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(left) People of the diocese, including many women religious, gather to pray for migrants and refugees at a prayer service at Mother of God Church, Covington, Sept. 27. The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for the 2026 World Day of Migrants and Refugees as “Even Just One of These Children,” emphasizing the challenges faced by minors in migrant and refugee situations.

(above) MiniMasih- Mini Masih, volunteer coordinator and outreach program support for Kentucky Refugee Ministry, presents as speaker for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees National Prayer Service.

Prayer service for World Day of Migrants and Refugees focuses on the struggles of migrant children, need for pastoral care

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Sept. 27, people of the diocese gathered at Mother of God Church, Covington, for a prayer service alongside many women religious of the Diocese of Covington, including members of the Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee, who organized the service in collaboration with parishioners of Mother of God Parish.

The theme for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees, as suggested by Pope Leo XIV, is “Even Just One of These Children” — emphasizing the struggles and needs of vulnerable migrant and refugee children.

Reflections for the afternoon were provided by Father Michael Comer, pastor of Mother of God, with guest speaker Mini Masih, volunteer coordinator and outreach program support for Kentucky Refugee Ministry — who immigrated herself to the United States 17 years ago.

Cindy Hassan, a lector and parishioner of Mother of God, welcomed those gathered by tying the day of prayer with the United States' 250th anniversary.

“We join in this national observance with gratitude and hope,” Mrs. Hassan said, “honoring the many immigrant communities whose faith, labor, cultures and sacrifices have helped to shape this nation into what it is today.”

In his reflection following the readings, Father Comer remarked on his arrival to the parish nine years ago, drawn to Mother of God for its “history of social justice.” He drew attention to the statement published by Pope Leo XIV in advance of the observance, encouraging those gathered to read.

“He talks about migrants and refugees, focusing specifically on children,” Father Comer said, “the ones who suffer the most.” He said, in all tragedy in the world, it is “children who pay the price” — encouraging reflection on the struggles children endure when faced with displacement due to war, poverty and other strife.

Calling back to the service's Gospel reading, Father Comer quoted Matthew 25. “Jesus says, ‘whatsoever you did for the least of my disciples, you did for me.’ What you're doing socially is worship,” Father Comer said. “... Jesus has taught us that doing for the least of our brothers and sisters — that's worshipping. That's the way we show Jesus our love for him.”

Speaker Mini Masih spoke on her work with Kentucky Refugee Ministry (KRH), saying that it is “about helping people feel that they are not alone as they begin again, and that is especially important when we talk about children.”

Many refugee children arrive in the United States with gaps in their education, and many have had little to no formal schooling, according to Ms. Masih.

“They are suddenly expected to learn in a new language, understand a new culture and adjust to a completely different school environment,” she said, resulting in children feeling isolated as they try to make friends in a new community. Struggles with experiences surrounding war, violence, loss, displacement and separation can further exacerbate these issues — which Ms. Masih says is the “reason” pastoral care is so important.

“Children need more than academic support,” said Ms. Masih. “They need adults who listen to them, encourage them, help them feel safe and remind them that they belong. They need people who will walk alongside them as they grow and heal.”



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St. Vincent de Paul NKY celebrates patronal feast day with the commissioning of four new presidents

Bailey photos

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Northern Kentucky filled St. Pius X Church, Edgewood, in celebration of its patronal feast day and to commission four new conference presidents. Father Ross Kelsch, spiritual advisor to the St. Vincent de Paul Council, and pastor, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, celebrated the Mass and presided at the commissioning. Vincentians from across the Diocese gathered with the leadership of St. Vincent de Paul NKY filling the pews of St. Pius X Church to celebrate together the legacy of charity left by their patron.

The work of Vincentians is not easy, often requiring home visits to those who live in a poverty unknown to many, and who have called upon the charity of St. Vincent de Paul for help. It is the role of Vincentians to answer that call, and to go provide what aide they can.

“Today, as we gather from all of our different parishes, our different communities, our different areas that we serve, I look around and see people who have answered that call,” said Father Kelsch. For those Vincentians who make home visits, Father Kelsch said, “There’s a moment that many of you know very well. You are standing outside someone’s door ... you know a little bit about what’s going on, but probably not much ... you don’t know how long they sat with their phone in their hand before they finally called. How embarrassed they might feel about having to make that call, how many nights they have been awake, wondering what to do next.”

Painting a picture of the hope that Vincentians bring through their work, Father Kelsch said, “You may never know how many times God has used your presence to answer someone’s prayer.”

This work, the one of hope and charity, is not solely the work of the St. Vincent de Paul NKY Conference, nor does it belong to the hands of the Vincentians that carry it out. Father Kelsch reminded those gathered that the work belongs to the Lord.

“We’re not perfect. God didn’t call us because we had all of the answers. He called us so that it would be clear that the work is not ours, but his,” said Father Kelsch. “You show up so that a person knows they haven’t been abandoned, someone knows their name, someone has listened, someone cares enough to take them seriously and to help how we can ... that’s how love takes practical shape.”

“We aren’t called to solve every problem,” he said, “and we can’t. But we can bring the people we serve to the one who can.”

Following his homily, Father Kelsch commissioned four new council presidents — Joyce Eiben, Mother of God Parish, Covington; Kay Mudd, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth; Michael Lauer, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California; and Richard Calchara, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville — instructing them to always live out this mission of hope and charity in the name of the Lord.

Two more conference presidents for Holy Cross Parish, Covington, and St. Timothy Parish, Union, will be commissioned at a later date.



(above, left) Casey Guilfoyle, Council 2nd Vice President, sits in the second pew and participates in Mass.

(above, right) Father Ross Kelsch delivers a homily to a church full of Vincentians on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul.



(left) The new council presidents commissioned by Father Kelsch are (from left to right) Joyce Eiben, Kay Mudd, Michael Lauer and Richard Calachara. Not pictured are Mary Rose Kahmann and Collen Pulsfort.

(bottom) The general congregation, made up entirely of Vincentians, stood after the commissioning to renew their own Vincentian commitment.



Bailey photos

Reading and writing standards are underway as teams meet

The Reading and Writing Standards Development Teams for grades K-5 and 6-8 met with Emily Urlage, director of Curriculum and Instruction for Catholic Schools, on Tuesday, Sept. 24, and Thursday, Sept. 26, respectively. Twenty different schools were represented across both groups, a strong showing with over 50 percent of Diocesan grade schools being represented. The groups are meeting to develop the reading and writing standards for schools across the Diocese.

An evening of reflection on Magnifica Humanitas amongst growing AI discourse

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

Organized by the Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee, Monsignor William Cleves, pastor, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, will be sharing a reflection on Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical Maginifca Humanitas. The first of two evening events will take place Oct. 26, 7:00 p.m. in the Curia's Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, the second evening will be on November 30, at the same time and location.

The Committee was formed to focus on matters of social justice and the Church's social justice teaching, so it was natural that when Pope Leo XIV released his first encyclical on the effect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the human person that the Committee would be interested. "We thought this would be perfect, it goes along with what we believe is part of our call," said Notre Dame Sister Shauna Bankemper.

Monsignor Cleves' reflection will be focused primarily on chapters 3-5 of the encyclical which highlight technology and dominance, safeguarding of human-

ity and a culture of power. Following the reflection there will be time for small group discussion, facilitated by a member of the committee. At the end of the evening, people will be invited to ask questions which will be discussed at the Nov. 30 gathering.

Sister Bankemper says the biggest draw for people to come is the topic itself, "If they haven't read the encyclical, their curiosity to see what Pope Leo [XIV] was writing about at this time, about human dignity and how we have to preserve human dignity, especially in a digital age," she said.

"I think they [people who attend] will be grateful that the Church has entered into the dialog with our world over the fast pace at which AI is moving, and that the Church is asking that we look through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching as to how we're addressing this AI, plus all the other issues that our cultures are wrestling with," she said.

No registration is required for the event, so Sister Bankemper hopes, "that a variety of people from different parishes and different communities can join us."

An Evening of Prayer, Reflection, and Conversation

Exploring Pope Leo XIV's
Magnifica Humanitas

Join us for an evening of reflection on the vision of Pope Leo XIV and explore its relevance for our world today.





PRESENTER

Msgr. William Cleves

Pastor
Holy Spirit Catholic Church

DATES

Monday, October 26 - Part I
Monday, November 30 - Part II

LOCATION

Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium
Diocesan Curia
1125 Madison Ave. | Covington, KY

TIME

7:00 PM - Opening Prayer and Program

No pre registration required

PRESENTED BY

Intercommunity Sisters Peace and Justice Committee and the The Diocese of Covington

Pope Leo's four-day apostolic visit to France was 'filled with many blessings'

Courtney Mares
OSV News

An in-flight press conference, Sept. 28, concluded Pope Leo's four-day apostolic journey to France Sept. 25 to 28. Pope Leo said that the personal highlights for him were the pilgrimage to Lourdes and the stadium prayer vigil near Paris with 80,000 young people.

"The four days were literally filled with many blessings — almost miracles, I would say — especially the time at Lourdes, walking with, accompanying so many people who are sick and suffering and seeing how the grace of God's presence manifested in many different ways, touches people's hearts, transforms their lives, and — to use an expression that I mentioned there — restores dignity to the sick, the elderly, those who in some parts of society are discarded," he said.

Here, in briefs, are highlights from Pope Leo's visit to France.

Pope Leo XIV arrives in Paris, urging French leaders to protect the right to life

PARIS — Pope Leo XIV arrived in Paris Sept. 25 beginning his four-day trip to France by urging French leaders not to forget their duty to protect every human life in a forceful speech at the Élysée Palace condemning "assisted dying," abortion and surrogacy. In a speech at the official residence of President Emmanuel Macron, the pope told France's civil authorities that "the protection of the right to life constitutes the indispensable foundation of every other human right." He expressed concern about "trends in society that risk turning science and technology into profit-driven ventures promoting genetic manipulation, surrogacy, the trade in human organs or the possibility of arranging one's own death." Calling the lawmakers to a conversion and minds and hearts, the pope underlined the need to "to welcome life unconditionally; to support frailty with loving care, to accompany every stage of life with respect and mutual trust, and to defend with courage and compassion those unable to make their voices heard and those who feel ignored or overlooked." The pope's Sept. 25-28 apostolic journey to France will bring him from the French capital to the Marian shrine of Lourdes in the south and the north-eastern city of Metz near the German border.

Pope Leo prays in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris 7 years after devastating fire

PARIS — For the first time since the world watched as Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris burned in the devastating 2019 fire, the pope stepped inside the famous Gothic cathedral and called on Catholics in France to be "living stones" of a Church that bears witness to how God's love restores and heals humanity. It was an emotional moment for many French Catholics as Pope Leo XIV led prayers Sept. 25 inside Notre Dame, which reopened to the public in December 2024. "This Cathedral has been reborn so that you, too, may be reborn with it in a new impetus towards holiness and daily mission," Pope Leo told the bishops, priests, deacons, and religious men and women gathered inside, speaking in French. Church bells rang out across the city of Paris to welcome the pope to the French capital. Pope Leo greeted crowds on the streets as the popemobile traveled from the UNESCO headquarters near the Eiffel Tower to the Place Saint-Michel, a public square across from the Ile de la Cite, the island in the center of the River Seine where Notre Dame is located. The Holy See Press office said an estimated 300,000 Parisians greeted the pope as he drove through the city. After vespers, the pope stood outside of the cathedral under its iconic gar-



OSV News photo/Gonzalo Fuentes, Reuters

French President Emmanuel Macron welcomes Pope Leo upon his arrival at Paris-Orly Airport in Orly, near Paris, for a four-day apostolic journey to France, Sept. 25, 2026.



Bishop's Schedule

- Oct. 1**
Thomas More University Board retreat, TMU campus, 9 a.m.

Oct. 3
Religious Jubilarians luncheon, St. Charles Community, noon

Oct. 5-9
Priest retreat, St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Ind.
- Oct. 10**
Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, Curia Boardroom, 10 a.m.

Oct. 12
Pro-Life Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 10**
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

Oct. 12
Life Learning Center gala, MegaCorp Pavillion, 7 p.m.



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What's most important

The readings for the twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Isaiah 5:1-7, Philippians 4:6-9 and Matthew 21:33-43.

This past week I had the privilege of visiting the Eternal City, Rome. It was a time for me to slow down — which I found quite refreshing.

Normally I'm always going from one thing to another. On this trip I noticed something, and it was a point of many conversations amongst the other priests who were with me. The many visitors to the Vatican and surrounding Rome had almost no self-awareness. Walking through pictures, pushing to the front of the line, stopping in the middle of the sidewalk, bumping into you, cutting you off, and so on. Everyone was in a rush.

I have to be honest; I did behave this way at least once because I couldn't handle the crowd in St. Peter's Square — I just had to get out. My own self-reflection suggests that this was very selfish. I had no concern for the other. I certainly felt that others had no concern for me.

Why have we gotten this way? I think it's because we have fallen into the trap of the secular world — "look out for num-

GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

ber one." I am most important. I am the determining factor of what is right. I, I, I. Me, me, me.

The problem is that when we live for the self, we are actually hurting the self. None of us created the world, and none of us has saved it. Only God has done these things! And his command is this: "Love one another, as I have loved you."

In the Gospel today, the tenants tried to take that which wasn't theirs. They were living for the self. In the end, it was their downfall. Let us be sure that as Christians we are living for the other — willing the good of the other — living lives of love.

And the reality is, it starts with really simple things. Good manners and kindness. Let's start being self-aware, so that we can see others. How do we change the world? Start with changing yourself!

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

Wonderfully made

October being Pro-Life Month made me think about how I was not always pro-life, I'm a pro-life "convert."

When I was younger, I just bought all of the rhetoric that is filtered through the media — "right to choose," "my body, my choice," "safe and legal" and more. Even my Catholic high school in New Jersey had Planned Parenthood visit and tell us that, "Abortion is a terrible thing, but it's there if you need it." Now, what kind of message does that send to a young impressionable young lady?

When I was about 15 years old, the Lord blessed my family with the sixth of six children, my brother

Sean Patrick. The day he was born, the doctors told my mom that they thought he might have Down Syndrome and they would do a test to confirm it.

With Down Syndrome children, we were told, there's no way of knowing ahead of time whether they will be severely handicapped or high functioning. I remember going to church that Sunday and praying to the Lord to please make him high functioning. Our family got him into early intervention, through exercise and cognitive therapy. But it seemed the Lord answered that prayer. He very quickly became the joy and light of our lives.

Fast forward several years, when talking with my friend Christine at an Epiphany party for young adults. She went on and on about how much fun it was that Sean came to youth group. I enthusiastically replied that Sean was the heart and soul of our family, that he taught my family what true love was, and he was the glue that bound our family together, especially during difficult times. She turned to me and said, "Wow! People really need to hear that! Would you be willing to say that to people?" I said, "Absolutely!"

"Great!" she replied, "We are having a pro-life prayer vigil in two weeks, would you be one of the speakers?" All of the bells and whistles in my head began going off because at the time I was not pro-life! But I already gave my word, so I wasn't going to back down. I figured that I had two weeks to find out about this pro-life stuff.

The morning of the vigil, we began with Mass and a rosary procession to the abortion clinic that was around the block from the church. There were priests that had

words for us and there were protestant preachers who had words for us — then it was my turn, I only knew how I would start. So, I said, "I'm just here to talk to you about someone who is very special to me."

In that moment, it was like scales had fallen from my eyes. I realized for the first time that the excuse people give to keep abortion legal is because they might be like my brother. I became absolutely incensed. To me that was like giving us the love of Jesus himself! I realized that I had been lied to all of my life, and I knew I needed to do something about it.

After that day I received information from Christine about pro-life conferences that she had organized which taught the truth about abortion and the different methods doctors use to take the life of the preborn child, as well as the development of the child in the womb.

At the moment of conception, a new, unique human individual is created, with its own set of DNA, where science even tells us the gender can be determined, boy or girl.

Science is just catching up with what Scripture has taught us from the beginning. At Jeremiah 1:5, God says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

At the moment of our conception, our Father infuses a soul with this newly formed child. Our Father knows each of us intimately; who we are, male or female, what our talents and gifts are, our likes and dislikes, our abilities and disabilities and who he intends for us to be on this earth. Even before that first moment. God the Father knew us and willed each of us in to being, with the hopes that one day, after perhaps a long life, we would be united with him in eternity.

At the moment when Sean was created, God knew he would be a male child with an extra copy of chromosome 21 in each cell, which determines that he has Down Syndrome. I guess you could say that it's what makes him extra special. My brother continues to delight us. Recently he had an opportunity to play in the National Special Olympics for Bocce and brought home two gold medals.

"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know. My bones are not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, fashioned in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw me unformed; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be." (Psalm 139:13)

Mother Seraphina Quinlan is a Franciscan Daughter of Mary

The joy of being Hispanic Catholic

Someone asked me recently if there was a defining characteristic I would highlight about the experience of being Hispanic Catholic in the United States. So many came to mind: resilience, communality, generosity, openness, religiousness, among others. I chose joy.

I tread with care when I speak of joy, though. There are far too many stereotypes about Hispanic people in our society, and one of them is that Hispanics are always joyful. Media portrayals of Hispanics in a perennial festive mode or always smiling tend to hide the struggles that millions of Hispanic people face every day.

The temptation to counter that generalization

GUEST



Hosffman Ospino

is to portray Hispanics as people always in precarious or dangerous conditions, passive victims of unknown forces, waiting for someone else to rescue us or help us.

Many seem suspicious of joyful people. If one smiles too much, then it is assumed that one is not serious enough to assume responsibility or take leadership. If one

exhibits a cheerful attitude toward life, charges of being "too emotional" or not sufficiently thoughtful to take charge of reality soon emerge.

To appreciate joyfulness when speaking of a community, we must recognize that external gestures often reveal deep narratives and time-tested convictions. A smile, a celebratory predisposition and a positive attitude are signs of a community's worldview shaped over time.

Hispanic Catholics by and large are joyful people. Our joy reflects profound convictions about faith and life, our relationships with other human beings and the created order; and how we seek fulfillment.

Many sources sustain the joy that identifies the Hispanic Catholic experience.

Jesus Christ is the bedrock of Hispanic Catholic faith. Jesus is the Savior. He reveals the God of life who lifts up the vulnerable and the poor. Jesus defeated death and the powers of evil to give us life. He journeys with us in history and meets us in the sacraments as our hermano.

To be Hispanic Catholic is to know oneself being part of a community of baptized sisters and brothers who speak a common language: the language of familia. Regardless of our many places of origin or the conditions that shape our life, at the end of the day we are one family, the Hispanic Catholic family. In this family one experiences belonging, solidarity and support.

In the Hispanic Catholic imagination, the world is not a

cold and dark place where people perceived as enemies await in every corner seeking our destruction. For Hispanic Catholics the world is a reality permanently charged with the possibility of encountering God. We discover something new about God every time we celebrate the Eucharist, pray by the small altar at home or learn about a miracle.

Despite the fact that many Hispanics struggle significantly in our society, our suffering engenders solidarity and the desire for healing. Just as we know that we do not journey alone, we have the conviction that in the midst of suffering members from our community accompany and advocate for us.

The joy that springs from being saved by Jesus Christ, journeying along the way with others, seeing God in all things with sacramental imagination, and knowing that suffering engenders solidarity renews the church.

This joy is not exclusive to the Hispanic Catholic community. It is the joy that any person or community experiences when daring to walk with Jesus as his disciples. This joy is our inheritance as we strengthen the U.S. Catholic experience by being authentically Hispanic Catholic.

As we continue to build the Church with Hispanic Catholics, let's not forget the deep reasons for the smile, the celebratory predisposition and the positive attitude.

Hosffman Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College.

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11 AM | Final Benediction at Old St. Mary's Church led by Fr. Jon-Paul Bevak and the priests of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri.

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Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen declared ‘Blessed’ at beatification Mass



Gina Christian
OSV News

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen — the 20th-century theologian, evangelizer, Catholic communications pioneer, teacher and preacher — is now Blessed Fulton J. Sheen.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a pro-prefect for the Holy See’s Dicastery for Evangelization and papal delegate, pronounced the Church’s declaration on Archbishop Sheen’s holiness of life and witness to Jesus Christ at a Sept. 24 Mass celebrated in The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis.

To the applause of pilgrims, Cardinal Tagle described Archbishop Sheen as a “son of Illinois, son of the United States of America” and “indeed, son of the world.”

Hundreds of clergy, including dozens of bishops and cardinals, had processed into the arena for the Mass as choirs, accompanied by an orchestra, performed a succession of hymns. The priests’ vestments were embroidered with “JMJ,” Archbishop Sheen’s signature dedication to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The location had been selected by Archbishop Sheen’s home Diocese of Peoria, Illinois, to accommodate the number of pilgrims who arrived for the beatification and its surrounding events. Around 50,000 people were in attendance, according to organizers.

During a press conference a few hours prior to the Mass, Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria said that almost every U.S. state and several additional nations were represented by pilgrims. A number of the faithful hailed from Italy, Poland and Brazil, he said.

Close to 90 bishops, some 1,000 priests, an estimated 1,600 men and women religious, and almost 250 deacons were present, added Bishop Tylka, who wore Archbishop Sheen’s pectoral cross. Among the concelebrating prelates was Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

The beatification — a papal act affirming an individual’s presence in heaven is worthy of belief — officially occurred between the liturgy’s Penitential Rite and the Gloria. Bishop Tylka made a formal request for Archbishop Sheen’s beatification to Cardinal Tagle.



A short biography of Archbishop Sheen, who was born in El Paso, Illinois, in 1895 and died in New York in 1979, was read by Archbishop Sheen’s great-nephew, Paul Cunningham, after which Cardinal Tagle proclaimed the apostolic letter from Pope Leo XIV declaring the beatification in Latin. Bishop Tylka then read the letter in English, as applause followed both.

With the papal decree’s public proclamation, Archbishop Sheen became formally counted among the Church’s “beati,” from the Latin word for “blessed.”

James Fulton Engstrom — whose revival from stillbirth in 2010, attributed to Archbishop Sheen’s intercession, was formally declared the miracle that moved Archbishop Sheen to beatification — processed with his parents and siblings to present a major relic of Archbishop Sheen during the liturgy.

Enclosed in a special case called a reliquary, the relic is Archbishop Sheen’s mandible, or jawbone, chosen because it represents the archbishop’s tremendous gifts as an orator, teacher and evangelist.

As part of the beatification, a portrait of a haloed Blessed Fulton Sheen was also unveiled. In the image, he is notably holding a piece of chalk, which he famously used — along with a blackboard — during his Emmy-winning television show, “Life Is Worth Living.”

The image was also simultaneously unveiled in the Diocese of Peoria at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle praised Archbishop Sheen as a “storyteller of Jesus” and “a “missionary who digs deep into the heart of the poor to meet Jesus there.”

The cardinal noted then-Bishop Sheen’s passionate advocacy for the poor during the Second Vatican Council. During the 1964 discussions on the document “Ad Gentes,” on the missionary activity of the Church, then-Bishop Sheen asked his brother bishops to “affirm” the notion of poverty and the bishops who came from poor and suffering parts of the Church.

“As only a wounded Christ could convert a doubting Thomas, so only a Church wounded by poverty can convert a doubting world,” he said.



(far, left) With the official portrait of Blessed Fulton Sheen in the background, the Engstrom family presents the relic of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen during the beatification Mass for Archbishop Sheen Sept. 24, 2026, at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. Blessed Sheen is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history.

(center, left) On his way to a speaking engagement in Cincinnati, March 6, 1958, three girls from Blessed Sacrament School approached Bishop Sheen at the Greater Cincinnati Airport. The *Messenger* reports: “Father” began one, then glanced quickly at her companions, “Your Excellency,” she corrected, “will you please stop at Blessed Sacrament School and give the children your blessing? It’s right on your way into town.” “Did you come way out there just to ask me that?” he inquired, somewhat surprised. At Her affirmative reply, he beamed down at her, “Then how can I refuse? Yes, we’ll stop.”

Messenger photographer Ray Hadorn captured on film the children kneeling for the blessing at the school.

(above, right) Bishop Fulton Sheen in the *Messenger*. The Feb. 4, 1951, edition of the *Messenger* announces that WLW will begin broadcasting then Msgr. Sheen’s “Catholic Hour” for Greater Cincinnati listeners.

Cardinal Tagle commended Archbishop Sheen for making genuine connections with the people he met and to whom he preached and ministered.

“The missionary evangelizer is blessed by the communion with persons and peoples, especially the poor and vulnerable, and this is communion in the name of Jesus Christ,” he said.

Cardinal Tagle shared how Archbishop Sheen told a friend, who asked why he became a priest, that he was called to share the Gospel and tell the story of Jesus.

“I never tire of telling it; I never tire of improving my telling of it. I love my calling,” Archbishop Sheen said, as Cardinal Tagle recounted.

Thanking the many prelates involved in the Mass, including Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, whose archdiocese hosted the beatification, and representatives from the Archdiocese of New York, Diocese of Rochester and the Pontifical Mission Societies, Bishop Tylka noted, “Your presence today is a beautiful reminder that while Peoria is incredibly proud to call Fulton Sheen one of our own, he is a gift to the whole Church.”

Following the Mass, attendees were invited to remain in prayer to venerate Archbishop Sheen’s relics.

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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.

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.

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 stjoseph-campsprings.org.

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>.

Mother of God Church, Covington, is a BLINK site this year. The exterior of the church will be illuminated each evening 7–11 p.m., Oct. 8–11. During this time, Mother of God Church will be offering free tours of the interior. During the day, the stained-glass windows dominate, as visitors take in the architecture and artwork that has decorated the church since the 1860s. Additionally, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Meg Booker, the church organist, will play the organ from 7–7:20 p.m. and 9–9:20 p.m.

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 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>.

Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament discernment retreats for women 18–35 years old interested in learning more about religious life. Retreats are free and meals are provided. Housing accommodations are limited. Day retreats: Oct. 17, Baton Rouge, La. and Feb. 27, Gainesville, Fla. Weekend retreats: Jan. 15–17, Cleveland, Ohio and March 5–7, Baton Rouge, La. Contact sister-jeanette@mercedariansisters.org to attend.

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.

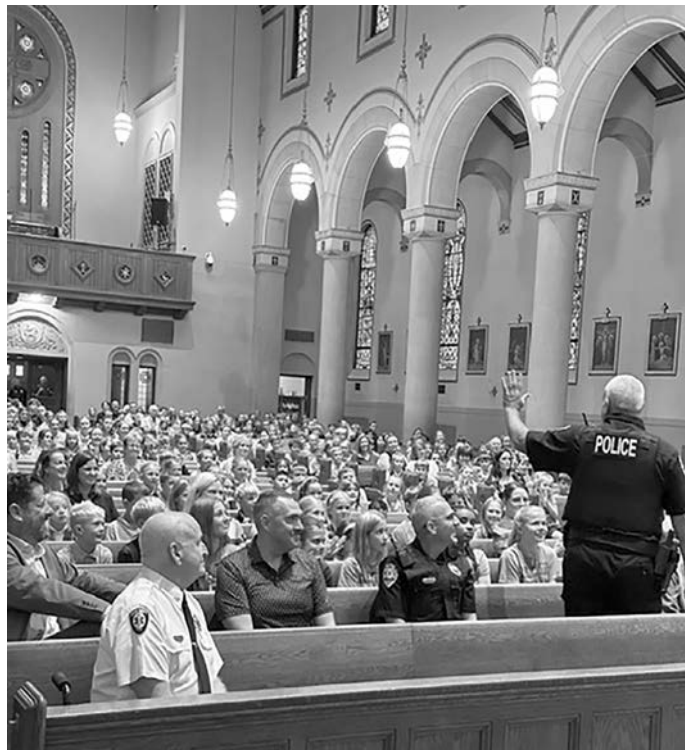
6-8th grade students are invited to attend the fall edition of CONNECT26 on Nov. 20, from 4–9 p.m. at Thomas More University. CONNECT is a dynamic evening filled with games, food, small groups, worship and opportunities to grow in faith and friendship with other Catholic students from across the diocese.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

Join Father Timothy Schehr, of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, for an inspiring seven-session Scripture study series. Each session will be held at the Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, 10 a.m. and includes a 90-minute presentation and a 30-minute group discussion. The Book of Psalms, Nov. 21, 28 and Dec. 5; The Gospel of John, March 13, 20 and May 8, 15. Registration required, visit <https://forms.gle/XsrspfqFVAWHWnzRA> or call Isaak A. Isaak at (859) 392-1529 and leave your name and phone number. Hosted by the Diocese of Covington, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

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.



Blue Mass

Father Daniel Schomaker, pastor, celebrated a Blue Mass, Sept. 11, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Mayor Greg Pohlgeers and Edwin King, city administrator, along with members from the Ft. Mitchell police and fire departments and Kenton County dispatch joined the students of Blessed Sacrament School for the Mass. The students were given the message of hope for our future and gratitude for first responders whose commitment to their safety is truly a gift.

RESPECT LIFE

OCTOBER IS
RESPECT LIFE MONTH

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MESSENGER

Mary,
Mother of Life
Pray for us!



Mary, Mother of Life

Faye Roch
Contributor

A few years ago, I was traveling with a new friend on an 18-hour journey. My friend is not Catholic and shortly into our journey she asked me about saints and why we worship Mary in the Catholic faith. So, me not being a theologian, used my first-grade analogy on what saints are. I told her a saint is like having a good friend who is there to intercede for you. We pray to saints to guide us for various reasons, “Tony, Tony, turn around, something is lost and cannot be found,” being one of the most popular. On the other hand, I explained to her that Catholics did not worship Mary, only God is adored and worshiped, but we honor Mary because she was chosen by God to be the



Faye Roch

Mother of Jesus and our praying to her brings us closer to God. The 2026 Respect Life theme from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s theme is “Mary, Mother of Life, Pray for Us.” Mary is a perfect witness to a culture of life. Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, whose life gave us salvation. Her experiences as the Mother of Jesus show us that all life should be welcomed and cared for. St. Pope John Paul II, had a special devotion to Mary, relying on her maternal care, protection and encouragement, knowing that Mary would protect him from harm and help him to endure whatever sufferings he faced. May we, too, find peace and hope in this world today where so many are burdened with life issues as we look to

Mary’s unwavering grace that she witnesses from the moment she said “yes” to God’s will, until she knelt at the foot of the cross where Her son suffered and died on the cross for us. Mary Mother of Life, pray for us. “To succeed in your intentions, entrust yourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary always, but especially in moments of difficulty and darkness. ‘From Mary we learn to surrender to God’s will in things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ, her Son and the Son of God ... Learn from her to be always faithful, to trust that God’s Word to you will be fulfilled, and that nothing is impossible with God.’” (St. Pope John Paul II, Washington, D.C., 1979) Faye Roch is director of the Pro-life Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky

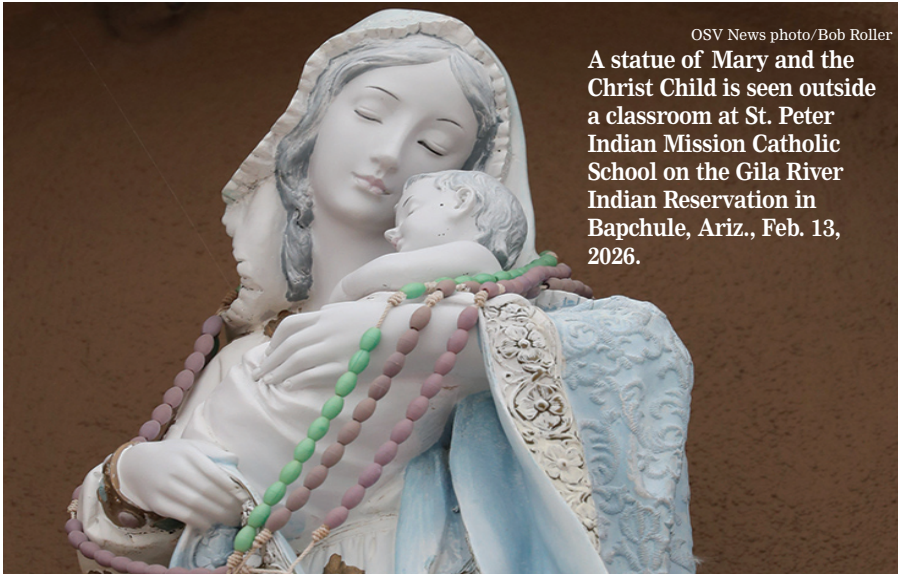
Mary, Mother of Life: A reflection

USCCB
Contributor

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would conceive and bear a son, Mary responded with her fiat, “May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Mary conceives Christ in her womb, becoming the mother of God, the mother of Jesus. Jesus himself tells us that he is “the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6). In becoming the mother of Jesus, Mary becomes the mother of life. Mary’s acceptance in this unforeseen moment demonstrates how each of us must welcome the gift of new human life, even when that gift is unexpected or calls us to make sacrifices. Eve was called the “mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). Unfortunately, her disobedience brought sin into the world. In contrast Mary, through her obedience to God, gives birth to our Salvation. Mary becomes the New Eve—the new mother of all the living. Her fiat gives us an example of per-

fect docility and cooperation with the will of God. At the Annunciation, when Mary learns that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is six months pregnant, she travels in haste to visit Elizabeth, spending the next three months at her side, even while pregnant herself. In her selfless service to Elizabeth, the Blessed Mother perfectly models how we are called to accompany expectant mothers as they prepare to welcome new life into the world. Mary’s role as the Mother of Life extends from the Annunciation all the way to the Crucifixion. On

(Continued on page 11)



OSV News photo/Bob Roller
A statue of Mary and the Christ Child is seen outside a classroom at St. Peter Indian Mission Catholic School on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Bapchule, Ariz., Feb. 13, 2026.



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Pro-Life Mass returns to the Cathedral to kick off Respect Life month celebrations throughout the Diocese

Bella Bailey
Multimedia Correspondent

As the air turns crisp and fall rolls in, the turning of the calendar from September to October signifies the beginning of Respect Life month, an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to unite the people of the United States in prayer for life. The Diocese of Covington's Pro-Life Office promotes Respect Life month annually, beginning with the Pro-Life Mass, celebrated this year on Oct. 12, 7 p.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

Bishop John Iffert will be the celebrant and Father Michael Hennigen, pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington, will be the homilist. Faye Roch, director of the Pro-Life Office said the Mass is, "a time when the entire Diocese of Covington community comes together. We always hope there is a great turnout because we are bring-

ing people together to pray for the sanctity of life and to celebrate our great gift of life."

"You come and you witness the greater community, and you realize that you are not in this fight alone," she said. "It's about people recognizing the dignity of life from conception to natural death."

The theme for this year's Respect Life month is "Mary, Mother of Life, Pray for Us," honoring Mary as the mother of Jesus. "What a gift she is to our Catholic faith," said Mrs. Roch. "We couldn't think of a more beautiful theme to have for Respect Life because she is our vision in the culture of life."

Mrs. Roch invites the people of the Diocese of Covington to visit the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption and participate in the celebration of Mass for the intention of the plight of the unborn and the dignity of human life.

"In the Diocese of Covington, if you can bring a few people from every parish together, it's such a great witness to our community, that they have others who are walking the same way and supporting each other in promoting the sanctity and dignity of life," she said.



A statue of Mary, dressed as Our Lady of Guadalupe, sits among flowers on the sanctuary during the 2025 Pro-life Mass.

(Continued from page 10)

Calvary, Mary stands at the foot of the Cross with Saint John. The Gospel tells us: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27).

With his final breaths on the Cross, Jesus entrusts Mary and the Beloved Disciple to one another, and by extension establishes a maternal relationship between Mary and the Church. Jesus' words are addressed not only to Saint John, but to each one of us. In this moment, the physical mother of Jesus becomes the spiritual mother of the Church and all the faithful. Saint John goes on to take Mary into his home and cares for her as she advances in age, demonstrating our responsibility to continue our care for human life, from conception to natural death. Mary, who taught us how to nurture human life, becomes the recipient of that same honor and care.

The life of the Blessed Mother teaches us to respect each human life in every stage and circumstance. Mary is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life. O Mary, "Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life."

The official Respect Life Month reflection is provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.



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RESPECT LIFE

Programs and Activities of the Pro-Life Office

The Pro-Life Office actively implements the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which calls upon the Church, its people and its institutions in a four-prong program in defense of human life. The Pro-Life Office employs the four components of prayer, pastoral care, education and public policy called for in this Pastoral Plan throughout the diocese through the following programs and activities:

Parish Coordinator Gathering for Prayer and Education — Parish and pro-life leadership members are invited to gather for prayer, information and education. This evening allows parish pro-life leaders to learn about resources available to them and they have the opportunity to share information, resources and ideas.

Respect Life Program Materials — These materials are published by the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and are distributed by the Pro-Life Office to be used as a resource in preparation for October, Respect Life Month, these resources are also for use throughout the year. This year's theme is "Mary Mother of Life, pray for Us".

Diocesan Pro-Life Mass — Held during October, Respect Life Month, all in the diocese are invited to join together to show our solidarity for the cause of life by celebrating the Eucharist with our Bishop and the priests of our diocese at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

Grade School Essay Contest and Banquet — This contest is offered to all eighth graders in our diocese during the month of October to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the Church's teaching concerning the sacredness of life from conception to natural death. A banquet is held in March honoring the top twenty contestants of the Essay Contest. The Knights of Columbus along with the Pro-Life Office provide scholarship awards to the top three essays.

March for Life and Kentucky March for Life — For 50 years hundreds of thousands of people gathered annually to participate in the annual March for Life which takes place in our nation's capital every January, commemorating the Supreme Court Decision that legalized abortion on January 22, 1973. Since the overturning of Roe v Wade, all states have been focusing in bringing awareness to the sanctity of life within their community and in 2024, the first Kentucky March for Life was held.

Catholics at the Capitol — Led by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, Catholics at the Capitol hosts a day giving the diocesan community the opportunity for education and advocacy around issues like the death penalty, abortion, gun violence, school choice and criminal justice reform.

Spiritual Adoption — The Pro-Life Office encourages all schools and parishes to offer the opportunity to pray for the health and life of an unborn baby. This program, designed for first grade on up educates children at an early age about the dignity and sacredness of all human life. The Pro-life Office provides all the necessary resource materials needed.

Memorial Mass for the Loss of a Child — The intention of this memorial Mass is to offer support and God's healing embrace through prayer and community outreach to help lift the burden of grief experienced by parents and families who have lost a child.

Project Rachel — God's Greatest Desire is to forgive, and the Catholic Church wants to reach out showing its Mercy and offer healing and reconciliation to women and men who have had an abortion experience. Project Rachel is a confidential ministry; healing sessions are held throughout the year. For more information, please call our confidential phone number (859) 392-1547, or confidential email projectrachel@covdio.org.



(above left) Chancellor, Jamie Schroeder (right), and Hispanic minister, Siliva Schmidt (left), wave to the camera as they pass, walking the mile to the Frankfort Cemetery for a memorial service at the Memorial for the Unborn.



(left) Students from Bishop Brossart High School proudly hold signs that read "Human dignity has no expiration date," and "Life is beautiful at every stage."

Catholic Medical Association — The Catholic Medical Association is a growing professional organization that is committed in supporting physicians and healthcare professionals in offering health care in conformity to Christ the Divine Physician. The Diocese of Covington has established a guild of the Catholic Medical Association, the Sts. Teresa of Calcutta and Faustina Guild.

Walking with Moms In Need — In 2020, the USCCB asked all diocese to participate in an initiative to create an archdiocese-wide parish-based program that supports women and families emotionally, spiritually and materially so they and their children can thrive during pregnancy and the critical first year of the baby's life.

Pregnancy Care Network — A network of non-profit agencies and ministries collaborating to improve the overall health and well-being of childbearing families in Northern Kentucky. Working with Walking with Moms in Need, the PCN hosts community baby showers two times a year, assisting pregnant and parenting families.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes — Is a national organization with a primary goal to raise awareness of Safe Haven Laws. Women in crisis can call the national 24-hour hotline and can receive counseling and assistance free of charge and offer the Safe Haven Baby as a last resort option for women to what to maintain complete anonymity. www.shbb.org.



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Resources of the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office

Faye Roch, Director
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froch@covdio.org

Peggy Piccola,
Assistant Director
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Website www.covdio.org

Project Rachel
Confidential
post-abortion healing
(859) 392-1547
projectrachel@covdio.org

Safe Haven baby box arrives in Campbell County, assisting mothers in crisis

Bella Bailey

Multimedia Correspondent

Central Campbell County Fire District, Cold Spring, unveiled its new Safe Haven Baby Box among friends, media and state legislators, Sept. 28. The box is a safe, secure and anonymous way for a mother in crisis to surrender her under 30-day-old infant. This is the 71st box of its kind in Kentucky, joining the rising national total of 473. This is the first Safe Haven Baby Box to be opened in Campbell County.

The firefighters of Central Campbell County Fire District were in attendance to demonstrate how the box works. Speaking at the event was Fire Chief Dan Schultz, Fire Board chairman Mike Rust, Kentucky State Senator Shelley Frunke Frommeyer, Safe Haven volunteer Lisa Klee, Safe Haven representative and Kentucky Representative Nancy Tate and executive director of the Kentucky Right to Life Addia Wuchner.

Since 2017, 83 infants have been surrendered in Safe Haven baby boxes in Kentucky. The boxes are affixed to firehouses, ensuring that within minutes of a surrender, the vulnerable infant will be in the care of trained emergency medical professionals and first responders. Once surrendered, the child becomes a ward of the state, with the goal becoming finding a forever family. From the fire station, the baby is transferred to a local hospital for a well-check examination and any medical care they might need.

Mr. Rust said, "When we first started talking about this idea, in my mind, it was a simple decision. We're a community building. This is just another extension of what our personnel do on a daily basis, and if we don't have something like this where there's immediate access, then the outcome may not be as good as we want."

Safe Haven's motto, "No Name, No Blame, No Shame," emphasizes the importance of an anonymous surrender for mothers in crisis.

"In the moment of crisis, we do love family, we love life, we love babies and we want that to be so clear ... we're not trying to shame a person who's doing one of the most beautiful things in bringing life into this world," said Mrs. Frommeyer.

The seeds for the Campbell County baby box were planted almost two years ago, when Chief Schultz saw a story on the news.

"We looked into it, investigated it," he said, "seeing the cost ... it's something we can't do right now."

Resigned to having the box be a future project, Chief Schultz tucked the thought away. Only weeks later, Diane McCormick, a St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, parishioner, emailed Chief Schultz about funding a Safe Haven baby box.

"I had barely sent the email when my phone rang, and it was Chief Schultz that called," said Mrs. McCormick. "He said 'we can't fund it.' I said, 'if you'll do it, we'll fund it.'"

Safe Haven baby boxes cost approximately \$20,000 to install because of the alarm system that alerts first responders that a baby has been dropped off, as well as the climate control and automatic locking systems. When Mrs. McCormick offered to pay for the box, she had no money raised, but a strong trust in the Lord to provide.

"I was sure that between the Catholic churches in our area, between all of them, I was sure we could do it," she said.

Word quickly spread, and Mrs. McCormick was joined by parishioners across the Diocese who supported and organized the fundraising effort. Together, parishioners at St. Thomas Parish; St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Alexandria; St. Therese Parish, Southgate; St. Philip Parish, Melbourne; and St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, raised enough money to install not just one baby box, but three across the county.

"We have funded the one in Bellevue-Dayton [Fire Department], and we've got money yet," said Mrs. McCormick. "We're trying to get one in Southern Campbell County, down closer to the border. So we'll have the north, this [fire] house, and then one in the south," she said.

The baby box at the Central Campbell County Fire District was prayed over by the department's lay chaplain, Engineer Micah Leiss, who asked for the Lord's blessing over the box, the families of the surrendered, the community and the fire department.

"We ask the blessing for the babies, we ask the blessing for the parents, but I also have another blessing I want to ask for, and it's a blessing for this department. I pray and I ask that we will have compassion that we will have grace," said Mr. Leiss. "Pray that God would give us the wisdom, the understanding, the capability to be able to care for and take care of these babies until we can get them transported."

"It takes a community, it does take a village," said Mrs. Wuchner addressing the community members gathered. "Someday if there's a child in this box, your heart will be wrapping lovingly around that child, whether you ever get to see the baby or not."

(top, Right) Diane McCormick, St. Thomas parishioner, smiles as she is recognized by Fire Chief Dan Schultz as an instrumental reason the Baby Box came to fruition in Campbell County.

(center, top) Representative Nancy Tate and Fire Chief Dan Schultz place their hands on the Baby Box as the lay chaplain, Engineer Micah Leiss, offers a blessing.

(center, bottom) Representative Nancy Tate demonstrates the Baby Box, gently placing a baby doll onto the padded interior of the box as alarms begin to sound inside the fire house.

(bottom) Firefighter EMT Ross Adams (far left) joined by Fire Chief Dan Schultz (center, right) and Lieutenant Ray Dishman (far right) smile as Firefighter EMT Van Roland happily holds the baby doll retrieved from the Baby Box during a demonstration.



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Pro-life office to host discussion on end of life care, pro-life perspective

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

As our loved ones reach the end of life, questions begin to arise. These questions can revolve round living wills, hydration and nutrition as they reach their final days — and many ask the question, “Am I doing the right thing for my loved one?”

These questions are ones that the Diocese of Covington Pro-life Office, in conjunction with the Catholic Medical Association, hope to answer. On Oct. 17, guest speaker Jozef Zalot of the National Catholic Bioethics Center will be joining Paul Darpel, attorney; Father Raymond Enzweiler, dean, Thomas More University and Addia Wuchner, executive director, Kentucky Right to Life, at the Curia’s Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington, for a special event titled “A Catholic Perspective to End of Life Care.”

Topics include pro-life perspectives on end of life care, including hydration, nutrition and pain medication, and advance directives, such as power of attorney and living wills. Also to be discussed is Catholic teaching on topics such as euthanasia and physician assisted suicide — which is currently legal in 13 U.S. states.

As a pro-life issue, discussions of end-of-life care are important as we “care about the person from the beginning of their life to the end,” said Faye Roch, director of the Pro-life Office. “Many times, when people are reaching the end of life, from illness or old age, there are pro-life issues that are involved.”

Distinctions such as ethics around life support, nutrition and other end of life topics are important and valuable topics to know “when it comes to making those decisions,” Mrs. Roch said, “because we do care about the person from the beginning until the end of their life, and all those little aspects in between.”

People are the most vulnerable not only at the beginning of their life, but at the end of their life, as well, Mrs. Roch said — emphasizing the importance of end-of-life care from a Catholic and pro-life perspective. “You want to have the information so that you can properly care for your loved one in an appropriate way,” she said.



OSV News photo/Manon Cruz, Reuters
A nurse touches the hand of a patient in the palliative care unit of the Clinic Saint-Elisabeth in Marseille, France, in this file photo from May 31, 2024.

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Being pro-life without exception

Irene Maria DiSanto
OSV News

How would you define “pro-life?” Many of us would say it is simply the defense of life from conception to natural death. However, when talking about abortion, some pro-life supporters add the often-repeated exception “in cases of rape, incest or when the mother’s life is in danger.” That amended clause, as compassionate as it may sound to some, can damage the women concerned and the pro-life ethic.

There are some who, while fervently believing that life begins at the moment of fertilization, would take away the right to life if conception occurred through rape or incest. But how can a human being become disposable because of the circumstance of conception? The child is still created in the image and likeness of God, just as any other human being. Yes, the woman has been victimized — a devastating, life-changing event — but the child is not the criminal. Should we destroy this new, innocent life and increase the violence by making the child a second victim?

We should all be appalled that a woman has suffered the outrage of rape or incest. The man has used her as an object, without recognizing that she was created by God in his image and likeness. Fists shaken in anger by sympathetic people slam down at the thought that she might have to give birth to the perpetrator’s child. Without doubt, the offender bears the moral responsibility for the



OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters

The late Pope Francis blesses a pregnant woman during the weekly general audience in Saint Peter’s Square at the Vatican, June 5, 2024.

barbaric abuse endured by this woman. But the child cannot be identified as an enemy. The only criminal in this case is the victimizer, not the baby.

She has been violated; however, she must not violate the rights of the human being growing within her: When fertilization takes place, a new person springs into being, and this new individual remains apart from the man; and although in the woman’s body, the child is a separate person developing within her. Even when conceived through an immoral, criminal act, the child is as much the image and likeness of God as everyone else.

Those pro-life supporters who insist on the exception clause send a double message: A baby is definitely a precious life, except when it isn’t. The difference centers on the circumstances of conception. However, circumstances cannot change the fact that this new life is a human being. To deny this individual’s right to life produces an incoherent logic where how the child was conceived takes precedence over the child.

In an attempt to come to the mother’s aid, well-meaning individuals can default to the deception of abortion. However, the exception clause dismisses the woman herself, as if, in destroying the new life, the woman can then return to her daily routine. But abortion cannot rid her mind of the memory of the attack or of incest’s entrapment. Abortion is never an answer to any problem, and it

(Continued on page 17)

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Litany of the Blesser Virgin Mary, Mother of Life

The Response is: Mary, pray for us. Mary, Mother of all Life, help us to respect human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. R.

Mary, Mother of Compassion,
You showed us how valuable a single life can be;
Help us to guard and protect the lives of all people entrusted to our care. R.

Mary, Mother of the Child Jesus, with St. Joseph you formed the Holy Family. Guard and protect all families in this earthly life; R.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
You sanctified the vocation of motherhood;
Pour out your heavenly aid on all mothers and help them to be holy. R.

Mary, Mother of Sorrows,
Simeon's prophecy foretold that a sword of suffering would pierce your heart; Bring comfort and hope to all mothers who suffer over their children. R.

Mary, Full of Grace, You had a choice in responding to God's call; Help us always to say "Yes" to the will of God in our lives, And strive always to do whatever he tells us. R.

Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted, Gather within your motherly mantle all who are in need of God's healing, Especially those who have been involved in abortion; Help them to experience the love and mercy of Christ, your Son. R.

Mary, Intercessor and Advocate, We lift up the poor, the displaced, the marginalized and vulnerable members of society; Help them to never abandon hope, but to place their trust in the God who gave them life. R.

Mary, Mother of the Word Incarnate, you bore in your womb him whom the heavens cannot contain;

Help us to bear witness to Christ by the example of our lives And show the world the extravagant love of God. R.

All:
Remember, o most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother. To you we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer them. Amen.

(Continued from page 16)

does not restore the woman to her former life.

The woman deserves our compassion, and abortion has nothing to do with compassion. Her pain seeks release through psychological and spiritual healing from the trauma itself. It calls for the moral response that involves caring people who are committed to reaching out to embrace her in her brokenness.

True pro-life advocates respect both the woman and the child, and they walk with her through this difficult time, helping her to find therapy from a suitable pro-life psychologist as she grapples with a difficult past. Carrying a child is time-limited, but who knows how long she might carry the vicious memory of the aggression if she fails to receive the proper help?

A few trusted pro-life supporters can journey with her during this process, as well as during her discernment about whether to raise the child herself or entrust the baby to adoptive parents. She might be navigating through the rapids of pressure from family, husband or boyfriend to abort the child. Those who are pro-life must serve as a safe harbor and reliable contact for her. The importance of relationship imbues our Catholic Christianity.

Our faith is incarnational. God was born into our world and related to the human race by taking on a bodily form. Through baptism, we are brought together into his mystical body. Because of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are saved. We must ask: What can I do to prevent an abortion and to aid in this woman's healing? It is as important to respond to the woman's problems and respect her life as much as we respect the child's.

The most troubling phrase referenced in the exceptions clause is "when the mother's life is in danger." We must recognize that two lives — possibly both in peril — are patients. The imperative requires that everything be done to save both mother and child. Physicians must consider them equally as his patients, meting out their medical skills with equity so that both survive. Both lives are of equal dignity and worth.

The child cannot be aborted. There are times when in performing surgery on the mother, the baby will die, but the death results from an effort to save the mother, not to provoke abortion. There must never be any intention or direct action to kill the child.

Healing begins with love. Abortion is not the response to a woman's emotional wounds. Our love and caring perhaps can bring her to the ability to rise from her victimization. Defying the death of her innocence with the determination to overcome the horror that assailed her, she can turn toward life and with unselfishness decide to allow the child to live — and this can begin her own healing.

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*We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.*

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Pope Leo's visit to France

(Continued from page 3)

goyles and bell towers to sing the “Salve Regina” before a statue of Mary with the crowd gathered on the historic Ile de la Cite and the Latin Quarter across the Seine.

Pope encourages French youth to seek holiness during visually rich stadium vigil

PARIS — Pope Leo XIV urged 80,000 young people gathered at Stade de France Sept. 25 to pursue holiness, peace and a deeper faith during an evening prayer vigil highlighting the diversity of France's Catholic youth. Addressing young Catholics and non-Christian students invited by local Catholic schools, the pope said the source of “true freedom” is “a living relationship with Jesus. The Lord's presence brings wisdom to our plans and beauty to the desires we hold in our hearts.” The vigil took place in Saint-Denis, one of France's poorest and most multicultural areas, home to people from more than 130 countries. Saint-Denis Mayor Bally Bagayoko, a Muslim, welcomed the pope and joined the event. After a popemobile tour, Pope Leo reflected on St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy, describing faith as a “struggle” in which “the only weapon is that of self-giving love.” He also pointed to Blessed Marcel Callo's witness of faith in a Nazi concentration camp. Music, testimonies and a presentation on French saints marked the event. Choir member Christel said the gathering fostered unity among Catholics from different backgrounds, adding that Pope Leo inspires her as “the figure of unity.” Broadcast nationwide, the vigil showcased a generation of young French Catholics committed to their faith while engaging with an increasingly diverse society.

Pope Leo prays for the sick and suffering in the Lourdes grotto

LOURDES, France — Pope Leo XIV prayed for the sick and suffering at the Marian shrine of Lourdes, drinking water from the spring associated with miraculous healings and asking the Virgin Mary to renew the faith of France. Visiting the grotto where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in 1858, Pope Leo knelt in silent prayer, touched the rock of the grotto wall, lit a candle, and drank a glass of spring water. He then prayed in French for peace, Christian families, priestly and religious vocations, the poor and disadvantaged, and France's leaders. The pope asked Mary to help the Church in France show young people “the luminous path of the Gospel” and called on families to be “generously open to life.” Pope Leo also presented the Lourdes shrine with a golden rose, a traditional papal gift expressing special esteem, before leading pilgrims in the Lord's Prayer and imparting his apostolic blessing. Lourdes has recorded more than 7,000 reported healings since 1858, with 72 officially recognized as miraculous. The visit marked the second leg of Pope Leo's four-day apostolic journey to France. On Sept. 27, the pope will offer Mass in Lourdes, where he will also meet with clerical abuse victims, visit the sick, speak to French bishops, and preside over a candlelight rosary procession.



OSV News/Remo Casilli, Reuters

Pope Leo XIV waves toward the crowd at the end of a celebration of vespers with bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated men and women, and seminarians at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris Sept. 25, 2026. The visit to the iconic temple is part of the pope's four-day apostolic journey to France.



OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV greets young people during a prayer vigil at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, France, Sept. 25, 2026, as part of the pope's four-day apostolic journey to France.



OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

Pope Leo XIV kneels in the Grotto of Apparitions at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, France, Sept. 26, 2026.

At Lourdes, Pope Leo XIV holds private meeting with abuse survivors

LOURDES, France — On the eve of his final day in France, Pope Leo XIV met privately in Lourdes with seven survivors of sexual abuse, the Vatican said Sept. 27. The group, four men and three women, shared their experi-

(Continued on page 21)

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Pope Leo's visit to France

(Continued from page 19)

ences, proposals for prevention and hopes for healing. The pope listened to them individually, prayed with some participants and thanked them for their testimony. He reaffirmed his commitment to preventing future abuse and urged the survivors to pray for him. Earlier, Pope Leo prayed before a plaque honoring abuse victims and later told France's bishops to continue safeguarding reforms with the greatest vigilance. The meeting came as France's Church continues reforms launched after a landmark 2021 report estimated hundreds of thousands of children were abused between 1950 and 2020. While some survivor groups criticized the selection process, leaders said a smaller gathering allowed deeper listening. The meeting came as the French Church continues responding to the 2021 CIASE report on abuse and amid scrutiny surrounding allegations against Father Marko Rupnik. Lourdes recently covered Rupnik's mosaics, citing their impact on victims and survivors of abuse worldwide.

Pope Leo XIV leads thousands in candlelight rosary procession in Lourdes

LOURDES, France — Pope Leo XIV joined tens of thousands of pilgrims in a candlelight rosary procession at the Marian shrine of Lourdes Sept. 27, describing himself as "a pilgrim among pilgrims." Holding a candle, the pope processed from the Grotto of Massabielle to the main square of the sanctuary, behind an illuminated statue of the Virgin Mary. Pilgrims prayed the glorious mysteries in multiple languages and raised their candles while singing the Lourdes "Ave Maria," creating a sea of lights. Pope Leo said the procession's light represents Christian hope, which remains even amid life's trials. He offered special words of encouragement to the sick, including many pilgrims participating in wheelchairs. Speaking in French, the pope reflected on finding serenity and joy amid suffering and recalled St. Paul's teaching that present sufferings cannot compare with the glory of heaven. Prayer inten-

tions gathered during the day were presented to Mary, with a special appeal for peace. Earlier, Pope Leo met Catholic bishops, celebrated Mass and met privately with clergy sexual abuse victims. His France visit is scheduled to conclude Sept. 28 in the northeastern city of Metz.



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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Universal health care a ‘moral imperative,’ Vatican’s top diplomat tells UN

NEW YORK — Universal health care is “a moral imperative,” as “the Holy See has consistently reiterated,” the Vatican’s top diplomat told the United Nations. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, shared his thoughts in a statement delivered during the U.N.’s Sept. 25 High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. The gathering took place

at the U.N.’s New York headquarters amid the multilateral body’s 81st General Assembly. The high-level events took place Sept. 18-28. Cardinal Parolin quoted Pope Leo XIV’s encyclical “Magnifica Humanitas,” in which the pope noted that scientific, technological and medical advances “are not easily accessible to the vast majority of people, as was dramatically demonstrated during the recent pandemic.” The cardinal added, “Failing to confront this gap will make it harder to prevent and respond to pandemics effectively in the future.” He stressed the need to “start by addressing the circumstances which often increase the risk of severe illness and death: poverty, poor living conditions, and lack of healthcare.” The cardinal, quoting Pope Leo, also urged greater attention to mental health care and emphasized the need to remind people that “life has value, that each of us is loved, awaited and called to a task in

the world.”

Vatican’s top diplomat pushes 2-state solution, ‘limits’ on AI at UN General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS — The Vatican secretary of state on Sept. 24 reiterated the Holy See’s support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East and also called for limits on the fast pace of the development of artificial intelligence, or AI. “The Holy See’s position is clear: The two-state solution, based on secure and internationally recognized borders, is the only viable and equitable path toward a just and lasting peace,”

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■ Thursday, Oct. 8
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■ 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

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

■ Wednesday, Dec. 9
6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, Jan. 7
9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

■ Thursday, Jan. 7
6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

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Cardinal Pietro Parolin told world leaders and top diplomats at high-level meetings during the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The two-state solution is a proposed peace plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by creating two separate, independent countries: Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people, and Palestine for the Palestinian people in state based on the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. “The Holy See continues to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,” said Cardinal Parolin, affirming their desire for “freedom, security and dignity within an independent and sovereign state” is a “legitimate aspiration.” In another address Sept. 23, Cardinal Parolin also urged the international community to place limits on the rapid development of artificial intelligence, highlighting Pope Leo XIV’s growing concern about the ethical, social, and human consequences of emerging technologies, and that such limits on AI would be “an exercise of responsible care for the human family.”

Notre Dame consecrated to the Sacred Heart for first time thanks to student-led initiative

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — The University of Notre Dame was consecrated for the first time to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Sept. 25 during an evening Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend at the Indiana institution. Following the liturgy, worshippers joined a Eucharistic procession to the campus statue of the Sacred Heart, where the bishop and university leaders offered a prayer of consecration, asking for healing of divisions and the grace to love others with the selfless love of Christ. In his homily, Bishop Rhoades said the human heart longs for lasting joy and fulfillment that can be found only in God. Human sinfulness, he explained, often prevents people from fully seeking truth and



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meaning. Through the Incarnation, however, God responded to humanity’s needs by sending his Son into the world “to love us with a human heart.” The bishop said the Church’s mission is to build God’s kingdom, marked by truth, life, holiness, grace, justice, love and peace, adding that the Sacred Heart of Jesus powerfully symbolizes that mission. Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, named the Sacred Heart the patron of his priestly community in 1841, a year before sending Father Edward Sorin to establish the university in Indiana. Notre Dame’s church, later elevated to a basilica, was dedicated to the Sacred Heart in 1888.

McElroy: Americans can no longer ‘pass on by’ how US is treating immigrants

WASHINGTON — Washington Cardinal Robert W. McElroy urged Americans to actively support unauthorized immigrants suffering under the U.S. government’s mass deportation policies, invoking the Gospel parable of the good Samaritan during a Mass for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees Sept. 27 at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington. He said Americans should not imitate the priest and Levite who ignored the wounded man on the roadside, but instead respond like the Good Samaritan by helping those in need. Cardinal McElroy condemned what he described as the suffering inflicted by mass deportation efforts, saying citizens could no longer remain indifferent. “For us as a nation we can pass by no more,” he said, calling on Americans to recognize and oppose injustices carried out in their name. He urged people to challenge political leaders who tolerate such policies and, if necessary, replace them. The Mass, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington’s Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, highlighted the church’s support for migrants and refugees. Before the liturgy, participants prayed a multilingual rosary in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Amharic and Haitian Creole, reflecting the cultural diversity of immigrant communities represented at the celebration and the church’s commitment to welcoming them.

Polish priest wounded in stabbing returns to altar with message of forgiveness

WARSAW, Poland — Two days after surviving a knife attack that killed a fellow priest, Father Adrian Mantykiewicz returned to the altar at the Benedictine sisters’ abbey in Jaroslaw, Poland, with a message centered on forgiveness. Celebrating the abbey’s first

Mass since the Sept. 24 attack, in which five people were stabbed, Father Mantykiewicz said: “As a disciple of Jesus Christ, in my own name, in Father Marek’s name and in Father Stanislaw’s name, I want to say very clearly that we forgive.” Father Stanislaw Zbojniec died of his injuries, while Father Marek Pienkowski remained hospitalized in serious but stable condition. Father Mantykiewicz, who was treated and released the same day, urged prayers for the suspect, a 31-year-old Ukrainian citizen. “I ask you to pray for our attacker and for the grace of conversion for him,” he said. “He needs this prayer most of all.” Warning against blaming an entire people for one man’s actions, Father Mantykiewicz appealed for respect and solidarity between Poles and Ukrainians, recalling the abbey’s extensive support for refugees following Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Prosecutors have filed murder, attempted murder and grievous bodily harm charges against the suspect, identified as Ihor M. Funeral rites for Father Zbojniec begin Sept. 28, with burial scheduled Sept. 29.

Pope’s communications day theme targets pitfalls of the ‘attention economy’

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV will address the risks of today’s “attention economy,” in which media platforms compete for and monetize people’s limited, valuable attention as the theme for the Catholic Church’s celebration of World Communications Day in 2027. “A New Gaze: Paying Attention in the Age of Clickbait” is the theme for the day, which the Vatican and most dioceses will celebrate May 9, the Sunday before Pentecost. The Dicastery for Communication made the announcement Sept. 29, the feast of St. Gabriel the Archangel, and the full papal message is traditionally released Jan. 24, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists. Explaining the pope’s choice of the theme, the dicastery noted that “The attention economy, with its struggle for a few moments of interest amid the rapid and endless flow of content, is transforming not only our cognitive abilities but also the depth of our interpersonal communication.” “The lack of genuine attention, fueled by digital culture, has accustomed us to a routine of rapid reactions, to superficial relationships, and to the ease with which we label and reject others,” the dicastery said. “Yet attention is a precious form of generosity,” with its Latin root signifying “to reach out toward the other and toward the truth.” “Communicating is not about capturing attention, nor about selling it, but about safeguarding it as a precious resource for relationships,” it said. “To communicate in the age of ‘clickbait,’ we are called to ‘pay attention’ and to rediscover a genuinely healthy attention.”

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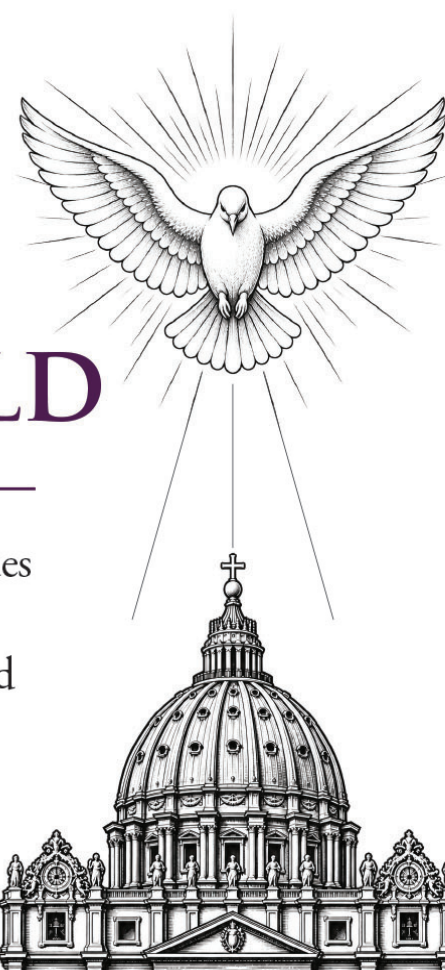


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