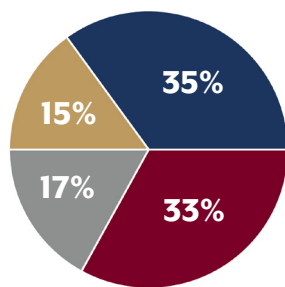


Sharing God's Gifts

An overview of how the Chancery office of the Jefferson City diocese uses the material support it receives from parishes to develop and enrich the faith life in communities throughout the diocese.

Page 14



Synod on Synodality. . . . Page 3

Eagle Scout's Rosary Walk . Page 4

Stewardship study guide . . Page 5

"Protect Young Eyes" Page 6

Mokane church renovation . Page 7

RIP, Sr. Eleanor Ewertz. . . Page 11

The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

September 29, 2023 • Vol. 67 No. 7

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Priests' pet dogs open doors to evangelization and fun



Father Henry Ussher, pastor of St. Clement Parish in St. Clement, St. Joseph Parish in Louisiana and the Mission of Queen of Peace in Clarksville, introduces a visitor to his dog, Africa, a Shih Tzu mix.

— Photo by Annie Williams

By Jay Nies

Sit right back and you'll hear a tail.

Listen closely. It's hard to hear it wagging with all those children around.

"It's always a good time for everybody when I have Miss Africa with me!" proclaimed Father Henry Ussher.

"Children come out and call her and say they want to pet her," he said of the floppy little Shih Tzu mix that has learned how to dance. "People come up and talk to me, even if they're not Catholic."

That's a common theme.

"If I ever take the dogs out when the kids are there, the kids just swamp us," said Father William Peckman. "The dogs love it, and the kids love it."

His 13-year-old wire-haired dachshund, Buddy, and 2-year-old golden-doodle, Molly, are but a few of the heavenly hounds that help keep things lively in rectories across the diocese.

"There's definitely a humanizing factor to having the pets," said Fr. Peckman, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Macon, St. Mary Parish in Shelbina and the Mission of Sacred Heart in Bevier.

"I've found that people who, for lack of a better term, are 'afraid' of priests. If they have a dog like the priest does, it becomes a moment of a little connection," he said.

Father Joshua Duncan called his dogs "a natural conversation starter."

"At funerals or even at weddings, when people who barely set foot in church find out that I have a dog, it just opens up the conversation amazingly," he said. "They're showing me pictures and asking me for pictures."

"And sometimes, they ask me the deeper questions."

DOGS, page 17

Rest in peace, Msgr. Michael Wilbers, 77, pastor, administrator, promoter of lay participation

By Jay Nies

Longtime friend and Our Lady of the Lake parishioner Chris Hermann described Monsignor Michael J. Wilbers as "consistent, fair and respectful."

"He helped a lot of people in their ups and downs in their lives," Mr. Hermann noted. "He was a calming influence. His message was always to trust — to trust in God. It's so simple and yet so hard."

Msgr. Wilbers, 77, a retired priest of the Jefferson City diocese who previously ministered in Moberly, St. Thomas, Jefferson City, Lake Ozark, the diocesan Religious Education Office and in diocesan administration, died peacefully on Sept. 19.

He had been a priest for 51 years.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 25, in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Jefferson City, with Bishop W. Shawn McKnight presiding and Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos and 45 priests of the diocese concelebrating.

Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicki, vicar general of the diocese and pastor of St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City, preached the homily.

"His struggle — long, painful, yet witnessing — has concluded," Msgr. Kurwicki proclaimed from the Cathedral pulpit. "His work is done, his suffering is over, he is at peace. And he will continue to live in the stories that are told about him."

Friends remember Msgr. Wilbers as a master of patient deliberation.

"He took time to think through important decisions," observed Sister Kathleen Wegman of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who got to know Msgr. Wilbers when he was vicar general of the diocese and she was provincial leader of her religious congregation.

"His style was steady ... very thoughtful," she said.

MSGR. WILBERS, page 21

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 NEW PARISH _____
 OLD PARISH _____

09/29/23

Hannibal Life Chain

DATE: October 1
TIME: 2-3 pm

The National Life Chain in Hannibal will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 1, outside Hannibal High School, 4500 McMasters Ave.

Participants will hold signs,

pray and give silent witness to the sanctity of human life and for an end to abortion.

A free-will offering will be taken up to benefit a local pregnancy care center.

Contact Nancy McWilliams at nmcwill49@charter.net or 573-406-9023 for information.

Pray for deceased priests

- Oct. 1 — Fr. Kenneth M. McDonnell, St. Joseph, Fayette (1981)
- Oct. 2 — Bishop Joseph M. Marling, C.P.P.S. (1979)
- Oct. 3 — Msgr. Herbert J. Farischo, St. Joseph, Palmyra (1979)
- Oct. 4 — Msgr. John C. Mahoney, St. Patrick, Clarence; and St. Michael, Hager's Grove (1991)
- Oct. 5 — Msgr. John P. Flood, St. Patrick, Jonesburg (1991)
- Oct. 10 — Fr. James R. Fuemmeler, St. Anthony, Camdenton (2012)
- Oct. 14 — Fr. P. Brendan Lawless, Immaculate Conception, St. James; and St. Anthony, Rosati (2013)

Life Chain at several Sedalia locations

DATE: October 1
TIME: 2-3 pm

The Sedalia Life Chain will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. in locations throughout the city, including West Broadway Boulevard between Bandana's Barbecue and the Cinema 8; on South Limit Avenue between El Espolon and the main gate to the Missouri State Fairgrounds; and at Encounter Church, 1201 N. William Parkhurst Drive.

Participants should arrive at their location at 1:30 p.m.

It will be one more than 1,000 Life Chain events in cities across the United States and Canada.

"Life Chain is not a protest," the event's organizers noted. "It is not a rally. Life Chain is simultaneous, living, public prayer, sending to heaven the prayers of thousands of prayer warriors from across the nation in the same hour."

Participants pray for unborn

children who are at risk of being aborted, and their mothers and fathers, and against the forces that seek to make elective abortion legal in Missouri. Contact Dan Lowe at dl@iland.net or 660-287-6026 for information.

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Pet Blessing at I.C. J.C.

DATE: October 8
TIME: 1 pm

Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City will have a Blessing of the Pets in honor of St. Francis of Assisi's upcoming feastday, at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 8, in the church parking lot, 1206 E. McCarty St.

cathmo.com

The Catholic Missourian

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"A diocesan paper serves as a bond of unity by publishing diocesan happenings and promulgating official regulations and decrees. It also plays a teaching role by reporting notable events of a religious and secular nature, and interpreting them in the light of Christian principles."
 — Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

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Women's Ministry Fall 2023 Events

defined by God

SENT ON MISSION
 FORTIFIED BY THE EUCHARIST



WITH AWARD WINNING AUTHOR & SPEAKER
TERESA TOMEO

Ladies Night Out
 Friday, Oct 6th
 Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

Fall Retreat
 Saturday, October 7th
 Doors open at 9:00 a.m.

Cana Hall
 Cathedral of St Joseph
 2305 W Main St, Jefferson City MO

For more info & to register go to
diojeffcity.org/wmfallevent



10 things to know about October's Synod on Synodality in Rome

By Maria Wiering
OSV News

The eyes of the Catholic world turn to Rome Oct. 4, as the worldwide Synod of Bishops convenes on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi to focus on “synodality” and understanding what it means in terms of “communion, participation and mission” in the Church. Here’s what it is, how we got here and what to expect.

1. The Synod on Synodality is three years in the making.

Pope Francis announced in March 2020 (at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in Italy) that the next Synod of Bishops would be held in October 2022 on the theme “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission,” which quickly became known as the “Synod on Synodality.”

In May 2021, he postponed the two-part meeting to 2023 (with a second gathering in 2024), due in part to the pandemic, and announced that it would be preceded by a two-year process.

That decision reflected Pope Francis’ vision for the Synod of Bishops outlined in the 2018 apostolic constitution “*Episcopalis Communio*,” including what Cardinal Mario Grech, the general secretary for the Synod of Bishops, described at the time as “transforming the Synod from an event into

a process.”

Pope Francis officially opened the “synodal path” with a Mass Oct. 10, 2021, with dioceses around the world following suit.

2. Synodality is “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.”

Despite the long history of synods in the Church, the term “synodality” is relatively recent, emerging in Church documents about two decades ago.

In 2018, the topic was addressed by the International Theological Commission, which defined it as “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.”

Synodality was also a topic of conversation at the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment” that took place in 2018.

In the Synod on Synodality’s “*vademecum*,” an official handbook issued in September 2021, “synodality” is described as “the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim

the Gospel,” adding, “Synodality ought to be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working.”

In his homily for the Mass opening the synod process, Pope Francis said, “Celebrating a synod means walking on the same road, walking together.”

He said that when meeting others, Jesus would “encounter, listen and discern,” and those verbs “characterize the synod.”

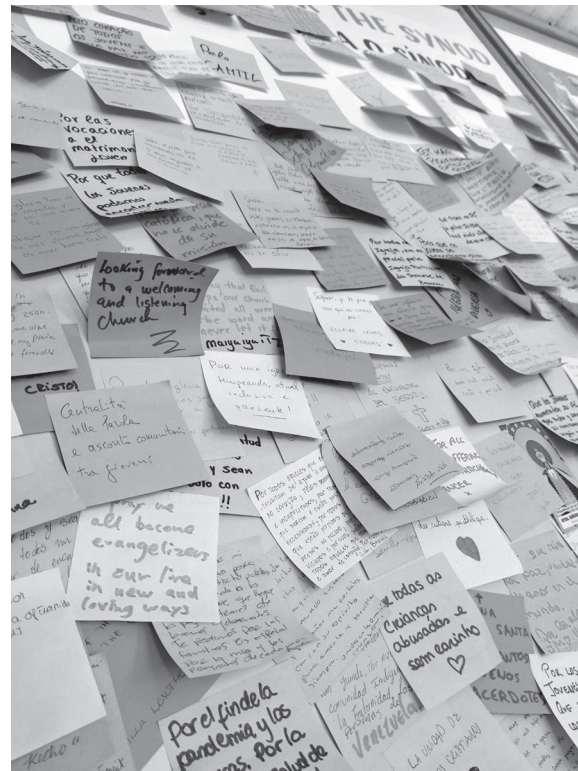
“The Gospels frequently show us Jesus ‘on a journey’; he walks alongside people and listens to the questions and concerns lurking in their hearts,” he said. “He shows us that God is not found in neat and orderly places, distant from reality, but walks ever at our side. He meets us where we are, on the often rocky roads of life.”

He continued: “Today, as we begin this synodal process, let us begin by asking ourselves — all of us, pope, bishops, priests, religious and laity — whether we, the Christian community, embody this ‘style’ of God, who travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity. Are we prepared for the adventure of this journey? Or are we fearful of the unknown, preferring to take refuge in the usual excuses: ‘It’s useless’ or ‘We’ve always done it this way?’”

3. A synod is a meeting of bishops.

It has ancient roots in the Catholic Church’s history and continuity in the Eastern Churches, but declined in the Latin Church. The modern Synod of Bishops was instituted near the end of Vatican II.

“Synod” has been historically interchangeable with “council,” such as the Church-wide Council of Nicea or the Council of Trent, or more localized meetings, such as the Plenary Councils of Baltimore, which brought the U.S. bishops together in 1852, 1866



Dozens of Post-it Notes with prayers and requests from young people are seen on the wall at the Synod of Bishops' booth in a park in Lisbon, Portugal, during World Youth Day Aug. 1-6, 2023.

— OSV News photo/Courtesy of the Synod Secretariat

information and offering advice.” “It can also enjoy the power of making decisions when such power is conferred upon it by the Roman Pontiff; in this case, it belongs to him to ratify the decisions of the Synod,” St. Paul VI wrote.

4. The Synod on Synodality is the 16th Ordinary Synod since the global Synod of Bishops' institution.

Three extraordinary general assemblies have also been held, including in 2014 to complete the work of the 2015 ordinary general assembly on the family.

An additional 11 special Synods of Bishops have been held to address issues facing a particular region.

Among them was a special synod on America in 1997 and one on the Amazon region in 2019.

Synods have regularly resulted in the pope, who serves as the synod president, writing a post-synodal apostolic exhortation.

5. Preparations for the Synod on Synodality sought to be the most extensive ever, with an invitation to every Catholic to provide input.

An unprecedented worldwide consultation occurred at the diocesan/national and continental levels.

See SYNOD, page 19



Bishop McKnight's Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Sep 29 Helias Board of Directors, 11:30 am, Chancery; Missouri Catholic Conference Dinner Meeting, 5:30 pm, Bishop's Residence

OCTOBER

Oct 3 Pontifical College Josephinum Seminary Board of Trustees Meeting, Columbus, OH

Oct 4-6 USCCB Catholic Home Missions Allocation Meetings, New Ulm, MN

Oct 7 Rosary at the Fall Women's Ministry Retreat, Cathedral of St. Joseph's Cana Hall, 10 am, Jefferson City

Oct 9-13 Annual Priests' Institute, Lake Ozark

Oct 14 St. Bernadette Parish 50th Anniversary Mass, 4 pm, Hermitage

Bishop McKnight's October prayer intention for our Local Church

For those who have experienced trauma in their lives; may the Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal their wounds and may the Church, like a loving mother, show the way to justice and wholeness.

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

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

Por aquellos que han experimentado trauma en sus vidas, para que el Espíritu Santo, consolador de los corazones, sane sus heridas, y para que la Iglesia, como madre amorosa, muestre el camino hacia la justicia y la plenitud.



Eagle Scout candidate builds Rosary Walk at Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Starkenburg

By Jay Nies

“Your conduct along the trail has been excellent.”

Sam Cramer is looking forward to hearing those words from his Scoutmaster during his upcoming Eagle Scout ceremony.

He also hopes his Eagle Scout project will help generations of people hear that same message at the end of their earthly lives.

Sam, a member of Church of the Risen Savior Parish in Rhineland, built a Rosary Walk on the grounds of the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Starkenburg.

He and fellow Boy Scouts from Troop 439 in Washington, along with Father Tony Ritter of the St. Louis archdiocese, placed stone pavers and landscaping in the form of a Rosary.

Pilgrims can now walk the circular path near the shrine’s stone chapel while praying the prayers and meditating on the mysteries.

“Especially when you’re praying the Sorrowful Mysteries, the sense of walking with Christ up to Calvary and then with his body being carried back down to the tomb: that’s what I was hoping to achieve with this,” Sam stated.

At the center of the Rosary Walk, directly in line with the cross-shaped paver, is a statue of the Blessed Mother as she appeared to the children at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

“She — Our Lady of Fatima — is who it’s dedicated to,” Sam noted.

Eagle’s wings

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in Boy Scouting.

Sam’s Scouting trail began in fourth grade, when he joined a Cub Scout pack in Hermann.

He continued into Boy Scouts and worked his way up through each rank — beginning with Troop 116 Hermann and then transferring several years ago to Troop 439 in Washington.

“As you progress through the ranks and challenges, you learn how to survive in the wilderness, how to camp, how to make a fire, how to cook food, how to lead a project, how

to calm people down in a dangerous situation, how to lead,” he stated.

The largest requirement for the Eagle rank is a work-service project, which itself challenges and helps develop the scout’s organizing and supervising skills.

Family bonds

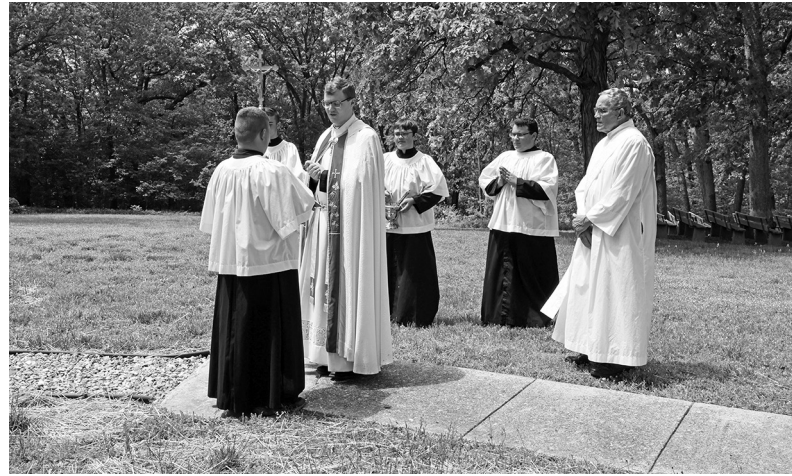
Sam has lived near Starkenburg his whole life. Many of his ancestors were members of the former St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland and the former St. Martin Parish in Starkenburg, which in 1979 were combined to form Church of the Risen Savior Parish.

The parish maintains the shrine, which memorializes the sorrow the Blessed Mother experienced at her Son’s passion and death, and the sorrow she still holds for people who ignore or belittle his sacrifice.

About two years ago, Sam started thinking about what he should do for an Eagle Scout project.

“I knew all along that I wanted to do something for the shrine,” he said.

He had been cycling through ideas when his moth-



Father Tony Ritter of the St. Louis archdiocese, Sam Cramer’s Eagle Scout mentor, blesses and dedicates the Rosary Walk Sam built for an Eagle Scout project outside the chapel of the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Starkenburg, on May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

er saw a Facebook post about a Rosary walk and passed the idea along to him.

Inspired, Sam got to work on preliminary planning — “how much space it would take, what we’d need, how long it would take.”

He attended the next meeting of the committee that promotes and maintains the shrine, and shared the idea with the members.

“There happened to be a woman at the meeting who proposed to the shrine committee to build a Rosary walk,”

Sam recalled.

“So on that same night, two people were proposing two versions of the same project,” he said. “What were the odds of that?”

With the committee’s blessing, Sam took the idea back to his Scout troop, which also gave its approval.

He then turned to the national Eagle Scout Board, which reviews and approves proposals for Eagle Scout projects.

Upon receiving the board’s endorsement, Sam set about final planning and fundraising.

“I figured out exact quantities for all the materials and compiled all the feedback,” he said.

Community support

Each candidate for Eagle Scout selects an adult mentor among those who have achieved the rank. Sam chose Fr. Ritter, the former associate pastor of St. Francis Borgia Parish and the former chaplain of the Scout troop sponsored by the parish.

Sam set up a table outside Valentine Hall on the shrine grounds during last year’s Fall Pilgrimage.

He continued greeting people outside the Second Tuesday Masses and Sunday Masses at the Church of the Risen Savior.

“Along the way, a lot of people told me it would take ages for me to raise the money and to maybe think about cutting expenses,” Sam recalled.

He remained committed to raising about \$3,500 — enough to pay for what he in-

tended to build.

“It wound up taking about a month-and-a-half to get the money,” he said.

Aside from a pledge from his dad’s employer, all the money came from people in the Starkenburg/Rhineland/Hermann area.

“That’s one of many things that had me thinking that this is something God wants me to do,” he said.

He also took it as assurance that the community was fully invested in the project and wanted to help.

Benefactors included individual parishioners as well as the Knights of Columbus Council 1914 and the St. George Parish Ladies Sodality, both in Hermann.

Answered prayers

Sam set about buying materials and setting up work dates with fellow Scouts from Troop 439.

Construction began on Feb. 17, the Friday before Ash Wednesday.

“From there, every Saturday when we could, we started having work days and going down to work on it,” said Sam.

He, his brother Max Cramer, and a handful of fellow Scouts joined in the labor.

Several adults volunteered to drive the Scouts to Starkenburg and serve as chaperones.

Sam enjoyed working beside Fr. Ritter and fellow Scouts.

“For the older ones, it was a bonding experience,” said Sam. “And for the younger ones, it was a learning experience.”

Work progressed until mid-March, when torrential rains brought a decisive halt.

“We had to keep canceling our work days,” Sam recalled. “It was impossible to work without destroying our equipment and everything around us.”

He remained prayerfully steadfast that the work would be completed in time for the Rosary Walk to be dedicated on May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

There were suggestions to move back the date, but Sam wouldn’t budge.



Catholic Stewardship Renewal study guide for small groups presents a relatable story of conversion

By Jay Nies

“Stewardship” and “renewal” are words that have been tainted and maybe even poisoned for some people.

Author Spencer Allen knows that one printed resource can't restore those words to their rightful dignity, but he's happy to help get the ball rolling.

“Stewardship doesn't mean what a lot of people think it means,” said Mr. Allen, principal of Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City, and author of a four-part small-group study program called “Catholic Stewardship Renewal.”

“Stewardship simply means ‘taking good care of that which does not belong to us,’” he noted. “It starts with a basic understanding of who we are and who God is and where everything comes from.”

It's a process of conversion from entitlement to gratitude, and it's always focused on God.

“The main thing that we are called to be stewards of is our universal call to holiness, our innate need to be in relationship with Christ,” said Mr. Allen. “That's the primary gift we've been given and are entrusted with safeguarding.”

Without proper context, these essential truths can come off as dry and abstract.

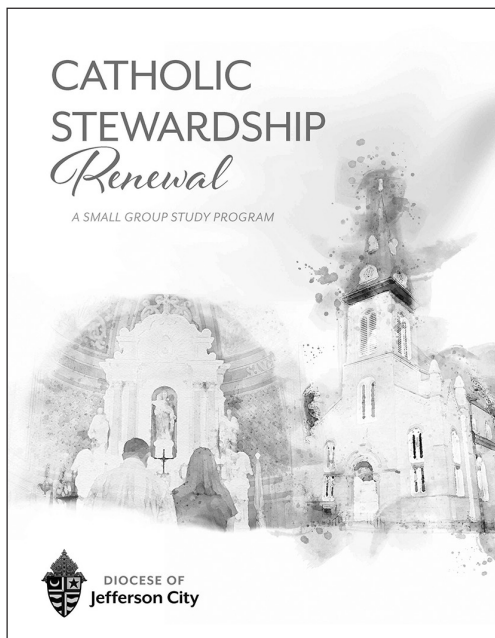
That's why when crafting this small-group study and faith-sharing resource, Mr. Allen borrowed Jesus's technique of using relatable and entertaining stories to help get the point across.

In “Catholic Stewardship Renewal,” available in English or Spanish, Mr. Allen introduces participants to the characters of James and Lisa, a married couple.

James has been Catholic all his life, perhaps to the point of becoming somewhat indifferent.

Lisa is preparing to become Catholic through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, with help from Deacon Brad at their parish.

Through each chapter of the study, the couple engage in a di-



lic Stewardship Renewal, and it now takes place every fall in parishes throughout the Jefferson City diocese.

It is an intentional process of ongoing conversion and renewal, culminating with a commitment to participate fully in the parish and its ministries.

“The Catholic Stewardship Renewal mirrors the annual Easter celebration, where we renew our baptismal promises and rejuvenate our faith,” Mr. Allen states in the introduction to the study guide.

“It enables us to actively demonstrate our belonging and support to the parish family.”

“Catholic Stewardship Renewal” is a follow-up to the study and faith-sharing guide Mr. Allen wrote last year about the Four Pillars of Catholic Stewardship.

This new guide is designed

alogue about holiness, discipleship and commitment and how it all pertains to being Catholic.

The story is designed to help Catholics prepare to enter the communal, deeply spiritual process of renewing their commitment to growing in holiness.

This is known as the Catho-

Administrative Assistant



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking an experienced administrative assistant to support the Director of Parish Services. This individual should be proficient in data entry and have excellent skills with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Occasional travel to parishes

in the diocese may be required (with the Director); no personal car is necessary. This position is open to candidates of all faiths.

Qualified candidates will be asked to complete a skills test online. The employer offers a full range of benefits including medical, dental, vision, life and long-term disability, plus a matching 403b plan.

Applicants are encouraged to apply on **Indeed.com**. Please check out our posting!

Controller



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a Controller to manage the accounting department. Duties include managing personnel, Sage accounting and investment portfolio platforms, cash flow, accounts payable, billing, accounts receivable, PP&E, GL level and general accounting platforms. Specific duties include monthly accounting period closings and reconciliations, preparing monthly trial balances, preparing monthly financial analysis and quarterly financial statements. This individual will also manage the annual financial audit process and oversee all Chancery bank accounts and supervise maintenance of budgets.

Requirements include Bachelor's degree in accounting; minimum of 10 years of job-related experience including 501(c)(3) fund accounting and/or public accounting preferred, but not required; strong computer skills and ability to easily work in Sage, MS Excel and Word. An equivalent combination of education, training and experience will be considered.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to apply on **Indeed.com** or send resume to **hrdir@diojeffcity.org**.

to help small groups explore the Catholic Stewardship Renewal together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The study also works well for families and individuals.

Mr. Allen shaped the characters and situations to be identifiable and relatable. But that doesn't mean he treads lightly on the content.

“The study really does dive into, ‘What does it mean to be Catholic?’ ‘What does stewardship mean?’ ‘What is the real meaning of renewal?’ and ‘Why is it important for us to do all those things as a community?’”

said Mr. Allen.

“We look at each of these words and talk about why we do this as a community, and specifically why the parish — and by extension the diocese — is the venue in which we do it,” he said.

“We present this as a dialogue, a story, not a lesson plan,” he noted. “We're not just being talked at. We're following a narrative and perhaps even taking part in it.”

Each section of the study includes prayers, questions and

See RENEWAL, page 27

Finance Manager



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a Finance Manager to assist the Chief Financial Officer with overseeing and supervising the day-to-day functions of the Finance Office. This individual will oversee the accounting of multiple entities, including but not limited to general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, budgeting, banking and cash receipts. Additional duties include providing support to parishes and assisting with the diocesan investment platforms, oversight of the risk management program and annual external audits.

Bachelor's degree, preferably in accounting, finance or business administration, plus three to five years' experience in a multi-faceted accounting role. Non-profit fund accounting is preferred. Experience with Sage accounting system is a plus, but not required.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to apply on **Indeed.com** or send resume to **hrdir@diojeffcity.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** or send resume to **HRDir@diojeffcity.org**.

Tech-readiness is topic of “Protect Young Eyes” workshops for parents, Oct. 16-18 at various locations

By Jay Nies

Chris McKenna likens today's unfiltered internet to four magazines lying on a coffee table in every house in the country.

One of the four is explicitly pornographic.

“It's right there, out in the open, and you just hope that's not the one your child happens to pick up,” said Mr. McKenna, Catholic founder of Protect Young Eyes (protectyoungeyes.com), an organization that teaches families, schools and communities how to create safer digital spaces for young people.

National speakers from the Protect Young Eyes team will lead free informational workshops for adults at locations throughout the Jefferson City diocese on Oct. 16-18.

The topic will be “How to Create a Tech-Ready Home.”

“I emphasize to all parents who come to our talks that they have digital superpowers,” said Mr. McKenna. “Grandparents do, too.”

“We're going to show them how to use them,” he said.

Mr. McKenna pointed to a 2019 study by the Reward Foundation (rewardfoundation.org) that found just over 25 percent of video content on the unfiltered internet to be explicit.

“That's what we have to guard against, prepare against, have conversations about, have policies against in our homes and in our communities,” he said.

He insisted that parents and other trusted adults don't have to be tech-savvy to have the

necessary conversations that will help keep children safe.

“They can lead relationally,” he said. “They can say, ‘I want you to know that whatever you find on this screen that disturbs you, you can land safely and softly with us.’”

Protect Young Eyes offers an age-appropriate digital safety curriculum to schools called “Be Tech Ready.”

Parishes throughout the Jefferson City diocese will have access to the materials for age-appropriate use in religious education classes.

“We emphasize being ‘Tech Ready,’” Mr. McKenna noted. “We don't want our young people to be ‘tech bubble-wrapped.’ We want them to be ready.”

While it's important for families to delay access to addictive technologies for their children, that isn't enough.

“None of us can control all the ways tech enters their lives,” Mr. McKenna noted. “So we want our families to be tech-ready — ready to deal with tech problems.”

He insisted that focusing only on fear-based protection often tends to push children toward pursuing the very “forbidden fruit” that parents are trying to protect them from.

“Rather than the ‘not my kid’ virus or the ‘bubble-wrap approach,’ I want us to prepare our children and have open discussions with them about what's out there,” he said.

“I want years of proper, balanced discussions about harmful digital situations flowing through our children, long before the world tries to harm them,” he stated.

What to expect

Mr. McKenna and wife Andrea have been married 24 years. He's also the father of four children, ages 11-18.

He and his team have given over 1,700 presentations at schools, churches and other groups throughout the United States and internationally.

He's a regular guest on news, radio and podcasts.

His 2019 testimony before Congress helped prompt the

HOW TO CREATE A TECH-READY HOME

Free Workshop for Parents



All parents in the Diocese of Jefferson City are strongly encouraged to attend an upcoming presentation from national speakers at Protect Young Eyes.



- Understand how young, developing brains are impacted by today's technologies.
- Learn how to use hardware and software to keep your children safe.
- Discover ways to ensure your family is prepared, balanced and protected online.



Free registration is required at: diojeffcity.org/pye-registration



Monday, Oct. 16

- 6:30 p.m. — St. Brendan School, Mexico
- 6:30 p.m. — Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center, Jefferson City
- 6:30 p.m. — Immaculate Conception School, Macon

Tuesday, Oct. 17

- 6:30 p.m. — St. Pius X School, Moberly
- 6:30 p.m. — Holy Rosary School, Monroe City
- 6:30 p.m. — Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School, Columbia

Wednesday, Oct. 18

- 6:30 p.m. — St. Joseph School, Westphalia

drafting and introduction of new federal and state child-protection laws for the internet.

He said that of all the things that currently impact a child's spiritual, relational, neurological and emotional development, technology is likely the most influential.

“When adults come to one of our presentations, they can expect to leave with soaring confidence, knowing how to have these conversations, how to have devices that are better protected, and to put shared values concerning digital things into practice,” he said.

“If that sounds more important than anything else you have on your calendar, then I look forward to seeing you there!” he stated.

He promises that parents who attend his presentations for adults will be empowered to prepare and protect their children from harmful content online.

It starts with adults developing loving, trusting relationships with the young people in their lives.

The workshop presenters

will explain why it's important to have 10 “little conversations” about pornography with each child before age 10 (their “10 before 10” strategy).

“Parents tend to be intimidated by that challenge,” Mr. McKenna noted. “They feel powerless and unequipped to have these discussions.”

“The fact is, that's exactly what the enemy wants: for them to do nothing,” he said.

He emphasized how easy it actually is for parents to breach the subject in an appropriate, God-centered way.

“You can invite the children to trust you and land softly with you about anything they see on the internet that disturbs them,” he said. “You can remind them that nothing they come to talk to you about will get them in trouble with you.”

He wants parents to repeat that message so many times that their children roll their eyes and finish the sentence for them.

“Then, you can say, ‘Good. I just want to make sure. Because I love you that much,’” he said.

Strength and solidarity

Mr. McKenna noted that it's much easier to do the right thing when parents in the same community share the burden of making good but sometimes unpopular decisions with their children.

“No parent wants to be the only one whose child doesn't have a device,” he said. “But when you have a tribe of likeminded parents who make these decisions, their children feel less isolated.”

Likewise, it's important for parents and grandparents to work together on convincing lawmakers to enact stronger digital protections for children.

“It's ridiculous to think that all the responsibility for keeping kids safe online lies solely with children and parents,” he said.

“That's on policymakers to hold big tech accountable, and that's on big tech to make their products better,” he stated.

Where and when

Here are the dates and times for the Protecting Young Eyes workshops:

Monday, Oct. 16

•Mexico: 6:30 p.m., St. Brendan School, 620 S. Clark St.

•Jefferson City: 6:30 p.m., Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center, 2207 W. Main St.

•Macon: 6:30 p.m., Immaculate Conception School, 401 N. Rubey St.

Tuesday, Oct. 17

•Moberly: 6:30 p.m., St. Pius X School, 201 S. Williams St.

•Monroe City: 6:30 p.m., Holy Rosary School, 415 S. Locust St.

•Columbia: 6:30 p.m., Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School, 817 Bernadette Drive

Wednesday, Oct. 18

•Westphalia: 6:30 p.m., St. Joseph School, 123 E. Main St.

For proper planning, registration is requested. Please visit diojeffcity.org/pye-registration and select your location.



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Mokane church restoration coinciding with people coming back

By Jay Nies

Unforeseen graces started flowing when parishioners of St. Jude Thaddeus in Mokane set about shoring up and restoring their 128-year-old church.

More young families started coming to Mass with their children.

Inactive Catholics began returning to the fold.

And the work isn't even finished yet.

"It's not just about building and giving the church a new look," insisted fifth-generation parishioner Heather Murphy.

"It's about renewing our faith and returning to what we used to be at the beginning," she said.

Attendance at Sunday Masses, currently being celebrated in the parish hall, has gone from about 25 to more than 50, and younger people are joining their stalwart elders in liturgical roles.

"People are seeing new momentum in the practice of our faith and worship," said Mrs. Murphy. "We want to carry that forward, to use it to motivate the community to get back to our roots."

The parish will hold an open house from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 29, in the soon-to-be completed St. Jude Thaddeus Church, 401 Adams Street.

Snacks and fellowship will be served in the nearby parish hall. All are welcome.

"Take a tour, explore the beautifully renovated historic building, and walk through 113 years of parish history," the promotional materials state.

A special invitation goes out to any "stay-at-home" Catholics in the area — those who for whatever reason have stepped away from the Church of their upbringing.

"We want to take this opportunity to invite people back and address whatever made them disassociate themselves from their Catholic faith," said Father Joseph Abah, pastor of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish and of St. Peter Parish in Fulton.

"We want to take this time to re-energize our faith and refuel the Church and renew people's confidence in salvation and eternal life," the priest stated.

Look again



This Sept. 14 photo of the inside of St. Jude Thaddeus Church in Mokane highlights the vaulted ceiling, which had been hiding behind a drop-ceiling for decades. Repairs and renovations are nearing completion to keep the 128-year-old church sound and viable for new generations. — Photo by Heather Murphy

The late Father Frank Bussmann was pastor of the Fulton and Mokane parishes when St. Jude parishioners started planning and saving money for a new church seven years ago.

Their whitewashed house of worship on a hill had been expanded and renovated several times but seemed to be nearing the end of its useful life.

Structural problems and fraying utilities made the situation urgent.

Fr. Bussmann's sudden death in 2017 set the project back. The COVID-19 pandemic created more delays.

Then came a clearer picture of the cost of building a suitable new church.

"We went through a couple of architects, and by the time the figures were run, we found out that it was way beyond what this small community can come up with," said Father Abah.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight encouraged the parish to take another look at the church they already had.

"We went back and found out that the issues with it weren't as bad as we thought," said Fr. Abah.

The money that had already been raised for a new church would cover much of the cost of renovating the old one.

"As we moved into the hall temporarily for worship, the very idea that this small community in a small town was in the process of giving their church a new look — for whatever reason, we started seeing a gradual increase in turnout on Sunday," the priest stated.

He recalled that when he first arrived as pastor, older members of a few families were carrying out all the liturgical roles every Sunday.

"Now, we have younger families who are stepping up, and that energy is being passed to their children," he noted.

Babies routinely contribute their own accolades and laments during Mass.

"The church is alive with children, and they're part of the worshipping community!" said Fr. Abah.

Photographic memories

The farther along the renovation goes, the happier the St. Jude parishioners become.

"I think we're all very, very glad that we went this route," said Mrs. Murphy.

"I'm not sure any of us were fully prepared for what would come with it, including the emotions," she stated.

Armed with two history degrees, Mrs. Murphy got busy documenting the restoration

work, researching the building's history and contacting descendants of early parishioners.

"I found out who was our first marriage here ... and our first Baptism," she said. "I found their families, and they provided us pictures."

Descendants of that first Baptism drove to Mokane to deliver photos of him in person.

The family are members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish of Pettis County and regularly attended Mass in the St. John the Evangelist Chapel in Bahner before it was destroyed by fire Aug. 1.

"They had the best time coming here and getting to walk through the church and share those photos," said Mrs. Murphy. "I think they were happy to realize what hasn't been lost."

The family also had photos of the old Yoest Hotel in Mokane, where Father George Hoehn of Starkenburg offered Mass one Sunday each month in the years before St. Jude Thaddeus Parish was founded.

A display cabinet in the church vestibule will highlight such ties to salvation history.

Mrs. Murphy also plans to provide copies of historical photos and documents to the

diocesan archives for future research.

Old and new

As renovation work got under way, parishioners got their first glimpse of the church's 1895-vintage vaulted ceiling that had been covered for decades.

Original stenciling on the ceiling has now been restored.

Replacing the bell-tower louvres offered rare views of the 1911-vintage bell and the inside of the tower.

"Watching people's faces as they go into the church and see what it looks like now — I'm really enjoying that part," said Mrs. Murphy.

A new altar, ambo, pews and repository for the tabernacle are being built.

However, the existing tabernacle, baptismal font, Stations of the Cross, statues and pedestals will be put back into use.

New woodwork and trim have been milled to match patterns from the time when the church was built.

"The general contractor has been really great about understanding the importance of retaining the look and feel of an old country church," said Mrs. Murphy.

"Helpful saint"

St. Jude Thaddeus Parish has no paid staff. The work that gets done gets done by parishioners.

"For many of us, this is very personal," said Mrs. Murphy.

Fr. Hoehn presided at Mrs. Murphy's great-great-grandparents' wedding in Starkenburg. Her great-grandmother, grandmother, mother and she were baptized in St. Jude Thaddeus Church, as were her children, who are now sixth-generation parishioners.

Many other parishioners also follow in the footsteps of their ancestors to Holy Communion, she said.

The church was originally built in 1895 for a local Presbyterian congregation.

Over the years, many of its members moved away, and the flock eventually disbanded.

Fr. Hoehn, who had family ties to the owner of the Yoest Hotel, began traveling to town

QUESTION CORNER

Are 'little white lies' okay to tell?

By Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Q: Is it always wrong in every case to lie? What about the so-called "little white lie?" I'm thinking of situations where you tell a person something you know is false to spare their feelings, when they're likely never going to know the truth anyway.



A: Our Catholic faith teaches us that lying is an offense against the eighth commandment and is in principle always wrong. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity" (CCC 2485).

However, as your question suggests, there are some nuances to consider. For one thing, a lie might be mortally or venially sinful depending on the objective importance of the truth being obscured and on the seriousness of the potential harms that might come about because of the lie. A quick fib about eating the last piece of cake is obviously not on the same level as a lie in a business transaction that causes a family to lose their entire savings.

It also might be useful to consider what a lie technically is. As the *Catechism*, referencing St. Augustine, puts it: "A lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving" (CCC 2482). This means that not every untrue statement is a lie. To give some examples, acting and some jokes involve saying things that aren't true, but untruths uttered by an actor in a play or as part of the set-up for a clear punchline aren't intended to deceive and typically aren't misleading in actual fact. Likewise, inaccurate statements that come about from an honest mistake also are not lies, because there was no intention in such statements to distort the truth.

The *Catechism* further specifies that: "To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead into error someone who has the right to know the truth" (CCC 2483). It should be noted that not everyone has the right to know the truth about every situation. In most cases it is not at all sinful to give an intentionally vague answer to a question that isn't the proper business of the one asking. For example, if a nosy coworker asks about a recent doctor's appointment you had, you have no obligation to share the details of your medical condition. "I'm fine, thanks," and a fast change of subject is morally licit.

Similarly, since we live in society and must be sensitive to the feelings of others, we don't always need to be brutally honest and outspoken in all our thoughts and opinions. So, it's fine — and even at times required by charity — to answer certain questions with diplomacy and tact, as long as we're not saying anything radically untrue in doing so.

With "little white lies," I think a lot depends on the specific context, and whether the "white lie" involves stating a literal untruth. Refraining from telling a sick person that they look terrible is not a lie, because staying silent in a scenario where you had no need or obligation to comment is not inherently untruthful. Saying a bride is beautiful on her wedding day — even if you secretly think she's rather average-looking — is also not really a lie, since beauty is in the eye of the beholder and can encompass elements beyond physical appearance.

Personally, I'm against telling white lies that are clear-cut falsehoods, even if they only concern trivial matters. Beyond the question of whether this is a sin, telling even small lies can cause people to lose their trust in us over time.

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.

Papal Audience
September 27, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters:

My recent visit to Marseille coincided with the conclusion of a significant meeting of civil and religious leaders, and many young people, from the Mediterranean countries. The meeting's theme, "Mosaic of Hope," alluded to the hope of freedom that inspires migrants to undertake dangerous journeys, but also Europe's own need for renewed hope in its future. The Mediterranean region, which embraces three continents and a great variety of cultures, is called, especially at this time of forced migrations, to be a "workshop of civilization and peace" in the service of a more humane and fraternal world. The meeting thus reaffirmed the importance of respect for both the right to emigrate and the right not to emigrate, and the urgent need, in light of present migration patterns, for adequate structures of security, welcome and integration. May young people in particular help to compose the "Mosaic of Hope" which is the present and future of the Mediterranean world, and likewise see that hope reflected in the faces of their brothers and sisters come from afar.

I extend a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially the groups from Norway, The Netherlands, South Africa, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Canada and the United States of America. My special greeting goes to the diaconate class of the Pontifical North American College, together with their families and friends. Upon all of you I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

In letter to bishops, Vatican asks
all faithful to pray for the synod

By Justin McLellan

Vatican City

The Vatican is asking all baptized people, regardless of whether they will be in Rome, to participate in October's assembly of the Synod of Bishops with their prayers.

In a letter directed to all bishops released Sept. 15, Cardinal Mario Grech, synod secretary-general, asked the world's bishops "to pray for the synod and to urge every Christian community in your particular church, especially monastic communities, toward unanimous and incessant prayer."

"The synod is first and foremost an event of prayer and listening that does not solely involve the members of the synodal assembly, but every baptized person, every particular Church," the letter read. "Indeed, all are called in this moment to join ourselves to the communion of prayer and in the insistent invocation of the Holy Spirit so it may guide us in the discernment of what the Lord asks today of his Church."

The cardinal's letter includes a blessing to be recited at the end of Sunday Masses Sept. 24

and Oct. 1, the two Sundays before the assembly opens Oct. 4.

He also sent out prayer intentions for the Church, bishops and other participants in the assembly, theologians, young people and all Christians. One asks that "the entire people of God, in a dynamism of communion, may feel that they are truly participating in the life of the Church."

In a statement, the Vatican said the letter also was sent to the leaders of the Eastern Catholic churches "with a request to implement a similar blessing and intercessions in their Divine Liturgies."

It also noted other efforts to create a prayerful environment during the synod, such as the ecumenical prayer vigil to be held in St. Peter's Square Sept. 30 and a three-day spiritual retreat for members of the assembly prior to its opening.

In his letter, Cardinal Grech wrote, "To pray for the synodal assembly, to intercede for all of its members, firstly the Holy Father who so often asks us to pray for him, is to realize the highest level of participation."

The cardinal identified four modes of prayer for people to join themselves to the synod: listening, adoration, intercession and thanksgiving.

Pope: New document
is titled 'Laudate Deum'

Vatican City

Catholic News Service

Pope Francis said the title of his new letter on the environment will be "*Laudate Deum*," (Praise God), a frequent refrain in several psalms, including Psalm 148, which tells the heavens and the angels and the sun and moon to praise the Lord. The new document, expected to be released Oct. 4, is what the pope has described as a follow-up to his 2015 encyclical "*Laudato Si*," On Care for Our Common Home."

The new document, he said, is "a look at what has happened" since 2015 and a look at what still "needs to be done."

The children of Ordinary Times

By Lucia A. Silecchia



If you become a teacher, you will receive a lot of advice along the way.

In the many years I have been blessed to make a living and a life in the classroom, I have also been blessed with much good advice. Perhaps one of the wisest and simplest things I was told when I started to teach was to remember, always, that all of my students are someone's child.

I teach adults. Therefore, sometimes, that reality is lost on me. It may also, sadly, be true that some have not had the blessings of a loving family.

Yet, when I stop to reflect, I know that each student who is one of thousands on campus, one of hundreds in a degree program, and one of dozens in my own classes is not merely a number, or a name, or a face. Each is, to his or her family, a beloved child (or spouse, or sibling, or parent, or grandchild.) Each is, to his or her family, someone whose well-being, happiness and flourishing is of deep, profound importance.

A good grade, a positive recommendation, a successful semester or the happiness when classmates become friends are not merely joys confined to my students themselves.

These are the things that, in texts, video chats, phone calls and conversations around the Thanksgiving table will also be sources of joy to their families.

It is also true that the disappointments, stresses and angst of a less than perfect semester will also make my students' families worry. In the true meaning of "com-passion," they will carry those sorrows with their loved ones even if — and especially if — they are powerless to help.

I try to keep this advice in mind when serving my students — especially in difficult times.

Yet, I wonder if that advice — to remember that everyone is someone else's child — means something far more than guidance for teachers. I wonder, too, if believing that advice can change the way in which we treat each other.

The truth is that all those we encounter are someone else's child.

Some may not know loving parents or family in this life. Nevertheless, everyone I meet is a child of God. Remembering that my students have human families affects how I care for them.

How much more should remembering that everyone has a Father who

cares for him or her deeply affect how we care for each other.

All of our companions through this life have a Father who cares about their joys and sorrows, their triumphs and woes, their dreams and their fears. They have a Father who knows when they have been hurt, ignored, overlooked, or scorned. They have a Father who also knows when they have been loved, cherished, comforted and appreciated.

In a world that can be harsh, perhaps remembering this gentle truth can make a difference. Everyone we meet is someone's child. They are children of a Father who loves them through all the days of their ordinary times.

Lucia A. Silecchia is Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Faculty Research at the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law. "On Ordinary Times" is a biweekly column reflecting on the ways to find the sacred in the simple. Email her at silecchia@cua.edu.

What makes the St. Michael prayer so powerful?

By Father Patrick Briscoe
OSV News



Catholics of a certain age will remember reciting a set of prayers after Mass called the Leonine Prayers.

Introduced by Pope Pius IX in 1859, the prayers were offered in the Papal States for the protection of the Holy See's temporal independence.

The prayers included, among other things, three Hail Marys and the Hail Holy Queen.

A few decades later, facing an extreme anti-clericalism in Italy, Leo XIII added the Prayer to St. Michael to the Leonine Prayers and asked that they be recited by Catholics throughout the world.

Following the Lateran Treaty in 1929, Pius XI ordered that they be said for the conversion of Russia.

The practice was suppressed in 1965 as part of the reform of the liturgy following the Second Vatican Council.

Back in popularity

In some places the custom of praying the St. Michael Prayer after Mass has seen a resurgence.

The St. Michael Prayer holds a special place in the hearts of many Catholics, not just for its historical significance but for the profound spiritual shield it provides. It is a reminder that, as we continue on our pilgrimage on this side of eternity, we are not alone.

The Archangel Michael stands ready to assist us in our battles against the forces of hell that seek to undermine our faith and virtue.

The prayer itself is a simple yet pro-

found expression of reliance on God's protection:

*St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.*

*Be our defense against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil.*

*May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince*

*of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan,*

*and all the evil spirits,
who prowls about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

In 1994, Pope St. John Paul II said, "Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against the forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world." Valuable to Pope John Paul II, we might ask, what makes the St. Michael Prayer so powerful?

First, the prayer invokes St. Michael, the "Prince of the heavenly hosts," who commands the legions of angels. Pope Francis has explained the archangel's work, saying, "Michael fights to re-establish divine justice. He defends the people of God from their enemies, especially the enemy par excellence, the devil." The prayer is a call for divine reinforcement in our spiritual battles, providing us with the armor we need to withstand temptation and evil.

Second, by praying the St. Michael Prayer, we acknowledge the reality of spiritual warfare. It reminds us that the devil and evil spirits are active in the world, seeking to lead us away from God. Our plea for St. Michael's defense

REFLECTION

In all fairness

Mark Saucier

On the surface, Jesus sells pretty well. Who wouldn't want forgiveness, grace and eternal life?

I know I do.

But once you get into the weeds, it can be a little more challenging.

"Sell what you have and give to the poor," Jesus tells the rich young man. Rich or not, that's probably not going to happen.

"Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or drink ..." Jesus tells the crowd, many of whom were parents who couldn't afford that detachment.

And then there is the problem of the parable of the workers in the vineyard. You know, a vineyard owner goes out early to the marketplace and hires workers for an agreed-upon daily wage.

He goes back four times — even as late as 5 p.m. — to hire more workers. Each time, he promises to pay what is just.

At the end of the day, the owner instructs his manager to begin with those hired last and to pay each worker the full day's wages, regardless of the hours worked.

That's when the grapes hit the fan.

When those hired first received the same amount as those who came on the 5 o'clock bus, they cried foul.

I used to think they had a case, but listening to the parable again, I remembered choosing teams to play ball as a kid. The best athletes were always picked first, and the rest reluctantly taken in order of descending talents.

I confess that my only thought about those chosen last was not how they felt, but what liability they would be to the team.

Maybe hiring those workers in the market was similar.

The strongest and the most experienced were always the first chosen. And by the third call at noon, the owner was probably selecting from the B-team.

I try to imagine those still looking for work in the afternoon. They may have been too old, too young or too afflicted in some way to hire.

Regardless, they couldn't give up. They didn't go drinking or take a nap. They had families to feed.

They would be there as long as it took, putting in just as many hours waiting as the more fortunate did working.

Still, when the shorter shifts get as much as the early one, it doesn't seem fair. But then, what is fair?

We are concerned that people (we) get what they (we) deserve.

Jesus seems to have a different understanding. His concern is that everyone gets enough.

See FR. BRISCOE, page 23

Encounter

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

National Migration Week: Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay



By Marissa Flores Madden

“Everyone tells me they’re ‘illegal’. But I work with them, and I know they’re good guys. So, they couldn’t be illegal, right?”

Mike, a senior in my Catholic Social Teaching class, had sought me out after our lesson on immigration, with concerns about his co-workers at a landscaping company.

“Could they be in the United States without status and be good guys?” I answered his question with one of my own.

Although this conversation took place 15 years ago, the current rhetoric used in both the news and political debates covering the topic of immigration continues to make it challenging for many U.S. citizens to answer my question in the affirmative.

Still, Catholic Social Teaching has always pointed us in this direction.

For well over a century, popes and bishops have written about the rights of migrants.

With this history, it should come as no surprise that Justice for Immigrants (a campaign founded by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and comprised of numerous Catholic organizations, including Catholic Charities USA) has chosen for this year’s National Migration Week theme, “Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay.”

And yet, this theme is tested daily in our country and our Church.

The complexities regarding immigration abound.

From the ever-changing policies to the impossible visa backlogs, from laws that need to be challenged to the root causes that must be addressed — im-

migration is not an easy topic to discuss.

But my former pastor at a Cleveland parish comprised of immigrants from 16 different Spanish-speaking countries would regularly remind us that immigration is not a topic that needs to be debated.

Immigration equals people.

It’s not just a legal matter or a political issue.

It’s a call for compassion.

Pope Leo XIII noted in his 1889 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, that people do not leave their homelands when the means of providing a decent and happy life for themselves and their families are already present where they are.

Over a century later, National Migration Week invites us to consider the root causes of migration — the reasons people leave their homelands — and to see immigrants with eyes of love rather than through a lens of suspicion.

Root causes of migration include persecution, violence and war.

The threat of violence is hard to dispute.

And as someone who has lived a life free from violence, it’s a situation I don’t even want to imagine.

What would I do if my loved ones were in danger?

Our Family Immigration Services department began its operations decades ago as a direct response to refugees fleeing war.

Today we continue to serve families escaping persecution and wars.

We are currently working with hundreds of Afghans who



Marissa Flores Madden

cannot return to their home country due to Taliban rule.

While many of these families migrated together; some of our clients have been separated from their spouses and children for nearly two years.

Just last week, I heard an Afghan client plead with my co-worker across the hall, “No need green card. No need citizen. I just need my wife.”

Other common root causes for migration are poor wages and a lack of jobs.

A few days ago, I met with two members of a mixed status family of five.

Both parents came to the U.S. 23 years ago seeking a better life for their young family.

One parent came on a non-immigrant, tourist visa and never returned home.

The other parent arrived without a visa.

The oldest child, who is now in their mid-20’s, has DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) which temporarily keeps them safe from deportation and gives them permission to work.

The other two children are U.S. citizens.

With the laws as they are right now, the DACA recipient and the parent who entered the U.S. without a visa have no options to adjust their status and obtain a green card while remaining in

the U.S.

A decision made 23 years ago — one motivated by love for their family and the dream of a better life — continues to haunt them.

Every family decision — whether it’s renting an apartment, buying a car, enrolling in school, obtaining a job, visiting a doctor, driving a vehicle, and countless other daily choices — involves weighing the risks.

What could happen to the family members without status?

And as a result, what will happen to the children with status?

There are well over half a million DACA recipients from 138 countries living in the United States.

At least 22 million people live in mixed status households.

And Family Immigration Services works with both of these populations every day.

“Could they be in the United States without status and be good guys?”

Of course!

But I asked Mike the wrong question all those years ago; because the immigration debate isn’t about immigrants.

It’s about us, the debaters.

How we treat people who aren’t model immigrants is also how we treat our U.S. born neighbors who aren’t model citizens.

And if we’ve decided that human dignity is up for debate and

treat it like it’s something that could be bestowed or withheld based on a person’s conduct, then we’ve already lost.

Instead, the question must always be: How are we being invited to love?

As we answer this question daily, may we all be free to choose to migrate into a spaciousness that knows no limits of compassion.

And may we all be free to choose to stay in the love of the One who first loved us.

Marissa Flores Madden is a DOJ Accredited Representative practicing immigration law at Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri in the Family Immigration Services program.

Catholic Charities has been providing immigration legal services for over four decades — reuniting countless families and helping clients navigate the intricate and often challenging U.S. immigration system.

Join us on social media for reflections and images that honor and celebrate communities we’ve served. Learn more online at ccnmo.diojeffcity.org/family-immigration.


This week has been designated National Migration Week by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

For over 40 years, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week, which has traditionally been linked to the Vatican’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees — scheduled for September 24 this year.

As in year’s past, National Migration Week will use the theme chosen by the Holy Father for his World Day of Migrants celebration: “Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay.”

This theme calls attention to the conviction that persons have a right not to migrate and if a person migrates it should be done by choice and not by necessity.

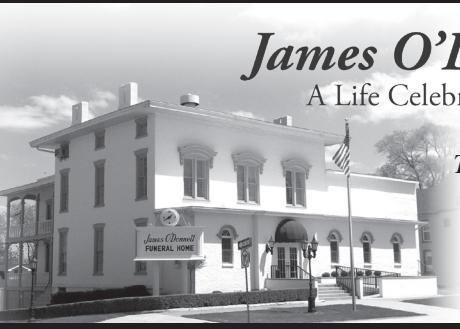
More information on National Migration Week can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website at usccb.org.

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Rest in Peace, Sr. Eleanor Ewertz SSND, missionary, former educator, school superintendent here

By Jay Nies

Sister Eleanor Ewertz of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), 84, who taught for 15 years in the Jefferson City diocese and later served as diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools, died peacefully on Sept. 20 in St. Louis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 26 in the SSND Sancta Maria in Ripa Chapel in St. Louis. Burial was in the SSND Motherhouse Chapel.

“Sr. Eleanor was an excellent educator and organizer,” said Sister Constance Schmidt, a fellow School Sister of Notre Dame.

“She had a great love for the people of Africa,” Sr. Constance continued. “As a retreat/spiritual director, she companioned individuals in their journey to God.”

Sr. Eleanor taught at St. Peter School in Jefferson City from 1961-67, at St. George School in Linn from 1967-70, and at Immaculate Conception School in Loose Creek, where she was also the principal, from 1970-76.

She then served as superintendent of schools for the Jefferson City diocese from 1979-86.

She also served as a parish organist and choir director at each of the parishes where she

was missioned.

Erin Vader Ed.D., current diocesan school superintendent, spoke of Sr. Eleanor’s legacy here.

“Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Sister, I am well aware of the impact she has had in my life, and in the lives of so many,” said Dr. Vader.

She’s especially grateful for the role Sr. Eleanor played in strengthening Catholic education here.

“The 40 schools of the diocese continue to thrive due to her hard work, and the hard work of all the School Sisters of Notre Dame,” Dr. Vader stated.

Sr. Eleanor later ministered to a generation of college students in the western African nations of Ghana and Sierra Leone.

She returned to the Jefferson City diocese in 2016 to minister part-time as a retreat and spiritual director.

Answering the call

Sr. Eleanor was born on Feb. 24, 1939, in St. Louis, a daughter of John and Eleanor Ewertz.

She had SSNDs as teachers from kindergarten through high school.

“I was inspired by the people who taught me,” she told *The Catholic Missourian* in 2010. “They helped make me who I am.”

During a silent retreat in her senior year, she realized God was calling her to religious life.

She felt drawn to missionary work and planned to join Maryknoll. Then, she met an SSND who had just returned from a mission in Japan.

“I asked her if I could go to Japan if I became a School Sister,” she recalled. “She said, ‘Probably not right away, but you could tell them it’s what you’re interested in.’”

Sr. Eleanor entered the SSND congregation in 1957, made her profession in 1959 and was given the religious name Sister Therese of Lisieux — in honor of the Church’s patron saint of missionaries.

She professed final vows on July 30, 1965.

She later returned to her baptismal name, as many sisters did in the years after the Second Vatican Council.

Names and faces

Sr. Eleanor’s dream of becoming a missionary came to fruition in 1986. She went to Sierra Leone to teach at the Women’s Teacher College in Port Loko.



Sr. Eleanor Ewertz SSND (1939-2023)

She then became a parish administrator in Mange Bureh in the same country, working also as manager of schools for eight surrounding villages.

After a sabbatical, she was missioned to Sunyani, Ghana, to teach English and religion at the Notre Dame Secondary School, which at that time had 600 students.

She also served as vocation director in Ghana, meeting with each girl who was interested in joining the SSNDs. She then served as postulant director for the young women

joining the congregation there.

She later returned to Sierra Leone to teach religious studies and English at a Catholic institution now known as the University of Sierra Leone.

She came back to the United States in January of 2015, during the deadly outbreak of Ebola fever.

“When you can put names and faces on those who have died, it touches you deeply,” she wrote at that time. “Some are small children, parents, grandparents, university students.”

Her longtime acquaintances in this diocese recognized and respected the influence the people of Sierra Leone and Ghana have had on her.

“They have helped me learn to live more simply,” she said in 2010. “They have helped me understand the meaning of hospitality — what it means to welcome someone into your home and make them feel like they’re part of your family. The Sierra Leonean people do that very well.”

Together on a journey

In the next phase of her life, Sr. Eleanor turned to providing spiritual accompaniment with a heavy emphasis on a shared journey, dialogue and listening to God.

“I really enjoy doing spiritual direction and retreat work, which I did for many years in Africa,” she stated in a 2016 interview. “I enjoy accompanying people on their spiritual journey and helping them develop a deeper appreciation for God in their life.”

As her health began to fail, she was missioned to Veronica House at The Sarah Community near St. Louis in January 2020 and to Anna House in January 2023.

She was placed on hospice in early September 2023.

She died peacefully around 11:30 a.m. on Sept. 20.

“May she now rejoice in her new and eternal life as she is welcomed by her loving God,” said Sr. Constance.

In an orderly fashion



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight gathers with fellow members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem who attended the annual meeting of the order’s Northern Lieutenancy in St. Louis. Dating from the Middle Ages, this worldwide Order works to support the Catholic presence in the Holy Land.

Fr. Flatley: The Supreme Gift

This is the second in a series of teachings and reflections offered by the moderator of spiritual formation for the Jefferson City diocese.

By Father Matthew Flatley

Mystery does not mean we cannot understand something, it means there is no end to the understanding.

If we can find the courage to move beyond our rational minds and into our hearts ... into the mystery of love, letting go of any need for certitude, then and there ... mystery becomes delightful.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For every one who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds.” (Matthew 7:7-8)

As Christians, we believe that the Word of God is true, eternal, unchanging. It is God communicating Himself to us.

And yet we must honestly ask ourselves: “Do we get everything we ask for in prayer?”

Of course not! God does, indeed, answer our prayers, but like the best loving parent we could ever imagine, it may not be the answer we think it should be.

Let us delve into this mystery.

Our Sacred Scripture demands a great deal from us. We must roll up our sleeves and get to work as we try to break it open.

This is why a small faith-sharing group is crucial, where the Holy Spirit works wonders in us, and in the community, as we try to break open the Word together. The Spirit will also bond us in love.

We'll soon discover the Scripture is actually

breaking us open.

Let us get to work ... first we remember that the Bible is not a book, but a library of books. And so it is helpful to consider which part of the library we are currently reading as we long to understand a text.

Second, as Catholics, we do not “proof text.”

Proof texting is when we read one line and understand it literally. A classic example of this is to read, “*They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.*” (Mark 16:18)

Personally, I would advise you to go to the Emergen-

“A journey into this profound concordance of the four senses guarantees a richness to the reading of Sacred Scripture.”

— Father Matthew Flatley

cy Room if you drink poison or are bit by a rattlesnake!

And so we must approach this mystery with a resolve to dive-deep, utilizing the treasures of Catholic Tradition.

We are instructed to read the lines that come before a particular text, and we read what comes after.

We consider whom is the author addressing, and what situation? What are the historical and cultural contexts?

To read a biblical text without context is a pretext. As St. Jerome teaches us: “Sacred Scripture is like a nose, and a person can bend it in any direction they wish.”

In addition, our Catholic Tradition teaches us that there two levels of meaning in Scripture. There are the **Literal** level and the **Spiritual** level, and the Spiritual

level is then broken down into the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical.

A journey into this profound concordance of the four senses guarantees a richness to the reading of Sacred Scripture.

So, an understanding of these levels of meaning, a willingness to engage in a bit of scholarly research, the willingness to work with others in faith ... all of this will lead into an exploration of the depth and breadth of the Divine revelation, and it also leads us deep into ourselves as well.

“Those with ears ought to listen, those with eyes ought to see” — a favorite saying of Christ.

So it turns out that this wise, all-knowing Heavenly Father of ours is inviting us to understand at deeper and deeper levels of trust and surrender.

So, we consider more and more, what it is we are asking for, and how do we best ask for it?

This God of ours may not always give us what we want ... but will always give us what it is we need most of all.

And what is that? What God most desires to bestow on us is the Holy Spirit. God is offering us the very breath that Christ breathed on his Apostles.

This Divine Spirit is the supreme gift.

My goodness, what more could we want!

Sisters and brothers, if we pray long enough, ask long enough, surrender our wills long enough, we will eventually join Christ in the Garden, and our only prayer will be “Thy will not mine be done.”

Fr. Flatley is pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City.

Bishops' pro-life chair calls for 'radical solidarity' with pregnant, parenting women

Washington, D.C.

OSV News

U.S. pro-life efforts “must remain strong to end legalized abortion” in this nation, but all Catholics have a personal responsibility to accompany women facing difficult or challenging pregnancies, said the

chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, invited Catholics into “radical solidarity” with pregnant women in a Sept. 18 statement commemorating the 50th anniversary of Respect Life Month in October.

The U.S. bishops set aside the month “as a time to focus on protecting God’s precious gift of human life,” he said.

“While ending legalized abortion remains our preeminent priority, the most immediate way to save babies and mothers from abortion is to thoroughly surround mothers in need with lifegiving support and personal accompaniment. This is radical solidarity,” Bishop Burbidge said.

Pope St. John Paul II first

defined “radical solidarity” in this way, the bishop said, quoting from the pope’s book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994): “In firmly rejecting ‘pro-choice’ it is necessary to become courageously ‘pro woman,’ promoting a choice that is truly in favor of women. ... The only honest stance, in these cases, is that of radical solidarity with the woman. It is not right to leave her alone.”

“Being in radical solidarity with women who are pregnant or raising children in difficult circumstances means putting our love for them into action and putting their needs before our own,” Bishop Burbidge said. “Pope Francis reminds us that solidarity ‘refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the creation of a new mindset,’ a transformation within our own hearts.”

Bishop Burbidge said there is much to celebrate about the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the U.S. Supreme Court. In June 2022, the high court overturned its prior rulings that made abortion access a constitutional right — its 1973 *Roe* decision and its 1992 ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which affirmed *Roe*. The court’s *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision returned the issue of abortion regulation to the states.

Twenty-two states, including Missouri, have moved to ban or restrict abortion, although not all of those efforts are currently in effect amid court challenges.

“While we thank God that the terrible reign of *Roe* has ended, we also recognize that abortion still continues in

See PRO-LIFE, page 27

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Vatican astronomer helps NASA in mission to study asteroid

By Carol Glatz

Vatican City

Catholic News Service

Jesuit Brother Bob Macke, a Vatican astronomer and meteorite expert, has built a custom device for studying material from the first U.S. mission to collect a sample from an asteroid.

The unmanned spacecraft, Osiris-Rex was launched in 2016 to collect samples on the near-Earth asteroid, Bennu.

After collecting about a cup of material in 2020, the spacecraft is now approaching Earth and, before it continues its space voyage to orbit the Sun, it is due to release its cargo to send the sample back to Earth Sept. 24.

Because of Brother Macke's known expertise in the field, Andrew Ryan, the lead of the mission's sample analysis working group, asked him if he could build the device needed to analyze the density and porosity of the samples to help identify the mysterious rocks on the asteroid's surface, according to Mashable.com Sept. 16.

NASA had strict requirements for this device, called a pycnometer, and the companies Ryan contacted were only willing to sell what they had in stock, not do a custom build, he told Mashable.

Brother Macke, however, was game and he posted his progress and success with a number of videos on his YouTube channel, Macke MakerSpace. He said he built it in five weeks with the help of

students at the University of Arizona, which collaborates with the Vatican Observatory's advanced technology telescope in Tucson.

He delivered the device to the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston in March for a trial run. Curators for the mission will handle the samples and the device, while Brother Macke will operate the software program he built to measure the samples' porosity and density, he said in his April 21 video.

"Our job is to examine it

and to find out what's in there. We're trying to answer some basic questions like, are there more than one type of rock in-

side? Or is everything the same kind of rock? From what we saw on the surface of the asteroid Bennu, we expect to find

This artist's rendering shows the Osiris-Rex spacecraft descending toward asteroid Bennu to collect a sample of the asteroid's surface. It is due to drop its cargo on Earth Sept. 24.

— CNS photo/ NASA/ Goddard/University of Arizona



two and maybe more," he said.

The results of the initial analysis, he said, "will help inform the selection of specimens for more detailed science to be done in laboratories around the world."



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Sharing God's Gifts

FISCAL 2023 PARISH TITHE REPORT*

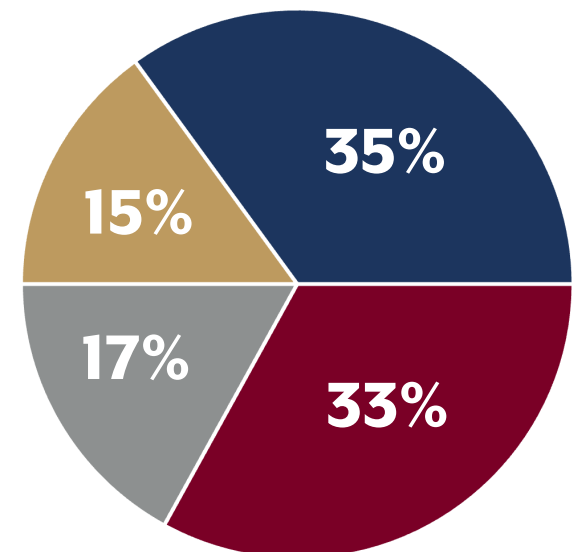


In the third weekend of October, the Catholic Stewardship Renewal process will begin in the Diocese of Jefferson City. Parishioners from across the diocese will pray and reflect on their gifts from God — and consider how they can use those gifts in support of their parish.

As Catholics prepare to engage in this spiritual process, and commit to their parish tithe, the Diocese of Jefferson City is providing this overview of how the diocesan Chancery office utilizes your support to develop and enrich the faith of our community.

For more information about the Catholic Stewardship Renewal, visit diojeffcity.org/stewardship.

YOUR SUPPORT (\$5.35 MILLION)



Worship and Catechesis
Ministry to Clergy and Vocations
Evangelization and Promotion of Catholic Life
Charity and the Universal Church

HOW YOU SUPPORT OUR DIOCESAN MINISTRIES

Parish Tithe — \$1.10 million
Catholic Stewardship Appeal — \$2.00 million
Cathedraticum (parish assessment) — \$0.86 million
Catholic Stewardship Renewal transition reserves — \$0.50 million
Christmas Special Collection for seminarians and infirm priests — \$0.42 million
Easter Special Collection for retired priests and religious — \$0.22 million
Missions Special Collection — \$0.25 million

TOTAL: \$5.35 MILLION

Canon 1254 commits the diocese to “the regulation of divine worship, the provision of fitting support for the clergy and other ministers, and the carrying out of works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially for the needy.”

WORSHIP AND CATECHESIS (\$0.82 MILLION)

Under the spiritual leadership of Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, the Chancery office for the Diocese of Jefferson City helps ensure that the liturgical life of the Church is celebrated reverently. This work encompasses the duty to ensure religious education and formation of Catholics is fulfilled in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

Including:

- ▶ Youth Ministry
- ▶ Catholic Schools
- ▶ Intercultural Ministries
- ▶ Faith Formation Ministries
- ▶ Women's Ministry
- ▶ Marriage and Family Ministries
- ▶ Hospital Ministry
- ▶ Liturgy

EVANGELIZATION AND PROMOTION OF CATHOLIC LIFE (\$1.75 MILLION)

Supporting and nurturing the life of individual parishes within the diocese is a central priority. This includes providing resources and programs to create safe, welcoming environments and providing centralized services that support parishioners across the diocese. These efforts enrich Catholic life across our diocese and call others to our community of faith.

Including:

- ▶ College and University Ministry
- ▶ Diocesan Pastoral Council
- ▶ Pastoral Assistance
- ▶ Youth Protections
- ▶ Matrimonial Tribunal
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ *The Catholic Missourian*
- ▶ Stewardship

MINISTRY TO CLERGY AND VOCATIONS (\$1.87 MILLION)

Promoting and supporting vocations to the Priesthood, religious life and diaconate is a vital part of our work. This involves discernment programs, seminary formation and ongoing support for clergy and religious.

Including:

- ▶ Ministry to Priests
- ▶ Infirm Priests
- ▶ Bishop and Curia
- ▶ Diaconate Office
- ▶ Seminarian Education
- ▶ Vocations
- ▶ Senior Communities
- ▶ Retired Priests

CHARITY AND THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH (\$0.91 MILLION)

Through the Catholic Stewardship Renewal, the Chancery office provides direct support to a wide range of charitable efforts of the Church. The Diocese of Jefferson City holds strong relationships with regions around the world thanks to the service of our mission priests, and we actively engage in charitable mission work in their home lands. Just as parishes support their sister parishes, our diocese supports the work of our Universal Church.

Including:

- ▶ Missions
- ▶ 13 National Collections
- ▶ Natural Disaster Relief
- ▶ Missouri Catholic Conference
- ▶ Support for our Universal Church
- ▶ Development

RENOVATE

From page 7

for Mass aboard the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (“Katy”) Railroad, from which Mokane takes its name.

The town was once home to the railroad’s bustling division headquarters.

“Back then, the closest Catholic church was in Fulton or Starkenburg or Rhineland,” Mrs. Murphy noted. “If you were out here, you were pretty much by your lonesome.”

Years before that, Jesuit Father Ferdinand Helias, remembered today as the Apostle of Central Missouri, had presided at Mass at the nearby former French settlement of Cote Sans Dessein.

When St. Jude Thaddeus was established on April 1, 1909, as a mission of Starkenburg, Fr. Hoehn was appointed pastor, serving until jurisdiction was transferred to St. Peter Parish in Fulton in November 1925.

“I had the pleasure of founding a new congregation, namely, Mokane, a little town on the MK&T Railroad about 10 miles farther than Rhineland,” Fr. Hoehn wrote in his memoirs.

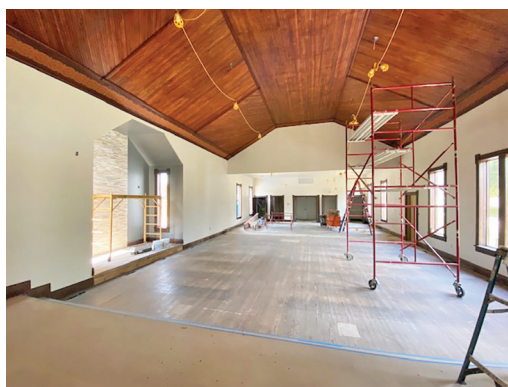
“I bought a neat little church belonging to the Presbyterians and arranged it for services. I had the good fortune to obtain a nice altar and placed on it St. Jude Thaddeus, the Apostle to whom so little honor is paid, but who is such a helpful saint in times of great distress.”

Turning back

Fr. Abah noted the important role church buildings play in people’s spirituality “and in the way they see themselves as Catholics.”

He called to mind a man who had been baptized, received his First Holy Communion and served at many Masses in St. Jude Thaddeus Church, but had ceased practicing his faith many years ago.

The man happened to be driving on Highway C through Mokane one evening and pulled onto a side street to let the speeding car behind him get past.



— Photo by Heather Murphy

faith.

The priest invited him to Confession and then to Mass.

The man returned to the regular practice of his faith several months before becoming seriously ill.

“I have to conclude that this is a sign from God,” said Fr. Abah. “We pray for him every week, and we hope he

He drove by the church of his childhood and noticed that the lights were on.

He went inside and saw the renovation work that was taking place.

Right away, he volunteered to pay for new pews.

He delivered a check the next day, and he and Fr. Abah had a long discussion about

can make it to the dedication and the open house.”

A time to build

Mrs. Murphy emphasized that for all the great history that’s been uncovered through the process, the renovation of St. Jude Thaddeus Church is much more about the future than the past.

“It was deeply important to us that we created and completed something that would leave our children with a parish that is not just surviving but is truly thriving,” she stated.

“We wanted to leave for them a building that was structurally sound and beautifully renovated to house them for generations to come while allowing them to focus their energies on growing and main-

taining our parish,” she said.

In every possible way, she stated, “this has been a labor of love.”

“We took care of the work of creating a comfortable and useable home for them and we involved them every step of the way so that they could really understand what goes into making our parish viable and functional and growing,” she said.

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Our Lady of Lourdes in Columbia celebrates its first African Mass



TOP: Priests and communicants gather in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Columbia Sept. 10, following the celebration of the parish's first-ever African Mass. **RIGHT:** Members of the choir help lead the singing at the Mass.

— Photos by Yoseph Gebrehiwot



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DOGS

From page 1

Fr. Duncan is convinced that Ollie and Bailey, his Labrador retrievers, helped him bond more quickly with the people of St. Mary Parish in Glasgow and St. Joseph Parish in Fayette when he became their pastor.

"It just seemed like an easy, natural thing to lead into Father being the father of the parish," he said.

He remembers the first time the children at St. Mary School in Glasgow met him and his dogs.

"The kids really took to them and opened up to me right away," he recalled. "It was kind of like, 'Hey, you have a dog. I have a dog, too! What are some of your other favorite things?'"

Father William Debo agreed that his dog helps open the door to evangelization.

"It's always a source of conversation when people see me out with this little guy," he said of his 12-year-old Maltese, J.P. "I think people appreciate seeing one of God's creatures."

He said having a dog really warmed up the big, 125-year-old rectory at St. George Parish in Hermann and continues to keep things interesting now that he's pastor of Holy Family Parish in Freeburg and Sacred Heart Parish in Rich Fountain.

"It's nice to go home when you get some down time and have a pet sit on your lap and be so enthusiastic to see you," he said.

"... And wanting to be fed!"

"Ball of fluff"

Fr. Peckman inherited Buddy when the priest's father died almost 11 years ago.

"I had two chairs in the rectory that Dad had sat in, and Buddy tore them both up," said Fr. Peckman. "The vet said, 'Your Dad's scent was on those. That was his way of grieving.'"

Molly was a farewell and thank-you gift from a parishioner at Ss. Peter & Paul Parish in Boonville, where Fr. Peckman previously served as pastor.

"I try to keep two dogs because I'm gone a lot during the day," he stated. "They keep each other company and they're both well trained."

As he usually adopts rescue dogs, Molly is the first time he's raised a puppy.

Families in his parishes volunteer to take care of both dogs whenever Fr. Peckman leaves town.

He prefers having gentle



Dominic, a mixed-breed dog belonging to Father Dylan Schrader, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk, is dressed as St. Dominic, including fake rosary beads, on Halloween at St. Joseph School.

dogs around the parish premises.

"The rectory here in Macon is like Grand Central Station, so I don't want a guard dog," he stated. "I want a big ball of fluff that won't scare people."

He said it's nice being greeted by creatures that are happy to see him, "no matter what."

Dominic vobiscum

More photos will be posted with the online version of this story at cathmo.com. Videos and other related content will be posted on the diocesan Facebook, Instagram and X feeds.

Father Dylan Schrader adopted his dog from a local pound.

"I picked him because he seemed calm and gentle," said Fr. Schrader, who's pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk.

"It's important for a priest's

dog to be totally safe around people and non-disruptive," he stated. "I also liked that he was already named Dominic, which I thought was a good name."

Fr. Schrader's childhood pastor, Father John Groner, now deceased, kept dogs in the rectory of Holy Family Parish in Hannibal.

"Before I made my First Communion, I did an interview with him at the rectory and saw his dogs," Fr. Schrader recalled.

Then, as now, he appreciates how keeping a pet can help break down barriers between the shepherd and his flock.

"Many people, though not all, respond positively

to pets, so having one can be a good way to connect with people," said Fr. Schrader. "Walking the dog becomes an opportunity to encounter people and also to pray while getting some exercise."

The children at St. Joseph School love when Dominic arrives with their pastor.

"He visits the classrooms with me most of the time," said Fr. Schrader.

Dominic can also be a calming presence in other settings.

"He isn't a trained therapy dog, but when people come for counseling or spiritual direction, he may be present, and many people find him comforting," said Fr. Schrader. "Of course, I make it clear that if anyone is not comfortable around dogs, I'll gladly put him out of the room."

I hope you dance

Fr. Ussher, a missionary priest from the Diocese of Winawso, Ghana, is pastor of St. Clement Parish in St. Clement, St. Joseph Parish in Louisiana and the Mission of Queen of Peace in Clarksville.

Africa is a Shih Tzu mix that



Children of St. Mary School in Glasgow greet Ollie and Bailey, Labrador retrievers belonging to Father Joshua Duncan, pastor of St. Mary Parish and of St. Joseph Parish in Fayette when he became their pastor.

— Photo by Denise Barnes

he received as a gift from a parishioner when he was serving at St. Patrick Parish in Laurie in 2017.

"She stays in the rectory and sometimes goes with me over to school," he said. "She's



Father Stephen Jones's dog, Trebby, is an American hairless terrier. His complete lack of fur keeps him from triggering Fr. Jones's allergies and those of his family.

so friendly and gets along with everybody who comes around."

Fr. Ussher named her after his home continent.

"It helps me always remem-

ber where I'm from and the community that formed me and sent me here to do my best to help," he said.

He taught her how to stand on her hind legs and dance.

Fr. Ussher previously had a dog and a cat in his rectory when he was serving as a pastor in Ghana.

"I've also had two monkeys as pets," he said. "The first one was Perpetua. The second one was Rosemary."

One thing they've all had in common is the affection they show and "the way they welcome you."

"Africa knows when I'm coming and going," Fr. Ussher noted. "Whenever I go out for a long time and come back, it's beautiful."

He said walking with her around the church parking lot every morning helps them both get exercise.

He noted that in Ghana, "most of our dogs stay outside and they keep watch in the night and they ward off intruders."

Dogs are also kept for hunting, and cats for catching mice, "but not so much for petting," he said.

Also, until recently, food made specially for pets wasn't available in Ghana, "so they ate what we eat."

Skin deep

Father Stephen Jones's dog, Trebby, draws a lot of attention.

"He's a very interesting beast," said Fr. Jones, diocesan director of stewardship. "He's an American hairless terrier."

Fr. Jones was previously a priest of the Anglican Communion, which allows their priests to marry. He and

See PETS, page 18

PETS

From page 17

his wife became Roman Catholic in 2010, and Fr. Jones was given a dispensation to be ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 2012.

They have four children, the oldest of whom shares Fr. Jones's severe allergies to cats and dogs.

"Our kiddos wanted an inside pet, so I started researching hypo-allergenic dogs," said Fr. Jones.

He found out about a breeder in Versailles who specializes in hairless terriers.

"One day when my wife was out of town, I said to my kids, 'Let's go visit some dogs!'" he recalled. "We did, and they fell in love with these hairless creatures."

They got on a waiting list, and Trebby eventually came to live with them.

"He's 11 or 12 pounds of skin," the priest noted. "Literally no hair, except his eyelashes and whiskers."

No fur or dander means no allergic reactions.

"But in the summer, he gets sunburned," said Fr. Jones. "And in wintertime, he has to wear a coat, because he's freezing all the time!"

Trebby gives Fr. Jones a unique icebreaker with people he hasn't met yet.

"People who have never seen him before want to know about him," the priest noted. "They look at him and say, 'What in the world is that!'"

His children enjoy drawing eyebrows on Trebby using nontoxic, water-soluble ink.

"Mad, sad, surprised or whatever mood you want him to be!" he noted.

Fr. Jones is amazed at how perceptive a dog can be.

"They know when you're upset, they know when you're happy," he said. "They can read feelings in ways that if you haven't experienced it, you can't imagine."

Dog days

In moments of feigned exasperation, Fr. Debo occasionally throws out the quip: "Even J.P. listens to me better than you do!"

The priest always liked Maltese dogs and previously had one that he named after St. Bridget.

After that dog died, Fr. Debo found out about some available dogs in Kansas City.

As it turns out, the woman there enjoyed raising Maltese dogs for show, but she had to go back to work full-time after her husband passed away.

Several people were interested in adopting dogs from her.

Fr. Debo went to her home to meet her dogs in-person and let her ask questions about where he lived and what kind of accommodations he had.

"J.P. kind of stood back at a distance and wasn't as friendly as the other dogs that were jumping on me," the priest recalled.

Yet, the floppy creature was very stately.

"He definitely looked like a show dog," Fr. Debo noted.

Just as the interview was winding down and the priest was getting ready to leave, the woman picked up J.P. and said, "Don't forget to take your dog!"

Back home, a parishioner noticed that the dog's fur was as

white as the pope's daily attire.

"I always tell people he's named after Pope John Paul, but he's no saint!" said Fr. Debo. "He has training issues and thinks he rules the roost."

Fr. Debo is quick to ask people who visit him in the Freeburg or Rich Fountain rectory whether they're allergic to dogs or are afraid of them.

"He is absolutely a great reminder that someone is at the door," the priest noted. "He always senses that people are at the door before they ring."

J.P. gets a little spooked around big groups of people, but the children at Holy Family and Sacred Heart schools can't get enough of him.

"They know I have a dog and they talk about the dog a lot," he said. "They always have questions about him."

"Holy hobby"

Fr. Duncan remembers Chichi, the Yorkshire terrier his childhood pastor, the late Father Henry Reichert, kept at the rectory of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City.

"Father was such a tall, gentle giant ... and he had such a little dog!" Fr. Duncan recalled. "As a kid in kindergarten or first-grade, I thought it was the coolest thing."

He got his own first dog as a priest while serving as associate pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia.



Father William Debo, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Freeburg and Sacred Heart Parish in Rich Fountain, and his Maltese dog, J.P., visit with parishioners at the Holy Family Parish Picnic Sept. 3. — Photo by Jay Nies

He asked his pastor, Father Christopher Cordes, for permission.

"He didn't give me an immediate yes or no," Fr. Duncan recalled. "He thought about it and took into account that I was taking my parish responsibilities appropriately."

Through research, Fr. Duncan found that Labradors tend to be friendly, easy to work with, and good around children.

"Having the dogs gives me a healthy and a holy hobby," he said. "If we throw ourselves too much into work, we lose personal activities that help give us balance."

"People can't relate very well to the priest who just works all the time," he added. "You have to be a human, as well."

Fr. Duncan said children are often amazed to learn that a priest can keep dogs.

They also enjoy hearing about how Fr. Duncan takes his on vacation with him, to places where they can hike, fish and swim.

"I think they like knowing that I can be a priest and have hobbies, too," he said.

Ollie and Bailey enjoy visiting St. Mary School during lunch or after school each day.

"Both of them — their favorite word is 'school!'" he said. "They jump up immediately and go to the door. They know they're going to get all that love and attention from the kids."

Prudence and patience

Fr. Schrader pointed out that according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it's okay to love animals, "but it also cautions us not to treat them like people. Pets are not children."

He believes that a priest having a dog is usually a good thing, "but it depends on the dog and on the as-

signment."

"A safe, well-behaved dog where the dog has a good place to live, to be outside, and to be taken care of properly can be great," he said.

But he noted that priests have to be flexible and ready to serve in a variety of different places and ministries.

"We have to prioritize our ministry over our pets," he said, "so it's best when a pet can help in our ministry rather than become a burden to it."

Fr. Debo and Fr. Peckman said one of the best lessons they learn from having pets is patience.

"Sometimes," said Fr. Peckman, "I have to remind myself, 'You can't let a dog determine your mood.' Accidents happen, life goes on, and getting upset about it only makes it worse."

He pointed out that priests are personally responsible for their pets' food and medication and for any damage they do.

Having pets isn't always fun, "but it's been more than worth it to me," he said.

"It's not for everybody, for sure," Fr. Debo noted. "But if you are willing to put in the work and be consistent in providing proper care it can be very rewarding."



Father William Peckman, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Macon, St. Mary Parish in Shelbina and the Mission of Sacred Heart in Bevier, entertains Buddy, a wire-haired Dachshund, and Molly, a Goldendoodle, in the St. Mary Parish Rectory. — Photo by Annie Williams

SYNOD

From page 3

The synod's two-year preparation process invited all Catholics worldwide to identify areas where the Church needed to give greater attention and discernment.

That feedback was gathered and synthesized by dioceses and then episcopal conferences, before being brought to the continental level. The syntheses from episcopal conferences and continental-level meetings were shared with the Holy See, and they informed a working document known as an *"Instrumentum Laboris"* for the general assembly's first session.

The document's authors describe it as "not a document of the Holy See, but of the whole Church."

However, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' report indicates that only about 700,000 Catholics in the U.S. participated, representing just over 1% of the U.S. Catholic population of 66.8 million.

6. The Synod on Synodality's objective boils down to answering a two-part question.

According to the vademecum, "The current Synodal Process we are undertaking is guided by a fundamental question: How does this 'journeying together' take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel? and what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?"

The working document released in June to guide general assembly participants includes many other reflection questions; but it particularly asks participants to reflect on these priorities, guided by its focus on communion, participation and mission: "How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?"; "How can we better share gifts and tasks in the service of the Gospel?"; and "What processes, structures and institutions are needed in a missionary synodal Church?"

In the Diocese of Jefferson City, this two-part question was presented using two prompts: Asking people to share a story about their ex-

perience with the Church that has shaped them, and to answer the question, "What is the Spirit asking of us?"

7. For the first time ever, non-bishops — including lay men and women — have a vote in the synod.

The synod's general assembly includes more than 450 participants — 363 of whom are voting members — with leaders from the Vatican curia and episcopal conferences.

More than a quarter of synod members are non-bishops, including laypeople, who for the first time will have a vote during synod deliberations.

A deliberate effort was made to include women and young adults. As of July 7, when the Vatican released the initial list, the number of voting women was the same as participating cardinals: 54.

The list was subject to change ahead of the synod, organizers said.

In previous synods, some non-bishop participants held the non-voting role of "auditor," which has been eliminated at this assembly, although some attendees will be non-voting observers, called "special envoys," or non-voting facilitators or advisers.

The presence of "non-bishops," according to Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, the synod's general relator, in a letter published at the time the change was announced, "ensures the dialogue between the prophecy of the people of God and the discernment of the pastors."

8. More than 20 Catholics from the United States have been invited to participate.

Participating American bishops chosen by Pope Francis are Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle, Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley of Boston and Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego, California.

Additional bishop-delegates selected by the USCCB and confirmed by Pope Francis are Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas; Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New

York; Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota; Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana; and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, who leads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, and serves as USCCB president.

American prelates Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, and Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, formerly the bishop of Dallas, are also delegates by nature of prior papal appointments. Cardinal Tobin is an ordinary member of the Synod of Bishops and Cardinal Farrell is prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

Pope Francis also nominated synod member Jesuit Father James Martin, editor-at-large for *America* magazine and founder of Outreach, a ministry for Catholics who identify as LGBTQ+.

Other U.S. delegates were nominated by the USCCB and confirmed by the pope. They include: Richard Coll, the executive director of the USCCB's Department of Justice, Peace and Integral Human Development; Cynthia Bailey Manns, director of adult faith formation at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Minneapolis; Father Iván Montelongo of El Paso, Texas; Wyatt Olivas, a student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming; Julia Oseka, a Polish student at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia; and Sister Leticia Salazar, a member of the Company of Mary, Our Lady and chancellor of the Diocese of San Bernardino, California.

USCCB-nominated delegates participated in the continental synod, and Coll, Bishop Flores and Sister Salazar were members of the 18-person

North American Synod Team that prepared the North American continental synod report for the U.S. and Canada. Bishop Flores has been named one of nine delegate presidents of the assembly.

In an unusual move, the synod general assembly has been divided into two sessions, with the first Oct. 4-29, and the second planned for October 2024.

The decision, announced in October 2022, has parallels to the Synod of Bishops on the Family, which met in 2014 for an extraordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops, and then continued its work the following year as an ordinary assembly.

The work of both meetings culminated in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *"Amoris Laetitia"* ("The Joy of Love"), released in 2016.

Prior to the synod, Pope Francis presides over an ecumenical prayer vigil in St. Peter's Square Sept. 30. Synod participants attend a retreat Sept. 30-Oct. 3 in Sacrofano, about 16 miles north of Rome.

The retreat includes morning meditations — offered by Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe of the United Kingdom and the Benedictine Rev. Mother Maria Ignazia Angelini of Italy — afternoon small-groups and Mass.

Meanwhile, the Taizé community and other organizations have organized a meeting in Rome that weekend called "Together — Gathering of the People of God" for young people to pray for the synod.

The synod's general assembly opens Oct. 4 with a papal Mass that includes the new cardinals created at a Sept. 30 consistory.

Among them is expected to be Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Maria Wiering is senior writer for OSV News.

The synod's two-year preparation process invited all Catholics worldwide to identify areas where the Church needed to give greater attention and discernment.

Sister Maria Cimperman, a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart and theologian at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and American Jesuit Father David McCallum, executive director of the Discerning Leadership Program in Rome, are among the 57 non-voting experts.

9. In the U.S., the meeting has been a source of great expectation and great apprehension.

The synod has inspired both great praise and deep criticism for its approach, including allowing laypeople to vote; its subject matter, which includes controversial topics such as leadership roles for women, ministry to Catholics who identify as LGBTQ+, and the relationship between laypeople and clergy.

At least one cardinal expressed concern that the meeting could lead to confusion and error in Church teaching.

However, Bishop Flores, speaking recently with OSV News, said the meeting aims to better understand people's reality so it can better minister to them.

"We can't respond with the Gospel if we don't know what the reality they're facing is," he said of people, especially those on margins and in difficult situations.

10. October's meeting is just the beginning.

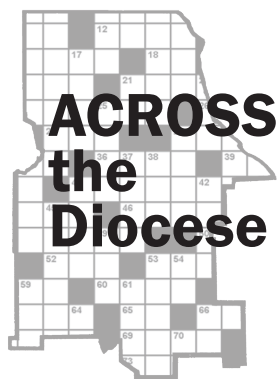


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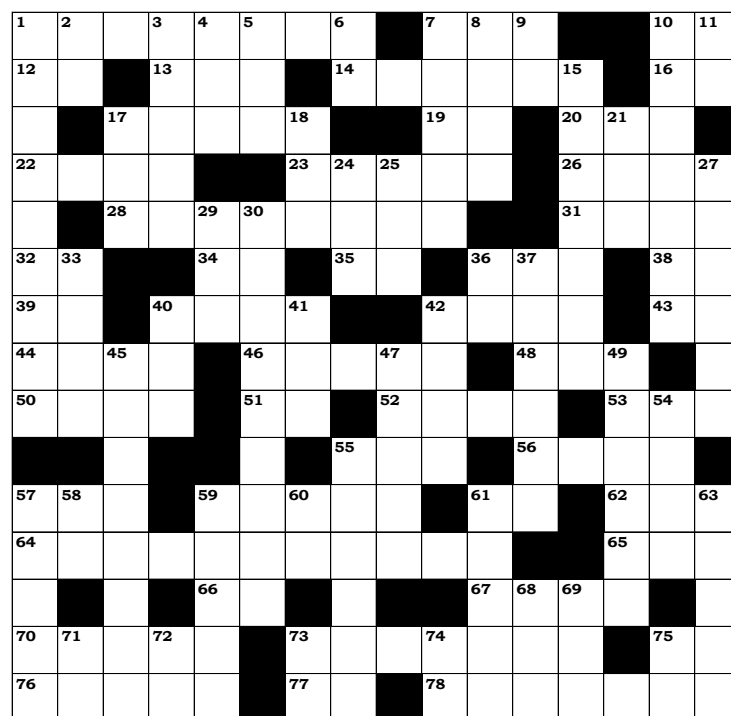
1. Mo. ____ have their own foods and eating habits. Different beasts eat different feasts. What and how much or how little they eat might surprise you.
7. The Trinity Broadcasting Network (____) is the largest Christian TV network in the world claiming globally two billion viewers.
10. "I was ____ school with monks. It stays with a man," —*The Leper of Saint Giles*, Ellis Peters.
12. ____ Mont Saint Michel; famous tidal island dominated by St. Michael Abbey, founded by St. Aubert; 2023 was its 1000th (!) anniversary; World Heritage Site; though used as a prison and other uses through the ages, a small group of monks & nuns currently live there.
13. Slippery fish.
14. "...to him I say, ____ water is sweet, and bread gotten secretly is pleasing!" (Proverbs 9:17).
16. This State ranks 21st in land area and 19th in population (abbr.).
17. "After stuffing its ____ with a big meal, a bobcat is perfectly happy to skip eating for a few days."
19. "He had a dry mouth, a crick in his neck and a soreness in his limbs. It was ____ unlike all previous wakings in the world of Venus," —*Perelandra*, C.S. Lewis.
20. "____ meat man..." —Oscar Meyer slogan.
22. Short for a British citizen.
23. Quit crowding! I need some ____ room!
26. It's often said you get more ____ for your buck at Walmart.
28. "Beavers eat bark and use branches to build dens and dams. Using only its teeth, this furry ____ can gnaw down a willow tree that's thicker than your leg in under five minutes."

31. Our law firm strongly encourages our new lawyers to give back by doing some pro ____ work.
32. "But ____ , king of Bashon..." (Numbers 21:33).
34. Two beginning letters for ail or ugly.
35. Abbr. for 5th book of the Bible.
36. "My ____ Sal"; a "lyrical, charming and spirited" 1942 musical/comedy starring Victor Mature & Rita Hayworth.
38. General Dynamics Electric Boat (____) division builds submarines.
39. Abraham's ancestral home.
40. Mild affirmative.
42. Mary's mom.
43. In football, letters for the Running Back position.
44. "If I have to think something through thoroughly, I lie on the ____ . There one can think things through steadily," —*Last Testament*, Pope Benedict XVI.
46. "When grief impounds our thinking and eats our brains, it ____ through all the cracks of our daily living," —Erik Pevernagie.
48. Forensic TV series.
50. Little furry Star Wars primitive whose people helped bring down The Empire.
51. Prefix for cargo or chew.
52. "____ morning before your feet hit the floor, take the opportunity to choose to serve the Lord," —*Meditations; The Work Among Us*.
53. Fawn's mom.
55. Whatever the problem, there's probably an ____ for it.
56. Row boat propulsion need.
57. A ____ does not have a collarbone, so it can fit through any opening the size of its head.
59. "Put your ear to a molehill and you might just hear the tiny tunneler's tummy rumble. An eastern mole may eat half its weight in ____, grubs, and other underground creepy-crawlies each day."
61. A golden-ager.
62. Highly prominent in the prophet Samuel's growing up (see 1 Samuel ch. 1-4).
64. "Super snoozer: during ____ a 400-lb. black bear may not eat a single thing for nearly four months."
65. Drunkard.
66. At our parish picnic's beer stand, we ask for an ____

67. You seem to have ____ in your pants today. Settle down and be still!
70. Our house at the lake was in a small ____ .
73. "That's who we are. And as spies, we need to be ____ about throwing the word 'innocent' around," —*The Bourne Treachery*, Brian Freeman.
75. 4th note on the musical scale.
76. New London is the County Seat for this county in our diocese.
77. The Sooner State (abbr.).
78. "River otters waste little tie digesting their dinners. When an otter ____ and crunches crayfish, the crayfish's remains turn up in the otter's droppings in about one hour.

DOWN

1. The ____ at a golf course has a Pro Shop, often a restaurant, and usually one more amenity: a bar. After a long 18 holes, golfers often head for this so called "19th hole" to celebrate or commiserate with a "beverage."
2. Prefix for port or pair.
3. I only survived by the skin of my ____ .
4. ____ Aviv; Israel's biggest city.
5. An extension of a building that is at right angles to the main part.
6. Short for Sacred Scriptures.
7. "And he spoke to them... in parables, saying 'A sower went out ____,'" —Matthew 13:3 (2 wds.).
8. "'Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll ____ your house in,' said the Big Bad Wolf," —from the "Three Little Pigs" fairy tale.
9. The capital of this State is Lincoln (abbr.).
10. In __ _ of speaking, that is what happened—not exactly with me in purple trousers—but it happened (2 wds.).
11. "It is not wise ____ tease a man with no humor in him," —*The Heretic's Apprentices*, Ellis Peters.
15. "Large mammals often consume less than you might think. A 700-lb. bull elk ____ only about 20 lbs. of grass a day."
17. A brand of pen.
18. Japanese currency.
21. ____ Tse Tung.
24. An illegal hallucinogen.



25. "Better than a bug zapper: during peak feeding times, the Little Brown ____ can swoop, snatch, and snarf down 1,200 mayflies, beetles and other insects in an hour."
27. "Some of Mo.'s tiniest mammals have ginormous appetites. A 3-inch-long Least Shrew, for ex., can ____ down more than its weight in insects every day. For us that's like eating about 240 quarter pounders!"
29. "Only ____ it of me, and I will make your inheritance the nations..." (Psalms 2:8).
30. Quit your complaining! I'll be there ____ ! (3 wds.)
33. The Mo. Dept. of Conservation collaborated with the St. Louis Zoo to spawn and ____ in captivity a federally endangered fish associated with Missouri called the Ozark Hellbender.
36. Abbr. for the book in the Bible that tells the story of how God brought forth all creation.
37. "This we have as an ____ of the soul, sure and firm..." (Hebrews 6:19).
40. "In the fall, an eastern chipmunk has just one thought in its furry little head: storing enough food for winter. In ____-rich and hickory-rich habitats, a hard-working chipmunk can gather more than 160 acorns in a single day.
41. A definite affirmative.
42. Short for As Soon As Possible!
45. "A gray squirrel, which weighs about as much as an NFL ____, eats more than 100 lbs. of acorns, hickory nuts and other foods in a year.
47. A brand of soda.
49. Whatever the event, ____ smartly for the occasion (2 wds.).
54. Capital of Norway.
55. Passenger train.
57. "The ____ (cathedra) of the bishop or priest 'should express his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer,'" —*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1184
58. Letters for the next (scary?) technological leap: artificial intelligence.
59. Written commands by a judicial court.
60. Letters for Rheumatoid Arthritis; can't be cured but can be treated; usual onset is ages 30-60.
61. Military slang for a really messed up but normal state of affairs.
63. "And ____ night," —John 13:30 (2 wds.).
68. Mother Teresa or Teresa of Avila.
69. She needs compassion and a lot of ____ .
71. Chemical ltrs. for sodium.
72. ____ Nino is when the jet stream moves further south than normal producing warmer and drier weather in the northern U.S. while the southeast has increased chances of flooding.
73. Letters for the chemical element Cobalt.
74. Dorothy's Auntie.
75. Established by the Spanish in 1610, Santa ____ is easily the oldest State capital in the U.S.

MSGR. WILBERS

From page 1

"I don't think he was capable of a 'knee-jerk' reaction," asserted Monsignor Gregory L. Higley, who succeeded Msgr. Wilbers as vicar general from 2002-2015.

"He told me once that he spent the 45-minute drive each way to Jefferson City from his parish of Our Lady of the Lake in Lake Ozark, thinking and praying about issues, questions and concerns that would come across his desk or come up at meetings, that would need his input or require a decision," Msgr. Higley noted.

Msgr. Wilbers appreciated the story of Jesus's friends, Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42).

Martha was occupied with doing, Mary with being present.

"He strove to be like Mary and 'choose the better part,'" Mr. Hermann noted. "But he understood full well that we do have to do things and take care of things and be responsible."

"A Vatican II priest"

Msgr. Wilbers, a son of the late Fred and Julietta Wilbers, was born on June 12, 1946. He had four siblings — two brothers who died as infants, and two sisters, Mary Helen Norfleet and Julie Wieberg.

He attended St. Peter School in Jefferson City, where priests, religious and laypeople joined his family in helping bring the Gospel to life for him.

He attended the St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary high school in Hannibal, followed by four years of philosophy and eight years of theology studies at Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri.

He ministered as a deacon at St. Pius X Parish in Moberly and at St. Gregory Barbarigo Parish in Maryville.

On Feb. 26, 1972, in St. Peter Church in Jefferson City,



Monsignor Michael J. Wilbers (1946-2023)

Bishop Michael F. McAuliffe, now deceased, ordained him to the Holy Priesthood.

Msgr. Wilbers remained in Moberly as an associate pastor while serving at the Chancery offices in Jefferson City as associate director of religious education.

He was promoted to diocesan director of religious education in 1974.

"Collaborating with women religious, as well as the local communities, his goal was to have adult education all throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City," Msgr. Kurwicky noted.

Not only did Msgr. Wilbers assemble an impressive pool of catechists in Central Missouri, he worked with parishes to the north and the south to establish regional catechetical centers in Edina and Rolla.

"He wanted everything done right," stated Jim Kemna, who worked with Msgr. Wilbers in religious education and later served for many years as director. "He was very committed to helping the parishes accept the call of the Second Vatican Council to a renewed, invigorated laity and a renewal of catechesis."

"He was truly a Vatican II priest," said Carolyn Saucier,

who served as diocesan associate director of religious education for 23 years. "He believed in the spirituality and the giftedness of laypeople."

He respected the gifts of women and helped draw religious sisters and lay women into the work of the Church and decision-making of the diocese.

Msgr. Wilbers recognized Mrs. Saucier's charism for teaching and invited her to lead adult faith-formation classes throughout the diocese.

"I believe he was an educator at heart," said Mrs.

Saucier. "He was an educator! He had a vision of education for adults in the diocese."

Called to stretch

Msgr. Wilbers once proclaimed: "May the gifts I have be used in the best possible way for the Lord and his people."

While continuing as religious education director, he was appointed pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in St. Thomas, where his reverence and per-

"He was very good at taking the Gospel and applying it to everyday life," St. Thomas parishioner Joann Heckman recalled last year for Msgr. Wilbers's 50th priestly anniversary.

He served as chancellor of the Jefferson City diocese from 1981-89 and as vicar general from 1988-2002, assisting Bishop McAuliffe, who led the diocese from 1969-97, and overseeing many of the day-to-day operations of the diocesan Chancery offices.

"He had to do what many priests have to do, then and now: stretch!" said Msgr. Kurwicky in his Funeral Mass homily. "Working ever-more-closely with the bishop for the administration of the local Church, he also continued growing in his love of the Liturgy."

His work as vicar general continued into the time of

Bishop Gaydos admired Msgr. Wilbers's thoroughness.

"The way he orchestrated my coming to the diocese was a good example of that," he recalled. "It was all done like clockwork. Nothing left to chance."

Msgr. Wilbers served as rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph from 1989-99, mentoring many newly ordained priests, including Father Christopher Cordes, who is now diocesan vicar for priests and pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia.

"I'm always very thankful for those four years I spent with him," Fr. Cordes stated during the vigil service the night before the Funeral Mass.

He said it wasn't in Msgr. Wilbers's nature to tell an associate pastor what to do or how to do it.

"He would occasionally share with me his own wisdom and things that he found to be important," Fr. Cordes recalled. "Not telling me I had to do things that way but letting me know that those are the things that he had found important and wanted to share those aspects of the Priesthood with me."

"Slow down"

As a former provincial of the St. Louis Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sr. Kathleen saw how well he respected and collaborated with religious sisters in parishes and in diocesan ministries.

"He had lots of heart and insight," she observed.

She witnessed how he ministered to her parents and relatives. She called to mind the homily he preached when her father, Leroy Wegman, died suddenly at age 67.

"Monsignor came down to the house and met with our family and was so attentive to us," she recalled. "He gave us time to talk about Dad."

Mr. Hermann called to mind the steady joy Msgr. Wilbers exhibited and the calming effect it had on the people around him.

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.

Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos.

"I've always recognized Msgr. Wilbers as a very kind and very patient man," Bishop Gaydos stated. "He brought



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos and priests of the Jefferson City diocese celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial for Monsignor Michael Wilbers on Sept. 26 in the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

— Photo by Jay Nies

sonal approach immediately impressed his parishioners.

His homilies made people think.

people together and drew forth their talents in the many activities we undertook for the sake of the Gospel."

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

Sep. 29

Jefferson City, Helias Catholic High School alumni homecoming event, 9-10:30 pm, Last Flight Brewing Company

Sep. 30

Hannibal, Holy Family Parish "Good Neighbor Project Autumn Auction," 5-9 pm, K of C Hall

Oct. 1

Holts Summit, St. Andrew Parish fall festival, 11 am-6 pm; **Linn**, St. George Parish fall festival, 11 am-6 pm; **Morrison**, Assumption Parish annual fall chicken dinner, 11 am-4 pm

Oct. 4

Jefferson City, St. Peter Parish Ladies Sodality annual card party, 6:30-9 pm; **Columbia**, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School open house for prospective families, 6-8:30 pm

Oct. 8

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am; **Brinktown**, Holy Guardian Angels Parish fall dinner, 11 am-5 pm; **Hermann**, St. George Parish fall dinner, 11 am-5 pm; **Wardsville**, St. Stanislaus Parish fall supper, 11 am-6 pm

Oct. 13

Columbia, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School homecoming, pre-game festivities 5:30 pm, football kick-off 7 pm

Oct. 13-14

St. Robert, St. Robert Bellarmine Altar and Rosary Society Fall Sale, 9 am-5 pm

Oct. 14

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows Parish fantasy night, 5-11 pm

Oct. 15

Westphalia, St. Joseph Parish fall festival, 11 am-6 pm

Oct. 26

Jefferson City, Pregnancy Help Center of Central Missouri banquet, 6:30-8:30 pm, for info or to register visit friendsofphc.org

Oct. 29

Mokane, St. Jude Thaddeus Church rededication open house, 2-5 pm

Meetings/ Workshops

Sep. 30

Rolla, Parish Engagement and Charity Event, sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, 8:30-11:30 am, St. Patrick Church, for info or to register call 573-635-7719

Oct. 3

Jefferson City, Grief Support Group, 6:15-8:15 pm, St. Peter Parish's Fr. Ahrens Room

Oct. 7

Columbia, Parish Engagement and Charity Event, sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, 1:30-4:30 pm, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, for info or to register call 573-635-7719; **Jefferson City**, Parish Engagement and Charity Event, sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, 8:30-11:30 am, Catholic Charities Office, for info or to register call 573-635-7719

Oct. 12

Jefferson City, "Hot Topics: Current Moral Issues & the Catholic Church," presented by Jamie Morris and Fr. Louis Nelen, 7-9 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph's Cana Hall

Oct. 15

St. Louis, Respect Life Apostolate 50th Anniversary Conference, 9 am-4 pm, Cardinal Rigali Center, for info or to register, contact prolife@archstl.org

Oct. 16

Jefferson City/Macon/Mexico, "How to Create a Tech-Ready Home" free workshop for parents, 6:30 pm, Jefferson City—Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center; Ma-

con—Immaculate Conception School; Mexico—St. Brendan School; to register, visit diojeffcity.org/pye-registration

Oct. 17

Moberly/Monroe City, "How to Create a Tech-Ready Home" free workshop for parents, 6:30 pm, Moberly—St. Pius X School; Monroe City—Holy Rosary School; to register, visit diojeffcity.org/pye-registration

Oct. 18

Westphalia, "How to Create a Tech-Ready Home" free workshop for parents, 6:30 pm, St. Joseph School, to register, visit diojeffcity.org/pye-registration

Oct. 28

Jefferson City, Information session on the Permanent Diaconate, 9:30 am-noon, Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center,

Eventos del Ministerio Hispano

octubre 7-8

Marshall, Congreso Diocesano, Saline County Fairgrounds Multipurpose Building, para más información contacte a Ilsi Palacios al 316-530-1004 o por correo electrónico a ComiteDiocesanoRCCH@gmail.com

octubre 14

Marshall, Retiro para Preparación de Quinceañera, 10 am-4 pm, San Pedro, para más información contacte el equipo de quinceañera de su parroquia

octubre 20-22

Griswold IA, Retiro para Diáconos Hispanos, Creighton University Retreat Center, para más información contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 en su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecas.tro@diojeffcity.org

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Every Tuesday

Jefferson City, "Tuesday With Faith," small group discussions, 6:30-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info, call 573-645-2478 or email jimkemna@gmail.com

Every Friday

Jefferson City, Centering Prayer Group, Immaculate Conception Parish, 11 am-noon

Oct. 2

Jefferson City, "Dwell: A Blessed Is She Study on The Eucharist" for women of all ages, 7-8:30 pm, Mary Room at the Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish Office, for info or to register contact julie.g@cathedraljc.org

Oct. 6

Jefferson City, Diocesan Women's Ministry "Ladies Night Out," 6:30-9:30 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph, for info or to register, visit diojeffcity.org/womens-ministry-upcoming-events/

Oct. 10

Columbia, "Healing, Faith & the Gospels," 6:30-8 pm, St. Thomas More Newman Center

Oct. 16

Jefferson City, "Dwell: A Blessed Is She Study on The Eucharist" for women of all ages, 7-8:30 pm, Mary Room at the Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish Office, for info or to register contact julie.g@cathedraljc.org

Oct. 19-22

Edina, Women's Cursillo Weekend #80, St. Joseph Parish Center, for info or to register contact sander.becky@gmail.com or call 573-808-3758

Oct. 21

Columbia/Jefferson City/VIR-TUAL, "Living Flame 1" 7-session program on in-depth spiritual study and enrichment of centering prayer, 9 am-2 pm; participants may join via Zoom or in-person at Broadway Christian Church in Columbia or Immaculate Conception Church in Jefferson City; to register visit cocemo.org

Oct. 28

Columbia, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd come and see event, 9 am-4:30 pm, St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish, for info visit diojeffcity.org/registration-workshops

Oct. 30

Jefferson City, "Dwell: A Blessed Is She Study on The Eucharist" for women of all ages, 7-8:30 pm, Mary Room at the Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish Office,

for info or to register contact julie.g@cathedraljc.org

Liturgical

Oct. 1

Hannibal, National Annual Life Chain, 2-3 pm, Hannibal High School

Oct. 10

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

Oct. 14

Linn, America Needs Fatima Rosary Rally, noon-1 pm, in front of St. George Church; **Westphalia**, Public Square Rosary Crusade, noon-1 pm, Norton Room courtyard (across from St. Joseph Church)

Oct. 18

Columbia, St. Luke White Coat Masses, 6:15 am at MU Hospital Chapel; 7 am at Boone Hospital Chapel; noon at St. Thomas More Newman Center

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

Oct. 4

Columbia, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School open house for prospective families, 6-8:30 pm; **Jefferson City**, Praise, Prayer & Pizza, 7-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall

Oct. 13

Columbia, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School homecoming, pre-game festivities 5:30 pm, football kick-off 7 pm

Health & Wellness

Oct. 2

Rich Fountain, Blood drive, 2-6 pm, Sacred Heart School

Oct. 11

Jefferson City, CPR training, 5:30-8:30 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info or to register call 573-690-8077 or email dhilke@icangels.com



301 Monroe
Jefferson City
(573) 635-6101

Charles Prather • Rick Prather
Tom Kummer

To submit **Baptisms, Birthdays** for ages 90 and older, **Anniversaries** of 10+ years in increments of 5 ONLY (e.g., 15, 25, 45 years, etc.), **Elections, Honors and Appointments**, please go to:

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

Argyle, St. Aloysius
Dale & Elaine Brandt, 35 years
Chris & Alicia Wieberg, 10 years

California, Annunciation
Dale & Vicki Glenn, 45 years

Mexico, St. Brendan
Richard & Sharon Henke, 50 years

Baptisms

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Heidi Lynn Schwartze**, daughter of Derek & Haley Schwartze

Marshall, St. Peter — **Isabella Hernandez Palma**, daughter of Jesus Hernandez & Leocadia Palma; **August, Ava** and **Barrett Maschmeyer**, children of Kevin Maschmeyer & Jordan Lay; **Adien** and **Ares Torres**, children of Ada Jesua Torres & Monica Lewis

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus — **Henry Howard** and **Leopold Louis Bruns**, children of Kyle & Nicole Bruns



ROSARY

From page 4

“And somehow, the horrible weather cleared out,” he recounted. “We mustered a lot of power and did a lot of work on it.”

“And somehow, by some miracle, even though it seemed impossible, we made it to the deadline.”

Well-worn path

Sam put the finishing touches on the project the morning of the feastday.

That afternoon, Fr. Ritter celebrated a dedication Mass and blessed the Rosary Walk.

The people then used it to pray the Rosary together.

Looking back at the generations of people who have worn paths to the chapel and grottos at the shrine, he realized that the grandchildren of people who

Marriages

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Macey Stockman & Kurtis Wilson**

Wien, St. Mary of the Angels — **Kelsey Almond & Joseph Bertsch**

Birthdays

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows — **Fred Evers**, his 94th on Sept. 28

Deaths

Lucille Mary Orscheln, 93 — longtime secretary of the former St. Thomas Seminary in Hannibal — on Sept. 19 in Sedalia. The Mass of Christian Burial was to be celebrated on Sept. 30 in Holy Family Church in Hannibal, with Father Michael Quinn presiding. Burial was to be in Holy Family Cemetery.

Brookfield, Immaculate Conception — **Phyllis Vandeventer**

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Dolores Fox; Robert Zeterberg**

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Wilma Mengwasser**

Lake Ozark, Our Lady of the Lake — **Mary Ann Russell**

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows — **Norma Jean Lepper**

Rhineland, Church of the Risen Savior — **James Overkamp**

aren't born yet could wind up praying along this Rosary Walk someday.

“When I started the project, I knew I wanted something that not only would last a long time, but would also leave a good impression and have a lasting benefit,” he said.

He believes the people who benefit the most from the Rosary Walk will be those who seek the Blessed Mother's help in figuring out what God wants them to do, and then doing it.

He also asked for prayers of thanksgiving.

“Keep in mind all the work throughout the shrine,” Sam requested. “Remember the ancestors and all the backbreaking labor it took to build everything, and thank God for them.”

PRIEST

From page 21

“He didn't pretend to have all the answers, because no one does,” Mr. Hermann noted. “Instead, he instilled in people to have trust in God.”

Msgr. Higley lauded Msgr. Wilbers as “invaluable as a mentor and advisor, and over time as an important collaborator.”

Msgr. Wilbers counseled Msgr. Higley on how to “slow down” and gather as much available information as possible before making important decisions, especially those affecting personnel or programs in the diocese.

“I appreciate how he taught me to ‘get all the facts and details’ before advising the bishop, or before making a decision as the vicar general,” said Msgr. Higley.

“His greatest work”

Msgr. Wilbers became pastor of Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Ozark in 1999.

The following year, Pope St. John Paul II made him a Prelate of Honor, an honorary member of the Papal Household, with the title Reverend Monsignor.

One of his best friends, Father Edwin Cole, who had taught him a homiletics class at Conception Seminary, died in 2009 at age 71.

“They were like brothers,” Msgr. Kurwicki noted. “That loss made Monsignor more sensitive to the loss that other people had in their life, as well as praying thrice as hard to increase his faith and belief in the Resurrection from the dead.”

Msgr. Wilbers retired due to failing health at the end of 2013.

He settled into a house in Lake Ozark and remained as active as he could. Fellow parishioners drove him to Mass and took him to lunch.

He moved to St. Joseph's Bluffs at the Heisinger Bluffs Senior Living Community in Jefferson City in early 2021.

He celebrated his 50th priestly anniversary on Feb. 27, 2022, with Bishop McKnight presenting him a Papal Blessing from Pope Francis.

Msgr. Kurwicki said Msgr. Wilbers's sisters were “like guardian angels to him,” particularly near the end of his life.

Bishop Gaydos was with Msgr. Wilbers shortly before he died.

“I wanted to share with him that right there as he was dying, he was doing some of his greatest work as a priest,” said Bishop Gaydos, who led the diocese from 1997-2018.

“This is the point at which we make our offering to God of ourselves for the whole world,” he said. “To be able to model that as a priest is a terrific grace, not only for the priest but for the whole Church.”

Msgr. Wilbers died in the company of his family.

Burial was in the Resurrection Catholic Cemetery in Jefferson City, Missouri.

“We do have many reasons to be grateful to God for giving us Monsignor for all of these years and the ways in which he shared his gifts with the world,” said Fr. Cordes. “And we can all be grateful for the ways in which he has touched our lives and the lives of so many.”

“God bless him and may he now celebrate the Holy Eucharist at the heavenly altar,” said Msgr. Higley.

FR. BRISCOE

From page 9

is a declaration of our commitment to resist these forces.

Third, we submit ourselves humbly to God's protection and St. Michael's intercession in this prayer. This act of surrender reflects our dependence on divine grace. It is a prayer of trust, declaring our hope in God's plan for our lives.

Finally, the St. Michael Prayer is a unifying force for Catholics. It transcends cultural boundaries, uniting believers in a shared understanding of the spiritual battles we face. Accordingly, it fosters a sense of community among Catholics worldwide.

While the world around us grapples with spiritual challenges and the relentless forces of darkness, the St. Michael Prayer shines. It is a timeless beacon of hope and strength for Catholics everywhere. Pope St. John Paul II's plea for its continued recitation echoes in our ears. As we navigate the complexities of this world, let us not forget the power of the St. Michael Prayer — a call to arms, a declaration of faith and a reminder of the protective strength that the Archangel Michael offers.

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

Crossword puzzle answers

S	E	H	C	N	U	M	K	O	S	T	V	R
V	E	L	U	E	V	O	T	E	L	T	N	I
W	S	J	N	A	V	A	D	I	V	A	V	A
I	O	S	N	O	I	L	N	E	R	I	B	H
I	E	L	R	S	S	M	R	O	W	T	V	C
S	R	O	V	A	P	A	V	C	O			
E	O	D	C	V	C	S	S	E	K	W	E	O
L	S	S	S	S	P	E	R	V	A	V	O	S
B	R	E	N	N	V	A	K	A	O			
B	E	L	V	T	D	L	N	S	G	O	G	O
O	O	W	V	S	N	I	H	H				
G	N	V	W	O	B	L	T	I	R	I	T	B
V	M	O	O	L	S	L	T	L	B	E	U	
O	M	E	T	O	T	E	T	E	T	E	T	E
L	V	N	J	B	S	S	E	T	E	C	R	I

Roughing it, but not so rough ...



Children of St. Mary School's Little Saints Preschool in Glasgow "camp out" on their first day of the school year on Aug. 19.
— Photo from the St. Mary School Facebook page

Who's in the House?



Third- and fourth-graders from St. Peter School in Jefferson City wave as they are introduced by state Rep. David Griffith of Jefferson City, as special guests in the House Chamber during the Missouri General Assembly's 2023 Veto Session on Sept. 12. The students also got to tour the Capitol.
— Photo by Julie Smith, courtesy of the *Jefferson City News-Tribune*

Find us online
@
cathmo.com



Award-winning artwork



Students of St. Andrew School in Tipton display the ribbons they won at this year's Moniteau County Art Fair.
— Photo from the St. Andrew Church and School Facebook page

Not out of the woods yet



Seventh- and eighth-graders of St. George School in Herman spend a day with Mrs. Chorley and Mrs. Hoemann at Camp Trinity Aug. 23, learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation and how to continue to grow in their faith.
— Photo from the St. George Catholic School - Hermann, MO Facebook page

Grandparents Day



LEFT AND ABOVE: Students and grandparents relish the Grandparent Celebration Sept. 13 at Our Lady of the Snows School in Mary's Home. — Photo from the Our Lady of the Snows Catholic School Facebook page

Bible Accent

What happened after the fish spewed Jonah upon the shore? In Jonah 3, we read that, once again, God called Jonah to be his prophet.

“Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you,” God said.

Jonah traveled to Nineveh. The city was so big that it took him three days to walk through it.

As he walked, Jonah announced God’s message.

“Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed,” he said.

The people of Nineveh declared a fast and put on sackcloth to show repentance. Even the king wore sackcloth and also sat in ashes to show his repentance.

“By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water,” the king declared. “Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. Who knows? God may again repent and turn from his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish.”

When God saw Nineveh’s repentance, he did not destroy the city.

St. Paul of the Cross

St. Paul of the Cross was born Paolo Francesco Danei in Italy in 1694. Even as a teen, he led a monk-like life of prayer and penance, and as an adult, he refused to marry. In 1720, he had a vision of Our Lady. In the vision, she wore a black habit with a white cross that bore Jesus’ name, and she told him to start an order to preach Christ’s passion. Paul founded the Discalced Clerks of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which he led for the rest of his life. Passionists were soon doing missions, retreats and spiritual direction throughout Italy. Paul died in 1775, and we remember him on Oct. 20.



Jonah tries to run away from God and the task he was given

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic Courier

One day, God called a man named Jonah to be his prophet.

“Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; for their wickedness has come before me,” God said.

Instead of listening to God, Jonah prepared to run away from God and what he was being called to do. Jonah traveled to Joppa and found a ship that was heading to Tarshish. He paid a fare and climbed aboard.

God caused a great wind to come upon the sea, creating a storm so severe that the ship was in danger of breaking apart.

The sailors were afraid, and they cried out to the various pagan gods they worshipped.

Jonah, meanwhile, was fast asleep in the hold of the ship.

“What are you doing asleep? Rise up, call upon your God! Perhaps God will be mindful of us so that we may not perish,” the ship’s captain said when he saw Jonah.

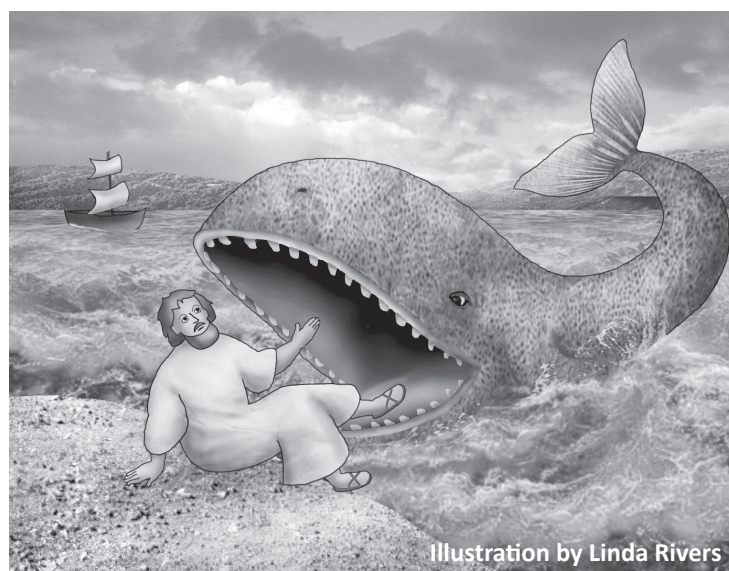
The sailors even threw cargo overboard to help save themselves, but it was not working.

“Come, let us cast lots to find out on whose account we have met with this misfortune,” they decided.

The lot fell on Jonah. “Tell us,” the sailors demanded, “what is your business? Where do you come from? What is your country, and to what people do you belong?”

Jonah explained that he was a Hebrew who was fleeing from God.

“How could you do such a



thing!” the sailors exclaimed. “What shall we do with you, that the sea may quiet down for us?”

“Pick me up and throw me into the sea, that it may quiet down for you; since I know it is because of me that this violent storm has come upon you,” Jonah replied.

“We beseech you, O Lord, let us not perish for taking this man’s life; do not charge us with shedding innocent blood, for you, Lord, have done as you saw fit,” the sailors prayed.

Then they took Jonah and

threw him into the sea, and the sea’s raging stopped.

But Jonah didn’t die.

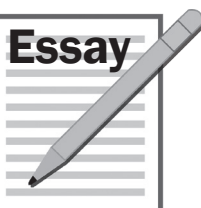
Instead, God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah, who remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah prayed to God from the fish’s belly, and then God commanded the fish to spew Jonah upon the shore.

Read more about it...

Jonah 1 & 2


1. What did God ask Jonah to do?
2. What happened when Jonah ran away from God?



Essay

Reading for
October 9, 2023:
Jon. 1:1-2:1-2,11

Why is it important to obey God?

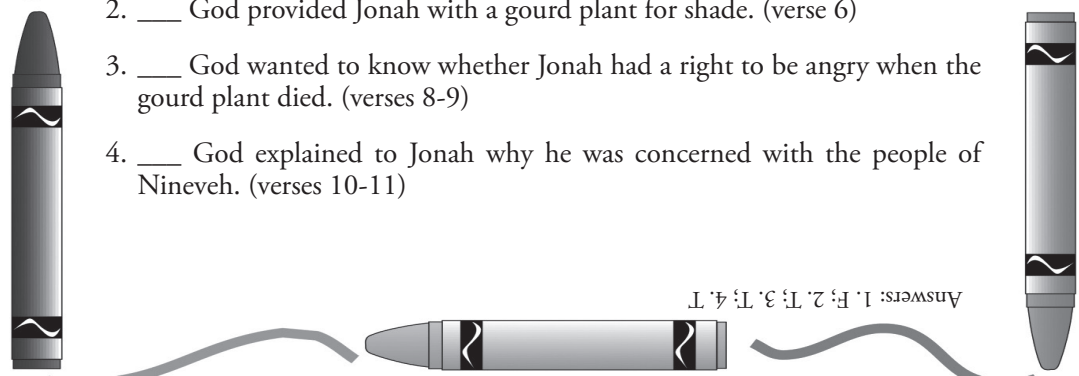


Puzzle

Using the hints from Jonah 4, put a T next to the sentences that are true and an F next to the ones that are false.

1. ___ Jonah was happy that God spared Nineveh. (verse 1)
2. ___ God provided Jonah with a gourd plant for shade. (verse 6)
3. ___ God wanted to know whether Jonah had a right to be angry when the gourd plant died. (verses 8-9)
4. ___ God explained to Jonah why he was concerned with the people of Nineveh. (verses 10-11)

Answers: 1. F; 2. T; 3. T; 4. T



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'Mister Magic': A suspense thriller that pricks a Catholic conscience

Mister Magic, by Kiersten White, Del Rey Books (2023), 304 pages, \$28.

Reviewed by Cecilia Cicone

If you are active on social media, regularly watch a news program or follow any sort of television program closely you might have had a so-called "parasocial relationship."

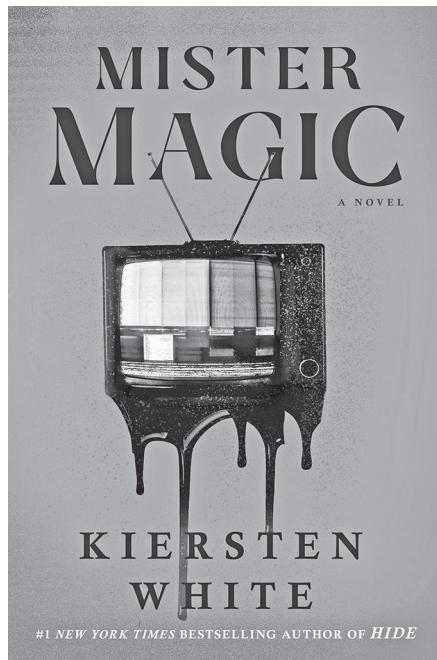
Parasocial relationships are a psychological phenomenon that develop when the fans of a public figure believe that they are genuine friends with the celebrity.

Such relationships, and the way they affect us, form the basis for Kiersten White's newest novel, *Mister Magic*.

The novel follows a group of adults who had previously starred in a '90s children's television program synonymous with the book's title. The program is shrouded in secrecy and mystery, however — no one can find old recordings of the program, especially of the final episode, and the series is not streaming anywhere.

Edits made to Wikipedia about the show disappear without comment. Online discussion boards have thread after thread of comments where adults who grew up in the '90s watching "Mister Magic" share their conspiracy theories about it all and reminisce on how the show influenced them on virtues and manners.

The child stars of the series are called "The Circle," which is short for "The Circle of



Friends."

While the novel's narration primarily follows one of the stars, Val, the chapters are broken up with fictional articles, Reddit forums, and social media posts from former fans of the program trying to understand what happened to The Circle.

In particular, the fans want to know why a show that was so formative for them, and gave them some of their first friends, went away so abruptly.

Five former members of The Circle are brought together for a podcast meant to explore their experience of being on the show and — for the sake of their fans — hopefully shed some light on its mysteriously unmemorable conclusion.

But even The Circle has questions about why "Mister Magic" ended so suddenly and

why, as child performers, they were treated so poorly by the show creators.

The actors reveal how they were separated from their families and discuss their confusing relationship with the series' host. They also marvel at how the obsessed fans seem to know them even better than they know themselves.

Mister Magic touches on a moral issue that is being increasingly brought into the public sphere as news outlets cover the end of Britney Spears's conservatorship and the publication of memoirs such as *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by "iCarly" star Jennette McCurdy: the treatment and morality of using children for popular entertainment purposes.

Often, child actors, musicians, and artists enter their profession at the initiative of their parents and without understanding the implications of their celebrity on the world, or how it will shape or distort their relationships and the overall trajectory of their lives.

"Entertainment" is the only form of child labor that is widely accepted in the west.

This novel offers a timely opportunity for reflection and an examination of conscience regarding the real effects our entertainment tastes and habits have on the lives of the people who create the content we unthinkingly lap up.

Movie Ratings



Adults and Adolescents

Blue Beetle (PG-13)
The Hill (PG)
A Million Miles Away (PG)



Adults

A Haunting in Venice (PG-13)
My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 (PG-13)



Limited Adult Audience

The Nun II (R)



Morally Offensive

The Equalizer 3 (R)
Expend4bles (R)
Strays (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

White's prose is incredibly readable and creative within its narrative format, which makes the book something of a compulsive page turner.

While fictional, this "inside story" of a pop culture phenomenon has the potential to help readers grow in media literacy by developing a critical eye toward the often-

exploitative origins of media content — a skill that is much needed in our current age, and very necessary for Christians who wish to engage modern culture.

Cecilia Cicone is an author and communicator who works in diocesan ministry in Northwest Indiana.

"A Million Miles Away" extols perseverance

There's a warm, folksy tone to this fact-based profile of Mexican American astronaut José Hernández (Michael Peña).

In adapting Hernández's memoir *Reaching for the Stars*, director and co-writer Alejandra Márquez Abella traces his journey from child migrant farm worker to NASA engineer and candidate for a place on the space shuttle, showing the lifelong determination that was required to achieve his longshot goal as well as the crucial support he received from his loving wife (Rosa Salazar) and family.

As Hernández overcomes prejudice and breaks down social and economic barriers, teens as well as grownups will profit from his good example and the strong values by which he's steadily guided.

Viewers will also note the brief inclusion of Catholic trappings that at least imply a religious influence on his success.

A few instances each of mild swearing and crass language. The OSV News classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG — parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.



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On air

Mustard Seed
Sunday Scripture readings
and reflections

Sundays, 10:06 am, KWIX-AM 1230, Moberly
Sundays, 8 am, KRLL-AM 1420, California

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KEFL 91.5 FM, Kirksville
94.7 FM, Columbia
103.3 FM, Fulton
K216GM 91.1 FM, Canton

PRO-LIFE

From page 12

most states and is aggressively promoted at the federal level," Bishop Burbidge said. "A great many prayers, sacrifices, and good works are still desperately needed to transform a culture of death into a culture of life. Our public witness, our marching, and our advocacy must continue, yet laws alone will not end the tragedy of abortion."

But "the new mindset" of which Pope Francis speaks "requires that we come alongside vulnerable mothers in profound friendship, compassion, and support for both them and their pre-born children," Bishop Burbidge said.

This also "means addressing the fundamental challenges that lead an expectant mother to believe she is unable to welcome the child God has entrusted to her," he continued. "This includes collective efforts within our dioceses, parishes, schools and local communities, engagement in the public square, and pursuit of policies that help support both women and their preborn babies.

"It all the more so requires our individual, personal commitment to helping mothers in our own communities secure material, emotional, and spiritual support for embracing the gift of life," he said. "Radical solidarity means moving beyond the status quo and out of our comfort zones."

An example of the Church's outreach to pregnant and parenting mothers is the U.S. bishops' parish-based and nationwide initiative Walking with Moms in Need. "(It) provides easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions to help transform our parishes into places of welcome, support, and assistance for pregnant and parenting

mothers facing difficulties," he explained, urging Catholics to get involved in the initiative.

In his statement, Bishop Burbidge included a number of questions he said Catholics must ask themselves: "Do I know what efforts are happening in my area to help women who are pregnant or parenting in difficult circumstances? What are the needs? What are my gifts and talents? How can I adjust my schedule or budget to assist efforts to help moms in need and their children?"

"Radical solidarity can be lived out in countless ways," he said, "including volunteering at your local pregnancy center; helping an expectant mother find stable housing; babysitting so a mom can work or take classes; providing encouragement and a listening ear to a mom without a support system; or speaking to your pastor about beginning Walking with Moms in Need at your parish."

Along with "enshrining pro-life laws and policies" is the need to transform the culture, which "requires continual conversion of our own hearts, so that we can recognize in every person the face of Christ and place their needs before our own," Bishop Burbidge said.

He concluded his statement by reiterating his invitation to all Catholics "to think about building a culture of life in terms of radical solidarity" during Respect Life Month this October.

"We are the Church. Our prayers, witness, sacrifices, advocacy, and good works are needed now, more than ever," he said. "We are the hands and feet of Christ in the world today and we each have a personal responsibility to care for one another."

RENEWAL

From page 5

explanations to help guide the participants in reflection.

There's also a helpful list of Bible passages that help solidify a Catholic understanding of stewardship.

"The goal is to have a balance," said Mr. Allen. "I set out to have it be meaningful for someone who has already been initiated into the stewardship mindset, but at the same time accessible to people who are new to these things."

He emphasized that it is an introduction, not a scholarly treatise.

"I see it as a 'hook' to get us thinking about stewardship and help us understand it a little better," said Mr. Allen. "But like anything else we learn in our Catholic faith, we are obliged to keep moving forward and growing in our depth of understanding."

Beyond buzzwords

Mr. Allen has long been an enthusiast for helping people know what being Catholic really means.

On the heels of his successful 2013 book, *Mackerel Snappers: How to Explain Even the Toughest Teachings About God and His Catholic Church*, he wrote another volume on the principles of Catholic stewardship.

He's gotten good feedback from Catholic publishers he's sent the manuscript to, but none have committed to marketing the book to a larger audience.

"Basically, they were concerned about having a book with the word 'stewardship' in the title, when that word is misunderstood by so many people," he said.

Namely, too many see "stewardship" as a buzzword for "how

much money does someone want me to give?" or "we think you should give us something that belongs to you."

"That's not the message we've been trying to get across all these years, but it's how people have heard it," said Mr. Allen.

He meant for the book to help reframe the discussion and bring it back to its roots.

He's convinced that if parishes help people stay focused on the call to holiness that everyone receives at Baptism, "no one will have to ask that person to support the parish or the diocese with their financial gifts, their time. That part will simply flow naturally from people living a life in Christ."

He said he takes his combined role as a Catholic educator and Catholic steward seriously.

"This school does not be-

Daily Readings

Sunday, Oct 1

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
Ez. 18:25-28
Ps. 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Phil. 2:1-11 or 2:1-5
Mt. 21:28-32

Monday, Oct 2

The Holy Guardian Angels
Zec. 8:1-8
Ps. 102:16-18, 19-21, 29, 22-23
Mt. 18:1-5, 10

Tuesday, Oct 3

Zec. 8:20-23
Ps. 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7
Lk. 9:51-56

Wednesday, Oct 4

St. Francis of Assisi
Neh. 2:1-8
Ps. 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6
Lk. 9:57-62

Thursday, Oct 5

St. Faustina Kowalska, virgin; Blessed
Francis Xavier Seelos, priest (USA)
Neh. 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12
Ps. 19:8, 9, 10, 11
Lk. 10:1-12

Friday, Oct 6

St. Bruno, priest; Blessed Marie
Rose Durocher, virgin (USA)
Bar. 1:15-22
Ps. 79:1b-2, 3-5, 8, 9
Lk. 10:13-16

Saturday, Oct 7

Our Lady of the Rosary
Bar. 4:5-12, 27-29
Ps. 69:33-35, 36-37
Lk. 10:17-24

Sunday, Oct 8

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
Is. 5:1-7
Ps. 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20
Phil. 4:6-9
Mt. 21:33-43

Monday, Oct 9

St. Denis, bishop, and companions,
martyrs; St. John Leonard,
priest
Jon. 1:1-2:2, 11
(Ps.) Jon. 2:3, 4, 5, 8
Lk. 10:25-37

Tuesday, Oct 10

Jon. 3:1-10
Ps. 130:1b-2, 3-4ab, 7-8
Lk. 10:38-42

Wednesday, Oct 11

St. John XXIII, pope
Jon. 4:1-11
Ps. 86:3-4, 5-6, 9-10
Lk. 11:1-4

Thursday, Oct 12

Mal. 3:13-20b
Ps. 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6
Lk. 11:5-13

Friday, Oct 13

Jl. 1:13-15; 2:1-2
Ps. 9:2-3, 6, 16, 8-9
Lk. 11:15-26

Saturday, Oct 14

St. Callistus I, pope and martyr
Jl. 4:12-21
Ps. 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
Lk. 11:27-28

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for October:

We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.

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long to me, and these kids aren't mine," he said. "They don't even fully belong to parents, either. They're God's kids, and we're stewards of them."

He pointed out that absent some miraculous intervention from heaven, people don't morph into stewards overnight.

"God is inviting us and asking us all to be all-in," Mr. Allen noted, "but he knows there's a journey from not-at-

all-in to all-in, and he wants for there to be balance so that the conversion is fruitful and lasting."

"You and God make the journey together, and you let God guide you in the pace," he said.

The English and Spanish language versions of the "Catholic Stewardship Renewal" study guide can be found online at: diojeffcity.org/stewardship.

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HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS PARISH
FALL Dinner
BRINKTOWN
Sunday, October 8
 Dine-In or Carry-Out
 Served from 11 am to 5 pm
Fresh Whole Hog Sausage & Fried Chicken Dinner
 with mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, sweet potatoes, sauerkraut, coleslaw & dessert
 Adults \$15, Kids 6-12 \$7, 5 and under free / Carry-outs \$15
Quilt & Dessert Auction @ 2:30 pm
 Ice Cream - Refreshments - Kettle Corn - Country Store - Prizes

ST. GEORGE PARISH
 HERMANN, MISSOURI
FALL DINNER
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8TH
WHOLE HOG SAUSAGE & BAKED TURKEY WITH MASHED POTATOES & GRAVY, GREEN BEANS, SAUERKRAUT, BREAD, DRESSING, RICE, SALAD BAR, DESSERTS AND DRINKS
 DINNER 11 AM TO 5 PM
 ADULTS \$15 | CHILDREN (6-10) \$6 | 5 AND UNDER FREE
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Diaconate information session

DATE: October 28
TIME: 9:30 am-noon

The Office of Diaconate Formation will host an information session for anyone interested in learning more about the Permanent Diaconate.

It will be from 9:30 a.m.

to noon on Saturday, Oct. 28, in the conference room of the Alphonse J. Schwartz Memorial Catholic Center, 2207 W. Main St. in Jefferson City.

The session will include insights into the life and ministry of permanent deacons. It will also offer information on

the application and formation process.

The session is open to anyone who has wondered if he is being called to the vocation of the Diaconate, and to spouses.

Contact Deacon John Schwartz at jschwartz@diojeffcity.org for information or to RSVP.

ANNUAL ST. GEORGE PARISH

FALL FESTIVAL
Sunday, October 1
LINN *Serving 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.*
WHOLE HOG SAUSAGE AND TURKEY WITH DRESSING
DESSERT AND BREAD — \$15 PER MEAL
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St. Andrew Parish
FALL FESTIVAL
Sunday, October 1
 11 am - 6 pm
Holt's Summit
FRIED CHICKEN, HAM & ALL THE FIXINGS!
 Kids Games
 Cake Walk
 Silent Auction
 Refreshments
 Quilt Auction (4:30 pm)
 Games & Prizes
 Country Store
 Prizes


Organ recital

DATE: October 8
TIME: 4 pm

Critically-renowned church organist Christopher Marks will give a recital at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 8, in St. Peter Church, 216 Broadway in Jefferson City.

Marks is a Professor in the Glenn Korff School of Music at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he also serves as Associate Dean of the Hixon-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Christopher Marks is consistently praised by reviewers for "style and assurance" and "musicality [that] seems to flow effortlessly." He has gained a reputation as an expert in American organ music old and new.

FIND MORE PARISH FALL EVENT ADS ON PAGE 15
SEE MORE LISTINGS ON PAGE 22!