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(above) The Thoroughbreds tear through a banner which reads “You’re in our house now,” a quip for their opponents.
(left) Bishop John Iffert blesses the field and teams before NCC’s season opener on its long-awaited athletic field.
(below) The student section cheers raucously after a Newport Central Catholic first down.



The NCC Thoroughbreds are home with the opening of the Ciafardini Family Athletic Complex

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

The Newport Central Catholic Thoroughbreds finally have a place to call home with the opening of the Ciafardini Family Athletic Complex, NCC’s new multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art football, soccer and track facility. For decades, the football team has been nomadic, traveling from field to field to compete and play under the Friday night lights.

Now, they get to play under their own lights, on a field with NCC gold and blue, in front of a home crowd. The Thoroughbreds opened their season, Aug. 21, in just that way, in front of a crowd of over 1,500 spectators made up of students, families and alumni, with an energy that was hardly contained in the stands.

Bishop John Iffert was present to offer a prayer for the safety of both teams ahead of the competition, and that they play and represent themselves the way that God calls them to. This message is one that the players of the Newport Central Catholic team are familiar with, said principal Kenny Collopy.

“That’s really what it’s all about, is bringing everybody together, and ultimately that’s what God calls us to do — love each other and be there for each other. We call NCC a family, and that was evident on Friday night,” Mr. Collopy said.

Newport Central Catholic’s mission rests upon five pillars — faith, family, academics, community stewardship and character development — and the new complex supports “all of those things,” said Mr. Collopy.

“I always say we’re trying to maximize the opportunity for our

students to get to heaven, and I truly believe that athletics in a field are a great way to learn some of the harder lessons in life, build resiliency, and become the best version of yourself, which is what God calls us to do,” he said.

Senior team captains, Van and Noah, agreed with Mr. Collopy.

“It’s just like everything we do here at NewCath, we’re all a family, we follow every rule, we just do everything to the best of our ability,” said Van.

“It just represents the community,” said Noah about the new complex. “It wouldn’t have been possible without all the donors and all the community that helped make it happen. I think that just shows what NewCath does for people even after they leave.”

A fact made even more evident by the number of volunteers who came to ensure the opening night’s success.

“Dozens of volunteers came to help out with parking, concessions, ticket taking,” said Mr. Collopy, “...many hands make light work, and that’s what really made it such a successful night was everybody coming together.”

“The best part for me,” he said, “was seeing the students on the field and in the stands ... to see them out there finally was extremely fulfilling.”

Noah said, “I’ve never seen a student section that big ... it was really fun, it was a really good atmosphere.”

After a year of construction and patiently waiting, Van said that being able to play a home game was “an awesome feeling. Looking up in the stands and seeing all those alumni, seeing our parents, all the fans, students. It was just an awesome feeling.”

St. Therese’s new pastor seeks to be spiritual shepherd in the way of Christ

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

Father Michael Grady was installed as pastor of St. Therese Parish, Southgate, through the Rite of Pastor Installation, Aug. 23, during Mass celebrated by Bishop John Iffert. Father Grady has served St. Therese Parish since 2022 in the capacity of pastoral administrator, and was elevated to the status of pastor, July 14. The new role offers Father Grady and the parishioners of St. Therese Parish a renewed sense of stability and confidence, said Father Grady.

“My job hasn’t really changed that much,” he said. “I think it’s the way the parishioners see me now has a different role. I think the parishioners see it more as a permanent role in the parish, they’ve been very excited about the whole thing.”

During his homily, Bishop Iffert likened the difference between a pastoral administrator and pastor to that of a hired hand and a shepherd.

“A person who is a pastor participates in the shepherding of the flock in a very personal, and in a stable way,” said Bishop Iffert. “From my perspective, from a bishop’s perspective, once a person becomes a pastor one of their rights is to serve in stability and wellness.”

Father Grady is now imbued with certain canonical rights as pastor, such as the right to baptize all babies of the parish, the right to marry all who wish to marry at the parish and the responsibility to form religious vocations and invigorate the youth of the parish.

“It’s very heartening knowing that I can continue to minister to them [parishioners],” said Father Grady. “One important thing for me, for them to know, about the role of pastor is I’m just trying to walk in the shoes of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. I’m just trying to pastor the way he would pastor.”

The role of pastor is to shepherd his spiritual flock, fashioned in the way of Jesus.

“Not that Father Grady is Jesus,” said Bishop Iffert, clarifying to a chuckling congregation of St. Therese parishioners, “but that Jesus uses Father Grady to make himself known and present. If that role were missing, if that role were absent, if that role were unfilled, we would be like ... sheep without a shepherd.”

“The good shepherd is working through me,” said Father Grady. “I just want to do what he wants me to do.”



(left) Bishop Iffert gives Father Grady the purple stole worn by priests inside the confessional. As pastor, one of Father Grady’s responsibilities is to ensure the sacrament of reconciliation is regularly available to the people of St. Therese.

(below, left and right) Parishioners clap in celebration as Bishop John Iffert presents Father Grady with the keys of the church, a symbolic symbol of trust as Father Grady becomes pastor for the parishioners of St. Therese, and the Southgate community at large.



SEPI workshop ‘first step’ in developing ministry for Hispanic children in Diocese of Covington

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

“Once a person, no matter the age, develops a relationship to God — that will stay with them for the rest of their life.” This is the belief of Silvia Schmidt, diocesan Hispanic minister, and one of the core motivations for the Hispanic Ministry Office’s collaboration with SEPI (Southeast Pastoral Institute) — with the goal of catechizing both the children in Hispanic communities within the Diocese of Covington, and the catechists that interact with them, as well.

The “first step” in this developmental journey happened Aug. 28-30, with a set of SEPI workshops aimed at catechists from the five parishes in the diocese with notable Hispanic populations. These workshops provided information on developing “inculturated prayer and worship experiences” for Hispanic children, developing their relationship to God and involvement in the Church, and included a live demonstration of prayer with children from St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill — which hosts a large population of Guatemalan parishioners.

The goal of the diocese’s involvement with his programming is an act of “killing two birds with one stone,” according to Mrs. Schmidt. “I believe in forming the adults, so that they can form the children.” In this way, the programming tackles both adults and youth in the communities — with hopes that better formation among adults will carry to chil-

(Continued on page 8)



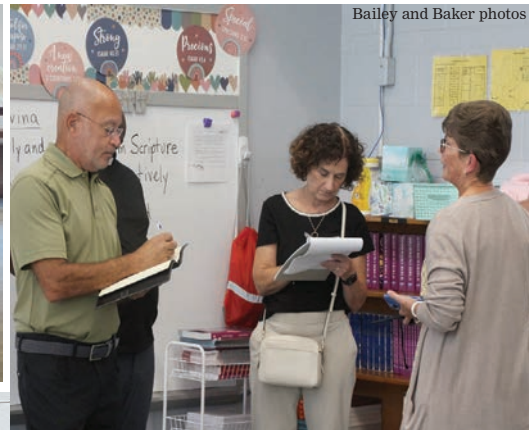
Baker and Schmidt photos

(above, left) A child answers a question as part of SEPI’s programming, which aims to help children build a personal relationship to God.

(above right) Catechists from parishes around the Diocese of Covington that host Spanish speaking Masses, and with Hispanic populations, gather for a training regarding catechesis for youth.



(left) Participants in the SEPI workshop stand for a photo on the stage at Zielger Auditorium, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills.



‘ACUE Taskforce’ gathers in support of urban schools

Fifteen individuals designated for an “ACUE Taskforce” met at the diocesan Curia, Covington, Aug. 31, for their first meeting. The Taskforce is engaging in a “90-day sprint” to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the schools under the jurisdiction Alliance for Catholic Urban Education (ACUE) for strategic planning. Members of the taskforce include five priests, a woman religious and lay people involved in ACUE schools. This same group visited the ACUE schools the previous Friday, Aug. 28, including having lunch with students and Bishop John Iffert at St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill.

The ACUE Taskforce was formed as a result of the Schools Commission — who recognized a specific need for targeted planning for ACUE schools.

“Marketing and communications,” according to Deacon Jim Fortner, COO, prove to be the greatest challenge faced by ACUE schools and diocesan schools at large, with enrollment in ACUE schools having dropped by 60 percent since 2003. The ACUE Taskforce aims to identify and begin planning solutions to this and any other arising needs within the schools.

We are ‘cells in the Body of Christ,’ Bishop Iffert tells ministries, community members at DPAA celebration

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

People of the diocese and surrounding community came together, Aug. 20, for a celebration and recognition reception in honor of the 2026 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal, or DPAA. Joining them was Bishop John Iffert, Jim Hess, director, Stewardship and Mission Services and Dr. Greg Salzman, the 2026 DPAA Leadership Gifts Chair.

As part of the evening, grants through the DPAA were distributed to different faculties and ministries within the diocesan community. DPAA grants totaling \$275,000 were given out to diocesan and local organizations who serve the community for needs such as staff, repairs, operating expenses and facility improvements. (For a full list of grants dispersed through the 2026 DPAA, see page 8.)

The theme of the 2026 DPAA is “Live as Children of Light.” Jim Hess, addressing the guests gathered for the reception, called back to this theme. “This room is so full of the light of Christ,” he said. “... When you think about the amount of people that each of our ministries impact individually, and then the cumulative efforts of all the ministries that are in this room right now — it’s outstanding. It’s amazing.”

Currently, the 2026 DPAA has approximately 300 more individual donors than mid-August of last year. This is the first time donor count has gone up since 2015.



(above, left) Dr. Greg Salzman (right) smiles as he accepts a gift from Bishop Iffert for his service as Leadership Gifts Chair for the 2026 DPAA.



(above, center) Chris Goddard (left), executive director of Catholic Charities of Northern Kentucky, shakes hands with Bishop John Iffert as he accepts a grant for Catholic Charities’ CARES school-based mental health program through the DPAA.



(above, right) Jim Hess, director, Stewardship and Mission Services, greets guests at the 2026 DPAA celebration and recognition reception.



(far left) Dr. Greg Salzman addresses guests at the reception. Dr. Salzman, who served as DPAA Leadership Gifts Chair for the 2026 DPAA, will serve as General Chair in 2027.

(left) Guests, including Bruce Kintner of the Samaritan Car Care Clinic (center), overlook the dispersal of DPAA grants.



Bishop’s Schedule

Sept. 5 Catholic Family Night at the Cincinnati Reds, Great American Ball Park, Game time 6:40 p.m.	Sept. 6 Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 5:30 p.m.	Sept. 7 Diocesan Curia offices closed in observance of the Labor Day holiday	Sept. 8 Opening school Mass, Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills 10 a.m.	Sept. 9 Crosier Guild welcome event, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, 6 p.m.	Sept. 10 Deans meeting, 11:30 a.m. Presbyteral Council meeting, 1:30 p.m.	Sept. 13 Wedding Vespers, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 2 p.m.	Sept. 13 (continued) Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 5:30 p.m.
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AI literacy before AI fluency: Preparing families for an AI-everywhere world

Dr. Jack Rudnick Jr. and Nick Noll
Contributors

This article reflects insights from a recent artificial intelligence (AI) literacy workshop. It reports on how Catholic social teaching, the Catholic intellectual tradition, and recent Vatican guidance on artificial intelligence can be combined to propose a sequence for AI literacy to evolve into AI fluency.

“AI Fluency and Child Development: The New Era of Education” is a day-long program guided by global AI Catholic thought leader Joseph Wehba. We attended the session, virtually, that informed parents, business leaders, and teachers in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., in an interactive education update from a Catholic perspective.

Perhaps the workshop’s most important message for parents and educators was this: human connection is not optional — it is essential. Children mature intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and morally through relationships with parents, teachers, mentors, classmates, pastors, coaches and friends.

- Face-to-face conversations cultivate empathy.
- Classroom dialogue teaches respectful disagreement.
- Service develops compassion.
- Family life forms character through daily example.

While AI can personalize instruction and answer questions almost instantly, it cannot celebrate a child’s success, recognize discouragement behind a smile, inspire hope during failure or model integrity through lived example.

Catholic education has always understood that learning is fundamentally relational. Great teachers do far more than deliver information — they accompany students in becoming the people God created them to be. Likewise, parents remain their children’s first educators, forming not only intellect but also conscience, faith and character.

For today’s children, AI is rapidly becoming the first point of contact with knowledge. Age-appropriate exposure is needed. This reality makes AI literacy no longer optional. Rather it is an essential life skill.

Before children and young adults learn to use artificial intelligence effectively, they should first understand what AI is, how it works, where its limitations lie and why its development and application require ethical governance.

AI should never be intended to replace the human person. It cannot substitute for the love, presence, wisdom and accompaniment that define authentic human flourishing.

The Vatican’s note, “Antiqua et Nova,” offers an important distinction between human intelligence and artificial

intelligence. Human intelligence integrates intellect, conscience, experience, relationships, freedom and moral responsibility.

Artificial intelligence, by contrast, recognizes patterns and generates responses without genuine understanding, wisdom or moral agency.

This distinction is critical for families. When students equate AI-generated responses with genuine human thinking, they risk bypassing the very habits education seeks to cultivate — curiosity, perseverance, creativity, discernment and sound judgment.

Catholic education has never been solely about transmitting information; its deeper purpose is the formation of the whole person — mind, heart, spirit and character.

Artificial intelligence therefore belongs in the service of human formation — not in its place. AI literacy means understanding how AI systems generate responses, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, identifying misinformation and bias, appreciating privacy concerns and knowing when human judgment must take precedence.

Only after developing this foundation should students pursue AI fluency — the responsible use of AI for research, writing, creativity, coding, analysis and problem-solving.

Without literacy, fluency can become dependence; with literacy, AI becomes a powerful educational tool governed by informed human judgment.

Pope Francis’ vision of the “wisdom of the heart” reminds us that authentic intelligence encompasses love, compassion, humility, courage, prudence, mercy, forgiveness, integrity and the pursuit of truth-qualities that no algorithm can possess.

The Church’s vision extends beyond technology itself to questions of justice and the common good.

As AI becomes embedded in nearly every digital interaction, the challenge is no longer whether our children will encounter AI, but whether they will possess the wisdom to govern its use responsibly. The future of education will not be determined by how intelligent our machines become, but by how intentionally we preserve the relationships, freedom, wisdom and moral responsibility that make us fully human. Ultimately, AI should augment and not serve as a replacement for human intellect. Responsible AI systems should be unbiased to the extent possible as well as



Dr. Jack Rudnick, professor, (left) and Nick Noll, alumnus, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, attended an online AI literacy workshop for business professionals in July.

trustworthy and fair while always operating with a “human in the loop.”

Dr. John D. Rudnick Jr. is the Chair of the Department of Business Administration and Accountancy and Director of the MBA Program at Thomas More University. He serves as Co-Chair of the University’s AI Steering Committee and has also participated in Vatican initiatives examining the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in education and healthcare.

Nicholas Noll is a 2026 graduate of Thomas More University. He will pursue graduate studies at the University of Cincinnati with a concentration in Economics and Artificial Intelligence. His interests include the responsible development and application of artificial intelligence, economics, innovation, and the future of work, education, and public policy.

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The language of hope

Upon arriving in the town of Kitale, Kenya, despite my 72 years of living, I was as green as a child. I walked through the town observing with the eyes (and heart) of a spectator at a theatre performance.

VIEWPOINT



Theresa Glaser

The downtown area was lined on both sides with produce, small household items and assorted trinkets being sold on rickety tables, carts and wooden crates. Vendors and buyers, several layers dense, slowed the movement of vehicles along the road. Cars in various stages of decline, motor bikes (pikipikis) and pedestrians streamed through the center of the barely passable streets. I was struck with a sense of charm in what I

was seeing — so, this is Kenya.

My vision of this spectacle has deepened with the passage of time. The charm was lifted and what I now see in the faces along the city street is courage and perseverance in the face of near hopelessness. The vendor selling small household electrics is working to pay school fees and rent. The wheelbarrow full of onions for sale will find two other sellers with the same stock nearby. Both young and old carry thermoses of chai, hoping to tempt another to splurge on a tea break for a few shillings. This is what they have to do to survive.

There are no nice white-collar office jobs available to the masses, including many recent graduates who struggle against an economy that does not reward the hard work and sacrifice required to gain a certificate.

Joseph is a disabled newspaper vendor. Regardless of when you pass through town, you will see him leaning on his crutch on “his corner.” He has seven children and a wife to support selling newspapers. He told me that for each paper that he sells, his profit is 7 shillings. That translates to 5 cents in US currency.

I had a lesson in the reality of peoples’ struggles one Saturday in town. A respectable looking middle-aged man approached me and asked if I wanted a paper. I replied “no, thank you,” and I was struck by the real pain I saw in his face as a result of my refusal. Later, my more experienced friend instructed me that a kinder response is “not today, thank you,” because it offers hope.

I’ve been thinking about ways that we can offer hope to one another. I don’t have any special knowledge — I’m really only basing this on experiences I have had in my own times of difficulty. It seems kindness is important. When someone is kind to us, we have a sense of our own worth, which can give us hope. Careful listening can offer peace and can permit God’s ever-present love to be felt. Praying together can strengthen both faith and hope.

We are so fortunate to have a faith that looks forward. We thank God for our hope in him.

Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Maryknoll Lay Missioners. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and will be sharing updates with Messenger. For photos see page 13.

Fraternal correction

The readings for the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Ezekiel 33:7-9, Romans 13:8-10 and Matthew 18:15-20.

On this 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time the Church calls us to reflect on “fraternal correction.” We need a little context to understand Jesus’ teaching. Immediately preceding the passage for Holy Mass this weekend, is the story of the lost sheep — where only one of a hundred is lost. And Jesus tells his disciples (us): “It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.” (Mt. 18: 14b)

Being lost in the spiritual life is multifaceted. Sometimes, it means abandoning the Way that leads to

Heaven. Or, being deceived into thinking you are on the right path though you aren’t. We might find ourselves searching but end up wandering around aimlessly instead. And sometimes we can be on the right path, we just get turned around and are facing the wrong way, or we have stumbled and fallen on our face!

All of this “lostness” is the consequence of sin. Living contrary to our nature — which is willing the good of the other —

GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

and instead giving into the ego and living for the self. The Lord Jesus, does not accept us being lost, and comes seeking us out.

Too often in our society we forget that our selfish actions, our sins, have an effect not just on ourselves, but on the community of believers — the Church. And so, Jesus teaches us how to correct the bad behavior of a disciple and heal the hurt caused to the Church.

It starts privately! Not on social media as is so often the case today! As Jesus’ disciples, we are not called to shame or humiliate each other, but to love. Remember what we learn in the Scriptures: the love the disciples had for one another lead to the “adding of those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47b) Shaming a brother or sister in Christ can be a detriment to the apostolic mission.

If the correction isn’t accepted, then Jesus calls us to take one or two others with us to give witness to the facts of the bad behavior. This is in keeping with the Law found in the Book of Deuteronomy. It is still quiet, private.

Only when there is obstinance in the one who is sinning is it brought to the authority of the Church — those who have the power to bind and to loose. And then if there is not conversion and reconciliation does Jesus command that they be cut off from communion. It is from Jesus that we get the practice of excommunication.

This sounds extremely harsh on the part of Jesus, but all sin is a barrier to communion. But there is in fact a positive side to this being “cut off” from the Church. The sinner is returned to the state of one who is in need of evangelization. They then get to hear the Gospel proclaimed again. And hopefully more clearly so that they can be returned to the communion of disciples and reintegrated into the Church. Remember, sometimes the healing process can be difficult, and the medicine doesn’t always taste good.

There is nothing that cannot be healed and forgiven. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

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

Addressing the ‘valleys of despair’ caused by the growing sports betting industry

The sports betting industry has seen explosive growth in revenue in the past six years, but how is it affecting society? Ray Kim, director of U.S. Programs & Partnerships at the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy,

CAMOSY AT LARGE



Charles Camosy

recently spoke with OSV News’ Charles Camosy about what Catholics should know about the growing addiction issues that have taken hold for many.

— Charles Camosy: Imagine someone who hasn’t really thought about online gambling at all? Or someone who is just unaware of what has happened in the last few years. Can you give us some numbers? What is the lay of the land?

— Ray Kim: I would say the lay of the land can be best described as having mountains of prosperity and valleys of despair. Those living on the mountaintops, mainly the online betting platforms and the gambling industry as whole, are raking in billions of dollars annually. The low valleys of despair exist because while record-level revenues are being generated from online wagers, there are entire generations of Americans who are now struggling with growing debt and gambling addiction, often jointly creating a vicious cycle that is intentional by design.

According to a 2025 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine, total sports wagers increased from \$4.9 billion in 2017 to \$121.1 billion in 2023, a span of six years. This sharp increase followed the 2018 Supreme Court ruling (Murphy v. NCAA) that overturned the federal ban on sports betting, returning decision-making power to individual states. The JAMA study also found that “online bets [accounted] for 94% (or \$113.8 billion) of total sports wagers during 2023.”

The years following 2023 continued to be just as bountiful for the sports betting industry. The American Gaming Association (AGA) has touted 2025 as another record year. According to ESPN, “the association’s figures showed that Americans legally bet \$166.94 billion on sports in 2025, an 11% increase from 2024.”

To put this into perspective: \$166.94 billion is more than twice the amount of money spent by Americans on the entire U.S. movie, music, book and museum industries

combined in 2025 (roughly \$70 billion).

If our spending habits are any indication of our priorities and what we value, then what these trends reflect is that Americans are increasingly valuing and prioritizing gambling over the arts, our cultural products and other sources of entertainment that have been the mainstays of American social life.

Not only do these spending habits reflect a gradual devaluing of the arts and culture, but when paired with data capturing the betting habits and finances of American bettors, they reveal a bleak picture of financial health and responsibility. This US News Survey from 2025 found: 25% of respondents have missed bill payments because of bets they have made; almost 30% admitted to having debts attributed to their gambling; over 15% said they have taken out personal loans to fund their gambling; and most concernedly, about a quarter said they were worried they could not control their gambling.

— Camosy: Who is making the most money from online gambling? Who is losing the most money?

— Kim: Undoubtedly, the sports betting industry is making the most money. They made a record \$16.96 billion in revenue in 2025. Rewind to 2018, the year of Murphy v. NCAA, the industry made approximately \$430 million. There has been a 39x increase in revenue in this short seven-year span.

The other group experiencing a windfall through the legalization of sports betting and the widespread adoption of online platforms has been our states. Since 2018, states have generated over \$11 billion in tax revenue; most of it being generated in recent years driven by massive adoptions of online platforms in states that have legalized sports betting.

As for who is losing the most money, this is where the picture gets complicated. The available data shows that Gen Z and Millennials constitute the largest number of sports bettors and the most frequent bettors, but it is hard to say just from the data whether they are the ones losing the most.

Most Gen Z and Millennials fall into the category of “casual gamblers” or “event bettors.” They make frequent smaller bets, however; those amounts can absolutely add up over time. Young men between ages 18-35 are also the most likely to “chase their losses” and fall into an addiction spiral.

What available data clearly shows, however, is that online betting platforms intentionally design their products and services to hook “VIPs” or heavy bettors. According to reports, approximately 60%-80% of sportsbooks’ profits are generated by a small percentage (1%-5%)

of their bettors.

There has even been a case where an online sportsbook was accused of generating over half of its revenue from just 20 VIPs. Although it is hard to say who exactly loses the most money, it is abundantly clear from data and reporting that online gambling platforms are intentionally deploying predatory tactics to constantly find new vulnerable targets to financially ruin.

Once a VIP has been identified by tracking their habits (ex. frequent large sum deposits, frequent activities late at night, high loss profiles, etc.), online gambling platforms keep them hooked through 24/7 “human VIP host” and other “perks” until they are no longer a “high-value target.”

(Continued on page 13)

Student Council leaves St. Paul School a cool gift

Laura Keener
Editor

Students, families and parish members gathered after Mass, Aug. 23, at St. Paul School, Florence, for the blessing and dedication of a new outdoor classroom and shade structure.

Father Jason Bertke, pastor, St. Paul Parish, blessed the space, which will give students a cooler place to play and a fresh spot to learn outside.

The idea came from the 2025-2026 Student Council, a group made up of eighth-grade girls, who noticed a simple problem during recess — it was hot. Very hot.

Anna Hanson, a member of Student Council, said the playground area needed shade. “I love to hang out at the playset, but it is very hot,” Miss Hanson said. “In middle school, we actually wear navy shirts, which attracts sun, and so we were very hot.”

Miss Hanson brought the idea to Student Council president, Mallorie Schlueter, and the two helped move the project forward.

“She immediately came and helped me,” Miss Hanson said. “Together, we worked on some multiple ideas, and we made different phases. Our first phase was the awning, and our second phase was the seating.”

The girls then got busy raising money.

Miss Schlueter said one fundraiser offered babysitting for younger students. “We had babysitting services where kids could come in for about \$10, and then that’s how we raised the money,” she said.

The Council also hosted a Ghoul Pull lollipop pull during the school’s annual haunted house, held during school hours for students around Halloween. Along with those efforts, Miss Schlueter said donors helped make the project possible.

“With our incredible donors, we thank them so much, that’s how this happened, really,” she said.

Karen Poulos, moderator for the Student Council, said the students were clear about what they needed — shade. The students even studied the sun and shade during the year so the structure would be in the right place. “When we were fundraising, we’d look at where the shade was, where it needed to be, so that we would have a good structure that they could utilize the area,” she said.

The finished project turned into more than a play area. Mrs. Poulos said an outdoor classroom had been on the school’s wish list for about three years, but earlier plans were too expensive. When the Student Council’s shade project came together, it created a space that could serve two purposes. “Now it kind of does a dual thing where we can have classes out here, and they have shade,” Mrs. Poulos said.

During the dedication, Mrs. Poulos thanked the Student



Keener photos

Council, school families, parish community, staff and donors, especially the Bolin and Kramer families. “This project began with students who saw a need and wanted to make a difference in their school,” she said. “Through their fundraising efforts and dedication, they helped turn an idea into something that will benefit students for years to come.” She added, “Every contribution, whether large or small, helped bring us closer to this day.”

The students who worked so hard on the project have now matriculated to high school for the 2026-2027 school year and no longer attend school at St. Paul. They will not get to use the shaded classroom every day. Still, Miss Hanson said that was all right.

“It’s really nice to know that kids will be able to stay cool and learn outside,” she said. “Really, it’s just about bringing



(top, left) Father Jason Bertke, pastor, St. Paul Parish, Florence, blesses the new outdoor classroom and shade structure, Aug. 23.

(top, right, from right) Mallorie Schlueter, Student Council president and Anna Hanson, Student Council member, spearheaded the planning and fundraising that brought the project to completion.

(above) Surrounded by their pastor, principal and major donors, the 2025-2026 St. Paul School Student Council celebrate with a ribbon-cutting the blessing and dedication of a new outdoor classroom.

them joy, and I’m very glad that I get to bring them joy in the years to come.”

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Poulos said, the new space is meant to be “filled with learning, laughter, friendship, and countless wonderful memories for many years to come.”



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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/>.

Extraordinary Ministers are needed, especially on Sundays, at St. Elizabeth hospital in Edgewood. If you are a Eucharistic minister, or are interested in becoming one, contact the Pastoral Care office or the Volunteer office at St. Elizabeth for more information, (859) 301-2000.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult volunteers to tutor children in grades K-8 one day a week in the Homework Plus Program, Monday–Thursday, 3–5 p.m. The program runs Sept. 8, 2026–May 13, 2027. Volunteers must be Virtus trained and compliant. Contact Brandi at (859) 630-9475 or blenihan@nduec.org for information.

St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky is in urgent need of Call Center volunteers to answer calls for assistance. On average, we receive over 1,700 calls each month. Shifts are available M-F, 10 a.m.–noon and noon–2 p.m. Training and initial shifts at our Erlanger location, with remote volunteering possible after. Must be 18+ years old. Background check (provided) required. Visit www.svdpnky.org/volunteer to register.

Volunteers needed at St. Vincent de Paul NKY’s Erlanger Food Pantry. Volunteers assist neighbors as they shop and keep the shelves stocked. More than 300 families are served each month. Shifts are: Tuesdays, 9 a.m.–noon and 4–6 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9–11 a.m. (stocking only); and Thursdays, 9 a.m.–noon. Visit www.svdpnky.org/volunteer to register.

Carmel Manor will be hosting their festival Aug. 29, 3–10 p.m. An unforgettable day of family fun, delicious food, live entertainment, raffles, Split the Pot, kids games and so much more — all while supporting the residents of Carmel Manor. Cash only event.

Newport Central Catholic annual Fine Arts Hall of Fame, Aug. 29, 5:30 p.m. social; 7 p.m. dinner and ceremony. This year’s inductees are Tammy Vulhop Hubler ‘95, Michael Connor ‘68, Steve Schofield ‘94, Scott ‘82 and Jane Grosser; and Therese Muench Blank ‘77; Show of Distinction is the production of “Shrek.” Cost \$35, RSVP by Aug. 21, <http://ncchs.com/events>.

Join Bishop John Iffert, Sept. 5, for Catholic Family Night at Great American Ball Park as the Reds take on the Milwaukee Brewers. Enjoy discount tickets as the Cincinnati Reds take on the Milwaukee Brewers. Bring your family, friends, and fellow parishioners for a fun night of fellowship. Bobblehead featuring Elly De La Cruz to fans in attendance, while supplies last. Participate in



Team Holy Spirit
Members of St. Henry District High School Football Team attended Mass at St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, on August 23. Afterwards, Father Kevin Kahmann gave a blessing to these young men.

Parish festivals			
Sept. 5–6 St. Anthony, Taylor Mill Festival Latino	Sept. 11–12 St. Barbara, Erlanger Rocktoberfest	Sept. 18–20 St. Timothy, Union Oktoberfest	Sept. 25–27 St. Agnes, Ft. Wright Oktoberfest
Sept. 5–7 St. Cecilia, Independence Parish festival	Sept. 11–13 St. Patrick, Maysville Parish festival	Sept. 20 St. Matthew, Morning View 12–7 p.m. Parish festival	Sept. 26 St. Therese, Southgate, Oktoberfest

together families, educators, parish communities, Catholic schools, and supporters to celebrate the belief that there is no separate Church for persons with disabilities — we are one flock. Following

the on-field parade at 5:30 p.m. and greet Bishop Iffert at home plate. The theme “Love In Action” features the ministries of Catholic Charities on both sides of the river. For tickets visit <https://www.gofevo.com/event/Archdiocesecovington2>.

Newport Central Catholic High School invites you to bring your family up on the school hill, Sept. 6, for the Labor Day fireworks at its 32nd Family Fireworks Fest. Food trucks, drinks and fun begin at 5:30 p.m. (no cans, bottles or coolers permitted). Admission \$5; tickets can be purchased at <https://gofan.co/app/school/KY6479?activity=Event%20School>. For information contact Tessy Krebs at (859) 292-0001 or tkrebs@ncchs.com.

Parents are invited to a special evening at Villa Madonna Academy to learn about the Academy and making the transition from 8th grade to high school. Parents can see the new Chase & Cole Fischer STEM Wing and discover how Villa prepares students to lead with faith, confidence, compassion and purpose at this preview event, held September 10, 6:30–8 p.m. RSVP to acarr@villa-madonna.net.

“Date Night with Father Nathan Cromly – An Evening Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage,” Sept. 12, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, optional vigil Mass, 5 p.m.; doors open at 6:15 p.m. With his signature blend of humor, honesty, and practical wisdom, Father Cromly speaks directly to the realities of marriage, offering couples a renewed vision for their relationship and simple, meaningful ways to strengthen it. <https://brushfire.com/eagleeyeministries/>

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.fire-foundationnky.org/golf>.

Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Vespers at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington to honor couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries in 2026. Married couples celebrating their 1st, 25th, 50th, 60th, or 60+ wedding anniversary in 2026

are invited to a Vespers celebration on Sep. 13 at 2 p.m. Anniversary couples should RSVP by August 17, 2026, at covdio.org/wedding-vespers/. Phone registrations are available through Isaak Abraham Isaak at (859) 392-1529. Reservations are required only for anniversary couples; family members and guests are welcome to attend. Congratulatory certificates will be available upon request.

Father Ryan Maher will celebrate A Mass of Belonging, Sept 15, 6 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Organized by the FIRE Foundation of Northern Kentucky, the Mass will bring

Mass, families and attendees are invited to an ice cream social.

Empowering God’s Children 5th annual facilitators’ training, Sept. 15, Curia, Covington. All facilitators, priests, principals, DREs and CREs are welcome to attend, as well as anyone interested in learning more about the program. Dinner and networking begin at 3 p.m.; training ends at 5:30 p.m. Registration requested at <https://forms.gle/LmtrSBxFjDmh64L1A>

Newport Central Catholic Alumni Weekend Sept. 18 and 19. The weekend begins with a pregame celebration, Sept. 18, 6 p.m., Ciafardini Family Athletic Complex plaza. On Sept. 19, Mass, NCC St. John Paul II Chapel, 8:30 a.m. followed by the Thoroughbred 5K fun run/walk for all ages, check-in begins at 9 a.m.; run/walk 10 a.m. RSVP today at <https://ncchs.com/alumni/alumniweekend>.

“Understanding Marriage and Baptism in the OCIA Process,” presented by Dr. William Keimig. Sept.19, a workshop exploring the pastoral and canonical issues related to the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children (OCIA/OCIC). RSVP by Sept. 7, online https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfAK93XyEMkbAFuqO1JeJH_3qI6GfVQ9AmVagIQPA-4daV1Kg/view-form . Contact Isaak at iisaak@covdio.org or (859) 392-1529.

Newport Central Catholic is partnering with Cincinnati Children’s and The Blessing List Ministry to host “Real Talk and Real Hope About Suicide Prevention,” Sept. 21, 6–8:30 p.m. at NCC. The free event is open to area teens and adults and is an opportunity to learn practical ways we can reduce suicide risk, open the door to difficult conversations, and promote a sense of community.

The Intercommunity of Women Religious Peace and Justice Committee and Mother of God Parish, Covington, will host a prayer service for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Sept. 27, 2 p.m. at Mother of God Church, Covington. All are welcome. Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme, “Even Just One of These Children,” taken from Matthew’s Gospel “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” (18:5) It focuses on the need for pastoral care for minors on the move.

All former St. Thomas School students who attended for at least one year between 1949 and 1976 are invited to a reunion Oct. 4, 3–7 p.m., in the St. Thomas School Cafeteria. Guests are welcome. Cost is \$50 per person; reservations deadline Sept. 15. For an RSVP form contact Tom Dierig at (859) 781-8743 or tomdierig@gmail.com.

St. Timothy Parish, Union, will host a series of interactive workshops Oct. 14, Oct. 21, and Oct. 28, 7–9 p.m., Brodnick Hall, designed to provide tools to help you share your faith. Parish Missionary Disciples offers a way to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ, transforming believers into disciples, and empowering disciples to witness to Jesus. Since 2024, over 200 members of the Diocese of Covington have participated in this program. All are welcome! Register at <https://tinyurl.com/sttimothyPMD>.

St. Henry District High School Craft Show Oct. 24, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., St. Henry Athletic Complex, 35 Cavalier Blvd., Florence. Over 100 local craftsmen display unique hand-made items — wooden toys and carvings, home décor, holiday décor, specialty coffees and nuts, homemade spices, pastry items, and more. Free face painting and a fall display photo opp. Adult admission \$5. Overflow parking at Boone County High School. Contact Cathy (859) 341-3135.

“Vatican II Workshop: Proclaiming the Joy and Hope of Christ to the Modern World,” an engaging and informative workshop presented by Prof. Lucas Pollice, chief mission officer, Diocese of Colorado Springs, Nov. 14, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m., Thomas More University’s Ziegler Auditorium. Register by Oct. 23 online registration form: Register Here. Again, everyone is welcome to attend. Contact Isaak at iisaak@covdio.org or (859) 392-1529.

2026 Diocesan/Parish Annual Appeal Grant Allocations

Ministry/Organization	Amount	Purpose
Care Net Pregnancy Services of NKY	\$2,500	French-speaking translator
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington	\$18,000	CARES — enhance and expand school-based mental health program
Community Care of Mason County	\$5,000	Residential help for those in Mason County
Covington Latin School	\$1,500	School chapel updates and expanding campus ministry
DCCH Center for Families, Ft. Mitchell	\$7,500	Residential treatment program
Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue	\$5,000	Floor/wall repair in gym, general operating expenses Child Development Center
Emergency Shelter of NKY, Covington	\$7,000	Winter cold shelter program; shelter beds year-round
Fiesta NKY	\$5,000	Food and educational programs
FIRE Foundation of NKY	\$5,000	Diocesan Inclusive Education director
Harrison County Food Pantry	\$5,000	Food to disperse weekly to families in need
Holy Cross Parish, Latonia	\$8,000	P/T communications director; weekend Mass musicians; altar server vestments
Holy Cross District High School, Latonia	\$5,000	Spanish instructor; technology upgrades
Holy Cross Elementary School, Latonia	\$2,500	Music, art, literature and physical fitness classes
Holy Trinity School, Bellevue	\$5,000	Windows
Life Learning Center, Covington	\$1,000	Graduation celebration event
Mary, Queen of Heaven School, Erlanger	\$4,500	Two interactive boards
Newport Central Catholic High School	\$3,000	Retreat programs
NKU Catholic Newman Center	\$8,000	SEEK 2027 conference
Our Savior Parish, Covington	\$7,500	General operating expenses; HVAC and electric upgrades
Parish Kitchen, Covington	\$10,000	Security upgrades
Samaritan Car Care Clinic, Covington	\$5,000	Car repairs for at least four low-income single moms
St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill	\$3,000	Outdoor shed
St. Anthony School, Taylor Mill	\$2,500	Bilingual welcome banners; portable speaker system; portable playground barriers
St. Augustine Parish, Augusta	\$5,000	General operating expense
St. Augustine Parish, Covington	\$5,000	Hispanic Ministry development
St. Augustine School, Covington	\$3,500	Part-time music teacher
St. Bernard Church, Dayton	\$5,000	Young adult minister
St. Bernard Food Pantry, Dayton	\$10,000	Food purchase
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas	\$2,500	Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program
St. Cecilia School, Independence	\$2,000	Reading learning centers
St. Edward Mission, Owenton	\$3,500	Expand parking lot
St. Edward School, Cynthiana	\$3,500	Update Wi-Fi; repair broken windows
St. Francis Xavier SVDP Conference, Falmouth	\$5,000	Food, clothing and utilities
St. James Mission, Minerva	\$2,000	Designated space for adult prayer groups
St. James Parish, Brooksville	\$5,000	General operating expenses
St. John the Evangelist, Carrollton	\$5,000	Hispanic ministry; CCD program; interior/exterior repairs
St. Joseph Academy, Walton	\$5,000	Security doors
St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw	\$5,000	Replace ceiling tiles and gutters; remove pine trees
St. Patrick School, Maysville	\$5,000	Art program
St. Paul Episcopal Church, Newport	\$5,000	Food service delivery and walk-up
St. Philip School, Melbourne	\$5,000	Music/art teacher
St. Therese School, Southgate	\$3,000	Library books
Sts. Boniface & James Parish, Ludlow	\$7,000	Evangelization
Sts. Peter & Paul School, California	\$3,500	Sufficient, qualified staff; general operating expense
St. Vincent de Paul Society NKY	\$7,500	Pantry assistance
Teens Encounter Christ (TEC)	\$10,000	Start-up costs for retreats
The Angelico Project	\$3,000	Theater; art /film experiences; social events
The Care Closet, Newport	\$3,000	Diaper assistance program
The ION Center for Violence Prevention, Covington	\$2,500	Green Dot & It's My Space middle/high school programs
Thomas More University, Crestview Hills	\$8,000	March for Life and National Pro-Life Summit; pilgrimage with Bishop Foys scholars
Treasures on Earth Food Pantry, Covington	\$4,000	Food, household, personal hygiene products
UpSpring, Cincinnati	\$2,000	6-week program for children experiencing homelessness
Welcome House, Covington	\$5,000	Food pantry; ID cards, bus passes
Diocesan Youth Ministry	\$8,000	Holy Week Mission; NCYC
TOTALS	\$275,000	

Meta \$18 billion settlement over child safety raises questions about its real impact

Kimberley Heatherington
OSV News

Social media giant Meta — owner of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, Threads and more – agreed, Aug. 26, to settlements paying out approximately \$18 billion, ending a landmark federal trial that began Aug. 18.

The case before the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California was brought forward by a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general, and centered on allegations Meta misrepresented the extent of potential mental health harms caused to children using its apps.

As part of a proposed “consent judgment,” Meta committed to “establishing daily limits and blocks on nighttime use for teenage users” of its social media platforms. It also committed to “enhanced age assurance measures to prevent children from accessing the platform, or age restricted content available on the platform, and ... additional tools to help parents and guardians to protect their children online.”

Meta has not admitted wrongdoing in the settlement. Up to this point, the corporation has argued misleading consumers was impossible because “social media addiction” isn’t an officially recognized psychiatric condition.

A \$17.1 billion settlement covers 47 states, the District of Columbia, and a handful of U.S. territories. Meta settled separately with Texas for \$1 billion. Funds will be paid out over a 10-year period. The money will fund various youth online safety initiatives as deemed by the states.

“This settlement has the potential to be significant in one way,” Mary Graw Leary, a professor of law at The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, told OSV News.

“It is now multiple cases in which Meta has been accused of designing their products to be harmful; misleading the public as to their harm; and misleading the public as to their safety — and they have either lost or settled the cases,” she explained. “That suggests Meta has an awareness that their own internal documents reveal a real risk of their actual motives emerging, and they recognize that they have difficulty establishing otherwise.”

However, Graw Leary, who directs the law school’s modern prosecution program, cautioned that while the potential for change now exists, it’s still not a surety the digital environment will become more safe.

“I would not think this settlement amount alone will severely impact Meta,” she said. “Moreover, it is significantly less than the \$200 billion that the AGs estimated would be the damages at the beginning of trial.”

She said it “may be significant” if Meta “actually does what this settlement requires.”

But,” Graw Leary noted, “this is a company which the court found at the summary judgment stage already collected private data from children under 13, which has been prohibited by law for many years. So, the track record of compliance is not there. Furthermore, there will no doubt be disagreements as to whether they are complying — and such disagreements could be bogged down in the courts.”

Graw Leary further emphasized some of the provisions are not highly burdensome on Meta — and that in the end, this amounts to a business decision for the company.

“It will cost them more to finish the trial and lose than to pay just over \$1 billion every year for 10 years,” she said. “Moreover, they will no doubt use this settlement to further lobby against any meaningful regulation that Congress is contemplating.”

Graw Leary argued that would really affect Meta is “comprehensive regulation.”

She said, “If the parties disagree about whether Meta is following the settlement terms, it will be a long road to litigate that. But if there was a federal law that precludes them from having certain design features, that would be much more powerful.”

Sister Helena Burns, a member of the Daughters of St. Paul, who holds a graduate degree in media literacy education, studied screenwriting at UCLA and can herself be found on the social media platform X, told OSV News she was “thrilled that this issue is being taken so seriously, and that the funds are going to truly pertinent programs, including media literacy for youth and practical alternatives to engaging with a screen 24/7.”

“However,” she added, “I wish there were more programs and incentives for parents to learn skills and strategies for parenting the media.”

Clare Morell, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, and author of “The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones,” also had both plaudits and reservations.

Morell termed the settlement “a monumental step forward in changing the social media industry to protect our children.” She noted “it gets rid of many of the most dangerous and addictive features of social media platforms, and requires robust age-verification to keep underage minors off the platform and ensure that the new automatic safeguard features apply to all minors under 18.”

However, she said, “it does nothing to change the age for social media in the U.S., which will still be 13 years old — whereas other countries like Australia and the U.K. have been raising the age to 16.”

“It also does nothing to change the addictive algorithms or give parents control of the algorithms,” added Morell, “and even the new two-hour-daily time limit set for Meta’s apps can still be incredibly addicting for young brains; because in that two hours,

(Continued on page 9)

SEPI workshop

(Continued from page 2)

dren.

Community building is also an important aspect of the workshop, as representatives from different parishes come from different cultural backgrounds — Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, etc. — all came together from their different parishes and engaged with one another through the workshops.

“For me, it’s the beginning of something bigger,” Mrs. Schmidt said. “To bring all the Hispanic parishes together, so that we can work as a team in the future for other projects ... I’m very happy and very excited. I know there will be challenges, but everything went well.”

To experience true relationship with God in the liturgy, faithful's participation cannot be passive, pope says

Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

"Firmly rooted" in the Church's living tradition, the liturgical reform put forth by the Second Vatican Council grew from the need for the faithful to celebrate the liturgy more "consciously and actively," and not "as strangers and silent spectators," Pope Leo XIV said.

"The faithful 'cannot and must no longer remain silent and passive. Their physical presence cannot be reconciled with their spiritual absence,'" he said, quoting Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini of Milan, the future Pope Paul VI and saint, who was attending the council's first session at the time in 1962.

The Council Fathers expressed "a renewed awareness of the value of the liturgy," Pope Leo said during his general audience talk in St. Peter's Basilica Aug. 26, which focused on the constitution on the sacred liturgy, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," and why the council sought to promote the liturgy's reform.

It was the pope's final catechesis dedicated to the council's first constitution after beginning his new series of talks on the documents of the Second Vatican Council Jan. 7, so people would be motivated to reread and reflect on them rather than base their understanding of the texts on "hearsay" and the interpretations of others, he had said.

While the liturgical reform promoted by the council is "firmly rooted in the living tradition of the Church," Pope Leo said, the reform must also be properly understood.

"A correct understanding of it also enables us to reject the abuses that occurred in certain sectors of the Church during the post-conciliar period, and which, unfortunately, still occur from time to time today, where some of the principles underlying the reform itself have been taken to extremes or misunderstood," he said.

During the liturgy, "the memorial of the work of salvation is celebrated," and the Church's ritual actions also provide an opportunity "to experience a true relationship with God, coming into contact with the salvific event," the pope said. "Since the gestures and words of the sacred liturgy are critical to realizing this experience, the participation of the faithful cannot be passive."

The council's reform put "at the center that which constitutes the heart of the ecclesial experience," he said. Therefore, the intention was "to allow the liturgy to shine forth as 'the primary source of that divine exchange in which the life of God is communicated to us.'"

Because of the importance of language, teaching and "intelligibility," there was "the need to make the richness of the biblical texts and prayers more accessible to all the faithful, and to streamline the order of the celebration compared with that set out in the liturgical books then in use,"

he said.

The liturgy is "a living entity," he said, and it has always been subject to developments and changes over the centuries.

Therefore, it is "not surprising that the Second Vatican Council, too, with the utmost respect for the heritage of tra-

actively, and as befits a community," he said, citing the constitution.

"In this way, the Christian people learn to recognize sacred realities, offer themselves with and through the hands of the priest, and become more open to receiving God's grace," he said in his summary to English speakers.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV blesses a child before his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Aug. 26, 2026.

dition, and precisely in order to make it more accessible, considered it necessary to revise the liturgical books," Pope Leo said.

Quoting the conciliar constitution, he said, "the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it."

Texts and rites should thereby be "drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully,

In his main catechesis in Italian, he said it is still the primary responsibility of bishops and priests "to safeguard and promote a liturgy which, while respecting liturgical norms, shines with noble simplicity and thus manifests the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

As the council teaches, "Liturgical services are not private functions," but are celebrations that pertain to the whole body of the Church, "which is the 'sacrament of unity,' namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops," he said, quoting from the constitution.

"At every celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, let us ask for God's help to be strengthened on our journey and to enter into a deeper relationship with the Lord," he said in his English summary.

(Continued from page 8)

a minor is getting constant hits of dopamine to his or her brain."

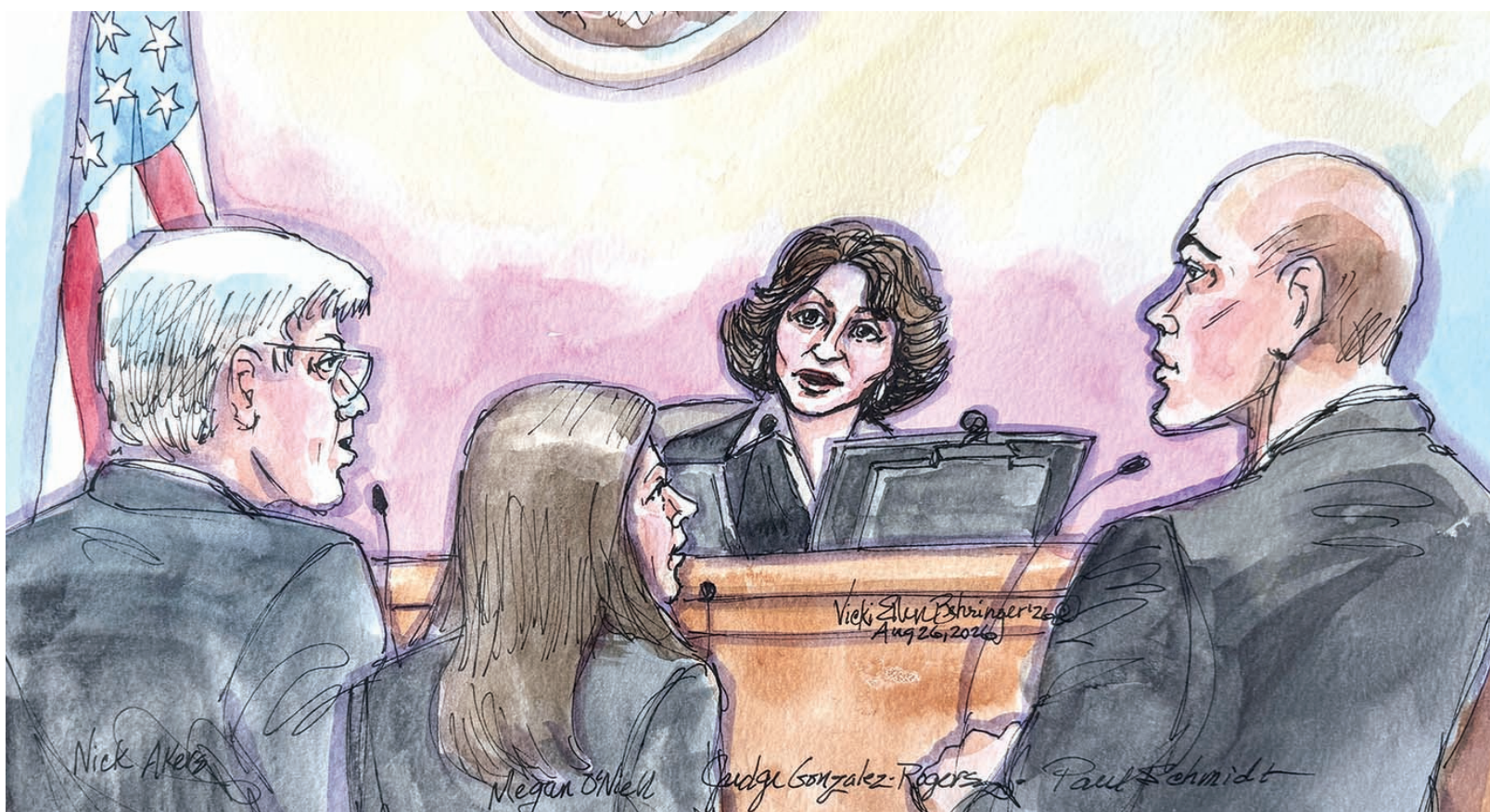
Ultimately, she feels legislation is still necessary — as well as parental vigilance.

"The best thing to do is still to keep children and teens off social media entirely," Morell said. "Yes, this settlement is a huge change for the industry in the right direction — but it is not a silver bullet."

OSV News illustration/Vicki Behringer, Reuters

In this courtroom sketch, states' attorneys Nicklas A. Akers and Megan O'Neill of California speak with U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers and Meta's lawyer Paul Schmidt in Oakland, Calif., Aug. 26, 2026.

Meta agreed to pay up to \$18 billion over the next decade and strictly limit how teenagers use Facebook and Instagram under an agreement with nearly all U.S. states to resolve claims it designed those social media platforms to addict children.





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Diocese of Covington
School Lunch Program

Children need healthy meals to learn. The Diocese of Covington SLP offers healthy meals every school day. Elementary lunch costs \$3.25 and High School lunch costs \$3.45. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is \$0.40 for lunch. Families can apply for free or reduced-price meals by going to myschoolapps.com. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS?
- a. All children in households receiving benefits from SNAP or KTAP can get free meals regardless of your income. Categorical eligibility for free meal benefits is extended to all children in a household when the application lists a case number for SNAP or KTAP for any household member.
 - b. Children receiving Medicaid, when the Medicaid office reports to the Kentucky Department of Education that the household composition and income levels are within the free income eligibility guidelines are eligible for free meals. (Reporting participation in Medicaid on a household application does not provide benefits).
 - c. Foster children under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
 - d. Children participating in their school's Federal Head Start Program are eligible for free meals.
 - e. Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
 - f. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if your household's gross income is within the limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

- arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call Laura Hatfield at 859-392-1551 or email lhathfield@covdio.org.
3. CAN I INCLUDE FOSTER CHILDREN AS PART OF MY HOUSEHOLD ON MY APPLICATION? Yes. A foster child may be included in the household on an application when applying for benefits for any non-foster child residing in a household.
4. Do I need to fill out an application for each child? No. Go to myschoolapps.com and apply for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information.
5. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR 26-27 SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you received carefully. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact Laura Hatfield at 859-392-1551 immediately.
6. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit myschoolapps.com to begin.
7. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first thirty days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school tells you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school, or

8. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please fill out an application form.
9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
10. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
11. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: Mrs. Kendra McGuire Superintendent at kmcguire@covdio.org.
12. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced-price meals.
13. DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE MY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON THE APPLICATION? No. Only the last 4 digits of the Social Security Number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member is needed when applying. It must be indicated on the application if no adult household member has a Social Security Number.
14. WHAT IF MY EARN INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and made \$900, you put down \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
15. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zero. Please be careful when leaving the income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
16. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonus must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
17. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, call 1-855-306-8959 or visit <https://kyconnect.ky.gov>.
- USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year SY 2026-2027			
Household Size	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$29,526	\$2,461	\$568
2	\$40,034	\$3,337	\$770
3	\$50,542	\$4,212	\$972
4	\$61,050	\$5,088	\$1,175
5	\$71,558	\$5,964	\$1,377
6	\$82,066	\$6,839	\$1,579
7	\$92,574	\$7,715	\$1,781
8	\$103,082	\$8,591	\$1,983
Each additional person	\$10,508	\$876	\$203

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing

you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.



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- Growth Potential: This role may develop into a COO position.

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DIOCESE OF COVINGTON FINANCE OFFICE – PAYROLL MANAGER

The Finance Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington invites qualified, actively practicing Catholics to apply for the full time position of Payroll Coordinator. This important Curia role requires a personable, self-starting individual who likes numbers and detail, and who is good with both. This position calls for someone who will thrive in a fast-paced work environment. Requirements include a general working knowledge of payroll operations and basic bookkeeping, and some prior experience with payroll software. Applicants should submit a resume with cover letter and compensation history, along with references including contact email addresses, by mail, fax or e-mail to:
Stephen Koplyay, SPHR, 1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011-3115; fax 859/392-1589; SKoplyay@CovDio.org.

DIOCESE OF COVINGTON INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Diocese of Covington invites individuals with a degree and background in Accounting to apply for the position of Internal Auditor. This position reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer. This position updates/maintains the existing Parish and High School audit programs, schedules and performs parish/high school audits, writes audit reports, as well as other duties in the Finance Office. Minimal requirements include a degree in Accounting with at least two years of experience, including auditing. CPA licensure is preferred.

Submit cover letter, resume, salary history, and five references with email address to: Stephen Koplyay by email or fax. SKoplyay@CovDio.org or 859-392-1589. EOE

FULL-TIME MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

St. Timothy Parish in Union, Kentucky, is seeking a full-time Maintenance Technician responsible for the care and maintenance of all parish buildings including the church, school and parish center. The ideal candidate is a motivated, dependable, and personable self-starter with experience in facility maintenance. This position requires occasional weekend work and availability during inclement weather or facility emergencies. Interested parties should email their resume, cover letter and salary requirements to Julie Aylor at jaylor@saint-timothy.org.

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Diocese of Covington,
ATTN: Laura Hatfield SLP Director,
1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011

BUILDING AND PROPERTY CUSTODIAN

The Diocese of Covington, KY is accepting applications for the full-time position of Building and Property Custodian at the Offices of the Diocesan Curia. Our building and the surrounding property requires the attention of an individual who will develop a sense of personal responsibility for its appearance and well-being. The position will involve a regular daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of routine cleaning and upkeep duties within the building and the chapel; setup of conference rooms; regular as well as seasonal upkeep of walkways and other exterior features; and other duties as needed. The successful candidate will be a personable self-starter who is dependable, trustworthy, and capable of prioritizing duties as circumstances require. Please contact Stephen Koplyay, SPHR to begin the application process: skoplyay@covdio.org, or call 859-392-1500.

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'Valleys of despair'

(Continued from page 5)

get." This process is a continuous cycle.

— Camosy: How should Catholic parishes, high schools, colleges and universities be responding to all of this? What about parents and broader families?

— Kim: The most troubling thing I have learned while diving into all of this is just how young this can all start. Teenagers are now falling prey to the allure of online gambling. They may not be on sports betting platforms as much as the older generations, but they are finding their own entry point through less regulated platforms like prediction markets. Many are getting around age restrictions by using someone else's ID, a VPN or borrowing an older friend's account.

We need a whole-of-society approach to tackle this issue. Churches, schools and families have to be on the same page and aware of the risks and dangers of online gambling. We have to be educating not just our children about these dangers, but ourselves as well.

We all have to know how to spot the signs of someone struggling with gambling addiction, and more importantly, know how to help them; this could mean knowing how to initiate a conversation around this topic that is usually

wrapped up in feelings of shame and guilt or knowing where to find the resources available to help those struggling with gambling addiction.

The study of addiction and the field of addiction recovery have come such a long way, and one of the most profound insights coming out of that field is that addiction is deeply influenced by one's social environment. Gambling addiction is no different, and this means that all those social spaces — churches, schools, the family — have a positive role to play in preventing gambling addiction from forming as well as helping those suffering from it recover.

— Camosy: Are there any public policy changes that you think could also help move things in a better direction?

— Kim: There are bipartisan efforts to protect youth from online gambling that I think are really meaningful. For example, Senators Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Katie Britt, R-Ala., recently introduced a bill, the GAME Act, in the Senate that would prohibit social media companies and other advertisers from targeting minors with sports betting ads online.

This is one way we can try to disrupt the systems in place that reinforce the addictiveness of online gambling. Representatives Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and Valerie Foushee, D-N.C., are making similar efforts in the House, calling for

more accountability from the gambling industry for the social harms caused by their platforms, pushing for more transparency around user data and increased clarity around existing safeguards.

Rep. Tonko's most notable piece of legislation, the SAFE Bet Act, that was co-introduced alongside Sen. Blumenthal in 2025 seeks to enforce nationwide consumer protection baselines for online gambling, bringing an end to the self-policing model currently used by the gambling industry.

Clamping down on advertising, particularly those targeting youth and minors, enforcing nationwide consumer protection baselines, banning the use of credit cards for funding gambling accounts, and removing features that increase the addictive nature of online gambling (e.g. in-game betting, "free" promotional bets to keep users hooked, and VIP programs) are all viable options that could yield positive results.

Taking a more holistic approach, funding gambling addiction treatment programs and resources at a level that matches the gambling industry's record-setting revenues and the billions of dollars generated in tax revenue by the states could also be meaningful policy changes we can all benefit from.

Charles Camosy teaches moral theology and bioethics at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Greetings from Africa

Theresa Glaser is a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill and a lay missionary for Maryknoll Lay Missioners. In January 2024, she began a three-year mission in Africa and is sharing updates with the *Messenger*. (See her column page 5). Here are photos she shared.

(right) Joseph, a newspaper vendor in Kitale, Kenya, awaits customers on his corner.

(far right) The busy main street in the Kenyan city of Kitale.



Glaser photos



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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Diocese of Covington is accepting applications for the full-time Curia position of Administrative Assistant. The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization facilitates ministries such as adult formation, catechist and religion teacher certification, marriage preparation, wedding anniversary vespers, divorced or separated ministry, family ministry, young adult ministry, and Catholic scouting. The Administrative Assistant provides a range of support to the program staff including data collection and management across a wide area; project logistics, coordination, and timelines; maintenance of the office master calendar; regularly updating the office web page; religion teacher certification status updates; etc. The position requires a detail-oriented practicing Roman Catholic with exceptional interpersonal and general office skills, including MS Office experience. Interested individuals are asked to send a cover letter, resume with compensation history, and at least five references with contact email addresses to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR at skoplyay@covdio.org

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ST. JUDE PRAYER AND THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world, now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help for the hopeless, pray for us. Amen. L.A.D.

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DPAA celebration

(Continued from page 3)

said, “10 percent of what the faithful will donate to our DPAA goes back out to support your beautiful ministries.”

Dr. Greg Salzman spoke also to guests, saying, “It’s exciting to be able to tell everyone how well the Lord has blessed us.”

Dr. Salzman shared the success of this year’s DPAA, stating that the diocese is doing “much better than expected” compared to results this time last year — with a rising number of donors compared to a falling number over the past few years.

Dr. Salzman additionally noted that 36 diocesan parishes

have met or exceeded their 2026 DPAA monetary goal. Money raised over the goal is given back to the parishes for their needs. However, donor participation goals are still underway — with seven parishes having met this secondary goal and 31 parishes 20 participants or less away.

After dispersing the grants to the different organizations gathered, Bishop Iffert spoke also to those gathered. “It’s a wonderful thing,” he said. “It’s such a nice evening to be here and to be able to give these little gifts to so many different groups and ministries.”

“All this is made possible by all of our neighbors,” Bishop Iffert said. “By you and all of our neighbors who contribute for the support of the Church and who allow the

Church to support others ... Our diocesan Church is not something separate from our experience in our parishes — but our experiences in our parishes, and our local schools, and our local agencies and our associations combine to make our world. They are cells in the Body of Christ here in this region.”

Bishop Iffert concluded, thanking ministries by saying, “Thank you all very much for what you’re doing to be the Body of Christ to others.”

At the end of the evening, Dr. Greg Salzman was given a gift on behalf of the diocese for his service as Leadership Gifts Chair. Dr. Salzman will continue his work in the 2027 DPAA as General Chair.

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:

■ September bulletin: posted Sunday, Sept. 7; due Tuesday, Oct. 6.
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:

■ Wednesday, Sept. 23
9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Sept. 23 9–11:30 a.m.,
6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, Oct. 8
9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, Oct. 8
6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, Oct. 20
9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Tuesday, Oct. 20
6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Nov. 4
9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia,
Bishop Howard Memorial
Auditorium, Covington

■ Wednesday, Nov. 4
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 Lynn Weisgerber at (859) 392-1565 or lweisgerber@covdio.org

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Pope meets Europe’s richest man, who donated millions to Notre Dame Cathedral

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy — Pope Leo XIV met Bernard Arnault, chairman and CEO of luxury goods giant LVMH, at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo on Aug. 25, just weeks before the pope’s scheduled trip to France. Arnault, Europe’s richest man and a major donor to the reconstruction of Paris’ Notre-Dame Cathedral, visited the pope with members of his family. The French businessman later shared photos of the meeting on social media. The audience came as Pope Leo received renewed attention after being named on Aug. 25 among the world’s best-dressed people by “Vanity Fair,” following an earlier appearance on Vogue’s 2025 best-dressed list. Pope Leo is set to travel to France Sept. 25-28. The visit includes prayer at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, marking the first papal visit to the cathedral since the devastating 2019 fire. Arnault, 77, leads Paris-based LVMH, created through the merger of Louis Vuitton and Moët Hennessy. The conglomerate’s portfolio includes brands such as Christian Dior, Fendi and Guerlain, along with champagne label Dom Pérignon and Tiffany & Co.

‘Let us be clear: this war must end,’ Archbishop Gallagher tells Russian authorities

MOSCOW — Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states, used a visit to Moscow to press for an end to Russia’s war in Ukraine, urging negotiations backed by the international community. Speaking alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Aug. 25, Archbishop Gallagher said the Holy See’s position “remains clear: the conflict cannot be resolved by military means,” he said. “It is essential to create the conditions for a serious political and diplomatic process.” The meeting marked Archbishop Gallagher’s first talks with Lavrov in five years during his four-day visit to Russia. After more than an hour of private discussions, Archbishop Gallagher described the exchange as “constructive” and emphasized the importance of keeping communication open despite deep international tensions. “Let us be clear: this war must end,” Archbishop Gallagher said. He said both sides agreed on the need to protect civilians, maintain channels of communication and cooperate on humanitarian concerns. Gallagher also reiterated Pope Leo XIV’s call for an end to hostilities and the start of “authentic negotiations.” Lavrov called the talks “comprehensive” and “substantive,” while saying Vatican-Russian relations remain “trusting, friendly, and pragmatic.” Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine started Feb. 24, 2022, with Russia continuously attacking civilian infrastructure and targets since its invasion began.

Cassidy takes aim at FDA mifepristone regulation, manufacturers

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., chair of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, said in a report published Aug. 27 that while the FDA should reinstate the in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone, its sponsors may not be “currently meeting their legal responsibilities to ensure compliance” with remaining requirements. Cassidy said the report was the result of an investigation into abortion pill manufacturers such as Danco Laboratories, GenBioPro, and Evita Solutions. The report also comes shortly after Cassidy expressed concern about President

Donald Trump’s nomination of Dr. Heidi Overton to lead the Food and Drug Administration. “Abortion drug companies are putting mothers at risk through their failure to properly oversee the prescription and distribution of their products. We are seeing that the explosion in online sales of chemical abortion drugs has opened the door to coercion and abuse of women,” Cassidy said in a statement. “FDA and the sponsors of these drugs have a responsibility to the American people to crack down on these prescribers that violate the prescribing requirements and reinstate the safeguards that keep mothers and babies safe.” Cassidy released the report just weeks after he became the deciding vote to confirm Todd Blanche as attorney general despite his previous criticism of Blanche.

Archbishop Hebda: Be ‘beacons of light’ at school shooting 1-year mark

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda is encouraging the faithful of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and all community members to be “beacons of light” as the one-year mark of a fatal shooting during an all-school Mass at Annunciation School and Church in Minneapolis approaches. In a newsletter released Aug. 24, the archbishop wrote that Aug. 27, 2025, “continues to have an impact on so many others connected with the parish, its school, and its families.” In reflecting on the loss of 10-year-old Harper Moyski and 8-year-old Fletcher Merkel that day, the archbishop wrote that “I have no doubt that their absence will be forever felt. My heart continues to go out to all who feel their loss.” Annunciation leaders encourage acts of service and prayer on Aug. 27, and the city of Minneapolis will hold a community remembrance event at Pearl Park. “I invite you to find a way to be a beacon of light within your own community, no matter your state in life,” Archbishop Hebda wrote. “Please join me in praying for Annunciation and for all those in need of healing as we are guided to walk together in the way of peace.”

Judge temporarily blocks Illinois assisted suicide law

CHICAGO — The Thomas More Society announced U.S. District Court Judge Franklin Valderrama on Aug. 21 placed the temporary restraining order on Illinois’ End of Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act for specific individuals. The law is set to take effect Sept. 12. The order applies to “Catholic health care entities” under the authority of Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, four Catholic doctors and Lutheran Care Center, a nursing home in south-central Illinois. (Two Catholic hospital systems, the Hospital Sisters Health System and OSF Healthcare’s Springfield campus, are both in the diocese). The Thomas More Society, which is representing the plaintiffs, is a Catholic-run public interest law firm based in Chicago. In an Aug. 24 news release, Peter Breen, executive vice president and head of litigation at Thomas More Society, said, “This is a critical first victory for these faithful doctors, for Bishop Paprocki’s Catholic hospitals, and for the Lutheran Care Center.” Valderrama said his order is in place pending the result of two cases under appeal in the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals: NIFLA v. Treto and Schroeder v. Treto. Thomas More Society is also involved in both suits, filed on free speech grounds and on infringement of religious liberty grounds, respectively.

East Tennessee diocese mourns Dolly Parton as ‘one of our own’

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The Diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, is remembering the late Dolly Parton — whose career as a singer, songwriter, actress, businesswoman and philanthropist spanned decades — as “one of our own.” Bishop Mark Beckman said he was “very sorry to hear of her passing” and “praying for those who are mourning her loss.” He added, “She made a wonderful contribution to our world and our community, and she will be greatly missed.” The 80-year-old Parton, whose many honors included 10 competitive Grammy Awards, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a National Medal of the Arts, died Aug. 25 at Nashville’s Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, following what her representatives described as a “brief battle with cancer.” Born in 1946 in Locust Ridge, Tennessee, Parton — the fourth of 12 children — was “a daughter of Sevier County,” said the Diocese of Knoxville in an Aug. 26 statement. Growing up in the heart of Appalachia, Parton ascended in the entertainment industry — finding success in the fields of country and pop music, developing a career in film, launching multiple business enterprises and supporting numerous charitable efforts. Parton’s life “carried the spirit of our mountain home far beyond the Smokies,” said the East Tennessee diocese in its statement. “We knew her as one of our own. She was shaped by these hills and these churches. Her life shows what can grow from faith, perseverance, imagination, and love for one’s neighbors — even from humble beginnings.”

Faithful across Honolulu Diocese rally after devastating hurricane

NAALEHU, Hawaii — In the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Lala, a Hawaii parish pastor emphasized there’s a long journey ahead “for repair and healing” but he has faith in the community’s resilience. “We, as a people of God, will show the witness to the people in this community,” said Father William “Pila” Tulua — pastor of the two parishes southernmost on Hawaii island, Sacred Heart Church in Naalehu and Holy Rosary Church in Pahala. “We have been blessed. We’re still hurting, but it’s going to be OK.” Hawaii Island, also called the Big Island, experienced the strongest impact from Lala. Roads and bridges were washed away, homes were flooded and families displaced, and residents faced shortages of potable water and electricity. But other islands also were significantly affected by the Aug. 15-17 storm. In addition to widespread power outages, the relentless wind and rain wreaked havoc on communities on Maui, Oahu and Kauai. More than 25% of utility customers lost power statewide, with 65% losing power on Hawaii Island alone. Many people were left without power and internet access for most of the weekend; days after Lala’s worst impact, tens of thousands were still without power.

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