

SPECIAL GRADUATION SECTION INSIDE

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Pastor installed at Buckeye Lake



Father Fritzner Valcin (above, left) renews his priestly vows and signs an oath of fidelity at the altar as Bishop Earl Fernandes watches during Father Valcin's formal installation as pastor at Buckeye Lake Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Saturday, May 17. At right, Bishop Fernandes celebrates the Vigil Mass at the church with (from left) Father Thomas Petry, Father Donald Franks, Father Michael Nimocks and Father Valcin below the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

CT photos by Ken Snow



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Front page photo

THREE NEW PRIESTS FOR DIOCESE

Fathers Kevin Girardi, Sam Severance and Joseph Rolwing prostrate themselves in front of the altar at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church before they are ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Earl Fernandes on May 17. Photo courtesy Andy Long

Clergy assignments include newly ordained priests

The following clergy assignments were announced on the weekends of May 17-18 and 24-25:

Reverend Tyler Carter, Parochial Vicar, St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, Gahanna, to Parochial Vicar, St. Brigid of Kildare Parish, Dublin, continuing as Administrator, Holy Resurrection Melkite Catholic Parish, Columbus, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Tomás Carvajal Basto, Pastoral Services, St. Joseph Parish, Dover and Holy Trinity Parish, Zoar, incardinated into the Diocese of Columbus, February 18, 2025, to Parochial Vicar, St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, Columbus/Powell, effective July 8, 2025.

Confirming the appointment by the Provincial of the Theatine Fathers, **Reverend Miguel Enrique Alvarado Santos, CR**, Parochial Vicar, St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, Columbus/Powell, to Parochial Vicar, St. Joseph Parish, Dover and Holy Trinity Parish, Zoar, effective July 8, 2025.

Confirming the appointment by the Provincial of the Theatine Fathers in the United States, **Reverend David Arroyo Alonso, CR**, Parochial Vicar, St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, Chaplain of Cristo Rey High School; to Full Time Vicar for Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Columbus, in residence at St. Peter Rectory, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend James Farnan, Parochial Vicar, St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Westerville, to Parochial Vicar, St. John the Baptist Parish, Danville/Mount Vernon, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend William A. Hritsko to Chaplain, Catholic Cemeteries, effective July 1, 2025.

Reverend PeterClaver Kasasa Kiviiri, Parochial Vicar, St. Francis De Sales Parish, Newark, to Parochial Vicar, Church of the Resurrection Parish, New Albany, effective July 8, 2025.

Confirming the appointment of the Provincial Superior of the St. Paul Province of the Heralds of the Good News, **Reverend Anish Thomas, HGN**, Parochial Vicar, Church of the Resurrection, to Chaplain, Newark Catholic High

School and Parochial Vicar, St. Francis DeSales Church, Newark, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Matthew Morris, Parochial Vicar, St. John the Baptist Parish, Danville/Mount Vernon, to Prison Ministry, Chaplain, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Walter Tuscano, from service outside of the diocese, incardinated into the Diocese of Columbus, January 22, 2025, to Parochial Vicar, St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, Gahanna, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Jude Esua Fongouck, to Administrator, St. Dominic Church, Columbus, continuing Hospital Ministry, Columbus, effective July 8, 2025.

Confirming the appointment of the Superior of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception, **Reverend Antony Varghese**, Administrator, St. Dominic Parish to continuing as Administrator, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Paul Check, from service outside of the diocese, to Faculty Member and Formator, at the Pontifical College Josephinum, effective July 1, 2025.

Reverend Jean-Luc Zadroga, OSB, to Chaplain, Fisher Catholic High School, Lancaster, continuing as Administrator, St. John Church, Logan, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Anthony Raj Bellamkonda Irudayam, Parochial Vicar, Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia and Immaculate Conception Church, Dennison, to Pastor, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Columbus, effective June 2, 2025.

Reverend Kevin Girardi, newly ordained, to Parochial Vicar, St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Westerville, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Joseph Rolwing, newly ordained, to Parochial Vicar, St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, Columbus/Powell, effective July 8, 2025.

Reverend Sam Severance, newly ordained, to Parochial Vicar, St. Brendan the Navigator Parish, Hilliard, effective July 8, 2025.



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Three men ordained to priesthood

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Vocations continue to rise in the diocese with three new priests ordained to the Sacred Order of Presbyter on Saturday, May 17 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.

Bishop Earl Fernandes ordained Fathers Kevin Girardi, Joseph Rolwing and Samuel Severance to the priesthood during a Mass that filled the church with hundreds of the faithful in attendance. Bishop Fernandes was joined by several priests and deacons from across the diocese. Major concelebrants included Bishops Emeriti James Griffin and Frederick Campbell.

Fathers Girardi, Rolwing and Severance completed their studies earlier this month at the Pontifical College Josephinum.

The Rite of Ordination, in which the three men were ordained to the priesthood in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, began with the presentation and election of the candidates.

Father William Hahn, the diocesan vicar general and director of priestly life and vocations, presented the candidates to the bishop and testified that they had been found worthy for ordination to the priesthood. The bishop then formally chose, or elected, the three men for the Sacred Order of Presbyter.

The congregation responded joyfully by proclaiming, "Thanks be to God."

Bishop Fernandes told the men in his homily that today begins their mission. The candidates must commit to personal conversion. Conversion, he explained, is the first work of the Holy Spirit.

He said such an act requires a daily

personal conversion of Christ, an openness to being completely taken by God and a willingness to offer themselves. Like Christ, the bishop said, the candidates' "yes" must be clear, decisive and free.

"Jesus was the 'yes' of the Father to humanity," Bishop Fernandes said. "He was always a 'yes' and never a 'no' and never a 'maybe' because no one wants to give their life over for a 'maybe.' He made a decisive choice for us, and today, you make a decisive choice for Him."

The bishop acknowledged that it might seem intimidating as new, young priests to offer advice and counsel to those who seem wiser. He assured the elect that God will give them the strength and the Holy Spirit will lead. Priestly maturity, he said, comes from the Holy Spirit.

He told the candidates that, with their "yes," they must have confidence and faith in what the Lord can do in and through them. He encouraged the elect to not be afraid.

The priesthood is a challenging vocation, the bishop acknowledged, but it is in their incapacities, he told the candidates, that Christ chooses them. The Lord is greater than their weaknesses and sins.

"Whatever may come after, do not forget the before," Bishop Fernandes said. "He saw you, He chose you to be instruments of salvation for others."

Bishop Fernandes also emphasized the high dignity of the call to the priesthood. He reminded the candidates that through no merit of their own God called them to the vocation. He encouraged them to have faith in God's power at work in them.



Bishop Earl Fernandes welcomes (from left) newly ordained Fathers Kevin Girardi, Sam Severance and Joseph Rolwing at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church on Saturday, May 17.

The bishop asked the faithful to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the men and the diocese.

After the homily, the men were examined by the bishop. He questioned the elect about their willingness to undertake and faithfully fulfill the ministry to which they were about to be ordained. They were also examined about their ability to unite themselves more closely to Christ. The candidates responded to each question with an "I do."

The elect then knelt before the bishop. They each promised obedience to him and his successors.

The Litany of Supplication followed. The congregation and clergy, facing the tabernacle, repeated after the cantor,

imploping the Lord's mercy as well as the intercession of the Blessed Mother and the saints. The candidates laid prostrate on the floor of the church during the litany.

The candidates then came forward for the laying on of hands. The bishop laid his hands on the head of each candidate while invoking the Holy Spirit. The act is an ancient apostolic gesture of ordination.

Bishop Fernandes prayed a prayer of ordination, asking God to raise the men to the priesthood. The men were ordained priests by the imposition of the bishop's hands and prayer of ordination.

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The three candidates for ordination to the priesthood kneel before the altar at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.
Photos courtesy Anna Lincoln



Bishop Earl Fernandes lays hands on Sam Severance during the ordination.



Bishop Earl Fernandes presents a chalice and paten to Father Kevin Girardi.



Mother Assumpta Tangan, LIHM (left) watches as Sister Mary Gianna Casino of the Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary religious order renews her temporary vows at an all-school Mass for Portsmouth Notre Dame students on Tuesday, May 13 at Portsmouth Holy Redeemer Church.



Sister Laura Austria Estrano, LIHM (left) and Mother Assumpta Tangan, LIHM (right) give postulant Nancy Valdovinos a new veil after her entrance into the order's novitiate.

Photos courtesy William Keimig

Sister renews vows at Portsmouth all-school Mass

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

Tuesday, May 13 was not an ordinary day for students at the Portsmouth Notre Dame Schools.

Students at Notre Dame Elementary and Notre Dame Junior and Senior High School witnessed something special during an all-school Mass that morning: the renewal of vows of a consecrated religious sister.

Sister Mary Gianna Casino, a sister of the Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary religious order, renewed her temporary vows before the Notre Dame Schools student body during Mass. The Mass was held at Portsmouth Holy Redeemer Church, located behind Notre Dame Elementary and about a mile from the high school, on May 13, the feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

The Leaven Sisters live in a convent at the Portsmouth St. Mary Church rectory, located west of Holy Redeemer Church. The sisters teach and minister to students in the Notre Dame Schools.

The order, which came to the diocese in 2021 at the invitation of then-Bishop Robert Brennan, embraces a contemplative-active life of prayer, penance and apostolate exemplified by the Blessed Virgin Mary. The sisters are dedicated to educating the young and the family.

Sister Gianna, who entered the order in 2014 and professed her first vows in 2020, renewed her temporary vows in front of students during a school Mass.

"I've been here 20 years and we've never had a ceremony like this," Notre Dame High School Principal J.D. McKenzie said.

The principal, who taught at the school for 14 years and has been its principal for six, shared that the high school



Father Stephen Smith incenses the altar at the start of an all-school Mass at Portsmouth Holy Redeemer Church on May 13.

Photo courtesy William Keimig

is "blessed to be able to be a part of it." He hopes the rite "draws the attention for some of our students that this may be a vocation or pathway they would take in the future."

McKenzie explained that a goal of the school is exposing students to different vocations, including the consecrated religious life. While students might learn about that vocation in class or from the witness of the Leaven Sisters, observing a sister profess vows is a rarity.

"It's just not something that our young people get to see all the time," McKenzie said.

He recalled that Mother Assumpta Tangan, superior of the Leaven Sisters' Portsmouth community, approached him about the possibility. She expressed interest in having Sister Gianna renew her vows in the presence of students.

McKenzie said the Notre Dame Schools responded with certainty.

Michelle Ashley, principal at Notre Dame Elementary, said several of the Leaven Sisters assist in the school. They teach religion classes, help prepare students for their First Holy Communion and organize special events throughout the school year to deepen students' faith. The Leaven Sisters also lead Advent and Lenten retreats for all students in the elementary school, kindergarten through sixth grade.

"It is an honor for them to choose our all-school Mass for Sister Gianna to profess her vows and for the students to witness such a spiritual occasion," Ashley said.

Renewal of temporary vows is made a few years after professing first vows and before making perpetual vows. The

Leaven Sisters then renew their perpetual vows annually.

During the school Mass, Nancy Valdovinos, a postulant in the order, entered the novitiate. Postulancy is the first stage in consecrated religious life, marking official entry in an order, followed by the novitiate, which prepares a woman to live a vowed life.

May 13 was a fitting day for such an occasion.

The Sisters of the Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary unite their daily actions, sufferings and sacrifices to Jesus' passion and death in response to Our Lady of Fatima's plea for prayer and penance. Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in the village of Fatima, Portugal six times between May 13 and October 13, 1917.

The Sisters of the Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were founded in the Philippines in 1991 and have three convents located in the United States: Hanceville, Alabama; South Sioux City, Nebraska; and Portsmouth.

Sister Gianna, 31, is expected serve with the Leaven Sisters in Portsmouth next school year. She echoed school administrators' hopes that her profession of vows inspires students to consider consecrated religious life.

"We believe it's so important to encourage and promote vocations, and it's not common for children and youth to witness someone giving their entire life to God the way that we have and the way we're called, as I am going to deepen that commitment through the renewal of vows," she said.

"We also want that in the presence of our students and families because, religious vows, it's ultimately a public witness of love, and it's a witness of

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Is Artificial Intelligence correct about Catholic fasting?

Dear Father,
I noticed that ChapGPT says black coffee doesn't break Eucharistic fast while Grok says it does. Which of these AIs are correct?
-Lacey

Dear Lacey,
When I asked an Artificial Intelligence (AI) website about AI reliability, it told me: "The reliability of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a complex and evolving issue, with no simple yes or no answer."

Some of AI systems describe themselves as generating responses that are more creative. We are not looking for creativity when it comes to the truths of our faith, even simpler matters about what breaks the Eucharistic fast.

Beware of using only AI for answers to questions, especially about Catholic matters. With so many AI systems vying for our attention combined with their unreliable responses, you do well to ask a priest or other Church authority for correct answers, including the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Code of Canon Law, and other Church writings.

Pope Leo XIV recognizes the challenges that artificial intelligence poses for us, particularly regarding "the defense of human dignity, justice and labor" (May 10 address to the College of Cardinals).

Addressing representatives of the media, the Pope expressed a concern for the way technology is developing. He said that he was "thinking in particular of artificial intelligence, with its immense potential, which nevertheless requires responsibility and discernment in order to ensure that it can be used for the

SACRAMENTS 101

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

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good of all, so that it can benefit all of humanity. This responsibility concerns everyone in proportion to his or her age and role in society."

The Pope has said that "we must rediscover, emphasize and cultivate our duty to train others in critical thinking, countering temptations to the contrary, which can also be found in ecclesial circles" (May 17, 2025 address).

Critical thinking leads us to say that black coffee is considered to break the Eucharistic fast. We are guided by the Code of Canon Law, which states: "Whoever is to receive the blessed Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from all food and drink, with the sole exception of water and medicine" (919, §1.)

Some may argue that coffee is mostly water and therefore may be drunk before Communion. Well, then, such a person should simply drink plain water if he thinks there is little difference between coffee and water.

Others argue that coffee is a medicine because it is a drug that helps a person wake up. I respond that I have yet to see coffee in retailers' medicine aisles. Rather, it's found in the coffee and tea aisle!

We are to fast at least "one hour before Holy Com-

munion." That's hardly asking for much. At a typical Sunday Mass with hymns and preaching, Holy Communion is not distributed until about 45 minutes after Mass has begun. That means that a person would need to be drinking coffee walking into church in order to break the fast!

Fasting for Communion goes back to the earliest times of the Church and it used to last longer. The reduction to one hour only came about in 1964 by Pope Paul VI. Catholics planning to receive Communion used to fast beginning at midnight, including water. In 1957, Pope Pius XII reduced the Communion fast to three hours.

Fasting for Communion is important, as Pope Pius XII wrote in his *Christus Dominus*: "Abstinence from food and drink is in accord with that supreme reverence we owe to the supreme majesty of Jesus Christ when we are going to receive Him hidden under the veils of the Eucharist."

"When we receive His precious Body and Blood before we take any food, we show clearly that this is the first and loftiest nourishment by which our soul is fed and its holiness increased."

Pope Pius also taught that the Eucharistic fast fosters piety; it helps to increase holiness in us because we consume Christ, who transforms us into Himself. The pangs of hunger are reminders that we are only truly satisfied when we are united with Christ, especially in Communion.

Artificial intelligence will never understand piety and union with God through the Eucharist. Use AI with caution on any topic but especially matters of the human soul.

Old and new: American pope takes on AI

Pope Leo XIV surprised the cardinals with the choice of his papal name and then did the same when he announced his intention to focus on the AI Revolution. When he addressed the College of Cardinals the day after his election, he explained these choices:

"Sensing myself called to continue in this same path, I chose to take the name Leo XIV. There are different reasons for this, but mainly because Pope Leo XIII, in his historic Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution. In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor."

Coming from America, the land of Silicon Valley and the tech revolution that has flowed from it, it seems fitting that Leo has taken on a burning issue of our day. Much of the pre-conclave speculation focused on the ecclesial divisions of the past century. Leo, who repeatedly has emphasized unity, including at his inaugural Mass, has immediately transcended this divide by pointing to the Church's task of addressing the pressing issues of the day. It's not a matter of simple politics or attempts to remain relevant to a secular world, because digital technology has already fundamentally impacted the daily lives of Christians. And many challenges await us as AI and genetic modifications promise to impact human life in previously unimaginable ways.

Pope Leo XIII awoke the Church from its slumber to address a fundamental shift occurring during the Industrial Revolution, using timeless truths from the

THE CATHOLIC CULTURALIST

Dr. R. Jared Staudt

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teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas to address new problems. Building on this legacy, Leo XIV addressed our current context with the members of the "Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice" foundation on May 17th:

"Pope Leo XIII, who lived in an age of momentous and disruptive change, sought to promote peace by encouraging social dialogue between capital and labor, technology and human intelligence, and different political cultures and nations. In the context of the ongoing digital revolution, we must rediscover, emphasize and cultivate our duty to train others in critical thinking, countering temptations to the contrary, which can also be found in ecclesial circles."

It's not that the Church hasn't addressed AI previously, but it's undoubtedly becoming an even more pressing issue. While Pope Francis frequently spoke about the ramifications of AI after its rise in the early 2020s, the Dicastries for both the Doctrine of Faith and Culture and Education released a joint document in January as the Church's most official teaching on the topic to date. *Antiqua et Nova*, "Old and New Things," which lays a philosophical foundation and offers practical application, will undoubtedly provide a framework for Pope Leo's approach. The document makes four key points on the proper approach to AI.

1: Computer intelligence is not human intelligence. While AI, particularly language models, seems to

imitate human thinking effectively, the comparison doesn't reach beneath the surface. AI "learns" by recognizing patterns in existing data, not by sensing, abstracting and judging. *Antiqua et Nova* says that "AI's advanced features give it sophisticated abilities to perform tasks, but not the ability to think" (§12). This reflects a metaphysical difference as well as a technical one: "Since AI lacks the richness of corporeality, relationality and the openness of the human heart to truth and goodness, its capacities ... are incomparable with the human ability to grasp reality" (§33).

2: AI is merely a tool. Because of its human-like appearance, it's easy to view AI as an autonomous entity that confers benefit or inflicts harm. However, even though it imitates human actions, "it must be understood for what it is: a tool, not a person" (§59). Because it is a tool, an ethical approach to AI involves not a moral judgment of AI itself, but a conscious consideration of how to use it in a way that contributes to the common good and respects human dignity.

3: AI should not replace human relationships. While it might be metaphysically true to say that AI has the same standing as a lawn mower, electric oven or computer — tools that assist and promote human labor — to leave things at that would be naive. In its treatment of AI in the economy, healthcare, education, privacy and warfare, *Antiqua et Nova* warns about the replacement of essentially human aspects of society with AI. Work is a vocation to steward God's creation, and putting AI in the place of a doctor or teacher misunder-

Finding the real meaning of peace

Peace is often a misunderstood word in our culture. I say this as I sit on my front porch breathing in the scent of spring lilacs and a soft spring breeze. This moment feels very peaceful.

And yet why, when I step back into my home where dishes, laundry, deadlines and a chorus of “Mom, can you help me?” await, does that feeling dissipate so quickly? I think it’s because the peace that we crave is the peace we were created for.

We are just so easily placated with a glimmer of peace that this world offers. Jesus reminds us that His peace is “Not as the world gives ...” If this momentary breath of lilacs calms my soul, how much more will the breath of the Holy Spirit?

The peace that Jesus speaks about in today’s gospel reflection is the peace that anchors the soul and binds us to heaven. It is the peace that in every storm reminds us of who we are and whose we are.

That peace is not fleeting. It is a living steadfast gift, and when we cling to it, our hearts are drawn upward to a Lord that desires our good and is advocating for us always. So when The Lord reminds us to not be troubled and not to worry, it is because He is for us. He hears our hearts. He knows the intentions that we carry in the very depths of our hearts. The peace He offers is healing.

Living our life in this peace is a beautiful witness of

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.



evangelization. As a homeschooling and working mom of eight kids, two in wheelchairs, I am often asked how I manage it all. The truth is, of course, that I do not. It is controlled chaos at its best moments, but gratitude is a constant theme through it all.

Recognizing the depth of grace offered in clinging to God’s peace is my answer. I cling to the heavenly rope of His peace that is offered every moment. In our strong and in our weak moments, His peace is there to calm us.

I think it is important to recognize that this is not a constant for me. The grace is, but there is a tendency to get distracted by the peace the world offers, a nice meal out, a new outfit, a freshly planted garden where all looks in order. Oh, how I love order. Oh, how fleeting order in family life is!

Maintaining peace in family life is an evangelization miracle. The evangelization comes in the ability to trust that God is working within the lives of all whom I hold dear. So when schedules are challenging, differing opinions are volatile, sleep is minimal, hearts are hurting,

health is compromised, and/or work is stressful, we must visibly breathe in the peace of Christ.

Modeling is critical here. I often pause in a tense or explosive moment, realizing that even my older kids or guests in our home are watching. I take a moment to recollect myself, call forth the peace that has been given to me by the Lord for these very moments. This peace does not solve the crisis but softens it every time. We might table the discussion. I might decide this is a “less of me and more of the Lord” moment, or I might say “Tell me more,” listening rather than inserting my opinion.

I am learning that breath is taken when we pause and my hope is that the air that people breathe in my home is the very spirit of Christ flowing through my home. It is His peace that calms and permeates wounded hearts, turning our gaze heavenward. Some with a clearer view than others but nevertheless looking, wondering, thanking.

St. Augustine is quoted as saying, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee.” Lord, let your peace break through the thin and quick peace this world offers. Thank you for the beautiful depth of peace you bring into our lives. Help us to be living witnesses, trusting and clinging to the grace Your peace provides in all moments.

MaryBeth Eberhard writes at www.marybetheberhard.com

“De-extincting” long-vanished animal species?

Several private companies have set out to “resurrect” extinct species using DNA and cloning technologies, with ongoing efforts to revive the dire wolf, woolly mammoth, dodo bird and various other ancient species.

Today’s “de-extinction technology” remains limited. It typically allows for the introduction of a small number of genetic changes into currently existing species, modifying individual animals to varying degrees so they resemble, and even behave like, animals that have long been out of existence.

Recent news reports declaring that Colossal Biosciences has managed to “resurrect” the dire wolf took this approach, introducing a couple dozen genetic changes into the genome of a modern-day gray wolf. The company produced a captivating animal that nevertheless retains most of the gray wolf genome. Although the animal looks and behaves differently from a gray wolf, it is not yet a dire wolf but constitutes, at best, a kind of hybrid between the two species.

Are there any potential ethical concerns that arise concerning such animal de-extinction protocols?

There are a few.

One is that the use of CRISPR technology as a tool for revival and manipulating animal genetic codes involves very complex science. It is still the case, despite progress in the field, that unforeseen effects and troublesome traits, like heightened aggressiveness, strange growth patterns or various birth defects could unexpectedly arise. Mistakes may come at a high cost if we can’t put the genie back into the bottle when something goes awry.

Another ethical concern involves the so-called dire wolves being kept in very large enclosures in undisclosed locations to protect them from the prying eyes of the public and from other potential predators. By restoring only a small number of animals, they end up existing without a large reference group of their peers, never being released into the wild, and growing up

MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS | Father Tad Pacholczyk

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mostly isolated and in captivity. Is it a good idea to be bringing back extinct animals that cannot roam free and participate in a natural habitat?

“If this is always going to be a zoo animal, then stop,” argues ecologist Ben Novak, a researcher interested in genetically rescuing endangered and extinct species in San Francisco. He says that the goals of de-extinction “have to be about ecological restoration and function.”

Ecological niches, however, can be very complex and unpredictable, even if there have been some occasional “rewilding” success stories, such as when wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 in an attempt to cull the large number of elk.

Yet as David Blockstein, senior scientist at the National Council for Science and the Environment, observes, “Bringing back extinct species sounds romantic, but it’s a distraction. The ecosystems they lived in are gone or radically changed, and we’re likely to create invasive species problems rather than restore balance.” Or as synthetic biologist Lynn Rothschild notes, “We’re gambling with ecosystems that are already fragile.”

When novel species have been introduced to natural settings in the past, they have sometimes wreaked ecological havoc, proving to be more damaging than anticipated, and negatively affecting other animals within the same habitat.

For example, when cane toads were introduced in

Australia in an attempt to control pests, they spread rapidly and caused a significant decline in native predator populations because they were toxic when consumed by many native species. The law of unintended consequences can raise its ugly head in unforeseen ways when attempting to introduce changes to complex systems.

When we consider that many millions of species have already gone extinct, an additional ethical issue arises: Who should determine which ones deserve to be resurrected? How likely is it that such decisions will end up being driven, as appears to have been the case with Colossal Biosciences, by the “flashiness” or “cultural appeal” of the animal, perhaps as a way to generate buzz and drive corporate investment? The woolly mammoth certainly garners a great deal of interest as a “charismatic mega-vertebrate,” and it’s not a stretch to suppose that companies might be drawn to de-extincting certain animals based on their glitziness and potential for generating venture capital rather than strictly ecological grounds.

The massive funding and scientific efforts that are required for de-extinction projects are also likely to divert resources from less expensive efforts to protect currently endangered species. If we can just bring back extinct species, isn’t that likely to sap the motivation out of conservation efforts trying to prevent extinction in the first place? It is always simpler to preserve what we already have than to go through the trouble of re-creating it again.

While de-extinction efforts raise ethical concerns, they do not seem to cross fundamental ethical lines. While there is nothing in principle that should make us object to the use of genetic engineering to introduce major modifications to animals, it behooves us to try to be clear, open and ecologically rigorous about the purposes, motivations and goals that undergird these endeavors.

Forward in hope

Since the last publication, we have experienced a period in the Catholic Church that may only happen a couple of times in one's lifetime. A change of leadership in our ancient Church, where both mourning and joy come together to forge a new path forward. We mourned the loss of Pope Francis, who taught us to embrace each other and our world in merciful bonds of human fraternity. Following the period of mourning and his moving funeral, our Cardinal electors entered the Conclave to select the next leader of the Roman Catholic Church. We did not have to wait long, as on the second day, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost emerged on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica as Pope Leo XIV. The first American Pope!

Hand in hand

In his first address from the balcony at St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo XIV paid homage to his predecessor by a reference to Pope Francis' last Urbi et Orbi message just two weeks earlier on Easter morning. He said, "God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail!" Pope Leo continued with "Therefore, without fear, united hand in hand with God and each other, let us move forward. We are disciples of Christ." This phrase ... united hand in hand with God and each other, let us move forward ... I believe is a profound statement that may offer us a glimpse into Pope Leo's hopes for our global Church. Walking hand in hand brings an image of solidarity, community and strength. Our journey can appear at times to be "alone" as we grind

SERVING AS NEIGHBORS |

Kelley Henderson

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



through life's challenges and struggles. But are we ever actually alone?

With God and each other

A dear friend of mine, Carmelite Father Jack Welch, once spoke to me about the reality of being alone. We were on retreat at the beautiful St. Bernard Abbey in Alabama. He was the retreat master, and I was his ride to the airport and retreat participant. One afternoon between talks, we took a walk together around the monastery grounds. Our conversation covered the customary topics of sports, politics and faith. I was discerning a possible new chapter in my life and struggling to find a clear path forward. It was obvious that following God's will meant completely following Jesus without fear and hesitation. I had committed to this path many years earlier, but now I was feeling "alone" and fearful. Father Jack said very simply, "No matter where you find yourself next, God is always, already there." We are never really alone, as God's hand is outstretched to welcome us and guide us. In his first remarks to the 1.4 billion Catholics across the globe, Pope Leo

was saying reach out, take a hand ... a neighbor, a friend, a stranger ... because God is already there.

Forward ... ¡Adelante!

Although these were the first remarks of our new Pope, I sincerely believe that words matter. He was very careful to encourage us and to remind us that we are not alone, and that we need God and each other to face this journey. Notice at the end of the quote, Pope Leo offered a little nudge to many of us who might be wondering what is next. He said, "Let us move forward." In Spanish, this phrase can be summed up in one word – ¡Adelante! For the man born and educated in Chicago, who then spent decades in missionary service in Peru, I wonder if this is what he was thinking as he walked out onto the balcony of St. Peter's. ¡Adelante! This is just speculation on my part, but as a Church, we always move forward, toward Christ our light. Forward is the only direction when walking in faith.

Despite the challenges and struggles facing our world, or the very real challenges facing us each day on our personal journey ... we are never alone. God is always, already there, and we are encouraged to move forward in hope – ¡Adelante con Esperanza!

"God Loves us. God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! We are all in God's hands, therefore, without fear, united hand in hand with God and each other – let us move forward." Pope Leo XIV, May 8, 2025.

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

VOWS, continued from Page 4

commitment to God. Our community is specifically dedicated to the formation of youth and family. We hope that moments like these will really inspire and strengthen those people that attend, especially the young, to live their lives of faith and to be generous and to live a life of purpose."

Sister Gianna, a native of St. Louis, first learned about consecrated religious life as a kindergarten student while attending Mass at a convent with her family. She recalled seeing women in black

habits behind the altar in a cloister. She asked why they were dressed in black and her mother responded that the women were nuns married to Jesus. Sister Gianna said the encounter planted a seed for the vocation in her heart.

She attended St. Louis University on a golf scholarship and studied pre-medicine. She previously won the National Junior Professional Golf Association (PGA) Championship at age 17 and was invited to the Ladies PGA qualifier at age 18. Thoughts of religious life remained,

however, and Sister Gianna left college after her sophomore year to pursue the vocation.

"That never really went away, even in high school and college, I always had that on my heart and mind that God might be calling me to be religious sister," she said. "It was also fostered through the devotion of my family, too. We would pray the rosary every evening. We would make time to go to Adoration, and that's really what helped me navi-

gate my challenges in life, even as a student, even with a lot of peer pressure.

"Being grounded in faith is what helped me never lose that love for Jesus. I fell in love with Jesus, and I never really got over Him, because no matter what I did or who I was talking to, it was that inclination and that inner drawing to one day be called – ultimately to holiness. I think it was always there: that desire for heaven."

AI, continued from Page 5

stands that these roles reach beyond the utilitarian and require personal care and formation.

4: AI should not become idolatry. In its concluding sections, Antiqua et Nova notes that "as society drifts away from a connection with the transcendent, some are tempted to turn to AI in search of meaning or fulfillment" (§104). But "the presumption of substituting God for an artifact of human making is idolatry," and "it is not AI that is ultimately deified and worshipped, but humanity itself" (§105). This deification threatens us with a subconscious pitfall against which we must consciously guard ourselves and our communities.

Pope Leo will undoubtedly expound and reiterate these topics, but Antiqua

et Nova is not comprehensive. Most of us are not executives, administrators or legislators in a position to decide how AI will be used. While the document provides philosophical guidance, it leaves practical questions open. Is our use of AI a matter of personal discernment, or are there moral parameters that must shape our decision-making? How should our personal and communal approach to AI proceed to avoid the alarms that some are sounding? Hopefully, Pope Leo will offer decisive guidance so that we can make the best use of this new, powerful tool and avoid the serious dangers that await its misuse.

I'd like to thank my son, Daniel, an inspiring writer and computer programmer, for his help with this article.

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LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Senior Citizens Day event set for June 12

The annual diocesan Senior Citizens Day Mass and luncheon will take place Thursday, June 12 at Columbus St. Catharine Church, 500 S. Gould Road.

The program will begin with a 10:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes, followed by a buffet luncheon in the parish center. The cost is \$25 per person.

To RSVP, visit <https://dioceseofcolumbus.org/seniorday>. Checks may be made out to the Diocese of Columbus with the words "Senior Citizens Day" in the memo line.

Questions may be directed to Mary Parker at mparker@columbuscatholic.org or (614) 241-5555, extension 1432.

St. John Neumann to present end-of-life program

The pro-life ministry of Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, 9633 E. State Route 37, will present a program on "Navigating the End of Life with the Catholic Directives" at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, June 5.

The speaker will be Dr. Marion Schuda, geriatrician and ethics committee member at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, who is a member of the local Catholic Medical Association. She will speak on approaching end-of-life de-

cisions with clarity, peace and faithful guidance rooted in Catholic teaching.

To register, go to <https://saintjohnsunbury.org/navigating-end-of-life-with-the-catholic-directives>.

Quo Vadis program set for July at Josephinum

The annual Quo Vadis discernment camp supported by the diocesan vocations office will take place from Sunday to Wednesday, July 27 to 30 at the Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus.

The program will be led by priests and seminarians of the Diocese of Columbus and is for young men entering grades nine to 12.

The cost is \$50 and scholarships are available.

The registration deadline is Saturday, July 18. To register or for more information, go to <https://www.vocationscolumbus.org/quovadis> or send an email to columbusquovadis@gmail.com.

Columbus St. Patrick to host speed dating event

Are you Catholic, single, between 21 and 42 years old and willing to take your

love life into your hands and see where the adventure takes you?

Come to Patrick Hall at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., at 4 p.m. Saturday, May 31 to take part in a Catholic speed dating event with relationship coach Monica Braun.

In this interactive and personalized dating event, you will have an opportunity to experience talking to other single Catholic men and women.

Speed dating provides you with the opportunity to personalize the dating experience by helping you meet and connect with potential matches in a relaxed and fun environment.

You can choose between two age groups for a more personalized event.

The cost is \$40.

Spiritual companionship program now available

The iTHIRST spiritual companionship program for people and families in the Diocese of Columbus struggling with addiction is underway. Thirty-seven local spiritual companions have been certified for the program through Seton Hall University.

The iTHIRST Initiative equips people with the skills and knowledge needed to

support those struggling with addiction or in recovery, as well as family members affected by a loved one's addiction.

This initiative of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity acknowledges addiction as not only a physical and mental health challenge but also a deeply spiritual one.

Through faith-based, compassionate care, trained spiritual companions walk alongside individuals recovering from addiction and their families, helping them draw strength, healing and purpose from a spiritual perspective. iTHIRST offers a path of hope rooted in faith, community and connection.

Recognizing the lack of spiritual care in conventional recovery programs, iTHIRST's training program is designed to create a network of trained individuals who provide spiritual companionship for those in recovery. This focus on spiritual healing addresses our fundamental human need for connection, purpose and inner peace, which is often neglected in traditional addiction treatment.

Adults interested in support from spiritual companions can call or text (614) 547-9288 or email info.ithirstcolumbus@gmail.com for confidential support and connection to a spiritual companion in their area.

Shanks to speak at right to life gala

Greater Columbus Right to Life will host its annual banquet on Monday, June 9, at Villa Milano, 1630 Schrock Road, Columbus, and while every year in service to the Gospel of Life is a joy, 2025 commemorates the organization's 50th anniversary.

In that spirit, Greater Columbus Right to Life (GCRTL) welcomes back one of its most dynamic former leaders, Jason Shanks, as the featured speaker.

Many will recognize his name for the bold vision he brought to life in central Ohio. It was his faith-fueled commitment to local organizational unity and community action that ignited partnerships across churches, schools and local organizations—and set the stage for transformational growth.

As the former president of Greater Columbus Right to Life, Shanks launched the first 40 Days for Life campaign, unveiled a bold "2020 Vision" plan to end abortion in Columbus and expanded the organization's reach by adding "Greater" to its name. GCRTL has grown five-fold since then and the local abortion rate has fallen by nearly 60%, sparing more than 30,000 innocent lives from abortion.

Shanks' impact reaches far beyond central Ohio. He co-founded Catholic Youth Summer Camp, where he led young people into a deeper relationship with Christ amid the beauty of creation. He served the Diocese of Toledo as Secre-

tariat Leader for Evangelization and Parish Life, sparking parish renewal across the region. As CEO of Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, he merged five county agencies into a regional service network, earning Crain's Detroit Business "40 Under 40" distinction in 2014.

In that same entrepreneurial spirit, he became president of the Our Sunday Visitor Institute, where he built a platform for Catholic innovators to share and fund their ideas for strengthening the Church. His ministry there reverberated nationwide, catalyzing new apostolic initiatives and equipping lay leaders for mission.

Shanks has also dedicated himself at the national level as a consultant on the Committee for Religious Liberty to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Eucharistic Revival since its inception in 2021 and as founding treasurer (and now president) of the National Eucharistic Congress. His counsel has helped steer these major initiatives in renewing devotion to the Eucharist.

He now lives in northern Indiana with his wife, Melissa, and their five children.

Tickets to the dinner are complimentary, with an invitation to support GCRTL's work after the program. Advance registration is required at gcrtl.org/banquet or by calling 614-445-8508. Sponsorship opportunities and VIP reception tickets are available.



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Father Severance remained undeterred in pursuit of priesthood

In 2016, when Sam Severance was a sophomore outfielder on the Otterbein University baseball team, he listed as his plans after college to continue playing baseball and get a job.

Life has a funny way of changing the best-laid plans.

Nine years later, Severance's baseball career is in the rear-view mirror and he's not going to be working a 9-to-5 job like many of his peers.

His career aspirations became a vocation. He answered a calling to serve.

And on Saturday, May 17, at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church – just a long home run away from the baseball stadium where he had started his college baseball career – he was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Columbus with two other seminarians by Bishop Earl Fernandes.

Along the way, Father Severance, 29, has overcome some significant obstacles – the most difficult by far an aggressive form of bone cancer that led to the partial amputation of his right leg.

Through the grace of God, he survived that ordeal, finished college and then entered seminary at the Pontifical College Josephinum, where he spent the past six years preparing for the priesthood.

"As I was getting ready to be ordained, I was thinking that went kind of quick," he reflected. "But in other ways it also felt like it's taken forever."

The new priest's vocation story might



Father Sam Severance holds the chalice and host during his first Mass at Columbus Holy Family Church on Sunday, May 18 after his ordination to the priesthood a day earlier.

be familiar to some, but it's worth telling again to emphasize that challenges – medical or otherwise -- can be overcome through perseverance and belief.

The stirrings of a possible call to the priesthood started in eighth grade at Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School. From there, he went to high school at Columbus Bishop Watterson, where more vocational seeds were planted in theology class.

But his focus centered more around athletics and any thoughts of becoming a priest one day were placed on the back burner. Still, there were signs along the

way of a potential calling.

"I didn't have a sophisticated understanding of the Eucharist," he recalled, "but I would sign out of study hall and go sit in the chapel for 10 minutes. There was something different about the chapel than any other room in the building."

After graduating in 2014, he went off to college at Otterbein, where he spent two years taking classes, playing baseball and considering a career in sports management.

He enjoyed his Otterbein experience, but he had always wanted to attend the



Father Sam Severance recites the opening prayer at his first Mass. CT photos by Ken Snow

College of Wooster and decided to transfer there to continue his college career. There was one problem, though. Wooster did not have a sports management major, leaving him with an academic quandary.

He took a variety of classes at Wooster hoping to find a major that suited him. In the meantime, he said he kept considering the priesthood while still trying to ignore thoughts.

"I remember the first time I told one of my friends I was thinking about it, you

See SEVERANCE, Page 17



Congratulations,

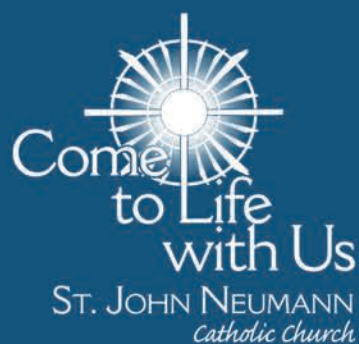
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Congratulations Father Kevin Girardi!

**Ordained to the
Holy Priesthood of Jesus Christ
May 17, 2025**

Father Girardi's vocation built on trust

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

Father Kevin Girardi said trust was a significant factor in his vocation to the priesthood.

Putting his trust in God years ago began a journey that resulted in ordination in the sacrament of Holy Orders as a priest on Saturday, May 17 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.

Father Girardi, 31, hails from the west side of Columbus and graduated from Hilliard Bradley High School. He was baptized at Columbus St. Cecilia Church and grew up in Columbus Holy Family Church downtown, where he first received the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation and was later confirmed.

He described being captured by the beauty of the church: the altar, the statues and the music each Sunday. The beauty sparked wonder of the Catholic faith and the priesthood, he said, and ultimately planted the seed for his vocation.

After graduating from Hilliard Bradley, Father Girardi left Columbus to attend Purdue University in West Lafayette, In-



Father Kevin Girardi sprinkles the congregation with holy water at Columbus Our Lady of Victory Church on Sunday, May 18 during his first Mass after ordination. CT photos by Ken Snow

diana. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 2016.

The newly ordained priest credited the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Center at

Purdue University as the place where he first encountered joyful witnesses of the Gospel. Dominican friars served the campus' Catholic center, and he was one of



Father Kevin Girardi blesses the faithful near the end of Mass at his home parish.

many students actively involved.

He established a prayer routine for the first time in his life, he explained. Each day

See GIRARDI, Page 20

OUR LADY of VICTORY PARISH CONGRATULATES

the newly ordained

FR. KEVIN GIRARDI
son of the parish

FR. JOSEPH ROLWING, &
FR. SAM SEVERANCE

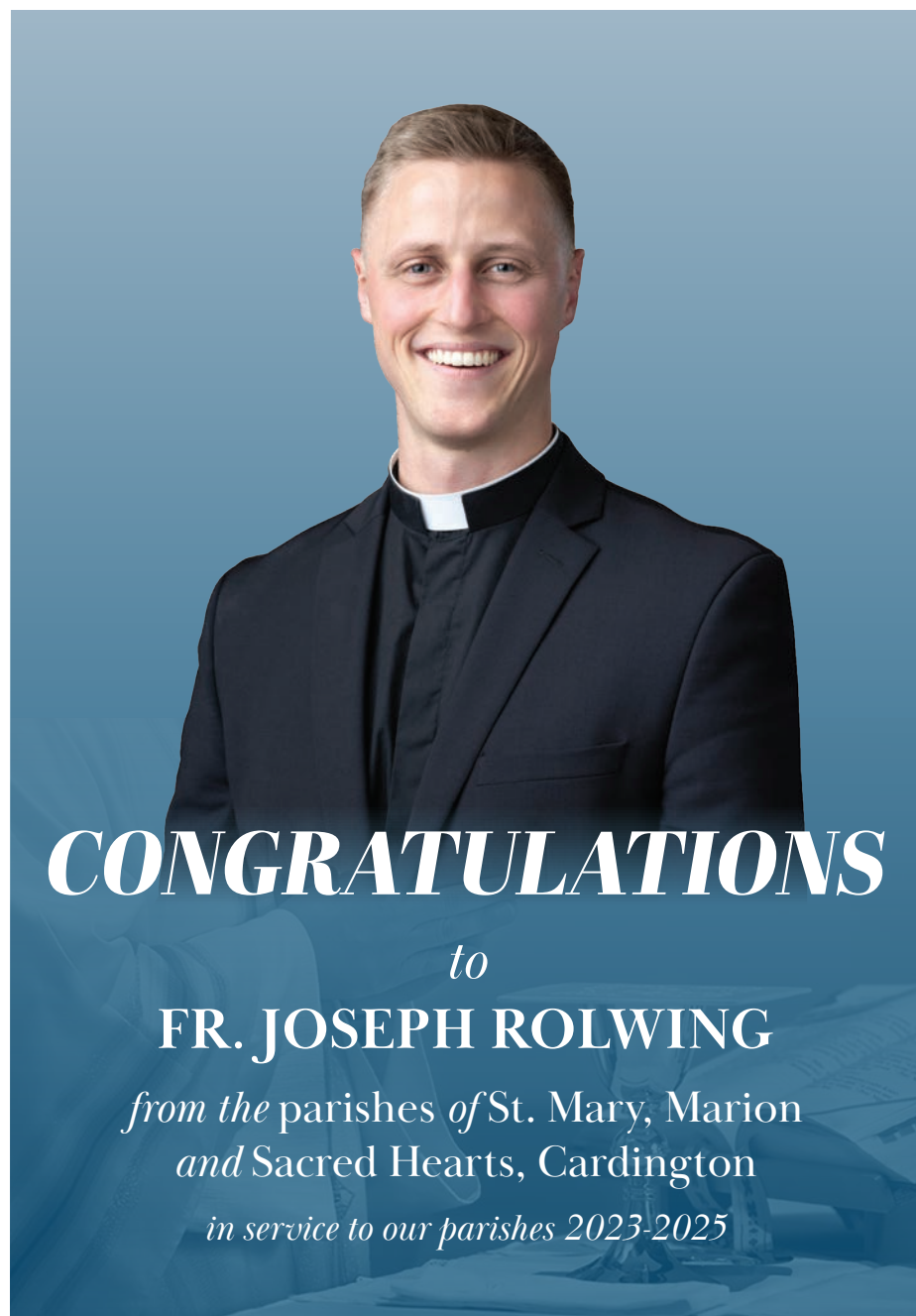


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Father Rolwing excited to begin serving as priest



Bishop Earl Fernandes anoints the hands of Joseph Rolwing with the Oil of Chrism during the ordination on May 17 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church. Photo courtesy Anna Lincoln



CONGRATULATIONS

to

FR. JOSEPH ROLWING

*from the parishes of St. Mary, Marion
and Sacred Hearts, Cardington*

in service to our parishes 2023-2025

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

Father Joseph Rolwing, with days left until ordination to the priesthood, was eager to begin his vocation.

"I can't imagine what it's going to be like on Sunday after my ordination, when I wake up, and I'm just like, 'I'm a priest now,'" he mused at the time. "One of the cool things about this vocation is it's not a career path. It's not like you clock in at nine and you clock out at five.

"It's becoming a father of a family. You wake up and this is a new identity, and I'm very excited to live in that identity and see where the Lord takes me."

While he does not know the path ahead, he described the path behind him as a clear call to the priesthood.

Father Rolwing, 27, a graduate of New Albany High School and parishioner at New Albany Church of the Resurrection, said a conversion experience at age 18 during his senior year led him to consider the vocation.

A girlfriend at the time challenged his faith and led him into a search for truth. Father Rolwing said he began taking his Catholic faith seriously and encountered God. He fell in love with the Lord, he recounted, and discovered a desire to give Him his life.

He began observing priests, who he described as men living lives of self-sacrifice, service and heroic love. Father Rolwing developed an interest in the priesthood and asked God if he was called to seminary after high school.

Without a clear answer from the Lord, Father Rolwing said he pursued college instead. He attended Ashland University on a basketball scholarship.

He continued praying about the priestly vocation, and by the end of the school year, he said, while praying a rosary on a retreat, the Lord and Our Lady made it clear to him. Father Rolwing said he experienced an overwhelming sense of peace,

clarity and certainty: The priesthood was his calling.

"The closer I was drawing to Him, the more He was making me desire this vocation," he said.

"It's always a little bit difficult to describe this, and I hesitate sometimes because it makes it feel like it was just a feeling of peace, like, 'Oh yeah, I think I feel God.' It's something much more profound than a superficial feeling."

Daily time spent in prayer, especially in front of the Blessed Sacrament, helped confirm the call. Father Rolwing developed a sacramental life that included regularly receiving the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation.

He decided to leave his basketball scholarship after his freshman year in favor of seminary. He recalled breaking the news to his coaches, teammates and family. Not all were pleased at first with the decision.

He said a sense of confidence remained, nonetheless, that the Lord was inviting him to pursue the path.

"I'm grateful that I did encounter resistance from people who loved me and cared about me and who had legitimate concerns because that was a test of the genuineness of the call," he said. "If I would have just been congratulated and supported immediately, I might not have had to wrestle with the questions as deeply as I did."

Father Rolwing entered seminary in the fall of 2017 at the Pontifical College Josephinum. He said his seminary experience enriched his life tremendously.

"There were a few moments throughout my time here where I thought, well, maybe I could leave right now and get married, or pursue marriage in that vocation, but ultimately, I didn't want to. This is what I was pretty sure He was calling

See ROLWING, Page 17



Father Joseph Rolwing presents the stole he wore during the first confession he heard to his father. This is a tradition the newly ordained priest follows as an expression of thanks to his father for his love and support.



Father Joseph Rolwing hugs his mother after presenting the maniturgium, a towel used by the bishop to wipe the Oil of Chrism from the hands of the ordinand after he confers his blessing. The towel is traditionally given by a new priest to his mother as a gift for her bringing him into the world and for nurturing him throughout his life. This pious tradition rewards priests' mothers for their many sacrifices and it is usually buried with a priest's mother.

Columbus seminarians receive degrees at Josephinum

Seven diocesan seminarians received degrees from the Pontifical College Josephinum during the 126th commencement exercises on Saturday, May 10.

Newly ordained Fathers Kevin Girardi, MDiv, MA magna cum laude, STB (honors TBA by Rome), Joseph Rolwing, MDiv, MA magna cum laude, STB (honors TBA by Rome) and Samuel Severance, MDiv, MA cum laude, STB (honors TBA by Rome) received graduate degrees. Columbus seminarians awarded undergraduate degrees were Justin Fagge, BA in Philosophy, summa cum laude;

Absalom Hall, Certificate of Completion; Dominic Ratliff, BA in Philosophy magna cum laude;

and Andrew (Ben) Van Buren, BA in Philosophy magna cum laude.

Fagge was named the winner of the Pinter Scholar Award, which was established in 1975 in memory of Rev. Msgr. Nicholas Pinter (Josephinum professor, 1902-1957) and goes to the College of Liberal Arts seminarian who has excelled in academic formation in preparation for service to the Church.

The graduating class also included seminarians from the Fathers of Mercy religious order; the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Dioceses of Birmingham, Alabama; Jefferson City, Missouri; Joliet, Illinois; and Oakland, California; and a sister from the Apostolic Sisters of Saint

John.

Bishop Earl Fernandes, vice chancellor of the Josephinum, celebrated a baccalaureate Mass in the seminary's Saint Turibius Chapel. Concelebrants were Father Steven Beseau, Josephinum rector-president; the Community of Formators; and many visiting clergy.

"We send these graduates on to major seminary, into parishes as ordained priests, or into the world as religious educators," Bishop Fernandes said. "We pray that, through the Holy Spirit, they have gained not only knowledge but also wisdom and understanding. That they have not only learned about God, but have come to know God."

"That the education received here opens up new ways of thinking, new ways of seeing the world, new ways of reading life experiences – all so that they can proclaim what they have seen and heard about the love of God come down to us as man in the person of Jesus Christ."

After Mass, more than 200 guests joined seminary priests, faculty, staff, and seminarians in the Msgr. Leonard Fick Auditorium for Commencement Exercises. Bachelor of Arts, Certificates of Completion in Philosophical and Theological Studies, Master of Divinity, and Master of Arts degrees were conferred upon the seminarians by Father



Receiving degrees from the Pontifical College Josephinum presented by Father Steven Beseau (center), the Josephinum's rector-president, at its May commencement exercises were (from left) Ben Van Buren, Father Kevin Girardi, Father Sam Severance, Father Joseph Rolwing, Justin Fagge and Absalom Hall.
Photo courtesy Pontifical College Josephinum

Beseau. The Josephinum, in affiliation with the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy, granted a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology pontifical degree (STB) to four of the graduating transitional deacons.

Fagge offered an address on behalf of the Class of 2025, expressing gratitude for their time at the Josephinum, the strong sense of brotherhood and the "incredible faculty and great formators

who are living examples of the plurality of the priesthood of Jesus Christ."

Regardless of what path each man takes going forward, he said, "we will all be grateful for the work of the Pontifical College Josephinum in creating holy, generous, adaptable and resilient priests for the 21st century."

Father Beseau acknowledged that
See DEGREES, Page 15



Congratulations FR. JOSEPH ROLWING

Church of the Resurrection would like to congratulate newly ordained Fr. Joseph Rolwing. We wish him all the best as he starts his priesthood. May God bless him on the journey ahead!





Diocesan priests lay hands of the heads of the three candidates for the priesthood at the ordination Mass on May 17 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church. Photos courtesy Anna Lincoln



Bishop Earl Fernandes is joined at the altar during the Mass by the three new priests to his left and Bishop Emeritus Frederick Campbell and Bishop Emeritus James Griffin to his right.

ORDINATION, *continued from Page 3*

Priests who were present also came forward to impose their hands on each candidate's head.

The newly ordained were then vested with a priestly stole, which is symbolic of priestly power or authority, and chasuble, which is worn above the other vestments, symbolizing the virtue of charity. A priest's stole is draped across his chest while a deacon wears a stole

over his shoulder.

The bishop anointed the hands of the newly ordained with sacred chrism, signifying their sharing in Christ's sanctifying ministry.

Bishop Fernandes also extended a greeting of peace to the new priests as a sign that they are coworkers in the ministry of the Church. Other priests in attendance came forward to extend the

"fraternal kiss of peace" to the newly ordained as well.

The new priests received their priest assignments from the bishop, which were announced during the Mass.

Father Girardi will serve at St. Paul the Apostle. Father Rolwing is assigned to Columbus St. Peter-Powell St. Joan of Arc Church. Father Severance will serve at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator.

Father Girardi, 31, is from Columbus Our Lady of Victory Church. His assignments during seminary included Sunbury St. John Neumann, Newark St. Francis de Sales, Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul, Danville St. Luke and St. Paul the Apostle churches. He also spent a summer serving with the Franciscan

See ORDINATION, Page 15



Congratulations and prayerful best wishes from
Very Reverend Steven P. Beseau, Rector/President,
and the priests, professors, seminarians, and staff of the
Pontifical College Josephinum, to

ALUMNI OF THE ORDINATION CLASS OF 2025

FATHER KEVIN M. GIRARDI
FATHER JOSEPH D. ROLWING
FATHER SAMUEL J. SEVERANCE

Ordained to the Holy Priesthood May 17, 2025

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and resilient priests for the 21st century.*

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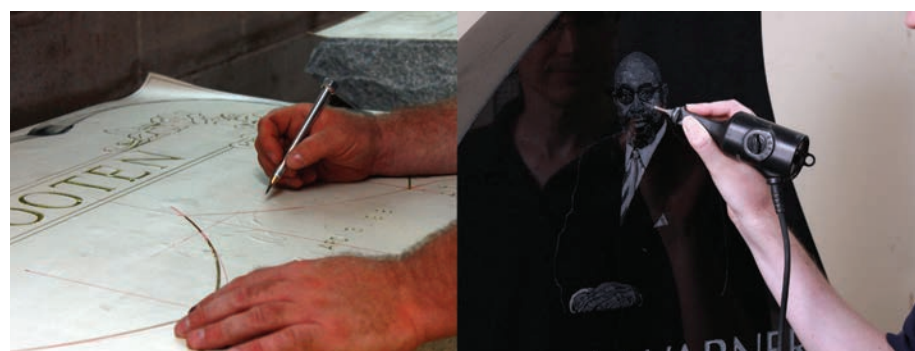
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE
JOSEPHINUM



Newly ordained (from left) Fathers Sam Severance, Kevin Girardi and Joseph Rolwing stand joyfully in front of Bishop Earl Fernandes (right) near the end of Mass.



Father Joseph Rolwing gives a first blessing to Bishop Earl Fernandes. *Photos/Anna Lincoln*



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ORDINATION, continued from Page 14

Friars of the Renewal in the Bronx, New York.

Father Rolwing, 27, is from New Albany Church of the Resurrection. His assignments included Marion St. Mary and Cardington Sacred Hearts, Zoar Holy Trinity and Dover St. Joseph, Columbus Christ the King and St. Cecilia

churches.

Father Severance, 29, is from Columbus Holy Family Church. His seminary assignments included Zanesville St. Thomas and St. Nicholas and Columbus Our Lady of Peace churches, and Spanish immersions in Mexico and Columbus.

DEGREES, continued from Page 13

days like commencement are seen and celebrated as the beginning of something new.

"For the formators and faculty who have been with these men for many years, there also is a tinge of sadness, because they have been a great part of our community," he said. "Yet, it is a wonderful gift that we are here to commence these men to the next phase of their lives, and that sadness is overcome with the joy, hope, and love that mark

this day."

The commencement exercises marked the close of the seminary's 125th year of forming priests for the Church. Graduating deacons of the School of Theology will return to their respective dioceses or orders to be ordained as priests, eventually joining more than 1,000 ordained alumni who currently serve the universal Church in nearly every U.S. state and in 18 countries.



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CONGRATULATE

Our Newly Ordained Priests



REVEREND
KEVIN GIRARDI



REVEREND
JOSEPH ROLWING



REVEREND
SAM SEVERANCE

SEVERANCE, continued from Page 9

should have seen his face,” Severance said. “It was pretty hysterical. He was just shocked. He didn’t know what to say.”

His dilemma turned out to be a blessing in disguise. At that point, Severance decided to see what steps he needed to take to get to seminary. Seeking guidance, he scheduled a meeting with the religious studies department chair at Wooster. He figured a religion degree would help him get into seminary.

He met with Dr. Ron Hustwit, a philosophy professor who was the acting religious studies chair. Providentially, Hustwit was Catholic and suggested Severance take some philosophy classes.

“And that was a big moment for me because there’s no way I walked into his office by accident,” Severance said. “But I said to him, Dr. Hustwit, I need you to tell me what philosophy is.”

Severance enrolled in a logic and a philosophy of God class, and he loved them. “Something changed in me,” he said.

While the academic portion of his life seemed to be on the right track, he faced a more serious issue.

For several years, he had dealt with a foot issue, a benign osteoid osteoma tumor normally found in the long bones of the lower extremities. He tried to ignore it the best he could and tough it out. But he was limited to playing in four baseball games for Wooster in the spring of 2017 and reached the point where something had to be done.

During a visit to the Ohio State University’s James Cancer Hospital, a scan determined that the tumor had significantly grown in size. He was diagnosed with osteoblastoma, a tumor that’s not cancerous but one that weakens the bones and poses a danger of coming back after surgery.

On July 6, 2017, the tumor was removed. A month or so later, he headed to Wooster for the fall semester. He felt better, but it wasn’t long before the tumor returned.

On Dec. 19, 2017, he returned to the James for another surgery to take out the tumor. When he arrived at the James for a wound check on Jan. 5, 2018, he felt the Holy Spirit letting him know something wasn’t right.

The pathology report came back. It showed osteosarcoma, a cancer that normally affects children and young adults.

“That was obviously a difficult thing to deal with,” he said. “I was on the fast track to seminary, but then I’m diagnosed with cancer.”

The only viable option was to undergo an amputation.

“My foot had deteriorated, I couldn’t walk very well and I remember asking, ‘Doctor (Thomas Scharschmidt), can we cut off my leg?’” Severance said. “And I was dead serious. And he kind of paused because I think he was relieved that he didn’t have to tell me he was going to do that anyway.

“I was like, ‘Can we just do this and get rid of it?’”

On Jan. 25, 2018, the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, he had the surgery.

“Vocation-wise, things were moving toward seminary and now I’m like, ‘I might die.’ That’s difficult to deal with as a young man,” he said.

For the next nine months, he underwent treatment on the 18th floor of the James. In fact, he spent so much time there receiving inpatient chemotherapy infusions that he gave himself the title of mayor of the 18th floor because everyone knew him.

There were plenty of complications along the way, including atrial fibrillation when doctors put a port into his heart. Doctors also found a blood clot that led to a visit to OSU’s Ross Heart Hospital for a cardiac MRI.

He recalled one profound moment when he was waiting for testing at the heart hospital.

“I remember being in a hallway alone with my rosary with me and just having this moment of grace – just a realization of how much I need God in my life because I was alone,” he said. “I didn’t have anybody but God. And I was like, ‘OK, God, this is me and you.’”

During his frequent hospital stays over the next nine months, he would call his parish priest, Father Stash Dailey, who was then the pastor at Columbus Holy Family Church, to bring him the sacraments. Father Dailey would stick around in his room

and the two would watch the Band of Brothers mini-series on DVD and engage in friendly conversation.

“What was impactful about that was it gave me a sense of what a priest can be, not some strange guy isolated by himself,” he said. “I fell in love with who the man of the priest is because I’m like, ‘Look at what the priest can do.’”

On Sept. 7, 2018, he finished his last cancer treatment. Since then, he has returned every six months for appointments and, thank God, the cancer has showed no signs of returning.

“The two-year mark is huge,” he said, “and five years (with a recurrence) is bigger. So that brought down some of the anxiety.”

Severance headed back to Wooster with a prosthetic right leg and completed his undergraduate degree. He also finished out his baseball career, which had been put on hold during the treatment.

Legendary Wooster coach Tim Pettorini agreed to give Severance a shot at contributing to the team. The prosthetic leg would limit him to pinch hitting, but that was OK.

In the spring of 2019, Severance saw action in nine games and walked five times in nine plate appearances. He believes pitchers, after they saw the prosthetic peeking out from under his sock, were saying to themselves, ‘I don’t want to give up a hit to this guy, so I’m just going to walk him,’” he joked.

His last at-bat in college turned out to be a memorable one. In a North Coast Athletic Conference tournament game against Wabash College at Paint Stadium in Chillicothe, Severance stepped to the plate as a pinch hitter and, facing a 2-and-2 count, connected with a fastball that ran inside toward his hands.

“I hit a little blooper and I started jogging and I remember saying out loud, ‘Come on, Our Lady,’ asking her to guide the ball to fall in no man’s land,” he said. “And it did.”

The bloop single drove in a run.

“That’s how my baseball career ended – not how I had pictured it when it started,” he said.

A few months later, he entered seminary at the Pontifical College Josephinum to begin studies that ultimately led to his ordination two weeks ago.

In addition to classes, Father Severance completed parish assignments at Columbus Our Lady of Peace, Zanesville St. Nicholas and St. Thomas Aquinas and Worthington St. Michael churches. He also spent two summers in Hispanic ministry immersions – one in Columbus and the other in Mexico City.

He credited his professors and advisers at Wooster and at the Josephinum as well as the priests at the parishes he served, including Father Dailey, Father Robert Kitsmiller, Father David Young, Father Sean Dooley in the diocese and Father Steve Moran, pastor at Wooster St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, for their guidance.

“One thing I’ve noticed is that the needs of God’s people are the same wherever you’re living,” he said. “It may change a little depending on where you live, but they all want the same thing, which is Jesus. And being welcomed by families has been very impactful for me.”

Reflecting on the journey, Father Severance said “there’s been a lot of change in me that maybe other people can’t necessarily detect. The way I communicate with other people has changed radically since I entered the doors. I think the spiritual awareness is probably where I’ve grown the most.”

As he prepares for his first assignment as a priest at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church, he knows the world outside the seminary will be much different, but he’s looking forward to serving nonetheless.

“I think confessions will be good, saying the Mass, and then hospital visits,” he said. “I think it’s not a shock to say that I’m very comfortable in hospitals. Going into a hospital and being comfortable is pretty much second nature for me because I lived there for about a year.”

Father Severance celebrated his first Mass after ordination on Sunday, May 18 at Holy Family.

ROLWING, continued from Page 12

me to do, and then, that conviction has just grown the more and more that I’ve been here.”

He acknowledged that, prior to entering, there were many fears and unknowns about seminary. He said he initially envisioned a cloistered monastery and seclusion from the world. Instead, he found the opposite to be true.

Eight years of seminary included travels to Mexico; two trips to Portugal; Rome and Assisi, Italy; Spain; and the Holy Land. He also met and developed relationships with numerous families across the diocese.

“One of the great blessings of this vocation is that you get to share life with so many different people, so many different

families,” he explained. “You get to be welcomed into their homes and into their lives. That has just really given me not only a great diversity of experience, but also, I just cherish it so much.

“I remember thinking when I entered the seminary if my family, who’s all here in Columbus, if they ever left this diocese, I’d probably follow them because Columbus is just where I happen to be right now. Throughout my time in the seminary ... I’ve really come to love deeply this diocese and the people here.

“Even if my family did leave at this point, I would want to stay here because I really do love it here. I think this is my home. I think that’s where the Lord has called me to serve.”

Father Rolwing’s vocation also presented an opportunity to learn Spanish.

He had not studied the language previously, but he was required to take at least three semesters of Spanish during seminary. He participated in a Spanish immersion in Columbus and got to know the Hispanic community in the diocese. He completed his pastoral year at Columbus Christ the King Church, a largely Hispanic parish.

His first priestly assignment will be parochial vicar at Columbus St. Peter-Powell St. Joan of Arc Church starting in July. The parish has a growing Hispanic community and several Masses offered in Spanish each week.

“Something that I never originally en-

visioned was getting to know and to serve the Hispanic community, which is large and is growing in the Diocese of Columbus, and so, when I decided that I was going to try to learn Spanish, I didn’t know what that would entail,” he said.

“It’s been one of the hardest things I’ve ever done but also one of the most rewarding things I’ve ever done because (of) having access to this culture and being able to speak their language, and to get to know them and to serve them. ... A lot of them have suffered and are poor, but they really know the Lord because of that, and they’ve taught me so much. ... It’s just made me a better person with a greater capacity to love and to listen and to serve.”

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord Year C

Christ takes His place at the right hand of the Father

Acts 1:1-11
Ps. 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9
Ephesians 1:17-23 or
Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23
Luke 24:46-53

Many unbelievers reject our Catholic faith due to a grave misunderstanding, considering belief in “the life to come” as rejection of the physical world, the world we experience every day. For them, there is a dichotomy between the so-called “real world” and what they consider an imaginary world of our own creation. The Ascension of the Lord is the mystery of faith that shows the falsehood of this dichotomy. We are committed to this world, in view of the next, which makes this world all the more important.

We believe in creation, visible and invisible, seen and unseen, and in the creator who loves us now and forever. The Ascension, which takes the Lord from our sight, moves our own human nature from this world to the next, transformed by the Resurrection and now dwelling forever in the very heart of the Holy Trinity. The Risen Lord Jesus, God and Man, is “seated at the right hand of the Father.”

This world of matter does matter. The spiritual world, to which we already belong, will include the reality in which we live. Our Catholic faith tells us that God so loved the world that He became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ and that Jesus rose from the dead in our flesh, and that after making known to His disciples that He had conquered death, took that human nature, risen and glorified, into the very heart of reality, the life of the Most Holy Trinity. This

Solemnity of Pentecost Year C

SCRIPTURE READINGS

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



means that we must pay attention to the world around us as stewards of creation. We acknowledge, with St. Augustine, that God has made us for Himself, and that we are meant to know, love and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

Jesus' final instructions to His disciples as He ascends is for them to return to Jerusalem to pray for the promise of the Father. The Gospel of Luke expresses His charge this way: “Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

The Acts of the Apostles describes how this witness will unfold: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” We are now living in a time when this instruction can be fulfilled in the most literal sense.

The Church that began in Jerusalem and went to the confines of the Roman Empire has been established to the ends of the earth. In our own time, the successors to the Apostles, under the inspi-

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

6-2/6-7 MONDAY Acts 19:1-8 Psalm 68:2-3b,4,5ac,6-7b John 16:29-33	THURSDAY Acts 22:30;23:6-11 Psalm 16:1-2a,5,7-11 John 17:20-26	6-9/6-14 MONDAY Genesis 3:9-15,20 or Acts 1:12-14 Psalm 87:1-3,5-7 John 19:25-34	THURSDAY 2 Corinthians 3:15-4:1,3-6 Psalm 85:9ab,10-14 Matthew 5:20-26
TUESDAY Acts 20:17-37 Psalm 68:29-30,33-36b John 17:1-11a	FRIDAY Acts 25:13b-21 Psalm 103:1-2,11-12,19-20ab John 21:15-19	TUESDAY 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 Psalm 119:129-133,135 Matthew 5:13-16	FRIDAY 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 Psalm 116:10-11,15-18 Matthew 5:27-32
WEDNESDAY Acts 20:28-38 Psalm 68:29-30,33-36b John 17:11b-19	SATURDAY Acts 28:16-20,30-31 Psalm 11:4-5,7 John 21:20-25	WEDNESDAY Acts 11:21b,26;13:1-3 Psalm 98:1-6 Matthew 5:17-19	SATURDAY 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 Psalm 103:1-4,9-12 Matthew 5:33-37

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION: Mass Schedule: Weeks of June 1 and 8

SUNDAY MASS

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

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

Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Ala., at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Spectrum Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or 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 City, Washington C.H.; Channel 125, Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; Channel 207, Zanesville); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.
12:05 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. 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.stannst-mary.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 propers for Weeks III and II of the Liturgy of the Hours

ration of the Holy Spirit Who was promised, have selected a man from “the new world,” a world “unknown” and therefore “unseen” at the time of the Jesus, to be the successor to Peter as the vicar of Christ, one who witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus to all the nations.

Pope Leo XIV, in choosing the name Leo, commits the Church in our day to the responsibility of keeping in our sight all that is happening, especially to the most vulnerable and to those who “work for a living.” Dignity, respect and a desire for authentic communication and

dialogue are no doubt to be a hallmark of a papacy under one whose motto is “In Illo uno unum,” that is, “in the One Christ, we are one.”

The time between Ascension and Pentecost has one primary prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit!” As we bring the Easter season to its close though this time of prayer, may we keep looking up and, at the same time, know that Jesus will return to bring salvation to all who believe in Him. May the Church live the unity willed by the One Who ascended so that His Spirit could dwell in and among us.

Pentecost is a unifying new creation in the Church

Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:3-8a, 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14 or Joel 3:1-5
Ps. 104:1-2, 24, 25, 27-28, 29, 30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

“When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.” The Apostles had seemingly not made it very far from trembling in their hiding spot after the Resurrection seven Sundays days prior on “the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear.”

In fairness to them, they had understandable reasons to be sticking close, with the threat of persecution still very active if not more feverish with “devout

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Tyron Tomson
Father Tyron Tomson is a priest of the
Diocese of Columbus pursuing a Licentiate in
Sacred Scripture in Rome.



Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.” Three of the major Jewish holy days required all the able-bodied faithful to make a pilgrimage to the Temple. The most famous was Passover, the 50th day after which fell the second most important to conclude it: the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost. The lunisolar calendar of Judaism meant holidays would only fall on certain days of the week. The fixing of Easter to the transferred Resurrection sabbath day in our modern liturgical calendar is appropriate, therefore, and sets Pentecost on

Sunday as well.

The festival's agricultural overtones commemorated the first harvest but also featured the memorialization of Moses' receiving the Decalogue on Mt. Sinai. All-night Torah study remains a common practice to observe the feast. That unclear correlation made sense after the descent of God the Spirit, promising holy fruitfulness in following the New Covenant Law: “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”

Exactly 1,700 years ago, the Council of Nicaea formulated our familiar Creed with the verbiage “the Lord, the giver of life” to describe the Holy Spirit, as we recite each Sunday. He breathes vitality into the Church. Paul carefully clarifies that it is “the same Spirit,” “the same

Lord” at work for us all together as “one body” composed of “many parts.”

Certain modern translations of the Scriptures have caviling footnotes in these early chapters of Acts of the Apostles, postulating that Luke's account artificially collapses several separate events of reportedly far less dramatic quality. Such contrived textual historicization amounts to “Biblesplaining.” Our Christian faith is predicated on the work of God the Holy Spirit: “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” Forgiveness of sins comes through the working of the Spirit through the Apostles: “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

See PENTECOST, Page 19

PENTECOST, continued from Page 18

The Psalmist affirms, clearly alluding to Creation: “If you take away their breath, they perish and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” What could be more sensational than that?

From disparate origins, “each one heard them speaking in his own language.” This reverses the confusion of tongues after the fall of the Tower of Babel as the Lord unifies His scattered people. The grammar of grace is universal. Pentecost developed into a colorful

international celebration. An old English rendering names it Whitsun, after the white robes of the newly baptized from its extended vigil the day before. Italy traditionally showers fresh rose petals from the dome of the church above to signify the descent of the tongues of fire, giving it the title “Red Easter” or in Germany “the Flower Feast.” It marks the coming of full spring in the northern climes and the abundant foliage was appropriated from pre-Christian customs of May dances, giving it the moniker “Green Holyday” among the Poles and

“Summer Feast” for the Czechs. The great medieval liturgical commentator Durandus notes that flaming filaments were sprinkled from the roof and a dove was released to fly about the church!

The Sequence captures the seasonal themes beautifully and relates them to our spiritual renewal: “Wash the stains of guilt away: Bend the stubborn heart and will; melt the frozen, warm the chill; guide the steps that go astray.” With the image that again invokes God’s creative power from the beginning of time and thereby parallels the era of the Church

with it as a time of re-creation, Our Lord “breathed on them.” The generally negative prescriptions of the Ten Commandments have found their positive, open-ended fulfillment in the Messiah’s New Law of love. The Apostles can now burst forth from the locked doors of their fear aflame with grace and boldly rush like the wind out unto the ends of the world to bring to all nations the pure, clean air of new life through the sanctifying Holy Spirit.

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- 1 Frances Shand ___, convert and mother of Princess Di
- 3 The Eucharistic Prayer
- 9 “Turn Back, ___” (“Godspell” song)
- 10 “I will raise you up on ___ wings”
- 12 “For my ___ is easy, and my burden light.” (Mt 11:30)
- 14 Catholic actor/comedian Murray
- 15 Peter’s ___
- 16 Miracle of the ___ and fishes
- 19 OT historical book
- 20 Notre Dame nickname, “The Fighting ___”
- 22 Mon. of St. Pat
- 24 What you do not use in unleavened bread
- 25 Worship
- 27 Day on which Jesus rose
- 29 Possible Easter month
- 30 There was no room here
- 31 Commandment word
- 33 Lectern
- 34 ___ on of hands
- 37 Jesuit missionaries compiled an atlas of this country
- 39 “...but do not perceive the wooden ___ in your own?” (Mt 7:3)
- 40 US state in which the Diocese of Nashville is found
- 42 Type of vow
- 43 NT epistle
- 44 Penitential prayer
- 45 Catholic horror actor Lugosi

DOWN

- 1 “...let us ___ before the Lord who made us” (Ps 95:6)
- 2 Most important teaching
- 3 Italian city of St. Clare
- 4 Son of Eve
- 5 Mattress for the Baby Jesus?
- 6 Catholic Today Show weather anchor
- 7 Last word
- 8 An end to repent?
- 11 Movie reviewer/film critic who was a former altar boy
- 13 Wealthy biblical land
- 17 The Diocese of Baker is here
- 18 Catholic custom of dropping into the Church for a few minutes to say a quick prayer
- 21 The priest’s are anointed during ordination
- 23 Paul VI’s “A Call to ___”
- 26 “...and the rich he has sent away ___” (Lk 1:53)
- 28 One of the two natures of Jesus
- 29 Mission to remember
- 32 The Diocese of Fairbanks is here
- 33 Administer extreme unction
- 35 This princess’ conversion to Catholicism caused something of a national issue
- 36 Archdiocese in northern Italy
- 37 Long cloak-like vestment
- 38 NT epistle
- 39 Angelus call
- 41 St. Frances Cabrini is buried here (abbr.)

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

BARNHART, Robert J., 89, May 19
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

BERNERT, Sharon (Snyder), 75, April 18
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

BREEHL-ELLWOOD, Barbara (Hawkins), 91, May 1
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

CAHILL, William J., 66, May 5
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

CLARK, Kathleen A. (Wilcox), 86, May 7
Christ the King Church, Columbus

COPLEY, James Augustine, May 3
St. Mary Church, Marion

CORDI, Concetta "Tina," 90, May 11
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

CRAYCRAFT, John R., 88, March 18
St. Mary Church, Marion

DESTEFANI, Jeanne, 71, April 24
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

DETTER, Donald E., 83, May 17
St. Peter Church, Millersburg

D'SILVA, Joyce, May 19
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin

EMMERT, Carl, 85, May 17
Sacred Heart Church, Coshocton

FOX, Raymond, 80, March 29
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

GUSTINA, Greg, 88, Feb. 10
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin

HARDING, Daniel, 73, April 26
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

HAZLETT, Walburga M. (Schroll), 97, April 30
St. Elizabeth Church of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, Columbus

HEDRICK, Edward A. III, 56, May 6
St. Mary Church, Portsmouth

HOFFMAN, Joseph, 88, April 11
St. Mary Church, Marion

INCARNATO, Mark, 69, April 18
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

KAPPLER, Dan, 82, April 25
Immaculate Conception Church, Dennison

KIRKPATRICK, Elizabeth, 84, April 1
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption Lancaster

KRILE, Robert M., 82, May 3
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lan-

caster

LAWLER, Mary Annette, 90, May 10
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Buckeye Lake

LEHNERD, Dr. James A., 79, May 8
St. Elizabeth Church of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, Columbus

McWILLIAMS, James K., 79, May 6
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Pickerington

MERRICK, Janice M. (Kerscher), 86, May 8
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Columbus

NOLAN, James L. Jr., 82, May 6
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus

O'DANIEL, Paul W., 93, April 23
St. Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna

ODORIZZI, Lynne Doreen, 71, May 9
St. Joan of Arc/St. Peter Church, Powell-Columbus

PHILLIPS, Kathleen, 69, May 1
St. Joseph Church, Dover

ROTTE, Connie Sue, 68, May 4
St. Mary Church, Marion

SAGGIO, Raymond, 78, May 13
St. Margaret of Cortona Church, Columbus

SCHULAR, Walter Richard, 94, March 25
St. Mary Church, Marion

SCHUPBACH, Krista (Langer), 78, May 9
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

STEVENS, Anna M., 91, May 15
St. Joan of Arc/St. Peter Church, Powell-Columbus

SWISHER, Hugh, 93, May 4
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

TEETERS, Kenneth E., 86, May 11
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

THOMPSON, Lisa A., 64, May 18
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

TREMBLY-HANNIGAN, Mary Anne, 100, May 15
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

UHLENHAKE, James Bernard, 83, May 5
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

WIHL, Donald F., 93, May 18
St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus

WINTHER, Frederick Morris, 94, April 25
St. Joan of Arc/St. Peter Church, Powell-Columbus

Charles D. Mers

Funeral Mass for Charles D. Mers, 84, who died Sunday, May 11, was celebrated Monday, May 19 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church. Burial was at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, Columbus.

He was born in Cincinnati on Dec. 30, 1940 to William Mers and Elise Smock-Taylor.

He was a co-founder of Cradling Christianity, a Columbus-based group that supports the Franciscan mission to Christians in the Holy Land. He also was a member of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and of Knights of Columbus Council 5776, was actively involved in the Sacred Heart Ministry and served on the Pontifical College Josephinum board.

In his parish, he was a founding member of the Men's Group and served as sacristan, lector, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and manager of the "One

Bread, One Body" monthly booklet distribution.

He was employed in the market research department of Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, then moved to Erie, Pennsylvania, where he was insurance director of the Independent Order of Foresters, and to Westerville, where he was public sector manager for Ohio for the Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Co., winning several awards.

He served in the U.S. Army in South Korea during the Vietnam War era.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers William Mers and Russell Taylor; and sisters Michaelyn Mers and Ramona Taylor.

Survivors include his wife. Ardith (Rogg), sons Jeffrey (Edna) and John; daughter Carrie; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

GIRARDI, continued from Page 11

before class included a stop at the Adoration chapel to spend five or 10 minutes in prayer, talking with God.

The simple routine translated to "growing in trust with the Lord throughout those years of college," he said.

"The priesthood really wasn't on the forefront of my mind. I had many friends, had many activities, had girlfriends throughout my college time, but it wasn't until after college, where I went off – I got a job with Toyota in Michigan and was working as an engineer, and that relationship of trust just continued to build with the Lord."

While working as a design engineer in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Father Girardi's prayer routine expanded. He began attending and then serving at daily Mass. He made a daily Holy Hour in addition to praying a rosary and reading Scripture every day. Spending such time in prayer, he explained, built on the trust he had established in God.

It was when that trust could be described as at its pinnacle that the Lord made an ask.

"I had everything – all these great gifts from the Lord – I had a job, I had a girlfriend, had a home, had friends, had a

wonderful parish," he said. "And then, of course, when the Lord gives you all these gifts, all these beautiful, wonderful things and that relationship of trust is there with the Lord, that's when He made that call of clarity to the priesthood very, very, very, very powerful – asking that I give Him back all of those good things that He'd given me so that He could give me the gift of my vocation.

"If He would have asked me to do that years before, that relationship of trust would not have been there, and I probably would have been scared off by a big ask like that from the Lord. But because for years leading up to that I had grown that relationship with the Lord ... when He asked something really big – even though everything in my life seemed perfect, seemed settled – I could trust Him enough to say, 'OK, you're asking for all of these things back. I will give them to You, and I will follow where You want.'"

While the call to the priesthood was clear, leaving a secure job was no easy feat.

Father Girardi said he went back and forth about the call for months. Thinking with a worldly mind, not the mind of Christ, he said, he questioned whether the call was the Lord's or his imagination.

"Of course, in the midst of all of that, I get a raise at work; I get a promotion. Things were going so great with all the community that I was with at the parish up there and thinking, 'Oh, the Lord wouldn't have given me all these great things if He was really calling me,'" he had justified, "but I remember there was one day where I walked into work and it was as if the Holy Spirit just took over."

Father Girardi recalled thinking, "Alright, I have to do this today," although he had not originally planned to. He said he simply could not "shake this call anymore" and needed to do something.

He called the Diocese of Columbus' then-vocation director Father Paul Noble during a lunch break and expressed inter-

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GIRARDI, continued from Page 20

est in applying for seminary. He recalled the joyful response from Father Noble and later starting studies in the fall of 2018, the beginning of seven years of formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum.

He typed a letter of resignation at work and went to his boss' office to relay the news.

"I walked out of the office thinking, 'I'm finally at peace,'" he said. "I'm finally doing what the Lord is calling me to," and that peace – that little 30 seconds of peace there – I've hung on to that for the past seven years."

Back home in Columbus, Father Girardi said he felt much like a nomad after years spent away in Indiana for college and working in Michigan. He needed to find a home parish.

The Girardi family has deep ties to Grandview Heights, located just west of Columbus. Father Girardi's ancestry includes Italian immigrants who settled in the area.

His father attended the former Columbus Our Lady of Victory grade school, located near Grandview in the Village of Marble Cliff. He also has a sister, who lives nearby, married at and attending Our Lady of Victory Church.

"I called up Father Romano Ciotola at the time, who was the pastor there (who died shortly after in 2019), and we talked," Father Girardi said. "We got lunch one day, and he was just overjoyed that he'd have a seminarian there at Victory."

He described studying for the priesthood at the Josephinum, located in north Columbus, as a time of intense formation. Father Girardi said he was confronted with his weaknesses and habits. He explained that, in seminary, he needed to break habits that were moving him away from Christ and build ones that would conform him to the Lord.

"It's been a real time of challenge," he acknowledged, "but a challenge that has helped me to grow to be more like Christ and to grow into a priest."

Father Girardi largely credited the support he received as a seminarian for completing his journey to the priesthood. The faithful in the diocese played a significant role in helping him keep going.

"Seeing the hunger that people have for the Eucharist, the hunger that people have for priests, has many, many times gotten me through difficulties throughout my formation," he said.

"I can look to the faith of the holy people in our diocese and see how much they want Jesus, how much they want the Eucharist, how much they need the sacraments. When I see their faith, and when I see their support and experience that personally, it increases my faith, and it increases the stability of my call to the priesthood.

"I couldn't answer this call without the faithful."

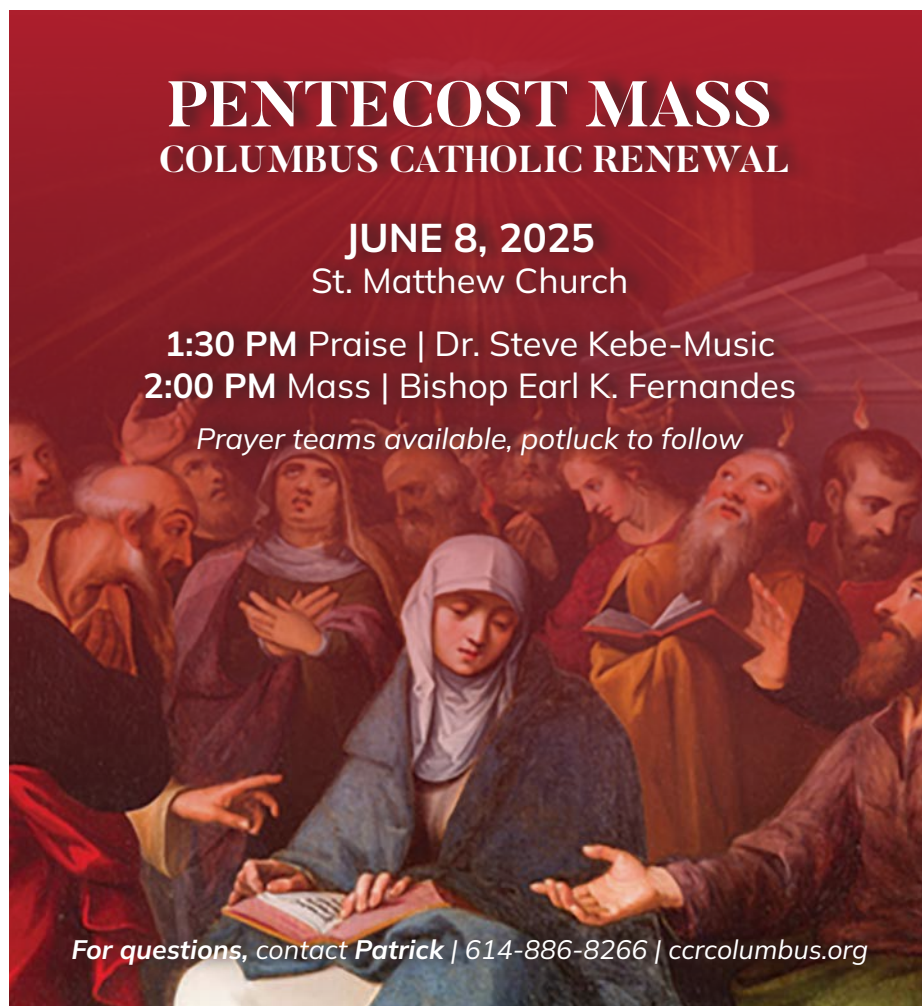
PENTECOST MASS COLUMBUS CATHOLIC RENEWAL

JUNE 8, 2025
St. Matthew Church

1:30 PM Praise | Dr. Steve Kebe-Music
2:00 PM Mass | Bishop Earl K. Fernandes

Prayer teams available, potluck to follow

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2025 All-Central Catholic League

Boys Lacrosse

First team

Joe Hayes, Luke Ishmael, Drew Dunlap, Kolt Rundio, Jake Ryan, Columbus Bishop Watterson High School; Ethan Berndt, Trey Davis, Luke Gibbons, Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School; Ryan Lee, Gavin Grimmett, Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School

Second team

Grant McGee, Carson, Osten, Marcus

Dixon, Bishop Watterson; Dylan Berndt, Luke Bennison, Michael Schrank, St. Charles; Bryce Herrick, Davis Anderson, Anthony Polina, St. Francis DeSales

Standings

Bishop Watterson	2-0
St. Charles	1-1
St. Francis DeSales	0-2

League Record

Girls Lacrosse

First team

Campbell Heald, Anna Bogan, Cortney Kelley, Caroline Cross, Clara Callahan, St. Francis DeSales; Bryn McClain, Giovanna Francati, Mary Ann Ishmael, Bishop Watterson; Zoe Cuvo, Camille Hoffman, Columbus Bishop Hartley

Second team

Mary Claire Willison, Tiffany Kelley,

St. Francis DeSales; Sophia Ritchey, Lucy Henry, Maggie Adkins, Bishop Watterson; Parker Nelson, Keegan McKnight, Deonna Shepherd, Bishop Hartley

Standings

St. Francis DeSales	2-0
Bishop Watterson	1-1
Bishop Hartley	0-2

League Record

Boys Tennis

First team

Tommy O'Brien, Charlie Schmiesing, Jack McCarthy, Bishop Watterson; Ted Must, William Kennedy, Pearce Stealey, St. Charles; Gabe Arbona, Jonah Abad, Alex Rush, St. Francis DeSales; Will Hariman, Columbus Bishop Hartley

Second team

Adam Somos, Madden Slack, Bishop

Watterson; Arav Fernandes, Joe Roscoe, St. Charles; Michael Haas, Quinn Bolchalk, St. Francis DeSales; Vincent Mampieri, Bishop Hartley

Standings

Bishop Watterson	2-1
St. Charles	2-1
St. Francis DeSales	2-1
Bishop Hartley	0-3

League Record

St. Matthew School program marks 20 years



Gahanna St. Matthew School's fourth grade inter-generation program celebrated its 20th anniversary on Friday, May 9 with a special assembly. The school's fourth-grade teachers, Mrs. Judeen Hartge and Mrs. Kyle Wnek, match their students with retired parishioners, meeting monthly to share experiences, memories and wisdom. To celebrate the milestone, the students presented a narrative on the program's founding by Mrs. Hartge and performed a song composed for the occasion. A slideshow of photos highlighted activities from the earliest days to the present. With gratitude to St. Matthew School, a painting of "The Virgin in Prayer" (left photo) was given as a legacy gift.

Photos courtesy St. Matthew School



JUNE 20 & 21,
2025

FRIDAY, 6/20
6-11PM

SATURDAY, 6/21
5-11PM

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All supplies will be provided!

We will be packing 1,000 care bags for
individuals experiencing homelessness, seniors
facing loneliness, and families in need.

All you have to do is register and attend!
There will be opportunities for volunteers of all ages.
(minors must be accompanied by an adult)



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