

- 2 50 year jubilee**
Father Ed Brodnick
- 2 Bishop William A. Hughes Awards**
TMU celebrates
- 3 DMI update**
- 3 St. Joseph School**
Students recognized
- 8 Villa Madonna Academy**
Pam McQueen steps down as principal
- 13 Obituary**
Sister Carol Marie Klaine, SND



Jail ministers joined in support of Winston Gaines, inmate of the Kenton County Detention Center, as he received Sacraments of Initiation, officially becoming a member of the Catholic Church.



Moving? Wrong address?

Call the circulation desk,
(859) 392-1570

Bishop's Schedule3
 Commentary5
 People and Events7
 Classifieds12
 Shopper's Guide14
 News Briefs15

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

Inmate finds faith behind bars, receives sacraments inside detention center

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

It was a buzz and the click of a lock, disengaging inside of large metal doors, that granted jail ministry volunteers access to a multi-purpose room inside of the Kenton County Detention Center, Covington. The drab gray walls, plastic folding tables and worn-down carpet, set the scene for the events of May 8, when inmate Winston Gaines was welcomed into the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Initiation. Administered by Father Jeff VonLehmen, pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, and assisted by Deacon Barry Henry, director of Community Ministries and Outreach for Catholic Charities Covington, folding tables became an altar inside a makeshift chapel.

Father VonLehmen prepared the water for baptism, pouring holy water from a cleaned and repurposed Powerade bottle into a pitcher full of tap water, blessing it, preparing it to be used in the baptism. He said to Mr. Gaines, "Water, filling this bowl, let it fill your heart, let it cleanse, let it change, let it transform, let it nourish. In that sense, you can be free from all your sins, all our sins, you can always be free in that sense and strengthened to live a happier life."

Then, taking the water, Father VonLehmen baptized Mr. Gaines who, though handcuffed, was set free of the stain of original sin and all those he has committed. Later, taking the perfumed chrism from a vial, Father VonLehmen confirmed Mr. Gaines, as the hands of jail ministers rested on his shoulders, a symbolic sign of support.

Those same hands rested on Mr. Gaines as he received Christ in the Eucharist for the first time, as Father VonLehmen told him in the homily, "there's no place that Jesus can't find us, come to us ... now, from the Eucharist, born from above, he can reach people where nobody else can reach, in our hearts."

Mr. Gaines said that he has been "anticipating" receiving the sacraments, and "looking forward to it." Through these sacraments Mr. Gaines was initiated into the Catholic Church, but they also provide for him a continued path towards healing. With Mr. Gaines saying that he is most looking forward to receiving the sacraments now that he is Catholic, and that he hopes his newfound faith will "help me to be closer to God."

The latest success story through the work of Catholic Charities, Covington, jail ministry program, Mr. Gaines approached jail min-

isters inside the detention center in January and inquired about becoming Catholic. However, his journey to the faith began long before his incarceration.

Mr. Gaines' first encounter with his faith was through his grandmother; though it was not until his adult life that he began exploring a personal faith journey. "I had been doing research and was learning about the sacraments. I was going to different churches and trying to figure out why there are so many different churches and which church to go to. I realized that Catholic is the church," he said.

After his incarceration, Mr. Gaines made the decision to become Catholic. "When I was here, the people from the Covington Diocese, I asked them and they hooked me up with Vince," he said.

Vince Lonneman, one of Catholic Charities' jail ministers, and new volunteer coordinator, accompanied Mr. Gaines through OCIA, working with him on matters of the faith: Old Testament and New Testament theology, the meaning of the Sacraments, the Eucharist as the true presence of Christ, how to pray the rosary and even stations of the cross.

Mr. Lonneman was "very excited" to work with Mr. Gaines, saying, "it was a very enriching, exciting, spiritual experience for me ... One of the best gifts you can give to somebody is give them their faith. It was very enriching and rewarding for me, and I'll never forget it the rest of my life."

Though Mr. Gaines, a quiet and introspective person, said only that his OCIA experience was "interesting," the emotion was evident when he announced his confirmation saint, St. Vincent.

Calling the sacramental experience, "happy," and "almost overwhelming," Mr. Gaines looks forward to practicing the Catholic faith, and learning more with the Catechism of the Catholic Church gifted to him by Deacon Henry.

Mr. Lonneman reflected on the fruits of the jail ministry team, saying, "they are always very appreciative, and that's what we do. We go in and we give them hope, we give them some Scripture, we give them some things they can fall back on." And in the case of Mr. Gaines, he received new life in Jesus, and a new community in the faith.

To learn more about the jail ministry program and how to volunteer go to: covingtoncharities.org/services/community-outreach-services/jail-prison-ministry.

Father Ed Brodnick celebrates 50 years of priesthood, service marked by those he's served

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

After 50 years of priestly ministry, Father Ed Brodnick has served seven parishes, from Corbin to Cold Spring, and two schools, influencing the lives of many. None more so than Father Brodnick himself, who has drawn inspiration during his tenure from those he served throughout his ministry. Marking this tenure is Father Brodnick's particular affinity for youth ministry, where he finds "hope for the future, hope for today and the days to come," he said.

Father Brodnick grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, with two brothers, a sister and faithful, loving parents. He attended grade school, high school and began college in Cleveland, a self-described "city boy from Cleveland." Through God's providence, Father Brodnick became a seminarian in the Diocese of Covington and attended St. John Vianney Seminary, Buffalo, New York.

Father Brodnick credits his experience in New York as the beginnings of his passion for youth ministry. "I was involved in high school retreat work, developing programs, and so I got a taste for youth ministry early on. I think that's one of the reasons why that was just something that was a part of my vision of what my role was going to be in a parish," he said.

Following his June 6 ordination by Bishop Ackerman, Father Brodnick was assigned to an Appalachian parish in Corbin, Kentucky. There, he gained first-hand experience in Appalachian ministry, but his passion



Father Ed Brodnick



for youth ministry remained. Bringing Bible school to the children of Corbin and surrounding towns, he explained, "We would run Bible school," he said "and we would have vans where the people would trust us ... to pick up their children, drive them to Williamsburg so that we could have Bible school with them all day."

Following his time in Corbin, Father Brodnick was assigned to St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria, as a part-time associate pastor, and to Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, as a part-time teacher. While at St. Mary Parish, Father Brodnick saw a need for the youth of the parish. "When I first came up from the mountains, there were not many choices for teenager retreats up here," he said. So, Father Brodnick took a group to a Celebration retreat in his hometown of Cleveland. Describing the retreat as "Christ renews his parish, only for teens," the experience was astounding, and the teens wanted to bring the retreat home.

"I thought it was going to be a one-time deal. We slept on the

Brossart cooked meals for us and the young people," he said. This "one-time deal" is in its 43rd year of operations, with retreats ongoing twice a year. "It's one of those things where every time you thought that it was not going to be enough coming anymore, it would just come back again," he said.

Father Brodnick remained at St. Mary Parish for five years, before a brief reassignment in the same role at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. There for two years, Father Brodnick was then assigned to a full-time teaching position at Newport Central Catholic High School, Newport, for one year. From there, he was assigned as the inaugural pastor at St. Timothy Parish, Union.

"I think God just kind of guides us," he said of all these assignments. "Sometimes you got to sit back and laugh, because you don't realize it till after the fact ... I love parish work ... the pastoral work is breathtaking."

Father Brodnick is now retired from active ministry but remains the chaplain at his beloved Bishop Brossart High School. "Getting to know some of these young people on a deeper level, rather than just seeing them once in a while, has been a gift," he said.

For Father Brodnick, 50 years of priestly ministry is marked by dedication to his parishes, to teaching, but above all else, to the people he serves.

"For some reason, God decided that he needed me in each of those places for some time, to live and to be a part of that community and to lead them as best I could," Father Brodnick said. "We [priests] try to do the best we can with whatever the Lord calls us to do ... We're not perfect at it, but somehow, with the working of the Holy Spirit and a lot of good people around us in a parish, a lot of the young people are hungry to know the Lord. It's an exciting life, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

floor at the old St. Mary school. The cook from Bishop

Thomas More University celebrates its 28th annual Bishop William A. Hughes Awards

Staff report

Thomas More University recently honored five community members at the 28th annual Bishop William A. Hughes Award Dinner, April 15. Sponsored by DBL Law, the awards recognize individuals who have demonstrated leadership in the community and made a significant impact on Catholic education. This year's honorees were Louis (Lou) '81 and Marilyn Esselman, Thomas Gilday '75, and Charles (Chuck) '74 and Julie Geisen Sheper '76.

"We are thrilled to recognize the dedication this year's recipients have to Thomas More, Catholic higher education, and the broader community," said Joseph Chillo, president of Thomas More University. "They have selflessly given their time and talents to help others through leadership, mentoring, and service initiatives. These initiatives support Thomas More's mission of challenging students of all faiths to examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world and their responsibility to others."

The Bishop William A. Hughes Award was given to Lou and Marilyn Esselman in recognition of their significant contributions to Catholic higher education throughout the region. In '81, Lou was elected to the alumni board and served as president from '84 to '87. They both worked bingo and Marilyn served as the athletic boosters' secretary. Lou was also the public address announcer for the men's and women's basketball games for about 13 years.

Lou and Marilyn are active with St. Thomas Parish, where Marilyn served as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine teacher and conference secretary. She was also the Santa House Fund Raiser Program Treasurer at Ruth Moyer Elementary School. Lou has been a volunteer at Housing Opportunities of Northern Kentucky since '93.

Lou graduated from Thomas More in '81, his sister

(Continued on page 6)



Thomas Gilday '75 receives the Dr. Raymond Hebert Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contributions to Thomas More from Dr. Joseph Chillo, president, Thomas More University.

As Disciple Maker Index survey comes to a close, diocese, parishes prepare for results

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Results of the 2026 Disciple Maker Index survey are coming in. With parishioners across the diocese having filled out the survey during this past Lent, incoming results will gauge the success of the pastoral plans developed following the first survey three years ago.

While final results are to be determined as paper surveys are still to be entered and evaluated, preliminary results based off the online submissions are beginning to take shape.

The Diocese saw a 36 percent participation rate for the 2026 survey — and, while a decrease from the 46 percent rate of the first survey, this number is considered a “great response,” according to diocesan chancellor Jamie



Schroeder, and close enough to the results of the first survey to be “statistically relevant.”

“As soon as the final results are ready,” said Mrs. Schroeder, “parishes will be able to take a look and see what difference their pastoral plans made.”

Results so far, according to Mrs. Schroeder, have differed from parish to parish — but parishes that stuck closely to their plans have seen the best and most consistent results based on the currently available data.

In the coming weeks, pastors and their parishioners

who participated in their pastoral planning committees, will participate in webinars to review how to analysis the finalized data and formulate it into an updated three-year pastoral plan.

On a diocesan level, previously identified focus areas such as faith formation, evangelization and leadership development are “still very significant parts of what we want to accomplish as a diocese,” Mrs. Schroeder said.

“What the parishes choose to do at a local level we hope will build on those three pillars, but they’re going to be local plans,” she said, with every parish’s needs being unique based off the results of the two surveys.

Updated plans for the both the diocese and individual parishes are projected to be completed by autumn, with parishes deciding individually whether or not to publish their plan publicly. The diocesan plan will be made available publicly both on the covidio.org website as well as printed in the *Messenger* newspaper.

St. Joseph School students who share God’s love through homeless ministry are recognized by Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

Students at St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs, were recognized by Kim Webb, chief executive officer, Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky, Covington, with the Ralph Drees Impact Award. This annual award is

presented to volunteers of the shelter and recognizes those who make an impact on the shelter and its guests. This year the students of the St. Joseph School Cavalier Care Ministry awarded, in surprise, following an all-school Mass.

The Cavaliers Care Ministry is a parent-run volunteer

organization that encourages St. Joseph School families to volunteer in their communities. The ministry has partnerships with four organizations, but Christie Pavia, founder, said that it is the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky that impacts the students the most.

“Every time a student goes down there and humbly submits themselves to the most vulnerable in our community it’s extremely rewarding, and I think it just feeds the soul of the kids and encourages them to be the hands and feet of Jesus,” said Mrs. Pavia.

Families can register for the volunteer opportunities at the shelter through the Cavaliers Care Ministry, and serve food donated by local organizations. As guests of the shelter come through the line to receive a meal, the students

(Continued on page 9)



The Ralph Drees Impact Award from the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky recognizes volunteer groups who make an impact on the shelter, its guests and its staff.



Bishop's Schedule

May 16
Thomas More University commencement, Thomas More Stadium, Crestview Hills, 9:30 a.m.

An Oaks Evening of Gratitude, Syndicate, Newport, 6 p.m.

May 17
Graduation, Bishop Brossart High School, Thomas More University, 2 p.m.

May 18
Graduation, Covington Catholic High School, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 19-20
CCK/Province meeting, Archdiocese of Louisville

May 21
TMU Center of Faith, Mission and Catholic Education team, 12:30 p.m.

Priest Holy Hour, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 3 p.m.

Graduation, St. Henry District High School, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 22
Graduation, Villa Madonna Academy, Mother of God Church, Covington, 10:30 a.m.

Graduation, Notre Dame Academy, Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Covington, 4 p.m.

May 23
Graduation, Holy Cross District High School, Thomas More University, 7 p.m.

May 24
Graduation, St. Patrick High School, St. Patrick Church, Maysville, 1 p.m.

Graduation, Covington Latin School, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 7 p.m.

May 25
Adult confirmation Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.

May 26
Curia Closed — Memorial Day Holiday

Official Assignments

Effective July 14, 2026

Rev. Phillip W. DeVous

To: Pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California

From: Pastor, St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Flemingsburg and St. Rose of Lima Parish, Mays Lick

Rev. Joseph A. Gallenstein

To: Pastor, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger

From: Pastor, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria

Rev. Aby Thampi, C.M.I.

To: Pastor, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria

From: Pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish and St. Ann Mission, Covington

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

Jamie N. Schroeder
Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

“I’ve been feeling lightheaded lately.
Could this be connected to my heart?”

- William, Taylor Mill, KY

“Yes, and you
shouldn’t have
to wait to have
it checked.”

Dr. Darek Sanford
Florence Wormald
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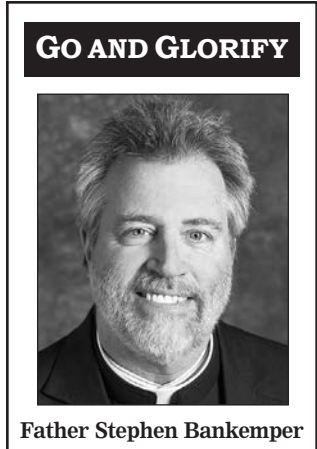


Our hope and our mandate

The readings for the Ascension the Lord — Cycle A — are: Acts 1:1–11, Ephesians 1:17–23 and Matthew 28:16–20.

We come this Sunday to our diocese’s celebration of the solemnity of The Ascension of the Lord. It is a fascinating event that can be forgotten in our everyday language.

How often, for example, have you heard someone speak of the “Passion, Death and Resurrection” of the Lord, as opposed to the “Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension” of the Lord? The first is a far more common phrase. Yet the Ascension of our Lord is truly a pivotal event: with the Lord’s return to the Father his earthly ministry in his body ends and the ministry of the apostles (and, by extension, the ministry of the Church) begins.



Father Stephen Bankemper

This article will focus on the twofold meaning of the Ascension for us in the Church: the hope and mandate that come from it.

The hope that the Ascension awakens in us is the hope that we, too, can “ascend” one day with Jesus to the Father. It is heard in all the prayers of the Mass and in one of the readings.

In the Collect we pray: “. . . for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation, and, where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope.”

The Prayer Over the Offerings does not use the actual word ‘hope,’ but the idea is there: “. . . grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms.”

Finally, in the Prayer After Communion we pray, “. . . grant . . . that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you.”

The Church also gives us a short section of St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians that not only mentions our hope of being with Christ in heaven, but also entices us, draws us, one might say, by its very description: “May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones . . .”

It is vital that we understand how the Church uses the word “hope.” The way we use the word in ordinary speech, we might just as easily and accurately exchange for it the word “wish”: “I hope it does not rain tomorrow,” “I hope she shows up on time,” “I hope there are tickets left for the movie.”

This is not what the Church means by hope. The Church’s meaning is expressed in paragraph 1817 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

Notice the parts of this definition: hope is a theological virtue — in other words, it does not even come from us but is a gift from God — and we rely, not on ourselves for its fulfillment, but on Christ’s promises and the grace of the Holy Spirit. And, we can add on this feast, on Christ’s first taking our human nature into the heavenly realms.

As Martin Luther wrote in his hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*), “Did

(Continued on page 12)

Who would have guessed it?

As I reach the conclusion of my first-year teaching ninth-grade religion at Bishop Brossart High School, I find myself reflecting on a journey I never expected to

take. Balancing the roles of theology teacher and strength coach for the football team has been, at times, frustrating and exhausting. Yet, I wouldn’t trade this experience for anything. I have grown to love a group of students I didn’t know a year ago, and I now see the profound importance of the mission God has entrusted to me.

Today’s youth face pressures that were non-existent when I was their age. The relentless

onslaught of social media adds a layer of stress that can be truly overwhelming. In this landscape, learning how to weave faith into their daily narrative is a challenge. That is why I chose to focus on building authentic relationships. My goal was to get to know them as individuals so I could introduce them to the faith in a way that felt relevant, not just academic. The last thing I wanted was for this to be just another class they had to take.

As a convert to the faith, my purpose was never to focus solely on doctrine and dogma of the Church. While those foundations are vital, I believe it is equally critical for students to understand the Church’s role in their personal journey with Christ. I wanted to show them the path of truth, beauty and goodness.

Students often know the fundamentals, the virtues, the commandments and the structure of the Mass, but knowing Jesus personally is a different story altogether. My intent was to show them that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that a real, living relationship with Him is possible.

One of the greatest hurdles is that many students do not attend Mass regularly. If faith is not a priority in the home, it is difficult to make it one in the classroom. This is why I emphasize that faith is more than just a Sunday obligation — it is a way of life.

Throughout the year, we explored the lives of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, seeing how God works through holy people despite their human imperfections. We talked about the Trinity and how God reveals himself to us. We spent Mondays in the chapel, connecting the Sunday readings to their real-world experiences. We tackled moral decision making through group projects and explored how music and art can be windows to the Divine.

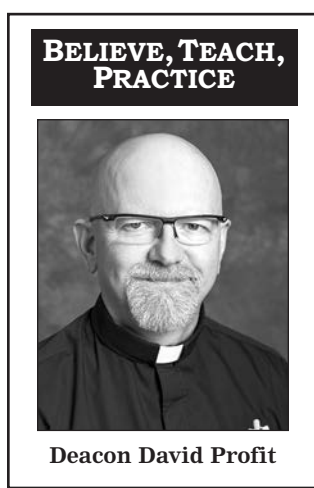
One of my favorite moments happened on Thursdays, our flex days. Students were given a choice of where to spend their period, and a group of my freshmen began joining me in the chapel for Adoration. Eventually, we started praying the rosary together. It was awkward at first, they didn’t know all the mysteries, and the rhythm was new to them, but it was undeniably beautiful. Witnessing that quiet growth was a testament to how God moves when we simply show up.

This year has been a profound gift to me. I was enjoying a comfortable semi-retirement when this opportunity appeared, and now I can’t imagine doing anything else. I have come to care deeply for these freshmen, as well as the entire faculty and staff at Bishop Brossart.

I’m excited to return next year full-time, where I’ll be adding a class on Exercise Science in conjunction with Theology of the Body. It’s a perfect marriage of my two worlds. Who would have guessed I’d find my second calling as a ninth-grade religion teacher and strength coach? I suppose God did. He put me here for a purpose, and I thank Him for it every morning.

Pray for me and these students and all who teach in Catholic schools. The mission and identity of our Catholic faith are greatly enhanced through our schools.

Deacon David Proffitt is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport and Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria.



Deacon David Proffitt

How about you? How do you experience joy?

The resurrection narrative is the epitome of the joy-filled experience!

Lately, I’ve enjoyed doing some life-review and thinking about the times that I’ve experienced joy. Joy can be described as a deep internal experience of peace that many times accompanies a hardship that one carries. It feels good, often simple, yet is deep and lasts longer than pleasure.

Experiences of joy come readily to my mind when I think about the time that began in the late 70s when I was living and ministering in Eastern Kentucky. I worked in several capacities both as a nurse therapist and as a teacher. My time as a remedial teacher brings about joy-filled memories of the people who were participants in a sheltered workshop.

A couple of mornings they would come “to school.” Few, if any, had completed elementary school. All were dealing with cognitive and emotional issues. When I first began, it was a bit of a surprise to see how eager they were to learn. It didn’t take long for me to realize what a joy it was for them to have this opportunity.

Their van arrived ahead of me. With schoolbags in tow, they waited for me to arrive. Eager to go into the makeshift classroom, they would rush to the car and offer to carry in whatever I brought. They were thrilled to be there and so was I.

Despite the many difficulties in learning, they tried their best. They particularly loved having their own reading, math and geography workbooks. Some used the answer keys to quickly go through the workbooks so they could get another! Though there were challenges, real life learning took place. Today, I can still visualize the happy expressions on their faces.

Joy is sometimes profound, usually not earth-shattering and yet is felt deep in the soul.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills.



Sister Aileen Bankemper, OSB

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28th annual Bishop William A. Hughes Awards

(Continued from page 2)

graduated in '66 when the university was still known as Villa Madonna College, and both of Lou and Marilyn's children graduated from Thomas More.

Thomas Gilday received the Dr. Raymond Hebert Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contributions to Thomas More. For 40 years, Thomas was an accounting professor, providing practical life skills such as financial literacy for first year students. He was named Instructor of the Year in '97, Outstanding Undergraduate Faculty Member in '20, and received the Outstanding Student Advocacy award also in '20. In '21, he was named Faculty Emeritus in recognition of his meritorious service. He also served as the department chair, participated in many University committees and helped establish the Jamaica Service Learning program.

Thomas launched the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program in '81 and remained active through '20. In '04 and '10, he was recognized by Delta Epsilon Sigma for his dedication to community service. Thomas's University roots run deep—his father taught at Thomas More for 23 years, and his sister, as well as his children, are all Thomas More alumni.

The Thomas More Medallion is the highest dedicated service award granted to a member of the Thomas More community, recognizing their extraordinary service to the University and to the larger community which it serves. This year, Chuck and Julie Geisen Sheper received this award in honor of their exceptional leadership, and shared commitment to service, mentorship, and community advancement at Thomas More and throughout Northern Kentucky.

A mental health professional for 25 years, Julie was active with the DCCH Center for Children and Families, Brighton Center, and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington, where she supervised the Child Guidance Program. She has served on boards for the Covington Education Foundation, Independent Public Schools, Interact for Health, BRIDGES for a Just Community, Parish Kitchen, and the Thomas More University Distinguished Alumnae League. Her 20-year Partners for Change mentorship helped a first gener-

ation college graduate launch her career.

As the chairman of Bexion Pharmaceuticals, Chuck helps advance cancer and neurological disease treatments and he has been involved with the Cancer Support Community for several years. Chuck also served as the interim Mayor of Covington, is a founding chair of the Catalytic Development Fund of Northern Kentucky and has served on numerous regional boards.

Together, Chuck and Julie have received the Northern Kentucky Chamber Frontiersman Award, the Metropolitan Club Persons of the Year Award, Northern Kentucky University's Lincoln Award, the Devou Cup, and individual Bishop Hughes awards. Julie was also named an Outstanding Woman of Northern Kentucky, and Chuck was named a Great Living Cincinnati in '25.



Dr. Joseph Chillo, president, Thomas More University recently honored five community members at the 28th annual Bishop William A. Hughes Award Dinner, April 15. This year's honorees are: Louis (Lou) '81 and Marilyn Esselman, (left), Thomas Gilday '75, (page 2), and Charles (Chuck) '74 and Julie Geisen Sheper '76, (right).



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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

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

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

The Catholic Men's Group of Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, will be having a Northern Kentucky Catholic Men's Rosary Procession from Divine Mercy to St. Bernard on May 16. There will be a breakfast afterward at Garvey Hall. The event will begin at 6 a.m. with Adoration at Divine Mercy. The Catholic Men's Rosary Procession from Divine Mercy to St Bernard will begin at 7 a.m. All are welcome.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, needs volunteer tutors for its Education Center's Summer Academics Program (Grades 1-9) during the month of June. Volunteers work alongside students to reinforce math, reading and English skills, helping to prevent summer learning loss. Contact Brandi at (859) 630-9475 or blenihan@nduec.org.

"Prayer Is Listening to the Heart of God", presented by Sister Marla Monahan, SND will be May 20 from 7-8 p.m. in the St. Barbara Sterling Event Center, Erlanger. Hosted by the Faith and Fellowship Committee. No RSVP needed.

St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, will host their annual Indoor Flea Market, June 5-6, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. in the school gym. Donations can be dropped off May 30, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and June 1-4, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. No adult clothing, mattresses, china cabinets or entertainment centers. TV's? Flat screen only. Call (859) 341-6609 x4010 for more information.

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

There will be a Summer Marriage Encounter Weekend July 24-July 26 at Towneplace Suites by Marriott in Lexington-Keeneland. Sign up at <http://esharing.org> or <http://wwme.org>. You can also register by calling Andy and Melanie Reinersman at (859) 653-8464. Come join us for an experience that can change your marriage, and your life!

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.

The FIRE Foundation of Northern Kentucky will be hosting a "FIRE in the Hole" golf outing, Sept. 12, at Devou Golf Course. Starting with registration at 8 a.m.,

the event will feature a 9 a.m. shotgun start and a 3-5 p.m. cocktail hour. Price is \$500 for a foursome (\$125 per golfer.) Includes breakfast, lunch, 2 drink tickets and hors d'oeuvres included. Win exciting prizes for longest drive, closest to the pin, live auction, raffles and split-the-pot. More information and registration online at <https://www.firefoundationnky.org/golf>.

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.

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.

Zoom Support Group for family, relatives and friends of victims of clergy sexual abuse, second Monday of the month, 6:30-8 p.m. CST; 7:30-9 p.m. EST. These meetings are confidential and no one is forced to contribute unless they want to. For information contact Paula Kaempffer, coordinator of Restorative Practices and Survivor Support, for the Archdiocese of St.

Paul and Minneapolis, at kaempfferp@archspm.org or call (763) 688-3978.

St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, offers Veneration of a relic of the True Cross, on the first Friday of every month, from noon-1 p.m. Confessions are offered concurrently. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic. The monthly veneration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Do you have a bike no longer used? Donate it to Pickett's Corner a ministry of Catholic Charities. Each bike makes a significant difference in the lives of those in need. Pick up available and all repairs are done at Pickett's Corner. Simply e-mail Pickettscorner23@gmail.com and give your name, address and phone number.



Tradition

A second grade student at St. Henry School, Erlanger, wore a very special dress for her First Holy Communion at on May 3: Her mother's dress. Her mother received First Holy Communion at St. Henry on May 2, 1993 — serving as a beautiful reminder of the faith being passed down through generations.

Pam McQueen to step down as principal after 30 years at Villa Madonna Academy, will continue as president

Laura Keener
Editor

Long before Pam McQueen ever walked the halls of Villa Madonna Academy as its first lay principal, a paperback copy of *The Great Gatsby* helped chart her course. Assigned by her high school English teacher, the novel gripped her so completely that, she said, “I don’t know — I read the first couple of chapters, I couldn’t put it down,” and “there was something about the characters in this that just changed my life.”

Mrs. McQueen said she saw herself most in Nick Carraway — the observant narrator who tries to make sense of the people around him and, ultimately, chooses integrity over illusion. As a young reader, she was drawn to Nick’s role as listener and truth-teller, she said, and to “the way he watches everything and then decides what really matters.”

That perspective, Mrs. McQueen explained, stayed with her in education: paying close attention to students’ stories, weighing competing voices and leading with a steady moral compass.

This spring, Mrs. McQueen will deliver commencement remarks one more time — like always, with *Gatsby* “in there” — and then retire from the principal’s office after 30 years leading the Benedictine school. She will remain at Villa Madonna Academy in the role of president focusing on strategic planning, alumni engagement and the next phase of fundraising.

Mrs. McQueen became principal three decades ago after teaching English at St. Henry District High School and Newport Central Catholic. “Brand new principal — first lay principal here,” she recalled.

She remembers arriving to an unfamiliar culture and quickly learning that the job was more than first-day excitement. “The first days were challenging,” she said, but she found mentors and, importantly, a warm welcome from the Benedictine Sisters who founded the academy. “They were incredibly supportive ... and from the get-go, made me feel like part of their family,” Mrs. McQueen said. “I always felt welcomed, always.”

Over the years, Mrs. McQueen worked to make Villa Madonna’s Benedictine identity unmistakable. “I set out [that] the minute you walk into this building, you need to know you’re in a Benedictine school,” she said, describing graphics, a prominent Benedictine cross and giving each freshman a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict. “Every day we

talked about hospitality and respect and reverence and stewardship. It’s in our announcements and it’s in everything we do.”

Those values, she said, helped sustain a close-knit faculty community through decades of change. “We don’t go to work in the morning — we go to school,” Mrs. McQueen said. She points to milestones such as opening the new gym in 2000, earning multiple National Blue Ribbon recognitions and other honors and navigating a major capital campaign that began in 2019 and paused during the pandemic. Despite rising costs, “we raised the money to renovate that building,” she said and the campus’ new STEM wing is nearing completion.

Mrs. McQueen also championed a distinctive grade-level model, integrating junior high students into the high school setting. The approach, she said, reframes early adolescents as “young adults,” giving them expectations and role models while surrounding them with a Benedictine house system designed to teach community. “It works. The model really works well,” she said.

During her tenure, she and faculty members began connecting with 24 other Benedictine high schools in the United States, forming a colloquium. “We have this tight knit group of Benedictine heads of school and we all work together,” said Mrs. McQueen, noting that she, faculty members and students have visited and welcomed students from California, New Jersey, Alabama and more.

Next year, Villa Madonna Academy will return to a leadership structure that separates day-to-day academic oversight from long-range operations and advancement. Mrs. McQueen has held a dual role, but the school is splitting responsibilities so she can focus on the president/executive director portfolio.

In the model, the president leads advancement, finance and community relationships, while the principal concentrates on curriculum, student life and instructional leadership. “It’s become more and more — I think more and more is expected of principals through the years,” Mrs. McQueen said, citing student mental health needs, teacher support and new programming. “So, you really need somebody that can focus 100 percent” on the principalship.

The search for a new principal is nearing completion, with the school down to its final candidates, she said.

As she transitions, Mrs. McQueen says she will work intentionally to give the incoming principal room to lead. “For me, it’s going to be important to step back and let the




Keener photo

With photos of Villa Madonna Academy and her high school copy of “*The Great Gatsby*” behind her, Pam McQueen holds a cornerstone dedicated to her — a gift from the VMA community — which will be cemented in the schools’ newly renovated STEM area.

new principal create his or her culture,” she said, while still staying present with students and families. “I want to do that too ... but to not be intrusive ... just to be a support, however they might need me to be.”

About her time as principal, Mrs. McQueen said, “Being here has been the gift of a lifetime. It’s bittersweet ... I will miss it,” she said, as she looks toward a new chapter — still at Villa Madonna Academy — in a singular role as president.



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St. Joseph School students are recognized by Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky

(Continued from page 3)

and families greet them with a smile, a conversation and a human connection.

When it came time to decide who would be the recipient of the 2026 Ralph Drees Impact Award, Mrs. Webb said that it was the students of St. Joseph who “immediately” came to mind. Their work with the guests of the shelter, “brightens up their mood and the shelter. They get excited when they see the students in here, and they just bring an energy and a joy, often in ways only young people can do.”

“To witness our guests engage with these students as

they’re going through the meal line, and they’re talking to them, and the students in return talk to our guests like they are worthy of a conversation, it removes the homelessness side of it,” said Mrs. Webb, “they normalize that experience for our guests, in terms of feeling valued in our community, feeling heard in our community.”

Timothy Maines, principal, St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs, said, “we have so many students wanting to help and do things that there’s just not enough space for it, and there’s not enough space at the shelter ... the students and

the parents, just the whole community, want to give back and show that Christ-like attitude of helping others.”

“I feel nothing but pride for these students,” said Mr. Maines. “I am just so incredibly proud of all the accomplishments they have, and everything they do.”

Mrs. Pavia shares a message with all the students who volunteer through the Cavaliers Care Ministry, telling them, “God gives you gifts, not to store them up in your school or your church or your house, but to be the vessel” that pours them out.



(above, left) Timothy Maines, principal, St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs, estimates that nearly 100 students stood to receive the Ralph Drees Impact Award from the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky. Students of all ages can volunteer at the shelter, from kindergarten through eighth grade.

(above, right) Kim Webb, executive director of the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky, presented the students with the Ralph Drees Impact Award as a surprise, following the conclusion of an all-school Mass.

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‘My soul magnifies the Lord!': Pope Leo marks anniversary of election at Marian shrine in Pompeii

Courtney Mares
OSV News

Pope Leo XIV marked the anniversary of his May 8 election by making a pilgrimage to celebrate Mass at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, one of Italy's most beloved Marian shrines, placing his pontificate under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

“Exactly one year ago, when I was entrusted with the ministry of the Successor of Peter, it was precisely the day of the Supplication to the Virgin, this beautiful feast of the Supplication to the Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii,” the pope said in his homily before an estimated 20,000 people gathered in the piazza in front of the basilica.

“I therefore had to come here to place my ministry under the protection of the Blessed Virgin,” he said.

The pilgrimage brought Pope Leo XIV full circle: On May 8, 2025, moments after his election, the newly chosen pope led the crowd from the loggia in St. Peter's Basilica in praying a Hail Mary on what happened to be the feast of Our Lady of Pompeii. Now, a year later, the pope began his homily with words echoing Mary's Magnificat: “My soul magnifies the Lord!”

“Brothers and sisters, no earthly power will save the world, but only the divine power of love, this divine power of love that Jesus, the Lord, has revealed to us and given us. Let us believe in Him, let us hope in Him, and let us follow Him,” Pope Leo said in Pompeii.

The first pope born in the United States had a busy first year. The Augustinian pope presided over more than 65 public Masses, the canonization of nine saints, apostolic journeys across three continents, audiences with many world leaders, and led the Catholic Church in the celebration of the historic Jubilee of Hope.

On the morning of the May 8 anniversary, the pope traveled south by helicopter from the Vatican to the Sanctuary

of the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, located near Naples. He began the day by meeting with hundreds of sick and disabled pilgrims inside the basilica before greeting thousands of people gathered in the piazza outside.

The Marian shrine has its roots in a remarkable conversion story of a former Satanist who was canonized as a saint by Pope Leo in October as one of the first new saints of his pontificate. The basilica was founded by St. Bartolo Longo, an Italian lawyer and former Satanist who returned to the Catholic faith and dedicated his life to promoting the rosary.

Located near the ancient Roman ruins of Pompeii, the modern city of Pompei was founded after Bartolo Longo built the Marian sanctuary.

“One hundred and fifty years ago, as he laid the cornerstone of this Shrine — on the very spot where the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. had buried the vestiges of a great civilization under ash, preserving them for centuries — Saint Bartolo Longo, together with his wife, Countess Marianna Farnararo De Fusco, laid the foundations not only of a church, but of an entire Marian city,” Pope Leo said.

In addition to the basilica, Bartolo Longo also built up the extensive charity network around the shrine, welcoming orphans and the children of prisoners, and earning two nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize in the early 1900s.

“When Saint Bartolo first arrived in the valley of Pompeii, he found a land plagued by great poverty,

inhabited by a few very poor farmers, and ravaged by malaria and bandits. He was able to see, however, the face of Christ in everyone: in the young and the old, and especially in the orphans and the children of prisoners, to whom he made the beating of God's heart felt through his tenderness,” the pope said in a meeting with charity volunteers affiliated with the shrine before the Mass.

Pope Leo listened to testimonies from those aided by the shrine's ongoing charitable works before the Eucharistic celebration. Among them was a mother named Serena, who told the pope: “When I arrived, I felt like a failure: a mother who hadn't been able to protect herself and her children from an abusive relationship. But then I began to understand that falling to the ground doesn't necessarily mean staying there.”

Today the Pompeii shrine dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary draws approximately 3 million pilgrims annually. Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis all made pilgrimages to the shrine, which was named a basilica by Pope Leo XIII in 1901.

On his anniversary, Pope Leo XIV reflected on how his choice of the papal name Leo connects him to Pope Leo XIII, who championed devotion to the rosary.

“Having chosen the name Leo places me in the footsteps of Leo XIII, who, among his other merits, also developed



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OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters

Pope Leo XIV venerates the reliquary containing ampoules of what local Catholics believe is the blood of St. Gennaro at the Naples Cathedral during a meeting with members of the clergy on the day of the first anniversary of his election, in Naples, Italy, May 8, 2026.

an extensive Magisterium on the Holy Rosary,” the pope said.

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV reflected at length on the importance of praying the rosary.

“The Hail Mary is an invitation to joy,” he said. “It tells Mary — and through her, all of us — that upon the ruins of our humanity, tried by sin and therefore ever prone to oppression, abuse, and war, God’s caress has come, the caress of mercy, which takes on a human face in Jesus.”

He described the repetition of Hail Mary in the prayer

of the rosary as an echo of the angel Gabriel’s greeting at the Annunciation, an echo “that spans the centuries and directs the believer’s gaze to Jesus, seen through the eyes and heart of his Mother.”

In the rosary, he said, “Jesus is adored, contemplated, and assimilated in each of his mysteries, so that with Saint Paul we may say: ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me’ (Gal 2:20).”

The pope closed his homily with an urgent appeal for peace, noting that “times have not improved” in the quarter century since St. John Paul II placed the Year of the Rosary under the patronage of Our Lady of Pompeii.

“The wars still being waged in so many regions of the world call for a renewed commitment, not only economic and political, but also spiritual and religious,” Pope Leo said. “Peace is born in the heart. ... We cannot resign ourselves to the images of death that the news presents

to us every day.”

Invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the pope prayed that “the God of peace would pour out an overflowing abundance of mercy, touching hearts, soothing grudges and fratricidal hatred, and enlightening those who bear special responsibilities of governance.”

Following Mass, the pope led the crowd in praying the traditional Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii, the prayer composed by St. Bartolo Longo himself that is

prayed each year on May 8 and the first Sunday of October by Catholics in Italy and around the world.

Veneration and liquefaction of St. Januarius’ blood in Naples

From Pompeii, the pope traveled to the nearby city of Naples for the afternoon leg of his pastoral visit, where he was greeted with the kind of exuberant welcome the southern Italian city is known for with festive music, dancing, and a traditional Neapolitan pizza bearing his name.

At the Naples Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary, Pope Leo venerated and kissed the reliquary containing the blood of St. Januarius, the fourth-century bishop and patron saint of the city. As the pope held the reliquary, the saint’s preserved blood liquified — an occurrence Neapolitans have long regarded as a miracle and a favorable omen. The phenomenon has taken place in the presence of only two popes in modern history: during the visit of Pope Pius IX in 1848 and Pope Francis in 2015.

The pope then traveled by popemobile through Naples’ streets before addressing a crowd of some 50,000 people in the Piazza del Plebiscito, the city’s largest public square. There, he spoke frankly about the challenges facing Naples, including organized crime, poverty and inequality, warning of the dangers of “poor job prospects, a lack of adequate facilities and services, and pervasive crime.”

“Faced with these realities, which sometimes take on worrying dimensions, the presence and action of the State is more necessary than ever; to give security and confidence to citizens and take away space from organized crime,” he said.

“Peace starts from the heart of man, passes through relationships, takes root in neighborhoods and suburbs, and expands to embrace the entire city and the world,” Pope Leo said. “Peace is built by promoting an alternative culture to violence, through daily gestures, educational paths, and practical choices of justice.”

He closed his remarks to thunderous applause with an enthusiastic “Viva Napoli!” before departing by helicopter back to Rome in the evening.

New data analysis provides baseline for weighing options on unauthorized immigration, say experts

Gina Christian
OSV News

New research shows the number of “undocumented immigrants” — if defined as those without long-term authorization to reside in the U.S., including those granted short-term legal status — reached an estimated 14.6 million in 2024, an “increasingly settled” population that reflects shifts in migration patterns.

A large portion of this group — about 37 percent — have liminal legal status, such as temporary authorization for humanitarian reasons. But an accurate analysis of the data is essential in formulating effective immigration policies, said experts.

“The unauthorized population has long been misunderstood, mischaracterized and often maligned,” said Ruth Wasem, senior fellow at Cleveland State University’s Levin School of Urban Affairs. “The results are poor policy decisions.”

Wasem was part of a May 5 online panel hosted by the Center for Migration Studies of New York. The CMS gathering provided updated estimates on the cohort, with the data drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey

Joining Wasem were Ryan Allen, associate dean for research with expertise in housing and community development at the University of Minnesota; CMS senior visiting fellow Robert Warren; Phillip Connor, research fellow at Princeton University’s Center for Migration and Development; and CMS senior research and policy analyst Matthew Lisiecki, who moderated the discussion.

The estimated data is searchable at data.cmsny.org through a collaboration between CMS and the University of Minnesota. A forthcoming article by Allen and Warren is also set to appear in the Journal on Migration and Human Security.

Allen noted that the data included a “necessary lag,” since 2024 was the last year for reliable figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Given “substantial changes” in both federal policy on, and patterns of, migration over the past year, he said, “the landscape today may look really quite different” than that in 2024.

Those changes include the current Trump administration’s sweeping efforts to curtail immigration to the U.S. through mass deportations, third-country removals, removal of previously authorized deportation protections,

and other means.

Warren explained that the data was also adjusted for undercounts, noting that those arriving between 2021-2024 were “very difficult to enumerate” since “they were bused all over the place” and sent to “shelters, hotels” and “temporary housing.”

Despite those methodological challenges, Allen and his fellow presenters noted key shifts in the data up to 2024 that bear consideration.

Allen said the topline number of 14.6 million “represents a significant increase” of “about 4.4 million more undocumented immigrants relative to 2020” and of “2.4 million” from 2023 to 2024.

That contrasts with a decrease of about 1.5 million between 2014 and 2020, he said.

Connor highlighted that as of mid-2024, “37 percent of the broader undocumented population had some kind of temporary permission to stay in the U.S., whereas the remainder had no temporary permission or no legal status.”

“Undocumented Mexican immigrants are about 5.1 million of the total 14.6 million,” explained Allen. He added

(Continued on page 14)

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Our hope and our mandate

(Continued from page 5)

we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, / Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing."

Pope Francis expressed this beautifully in one of his general audiences: "The Ascension of Jesus into heaven acquaints us with this deeply consoling reality on our journey: in Christ, true God and true man, our humanity was taken to God. Christ opened the path to us. If we entrust our life to him, if we let ourselves be guided by him, we are certain to be in safe hands, in the hands of our Savior." (General Audience, 17 April 2013)

The Ascension of our Lord also brings a mandate, as we hear in the Gospel. Jesus has redeemed the world, reconciling it to the Father, and created the Church. He now entrusts to his Church a mission: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt 28:18-20)

If the hope of eternal life with the Father cannot be realized without entrusting our life to Jesus, as Francis said, then those who know Him must proclaim Him to others.

Jesus' command to make disciples "of all nations" may sound so broad as to seem to apply only to "the Church" as we often mean it, the great institution into which it has grown, but if it is to mean something to each of us — we individually are part of the Church's constitution — we must see something more specific in Jesus' words.

Instead of "all nations," we might substitute "all people" or, even better, "every person." In other words, the Church's mission — and we are part of the mission — is to make disciples of our sister and brother, if necessary, our next-door neighbor, our boss, our co-workers and

cousins. Not necessarily first by proselytizing, but by the "strangeness" of our Christian life.

Last Sunday we heard from Peter's first letter: "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." (Pt 3:15) Why would someone ask about our lives if they were not different from theirs?

So, Jesus' command to his apostles before he ascends to his Father becomes an exhortation and command to us as well: live a life that draws the world to me, that all may know "the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory" that await all who give their lives to our Lord.

The Ascension of the Lord — our hope and our mandate.

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

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Obituary

Sister Carol Marie Klaine (formerly Sister Mary Andree)

Mary Carol Klaine was born on Jan. 11, 1932. She was lovingly raised by her devoted mother, Margaret, and her family. Her father, George, passed away just two months before her birth; however, the steadfast love and support of family surrounded her throughout her life, providing all the care and security she needed.

Mary Carol began her education at the age of five at Mother of God School in Covington, Ky. After completing eighth grade, she attended Notre Dame Academy. Upon graduation, she began working at Peoples Liberty Bank and Trust Company in Covington.

At the age of 21, Sister Carol Marie (formerly Sister Mary Andree) entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Notre Dame and professed her vows on Aug. 20, 1956. She later returned to school to further her education, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Thomas More College, a Master of Arts in Education from Northern Kentucky University, and principal certification from the University of Dayton. Sister Carol Marie was devoted to education in a lifetime of faithful service, teaching intermediate and junior high students in the Dioceses of Covington, Cincinnati and Lexington.

In 1973, Sister Carol Marie discerned that she was being called to temporarily step away from the Sisters of Notre

Dame, yet her love for teaching and her faith remained at the heart of her life and ministry. During the years she was not a part of the community, she continued to be closely connected through her ongoing commitment to education and service.

After returning to the Sisters of Notre Dame, Sister Carol Marie soon found a ministry especially close to her heart. She served at St. Augustine School in Covington, Ky, where she ministered as both teacher and principal. There, she formed strong and enduring relationships with students and their families. Her faithful dedication to the St. Augustine community lives on in the many she inspired.

After retiring from education, Sister Carol Marie continued to serve her community in many capacities, assisting with the receptionist's office, transportation and the scheduling of meeting spaces. To relax, she delighted in spending time on the golf course, visiting with local families, and enjoying the companionship of friends.

After 55 years of religious life and service to God, Sister Carol Marie passed away peacefully on May 9, 2026. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers, Jack, Dick, and Larry Klaine. She leaves behind many beloved nieces and nephews.

Sister Carol Marie will be remembered for her faith, her service and the countless lives she shaped through education. Her legacy lives on in the students she taught, the schools she strengthened, and the community that so



Sister Carol Marie Klaine, SND

deeply loved her. May she now enjoy the reward of her good and gracious God.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated May 16 at St. Agnes Church, Ft. Wright, with interment in the convent cemetery.

Pope remembers attempt on St. John Paul, calls Mary the Church's 'perfect model'

Josephine Peterson
Catholic News Service

Marking the anniversary of the attempted assassination of St. John Paul II and the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Pope Leo XIV said Mary is the "perfect model" of what the Church is called to be and urged Catholics to imitate her "humility, active faith and obedience."

During his May 13 general audience in St. Peter's Square, the pope dedicated his catechesis to Mary, reflecting on her role as "model," "mother" and "pre-eminent member" of the Church through the teaching of the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution "Lumen Gentium."

The date marked 45 years since St. John Paul was shot and seriously wounded in St. Peter's Square during a general audience in 1981. The Polish pope was struck twice while passing through the square in his open popemobile. He was rushed to the hospital, where it was discovered that no vital organ was pierced. He later credited his survival to the protection of the Virgin Mary and maintained a lifelong devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

The shooter, Mehmet Ali Agca, was apprehended immediately and later visited by the pope who forgave him and called for his pardon. After serving 20 years in an Italian prison, he was deported to his country of Turkey in 2000.

The pope was shot May 13, 1981, the anniversary of the first of the Fatima apparitions, and the feast of Our Lady of Fatima. Three children were tending sheep May 13, 1917, when they had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The apparitions continued once a month until Oct. 13, 1917. The children said Mary asked them to promote devotion to

her Immaculate Heart and to pray the rosary daily to bring peace to the world.

In greeting the Portuguese speakers, Pope Leo said that the Church turns its gaze to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima today, where Mary delivered a message of peace.

"In that place, so dear to Christianity, numerous pilgrims from the five continents gather today: their presence is a sign of the need for consolation, unity, and hope of the people of our time," he said in Italian.

Pope Leo said Mary is the model of what the "Church is meant to be," because her "unconditional 'yes' shows us how to be members of the Church."

"Let us be challenged by Mary's example of humility, active faith and obedience," he said to English speakers following his address. "Let us generously respond in love, magnifying God in our hearts, and receiving strength from the sacraments."

He called Mary an "icon of the Mystery," saying that in her, God's plan of salvation is revealed through both divine grace and her free acceptance of God's will.

Continuing his catechetical series on the Second Vatican Council, the pope quoted "Lumen Gentium," saying the council's teaching on Mary helps the faithful "love the Church and to serve within her the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God."

The Church contemplates the mystery of Mary, not



CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters

In this file photo, a marble plaque, placed in St. Peter's Square, marks the spot of the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II May 13, 1981. The shooting took place on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, and the late pope always credited Mary with saving his life.

only because of her faith, her charity and the fact that she is the mother of Jesus, but also because, above all, she fulfilled all that she was called to be through the Lord.

Pope Leo called on the faithful to ask for Mary to help through her intercession, saying that everyone can learn from her example of humble and active faith, ending his address by saying, "Let us ask the Virgin to obtain this gift for us: that love for the Holy Mother Church may grow in all of us."

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Unauthorized immigration

(Continued from page 11)

that population increased 15 percent “by about 650,000 between 2020 and 2024.”

Yet despite the increase, “there are about 1 million fewer Mexican undocumented immigrants in 2024 than there were in 2014,” said Allen.

More recent growth among the overall cohort “has been driven by increasing numbers from Central and South America,” he said.

Some of the “fastest-growing undocumented populations” in the U.S. from 2020-2024 came from “Venezuela, Haiti, Ecuador and Nicaragua,” Allen said.

The overall CMS-defined undocumented population in 2024 was roughly split into thirds in terms of their length of U.S. residency, he said. Allen noted about 36 percent of the total had been in the U.S. less than five years; some 30 percent between five and 14 years; and 34 percent for 15 years or longer.

Over 80 percent of that last group are age 35 and older, with 60 percent reporting the ability to speak English “well or very well,” he said.

Those living in the U.S. between five and 14 years have “the highest levels of educational attainment,” with “nearly half” saying they had “at least some college” studies, said Allen.

Labor force participation (73 percent employed and 5 percent unemployed in 2024) is high among undocumented immigrants as a whole, he said, with the rate increasing with the number of years of residence. In comparison, 61 percent of the overall U.S. population was employed and 3 percent unemployed in 2024.

Wasem said the research under discussion in the CMS webinar “provides solid analysis of empirical data to enable policymakers to have a meaningful discussion

about the options to address unauthorized migration to the United States.”

She also said the research “shows how a preoccupation with border security and enforcement has not been particularly effective.”

The data can be used to more strategically address both “foreign nationals who posted national security risk” and the “humanitarian concerns” that drive individuals to flee their countries of origin for liminal immigration status in the U.S.

Ultimately, she said, “it’s legal immigration reform that we need to be talking about.”

Wasem said her forthcoming analysis of 20th-century U.S. immigration policy has identified “family ties, needed economic skills and humanitarian relief” as the nation’s historic “ideology of the deserving” for immigration authorization.

She said the 2024 data — which along with labor participation shows “over 2 million have strong family ties in the U.S.” — aligns with those three aspects, she said. Wasem echoed panelists’ highlighting of immigration processing backlogs that have left “millions of people waiting who are eligible for lawful permanent resident status, or eligible for asylum or refugee status.”

“Great research, important to the policy process, shifts our emphasis away from just talking about border security,” said Wasem. “Let’s talk about immigration reform.”

Catholic social teaching on immigration balances three interrelated principles — the right of persons to migrate



OSV News photo/Keith Bedford, Reuters

People are pictured in a file photo standing on the steps of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in New York City.

in order to sustain their lives and those of their families, the right of a country to regulate its borders and control immigration, and a nation’s duty to regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

While often used interchangeably, the terms “migrant” and “refugee” are separately defined under international law, with refugees specifically protected due to perilous conditions — such as war or persecution — that make returning to the country of origin impossible. No uniform definitions of “migrant” or “forced migration” exist at the international level, according to the United Nations. However, migrants are nonetheless protected as human persons under international human rights law.

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National/World

SSPX bishop consecrations constitute ‘schismatic act’

VATICAN CITY — Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, head of the Vatican’s doctrinal office, said the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X would commit “a schismatic act” if it proceeds with plans to consecrate new bishops July 1 without papal approval. In a May 13 statement, Cardinal Fernández said the SSPX lacks the required pontifical mandate and warned that formal adherence to schism is a grave offense that carries excommunication under Church law. He said Pope Leo XIV is praying that the Holy Spirit will guide SSPX leaders to reverse course. SSPX superior general Father Davide Pagliarani announced the planned consecrations in February, citing a “grave necessity” for souls after failed attempts to secure an audience with the pope. The Vatican offered continued dialogue if the SSPX suspended the consecrations, but Father Pagliarani rejected that condition, pointing to ongoing disputes over the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar reforms. The dispute recalls Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre’s 1988 unauthorized bishop ordinations, which led to excommunications.

As Planned Parenthood defunding nears expiration, USCCB pro-life chair backs bill to block funds

WASHINGTON — Ahead of the July 4 expiration of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act provision that eliminated Medicaid funds to health providers who also perform abortions, the U.S. bishops’ pro-life chairman expressed support for legislation that would block federal Title X family-planning grants and funds from going to those entities. The Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act would codify a prohibition on Planned Parenthood from participating in Title X. Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, wrote a May 8 letter to the lawmakers who sponsored the bill to offer support. “We have consistently called for the separation of abortion from the Title X family planning program, but organizations like Planned Parenthood, despite performing hundreds of thousands of abortions every year, continue to receive millions of dollars in taxpayer money annually,” Bishop Thomas wrote. Asked by a reporter in the Oval Office on May 12 if he would like to see Congress continue to block funds for Planned Parenthood, Trump replied, “Congress is now negotiating.” “To put it mildly, it’s been a very thorny issue,” Trump continued. “It’s all under negotiation right now.”

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Pope Leo XIV discuss Iran war at Vatican meeting

VATICAN CITY — U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican on May 7 for talks focused on Iran, humanitarian aid, and global conflicts, amid tensions between President Donald Trump and the pope. Rubio spent more than 45 minutes with Pope Leo XIV before meeting with the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican’s foreign minister. The Vatican said the meetings reaffirmed “the shared commitment to fostering good bilateral relations between the Holy See and the United States of America” and stressed “the need to work tirelessly to promote peace.” Rubio later said he met the pope “to underscore our shared commitment to promoting peace and human dignity.” The visit came days after Trump claimed the pope supported Iran having nuclear weapons, a charge the pope swiftly rejected, saying, “The Church has spoken out for years against all nuclear weapons.” The meeting with Rubio was one of several audiences on the pope’s schedule that day. Pope Leo also met with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, bishops from Burkina Faso and Niger, German Cardinal Reinhard Marx, and members of the Pontifical Swiss Guard.

California governor announces free diaper program for newborns, a first in US

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif., announced May 8 a first-in-the-nation program to provide 400 free diapers to every newborn in the state. Newsom, a Catholic who is widely seen as likely to seek his party’s presidential nomination in 2028, cast the effort as part of a broader affordability strategy. His office said the program would leverage the “bulk purchasing power of the state” to challenge “high prices from major brands.” “California is taking on the cost of raising a family head-on — delivering free school meals, making preschool free for every four-year-old, expanding after-school programs, and now making sure parents leave the hospital with the basics their newborn needs,” Newsom said in a statement. The Urban Institute estimated in 2025 that nearly 8 million children in the U.S. live in families that struggle to afford enough diapers. The same organization said the average cost of diapering one child is about \$100 a month, but families report “only being able to pay a median of \$65.” Molly Sheahan, associate director for healthy families at the California Catholic Conference, told OSV News, “We’re thrilled to see California stepping into the gap for mothers.” “Helping families cover this cost is a crucial step towards parity for mothers welcoming their children,” she said. “We look forward to even more

opportunities that make it easier for families to say yes to their child for a lifetime.”

Israeli soldiers punished after desecration of Virgin Mary statue

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military said it has disciplined two soldiers after a statue of the Virgin Mary was desecrated in southern Lebanon. One soldier received 21 days of military detention for placing a cigarette in the statue’s mouth in the Christian village of Debel, home to a significant Christian population. Another soldier who photographed the act was sentenced to 14 days. The Israeli Defense Forces called the incident serious and said troops are regularly instructed to respect religious sites and symbols. The case follows a separate April incident in the same village, where soldiers damaged a crucifix Jesus Christ statue with the blunt side of an axe. Two soldiers involved in that case were sentenced to 30 days of detention. The episodes have alarmed Christian communities and church leaders in the region. “In whose name and for what motivation can sacred places be destroyed and outraged, human beings offended and humiliated, religious signs and symbols trampled upon?” asked Father Ibrahim Faltas of the Custody of the Holy Land in a Vatican News commentary condemning the attacks on sacred places and religious symbols amid escalating tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border.

Catholic health centers respond to massive measles outbreak

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Catholic charities and Church-run clinics in Bangladesh are stepping up measles awareness and treatment efforts as the country faces a deadly outbreak that has killed at least 336 children since mid-March. Government health officials say more than 32,000 suspected measles patients have been hospitalized nationwide since March 15. Caritas Bangladesh, along with hospitals and clinics run by Catholic religious sisters, is providing care and public health education in both cities and remote communities. Sister Mary Piusha, who oversees St. Paul’s Hospital in the Diocese of Khulna, said Catholic health workers are informing patients about measles symptoms and providing rapid treatment when cases arrive. Families are feeling the crisis firsthand. Belal Hosain, whose 12-month-old son was hospitalized in Dhaka, said he fears for his child’s life after witnessing other children die. Church leaders say Catholic institutions continue to play a major role in Bangladesh’s healthcare system despite Christians making up less than 1% of the population. In 2025, Bangladesh’s Health Ministry halted measles-rubella vaccine procurement through UNICEF, in favor of an open tender process — despite repeated warnings about possible disruptions in immunization services, reports say.

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Divine Mercy Parish	50	100	(50)	\$29,390	\$59,900	(\$30,510)
Holy Cross Parish	98	125	(27)	\$44,399	\$9,900	\$34,499
Holy Redeemer Parish	10	15	(5)	\$2,768	\$2,700	\$68
Holy Spirit Parish	95	170	(75)	\$55,813	\$48,300	\$7,513
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish	213	305	(92)	\$140,484	\$171,100	(\$30,617)
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish	179	235	(56)	\$115,432	\$40,900	\$74,532
Mother of God Parish	161	215	(54)	\$118,495	\$70,900	\$47,595
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	10	25	(15)	\$3,795	\$35,900	(\$32,105)
Our Savior Parish	14	25	(11)	\$15,300	\$5,000	\$10,300
St. Agnes Parish	243	320	(77)	\$175,501	\$140,200	\$35,301
St. Ann Mission	22	35	(13)	\$34,753	\$8,700	\$26,053
St. Anthony, Taylor Mill	33	70	(37)	\$17,845	\$27,000	(\$9,155)
St. Augustine Parish, Augusta	38	70	(32)	\$24,850	\$37,300	(\$12,450)
St. Augustine Parish, Covington	89	135	(46)	\$65,228	\$32,500	\$32,728
St. Barbara Parish	156	350	(194)	\$110,146	\$134,500	(\$24,354)
St. Benedict Parish	52	80	(28)	\$27,060	\$26,600	\$460
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St. Catherine of Siena, Fort Thomas	56	115	(59)	\$56,656	\$59,900	(\$3,245)
St. Cecilia Parish	149	195	(46)	\$61,024	\$97,900	(\$36,876)
St. Charles Borromeo Parish	20	30	(10)	\$7,130	\$13,800	(\$6,670)
St. Edward Mission, Owenton	7	25	(18)	\$2,650	\$4,500	(\$1,850)
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St. Pius X Parish	392	550	(158)	\$336,752	\$226,100	\$110,652
St. Rose of Lima Parish	21	25	(4)	\$9,775	\$11,400	(\$1,625)
St. Therese Parish	121	160	(39)	\$59,502	\$7,200	\$52,302
St. Thomas Parish	140	270	(130)	\$94,696	\$144,400	(\$49,704)
St. Timothy Parish	301	360	(59)	\$223,819	\$121,600	\$102,219
St. William Parish	46	60	(14)	\$32,795	\$20,500	\$12,295
Sts. Boniface and James Parish	25	45	(20)	\$16,145	\$13,900	\$2,245
Sts. Peter and Paul Parish	118	145	(27)	\$53,350	\$32,500	\$20,850
Transfiguration Mission	1	15	(14)	\$1,000	\$2,600	(\$1,600)
Friends of the Diocese	10	-0-	-0-	\$5,450	-0-	-0-
Totals	4,948	7,435	(2,487)	\$3,264,825	\$2,754,000	\$519,795

QUESTIONS: PLEASE CALL THE DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP OFFICE AT 859-392-1500