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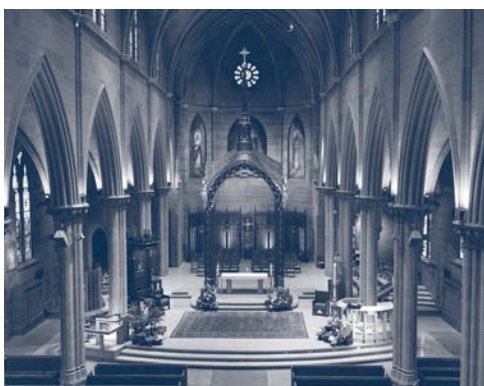
African Catholics hold conference

Bishop Earl Fernandes sprinkles holy water during a Mass at the National Association of African Catholics in the United States conference on Saturday, July 19 at Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, Page 5



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7 Church Pilgrimage

Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception take a break at Columbus St. Patrick Church during the 7 Church Pilgrimage organized by the Bridgettine sisters on Saturday, July 26, Page 3

7 CHURCH PILGRIMAGE



The seven stops on the 7 Church Pilgrimage on July 26 in Columbus included time for prayer.

Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



Participants receive pilgrimage directions at the Convent of St. Birgitta.



The Bridgettine sisters organized the 7 Church pilgrimage.



The pilgrims pause for a group photo outside Columbus St. Patrick Church, the fifth of seven stops.



Some of the approximately 40 participants cross Fourth Street in downtown Columbus on their way from St. John the Baptist Church to St. Patrick Church.

Bridgettine sisters lead prayerful walk to parishes in and around downtown Columbus

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

The Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget, also known as the Bridgettines, invited the faithful to join for the first annual St. Bridget's 7 Church Pilgrimage in Columbus on Saturday, July 26.

Approximately 40 individuals joined the Bridgettine Sisters, six of whom live at the Columbus convent, for a walk that included stops at seven historic Catholic churches in the city totaling approximately six miles.

"We are so blessed to be right here in downtown Columbus with the Bridgettines, and we have seven churches in walking distance, and a pilgrimage, as Mother Eunice says, shouldn't be easy. It should be an offering. So, we decided a hot summer July day, three days after St. Bridget's feast day (on July 23), to do this in honor of her," said Jody White, a friend and volunteer with the Bridgettine Sisters.

The Bridgettine Order was founded by St. Bridget of Sweden in the 1300s. The Bridgettine spirituality is rooted in a deep love of Christ, especially in remembrance of His sufferings.

Pilgrims gathered early Saturday morning outside of the Bridgettine convent in Columbus, located west of downtown. After opening prayers, the pilgrims set out for their first destination: Columbus Holy Family Church.

The Bridgettine Convent, 40 N. Grubb Street, is located adjacent to Holy Family.

Faithful spent time praying inside each church on the journey, reflecting on Christ's Passion with prayers and readings from Sacred Scripture. Father Stash Dailey, pastor at Worthington St. Michael the Archangel Church, led pilgrims in prayerful reflection at each stop.

While walking to the seven churches, pilgrims prayed the Bridgettine rosary, which includes six decades instead of five. The Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries each contain an additional mystery

of the rosary.

Participants also reflected on the seven sorrows of Mary during the pilgrimage.

"We hope more people learn about the sorrows of Mary and how she truly walked in suffering, but she did it for our Lord. She trusted in God's divine will," White said.

Glenn and Karen Ruffner made the trip from New Jersey for the pilgrimage. Their daughter, Sister Jose Mary, 27, an Ohio State University graduate and Bridgettine sister in Columbus, professed her first vows with the order last year.

Sister Jose Mary invited her parents to Columbus for the seven-church pilgrimage. Rain or shine, Karen said, they would be there.

"It fills me with gratitude because God is so good," she said. "He's taken me on a journey, and this is symbolic of that."

She described having a daughter in consecrated religious life as a constant surrender.

"Part of the path that we all have to be on is to surrender to God's will, and so, it's a joyful surrender, and for me, it's so exciting because I know my daughter really well, and it's like, look out world, because she is a dynamo," Karen said. "So, God has a plan. It's a good one."

After praying inside Holy Family Church and meditating on Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, pilgrims set off to the second church of the day, Columbus St. Francis of Assisi. Pilgrims spent time praying in the church, located near Columbus' Victorian Village neighborhood, and reflecting on Jesus being bound and taken before Annas.

The pilgrimage then continued east to Columbus Sacred Heart Church followed by Columbus St. John the Baptist Church in the Italian Village neighborhood. The faithful reflected on Jesus being taken before the high priest Caiaphas and then summoned by Pontius Pilate.

Father Vince Nguyen, pastor of Sacred Heart and St. John the Baptist churches, was present to greet pilgrims, welcome them to the churches and distribute water.

The pilgrimage then headed south into downtown for the fifth church visit at Columbus St. Patrick Church. Faithful prayed, read Scripture and reflected on Jesus being taken before Herod.

At St. Patrick Church, pastor Father Paul Marich, O.P. (Order of Preachers) welcomed the group. Pilgrims had an opportunity to venerate a relic of St. Margaret of Castello, which was on display and is housed in the church.

In 2021, a diocesan shrine of St. Margaret was established at St. Patrick. The church is staffed by Dominican friars. St. Margaret was a member of the Dominican Third Order of Castello, through which she developed a deep prayer life and devoted her 33-year life to performing acts of penance and charity.

After spending time in prayer before the relic of St. Margaret of Castello, pilgrims continued to Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, the sixth church on the route. They prayed at the mother church of the diocese, reflecting on Jesus being taken before Pilate again.

Damion Faulkner, a special education tutor at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School, joined the pilgrimage. He volunteers at the Bridgettine convent, helping with gardening and pulling weeds on the convent grounds. He also spends time praying in the sisters' Adoration chapel.

"There's something that draws me to spend time with them, when I can, because I can feel the presence of God and just a peacefulness," he explained.

"Every time I've been with them there's just always a peace and a joy to them, like you can hear it when they sing Ave Maris Stella. There's just something that is attractive about that."

Faulkner said he also appreciates the Bridgettines' structure. He finds it resonates with his desire for a daily structure of prayer and work.

"Sometimes I just find myself going in too many different directions, and this, maybe, is like an opportunity to refocus and come back to God and what's impor-

tant," he said.

The pilgrimage made its seventh and final stop at Columbus Holy Cross Church, the first Catholic church in Columbus and the oldest church in the city.

At the final church destination in Columbus, pilgrims meditated on Jesus being given the crown of thorns. They offered a closing prayer and the Divine Praises.

The pilgrimage concluded with an 11:30 a.m. Mass, which is regularly held at Holy Cross on Saturday mornings. The Mass was celebrated by Father Jan Sullivan, rector of St. Joseph Cathedral and Holy Cross Church.

The Mass celebrated the feast of Ss. Anne and Joachim, the grandparents of Jesus and parents of Mary, whose feast day is July 26. St. Anne is the co-patroness of the diocese. A relic of St. Anne and holy oil from the St. Anne shrine in Quebec, Canada, were available for blessings and veneration.

Confession and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament followed Mass at Holy Cross Church. Pilgrims then returned to the Convent of St. Birgitta.

Faithful are invited to join the sisters at the convent for daily Mass and Adoration offered 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Bridgettine Sisters' primary charism is unity among all Christians. They live a simple monastic lifestyle through prayer and hospitality.

"Our Lord wanted us to be under one flock, and I've seen it happen within my own family, the interaction with the sisters, with their counsel, with their wisdom, that they meet with folks, that they're truly bringing those lukewarm back with zeal and knowing that there's something deeper," White said. "It's been beautiful to see."

The Bridgettines are currently renovating their Columbus convent. The

Quo Vadis retreat draws over 40 high schoolers to Josephinum

From July 27 through July 30, more than 40 high-school age young men from throughout the Diocese of Columbus gathered for the annual Quo Vadis retreat hosted at the Pontifical College Josephinum.

The aim of the event, which is organized through the diocesan Vocations Office and staffed by seminarians of the Diocese of Columbus, is to encourage 14- through 18-year-olds to be open to considering a vocation to the priesthood.

The title of the retreat, meaning “where are you going,” comes from the story of the martyrdom of St. Peter.

As the first Pope was fleeing persecution in Rome, he saw a vision of Jesus carrying His cross back into the city. Peter asked Jesus where He was going, to which Jesus replied “to be crucified again.” This vision strengthened Peter to return to Rome and to fulfill his vocation, and to eventually be martyred.

Retreatants attended Mass, prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and participated in a daily Holy Hour. They also listened to talks about priestly discernment, masculine spirituality and panel discussions from both priests and seminarians of the diocese.

During free time, participants hiked, played sports and enjoyed the Josephinum’s 100-acre campus.

The yearly retreat began to be offered in 2018, initially at Ss. Peter and Paul Retreat Center near Newark before moving to the Josephinum in 2020. Since the retreat began to be offered, over 10 prior retreatants entered seminary formation for the diocese.

Vocations events like Quo Vadis are funded through the generosity of the faithful of the Diocese. If you are interested in assisting the Vocations Office in putting these events on or know a young man who would be interested in attending Quo Vadis next year, please reach out to Father Michael Hammerle, diocesan director of vocations, in the vocations office.



Father Michael Haemmerle (right), director of vocations for the diocese, chats with one of the Quo Vadis retreatants at the Pontifical College Josephinum. Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



Deacon Zack Goodchild (left), a diocesan seminarian who will be ordained to the priesthood in 2026, talks with one of the participants in the Quo Vadis retreat at the Josephinum.



Quo Vadis retreatants enjoy their time at the Josephinum participating in recreational activities such as basketball in the seminary gymnasium.



Free time at the Quo Vadis retreat for high schoolers includes outdoor recreation.

Catholic Social Services launches ‘Super Neighbor’ volunteer initiative

Catholic Social Services (CSS) announced a bold new community-led initiative in response to recent government funding reductions that have forced the suspension of two long-standing direct service programs for older adults. The “Super Neighbor” volunteer initiative is a renewed call to action inviting everyday Ohioans to become powerful agents of hope, compassion and service to vulnerable neighbors across the 23 counties of the Diocese of Columbus.

AmeriCorps Seniors has historically funded stipends and travel costs for income-qualified seniors to serve as Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents in four counties in central Ohio. These programs have offered seniors a way to give back while earning a little extra money to support their own needs. Due to severe cuts to federal initiatives like AmeriCorps, these programs as structured are no longer possible.

“This is not the path we wanted,

but it’s the reality we face,” said Kelley Henderson, president and CEO of Catholic Social Services. “We are prayerfully choosing to respond with faith, creativity and community as we look beyond this moment.”

As of August 20, services for Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent will be suspended in Franklin County. We will continue Senior Companion operations in Delaware, Fairfield and Licking Counties through September 30. If funds are ultimately appropriated in Congress, further updates will be shared.

We are grateful for the more than 100 Companions and Foster Grandparents who have generously served in recent years and continue to explore other ways to engage their knowledge and experience in Ohio. While deeply saddened by the need to scale back certain programs, we remain committed to serving those who rely on us. Over the past 12 months, over 650 isolated seniors relied on weekly visits from

CSS companions, and 400 students benefited from grandparents in the classroom.

“We are using this moment as a call to action and to reimagine what compassionate care and accompaniment can look like when backed by the good will of our neighbors,” Henderson said. “This ministry never happens alone, and the Super Neighbor initiative gives us a way to support each other as neighbors serving neighbors.”

The Super Neighbor initiative is a volunteer-powered model that equips local individuals from churches, schools and our community to provide essential services to isolated seniors, students and our neighbors in need. The activities could include:

- Friendly phone check-ins and home visits to isolated seniors
- Assistance to non-emergency medical appointments, the grocery store or a haircut
- Help navigating local resources
- Homework support in a local school

Our Super Neighbor volunteers receive background checks, training and support through CSS to serve safely and effectively. The initiative seeks to reignite the spirit of being a neighbor, one that is core to our Catholic faith tradition and essential to healthy communities.

Anyone 25 years old or older with reliable transportation and willing to give a couple hours a week can become a Super Neighbor. Catholic Social Services is actively recruiting Super Neighbors — you can make a difference.

“You don’t have to wear a cape to be a hero,” Henderson said. “You just have to be the one who shows up when a neighbor needs a hand!”

To learn more or to become a Super Neighbor, visit <https://colscss.org/services/senior-services/>



Mass is celebrated in the Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School gymnasium for the National Association of African Catholics in the United States conference on July 19. Photos courtesy William Keimig



Bishop Earl Fernandes distributes Holy Communion at Mass.



A choir provides music during the Mass for the African Catholics conference at DeSales.

Bishops urge African Catholics to be witnesses of faith

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

African Catholics from across the country gathered in Columbus this summer for the National Association of African Catholics in the United States (NAACUS) conference held July 18-20.

The biannual conference was hosted by the organization's Region 6, which includes Ohio and Michigan. Presentations, workshops and prayer were offered at Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School and St. Matthias Chapel, part of Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita parish.

Bishop Earl Fernandes was present to speak with attendees, answer questions and celebrate Mass.

"Talking to the bishop and getting in touch with the community here in Columbus, that fit what we are trying to accomplish – to be able to reach out to our respective communities – and that's what drove us to have the conference here in Columbus," said Sally Stovall, NAACUS president.

"It has been amazing. The bishop has been welcoming. Everybody in the community, they have come together to make sure that, NAACUS members, they are welcome."

Bishop Jerome Feudjio of the Diocese of Saint Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands gave a keynote address. Bishop Feudjio, a native of Cameroon, became the first African-born bishop in the United States when appointed by Pope Francis in 2021 to shepherd the Saint Thomas diocese.

He also serves on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church as a liaison of African Catholics.

His keynote address, United in Christ for Evangelization, explored evangelizing through African culture and witness.

He also noted challenges and opportunities for African Catholics in the United States.

The conference theme was drawn from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. St. Paul wrote, "I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

"He was speaking to a Church that, like ours, was diverse, dynamic, and sometimes, divided," Bishop Feudjio said.

Unity is the basis for evangelization, which, he said, is about communion not sameness. He also noted the importance of evangelizing through a lived witness rather than preaching.

"Our African cultures are rich with ways of witnessing to the Gospel: through music that lifts the soul, through community that embraces the stranger, through reverence for elders and through joy even in suffering. These are not just cultural traits; they are evangelical tools," he said.

Bishop Feudjio recognized ongoing challenges: preserving African identity while integrating into parish life, feelings of invisibility, misunderstandings, overlooked customs and underused gifts. African youth often feel "caught between two worlds," he said.

"These obstacles are avenues that need our presence and witness and challenge us to be firmer and stronger in the faith."

Challenges can also be opportunities to build bridges between generations, cultures and communities. He encouraged African Catholics to mentor youth, celebrate cultures and serve their parishes.

"We are called to grow in spiritual maturity, to deepen our prayer lives, to support vocations, to form leaders and to

serve the Church with humility and courage," the bishop said.

Bishop Feudjio told young people to recognize their energy, creativity and cultural pride as gifts. He asked youth to use and share their gifts with the Church.

He also addressed elderly and first-generation African immigrants. He asked them to be intentional about memory, continuity and cultural pride rooted in Christ.

"Your African identity is not a burden to be shed but a gift to be shared," he said.

"The Church in the United States needs your voice. It needs your joy. It needs your witness, and it needs your culture, not as something foreign but as something deeply Catholic."

A youth and young adult workshop was held during the weekend conference. Young children of preschool age through teenage years were present.

Father Thomas Kamau, a native of Kenya, helped lead the workshop. He is serving in the Diocese of Columbus and as a professor at Ohio University.

The priest, who helps with the diocese's Swahili Mass for Catholics from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo at St.

Josephine Bakhita parish, said the workshop was intended to engage and inspire youth.

Youth were instructed on living their Christian values at an early age by intensifying their prayer life, reading Scripture and participating at Mass by lecturing, singing or serving.

Father Kamau said many young Catholics know something about God, but they lack a personal relationship with Him. African Catholic youth were encouraged to cultivate a relationship with Christ and share their testimony.

"We are showing them that you really don't have to wait until when you're an adult, to be an elderly person to do the evangelization," Father Kamau explained. "You can actually begin where you are in your own family."

"If you live love, if you have goodness, you have patience, let's say self-control at school where sometimes there's bullying ... you treat that person who is actually being isolated with love, with understanding, expanding your network ... not just being friend to those who are friends to you ... then now you are living the Gospel, so we encourage them to live that kind of life."

African youth were also encouraged to think about



Bishop Earl Fernandes is joined by clergy after the Mass for the National Association of African Catholics in the United States.

their vocation. The discussion included the priesthood and consecrated religious life, but regardless of a child's vocational path, they were encouraged to demonstrate Christian values.

"We are showing them where they are now, what they can do, and as they start aspiring and thinking of what they want to become in the future, then they can still see how they can practice or live their Christianity at that point," Father Kamau said.

A question-and-answer session was also offered during the conference. Bishops Feudjio and Fernandes answered several questions from conference attendees.

Bishop Fernandes encouraged those gathered to personally invite others to Mass or parish events. He said priests and parishioners need to be made aware of events and their importance.

"African culture has something to offer to the life of a parish, and it's an opportunity for those who do not yet know you or your culture to learn about you and your culture," Bishop Fernandes said.

"Don't be afraid to encounter another person, even if they're not African, because you have something to offer, and they have something to offer to you."

Having a united mindset, Bishop Fernandes encouraged African Catholics to evangelize to Anglos by inviting them to Mass, showing them the beauty and blessing of children and family life, and ministering to the sick and poor by visiting them and being a witness to reconciliation.

"This is your faith and your heritage, and you have a beautiful opportunity to really evangelize," he said.

BRINGING FAITH to the FAIR



Longtime volunteers (from left) Susan and Deacon Ed Christ and Rita Merk annually bring a Catholic presence to the Ohio State Fair at the Lancaster-Zanesville Marian Center. Photo courtesy Sarah Lightle

Dedicated group spreads the good news about the Catholic Church at Ohio State Fair

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

For 51 years, a booth at the Ohio State Fair in Columbus has represented the Catholic Church at the state's largest fair.

The Lancaster-Zanesville Marian Center set up a booth in 1974 that continues to operate at the state fair, typically held each summer at the end of July and beginning of August. The booth was back again this summer at the Ohio State Fair, which ran from July 23 to August 3.

It was founded by a Lancaster couple, Rita Merk, 92, and her late husband, Dr. James Merk, who died earlier this year. More than five decades ago, the couple was enjoying the various booths at the Ohio State Fair when they encountered one rather alarming.

"It was a black tent, and inside, there were men dressed as priests, and they were singing the worst songs against the Church – terrible – so we left, and we went up to the office to complain," Merk recalled.

"They said, 'Lady, they paid

\$1,200 for that booth. They can do what they want. If you want to do something, you get a booth of your own.'"

And so, she did.

As divine providence would have it, one booth was left available for the coming year. Merk contacted a Marian group in Columbus for help with expenses.

They compiled enough money to rent the booth at the fair the following summer. The first Marian booth opened on July 27, 1974. The booth made enough money in donations each summer to open again every year since.

The Lancaster Knights of Columbus council donates \$500 a year to help with the Marian booth expenses, which average about \$1,270.

The booth is located inside the fair's Bricker Marketplace. The backdrop of the booth includes a painting of God the Father, the Holy Spirit depicted as a dove and a cutout that leaves room for a large crucifix, which is situated in the space.

Sacred Scripture and statues of Our Lady of Fatima and St.

Joseph sit on a stand in front of the painting.

Visitors can enter a drawing to win the statue of Our Lady, which is given to a selected winner each summer. The statue is handcrafted by Mazzolini Artcraft in Cleveland, the largest supplier, manufacturer and importer of fine Catholic statuary in the United States. The company handcrafts a statue each year for the booth.

Merk, who belongs to Lancaster St. Bernadette Church, is part of the parish's Marian Society. The ministry meets monthly to promote prayer and Eucharistic Adoration. The society regularly leads the Holy Rosary before Mass on Sundays.

The booth is manned by members of the Marian group and parishioners in and around Lancaster, Zanesville, Perry County, Newark and Columbus. St. Gabriel Radio (central Ohio's AM 820 station) staff and volunteers also serve at the booth, along with consecrated religious sisters and priests. Volunteers answer questions, pass out material and offer a Catholic presence at the fair.

Handmade rosaries, holy cards, pamphlets and books on the saints are available to booth visitors free of charge. All items are donated or purchased with money from donations.

Rosaries are made by members of the Marian center from 80-pound fishing line. The Children of Mary religious order, which has a convent in Newark, donated Eucharistic holy cards.

"In 51 years, we've never had to worry about having enough stuff. Seems like we've always been blessed with enough," said Deacon Ed Christ, who serves as a deacon in the Perry County Consortium (Junction City St. Patrick and New Lexington St. Rose of Lima churches).

Christ, who is part of the Lancaster-Zanesville Marian Center, volunteers with his wife, Susan. The deacon has volunteered at the booth since 1979. He has witnessed the Lord's unfailing providence in the time since.

"This year, we didn't have any scapulars, or very few left over. ... We only had just a little bit with not enough time to order any," Christ explained.

A volunteer went to a priest, asking if he had a contact who could give them scapulars to distribute.

Christ recalled that the priest "came back and gave her a great big box of scapulars. He said, 'A lady gave me these. I didn't know what to do with them.'"

Throughout the years, several fairgoers have stopped by the booth to share stories of

conversion or sorrows in their lives.

"Many times people will come up and they'll say that they had a miraculous happening in their life, maybe, and they honor the Blessed Mother for that, and they feel that she's come in their life," Merk explained.

"We've had some people that are anti-Catholic, and you'll get a handful of those every time, too," Christ added, "but it's nice because you know that you're doing something good, because, if you're weren't, they wouldn't come over and say something to you."

Members of the All-Ohio State Fair Band, which features instrumentalists from more than 100 high schools across the state and performs each year, have also visited the Marian booth.

"About an hour after they get done playing, you'll see a bunch of them start to trickle in, and we'll get maybe 20 of the members of the band stop, and they'll say, 'Boy, you know, we were waiting to get done so we can come see the booth,'" Christ said. "They do it every year that they play."

"We get a lot of people that come back every year and say, 'Boy, I'm glad to see you're here.'" Many youth have been

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Susan Christ hands a prayer card to her brother-in-law, John Christ, at the Ohio State Fair.



Catholic evangelization from the Marian Center booth at the Ohio State Fair has taken place for decades. Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



Rita Merk has come to the Ohio State Fair for 51 years to share the Catholic faith at the Marian Center booth. The 2025 fair was the first without her husband, Dr. James Merk, who passed away earlier this year.

Lifelong friendships built on faith, family, Catholic education

By Ken Snow

For The Catholic Times

Anne Gillilan likes to reminisce about how she and her best friends from high school bonded and managed to maintain their friendship for more than 75 years.

"It's remarkable," said Gillilan, who is now 90, "but true!"

The connection started on the east side of Columbus at Holy Rosary High School, which Bishop James J. Hartley established in the early 20th century and remained in operation until 1966.

"By the 1950s, the school was thriving and I transferred to Holy Rosary from St. Mary of the Springs (an all-girls school) and began my sophomore year there," said Gillilan, who graduated in 1953.

During her sophomore year, Gillilan began sharing a locker with a girl named Phyllis, something that was normal in those days. At first, they got along famously until Gillilan began dating a boy from another school whom she'd met at a dance at her home parish, Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle. There was just one problem: Phyllis had also taken a liking to this boy and, after that, Phyllis quit speaking to Anne until sometime after graduation.

In the end, Anne married the young man, Jim Gillilan, and she and Phyllis let bygones be bygones. Today, Anne and Phyllis are among the six remaining "girls" who share lunches together at TAT Family Restaurant (in Columbus at the corner of James Road and East Livingston Avenue) on the third Friday of every month.

Gillilan thinks back on her high school days at Holy Rosary and says, "The friendships with the other girls (12 in the original lunch group) continued after graduation. We even took a couple of vacations together — one to Virginia Beach and one to New York City. Not long after that, we all started getting married and having children. Then we formed a weekly card club or played other games like Bunco (a friendly but merry dice game), and began spending time together on the holidays, especially at Christmas."

So, 75-plus years later, the six "girls" who maintain their lunch group at the TAT share conversation, reminiscing and laughs together. Each is 90 or 91 and they carry on as if still in their 20s. By now, each is a grandmother or great grandmother, some sadly outliving their own children. Often, many of their children and grandchildren attend the luncheons, adding to the friendly cacophony that always prevails.

This lunch group evolved from the original card club of the early days and really didn't take off until about 15 years ago. But it was a natural extension of their lifelong friendship. Some of the ladies are still living independently and still drive while others are in assisted living and rely on their children to bring them to the lunches. Yet, not one of them would skip these monthly get-togethers unless a physical or health-related issue were to prevent them from coming.

Suzanne Webb, one of the "girls" who graduated from Holy Rosary in 1954, said, "I got married the following December and it wasn't long after that when we all started

having children. The card club was our way of escaping for one night a week. We let our husbands be in charge of our kids so we could relax and keep our heads about us. My husband was a mailman and we had four children."

Phyllis Woodyard (yes, the Phyllis) graduated from Holy Rosary in '53 and said about still getting together after all these years, "There are things you wouldn't imagine. When we needed help, you always could call one another on the phone and talk to them. They would always be there for us."

Peggy Williams, Phyllis' daughter who brought her to the luncheon, said, "They started out getting together when they all had their children. They had play dates to go to the park, have picnic lunches, and that sort of thing, and during that time, they started having their card club. That's how it initially started. They also got together as couples and these events became the foundation of their lifelong friendship. So, gatherings like this one today are very special. When you think about a lifelong friendship, it's literally been since they were children. Some of them have known each other since elementary school, and others came in as time went on. But, really, this is a lifelong relationship family — these ladies are like family to one another."

Williams, 65, said that she and her three siblings were adopted by Phyllis and her husband (now deceased) and that she plans to continue the tradition of get-togethers with the daughters and sons of the group. She said, "This is so important. That's why we continue because many of these ladies might otherwise have died many years ago. And Anne (Gillilan) always says to me, 'Thanks for bringing your mom.'"

Williams continued, "She (her mom Phyllis) has to be here. These relationships are that important to these women and I think it really helps with their longevity. And I told Mom, 'As long as you want to keep coming and you feel well enough to come, we're here for you.' It's on my calendar every month."

Gillilan summarized the lunch club by saying, "I don't think these lifelong relationships would've ever come about if we hadn't been Catholic. We were all raised in good, Catholic families. We all went to Catholic school. And we all loved the Lord. These things make up the foundation of lives well-lived. And I hope our children, and our children's children, carry on this legacy. It makes life worth living and really helps us live longer and in the most fulfilling ways."

Growing up Catholic in a devout family also influenced Gillilan's life. Some of her earliest memories were of her dad, whom she called "a pretty tough guy" who'd sometimes pound his chest and exclaim, "I love my faith!"

"And that impressed me," Gillilan said. "He was a fun person, he had a good time, he worked hard, and when he'd stop and say, 'I love my faith!' It made me sit up and take notice. Not only that, but it made me begin to love my faith, too. Things like that really shaped my life. And it matters when you come from a big family. I'm one of 12 children — 10 girls and two boys."

Some children come up, but their parents steer them away. Volunteers have seen parents tell their children not to believe it. Adults have also voiced their opinions.

Regardless of where individuals stand with the Catholic faith, volunteers at the

I don't think these lifelong relationships would've ever come about if we hadn't been Catholic. We were all raised in good, Catholic families. We all went to Catholic school. And we all loved the Lord.

These things make up the foundation of lives well-lived.

-- Anne Gillilan,

1953 Columbus Holy Rosary High School graduate



The "girls" from the Holy Rosary High School lunch group include (from left) Monica Shannon, Suzanne Webb, Dorothy Tanner, Phyllis Woodyard, Rita Ralston and Anne Gillilan.
CT photos by Ken Snow



Memorabilia from high school days, reunions and other gatherings are displayed.

FAIR, continued from Page 6

attracted to the booth.

Christ noted young children have stopped by, saying they need a new rosary or holy card. With the rise of a generation not practicing any faith, encountering youth at the booth brings hope.

booth offer a Christlike presence. They listen and explain their devotion to Jesus, Mary and the Catholic Church.

"We never argue with anyone. We'll maybe say, 'May God bless you,' but we never argue," Merk added.

"A man came out, and he said, 'I don't believe in any of this,' and I said, 'I will pray for you,' and he came back later and he thanked me. So, you see how God works."

Somerset alumni group experiences second life

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

What once was a dormant organization for graduates of the former Somerset Holy Trinity High School has been revived and is playing an active role in ensuring continuation of a nearly 200-year tradition of Catholic education in Perry County.

An annual dinner and other fundraisers in 2024 enabled the Holy Trinity Alumni Association to contribute \$7,500 toward an addition to Holy Trinity Elementary School, which will be completed in time for the 2025-2026 academic year. The space will include six new classrooms and a separate early childhood center. The school currently has 191 students in kindergarten through eighth grade and 36 preschool students and anticipates growth in both areas, especially the preschool.

The alumni group also awarded \$1,000 scholarships for postsecondary education to Holy Trinity graduates Jacob Householder and Aleah White, gave \$2,500 toward furniture for the school expansion and donated \$500 to the school latchkey program for supplies and \$300 for a pie baking contest at the annual parish garden party in June.

This year's alumni dinner will be at 6 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 23 in the school gym. Home and School Association members will provide the food, beer will be available for purchase and those attending may bring a bottle of wine. The cost is \$30 per person.

Besides the dinner, the association's other fundraisers included a garage sale in May, a Christmas sale in December, a football pool for one of Ohio State's postseason games and euchre tournaments that took place throughout the winter, said association chair Eve Smith. The group's other officers are Tina Boyer, co-chair and Kim Purkey, treasurer.

"We don't have regular meetings, but all these events serve the purpose of enabling the school's alumni and others to have get-togethers and raise funds," Smith said.

"The high school closed more than 50 years ago, so the number of its living alumni is steadily declining. It's probably about 100 now," she said. "As that number grew smaller, the association became less active and eventually didn't exist."

"I got involved with it about seven years ago when Father (Stephen) Carmody (OP), the pastor at the time, requested that it be revived. I was already on the parish advisory council and Home and School Association board, so it made sense to be part of the group."

"The old association had a golf outing and an auction in addition to the dinner. We decided the most important thing was to bring back the dinner, not as a fundraiser but as a way for Holy Trinity graduates and others to socialize, reminisce and recognize the school's long history."

Holy Trinity School was founded in 1830 by the congregation now known as the Dominican Sisters of Peace. One of its members, Sister Nancy Ames, OP, is the school's vice principal.

The alumni association sponsors a fund administered by The Catholic Foundation and known as the Peggy Ryan Perpetual Endowment, which receives funds from donations, estate planning and fundraising.

Money from the endowment is disbursed each year to meet specific needs of the school as determined by its principal. The current principal, 1976 Holy Trinity graduate Bill Noll, is retiring from that position next year after more than a decade. He became principal after a long career in the U.S. Navy ended in 2012.

"It is often said that the backbone of a great Catholic school is its alumni and

this holds true at Holy Trinity," Noll said. "By the time our alumni banquet arrives, we will have moved into the new classrooms and I will be delighted to personally give anyone a tour of the new addition so they can be firsthand witnesses of our progress."

Anyone interested in attending the dinner may send a check for \$30 per attendee to Holy Trinity Alumni Association, Post Office Box 642, Somerset, OH 43783. Those wishing to donate to the endowment are asked to send a separate check and mark it for The Peggy Ryan Perpetual Endowment. The association has a Facebook page at "Holy Trinity School Alumni."



It is often said that the backbone of a great Catholic school is its alumni and this holds true at Holy Trinity.

-- Bill Noll,
1976 Holy Trinity graduate
and current principal



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Somerset Holy Trinity School alumni gather for their annual dinner.

Photos courtesy Eve Smith

Aquinas alumni continue to meet regularly, award scholarships

By Tim Puet
For The Catholic Times

Aquinas College High School in Columbus was open for 60 years and has been closed for just as long. Although it no longer exists physically, an active alumni group has ensured that the school continues to play a role in educating students in diocesan schools.

For the 31st straight year, the Aquinas Alumni Association has awarded scholarships to eighth-graders entering diocesan high schools. Most recently, \$13,492 in scholarship aid was presented to six students.

Since the association began its scholarship program in 1994, 191 students have received \$538,727 in scholarship money through an endowment fund managed by The Catholic Foundation. The fund has a balance of \$480,700, which will enable it to continue distributing benefits even after the school no longer has any living graduates.

Aquinas High School existed from 1905 to 1965. Alumni association president Lou Nobile said about 840 of its 4,200 graduates are alive, with the youngest being 77 years old and the oldest in their 90s. “I’d love to be in touch with more people, but only about half the graduates have email addresses,” he said.

Nobile said about 40 percent of Aquinas graduates live in the Columbus area and 60 to 70 attend the association’s meetings on the first Monday of each month between April and October, except for July. The September meeting is on the second Monday because of the Labor Day holiday. Five of the meetings are at the

As long as we're able, we will continue to live up to a statement in the 1963 Aquinas yearbook – We are determined that so long as we are, Aquinas will be.

-- Lou Nobile,
Aquinas High School
alumni association president

TAT restaurant on Columbus’ east side, operated by the family of the late Jim Corrova, a member of the Aquinas class of 1953.

The group meets once a year in the Aquinas Room of Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School, where every class picture, athletic trophies, letter jackets and sweaters and other school memorabilia are displayed.

Those items were in a room at what is now the Museum of Catholic Art and History when the institution was located at the former Columbus Holy Family School. When conditions there were found to be unsafe, the museum in 2021 was moved to its current location across from St. Joseph Cathedral and St. Charles volunteered to be the new site for the Aquinas collection.

“Administrators from St. Charles called and said they’d be proud to display what we had in the museum. We were delighted because Aquinas and St. Charles always had a fierce but friendly rivalry as the

only two all-boys schools in the Diocese of Columbus,” Nobile said.

After Aquinas High School closed, its alumni association eventually became inactive until the late 1990s, when it was revived by 1952 Aquinas graduate John Cross, Nobile said. Its regular meetings have been at the TAT since that time. “Jim Corrova invited us and his daughters have continued to graciously welcome us since his death,” Nobile said. “The restaurant is closed on Mondays, but the Corrovas open it just to accommodate us.”

Nobile said that the scholarships, one of the alumni association’s most significant expenses each year is for Masses for deceased Aquinas graduates, which are celebrated by the Dominican Fathers at Columbus St. Patrick Church. The church was adjacent to Aquinas and was closely associated with the school throughout its history.

This past December, the Dominicans asked Aquinas alumni to provide an honor

guard for relics of St. Thomas Aquinas that were displayed at St. Patrick’s for two days. Several association members responded and Nobile said most wore Aquinas letter sweaters and jackets while being part of the event.

For 10 years, the alumni association hosted a golf tournament in which teams of St. Charles and Aquinas graduates competed against each other. “That ended about 10 years ago as the Aquinas graduates got older and realized there wouldn’t be younger guys to replace them,” Nobile said. The association used to host an all-class reunion, which also ended a few years ago, said Nobile, a member of the school’s class of 1957 who has been alumni association president since 2003.

“I’ve been president for so long because I do enjoy the job and the continuing contact with other alumni,” he said. “The school was very important to me, as I think it was to most Aquinas graduates, and the bond among us has gotten stronger as we’ve gotten older. I’m in my mid-80s and don’t know how much longer I can handle the job of keeping the association going, but then none of us are getting any younger.”

Besides Nobile, association officers are Don Laird (class of 1958), vice president; Paul Nobile (1957), treasurer; Don Schlegel (1965), curator; Frank Roberts (1958), event chairman; Steve Brown (1960), webmaster; and Mike West (1965), transportation coordinator.

“As long as we’re able, we will continue to live up to a statement in the 1963 Aquinas yearbook – ‘We are determined that so long as we are, Aquinas will be,’” Nobile said.

For more on the association, including all the class pictures, go to its website, www.columbusaquinas.com.



Alumni from the former Columbus St. Thomas Aquinas High School view a display of memorabilia at Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School.

Photo courtesy Aquinas alumni association



Aquinas alumni wear hats that show their loyalty to their alma mater.



TAT restaurant staff members wear Aquinas Forever hats as they welcome alumni to a luncheon.



Father Stephen Alcott, OP, former pastor at Columbus St. Patrick Church, wears a Forever Aquinas hat along with alumni Paul and Lou Nobile. The former Columbus Aquinas High School was staffed by Dominican friars.

St. Joseph Academy graduates reunite after 50 years

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Four Catholic high school classmates are great friends after planning a reunion brought them back together.

Mary (Hoelker) Snook, Mary (Anglim) Groves, Tess (Calderone) Galvin and Teresa Hooper are 1974 graduates of the former Columbus St. Joseph Academy, an all-girls Catholic school in the diocese that closed in 1977 after 102 years. While the academy closed its doors, close friendships among several former students remain alive today.

Four '74 graduates regained connection after planning their 50th high school reunion, which was held last summer. The group now meets on a regular basis.

Galvin, who serves as the class president and belongs to Columbus St. Christopher Church, helped bring the group together while planning a class reunion for St. Joseph Academy's class of 1974.

"We're the ones that initially talked about it on Messenger on Facebook," Snook recalled. "And then, Mary Groves and I would see each other in Lancaster, run into each other, and then she jumped in. Teresa did, too, but I knew Teresa when we were young."

Groves and Snook reside near each other today in Lancaster. Snook, a parishioner at

Lancaster Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, hails from the west side of Columbus. She attended the former Columbus St. Agnes School for first through fourth grade and Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help School for grades five to eight.

Hooper, who lives in Lewis Center and belongs to Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church, grew up with Snook in Grove City.

"We rode the bus together into St. Joe's, and we stayed in touch off and on over the years. I think by the time I moved to West Virginia and had (baby) number three, and she was so busy working, ... I lost track of her," Snook recounted.

"We ran into each other helping plan the 50th class reunion, so it kind of renewed this, and Tess was our class president. ... Tess messaged me and said, 'Mary, I'd like to talk to you about it' ... and that's how we all got together the first time."

The group has been near inseparable ever since.

"We're all retired, and so, I think, when you're busy with your family life, you just don't have the time. You don't have the time for the friendships ... but now we do, and it's just such a blessing that we all connected, and it wasn't planned," Snook explained. "It just happened. Beginning the planning of the reunion brought us together."

The quartet consistently gather each month, rotating restaurants and places



Teresa Hooper (left) and Mary Snook have met regularly through the years after their school days at the former St. Joseph Academy in downtown Columbus.

in Columbus to meet for lunch. Get-togethers often last two or three hours.

"We talk about memories from St. Joe's, and sometimes, if we've heard from other classmates, we talk about them, just news, not gossiping," Snook explained.

St. Joseph Academy, formerly located at 301 E. Rich St., was established and operated by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The school first opened on Sept. 6, 1875.

The Sisters came to Cincinnati in 1855 to teach in parish grade schools – about 12 years before the Diocese of Columbus was established and was then part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Congregation of the

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur was co-founded decades earlier in France by St. Julie Billiart in 1804.

Snook described the academy as a wonderful place.

"I was very blessed to go there, and I had a half scholarship. The Sisters did have some, and I had to maintain a B average to keep it, but I was thrilled to be going," she said.

"I remember at first I didn't want to go there. I wanted to go to the new Grove City High School. My mom said, 'Just go for a year,' and she knew I'd fall in love with it in a year, but I did."

As part of the 50th anniversary celebration, the class of '74 toured their former school building, which is now part of Franklin University. A new



Mary Groves (left) and Tess Galvin, graduates of the former St. Joseph Academy in downtown Columbus, spend time together at Buckeye Lake. Photos courtesy Mark Snook

academy building, now part of the university, was built in 1924 – marking its 100th year at the time of the reunion.

Snook said she appreciated seeing former classmates whom she had not seen in years. Some have since moved out of state. The reunion was an opportunity to reflect on fun times from high school days, catch up with classmates and learn how life evolved 50 years later.

"Some people have had real trials," Snook acknowledged.

While the graduates were grateful for the friendships during their time at Columbus' last Catholic all-girls school, they are perhaps more appreciative of them today.

"It means a lot,

especially at this phase in our life," Snook said. "It just means a lot – so much – and I couldn't imagine my life without them."

They are hopeful that the diocese will one day again offer a Catholic high school for girls. The classmates benefited from the experience.

"Because there were no boys there, we could really be ourselves," Snook explained.

When it comes to their friendship, she said they are supportive of one another, wish each other well, and have fun but are serious about the important things in life.

During a monthly get-together last August, the four St. Joseph Academy graduates gathered to spend a sunny day at Buckeye Lake. Snook owns a pontoon boat at the lake located about 30 miles east of Columbus. Her husband offered to chauffeur the ladies.

"He was driving us around, and we went to the Buckeye Lake Winery to have lunch, and he said, 'No, just go on,' and he could hear all of us talking. He's pretty blunt," Snook explained, "and he said, 'You have the nicest group of friends.' He said, 'I'm jealous.' So, he meant it."

Snook's daughters also recognized what a treasure such friendships are. They noted the difficulty in making and keeping good friends.

When it comes to her St. Joseph Academy trio of friends, Snook is taking her daughters' advice: "If you're lucky enough to have some, hang on to them tight," she said.

"We love each other."

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Westerville St. Paul honors two centenarians

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church recently honored two parishioners who celebrated their 100th birthdays this year. Al Surette and Linus Losh were recognized at the 8 a.m. Mass on Sunday, July 20 and at a reception for them afterward.

Both are World War II veterans. Surette was a pharmacist's mate in the U.S. Navy hospital corps and took part in the U.S. Marines' invasions of the Pacific islands of Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa in 1944 and 1945. Losh was a member of the U.S. Army's 97th Division, 386th Regiment, serving in Europe from 1943 to 1946.

Surette was born on July 11, 1925 in Bellows Falls, Vermont and joined the Navy at age 17 after high school with his parents' permission. "It wasn't unusual to do that back then," he said. "So many of us young fellows loved our country and wanted to do our share."

After finishing military service, "I visited a friend in Columbus, decided I liked it here and never came back," he said. He had received instructions in drafting while in the service and continued his training at Ohio State University.

"I didn't finish college because I got job offers in the construction business and was ready to go to work," he said. His career included time as a crane operator, inspector and surveyor.

His wife, Frances O'Connell Surette, died about 20 years ago. Surette said they were married for about 20 years and had three daughters. Surette also has nine grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren, many of whom attended the Mass recognizing him.

Surette has been a St. Paul parishioner for most of his time in Columbus. "I've attended



Al Surette (left) and Linus Losh were recognized at a reception in the Klinger Center at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church on Sunday, July 20. The World War II veterans turned 100 years old this year.

Mass at three St. Paul churches and they keep getting bigger," he said. "The parish started out in a little white church and had to build another (in the 1960s) when that one got too small. They outgrew that one and our new church (dedicated in 2011) is one of the most beautiful I've ever seen."

He said he was among the volunteers who installed desks in the parish school before it opened in 1961 and was a member of the Knights of Columbus for more than 30 years. "I was in a bunch of other church activities, too. You just forget a lot as time passes, but I can say being a Catholic always has meant a great deal to me," he said.

"I've been fortunate to live this long but can't think of any reasons I've been able to, other than that I don't drink and always tried to live a good, clean life. If there's any advice I have

for people who want to live to 100, it would be to follow that rule."

Losh was born on March 3, 1925 in the Cleveland suburb of Lakewood and entered the Army upon graduation from high school.

"The most memorable and satisfying thing about the war was being part of the first group of soldiers that liberated the Flossenburg concentration camp in April 1945," he said. As many as 100,000 prisoners, 30,000 of whom died there, passed through the camp in a remote area of Bavaria, helping build Messerschmitt fighter planes for the Nazis.

"Another very good feeling I can recall is laying outside at night or in the morning in Germany, seeing American bombers pass over and knowing my (future) brother-in-law might be in one of them. He successfully completed 50



Al Surette (left) and Linus Losh, who both turned 100 in 2025, are embraced during a reception on July 20 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church. Photos courtesy Andy Long

bombing missions," Losh said.

He and his wife, Jeannette, were married on Sept. 17, 1946 and were together for 63 years until her death in 2009. They had one son, one daughter, two grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Losh was the Order of Christian Initiation sponsor for one of the grandchildren, Emaleigh Caudill, who entered into full communion with the Catholic Church at this year's Easter Vigil. She drives him to church every Sunday from the Gables nursing home in Westerville, where he lives.

Losh received a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy in 1949 and a Master's degree in 1951 from Ohio State and was employed by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) for 30 years, beginning in Columbus for eight years before taking positions in Wisconsin, Nebraska and Washington, D.C. After 30

years with the SCS, he spent 12 years with the Republican Party advising members of Congress on farm issues. He retired in 1992 and moved to Columbus with his wife in 1996 to be near their daughter.

Several members of his family have been members of religious communities. Three cousins belonged to orders of sisters and a niece is a Carmelite sister. An uncle, Father Joseph Losh, died in 2017 after pending 52 years as a priest of the Diocese of Columbus.

"The Catholic Church always has been a major factor in my life," he said. "The one thing I insisted on was marrying a Catholic girl and I'm glad I did. I thank God for taking care of me all these years. If there's any advice I'd want to give to young people, it would be to have faith in the democratic system and the Constitution."



Al Surette, a 100-year-old World War II veteran, spends time with visitors during a reception after a Sunday Mass at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.



Linus Losh greets a well wisher in the Klinger Center at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church on July 20.



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DIOCESAN FINANCIAL REPORT



MY DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Fiscal 2024 brought a measure of stability to our Diocese with the Real Presence Real Future initiative being implemented. In all of this, we depend on the love of the risen Christ to bring hope in the midst of our ongoing challenges. Please know that I pray for you each and every day that you will look to Christ and receive His love.

As your Bishop, it is my responsibility to provide all Catholics in the Diocese of Columbus with an annual view of our financial position and activity. I am pleased to present to you the financial reports of the Diocese of Columbus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Our independent accounting firm has completed their procedures on our financial statements and have issued an unqualified opinion on them.

The Diocese once again made progress in strengthening our financial position. Positive market conditions once again provided significant gains in our endowment and investment funds as well as a large decrease in our pension fund liabilities.

Please know that I continue to be humbled and honored by your generosity for our parishes, schools and Diocesan programs. While our Diocese faces many challenges at this time, we also have a great opportunity to evangelize and carry out our mission for years to come. Your continued support is critical to our success.

Grateful for your generosity during the past year and offering my prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

**MOST REVEREND
EARL K. FERNANDES**
Bishop of the Dio-
cese of Columbus



DIOCESAN ORGANIZATION
FINANCIAL REVIEW | FOR FYE JUNE 30, 2024 & 2023



The financial statements titled **Catholic Diocese of Columbus – Diocesan Organization** represent the combined financial position, statement of activities and functional expenses for the Chancery, the Catholic Cemeteries, the Diocesan Offices and funds managed at a diocesan level (i.e. Parish Aid, Self Insurance and Varia Trust Funds). The information presented was extracted from audited financial statements. These statements do not include the financial position or activity of our parishes or schools, or agencies that are governed by their own boards, as each reports their financial information separately to their communities.

The financial statements for the Diocesan Organization are audited by the independent CPA firm of Schneider Downs & Co., Inc. The audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. For the fiscal years ended June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2023, the auditors issued an unmodified opinion.



CATHOLIC DIOCESE of COLUMBUS

DIOCESAN ORGANIZATIONS



COMBINED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	As of 6/30/2024	As of 6/30/2023
Cash & cash equivalents	\$12,788,851	\$15,972,355
Accounts receivable, net	6,273,331	5,277,324
Pledges receivable, net	1,433,751	1,442,576
Inventory	1,815,964	1,944,246
Prepaid expenses	84,193	143,361
Investments	162,090,882	156,278,944
Loans and advances receivable, net	16,282,300	12,978,495
Land under sale contract	3,576,893	3,576,893
Property and equipment, net	23,504,680	18,597,361
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	41,131,816	38,581,827
Total Assets	\$268,982,661	\$254,793,382
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$1,519,700	\$1,784,057
Agency funds	353,430	365,588
Deposits payable	102,237,145	105,215,489
Accrued expenses	2,155,614	2,049,167
Deferred revenue	138,581	150,365
Self-insurance reserve	2,601,000	6,182,000
Liability for post retirement benefits - priests	9,316,128	9,434,592
Liability for pension benefits - lay employees and teachers	1,099,085	15,763,589
Liability for pension benefits - priests	198,484	1,558,444
Total Liabilities	119,619,167	142,503,291
NET ASSETS	149,363,494	112,290,091
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$268,982,661	\$254,793,382

COMBINED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUES:	Year Ended 6/30/2024	Year Ended 6/30/2023
Annual appeal, net	\$7,180,122	\$6,396,370
Investment income, net	4,690,366	3,410,415
Realized/unrealized gain on investments	5,935,480	4,013,322
Change in fair market value of beneficial interests in perpetual trusts	4,014,653	3,204,601
Operating revenue, net	15,738,466	2,729,578
Diocesan assessment	5,978,095	4,548,725
Gain on sale of property and equipment	2,604,954	0
Recovery of bad debt	1,200,000	0
Contribution of property	620,000	0
Other	55,975	54,223
Contributions & other additions	2,564,023	2,090,197
Contribution of net assets		1,424,492
Total Revenues, Gifts, & Grants	50,582,134	27,871,923
EXPENSES:		
Program expenses	27,183,645	22,444,005
Management and general	2,508,438	2,574,251
Fundraising	526,847	737,893
Total Expenses	30,218,930	25,756,149
Change in net assets prior to pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	20,363,204	2,115,774
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	16,710,199	21,501,267
Changes In Net Assets	37,073,403	23,617,041
NET ASSETS		
Beginning of year	112,290,091	88,673,050
End of year	\$149,363,494	\$112,290,091

COMBINED STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Year Ended 6/30/2024					Year Ended 6/30/2023				
	Programs	Mgmt & General	Fundraising	Total		Programs	Mgmt & General	Fundraising	Total
Compensation and benefits	\$10,753,373	\$523,090	\$18,283	\$11,294,746	Compensation and benefits	\$9,416,001	\$523,610	\$-	\$9,939,611
Direct program expenses	9,669,719	299,774	436,448	10,405,941	Direct program expenses	7,654,320	325,663	679,520	8,659,503
Interest	2,229,423	-	-	2,229,423	Interest	1,956,870	-	-	1,956,870
Cost of goods sold	1,487,773	-	-	1,487,773	Cost of goods sold	1,204,100	-	-	1,204,100
Occupancy	844,049	134,913	-	978,962	Occupancy	759,564	144,075	-	903,639
Office expenses	488,839	13,793	72,116	574,748	Office expenses	432,760	5,308	58,373	496,441
Other	408,244	303,047	-	711,291	Other	183,032	232,775	-	415,807
Depreciation	222,231	354,209	-	576,440	Depreciation	119,932	339,830	-	459,762
Information technology	53,754	389,507	-	443,261	Information technology	79,156	360,123	-	439,279
Pension service Cost	-	442,180	-	442,180	Pension service cost	-	440,984	-	440,984
Contract services	320,678	45,383	-	366,061	Contract services	245,843	37,458	-	283,301
Publicity	155,788	-	-	155,788	Publicity	79,960	-	-	79,960
Travel	115,916	2,542	-	118,458	Travel	87,773	2,601	-	90,374
Professional services	320,670	-	-	320,670	Professional services	149,760	161,740	-	311,500
Seminars and meetings	113,188	-	-	113,188	Seminars and meetings	74,934	84	-	75,018
Total Expenses	\$27,183,645	\$2,508,438	\$526,847	\$30,218,930	Total Expenses	\$22,444,005	\$2,574,251	\$737,893	\$25,756,149

CATHOLIC DIOCESE of COLUMBUS

HIGH SCHOOLS



DIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR FYE JUNE 30, 2024 & 2023

The financial statements titled **Catholic Diocese of Columbus – High Schools** represent the combined financial position, statement of activities and functional expenses for the Diocesan High Schools.

The financial statements for the High Schools are reviewed by the independent CPA firm of Schneider Downs & Co., Inc. The review was conducted in accordance with statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.



COMBINED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	As of 6/30/2024	As of 6/30/2023
Cash & cash equivalents	\$36,431,252	\$35,079,744
Accounts receivable, net	6,869,816	7,435,586
Pledges receivable, net	5,714,492	6,988,788
Prepaid expenses	163,692	69,422
Operating right-of-use (ROU) assets	882,209	809,853
Property and equipment, net	58,036,070	52,839,088
Beneficial interest in assets held by others	53,140,328	45,273,058
Total Assets	\$161,237,859	\$148,495,539
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$2,234,365	\$1,835,083
Accrued liabilities	2,800,370	2,708,167
Deferred revenue	423,583	252,889
Operating lease liabilities	882,209	809,853
Prepaid tuition & fees	2,218,304	3,808,458
Notes payable - related party	5,665,909	3,910,631
Total Liabilities	14,224,740	13,325,081
NET ASSETS		
Total Net Assets	147,013,119	135,170,458
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$161,237,859	\$148,495,539

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

	Year Ended 6/30/2024		
	Programs	Fundraising	Total
Salaries and benefits	\$36,278,918	\$1,383,203	\$37,662,121
Extracurricular activities and cafeteria	\$11,333,806		\$11,333,806
Depreciation and amortization	\$4,998,447		\$4,998,447
Building, grounds and utilities	\$3,819,619		\$3,819,619
Departmental costs	\$1,364,968		\$1,364,968
Office supplies	\$732,247	\$287,114	\$1,019,361
Technology	\$775,848		\$775,848
Other	\$735,658		\$735,658
Credit loss expense	\$249,609		\$249,609
Interest	\$239,562		\$239,562
Central administration fees	\$150,574		\$150,574
Total Expenses	\$60,679,256	\$1,670,317	\$62,349,573
	Year Ended 6/30/2023		
	Programs	Fundraising	Total
Salaries and benefits	\$33,565,840	\$1,290,584	\$34,856,424
Extracurricular activities and cafeteria	\$10,182,793		10,182,793
Depreciation and amortization	\$4,622,153		4,622,153
Building, grounds and utilities	\$3,672,304		3,672,304
Departmental costs	\$754,389		754,389
Office supplies	\$683,148	\$314,697	997,845
Technology	\$1,027,803		1,027,803
Other	\$948,765		948,765
Credit loss expense	\$110,055		110,055
Interest	\$122,583		122,583
Central administration fees	\$133,957		133,957
Total Expenses	\$55,823,790	\$1,605,281	\$57,429,071

COMBINED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 6/30/2024	Year Ended 6/30/2023
REVENUES AND SUPPORT:		
Tuition	\$42,774,095	\$37,575,639
Extracurricular activities and cafeteria	10,272,145	9,389,647
Contributions & grants	9,429,848	7,514,146
ERC income, net	-	5,834,843
Net realized and unrealized gains	5,296,353	4,055,032
State of Ohio administrative cost reimbursement	1,859,644	1,895,956
Fundraising events, net	1,093,351	1,635,115
Other school income	1,282,628	1,008,968
Parish support	739,567	997,182
Investment income, net	714,010	542,798
Gift and grants - Diocese	260,900	363,795
Interest income	469,693	358,381
Total Revenues and Support	74,192,234	71,171,502
EXPENSES:		
High School program services	60,679,256	55,823,790
Fundraising support services	1,670,317	1,605,281
Total Expenses	62,349,573	57,429,071
Net revenues in excesss of expenses	11,842,661	13,742,431
NET ASSETS		
Beginning of year	135,170,458	121,428,027
End of year	\$147,013,119	\$135,170,458

CATHOLIC DIOCESE of COLUMBUS

PARISHES



PARISHES COMBINED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES		
RECEIPTS:	Year Ended 6/30/2024	Year Ended 6/30/2023
Offertory	\$61,549,849	\$60,668,618
Fund Drives	2,813,589	3,357,004
Gifts & Bequests	4,416,187	3,745,022
Diocesan Support	2,957,596	2,681,572
Other Parish Income	9,417,047	8,064,973
Religious Education Income	1,389,132	1,458,619
School Income	63,282,577	56,880,952
Total Receipts	145,825,977	136,856,760
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Parish Salary & Benefits	27,633,167	26,894,510
Parish Operating Expenses	24,822,862	23,836,475
Diocesan Assessment	5,881,081	4,504,037
Depreciation	9,070,670	8,482,513
Debt Interest Payments	389,928	424,353
Religious Education Salary & Benefits	4,839,178	4,451,231
Other Religious Education Costs	2,175,102	2,219,807
School Salary & Benefits	52,373,935	49,938,840
Other School Costs	8,936,257	8,338,915
Total Disbursements	136,122,180	129,090,681
Excess Receipts over Disbursements	\$9,703,797	\$7,766,079
New Loan Funds	\$140,000	
Payments on Loans	\$1,927,767	\$2,538,579



DIOCESAN PARISHES FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR FYE JUNE 30, 2024 & 2023

The financial statement titled **Catholic Diocese of Columbus – Parishes**, represents the consolidation of the receipts and disbursements for the parishes and associated elementary schools of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus. This statement was prepared from the unaudited financial reports submitted by those organizations.

For those interested in the financial results for a particular parish, please contact that parish directly.

Diocese achieves financial stability

By Kevin Lowry

My career began many years ago in a CPA firm when staff routinely put in 60, 70 or even 80-plus hour weeks during peak season. My wife and I had our first four kids in five years, and it was a hard time for our family. So-called “balance” was elusive. It got even harder as our family continued to expand. Over time, four additional kids came along.

I’ll never forget my wife taking me aside during a particularly excruciating time and offering an important insight. “Predictability equals stability,” she said. It became something of a mantra for us over the years.

Although I’m new in my role with the diocese, my

predecessor, CFO John Mackessy, made financial stability a priority. With the benefit of his efforts, along with the entire leadership team, we’ve achieved a balanced operating budget for the first time in several years. I’m grateful for the hard work that has been done to fulfill our responsibility of stewardship. We owe that to you, the faithful of our diocese, whose generosity is truly appreciated.

As a newbie to the diocese, among my surprises was the sheer breadth of its operations. There are so many dedicated people here who contribute to the life of the Church and inspire me with their example. At the same time, the financial needs are many and varied. Maintaining

the facilities infrastructure alone is a daunting challenge, I had no idea how expensive parish or school roofs can be, or how many require repairs!

In an effort to help provide better predictability, I’ve been focused on three overarching priorities to meet the needs of the diocese both now and in the future.

Financial sustainability: A balanced budget was the first step. Thankfully, the markets have helped too, plugging most of the gap in what had been underfunded pension liabilities. Our revenue sources such as The Appeal are an important component of ongoing sustainability along with disciplined spending that reflects our mission-focused priorities.

Building for the future:

We’re so grateful to be in a position where most of the tough decisions that were part of the Real Presence, Real Future initiative are now behind us. We now face enormous opportunities as a diocese. Parishes are growing. Catholic schools are bursting at the seams. Capital campaigns are underway in various places to respond to these needs, and a diocesan campaign is in the planning stages. By investing in our mission of evangelization and responding to population growth, we hope to hand over a vibrant and thriving Church to our children and grandchildren.

Operational excellence: The diocese focuses much of its efforts on providing services to support parishes

and Catholic schools. We continually strive to improve those services, and to build positive relationships and trust with our “clients.” After all, we’re all working together in the Lord’s vineyard.

Financial stability is a great gift that you have given to our diocese. Let’s pray for the Lord’s continued blessing, and for our bishop, the priests and religious among us. There is cause for tremendous gratitude in the blessings the Lord has provided to us in the past. We can also look forward with great hope and, together, rise to meet the opportunities of the future.

Kevin Lowry is the diocese’s chief financial officer.



Together in Mission we can do great things for the people of the Diocese of Columbus.

The Diocese of Columbus has been able to evangelize, educate, nurture, and support the needs of our 23 county diocese because of your support of The Appeal.

Thank you for your gift to The 2025 Appeal.

It's not too late to give or support another parish's goal for The 2025 Appeal.

Diocesan Goal: \$8,000,000

Pledged to Date*: \$6,963,314

**Pledges as of 7/28/25; parishes in red have met goal*

Parish, City	Goal	Pledged	Parish, City	Goal	Pledged
Christ the King Church, Columbus	\$112,312.84	\$47,189.00	St Colman of Cloyne Church, Washington CH	\$39,512.65	\$58,370.00
Church of the Ascension, Johnstown	\$48,505.72	\$66,103.72	St Dominic Church, Columbus	\$27,991.59	\$17,310.00
Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Newark	\$99,415.50	\$120,703.00	St Edward the Confessor Church, Granville	\$111,705.14	\$150,980.62
Church of the Holy Trinity, Zoar	\$31,873.32	\$9,750.00	St Francis de Sales Church, Newark	\$219,798.86	\$195,287.40
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany	\$297,549.35	\$149,302.00	St Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus	\$30,480.64	\$24,034.00
Community of St Joseph and Holy Cross Church, Cols.	\$61,733.03	\$47,733.00	St James the Less Church, Columbus	\$68,824.70	\$50,185.00
Divine Mercy, Zaleski	\$40,219.41	\$34,365.00	St John Church, Logan	\$43,105.56	\$43,456.05
Holy Family Church, Columbus	\$82,346.72	\$39,750.59	St John Neumann Church, Sunbury	\$285,976.93	\$289,737.43
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus	\$41,622.34	\$72,821.00	St John Paul II Scioto Catholic, Portsmouth	\$117,873.07	\$126,183.07
Holy Trinity - St. Joseph, Somerset	\$36,830.92	\$22,040.00	St John the Baptist Church, Columbus	\$37,327.04	\$27,355.00
Immaculate Conception Church, Dennison	\$69,634.80	\$50,735.00	St. John the Baptist Parish, Mount Vernon	\$97,764.41	\$194,695.00
Immaculate Conception Church, Columbus	\$181,385.64	\$212,582.00	St Joseph Church, Circleville	\$50,052.18	\$50,386.00
Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Canal W.	\$90,706.55	\$78,885.55	St Joseph Church, Dover	\$78,446.98	\$54,765.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Columbus	\$33,353.16	\$23,554.00	St Joseph Church, Plain City	\$44,961.26	\$35,439.34
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Marysville	\$100,071.03	\$112,291.00	St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, Columbus	\$116,770.15	\$106,140.00
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Buckeye Lake	\$38,736.77	\$79,781.00	St Margaret of Cortona Church, Columbus	\$67,368.57	\$129,025.00
Our Lady of Peace Church, Columbus	\$109,916.58	\$101,239.00	St Mary - Mother of God, Columbus	\$90,374.19	\$94,953.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City	\$185,819.03	\$261,784.00	St Mary Church, Delaware	\$182,627.66	\$146,661.00
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Columbus	\$42,290.92	\$21,745.00	St Mary Church, Marion	\$93,058.07	\$98,854.50
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus	\$67,250.20	\$44,305.00	St Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus	\$35,675.78	\$27,711.78
Our Lady Queen of the Apostle, Chillicothe	\$87,530.55	\$29,460.00	St Mary of the Assumption Parish, Lancaster	\$160,813.48	\$247,725.70
Our Lady the Immaculate Conception, Kenton	\$28,987.66	\$29,750.00	St Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna	\$280,739.33	\$271,513.62
Sacred Heart Church, Columbus	\$17,252.31	\$17,902.31	St Michael Church, Worthington	\$158,245.94	\$301,590.00
Sacred Heart Church, Coshocton	\$51,570.62	\$35,359.19	St Nicholas Church, Zanesville	\$76,521.86	\$42,669.00
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia	\$83,750.09	\$56,435.00	St Patrick Church, Columbus	\$171,619.43	\$107,057.00
Sacred Hearts Church, Cardington	\$20,791.48	\$34,085.00	St Patrick Church, Junction City	\$19,776.90	\$11,090.00
Seton Parish, Pickerington	\$200,469.29	\$186,110.00	St Patrick Church, London	\$46,970.98	\$45,836.00
St Agatha Church, Columbus	\$152,699.58	\$195,883.00	St Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville	\$509,031.12	\$558,876.18
St Agnes Church, Columbus	\$16,580.53	\$25.00	St Peter Church, Millersburg	\$14,544.43	\$8,781.44
St Aloysius Church, Columbus	\$20,552.65	\$5,435.00	St Peter St Joan of Arc Parish, Powell	\$425,383.19	\$565,642.38
St Andrew Church, Columbus	\$227,602.84	\$203,702.84	St Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg	\$166,773.26	\$79,850.00
St Andrew Kim Taegon Korean Community, Cols.	\$12,160.71	\$0.00	St Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington	\$39,240.64	\$16,805.00
St Ann - St Mary Church, Dresden	\$21,708.57	\$24,965.00	St Stephen the Martyr Church, Columbus	\$49,773.42	\$79,764.00
St Bernadette Church, Lancaster	\$90,335.11	\$93,512.00	St Thomas Aquinas Church, Zanesville	\$64,726.28	\$35,495.00
St Brendan the Navigator, Hilliard	\$330,767.59	\$281,847.73	St Thomas the Apostle Church, Columbus	\$21,670.25	\$8,882.00
St Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin	\$365,171.03	\$352,766.88	St Timothy Church, Columbus	\$97,859.12	\$87,535.00
St Catharine Church, Columbus	\$139,689.09	\$149,110.00	Sts Augustine & Gabriel Church, Columbus	\$26,746.60	\$26,965.00
St Cecilia Church, Columbus	\$118,979.21	\$78,963.10	Sts Simon & Jude Church, West Jefferson	\$62,326.45	\$58,760.00
St Christopher Church, Columbus	\$59,369.17	\$65,406.17			



To give online, scan the QR code or visit columbuscatholicgiving.org/appeal



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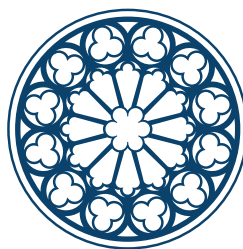


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LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Ladies Order of Hibernians sponsors essay contest

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians is sponsoring a nationwide essay contest for students in sixth to 12th grades on the subject "How the Irish Affected the Outcome of the American Revolution."

Three scholarship prizes will be awarded in two divisions – sixth to eighth grade and ninth to 12th grade. The prize amount totals \$5,000, with first prize being \$1,500 for the older group and \$1,000 for the younger one.

Submissions may be in the form of an essay, a creative writing piece, a poem, a song or an interview with a historic figure and may be submitted as a written paper or a PowerPoint presentation.

A combined total of 38 students nationwide participated in last year's contest, so the chances of winning a prize are reasonable if that trend continues.

The entry deadline is Thursday, Oct. 30.

For rules and entry details, go to <https://ladiesaoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-Student-Contest-Guidelines-2.pdf>

Luncheon club to hear about Maronite church

Father Jacques Kik, pastor of Columbus Our Lady of Victory Church and the Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Mission that meets there, will speak about the Lebanese Maronite Church at the September meeting of the Catholic Men's Luncheon Club.

The club will meet on Friday, Sept. 5 after the 11:45 a.m. Mass at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave. Lunch begins at approximately 12:10 p.m. Cost is \$12 for the lunch and meeting. No reservations are necessary.

St. Gabriel Catholic Radio is sponsoring the luncheon. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a future luncheon, contact Dave Kilanowski at dkilano@aol.com.

The club's next luncheon will be on Friday, Oct. 3, featuring a talk on vocations by Father William Hahn, diocesan vicar for clergy.

Diocesan choral festival to take place in March

Pueri Cantores, the national student choral organization of the Catholic Church, and the

Diocese of Columbus invite all parish and school treble voice choirs (grades 4 to 12) in the region to participate in a youth choral festival and Mass on Saturday, March 7 at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St.

Singers will unite with hundreds of their peers as one combined choir to sing music from the Church's rich historic repertoire.

Registration will begin at 11 a.m., followed by rehearsals leading to the choral prelude at 4:45 p.m. and Mass celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes at 5. Lunch, a snack and break time will be included.

Conducting the choir will be Paul French, music director of Chicago Our

Lady of Mount Carmel Church and president of the American Federation of Pueri Cantores. He has composed more than 200 choral and orchestral works.

Eight professional development credits will be available for school music personnel whose choirs take part. MP3 tracks of the festival repertoire will be available so participating choirs can learn the music.

More information is available at www.pcchoirs.org, info@pcchoirs.org or (714) 633-7554.

Catholic conference sponsors Adoration at Statehouse

As part of the "Year of Mission" during the National Eucharistic Revival, the Catholic Conference of Ohio is sponsoring Eucharistic Adoration at the Ohio Statehouse once during each quarter of this year.

The bishops of Ohio invite all the faithful to spend time with Jesus and pray for national, state and local government leaders from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23 in the Gov. Thomas Worthington Center, a room on the east side of the Statehouse.

St. Vincent de Paul walk set for Sept. 20 at DeSales

The diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Society's annual fundraising walk will take place Saturday, Sept. 20 at Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, 4212 Karl Road. Registration will be from 8:30 to

9:30 a.m., with prayer, announcements and pictures from 9:30 to 10.

The walk will begin at 10 and is for one mile to symbolize walking a mile in the shoes of someone in need. The St. Vincent de Paul Society provides help with rent, utilities, food and more, bringing hope to people through difficult times.

Donations will be accepted, but the walk is free. If you can't attend the event and wish to donate, visit www.svdpcolumbus.org or write to the society at 5969 E. Main St., Columbus, OH 43213.

Shroud of Turin will be Josephinum talk subject

The Pontifical College Josephinum's 2025-2026 lecture series will begin with a presentation by Russ Breault, president and founder of The Shroud of Turin Education Project, Inc.

The program will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 29 at the Jessing Center, 7625 N. High St., Columbus.

It will cover key findings of the scientific investigation of the shroud, relate new techniques to determine its age and explore the crucifixion and resurrection based on the shroud image.

Admission and parking are free and reservations are not required. For more information, call (614) 985-2274.

PILGRIMAGE, continued from Page 3

construction project includes improvements and enhancements to the existing building.

An additional stage includes constructing a permanent Adoration chapel, a library and community room, two parking areas for guests and visitors, completion of an outdoor courtyard and eight guest suites.

"We're just still in the beginning stages for the huge capital campaign," White said. "We are humbly asking people for their financial support in addition to their prayers, and even though the chapel is not built yet, or the guest house ... this one hopefully will house those families who the

loved ones are in the local hospitals.

"They'll have the holy church here, the sisters with their hospitality taking care of them in the guest rooms, which will be absolutely beautiful."

The Bridgettine Sisters are present in 19 countries. Two convents are established in the United States: Columbus and Darien, Connecticut. The order's motherhouse is located in Rome in the former dwelling of St. Bridget of Sweden.



Father Paul Marich, OP, pastor at Columbus St. Patrick Church, offers a relic of St. Margaret of Castello for veneration.



Pilgrims pray at St. Joseph Cathedral, the sixth of their seven stops. Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



SEPTEMBER 27, 2025
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM
7625 NORTH HIGH STREET

Event parking provided at Crosswoods I and II, located at 100-150 E. Campus View Blvd. Jessing Center parking may be used by those with small children, or mobility challenges.

Packet pickup: 7 am | Start time: 9 am
Swag: All participants receive bread and a bottle of wine or bread and a jar of Trappist Monastery jam.

Family rate: Save \$5/person when registering at least 3 participants at one time.



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August 21, 22, 23
THURSDAY 6-10PM
FRI. & SAT. 5-11PM

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at St. Joan of Arc Church
10700 Liberty Road Powell





 **ST PETER ST JOAN OF ARC**

PDHC shares life-affirming story ahead of galas

By Nurse Kathy
Pregnancy Decision Health Centers

If I could use only one word to describe what we do at Pregnancy Decision Health Centers, it would be HOPE.

From our client's perspective, I hope that someone will listen. Hope that there might be some resources that I desperately need. Hope that there are answers to my questions. Hope that maybe I am not really pregnant. Hope that an abortion is not my only option. Hope that I can reverse my decision to abort my baby after already taking the abortion pill last night.

And we do provide that HOPE to each and every one of our clients who walk through our door. We listen and ask God to show us what she needs the most (which is not always what she says). We take note of what we can provide or our community and ministry partners can provide and share these – often seeing hope rise as we do.

You don't know about pregnancy resources until you need them! Diapers, wipes, cribs, car seats, mentors, friends, counsel.

You don't understand about STIs until you think you have one. And if a client is not pregnant, what an opportunity we have to speak TRUTH about God's best plan for their life as they

pursue healthier relationships! The truth of Jesus, the truth of what it means to be in a healthy relationship, the truth of who they are in Christ -- often cannot come until that hope is provided. It often cannot be heard until an inkling of hope arises.

And then ... our clients who think abortion is the only answer, there is hope as we discuss that there is another way, other options, other choices – and other people who can and will come alongside them.

And for those who made the decision to take the abortion pill out of desperation and in a place of no hope, we can provide the ultimate hope – a chance to save their baby.

I had a client who came to come to us through the Abortion Pill Rescue network – she had been considering taking the pills for weeks, got the pills online with no medical oversight and kept them until the night before I met her. We will call her Grace.

Grace had one child and a stable and successful job. However, she had been recovering from a very significant abusive relationship in the past. The physical abuse was so bad that it resulted in several surgeries and therapy for years.

She was now in a healthy relationship with a partner who was thrilled that she was pregnant – who wanted to marry

her -- but she did not feel that she was worthy or ready to open herself up to marriage and did not think she could emotionally handle another child. And so, in a moment of crisis, she opened her medicine cabinet and took that abortion pill she had ordered weeks ago. But her "motherly instinct" caused her to immediately regret it.

She came to see us and we began the reversal process. It was successful!!!! Her case was complex, as although she did not want to end the life of her child, she also did not think she was healthy enough to handle another child. We discussed adoption at length and this was her plan. Hope again comes through.

Halfway through her pregnancy, she called me in a panic and said she was going out of state to abort her baby. As I discussed this with her, she revealed that this child was conceived in a rape and she had kept this a secret. She simply could not handle the emotion of it all.

Her partner stood by her side and still wanted to marry her regardless and raise this child as his own. What a man. We don't see this often and I encouraged her with this TRUTH. As I pointed this out to her and offered other resources, hope arose again. The abortion was cancelled.

Fast forward to the hospital – a healthy baby boy is born – the adoption plan is in place and ultimately Grace cannot go forward with it. She brings her baby home – life is still hard, but she is working hard on healing and letting hope into her life again. The TRUTH: Every life is valuable no matter how it is conceived, no matter the circumstances.

Here at PDHC, we stand ready to usher in HOPE and share TRUTH with a world that desperately needs it.

Don't miss PDHC's Celebration

for Life Galas on Thursday, Sept. 18 in Lancaster and on Thursday, Sept. 25 in Columbus. Attendees will hear other inspirational stories of truth and hope, hear from amazing guest speakers, and learn more about the impact of PDHC in central Ohio.

For more information and to register visit SupportLifePDHC.org or call Kate Hamrick at 614-888-8774 ext. 6117.

Pregnancy Decision Health Centers has been sharing the truth and providing hope for more than 44 years in central Ohio.



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A CONCERT WITH
Sarah Hart

Saturday, August 16, 2025
7:00 PM

Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption,
Emerald Campus
324 Gay Street, Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Tickets: \$25.00



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ATHENS

19th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year C

Be prepared for the Lord and pragmatic in faith

Wisdom 18:6-9
Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 or 11:1-2, 8-12
Luke 12:32-48

Today's Gospel may surprise those faithful who are used to relating such a message with the end of the liturgical year or the beginning of the Advent season. It is true that warnings to be watchful for the return of the Master are regularly connected with the so-called Eschatological Sermon of Mark 13 or Matthew 24-25. As a matter of fact, the Alleluia verse comes from Matthew 24: "Stay awake and be ready! For you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

While Luke's Gospel repeats some of that content in a similar location (Chapter 21), today's passage appears in the section of his gospel titled by the New American Bible Revised Edition as "The Journey to Jerusalem: Luke's Travel Narrative" (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/9>), which is what we are reading now in the Sunday Liturgy. The distinctiveness of this section in Luke's Gospel can be appreciated by a simple comparison. While Mark dedicates one chapter to Jesus' travel from Galilee to Jerusalem and Matthew dedicates two, Luke uses 10 for the same trip.

We may find the clue to understanding why so much attention is given by the third evangelist if we turn to the second volume of his work, the book of the Acts of the

Apostles. Here, the term "the Way" is used to designate the Christian community itself or perhaps better the mode of life followed by them, what is otherwise called the gospel. Luke's travel narrative is focused mostly on Jesus' teachings to his disciples, a privy teaching.

The scene portrayed in the Gospel passage is not difficult to picture even in our own times. But the passage contains expressions that are unique to Christian believers. First of all, when Jesus makes a concrete application of the story, He says, "You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." The "Son of Man" title is virtually unique to Jesus throughout the Gospels. Jesus uses it in the Last Supper (see Luke 22:22) and also to answer the High Priest's questioning (see Mark 14:62).

Then the reference to the reward given to the faithful steward is absolutely stunning! Jesus says, "(the Master) will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them." This was not only unheard of but absolutely unthinkable in Jesus' times. The unmistakable reference for such a reward is the eternal banquet.

The teaching of Jesus' parable boils down to one essential thing, to know the necessity to be always ready to open immediately to the master. (Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in



SCRIPTURE READINGS
Father Ervens Mengelle, IVE, SSL

Father Ervens Mengelle, IVE, SSL, is an Assistant Professor of Scripture and Dean of Men in the School of Theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum. He holds a licentiate in biblical exegesis from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome with further biblical studies at the Toronto School of Theology.

to him and dine with him, and he with me.")

What makes it possible to have such a disposition? Faith. This is what the first reading from the book of Wisdom highlights in reference to the night of the Jewish Passover in Egypt, the "sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith." It is what the second reading stresses in reference to the heroic patriarchs of Israel.

And it is what still makes the difference in the outlook we Christians possess. Javier

Cercas, a well-known Spaniard writer and self-declared agnostic, has recently published a book in which he chronicles the trip of Pope Francis to Mongolia. He describes his work as what "an insane (Spanish 'loco') without God" (himself) sees in the life of "God's insane ones" (the missionaries). He declares that he accepted the challenge as soon as he was offered it because he thought of his mother, a firm believer who said as soon as her husband died that she would see him again after death. This is, he asserts, the heart of Christianity itself, faith in the resurrection of the flesh and eternal life, namely faith in the encounter with the Master.

Hebrews 11:1, the opening verse of the second reading, provides the best biblical definition of faith: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen." At the core of this expression, there is a Greek term, here translated as "things," whose meaning is powerful. The term is *pragmata*. When we want to describe somebody who is very down to earth, we say "he is a practical man." They are typically grounded, realistic, and focused on achieving tangible outcomes rather than theoretical or idealistic pursuits. The term *pragmata* has that connotation. Faith simply accepts it and then guides our lives, because the Lord said, "where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."

20th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year C

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10
Psalm 40:2, 3, 4, 18
Hebrews 12:1-4
Luke 12:49-53

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere (Heb 12:1).

St. Paul teaches us how to view our life, our whole life. There is only one life that consists of both *ordinary and spiritual* reality. There is no division between the two. There is no separate spiritual world. All is here and now.

St. Paul encourages us to look at the witnesses so we may learn how to live, what to expect and, most important, what to expect so that you may not be *sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises* (Heb 6:12).

Who are the witnesses? The great figures of the Scriptures. St. Paul also reminds us that *these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come* (1 Cor 10:11). They trust in God. Among them is Abraham, an outstanding example of faith.

We all know Abraham's story (Gen 12:25). Once he heard the voice of the Lord, he left behind the security of the homeland and followed the Lord -- from today's south Iraq

to the land of Israel. He is also *the* example of patience. He had to wait 25 long years to see his own son born! When he was finally rejoicing in his son Isaac, the Lord asked to sacrifice him! (Gen 22)

What we learn from Abraham is patience and trust, but, most important, that the Lord kept his word and blessed him. The Lord did not want the sacrifice but wanted to see what was in the heart of Abraham. *For now, I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me* (Gen 22:12). In the time of trial, the Lord did not abandon him!

Another example is Jacob and specifically his cunning character (Gen 27) that seems to be praised and without any consequences. However, at the end of the story, Jacob had to face a fight with a stranger, who turned out to be the Lord himself. When his name is changed, we learn who he fights. Israel means *the one fighting God* (Gen 32:23-33). After this mysterious night fight, Jacob humiliates himself before his brother Esau, asking him thus for forgiveness (Gen 33:1-11). The cunning, self-righteous and prosperous Jacob learns to be humble and authentic.

From his story, we learn that the Lord will always lead us to face our sins, giving us the opportunity to repent though. We could go on and on, however, these two examples are enough to understand the



SCRIPTURE READINGS
Father Robert Jager, Ph.D

Father Robert Jager, Ph.D., is pastor of Columbus St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church.

point. St. Paul recalls that *those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith* (Gal 3:9).

St. Paul finally challenges us to look on Jesus (Heb 12:2). Why? For Jesus is not only our Savior, who destroyed death, bringing about the forgiveness of sins and new life, but what happened to him happens to us. God allowed Jesus to go through adversities, torture and death. He allowed the silence to reign for three days. Neverthe-

less, on the third day, he intervenes and brings about *the* new life! Likewise, God the Father does not forget us but enters our challenges together with us. No matter how dark and never ending seems to be the challenge you face, God is there! He will act as he did with Jesus.

Looking at the witnesses and the Lord Jesus himself, we learn to trust and persevere. For by persevering, we will experience another reality St. Paul speaks about: *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good (Rom 8:28) and God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it* (1Cor 10:13).

Theodor of Cyr concludes his encouragement as follows. *The models of godliness are set before us on all sides in such vast numbers as to resemble a cloud in density and testify to the power of faith. Accordingly, let us keep our eyes on them, be light on our feet and rid ourselves of the burden of unnecessary worries, in this way being able also to avoid sin that is easy to contract* (Interpretation of Hebrews, 12, 82:768)

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

8-11/8-16 MONDAY Deuteronomy 10:12-22 Psalm 147:12-15,19-20 Matthew 17:22-27	THURSDAY Joshua 3:7-10a,11,13-17 Psalm 114:1-6 Matthew 18:21-19:1
TUESDAY Deuteronomy 31:1-8 Deuteronomy 32:3-4b,7-9,12 (Ps) Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14	FRIDAY Revelation 11:19a,12:1-6a,10ab Psalm 45:10bc,11-12ab,16 1 Corinthians 15:20-27 Luke 1:39-56
WEDNESDAY Deuteronomy 34:1-12 Psalm 66:1-3a,5,8,16-17 Matthew 18:15-20	SATURDAY Joshua 24:14-29 Psalm 16:1-2a,5,7-8,11 Matthew 19:13-15

8-18/8-23 MONDAY Judges 2:11-19 Psalm 106:34-37,39-40,43ab,44 Matthew 19:16-22	THURSDAY Judges 11:29-39a Psalm 40:5,7-10 Matthew 22:1-14
TUESDAY Judges 6:11-24a Psalm 85:9,11-14 Matthew 19:23-30	FRIDAY Ruth 1:1,3-6,14b-16,22 Psalm 146:5-10 Matthew 22:34-40
WEDNESDAY Judges 9:6-15 Psalm 21:2-7 Matthew 20:1-16	SATURDAY Ruth 2:1-3,8-11;4:13-17 Psalm 128:1b-5 Matthew 23:1-12

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION: Mass Schedule: Weeks of August 10 and 17

SUNDAY MASS
10:30am Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio AM820, Columbus, FM88.3, Portsmouth, and FM106.7, Athens., and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org.

Mass from St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Milwaukee, at 7:30 and 10 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus. Mass with the Passionist Fathers at 10:30 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville. Check local cable system for cable channel listing.

Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Ala., at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Spectrum Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or Breezeline Channel 378). (Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight). Mass from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 6:30 a.m. on ION TV (AT&T U-verse Channel 195, Dish Network Channel 250, or DirecTV Channel 305).

Mass from Massillon St. Mary Church at 10:30 a.m. on WILB radio (AM 1060, FM 94.5 and 89.5), Canton, heard in Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Coshocton counties.

DAILY MASS
8 a.m., Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Birmingham, Ala. (Encores at noon, 7 p.m. and midnight). See EWTN above; and on I-Lifetv (Channel 113, Ada, Logan, Millersburg, Murray City, Washington C.H.; Channel 125, Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; Channel 207, Zanesville); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com. 12:05 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. Saturdays, Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org. (Saturdays on radio only).

Videos of Masses are available at any time on the internet at these and many other parish websites: Mattingly Settlement St. Mary (www.stannstmary.org); Columbus St. Patrick (www.stpatrickcolumbus.org); Delaware St. Mary (www.delawarestmary.org); Sunbury St. John Neumann (www.saint-johnsunbury.org); and Columbus Immaculate Conception (www.iccols.org). Check your parish website for additional information.

We pray the propers for Weeks III and IV of the Liturgy of the Hours

Solemnity of the Assumption Year C

Mary's Assumption uniquely Catholic but a sign for everyone

Vigil Mass
1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2
Psalm 132:6-7, 9-10, 13-14
1 Corinthians 15:54b-57
Luke 11:27-28

Mass of the Day
Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab
Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16
1 Corinthians 15:20-27
Luke 1:39-56

Celebration of the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a uniquely Catholic activity. Even though it represents a belief – for Catholics, a dogma of our faith – not shared by everyone, it is clearly addressed to everyone. The Assumption, a personal gift of salvation given to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, for her cooperation with the role assigned to her, is a reminder to all of us that God fulfills His promises.


God has a plan of salvation for the human race that unites body and soul, the fullness of humanity, in the accomplishment of the Resurrection. By bringing Mary in the full reality of her person into Heavenly glory, God is returning the “Yes” that was Mary’s response to Him by her “fiat.”

Mary’s Assumption is a reminder of the

Resurrection promised to all who believe. “For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.” Christ draws His Mother into the New Life that offered through the mystery of His passion, death and Resurrection.

The Gospel for the vigil highlights that Mary’s greatness is fulfilling the will of God for her: “blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.” The account of the Visitation in the Gospel of the day is a reminder that Mary was utterly selfless in her concern for others. She travels to the hill country of Judea immediately after the Annunciation to assist the mother of John the Baptist, who recognizes the divine Presence in her womb, leaping for joy. Mary acknowledges all that God has done, not only for her but for all His People: “he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.”

Many scriptural images express who Mary is: the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of Holiness, the Great Sign in Heaven: “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” These images evoke a connection between Heaven and



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Timothy Hayes

Father Timothy M. Hayes is pastor of St. Edward The Confessor, Granville.

earth, where God accomplishes His purpose in our human nature: “that which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

All that happens on earth can become part of the path to Heaven. Jesus Christ accomplishes our salvation. What follows is an unfolding of the redemption, the “buying back” of what has been distorted by sin. Mary is the first to share in the fulfillment of the promise as her divine Son

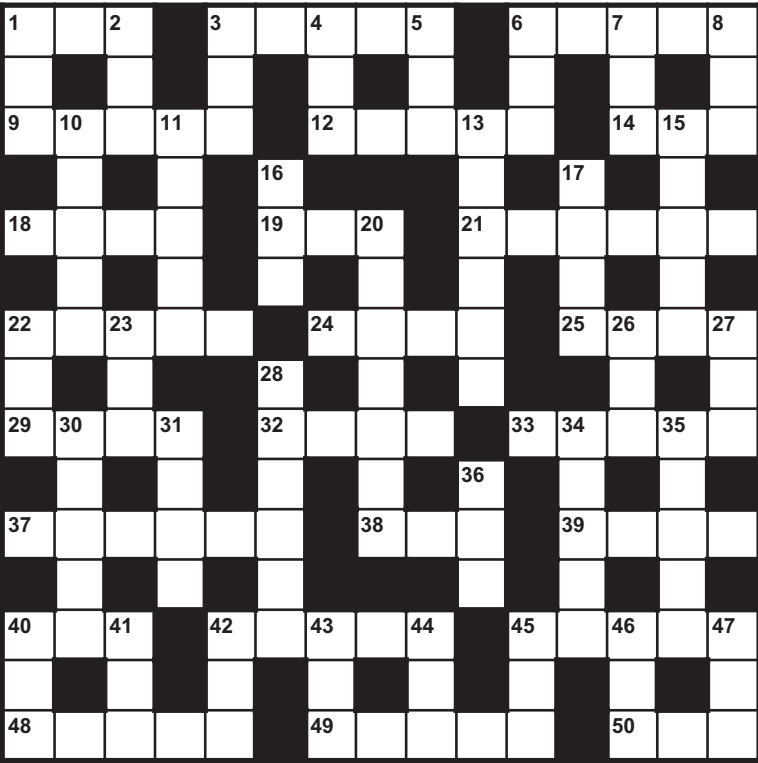
shares with her His place in glory. This revelation is given to us who receive it in faith to assure us that each of us has a part in the work of the Kingdom. Just as Mary accomplished her motherly role on earth, first for Jesus, then for His disciples, she now continues that role as mother and mediator, interceding for us and inviting us to follow her Son.

The Assumption tells us that God fulfills what He has promised. It offers us a sign and serves as a motive for us to persevere in faith, continuing our own journey to its end. Just as Mary’s ministry in the Church and for all humanity continues beyond her earthly journey, we have a ministry entrusted to us to fulfill in time and in eternity. God’s providence has brought about that Heaven receives the fruit of earthly seeds. The Word of God planted in each of us will endure with the Word of the Father, the Son of Mary.

We look to Mary as a sign that God’s will shall be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. We may put our trust in Him, as Mary did, making her prayer our own: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.”

Mary, Mother of our Lord, gloriously assumed into Heaven, pray for us!

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**
- 1 A liquid measure in Leviticus
 - 3 The Duke, a convert to Catholicism
 - 6 Gregorian music
 - 9 First Catholic United States Chief Justice
 - 12 A queen from this country came to hear Solomon speak
 - 14 ___ rosa (secret appointment)
 - 18 ___ of Songs
 - 19 Fear of the Lord
 - 21 False prophets come in this kind of clothing
 - 22 Pope St. Pius X's surname
 - 24 Angel's hat?
 - 25 "___ have mercy"
 - 29 Letters some people sport on jewelry
 - 32 "___ homo"
 - 33 Lucifer
 - 37 In Exodus, Aaron was anointed to be this
 - 38 "...___ take away the sins of the world."
 - 39 Catholic horror actor Lugosi
 - 40 "Altared" words
 - 42 Philosopher, converted from agnosticism, Mortimer J. ___
 - 45 "___ you destroyed our death..."
 - 48 Commandment word

- 49 Pope (II) who called for the Crusades
 - 50 The feast of St. Joseph the Worker is on the first of this month
- DOWN**
- 1 He traveled with Abraham
 - 2 The flood is found here (abbr.)
 - 3 The first Jewish followers of Christ were called this (with "The")
 - 4 "...be ___ and your no..." (Jas 5:12)
 - 5 Noted garden dweller
 - 6 US school of higher learning founded by bishops (abbr.)
 - 7 Jesus entered Jerusalem this type of animal
 - 8 OT historical book
 - 10 Diocese of Honolulu greeting
 - 11 Number of Beatitudes
 - 13 Head of a diocese
 - 15 The ___ Room, where the disciples experienced the Holy Spirit
 - 16 ___ Minister
 - 17 Paradise Lost?
 - 20 Diocese, in an Eastern rite
 - 22 In Matthew, Jesus said birds of the air don't do this
 - 23 Order founded by Mary MacKillop (abbr.)
 - 26 The feast of the Guardian Angels is the second of this month (abbr.)
 - 27 Daniel was in the lion's ___
 - 28 "___ at the right hand of the Father"
 - 30 ___ Youth Day
 - 31 God, in Paris
 - 34 Monastic Press?
 - 35 Catholic comedian married to Burns
 - 36 Start of the Lord's Prayer
 - 40 Catholic letters
 - 41 Latin for "to pray"
 - 42 "How Great Thou ___"
 - 43 Catholic comedian Costello
 - 44 Beginning of 5D
 - 45 Tribe of Israel
 - 46 "___ the vine..." (Jn 15:5)
 - 47 Catholic Fawkes of the Gunpowder Plot

Words of Wisdom

by Pat Battaglia, aka Dr. Fun

Draw a path from letter to letter to spell the words given in capital letters that completes the wisdom statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left or diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

Earth has no sorrow ...

T	N	E	A	L
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T	A	H	E	C
H	T	E	A	V

THAT HEAVEN CANNOT HEAL

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

- AVAKIAN, Carol Susan (Lombardi), 69, July 23**
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

ARMSTRONG, Elizabeth "Betty" (Trapp), 90, July 21
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

BARNHART, Mary JoAnn (Speaks), 94, July 15
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center

BASH, David J., 82, July 6
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

BELL, W. Vernon, 79, July 22
St. Joseph Cathedral, Columbus

BLAZER, Linda, 82, July 19
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

BOTELHO, Suzanne (Valiquette), 89, July 25
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Pickerington

CHESTER, Joan A. (Yanak), 93, June 26
St. Edward the Confessor Church, Granville

CLEARY, Patrick J. III, 77, July 27
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Pickerington
- CONIDI, Cherie (Beven), 91, July 29**
St. Joseph Church, Dover

ENRIGHT, Dorothy, 93, July 14
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

ENRIGHT, Laurie, 62, July 11
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

FAIRALL, Mary T. (Tiberi), 89, July 24
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

FERNOW, Hilda, 95, June 29
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

GWILYM, Lisa Carol, 66, July 12
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

HADDOW, Howard, 88, July 1
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

HALL, G. Philip, 95, July 5
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

HESTON, Patricia, 74, July 9
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

HILL, Donald Dean, 91, July 23
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark
- HOWLEY, George L., 3, June 6**
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

JOOS, James Michael, 85, June 6
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

MARTINELLI, David L., 79, June 24
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

McCORD, Roisin Brigid, 34, June 16
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

MERCER, James, 88, July 21
St. Patrick Church, Columbus

MILLER, Ken, 90, May 28
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

MOLLIKA, Linda Sue, 83, July 4
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

MOSIER, Judy (McIntee), 80, July 17
St. Brendan the Navigator Church, Hilliard

MURRAY, Bernard "Ben," 83, July 26
St. Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna
- PELZER, Dan, 92, July 1**
Mother Angeline McCrory Manor, Columbus

SAKER, Patricia A. (Abowd), 98, July 17
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

SMITH, Robert "Butch," 77, July 18
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville

SPIRES, Timothy J., 59, May 21
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

TOBIAS, Lloyd D., 81, July 5
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

THIBAUT, Shirley A. (Baumann), 87, July 20
St. Leo the Great Oratory, Columbus

VILLARREAL, Eleazar Morales, 52, July 18
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

WALSH, Janice Buckley, 89, July 13
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

YEZZI, Ann, 93, July 19
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

Sister Colleen Gallagher, OP

Funeral Mass for Sister Colleen Gallagher, 94, who died at the Mohun Health Care Center in Columbus on Monday, July 21, was celebrated Tuesday, July 29 at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, with burial at a later date.

She was born Mary Gene Gallagher on April 2, 1931 to Eugene and Mary (Sullivan) Gallagher. She was a graduate of the former St. Mary of the Springs Academy in Columbus and received a Bachelor of Science degree in art education in 1953 from the College of St. Mary of the Springs (now Ohio Dominican University) and a Master of Arts degree in education in 1962 from DePaul University in Chicago.

She also studied at Ohio State, Notre Dame and Georgetown universities, The University of Puerto Rico and the New York University Medical Center, where she

earned certification in clinical pastoral education.

She entered the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs (now the Dominican Sisters of Peace) in 1952 and professed her vows on July 9, 1954.

In the Diocese of Columbus, she was a teacher at Somerset Holy Trinity School, principal at Columbus Holy Name School, worked in the diocesan Department of Education and was a pastoral minister at Columbus St. Matthias Church, chaplain and pastoral care director at St. Anthony and

Mercy hospitals, vice president for mission of the Franciscan Health System of Central Ohio, in mission development and outreach at Mount Carmel Hospital, promoter of the arts at St. Mary of the Springs, pastoral care coordinator at the Mohun center and a volunteer at the Motherhouse. She had been at the Mohun center since 2021. She also was a teacher in Michigan, Illinois and Puerto Rico.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and brothers Martin and Thomas. She is survived by nieces and nephews.

Sister Bernice Weilbacher, SNDdeN

Funeral Mass for Sister Bernice Weilbacher, SNDdeN, 99, who died Wednesday, July 23, was celebrated Friday, Aug. 1 at the Mount Notre Dame Health Center in Cincinnati. Burial was in the sisters' cemetery.

She was born on Aug. 31, 1925 in Columbus to Bert and Mary (Specht) Weilbacher.

She was a graduate of Columbus St. Joseph Academy and received a Bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in music from Ohio State University in 1951, the same year she joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. She earned a certificate in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California in 1981.

In the Diocese of Columbus, she taught music at St. Joseph Academy from 1954 to 1957. She spent most of the next 36 years teaching at schools in Chicago and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, then became religious education director of a parish in Arizona for eight years and a hospitality minister for her congregation in Arizona for five years. She had been a resident of the Mount Notre Dame center since 2007.

She was preceded in death by her parents and seven brothers and sisters. Survivors include a sister, Mary (Harold) Goff, and several nieces and nephews.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

L	O	G	W	A	Y	N	E	C	H	A	N	T
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WORDS OF WISDOM SOLUTION

CATHOLIC WORD SEARCH

THE GOOD LIFE												
S	E	N	I	M	A	X	E	J	D	B	M	K
E	D	Y	F	F	Z	Z	U	Y	E	E	L	N
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BEATITUDES			EXAMINE			MORALITY						
COMMANDMENTS			FORTITUDE			PRECEPTS						
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What are those prayers halfway through Mass?

Dear Father,
Can you please explain those prayers we hear about halfway through Mass? They seem awfully repetitious to me. Also, I asked the priest to pray for my 98-year-old sister, but I never did hear any more on that during those prayers at Mass.

-Quana

Dear Quana,
It seems that you are referring to the Prayer of the Faithful, also known as the Universal Prayer at Mass. Some also call it the General Intercessions.

The Universal Prayer happens at the very end of the Liturgy of the Word and just before the offering of gifts at the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Its format is in three parts: an introductory call to prayer, a set of intercessions and a concluding prayer.

In the Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 53, we read: "Especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation there is to be restored, after the Gospel and the homily, 'the common prayer' or 'the prayer of the faithful.' By this prayer, in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world."

That's why the intercessions should be carefully crafted in order to avoid being redundant with the Eucharistic Prayer. We want to avoid being repetitious when those very same intercessions are found later in

the Mass.

We instinctively want to pray for the pope and bishop, but we do that in each of the Eucharistic Prayers. A better use of the intercession for the pope and bishop is to make the prayer broader, that is, for the entire Church, but with a special emphasis. For example, a formulation for the Church could be "For our diocese, that, with the entire Church, it may grow in charity and in numbers; we pray to the Lord; Lord, hear our prayer."

Remember that these intercessions are meant to be broad in scope and not individualistic. In the example above, the diocese, is referenced within an even broader body, the Church. It is good to limit the number to about five so that this Universal Prayer does not encumber the Mass, which is in itself one great prayer.

Likewise, when we pray for the special intention of the Mass, rather than saying "For John Doe, for whom this Mass is offered," the intention should be something like "For all who have asked our prayers, especially John Doe." Or for the dead: "For all who have died, especially Jane Doe."

It is most inappropriate to use the Universal Prayer intercessions to announce the news, such as "For Mildred Smith, who fell and broke her hip last Thursday and is now facing surgery and a lengthy stay in a rehab center ..." It's enough to pray: "For all the sick and suffering, especially the members of our parish." Remember, these intentions are "general," not specific.



SACRAMENTS 101

Father Paul Jerome Keller, OP, S.T.D.

Father Paul Jerome Keller, O.P., S.T.D., director of the diocese's Office of Divine Worship, is a priest of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph. His doctorate is from Rome in sacramental theology. He currently assists at Columbus St. Patrick Church.

God doesn't need all the details of what we pray for. He already knows our needs before we ask. We offer prayers so that we can grow in trust as we surrender our needs and intentions to God's providential care.

Also to be avoided is the opening of the Universal Prayer to each person present to speak his or her intercession. Again, this is a time of "universal," not "particular," prayer. Our particular intentions are made in silence before Mass begins and again remembered at the Offering of the Gifts at the hands of the priest. The people's part in the Universal Prayer is to say "Lord, hear our

prayer" after each intercession and "Amen" after the priest's concluding prayer.

The introduction by the priest, not the lector or deacon, is simply an invitation to the congregation to give their attention to interceding for the stated intercessions. It should be short and to the point rather than a dissertation on how to pray. Rather than "During these blisteringly hot days, we take comfort in knowing that God is cool and sees every detail of our lives, which gives us comfort in praying that these needs of our will be fulfilled," the introduction could simply be "We now give voice to the needs of the Church and the world."

Likewise, the concluding prayer, always offered by the priest and not the deacon or lector, should be a direct and succinct offering rather than a run-on demand made to God. For example: "Father, we offer these intentions with trust in your constant care, through Christ our Lord." Even the newest ordained priest is more than capable of offering a summary prayer without needing a special book.

By the way, the concluding prayer is addressed to the Father through the Son. Therefore, other prayers are inappropriate as a conclusion to the Universal Prayer. This includes the St. Michael prayer, the Hail Mary and similar devotional prayers. The priest alone extends his hands in the orans position.

Questions about the sacraments should be sent to sacraments101@columbuscatholic.org.

Hope in family

As we wrap up the summer travel season, I am sharing a couple of experiences that offered me fresh insights on the theme of hope. This is the Jubilee Year of Hope after all, and I needed a good midyear reminder!

Last month, I shared about a trip to Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., for a gathering of friends who share a common profession as Lay Carmelites. In July, I returned to Chicagoland for an annual retreat in Carmelite spirituality and received some good reminders about the role of family, and how we find courage together in the spiritual life.

It has been a full Carmelite summer, and I am glad you can join me on the journey.

Coffee's on!

Darien, Illinois is a quiet suburb on the west side of Chicago, and home to the provincial headquarters of the Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, which supports the friars, sisters, and Lay Carmelites in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru, El Salvador and Honduras.

For the past eight years, the campus retreat center has hosted "Into the Land of Carmel: A Retreat in the Carmelite Tradition," where pilgrims attend preached topics and make time for daily prayer and solitude.

The original hermits on Mount Carmel in the 1200s dedicated their desert wadi to "Our Lady of the Place" and Carm-el literally translates as "God's Garden." The retreat center campus is large and filled with meditation gardens, waterscapes, stunning flowers, curious wildlife and quiet peace.

Many of the same people return each year for this gathering, where relationships and traditions have become like that of a family. The sunrises are spectacular on this campus, and a few of us are early risers. We often meet at the coffee pot around 5 a.m. to brew up a fresh batch and go for a silent walk in the stillness before sunrise. When families gather, a gift of shared time also



SERVING AS NEIGHBORS

Kelley Henderson

Kelley Henderson is a Third Order Carmelite who serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services. He is a member of Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral and serves in volunteer leadership roles with Catholic Charities USA, Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission, and Mission and Culture Committee at Mount Carmel Health System.

means that someone has the privileged position to announce "coffee's on!"

WWED

Many of our session topics this year seemed to reference courage in the spiritual life. We all face the reality of a "dark night" at times, when we feel alone or abandoned. Perhaps it is due to the distance that forms when we are not living our most authentic life. It is during these times that we can trust in God's limitless mercy and the peace that comes from reconciliation and the sacraments of our faith.

Other times, the dark night can be when God intentionally leaves a void in our spiritual life to call us deeper into relationship, or to pursue new experiences along the spiritual journey. This is the essence of the dark night as expressed in the beautiful poetry of St. John of the Cross, where he says "Where have you hidden, beloved, and left me moaning? You fled like the stag after wounding me; I went out

calling you, but you were gone." This image is one that expresses desire for closeness and fellowship.

A prominent feature of the retreat center campus is a large fire pit that is constructed into a hillside and surrounded by stone seating for about 30 people comfortably. Each year, we pick an evening to light a fire and simply enjoy each other's company. The chef at the retreat center always surprises us with snacks, and a bottle of wine or two always seems to miraculously appear.

A few years ago, we asked "WWED ... what would Elijah do" with the prospect of a fire pit, and the spontaneous idea of S'mores! came about. When families gather, closeness can happen through a spontaneous act of playfulness that becomes that thing we do together.

Family matters

Summer often involves time with family. For those with children, it might be an annual vacation to a favorite place where

traditions form. For others, a brief respite from the grind of daily routines where we can reflect.

At this point in my life is the opportunity to gather with friends from far and wide, as a family of sorts. We have traditions and stories and find ways to express closeness at the morning coffee pot or evening fire pit. This year, I needed the reminder that hope can be experienced in unique ways together.

The journey of faith can be challenging at times, especially when God feels distant or elusive. Finding help in each other along the way can be just what is needed to make things right again. When families gather, hope can blossom through the mutual self-giving that occurs when we take the time to realize that family matters.

Learn more about getting involved with Catholic Social Services at www.colscss.org

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Capitalism: What it isn't and what it is

In my last two columns, I made the claim that there is an irreconcilable conflict between capitalism on one hand and the teachings and practices of the Church on the other. I also made clear that Church teaching firmly rejects socialism, whether in its more moderate or more extreme forms. I'd like to circle back now to my position on capitalism and start to unpack why capitalism cannot be reconciled with sound Christian witness. In doing so, the first thing I need to do is to clarify what I'm talking about when I talk about capitalism.

First, it's crucial to recognize that capitalism is *not* identical with the free market or a market economy. By a free market, I mean any social institution in which many willing buyers and willing sellers are legally free to come together for the sale and purchase of goods and services at prices agreed to by the parties. These kinds of markets existed in the empires of the ancient world and in the semi-anarchy of medieval Europe, although those markets existed alongside other, predominant forms of allocating goods and services, like slavery, serfdom, pillage and self-supporting agricultural labor. A market *economy*, in turn, is one in which the free exchange of goods and services through mutually agreed-to transactions between many buyers and sellers has become the *primary* means of allocating goods and services, although other ways of satisfying needs and wants persist. From the 17th century to the early 19th century, this kind of economy first arose in England and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands, before spreading to other parts of Europe and North America and eventually to most of the rest of the world.

So far, so good. The Church sees no inherent problem with either free markets or a market economy, so long as transactions are conducted honestly and the sale or purchase of goods and services that undermine human dignity—for example, illicit drugs or prostitution—are prohibited. Indeed, the Church wisely



THE COMMON GOOD

David P. Lyons, PhD

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celebrates both free markets and a market economy, given that both can provide human beings with opportunities to develop their God-given talents, reward work and creativity, allow people to support themselves and their families, and supply customers with the means of both living and living well. The most salient statement of this approval can be found in Pope St. John Paul II's encyclicals *Centesimus Annus*.

What's more, genuinely free markets and market economies — that is, those with many buyers and sellers in competition with each other — do a very effective job of setting prices for goods and services and rewarding sellers who provide good value to their customers. Indeed, advocates of capitalism invariably point to these aspects of the market when they celebrate capitalism. What they fail either to recognize or acknowledge, however, is that in some vitally important ways, capitalism is a different kind of cat.

To be fair, capitalism emerged out of the market economy of England, and markets have continued to serve as the primary forum in which economic transactions take

place under capitalism. Nevertheless, once industrialization began in England in the mid-18th century — ignited by competition in textile manufacturing — the high cost of machinery significantly raised the capital requirements for manufacturing, which reduced the number of potential producers capable of bearing the cost of entry into a market. Consequently, control over the means of production became increasingly concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, a trend that has only continued to the present.

There is also a flipside to this concentrated control of productive powers. In capitalism, most work is not performed by the self-sufficient producers of the pre-capitalist market economy, but by a supply of workers, from the unskilled to the highly educated, who sell their labor to secure their means of survival. In this way, capitalism is not merely a system of resource allocation, as a market economy is; it is also a system based on a very particular mode of production, one that relies on a laboring population that is beholden to those with greater wealth. These two features of capitalism — concentrated control over production and a large market of people selling their labor power — has marked a massive social transformation over the last two centuries.

Another feature of capitalism that we're all familiar with is its constant technological innovation, as businesses seek to maximize profits. From the spinning jenny of the mid-18th century to the large learning models of today, the logic of capitalism is constantly giving birth to new technologies, leaving humanity very little if any time to respond. While there are, no question, many positive aspects to the technological change the past few centuries have witnessed, these changes have not been without their victims, whether workers who've found their skills no longer needed to hundreds of millions of people distracted by their screens and alienated from one another.

There's one final aspect of capitalism that bears notice: In capitalist societies, the logic of capitalism — the perceived need for greater capital accumulation and, by extension, perpetual revolutions in technology — dominates not just our economy but our social relations, our political system, our culture and our entertainment. Capitalism has become a total system, an ideology that leads us to assume that the system we inhabit was inevitable and that concentrations of wealth, the maintenance and extension of profit margins and helplessness before unending technological change is the best to which the human race can ever hope to aspire.

Fortunately, that need not be the case. Capitalism, as I've argued above, has not always existed: There was a time in human history when its logic would have struck people as odd and outlandish. From the mid-18th to the late 19th century, however, that changed, and capitalism became the dominant mode of thought and practice *across the world*.

If that kind of change can happen once, it can happen again, and such a change could lead to forms of social life that are far more distinctly Christian. Christians, however, should not fall prey to the temptation to seek such transformation through revolution, or statist pseudo-solutions, or political posturing about systemic injustice. Instead, as followers of Christ, we're called to the prayerful and patient work of witnessing to the truth of the Gospel and showing the world what genuinely Christian alternatives to capitalism look like.

In the next few columns, I'll discuss in more detail why Catholic Social Doctrine finds capitalism is so problematic, and then move on to discuss what kinds of alternatives we should seek to build. In the meantime, if you have questions about the argument I'm developing here, please feel free to e-mail me at dlyons@columbuscatholic.org.

The Summer Reading List, 2025 Edition

Some years ago, a friend teaching at a state university told me that he was offering a course on the history of baseball. I asked him for his syllabus, thinking there might be books on it I'd like to read. "What did you say?" he asked. "Books," I replied. He laughed and said that if his syllabus included more than one book and one article, no one would register for the course.

This is not good for civilization.

So in memory of those halcyon high school days when I was assigned at least five (often very large) books to read each summer, I offer the 2025 edition of my annual Summer Reading List.

Two volumes of *The Revolution Trilogy* by Rick Atkinson are now available, and I can think of no better preparatory reading for next year's America-250 semiquincentennial than *The British Are Coming: The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777* and *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Mifflin to Charleston, 1777-1780*. Our national ignorance of our national history is appalling, and a deep dive into the years that forged a nation may help us repair our currently tattered civil culture.

U.S. Catholics are typically unaware of the Church's often-stormy history in these United States, a familiarity with which might help blunt Chicken Little analyses of our current Catholic circumstance. St. Augustine's Press



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

George Weigel is the Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. George Weigel's column 'The Catholic Difference' is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

has done American Catholicism a great service with the publication of *The World and Work of Father John J. Burke: A Mystic in Action*, by Douglas Slawson. Largely forgotten today, Father Burke virtually created modern U.S. Catholicism's national structure and our engagement with public life. His story is worth learning — and then pondering for its 21st-century lessons.

Time after time, in Rome between April 22 and May 19, someone (often eminent) would sigh and say, "I wish

George Pell were here." Various facets of that extraordinary personality are nicely captured in *Remembering George Cardinal Pell: Recollections of a Great Man of the Church*, compiled by Tracey Rowland and published by Ignatius Press. Cardinal Thomas Collins ably sums up my old friend's continuing relevance to the Church that, as Pell's tombstone has it, he loved vehemently: "We are sent to evangelize, not to be colonized by current intellectual trends, no matter how dominant they are ..."

As my colleague Ryan Anderson puts it in his foreword to my colleague Nathanael Blake's book, *Victims of the Revolution: How Sexual Liberation Hurts Us All*, Nathanael is not afraid of being pilloried as a "professional prude." That's because he understands how the dumping down of sex into a contact sport has wreaked untold personal, societal and cultural damage. It's a book by a Protestant that should be given to anyone who's afraid of being castigated as a "Catholic culture warrior."

Jim Billington helped bring me to Washington 41 years ago, so I'm perhaps a suspect witness in claiming that he was the most consequential Librarian of Congress ever. His herculean efforts to put that great institution to work in helping repair the damage done to Russia by seven decades of communist intellectual and political barbarism were

not successful, as John Van Oudenaren describes, often in an elegiac key, in *The Geopolitics of Culture: James Billington, the Library of Congress, and the Failed Quest for a New Russia*. But the effort was nobly intended and the reasons for its ultimate failure teach important lessons about Vladimir Putin's Russia — and why its aggression must be stopped, if Russia is ever to experience true cultural and political renewal.

Fulton Sheen continues to fascinate many Catholics today. In *Prophet of Hope*, Derek Rotty puts the original televangelist into imaginary (and imaginative) dialogue with eight culture influencers in modern America — John Dewey, H.L. Mencken, Henry Luce, Margaret Mead, B.F. Skinner, Jack Kerouac, Betty Friedan and Michael Harrington. The result demonstrates that the Catholic vision of the human person and the good society can more than hold its own against all comers.

In previous lists, I've recommended Bishop Robert Barron's *Light from Light: A Theological Reflection on the Nicene Creed*, first published in 2021. Now, for this year's 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council, Bishop Barron is offering a somewhat briefer version of that superb work in *What Christians Believe: Understanding the Nicene Creed*.

Davidic worship deviates from Catholic liturgy

Psalm 132 tells of God's promise to dwell among his people in Zion, and how King David promised to build a worthy dwelling place: "I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

In recent years, some non-Catholic Christians, especially at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City (IHOPKC), have developed an elaborate theory of "Davidic worship" based on David's words and actions. David promised to build a dwelling place for the Lord, and followed through by establishing a tabernacle staffed by many singers and instrumentalists who offered ceaseless worship, night and day -- this was something new (see 1 Chronicles 16, 25).

Promoters of "Davidic worship" claim that God has begun a "revival" in our time, leading to the restoration of the kind of worship David established, including expressive worship, dancing, uplifted hands, clapping, shouting, and spontaneous praise and singing. Some say this worship should continue around the clock, as in David's tabernacle, and that the restoration of Davidic worship needs to happen before the "Church God wants" is restored and the end times come. In the meantime, "Davidic worship" will "bring heaven to earth."

Some Catholics have adopted these beliefs, teaching that we are currently in a time of revival leading to a restoration of Davidic worship, including praising God unabashedly with our bodies,



A SHEPHERD'S CARE

Father Thomas Buffer

Father Thomas Buffer is the pastor at Columbus St. Cecilia Church.

shouting, clapping, spontaneous praise, etc. One Catholic worship leader writes, "We have been promised by our Father that one day the Tabernacle of David will be rebuilt (Acts 15:16) and we will worship the Father the way He wants us to worship Him." Recent Catholic events that feature prolonged adoration with praise and worship music and reference "Zion" may be inspired by "Davidic worship" concepts as well.

What should Catholics think about "the restoration of Davidic worship?" The claim that God is now reviving the kind of worship he really wants implies that Catholics, along with the Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Anglicans and other Christians who practice liturgical worship, have for centuries failed to give God the kind of worship he really wants but that we are now in a "season

of revival" during which Christians will finally start worshipping God correctly after centuries of doing it wrong.

It is instructive to study the worship of the early Church. The first Christians adapted the structure of Jewish worship, preserving its liturgical structure, including specified days and times for prayer, a lectionary with pre-selected scripture readings, worship led by a hierarchically ordered clergy, incense and pre-composed prayers. Contemporary descriptions of the earliest Christian worship do not mention dancing, clapping, shouting or spontaneous praise. Most early Church leaders refused to allow newly composed songs or hymns and frowned on dancing. In short, early Christian sources offer no evidence of a commitment to "expressive Davidic worship" as it is presented today.

St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) wrote: "When we pray, our words should be calm, modest and disciplined. Let us reflect that we are standing before God. We should please him both by our bodily posture and the manner of our speech. It is characteristic of the vulgar to shout and make a noise, not those who are modest. ... The same modesty and discipline should characterize our liturgical prayer as well. When we gather to celebrate the divine mysteries with God's priest, we should not express our prayer in unruly words; the petition that should be made to God with moderation is not to be shouted out noisily and verbosely. For God hears our heart not our voice. He sees our thoughts; he is not

to be shouted at."

Because Jesus said, "the Spirit blows where he wills," some might conclude that spontaneity and a disregard of established forms of worship are sure signs of the Spirit at work. Catholics believe that the Church's liturgy, with all its structure and rules, was established under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Even liturgical silence, Pope Francis noted, "is a symbol of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit."

The Second Vatican Council taught that, in the sacred liturgy, "the work of our redemption is accomplished" and that participation in the liturgy is "the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit." It also taught that Christians have the duty "to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says the liturgy is an action of the "whole Christ;" that is, the whole mystical Body joined to Christ, its Head. The liturgy of the Church, as it is officially constituted and practiced right now, expresses the truth about the mystery of Christ and the nature of the true Church. Those who sincerely participate in the liturgy of the Church can be certain that they are worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, already offering God the kind of worship he wants.

The grace of being bald

I'll start with a running joke I have with family, friends, and colleagues. I enjoy occasionally declaring that I have the world's perfect hair, which gives others pause due to my near complete baldness. My assertion usually earns a skeptical look or chuckle. I am not kidding, though.

Once I have their attention, I jump right in with a cheerful inventory of the benefits of having little to no hair: with so little up top, you can cut it yourself (saving money); it never gets mussed (no worries about windy days, swimming, hats, or putting on vestments if you are ordained); it dries right away (no need for a blow dryer); it never has to be brushed or combed; and there's no need for hair spray or gel. What a wonderful situation!

My hair began thinning in my mid-20s, but it never bothered me. Not once. I shrug my shoulders at it, enjoy the savings of money and time, and I'm happy with the way our loving Lord, in His wisdom, made me. I enjoy being who I am.

That is a key point that leads to something I urge all people to take into their minds and hearts: We are all children of God, made in His image, all of us loved by Him equally no matter what we look like or who we are. That is essential to our being. We are called by God to love ourselves for who He created us to be. "Then God said: Let



THE CHANCELLOR'S ARCHIVE

Deacon Tom Berg Jr.

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us make human beings in our image, after our likeness ... Male and female he created them (Gn 1:26-27)."

Each of us is unique, yet each of us and who and what we are, is also a reflection of our loving Lord. We are the achievement of His creative action. Each of us is born with an inherent dignity through our creation by God. It is vital that all of us hold onto that dignity no matter where life takes us or what it throws our way in this all-too-challenging and often painful world in which we live.

Understanding this means that it is

vital that we be comfortable with our being, the way God created us. We are to treat ourselves and our bodies with the complete respect. That is why St. Paul wrote, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:19)."

Love of ourselves means we are not meant to alter our bodies radically to fit a self-perception or externally imposed perception of who we are that is based on our or others' desires. A prevailing perception in today's social world is that if we do not like the way we are made, we can completely change that and be remade according to our own perceived vision of self rather than God's vision for us.

Love of ourselves means that even when we recognize our frailties and imperfections, we trust that God rejoices in who we are and that we can strive to do the same, that we can be humble enough to also rejoice in how God shaped our bodies. It means that we can develop the confidence to disregard societal dictates about what we should look like. Thus, I need not worry that I no longer have a full head of brown hair, no matter what the ads on TV proclaim.

Love of ourselves also means taking good care of ourselves, answering the call to care for God's creative action. Living a healthy lifestyle is a wonderful way to thank God for His gift of life to us.

Changes that lead to a healthier lifestyle are good. If someone's cardiologist instructs him or her to eat healthier food -- and a little less food -- and get more exercise, he or she is honoring God.

There are a couple things to make clear, though, as we reflect upon this topic. First, there are times in life when significant surgery or other medical treatment might be needed for healing and a return from illness to health. When I was diagnosed with cancer 11 years ago, I underwent major surgery that left scars and took a long time for recovery. Those procedures led to a cure of my cancer. That was a proper way to take care of the body God gave me and led to a return to good health. Surgeries like that are good in the eyes of the Lord.

Also, love of ourselves does not mean we have the right to be narcissistic and prideful. Being who we are means being humble about it. Being humble enables us to see more clearly the inherent dignity not just of ourselves but of others as unique and wonderful products of God's loving creative action. Humble love of ourselves mean we grant the same respect for others that we have fostered within ourselves.

Love of ourselves means that we trust God's love for us and all others and trust His creation of all people. It means that we will love ourselves and others humbly out of love and honor for Him.

WEIGEL, continued from Page 26

Both books are spiritually nourishing while providing readers with a deeper understanding of the inner architecture

of Catholic faith.

And given events in the Middle East, permit me to recommend my latest book,

Pomp, Circumstance, and Unsolicited Advice: Commencement Addresses and University Lectures, and particularly its

last chapter on the much misunderstood just war tradition.

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