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(right) A statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe sits on the sanctuary during the Pro-life Mass. Before her are vases of roses, a flower often associated with the Blessed Virgin.

(far, right) Dames of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre pray the rosary together before the Diocesan Pro-life Mass, celebrated Oct. 12.

(center, left) Father Michael Hennigen, Pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish and St. Ann Mission, Covington, and chaplain for Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, preached as this year's homilist.

(center, right) Bishop John Iffert, celebrant, prays over the gifts during the consecration.

(bottom, left) The McDaniel family — both parents and children — delivers the gifts to Bishop Iffert.

(bottom, right) A man in a shirt featuring Our Lady in Guadalupe joins for the 2026 Pro-life Mass. The Virgin of Guadalupe is regarded as the patroness of the unborn.



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‘Faith must be lived out,’ said Father Hennigen at Diocesan Pro-life Mass

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

On October 12, the Diocese of Covington commemorated Respect Life Month with its annual Diocesan Pro-life Mass. The Mass brought together laity, clergy and women religious from across the diocese under the roof of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to pray for the upholding of the dignity of human life — from natural conception to natural death.

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Iffert and concelebrated by his brother priests including homilist Father Michael Hennigen, the Pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish and St. Ann Mission, Covington, and chaplain of Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills.

Beginning his homily by quoting the 1998 rock song “Closing Time” by Semisonic, where the lyrics “take me home” are sung, Father Hennigen said, “all of us want to be taken home by someone who loves them — what child doesn’t want to be born?”

“Faith must be lived out,” he said, explaining that living out our

faith in the midst of today’s world means “standing for life, from conception to natural death.”

“The respect for every person,” said Father Hennigen, “even how we treat each other, is pro-life.”

Not judging once another, he explained, is part of this pro-life attitude. “We make objective judgements all of the time: what is right and what is wrong ... but subjectively, we cannot judge someone. We do not know what is in the heart of others, only the lord knows,” said Father Hennigen. “Pope Francis told us that to help keep us from subjectively judging others is to get to know the heart of others, their story — this encounter, to walk with them, to pray for them and with them. This helps bring about conversion. This brings people to Jesus.”

By letting people know the love, mercy and forgiveness of God, “where sin is, grace abounds all the more,” Father Hennigen said. “And, as people of faith, our faith is to affect everything we do and who we are.”

Baker photos

Fifty Seasons of music, open to everyone — The Cathedral Concert Series celebrates its 50th season in 2026-2027, part 2

Dr. Gregory Schaffer
Contributor

This is part two of a two-part series celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Cathedral Concert Series.

From its modest beginnings in Sunday-afternoon organ recitals, the Cathedral Concert Series grew into a vibrant tradition featuring visiting artists, young musicians, ensembles and beloved annual programs. With the expanding musical life so does the ongoing responsibility of preserving the historic Matthias Schwab Organ that inspired it.

Music for generations

The programming soon expanded beyond organ recitals to include sacred choral music, instrumental soloists and ensembles, brass and orchestral music. The broader reper-

toire brought new listeners and new possibilities to the Cathedral.

In 1982, the existing 30-rank Wicks organ was expanded to 65 ranks, more than doubling its size, by the Aultz-Kersting Organ Co. This greatly enhanced the tonal capabilities of the Cathedral’s main organ and attracted performances by more notable organists, which in turn brought greater interest in the Series.

Robert and Rita also placed particular importance on encouraging young musicians. Talented young organists were regularly included in the seasons, and area university choirs and ensembles became a programming priority. Students had the opportunity to perform in a sacred space of exceptional visual beauty and rewarding acoustics, contributing their own voices to its musical life.

(Continued on page 10)

Cathedral Concert Series

50th Season 2026–2027

Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, 3 p.m.

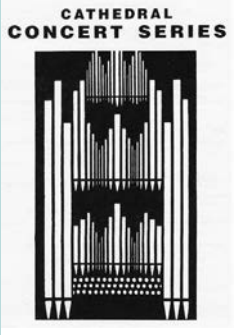
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All concerts are held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, and are open to the public with no admission charge. Freewill offering gladly accepted.

For 50th season schedule see page 10.



Sister, Soldier, Surgeon: Sister Deirdre Byrne comes to St. Catherine of Siena

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, will be welcoming Sister Deirdre Byrne, M.D., as a speaker, Nov. 1, at 6:30 p.m.

Sister Deirdre is a professed member of the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a retired

U.S. Army colonel and a surgeon — who paid for her medical training through service in the armed forces. Her talk at the parish will focus on her life through the lens of her biography, written by Leisa Marie Carzon, Ph.D and titled “Sister, Soldier, Surgeon.”

Terri Babey, a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena and organizer of the event, described Sister Deirdre as a “total package” — humble, faithful and with a “sense of humor.”

“For me,” Ms. Babey said, “to see his real person living this unreal, incredible life is inspiring. She’s very understated when she talks, but very thoughtful. I thought that was interesting.”

Exemplified by her “care for the poor,” Sister Deirdre offers free and low-cost medical care for poor and uninsured communities. “She has so much virtue,” Ms. Babey said, “but it is virtue in action.” This devotion has also taken Sister Deirdre on missions abroad to countries such as Sudan, where her mission still runs, but her dedication persists in her local community as a woman religious as well.

While the talk at St. Catherine of Siena Parish is free, Terri Babey hopes people coming to see the sister speak will “give generously” in free will offerings — all of which will be returned to Sister Deirdre in support of her free clinic operated near her convent’s home in Washington D.C.

“She has done so many things,” Ms. Babey said, “It’s really a wild, beautiful lifestyle that she leads,” encouraging all to join for not just the talk — but to read the biography as well.



Teens Encounter Christ

Bishop John Iffert is inviting high school juniors and seniors and young adults through college age to be a part of Teens Encounter Christ (TEC), Diocese of Covington. TEC is a vibrant Catholic movement that begins with a retreat weekend and evolves into a community that supports, values and accompanies teens and young adults. The first TEC weekend retreat will be held Nov. 21–23 at the Jesuit Spiritual Center, Milford. Space is limited. Each weekend is limited to 25 retreatants, and the first retreat is over half full, so don’t delay in registering.

Subsequent weekend retreats are scheduled in 2027 for March 6–8, June 11–13 and Oct.16–18. To register for the retreat, visit YouthMinistry@covdio.net and to hear more about TEC from Bishop Iffert scan the QR code.



Sister Deirdre Byrne, M.D., is seen depicted in the three titular roles of her biography “Sister, Soldier, Surgeon” by Leisa Marie Carzon, Ph.D. Sister Deirdre will be giving a talk about her life at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Nov. 1.

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.



Bishop's Schedule

Oct. 17

Concelebrate Mass prior to the men’s Eucharistic procession, Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 8 a.m.

St. John Cemetery visitation, Ft. Mitchell, 10 a.m.

St. Mary Cemetery visitation, Ft. Mitchell, 11 a.m.

St. Stephen Cemetery visitation, Ft. Thomas, 12:30 p.m.

Oct. 20

Diocesan Finance Council meeting, Curia boardroom, 2 p.m.

Anniversary Mass with Covington Deanery, Holy Spirit Church, Newport, 7 p.m.

Oct. 21

Presbyteral Council meeting, Curia Boardroom, 1 p.m.

Anniversary Mass with Northern Kenton County Deanery, St. Pius X Church, Edgewood, 7p.m.

Bishop selects Scholarship Granting Organization as federal school choice program nears

Laura Keener
Editor

In an Oct. 15 press release, Bishop John Iffert announced the selection of American GOAL Scholarship Program as its Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) for the new federal scholarship tax program that will launch Jan. 1, 2027.

“With every state surrounding Kentucky offering school choice programs in some form, for years, Kentucky families could do little but watch as neighboring parents enjoyed the advantage of choosing the school that best met their child’s needs. We are grateful for this new opportunity

superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Covington. “Through our partnership with American GOAL and the opportunities made possible by scholarship tax credits, we look forward to a future in which Kentucky parents are not limited by financial circumstances when choosing the best fit for the education of their children.”

States surrounding Kentucky already offer some form of school choice program for private schools. Ohio’s EdChoice Scholarship program launched in 2005, Indiana’s Choice Scholarship

Program began in 2011, West Virginia’s Hope Scholarship ESA program started in 2021, Tennessee’s ESA program for students with disabilities began in 2015; Missouri passed a school choice bill in 2021 and Virginia’s Education Improvement



to support Kentucky families seeking educational choice,” said Bishop John Iffert. “Partnering with American Goal will allow the Diocese of Covington to focus our local efforts on encouraging participation in the tax credit and generating the greatest possible benefit for students and families, while drawing on their extensive experience administering scholarship tax-credit programs.”

The federal scholarship tax credit program, known as The Education Freedom Tax Credit, provides individuals with a unique opportunity to support K-12 students while receiving a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 (or \$3,400 for a married couple) for qualifying contributions to approved Scholarship Granting Organizations. SGOs are nonprofits that accept qualified contributions from individuals and use the funds to provide scholarships to students for education-related services, including tuition, fees, academic tutoring, extended day programs and supplies.

Through this program, donor contributions can help expand access to Catholic schools — funding scholarships for eligible students and families — directing dollars that would otherwise be paid in federal income taxes.

“Catholic education has a long and meaningful tradition in the Diocese of Covington, and we are committed to making it accessible for more families,” said Kendra McGuire,

Scholarships Tax Credit launched in 2013. After the failed “Yes On 2” amendment in 2022, it looked like Kentucky’s private schools would stand alone without school choice for its families. The Education Freedom Tax Credit offers hope.

In March 2026, Kentucky’s General Assembly overrode Governor Andy Beshear’s veto of a bill that would allow Kentucky to opt-in to the federal scholarship tax program. This paved the way for school choice for Kentucky families to become a reality. To ensure the state of Kentucky’s participation in the federal program, the state must opt into the program each year. Under Kentucky’s law, the Secretary of State bears the responsibility of submitting the approved list of local SGOs to the U.S. Treasury by the Jan. 1 deadline each year.

Through the program, scholarships are not just granted to private school families for tuition. Public school families can also apply for scholarships to help pay for academic tutoring, extended day programs and supplies. The goal of the scholarships to provide parents with funds to help support the eligible educational needs of their children.



Bailey photo

In this Messenger file photo a student on the first day of school hangs his bookbag in his locker. The sticker on the locker door reads “I love school choice!”

American GOAL is modeled after the nationally recognized GOAL Scholarship Program in Georgia, which has successfully administered scholarship tax credit programs for more than 18 years. During that time, GOAL has

(Continued on page 18)



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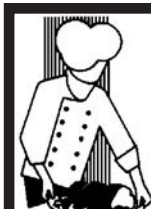
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Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us

I returned three weeks ago from a pilgrimage to Mexico. Our group of close to forty pilgrims traveled to several cities and the amazing churches located there. Each church was more beautiful than the last. Of course, Mexico City was at the top of the list. I paid two visits to

VIEWPOINT



Jamie Schroeder

the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe to see her miraculous image on the tilma of St. Juan Diego. What an incredible blessing it was to see the tilma with my own eyes and to spend time in prayer for my family and friends.

Our tour guide was a wealth of knowledge. He shared so much of the history of the area, especially what was happening at the time the apparition of Our Lady took place. Imagine a culture governed by a

belief system that required the ritual sacrifice of human beings: sacrifices made to appease their gods of war, water and the sun, where up to an estimated 250,000 people were killed each year. This was the Aztec society in which Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in December 1531. She came to Juan Diego as a pregnant mother signified by the black sash tied high on her waist, a traditional sign of pregnancy in the Aztec culture. Her appearance and the miracle of her image left on his tilma contributed to a profound cultural transformation: eight to nine million Mexican natives were converted to Catholicism within a decade, worship of the one true God replaced the worship of the Aztec gods, and the barbaric practice of human sacrifice came to an end.

October is Respect Life Month, and Our Lady of Guadalupe is the protectress and patroness of unborn children and the pro-life movement. Just as there was human sacrifice in the Aztec culture in the fourteenth through sixteenth century, human sacrifice continues today, and it's much worse than it was in Mexico 500 years

ago.

Strong protections for unborn human life exist in half of the states in the U.S. since the overturn of Roe v. Wade (including in Kentucky), but abortion is still prevalent. Last year, an estimated 1.3 million abortions were performed in the U.S. alone, the highest level in more than a decade. Currently, two-thirds of these are medication abortions with one-fourth being provided through telehealth or mail-order. Planned Parenthood in Cincinnati is an abortion destination with 50% of their patients coming from out-of-state.

To a lesser number, but just as serious, are deaths from euthanasia, (physician) assisted suicide (also known as medical assistance/aid in dying), and the death penalty. It is estimated that 1,900 to 2,000 people die annually in the U.S. from physician-assisted suicide. In 2025, 47 people were executed, a recent peak, and 29 people have been executed so far in 2026.

Pope Leo stated on October 10, observed annually as World Day Against the Death Penalty, that the death penalty is "inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person." The day before, on October 9th, the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and Archbishop Paul Coakley, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke out against a planned public livestream of the execution of Nidal Hassan by the U.S. Department of Defense. Archbishop Coakley prayed that "we as a nation may always choose life even in the most trying times and circumstances."

People are being sacrificed still, not to ancient, false gods, but on the on the altars of convenience, fear, coercion, poverty, misinformation, indifference and even justice. We need the help of Our Lady of Guadalupe now more than ever, and she needs each and every one of us to do our part to end the scourge of killing. As the saying goes, let us pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on us to end all attacks on human life. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

Jamie Schroeder is chancellor for the Diocese of Covington, Ky

The mission of the Church

The readings for the Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary time — Cycle A — are: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b and Matthew 22:15-21.

These "Go and Glorify" columns generally focus on some aspect of the Sunday readings. This coming Sunday, however, is the Church's annual observance of World Mission Sunday, so it seems appropriate to spend some time meditating on the theme of mission as it connects with the Church and its members.

GO AND GLORIFY



Father Stephen Bankemper

We often speak of the Church's mission, implying that Christ created the Church and gave her a mission. Various spiritual writers, Catholic and Protestant, have played with that idea in various ways. Some have remarked that the Church does not have a mission so much as she is a mission. Others have turned the words around and have written that the Church does not have a mission, but the

mission has the Church. There is some value in playing with these ideas, but however one sees it, the Church and the mission are inseparable. The Second Vatican Council fathers even described the Church as missionary in her nature (*Ad Gentes Divinitus, or Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church*).

What is the mission of the Church? Pope Benedict has been quoted as saying that the Church does three things: she worships, cares for the poor, and evangelizes. While all three are woven together in many ways, the last two, and particularly the last, are what we normally think of as the missionary activity of the Church. Even her care for the poor is not discreet; always we have in mind the proclamation of the Good News.

World Mission Sunday is a day, as the online encyclopedia Wikipedia puts it, "set aside by the Catholic Church throughout the world to publicly renew its commitment to the missionary movements through prayer and donations." On this Sunday we are reminded that there are women and men who have given their lives to spreading the Gospel in the world, and that they need our support, both of our prayers and sacrifices, and of our monetary donations.

It is nothing new that some are called by God to what we traditionally think of as missionary work and that others in the Church are asked to support them. Perhaps our first great missionary, St. Paul, wrote to the Philippians: "Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help not once but twice." (Phil 4:14-16)

It is worth highlighting a word Paul uses. We think of our donations as helping to fund some activity, and even our prayers for missionaries as support. It would be more helpful to think of Paul's word — partnership. The work of missionaries is the work of the Church, so it is our work, too. When we provide monetary or spiritual help to missionaries we are partnering — taking our part — with them.

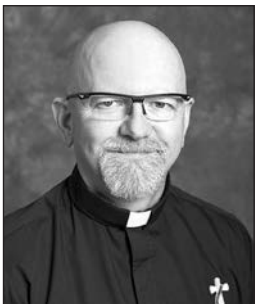
Those are not the only ways we can each take our part in the Church's mission. We are called, too, to be missionaries of the Gospel to the world. Although it may look different

(Continued on page 17)

Teaching a life in Christ

As I have now moved into my second year of teaching ninth grade religion at Bishop Brossart High School, I've

BELIEVE, TEACH, PRACTICE



Deacon David Profit

focused more of my teaching around building their relationship with Jesus Christ and on my relationship with them. These young people have largely received quality education in the Catholic faith, but their experience in living that faith is largely undeveloped.

Much of their view on the faith is derived from their intellectual development. While knowing the faith is important, understanding how to deploy

that faith in real-world situations is essential. The world they live in is a constant boiler of social pressure that most of us never had to endure. Understanding where faith fits into their world becomes critical at this age. This is so often where we lose them from the Church. It's my goal to show them that Christ and his Church are the answer to many of their life struggles.

Part of this goal stems from the words of St. Bonaventure in his work "The Journey of the Mind to God." In it, he mentions that mystical wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit. He then goes on to say, "Seek the answer in God's grace, not in doctrine; in longing of the will, not in the understanding; in the sighs of prayers, not in research; seek the bridegroom, not the teacher; God not man."

Too often, we get hung up on the rules and regulations and the doctrine and dogma of the Church, without helping them understand why the Church teaches what it means to be Catholic. These kids have unanswered questions, and if we fail to meet them in the midst of those questions, we become a "because I said so faith." Those doctrines and dogmas are important, but without putting

them in the context of their lives, we come across as the stiff-necked people Jesus warns us about.

It is God's grace that has been given freely to us that fuels my desire to help them experience that internal fire that can fuel their Catholic faith. So much of their life is lived in the conflict of the world versus their own individual peace that can only come through Christ and the Church.

Recently in our Monday Chapel chat, I shared with them the counter of conflict in the world can only be mitigated by peace. We all want it, so we need to define what peace is and isn't. Peace isn't a lack of conflict, stress, and the difficulties of life. That never goes away. Jesus himself was a source of conflict to the people of that time. Instead, I gave them a definition of peace that I use.

For me, peace is doing what God wants me to do, where he wants me to do it, with the people he wants me to do it with. That may sound simple, but when I look at my life through that lens, I can see it and say that I am living that peace. Being married 45 years, our conversion to the Catholic faith and my role as a deacon and religion teacher and coach are proof of that to me. It's knowing my life is rooted in Christ and that the storms of this life can't shake it.

The encouraging thing I see is that kids seem to respond well to this approach. It makes it less of a religion class and more of a Catholic living class. Once a month, I will take a class period and tell them that they can ask any question about our Catholic faith or life in general. I get some great questions and some silly ones, but that's ok. They know that I will tell them the truth about the goodness of God and the beauty of being Catholic. We cannot be afraid of those questions. There are times when I don't have the immediate answer, and I'm honest with them about it. But I also get back to them to finish the conversation.

It's in those moments of honest conversation that I know God has me where he wants me to be. I'm not a great teacher by any stretch, but I care about these kids, and that's more important in my mind. I get emails and visits from them during various times of the day just to

talk about something they have on their mind. I truly cherish those moments because it means I'm building trust.

The importance of Catholic education cannot be talked about enough. The culture and discipline in the Catholic schools is essential for their growth into a world that doesn't appreciate the necessity of faith. I ask for continued prayers for all of our Catholic schools and their teachers. They really are special people doing important work for the kingdom. Pray for me as well that I can be the source of faith and hope for them.

Deacon David Profit is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.

US bishops, lawmakers offer prayers for Pope Leo after cancer diagnosis

OSV News

Following the Holy See’s Oct. 13 announcement that Pope Leo XIV was diagnosed with lung cancer and had the lower lobe of his right lung removed, Church and civic leaders expressed their hope and prayers for his full recovery.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops urged the faithful to pray for Pope Leo in a post on X.

“Doctors at Gemelli Hospital removed a cancerous tumor from Pope Leo XIV’s right lung, according to the Holy See Press Office,” the post said. “The surgery was successful, with no complications, and the Holy Father has returned to his hospital room. We ask the faithful to continue praying for Pope Leo’s recovery and for the doctors and staff caring for him. We also hold in prayer all who are living with cancer; their families, and those who care for them.”

Individual bishops and dioceses in the U.S. also urged prayer.

“Bless Pope Leo XIV with strength and peace as he faces this illness and unite him ever more closely with your Son,” said the Archdiocese of New York in an X post asking for prayers for the restoration of the pope’s health.

In a separate post, Archbishop Ronald A. Hicks of New York thanked God that the pope’s surgery was “by all accounts, successful” and added that he joined faithful from the archdiocese, country and the world “in keeping the Holy Father in our prayer.”

“Friends, please join me in praying for healing for our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer,” Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, wrote on X.

Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of St. Louis asked “all people of good will to join us in prayer for Pope Leo XIV and those who are caring for him.”

Bishop Mark A. Eckman of Pittsburgh said in a statement he joins Catholics in that diocese “and around the world in lifting up our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, in prayer following the news of his surgery and lung cancer diagnosis.”

“We are grateful to hear that the surgery was successful, and we pray that the Holy Father will experience a full and peaceful recovery,” Bishop Eckman said. “Pope Leo has reminded us of the importance of faith, hope, and caring for one another. Now, as he faces this personal health challenge, we have an opportunity to surround him with the same love and prayerful support that he so generously offers to the Church and the world.”

Some U.S. officials and lawmakers also weighed in, including Rep. Jonathan L. Jackson, D-Ill., who represents a Chicago-area district.

“Pope Leo XIV is one of our own, a Chicago kid who car-



OSV News photo/Stoyan Nenov, Reuters

An image of Pope Leo XIV and other items are displayed outside Rome’s Gemelli Hospital in the evening hours of Oct. 13, 2026, where the pontiff underwent surgery to remove a lung nodule. The Vatican announced that evening the surgery was successful, but revealed the pope was confirmed to have lung cancer.

ried the values of our neighborhoods all the way onto the world stage, and today our whole city is wishing him strength and a full recovery,” Jackson said in a post on X. “Let his diagnosis also be a reminder to talk with your doctor about lung cancer screening, because catching it early saves lives. Chicago is with you.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio wrote in a post on X, “Jeanette and I are united in prayer for (Pope Leo)’s health following his recent diagnosis.”

“May the Lord give him strength and the Holy Spirit guide the medical professionals taking care of the Holy Father,” Rubio said.

Rep. Riley Moore, R-W.Va., who is Catholic, wrote in a post on X, “Saint Teresa of Avila reminds us that ‘those who were nearest to Christ our Lord were those who had the greatest trials.’”

“This is no doubt true of (Pope Leo),” he said. “Please

join Mina and me in praying for the Holy Father as he begins this battle to defeat cancer.”

“I invite all Catholics to pray for the health of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, and to offer our participation in the Holy Mass, the rosary and other personal prayer and sacrifice for this return to health,” Bishop John Iffert wrote in a statement to the Diocese of Covington. While the diocese does not currently have a prayer service planned for the pontiff, all are still requested to join in personal prayer during this time. “I welcome the prayer and assurances of other Christian communities and people of good will,” Bishop Iffert wrote, “who recognize the distinctive moral voice of Pope Leo XIV and join their Catholic neighbors in loving concern.”

The 71-year-old pope disclosed during his Oct. 11 Angelus address that doctors had found a “localized nodule” in his lung. He said the nodule was “detected at a very early stage” during “some recent medical examinations.”

“The doctors believe intervention is advisable, so, following their advice, I have decided to undergo surgery to have it removed,” Pope Leo said.

The pope arrived at Rome’s Gemelli Hospital at about 1 p.m. Rome time on Oct. 13, and underwent the surgery in the late afternoon.

“The surgery was successful, completed on schedule and as planned, and the Holy Father has returned to his room,” the Holy See Press Office said in a statement issued shortly before 8 p.m.

Just before 10 p.m., a joint statement by Dr. Stefano Margaritora, chief thoracic surgeon at Rome’s Gemelli Hospital, and Dr. Luigi Carbone revealed that the “examination confirmed the diagnosis of lung adenocarcinoma, as suspected by the preoperative tests.”

This story has been amended by Messenger staff.

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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/>.

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.

Our Savior Parish, Covington, will host its annual homecoming and Mass with celebrant and pastor Father Michael Comer, Oct. 18, 9:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, hosts a presentation “Pope Leo and the Challenge of Artificial Intelligence” with Msgr. William Cleves, who will explore what the pope’s encyclical means for us as AI can be a great benefit to us as well as a real threat. The event will be Oct. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Barbara’s Sterling Event Center, Erlanger. No RSVP needed.

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 hand-made items — wooden toys and carvings, home décor, holiday décor, specialty coffees and nuts, homemade spices, pasty 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.

Holy Guardian Angels Cemetery, Sandfordtown (Edgewood), will hold its annual visitation day, Oct. 25, 2 p.m. Deacon Thomas Kissell will lead the prayer service.

“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.

St. Joseph, Crescent Springs, will host a Women’s Advent Day of Recollection, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. This free event features keynote speaker Sister Marla Monahan, SND, inspiring women how to deepen their relationship with God day by day. Includes Mass, speaker, group discussion, confession and other activities. Lunch is provided. To register email dkittyallen@gmail.com or text (859) 957-7595.

St. Joseph, Cold Spring is hosting a free showing of the full-length feature film “Cabrini”, Nov. 13, 7 p.m. in the parish’s Memorial Hall. Free popcorn and soft drinks also included, open to all. Film is appropriate for middle school age and up; under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. Questions? Contact Vicki Klocke at vklocke@stjoeparish.net or (859) 927-2291.

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/XsrpfqFVAWHWnzRA> 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/

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

Zoom Support Group for family, relatives and friends of victims of clergy sexual abuse, second Monday of the month, 6:30–8 p.m. CST; 7:30–9 p.m. EST. These meetings are confidential and no one is forced to contribute unless they want to. For information contact Paula Kaempffer, coordinator of Restorative Practices and Survivor Support, for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, at kaempfferp@archspm.org or call (763) 688-3978.



Cristo Rey Parish multicultural festival

Recently, Cristo Rey Parish held its multicultural festival, bringing together traditions from various countries through folk dances, traditional costumes, live music and delicious snacks from various Latin American nations. It was a beautiful way to celebrate diversity and Hispanic Heritage Month, united as one community and one heart.

Novena, resources respond to 'urgent pastoral challenge' of mental health

Gina Christian
OSV News

As the global community marks World Mental Health Day Oct. 10, the U.S. Catholic bishops have renewed their ongoing commitment to address an issue the Vatican has named an "urgent pastoral challenge."

That challenge affects more than 1 billion globally, and at least 1 in 5 in the U.S. every year.

In an Oct. 10 press release, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the 2026 start of its annual Novena for Mental Health, which takes place Oct. 10-18.

The nine days of prayer — which concludes on Oct. 18, the feast of St. Luke, the evangelist and a patron of health-care — focus on various aspects of mental health and its impact. (In 2026, the feast is superseded on the Roman calendar by the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.)

The novena was introduced in 2023 during the launch of the USCCB's National Catholic Mental Health Campaign, currently spearheaded by Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of Louisville, Kentucky, and Bishop Edward J. Burns of Dallas.

Prayers and reflections for the novena, available in both English and Spanish, can be found online at uscbb.org/mental-health-novena.

The USCCB also pointed to the novena as "an invitation for parishes to participate in Mental Health Sunday," an Oct. 11 observance established by the U.S. Catholic bishops as part of the mental health campaign.

The USCCB directed faithful interested in forming a mental health ministry to visit uscbb.org/mentalhealth, and to consult the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and Catholic Charities USA for additional resources.

In its statement, the USCCB promoted the Oct. 10 message for World Mental Health Day from Sister Alessandra Smerilli, a member of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco and prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting

Integral Human Development.

Sister Alessandra stressed in her message that "no psychological wound can ever erase the dignity of a human person."

"Caring for mental health belongs to integral human development, which seeks the good of every person and of the whole person," she said.

Pope Leo XIV has "named the problem clearly," she added, quoting the pope's observation, made during his June papal visit to Spain, that mental health "is increasingly threatened in the context of societies that consider themselves advanced," a sign that "there is something deeply wrong with a certain notion of progress."

"Today, interior, emotional and relational wounds represent one of the most profound dimensions of human suffering," said Sister Alessandra.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people worldwide had some form of mental health disorder as of September 2025. WHO called for "greater investment and action" to scale up global responses to mental health needs.

In the U.S., more than 1 in 5 adults experience mental health issues in a given year; 1 in 20 seriously, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

NAMI noted that over 1 in 7 U.S. youth ages six through 17 experience a mental health disorder each year; with 75% of all lifetime mental illness beginning by age 24.

Sister Alessandra said that "parishes, schools, religious communities and small ecclesial communities are often where people bring their suffering and seek a listening ear, accompaniment and support in times of psychological vulnerability."

As a result, she said, "in many local Churches, mental health is emerging as one of the most urgent pastoral challenges."

She drew attention to two groups particularly vulnerable to mental health suffering — those who have lived through humanitarian crises, and youth.

"War, forced migration, political instability, environmental disasters and structural poverty" all "leave deep trauma in individuals and communities," she said.



OSV News screenshot / Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

Pope Leo XIV is pictured praying his October 2026 prayer intention dedicated to mental health, while holding an image of St. Dymphna, patroness of people suffering from mental disorders and of mental health professionals. In an Oct. 10 press release, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the 2026 start of its annual Novena for Mental Health, which takes place Oct. 10-18.

Young people "face new forms of emotional vulnerability linked to social pressure, economic uncertainty and isolation," Sister Alessandra said.

While "the situations differ," she said, "the root is the same: a person becomes vulnerable when security, relationships, meaning and hope are missing."

She noted the theme of this year's World Mental Health Day — an observance established in 1992 by the World Federation for Mental Health — is "Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change."

That focus speaks to the need for both listening to those suffering from mental illness and taking action to address their situation, she said.

Sister Alessandra also stated that "the Church cannot limit herself to occasional or reactive responses" to the issue of mental health.

"As Christians, we are called to develop a stable, competent, compassionate and preventive ministry that embraces the person in their totality: body, mind and spirit," she said. "This requires trained pastoral workers, collaboration with health professionals, clear referral pathways, attention to suicide prevention, support for families and care for young people."

In his October prayer intention, Pope Leo has called for Church-wide mental health ministry and an end to the stigma and discrimination those with mental illness often encounter.

"Those who live with mental suffering are not only recipients of care: they are protagonists of the path forward, and their voices must help shape the answers," said Sister Alessandra. "Caring for them is not a marginal concern. It belongs to the heart of the Church's mission."

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.



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Sheen effect, innovative storytelling and ‘renewed energy’ mark World Mission Sunday at 100

Gina Christian
OSV News

Catholics around the world mark World Mission Sunday on Oct. 18, and a “renewed energy” infuses the annual celebration of the Church’s missionary activity this milestone year, one expert told OSV News.

“There are more and more dioceses around the country that are finding innovative ways to tell the stories of missionaries, the need to support missionaries, the need to pray for missionaries,” said Father Anthony D. Andreassi, a priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Brooklyn, New York, and a researcher for the Pontifical Mission Societies USA.

Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme “One in Christ, united in mission” for this year’s celebration, with his message for the day encouraging “the whole Church to continue its missionary journey with joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit.”

Established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 and universally observed by 1927, World Mission Sunday is a dedicated day of “prayer and missionary promotion throughout the Catholic world,” according to its founding decree.

Masses celebrated on the observance, which takes place on the next-to-last Sunday in October, are offered for the Church’s missions, with priests encouraged to preach homilies “of a missionary nature,” the decree states.

Father Andreassi explained the date was chosen with an eye to the feast of Christ the King (an observance also created by Pope Pius XI), which was initially celebrated on the last Sunday of October, ahead of All Saints’ Day, to underscore the Church’s missionary task ahead of Christ’s return. (Later, Pope Paul VI sought to highlight the eschatological dimensions of the Christ the King feast by making it the final Sunday of the liturgical year, immediately before the First Sunday of Advent.)

At first, the collection for World Mission Sunday was taken up in January, connecting the donations with the

gifts brought by the Magi at Epiphany, said Father Andreassi, noting the mission collection was later moved to the actual observance in October.

Donations to the collection serve as the primary financial support for the Pontifical Mission Societies, a worldwide network operating at the service of the pope and consisting of four organizations, three of which were designat-

In 2025, donations from Catholics in the U.S. alone enabled the societies to provide more than \$30 million to build churches, convents, orphanages and schools; fund catechetical projects; and support dioceses, seminarians, and men and women religious.

With 1,130 mission territories worldwide, “each gets a relatively small amount of money” through a “very collaborative process” of allocation, said Father Andreassi.

And, he said, “Even in the mission lands, even if they may be a recipient (of mission funds), they take up a collection.”

World Mission Sunday is “very much seen” as a day of “solidarity,” one on which the Church recognizes that “we are all in this together,” said Father Andreassi.

In contrast to that message of solidarity, World Mission Sunday surprisingly traces its roots in part to one of the most devastating conflicts in human history: the First World War.

That war “had dealt a serious blow to the missions, reducing the number of missionaries and disrupting many of the schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions they maintained,”

Father Andreassi told OSV News, quoting from his original research on the history of World Mission Sunday.

In his 1919 apostolic letter “Maximum Illud,” Pope Benedict XV urged the Church to “rebuild and reinvigorate its missionary efforts,” said Father Andreassi.

But after a war that felled no less than four empires — Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian — Pope Benedict XV realized “you don’t just go back to doing what you used to be doing,” Father Andreassi said.

Instead, the pope placed “renewed emphasis — and in

(Continued on page 17)



OSV News photo/Margaret Murray

Missionaries from the Pontifical Mission Societies USA distribute custom sandals to victims of Hansen’s disease, commonly known as leprosy, in a remote leper colony in the Diocese of Kon Tum, central Vietnam, April 7, 2025. Catholics around the world mark World Mission Sunday Oct. 18, 2026.

ed as pontifical by Pope Pius XI in 1922.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith supports the evangelization efforts of the local church; the Missionary Childhood Association educates children about their part in the church’s missionary outreach; and the Society of St. Peter the Apostle trains the next generation of missionary clergy and consecrated religious.

The Pontifical Missionary Union, designated as pontifical in 1956 by Pope Pius XII, focuses on forming clergy, religious and pastoral leaders more deeply in their role as evangelizers.

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Fifty Seasons of music

(Continued from page 3)



Photos provided
(above) Historic Matthia Schwab Organ – 1859
(left) Aultz-Kersting Organ 1982 (Original Wicks 1930), South Transept

Over five decades, the Series has welcomed distinguished artists from near and far, including organists Diane Bish, Heinz Wunderlich of Germany and James Goettsche, former Vatican organist. International choral visitors have included the Yekaterinburg Chorus of Boys and Men from Russia and Les Petits Chanteurs de Monaco.

The rich musical life of the region has also been represented by Musica Sacra of Cincinnati, the Northern Kentucky Symphony Orchestra, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Chamber Ensemble and Brass Choir, the Bach Ensemble of St. Thomas, Cincinnati.

These artists and ensembles are only a small sampling of the Series’ guests. Their achievements are one measure of its stature. Another is the experience of the tens of thousands of listeners whose lives have been enriched by the music.

The Mozart Requiem performed by chorus and orchestra surrounded by the Cathedral’s great arches and stained glass can be deeply moving. The full force of the Cathedral’s great organ, joined by brass and timpani in the triumphant final chords of Saint-Saens’ celebrated Organ Symphony, can take the breath away.

For some listeners, a concert is an introduction to classical music. For others, it is prayer. For still others, it is an encounter with beauty. The Series welcomes each of those experiences.

Three annual programs have become especially cherished: the Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols with the Bishop’s Choir; An Epiphany Epilogue with LeeAnn Kordenbrock and brass ensembles; and the musical celebration of Johann Sebastian Bach’s birthday. Each has developed a loyal following, and these programs consistently draw some of the season’s largest audiences.

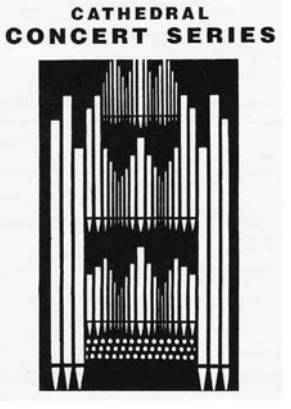
The beloved Matthias Schwab Organ will be heard at some point in each of this year’s concerts as a tribute to how it all began.

Preserving the voice that began it

As the Series looks ahead, attention returns to the instrument that helped inspire it. Since its rededication in 1974, the Schwab has received tuning, repairs and routine maintenance, but it now needs comprehensive restoration.

It has continued to sing with a voice remarkably close to that heard when it stood in Old St. Joseph Church. Time, however, has taken its toll on the instrument’s components. Without timely attention, increasing deterioration threatens its reliability and ultimately its continued use.

The Schwab’s substantially historic condition makes it an important link to nineteenth-centu-



Cathedral Concert Series 50th Season Schedule 2026–2027

**Sunday, Oct. 25,
2026, 3 p.m.**

Musica Sacra Cincinnati
Chorus and Orchestra
L. Brett Scott, Music Director

Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026, 3 p.m.

University of Cincinnati
College-Conservatory of Music
Organ Studio
Remembering Maurice Duruflé

Sunday, Dec. 6, 2026, 3 p.m.

Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols
Basilica Bishop’s Choir
Very Rev. Ryan Maher, president
Gregory Schaffer, Organist and Conductor

Sunday, Jan. 10, 2027, 3 p.m.

An Epiphany Epilogue
LeeAnn Kordenbrock, Soprano
Brass Quintet
Gregory Schaffer, Organ and Synthesizer

Sunday, Feb. 21, 2027, 3 p.m.

Heri et Hodie
Krista Cornish Scott, Artistic Director
Early Church Music from France

March 7, 2027, 3 p.m.

A Musical Celebration of
Johann Sebastian Bach’s 342nd Birthday
Michael Unger, organist
In the Company of Bach

All concerts are held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, and are open to the public with no admission charge. Freewill offering gladly accepted.

ry organ building and the church music of this region. Preserving it will allow future generations to hear that history as well as learn about it.

From modest Sunday-afternoon recitals and Rita’s handmade flyers grew a lasting institution, sustained by artistic conviction, generous patrons, willing volunteers and a belief that great music should be accessible to everyone.

The task now is to carry that generosity forward: to welcome new audiences, encourage new musicians and preserve the historic voice that helped bring them all together.

For more information about the Cathedral Concert Series, its history and archives, and the full schedule for this season, please visit www.cathedralconcertseries.org.

Dr. Gregory Schaffer is principal organist and choirmaster for the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Ky

Cardinal Tagle reads Pope Leo's homily to bishops: 'The world has no future without strong families'



OSV News photo/Stoyan Nenov, Reuters

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, celebrates Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Oct. 14, 2026, on the final day of a meeting in which the presidents of bishops' conferences are marking the 10th anniversary of "Amoris Laetitia" ("The Joy of Love"). The Mass also included special prayers for the health of Pope Leo XIV, following his lung surgery the previous day and diagnosis of cancer.

Courtney Mares
OSV News

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the newly elected dean of the College of Cardinals, presided over the closing Mass for the Vatican meeting of bishops on marriage and family on Oct. 14, reading aloud a homily that had been prepared by Pope Leo XIV prior to his lung cancer surgery, saying, "The world has no future without strong families."

Pope Leo had been scheduled to preside over the closing Mass in St. Peter's Square himself before he shocked the world on Sunday with the announcement that he would be having surgery. As a result, the morning Mass took place without the presence of the pope, just hours after the Vatican announced that late Oct. 13 that the surgery had confirmed a diagnosis of lung cancer for the 71-year-old pope.

Participants in the Oct. 7-14 gathering of the world's bishops' conference presidents and the heads of Eastern Catholic churches marking the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' document on the family, "Amoris Laetitia," prayed for Pope Leo's recovery in the Prayer of the Faithful during the Mass and listened to the words that the pope had prepared for them.

"The world has no future without strong families open to the gift of children and attentive to their education and growth," Pope Leo wrote in his homily, which emphasized the important role of families in educating and forming the young in the virtues.

The pope highlighted, quoting Amoris in part, that "the

importance of the virtues, among which a special place is given to chastity, which is 'invaluable for the genuine growth of love between persons,'" in preparing young people for true love in marriage.

"Marriage preparation programs conscientiously developed for this purpose in parishes and pastoral areas are commendable. Yet such courses alone are insufficient, for they must be preceded and supported by an education in love that accompanies a person's growth from childhood," he wrote.

Pope Leo highlighted Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation that followed the Synod on the Family, saying that "marriage preparation begins at birth."

"In this way, love lived within the family — with its moments of struggle, mistakes and failures, yet also with the marvel of its unpredictable, everyday life — becomes the first school of human affection, the first precious and irreplaceable apprenticeship in the 'joy of love,'" Pope Leo said.

Pope Leo said that "the values of openness to life and respect for life, from conception to natural death, are also rooted in this charity, which is fundamental to our existence and to our life together as human beings."

"The family is the foremost guardian of these values, a beacon for the good of humanity," he added.

As Cardinal Tagle read aloud the pope's prepared homily, the cardinal noted the presence of Patriarch Paul III Nona, the patriarch of Baghdad of the Chaldeans, whom

Pope Leo granted ecclesiastical communion in April.

"I myself have the honor of presiding over this celebration by special mandate of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, in order to manifest publicly the ecclesiastical communion he has granted to His Beatitude Paul III Nona, Patriarch of Baghdad of the Chaldeans, who is participating in this Eucharist," the cardinal said.

"Your Beatitude, your presence helps us better understand our identity as the Church, which is a communion in Christ the Lord of the Churches of various rites and traditions, in a unity that is expressed tangibly with the Successor of Peter," he added.

The Vatican did not provide an update on Pope Leo's clinical condition in the morning following the announcement of his cancer diagnosis, other than that the pope's first night in the hospital passed calmly.

Following the closing Mass, the bishops, families and experts taking part in the "Amoris Laetitia" meeting are scheduled to meet again in the late afternoon for the presentation of the meeting's synthesis report at the closing session of the weeklong event.

Due to the personal request of Pope Leo prior to his surgery, the meeting's final synthesis report will no longer be made public on Oct. 14. Jesuit Father Giacomo Costa, a consultant to the General Secretariat of the Synod, said that the pope requested to postpone the meeting's final report, noting that Pope Leo "wanted to listen to it and be able to offer his own word on it himself."

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Pope Leo to deliver peace message in Assisi 40 years after St. John Paul II's landmark gathering



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano

Pope John Paul II attends an interreligious peace meeting in Assisi, Italy, in this Oct. 27, 1986, file photo. Forty years after St. John Paul II gathered leaders of the world's religions in Assisi for the landmark meeting, Pope Leo XIV will return to the city Oct. 27, 2026, for the closing day of the 2026 interreligious meeting.

Vatican News OSV News

Forty years after St. John Paul II gathered leaders of the world's religions in Assisi for a landmark day of prayer for peace, Pope Leo XIV will return to the city Oct. 27 for the closing day of the 2026 interreligious meeting.

Pope Leo will pray for peace together with the Christian community in the Lower Basilica of St. Francis, during a special prayer for peace in which both he and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople will offer a meditation.

From Oct. 25 to 27, Assisi will host an interreligious peace prayer; the 40th annual meeting in a series initiated by St. John Paul II when, for the first time in history, repre-

sentatives of all world religions were invited by the pope to pray together for peace.

Among those inspired by that meeting was the Community of Sant'Egidio, a Catholic lay organization, which since then has continued to promote what is known as the "Spirit of Assisi" every year across Europe and beyond.

"We are truly delighted by the Holy Father's return to Assisi," said Archbishop Felice Accrocca of Assisi-Nocera. "We firmly believe that the Pope's presence, together with all the other religious leaders, can reinforce the shared journey against every form of violence."

Marco Impagliazzo, president of the Community of Sant'Egidio, said during an Oct. 6 press conference at the

Vatican that in Assisi, "a new and creative perspective for interreligious dialogue was born. Over the past 40 years, that spirit has become a necessity in a globalized world."

Today, Impagliazzo said, the world is "very frightened, fearful and torn apart, prey to nationalism and racism — a world that needs to be reunited once again."

"But", he continued, "if there is no spiritual unification of the world — and this is the message of Assisi and of all religions — it will be difficult for men and women to unite and to think of themselves as 'brothers and sisters to all,' as Pope Francis would say."

The title of the Assisi 2026 meeting — "Disarmed and Disarming Peace" — comes from Pope Leo's own words and the title of his July 21 book, "Disarmed and Disarming: Peace Is a Gift," published by the Vatican Publishing House.

A total of 384 representatives of religions, cultures and institutions from 53 countries will take part in the event, with 155 speakers participating in 24 thematic forums, addressing subjects including peace and conflicts, prayer and economy, but also topics such as children and young people, the media, migration, Christian unity and contemporary martyrs.

At the conclusion of the 2026 meeting, Pope Leo XIV "will give the world his message of peace, which is increasingly necessary," Impagliazzo said.



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Catholic, evangelical leaders issue joint call for compassionate immigration reform

Kate Scanlon
OSV News

Catholic and evangelical leaders issued an ecumenical statement Oct. 13 as part of a joint effort to call for compassionate immigration reform.

Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, and Rev. Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, are the co-chairs of the Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue on Immigration. Their joint statement, "A Call for Christian Compassion and Wisdom in the Immigration Debate," marks the first such statement on immigration in U.S. history to be jointly issued by senior leaders of their respective traditions, they said.

The pair said that although they have "doctrinal differences," they are "united in our conviction that God calls us to stand both with our fellow Americans who are experiencing economic and cultural anxieties and with our immigrant neighbors who are facing existential challenges."

The statement articulated shared principles that every human being is "created with dignity, bearing God's image," and that government "is responsible for protecting its citizens and providing for the common good, including the establishment and enforcement of reasonable immigration policies."

Those policies should include targeted, humane border enforcement, clear legal pathways to citizenship and efforts to prevent the separation of families, they said.

They also highlighted risks to religious liberty presented by certain immigration enforcement efforts.

Catholic and other faith leaders have pointed to recent cases where religious liberty challenges have intersected with immigration issues, such as a recent lawsuit from the Archdiocese of St. Louis against the federal government over a policy it said prohibits priests from distributing holy Communion and hearing the confessions of people detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"We especially commit to upholding the right to religious liberty," the statement said. "This right extends to all people, of all faiths and none, no matter their immigration status. It is implicated in a particular way for those in detention, for whom we as Christians are specifically compelled by Christ to offer our pastoral care (Matthew 25:31-46). We are resolute in our commitment to working with the relevant authorities to ensure access to religious and pastoral services for all in detention, that each person may have the opportunity for spiritual counsel and active participation in the sacraments."

Faith leaders have also raised alarm about the need to prevent immigration enforcement actions at places seen as sensitive locations, including houses of worship, schools and hospitals.

In a joint statement issued through the USCCB, Bishop Cahill — currently bishop of Victoria, Texas, but was recently appointed the next bishop of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois — and Rev. Kim said, "What is unique about this statement is not the content, which is grounded in centuries of Christian teaching and tradition that we have already affirmed separately, but the clear unity that exists between us in this moment."

"As pastors devoted to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we share a responsibility to articulate our convictions, even when it comes to subject matter as challenging as immigration. In doing so together, we seek to embrace our common heritage as both Christians and Americans," they said. They added that through Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue on Immigration, "we have found a strong sense of fraternity and common purpose. It is from this sincere and patriotic perspective, and with deep concern for those



OSV News photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters

Mexican migrants carry their belongings Jan. 15, 2026, as they walk toward Mexico across the Paso del Norte international border bridge after being deported from the United States, as seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

affected by current immigration policies, that we offer this statement with both conviction and hope."

A joint report issued last year by the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and World Relief, found that more than 10 million Christians living in the U.S. would be vulnerable to deportation under Trump administration policies implemented in 2025. A majority of them were Catholic followed by a sizable number of evangelicals.

The joint statement from Bishop Cahill and Rev. Kim noted the report's findings.

"Roughly one in 12 believers in this country either faces the loss of legal status or shares a home with someone who does," they said. "Their fear is our fear; their tears are ours to wipe."

Pope Leo XIV starts respiratory physical therapy a day after lung cancer surgery

Courtney Mares
OSV News

Pope Leo XIV underwent more medical exams and started respiratory physical therapy on Oct. 14, the day after the lung cancer surgery that removed the lower lobe of the pope's right lung.

In the first medical update provided by the Vatican since the late-night revelation of the pope's lung cancer diagnosis, the pope's doctors said Wednesday that the pope's "recovery is proceeding as expected" and the pope has begun walking around his hospital room.

"This morning, the Holy Father underwent the blood tests and chest X-ray scheduled following the surgery. The results confirm a normal postoperative recovery: the values are within the normal range for the type of surgery performed," the joint statement by Dr. Stefano Margaritora, the pope's surgeon, and Dr. Luigi Carbone, the pope's personal doctor, said.

(Continued on page 17)

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Pope Leo XIV starts respiratory physical therapy

(Continued from page 15)

“The Holy Father underwent respiratory physical therapy and has begun walking around his room. He has resumed his regular diet, having had breakfast and lunch. His recovery is proceeding as expected.”

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni told journalists that Pope Leo was “in good spirits” the day after surgery. Bruni told journalists that before having surgery, Pope Leo had undergone a robotic bronchoscopy with biopsy, a chest CT scan with contrast, and a PET scan which indicated the need for the Oct. 13 surgery.

Pope Leo was admitted to Gemelli Hospital Oct. 13 for the lung surgery, following the pope’s Oct. 11 disclosure that recent medical examinations had revealed a “well-contained” lung nodule that had been “detected at a very early stage.”

According to Vatican News, post-operation

tests will be conducted on the removed tissue in the coming days.

In response to a question of how long the wait might be to receive any results as to whether cancer remains beyond what was removed during the pope’s surgery, Bruni said, “You have to ask a doctor for the timing of those. It usually takes five, 10, 15 days depending on the situation.”

Speaking with OSV News, medical experts indicated that a potential analysis of the pope’s lymph nodes could be key to evaluating the next steps.

Dr. Nirmal Veeramachaneni, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine and medical director for lung cancer screening at SSM Health — who is not involved in the pope’s care — said in an interview with OSV News that it would typically take a week to get all of the biopsy results back.

The pope’s doctors Oct. 14 statement is the first update from the Vatican on the pope’s medical condition since the pope’s surgery ended with the revelation from his doctors that the “examination confirmed the diagnosis of lung adenocarcinoma, as suspected by the preoperative tests.”

Adenocarcinoma of the lung is the most common form of lung cancer in the United States. It represents about 40% of all lung cancers, according to the Lung Cancer Foundation of America.

The right lower lobe of the lung, which Pope Leo had removed, is the largest of the three lobes in the right lung. Located in the posterior and inferior part of the right chest cavity, it contributes roughly 30% of total lung capacity, making it the single largest lung lobe, according to the Baylor College of Medicine.

Pope Leo is expected to remain in Rome’s Gemelli Hospital as he recovers from surgery for at least one week. The Vatican has canceled all of the pope’s scheduled audiences through Oct. 20.

Bruni said that there were no changes to announce at this time to the pope’s expected length of stay in the hospital or to the pope’s scheduled trip to Latin America Nov. 6-17. He said that Pope Leo XIV had “manifested his intention” to travel to Peru and “that’s still there.”

The previously published schedule for the 12-day trip to South America indicated that he would travel more than 19,000 miles on 14 flights during a November trip to Uruguay, Argentina, and Peru, which includes stops high in the Andes mountains.

Peru’s President Keiko Fujimori said the country received the news of the pontiff’s diagnosis “with deep sadness” and asked God “to care for him, to give him strength, and allow us to see him soon recovered.”

“Holy Father, this land, which is also your home, embraces you with immense affection. Today it is our turn to accompany you with our prayers, just as you have so many times accompanied us with yours,” she wrote.

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The mission of the Church

(Continued from page 5)

ferent than our picture of traditional missionaries, it is just as real. Consider this well-known prayer of St. John Henry Newman’s:

“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place . . .”

There is a question, then, that each of us is bound to ask: What mission has God assigned to me? How can I further God’s plan to bring the Gospel to everyone in the world — and that may not be someone in Africa or Appalachia; it may be my next-door neighbor or my barber or even a fellow parishioner. Whatever the work God has given us to do, our doing it will further the mission of

the Church.

The Church offers us a choice of special prayers for this Sunday. The second option of a Collect for The Evangelization of Peoples includes the themes we have been considering in this article. May it inspire us.

O God, you have willed that your Church be the sacrament of salvation for all nations, so that Christ’s saving work may continue to the end of the ages; stir up, we pray, the hearts of your faithful and grant that they may feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature, so that from all the peoples on earth one family and one people of your own may arise and increase. Let us pray for one another.

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

World Mission Sunday

(Continued from page 9)

some places, emphasis for the first time — on growing a native clergy (in various nations), so that all the priests were not just from the Netherlands and England and Ireland,” Father Andreassi said.

In so doing, Pope Benedict strove to “free Catholic missionary activity from excessive identification with European nationalism and colonial interests,” said the priest. “At the same time, he sought to enlist the entire Catholic world in the missionary enterprise through prayer, missionary vocations, and financial support.”

Those efforts “exploded” when then-Msgr. — later Bishop, and now Blessed — Fulton J. Sheen was appointed the U.S. director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1950, said Father Andreassi.

A pioneer in Catholic communications with an already developed national audience, Blessed Sheen was able to place his popularity in service of the missions, said the priest.

“Now you’re starting to see Sheen on local television stations talking about World Mission Sunday,” said Father Andreassi. “You’re seeing offers in anticipation of World Mission Sunday — if you send a few dollars to the national office, you’ll get a World Mission Rosary. So now World Mission Sunday is now becoming a huge event. There were a lot of things happening (on behalf of the missions), but he brought them up ten levels.”

The impact of Blessed Sheen “then had ripple effects on the diocesan offices” of the mission societies, the priest added.

Ahead of this year’s World Mission Sunday, the

Pontifical Mission Societies have garnered increased attention with the recent beatification of the prelate in St. Louis.

Father Andreassi noted that as Blessed Sheen expanded the profile of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith during his 16-year tenure as national director, the Church was invigorating the mission field throughout the latter 20th century by sending priests to minister in other nations and to help animate local vocations.

He cited the Fidei Donum (“gift of faith”) priests, diocesan clergy assigned to foreign missions.

“Historically, if you became a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, you were going to work in Pittsburgh, with some rare exceptions,” said Father Andreassi, noting that while “many religious orders already had a missionary arm to them,” the commitment of diocesan clergy to missions marked a shift.

Other inflection points in more recent years have included the COVID-19 pandemic, after which “national and the diocesan offices have really been tapping into new media to get the word out like it’s never been done before,” he said.

Another challenge is simply “trying to get the attention of Catholics,” since “so many things are pulling at our attention,” Father Andreassi said.

But missionary outreach is “central to the life of the Christian,” even in places where the Church is seemingly well grounded — including the U.S., where “many things” still “challenge or threaten the faith,” he said.

Missionary efforts must “lead to an interior transformation,” said Father Andreassi. “We’re looking to convert hearts and minds.”

Bishop selects Scholarship Granting Organization

(Continued from page 4)

received more than \$558 million in tax-credit contributions and awarded more than 94,000 scholarships, helping thousands of families choose the K-12 educational environment that best meets their children's needs.

As states prepare to implement the federal scholarship tax credit beginning January 1, 2027, American GOAL is partnering with Catholic dioceses, independent schools, and school associations to provide a proven, turnkey solu-

tion for administering the program while allowing schools to remain at the center of its fundraising and financial aid efforts.

"We are honored that the Diocese of Covington has chosen American GOAL as its Scholarship Granting Organization partner," said Ben Saylor, president and CEO of GOAL Scholarship Program, Inc. "The Diocese has a strong commitment to providing students with a Christ-

centered, academically excellent education, and we are excited to support that mission by helping more families access the educational opportunities that best meet their children's needs through this historic new federal scholarship tax credit."

Families, donors, and schools interested in learning more about the federal scholarship tax credit and American GOAL may visit www.americangoal.org.

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training class during the registration.

Step 3: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

Bulletins:

■ October bulletin: posted Sunday, Oct. 4; due Tuesday, Nov. 3.

The monthly e-mail reminder of a new bulletin posted will come from system@pub.virtus.org.

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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

New name, same mission: The National Association of Catholic Church Musicians celebrates 50 years

CHANTILLY, Va. — For half a century, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians helped define much of the sound of Mass and other sacramental experiences throughout the United States, teaching and empowering musicians to make music a spiritual food for tens of millions every Sunday. They plan to do the same and further enrich the life of the church for another 50 years, but under a new name as of Oct. 6: The National Association of Catholic Church Musicians. The group received a special blessing from an American Catholic whose faith life was fostered by Catholic music, Pope Leo XIV, through special greetings shared earlier from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, for its national convention in July. NACCM Board Chair Meyer Chambers, said he sees how the name change can help attract Catholics who share music outside the choir lofts on Sunday, whether it's through Gregorian chant, guitar-folk or Gospel sound. "We need to go out and proclaim this beautiful thing that God has given us," he said, "this ability to make music to praise the Lord on the highways, the byways, the corners, the woods, everywhere, because that's where you'll find us."

Kenyan archdiocese holds memorial Mass for Catholics killed on way to National Prayer Day

NAIROBI, Kenya — Catholics in Kenya's Archdiocese of Mombasa gathered Oct. 8 for a memorial Mass honoring 17 parishioners killed in a road accident while traveling to the Subukia National Marian Shrine in Nakuru for the country's National Prayer Day. Family members, friends and fellow worshippers filled St. Mathias Mulumba Church in Mikindani to remember the victims: 14 women, two men and their driver. In his homily, Coadjutor Archbishop Dominic Kimengich of Mombasa said, "Today we mourn our fellow brothers and sisters, but we are not mourning without hope ... they were part of our family, they were part of our parish and touched our lives in one way or another," he said. The group was among pilgrims traveling along the Mombasa-Nairobi Highway when a truck reportedly lost control, triggering a crash involving multiple vehicles. Twenty people died in the accident overall. At the

National Prayer Day, Archbishop Maurice Muhatia Makumba, president of the Kenyan bishops' conference, offered condolences and led prayers for the dead. Church leaders and Kenya's President William Ruto also offered condolences and prayers for the victims' families and the injured. On Oct. 7, the parish held a candlelight vigil to pray for those from the community who lost their lives.

Sydney bishops discuss plans for Eucharistic Congress with Pope Leo

SYDNEY — Catholics now have official dates for the next International Eucharistic Congress, with Eucharist28 set for Sydney Sept. 24-Oct. 1, 2028. Sydney's Archbishop Anthony Fisher and Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umbers, secretary general of the event, met Pope Leo XIV on Oct. 8 to discuss the details of the event. The congress, themed "This is My Body, Given for You," is expected to draw pilgrims from across Australia and around the world. A theological symposium will take place Sept. 20-22 ahead of the gathering. Archbishop Fisher said the meeting with the pope was an opportunity to "discuss our plans so far for the Eucharistic Congress, for me to get some feedback from him on what he'd like to do, what he'd like to see happen." While Pope Leo has not formally accepted an invitation to attend, he said in February, "It's still a way off, (but) I'll be there." Organizers have launched a nationwide Year of Prayer and are encouraging Catholics to begin preparing through parishes, schools and communities. Bishop Umbers emphasized the congress is for everybody "because the Eucharist makes the Church — the Church." The 54th International Eucharistic Congress will mark the centenary of Sydney's hosting of the event in 1928.

Cardinal Antonio Tagle elected dean of the College of Cardinals

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican announced Oct. 9 that Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle has been elected dean of the College of Cardinals following the retirement of 92-year-old Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re. The Filipino cardinal, 69, was chosen by the Church's cardinal bishops and confirmed by Pope Leo XIV, who also assigned him the traditional title of the suburbicarian Church of Ostia while he retains his see of Albano. As dean, Cardinal Tagle will hold a key role during any future papal transition. If a pope dies or resigns, the dean summons cardinals to Rome, leads the pre-conclave meetings, and formally asks the pope-elect whether he accepts his election and what name he will take. Cardinal Tagle will continue serving as pro-

prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization. He was elevated to the rank of cardinal bishop by Pope Francis in 2020 and recently presided at the beatification of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen in St. Louis. Cardinal Re had served as dean since 2020, overseeing the general congregations before the 2025 conclave that elected Pope Leo. He now becomes dean emeritus of the College of Cardinals.

Pope Leo declares death penalty 'inadmissible' attack on dignity of human person

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV has posted on his official X account that the Catholic Church holds the death penalty to be "inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person." In a post published Oct. 10, on the World Day Against the Death Penalty, the pope noted that justice can be upheld and the common good of humanity can be safeguarded without relying on capital punishment. He said criminals can be effectively detained in order to protect citizens, while still allowing those who are guilty of the possibility of redemption. "The death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person. The common good can be safeguarded and the requirements of justice can be met without recourse to capital punishment: effective systems of detention have been developed that protect citizens while at the same time do not completely deprive those who are guilty of the possibility of redemption. #NoDeathPenalty," Pope Leo wrote. The pope's post came a day after the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops made statements against the U.S. government's planned public execution of Nidal Malik Hasan over livestream.

Bishops to vote for conference secretary

WASHINGTON — Ahead of their annual fall meeting, the nation's Catholic bishops have announced the nominees for the leadership of six standing committees and for their conference's secretary. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will gather Nov. 16-19 in Baltimore, with a portion of the agenda dedicated to naming the new appointees. Chairs for the USCCB's committees on Catholic education, communications, cultural diversity, doctrine, national collections and pro-life activities are also up for the vote. Each bishop elected will serve for one year as chairman-elect of the respective committee before beginning a three-year term at the conclusion of the bishops' 2027 fall plenary assembly.

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