

The CATHOLIC TIMES

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JUBILEE YEAR BEGINS,
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SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Special attention is given to the Sanctity of Human Life in January as a time to reflect on the work that's being done in the diocese by pro-life organizations to defend and preserve all human persons, Pages 8-11



SEEK TO COLUMBUS

The SEEK conference is coming to Columbus in early 2026, bringing thousands of college students, young adults and others from throughout the country and beyond to the diocese for the event, Page 3

Jubilee Year opens in diocese at Cathedral

Rain canceled a scheduled procession but failed to dampen the spirits of the participants in the Rite for the Opening of the Jubilee Year on the feast of the Holy Family.

The diocese officially launched Jubilee Year 2025 on Sunday, Dec. 29 at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, following the opening on Dec. 24 of the observance in Rome. The Jubilee will run through Jan. 6, 2026.

Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrated Mass on Sunday morning at Columbus

Holy Cross Church and was scheduled to join a procession to the Cathedral afterward that was derailed by the inclement weather. Instead, the bishop led the introductory rites at the back of the Cathedral near the baptismal font.

The bishop addressed the people in these words: "Brothers and sisters, the mystery of the Incarnation of our Savior Jesus Christ, fostered in the communion of love of the Holy Family of Nazareth, is for us the ground of deep joy and certain hope. In fellowship with the uni-

versal Church, as we celebrate the love of the Father that reveals itself in the flesh of the Word made man and in the sign of the Cross, anchor of salvation, we solemnly open the Jubilee Year for the Church of Columbus. This rite is for us the prelude to a rich experience of grace and mercy; we are ready always to respond to whoever asks the reason for the hope that is in us, especially in this time of war and disorder. May Christ, our peace and our hope, be our companion on the journey in this year of grace and consolation. May the Holy Spirit, who today begins this work both in us and with us, bring it to completion in the day of Christ Jesus."

After a prayer and gospel reading, an excerpt from the Bull of Indiction (a letter from the Holy Father) for the Jubilee

Year was read:

"Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: 'For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.' That life becomes manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with Baptism, develops in openness to God's grace, and is enlivened by a hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit.

"By his perennial presence in the life of the pilgrim Church, the Holy Spirit illumines all believers with the light of hope. He keeps that light burning, like an ever-burning lamp, to sustain and

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Bishop Earl Fernandes leads the introductory rite for the opening of the Jubilee Year 2025 on Dec. 29 at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Photos courtesy Andy Long



Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrates Mass at the altar in St. Joseph Cathedral on Sunday, Dec. 29, the feast of the Holy Family.



Bishop Earl Fernandes delivers his homily at St. Joseph Cathedral during a Dec. 29 Mass on the feast of the Holy Family, which is represented in the stained glass windows.

Front page photo

JUBILEE YEAR GETS UNDERWAY

The Church's Jubilee Year opened at Christmastime and Bishop Earl Fernandes began the yearlong observance in the diocese on Sunday, Dec. 29 with introductory rites and a Mass on the feast of the Holy Family at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Photo courtesy Andy Long

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Columbus to host SEEK26 conference

The Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SEEK26 conference is coming to Columbus.

The annual conference organized by FOCUS will be held in Columbus early next year, the organization announced Jan. 2.

The announcement came during the SEEK25 conference, held Jan. 1-5 this year in Salt Lake City.

"We are pleased and excited to be able to host SEEK26," Bishop Earl Fernandes said in a statement. "It will be a boost for our diocese and our city. People will see that the Church is young and alive."

"It will be a tremendous opportunity for our young people to encounter Christ and other young people from around the country. It is another sign of the commitment of the Diocese of Columbus to college students, young adults and their families. Together we will proclaim the joy of the Gospel."

FOCUS announced that next year's conference locations will also include Denver and Fort Worth, Texas.

FOCUS is an apostolate that forms Catholic missionaries rooted in Church teaching, prayer, Scripture and evangelization. Missionaries primarily serve on college campuses.

The apostolate's annual SEEK conference, which is geared toward college students, gathers thousands from around the world to encounter Christ and celebrate the beauty of the Catholic faith. The multi-day event features keynote talks, breakout sessions, worship and opportunities for confession, Eucharistic Adoration and Mass. Sessions include talks from top Catholic speakers.

A record number of young adults attended SEEK25 earlier this month. More than 17,000 participants gathered for the conference in Salt Lake City with a few thousand others attending at additional locations in Washington and Cologne, Germany.

The conference is intended to energize Catholic youth to go into the world and preach the Gospel. In recent years, events and talks were added for Catholics of all ages.

Participants are given practical tools for evangelization and a deeper embrace of the Church's sacraments. The conference inspires attendees to live out the Catholic faith and contribute to the ongoing renewal of the Church.

Additional information about the SEEK26 conferences in Columbus and elsewhere is forthcoming.

JUBILEE, continued from Page 2



Bishop Earl Fernandes leads the rite of commemoration of Baptism before blessing the celebrants, servers and the congregation with holy water at St. Joseph Cathedral on the feast of the Holy Family and the start of the Jubilee Year in the diocese. Photo courtesy Andy Long

invigorate our lives. Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God's love," the Bull said.

The reading of the Bull was followed by a procession to the altar for the Mass with Bishop Fernandes and concelebrating priests.

In recent times, the universal Church has also observed Jubilee Years in 2016 (Year of Mercy, instituted by Pope Francis) and in 2000 for the great millennial

year.

There is a tradition of opening Holy Doors in dioceses around the world, but this year the Church is designating only the doors of the four major basilicas in Rome (St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major and St. Paul Outside the Walls) and a special door set up at a prison.

In 2000, a door at St. Joseph Cathedral and several other churches in the diocese were designated as Holy Doors.

You're Invited!



COLUMBUS CATHOLIC
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

February 15, 2025

Created for this moment

8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Ohio Expo Center – Kasich Hall



Carrie Schuchts Daunt



Sarah Swafford



Fr. John Riccardo



Mary Guilfoyle



Sr. Mercedes



Emcee: Jennifer Rice

columbuscatholicwomen.com



Bishop's Mass brings joy to women in prison at Christmas

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Christmas came early for inmates at the Ohio Reformatory for Women, a state correctional facility for female prisoners located in Marysville.

Bishop Earl Fernandes visited the prison on Monday, Dec. 23 to celebrate a Christmas Mass.

In attendance were Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine; First Lady Fran DeWine, Annette Chambers-Smith, director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and members of state government.

The bishop celebrated a Mass for inmates at Chillicothe Correctional Institution days before on Dec. 20.

Approximately 60 women incarcerated at the Ohio Reformatory for Women attended the Mass on Dec. 23.

Bishop Fernandes offered an opportunity for confession before Mass. Several women came forward to receive the sacrament.

In his homily, Bishop Fernandes assured them that they are not alone.

"That's one thing I want to tell all of you: God has not forgotten you," he said. "He sees you, and He loves you, and His mercy is for you, and He gives His Son for you."

"Sometimes we feel like we are the forgotten people in the world, that nobody knows us, nobody loves us, nobody cares about us. We feel discarded. I'm here to say that you matter. You matter to me; you matter to God, and you are not forgotten."

"I think about our gospel. To whom did Christ first reveal His Sacred Face? To His mother, Mary, a lowly handmaiden, with St. Joseph, a simple carpenter – not to the great and mighty of the world but to the meek and lowly."

Joining the bishop in the celebration of the Mass were Father Joseph Trapp, who serves as a chaplain at the facility and pastor at Plain City St. Joseph Church; Deacon Kevin Girardi, who is anticipated to be ordained to the priesthood in the spring; and seminarians Miguel De La Torre, Shane Gerrity and Zachary Goodchild.

Several inmates served as lectors, cantors, read the petitions and assisted during Mass.

Bishop Fernandes also reflected on the coming Jubilee Year, "Pilgrims of Hope," taking place in 2025. The Holy Father opened the Jubilee Year, which is typically celebrated in the Church every 25 years, on Christmas Eve in Rome.

The bishop reminded the women that the Jubilee is a special year of God's grace and mercy.

"Emmanuel means 'God is with us,' and I think that is the most important thing that we should remember, is that we are never alone. And all of us, regardless if we work for the government or the Church or you who are here – those who work as correctional officers here – we are all pilgrims of hope," he said.

Michele Williams, one of the incarcerated women, was grateful to celebrate a Christmas Mass with the bishop.



Bishop Earl Fernandes processes into Mass at the Ohio Reformatory for Women on Dec. 23 behind Father Joseph Trapp, the facility's chaplain.



Michele Williams leads the music at the Mass with Bishop Earl Fernandes on Dec. 23 at the Ohio Reformatory for Women.

"It was an incredible honor to have him here," she said. "His reminder to us about, we matter, is what impacted me the most because, being here for so long, you don't think you matter anymore, and him making the effort and asking Governor DeWine and First Lady DeWine, and all the central office people, they made the effort, and they proved that we matter, and that was very important to me."

Williams provided music for the Mass. She played the piano, which, she said, is self-taught during her time at the reformatory, and served as a cantor. She described playing music for Mass as her gift to God.

"I feel a lot like the little drummer boy," she said. "I don't have many gifts. I play the piano and I sing, and my voice gets shaky and my heart jumps in my throat, but it's my best, and it's my only offering that I have. We can't do much else here."

"And so, just like the little drummer boy, when he said, 'Shall I play for you?' and Mary nodded, I saw the bishop nod, and I saw Governor DeWine and his wife look, and I said, 'I'm going to play.' But it was bigger than that. It was playing for Jesus. It was my best offering that I could possibly give."

Alice Lundgren, also incarcerated at the correctional facility, also expressed gratitude for the bishop's visit.

Although Bishop Fernandes has celebrated Mass at the facility before, Lundgren said his presence again this year was a reminder that the women are on his

heart and in his thoughts and prayers. She said it is empowering and fills her with hope.

"Often times when we're sentenced to prison, in the beginning, our family and loved ones make effort to spend time with us, and as time passes, life happens, and we find ourselves often alone at the holidays, so, to have that kind of effort and dedication as a gift to us is so overwhelming," she said.

"I hardly have words to express that, to know that behind the scenes so much work went into today to make it possible for us to spend one hour in the presence of the Lord in a room full of so many different people, and yet, we are all the same in the eyes of God."

Lundgren converted to the Catholic faith in 2017 in prison.

She said she came into the Church because the Catholic faith felt most "at home." This year's Christmas Mass celebration was a reminder of why she converted.

"Today was one of those experiences where I felt very much at home," she said. "It was almost as good as my mother's living room, in regard to the amount of love that was emanating from everywhere, and it just doesn't hardly get much better than that."

"Today was one of those beyond imagination days. To sit in that room and to share with the seminarians and with the bishop and with the beautiful music and with government officials and insti-



Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine extends a sign of peace to Ashleigh Ballachino during the Mass.
CT photos by Ken Snow



Adriana Guitierrez Santana serves as a lector and reads the first reading at Mass.

tutional staff, that was almost beyond words to really express what that means to somebody dressed like me."

Pam Henry, who attended this year's Christmas Mass, also converted to Catholicism during her time at the Ohio Reformatory for Women. She was Baptist when she entered the facility, she said, and later converted to the Catholic faith in 2008.

Women at the facility have an opportunity to attend Mass every Thursday. For Henry, receiving the Eucharist means a lot.

"Church is very important to a lot of us here," she said. "It keeps us grounded. Me, it keeps me grounded and hopeful, joyful. My light just shines on Thursday mornings. I get to go to church. I get to go to rosary."

Participating in a Christmas Mass celebrated by the bishop was especially meaningful. Adriana Guitierrez Santana, who also attended this year, described the Mass as "a moment of joy."

"I can't wait to go back and tell everybody what just happened," she said.

For Guitierrez Santana, the Mass was a reminder of how much God loves her. She was especially excited to participate in a Mass celebrated by the bishop.

"I can't believe that he chose to come to prison," she said. "He could be anywhere. He could be any fancy place with fancy people – wherever – and he chose to come to celebrate Mass with inmates."

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What if I don't feel sorry for sins?

Dear Father,
You wrote about how to get a plenary indulgence recently. There was something about being free from any affection for sin. Sometimes when I go to confession, I don't always feel sorry even though I think I am sorry, if that makes any sense. What if I don't feel sorry for my sins? Can I still get a plenary indulgence?

-Asher

Dear Asher,
It is possible to be sorry for something sinful but not always feel the sorrow. That's because human emotions are strange things. We can try to conjure up feelings without success. We can try to get rid of other feelings, again without much success. It's similar to how we don't always have feelings of love for someone, but we know that we love that person anyway in spite of our feelings, particularly when the other may not elicit good feelings from us.

Our emotions (our feelings) need to be directed by our intellect (our thinking). Unfortunately, we often get this turned around and let our thinking be directed by our feelings and desires. Proven wisdom tells us that the relationship between our intellect and emotions is like a train. The engine comes first and the other cars follow. Train engineers don't put the passenger and dining cars at the front of the train. The wrong order will lead to derailment.

So it is with our intellect and our emotions. The intellect is supposed to bring the emotions along. We don't want the emotions dragging the intellect. When that happens, derailment is imminent. (Which is probably why we have to be in the confessional in the first place.) Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, humans

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.



have struggled to keep their emotions subject to their intellectual powers.

When we go to confession, it's better to pay less attention to our feelings and focus more on our act of sorrow. The very fact of going to confession can be a sign of being sorry for our sins. We express this in our act of contrition, telling God that we are sorry for offending Him and that we resolve to sin no more. That resolution does not depend on our feelings. Then the priest is able to absolve us.

On the other hand, at times people really are not sorry for their sins. One sign of this lack of sorrow is the plan to commit them again. This is not the same as being concerned that one may fall again. The difference is that with true sorrow one does not intend to sin again, for love of God, regardless of how one feels in the moment.

As you mentioned, the plenary indulgence (the full remission of temporal punishment due to sin) requires that we be free from all affection for sin. This means that we are completely detached from all sin, including venial sin. Is this even possible?

Yes, for neither God nor the Church commands the impossible. Repentance with detachment from sin is a grace that God desires to give to every person so that each one can live a fully human and flourishing life. Being completely detached from all sin is how God cre-

ated us to be.

The saints show us how to be completely detached from all sin. The key is in loving God with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength. It means placing God above everything at all times. It's how Adam and Eve lived in Eden when they were created, before their rebellion. It's how the Blessed Mother lived her entire life. It's how the martyrs showed their love of God over their very existences in the face of cruel tortures and terrifying deaths.

Imagine a man who says to wife: "I love you a lot, but I still hold on to thoughts and desires for my old girlfriend and may meet up with her someday." Don't we recognize that he is still attached to his old flame? Don't we see that he has not given his entire heart to his wife? Don't we realize that he's holding out on her?

So, too, with God. You can't go north and south at the same time, as one of my old theology profs used to say.

For a number of us, learning to be free of all attachment or affection for sin may take time. When we find within our souls that lingering affection for sin, we should gently turn our minds and hearts back to God and to the good.

People sometimes confuse temptations with actual sins or affection for sin. Temptations can wreak havoc on us, but as long we refuse to consent to the sin being suggested we can be sure we have not sinned.

As we practice growing in holiness, which is the same as growing in love for God each day, we will obtain plenary indulgences. Nevertheless, we can avail ourselves of partial indulgences, or the remission of part of our temporal punishment due to sin.

Indulgences, whether full or partial, are meant to be measured by our love of God and all things pertaining to Him.

Stacked decks, 'Conversation in the Spirit,' Catholic future

Various cultures — English, Turkish, Chinese — claim to have invented the maxim, "The fish rots from the head down" (a favorite in Your Nation's Capital during the unhappy years when the Redskins/Commanders were owned by Daniel Snyder). Applied to the Church, the idiom suggests that when theology is decadent, bad things will follow in the life of faith. Or, to put it more stringently, intellectually decadent Catholicism (Catholic Lite) inevitably leads to dead Catholicism (Catholic Zero).

Which brings us to the conference on "The Future of Theology," sponsored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education and held at the Pontifical Lateran University this past Dec. 9-10.

Among the conference's featured speakers were Father James Keenan, SJ, of Boston College and Dr. Nancy Pineda-Madrid of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

Father Keenan came to public attention in 2003 when, in testimony before the Judiciary Committee of the Massachusetts State Legislature, he opposed a bill defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman as "contrary to Catholic teaching on social justice" because such a law would constitute "active and unjust discrimination against the basic social rights of gay and lesbian persons." At the Lateran conference in December, Keenan was reported to have devoted a considerable part of his allotted time to railing against Donald Trump, whose relationship to "the future of theology" is not immediately evident.

Dr. Pineda-Madrid's faculty page at the LMU website describes her as "a feminist theologian who researches

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

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the Latina/x faith experience" and the author of a book "arguing for a fresh interpretation of salvation where women's lives matter." In June 2024, she was elected president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. But do CTSA theologians represent "the future of theology"?

Evidence for that is not abundant at Dr. Pineda-Madrid's own university. For while Loyola Marymount counts, at present, 7,094 undergraduates, LMU's "institutional research and decision support" website reports that the university awarded one bachelor's degree in theology in the 2023-2024 academic year. That marked lack of student interest might be explained in part by the faculty page of Dr. Pineda-Madrid's LMU theology department colleague, Dr. Layla Karst, who offers a seminar entitled "Bad Catholics." There, students learn from the "voices" of "Feminist theologians, Black and Womanist theologians, Queer theologians, and Eco-theologians" about the "struggle over orthodox belief and right practice that takes place under asymmetrical power relationships."

It says something about the current Roman atmosphere of ecclesiastical intimidation that several of those who attended the Lateran conference declined

to discuss in detail what was said there, although one brave soul did describe the conference as "vapid." Irrespective of the theological wokery that framed the conference's content, however, the imposition of the small group discussion method of "Conversation in the Spirit" on the conference participants guaranteed that there would be no robust exchange of views of the sort that once characterized medieval Catholic universities, where even the most distinguished professors were expected to publicly defend their positions, at length and in-depth, against all comers.

For despite the hype extolling its use at the last two Synods — indeed, based on that experience — "Conversation in the Spirit" is an instrument of manipulation, not a process that yields serious conversation or debate. Participants (some of them brilliant and learned) were given two minutes in "Moment 1" to share ideas or reactions to what the principal speakers said to the whole conference; a minute of silence followed; participants got another two minutes to state "what resonated with them most from the contributions shared by others in Moment 1" (note: not what they might have thought to be utter nonsense); another minute of silence ensued; and finally, the group's "secretary and facilitator" concocted "a concise summary to be presented to the assembly."

If you can imagine serious deliberation on anything emerging from a process in which a human egg timer controls the flow of discussion, well, your imagination is more fertile than mine.

It is absurd to suggest that a creative, evangelically

See WEIGEL, Page 9

“Created for This Moment” is women’s conference theme

“Created for This Moment” will be the theme for the 17th annual Columbus Catholic Women’s Conference scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 15 in the Kasich Center at the state fairgrounds.

Women of the diocese are invited to encounter Christ and be inspired through Mass, Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration, fellowship, music, lunch, displays from more than 70 vendors and powerful stories of faith, hope and love.

Speakers will be Father John Riccardo, Mary Guilfoyle, Sister Mercedes Torres, OP, Carrie Daunt and Sarah Swafford.

Father Riccardo, a missionary and executive director of ACTS XXIX, is a past Columbus conference speaker and conducted his signature program, The Rescue Project, in Columbus in 2022. His “Christ is the Answer” program is heard every weekday morning on St. Gabriel Catholic Radio in the Diocese of Columbus.

He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1996. In 2019, after 23 years in parish ministry, he founded Acts XXIX to proclaim the gospel in an attractive and compelling way and to equip clergy and lay leaders for the age in which God has chosen us to live.

He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, the Gregorian University and the Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family.

Guilfoyle is a wife, mother and grandmother of twin boys. After a life-changing encounter with Jesus while in college, she served Him in parish ministry for most of her adult life. Upon returning to Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit to complete earlier studies, a cancer diagnosis enrolled her in far more advanced courses than she could have imagined.

After a miraculous healing, she returned to parish ministry, serving as a director of evangelization and discipleship. She is a missionary with ACTS XXIX, co-host of the “You Were Born for This” podcast with Father Riccardo, and serves on the leadership team and is the lead for The Rescue Project.

Sister Mercedes was raised in Brooklyn in a Dominican immigrant family. She studied international relations and Spanish at the University of Southern California. She has always had a great love of travel and personal encounter, leading her to work for a Manhattan-based non-profit, planning trips and bringing medical supplies and doctors to Cuba and Nicaragua before entering religious life.

She entered the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 2011 and professed her final vows in 2019. She has taught Spanish and humanities at a high school in Phoenix, was a librarian at the Pontif-

ical North American College in Rome, and currently serves as vocations director for her community.

Daunt is a speaker for the John Paul II Healing Center, devoted to the center’s mission of transformation in the heart of the Church. She is the main presenter and content developer for the center’s women’s conference. She also presents alongside her father, Dr. Bob Schuchts, at the center’s marriage conference.

She is the author of “Undone: Freeing your Feminine Heart from the Knots of Fear and Shame”; co-author with her husband of “Man Your Post: Learning to Lead like St. Joseph” and author of the children’s book “Beloved Daughter.” She lives with her husband and nine children in Tallahassee, Florida.

Swafford is the founder of Emotional Virtue Ministries. She speaks internationally on topics including faith, relationships and interior confidence. Engaging audiences of all ages, she shares her message at school assemblies, retreats, rallies, parishes and conferences around the world.

She is the co-author of “Gift and Grit: How Heroic Virtue Can Change Your Life and Relationships” and author of “Emotional Virtue: A Guide to Drama-Free Relationships.” She is co-host of EWTN’s “At the Heart of Relationships” and lives in

Atchison, Kansas with her husband, Dr. Andrew Swafford, and their six children.

Music for the conference will be provided by Andrea Thomas and the Vigil Project of Cincinnati. Thomas is a worship leader, songwriter and entrepreneur with a passion for holistic living. Her performance background turned to a deep love for and call to worship. She is co-director of The Vigil Project, which has a mission of restoring devotional prayer in the Catholic Church that deepens participation in the sacraments and liturgical seasons.

The emcee will be Jennifer Rice, director of missionary discipleship at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church. Originally trained as a clinical social worker, she obtained a Master’s degree in theology to blend the two disciplines into a ministry of presence and pastoral support in which she continues to serve.

She is also a writer, speaker, and coordinator and emcee of women’s events. She and her husband, Grant, are parents of triplet high school seniors.

The conference will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude with a 4 p.m. Sunday Vigil Mass. Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$35 for anyone 23 and younger. Admission is free for priests and religious. For more information, go to columbuscatholicwomen.com.

Men’s conference returns to Kasich Hall

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers will return to Columbus on Saturday, Feb. 22 for another powerful presentation as part of the 28th annual diocesan Catholic Men’s Conference in Kasich Hall at the state fairgrounds in Columbus.

Other featured speakers will be Dr. Ray Guarendi, host of the daily radio show “The Doctor Is In” on St. Gabriel Catholic Radio in the Diocese of Columbus and the EWTN network, and Mark Hartfel, vice president and national program director of the That Man Is You! program.

Deacon Burke-Sivers, of Portland, Oregon, spoke at the 2017 men’s conference. Known as “The Dynamic Deacon,” he lived up to his reputation with an en-

thusiastic exhortation on what a Catholic man’s identity should be.

“Stop making excuses,” he said at the conclusion of his talk. “Let the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic faith take you to the next level. Let it be the sword of the Spirit you use to cut Goliath’s head off. Let us clean out the caverns of our lives and get rid of our preoccupation with the world so God can take its place and let nothing stand between us and Him.”

Deacon Burke-Sivers is one of the most sought-after speakers in the Church today. He travels across the United States and around the world speaking at conferences, workshops, retreats, parish missions, high schools and young adult

events to everyone who desires to know Jesus intimately and enjoy a deeper personal relationship with Him.

His areas of expertise include marriage and family life, discerning God’s will, the sacraments, male spirituality, evangelization, prayer and many others. He can be heard weekdays on St. Gabriel Radio on his new EWTN program, “Beacon of Truth,” as well as on various podcasts and videos.

Dr. Guarendi, from North Canton, is a Catholic father of 10 children, clinical psychologist, author and professional speaker. He has given more than 3,000 talks on topics including parenting, marriage, family and the Catholic faith. He captivates audiences with his compelling humor-laced presentations providing practical advice and proven techniques.

His radio show can be heard weekdays on 600 stations and Sirius XM satellite radio. In addition, his EWTN television series, “Living Right With Dr. Ray,” can be seen in 140 nations. The world is in great need of the truth and of authentic guidance in finding the answers to life’s daily family issues. His television program combines the wit, humor and experience of its host with the timeless wisdom of the Catholic Church to provide these answers.

Guarendi also is an accomplished, best-selling author and international speaker, particularly covering topics related to parenting and families.

Hartfel graduated in 2004 from Franciscan University of Steubenville and became the first employee of the That Man Is You! men’s program. He witnessed it from its infancy with one parish in Houston and has helped facilitate its growth throughout the country to 950 parishes across 46 states, with more than 35,000 participants.

He is often seen as a presenter of various That Man Is You! programs, with his most recent being a four-part series titled “The Mysteries of The Rosary.” It began out of his desire to deepen his spiritual life as a father and husband, which included taking steps to protect his family from evil.

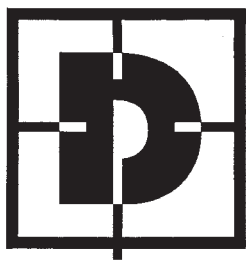
St. Padre Pio said, “The Rosary is the weapon for these times,” and Hartfel took that to heart. It was through his daily Rosary that the idea came to him to create and film a series that takes viewers right to the Holy Land, where the Mysteries of the Rosary actually happened.

The program for the day also will include Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, breakfast and lunch. There also will be displays representing many Catholic organizations.

Adoration begins at 6 a.m., with the conference lasting from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost for the day is \$45 for adults and \$30 for anyone 23 and younger. There is no charge for priests and religious.

For more information, go to www.catholicmensministry.com/2025conference.

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The power of hope

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. Mary, Mother of God Church 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.



On May 9, 2024, the Holy Father officially declared 2025 as a Jubilee Year with the Bull of Indiction, *SPES NON CONFUNDIT* "Hope does not disappoint," a familiar phrase taken from St. Paul's letter to the Romans 5:5. To officially begin the Jubilee Year, the Holy Father then opened the doors of St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 24 and our own Bishop Earl Fernandes joined him by opening the doors of St. Joseph's Cathedral on Dec. 29. Thousands will make the pilgrimage in Ohio, and millions across the globe to participate in the holy year, where all are called to be "Pilgrims of Hope." Hope is the topic of this article, and I would like to explore hope through three questions: Why hope, why pilgrimage, and why together?

Why hope?

For nearly 20 years, I have had the privilege of serving some of our most vulnerable neighbors in need across three states. I recall a time when I was asked to teach a class for men recently released from jail and were staying in a homeless shelter until they found employment. This was the first time I truly witnessed the power of hope. The weekly class was called "Owning our Struggles," and focused on unpacking the anger and emotions that come with failure. Yes, failure is a harsh word and elicited some emotional responses from many on their first night in class. If we are to heal, we must first own the reality that we need healing. We all struggle with something, and these challenges vie to become "lesser gods" in our lives. Lesser gods always disappoint and ultimately strip away our purpose and possibilities. I learned much from these men, as they began to leave their struggles behind in the hands of Christ who alone could offer them mercy and healing. Here I witnessed the power of hope transform lives and futures, as these men journeyed together.

Why pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is more than a journey, it is an inten-

tional journey of faith. Our Jubilee Year is rooted in the phrase "hope does not disappoint" from St. Paul's letter to the Romans. For full context, the preceding verse describes the journey in more detail as one where we should "boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint." (Rom 5:3-5). For many, the pilgrimage toward hope begins with an understanding that we cannot get there on our own. Our struggles weigh us down, yet we build endurance through the sacraments, and trust in God's mercy. It is this endurance that reinforces our need for the Holy Spirit as our traveling companion. Our confidence in God's complete love for us, no matter what, gives us the nudge we need to hope again. For most, the journey to hope may happen in subtle ways. We may not find ourselves facing the violence of poverty or loss of freedom on the journey, like those we serve each day at Catholic Social Services, but our personal journey can be a pilgrimage of faith nonetheless, where we leave behind the heavy baggage of past hurts and disappointments along the way, and begin to hope again.

Why together?

A pilgrimage has two primary goals, to help the pilgrim grow in faith and to unite all the faithful together in common purpose. We live in a time of division, polarization and economic hardship, experienced together as neighbors. In *SPES NON CONFUNDIT*, we are re-

minded that "in addition to finding hope in God's grace, we are also called to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us ... The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope" (SNC 7). As we journey on a pilgrimage of hope in the Jubilee Year, perhaps we could reflect on the reality of division as a sign of the times. A sign that calls us to respond faithfully and to build bridges where hope can be shared. We can choose to journey together with the poor, as neighbors toward a future where things are a little better for everyone, and where we experience the yearning of the heart to hope together as a people on a common pilgrimage.

I pray that the faithful of the Diocese of Columbus, spanning 23 counties across central and southern Ohio, experience hope during the Jubilee Year 2025. At your Catholic Social Services, we are prepared to journey with you, your parish, your school, as neighbors serving neighbors. St. Paul's words still resonate today, "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has poured out into our heart through the Holy Spirit, that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). This total gift of self, shared with each of us so that we could share with others, ensures that we never journey alone.

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

Since 1945, Catholic Social Services (CSS) has been a source of compassion, dignity, and hope for those Christ calls us to serve throughout our community. Serving over 10,000 individuals annually, our mission is supported by dedicated staff and passionate volunteers who help seniors find connection, guide families towards a brighter future, and assist persons with disabilities in finding new freedom. Rooted in the belief that every person reflects the image of God, we journey together as neighbors, empowering individuals to shape their own futures with our unwavering support.

In 2025, be thankful for how much you really are in God's eyes

Have you ever sat down and thought about how much you really matter? It's the time of year when resolutions are made, and we all think about what changes we will make going forward. Planners are bought. Checklists are made. Goals are set. We will do more, be more, achieve more.

Each of us can look back on the past year and see it filled with so much. On a basic level, our days are filled with so much doing. We work, take to dance, sports, lessons, care for family, manage a household, making sure many souls are fed literally and figuratively. There is much that goes into our days.

Amid all the doing, life happens and there is pain, suffering, sorrow, loss and fatigue. And at times, it all feels too heavy. We have walked with our children, family and friends through very hard moments; moments at times so heavy they knock the breath right out of you, and we wonder how we are going to get through it all.

I remember when my family was in the middle of multiple rounds of surgeries for two of our children. Their doctors were in different states, and we were managing care for them and the other six kids while keeping my husband's job and our home afloat in the middle of it all. We relied on those who stepped in to help. One particular woman, who took on too much in her effort to help, became overwhelmed with the weight of it all and said, "Don't you ever feel like you're too much?" She lived one

ALL THAT WE HAVE

MaryBeth Eberhard

MaryBeth Eberhard writes about marriage, life experiences of a large family and special needs. She attends Sunbury St. John Neumann Church.



week in my shoes and was ready to jump ship.

Clearly, this was a lot, my kids were a lot, I was a lot. Over the years, I played that tune in my head as people would step in to help. We needed them to survive, but all the while I felt the temperature on the thermometer of how "much" we were raising till it almost burst.

I read a reflection from Donna Ashworth and Charlie Mackesy the other day and it struck me. The reflection began with the words "I hope you know how brave you've been." As I pondered this, I immediately felt lighter recognizing the fact that I have been brave, very brave, not just this year but for many years.

I sat with my husband and said, "What if, I am so much? But the so much is all good?" We sat together and listed all of the so much. I am so much strength, depth, promise, resilience, trust, wisdom, laughter, compassion, joy, sugar and spice. As I read this over, I felt the reality of those words fill me. I imagined myself as the wise woman in the village who poured tea and listened to hearts and gave counsel because I am so much. I have so much. I give so much. How wonderful it is to reclaim

words and heal, to realize we can be so much, and it can be good.

I sit and think of those I hold close in my life. They are so much laughter, so much insight, so much creativity, so much kindness, so much faith, so much giving. They are extraordinary and necessary. Yet, we live in a world where we allow the fulcrum to move from the seesaw and we become unbalanced.

It's so easy to see the faults and make the priority to fix them. Perhaps instead of making lists and resolutions to do more and be more, the easiest shift is to recognize that we are so much and rejoice in it.

Perhaps the key is gratitude. Perhaps the key is simply taking the time to look into a spiritual mirror and allow ourselves to see the depth we carry.

St. Anthony of Padua is quoted as saying, "Nowhere other than looking at himself in the mirror of the cross can man better understand how much he is worth." God became man for us to recognize how much we are and how much we mean to Him. Recognizing this gives us purpose and mission.

We are called to use everything we are to love and serve God. So, instead of my beloved lists of what to change this year, I think a year allowing myself to realize, celebrate and grow in the identity of how much I really am will be a year well spent.

New Respect Life Office prepared to serve, evangelize in diocese

The Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Columbus continues to grow as it responds to the pressing need to defend and protect the dignity of each human life.

In July, in the wake of Issue 1, Bishop Earl Fernandes established the Respect Life Office with Father Bob Penhallurick as Director. Fr. Penhallurick emphasized how the Respect Life Office will serve and evangelize both the secular culture and fellow Catholics by showing the beauty and worth of each human life from natural conception to natural death.

In December, Father Penhallurick welcomed Mary Parker as the associate director for the Respect Life Office.

Parker has worked for various pro-life organizations, including Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, Ohio Right to Life and Heartbeat International. She received her master's degree in theology from Ave Maria University. Her thesis focused on how practicing the virtue of solidarity can help challenge physician-assisted suicide.

"With her previous experience in the legislature and pregnancy care movement, Mary will be an asset to the Respect Life Office," Father Penhallurick

said.

"It is a privilege to serve the Church for such an important cause," Parker said. "It is my hope that the Respect Life Office can serve those who have faithfully served the pro-life movement and invite others to help serve the most vulnerable in our community."

Pope Francis has stressed the importance of accompaniment, and this will hold true for the Respect Life Office.

The Respect Life Office will be looking for new ways to help accompany mothers in unexpected pregnancies, families struggling with an adverse prenatal diagnosis, those who are suffering from previous abortions, medical professionals facing ethical dilemmas and the dying who may view themselves as burdens to their loved ones.

"The dignity of each human life stems from the fact that we are made by God to return to God. As C.S. Lewis said, 'There are no ordinary people.' We are all called to the glory of heaven. Before we can attempt to solve the problems of today, we must first look to the Lord of Life who teaches us how to truly love our neighbor," Parker said.

With this in mind, Father Penhallurick

and Parker ask the faithful to keep them and those in the pro-life movement in their prayers, especially at the start of a busy new year.

In January, the Respect Life Office will attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C. with Bishop Fernandes.

On Jan. 27, Bishop Fernandes will celebrate the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral at 10 a.m.

In March, Father Penhallurick and Parker will begin attending the deanery meetings in the diocese and meeting with parish pro-life groups. This time together will hopefully provide an opportunity for spiritual renewal, healing and to hear more about their strengths and concerns.

The Diocese of Columbus is a sponsor for the Converging Roads Conference, which will take place on April 5 at the Pontifical College Josephinum. The Converging Roads Conference is a regional one-day conference that equips medical professionals to practice the highest ethical standards of their profession.

"We need to help health care professionals embrace the pro-life movement because of their impact on our culture and patients," Parker said.

"My father, Dr. Michael Parker, is a pro-life OB/GYN and my mother, Teresa, is a nurse. When they made the decision that my dad would no longer prescribe contraceptives at his practice, it took a tremendous amount of courage and strength. They made that leap of faith because of the Catholic community around them that helped to support and guide them."

Throughout the year, Father Penhallurick and Parker will join Dave Osborn, Cam Clutter, and Amanda Miller on the St. Gabriel Café show on St. Gabriel Radio that airs weekdays from 8 to 9 a.m.

Additionally, Parker believes that one of the top priorities for the Respect Life Office will be to find ways to help those who are suffering after having an abortion.

The Guttmacher Institute estimates that 1 in 4 women will have an abortion before the age of 45. It estimates that 19 percent will have an abortion by age 30.

"We need to realize that many of these women and men who have been affected by abortion are sitting next to us in the pews. Oftentimes, they are burdened by overwhelming feelings of guilt and

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Getting 'death with dignity' right

Nurses and doctors can encounter distressing images as death unfolds for their patients. Those approaching death may make odd bodily movements, give off stench or emit strange groans. Perhaps they are facing metastasizing cancer that leads to a courageous fight, with recurrent episodes of pain, suffering and sadness followed by humble submission and eventually giving way to a lifeless corpse, mouth agape, with flies buzzing round.

Where, one can ask, is the dignity in this manner of dying?

Indeed, the physical aspects of dying and death can be very challenging, as we face the prospect of losing control of our bowels and bladder, our mind and autonomy.

Margaux Killackey sums it up this way in an essay: "All flesh will harden and turn to dust. If we judge from appearances, this is an ugly picture."

But she goes on to offer a key insight, namely, that by "looking beyond the physical aesthetics, we can find not only a life well-lived, but a death well-died."

So what does a "death well-died" look like?

One might anticipate it would arise organically out of a "life well-lived," and that both of these would involve our continued and strengthened connectedness to others, including family, friends and God. A good death will typically be a communal event.

Mother Teresa once lamented how "we have forgotten that we belong to each other." To die surrounded by the care and support of others is to transcend our decaying bodily existence as we are sustained in a kind of wholeness through the experience of being loved. When it comes to what a "death with dignity" should look like, Mother Teresa best described it this way: "Death with dignity is to die with grace, in the knowledge that (you) are loved."

Today, as efforts continue apace to legalize physician-as-

MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS | Father Tad Pacholczyk

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as Senior Ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



sisted suicide and euthanasia, flawed notions of "death with dignity" continue to enter and subvert our discussions.

One group in Britain pushing for assisted suicide and euthanasia calls itself the "Campaign for Dignity in Dying." But suicide is never dignified, no matter how much we repackage it by passing laws that grant doctors and nurses immunity from prosecution as they dole out death in place of healing.

These legislative maneuvers provide professional and legal cover for patient abandonment. Physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia are quicker, easier and cheaper than remaining vigilant at the bedside, holding a sick person's hand, and accompanying him or her through the twists and turns of their final journey home.

Canadian euthanasia data from Québec for 2022-2023 indicate that 70 percent of those choosing euthanasia listed "loss of dignity" as one of the motivations. We are being cajoled as a society into believing the contradiction that "death with dignity" means killing ourselves, or letting someone else kill us.

If some insist that they want access to physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia, this should remind us how much they need our care, support and love. It should also serve to remind us of how fearful they may be at the prospect of their illness and sufferings and of the

loneliness that may accompany it. This should prompt us to redouble our efforts at providing not only tailored treatments and appropriate pain management but also compassion, companionship and faithful accompaniment.

When Mother Teresa began her ministry in Calcutta, she would take a wheelbarrow and walk around the city to pick up individuals who were destitute and dying alone in the gutter. She would bring them back to her Home for the Dying. There, she and her sisters would care for them, pray with them and remain in their presence until they passed on. Mother Teresa would offer them the chance to receive a gift – what she termed a "special ticket of Saint Peter" – the Sacrament of Baptism.

No one, she said, ever declined the gift. Although their human frame was wasting away as death approached, and even though flies may have buzzed nearby, these dying individuals were able to surrender their life surrounded by love, warmth and care, both human and divine, and experience, most assuredly, a blessed and dignified death – a "death well-died."

A 2024 Vatican document entitled *Infinite Dignity* reminds us of the important point, often overlooked in these discussions, that suffering "does not cause the sick to lose their dignity, which is intrinsically and inalienably their own. Instead, suffering can become an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of mutual belonging."

The acceptance of the twin evils of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, far from promoting or supporting our core human dignity, constitutes a broadside attack against it. Both threaten those who are sick and vulnerable with systematic abandonment, not only by denying the basic protections to which they are entitled as members of the human family but also by taking away the dignified care and loving human accompaniment due them in the final stages of their journey.

Seminarian devoted to saint, prays for women suffering miscarriages

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Some think that people choose their favorite saints. Others think that saints choose people.

For Kennedy Ofezu, a seminarian for the Diocese of Columbus, the latter is likely true.

Ofezu discovered St. Catherine of Sweden in a book while at Mount St. Mary Seminary & School of Theology in Cincinnati, where several seminarians for the diocese are studying for the priesthood. However, it could be said that St. Catherine discovered and chose him.

Ofezu, who is in the configuration stage of seminary formation and studying theology, experienced a connection with St. Catherine, the patron saint of those who suffer a miscarriage. Ofezu could understand the need for her intercession.

His own family experienced the tumult of a miscarriage. Ofezu recalled being around 10 years old when his aunt lost her baby during pregnancy. Although just a child at the time, he vividly recounted the profound effect the miscarriage had on the extended family.

He described the experience as very “touching.” It was his first experience of the effects of a miscarriage. Ofezu said it was also the first time he realized such an experience happens to women.

“Reading about St. Catherine of Sweden being the patroness of women who experienced miscarriage, I feel positive because her role is to pray for life,” he said. “When we pray to promote life, it is something that is touching to everyone.”

He went on to hear from various families and friends who also experienced a miscarriage.

When Ofezu came to the United States from Uganda, he recalled an encounter with the daughter of a family from Africa. She asked him to pray for her, having suffered a miscarriage.

Ofezu continued to hear stories of miscarriage and receive prayer requests.

In the United States, he said, having



Kennedy Ofezu is a diocesan seminarian.

previously thought miscarriage happens only in Africa, he realized it was a global experience, a suffering shared among all women.

“I was like, ‘Oh, it is not just one person experiencing this,’” he said. “So many people experience a miscarriage today.”

And so, discovering a book about St. Catherine in seminary seemed fitting. It appeared she was just the saint Ofezu needed, interceding for such women herself.

Every week, Ofezu said he devotes private time aside from school to pray for women who experience a miscarriage or illness during pregnancy. He offers a Holy Hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament for them.

He recalled being very moved when reading about St. Catherine of Sweden. Her life impacted his own.

“That was one of things that really touched me, like, ‘This should be my favorite saint,’” he said. “I used to love St. Augustine, but when I read this one, (it) connected with all these requests for

prayers and so on, and it touched me more than any other thing.”

Surprisingly, St. Catherine (1331-1381), who is also invoked for protection against abortion, never had children. She and her husband devoted themselves to a marriage of perpetual chastity.

After her husband died, St. Catherine traveled with her mother, St. Bridget of Sweden. The two cared for the sick, including women who suffered miscarriage, experienced complications during pregnancy or lost children to illness.

Learning of St. Catherine’s service to the poor, counseling the women she served, Ofezu could follow her example not only in prayer but action.

While studying for the priesthood at Mount St. Mary’s, Ofezu participates in an apostolate in which he serves those in need in Cincinnati. Each year, he said, he participates in a different apostolate.

His ministry has included feeding the hungry and serving at a school. Ofezu said he has served many women and children. Following St. Catherine’s example, he seeks to pray with and for those he serves.

He also shared St. Catherine’s story with a fellow seminarian. Ofezu said the seminarian, who is from Charlotte, North Carolina, does apostolate work at a hospital and encounters women there suffering miscarriages or illnesses in pregnancy. Ofezu encouraged him to seek St. Catherine’s intercession with the women he serves.

The saint’s impact on Ofezu’s life and his connections with others extend to Columbus, too.

In May, several diocesan seminarians typically participate in a seminarian bike tour. They bike to several diocesan schools to visit classrooms and speak with students.

While visiting schools, seminarians often pass out a seminarian card, which shares some background about their family and favorite prayers or activities. On his, Ofezu noted his devotion to St. Catherine of Sweden.

He recalled two students approaching him directly after reading his seminarian card to share stories of losing a baby to miscarriage in their family. For the children, it was an experience that resonated with them. They asked Ofezu to pray for their family and shared how they appreciated the card.

His devotion to St. Catherine also gained him a leadership opportunity.

Ofezu said his seminary formators appreciated his devotion to the saint and, as a result, invited him to lead a group of seminarians to Columbus for the Ohio March for Life. The annual march is held in downtown Columbus in October.

“That is one of the greatest things,” Ofezu said. “I feel like I chose the right saint when it gave me the opportunity to lead March for Life here in Columbus.”

Later this month, Ofezu will attend the national March for Life in Washington. He described the march as an opportunity for individuals to let the world know that every life is important and every person matters – from the baby in the womb to the elderly individual.

He also noted how impactful the loss of life is, no matter when it occurs, whether a baby lost during pregnancy or an individual who died in their elder years. A loss of life at any stage makes an impact.

“In my language, we say life is neither big nor small,” he said. “Every life is the same, and it’s very important. Every life must be protected, and losing life in any way, it disheartens people a lot. Either knowingly or unknowingly, when we lose life, it distorts our thoughts, our feelings and everything that we do.”

Should he continue discerning a call to the priesthood, Ofezu said he looks forward to serving women and children as a priest one day. Having witnessed the sufferings that can often accompany pregnancy and motherhood, he is eager to impart the love of God to mothers and their families.

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shame. They feel like they could never be welcomed in the Church,” Parker said.

“The Church is the best place to find healing for those who have had an abortion. God’s mercy knows no bounds, and we definitively encounter His mercy in the sacraments.”

Parker hopes to compliment the efforts of Bethesda Healing Ministry through diocesan-led retreats and initiatives.

“We do have an uphill battle before us,” Parker said. “But this new year holds a lot of hope, and I look forward to seeing how God will use the Respect Life office to promote a greater love for all life.”

WEIGEL, continued from Page 5

empowering “future of theology” is going to be defined by a stacked deck of major presenters and an infantilizing process. Even worse, though, is that, in certain quarters, this “Conversation in the Spirit” methodology seems to be considered a template for all Catholic deliberative bodies. Might that include, in some minds, the general congregations of cardinals that precede a conclave? Might some even dare to suggest that the conclave itself should be conducted according to the “Conversation in the Spirit” method?

Those concerns were being quietly bruited in Rome last month. As they certainly should be.

Project benefits Women’s Care Center

By Annelise Perez

In January 2024, I received donations for my project with the American Heritage Girls benefiting the Women’s Care Center. Over the past year, I have worked to update and renovate the center’s main bathroom with the help of donors’ unprecedented spiritual and monetary generosity.

At the start of last year, the Care Center identified problems with the restroom that included a cracked vanity, old tiling, peeling walls, and the need for a pregnancy sample box and new baby

changing station.

I asked for donations through my American Heritage Girls Troop OH0031, my youth group the Vine, and through *The Catholic Times*. I was floored by the incredible kindness and unselfishness. Within a few weeks, the total funds reached \$5,522.57, surpassing my initial goal.

In January, a vanity was installed. God’s grace was so clear during this process with the timing of the delivery and the contractor, who found issues with

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Pro-life vigilance must continue after Roe decision

By Beth Vanderkooi

A few weeks ago, someone asked me why we are still holding the Roe Remembrance this January. After all, it is cold.

The U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade* (which legalized abortion nationwide) in June 2022. Ohioans adopted the even more barbaric Issue 1 on Nov. 7, 2023, enshrining abortion through all nine months in the state constitution.

It is a fair question, and one that both I and the leaders of Greater Columbus Right to Life and many other pro-life organizations have asked ourselves.

To be sure, there might be good cause to reconsider programming vis a vis time and schedules. With time, you will probably see shifts at the local level and nationally. That is OK.

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The truth is that while it has gone by different names and forms during the years – marches, protests, rallies and eventually the Roe Remembrance of today – we gather each year on or near Jan. 22 (the anniversary of the court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling) with the same purpose: to protest peacefully the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*; to provide a local option for those who cannot attend the Washington March for Life or who would like to attend both; to memorialize unborn children who have died as victims of legalized abortion; to educate the community about abortion alternatives, reversal and healing; and to gather the pro-life faithful together in prayer and solidarity to prepare for the year ahead.

All of these reasons are still important today. One might even say that they are more important than ever.

Roe altered the very fabric of our society. It abruptly ripped apart moral and legal norms – a decision that ignored both the standards of science and jurisprudence in search of a political result.

Then it started the cultural and civil rot and decay. It has attempted to unravel the family and shatter the dignity of the human person.

So, yes, we will continue to hold the Roe Remembrance, but that is not all we will do.

We will continue our works to intervene on the sidewalks and provide prayerful and peaceful options to women who would like to make another choice. We will continue to engage individuals, families and churches in programs like 40 Days for Life and Faithful at the End of Life, and through our

work we will continue to challenge the culture to stand for life. Most importantly, we will continue to invite everyone to join us in that mission.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Greater Columbus Right to Life. It is tempting to be a bit discouraged that after decades of work we are once again facing a legal structure where abortion is legal through all of pregnancy and even basic protections for mothers have been (or soon will be) completely wiped out. That is not how I imagined we'd be marking this milestone for the organization. It can be discouraging.

Our response to discouragement is to keep our eyes and our hearts firmly on Christ. From the baby in the manger to the corpus on the cross and the Resurrection from the tomb, that is where we find the antidote to our discouragement. That is where we find our steadfastness. That is where we find our hope.

I often say that our sidewalk counselors are the last sign of hope and the first sign of mercy for women walking into and out of the abortion clinic. It seems worth repeating during this 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope taking place in the Church.

While it might not offer all the fruits of a trip to a Holy Door in Rome or the possibility of a plenary indulgence attached to this Jubilee Year and its observations, I invite you to make it a point to join us in 2025.

Whether on Jan. 27 for the Respect Life Mass at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral at 10 a.m. and Roe Remembrance at noon, as a partner on the sidewalk or in any of our programs, pro-life work will encourage your faith and help bring hope to a desperate world.

Beth Vanderkooi is the president of Greater Columbus Right to Life.

LIVE AND LOCAL!

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ATHENS

PDHC has helped pregnant mothers, families for 44 years

By Kathy Scanlon
President,
Pregnancy Decision Health Centers

This month, Pregnancy Decision Health Centers (PDHC) celebrates 44 years of rescuing lives and impacting generations, one heartbeat at a time.

Abortion was legalized in the United States with the passing of Roe v. Wade on Jan. 22, 1973. As a result, thousands of organized pro-life responses emerged around the country.

In Columbus, PDHC founders Mike and Peggy Hartshorn, along with several of their pro-life Christian friends, felt God's calling to do more for the pro-life movement. They, along with other founding couples, began helping pregnant women in their own homes and operated a 24/7 hotline from a bedside table.

On the eighth anniversary of Roe v. Wade, PDHC opened the doors to its first center on Jan. 22, 1981. During the first year, there were 3,109 client visits and hotline calls. Since then, God has continued to provide for and bless this ministry, so more lives can be saved from abortion.

Last year, PDHC served 2,129 individuals through 3,940 visits to four pregnancy centers, responded to over 70,000 calls, texts and chats on the hotline, and provided over 800 in-person and over 16,000 online parenting classes in our Family Empowerment Center to over 1,000 new moms and dads. In addition, over 3,000 visits were provided to our baby boutique for much-needed baby items, and over 170,000 diapers were distributed.

Since 1973, according to National Right to Life's (nrlc.org) latest statistics, there have been at least 65,464,760 abortions performed in the U.S. Pregnancy centers

play a vital role and are often the last line of defense against abortion, providing hope, compassion and much-needed services and resources to women who are undecided or abortion-minded. Through this care and support, pregnancy centers help make abortion unnecessary. Last year, PDHC celebrated 952 decisions for life and welcomed 829 babies born into the PDHC family.

Recently, we received a letter from a grateful mom who visited PDHC 12 years ago. "A wonderful member of your staff helped to save my son from an abortion. I was 22 years old and very scared, and I am forever thankful for your organization. My son is so precious and a light of my life. ... I cannot wait to see the lives he will touch throughout his life," she wrote.

The month of January commemorates our nation's observance of the sanctity of human life. It is typically recognized on the third Sunday in January as Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (SOHLS). SOHLS originated in January 1984, when President Ronald Reagan issued Proclamation 1547, National Sanctity of Human Life Day, and made the following statement:

"I call upon the citizens of this blessed land to gather on that day in homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life, and to reaffirm our commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of each human life. ... We are poorer not simply for lives not led and for contributions not made, but also for the erosion of our sense of the worth and dignity of every individual. To diminish the value of one category of human life is to diminish us all.

"Time and time again, we watch women walk into our center full of doubt, fear and timidity and then witness them become equipped, resilient and capable of being the wonderful mother God de-



A mother who received help and encouragement at Pregnancy Decision Health Centers holds her baby. Photo courtesy PDHC

signed them to be. We're able to stand beside her and walk with her during her journey and provide practical help and spiritual guidance. The best part? Watching her walk back through our same doors holding her baby that we've once met on the ultrasound screen together! What a gift," Nurse Alyssa said.

Recently, a new mom shared her experience. "I was on the fence on whether

or not I wanted to keep my baby. I decided to keep him and it was the best decision I've made," she said. "There are ups and downs of course (mostly ups) but I wouldn't give him up for anything. Thank you PDHC for helping with making my decision, not judging my choice, and being so helpful throughout my experience!"

Over the past 44 years, PDHC has continued to add, adapt and adjust our programs and services to meet the needs of those we serve. As we enter 2025, we are excited to announce the relocation and opening of our new Lancaster Center, which will allow us to serve even more moms and families in the community.

On Thursday, Jan. 30, we will have the new center blessed and hold a community open house from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and a ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon. We were blessed to have the construction buildout project completed by Elevated Integrity Construction Services, LLC. Aaron and his team did an incredible job and we are so thankful. The name of his company is true to the services and experience provided.

Many of PDHC's church partners hold "Bottles for Life" campaigns in January in commemoration of SOHLS. This is a wonderful way to get your family involved with the sanctity of human life and helps PDHC provide much-needed resources at no cost to those we serve. For more information or to get your church involved, contact Kate at kateh@pdhc.org, or call 614-888-8774, ext. 6117.

You can learn more about PDHC at SupportLifePDHC.org. For more information on the open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony, please reach out to Kathy at kathys@pdhc.org, or call 614-888-8774 ext. 6121.

PROJECT, continued from Page 9

the wiring.

From February through April, plans were made for retilling. I needed something classy and homelike to support the aesthetic, but I wanted to stay under budget. I went with the same contractor, who laid vinyl tiling on top of the current tiling to refresh the room.

In May, I debated with my adviser about the benefits of adding air conditioning in the form of a return fan. After consulting a professional, I realized the only possible way to do that would be through the current window, but rewiring the walls would be required. I decided that a better use of the money would be to freshen up the area, and a marble backsplash was installed at the top of the vanity.

The painting phase took all summer between working and college visits. It

involved painting late into the night in order to work around the center's open hours. I learned time management, perseverance and patience throughout this process. Sometimes, the preparation and cleanup alone would take four hours. I am so grateful to the friends and adults who sacrificed their nights to help me.

In August, the center provided a metal box and spray paint for the pregnancy sample box. The Lord continually blessed me throughout this month between my Dad helping me install the box, St. Anthony being abundantly generous any time we needed or lost anything, and navigating issues with the waterproof lining and final box installation.

In September, last-minute trips were made to find bathroom necessities. Scraping off extra paint, adding finishing touches and installing lamps com-

pleted the bathroom.

I truly learned so much through this project and was astounded by the kindness of everyone through donations of time, prayer, knowledge and money. Because of their generosity, I was able to donate \$1214.68 back to the Women's Care Center for future cleaning and maintenance.

The Women's Care Center's staff is incredible. Every day, I entered a center full of love and holy femininity. Each member reflected Mary in words and actions. They live out the works of mercy, opening their doors to anyone and everyone. It's so unlike a sterile hospital. It is a haven of comfort, joy and hope.

Since I originally contacted the Women's Care Center in July 2023 about the project, the number of expectant mothers seen at the Center has risen 30 per-

cent from 1,503 to 1,943 while visits in the previous 365 days jumped from 9,519 to 10,895. This means more moms are given the opportunity to choose life and more babies are saved.

There are so many blessings from the Lord showing His guiding hand over the Women's Care Center and with this project to earn the Stars and Stripes Award, which is the American Heritage Girls' highest award. Thank you all for your support and unending kindness.

All are welcome to come and take a look inside at 935 E. Broad St., Columbus. Contact Madeline Pesavento, the Women's Care Center senior outreach director, at madeline@supportwcc.org.

Annelise Perez is a parishioner at Columbus St. Patrick Church.



THE MISSION OF THE 72

A ministry of active Catholics reaching out to nonactive Catholics, inviting them to rediscover their faith and return to the Church.

Would you like to reach out and invite your family members back to God's Church, but aren't sure how? Are you hesitant to take that step, worried you might alienate them, or have you tried before without success?

This session is for you!

Come and See: January 25

Join us on January 25 from 10:00 AM to Noon at St. John Neumann Church in Sunbury to learn about this ministry and how you can become a disciple in your own family. Discover ways to reach out and invite family members who have drifted away from the Church to return.

Visit saintjohnsunbury.org/mission-of-the-72 or scan the QR code to register.



Questions? Contact Deacon Carl Calcara at ccalcara@stjohnsunbury.org.



Bishop visits St. Francis Center, Zaleski parish

The calendar year ended in the diocese with Bishop Earl Fernandes making his first visit to the St. Francis Evangelization Center in McArthur and the newly formed Divine Mercy Parish in Jackson and Vinton counties.

The bishop began his Dec. 31 trip at the St. Francis Center and ended with a Mass at Zaleski St. Sylvester Church, which is part of the new Divine Mercy Parish established Jan. 1 that includes Wellston Ss. Peter & Paul and Jackson Holy Trinity churches.

At the St. Francis Center, Bishop Fernandes toured the facility with Lisa Keita, director of the diocese's Joint Organization for Inner City Needs (J.O.I.N.); Father Thomas Herge, pastor of Divine Mercy Parish; and Deacon Dave Bezusko, the new director of charities for the diocese.

The St. Francis Center primarily serves Vinton County residents and offers a clothing center and several food programs to help ease poverty in the area. A food pantry is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and four mobile sites are open each week in the county. The center also delivers food to families in remote areas, supports several food programs and provides school supplies for children each summer.

In addition to Keita, the center staff includes two full-time assistants and one part-time assistant. Volunteers help on a regular basis at the center, which serves an estimated 10 percent to 20 percent of Vinton County's 13,000 residents.

Bishop Fernandes said he was impressed by the staff and by the good will of the people who have donated support for the center in many ways.

"It's eye-opening that people in our country live with such a high degree of poverty," he said. "My visit here has raised my awareness of what the true need is here and what the difference between urban poverty and rural poverty is."

"I think sometimes in the Diocese of Columbus the impression is that every-

thing revolves around (the city of) Columbus. People need to be aware of both the Catholics and non-Catholics who live out here and about the people here at the St. Francis Center who are doing such great work in McArthur who serve the needs of these underserved communities.

"It's precisely through the efforts of the staff and the people here that people encounter Christ and encounter the Church with spiritual and corporal works of mercy."

Deacon Bezusko, who recently began a new role as diocesan director of charities, said he is looking forward to raising awareness of the needs in communities to assist the people who are providing aid to the underserved.

"One of the things we want to talk about is that, when we serve the poor, the needy among us, we're serving Christ, and we're being Christ to others," he said. "We're here to be His hands and

See VISIT, Page 20



A statue of the parish's patron can be found inside Zaleski St. Sylvester Church.



Deacon Dave Bezusko carries the Book of the Gospels ahead of (from left) Father Thomas Herge, Father David E. Young and Bishop Earl Fernandes at Zaleski St. Sylvester Church.



Lisa Keita, director of J.O.I.N., and Bishop Earl Fernandes look at some of the donated clothing at the St. Francis Evangelization Center on Dec. 31 in McArthur.



Bishop Earl Fernandes (second from left) discusses the work of the St. Francis Center with Father Thomas Herge (left), Deacon Dave Bezusko (second from right) and Lisa Keith.



On the altar for Mass on Dec. 31 at Zaleski St. Sylvester Church are (clockwise from right) Deacon Dave Bezusko, Bishop Earl Fernandes, Deacon Bart Supino, server Joseph Matthews, Father David E. Young and Father Thomas Herge.
CT photos by Ken Snow

OH WOW!

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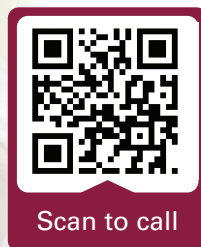
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Catholic education serves as the foundation for evangelization, and scholarships help make it accessible by assisting deserving students with their tuition costs.

Online applications open
January 31 - February 28



Scan for the list
of scholarships,
qualifications,
and applications

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL
Sponsored by Little Italy Ristorante, Groveport, Ohio

FUNDRAISER: Jan 18, 2025; 4:30-7:30pm
St. Patrick's Episcopal Church | 7121 Muirfield Drive, Dublin, OH

SPAGHETTI, SALAD, BREADSTICK, DESSERT, & BEVERAGE
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"I was in prison and you came to visit me." – Matthew 25:36





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CATHOLIC
MEN'S CONFERENCE
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TO BE
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Saturday † February 22, 2025
Kasich Hall † Ohio Expo Center

Adoration 6:00am • Registration 7:00am
Conference 8:00am - 3:00pm
Adoration • Reconciliation • Holy Mass • Breakfast & Lunch • Faith Organizations



Dcn. Harold Burke-Sivers



Dr. Ray Guarendi



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Thursday, January 23
6 p.m.

school.ourladygc.org/



**NEW for
2025-26
Year!
Grade 7**

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Sunday, January 26
11 a.m.

www.stbernadetteschool.com



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Sunday, January 26
12 p.m.*

www.crchsworks.org



Educating PS - Grade 8

Sunday, January 26
12:15 p.m.

www.stfrancisnewark.org



**SAINT ANDREW
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Educating PS - Grade 8

Sunday, January 26
12 - 2 p.m.

www.standrewschool.com



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to Kindergarten**

Sunday, January 26
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www.ourladyofbethlehem.org



**ST. MATTHEW
THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Educating PS - Grade 8

Sunday, January 26
1 - 3 p.m.

www.cdstmattthew.org



Educating PS - Grade 8

Sunday, January 26
3 - 5 p.m.

www.saintmarylancaster.org



**St. Josephine Bakhita
PARISH & SCHOOL**

Educating K - Grade 8

Thursday, January 30
5 p.m.

www.stjbk-8.org

**Event requires pre-registration.
Please visit the school's web site for more information.*

Propagation of the Faith collection supports missionary work

Sr. Zephрина Mary, FIH

Director, Diocesan Missions Office

The Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the missions. On behalf of His Excellency, Bishop Earl Fernandes, I would like to thank you for your generosity. I sincerely thank you on behalf of the Church's missionaries and the people whom they serve. Please consider including the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in your will/trust. Your legacy will live on and on, and your life will touch the world for many generations!

Jesus tells us as he told Simon: "Let us move on to the neighboring villages so that I may proclaim the Good News there also. That is what I have come to do" (Luke 4:43). Following Jesus, we are called to teach and to pass on the faith with which we have been blessed. The Propagation of the Faith is the central means of the Church to encourage prayer for the missionary task and to gather support for those who bring the Gospel to the poor in village missions, city streets, in primary schools, and in clinics in Asia, Africa, Oceania, among the elderly, families of orphan, refugees, and young people who flock in to the cities of the developing world.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is established in every country where the Church is free to operate. At the beginning of each year, the total sum collected during the past year is distributed, and the missions are always at the mercy of the faithful. Every year, at the end of January, the offerings of the members of the society are sent to the central

Help propagate faith on Membership Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

By virtue of our baptism, we are disciples of Jesus, engaged in His mission to bring the Gospel to all peoples and nations. Through the Propagation of the Faith, Catholics worldwide take part in the missionary work of the Church with their prayers, sacrifices and offerings. This generosity enables those who have yet to hear the Good News to experience the message of God's love and salvation.

Next weekend, Jan. 18-19, we will celebrate Membership Sunday. With our membership, we make a special commitment to the Church's mission "to all peoples and nations" by pledging daily prayer and financial help to the Propagation of the Faith. We help to ensure that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poorest members of our human family.

The goal is to offer support to the missions around the world, for pastoral and evangelizing programs, for

catechists and catechetical work, for the building of new churches, health care, education, communication and transportation needs. Catholic missions count on this support as they help young people search for the meaning of life, comfort refugees by meeting their spiritual and material needs, minister to the sick, teach small children, prepare adults for Baptism, or bring help to the suffering in times of war and natural disasters.

During Membership Sunday, please remember to pray for missionaries everywhere who are sharing Christ's Gospel message.

Grateful for your continuing generosity and support of the most important task of the Church – evangelization, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus

office in Rome. The total amount is divided among all the missions of the earth. The society does not deal in investments and has no permanent fund.

Let us ponder the words of Pope John XXIII, "No one today in a world where distance no longer counts can give the excuse that the needs of his faraway brother are not known to him, nor can one say that the task of helping his brother is not

his concern." We can together carry out the missions of the Church and continue to be foster and transform many in the light of Christ, who commanded us to spread the Gospel to the whole world. We also have to foster vocations who are consecrated for the work of Gospel.

Today, the General Fund of the Propagation of the Faith, which gathers donations from all over the world, is the

basic means of support for the Catholic Church's worldwide missions. Encouraging the faithful to give first place to prayer and a spirit of sacrifice for the missions is the most important part of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Let us humbly serve Christ to promote His kingdom.

As Pope Francis teaches, "The Church is missionary. She exists so that every man and woman may encounter Jesus." Today, the General Fund of the Propagation of the Faith, which gathers donations from all over the world, is the basic means of support for the Catholic Church's worldwide missions.

I quote the words of Blessed Carlo Acutis, "The infinite is our homeland. We have always been expected in Heaven." If we want enjoy eternal salvation, we must love our brothers and sisters in need, wherever they are and from wherever they came. In fact, universal fraternity is necessary for everyone. Jesus reminds us that what we do to the "least of others" we do to Him (Mat: 25:31-46). Jesus is the companion of the poor, the hungry, the stranger, the immigrant, the sick, the imprisoned, the misunderstood.

The mission work is the important vitality of the Church. We are obliged to preach Good News of Jesus Christ to our fellow men through our good deeds and words regardless of their religion, ethnicity, culture, rich and poor. Membership Sunday is calling us to prayer and to affirm us in our work in the Church to move forward in Christ's mandate to all the nations. Let us hear the cry of the poor and console them by our act of charity."

LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Scholarship application period to open on Jan. 31

The Catholic Foundation's online scholarship application period will open on Friday, Jan. 31. A complete list of available scholarships, qualifications and application details may be found at www.catholic-foundation.org/grants.

The application deadline is Friday, Feb. 28 for all scholarships except the Ronald C. Sullivan Scholarship, which will remain open until Monday, March 24. Scholarship recipients will be notified in May.

Several scholarships are available for students in the Diocese of Columbus. Last year, thanks to the generosity of its donors, The Catholic Foundation awarded more than \$200,000 in scholarships. To date, it has granted more than \$1.75 million to help empower young people in their academic and vocational studies.

If you have questions about specific scholarships or the application process, contact Dan Kurth at (614) 443-8893 or dkurth@catholic-foundation.org.

Clergy Who Cook will be Jan. 31

Clergy from the Diocese of Columbus and beyond will don aprons and whip up their tastiest dishes at the 15th annual Cler-

gy Who Cook event on Friday, Jan. 31 in the Jessing Center of the Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus.

The event, sponsored by the Friends of the Josephinum, benefits seminarians at the college. It is currently sold out, but you can help your favorite clergy chef team win the grand chef award by making a gift in their name.

The event begins with a happy hour at 5:30 p.m., followed by registration at 6:30 p.m., tasting at 7, a program at 8:15 and the final course that includes awards at 8:40.

See the list of chefs and cast your vote online at www.pcj.edu/clergywhocook.

If you would like to join a waiting list for potential ticket availability in January, email Kathy Miller at Events4FOJ@gmail.com.

Shepherd's Corner sets schedule

The Dominican Sisters of Peace who operate the Shepherd's Corner Ecology Center, 987 N. Waggoner Road, Blacklick, invite people to join them in experiencing the joys and responsibilities of caring for land, life and spirit, inspiring others to become shepherds of creation in their own corners of the world.

The center's winter program includes self-led walks at its labyrinth from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 8 and Wednesday, Feb. 12. Themed labyrinth walks will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, March 21 and Friday, April 11. Themes for the walks will be the spring equinox in March and "Season of Growth" in April. There is a suggested \$5 donation for the evening walks.

Programs for homeschooled students will take place on the third Wednesday of each month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. for those in middle school and 1 to 3 p.m. for elementary students, at a cost of \$5 per student.

A retreat titled "Kneading Community" and featuring bread baking, reflection and conversation is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1. The suggested donation is \$20.

There will be a program on rediscovering the practice of fasting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5 with a \$5 suggested donation.

Meditative slow stitching derived from the outside-in Kawandi quilting technique of India and Pakistan will be taught from 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11 at a workshop with a \$10 fee.

The center will celebrate Presidents' Day

on Monday, Feb. 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with family-friendly activities including feeding the farm's animals and walking its trails. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

There will be a maple sugaring program from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 1. Those taking part will be able to see the boiling process and taste sugar from the center's maple trees. The fee is \$6.

A self-care event featuring yoga and the making of Ayurvedic tea is planned for Saturday, March 22 from 9 to 11 a.m. There is a \$20 fee.

A class in gentle Tai Chi, with a \$10 fee, will take place from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, April 30.

Shepherd's Corner will be open to the public on most Mondays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. beginning in April. Exceptions will be noted on the farm's website, www.shepherdscorner.org. A donation of \$2 per visitor on public days is requested. The sisters also encourage visitors to bring shelf-stable food that will be donated to the food pantries receiving produce from the farm. The site also is open on demand to small groups.

Registration is required for all programs. To register, call (614) 866-4302 or visit www.shepherdscorner.org/calendar.

Baptism of the Lord Year A

We turn to God as sinners, not away from Him

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 or Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 or Psalm 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30
Acts of the Apostles: 10:34-38
or Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Looking around the world, it seems to be there are very few signs of hope. Too much division, too many wars and conflicts, too much uncertainty, too much inflation and too high prices ... too much anxiety in children, too much tension in families.

Psychologists and sociologists, however, say that the greatest problem human beings face is not poverty or social uncertainty. It is rather fear and desperation, and, therefore, the lack of hope. And indeed, all the troubles in our world have their root in the desperation of the human heart.

It is the fear of the other that urges someone to attack, to despise and dismiss, or even to wage wars. It is the fear and its fruit – desperation -- that urges people find solution in drugs, alcohol, loose lifestyle. The fear of the void that is in the human heart.

Some cover it with workaholism, others in environmental fights, social activism, etc. We look for fast solutions that do not require self-reflection and self-confrontation. God has been dismissed long ago, and so indifference is the leitmotif for many.

For many, the failure of Christians and clergy are the obstacle to consider the way of the Church. Or many live in fear when confronted with their own weakness and sins. God cannot bear with me for my heart's messiness.

Nonetheless, there is true hope in this confusing darkness of our age! The solution was born in Bethlehem. Jesus is the solution! Jesus is the hope!

The invisible God not only became a human being, but he identified himself with us, with our sins. This is what we celebrate on the feast of the Baptism of *Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

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



the Lord.

Jesus comes to John, and he is waiting in the lane with sinners. They confess their sins and repent. Even though he has nothing to confess, and John realizes this, Jesus wants to be baptized as if he was a sinner.

St. Paul says, "Christ Jesus, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself." (Phil 2:6-8) To the Hebrews, he writes, "for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

He humbled himself, identified himself with us sinners. He was tempted in all just as you and I, he suffered the pain of temptation and human weakness. Though he did not sin, he endured the punishment for, the consequences of, and the fate of sinners. He endured the cross.

The liturgy of the Byzantine church helps us to appropriate the hope that comes from this event. One of the hymns of preparation sings:

Zebulun, make ready; Naphtali, prepare yourself.

O River Jordan, stand and leap for joy to receive the Master coming to be baptized.

O Adam, rejoice with the first mother, Eve, and do not hide yourselves as once you did in Paradise. For, seeing you naked, Christ has appeared to put on the first robe.

He has appeared to renew all creation.

Do not hide yourself, Adam and Eve! It is evident Adam and Eve represent all

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

1-13/1-18
MONDAY
Hebrews 1:1-6
Psalm 97:1,2b,6,7c,9
Mark 1:14-20

TUESDAY
Hebrews 2:5-12
Psalm 8:2a,5-9
Mark 1:21-28

WEDNESDAY
Hebrews 2:14-18
Psalm 105:1-4,6-9
Mark 1:29-39

THURSDAY
Hebrews 3:7-14
Psalm 95:6-11
Mark 1:40-45

FRIDAY
Hebrews 4:1-5,11
Psalm 78:3,4bc,6c-8
Mark 2:1-12

SATURDAY
Hebrews 4:12-16
Psalm 19:8-10,15
Mark 2:13-17

1-20/1-25
MONDAY
Hebrews 5:1-10
Psalm 110:1-4
Mark 2:18-22

TUESDAY
Hebrews 6:10-20
Psalm 111:1-2,4-5,9,10c
Mark 2:23-28

WEDNESDAY
Hebrews 7:1-3,15-17
Psalm 110:1-4
Mark 3:1-6

THURSDAY
Hebrews 7:25-8:6
Psalm 40:7-10,17
Mark 3:7-12

FRIDAY
Hebrews 8:6-13
Psalm 85:8,10-14
Mark 3:13-19

SATURDAY
Acts 22:3-16 or
Acts 9:1-22
Psalm 117:1b-2
Mark 16:15-18

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION: Mass Schedule: Weeks of Jan. 12 and 19.

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 with the Passionist Fathers at 7:30 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus and 10:30 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville. Mass from St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Milwaukee, at 10 a.m. on WWHO-TV. 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 Breeze-line 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, 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. Satur-

days, 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.saintjohnsunbury.org); and Columbus Immaculate Conception (www.iccols.org). Check your parish website for additional information.

We pray the seasonal propers for Weeks I and II of the Liturgy of the Hours

of us and each of us. Do not be ashamed therefore! Do not be afraid! Do not turn away from God after your sin but turn to him. Do you not see he comes to save you? Do you not see he comes to solve your troubles? To fill the void of your heart? To take away the shame you experience? To renew you?

The good news is that God did not turn away from us, even though we live in messiness! Quite the opposite! This is the hope that saves the world.

The voice of the Father confirmed that Jesus did the right thing. Identifying himself with us sinners, he takes on himself the burden of sins, weaknesses and human failures. In this way, he heals the human heart. The void we all experience is being filled with the new life!

God the Father proclaims that "you are my beloved Son in whom I well pleased."

(Lk 3:22) Only Jesus understands you! Only he can fill the void in your heart! Do not turn away but come to him as he came to you.

The feast indeed challenges us to recognize the fears, anxieties and often emptiness in our hearts. To recognize the search for a solution that is ever present in us in the form of urge.

However, it goes further. As we hear that Jesus identified himself with us, we are challenged to identify ourselves with him. Coming to him. Giving him our hearts and letting him touch our hearts.

As the fire communicates its heat, flame, power to the iron, so does Jesus, the Incarnate Word, communicates to you the healing power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Basil the Great, Homilies, 2,6). The hope we proclaim becomes reality once you come closer to him!

Jesus begins to reveal His glory in miracle at Cana

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
John 2:1-11

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Timothy Hayes
Rev. Timothy M. Hayes is the pastor of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Church.



moment of Epiphany, the first of Jesus' signs that reveal His glory.

This flow of the liturgical calendar is a reminder to us that we experience all the mysteries of the Lord throughout the year. The cycle of seasons calls attention to certain moments, but all of them work together to accomplish the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ. There is truly one

mystery, that is Jesus Christ Himself. He is the sacrament of the Father, and the Church is the sacrament of Christ. We experience the sacramental life through our common prayer and liturgy, and our lives then become a "place" where the world can come to know Jesus Christ.

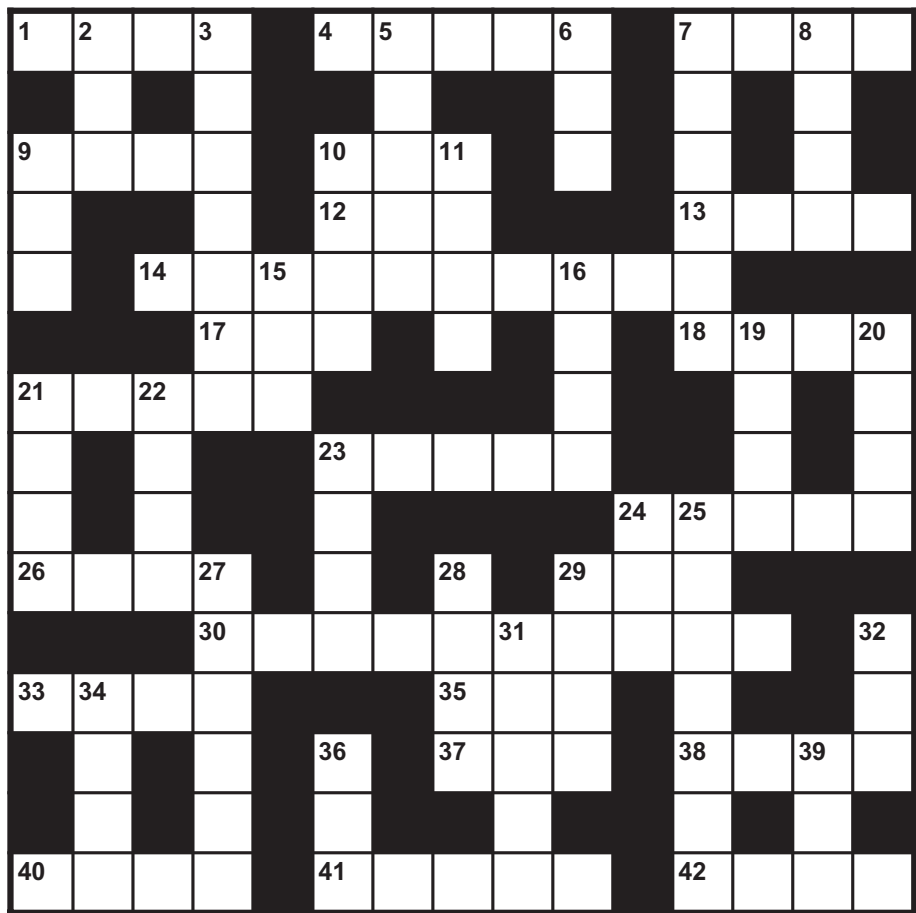
The wedding feast of Cana is a moment of revelation, the first public miracle of Jesus. Through their experience of the transformation of water into wine, the disciples of Jesus begin to have faith in Him. "Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory,

and his disciples began to believe in him."

The Gospel of John offers us some unique insights into Jesus and those who believe in Him. When John speaks of "the first of His signs," he opens to us a path that leads to a greater depth of insight into the identity of Jesus. The promise of the Gospel is to tell us about what Jesus said and did, so that we may come to believe. But that is just the start of a living relationship with God. To begin to believe is to be open to a journey with God. This is a journey of discovery that reveals to us

See SCRIPTURE, Page 19

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS
- 1 "___ my sheep." (Jn 21:17)

4 Vestment made of a narrow strip of cloth

7 "___ let us adore him..."

9 "Te ___"

10 Catholic actor Mineo

12 Med. Christian empire

13 Paul's conversion is described in this book

14 Bread of the Passover

17 "___ the vine" (Jn 15:5)

18 Shepherd-turned-prophet

21 Catholic actor who won an Academy Award for his role as Father Flanagan

23 9 AM prayer

24 You find it on 32D

26 It burned without being consumed

29 One of two epistles (abbr.)

30 Type of council

33 Biblical site of the temple of Dagon

35 "Thou shalt ___..."

37 Mother of Abel

38 Latin 101 word

40 "So be it!"

41 The four ___ of the Church

42 Food for Elijah
- 5 Papal crown

6 "...for ___ and tooth for..." (Ex 21:24)

7 St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of this country

8 Friday in Lent no-no food

9 "___ gratias"

10 Brother of Japheth

11 Members of this tribe of Israel carried the Ark

15 Not cleric

16 Novena number

19 Land in which Ruth was born

20 Michaelmas mon.

21 It was empty Easter morning

22 Charity

23 "Blessed art ___ among women"

24 Second of IHS

25 Language of Palestine during the life of Christ

27 Afterlife

28 Word on a biblical wall

29 Refer to a biblical passage

31 Catholic columnist and TV commentator, Robert ___

32 Female members of religious orders (abbr.)

34 Biblical name for Syria

36 See 10D

39 The brothers in this puzzle rode in this
- DOWN
- 2 Nathan told David that taking Bathsheba was like stealing this

3 St. ___ Guzman

SCRIPTURE, continued from Page 18

Who God IS and who we are.

The disciples of Jesus are slow to understand, both at the beginning and in our time. We may think we know God, but unless we are open to being known by Him first, we can be mistaken. For this reason, it is a real blessing to have the structure of the liturgical year and the cycle of seasons that permit us to take in the mystery and the mysteries week by week and day by day.

The message of the Mother of Jesus, the last words we hear from her in the Gospels, is simple and straightforward: "Do whatever he tells you." She speaks this to the servers at the wedding feast and their response is the context of the sign, Jesus' first public miracle, which is hidden from all except those with eyes to see.

Paul's address to the Corinthians adds another point concerning belief and cooperation with grace. It is not an individual response that is sought, but a collaborative action. Faith incorporates interdependence. "To each individual, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." The benefit is to build up the Body of Christ for witness.

Paul explains: "To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another, the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another, mighty deeds; to another, prophecy; to another, discernment of spirits; to another, varieties of tongues; to another, interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes."

As we continue to live in the light of the Mystery of the Incarnation throughout the year ahead, may we work together in harmony to "Proclaim His marvelous deeds to all the nations."

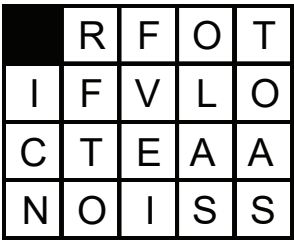
Words of Wisdom

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.

The oil of courtesy ...



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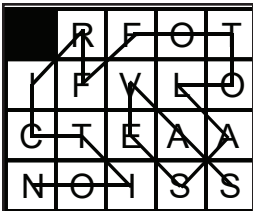
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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

- ABELE, Frank A., 92, Nov. 28**
St. Joan of Arc Church, Powell
- BROWN, Regina Clare "Jeanne," 89, Dec. 18**
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin
- CHIAO, DeChao "Ralph," 72, Dec. 27**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- CURTIS, Richard A., 79, Dec. 28**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- DATTILO, Mary Louise (Galloway), 97, Nov. 21**
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus
- EISEL, Joseph E., 95, Dec. 22**
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus
- FERRAR, Dr. Eleanor, 87, Dec. 18**
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus
- GALLO, Carol A., 85, Dec. 25**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- GRIFFITH, Patricia Ann, 76, Dec. 19**
St. Joseph Church, Circleville
- GUZZO, Margaret "Nancy" (Breen), 92, Jan. 2**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- LEHNER, William E., 76, formerly of Worthington, Dec. 22**
St. Joseph Church, Marblehead
- LEWIS, James D. Jr., 81, formerly of Columbus, Dec. 14**
St. Peter Church, Huber Heights
- MACALUSO, Philip A. Jr., 79, Dec. 23**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- MURPHY, John R. III, 72, Dec. 26**
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville
- SCHNEIDER, Victoria L. "Vickie," 74, Dec. 23**
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster
- URITUS, Theodore P., 84, Dec. 30**
St. Andrew Church, Columbus
- VAN BUREN, Relva L., 96, Dec. 23**
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster
- WELTER, Joan E. (Gstalter), 86, Dec. 21**
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center
- WHITTAKER, Bernadine S. (Sneed), Dec. 16**
Holy Rosary- St. John Church, Columbus



WORDS OF WISDOM SOLUTION

Sister Mary Claire Kirkpatrick, OP

Funeral Mass for Sister Mary Claire Kirkpatrick, OP, 85, who died Tuesday, Dec. 10 at the Mohun Health Care Center in Columbus, was celebrated Saturday, Dec. 28 at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Burial will take place later at St. Catherine, Kentucky.

She was born on Dec. 3, 1939 in Boston to the late Francis and Catherine (O'Brien) Kirkpatrick.

She received a Bachelor of Science degree in education, mathematics and French from Boston State College in 1969, a Master of Science degree from Fordham University in 1974 and a Master of Arts degree in professional studies from the New York Theological School in 1977.

She entered the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine, Kentucky (now the Dominican Sisters of Peace) in 1957 and pronounced her vows on Aug. 15, 1959, taking the name Sister Mary Carleen.

She served as a teacher, administrator, religious education director and pastoral associate in Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts and New York. She had been a resident of the Mohun center since 2019.

She is survived by a brother, Francis.

Jean D. Howley

Funeral Mass for Jean D. Howley, 98, who died Sunday, Dec. 29, was celebrated Saturday, Jan. 4 at Circleville St. Joseph Church, followed by burial in the parish cemetery.

She was born on May 31, 1926 in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania to Rudolph and Nancy (Clawson) Jellison.

She was a former president of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and also served as president of the Associates of Council of Catholic Women for the Episcopal Province of Cincinnati and of the Southern Deanery Council of Catholic Women.

She also was a member of the parish Altar Rosary Society and served as parish census secretary for 12 years.

She worked for Westinghouse Electric Corp. from 1944 to 1959 in Pittsburgh, then moved to Circleville, where she was employed at Prairie Lanes and Berger Hospital. She retired from full-time work in 1988 and continued to volunteer there. She also was a volunteer for the Red Cross, Knights of Columbus bingo and parish fish fry, was a poll worker and served on the Circle of Caring, the Faith in Action Council and the Pickaway Health Services board of trustees.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Paul. Survivors include a son, John (April Grube); two daughters, Paula and Mary (Buzz) Buskirk; one grandson, one granddaughter and two great-grandsons.

VISIT, continued from Page 13

feet. And the idea of loving God and loving our neighbor are not to be separated."

A number of diocesan parishes support the St. Francis Center with monetary and material donations, but more help is needed. Contribution can be made to the center at <https://dioceseof-columbus.org/donatejoin>.

Later in the day, Bishop Fernandes traveled to Zaleski to celebrate a Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on the feast day of the church's patron, St. Sylvester.

Concelebrating with Bishop Fernandes were Father Herge and Father David E. Young, a retired diocesan priest in residence at St. Sylvester. They were assisted by Deacons Bezusko and Deacon Bart Supino.

Bishop Fernandes has visited most of the parishes in the diocese during his 2½-years as its shepherd and said St. Sylvester was one of his last stops.

On the final day of the year, the bishop invited parishioners to reflect on 2024 and look ahead to 2025 as the three area parishes became one.

"It's an opportunity to give thanks to God for all the graces He has poured out through the decades at his parish," Bishop Fernandes said in his homily. "But just like someone who walks through a door, you leave the old life behind and you walk into something new – to contemplate what this something new

might be for you as a parish family.

"Change is difficult. Change can also be good and beautiful."

The bishop went on to explain the history of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, a title given to her at the Council of Ephesus in 431, and of St. Sylvester, who became pope in 314.

Pope St. Sylvester led the Church during the Council of Nicea, which defined the nature of God the Father and God the Son. In 2025, the Church will observe the 1,700th anniversary of that council.

"The whole Church was torn apart by this controversy, which was resolved at the Council of Nicea during the reign of Pope St. Sylvester," Bishop Fernandes said. "He is the one who confirmed the decision of Nicea. And he is the first pope to be called the Confessor of the Faith."

As a parish, St. Sylvester has a long history dating to the post-Civil War era. The parish was established in 1867 and named in honor of Bishop Sylvester Rosecrans, who was an auxiliary bishop of Cincinnati and the Diocese of Columbus' first bishop.

The original church was built in 1869 in Zaleski, a town whose origins are traced to the Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad, but it burned down in 1929. The current church was built at the same site in 1931. The parish rectory was also destroyed by a fire in 1938.

MASS, continued from Page 4

That's amazing because he's seen behind the title of 'inmates.'

"I'm so grateful that he came and spent time with us, that he does not see us for a number, crime or anything else. He sees

behind the stigma, the title. He's seeing the soul, the child of God – that is just amazing."

Gutierrez Santana added that the Mass will impact not only her but those around her.

She said other people can tell when things are going well for her. She expected that the joy she carries from the Christmas Mass will be noticed.

"You cannot deny when you have faith or when you have hope or when you get blessings," she said.

After Mass, a reception with Christmas cookies and coffee was offered for inmates to partake with the bishop, clergy, staff and other attendees.

PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of heaven, blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in necessity. Oh, star of the sea, help me and show me herein, you are my Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in this necessity. There are none who can withstand your powers. Oh, show me herein you are my Mother. Oh, Mary conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee. (Repeat three times) Oh, Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hand. (Repeat three times) Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads that I can obtain my goals. You gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me, and in all instances in my life, you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. | D.P.

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Bishop joins Posadas celebration at St. Agnes

By Jessica Schira

On Sunday, Dec. 22, Bishop Earl Fernandes was invited to Columbus St. Agnes Church for Posadas with the community from the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca.

It was a multitudinous event that included little ones as well as the adults who put their efforts into showing the bishop, who had never participated in a posadas, how beautiful it is to start Christmas by accompanying Mary and Joseph as pilgrims while preparing their hearts for the birth of Jesus.

The evening began with the Holy Rosary inside the church. Most of the attendees, including Bishop Fernandes and Father Fernando Bonilla, MSP, of St. Agnes Church, prayed on their knees throughout, showing great devotion. Children in their colorful winter clothes and their families also showed reverence during the prayer.

Poinsettias surrounded the altar, two Christmas trees were behind it, and a beautiful Nativity scene was stationed in front. After each mystery, there was singing.

At the end of the rosary, everyone left the church to begin the posadas, which consists of walking as Joseph and Mary (represented in small statues that are carried by two people) did, asking at different stations for a place to stay for the night. Two groups alternately sang songs, and at the end, a place was found for Joseph and Mary to enter.

Despite the cloudy night with a temperature of 25 degrees, those present paid little attention to the cold and sang joyfully with the bishop outside. Whistles and shouts of jubilation could be heard.

Then the celebration began inside with traditional food, dances and singing that filled the participants with Christmas spirit.

Father Efrain Villalobos of Columbus St. Stephen the Martyr Church and Jorge Ramírez, a 36-year-old missionary in the house of formation with the Missionary Servants of the Word (MSP) religious community, joined the posadas to support Father Fernando in this special event for the Hispanic community.

"Today, we are delighted because we have Bishop Earl K. Fernandes of Columbus present. Through these traditions, we prepare ourselves with prayer and, remarkably, follow the example of our Blessed Mother, always being open to God's plans," Father Villalobos said.

The priest invited young adults to join him for a special Mass at St. Stephen on Sundays at 5 p.m.

"I started at 6 years old to enjoy this tradition of the posadas in Mexico," Ramirez said. "My favorite part is the candy and going out as pilgrims with Mary and Joseph to ask for posada. The essence of the posada is to remember the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph as they were asking for a place to stay for the night and how they



Posadas children's activities include a pinata and dances.

were denied, but in the end, an innkeeper gave them a stable for the birth of the child God, in a very humble place."

"We are celebrating the eighth posada (and) the bishop seems to have enjoyed the tradition of breaking the piñata," he continued.

Asked whether he's considering a call to priesthood, Ramirez said, "Yes," and recommended that young people "seek and follow God."

Other attendees offered their perspectives on the posadas.

"Everything is perfect, and what a blessing it is to have the bishop here with us," Gerardo Reyes said. "My wife, Aracely Garcia, and I have visited this parish for 12 years. Father Fernando invited the bishop to learn more about our Oaxacan community traditions."

"What a blessing it is that the bishop enjoys our culture and sees how united our Oaxacan community is," Garcia said.

Gil Santos, a volunteer and parishioner at St. Agnes, said, "I am from Oaxaca, Mexico. The posadas is a tradition that many Catholic churches celebrate during December. We make a novena and finish the novena by celebrating Christmas. This helps us congregate and honor God."

"We must motivate ourselves to learn more about Jesus. We come to pray and receive God's blessings, to live in community. Then, on Christmas Eve, we wait for the birth of the baby Jesus. We do another kind of celebration for Three Kings Day (Epiphany)."

Santiago Espinosa, also a parishioner at St. Agnes, said, "This is something to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is about living together and getting closer to God. Many people take this kind of tradition as fun party time, but this kind of fellowship is getting closer to God and knowing why He came to this world."

Carlos Cabrera, a St. Agnes member for 11 years and a Eucharistic Minister, said, "I am from Ecuador, and this is also new to me. Everyone has brought their favorite dish. That is what Christmas time should be about: to share with the neediest and give to others. Joy for me is to share with others and make their day."

"My wife and I feel it is a healthy activity for our four children; they have fun.



Children participate in the Posadas.

Photos courtesy Andy Long



Music is part of the Posadas.



A rosary is prayed.

We see other people's faith, which helps us to continue the path of God and always work in what we can. I like that the bishop took time out of his hectic schedule to be with us; his smile is contagious.

"We feel blessed to have Father Fernando. He is very charismatic, has done many good works for this parish, and likes working with the people. I don't know what the piñata means, but the kids enjoy it."

His daughter, Alicia, added, "It was great and fun; I spent a lot of time with my friends. I love to dance. The first time we practiced, the dance was challenging, but then we practiced more and more, and it started to get easier. It was good

that bishop came."

Posadas organizers expressed gratitude for an evening spent together as a community. Three weeks of preparation went into the event, parishioner Laura Trujillo said.

"It was an honor for us that Father Fernando organized the posadas by country this year," she said. "And we had a lot of help from volunteers."

Gisell Gallegos, 16, said it "was one of the most beautiful posadas because of the dances and the presence of the bishop. I encourage the young people to come and see this type of tradition so they can learn more about other cultures."





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Filipino Catholics' Simbang Gabi ends with bishop celebrating Mass

By Eric V. Yang

For the 14th year, Simbang Gabi was observed by the Filipino Catholic Community in the diocese led by their chaplain, Father Ramon Owera, pastor at Circleville St. Joseph Church. The traditional Novena of Masses, also known as *Misa de Gallo* (Mass of the Rooster), are celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a spiritual preparation for Christmas.

The nine Masses were offered at St. Josephine Bakhita Parish at St. Elizabeth Church from Sunday, Dec. 15 through Monday, Dec. 23. Fr. Owera was the main celebrant of the first eight Masses, joined at times by the clergy at St. Josephine Bakhita Parish: Father Anthony Davis (pastor), and Father Pius Ajuluchukwu (associate pastor) as concelebrants, and assisted by Deacons Jason Nguyen and Dean Racine.

For the second year in a row, Bishop Earl Fernandes joined the community as main celebrant for the Mass on Dec. 23. Concelebrants were Father Owera, Father Davis and Fr. Ajuluchukwu along with Father Hilary Ike, who serves in the diocesan tribunal, and Father Tesfaye Petros Botachew, diocesan director of multicultural ministry. They were assisted by Deacon Nguyen, Deacon Racine and Deacon-candidate Diep Bui. Luke Eschmeyer, a diocesan seminarian, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

In Bishop Fernandes' homily, he announced that he is the chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee for Asia & Pacific Islanders. Bishop Fernandes compared the traditions of Simbang Gabi of the Filipinos to that of Las Posadas celebrated by the Latino communities. Bishop Fernandes mentioned that he had joined the Latino community the previous evening for their Las Posadas celebration, complete with a piñata and, just like the with the Filipino community ... plenty of food to enjoy.

Bishop Fernandes reflected on the readings and reminded all that in addition to the aspect of waiting during the Advent season, Advent is also a period of repentance. God had a plan for us and fulfilled his promise of salvation by sending his only Son.

Bishop Fernandes also urged the congregation to look to the Holy Family as an example to emulate for our families. He said that we can see in the Blessed Mother a faithful trust in God. Joseph also showed faithfulness to God's will and is thus Protector of the Universal Church.

After the last Mass, Bishop Fernandes joined approximately 250 people in the Pastor's Hall for a potluck-style dinner reception, where members of the Filipino Catholic Community and their guests enjoyed home-cooked Filipino food and performances by various groups.



Bishop Earl Fernandes preaches during a Mass that concluded the pre-Christmas Simbang Gabi celebration for Filipino Catholics.

Photos courtesy Cedric Sze



Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrates Mass on Dec. 23 at Columbus St. Elizabeth Church on the last day of the Simbang Gabi celebration for Filipino Catholics leading up to Christmas. He is assisted by Deacons Dean Racine (left) and Jason Nguyen.

An added aspect of this year's Simbang Gabi is fundraising. Father Owera and the Simbang Gabi committee (Rex Alba, Kaella Aliling, Ice Batino, Jewel Beriso, Jesse Cabungcal, Frances Horenstein, Joy Kouns-Lewis, Minda Li, Joy Polintan, Irene Sze, and Josephine and Eric Yang) aimed to not only promote the spiritual and social aspects of Simbang Gabi but also to raise funds for a worthy cause. This year, the funds raised benefited the Bridgettine Sisters in Columbus, specifically their chapel and guesthouse construction project.

As in previous years, there were several vendors selling Filipino delicacies after Mass. The vendors donated a portion of their profits to the Bridgettine Sisters. In addition, there was a silent auction of donated goods and services that added to the funds raised for the Bridgettines.

The Filipino Catholic Community is one of seven active ethnic communities celebrating Masses regularly at St. Josephine Bakhita Parish.

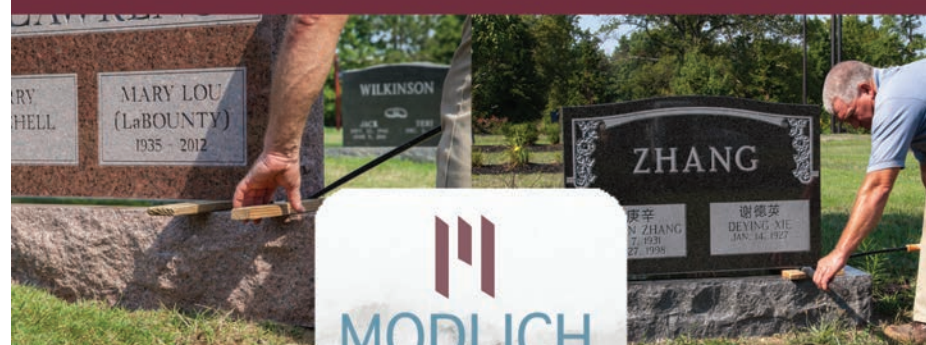
Filipino Catholics meet every first Wednesday of the month at St. Elizabeth, 6077 Sharon Woods Blvd., Columbus, for a devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The evening starts with the Holy Rosary at 6 p.m. followed by the novena and Mass.

The community also gathers every first Saturday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth for Mass celebrated in Tagalog, a dialect of the central Philippines, that is open to anyone.

Eric V. Yang is a parishioner at Columbus St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish and serves on the Simbang Gabi Committee.



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