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



(above, left) A young boy adjusts his mother's glasses while being held.
(above, right) A young child with disabilities is able to attend Mary, Queen of Heaven, school alongside his aide thanks to the grants bestowed by the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky.
(right) A mother and her daughter pray reverently during the Mass of Belonging.



Bailey photos

Love cannot exist without suffering, and suffering without love is 'hell'

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

The third annual Mass of Belonging was celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Sept. 22, on the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. The Mass brings together the Fire Foundation of Northern Kentucky and supporters of the mission of inclusive education, for the celebration of Mass and a social gathering in St. Mary's Park, Covington.

Celebrating the Mass was Father Ryan Maher, rector of the Cathedral. Concelebrating were priests of the Diocese, including Father Joseph Gallenstein, pastor, St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger; Father Eric Andriot, parochial vicar, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Burlington; Father Britton Hennessey, pastor, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth; Father Mark Keene, pastor, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright; Father Michael Grady, pastor, St. Therese Parish, Southgate; and Father Thomas Picchioni, pastor, St. John the Evangelist, Carrollton.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Kendra McGuire, addressed those gathered before the start of Mass, highlighting the impact of the Fire Foundations work in the Diocese.

"We are hearing from more families who are seeking a Catholic education for their children, and our Catholic schools are working hard with the Fire Foundation's generous support to welcome them," she said. "Together, we are building a community that includes all of our brothers and sisters, regardless of their disability."

The Mass of Belonging was celebrated on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, a feast day commemorating the "martyrdom of Mary," said Father Ryan Maher, quoting St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Though, Father Maher pointed out, Mary is not officially recognized as a martyr of the Church. "We don't wear read, she did not die a martyr's death," he said, but "she suffered a martyr's death in her heart."

"...She experienced in her heart everything Jesus experienced in his body [during his crucifixion]. This beautiful participation in the work of salvation that Jesus gave to his mother to share with him," said Father Maher, explaining Mary's martyred heart. Because of her great love for her son, she took part in the work of Jesus' greatest sacrifice. "Suffering without love is hell ... suffering without love, no possibility of love. Love without suffering is an incomplete love," said Father Maher.

In her suffering during Christ's passion, "she can't do anything. She accepts and suffers with love and suffering ... The final sword, in a real way that pierced the side of Jesus, first went through Mary's heart, and she suffered with love. The Lord gave her a share in his passion," said Father Maher.

"We ask the Blessed Mother to intercede for us," he said, "to help us love deeply, because there is so much suffering in the world. But suffering does not have to have the last word, love has the last word. Love makes suffering, in a way, beautiful, love makes suffering whole."



A quick favor for our *Messenger* newspaper

For 142 years, the *Messenger* has been your trusted source for local, national and international Catholic news. To ensure that we keep delivering the news in a way that is most beneficial to our readers, we need your feedback. Whether you've been receiving the *Messenger* for decades or just recently started getting the paper, we want to hear from you.

Scan the QR code with your phone camera or visit covidio.org/messenger to share your thoughts.



Dr. William Keimig presents workshop on baptism and matrimony

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

Dr. William Keimig, director, Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University, Steubenville, visited the Diocese of Covington to host an OCIA workshop, Sept. 19. OCIA coordinators from across the Diocese attended the workshop, which focused primarily on the Code of Canon Law surrounding the sacraments of Baptism and marriage. The workshop was held on Thomas More University's campus, Crestview Hills, in the Ziegler Auditorium. Isaak Isaak, director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese, welcomed the attendees at the top of the day's program.

"Today we gather to learn together, grow together and deepen our understanding of the OCIO pastoral and canonical issues, so that we may better serve those who seek Christ and his Church as Catholic leaders, parish volunteers, clergy and members of the faithful," said Mr. Isaak. "We share an important mission entrusted to us by the Church and the founder of the Church in Jesus Christ."

The workshop consisted of four presentations from Mr. Keimig, one of those presentations was on the canonical baptismal process, while the other three focused heavily on marriage, specifically the sacramental nature of matrimony, its nullification process and the canon law surrounding it.

Holding a red covered book up so the audience could read its title, Dr. Keimig dropped the bound Code of Canon Law on the table in front of the audience, resulting in a loud and defining thud which reverberated across the auditorium.

"This," he said, "is the entirety of our law for an institution that runs in the United States: 178 dioceses that are Latin Rite, and about another 15 that are Eastern Rite; 17,000 parishes, and about 5,000 schools, hundreds of hospitals — and that's just America."

The institution Dr. Keimig was referencing being the Catholic Church.

"This is an extraordinarily succinct work," he said referencing the Canon Law book. "It is an extraordinary efficiency of communication of law ... It has to adapt to every culture on earth, every circumstance of the human condition."

The Code of Canon Law has two remarkable qualities, said Dr. Keimig. The first is that it is a succinct work and the



second is that "it expresses mother's heart, meaning Mother Church. It expresses mother's heart, where she wants us to think about things," he said.

With newfound understanding on the work of the Code of Canon Law, the OCIA coordinators spent the day with Dr. Keimig learning and growing in formation.



(top, left) Isaak Isaak introduces the programming for the OCIA workshop and welcomes the OCIA coordinators.

(top, right) Participants meet and gather before the workshop begins.

(bottom, left) Dr. Keimig holds up the Code of Canon Law which was the basis for the programming throughout the day.

(bottom, right) Deacon Chris Friehofer, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, takes notes during Dr. Keimig's presentation.

Parish Missionary Disciple trainings return for the fall — laity invited to participate in workshops

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

This Autumn, trainings return as fruits of the Diocese of Covington's With One Heart planning process and resulting pastoral plan. From a core group of around 200 parishioners across the diocese who attended training in 2024, more "Parish Missionary Disciple" (PMD) trainings have been held — with more to come at St. Timothy, Union, and St. Agnes, Ft. Wright, this October and November.

Organized and led primarily by laity, previous trainings were held at Mother of God Parish, Covington and St. Mary Parish, Alexandria. These trainings, described as "interactive workshops", developed from a program and framework set and presented by the Catholic Leadership Institute.

Deacon Kevin Cranley, who is helping to organize the training at St. Timothy Parish, said that the design of the trainings is to "give people the confidence and the knowledge to be able to discuss their faith."

"We all get into situations where someone might ask us a question and we're not confident enough to answer," said Deacon Cranley, "or someone may challenge our faith. This program is designed to help give us the ability to talk openly."

Deacon Cranley continued, saying that "we (as people of the Church) are called to build our Church and bring people to Christ — so it's something we should all learn to do."

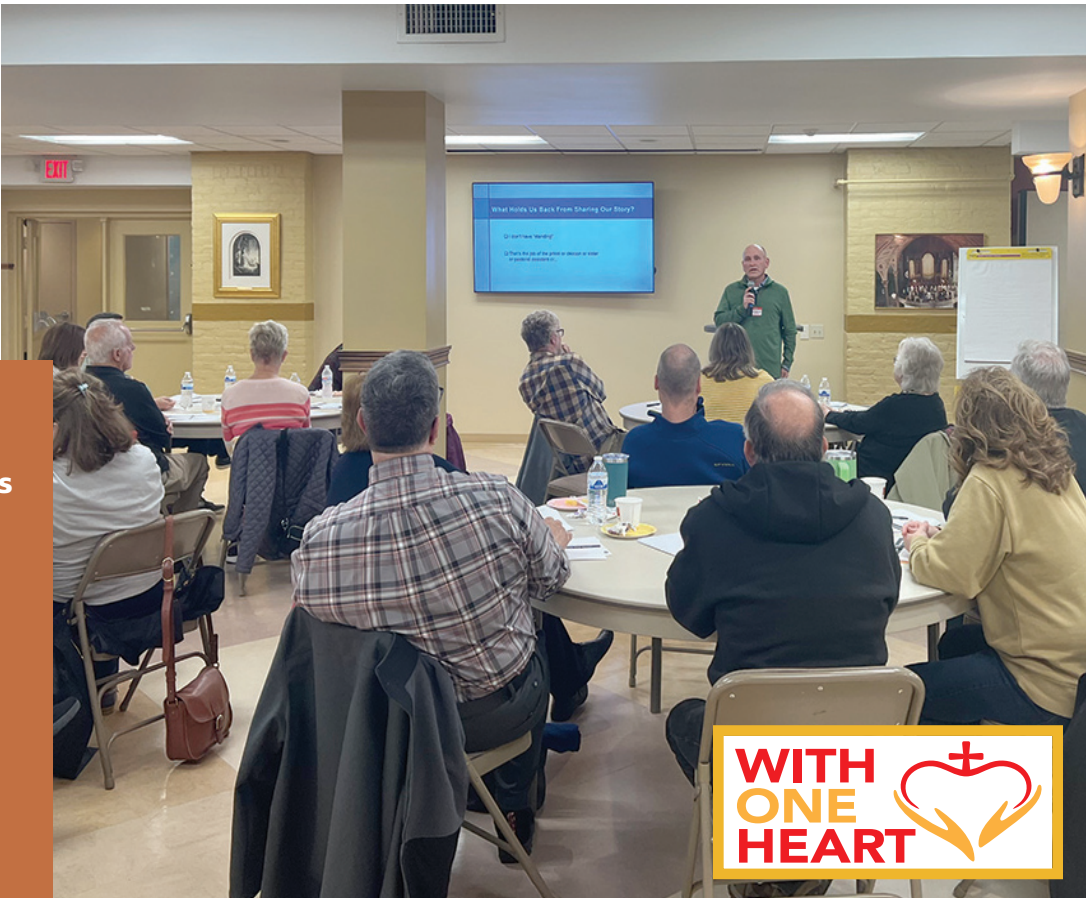
With registration still open for both parish's trainings, Deacon Cranley encourages laity to participate, even if they can only attend one or two of the available sessions.

Registration information for either session can be found online on the parishes' websites.

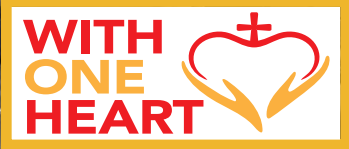
Parish Missionary Disciples
Fall Core Workshops

PMD Evangelization Core Training
St. Timothy, Union
October 14, 21 and 28
<https://saint-timothy.org>

PMD Evangelization Core Training
St. Agnes, Ft. Wright
October 29, Nov. 12 and 19
<https://saintagnes.com>



Lay people attend a previous Parish Missionary Disciple Training at Mother of God Parish, Covington.



Seminarians' summers spent as missionaries and team leader for Totus Tuus

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

Every summer since becoming a seminarian, William Fuller has served as a missionary for Totus Tuus, a Catholic summer youth program which provides fun catechesis for children and teenagers. Missionaries travel from parish to parish each week, staying for five days at a time and relying on host families for housing.

This summer, Mr. Fuller was asked to serve in a leadership role as a Team Support Person. Rather than traveling with the missionaries, Mr. Fuller provided support for each Totus Tuus team out in the field, commuting daily from his summer assignment at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell.

"I just got inspired by the Holy Spirit to take up this labor," said Mr. Fuller. Joining Mr. Fuller in the Totus Tuus experience were his brother seminarians Joseph O'Bryan and Evan Ihrig, who served as missionaries for the program. This was Mr. O'Bryans second summer as a missionary and Mr. Ihrigs first.

This year at the Seminary Ball, Oct. 16, the annual seminarian video will highlight the seminarians' experience as missionaries for Totus Tuus and provide insight into what the summer of a seminarian looks like.

"Everyone who has joined seminary after us has done Totus Tuus at least during their first summer," Mr. Fuller said. "It definitely seems that that's the current plan, to get all the seminarians through Totus Tuus," he said. "It's a great formational thing. It teaches you a lot about self-sacrifice, how to be totally yours for people, how to interact with parishes you know nothing about. In every area of formation, it grows you."



Seminarian Will Fuller, known as "Mr. Will" to his Totus Tuus students, sits beside seminarian Joseph O'Bryan who spent the summer as a Totus Tuus missionary. Mr. Fuller provided support to all Totus Tuus teams across the region, making this the third summer he has participated in the program.

authentic. The catechesis is also fun," he said.

Two parishes in the Diocese of Covington participate in the Totus Tuus experience — Immaculate Heart of Mary, Burlington, and St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas. In all three years of his Totus Tuus work, Mr. Fuller has spent time at St. Thomas Parish and has watched the students grow from third graders to now sixth graders.

"They grow in every way," he said, "but especially in their love of Jesus, the Lord ... I could tell these kids are holier. They're in a better spot than I was, at least at their age and a lot of people I've known at their age. And I think Totus Tuus is a big part of that."

Seminary Ball tickets are still available. Join the other Diocese of Covington faithful at the diocese's largest social event in supporting the education and formation of our future priests. Visit covdio.org and click on the Seminary Ball web banner.

Totus Tuus is a Latin phrase meaning "Totally Yours," and the missionary program was inspired by St. Pope John Paul II's papal motto, "Totus Tuus Maria," meaning "Totally Yours Mary."

The goal of the program is twofold, explained Mr. Fuller: "There's catechesis, of course, to get the kids to learn about their own faith, to grow in prayer, to grow in their own spiritual life," he said, "but also just provide a place for kids to be kids, to have fun, to be children of God. I think Totus Tuus does a great job of that."

"Totus Tuus integrates the fun in a way that feels more authentic and is more



Pilgrims prepare to encounter the Blessed Virgin in Mexico

Pilgrims met, Sept. 17, in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, before embarking on a six-day pilgrimage to Mexico alongside Bishop John Iffert — departing Sept. 21 and returning Sept. 26. The journey will take pilgrims to the single most visited Marian sanctuary in the world, the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City — as well as other related Marian sites, such as the location where Our Lady appeared before St. Juan Diego.

Official Assignment

Effective September 14, 2026

Rev. Allan R. Frederick
To: Retirement

From: Parochial Vicar,
St. Barbara Parish,
Erlanger

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

Jamie N. Schroeder
Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

Save the Date

Vatican II Workshop: Proclaiming the Joy and Hope of Christ to the Modern World

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization of the Diocese of Covington warmly invites all adults throughout the diocese to attend a special day of formation:

Vatican II: Proclaiming the Joy and Hope of Christ to the Modern World

Saturday, Nov. 14, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Ziegler Auditorium, Academic Center
Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Kentucky

This engaging workshop will be presented by Professor Lucas Pollice, chief mission officer for the Diocese of Colorado Springs and a gifted speaker known for making the teachings of the Church both accessible and inspiring. Participants will explore the enduring vision of the Second Vatican Council, discover its profound impact on the life of the Church, and learn how its teachings continue to shape evangelization, catechesis, parish life, and Christian discipleship today.

At a time when many people are searching for hope, purpose, and spiritual direction, Vatican II reminds us that Christ is the answer to the deepest longings of the human heart.

Registration is required by Friday, Oct. 23.
To register, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/56vtzdx2>

For information, contact: Isaak A. Isaak,
iisaak@covdio.org or (859) 392-1529.



Register Now!

FRIDAY, OCT 16 2026 | RECEPTIONS · ERLANGER, KY



Bishop's Schedule

- Sept. 27**
TEC Leadership Summit meeting, 1 p.m.

Sept. 28
Mass and reception for Bishop Iffert's 5-year anniversary, Campbell County Deanery, St. Joseph Parish, Alexandria, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29
Diocesan Review Board meeting, 10 a.m.
- Sept. 29 (continued)**
Visit Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, 3 p.m.

Mass and reception for Bishop Iffert's 5-year anniversary, Southwest Deanery, All Saints Parish, Walton, 7 p.m.

Sept. 30
ACUE donor reception, Ft. Mitchell Country Club, Ft. Mitchell, 6 p.m.



Bishop John C. Iffert Invites everyone to celebrate his 5th Anniversary in the Diocese of Covington

Bishop Iffert will celebrate a Mass with the people in each of the 5 deaneries

All Masses will be at 7:00 PM
followed by a reception and fellowship

Campbell County Deanery
Monday, September 28, 2026
St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring

Southwest Deanery
Tuesday, September 29, 2026
All Saints Parish, Walton

Southeast Deanery
Thursday, October 1, 2026
St. Patrick, Maysville

Covington Deanery
Tuesday, October 20, 2026
Holy Spirit, Newport

Northern Kenton County
Wednesday, October 21, 2026
St. Pius X, Edgewood



Deacon to speak on God’s Divine Mercy in everyday life at annual Knights of Columbus dinner

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The St. Michael the Archangel Council of the Knights of Columbus is inviting individuals to join them for their annual “It’s a Miracle” dinner event — to be hosted at Receptions Event Center, Erlanger, Oct. 7, 6 p.m.

This year, the council welcomes Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers as the featured guest speaker. Known for his “energetic and engaging” preaching style, Deacon Burke has earned the nickname “The Dynamic Deacon.”

The evening’s topic will be “Miracles of Divine Mercy — Finding Joy in Everyday Challenges.” Deacons of the diocese and their wives were invited in particular to this event as guests as a “thank you,” according to the Knights of Columbus, with many planning on attending.

Drawing from his own experiences, Deacon Burke will share with guests “how God’s Divine Mercy is at work in the ordinary challenges of everyday life.”

In an interview with “Ask a Marian,” Deacon Burke spoke on God’s Divine Mercy as he learned from his relationship to his father. “The past helped shape me into the person I am today,” Deacon Burke said, “but my past does not determine my future. My relationship with Jesus Christ determines my future.”

Looking at the image of the Divine Mercy and seeing the “rays coming forth from the heart of Jesus ... the Holy Spirit was asking me to be a vehicle of mercy in the life of the person who hurt me,” said Deacon Burke.

All are invited to join Deacon Burke, and the deacons of the Diocese in Covington, to hear more about the way Divine Mercy operates in our day-to-day lives. Tickets for the event, which are \$30 each, are available on the Knights of Columbus’s website at <https://www.stmichaelkofc.org>.



Photo courtesy of the St. Michael the Archangel KofC Council

Pictured is Deacon Harold Burke Sivers, who will be speaking about the “Miracles of Divine Mercy” at Receptions Event Center, Erlanger, Oct. 7.

“It’s a Miracle” Dinner
October 7, 6–9 p.m.

Tickets available online at
<https://www.stmichaelkofc.org>

A quick favor for our *Messenger* newspaper

For 142 years, the *Messenger* has been your trusted source for local, national and international Catholic news. To ensure that we keep delivering the news in a way that is most beneficial to our readers, we need your feedback. Whether you’ve been receiving the *Messenger* for decades or just recently started getting the paper, we want to hear from you.



Scan the QR code with your phone camera or visit
covidio.org/messenger to share your thoughts.

The Parishioners of
ST. JOSEPH CHURCH
6833 Four Mile Rd. • Camp Springs
Invite You To Our

OKTOBERFISH
Fish Fries



Friday, October 2nd and 9th
Dinners are served from 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

The menu features
hand-breaded fried cod and catfish fillets as well as baked cod,
shrimp, crab cakes, salmon, and a wide variety of
homemade desserts
Set-ups & Sandwiches Weekly Split-the Pot

Dine-In and Carry Out
For more information or to place a carry-out order,
please call 859-635-2491 or visit
stjosephcampsprings.org

Directions: Take AA Highway (Rt. 9) from Wilder. Go 9 miles to Rt. 547
exit. Turn right and go 1 mile to church.

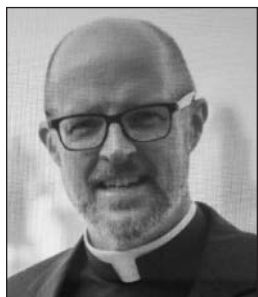
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Indifference to God, fascination with Christ

The reading for the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Ezekiel 18: 25-28, Philippians 2:1-11 and Matthew 21:28-32.

Ultimately, everything depends on the God question. Faith is faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ or it is nothing. And to the extent we can grasp the nettle of the matter, it is that the crisis in the heart of modern man exists to the degree to which he is indifferent to God. That indifference to God, however, is often not met with a direct repudiation of Jesus Christ, but rather, by erecting a simulacrum of the savior — an idol — who approves our every whim to live as we will.

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Phillip DeVous

In recognizing this situation of deep indifference and idolatry, we must cry out anew with the Psalmist, “Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.”

No doubt, there are many reasons as to why

people have grown indifferent to God. The reasons are as personal as every individual who has become indifferent. I think, however, we could sum up a great many of those reasons as distraction. After all, the world puts many titillating things before our eyes.

The passing world is very good indeed at making us forget that it is passing away. The sum of this relentless distraction leads us down the path of disinterest in Jesus Christ, inattentiveness to the things of the spirit, then on to indifference, and finally to a kind of blindness to God and to the presence of Christ in our midst. This is a constant pressure and temptation with which we all contend.

So, here are some questions to ask ourselves daily to avoid being pulled down the road of indifference to God and to the priority of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom: Do I find Jesus Christ interesting? Do I find Jesus Christ fascinating? Do I want to know more about Jesus Christ?

Every pastoral work of the Church is dead in the water if we do not find Jesus interesting and do not have a desire to really get to know him. It is a tragic irony that after more than a millennium of Christianity as the dominant religion in the Western world that the challenging person of Jesus Christ is now largely met with widespread disinterest, even by many claiming to have a relationship with Him. How many church related things do we engage with whereof Jesus Christ is barely spoken?

If there is to be a resurgence of faith in our time, which truly rediscovers the priority of Christ, taking faith beyond the routine and superficial, it will only start when we again find Jesus fascinating. And, it must be said, Jesus Christ is fascinating!

Let us pray to hear the words of St. Paul with fresh, inquisitive ears when he says: “(Christ Jesus) Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God, something to be grasped.”

In this single sentence we have two claims that were revolutionary in St. Paul’s time and our own. First, that Jesus is God. The God of the Israelites was understood as majestic, so holy that not even His name was to be said, lest one offend with blasphemy. Though He cared for Israel, the chosen people, he was to be carefully approached and attended to. The apostle is saying this Jesus is that God. The Lord. The Creator.

Second, even though Jesus is the God of Israel, He “did not regard equality with God.”

Why?

“...Because he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness and human in appearance.” Now whatever one may think about this claim, is this not a fascinating claim? That the all-holy Eternal God from whom all things were made, through whom the entire cosmos was fashioned, set aside His glory to take the form of a slave, to approach us.

Faith can only be sustained if we find Jesus interesting. When we pursue that interest in prayer, worship, fellowship, service and study, our fascination with Jesus grows. Consequently, we find ourselves more willing to listen to Him, to live more of our life “through him, and with him and in him.” Allowing ourselves to be led from indifference to interest, and then onwards to fascination,

When I was a young child, I thought that age automatically brought wisdom. I had an aunt, who in my mind was always elderly, and she seemed to have figured out every-

MUSINGS



Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

I try to identify the wisdom figures in my life, Aunt Lou is the model. She had only a third-grade education. Because she was the eldest child among my mother’s siblings she was expected to help support the family from a young age. She was a genius at managing finances. And she was able to be frugal without being stingy.

Today the news is filled with politicians who are asking for my vote. They offer so many things that I do not need and which they do not have the power to give. What I want is someone who cares as my Aunt Lou always did. Who shares the simple things of life — recipes, help with

chores, a resolution of disputes in simple terms. Poverty did not cause her to long for what she did not have or to hold tight to what she did have. She was generous. Aunt Lou was kind and fair. She was not lenient in a way that allowed bad behavior. Without making any threats, I always knew what she expected — good behavior. I obliged and behaved. Order and calm surrounded her even when the economy rendered her poor. She made her own clothes and dresses for my dolls. Today she would be called industrious.

I remember how after she washed her granddaughter’s hair, she dried it so vigorously that I thought the child’s head would come lose. Perhaps the essence of wisdom is knowing when a soothing touch is needed and when a vigorous drying technique is demanded. No threats involved!

I do long for wisdom when I am faced with hard decisions. Life seems complicated most of the time. Now that I am older, I know that it was not an easy life that made Aunt Lou calm and caring. She lived through the Great Depression. During that tragic time, she and my uncle lost their business and had to declare bankruptcy, move in with her relatives and count on the generosity of others. She could have become angry, stingy, withdrawn. What was the wisdom that kept her open and caring, generous and loving?

I wonder if that picture of the Sacred Heart was part of her secret to kindness, generosity and forgiveness. Can prayer soften our hearts? Can we care without measure and still demand fidelity to the Gospel demands? The life of my Aunt Lou seems to say, “Yes!”

Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy is a retired theology professor at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky

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Fulton Sheen: A teacher of virtue

“What virtues do you think Sheen is an example of?”

That question was put to me by a fellow sister who was preparing her classroom for the beginning of the school year.

VIEWPOINT



Sister Jude Andrew Link

Here in Peoria, Illinois, we are already several weeks into the school year. But in other parts of the country, students and teachers just had their first days of class this week. This sister was preparing a bulletin board about saints and virtues.

I haven’t stopped thinking about that question. The fact of his beatification tells us the Church believes Sheen to be a man of heroic virtue. Soon-to-be Blessed Fulton Sheen was certainly a man of faith. He had had a deep and personal adherence to Jesus Christ revealed in his famous commitment to the daily Holy Hour.

“If you want to know about God,” he said, “get down on your knees.” On his ordination day, Sheen promised to make a Holy Hour every day, and his fidelity to that promise disposed him to receive the fruits of theological faith. The light of faith illumined his mind and gave him insights into the mysteries of Christ that then informed his teaching, preaching and writing, giving them a power born of the Spirit.

He knew about Christ from study, but he knew Christ from prayer. That fidelity was sometimes costly.

In “Treasure in Clay” he writes of the lengths he would go to keep his daily appointment with Our Blessed Lord, through periods of dryness and distraction or the time he was accidentally locked in a Chicago church, climbed out a window and landed in the coal bin.

The Blessed Lord rewarded his fidelity in the most touching way, coming to meet Sheen definitively during his Holy Hour on Dec. 9, 1979, to lead his faithful disciple to the Father’s house.

The Holy Hour was the rock of Fulton Sheen’s life, the place where he found his identity, gained insights for his teaching, gathered strength for the task ahead of him. It was the source of his remarkable integrity. He was the

same person regardless of his situation and audience, at home among the rich and famous as well as the char-woman and street sweeper.

His stories, however, reveal that he was more at home among the poor and simple. He told the story of the street sweeper in Rome who was unimpressed by the cardinals and bishops gathered for the Second Vatican Council, and who reminded him that the simple man doing his work for the love of God was doing a more profitable thing than any “important” tasks accomplished for other reasons.

This spiritual vision fostered a deep respect for each individual and for the wisdom and honor of the common man. This respect was born of his love of God which allowed him to see each person as a brother or a sister with a deep and practical love for his neighbor, a love that animated his zeal for souls that sustained his preaching and missionary activity.

Fulton Sheen was famously hardworking. As a university professor he tore up his lecture notes at the end of each term, he rewrote them each semester so that he would be coming to the material fresh.

He spent over 30 hours preparing for each television episode, practicing its delivery in several languages. It would be easy to dismiss Sheen as a workaholic, but perhaps it was an embrace of asceticism, a sort of spiritual discipline and devotion to one’s duty, refusing to give into the complacency that can accompany success and the presumption that excuses one from work because “I know how to do this already.”

All of his activities — the preaching, teaching, writing, radio and television appearances, missionary work — was at the service of the Church, an expression of his undying obedience to Christ and the Church as manifested by his hierarchical superiors.

He was clear-eyed in this obedience, going toe-to-toe with Cardinal Francis Spellman when he judged it right. This obedience was, as all obedience is at some point, a crucible in his final years, one he accepted and embraced out of love for Christ and his body, the Church.

In the heady and confusing times of the 60s and 70s, Sheen — who had a platform and an audience at his fingertips — chose the path of discretion, intentionally not displaying the ecclesiastical falling outs for all to see. They get only a vague reference in his autobiography.

His faith in Christ, present in his Church and his obedience even in the face of the fallenness of her members

(Continued on page 13)

we become more desirous and willing to bend the knee, and to let the entirety of our lives confess “that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Father Phillip W. DeVous is pastor of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish in California, KY.

St. Pius X students celebrate the constitution on its anniversary

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On September 17, during the 250th anniversary of the United States, the community of St. Pius X School, Edgewood, celebrated the United States Constitution on its day with a special event.

A crowd in front of the Edgewood school stood out in a wave of red, white and blue as students prepared for a

Constitution Day parade. In collaboration with the Daughters of the American Revolution — a society founded in 1890 to promote historic preservation, education and patriotism across the United States — students, alongside their teachers and family members, paraded from their school to the nearby Presidents’ Park — waving flags and led by the beat of a student drummer dressed as a Revolutionary soldier.

At the park, the school was joined by the Elsmere Honor Guard, who performed a three-rifle volley salute and a flag folding ceremony. Sitting in front of the park’s amphitheater, students in their grade levels took turns reading and reciting parts of the United States Constitution — celebrating its history and the history of the nation.

Baker photos



(above) A young student dressed in a costume resembling a Revolutionary War soldier leads the parade with a drumbeat. The drum is held up by an older student in a flag-striped suit to assist the drummer as he sets the rhythm of the parade.



(above) Boy scouts lead the parade from St. Pius X School, Edgewood. Behind them, students holding handmade flags representing the 13 original colonies follow.



(above) Young students smile and wave as they pass by in the parade, led by students carrying the United States flag.



(above) An American flag held by a student rises above heads sitting in a crowd on the grass of Presidents' Park, Edgewood.



(above) After parading from St. Pius X school to the local park, students performed a ceremony where they read parts of the United States Constitution divided by grade level.



(above) Members of the Elsmere Honor Guard perform a flag folding ceremony for students in the amphitheater of Presidents' Park.

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.

Medical volunteers are needed at the Rose Garden Center for Hope & Healing. They are looking for medical professionals to volunteer at their free medical clinic. Needed are Doctors, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners to volunteer once or twice per week or once or twice per month. Interested parties can reach out at tfrosegarden@gmail.com.

“Reclaiming the Sacred through Beauty: A Sister’s Story of Harm in the Church and How She is Reclaiming the Sacred in Her Own Journey through Art,” a webinar for survivors and those who care for them, Sept. 28, 6:30–8 p.m. CDT. Sister Danielle Victoria will share several art pieces she created through her journey of grief, after learning that her trusted spiritual director had allegedly assaulted a sister from her former community. Sister Danielle is co-founder of the Sisters of the Little Way of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, a private association of the faithful in the Diocese of Lexington, Ky. To register visit https://link.edgepilot.com/x/fv50pk8umU5XKoYcFekp_Rw?u=https://archspmorg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VKlzhTc9QlOusNIDsMDl3w

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St. Joseph Church in Camp Springs will be holding their Annual Oktoberfish Fish Fries on October 2nd and 9th, 2026.

Dinners are served from 4:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m. The menu features hand-breaded fried cod and catfish fillets as well as baked cod, shrimp, crab cakes, salmon and a wide variety of homemade desserts. Dine-in or carry-out options available. For more information or to place a carry-out order, please call (859) 635-2491 or visit stjosephcampsprings.org.

Experience the beauty of the Mass by candlelight, Oct. 2, at St. Therese in Southgate, KY. Confessions begin at 6:00 PM, followed by Candlelight Mass at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. Following Mass, stay for an Angelico Pub Night featuring Bellevue Bluegrass Revival. Enjoy live bluegrass music, food, drink, and fellowship as we extend the First Friday experience into a joyful evening together. To RSVP go to: <https://angelicoproject.org/all-events/candlelight-mass-st-therese/>.

The 9th annual international, diocesan-wide Rosary Coast to Coast 2026 will be held Oct. 4, 4 p.m., at The Grotto of the Two Hearts, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. This year Deacons Chris Freihofer and Rich Malsi will lead the hour of prayer. This international event, initiated by Father Richard Heilman of The Holy League, unites people from across the globe together at the same time, under the protective mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in prayer for the spiritual health of our country. Rain or shine. Please bring a chair. For information visit rosarycoasttocoast.com. Questions: e-mail Jeanette at jmlandenwitch@yahoo.com.

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. Michael the Archangel Council of the Knights of Columbus welcomes Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers Oct. 7, 6 p.m., Receptions Event Center, Erlanger. Deacon Harold will speak on “Miracles Of Divine Mercy: Finding Joy in Everyday Challenges,” drawing from his own life experiences, he will share how God’s Divine Mercy is at work in the ordinary challenges of everyday life. Through stories of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing, he will help us recognize the everyday miracles taking place around us — and discover the joy and lasting peace that come from opening our hearts to God’s mercy. Tickets \$30; to purchase visit <https://www.stmichaelkofc.org/event-details-registration/miracles-of-divine-mercy-dinner>.

Support group for separated and divorced begins Oct. 8 and runs through Dec. 3. New Beginnings is an eight-week support program designed to help separated and

Parish festivals

Sept. 25–27
St. Agnes,
Ft. Wright
Oktoberfest

Sept. 26
St. Therese,
Southgate,
Oktoberfest

divorced individuals heal and move forward with hope. Led by facilitators who have experienced similar losses, the program will be held at Catholic Charities, Covington, 7-8:30 p.m. Registration is required, visit <https://forms.gle/PRcoSuf3Jttuuz1p7>, or call (859) 392-1529

A Marriage Encounter Experience will be held on October 9–11 at the Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center in Norwood, Ohio. Come and learn how to enrich your marriage. Contact Jake and Carinna Henry at (513) 807-5605, application@esharing.org or visit esharing.org.

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>.

Join St. Paul School PTO at The Blue and Gold Bash on Oct. 24 from 7–11:00 p.m. at Braxton Brewing, 25 W 7th Street, Covington, KY 41011. The evening will include an online silent auction, Blue & Gold Game, live music, appetizers, beverages for purchase and a Split the Pot Grand Raffle! It is an adult only event and is \$20 per ticket. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to <https://stpaulnky.org/school/>

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 handmade 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.

6-8th grade students are invited to attend the fall edition of CONNECT26 on Nov. 20, from 4–9 p.m. at Thomas More University. CONNECT is a dynamic evening filled with games, food, small groups, worship and opportunities to grow in faith and friendship with other Catholic students from across the diocese. Cost: \$30 (early-bird \$20 if registered before 11/9). Register at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) 3-day overnight retreat for high school juniors/seniors and all college-age students, Nov. 21–23. Attend the very first TEC retreat in the Diocese of Covington. Bishop Iffert invites all students to discover TEC, an important part of his own discipleship journey. Applications are now open. Space is limited — sign up early at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

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/

Millions of Monicas prayer group, St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Alexandria, the first Monday of each month, 6:30–7:30 p.m. Women are invited to gather for one hour of guided prayer for the intention that our children and youth will return to or remain active in the faith. For information call Carol, (859) 653-5638. Note: no gathering in September due to the Labor Day holiday.

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.



Celebrating 95 years of love in action at Cassba 2026

Cassba 2026, the annual fundraising event of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, was held at Drees Pavilion, Park Hills. For more than 95 years, Catholic Charities aids and supports individuals and families experiencing hardship. Through a variety of programs and services, the agency addresses challenges related to food insecurity, homelessness, incarceration, mental health, parenting support and family stability. Thousands of individuals receive assistance through these ministries each year. Funds raised through Cassba directly support the clients and programs of our Catholic Charities. For more information visit www.covingtoncharities.org.

Benedictine Sister Kimberly Porter elected president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, are part of a larger congregation made up of 16 other Benedictine communities throughout the United States known as the Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica. Together, these 17 communities share a constitution through this congregation, while each maintaining their own monastic norms unique to each community.

The Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica is one of three congregations in the United States for Benedictine Sisters, and now they are under new leadership as the Diocese of Covington's own Benedictine Sister Kimberly Porter was elected president of the Congregation.

Sister Kimberly's new role comes after she received nominations for the position, and the delegates of the 17 communities voted to elect her as their new president. "It's one of those jobs that you get called to," she said. "I really think how I landed here was through a series of small yeses and just getting to know communities."

After receiving the nominations and being called to present to the delegates of the community, Sister Kimberly took time to discern if this was God's plan for her. "There was always a sense of peace that was underlying any questions or uncertainty, and so it really was about trusting that this call was of God, and I needed to trust the process," she said.

Being elected president means that Sister Kimberly's full-time work as a family and child therapist must come to an end as she assumes responsibility for the congregation and its needs. Though only one month into the new role, Sister Kimberly understands that her primary role is to support the communities in "whatever they might need," she said. This includes overseeing the canonical elections for new leadership, monastery visitation and being the liaison to the Vatican.

Her longtime work as a therapist will provide a solid foundation on which to provide the support necessary for the congregation's communities.

"As a therapist, a lot of your work is about listening and being present to people and holding space as they discern or decide what action they need to take," she said. "I think that's part of the work of a president too. There are sometimes where there are clear things you have to say, 'this is how it is,' but a lot of it is about walking with others along their journey."

Sister Kimberly's first term as president will last four years with the possibility to serve for a total of 12 years, with the position being eligible for re-election twice. One month into a possible 12-year role might be daunting to some, but Sister Kimberly has trust in the Lord's plan. "I'm open to the work for as long as I'm called to do it," she said.

Upcoming for the Congregation is the Benedictine Jubilee, which will be celebrated over the next four years to commemorate 1,500 years of Benedictine life.

"We're at an exciting time," said Sister Kimberly. "Benedictine life has something to offer the world in terms of prayer and balancing those pieces. I think of just the hope and possibility at having this opportunity at this point in time."

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Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica photos
In a ceremony signifying the transfer of power from outgoing congregation president, (above) Sister Lynn McKenzie (left), Sister Kimberly Porter (right) accepts her new role as president of the congregation. She received the icon of Mother Benedicta Riepp, the nun responsible for bringing the Benedictine Sisters to the United States in 1852.





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AI is generating a mental health crisis, warns Divine Mercy University president

Kimberley Heatherington
OSV News

The ever-increasing presence of artificial intelligence, with AI in every sphere of daily life, is generating a mental health crisis that threatens adults and children alike, according to Father Charles Sikorsky, president of Divine Mercy University, a private Catholic graduate school of psychology and counseling in Sterling, Virginia.

It's a particularly timely message as Mental Health Sunday — part of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Catholic Mental Health Campaign — approaches on Oct. 11, when the faithful are invited to pause and reflect on mental health in their local parish community. The bishops have encouraged all Americans to respond to what they term "the ongoing mental health crisis across the United States."

Father Sikorsky, a member of the Legionaries of Christ, shared his insights with an audience gathered Sept. 5 at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington. It was the second installment in a series of shrine dialogues exploring Pope Leo XIV's landmark encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity): On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence."

The subtitle of Pope Leo's encyclical, said Father

Sikorsky, "kind of identifies what it's about — but the deeper concern really is anthropological: Who are we? What does it mean to be human? What understanding of the person should guide technological and social development?"

These questions, Father Sikorsky continued, are "of tremendous importance" to the field of mental health and the practice of psychology.

Using a framework developed by David Rosmarin, director of the Spirituality and Mental Health Laboratory at Harvard Medical School's McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts, Father Sikorsky examined AI's impact upon identity, connection and meaning.

"There's a crisis of identity in general in our culture — people don't have the same roots they used to have," explained Father Sikorsky.

Globalization; domestic and international migration; the decline in religious adherence; fractured families; frequent job changes — all of these can profoundly impact an individual's sense of self, he suggested.

"And AI can really feed this identity crisis," noted Father Sikorsky, "when people are looking outside of themselves for that stability; for that identity; for who they are."

In "Magnifica Humanitas" Pope Leo reminds his readers that "human dignity does not depend on a person's abil-

ities, wealth or position in life, nor on the right or wrong choices made; instead, it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person, endowed by God as an expression of his unfailing love."

AI can be highly disruptive to interpersonal connectivity, Father Sikorsky noted — especially in a society already suffering from an epidemic of loneliness.

"Fifteen to 20 years ago, the social media companies were saying, 'Hey, we have a solution for loneliness: social media.' And of course, the opposite has happened," shared Father Sikorsky.

A 2023 advisory from the U.S. Surgeon General stated loneliness can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. In 2024, the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common project reported 29 percent of people between 30-44 years of age said they were "frequently" or "always" lonely.

St. John Paul II, said Father Sikorsky, clearly stated in his 1979 encyclical "Redemptor Hominis (Redeemer of Man)" that "Man cannot live without love." Pope Leo dedicates an entire chapter of "Magnifica Humanitas" to "The Culture of Power and the Civilization of Love."

"One of the dangers of AI is it's kind of social media on steroids," Father Sikorsky said. "At least on social media, if you're on Facebook, you're talking to other people — maybe sometimes there are robots behind it — but (AI) is a conversation with a robot."

Nonetheless, Americans are increasingly turning to AI chatbots — computer programs that imitate human conversations — for company. "Character AI" — a platform with more than 20 million monthly users — offers hyper-realistic digital companions; some parents have blamed chatbot behavior for the suicide deaths of their children.

The dangers of AI and loneliness, said Father Sikorsky, are clear — and among the tools to combat them are education for children in the use of AI, and maintaining strong communal bonds through a parish community.

Meaning, Father Sikorsky emphasized, can't be determined by technology — a chatbot can't say why a person's life matters or why they are here.

"AI can assist in reflection — but it can't assume moral responsibility. It can't help us discern our path; live out our vocation, our calling. It can't love," he said.

Those answers, Father Sikorsky stressed, are found in the Church.

Attempts to transcend natural human limitations by using technology to enhance human physical, cognitive and emotional capacities — otherwise known as transhumanism — is, Pope Leo says in "Magnifica Humanitas", a mistake.

The pope observes that "humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them." He adds, "To renounce this adventure, both tragic and splendid, in the name of a presumed transcendence of all limits, could mean many things, but it would no longer be human."

Father Sikorsky said Pope Leo's encyclical "gives us a lot of great principles and things to think about when we look at this mental health crisis and how it can help psychology. The crisis is rooted in a crisis of identity, a crisis of loneliness and connection, and a crisis of meaning."

"Ultimately, the real solution is this gift of faith; this gift of grace that gives us an identity — our highest form of identity — in our baptism, as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ," he said. "It also gives us community to help us in that struggle of loneliness and connection. And it obviously gives us meaning. It answers all those existential questions."



OSV News photo/Eric Gaillard, Reuters

A visitor wears virtual reality goggles at the World Artificial Intelligence Cannes Festival in Cannes, France, Feb. 10, 2023. Father Charles Sikorsky, president of Divine Mercy University, a private Catholic graduate school of psychology and counseling in Sterling, Virginia, said Sept. 5, 2026, that Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas," can be "of tremendous importance" to the practice of psychology in addressing AI's impact on mental health.

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Technological advancements are not rivals to faith, pope says

Josephine Peterson
Catholic News Service

Progress in science and technology is not contrary to belief in God, and Christians should be actively involved in shaping that progress so that it serves human dignity and the common good, Pope Leo XIV said.

At his Sept. 23 general audience, the pope also pointed to Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen, who is set to be beatified Sept. 24 in St. Louis, as an example of a Catholic who embraced the technology of his time to spread the Gospel.

Continuing his series on documents of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Leo reflected on the council's conciliar constitution "Gaudium et Spes," particularly its teaching on human activity and progress in the world.

Created in the image and likeness of God, the human being is an agent of progress, the pope said, using freedom and intelligence to increase knowledge and advance society.

Yet as scientific and technological achievements multiplied, he said, some thinkers began portraying God and humanity as "rivals: in order to assert his knowledge, his freedom and his progress, man is thought to have to emancipate himself from God."

Pope Leo called that view erroneous and quoted the late theologian, Jesuit Father Henri de Lubac, who described it as the "tragedy of atheistic humanism."

"Ultimately, however, by denying the relationship with God, one also loses the possibility of affirming the transcendent value of the human person," the pope said.

Quoting the conciliar constitution, he said Christians instead believe "that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design."

Human achievement, therefore, should not draw the faithful away from involvement in scientific, technological or social progress, the pope said. Rather, the Gospel calls

them to participate in building society while keeping such progress oriented toward human flourishing.

"Let us carry out our daily activities with true charity, offering our work to the Lord both as a means for personal sanctification and as an expression of our desire ever more fully to bring about God's kingdom, especially through pur-

suing the common good, caring for the needy and defending human dignity," he told English-speaking pilgrims.

Humanity's freedom and activity are not absorbed or nullified by an encounter with God, Pope Leo said. Instead, humanity finds its fullest truth and freedom in Christ.

"From this perspective, an important truth emerges: to encounter God, the human being must not abandon his earthly occupations, but can live his vocation fully, carrying out his daily work well and sanctifying it," he said.

Christians, he said, should therefore participate fully in society's progress while reminding others of its "ultimate purpose."

Pope Leo's catechesis echoes his recent encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas," in which he addressed the development of artificial intelligence and stressed that technological advances must remain at the service of human dignity.

Authentic human progress, the pope said at the general audience, "must be inspired and guided by charity" and improve the lives of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

"Dear brothers and sisters, the Second Vatican Council invites us to share the bread of knowledge and know-how, so that every person and every people may develop their potential, and together, with God's help, we may build a better future," he said.

Mentioning the upcoming beatification of Archbishop Sheen in his greeting to English-speaking pilgrims, Pope Leo recalled the American prelate's innovative use of radio and television for evangelization.

"May the example and intercession of this holy bishop, known for his evangelizing work through the media, inspire many others likewise to find new ways of spreading the Gospel message with joyful enthusiasm," he said.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV greets a child from the popemobile while riding around St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before his weekly general audience Sept. 23, 2026.

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

Pope Leo XIV to travel 19,000 miles on 14 flights during trip to Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay

Courtney Mares
OSV News

Pope Leo XIV will travel more than 19,000 miles on 14 flights during a November trip to Peru, Argentina and Uruguay, according to the full schedule the Vatican released Sept. 21.

The Nov. 6-17 trip will be the first papal visit to Latin America of Pope Leo's pontificate and his longest international journey to date. Over 12 days, he will celebrate nine public Masses, visit seven cathedrals and preside over two stadium prayer vigils. The trip culminates with a return to Chiclayo, Peru, where he served as bishop from 2015 to 2023.

The journey begins Nov. 6 with a flight of more than 14 hours and 6,900 miles from Rome to Montevideo, Uruguay. The return flight from Lima, Peru, to Rome covers 6,700 miles. In between, the pope will travel to a new destination nearly every day, including a 2,200-mile flight from Buenos Aires to Lima and a military helicopter flight Nov. 14 to the Andes mountain town of Santa Cruz de Succhabamba, Peru.

By comparison, Pope Leo traveled 11,000 miles over 11 days during his trip to Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea earlier this year.

In addition to the detailed schedule, the Vatican also released the motto and logo for each of the three countries.

— Uruguay (Nov. 6-8): 'I bring you news of great joy'

Uruguay will be the pope's first stop. Christians make up 44% of the population, the lowest share in Latin America, according to the Pew Research Center. It will be the first papal visit there since St. John Paul II's in 1988.

The motto is drawn from the angel's announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem in the Gospel of Luke, "I bring you news of great joy."

Pope Leo will visit Montevideo, the capital and largest city; Paysandú, a cultural and economic hub on the border with Argentina; and Florida, home to the National Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three.

In Montevideo, he will visit the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and Sts. Philip and James and lead a prayer vigil at a stadium. He will celebrate an outdoor Mass in París Londres Park in Paysandú.

The logo for the visit features Our Lady of the Thirty-Three, Uruguay's patroness, reflecting the visit's culminating moment: a Mass at the National Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three on Nov. 8, the date of the annual national pilgrimage there.

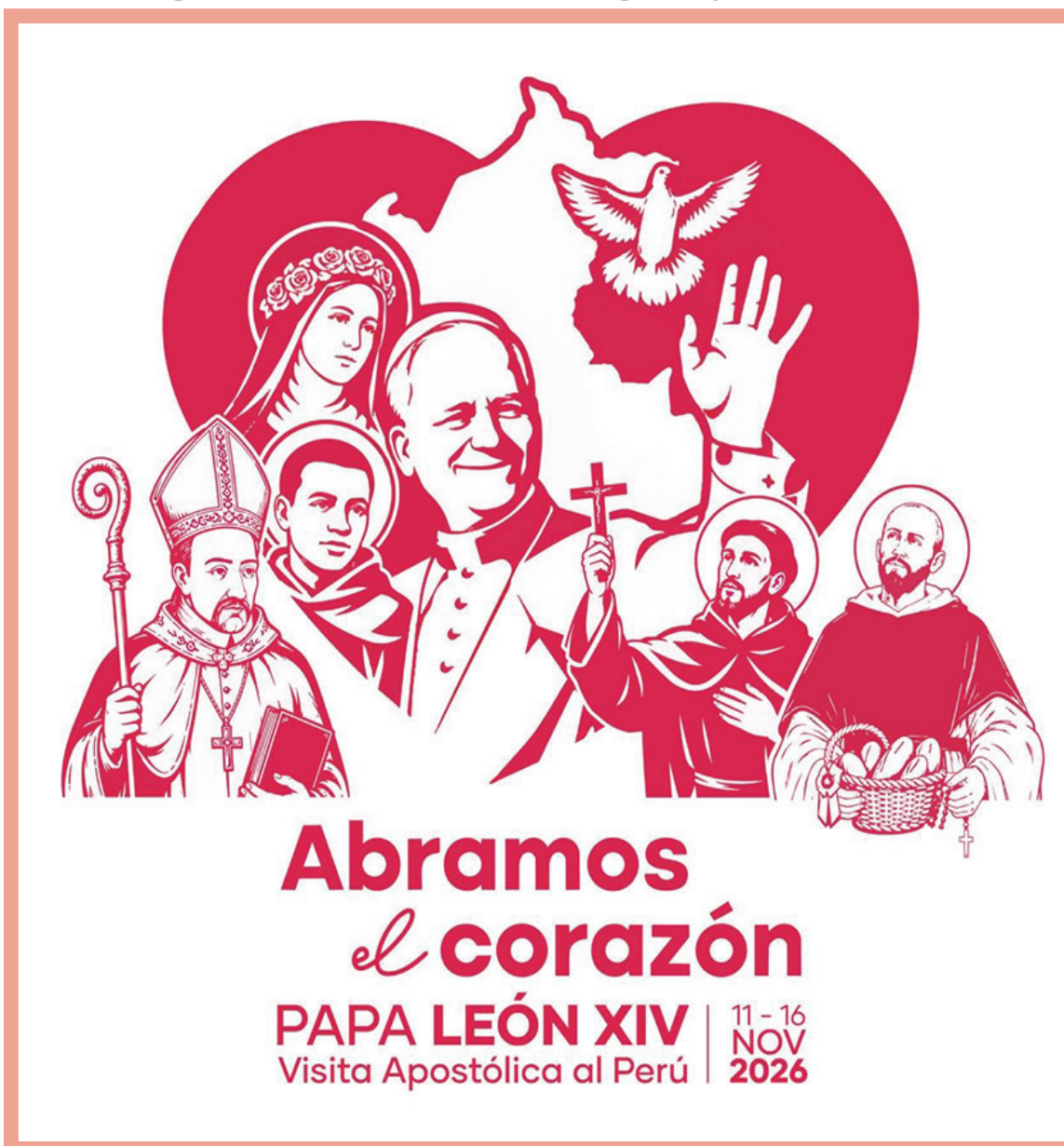
— Argentina (Nov. 8-11): 'Welcome everyone. Go and proclaim'

The second leg of the trip will be Argentina, the homeland of Pope Francis, who served as archbishop of Buenos Aires before becoming pope, but never returned during his pontificate. About 58% of Argentine adults identify as Catholic, according to Pew. St. John Paul II made the last papal visit in 1987, nearly four decades ago.

Pope Leo will visit Buenos Aires; Córdoba, the country's second-largest city; and Luján, where he will celebrate Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Luján, Argentina's patroness and one of its leading pilgrimage sites.

He will also offer Mass in the center of Buenos Aires at the Monument of the Spanish and pray with local Catholics in the capital city's Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, as well as celebrate an outdoor Mass in on the grounds of the Military Aviation School in Córdoba, where he will also visit the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

The logo shows a wreath of small, stylized human figures in shades of Argentine sky blue, representing a society where everyone is welcomed and no one is excluded, with Christ at the center. The Spanish motto, "Bienvenidos todos. Vayan y anuncien," is meant to express openness, harmony in diversity, encounter and proclamation, accord-



This is the official logo for Pope Leo XIV's trip to Peru Nov. 11-17, 2026. Pope Leo will travel more than 19,000 miles on 14 flights during a Nov. 6-17 trip to Peru, Argentina and Uruguay, according to the full schedule the Vatican released Sept. 21.

OSV News photo/courtesy Holy See Press Office

ing to the Vatican.

— Peru (Nov. 11-17): 'Let us open our hearts'

The final and longest leg is a homecoming for Pope Leo in Peru, where he first arrived as an Augustinian missionary in 1985. He was appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo in 2014 and later became its bishop. He obtained Peruvian citizenship in 2015.

Pope Leo will visit Lima, the capital and largest city; Chiclayo; Cusco, the former Inca capital in the Andes; and Pucallpa, a city on the Ucayali River in the Amazon rainforest that has long been a center of Catholic missionary outreach.

He will celebrate four Masses: at an open space near the "Pampas de Pimentel" in Chiclayo; in Santa Cruz de Succhabamba, at an altitude of more than 6,000 feet in the Andes; at a sports complex in Pucallpa; and at the "Las Palmas Air Base" in Callao outside of Lima.

The logo shows Pope Leo surrounded by Peruvian saints, in front of a map of Peru enclosed in a large red heart. The saints depicted are St. Rose of Lima, St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, St. Martin de Porres, St. Francis Solano and St. John Macias. The heart represents the motto, "Let us open our hearts," an invitation to open one's heart to God, to others and to the future with hope, expressing welcome for the successor of St. Peter with faith, unity, and a missionary spirit.



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Bishops urge policy that upholds 'God-given human dignity'

OSV News

In a statement to mark National Migration Week Sept. 21-27, Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, urged U.S. officials and lawmakers to enact policy that upholds the "God-given human dignity" of migrants and prevents the separation of families.

Bishop Cahill, who currently leads the Diocese of Victoria, Texas, has been named by Pope Leo XIV as the new bishop of Joliet, Illinois, Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States, announced Sept. 17.

The bishop's statement for National Migration Week was issued Sept. 16, ahead of the observance, which culminates with the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

"Our Church in this country and beyond has a long, inspiring history of caring for migrant and refugee children — from the days of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini and

her sisters sheltering many orphaned immigrant children when few others looked their way to today's diocesan charities providing them and their families with vital support," Bishop Cahill said.

Bishop Cahill added, "We owe much gratitude to the law enforcement officers, social workers, pastoral staff, and caregivers who dedicate themselves to their safety and well-being."

"As we see protections for this population being undermined in various ways, including prolonged stays in detention and decreased access to legal representation, we urge governments and communities to ensure a high level of care rooted in their God-given human dignity," he said. "This requires promoting family unity and reunification whenever possible."

In a news release with Bishop Cahill's statement, the USCCB acknowledged "heightened social tensions regarding immigration" and invited Catholics across the country

"to reflect on how our faith is calling us to respond to this most vulnerable group within the context of migration."

"Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, and organizations nationwide are encouraged to mark this observance with prayer, educational programs, pastoral outreach and support for migration-related ministries," the USCCB said.

Previously, in a video message for the USCCB's Committee on Migration's "You Are Not Alone" campaign, Bishop Cahill said, "Human dignity does not depend on immigration status."

"It is given by God and cannot be taken away," he said in the video posted by USCCB. "In this moment, many immigrant families living in our communities are grappling with real fear and uncertainty, worrying about their children, their future, and whether they will be able to remain together," he said, referring to the fear families are experiencing over raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

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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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Fulton Sheen: A teacher of virtue

(Continued from page 5)

and leaders, gave his love that character of endurance and sacrifice that is the hallmark of the old-fashioned-sounding virtue of long-suffering. His trials and physical sufferings in the last decade of his life conformed him to Christ the victim, making him a witness to the enduring reality of Christian hope.

It is no wonder then, that St. John Paul II told Sheen, just two months before his death in 1979, "You are a loyal son of the Church." The Polish pontiff saw in the frail bishop a man whose whole life and identity had been handed over to Christ and placed at the service of the Church.

On Sept. 24, St. John Paul's successor will, through his representative Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, declare Fulton Sheen blessed. By this

action the Church, our Mother, is giving us the gift of a teacher and guide, telling us that Sheen's teaching and writing can form us in faith, and his life is a model of holiness through the imitation of his practice of heroic virtue.

As students fill classrooms across America this September, Catholics are being invited to meet a new teacher in the school of holiness, Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Dominican Sister Jude Andrew Link is a member of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. She teaches high school theology at Peoria Notre Dame High School and is the programming director for Fulton Sheen's beatification in St. Louis.



Obituary

Passionist Sister Margaret Mary Fields, 85, passed away peacefully, Sept. 12, at the Passionist Nuns Monastery in Erlanger, Ky., where she lived and served the Lord. A sister for over 66 years, Sister Margaret Mary served the community faithfully and joyfully in multiple roles.

She was born on Sept. 15, 1940, in Louisville, Ky., to the late Claude Francis and Mary Margaret (Stuckenborg) Fields. She was the oldest of four daughters.

Sister Margaret Mary was blessed to be educated by Catholic Sisters throughout grade school, high school and nursing school. Sister Margaret Mary worked in the emergency room for several years at St. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital in Louisville until she followed God calling her to the contemplative life of prayer as a Passionist Nun.

Truly a lovely lady who was easy to live with, joyful, resilient and reliable, compassionate, caring, a true blessing for our community in every way, her fellow Sisters said. Sister Margaret Mary's faith was unwavering, and she will be sorely missed by everyone in her community.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Claude Francis and Mary Margaret Stuckenborg Fields and her sister, Martha Fields Lotz.

Sister Margaret Mary is survived by her sisters, Claudia Day and Susan Fields Rutherford and her sisters at the Monastery.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Sept.



Sister Margaret Mary Fields, CP

19 at the Monastery Chapel with burial following in the Monastery's cemetery.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in Sister Margaret Mary's name to the Passionist Nuns Monastery, 1151 Donaldson Road, Erlanger, KY 41018.

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Vatican document affirms interreligious dialogue as essential to 'journey of hope' for humanity

VATICAN CITY — “A Journey of Hope,” released Sept. 16 by three Vatican dicasteries, affirms “Nostra Aetate,” the Second Vatican Council’s 1965 landmark teaching on the Church’s relationship with the Jewish people and those of other faiths, while inviting humanity to enter upon a common path of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. The 8,600-word note, approved by Pope Leo XIV in June, was the

result of a collaboration among the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity — which also oversees religious relations with Judaism — and the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue. Over the past six decades, “Nostra Aetate” has borne both “visible and silent” fruits in everyday ways. Now, said the note, “unprecedented challenges” require

renewed courage and “a genuine shift in mindset” to ensure those fruits continue. Rather than looking to found “one great world religion,” authentic interreligious dialogue aims to build “a fraternal society capable of accepting differences,” said the text. “This journey of hope remains open, and all of us are invited to walk it together with courage,” said the dicasteries.

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.

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

In AI guardrails push, US bishops advocate for Kids Online Safety Act at the Capitol

WASHINGTON — More than a dozen U.S. bishops met with members of Congress on Sept. 16 to urge lawmakers to enact effective safety guardrails on artificial intelligence and to advocate for the passage of a bill that aims to protect children online. The meetings came the same day the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced a new task force to engage with tech leaders and lawmakers to discuss their concerns about AI, human dignity, and online child safety. Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Oregon, chair of the USCCB's religious liberty committee, told OSV News in an interview near the Capitol the same day that after the bishops' administrative committee meeting they took the opportunity "to visit with some of the senators and the representatives about the pressing issues that are on the minds and the hearts of the bishops." After multiple tech leaders called for a slowdown in AI development to establish safety guardrails, debate on Capitol Hill has emerged about how to respond. Archbishop Sample also said the bishops advocated on the Hill for Congress to pass the Kids Online Safety Act (S.1748). The House passed a version of legislation earlier this year, but the Senate's version includes a "duty of care" provision that was not included in the House bill. Placing the burden of duty of care on developers, Archbishop Sample said, would ensure they have the "responsibility to make sure that there's protections for children."

Mexican priest killed 2 days after cries for a halt to violence come during a march for peace

MEXICO CITY — A Mexican priest was killed on the eve of the country's Independence Day celebrations, underscoring ongoing concerns about violence against Catholic clergy in Mexico. In a Sept. 16 statement, the Diocese of Huejutla confirmed the death a day earlier of Father Román de la Cruz Hernández, pastor of Santa Cruz Parish in Huejutla de Reyes, Hidalgo state. The diocese declined to speculate on the circumstances surrounding his death. According to N+, Father de la Cruz's body was found along a rural road with multiple gunshot wounds. The reported attack occurred as Mexicans were marking the nation's independence from Spain. "In light of the

alarming situation of violence in our country, we urgently call upon the competent authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to clarify the incident that took place in our diocese, to ensure justice is served, and to prevent this event — as well as other crimes that have wounded our nation — from going unpunished," said Bishop José Hiraís Acosta Beltrán. The Mexican bishops' conference echoed that appeal, stating: "We call upon the relevant authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to clarify these events and ensure that justice is served expeditiously." The Catholic Multimedia Center reports four priests have been killed since President Claudia Sheinbaum took office in October 2024.

Pope Leo tells Special Olympics athletes they 'remind everyone of the true values of life'

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV praised the educational and unifying power of sport as he welcomed a delegation of Italian athletes from the Special Olympics to the Vatican on Sept. 19, encouraging them to follow the example of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati in living holy lives. The delegation included competitors who took part in the 2025 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin. The Special Olympics, founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, promotes sports for people with intellectual disabilities and today includes millions of athletes worldwide. Expressing his joy at the meeting, the pope highlighted his own love of sports and their role in forming character, saying he is "convinced" sports have "great educational value, because it teaches people noble and authentic values." He said participation in sports requires commitment, perseverance, loyalty, trust, openness, teamwork and courage, and noted that the world needs people who witness to these values. "Our world," he said, "is greatly in need of people who, like you, remind everyone of the true values of life: of men and women who, through their example, show that the path of sharing and love is the only path that truly leads to happiness and peace."

Pope, other world faith leaders urged to save starving Ukrainian victims of Russian blockade

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's religious leaders are pleading with Pope Leo XIV, global faith leaders and the international community to "use every available means" to save Ukrainian

civilians facing starvation amid a Russian blockade. In a Sept. 19 appeal, the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations called for urgent action to address "the humanitarian catastrophe in the city of Oleshky," located in Ukraine's southern Kherson region. The area, under temporary Russian occupation, has an estimated 6,000-plus residents, including some 200 children, who are "effectively trapped in a 'gray zone' near the front line," said UCCRO. Russian forces have imposed a "humanitarian blockade," with food supplies last "delivered to the area at the end of May," said UCCRO. The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War has issued multiple warnings of a "dire" and "Russian-manufactured humanitarian crisis" in Oleshky. UCCRO appealed to Pope Leo, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance and other religious leaders, as well as human rights organizations, to "use every available means to save the residents of Oleshky ... from death by starvation." In addition, UCCRO called upon both U.N. member states and the International Committee of the Red Cross "to carry out a humanitarian mission" to evacuate Oleshky's residents "to Ukrainian government-controlled territory."

Pope Leo XIV to make historic first veneration of 'holy tunic,' highlighting Christian unity

PARIS — Pope Leo XIV will make history during his Sept. 25-28 visit to France as the first pope to venerate the Holy Tunic of Argenteuil, the relic long believed to be the seamless robe worn by Christ during his Passion. On Sept. 25, after visiting Notre Dame Cathedral, where he is scheduled to pray before the crown of thorns, the pope will travel to the Stade de France for an evening prayer vigil with 80,000 young people. The tunic will be brought to the stadium especially for the event, a move local authorities have called "exceptional," "unprecedented," and "historic." Venerated in France for more than 1,200 years, the tunic was entrusted to the Abbey of Argenteuil around the year 800. Hidden in pieces during the French Revolution and later restored, it remains one of the country's most significant Christian relics. The vigil's theme will be Christian unity, inspired by the garment's seamless nature. Bishop Benoît Bertrand of Pontoise, the relic's custodian, has emphasized its spiritual significance as a symbol of unity among Christians. Interest in the papal event has been intense. Tickets for the vigil were claimed within minutes, while many more young Catholics will follow the gathering through parish and school watch events across France.

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Please register by Friday, November 6
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For more information, contact:

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