

- 2 Ash Wednesday**
- 2 You're invited**
An evening of prayer, reflection and conversation
- 2 Kentucky March for Life**
- 3 Covington Lenten Pilgrimages**
- 3 Official appointments**
- 4 St. Thomas Adoration Chapel**
25 years
- 6 St. Francis Xavier**
Renewing the St. Vincent de Paul conference
- 7 Lenten fish fries**
- 8 OCIA**
- 9 Obituary**
Donald "Don" Schaeper

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

Bishop's Schedule	3
Commentary	5
People and Events	7
Classifieds	12
Shopper's Guide	14
VIRTUS	14
News Briefs	15

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

Have a Beatitude Lent — Part 2, mourning and meekness

Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Last week I encouraged myself and you to focus during Lent 2026 on virtues that may help contribute to the establishment of the Kingdom of Peace. I wrote to you about choosing humility (poverty of spirit) as a Lenten practice. Today I propose to you mourning with those who mourn and meekness as paths toward peace.

Mourning our griefs and losses in healthy and holy ways acknowledges our own limits, fosters reliance on God, and can lead to a greater awareness of and identification with others who suffer. Joining others in mourning their losses fosters understanding, cul-



tivates gentleness, and leads to accompanying others through the most sensitive and susceptible of times. It is an imitation of Christ who emptied himself out to join our human state and accompany us through the dark valley.

This Lent we might embrace this beatitude by finally seeking help in processing our own profound losses or traumas that have in some way held us captive. A skilled counselor or spiritual director (or both) can be incredibly helpful on this journey. Prayer that acknowledges our own pain and helps us turn to the assurance of God's accompaniment may, over the long term, open us to sensitive accompaniment of others.

Considering the sufferings of those we count as opponents (or even enemies) can build the virtue of understanding. Meditate on the losses of someone on the other side of a local, national or international issue and take the time to respect their losses and pain. Is there a way to acknowledge their grief and consider how it might cause us to adjust our worldview, or at least the kinds of rhetoric we employ?

Offering practical, unrequested assistance to one who is mourning the loss of a loved one, of their own mobility and liberty, or of a forfeited dream, is a particularly profound kindness. Perhaps a Lenten effort might be to finally develop a concrete response that we can offer a neighbor at the time of a loss.

Many people offer gifts of food. When my mother died, a crafty friend made us a set of notecards and a lovely list for recording delivered food and gifts. The package came with a personal note offering to help us with the dozens of thank-you cards we would face in coming days. A non-judgmental cup of tea with a friend who feels isolated and needs a listening ear is an offering unto the Lord. Taking time this Lent to find a way to respond to a neighbor's grief and preparing to put this compassionate response into motion, might be a terrific Lenten discipline.

Meekness is the most misunderstood of all human virtues. It is

unfortunate that our English word rhymes with "weakness." Meekness is nothing of the sort. It is the virtuous capacity to endure hardship, and even injustice, without giving way to our baser instincts and desires. Meekness helps us to maintain our higher and holier faculties. It helps us control our tongues for the sake of maintaining relationships. It empowers us to take deep breaths, avoid rage and the emotional backlash that stems from anger. Meekness helps us forego revenge and it promotes charity. Meekness is integrity and **STRENGTH!**

This virtue allows space for respect, the protection of the dignity of the other, and for considering the other's perspective with a loving and appreciative eye. It keeps us from jumping to hasty conclusions and actions. Meekness allows us to avoid reacting from our woundedness and instead to see more as God sees and respond more from the heart and mind of Jesus.

To grow in meekness, pray for the gift, of course. It may also be fruitful to consider the last few times we have grown angry and reflect on what was at stake for us when we lashed out. A daily examen that focuses on moments of anger or pique — and the corresponding sense of self-righteousness that can flood us in anger's wake — may lead us to consider more productive ways to respond. Developing a concrete plan — turning to God, taking a walk or counting to 10 — might help us develop the habit of meekness. If anger is a particular issue for us, we might enter a season of regular, weekly Confession with an emphasis on the moments we have lost our cool and our ability to respond from a Christ-centered place. Of course, daily reception of Communion with the intention of becoming conformed to the One who is meek and humble of heart would be a wonderful Lenten practice.

I have come to think that these three virtues — poverty of spirit, mourning and meekness — are first in Matthew's list of Beatitudes because they are foundational to the development of all human virtue. They are building blocks along the way of becoming temples of God's mercy and peacemakers after the heart of Jesus. Wouldn't it be amazing if we and our whole society might foster these virtuous capacities!

Whatever Lenten observance we choose, may it lead us to become instruments of the peace Christ wills for his people and his Church. May the Holy Spirit guide you and pour out blessings upon you in this sacred time.



Bishop John Iffert



Lent in the Diocese of Covington

At the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption:

Stations of the Cross
 Fridays, Feb. 20–March 27, 6:30 p.m.
 Good Friday, April 3, noon

Rite of Election
 Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.
 No 5:30 p.m. Mass

On Ash Wednesday, faithful are reminded that they do not just live for this world, but for God, said Bishop Iffert

Baker photos

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The observance of Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18, marks the beginning of the Lenten season. The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, opened the season with a morning Mass — joining together parishioners, guests, Curia staff and students of Covington Latin School.

Ash Wednesday, which is observed with prayer and fasting, is known famously for the ashes distributed at Ash Wednesday Mass — during which the faithful are reminded of their own mortality with words from Genesis: “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Bishop John Iffert served as both celebrant and homilist for the Mass and began his homily referencing the book of Joel — from which one of the day’s readings was taken.

He first described the first part of Joel, where Joel “warns the nation of Judah.”

Bishop Iffert said, “He warns them that they need to repent, that they have turned away from their God ... He calls upon them to fast in a way that produces a long change in themselves and in their relationship to God.”

Bishop Iffert then described the second part, which chronicles God’s response to this great fast.

“Here God moves with mercy,” Bishop Iffert said, “and the second proclamation of the book of Joel is that the Holy Spirit of God has filled the nation and once again dwells with his people ... and then he (Joel) announces that faithfulness to God has brought a renewal of relationship with God and the strengthening of God’s spirit in the people. One can hardly ask for a better Lent.”

During the Lenten season, “We are called to turn back to the Lord,” said Bishop Iffert. “We have all of these practices and traditions that we keep in place, starting today, with the placement of ashes on our forehead ... We are reminded of our own mortality and that we live not just for this world, but that we live for God.”

“This is the call of Lent for us,” he said, “and today, we ask for the grace to respond faithfully.”

Bishop Iffert continued his homily referencing an op-ed where a Catholic man admits to not going to Church on Sunday or praying most days. “But don’t judge him too quickly,” Bishop Iffert quoted. “He comes to church every Ash Wednesday, and he receives the ashes.”

“Well, that’s good for him,” said Bishop Iffert. “If you’re in that position, good for you. But what good is Lent if it brings no change? What good is Lent if it brings no reform in our lives? What good is Lent if it doesn’t position us to receive with gratitude the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon us, to fill our lives with grace and goodness — to do nothing less than open us up to a more complete relationship with God.”

“That’s the journey of life,” he said, urging the faithful to not only give up chocolates or sweets or alcohol for Lent, but to most of all “embrace the love of Christ Jesus in our hearts, to be completely conformed to his love for the world and to behave that way with one another.”

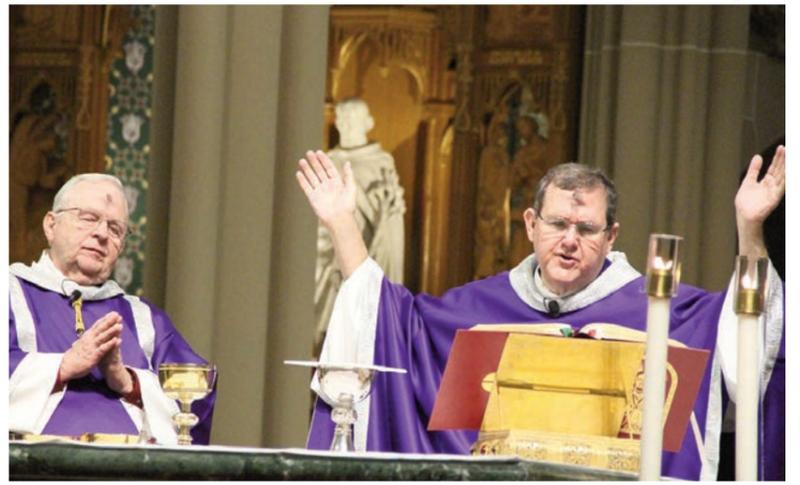
“Then,” Bishop Iffert said, “this Lent will be a holy season, and our repentance will be true, and the Lord will pour out his Spirit and have mercy on his people and lead our nation in the way of virtue and righteousness — God’s will will be known among us again. What else can we hope for?”



(right top) Msgr. Kurt Kemo, vice-rector of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, distributes ashes to a member of the congregation. The words spoken during the blessing, “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” are borrowed from the book of Genesis, and remind the faithful of their



(right bottom) A young child sits with her father in the pew following the Ash Wednesday blessing and distribution of ashes.



(above top) With ashes on their forehead, Bishop John Iffert (right) and Deacon Gerry Franzen (left), pray over the offertory gifts during the consecration.

(above bottom) Bishop John Iffert addresses the congregation during his homily at the Ash Wednesday Mass, Feb. 18. In his homily, Bishop Iffert spoke of the “Lenten call” of the faithful — to renew their relationship with God.

HANNAH KEEGAN
Thomas More University
Director for Center for Faith, Mission, and Catholic Education

You’re invited

The Diocese of Covington and the Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee invite you to “An Evening of Prayer, Reflection, and Conversation,” presented by Hannah Keegan, director, Center for Faith, Mission and Catholic Education, Thomas More University, **March 2, 7 p.m.**

The presentation will be held at the Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, and will focus on “Dilexi Te,” Pope Leo’s exhortation On Love for the Poor and “Dilexit Nos,” Pope Francis’ encyclical On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.

No preregistration required.

Kentucky March for Life Event Details

Mass for Life
Date: March 11
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Location: Good Shepherd Parish, Frankfort
Celebrant: Bishop John Iffert

Kentucky March for Life
Rally: After Mass, at a location to be determined (due to Capitol construction)
Procession: To the Cemetery of the Unborn, Frankfort Cemetery
Conclusion: Approximately 3:30 p.m.

To register to attend the Kentucky March for Life with the Diocese of Covington using private transportation or by joining the buses visit <https://forms.gle/9kYM9Nd8MoiXjcBR8>

Buses will load at:
The Curia, Covington, departing at 7:15 a.m.
The Florence Mall parking lot (upper level where the Sear’s entrance used to be), departing at 7:30 a.m.
For information or to sign up, call the Pro-Life Office (859) 392-1546.

Covington Lenten pilgrimage to return for fourth year — Mass, confession and adoration to be made available

Bailey photos

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

For the fourth year, the annual Covington Lenten Pilgrimage will be returning. The pilgrimage, which consists of a 4.3-mile loop, takes pilgrims to five historic Covington churches — including St. Augustine Church, St. John the Evangelist Church, Mother of God Church, the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption and St. Benedict Church. This year's pilgrimage will take place March 28 — the Saturday before Palm Sunday — from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This year, as in years past, the churches on the pilgrimage route will offer times for Mass, confession and adoration — all in preparation for the upcoming Holy Week. Among these opportunities is a Mass held at Mother of God Church at noon, and pilgrimage planning committees are working with parishes to have at least two confessors available and formal Benediction during the pilgrimage's hours. According to Margie Springelmeyer, who helped establish the pilgrimage four years ago and continues to help coordinate to this day, the publicization of these opportunities is the "main goal" of the planning committee.

"It's a beautiful opportunity for spiritual growth," Ms. Springelmeyer said. "Capping off your Lenten journey and heading into Holy Week, it's a perfect transition time."

Ms. Springelmeyer invites prospective pilgrims to take the pilgrimage as an opportunity to "reflect on the six weeks of Lent" and bring that devotion to Covington's five churches, even if they have already attended in years past.

"It's not just about seeing the churches," she said. "It's about experiencing the Lord along your journey."

Ms. Springelmeyer continued, saying, "We never stop coming before the Lord with what's on our heart — and, to take a day like this and spend the day with him, with whatever intention it is that's burning inside your heart each year ... Each year makes it a new year when you experience the pilgrimage."



(above left) A 2025 pilgrim admires the hand carved stations of the cross at St. Benedict Church.

(left) A 2025 pilgrim gets their "Passport to Heaven" stamped at St. Benedict Church.

(above right) The monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic adoration at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, in 2025.

(above) 2025 Pilgrims admire the St. Paul Relics Chapel at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

Official Appointments

Effective Feb. 2, 2026

Very Rev. Raymond N. Enzweiler, V.F.

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Very Rev. Mark A. Keene, V.G.

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Rev. V. Ross Kelsch

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Very Rev. Baiju Kidaagen, V.C., V.F.

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Very Rev. Ryan L. Maher

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Rev. Msgr. Gerald L. Reinersman

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

Very Rev. Ryan L. Stenger, J.V.

To: Diocesan College of Consultors
Term: Five years
Continues other duties

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

Jamie N. Schroeder
Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor



Bishop's Schedule

Feb. 22
Rite of Election, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

March 3
DPAA dinner, Blue Licks State Resort Park, Carlisle, 6 p.m.

Feb. 24-26
CCK/Province meetings, Archdiocese of Louisville



What's on your heart?

The Disciple Maker Index survey returns this Lent

Survey opens Feb. 18

Online portal and paper forms will be available.

Parishes will share details leading up to the survey's start date.

St. Thomas Adoration Chapel to celebrate 25 years as ‘heart’ of parish

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

In 2001, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, opened its Adoration Chapel. And now, 25 years later, the parish will celebrate the chapel’s anniversary. The celebration will take place March 1 at the Parish, with adoration at 6 p.m., followed by Benediction then dinner at 6 p.m. All are welcome to join in the commemoration.

According to long-time, now retired, adoration coordinator and adorer of the Chapel, Ellen Curtin, the idea to establish the chapel came from parishioner Gary Smith. From there, he pursued the idea and gathered a committee — the rest is history. And, while open hours have lessened and available adorers have dwindled over the years, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the chapel has stayed open every week for the past 25 years.

Adorers come from all around the area, according to Mrs. Curtin, reminiscing on her time as coordinator, citing people coming from “every parish,” and some even from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

As an adorer herself, Mrs. Curtin said that she “found that committing to an hour made me go ... It’s the commitment to me that is the powerful thing. It’s lovely to know that adoration is possible ... I have found it powerful for my spiritual growth. Adoration is a beau-



In this file photo from the chapel’s 15th anniversary, the St. Thomas Adoration Chapel’s altar can be seen. According to former pastor Msgr. William Neuhaus, the altar is from Bishop Richard Ackerman’s private chapel on Walker Rd., Ft. Thomas, the former bishop’s home.



The Fred Hollis Family

*Would like to Thank You for your prayers,
words of support, cards and attendance
at the Funeral Mass for Julia, my Wife.
It was overwhelming to witness the love
and support from everyone at this time.*

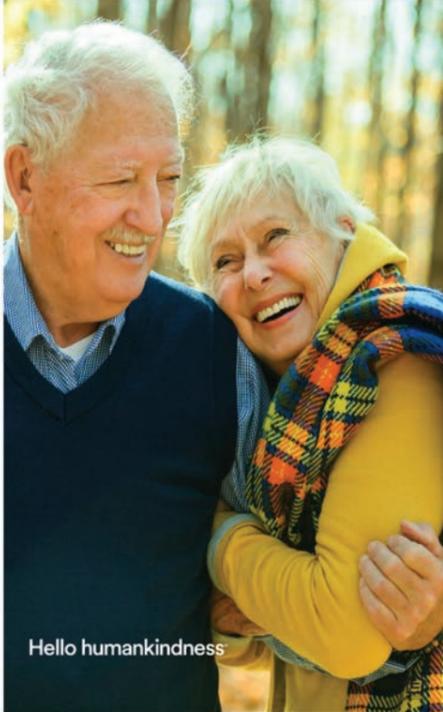


We put living into senior living.

Dedicated to our healing ministry, Madonna Manor offers Independent & Assisted Living, Memory Care, Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation.

For details or to plan a visit, call **859.426.6400** or go to CHILivingCommunities.org/MM.





Hello humankindness

tiful way to spend an hour.”

“Eucharistic Adoration is the quiet heart of a parish, just like prayer is the quiet heart-beat of the individual,” said Father Ross Kelsch, St. Thomas’s pastor. “In adoration, we can bring what we carry: gratitude, grief, decisions, fears, hopes ... Adoration creates space for God’s grace to work patiently within real lives. The chapel is where the parish breathes — and everything else draws life from that breath.”

“This anniversary reminds us that for 25 years people have come before the Lord here at every hour of the day and night. Generations have kept watch, often unseen, carrying the prayers of the whole parish,” Father Kelsch continued, remarking on the reduced hours of the chapel since the pandemic. “We have not yet returned to perpetual adoration and currently offer it several days each week. Even so, the chapel remains a place of deep faithfulness — because every hour someone keeps is a gift not only for themselves but for the whole parish. I am grateful to those who built it, those who sustained it for years, and especially those who continue to come now. A chapel lives because people return.”

Looking forward to the future, Father Kelsch said that, “My hope is simple — that more hearts will rediscover the peace found there and that, in time, we may again keep watch around the clock. Not as a program to accomplish, but as a sign of love — a community choosing to remain with the Lord who never stops remaining with us. May the next 25 years see even more people find in this chapel a place of rest, trust and quiet transformation.”

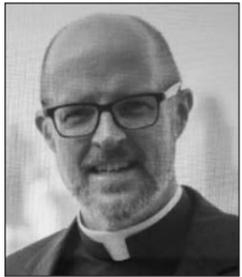
<p>VOL. 96 MESSENGER No. 7</p> <p>Official newspaper of the Diocese of Covington</p> <p>Cathedral Square • 1125 Madison Ave. • Covington, Ky. 41011-3115 Telephone: (859) 392-1500 E-mail: messenger@covdio.org www.covdio.org</p>	<p>(UPS-403-650) Published by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, Ky.; 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Bishop John C. Iffert Publisher Laura Keener Editor, General Manager Laura Gillespie Production Coordinator/Designer Maura Baker Staff Writer Isabella (Bella) Bailey Multimedia Correspondent David Stutler Sales Manager</p>
---	---	---

Spiritual combat and the joy of our salvation

The readings for the First Sunday of Lent — Cycle A — are: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-19 and Matthew 4:1-11.

At the outset of Lent, we are brought into the cosmic confrontation between Jesus Christ and the devil. This is a spiritual reality revealed to us: the state of spiritual combat we are always within, but which is brought to the

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Phillip DeVous

fore during this penitential time. As St. John Chrysostom noted concerning Jesus's battle with Satan: "Jesus's victory sets an example for Christian obedience. Earthly life is a wilderness trial for God's people en route to the land of heaven ... God wills the faithful to overcome temptations from the world, the flesh and the devil. Triumph is possible through penance and obe-

dience to God's word. Rather than earthly bread and power, the faithful must desire the food of God's will and the humility of Christ."

In tempting Jesus with the things of the flesh, symbolized by the bread, we are shown the "night of senses." If we resist the temptation to indulge our bodily appetites without reference to the order of creation and grace, there is no reason for the devil to keep tempting us in this way. Jesus shows us the necessity of asceticism and fasting in the face of the temptations emanating from the unruly cravings of the flesh. Our Blessed Lord shows us how fasting is a prayer of the body, as well as how it can fortify us against powerful temptations of this sort, bringing our flesh under subjection to grace and truth.

Moving from the lower to the higher in the order of temptation, the devil tempts Jesus to living according to the spectacle and approval of the world. If Jesus would only grandly manifest himself, then people would fear and follow him! He could become a showman instead of the savior. As we contemplate this temptation of Jesus, we consider how often we are tempted by the attractions and entertaining things of the passing world. We can begin to see how we seek consolation and affirmation, not in God and spiritual things, but in material things, always wanting more and better stuff and higher quality experiences. Consequently, we lose sight of what lasts because we are blinded by what does not.

Failing to tempt Jesus with the blinding lights of the world's approval, the devil moves to tempt Jesus to reject his identity as the Son God. Satan encourages Jesus to embrace an earthly and political mission to rule over the kingdoms of the world. The evil one is trying to prompt Jesus to forgo his mission as the suffering servant of the Kingdom of God.

As we consider this temptation of Jesus, we see the heart of the temptation is to substitute truth for the simulacrum of truth, which we think can be realized in power. This is pride. Pride, wherein we assume and assert "our truth" is what must be thought and our will is what must be done. When we fall to this species of pride, our hearts become hardened to the Eternal Word of God. Then, the way of Christ, which is the way of the Cross, is deemed impossible, undesirable and unnecessary. We end up living a self-enclosed, self-referential, selfish way of life. The result: we become possessed by the world and miss the mark of communion with Christ and heaven.

The diabolic illusion is always one of Godless self-sufficiency, personal aggrandizement and self-justification. In essence, the devil's proposition to humanity is this: I will give you everything you think you want, and I will make you feel you will "be like gods." And in so doing, the devil will make you forget that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

(Continued on page 13)

'A peaceful light' amid tragedy: Preparing for Lent 2026

As Lent 2026 approaches, I return to the words, "You have shed peaceful light on the mystery of suffering and death," which first touched my heart a year ago and now carry renewed personal meaning. For more than 10 years, my Cursillo prayer group — Team 100, along with three adopted Cursillista brothers — has met faithfully to discern how we will journey through Lent together. Each

VIEWPOINT



Chris Goddard

year, we pray, reflect and listen to where the Lord is leading us. For Lent 2025, we joined Hallow's Lenten study, A Song for Nagasaki, centered on the life and witness of Dr. Takashi Nagai, who survived the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. None of us anticipated just how deeply it would enrich both our Lent and our spiritual lives.

The connection between Nagai's story and Lent is unmistakable: the antidote to suffering is not simply endured or managed, but embraced through prayer, gratitude, detachment and a heart open to conversion. In Nagai's life, these were not abstract ideals but lived habits, cultivated over years and witnessed deeply by his wife, Midori. His response to unimaginable tragedy — caring for the wounded after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, searching for his family, and accepting profound loss — flowed from a life already surrendered to God. Through prayer and detachment from worldly concerns, he found the grace to forgive, and through his example, he helped the city of Nagasaki to embrace forgiveness and begin its own healing.

It was in his darkest hour, amid the ashes of his home, that the paradox of faith became most clear: "You have shed peaceful light on the mystery of suffering and death." (Glynn, A Song for Nagasaki, Chapter 22) Nagai's witness reminds us that suffering united with Christ is never meaningless; it can be transformative, drawing us and those around us toward redemption even in the midst of loss.

Even before that Lent began, I sensed the coming year might be difficult. We knew of my sister-in-law, Janet's, diagnosis and prayed continually for a miracle. Then sor-

row arrived quickly. Janet died of cancer at just 59 years old, only a week into Lent 2025. Five months later, another sister-in-law, Cathy, was diagnosed with cancer. She continues her courageous fight. Suffering was no longer something we reflected on from a distance; it profoundly entered our family's daily life.

Learning about Nagai during that Lenten season provided a vivid example of faith amid catastrophe. After surviving the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, he spent days caring for the wounded as one of the few remaining physicians. Only afterward did he search for his own family. When he returned home, he found the ashes of what had once been his house — and within them, the charred remains of Midori, still clutching her rosary. He wept, thanking God that she had died in prayer. In that moment, grief and faith were not opposed; they stood together as companions.

Reflecting on Mary at the foot of the Cross, Nagai came to understand that love does not spare us from suffering; rather, it has the opportunity to transform it. Like Our Lady, Midori had entrusted herself entirely to God. Nagai clung to Christ's promise: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Matt 24:35) Strengthened by that truth, he rose and continued forward, repeating quietly as he searched for his children and mother, "Everything will be okay." It was not denial. It was surrender. By God's grace, his remaining family members were safe.

That witness continues to steady me when I reflect on the crosses we carry. We prayed fervently for Janet's healing, and when it did not come as we hoped, we held fast to the same truth that sustained Nagai: God's word endures even when earthly hopes seem to fail. As we pray for Cathy, we trust that Christ walks beside her — and beside all of us — whether his answer comes through healing, perseverance or peace.

Our prayer group found the study transformative. It did more than inform us; it formed us. It reminded us how to stand within suffering without surrendering hope, how to grieve without despair, and how to trust without seeing the whole design of God.

That is why we now look toward the coming Lent with anticipation, confident that, as we journey together, the Lord will walk with us step by step — through whatever lies ahead.

Chris Goddard is executive director for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Walking in the light of Christ: The 2026 DPAA

As we enter this holy season of Lent, the Diocese of Covington invites every household to reflect on the gifts that God has given them.

GUEST



Jim Hess

The theme for the 2026 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA) is "Live as Children of Light," drawn from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." (Eph 5:8)

This year's theme fits perfectly with Pope Leo XIV's Lenten message, "Listening and Fasting: Lent as a time of Conversion." The Holy

Father reminds us that conversion is not merely a private turning away from sin, but a public turning toward our neighbor.

Pope Leo challenges us to use Lent as a period of "active listening" — hearing the cry of the poor and the quiet whisper of the Holy Spirit. When we fast from our own comforts, we create space for God to enter into our daily lives in a powerful way. To live as children of light is to allow that light to shine through our hands, reaching the corners of our Diocese where hope is most needed.

The DPAA is the lifeblood of our local Church's mis-

sion. It isn't just about hitting a financial target; it is about the good work that in part defines who we are as Catholics. Your contributions directly support:

— Catholic Charities: Providing food, counseling and housing assistance to our neighbors in Northern Kentucky.

— Vocations: Supporting the education and formation of our future priests and deacons.

— Retired Priests: Caring for those who have spent their lives serving our spiritual needs.

— Catholic Education: Ensuring that the "Light of Christ" is passed on to the next generation in our schools.

Stewardship is a way of life that recognizes everything we have is a gift from God. This Lent, as we practice the "listening" that Pope Leo encourages, let us ask ourselves: How is God calling me to share the light entrusted to me?

No gift is too small when given in sacrifice. Whether you can give a little or a lot, your participation is a witness to the unity of our Diocese.

"For light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth." (Eph 5:9)

This year, let us not just observe Lent; let us be transformed by it. Let us listen, let us fast and let us give — living truly as Children of Light.

To learn more about the 2026 DPAA or to make a pledge, please visit: www.Covdio.org/Give.

Jim Hess is director of Stewardship and Mission Services for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

From remnants to renewed, St. Francis Xavier celebrates renewal of St. Vincent de Paul Conference

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

After 13 years of inactivity, the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth, was once again commissioned, Feb. 14, by Father Britton Hennessey, pastor. The renewed conference has 18 members, five of whom serve as officers, leading the conference in an administrative role.



When Father Hennessey first arrived at St. Francis Xavier Parish in 2022, there was a “cardboard barrel in the breezeway, that was the remnants of a St. Vincent de Paul food donation barrel, but there was no indication that anything was active at the parish,” he said. However, “it was always in the back of my mind,” he said of having an active St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

With no active conference, the residents of Pendelton County were staying afloat with the Mobile Food Pantry visits from Catholic Charities, which was “always very heavily volunteer staffed,” said Father Hennessey. The Mobile Food Pantry demonstrated a great need in the county for support, said Kay Mudd, conference president.

“We have over 100 people each time,” she said, “and that means that there’s 100 families out there asking for help with just food. So, we thought ‘if they are having trouble with the food, we know that they’re having trouble with other entities.’”

Seeing a need in their community, the St. Francis Xavier St. Vincent de Paul Conference began anew.

“Being a former teacher, I know that there is an outstanding need for people in our county, based upon the number of children they have in the home, struggles throughout the day, stuff like that,” said Ms. Mudd.

Once operational, the conference will “do everything that is under the auspice of a St. Vincent de Paul conference,” said Ms. Mudd.

“Helping people with rent, if they’re struggling with utilities, electricity, water, whatever they may need.” This

includes taking over operation of the St. Vincent de Paul store food pantry, moving the operation to a newly built space at the St. Francis Xavier Parish Hall.

One of the parish goals of their With One Heart Pastoral Plan was to increase opportunities for charitable outreach. The renewed conference, “certainly directly correlates to that,” said Father Hennessey.

“This is bigger than just the 19 folks that were involved here, this is our conference, this involves all of us,” he said, “there will be opportunities for those who want to increase their membership to participate more actively in the work of the conference.”

The renewal of the St. Francis Xavier St. Vincent de Paul conference has breathed new life into the charitable giving capacity of the parish. From a cardboard barrel, to a newly renovated food pantry and beyond, the conference hopes to not only fulfill the needs of their community but also “fulfill the needs spiritually within the church, to grow as better disciples with God,” said Ms. Mudd.

The St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Francis Xavier Parish was founded in 1984 and faithfully served the parish and surrounding community for many years with compassion and dedication. In 2013, the Conference became inactive when its longtime leader, Don Cross, became ill and was no longer able to continue his service to the Vincentians. His devoted leadership laid a strong foundation of charity and service that continues to inspire the parish today. The Feb. 14 commissioning celebrates not only the revival of the Conference, but also the continued spirit of charity, service and faith within the parish community.

St. Francis Xavier marks the 32nd parish in the Diocese of Covington to have an active St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

(left) Conference president, Kay Mudd, lectures the Mass where the conference was commissioned.



Bailey photos



(above top) Father Britton Hennessey, blesses the five officers who have stepped into leadership roles for the renewed conference, officially commissioning them and the volunteers present as Vincentians.

(above bottom) The five officers read their pledge to the conference and community, saying in part, “We are called to always adapt to a changing world. Faithful to the spirit of its founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions.”



ST BENEDICT'S SUPER BINGO

Boiler Fundraiser

The Boiler is back up & running! Your support helps us to pay for replacing it.

Regular game - \$125 winner
Jackpot game - \$2,000 (50 numbers or less)
\$1500 (55 numbers or less)
\$1000 winner (56+ numbers or less)

**ST BENEDICT'S
PARISH HALL
HOLY FAMIL SCHOOL
COVINGTON**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH
7:00 JITNEY
GAMES**

**27 CARDS - \$20
BANKERS
FOOD & DRINK**

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). Volunteers work alongside students to complete homework, build academic skills and create a lifelong passion for learning. Contact Brandi at (859) 630-9475 or blenihan@nduec.org.

Middle school students are invited to "Take heart!" at Youth Ministry's upcoming CONNECT26 event, Feb. 21, 9:30-4:30 p.m. at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. Cost is \$40. Registration online at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, is hosting its annual Saints Night Feb. 25, 6-8 p.m., for high school seniors and transfer students admitted to Thomas More for Fall 2026. Learn about college affordability and the FAFSA, hear an insider's view of campus life, attend an athletics session and browse a fair of our 35+ academic majors.

High school students are invited for the SUMMIT 2026 Youth Ministry retreat. The retreat will be held Feb. 27 through March 1 at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. Not an overnight retreat. Friday evening, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Cost is \$60 before Feb. 14, \$75 after. Registration online at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

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. 2026 Spring Workshops: Job, March 1, session 1; March 14, session 2; April 11, session 3 and April 18, session 4. Cost \$35 per session, cash or checks at the door. Register at covdio.org/bible-workshops.

The Diocese of Covington and the Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee are hosting "An Evening of Prayer, Reflection, and Conversation," March 2, 7 p.m., presented by Hannah Keegan, director of Thomas More University's Center of Faith, Mission and Catholic Education. Dr. Keegan's presentation will focus on Pope Leo's exhortation "Dilexi Te," (On Love for the Poor) and Pope Francis' encyclical "Dilexit Nos," (On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ). The presentation will be held at the Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington. No preregistration required.

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, will be hosting a one-night only Bingo Night after the March 6 fish fry, 7 p.m. Come support the parish's new boiler. Cost is \$20 for 27 cards, and food and drink will be available.

Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, 5th annual girls' softball/volleyball euchre tournament, March 7. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; cards fly at 7 p.m. Cost: \$25 pre-registration by March 4; \$30 walk up registration (limited spots); \$10 optional skin game. Contact Kari Bezold, (859)-391-5119 or bbhsvolleyball.softballeuchre@gmail.com. Checks payable to BBHS.

Northern Kentucky St. Patrick's Day Mass, March 12, 7 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. This Mass celebrates local Irish families and heritage with an after-Mass celebration at Molly Malone's Irish Pub, Covington.

This Lent, Father Michael Comer, pastor, Mother of God Church, Covington, will be presenting a series of five talks on St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Leo XIV recently declared a Jubilee Year of St. Francis in honor of the

800th anniversary of his death. The talks are on Thursdays, Feb. 19 through March 26 (no sessions March 5) at 10:30 a.m. and repeated at 6:30 p.m. at Mother of God Church.

A Marriage Encounter Experience will be held on March 13-15 at the Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center in Norwood, OH. Sign up at wwme.org or call Andy and Melanie Reinersman at (859) 653-8464. Learn how to make your marriage better.

New Beginnings is an 8-week program that provides the opportunity to heal and move forward despite a complicated situation. Led by facilitators who have been through their own personal losses, this program invites participants to move toward their own new beginnings. Registration is required. Visit <https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1529. The next session will be held on consecutive Tuesdays, March 17-May 5, 7-8:30 p.m., Catholic Charities, Covington.

Blessed Sacrament Parish will host a Lenten Food Truck night, March 20, beginning at 5 p.m. Food trucks serving Lenten classics such as pizza, fish and dessert will be available.

The fourth annual Covington Lenten Pilgrimage will be held on Palm Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. On the self-guided pilgrimage, pilgrims will journey to five historic Covington churches: St. Benedict, St. Augustine, St. John the Evangelist, Mother of God and the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of Mary. Adoration and confession is available at multiple churches.

Sisters of Notre Dame Women's Retreat, "Women of Faith," March 28, St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, with guest speakers Jenn Ledonne and Notre Dame Sister Mary Evelyn Reinke, reflecting on women of the Bible and the 21st Century. Cost \$50 includes continental breakfast, lunch from Panera and all activities. To register contact Margie Schnelle (859) 392-8229 or mschnelle@sndusa.org.

The Diocese of Covington is offering 63 FREE in-person adult Catholic faith formation workshops, June 8-11, 2026, at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Administration Building (Library classrooms). All workshops are broken into two parts and scheduled for two consecutive days, 1.5 hours per day. Instructors will provide topical information, video content, and time for open discussion. Create a free account under your parish or school to access these and 200+ additional workshops at <https://franciscanathome.com>. The workshops are open to everyone who wants to learn more about their Catholic faith. There is something for everyone. Visit <https://covdio.org/register> or contact Isaak A. Isaak at (859) 392-1529 or iisaak@covdio.org.

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 ini-

Lenten Fish Frys

Fridays, Feb 20 – March 6
St. William Parish,
Williamstown, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fridays, Feb 20 – March 13
St. Mary of the Assumption
Parish, Alexandria,
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Fridays, March 13 – 27
St. Matthew, Morning View,
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Fridays, Feb 20 – March 20
St. Agnes Parish, Fort Wright,
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fridays, Feb. 20 – March 27
St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger
4:30-8 p.m.

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence,
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Holy Cross High School,
Latonia, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

St. Joseph, Camp Springs,
4:00 –7:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Academy, Walton,
4:30 –7:30 p.m.

Mary, Queen of Heaven,
Erlanger, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

St. Benedict Parish, Covington,
4:45 –7:00 p.m.

St. Bernard Parish, Dayton,
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

St. Catherine of Sienna Parish,
Fort Thomas, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Fridays, Feb. 20 – March 27 (continued)
St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana,
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

St. Francis Xavier, Falmouth,
4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Burlington, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent
Springs, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

St. James Parish, Brooksville,
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

St. Patrick Parish, Maysville,
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill,
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul Parish, Florence,
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood,
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Thomas Parish,
Fort Thomas, 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Timothy Parish, Union,
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Fridays, Feb. 20 – April 3
St. Augustine, Covington,
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

March 27
Our Savior Parish, Covington,
noon-6 p.m.

tial 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.



Feast of St. Blaise

During a recent all-school Mass at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, Father Kevin Kahmann, pastor, shared with students the witness of St. Blaise and his connection to the blessing of throats for the upcoming feast day on Feb. 3. After his homily, Father Kahmann, Father Doug Lauer, Deacon Joe McGraw, and Deacon Mike Lyman blessed the throats of all the students, staff and parishioners at Mass.

OCIA brings people together, into the Church, as class sizes rise

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

As the season of Lent begins, so does the 40-day countdown, as candidates and catechumens move ever closer to full initiation into the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil Mass. This year, during the Lenten season, the *Messenger* will be highlighting candidates and catechu-

mens who are in the final stages of the Order of Christian Initiation (OCIA).

OCIA has roots that “go back to those early times where there was a lot of persecution of Christians. And so, it used to be a significantly more rigorous process,” said Sarah Wells, pastoral associate at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. That rigorous process, “fell out of practice,” said Ms. Wells. “By the last few hundred years, private instruction was the normative way to enter the Church.”

It was Vatican II that reinstated the Order of Christian Initiation, then known as the Rite of Christian Initiation. The Fathers of Vatican II thought, “it’s about time that the Church goes back to a communal setting for people to enter the Church together, to learn together, to have a community of fellowship, of prayer, accountability; it’s just really good for everyone involved,” said Ms. Wells.

“The early Church grew because of faith sharing,” said Father Ryan Maher, rector of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. “So that element is introduced, especially at OCIA, that context of space for sharing of one’s faith that really builds up the whole parish, it builds up our catechetical team, it builds up the clergy. It’s really a beautiful thing to be a part of and receive,” he said. “We give teachings and we give our own witness, but we’re all receiving, and it’s very beautiful.”

This year, the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption has a record-breaking 16-person OCIA class, shattering their previous record of 12 from the year prior. The class is a mix of catechumens and candidates, an important distinction as someone moves through the program.

“The distinction comes after the first rite, the Rite of Acceptance, which differentiates between a candidate, who is a baptized adult, baptized in a different denomination, or a catechumen, who is an unbaptized adult,” said Ms. Wells.

OCIA is separated into three separate rites: first is the Rite of Acceptance, for catechumens, or the Rite of Entrance for candidates. This is the public transition from mere inquiry into conversion to being accepted as a catechumen or candidate. The second rite is the Rite of Election, for catechumens, or the Call to Continuing Conversion for candidates. The second rite is customarily held at the beginning of Lent and begins the period of purification and enlightenment. Here the catechumens are elected by the bishop to receive their sacraments of initiation at Easter. The third and final rite is the Rite of Initiation, for both candidates and catechumens, where they receive the sacraments of initiation at Easter.

Originally named the Rite of Christian Initiation, the name was changed to the Order of Christian Initiation to better reflect the three rites. “An order is a series of rites,” said Ms. Wells.

“In this culture in which we live, which can be so artificial in so many ways and non-relational, that desire to belong to a group, and exposure to the sacraments and to Mass, there’s something about the mystery of the Church and celebrating her rites, it attracts people who are searching,” said Father Maher on the appeal of OCIA.



OSV News photo/Gregory L. Tracy, The Pilot

In this file photo, more than 450 catechumens preparing to enter the Catholic Church at Easter take part in the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston March 9, 2025.



Saint Agnes Fish Fries

Feb 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20

Food Served 5:00 – 8:00 PM
Drinks & Social until 10:00 PM

Beer Battered Cod

Shrimp Tacos
Sautéed Shrimp, Homemade Pineapple Slaw

Pizza - Grilled Cheese

Beer – College Basketball

All Are Welcome
1680 Dixie Hwy. Fort Wright





ProCatholicTours

Travel to many exciting locations: Holy Land, Italia Bella, Fatima & Lourdes, Ireland & Scotland, Greece, Our Lady of Guadalupe and many more

FLY FROM ANYWHERE IN THE
CONTINENTAL US, ALL INCLUSIVE PRICES.

Bishops, Priests & Deacons are our specialty,
we will customize any trip for you!

To register call 508-505-6078 or online at www.procatholic tours.com.

Join the Jubilee Pilgrimage to Italy, Fatima & Lourdes with Fr. Aby Thampi
from St. John's Church, Covington, KY Nov. 1-14, 2025

For more information contact office@procatholic tours.com.

LENTEN FISH FRIES

St. Joseph Parish in Camp Springs invites you to its Lenten Fish Fries.



**Dinners are served each Friday, February 20th –
March 27th, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

The menu features hand-breaded fried cod and
catfish fillets as well as baked cod, shrimp, crab cakes,
salmon, and a wide variety of homemade desserts.

Dine-in or carry-out options available.

For more information or to place a carry-out
order, please call 859-635-2491
or visit stjosephcamp springs.org.

6833 Four Mile Road, Camp Springs, KY

Donald 'Don' Schaeper, 93, remembered for a life of service and quiet faith

Staff report

Donald "Don" P. Schaeper, 93, of Villa Hills, Ky., passed away Feb. 9, 2026. He is the father of Father Lawrence Schaeper and Father James Schaeper.

"My dad passed on a legacy of faith. He lived it quietly but consistently every day — through service, prayer and the way he treated people. That daily witness shaped me and my brothers and continues to guide us," said Father Lawrence Schaeper, pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Covington.

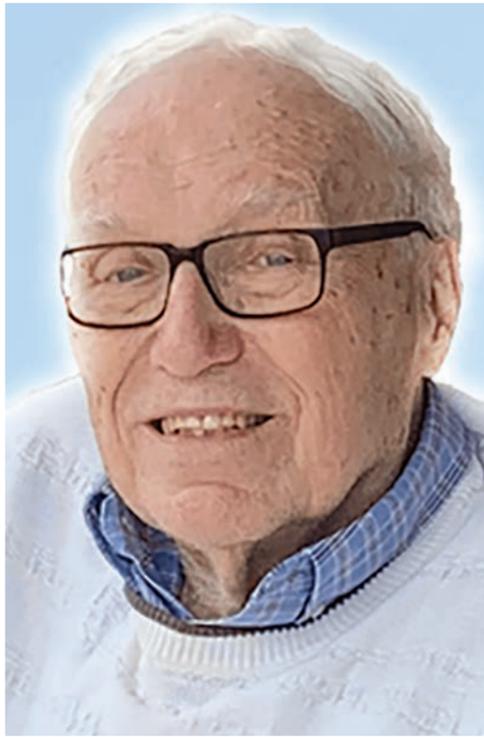
Two of Mr. Schaeper's sons are priests for the Diocese of Covington, Father Lawrence and Father James Schaeper, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw and St. Edward Mission, Owenton.

"He was a loving husband and father," Father L. Schaeper said. "The faith he passed on shaped our vocations as priests and guided our whole family. His greatest gift to us was the example of a life rooted in love — love for God, for family and for every person placed in his path."

Mr. Schaeper spent two years in seminary with the Marianist Fathers, ultimately discerning out of the vocation and marrying six years later. "God is good at math," said Father J. Schaeper. "God made a two-for-one deal; he lost my dad but then gained two of his sons."

Father J. Schaeper fondly remembers family dinners and vacations and his dad traveling to visit with him in grad school. Last year, the St. Joseph Parish fish fry in Warsaw featured a \$7 special inspired by Mr. Schaeper and a favorite family story shared by his son, Father J. Schaeper. Parishioners loved hearing how Mrs. Schaeper was frustrated with her husband for bringing only \$7 for a weekend getaway — so they decided to commemorate the memory with a \$7 special: if you know, you know and now you know.

Father J. Schaeper said that both his mom and dad were volunteers for the Church, taking Communion to the sick at Good Samaritan Hospital. Mr. Schaeper also volunteered at Clovernook Home for the Blind and Visually



Donald "Don" P. Schaeper

Impaired and at Drake Hospital, both in Cincinnati.

"Jesus came to serve, not to be served," said Father J. Schaeper. "My dad lived that out by helping people. Faith was important to him, and he was very approachable."

For the last 12 years, he was a resident at Madonna Manor where he attended Mass, was sacristan, lector and led the rosary.

"His faith wasn't loud; it was lived. Whether he was serving as sacristan, singing, lecturing, or leading the rosary at Madonna Manor, he showed what it means to follow Christ in the simple, steady moments," said Father Lawrence. "People would always tell me, 'We love your dad.' He had a presence that made others feel welcome and cared for. His kindness and compassion touched everyone he met. Dad had a beautiful way of helping people feel at

home — through friendliness, concern and a genuine interest in others' lives. That was his quiet ministry."

Mr. Schaeper was a 1951 graduate of Purcell Marian High School in Cincinnati, Ohio and a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran who served during the Korean War Era. After his military service, he went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Xavier University. Mr. Schaeper retired as an accountant with George E. Fern/Parsec Inc. after many years of service. He was an avid sports fan and especially enjoyed Xavier basketball and the Cincinnati Reds.

"Dad truly persevered through illness and the challenges of aging. His strength, his love for life, and his trust in God carried him through 93 years," said Father L. Schaeper. "He endured so much in his later years — hospital stays, illness, recovery — but he never lost his love for life or his faith. That perseverance inspired all of us."

Mr. Schaeper was preceded in death by his parents: Earl and Mildred Schaeper; loving wife of 51 years: Mary Jo Schaeper and sisters: Earlene Kelly and Janet Schaeper. He is survived by his children: Rev. Larry Schaeper, Terry (Patty) Schaeper, Rev. James Schaeper and grandson: Stephen Schaeper.

Mass of Christian Burial was Feb. 13 at St. Benedict Church, Covington with interment at St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell.

Memorials are suggested to St. Benedict Church, 338 East 17th Street, Covington, KY 41014 (and/or) Catholic Charities Diocese of Covington, 3629 Church Street, Covington, KY 41015.

A FRESH NEW START

— at the St. Charles Lodge —

A new year calls for new opportunities at the Lodge. Our Senior Living is designed to meet the needs of seniors. you can expect to enjoy:

- Chef Prepared Meals
- Recreational Activities
- Therapies
- Wellness Exercise Program
- Beauty Shop
- Housekeeping
- Private Duty Nursing

Immediate Availability!

📞 (859) 331-3224

🌐 www.stcharlescommunity.org



SERVICE IS OUR PASSION.



www.ArlinghausAir.com
(859) 429-0980

VOTED

BEST

of NKY

NKY MAGAZINE

THE OFFICIAL

FINANCING!

HM-05428 MPL-7768 OH-47296 PL-48803



CDI Electric Inc.

Quality Service Since 1997
859-291-9189



CHEF BARONE'S CATERING

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

"Our Foods Taste Good"

Serving Greater Cincinnati
Call Jill
491-6391



KW MECHANICAL, INC.

"A Wischer Family Company"

(859) 261-1100
KWMechanical.com

- Electric
- Plumbing
- Heating &
- Air Conditioning



Bishop Rhoades calls on Notre Dame to reverse new director's appointment over abortion advocacy

Gina Christian
OSV News

An Indiana bishop is urging the University of Notre Dame to halt the appointment of a faculty member, who advocates openly for abortion, as head of one of the school's research centers.

The matter highlights the role of Catholic universities in the life of the Church, as delineated in St. John Paul II's 1990 apostolic constitution, "Ex corde ecclesiae," for which the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a particular application in 1999.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, issued a Feb. 11 statement expressing "dismay" and "strong opposition" to the university's appointment of associate professor Susan Ostermann as director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, effective July 1. Notre Dame is located adjacent to South Bend, Indiana, the state's fourth largest city.

The institute is part of the university's Keough School of Global Affairs, of which Ostermann — who specializes in the study of regulatory compliance, comparative politics and environmental regulation, with a focus on South Asia — is a faculty member.

OSV News is awaiting a response to its request for comment by Ostermann.

The appointment, announced on Jan. 8, has drawn fire from Notre Dame faculty and staff due to Ostermann's robust public endorsement of legal abortion, and her work as a consultant for the Population Council, an international research and policy firm that works to advance "sexual and reproductive health, rights and choices" as a key aim.

In his statement, Bishop Rhoades said Ostermann's "extensive public advocacy of abortion rights and her disparaging and inflammatory remarks about those who uphold the dignity of human life from the moment of conception to natural death go against a core principle of justice that is central to Notre Dame's Catholic identity and mission."

Bishop Rhoades — noting he had read "many of the op-ed pieces co-authored by Professor Ostermann — said the appointment was "causing scandal to the faithful of our diocese and beyond."

In one such piece, published by the Chicago Tribune in December 2022, Ostermann and former faculty colleague Tamara Kay (who left Notre Dame for the University of Pittsburgh, following outcry over her endorsement of legalized abortion) surveyed "lies about abortion" that have "dictated public policy."

Among those lies, wrote Ostermann and Kay, was that "abortion kills babies."

"Almost 90% of abortions occur during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy when there are no babies or fetuses. There are only blastocysts or embryos so tiny they are too small to be seen on an abdominal ultrasound," wrote Ostermann and Kay.

The same article also described crisis pregnancy centers as "anti-abortion rights propaganda sites" that "operate and provide false information to women who are lured to them believing they will receive legitimate medical care."

Ostermann and Kay further asserted that "women who are denied an abortion experience a panoply of negative outcomes physically, mentally and occupationally."

Bishop Rhoades quoted additional writings by Ostermann in his statement, noting she had claimed the pro-life position has "its roots in white supremacy and

racism," with misogyny "embedded" in the movement."

"She also argued that the Catholic social doctrine of 'integral human development' supports abortion because it enhances freedom and flourishing for women," said Bishop Rhoades.

"These are all outrageous claims that should disqualify her from an administrative and leadership role at a Catholic university," he said. "I hope that Professor Ostermann will explicitly retract these claims, and I pray that she will have a change of mind and heart that will lead her to affirm the innate dignity of unborn babies as well as that of their mothers."

The bishop cited a Nov. 15, 2014, address by Pope Francis in which the late pontiff denounced "false compassion which holds that it is a benefit to women to promote abortion."

"The Church here in our diocese and around the world serves mothers before and after birth, providing spiritual, emotional, and material care to moms in need," said Bishop Rhoades. "The Church stands for the inalienable right to life of mothers and their unborn children."

Bishop Rhoades said that "Notre Dame has publicly committed as a Catholic institution to the life and dignity of the human person," affirming the Church's teaching that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception," as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states.

"I am proud of Notre Dame's pro-life commitment, manifest in the large number of students and faculty who promote a culture of life through many campus organizations, programs, and activities," Bishop Rhoades said. "They witness to the sanctity of life at every stage, with special attention to the lives of the vulnerable, including the unborn, the poor, immigrants, the elderly, and the infirm."

He stressed that "the Catholic Church upholds a consistent ethic of life," pointing to Pope Leo XIV's recent citation of St. Teresa of Calcutta's address at the National Prayer Breakfast in February 1994, in which she said "the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion."

Bishop Rhoades also quoted Pope Leo, who in a Jan. 31 address observed that "no policy can genuinely serve the people if it denies the unborn the gift of life, or if it neglects to support those in need whether in their material circumstances or in their spiritual distress."

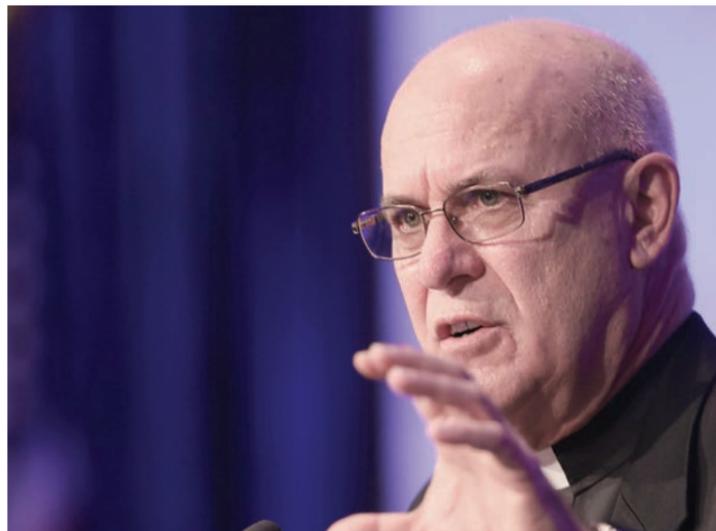
Bishop Rhoades said that "this pro-life principle is not merely affirmed by Catholics; it is embraced by many people of good will of diverse backgrounds and commitments around the world."

With the Keough Institute endorsing integral human development as the primary Catholic social teaching principle for its work, said Bishop Rhoades, "Professor Ostermann has written — ludicrously — that this Catholic principle actually supports abortion on demand."

Yet the Holy See has repeatedly affirmed to the United Nations that the inherent right to life is central to integral human development, said the bishop.

"Professor Ostermann's opposite view thus clearly should disqualify her from holding a position of leadership within the Keough School," he said.

He added that Ostermann's consultancy for the



OSV News photo/Bob Roller

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, speaks during a Nov. 17, 2021, session of the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore. Bishop Rhoades is speaking out against the University of Notre Dame's decision to appoint Susan Ostermann, who supports keeping abortion legal, as director of the university's Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies.

Population Council was another disqualifier for the Liu Institute appointment, since the council is "dedicated to the promotion of abortion around the world, "linked to China's population control policies that have resulted in hundreds of millions of abortions of baby girls," and "instrumental in securing approval of the abortion pill by the FDA, which is responsible for the majority of abortions in the United States."

"Some may claim that this appointment should be protected by academic freedom," said Bishop Rhoades noted.

However, he said, "Academic freedom concerns the liberty of faculty to conduct research according to their own professional judgment and interests."

"This appointment, by contrast, concerns the official administrative appointment to lead an academic unit," he said. "Such appointments have profound impact on the integrity of Notre Dame's public witness as a Catholic university."

Ostermann's appointment as the head of the Liu Institute "understandably creates confusion in the public mind as to Notre Dame's fidelity to its Catholic mission," said Bishop Rhoades, adding that "many faculty, students, alumni, and benefactors of Notre Dame have reached out to me to express their shock, sadness, confusion, and disappointment" over the move.

Bishop Rhoades urged prayer, particularly to the Virgin Mary under her title Our Lady of Lourdes, asking her to intercede so that "Notre Dame will always stand firm in her commitment to the Gospel of her Son, the Gospel of Life."

He cited "Ex Corde Ecclesiae," which names the local bishop as having particular responsibility to promote and assist in preserving the Catholic identity of Catholic universities within a given diocese.

"I call upon the leadership of Notre Dame to rectify this situation," said Bishop Rhoades. "The appointment of Professor Ostermann is not scheduled to go into effect until July 1, 2026. There is still time to make things right."

"Specializing in residential and commercial plumbing repair parts"

Specialized Plumbing Parts Supply Inc.

921 Dudley Road
Edgewood, KY 41017
(859) 341-6666



We now stock a complete line of home health aides that include elevated toilet seats, grab bars and personal showers.

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

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

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

MOTHER OF GOD CEMETERY AND CHAPEL MAUSOLEUM

Interest free payment plans available.

For details call sales and information:

3125 MADISON AVE., FORT WRIGHT, KY
(859) 431-0614
WWW.MOTHEROFGODCEMETERY.COM

Data on sweeping immigrant detentions underscores US bishops' concerns, says policy expert

Gina Christian
OSV News

Data showing most individuals in immigration detention do not have violent criminal records highlights ongoing concerns expressed by the nation's Catholic bishops over the Trump administration immigration crackdown, said an official with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

CBS News reported Feb. 9 that "less than 14% of nearly 400,000 immigrants arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in President Trump's first year back in the White House had charges or convictions for violent criminal offenses."

The news outlet cited an internal Department of Homeland Security document it had obtained, showing almost 40% of those arrested lacked a criminal record altogether, and were accused of civil immigration offenses — such as being in the U.S. without legal authorization or overstaying a visa — that are usually adjudicated in civil court proceedings.

The internal document, which aligns with data compiled by Syracuse University, contrasts sharply with Trump administration claims it is targeting the violent criminals in its sweeping immigration detention operations.

"The data we are seeing related to the demographics of people being arrested, detained and deported, along with the real-life human impacts these statistics represent, underscore precisely why the U.S. bishops, in their special message last November, expressed their opposition to the 'indiscriminate mass deportation of people,'" David Spicer, policy and engagement director for the USCCB's Secretariat of Migration, told OSV News.

"The vast majority of Americans, including the bishops themselves, support immigration enforcement efforts that prioritize those in our country who pose genuine threats to national security or public safety," Spicer explained.

But, he said, "a sweeping and at times punitive approach to enforcement — which is seemingly driven by numerical quotas — leads to, as the bishops have said, an environment that 'undermines the already limited due process provided to noncitizens, threatens family unity, and foments discrimination.'"



OSV News photo/David 'Dee' Delgado, Reuters

The family of a detained migrant speaks to immigration officers in an attempt to gain information at a U.S. immigration court in the Manhattan borough of New York City Jan. 16, 2026.

Catholic social teaching on immigration balances three interrelated principles — the right of persons to migrate in order to sustain their lives and those of their families, the right of a country to regulate its borders and control immigration, and a nation's duty to regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

"Respecting human dignity and upholding the rule of law are not in conflict," Spicer stressed.

He also noted that the U.S. is also "grappling with the consequences of a woefully inadequate immigration system that is in desperate need of meaningful reform," adding, "without that, we will continue to see outcomes that are inconsistent with fundamental American values."

Spicer quoted St. John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, "Evangelium Vitae" ("The Gospel of Life"): "A society

lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized."

And, said Spicer, "As Catholics guided by the Gospel and Church teaching, we are left asking ourselves: Is the current approach to immigration and immigrants furthering the common good? Is it promoting human life and dignity, especially regarding the poorest and most vulnerable among us? Is it strengthening families and communities?"

"If our answer to any of these questions is 'no,' then our faith calls us to work toward something better — and to reflect it in our words and deeds," he said.

**4:30-7:30 p.m. every Friday of Lent
except Good Friday**

**February 27 - Panther Blue Ribbon Special
Cajun Shrimp Boil with Bread Stick- \$17**

Dine-In, Drive Thru and Online Ordering available. Visit stpaulnky.org/fish-fry/ for the full menu.

7303 Dixie Highway, Florence, Kentucky 41042

**LANDSCAPING DESIGN,
INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE**

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

**Stegman
Landscape
Services**

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

(859) 393-3716

CARMEL MANOR
A MISSION TO CARE

Short-Term Rehab | Long-Term Care | Memory Care | Personal Care

SCAN ME

Visit our website at
www.CarmelManor.com/Hope

To learn more and to schedule a tour today!

100 Carmel Manor Road | Ft. Thomas, KY 41075 | 859.781.5111

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

HOUSE CLEANING

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

JOE HARMELING (859)609-2513

**I'M BACK! I Don't Do Portraits
 I Can Paint the Interior & Exterior of Your Home and More. Free Estimates. Fully Insured**

GOESSLING LANDSCAPING

New installations, maintenance and tree removal. Find us at GoesslingLandscaping.com
Call Norb at (859) 912-0340

SENIOR CITIZEN APARTMENT FOR RENT

Lakeside Park. 2 Bedrooms, Garage, and Equipped Kitchen. No Pets. Water and Sanitation included.
 \$1200 per month. Excellent condition
Call Tom @ 859-380-7738

IN SEARCH OF SNOWBIRDS

To rent our townhouse this winter in sunny Bradenton, Florida. Cozy 2 br, 1.5 bath in gated community. Brand new carpet throughout, lanai, W/D, reserved parking space, heated pool, gym, WiFi and Smart TV. Close to shopping, church, IMG; 25 min. to beach. One month minimum stay. Text or call 859-866-2104 for more info.

GERDES CONCRETE & MASONRY

Concrete - Specializing in concrete replacement, driveways, sidewalks, steps, patios, stamped concrete
Masonry - Cultured stone, retaining walls, brick pavers, foundation repairs, free standing wood burning fireplace
 Quality work & ref. Call Bill (859) 331-4733
Messenger advertiser since 1993

APARTMENT FOR RENT LAKESIDE PARK SENIORS ONLY 55+

1 Bedroom - 2nd Floor Unit, Located in 4 Family Building. Hardwood Floors, Garage. Landlord pays heat, water, and sanitation. \$950 per month + deposit. No Pets.
859-866-2607

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

MESSENGER

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Due to an upcoming retirement, the Diocese of Covington is seeking a full-time ad salesperson for its official newspaper, the Messenger, beginning in January. The successful candidate will be a practicing Roman Catholic and an excellent representative of the newspaper and the diocese. The candidate will be ready to embrace the mission of the diocesan newspaper, has some previous sales experience, works well as a team member, is attentive to detail, and energetic in serving existing customers as well as expanding sales to new clients. The salary is commission-based, with medical and retirement benefits provided by the diocese. Interested candidates are asked to e-mail a letter of interest and a résumé outlining sales experience and other qualifications to Stephen Kopylay at skopylay@covdio.org.

Marco Island, FL

3-min. walk to beach. 1st floor fully furnished 2BR, 2 bath condo. Contact angie@earlfranksflooring.com or (859) 801-8691 for pricing, pictures & availability.
 View at EarlFranksFlooringFacebook.com

Love numbers, financial management and children...

Come join our team @ DCCH Center as our Financial Controller. Full position description available on our website www.dcccenter.org
 Send resumes to: Hrteam@dcccenter.org



CONTROLLER (In-Person)

St. Charles - A Faith-Based Community Serving Seniors
 St. Charles is seeking an experienced Controller to provide financial leadership in support of our mission. This role oversees financial management, reporting, budgeting, payroll, compliance, and internal controls, while supporting strategic growth and Board reporting.

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree in Accounting; 10+ years of progressive accounting/financial management experience; strong GAAP and reporting skills.

Excellent Benefits: 401(k), health, dental, vision, life insurance, FSA, PTO, and tuition reimbursement.

Email your resume and cover letter detailing your qualifications and interest in the role to ssmith@stcharlescommunity.org



You Can Change Lives

Make a historic impact by using your talents to re-energize the Catholic Church in America. Join our team as a Part-Time Development Associate today!

DynamicCatholic.com/Hiring



ARCHIVIST

The Diocese of Covington invites qualified, actively-practicing Roman Catholics to apply for the part-time (15 hours) position of Archivist. The Diocesan Archives contains instruments and written documents which pertain to the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Diocese, including specifically but not exclusively, non-current files from Diocesan offices, sacramental records, academic transcripts of certain closed schools, certain photographs, and other historical information of Diocesan archival significance. The Archivist maintains records of acquisitions, labels and houses files, updates inventory, responds to records requests, and performs research when requested by Diocesan or parish personnel. Qualifications include either a degree in history, archive certification, or archive or library experience. Interested candidates may send a letter of interest, resume or C-V with compensation history, and a list of references with contact email addresses to Stephen Kopylay, SPHR by email or by fax: skopylay@covdio.org, 859/392-1589.

SCHOOL LUNCH HEROES DIOCESE OF COVINGTON SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Interested in a fast-paced, exciting, and rewarding career in school food services?

We offer flexible full-time and part-time work schedules with competitive pay and summers off. Benefits packages are available for eligible employees.

We have open positions:

St. Joseph Cold Spring - Fulltime Cook Monday-Friday 8:30-1:30

St. Joseph Crescent Springs-Parttime Dishwasher-Monday-Friday 10-2

Those interested in contributing to the successful operation of the school lunch program and ensuring the provision of nutritious meals to our students, please go to: www.covdio.org/employment, School Related Openings, Employment Application Non-Teacher, and send completed application to Diocese of Covington, ATTN: Laura Hatfield SLP Director, 1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011.

USCCB calls for adoration hours, works of mercy to celebrate America's 250th anniversary

OSV News

As the U.S. prepares to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has encouraged Catholics to participate in initiatives including a collective 250 Hours of Adoration and 250 Works of Mercy.

To celebrate the occasion, "America 250," the initiatives encourage prayer for the unity and healing of the U.S., according to a resource guide the USCCB has published. The conference previously said the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June.

In his encyclical "Dilexit Nos," Pope Francis "instructs us to 'nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist' in Holy Communion and Adoration, so that we might understand Christ's love for all more deeply and live out this love ourselves," the guide stated. "Our contemplation of the Sacred Heart leads us deeper into the mystery of our salvation and deeper into our love for Christ found in the faces of our sisters and brothers — especially those most in need."

The guide said parishes can participate in 250 Hours of Adoration by offering a Holy Hour on a weekly or monthly basis leading up to the nation's July 4 anniversary. It noted that this could include continuing current practices or inviting new people to join. It suggested similar efforts to carry out 250 Works of Mercy.

It includes resources for Holy Hours for life, peace, marriage, religious liberty, vocations, an end to racism, as well as a Sacred Heart Holy Hour.

"Consider hosting a holy hour or series of holy hours at



OSV News photo/courtesy FOCUS

A file shows young people praying as a priest holds the monstrance during adoration in Nashville, Tenn. As the United States prepares to commemorate its 250th anniversary July 4, 2026, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is encouraging Catholics to participate in initiatives including a collective 250 Hours of Adoration and 250 Works of Mercy as part of anniversary preparations.

your parish using the templates provided. ... You may have other ways to invite members of your community to spend some time in prayer for our country with Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament," the guide said. "To prepare for the Consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart, parishes can also incorporate the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus into their Holy Hour."

As examples of works of mercy, the guide encouraged parishes to find ways to assist women who are facing a crisis pregnancy; donate to food pantries and clothing closets, and community beautification programs; raise money for an overseas development project; sponsor a refugee family; tutor children; or volunteer at homeless shelters.

"The seven Corporal Works of Mercy come to us directly from the Scriptures in the Gospel of Matthew," the guide said. "Rooted in our lives of faith, the actions that Jesus calls us to in feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned, burying the dead, and giving alms are central elements of our Catholic identity."

It quotes from Pope Leo XIV's apostolic exhortation "Dilexi Te," which itself draws on Pope Francis' "Dilexit Nos": "As we contemplate Christ's love, 'we too are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others, and confirmed in our efforts to share in his work of liberation as instruments for the spread of his love.'"

Spiritual combat

(Continued from page 5)

In the face of these primordial temptations to relentless worldly satisfaction, to self-sufficiency and to that of personal aggrandizement, we take up with the Lord the spiritual combat of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These disciplines of the soul and weapons of the spirit are given to us so that hardened hearts can be cracked open to the grace and the glory of God. These weapons of the spirit must be wielded so that we might learn anew to worship the Lord, our God, serving him alone with undivided hearts. The goal of this spiritual combat is to move us from vice to virtue, from sin to sanctity, from death to life, Himself — the one who is the "joy of our salvation."

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



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

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





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

859.442.7776 | www.McHalesCatering.com



Established by the St. Charles Community

The Senior Resource Center is designed to inform, educate, and empower seniors and their families as they navigate the complexities of aging services. Our compassionate professionals offer expert guidance and support in every aspect of senior services, including:

- Home Modifications
- Memory / Dementia Care
- End of Life Planning
- Support Group Connections
- Medicaid and Medicare Assistance
- Senior Living (Levels of Care) Options



Feeling Overwhelmed?

Don't be. That's where our dedicated team of professionals can help. Email, call or make an appointment to come in and talk to us. We will listen. We will help.

What does it cost?

✔ Consultation services are free of charge!

How do I make an appointment?

☎ (859) 261-0746

📍 3705 Winston Avenue, Latonia, KY 41015

🌐 seniorresourcecenterofnky.org

Scan the QR code for more information about the Senior Resource Center!



Protecting God's Children for Adults Safe Environment Trainings

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

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

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

Step 3: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your

computer program blocks them.

Bulletins:
 ■ February bulletin: posted Sunday, Feb. 1; due Tuesday, March 3.

The monthly e-mail reminder of a new bulletin posted will come from system@pub.virtus.org.
www.virtusonline.org, enter your user id and password. If your account is suspended contact your primary location where you volunteer or are employed. Your primary location contact information is found under your Contact Tab.

VIRTUS Training:
 ■ Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6:30-9 p.m., Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, Training Room, Miller Building, Ft. Mitchell
 ■ Tuesday, March 3, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, March 3, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Thursday, March 19, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Thursday, March 19, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, April 15, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, April 15, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Thursday, April 30, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Thursday, April 30, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, May 19, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Tuesday, May 19, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, June 17, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, June 17, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, July 1, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Wednesday, July 1, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, July 28, 9-11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
 ■ Tuesday, July 28, 6-8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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

SHOPPER'S GUIDE

Hancock Drain Service Inc.

#1 in the #2 Business



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

(859) 356-6811

info@hancockdrainserviceinc.com

859.371.7444 www.GraniteWorldNKY.com



CUSTOM CABINETRY & COUNTERTOPS

YOU DREAM IT, WE BUILD IT



www.tomrechten.com

(859) 261-8269

Master HVAC #M04784

PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING • INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Over 95 Years of Family Owned Service!



Owners Lisa & Kris Knochelmann

Call 859.757.4779 • www.skpha.com

America's Choice in Homecare.
Visiting Angels
 LIVING ASSISTANCE SERVICES



Caregivers with character!

Reliable caregivers provide up to 24 hour non-medical care in your home. Hygiene assistance, meals, light housework, companionship. Affordable rates. Top Background Checks.

Cindy Sesher-Director

1099 Burlington Pike, Florence KY • (859) 647-6770

ARC ELECTRIC
 AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING, INC.

24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE

Since 1953

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS • HEATING SYSTEMS • AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

• New installations • Repair all makes and models

• Clean & Service • Humidifiers

• Oil or Propane • Radiant or Gas Heat

• Electronic Air Cleaner • Hot Water Heat Systems

441-7161



www.arcelevac.com

INSTALL CONFIDENCE
 Licensed Master HVAC Contractor M02125

RAWE Financial



859-415-0991

Your Family's Future is Our Family's Business

541 Buttermilk Pike, Ste 108
 Crescent Springs, KY 41017

RaweFinancial.com

Randy, Jessica, Eric & Linda
RandyRawe@RaweFinancial.com

Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network*, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.

BLAU MECHANICAL, INC.

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

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

Call David at the *Messenger* to place your ad in the SHOPPER'S GUIDE.

(859) 392-1572

Looking for something to do?



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

National/World

Holy See will not join Trump's 'Board of Peace' for Gaza

WASHINGTON — The Holy See “will not participate” in President Donald Trump’s “Board of Peace” for Gaza, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican’s secretary of state, said Feb. 17, citing “points that leave us somewhat perplexed.” In comments to reporters at a bilateral meeting in Rome with the Italian government, Cardinal Parolin confirmed the Holy See “will not participate in the Board of Peace because of its particular nature, which is evidently not that of other States.” He said that “certain critical issues that should be resolved,” including that “at the international level it should above all be the U.N. that manages these crisis situations.” The board was part of Trump’s peace plan for Gaza, which he announced in September. Trump is scheduled to host the board’s inaugural meeting in Washington Feb. 19 at the U.S. Institute of Peace, which the Trump administration renamed the “Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace” in December. More than two dozen countries have accepted Trump’s invitation to join the Board of Peace, including Israel as well as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt. However, like the Holy See, key U.S. allies in Europe have declined to join the board, with some expressing concern it would undercut the United Nations.

General belief is up, but no religious revival? Panels explore the contrast at NY Encounter

NEW YORK — Results of two national surveys of American adults released in 2025 indicated contrasting trends — more belief in God and spirituality, but no indication of any organized religious revival. The Pew Research Center reports said that an astonishing 92% say they hold one or more spiritual beliefs that Pew asked about: the existence of a soul, God or a universal spirit, something spiritual beyond the natural world, and an afterlife containing heaven, hell or both. While this has not created a stampede to church pews, the long-feared trend of secularization appears to be, for now, in retreat. This apparent paradox in the perception of a religious revival in the West was explored in the panel discussion “Hungry for Belonging?” at the annual New York Encounter, held Feb. 13-15 and organized by the Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation. The discussion, moderated by Brandon Vaidyanathan, professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America in Washington, included British writer Justin Brierley, author of “The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God”; The New York Times religion journalist Lauren Jackson; and Chip Rotolo, a research associate at the Pew Research

Center. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 did not “accelerate religious decline,” noted Rotolo. “Something is definitely shifting in American religious life. ... We can disagree and have to continue figuring out exactly what that is. It’s definitely an interesting time to study religion.”

For its 400th anniversary, St. Peter’s Basilica to get 21st-century upgrade

ROME — Four hundred years after its consecration, St. Peter’s Basilica is marking the milestone with a 21st-century upgrade. At a Feb. 16 Vatican press conference, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti unveiled anniversary celebrations leading up to Pope Leo XIV’s Mass on Nov. 18 — exactly four centuries after Pope Urban VIII dedicated the basilica. Pilgrims in 2026 can expect expanded rooftop access, a streamlined online reservation system and AI-powered, real-time Mass translations in 60 languages accessible on one’s cellphone by QR code. A new temporary Stations of the Cross, weekly “Spiritual Elevations” with the Cappella Giulia choir, lectures, and special meditations are also planned. Cardinal Gambetti called the anniversary “an opportunity to re-understand the Basilica as an ‘authentic event’ in the history of humanity.” In addition to the celebrations, an extensive conservation program is underway in partnership with Italian oil and gas company Eni to safeguard the basilica’s structural stability for future centuries. The project, which used advanced geophysical, geological, topographical and structural survey technologies, found the basilica to be in a “good state of health.”

Cardinal Fernández proposes path of theological dialogue with SSPX toward full communion

ROME — The Vatican’s doctrine chief proposed a path of theological dialogue with the Society of St. Pius X, the traditionalist Catholic group threatening to defy Rome by ordaining bishops without papal approval, during a meeting at the Vatican on Feb. 12. Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, met at the Vatican with Father Davide Pagliarani, superior general of the Society of St. Pius X. According to the dicastery, the cardinal proposed “a path of specifically theological dialogue, with a well-defined methodology.”

The talks would include discussion of “the minimum requirements necessary for full communion with the Catholic Church,” as well as “the different degrees of adherence required by the various texts of the Second Vatican Council and their interpretation.” The meeting follows the society’s announcement that it plans episcopal consecrations July 1 without papal approval. The dicastery warned such ordinations “would imply a decisive rupture of ecclesial communion (schism) with grave consequences for the Fraternity as a whole,” and said dialogue requires the group to “suspend the decision regarding the announced episcopal ordinations.” The Vatican now awaits the society’s response.

Catechist, pregnant wife among kidnapped in latest anti-Christian attacks in Nigeria

KADUNA STATE, Nigeria — Gunmen in Nigeria’s Kaduna state abducted 32 people, including a Catholic catechist and his pregnant wife, in the latest attack targeting Christian communities. Armed militants raided two villages tied to St. Joseph Parish, leaving residents terrified and forcing most families to flee. The kidnapping came days after another assault on Holy Trinity Church, where a priest and parishioners were taken, and a separate raid on a prayer vigil in Benue state. Catholic leaders say the violence is escalating. Nigeria’s bishops recently called the country a “slaughterhouse,” while clergy marched in protest, demanding stronger protection. Church officials report more than 80 Christians killed, hundreds of churches and communities destroyed, and tens of thousands displaced. The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria criticized the government for its continued treatment of the right to life “as optional,” and called on authorities to deploy security forces to defend areas “where citizens are under siege.” Pope Leo XIV voiced sorrow and prayers for victims, urging authorities to safeguard human life. Local priests say despite fear, some faithful remain, determined to care for their communities and trust in God’s faithfulness there still today.

IT'S FISH FRY TIME
 ...AND THE DONALDSON ROAD CONSTRUCTION IS FINALLY COMPLETE, SO IT'S EASY TO GET HERE AGAIN.
 COME JOIN US FOR THE BEST FISH FRY THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN

MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN PARISH
 1130 DONALDSON HIGHWAY, ERLANGER, KY - WEST OFF EXIT 184



6 FRIDAYS IN LENT
FEBRUARY 20 & 27 AND
MARCH 6, 13, 20 & 27
4-8 PM

3 DINING OPTIONS AVAILABLE
DINE-IN, DRIVE-THRU OR ORDER ONLINE WITH CURBSIDE PICK-UP
 GO TO WWW.MQHPARISH.COM AND CLICK THE LINK TO PLACE A PREPAY CURBSIDE ORDER, PARK IN THE AREA DESIGNATED FOR CURBSIDE PICKUP AND YOUR ORDER WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOUR CAR.
◆ OVERFLOW PARKING AREA ◆
PARKING WITH SHUTTLE SERVICE AVAILABLE AT DYNAMIC CATHOLIC, 5081 OLYMPIC DRIVE FOR DINE IN GUESTS



MIDWEST EYE CENTER

TIME FOR CATARACT SURGERY?

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

****Voted "Best Doctors" 2015-2023**
 as published in *Cincinnati Magazine!*

WE OFFER DROP-LESS CATARACT SURGERY



Saif Jaweed, M.D.



Kristen Ann V. Mendoza, M.D.



Aaron R. Noll, M.D.



Jean M. Noll, M.D.



Jenny McKenzie, O.D.



Chris D. Thon, O.D.



Jillian Zimmer, O.D.

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

The Church is proof of God’s plan to unite humanity, pope says

Josephine Peterson
OSV News

The Catholic Church is not merely an institution, but a visible sign of God’s plan to unite all humanity in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, Pope Leo XIV said in his weekly general audience.

The pope continued his series on the Second Vatican Council, emphasizing one of its principal documents, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, “Lumen Gentium,” which states that the Church is “in Christ like a sacrament,” and therefore both are a “closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.”

“It is through the Church that God achieves the aim of bringing people to him and uniting them with one another,” he said Feb. 18 in Italian. “Union with God finds its reflection in the union of human beings.”

Pope Leo said that this document refers to the Church as a “mystery,” not because it is incomprehensible, but rather because what was previously hidden “is now revealed.”

“Church is an expression of what God wants to accomplish in the history of humanity; therefore, by looking at the Church, we can to some extent grasp God’s plan, the mystery,” he said.

The pope said humanity is naturally fragmented, but Jesus broke down the wall that separates people, and the Church was established through his sacrifice.

“Sitting at the right hand of the Father, he is continually active in the world that he might lead men to the Church and through it join them to himself and that he might make them partakers of his glorious life by nourishing them with his own body and blood,” Pope Leo said.

With Rome’s temperatures slowly rising, Pope Leo returned to holding the general audience in St. Peter’s Square, waving at visitors, kissing and blessing babies as he rode in the popemobile on Ash Wednesday. At the end of his general audience, the pope addressed the beginning of

the 40-day Lenten season in his greetings to English-speakers.

“As we begin our Lenten journey today, let us ask the

Lord to grant us the gift of true conversion of heart so that we may better respond to his love for us and share that love with those around us,” he said.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV kneels to greet a child in a wheelchair after leading his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Feb. 18, 2026.



Be Concerned
The People’s Pantry
Annual Christmas Store

Presenting Sponsors:
GreenSky
prysmian

Since 1968, our Annual Christmas Store has been an integral part of Be Concerned’s mission. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors who supported our inaugural Christmas Store sponsorship program in 2025. Your generosity enabled us to serve a **record-breaking 2,100 children**, bringing joy, hope, and dignity to families during the holiday season.

Gift Card Sponsor:
The Waugh Family Charitable Fund

Santa’s Workshop Sponsor:
Linda Vila Passione

St. Nick Sponsors:
The Sanborn Family; Carolyn Rowles

Reindeer Games Sponsors:
Levi; Steve & Mary Ellen Elsbernd; Tom & Jeanne Cady; Kay Franke & Jean Payne; ViewPoint Psychological Services; John Lorenz; Toyota Boshoku; Lawrence Boschert; Jackson Florist; Kim & Nancy Hiltibrand; Thomas Kacir; Robann Cunningham; Pine Meer Foundation

Milk and Cookies Sponsors:
Kevin Moser; Michael & Donna Downing; Mike & Connie Lenihan; Tom & Judy Kinman; Mike & Laurie Arnold; Julie Bruton; Rob & Amy Haney; The Frohlich Family; David & Kathy Manning; Mary Gray

Secret Santa Sponsors:
Mary Dressman; Linda & Doug Wisner; Michael Sucher Douglas Stegman; Darya Ramirez; The McGinnis Family; Michele Redden-Borowski; Boone Ready Mix; The Wolnitzek Family; Laura Rippe Cardosi; Whitewater Community Pantry; Barb Rintala; The Groeschen Family; Kristi Jennings; Charlotte Lokesak; Bruce Haake; Michael Whelan

Stocking Stuffer Sponsors:
Mary Tignor; CTI Clinical Trials; Minda Michaels; Donna Bianchi; Don & Kristi Goins; John Rouster; Judith Clabes; Vicki David; Bryan Tomasetti; Deborah Comstock; Lois Flaherty; Denise Clark; Zac Grawe; L.A. Stopa; Kim Serra Freer; Nancy Rowles; The Cogswell Family; Rick and Anne Gaunder; Mary Grothaus; Barbara Blank; Lisa Uehlein; Tara Rowekamp; Susan Kerdolff; Juliana Menner; Alpha Alpha Mu Zeta/Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; Inc.; Craig and Jennifer Dressler; Connie Flynn; The Brinkman Family; Pam Schnieder; James & Karen Cusentino; Molly King; Leah & Jeff Fossitt

Drive Partners:
CinCity Curated; Last Mile Food Rescue; Cincinnati Children’s NKY; Corken Steel; European Wax Center in Newport; First Financial Bank; Flottman Co.; Kenton County Parks; Madison Place Apartments; Mary Queen of Heaven; Orange Theory Fitness; Reka’s Restaurant; Signature Hardware; St. Joseph School in Crescent Springs; St. Agnes Church; St. Elizabeth Healthcare; St. Joseph Church; St. Pius X School; TANK/Remke Markets; TQL; Villa Madonna Academy; Wallace Woods Neighborhood Association; Ft. Wright Walmart; WLWT News 5; Bella Dance; Covington Street Hockey League; Crossroads Church; Wegman Company; Blessed Sacrament Church; Crown Lift Trucks; Harper Co.; Hope Ministries; Mother of God Church; New Friends of NKY; NKYWINS; Notre Dame Academy; Pilates Body Barre; Viewpoint PSY Services; WCPO Toy Team 9



CTI
CLINICAL TRIAL & CONSULTING



ViewPoint
Psychological Services



Levi's



BRM
BOONE READY MIX
371-5542



Community Pantry



Pine Meer Foundation



Jackson
FLORIST & GARDEN CENTER



TOYOTA BOSHOKU