In this situation the evil spirit will

encourage the soul in every kind of sin and wrongdoing. He will offer all sorts of new opportunities for the soul to distance itself from God. Perhaps through a sinful relationship, or going deeper into sinful activities, or encouraging whatever other activity might take the soul from God.

The good spirit, on the other hand, will use exactly the opposite means. He will discourage wrongdoing, sting the conscience with guilt, and hinder the soul from moving further away from God.

If the situation is reversed and the soul is moving good to better and towards God, then it will be the good spirit encouraging the soul and the evil spirit discouraging the soul. The good spirit will offer plentiful consolations and help, and will open doors so that the soul can move closer and closer to God. The evil spirit, on the other hand, will use every means available to him to prevent the soul from moving towards God. Typically, this means new difficulties or troubles in relationships whether it is a marriage, a friendship, or a work relationship.

Prayer will sometimes become dry or difficult, temptations will be strong, and the soul might experience shame or worthlessness due to previous sins, among other things. The evil spirit uses all of these things to stop the soul from moving towards God and to begin retreating back into a life of sin.

These distinctions are critical because it is a major error to think that every encouraging thought is definitely from the good spirit and that every discouraging thought is from the evil spirit. The spirits work on us in different ways depending on the direction of our lives. Understanding our present spiritual experiences requires that we have a sense about the general direction of our life. With all of that context in mind we can come to some kind of understanding about where these spiritual movements

are coming from.

Once we have arrived at an understanding about where the spiritual movements of our life are coming from then we can make a sound decision. If we understand that the good spirit is the cause of these movements then we choose in the direction that it points to. If we understand that the evil spirit is behind these movements then we choose against it.

To give an easy example: you’re standing in line for confession, and suddenly you feel a deep sense of dread about having to confess your sins. Maybe it is because you haven’t been in a long time or maybe you’re deeply ashamed about some of your sins and you don’t want to have to speak about them to the priest. You experience this moment as a deep desolation filled with discouragement and darkness. Your awareness presents the moment to you such as it is. Then you seek to understand it, is my fear of confession from the good or evil spirit? It becomes plainly obvious that it is from the evil spirit discouraging you from taking the path that God has called you to in the sacrament of confession. You then choose to go to confession and receive a deep sense of consolation because you did as God called you to do.

Hopefully it is now obvious why discernment, properly understood and practiced, is so important. If we as disciples don’t discern properly and really strive to live as God calls us, then no real progress is ever going to be made in the Church. We will be stuck, because, just as often as we make progress, bad discernment will take us back to where we started, or even further. So, as we celebrate this National Vocation Awareness week, let’s take a moment to really strive to be aware, to understand, to decide and to really, truly discern.

Father Conor Kunath is Vocations Promoter for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Called to be love

Notre Dame Sister Marla Monahan
Contributor

I used to think there were three major categories of vocation: a person could be a priest or sister, get married or stay single. I may still think that (and now deacons could be another category).



Sister Marla Monahan, SND

I also think there is really one vocation each of us is called to: to be who we are, the person of love God made us to be. We are made in God’s image, and God is love, so we are called to be love.

Frederick Buechner, author and protestant theologian, defines vocation: Where our passion meets the world’s need. He is reminding us that

each of us is unique and gifted and we are called to live our life for the sake of the world.

To know our vocation, it is critical that we learn to listen deeply, to God, and to ourselves. We will come to know in a very real way our God who is love. And God will show us the way, day by day, to be the person of love we were created to be.

The following reflection, attributed to Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ but thought to be by Father Joseph Whelan, SJ, captures the meaning of vocation:

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than Falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know,

what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love,

and it will decide everything.”
Sister Marla Monahan, SND, is the Vicar for Religious for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.



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Did I ever tell you that the priesthood is hard?

Michael Schulte
Contributor

“Did I ever tell you that the priesthood is hard?” This is a quote from Father Cassian, who candidly asked this to our formation class at St. Vincent Seminary.



Michael Schulte

We hear many things every day in seminary, but this question has really stuck with me. I think it has stuck with me for two reasons: first, because it is true. The priesthood is a demanding vocation. After all, at a man’s ordination, the Bishop tells him, “Conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.” The second reason this question has stuck with me is that I believe Father Cassian lives out what he preaches.

When I imagine the life of a good priest, I see him before the Blessed Sacrament, his heart in agony out of love for God and his people, offering sacrifice for the people of God. This is inspiring to me. This is what a priest does — like Jesus, he pours himself out as a libation in sacrifice to the Father for all the faithful.

Growing up, I never thought about the priesthood. Not a single time. This is not because I was against it; the thought simply never crossed my mind. I always thought I would get married, have kids and be a plumber. I did not feel the calling until I was about 20 years old.

I’ll be honest, I wasn’t happy about the call at first. The Lord encountered my heart in a loving yet convicting way during prayer, calling me to discern the priesthood. I knew that God had my best interests in mind, but I was struggling to lay down my will. I knew that the priesthood is hard. But the thought did not go away; it just kept on bothering me.

It was not until I met a really good priest, Father Ryan Boyle (an Air Force chaplain), that I began to feel a sense of peace. He is a good, joyful witness to what a priest is. After getting to know him for about a year, he asked me if I had ever thought about going into the seminary. I replied in the affirmative, but it was still difficult for me. He reassured me that doing a year in seminary, then finding out that I am not called, is totally normal. But we must try to find out God’s calling in our lives.

I am now in my sixth year of seminary, and I am thrilled to have just received the ministry of Acolyte, which is one of the last major steps before ordination. I was so happy the day of the Acolyte installation that I felt a childlike sense of amazement: Wow! God is really calling me!

A man thinking about the priesthood and going into seminary should not build his foundation on sand. He must build it on rock. He must understand that if he is called to the priesthood, the Lord and his Church will repeatedly ask him to lay down his life in self-sacrificial love. This means that he must take up his cross daily and follow Jesus. But it is a life of abiding joy. I am most looking forward to my new relationship with God as a priest.

If you know a young man who could be a candidate for discerning the priesthood, please do not build his foundation on sand. The priesthood is hard, and it is not for everyone. But it is a life of sacrificial love for the Lord and for others. Sacrificial love is the only way to find true happiness and peace in God.

Michael Schulte is a seminarian for the Diocese of Covington, Ky. Mr. Schulte is currently in the Configuration Stage of seminary — the final stage before ordination to the transitional diaconate.

Religion teacher teaches vocations with in-person encounters

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Jarrold Lux, a junior high religion teacher at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, has his own way of teaching and promoting vocations among his students. A teacher of over 20 years, mostly for students in high school and college, Mr. Lux has spent the summers among the military — testing new recruits and helping them to prepare.

“My thinking was,” Mr. Lux described, “How can I take what I’ve learned from these two experiences and apply it to being a religion teacher in particular?”


When it comes to vocations specifically, Mr. Lux found that there was something missing outside regular teaching and testing. “We don’t recruit for vocations the way we recruit for the military,” noted Mr. Lux, “We don’t invite the Dominicans and the Franciscans and the Passionists to set up tables in the cafeteria and hand out business cards ... what I came down to was that this missing piece is the encounter.”

Which led to Mr. Lux’s idea to teach and share the importance of vocations — inviting religious to speak directly to his students at St. Agnes.

After speaking to school administration, it was arranged for women religious to join the school community after their junior high Masses — speaking to all the students for ten minutes, then remaining an hour visiting different classrooms to give students time to interact on a personal level and ask questions — a system that, according to Mr. Lux, the students have “greatly enjoyed.”

So far, two sisters have visited St. Agnes already — Notre Dame Sister Marla Monahan, who is Vicar for

(Continued on page 13)



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(Continued from page 12)

Religious for the Diocese of Covington, and St. Joseph the Worker Sister Philomena Marie, a novice to the order of St. Joseph the Worker, Walton. Mr. Lux particularly thanked Sister Marla, who had been “helping to arrange for all the sisters to come and talk.”

On Sister Philomena’s visit to the school, she brought rosaries to share with the students. She shared her story to the novitiate, including her background in pharmaceuticals — something that struck Mr. Lux in particular.

“Her story spoke especially to the students,” he said. “For getting them to have the understanding that she’s not just dedicating herself to religion, but she’s also using science to help with her vocation.”

St. Joseph the Worker Sister Philomena Marie speaks to children in a classroom at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright.

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National Vocation Awareness Week will be celebrated in our country Nov. 2–8. Please ask Our Lord for more dedicated, holy priests, deacons, and consecrated men and women. May they be inspired by Jesus Christ, supported by our faith community, and respond generously to God’s gift of vocation.

VOCATIONS

Lilly Endowment Inc. awards \$1 million to St. Vincent College and Seminary for new degree, certificate programs in mental health and pastoral counseling

Kim Metzgar
Contributor

St. Vincent College Corporation (St. Vincent College and Seminary) has received a grant of \$1 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to develop master’s degree and certificate programs in Mental Health and Pastoral Counseling. The new degree program will develop education and training to prepare licensed professionals schooled in pastoral counseling to support clergy in dealing with mental health issues such as addiction, depression, suicide and troubled relationships, problems which affect nearly one in four of all Americans.

The program is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, which is intended to help theological schools across the United States and Canada strengthen their educational and financial capacities to prepare and support pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

The program will be a part of St. Vincent Seminary’s Institute for Ministry Formation (IMF), which was founded in 2019 to offer academic and formative experiences primarily to non-ordained students desiring to serve in ministry.

“Many of our clerical alumni — both in rural and urban areas — are concerned about the people they serve,” said Father Edward M. Mazich, O.S.B., rector. “However, the societal crisis and need for mental health and well-being is beyond the scope of their formation as priests. The Seminary’s IMF — which has grown from 13 students in 2019 to more than 150 this year — makes us uniquely positioned to educate the laity for service with this new and necessary degree program, and to pair these people with pastors and parishes in order to help the parish communities they serve and the greater community at large.”

St. Vincent College and Seminary is one of 163 theological schools that have received grants since 2021 through the Pathways initiative. Together, the schools serve a broad spectrum of Christian traditions in the U.S. and Canada.



They are affiliated with evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, Black church, Latino, Asian American, Indigenous and historic peace church traditions.

“Theological schools have long played a central role for most denominations and church networks in preparing and supporting pastoral leaders who guide congregations,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “These schools are paying close attention to the challenges churches are facing today and will face in the foreseeable future. The grants will help these schools engage in wide-ranging, innovative efforts to

adapt their educational programs and build their financial capacities so they can better prepare pastors and lay ministers to effectively lead the congregations they will serve in the future.”

The project includes both an 18-credit certificate and a 60-credit master’s degree in Mental Health and Pastoral Counseling. Leading the program through its first year will be Brother Norman Hipps, O.S.B., President Emeritus of St. Vincent College, who as Dean of the Herbert W. Boyer School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computing at SVC established partnerships with Excelsa Health to offer a Master’s Degree program in Health Sciences and a Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice as well as new majors in the medical sciences.

“According to our student and alumni surveys,” Father Edward noted, “the Seminary is quite good at preparing those dedicated to religious practice. Still, our leaders are only trained to identify and refer for mental health treatment to those who manifest fear, anxiety, depression, marital issues, substance abuse and a myriad of other ailments. We currently prepare our graduate students on the ordained ministry track to identify mental health concerns in the people they will serve and refer them to professionals. We do not imagine the role of the ordained clergy to evolve beyond triage.

“This new program will train new religious leaders with expertise in counseling and religion to work jointly with the clergy to directly address the crisis,” he continued. “The need for these pastoral counselors is immediate and growing, and the referral system is inadequate.”

Brother Norman noted that he is grateful that the Lilly Endowment recognized the strengths of the foundation of the IMF, the quality of the resources at St. Vincent College and Seminary and the value of pastoral mental health counseling.

“We eagerly look forward to being an active participant in the Lilly Endowment Pathways network,” he added.



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continued blessings as he discerns a vocation to the priesthood!



Holy Cross Parish extends our prayers and best wishes to Will Fuller as he prepares for the holy sacrament of Ordination.



Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son’s Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen

Serra Club engages with Diocesan Vocation Office for bold new parish vocation ministries

Contributor
The Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky, is affiliated with Serra International and has a three-fold objective:



- Promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated religious life
 - Support priests and consecrated religious serving in the Diocese of Covington
 - Assist our members in recognizing and responding in their own lives to God’s call to holiness
- Vocations promotion by the Serra Club is in support of that of the Diocesan Vocation Office and of the vocation ministries of the Religious Orders in the Diocese of



Onlooking religious sisters smile and laugh as they observe the ongoing program during the luncheon for women religious held July 8, 2025, by the Serra Club for Vocations.



Outside the Devou Park golf course Event Center, Benedictine Sister Cathy Bauer and Notre Dame Sister Ruth Lubbers compete in a game of cornhole.

Covington. Father Conor Kunath, vocation director of the Diocese, serves as the chaplain for the Serra Club.

The Serra Club is pleased to participate with Father Kunath in a bold new plan to initiate and sustain parish-based vocations ministries in the Diocese. This plan is based on the book, “Hundredfold: A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry,” second edition, by Rhonda Gruenewald, founder of Vocation Ministry, a national organization that helps parishes foster a culture of vocations.

The Serra Club and its Vocations Committee is fully supporting this effort, including helping organize initial pilot projects at a handful of parishes within the next 3-6 months. The Diocesan Vocation office will provide training on the program to all parishes in the Diocese in the fall of 2026.

The Serra Club has obtained copies of the book for use by members to fully engage in the program in their parish or in a broader role with the Serra Club’s Vocations Committee. For more information, contact Vocations Committee member Roger Bockweg at rbockweg@catholicforester.org or (859) 838-4038.

Serra supports the Diocesan vocations program through an annual financial gift to the Seminarian Education Fund and by providing sponsorship for the Seminary Ball.

Support activities for priests, deacons and consecrated

religious serving the diocese are well attended and received. The Serra Club co-sponsors the Picnic for Women Religious with the Diocese each summer and Serrans arrange and present the event including a hot lunch, games with prizes and updates from each religious order on their congregation.

Serra supports deacons by providing desserts at the summer and fall picnics arranged by the deacons. Many deacons are active members in the Serra Club.

In December, Serra sponsors the Priest Appreciation Dinner. All priests are invited to attend the dinner party, where gifts are shared with each priest and milestone ordination anniversaries are acknowledged. A highlight is the presentation of a check to the Bishop for the Priest Retirement Fund.

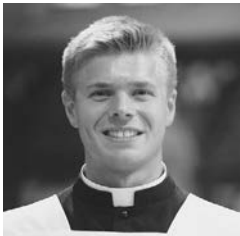
Members embrace their call to holiness in a variety of ways, especially with activities that promote and support vocations. The Seven Serrans group volunteers to select a day each week that the member will spend an hour in prayer for our chaplain, Father Kunath.

The club gathers for a community Mass each July 1 for the Feast Day of St. Junipero Serra and hosts a reception afterwards.

Many members participate in a one-on-one program with an individual seminarian or consecrated religious postulate from the diocese to pray for their formation and to send encouraging correspondence throughout the year.

Each of the two monthly meetings includes prayer for priests and consecrated religious and for vocations along with reading of the Gospel for the day and reflection on the Gospel.

If you would like to learn more about the Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky, contact Nick Winnike, at (513) 236-2452. Membership is open to all Catholics in the Diocese.



Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish wishes our very own **Joseph O’Bryan** all the best on his seminary studies!



Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish wishes our very own **Evan Ihrig** all the best on his seminary studies!



Love is at the heart of a vocation, pope tells Augustinians

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Pope Leo XIV returned to his Augustinian confreres to encourage their new leader and to offer some final thoughts as they prepared to conclude their general chapter discussions about vocations, formation and education.

The pope also congratulated U.S.-born Augustinian Father Joseph L. Farrell, 62, who was elected the prior general of the global order Sept. 9.

Pope Leo, who led the order from 2001 to 2013, had celebrated the opening Mass for the general chapter meeting Sept. 1.

Returning Sept. 15 to the group, which was meeting at the order’s patristic institute across the street from the Vatican, Pope Leo focused first on the theme of vocations and initial formation.

“I like to recall the exhortation of St. Augustine: ‘Love what you will become,’” he said. “I find this to be a valuable insight, especially to avoid the mistake of imagining religious formation as merely a set of rules to follow or tasks to complete, or as a pre-made garment to be worn passively.”

“At the heart of it all is love,” he said. “The Christian vocation, and the religious vocation in particular, arises only when one feels the attraction of something great — of a love that can nourish and satisfy the heart.”

In vocations work, he said, “our first concern should be to help others, especially young people, to glimpse the beauty of the call and to love what they can become by embracing their vocation.”

“Vocation and formation are not pre-established realities: they are a spiritual adventure involving the whole story of a person, and above all, they are an adventure of love with God,” he said.

“Love — which, as we know, Augustine placed at the center of his spiritual quest — is also a fundamental criterion for theological study and intellectual formation,” the pope told the chapter members.

“In knowing God, we can never reach him through reason alone or by collecting theoretical information,” he said. “Rather, it begins with allowing ourselves to be amazed by his greatness, to question ourselves and the meaning of events, to trace in them the footprints of the creator — and above all, to love him and help others to love him.”



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV greets Augustinian Father Joseph L. Farrell, the new prior general of the order, during a visit Sept. 15, 2025, to the Augustinianum Patristic Institute in Rome to meet with members of the Augustinian general chapter.

Study: Devotion to Mary has significant impact on discerning, sustaining vocations

Gina Christian
OSV News

Devotion to Mary is a significant factor in discerning and sustaining the call to priestly and religious life, according to a new study.

“As a religious, Mary has played a big role in our religious life, and I am just excited to see the report as a kind of confirmation that Mary indeed is our model,” said Sister Thu T. Do, a Sister of the Lovers of the Holy Cross and a research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

On July 16, CARA made public a report titled “Impact of Mary, Mother of the Church, on Ecclesial Vocations,” which Sister Thu and fellow CARA researcher Jonathon L. Wiggins prepared in response to a request from the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan.

Spearheading that request was the diocese’s theologian and permanent diaconate formation coordinator, Daniel Osborn. He told OSV News the “main genesis” for the project was Pope Francis’ November 2023 call to members of the International Theological Commission for greater study on the Marian dimension of the church.

“On a personal level,” he added, “I owe my own ecclesial vocation as a lay theologian to the Blessed Mother’s intercession.” So the study, Osborn explained, was also “a way to honor and thank her personally for how she intervened in my own life,” which saw him return to his childhood Catholic faith after a period of drifting away.

The survey, conducted between March and May through mailed paper forms and emailed questionnaires, represented responses from 1,091 respondents, a mix of U.S. Catholic bishops, diocesan priests, permanent deacons, deacon directors, and major superiors of men and women religious.

Among those six groups polled, an average of 59% said Marian devotion had either a “meaningful” or “great” impact on their discernment of a vocation to serve Jesus Christ and the church. Of the groups, religious priests (71%) were most likely to cite Marian devotion, while deacon directors (49%) were the least likely.

Most respondents (92%) said they had first learned of Marian devotion as children, with family (79%) the primary means of introduction, followed by parishes (44%) and Catholic schools (44%).

The rosary topped the list of common Marian devotional practices during one’s discernment of a vocation, with 71% reporting private recitation and 52% saying they prayed the rosary with others. Praying before images of Mary — whether icons, statues or paintings — was cited by 40% of the respondents.

Among the participants, the home (80%) was the prime location for such devotion during their vocational discernment, followed by the parish (77%).

Survey respondents also said that they “often” or “always” wear the Miraculous Medal (32%), associated with Mary’s 19th-century appearances to St. Catherine Labouré; the Brown Scapular (29%); or another Marian medal (18%).

Pilgrimages to Marian apparition sites ahead of coming to their vocation in the church were also noted by 44% of all respondents, with Guadalupe (29%) and Lourdes (28%) as the most popular sites visited.

(Continued on page 17)



OSV News photo/Bob Roller

A statue of Mary with a crown, and a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe are pictured at Sacred Heart Church in Prescott, Ariz., May 5, 2025. The month of May is devoted to Mary and is traditionally celebrated with a crowning and praying of the rosary.

VOCATIONS

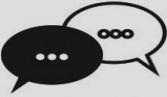
HOW TO DISCERN YOUR VOCATION



1

PRAY

Establish a routine prayer life of attending Mass regularly, praying the Rosary, meditating on Scripture, journaling, making a retreat, and spending time with the Lord in front of the Blessed Sacrament.



2

TALK

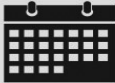
Contact your Diocesan Vocations Director and speak to them about your discernment thus far to get their advice on next steps.



3

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual Direction, often by a priest or consecrated person, attunes the heart to the voice of the Lord and will help you identify how the Holy Spirit is moving in your life.



4

COME & SEE

Often coordinated by the diocesan vocation office, these "Come & See" events offer a glimpse into the life of a seminarian / religious sister and will help you identify if this is the life to which God is calling you.



5

GET INVOLVED

Consider volunteering in your parish or community and finding trusted friends who can provide support and accountability for your discernment journey.



6

REST

Discerning a vocation should not be considered an "accomplishment" that you check off your to do list. It's a daily walking with God that involves the whole person. A healthy life balance of eating well, exercising, and getting the proper amount of rest will positively contribute to your spiritual well-being!

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Whom to call

For in-depth information about religious life, permanent diaconate, lay pastoral ministry or priesthood, please contact the following individuals.

Priesthood

Father Conor Kunath
Vocation Office, 1125 Madison Ave,
Covington, KY 41011-3115
(859) 392-1566
E-mail: ckunath@covdio.org

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Ways to support vocations

Become a prayer partner. Prayer partners are individuals and families who agree to pray for a specific seminarian as he discerns his call. Call Father Michael Norton at (859) 392- 1566 or e-mail mnorton@covdio.org.

Many parishes have vocation committees. If your parish doesn't, consider starting one.

The Serra Club of Northern Kentucky is part of an international organization dedicated to supporting vocations. Contact Michael Murray at (859) 392-1500 or e-mail: mmurray@covdio.org. Visit www.serranky.org or www.serrainter-national.org.

Our diocesan Knights of Columbus send each seminarian a financial contribution for personal expenses. Call Dustin Reed at (859) 866-2122 or visit kofc.org/joinus.

Make a financial contribution to the diocesan Seminarian Education Fund, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, KY 41011-3115 or online at www.covdio.org.

Families — the seedbed of religious vocations

A newly-released study from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, surveyed seminarians who were ordained to the priesthood in 2024. The data shows that families continue to be the seedbed of religious vocations: of the 392 respondents, 95% were raised by their biological parents, and 88% were raised by a married couple who lived together.

(Continued from page 16)

A majority of survey participants (74%) said devotion to Mary has either "strengthened" or "very much strengthened" the living out of their respective vocations. Bishops (89%) were most likely to highlight Mary's role in this regard.

Marian devotion also enhances respondents' current devotion to the Eucharist, with a total of 80% saying that Mary has had either a "meaningful" or "great" impact.

The survey's open-ended question on the Marian dogma or doctrine that has been most significant in sustaining respondents' vocations elicited 31 specific examples, with the Immaculate Conception, the Mother of God or Theotokos, the Assumption and perpetual virginity of Mary most commonly cited.

Another open-ended question on the most meaningful Marian titles yielded a high response rate, with 84% of participants listing a combined 128 distinct Marian titles.

Most popular was "Mary, Mother of God," followed by "Our Lady of Perpetual Help," "Mary, Mother of the Church," "Undoer of Knots," "Our Lady of Guadalupe," "Our Lady/Mother of Sorrows," "Theotokos" ("God-bearer"), "Queen of Peace," "Our Lady of Good Counsel," and "Immaculate Heart."

Ranking first among Marian authors noted by survey participants was the French priest St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, followed by St. John Paul II, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Venerable Fulton J. Sheen, Father Michael E. Gaitley, a member of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, and St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Among the report's other findings:

-St. John Paul II was named as the saint who had most inspired respondents' Marian devotion, followed by St. Louis de Montfort, St. Joseph, St. Bernadette of Lourdes, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Dominic, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

The Gospels of Luke and John were the most popular sources of Marian-related Scriptures.

-Marian art such as the Pieta, St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin's tilma imprinted with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and depictions of the Annunciation and Our Lady of Perpetual Help received "a high volume of mentions" among survey participants.

"Most respondents described Mary's presence in their lives using terms such as companion, friend, guide, comforter, model, intercessor, mother, and vocation-inspiree," said the report. "Many also spoke of experiencing her role through Marian devotional practices and through being consecrated to Mary."

Mary "meets us everywhere," Sister Thu told OSV News. "Even in the place or in the moment that we do not find anyone, Our Lady, Mary, is there."

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For more information, contact Timothy Mains (tmains@sjscrescent.org).

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Pope calls for unity among world’s religions to promote peace, justice, ethical AI

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

At a time when so many people and the planet are suffering, the world’s religions need to come together to promote truth, compassion, reconciliation, justice and peace, Pope Leo XIV said.

“Today we are called upon to rekindle that hope in our world, devastated by war and our degraded natural environment,” the pope said Oct. 29 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

“Let us collaborate, because if we are united, everything is possible. Let us ensure that nothing divides us,” he said, addressing the many representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and other religions that were present at the audience.

Many of the leaders had been in Rome for a meeting of religions for peace sponsored by the Community of Sant’Egidio and a series of events, including a nighttime celebration Oct. 28, marking the 60th anniversary of “Nostra Aetate,” the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on relations with Judaism, Islam and other world religions.

In fact, Pope Leo set aside his ongoing series of audience talks on the Jubilee theme, “Jesus Christ our Hope,” to dedicate the Oct. 29 audience to “Nostra Aetate,” which was promulgated 60 years ago: Oct. 28, 1965.

The first focus of the landmark document “was toward the Jewish world,” the pope said. “For the first time in the history of the church, a doctrinal treatise on the Jewish roots of Christianity was to take shape, which on a biblical and theological level would represent a point of no return.”

While much has been achieved in Jewish-Catholic dialogue over the past six decades, he said, “we cannot deny that there have been misunderstandings, difficulties and conflicts in this period, but these have never prevented the dialogue from continuing.”

“Even today, we must not allow political circumstances and the injustices of some to divert us from friendship, especially since we have achieved so much so far,” he said.

Quoting “Nostra Aetate,” the Catholic Church, “mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel’s spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of antisemitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone,” he said to applause.

“Since then, all my predecessors have condemned antisemitism with clear words,” Pope Leo said. “And so I too confirm that the church does not tolerate antisemitism and fights against it, on the basis of the Gospel itself,” which was also followed by applause.

“The spirit of ‘Nostra Aetate’ continues to illuminate the path of the church,” which recognizes that all religions can reflect “a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men,” he said, citing the document.

Today, more than ever, he said, all of the world’s religions need to act together: “Our world needs our unity, our friendship and our collaboration.”

“Each one of our religions can contribute to alleviating human suffering and taking care of our common home, our planet Earth,” he said. “Our respective traditions teach truth, compassion, reconciliation, justice and peace. We must reaffirm service to humanity at all times.”

In addition to remaining “vigilant against the abuse of the name of God, of religion and of dialogue itself, as well as against the dangers posed by religious fundamentalism and extremism,” he said, “we must also face the responsible development of artificial intelligence.”

If AI is intended to be “an alternative to humans, it can gravely violate their infinite dignity and neutralize their fundamental responsibilities,” the pope said. “Our traditions have an immense contribution to make to the humanization of technology and therefore to inspire its regulation, to protect fundamental human rights.”



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV greets religious leaders and people involved in interreligious dialogue during an event at the Vatican Oct. 28, 2025, marking the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council declaration “Nostra Aetate” on the church’s relations with other religions.

“The declaration invites all Catholics — bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and lay faithful — to involve themselves sincerely in dialogue and in collaboration with the followers of other religions, recognizing and promoting all that is good, true and holy in their traditions,” Pope Leo said.

“‘Nostra Aetate’ reminds us that true dialogue is rooted in love, the only foundation of peace, justice and reconciliation, whereas it firmly rejects every form of discrimination or persecution, affirming the equal dignity of every human being,” he said.

“We must restore hope to our personal lives, our families, our neighborhoods, our schools, our villages, our countries and our world,” he said. “This hope is based on our religious convictions, on the conviction that a new world is possible.”

Concluding his remarks, Pope Leo then led a moment of silent prayer since “prayer has the power to transform our attitudes, our thoughts, our words and our actions.”



Cranley photo

Diocese of Covington pilgrims in Rome for the Jubilee Year 2025, were stationed in the second row of Pope Leo XIV’s route for the general audience, Oct. 29. Deacon Kevin Cranley, St. Timothy Parish, Union, was able to snap this shot of Pope Leo as he passed. The pilgrims, including Bishop John Iffert, are scheduled to return home Nov. 1. Prayers for safe travels are appreciated.

National/World

With thousands in Sudan trapped, Catholic leaders calls to end war

EL-FASHER, Sudan — Catholic Church leaders are raising alarms after the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces claimed to have captured Sudanese El-Fasher, the besieged capital of North Darfur. The city fell on Oct. 26 after an 18-month siege marked by heavy bombardment, starvation, and blocked aid. Catholic Church and U.N. officials say more than 260,000 civilians — including 130,000 children — remain trapped in desperate conditions. UNICEF warns that malnourished children are dying as lifesaving food and medicine are deliberately withheld. Italian Bishop Christian Carlassare of Bentiu in South Sudan called the crisis “a forgotten war,” saying profiteers are exploiting Sudan’s gold to fuel the conflict. Catholic missionaries and regional bishops are urging the world not to look away, calling for immediate humanitarian access and renewed peace efforts. Since fighting erupted in April 2023, more than 9 million Sudanese have been displaced, and Church leaders are

appealing for what they call “a peace written with a pen, not a pencil.” The search for peace in the country continues, with the U.S leading the peace efforts, and the Sudanese foreign minister visiting Washington for high-profile talks. The U.S. government and Egypt are also holding talks with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, the main backers of the rival sides.

USCCB president raises alarm about disruption of federal food assistance

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops urged lawmakers to fund federal food assistance before a looming deadline risks disrupting benefits for more than 40 million people. The Trump administration said benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, would not be issued starting on Nov. 1. About 42 million Americans rely on SNAP. Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that in fiscal year 2023, 79% of SNAP recipient households included either a

child, an elderly individual, or a nonelderly individual with a disability. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in an Oct. 28 statement the group is “deeply alarmed that essential programs that support the common good, such as SNAP, may be interrupted.” “This would be catastrophic for families and individuals who rely on SNAP to put food on the table and places the burdens of this shutdown most heavily on the poor and vulnerable of our nation, who are the least able to move forward,” he said. “This consequence is unjust and unacceptable.”

Gaza ceasefire tested as Israel and Hamas each say the other violated agreement

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s ceasefire agreement in Gaza was tested Oct. 28 as Prime Minister

(Continued on page 21)

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National/World (continued)

Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the Israeli military to conduct strikes in Gaza as his government alleged Hamas violated a White House-backed ceasefire agreement by firing on Israeli forces and failing to return the remains of deceased hostages. Israeli officials said Hamas had attacked Israeli forces in Rafah, in southern Gaza. Strikes in Gaza were carried out in response. “This is a clear violation of the agreement by the terrorist organization Hamas,” Netanyahu’s office said in a statement. Hamas denied involvement in the attack on Israeli forces, but was also accused of deception in the return of the remains of another Israeli hostage. But Israel said forensic tests showed the remains were from another victim whose body was previously recovered. Mary Ellen O’Connell, a professor at Notre Dame Law School who specializes in international law and conflict resolution, said in comments shared with OSV News, “Israel’s decision to bomb is an unjustified breach of its commitment to the ceasefire. There have been issues but nothing serious enough to justify this violation.”

Federal judge strikes rule including gender identity in sex discrimination prohibition

WASHINGTON — A federal judge recently struck down a rule issued by former President Joe Biden’s administration

that sought to include gender identity and sexual orientation in regulations seeking to prevent discrimination in health care settings. Judge Louis Guirola Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi issued a ruling Oct. 22 in favor of a coalition of 15 GOP-led states that sued over the rule, finding the Department of Health and Human Services “exceeded its authority by implementing regulations redefining sex discrimination and prohibiting gender identity discrimination,” when it issued the rule in 2024. Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act mirrors language from Title IX’s education discrimination prohibitions, which prohibits sex-based harassment, sexual violence, pregnancy discrimination and other types of discrimination. Attorney General Lynn Fitch argued in an Oct. 23 statement, “The Biden administration attempted to import its radical theories on gender identity into ObamaCare, forcing healthcare providers to perform surgeries or prescribe drugs even if it violated their best medical judgment.”

Catholic Media Association releases new AI guidelines

CHICAGO — As the use of artificial intelligence accelerates, the Catholic Media Association is calling for its members to adopt a holistic, moral approach — one rooted in Catholic teaching — regarding AI. “One of the values at the heart of Catholic media is a concern for human dignity, and so Catholic journalists should be at the forefront of thinking about how we integrate AI technology, which has the potential to undermine that dignity, whether through replacing human work or feeding false narratives,” Kerry Weber, president of the CMA, told OSV News in an Oct. 27 email. Founded in

1911 as the Catholic Press Association, the CMA serves Catholic communications professionals and platforms throughout the U.S. and Canada. “Most importantly, moral agency must be considered as primary, with responsibility and accountability for AI’s design, deployment and usage at every stage resting solely with humans and not automated systems,” said the CMA in its recently updated AI guidelines. Along with publishing its general AI usage guidelines, the CMA specifically called for Catholic communicators to “clearly disclose when AI is used in generating editorial or creative content,” whether in text or multimedia format, with “humans, not computer algorithms,” supervising and fact-checking before release of such content to the public.

How are doctors of the Church chosen? Here’s a look at the process before Newman declaration

ROME — On Nov. 1, Pope Leo XIV will proclaim St. John Henry Newman the newest doctor of the Church — the 38th in history and the first named under his pontificate. The title “doctor,” meaning “teacher” in Latin, is reserved for saints whose writings and holiness have profoundly shaped Catholic teaching. Father John Flader, an American priest long based in Australia, explained that three criteria must be met: The saint must be eminent in doctrine, outstanding in holiness and formally declared a doctor by the pope. Notably, St. Newman’s Anglican writings aren’t considered in the evaluation — only his Catholic works. The Church’s earliest doctors include Sts. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; four are women, among them St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Hildegard of Bingen. Other candidates often mentioned include St. John Paul II and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a Discalced Carmelite, who was born Edith Stein (1891-1942). In April 2024 during a private audience, the superior general of the Discalced Carmelites, Father Miguel Márquez Calle, made a formal request to Pope Francis to declare her a doctor of the Church.



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Best Practices for Teaching Adults

- How do adults best learn and grow in faith?
- What common mistakes make sessions boring or ineffective?

OCIA and Parish Renewal

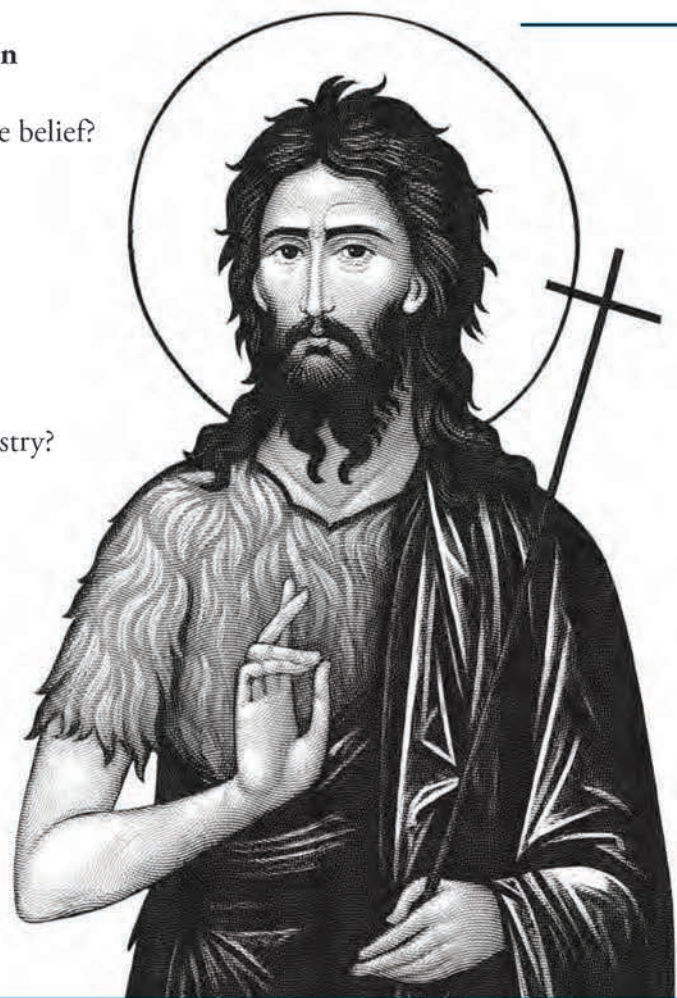
- Why does a strong OCIA process renew the whole parish?
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