

Fr. Boniface, U.S. citizen

Fr. Boniface Kasiita Nzabonimpa, a missionary priest from Uganda, talks about what becoming a U.S. citizen means for him and his priestly ministry in Missouri.

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

January 20, 2023 • Vol. 66 No. 15

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

SEEK23: a moment of grace for people from this diocese



Priests carry the Most Blessed Sacrament around the floor and through the crowd in the Dome at the America's Center in St. Louis Jan. 6 during Adoration attended by over 17,000 people during the SEEK23 conference organized by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

— Photo by Jay Nies

By Jay Nies

A starburst of lights reflected off the sweet, ascending smoke of the incense and the shimmering gold of the monstrance.

The Lord of the Universe was back in the Dome at America's Center in St. Louis.

More than 17,000 Catholics, mostly young, from all over the United States and beyond, were gathered to adore Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, in the place Pope St. John Paul II offered Mass nearly 24 years previously.

Hundreds of priests heard Confessions in a nearby assembly hall as the people joined in mantras of praise and the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession through the crowd.

It was a highlight of SEEK23, a massive annual Catholic evangelization conference organized by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

The theme was "You Are Called."

"I wasn't expecting anything like this. It really touched me," Korbin Fisher, a senior at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City, stated shortly after Adoration.

He and fellow Helias Catholic senior Aidan Martin had stood near four priests they'd never met before, who quietly sang and adored Christ throughout the two-hour service.

"It was like God put us there, right in front of these priests, so we could learn from their example," said Korbin.

Allison Newkirk, a freshman at the University of Missouri in Columbia, was one of 105 student parishioners of the St. Thomas More Newman Center who attended SEEK23.

She called to mind a phrase from the

See SEEK23, page 17

Prayer, resolve, action as 50th anniversary of Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade abortion decision nears

By Jay Nies

The 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court case that opened the door to abortion-on-demand throughout the United States will be an occasion for introspection and recommitment.

The Court's recent overturning of that Jan. 22, 1973, decision has highlighted the need for individuals, families and communities of faith to pray for and assist pregnant mothers who might otherwise consider abortion.

Several parishes and schools in the Jefferson City diocese responded to an inquiry about how they are helping pregnant women in need:

- The parishes in Crawford County cooperate with the local Pregnancy Help Center's Lifeline Pregnancy Center in Cuba.

"We have volunteers help there," said Father Daniel Lu-

eckenotte, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Cuba, St. Francis Caracciolo Parish in Bourbon and St. Michael Parish in Steelville.

"Donations from our St. Martin de Porres fund go there — \$100 monthly," he noted. "Occasionally, folks host baby showers."

All three parishes take part in Lifeline's annual baby bottle fundraisers. Parishioners and the local Knights of Columbus council sponsor a table and attend the annual dinner.

"Some of their clients get housing and rent assistance and utility assistance through the Cuba Ministerial Alliance, of which Holy Cross is a member," Fr. Lueckenotte added.

- St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia regularly invites parishioners to bring donations of diapers,

See PRO-LIFE, page 21

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MOVING? If you are moving or changing parishes, please fill out information below. Clip and mail to THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN, 2207 W Main St, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Or email changes to dbarnes@diojeffcity.org. Allow two weeks.

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CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

NEW PARISH _____

OLD PARISH _____

01/20/23

Pray for deceased priests

Jan. 23 — Fr. Kenneth E. Brockel, St. William, Perry; St. Frances Cabrini, Paris; and St. Paul Historic Church, Center (2002)

Jan. 27 — Fr. Charles A. Pfeiffer, St. Stephen, Indian Creek (1999)

Jan. 29 — Fr. William J. Berkel, Holy Spirit, Centralia (1959); Msgr. Joseph J. Morrell, St. Patrick, Rolla (1989)

Jan. 31 — Fr. James M. Denner, St. Boniface, Koeltztown (1962)

Feb. 2 — Fr. Francis J. Stangl, St. Jude Thaddeus, Mokane (2008)

Science/Religion Teacher



Visitation Inter-Parish School, Vienna, Missouri is looking for a science/religion teacher for the current semester. Please contact Mrs. Marilyn Bassett at mbassett@visitationip.org or (573) 422-3375.

Parish Secretary — Folk, Mo.



St. Anthony of Padua parish in Folk is seeking a part-time parish secretary (approximately 12-16 hours per week). Duties include parish communications, bulletin, scheduling Mass intentions, maintaining parish records and serving as contact person for vendors. Much of the work can be done off-site and with flexible hours. Some work is on-site or involves trips to Westphalia and Jefferson City. A full list of duties is available upon request. Please contact Fr. Dylan Schrader at dschrader@diojeffcity.org.

Senior Bookkeeper



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a full-time senior bookkeeper with advanced bookkeeping and elementary accounting work in the maintenance, review and analysis of detailed financial records throughout the entire accounting cycle. This individual will perform a variety of moderately complex to advanced bookkeeping/accounting tasks and procedures. Experience with general ledger, investments, insurance administration and payroll is strongly desired. Employer offers a comprehensive benefit package including health, dental, vision, and matching 403b retirement plan.

Experience with Sage Intacct accounting system would be considered a plus. Knowledge and preparation of worksheets and financial statements and general ledger account classification is required.

Qualified candidates should send their resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Correction

The “Things to Do” column in the Jan. 6, 2023, edition of *The Catholic Missourian* included an incorrect date for the Cursillo Grand Reunion in Columbia. The event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 25, at Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia.

We apologize for the error.

Catholics ‘must act’ to honor MLK

OSV News

Washington, D.C.

Catholics ‘must act’ for racial justice, starting with personal conversion, to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s struggle and eliminate racial injustices in society, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated.

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese of the Military Services relayed the work the USCCB has done to fight racism, while saying much remains to be done by Catholics to finish Dr. King’s struggle.

He referred to the call to action from Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman, one of six Black Catholic women and men proposed for sainthood: “People keep saying, ‘Where’s the next Martin Luther King?’ We’re all called, I think. We’re called by our citizenship, by our membership in the human race. We’re all called to free ourselves and to free one another.”

The Catholic Missourian

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“A diocesan paper serves as a bond of unity by publishing diocesan happenings and promulgating official regulations and decrees. It also plays a teaching role by reporting notable events of a religious and secular nature, and interpreting them in the light of Christian principles.”

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

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight
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Director of Religious Education/Youth Minister



Holy Family
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Holy Family Parish in Hannibal is seeking a DRE/Youth Minister. Key responsibilities include:

- assist the pastor in the responsibility for Catholic faith formation for parish youth and adults;
- implement the bishop’s Confirmation preparation policy;
- organize, schedule and oversee religious education in the parish;
- administer a formation program for catechists that leads to certification and tracks completion;
- in cooperation with the diocesan Director of Religious Education & Youth/Young Adult Ministry, order approved textbooks, liturgy materials and other works that complement the religious education efforts of the parish; and
- provide resources and programs for adult formation.

A bachelor’s degree in theology or religious education is preferred. The pastor is willing to consider either one full-time candidate or possibly two part-time individuals.

Resumes can be sent directly to Fr. Alex Gabriel, Holy Family Parish, 218 S. Maple Avenue, Hannibal, MO 63401 or applicants can apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com).

Business Manager Wanted



St. Peter Catholic Parish in Jefferson City is seeking a full-time Business Manager. This position oversees all financial elements of the parish, school, lunch program and Foundation. The work schedule varies based on needs of tasks at hand. The individual must have good communication skills, experience with various forms of media, and the ability to interact effectively with a variety of religious and secular personnel. Supervision is provided by the pastor. A degree in Business or Accounting or prior parish management experience is preferred. Experience with Microsoft Word and Excel are essential. Knowledge of Paylocity, QuickBooks and Community Church Builder would be helpful. St. Peter Catholic Church offers a comprehensive benefit package including health, dental, vision, vacation, and matching 403b retirement plan. Qualified candidates should email their resume with references to jsecrist@diojeffcity.org.

For a detailed job description please visit our website at <https://www.saintpeterjc.org/employment/>

Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau



Director of Schools sought for Joplin Area Catholic Schools

Southern Missouri’s Joplin Area Catholic Schools seeks a Director of Schools for the 2023-2024 school year. We seek a dedicated Educational Leader with successful experience in Catholic School Leadership. The successful applicant will have a Master’s Degree or beyond in Educational Administration as well as meet requirements for Missouri Certification. We seek an active Catholic who is dedicated to the growth and mission of Catholic Education.

About Joplin Area Catholic Schools

Founded in 1885 by the Sisters of Mercy, Joplin Area Catholic Schools (JACS) is part of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau and consists of St. Mary Preschool & Elementary, St. Peter the Apostle Middle School, and McAuley Catholic High School, located on two campuses in the Joplin Community. JACS is supported by the parishes of St. Mary Catholic Church, Joplin; St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, Joplin; and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Webb City.

To Apply

Applicants should send a letter of interest and resume to Doretta Fox, dfox@jacss.org, as well as complete an application, which will be sent to you upon receipt of letter of interest. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 25, 2023, or until filled.

Bishop McKnight: Love is central to the message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The following is a statement from Bishop W. Shawn McKnight on Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2023:

The life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a reminder that God has blessed all of us with the power to change the world for the better — and that power is love.

Jesus taught us to love God and to love our neighbor. This two-fold commandment would become foundational to the work of Dr. King.

In a sermon called “Love in Action,” Dr. King preached that, “Jesus eloquently affirmed from the

cross a higher law. He knew that the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy would end up leaving everybody blind. He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good. Although crucified by hate, He responded with a radical love.”

Through the work of Dr. King, our country was able to overturn unjust laws and discriminatory systems hurting Black Americans. Our progress under his leadership showed us that radical love is an insurmountable force — even in the face of hatred, prejudice and death.

Today, let us remember Dr. King as proof of the

power of love. I pray that we are inspired to continue his ministry of Gospel justice in our day.

Together, we can move forward and work to heal the painful divisions still present in our society.

As always, the path toward a better world begins with love.

“Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.”

— the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Catholic elementary schools score high in national testing

By Jay Nies and Jacob Luecke

Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 29-Feb. 4) always brings with it an air of celebration and gratitude.

This year’s observance will include an extra element of “with God, all things are possible.”

The Catholic schools in the Jefferson City diocese weathered the COVID-19 pandemic well, with students collectively scoring above national averages at every grade level, according to the latest standardized test results.

“I congratulate our students, parents, teachers and administrators for this success,” stated Erin Vader Ed.D., diocesan superintendent of Catholic Schools. “Everyone in the Diocese of Jefferson City can

feel proud of our Catholic education system — our strength comes from their longstanding support.”

Reflecting the Light

In October, the Iowa Assessment was administered to third- through eighth-graders in the 37 Catholic elementary schools in this diocese.

Collectively, the students in each grade here exceeded the national averages.

Specifically, the Catholic school students in fourth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades were found to be performing at or above a grade level higher than their current grades.

These results reflect a strong response to pandemic learning challenges across the diocese, with no signs of pandemic-

related academic decline demonstrated in the data.

Dr. Vader noted that educating the mind and spirit is good for both.

“As always, the focus of our mission is creating a Christ-centered environment for learning, where students can grow in their Catholic faith as they benefit from our strong academic tradition,” she said. “Our hope is for every child to grow into a thoughtful, generous and charitable citizen who reflects Christ’s light in this world.”

Staying connected

Kathryn Coulson, principal of St. Brendan School in Mexico, attributed much of her school’s current success to hard work, a family mindset and a relentless focus on Christ.

She pointed to the teachers’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of the 2019-20 school year and the beginning of 2020-21.

“We really concentrated in those early months on continuing to provide good instruction to our students,” she said.

St. Brendan’s pre-school and primary teachers created instructional videos for their students, with easy links so parents could help their children access them.

“They also created packets that parents picked up immediately,” said Mrs. Coulson. “And each day, they would provide instruction for what students should be doing, and gave that instruction through the videos, and let the parents work through it with their children.”

Teachers of the older students taught in real time using

Google Classroom or posted instructional videos for students to watch.

Parents helped make sure

See CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, page 16

Bishop McKnight’s January prayer intention for our Local Church

For foster parents and adopting parents; may they experience the support of the Church and the love of God as they expand their homes to make room for more children in their families. We pray to the Lord.

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

Por los padres de crianza temporal y padres adoptivos; que experimenten el apoyo de la Iglesia y el amor de Dios a medida que amplían sus hogares para dar cabida a más niños en sus familias. Roguemos al Señor.

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



Bishop McKnight’s Calendar

JANUARY

Jan 20 Memorial Mass for Mary Elizabeth Schaffer, mother of Bishop McKnight, 10:30 am, St. Andrew Church, Holts Summit

Jan 24 Priests’ Personnel Board Meeting, 2 pm, Chancery

Jan 26 Diocese Finance Council Meeting, 11 am, Chancery

FEBRUARY

Feb 3 Holy Land Presentation and Luncheon for Diocesan Priests, 11 am, Chancery

Feb 4 Mass 10 am; Holy Land Presentation and Luncheon for The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, 11 am, St. Stanislaus Church, Wardsville

Feb 5 Celebration with Religious of the Diocese, 2 pm, St. Alphonsus Liguori Chapel, Chancery

Feb 7 Council of Deans Meeting, 10 am; Presbyteral Council Meeting, 1 pm, Chancery

Feb 8 Confirmation Mass, Ss. Peter & Paul Church, 6:30 pm, Boonville



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Bishop Emeritus Gaydos shares memories, lessons from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Presides, preaches homily at See City Deanery's Memorial Mass for former pontiff

By Jay Nies

Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos remembers looking out with all the other bishops from the Cathedral of St. Patrick sanctuary in New York City.

It was April 18, 2008. Pope Benedict XVI had just arrived to offer Mass for the religious brothers and sisters of the New York archdiocese.

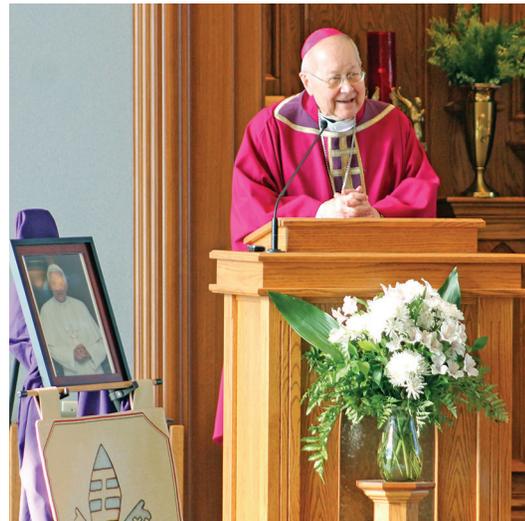
The main doors of the cathedral were wide-open, offering an unusually panoramic view across Fifth Avenue, into the city.

"I was seated right behind the main altar," Bishop Emeritus Gaydos recalled. "And St. Patrick's is right across the street from Rockefeller Center. And there's this statue, this sculpture, right across the street."

The sculpture depicts Atlas, a brawny figure from Greek mythology, holding up the world.

"Well, the car stops outside the cathedral, and Pope Benedict gets out, and his figure covers the statue of Atlas," Bishop Emeritus Gaydos recalled. "All you can see is the pope holding up the world."

"I couldn't think of a better description of the role of the successor of St. Peter in the Church!" the bishop emeritus stated.



Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos, who led the Jefferson City diocese from 1997 to 2018, preaches the homily (left) and elevates the Most Blessed Sacrament (right) during the See City Deanery's Memorial Mass for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on Jan. 6 in St. Andrew Church in Holts Summit.

— Photos by Jay Nies

This was one of three significant recollections he offered Jan. 6 in his homily for the See City Deanery's Memorial Mass for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

Pope Benedict, who led the Church from 2005 until he relinquished the papacy in 2013 due to age and ill health, died on Dec. 31 at age 95.

The pope emeritus had spent the years of retirement in study and prayer for the Church.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight called for Memorial Masses to be offered for Pope Benedict in each of the diocese's five deaneries.

Bishop McKnight, who was on a pastoral visit to Uganda, invited Bishop Emeritus Gaydos to preside at the See City Deanery Mass.

Bishop Emeritus Gaydos led the Jefferson City diocese from 1997-2018 — which included all of Pope Benedict's papacy.

Priests who minister in the See City Deanery, which includes the Jefferson City and surrounding parishes, celebrated the Mass in St. Andrew Church in Holts Summit.

"Invite people in"

"I have been thinking many things about this wonderful, wonderful Joseph Ratzinger, who was called to the See of Peter," said Bishop Emeritus Gaydos.

Noting that the former pope was a splendid catechist, the retired bishop called to mind the homily Pope Benedict preached on that sunny April Saturday in New York.

"It was just spectacular," he recalled. "He started by complimenting the beauty of the stained-glass windows in St. Patrick's."

The pope talked about how people walking outside would have no way of anticipating such beauty without coming

inside to look.

"And he went on to elucidate how our work is simply to help invite people in and then once they see the beauty of God's love and God's grace, let God take care of the rest," Bishop Emeritus Gaydos recalled.

"Dialogue of grace"

The third connection that came to mind for the retired bishop stemmed from the Gospel reading that was proclaimed at the Funeral Masses for Pope Benedict and his predecessor, Pope St. John Paul II.

In that passage from John 21, the Risen Christ asks Peter three times if Peter loves Him.

The third time, Peter responds in desperation: "You know, Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You."

Bishop Emeritus Gaydos tied that to what Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, Pope Emeritus Benedict's longtime secretary, had reported to be the former pope's last words.

"One nurse who had been helping take care of him as he was ebbing away, heard him say in a very low voice, in Italian, '*Signore, Ti amo*' — 'I love You, Lord,'" said Bishop Emeritus Gaydos.

"Recall the Gospel passage, and you could almost imagine the dialogue going on, the dialogue of grace on those last hours of Benedict on earth: 'Peter, do you love Me?' 'I love You, Lord.'" he said.

See BENELECT XVI, page 22

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Rest in peace, Fr. John Groner, 78, pastor, missionary

By Jay Nies

Father John Groner believed that he would be forgiven and saved.

He wanted that also for everyone he ministered to.

“He put his life in God’s hands and totally trusted — and whatever God had planned for him, and whatever direction that took him, he believed and trusted in that,” said Deacon Richard Vise, who discerned a call to the Diaconate while Fr. Groner was his pastor and then ministered alongside him after ordination.

Fr. Groner, a retired priest of the Jefferson City diocese, died peacefully on Jan. 6, three days after his 78th birthday, following a six-month struggle with cancer and a decades-long battle with Type 1 diabetes.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 16 in Immaculate Conception Church in Jefferson City, with Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos; Father Matthew Flatley, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish; Father Eric Groner of the Divine Word Missionaries, Fr. Groner’s nephew; and other priests of the diocese concelebrating.

Father Patrick Dolan preached the homily.

Burial was in the Groner family plot in Resurrection Cemetery in Jefferson City.

“He was a good shepherd,” said Bishop Gaydos during a Mass celebrated for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on the day Fr. Groner died.

Ordained in 1971, the Jefferson City native ministered in Columbia; Marcona, Peru; Monroe City and Indian Creek; the diocesan Mission Office; Freeburg; Hannibal; Mexico; and for 22 years as pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine Parish in St. Robert and St. Jude Parish in Richland.

“We remember this man who ministered in many parishes, who was touched and served in Peru,” Fr. Dolan stated from the pulpit. “We remember him for his faithfulness to the Gospel, his ministry as a priest, and his greetings and hospitality to his people.”

Fr. Groner was born Jan. 3, 1945, a son of John and Lydia Groner, who are now deceased.

He studied at the former St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary

high school in Hannibal, followed by philosophy and theology studies at what is now Conception Seminary College in Conception.

Priest and pastor

Holy Week was Fr. Groner’s favorite time to be a priest.

“Oftentimes,” said Deacon Vise, “he would just reflect on the meaning of those days and how we, too, have our own monsters that we have to suffer through, and knowing that in the promise of the resurrection of Our Lord, we can get through that.”

Monsignor Marion Makarewicz, pastor of Mary Immaculate Parish in Kirksville and the Mission of St. Rose of Lima in Novinger, was teaching in Hannibal when Fr. Groner became pastor of that city’s Holy Family Parish.

“The guy was passionate about everything he did,” said Msgr. Makarewicz. “And he did a lot.”

Fr. Groner’s brother, Robert, developed multiple sclerosis early in life. The entire family included him in every activity. Msgr. Makarewicz believes that helped fuel Fr. Groner’s compassionate streak.

“He was very much for the preferential option for the poor and the downcast and the outcast,” said Msgr. Makarewicz.

Having been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes early in his Priesthood, Fr. Groner got to where he had to give himself five shots a day.

He weathered numerous near-death experiences due to low blood sugar. His housekeeper, the late Jewel Tawney, saved his life many times, as did several friends.

Fr. Groner drew energy from a circle of fellow priests, including Father David Maher and Father Patrick Shortt, who both died before him.

“He was so filled with joy, which I sometimes found exasperating,” recalled Msgr. Makarewicz, who was also a member of Fr. Groner’s priest support group. “I’d be trying to complain about something to him, and he’d just laugh and say, ‘Yes! That’s the way it is!’”

No half-measures

“He was generous with himself,” Fr. Groner’s niece, Aman-

da Avenoso, stated in her eulogy. “He was generous with letting us see his humanity. ... He never hid any of his complexity. He never modeled for us that imperfection equals unworthiness.”

One of the consistent messages she found while reviewing his past homilies was that “we are made to be in communion and in relationship with each other, because we are united in the Body of Christ — no exceptions.”

Al and Carolyn Cyr were members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia when Fr. Groner was assigned there as a newly ordained priest.

The Cyrs remained friends with Fr. Groner for more than a half-century, long after they moved to Colorado.

“We just treated him like as regular guy,” said Mrs. Cyr. “We never put him on a pedestal, and I think he appreciated that.”

Mark Saucier, who led the Mission Office for many years, is convinced that Fr. Groner, already sensitized to people’s suffering, grew in that awareness during his time in Marcona.

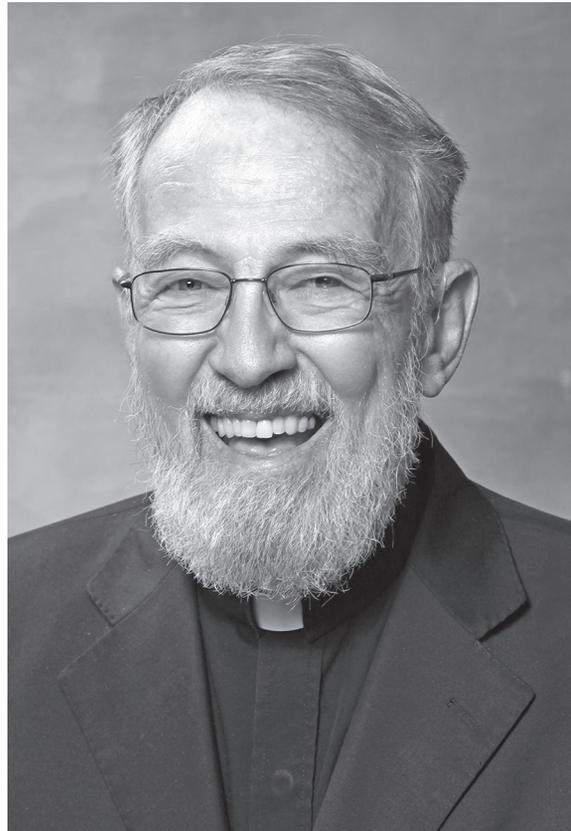
“I think John was one who by health issues was reminded of his own frailty and vulnerability every day,” said Mr. Saucier. “I think that made him much more sensitive, much more compassionate, much more understanding of the frailty of others.”

Fr. Groner’s love of nature and the outdoors blossomed into abundant zest for life in general.

“He loved to learn!” said Paula Glynn, who was Fr. Groner’s secretary and bookkeeper at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish for 13 years.

“He always had so many diverse interests, you never knew what was going to capture his attention next,” she stated. “He loved to try new things and share what he was learning.”

“The same place he knew God was guiding him to, he was going to guide you there



Fr. John Groner (1945-2023)

without being preachy,” said Mrs. Glynn. “He had a personal way of communicating with you about spirituality. He made it personal to you.”

Here for a reason

In 2005, Fr. Groner joined a pilgrimage to the town of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the site of numerous reported apparitions of the Blessed Mother.

He was hoping for a miracle — the healing of his diabetes.

But Mariana — one of the reported visionaries — reminded Fr. Groner that the first healing must be of the heart before any other healing can take place.

“We are called to be people of love and mercy, and not to

lose faith when things look difficult,” Fr. Groner preached at Mass in St. James the Greater Church in Medjugorje. “Because the Lord is merciful and kind. He is that way first. All we have to do is follow Him and we’ll be on the right path.”

For years, Fr. Groner was inseparable from his service dog, Lilly. Trained with help from a family in St. Elizabeth, she was alert to subtle differences in his behavior and body chemistry and would warn him of low blood sugar.

“She has given me a way to remain an active parish priest, and that has meant everything to me,” he said in 2009.

Lilly died in 2018. Fr. Groner obtained an electronic monitor that helped in a similar way.

He remained convinced that God had a reason for helping him avoid death on so many occasions.

“He could have walked away so many times because of his health,” Deacon Vise noted. “But the way he saw it, ‘God is not done with me yet. There’s a reason I’m still here.’ And he kept serving.”

Happy reunions

Fr. Groner collapsed and was rushed to the hospital while filling-in at a parish in north-

See FR. GRONER, page 21

MORE CONVENIENCE THAN EVER

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Why Water? Understanding the Importance of Providing Safe Water to Haiti's Poorest Families

Few of us think much about water. We want some, and we turn a tap. We drink it, and we expect to feel refreshed. Water isn't something we worry about, and with good reason. We are blessed to have safe, clean water at our fingertips.

Unfortunately, millions of families in the developing countries of the world — Haiti among them — are far less fortunate. For them, water must be found, it is rarely clean, and it can pose serious dangers if they don't take precautions before drinking it. This is because poor families often rely on collected rain or murky streams — water sources that are almost inevitably contaminated with parasites that cause disease.

"That is why Father Glenn Meaux has made providing safe water to the people of Kobonal, Haiti, a priority," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the largest Catholic charities serving in Haiti. For years, Cavnar's ministry has partnered with Kobonal missionary Fr. Meaux to address the plight of the poor in Haiti by funding feeding programs, housing projects, educational outreaches, water projects and more.

"It may surprise some American Catholics, but providing safe water can literally be a lifesaving measure in a remote community. In fact, one of the first projects we did with Fr. Meaux involved capping a spring to bring clean water to a town that had lost a tragic number of children to illnesses caused by contaminated water," Cavnar said. "Fr. Meaux had seen them carrying a child's coffin down the hillside and was shocked to learn local families were losing babies and toddlers to unsafe water every month. He contacted us to see whether something could be done, and we rallied support from American Catholics to fund the water project he needed. This gift to the community has

probably saved dozens of lives since then."

The impact of unsafe water goes further, affecting older children and adults too, according to Cavnar.

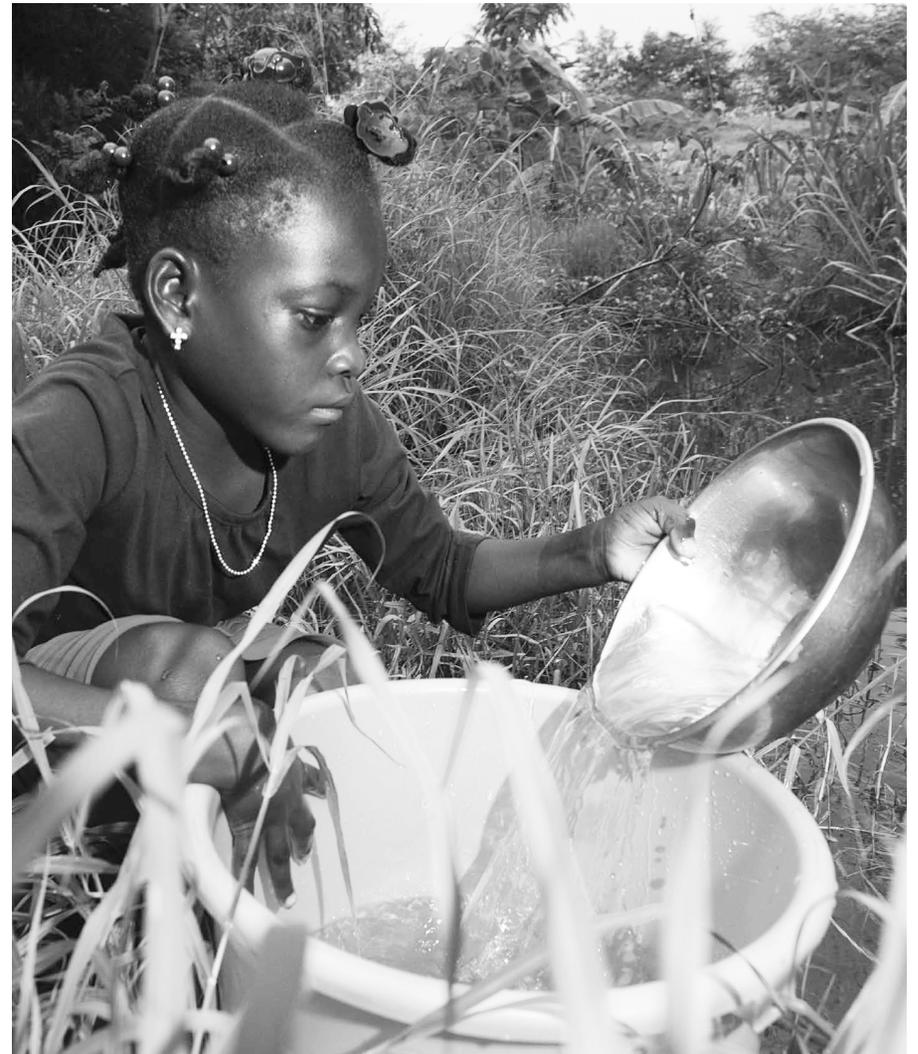
"When an older child becomes ill, he or she often misses school, and sick adults can find it difficult to work steadily and secure a stable income. These may not seem like serious problems, but as sick days mount, the impact can be devastating. Children fall behind in their classwork or drop out of school entirely, losing the opportunities for advancement that an education can bring. Their parents struggle to make ends meet, sometimes even finding it impossible to provide food each day. Once that downward spiral begins, it can lead to families falling into despair — and a real sense of hopelessness."

Fortunately, modern technology can provide a solution if funding is available. Well-digging rigs can be secured to reach safe water sources underground, and hand or solar pumps can be used to make water stations effective even when electricity isn't available.

"We have had a lot of experience solving water scarcity problems and developing water delivery systems in remote areas," Cavnar said. "The technology and skills are available if we can get the funding for the project work involved. That is why we are seeking support from American Catholics to help Fr. Meaux with his latest project — installing two new freshwater wells and repairing several other wells in his area." (See story on opposite page.)

As Cavnar has said, managing major water projects is one of Cross Catholic Outreach's areas of expertise, and he remains confident Fr. Meaux's wells will be built, benefiting the communities he serves.

"I believe we'll succeed because



In Haiti's rural communities, water is often collected from murky ponds or other contaminated sources. It can be tainted with animal waste or teeming with bacteria and harmful parasites. For the poor, who must rely on this water, one drink can lead to serious illnesses, and infants and very young children are at the greatest risk.

Catholics in America often rally to accomplish missions of mercy like this," he said. "They are eager to help others, particularly those with an urgent need. What matters to them is that their donations are used wisely and will produce an important, tangible benefit for the poor. They support water projects such as this one because they understand the value of safe water. They would want that for their own families, and their hearts go out to poor parents who must give their sons and daughters contaminated water to drink. I believe they will want to end that suffering and support a committed Catholic leader like

Fr. Meaux."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach water programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02345, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Legacy Giving Provides Catholics With Unique Opportunity to Bless Others

If you are like many Catholics born in the 1950s or before, you have probably begun to think about the spiritual legacy your life and actions represent. What did we care about? What did we value? These are some of the things we hope will be remembered.

"For a growing number of Catholics, this introspection has led to the exploration of 'legacy giving' — the use of one's will, trust, life insurance or retirement policies to leave behind an echo of one's beliefs, deeds and values — a blessing of others that will reverberate beyond our

own lifetime, hopefully influencing our family and others we cherish," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, an official Catholic relief and development charity with a staff dedicated to such estate planning.

According to Cavnar, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped many Catholics establish these "legacy gifts" and expects them to play a significant role in future ministry missions.

"A will or trust can also reflect a person's special heart for a country or for an area of need. It can be used to

build houses for poor families or to build classrooms to educate children, for example," Cavnar said. "Others simply want to help the poorest of the poor and make their legacy gift for that purpose. It's their way of saying, 'As a Catholic, I value life and support works of mercy. I want my family to understand that calling and believe in it too.' And because legacy gifts can be quite large, they often achieve incredible things. A single one might build an entire school or fund the construction of hundreds of homes. It's producing an amazing impact and serves

as an incredible testament to the faith of the giver."

In addition to this service, Cross Catholic Outreach's staff can support donors seeking to establish a charitable gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or special endowment. Financial planners can also obtain information to help those who seek professional counsel or have donor-advised funds.

To learn more about these services, the charity recommends readers visit its special online portal at CrossCatholicLegacy.org.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

American Catholics Rally to Provide Poor Families With Safe Water Through Fr. Meaux's Kobonal Haiti Mission

When Father Glenn Meaux and his missionary team arrived in Kobonal, Haiti, in 1989, he was deeply disturbed by the magnitude of poverty he saw there. Hardly anyone in the village owned the land their fragile huts occupied. No one grew gardens or raised animals. Very few employment opportunities existed for the unskilled, uneducated population, so very few families were able to earn money to buy food.

During the rainy season, the women and children would gather water from the plentiful streams and rivers — but the water was obviously tainted. During the dry season, people resorted to digging holes in the sand in order to find water.

“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system, there was literally no hope at the time.”

Fr. Glenn Meaux,
Haiti Kobonal Mission

In addition to suffering hunger and thirst, the people were also starving for spiritual guidance. Entrenched in superstition and occult practices, few had ever heard the name of Christ.

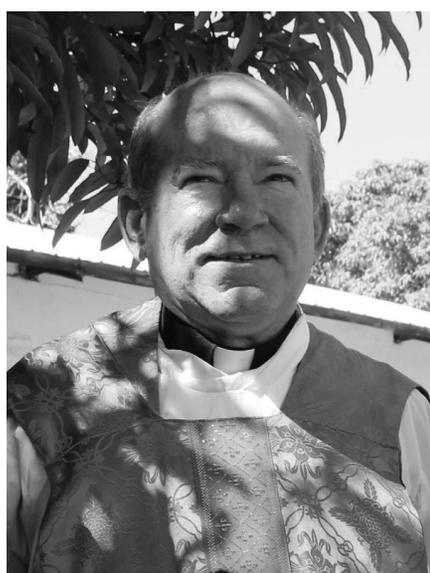
“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system— there was literally no hope at the time,” Fr. Meaux recalled.

This is the challenging ground on which the Kobonal Haiti Mission took root, and in the three ensuing decades, the mission has worked marvels, helping hundreds of families improve their lives. Still, Fr. Meaux's heart breaks every time he sees a mother or child living in a dilapidated shack or gathering water from a murky stream.

“Fr. Meaux has already given the best years of his life to the people of Haiti (see story on opposite page), but he always has his eyes forward, looking for the next thing he can do to help relieve the people's suffering and increase their opportunities in life,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a leading Catholic relief and development ministry that has partnered with Fr. Meaux for more than a decade and a half. “Many people are aware of the wonderful things he's done to address the people's urgent needs, but his ultimate goal is to break the cycle of poverty in this part of Haiti and forever change the fate of the families he serves.”

Fr. Meaux stated his objectives even more simply.

“As Catholics, we must extend our hands to help our brothers and sisters in need,” he said.



Currently, one of the mission's primary project goals is to bring clean water to the people of Kobonal, ending the need for families to collect unsafe water from remote sources.

“Women and children are often tasked with finding and collecting water, and the murky streams they draw from aren't fit for animals, much less people,” Cavnar said. “At Cross Catholic Outreach, we work on many projects like this, obtaining donations from U.S. Catholics to pay for the equipment and organize the construction efforts involved. Our current goal is to help Fr. Meaux put in three clean-water wells, build a community distribution point and repair five existing wells. If we can accomplish this, it will

postively impact 211 adults and 567 children who currently face the greatest challenges to their health and well-being. The people in these villages will use the water not only for drinking and cooking but also to sustain important gardens they depend on for food and income.”

According to Cavnar, the wells will make use of freestanding hand pumps, and the families in each community will choose a leader to oversee and perform maintenance on the equipment. Each well will have a cement wall around it for security and be available daily during specific hours of operation. The water will be free, but the benefiting families will be encouraged to contribute a token

amount to a community fund that can be tapped if repairs are ever needed on the wells. Contributing in this way will give villagers a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

“Anticipation is mounting for this project, and volunteers have already stepped forward to offer their help with the construction of the wells. Now, all that's needed are the funds for drilling, purchasing pumps, constructing a pump house to store supplies and training community members to handle maintenance of the new facilities,” Cavnar said. “Our goal now is to make American Catholics aware of the project and gain their support.”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02345, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions for becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



QUESTION CORNER

Why confess to a priest? What if it's been a long time?

By Jenna Marie Cooper

Q: Why must I confess to a priest, when I can just talk to God? (Newark, New Jersey)

A: Jesus told His Apostles: "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn. 20:23). Our bishops are the direct successors to the Apostles and, together with their priests, they share the same mission and sacramental powers given to the original Twelve.

However, while Jesus gave priests and bishops the authority to forgive sins, He didn't also give them the ability to read minds. In order to offer sacramental absolution, it is necessary for priest-confessors to be made aware of the penitent's sins. This typically happens through a spoken confession. Additionally, one requirement for absolution within the Sacrament of Reconciliation is true sorrow for our acts and a resolve to avoid sin in the future. Confessions spoken aloud give the penitent the opportunity to express real contrition.

That being said, while we know for sure that sins are forgiven through the sacrament, God is of course free to extend His grace beyond even what He has promised. If circumstances prevent you from getting to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in person, you can always directly, prayerfully petition God for the forgiveness of your sins in the meantime.

Q: I have not gone to confession in years, and I'm anxious about it. Will the priest be angry with me? (Ohio)

A: Most priests will be happy to welcome you back to the sacrament, and not angry at all. Your finally making it to confession is what is important. The priest asks how long it has been since your last confession only to gain some context, so he can better understand your situation and thus counsel you more effectively.

If you are nervous, there are practical ways you can find a confessional situation with which you are most comfortable. If you feel like you need to just dive in and talk, you can simply go to your parish at the normally scheduled time for confessions (typically found in the parish bulletin or website). But if there is a specific local priest whom you think would be an especially gentle confessor, it's also perfectly fine to reach out to him directly and ask to make an appointment.

On the other hand, if you want your confession to be as anonymous as possible, you can go to a parish other than your own, even one in another town. If you have a shrine or pilgrimage site within driving distance, these places will often offer confessions as well, with priests you're unlikely to run into in your day-to-day life.

You may find it useful to review the process of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and its prayers, ahead of time. Do know, however, that if you get flustered in the confessional, you can ask the priest-confessor to remind you of what to do. Many confessionals even provide printed copies of the Act of Contrition.

Finally, as you prepare for your confession, it might be helpful to read and reflect on the parables in chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel, all of which illustrate the joy God takes in those who repent and return to Him. These include the parable of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, and the woman who rejoices over finding a lost coin. Jesus concludes the parable of the lost coin by saying: "In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Lk. 15:10).

Jenna Marie Cooper, J.C.L., is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.



Papal Audience January 18, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters:

In our continuing catechesis on apostolic zeal, the desire to share with others the joy of the Gospel, we now look to its model and source: the example of Jesus Himself. As the eternal Word of God, made flesh for our salvation, Jesus' entire life was devoted to communicating and dialoguing with others, first with His heavenly Father in profound prayer, and then with others, especially the poor, the outcast and sinners. He proclaimed the coming of God's Kingdom not only by His preaching, but also by His ministry of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness. As the Good Shepherd, the model for all pastors in the Church, Jesus was completely committed to the welfare of His flock, protecting the fold yet also setting out in search of the lost sheep. Following His example, may we, in our daily lives, draw joy and strength from our union with the Father in prayer, allow our hearts to be shaped by pastoral zeal for the Word of God, and strive, in all our words and actions, to share with others its saving message of joy, hope and new life.

I offer a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's audience, especially the groups from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Australia and the United States of America. I offer a special greeting to the many student groups present. I ask all of you to join me in praying for Father Isaac Achi, of the Diocese of Minna in northern Nigeria, who was killed last Sunday in an attack on his rectory. So many Christians continue to be the target of violence: let us remember them in our prayers! Upon all of you, and upon your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

Epiphany Proclamation: Announcement for Easter and moveable feasts for 2023

The proclamation of the date of Easter and the other moveable feasts on the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord dates from a time when calendars were not readily available.

It was necessary to make known the date of Easter in advance, since many celebrations of the liturgical year depend on its date. The number of Sundays that follow Epiphany, the date of Ash Wednesday, and the number of Sundays that follow Pentecost are all computed in relation to Easter.

On the Epiphany of the Lord, after the proclamation of the Gospel, a deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Mother Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year:

"Know, dear brothers and sisters that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of His Resurrection, Who is our Savior.

"On the Twenty-second day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season.

"On the Ninth day of April

you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"On the Eighteenth day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"On the Twenty-eighth Day of May the feast of Pentecost.

"On the Eleventh day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

"On the Third day of December the First Sunday of Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Prayer for the opening of session, Missouri House of Representatives

Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicki, vicar general for the Jefferson City diocese and chaplain of the Missouri House of Representatives, led the House in prayer at the opening of 2023 Legislative Session on Jan. 4. He prayed:

"Behold," sayeth the Lord, "I have set before thee an open door."
— Revelation 3:8

Eternal God, Our Creator, as we enter the door of a new session and of a new legislative year, we pause in Your presence to offer You the devotion of our hearts and to pray for guidance, strength and wisdom as we face the crucial moments, days and months that lie ahead.

In this high hour of a new beginning, give to us, the representatives of our great citizens, a deep sense of responsibility, a broad spirit of understanding, an attitude of good will, and a real faith in You that we may govern well for the good of all and the freedom and justice may live long in our Show Me State.

Bless our new Speaker and his family and staff, plus give him the insight of Solomon to guide the People's House on a path of unity and humility.

And the House says, "Amen!"

Benedict XVI: The introvert dressed and led

By Elizabeth Scalia



It was a coldish day in April 2008, and an 81-year-old man, wearing a long but lightweight white coat against the chill, exited a limousine and began to walk down a long ramp, toward a place of terror and death. His trusted assistant walked discreetly behind him, nearby but not intrusive, so yes, he was very much alone. As cameras clicked noisily all about him, or filmed his progress amid the whirl of chopper blades, the man moved resolutely forward, upright but grim-faced, like a weary shepherd all too aware of his duties to the sheep.

As I watched Pope Benedict XVI make

his way to the site of the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 — then still an ugly gaping hole near the water's edge — the Scripture passage came, all unbidden: "... when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you, and lead you where you do not want to go" (Jn. 21: 18).

In perusing the first obituaries since his death was announced, it occurs to me that Joseph Ratzinger had been dressed and led away from his own desires for nearly all his life. First as a teenager, forced into the Hitler Youth, and then as a young seminarian conscripted into the German army, where he and all of his classmates were outfitted with uniforms and guns. Deserting that dubious service, he was then sent to a prisoner of war camp, where he again wore clothes not of

his choosing.

For a time, Ratzinger did manage to go (and wear) what he wished, living in his beloved Bavaria as a priest and professor of theology, celebrating Mass, holding class, celebrating the sacraments and writing, always writing.

But the calls to duty beyond his preferences continued. His talents brought him to Rome, where the width and breadth of his intellect influenced the Second Vatican Council. At age 50, he would be appointed an archbishop (only to be elevated to the College of Cardinals three months later) by Pope Paul VI. John Paul II eventually brought him to Rome to head up the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and never let him leave. In 2002, when a weary Ratzinger, aged 75, expressed a wish to retire, he was instead elected the dean of the College, con-

firmed in the role by the Polish pope.

In essence, he was told, "you're not going anywhere, Joseph Ratzinger, but where you are led."

And then he was elected to the papacy — a role he never aspired to. As Pope Benedict XVI, he held out his hands and someone else dressed him and led him to the balcony, to the jubilant crowds of St. Peter's Square and the waiting, often unfair, very often unfriendly, world. There he declared himself, "comforted by the fact that the Lord knows how to work and act even with insufficient instruments," before he asked for prayers.

He asked for them again a few days later as he received the fisherman's ring, "Pray for me, that I may learn to love the Lord more and more. Pray for me that I

See SCALIA, page 23

'Ecclesiolatry': Why our focus 'must' be Jesus Christ

By Jaymie Stuart Wolfe



Our Catholic faith has a rich heritage of truth, goodness and beauty derived through Scripture, sacraments, the lives of the saints, moral and systematic theology, a treasury of liturgical, devotional and mystical prayer, social teaching, charitable works and extraordinary achievements in art and science. Such an abundance, however, can tempt us to lose sight of what is primary. None of these wonderful blessings — not even all of them together — can replace Jesus Christ. Nor should they.

It might sound strange, but it's possible to make an idol of Church things. I call it, "ecclesiolatry" — the impassioned raising of Church-related "things" over the Christ Who inspires them.

Consider the conversations that occur at parish meetings or the "discussions" happening between Catholics on social media. Loads of energy is spent arguing on which form of the Liturgy is best, which Scripture translations should be used, which devotions are the most pious, which political platforms best reflect the social teaching of the Church, and whether doctrine should be developed and how broadly. Interesting questions all, but when they become our main pursuits, then our focus has shifted, and not in a good way. We sometimes forget that the Giver is The Supreme Gift, and that everything else is overflow; that Christianity isn't a philosophy, aesthetic, social structure, or code; that our faith is bound to a personal relationship with the living God Who made Himself intimately accessible to us in Jesus Christ. When that personal relationship takes a backseat to

the beautiful things meant to flow from it, we become disoriented, and our priorities disordered.

The Church is nothing if she's not the Bride and Body of Christ. But a bride's gaze, like her heart, must fix on the bridegroom, who is her everything. Her identity as bride is completely dependent on the love they share, and efforts to cultivate her beauty are not for herself but for "the one" whom her soul loves (Sg. 3:1-5). All her finery is mere adornment. Ultimately, self-giving love for her beloved is what makes her radiant.

But are we radiant with love for Jesus Christ? The truth is that too often we very sincere Catholics get caught up in the finery. We assume (or presume) that the relationship is there, but do little to foster or fuel it in our parishes, or even in our own lives. And a personal relationship with Jesus Christ isn't just a piece of our Catholic faith, it's the centerpiece, the foundation and cornerstone not only of the Church but of our lives as disciples. All the rest should bolster the relationship, not distract from it. Glorious architecture can elevate the soul, but only Christ Jesus can raise it to heaven.

To be the Body of Christ, we must keep ourselves connected to the Head. As St. Joan of Arc remarked at her trial, "About Jesus Christ and the Church, I simply know they're just one thing, and we shouldn't complicate the matter" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 795). Sometimes, even without meaning to, our desire to celebrate the Christ within each of us leads to writing hymns that, while well-intended, lose sight of God. Singing to and about each other isn't necessarily bad, but it isn't exactly worship either. When our subject is ourselves

See WOLFE, page 23

REFLECTION

Blessed are the humble

By Mark Saucier

It was a greedy, aggressive cancer.

Not content to feast on his lungs, it metastasized, seeking total conquest of his body.

It seemed to win. We had his funeral yesterday: a royal farewell with prayer, song, tears and memories.

But this once-vibrant, caring man was now cold, still and silent.

We try to deny death its victory, claiming the grave a portal to a world in which it has no place.

I want that to be true, but the afterlife is above my pay grade and beyond my vision.

Yet, when I reflect on his suffering, I find a reason to hope.

His was hard but relatively fast. He went from cane to coffin in a matter of months.

He told me early on that dying is a humbling experience. It had to be humbling for someone so independent to find himself totally reliant on others.

But I learned that accompanying someone down that one-way path is humbling, as well.

When he could still get out, we'd go down to his farm and, for a while, pretend nothing had changed, sitting on the porch, sipping and reweaving our stories.

Soon, though, the memories began to wander, and the words fail. We both pretended to understand, hiding our frustration.

What do you do when there is little more to say, when what we do clumsily utter is lost in the maze of a confused mind?

We do the only things you can do.

We help him sit up in bed or move him to his chair.

We get him water and encourage him to drink.

We rub lotion on his dry and irritated skin.

We read him cards and help him recall the friends who write.

We feed him ice cream because the sweet tooth is the last to leave.

And we cherish the times he smiles, says our name or whispers his "Thank you."

Dying removed all the masks, leaving him with only his needs and us with only the simplest acts to respond.

There is a sadness, a helplessness, but there is also something profoundly meaningful and intimate to be together in this. Humbled by death, we encounter something beyond it.

There is a Hasidic story about a rabbi who is asked by a disciple, "In the old days, there were those who saw the face of God. Why don't they anymore?"

The rabbi responded, "Because nowadays, no one can stoop low enough."

If we allow it, dying will get us there.

Encounter

Finding joy amidst the struggle

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES



How one legal practitioner's experience abroad continues to inform immigration work two decades later

By Marissa Flores Madden

She handed me her passport from across my desk and I smiled as I read the cover. She was the first Ecuadorian I had encountered while working at Catholic Charities Family Immigration Services. When I opened the passport, I could no longer contain my excitement. Having spent a year with a postgraduate volunteer program, I exclaimed, "Durán!? I lived in Durán!"

Thousands of miles from her home, we immediately connected over a town and a people we both loved.

Favorite soccer team? Together we agreed: "Barcelona!" (a professional club team in the coastal city of Guayaquil). Of course, I was a Barcelonista! Although, I explained, I had only ever attended one match, which unfortunately ended prematurely when a questionable call on the field prompted angry fans to hurl beer bottles at the referees.



Favorite Ecuadorian dish? Her husband spoke up before I could respond: llapingachos. I could still taste the fried potato pancakes, oozing with cheese and drenched in peanut sauce; and I remembered the women who had first served me this iconic recipe. I was with a group of fellow university students, and we had been invited to a fundraiser to support survivors of domestic violence hosted by a newly-established women's group in the community. The cooking was only bested by the women's spirit and passion for justice.

We debated our favorite Ecuadorian slang (bacán, "awe-

some", chévere, "cool") and I shared stories of my fellow volunteers who I lovingly referred to as my ñaños, siblings, in Quichua — one of the indigenous languages still spoken in Ecuador.

We reminisced. The music and dancing — salsa, merengue, reggaeton. The fiestas. The people. The culture. The hospitality. The community. The beauty of it all.

Still, an unspoken sadness crept into our conversation.

They recognized the names of the neighborhoods in Durán where I had lived and worked: El Arbolito. La Puntilla. El 28 de Agosto. And I was familiar with their daughter's neighborhood in the adjoining city of Guayaquil as well. Their daughter — who they have not seen for over 25 years. Their daughter — the reason they have come to meet with me. Their daughter — the source of both their hope and their tears.

I realized that although it had been nearly two decades, my ñaños and I had lived in Ecuador more recently than my clients. I had even returned for countless visits — sometimes multiple trips in a year — all while this family had been kept apart. As I thought about our commonality, our differences were stark. I could come and go freely, but they were separated due to immigration laws and policies; making their journey impossible to



ABOVE: The street Ms. Flores Madden lived on in Durán in 2005. **RIGHT:** Ms. Flores Madden with Francisca, a dear friend and one of the founders of the community women's group, "Mujeres en Acción y Progreso" in El Arbolito, 2006.

navigate alone.

This is the reality of our work in Family Immigration Services. We struggle to reunite families daily and in doing so we often make connections capable of transcending time, distance, language and culture. Still, with these connections come difficult stories. There are heartbreaking challenges which far too many immigrant families must confront. We journey as far as we can with our clients who carry these unimaginable burdens, and maybe deep down, that's what makes each encounter so powerful. We know it's not just food and fútbol. It's faith and family and so much more. It's the struggle not just to reunite, but to remain united despite the time and distance.

Marissa Flores Madden, is



a Department of Justice Accredited Representative in the Family Immigration Services program at Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri and the creator of the eight-episode Mercy Moments podcast series (ccnmo.diojeffcity.org/mercy-moments) Before moving to Missouri in 2021, she taught Catholic Social Teaching (CST) to high school seniors and worked in campus ministry leading immersion retreats to Ecuador and the U.S./Mexico border. Reflecting on these experiences through the lens of CST continues to inspire her work with immigrants today.

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Your local Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help you or anyone who has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church. We will listen to your needs and support you. We will help you make a formal complaint and arrange a personal meeting with the bishop, or his delegate, if desired. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.

To report abuse, call the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline:

1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL

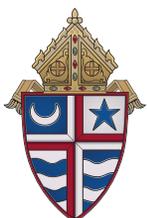
Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-392-0210

Any known or suspected abuse or neglect of children or adults should be immediately reported to the appropriate legal authorities.

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Jacqueline Baldwin, Victim Assistance Coordinator

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Martinsburg native, best-selling author, draws lessons from seeing former U.S. president in action

By Jay Nies

The incoming chief executive found a handwritten letter on his desk.

"You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well. Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you. Good luck — George"

It was Jan. 20, 1993, the day William J. Clinton succeeded George H.W. Bush as president of the United States, following a long, unpleasant election.

"That was the essence of George Bush," said Martinsburg native Jean Becker, who served as his chief of staff after he left office.

"He was one of the most principled, honorable, smartest people I've ever known," she said. "He also drove me crazy for 25 years!"

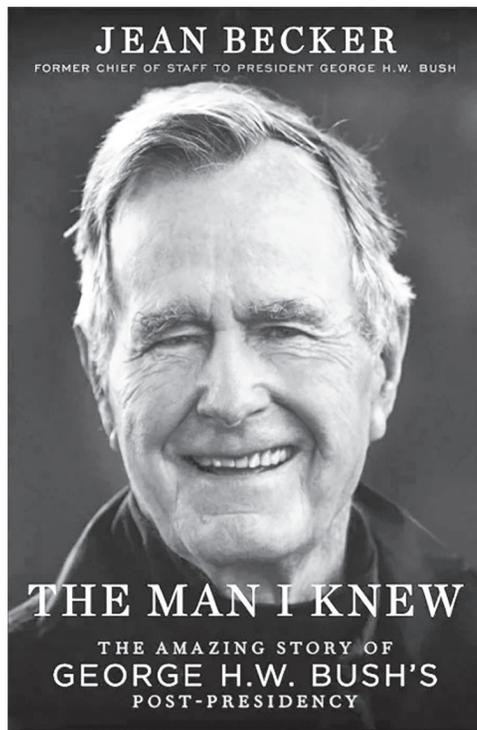
Her 2021 book, *The Man I Knew: The Amazing Story of George H.W. Bush's Post-Presidency*, illuminates how he approached life in the international spotlight and in the privacy of his home.

The book topped the *New York Times* Bestseller List for a week and remains popular.

"I started writing it because I had so many great stories to

tell," Ms. Becker stated. "Then, as I was writing, a lightbulb came on, and I realized that something more important was at work.

"What (Mr. Bush) gave us was a blueprint for a life well



lived," she said. "He showed us how to do it."

"41's" post-presidency offered insights into marriage, family, friendship, philanthropy and faith.

"A good friend once asked him to share some advice for young people," Ms. Becker noted. "What he wrote is really amazing. We'd all be better off

if we'd do what he advised."

They're simple suggestions, such as trying to be a good person, giving back, helping people, and not trying to be a big-shot.

"And the very last one is 'say your prayers,'" said Ms. Becker.

She repeatedly observed how faith shaped the lives and character of Mr. Bush and Barbara Bush, his wife of 73 years.

"I was very lucky to work with both of them," she said. "I learned so much from them."

"What is wrong with you?"

Ms. Becker and her siblings grew up on a farm near Martinsburg, going to Mass each Sunday as a family in St. Joseph Church and receiving the Sacraments there.

They attended Community R-VI schools.

Ms. Becker completed a degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and started looking for work.

"I interviewed for a ton of jobs and didn't get hired," she noted. "I finally went to work for the *Mexico Ledger*."

A coworker there, a former employee of the Gannett newspaper chain, helped her take the next step to the *Danville Commercial-News* in Illinois.

Gannett founded a national newspaper, *USA Today*, in 1982. To help it become solvent, the other papers in the chain were expected to take turns sending a reporter to Washington, D.C., for three months.

"My turn came up and I went there in 1985," Ms. Becker recalled. "I never came back. They offered me a full-time job."

Her editor appointed her feature-writer for the team covering the 1988 presidential election.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "I interviewed all the candidates and their spouses for

a series called 'Candidates at Home.'"



Jean Becker, who served as former President George H.W. Bush's chief of staff for almost 25 years, grew up in Martinsburg.

After Mr. Bush, who was vice president, and Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis were nominated, the paper convinced both candidates' wives to write a weekly column.

"And I got 'volunteered' to be their editor," said Ms. Becker. "I was grumpy about that. I had been doing what I wanted and loved my freedom as a feature writer. And now, I had to be in the office every Sunday night, when we got their columns."

It wound up being "the best assignment ever."

"I really loved both of those women," she said.

After Mr. Bush won the election, Ms. Becker's bosses sent her to pitch a story idea to the incoming first lady's chief of staff.

"I took her to lunch," Ms. Becker recalled. "And she started venting and telling me how Marlin Fitzwater, the president's press secretary, was insisting that one of Mrs. Bush's press secretaries needed to be someone with work experience in the media."

"I don't even know any former reporters," the woman vented before suddenly looking across the table and offering Ms. Becker the job.

"I was stunned," Ms. Becker

recalled, noting that she loved her job at *USA Today*.

Back in Martinsburg for Thanksgiving, she talked to her dad, Joe Becker, about the invitation and her concerns.

He said: "You've been offered a job in the White House, to work for the incoming president and first lady, and you're 'thinking about it?' What is wrong with you?"

"The best job"

Ms. Becker served as the first lady's deputy press secretary throughout Mr. Bush's term in office.

Mrs. Bush then asked her to move to Houston and help research and fact-check the memoir the former first lady was writing.

Ms. Becker did so for the following year.

She was about to interview with the *Chicago Sun-Times* when Mr. Bush asked to speak with her.

"He said his chief of staff was retiring," Ms. Becker recalled. "He said, 'Barbara thinks you can help out for a while. Would you be willing to stay and help keep the trains running on time?'"

Ms. Becker noted that she had never managed a staff or a budget.

The former president said "we'll take it one day at a time" and promised to have someone permanent hired by Labor Day.

"And we never talked about it again," Ms. Becker recalled. "Labor Day came and went. I finally got business cards printed.

"It was the best job in America," she added.

"Starting a buzz"

Young Jean's family prayed the Rosary together every night, doing so with several neighbor families on Mondays.

"Like everybody, my faith has gone up and down over the years," she stated. "But now, it's stronger than ever. In

See BECKER, page 27

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Discerners for the diaconate enjoy three-day retreat in Conception

This past November, the diaconate formation class attended a weekend retreat at Conception Abbey in Conception, Missouri.

The retreat preceded their ultimate entrance into the stage of Candidacy.

There were fourteen couples present for the retreat. They represent parish communities from throughout the diocese,

including Marceline, Palmyra, St. Clement, Centralia, Columbia, Boonville, Sedalia, Jefferson City, Wardsville, Taos and Rolla.

In addition to the formation class, six deacons and their wives were present to walk through the weekend retreat with those in formation.

The setting of Conception Abbey offered a unique spiritu-

al opportunity for the group.

“The rhythm of the weekend was established by praying with the Benedictine community,” Deacon John Schwartz, diocesan director of diaconate formation, stated. “We began each day with Morning Prayer and then progressed to Holy Mass and then evening prayer and concluded each day with Night Prayer.”

Saturday afternoon included a breakout session for the wives, who were given a talk on spiritual direction by Karen Ceckowski of the Abbey.

This was followed by the opportunity for spiritual direction for the women. Two priests from the Benedictine community also made themselves available for the Sacrament of Confession.

Father Daniel J. Merz, diocesan director of the Permanent Diaconate, led the retreat. He offered four guided sessions spaced throughout the three days.

The sessions laid the groundwork for the overall theme of the retreat, which was “Surrendering to God’s Will in Life.”

The sessions built on each other:

- Session one — Deliverance and Healing
- Session two — Renounc-



The current group of men who are discerning a possible calling to the diaconate gather with their wives and several deacon couples for a three-day retreat at Conception Abbey in northwestern Missouri.

Christmas dinner



Volunteers at St. Brendan Parish in Mexico prepare, serve and deliver about 350 meals to people who are hungry, homebound or in need of companionship on Christmas Day. The Christmas dinner is an annual tradition for the parish.

ing Lies and Announcing the Truth

•Session three — Call to Service

•Session four — Living the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist)

Deacon Schwartz showed two videos on the diaconate — one from the Diocese of Joliet and the other from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Both of the videos reiterated the important role that the wife plays during formation and after ordination.

They also provided insight into how deacons and wives are to support each other physically, emotionally and spiritually.

In addition, the call to the diaconate was shown to strengthen the marriages of those couples who walked together during the formation period and into ordained min-

istry.

The videos also pointed to the deacon as the witness to Christ the Servant in the world and offered a bridge between the pastor and laity.

The group was left with the message to trust God in their vocation and to surrender to His divine providence in their lives.

The feedback from the group was very positive. The participants enjoyed the rhythm of the monastic prayer and chant and the realization that they were part of a 150-year tradition of prayer at the Abbey.

The agenda of the retreat allowed for ample time for personal prayer and reflection. And though the weather was cold, many were able to enjoy walks around the beautiful grounds and natural settings of the Abbey.

‘His memory still resonates with us’: Franciscan recalls MLK’s deathbed

OSV News

Mishawaka, Indiana

On April 4, 1968, Franciscan Sisters Jane Marie Klein and Sister Anna Marie Hofmeyer were both in Memphis ministering at Saint Joseph Catholic Hospital when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — just 39 years old — was brought there after being shot by an assassin.

“We were not allowed to go into the ER when they (the doctors) were working on him, but after Dr. King was pronounced dead, we

were admitted to it and the authorities gave us the time we needed to pray with him,” Sister Jane Marie, now 84, told OSV News.

This coming Jan. 15 would have been King’s 94th birthday, although the holiday was observed in 2023 on Jan. 16.

Rev. Dr. King only led the civil rights movement for 13 years, but they were eventful ones that changed American society forever.

“His memory still resonates with us,” said Sister Jane Marie.

Chariton County pastor Fr. Boniface becomes a U.S. citizen

**Has been serving
in this diocese since 2011**

By Jay Nies

Father Boniface Kasiita Nzabonimpa raised his right hand and pledged to defend and abide by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

With that, the Uganda native became a U.S. citizen, allowing him to travel freely between his homeland and his mission field.

"It started with the people of America and their goodness," said Fr. Nzabonimpa, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda, who has been ministering in the Diocese of Jefferson City since 2011.

"After 10 years of service to the American people, I said, 'I have to be one of them!'" he stated.

Ordained to the Priesthood in 2002, he is currently pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Brunswick, St. Joseph Parish in Salisbury and St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Wien.

He previously served at St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City and in local hospital ministry; at Visitation Parish in Vienna, Holy Guardian Angels in Brinktown and St. Aloysius Parish in Argyle, which includes St. Boniface Chapel in Koeltztown; at St. Michael Parish in Kahoka, Shrine of

St. Patrick Parish in St. Patrick, the former Mission of Notre Dame in LaGrange and the former Mission of St. Martha in Wayland; and at St. Joseph Parish in Hurricane Branch and the Mission of St. Raphael in Indian Grove.

"I love Missouri," he said. "The years that I've been here — it's just been unbelievable."

Prior to coming to this diocese, he ministered part-time at parishes in Chula Vista and El Centro, California.

Almost 12 years ago, he visited Monsignor Gregory L. Higley, who was vicar general of the Jefferson City diocese at that time.

"He was very welcoming and encouraged me," Fr. Nzabonimpa recalled. "Bishop (John R.) Gaydos contacted my bishop, who allowed me to come here. That's how it started."

When Fr. Nzabonimpa arrived in Jefferson City, a place where temperatures dip lower than in his homeland, Msgr. Higley presented him with a winter coat and hat.

"I still have them!" said Fr. Nzabonimpa.

Along the way

The missionary priest started by applying for permanent



Father Boniface Kasiita Nzabonimpa — pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Brunswick, St. Joseph Parish in Salisbury and St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Wien — celebrates becoming a U.S. citizen, during a Christmas party.

resident status, often referred to as a "green card."

That process took about two years.

After maintaining permanent-resident status for five years, he became eligible to apply for citizenship.

"I knew it would help me to serve the people better," he said. "Going back and forth to visit my family and my dio-

cese, you have to get a visa, and things can get mixed up in the shuffle."

"Being a U.S. citizen helps me to always be available for the people and serve them the way I should," he said. "Now, nothing can hold me back."

Alan Garrison, a member of St. Boniface Parish in Brunswick, helped him work through the preparations and

get to and from St. Louis.

"Alan has tremendous love for this country and has served it for many years," Fr. Nzabonimpa noted. "And he has a tremendous love for the Church, and I am grateful to him."

The priest studied the answers to 100 possible questions pertaining to U.S. citizenship, including history and civics.

His examiner asked him six questions when he went for an interview in October.

"I answered them, and that was it," the priest recalled. "After that, they schedule you for a swearing-in ceremony."

He traveled to the Thomas F. Eagleton Federal Courthouse in St. Louis on Nov. 8 to take the oath.

One thing that stood out to him was being asked if he would be willing to take up arms to defend the United States if called upon to do so.

"I said yes, that I'm ready to do that," he said. "That's part of what makes the United States of America a great nation, that we're ready to fight for each other and protect each other."

The children of St. Joseph School in Salisbury celebrated his newly-acquired citizenship later that day, and his parishioners did so the following weekend.

See FR. BONIFACE, page 15



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FR. BONIFACE

From page 14

"It makes me feel proud for our country and for our people that I can do this," he said.

"I feel a sense of belonging, like the rest of Americans. And I'm proud of that."

Blood of the martyrs

As pleased and honored as Fr. Nzabonimpa feels to be a U.S. citizen, he is also proud of Uganda and its people.

"They are who made me who I am today," he said. "And they helped me prepare to serve in this great country."

He is one of four missionary priests from Uganda currently ministering in this diocese.

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

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

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

"We have more Christians in Uganda than any other kind of people," Fr.

Nzabonimpa noted. "And of those, Catholics are the most numerous."

He said celebrating the Mass and the other sacraments is mostly the same in Uganda and the United States.

"But in Uganda, there are many more young people in the parishes," he noted. "Here, there are more old people and not as many young people."

Some in Uganda travel to Sunday Mass by car, others walk a mile or two to get there.

"Either way, they respect the Sunday obligations," the priest noted.

Catholics and other Christians work well together and occasionally unite for worship on special occasions, "which is good," he said.

Fr. Nzabonimpa grew up enjoying going to Mass and praying with his family.

"I think that made me open to whatever vocation God had in mind for me, and that's something I want to share with the people here," he said.

Sister André, oldest known person in world, dies in France at 118

OSV News

Toulon, France

Sister Andre, a Daughter of Charity and the world's oldest known person, died at age 118, a spokesman of the nursing home where she died told AFP agency on Tuesday.

"There is great sadness but ... it was her desire to join her beloved brother. For her, it's a liberation," David Tavella, speaking for the Sainte-Catherine-Laboure nursing home, told AFP.

Sister Andre, a Catholic convert raised in a Protestant family, was born Lucile Randon Feb. 11, 1904. She lived through the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and through 10 pontificates.

She died Jan. 17 in her sleep at her nursing home in Toulon, on France's Mediterranean coast, Tavella said. An avid listener of Vatican Radio, the French nun sent well wishes to the radio operation on the occasion of its 90th anniversary in 2021.

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This is a screen shot of the livestream of Father Boniface Kasiita Nzabonimpa as he takes his pledge in St. Louis in order to become a U.S. citizen.

"Excited and grateful"

Fr. Nzabonimpa said Archbishop Paul Ssemogerere of his home Archdiocese of Kampala was pleased with the priest's decision to pursue U.S. citizenship.

"My archbishop knows the needs here," Fr. Nzabonimpa stated. "And this puts me in a better position to continue ministering here in this diocese."

His parents and siblings are

also proud of the achievement.

"They're excited and grateful that I'm able to serve Uganda as their country and also the country of the U.S.," he said.

Now in his 21st year of Priesthood, Fr. Nzabonimpa is accompanying Bishop W. Shawn McKnight on a pastoral visit to Uganda to meet with Archbishop Ssemogerere and the people.

"It's exciting to go back to

Uganda for the first time as a U.S. citizen," the priest said.

Peace and unity

U.S. Rep. Sam Graves recently sent Fr. Nzabonimpa a U.S. flag that was flown above the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

"I'm going to plant it in my yard so everyone can see it," the priest said.

Will he bless it first?

"Yes, yes, of course!"

Fr. Nzabonimpa asked for prayers for the people of the United States and Uganda — "for peace and unity for all the people."

"We want our countries to have peace and unity, to be protected by our God," he said.

"Sometimes," he noted, "politicians try to tell us how divided we are. But Americans should confess that our unity is very important."

"We can disagree, but we should always be united as a country," he said.

For others hoping to apply for U.S. citizenship, he advised patience and diligence.

"You have to be committed," he stated. "It involves a lot of paperwork."

"And you must continue to be a good person," he said. "Be of good service to others and avoid bad things."

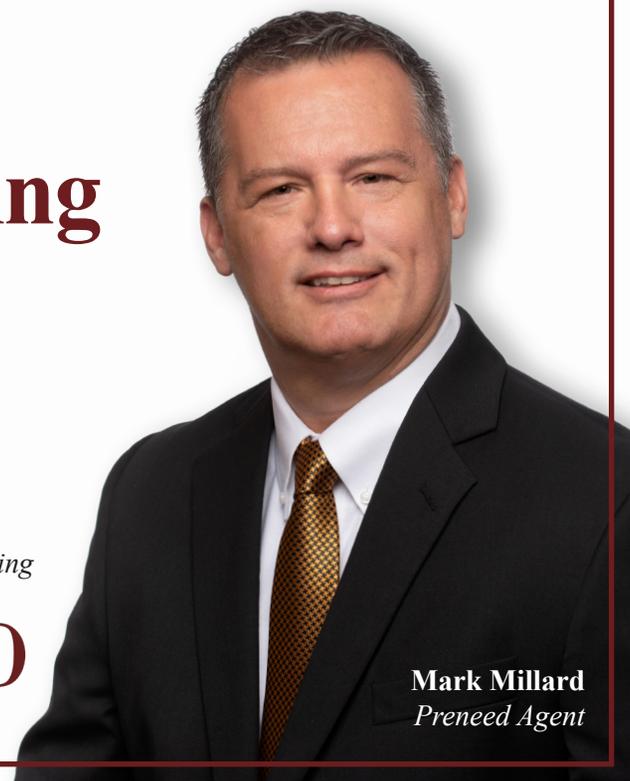
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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

From page 3

their children were logged on and ready to learn.

Over that summer, Mrs. Coulson and the teachers re-evaluated their remote teaching strategies — what worked well and what needed improvement — in case the pandemic or other circumstances would require more learning at home.

“We took a hard look at our diocesan standards and what each student should be mastering at each level,” said Mrs. Coulson. “And whatever benchmarks weren’t being met in terms of rigor, we would spend time reviewing.”

The teachers found ways to do that while keeping the students up-to-date on the requirements of their current grade level.

Teachers also had to work on breaking down the isolation children were feeling from being separated from their friends — first while learning at home, then while keeping a safe distance in person.

“That’s where a lot of our faith came into play,” said Mrs. Coulson. “Even though we could not be right next to each other, we were able to connect through faith, through prayer, through the Mass.”

Students in different grades wrote letters to each other during the pandemic, helping them stay connected as a school family and as a family of faith.

The teachers themselves stayed busy learning.

“I firmly believe you educate the educators and help them get better at the job,” Mrs. Coulson stated. “My role is to help them be the best teachers they can be.”

They sought creative ways to help individual students who were falling behind in any of their subjects.

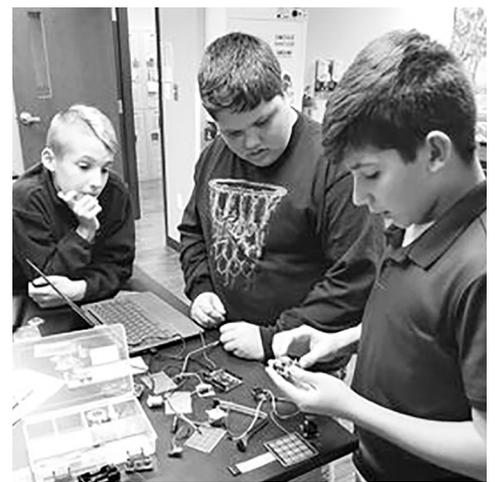
They also reevaluated their textbooks and brought in additional resources to help fill-in the gaps.

The school’s literacy teachers spent a year honing the fundamentals of teaching reading and writing.

Other teachers learned more about helping students who are falling behind catch back up.

At every turn

Father David Veit has been pastor of St. Brendan parish for



Students in all grades at St. Brendan School take part in a multitude of activities to reinforce their learning throughout the school week.

— Submitted photos

about six months.

He noted that recently, the wind blew a stack of papers out of his car. Without hesitating, a fourth-grader waiting for recess jumped out of line, chased down the scattered leafs and handed them to the priest.

“That’s very typical of what I’ve experienced with the kids here since I arrived six months ago,” said Fr. Veit.

This past fall, students had a lesson in their religion classes about the ancient practice of praying on All Souls Day for people who have died, whose souls are being purified before entering heaven.

The students got enthused about doing that for their deceased family members and others who are at rest in the parish cemetery.

“They worked out when go to confession, and how they would get to the cemetery and pray, and we had several parents go along,” said Fr. Veit.

The students wound up getting so involved in praying at every grave, they didn’t want to leave.

“It’s not just that we can have religion class every day, although we do,” said Fr. Veit. “Our school is Catholic, and our faith pervades everything we do.”

Off to a good start

Years ago, a St. Brendan parent started referring to the “St. Brendan difference.”

“We use that phrase a lot now,” said Mrs. Coulson.

It starts with a focus on faith and keeping God at the center.

“We always begin with, ‘Know Christ, grow in Christ, make Christ known,’” said Mrs.

Coulson.

Each school day begins with an assembly in the gym, with the students and teachers praying a morning offering and asking the Blessed Mother, their guardian angels and all the saints to pray for them.

“So right off, they’re being reminded that not only is our school and parish family praying with us, but so are the saints in heaven,” said Mrs. Coulson.

After attendance in home-room, the students head over to

family within our school,” said Mrs. Coulson. “You can feel it.”

The entire faculty knows each student and looks out for him or her throughout the day.

“As a family, we can recognize when something’s going on with one our students, and we work together to help solve it and make things better and stronger,” she said.

“Like a lion”

Approximately 7,000 students attend Catholic elemen-

been benefiting for decades from a stewardship model of support from all parishioners.

The cost of education is largely borne by parishioners’ sustained giving to their parishes, making Catholic education accessible to more Catholic students.

In keeping with the diocesan pastoral plan, parishes are now in the process of moving away from a fundraiser mindset and toward a deeper application of everyday stewardship for supporting all parish ministries.

“There’s no separate entity called ‘St. Brendan School,’” the priest noted. “It’s all part of St. Brendan Parish, and we’re cultivating a mentality of treating it all as such.”

Holy environment

Mrs. Coulson is convinced that many of the current St. Brendan students who decide to raise their families in the Mexico area will want to send their children to St. Brendan someday, based on their own experience.

“I believe they’ll be aware of how we helped set them up for success,” she said, “not only in high school with academics, but also into adulthood with the building up of their character.”

For Catholic Schools Week, Fr. Veit suggested praying not just for the success of St. Brendan School but for everyone in the parish to have a deeper appreciation for their Catholic faith.

“Our school helps with that by nurturing children in an environment that is holy and exposes them to what the Church teaches, day-in and day-out,” he stated.

2022 Fall Iowa Assessment Results show grade equivalent

| | National average | Diocese of Jefferson City |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Third grade: | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| Fourth grade: | 4.2 | 5 |
| Fifth grade: | 5.2 | 5.8 |
| Sixth grade: | 6.2 | 7 |
| Seventh grade: | 7.2 | 8.5 |
| Eighth grade: | 8.2 | 9.9 |

church. They pray the Rosary together each Monday and the Divine Mercy Chaplet or another devotion each Tuesday.

They attend Mass each Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Mrs. Coulson said it’s well worth the time taken.

“The teachers will tell you over and over again, they would much rather start the day in church, because it has such a positive impact on the students throughout the day,” said Mrs. Coulson. “It means they’re able to get much farther in academics and everything else.”

The students also spend time in Adoration each Wednesday and get a chance to go to Confession.

“It all builds up a sense of

tary schools in the Jefferson City diocese, which covers 38 counties in central and north-eastern Missouri.

Fr. Veit is convinced that having a Catholic school helps energize a parish and all of its other ministries.

He observed that such an environment, created with joy and a sense of community, draws entire families deeper into the practice of their faith.

Sometimes, students who are not Catholic decide that they want to enter the Church.

“Truth is like a lion,” said Fr. Veit, paraphrasing St. Augustine. “You don’t need to protect it, just let it out and it will take care of itself.”

He noted that Catholic schools in this diocese have

SEEK23

From page 1

keynote talk by Sister Miriam James Heidland of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

“She kept going back to the idea that ‘it’s good that you are here,’” said Ms. Newkirk. “That really stuck out to me because it reiterates the fact that God assembled these thousands of Catholics not just from throughout the United States but from throughout the entire world, here at this conference for a reason. And He has a plan for each of us.”

During Adoration, she meditated on a verse from the Book of Esther (4:14): “Perhaps, you were made for a time such as this.”

“That was really clicking with me,” Ms. Newkirk said, “that there’s something about bringing us all together here this week that’s going to make a lasting impact not only on the whole Catholic Church but the entire world.”

MU freshman Catherine Patti became keenly aware of God’s presence during Adoration.

“It was my first time experiencing Adoration in a crowd that large, and I felt so much joy being able to worship God with so many people from all over the world,” she said.

In talks throughout the week, she had been hearing how much God wants her to spend all eternity with Him.

“My experience in Adoration made me truly feel God’s love for me,” she stated. “That’s something I will take with me for the rest of my life and will use to help motivate others to attend Adoration and experience for themselves God’s outpouring of love for them.”

MU freshman Emma Johnson invited her mother, who lives in St. Louis, to join her at Adoration in the Dome.

“It made me so happy to have her here,” said Ms. Johnson. “It was the first time she’s ever been to an Adoration like



LEFT: Father Nicholas Reid, a priest of the diocese who’s serving as an Air Force chaplain in San Antonio, Texas; Father Paul Clark, chaplain of Helias Catholic High School and diocesan vocation director, director of seminarians and moderator of youth and young adult ministry; Father Daniel Merz, pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia; and Father Joshua Duncan, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Glasgow and St. Joseph Parish in Fayette gather for a photo at the SEEK23 conference in St. Louis. **RIGHT:** Anna Porting, director of youth ministry for Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City; Maureen Quinn, director of religious education and youth/young adult ministry for the Jefferson City diocese; Julie Gramlich, director of adult faith formation for Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City; and Maddie Gramlich, at teacher at St. Peter School in Jefferson City and a member of the Cathedral parish’s youth ministry team, pose for a photo with Jonathan Roumie, the actor who plays Jesus in the hit series “The Chosen,” at the SEEK23 conference in St. Louis.



this. And I know that her experiencing what I experienced was an answer to prayer, because we’re both going to have a better relationship with Jesus, and that’s all I want.”

Stronger bonds

Numerous college students, along with 45 priests, seminarians, high school students and lay parishioners from all over the diocese, attended SEEK23.

Zach Mueller attended from St. Brendan Parish in Mexico.

“I felt unity and love, and you could instantly tell that God was in St. Louis,” he said.

Logan Mathews graduated from Helias Catholic last year and is a freshman at MU. He decided to cap-off his winter break by attending SEEK23.

“I heard a lot of good things about it and I wanted the opportunity to deepen my faith and meet some new people in the process,” he said.

He wasn’t disappointed.

“When you’re with so many people who have similar goals and ideals, you hit it off so much better than with anybody else,” he stated. “The connection you feel is that much stronger.”

He said he would be taking a trove of new insight back to campus with him.

“The people I’ve met here from Mizzou and even the ones I came here with — I feel like our bond is stronger,” he said.

“Hopefully, we can branch out and be like undercover missionaries on campus.”

“The same best friend”

A platoon of priests gathered around the edges of the indoor stadium floor, ready to hear Confessions throughout Adoration.

Among them were: Father Paul Clark, chaplain of Helias Catholic and diocesan vocation director, director of seminarians and moderator of youth and young adult ministry; Father Joshua Duncan, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Glasgow and St. Joseph Parish in Fayette; Father Daniel Merz, pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia; and Father Nicholas Reid, a priest of the diocese who’s serving as an Air Force chaplain in Texas.

Fr. Duncan attended his first SEEK conference as a college student in 2010.

He went to another as a seminarian in 2013, and as a priest has been at each SEEK held since 2018.

Twenty of his parishioners, including three teachers from St. Mary School, came with him this year.

“I told them it’s one of the best experiences of the universal Catholic Church you could have,” said Fr. Duncan. “You’re seeing the Church fully alive.”

“It’s like you already know

everybody here because we all have the same best friend, Jesus!” he stated.

Fr. Duncan hopes the experience will help those who attended convince their fellow parishioners to get more involved in carrying-out the Church’s mission.

Tools for evangelization

Brett and Erin Witte were among the adults from St. Mary in Glasgow at SEEK23.

“I’d say it’s re-sparked the fire in us for reaching out and sharing our faith with others,” said Mrs. Witte.

Mr. Witte added: “It’s giving us more tools to do the evangelization that we’ve been aspiring to do for years but really haven’t had the confidence, the motivation, the know-how that we felt we needed in order to do it.

“We want every single soul to go to heaven,” he stated. “We want to get our fallen-away family and friends and community members back to Holy Mass

and the Sacraments so they can know joy and be saved.”

Mrs. Witte was delighted to enter a packed assembly hall for a 7 a.m. talk on respect for life and women’s health.

“These young people are fun but they are also serious about their faith and their life, and it’s been beautiful,” she said.

“He’s always waiting”

Four seniors from Helias Catholic attended the conference.

See CALLED, page 19

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Breathing with both lungs

Father Geo Tharakan — a priest from India who assisted at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia while studying at the University of Missouri School of Journalism last semester — celebrates an Eastern Rite Mass in the Syro-Malabar Tradition in the St. Thomas More Newman Center on Dec. 13. The Syro-Malabar Church is one of the 21 Eastern Churches that constitute the Catholic communion, and has 3.25 million members. The term “Syro-Malabar” refers to the Syriac language and the Malabar region that is currently known as Kerala, on the southwest coast of India. The Syro-Malabar Church is one of the eight churches among the St. Thomas Christians in India that trace the origin of their faith to St. Thomas the Apostle. Pope St. John Paul II stated that the Church needs to breathe with both of her lungs, eastern and western.

— Photo by James Benson

Accompaniment key to expanded vision for marriage formation

By Maria Wiering

OSV News

When Adriana Vasquez was working in marriage ministry for the Archdiocese of New York two decades ago, she helped enrich the theology expressed in its materials and workshops for Spanish-speaking Catholics.

She later discovered, however, that excellent content was not enough.

“I was dismayed years later to find out that some of those couples who attended those workshops were later divorced,” she told OSV News.

As she has continued working in marriage ministry in several other dioceses, Vasquez has identified an approach that does make a powerful difference for engaged couples: evangelization through personal accompaniment.

Ahead of Valentine’s Day — the most popular day for couples to get engaged, according to the wedding planning website *WeddingWire* — marriage ministry experts say the practice of personal accompaniment could become a worldwide trend in Catholic marriage preparation, due to a renewed vision for marriage formation introduced last year in a document from the Holy See’s Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

First issued in Italian in June with an English translation published in October, “Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life” presents a three-stage approach to preparing men and women for Catholic marriage. It also addresses the wedding celebration and pastoral accompaniment for the couple’s first married years.

The approach aims not only to transmit doctrine, but also to “let the mystery of sacramental grace resonate among the spouses,” the document states.

In an introduction to “Catechumenal Pathways,” Pope Francis frames “accompaniment” as an important action of the Catholic Church as a whole, writing that “we have a primary duty to responsibly accompany those who manifest their intention to be united in marriage, so that they may be preserved from the trauma of separation and never lose faith in love.”

The document shares a vision of accompaniment tailored to each couple by their parish’s priests, pastoral workers and other married couples. It states that “it is not so much a matter of sharing notions or imparting skills. Rather, it is about guiding, assisting, and being close to couples along a path to walk together.”

The idea of a “marriage catechumenate” has roots in St. John Paul II’s writings about family life, and the language draws a connection to the Church’s process for welcoming new members.

That is appropriate, because it allows an engaged couple to rediscover the mystery of the faith, said Julia Dezelski, assistant director of marriage and family life for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

The breakdown of mar-



Pope Francis greets Zea Daolio and Enzo Bellelli during his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Jan. 11. The couple received the pope’s blessing for their 70th marriage anniversary.

— CNS photo/Vatican Media

riages in the United States and worldwide, and its implication for children and family life, indicates that the Church should be investing more in engaged couples, she said.

According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University in Washington, the number of annual Catholic weddings in the United States fell 65% from 426,309 in 1969 to 148,134 in 2014 — with a dramatic drop to 97,200 weddings in 2020 (the next available year of captured data). Between 1969-2020, the self-identified Catholic population grew from 54.1 million to 73.2 million.

A 2015 Pew Research study found that among Catholics who have ever been married, 34% have obtained a divorce. Meanwhile, 44% of Catholics report having cohabitated with a romantic partner outside of marriage.

“It’s crucial that we build

stronger families and stronger marriages, starting with stronger marriages,” Dezelski said.

The current marriage preparation landscape among U.S. dioceses “varies somewhat drastically,” she said. However, Dezelski has observed more dioceses and parishes incorporating mentor couples for personal accompaniment in marriage formation. Several widely used marriage preparation programs require them. Mentor couples are also recommended in the USCCB’s 2021 document “Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry.”

Under many of these models, a pastor or parish marriage ministry coordinator assigns a married, program-trained mentor couple to an engaged couple.

One popular marriage-formation apostolate, Witness to Love, has flipped that approach, encouraging the en-

gaged couple themselves to choose a couple to mentor them so long as they meet certain criteria, such as regularly attending church, actively practicing their faith, and being married five years or more.

The hope is that, by connecting with mentors they already trust and respect, the engaged couple will discuss their faith authentically, be more attracted to the Church and open to personal conversion, and continue their relationship with their mentors beyond their wedding day. It also gives mentor couples an

opportunity to evangelize, experience deeper conversion and strengthen their marriages.

Witness to Love contains many aspects of what the “Catechumenal Pathways” document envisions for a marriage catechumenate, said Mary-Rose Verret, who founded the apostolate in 2011 with her husband, Ryan.

The marriage catechumenate “isn’t an invitation (for dioceses and parishes) to fit something new into their existing process,” she said. “It’s a plea to completely rethink the way that they’re approaching forming couples getting married today. It’s obvious that the best content that’s ever been created in the history of the Church isn’t doing the trick. It’s not because it isn’t great content. It’s because ultimately evangelization moves at the pace of relationships.”

Maria Wiering is senior writer for OSV News.

CALLED

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“I feel like we’re all here to grow a little bit closer to God, and explore that relationship and take a deeper dive,” said Aidan.

“It’s cool to see so many Catholic youth who are active in their faith,” said Josie Morasch. “It gives you an inkling of how many of us there are in the world.”

Statistics show that a large percentage of high school-age Catholics stop practicing their faith within a few years.

“Before this, I’d say I was probably going to be one of those people who wouldn’t be practicing,” said Korbin. “But I feel like this has really changed my way of looking at Christ and deepened my love for Him.”

Josie was inspired by hearing one of the speakers say: “Don’t be afraid to come back home. You’re not defined by your sins. God is always waiting with open arms for you to come back to Him.”

What stood out for Aidan was a speaker’s message that “you’re not defined by your greatest weakness; you’re defined by your Father’s love for you.”

For Allie Mathews, the most striking message was that “they can try to call it the Common Era or whatever, but there’s nothing ‘common’ about the time after the birth of Jesus Christ!”

She asked for prayers for continued guidance and growth in relationship with the Lord.

Korbin said the most challenging message for him was to “forgive the ones who hurt you the most, first.”

Final destination

Zachary Rockers, director of campus ministry at Helias Catholic, said SEEK23 was “a sliver of heaven.”

“We’ve seen the Church fully alive,” he said. “We get a really good look at the Communion of Saints here.”

He hopes the experience will help launch everyone who was present on a lifelong pursuit of the Lord.

“Heaven is our final destination,” he noted. “And the beauty of our Catholic faith, with the depth and the

breadth of it, you’re never going to be finished with it, you’re never going to stop finding gems and treasures.

“Those things are going to keep leading you closer to Jesus,” he said.

Mr. Rockers hopes everyone will remember that God wants to have a deep relationship with them.

“And He’s given us the gift of the Catholic faith to encounter Him in the most intimate way possible,” he said.

Like no other joy

MU freshman Sofia Fiorino became Catholic with members of her family last Easter.

“What really surprised me here is that there are so many people representing different practices of the Catholic faith in so many different ways,” she said.

She witnessed priests, sisters and monks in a panoply of religious garb, mingling effortlessly with crowds of laypeople.

“I saw two priests, a nun and a layman playing spikeball together,” she said. “I sure wasn’t expecting that!”

MU freshman Olivia Evers said she hopes she never forgets seeing “a bunch of people that don’t know each other come together and bond with their Catholic faith.”

“I’ve never seen this kind of joy anywhere else,” she said. “This community of people who are yearning to feel God’s presence and just be in community with each other and serve others and help the world become a better place — it’s unlike any other joy I’ve ever encountered.”

She was looking forward to taking that joy home with her and sharing it with her family and friends.

“I want my happiness and joy to be so evident that people want to know where it’s coming from,” she said. “It’s because of a relationship with God and with others, built on the foundation of Christ.”

“Our deepest desire”

MU freshman Alex Mitendorf noticed a common



Students from Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City gather with their banner in the Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis during the SEEK23 conference.

— Photo by Zach Rockers

thread through all the talks and workshops — the love of Christ.

“It was through Jesus’s love for the Father and the Holy Spirit that He created everything that’s around us, and it’s through Jesus’s love that all of us are here and all of us are saved,” he said.

Why does that matter?

“Because it orients our entire life toward heaven, which is the ultimate goal,” he said. “That is our deepest desire as humans, to be in communion

with that love.”

MU freshman Thomas McCauley asked for prayers for the powerful experiences and speakers’ messages from SEEK23 to stay with everyone who attended.

“Pray,” he suggested, “that we have the courage to act on all of this and help the people in our communities and do what God’s really calling us to do.”

Planning ahead

Mr. Mueller found that he

could relate in some way to each of the speakers and their stories.

“The knowledge they shared definitely made a great impact on my faith and provided a sense of clarity in this time of such confusion,” he said.

Maureen Quinn, director of religious education and youth/young adult ministry for the diocese, said FOCUS, the SEEK conference’s organizer, has “mastered the art of building missionary disciples.”

“Through SEEK, we are able to learn tangible skills that we can bring home to our diocese,” she stated.

Next year’s SEEK conference will also be in St. Louis. Mrs. Quinn hopes the number of people who attend from this diocese will double.

“Consider SEEK24, where you will be inspired by top-notch speakers, find out about countless resources, learn how to be missionary disciples in our parishes, and most importantly have an encounter with Jesus Christ,” she said.

To learn more, visit seek.focus.org/seek24, or contact Mrs. Quinn at maureenquinn@diojeffcity.org.

Seminarians benefitted from SEEK23

By Jay Nies

Seminarians Jacob Hartman and John Paul McGuire of the Jefferson City diocese took part in a special track for seminarians at the SEEK23 conference.

The Jan. 2-6 event in St. Louis was sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

For Mr. Hartman, the most memorable message from the event was that “Jesus does not want to pardon you like a judge, He wants to heal you like a physician.”

“This reminded me that Christ did not give us the Sacraments merely for the sake of our obedience to them,” said Mr. Hartman, a first-year theologian at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago.

“Christ wants to heal us and make us fully alive,” he noted. “He desires our joy, peace, happiness and fulfillment.”

SEEK23 helped Mr. Hartman think back to the many ways Christ has brought him healing.

“With that comes greater trust and hope in the way He is guiding me now,” he said.

Upon arriving, Mr. McGuire immediately noticed the intensely joyful environment at SEEK23.

“This joy was also very present at the large Masses,” said Mr. McGuire, a second-year collegian at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, Texas.

He enjoyed worshipping with 200 fellow seminarians and 17,000 other Catholics.

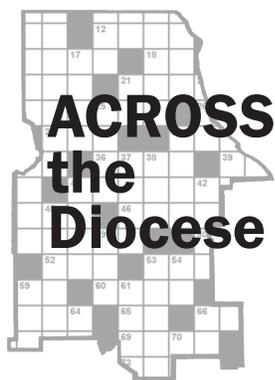
“I could feel that everyone was praying the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and desiring to love Christ more through the Holy Eucharist,” he said.

Mr. McGuire stated that if he could only remember one thing from SEEK23, he would want it to be wandering around the “Mission Way” exhibit area with his fellow seminarians and “seeing all the different religious orders, apostolates and religious shops, along with so many people I know.”

Part of the seminarian track included daily “impact sessions.” Members of the Sisters of Life gave the talk on the last day.

“It helped me a lot in discerning the aspects of formation that have to do with the heart and being conformed to the Sacred Heart of Christ,” said Mr. McGuire.

It also gave him a clearer understanding of “what we are doing as seminarians and what it means to love those entrusted to the vocation of the Priesthood,” he said.



By Father Don Antweiler

ACROSS

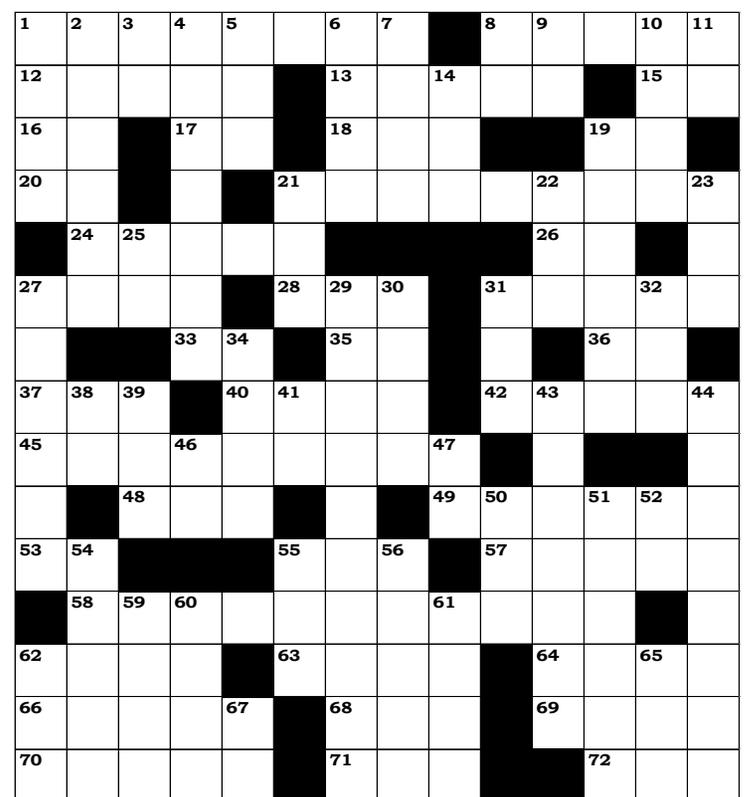
1. Fr. John Hogan for 11 years was a frontier priest in northern Mo., seeking the shanties of Irish Catholic railroad workers and _____ Catholic settlers.
8. Artic or Antarctic.
12. "I _____ knew you. Depart from me..." (Matthew 7:23).
13. Disney's flying elephant.
15. _____. Box (2 ltrs.).
16. Letters perhaps at a railroad crossing.
17. _____-47; Russian-origin assault rifle (2 ltrs.).
18. "Anyone knows an _____ can't move a rubber tree plant," —lyrics from "High Hopes"; popularized by Frank Sinatra; won 1959 Oscar for Best Original Song.
19. Little Rhody State (abbr.).
20. 4 for Caesar.
21. The very first _____ to the U.S. Constitution guarantees, first and foremost, the free exercise of religion. Only then, in order, it lists freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to assemble peacefully.
24. Home of the only Queen of Peace parish in our diocese, in Lewis County.
26. Internet country code for Greenland.
27. "Then the Lord God planted a garden in _____" (Genesis 2:18).
28. Lamb's mom.
31. Fr. Hogan ministered & crisscrossed settlements and towns all over north-central Missouri, big and _____. The main centers were Macon (City), Brookfield, Chillicothe, Cameron, and Mexico.
33. The Peach State (abbr.).
35. "What a sad era when it _____ easier to smash an atom than a prejudice," —Albert Einstein.
36. "O _____ of little faith," (Matthew 16:8, King

- James Version).
37. _____ la la.
 40. After my best friend's family moved away, we stayed in touch and became great pen _____.
 42. "All along I have been trying to get to know the murderer. And now I realize I do not know him at all! I am _____!" —Hercule Poirot in *The A.B.C. Murders*, Agatha Christie (2 wds.).
 45. Fr. Hogan met with great challenges: anti-Catholic prejudice; great poverty; backwoods drunkenness. In 1857, the banks failed, credit was gone, public works _____. During the violence of the Civil War, the public school system collapsed. Civil society teetered.
 48. Letters before the names of ships in the British navy as an abbr. for His Majesty's Ship.
 49. He contemptuously rejected the offer with _____ (2 wds.).
 53. Fee-fi-____-fum; from the "Jack and the Beanstalk" fairy tale.
 55. To and _____.
 57. "...there are some standing here who will not _____ death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom," (Matthew 16:28).
 58. In 1868, Fr. Hogan very reluctantly accepted his _____ as the first bishop of the newly-created Dio. of St. Joseph, Mo. In 1880, he was then made the first bishop of the newly-created Dio. of Kansas City, Mo. As bishop, he continued his energetic missionary spirit.
 62. "_____ four men unfettered and unhurt..." —Daniel 3:92 (2 wds.).
 63. A brand of soda.
 64. "I have found the greatest power in the world in the power of prayer. There is no shadow of doubt of _____. I speak from my own experience," —from the autobiography of Cecil B. De Mille, co-founder of Paramount Pictures and director of the epic "The Ten Commandments."
 66. "A small body of determined spirits, _____ by an unquenchable faith in their mission, can alter the

- course of history," —Mahatma Gandhi.
68. Very small monetary unit (1/100th of a dollar, riel, rupial, etc.) in Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Or, abbr. for Senator.
69. The extreme heat would quickly _____ and wither our potted plants if we didn't bring them inside.
70. We have failed so far but all we can do _____ again (2 wds.).
71. _____ Lanka.
72. "Was he a slight _____-faced man with a rather prominent nose and a nervous manner?" 'The very same,' said our hostess," —*Sherlock Holmes and the Devil's Grail*, Barrie Roberts.

DOWN

1. Letters on the cross.
2. Fr. Hogan _____ his widespread missions often by train. He was granted free passage by three railroads. But it wasn't always the safest transportation. He managed to survive 21 train wrecks.
3. Prefix for anything related to egg(s); from the Latin, ovum.
4. One morning Fr. Hogan's train was _____ Centralia for Mass at Martinsburg when several outriders of Bloody Bill Anderson's guerillas rode to form a line to fire but the train was moving too fast for them. But the full band (400 strong) got the next train. Later he learned he narrowly escaped the infamous Centralia Massacre.
5. "...while God waited patiently in the days of Noah during the building of the _____" (1 Peter 3:20).
6. Dutch cheese.
7. You will find one (and more) at White Sands Nat. Park in New Mexico.
8. _____-GYN.
9. "...we may merit to be _____ heirs to eternal life," —2nd Eucharistic Prayer.
10. It got so quiet you could hear _____ drop (2 wds.).
11. Fr. Hogan did _____ dabbling in politics but was very anti-slavery, and so, was a strong Union man. At Brookfield, as Confederate troops advanced, he impulsively took up a rifle



- and "stood with the Boys in Blue."
14. Abbr. for mountain.
19. Once, to get to Sunday morning Mass in Mexico on time, Fr. Hogan crossed 60 harrowing miles through the dark of night switching from _____ of railroad men on handcars and being stopped at several federal checkpoints. But he made it!
21. "_____ is the price of living," —Paladin in the old TV series "Have Gun, Will Travel."
22. Major Hollywood studio.
23. _____ Aviv; largest city in modern Israel (450,000 pop.).
25. "No, the journey doesn't end here. Death is just another path. One that _____ all must take," —from J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, #3, *The Return of the King*.
27. "...it shall be considered as refuse, and anyone who _____ it shall have his guilt to bear," —Leviticus 7:18 (2 wds.).
29. In 1859, Fr. Hogan founded a settlement of Irish immigrants in southern Missouri which was wiped out during the Civil War. The area is now called the Irish _____.
30. To Be, in Latin 101.
31. _____ Na Na; doo-wop band formed in 1969, but which revived and parodied the music of the 1950s; had their own TV series for 4 seasons.
32. Director Spike or General Robert E.
34. "George and Owen were singing snatches of songs and gibbering like two great _____. Oh, it was awful to see!" —*The Adventure of the Devil's Foot*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.
38. Internet country code for Russia.
39. "The Lord raises the needy from the dust, lifts the poor from the _____ heap," (Psalms 113:7).
41. Prefix for them or notate.
43. "When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the _____ to obtain his produce," (Matthew 21:34).
44. After the Civil War, Mo.'s new constitution required all clergy to swear a loyalty oath to the Union or they would be forbidden to preach or witness marriages. Fr. Hogan, agreeing with his Bishop's directions, refused; he was _____. This oath was eventually nullified by the U.S. Supreme Court because it infringed on freedom of religion.
46. Not A.M.
47. Short for District Attorney; or, initials of this puzzle's composer.
50. Abbr. before a French female saint's name.
51. OT heroine; 19th book of the Bible.
52. Short for extraterrestrial.
54. Where palm trees often

CLUES continued on page 21

PUZZLE CLUES

From page 20

- grow in the middle of a desert.
55. Part of a fish.
56. "There are some saints who would not have been able to live with ____ saints. All do not take the same path. Nonetheless, all arrive at the same place," —*The Cure D'Arts Today*, George Wm. Rutler.
59. Neat, lively, jaunty.
60. "____ pressure drives teens crazy. But it may lead to them being lazy," —opening lines of a poem by Jhadana Lopez.
61. A short skirt.
62. ____ live a thousand years, there will be no happier time for me than right now (2 wds.).
65. "It would seem the bogfolk learned something of sorrow." Remus nodded. "They have learned that there ____ things and persons in this world worth sorrow," —*Bogfolk*, Michael Nicholas Richard.
67. Chemical letters/symbol for dysprosium, a rare-earth element with a metallic silver luster found in various minerals.

ANSWERS on page 23



Priests of the Jefferson City diocese chant the ancient "*Salve Regina*" ("Hail, Holy Queen") prayer seeking the Blessed Mother's intercession as Fr. John Groner's earthly remains are carried out of Immaculate Conception Church in Jefferson City after his Funeral Mass on Jan. 16.

— Photo by Jay Nies

FR. GRONER

From page 5

ern Missouri last summer.

Further examination revealed the presence of cancer.

He died about six months later, a few days after a visit from family and friends.

"He's where he needs to be now and happy with his brothers and parents and friends who went before him," said Mrs. Cyr. "We miss him, but we can't be too sad."

Mr. Saucier believes that with this phase of life completed, Fr. Groner would tell the people he ministered to, to "be attentive to the needs around you, in your home, in your family, in your community, in your parish."

"So much of it is Lazarus right outside your door," Mr. Saucier stated, "and John saw that."

PRO-LIFE

From page 1

baby food, formula and other helpful items to the My Life Clinic.

On another front, the parish is starting a lecture series called "The Genius of the Body."

Lectures will take place twice a semester on an ongoing basis, beginning from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 26.

Each presentation will contribute to a holistic understanding of biology and fertility in the human body.

The first two speakers will be Dr. Amanda Patterson, who teaches at the University of Missouri, and Dr. Michael Dixon, who is certified in Na-ProTechnology, the Creighton Model of Natural Family Planning (NFP).

"We hope this will be an opportunity to empower females (and males), foster a relationship with MU healthcare, and help get people familiar with Natural Family Planning before they get engaged," said Father Daniel Merz, pastor.

•A pro-life group made up of members of St. Stanislaus Parish in Wardsville and St. Margaret of Antioch Parish in Osage Bend stays very busy.

"Our group has six meetings per year and we try to also do six pro-life activities per year," stated parishioner Jenny Lamb.

The committee maintains a resource section on the St. Stanislaus parish website (church.ststanislaus.net/pro-life-group), providing information on many organizations a pregnant woman in crisis pregnancy can contact for help.

The committee's largest activity is the annual Walk for Life. In partnership with the local Knights of Columbus and Lions Club, the committee held its 45th walk this past September, raising money for local pro-life organizations.

"The day of the event is a chance for those attending to witness to our community on the sanctity of life, celebrate life, to learn more about the different pro-life agencies that benefit from this event, and to enjoy fellowship with friends and neighbors," said Ms. Lamb.

Seven pro-life organizations received \$1,900 apiece from the 2022 walk.



A couple prays in the rain on the sidewalk outside Planned Parenthood in Columbia. Once the site of hundreds of abortions per year, the facility is no longer licensed to perform abortions. The staff does still refer women for abortions outside Missouri.

The committee also works with the parishes and St. Stanislaus School to hold a LIFE Runners Witness Walk on the First Wednesday of each month.

More than 50 or more students participate, beginning at 7:10 a.m.

"This is a very visible sign to our community as they are all on their way to work," said Ms. Lamb. "We pray for mothers, fathers and babies, as well as those who are post-abortion."

A committee member updates two pro-life bulletin boards in the school each month.

This year, the committee worked with the Jefferson City-based Pregnancy Help Center (PHC) of Central Missouri to start a prayer initiative.

"The PHC is sending us generic info on moms who have agreed to receive prayers over mom and baby," said Ms. Lamb.

That information, along with a book containing prayers for moms and babies through each week of pregnancy, is available in the Adoration Chapel in St. Stanislaus Church.

"We've been overwhelmed with the number of women asking for our prayers," Ms. Lamb stated. "There are currently 21 on our list."

•Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Ozark has been supporting the Pregnancy Help Center in Camdenton since 2019.

The parish's Social Concerns

Commission includes a Ministry for Protecting Life, led by Glenda Hinrichs and Theresa Brown.

The commission organizes an annual baby bottle fundraiser campaign for the PHC, providing about \$500 in 2019; \$1,013.77 in 2020; \$1,112.87 in 2021 and \$2,164.13 in 2022.

It also organizes collection drives for diapers and baby clothes when requested.

The commission contributed to the PHC's 2021 and 2022 5K run/walk fundraiser, with members also volunteering to staff various information booths during the event.

The parish held a trivia night last February, raising \$2,000 for the PHC.

Volunteers also served in the PHC's front office until a full-time receptionist could be hired.

•The staff and students who comprise the LIFE Runners Team chapter at St. Joseph School in Westphalia meets the first Wednesday of each month to pray and talk about current pro-life events and development.

They walk and pray for about 15 minutes, wearing their distinctive blue "REMEMBER the Unborn" shirts.

The school also maintains several prayer boxes that rotate among the school families. Each box contains rosaries, prayer cards, a crucifix and blue and pink slips of paper.

"Families keep the box for a week, praying for an unborn baby and writing names on the slips of paper," said Westphalia parishioner Kelly Kampeter. "The slips are formed into a prayer chain as a visible reminder of our school families uniting in prayer for these babies and their families."

The school's seventh- and eighth-graders attended last year's Midwest March for Life at the Missouri State Capitol and were honored there as pro-life school of the year.

Parishes and Catholics schools throughout this diocese help in numerous other ways. Follow-up articles will be published in upcoming issues of The Catholic Missourian.

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

Fundraisers & Social Events

Jan. 20

Jefferson City, Fraternal Order of Eagles chicken dinner fundraiser, 11 am-7 pm, 1411 Missouri Blvd.

Jan. 21

Fulton, K of C Ladies Auxiliary Annual Candlelight Lasagna Dinner, 6-8 pm, St. Peter Parish multipurpose building; **Linn**, St. George Home & School Association "Taste of Italy" dinner, 4-9 pm, activity center, for info visit facebook.com/StGeorgeHomeSchoolAssn

Jan. 27

Westphalia, K of C drive-through fish fry, 4-7 pm

Jan. 28

Jefferson City, Helias Catholic High School Open House, 10 am-noon

Feb. 10

Westphalia, K of C drive-through fish fry, 4-7 pm

Feb. 12

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am; **Starkenburg**, Church of the Risen Savior Parish (Rhineland) breakfast, 7-11 am, Valentine Hall

Feb. 19

St. Anthony, K of C breakfast, 7:30-11:30 am, St. Anthony Parish Hall

Meetings/ Workshops

Feb. 4

Wardsville, "Catholics in the Holy Land" presentation by Rami Salfiti, following 10 am Mass, St. Stanislaus Church

Feb. 7

VIRTUAL, Marriage Prep Facilitators' morning refresher, 10:30-11:30 am, for info or to RSVP email faithformation@diojeffcity.org

Feb. 23

VIRTUAL, "Eucharist: The Work of Our Redemption" Lenten lecture series presented by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, noon, for info or to register visit fdlc.org/eucharistseries2023

Feb. 25

Columbia, Cursillo Grand Reunion, 8:30 am-4 pm, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School, for info visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo/

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Feb. 11-12

Jefferson City, Marriage En-

counter Weekend, Best Western Capital Inn, for info or to register visit jeffcityme.com

Mar. 2-5

Camdenton, Men's Cursillo Weekend #71, St. Anthony Parish, for info visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo/

Mar. 16-19

Camdenton, Women's Cursillo Weekend #79, St. Anthony Parish, for info visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo/

Youth & Young Adults

Jan. 28

Jefferson City, "With Great Power," Confirmation Retreat, 10 am-3 pm, Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/confirmation-retreat-2023; **Jefferson City**, Helias Catholic High School Open House, 10 am-noon

Feb. 1

Jefferson City, Rooted/Connected/Searching in Community young adult group, first

Wednesday of each month, 5-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall for info visit icangels.com/youngadults

Feb. 18

Monroe City, "With Great Power," Confirmation Retreat, 10 am-3 pm, Holy Rosary Parish, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/confirmation-retreat-2023

Feb. 19

Jefferson City, Young Adult Mass, third Sunday of each month, 5 pm, Immaculate Conception Church

May 29-Jun. 2

Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 1 for junior high boys, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 5-9

Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 2 for junior high girls, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 11-13

Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 3 for junior high boys, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 15-17

Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 4 for junior high girls, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 19-24

Conway, Mo., Camp Macabee for high school young men, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-macabee

Jun. 25-30

Conway, Mo., Camp Siena for high school young women, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-siena

Health & Wellness

Jan. 24, 31, Feb. 7

Jefferson City, "Seasons of Hope" grief support, 6:15-8:15 pm, St. Peter Parish's Fr. Ahren's Room

Jan. 25

Jefferson City, "Keep Your Keys" free presentation on driving safety, 7-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall

Feb. 8

Jefferson City, Heartsaver CPR class, 5:30-8:30 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall

BENEDICT XVI

From page 4

"Every one of us, this is our mission," said Bishop Emeritus Gaydos. "This is all that matters."

He encouraged the faithful to thank God for the pope emeritus's inspiration and example.

"And ask the Lord," he said, "to help us to grow in faith and to be EAGER sharers, as Benedict was, of this Good News that God has given us to share."

After Holy Communion, the cantor chanted the ancient "In Paradisum" in Latin, asking the angels to lead the former pope into heaven.

The congregation sang "Faith of Our Fathers" for the recessional.

Faith, reason and truth

When Pope Emeritus Benedict retired in 2013, Bishop Gaydos predicted that the 264th successor to St. Peter would leave behind a decades-long legacy of scholarship and teaching that will continue to enlighten the Church for years to come.

"What I suspect he'll be best remembered most for is being such a great teacher," Bishop Emeritus Gaydos said at that time.

He cited the retiring pope's

copious writings, including the three books in his *Jesus of Nazareth* series.

"*Jesus of Nazareth* is a great theological work," said Bishop Emeritus Gaydos. "Anyone can really grow in appreciation for the Second Person of the Trinity, true God and true man, by reading those books. And you don't have to be a theologian to understand them."

The pope emeritus also left behind an astonishingly diverse cache of writings, lectures, interviews and homilies from his days as a young professor in Regensburg, Germany; as a theological consultant at the Second Vatican Council; as archbishop of Munich and Freising; and for 24 years as prefect for the Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

Bishop Emeritus Gaydos was particularly struck by an address Pope Benedict delivered in Germany's newly reconstructed government building in Berlin in 2011.

That address was one of numerous occasions when the then-pope asserted the essential relationship between faith and reason.

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“Bearing gifts, we traverse afar”



Students of the St. Joseph Parish School of Religion in Palmyra perform a dramatization of the arrival of the Three Wise Men during an Epiphany breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 8. Parishioners gathered for a light breakfast with biscuits and gravy served by the Knights of Columbus. Students sang songs and acted out the journey of the Wise Men to adore the newborn Jesus.

— Photos by Andrea Barnes, PSR coordinator

Warm hearts in cold weather



A handful of students from Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City brave the cold to answer a last-minute call for help in assisting The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri and United Way of Central Missouri with food distribution at a mobile pantry at Knights of Columbus Hall. A surprise amount of snowfall that morning had cancelled school at Helias.

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

In the Year of Our Lord ...



Students of Holy Cross School in Cuba join Father Daniel Lueckennotte, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Cuba, St. Francis Caracciolo Parish in Bourbon and St. Michael Parish in Steelville, in blessing their church and school building for Epiphany on Jan. 6.



Angels we have heard ...

Eighth-graders at Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City sing and accompany Christmas carols in Immaculate Conception Church on Dec. 21.

— Photo from the Immaculate Conception Catholic School Facebook page

Bible Accent

What happened after Jesus had chosen all 12 of His apostles? In Matthew 10:1, we read that Jesus called the men to Him and gave them the power to drive out unclean spirits and to cure every disease and illness.

He then sent them on a mission and gave them some instructions before they left.

“Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Jesus said. “As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

Jesus told His friends to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and drive out demons. But He told them not to take money for anything they did.

He also told them to stay with worthy people in the villages they were visiting and to wish the houses peace when they entered.

And if people or towns did not receive them or listen to their words, Jesus told the apostles to shake the dust off their feet outside the towns or houses to show that they would not associate with unbelievers.

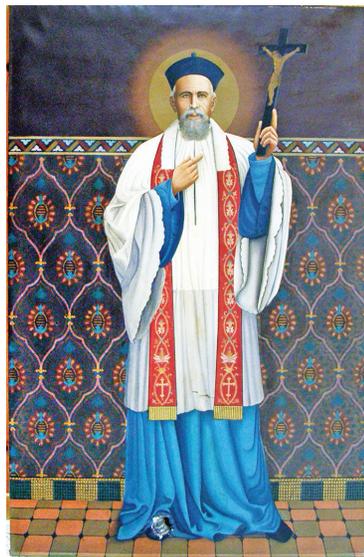
“Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town,” Jesus said.

St. Francis-Regis Clet

St. Francis-Regis Clet was born in Grenoble, France, in 1748. At age 21, he joined a religious congregation called the Lazarists, teaching theology and serving as master of novices.

In 1791, he traveled to central China, fulfilling his dream of becoming a missionary to the Far East. He served in China for 30 years despite language barriers, a harsh climate and local rivalries.

In 1818, all foreign missionaries in China became targets for persecution. He evaded arrest for a time, but in 1820, he was imprisoned, tortured and killed. We remember him on Feb. 17.



Jesus calls four men to follow Him

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic Courier

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert, where He fasted for 40 days and nights.

When He was done fasting, the devil came and tried to tempt Jesus to worship him, but Jesus refused.

After the devil left Him, Jesus came out of the desert. That’s when He learned that John the Baptist had been arrested.

Jesus decided to leave Nazareth and withdraw to Galilee. He went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that the words of the prophet Isaiah could be fulfilled:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.”

From that time on, Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

One day, Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee. He saw two fishermen who were brothers, Andrew and Simon, who was called Peter. They were casting a net into the sea.

Jesus approached the brothers.

“Come after Me,” He said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Peter and Andrew put down their net at once and followed Jesus.

As the three men walked



Illustration by Linda Rivers

along the sea, they came across another set of brothers.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were in a boat with their father. They were busy mending their fishing nets.

Jesus called to James and John, and the brothers immediately left their father and their boat to follow Jesus.

Jesus and His new friends traveled all around Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom. He also cured people of sickness and disease.

His fame spread to all of

Syria. People began to come to Him with those who were sick, paralyzed, possessed, racked with pain and mentally ill. He cured everyone who came to Him.

As a result, great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond the Jordan River began to follow Jesus.

**Read more about it...
Matthew 4**

1. Where did Jesus live after leaving the desert?
2. Who were the four men Jesus asked to follow Him?



What was Matthew doing when Jesus asked Matthew to follow Him? (Hint: Matthew 9:9)

Answer: Sitting at the customs post.



COLUMBIA ORTHOPAEDIC GROUP



Alan Anz, M.D.
Parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes

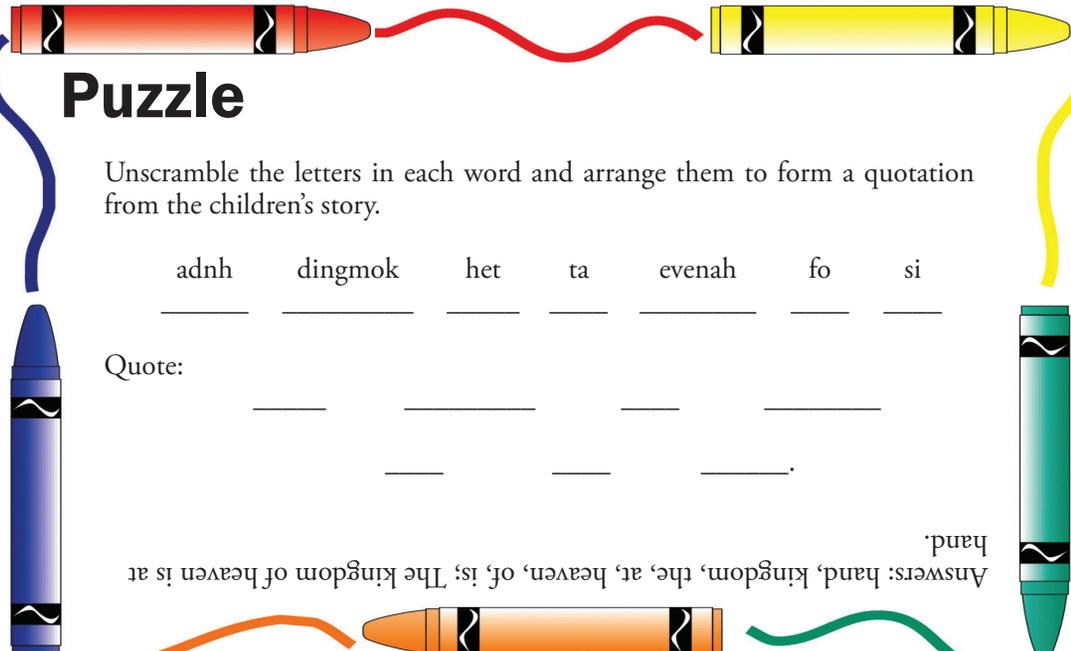
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Puzzle

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

adnh dingmok het ta evenah fo si

Quote: _____

Answers: hand, kingdom, the, at, heaven, of, is; The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Archdioceses offers '52 Sundays' guide for free online, launches podcast

By Gabriella Patti
OSV News

Detroit

In 2020, the Archdiocese of Detroit released 52 Sundays, a tool to help families reclaim Sunday as a day set apart for God. The resource included a guidebook that offered tips for families to celebrate each Sunday of the liturgical year with the week's Gospel reading, a family fun activity, prayers, recipes and an introduction to a new saint.

This year, due to growing interest in the tool, including from outside southeast Michigan, the archdiocese has decided to release 52 Sundays 2023 exclusively online — both in English and Spanish — and free of cost.

In addition, a new podcast — called "Beyond Sunday" — accompanies this year's guide to help families make the most of the resource.

"We realized the place to start [strengthening families as domestic churches] was Sun-



Children are seen helping prepare a family meal at their home. A new reflection guide created by the Archdiocese of Detroit's Department of Evangelization, Catechesis and Schools seeks to offer families a way to spend the Lord's day together in prayer by focusing on the Scriptures, family conversations and meals together. The program, called 52 Sundays, is available in book form or online at 52Sundays.com.

— CNS photo/Melissa Moon, *Detroit Catholic*

day at Mass, and families just needed a tool to help encourage as well as help them go deeper," Tara Stenger, family ministry coordinator and engagement support, told *Detroit Catholic*. "So whether a family isn't really engaged on Sundays and is just looking to do something, or whether they were super engaged and looking to do more, we wanted to create a resource that would meet them wherever they were."

52 Sundays 2023, available in both English and Spanish, provides the same weekly activities for families as in prior years, Stenger said.

Families have always been

able to use as much or as little of the content as they wanted, but now families can easily pick and choose which activities are a good fit at the click of a button.

Furthermore, if families preferred a physical copy, they are still given the option to print content to use together, Stenger said.

The "Beyond Sunday" podcast is hosted by Nicole Joyce, associate director of family ministry for the Archdiocese of Detroit, and Rakhi McCormick, mission and outreach director for Guardian Angels Parish and school in Clawson, Michigan. New episodes are released on Tuesdays, looking ahead to the following Sunday.

Joyce and McCormick,

Movie Ratings



Adults

A Man Called Otto (PG-13)
M3GAN (PG-13)



Limited Adult Audience

Plane (R)
Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

both mothers, described themselves as real people "working in the field" — which is to say, their own families.

In each 20-minute unscripted episode, Joyce and McCormick acknowledge the challenges faced by real families and offer encouragement wherever each family is on their journey.

"We want it to be real; we don't want to focus on lofty goals," McCormick said. "We want people to be able to feel like wherever they are, there is something for them and that God is already present and working in their family."

The podcast pulls from the hosts' own experiences, McCormick said, and includes honest anecdotes of sometimes messy lives.

"There are some true confessions of the ways that we don't even live up to the ideal," McCormick said. "We're really hoping that it's a breath of fresh air and just life-giving for families to realize that it's not unattainable for us to incorporate faith into our normal, daily family life."

Sometimes living liturgically can feel impossible, given the pressures of daily life, McCormick said. That's a perception the podcast aims to change.

"We want to change, not lower the bar. We want to change the understanding of what it means to incorporate faith into the family," McCormick said. "It doesn't always have to be crafts, but if your family likes crafts, that's good, too. It doesn't always have to be extra — there are things you already do daily that very much are infusing the faith into your family."

Moving 52 Sundays completely online helps make this more achievable and accessible

for families, Joyce added.

"I really love the added features on the new website where parents can just download one piece of it; you don't have to have that whole book in front of you if it's overwhelming," Joyce said. "If you just want the Gospel, or you just want the recipe or the prayer, you can download or print just that one piece of it and use that."

"We have a lot of parishes that use 52 Sundays as part of their faith formation for their families," Joyce added. "It's (now) something they can save as a PDF and email out to families or put in the church bulletin. It'll be easier to reach a lot more people."

McCormick admitted that, like many families, some weeks her family uses 52 Sundays, and other weeks it collects dust. But the intention is always there, and the resource remains available even if they skip a week or two.

"With the podcast, we want to eliminate the feeling that you are sometimes doing wrong as a Catholic parent if you're not doing all these things with the bells and the whistles," McCormick added. "You are a Catholic parent, period. You are Catholic. You are a parent. You are a Catholic parent."

Gabriella Patti is a staff reporter for Detroit Catholic, the official news source of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

52 Sundays can be accessed at: 52sundays.com

The "Beyond Sunday" podcast can be accessed at: unleashthegospel.org/episodes/introducing-beyond-sunday/



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BECKER

From page 12

good times and tough times, I always know that God is here, walking with me.”

Her brother, Father Edward Becker, is a priest of the Diocese of Orange, California, and was studying in Rome.

Mr. Bush, a devout Episcopalian, was well acquainted with Fr. Becker but had limited understanding of Catholic Church administration.

“He thought my brother should be elected pope,” said Ms. Becker.

Once while visiting with Sen. Mitt Romney, who was about to announce his 2012 run for president, Mr. Bush said, “Are you aware that Jean’s brother is a Catholic priest and very likely could be the next pope of the Catholic Church?”

“I just started laughing!” Ms. Becker recalled. “I said, ‘Ed will never be pope!’”

The former president kept bringing it up to friends and acquaintances.

“I finally had to take him aside and say, ‘Sir! You’ve GOT to quit saying that! He hasn’t even been a pastor yet!’”

“He said, ‘I’m trying to start a buzz about this,’” Ms. Becker recalled.

The story came back up on a Sunday news show when she was on her book tour in 2021.

The interviewer asked Ms. Becker to recount how Mr. Bush had tried to promote her brother for the papacy.

“We were all in Martinsburg for my Uncle Anthony’s funeral, and we were watching the show in my sister’s living room,” Ms. Becker recalled.

Throughout the segment, the news feed at the bottom of the screen read, “Will Jean Becker’s brother be the next pope?”

“Eddie was there, just dying!” she recalled. “His sisters were just dying — laughing!”

A friend, indeed

Ms. Becker said Mr. Bush’s principled impulses made life interesting.

“He would say constantly that the three most important things in life were faith, family and friends,” she recalled.

He wore his friendships on

his sleeve, regardless of party.

A powerful congressman during his presidency later got convicted of mail fraud and sent to prison.

Mr. Bush said, “You know, Jean, I’d like to call him and let

“These are a great examples of how you don’t always have to agree with other people’s views to be friends or to be friendly.”

— Jean Becker

him know I’m thinking about him and still consider him a friend.”

“He’s in prison, sir,” Ms. Becker responded.

“Now Jean,” Mr. Bush replied, “this is when you reach out to people. When they’re down.”

So she made the call. Upon convincing the prison warden that this wasn’t a prank, the former president got to reassure his old friend over the phone.

He did the same thing when California’s then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s wife announced that she was filing for divorce.

He told Ms. Becker, “Everybody likes to be friends with the winner or someone on top of their game. The time you reach out to people is when nobody else is, when they’re at the bottom.”

Even on the night in 2000 when the battle over recounts ended and Mr. Bush’s son was officially declared the winner, the elder Bush decided to call Vice President Al Gore, who had narrowly lost.

“I want to call Al and thank him for the concession speech he just gave,” Mr. Bush told Ms. Becker. “I know what it’s like to lose an election and feel like your life has ended.”

“These are a great examples of how you don’t always have to agree with other people’s views to be friends or to be friendly,” she said.

43, 42 and 41

President George W. Bush was in his second term in the White House in 2005 when a tsunami struck Indonesia, killing tens of thousands of people.

The president asked his two

predecessors — the elder Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton — to work together to promote the relief efforts.

Both agreed.

“They went into it with a common cause,” said Ms.

Becker. “No matter what you thought of George Bush’s politics, no matter what you thought of Bill Clinton’s politics, they both had hearts for service.”

The former rivals became close friends, continuing their relief work after Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S. Gulf Coast later that year.

That friendship helped raise hundreds of millions of dollars for disaster relief around the world.

“Yes, the causes themselves really moved people,” Ms. Becker noted. “But their friendship also struck such a chord in people’s hearts. It’s an example of how we’re supposed to live our lives.”

“Not done with 41”

Mr. Bush, who died in 2018, told Ms. Becker that over time, his recollections of his presidency were becoming more surreal.

Sometimes, usually when world headlines were being made or an international leader was passing from this life, Mr. Bush would say, “It’s hard to remember that I was actually president of the United States.”

Ms. Becker has reached that same point regarding her time as his chief of staff.

“Did it all really happen?” she sometimes asks herself.

She was in New York last October, pitching several projects to her book editor over lunch.

He chimed in with an idea of his own.

“I don’t think the world is done with 41,” he told her.

He wants her to ask people who knew Mr. Bush — from heads of state to former staff members, “What did you learn from him?”

“It really touches me that my editor in New York still thinks Mr. Bush has untapped lessons for us,” she said.

“I think he might be right.”

Daily Readings

Sunday, Jan 22

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is. 8:23-9:3

Ps. 27:1, 4, 13-14

1 Cor. 1:10-13, 17

Mt. 4:12-23 or 4:12-17

Monday, Jan 23

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (USA); *St. Vincent, deacon and martyr; St. Marianne Cope, virgin*

Heb. 9:15, 24-28

Ps. 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6

Mk. 3:22-30

Tuesday, Jan 24

St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church

Heb. 10:1-10

Ps. 40:2, 4ab, 7-8a, 10, 11

Mk. 3:31-35

Wednesday, Jan 25

The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle

Acts 22:3-16 or 9:1-22

Ps. 117:1bc, 2

Mk. 16:15-18

Thursday, Jan 26

Ss. Timothy and Titus, bishops

2 Tm. 1:1-8 or Tit. 1:1-5

Ps. 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 7-8a, 10

Mk. 4:21-25

Friday, Jan 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin

Heb. 10:32-39

Ps. 37:3-4, 5-6, 23-24, 39-40

Mk. 4:26-34

Saturday, Jan 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church

Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19

(Ps.) Lk. 1:69-70, 71-72, 73-75

Mk. 4:35-41

Sunday, Jan 29

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Zep. 2:3; 3:12-13

Ps. 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Cor. 1:26-31

Mt. 5:1-12a

Monday, Jan 30

Heb. 11:32-40

Ps. 31:20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Mk. 5:1-20

Tuesday, Jan 31

St. John Bosco, priest

Heb. 12:1-4

Ps. 22:26b-27, 28, 30, 31-32

Mk. 5:21-43

Wednesday, Feb 1

Heb. 12:4-7, 11-15

Ps. 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a

Mk. 6:1-6

Thursday, Feb 2

The Presentation of the Lord

Mal. 3:1-4

Ps. 24:7, 8, 9, 10

Heb. 2:14-18

Lk. 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

Friday, Feb 3

St. Blaise, bishop and martyr; St. Ansgar, bishop

Heb. 13:1-8

Ps. 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9abc

Mk. 6:14-29

Saturday, Feb 4

Heb. 13:15-17, 20-21

Ps. 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Mk. 6:30-34

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for January:

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for January:

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

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**Diocese of
Jefferson City**

Cursillo Grand Reunion set for Feb. 25 in Columbia

DATE: February 25
TIME: 9:30 am - 4 pm

By Susan Stolwyk

For the first time, the diverse families of The Cursillo Movement of the Jefferson City diocese will be celebrated at one event.

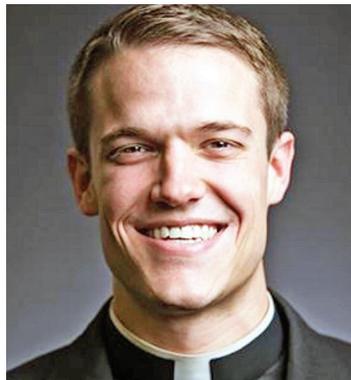
A Grand Reunion co-sponsored by the English- and Spanish-speaking Cursillo communities of the diocese will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25, at Father Tolton Regional Catholic High School, 3351 Gans Road in Columbia.

Dynamic speakers, fellowship, music and food from Cursillistas' various cultural backgrounds are planned for the event.

"Those who are interested in Cursillo as well as everyone who has ever made a Cursillo should plan to come to this event," the reunion's organizers stated. "It is designed to inspire, revive and help us grow in becoming one big family in Christ."

Lunch at noon will be potluck. Please, bring your favorite family or ethnic dish to share with others.

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. The reunion will close with a celebration of the Eucharist at



Father Jacob Carlin

3 p.m.

Three dynamic speakers will address the community:

•**Father Jacob Carlin**, a young bilingual priest from the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, will be the spiritual speaker and celebrant of Mass.

Fr. Carlin became more involved with the Cursillo at St. Patrick Parish in Wichita, where he served his first three years of Priesthood. During that time, he became convinced of the gift that the Cursillo Movement is to the Church when lived out with the essential spiritual pillars of piety, study and action.

Fr. Carlin has many important duties in his diocese, including priest assistant to the bishop, as well as spiritual advisor for both the Spanish- and English-language Cursillos of the Wichita diocese.



Avila Hendricks Nilon

•**Avila Hendricks Nilon**, another morning speaker for the event, is a wife, mother, grandmother and university professor. She proudly promotes the canonization of America's first Black priest, Venerable Father Augustine Tolton.



Jose Luis Marquez Parra

Twenty-five years ago, Ms. Nilon was inspired by her Cursillo weekend to strive to live a more Christ-like life. She will share the blessings as well as some of the challenges of growing up Catholic.

•**Jose Luis Marquez Parra**, originally from Los Angeles, is

the third speaker at this Cursillo celebration of family diversity.

Mr. Parra spent some of his childhood in Mexico, later moving to New Mexico and Texas, finally landing in Topeka, Kansas, where he began his Cursillo experience in 2016.

He is eager to share his insights as a bilingual Hispanic male navigating life: family, several master's degrees, doctoral studies, a career as a social worker and of course, service in his parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe as well as leadership at the regional level of the Cursillo Movement.

Early registration is encouraged by visiting:

signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AAAA729A46-grand

Lecture on Catholics in the Holy Land

DATE: February 4
TIME: 11 am

Director Rami Salfiti will give a lecture about the Catholic presence in the Holy Land, following the 10 a.m. Mass in on Sunday, Feb. 4, in St.

Stanislaus Church, 6418 State Highway W in Wardsville.

All are welcome to attend the Mass and presentation.

Mr. Salfiti is a parishioner of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

African Mass in Columbia

DATE: February 12
TIME: 5 pm

St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia will have a special Mass on Sunday, Feb. 12, embracing the culture of the African students and parishioners and those who are of African heritage.

It will be at 5 p.m. in the Newman Center, 602 Turner Ave.

A reception will follow in the Multipurpose Room on the second floor.

All are invited to participate.

Volunteers needed for JCRATI shelter

Jefferson City Room at the Inn (JCRATI) operates a low-barrier emergency winter homeless shelter, providing a warm, safe place to sleep at the Catholic Charities building, 1015 Edmonds St. in Jefferson City.

Volunteers are needed to keep the shelter staffed for three shifts per day.

To sign up to help, visit the Jefferson City Room at the Inn Facebook page and use the sign-up genius link.

The center is scheduled to be open until March.

Training videos are available on the Facebook page.

Contact Mary Telthorst at 573-694-8918, Deacon Ric Teltorst at 573-690-0730, or email jeffcityrati@gmail.com for information.

cathmo.org



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Elias Abu Aita & Issa at Shepherdfieldarts@gmail.com



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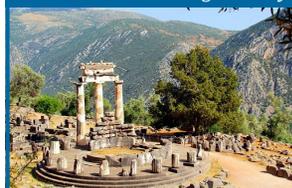
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