

High tea at Westbrook

The Women's Ministry group from St. Martin Parish in St. Martins joined residents of a local senior living community for fashion, fellowship and steamy beverages. **Page 6**



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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

July 7, 2023 • Vol. 67 No. 1

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Over 500 gather to celebrate World Refugee Day



Members of the Rvwang tribe from Myanmar perform a traditional dance of thanksgiving during the World Refugee Day celebration June 24 in Columbia. — Photo by Jay Nies

By Jay Nies

Three women of the Karen tribe of southern Myanmar performed a ceremonial dance to a song epitomizing the 2023 theme for World Refugee Day: "Hope Away From Home."

A narrator rolled back the meaning of the music: "I miss where I came from. I miss my village by the river. And I miss my parents every single day. It breaks my heart because I'm so far from them. ..."

More than 500 people, including many recently resettled refugee families, gathered under the MU Health Care Pavilion at Clary Shy Agricultural Park in Columbia June 24 for Central Missouri's World Refugee Day celebration.

Music and movement permeated the event, cosponsored by Catholic Charities Refugee Services and the City of Refuge in Columbia.

"The message to everyone here is "Welcome. We're so glad you're here!" said Lacy Stroessner, director of Catholic Charities Refugee Services, a ministry of Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri.

"Welcome is really the basis, the bread and butter of what we do here," she said.

Catholic Charities Refugee Services is the only agency in Central Missouri that resettles refugees, having welcomed more than 5,000 refugees, Special Immigrant Visa holders, and humanitarian parolees since 1975.

With a 27-member staff, the Catholic Charities program provides essential services to arriving refugees, with the most intensive level of services taking place in the first six months after arrival.

It is part of the U.S. Conference of

REFUGEES, page 15

New infant, early childhood center to give access to daycare to J.C.-area Catholic school employees

By Jay Nies and Jacob Luecke

A triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is an answer to prayer for families involved in Catholic education in and near Jefferson City.

A generous gift and a providential turn of events means the infant children of Catholic school educators at Helias Catholic High School and nearby schools will have access to affordable, quality, faith-based daycare before the new school year begins.

"This is an exciting and crucial thing. It's going to make a difference," said LeAnn Rockwell, newly-appointed director of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center, which will open Aug. 7.

An open house is planned for late July.

The center, located on Scott Station Road in the Capital City, will provide affordable childcare for infants and very young children of diocesan employees as well as employees of parishes and schools of the diocese.

Its primary focus will be on helping to attract and retain

teachers to work in Catholic schools.

"I know when parents are at work, either if a child is pre-school-age or infant age, it's very important to have that piece of mind to know your child is getting the best possible care and direction that they can get," said Mrs. Rockwell.

The new director is an experienced early childhood educator who previously ran the after-school and summer camp programs at Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City.

The new center's name honors the Immaculate Heart of Mary, patroness of the Jefferson City diocese.

"Who else's heart would you want to entrust your kids to than hers, filled with a mother's love for her son and for all of us?" said Zachary Rockers, a teacher, coach and campus minister at Helias Catholic High School, who helped bring the center into being.

Erin Vader Ed.D., diocesan superintendent of Catholic

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NEW PARISH _____

OLD PARISH _____

07/07/23

Pray for deceased priests

July 12 — **Fr. Henry J. Figge**, Immaculate Conception, Owensville (1978)

July 14 — **Fr. John P. Walsh**, St. Joseph, Westphalia (1992);
Msgr. Raphael P. Keyes, St. Anthony, Camdenton; Our Lady of the Snows, Climax Springs; and St. Bernadette, Hermitage (2010)

Coordinator of Liturgical Ministry

Sacred Heart Parish in Columbia, Mo., has an opening for a part-time (20 hours) Coordinator of Liturgical Ministry. Applicants must be a practicing Catholic registered in a Catholic parish; proficient in playing keyboard and/or guitar; knowledgeable in Church music and liturgical rituals and ceremonies; organizational and management experience; and proficient in editing software and communication technology. Contact Sacred Heart Parish Office at 573-443-3470 or bhead@sacredheart-church.org for job description. Resumes may be emailed to bhead@sacredheart-church.org.

Administrative Assistant



The Chancery office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a highly skilled Administrative Assistant for the Stewardship Office. This person is responsible for assisting the director and associate director in implementing the bishop's vision of spirituality of stewardship throughout the diocese, which covers 38 counties in central and northeastern Missouri.

Responsibilities:

- prepare presentation materials and strategic briefings for deans and pastors
- general administrative and office management duties
- meticulously plan, coordinate and execute events and activities
- provide administrative support for the Stewardship Office
- work closely with the director and associate director as a team partner to educate parishioners on the spirituality of stewardship and convey the impact and importance of supporting their parish and sharing their gifts for the common good
- ability to travel within the diocese (no overnight travel); fleet vehicle provided for day trips

Qualifications:

- practicing Catholic in good standing preferred
- bachelor's degree preferred
- event planning and management is desired

We are seeking a confident, competent individual to manage the Stewardship Office. Qualified candidates can apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) or send resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Support after abortion for men

Base Camp is an open-forum, weekly discussion group via Zoom for men who have been impacted by abortion.

The group meets on Tuesdays at 11 a.m.

Each week, men will be invited into the conversation as we discuss abortion, healing, authentic masculinity and other issues that plague men today.

Attendees can remain anonymous or not.

The group is led by Greg Mayo, Men's Healing Strategist for Support After Abortion and author of *Almost Daddy: The Forgotten Story*.

Scan the QR code to participate in the Zoom call.



OSAGE

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—Located in Wardsville, Mo.—
Looking for interested seniors to fill possible vacancies and/or be placed on the wait list for USDA or MHDC units.

The Center is located close to St. Stanislaus Church.

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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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St. Martin one-time Mass change July 9

The regular 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass will be moved to 9 a.m. on July 9 only, due to the parish picnic.

Early Childhood Center Staff



Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center in Jefferson City, Mo. is seeking dedicated and passionate individuals to join our team as Early Childhood Center Staff. A successful candidate is committed to providing a safe, Christ-like environment for the children, where they are loved, safe,

and encouraged to learn. As part of our center,

you will play a crucial role in providing a nurturing and educational environment for young children. Your primary responsibilities will include engaging in age-appropriate activities, ensuring the safety and well-being of children, promoting their social and cognitive development and maintaining a positive atmosphere within the center.

Qualifications include a high school diploma or equivalent; early childhood education certification or relevant coursework preferred; previous experience working with young children in a childcare or educational setting desirable; practicing Catholic; First Aid and CPR certification (or willingness to obtain). This job description is a general outline of the duties and qualifications typically associated with the Early Childhood Center Staff role. Responsibilities may vary based on the specific needs and policies of the center. Ability and willingness to complete other training is necessary. Starting pay is \$15 per hour. For a detailed job description and to apply, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/29nznxdf>.

Multiple position openings



Interparish School
EST. 1960

Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School in Columbia, Mo. is seeking several individuals to fill positions for the 2023-2024 school year. If interested in any of these positions, please email Elaine Hassemmer at ehassemmer@ol-lisk8.org.

Music/Band Instructor (Part-Time) — For middle school students. Applicants should

have a background in music education. Active practicing Catholic preferred. Pay based on experience.

Food Prep Position — Assist in lunch preparation, serving and clean-up. Qualifications include love of children, ability to lift 50 lbs., and stand for extended periods. Active practicing Catholic preferred. Hours are 7:30am-1:30pm. Pay based on experience.

Cafeteria Supervisors — Three adults needed to supervise/assist students during lunch, sweep floors and wash tables between lunch shifts. Qualifications include love of children, ability to lift 50 lbs., and stand for extended periods. Active practicing Catholic preferred. Hours are 10:30am-1:30pm.

Speech Pathologist (Full-Time) — Assist students identified with speech and/or language disabilities/delays. Qualifications include advanced degree in Speech-Language Pathology or Communication Disorders; Mo. licensure in Speech-Language Pathology, eligible for a Speech-Language Pathology Student Services Certificate; effective human relations and communication skills. Active practicing Catholic preferred, and previous experience as a speech-language pathologist in a school is preferred. Pay based on experience.

Diocesan Missions Collection helps support a vast circle of mission for the diocese and the worldwide Church

To be taken up in parishes throughout the diocese July 15-16

Special envelope inserted into this issue

By Jay Nies

A tide rises and recedes on one shore just as it cycles back on another.

Such are the bonds of mission among the people of central and northern Missouri and several dioceses thousands of miles away.

“We work in partnership with dioceses in Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana and India,” said Jake Seifert, director of the diocesan Missions Office.

“They have an abundance of priests that they send us to help build up the Kingdom of God here,” he said.

“We have access to financial resources they do not have in their home dioceses, and we’re sending it there to help them build up the Kingdom of God among their people,” he stated.

The bulk of this support comes from the Diocesan Missions Collection, which will be taken up in parishes throughout the diocese the weekend of July 15-16.

“We’re helping thousands of people lift themselves out of poverty and make a hopeful future for themselves and their families,” said Mr. Seifert.

Projects include building and expanding schools, digging water wells, installing solar-powered generators, establishing youth centers and building and renovating churches.

Building up the Kingdom

Early this year, Mr. Seifert accompanied Bishop W.

Shawn McKnight and Father Boniface Nzabonimpa on a pastoral visit to the Diocese of Kampala, Uganda.

Fr. Nzabonimpa, pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Brunswick, St. Joseph Parish in Salisbury and St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Wien, is one of four priests serving here from the Kampala diocese.

They are among the 18 missionary priests serving here from dioceses overseas.

“They’ve been ministering here with great success, and we’re very grateful for that relationship,” said Bishop McKnight.

He noted that the Church in central and northeastern Missouri has been depending for generations on mission priests helping to provide the Sacraments.

“And in keeping with the spirituality of stewardship, it’s not only about what we receive, it’s also about what we can do to share and participate in the life and mission of the Church,” he said.

“So, in the exchange of gifts that we have between the diocese of Jefferson City and the Diocese of Kampala, they are sending us priests and we are giving them something that we have to share with them, which is our ability to support some of their programming and some of their capital improvement needs,” he said.

Far and away

The Missions Collection also bolsters the work of the

Missions Special Collection

As Catholics we are united by our faith in God and our sharing of gifts. Through this collection we are helping needy people in the home dioceses of the mission priests serving us.

Inspired by God’s mercy, please enclose your gift in this envelope, then place the envelope in your parish’s collection basket or give it to your local parish office.

Thank you for your generous support of our missions!

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Envelope #: _____

Please make your check payable to your local parish and place the check in this envelope.

DIOCESE OF Jefferson City

Merida Foundation, founded by Jefferson City parishioners the late Dorothy and Rudy Lemke, which helps residents of Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula.

Assistance includes providing eyeglasses and sunglasses to people who cannot afford them, nutritious meals to more than 600 schoolchildren in need each day, and improvements to local schools.

A delegation from the foundation visits the area around Merida twice a year, delivering eyeglasses and meeting with foundation employees and volunteers.

The Missions Collection also helps support the health clinic and charitable outreach founded by Father Dandi Bermejo to help sugarcane plantation workers in the Negros Occidental region of the Philippines.

Missionary discipleship

The Diocesan Missions Collection is one of three special collections that will be taken up each year in this diocese under the stewardship model of supporting the Church.

The others are the Christ-

mas special collection for seminarians and infirm priests, and the Easter special collection in support of retired priests and religious.

A special envelope for this collection is inserted into this issue of *The Catholic Missourian*.

Parishioners should write a separate check to their parishes and place it in the collection basket in this or another envelope.

Funds brought into the parish for this collection are considered extraordinary income and thus not subject to the tithe.

“I ask that you reach into your hearts and prayerfully consider joining personally in the Church’s missionary efforts through this special collection,” Bishop McKnight wrote to the people of this diocese.

“Consider your own call to be a missionary disciple of Christ, to be a neighbor, one who loves God by helping those in need,” the bishop stated.

In union with the whole Church

The Missions Office was founded in the early 1960s in response to Pope St. John XXIII’s plea to the Church in Europe and North America to help stem the spread of Communism in developing countries.

For 40 years, as many as 10 percent of the priests of this diocese were serving in the diocese’s missions in Peru. They helped cultivate throughout this diocese a sense of shared mission and renewal of the worldwide Church.

The diocese’s mission work has diversified over the past two decades in proportion to the number of missionary priests from other countries who now serve here.

“It’s about understanding that we’re a part of the whole,” said Bishop McKnight. “The more we work together, the better we’re able to fulfill what the Lord asks us to do, and that is ultimately to invite more brothers and sisters to the table of the Lord.”

Bishop McKnight's Calendar

JULY

Appointments are not normally scheduled in the month of July.

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Diocese of Jefferson City

Bishop McKnight's July prayer intention for our Local Church

For the men and women in military uniform; that they may serve their country with honor and be kept safe, especially those serving in harm’s way. We pray to the Lord.

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

Por los hombres y mujeres en uniforme militar; para que puedan servir a su país con honor y estén a salvo, especialmente aquellos que están que sirven en áreas de peligro. Roguemos al Señor.

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

Fr. Daniel Merz — 25 years of helping people get closer to God

By Jay Nies

One night while Father Daniel Merz was in first grade, he prayed in the dark before bed: “God, I just want to see you. Show me your face just once.”

“To some extent, that’s never gone away,” he recently stated. “There’s been that desire, that acceptance that God is real, and I want to see him.”

Fr. Merz, pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center in Columbia, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood 25 years ago — July 11, 1998, the Feast of St. Benedict, in St. Clement Church in St. Clement.

“What I remember most was when all the priests came forward and laid hands on my head,” he said. “That felt very powerful. Every pair of hands felt different. Different spiritualities, different personalities, different gifts. I could really sense that.”

He wasn’t just becoming a priest. He was becoming a member of the Order of Presbyters, all working and praying on God’s behalf for the salvation of souls.

“Why did I enter the Priesthood?” said Fr. Merz. “To be there to be help people with their faith — helping them

grow closer to God in good times and in bad times.”

“Slap upside the head”

Fr. Merz is the fourth of five siblings — three brothers, two sisters — in his family.

Their parents ran a dairy farm near Bowling Green.

The Merz children worked hard on the farm, went to St. Clement School, attended Mass with their parents and learned from them to be Catholic.

Fr. Merz’s interest in spiritual matters intensified when Father Edward Doyle, a gregarious young priest from Ireland, was assigned to St. Clement.

“I found him to be someone I could look up to and be inspired by,” Fr. Merz recalled.

Fr. Doyle, now deceased, frequently invited the boys of the parish to think about whether God wanted them to be priests.

Several of Fr. Merz’s friends went to St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Hannibal for high school, but Fr. Merz didn’t think he was ready for that.

He wound up having an unhappy freshman year in the local public school and missed his friends.

“I think God knew I needed a slap upside the head to get me to go,” he said.

Joining his pals in Hannibal the next fall, he immediately felt at home.

“The experience of fraternity that I encountered there has never left me,” he said. “It has continued to buoy me along.”

Monsignor David Cox was his spiritual director.

“That was a very positive experience for me,” said Fr. Merz. “He had a special role in my formation.”

The discernment process continued at Conception Seminary College in northwestern Missouri.

“Being out in the middle of

the nowhere with the monks at Conception — that’s where I really learned to fall in love with God,” he recalled.

Drawn to the deep sense of community and the monastic spirit he witnessed among the monks, he considered entering the Benedictine novitiate.

He also felt a tug to marriage and family life.

“There was something genuinely beautiful and powerful about falling in love,” he said, “but I still couldn’t let go of this love for God and this fraternity I had in the seminary.”

“Beautiful Church”

Bishop Michael F. McAuliffe of Jefferson City, now deceased, sent Fr. Merz to Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis to study theology for two years, then to the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant’Anselmo and the Pontifical Gregorian University, both in Rome.

“I wanted all along to study in Rome,” Fr. Merz noted. “But when I got over there, I was in over my head. I was learning the language and culture while working on my degree.

“That first year in Rome, not a day went by where I didn’t stop and say, ‘What’s this farm boy doing an ocean away from home?’” he stated.

Time and hard work brought comfort and familiarity, “but there was always a readiness, a longing to get back home.”

He got to travel to places throughout Europe and the Middle East, most notably Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Israel.

He attended several of Pope St. John Paul II’s weekly audiences and Sunday Angelus prayers in Vatican City.

“It was always neat to see the universality of the Church reflected in people from all over the world,” said Fr. Merz. “It felt great to be able to be proudly and unapologetically Catholic.”

“It’s a beautiful Church!” he said. “Not perfect, but beautiful.”

A priest forever

Bishop McAuliffe ordained Fr. Merz a transitional deacon



Father Daniel Merz

in the spring of 1997.

“That was a beautiful ceremony,” Fr. Merz recalled. “It was powerful for me and the people of St. Clement. I think a few people started coming back to Church because they had such an experience at the ordination.”

He spent that summer assisting Father Edwin Cole, now deceased, at Sacred Heart Parish in Columbia.

It took a few months for Fr. Merz to get used to helping to lead public worship and preaching occasional homilies without getting a knot in his stomach.

He got to serve as a deacon at Bishop John R. Gaydos’s (now retired) ordination as bishop of Jefferson City.

He attended a Holy Thursday Mass with the pope and got to shake his hand, and meet him again during Bishop Gaydos’s and Bishop McAuliffe’s *ad limina* visit to Rome in 1997.

The following July, in St. Clement Church, where Fr. Merz had received all of his other sacraments and where he would offer his Mass of Thanksgiving the following day, Bishop Gaydos ordained him to the Holy Priesthood.

The new priest spent his first two years as associate pastor of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City.

Father Frederick Elskamp was the rector.

“He’s a wonderful guy,” said

Fr. Merz. “A great pastor. A good friend.”

The parishioners welcomed Fr. Merz and helped draw him into the life of the community.

He was surprised in 2001 when Bishop Gaydos asked him to return to Conception Seminary College as a member of the faculty.

“The monks wanted a diocesan priest to be on the formation staff, and they wanted someone who could teach Latin, and they knew me,” Fr. Merz noted.

He spent 10 years in Conception, the last four as the seminary’s first non-Benedictine vice rector and dean of students in its history.

He believes the structure and commitment to communal prayer that are part of the Benedictine charism helped him become a better priest.

So did the teaching, organizing and mentoring responsibilities he undertook.

“Because of all of that, I feel a lot more comfortable saying yes to leading retreats, giving talks, leading Bible studies and the like,” he said.

“Theology in action”

After completing a doctorate in Sacred Liturgy through the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy in Rome, Fr. Merz was ready to return to his home diocese.

Instead, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops invited him to apply to be associate director of its Secretariat of Worship in Washington, D.C.

Bishop Gaydos and the diocesan Presbyteral Council encouraged him to pursue the opportunity, saying the experience will help him serve the diocese better.

“I was out there three and a half years,” Fr. Merz noted. “The people were great, and I loved the people I worked with, and for the most part, I enjoyed the work I did.”

He helped implement the new English-language translation of the Roman Missal in 2011.

See FR. MERZ, page 23


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Participants in Columbia S.H. Parish's "Nourishing Our Faith" events discuss the Church's position on the death penalty

Missouri Catholic Conference policy analyst takes questions, walks through contributing principles

By Jay Nies

When issues of public safety collide with the sanctity of human life, it's always best to avoid actions that cause harm without a clear, outweighing benefit.

That was a key message Curtis Wichmer of the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) shared with two separate audiences in Columbia.

Mr. Wichmer, a legislative analyst and lobbyist for the MCC, was the featured speaker at Sacred Heart Parish's "Nourishing Our Faith" events on June 25 and 26 in the Sacred Heart Activity Building.

The topic was the Church's position on the death penalty.

Parishioners prepared dinner for about 60 people for the Sunday evening event, and brunch for about 20 people the following morning.

Participants listened to Mr. Wichmer's overview of how the Church has refined its teaching on the death penalty. They asked questions and then continued the discussion over a shared meal.

It was the latest in an annual forum the parish sponsors in order to foster a deeper faith-based understanding of issues affecting society.

The subject of last year's event was homelessness.

Mr. Wichmer noted that this year's topic arouses strong emotions and is often difficult to discuss.

"It's not a particularly uplifting topic," he acknowledged. "I think you see a lot more controversy over the death penalty than you do with almost any other position the Catholic Church holds."

One reason is that Church leaders in other eras of history sanctioned capital punishment as a means of protecting societies from people deemed dangerous.

"Now, when you hear the statements of our popes from the latter half of 20th century forward, people have a hard time reconciling that," he said.

As with any contentious topic, there are no easy answers.

"This is one of those issues you really have to dig deep on," said Mr. Wichmer.

The Death Penalty Information Center states that Missouri has carried out the fifth-highest number of executions since 1976 and the fourth-highest in proportion to the state's population.

"Double effect"

The MCC is the public-policy agency of Missouri's four Roman Catholic dioceses, with the bishops serving as its board of directors and people from each diocese giving guidance on its public-policy committee.

Mr. Wichmer joined the agency's staff last October. He holds a degree from the Saint Louis University School of Law with a focus on immigration and international law, criminal law and health law.

He said that relying on the Deposit of Faith dating back to Biblical times and the work of gifted theologians in every epoch since then, the Pope and his advisors make as detailed of a case for Church teaching as the rulings of any secular court.

"In this case, we hear how in the past, the death penalty was seen as necessary for maintaining law and order and for public safety," he said.

He noted that St. Augustine, one of the Church's most renowned theologians, worked in the fourth century to articulate a moral framework for properly administering the death penalty.

The understanding that developed through the ages was that the death penalty should not be administered for revenge or deterrence but only when an individual poses a continued risk to society.

Pope St. John Paul II (1978-2005) and his successors have taught that at least in developed nations, because of the ability to safely incarcerate



About 60 people take part in a Sunday evening dinner discussion on June 25 in the Sacred Heart Activity Building in Columbia, about the Church's teaching on the death penalty, facilitated by Curtis Wichmer (RIGHT), a legislative analyst for the Missouri Catholic Conference.

— Photos by Caroline Andriano



dangerous people, the death penalty is no longer ever necessary for that purpose.

In 2018, Pope Francis, in union with the teaching body of the Church, updated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to state:

"Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

"Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

"Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,' and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide." (#2267)

Mr. Wichmer spoke of that teaching through the lens of the Principle of the Double Effect.

"The Fifth Commandment says, 'Thou shalt not kill,'" he noted. "However, if we kill a would-be murderer in self-defense, that is not a sinful act. This is because of the principle of double effect.

"If an act produces a double effect, part good and part bad, it is morally permissible if certain criteria are met," Mr. Wichmer noted. "First, the action itself must be morally good; in the example I just used, the action would be to stop an assailant from committing murder.

"Second," he continued, "you must not desire the negative consequence, and if you can produce a good result without any negative consequence, you should."

Therefore, incapacitating an attacker is preferable if it's possible, but if killing the attacker is the only way to stop him or her, then doing so is morally permissible.

"Third," said Mr. Wichmer, "the good effect must be as immediate as the negative effect — because as the two effects become more distant in time from one another, the more likely it is that we are committing two separate acts, one

good and one bad, rather than one action that has a double effect."

Further objections

In addition to all of this, death penalty opponents have been raising concerns for decades that the criminal justice system is imperfect and that innocent people or people who are incapable of understanding the consequences of their actions can be put to death.

Also of note are concerns about whether capital punishment is meted out in greater proportion to people who are poor and are members of ethnic and racial minority groups.

"As a law school grad who studied the system through which these penalties are imposed on someone convicted of a crime, I hope there are enough safeguards in place to keep people from being executed unjustly," Mr. Wichmer said.

"But there have been situations and close calls that do give me pause."

Causes and effects

Topics of the question-and-answer session ranged from the difference between justice and vengeance, to the root causes of violence, to the ability of

See DEATH PENALTY, page 19

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St. Martin Parish Women's Ministry serves up high tea, priceless memories at Westbrook Terrace

By Jay Nies

Ten members of the Women's Ministry group at St. Martin Parish in St. Martins experienced the joy of the Visitation with residents of Westbrook Terrace Senior Living in Jefferson City.

Dressed to the nines, the guests treated a group of Westbrook residents to high tea — complete with homemade comestibles and a bevy of stylish accessories to share.

"We wanted every resident to feel special for the day," said Karen Brondel, St. Martin Parish office secretary and Women's Ministry member.

Several residents were seated outside on June 12 as their guests arrived in dresses, hats and pearls, carrying items for set-up.

"One of the ladies jumped up to get the door and open it, as we had our arms full," said St. Martin parishioner Wanda Schaefer, a Women's Ministry member. "She said she's 90."

The group set four tables in the Westbrook dining room with beautiful tablecloths, china plates, teacups and saucers.

At the appointed time, the residents proceeded to the dining room, each taking a seat at a table of her choosing.

"We got to help the residents 'dress' for the tea with



LEFT: Members of the Women's Ministry group of St. Martin Parish in St. Martins, accompanied by their young chaperone, prepare to share high tea with residents of Westbrook Terrace in Jefferson City June 12.



RIGHT: St. Martin Women's Ministry group members and Westbrook Terrace residents gather around the daintily set tables in the community dining room.

hats, scarfs and jewelry and then escorted them to the 'tea room,'" said St. Martin parishioner and Women's Ministry member Anne Hackman.

The Women's Ministry members joined in at each table.

"Lively conversation and smiles could be seen all around," said Mrs. Hackman.

"We each told stories and shared about our family, work and hobbies," said Ms. Brondel.

"We visited and had food and drink, just as if we were at the table with Jesus," she said.

"They had smiles and were excited to wear a beautiful hat and pearls," said Ms. Schaefer.

The visiting women served finger foods, including homemade scones, cucumber sandwiches and crostini, followed by homemade strawberry pie and chocolates.

They offered a choice of several flavors of tea, each one poured from a beautiful teapot.

"Several commented that they wouldn't be hungry for dinner!" Ms. Schaefer recalled.

But the most satisfying part of the afternoon was the visiting.

"It was nice to talk with them, to hear about their families, children and grandchildren," said Ms. Schaefer.

Ms. Brondel said it was wonderful to see everyone forget about their pain and struggles for a couple of hours and bask in the moment.

The event concluded with a rousing rendition of "You Are My Sunshine," — "as we all need a little sunshine in our

lives," Ms. Brondel noted.

"Many sang along," said Ms. Schaefer. "It was truly an uplifting experience."

"It was a lovely afternoon not only for the wonderful ladies we served tea and snacks to, but for the women from our ministry, as well," said St. Martin parishioner Monica Hoy, head of Women's Ministry at the parish.

"We laughed, we chatted, we listened to their stories and we told our stories," she stated. "They touched our lives and we are hopeful that we touched theirs. We are each grateful for the experience."

Mrs. Schaefer is convinced that being a part of Women's Ministry helps her and the

other participants grow in their faith together while sharing their talents with others and helping to brighten their day.

Ms. Brondel said she's proud to be a St. Martin parishioner, "as we are practicing stewardship and showing hospitality to our neighbors."

"We all have the same goals to have eternal life in God's Kingdom," she noted.

The group is intent on making this an annual event.

Women's Ministry is taking root in parishes throughout the diocese, with guidance and encouragement from Barb Prasad, diocesan coordinator of Women's Ministry.

diojeffcity.org/womens-ministry/

Papal almoner visits flooded Kherson in sixth Ukraine trip

OSV News

Kherson, Ukraine

After driving more than 1,900 miles, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, papal almoner, arrived in Kherson to show closeness to a community shattered by war and devastating flood.

Cardinal Konrad Krajewski started his visit to war-torn Ukraine June 25 on his sixth trip to the country since the war began "to assist those in need," he said.

The cardinal traveled south to Odessa June 26, followed by Mykolaiv and Kherson June 27 and 28.

"When we were here (in Odessa region) before, the front line was just at the city's borders, therefore we couldn't visit Mykolaiv during previous trips," Cardinal Krajewski said in a voice message sent to OSV News June 27.

"Now we could visit the community, we left the rosaries from the Holy Father and material help," the cardinal said.

In one of the videos sent to OSV News from Mykolaiv, Cardinal Krajewski is seen with a local Catholic priest, Father Alexander Repin from the Society of Christ Fathers, who stayed in Mykolaiv with his flock throughout the Russian occupation and in difficult months after the city was liberated in November 2022.

"We couldn't come to you a year ago," the cardinal said in the video, "but you came to us to Odessa and I promised you that if only there is a possibility for me to come here, I will come, and here I am."

He told the priest, "Thank you for your perseverance and for your witness to the Gospel, for not leaving."

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U.S. bishops, other Catholics criticize ‘statement of principles’ on abortion by House Democrats

By Kate Scanlon
OSV News

Washington, D.C.

After more than two dozen Catholic Democratic House lawmakers signed a “statement of principles” advocating for abortion access that cited tenets of their faith as their rationale, the U.S. bishops and other Catholics pushed back, arguing their position was contrary to Church teaching.

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the chairmen of the pro-life and doctrine committees said in a joint statement issued late June 28 that invoking “teachings of the Catholic faith itself as justifying abortion or supporting a supposed right to abortion grievously distort the faith.”

The Second Vatican Council “called abortion an ‘unspeakable crime,’” Stephen White, executive director of The Catholic Project at The Catholic University of America, told OSV News the same day.

Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life, said that “as Catholics, it is our duty to live and advance our faith, not excuse or walk away from the faith when faced with political pressure.”

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Connecticut, who spearheaded the lawmakers’ statement, was joined by 30 other self-identified Catholics who are Democrats in the House — including former Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California — in arguing that when the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, it “stripped women of their right to abortion and escalated an ongoing reproductive healthcare crisis in this country.”

“Our faith unflinchingly promotes the common good, prioritizes the dignity of every human being, and highlights the need to provide a collective safety net to our most vulnerable,” the lawmakers wrote June 24.

Their statement reaffirmed a similar effort in 2021, in which many of the same lawmakers argued that “we seek the Church’s guidance and assistance but believe also in the primacy of

conscience,” and that Catholic lawmakers who support legal abortion should not be denied Holy Communion.

That earlier statement came as the U.S. bishops, gathered for their spring plenary assembly, debated the drafting of a document on the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, with some prelates saying it should include a call for Catholics in public office who support abortion, like President Joe Biden, to be denied Holy Communion.

But the final document, “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” approved at the bishops’ November 2021 meeting, did not include that language and was addressed to all U.S. Catholics “to deepen our people’s awareness of this great mystery of faith.”

The lawmakers’ June 24 statement further cited the writings of Pope St. John Paul II, arguing that in his 1988 apostolic exhortation on the role of the laity, *Christifideles Laici*, he wrote that the Church “is the ‘people of God,’ called to be a moral force in the broadest sense.”

The lawmakers letter stated “We believe the Church as a community is called to be in the vanguard of creating a more just America and world.” “The fundamental tenets of our Catholic faith — social justice, conscience, and religious freedom — compel us to defend a woman’s right to access abortion. We are committed to advocating for the respect and protection of those making the decision if and when to have children.”

“Wrong and incoherent”

The USCCB statement opposing the lawmakers’ statement was issued by Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, USCCB president; Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities; and Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine.

“It is wrong and incoherent to claim that the taking of innocent human life at its

most vulnerable stage can ever be consistent with the values of supporting the dignity and wellbeing of those in need,” the bishops said.

“Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception,” including through the civil law,” the bishops stated, quoting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2270 and #2273).

“Abortion violates this with respect to preborn children and brings untold suffering to countless women,” the bishops said.

In Catholic teaching and “in the public sphere,” conscience “rightly enjoys a special regard,” they said, but “conscience is not a license to commit evil and take innocent lives. Conscience cannot and does not justify the act or support of abortion.”

They urged policymakers “to support the freedom of Catholics and of others to serve the common good in accord with their beliefs in a wide range of areas — from services and assistance to recently arrived migrants, to offering health care and social services.”

The bishops also called on the lawmakers to join them in working for the common good and “uplifting support for the vulnerable and marginalized, including mothers and families in need.”

“Poison on human society”

In an interview with OSV News, The Catholic Project’s White noted that Vatican II likened abortion to “‘slavery’ and ‘the selling of women and children’ and other direct attacks on life,” and it also “insisted that abortion is a ‘poison on human society,’ that it does more harm to those who practice it than those who suffer from the injury, and is a ‘supreme dishonor to the Creator.’”

“Pope Francis calls it ‘mur-

der,’” White added.

White, who is one of the organizers of the Tertio Millennio Seminar on the Free Society, an annual three-week seminar on

foundation of Catholic social teaching on social justice is the proclamation that human life is sacred and every person has dignity,” Lipinski said.

“The right to life is the first right because without life a person has nothing and that is why the Church opposes abortion,” she stated. “It is science, not only Catholic teaching, that shows us that human life begins at conception and thus abortion is the taking of the life of ‘the least among us.’”

Day, of Democrats for Life, concurred, arguing that “it is disconcerting to watch Catholic legislators continue to disassociate their religious affiliation to justify their position on abortion.”

“The letter talks about the value of human life and protecting the vulnerable, yet their position on abortion harms the very people they espouse to support, poor and minority communities,” Day said.

“The money that the abortion lobby provides to the Democratic Party is not a good enough reason to walk away from one’s faith and responsibility to protect the vulnerable and provide all, regardless of their income or race, an opportunity to have and raise their families,” she said. “I would encourage the members who signed the letter to go back and review the fundamental tenets of our Catholic faith.”

Day said they would find themselves “hard-pressed to find any reference or tenet” that would “justify killing conscience provisions,” justify their support for taxpayer funding for abortion, or “any social justice provision that would encourage unjust policies that support abortion for financially insecure women.”

Day said they would find themselves “hard-pressed to find any reference or tenet” that would “justify killing conscience provisions,” justify their support for taxpayer funding for abortion, or “any social justice provision that would encourage unjust policies that support abortion for financially insecure women.”

Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.



An illustration depicts a human fetus in a womb.
— CNS illustration/Emily Thompson

Catholic social teaching with an emphasis on the writings of St. John Paul and takes place in the pontiff’s native Krakow, Poland, pushed back on the argument in the lawmakers’ letter about the writings of the saint.

“As for what can be said about these politicians desperately trying to enlist Pope St. John Paul II to their cause, he gave the most succinct rebuttal to these claims himself, when he wrote, in *Evangelium Vitae*: ‘To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others. This is the death of true freedom: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin’ (John 8:34),” White said.

Former U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski, D-Illinois, also a Catholic, told OSV News that the signatories’ understanding of the terms “social justice, conscience and religious freedom is fundamentally wrong.”

“Regarding social justice, the

QUESTION CORNER

Do Catholics pray for the souls of the dead to save them from hell?

By Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Q: Why do Catholics pray for the souls in purgatory to lessen their sufferings? Is it possible that the souls already in purgatory would even go to hell, so our prayers for them would save them from going to hell? (Piscataway, New Jersey)



A: We don't pray that souls in purgatory won't wind up in hell, because hell is no longer a possibility for them. We do pray because we hope that, through our prayers and sacrifices, the sufferings of their purgation might be eased and their journey to heaven might be hastened.

Let us recall that heaven is a state of eternal happiness arising from perfect union with God, and hell is a state of eternal suffering arising from one's freely-chosen rejection of God.

It is by God's grace that heaven is possible for us in the first place, but to a great extent where we spend eternity depends upon us.

We can choose to reject God through our sinful actions, or we can choose to accept God's gift of eternal life by striving for a life of virtue and in repenting from our sins.

Whether we go to heaven or hell is decided at the point of our death. But we know that God is merciful and wants us to be in eternity with him.

God is therefore very forgiving and will save even the most sinful soul — even if that person only repents at the last minute! Think for instance of St. Dismas, the “good thief” who was crucified next to Jesus, and to whom Jesus promised paradise (Lk. 23:39-43).

However, not everyone ultimately destined for heaven will be ready to meet the all-holy God face-to-face immediately upon death.

Catholics believe in a state called purgatory, which is a place of purification specifically in preparation for heaven.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: “It is necessary to understand that sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the ‘eternal punishment’ of sin.

On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the ‘temporal punishment’ of sin.

These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin.” (CCC 1472)

In other words, all sin leaves some damaging effect on our souls which can often last even after we have repented or sought absolution in the sacrament of penance. Purgatory is a time of repairing this damage.

We understand purgatory to be a finite period of suffering, often described or depicted artistically as a purifying fire. Still, the suffering of purgatory is of a radically different nature than the torments of hell, since the souls in purgatory have the joy of knowing that they are on their way towards God.

Incidentally, we can pray for the dead even if we may personally have doubts about an individual's salvation. While a soul in hell can no longer benefit from prayers, we never know what happens between a soul and God in the final moments of life. Prayers for the dead are never wasted.

See QUESTION, page 19

Consulate of Mexico holds mobile consulate in Catholic Center



Volunteers from El Puente-Hispanic Ministry in Jefferson City and Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri join staff members of the Kansas City office of the Consulate of Mexico during a mobile consulate in the Alphonse J. Schwartz Memorial Catholic Center on June 24. The staff processed applications for Mexican passports, consulate IDs and credentials to vote absentee in Mexico.

— Photo by Jay Nies

By Jay Nies

The Consulate of Mexico's first mobile consulate in Jefferson City will certainly not be its last.

Head Consul Soileh Padilla-Mayer of the Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City declared her staff's June 24-25 outing to the Capital City both a success and a delight.

“This has been a beautiful experience,” she said. “People have been super-polite, nice, understanding, patient.”

Ms. Padilla-Mayer and her staff produced Mexican passports and consular IDs for citizens of Mexico and helped them apply for credentials to vote absentee in their homeland.

The consulate in Kansas City, one of 51 in the United States, is an agency of the Mexican government's Secretary of Foreign Relations.

“We're a staff of about 25 people,” said Ms. Padilla-Mayer. “We operate the consulate in Kansas City during the week, and then we travel to different cities on weekends to provide our services to people who can't travel to Kansas City.”

El Puente-Hispanic Ministry served as the host agency for the consulate's visit, assisted by volunteers from Catholic Charities of Central and North-

ern Missouri (CCCNMO).

Originally slated for the El Puente headquarters in Jefferson City, the mobile consulate was moved to the Jefferson City diocese's Alphonse J. Schwartz Memorial Catholic Center, in collaboration with CCCNMO.

The consulate staff hosted 190 appointments on Saturday and 30 on Sunday.

It's painstaking work.

“I tell people, ‘It's not producing tortillas. It's documents — very high-security documents. So, it takes some time,’” said Ms. Padilla-Mayer.

“Sometimes, people complain and want us to rush it,” she noted. “But, here, everyone has been super-polite, super-patient.”

She believes having many friendly volunteers from El Puente and CCCNMO.

“From the beginning, even from the parking lot, the volunteers have been telling them, ‘Okay, you have your appointment. Welcome. Come on in,’” she stated. “So, they arrive in a very good mood.”

The Mexican passport expedites travel from the United States to Mexico.

The consular ID makes it easier for someone from Mexico to open a bank account in the United States. It also helps

authorities contact loved ones in an emergency.

Both documents contain microchips and dozens of security measures to prevent counterfeiting.

Ms. Padilla-Mayer said that upon taking up her role last summer as head consul for the division of the Mexican Consulate serving Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma, she visited the capitols of all three states.

“I found out that we'd never had a mobile consulate in Jefferson City, which I found strange because it's the state capital,” she said. “So, we decided to come.”

Looking for a proper venue and a local agency to cooperate with, the consulate contacted El Puente.

“They were very eager to help us,” Ms. Padilla-Mayer stated. “And El Puente also helped us in promoting our services to the people they serve.”

Most of the people making appointments at the weekend consulate were from Jefferson City and nearby communities — although some travelled from as far as Springfield or Kansas City.

“Having the majority come from the Jefferson City area

See CONSULATE, page 19

Fixing the working-class problem in the Catholic Church

By Father Patrick Briscoe
OSV News



We have a working-class problem in the Catholic Church today. Not a problem with the working class, per se, but a problem because they are absent. I quickly noticed this as a parish priest. The vast majority of weekly Massgoers at our parish had white-collar jobs. And this didn't reflect the neighborhood, which had plenty of blue-collar families. And then I noticed it wasn't just true of that parish, it was true of many parishes where I said Mass. In a world marked by shifting cultural values and evolving religious practices, one noticeable trend has emerged: a decline in attendance at Catholic Mass among working-class individuals.

Researcher Ryan Burge has noticed this trend, broadly. In a recent post at *GraphsAboutReligion.com*, he argues that religion has become a luxury good. Using the Cooperative Data Study, which includes 570,000 total responses

over 15 years, Burge demonstrates that the less education a person has, the more likely he or she is to identify as a "none" or an atheist. According to this data, it is just not true that the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to disaffiliate.

In fact, Burge's research reveals another striking conclusion: "The people who are the most likely to attend services this weekend are those with college degrees making \$60K-\$100K. In other words, middle-class professionals." The problem, however, is that the Gospel is not just for the middle class. So what happened? Why have we lost the working class?

Missing a parish community

For generations, attending Sunday Mass was deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of working-class neighborhoods. Churches served not only as religious centers but the centers of entire communities, where people sought friendship, support and a sense of belonging. The disintegration of the family and increasing mobility no doubt play a role in what we're seeing. As people relocate for better job prospects

or seek affordable housing outside of Catholic neighborhoods, the sense of community that once fostered religious devotion has weakened. With fewer neighbors and acquaintances attending Mass, the incentive to go diminishes for many.

Today, too often, our parishes are little more than location markers for Sunday Mass, suggesting that the most important and promising evangelical efforts will be those that labor to build a community that extends beyond Sunday worship. In the parish hall at the church where I first served as a priest, there's a photo of a card party taking place. The room is filled. There must have been hundreds there. I think we need more of that — more bridge and euchre leagues in our local communities.

The need for respite

We have to consider, too, the way that the very nature of work has changed. This is a crucial factor behind the trend we're seeing, since the evolving nature of work itself directly impacts people's lives. In today's fast-paced, demanding world, many working-class individuals find themselves caught in the whirlwind of long hours, multiple jobs and unpredictable schedules.

With Sundays becoming an increasingly rare respite from the demands of work, working-class families may prioritize family time or pursuing personal interests over attending Sunday Mass. With youth sports and other activities on the rise, Sundays have become an

See BRISCOE, page 19

The gravity of Gettysburg, through the heart of a child

By Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News



Our oldest son, who just finished kindergarten, loves to visit national parks and participate in their Junior Ranger programs. A few months ago he accompanied me on a trip to Springfield, Illinois, where we visited the Abraham Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

That trip inspired an intense interest in the Civil War, and since then he has wanted to learn as much as possible about it, not least through his persistent questions. Not long after our Springfield trip — once he learned that Gettysburg was the bloodiest of the war's battles, with tragically more than 50,000 dead — he decided we must go there.

I wasn't exactly sure how to explain the gravity of Gettysburg to our son, much less to our 4-year-old daughter. When it comes to introducing children to history, you are not just dealing with facts and trivia; you're introducing young minds to the reality of the human condition — that celebrating the greatest of human achievements is good, but that we must acknowledge and recognize the worst of human behavior. Gettysburg, I kept thinking, would be mostly the latter.

Start with why the war was being fought in the first place. Sure, it's complicated. But we all know we can't tell the story without the reality of chattel slavery — a concept that is hard enough to comprehend in adulthood, much less when you're 6. But perhaps my son summed it up best, and succinctly, when he donned a Union soldier's replica hat at the gift shop and stated: "I want to join in, to make sure people get treated like they should."

As we made our way through the former combat zone, we frequently tried to grasp the geography of the three days' battle and imagine what it might have been like to be living in the little borough 160 years ago. But more than that, as we looked at the hundreds of monuments and statues, I wanted to make sure that my kids knew that the Battle of Gettysburg wasn't all about violence and killing — that it was about giving and loving too.

We stopped and prayed at the statue of Holy Cross Father William Corby — later president of the University of Notre Dame — who personified this. We talked about how he risked his life to serve as a chaplain attached to the Union's Irish Brigade and how he famously offered general absolution on the second day of the battle.

After taking in Gettysburg, our historical tour continued the next day at

See HEINLEIN, page 12

REFLECTION

Truth be told

By Mark Saucier

In *King Lear*, it's the fool Edgar who has the last word:

"The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say."

Behind the fool's mask, Shakespeare urges us to admit the suffering of it all, but at the same time to look deep into the dark heart of things and tell the truth of what we see.

A friend of mine, a religious sister for too many years to count, wrote to me about the changes in her community. As they age and membership declines, they are forced to sell their property.

Now, their beloved chapel is being closed, declared profane, no longer an officially sacred place.

My friend has worked with church groups throughout the world, but this chapel was her spiritual home. It was their "upper room" where sins were confessed, their banquet shared, commitments made, lives celebrated and friends mourned.

She could have lashed out at the change and loss, but instead she spoke of the pain, the grief, the long days of healing required.

Last week, I went to a memorial gathering for my cousin. Well, not my cousin by blood, but then, more than a cousin as she lived with us when our uncle, her stepfather, parceled out his kids to his siblings.

At her son's house, I found another "cousin," the deceased's full sister who had left home before the others were reassigned. Angry and rebellious, she never looked back.

I hadn't seen her in over 60 years, so we had some catching up. It was awkward at first but gained momentum and depth.

She told me of the love of her life — one of the two husbands she buried — and of her five kids, including the two she had already lost.

She hadn't seen her sister in 21 years, but something deep inside, painful but insistent, brought her to unfamiliar family a thousand miles from home.

She now hopes regrets may someday turn to joy.

There were others this past week — a woman still learning to celebrate the life of her 35-year-old son, and a priest friend weeping in fear that he may be removed from his ministry to a people everyone wants to ignore.

They all spoke what they felt, not what they ought to say.

As Jesus and the fool both knew, our deepest truth is found in our story, but we seldom find it until we hear ourselves tell it.



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AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Empowering Families: Restoring hope and security after predatory lending



By Kathy Frese
with Ashley Wiskirchen

When I came into my role at Catholic Charities, I didn't know what to expect. I felt called to this work because I had started working with people experiencing poverty through Transformational Housing and felt the pull to do something more. I looked forward to incorporating my faith into my work and ministry at Catholic Charities. I'm grateful for the encouragement from family and friends to pursue work in service of others.

It was surprising to me, to experience for the first time, the challenges that families were facing in the area I lived in. The opportunity to serve people in a hands-on way, relying on my background in finances, having worked in au-

diting and accounting for over 30 years — the financial stability and wellness program called to me.

I want you now to try to ask yourself these next few questions slowly, really taking time to think on them. If you found out tomorrow that you have a major health problem requiring hospitalization:

What would you do?

Who would you turn to?

How would your family fare as you coped with the hospital stay?

Now, imagine that your employer, who keeps your hours under the threshold of offering benefits, doesn't pay for sick leave — so the time that you cannot work is time that you will not get paid. And, if you can't come back to work in three days, you'll likely lose

your job.

Or, maybe you're on your way to work when the check engine light turns on, so you pull over and end up needing a tow. You're facing a major car repair, with no savings to cover the cost.

How will you get to work tomorrow?

How can you come up with the money you need for repairs?

What will your family do if you can't make it all work?

Across our nation, and just down the street from us, many families living in the U.S. are one emergency away from crippling financial trouble. The 2022 Missouri Poverty Report artfully explores the state of families in Missouri facing financial insecurity, lack of access to healthcare, food insecurity

and more. It sheds light on the situation, with Missouri's 13% poverty rate exceeding that of the U.S. average of 12.8%. In the common situations I mentioned above, many families are doing everything they believe they can to stay afloat from month-to-month and still find themselves in desperate need of \$500 or \$1,000 when facing an emergency.

And, when they look for help with that crisis, the local payday lender is more than happy to oblige — often at 10 times the average interest rate for a traditional loan. Predatory lenders — also known as title loans, installment loans, cash advance, payday loans — offer "help" at a price, which, in most cases, will be repaid many times over.

I have been astounded by the prevalence of these types of lenders. We drive past them on our way to work, when we go out to grab lunch, or walking home from the bus stop. That they exist, and stay in business, shows us the need exists — help in a pinch — and systemic help to break cycles of poverty that keep families from financial stability. And predatory lending is a big part of that cycle: not having enough, needing more, strapped with unpayable interest rates: wash, rinse, repeat.

Last year Catholic Charities launched the Predatory Loan Relief program, seeking to help those who have been caught in the cycle of debt as a result of these types of high-interest loans. In this program, we work to relieve financial strain and carve a pathway out of debt by refinancing existing loans at a significantly lower interest rate — lowering the burden on the monthly budget.

How does it all work?

First, applicants to the program show proof of regular, stable income and show that they have the ability to repay a refinanced loan. As part of the application process, I work one-on-one with clients to re-

view all sources of income and expenses and prepare a monthly budget. Applicants are asked to track daily expenses and bring the information to a follow-up meeting in order to compare the budget to actual spending.

Once approved for loan refinancing, we go together to sign all documents on a market-rate loan through our wonderful program partner, Mid America Bank. The bank prepares a check, and together we ride over to the high interest lender and walk away from that counter with a paid in full receipt. It is so gratifying to witness the joy and relief when these predatory loans have been paid.

I'm sure you can picture it: smiles and hugs abound! The relief is palpable. I see the stress of the compounding interest (which in one instance was a whopping 686% APR) dissipate. When we revisit their monthly finances and see that decreased strain — a monthly payment that was once \$979 and is now \$121 — they can breathe again. This is quite honestly life changing for the families I work with.

And, this isn't the end of the journey. Each month during the term of the market-rate loan, I meet with the loan holder to review their monthly budget and compare it to actual spending. Based on their goals, we can review the credit report and prepare a plan with action steps to improve the overall score. With an improved credit score, future financial goals come to light: home ownership, a new car, saving for education. They provide their hopes for the future, I help along the way with education, tools and accountability to get there.

As I work with families on personal finances, my hope is that each client comes to a place of financial stability, where they will never need to resort to this type of lending in the

FROM THE 2022 MISSOURI POVERTY REPORT

LOCAL SNAPSHOT OF POVERTY

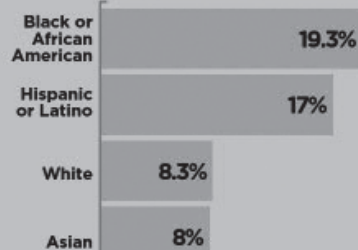
The US Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program provides annual estimates of income and poverty statistics for all counties and states in the nation. The program is used primarily for policy makers in deciding the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions. Utilizing this report, we get a view of Missouri counties with the highest and lowest poverty rates (US Census Bureau).⁴

Observe the difference between the counties with low poverty rates and the counties with high poverty rates.

Missouri population:
5,942,813



Missouri population below
poverty level:
772,992



POVERTY AND RACE

The American Community Survey show how race impacts the percentage of people in poverty across Missouri. The disparities between races are evident—white Americans experience a lower rate of poverty than people of color (US Census Bureau).¹

POVERTY AND GENDER

The ACS also shows us the disparity between males and females. Women face a 2.3% higher rate of poverty than men (US Census Bureau).¹

11.8%
of Missouri men
in poverty



14.1%
of Missouri women
in poverty

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Children who grow up in poverty often lack food, shelter, healthcare, and education they need to thrive. This can have a profound impact on future economic stability. According to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 17.4% of Missouri children live in poverty; 19.3% of children under 5 years of age in Missouri are in poverty (US Census Bureau).¹



17.4%
of Missouri children
in poverty

Fr. Doke blesses VFW Veterans' and First Responders' Memorial

By Jay Nies

"Eternal God, source of every gift and talent ... as we remember and give you honor for the eloquent witness of all veterans who served our country, especially those who laid down their lives, we ask your blessing upon this monument and this space."

"Make it a place of continued peace and meditation, calling us all to mutual love and tireless service for others."

Father Jason Doke, pastor of St. Martin Parish in St. Martins, blessed the people and the new Veterans' and First-Responders' Memorial outside the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Basinger/Sone Memorial Post 1003.

It was the 100th anniversary of the founding of Post



Father Jason Doke, pastor of St. Martin Parish in St. Martins, proclaims a reading from Scripture during the dedication of the Veterans and First Responders Memorial at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1003 in St. Martins.

— Photo by Jay Nies

1003, Missouri's second-oldest VFW post.

The post and the City of St. Martins worked together to create the memorial, which includes an array of flags and a permanent display for stone plaques that will be engraved

with veterans' names.

"It's incredible to think that just a short time ago, this was an empty parking lot," said VFW State Commander Royce Kelb.

The plaza is named in honor of the late Philip Kalaf (1950-2020), a Meta native, Vietnam War veteran and former post commander who helped raise the money and did much of the preliminary work to get the plaza built.

"This was something Phil wanted," said Current Post 1003 Commander Scott Englund. "He wanted us to have a veterans memorial."

Dignitaries attending the dedication included: state Sen. Mike Bernskoetter, a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City; state Rep. Rudy Veit, a member of St. Stanislaus Parish in Wards-

ville; VFW Missouri State Commander Royce Kelb, St. Martins Mayor Daryl Raithel, a member of St. Martin Parish; Mary Paulsell, representing Central Missouri Honor Flight, and members of the Kalaf family, including Philip Kalaf's wife, Cindy.

Mayor Raithel said the VFW post's and city's efforts to honor veterans and first responders are worthwhile.

"This plaza is a great reminder of the sacrifices made on our behalf," he stated. "Because of their sacrifices, we are

blessed with the stability we have in our country today."

Mrs. Kalaf recalled that her husband, a U.S. Navy veteran, returned from fighting in Vietnam and did not feel welcome or honored for his service.

In getting involved in VFW, he set about changing the culture and letting fellow Vietnam vets know that they were welcome, valued and that their service mattered.

He also worked to help

See MEMORIAL, page 13



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HEINLEIN

From page 9

the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in nearby Emmitsburg, Maryland, where the kids were struck by a simple, lifelike diorama depicting the Daughters of Charity nursing the Gettysburg wounded. Our daughter proudly announced: "That's what I'd be doing while the cannons blew up." Which seemed to be quite a turn-around from the previous day, when she easily spent 15 uninterrupted minutes intensely "loading cannons" on the battlefield.

Over two days, I became grateful for the insights offered by my kids that will help them — and me — continue to process the events of 16 decades ago. When the worst of humanity rears its ugly head, as it will time and again in all of our lives, I hope the important life lessons sharpened by touring Gettysburg and the surrounding environs — the desire to fight for the God-given rights of all, love's demand to put others first, and the desire to care for those in need — will remain there to guide my kids.

As we encounter and live in a society that continues to cheapen human dignity and where the division is so palpable it feels like we're battling our own civil wars each day, it's easy to encounter and focus on the worst of humanity.

But, as sometimes we all need to be reminded through the eyes of the innocent, there is hope. "Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more" St. Paul wrote to the Romans (5:20). Places like Gettysburg teach that, too, if we put in the work and prayer to make it so. Only then will we be equipped

to respond to today's challenges with a heart of love — with the heart of a child.

Michael R. Heinlein is author of "Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I." and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.



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MEMORIAL

From page 11

children and young people understand the sacrifices that service men and women make in times of war.

Fr. Doke proclaimed a reading from the Gospel According to John, in which Jesus commands his followers to love another, and says there is no greater love than give one's life for one's friends.

State Rep. Bernskoetter called to mind the words of President Lincoln at the dedication of the Battlefield Memorial at Gettysburg in 1863 — "the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract."

"We can never forget the sacrifices our veterans have made for us," Mr. Bernskoetter stated.

"All of our veterans and first responders and their families are such an important part of our community," said Lilian Hentges, president of the Post Auxiliary.

The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces.

It has more than 1.5 million members, including its Auxiliary.

Mr. Englund spoke of the organization's significance.

"We help out around the community," he said. "We help out vets."

Mr. Kelb touted the VFW's community service activities.

"Helping people — that's what the VFW is all about,"

he said. "The VFW is about not just the veterans but the taking care of the community, community."

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SUNDAY, JULY 9
CITIZEN'S CIVIC LEAGUE PARK
META, MO

Fried Chicken & Roast Beef Dinner
with mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, coleslaw, home baked bread and pie
Served buffet style — Dine-in or Carry-out
11am to 6 pm

Adults \$15 — Kids 6-12 \$8 — 5 & under free — Carryouts \$15

Quilt & Desserts Auction 4 pm
Games - Kettle Corn
Refreshments
Country Store - Sandwich Stand

St. Margaret of Antioch
PICNIC
Sunday, August 6
OSAGE BEND
 7 miles from Wardsville on Rt. W

Family Style Fried Chicken & Roast Beef

Served 11am-6:30 pm (air-conditioned hall)
 Adults/Carryouts \$15, Kids 6-12 \$8
 5 & under free

Quilt Auction - 5 pm
 Kids Game Area - Refreshments - Country Store
 Games & Prizes

Shaded Grounds Mass on picnic day is at 9 am



— Photo by Jay Nies

St. Stanislaus
PICNIC
SUNDAY, JULY 16 11 am to 7 pm
WARDSVILLE
 6418 Highway W

Live Quilt Auction 5pm

Country Store

Kids Area

Games & Prizes

Refreshments

FRIED CHICKEN & POT ROAST DINNERS
 Served cafeteria style or carryout meals available
 \$15 per dinner

Mass times for picnic weekend are Saturday 4 & 5:30pm; Sunday 7:30am (no 10:30am Mass on picnic day).

New Haven, Conn., churches merged, named for K of C founder

OSV News

New Haven, Connecticut
A priest on the road to saint-

hood, who has united millions of Catholic men across the world, is drawing faithful together in

the town where he first served.

The Archdiocese of Hartford announced it will merge seven parishes in New Haven, Connecticut into the newly created Blessed Michael McGivney Parish, named for the

Waterbury, Connecticut native who founded the Knights of Columbus fraternal order, which counts some 2 million members globally.

Effective July 1, the seven parishes will be "united as one

parish under the patronage of Blessed Michael McGivney," said Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair in a July 3 joint statement with the Knights of Columbus and Catholic leaders from the New Haven area.



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A Prayer for Rain

God our Creator, maker of all things and protector of your people, in your love look upon us in our time of need and give us your help. Open the heavens for us and send us the rain we need for our lives and crops. As our hearts long for you, so we seek rain to refresh the earth; as we long for life, so let the earth produce its harvest in abundance. May we rejoice in the good things of the earth and raise our eyes to you the source of all blessings. Hear our cry for mercy and answer our prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. — *Composed in 2015 for the Diocese of Forth Worth, Texas*

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REFUGEES

From page 1

resettlement network.

All of these refugees, who leave their homes out of legitimate fear of death or serious injury, are thoroughly vetted for security through multiple federal departments, including the U.S. State Department.

Most arrive here with little more than the clothes on their backs.

Resettlement services at Catholic Charities are funded by state and federal grants and private donations.

Services include: securing safe and affordable housing, furniture, clothing and food; job training and employment services; school enrollment and English-language instruction; benefits enrollment and health-care facilitation; community referrals, extensive case management and more.

“Out and enjoying”

More than 20 community-resource agencies that work in partnership with Catholic Charities Refugee Services, City of Refuge, or both agencies set up tables for the celebration in Columbia.

World Refugee Day is an international observance designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the world.

Observed on or near June 20, it “celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution,” according to the official website.

More than 100 volunteers brought about Central Missouri’s celebration of the day this year.

For many of the families present, the event was a welcome respite from the rigors of beginning anew.

“Most of our families here, especially our newest arrivals, have very limited resources,” Mrs. Stroessner noted. “So, getting to go out into the community and do something fun, enjoying some time with their family and their friends is a treat in itself.”

She shared welcoming duties at the celebration with Debbie Beal, director of City of Refuge, a local nonprofit organization created to help refugees recover and regain control of their lives.



— Photos by Jay Nies

Groups and families from numerous nations, many dressed in clothing from their homeland, mingled around tables and food trucks where cultural favorites were being served.

Catholic Charities provided blood-pressure screenings.

People of all ages played games of skill and determination.

Young volunteers painted intricate artwork onto the faces of children whose complexions spanned the visible spectrum.

Youthful cheers and laughter filled the nearby soccer field, volleyball court and giant inflatable slides and bounce houses.

“It’s great to see everybody together, out and enjoying,” said Mrs. Stroessner. “It’s amazing to see all of our different communities at one event.”

Singers and dancers representing local congregations and

More photos have been posted in *The Catholic Missourian’s* online edition, cathmo.com. Select “Photo Galleries” from the “Multimedia” tab on the menu bar.

ethnic traditions from far away drew attention and applause to one end of the pavilion.

“Our prayers go out to everyone represented and the countries that they represent, that peace will come and that we will have a day where you can visit and go back to your countries and enjoy your families,” the narrator for one of the performing groups stated.

“Where my heart is”

Mrs. Stroessner began volunteering with what is now Catholic Charities Refugee Services about 15 years ago.

She became its director last December.

“This is where my heart is,” she said, noting that she previously worked with refugees overseas for several years.

She called the Catholic Charities Refugee Services staff “an amazing team.”

The staff grew rapidly in the summer and fall of 2021, when the agency resettled nearly 300 people from Afghanistan in the course of several months.

“Anybody who works through this program will tell you that this is not an easy job,” Mrs. Stroessner noted. “Keeping track of the grants and the requirements is very complicated.

“And that’s for a good reason,” she said. “We are working with human beings who deserve to be treated with dignity, and all of that takes a lot of time and effort.”

She noted that stories of people setting down roots in this country while missing the people and familiar ways they grew up with are nothing new.

“Those stories get passed down from generation to generation, and the young people feel some of the sadness and relief that their parents felt,” she stated.

“But they can still connect with their homeland, they can still have that history and that love for it,” she said, “and that’s why events like these are so important.

“In the end, aren’t we all just

trying to make a better life for our family and do well by our children?” she inquired.

Called to welcome

Mrs. Stroessner said she feels honored to work with such compassionate, dedicated people.

“The front line staff are the folks who make the bulk of it all happen — the ones who have the closest relationships with our newest families,” she said.

She asked for fervent prayers for kindness and for the people being resettled by Catholic Charities Refugee Services to “live with ease.”

“By that I mean, may the stresses of their daily lives not bring them down,” she said. “May the challenges they deal with not be so heavy that they forget their dignity and their humanity.”

She said people can be an answer to prayer by donating to Catholic Charities Refugee Services, volunteering to help people become acclimated to their new homeland, and working to make their communities more welcoming.

“One thing I think is cool to recognize is that throughout the history of refugee resettlement, it has mostly been a nonpartisan issue, with much of the work being carried out by people of faith — people of many different faiths,” she said.

“I think it’s important to remember and recognize that as people of faith, no matter what faith we belong to — that we are called to be welcoming, to be inclusive, to house those, to clothe those, to feed those who don’t have what they need,” she stated.

She noted that the groups who volunteer to be community sponsors of refugees — working together to help a newly arrive family become acclimated to life in this locale — form bonds that often last a lifetime.

“It becomes a really beautiful expression of our call to be in right relationship with one another, regardless of our differences,” she said.

Mrs. Stroessner noted that children of the families being resettled here tend to pick up the language and culture quickly and will pass on what they learn down to their own children.

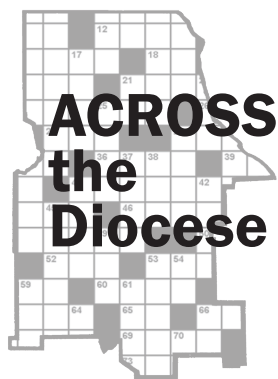
“If you think about it, the multigenerational impact of the work we’re doing today is pretty incredible,” she said.

“So, why wouldn’t we want to be good welcoming?” she asked. “Why wouldn’t we want to be good neighbors? Why wouldn’t we want to be great community partners and employers and building strong relationships?”

“It’s going to make our community better, and not just now but for generations down the road,” she stated.

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (cccnmo.diojeffcity.org), an entity of the Diocese of Jefferson City and the local resettlement agency for mid-Missouri, responds to the needs of people in 38 counties regardless of faith, culture, or situation.

This includes services for refugees and immigrants, those with food insecurity, mental health needs, health and nutrition education, basic household, and financial stability and housing counseling.



By Father Don Antweiler

ACROSS

1. If Kansas City, Mo. is most known for its Superbowl KC Chiefs football, second place has to go to its world ____ KC barbeque.
7. St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield, Mo. have been listed in the top four ____ in the nation for eating BBQ.
12. According to Plato, ____ composed of reason, spirit and appetite (3 wds.).
14. Short for air conditioning.
15. "When ____ has to speak as much and as often as a Pope must, he tends to be overexerted," —*Last Testament*, Pope Benedict XVI.
16. Henry Perry's delicious & unique slabs of BBQ became so popular that others began imitating his technique and ____.
17. Starchy Polynesian food from the tarot root.
19. A football score.
20. "And he did not work many mighty ____ there because of their lack of faith," (Matthew 13:58).
21. St. Louis BBQ sauce, compared to KC's, is ____ because of the addition of vinegar which makes it more tangy.
23. Distress letters.
24. He threw his ____ the ring as a candidate for Governor (2 wds.).
25. Two letters that can be added to absent or employ.
27. "____ gods, it doth amaze me, a man of such feeble temper..." —"Julius Cae-

- sar," Act 1, Scene 2; Shakespeare.
29. "____ the ramparts we watched..." —from the "Star Spangled Banner," our national anthem.
 31. The word "lake" in Scotland is loch, in Italy, lago, in France, ____.
 32. ____ *culpa*.
 33. "Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to ____ the child for you?" (Exodus 2:7).
 35. ____ Bean; outdoor clothier.
 36. These letters are on an Am. naval sailor's dog tags.
 37. With tilde, year in Madrid.
 39. Don't upset the apple _____. Let well enough alone.
 41. A red hue.
 42. KC BBQ is different because it is cooked low-and-____, in a pit barrel or charcoal grill at 200-250 degrees for 5-16 hours.
 43. "...he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a ____,'" (Luke 5:4).
 44. Prefix for view or wind.
 45. *Adoro* ____ *devote*; a hymn preserved in the 1570 Roman missal; still sung today.
 46. St. John Vianney, the Cure of ____, patron of parish priests.
 47. KC's Am. Royal World ____ of BBQ is the biggest BBQ competition in the world with 500 local, national and international teams smoking and sizzling for two weeks every fall.
 50. "...a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and ____ on his head," (2 Samuel 1:2).
 51. Cartoonist Capp or actor/comedian in vaudeville Jolson.
 53. This Roman emperor started the first official persecution of the Church, martyring Ss. Peter and Paul.
 55. Sea eagle.
 57. Gates BBQ with its signature "Hi, may I help you" ____ was founded by Arthur Pinkard, a former employee of Henry Perry.
 61. The origins of McDonald's, in southern Calif. in 1940, began as a BBQ ____-in before switching to hamburgers.
 62. "These people are not

- drunk...for it is only ____ o'clock in the morning," (Acts 2:15).
63. State bird of Minnesota.
65. Latin for male human or husband; often used today in legal documents to indicate an unidentified husband.
66. "You must do what you must do, and pay for it. ____ in the end all things are simple," —*Brother Cadfael's Penance*, Ellis Peters.
67. "...this very night before the cock crows, you will ____ me three times," (Matthew 26:34).
68. Rosedale BBQ is the oldest BBQ restaurant continuously owned and operated by the same ____ in KC.

DOWN

1. Do, re, mi, ____, so, la, ti, do.
2. "We sin because we don't want to love ____ God loves us; it's too demanding," —*Catholic for a Reason*, Scott Hahn.
3. God gave him the 10 commandments.
4. KC BBQ fame can be traced back to Henry Perry who started BBQing in the early 1900s in an ____ pit next to his streetcar barn serving his slabs wrapped in newspaper.
5. First name of General and 18th President U.S. Grant.
6. Part of RSVP; i.e., from the French, *Repondez* ____ *vous plait*; i.e., Please respond.
7. ESPN identified Kansas City as the "BBQ ____ of the World."
8. One list of favorite KC BBQ restaurants include the ____ Arthur Bryant's, Joe's KC BBQ, Gates BBQ, Woodyard, Slaps and Q39.
9. Moon of Jupiter.
10. Main course of a dinner.
11. "____ *libera nos a malo*"; "but deliver us from evil," from the Our Father in the old Liturgy.
13. Son born to Adam and Eve in place of Abel (Genesis 4:25).
18. Days or Holiday.
20. KC has over 100 BBQ restaurants, a number of which are nationally renowned. The city honors the "Father of KC BBQ" with Henry Perry ____ on

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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57	58	59				60		61			
62						63		64		65	
66			67					68			

- July 3rd.
22. "____ be thy name..." —from the Our Father in the new Liturgy.
26. "Bourne inhaled the smells of the city. It felt down-to-____; it felt real. Not like the world he lived in," —*The Bourne Treachery*, Brian Freeman.
28. A brand of protein drink.
30. "I vowed that no sword, ____ or symbolic, would ever come near my wife (Mary) without first having to pierce me as well." Joseph in *My Perfect Wife, Her Perfect Son*, Joe Benevento.
32. It is said that the most popular BBQ food is not ribs but brisket, called the mother of BBQ ____.
34. Australia is known as the Land Down ____.
36. Abraham's ancestral home.
38. "God in his deepest mystery is ____ a solitude, but a family," —Pope St. John Paul II.
39. The oldest BBQ in KC is Arthur Bryant's which has served notables such as Presidents Harry Truman, Jimmy ____, and Barack Obama.
40. A brand of soda.
42. KC BBQ is different because of its sauce: thick, ____, tomato-and-molasses based, often with brown sugar.
43. "Just going to Church doesn't make you a Chris-
- tian any more than standing in your garage makes you a ____," —G.K. Chesterton.
47. "Now Jesus did many other ____ in the presence of his disciples..." (John 20:30).
48. "John (the Baptist) tried to prevent him saying '____ to be baptized by you,'" —Matthew 3:14 (2 wds.).
49. ____ Lanka; island country off the coast of India.
51. The hammer and ____ is a military tactic of one force pinning the enemy down and the other smashing their flank or rear.
52. Cautious; wary.
54. "____ in God's revealed plan does man once again find his intended purpose for being..." —*His Story is Your Story*, Catholic evangelist Jeff Cavins.
56. A brand of gin; distilled in England, bottled in Florida.
58. "____ Bravo"; 1959 movie starring John Wayne, Angie Dickenson, Walter Brennan, Dean Martin and Ricky Nelson.
59. Prefix for trance or joy.
60. "____, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19).
61. Genetic material.
64. "I have sinned, and most ____ all in relishing my sin," —*The Hermit of Eynton*, Ellis Peters.

ANSWERS on page 19



301 Monroe
Jefferson City
(573) 635-6101

Charles Prather • Rick Prather
Tom Kummer

IMMACULATE HEART

From page 1

schools, said the center will be explicitly Catholic.

“It will be a faith-filled environment in which these children can grow,” said Dr. Vader. “We don’t want it to just be a convenient place that’s affordable for parents, although that’s important. But the most important thing is that we are bringing these little people and their families closer to God.”

She said it’s clear that the scarcity of childcare is a major factor keeping many good teachers out of the classroom.

“We have outstanding educators at our Catholic schools,” she stated. “We need to do everything we can to continue attracting the best talent to our teacher positions.

“This new child development center is an effort to address this concern, providing affordable, Catholic childcare so our teachers and other diocesan employees are supported as they return to our workforce,” she said.

“It’s a win-win,” said Mr. Rockers. “This a way for our kids to be loved and cared for in an awesome child development center, and the teachers can continue to love, support and teach the children of our diocese.

“At the same time, the schools will be able to attract gifted teachers and retain the ones they have,” he said.

Bridging the gap

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center was made possible by a generous Catholic donor who enabled the diocese to acquire a childcare facility, which was previously Growing Hearts Montessori School.

When it reopens as Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center, the facility will care for children as young as infants and as old as 3 years.

“The goal is for this to bridge the gap between birth and preschool at their parish school,” said Dr. Vader. “All the Catholic schools here have preschool available for 3-year-olds and up.”

Expected initial capacity, based on space and staffing constraints, will be between

about 30 and 35 children.

Keeping the service affordable for families will be a high priority.

So will the faith component.

“Catholic school is never just about the kids. It’s always about the family,” Dr. Vader noted. “Our job is to support the parents as the first and best teachers of their children. And kids are the best evangelizers.”

Similar to two Catholic high schools in the diocese, the center has its own board of directors led by Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, with bylaws for the board to follow and Dr. Vader giving oversight on the bishop’s behalf.

The center is provisionally accredited through the Missouri Nonpublic School Accreditation Association, which is the organization that does the accreditation for all our schools and is recognized by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

It will operate under a religious exemption while obtaining its license from the state, which takes about a year.

“We understand the importance of being licensed by the state, but we also see that the need for this is now,” said Dr. Vader.

“Something new”

Dr. Vader said the diocese is fortunate to have Mrs. Rockwell, following her 23-year career at Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Jefferson City.

Her work there included directing the afterschool program for 18 years. She also developed the Immaculate Conception Summer Camp program and directed it for 13 years.

Mrs. Rockwell previously operated a licensed daycare for 12 years so that she could stay home with her three young children.

“I know how important it is to have high-quality, affordable childcare,” she stated.

“I’m excited about this opportunity to ensure our teachers and other employees have a loving, Catholic childcare option here in our diocese,” she said.

She will be respon-



sible for scheduling, hiring staff, working with state licensing and local code compliance, and offering a service for parents.

She emphasized the importance of helping parents instill faith and love of God, even with infants and small children.

“It’s exciting to be able to lay that groundwork with them,” she said.

She said she enjoys a challenge and a chance to help build something from the ground up.

She also likes working with families and promoting family life.

“It’s exciting to be part of something new,” she stated. “And I love early childhood — it’s always a very fun and exciting thing to be involved in.”

She pointed to other non-negotiables: “The nurturing, the love, the guidance and the safety of the program, and the growth. You want it to be a happy, safe place for the children to come to.”

“Little opportunities”

Mr. Rockers and his wife Luci welcomed a son into the world on May 27.

“We realized early on that we would need childcare,” Mr. Rockers stated. “We called

When the fully furnished former Growing Hearts Montessori School became available, anonymous donors stepped forward to help the diocese buy it.

“The donors are very humble, kind and so generous,” Mr. Rockers stated.

He said he’s grateful to Dr. Vader for her openness to the idea, and to numerous people throughout the community who have offered guidance, insight and expertise “to help make this dream a reality.”

“I think a lot of time, God puts those little opportunities in your life to hopefully bring about a greater good for the community and the Church, rather than just yourself.”

Powerful advocate

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center are hiring staff to prepare for the opening.

All personnel will have training and certifications required for compliance with the accreditation.

They’ll also have to meet the standards of every other diocesan school employee, including a background check and safe environment training.

Dr. Vader noted that if the Immaculate Heart of Mary Child Development Center is successful, “there may be other opportunities in the diocese for us to replicate this in the diocese.”

Mrs. Rockwell asked for prayers for success for the new center, for the people who will be working there, the children who will be attending, and their parents.

She believes the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a perfect model and intercessor for this ministry.

“As much as the Blessed Mother guides and influences us, she also helps the children,” she said.

For information about the Immaculate Heart of Mary Childhood Development Center, contact Dr. Vader at evader@diojeffcity.org or 573-635-9127.

around for months and found that there wasn’t any room, especially not for newborns and infants.”

He and Liz Twyman, director of accommodations at Helias Catholic, talked to Dr. Vader about possibly opening an early child development center at Helias Catholic.

The scope of the discussions turned to the need to help Catholic educators throughout the community.

“I think being a Catholic school teacher is far more a vocation than an occupation,” said Mr. Rockers. “It’s a calling. And with that, there are so many blessings and joys, but there also are sacrifices you have to make.

“We want to keep being teachers because God has called us to it and it fills us with joy,” he said. “But it sure can be difficult to do that when you worry about who can care for your child so you can be present with the students we educate at school on a daily basis.”

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

Jul. 9

Meta, St. Cecilia Parish picnic, 11 am-6 pm; **St. Martins**, St. Martin Parish picnic, 11 am-9 pm

Jul. 15

Salisbury, St. Joseph Parish picnic, 5-11 pm

Jul. 16

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus Parish picnic, 11 am-7 pm

Jul. 23

St. Elizabeth, St. Elizabeth community picnic, 11 am-6:30 pm

Jul. 31

Jefferson City, Resurrection & St. Peter cemeteries Summer clean-up day

Aug. 1

Columbia, "An Evening of Story and Song," with Steve Angrisano, to benefit Mary's Meals, 6-8 pm, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, to register for this free event, email lisa.geger@ourladyoflourdes.org

Aug. 6

Osage Bend, St. Margaret of Antioch Parish picnic, 11 am-6:30 pm; **Wien**, St. Mary of the Angels Parish picnic, 11 am-10 pm

Aug. 11

Jefferson City, St. Peter Parish block party, 5-9 pm, parish campus

Aug. 13

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am

Meetings/ Workshops

Jul. 6

Clarence, Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS training), 6:30-8:30 pm, St. Patrick Parish

Jul. 7 & 8

Lake Ozark, Reflection on Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, Fri. 7 pm or Sat. 10 am, Our Lady of the Lake Church

Jul. 9

Lake Ozark, Lake Area Cursillo Ultreya, 3-5 pm, Our Lady of the Lake Parish's Bestgen Hall, for info call 573-552-5337, email glenda_hinrichs@yahoo.com or visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo

Jul. 27

Westphalia, Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS training), 6-8 pm, St. Joseph Parish

Eventos del Ministerio Hispano

Julio 13

Evento Virtual, El Diácono y la Liturgia, 6-8 pm, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org

Julio 13-16

Sedalia, Cursillo de Hombres, Escuela Sagrado Corazón, para más información o registrarse contacte a Maria Gomez al 660-620-3405 o Raul Lopez a 660-287-8920

mez al 660-620-3405 o Raul Lopez a 660-287-8920

Julio 14

Varios lugares, Asambleas de Jóvenes, 7-9 pm, para más información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

Julio 15-16

Marshall, Retiro de Parejas, San Pedro, para más información contacte a Liliana Ruano al 660-202-0317 o por correo electrónico a nellym.ruanorn6@gmail.com

Julio 19

Columbia, Protección de los niños de Dios para adultos, sesión de VIRTUS en español para empleados y voluntarios, 6-8 pm, Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón

Julio 22

Sedalia, Retiro de Vida en el Espíritu para Niños (7-11 años), 9 am-3 pm, Escuela Sagrado Corazón, para más información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

Julio 29

Sedalia, Convivio Diocesano RCC, Bothwell Park, noon-6 pm, para más información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

Julio 30

Sedalia, Bienvenida de Cursillistas, capilla de san Patricio, 1-3 pm, para más información o registrarse contacte a Maria Gomez al 660-620-3405 o Raul Lopez a 660-287-8920

Agosto 5

Sedalia, Retiro para Preparación de Quinceañera, 9 am-3 pm, San Patricio, para más información contacte el equipo de quinceañera de su parroquia; **Sedalia**, Planificación Familiar Natural - Familia de las Américas, 9 am-noon, San Patricio, para información sobre instructores y clases contacte a Diácono Enrique o Crísthina Castro al 573-680-3650 o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org

Agosto 11

Varios lugares, Asambleas de Jóvenes, 7-9 pm, para más

información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

Agosto 20

Sedalia, Retiro Parroquial: Buena Administración, 9 am-5 pm, San Patricio, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org

Agosto 25-27

Carthage, Mo., Encuentro Regional, Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer, para más información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

Agosto 26

Columbia, Retiro Parroquial: Buena Administración, 9 am-3 pm, Sagrado Corazón, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecastro@diojeffcity.org

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Every Friday

Jefferson City, Centering

ENCOUNTER

From page 10

future. While chipping away at this cycle of financial need, we strive to achieve goals, such as establishing an emergency fund that can be accessed when those unexpected expenses or losses of income happen, and working toward a secure financial future.

After encountering financial stability and wellness services at Catholic Charities, I hope my clients (and former clients) reactions are no longer stuck on "how will we survive this?" but instead reassured with "We have a plan for this, we know what to do."

I feel blessed to lead this program and see, through the people I encounter, God's handiwork. Walking alongside individuals in a time of vulnerability, hearing their stories, and meeting their families is a privilege — and it is my prayer that my work will help to make a difference in the lives of those I

Prayer Group, Immaculate Conception Parish, 11 am-noon

Jul. 21-23

Wildwood, Mo., Reflect Mid-Life Singles Retreat, LaSalle Retreat Center, for info or to register visit ReflectRetreat.com

Liturgical

Jul. 11

Starkenburg, Second Tuesday Mass, 11 am-2 pm, Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows, for info visit risensavior.diojeffcity.org

Youth & Young Adults

First Wednesdays each month

Jefferson City, Rooted/Connected/Searching in Community young adult group, 5-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info visit icangels.com/youngadults

Third Sundays each month

Jefferson City, Young Adult Mass, 5 pm, Immaculate Conception Church

Nov. 16-19

Indianapolis, In., National Catholic Youth Conference, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/national-catholic-youth-conference

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diojeffcity.org/parish-correspondence

For marriages and deaths, use the form at diojeffcity.org/parishioner-update/ so that we may update our mailing lists and records.

Anniversaries

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes
Bill & Janice Johnston, 45 years
Stuart & Karla Briggs, 25 years

Columbia, St. Thomas More Newman Center
Lonny & Sandy Dirks, 45 years

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception
Roman & JoAnna Patten, 65 years

Jefferson City, St. Peter
Daniel & Stephanie Worthen, 25 years

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate
John & Mary Schlepffhorst, 70 years
John & Debbie Lechner, 50 years
John & Kimberly Moore, 30 years

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows
Fred & Margaret Evers, 71 years
Kenneth & Norma Runge, 66 years
Brian & Jennifer Adrian, 30 years

Rolla, St. Patrick
Albert & Connie Myers, 50 years

Salisbury, St. Joseph
Carl & Frances Ann Boss, 60 years
Carey & Mary Jo Henke, 45 years

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus
James & Patricia Grothoff, 50 years

Wien, St. Mary of the Angels
Alan & Paula Ablen, 50 years
Dennis & Pam Bixenman, 45 years
Josh & Megan Burch, 20 years
Loren & Regina Niemeier, 15 years

CONSULATE

From page 8

told us that having it here was helpful and convenient," said Ms. Padilla-Mayer.

Moises Sosa, a U.S. Department of Justice-accredited representative with Catholic Charities Family Immigration Services, spoke highly of a Mexican Consulate program called "Know Your Rights."

"This program provides immigrants with tools and training necessary to know and understand their rights in this country," Mr. Sosa stated. "People were very happy with the service they received. Some of them told me that they were very fortunate to have this event in our diocese."

Based on the success of this first mobile consulate, she hopes to hold similar events in Jefferson City two or three times a year in the future.

"It was a great success and we helped a lot of people get the documents they

Baptisms

Marshall, St. Peter — **Marcos Andrew Colindres**, son of Marcos Colindres & Yaneth Trujillo; **Addilynn, Leonardo** and **Nicholas Pardo**, children of Miguel Pardo & Roxana Ramirez

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows — **Lyla Ann Looten**, daughter of Ryan & Morgan Looten

Marriages

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Jasmine Rustemeyer & Trent VanLoo**

Birthdays

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Margie Otto**, her 91st on July 5

Boonville, Ss. Peter & Paul — **Norma Esser**, her 90th on Jul. 24

Loose Creek, Immaculate Conception — **Albert Haslag**, his 98th on July 11

Deaths

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Mildred Leighton**

Marshall, St. Peter — **Wayne Pabst**

Vienna, Visitation — **Laura Ann Schiermeier**

need," the head consul stated. "We're looking forward to coming back."

She asked for prayers for her and her staff to have the energy to do more consulates throughout their three-state territory — "and to have partners such as the Catholic diocese, El Puente and Catholic Charities that we can rely on."

QUESTION

From page 8

There are several biblical citations referencing prayers for the dead, most famously, 2 Mc. 12:44-45: "For if [Judas Maccabee] were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead."

But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

BRISCOE

From page 9

underutilized opportunity to break from the demands of work. Part of what we have to do is teach our culture to rest, and to rest well. Liturgy, properly understood and loved, is a crucial part of that rest.

Ultimately, the declining attendance of the working class at Catholic Mass reflects broader societal changes. Who isn't present at Sunday Mass is a question we must dare to ask. And once we've recognized who isn't there, we have to ask why they're missing. By recognizing the unique struggles faced by the working class and actively engaging with them, the Catholic Church can pave the way for a revitalized sense of faith and community among those who have drifted away.

Father Patrick Briscoe, Order of Preachers, is a Dominican friar and the editor of Our Sunday Visitor.

DEATH PENALTY

From page 5

anyone to ascertain a person's motives and state of mind or soul at the moment a crime is being committed.

"I consider myself a proponent of strong families," Mr. Wichmer stated. "The most important thing we can do in terms of intervention is contribute to a strong moral upbringing and protect the family unit in general."

He noted that the MCC consistently advocates for access to healthcare and mental health services for people who are vulnerable and cannot afford it.

The MCC has been lobbying for decades to abolish the death penalty or at least to put executions on hold long enough for an in-depth study into whether it is being administered fairly and justly.

One audience member asked Mr. Wichmer whether he thought families of murder victims push the death penalty because they want revenge.

"I have never experienced a relative being murdered, so I wouldn't know how those people would feel," he replied. "I would only hope that someone in that situation would make the moral decision, though I'm certain it could be very difficult."

Mr. Wichmer noted a shift in the death penalty landscape in the United States.

"The number of states that retain the death penalty has dropped pretty drastically," he stated. "And even among states that do keep it legal, only a handful still execute criminals and schedule executions."

"But the ones that do — Missouri being one of them — are doing so at an accelerated rate," he said.

"Interesting and helpful"

Monsignor Gregory L. Higley, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, thanked Mr. Wichmer for visiting Sacred Heart and providing helpful information and insight to the events' participants.

"He did a very good job in explaining some of the history and the current reasons for the Church's position on capital punishment that is now presented in the revised *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," the priest stated.

"I think those who attended found it not only interesting but helpful in reevaluating their opinions about the use of capital punishment," he said.

Mr. Wichmer said he was impressed both by the size of his audiences at Sacred Heart and their level of engagement.

"It was wonderful to see so many people who were that interested in the topic and following up with insightful questions," he stated.

He lauded Msgr. Higley, parishioner Leo Agnew and all of the event's organizers.

"I'm just glad I didn't scare the crowd away!" he added.

Crossword puzzle answers

1	A	L	I	M	V	A	F	L	N	D	E	O	S
2	R	I	R	N	O	T	N	E	I	N	G	R	E
3	E	V	E	R	I	G	E	T	I	E	G	R	E
4	E	N	E	R	N	E	R	O	N	E	R	N	E
5	T	A	L	E	R	I	D	I	E	S	E	R	I
6	S	S	V	A	R	S	E	W	R	E	R	E	
7	H	C	T	A	V	L	O	W	S	L	D	R	
8	T	C	A	R	T	O	N	A	V	N	S	N	
9	R	E	E	L	L	S	F	R	S	U	N		
10	V	E	M	C	V	C	O	E	R	O	E		
11	E	E	N	I	N	V	L	S	O	S	O		
12	R	E	R	E	I	D	E	S	I	D	E		
13	D	O	I	O	P	L	E	T	L	S			
14	E	N	O	C	C	V	I	T	L	U	S		
15	S	E	I	T	I	C	H	S	U	O	W		

Staying FOCUSED



ABOVE: Members of the 2023-24 Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) team at St. Thomas More Newman Center in Columbia gather for summer training in early June. The group includes returning missionaries Kip and Abby and newly arriving missionaries Julia, Val and Luke. FOCUS missionaries (*focus.org*) are committed to helping make disciples for Christ, by inviting students into a relationship with Jesus in the Catholic Church, accompanying them along their journey, and equipping them to share the faith with others.

— Photo from the St. Thomas More Newman Center Facebook page

Getting active in their faith



Young people from in and around Sedalia take part in the "Totus Tuus" Catholic summer experience in Sacred Heart School. "It's been a great week so far with learning about God's love for us and lots of laughs!" the organizers stated.

— Photos from the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Parish Facebook page

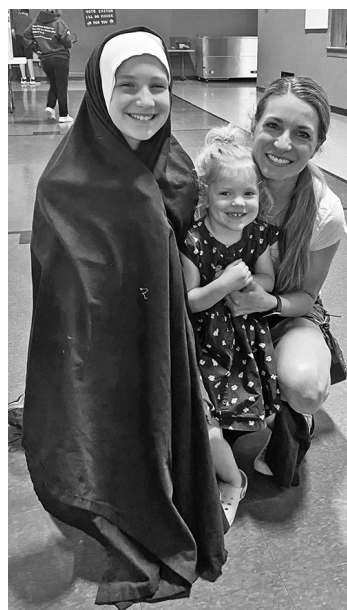
Plenty to talk about in Marshall



ABOVE: Jamie (Backes) Johnston, a member of Annunciation Parish in California, carries on an insightful and enjoyable conversation with a group of young parishioners of St. Peter Parish in Marshall on June 28. High school teens from Marshall meet twice monthly for group meetings, youth Masses and service projects.

— Photo by Carol Wolfe

Famous Missourians



St. Rose Philippine Duchesne and St. Louis native Yogi Berra of Major League Baseball's New York Yankees are a couple of the state's sons and daughters portrayed in the Famous Missourians Live Museum put on by the fourth-graders at St. Peter School in Marshall on May 15, shortly before school got out for the summer. Others included Mark Twain, Jesse James, Walt Disney and Ginger Rogers.

— Photo from the St. Peter School Facebook page

"Totus Tuus" Game night



Young people from in and around Mexico take part in Game Night as part of the "Totus Tuus" Catholic summer experience at St. Brendan School on June 8. "Thanks to our participants for a faith-filled, fun week and for our Missionaries who led them!" parishioners stated.

— Photos from the St. Brendan Catholic Church Mexico, MO Facebook page

Bible Accent

Two dreams that Joseph had in his youth contributed to his brothers' hatred of him.

In Genesis 37:5, we read that Joseph told his brothers he had dreamed they were all binding sheaves in a field. Suddenly, Joseph's sheaf stood upright, and his brothers' sheaves bowed down to it.

"Are you really going to make yourself king over us? Will you rule over us?" said Joseph's brothers, who hated him even more than usual.

In another dream, Joseph saw the sun, moon and 11 stars bowing to him. When he told his father and brothers, Jacob reproved him.

"What is the meaning of this dream of yours? Can it be that I and your mother and your brothers are to come and bow to the ground before you?" Jacob said. This made his brothers furious, but Jacob kept the matter in mind.

One day, when Joseph was 17, Jacob sent him to check up on his brothers, who were tending their father's flocks.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said when they saw Joseph approaching. They discussed ways they could mistreat Joseph and even considered killing him.

"We will see then what comes of his dreams," they said.

Many years later, when Joseph was almost 40 years old, his dreams came true when his brothers treated him like a king and bowed before him in Egypt.

St. Kunigunde of Poland

St. Kunigunde, or Kinga, was born in 1224 and was the daughter of Hungarian royalty. At age 16, she married King Boleslaus IV of Poland. Kunigunde and her husband ruled together for 40 years. She was very generous, and she helped the poor and sick, supported the Friars Minor and ransomed Christian prisoners. After she was widowed, she entered a Poor Clares convent that she had founded in southern Poland. She died in 1292, and we remember her on July 24.



Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt for food

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic Courier

Jacob — a son of Isaac and a grandson of Abraham — had 12 sons. His favorite was his second-youngest son, Joseph.

This made Joseph's older brothers so jealous that they sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt.

With God's help, Joseph could interpret dreams. One day, he was summoned to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler.

Joseph said that Pharaoh's dreams meant there would be seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of terrible famine.

Pharaoh was so happy that he put Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine, and he also made him governor of the entire country.

When the famine came, it gripped not only Egypt but the entire world. People — including 10 of Joseph's 11 brothers — traveled to Egypt from many other countries to ask for food, which Joseph was in charge of giving out.

One day, Joseph's brothers came and knelt before him to ask for food. They did not recognize Joseph, but Joseph recognized them. He also noticed that Benjamin, his youngest brother, was not there.

Joseph kept his identity secret, and he pretended he needed an interpreter to talk to his brothers. Through the interpreter, he accused his brothers



Illustration by Linda Rivers

ers of being spies from the land of Canaan. Even though his brothers explained who they were and what they were doing in Egypt, Joseph had them locked in the guardhouse for three days.

"If you have been honest, only one of your brothers need be confined in this prison, while the rest of you may go and take home provisions for your starving families," Joseph told them through the interpreter. "But you must come back to me with your youngest brother. Your words will thus be verified, and you will not die."

Joseph's brothers agreed.

As they left Joseph, they said to one another that they were being punished for what they had done years earlier.

"Did I not tell you not to do wrong to the boy?" Reuben, the eldest brother, said of Joseph. "But you would not listen! Now comes the reckoning for his blood."

Joseph heard what his brothers were saying about him. He turned away from them and wept.

Read more about it... Genesis 41 & 42

1. Who wanted his dreams interpreted?
2. Who came to ask Joseph for food?

Essay

Reading for
July 12, 2023: Gn. 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a

When have you helped people who were hungry and needed food?

Puzzle

Unscramble the letters in each word and arrange them to form a quotation from the Bible Accent.

htat

reeh

meadrer

smoce

Sentence:

Answers: that, here, dreamer, comes; Here comes that dreamer.

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Caviezel: 'Sound of Freedom' is a 'weapon of mass instruction' to end child trafficking

By Gina Christian
OSV News

A new film starring Jim Caviezel aims to move millions to end the scourge of child trafficking.

"Sound of Freedom," directed by Alejandro Monteverde, debuted in theaters July 4 with Caviezel starring as Tim Ballard, who began his career at the CIA and then spent more than a decade as a special agent for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) battling child exploitation.

Assigned to the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, Ballard was deployed as an undercover operative for the U.S. Child Sex Tourism Jump Team, infiltrating criminal organizations that sexually abused and trafficked children.

In 2013, Ballard and a team of former agents left DHS to form Operation Underground Railroad, a private foundation that assists international



Jim Caviezel stars in a scene from the movie "Sound of Freedom."

— OSV News photo/Angel Studios

governments and U.S. law enforcement in dismantling criminal trafficking organizations that target children.

Ballard has testified before Congress on child trafficking and has advocated vigorously to raise awareness of the issue, which is estimated to affect at least 1.7 million children globally, according to the International Labor Organization.

For Caviezel, portraying Ballard — and replicating his dramatic real-life rescues of enslaved children — is a role second only to that of playing Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ," with a similarly compelling mission.

Ahead of the film's opening, the "Sound of Freedom" team is looking to sell "2 million tickets for 2 million children" trapped in trafficking, Caviezel told OSV News. "That's been the goal all along."

The film's distributor, Angel Studios, is using technology it developed for its hit series "The Chosen" to enable viewers to buy tickets so that others can watch for free, or to claim donated tickets if they are unable

to afford the purchase price.

Both Caviezel and producer Eduardo Verástegui told OSV News that the film has been a labor of both faith and love for the past eight years.

"I was in Los Angeles and met Tim Ballard and his team — ex-CIA agents, ex-FBI agents — and I learned what they were doing, traveling around the world undercover, rescuing children that were kidnapped for sexual exploitation," said Verástegui.

"And I was in shock. I couldn't sleep for a few days when they told me what was going on."

Verástegui said he decided to counter the problem with "a weapon of mass instruction and inspiration — film."

Caviezel and Verástegui drew on their deeply held Catholic faith to overcome what the latter called "so many obstacles" that gave way to "so many miracles" in making the film.

"Every time I do a film, I pray the Rosary and my prayer is that God would use us to really be whatever he needs us to be," said Caviezel.

"In this particular case," he stated, "it's a weapon against the greatest evil right now we've ever seen. And when the public really wakes up and sees this, it's going to blow their minds how wicked those people (are) that do what they do with these children."

"I pray the Rosary every day," said Verástegui. "That's my biggest weapon. I go to

Movie Ratings



General Patronage

The Little Mermaid (PG)



Adults and Adolescents

Elemental (PG)
Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny (PG-13)
Transformers: Rise of the Beasts (PG-13)



Adults

Asteroid City (PG-13)
The Blackening (R)
The Boogeyman (PG-13)
Fast X (PG-13)
The Flash (PG-13)
Padre Pio (R)
Ruby Gillman, Teenage Kraken (PG)
Sound of Freedom (PG-13)
Spider-Man Across the Spider-Verse (PG)



Morally Offensive

No Hard Feelings (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

Mass every day. ... Without that, there's no way I can do what I'm doing right now."

Caviezel also prepared for filming by attending Mass and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation "to get as pure as I can in my soul," he said, admitting that researching the horrors of child sex trafficking by working with law enforcement provoked both nightmares and tears.

In addition, "fasting had to happen," said Caviezel, especially for a project that sought to expose the sexual slavery of children.

"You're going to have a lot of bad demons that are not going to like that. ... Scripture says some demons can only be removed by prayer and fasting," he said.

The Holy Spirit provided inspiration for "taking and elevating" the script by Monteverde and Rod Barr into a triumphant story of good conquering evil, said Caviezel — and without directly portraying lurid details of the film's subject matter.

In one scene, his character reviews a confiscated child pornography video to file a DHS report, but the film manages to convey the horror by instead

showing only Caviezel's eye as he types up his testimony.

"The scene wasn't written that way, but ... it takes you right to the edge," said Caviezel. "I needed to take it to that point, because I needed the public to understand that when Tim would come home and his children would run to him, he would literally fall on his knees and start weeping in their arms."

Verástegui said as producer he stressed the importance of "how we treat people on set," particularly the child actors.

"They never knew what this film was about," he said. "How can you explain what child pornography is to actors that are 5, 6 years old?"

He said the parents were there, "and Alejandro (Monteverde) was literally protecting the integrity and the innocence of the children on set with their parents."

"He had that ability to tell them different stories to bring the emotions and the tears," Verástegui stated. "In the editing, you see the real deal, but on set, they never knew the reality."

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FR. MERZ

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Working with the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), he helped fine-tune the new translations of other Catholic rites and resources.

He also continued serving as chairman of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

Liturgy refers to the Mass and other universal prayers, rituals and sacraments of the Church.

“For me, liturgy is a fountain of spirituality,” Fr. Merz said. “Some people see liturgy as a bunch of rubrics. I see it as a source of theology — theology in action.”

“In our DNA”

Upon Fr. Merz’s return to Missouri, Bishop Gaydos appointed him to lead St. George Parish in Linn and Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Frankenstein.

“I was very excited about that,” Fr. Merz recalled. “I was so happy to be able to just pour myself into these parishes and get to know the families and the people and get to know them and see how we can grow the faith there.”

Both parishes have Catholic grade schools.

“Going over and visiting the kids and hanging out with them — that was just great!” he said.

He oversaw an extensive renovation of St. George Church, integrating artwork from the previous church that was built in the 1890s.

On July 1, 2020, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight appointed him pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center in Columbia.

Bishop McKnight also tapped him to serve as diocesan director of the Permanent Diaconate, working with two deacons to oversee diaconal formation before and after ordination.

The Newman Center parish is one of the youngest, most energetic, dynamic and diverse parishes in the diocese, serving Catholic students and faculty members from all over the world, as well as an established year-round resident population.

Fr. Merz arrived to encounter a student community that

had been invigorated by the Dominican priests who preceded him, as well as the missionaries of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

He has been working with parishioners to make the Newman Center chapel more conducive to sacred worship.

“The Liturgy — communal worship — it’s the essence of who we are,” he said. “Without the sacraments, we’re adrift. They form us into the Body of Christ and keep us connected.”

“Being Catholic is in our DNA because of the Eucharist,” he noted. “We consume Christ and we become Christ to each other. Without that, a huge part of our reality is missing.”

He emphasized that the Old and New Testaments give clear direction for how God wants to be worshiped.

“He cares deeply about that,” Fr. Merz stated. “As we pray in the Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer, ‘It is right and just, our duty and our salvation to give you praise.’”

“How we do that is a matter of our salvation,” he said. “If Liturgy is done well, on a practical level, it informs but it also inspires.”

Here and now

Twenty-five years into Priesthood, Fr. Merz is a lot more comfortable with God’s mysterious ways.

“I’ve come to experience and accept that God works through sinful and imperfect people to do great and beautiful things,” he said. “And I humbly include myself in that.”

He sees his role as a priest

as to be of service to the Priesthood that all people are called to in Baptism.

“It’s not about me,” he noted. “I always want it to be about helping people to grow in the faith.”

He remains eager to help people understand that they are as much a part of God’s plan as Jesus’s first followers.

“It’s not just history,” he said. “We’re all part of this. Our faith is about Christ still doing the things today that he did himself and that he did through Peter and Paul and the Apostles and the whole early Church.”

As his silver jubilee approaches, Fr. Merz asks for prayers for more men to hear God calling them to Priesthood, and for more men and women to hear the call to religious life.

“We need generous hearts!” he said. “We need to encourage and inspire people to listen to the Lord and pursue it. I’m sure the Lord is calling them.”

A year after his ordination, he became part of a small group of priests in the diocese that meets monthly to encourage and support each other.

“I want to thank them for helping keep the Priesthood alive and wonderful over these years,” he said.

Fr. Merz is filled with joy and gratitude.

“Thanks be to Jesus Christ for sharing his Priesthood with me!” he stated. “And to all the other people who have been a part of this journey, who have helped and supported me, who support the Church and the Priesthood.”

“FREEDOM”

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Ballard himself was impressed by the film’s veracity, said Verástegui.

While viewing the on-set replay of the key rescue scene, the veteran operative “started crying ... and broke in pieces,” amazed to see his life story amplified to aid others, he said.

He and Caviezel are passionate about galvanizing the film’s viewers to end child sex trafficking and enslavement.

“The power of this is that your heart gets on fire,” said Caviezel. “Why does it get on fire? Because they feel the love of Jesus. ... You’re not afraid anymore.”

Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News.

Daily Readings

Sunday, Jul 9

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Zec. 9:9-10
Ps. 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14
Rom. 8:9, 11-13
Mt. 11:25-30

Monday, Jul 10

Gn. 28:10-22a
Ps. 91:1-4, 14-15ab
Mt. 9:18-26

Tuesday, Jul 11

St. Benedict, abbot
Gn. 32:23-33
Ps. 17:1b, 2-3, 6-7ab, 8b, 15
Mt. 9:32-38

Wednesday, Jul 12

Gn. 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a
Ps. 33:2-3, 10-11, 18-19
Mt. 10:1-7

Thursday, Jul 13

St. Henry
Gn. 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5
Ps. 105:16-21
Mt. 10:7-15

Friday, Jul 14

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, virgin (USA)
Gn. 46:1-7, 28-30
Ps. 37:3-4, 18-19, 27-28, 39-40
Mt. 10:16-23

Saturday, Jul 15

St. Bonaventure, bishop and doctor of the Church
Gn. 49:29-32; 50:15-26a
Ps. 105:1-4, 6-7
Mt. 10:24-33

Sunday, Jul 16

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Is. 55:10-11
Ps. 65:10-14
Rom. 8:18-23
Mt. 13:1-23 or 13:1-9

Monday, Jul 17

Ex. 1:8-14, 22
Ps. 124:1b-3-8
Mt. 10:34-11:1

Tuesday, Jul 18

St. Camillus de Lellis, priest (USA)
Ex. 2:1-15a
Ps. 69:3, 14, 30-31, 33-34
Mt. 11:20-24

Wednesday, Jul 19

Ex. 3:1-6, 9-12
Ps. 103:1b-2-4, 6-7
Mt. 11:25-27

Thursday, Jul 20

St. Apollinaris, bishop and martyr
Ex. 3:13-20
Ps. 105:1, 5, 8-9, 24-27
Mt. 11:28-30

Friday, Jul 21

St. Lawrence of Brindisi, priest and doctor of the Church
Ex. 11:10-12:14
Ps. 116:12-13, 15, 16bc, 17-18
Mt. 12:1-8

Saturday, Jul 22

St. Mary Magdalene
Sg. 3:1-4b or 2 Cor. 5:14-17
Ps. 63:2-6, 8-9
Jn. 20:1-2, 11-18

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for July:

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