

The CATHOLIC TIMES

THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS' INFORMATION SOURCE
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Inside this issue



Mass, March for Life

The Mass for Life at St. Joseph Cathedral on Oct. 3 was followed by the Ohio March for Life in downtown Columbus, bringing thousands of the faithful together to pray and be witnesses for the protection of all human life, Page 3



Prepared for disaster

The diocese has created a disaster relief response plan to help parishes, schools and organizations mobilize people and resources in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, Page 2



Holiness in marriage

The first Together in Holiness conference in the diocese brought together married and engaged couples at Gahanna St. Matthew Church to explore the vocation of marriage and family life, Page 12



World Mission Sunday

The annual World Mission Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral brings together different cultures and highlights the work of the Church in nations where there is great need, Page 7

Diocese creates disaster relief response plan

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

A disaster response plan, implemented to help parishes, schools and organizations mobilize people and resources in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, was recently established in the diocese.

It will serve as a form of preparation to mitigate the risk of a disaster to diocesan facilities and the diocese's various communities.

The plan is not a reaction to recent disasters or an effort to increase safety. Diocesan safety guidelines and protocols have been set in place.

Deacon Dave Bezusko, director of the diocesan Office of Catholic Charities, explained that the disaster plan, independent of safety protocols, is established to help communities when needed.

"Thinking about that in this role within the Office of Charities, one of the most critical times in which charity is needed is in the aftermath of a disaster, and thinking about how we as Church are in a situation where there's no question people will

turn to Church for spiritual support and accompaniment, for physical help," he said, "we as Church need to be ready to respond to people's darkest days.

"The guidelines are designed to help provide that path forward for us, not necessarily all the answers."

It will serve as a path in reacting to unpreventable situations. The plan will help the diocese minister to impacted individuals' spiritual and physical needs through a coordinated, organized response.

"Will this prevent disasters? Not likely," Bezusko acknowledged. "It's meant to be a guide for how we're going to react when something does happen, and that can be a natural or man-made disaster.

"It's truly a matter of 'when and where' and not 'if.'"

In the past 60 years, 43 events within the boundaries of the Columbus diocese spawned federal disaster declarations.

Flooding and tornadoes constitute the majority of natural disaster risk in the diocese. The response plan can also assist in events such as fires, blizzards, extreme heat, droughts, wildfires, bus crashes or cyberattacks.

A Spirit of Hope Disaster Fund in the

diocese was created for use in the aftermath of a potential disaster. The fund was seeded with \$75,000 from the diocesan Office of Catholic Charities.

The fund will offer financial assistance to entities providing a direct response: diocesan parishes; Catholic charities, such as Catholic Social Services or the St. Vincent de Paul Society; and long-term recovery groups and vetted partner agencies.

Monetary donations to the fund will help provide materials, food and other resources. It can also be used to rebuild and restore diocesan churches and schools damaged in a disaster.

The Spirit of Hope Disaster Relief Fund will be evergreen and donations can be made at any time.

An annual second collection during Masses at diocesan parishes will be taken up to support the fund. The second collection will take place every September beginning in September 2026.

A diocesan disaster response team was formed to execute the plan. Members of the team provided input and expertise in its formation. All have committed to serve in the event of a disaster.

The response team will collaborate with

existing disaster-response community organizations, such as the American National Red Cross organization, which provides disaster relief services.

"As they're working through responding to situations that come up in our communities, how can we supplement and support the work they're doing?" Bezusko contemplated.

"One of the things that happens a lot in disasters is people with great intentions and incredible charity decide that they want to do this, that or the other thing, and that's one of the last things that's needed."

Team members will assist where needed to avoid duplicating services.

The diocesan disaster response team is divided into two tiers. The first tier of response includes six individuals on the diocese's staff.

The second tier consists of about 20 who hold various roles in the diocese and bring various types of expertise. The team has background in areas such as facilities, insurance, information technology, schools and communication.

See RELIEF, Page 27

Diocese's support makes priests' convocation a success

By Father William Hahn

For The Catholic Times

Parishioners found their parishes without Mass the week of Sept. 22-26 when more than 125 priests serving in the Diocese of Columbus met for their convocation. However, many of those same parishioners were instrumental in the convocation being such a time of rest and renewal for the priests this year.

The convocation is held every two years. This year, it took place at Deer Creek State Park Lodge near Mount Sterling, Ohio. The theme of the convocation was "Spiritual Fatherhood and Fraternal Brotherhood."

Upon arrival, priests received a bag with snacks, a program booklet and one or more

letters. The letters came from the good work of the Serra Club, which coordinated the collection of personal letters of thanks to the individual priests for their spiritual fatherhood.

The priests gathered with Bishop Earl Fernandes every day for the celebration of Mass and for the chanting of the Psalms of the Liturgy of the Hours every morning and evening. Presentations on living the fatherhood of the priesthood intentionally, preaching from the heart of a father and other related themes were given by Father Benjamin Roberts, Father P.J. McManus and Dr. Anthony Isaaco from the St. John Paul II Foundation.

Employees of the diocesan offices generously donated a variety of prizes to be given away before each conference

session. Prizes ranged from gift cards and bottles of various beverages to a beautiful handmade box by prisoners (donated by a staff member who is involved with prison ministry) and a day on a sailboat on Lake Erie (donated by a staff member who has a boat on the lake).

The priests enjoyed free time in the afternoons and after a late afternoon presentation each day, fellowship and fraternity in the evenings. Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church and the board president of Buckeye Catholic both sponsored evenings of refreshments for the priests.

The diocese's Office of Communications sponsored a game night with cornhole (very competitive at times), cards and various board games. One favorite of the priests was Family Feud night. Each deanery chose two priests to be part of regional teams that went against each other in a game based on the popular TV game show, Family Feud.

Father Dan Dury, pastor of Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, served as the host and, like TV game host Steve Harvey, added a great comedic element. Answers had been populated by nearly 100 of the lay faithful of the diocese answering a 100-question survey in advance. Questions included fare from church life, Scripture, entertainment and culture. As you can imagine, the range of answers the priests gave provided for a lot of laughter.

One evening also included Bishop Fernandes recognizing priests for significant anniversaries ranging from

five priests who were marking their fifth anniversary to one who was celebrating his 65th anniversary of priestly ordination. That was none other than Bishop James Griffin. He received a standing ovation from all of the priests present.

Finally, the priests were extremely grateful and attribute the great success of this year's convocation to the prayer support that was received from parishioners all over the diocese.

The Catholic men's ministry, Wilderness Outreach, coordinated a campaign in which every priest was supported each day by a different man who committed to praying and fasting for them. Each priest was given a schedule of who was supporting him each day.

In addition, more than 300 of the religious, deacons and lay faithful of the diocese committed to an hour of prayer during the length of the convocation. They signed up through a link provided by the Office of Communications to bulletin editors and through social media. On the last day, the priests could look at the list and see that every hour, even throughout every night, was covered by two, three and sometimes five people.

This year's convocation was a great blessing to the priests of our diocese and it is a result of the involvement and support of so many throughout our diocese.

Father William Hahn serves as a vicar general and director of priestly life in the diocese.

Bishop welcomes pope's exhortation

Bishop Earl Fernandes and the Diocese of Columbus gratefully welcome Pope Leo XIV's first exhortation of his pontificate, DILEXI TE.

DILEXI TE, composed as a follow up to the Encyclical DILEXIT NOS, was originally started by the late Pope Francis at the end of his life. The exhortation focuses on the Church's care for the poor and was completed by Pope Leo XIV after including some additional reflections.

We as the Church are provided with

a glimpse into how we should care for the poor as our Lord did, as is noted throughout the scriptures. Further, we must challenge some of our own ideological prejudices that can cause us to be indifferent to the suffering of others.

As we contemplate Christ's love, "we too are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others and confirmed in our efforts to share in his work of liberation as instruments for the spread of his love."

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Diocese of Columbus



Students pray at the Mass for Life at St. Joseph Cathedral on Oct. 3.



Bishop Daniel Thomas prays at the start of the Mass for Life.

Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



A Mass for Life is led by Bishop Daniel Thomas of Toledo and Bishop Earl Fernandes of Columbus at St. Joseph Cathedral on Friday, Oct. 3.

Ohio shows support for life at Mass, march in Columbus

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

Several thousand pro-life supporters gathered in Columbus on Friday, Oct. 3 for the fourth annual Ohio March for Life.

Holding signs reading “Women Deserve Better than Abortion,” “Lives are on the Line” and “I Regret my Abortion,” thousands congregated on the Ohio Statehouse lawn, calling on their state legislators to defend life. They continued by bringing a spirit for life to the streets of downtown Columbus with a march at noon.

For many Catholics, that spirit began hours earlier at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral with a 9 a.m. Mass for Life.

Bishop Daniel Thomas of the Diocese of Toledo served as the principal celebrant. The bishop serves as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

He was joined by Bishop Earl Fernandes and several diocesan priests, deacons and seminarians.

The standing-room-only congregation of approximately 500 packed the cathedral. The crowd ranged from infants to elderly men and women. Catholic school students from across the state attended the Mass.

In the Columbus diocese, students came from Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School, Bishop Hartley and St. Francis DeSales and Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans high schools. Other schools represented were Worthington St. Michael the Archangel and Chillicothe Bishop Flaget schools and the Chesterton Academy of St. Benedict.

Other grade school, high school and

college students came from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Dioceses of Toledo and Youngstown. Among them were Cincinnati Elder and La Salle high schools, Sidney Lehman, Franciscan University of Steubenville and Walsh University.

“Today is to provide a witness for the beauty of human life and the sanctity of human life,” said Mary Kristoff, associate director for the diocesan Office of Pro-Life Ministries.

“One of the great things that we have are the school kids here, and I think they provide that special witness that every life is important and that every one of us has a responsibility to help protect it.”

In his homily, Bishop Thomas blessed God for the gift of life that He gives to each person. The bishop implored strength, conviction and enthusiasm to defend, promote and honor life.

“We march today to proclaim that every human person has worth and dignity,” he said, “that every human person is chosen, first and foremost, the pre-born: the most weak, the most innocent, the most vulnerable of human persons.”

Bishop Thomas highlighted the reading from the Gospel of Luke, which recounted Jesus coming by way of the womb of His mother, Mary. God chose to take on a human body.

The bishop asked the congregation to pray for mothers experiencing an unexpected pregnancy. He also encouraged prayers for individuals suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, disabled children, forgotten prisoners seeking forgiveness, immigrant families and people suffering from substance abuse.

He recalled the words of Pope St. John Paul II, who said, “the right to help, to home,

to work, to family, to culture is false and illusory if the right to life – the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights – is not defended with maximum determination.”

After the Mass, the faithful made way to the Ohio Statehouse for a statewide rally and march hosted by the national March for Life organization and Center for Christian Virtue.

Melissa Ohden, founder of The Abortion Survivors Network, served as the keynote speaker at the rally.

Other speakers included state Rep. Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon), a Catholic legislator representing a portion of southwest Ohio near Cincinnati; Attorney General Dave Yost; and Savannah Marten of the Bella Vita Network in Toledo.

Bishop Thomas led the audience in an opening prayer at the rally. The bishop later walked the entire route of the march through downtown streets.

Marten, executive director the Bella Vita Network, shared statistics with attendees.

Bella Vita, meaning “beautiful life,” collaborates with organizations to provide solutions for making abortion unthinkable. Marten also serves as president of the Ohio Coalition of Pregnancy Centers.

She noted that Ohio has 133 pregnancy resource centers. The centers provide \$16 million in services annually.

Several centers across the state offer Abortion Pill Reversal services. The Abortion Pill Reversal can counteract the effects of the abortion pill by increasing a woman’s progesterone, a hormone supplying nutrients to the baby.

Sierra, whose daughter Sawyer was saved by the Abortion Pill Reversal at Pregnancy Decision Health Centers in Columbus,

shared her testimony.

In her keynote address, Ohden shared that she survived an abortion attempt. Her birth mother underwent an abortion at about 31 weeks pregnant. Ohden, weighing less than three pounds, was delivered alive.

The Abortion Survivors Network has connected with more than 1,000 abortion survivors and their families.

“We march today for their biological mothers and mine, who deserved compassion, support and resources like those offered by your incredible pregnancy resource centers,” Ohden told the crowd. “You all have some of the best pregnancy centers in the nation.”

She added that she marches for every child who, unlike her, did not survive an abortion – no matter the type of abortion or age of gestation.

She acknowledged Ohio legislators and advocates who defend life.

“A state line should never be a death line,” Ohden said, referring to states such as Ohio that enshrined abortion in its constitution. “A child’s right to live should not be subject to the whim of politics. My life was not political fodder.”

Ohioans voted in 2023 to legalize abortion through all nine months of pregnancy in the Buckeye State.

Yost, who has served as Ohio’s attorney general since 2019, encouraged those gathered to change people’s hearts and minds. Changed hearts, he explained, change laws.

“The will of the people is expressed in their constitution, (which) can and does constrain the exercise of the public authority of my office, but it cannot constrain my conscience,” Yost affirmed.



Bishop Daniel Thomas leads the opening prayer at the Ohio March for Life at the Ohio Statehouse. Photo courtesy Sarah Lightle



The Ohio March for Life begins on South High Street in front of the Ohio Statehouse on Friday, Oct. 3.



Students carrying signs participate in the Ohio March for Life.

Observations from Ohio's March for Life, Mass

The thousands of participants in the Ohio March for Life and the rally at the statehouse on Friday, Oct. 3 in Columbus made a strong statement.

Their witness at the state capitol and then through the streets of downtown Columbus sent a peaceful but powerful message: Despite voters passing an amendment to the Ohio constitution two years ago enshrining the right to abortion, the fight to protect the sanctity of human life at all stages continues unabated.

The following are some observations from the Ohio March for Life and also from the Mass for Life at St. Joseph Cathedral preceding the rally.

Not only did Bishop Daniel Thomas of the Diocese of Toledo serve as the principal celebrant for the Mass for Life, he led the opening prayer at the statehouse rally and then walked the entire route with the marchers, including a contingent from his home diocese.

He didn't go to the front for everyone to see but stayed in the middle of the marching mass of humanity on the city streets, praying and advocating for the protection of human life. For a bishop to march at a large public event is important. And considering the climate of negativity and uncivility surrounding the issue in this country, his witness was courageous. His position as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Chairman for Pro-Life Activities made his presence even more noteworthy.

As the marchers traveled north on High Street before turning onto Spring Street and then on to Front Street and State Street before arriving back at the statehouse, they were met with only one small group of protesters near the statehouse. Somewhat surprisingly, the reactions from hundreds of bystanders along the route seemed to be respectful and tinged with curiosity.

Astute observers might have noticed construction workers looking down over the marchers from several stories up in buildings they were working on. Some of the onlookers, who appeared to be Latino, were filming on their cellphones and seemed to be smiling in agreement with the pro-life signs in English and Spanish carried by marchers.

Unlike other demonstrations that take place in downtown Columbus, the Ohio March for Life was nothing but peaceful. The marchers chanted prayers, prayed

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

Doug Bean

the rosary and Divine Mercy chaplet and conversed quietly among themselves. Their intention was not to incite negative reactions but to convert hearts and minds that are indifferent to the holocaust of abortion.

Marchers came from virtually every corner of the state. Groups were in attendance from the Cleveland area, Toledo, Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus and plenty of smaller cities.

The presence of young people attending the Mass and joining the March for Life offers hope that the next generation will carry on the fight. The largest contingent of students came from Cincinnati Elder and Sidney Lehman high schools and Worthington St. Michael School. This year, they were joined by the student body from the Chesterton Academy of Columbus. Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans and Chillicothe Bishop Flaget were among the other schools from the Diocese of Columbus at the Mass or the March for Life.

Colleges with notable representation were Franciscan University of Steubenville, Walsh University, Ohio State University and Cedarville University. They were joined by seminarians from Columbus and other dioceses as well as sisters from religious orders.

For students and adults to take time out of their busy schedules on a Friday to travel several hours in some cases to participate in the March for Life says something about the importance of this cause.

In Ohio, there's heightened urgency to combat abortion with the constitutional amendment in place. The outcome of the 2023 vote has made Ohio an abortion destination for women traveling from Indiana, West Virginia and others states where there are strict limits or a near-total ban on ending unborn life in a mother's womb.

That's why it's critical to send a message to legislators at the statehouse that implores them to find ways to protect and support life through the passage of laws to



Signs at the Ohio March for Life include messages in Spanish.



Hundreds of students and young people walk the streets of Columbus in the Ohio March for Life.



Seminarians from the Diocese of Columbus march together.

Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle

counteract the constitutional amendment as well as to support Ohio's 133 pregnancy centers taking care of abortion-minded women and their children.

At the rally, several state legislators were on hand to highlight some of the steps the House of Representatives has taken to protect life, including enabling safe haven

baby boxes, a pro-life and pro-family state budget that funds pregnancy centers and fatherhood initiatives, and a tax deduction for donating to pregnancy centers.

Pro-life bills currently before the

See **OBSERVATIONS**, Page 5

Latest abortion statistics fail to tell the whole story

By Beth Vanderkooi

For The Catholic Times

A group of excited teenage girls rushed up to the Greater Columbus Right to Life (GCRTL) table at the Ohio March for Life, spotting the small box stuffed with baby socks, shoes and booties. One started to exclaim, "Aww. How cuu ..." but her words trickled off as she read the accompanying sign: Memorial of the Unborn. Each pair represents one of the 60 babies who died by abortion every day last year in Ohio. She gulped, "That's so sad. It's why we are here, though."

Anyone that stopped at the table on Friday, Oct. 5 would have seen this play out repeatedly. A state representative came by and took in the scene before snapping a photo that he posted on social media, saying, "This really got to me."

The Memorial of the Unborn is one of the programs that GCRTL brings to churches, schools and other organizations to help illustrate the enormity of the abortion

crisis. The display can be adjusted to represent the local community and include nearby pregnancy help and post-abortion healing programs.

The Memorial was just updated based on the 2024 abortion report – the count of all known abortions in Ohio. The report contains various demographic and other information that provides a snapshot of the abortion picture in the state, but the statistics don't tell all of the story.

At least 21,892 women had abortions in Ohio last year, a slight decline from the previous year. It is not known how many abortions were never reported, especially those women who obtained pills by mail and likely never saw a doctor. The number of women coming from out of state for abortions increased, traveling to Ohio from states with laws that are more protective of mother and baby.

There were 4,264 reported abortions in central Ohio. That is about 12 each day – up from 10 each day in 2023. It is known that 4,245 of the reported abortions were performed on women living in the Diocese

of Columbus, an increase of 77 from the year before.

Reported use of the abortion pill was about 46 percent statewide but closer to 72 percent locally. Only four of every 1,000 Ohio abortions were from what doctors described as medical necessity.

Meanwhile, the number of reported serious complications from abortions has more than quadrupled.

What the statistics also do not tell is how many women were pressured, coerced or felt like they had no other choice than to abort their child. There are no numbers that indicate how many women regret their choice or will grieve in the future and how many would have chosen life for their unborn child if they had encountered someone praying and offering help, sharing abortion pill reversal information, or guiding them to healing following a past abortion.

The solution to abortion isn't in spreadsheets or statistics. Those numbers help identify where the need is. It is found in a relationship ultimately with Jesus

Christ.

When a GCRTL team member meets a woman on the sidewalk, she is standing at the edge of despair. Those encounters offer an opportunity to remind her that she is seen, known and loved, especially by God.

For GCRTL, Respect Life Month is every day. Whether it is working to end abortion or euthanasia, everyone needs to get involved -- parishes, schools and families to stand with us. Volunteers are needed to fill hours outside centers where abortions take place to demonstrate faith and mercy to a culture that has forgotten both.

Over the past 50 years, GCRTL has helped over 700 women turn away from abortions. There have been 24,500 fewer abortions in Ohio since 2008, when 40 Days for Life campaigns and regular sidewalk advocacy began.

To learn more about the 2024 abortion numbers, schedule a free speaker or volunteer, visit gcrtl.org/abortion-rate.

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

Be not afraid to do your part to end abortion

When Sharon Rygg was expecting her fourth child, she and her husband were advised to terminate the pregnancy. She promised God that if the child survived, she would commit herself to saving other babies.

For more than 40 years since her son was born, she has been faithful to her promise – starting with pro-life advocacy at abortion centers and continuing into her 80s with prayers for the unborn and their mothers.

Her story is not unlike many faithful Catholics and Christians who give their time – often at great expense and personal sacrifice – to help expectant mothers choose life for their unborn babies.

Last month, the fall 40 Days for Life campaign began across the world and in Columbus. It continues through early November. During the 40 days, individuals and parish groups will be on the sidewalk near the Planned Parenthood at 3255 E. Main St. in Columbus to pray for life and provide information, assistance and alternatives to mothers who might be considering an abortion.

The Columbus Planned Parenthood on East Main Street is the only remaining location in central Ohio where surgical abortions are performed. The so-called “right” to an abortion in Ohio was preserved when a constitutional amendment was passed by voters in 2023.

While there are fewer locations offering surgical abortions today, the use of abortion pills has proliferated over the past few years and now account for 60 percent of all terminations. These abortions are carried out by women taking two pills – the first that essentially starves the baby and the second that expels the child once he or she has died in the womb.

Federal law has relaxed the restrictions

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

Doug Bean

on abortion pills, allowing women to obtain them by mail without an in-person visit to a medical practitioner. The relative ease of availability makes the pills a convenient option for abortion-minded women but also a dangerous alternative due to complications that can result without medical supervision. The Ohio House of Representatives is attempting to address this serious issue through House Bill 324, which would prohibit sales of drugs causing severe adverse effects and establish conditions on the prescribing of such drugs under at Patient Protection Act.

Thankfully, Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) has become an effective option for women who change their mind after taking the first pill. There is a national hotline to call through Columbus-based Heartbeat International that connects women with local pregnancy help centers. Locally, Pregnancy Decision Health Centers (PDHC) in Columbus and Lancaster can assist with APR.

PDHC also provides assistance for women in crisis pregnancies, as does the Women's Care Center in the Columbus area, Elizabeth's Hope in southern Ohio, Heartbeats in Newark and Zanesville, Pregnancy Resources of Delaware County and others.

The incredible efforts of the 133 pregnancy help centers in Ohio were highlighted at the Ohio March for Life on Oct. 3 at the Ohio Statehouse.

Those pregnancy centers are often where sidewalk counselors and prayer warriors attempt to redirect pregnant women in need of assistance away from Planned Parenthood.

Rygg is no longer able to be on the sidewalk at abortion centers, but she certainly knows what it's like to be there.

Like many of the faithful who frequently pray and provide encouragement to abortion-minded women at Planned Parenthood or other similar facilities, she has many stories to tell – some with happy endings and some with disappointing outcomes.

Rygg remembers her first “save” in Buffalo, New York, where she lived until moving with her husband to Westerville to be near family members.

“A colleague and I were standing in front of the clinic and I had this in my hand (a plastic image of a three-month-old child in utero),” she recalled. “A car pulled up and a young woman got out. I said to her, ‘Your baby's this size now. And she said, ‘I can't go through with this.’

“She flagged the father down in his car. It was a cloudy day, and as they drove away, the sun came out.”

Not every encounter has a happy ending, she said, recounting an occasion when a couple pulled out of an abortion facility in an expensive car and the two of them were laughing as the man rolled down a window and said, “All done.” That was the worst thing I ever saw.”

There was another time when she saw a young man begging the mother to “please don't have an abortion, don't kill my baby.” And she gave him an obscene gesture.”

Rygg said she would often appeal to the fathers and sometimes they would say, “I'm really having a bad day.” And I said, “not as

bad as that baby.”

If you've participated in 40 Days for Life or prayed outside of Planned Parenthood, chances are you've been sworn at, honked at or even intimidated. It certainly helps to have a firm resolve, thick skin and a soft heart because the experience can be disheartening.

“I was at the clinic in Buffalo with prayer warriors and it was a cold day when this man walked up to me with a short-sleeved shirt on,” Rygg said. “And he says to me, ‘I know you can get discouraged coming here, but you're doing God's work. You have to continue doing this.’

“He walked away and I said to the other prayer warriors, ‘Did you see that man?’ They said, ‘What? Sharon, there was no one here.’”

On another occasion, she was dining in a restaurant with family members when a young woman approached her and said, “You don't remember me, do you?” I said, “No,” and she replied, “You had a baby shower for me and there's the baby.”

That's a reminder that so many mothers and fathers just need encouragement. They need to know that countless people are willing to help, that there are more than two million couples in the United States hoping to adopt a baby.

Don't let the devil trick you into thinking that abortion is not an important issue. As Catholics, it's incumbent on the faithful to do everything within their means to end this scourge.

The right to life is endowed by our Creator. It is the most fundamental right in a civil society. If we lose sight of that and give up the fight, the wars and discord and criminal activity will continue until everyone cherishes every human life from conception until natural death.

OBSERVATIONS: March for Life, Mass, Continued from Page 4

legislature are House Bill 324, the Patient Protection Act, which shields communities from dangerous medications such as abortion pills delivered through the mail with no in-person doctor oversight, and House Bill 410, which aligns the state with federal Medicaid guidelines to defund abortion providers and provide life-saving health care to support mothers, families and the unborn rather than harm them.

Those are just a few of the pro-life bills currently in the House and Senate.

-- One of the elected officials who spoke at the rally was Dave Yost, Ohio's pro-life attorney general wpo reminded the crowd that Ohio voted 23 months ago to change its constitution “to declare that a mother is superior legally to her unborn child” and is allowed to choose to end the child's life.

He pointed out to the pro-lifers assembled at the foot of the statehouse steps that an inalienable right in the Declaration of Independence is the right to life. “The government may refuse to enforce an inalienable right, but that does not take away the right,” he stressed. “The right to life may be violated, but it cannot be repealed.”

Yost explained that in the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson cited a “higher law than the law of kings and presidents, a more important and everlasting



Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost addresses the Ohio March for Life on Friday, Oct. 3 from the Statehouse steps.

law that is greater even than a democratic vote.

“The laws of nature and nature's God declare that we are of equal worth and dignity, that we have things that the government cannot and did not give us, things that the government cannot take away.

“When the laws of nature and nature's God conflict with the laws of men, the result is injustice. And although it may take a long time where there is that conflict, the laws of men inevitably yield. What the sovereign people can

change once in their constitution, they can change again. It is for us then, the living, to change the hearts and minds of the people. Changed hearts will lead to changed laws.

“My friends, the will of the people expressed in their constitution can and does constrain the exercise of the public authority of my office, but it cannot constrain my conscience, it cannot imprison my heart, and as long as God gives me breath, it will not silence my voice.”



The large congregation spills into the aisles at the Ohio March for Life on Oct. 3 at St. Joseph Cathedral. Photos courtesy Sarah Lightle



Bishops Daniel Thomas and Earl Fernandes are joined at the altar by priests from the Diocese of Columbus during the Mass for Life at St. Joseph Cathedral.



WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 19, 2025

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS SUMMARY OF 2024 MISSIONS DONATIONS

**SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION
OF THE FAITH (SPOF)**

World Mission Sunday Offering	\$68,437.19
Membership Offerings	\$44,746.40
Gifts	\$118,239.00
Total SPOF	\$231,422.59

SPECIAL DESIGNATED FUNDS

Missionary Childhood Association (MCA)	\$1,278.63
Missionary Cooperation Plan	\$367,308.57
Mass Offerings	\$34,699.00
Latin American Collection	\$56,432.99
Home Missions	\$51,559.26
Black/Indian Missions	\$50,404.74
Peter's Pence	\$53,749.86
Total Special Designated Funds	\$615,433.05

GRAND TOTAL MISSION OFFICE RECEIPTS \$846,855.05

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS MISSIONS OFFICE
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Mission Sunday: Missionaries of hope among all peoples

Sr. Zephрина Mary, FIH

Director, Diocesan Missions Office

In the midst of World Mission Month 2025, which gives more significance to this Jubilee Year, the late Pope Francis urged us to keep our gaze fixed on Christ, the center of history, emphasizing that His mission continues today through the Church.

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV called the Pontifical Mission Societies a “primary means” of evangelization. Whether through prayer, financial support or personal commitment, we can all be Missionaries of Hope in today’s world.

On behalf of His Excellency Bishop Earl Fernandes, and The Pontifical Mission Society national director, Msgr. Roger Landry, I would like to thank you for your generosity and kindness toward the mission of the Church. In 2024, our diocesan contribution for the World Mission Sunday collection from the faithful was \$68,437.19.

Who is a missionary? The one who builds God’s kingdom on earth is called a missionary. It can be as near or as far as God is allowing him or her to go.

Our 267th Holy Father, a native son to the Archdiocese of Chicago and Order of Saint Augustine who was a missionary, advocates that the Church herself, in all her members, is increasingly called to be “a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word ... and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity” (Homily, Mass for the Beginning of the Pontificate, 18 May 2025).

Before the papacy, Pope Leo XIV was a missionary priest who ministered globally as the prior general of the Augustinians, who serve in most of the continents. I’m happy that Pope Leo came to Kerala, India, and lived there in my home state because there is an Augustinian monastery there. Missionaries often leave their countries and families to go to unfamiliar places to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as their vocation and be witness to Christ until their death.

World Mission Sunday is a global celebration of the Church’s missionary mandate. Every parish in the world will be holding a special collection on this day.

One hundred percent of the funds will go to the Church in mission territories; places where the Church is young, poor or persecuted and unable to sustain itself without our support. These territories include Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and parts of Latin America and Eastern Europe. Missionaries rely on the solidarity of the entire Catholic Church to continue their work of evangelization, service and support to those most in need.

The true influence of your life and love, your faith and goodness, is not measured in possessions. Real wealth is better reflected in what one gives from the heart, not what one earns or acquires. “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mat 25:40).

Through your generosity, you become a

Missionaries need support

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we prepare to celebrate World Mission Sunday on October 19, 2025, I invite you to join me in renewing our commitment to the Church’s missionary mandate. This year, the theme invites us to be “Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples,” bringing Christ’s love and mercy to the world’s most vulnerable communities. It is a call that deeply resonates with our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, who spent much of his priestly ministry serving with humility, joy and pastoral closeness as a missionary in Peru in the Andean highlands and rural villages.

Reflecting on our role in supporting the missions, we ought to remember that just over a century ago, the United States was still considered mission territory. Then, the faith was still taking root, supported by the generosity of Catholics from Europe and beyond, who provided financial assistance, sent priests and religious, and built the parishes and schools that formed the foundation of the Church in this country.

Without that missionary support, many of the dioceses we know today would have struggled mightily to grow. In those early years, Catholics in the United States benefited from the same collection we are today invited to support, overseen by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, one of four Pontifical Mission Societies. The Diocese of Columbus greatly benefits from the presence of missionary priests and religious who serve here, as well as from the richness of the many immigrants who have come to our

Diocese, who themselves benefited from the generosity of Catholics.

Over the past few decades, American support for the Pontifical Mission Societies has declined significantly. It is time to renew our commitment to support the foreign missions and the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. Let us assist Pope Leo, the first American Pope, in the mission of evangelization through our sacrificial giving and through our prayers. Your prayers and sacrifices ensure that the light of Christ will reach the ends of the earth. We all have a responsibility to spread the Faith. Each time we support the missions, we affirm that we are one Church, one family in Christ, united in bringing hope and love to all people. Through our prayers and generosity, we share in spreading Christ’s Gospel message in every land on the earth.

Finally, I invite you to the Cathedral of St. Joseph for the 5:15 Mass, which will be presided over by Archbishop George Antonysamy, Archbishop of Madras-Mylepore and Vice President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India. This Mass is not just for missionaries, religious and ethnic groups but is for all the faithful of the Diocese.

Grateful for your sharing in the missionary work of the Church and answering Christ’s call to be a Missionary of Hope, I remain

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

blessing for countless people and families in need. You may never meet them, but be assured that their prayers and blessing is yours! Above all, God’s never-failing reward is coming to you through your loving act of kindness.

We ask you to consider making a financial gift to support the Church in mission territories. Pope Leo wrote that “Here I would emphasize once more the importance of the missionary synodality of the Church, as well as the service rendered by The Pontifical Mission Societies in promoting the missionary responsibility of the baptized and supporting new Particular Churches. I urge all of you, children, young people, adults and the elderly, to participate actively in the common evangelizing mission of the Church by your witness of life and prayer, by your sacrifices and by your generosity. A Call to Support the Missions” (Pope Francis’ Message for World Mission Sunday 2025).

Your generosity will directly impact the lives of those who hunger for the Word of God and the tangible assistance the Church provides through education, health care

and pastoral care.

How can we spread the Gospel to the whole world? Jesus inspires us and calls us to be a missionary for Him through our smile, a kind word, phone call, visit, helping hand and collecting funds for the needy. Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn. 20:21).

Millions of priests and nuns are missionaries throughout the world who are sent by God through their consecrated life. Even though we may feel it is impossible, it really is possible. We definitely can do so through media, letters, prayers, sacrifices and penance.

The words of St. Therese of Lisieux, the patroness of missionaries and missions, is very significant here: “I’m assured ... that (the Lord) will listen to the desire of my soul by rendering fruitful your apostolate. I shall be truly happy to work with you for the salvation of souls ... I wanted to be (a missionary) through love and penance” (St. Therese, Letter to Father Roulland).

St. Therese’s whole life was dedicated to the mission of Christ. She wanted all to know about the love of God who suffered

and gave His life for everyone. He opened up Heaven for all mankind. Uniting her suffering with His, she offered her own life for the salvation of others.

The funds collected each year in every single parish in the world, no matter how big or small, directly aid Catholic communities in mission territories, build churches, donate Bibles, support seminarians and novices, and sustain religious sisters and catechists. When you risk something for those in need then you receive favor of God and grace of God because when you break out of your comfort zone and familiarity by offering your treasure for the needy, God will reward you in abundance. Jesus taught us that “When you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame or blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you” (St. Luke 14:14).

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the missionary proclamation has conversion as its goal: “that non-Christians be freely converted to the Lord under the action of the Holy Spirit who opens their hearts so that they may adhere to him” (Ad Gentes, 13).

The key to mission spirit is evangelization, which is the identity of the Church, starts with commitment in a personal relationship with the Lord.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the living Christ, is the divine agent of evangelization. The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will be our guide in preaching the saving message of Jesus Christ to others. The Holy Spirit animates the faithful to transform their lives into Christ’s teachings, the Gospel.

Thousands of missionaries at work in some of the poorest areas of the world. Missionaries, includes priests, religious sisters, brothers, they serve in parishes, schools, colleges, seminaries, orphanages. They proclaim the Gospel and celebrate the sacraments. Your generous help enables missionaries to build churches, chapels, catechism classes, operate training schools, clinics, and provide safe environments for orphans, girls, older people, and mentally challenged people. His Holiness Pope Francis exhorts us that, “Through his disciples, sent to all peoples and mystically accompanied by him, the Lord Jesus continues his ministry of hope for humanity. He still bends over all those who are poor, afflicted, despairing and oppressed, and pours upon their wounds the balm of consolation and the wine of hope” (Pope Francis’ Message for World Mission Sunday 2025).

We can together carry out the mission of the Church and continue to be foster and transform many in the light of Christ, who commanded us to spread the Gospel to the whole world. Let us humbly serve Christ by promoting universal Church’s Mission: Salvation of humanity only through Jesus Christ!

Let us evangelize, prioritize and empathize with the poor who cannot repay us, but our repayment will be from God, the source of abundance.

Appeal funds used for church building project in Tanzania

By Father Peter Asantebwana

St. Agnes Church is a young parish in Tanzania that is growing very fast. I was assigned pastor of the church right after my assignment in the Diocese of Columbus. I am grateful for my experience in the United States at Gahanna St. Matthew Church of leading a parish in cooperation with parishioners with different talents. Many thanks to Father Ted Sill and his parish

staff at St. Matthew!

The bishop of the Diocese of Moshi asked me to return to Africa from America to lead a church building project at St. Agnes in which there will be a parish hall and rooms for seminars. We have many children and teenagers who need catechesis and education. St. Agnes Parish has about 1,200 families and 8,500 parishioners.

The donation we received from St.

Matthew in this year’s mission appeal has been very helpful and useful for the St. Agnes parish project. We were able to put reinforcement bars and concrete in the new church building.

The cost of the church project will be between \$700,000-\$800,000. That is why we are asking you to include the Diocese of Moshi in the Missionary Cooperative Plan (MCP).



Workers construct a church roof in Tanzania.

Dominicans in East Africa: What it takes to establish a stable mission

By Fr. Dominic Mutuku, O.P.
For The Catholic Times

When the Dominican Friars from the Province of St. Joseph, New York, arrived in Eastern Africa in 1991, they carried with them a bold vision: plant the seed of the Order of Preachers in this region and nurture it until it could stand on its own. The mission, spanning Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan, was to continue the Order's 800-year legacy of preaching the Gospel for the salvation of souls, but now in a context where the Church was still relatively young and in the peripheries.

From the start, the friars knew that one of the most important ways of ensuring stability was through the formation of local clergy. In the early 2000s, when I first joined the mission, there were only three ordained local priests. Today, the Dominican Vicariate of Eastern Africa can count more than 20 ordained friars, with over 20 brothers currently in formation. This growth is a sign of hope not only for the order but also for the Church in this part of the world.

Formation, therefore, remains at the heart of our work. The novitiate of St. Martin de Porres in Kisumu welcomes men beginning their first year of discernment. Those who make profession of vows continue at St. Dominic's Priory in Nairobi, where they

study philosophy and theology at Tangaza University while also gaining pastoral experience. Community life, study, prayer and apostolate come together to prepare them to serve as preachers, pastors and leaders in the Church. With the numbers of student brothers steadily increasing, plans are underway to expand St. Dominic Priory to better serve the needs of formation.

From these formation houses, the mission has grown to five communities: two in Kisumu, two in Nairobi and one in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Our ministries are varied: parish work at St. Catherine of Siena (Nairobi), St. Paul (Kisumu) and St. Alypius (Dar es Salaam); teaching and administration at Tangaza University; chaplaincy for sisters and schools; retreats and recollections; pro-life initiatives; and ministry to the deaf. We accompany the Dominican Laity, engage young people through various university chaplaincies, notably Kikuyu and Kabete Campuses of the University of Nairobi, the Dominican Youth Movement, and remain attentive to the poor who knock on our doors.

The vision for the future is clear yet challenging: to grow into a fully-fledged province, capable of sustaining itself in personnel and resources. This requires building institutions strong enough to support our brothers



Dominican friars walk in the rural villages of Kisumu for pastoral work.

Photo courtesy Father Wiseman, OP

in formation and to sustain the many ministries we undertake. It is no small task: It requires vision, sacrifice, and above all, faith that God who began this good work will bring it to completion.

It is at this point that the words of the late Pope Francis for World Mission Sunday 2025 take on special meaning. Our Holy Father called us all to live this Jubilee Year as "pilgrims of hope" and "missionaries of hope among all peoples." For us Dominicans in Eastern Africa, this call is both an encouragement and a challenge.

The encouragement comes from knowing that our work of preaching, teaching and serving is not just local but part of the universal Church's mission of hope. Every time a friar celebrates Mass for Christians in the village, accompanies young people in their search for meaning, or offers

consolation to the poor, the hope of Christ takes flesh in the lives of ordinary people.

The challenge, however, is real. The majority of our American friars who first established the mission have since returned home, leaving us, the natives, to carry forward the work. Supporting our young brothers in formation is particularly demanding, requiring resources that are not easy to come by. Yet Pope Francis reminded us that Christian hope is not mere optimism. It is a gift from God, nourished in prayer and lived out in community. As he said, the person who hopes is also a person who prays.

To be missionaries of hope, then, means not only reaching outward to those we serve but also sustaining one another within our own communities. It

means praying together, sharing resources and trusting that God's providence will provide for what is lacking. It also means inviting others, especially our friends, benefactors, and people of good will, to walk with us on this journey of faith and hope in sustaining and growing this mission.

The story of the Dominican mission in Eastern Africa is still young, yet is already marked by signs of hope: young men embracing the Dominican way of life, communities of faith growing stronger, and the poor finding comfort in the presence of Christ's ministers. As we continue this journey, we take to heart our late Holy Father's invitation to be "missionaries of hope among all peoples."

As we enter the final months of this Jubilee Year, may we continue to be renewed in our mission, so that the Dominican friars in Eastern Africa may continue to preach the Gospel with joy, build up the Church with faith and bear witness to the hope that never disappoints.

Fr. Dominic Mutuku, OP, is a member of the formation team at St. Dominic's, Nairobi. He lectures in philosophy at Tangaza University and serves as director of the Institute of Social Communication at the same university.

We survived the odds: A story of Catholics' resilience in war-torn Liberia

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair – Persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."
-2 Corinthians 4: 8-9

By S. Cooper Davayu

After the Liberian civil war, which spanned from 1989 to 1997 and reignited between 1999 and 2003, the Catholic Church in Liberia faced devastating setbacks. Once a beacon of education, healthcare and faith formation, the Church was left with destroyed schools, desecrated parishes, displaced clergy and communities struggling to find hope amid traumas.

Catholic institutions had historically been vital to Liberia's development, running some of the best schools and hospitals across the country. However, two brutal wars dismantled much of this infrastructure, leaving the faithful in great need of both spiritual healing and material rebuilding.

The Catholic community, though battered, remained resilient. In Monrovia, Gbarnga and other regions, priests, nuns and lay leaders reopened churches even in makeshift structures. They sought ways to rekindle people's faith after years of suffering.

International Catholic



Support from the Diocese of Columbus is helping the Catholic community in Liberia. Photo courtesy Father Paul Voisard Memorial African Mission Fund

organizations also began helping in reconstruction, providing funding, sending missionaries and supporting local dioceses. But rebuilding after such profound devastation required not only global assistance but also contributions from Liberians in the diaspora, many of whom carried both the scars of war and the deep desire to restore what had been lost.

Liberian immigrants in Columbus

In Columbus, a small but active community of Liberian Catholics has made an impact by supporting the church back home. Among them are immigrants S. Cooper Davay, Emmanuel Massaquoi and Larmie Molubah, who hold a deep pride in their heritage and a firm commitment to their Catholic faith. These men recognized

that while many Liberians had migrated to America for safety and opportunity, they also had a responsibility to honor and support the Church that shaped them and sustained their people even through war.

With the help of the Catholic Foundation in Columbus, the three established "The Father Paul Voisard Memorial African Mission Fund" in 2023. The Fund was created in honor of the late Father Paul Voisard, a missionary priest who served first in the Republic of Guinea in the 1950s and 1960s before later crossing into Liberia, where he served as parish priest in the Guinea-Liberian bordering towns of Sanniquellie and Ganta while ministering tirelessly to Liberian Catholics until the outbreak of the civil war.

Father Voisard's legacy touched countless lives through pastoral care, educational initiatives and missionary service, leaving behind a model of generosity and remembrance. For Cooper, Emmanuel and Larmie, honoring Father Voisard's memory through this fund was a way of acknowledging the gift of missionary dedication while also meeting the needs of today's Liberian Church.

Partnership with diocese

The Father Paul Voisard Memorial Fund is not a solitary effort. Instead, these Liberian immigrants have partnered closely with the Diocese of Columbus and the Catholic Foundation. The Diocese's Mission Office has played a particularly significant role in guiding the initiative, ensuring that resources raised in Ohio reach Liberia in ways that strengthen the local church. By collaborating with formal church structures, the fund demonstrates transparency and fosters real connections between parishes across continents.

The fund was further strengthened by the generosity of multiple Catholic parishes in Columbus. St. Dominic, St. Mary, Mother of God in German Village and St. Joseph Cathedral offered financial support to the fund during the mission appeal in 2023. These communities embraced the opportunity to express solidarity

with their brothers and sisters in Liberia, demonstrating how universal the Catholic Church truly is. Through parishioners' generosity, the fundraising was not just about dollars but also about strengthening the global bonds of faith.

Impact and vision for the future

The goal of the Father Paul Voisard Memorial African Mission Fund is to provide ongoing support to the Liberian Catholic Church. This includes helping rebuild parishes damaged during the war, funding education initiatives, assisting seminarians in their formation and offering resources for pastoral work. By doing so, the fund provides hope and encouragement for priests, religious and lay leaders on the ground who continue to navigate the challenges of poverty, lack of resources and rebuilding after conflict.

For the Liberian immigrant community in Columbus, the initiative is also an expression of gratitude. Having found safety and opportunities in Ohio, they now give back by remembering both the sacrifices of missionaries like Father Voisard and the resilience of the Catholic faithful in Liberia. Their mission demonstrates the dynamic way immigrant communities can bridge cultures and continents

See LIBERIA, Page 10

Mission priest appeals for educational needs in India

By Doug Bean
Catholic Times Editor

When Father Abraham Vettivil explains the work his religious order does among the poor in India and Africa, Americans might find his descriptions difficult to comprehend.

In some places, children have limited or no access to education. Some of the people the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS) clerics help on the streets have no access to showers or decent food. Some live very primitively by Western standards. Many have little or no knowledge of Jesus Christ.

During a visit to the Diocese of Columbus in September on behalf of his religious order as part of the Missionary Cooperative Plan, Father Vettivil made an appeal to the parishioners of St. Mary, Mother of God Church in the German Village area and St. Joseph Cathedral for financial and spiritual support.

He shared with the parishioners of those parishes and in an interview that his order serves the spiritual and social needs of marginalized populations around

the world with an emphasis on education, outreach and evangelization.

The congregation has established a strong presence in the northern India states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, where they focus on uplifting impoverished communities.

In Bhinmal, a city with a population of 300,000 in Rajasthan, the order provides elementary education to children with a particular emphasis on empowering girls, who are often prevented from receiving formal schooling by economic hardships and cultural barriers.

Father Vettivil's mission appeal in Columbus focused on securing funds for education in Bhinmal to improve transportation, resources, provide teaching materials and support qualified educators. A good education helps break the cycle of poverty, he said.

MCBS priests work in the schools mainly as principals but also as teachers.

Particularly in remote villages, "we establish small schools where there is no established school," said Father Vettivil, the counselor for missions in his Indian province who coordinates mission activities.

Because India's government enforces strict anti-conversion laws that target Christians, the fathers evangelize through education. Civil rights groups have recently organized public protests against the recently passed law that criminalizes religious conversions in Rajasthan.

"In most places, direct evangelization is not possible and so through the schools we impart human values, Christian values," Father Vettivil said.

In northern India, Hinduism is the predominant religion. There are so few Catholics that parishes might consist of just 20-25 families in rural areas and 100 or more families in larger cities.

In some areas, priests celebrate Masses in parishioners' homes because there are no churches. But they are restricted in other areas from visiting homes or preaching. Where the laws are stricter, priests take a more clandestine approach to administering the sacraments, teaching catechism and sharing the Word of God.

The MCBS priests do similar work in Tanzania taking care of pastoral needs, helping in schools and assisting the homeless.

In southern India, where there are more Catholics, the fathers engage mostly in pastoral duties.

"We have institutions with differently abled children and we take care of them," Father Vettivil said. "We take care of street people and we take care of the jail ministries."

"Our priests take street people inside and give them a shower and give them food, medication and whatever is possible."

The Missionaries Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament was founded in 1933 in the Indian state of Kerala. The order has grown to include more than 500 priests serving in northern and southern India, Tanzania, Brazil, Peru, Europe and the United States.

The MCBS order is part of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, an Eastern rite church in full communion with the Holy See.

In Western countries, the order engages mostly in pastoral and parish ministry rather than mission work. In the U.S., MCBS priests are present in Memphis, Tennessee; New York and Chicago.

Ecuador parish feeds migrants

By Robert Christy, SVD
For The Catholic Times

The Maria Madre de la Iglesia parish community in southern Ecuador cares deeply for its migrant neighbors. Forced to leave the security of their home countries because of political or economic strife -- usually both -- these migrants face a long and dangerous journey, struggling to survive as they search for a better life.

The parish takes care of its migrant neighbors by feeding them.

The feeding program takes place at a Divine Word Missionary parish in Hauquillas, a small city with a population of 56,000 located in southern Ecuador on the border with Peru. Most people here, even those from Ecuador, are very poor because they came from other provinces searching for employment.

Our feeding ministry's primary focus is migrants. People crossing the border from Peru (even though most started their journeys in other countries) are on their way north where they hope to find a better life.

As Divine Word Missionaries, we reach out to those in need. We recognize that God



Food is prepared to feed needy individuals in Ecuador. Photo courtesy Divine Word Missionaries

never abandons his people, and neither should we. We join with the poor in their struggle for justice, equality and freedom. In their pain and sorrow, we see the face of Christ.

Our parish's primary ministry is the weekly feeding program, which assists the many migrants in need. We also provide basic medical assistance and a small amount of money to help them continue

their journey.

The feeding program has been in existence for almost five years now. In the early days, almost all of the migrants we served came from Venezuela. While the majority of them still come from Venezuela, we now see migrants from other countries, including Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru.

Most of them travel with children and are in need of economic help. They wish to settle in America or Europe, places they hope to find jobs and make a better life for themselves and their families.

Our feeding program serves them meals every Saturday. Parish volunteers run the program. We have 12 to 15 weekly volunteers who prepare and serve the meals. Last May, we served an average of 150 meals a week.

Our volunteers can find it challenging to watch the painful realities of the families who come through this much-needed program. Upon arrival, migrants are strangers. They face suspicions and prejudices and are not accepted by many people around Hauquillas. Maria Madre de la Iglesia parish is a place where they can find refuge, where they can feel welcome.

The migrants -- men, women, young, old -- are also very grateful, and you can see

the thank-you smiles on their faces for the food they receive. We are happy to alleviate their hunger with full, hot meals. Tired and hungry, some ask for seconds, which we provide if there is enough food. To help them even further, we provide medical assistance and hygiene articles. These basic necessities -- food, medicine, soap and water -- allow them to recuperate until they are ready to continue their journey.

As for my own experience with the feeding program, I have become more open to responding creatively to the needs of the poor. As a Divine Word Missionary, I assume that the Church's preferential option for the poor comes from Christ the Incarnate Word.

It is in caring for the poor and neglected that I am actually ministering to the Lord himself. This is very clear in chapter 25 of the Gospel of St. Matthew: Whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters (the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, etc.) we do for the Lord. My spiritual foundation in the Word impels me to put the last first.

I personally find the presence of the Word in the realities of immigrants. This mission is

See ECUADOR, Page 10

Piarist Fathers work in U.S., Puerto Rico

The Piarist Fathers have been very busy with several projects in their missions this year thanks to the generosity of donors.

In Cuba, they were able to install new water containers and a walk-in freezer with a generator and to update plumbing in some of the bathrooms. Rolling blackouts, food, water and general health supplies remain major issues in Cuba.

At San Juan school, Colegio Calasanz, new air conditioning units were installed in the middle school, and a week was spent painting all of the classrooms. Volunteers helped to stretch donations further.

In Guatemala, we continue the No Child Goes Hungry project that provides free lunches to all students in three schools in Cabrican and Huitan. In addition, much-needed professional training was provided for teachers and staff members. Finding qualified teachers in this remote

mountainous region is a challenge.

The Piarist School in eastern Kentucky continues to provide a tuition-free Catholic college preparatory school with a 100% college acceptance rate in a region that is plagued with academic and financial difficulties. This year, the Piarist Outreach Program supplied Christmas gifts for over 600 children in the hollers in addition to providing food, hygiene, clothes and over-the-counter medical supplies to people in need. All of this is possible because of our benefactors.

As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

The Piarist Fathers run missions in Kentucky, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba and Guatemala. 100% of your donation goes directly to our mission projects.



Missionaries, faculty, friends and families help paint the interior and doors of the middle school classrooms of a school, Colegio Calasanz in San Juan, this past June.



Brother Christian Bacar, Sch.P. marches in the streets of Cabrican, Guatemala for the feast day of St. Joseph Calasanz.

Priest brings missionary zeal to diocese

By Fr. Joseph P. Thomas, OSB
For The Catholic Times

Vallombrosan Benedictine spirituality, rooted in the rich monastic traditions of the Benedictine order, emphasizes community living, prayer and a balance between work and contemplation. The Vallombrosan Benedictine congregation, founded in the late 16th century in Italy by St. John Gualbert (Hero of forgiveness), has a unique approach to Benedictine spirituality, characterized by a commitment to a contemplative lifestyle while engaging actively in pastoral work and education.

In India, the Vallombrosan Benedictines have established a presence that blends traditional Benedictine values with the local culture and spirituality. Their missions often focus on education, spiritual retreats and pastoral care, reflecting the Benedictine principle of “Ora et Labora” (prayer and work). This dual commitment fosters a holistic approach to community life, where spirituality is lived out through service.

The Vallombrosan Benedictine Congregation also emphasizes the importance of silence, prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours, which are central to Benedictine spirituality. The communities often engage in retreats and spiritual formation, helping individuals deepen their relationship with God and understand their vocation.

Furthermore, the Vallombrosan Benedictine approach to spirituality embraces the diversity of culture,

incorporating local traditions and languages into their practices. This adaptability allows Vallombrosan Benedictine monks to resonate with the spiritual aspirations for serving God's people while remaining faithful to their Benedictine heritage. Overall, Vallombrosan Benedictine spirituality is a dynamic expression of a centuries-old tradition, manifesting in a way that is deeply engaged with the contemporary world while remaining rooted in prayer and communal life.

Missionary experience in Columbus

When I look back on my year of service as a Vallombrosan Benedictine missionary in the Diocese of Columbus, my heart is filled with gratitude. The Lord has led me through varied paths of ministry — parish, hospital, prison and school — and in each setting I have witnessed the living presence of Christ in His people.

My first and most constant field of service is pastoral ministry. The St. Joseph Cathedral parish became a home where I lived out my Benedictine spirit of ora et labora (prayer and work). I accompanied parishioners in their spiritual journeys, celebrated the Eucharist and administered the sacraments. Preaching the Word each Sunday was not just a duty but a dialogue with a community thirsting for the Gospel. I saw families struggling with faith, young people searching for meaning and the elderly offering wisdom born of experience. In the cathedral parish, I felt the joy of being a shepherd, guiding souls closer to Christ.

My encounters with the inmates of the prison were among the most transformative



Father Joseph Thomas

File photo

experiences of my missionary journey. Behind bars, I discovered men and women yearning for freedom not only of the body but of the soul. Many carried heavy burdens of guilt and regret, yet also a deep desire for forgiveness.

Celebrating the Eucharist within prison walls was a profound reminder that God's mercy has no boundaries. Sharing Scripture, listening to stories of brokenness and offering reconciliation showed me how the Gospel can heal even the deepest wounds. In those cells, I saw prodigal sons and daughters returning to the father's embrace.

The hospital corridors were another mission field. Walking into rooms filled with suffering, uncertainty and silence, I carried the presence of Christ the Healer.

Sometimes my words mattered little;

my presence, prayers and the quiet sign of the cross were enough. I met people at the threshold of life and death. Some asked deep questions about God while others simply wanted someone to hold their hand. Each visit reminded me that Christ Himself suffers with His people. I became a witness of hope for families facing unbearable pain and I saw how faith gives courage even in the darkest nights.

Finally, in schools, I found myself sowing seeds of faith among the young. Teaching, guiding and being present to students was both a joy and a challenge.

The young ask hard questions and seek authentic witnesses. I tried to bring Benedictine values of discipline, prayer and balance into their lives. Whether in classrooms, during school Masses or in informal conversations, I encouraged them to see their studies, friendships and talents as gifts from God to be used for service. Some of the most rewarding moments were when students shared how they experienced God in their own simple ways.

In each of these ministries, I discovered different faces of Christ: the searching parishioner, the suffering patient, the imprisoned soul and the questioning student. My missionary journey in the Diocese of Columbus has been a living testimony that God calls us to be Pilgrims of Hope, carrying His love wherever people are wounded or searching.

As a Vallombrosan Benedictine, I have tried to live my motto: ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus (“that in all things God may be glorified.”)

Diocese's support enhances altar server program in India

The Diocese of Palayamkottai in southern India successfully launched its first-ever training program for altar servers, an initiative that has already begun to transform the liturgical life of the local Church. With the generous support of the Diocese of Columbus, 1,570 children across five vicariates received formation in reverence, discipline and spirituality.

Established in 1973 after being carved out of the Archdiocese of Madurai, the Diocese of Palayamkottai today encompasses the Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Tenkasi districts. It has 60 parishes, 336 substations, 103 diocesan priests, 12 religious priests and a Catholic population of nearly 138,500.

The majority of the faithful come from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. About 75 percent are landless laborers, 15 percent are small farmers and nearly 80 percent of families live on just two Euros a day. Despite these challenges, the people remain deeply rooted in their Catholic faith and committed to the life of the Church. The diocese runs welfare programs through its Social Service Society and provides education to over 65,000 children through 108 diocesan schools alongside schools managed by religious congregations.

At the heart of faith formation in the diocese is the Christian Life Commission (CLC), which coordinates Bible,



Altar servers, priests and instructors in the Diocese of Palayamkottai in southern India have benefited from support received from the Diocese of Columbus. Photo courtesy Diocese of Palayamkottai

Catechetical and Liturgical ministries. Its programs include Vacation Bible Schools, daily and Sunday catechism, teacher training, formation of Holy Childhood Associations and seminars for catechists. The liturgical ministry provides training on the Eucharist, sacraments and seasonal celebrations, ensuring that the faithful are deeply rooted in prayer and tradition.

Although often referred to as “little angels,” the role of altar servers had been taken lightly in many parishes. Duties were carried out mechanically, often without understanding or reverence,

which diminished both the liturgy and the children's spiritual growth. Recognizing this gap, the diocese organized training to help altar servers rediscover the sacredness of their calling.

The program aimed to:

- Build awareness of the altar server's sacred role.
- Instill reverence, discipline and good behavior.
- Deepen the spiritual growth of children while uplifting parish liturgies.

Sessions included audio-visual presentations, demonstrations, printed

guides and group discussions. These engaging methods made the training both enjoyable and impactful.

The testimonies of the participants reveal the program's fruits:

- John (12, Kalvettankuzhy) became more prayerful and inspires his peers.
- Christina (10, Kalugumalai) learned the four parts of the Mass and teaches her friends.
- Mary Joyce (13, Chidambarapuram) appreciated the practical training in handling sacred vessels reverently.
- Jesu Rajan (14, Akarakattu) began organizing altar servers' meetings in his parish.
- Anto Jerry (15, Singamparai) now serves with devotion, having realized the importance of his role.

The altar servers' training has proven to be a landmark initiative. It has not only strengthened the children's faith and discipline but has also made parish liturgies more prayerful and meaningful for the wider community. Expressing gratitude, Diocese of Palayamkottai acknowledged the Diocese of Columbus for its support in making this milestone possible. With great hope, the diocese assures that such collaboration will continue in forming young faithful and advancing the mission of the Church.

ECUADOR, Continued from Page 9

non-negotiable.

At Maria Madre de la Iglesia parish, we are grateful to YOU and all who help this mission. We appreciate your generosity and willingness to feed these hungry migrants in Ecuador. We appreciate your sensitivity to our neediest brother and sister immigrants.

For more information, visit www.svdmissions.org.

LIBERIA: We survived the odds, Continued from Page 8

through acts of faith.

The 2023 mission fundraising event was only the beginning. Cooper, Emmanuel and Larmie envision a future where the fund grows, drawing wider support both from the Diocese of Columbus and Catholic communities throughout the United States. They see this as a grassroots

effort that will sustain the Liberian church for years to come while also strengthening the sense of global Catholic unity.

In the end, the story of Liberian Catholics after the civil war is one of faith persisting in tragedy, of communities rebuilding from ruins and of immigrants carrying forward that faith into new lands. The Father Paul

Voisard Memorial African Mission Fund is a living testimony to the resilience of Liberian Catholics, their gratitude toward missionaries and the unifying nature of the Catholic Church across the world.

S. Cooper Davay is the co-founder of the Father Paul Voisard Memorial African Mission Fund

Annual White Mass includes presentation on bioethics

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

The feast of St. Luke, patron saint of physicians, came early this year. While his feast day is traditionally celebrated on Oct. 18, Mass for the Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist was celebrated on Thursday, Oct. 9 at the Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center, adjacent to Ohio State University, for the diocese's annual White Mass.

The White Mass, named for the color worn by individuals in the medical profession, gathers health care professionals under the patronage of St. Luke to ask God's blessing upon patients, doctors, nurses and caregivers.

In the Columbus diocese, the yearly event is organized by the Catholic Medical Association (CMA) of Central Ohio.

Father Tad Pacholczyk, senior ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, served as the principal celebrant for the Mass. He spoke to attendees and members of the CMA afterward.

A priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, Father Pacholczyk writes and speaks on bio and medical ethics. He writes a monthly newspaper column on bioethics that is nationally syndicated to more than 30 diocesan newspapers in the United States, including The Catholic Times.

He holds a doctorate in neuroscience from Yale University and was appointed to the National Institutes of Health Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board in 2020.

In his presentation, Father Pacholczyk



Father Tad Pacholczyk was the keynote speaker at the Catholic Medical Association of Central Ohio annual meeting that followed the White Mass at the St. Thomas More Newman Center.

CT photos by Ken Snow

discussed ethics regarding use of contraception and the abortion pill.

Drawing from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ethical and Religious Directives (ERD) for Catholic Healthcare Services, he emphasized that acts of contraception are always immoral.

Father Pacholczyk encouraged attendees to "vigorously defend the claim that we care profoundly for both patients in all situations, and we're always going to do best by both of them in the concrete instances of apparent maternal fetal conflicts that may arise."



The annual White Mass for those who serve in the medical and health-related fields was hosted on Thursday, Oct. 9 by Buckeye Catholic at the St. Thomas More Newman Center.



Father Tad Pacholczyk was the principal celebrant at the White Mass. He was joined at the altar by (from left) Deacon Steve Petrill (kneeling); Father Veevin Richard Pitchaisavary, SAC, pastor of Columbus Holy Spirit Parish; Father Bob Penhallurick, pastor of Columbus St. Catharine of Siena Church and director of the diocesan Office of Pro-Life Ministries; and Father Adam Streitenberger, executive director at the Newman Center.



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Together in Holiness conference inspires married couples

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Together in Holiness, a conference presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation, was held in the Columbus diocese for the first time on Saturday, Oct. 4 at Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church.

The St. John Paul II Foundation, headquartered in Houston, Texas, proclaims the Gospel of life and family through education and formation. Its Together in Holiness conference inspires spouses to grow in holiness and empowers parents to form their children in the Catholic faith.

The event was presented in partnership with the diocesan Office of Evangelization & Catechesis.

Married and engaged couples explored the vocation of marriage and family life during the daylong event. The conference included local and national speakers, time for prayer and discussion, the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"There's a lot of good marriage prep material. There's stuff that helps couples when they're in trouble, but there was not as much ... in between to assist couples to not just survive marriage but to thrive," explained Roland Millare, vice president of curriculum and director of clergy initiatives at the foundation.

Together in Holiness does not simply fill in the gap. The conference encourages and helps couples spend their marriage growing together in holiness.

"We're all called to be saints. Marriage is, like Holy Orders, a sacrament in service of communion," Millare emphasized. "The vision is for couples to realize that they can be saints in their married life, in their life as parents, grandparents."

The event explored the supernatural aspect of marriage – that matrimony is a sacrament and couples are called to be a living sign – and offered couples practical tools for growing in holiness, developing a prayer life and raising their children.

"They realize they're not alone. They encounter other couples that are struggling to live the same life that they are," Millare noted. "They can hopefully develop some friendships, receive that grace and that encounter with the Lord with each other."

The St. John Paul II Foundation also offers a Together in Holiness series for couples after the conference. Several parishes in the Columbus diocese currently offer the series for ongoing formation.

"We get continuing education, formation in our varying



Monica and Renzo Ortega speak to the couples gathered at the Together in Holiness Conference on Saturday, Oct. 4 at Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church. The Ortegas are authors, national speakers and hosts of a marriage podcast.

Photos courtesy Aaron Christy

professions: in law, in journalism, in education, engineering, but yet, we don't do this with respect to the faith, which we need to do more," Millare said. "If parents are to be the primary educators, then we should have continuing education and formation."

Each Together in Holiness conference is broken into three talks: a foundational theological talk rooted in Scripture, the early Church Fathers and lives of the saints; a practical presentation offered by a local couple; and a talk from national speakers with a sending mission.

At the Columbus conference, Renzo and Monica Ortega, authors, national speakers and hosts of the marriage podcast Two Become Family, spoke about a season in their 13-year marriage comparable to the story of Exodus in the Bible.

The couple, who are parents of five children and reside in Connecticut, met when Renzo was in second grade and Monica was in first. Having been friends for years in childhood, the two dated through high school and college before marrying.

The Ortegas said, because they grew up together and were high school sweethearts, they assumed marriage would be easy. Marriage was difficult in ways they did not imagine.

"That was alarming to us because we felt like we had done all the right things: We got married in the Church, we've done our marriage prep, we were not ignorant to Theology of the Body, we had a good priest who helped us through our marriage prep," Monica recalled.

"We didn't want to get divorced, but there was a point in our marriage that we thought we might not make it," Renzo added. "This is after two, three years in – two, three kids in – we did not think that we'd be able to have this."

The Ortegas reminded couples that they made a choice to prioritize their marriage and center it on Jesus Christ, His Church and the faith. Monica

acknowledged it can be complicated, difficult and a daily choice.

"We, at some point in our marriage – and it happened a lot faster than we thought – we had to start making the choices to choose our marriage," she said.

The couple learned that marriage often reveals to heal.

"God was revealing something to us about us, about our spouse that need healing, that needed to be worked on, that needed to be fixed – and our marriage, because of its permanence, because we're not going to get divorced, it's a permanent reminder of that road to healing," Monica explained. "It's a permanent reminder of more and more is going to be revealed."

Every time they fought, thought negatively about each other or received corrective criticism, they believed something in their marriage was broken.

"I cannot tell you how many fights we had, and they were the same fight over and over and over again, and they were about all the things and nothing at the same time," Renzo admitted.

As they struggled to love, Renzo said they learned that they must allow themselves to first be loved by Christ. They had to receive God's love to love each other.

"Usually we try to grind our way to holiness, right? There's the grind culture that says that if you want to get better, go be better, go do better, go do more, wake up at 5, do the things you got to do, work out – everything," Renzo said. "That's not how grace works."

"We have to allow the Lord, and we cooperate with the Lord, so that He loves us. First love is revealed to us. We encounter love, and then we experience it and make it our own."

Renzo was not fulfilling his vocational call to love his wife as Christ loved and died for the Church.

He said he discovered that he was a "passive man." He failed



Kathi and Kevin Lowry speak about marriage and relationships during the conference. They are parishioners at Columbus Holy Family Church.

to take initiative and waited for Monica to tell him what to do.

Fear of making a mistake or not doing the "right thing" led him to do nothing unless directed by his wife.

"That's built into our masculinity, to be the ones that initiate. When you are passive, there's something in our marriage that was a little bit broken because she ended up having to say, 'Do this; do this; do this,' and then it was an extra thing put on her," Renzo recalled.

"I would say things like, 'I would die on a cross; I would take a bullet for her,' but I didn't clean up after myself," he explained. "I would 'die for her,' but I wouldn't die for her in the little things, and that's where God challenged me."

Monica had her struggles, too. She thought motherhood would come naturally, she said, but found it difficult and humbling. She reached a point where she wanted to escape.

She recalled feeling as though she were drowning or suffocating. Marriage was not as Monica thought it would be, so she believed she was the problem.

She had disordered her identity by putting her worth into performance and perfection. A former high school teacher, she received affirmation as a favorite teacher and from her students excelling.

Motherhood, she explained, did not come with a pat on the back or bonus on a paycheck. She worked through struggles with codependency – being a "people pleaser" – and avoiding conflict by escapism.

She reminded the audience that God brought the Israelites through the exodus in Egypt. Christ brings His people through the cross to the resurrection.

"Jesus died for you and for your marriage, for your family, so your spouse is a permanent reminder of that reality, of that Gospel message – the whole part of it," she said.

"Our spouse is a reminder that suffering is real, and our spouse is also a reminder that unconditional love is real. The two can coexist."

"The sacrifices, the difficulties that God brings about were beautiful," Renzo added, "because He brings about suffering in ways that we don't realize how He's using it, but He made me better for when I needed to be better."

Devonte and Alexina McKee, who are parishioners at Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, enjoyed dedicating time to their marriage at the conference.

"It was one of those things that you put on your calendar the same way you do vacations," Devonte said of the conference, "because maybe down the line I'm going to need this."

The husband and father is a school counselor at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle and his wife is a nurse. The couple have been married for seven years and have three children.

They appreciated spending a day with like-minded couples.

"You're talking with other people, building that community with other people and being able to see other people's struggles and know that you're not alone," Devonte explained. "A huge thing of being in a marriage is being able to have those resources, so it's super nice to be able to have that today."

The McKees were also reminded of the sacrificial nature of matrimony.

"The quote that has really continued to sit on my heart would be, 'This is My Body given up for you,'" Alexina said, "that constant sacrificing and remembering I'm not just here in this body, but my body is truly for my spouse, and what am I doing to be that light and joy of God to my spouse?"

"Offering yourself the same way Christ has offered Himself up to us is something that really stuck out to me," Devonte added. "To be able to do that just seems like a calling for us."

Kevin and Kathi Lowry, parishioners at Columbus Holy Family Church, served as local speakers at the conference. Kevin is an author and chief finance officer for the diocese, and Kathi spent 30 years homeschooling their eight now-adult children.

The couple met at Franciscan University of Steubenville, although both were not Catholic. They married in 1989 and converted to Catholicism three years later.

They offered five practical tips for marriage. Kevin encouraged couples foremost to pray relentlessly followed by speaking to their spouse with honor. Spouses, they noted, can differ in how they speak.

The Lowrys explained that Kathi is not a words-of-

CONFERENCE: Together in Holiness inspires married couples, *Continued from Page 12*

affirmation person, while Kevin was raised by a very affirmative mother. "He arrived to me like that, thinking that I should be so effusive with such positive words to him every day of his life, and I am not," Kathi said.

When communicating, they encouraged couples to stay present. The Lowrys read in a book that a couple who brought up past arguments was not "staying in Cleveland."

"They were taking the argument to Cincinnati or to Columbus. They brought in all of this other junk that was from a long time ago," Kathi said of the analogy.

"We get to say to each other, 'Hey, you just left Columbus. You're not allowed to do that.' We get to stay here in today's argument, stay present in the moment."

They noted, thirdly, forgiveness is essential in marriage. Kevin concluded that if people truly understood the value of forgiveness, they would wait for people to wrong them simply so they could forgive.

Kathi shared a story of her last conversation with her father before he died. In tears, she told the audience that he rejected her.

A diocesan priest guided her in understanding that she could choose self-pity or forgive her father and offer that pain to God.

"That's the power of



Roland Millare of the St. John Paul II Foundation speaks at the Together in Holiness Conference.

redemptive suffering," Kevin noted. "It's something that we didn't understand at all in our upbringing as non-Catholics, but it's been very profound and hugely helpful because it's just another way that the Lord has infused into us that we can use for our own benefit and for others."

They advised couples to be present to their spouse, and finally, accept challenges in marriage.

Kevin explained that suffering brings joy, so individuals should desire it. He recognized the level

of trust in God required to pray in thanksgiving for suffering.

"I think some of the saints are on this, in terms of how the particular cross that we're given has been measured specifically for us and for our sanctification and salvation," he said.

Millare presented on the Holy Eucharist and family as the domestic church. Every family, he said, has a mission to guard, reveal and communicate love.

Families are a living reflection of the Trinity. They reflect love shared between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They share



The Together in Holiness Conference ends with Mass on Saturday evening at Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church. Photos courtesy Andy Long

in God's love for humanity and the Church, His bride.

To fulfill the mission of love, couples were encouraged to practice presence, sacrifice and communion.

Millare asked couples to consider if they are fully and intentionally present to their spouse. Couples considered obstacles and resolutions to giving their spouse a gift of presence.

Married love, Millare explained, foreshadows the sacrificial love of Christ the Bridegroom. Spouses are called

to make a free gift of themselves.

In communion, the audience was encouraged to take steps as a couple and family to grow closer to Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The conference concluded with a 5 p.m. Mass of Anticipation (for Sunday Mass) at St. Matthew Church celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes.



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37 women receive St. Mother Teresa Awards

Thirty-seven women were recognized as recipients of the St. Mother Teresa Award on Sunday, Sept. 28 at Columbus St. Catharine of Siena Church.

The awards are presented annually by the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women to individuals who are living lives in the spirit of St. Teresa and are strong in their Catholic faith, engaged and involved in parish communities, and whose example of devotion and dedication is in the tradition and spirit of the holy and humble saint.

A lunch was provided for recipients and guests, and Bishop Earl Fernandes offered remarks.

The St. Mother Teresa Award recipients were: Laurie Alrich (Columbus St. Peter/Powell St. Joan of Arc Parish), Janet Baird (posthumous) (Columbus Our Lady of Peace), Monica Beadles (Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church), Jackie



Bishop Earl Fernandes recognizes the St. Mother Teresa Award winners on Sept. 28 at Columbus St. Catharine of Siena Church.
CT photo by Ken Snow

Bensman (St. Brendan the Navigator), LeeAnn Breeze (Columbus St. Cecilia Church), Margaret Calderone (St. Peter/St. Joan of Arc), Elizabeth Carle (Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle Church), Bi Bi Coleman-Portell (Columbus Christ the King Church), Michele Ellis (Columbus Holy Family Church), Ann Fisher

(Chillicothe Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles Parish), Tammy Foeller (New Albany Church of the Resurrection), Patricia Green (Columbus St. Patrick Church), Cheryl Anne Grogg (Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish), Mary Elizabeth Gunkel (Zanesville St. Nicholas Church), Ann Hamm (Our Lady,

Queen of the Apostles), Lynn Harden (Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church), Karina Hernandez (St. Thomas the Apostle), Lucienne Thomasi Jawo (Columbus St. Margaret of Cortona Church), Yvonne King (Newark Blessed Sacrament Church), Mary Beth Lee (Newark St. Francis de Sales Church), Lisa

Maurer, D.O. (St. Francis de Sales), Mary Jo Mayhan (Christ the King), Patricia Moore (Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles), Joannie Neal (St. Thomas the Apostle), Michele Niklaus (St. Brendan the Navigator), Shirley Nyhan (St. Thomas the Apostle), Deanna Oppenheimer (Columbus St. Andrew Church), Mary Beth Poe (Circleville St. Joseph Church), Lisa Rehack (Delaware St. Mary Church), Lindsay Rerko, M.D. (Worthington St. Michael the Archangel Church), Margaret Rurak (St. Cecilia), Jan Sampson (St. Brendan the Navigator), Margaret Schmelzer (Blessed Sacrament), Holly Shields (Columbus St. Agatha Church), Kristy Skocik (St. Peter/St. Joan of Arc), Mary Vantour (Columbus St. Catharine of Siena Church) and Anna Wang (St. Andrew).

Annette Roth serves as president of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Josephinum 4-Miler draws more than 800 participants

By Friends of the Josephinum

Who won the Josephinum 4-Miler Run/Walk on Saturday, Sept. 27? Every seminarian at the Pontifical College Josephinum (PCJ)!

The seventh annual 4-Miler Run/Walk drew more than 800 participants who gathered at the PCJ campus on a sunny, warm and blessed day for the charity event. The crowd included priests, religious, men, women, youth and a few babies in strollers — maybe even some future seminarians!

The event was a huge success for all as well as another successful fundraiser for the seminarians! Special thanks go to the two dozen sponsors, including the Catholic Diocese of Columbus and The Catholic Foundation, for their financial support of this year's event.

Wilderness Outreach volunteers prepared freshly grilled breakfast burritos, and White Castle provided complimentary Slider sandwiches. Jars of Trappist jam and bottles of red wine were also provided for everyone.

Many Friends of the Josephinum members distributed "goodies" for all to enjoy after the event and assisted 4-Miler



Fathers Tom Gardner (left) Michael Hartge display their Josephinum 4-Miler medals.

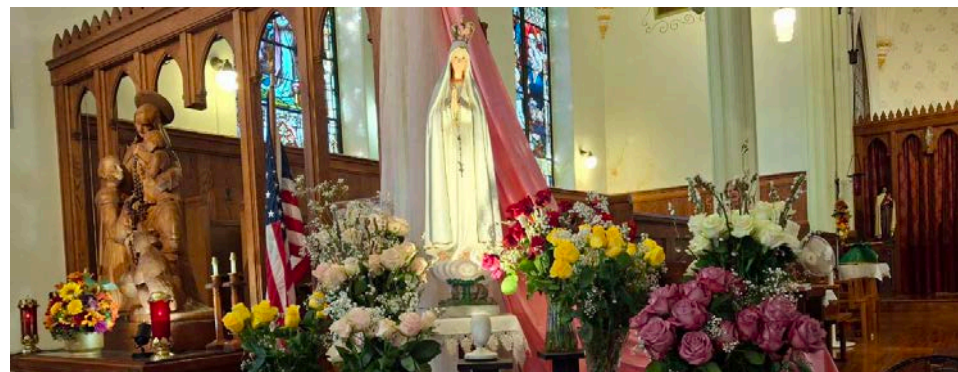
Run/Walk founders and hosts John Reiner and Don Brown.

The event was conducted and managed by M3S Sports and its team of volunteers. Photos were taken of event participants as each crossed the finish line and are available on the event's registration website.



Clergy, religious and seminarians wear their finisher medals after the Josephinum 4-Miler Run/Walk on Saturday, Sept. 27 at the Pontifical College Josephinum. Photos courtesy Friends of the Josephinum

Roses on Rosary Sunday in Somerset



A tradition at parishes staffed by Dominican friars is to distribute blessed roses at Masses on the first weekend of October when Rosary Sunday is observed by the universal Church. Each person who attends Mass is invited to the altar to receive a rose to take home. At Somerset St. Joseph Church, where the Dominicans have a long history of service dating to the 1800s, roses were distributed by Father Andre-Joseph LaCasse, OP, the parish pastor, on Sunday, Oct. 5. All weekend Masses in Somerset are currently being held at St. Joseph Church while Holy Trinity Church is being renovated. A rosary was also prayed nearby in a rosary garden at the site of the first Mass in Ohio. Father Donald Franks, a retired diocesan priest, joined Father LaCasse and parishioners for the rosary, a prayer that was given to St. Dominic, the founder of the order bearing his name, in a vision by the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1214. St. Dominic made it his mission to spread devotion to the rosary. Photos/Somerset St. Joseph Church



Pet blessing, parade at St. Timothy



Columbus St. Timothy Church hosted its second annual Blessing of the Animals on Thursday, Oct. 2 in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. The pets ranged from quiet kittens caged in their carriers and howling, long-eared bassets pulling their owners to the parish green. Golden retrievers made up the largest pack and outnumbered all other breeds. Maverick and his handler, Officer Dave Miller, and Bodhi, with his handler from the Columbus Division of Police Therapy Dog Unit, led the long pet parade around the neighborhood. After the parade, Father David Poliafico blessed the animals on the parish green. A raffle followed the blessing with giveaways.

Photo courtesy St. Timothy Church

Foster grandparents bridge generations to build stronger community

In classrooms across Franklin County, something extraordinary is happening every day: older adults, many of whom live on limited incomes, are stepping into schools as foster grandparents — and in doing so, they are shaping a better future for everyone.

At first glance, the Foster Grandparent Program is a simple idea: pair low-income seniors with elementary and Head Start students to offer tutoring, mentorship and companionship. But its true power lies in its dual mission and far-reaching impact. It helps children thrive academically and emotionally, and it offers seniors the chance to stay engaged, supplement their income and find purpose beyond their own challenges.

Every week, foster grandparents visit schools to work one-on-one with students who teachers identify as needing extra help in reading, math or social skills. But the effect extends beyond academic support. Foster grandparents also model kindness, perseverance and life skills — lessons that can't be measured by test scores alone.

A single intervention can change a life and a family

One powerful example shows how a seemingly small act can create a ripple of hope. Celia, a foster grandparent with three years of experience, noticed that her third-grade student, Jasmyn, began falling behind. Once an eager learner, Jasmyn stopped doing homework, struggled to stay awake in class, and her reading progress stalled.

Because of her foster grandparent training, Celia knew to look beyond academics. With gentle questions, Celia learned that Jasmyn's family had lost electricity in their apartment and were sleeping on the kitchen floor, using the gas stove for heat. Exhausted and without space to study, Jasmyn simply couldn't keep up.

Celia quickly shared what she learned with the teacher, school administration and Catholic Social Services. Together, they mobilized support — working with the utility company and community partners to restore power and help stabilize the family's situation.

Without Celia's intervention, Jasmyn could have continued to slip further behind, possibly labeled as disruptive or disinterested. Instead, Jasmyn got the help she needed to stay



Catholic Social Services' Foster Grandparent Program pairs seniors with elementary and Head Start students to offer tutoring and mentorship. Photo/CSS

on track — a powerful reminder that academic success often depends on meeting basic needs first.

Building equity, resilience and community health

This story is not unique. In Franklin County, about 19,800 seniors live in poverty, and the rate is even higher among African American seniors. The Foster Grandparent Program helps address this inequity by

providing a modest stipend to volunteers — most of whom are women and people of color — helping them cover essential expenses.

At the same time, the program strengthens the future for the next generation. Many of the students served come from low-income families and are students of color. Foster grandparents help close opportunity gaps by providing individualized support, encouragement and a

caring presence.

Beyond academics, the program also fights social isolation among seniors — a risk factor linked to poor health and early mortality — by giving them meaningful roles where they know they are needed and valued.

Quiet force for systemic change

The Foster Grandparent Program is more than tutoring sessions or warm smiles in hallways. It is a model of community care — where seniors find purpose and stability, students receive the support they need to succeed and schools gain trusted allies to help address deeper challenges.

Through thousands of moments like Celia's with Jasmyn, the program weaves a stronger safety net for the whole community: a network of hope, resilience and shared responsibility.

By connecting generations, the Foster Grandparent Program doesn't just change individual stories — it helps create a future where everyone, regardless of age or income, has a chance to thrive.

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Limited table space is still available for vendors with crafts and wares to sell.

For information, contact Judy Brown, 614-446-4812
judyzumba09@gmail.com.

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Catholic Social Services sponsors Everything But the Turkey drive

As Thanksgiving approaches, Catholic Social Services (CSS) is once again uniting with local parishes, schools and community partners to ensure families in need can gather around a full holiday table. The first Everything But the Turkey Food Collection Drive provides all the fixings for a traditional Thanksgiving meal — except the turkey — helping 2,000 people celebrate with dignity and joy.

Volunteers and donors contribute staple items such as stuffing mix, canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy and dessert mixes. These items are then assembled into food boxes and distributed to families across central Ohio. Each box pairs with a donated gift card to purchase a turkey, ensuring that every family receives a complete Thanksgiving meal.

"This effort is about more than

food — it's about giving families a sense of tradition and hope during the holiday season," said Julie Naporano, vice president of development for CSS. "When our community comes together in generosity, we can make sure no one is left out."

The drive engages parishioners, students, businesses and individuals who collect food and volunteer their time to sort, pack and deliver the boxes. The partners include Elford Construction, Columbus St. Andrew Parish, Kimball Midwest, Diocese of Columbus, Bank of America, Mount Carmel East Hospital, Sunbury St. John Neumann Parish, Columbus St. Patrick Parish, Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School's football team, Mercer Company, Granville St. Edward the Confessor Parish, Shoenfelt family, and Worthington St. Michael School's

eighth-grade class.

With food insecurity continuing to impact families in the community, the need is greater than ever. There has been a 15% increase in need over this time last year.

If you are interested in joining the community-wide effort, donations can be dropped off at one of three locations:

- o Our Lady of Guadalupe Center, 3631 Soldano Blvd., Columbus

- o Catholic Social Services, 1031 Brice St., Newark

- o Catholic Social Services, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus

As one volunteer shared, "It's incredible to see how just a few cans of food from each household add up to make such a big impact. Together, we're giving families more than the gift of Thanksgiving — it's the gift of faith in action."

Father Sizemore installed as Church of the Resurrection pastor



Father David Sizemore (left) and Bishop Earl Fernandes sign documents on the altar at a Mass that included the installation of the new pastor at New Albany Church of the Resurrection on Sunday, Oct. 5. Father Sizemore was most recently the pastor at Newark St. Francis de Sales Church before his appointment to Church of the Resurrection this summer. Photo courtesy Aaron Christy

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Refurbished pipe organ finds home at Newman Center

By Ken Snow

For The Catholic Times

The young Buckeye Catholic congregation at the Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center, adjacent to the Ohio State University campus, is known for the enthusiasm of its singing. Now it has an organ of sufficient quality to help it “make a joyful noise unto the Lord” (Psalm 100:1).

The instrument, built in 1969 by the Moller organ company of Pennsylvania, replaces a portable electric organ owned by the Diocese of Columbus that also was used at men’s and women’s conferences and other events. The Moller organ was dedicated and blessed by Bishop Earl Fernandes on March 29 at the Newman Center; located at 64 W. Lane Ave. Also present for the dedication was Bishop Fernandes’ predecessor, Bishop Robert Brennan of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York.

“The previous instrument, while beneficial for the time, couldn’t fully support the congregation,” said Nicole Simental, music director for Buckeye Catholic, the ministry affiliated with the center. “One of the blessings here at Buckeye Catholic is that the students sing full heart and voice. They are a singing congregation and they love to glorify the Lord, so the ‘new’ pipe organ, being able to support them, is really vital to that.”

Though it’s only 55 years old – relatively young for an organ – the instrument has served congregations at three sites in two states. It was first installed in a church in New Jersey. That church fell into disuse and the console and its pipes were placed in storage.

It was acquired by the Diocese of Columbus a few years ago and was installed in Bremen St. Mary Church. Shawn Kenney, director of the Museum of Catholic Art and History in Columbus, and other organ enthusiasts



Bishop Earl Fernandes blesses the organ for Buckeye Catholic at the St. Thomas More Newman Center.

volunteered to install it at Bremen and update its computer system.

The Bremen church was closed in a merger with Lancaster St. Bernadette Church as part of the diocese’s Real Presence Real Future initiative. That left the organ again without a home, but not for long.

Simental said in the summer of 2024 that the Newman Center was looking for a new organ and Father Dan Olvera, St. Bernadette pastor, offered to donate any components from the Moller organ the center needed. These turned out to be the console, the central pipes and the two flanking cabinets holding additional pipes. Simental was familiar with the organ because she had been the organist for its dedication ceremony.

Components such as a larger blower and leather bellows (re-leathered by Kenney) came from a cache of rescued parts he keeps in a storage facility.

Kenney oversaw installation of the organ at its new home by a small group of dedicated volunteers. The process took about four months. The blower, new ductwork and the bellows were installed by Newman Center maintenance coordinator Jim Severance. Once the

installation was finished, Clark Wilson, organist for the Ohio Theater in Columbus, helped with the final testing to give the organ its voice.

“The organ is fully functional now, although there are a few things we need to do to it,” Kenney said. “One is that we’re going to add a set of large wooden bass pipes which came from (now-closed) Columbus Corpus Christi Church -- another example of saving these instruments from a dumpster fate. These pipe organs were built to last forever, but we need to maintain them and store them properly. This one has been re-homed at least two or three times, and hopefully it will serve Buckeye Catholic for many years to come.”

“It’s important that people know that pipe organs work so well with choirs because they, like a choir itself, have ‘lungs.’ They have air that passes through and ‘breathes’ into the pipes, literally giving it sound, and thus they blend so well with the voices of the choir. Plus, they are loud. A big instrument can be heard in a large church and an entire congregation can sing with it.”

Installation of the organ is part of a remodeling of the



Shawn Kenney plays the recently installed organ for Buckeye Catholic. Kenney oversaw its installation. CT photo by Ken Snow

center that began in 2022 and included creation of a choir loft in what had been an elevated, glass-enclosed ‘cry room’ for children. The building’s former choir space was on its main floor adjacent to the sanctuary. Its only instruments were a piano and the portable organ.

“I love Jesus and the Church and I love sacred music – I’m very passionate about it – and I love helping young people become closer to Christ through the ministry of music within the (diocesan Office of) Divine Liturgy,” Simental said. “The new choir loft has really expanded our ability to do this, especially with the recent addition of the pipe organ there.”

Kenney has been involved with the museum since its earliest days as the Holy Family Jubilee Museum in the former Columbus Holy Family School. “The museum helped spark my interest in pipe organs,” he said. “I started volunteering at the original museum when I was 18 and became the director 10 years ago. Over the years, I gradually learned about the workings of pipe organs and was mentored in playing the instruments by a number of highly skilled organists. I also began accumulating and storing parts

of old pipe organs whenever they became available.”

The former Newman Center organ “was getting old and was struggling. There are notes that weren’t working. There were electronics that were starting to fail, which is common. The problem was in finding an instrument which would work in its place. At Newman, there’s a very weird space upstairs in the loft to accommodate the necessary components of an organ, as well as the members of the choir.”

“I think that what Nicole’s doing at Buckeye Catholic, with the organ and the choir, is that the music is more than just worshipping God; it’s evangelization,” Kenney said. “St. Augustine of Hippo is said to have written, ‘He who sings well prays twice.’ And that’s what they’re doing there. The students who go there often face a huge struggle going to college. That’s when a lot of them lose their faith. So by singing, having beautiful music and sharing in a beautiful Mass and church tradition, that’s going to keep them strong in their faith throughout their college years.”

Equestrian Order invests, honors faithful from diocese

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem invested, promoted and awarded members of the Catholic faithful from the Diocese of Columbus at the North Central Lieutenancy’s annual Investiture held Sept. 12-15 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In a solemn investiture ceremony held Sunday, Sept. 14 at the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids, Bishop Jerome Listecky, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and former Coadjutor Prior, invested David Amrine of Worthington St. Michael the Archangel Church, Cody and Angela Egner of Chillicothe Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles Parish, John Paul and Christine Munhall of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Parish, and Richard Wanner Jr. and Rita Wanner of Columbus St. Andrew

Church into the Equestrian Order as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre.

A Memorial Mass followed the investiture ceremony, celebrated by Archbishop Listecky and concelebrated by archbishops, bishops and priests of the Order.

In a separate ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 13, Bishop Ronald Hicks of the Diocese of Joliet and Coadjutor Prior promoted Brett Gissel of St. Michael the Archangel Church to the Equestrian rank of Knight Commander and Mark McGrath of Columbus St. Patrick Church to the rank of Knight Grand Cross.

At the same ceremony, Bishop Hicks awarded Charles and Susan Hickey of West Jefferson Ss. Simon & Jude Church the Silver Palm of Jerusalem, one of the Order’s highest honors. It is

awarded by the Cardinal Grand Master to longstanding members of the Order who have attained the rank of Grand Cross and have distinguished themselves by extraordinary service to the Order and the Holy Land. The Hickeys currently serve the North Central Lieutenancy as the Vice-Chancellors of Formation.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is a Pontifical Order of Chivalry under the protection of the Holy See, with origins that can be traced to 1099 and the First Crusade. Members make a lifelong commitment to live a life of the Order’s spirituality and to the Order’s mission of service and support for the Christians in the Holy Land. The Order numbers over 30,000 members worldwide.



Susan and Charles Hickey, recipients of the Equestrian Order’s Silver Palm of Jerusalem award, are joined by Thomas Olejniczak (left), Bishop Ronald Hicks and Lieutenant Emeritus Max Brown (right). Photo courtesy Equestrian Order

Hartley graduate creates 'The Road to Damascus' musical

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Like many young graduates, Joseph Sheridan, a Reynoldsburg native, had dreams and aspirations. In 2019, he graduated from Columbus Bishop Hartley High School and later earned a degree from Miami University in theater and arts management and entrepreneurship.

He had a passion for developing plays.

In college, Sheridan spent time performing, writing, managing and directing. After graduation, he spent a year in an interdisciplinary theater apprenticeship at Commonweal Theatre Company in Minnesota. He developed skills self-producing theater.

His work behind the scenes is now front and center. Sheridan's first professionally produced musical, "The Road to Damascus," is currently featured in the Columbus diocese at Ohio Star Theater in Sugarcreek near New Philadelphia.

The play began running in May and will be performed through Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Ohio Star features a musical every year for about six months. Sheridan began as an actor at the theater.

"I got a call back at the United Professional Theatre Auditions for Ohio Star Theater," he recalled. "I never thought that I would wind up at a company doing Christian theater."

Yet, God had other plans.

There was a time Ohio Star did not produce theatrical work. It contracted with Blue Gate Musicals, which produced musicals there.

"They did Amish romance musicals, but the Amish really didn't care for the Amish romance musicals because it was about the Amish but didn't really involve the Amish," Sheridan explained.

"They didn't think it was a very good representation of them. They wouldn't come and see the shows."

The theater switched to Bible-based musicals, beginning



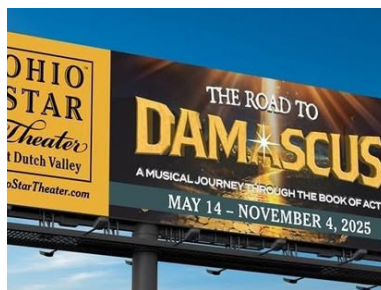
Joseph Sheridan, a Columbus Bishop Hartley High School graduate, has produced his first professional musical.



The final scene in The Road to Damascus includes an angel. Photos courtesy Joseph Sheridan



Mary Magdalene is one of the characters from the Acts of the Apostles in The Road to Damascus.



A billboard advertises The Road to Damascus at the Ohio Star Theatre in Sugarcreek.



A scene between Syntyche and Barnabas is featured in The Road to Damascus.

with one from Sight & Sound Theatres based in Pennsylvania and Missouri.

Sight & Sound licensed a show to Ohio Star. After one season, the professional partnership was discontinued.

Ohio Star considered producing an original musical. In August 2024, artistic director Tammie McKenzie contacted Sheridan.

"She reached out to me because she had found out that I was a writer, that I was involved in new work development and said, 'Hey, do you have any interest in writing a show for Ohio Star?'" he recounted.

"And I said, 'Yes, I am absolutely the most interested in that I have ever been.'"

The theater's first original play was based on the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament.

"I remember hearing one of my pastors say – when I was in high school – that the book of Acts reads like fiction," Sheridan recalled.

"It is a very high-intensity, high-energy book of the Bible and is an entertaining read if you just sit down from start to finish. I was like, I haven't read through all of Acts before just start to finish, and I read it, and I was like, yeah, there's a lot here."

Ohio Star wanted to produce the show in 2025, but it required a quick turnaround. Sheridan collaborated with a lyricist and composer.

"The three of us put together the show 'The Road to Damascus' based on the book of Acts in about 10 weeks," Sheridan said, "and it's now been playing here in Sugarcreek for over 100 performances."

The musical includes 22 actors, 13 men and nine women. When writing the show, Sheridan drew from his Catholic roots.

He had several years of Catholic formation under his belt from his childhood years at Reynoldsburg St. Pius X School and Bishop Hartley. Writing

"The Road to Damascus" was largely influenced by his time there.

"I attribute a lot of it to my Catholic education and learning how to read the Bible in a way that was able to help me extract more meaning from the story," Sheridan said.

"When I was at Bishop Hartley, I learned from my religion teacher, Mrs. Tera Chun. She was a big influence on me and how to read the Bible."

In high school, Sheridan spent time researching Bible translations and its contributing sources.

"That toolkit that was given to me by my Catholic education was invaluable in the development of the story of the play," he said.

He wanted to ensure his writing was theologically accurate.

"In a musical, you have to take some dramatic license, but we also want to make sure that we're doing right by

the Biblical stories," he said. "Getting it wrong would be not only disastrous to people's perception of the play but also just wouldn't sit right with any of us if we felt like we weren't doing the Biblical text justice."

Acts of the Apostles includes 28 chapters. Due to time restraint, the musical focuses on the first half of the book through chapter 12.

"We had this framing device where we're going back and forth between the shipwreck that happens at the end of the Acts of the Apostles with Paul on the way to Rome and finding that driving force within Paul," Sheridan explained.

"The show is trying to make the plot feel as continuous as possible, despite knowing that we have some greater stretches of time in between."

The show begins with Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Blessed Mother and 12 Apostles who were gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem.

The musical covers the arrest of the Apostles and stoning of St. Stephen, the first martyr.

It showcases Peter, who Jesus declared as the rock upon which He would build His Church, and Saul's conversion as Paul, when he was knocked off his horse and blinded enroute to the city of Damascus.

An intermission is held between Act I and Act II. The play breaks as Saul is blinded on the road. Act II focuses on Paul post-conversion as a disciple after persecuting Christians.

Due to the musical's success, Sheridan and the creative team were asked back for another musical.

Sheridan's next show will be "Elijah: Prophet of Fire," based on the prophet Elijah in the Old Testament. It will premier in May 2026 and run through November 2026.

For tickets to "The Road to Damascus," visit

www.Tickets-Center.com/Ohio-Star-Theater.

Students, pets receive blessing at Immaculate Conception



Students and their pets gathered outside for a blessing on Friday, Oct. 3 at Columbus Immaculate Conception School from Father Matt Hoover, the parish pastor. The pet blessing took place in anticipation of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi the following day on Saturday, Oct. 4. Photos courtesy Immaculate Conception School

Fisher Catholic presents 'Radium Girls'

Students at Lancaster Fisher Catholic High School will tell a cautionary tale of how science and health are sometimes sacrificed for profit when they present their fall play, "Radium Girls," on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. in the school, 1803 Granville Pike.

The play, written by D.W. Gregory in 2000 and made into a movie in 2018, is based on the story of young women who unwittingly poisoned themselves in the 1920s by painting watch dials with radium-based paint.

It traces the efforts of Grace Fryer, one of the dial painters, as she fights for her day in

court. Her chief adversary is her former employer, an idealistic man who cannot bring himself to believe that the same element that shrinks tumors could have anything to do with a terrifying rash of illnesses among his employees.

As the case goes on, Grace finds herself battling not just the corporation for whom she worked, but with family and friends who fear that her campaign for justice will backfire.

Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.fishercatholicarts.ludus.com/200497372 or at the door.

DeSales sophomores experience poverty in simulation

By Meredith Keller
For The Catholic Times

Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School sophomores experienced what it's like to struggle with poverty while participating in a simulation during a class retreat earlier this month.

The Think Tank Cost of Poverty Experience is a program brought to the school on Oct. 7-8 by Deacon Dave Bezusko, the diocese's director of Catholic Charities.

In the simulation, students were divided into family groups that experience the challenges of poverty. Each family was given a number instead of a name because "many families in poverty feel that they are just a number without dignity," Deacon Bezusko said.

The simulation was broken into four periods of 15 minutes. Each family member had different tasks to complete such as paying bills, finding work or transportation, obtaining childcare or buying groceries.

DeSales student Malynn Saka oversaw the Mega Mart store in the simulation and said she noticed that "most people didn't have enough money to buy healthy, let alone affordable groceries." And by the end of the simulation, there were 14 families who didn't go to the grocery store. "This goes to show just how many families go hungry when faced with poverty," she said.

The experience made her "realize how hard it is to be in poverty."

Not only were some not able to buy food, countless families were evicted from their homes.

"Eviction is a huge problem that lots of families in poverty face," Deacon Bezusko said.

Sophomore Joseph Vemboi was part of a family group. He stepped into the shoes of an uncle who migrated from Mexico to the United States.

Vemboi said his eyes were opened



DeSales students study family scenarios during the Cost of Poverty Experience.

to "how hard it is for people to live in poverty, especially those who don't speak English."

He shared that he felt frustrated throughout the exercise because there were so many obstacles for him to get the help he needed, but most of the time he felt overlooked or underappreciated.

Sophomore Dylan Csee also was part of a family, playing the role of a Hispanic grandmother. He learned that "living in poverty makes it impossible to do even the smallest things ... even communicating is difficult."

By the end of the four-week immersion experience, he said he felt that he could really understand how people in poverty are limited in various ways.

Other students voiced that they felt "disappointed, mad or frustrated" but came away with more compassion for impoverished families.

"To suffer is what compassion means," Deacon Bezusko said.

"We all need hope," Deacon Bezusko added, as it is proclaimed in Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me,



Deacon Dave Bezusko converses with DeSales students about the Cost of Poverty Experience. Photos courtesy St. Francis DeSales

I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

Keeping in mind that "we all have the dignity of being a child of God," Deacon Bezusko stressed that "we need to understand our brothers and sisters in need better" while keeping in mind the Scripture passage: "And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:40).

In a video played for the students, one of the women represented in the simulation reminded the participants that "I am not just a number. I deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. ... We need less programs and more people to walk alongside me. ... I'm not a problem to be solved but a person. My life has purpose. We all have something to give."



Columbus St. Francis DeSales students spend time in the school chapel for reflection and prayer on the Cost of Poverty Experience.

At the end, students had the opportunity to go to the chapel for prayer in silent adoration to reflect on how Jesus comes to them in their own poverty.

"I'm proud of all the retreats we put on at St. Francis DeSales High School. Each one provides students with a different experience, but this one in particular guides students in service to others," said Mike McGoldrick, vice principal of student services at DeSales.

To learn more about the Cost of Poverty Experience, visit www.thinktank-inc.org/cope.

For questions about the program, contact Deacon Bezusko at dbezusko@columbuscatholic.org.

Five DeSales seniors named Commended Students



Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School announced that five members of the Class of 2026 have been recognized as Commended Students by the College Board. They are (from left) Emma Hahn, Ava Manfresca, Ben Reither, Charlie Brunelle and Rebecca Gebhart. The five seniors were in the top 50,000 of the 3.5 million students who took the PSAT last fall.

Photo courtesy St. Francis DeSales High School

DeSales adds kinesiology to curriculum



As Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School's Sports Medicine & Exercise Science program enters its second year, the curriculum continues to grow with the addition of Kinesiology. The course takes a clinical approach to the study of biomechanical and functional anatomy, focusing on muscles, joint systems and full-body movement patterns. It's considered an excellent foundational class for students considering a future in the medical field. The program is led by Mr. Tim Brown, a certified and licensed athletic trainer with over 27 years of experience. As program director and instructor, Mr. Brown brings valuable real-world insights into the classroom each day, enriching the learning experience for his students.

Photo courtesy St. Francis DeSales High School

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ALWAYS FAITHFUL, ALWAYS HOPEFUL, ALWAYS READY

Watterson honors couple whose legacy spans generations

By Elizabeth Pardi
For The Catholic Times

Paul and Charlene Pardi were selected as this year's Columbus Bishop Watterson High School homecoming honorees, an award that recognizes individuals who have significantly impacted the Watterson community.

Deacon Chris Campbell, Watterson's principal, said he chose the Pardis because of the couple's emphasis on family. "I consider Bishop Watterson to be a family and when I think of family, I think of Paul and Charlene Pardi," Campbell said. "They embody what the Watterson family is all about."

Watterson's staff and student body gathered together in the gym on Friday of homecoming weekend to welcome the Pardis, who were introduced by student council president Ryan Alvis and vice president Alex Das as well as senior class president Cecilia Keller.

"The Pardis have been a part of the Watterson community for nearly seven decades," Das said, adding that their oldest child began school there in 1967. All nine of Paul and Charlene's children graduated from Watterson along with 21 of their 25 grandchildren and three of their 53 great-grandchildren. Another four of their great-grandchildren are currently



Homecoming honorees Paul and Charlene Pardi speak to students and family at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School. Photos courtesy Bishop Watterson

underclassmen there.

Paul, 95, a Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School graduate who also served in the Air Force, supported his family through his business, Paul E. Pardi Builders. "Many of the homes in Upper Arlington and Clintonville were constructed by Mr. Pardi," Keller said, "one of those being the childhood home of Deacon Campbell."

Around the same time that he started his company, Paul began announcing football games for Bishop Watterson in 1958, becoming known as the voice of the Eagles, a role he filled for 58 years. In 2014, he was inducted into Watterson's athletic hall of fame. "I don't know why I should be rewarded for doing something I love," he once said of the honor.

Das then recognized Charlene's contributions to the football

program, particularly during the seasons her sons and grandsons played, when "she would make her famous meatballs for the ... team before big games," Das said. Still, she never allowed sports to overshadow the faith for her household. "Sports will not interrupt Sunday Mass," Das said, quoting Charlene, 93.

After the students' introduction of the couple, Charlene took the microphone, saying, "It's such a blessing to be here today, and I'm truly honored to stand in front of all of you in a place that has meant so much to Paul and me." She then pointed out the group of more than 65 of her and Paul's family members in attendance who had surprised them by showing up at the assembly.

Charlene then noted which sports and activities her and



A contingent of Paul and Charlene Pardi's family members join them behind the podium for the homecoming assembly at Bishop Watterson.

Paul's children participated in during their years at Watterson, such as football, girls and boys basketball, baseball, wrestling and cheerleading. "Their time at Watterson shaped who they became — not just as athletes but as leaders, teammates and people of character," she said. "The lessons they learned here are ones they've carried with them throughout their adult lives."

She then alluded to a painful time for the family in 2014 when her and Paul's daughter, Patti (Pardi) Passen, passed away at age 51.

"You see the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes in the lobby commemorating her feast day, which is February 11, the day of Patti's passing," Charlene said. The large statue was acquired by the school in honor of Patti

through donations from the Watterson family after her death. "(The community) was instrumental in supporting our family through a difficult time," Charlene said.

She concluded her speech by emphasizing to the students the value their Watterson experience will add to their lives.

"To all of you current students, please know this," she said. "You are not just receiving an education. You are inheriting a tradition — one rooted in love, faith, excellence and service. May this beautiful legacy continue for many more generations of students and families to come."

The couple celebrated their 74th wedding anniversary on Oct. 13.

Watterson seniors named National Merit Semifinalists



Four Columbus Bishop Watterson seniors have been named National Merit Semifinalists based on their performances on the 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The semifinalists are (from left) Gretchen McGowan, Cecilia Keller, Katie Graff and Nichole Bhowmick. Photos courtesy Bishop Watterson High School

Watterson seniors named National Commended Scholars



Six Columbus Bishop Watterson students have been named National Merit Commended Scholars based on their performances on the 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The Commended Scholars are (from left) Grant Clark, Anna Rose Gradisar, Alexander Das, Claire Heise, Nick Powell and Erin Meury.

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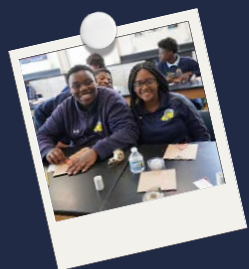
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#ROOTEDINFAITH



St. Mary German Village launches hydroponic gardens project

Columbus St. Mary middle school students are digging into science, sustainability and stewardship with the launch of two new Flex Farm hydroponic gardens from Fork Farms.

Thanks to the guidance of middle school science teacher Mrs. Katie Patti and the support of Mr. Hanson, students in grades 7 and 8 planted nearly 270 lettuce plants in September, marking the start of an exciting new chapter in hands-on education at St. Mary in the German Village area.

Each Flex Farm unit — the most efficient and scalable indoor vertical hydroponic system in the world — has the capacity to grow more than 394 pounds of fresh produce annually. Portable and space saving, the units operate on a standard electrical outlet and less than 10 square feet of space.

The two hydroponic systems are currently housed in the school's middle school science lab and "The Hub" in the main building. In addition to learning how to maintain the plants, students will monitor growth, explore hydroponic science and eventually harvest crops in about 30 days. Plans are underway for middle school students to share their knowledge and demonstrations with younger grades throughout the year.

This initiative also aligns with the school's Laudato Si' initiative, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical On Care for Our Common Home. The program emphasizes environmental stewardship and encourages communities to care for the Earth through sustainable and faith-driven practices.

"St. Mary students are hard at work



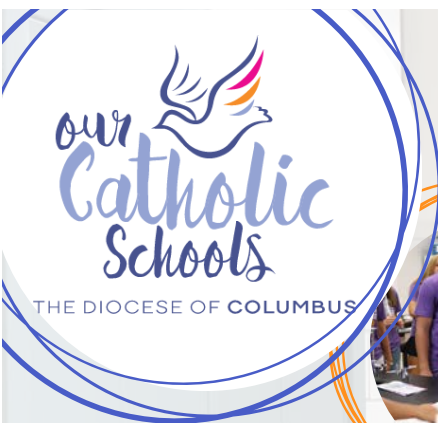
St. Mary middle school students work on their hydroponic garden project. Photo/St. Mary

growing vegetables and their minds as they work with our new hydroponic gardening centers," St. Mary principal Gina Stull said. "From starting seedlings to transferring and harvesting crops, students are learning about data collection and fertilizing to make their work a success. It's so exciting to see them eager to learn and be so engaged in science and engineering."

Mrs. Patti said, "Our hydroponic gardening program is designed to spark curiosity, cultivate responsibility, and connect science to real life. By exploring hydroponics, students connect Ohio state and NGSS science standards to real-world applications, engaging directly with sustainability, innovation, and the future of our food supply."

St. Mary School will continue to share updates as students grow and harvest produce, integrating hydroponics into the curriculum and community life.

Learn more about how we are forming well-educated men and women of faith for the future at these upcoming open houses!



In every corner of the diocese, Our Catholic Schools are working toward a common goal: to help our students become saints.



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Tuesday, October 21
6 p.m.*
newarkcatholic.org

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Educating Young Men in Grades 9 - 12
Sunday, November 2
1 p.m.*
www.stcharlesprep.org

BISHOP READY HIGH SCHOOL
Educating Grades 9-12
Sunday, November 9
1 p.m.
www.brhs.org

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES HIGH SCHOOL
Educating Grades 9 - 12
Sunday, November 9
11 a.m.*
www.sfdstallions.org

SAINT AGATHA SCHOOL
Educating PS - Grade 8
Sunday, November 9
12 p.m.
www.saintagathaschool.org

SAINT BRIGID OF KILDARE SCHOOL
Educating PS - Grade 8
Thursday, November 13
4:30 p.m.
www.stbrigidofkildare.com

PreK and Kindergarten Focus!

SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL
Educating K - Grade 8
Thursday, November 13
6 p.m.
www.stmichaelworthington.org

SAINT PAUL SCHOOL
Educating PS - Grade 8
Thursday, November 13
6 p.m.*
www.stpaulk-8.org

OUR LADY OF BETHLEHEM SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE
Serving Children 6 Weeks to Kindergarten
Thursday, November 13
6:30 p.m.*
www.ourladyofbethlehem.org

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

197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215

education.columbuscatholic.org

Grandma's Club supports Zanesville students

The Grandma's Club is a grassroots initiative started by a group of devoted grandmothers who wanted to support their grandchildren's Catholic schools in meaningful ways. What began earlier this year as a few simple gestures of faith and love has quickly grown into a full-fledged community group with 27 active members — and counting.

The idea for the club goes back several years when a few grandmothers noticed the absence of nativity scenes in classrooms at Zanesville Bishop Fenwick. Moved by the importance of faith and tradition, they quietly took it upon themselves to place nativity scenes in each classroom, helping to remind students of the true meaning of Christmas.

That same spirit of service and generosity resurfaced at this past year's Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans Annual Auction, Shimmer of the Night. A handful of grandmas donated a catered breakfast for 20-25 people, which was purchased by the parent of a graduating senior. The breakfast was used to host the senior class before graduation practice — a memorable send-off that inspired alumni director Megan Dosch to meet with two of the grandmothers, Brenda Lepi and Claire Tiberio, to discuss forming an official group.

After a mention in the school's alumni newsletter, interest in the group surged. What started as five enthusiastic grandmothers quickly grew into a vibrant network of nearly 30 women, many of whom are grandmothers of current students



or alumni of Bishop Rosecrans or Bishop Fenwick.

"This is really about building community and showing love," Dosch said. "These grandmas bring warmth, wisdom and a lot of energy — and they're already making a huge difference."

The Grandma's Club has wasted no time getting involved. In their first official act, the group provided breakfast for the joint back-to-school meeting of faculty and staff at both Bishop Rosecrans and Bishop Fenwick.

They then went above and beyond — organizing and serving a hot breakfast to the entire student body and staff of Bishop Rosecrans on the first day of school. In addition, they generously provided breakfast to both the staff and students at Bishop Rosecrans, making everyone feel welcomed and cared for as the new school year began.

Participation in the club is entirely voluntary, and events are decided collectively. Grandmas can contribute as little or as much as they wish, depending on their availability.

From baked goods and warm smiles to acts of faith and generosity, The Grandma's Club is already



The Grandma's Club is supporting students at Zanesville Catholic schools. Photo/Zanesville Catholic schools

proving to be a blessing to the school community.

"They're setting a beautiful example for our students," a Rosecrans staff member said. "It's amazing to see this kind of love and support from our wider school family."

With such a strong start and growing enthusiasm, The Grandma's Club is poised to become a cherished part of school life for years to come.

Mass of Inclusion at St. Catharine



Approximately 350 people attended a Mass of Inclusion on Sunday, Sept. 28 at Columbus St. Catharine of Siena Church recognizing Special People in Catholic Education (SPICE) that was celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes and Father Bob Penhalurick, the parish pastor. The annual Mass is a celebration of people with special needs who are engaged in learning in Catholic schools and parishes. It also honors the programs, teachers, intervention specialists and other resources that enable the schools to successfully include, nurture and support all students and proclaim the inherent human dignity of every person.



CT photos by Ken Snow

Open House
November 2

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St. Charles
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

29th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Our arduous duty of tenacious prayer

Exodus 17:8-13
Psalms 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
2 Timothy 3:14-4:2
Luke 18:1-8

Working out the body requires serious endurance, as does the training of the soul. Military-grade exercises are crucial for spiritual warfare, too.

Prayer demands a resilient, determined grit, exerting effort fitting to the incalculable value of our eternal life.

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. If a frail widow could wear down a godless magistrate, it will succeed for us before our loving Father: “because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.” Christ promises this by posing the explanatory rhetorical question-and-answer, “Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it.”

The scene from Exodus also presents the long-suffering dimension of prayer, even paralleling it with the ongoing battle below: “As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight.”

This gesture of intercession from Moses signifies his reliance on the Lord through the power granted him, symbolized by his miraculous staff: “I will be standing on


top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” His elevated purview also associates him with proximity to Heaven.

The very familiar Psalm text naturally comes to mind: “I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me? My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Although the great leader Moses gazes out, appraising all of creation, he humbly recognizes that the fate of his people remains under its designer’s providence.

The war raged until evening: “Meanwhile, Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset.” But the Psalmist promises that the Lord “is beside you at your right hand. The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night” for “he neither slumbers nor sleeps, the guardian of Israel.”

Our Lord (whom the Gospels tell us prayed all night, as well as His apostles) assures us of this same constant protection if we imitate the practice: “Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?” We have a certain claim to His blessings, “that justice is done for them,” but that imposes onerous full-time responsibilities upon us.

Minimal, relaxed, easy, stress-free, gentle, effortless prayer doesn’t seem to fulfill the biblical mandate then. Scripture is itself an active reality: “The word of God



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Tyron Tomson

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

is living and effective, discerning reflections and thoughts of the heart,” we are reminded in the Alleluia verse from the Letter to the Hebrews.

St. Paul instructs us in his final letter, written in Rome before his martyrdom, to “proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.” Interpretation/application of the Bible is described as hard labor: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for

every good work.” A few verses later, we hear Paul’s litany of his busy pastoral program: “teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, and sufferings.”

What nonstop support underlies all those apostolic endeavors but prayer? We only thus win the war for holiness by God’s grace. Victorious entrance into Heaven for those who stay dedicated is biblically guaranteed by the authority of the Lord Himself: “Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

The response is assured “speedily.” How long exactly must we keep up this strenuous prayer? Until the Second Coming. We are charged in dire apocalyptic terms to expect “Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead.”

No single soul can hope to accomplish this alone; we need to lift one another up at times like Aaron and Hur did for Moses. Thankfully, together we can continuously offer God worship as is His due. The Messiah’s haunting question still reechoes as His Church carries on the strain of praise throughout the ages: “But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

30th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year C


Practice virtue of humility by recognizing all gifts come from God

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
Psalms 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

Today’s passage of the gospel brings what may be considered the wittiest of all of Jesus’ parables. It is called “The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.”

It is a simple story of two people going to the temple area to pray: one of them a member of the Pharisees, the best regarded religious group in Jesus’ time, and the other a tax collector, likely the most hated group as they worked for the foreign power that controlled Judea, the Roman Empire.

Still, the evangelist took care to specify Jesus’ purpose: “Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.” But what happens when we read the parable? Most likely, we will identify ourselves with the tax collector ... thinking we are better than the Pharisee, and so we are caught in a very interesting dynamic. It is as we say in my own country: “nobody



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Ervens Mengelle, IVE, SSL

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

the list of actions he presents to God is quite a good one! What then is missing here for the Lord to say that the Pharisee went back home without being justified?

The issue of justification (to be acknowledged as righteous or just by God and, in consequence, to be admitted into the Lord’s presence) was extremely important in the Jewish spiritual world of Jesus’ time. The Pharisees made it the focus of their efforts. As a matter of fact, the term Pharisee comes from the verb *parash*, which means “to separate.” In their eagerness to avoid any source of contamination that would render them legally impure and therefore unable to perform God’s worship, they adopted a lifestyle that kept them away from all those who, one way or another, could constitute a threat to their legal purity.

In a short autobiographic blurb about himself, St. Paul says that he was a Pharisee, blameless in the righteousness based on the law, but he adds that he gave it up to accept the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ (see Philippians 3:5-11). He says even more that Abraham him-

self, the source of the entire Jewish nation, was doing the same: “Indeed, if Abraham was justified on the basis of his works, he has reason to boast; but this was not so in the sight of God. For what does the scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’” (Romans 4:2-3).

So, what is the essence of the problem? It lies in the acknowledgment of the authentic source from which all our good actions spring. Without denying the cooperation that we, as free beings, are to bring to our actions, we must recognize that the ultimate font from which our capacity to perform good actions comes is the Lord himself. How is this expressed? It is by practicing the virtue of humility, which prompts us to see that “every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).

Humility works as *removens prohibens*, as the Latin saying goes. It means that it removes what constitutes an impediment.

See SCRIPTURES, Page 27

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

10-20/10-25 MONDAY Romans 4:20-25 Luke 1:69-75(Ps) Luke 12:13-21	THURSDAY Romans 6:19-23 Psalm 1:1-4,6 Luke 12:49-53	10-27/11-1 MONDAY Romans 8:12-17 Psalm 68:2,4,6-7b,20-21 Luke 13:10-17	THURSDAY Romans 8:31b-39 Psalm 109:21-22,26-27,30-31 Luke 13:31-35
TUESDAY Romans 5:12,15b,17-19,20b-21 Psalm 40:7-10,17 Luke 12:35-38	FRIDAY Romans 7:18-25a Psalm 119:66,68,76,77,93,94 Luke 12:54-59	TUESDAY Ephesians 2:19-22 Psalm 19:2-5 Luke 6:12-16	FRIDAY Romans 9:1-5 Psalm 147:12-15,19-20 Luke 14:1-6
WEDNESDAY Romans 6:12-18 Psalm 124:1b-8 Luke 12:39-48	SATURDAY Romans 8:1-11 Psalm 24:1b-4b,5-6 Luke 13:1-9	WEDNESDAY Romans 8:26-30 Psalm 13:4-6 Luke 13:22-30	SATURDAY Revelation 7:2-4,9-14 Psalm 24:1b-4b,5-6 1 John 3:1-3 Matthew 5:1-12a

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION: Mass Schedule: Weeks of October 19 and 26

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

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

Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Ala., at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Spectrum Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or Breezeline Channel 378). (Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight).

Mass from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 6:30 a.m. on ION TV (AT&T U-verse Channel 195, Dish Network Channel 250, or DirecTV Channel 305).

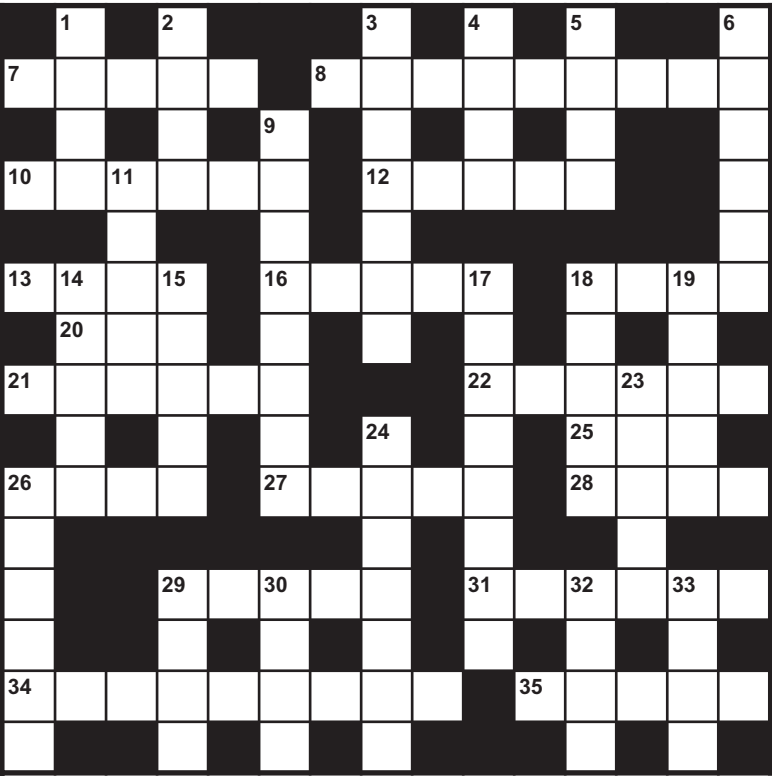
Mass from Massillon St. Mary Church at 10:30 a.m. on WILB radio (AM 1060, FM 94.5 and 89.5), Canton, heard in Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Coshocton counties.

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

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

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

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
7 Peter's ____
8 Catholicism is the official religion of this Central American country
10 "And with your ____"
12 Alternative name for the Pentateuch
13 It's gold and white with a papal symbol on it
16 What the Magi brought
18 Hemingway, convert to Catholicism, as known to his friends
20 "Eye has not seen, ____ has not heard..."
21 Council of 325 AD
22 Papal ambassador
25 "____ the Good Shepherd" (Jn 10:14)
26 "O Mary! We crown ____ with blossoms today"
27 Top monk
28 Gaudium et ____
29 Papal vestment
31 "...male and ____ he created them." (Gen 1:27)
34 Feast which celebrates Jesus' return to heaven
35 Mother-in-law of Ruth
- DOWN**
1 "The intention of the human heart is ____ water" (Prv 20:5)
2 OT historical book
3 Supreme ____
4 The Wise Men followed it
5 Type of angel that Michael is
6 Sister of Lazarus
9 Wounds of Our Lord
11 Husband of Rebekah
14 Catholic who won an Oscar for Gone with the wind
15 It may be actual or sanctifying
17 Make holy
18 "____ Angelicus"
19 6 AM prayer time
23 Catholic director of It's a Wonderful Life
24 Son of David
26 Catholic author Wolff
29 "____ my sheep." (Jn 21:17)
30 The ____ Supper
32 What we abstain from
33 You wouldn't put one under a bushel basket

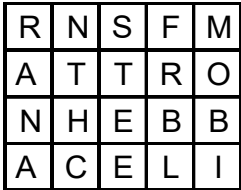
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Words of Wisdom

by Pat Battaglia, aka Dr. Fun

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

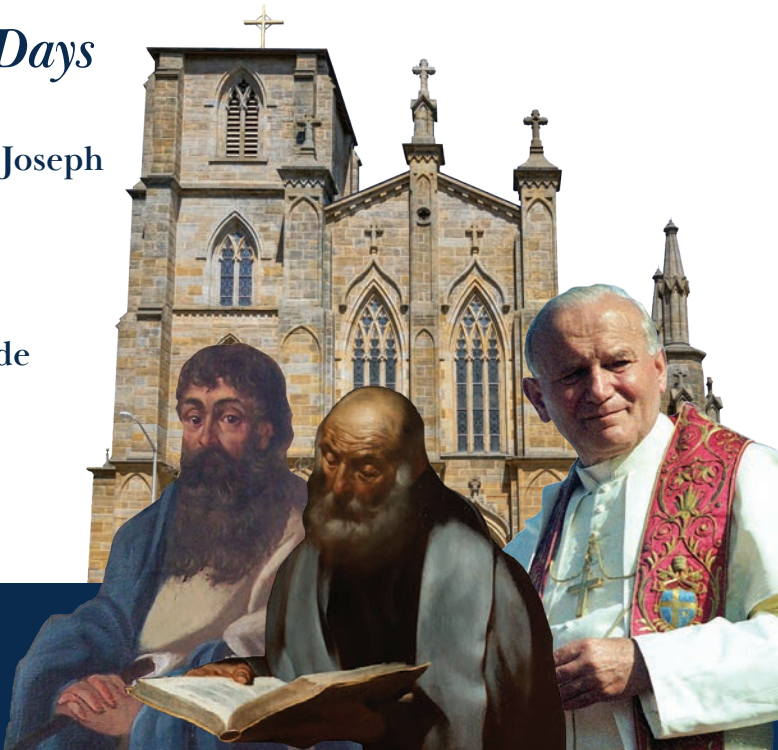
While many books inform ...



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Upcoming Feast Days

- 10-20 Solemnity of the Dedication of St. Joseph Cathedral
- 10-22 St. John Paul II
- 10-28 Ss. Simon and Jude
- 11-1 All Saints Day
- 11-2 All Souls Day



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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

BORCHERS, Robert, 83, Sept. 28
St. Peter-St. Joan of Arc Parish, Columbus-Powell

BORSOS, Eric, 68, Sept. 27
Holy Cross Cemetery Chapel, Pataskala

BRYSON, Julia A., 95, Oct. 5
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

CECUTTI, Nancy A. (Bergin), 95, Sept. 28
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

CHAPMAN, Stephanie (Nutter), 43, Sept. 28
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

DURBIN, Michael J., 56, Sept. 27
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

GALLUCCI, Leonard J. Jr., 72, Oct. 2
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

HAND, Frances M. (Kinney), 97, Oct. 4
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

HELVOIGT, Duff, 88, Sept. 30
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

HUTCHISON, Bernadetta A., 93, Oct. 8
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

JEWETT, Grover C., 93, of Columbus, Sept. 17
St. Rita Church, Solon

JORGENSEN, Bernadette (Zywicki), 89, Oct. 5
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

KINNAIRD, Caroline "Jackie" (Allgeier), 90, Oct. 6
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

LAVRIC, Boris, 72, Sept. 27
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

LEWIE, Brian W., 86, Sept. 28
Holy Family Church, Columbus

LITTLER, Ernest Ellsworth Jr., 94, Oct. 4
Our Lady, Queen of Apostles Parish, Chillicothe

MACK, Bob, 88, Sept. 26
St. Elizabeth Church of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, Columbus

MARK, Judith A. (Oser), 82, Sept. 26
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

McLOUGHLIN, Maxine (Jones), 92, Oct. 5
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

MCPHERSON, Thomas M., 78, July 20
St. John Neumann Church, Sunbury

MENEFEE, Juan Fernandez, 64, Sept. 12
Our Lady, Queen of Apostles Parish, Chillicothe

MORRILL, Ann Royce, 69, Oct. 1
Holy Family Church, Columbus

MURLIN, Lawrence F. Jr., 81, Sept. 25
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin

MYERS, Daniel O., 71, Aug. 5
St. Michael the Archangel Church, Worthington

OTTENWELLER, DREW, Oct. 7
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin

PARDI, Dr. James J., 91, Oct. 3
Our Lady of Peace Church, Columbus

RICE, Diane Marie (Lewis), 81, Sept. 28
St. Peter-St. Joan of Arc Church, Columbus/Powell

RIEPENHOFF, James P., 78, Oct. 1
Holy Trinity Church, Jackson



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E	A	R	M	F	A
N	I	C	A	E	A
G	C	T	A	C	I
T	H	E	E	A	B
O	B	F	A	L	D
I	E	A	L	Y	E
A	S	C	E	N	S
S	D	T	M	T	P

SCARDINA, Joyce Marie (Culwell), 74, Sept. 23
St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Church, Columbus/Powell

SCHWARTZ, James L., 84, Sept. 23
Holy Cross Church, Columbus

WALSH, Elizabeth L., 93, Aug. 21
St. Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna

WEISENT, Charles O., 97, Sept. 25
Our Lady of Peace Church, Columbus

WHITE, Roger J., 96, Sept. 18
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

WIEZBISKI, Patricia Ann "Patty," 91, Aug. 28
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(Act to August 23, 1970: Section 3685, Title 36, United States Code)

CATHOLIC TIMES

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The purpose, function and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.

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B. Paid circulation:		
1) outside-county mail subscriptions	2,100	2,020
2) in-county mail subscriptions	2,600	2,482
3) sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales, other non-USPS paid circulation	0	61
4) other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid circulation:	4,700	4,563
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1) by mail outside-county	0	0
2) By mail in-county	0	0
3) Free or nominal rate at other classes through USPS	0	0
4) Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail	0	250
E. Total free or nominal rate distribution	250	250
F. Total distribution	4,950	4,813
G. Copies not distributed	50	50
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I. Percent paid	94.95%	94.81%

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Doug Bean, Editor.



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LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Resurrection to host mental health awareness program

A program on mental health awareness sponsored by the parish Respect Life committee will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23 in the ministry center of the New Albany Church of the Resurrection, 6300 Dublin-Granville Road.

It will begin with 10-minute talks by Susan Lewis Kaylor, president and chief executive officer of the St. Vincent Family Center of Columbus; family therapist Joseph Reis, speaking on anxiety and depression; and Tammy Foeller of the OpenDoor program and the iThirst program speaking on addiction.

The talks will be followed by a panel discussion and a question-and-answer session.

Serra Club sponsors young men's vocations luncheon

The Serra Club of North Columbus is sponsoring its annual vocations luncheon for boys in grades 8 to 12 from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4 at the Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus.

RELIEF: Diocese creates disaster response plan, *Continued from Page 2*

"If it's something that is related to the spiritual side of things, we've got chaplains and clergy involved to help with disaster spiritual care," Bezusko explained.

Father P.J. Brandimarti, pastor at Johnstown Church of the Ascension, was asked to serve on the team because of his role as a chaplain for the Ohio Army National Guard. The Guard is a military fighting force for conflict abroad and also assists in humanitarian, law enforcement and relief efforts.

Father Brandimarti is a conduit between diocesan and state military leadership. The chaplain brings an understanding of the Guard's operation and connecting people together, which, he said, he hopes can strengthen ties of cooperation if necessary.

He is also experienced in dealing with sudden trauma. The priest can share his experiences with clergy and lay leaders in the event of a disaster.

"Disasters are going to happen whether we are prepared for them or not," he said. "The only thing worse than some of these disasters is when we get taken by surprise by them."

"By having a comprehensive plan ... we will be better able to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout our central Ohio community."

Parish pastors were asked to identify teams of four or five leaders to serve as

Speakers will be recently ordained Father Joseph Rolwing, parochial vicar of Columbus/Powell St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, and Father Michael Haemmerle, diocesan vocations director.

The deadline for reservations is Tuesday, Oct. 21. To RSVP, email Patricia Vandewalle at pvandewalle14@gmail.com or call (614) 439-5152.

Columbus Catholic Renewal plans Mass, adoration

Columbus Catholic Renewal will offer a City Wide Mass and Adoration on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Columbus Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, 5225 Refugee Road (next to Independence High School).

First Saturday Mass will start the morning and then a light potluck breakfast will be available followed by speaker Jay Collins, president of Young Catholic Professionals, speaking on "Faith in the Marketplace."

Adoration will follow with music led by Michael Melliore, and confession and prayer teams available.

parish disaster response coordinators. Leadership is open to individuals interested in or currently leading relief ministries.

"Think about the impact this could have: What if there's an apartment fire in a community and a dozen families are now all of a sudden homeless and needing all this help, resources?" Bezusko suggested.

"This is where that disaster response team within the parish can mobilize and work to provide help, whether it's parishioners, even just the community members at large that were impacted and provide that loving embrace and provide support."

Participants will be trained to serve as disaster response coordinators at their parish. The parish will be prepped so, in the event of a disaster, they know who is responding and what they can offer.

A series of trainings are scheduled at several diocesan parishes. Trainings are open to anyone interested. The two-hour training will be the same at every offered session.

Trainings are scheduled at the following parishes: Newark St. Francis de Sales, Saturday, Oct. 25 at 9:30 a.m.; Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 9:30 a.m.; Columbus St. Catharine of Siena, Monday, Nov. 3 at 6:30 p.m. and Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita, Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 9:30 a.m.

For more information call Pat Shroyer 614-302-3970

Ohio Dominican presents art exhibit

The Wehrle Gallery at Ohio Dominican University will present Strataform, a new body of work by Chaz O'Neil, beginning with an opening reception from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 26 and continuing through Saturday, Jan. 10.

Strataform is an exploration of pressure and time, both geological and symbolic. Inspired by the layered structures of minerals and the outward reach of spacebound signals such as Carl Sagan's Voyager disk, O'Neil investigates how memory and material are encoded, transmitted, and transformed.

Referencing diagrams, strata and speculative futures, Strataform visualizes the invisible forces shaping planetary matter and human meaning alike.

O'Neil is a Columbus-based artist whose work explores the layering of memory, material and mapping. His practice has

been supported by international residencies in Germany and Spain and his work has been featured in several solo exhibitions. He is the coordinator for individual artist programs at the Ohio Arts Council.

Bishop Fernandes to speak to men's luncheon club

Bishop Earl Fernandes will give his annual presentation to the Catholic Men's Luncheon Club on diocesan activities on Friday, Nov. 7, after the 11:45 a.m. Mass at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave.

No reservations are necessary. A \$12 donation covers the lunch and meeting.

The club's next meeting will be on Friday, Dec. 5 with Father Sam Severance, who was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Columbus in May, speaking on his first six months as parochial vicar at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church.

The November luncheon is being sponsored by an anonymous donor. If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, contact Dave Kilanowski at dkilano@aol.com.

Trainings are also offered at Delaware St. Mary, Saturday, Nov. 8 at 9:30 a.m.; Chillicothe St. Peter, Monday, Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m.; and New Philadelphia Sacred Heart, Thursday, Nov. 13 at 6:30 p.m.

To reserve a spot at a training event, individuals must RSVP. A response form is available at <https://forms.office.com/r/opbfUjjdAE>.

Donations to the Spirit of Hope Disaster

Relief Fund can be made online. A donation page will be forthcoming at <https://columbuscatholic.org/vicariate-for-catholic-social-doctrine/disaster-response>

Checks can also be made payable to the Diocese of Columbus with "Spirit of Hope Disaster Relief Fund" in the memo line and mailed to 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, Ohio 43215.



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SCRIPTURES: Practice virtue of humility, *Continued from Page 24*

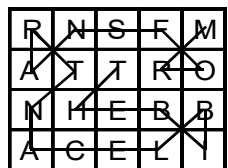
What is the greatest impediment or obstacle to God's intervention in our lives? It is pride, to which humility is diametrically opposed.

St. Teresa of Avila described humility as "walking in truth." It is that simple. But, for some reason, we have the tendency to place ourselves above everything else, including God. Aquinas argues that pride is the first and most fundamental sin because it arises from an inordinate desire for one's own excellence, leading to a rejection of God's authority and the natural order (see Summa Theologiae II-II, 162). This is the constitutive element of original sin at its root.

The second reading shows us the right approach. St. Paul says, "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day. ...

"On one hand, the Apostle declares that he has led an intense life preaching the gospel, but, on the other hand, the crown of righteousness is given by the Lord.

The most perfect example in the practice of humility is the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, being praised by St. Elizabeth for her faith, immediately reacted by saying, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord ... for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant" (Luke 1:46, 48).



**WORDS OF
WISDOM
SOLUTION**

Is Halloween evil?

Dear Father,

With Halloween coming up, what are your thoughts about that night? I've heard some say that it's evil and that we shouldn't participate. Is the Catholic Church against it?

- Val

Dear Val,

Most people don't know that Halloween is a Catholic tradition. Some have tried to hijack it with their macabre celebration of death and other perverse practices. Fortunately, many Christians are reclaiming this sacred feast.

Halloween is a shortened form of All Hallows' Eve. It refers to the eve before All Hallows Day, or All Saints Day, always on Nov. 1. The term "hallow" has Germanic roots and means holy. In the Our Father, we pray "hallowed be thy name," denoted that God's name is holy and we are honoring Him by saying that. Hallow was also used archaically to call someone a saint or a holy person.

On Halloween and on All Hallows Day, we honor all the Saints in heaven. This includes all the unknown saints as well as those who have been canonized by the Church. There are many men, women and children who are singing the praises of God and enjoying the beatific vision due to their complete devotion to God.

Canonized saints each have a special feast day on the Church's calendar. The countless

other saints, whose reputations may be unknown to us, are certainly known by God as His friends in heaven. Not everyone indeed dies a saint and so we will pray for them on Nov. 2, All Souls Day.

All Saints Day is a solemn feast in the Catholic Church, ranking as one of the highest celebrations on the Church's calendar. We might liken it to Christmas Eve in the sense that we begin celebrating the night before.

Halloween and All Saints Day are two sides of the same coin. We celebrate the saints as our elder brothers and sisters. In the Collect, or Opening Prayer at Mass, we thank God for all their good works done for love of God and ask them to pray for us. In particular, we ask them to help us get to heaven and become saints.

Another central aspect of Halloween and All Saints Day is that we learn to long for the great feast in heaven (the eternal All Saints Day). We should make plans for the journey to heaven to be with our brothers and sisters who have "made it," so to speak. This goal is the opposite of copping out on life here. It is, rather, the desire to finish the race and attain the prize, as St. Paul teaches (Phil 3:13-15).

This yearning is also found in the prayers at Mass on All Saints Day. The Eucharistic Preface, for instance, prays that "we eagerly hasten as pilgrims advancing by faith." The Prayer over the Offerings asks for the grace that "we may experience (the saints') concern for our salvation." Think of the



SACRAMENTS 101

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

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

millions of saints in heaven, perhaps some of our own ancestors, who are longing for us to join them!

It's scandalous to see any number of evil distortions of our Catholic and ancient feast day. What seemed like harmless depictions of ghouls and goblins several decades ago have become disgusting scenes of horror that celebrate death gruesomely, such as bodies hung in nooses from trees. Rather than celebrating the joy of heaven, people seek to shock and scare with so-called celebrations of hell.

Perhaps people are not aware of the

embrace of the nether world and put up anti-Christian decorations because they think that's what Halloween is all about. It's one thing to illustrate death as a means to an end and quite another to make death an end in itself. Aren't the times and culture in which we live already oversaturated with celebrations of killing?

Children dressing up in innocent costumes and trick-or-treating for candy is not an evil in itself. Many of us fondly recall our own childhood fascination with Halloween. Commercialization has robbed our feast day of its real meaning. It's too bad that merchants find the exaltation of death more lucrative than life, eternal life.

So, rather than getting rid of Halloween, it's time for us to reclaim the night. It's a time for evangelization! Don't turn off your porch light; rather, pass out good treats with a holy card. One Catholic website suggests praising children dressed as good characters but making light of those dressed as evil, especially those dressed as the devil.

Have fun parties with lots of food and candy. Have contests for the most creative jack o' lantern. Dress up as good people, heroes and particularly as saints. Parish churches should sponsor safe festivities for young children, teens and even adults. Decorate your property with celebrations of life.

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

"Let the children come to me": bringing little ones to Mass

Any parent of a young child knows that sometimes Mass can feel like a marathon.

Between bathroom breaks (potentially multiple), asking for snacks and ill-timed squeals or cries during the consecration, it can feel daunting, let alone exhausting, to bring our children to Mass.

The temptation to not bring our children to Mass is a strong one at times, but in Mark 10:13-14, we see that Christ tells his own disciples to "let the children come" to him. It even goes as far as to say that Jesus "was indignant" at the idea that his disciples would keep those children away from him.

It can be very appealing at times to not bring our children to Mass and try to rationalize that they are too young to absorb anything anyway, but the Mass is just as much a place for our children as it is for us as adults.

But why should we bring our children to Mass and how? It is a good reminder to us all that we go to Mass to worship the Lord and to partake in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist. At the core, that is why we go to Mass.



LOADS OF LAUNDRY AND LOVE

Rachel Romantic

Rachel Romantic is a wife and mom of two who loves to spend time with her family and make memories together outside in the garden. She is also the Communications Coordinator at New Albany Church of the Resurrection.

Of course, it is nice when we feel like the homily really hits home or we feel a

closeness to the Lord, but the Lord can work in our hearts even if we may not feel it at that moment. I'm sure many of us can look back at times in our lives where in retrospect we can see how the Lord was working even when we didn't recognize his work. Just the same, we receive graces by going to Mass and so do our children!

Consider a daily habit such as brushing your teeth. We know that this is something that is good for us even if we can't see the results of that each day. As parents, we want what is best for our children as well, so we impart the habit of daily teeth brushing to our children. They may not understand why or even how to do this fully on their own, but at the end of the day, their teeth are clean before going to bed. We would never say, "Well, he doesn't understand why we are brushing his teeth, so we are going to wait until he is older."

Much in the same way, our children are primed not only to receive grace from the Mass but also to build those habits of prayer. This is not to say that we shouldn't explain why we go to Mass when they are older, but building these habits at an early age will help to set the foundation for a life of prayer and worship. The questions about the faith will come, and they might be hard conversations, so we ought to give

our children and ourselves as much grace as possible to be able to navigate those situations later.

As for how we take our children to Mass, a few practical thoughts come to mind. Finding your "village" is one of the best tips I can give. At our church, the 9 a.m. Mass has now multiple areas where many young families gather to sit together for Mass. The parents and children have made their own villages within the pews of our parish to love and support each other during Mass. These villages go beyond young families too and include seasoned parents and grandparents as well. How comforting it is for our own family knowing that the people around us are willing to lend a hand if needed with our children.

Another tip would be to prepare yourself and your children for Mass. Things like reading the Gospel in advance can help us to better absorb the message of the Gospel. Consider reading it as a family the day before during dinner to prepare your hearts and minds for Mass.

Having a Mass bag for young children is also a good way to prepare for Mass. Our own Mass bag is a mix of Catholic toys, cars,

See CHILDREN, Page 29

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The risk of fearing God



CALLED TO TEACH, NOT JUDGE

Dr. Marlon De La Torre

Dr. Marlon De La Torre serves as the senior director for the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis in the Diocese of Columbus. His professional catechetical background spans more than 30 years.

Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who would be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. A genuine understanding of the fear of God is the relationship with the gift of grace. If properly ordered and thought, fear of the Lord is a direct path to the grace of God's love. This means that if we truly understand the power of God's love, we would embrace it with fear and trembling and, in turn, proclaim Him with fear and trembling. We are reminded of this in the second Psalm, the author, who is assumed to be King David, tells us the following,

Serve the Lord with fear and trembling,

rejoice, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. (Psalm 2:11)

The book of Proverbs provides us with several fruitful examples of the grace associated with a proper understanding of how the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (Proverbs 1:7) The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil (Proverbs 8:13), and the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10) These examples directly address our human condition and how sin and our response to embrace sin can quickly cloud our ability to understand the sovereignty of God and possess a properly ordered fear of Him. The risk of fearing God means that all of our supposed fears that may appear to paralyze us in some ways do not compare to the Fear of the Lord, which allows us to take all of our misplaced fears and surrender them to Him. The Catechism reminds us that Fear of the Lord is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and is ordered to Christ and makes the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. (CCC 1831)

The fear of God is not a detriment to our ability to live life to the fullest; on the contrary, with a willingness to acknowledge that you and I were made in God's image and likeness out of pure love, fear of the Lord is a reciprocation of this love by us as direct profession and proclamation that God is love. If we come to know and understand that a Fear of the Lord is a gift of grace that no one should

be afraid of, then any fear of carrying the cross of Christ is abated. I would dare say that the way of the cross would be joyfully accepted and embraced because it unites us more intimately with God the Father through God the Son, Jesus Christ. It is not a coincidence that after Pentecost, filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles began their post-ascension Apostolic journey with every believer present receiving the gift of fear associated with many signs and wonders. (Acts 2:43)

In his first Epistle, St. Peter reminds us how holy living is intimately associated with a conduct in holy fear,

Therefore, gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you as the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, since it is written, You shall be holy as I am holy. And if you invoke as Father him who judges each impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. (1 Pt 13-17)

The ultimate risk of fearing God is a conversion of heart toward Him and nothing or no one else.

To love God as he ought to be loved, we must be detached from all temporal love. We must love nothing but Him, or if we love anything else, we must love it only for His sake.

St. Peter Claver, Slave of the Slaves

The idea that human fear is intimately associated with God may sound and appear as either an anomaly or a contradiction. In a worldview understanding of fear, God would be typically referenced by saying his name in vain and thus breaking the second commandment due to the cause of the fear experienced. Even more, fear as a human act would be associated with being afraid of God, not because he is the alpha and omega, but instead of what he can do to you if you cross Him. Hence, a misunderstanding of fear or being afraid of God because he might do something to you, which already implies guilt, may resonate more with the common masses.

In the book of Leviticus, there is a dialogue between God and Moses where God directs Moses to tell the entire congregation of the sons of Israel on the necessity and importance of living a holy and moral life. He emphasizes this point by reminding Moses to tell Israel, I am the Lord your God. (Lev 10:9 ff) Within this discourse, God reminds Moses of the necessity of Israel to fear God above all things as a way to honor God as Father. (Lev 10:32) Something is intriguing about God's discourse with Moses. He reminds Moses that a fear of the Lord is a way of knowing Him more intimately. Instead of being afraid of God, a genuine fear of God is an acknowledgement of the loving God who is both Creator and Father.

One of the misconceptions about expressing a genuine fear of God is its negative connotation that God is not loving or merciful. This could not be further from the truth, as revealed through His Son

CHILDREN: Bringing little ones to Mass, Continued from Page 28

books and snacks, but having this helps our son to be comfortable at Mass. We still take time during Mass to tell him what is going on and encourage him to participate in the prayers, but something small like a Mass bag provides a bit of relief for him, and us as well, when he grows tired of being in the pew.

At the end of the day, we should remember

to offer mercy to ourselves, our children and those around us when going to Mass. We never know what another family may be going through each week, whether their children are small or grown. When we do this, we make room for Christ's own words to work in our hearts so that we can respond as he says, "Let the children come to me."



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Healing the family tree, ancestral curses debunked

Many Catholics are caught up in talk about “generational healing,” also called “intergenerational healing” or “healing of the family tree.” They believe that they are affected spiritually by the misdeeds of their ancestors, and even speak of “ancestral curses.” The practice of offering special prayers and Masses for generational healing has become commonplace among Catholics of a charismatic bent as well as among more traditionally-minded Catholics who follow “celebrity exorcist” priests who have become influencers.

The basic idea is that the sins of one’s ancestors, going back four generations, are creating spiritual and physical problems for their descendants today. Believers in generational healing say that, if one of your ancestors committed serious sins or was involved in the occult, or joined the Freemasons, you may experience breathing and stomach disorders, fertility issues, early death, death by accident and the death of children as well as being more likely to abuse alcohol or sin against the sixth commandment. If you identify any of this sort of thing among your ancestors, you would then seek out deliverance prayer, exorcisms and/or participate in a special Mass offered for “healing the family tree.” These spiritual practices are supposed to break the “generational bonds” or “generational curses.”

In 2024, the bishops of Spain published a document on generational healing and concluded that the practice has no basis in Catholic teaching. It does not align with the Catholic understanding of personal sin and punishment, Baptism and the Eucharist.

While the Spanish bishops’ document got a lot of media attention, it was not the first time Church authorities addressed the issue.

In 2015, the Polish Bishops’ Conference published a study on Generational Sin and Intergenerational Healing and concluded that the idea of “generational sin” and the practice of “intergenerational healing” have no foundation in the Bible, that it cannot be justified by appeals to Scripture or the official teaching of the Church, and that it



A SHEPHERD’S CARE

Father Thomas Buffer

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

denies the truth of the mercy of God and his forgiving love as well as the efficacy of the sacramental grace received through Baptism and penance.

Eighteen years ago, the French Bishops’ Conference published a study on Healing the Family Tree through the Eucharist; it reached similar conclusions to those of the Spanish bishops. In 2007, the bishop of Suwon, South Korea, issued a pastoral letter warning against the practice of “healing the family tree” after concerns were raised by other Korean bishops.

The International Association of Exorcists considered generational healing during a meeting held in 2018. Father Rogelio Alcántara, chairman of the doctrinal commission of the Archdiocese of Mexico, gave a report concluding that the practice had no theological basis and that attempts to justify it by appeals to Catholic tradition failed, noting that the ideas behind it closely resemble the non-Christian concept of “karma.” He also pointed out that the idea does not appear at all until the second half of the 20th century.

Of course, Catholics can and should pray for deceased Christians, including their ancestors. The Catholic practice of offering Masses for the dead inspired the Anglican psychiatrist, R. Kenneth McCall, to develop his ideas, published in the 1982 book *Healing*

the Family Tree. McCall’s work inspired Catholic priests John Hampsch and Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., to write on the subject; DeGrandis’ work has been especially influential among Catholic charismatics.

McCall seems not to have understood Catholic doctrine about praying for the dead. We can help those in purgatory because all the baptized are members of the communion of saints, who share in spiritual goods. The key word here is goods. We are joined to deceased Christians in a sharing of holy things, not curses or spiritual evils. It does not include, as the Spanish bishops put it, a notion of “the transmission of the consequences of the sins of the dead members of one’s own family tree to the living. On the contrary, it does include the possibility of a mutual benefit of intercession between the living and the dead, unconnected to the idea of intergenerational sin.”

We should also remember that purgatory is a place where those whose serious sins were forgiven before their death are being purified before entrance into heaven. Our doctrine of purgatory does not include a concept of “posthumous forgiveness” of extremely grave sins.

We become members of the communion of saints through Baptism. Baptism forgives both original sin and all personal sins one has committed as well as all punishment due to sin. In one who has been born again through baptism, there remains no obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. This means it is impossible to believe in a transmission of sin from one generation to another without contradicting Catholic teaching on Baptism.

What about offering Masses for intergenerational healing? The Church’s liturgical books include Masses offered for the faithful departed, but in them we do not ask for healing of intergenerational relationships. The Spanish bishops, therefore, point out that introducing such an intention into the celebration of the Mass essentially changes and seriously distorts the meaning of the Mass.

Despite the clear and wise teaching of bishops in Spain, Poland, France and Korea, belief in generational curses is still popular among Catholics. Popular priests, deacons and lay Catholics continue to popularize these ideas through videos, books and special Masses. Maybe it is time for bishops in English-speaking countries to look into the matter.

In the meantime, Catholics should educate themselves about the Church’s teaching on original sin, personal sin, the communion of saints, the effects of baptism and the purpose of the Mass. They should avoid novel and unsound teaching that is not firmly grounded in Catholic tradition. Above all, anyone who is baptized should put all their trust in Christ’s victory over evil. Christ has conquered! Standard translations of the Bible are produced by teams of scholars who check each other’s work and arrive at a consensus about difficult or obscure passages. They do not claim to have received visions, private revelations or secret knowledge.

There is more than one good translation of the Bible that can help Catholics know and meditate on God’s holy word. Here are some widely available translations that have been approved by Catholic authorities (for a complete list, see <https://www.usccb.org/offices/new-american-bible/approved-translations-bible>):

-- New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE). The lectionary we use at Mass is based on this translation.

-- New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition, National Council of Churches

-- Good News Translation (Today’s English Version), Second Edition), American Bible Society

-- English Standard Version, Catholic Edition.

“The Passion Translation” has not received such approval. For this reason alone, it is not good that Catholics in the Encounter School of Ministry are recommending it to other Catholics. The other reasons I have given above just make it worse.

The problem(s) with “LGBTQ Catholic”

The late Father Richard John Neuhaus had a love/hate relationship with *The New York Times*.

Richard was a passionate partisan of New York City, which he sometimes described as a preview of the New Jerusalem, but the Grey Lady’s parochialism nonetheless led him to occasionally dismiss New York’s most prestigious daily as a “parish newsletter.” He regularly castigated the *Times*’ editorials for their air of smug infallibility. And then there was RJN’s annoyance (and more) with the *Times*’ knee-jerk liberalism, which, by its embrace of every imaginable left-of-center cause, accelerated the decay of liberal politics into the promotion of lifestyle libertinism. Richard was thus years ahead of Joseph Ratzinger in issuing warnings about a dictatorship of relativism, the unavoidable political outcome of the *Times*’ cultural lurch leftward.

On the other hand, Richard Neuhaus could no more imagine skipping *The New York Times* in the morning than he could imagine beginning the day without numerous cups of coffee, a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios and a smoke.

That love/hate relationship was crystallized in an incident during Richard’s days as a Lutheran pastor in the then-impoverished Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, when the *Times* declined to refer to a local black pastor (from Christendom’s entrepreneurial Protestant subdivision) as “Bishop” so-and-so. In high



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

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dudgeon, RJN wrote A.M. Rosenthal, then the *Times*’ managing editor, and asked what was going on. The man referred to himself as “Bishop.” His people called him “Bishop.” The sign on the front of his ecclesiastical establishment identified him as “Bishop.” Who did the *Times* think it was, and what did the *Times* think it was doing, denying this man the title he and his people used?

Abe Rosenthal eventually wrote Richard a harrumphing letter, stating that, after the painstaking deliberation appropriate to the

nation’s newspaper of record, the *Times* would henceforth refer to the gentleman in question as “Bishop” so-and-so. The letter then concluded with a sentence that would cause Richard Neuhaus to laugh uproariously for decades: “And so, Pastor Neuhaus, you may take some satisfaction from knowing that, in drawing this matter to our attention, you have made a small contribution to the history of our times.”

Or words to that effect, if I may be pardoned for quoting the loathsome Richard Rich in *A Man for All Seasons*.

Over 30-plus years of friendship and collaboration, I must have heard Richard tell that story a dozen times, but I don’t think I’d thought of it more than once or twice since his death in 2009. Then, recently, I read an article indicating that a churchman I admire, who indicated some sympathy with the charge that the Catholic Church in the West is “obsessed” with questions of sexual morality, nonetheless himself used the term “LGBTQ Catholic.”

Now, as a matter of good manners, I agree with the substance of Richard’s complaint to Abe Rosenthal: People should usually be identified the way they identify themselves, and in any event, it was not up to *The New York Times* to decide who is and who isn’t a bishop. But a churchman using the term “LGBTQ Catholic” of any member of the Catholic Church seems to me a different matter.

First, it strikes me as incoherent to give at least a nod of credibility to the

charge that certain sectors of the world Church are obsessed with sexual morality and then use the hypersexualized term “LGBTQ Catholic” — which, whatever its provenance, reduces an individual to their sexual desires, confusions or both.

Second, as was pointed out at several synods beginning with Synod 2018, this usage has no warrant in Catholic history, for the Church has never identified its members by libido. Which means it’s just as untoward to speak of “Heterosexual Catholics” as it is of “LGBTQ Catholics.” Why? Because “you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28) and subdividing Catholics this way fractures the unity of the Church.

Finally, in this political and cultural moment, the term “LGBTQ Catholic” is both the carrier of a theological program — the transformation of settled Catholic understandings of the human person and the moral life — and an emblem of various political causes: causes not untinged by the threat of Ratzinger’s “dictatorship of relativism.” The term “LGBTQ Catholic” is not neutrally descriptive; it is, rather, quite loaded, theologically and politically.

We are all sinners in constant need of the redeeming grace of Christ, as Pope Leo XIV forcefully reminds us. When we remember that, we will perhaps be less inclined to countenance delineating each other (and ourselves) by sexual desire, orientation or practice.

Measuring and planning: The significance of October Mass counts

The first weekend of October, when I stepped into the sacristy at my parish, I quickly noticed the clickers were out. That's what I call the little handheld tally counters that our ushers use when something needs to be counted. For the most part, these are used during the annual October Mass attendance counts.

This is a statistical census report that is gathered annually by the Chancery Office, so in my capacity as Chancellor, and because I'm asked with some regularity about the why of this process, it's a suitable time to discuss it and the reasons it's important.

Every October, Catholic dioceses across the United States undertake this vital task of counting the number of people attending Saturday evening and Sunday Masses. It is done with little fanfare, but it contributes valuable information to parish and diocesan planning efforts.

The October Count is a snapshot of parish life, helping us evaluate trends in Mass participation, consider the apportioning of resources and plan for the future. While it is a simple task to complete, the October Count is a powerful tool for understanding the trends in Mass attendance across the Diocese of Columbus.

In our diocese, each parish is asked to count the number of people attending the Saturday evening and Sunday Masses over the course of the four or five weekends of October. Ushers, or other volunteers designated by a pastor, count the number of people present at each Mass and report the figures to the parish office. These numbers are then submitted to the Chancery Office



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here for compilation, review and analysis.

October was chosen because it avoids the summer vacation seasons and skewing of attendance numbers as well as the surges that occur during the Christmas and Easter holiday seasons. This month offers a more stable and representative portrait of regular attendance.

The data collected is not just a bureaucratic exercise. It informs pastoral planning, helps track long-term trends and supports decisions about Mass schedule planning, priest assignments, future staff planning at the parochial level, evangelization efforts and more.

There are numerous benefits to doing these tallies. Data gathered during the

October Counts reveals much more than how many people are attending particular Masses. These counts also can show:

Population shifts: growth or decline in specific parishes or areas of the diocese;

The impact of pastoral initiatives and evangelization efforts;

The effects of parish mergers or closures;

Trends in Mass attendance decisions parishioners are making; for example, Saturday vigil Masses and Sunday morning Masses or earlier Mass times vs. later Mass times.

The October Counts do not just provide valuable data, they serve as a reminder of the Church's mission to evangelize. Changing attendance is more than a statistical matter. It is also both a pastoral challenge and opportunity. An empty pew reminds us who serve the Church and its people that there are souls who are detached from the life of the Church, its sacraments, the Word of God broken open by clergy, the charity of the Church, and the strong social connections that Catholic taking part in the Mass enjoy.

This impels us to invest in renewal efforts to welcome all into the joy of being part of a parish family, to be fed spiritually at Mass by the Real Presence of God in the Eucharist, to be strengthened by catechesis, to be welcomed by old and new friends.

Clergy, religious and diocesan and parish lay staff play a crucial role in these efforts to understand and respond to the gathered October Count data. Rather than viewing attendance figures as a report card, it is an opportunity to consider what draws people to our parishes as well as what obstacles

can prevent people from attending. This information is a call to all of us to better understand how we can and should serve the spiritual needs of our communities.

Engaging parishioners in this conversation through such efforts leads to creative solutions and renewed energy that are inspired by Jesus Christ. Parishes and dioceses, through understanding their communities and through trusting in God's grace, will foster a culture of invitation and belonging.

In a world marked by noise and distraction, the Sunday Eucharist remains a sacred anchor, the source and summit of our faith practice, an encounter with Jesus Christ in the Real Presence. It is also Communion with others and nourishment for the journey of faith. The October Count reminds us that our presence matters, not just to the Church but to God.

When I hear those faint clickers and glance up and see our ushers in the back of my Church going about their work of counting diligently during Masses this month, I smile and remember that the October Mass attendance count is not just a tally but a window into the life of the God's Holy Church, a window that helps diocesan and parish leaders make informed decisions, supports pastoral planning and challenges all of us who are Catholic to consider our commitment to our worship and the Eucharist. As the Church continues to navigate the complexities of modern life, these counts serve as a quiet but essential tool for renewal, evangelization and hope.

Do right and left belong in the Catholic Church?

The partisan division that runs deep in America has recently taken a violent turn. Political affiliations manifest competing visions for the country's future, and increasingly, for human life itself.

Is freedom absolute in a way that should progress no matter the consequences? Or, are there fundamental truths and goods that should be conserved and respected?

We often speak of the fundamental divide between these general positions as right-wing and left-wing, conservative and liberal, as solely political, without realizing the surprising Catholic connection to their origin.

It's common to hear Catholics object to the use of right-left and conservative-liberal labels in the Church. Nonetheless, it's impossible to deny the existence of factions that have arisen broadly along these lines. Factions are nothing new, of course, as St. Paul made clear to the Corinthians: "For, in the first place, when you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized" (1 Corinthians 11:18-19). Controversies over doctrine, liturgy and morality tend to divide into two major factions, and conservative and liberal labels capture, in a generally accurate way, the positions of either preservation or innovation.

Contemporary divisions within the Church, although not identical to political camps, often align in surprising ways. This reality took center stage recently as a major figure in the progressive Catholic camp, Cardinal Blase Cupich, created enormous controversy in seeking to honor a Democratic politician, Senator Dick Durbin, with a long track record of supporting abortion. On the other hand, churchmen dedicated to the defense



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of human life, marriage and religious freedom often find allies in the Republican Party. In fact, three bishops in the United States currently serve on President Donald Trump's Religious Liberty Commission. Given dynamics both within and outside of the Church, the "left and right" or "liberal and conservative" should not be dismissed as inapplicable or irrelevant.

"Right" and "left" as political labels go back to the French Revolution, particularly to the National Assembly, where representatives lined up either to the right or left of the Assembly's President, depending on whether they supported the rights of the king (the right), the position of most Catholics, or favored abolishing the monarchy (the left) and the rights of the Church along with it. After the king's downfall, those considered to be on the right favored a restoration of the ancien régime, while the left continued to advocate for the further liberalization of society along republican or democratic lines. This political division

carried enormous religious significance, as one side advanced the French notion of laïcité (the removal of any public role for the Church) and the legalization of divorce, while the other sought to restore the union of throne and altar.

After the French Revolution, popes supported the restoration of Catholic monarchs and even disciplined priests who advocated for democracy. The Second Vatican Council, however, brought about a rehabilitation for Catholics holding positions associated with political liberalism by fostering greater openness to the modern world. Vatican II largely buried the traditional right-left division among Catholics, who had supported either the restoration of monarchy or modern democracy (although the word "democracy" does not appear in its documents). The right-left divide in recent decades now mostly breaks along the lines of those who support traditional values within modern democracy (the new right) versus those continuing to push the revolution against any form of traditional authority and morality (the new left).

Vatican II, however, created a new form of the right-left divide, not wholly unrelated to the prior usage. On the one hand, there is the conservative or traditional movement, which emphasizes continuity with the Church's tradition prior to the Council, particularly in relation to the liturgy. On the other hand, progressives stress openness to modern culture, shaped by modern democracy and its emphasis on freedom.

Pope Benedict XVI had his own way of characterizing it as two competing hermeneutics (interpretations) of Vatican II, typified on the one hand by "discontinuity and rupture," which "has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of

modern theology." On the other hand, he identifies a "hermeneutic of reform," typified by "renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us" (Address to Roman Curia, December 22, 2005).

This divide certainly exists and shapes how many pursue priorities in the Church. Often, those dedicated to conserving the theological tradition of the Church also seek to uphold fundamental values of life and the family. Those who favor rupture in matters of doctrine and morality often prioritize social justice over other issues.

Perhaps factions are inevitable or even necessary, as Paul conceded. Catholics must take a stand on pressing issues — social ones, such as voting, and spiritual ones, like finding a new parish, with many willing to drive outside their immediate territorial parish for more traditional or contemporary options. In an age of change, when everything seems in flux, Catholics face two major choices: either to dig in their heels to some degree or follow along with the current of change.

The Body of Christ, however, cannot be divided in its essence. Factions may exist due to human weakness, though there is only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Even as we take a stand, work with like-minded people and oppose evil, we must do so as Christians who ultimately transcend party politics. More than a call to "get along," we need a primary commitment to Christ that rises above divisions and other allegiances. The Beatitudes offer a concrete path to transcend factionalism and rise above squabbles, no matter how important. We will be blessed if we seek the Kingdom before all else, make peace, remain meek and merciful and suffer for righteousness' sake rather than retaliating or seeking revenge.

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