

Present to one another

Eight young adults spent 11 days forging spiritual bonds between the Jefferson City diocese and the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda.

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

April 12, 2024 • Vol. 67 No. 21

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Pastoral plans point to collaboration, Beatitudes



Individuals representing people of all ages, backgrounds and skin tones process along an idealized image of the Missouri River while caught up in a fishing net, in this mural by artist Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs, adorning a wall of the Baptistry in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Jefferson City. The newly promulgated pastoral plans for the diocese and its deaneries encourage all Catholics to take up their Baptismal call to pursue holiness and participate fully in carrying-out the mission of the Church.

— Photo by Annie Williams

Diocese submits listening sessions report for Synod on Synodality

See Page 17 for the full text of the latest report from this diocese to the Synod

By Jay Nies

Listening with the heart is a sacred act.

That has been the message throughout the Churchwide Synod on Synodality and all the preparations leading up to it.

And it's what people in the Jefferson City diocese experienced while participating in listening sessions for the Synod.

"Your listening exercise is a spiritual experience," Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general for the Synod of Bishops, told participants at a diocesan-wide listening session on Feb. 27.

The cardinal spoke over a live video feed to about 300 Catholics taking part in simultaneous listening sessions at already-scheduled parish leadership meetings in the diocese's five deaneries.

"You are not only going to listen to one another, you are not going to share only personal concerns and opinions, but you are going to share what the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate to the Church through YOU!" the cardinal stated.

The Synod is a multi-year, worldwide process of praying and listening in order to discern how best to proclaim the

See the full text of Bishop McKnight's pastoral letter on Pages 13-16

See related story on Page 3

By Jay Nies

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight has released the newly approved pastoral plans for the Jefferson City diocese and each of its deaneries.

The plans are part of the Shaping Our Future Together pastoral process and affirm a discernment by Catholics in the diocese for increased collaboration among parishes in each deanery.

The five deaneries are geographical divisions of the diocese.

This increased collaboration is considered essential for parishioners to strengthen their stewardship and co-responsibility, and for parishes to be recognized as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy.

The deanery plans, which were developed by people in each deanery, address the unique situations in their region. A diocesan pastoral process provides coordination and support to the deanery plans.

Bishop McKnight officially placed the new plans into effect with a pastoral letter just before the Chrism Mass during Holy Week this year.

The letter highlights the fruit of previous pastoral planning and explains that the new plan builds upon that progress.

"Our new pastoral plans will serve in continuity with the previous plans, deepening our mission as a synodal local Church," Bishop McKnight stated.

Shaping Our Future Together will encourage Catholics to continue their efforts to make their faith and their par-

See PASTORAL PLANS, page 12

Find us online at
CATHMO.COM

and
@DIOJEFFCITY

See SYNOD, page 12

MOVING? If you are moving or changing parishes, please fill out information below. Clip and mail to THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN, 2207 West Main Street, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Or complete the online form at diojeffcity.org/update-information. Allow two weeks.

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NEW PARISH _____

OLD PARISH _____

04/12/24

Assistant Director of Campus Ministry



St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia, Mo. is seeking to fill the position of Assistant Director of Campus Ministry.

To see a full job description, go to <https://www.comonewman.org/job-openings/>.

Administrative Assistant

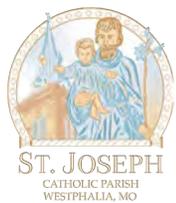


The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking an experienced administrative assistant to support the Director of Religious Education & Youth/Young Adult Ministry and the Coordinator of Women's Ministry. Requirements include: at least 5 years' experience; intermediate to advanced skills in Word and Excel; experience with website content management (preferred); ability to prioritize tasks and support more than one director; and willingness to assist with events.

This is a full-time position offering a competitive wage with comprehensive benefits which include life insurance, long-term disability, medical, dental, vision and a matching 403(b) retirement plan.

Applicants are encouraged to apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) or send resume to hrrdir@diojeffcity.org.

Teachers Needed - Westphalia



St. Joseph School in Westphalia, Mo., a Catholic K-8 school, is seeking to fill the following teaching positions:

FOURTH GRADE TEACHER — Develop and implement engaging lesson plans that align with the school's curriculum and Catholic teachings; ability to create positive classroom environment; and use a variety of instructional strategies to promote active learning. Candidate should have good communication skills to collaborate with colleagues, parents and administration, hold a BS in Education and current teaching certificate.

MUSIC TEACHER — Strong background in music education, deep appreciation for Catholic values and the ability to create engaging and enriching music experiences for students. Previous music teaching experience, proficiency in playing the piano, organ, and playing music for Masses is preferred.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER — Promote health, fitness and teamwork among students; experience in teaching PE to students in K-8; develop and implement age-appropriate PE lessons that promote physical fitness, skill development, student team building and sportsmanship; and integration of Catholic values and principles within lessons.

SECOND GRADE TEACHER — Teach the sacraments; develop and implement engaging lesson plans that align with the school's curriculum and Catholic teachings; ability to create positive classroom environment; and use a variety of instructional strategies to promote active learning. Candidate should have good communication skills to collaborate with colleagues, parents and administration, hold a BS in Education and current teaching certificate.

If interested in any of these positions, please submit cover letter, resume and three references to Patricia Kirk at pkirk@stjosephwestphalia.org.

Amid war, Cardinal Dolan to make pastoral visit to Israel, Palestine

OSV News

New York

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York has announced he will travel to Israel and Palestine April 12-18, amid a war now in its seventh month.

The cardinal will undertake the pastoral visit in his role as chairman of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA). Founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926, CNEWA supports the hospital as part of its overall mission to support the Catholic Church in the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe.

During his trip, Cardinal Dolan plans to meet with local Christian, Jewish and Islamic religious leaders; Israeli and Palestinian representatives; families of Israeli hostages; and various social service and humanitarian efforts.

The visit will mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Mission for

Palestine, established by Pope Pius XII in 1949 and placed since its inception under the administration of CNEWA.

Plans for the cardinal's visit were in place before Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, ambush on Israel, said CNEWA communications director Michael La Civita — and there is no in-

tervention of canceling this visit, during which Cardinal Dolan will help "keep open the windows of dialogue" to ensure "a just peace."

diojeffcity.org

Pray for deceased priests

Apr. 15 — Fr. Edwin A. Schmidt, St. Martin, St. Martins (2017)
Apr. 17 — Fr. Blase J. Scheffer, Annunciation, California (1969)
Apr. 21 — Fr. Raymond W. Rau, St. Anthony, Rosati (1978)
Apr. 22 — Fr. William P. Kottenstette, Chaplain, Kirksville Newman Center (2015)
Apr. 25 — Fr. Jerome F. Bestgen, St. Anthony, Rosati (1986); Fr. John J. Vandenberghe, service outside the diocese (1986)
Apr. 27 — Fr. Richard C. Hunkins, director of pilgrimages; Columbia Nursing Home Ministry (2000)

1st & 2nd Grade Teacher

St. Clement School in St. Clement, Mo., has an opening for a 1st and 2nd grade classroom teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. A successful candidate is a practicing Catholic in good standing who can minister to students regardless of subject area or a teacher who, consistent with the mission of St. Clement School, promotes and teaches the Catholic faith as reasonably determined by the principal. Applicants should hold the appropriate Missouri teaching certification, or its equivalent. All interested persons should complete the application at tinyurl.com/StClementTeacher and contact the Principal, Laurie Schuckenbrock, at lschuckenbrock@stclementmo.org.

Finance Manager - Sedalia



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Sedalia is seeking an experienced Finance

Manager to provide general accounting, budgeting and financial reporting services for the parish and school. In addition to traditional financial accounting practices, this person will be responsible for overseeing cash handling procedures and processes and implementation of best financial practices and internal controls. The ideal candidate will be proficient in QuickBooks OnLine, Microsoft Office and Google Workspace. Bachelor's degree in accounting or a related field preferred, but can be offset by years of experience. Position is open to persons of all faiths. Qualified candidates can apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) or send resume to hrrdir@diojeffcity.org.

Principal Needed



Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville, Mo., is accepting applications for a principal for the 2024-2025 school year. We are a Catholic elementary school, serving pre-K through 8th grade, with a current enrollment of 92 students.

This position requires a strong Catholic identity, commitment to growth, collaborative spirit and strategic vision that embraces a strong partnership with parents and the parish community. The principal reports directly to the pastor, and would lead staff by example in the areas of continuing educational and professional growth. A job description and application can be found at diojeffcity.org/school-office. Questions can be directed to Dr. Erin Vader, Superintendent of Catholic Schools at evader@diojeffcity.org.

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Diocese of Jefferson City

The Catholic Missourian

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— Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight
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At Easter, Bishop McKnight calls the faithful to tend to Christ's body through charitable, merciful action

See the full text of Bishop McKnight's pastoral letter on Pages 13-16

By Jay Nies

The Lord who conquered death by dying and rising ce-ments his reign with mercy, peace and reconciliation.

So should it be for all who follow him and hope to inherit his gift of eternal life.

"All of our past sins against God and one another have been nailed to the cross, so now is the time for us to practice the mercy we have received," proclaimed Bishop W. Shawn

McKnight in his homily at the Easter Vigil in the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

"This Easter, I pray that you and your families may find your own ways to be agents of Christ's mercy, to help your domestic church and your parish to become a more gentle community where the Beatitudes are lived and embraced," he stated.

He said the Easter Vigil, celebrated on the holiest night of the year, is the kernel of the entire liturgical year.

"All that has come before — beginning with Advent and Christmas — and all that flows afterward, with the Easter Season, the celebration of Pentecost, and the rest of Ordinary Time — the entire liturgical year centers on this night of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The Beatitudes, an integral part of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, include a litany of blessings: Blessed are the poor in spirit ... those who mourn ... those who are meek ... those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... those who are merciful ... those who are clean of heart ... the peacemakers ... those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness ... and those who endure insults falsely because of Jesus.

Bishop McKnight made the Beatitudes the basis for the diocese's new, three-year pastoral plan and the concurrent pastoral plans for the diocese's five geographical groupings of parishes, known as deaneries.

He promulgated the new pastoral plans during Holy Week in a pastoral letter titled, "Shaping Our Future Together: Parishes On Mission Together as Communities of the Beatitudes."

Bishop McKnight began the Easter Vigil at dusk on Holy Saturday, concurrently with priests in parishes throughout the diocese.

Father Stephen Jones, rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph and pastor of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish; Father Paul Clark, diocesan vocation di-



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight blesses the fire for the Easter candle outside the Cathedral of St. Joseph at the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

— Photo by Father Stephen Jones

rector, director of seminarians and chaplain of Helias Catholic High School; Father Cesar Anicama; and (retired) Father Donald Antweiler concelebrated the Mass.

It was the culmination of the Church's communal observance of Holy Week and the 40-day period of penitential preparation.

Symbols of fire, light, water, oil, bread and wine were highlighted in a Liturgy filled with some of the Church's oldest and richest traditions and rituals.

The bishop baptized members of the elect and confirmed and gave First Holy Commu-

nion to the candidates for full communion at Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish, as did priests in parishes throughout the diocese

He blessed the Easter Candle, symbol of the resurrected Christ, which will be used for Liturgies in the Cathedral throughout the upcoming year.

In his homily, the bishop told of how pilgrims from all over the world travel to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to visit the place where Jesus was buried after his death, and rose up on the first Easter Sunday.

See EASTER, page 23

Bishop McKnight's Calendar

APRIL

- Apr 13** Diocesan Stewardship Conference Mass, 8 am, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City; Confirmation Mass, St. Anthony Parish, Camdenton and Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Lake Ozark, 5 pm, St. Anthony Church, Camdenton
- Apr 14** Confirmation Mass, Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish, 10 am, Jefferson City; Confirmation Mass, St. Andrew Parish, Holts Summit, St. Anthony of Padua Parish, St. Anthony, St. Lawrence Parish, St. Elizabeth, St. Mary Parish, Milan, and St. Mary Parish, Unionville, 1 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City
- Apr 15** Pontifical College Josephinum Good Shepherd Dinner, 5:30 pm, Columbus, Ohio
- Apr 16** Mass, Pontifical College Josephinum Seminary, 7 am; Board of Trustees Meeting, 8:30 am, Columbus, Ohio
- Apr 17** Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Senior Retreat Mass, 1:50 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City; Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Parish, 6:30 pm, Pilot Grove
- Apr 18** Spire Foundation Meeting, 11 am, Chancery; Confirmation Ceremony, St. Peter Parish, 6:30 pm, Jefferson City
- Apr 20** Immaculate Conception Parish Centennial Mass, 4:30 pm, Macon
- Apr 21** Confirmation Mass, St. George Parish, Hermann, Church of the Risen Savior Parish, Rhineland, St. Alexander Parish, Belle, and Immaculate Conception Parish, Owensville, 2 pm, St. George Church, Hermann
- Apr 22-23** Child and Youth Protection Catholic Leadership Conference, St. Louis
- Apr 24** Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri Executive Committee Meeting, 11:30 am, Catholic Charities Offices, Jefferson City
- Apr 25** Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 11 am; Chancery
- Apr 27** Confirmation Ceremony, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 11 am, Columbia
- Apr 30** Priests' Personnel Board Dinner Meeting, 5:30 pm, Bishop's Residence

MAY

- May 1** Diocesan 6th Grade Vocation Day Mass, 10 am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Columbia; Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Board Meeting, noon, Columbia; Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Snows Parish, Mary's Home and Sacred Heart Parish, Eldon, 6:30 pm, Our Lady of Snows Church, Mary's Home
- May 2** Diocesan 8th Grade Mass, 10:30 am, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City

Bishop McKnight's April prayer intention for our Local Church

For a greater awareness of and respect for our common home in building an authentic human ecology: May we be good stewards of the gift of creation in defending all human life.



Intención del mes de abril del Obispo McKnight por nuestra Iglesia Local

Para una mayor conciencia y respeto por nuestra casa común en la construcción de una auténtica ecología humana: Que seamos buenos administradores del don de la creación al defender toda vida humana.

Please be so kind as to make this a part of your group and private prayer.

Kirksville Mary Immaculate students learn and teach the meaning of “Maundy” Thursday

By Jay Nies

Before freely accepting his passion and death, Jesus commanded his closest friends to love one another and to serve others with unvarnished humility.

He drove the point home in a way his Apostles found shocking — by wrapping a towel around his waist and insisting on washing their feet (John 13).

Julia Murmylo wanted her seventh- and eighth-graders at Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville to ponder that lesson and share it with the rest of the school.

Having attended Mary Immaculate School from age 5 through eighth grade, she pointed out that Holy Thursday has long been a part of the Holy Week experience there.

“When I was a student, Holy Thursday was celebrated by following the seventh- and

eighth-grade kids around the school grounds as they acted out the Live Stations of the Cross,” she recalled.

Mrs. Murmylo is convinced that God was who led her back to her alma mater to teach.

“I got my first and only teaching job at Mary Immaculate, two weeks before school started back in 2014,” she noted.

As the new seventh- and eighth-grade teacher, she inherited the responsibility for organizing the Holy Thursday activities for the school.



Students in Julia Murmylo’s seventh- and eighth-grade class at Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville wash the feet of their schoolmates after explaining the significance of “Maundy” Thursday during Holy Week.

— Photos by Julia Murmylo

“We continued to do Living Stations for many years,” she said.

But following the

COVID-19 pandemic and related disruptions in 2020, Mrs. Murmylo and Principal Ann Gray set about breathing new life into the students’ Paschal observance.

“I wanted to something that was hands-on learning — something for the kids in the school of all ages could reflect on,” Mrs. Murmylo insisted.

She called to mind how many Christians refer to Holy Thursday as Maundy Thursday, which is the name of the ritual of washing people’s feet on that day in imitation of what Jesus did.

She recounted to her students how when she was a child attending the Mass of the Lord’s Supper with her family on Holy Thursday, the entire congregation would come forward for the Washing of the Feet portion of the Liturgy.

“Then, it became clear to me,” she said, “that I should host a feet-washing for the school and have the kids be hands-on — be like Jesus, be-

ing a servant to his disciples.”

She set about gathering information from various sources to give her students a feel for what Jesus was trying to convey to those who would be charged with carrying his message to the ends of the earth.

She printed out five pages of information and skit lines for her students to read and silently reflect on.

She asked

each to highlight what information struck them as being most important.

“I told them to think while reading: ‘What in here is best to explain to the younger kids about what Jesus wanted us to learn from his last days on Earth?’” she said.

“Being a part of a small school community, my students really strive to do what is best for all,” she noted.

The students then collaborated on putting together a lesson to share with their schoolmates about the meaning of “Maundy” and the significance of what Jesus did that day.

After sharing that lesson at an all-school assembly in the gymnasium, Ms. Murmylo’s students set about washing the feet of all the pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade students and the adults of the school.

“As a whole, this was a beautiful lesson for the students of all ages,” their teacher observed. “And it will surely be an experience to remember.”

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Young adults from diocese gather lifetime of memories in Uganda

By Jay Nies

A group of young Missouri Catholics searched for words to describe the 11-day voyage they were preparing for to the African nation of Uganda.

Some called it a mission trip. Some described it as a cultural exchange. Others said it was “religious tourism.”

“But honestly, none of us knew what was in store for us,” said Nico Keegan, a member of St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia.

“We were going out there and were just trusting that what we’re doing is a God thing,” he said.

Eight young adults from the Jefferson City diocese traveled to Kampala, Uganda, over Holy Week and Easter to cultivate relationships with the people of an archdiocese from which four priests are on mission to this diocese.

One of those priests, Father Joseph Luzindana, led the Missouri delegation to his home diocese.

Fr. Luzindana serves here as diocesan moderator for youth and young adult ministry and as associate pastor of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City.

He previously served as associate pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia, where several of the people who wound up going to Uganda with him

originally got to know him.

He is founder of the Kampala archdiocese’s Y.E.S. Center (yescenterug.org), a place for young Catholics in Uganda’s largest city to have their faith life, social life and education strengthened.

Also traveling with the group were Maureen Quinn, diocesan director of religious education and youth/young adult ministry, and Jake Seifert, diocesan senior director of development and of the diocesan Missions Office.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight visited the Kampala archdiocese in January 2023. In keeping with his vision for a deeper spiritual bond between the two dioceses, the young-adult delegation from Missouri went to Kampala to take part in a “ministry of presence.”

“Maureen Quinn told us we were coming here just to simply be — to be with the people and show them love from across the world — all one Church on separate continents,” Nico stated in an inter-



A group of young adults from the Jefferson City diocese and their guides gather before leaving on a Holy Week/Easter visit to the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda, from which four priests are serving on mission in the Jefferson City diocese.

view from Uganda.

“We came here from almost a completely other world to become friends with our brothers and sisters in Christ,” he said.

Throughout the journey, the Ugandan people were unreservedly warm and hospitable, treating their American guests as celebrities and dignitaries.

“We’ve received a lot of very warm welcomes and celebrations of us being here,” said Allison Newkirk, who traveled to Uganda with her brother, Matthew.

“We were taken aback by how happy everyone was to see us,” Allison recalled. “We’re just regular people, not anything special, but they were treating us as if we were very special.”

The Americans quickly recognized the tremendous esteem the people in Fr. Luzindana’s home archdiocese have for him.

“The impact he’s had on the Church in Uganda is incredible, and the experiences that he’s been able to lead us through as a result could not be bought with any amount of money,” said Matthew.

Upon arriving in Kampala, the Missourians were greeted by about 30

young people playing African drums and dancing.

Children presented each American visitor with a bouquet of flowers.

“They came and gave each of us hugs, and everyone was welcoming us, and there were three photographers snapping photos of everything going on,” said Allison.

No greater love

Bishop McKnight noted after his visit last year that the Catholic Church in Uganda is young and vibrant and rests firmly on the blood of the Ugandan Martyrs.

The growth of Catholicism in that East-central African nation dates back to the arrival of French missionaries in the 1800s.

Twenty-two Catholics and as many Protestants were killed for their faith in 1885.

Pope St. Paul VI declared several of them saints in 1964.

Mrs. Quinn said it was a tremendous blessing to visit Fr. Luzindana’s homeland with him and see it through his eyes.

On Good Friday, more than 60,000 people followed the priest up a rugged mountain to the Kiwamirembe Marian Shrine, praying the Stations of the Cross at stone pillars along the way.

Fr. Luzindana gave reflections on each Station, alternating between English and the local language commonly spoken in Kampala.

“Even preaching in two languages at the same time for over two hours — for that to be so engaging, and for people to remember everything he said — we were just in awe,” said Matthew.

At every station, Fr. Luzindana laid out a personal connection.

“He’d ask, ‘What is going on in your life, and how does this station connect to that,’” Matthew recalled. “Everybody has real sufferings and issues.

He brought a lot of that to life.

“Like at the second and third fall, he’d say, ‘Do you not see how Jesus falls? He understands how we fall, and he encourages us to get back up,’” said Matthew.

“Or when Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus: ‘Who are the people in your life who are helping you carry your cross? Who can you say thank you to?’” Matthew recalled.

Fr. Luzindana consistently wove Easter joy through the Good Friday observance.

“All through the Way of the Cross, he reminded people that ‘you want to be holy, Jesus wants you to be a saint,’” said Allison.

“He made it so engaging,” said Matthew. “So many people in the crowd were moved by his voice.”

Thriving, young Church

More than 700 people were on hand to welcome the Americans to the Y.E.S. Center for Mass on their second day in Uganda.

“The beautiful thing was that they were doing traditional dancing with the drums,” Allison observed. “And if you’d start to dance, they’d invite you in and you’d have so much joy.”

Matthew pointed out that most countries with developed economies are entering what Pope Benedict XVI called a New Apostolic Age, in which people routinely do not hear the Gospel and know little about Jesus.

“But here, in Uganda, you

See UGANDA, page 21



Father Joseph Luzindana, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda, who is serving on mission in the Jefferson City diocese, leads about 60,000 people (background of photo) in meditating on the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday during a recent visit to his homeland with a group from this diocese.



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Abortion survivor to speak at Midwest March for Life in J.C.

DATE: May 1
TIME: 8 am - 2:30 pm

By Jay Nies

Melissa Ohden's circle of friends includes women who have had abortions, as well as former abortionists and abortion clinic workers.

"I see them for who they are, not just the abortion experience they have," said Mrs. Ohden, founding CEO of The Abortion Survivors Network (abortionurvivors.org) and author of *You Carried Me: A Daughter's Memoir*.

Mrs. Ohden, who survived an attempt to end her life in the womb by a failed saline-infusion abortion, will share her story at this year's Midwest March for Life in Jefferson City.

The 15th annual March and rally will take place on Wednesday, May 1, on the grounds of the Missouri State Capitol.

Activities are planned from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Parishes and schools throughout the diocese are encouraged to attend.

Participants are urged to wear red.

The day's activities will begin at 8 a.m. with a Prayer Walk in the Capitol, and the praying of the Rosary on the North Lawn of the Capitol.

The pre-march rally will start at 9:15 a.m. Presenters will include: Mrs. Ohden; Ivy Almon, Brand Ambassador of Support After Abortion; Brandy Meeks, President of Vitae Foundation; Bridget Van Means, CEO Vision Leader of ThriVe Nation; Gabriel Cobb, Tri21 triathlete and motivational speaker; and Father Anthony Viviano, moderator for Pro-life Ministry in the Jefferson City diocese.

The March through downtown Jefferson City's streets will occur immediately after the rally.

A grilled hot dog lunch prepared by the Knights of Columbus St. Peter Parish Council in Fulton will be offered at a reasonable cost.

A youth rally will be held at 12:15 p.m. Presenters will include Nate Robertson, vice president of Sidewalk Advocates For Life; Reagan Barklage, national field director for Students For Life Amer-

ica; pro-life activist Megan Mastro; Chuck and Linda Raymond with Silent No More and Project Joseph, and Levi Hart, senior investments officer of ThriVe Nation.

Dena Espenscheid, senior director of coalitions at the Leadership Institute, will give an update on the statewide ballot initiative at 12:15 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda.

Further information and a full listing of the agenda for the day can be found at: midwestmarchforlife.com.

Accomplished young vocalist Claire Huntley, a junior at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City, will perform at 8:45 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. on the Capitol steps.

Bishop Edward M. Rice of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will pray the Opening Prayer and give remarks at the pre-march rally.

He will also preside and preach the homily at the Closing Mass at 1:30 p.m. in the nearby Proto-Cathedral of St. Peter. Bishop James V. Johnston of Kansas City-St. Joseph will concelebrate.

Copies of Mrs. Ohden's latest book, *Abortion Survivors Break Their Silence*, will be available for purchase.

"More alike"

Some of the most difficult conversations Mrs. Ohden has had are when women contact The Abortion Survivors Network, hoping to find out that their baby survived their abortion.

She noted that while abortion survivors' experiences are more diverse than many people realize, "we do have a lot of common issues that we face, both in terms of strengths and difficulties."

Strengths often include resilience, a sense of purpose, and an unusual capacity to forgive.

"There are also often significant issues with identity, self-esteem and self-worth, high levels of anxiety and depression, as well as difficulty



Participants in last year's Midwest March for Life make their way around the Capitol Circle.
— Photo by Jay Nies

'fitting in' to a society that is so saturated by abortion," she said.

Given her own history, many people are surprised to learn of Mrs. Ohden's tight friendships with women who have had abortions and with people who have carried them out.

"I find that through all of these types of abortion experiences — whether having the abortion, surviving it or being a part of it — we are more alike than we are different," she said. "First as human beings, but then, also, in being impacted by the abortion."

She said there's never been a more critical time for people to attend the Midwest March for Life, show their solidarity and actively advocate for life in the womb.

"For one thing, it's encouraging for people to gather together and see that there are so many people with shared beliefs, regardless of how the media and abortion industry try to paint being pro-life," she said.

Furthermore, "our public witness helps educate people and bring forth meaningful conversations about the sanctity of human life, abortion, and healing," she stated.

Also, with powerful and well-funded interests attempting to enshrine abortion-on-demand in Missouri's Constitution through the initiative petition process, "it's so important for truth to be heard and seen, and for all of us to collaborate together," said Mrs. Ohden.

Unique perspective

The Abortion Survivors Network is the only healing and advocacy organization for abortion survivors and their families worldwide.

Mrs. Ohden is one of likely tens of thousands of abortion survivors in the United States.

As of January of this year, she and her team had connected with over 700 survivors.

She's convinced of the importance of people who have survived failed abortions to tell their stories to the masses.

"Abortion survivors humanize abortion in a way that no one else can," she observed. "As vulnerable as that makes us, there's purpose and meaning born from the pain we experience."

Through that sharing, other people who survived abortion also find out that they aren't alone.

"Raising one's voice not only furthers our own healing but brings healing to others," Mrs. Ohden said.

She pointed out that babies survive all types of abortion procedures, even both abortion pills.

"The mothers who are experiencing this, need help and hope, as do the babies who are at risk of being aborted again," she said.

She insisted that abortion survivors and their mothers are not each other's enemies.

"I was the primary and intended victim of that abortion procedure," she stated. "My

birthmother, Ruth, was the secondary victim."

Instead of fear of condemnation, she wants women and men, abortionists, abortion clinic nurses and workers, and all of this abortion-scarred society to come to full realization that there is hope and healing after abortion.

"The pro-life movement isn't just lip service when we say we're pro-life, pro-woman and pro-child," Mrs. Ohden noted.

"We live it out in action, and if anyone who's been impacted by abortion attends the March, they will certainly experience that," she said.

God's fingerprints

Mrs. Ohden often hears that people can recognize God's handiwork in their lives by simply looking closely.

"For me, his fingerprints are all over my life — from my survival, to giving birth to my oldest daughter at the same hospital where my life was intended to end in abortion, even in moving to Kansas City, not knowing that my birthmother and half-sister live in the area," she said.

She noted that forgiveness and reconciliation are indispensable components in everyone's life, and hers is no different.

"My prayer continuously is for the repose of the soul of my abortionist and my grandmother, and for my birthmother and her family to experience healing — and if it's God's will, reconciliation," she said.

"That's my prayer for all families impacted by abortion," she added.

She's confident that this year's Midwest March for Life will bring renewed collaboration and commitment for grassroots pro-lifers; media attention that highlights the humanity of the preborn and the inhumanity of abortion; and inspiration "to continue on with so much urgency swirling around us."

See MARCH, page 23

Vatican says abortion, surrogacy, war, poverty are attacks on human dignity

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Being a Christian means defending human dignity and that includes opposing abortion, the death penalty, gender transition surgery, war, sexual abuse and human trafficking, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said in a new document.

“We cannot separate faith from the defense of human dignity, evangelization from the promotion of a dignified life and spirituality from a commitment to the dignity of every human being,” Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, wrote in the document’s opening section.

The declaration, *“Dignitas Infinita”* (“Infinite Dignity”), was released at the Vatican April 8.

In the opening section, Cardinal Fernández confirmed reports that a declaration on human dignity and bioethical issues — such as abortion, euthanasia and surrogacy — was approved by members of the dicastery in mid-2023 but Pope Francis asked the dicastery to make additions to “highlight topics closely connected to the theme of dignity, such as poverty, the situation of migrants, violence against women, human trafficking, war and other themes.”

In February, the cardinals and bishops who are members of the dicastery approved the updated draft of the document, and in late March, Pope Francis gave his approval and ordered its publication, Cardinal Fernández said.

With its five years of preparation, he wrote, “the doc-

ument before us reflects the gravity and centrality of the theme of dignity in Christian thought.”

In St. John Paul II’s memory

The title of the document is taken from an Angelus address St. John Paul II gave in Germany in 1980 during a meeting with people with disabilities. He told them, “With Jesus Christ, God has shown us in an unsurpassed way how he loves each human being and thereby bestows upon him infinite dignity.”

The document is dated, “2 April 2024, the 19th anniversary of the death of Pope St. John Paul II.”

Cardinal Fernandez said initially the dicastery was going to call the document “Beyond all Circumstances,” which is an affirmation by Pope Francis of how human dignity is not lessened by one’s state of development or where he or she is born or the resources or talents one has or what one has done.

Instead, he said, they chose the comment St. John Paul II had made.

The declaration noted that the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World also listed attacks on human dignity as ranging from abortion and euthanasia to “sub-human living conditions” and

“degrading working conditions.”

Members of the doctrinal dicastery included the death penalty among violations of “the inalienable dignity of every person, regardless of the circumstances” and called for the respect of the dignity of people who are incarcerated.

The declaration denounced discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and particularly situations in which people are “imprisoned, tortured and even deprived of the good of life solely because of their sexual orientation.”

But it also condemned “gender theory” as “extremely dangerous since it cancels differences in its claim to make everyone equal.”

Gender theory, it said, tries “to deny the greatest possible difference that exists between living beings: sexual difference.”

The Catholic Church, the declaration said, upholds the objective truth that “human life in all its dimensions, both

physical and spiritual, is a gift from God. This gift is to be accepted with gratitude and placed at the service of the good.”

Quoting Pope Francis’ exhortation *“Amoris Laetitia,”* the declaration said gender ideology “envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.”

Dicastery members said it is true that there is a difference between biological sex and the roles and behaviors that a given society or culture assigns to a male or female, but the fact that some of those notions of what it

means to be a woman or a man are culturally influenced, does not mean there are no differences between biological males and biological females.

“Therefore,” they said, “all attempts to obscure reference to the ineliminable sexual difference between man and woman are to be rejected.”

Again quoting Pope Francis’ exhortation, the declaration said, “We cannot separate the masculine and the feminine from God’s work of creation, which is prior to all our decisions and experiences, and

See DIGNITY, page 27



LEFT: People receive containers to be filled with food for people in need at a soup kitchen in Havana that is serving a growing number of Cubans struggling to make ends meet amid economic crisis on Jan. 15. Poverty is among more than a dozen issues covered by a new Vatican document on human dignity. *“Dignitas Infinita”* (“Infinite Dignity”) was released April 8, by the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. — OSV News photo/Yander Zamora, Reuters



RIGHT: A nurse and newborns are seen in the Hotel Venice in Kyiv, Ukraine, May 14, 2020, which is owned by BioTexCom, a surrogacy agency. Surrogacy is among more than a dozen issues covered by a new Vatican document on human dignity. — OSV News photo/Gleb Garanich, Reuters

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QUESTION CORNER

Why isn't a pro-life petition part of the Prayer of the Faithful for every Mass?

By Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News



Q: If, indeed, abortion is the Church's preeminent issue, then why don't we hear a pro-life petition as part of the Prayer of the Faithful at every Mass?

A: Many parishes do include a pro-life intention as part of the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass every week. However, it is true that including a pro-life intention is not a stated requirement.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (i.e., the master universal "instruction book" for how Mass is to be celebrated) tells us that: "The intentions announced (during the Prayer of the Faithful) should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community" (see GIRM 71).

In a roundabout way, this paragraph of the GIRM is letting us know that, unlike other prayers of the Mass such as the offertory or the consecration, the Prayer of the Faithful is meant to be somewhat more "free form." Although practically speaking there are Catholic publications that can provide parishes with suggested verbiage for the various intercessions of the Prayer of the Faithful, the Church's law envisions each parish composing their own intercessions, so as to best express the actual intentions on the minds and hearts of the faithful in a given parish or diocesan community.

Still, the GIRM does give us some guidelines on what these intercessions should encompass. GIRM 70 indicates that: "The series of intentions is usually to be: a) for the needs of the Church; b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; d) for the local community. Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion."

In light of these statements from the GIRM, my thought is that, if you are not hearing a specifically pro-life intention during the Prayer of the Faithful, this might be due to one of several reasons.

First, it could be that other kinds of intentions were seen as more pertinent to a given community or in a particular circumstance. For instance, it may be eminently appropriate to include a pro-life intention during the Sunday Masses at a Catholic chapel or Newman center serving a secular university. But it might not be as much of a pastoral priority to specifically pray for pro-life causes at the funeral Mass for the grandmother of a large and devout Catholic family, as this might be perceived as merely "preaching to the choir" rather than offering a sincere prayer most relevant to the occasion.

In more typical parish settings, perhaps the pro-life intention might be "hidden" and implicit rather than explicit and obvious in a given intercession. For example, an intercession "for public authorities" to carry out their duties with a well-formed conscience might strongly imply that public leaders should do all they can to protect the sacredness of human life. Or a prayer "for those burdened by any kind of difficulty" might include women facing difficult pregnancy situations. Even without using the word "abortion," such intercessions would still be supporting the Church's pro-life teachings.

On a similar note, it's good to keep in mind that while being pro-life does certainly mean opposing the act of abortion, it goes well beyond that. A true pro-life stance means supporting vulnerable women, creating spaces where children and families

See QUESTION, page 23

Papal Audience

April 10, 2024



Dear brothers and sisters:

In our continuing catechesis on the virtues, we now consider fortitude, which the *Catechism* defines as "the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good." With the help of this virtue, we are strengthened in our daily efforts, sustained by grace, to resist temptation and to overcome all obstacles to living fully our new life in Christ. Those obstacles may be from within, such as fear, anxiety or guilt, or from without, such as trials, tribulations or persecution. Cultivating the virtue of fortitude makes us take seriously the reality of evil and actively combat all forms of injustice in the world around us. May the example of fortitude and perseverance shown by Jesus and the saints encourage us in our journey of Christian faith and confirm our trust in the Risen Christ's definitive victory over sin and death.

I extend a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially the groups from England, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United States of America. I also want to convey to the people of Kazakhstan my spiritual closeness at this time, when massive flooding has affected many regions of the country and caused thousands of people to be evacuated from their homes. I invite everyone to pray for all who are suffering the effects of this natural disaster. Even in times of difficulty, we recall the joy of the Risen Christ, and I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

Pope meets with family members of Hamas hostages

By Justin McLellan
Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Eight people united in their anguish carried into the papal library posters bearing the faces of their loved ones who are held in captivity by Hamas.

The father, mother, aunt, uncle, cousin, brother or twin sister of various Israeli hostages met with Pope Francis for just under an hour April 8, six months after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas in which some 240 people were kidnapped and taken to Gaza.

Vatican News reported that among those who met with the pope was Bezalel Shnaider, the aunt of Shiri Bibas — an Israeli mother taken hostage along with her two sons, 4-year-old Ariel and 9-month-old Kfir, the youngest hostage taken in the Oct. 7 attacks.

In an edited video of the meeting posted on X by *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, Pope Francis touched his hand to a poster with images of the children to bless them.

The video also showed Amit Nimrodi giving Pope Francis a necklace bearing the image of a house with a heart inside, a symbol of support for the hostages, and he told the pope

that he began growing out his now-lengthy white beard when his son was taken hostage since he believes his son, an Israeli soldier, is also growing out his beard in captivity.

Gal Gilboa-Dalal, another member of the delegation, survived the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on a music festival in Re'im, Israel, but his brother, 22-year-old Guy, was taken prisoner by Hamas. Li-Yam Berger attended the audience in support of her twin sister, Agam, a 19-year-old Israeli soldier, who was kidnapped during an at-

tack military base in Nahal Oz, Israel, Oct. 7.

The delegation was scheduled to travel through Italy, meeting with government representatives and members of the Italian Jewish community.

In November Pope Francis had met at the Vatican with 12 relatives of 14 Israelis held hostage by Hamas and, separately, with 10 Palestinians whose family members were suffering under the Israeli siege of Gaza. The Vatican press office insisted the meetings were "of an exclusively humanitarian nature."

CRS workers remain in Gaza after colleagues killed in strike

OSV News

Jerusalem

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) workers in Gaza are determined to continue their mission after seven members of World Central Kitchen (WCK) were killed April 1 by a strike Israeli forces called a "grave mistake." Now, "the overall humanitarian community is ... reeling from the news of the WCK incident," said Jason Knapp, country representative for CRS in Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza. Knapp told OSV News he is "amazed every single day by the CRS colleagues who are providing assistance in Gaza."

The CRS Gaza team has "reached about three quarters of a million people since the beginning of the war," providing "food, cash-based assistance or market-based assistance, blankets and shelter and other types of items to families who need it," said Knapp.

Gowns of grace, heaps of joy: rediscovering Catholicism

By Christina Capecchi



Jenna Wright has come a long way from being an NFL cheerleader to a First Communion catechist. Now, rather than sporting a skimpy outfit at the Super Bowl, she's selling white gowns to second-grade girls and their families — and making it a memorable part of their sacramental preparation. It's the perfect fit for the mother of five who's rediscovered her faith.

Jenna was raised Catholic in Michigan. Again and again, the green-eyed blonde performed in the spotlight. As

a teen, she trained in ballet and won a beauty pageant. In college she studied broadcast journalism and became a professional cheerleader. She even cheered at the Super Bowl.

Meanwhile, her faith was crumbling. "I was quite thin, yet I had huge body issues and felt low in my self-worth," she said. "I was surrounded by worldly things."

At the end of her junior year of college, Jenna hit a breaking point. "I'm tired of this!" she felt. "Jesus was calling me back."

She made her first confession in years. Grace began to flood in.

When the Cardinals invited Jenna back the following season, she declined. "I don't want to be dancing around in

a bikini in front of hundreds of thousands of people," she thought. "I'm done with that."

The more she learned about her faith, the more her confidence surged.

Now 36, she and her husband, Eric, are raising five kids ages 1 to 10 on Daniel Island in Charleston, S.C., where they attend St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church.

Jenna delights in leading First Communion classes. "That age group is still so sweet and innocent, but they're asking good questions and can understand bigger concepts," she said. "And the sacraments! I get teary-eyed just thinking about it. Whenever you receive the Eucharist, it's like you have a cup, and God is filling up your cup with grace.

Sometimes it gets so full that it's overflowing so you just have to share it with other people."

As she taught, Jenna couldn't help but notice a business opportunity. It started when her firstborn needed a First Communion dress. No local stores were selling them, and shopping online didn't feel the same.

Other families began asking Jenna where to find dresses. She didn't have an answer. One parent mentioned that they'd booked a trip to New York to shop at a boutique. The next year, another parent said they were headed to Rhode Island to buy a First Communion dress.

See CAPECCHI, page 23

Let's celebrate Easter for a while

By Greg Erlandson
OSV News



This year, I'm glad to see Lent come to an end, and not just because of Easter Alleluias and Cadbury dark chocolate eggs.

It was a tough Lent. Part of it, of course, had nothing explicitly to do with Lent. The news has generally been dreadful, a reminder, I suppose of why we need saving. This broken, battered, cruel world needs a savior. I need a savior.

Perhaps this was not true for you, but my Lent was especially difficult because I had trouble keeping my Lenten resolves. None of them were all that hard, by the way. But each of them demanded a certain amount of diligence in the sacrifice, and diligence was a struggle this year.

I won't go into all the bloody details, except to say that when "Son of a..." flew from my lips, only to remember that I had resolved to refrain from saying "Son of a ...," well, it was that kind of Lent.

One of my favorite Easter reflections is from St. John Chrysostom. He is a saint revered by both the Eastern and Western churches, and for many good reasons. But this quote from his Easter homily proclaiming the time to celebrate reveals his Christ-like love of our poor humanity.

"First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day! You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go

away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave."

"Forgiveness has risen from the grave," so "you that have kept the fast, and you that have not," come and celebrate all the same. All of us: Those of us who didn't do so well this Lent. Those of us who kept our resolutions with gritted teeth and quiet grumbling. Those of us who sacrificed with a prayerful soul and a smile.

St. Chrysostom reminds us that all of us are invited to the feast: The lazy and the good, the sober and the slothful, rich and poor.

In another part of the same homily, he invokes that great parable that so frustrates Americans. It is the one about the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16) who show up at different times of the day, yet all get the same payment at day's end. Boy, does that frost our puritan cupcake.

Easter, St. Chrysostom says, is the same reward for all of us. Lent is a good discipline, a way of reminding us of the Lord's own suffering and sacrifice on our behalf. But that sacrifice has been already made for us, and now in this glorious Easter season, we can celebrate that he truly is risen and death defeated.

And if I may suggest an Easter resolution: Let's not let Easter be forgotten in a flash. We spent 40 days in the desert of Lent. Let us now, as they did in St. Chrysostom's day, spend 40 days rejoicing.

Break out the Cadbury eggs! Celebrate with special foods! Express gratitude for the blessing that this, the greatest feast in the Church calendar, truly is.

There will be other Lents. There is

just one Easter event. Let's remind this tormented old world that there is a happy ending.

Greg Erlandson is an award-winning

Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on Twitter @GregErlandson.

REFLECTION

What you hear in darkness

By Mark Saucier

I was making a pinhole projector so our granddaughter could experience her first solar eclipse like her grandparents did back when both the sun and the moon were much younger.

While racing against the celestial clock, someone came to the door. It was a young man we had been helping, and I'm sure my impatient "What's up?" sounded more like "What do you need? Can't you see I'm busy?"

My wife was the first to notice something wrong. A shy kid, he now seemed deeper within himself. Always quiet, his words were now little more than a whisper.

"My mother died," he told us, trying to hold back the tears.

We knew that she had been sick. She was in the hospital when we first met him.

He came to our house, asking if we had any job he could do to earn some money.

An induced coma, an operation, therapy, and we thought she had turned the corner.

He thought so, too. Soon she would be eating, living at home, being his mother again.

"I feel like my soul has left my body," he said, confessing a darkness that no 15-year-old should know.

It was humbling and sad that we were the first people he came to after learning of his mother's death.

Humbling in that we were invited into a sacred moment, called to be the love and listening he so desperately needed.

The sadness was not just the shattering loss of his mother, but that he had no one else but two relative strangers from whom to seek some comfort.

He has no brothers or sisters. His father died when he was 5 — shot and killed in an act of vengeance and mistaken identity.

His mom has a cousin in town, someone who has been good to the young man, but a "tough love" kind of guy. He would not do well with the tears and tenderness this moment required.

So today, we'll get him on a train to travel to southern Mississippi, to his Grandma's, to where his mother's body has been shipped.

After the funeral, he will live with her, joining the menagerie of grandchildren she cares for because of death, prison and poverty.

We still got to see the eclipse. When the sun seemed nearly extinguished, we could only pray for our young friend, knowing that his "totality" was going to last far longer before light is restored to his life.

Encounter

Fair housing: Exploring the impact on families and communities

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES



By Paige Orscheln

April is Fair Housing Awareness Month, commemorating the passing of the Fair Housing Act in 1968.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and familial status in the rental, sale and financing of houses.

This protects our basic rights as individuals regarding housing, offering protection to homeowners and renters alike.

While you would not think that a law should be necessary for all people to have an equal opportunity to housing in the U.S., the unfortunate truth is that even with the law in effect, discrimination does still occur.

Fair housing discrimination can happen in numerous different ways.

For example, a landlord may refuse to rent to someone based on the color of their skin or their religious beliefs.

A landlord may reject a rental applicant because she is a single parent, or on the grounds of a family who is rebuilding their lives in the U.S. after fleeing war in another country.

While it is heartbreaking that this kind of discrimination still exists in our modern world, at the very least it has been made illegal.

I've found that awareness of these protections and the legality of a person's rights to rent or own a home are sometimes

unknown.

In my capacity at Catholic Charities, I spend time with clients and participate in community initiatives that help educate and advocate for fair housing practices to be implemented in counties we serve.

With an ongoing housing crisis, it is more important now than ever to be educated about renter and homeownership rights.

These protections even extend to banks, who historically practiced patterns of bias when approving home loans, though we see this less often today.

Catholic Charities is one of three HUD-Certified Housing agencies for the 38 counties in the Diocese of Jefferson City.

As the HUD-Certified Housing Counselor, I have had the unfortunate reality of addressing Fair Housing Claims.

It's disheartening to know that, while these protected classes are in place, the housing market does not always afford individuals the dignity they want and deserve.

HUD, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, takes fair housing seriously and has worked hard to help alleviate discrimination.

If you feel you have been the victim of housing discrimination, please file a report with HUD or reach out to me at Catholic Charities for assistance in reporting discrimination.

Everyone should have equal and fair access to the most basic



need of a home.

The impact of discrimination in housing attacks people in the most personal way.

Could you imagine being evicted from your home for your religious belief?

Or, because you have a disability?

Catholic Social Teaching forms us to understand that everyone should be able to go home at night to a place where they feel safe.

Any time discrimination occurs, feelings of great fear that this will happen again begin to plague individuals and families — oftentimes targeted at minority and vulnerable populations.

Housing discrimination furthers the poverty gap by preventing historically persecuted members of our society from creating generational wealth through homeownership and stability they can pass down through their family tree.

It's nothing new for me to say it outright: discrimination has a significant and lasting negative emotional and financial impact.

Many counties across Missouri are currently experiencing a significant lack of affordable and safe housing.

In this climate, landlords can quickly fill their rentals

with those who have the best credit score and income.

This is a great benefit for landlords and for some rental applicants or first-time home buyers — but we have to ask, who does it leave in the margins?

For someone without perfect credit, rental history or employment history, even working up the courage to apply can be a challenge.

Discrimination adds an ugly and unnecessary burden to the search for sustainable housing.

Every client that I meet with, for any housing reason, is provided with fair housing information.

That's what it means to provide care and create hope at Catholic Charities — that we as an agency are committed to honoring the dignity of our clientele through education, support and goal-setting.

Outside of the one-on-one work, we look for ways to advocate and participate in the housing initiatives that will be the solution to foreclosures, chronic eviction and homelessness.

The only way that we can work to end discrimination completely is for each of us to know what it looks like and speak up whenever this occurs.

Please join me this month,

in praying for a world where discrimination is no longer a barrier to housing.

And join us in looking for ways to serve others who deserve, but do not have, fair housing.

Paige Orscheln is the HUD-Certified Housing Counselor at Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri. As one of two HUD-Certified Housing Agencies for our 38-county diocese, her assistance in renter and homebuyer education, credit and budgeting counseling, and securing affordable housing are an integral part of our Community Services Program.

April is Fair Housing Month. The housing market has been in flux dating back to the COVID-19 pandemic. For some that's meant selling a home quickly, and successfully. For others that's meant a tight market that prefers buyers who can exceed seller expectations — thus pricing out many who are seeking affordable and safe housing on a limited budget. You can learn more about our HUD-Certified Housing Counseling services and about how you, your parish, your school, or your classroom can engage with Catholic Charities to increase access to fair housing at ccnmo.diojeffcity.org.

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Mother's storybook for children opens door to discussions about grief, loss

By Jay Nies

"In grief and loss, love's light will prevail. Through shared support, we can mend and set sail."

Jeanette Steiner wove lessons from her 15-month-old son's sudden death into vivid couplets about how family members help one another cope with grief.

She spent about a year gently shaping the words to fit the reality that she, her husband and her children were experiencing in that terrifying realm no parent wants to imagine visiting.

"This is more or less a living memoir of my son and a way to let my children know in a childlike way that it's okay to be sad and it's okay to talk about it," said Mrs. Steiner, a member of St. George Parish in Hermann and author of *Owen's Light*.

The imaginatively illustrat-

ed, 30-page children's book introduces readers to a happy and secure family of barred owls, each representing a member of the Steiner family.

"But one fateful day, sadness filled the air. Baby brother Owen was no longer there."

With each succeeding verse, Mrs. Steiner gives insight into the ways different members of a family process their grief.

"But in the darkness, they found strength anew. Together they stood, their love shining through."

Second family

Mrs. Steiner and her husband were at work on Jan. 28, 2020, when healthy, 15-month-old Owen closed his eyes for a nap at a local daycare.

"He went to sleep at 12:30 and didn't wake up," said Mrs. Steiner.

There was no time to pre-

pare, no time to say goodbye.

"It just came out of the blue, and it was such a shock," said Mrs. Steiner. "When you don't have any way to expect it, it's that much more devastating."

The mother had a major falling-out with God.

"I was very mad for a very long time," she noted.

"I have days when I'm still mad," she said. "I will always have days that I question. But I also know that God is the reason I got the pleasure of getting to know Owen in the first place.

"God is showing me how to heal," she stated. "He's the reason I wrote the book."

The people of St. George Parish and the families, students and staff of St. George School provided "amazing support" throughout the time when Mrs. Steiner thought she



Jeanette Steiner, a member of St. George Parish in Hermann, displays a copy of *Owen's Light*, a children's book she wrote based on her family's process of helping each other work through grief and loss.

through," she stated. "My children tell me that school feels like a family, as it should."

Monsignor Gregory Higley, who was pastor of St. George Parish at that time, prayed with Mrs. Steiner's mother-in-law at school upon hearing the news and then visited the Steiners at home.

"The teachers made sure the kids knew they could talk to them about Owen and that they had pictures of him hanging up, and they'd text-message me when they saw the kids were having a hard time," said

couldn't go on.

"The church and school and parishioners carried us

See OWEN'S LIGHT, page 19



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SYNOD

From page 1

Good News of Jesus Christ at this time in history.

Pope Francis initiated the Synod to help spur ongoing renewal of the Church throughout the world.

It will culminate with a second, monthlong formal gathering of the world's Catholic bishops and other Church representatives in Vatican City in October 2024.

Participants from throughout the world will focus on promoting communion, participation and mission among all members of the Church.

Each diocese submitted a report last year that helped set the agenda for discussions throughout the process.

Following the first formal session this past October, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called upon each U.S. diocese to hold an additional listening session to gain further information for the Synod's second and final session this October.

The Jefferson City diocese submitted its report from the latest listening session on April 4. The full text can be found on Page 17 of this issue of *The Catholic Missourian*.

Among its sister dioceses and archdioceses of Region IX that had submitted their reports as of April 8, the Jefferson City diocese reported by far the highest number of participants in this year's listening session.

Clear messages

Helen Osman, a Meta native and former diocesan director of communications, has been the diocese's coordinator for participation in the Synod on Synodality since 2021.

She is also president of SIGNIS, the only association of lay media professionals officially recognized by the Holy See, and is serving a five-year appointment as a consultant to the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication.

She noted that the listening sessions and other efforts to gather information and engage parishioners for the Synod also provided insight for ongoing pastoral planning in the diocese.

She said a consistent theme throughout the process has been an urgent need to en-

gage younger people in the life of the Church.

"That's not just in our diocese; it's happening in the Church overall," Mrs. Osman noted.

It's becoming clear that many young Catholics want to get involved but don't feel welcome to do so or don't see their perspectives being taken seriously.

It's as if older parishioners are afraid to let go of control, said Mrs. Osman.

"Sometimes, I think, we get so fixated on what's being lost that we aren't able to move forward into the resurrection that God has planned for us," she stated.

She pointed to several other themes that have remained consistent throughout the diocesan portion of the Synod process, as well as things that appear to be changing.

She noted that since coming to this diocese in 2018, Bishop McKnight has been urging people to recognize and act on the calling everyone receives in Baptism to seek holiness and actively help God lead people to himself.

"We know that that's a fundamental understanding of stewardship, that we are all called to be stewards, because we're all baptized Christians," Mrs. Osman stated. "So, that has been our approach even before the Synod."

Many laypeople who took part in the first round of listening sessions in 2022 and in the Feb. 27 session this year spoke in various ways of wanting to feel welcomed and accepted in the Church.

"I heard people say they've been coming to church two or five or 10 years, and this the first time they felt invited to participate in something," said Mrs. Osman.

That concern became consistently evident as dioceses throughout the United States and other countries submitted their reports for the Synod.

"Again, it goes back to: we are all baptized. We all have a place



Parish representatives of the North Deanery of the Jefferson City diocese participate in a listening session for the Synod on Synodality on Feb. 27 in the Immaculate Conception Parish Hall in Macon.

— Photo by Annie Williams

at the table," said Mrs. Osman. "What I think this synodal process is about is figuring out how to make the table bigger."

On a journey together

Mrs. Osman said one major change she's recognized during the process has been subtle and gradual: the understanding that the Church can't tackle all of the "tough questions" at once. People first need help finding and knowing their place in the Church.

"And, we're beginning to realize that things like small faith sharing groups, multigenerational events, multicultural events and the annual Stewardship Renewal process are effective ways of doing that," she said.

"These are all venues where people can come together, feel welcome, break bread and share their faith together," she stated.

None of these things diminish the importance of the Eucharist or the other Sacraments, "but they do expand our understanding of what it means to be a baptized Christian," said Mrs. Osman.

All of this is consistent with what Pope Francis has been emphasizing throughout the preparations for the Synod.

"He said we're not going to focus on all the hot-button issues of the day but on the question he gave when he first announced the Synod: how do we enliven the mission of the Church?" said Mrs. Osman.

Those issues will certainly

not be ignored as the Synod moves forward, "but they'll be answered as we answer that fundamental question of 'how can we accompany one another?' — 'how can we live the faith?'" she said.

Relational encounter

Toward that end, each participant at the Feb. 27 listening session was given time to speak openly about what they have seen as successes and as challenges in their own experience in their parishes.

According to the responses, people are understanding the need to move away from "transactional encounters" in the Church and toward more of a relational encounter.

"As we deepen our spirituality of stewardship, and as we're attempting to be more co-responsible, and expanding how our parishes are centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy, it's changing how we think of ourselves and how we fundamentally relate to others in

our communities," Mrs. Osman said.

Called to change

Pope Francis has made it clear that part of the work of the Synod on Synodality is helping the whole Church make a habit of listening better to its fellow members and the rest of the world.

"This can't be a 'one and done' thing," said Mrs. Osman. "It will be essential for us to continue to engage in these kind of disruptive — I use that word intentional-

ly — processes if the Church is going to be able to serve the next generation.

"We have to normalize the work of continually discerning what the Holy Spirit is asking of us right now," she said. "While acknowledging the answer is always: to change, to grow, to be open to God's dream for each of us and for our parishes."

At the Feb. 27 listening sessions, Bishop McKnight thanked the participants and facilitators for helping prepare "for the next stage of our synodal journey."

He said he hoped that in keeping with past experience, the participants would meet, get to know and find new friends among fellow Catholics from other parts of the diocese.

"That's what happens at these gatherings," he noted.

"May the Lord put your heart on fire!" Cardinal Grech told the participants. "Because this is what the Church needs today, this is what the world needs today."

PASTORAL PLANS

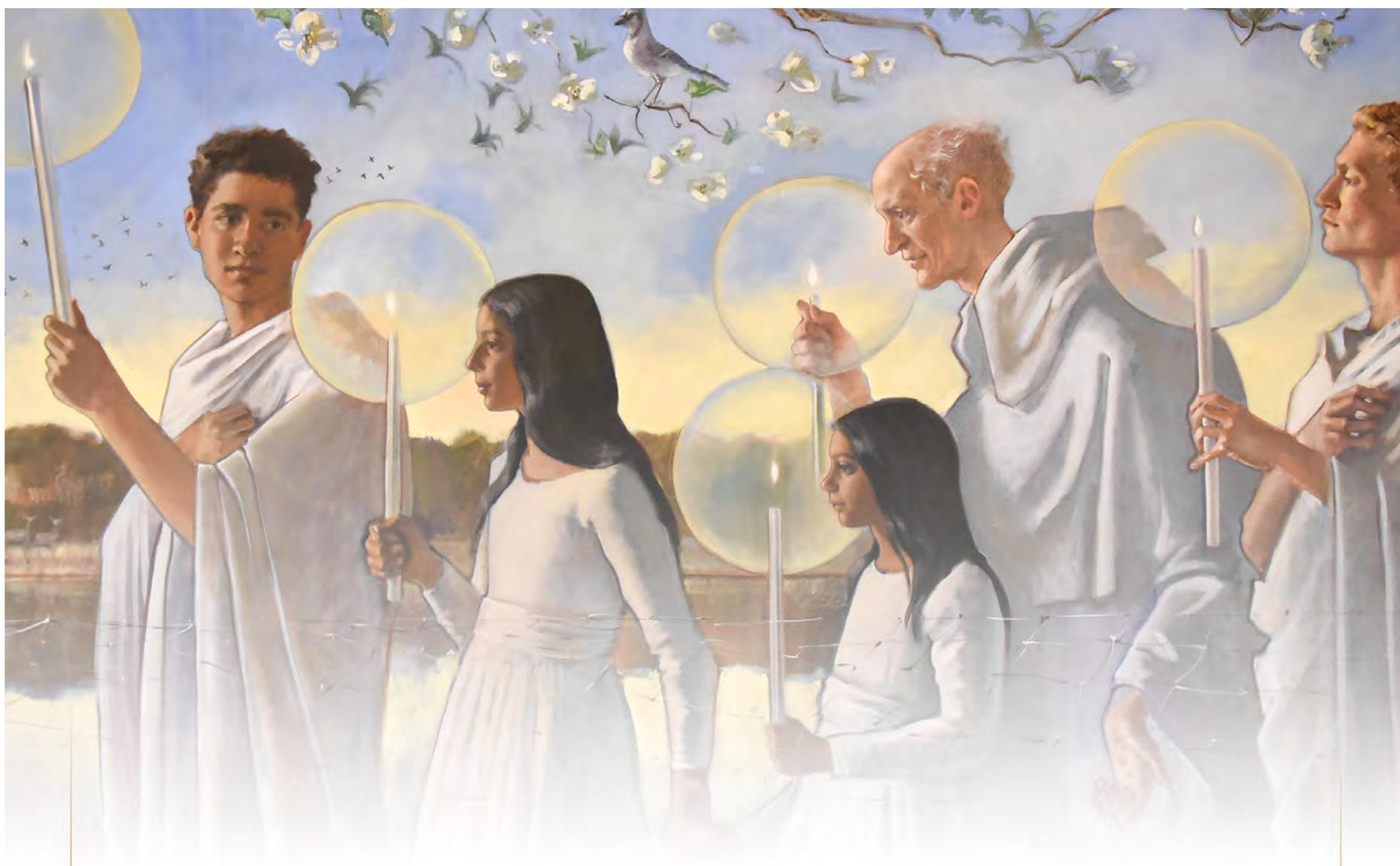
From page 1

ishes more vibrant.

Bishop McKnight's pastoral letter provides the Beatitudes, which are a litany of blessings identified by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12), as a framework for this renewal effort.

The new plans, along with the pastoral letter in which Bishop McKnight explains them, are published on Pages 13-16 of this issue of *The Catholic Missourian* and online at: diojeffcity.org/soft.

More resources to be used in small faith-sharing groups and by parish councils will be provided in the near future.



SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

**Parishes on Mission Together as
Communities of the Beatitudes**

Diocesan and Deanery Pastoral Plans

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight
Bishop of Jefferson City



MARCH 26, 2024

To the laity, members of institutes of consecrated life,
and the clergy of the Diocese of Jefferson City:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord, who brings glad tidings to the poor.

INTRODUCTION

1. The clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Jefferson City gather today to celebrate the Chrism Mass as an expression of the unity of the ministerial priesthood and the local Church in the Holy Spirit. The Scripture passage from today's Gospel has our Lord reading and preaching from a passage of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor" (Luke 4:18). With an economy of words, the Lord summed up his entire mission with: "Today, this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

2. As baptized and anointed members of the Church, we are "another Christ" as individuals and corporately the Body of Christ; thus, our mission is also to bring glad tidings to the poor. The holy oils we bless and consecrate today assist us to fulfill our mission by preparing, healing, strengthening and enriching all who need the Gospel. On this occasion, I am happy to issue this pastoral letter to formally promulgate the diocesan and deanery pastoral plans, which are the result of a process of synodal discernment and reflection on where we have been and where we are called to be as the Roman Catholic Church in central and northern Missouri.

A STEWARD'S JOURNEY AND THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

3. We have recently completed the pastoral plan issued in our previous pastoral letter, *A Steward's Journey: A Call to Greater Communion*, in which we focused on the themes of the spirituality of stewardship, co-responsibility and parishes as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy. Our pastoral letter took inspiration from the Emmaus story in Luke's Gospel, the communion of the Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles, and the dream of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for the parish as described in his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel* (no. 28). Each parish discerned their own pastoral plans using the *Better Together* process. From the various parish pastoral plans, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Presbyteral Council proposed diocesan-level goals and activities to assist the parishes in the fulfillment of their own plans.

4. Working more intently and strategically together, our efforts have borne much pastoral fruit:

- Over the last three years, three cohorts of parishes went through a conversion process from Catholic Stewardship Appeal to a parish-focused renewal of stewardship commitments of time, talent and treasure. Small faith-sharing group activities and other catechetical efforts accompanied the parishes through this transition, focusing on the spirituality of stewardship and away from an annual diocesan financial appeal. Now, the entire diocese is on the parish-based stewardship renewal process. We are already seeing the fruits of renewal in more engagement by more parishioners.
- In the implementation of their individual parish plans, some discovered difficulties in accomplishing their goals and developed a desire and greater openness to collaborating with neighboring sister parishes.
- A new Catholic Charities center was opened in Jefferson City to serve both the local community and the entire diocese, especially through a newly-established fund to provide Charity and Mercy Grants to diocesan parishes for charitable works.
- The renovation and rededication of our beloved Cathedral by the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, with the Bishops of the Missouri Province and other Bishops from our region in attendance was one for the record books. It was an uplifting spiritual experience of renewal for our local Church, one that we will fondly remember and celebrate each year. It was a tangible experience of the bond between the Local and Universal Church.

It has been a time of great missionary renewal for our diocese, rooted in "the teachings of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

5. Since our last pastoral planning process, the Holy Father called for a three-year process of listening, dialogue and consultation of the People of God for the Synod on Synodality. Two rounds of listening sessions were held in our diocese on the Synod's themes of communion, participation and mission, with an emphasis on structures of co-responsibility in the second round. These synodal themes relate well to our themes of stewardship (participation), communion (co-responsibility) and mission (parishes as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy).

In parallel to the Synod on Synodality and based on the experience of the parishes in the implementation of their first pastoral plans, a discernment process was initiated at the level of the deanery to discern how to help the pastoral conversion of the parishes through greater collaboration in the fulfillment of their evangelizing missions. This process of discernment, *Shaping Our Future Together (SOFT)*, continues to bear fruit as we enter this new pastoral planning period.

6. In February, about 300 Catholics in our diocese engaged in a listening session which focused on the importance of co-responsibility and ways our current Church structures support or detract from our shared mission. Many respondents expressed appreciation for the ability to engage more in parish life, especially through the renewal of stewardship and in small faith-sharing groups. They also were able to identify moments of charity and mercy in specific programs in their parishes.

Many also asked, "Where are the next generations of volunteers and leaders?" We know this is not unique to our diocese, but the stark reality is that the Church needs new, younger people to take the helm in so many places in our parishes. Finding ways to invite people who may feel unwelcomed, under-qualified or unsuitable for whatever reason, is at the heart of what it means "to bring glad tidings to the poor."

THE BEATITUDES

7. Our new pastoral plans will serve in continuity with the previous plans, deepening our mission as a synodal local Church along the themes of the spirituality of stewardship, co-responsibility and parishes as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy. Our Lord gives greater specificity regarding how "to bring glad tidings to the poor" in the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 5:1-12):

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

8. The various Beatitudes given are forms of the first and fundamental Beatitude, "poverty of spirit," which brings salvation to those who embrace it. All of them are moments that draw the Holy Spirit to us and when we are closest to God (hence, they are true "Beatitudes" or "blessed opportunities" that bring a deeper

meaning to life and spiritual satisfaction like nothing else). Those who mourn, who are meek, who hunger and thirst, who are merciful, clean of heart, peacemakers and who suffer persecution all experience a poverty of spirit, which comes with its own blessing.

9. Our Lord provides the perfect example of the Beatitudes in his own life and ministry. The many ways in which he gave himself, culminating in his Passion, Death and Resurrection, manifests how he was perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. We, however, are struggling disciples who are on the path of conversion to live out and embrace the Beatitudes more readily and fully in our lives. Whenever we follow the Lord's command to take up our cross daily and follow him, or to die to ourselves like a grain of wheat, we experience the most meaning in our lives as Christians and are closest to the Lord, receiving all the blessings of the kingdom.

The Beatitudes thus stand as key moments in people's lives that draw the attention and consolation of the Holy Spirit. As "another Christ" and the Body of Christ, we too, both individually and as a community of believers, should be drawn to all individuals who are in the throes of one or more of the Beatitudes, just as our Lord was. The pillars of stewardship, especially hospitality and service, support these evangelizing efforts. We fulfill our mission as Church only when we become a community of the Beatitudes wherein we accompany those who grieve the death of a loved one with the Church's funeral rites; when we foster reconciliation in peacemaking and the practice of mercy; when we stand in solidarity with those pushed to the margins of society because their human dignity is not fully acknowledged; we are true disciples of the Lord when we exhibit the gift of fortitude when persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We should avoid at all costs any appearance of mere commercial transactions whenever we provide services as a Church for anyone marked by the Beatitudes.

10. Just as we are on paths of individual conversion to a life of the Beatitudes, so we are on a synodal path as the Church together, at times imperfect in our communion, participation and mission, but assured and guaranteed the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Our pastoral plans can be the means by which we become a community of the Beatitudes as we are centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER (SOFT) PASTORAL PLANS

11. When we began the Shaping Our Future Together process, we recognized seven values which were essential to our discernment:

- (1) The sacraments are accessible and celebrated well.
- (2) The parish is known for its hospitality and welcoming spirit.
- (3) We prioritize the well-being of our clergy and the need to prevent burnout among them.
- (4) We abide by canon law and current Church teaching. There will be no "discerning" the changing of Church teaching to accommodate the lack of resources.
- (5) We provide good faith formation for our children, youth and young adults, and families; and we build a culture of lifelong formation for all our adults.
- (6) We are good stewards of the human and financial resources within the deanery. We cannot expect people to perform professional services in the work of the Church without just compensation.
- (7) We fulfill the mission of our diocese, as defined in our diocesan pastoral plan, by:
 - (a) Promoting the engagement of all parishioners in the mission of the parish through a stewardship way of life;
 - (b) Fostering a culture of co-responsibility, in which there is a mutual respect for the differing roles of the laity and clergy in the life and mission of the Church;
 - (c) Strengthening the parish's capacity as a center of charity and sanctuary of mercy.

12. I am also committing the resources of our entire diocese to support these deanery pastoral plans. Specifically, I am pledging:

- To strengthen our ability to engage in "synodal listening," which can also be identified as Christian discernment, and which is necessary in the changing environment of our American culture.
- To create structures which allow lay people to provide insights and engage in pastoral work in their current parish, in inter-parish settings, and in diocesan-wide initiatives.
- To provide lay people with the necessary formation so they can properly exercise their responsibilities in the Church.

13. In considering the pastoral plans for each deanery and our diocese, I ask for the commitment from each Catholic in our diocese to seriously reflect on how they could be recognized as a Catholic Christian, and furthermore, what their role is in helping to make these plans a reality. To assist all of us in being able to partake in Shaping Our Future Together, we are providing material which small faith-sharing groups and parish councils or committees can use. Everyone is also asked to prayerfully consider how they and their families can engage more deeply in a stewardship spirituality by becoming more engaged in their parishes.

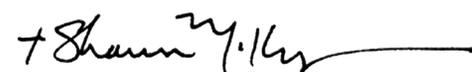
CONCLUSION

14. As we observe this special year of Eucharistic Revival for our nation, we look forward to hosting the Eucharistic Pilgrimage and participating in the National Eucharistic Congress this summer. Our observance of these Eucharistic events will emphasize the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Charity, in whose Real Presence our own presence is sustained in the mission of the Church and with our Eucharistic Lord. May our diocesan patroness, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, intercede for us as we implement Shaping Our Future Together so that we may become a more synodal local Church, a devout Eucharistic people, and a gentle community of disciples in which the Beatitudes are lived and embraced.

15. As we seek the pastoral conversion of our parishes, deaneries and diocese through the present pastoral plans, and as we look forward to the preparations for a future diocesan synod, let us entrust our Local Church to the Holy Trinity in prayer:

*Heavenly Father,
Send your Holy Spirit upon us
to inflame our hearts and enlighten our minds
as baptized members
of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church
present in the Diocese of Jefferson City.
Help us to discern Your holy will for our Church
as the Body of Christ in the world.
May we shape our future together
by embracing our mission
to be sanctuaries of mercy
and centers of charity.
Open our hearts and minds
so that the parish communities
will thrive in the spirituality of stewardship
and with a culture of co-responsibility.
May we be ever more strongly united
in our Catholic faith, prayer and communal life.
This we ask through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Given at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City, on the 26th day of March in the year of Our Lord 2024, my seventh year as Bishop of Jefferson City.



Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Bishop of Jefferson City

SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process 2024-2026



In cooperation with the deanery pastoral plans, the diocesan process provides the following elements:

	Strengthening participation by stewardship	Strengthening co-responsibility	Strengthening parishes as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy
YEAR ONE	Providing ongoing support of the stewardship way of life in every parish. ^{2 4}	Develop guidelines for groups of lay leadership from parishes who are not in the same deanery or do not have the same pastor to perform effective pastoral planning in collaboration with their pastors and deans. ^{1 2 3 4 5}	Develop guidelines for groups of lay leadership from parishes who are not in the same deanery or do not have the same pastor to perform effective pastoral planning in collaboration with their pastors and deans. ^{1 2 3 4 5}
YEAR TWO	Create a sustainable structure to provide ongoing feedback in how parishioners can be more active in their faith. ^{1 2 3 4 5}	Revitalize and constitute parish and diocesan councils, including parish pastoral, finance and stewardship councils. ^{1 2 4}	Begin plans for catechetical centers in each deanery, including for facilities, personnel and curriculum. ^{1 2 3 4 5}
YEAR THREE	Prepare for diocesan synod. ^{1 2 3 4 5}		

SOFT builds on the 2021-2023 diocesan pastoral plan, which had three pillars:

- Strengthening participation by stewardship;
- Strengthening co-responsibility; and
- Strengthening parishes as centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy.

Elements of that plan, and the universal Synod on Synodality, continue in the SOFT diocesan pastoral process, which is built upon the deanery pastoral plans.

- ¹ Supports Central Deanery pastoral plan
- ² Supports North Deanery pastoral plan
- ³ Supports See City Deanery pastoral plan
- ⁴ Supports Southeast Deanery pastoral plan
- ⁵ Supports Southwest Deanery pastoral plan

SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

5 Deanery Plans in Brief



	Goal(s):	How the deanery will achieve its goal:
Central Deanery	Leverage resources to improve communications and faith formation/sacramental preparation for youth and adults; improve quality of programming and reduce duplicative efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Chancery resources and personnel to assess best practices, resources and systems in communications, faith formation & sacramental preparation. • Share financial costs across parishes for personnel and resources • Create deanery-based Coalition Council
North Deanery	Furthering stewardship and sharing of resources among the parishes.	Meetings held once per quarter to allow parish leadership to share information and collaborate, building on the stewardship resources provided to parishes.
See City Deanery	Collaborate to achieve sustainable ministry groups not possible on a parish-only basis.	Five initiatives which focus on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Masses and events 2. Young adult fellowship and prayer 3. Support group ministries (i.e., bereavement, AA, divorced) 4. OCIA collaboration 5. Women's ministry
Southeast Deanery	Short-term (1-2 years) goals include: Formation and training of liturgical ministers, welcoming sustainable inclusion and deepened spiritual experience of new parishioners, young families and Mass-goers; improve sharing of resources among parishes using Coalition Councils and shared personnel for business and facilities needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgical ministers formation (3 regional sessions) • Women's Day of Reflection • Men's Day of Reflection • Parishes (1) create spiritually enriching environments in churches, and (2) find ways to welcome newcomers • Coalition Councils to promote clergy well-being by transferring appropriate responsibilities to deacons, lay volunteers and hired staff • Parishes discern ability to hire/share business managers and facility/maintenance managers
Southwest Deanery	Identify best practices and develop consistent programming across the deanery in sacramental preparation; prioritize well-being of clergy; provide life-long Catholic faith formation and vocation awareness.	Will conduct research regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramental preparation in parishes • How volunteers and liturgical ministers are trained • Best practices that prioritize clergy well-being

Diocesan report to the USCCB for the Synod on Synodality

See introductory story on Page 1

Approximately 300 people participated, in five locations and in Zoom sessions. The groups were very homogeneous: few under age 50, few people who were not White.

Respondents were asked to follow a process which allowed individuals to respond to the question and not enter a conversation about their responses. Priests and deacons were asked to meet in small groups separate from one another and the laity. Facilitators reported a good engagement by people, and offered some minor suggestions to improve future sessions using this kind of process.

Nineteen responses were received via email. These were individuals who were unable to participate in the evening session, but wanted to contribute.

There were hundreds of remarks recorded. In reviewing the facilitators' reports and individual responses, some common points of interest and concern were recognized. This report identifies those common points. Copies of all reports and responses will be available online.

Addressed the questions:

1. Where have I seen or experienced successes and challenges within my parish's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage or hinder the mission?

2. How can the structures and organization of the local Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

Successes which encourage the mission of the Church were identified as the following:

Small groups

Small faith sharing groups, which reflect on Scripture, issues or other spiritual matters, were recognized numerous times as positive experiences for many people. They are seen as a way for adults to continue their faith formation. "Small groups are critical" for vital parishes, one respondent stated. "The use of small groups for our stewardship process got

us started well," another said.

Multi-generational events

These included social activities, as well as opportunities for faith-sharing, and experiencing the culture of other parishioners. Events which do not require parents to find childcare and which strengthen their formation as a family of faith were appreciated. "When cultures are shared, the entire parish is enriched," one respondent said.

Some called for more intentional use of these kinds of events. "We are good at welcoming others to food events," said one person. "What about for other activities?" Others suggested that these events can be a way of helping people recognize their participation in the parish extends outside of Mass.

Stewardship way of life

While acknowledging the implementation of the diocese's renewed investment in stewardship required strong effort, respondents who mentioned stewardship generally saw it as a successful parish initiative.

Despite lingering concerns about the financial impact, it was recognized that the time and talent aspect of stewardship is a sustainable, organized way to get more people engaged in parish activities. Others recognized that this is a way to strengthen lay leadership and co-responsibility. "[Our] parish really needing something like that," one participant said.

The use of the small faith sharing group materials has already been recorded. Others noted that providing people with a finite commitment (one year) to time and talent opportunities is appealing to those who are skittish about commitment. Access to conferences offered in Wichita and in Jefferson City is appreciated. The stewardship fairs were cited as ways for parishioners to mingle outside of their usual circles, and for parishes who are sharing a pastor to gather people who might otherwise not meet.

Structures beyond the parish

Projects and structures which allowed people to en-

gage outside of their parish and become aware of the larger Christian community were also cited as ways to encourage the parish's mission.

Examples cited were a community warming center for those without adequate shelter, rallying around individuals or families in crisis, sending youth to camps or events.

Others also noted how the regular meetings of parish leadership within the deaneries are a way for parishes to share resources. Finally, having competent and trained staff were cited as a means to ensure success when parishes come together, whether for "stand-alone" activities such as a joint event for youth or if parishes are merging or sharing a pastor.

What are challenges?

The challenge most often cited was: Where are the next generations of volunteers/leaders? One participant put it poetically: "Will we be like the Amish or the Orthodox — left with being 'cute, quaint and good for food' and otherwise irrelevant?"

The concern that younger Catholics are not making the commitment as leaders or even as volunteers has been made in previous listening sessions and in surveys. This concern was illustrated in several ways this time, most notably in that parents of students in the Catholic schools are not modeling being active stewards in their parishes. Others cited that younger families prioritize other activities (sports was the one most often cited) over engagement with the parish.

Others acknowledged that perhaps one reason for disengagement by younger people is that older parishioners are not allowing the next generation to become involved. While

it's not possible to verify the correlation, it should be noted that, in other surveys and gatherings, younger Catholics have expressed frustration with not being welcomed into leadership or volunteer roles in their parish.

Other comments suggested that other factors for why younger Catholics are not participating could be:

"When decision-making resides solely with the pastor, everything stops/restarts with a new pastor." Developing

structures which encourage ongoing co-responsibility of lay parishioners can reduce the instability caused by leadership transitions. As one respondent explained, "Stronger leadership councils that defer to pastors and bishop but carry leadership structures forward" can provide stability for a parish. But work needs to be done, especially in the training and formation of lay leaders. "Parish councils have trouble setting vision and implementing," said one pastor, a concern echoed by others.

Some parishes are experiencing people segregating themselves: young people/old people, Hispanic/White, school families/everyone else, etc. This lack of unity encourages cliques, which are unattractive to newcomers. One respondent offered a personal story: he/she had been attending Mass in Spanish since moving here more than two years ago; just recently (with a new pastor) did this person realize the Mass was part of a larger parish, with English-language liturgies and activities.

Volunteers feel inadequately trained, or don't know what the expectations and standards are for their work/ministry. Others have attempted to volunteer, but receive no further information or details on how

to become involved.

Lack of communication and connectivity between the groups, committees and councils in a parish result in fewer people knowing what is happening in the parish. Respondents recommended clearly defined expectations and processes so that activities, minutes and progress of all groups could be communicated to the entire parish — and beyond. As an example, one respondent said their parish has "many study groups, but they are not published for those who aren't already involved."

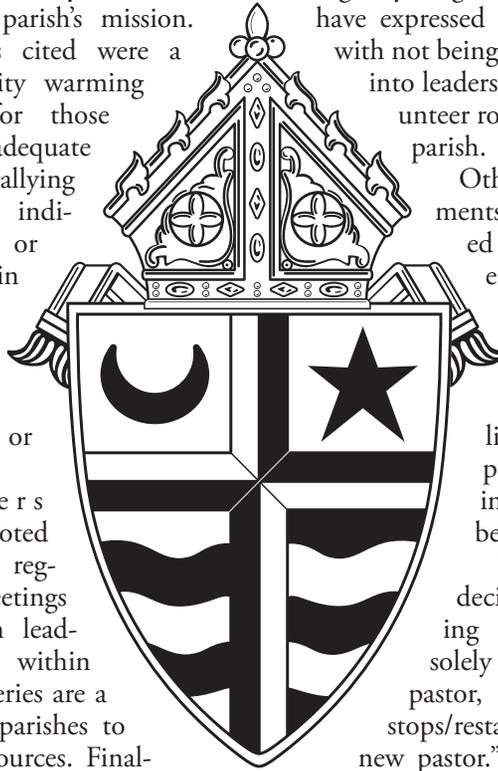
Clergy

Even though respondents were segregated by laity and clergy, almost no one used the session to complain about their priests or deacons. What was reported was that the laity would like to see the priests freed of administrative or other tasks which are not germane to their Priesthood, and therefore being more available to parishioners, whether for phone calls, meeting with them in the parish office or going to parishioners' homes or other public places. In addition, respondents asked for homilies that can help people connect the Scriptures with "real life." "Parishioners should be able to relate the Church back to their lives," one respondent said.

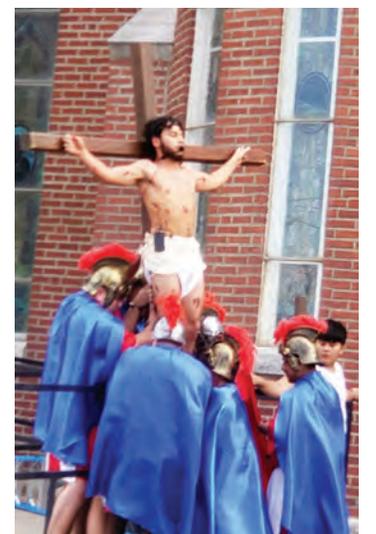
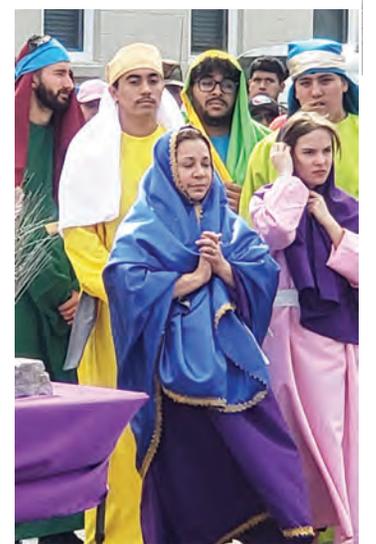
Adult faith formation

The challenge regarding the need for improved preaching could also be considered as part of a large group of comments calling for more adult faith formation.

In various ways, responses suggested the need for a more organized, diocesan-wide catechetical program for adults. Some pointed to the formation program for diaconal candidates as a possible model; others suggested a diocesan retreat center and a formal certification program. This request for a unified approach to adult faith formation was especially expressed by members of smaller parishes — an acknowledgment of the resources required to provide solid, high-quality catechesis and faith formation that are not available to smaller communities.



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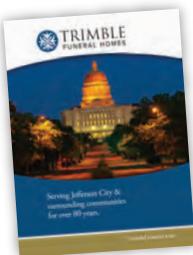
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AGE	ANNUAL PAYOUT RATE
60-64	5.2-5.6%
65-69	5.7-6.2%
70-74	6.3-6.8%
75-79	7.0-7.8%
80-84	8.1-8.9%
85-89	9.1-9.9%
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DIOCESE OF Jefferson City

Members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish of Pettis County present an elaborate, live reenactment of the Stations of the Cross outside St. Patrick Chapel in Seda-lia on March 29, Good Friday.

— Photos by Sandra L. Rangitsch, from the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Parish Facebook page

OWEN'S LIGHT

From page 11

Mrs. Steiner.

"And the parishioners are people we have grown up with, so they felt our pain and lifted us up with prayers and a meal train and hugs," she said.

Life, love and light

Mrs. Steiner said every child is a gift from God.

"Each one gives you a new experience," she said. "You not only teach them, you're always learning from them."

She called Owen "my strong-willed child."

"He loved to climb, loved to play — he was a go-go-go baby," she said. "He loved his siblings with a passion. He always wanted to be outside. At bedtime, he needed his compassion. He needed me to cuddle him and sing to him."

Like with her other children, she and her husband would pray the "Our Father" with Owen before bedtime.

"We learned so many things from him," Mrs. Steiner stated. "And after he left us, I went through such an unbelievable spiritual journey. I feel like I'm learning from him still every day."

The week of Owen's death, she had no idea how she'd get through the visitation and the Funeral Mass.

God comforted her and strengthened her with clear signs of his presence and power.

"There was a rainbow over the church," she noted. "And I don't really know how to explain this, but when we were walking him to the church, I felt like I was floating, like someone was actually carrying me, holding me up."

Mr. and Mrs. Steiner learned that because they process grief so differently, they needed to ask each other outright each day how they're holding up and what they need.

"We have so much love for each other, but you can't just look at someone and know what's going on in their head," Mrs. Steiner noted. "So, you want to be sure they're okay."

Together, with help from their extended family and the community at large, the couple learned to recognize and respond to their children's evolving needs as each began coming to terms with the loss,

of their brother.

Four months into the journey, Mrs. Steiner gave birth to a daughter, Sadie.

"In her eyes, they saw the sparkle of Owen's soul, a reminder that love can make a heart whole."

Words and pictures

Mrs. Steiner began writing *Owen's Light* in secret, hoping the finished story would bring comfort and clarity to her still-grieving family.

She recalled a daytime sighting of a white-faced barn owl in a neighbor's tree when she and her husband were on their way to Owen's funeral.

"I had never seen one before, especially not in the bright of day," said Mrs. Steiner. "But after that, I saw one at least once each week for over a year."

That's why she decided to use owls to tell her story.

Drawing on what was occurring in her heart, she crafted each verse with the image of young owls in her mind.

Writing the story became part of her healing.

"It's a child's story, so it's supposed to be simple," she noted. "I didn't know now to put it all out there, so I did it at my own pace. Nothing was rushed. I felt completely at ease."

Finally, she asked her husband to read the work, and then she shared it with each of her children.

They were all amazed and impressed, but true to life, each reacted differently.

So did friends and members of her extended family.

"We're all going through things," she noted. "Whether you've lost a child or another loved one, it's grief. You've lost someone you love."

She wrote *Owen's Light* to help heal her family, but her husband and mother-in-law recognized upon reading it that it could also help other people find peace.

Mrs. Steiner went about hiring an illustrator through an online application called Fiverr.

She corresponded with five before choosing Amelia Atika.

"It's like she could read my



A pair of shoes that belonged to Owen Steiner, a 15-month-old boy who died suddenly in 2020, are now given a place of prominence in the Steiner family home. "It's amazing how something becomes not just shoes but a cherished treasure," said his mother, Jeanette Steiner, author of *Owen's Light*.

mind, just from the words," said Mrs. Steiner. "I said I needed my character to be an owl, and she read certain things between the lines and included them in her illustrations."

Although the book is not overtly spiritual, the motivations behind writing it certainly were.

"The whole purpose is to help people heal," said Mrs. Steiner. "If it helps one child or an adult release some of that grief from their shoulders, then it's all been worth it."

Tears and trust

Publication of *Owen's Light* in January of this year brought a fresh wave of support from the people of St. George Parish.

"They shared it and cried with me and told me how they thought it would help many people," said Mrs. Steiner.

Owen's brother, Reid, is now 11; his sister, Quinn, is 9, and Sadie, the little sister Owen never got to meet, is 3.

"We know he's in a good place and also with us always, and he's happy," said Mrs. Steiner. "But it's hard to live without him, and you've got to find ways to deal with that."

loss, and I'm determined to light a path for anyone else who might be feeling lost in the darkness," she stated.

"Among the stars"

Mrs. Steiner is now working with the same illustrator on a new book, titled *Where Did Owen Go?*

It will include references to the great tapestry of life, of which every person contributes a thread that gets woven in together with the rest.

"Even though Owen's thread is very short, it is intertwined with ours and everybody else's to help make a beautiful tapestry," said Mrs. Steiner.

The last page of the second book will show Owen flying happily to the sky, with clouds and stars and rainbows all around him.

"I showed that illustration to my sister, and she said it's breathtaking," said Mrs. Steiner.

Reflecting on Owen's life still summons forth an array of emotions, with gratitude steadily rising toward the top.

"I'm grateful for everyone in my life, but mostly my husband and my children," said Mrs. Steiner. "I thank God every day for them, and I also speak to [Owen] when I speak to God."

Autographed copies of Owen's Light is available at The Vine Boutique in Hermann.

To order a copy, visit amazon.com and search for "Owen's Light."

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By Father Donald Antweiler
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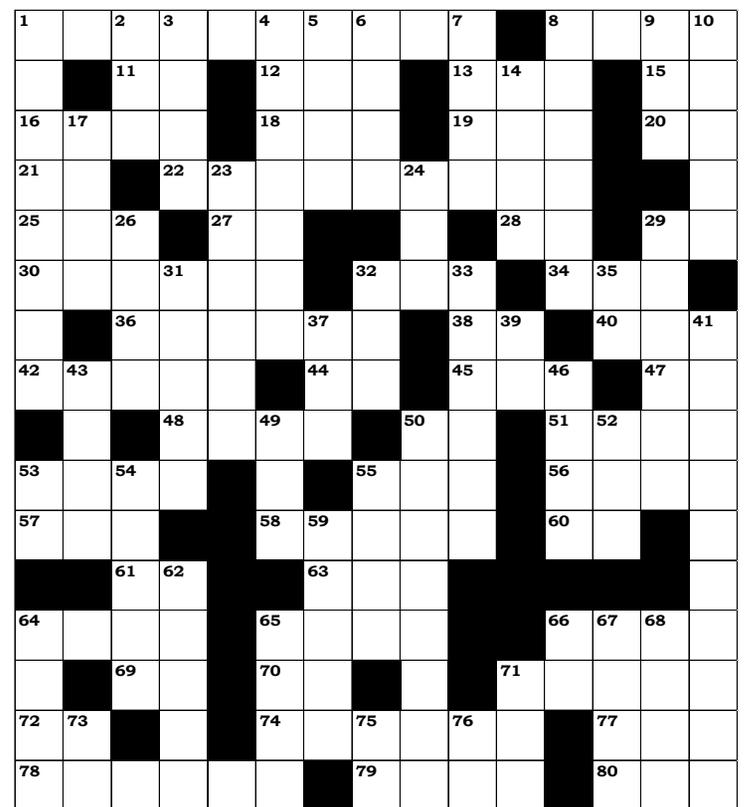
1. "___ in general have given Mo. kind of a cursory look for its role in the American Civil War," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
8. Part of a BA college degree.
11. Union Pacific or Burlington Northern.
12. Large coffee container.
13. If you'll ___ the tune I'll bet I can accompany you on my guitar.
15. It is said this Mo. border State has one of the highest literacy rates in the country (abbr.).
16. Letters for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Catholic Church's conversion process into the Church.
18. Several major beer brands are now selling ___-alcoholic beer.
19. Japanese sash.
20. Affirmative for Alejandro.
21. We call him ___' reliable (i.e., a dependable person).
22. "In fact, thanks to Mo.'s plentiful supply of white males of age for army service, and thanks to Mo.'s major rivers, the State became a hotly ___ prize," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
25. The ___ Jones Industrial Average is a popular stock market index tracking 30 U.S. blue-chip stocks.
27. The next big technological leap is said to be artificial intelligence (___).
28. The three "___" refer to reading, writing and arithmetic, a phrase coined in the early 1800s.
29. "When the enemy declared no inhabitant of the town should escape massacre, not even children of seven years of age, Joan was in a fever ___ once to fly to our rescue," —*Personal Reflections of Joan of Arc*, Mark Twain.
30. To lose the bet would cost

- me a bit but, on the other hand, ____, the rewards will be huge! (3 wds.)
32. "...the kingdom of heaven is like a ___ thrown into the sea, which collects the fish of every kind," (Matthew 13:47).
34. ___-tac-toe.
36. In the first two pivotal years of the Civil War, Black soldiers for the first time in the Civil War took up arms and ___ for the Union at Island Mound in Mo. near the Kansas border (from *The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie).
38. Brand of soda.
40. Word that can precede the words age or cream.
42. Church steeple.
44. Seven Presidents were born in this State (abbr.).
45. A very long time.
47. Electronic Arts (___) is an Am. video pioneer company founded in 1982 in Calif. with over \$7 billion in revenues.
48. "...it will be more tolerable for ___ and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you," (Matthew 11:22).
50. Both basketball and volleyball were invented in this State nicknamed the Bay State (abbr.).
51. "A scholar in the mid-1970s reported there was not a single Catholic monastery, convent, school or welfare institution left in the entire ___," —*A Pope and a President*, Paul Kengor.
53. This State, the Beehive State, has 5 national parks, the largest ski resort in the U.S. and is the driest State in the U.S.
55. "If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a ___," (Matthew 15:14).
56. "...enemies — the world, the devil and the flesh. The world is the least difficult enemy. The devil is the hardest to understand. The flesh is the ___ tenacious of all," —*Counsels of Light and Love*, "Cautions," St. John of the Cross (1542-1591).
57. Abbr. for route.
58. "...give us this day our ___ bread..." —from the Lord's Prayer.
60. A bit of air gun ammo.
61. Six points in the NFL (abbr.).
63. Hawaiian necklace.

64. "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must ___ himself and take up his cross..." (Luke 9:23).
65. A pub game where one throws one ___ at a time at a bullseye.
66. "At the time of the Spanish conquest, Incan farmers were producing 3,000 different types of potatoes in the Andes mountains. Today, ___, land of the potato, imports them from the Netherlands," —*Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World*, Jack Weatherford.
69. Letters for American Eagle; upscale clothier.
70. Morning hours.
71. *Ave* ___, *gratia plena*...
72. Stomach muscle.
74. 5th U.S. President James or movie star Marilyn.
77. "...a letter of Christ administered by us, written not in ___ but by the Spirit of the living God..." (2 Corinthians 3:3).
78. "Cowards die many times before their ___; the valiant never taste of it but once," —Wm. Shakespeare.
79. Church song.
80. He worked very hard to ___ out a living for his family.

DOWN

1. Wife of Herod who had her daughter ask for the head of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3).
2. "...the cooks of India and ___ Lanka had a keen eye for new vegetable dishes: from the Americas, the tomato and potato as well as the peanut and the cashew," —*Indian Givers, How Native Americans Transformed the World*, Jack Weatherford.
3. Gillette ___ II razors.
4. "But Mo. was not just a backwater with bushwhackers ___ around," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
5. ___ in this stink-hole of a jail while that other guy walks free! (2 wds.)
6. Mary's mom.
7. "I'll do whatever it takes to win, sitting on a bench waving a towel or hitting the game-winning ___," —Kobe Bryant.
8. "...my biggest accomplishment is that I kept the country safe ___ a real



- danger," —Pres. George W. Bush.
9. "Never was found so clear, undimmed and bright; From it alone, I know, proceeds all light, Although '___ night," —St. John of the Cross (1542-1591).
10. "Every ___ has a past and every sinner has a future," —Oscar Wilde.
14. ___ is a company that authorizes and coordinates drivers available for rides or deliveries using their own car.
17. In nursing, letters for Current Level of Functioning.
23. All the vowels.
24. Abbr. before a female French saint.
26. ___-___ enables wireless communication between the internet, smartphones and other computer devices.
29. "Mo. was prized for its ___ to the Mo., Mississippi and Ohio rivers — vital transport routes when railroads were far from extensive," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
31. In the first two pivotal years of the Civil War, it was in Mo. that "General Ulysses S. Grant proved his ___ as a battlefield commander," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
32. The ultimate degree.
33. In the first two pivotal years of the Civil War, "Callaway County tricked the Union Gen. and future U.S. Mo. Senator, John Henderson,

- into negotiating an illegitimate ___, creating the nickname "The Kingdom of Callaway," —*The War for Missouri:1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
35. Pope Sixtus ___ was Pope from Aug. 31, 257 to Aug. 6, 258, not even a year before Roman Emperor Valerian hunted him down and martyred him along with 7 deacons, including St. Lawrence.
37. Garden tool.
39. The tricked John Henderson became a U.S. Senator who ___-sponsored the 13th Amendment (outlawing slavery), drafted the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and also the 15th Amendment (the right of African-Americans to vote).
41. "...there was such a severe ___ that the foundations of the jail shook, all the doors flew open..." (Acts 16:26).
43. What golfers do when they are on a green.
46. "Learning essential stuff is an excellent antidote for the modern condition of being ___ and dumb," —Ben Fountain.
49. "He had done triage in the middle of nowhere with guys who looked like ___ chunks of meat. He saved some, lost others," —*Zero Day*, David Baldacci.
50. "Mo. was prized for the largest supply of potential soldiers out of any slave/southern State, 233,000

CLUES continued on page 21

CLUES

From page 20

- white males of ____ age, even more than Virginia's 197,000," —*The War for Missouri: 1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
52. "No excuses and no ____ stories. I don't waste time looking back," —Junior Seau.
53. Abraham's ancestral city.
54. An insurance company giant.
55. Dock.
59. "Remember the ____!" 1718 Catholic mission in San Antonio, site of infamous 1836 battle which led to Texan independence.
62. My old white blouse needs an update. I know! I'll ____ green for St. Patrick's Day! (2 wds.)
64. There are graveyards large and small across Mo. that hold Mo.'s ____ from both sides of the Civil War. National cemeteries alone hold 300,000 tombstones, 1/3 dedicated to unknown soldiers.
65. Table Rock and Truman.
66. "Willie Lincoln, much excited, said, '____ says there's a battle in Virginia; that's big cannons going off that sounds like slamming doors,'" —*Tad Lincoln's Father*, a memoir, Julia Taft
- Bayne.
67. Cleveland sits on this Great Lake.
68. The words roller or ice can precede this word.
71. "To prevent young Mo. ____ from swelling the Confederate ranks, they were required to register at recruitment stations; there they could choose to join the Union army or to surrender their guns. And so, many Southern-minded guys ended up serving in Union militias," —*The War for Missouri: 1861-1862*, Joseph W. McCoskrie.
73. "I saw the lightning strike a short distance away, and far from being frightened, I was thrilled with delight because God seemed to ____ so close!" —*The Story of a Soul; the Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*.
75. This northeastern State was home to the first soldier killed in the Civil War, first civilian to die in space (Christa McAuliffe) and home to the first political primary in the nation (abbr.).
76. Buddhist meditation mantra.

See ANSWERS, page 23

Notre Dame chaplain: Fire 'gave us all a boost'

OSV News

Paris

For some, the Notre Dame fire was a sign of devastation of faith and Christian values. But for many more in France, it meant awakening of faith on an unprecedented scale.

"The fire gave us all a boost," Father Henry de Villefranche told OSV News, speaking of a "renewed vitality" encouraged by the Notre Dame worksite.

"The Church was asleep. Some people were behaving badly," he said. "In that respect, the fire was providential. It pushed us all to move forward and give our best."

Few know it better than the chaplains of the iconic cathedral and Fr. de Villefranche is one of them, but the only one

remaining from before the fire.

A few yards from Notre Dame, in an old medieval street, on Ile de la Cité, he works on ensuring continuity of Notre Dame's heritage with the new team, responsible for the liturgical life of the renovated cathedral, in which "culture and worship should not be separated, but rather linked," he said.

"We hope that visitors who enter as tourists leave as pilgrims."

Fr. de Villefranche told OSV News that he is "not very interested in the official ceremonies" to reopen the cathedral.

He said he is "signing up to celebrate the first ordinary Mass of the week that follows. That is when everything will really begin."

diojeffcity.org

UGANDA

From page 5

have a new and thriving and growing Church — specifically a Catholic Church, where their relationship with Jesus is first and foremost in their lives," Matthew stated.

About 50 percent of the Ugandan population is age 15 or younger.

"So many babies! So much faith and optimism!" Nico observed.

They and their traveling companions were amazed to see how genuinely and joyfully the Ugandan people love Jesus, despite not having access to conveniences and even many of the basic needs people take for granted in the United States.

"It's given me and a lot of people on this trip some serious hope for the future of the Church, how much it's growing and thriving in Africa," Matthew stated.

What we have received

Nico said the Ugandan people have the spiritual authenticity of St. Therese of Lisieux.

He believes the welcome and unconditional love and acceptance he and his friends received in Uganda were a taste of the love God has for each person and for all humanity.

"It is being seen without boundaries, without expectations," said Nico.

He noted that student parishioners at the St. Thomas More Newman Center have been having discussions about the various kinds of love — including the unconditional, self-giving love, known in Greek as "agape," that God gives.

"I can honestly say: I agape-love the people of this country," Nico stated. "They've given so much to us and enriched us so much and done so much to agape-love and serve us."

He said it's actually a challenge to receive and know how to respond to that kind of love.

"But that's exactly why we're here today," he said. "Our part has been to receive love, and it



Numerous children join in welcoming the delegation from the Diocese of Jefferson City to the Archdiocese of Uganda. The nation has one of the youngest populations in the world.

calls us into a mission to give love in any way we can."

What's in a name?

The visitors got to know a member of their security detail named Kimera.

He started asking questions about the Christian faith last year while helping provide security to Bishop McKnight during his visit in January 2023.

This year, after attending an outdoor Mass with the young adults from Missouri, Kimera told Fr. Luzindana that he wants to begin the process for being received into the Catholic Church.

A local priest will assist the man through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Kimera asked the group from Missouri for a suggestion for a Confirmation name. After prayer and discussion, they suggested Andrew Kaggwa — after one of the 19th-century Ugandan Martyrs whose shrine the group had visited.

The people from Missouri presented Kimera a rosary and a Bible in his native language.

"We're looking forward to seeing pictures from his initiation into the Church next Easter," said Matthew.

Greatest treasure

The group visited Arch-

bishop Paul Ssemogerere of Kampala and toured a school where additional classrooms were recently built with a grant from the diocesan Missions Office.

"Even after we are gone, we're leaving a piece of us behind," said Mr. Seifert said of the school addition.

Allison spoke of the most unforgettable sunrise she had ever seen, which she beheld while surveying the beautiful landscape with the group.

"And the landscape and the wind whipping through your hair, so fresh

and clean and real nature, and it's absolutely beautiful," she said. "That image and feeling won't ever go out of my head."

Mrs. Quinn said the journey to Uganda was more powerful than any of the participants could have imagined.

She believes it will take them weeks to finish spiritually unpacking everything they saw and heard and experienced.

"Uganda is a beautiful country, but their greatest treasure is the people," she stated. "The faith and joy the people radiate is contagious!"

"I am so grateful that our diocese values knowing the people in the places we support," she said.



People gather for Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral Rubaga in Kampala. — Photo by Maureen Quinn

Need more info about an event or want to see more events?
Visit the diocesan EVENT CALENDAR at diojeffcity.org/events.
Want your event listed?
Fill out the ONLINE FORM at diojeffcity.org/event-listing.

Fundraisers & Social Events

Apr. 14

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am

Apr. 19

Jefferson City, Helias Marching Band trivia night & silent auction, 6-10 pm, Helias old gym; Loose Creek, K of C #2027 chicken dinner, 4:30-7 pm, Immaculate Conception School

Apr. 20

Jefferson City, Pregnancy Help Center of Central Mo. "Bubbles and Bounces" 5K Walk/Run, 8:30 am, Memorial Park Pavilion, for info or to register visit friendsofphc.org

Apr. 21

Koeltztown, St. Aloysius & St. Boniface fried chicken & baked ham dinner, 11 am-5:30 pm, St. Boniface annex building

Apr. 26-27

Camdenton, St. Anthony Parish annual Spring garage sale, Fri 7 am-4 pm, Sat 7 am-2 pm

May 2

Jefferson City, Helias Catholic High School vocal music concert, 7-8 pm, Miller Performing Arts Center

May 3

Jefferson City, El Puente trivia night, 6-10 pm, Cana Hall,

Cathedral of St. Joseph, for info or to register visit elpuentemo.org; Jefferson City, Fraternal Order of Eagles chicken lunch & dinner, 11 am-7 pm, 1411 Mo. Blvd.

May 7

Columbia, Vitae Foundation Pro-Life Dinner, 7-9 pm, Holiday Inn Executive Center, to register visit vitaefoundation.org

May 12

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am

May 31

Freeburg, Cruise-in and Holy Family Parish BBQ, 5 pm-midnight, parish grounds

Meetings & Conferences

Apr. 19-20

Jefferson City, "Heart of a Hero" Men's Conference, hosted by Men of Signum Crucis, Cathedral of St. Joseph, for info or to register visit menofsignumcrucis.com

Apr. 22

St. Martins, Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS® training), 6:30-8:30 pm, St. Martin Parish

May 1

Jefferson City, Midwest March for Life, 8 am-2:30 pm, Missouri State Capitol south steps and lawn, for info visit midwestmarchforlife.com

May 2

St. Martins, Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS® training), 6:30-8:30 pm, St. Martin Parish

Eventos del Ministerio Hispano

abril 14

Sedalia, Planificación Familiar Natural - Familia de las Américas, 9 am-noon, Parroquia San Patricio, Para información sobre instructores y clases contacte a Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org, para más información sobre este método, visite diojeffcity.org/natural-family-planning/ y/o familyplanning.net/es

abril 20

Marshall, Curso de Finanzas Personales & Familiares, 9 am-3 pm, Parroquia San Pedro, para más información y registrarse contacte a Rosalin Howatt por email: rosalinhowatt@gmail.com

mayo 18

Jefferson City, Retiro de Quinceañera, 9 am-3 pm, San Pedro, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org; Marshall, Retiro de Quinceañera, 10 am-4 pm, San Pedro, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org

mayo 25

Columbia, Planificación Familiar Natural - Familia de las Américas, 9 am-noon, Sagrado Corazón, Para información sobre instructores

y clases contacte a Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org, para más información sobre este método, visite diojeffcity.org/natural-family-planning/ y/o familyplanning.net/es

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Every Tuesday

Jefferson City, "Tuesday With Faith," small group discussions, 6:30-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info, call 573-645-2478 or email jimkemna@gmail.com

Every Friday

Jefferson City, Centering Prayer Group, Immaculate Conception Parish, 11 am-noon

Apr. 17

Jefferson City, Monthly gathering of the Men of Signum Crucis, 5:30-8 pm, Helias Catholic High School, for info visit menofsignumcrucis.com

Apr. 20

Columbia/Jefferson City/VIRTUAL, "Living Flame 1" 7-session program on in-depth spiritual study and enrichment of centering prayer, 9 am-2 pm; participants may join via Zoom or in-person at Broadway Christian Church in Columbia or Immaculate Conception Church in Jefferson City; to register visit cocemo.org

Apr. 25-28

Camdenton, Men's Cursillo Weekend #73, St. Anthony Parish, for info or to register email jeffcity.diocese.cursillo@gmail.com or visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo

Apr. 27

Moberly, "Morning of Retreat" for diocesan music ministers, 9 am-noon, St. Pius X Parish, for info or to register email JeffersonCityMO@npm.org

May 2-5

Camdenton, Women's Cursillo Weekend #81, St. Anthony Parish, for info or to register email jeffcity.diocese.cursillo@gmail.com or visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo

May 8

VIRTUAL, "Fuel the Body, Fuel the Soul," monthly program sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, 7-8 pm, for info visit <https://bit.ly/fuel-the-body-and-soul>

May 15

Jefferson City, Monthly gathering of the Men of Signum Crucis, 5:30-8 pm, Helias Catholic High School, for info visit menofsignumcrucis.com

May 18

Columbia/Jefferson City/VIRTUAL, "Living Flame 1" 7-session program on in-depth spiritual study and enrichment of centering prayer, 9 am-2 pm; participants may join via Zoom or in-person at Broadway Christian Church in Columbia or Immaculate Conception Church in Jefferson City; to register visit cocemo.org; Columbia, "Life in the Spirit," CoMo Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group, 8 am-4 pm, St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish multipurpose room

Liturgical

Apr. 17

Jefferson City, Crusader Family Mass, 7:15-8:30 am, Helias Catholic High School's St. Pius X Chapel

Apr. 25

Westphalia, Rogation Day procession, 6-7 pm, St. Joseph Church

May 14

Starkenburg, Second Tuesday Mass, with Sacrament of Reconciliation, Rosary and luncheon following Mass, 11 am-1 pm, Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows

May 15

Jefferson City, Crusader Family Mass, 7:15-8:30 am, Helias Catholic High School's St. Pius X Chapel

Youth & Young Adults

First Wednesdays each month

Jefferson City, Rooted/Connected/Searching in Community young adult group, 5-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info visit icangels.com/youngadults

Third Sundays each month

Jefferson City, Young Adult Mass, 5 pm, Immaculate Conception Church

Health & Wellness

Apr. 15

Rich Fountain, Blood drive, 2-6 pm, Sacred Heart School cafeteria

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To submit items for the PEOPLE PAGE, including **Baptisms, Birthdays** for ages 90 and older, **Anniversaries** of 10+ years in increments of 5 ONLY (e.g., 15, 25, 45 years, etc.), **Marriages, Deaths, Elections, Honors and Appointments**, please go to:
diojeffcity.org/update-information

Anniversaries

Fulton, St. Peter
Leonard & Mary Overkamp, 65 years

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate
Don & Kathy Westhoff, 55 years
Winston & Pat Vanderhoof, 45 years
Albert & Margie Kurz, 40 years

Palmyra, St. Joseph
Roger & Tammy Foster, 40 years

Russellville, St. Michael
Alan & Norma Lepper, 40 years
Mitch & Becky Verslues, 30 years
Adam & Kaelee Wilson, 10 years

Birthdays

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate — **Mary Maye Bennett**, her 95th on Apr. 14

MARCH

From page 6

As the March draws near, Mrs. Ohden asks for prayers for strength and discernment for all of the event’s speakers and leaders.

“With great urgency comes great stress, and the needs of those we serve continue to increase in today’s world,” she said.

She hopes people who attend the March will be stirred to live each day with boldness, even in life’s seemingly most ordinary circumstances.

“It’s loving people, forgiving people, our ‘little flats,’ that make an extraordinary difference in transforming our lives, our families, our culture,” she stated.

“I hope that people come away recognizing that if God can use me in the way he has, they can cooperate with his will, as well.”

CAPECCHI

From page 9

“I saw a hole in the market,” Jenna said.

Her thoughts quickly progressed. “There’s a need, especially down south, where there aren’t as many Catholics. But it’s seasonal — you don’t need a brick-and-mortar all year round. Someone’s got to start a pop-up First Communion boutique. I guess that someone’s me.”

Last summer, Jenna officially launched Gowns of Grace. She sources all the dresses, culling from three designers, along with veils and suits for boys.

Then she hosts a pop-up shop at a church. She packs everything up, carrying every size and style of dress. She makes it an experience for families to enjoy together, providing cookies and drinks, a religious craft, a photo booth and a keepsake gift.

The event functions as a fundraiser

Marriages

Hermann, St. George — **Joshua Schroer & Hannah Butts**

Deaths

Hermann, St. George — **Gertrude Weber**

Rhineland, Church of the Risen Savior — **Maxine Witte**

Salisbury, St. Joseph — **Glenda Weimer**

Taos, St. Francis Xavier — **John Decker**

Vienna, Visitation — **Dylan Limbach**

Wardville, St. Stanislaus — **Agnes Brondel; Adele Lueckenhoff**

for the hosting church, which receives up to 25 percent of her sales. Jenna also sells her products online at gownsofgrace.com. Parishes who promote it are given a code that gives them 10 percent back.

Jenna’s goal is to celebrate each child. “This is not just another dress you have to get,” she said. “This is really special.”

It works, creating a positive experience that underscores the importance of the sacrament — faith-filled and fun.

“Every single parent and grandparent who came thanked me and told me how lovely it was.”

These days, beauty fills Jenna’s life. She’s come so far since college.

“I felt like Jesus stepped in and said, ‘Here’s a fork in the road, go the other way,’” she said. “I haven’t looked back.”

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

QUESTION

From page 8

are welcomed, appropriately catechizing young people on the nature of sexuality and teaching them to form healthy relationships, and fostering a sense of the immeasurable worth and value of every human person. It could be the needs of a community — and thus the specific wording of their intercessory prayers — are more focused on one of these more foundational pro-life concerns.

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

EASTER

From page 3

Near the main entrance, pilgrims kneel down and anoint and kiss the stone upon which Jesus’s lifeless body was anointed and prepared for burial.

“These devotional people are expressing outwardly their inward desire to tend to the body of the Lord today,” the bishop noted.

These pilgrims follow in the footsteps of the woman from Bethany who anointed Jesus’s head with expensive oil shortly before his arrest and execution, as well as the women named in Mark’s Gospel as being at the tomb of Jesus. They were willing to risk ridicule and persecution by others in order to honor and tend to his body.

“It is interesting that Mark uses these figures of pious women to highlight the care and concern for the body of the Lord that all Christians should imitate,” the bishop said.

Although extremely worthwhile, it is not necessary to visit the Holy Land in order to share such care and reverence for Jesus’s crucified, buried and risen body.

“We can show our piety and devotion in Eucharistic adoration, as well as taking seriously the personal act of receiving Holy Communion with proper preparation, reverence and prayers of thanksgiving,” said Bishop McKnight.

Those life-changing acts of piety reach their full expression when put into concrete acts of mercy.

“Our sacramental expressions, as important as they are, do not replace our obligations as Christians to be agents of mercy by tending to the body of the Lord that still suffers and is in need of anointing here among us,” the bishop stated.

The Bible records Jesus repeatedly identifying himself with the poor and the outcast, with sinners and those who mourn.

Accordingly, “we have the opportunity to do as the holy women did before (Jesus’s) Passion and after his resurrection whenever we tend to the lowly, the outcasts, the impoverished, the sick and neglected and the poor in

spirit,” said Bishop McKnight.

He noted that one of the priorities of the new pastoral plan draws attention to the Church’s mission to be a center of charity and a sanctuary of mercy by becoming a community of Beatitudes.

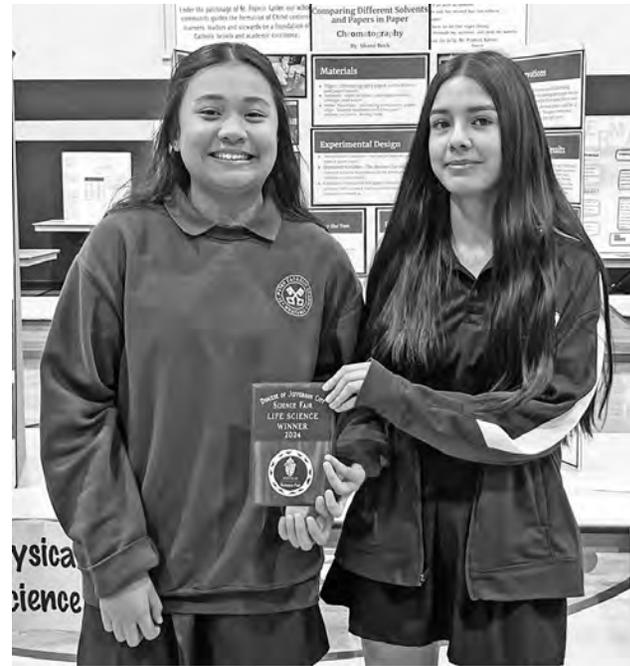
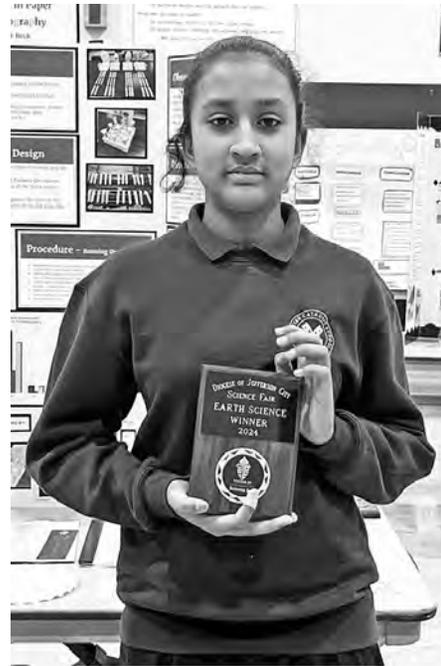
“Each one of us here tonight carries spiritual wounds in need of healing,” he noted. “Each one of us is in need of redemption; we all need the mercy of the Father. And we all need a compassionate Church.”

Although the fullness of resurrected life will only come at the end of time in the general resurrection of the dead, “the light of God’s mercy is given to us through the preaching of Christ’s Gospel, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in the communal life of the Church, where we support and tend each other,” he said.

“Our lives are different because of the mercy we have experienced in the Church!” he stated. “Tonight, we are brought from slavery to sin and the shadow of death, to walk upright in the new life of God’s light of mercy with our fellow brothers and sisters in Baptism.”

Crossword puzzle answers

E	K	E	N	M	X	H	S	H	J	V	E	I
K	N	I	O	R	N	O	M	I	B	V	A	I
A	I	R	M	A	V	M	A	E	V	E	D	E
U	R	P	E	R	L	V	R	X	N	E	N	D
O	I	E	I	E	I	D	J	L	I	I	I	I
H	R	B	X	T	I	D	E	E	J	L	E	I
L	S	O	M	J	L	E	H	H	J	L	J	I
R	S	S	U	V	A	R	E	J	L	U	I	I
V	E	N	O	H	O	H	E	I	R	E	I	P
I	C	E	J	L	J	L	G	O	O	V	A	V
C	I	J	E	N	N	I	W	I	E	I	E	I
J	V	S	R	J	I	V	W	W	O	D	S	O
N	S	D	E	J	E	J	N	C	T	O	T	O
I	S	I	B	O	N	N	V	I	R	C	I	R
V	I	M	U	H	N	R	N	O	I	R	I	E
S	I	R	V	S	N	V	I	R	O	J	S	I



Science is golden

Shane Beck of Our Lady of the Snows School in Mary's Home won top honors in the Physical Science division; Sethuli Jayasundera of St. Peter School in Marshall placed first in the Earth Science division; and Madelaine Granados of Lia Cubero of St. Peter School in Marshall placed first in the Life Science division in this year's Diocesan Science Fair.

— Photos by Sara Blandford

At your service



Sophomores at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City spent time in service at the Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri Central Office during their class retreat in March. Activities included: packing blessing bags for Jefferson City Room at the Inn; writing notes of encouragement to Catholic Charities clients; sorting and stocking food in the Catholic Charities Food Pantry; learning about advocacy and care for the poor; building garden beds and fencing for the outdoor community garden; sweeping and cleaning furniture to help keep the center welcoming to its clients.

— Photos from the Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri Facebook page

Bunny ears and colored eggs



Children of St. Mary School's Little Saints Pre-School in Glasgow are ready for their Easter egg hunt on the Monday of Easter Week.

— Photo from the St. Mary School Facebook page

Can I get an Alleluia?

Mrs. Perrey's fifth- and sixth-grade class at Holy Family School in Freeburg "unbury the Alleluia" during Easter Week, following 40 days of Lent.

— Photo from the Holy Family School and Parish Facebook page



Bible Accent

In Luke 24, we also can read about Jesus appearing to two of his followers who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Beginning in verse 13, we learn that as the two men were walking, they were talking about Jesus' arrest, crucifixion and death.

Just then, Jesus began walking with them, although they did not recognize him. Jesus asked what they were talking about, and they told him.

The men then told Jesus that the women in their group had shared some amazing news. They were at the tomb that morning and found it empty, and angels told them that Jesus was alive.

"Stay with us," the men urged, "for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."

So, Jesus stayed with the men and ate a meal. As Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it with them, the men's eyes were opened. They recognized Jesus, but he vanished from their sight.

The men returned to Jerusalem, found the apostles and told them what happened.

St. Zita



St. Zita was born in Italy to very devout Christian parents. When she was 12, she went to live in the village of Lucca to be a servant for a family that owned a wool and silk weaving business. She was known to get up during the night to wash herself off to prepare herself for praying and to attend Mass at a nearby church. She always gave her food to the poor, and a lot of times she slept on the ground. She was

very well-liked by the family she served, and she eventually became their housekeeper and also their adviser. The family allowed her all the time she wanted to visit the sick, poor and imprisoned. She especially was devoted to those prisoners who were going to be put to death. She served the same family for 48 years, and she died peacefully in 1278 at age 60. We remember her on April 27.

The resurrected Jesus appears to the apostles in Jerusalem

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic Courier

The apostles were staying in Jerusalem after Jesus' crucifixion and death on the cross.

On the third day after Jesus' death, several of his followers visited the apostles to report having seen the resurrected Jesus.

As the apostles were discussing the reports, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst.

"Peace be with you," he said.

The apostles were startled and terrified as if they had seen a ghost.

"Why are you troubled?" Jesus asked. "And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

As Jesus spoke, he showed the apostles his hands and feet, which bore the marks of being crucified.

When the apostles realized they were seeing the resurrected Jesus, they were amazed and filled with joy.

As they were processing what they saw, Jesus asked them for something to eat. They gave him a piece of baked fish, which he ate in front of them.

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled," he told his friends.

Jesus then opened their



Illustration by Linda Rivers

minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

"Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem," Jesus said. "You are witnesses of these things."

Jesus told his friends to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the promise he would send them from his Father in heaven. He said the promise would clothe them with power from on high.

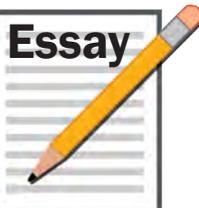
Then Jesus led the apostles out of Jerusalem as far as Bethany, where he raised his hands and blessed them.

As Jesus blessed his friends, he was taken up to heaven.

The apostles did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Afterward, they were continually in the Temple praising God.

Read more about it... Luke 24

1. Where were the apostles staying after Jesus' death?
2. What food did the apostles give Jesus?



Essay

Reading for April 14, 2024:
Luke 24:35-48

When have you been pleasantly surprised by someone or something?

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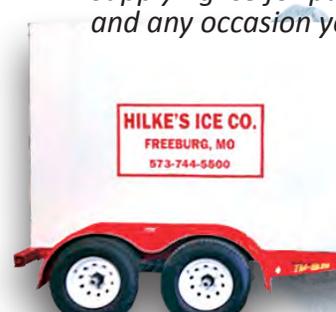
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Puzzle

Unscramble each word and arrange them to form a quotation from the children's story.

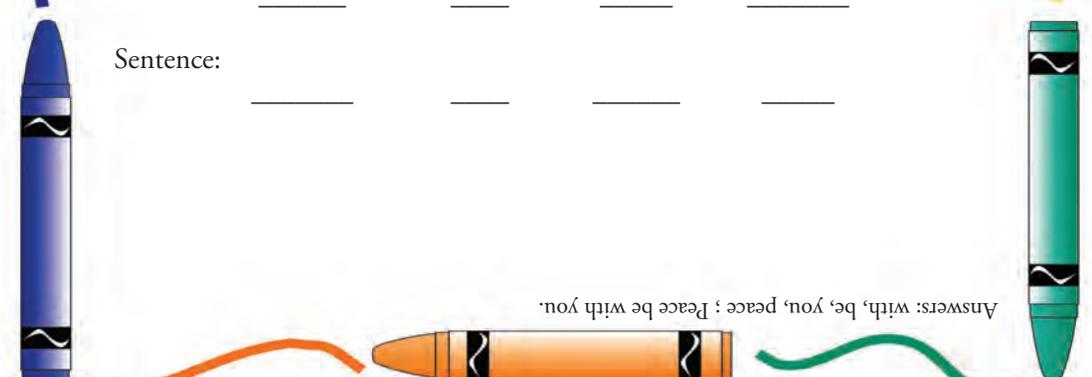
hitw

eb

oyu

ceepa

Sentence: _____



Answers: with, be, you, peace; Peace be with you.

Apalling brutality in “Irena’s Vow” sets stage for unflinching heroism

By Kurt Jensen
OSV News

On the first day of filming for “Irena’s Vow” (Quiver), Sophie Nélisse had to witness a mass hanging.

The Canadian actor, 24, has been making movies since childhood. So the scripted summary executions by Nazis — meant to terrorize the population of occupied Poland during World War II — were all in a day’s work.

Yet evoking an atrocity was not the problem. Instead, it was the possibility of running afoul of Polish child-labor laws.

“We had so many background actors. (But) a lot of the kids had to wrap up in the afternoon,” Nélisse told OSV News.

As a result, Nélisse’s close-ups didn’t involve watching



Sophie Nélisse as Irene Gut Opdyke, left, stars in a scene from the movie “Irena’s Vow.” — OSV news photo/Quiver

the gallows, but rather, following a tennis ball that an assistant director was moving to direct her horrified gaze.

The movie is based on the real-life experiences of Catholic nurse Irene Gut Opdyke (1918-2003).

Famed for her rescue of Jews, Opdyke was named Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli Holocaust Commission.

In 1995, she received a special blessing from St. John Paul II who also invited her to a personal audience.

The hanging is not the most uncomfortable moment in the R-rated film. It’s surpassed, in that regard, by a scene of infanticide that’s explicit enough to make many viewers cringe. A sadistic German officer grabs a newborn child from its mother, stomps the infant to death, then shoots the mother.

Grim fare indeed. Yet it was this incident that inspired Irene’s resistance, as the movie — directed by Louise Ar-

chambault and adapted from his play of the same name by screenwriter Dan Gordon — explains.

Unflinching depictions of history can be both troubling and complicated. But that was the point of Opdyke’s 1999 memoir *In My Hands*, which discussed her decisions.

Another challenging theme crops up in the plot when Irene is asked to perform an abortion. By now, she’s hiding a dozen Jews in the basement of a capacious villa requisitioned by Wehrmacht Major Eduard Rügemer (Dougray Scott), for whom she works as a housekeeper.

When one of the women under Irene’s protection becomes pregnant, the pregnant mother asks her rescuer to terminate the child’s life.

Irene refuses, not out of stated religious principles, but on more broadly humanitarian grounds.

Because of what she’s witnessed, Irene announces, “I refuse to participate in the death of another Jewish baby.” (Before the end credits, the real Irene is shown hugging the man she refused to abort.)

Remarkably, this is Nélisse’s second role as a young wartime hero. Her first was as Liesel in “The Book Thief” (2013).

In that film, her fictional German character — a member of the female equivalent of the Hitler Youth, no less, who is shown singing anti-Semitic lyrics in a choral number — steals books to share with the Jews taking refuge in her basement.

Nélisse, currently one of

Movie Ratings

 General Patronage	Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG)
 Adults and Adolescents	Cabrini (PG-13) Guadalupe: Mother of Humanity (not rated)
 Adults	The American Society of Magical Negroes (PG-13) Arthur the King (PG-13) Dune: Part Two (PG-13) Imaginary (PG-13) One Life (PG)
 Morally Offensive	Immaculate (R) The First Omen (R) Road House (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

the stars of “Yellowjackets,” a Showtime drama series set in the Canadian wilderness, insists this was never her career plan. Still, she enjoyed the evident parallels between the protagonists — in this world but not of it, and being caught up in a milieu of unspeakable evil, yet finding the inner courage to remain moral.

Both the fictional Liesel and the real Irene “put others’ needs in front of their own,” she says. (“Irena’s Vow”) “went beyond a Holocaust movie, I think. It helped me grow as a human being, and brought me so many values.”

Real heroes, she observed, “are often the most quiet ones,” and operate, as both characters did, “in the shadows.”

She’s quick to point out that, as a working actor, she seeks diversity in her roles. In addition to the next season of “Yellowjackets,” Nélisse has a horror movie coming up.

Additionally, she’s looking for parts in comedies and romances and — like every young performer in the business — hopes to land a role somewhere in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Nélisse is not Catholic; neither is Opdyke’s daughter, Jeannie Smith, who identi-

fies as a non-denominational Christian.

Smith vouched for her mother’s self-effacement about saving lives. Growing up in Orange County, California, “I didn’t know anything about that until that phone call (in 1976) when I was 14.”

It was a hostile call from an anti-Semite. Her mother — who had married William Opdyke, a United Nations employee, in 1956 — was asked “whether she thought the Holocaust was make-believe,” Smith told OSV News.

This event only spurred further activism and a campaign of public speaking — which, in turn, brought hostility from neo-Nazis in California.

Smith remembers accompanying her mother to a talk at a Los Angeles high school in the late 1970s where there were swastikas painted on the sidewalk as well as threats saying “Jew-lover, stay home or else.”

But the students responded well to her mother’s honesty, Smith recalls, “one after another, they got back in line to get another hug and kiss.”

Her mother, Smith says, “taught me that a little can go a long way.”

Kurt Jensen is a guest reviewer for OSV News.

On air

Mustard Seed Sunday Scripture readings and reflections

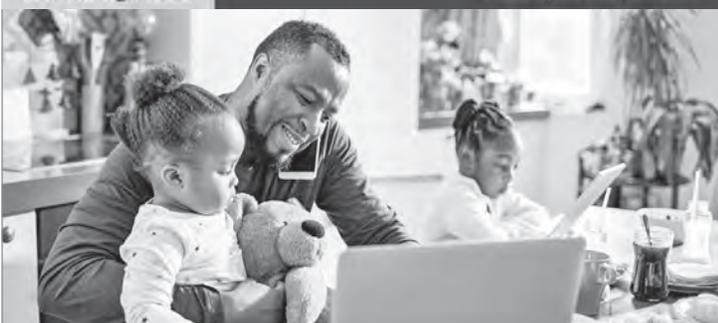
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A healthy contingent



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight meets with several leaders of SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital-Jefferson City on March 13 in his office in the Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center. "I would like to thank Joshua Allee, Joe Hodges, K.C. DeBoer and Andrew Ochs for their commitment to bringing the healing light of Christ to healthcare in Missouri," said Bishop McKnight. — Photo by Annie Williams

DIGNITY

From page 7

where biological elements exist which are impossible to ignore."

"Any sex-change intervention, as a rule, risks threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception," it said. However, the declaration clarified that "this is not to exclude the possibility that a person with genital abnormalities that are already evident at birth or that develop later may choose to receive the assistance of healthcare professionals to resolve these abnormalities."

Words matter

Members of the dicastery also warned about the implications of changing language about human dignity, citing for example those who propose the expressions "personal dignity" or "the rights of the person" instead of "human dignity."

In many cases, they said, the proposal understands "a 'person' to be only 'one who is capable of reasoning.' They then argue that dignity and rights are deduced from the individual's capacity for knowledge and freedom, which not all humans possess.

Thus, according to them, the unborn child would not have personal dignity, nor would the older person who is dependent upon others, nor would an individual with mental disabilities."

The Catholic Church, on the contrary, "insists that the dignity of every human person, precisely because it is intrinsic, remains in all circumstances."

The acceptance of abortion, it said, "is a telling sign of an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense, which is becoming more and more incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, even when the fundamental right to life is at stake."

"Procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to

birth," it said.

On many fronts

The document also repeated Pope Francis' call for a global ban on surrogacy, which, he said, is "a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother's material needs."

Surrogacy, it said, transforms a couple's legitimate desire to have a child into "a 'right to a child' that fails to respect the dignity of that child as the recipient of the gift of life."

Extreme poverty, the marginalization of people with disabilities, violent online attacks and war also violate human dignity, the document said.

While recognizing the right of nations to defend themselves against an aggressor, the document insisted armed conflicts "will not solve problems but only increase them. This point is even more critical in our time when it has become commonplace for so many innocent civilians to perish beyond the confines of a battlefield."

On the issue of migrants and refugees, the dicastery members said that while "no one will ever openly deny that they are human beings," many migration policies and popular attitudes toward migrants "can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human."

The promotion of euthanasia and assisted suicide, it said, "utilizes a mistaken understanding of human dignity to turn the concept of dignity against life itself."

The declaration said, "Certainly, the dignity of those who are critically or terminally ill calls for all suitable and necessary efforts to alleviate their suffering through appropriate palliative care and by avoiding aggressive treatments or disproportionate medical procedures," but it also insisted, "suffering does not cause the sick to lose their dignity, which is intrinsically and inalienably their own."

Daily Readings

Sunday, Apr 14

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
Ps 4:2, 4, 7-9
1 Jn. 2:1-5a
Lk. 24:35-48

Monday, Apr 15

Acts 6:8-15
Ps. 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30
Jn. 6:22-29

Tuesday, Apr 16

Acts 7:51-8:1a
Ps. 31:3cd-4, 6, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab
Jn. 6:30-35

Wednesday, Apr 17

Acts 8:1b-8
Ps. 66:1-3a, 4-7a
Jn. 6:35-40

Thursday, Apr 18

Acts 8:26-40
Ps. 66:8-9, 16-17, 20
Jn. 6:44-51

Friday, Apr 19

Acts 9:1-20
Ps. 117:1bc, 2
Jn. 6:52-59

Saturday, Apr 20

Acts 9:31-42
Ps. 116:12-17
Jn. 6:60-69

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for April:

We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognized in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in parts of the world.

Sunday, Apr 21

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Acts 4:8-12
Ps. 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28-29
1 Jn. 3:1-2
Jn. 10:11-18

Monday, Apr 22

Acts 11:1-18
Ps. 42:2-3; 43:3-4
Jn. 10:1-10

Tuesday, Apr 23

St. George, martyr; St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr
Acts 11:19-26
Ps. 87:1b-3-7
Jn. 10:22-30

Wednesday, Apr 24

St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr
Acts 12:24-13:5a
Ps. 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Jn. 12:44-50

Thursday, Apr 25

St. Mark, Evangelist
1 Pt. 5:5b-14
Ps. 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
Mk. 16:15-20

Friday, Apr 26

Acts 13:26-33
Ps. 2:6-11ab
Jn. 14:1-6

Saturday, Apr 27

Acts 13:44-52
Ps. 98:1-4
Jn. 14:7-14

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Catholic education of our youth is essential to the foundation of your parish. Please consider making a provision in your will for your local parish school.

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Director of Development
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Jefferson City, MO 65110-4900
diojeffcity.org

Have you already remembered your parish or school in your estate plans? Please let us know!

THE HELIAS CATHOLIC MARCHING CRUSADERS
PRESENT THE
7TH ANNUAL TRIVIA NIGHT



CELEBRATE THE 50s

FRIDAY, APRIL 19
DOORS OPEN AT 5:15 PM | TRIVIA STARTS AT 6 PM
HELIAS CATHOLIC OLD GYM - JEFFERSON CITY

TO REGISTER, USE YOUR SMART PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT
HELIASBANDTRIVIA@GMAIL.COM



St. Aloysius, Argyle & St. Boniface, Koeltztown

FRIED CHICKEN & BAKED HAM

DINNER

Sunday, April 21
11 am - 5:30 pm

ST. BONIFACE ANNEX BUILDING
(BEHIND ST. BONIFACE CHURCH)
KOELTZTOWN

Dine-in or Drive-thru — \$15 per meal
Country fried chicken & baked ham,
mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans,
coleslaw, applesauce & assorted desserts!

Prizes and Country Store!

THE MEN OF SIGNUM CRUCIS PRESENT

HEART OF A HERO
MEN'S CONFERENCE

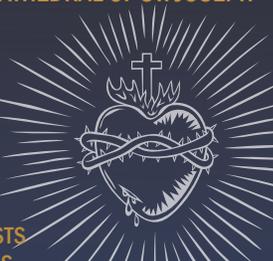
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APRIL 19
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

\$30 FOR EITHER DAY
\$40 FOR BOTH DAYS
\$20 FOR STUDENTS
NO CHARGE FOR PRIESTS
AND SEMINARIANS

APRIL 20
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

WITH MIDDAY MASS
AND ADORATION
& CONFESSIONS
DURING LUNCH
BREAK



SCAN FOR MORE INFO
OR TO REGISTER



OR VISIT MENOSIGNUMCRUCIS.COM/MENS-CONFERENCE


 LAMAR HUNT JR.
FRIDAY 6:30 PM


 FR. BILL PECKMAN
SATURDAY 9 AM


 ADAM WRIGHT
SATURDAY 10 AM


 DR. ANDREW SWAFFORD
SATURDAY 1:15 PM


 BRIAN MILLER
SATURDAY 2:15 PM

"FOR GOD DID NOT GIVE US A SPIRIT OF COWARDICE BUT
RATHER OF POWER AND LOVE AND SELF CONTROL."
2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Fr. Tolton Mass in Columbia

DATE: April 21
TIME: 11 am

The Father Tolton Society's annual Celebration Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Sunday, April 21, in the chapel of the St. Thomas

More Newman Center, 602 Turner Ave. in Columbia.

Fr. Tolton, born into a family of enslaved people in northeastern Missouri in 1854, grew up to become the Roman Catholic Church's first recognizably Black priest

in the United States.

This Mass is celebrated each April in observance of the anniversary of his birth on April 1 and his priestly ordination anniversary on April 24.

He is under serious consideration for being declared a saint.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Lots of fun!
MAY 03, 2024

Homemade Hispanic food

\$240 per table of 8 or \$90 per person

Wear your best Wild West attire

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Prize for best decorated table

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Ocaso Band

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Doors open at 6:00p.m.



Mass in Brush Creek

DATE: April 28
TIME: 1 pm

The annual Spring Mass in historical St. Peter Church in Brush Creek will be offered at 1 p.m. on Sunday, April 28. Father Gregory Oligschlaeger, pastor of the Monroe City and Indian Creek parishes, will preside.

The church stands where Venerable Father Augustus Tolton, the Roman Catholic Church's first recognizably Black priest in the United States, was baptized in 1854.

The church is located at 14690 Gentry Road, off of Sheil Lane, south of Route J in rural Ralls County.

This Mother's Day

CELEBRATE ALL MOTHERS AT THE MOTHERS' SHRINE

Join us on May 12, 2024 for:

8:30AM: **MASS** AT ST. PATRICK CHURCH
9:15 - 11AM: **FREE MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH**
1:30PM: **MASS** IN THE MOTHERS' SHRINE
AND **UNVEILING OF THE NEW NAMES ON THE MOTHERS' WALL OF LIFE**

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