

- 2 Holy Week at the Cathedral**
Holy Thursday and Good Friday
- 3 Chimera return to Covington**
- 3 Catholic Schools Commission**
First general assembly
- 3 Child Abuse Awareness Month**
- 3 Divine Mercy Sunday**
Video out now
- 4 Holy Week Mission of Mercy**
- 9 Gardens at St. Patrick's**
Inaugural Good Friday Stations
- 12 Newport Central Catholic**
Athletic complex blessing

Moving? Wrong address?

Call the circulation desk,
 (859) 392-1570

Bishop's Schedule3
 Commentary5
 People and Events6
 Shopper's Guide15
 VIRTUS15
 Classifieds16
 News Briefs19

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

We are invited into the life of Christ, says Bishop during Easter Vigil

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

With a service beginning in total darkness, illuminated only by an Easter Fire — the celebration of the Easter Vigil after sunset marks the official end of the Lenten season and the beginning of Easter, the celebration of Christ's resurrection.

The pews were filled as the vigil began at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington — with Bishop John Iffert serving as the Mass's celebrant and homilist. Among the congregation were 16 candidates and catechumens, who would receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion during the service. These numbers are representative of more than 420 who were welcomed into the Church during the Easter Vigil across the diocese, a more than 57 percent increase from last year.

As his homily began, Bishop Iffert welcomed all who were present — Cathedral parishioners, their families, visitors and, in a special way, the candidates and catechumens.

"Welcome especially to those who have been journeying with us," he said, greeting also the families and friends of these individuals who had come to support this step in their journey.

Remarking on some struggle to light the Paschal candle at the beginning of the Mass, following the blessing of the fire, Bishop Iffert spoke on his worries since that the fire would go out.

"Just before I walked over here to the ambo to begin sharing," Bishop Iffert said, "I looked up and I saw that flame dancing above the top of the candle. And what happens? Fear is transformed into joy. That's as good a place to begin tonight as any, isn't it?"

With a smile, Bishop Iffert said that "it fits with what I was hoping to say to you when I came in tonight."

Bishop Iffert spoke about the fear felt by the three women who came to discover the tomb empty, and how the angel speaks to the women, "Do not be afraid."

"He tells them that the Lord Jesus is not in the tomb but has

(Continued on page 7)



Baker photos

Bishop John Iffert, with his hands raised, blesses the Easter Fire at the start of the Easter Vigil Mass, April 4.

Cardinal Dolan, Bishop Iffert bless and dedicate the Gardens at St. Patrick's on Holy Wednesday

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

The Gardens at St. Patrick's beckoned hundreds to a celebration, ribbon cutting and Mass on April 1, with founder Gerald Lundergan, his wife Charlotte Lundergan and other esteemed guests such as former President of the United States Bill Clinton, a personal friend of the Lundergans; Archbishop Emeritus of New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan; former University of Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari; and the diocese's own Bishop John Iffert and Bishop Emeritus Roger Foy. Together, they cut the symbolic ribbon in front of the state-of-the-art welcome center, opening the Gardens to all, inviting them to a place of prayer, reverence and personal pilgrimage, where they can follow along in Christ's paschal mystery.

Cardinal Dolan began the celebration of Mass outdoors, among the stations, with Bishop John Iffert; Father Augustine Aidoo, pastor, St. Patrick Church, Maysville; Father Joshua Heskamp, parochial vicar, St. Patrick Church; Father Michael Black, parochial administrator, St. John the Baptist Parish, Wilder; Father Andrew Young, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring; and Deacon Steve Winbigler, also of St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, before the threat of rain and increased wind speed necessitated the celebration to move indoors.



Bailey photo

New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan (center) tips his beretta while Covington Bishop John Iffert (left) and Bishop Emeritus Roger Foy (right) applaud during the dedication of the Gardens at St. Patrick's, April 1.

"Sometimes when you have these kinds of emergencies, it's more memorable, and it kind of reminds us, it's his sacrifice, it's his supper; we're blessed to participate in it," said Cardinal Dolan of
(Continued on page 8)

Following God is counter cultural, said Bishop Iffert at Holy Thursday Mass

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

The Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper was held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, where celebrant and homilist Bishop John Iffert shared a message of salvation through Christ, and the counter cultural worship of the Lord.

In the first reading, the Lord passes a commandment to Moses that all households should procure an unblemished lamb for slaughter. The blood of this lamb shall be sacrificed in the name of the Lord, its blood applied to the doorposts and its flesh roasted for eating.

This worship of God, Bishop Iffert said, would be "abhorrent," to the Egyptians. "You see, in the land of Egypt, these young creatures, especially the more perfect they were, would have been considered a reflection of the divine." By participating in this sacrificial worship, the Israelites "reject the worship of the land of Egypt, and instead they will worship the one true God. This is testimony to their neighbors that they do not fit in," said Bishop Iffert. Their worship of the Lord would have been deemed countercultural, and "enraged" their neighbors, said Bishop Iffert.

In the second reading, Jesus shares the words which are echoed at every celebration of the Eucharist, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

"Jesus taught his disciples that this was his body and his blood. He was anticipating his own sacrifice on the cross, which would come in the following hours. He anticipated his own gift of himself and instead of lamb, he places his own, divine, human self at the center of the sacrifice," said Bishop Iffert.

In his own sacrifice, Jesus acts as the sacrificial lamb from the time of Moses, and during the Last Supper he casts aside any status he might have and washes the feet of his disciples.

"He rises from the meal, and he puts aside his outer cloak, the outer cloak that for so many in the society would have represented their social standing," said Bishop Iffert. And wrapping a towel around his waist, "he proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples. And he taught us again to reject the weight of the world, he taught us again to reject that kind of culture of empire where the only one right and wrong is what you have the power and

wealth to get away with," said Bishop Iffert.

The readings at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, represent a counter cultural way to live. To know one's own weakness, and in the way of the disciples, have our feet washed by the Lord in the course of salvation.

Bishop Iffert said, "We need to know that our feet are filthy and that they must be washed by the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be sustained in the way. We need to be saved. It's counter cultural to know that you're needy and to embrace it."

"Being a follower of Jesus, is always counter cultural, to be true to the worship of God has always been a different way to live. Jesus asks not that we be successful but that you love one another in everything you do. We pray to be worthy of the teaching of the God of Man, the one who loves us and who loves us to the end" he said.

Bailey photos



(top right) Bishop Iffert washes the feet of the faithful at the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper. Acting in the way of Christ at the Last Supper, who washed the feet of the 12 disciples, revealing, Bishop Iffert said, a "pattern of salvation."

(left and above) Bishop Iffert takes the Blessed Sacrament from the altar, and under the ombrellino, carries it to the altar of repose. A tradition of Holy Thursday Mass which leaves the tabernacle empty as a symbol of Christ's death.

On Good Friday, Cathedral vice-rector says Passion reveals the truth about us, about God

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

As the one day in the liturgical year that Mass is not celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Good Friday observance, which this year fell on April 3, is a solemn observance and celebration of the Lord's death and Passion.

Good Friday services include a liturgy marked by solemnity — with a silent procession. It is customary during the liturgy for the congregation to come forward and venerate the cross, typically with a kiss or reverent touch.

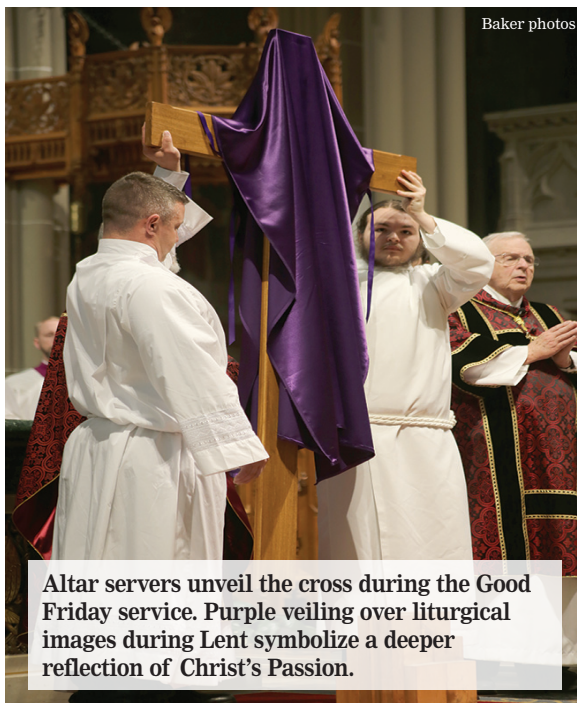
Father Ryan Maher, rector, was the celebrant at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption's Good Friday service. Vice-rector Msgr. Kurt Kemo served as the homilist.

"Good Friday forces us to slow down and look at what our salvation costs," Msgr. Kemo said during his homily. "Not an idea, not a symbol — a body. Blood poured out of love."

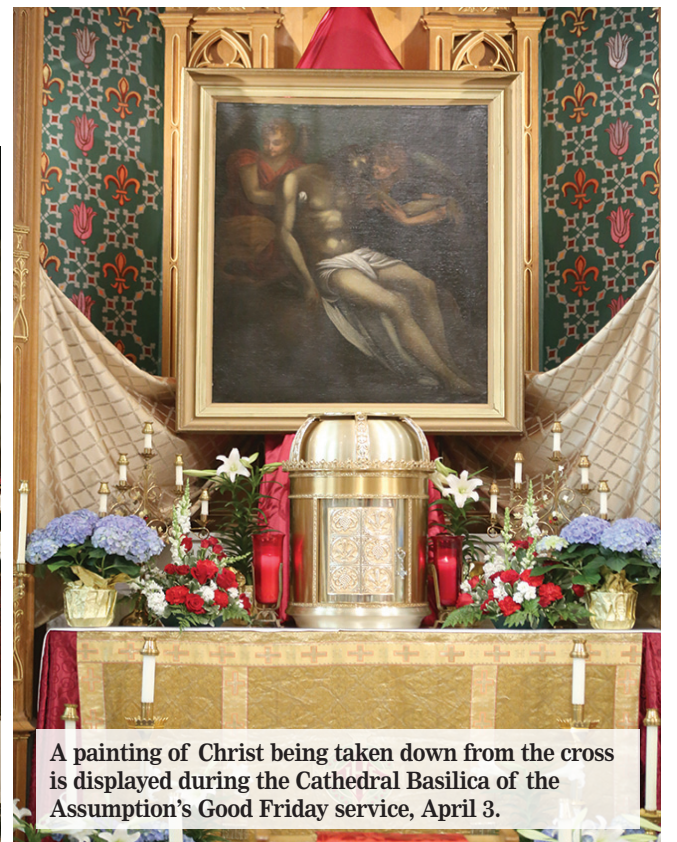
Msgr. Kemo said that "Jesus does not die peacefully in his sleep. He is betrayed by a friend, abandoned by his disciples ... nailed to wood, and yet, this is not defeat."

"He does not have his life taken from him," Msgr. Kemo continued. "He hands it over on the cross ... The work is complete, the work of love, the work of obedience, the work of redemption. Good Friday reveals the truth about God. God does not save us from a dis-

(Continued on page 3)



Altar servers unveil the cross during the Good Friday service. Purple veiling over liturgical images during Lent symbolize a deeper reflection of Christ's Passion.



A painting of Christ being taken down from the cross is displayed during the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption's Good Friday service, April 3.



Chimeras return to Covington home

The final chimera has been installed on the top of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The 26 chimeras were moved to the roof of the Cathedral, March 30, for their installation through the week of April 6. Constructed by Boston Valley Terra Cotta, the new chimeras were made by using 3D scans of the old chimeras to cast foam molds, from there a hollow mold was made, from which the new chimera were created. Each new chimera is made of hollow terracotta and installed using a threaded rod to anchor them atop the Cathedral. Now, all chimera have taken their rightful place, watching over the citizens of Covington and the Diocese at large.



Catholic Schools Commission is first general assembly to meet

Deacon Jim Fortner, chief operating officer for the Diocese of Covington, welcomed about 140 people, April 14, to the general assembly of the newly formed Catholic Schools Commission. It is one of four — and the largest — Commissions convening this year to gather the collective wisdom of the people of the Diocese to develop a pastoral plan that will inform the ministries and governance of the local Church for a decade or more. The other three Commissions are Catholic Charities, Catholic Foundation and Diocesan Governance. So far, over 330 people have answered the call to be a part of a Commission in what could be an historic moment in the life of the Diocese. “I feel strongly that God has chosen the right people to help us navigate through this,” said Deacon Fortner. “I really think this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for us in the Diocese, with Bishop Iffert, to make a substantial change in how we operate — not just schools but also the Curia, Catholic Charities and in the whole Foundation set up.” General assembly meetings for the Catholic Foundation and Catholic Charities Commissions were scheduled for April 15 and 16, respectively. The Diocesan Governance Commission will begin its work in the fall of 2026 and will be primarily focused on the needs identified by the other three commissions. To learn more about the commissions and to register for a commission visit covdiopanning.org.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month — here’s how you can raise awareness and support children in need

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. “The month of April offers us the opportunity to come together to protect our children and ensure every child has a safe and nurturing environment where they can grow and thrive,” wrote the USCCB Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection in the conference’s 2026 materials.

Participation in raising awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month includes wearing blue, the recognized color for child abuse prevention and awareness, or displaying pinwheels — another symbol of the movement. The Diocese of Covington, including the Curia building

(Continued on page 4)



A sign facing the street from the Diocese of Covington Curia, Covington, invites the community to “light up blue” in the month of April for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

(Continued from page 2)

tance, he enters our suffering.”

In addition to this truth, Msgr. Kemo said that Good Friday “also reveals the truth about us.”

“We are the ones who shall be crucified,” he said. “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them.’ ... God responds to sin not with vengeance, but with mercy — not with power, but with self-giving love. When we venerate the cross before us today, we are not honoring suffering for its own sake. We are honoring love that holds nothing back, love that goes to the very end — love that trusts the Father, even in darkness.”



A woman venerates the cross during the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption’s Good Friday service with a kiss.



Divine Mercy Sunday

In his Divine Mercy Sunday homily, Father Ryan Maher reminds us that our wounds are always revered by the Lord, we can trust the Lord.

To hear more from the homily and watch more videos from the official Diocese of Covington Youtube channel, scan the QR code.



Bishop’s Schedule

- April 17**
High school seniors’ Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.
- April 18**
Sacrament of Confirmation, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Park Hills, noon
- April 19**
Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
- April 20**
Good Shepherd Dinner, Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, 6 p.m.
- April 21**
Board of Trustees meeting, Pontifical College Josephinum, 8:30 a.m.
- April 22**
Sacrament of Confirmation, Divine Mercy group, Cathedral Basilica, 7 p.m.
- April 23**
ACUE donor luncheon, Holy Cross Elementary School, Latonia, noon
- Sacrament of Confirmation, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 7 p.m.
- April 25**
Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.
- April 26**
Vespers, Serra Club Server awards, Cathedral Basilica, 2 p.m.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

(Continued from page 3)



Baker photo

A blue pinwheel is shown tied to the fence at St. Mary's Park, Covington. Pinwheels, as well as blue ribbons and their color, are considered a recognized symbol of child abuse prevention.

in Covington, and other Greater Cincinnati organizations and businesses will also be participating in the "Light it Up Blue" campaign, shining blue light onto their buildings and businesses — a campaign that Julie Feinauer, director, Office of Safe Environment, says that individuals are encouraged to participate in, too, lighting their homes blue in support of this important initiative.

Other ways to support child abuse prevention, both in April and year wide, is to support "local agencies that help women who are in domestic violence situations," Mrs. Feinauer said, "because that is one place (homes) where children are abused, are in these violent homes." Such organizations include the Brighton Center, Catholic Charities and the Rose Garden Home Mission.

"All of these places give support to low-income families or to families who are struggling," said Mrs. Feinauer. "Anytime that you are taking stress out of people's lives, it's helping to ensure that children aren't going to be put into abusive situations."

"Unfortunately, the Catholic Church in particular has become associated with abuse," she said, "We want to be seen as the Church moving forward doing everything that we can to prevent, to help educate and to give resources to

children and families in need."

The Diocese of Covington continues to support this mission of healing — with 3 p.m. monthly Holy Hours held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, held on the third Thursday of each month praying for victims of abuse. And with programs such as VIRTUS, which vet the volunteers and individuals who interact with children in the diocese and educate adults on important topics such as how to create safe environments for children as well as recognize and report suspected abuse — as all adults in Kentucky are considered mandatory reporters. And by educating its school children, preschool through 12th grade, on safety by identifying boundaries and reporting to safe adults through the VIRTUS Empowering God's Children program.

"We are grateful for the work of individuals, organizations and policymakers who continue to work for the protection of children from abuse and neglect," the USCCB concluded their letter for 2026 Child Abuse Prevention Month, further encouraging all Catholics and people nationally to continue the mission.

Holy Week Mission of Mercy sent students to become part of the story of redemption

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Continuing the tradition from last year, the diocesan Youth Ministry office held a Holy Week Mission of Mercy for diocesan youth, in partnership with the Regnum Christi Youth movement. Students were invited and challenged to spend Holy Week accompanying Jesus and taking their faith to the streets, sharing the love of Jesus with those who perhaps would not make it to church themselves.

The retreat featured prayer, fellowship and opportunities for evangelization. Seventy-five high school and 12 elementary students were joined by 12 young adult team leaders and 45 adult volunteers during the course of the three-day mission.

Included in the retreat was a Good Friday "Cross Walk." During the Cross Walk, divided into eight groups, students were assigned with routes alongside adult chaperones — taking them into Covington and surrounding communities to pray for and with the people there.

Each group was equipped with a wooden cross and post it notes. As they met people on the streets, they invited them to pray with them and put their intentions onto the crosses.

"I do believe that because we're walking and carrying a cross, it's not just alongside of Jesus, but united to him," said Father Andrew Gronotte, LC, a Legionnaire of Christ who joined students for the mission told youth prior to taking to the streets. "Our life is becoming one with his, and we're part of the story of redemption. As we carry those crosses through the streets ... we're praying with others, we're interceding for others. And that's all the way in which Jesus is saying, 'I want you to be part of me, be part of that redemption I've come to share with the world'."

After the walk, students came together

for the Good Friday liturgy at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, then set back out to pray the Stations of the Cross together while walking around the block. Friday ended with intercessory prayer by teams, recalling the many prayer intentions they had gathered throughout the previous two days, including a door-to-door mission inviting individuals to Mass the day before, on Holy Thursday.

"This was my second time participating in the Holy Week Missions and it has been a life changing experience," said Dexter, one of the young adult volunteers. "From seeing highschoolers have the courage to pray with strangers, crying with people I just met or seeing how a simple smile can have such a positive impact on someone — it is evident that the Holy Spirit was all over Covington this Holy Week."



Baker and O'Connor photos

(above) Two youths pin their own prayer intentions to a cross set up in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, prior to the Friday Cross Walk. The Cross Walk, as part of the Youth Ministry Holy Week Mission of Mercy, has youths invite individuals on the streets of Covington to pray with them during the Triduum.

(left) A missionary carries a wooden cross down Madison Avenue, Covington.

(below) A young missionary pins collected prayer intentions to a carried cross near Mainstrasse, Covington.



VOL. 96 **MESSENGER** No. 14
Official newspaper of the Diocese of Covington
Cathedral Square • 1125 Madison Ave. • Covington, Ky. 41011-3115
Telephone: (859) 392-1500 E-mail: messenger@covdio.org
www.covdio.org

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

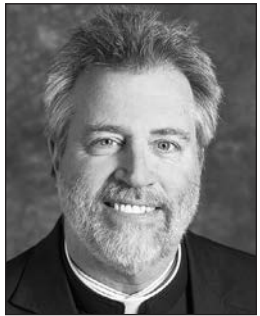
Bishop John C. Iffert Publisher
Laura Keener Editor, General Manager
Laura Gillespie Production Coordinator/Designer
Maura Baker Staff Writer
Isabella (Bella) Bailey Multimedia Correspondent
Tony Zilliox Sales Manager

Understanding the old through the new

The readings for the Third Sunday of Easter — Cycle A — are: Act 2:14, 22-33, 1 Peter 1:17-21 and Luke 24:13-35.

Most Catholics know that there are two creeds we use at Mass, the Apostles' Creed (the shorter of the two, the one most people pray at the beginning of the Rosary) and

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which title we, thankfully, usually shorten to Nicene Creed. In the Nicene Creed, which we use most of the time, we pray these words: "For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." Many Catholics seem to understand the phrase — "in

accordance with the Scriptures" — to refer to the Passion narratives in the Gospels. While that thought is not completely incorrect, the more fully correct understanding of it is that it refers to the types and prophecies in what we call the Old Testament. For instance, in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he wrote, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, . . ." (1 Cor 15:3-4) Since Paul wrote this around the year 55, and the first Gospel was written somewhere around 65-70, Paul could not have been referring to the Gospel accounts, but was clearly referring to the Hebrew scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) he knew so well.

The fact that Paul uses the phrase and the Church incorporated it into her creed shows the importance of it, but one scholar, John Bergsma, goes even further: "The inclusion of this line, the most widely-used and recognized statement of the Christian faith, should cause us to realize this fact: that Jesus's Passion and Resurrection fulfilled the oracles of the prophets is central to the Gospel message. (Emphasis in original.) Moreover, in the early Church, it was of considerable apologetic and evangelistic power because no other religious or political leader could claim to have fulfilled ancient prophecies in the way that Jesus had." (THE WORD OF THE LORD: Reflections on the SUNDAY MASS READINGS for YEAR A, p.131)

We have two examples this weekend of the early Christians coming to understand Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection in terms of the Old Testament narratives, types (events and people in the Old Testament that prefigure New Testament events and people, particularly Jesus), and prophecies. In the first reading, Peter helps the Jews to understand Jesus' life, death, and resurrection through Psalm 16, and Jesus himself, in the Gospel account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, apparently goes through all the Old Testament references to him to help the two understand the events of the previous week.

In the first reading this weekend, from the Acts of the Apostles, the Church presents Peter's sermon after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is important to understand that the general belief of the Jews of Peter's time was that the psalms were written by David. Psalm 16 must have been a puzzle to them, especially the line, "nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption." But to Peter, reading the psalm through the perspective of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, the psalm makes complete sense, and he uses his new understanding to begin to evangelize his listeners. The psalm, Peter contends, could not be about David, because

(Continued on page 17)

Noticing

From that moment on, she had my undivided attention. I was in awe. She was knowledgeable, resourceful and efficient in getting around, all patient, kind and gracious with my quirks and questions. She introduced her friends, shared stories of her own adventures, her classes, the book she was reading, her plans for her senior dissertation and what's next after graduation.

She put me at ease. I really paused. I may have even stopped. No agenda, no to do list — just time with her; watching her in this new exciting chapter of her life. I noticed a lot.

I feel fortunate to have carried this state of mind into Holy Week. For the first time in a while, our stateside family attended all three liturgical services of the Triduum. If I could get a "do-over" in my life, I would make this a steadfast tradition in our household. Attending all three components fully immersed our family into the events that led up to Jesus' death and resurrection. Each experience requires intentional participation and carries with it significant meaning.

On Holy Thursday, Jesus is our servant and friend. On Good Friday, Jesus is persecuted, enduring unimaginable suffering to save us. On those nights, we left the church in solemn silence with lumps in our throats.

Then came Easter Vigil. Sitting in the stillness and darkness helped me listen, really hear for the first time the messages of love, sacrifice, forgiveness and hope present in the Old Testament readings and their connection to Jesus' death and joyful resurrection. Our new church family was welcomed into the fold. Instead of that lump in my throat, I left with a very full, grateful heart and a deep sense of peace.

You might be thinking, "Where have you been, Karen?" It's a fair question.

This experience made me realize how easy it is to miss what matters most. Even in Jesus' time, there were many who did not recognize the magnitude of what was unfolding. I have been in that crowd, caught up in daily life, moving from one task to the next, not taking the time to notice. And in doing so, I risked missing the greatest love story ever told.

(Continued on page 17)

I like to work, all kinds of work, in my professional life and at home. I love the challenge of figuring things out, working with others to accomplish a goal and celebrating that work. Even when things are not going perfectly, there is satisfaction in bringing something to completion.

The problem is that it can become difficult to stop, even pause for a bit. The work picks you up and sweeps you along with an endless to do list and that next goal. Before I know it, time has vanished. I am left wondering and worrying about what I missed in the other parts of my life. And, that work — well, it's still there.

I recently had the opportunity to pause thanks to a trip to Italy to visit my daughter studying abroad there. She's been away for over two months, and I could not wait to see her.

The trip was amazing; I took a notebook to jot down things that caught my attention along the way. The town where Emilie is studying is quintessential Italy: stone buildings lining narrow cobblestone streets, terra cotta roofs, impressive heavy, wooden doors, trailing vines and flowers flowing from pots and flower boxes throughout town. At a local market, we wandered past delicate teacups and plates, ornate brooches and rings, and colorful scarves on full display. My Italian grandmother had collected similar treasures, and these souvenirs drew me back to memories of her.

And, then there was my daughter.

When I first arrived in Rome, I managed to get lost right away navigating the trains on my own. From afar, she calmly helped me get back on track and met me at the train station when I finally reached her town. We had the best tight hug and she took my suitcase, confidently leading me through the winding streets to my room to get settled.

VIEWPOINT



Karen Zengel

America needs you, Thomas Aquinas

When I was in Toulouse, France, filming for my 20-part documentary on Catholicism — I will admit that I was in Toulouse for fairly personal reasons. In the Dominican church of the Jacobins, in a golden casket situated under a side altar, are the remains of my hero, St. Thomas Aquinas. I spent a good amount of time in silent prayer in front of Thomas's coffin, thanking him for giving direction to my life.

When I was a 14-year-old freshman at Fenwick High School, I was privileged to hear from a young Dominican priest the arguments for God's existence that Thomas Aquinas formulated in the 13th century. I don't entirely know why, but hearing those rational demonstrations lit a fire in me that has yet to go out. They gave me a sense of the reality of God and thereby awakened in me a desire to serve God, to order my life radically toward him. I'm a priest because of God's grace, but that grace came to me through the mediation of Thomas Aquinas.

As I prayed before the tomb of Aquinas, I found myself ruminating on the importance for our own time of the one whom the Church calls its "common doctor." What can this 13th century Dominican master teach us?

First, Thomas Aquinas saw with utter clarity that since all truth comes from God, there can never be, finally, any conflict between the data of the sciences and the

facts of revelation. In his own time, there were advocates of the so-called "double truth theory," which held that the "truths" of philosophy and science were in one category and the "truths" of the faith in another. On this interpretation, one could hold mutually exclusive positions as long as one remained cognizant that the opposing views were in separate departments of the mind.

Well, Thomas saw this as so much nonsense and said so. Apparent conflicts between science and religion (to use our terms) are born of either bad science or bad religion, and they should compel the puzzled thinker to dig deeper and think harder.

Following Augustine, Thomas said that if an interpretation of the Bible runs counter to clearly established findings of the sciences, we should move to a more mystical and symbolic reading of the Scriptural passage. How important this is today when forms of fundamentalism have given rise to a terrible rationalist counter-reaction.

Biblical literalism — a modernism, alien to the patristic and medieval minds — produces a variety of views repugnant to physics, evolutionary biology, cosmology, etc. And this has led to the sequestration of some religious types and some scientific types into separate and mutually hostile camps. Thomas Aquinas would see how foolish and counter-productive this is for both science and religion. The faith, he claimed, should always go out to meet the culture with confidence, and the culture should see its own deepest aspirations realized in the faith.

Secondly, Thomas knew that the Creator God of the Bible is the only finally satisfying explanation for the existence of the contingent things of the world. He was deeply impressed by the actual existence of those things

(Continued on page 17)

WORD ON FIRE



Bishop Robert Barron

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/>.

Serve with Sisters, April 18, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Meet at Mother of God Church Hall, Covington, for 9 a.m. prayer before heading out to serve at local agencies. Afterward, return for lunch and a shared reflection. Service opportunities include gardening, helping at a food pantry, assisting with bingo, and more. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg, the Sisters of Divine Providence, and the Sisters of Notre Dame. Register at tinyurl.com/ServeWithSistersCovington. Questions? Email Sister Leslie Keener at Ikeener@cdpkentucky.org.

“Eucharistic Miracles: Faith, Flesh, and Forensics,” April 19, 11:30 a.m., St. Joseph Church Hall, Warsaw. Join engineer and author Ray Grijalba for a fascinating presentation on the scientific evidence behind Eucharistic miracles and Jesus’ Real Presence in the Eucharist.

Thomas More University theatre presents: “Once Upon a Mattres,” a delightfully silly twist on the classic tale of “The Princess and the Pea.” Showings will be April 23-25, 7:30 p.m. and April 26, 2 p.m. For information, or to purchase tickets, visit tmuky.us/tmtheatre.

Immigrant Neighbors Network (INN) will meet on April 23, 7 p.m. at the Curia office building in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington. Hosted by the Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee. Updates will be given from different Hispanic and immigrant ministries within the diocese.

Thomas More University’s Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Crestview Hills, will host a concert: “Because He Lives,” April 30, 7–8:30 pm. World-class, classically trained pianist Annie Takeuchi brings her talents and gifts to the Thomas More University campus for a special evening of sacred music and spiritual praise. Come join us as we celebrate in music this season of our Lord’s Resurrection. All are welcome to attend this free concert. RSVP not necessary.

St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Millions of Monicas group will have its first gathering Monday, May 4, 6:30–7:30 p.m. Join Catholic women called by the Holy Spirit to imitate St. Monica in praying for our children to return to or stay close to the practice of their Catholic faith. This is not a support group. For information, contact Carol at (859) 653-5638.

St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, Millions of Monicas group will have its first gathering Monday, May 4, 6:30–7:30 p.m. Join Catholic women called by the Holy Spirit to imitate St. Monica in praying for our children to return to or stay close to the practice of their Catholic faith. This is not a support group. For information, contact Carol at (859) 653-5638.

Thomas More University Nursing presents “Learn More with Nursing,” for any prospective students interested in the field. The event will be May 12, 4:30–6 p.m. at the Thomas More University’s Nursing Department. Try nursing for yourself with hands-on simulations, real skills and real conversations. Sign up now at <https://apply.thomasmore.edu/>.

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 dis-

cussion. 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 Thomas More University Biology Field Station third annual “Raisin’ Hellbenders on the River: Concert for Conservation,” July 25, 3–9 p.m. Listen to live bluegrass music from local bands, enjoy a guided hike, explore laboratories, purchase raffle tickets for a brand-new kayak and paddle on the river. Visit tmuky.us/bfsconcert for more information; purchase at tmuky.us/concertsvp (case sensitive).

New Beginnings, a support group for separated and divorced, begins Aug. 18. The 8-week program provides the opportunity to heal and move forward. Led by facilitators who have been through their own personal losses. The next session, held on consecutive Tuesdays, is Aug. 18 – Oct. 6, 7–8:30 p.m. at Catholic Charities, Covington. Registration is required. Visit <https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1529.

World Youth Day 2027, Seoul, South Korea, July 30 to August 10, 2027. The Diocese of Covington is coordinating a pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2027 for young adults ages 18 to 35. Experience the universality of the Catholic Church in the presence of our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, alongside millions of young adult Catholics from around the world. Bishop John Iffert hopes to join the pilgrims along with a few priests and deacons from the diocese. Estimated cost is \$5,500 per person and includes round-trip airfare, transportation, lodging, meals (from WYD) and tours. To reserve your spot, the initial payment of \$800 is now due. The full amount must be paid by Monday,

March 15, 2027. For more information, go to covdio.org/register/

Bishop Iffert and the priests of the Diocese of Covington will pray a Holy Hour for survivors of sexual violence and for the sanctification of priests, 3 p.m., every third Thursday monthly, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. All are welcome.

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.

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

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones, (PAL) is a support group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:30–8 p.m. at Catholic Charities, Latonia. It provides continuing education and support, at no charge, for parents with a son, daughter or spouse suffering from addiction to alcohol or drugs. No cost. Just come — 3629 Church Street, Latonia. For more information contact Client Care at (859) 581-8974.

A Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group begins at Mother of God Parish, Covington, for family members and friends of persons who have ended their own lives. Group meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at the parish office in the St. Aloysius Conference Room. For information contact Jeff Duell at (859) 801-8213.



The St. Pius X VEX Robotics teams did a stand-out job at the state competition. Team A earned the Innovate Award for their unique and creative robot design. Team B won the Design Award for their outstanding use of the engineering design process in their notebook and judge’s interview. This award also qualifies them for the World Tournament in St. Louis.

Easter Vigil

(Continued from page 1)

been raised from the dead and has gone before them. And then, he sends them. It says they went quickly from the tomb — fearful, and yet overjoyed.”

“I love that description,” Bishop Iffert remarked. “Although the angel has told them ‘do not be afraid’, they remain fearful. The events of Good Friday do not go away, they are not undone. They remain with questions in their heart.”

Later, as the women encounter Jesus, still “bearing the weight of the cross,” as Bishop Iffert said, “notice what he

says, ‘Do not be afraid.’ Do not let your fear have the last word. Do not let that fear dominate your life. Do not let that fear steal away hope. Do not live in the darkness.”

“These women are sent on a mission,” said Bishop Iffert. “They encounter the risen Lord, first to encounter the risen Lord, and they are sent on a mission to go — go and tell.”

“This is the truth of the situation for all of us,” he continued. “We are invited into life in Jesus. Jesus, who himself carried the cross, doesn’t always volunteer to take our

crosses away from us.”

Bishop Iffert said, “We might be like these women, as if we’re sitting in darkness, looking for something that we can’t even put into words, and we’re waiting — but we’re waiting in a new way, no longer overwhelmed by fear; but joyful with the promise of the resurrected light of Christ.”

“May the light of Christ never die in our heart,” he concluded, “may we always see him and know him, catching glimpses of the joyfulness of his life — and may that joy carry us into the resurrected life.”



(far left) A catechumen is baptized by Bishop John Iffert during the Easter Vigil. At the Cathedral, the Easter Vigil welcomed 16 candidates and catechumens into full communion with the Catholic Church.

(left) The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption’s newly baptized catechumens are distributed lit baptismal candles.

(below) A newly baptized catechumen is wrapped in a white garment by her Godmother.

Baker photos



(left) During the Easter Vigil, Bishop John Iffert smiles while holding a lit candle. As symbols of the Resurrection, the entirety of the congregation carries these candles as the Mass begins — all lit from a fire blessed at the start of the service.

(below) Bishop John Iffert (front) and Father Ryan Maher, rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, sprinkle the congregation with holy water following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

(below center) Grains of incense, representing the wounds of Christ, are pressed into the Paschal Candle during the Easter Vigil.



(left) An altar server helps to light a candle held by a member of the congregation.



(above) Anointing the forehead with chrism, Bishop John Iffert confirms a catechumen as a full member of the Body of Christ during the Sacrament of Confirmation celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

Gardens at St. Patrick's on Holy Wednesday

(Continued from page 1)

the change in location mid-celebration.

Given the abrupt change, Cardinal Dolan's homily was brief but impactful. He reminded those who remained of the spiritual song which says, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" In response, Cardinal Dolan told the crowd, "You bet we were and we sure are. Thanks to these living stations of the cross here in Maysville, we were there. We are there. The passion, death and resurrection of the Lord didn't just happen. It is happening."

This echoes a sentiment which Cardinal Dolan shared with the students of St. Patrick School, Maysville: "These are life-size. These are really going to make the Passion and death of our Lord come alive because it is alive. Jesus is still on this cross. Jesus is still rising from the dead, and he wants us to be close to him."

"Our life is united to the life-size stations of the cross. Our life is united to Jesus, who told us that he is the way, the truth and the life," he said to the students.

The Gardens at St. Patrick's is a 6-acre recreation of the Passion of Christ, complete with extraordinary attention to detail and a 7.5-story-tall lighted cross. Visitors will begin their journey in a symbolic Garden of Gethsemane, where a 6,000-year-old olive press sits, a reminder of Gethsemane's original function as an olive garden before its key role as the location of Judas' betrayal.

"You can walk through this garden and touch that implementation and think of Jesus and his work and the incarnation and the way he emptied himself out to become one of us," said Bishop Iffert at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The garden will lead visitors down a scaled replica of the Via Dolorosa, the path which Christ walked to crucifixion, where they will marvel at the strategically placed life-sized stations of the cross. The sculptures were hand-carved by Italian sculptor Reto Demetz and his team in Northern Italy, before being shipped to their permanent home at the Gardens of St. Patrick's.

"I want it to be just like it is in Jerusalem," said Mr. Lundergan at a private endowment luncheon prior to the public celebrations. "I want it to be exactly like Jerusalem so that when people come they go to Jerusalem, they'll know exactly what our Lord went through, for each and every one of us."

Praying the Stations of the Cross is a common practice during Lent, a time of penance and sacrifice, as a way to connect with Christ and his great sacrifice on the cross.

"We have a tradition," Bishop Iffert said at the ribbon-cutting. "We speak of that as those who are baptized into Jesus as being called to live as Alter Christi — other Christs. After his pattern, in his style of loving the people he loves, learning to live sacrificially as he lives."

"This is what a garden like this is about. This is what the Stations of the Cross are about," he said. "Inviting us to walk literally in the path of Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at, but rather he emptied himself out, becoming human, like one of us in all things but sin. That's what this garden is about. It's about forming people, forming people to live like Christ, to live into that baptismal call, to become the hands and feet, the extension of Christ in the world."

The beautifully, intricately carved stations serve as a stark recreation of the Passion of Christ. With the emotion shown raw on the statue faces, livid anger and gut-wrenching sadness, it makes real the passion, death and resurrection.

"Anybody who thinks that God is distant, anybody who thinks that God doesn't know what they're going through, anybody that thinks that God is way beyond this, let them come to Maysville and let them come to this Garden of St. Patrick. Let them look in the eyes of the life-size Christ. Let them see him fall and try to get back up. Let them see his mother's tears as she greets him on the Via Crucis. Let them see the anger and the violence in the soldiers. Let them see," said Cardinal Dolan at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"These gardens are more than just soil and stone," said Mr. Lundergan at the endowment luncheon. "They are a sacred path that tells a story of suffering, sacrifice and ultimately redemption. These stations remind us that Christ himself carried a cross, and in our own lives, we are each called to carry our cross."

Speaking to the hundreds gathered at the welcome center, Mr. Lundergan said, "No matter if you're Catholic, Protestant, Christian, as long as you believe in the Lord and what he did for us, this is your garden."

Bishop Iffert said to the crowd, "When we have the stations built on such a magnificent stage, such a magnificent proportion, maybe it will just help us to think for just a moment about how living after the image and likeness of Jesus means that he takes all of us, every gift that we have to give, every sorrow we have to suffer, and he takes it ... he blesses it, he breaks it, he shares it, he makes it plenty. That's what a place like this can do for us."



(above) Gardens at St. Patrick's founder, Jerry Lundergan (center) and his wife, Charlotte Lundergan, cut the gardens' ribbon alongside Bishop John Iffert (left) and Cardinal Timothy Dolan (right).



(above left) Bishop John Iffert sprinkles Holy Water amidst the crowd as part of the Gardens at St. Patrick's dedication.



(above right) Cardinal Timothy Dolan speaks beside one of the life-size statues representing Christ's Passion, on display at the gardens.



(left) A young girl holds an event program for the dedication.



A detail image shows one of the life-size Stations of the Cross, featuring a Roman soldier handing the cross off to Christ.



Former United States President Bill Clinton shakes hands with St. Patrick, Maysville, pastor Father Augustine Aidoo.



Former University of Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari greets another attendee.



Cardinal Timothy Dolan speaks with Jerry Lundergan at the blessing and dedication of the Gardens. Also pictured is Bishop Roger Foy.

Inaugural Good Friday Stations of the Cross at Gardens of St. Patrick's combines personal prayer, art and shared worship into a meaningful experience

Laura Keener
Editor

Bishop John Iffert led the inaugural Good Friday praying of the Stations of the Cross, April 3, at the newly dedicated Gardens of St. Patrick's. (See related story page 1.) Hundreds of people from across the Diocese of Covington participated. It was one of several events held at the Gardens during Holy Week, which culminated with sunrise Easter Sunday Mass with Father James Sichko.

Before opening prayers beginning the Stations of the Cross, Bishop Iffert shared that the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu is one of his favorite places he visited in Jerusalem. The church is believed to be built over the house of the high priest Joseph Caiaphas, and the place where Jesus was held in a lower-level dungeon the night before his passion and death.

"It's a moving place," said Bishop Iffert. "And one of things that makes it so moving is that as you descend the stairs down into the stone pit, you pass crosses and graffiti

that has been scratched into the wall."

Some of the graffiti dates to the late first century. The graffiti, said Bishop Iffert, "is part of the testimony that says this is the place where Jesus was held. It's because of those early pilgrim witnesses who went there to join him in his place, so today, here in Maysville, Kentucky, we join ourselves to all of those believers in Jesus, all of those Christians, all of those who seek to be self-emptying like Christ. We join them in remembering the journey that Jesus took to his cross and to his tomb and beyond."

At the Gardens there are 15 stations featuring life-sized bronze statues, 14 traditional stations with the 15th being the Resurrection. The 14th Station — Jesus is Laid in the Tomb — is nearly complete. The tomb and its 5,000-pound rolling stone are there; the statues are on the way. The tomb and rolling stone were hand carved by Kentuckians from ancient limestone, 485 million years old. The 15th Station — the Resurrection — still needs to be installed. Bishop Iffert said that he likes that the

Gardens are not complete for the inaugural events because it reminds us that we aren't complete and that God is continually drawing us to him.

The Via Dolorosa — the Way of Suffering — begins with visitors passing by a 6,000-year-old olive press, a tangible reminder of the Garden of Gethsemane, an olive garden, were with a kiss Judas betrayed Jesus, an innocent man.

(Continued on page 11)



A 7.5-story tall lighted cross greets visitors to the Gardens at St. Patrick's, Maysville. The gardens was dedicated during Holy Week, with an inaugural Stations of the Cross held on Good Friday.



Gardens founder Joe Lundergan greets guests attending the Good Friday service.



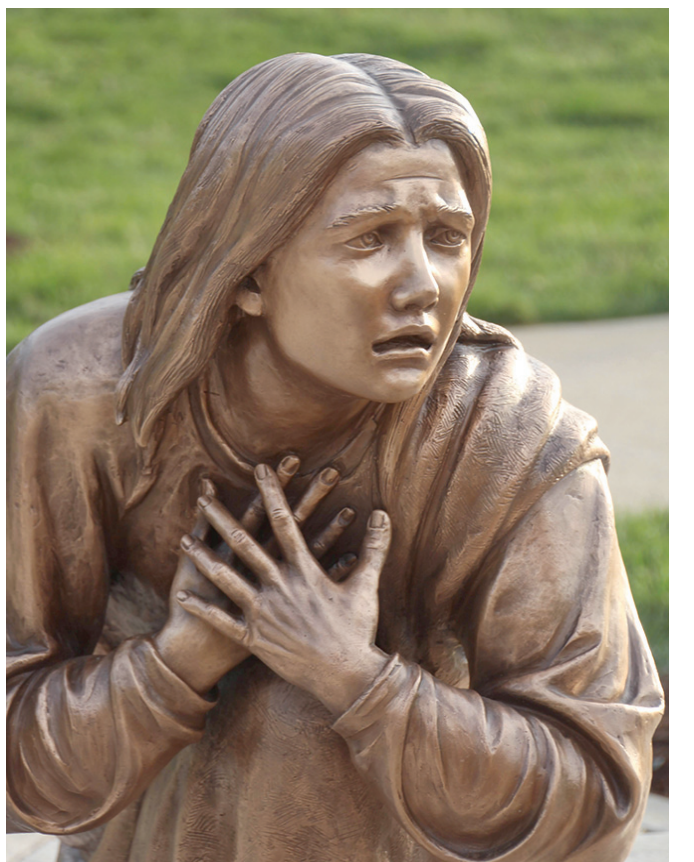
(above) A singer with the American Spiritual Ensemble, alongside her choir, provides musical accompaniment for the Stations of the Cross.

(below left) The ninth station, Jesus falls the third time, is displayed at the Gardens at St. Patrick's. The stations feature life-size statues depicting Christ's Passion.

(below) A detail shows the mournful expression of a woman's face in the 13th Station — Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross — at the Gardens at St. Patrick's.



IX
Jesus falls the third time
Hebrews 4:14-16



Spring Home Improvement

Come Home to a Clean Home

REGAL MAID

(859) 781-3300

Trusted Since 1986.



Family Owned and Operated

TOM *Rechtin*

Heating & Air

859-261-8269

www.tomrechtin.com

Proudly Serving You Since 1964.

KY Master
HVAC HM04784




Debris Removal & Hauling Services

859-781-1326

Household & Tree Debris • Lawn Mowing
Rock • Dirt • Mulch

M&K



NKY

CONCRETE

& CONSTRUCTION

859-816-9484



Call Tony at the *Messenger* for information on placing your ad in the Spring Home Improvement Advertisements. (859) 392-1572

Inaugural Good Friday Stations of the Cross

(Continued from page 9)

Bishop Iffert invited everyone to join him in praying for all those wrongly accused, detained and imprisoned throughout the world.

The journey ends at reflection pools with fountains surrounding a 7.5 story lighted cross near the 15th Station. The cross is prominently placed so that it can be clearly seen by travelers passing along Route 62.

“To meditate on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is to invite Jesus to be with us in carrying our crosses,” said Bishop Iffert, “to ask Jesus for the grace not that our cross would go away, not that our cross would be removed from us, but that Jesus will be with us under our crosses, and Jesus will strengthen us to be able to carry the cross that is ours in life.”

The evening revealed the event’s quiet power through the eyes of a young participant, Juan Briseño, a student from St. Patrick’s School who volunteered to serve for Bishop Iffert. He described being deeply moved while walking among the Stations and seeing them “brought to life,” an experience he said left him newly motivated. Like many in attendance, he was surprised by the size of the crowd — a testament to the strong sense of community and shared faith that shaped the night.

Visitors described the experience as deeply emotional, noting how the Stations of the Cross immediately invited

personal reflection. The quiet, prayerful atmosphere allowed participants to pause and reflect on Christ’s passion in a way that felt both intimate and profound.

“I’ve lived here all my life, and this just touches my heart when you think about how much he (Jesus) did for us. This is the most amazing tribute someone could give to our community,” said Debbie Mason, parishioner at St. Patrick Parish, Maysville. She was especially moved by the First Station — Jesus is Condemned to Death. “That station reminds me that we all had a part in it — whether we want to admit it or not — through what we’ve done or failed to do.”

Several visitors emphasized how the scale and presentation of the displays intensified that experience. Helen McKay, parishioner, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, noted that the larger-than-life elements made a lasting impression, explaining that “it’s much more moving than a three-by-three.” For her, the physical size and presence of the stations deepened the sense of walking alongside Christ on his journey.

St. Patrick parishioner Dana Casey, agreed. “To stand next to the life-size Stations of the Cross instead of seeing them as small icons on the wall makes the story feel personal and real,” said Ms. Casey. An exceptionally emotional moment for her came at Station Four — Jesus Meets His

Mother. “The moment when Jesus sees his mother — just that silent glance between them — really stayed with me. They didn’t need words. She had to say ‘yes’ at the beginning, and she had to say it again at the end.”

For others, attending the stations was an intentional part of observing Good Friday.

St. Catherine of Siena parishioners David and Sharon Kohr who traveled from Ft. Thomas echoed that sense of personal connection. Mr. Kohrs said that praying, “The Stations of the Cross were always very emotional—[they] go straight to the soul.”

Mr. Kohrs expressed the importance of making the time for Holy Week observances despite busy schedules, saying, “When we saw this in the *Messenger*, we just made it happen. We made ourselves make it into our schedule that we would come down and spend Good Friday here.” He added that retracing “the real journey of Christ, through his passion,” is “such an integral part of our faith,” and something they wanted to hold “in our heart and our soul.”

Mrs. Kohrs shared that the experience left a lasting impression. “It’s such a blessing,” she said, adding that she was “absolutely” glad they made the trip. The combination of personal prayer, art and shared worship made the observance both meaningful and memorable.



(above) The First Station — Jesus is Condemned to Death, features Jesus holding palm branches before he takes up the cross. Bishop Iffert begins the Stations of the Cross.



(above) At the Fourth Station — Jesus Meets His Mother — Mary’s fiat becomes her strength, she embraces the sacrifice as love. (right) At the 14th Station — Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in the arms of his Mother.



Keener photos



(left) The 12th Station — Jesus Dies on the Cross — is the largest of the stations, featuring six statues, Jesus flanked by the two criminals crucified alongside him and his Mother, Mary and John at the foot of the cross. (right) A mom holds her daughter as the praying of the Stations of the Cross begin.



God’s light, not just stadium lights, to shine from the Hill as NCCHS blesses its new athletic complex

Laura Keener
Editor

Newport Central Catholic High School gathered, April 14, as one community to bless and dedicate its new athletic complex during a special outdoor Mass led by Bishop John Iffert. The celebration marked the completion of years of planning, fundraising and construction and highlighted the school’s mission of faith, leadership and service.

Speaking from the field at the Ciafardini Family Athletic Complex, Principal Kenny Collopy opened the ceremony by welcoming students, families, alumni, donors, clergy and community members. He called the day a reminder of what can be accomplished when people come together with a shared vision.

“So many people made this possible,” Mr. Collopy said. “If not for the generosity and commitment of our supporters, we would not be sitting here today, nor would we have the opportunities that this facility provides for our stu-

dents.”

Mr. Collopy thanked donors, campaign leaders, diocesan staff, contractors, alumni, parents and students who supported the multi-year “Looking Up Campaign,” which also funded campus improvements including academic facilities. He noted the special impact of the Ciafardini family and Robert J. Schneider, whose names will forever be connected to the complex and field.

Speaking directly to the students, Mr. Collopy said, “People give to this campaign because of you. You are our hope and our inspiration.”

He also spoke honestly about the unfinished details, explaining that some work on the complex would continue in the coming weeks. Still, Mr. Collopy said waiting for perfection would have meant missing an important moment.

“There’s never a perfect time for anything,” he said. “On this Hill, we decide to focus our energy on what is in our control and let God handle the rest.”

The Hill is a nickname the NCCHS community has adopted for its campus, not only for its physical location atop a Northern Kentucky hill with breathtaking views of Covington and Cincinnati but also for a biblical reference. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden ... your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Matt 5:14, 16)

A second lesson Mr. Collopy said he has learned “is that there is no finish line. Our mission of faith is never complete and is eternal. We are all constantly under construction. We’ll be looking to constantly improve this facility and our school long after any final inspection, what a great metaphor for us as a community of human beings, imperfect and always looking to get better as God calls us to be the best versions of ourselves.”

Mr. Collopy emphasized that while athletics are important, they are not the school’s ultimate purpose.

Keener photos



(above) Kenny Collopy, principal, Newport Central Catholic High School, welcomes students, families, alumni and supporters to the blessing and dedication of the new Ciafardini Family Athletic Complex.



(above) Bishop John Iffert gestures during his homily as he shares wisdom from his beloved freshman football coach Whitey Miller, “Heads up, feet moving.”



(above) From the 50-yard line, Bishop Iffert and Deacon Barry Henry raise the Eucharist at the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer.



(left) During Mass, NCCHS students present Bishop Iffert with the gifts.



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



SERVICE IS OUR PASSION.

www.ArlinghausAir.com
(859) 429-0980

VOYED BEST OF NKY
PLUMBING - HEATING - AIR CONDITIONING

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

“We are not just material beings, but also spiritual,” he said. “Playing sports, winning trophies and having a beautiful athletic complex does not fulfill us.”

That message was reinforced by Bishop Iffert, who followed with an engaging homily connecting faith, sports and life lessons. The Bishop shared a personal story from his own high school football experience that set the tone for his remarks.

“My freshman line coach, Whitey Miller, used to shout at me all the time,” Bishop Iffert said. “‘Iffy, head up, feet moving.’ I bet he said that to me 2,000 times.”

The bishop explained that this simple phrase became one of the most important lessons of his life.

“Even now, I think to myself in the morning, ‘Head up, feet moving,’” he said.

Bishop Iffert connected the coach’s advice to the Gospel story of Nicodemus and Jesus, reminding students that faith calls people to look beyond daily distractions.

“Keep your eyes on higher things,” Bishop Iffert said. “Stay focused on goodness, on truth, on beauty, those transcendental things that tend to lead us beyond ourselves and call us into a deeper relationship with God. ... Keep your head in the game, the real game, the real purpose of

life, to know, love and serve God.”

He spoke directly to students about living the mission of Newport Central Catholic, especially through the virtue of meekness, which he described as strength rooted in humility and self-control.

“To be meek is not to be weak,” Bishop Iffert said. It means knowing who you are, knowing who God is, and having the strength to stay grounded in that truth. “To be meek is to be courageous, he said. “To be humble is to be honest. The humble person is the person who is honest about who they are in relation to one another, in relation to God ... they take their identity from their relationship to God, and they know where they stand in relationship to their community. The humble person knows who he or she is and who they are not.”

The bishop challenged students to use the new facility not just to compete, but to grow as people of character.

“It will be a place for games. It will be a place for sports. It will be a place for exercise. It will be a place for teams,” Bishop Iffert said. “Most of all, it will be a place for building character in the games you play here ... you will learn how to interact with others in life, how to compete with others in life, and to keep your higher mind in place.”

Bishop Iffert encouraged students to remember the deeper purpose behind every practice, game and challenge is to nurture the virtues of meekness and humility.

“If you live life that way, then I think this community, this NCC community, truly will be and will gain the reputation for being what your motto claims you to be, a bright light set on a lamp stand for all to see,” Bishop Iffert said.

As the Mass concluded, the athletic complex was blessed and officially dedicated, symbolizing both physical progress and spiritual commitment. The new space will host football, soccer, track and field events and school gatherings for years to come.

For Newport Central Catholic, the dedication was about more than new facilities. It was a time of gratitude for supporters, teachers and each other. It was a reminder that faith remains the foundation of everything done on the Hill.

“If we do not use these facilities and our abundant blessings to serve one another then we would lose our way,” said Mr. Collopy. “Let God be the light shining from this Hill, metaphorically and now literally with these stadium lights. Remember, NCC, you’re the light of the world; a city on the Hill cannot be hidden.”



(above, left) Bishop Iffert distributes Communion to a NCCHS student.
 (above, center) Brody Boyers, '28, reads the First Reading.
 (above, right) A future Thoroughbred looks inquisitively at the camera.
 (left) Before sprinkling the entire crowd, Bishop Iffert approaches the middle of the field for the blessing of the athletic complex.

LONNEMAN PLUMBING INC.

859-341-7755 Nick Lonneman
 Owner, Master Plumber
 Since 1960

Water Heaters, Repair, Remodel

KW MECHANICAL, INC.
 "A Wischer Family Company"

(859) 261-1100
 KWMechanical.com

- Electric
- Plumbing
- Heating &
- Air Conditioning

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

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

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

Pope at Easter: Jesus showed nonviolence is true power over evil

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

Appealing to those in power to end all conflicts through dialogue and not domination, Pope Leo XIV urged humanity to stop growing accustomed to wars and violence and announced a prayer vigil for peace April 11.

"We cannot continue to be indifferent! And we cannot resign ourselves to evil!" he said April 5 before giving his Easter blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world).

"In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us!" he said.

"Let those who have weapons lay them down!" he said. "Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!"

Before delivering his blessing from the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo said, "The peace that Jesus gives us is not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us!"

"Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts!" he said. "For this reason, I invite everyone to join me in a prayer vigil for peace that we will celebrate here in St. Peter's Basilica next Saturday, April 11."

Christ's power is nonviolent, Pope Leo said. "Christ, our 'victorious King,' fought and won his battle through trusting abandonment to the Father's will, to his plan of salvation."

Jesus walked the path of dialogue, "not in words but in

deeds: to find us who were lost, he became flesh; to free us who were slaves, he became a slave; to give life to us mortals, he allowed himself to be killed on the cross," he said in his message.

This strength and power, he said, is the God of love who creates and generates, who is faithful to the end, and who forgives and redeems.

According to the Vatican, more than 50,000 people attended the Easter morning Mass in St. Peter's Square, where colorful floral arrangements adorned the steps leading to the basilica, highlighting the joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection.

In his homily, he said, "death is always lurking. We see it present in injustices, in partisan selfishness, in the oppression of the poor, in the lack of attention given to the most vulnerable."

"We see it in violence, in the wounds of the world, in the cry of pain that rises from every corner because of the abuses that crush the weakest among us, because of the idolatry of profit that plunders the earth's resources, because of the violence of war that kills and destroys," he said.

And yet, because of the Lord's resurrection, Christ invites the faithful to "lift our gaze and open our hearts," recognizing that "the Lord is alive and remains with us," the pope said.

"In every death we experience, there is also room for new life to arise," he said. Easter gives the hope "that in the risen Christ, a new creation is possible every day" and that "a new life, stronger than death, is now dawning for humanity."

his homily, "so that wherever the specter of death still lingers, the light of life may shine."

After the Mass, he greeted those gathered in the square and surrounding streets from the central loggia, saying in Italian to great applause, "Brothers and sisters, Christ is risen! Happy Easter!"

He also gave Easter greetings in 10 different languages, including Chinese, Arabic and Latin, though the crowds cheered loudest when he spoke in Spanish and his native English. The crowds enthusiastically waved flags and handed him babies as he was driven around the square in the popemobile after the ceremony.

Before reciting the noonday "Regina Caeli," and giving his blessing, the pope delivered the traditional Easter message from the loggia, where almost a year ago, Pope Francis gave his final words before his death on Easter Monday, April 21.

Pope Leo repeated his predecessor's words that day, and his warning against the increasing "globalization of indifference" to the "great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of the world!"

Instead of making a series of appeals for peace regarding specific areas of conflict, as has been the norm, Pope Leo invited everyone to join him in a prayer vigil for peace at the Vatican, a few days before he leaves for a four-country journey to Africa.

"On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil," he said.

"To the Lord we entrust all hearts that suffer and await the true peace that only he can give," he prayed. "Let us entrust ourselves to him and open our hearts to him! He is the only one who makes all things new."

This is the "song" of hope and joy that today's Christians must proclaim on "the streets of the world," and live out in their daily lives, he said in

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.

 **CHI Living Communities**
Madonna Manor



Hello humankindness



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.procatholictraveltours.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@procatholictraveltours.com.



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

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:
 ■ March bulletin: posted Sunday, April 5; due Tuesday, May 14.

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:

- 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) 743-9669

hancockdrainservice.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



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



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.arcelechvac.com



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.

Moving? Wrong address?

Call the circulation desk,
 (859) 392-1570

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!

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

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

All American Painting
Interior – Exterior Painting
Call Joe at (859) 609-2513

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

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



Gulf Shores, AL Beachfront Condominium Rentals

1-2-3 bed beachfront units and 4 bed beach resort house. Owner direct rates save you \$\$!! Call or text Chris or Larry Ashley at 1 (502) 396-2287.
B.A. Beach Properties—Your Kentucky Condo Connection!

DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT AT NOTRE DAME ACADEMY

Notre Dame Academy, a Catholic, all-girls high school sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame, is seeking an energetic and mission-driven Director of Enrollment to join our Advancement team.

This full-time position offers an exciting opportunity to shape the future of NDA by leading all aspects of student recruitment, admissions, and enrollment strategy. The Director of Enrollment plays a key role in advancing the school's mission while driving sustainable growth through innovative, data-informed approaches. From cultivating relationships with prospective families to enhancing the student experience from first inquiry to enrollment, this role is central to the continued success of our school community.

Candidates should have a bachelor's degree or higher with 3-5 years of experience in education, admissions or a related field. If you are a strategic thinker who thrives on building community and inspiring future students, we encourage you to apply.

Learn more at ndapandas.org.

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Ms. Lauren Hitron at ndahr@ndapandas.org.

NEED AN EXPERIENCED CAREGIVER???

Years of experience w/references

Work with clients and family members to do whatever is necessary (prayers, games, read, cook, laundry etc.)

Call Maryann at 859-443-7115.

DIRECTOR OR COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Mary of the Assumption Parish Alexandria, KY seeks a Director or Coordinator of Religious Education. We are a growing and vibrant community with approximately

630 students Pre K – 8 in our parochial school, 120 students in Religious Education program and over 1,200 Parish families.

Must be an energetic and practicing Roman Catholic. Position will direct or coordinate a wide range of faith formation activities. The position requires some evening and/or weekend work, including participating in meetings of Parish Education Committee, staff meetings, and presence during catechetical sessions and special programs.

Degree in religious education or catechesis preferred but will consider other educational background with appropriate experience.

Salary commensurate with experience with health insurance and retirement benefits.

Interested candidates should submit a Cover Letter and CV (or Resume) to: Rev. Joseph Gallenstein, 8246 East Main Street, Alexandria, KY 41001
or by email at: joseph.gallenstein@saintmaryparish.com

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.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

Catholic Charities is seeking a mission driven Clinical Director to lead our mental health counseling programs. This role provides strategic leadership, clinical supervision, quality assurance, and direct outpatient counseling in a faith based nonprofit setting.

Key Responsibilities: • Lead Individual, Family, and Outpatient Counseling programs • Provide clinical supervision to licensed clinicians • Oversee quality assurance, documentation, and accreditation readiness • Support staff development and training • Provide outpatient therapy (approx. 75%)

Qualifications: • Master's in Social Work or related field • LCSW required (Supervisor preferred) • 5+ years clinical experience; 3-5 years leadership/supervision • Strong assessment, treatment planning, and documentation skills • Experience with diverse populations and trauma informed care

Benefits include: Health insurance, pension, generous paid time off, tuition assistance to Diocesan Catholic Schools, and more.

To Apply: Send résumé, cover letter, salary history, and three references to: Shannon Braun — sbraun@covingtoncharities.org

Learn more: www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events/job-opportunities

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT NOTRE DAME ACADEMY

Notre Dame Academy is seeking an Executive Director of Institutional Advancement responsible for developing a culture of philanthropy among the NDA community.

The position ensures alignment across all external relations to promote Notre Dame Academy's mission, grow philanthropic support, and strengthen enrollment. This position serves as the chief development officer and leads comprehensive development strategy.

This is a full-time position. Candidates should hold a bachelor's degree or higher with at least 5 years of fundraising experience. Candidates should have a genuine passion for the school's mission and the value of Catholic education.

For more information go to ndapandas.org. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to Ms. Lauren Hitron at ndahr@ndapandas.org.

NDA is a Catholic, all-girls high school sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

APARTMENT FOR RENT/ERLANGER

2 bedrooms - 1st floor unit. Located in duplex. Garage. Shared laundry. Landlord pays gas, water and sanitation. \$1400 per month + deposit. References required. No pets or smoking.

Call or text Stephani 859-750-3110

Moore's Painting

The Company you feel safe with

Interior & exterior painting.

In business since 1988. Members of St. Timothy Parish.

Moore's Painting — Union, Ky. — (859) 512-7398

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

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

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

Noticing

(Continued from page 5)

But that awareness now brings an invitation. An invitation to slow down, to pay attention, to notice. Every day is a gift. Every encounter is a gift. In the midst of all that calls for our time and attention, God's presence is there — steady, constant, and full of love.

I don't want to miss it.

And I don't want others to miss it either. We are all invited to know the strength of God's embrace and the depth of his love. When we take the time to notice, we begin to see it in the ordinary, in one another, and in the quiet moments we might otherwise overlook.

Let's all take notice and share the good news — the gift

of everlasting life made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ. We are loved.

Karen Zengel is executive director, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky.

America needs you, Thomas Aquinas

(Continued from page 5)

that do not contain within themselves the reason for their being. Clouds, trees, plants, animals, human beings, buildings, planets, and stars certainly exist, but they don't have to exist. This means, he saw, that their being is not self-explanatory, that it depends, finally, on some primordial reality which does exist through the power of its own essence.

This "necessary" being is what Thomas called "God." He was moved by the correspondence between this philosophical sense of God and the self-designation that God gives in Exodus 3:14: "I am who I am." How significant this is in our time when "new" atheists have raised their voices to dismiss belief in God as a holdover from a pre-

scientific time. Thomas would remind the Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins of the world that no scientific advance could ever, even in principle, eliminate the properly metaphysical question to which God is the only satisfying answer: God is not a superstitious projection of human need; rather, God is the reason why there is something rather than nothing.

Thirdly, Thomas Aquinas was a deep humanist, precisely because he was a Christian. He saw that since God became human in Christ, the destiny of the human being is divinization, participation in the inner life of God. No other religion or philosophy or social theory has ever held out so exalted a sense of human dignity and pur-

pose. And this is why, Aquinas intuited, there is something inviolable about the human person. How indispensably important that teaching is in our era of stem-cell research, euthanasia, legalized abortion, and preemptive war, practices that turn persons into means.

Thomas's bones lie in that golden casket in Toulouse, but his mind and his spirit, thank God, still inform the counter-cultural voice of the Church.

Bishop Robert Barron is bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota. Article originally published at WordOnFire.org.

Understanding the old through the new

(Continued from page 5)

David's tomb is yet in their midst. Rather, it is a prophecy about the Messiah and has been fulfilled in Jesus the Nazorean. You killed him, Peter says, but God raised him up. Now, "... because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption," makes perfect sense.

Jesus makes a similar move with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, for even they, who knew and followed Jesus and heard him teach, had no understanding of the events they themselves witnessed. Jesus, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, ... interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures," explaining why it was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory." What a monologue that must have been!

All this stands as a reminder to us of the importance

of the Old Testament. So many Catholics, if they read scripture at all, tend to stay with the Gospels. While it is good to read and re-read the Gospels, we can come to know Jesus through the Old Testament as well. Some passages from the Catechism of the Catholic Church may serve to encourage us:

128. The Church, as early as apostolic times, and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant pre-figurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son.

Lew

129. Christians therefore read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. [And] the New Testament has to be read in the light of the Old. Early Christian catechesis made constant use of the Old

Testament. As an old saying put it, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New. [St. Augustine]

133. The Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful ... to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ,' by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.'" [Phil 3:8 and St. Jerome]

If you are new to the Old Testament, try this: read a passage that the Church uses in the liturgy (the first reading or the psalm) and ask the Holy Spirit to show Jesus to you in that passage. Then ask yourself, how does this apply to Jesus, or how does Jesus fulfill this passage. You might be surprised at how easily you can come to know Him in this manner of reading.

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

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

St. Cecilia Catholic School in Independence, Kentucky is prayerfully searching for the next leader of our school family, a principal who will walk with our students, support our teachers, and help guide our community into the 2026-2027 school year and beyond.

We are a Kindergarten through 8th grade school, blessed with an Early Childhood Learning Center that includes both preschool and daycare, and an in-house aftercare program. More importantly, we are a place where children are known, loved, and formed, not just academically, but spiritually and personally. Our school is an extension of our parish home, and everything we do is rooted in faith, family, and community.

We are looking for someone who doesn't just want a job, but a calling. A leader who will greet children by name, encourage teachers in their mission, and partner with parents in raising strong, faith-filled young people. Someone who understands that education is more than books and tests, it's about shaping hearts, building character, and helping each child discover who God created them to be. At St. Cecilia, you won't find just a school; you'll find a community that supports one another, celebrates together, and shows up when it matters most. We are proud of who we are, and we are excited about where we are going.

If you feel called to be part of something special, we would love to hear from you. Come lead. Come serve. Come grow with us. Interested candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics. Please mail or email a letter of interest along with a comprehensive resume, including compensation history and references with contact email addresses to **Stephen Kopyay, SPHR, P.O. Box 15550, Covington, KY 41015-0550, or skopyay@covdio.org.**



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
- End of Life Planning
- Medicaid and Medicare Assistance
- Memory / Dementia Care
- Support Group Connections
- 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!



Priests: ICE detainees see Chicago group's Easter Triduum visits as sign of 'humanity'

Simone Orendain
OSV News

Easter Triduum visits ended the Lenten season for a small group of Chicago-area religious and clergy who ministered to people in the U.S. without legal authorization that are detained at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility.

The same group started the 40-day period of preparation for the Lord Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection with an Ash Wednesday visit to the processing facility in Broadview, Illinois, to bring holy Communion, give ashes and pray with those Catholics being held there.

The visits during the Church's most sacred period of the year were a result of court orders that compelled the Department of Homeland Security to allow access to members of the Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership. Last year, the Chicago-based Catholic social justice organization tried several times to enter the ICE processing unit but it was turned away each time.

Jesuit Father David Incauskis was part of the CSPL team of three priests and a religious sister who went inside the Broadview facility on Holy Thursday, April 2.

On April 6, Easter Monday, he told OSV News he was struck when the group first saw those being brought for processing in handcuffs and ankle shackles.

It was the first time Father Incauskis had encountered detainees in shackles. He has done prison and jail ministry in Peru and Honduras, and also ministered to minors in the U.S. who had been separated from their parents.

"I think to see this was unique, and particularly devastating and dehumanizing," he said.

Father Incauskis and another priest who spoke with OSV News described the setting for the pastoral visits. They said the small delegation prayed, read Scripture and gave Communion through a half door in what they described as an "intersection between two long hallways" separated by the door that opened in two halves. They said the 14 people they ministered to on Holy Thursday were brought to the door in two sets of five, and then four.

On the other days of the Triduum, there were far fewer detainees to minister to, sometimes just one or two, they added.

One priest was allowed to wash the shackled feet of the detainees after Father Incauskis read the Holy Thursday Gospel on the Last Supper. In the reading, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples before going to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, where he was then arrested.

The superior of the Claretians' USA-Canada province, Father Paul Keller, led prayers and the opening and closing blessings. Also on Easter Monday, he described the same look of "shock and disorientation" on the detainees' faces that he recognized when he was last inside the facility on Ash Wednesday. He noted they were within the very first minutes and hours of being brought in.

"Some people really broke down," he said. "It was a moment in which they perhaps let out the sadness and frustration that they had been feeling."

"But then also I got the sense that some of them took the foot washing as a sign of care and humanity in a situation of such dehumanization that this allowed them to experience those emotions of being cared for in this time of great distress," he told OSV News.

The processing facility is located in Broadview, a suburb about 12.5 miles west of Chicago's downtown. It was a flashpoint for heated clashes between protesters and ICE personnel at the height of the Trump administration's

immigration crackdown.

CSPL sued for access to the facility in November last year, citing violations of their rights to freely exercise their religion under the First Amendment, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.

OSV News requested comments from DHS on the recent visits and has not yet received a response.

Among migrants most at risk of arrest and deportation by ICE about 80% are Christian — the majority of them (61%) are Catholic — according to a joint Catholic-evangelical report published by World Relief and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

U.S. District Judge Robert W. Gettleman of the Northern District of Illinois ordered a preliminary injunction to allow members of CSPL to give ashes and Communion on Ash Wednesday. He also ordered both sides to work out a schedule for future visits and allow religious and lay ministers to once again pray outside the Broadview facility, like they did for years until the immigration crackdown intensified.

In the partial injunction issued March 31 that forced the Triduum visits, Gettleman wrote, "The court finds that the government has substantially burdened plaintiffs' exercise of religion."

He noted, "The court also agrees with plaintiffs that the injunction is in public interest. Allowing plaintiffs to provide pastoral care to migrants and detainees will improve the condition of those detained at Broadview."

Gettleman reiterated the need for both sides to schedule further, regular visits and prayer just outside Broadview facility, within view of the detainees. A status hearing was scheduled for April 7.

Michael Okinczyc-Cruz, CSPL's executive director, told OSV News the Triduum and Easter visits were a "pro-



OSV News photo/courtesy of Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership

Clergy and others wash the feet of immigrants half a block away from the Broadview ICE processing facility in Broadview, Ill., during an April 2, 2026, Holy Thursday visit of three priests and a religious sister inside the facility to minister to 14 people detained there.

foundly moving and stirring experience ... for not only our ministers who entered, but the communities that surrounded those ministers with prayer."

"And for our siblings, who are detained and their families," he said, "it brought some comfort and consolation in a period of profound darkness."

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

CARMEL MANOR
A MISSION TO CARE
Short-Term Rehab | Long-Term Care | Memory Care | Personal Care




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

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

National/World

‘Cease fire’ Pope Leo asks world leaders as he expresses closeness to Lebanon, Sudan and Ukraine

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV is renewing urgent calls for peace, following a powerful April 11 prayer vigil where he warned that “war divides,” “arrogance tramples,” and only God’s truth can enlighten hearts. Speaking at the Regina Caeli on April 12, he expressed deep solidarity with people suffering in conflict zones, especially Lebanon and Sudan. He said he feels “closer than ever” to the Lebanese people amid escalating violence, as reported casualties continue to rise after recent strikes. Emphasizing the moral duty to protect civilians, the pope called for an immediate ceasefire and peaceful negotiations. Marking three years of war in Sudan, he lamented the suffering of innocent victims and urged leaders to begin sincere dialogue without preconditions. Looking ahead, Pope Leo announced an 11-day apostolic journey across Africa beginning April 13. Pope Leo XIV will travel more than 11,000 miles over 11 days across Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea during his apostolic trip to the continent he visited multiple times as prior general of the Augustinian order. He also encouraged the faithful to remain rooted in the Eucharist and offered prayers for global peace, including for Ukraine and Eastern Christians celebrating Easter.

Experts: Trump threat to wipe out Iran’s civilization violates international law, Christian ethics

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s threat to annihilate Iran’s civilization violates multiple international norms, while the administration’s religious justifications for the US-Israel war on Iran — asserting divine approval for the aggression — are “very disturbing,” experts told OSV News. On April 7, Trump warned in a post on his Truth Social platform that “a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again,” referencing earlier threats against the Iranian regime if it did not reopen the Strait of Hormuz — a critical maritime transit route — by 8 p.m. EDT that same day. Some 90 minutes before that deadline, Trump posted again that he had accepted a Pakistan-brokered proposal by which he would “suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks.” Mary Ellen O’Connell, professor of law and international peace studies at the University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute, told OSV News that Trump’s early April 7 statement threatening Iran and his previous threats contravene key legal instruments such as the Geneva Conventions and possibly the Genocide Convention. With Trump and several Cabinet members, including Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, frequently citing religious justifications for the war, O’Connell also said she was “particularly disturbed by the false invocation of religion” in the context of the aggression. She applauded Pope Leo, who has repeatedly called for de-escalation, dialogue and peace on all sides.

Planned Parenthood report: abortions and taxpayer funding up, cancer screenings down

WASHINGTON — Planned Parenthood’s new 2024-2025 annual report showed an increase in abortions from the previous year’s report, while also showing an increase in government funding. At the same time, it showed a decrease in cancer screenings and prevention services. The organization’s latest annual report reflects its fiscal year as of June 30, 2025, just a few days before President Donald Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act into law on July 4. That legislation, which enacted key items from his legislative agenda on issues including taxes and immigration, also included a provision eliminating funds to health providers who also perform abortions — but just for one year. The report showed Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest abortion provider, performed 434,450 abortions, an increase of over 32,200, or 8%, from the previous year’s report. Planned Parenthood reported \$832 million in “Government Health Services Reimbursements & Grants,” an increase of about \$39.8 million from the previous year’s report. Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood reported 389,449 total cancer screening and prevention services — such as pap tests and HPV vaccinations — a decrease from 426,268 the previous year. Tessa Cox, senior research associate at the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the research arm of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, said in a statement that women deserve better alternatives to Planned Parenthood. “Yet again, abortions performed by Planned Parenthood hit a record high, demonstrating that abortion remains a top priority for the organization,” she said, noting how its revenue has soared “even as the number of clients served has declined and total services have stagnated.”

Court hears lawsuit on law mandating centers give abortion referrals

CHICAGO (OSV News) — The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago heard oral arguments April 10 in a challenge to an Illinois law that compels pro-life physicians and pregnancy centers to give patients who ask for it a referral to an abortion provider. Erin Hawley, counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, a public interest firm dedicated to religious freedom, went before a three-judge panel of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to argue against the law on behalf of pro-life physicians and pregnancy centers. The case is *Shroeder et al v. Treto Jr.* and concerns a provision left in place by U.S. District Judge Iain D. Johnston in a split decision handed down April 4, 2025. Johnston, of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, struck down the part of the state’s 2016 Health Care Right of Conscience Act that required pro-life physicians and pregnancy centers to share the “benefits of abortion” after giving a pregnant woman an ultrasound — or lose their conscience protection rights. But he upheld a separate amendment to the act that lawyers for pro-life plain

tiffs argued also “guttled conscience protections for pro-life physicians and pregnancy centers and required them to refer for abortion.” Hawley told OSV News outside the federal courthouse in downtown Chicago that, based on the day’s proceedings, the 7th Circuit seemed to agree with ADF’s position “that referrals are, in fact ... protected by the First Amendment.”

Cameroon separatists declare temporary ceasefire ahead of pope’s visit

BAMENDA, Cameroon (OSV News) — Separatist groups in Cameroon’s Anglophone regions have announced a temporary ceasefire as Pope Leo begins a high-stakes visit to the country. The truce, described as a “safe travel passage,” is meant to protect civilians and allow participation in papal events, especially in the conflict-hit city of Bamenda, where the pope will host a major peace gathering. The visit follows his historic stop in Algeria and comes amid a decade-long crisis that began in 2016 over language rights disputes. Violence between government forces and separatists seeking an independent Ambazonia has since killed more than 6,500 people and displaced over half a million. Local Church leaders say the pope’s presence brings hope. Archbishop Andrew Nkea calls it a visit to “a suffering people,” with expectations that Pope Leo will emphasize reconciliation, justice and mutual love — while offering moral guidance toward ending one of Africa’s most persistent conflicts. While the pope is a pastor, he can offer “humble suggestions” on how Cameroon could resolve the crisis, said Archbishop Andrew Nkea of Bamenda.

Vatican foundation announces global events to honor Benedict XVI

ROME — The Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation has announced a global slate of events in 2026 to mark the centenary of the birth of Pope Benedict XVI. His 100th birthday is April 16, 2027. According to an April 14 statement, initiatives will span Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, featuring lectures, symposiums, exhibitions and concerts exploring the life and thought of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. A new international committee of scholars will guide research, publications and outreach efforts, with a strong focus on engaging younger generations. Foundation president Father Roberto Regoli said the goal is not only to revisit Pope Benedict’s theology but to place it in dialogue with today’s cultural and social debates. He highlighted the late pope’s Christ-centered approach and emphasis on the harmony of faith and reason. Placing “everything in the light of the encounter with Christ,” particularly one’s personal experience, he explained, makes his writings and teachings “easily understandable for younger generations,” the priest said. Alongside academic programs, the foundation plans digital and pastoral initiatives to broaden access, with major commemorations continuing into 2027. Dates for the 2027 events will be announced later, the foundation said.

McHale’s Delivering exceptional catering and remarkable experiences throughout Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

EVENTS AND CATERING

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



CARE FOR THEM. TIME FOR YOU.

CHARLIE’S CLUB ADULT DAY HEALTH PROGRAM

Charlie’s Club provides specialized care for older adults, including those living with dementia or other cognitive challenges. At Charlie’s Club, your loved one enjoys engaging activities, meaningful friendships, and compassionate care — while you gain peace of mind and time to recharge.

MONDAY - FRIDAY 8:00AM - 5:30PM

FOR YOUR LOVED ONE:

- Chef-prepared meals
- Wellness & exercise programs
- Recreational activities
- Therapies & podiatry services
- Medication administration
- Beauty shop services

FOR YOU, THE CAREGIVER:

- Reliable daytime respite
- Reduced stress and caregiver burnout
- Time for appointments, work, or rest
- Trust in care that’s attentive, personalized, and dependable

Scan me for more information!




(859) 331-3224 | www.stcharlescommunity.org



IN-PERSON ADULT CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION WORKSHOPS

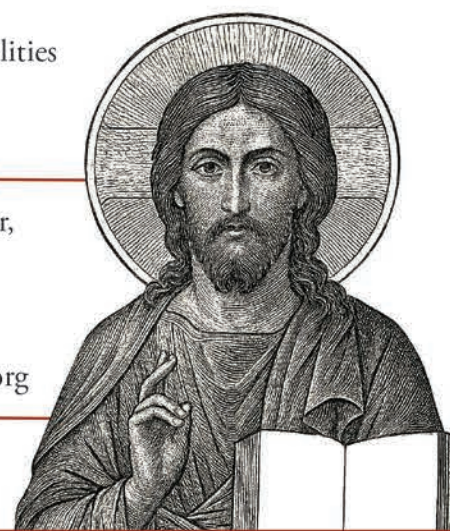
June 8 – 11, 2026 at Thomas More University

The Diocese of Covington, in partnership with the Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute, is offering FREE in-person Adult Faith Formation Workshops in TMU's 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 open discussion time. Create a free account under your parish or school to access these and 200+ additional workshops at franciscanathome.com.

- The Vocation of the Catechist
- Family Systems in a Catholic School
- Jesus: The Cristo-Centricity of Catechesis
- The Deposit of Faith: An Intro to the Catechism
- Essential Link Between Liturgy & Catechesis
- Scripture: The Heart of Catechesis
- Sacred Scripture: The Big Picture
- Scripture: The Driving Force of Doctrine
- Introduction to the Old Testament
- Trinity
- Preventive System of St. John Bosco
- Introduction to the New Testament
- Our Life in Christ: The Basics of Catholic Morality
- Ten Commandments and Beatitudes
- Teaching Your Children about God's Plan for Sexuality
- Faith and Moral Development: Ages 3–6
- Faith and Moral Development: Ages 6–12
- Faith and Moral Development: Ages 12–18
- Christ: His Person & Works
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- Unlocking the Rich Treasure of the Catholic Church
- The Sacrament of the Eucharist
- First Penance and First Eucharist Preparation
- The Sacrament of Confirmation
- Confirmation Preparation
- Introducing Liturgy to Children
- Liturgy and Catechetical Methodology
- The Sacramental Economy
- Praying Scripture: Lectio Divina
- Evangelización en la Parroquia – Hispanic Ministry
- The Father: Origin and Desire of All Souls
- Holy Spirit: Converter of Hearts
- The Church: Dispenser of the Mysteries and Guardian of the Deposit of Faith
- Magisterial, Conciliar, and Catechetical Documents I
- Magisterial, Conciliar, and Catechetical Documents II
- Unlocking the Rich Treasure of the Catechism
- The Catechumenal Process: A Modern Restoration (OCIA/OCIC)
- Entrance into Christ & Participation in God's Life (OCIA/OCIC)
- The Educational Leader in a Catholic Setting
- The Evangelizing Classroom
- Dilexit Nos: Formation of Heart Linking Evangelization & Catechesis
- Child Catechetical Methodologies & Learning Styles
- Adult Catechetical Methodologies & Learning Styles
- A Foundational Vision: Theology of the Body (JPII)
- Pedagogy and the Response of Faith
- Prayer: Introduction to the Spiritual Life of the Catechist
- The Human Person in God's Loving Plan
- The Family as the Context of Catechesis
- Being Guided and Guiding Souls
- Personal Vocation and the Mentoring Relationship
- Building the Mentoring Relationship: Asking Good Questions
- Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening
- The Vision of Educating in Christ Approach
- Connecting Child Development with Catechetical Formation
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Hearing God's Voice through the Scriptures: Learning to Let Christ Become the Teacher
- Introducing Children to the Scriptures
- Catechetical Mentorship
- Catechesis for Persons with Disabilities
- How to Disciple Adults
- Church History

For more information and to register, visit <https://covdio.org/register>.

For questions, please contact Isaak Abraham Isaak at 859-392-1529 or iisaak@covdio.org



DIOCESE of COVINGTON
OFFICE of CATECHESIS *and* EVANGELIZATION