

The CATHOLIC TIMES

THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS' INFORMATION SOURCE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023 • TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • VOLUME 72:20



SUPPORT MINISTRIES

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BLUE MASS

Law enforcement, firefighters and other first responders were among the public safety professionals attending the annual Blue Mass on Monday, Sept. 11 at Columbus St. Timothy Church, Page 5



ST. CHARLES CEREMONY

Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School dedicated a new convocation center and renovations to its Our Lady of Lourdes grotto and plaza on campus during a Sept. 8 ceremony, Page 16

Father Arroyo leads diocese's Hispanic ministry

Father David Arroyo, CR, has begun serving as the vicar for Hispanic ministry in the diocese after his official appointment was made public by Bishop Earl Fernandes on Tuesday, Sept. 12.

Father Arroyo, a member of the Congregation of Clerics Regular (known as the Theatine Fathers), replaces Father David Schalk, who became pastor at Powell St. Joan of Arc and Columbus St. Peter churches in July. Father Schalk had directed Hispanic ministry for the diocese since he was appointed as vicar by former Columbus Bishop Robert Brennan in 2019.

The Office of Hispanic Ministry serves the needs of the Latino population in the diocese. Seventeen diocesan parishes regularly offer Masses in Spanish.

Father Arroyo and two other Theatine priests came to the diocese just over a year ago in July 2022 and worked with



Father David Arroyo, CR
Photo courtesy Office of Hispanic Ministry

Father Schalk while residing at Columbus Christ the King Church and assisting at several parishes. Two months ago in July, the Theatines moved to St. Peter and St. Joan of Arc as parochial vicars.

In addition to Father Arroyo's new duties and parish ministry, he remains the chaplain at Cristo Rey Columbus High School and a lecturer at the Pontifical

College Josephinum.

A native of Torreon, Mexico, Father Arroyo began studying for the diocesan priesthood in his home country but felt called to be a missionary and joined the Theatines after visiting a friend at the order's only U.S. mission at the time in Colorado.

Father Arroyo grew up in Mexico as the youngest in a family with one brother and six sisters. His late parents, Victor and Amelia Arroyo, were teachers in the Mexican equivalent of high school.

After earning a college degree in seminary, Father Arroyo went to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 2018 to study for a licentiate in sacred theology. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 16, 2021 by Bishop Juan Munoz of Guadalajara, Mexico, where he served for a year before coming to Columbus with Father Victor Mendez, CR, and Fa-

ther Salvador Cisneros, CR.

Father Tomas Carvahal, CR, who has been at Zoar Holy Trinity and Dover St. Joseph churches since July 2021, and the other Theatines are the first priests in the order to serve outside the Archdiocese of Denver and the Diocese of Pueblo in Colorado since the Theatines left New York more than 100 years ago.

The order, founded in 1524, had 161 members, including 124 are priests, as of 2020. They serve in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, the Netherlands and Spain.

The diocese's Hispanic ministry office was directed by Angela Johnston from 2001 until her death in 2018. Later that year, the diocese created an ethnic ministries office that included Hispanic and Latino ministry until late 2019, when the Office of Hispanic Ministry was re-established.

Masses celebrate Theatine jubilee year

Two Masses in the diocese to inaugurate the Theatine Fathers' jubilee year will be celebrated on Sunday, Sept. 24.

The Masses will be offered at Zoar Holy Trinity Church at 10 a.m. and at Dover St. Joseph Church at 1:30 p.m.

The Theatines in the diocese kicked off the order's jubilee year on Sept. 14 with Masses in English and Spanish at Powell St. Joan of Arc Church and Columbus St. Peter Church.

The Congregation of Clerics Regular, known as the Theatines, are beginning the observance of the 500th anniversary since the order's founding on Sept. 14, 1524 by St. Cajetan.

Four Theatine priests are stationed in

the diocese. The order arrived in the diocese in 2021.

Father David Arroyo, CR, serves as a parochial vicar at St. Joan of Arc and St. Peter churches and has additional responsibilities as chaplain at Cristo Rey Columbus High School. He also was recently named the diocese's vicar for Hispanic ministry, replacing Father David Schalk, who is now the pastor at St. Joan of Arc and St. Peter.

Father Salvador Cisneros, CR, and Father Victor Cano, CR, are with Father Arroyo at St. Joan of Arc and St. Peter, where they moved in July from Columbus Christ the King Church.

The Theatine priests also assist with

Masses at Columbus St. Mary, Mother of God Church and at Newark Blessed Sacrament Church, and their parish work includes Hispanic and youth ministry. In August, the Theatines accompanied young adults from the diocese to Portugal to participate in World Youth Day.

The fourth Theatine father in the diocese, Father Tomas Carvajal, CR, has ministered in the diocese since 2021 at Zoar Holy Trinity and Dover St. Joseph churches.

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the foundation of the Theatines, the Holy See has granted a plenary indulgence to the faithful who visit churches entrusted to the pastoral care of the Theatines from Sept. 14 to the same date

in 2024.

During this privileged year, the faithful are invited to perform an extra sacrifice that shows their desire to deepen their conversion of life as an indication of taking a step on the path to holiness.

This means going to a church served by the Theatines to receive the sacrament of reconciliation, attending Mass and praying for the intentions of the pope and invoking the intercession of St. Cajetan.

As part of the yearlong event, every Theatine community will celebrate an inauguration Mass and offer other opportunities for people to know more about the order's charism.

Jeric named VP for advancement at Josephinum

Rick Jeric, senior director for major gifts at the Pontifical College Josephinum, has been named as vice president for advancement at the seminary.

Jeric's 25 years of experience in Catholic institutional and diocesan development and advancement includes major gifts, planning, annual giving, planned giving, capital campaigns and foundations.

Before joining the Josephinum staff as senior director for major gifts in October 2022, Jeric established the Catholic Foun-

dation of West Central Wisconsin for the Diocese of La Crosse.

He also served on the seminary's Board of Trustees for nine years – the longest tenure permitted by the board – from 2013 to 2022.

He previously was executive director for the Women's Care Center in Columbus and the executive director for development and planning for the Diocese of Columbus for 14 years.

"A proven leader and collaborator, Rick brings unparalleled expertise in many as-

pects of fundraising, development, and planned giving," said Father Steven Beseau, the Josephinum's rector and president. "His insightful contributions to the Josephinum's Board and his recent work in major gifts are a testament to his personal and professional commitment to the Church and our mission."

Jeric will guide the Josephinum's Advancement Office, providing strategic

See JERIC, Page 7



Rick Jeric
Photo courtesy Pontifical College Josephinum

Front Page photo:

SUPPORT MINISTRIES

The Courage, EnCourage and Connected Through Christ ministries in the diocese provide accompaniment for individuals and families affected by same-sex attraction and gender identity issues. *iStock photo*



CATHOLIC TIMES

Copyright © 2023. All rights reserved. Catholic Times (USPS 967-000) (ISSN 745-6050) is the official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. It is published every other week throughout the year. Subscription rate: \$17 per year, or call and make arrangements with your parish. Periodical Postage Paid at Columbus OH 43218.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to
Catholic Times 197 E. Gay St., Columbus OH 43215.
Please allow two to four weeks for change of address.



Father Chris Tuttle, pastor at Chillicothe St. Peter and St. Mary and Waverly St. Mary churches, speaks with Janine King, from Delaware St. Mary Church, at the diocesan parish evangelization conference on Aug. 31 at Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.



(From left) Dorothy Allwein of Damascus Catholic Mission Campus speaks with Sam Struppa, youth minister and confirmation coordinator at Sunbury St. John Neumann Church and Kate Giddens, life group director at St. John Neumann. Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones

Revised RCIA presented at parish evangelization conference

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

More than 180 parish ministry staff members, consecrated religious and clergy gathered at Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish on Aug. 31 for the Parish Staff and Ministry Leader Day hosted by the Diocese of Columbus' Department of Evangelization.

The day began with attendees praying the rosary and attending Mass and concluded with an opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Dr. Marlon De La Torre, the senior director for the Department of Evangelization, explained the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA), or the catechumenate model, to bring individuals who are unbaptized, or baptized but not Catholic, into full communion with the Catholic Church.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adapted the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), the official text which governs entrance into the Church for adults and children who have reached the age of reason (age seven). The USCCB has adapted the rite to reflect the proper Latin language of the Church.

The USCCB is one of various bishops conferences to translate updated versions of rites in the Church, such as RCIA, to reflect the original Latin. The USCCB is awaiting final approval from Rome for the revised model.

The catechumenate model is a central option for parish catechesis, De La Torre said, as opposed to the RCIA model.

Such instruction should be a progression of faith, with no beginning or end. The catechist, or person teaching about the Catholic faith, is to walk with the catechumen, a person preparing for initiation into the Church, toward God so that their "soul is never left alone," De

La Torre said.

Walking with an individual in their faith formation is the Church's preferred method since the beginning of its history, he said, with the model developed by St. Augustine.

De La Torre also referenced St. Francis de Sales, the patron saint of the diocese, who wrote that the heart converts the heart, as one person's heart influences the heart of another.

"We're going to take his namesake and apply it to this diocese," De La Torre said.

In RCIA, individuals seeking initiation into the Catholic Church were known as candidates. In the new catechumenate model, such individuals will be referred to as inquirers, catechumens or the elect, depending on where they are in the progression of faith.

The educational progression begins with pre-evangelization, or pre-catechesis. In this stage, a person seeking initiation into the Church is inquiring and must reach an understanding of what it means to be a child of God.

"We want them to be profoundly shaken by the Gospel," De La Torre said of how he wants catechists to walk with an individual one-on-one so they come to be moved by the Gospel, rather than begin their journey by being taught information in a class.

The catechist will meet with a child or adult, determine the state of the individual's relationship and understanding of Jesus Christ and His Church and begin walking with the individual.

"You're going to find out if they understand the concept of God."

Resources, books and materials should be secondary, De La Torre said, because they cannot determine the disposition of the soul.

Pre-catechesis should be conducted in a one-on-one interview. In this stage, he said, the inquirer typically knows that they want to become Catholic, but they do not yet fully believe in the Catholic

faith.

Eventually, the individual will progress into "investigation," he said, where they believe but need more clarity.

Once an individual has a firm understanding of God and what it means to be a child of God, they will progress into stage two, the catechumenate stage, and are considered a catechumen. The time it takes to progress will vary from person to person.

In the catechumenate stage, the catechist will begin teaching Church doctrine. He encouraged catechists not to deviate from what the Church prescribes, and the Department of Evangelization will come "on site" if a parish needs support.

In the third stage, the child or adult must go through a period of purification and enlightenment, De La Torre said. This period focuses on spiritual preparation, interior reflection and repentance.

For catechesis, he encouraged having a sacred space in every classroom, or a space that includes statues, religious images or objects, and sacred religious imagery on the walls. The catechist should determine if the catechumen is moved toward Jesus Christ by observing the imagery and through silence.

In the final stage, known as the mystagogy, a catechumen is prepared to continue living out the Catholic faith. Mystagogy is Greek in origin and can be translated as "savoring the mysteries" or "leading the one who is initiated."

It is the period following an individual's conversion to Jesus Christ. At this stage, catechetical preparation is completed and the individual has been initiated, or brought into full communion with the Catholic Church, but the progression of faith does not end.

"You allow the student to leave with an identity that is different than what they came in with before," De La Torre said.

In addition to the catechumenate

model, he proposed the whole family catechesis model for religious education in parishes. Whole family catechesis is designed for families and children to learn together.

The model is a revised version of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, or CCD, which was an association established in Rome for the purpose of giving religious instruction. It is a parish religious education program.

Parents are the primary educators of the Catholic faith, De La Torre said. In whole family catechesis, the catechist serves as a guide and presents a lesson, while parents are present in the classroom and teach their children.

The model is based on a four-week rotating cycle. The catechist introduces a theme and topic the first week, which is followed by parents teaching the second week. The catechist then presents a lesson during the third week of the month, and parents teach the following week.

The catechist will introduce intercessory prayer, and parents will pray aloud with and over their children, he said.

There are four tasks for whole family catechesis: promote the faith, teach the liturgy, moral formation and establish community. Being intentional in establishing community is important, De La Torre said, as many people leave a parish because of not being surrounded by a loving community.

De La Torre said the whole family catechesis model is focused on teaching children how to pray and incorporating the use of sacramentals, such as the rosary, a crucifix and other sacred objects, for a hands-on approach.

The model also includes time for a communal celebration among families each month, including sharing a meal, Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament together.

Jason Spoolstra, the new associate di-

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Married couples honored at Jubilee of Anniversaries Mass

The diocese paid tribute to the men and women who have provided faithful witness to the holy bond of matrimony with its annual Jubilee of Anniversaries Mass and reception on Sunday, Sept. 10.

More than 400 married couples, family, friends and community members attended the 2 p.m. Mass in downtown Columbus at St. Joseph Cathedral.

The Mass and reception were moved to the cathedral from Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, which was originally scheduled to host the event before unanticipated circumstances forced a late change of venue.

Each year, the diocese honors couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries of 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60-plus years. Registrants from parishes throughout the diocese received a signed certificate from Bishop Earl Fernandes in recognition of their fidelity, and those who signed up in advance were recognized in the Sept. 10 edition of *The Catholic Times*.

Concelebrating the Mass were Father Jan Sullivan, the cathedral's rector; and Father Michael Hinterschied, a parochial vicar at the cathedral; and they were assisted by five diocesan seminarians.

Father Hinterschied's parents, Gregg and Barbara of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Church, were among the couples observing milestone anniversaries at the Mass.

In Bishop Fernandes's homily, he began by



The Jubilee of Anniversaries Mass on Sunday, Sept. 10 at St. Joseph Cathedral honored couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries in 2023. Photo courtesy Abigail Pitones

speaking of his late parents' fidelity to their marriage vows and his appreciation for all married couples in the diocese who display a similar commitment to their spouses.

"On behalf of a grateful diocese, I am thankful for your faithful witness, your witness to Christ and love for His bride, the Church," Bishop Fernandes said. "I am grateful for your generosity in raising up families. I am grateful for your fidelity in helping to build up the Church and for making your homes places of belonging

and welcome."

That fidelity, the bishop explained, came from an act of faith made during the marriage vows on a couple's wedding day.

"You made an act of faith that truly marriage is a sacrament between a man and a woman," he said, "which is a deep sharing in the life and love that is ordered toward procreation and, education of children and the good of their spouses, namely heaven.

"You've made an act of faith that you would be witnesses to Christ's love for His bride, the Church, and you would model this in the world. It takes great courage to make such an act of faith, and I am grateful because of your faithful witness."

Bishop Fernandes pointed to the importance of that witness for young adults.

"Young people wonder today, 'Can I actually get married?'" he said. "'Will a relationship last? Is it even possible in the modern day to be married and to hope for a long and happy life?'"

"You are the living witnesses that this love is real, this love is possible."

Referring back to his parents, the bishop shared his experience of growing up in a household that the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to as the domestic church, rooted in daily prayer that included recitation of the rosary.

Couples recognize through faith that they have a responsibility toward their spouse to sanctify each other and their children to help them reach heaven.

"And so, I call upon you to be committed to the sanctification of the family," the bishop said. "We know that things aren't as they once were. People don't believe as easily, and we know that many families are broken.

Touching on the theme of "fraternal correction" in the Sunday readings, the Bishop remarked: "Many people struggle with many of the moral and sexual issues of our day. It doesn't mean that we be silent but that we offer correction because we love the other person, not because we want to control the other person's life.

"Similarly, when another person offers correction to us, sometimes we get defensive. Sometimes we say, 'Don't nag me.' Sometimes we try to justify ourselves. But we should receive the correction in the spirit which it is given – with humility, with resolutions to try to do better, because it is usually given out of love."

Bishop Fernandes concluded by sharing parts of the exhortation before marriage used at weddings long ago:

"No greater blessing can come to your married life than pure, conjugal love, loyal and true to the end," he said, "May, then, this love, which you join your hands and hearts today, never fail but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on.

"And if true love and the unselfish spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the greatest measure of earthly happiness that may be allotted to man in

Blue Mass honors courage, service, sacrifice of first responders

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Members of the faithful gathered on Sept. 11 at Columbus St. Timothy Church to support first responders and their families at the Blue Mass.

The Blue Mass honors the sacrifice of police, firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical crews, members of the public safety community and those who have given their lives in service to their communities.

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes, who was joined by priests, deacons and seminarians from across the Diocese of Columbus. The Mass was first celebrated in Washington, D.C., in 1934, and the tradition was brought to Columbus by the St. Timothy Knights of Columbus Council.

First responders present for the Mass said it is crucial to have the public's support. It is reassuring and reenergizing for them, they said, to know that they have the support of those they serve.

"This Mass is a commitment to law enforcement and fire and all public safety that the citizens still appreciate," said Chief Jim Gilbert with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

"Over the time of 9/11, it's been 22 years, each time we come together, this event has consistently shown to first responders that there are citizens out there that still support what we have to do on a daily basis because on any given call to service any one of us could need to run into a building like those first responders did in New York, the first responders that responded to the Pentagon, the first responders that responded to the Flight 93 tragedy."

Gilbert, who serves as chief deputy for the sheriff's Patrol Division, said the Mass is "reassuring to us and our families to know that they still care, and they still appreciate what we do because that's important to us in case we have to lay down our lives for them as citizens."

Fire Chief David Whiting with the Pleasant Township Fire Department said many first responders rely on their faith to do their jobs and having the public's support increases their faith and commitment to their role.

"I've been coming for a lot of years, and it's really nice that they recognize what the first responders do because the first responders meet a lot of challenges, and we rely on our faith throughout our lives, our personal and professional lives," he said.

Whiting has served for a year as fire chief, and he previously served as assistant chief for the Columbus Division of Fire.

"It's important to us to be able to be recognized for what we do. It really re-energizes us, gives us more faith as we

go forward, especially in today's challenging world, the things that we face, the difficulties that we face. It's 9/11, so it's a challenging day."

In his homily, Bishop Fernandes thanked the emergency personnel "who serve the Diocese of Columbus and beyond."

The bishop recognized that some people turn to terrorism as a solution, but Christians place their faith in the One whose name they proclaim.

"Some people think we can use the power of terror and terrorism to achieve our ends," he said. "And certainly, on this date in 2001, our world changed forever: a new threat of terrorism, a war in Iraq, a war in Afghanistan, continuing war in Syria, a war in Ukraine, but where does it get us? ...

"What is the power? It is the power of love. This is the world's true power. The power that actually changes hearts. That power has a name, and He was not born in wealth, but in poverty. He came not to terrorize us, but to win us over with His love and gentleness. This is the Christ Whom we proclaim."

Chief David Conley, who serves in the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Security Operations Division, said, "Being a Catholic, the Mass was always the highlight for the week for my life, but to see the public support in one room, one building, one area for an hour, it's wonderful."

"It's crucially important that they support us because we want to support them."

Father Joe Yokum, pastor of Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, serves as a chaplain for police officers and their families. He is assigned to the Patrol Division of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and ministers to the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs of first responders.

After the final blessing, Father Yokum thanked first responders and their families for their willingness to "stand in the gap between good and evil every day."

"You expose yourselves, making yourself vulnerable to danger for our protection. Those of you who serve as a first responder in our community are on the front line of our defense that we have against evil and lawlessness in our communities. You stand between us and them, between safety and chaos, between peace and anarchy."

"You are the reason that we can go to bed at night confident that trained and dedicated first responders are patrolling our streets while we sleep. You do the work that we could not do in places where we would not want to go with courage that we do not possess. You stand in the gap for us, and we are grateful."



The annual Blue Mass honors the men and women who serve and protect the public and is celebrated on Sept. 11 in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and in a field in Pennsylvania in 2001.
Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones



Representatives from fire and law enforcement present the gifts to Bishop Earl Fernandes at the Blue Mass. The bishop is assisted by Deacon Victor Nduaguba (left) at St. Timothy Church.



Columbus Police were among the attendees at the annual Blue Mass on Monday, Sept. 11 at Columbus St. Timothy Church.

Grandparent can pray for a child, not baptize him

Dear Father: I'm in a quandary. I've been a church-going Catholic all my life and raised my kids in the Church. All of them go to church except for one of my daughters. She quit going to church in college and got married outside the Church. Now she has a beautiful baby boy but refuses to have him baptized. My friends tell me to just baptize him in the kitchen sink when I'm babysitting him. Can you explain the procedure to me, please? I'm very worried for his salvation. — L.K.

Dear L.K.: You seem to have a wonderful apostolic spirit, wanting your grandson to be bathed in the saving waters of baptism. But don't do it, not in the kitchen sink, nor the tub, nor a pool. Not even with a water drink.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to raise their children in the Catholic faith. This includes making sure that their children receive the sacraments of the Church so that the children may have communion with their heavenly Father. After all, parents do not "own" their children. Rather, they share in the procreation of a child with God, the Creator of all.

God made us for Himself with the intention that we would be happy (blessed) in His love. No one has a right to stand in the way of God's plan for each person to be saved: to share in God's life on earth and to enjoy union with Him in eternity.

It is very short-sighted for parents to refuse to baptize their children and to refuse the gifts of the other sacraments. To refuse the greatest good to someone shows great selfishness and lack of love.

If a good parent would want the best nourishment and

SACRAMENTS 101

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

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



education and home for his or her child on earth, why not also desire the end for which the child was created: eternal life? Baptism is the beginning of eternal life on earth. It is the beginning of the interior life of grace in the soul. It is the sacrament of divine adoption. It is the infusion of the life of the Blessed Trinity in the soul.

That said, baptism is not magical. The baptized child needs to know about his or her spiritual birthright. Imagine someone who is the heir to a vast fortune but is never told of being an heir. But even if that child was told that he or she is an heir to a financial dynasty but not told how to manage the finances, there would soon be financial disaster.

It's the same with the divine dynasty that we receive by being made children of God, heirs to His glory. We need to know our divine identity, and we need to know how to live as sons and daughters of God. Without this most important education, we will live as paupers on the streets of despair and the gutters of unruly passions.

Thus, dear grandparent, unless your grandchild is going to be raised in the faith by the child's parents, it is quite wrong for you to baptize the child. Try to explain the faith to the child, and take the child to church, but

the parents must also directly participate in teaching their child about God and the Catholic faith.

At the very least, they, and not you, have the responsibility to take the child to their parish to be baptized. Your responsibility is to encourage them to return to and live the faith at home.

There is one exception to the right and responsibility of the parents to have their child baptized: danger of death. If the child is in danger of death, then anyone, including hospital personnel, have the responsibility to baptize the child.

In a true emergency, baptism is accomplished by using this formula: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" while pouring water over the head of the child three times, once at each of the three names of the Trinity.

But you don't need to be passive, dear grandparent! Instead of baptizing the child yourself, pray! Pray hard for the child to survive the threats of the kingdom of darkness.

If the parents of the child permit you to babysit your grandchild, you can pray with the child. Perhaps you could teach your grandchild some essential prayers, such as the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory be and so forth.

You could make visits to the Blessed Sacrament while out on errands with the child. If the parents allow it, take the child to Mass. Teach the child how to genuflect before the tabernacle.

Pray hard, too, for the conversion of the parents of your grandchild. God wants all to be saved, and He always answers prayers for conversion. Always!

Aid needed to train medics in Ukraine conflict

Since February 2022 in the war in Ukraine, more than half of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians who died from their injuries could have been saved if medics and others were properly trained in basic lifesaving skills.

Brig. Gen. Mark Arnold of Columbus is working to provide mobile medical units and trained medics for Ukraine. Arnold has more than 37 years of military service and served three combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq in special operations task forces.

Post-active duty, he graduated from the Ohio Fire Academy's EMT and firefighter courses. He also trained to be a medic and a certified medic instructor. He understands what is needed to save lives.

Before 2022, medics in Ukraine were educated by physicians in five medical schools until three were destroyed and one severely damaged in the invasion by Russia.

While the Ukrainian military has approximately 27,000 medics, the significant expansion of the Ukrainian ground forces and casualties among medics have resulted in fewer than 20% receiving more than

FAITH IN ACTION | Erin Cordle

Erin Cordle is associate director of the diocesan Office for Social Concerns.



two weeks' education in pre-hospital medicine before being assigned to their units, as compared with a 16-week education program pre-invasion.

Almost all injured Ukrainian soldiers are two to six hours' transport from point of injury to the first physician in the chain of care, and four to six days until they are hospitalized. Often, enemy artillery attacks prevent evacuation from the front for up to two days.

The Ukrainian Military Medical Academy is responsible for educating and graduating physicians, nurses and medics. The academy plans to qualify 120 instructors (most are physicians) to teach the combat medic course, the same curriculum used by the U.S. military for its medics.

The academy is establishing 23 geographically dispersed sites plus mobile training teams to educate medics near their units of assignment.

This model worked in Ukraine from 2015 to 2021; the pandemic slowed it, and the Russian invasion destroyed it. This model uses Ukrainian trauma physicians and other experienced Ukrainian medical providers.

A budget of \$2 million to \$2.2 million is needed to purchase in the U.S. and ship to the academy medical training aids and pickup

trucks for the mobile physician instructor teams.

The Columbus Foundation is managing the donor-advised fund, Frontline Medical Ukraine. To donate or learn more, go to: www.cbusfdn.org/frontline-medical-ukraine or socmailbox@columbuscatholic.org.

In addition, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has supported Caritas Ukraine in its emergency efforts since the conflict began in 2014. Since the 2022 invasion, CRS partners Caritas Ukraine (Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church) and Caritas Spes (Roman Catholic Church) have supported nearly 4 million people. Support includes:

- Food assistance in field kitchens that provide hot lunches and snacks.
- Reception services at Caritas offices, train stations and other locations for displaced people to provide clothing, information, referrals, food, water, hygiene items and counseling services.
- Transportation of displaced families to friends, families and local social services.
- Evacuation centers that provide shelter, food, legal assistance and counseling services for displaced families. These centers include support to address emotional care and child-friendly spaces.

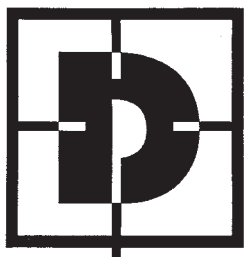
CRS also support relief efforts in Moldova, Romania, Poland, Hungary and the Balkans.

Your help is needed both within Ukraine and for those who flee to neighboring countries for safety and for people who have been displaced to safe areas, as well as conflict-affected residents in isolated settlements.

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Kind mother-in-law an inspiration on life's journey

My mother-in-law, Betty Crock, passed away at the end of June. She was a beautiful, beloved daughter of God and a spiritual mentor to me as she was a convert to Catholicism, and so am I. Here are a few ways she inspired me as I reflect on her amazing and humble life.

Commitment to marriage and family. We witnessed her and her husband's beautiful, faithful and strong marriage of 49 years with three beautiful children and six grandchildren.

Acceptance of others where they are. When Al and I were dating, it was never an issue that I wasn't Catholic or had not committed to converting to Catholicism. (I was Presbyterian.) She and her family loved and encouraged me without any pressure to convert. That loving acceptance helped me to be open to becoming Catholic, which has been truly a gift beyond measure.

Giving gentle encouragement. As a young married couple in New Hampshire many years ago, it's hard to admit, but with two babies and no family nearby to help us, my husband and I were not always faithful to weekly Mass.

In our Sunday phone conversations with Betty, she would ask if we attended Mass. When I said no, she said she was sorry, and she wished she was there to watch the babies so we could go.

She was gentle, kind and encouraging, and I look back on that and I'm so grateful that she didn't push or judge us. Those gentle reminders played a role in getting us back to Sunday Mass weekly.

HOLY AND HEALTHY | Lori Crock

Lori Crock is a SoulCore Rosary prayer and exercise leader and a St. Brendan parishioner. Lori is online at hollyandhealthycatholic.com, where she shares her passion for faith and fitness.



Getting involved in parish life. She was active in her church in many ways. She and her husband, Ron (who passed many years ago), ran the St. Vincent de Paul organization in Seton Parish for many years. She also helped with preparing funeral lunches, greeting people before Mass and helping with the parish festival – to name a few of the many ways she served.

What struck me was her joy in parish life, and that has always been an encouragement to me to get involved in my parish.

Being grateful. She offered prayers of gratitude no matter the circumstances. Betty was incredibly grateful for the smallest blessings. I saw this in her siblings, too, when I was speaking with them at her funeral – a beautiful acceptance of the crosses that they have to bear in their lives and lifting up those crosses with joyful perseverance not self-pity.

Praying and attending daily Mass and Adoration. I would ask her to pray for me, and I could count on her prayers whether it was a rosary or simply talking freely to God on my behalf.

She believed in the power of intercessory prayer and

had a devotion to the Blessed Mother and many saints. Daily Mass and Adoration were important to her, especially in her elder years.

Loving and serving others. Family and friends, especially working side-by-side with others to serve the less fortunate, moved her heart. She enjoyed deep friendships with people from church and in her community.

She was an active listener who always had an encouraging word for others. She loved meeting friends for coffee and treasured her job as a funeral home greeter in her elder years where she would welcome and console others.

Keeping active and getting outside. She walked in her neighborhood for exercise and enjoyed time outdoors, listening to and watching the birds, and never missed an opportunity to visit with a neighbor. This was a healthy habit she maintained even as her physical health began to decline.

Laughing. She enjoyed hearing and telling funny stories. She loved to laugh! Even at the end of her life, when Alzheimer's was challenging her mind and body, she knew when my husband, Al, was teasing her, and she would acknowledge him with a chuckle or a funny face, which made us smile.

I'm grateful for Betty's love and her example of holiness. She inspires me to keep moving and growing on my own journey with Jesus. May we all bear witness to the love of Jesus in our everyday lives.

The Blessed Ulma Family and our Catholic moment

It's a rare occasion when the word "unprecedented" can be used for a Church whose history extends over two millennia. Yet something unprecedented happened in the Polish village of Markowa on September 10, when an entire family, including their unborn child, was beatified. It seems not quite right to refer to the new blessed by the traditional formula, "Blessed Józef and Wiktoria Ulma and Companions," the "companions" in question being the Ulmas' six living children and their unborn child. Let's instead think about the Blessed Ulma Family and what they might mean for us.

Beginning in late 1942, Józef and Wiktoria Ulma sheltered eight Jews in the attic of their wooden farmhouse: a capital crime during the German Occupation of Poland in World War II. On March 24, 1944, German gendarmes came to the house, murdered the Jews, and then shot Józef and Wiktoria, who was late in her pregnancy. The terrified children – Stanisława (8), Barbara (6), Władysław (5), Franciszek (4), Antoni (3), and Maria (1½) – were then gunned down. The bodies were dumped in a pit and later reburied in the local church cemetery.

Visiting the nearby Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II this past July 23 and praying at the Ulma family tomb near their parish church of St. Dorothy, lessons for 21st-century Catholicism came to mind.

The first involves the sources of Christian heroism. While both Józef and Wiktoria Ulma were well-educated by the mid-20th century standards of rural Poland, they were not theological sophisticates. They read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37) not as a general injunction to love of neighbor that could be adapted to circumstances but as a specific instruction from

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

George Weigel is the Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. George Weigel's column "The Catholic Difference" is syndicated by the *Denver Catholic*, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.



Christ the Lord – if you encounter people in distress, you must help them, irrespective of their ethnic or religious identity and regardless of the cost.

Some contemporary Catholic leaders find such a literal reading of the Lord's words uncomfortable; they suggest that the moral code that follows from such biblical "fundamentalism" is "rigid," "ideological," and insufficiently pastoral. Yet the same "rigid" sense of biblically-grounded moral obligation that animated the Ulmas' heroic sheltering of persecuted Jews led Father Maximilian Kolbe to offer his life in the starvation bunker at Auschwitz in exchange for that of a condemned prisoner, just as it led Mother Teresa to spend out her life in service to the poorest of the poor, whom she regarded as "Jesus in his most distressing disguise;" just as it led U.S. Navy chaplain Father Vincent Capodanno to sacrifice his life bringing comfort to wounded and dying Marines in Vietnam. Neither the Ulmas, Father Kolbe, Mother Teresa, nor Father Capodanno indulged in the "proportionalist" weighing of moral obligations that have returned to favor during the present pontificate. They lived the parable of the Good Samaritan literally—those who find that "rigid" and "ideological" should think again.

The second lesson involves the nature of martyrdom,

which the death of St. Maximilian Kolbe and the drama of the Blessed Ulma Family invite the 21st-century Church to reconsider.

Traditionally, a "martyr" was someone killed in odium fidei [in hatred of the faith]. Did Kolbe's self-sacrifice satisfy this definition, such that he was a "martyr" as well as a confessor of the faith? Were the Ulmas' murderers motivated by odium fidei? The hybrid category "martyr of charity" has come into vogue in recent decades since Pope Paul VI used it of Kolbe. But it seems that Kolbe's sacrifice, and that of the Ulmas, satisfies while developing the traditional definition.

Certain modern political theories teach a radical contempt for the dignity and value of human life, or at least the dignity and value of some human lives. That was certainly the case with German National Socialism: to the Nazis, Jews and the Poles who sheltered them were lower life forms to be exterminated. Is that not hatred of the biblically informed faith that, in Genesis 1.26, teaches that every human being is created, like Adam and Eve, in the divine image and likeness? Is not hatred of those made in God's image and likeness hatred of God? And is not odium Dei a form of odium fidei?

The Synod that opens next month bids us to be a Church of "communion, participation, and mission." The Blessed Ulma Family lived in communion with the persecuted Jews of Subcarpathian Poland and participated in the Mystery of the Cross by living the mission of the Good Samaritan, to which they were called in Baptism. May their example inspire Synod-2023 to a similarly radical embrace of the Catholic faith.

JERIC, continued from Page 2

oversight to all aspects of fundraising including planned gifts, annual giving, and implementation of the Advancement portion of the seminary's strategic plan recently approved by the Board of Trustees.

"The Pontifical College Josephinum is

one of the great seminaries not only in America but the world," Jeric said. "Its independent, pontifical identity makes it very unique, and to support the formation of future priests here is a true honor. I am both blessed and humbled to be in

this new leadership position and to advance the Josephinum's mission to form holy, generous, adaptable, and resilient priests for the 21st century."

Jeric replaces Doug Stein, who served the Josephinum for three years.

"I am very grateful to Doug for his leadership, guidance, and help during this transition," Jeric said. "Because of Doug's leadership, we are in a solid position to move forward and further the mission of the Josephinum."

The work of surrender and trust

The work of mothering lasts a lifetime. When I began this journey, I thought it was a work devoted to my children. Little did I know then, but it was a work given to me by the Lord not only to lift my children to Him but also to form me closer to His heart.

There is a pouring out in motherhood, a selfless, hope-filled giving that enables us to serve joyfully and to persevere through the growing pains of raising children to adulthood. Having launched four of my eight children into the young adult world, I am reflecting on the growth in myself, the growth in my children and the growth I still need.

Letting go of adult children is never easy. There is a realization that no matter their age, our children belong to the Lord. I remember saying to myself often, "What faith the Lord must have in me!"

Even then I knew He had entrusted them to me, but like the parable of the talents, they still belong to Him. I wish I had taught myself to continually give them back to the Lord as a young mom. Perhaps it would have made this part of motherhood easier. For there is a rip-

ALL THAT WE HAVE

MaryBeth Eberhard

MaryBeth Eberhard writes about marriage, life experiences of a large family and special needs. She attends Sunbury St. John Neumann Church.



ping, a tearing of heartstrings, as I learn to let go.

Looking back, there were times of suffering and strife, frustration and anger when I would yell out to the Lord that I did not know what to do. I thought of Hannah who gave Samuel to Eli at the temple. I used to joke with my parish priest, asking if that was still possible. He would smile and remind me that, as Mother Mary was chosen for our Savior, I was chosen for these children.

So now what do I do, as they are out in the world facing temptations and living in a culture caught up in selfishness and sin? How do I step back and trust?

Prayer and surrender are key, and as mothers we are used to doing both. We change diapers, we make meals, we help with schoolwork, drive to activities and stay up

late when hearts need mending.

I am learning now to pray into all those moments that my children are learning to navigate themselves. Praying becomes the doing, and it is holy ground. In prayer, I speak of the sorrow and the pride, the joy and the gratitude, my worries and hopes, and I trust that the Lord hears the integrity of my heart.

I am finding peace in the constancy of prayer. I am finding peace in getting myself to Mass more often or to Adoration. A dear friend taught me the joy of asking my children's guardian angels to go to Mass for them every day – such a beautiful offering for them!

In adopting this new routine of surrendering and praying for my children, I notice how the Lord works in my life. How he is forming me to be a better mother even when it goes against what I want to do. The Lord is showing me what I need to do.

The beautiful thing about being human is that we have such a capacity for growth and change, and in that growth is where we become more who we were created to be and closer to Him who made us.

JUBILEE, continued from Page 4

this valley of tears.

"The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting to your needs. He will pledge you the lifelong support of His graces in the holy sacrament, which you are now going to receive."

"Truer words were never spoken. Everything is in the hands of God. God is attentive to your needs, and He continues to pledge His lifelong support, His grace

and His friendship."

After the homily, Bishop Fernandes gave a special blessing to the married couples in the pews and watching the livestream online.

A Jubilee of Anniversaries Mass replay is available on the diocese's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@ColumbusCatholic/streams>.

St. Catharine offers SPICE Mass on Oct. 1

Columbus St. Catharine Church's SPICE program will host a Mass of Inclusion on Sunday, Oct. 1 at 5 p.m. at the parish, 500 S. Gould Road.

The Mass will be a celebration of all people with special needs. SPICE is an acronym for Special Persons in Catholic Education, which is a special funding program developed to address the vari-

ety of student learning needs.

There will be low gluten hosts, wheelchair accessibility and a sign language interpreter.

A light reception will be held immediately after Mass.

Anyone who has questions or who would like to be involved in the liturgy should contact Lynn Sweeney at lynnann9570@yahoo.com.



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CATHOLIC TIMES

Published bi-weekly at 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3229, with general business offices at the same address.

Names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and business manager are: publisher – Bishop Earl K. Fernandes, 198 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3766; editor – Doug Bean, 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3229.

There are no known bondholders, mortgages and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more total amount of bonds, mortgages and other securities.

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

AVERAGE NUMBER OF COPIES:	THROUGH 9/24/23 ISSUES	
A. Total number of copies printed (net press run)	6,300	6,283
B. Paid circulation:		
1) outside-county mail subscriptions	2,745	2,071
2) in-county mail subscriptions	3,355	3,952
3) sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales, other non-USPS paid circulation	0	0
4) other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid circulation:	6,100	6,023
D. Free or nominal distribution:		
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3) Free or nominal rate at other classes through USPS	0	0
4) Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail	250	250
E. Total free or nominal rate distribution	250	250
F. Total distribution	6350	6273
G. Copies not distributed	50	50
H. Total	6400	6323
I. Percent paid	96.06%	96.01%

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

2 diocesan priests studying abroad for advanced degrees

By Hannah Heil

Catholic Times Reporter

Eight years after Father Michael Hartge and Father Nicola Ventura were ordained as priests for the Diocese of Columbus, the classmates are students again.

Both were ordained in 2015, and upon the request of Bishop Earl Fernandes, they are pursuing graduate degrees.

Father Hartge is working toward a degree in canon law. He relocated to Canada in fall 2022 to study at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Father Hartge considers it a “privilege to be able to take two years out and study.”

Sending priests for further education enriches the diocese, he said, and he is grateful for the opportunity.

“It’s enriching my priesthood to understand the code better, and then, in the future, always as I’m learning, I’m thinking of, number one, my brother priests and how I can assist them in their ministry, especially in the parochial ministry.

“And I’m also thinking about how I can be of assistance eventually, maybe to the bishop, too.”

Prior to returning to school, Father Hartge served in the Chancery as moderator of the curia, under the authority of Bishop Fernandes, overseeing those in diocesan administration. He said he hopes to aid in Chancery work after earning his degree.

He said canon law is often misunderstood as being “rigid,” but he has come to find it “pastoral” through his studies.

“There’s a lot of misconceptions that the Code of Canon Law is this book of strict rules that get in the way of pastoral work, and that couldn’t be further from the truth,” he said.

“It’s really an encouragement in so much of the pastoral work that we do, and it’s good that it’s written down and promulgated and codified (arranged into a system) in such a way that we have something to go back to, to make sure that things are done right, people are getting the pastoral care that they deserve as the people of God, that those who are giving that pastoral care, such as clerics (members of the clergy), are properly supported.”

Canon law consists of ecclesiastical law, or laws made by man, Father Hartge said, and it also codifies some divine laws, too. Divine law governs sacraments such as marriage.

Canon law protects the rights of members of the Church, including laypersons, consecrated religious and clerics. And, he said, it “spells out, too, some of the obligations of different states in life.”

While studying for his degree, Father Hartge has taken various courses, including a class on the “people of God,” which, he said, involves one of the “lon-



Father Michael Hartge *File photo*

ger books in the Code of Canon Law.” The class focuses on the rights and duties of all the baptized, including the lay faithful and clerics.

He also took a class on the Sanctifying Office, which are canon laws that “describe and govern the sacraments,” as well as a class on procedural law, which ensures that people’s rights are not violated and proper procedures are followed, such as in a marriage nullity case (annulment).

Having a degree in canon law, he said, will him in advising priests particularly with questions pertaining to marriage.

There is a book in the Code of Canon Law on penal law, which, Father Hartge said, he could use to advise the bishop on penalties in the law. The degree will also be useful with ongoing changes in the diocese, he said.

“With what we’re doing with the Real Presence Real Future initiative, that’s another part of canon law, which would just be how parishes are set up. And so, pastors, rightly, are going to have questions about that – about the proper procedures for notably altering parishes.”

Laypeople can earn degrees in canon law, and being a civil lawyer is not a requirement.

“Many laypeople do earn this degree and are very helpful, either in a diocese or on their own, to have a better knowledge of the Church law,” Father Hartge said. “Sometimes it’s a civil lawyer who might be helping a diocese and wants to get to know better the law of the Church.”

Laypersons who earn such a degree can hold certain offices in a diocese. They can act as a judge on a tribunal, which is a diocesan court that investigates marriage nullity cases, or be an advocate in a marriage nullity case, he said. The degree can also be a prerequisite to teach in a seminary.

The Catholic Church is governed by the 1983 Code of Canon Law, a revision



Father Nicola Ventura *File photo*

of the 1917 code. The year 1917 was the “first time the laws of the Church were placed in a cohesive code,” Father Hartge said.

His curriculum of study is governed by the Vatican and is divided into six semesters of work, he said. A canon law degree can be completed in two years, or canon law can be studied part-time. Father Hartge is taking classes in consecutive semesters and plans to graduate in summer 2024.

More than 4,000 miles away, Father Ventura is studying at the Pontificio Ateneo Sant’Anselmo, or the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm, a pontifical institute in Rome.

“We haven’t assigned a Columbus priest to study in Rome in over 20 years, so it’s a lot of firsts,” he said.

Father Ventura was asked by Bishop Fernandes in August 2022, when he was pastor of Columbus St. Cecilia Church, to earn a licentiate in sacred liturgy. He holds a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology in Scripture from the Pontifical College Josephinum.

There are three levels of ecclesial degrees: bachelor’s, licentiate and doctorate.

Father Ventura plans to take “a lot of historic development classes” and study “ancient liturgies from archeology, medieval books describing the liturgy, our records,” as well as “translating Latin texts.”

“We’ve been celebrating liturgy since the Last Supper, really since the Covenant of Israel, but studying it as a science is relatively recent,” he said.

When he arrived in Italy in August of this year, Father Ventura first settled in Assisi and took classes in the Italian language. He said he will likely begin studies for his licentiate in sacred liturgy in mid-October.

“I’m excited to enter into the subject field and see how the Lord leads me,

what might interest me,” he said. “I’ve always enjoyed history, so learning more about the historical development of the liturgy, our tradition, is interesting to me.

“We can never throw out our tradition. We can develop our tradition. We should never throw it out, so it’s always good to know about it. To throw out our tradition would be like a family throwing away their photo album, even though the photo album might contain things that aren’t applicable anymore, it’s still important they know who they are.”

Catholics partake in the liturgy through participating in the Mass or praying the Liturgy of the Hours, which is prayed daily by consecrated religious and clerics. Receiving a sacrament is also participating in liturgy.

“When you go to Mass, when you go to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, Vespers, Morning Prayer (Lauds), when we go to a Eucharistic procession, when we go to Adoration, this is, in a sense, a form of liturgy. Anytime you celebrate a sacrament, that involves liturgy.

“When someone goes to confession or receives the anointing of the sick, there are liturgical actions in there. In confession, the confession of sins, the priest giving absolution, the act of contrition; in the anointing of the sick, the oil being used and the words being said, all of these things the Church has spelled out. And so, these are things to study, like development, how did we get there.”

Father Ventura said he will explore how the Church understands worship and what it means to worship God. He said worship is “predominantly a divine action,” although it involves human action, too.

The curriculum is not exploring new developments or changes to liturgy, he said, but rather a study of its history and development and the Church’s understanding of worship by “going back to the source.”

Father Ventura hopes to complete his degree in 2026. After graduating, he looks forward to serving his brother priests by being “a resource to understand where we come from and why we do certain things, and also, to be consulted when it comes to sacramental theology.”

Having a licentiate in liturgy will also be beneficial “for training seminarians, for training men to be priests,” he said, and “having someone who’s an expert to talk about these things, so they know the basics to serve the people.”

Courage ministry counsels same-sex-attracted Catholics

In today's culture, it takes courage for anyone dealing with same-sex attraction to follow Catholic Church teaching on human sexuality.

The Church is often ridiculed and mocked for its adherence to biblical principles regarding the unique qualities of man and woman assigned by God, the virtue of living chaste lives and the sanctity of marriage between a male and a female.

For individuals who find themselves same-sex attracted yet want to remain faithful Catholics, there's a resource that might not be widely known but has proved helpful to thousands for more than 40 years.

Courage International ministry is an international apostolate founded in 1980 in the Archdiocese of New York and directed by Father John Harvey, OSFS, for 30 years with the intention to provide pastoral care and uphold clear Catholic teaching on chastity and homosexuality. In the past 43 years, Courage has expanded to more than 75 chapters worldwide.

In the Diocese of Columbus, Courage has existed for a number of years but has experienced a recent revival through efforts to make the availability of this resource more widely known.

Father William Ferguson, the parochial vicar at Delaware St. Mary Church, has served as the local chaplain of the Courage apostolate for the past two years, assuming that role from Father Pat Toner.

Last October, the local chapter went from being limited to individual spiritual direction to monthly group meetings. Over the past year, attendance has grown from four members to 11.

"Here in the diocese, we would like to keep expanding Courage and EnCourage (the support group for loved ones of same-sex-attracted persons)," Father Ferguson said.

"We are looking especially with Courage to start a college-age group because we realize that same-sex attraction is becoming an increasing concern and an issue with the college-age population, and so as a local Church we want to be responsive to that need."

Because of the sensitivity surrounding the issue, local participants are understandably reluctant to share their experiences about Courage publicly.

But a Courage member identified as S.B. was willing to offer some thoughts, saying, "The Courage group is indispensable! The support offered when experiencing unwanted same-sex attraction is invaluable.

"Although support may be found in other places within the Church because of the nature of the issue, the level of intimacy and confidentiality needed for such support is very difficult to find. I would encourage anyone experiencing unwanted same-sex attraction to reach



Father William Ferguson is the diocesan chaplain for the local Courage and EnCourage chapters. *File photo*

out for the support a Courage group can provide."

Men make up approximately two-thirds of the local group. The monthly meetings follow a format that includes prayer, spiritual reflection, a talk on a topic related to same-sex attraction (SSA), sharing and fellowship.

At each meeting, the following goals of Courage from the national apostolate are read:

- To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality.
- To dedicate our entire lives to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass and the frequent reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.
- To foster a spirit of fellowship in which we may share with one another our thoughts and experiences and so ensure that no one will have to face the problems of homosexuality alone.
- To be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in a chaste Christian life; and to encourage one another in forming and sustaining these friendships.
- To live lives that may serve as good example to others.

CHURCH TEACHING

"The main thing to be certain about is that God loves everyone, no matter what struggles or temptations we might face," Father Ferguson emphasized. "That's because we're all made in God's image and likeness, and we're called by God to deeper spiritual growth and preparation for heaven.

"We are also created as a whole person, which means we're a combination of soul and body. Not simply does our soul have significance, but also does our body. The Catholic Christian faith has always believed in the goodness and

deeper meaning of the body."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 2358) states that most persons in this situation do not choose this condition; it can be experienced as a confusing burden, and then adds that persons with SSA "are called to lives of chastity, which is a positive virtue that actually everyone is called to as a human person."

"Chastity simply means relating to one's own person – body and soul – and to other persons in a holy, authentic and pure way that respects the dignity of all involved," Father Ferguson said. "This can take on different forms for different states in life.

"For example, a teenager is called to chastity by practicing how to interact with others in a way that respects their dignity, to begin to experience their sexual desires in a holy way as a sign of anticipating the deep union and beauty of heaven, and to save the positive sexual act for a possible future call to marriage so that it can be made a 'gift' to a spouse.

"A married couple is called to chastity precisely in the marital act by ensuring that the act is indeed one of total self 'gift' to the other, rather than one of merely 'taking' from the other.

"Likewise, a person with SSA is called to chastity by refraining from intimate sexual relations. Instead, they are called to relate to others in ways based on healthy chaste friendships along with directing their intimate desires in honest prayer to God as, again, a sign of anticipating an even deeper union with the divine to come one day in heaven."

Father Ferguson stressed that merely experiencing internal same-sex attraction involves no sin in and of itself. "If you don't 'will' a condition, there is no sin in having it. And you are not at all any less loved by God for having a challenging condition," he said.

"But if someone were to act on those attractions and engage in active same-sex relationships with full knowledge and will, that would be a sinful thing, because it harms the ability of a person to grow in their positive holiness and likeness to God.

"Now, the power of same-sex attractions can be pretty strong, so that's why authentic chastity is certainly not always going to be an easy path for someone with SSA. But that's why we have the Courage ministry. It helps provide support to keep staying strong in growing in holiness and pursuing chastity."

A person with SSA, though, does not have to face this challenge alone and should not "hide" from Jesus in shame, Father Ferguson said. The Catechism (No. 2358) says that Jesus is always there to help, and that He knows what it's like to carry crosses and to be severely tempted.

When someone asks why active same-

sex relationships should be avoided, Church teaching provides the answer.

"Intimate relations with someone of the same sex does not allow for a 'total gift' of whole persons," Father Ferguson said. "While the souls might have feelings of union, the bodies involved logically cannot make a total 'gift'; it is always going to be a 'frustrated' attempt at union.

"It can be tough for a person with SSA to stay holy, partly because much of the culture tells us that anyone with SSA should automatically get involved with the active lifestyle. But there is a healthier alternative.

"Contrary to what much of society says, 'love' and 'sex' are not the same thing. Of course, we all need love. But authentic love does not necessarily mean frequency of intercourse. True love among humans is a much deeper thing. It's founded on mutual respect for each other's dignity.

"That's why one of Courage's main goals is to help members to foster healthy, chaste friendships as fellow disciples so that they can experience authentic love that is not a sexual experience."

CONVERSION?

To be clear, the goal of Courage is not to force someone to "convert" from a homosexual to a heterosexual lifestyle. Twenty-six states and more than 100 U.S. cities, including Columbus, have banned so-called conversion therapy for minors (counseling for same-sex-attracted youth seeking help in returning to their God-given sexual orientation).

"In Courage, we talk a lot about conversion, but conversion to Jesus Christ," explained Father Kyle Schnippel, the acting interim director for Courage International and a priest in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. "Part of that conversion is how we bring our brokenness to Him to allow Him to speak to us through those moments of brokenness.

"The longer I have worked with Courage, the more I appreciate the nuance and pastoral approach that is conveyed by the Catechism: '(Same sex attraction's) psychological genesis remains largely unexplained.' (No. 2357)

"The approach of Courage is, I think, straightforward and pastoral: We care that the person has this experience and want to walk along with him or her in this experience towards Jesus Christ. That's the goal; whatever Jesus wants to do with this person's experience of SSA is up to Him!"

Father Ferguson confirmed that the goal locally is not to make an individual pretend that he or she is heterosexual "but to help them know that in the midst of their attraction that they can still be chaste and have good, healthy friend-

Families find support through EnCourage

When Catholic families and friends are confronted with a loved one's same-sex attraction, a typical reaction is confusion and concern. Often, they don't know where to turn for help.

"When I first learned that our son was leading a homosexual lifestyle, I was overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and doubt," K.W. (name withheld for confidentiality) said. "I wondered what I had done (or not done) to cause my son's homosexuality."

"It was comforting to meet other parents who were struggling with these same feelings and to be reassured by the priest that I was not to blame for my son's homosexuality."

K.W. and others have found encouragement through an EnCourage group in the Diocese of Columbus that provides support for parents, family members, friends and others who have someone in their lives dealing with same-sex attraction.

EnCourage is an international apostolate that was formed in 1987, seven years after the founding of Courage International, which focuses on assisting the men and women with same-sex attraction who want to live chaste lifestyles according to Church teaching.

Parents with a same-sex-attracted child often struggle with guilt, particularly when the child is not actively practicing the faith. EnCourage, which has grown to more than 75 chapters worldwide, is designed to help them understand the experience of their loved one and to develop healthy relationships within families while striving to deepen their own spirituality.

In the Diocese of Columbus, the EnCourage group meets once a month under the direction of Father William Ferguson, the parochial vicar at Delaware St. Mary Church who has served as the chaplain of Courage and EnCourage for the past two years after Father Pat Toner filled that role for many years.

"I am so grateful that the Catholic Church has, for many decades now, recognized the need to serve the real pastoral needs of those with same-sex attraction (SSA) along with their families," Father Ferguson said.

"These national apostolates show that the Catholic Church does not at all 'hate gays' as many in our society seem to think, but that we are indeed very welcoming of those who are experiencing SSA and who want to handle it in an authentic way.

"The Courage and EnCourage ministries show that the Catholic Church is always wanting to meet people with two vitally important principles: both compassion and truth. This is how Jesus related to people. Jesus was always compassionate and willing to accompany people in their needs, but he never wavered on the truth of their dignity as

human persons."

"As the local chaplain, and as someone who has never had SSA, I have learned an immense amount from the members of both ministries as I have tried to serve them and to accompany them. And I have grown deeply in my sincere admiration for their determination to strive for holiness and their total commitment to Jesus. They are all an inspiration to me."

About 10-15 people attend the monthly meetings for the local EnCourage group, which has grown steadily in recent years to approximately 30 members. The group sessions include Mass, prayer, a reflection based on the Church's teaching on same-sex attraction and discussions about family situations and healthy relationships with family members.

"The culture as a whole is trying to get us to condone this kind of lifestyle, and it can be fairly isolating for many of these family members who want to embrace Church teachings," Father Ferguson said. "This group really helps them to know that they're on the right track as far as upholding the dignity of the human body and what authentic love means.

"It helps them to know that they're not alone and that they have the support of the Church and other fellow disciples as Catholics in the midst of their family situations."

At every EnCourage meeting, the national apostolate's five goals are read:

- To grow spiritually through spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist.
- To gain a deeper understanding of the needs, difficulties and challenges experienced by men and women with same-sex attraction.
- To establish and maintain a healthy and wholesome relationship with their loved ones who experience same-sex attraction.
- To assist other family members and friends to reach out with compassion and truth, and not to reject their loved ones who experience same-sex attraction.
- To witness to their loved ones by their own lives that fulfillment is to be found in Jesus Christ through His Body, the Church.

A mother and father who attend local meetings described their EnCourage experience. They have a same-sex-attracted son.

"Over the years, attendees at our meetings have been parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses, cousins, aunts and uncles and friends of men or women who experience same-sex attraction," the couple related.



EnCourage meetings are held once a month in the diocese for families and friends who have a same-sex-attracted loved one. *iStock photo*

"Our loved ones are very, very dear to our hearts, and we accept them as we accept all those we love, with all their strengths and weaknesses. Yet love and acceptance of another person does not mean that we must agree with their choices and actions."

They said the confidential sharing and fellowship at the meetings have proved invaluable to them in their family's journey.

"At the heart of this sharing is our desire to increase in understanding, compassion and love, grounded in God's revealed truth, so our discussion encompasses goals two, three and four," they said. "Much fruitful conversation flows from this. Sometimes people just have to unburden their hearts, and that is fine.

"The reason everyone is there is because they love someone so much, and they want that person to know how much God loves them, and it's painful to see any of our loved ones turn away from God's plan for human flourishing. ...

"We have also developed wonderful friendships with the other members over the years, and for many, those friends are the only people they can talk to about their situation.

"And, most important, EnCourage has been vital for our family, helping us to develop a better relationship with our son. He knows we don't agree with him on the issues surrounding same-sex attraction, but he absolutely knows we truly love him."

Another couple learned of their son's same-sex attraction more than 14 years ago before the EnCourage group was formed in Columbus. Shocked and confused, they turned to a parish priest who at that time did not have the resources available to assist. They went online and found the national apostolate of Cour-

age and EnCourage, which has its headquarters in Connecticut.

The www.couragerc.org website offers a variety of resources for the same-sex attracted and their families that include the locations of local chapters, support programs, chat groups, events and contact information.

Details about Courage and EnCourage in the Diocese of Columbus also can be found through the Office of Marriage and Family Life at www.columbuscatholic.org.

"If not for (Courage and EnCourage), we don't know what our relationship would be like with our son," the couple said. "We learned to speak the truth in love with compassion and maintain a good relationship with him.

"We are so grateful for the local EnCourage group that we have now. We look forward to spending time with the other like-minded members and Father Ferguson for their support and a chance to pray together."

Another couple who joined the group about six years ago said EnCourage has been a "lifeline" for them.

In addition to local meetings, EnCourage and Courage conduct a yearly national conference. This year's event took place at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, and was attended by Bishop Earl Fernandes.

A couple who has gone to the conferences said, "We have witnessed the struggles and, most of all, the joy of those with SSA who have come to know that true happiness can only be found in Christ and by living by His teachings. They truly are saints to be able to live chaste lives as opposed to what the culture is telling them to do.

"As we are labeled homophobic and

Support group helps parents of children with gender confusion

Editor's note: Names in this story have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

When Joan's daughter confided in her mother that she was experiencing gender dysphoria, which is defined as clinically significant distress or impairment related to gender incongruence, including a desire to change sex characteristics, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Joan felt alone.

After much time spent in prayer and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, she took a leap of faith and formed Connected Through Christ, a confidential support group for parents around the country who have children experiencing gender dysphoria and same-sex attraction.

"My strong Catholic faith told me that I was different, and I needed to guide her to the truth of who God created her to be," she said. "I know that our kids are facing a mental health crisis right now, so to me, guiding them towards the truth seemed like the only logical way to go when it affected my family, but I really had to dig deep to find people who were like-minded on this issue."

Connected Through Christ first met in October 2022. The group consists of nine parents from seven families who have children experiencing gender dysphoria or same-sex attraction. They meet once a month and lean on their faith in Christ and each other for support.

Joan recalled the early days after her daughter revealed that she was experiencing gender dysphoria. Joan searched for resources, she said, but what she discovered contradicted her Catholic faith.

"My teenage daughter confided in me that she was struggling with her gender identity, and there were some visible changes with her appearance and with her mood and some of her behaviors," Joan said. "So, at that point, I started to dive into some resources to process what she was feeling and why and how I could help her in a loving and supportive way."

"Unfortunately, most of the resources that I found that were readily available for parents who were looking for answers took me down a path to socially and medically transition her."

To socially transition, Joan said, would mean calling her child by an alternative name, using her daughter's preferred pronouns and encouraging alternate-dress and hairstyle that do not align with her daughter's sex at birth.

To medically transition would entail taking her daughter to a gender clinic and allowing her to start puberty blockers, receive cross-sex hormones or a sex-



Parents find comfort meeting with others facing similar gender experiences. *iStock photo*

change operation, she said.

"With the way most of our secular culture approaches gender dysphoria, a parent who views it differently can feel very isolated and alone, which is exactly how I felt in the beginning when I started to research, 'OK, so my child told me this, what do I do?'"

"It took me down a path of medical transition and changing her name, and it never sat very well with me, and I felt utterly and completely alone."

Joan formed Connected Through Christ after meeting with Mary Ann Jepsen, a Catholic licensed professional clinical counselor and the founder of Covenant Integrative Counseling Services, located in central Ohio. Jepsen has served as the group's adviser and liaison.

Jepsen also recommended that parents of children experiencing gender dysphoria or same-sex attraction read *The Genesis of Gender* by Dr. Abigail Favale, published by Ignatius Press.

The book offers a historical, philosophical and theological perspective on gender issues facing modern society. It provides a Christian understanding of the dignity of the body, the sacramental meaning of sexual difference and the interconnectedness of all creation, written from the perspective of a former feminist and Catholic convert.

"As a Catholic therapist, I always approach the concerns of my clients from a spiritual, psychological, biological, social perspective," she said. "I often see conflicts between these different parts within an individual. We all have them at times. This is part of the human condition."

"My job is to help my clients assimilate these parts from a Christian anthropological position. Gender incongruence and dysphoria, as well as same-sex attraction, can be very real and deeply distressing situations for both the individual experiencing them and their family

members.

"Groups like Connected Through Christ, Courage (apostolate) and EnCourage (ministry) have the advantage of providing a safe and confidential space where people sharing the same, or similar, life challenges can meet to support each other, pray together, share resources and develop lasting bonds of friendship. They can be very healing for everyone involved, and I highly recommend them."

Courage is a Roman Catholic apostolate for men and women who experience same-sex attraction. EnCourage is a ministry within Courage that is dedicated to the spiritual needs of parents, siblings, children, relatives and friends of individuals who experience same-sex attraction.

Holding true to her Catholic faith, Joan formed Connected Through Christ to support parents who felt isolated and were suffering in silence.

"I said, 'Look, I'm going to form an in-person support group because we don't walk this journey alone,' and I had so many people say, 'Yes,' to my invitation. That's how this started. Together, we're healing while we're trusting in the Lord and leaning into our faith and leaning into each other."

Joan selected the Bible verse John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life," to represent the group because "there really does not seem to be any other way, especially with this issue." She knew she needed to speak truth to her child of who God created her to be, rather than seek a medical transition, she said, and she felt a need for prayer and to trust in God's plan through trials.

"The truth is that someone's DNA will never change, even with a medical transition. You are who you are at birth and who God created you, and you will always be that. Biology tells you there are two genders: there's male and female."

Joan said when someone experiences gender dysphoria or same-sex attraction, it can breed division among people, especially within families.

"The biggest way it affects families is just division," she said. "There can be division among parents who may not agree on how to handle this issue with their kids, division between siblings. You can have just a complete fear of losing your family unit. You feel attacked, and it can be really, really scary."

Members of the group have children of various ages – some are in high school; others are adults who medically transitioned their bodies. Joan said parents in Connected Through Christ share knowledge, expertise and coping mechanisms with one another. They also share resources, such as a "trusted counselor," she said, or a medical professional.

"It's just a way for people to talk about where their kids are at with everything and how the family's coping," Joan said. "There's usually tears; there's always laughter. It's just incredible to think how we started as strangers, and now the friendship is so strong over something that is such a tough topic."

Parents in the group are rooted in faith and speak truth to their children "in terms of who God created them to be," Joan said. The parents rely on their faith in Christ to navigate their children's experience with gender dysphoria or same-sex attraction.

There is an option for anonymous, virtual participation if a parent feels uncomfortable meeting in-person. However, Joan said, she holds an initial phone conversation with each parent prior to joining the group, and confidentiality waivers are signed.

April and her husband, Andy, are part of the Connected Through Christ support group. Their daughter has experienced gender dysphoria for seven years.

"We totally understand and support each other," April said of the parents in the group. "We cry together, we pray together, we share Bible verses for inspiration, things to hold onto. We hug. I don't know how to say it except that you just don't get it until you're in it. These are people that are absolutely in it with you."

"Everybody loves the Lord so much and just really clings to their faith in Him to get through it. I don't know that my husband and I would get as much out of a group that was not faith based because the only way we've gotten through this is sort of with each other and Jesus – the Lord – and so that is such an integral part of our story, and all these people, I think they would say the same."

"To anybody who's experienced this, you don't have to do it alone. It is much easier to carry this burden with other people going through it."

Andy said he experienced guilt be-

Rapid onset gender dysphoria and the tragic seduction of our daughters

In recent years, the number of young people with gender dysphoria, or extreme discomfort in one's biological sex, has skyrocketed in the United States and Western Europe.

Professor Lisa Littman, a researcher at Brown University, was the first to publish a report that indicated that many transgender-identified children experience "rapid onset gender dysphoria," a clustering phenomenon in which one, several, or even all the friends in a group become transgender-identified within a similar timeframe. Other researchers have since published similar findings.

Littman proposed the hypothesis that this transgender identification could involve a novel form of peer or social contagion that contrasts with our classical understanding of gender dysphoria dating back about a hundred years. Some of the novel aspects of the phenomenon include:

1. The initial age of onset has markedly shifted, from preschool-age kids to the teenage years, typically around the age of 16;

2. The sex ratio has flipped from mostly young boys before 2010 to now more than 75% adolescent girls; and

3. The prevalence of the phenomenon has risen dramatically in recent years, both absolutely and relatively, leading some to suggest we are facing an "epidemic" in rapid onset gender dysphoria.

In other words, teenage girls with no prior history of gender dysphoria are now the predominant demographic identifying as transgender.

Discussing the phenomenon in *Psychology Today*, Christopher J. Ferguson, Ph.D. notes that the "sudden surge in the number of teen girls identifying as trans boys is due not to gender dysphoria or transgenderism but rather to girls with other mental conditions who are mistakenly self-identifying as trans because there is social capital built into marginalized identities."

When surveyed by Littman, more than 60% of parents reported that the announcement of their child's coming out had resulted in a popularity improvement at school and in other settings.

These young people appear to be escaping into a victim group into which they don't actually fit, in part

MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS | Father Tad Pacholczyk

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as Senior Ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



because within the broader culture, gender dysphoria has become one of the few victim identities one can choose.

Many of these youth reportedly had one or more psychiatric diagnoses and almost half were engaging in self-harm before the onset of gender dysphoria. There is evidence that transitioning can worsen mental health and correlate with suicidal thoughts. Claims that gender transitioning reduces the risk of suicide remain highly controversial and unsupported by well-designed and properly-controlled scientific studies.

The surge in transgender-identifying adolescents may also be partly explained as a maladaptive coping mechanism for teens struggling with the challenges and stresses arising from their adolescent journey through puberty and their explorations of sexuality in a hypersexualized society. Prior trauma, whether sexual, peer, or family, may also play a role.

The steep spike in the phenomenon of rapid onset gender dysphoria appears to be connected to other social factors as well.

For example, YouTube influencers and internet advocates of gender transitioning often have charismatic personalities and offer compelling personal testimonies and confessional stories that draw the attention of youthful audiences. These entertaining and well-produced videos strongly encourage young people to transition, promising happiness and a new lease on life. Prior to announcing their new transgender identity, more than 65% of the teens were reported by their parents to have spent extended time, sometimes even several weeks of total immersion, watching YouTube transition vlogs and other trans-oriented social media.

A second relevant factor is that various authority figures in the lives of teens, including teachers, therapists and doctors, have started encouraging and affirming the idea of gender transitioning. These respected individuals may energetically advocate for a young person to transition, claiming they know best what the young person needs, and it is virtually always "transition."

When parents are hesitant to go along, these authority figures may adopt a savior posture by bringing up a coercive suicide narrative, asking them whether they prefer to have a live son or a dead daughter, while actively seeking to re-educate the allegedly naïve and transphobic parents.

Gender-affirmative advocacy applies powerful pressure on impressionable youth and vulnerable parents. These approaches can tragically seduce our adolescent daughters, resulting in permanent and irreversible damage through hormonal treatments, mastectomies and mutilative genital surgeries.

Thankfully, medical professionals in several European countries are beginning to change course. Treatments for youth with gender dysphoria have become decidedly more cautious. The paramount importance of psychological care is being recognized, with transitioning becoming restricted to research protocols.

We need to begin promoting a more wholesome and balanced perspective to girls, namely, that being a woman is good and beautiful. Therapists need to counsel patience in the face of adolescent claims of discomfort with their biological sex, recognizing that some may be seeking gender transition as an escape from other emotional difficulties. Many who have transitioned are now regretting their choice, with "detransitioning" occurring at an accelerated rate among the same females who presented during adolescence with gender dysphoria.

Young people facing rapid onset gender dysphoria need authentic support and encouragement, rather than surgeries and hormones, especially in the face of data revealing that most of them, if not offered "affirmation therapies," will outgrow their dysphoria and come to accept their birth sex once their turbulent adolescent years have passed.

SUPPORT, continued from Page 12

cause of his daughter's experience. Guilt is "one of the devil's favorite tools," he said.

"Part of the misery was us beating ourselves up because, 'How did this happen to my child? Why did I not do a better job? My job is supposed to be the protector of the household, and I failed.'"

"It happens in every kind of family you could imagine," April said. "The people in our group, I think that they were really wonderful parents and are wonderful parents. They weren't neglectful. They were loving, they were supportive. I would trust my kid in any of those families."

Erin, who is a practicing Christian but not Catholic, is a member of Connected Through Christ. Her daughter, who is in high school, experiences gender dysphoria. Erin relies on her faith in Jesus to handle the experience, which is something she shares with other parents in the group.

"We're all Christian, and ... I think at

the end of the day, we all know that God is very much in control, and what really matters is our personal relationship with Jesus," she said. "And so, we typically end on a peaceful note because we have each other, we have that support, and we know that God works for the good of all who love Him. (Romans 8:28)

"So, we do share Bible verses that are encouraging like that, but I think mostly we've just been sharing our stories and different things come up in the world, different things come up in the news and in the government and in schools, and we share tidbits that we have learned to help keep each other informed."

Erin takes a watchful, waiting approach to her daughter's experience with gender dysphoria. This includes carefully observing how gender dysphoria develops over time, rather than seeking a medical transition. Erin communicates with her daughter and shares information with her, while listening to her daughter's perspective.

"My stance was, OK, all I'm going to do is work on my relationship with her, and so, since that day to now, that is all I've done," she said. "So, when she throws a curveball at me like, 'I'm no longer doing this, I'm no longer doing this, I'm going to do this,' there's a lot more curiosity and compassion and support, even though I don't agree with it."

The watchful waiting approach has also been used by a member of Connected Through Christ who refers to herself as "A Hopeful Parent." Several years ago, her child, who is now an adult, threatened to commit suicide if "forced to live out their biological sex," she said.

In a letter to *The Catholic Times*, she recalled being in "desperation" because of the lack of support she had during that time.

"(My husband and I) were convinced in our hearts that 'watchful waiting' was the best decision, and until I got to Mary Ann (Jepsen), I found no support for this," she said. "I asked her repeatedly whether there was a support group she

knew of or any other parents I could talk to — back then there were none.

"I continued to see Mary Ann as my counselor and source of support as I navigated my child's repeated mantra (that they would commit suicide if they had to remain in their biological sex), but what I really longed for were other parents, other common sense, Catholic or Christian parents that were trying to listen intently to the facts, the research and the Church to help us navigate through this nightmare without losing our child to suicide or the cult of dysphoria."

A Hopeful Parent said she believes the Church needs groups for parents, such as Connected Through Christ, especially now.

"I pray this group ... is a place of refuge, prayer, strength, union and shared tools to fight the war on our children that is happening every day. We need each other."

For more information on Connected Through Christ, contact Joan at MamasLove4@yahoo.com or Jepsen at Jepsen.Ma@gmail.com.

Help urged for young Christians in the Holy Land

Father Peter Vasko, OFM, made what has become an annual trip to Columbus to give the featured address at the Cradling Christianity benefit dinner supporting the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land on Thursday, Sept. 7 at Columbus Our Lady of Victory Church.

The dinner was preceded by a Mass with Bishop Earl Fernandes serving as the principal celebrant for the second consecutive year. The bishop also offered remarks to the 210 attendees after the dinner and before the presentation by Father Vasko, foundation president.

Father David Schalk, pastor at Powell St. Joan of Arc and Columbus St. Peter churches, offered the opening prayer at the dinner. Doug Lessells, a local broadcaster and businessman, served as the emcee for the evening. Kris and Dee Pellissier were co-chairs of the event.

The principal mission of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, founded in 1994, is to provide opportunities and educational assistance to allow Christians to remain in the region. In the past 29 years with Father Vasko as president, the foundation has raised \$51 million.

That money goes toward scholarships for students in the Holy Land. According to the foundation, 97 percent of the students with an educational degree remain in the Holy Land.

"It's good to be back in Columbus, and I'm really excited to have the opportunity to speak with all of you, and I thank you for your presence here this evening," Father Vasko told the audience. "I'm equally excited to tell you about the great news of what Cradling Christianity is doing in the Holy Land."

Cradling Christianity was founded in 2006 by a small group of Catho-



Bishop Earl Fernandes elevates the host during a Mass preceding a Cradling Christianity event at Columbus Our Lady of Victory Church. Concelebrating is Father Peter Vasko, OFM, (left) president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, and assisting is Deacon Paul Zemanek.

CT photos by Ken Snow

lics in Columbus to support the work of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. The group held fundraising events supported by Father Vasko for 14 consecutive years until the events were suspended in 2020 and 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"One of the ways Cradling Christianity has been so helpful is that, as a result of your giving throughout these many years, 40 college students have received tuition assistance and, upon graduation, all of them have attained professional employment," Father Vasko said. "Your financial contributions have provided hope and opportunities to others."

He described the difficulties for Christians living in the Holy Land, where only 0.2 percent of the population (approximately 175,000 people) is Christian. An estimated 300 families leave each year because of political strife and economic hardship, raising concerns that Christians might disappear from the region of Christ's birth, death and resurrection in the next 50 years.

Cradling Christianity has raised more than \$1 million since its inception to provide funds for the Franciscan Foundation's university scholarship program. At this year's dinner, two auctions raised \$23,000.

"It's good to be in the Holy Land, ... but when we're speaking about the Holy Land, we're speaking also about a conflict that has been going on there between the Israelis and the Palestinian Muslims for the past 76 years," Father Vasko explained.

"And the Christians – our Christians – are caught in the middle. ... They are in the minority, facing discrimination every day, yet still struggling and hoping for peace, justice and a better future."

"However, the good news is that, in the midst of all this turmoil, there are

organizations like Cradling Christianity, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, which have been reaching out all these many years and helping the Christians, giving them hope for their future and their children's future."

Local members have made pilgrimages to the Holy Land through the years, and Father Vasko encouraged anyone with the means to consider traveling there.

"One of the things you can do as a follower of Christ, if you haven't already, is to come and make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land," he said. "Pilgrimage is a calling. It's not for everybody. You have to pray about it. But a pilgrimage is something in which you leave your family, your friends, your business, to do what? To see the divine. That's what pilgrimage is."

"Could you imagine being there, where Our Lord was crucified for our sins? Right there on Calvary? You're there, and you can touch Golgotha, a foot and a half away from where the actual cross was."

"Or to be in the place where He resurrected – in the tomb of Our Lord? Where He gave us life everlasting? To be in the place where Jesus was born – in Bethlehem – the very spot where he was born?"

"There are things that I can't explain to you, what happens when you're there. It's something that you have to experience on your own. And I just want to mention that we do have a pilgrimage coming from Columbus the end of (next) February, and I will be guiding it."

"So, pray about coming to the Holy Land. See what the Lord wants you to do. And, I'm telling you, your life becomes completely changed when you come back."

Bishop Fernandes asked Cradling

Christianity supporters and all of the faithful to consider not only giving financially but also spiritually.

"Part of what we are doing tonight, and part of what the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land wants to do, is give a voice to the voiceless, to raise funds so that Christians can stay in their homes and be present in the Holy Land and be forces of peace rather than forces of violence," he said.

"So, while your sacrifices and gifts are important, your accompaniment – your prayers, your solidarity – is also important because it's a way of communicating our love for the Christians in the Holy Land."

The bishop stressed the importance of listening to the Holy Spirit to discern how God wants each person to serve Him and to assist brothers and sisters in Christ.

"We need to listen to the stories of our brothers and sisters and tell others, not only about their sufferings but also about their joy in being Catholics and in being Christians," he said.

"I was with a Nigerian Capuchin (Father Anthony Essien, OFM Cap.), who is now here in the Diocese of Columbus, and he said, 'You know, I am the chaplain now at Bishop Hartley High School, and we are Catholic and unapologetically so.' And this brought joy to my heart."

"We need to say the same thing about being Christians. Our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land know they are Christians and are unapologetically so. So let us support them with our prayers and sacrifices."

For more information about the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land programs and pilgrimages, visit ffhl.org.



Father Peter Vasko, OF, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, gives the featured presentation at the Cradling Christianity dinner.



Dee Pellissier, one of the co-chairs for the Cradling Christianity event, pauses to pray.

Departing Stella Niagara sisters leave legacy of faith, service in diocese

The end of an era – more like several eras – comes this month when the last two Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity (better known as the Stella Niagara Franciscans) at the St. Leo Convent on Columbus' south side in the Merion Village area move back to the religious order's motherhouse in New York.

Sisters Alberta Wilkes, OSF, and Margaret Scanlan, OSF, have lived in the convent next to what is now St. Leo the Great Oratory for several decades and have spent significant portions of their religious life ministering in the Diocese of Columbus and in Ohio.

Sister Alberta, who grew up in the Cleveland area, and Sister Margaret, a Columbus native whose family resided close to St. Leo, will join approximately 35 of the Holy Name Province's 74 remaining sisters in Stella Niagara, New York, in the Buffalo area.

The three U.S. branches of the worldwide order also has sisters in California; Colorado; Nebraska; Florida; New York; West Virginia; Chiapas, Mexico; and Tanzania.

In late August, a prayer service and reception at the convent was attended by approximately 75 visitors who ranged from provincial councilors from New York to lay associates of the order, relatives, area residents and Bishop Earl Fernandes.

"Although there is sadness in the departure of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity (Stella Niagara Sisters), from what I have seen and heard, the people of the Diocese of Columbus are filled with gratitude for generations of dedicated service, especially in the area of Catholic education," Bishop Fernandes said.

"On their behalf, I express to the sisters, our profound gratitude, assuring them of our heartfelt prayers. Their service and witness will not be forgotten."

Though the order is leaving St. Leo Convent, seven of its sisters remain in the diocese at various residences. The oldest, Sister Barbara Holtzinger, 101, is a Columbus native currently at Mohun Health Care Center, which is a ministry of the Dominican Sisters

of Peace on the city's east side.

The Stella Niagara congregation, founded in the Netherlands by Mother Magdalen Damen in 1835, came to the United States in 1874 and established their first convent and novitiate in Buffalo.

One year later, in 1875, sisters were sent to Columbus to open St. Vincent's orphanage. That same year, they opened Sacred Heart convent.

During the next 125 years in the diocese, they carved out a legacy that includes the establishment of St. Ann's Hospital in Westerville and Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, staffing the St. Therese Shrine and Retreat Center on Columbus' east side from its founding in 1926 until 1971, and involvement in various apostolates in education, health care, social work, rural life, administration and youth ministry.

Among the other service activities and residences listed in a 1974 *Catholic Times* article marking the order's jubilee year in America were St. Vincent Children's Center; Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School; St. John XXIII School; the parishes of Columbus Sacred Heart, Columbus St. Matthias, Columbus St. Anthony, Columbus Our Lady of Victory, Columbus St. Christopher, New Lexington St. Rose, Lancaster St. Bernadette, Junction City St. Patrick, Columbus Holy Cross and Columbus St. Mary, Mother of God; Mount Carmel Hospital; Ohio Nurses Association; diocesan education office; and in rural life around New Straitsville.

A letter to the editor of *The Catholic Times* in June 1987 from Father Richard Snoke thanked the order for 113 years of education and service in Perry County and at New Lexington St. Rose School, which the order staffed from its opening in 1912 until the order's departure at the end of the 1987 school year.

The order's association with St. Leo Church and School began in 1904, two years before the convent that the sisters inhabited for 117 years was built, when three sisters were assigned to teach at the school. They commuted by street car or walked each day

See STELLA, Page 17



Columbus St. Leo convent has served as a home for the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Charity for more than 100 years. The last two sisters to live there moved this month to the order's motherhouse in Stella Niagara, New York. The diocese has yet to determine how the convent will be used in the future. *CT photo*

HISTORY OF THE MINISTRIES OF THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PENANCE AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS:

St. Vincent Orphanage, Columbus (formerly St. Vincent Children's Center and now St. Vincent Family Services)	1875-1994
Sacred Heart, Columbus Elementary	1875-1986 1875-1973
Commercial (later High School)	1892-1966
St. Aloysius Academy, New Lexington	1876-1969
St. Aloysius Military School	1938-1969
St. Rose School, New Lexington	1912-1987
Mt. Aloysius, New Lexington	1970-1991
St. Mary, Delaware sisters returned to parish	1885-1890 1983-1987
St. Peter School, Columbus (Milo)	1895-1965
St. Leo, Columbus St. Leo School	1904-2023 1904-1997
St. John School, Columbus school merged into Pope John XXIII in 1970 convent opened in 1908 sisters returned to parish/convent	1906-1968 1983-1987
Holy Rosary Elementary School, Columbus merged with St. John and St. Dominic to form Pope John XXIII 1970-1983	1906-1970
Rosary High School sisters in residence 1953-1982	1924-1966
St. Ann Hospital, Columbus/Westerville aka St. Ann Infant Asylum St. Ann's Hospital for Women St. Ann's Hospital of Columbus Convent closed in 1973 and the Westerville facility opened in 1984; joint venture with the formation of Mt. Carmel Health System in 1995; Sisters of St. Francis terminated participation in 1997 Individual sisters ministered in mission integration work later	1908-1997
St. Rita's Home, Columbus	1924-1987
St. Charles Seminary, Columbus St. Charles High School 1969	1925-1976
St. Therese's Shrine, Columbus	1927-1971
St. Francis DeSales High School, Columbus St. Anthony School, Columbus	1962-2002 1965-c1981/82
St. Bernadette School, Lancaster	1967-1981
St. Francis Center, McArthur Opened in Junction City (70-79)	1970-2010
Our Lady of Victory Convent, Columbus Trinity School	1973-2007 1973-1995
St. Matthias, Columbus	1973-1985
St. Mary Parish, Shawnee	1973-1975
Father Wehrle High School, Columbus	1977-1979
St. Philip Neri, Murray City	1982-1985
St. Catharine Convent, Columbus	1973-2015

Individual sisters also ministered around the diocese at Bishop Ready High School, Worthington St. Michael School, DeSales High School, Hilliard St. Brendan Church, Columbus St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus Holy Cross Church, Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dominican Learning Center, Bishop Griffin Center, J.O.I.N., Columbus St. Mary School and Franklin County Office on Aging.



Students, faculty, staff and guests gather for a Mass on Friday, Sept. 8 in the Walter Commons at Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School preceding a dedication and blessing of a new convocation center, plaza and grotto.
CT photos by Ken Snow



Visitors, benefactors and guests tour the new Frank E. Murphy Convocation Center on the St. Charles campus.

St. Charles opens centennial festivities with building dedication

Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding this year, and the school kicked off the festivities with a dedication and blessing that included a Mass with Bishop Earl Fernandes as the principal celebrant on Friday, Sept. 8.

After the all-school Mass with supporters, benefactors and community members present, the bishop blessed the new Frank E. Murphy Convocation Center, a central plaza and the beautified Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto.

“Sisters and brothers, let us ask God, our all-powerful architect, that this facility which we bless today may contribute to the building of the kingdom and join us in faith and in the love of Christ,” Bishop Fernandes said in his blessing.

The convocation center, which bears the name of 1954 St. Charles graduate and major benefactor Frank E. Murphy,

provides a state-of-the-art arena that seats up to 2,000 people for school athletic and other events that also can be used by the community.

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, a place of prayer and reflection on campus, was enhanced and beautified with the addition of a large circular gathering area and seating wall, paved walkways and two new waterfalls.

“This sacred space will continue to provide a comforting and reflective setting for anyone who visits our campus,” St. Charles principal Jim Lower said during the dedication.

A new central campus plaza includes paved areas, walkways and seating areas surrounded by plantings and landscaping. This gathering space was designed to connect the buildings of the past with those of the future.

“Today, we gather in this beautiful

new plaza, a beautiful space that has been supported by so many and will be enjoyed by anybody who sets foot on our St. Charles campus,” Lower said.

In 2018, St. Charles initiated “The Vision for the Future; Building Leaders for the Next 100 Years” campaign, which includes constructing new spaces and facilities for use by the school community; beautifying and improving existing spaces; and increasing its endowment.

The St. Charles endowment supports tuition assistance for families and provides for faculty recruitment and retention.

An additional facilities project is underway to repurpose the school’s former gymnasium into a multi-story Brotherhood Center that will add classrooms and offices, a library and media center, and spaces that foster 21st-century learning and future programming for

students.

When it is completed, the campaign will have realized a total investment in the school and its students of more than \$35 million.

“There have been many capital improvements on our St. Charles property since the school was built in 1925,” Lower said. “Today’s opening marks the next significant expansion of our campus, laying the foundation for the next 100 years of educating the young men of central Ohio.”

In November, St. Charles will commemorate the 100th anniversary of its founding by Bishop James J. Hartley in 1923 with several events.

For more information, contact director of communications Louis Fabro at lfabro@scprep.org or (380) 209-2233.



The renovated Our Lady of Lourdes grotto provides an outdoor space for prayer and reflection on the St. Charles campus.



St. Charles principal Jim Lower addresses guests and students during the dedication ceremony.

STELLA, continued from Page 15

from St. Vincent's orphanage to St. Leo and also to St. John and Holy Rosary to work with students.

When St. Leo School was established, it was the first free parochial school in Ohio. Enrollment started at 150 students and grew into the 400s by the 1950s.

Clara Babbert, the first graduate of the school who completed all eight grades there in 1912, entered the convent with the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in 1919 and later returned to Columbus as Sister Mary Daniel to teach at St. Vincent's orphanage.

The Stella Niagara sisters remained at St. Leo as teachers, touching countless lives and inspiring numerous religious vocations, until the school closed in 1997.

The diocese deactivated the parish two years later, and the church was used during the next 20 years for weddings and funerals and by the Korean Catholic community until the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest arrived in October 2020 at the invitation of former Columbus Bishop Robert Brennan to establish an oratory dedicated to the Traditional Latin Mass.

Since the closing of the school and parish in the late 1990s, the convent has continued to serve as a residence to a reduced number of sisters and as a meeting spot for the order's various ministries.

Throughout their history at St. Leo, the sisters have attended to the needs of the community, providing food and medicine for the homeless and sometimes odd jobs for individuals in need of work as part of the sisters' Franciscan charism.

At one point, nine sisters lived in the well-maintained convent, which includes a full kitchen, dining area, parlor, offices, chapel and bedrooms to house up to 10 people. Renovations and additions have included handicapped-accessible ramps, a chair lift and first-floor laundry.

A statue of St. Francis of Assisi near the front door of the convent is visible to passers-by from Hanford Street and has stood guard over the sisters for years.

"As our sisters say farewell to St. Leo's Convent, we recall the way it has provided a space for community Masses and prayer, for overnight stays and for official visitations by leadership as well as many other gatherings," said Sister Nancy Zelma, the first provincial councilor for the order as part of a blessing at the convent reception last month.

"And we see the changes and additions that this house has undergone to assist our frailer members. Our hope is that this residence will continue to be of good service to God's people."

Sister Margaret has spent significant portions of her life at St. Leo. A daughter of the parish, she graduated from the school, assisted the sisters with their

work in the church and school during her youth, and eventually entered the order.

In 1967, she returned to St. Leo School as a teacher. All told, she spent 12 years in teaching in New Jersey, West Virginia, South Carolina and Ohio.

In the late 1980s, she came back again to St. Leo as a pastoral associate for 10 years and then became a religious education consultant in the Diocese of Steubenville before another return in 2001 to St. Leo, where she has remained ever since.

"I've been fortunate to be 'home' for all of those years," she said. "My family's here, which is really nice. But I'll get to come back at least a couple of times a year."

Sister Alberta came to the diocese in 1987 to finish a degree in journalism, encountered the sisters at the Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center near Ohio State University and entered the order. After spending time in New York for religious formation, she returned to Columbus.

She worked at St. Ann's Hospital with employee publications and then began the first of two stints with *The Catholic Times* as a reporter and writer. While living at the former Holy Rosary convent on the east side of Columbus, she developed an interest in the community kitchen at Holy Rosary-St. John Church. That led to her obtaining a degree in social work.

Until retiring five years ago, Sister Alberta worked in geriatric social work for several private health-care organizations and for Franklin County for 17 years.

"I don't want to live alone, and I don't want to go out and get an apartment," Sister Alberta said of her decision to move to New York. "At this age, I think it's better to be with a group and, right now, with women's religious orders nationally, we're all in the same boat as older orders.

"We're trying to take care of our elderly, but how can we leave a legacy? We have all these things we started."

Both sisters said they chose to move back to Stella Niagara to live in community "because there are lot of ministry opportunities when you're with more people," Sister Alberta said.

"I would say our legacy is the well-established places like the hospital, orphanage (now closed) and high school," Sister Margaret said.

The diocese, which owns St. Leo Convent and has provided maintenance through the years, has yet to determine how the building will be used.

The departing sisters hope a new community of religious will move in, and the rapidly growing St. Leo Oratory's Latin Mass community is in need of space.

Dominican sister celebrates 50th anniversary of religious life

Sister Pat Thomas, OP, a Newark native and a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, is celebrating 50 years of consecrated religious life this year. Since 2014, she has been co-director of the Peace Center, a neighborhood outreach in New Orleans that serves children, senior citizens and neighbors in need.

Sister Pat entered the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs in Columbus in 1969 and professed her first vows on Aug. 8, 1973.

The Newark Catholic High School graduate received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ohio Dominican College (now Ohio Dominican University) in 1974 and later earned a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Arts degree in pastoral studies from the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis.

Her first ministry was in education. She taught middle-school students at Zanesville St. Thomas Aquinas, Lancaster St. Mary and Columbus Christ the King schools and in Brooklyn at various times in the 1970s and '80s. She also was an assistant principal in the New York City borough of Queens and a school administrator in Connecticut.

She later served as a residence hall rector at Notre Dame and campus ministry director at Albertus Magnus College in

New Haven, Connecticut. After completing her studies at the Aquinas Institute in 2008, she joined the RENEW International pastoral services team, training lay leaders for small Christian communities in U.S. dioceses for five years.

In 2014, she was asked to help develop the Peace Center, a ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, a congregation formed by the merger of the Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs and seven other Dominican congregations in 2009.

The center was created after meetings with residents to determine the best way to serve the population of the Gert Town area of New Orleans as they struggled to recover from the long-term effects of Hurricane Katrina and systemic poverty.

In New Orleans, she has seen hurricanes, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. She also has seen young people grow from awkward primary-schoolers to confident high school students and been part of a caring, compassionate community through the Peace Center.

"As Dominicans, we seek ways to educate for peace, seek the truth when the peace is broken and look for solutions to repair the breaks," she said. "The Peace Center sits in the middle of it all, opens its doors and welcomes the people, young and old, to find some peace for themselves."

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CONFERENCE, *continued from Page 3*

rector of the diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, explained the work he will do for marriage preparation in the diocese, which includes Natural Family Planning classes for couples who are engaged to be married, a Pre-Cana retreat and work with marriage mentor couples.

Liz Christy, the diocese's associate director of missionary disciple formation, spoke of the importance of catechesis in each stage of life.

"All of these different ministries in our parish are intertwined," she said. "The catechumenal model, whole family catechesis, marriage preparation – it's all intertwined. It's all part of a bigger design that our Lord designed.

"We're all on a progression. We're starting at one point, but we're not staying there. ... We have to progress in our faith. We have to help others progress in their faith, and that's all part of God's design."

Christy also spoke of the important role that catechists play in faith formation, and, as teachers, catechists need to be formed themselves.

"The goal is to form catechists throughout this entire diocese, whatever

ministry you're working in, also for parents, also just for lay people," Christy said. "We all need to be formed as catechists so that we can do what the Lord is calling us – to invite other people in."

The Department of Evangelization proposed three levels of formation for catechists: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Beginner-level training will be provided by the department in a one-day session, Christy said, with other experts as needed.

Department staff members will travel throughout the diocese to various deaneries for the training, she said. The diocese is divided into 10 deaneries, which are based on geography and were implemented in July after new clergy assignments took effect.

Intermediate-level formation will be provided online by the Catechetical Institute of Franciscan University of Steubenville. The training offers several different tracks including child-age catechesis, youth ministry, OCIA and a track for parents.

"It's going to take some time, and it's on your own timeframe," Christy said. "We're not mandating anything, but it's

available. ... You can study independently and just on your own time, or you can gather in groups.

"So, if you are in charge of a ministry at your parish, you can say, 'OK, once a month or every six weeks, I'm going to bring my leaders together, and we're going to take one more chunk of it or one more piece of it.' So, that's up to you to decide how you want to do that."

De La Torre said the diocese is keen on ongoing formation to help catechists be properly trained.

"We're offering a baseline – a diocesan baseline – and then utilizing Franciscan University to assist us with that baseline moving forward," he said.

Advanced-level certification is achieved through degree programs, Christy said.

Further information on catechist formation will be provided in a catechist handbook, Christy said, which is being developed and will be available on the Department of Evangelization website, www.ColumbusCatholic.org/Evangelization.

"The aim or the principle of a parish catechist is to have an awareness, one, of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," De La Torre said. "Some of the (educational) content itself is aimed at helping the catechist grow in his or her

own personal relationship. That's key.

"An awareness is important, meaning that the disposition of the catechist is based on how he or she practices their faith, and then the knowledge of it is visible. So, that's the base that we're looking for for the entry level, level-one type of beginner catechist."

He said it is also important that "somebody knows how to disseminate, articulate and break down the teachings of the Church in a clear manner.

"We're big on not regurgitating information but actually helping you demonstrate how this connects with daily life."

While there are "baselines that I am required to execute per the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church," he said, the proposed models for parish catechesis will serve as diocesan guidelines and are aimed to help parishes.

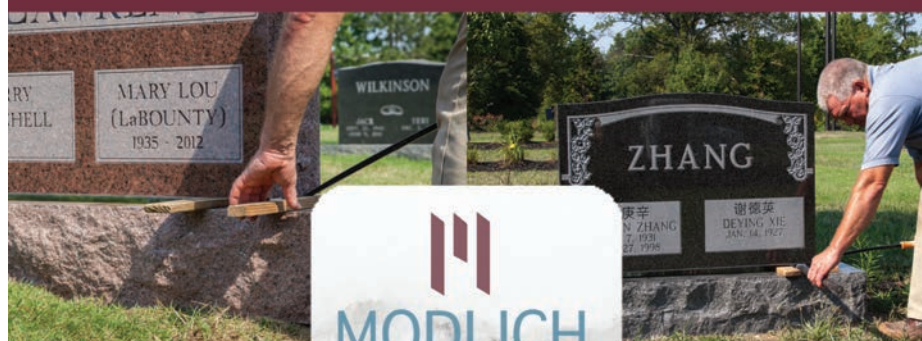
De La Torre said he hopes that the new structure will appeal to parishes "because you're literally in the ministry of saving souls."

For more information on the catechumenate model or whole family catechesis, send questions to mdelatorre@columbuscatholic.org.



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Mommies Matter marks 5 years of helping single, pregnant women

To celebrate five years of service to central Ohio's pregnant, single mothers, Mommies Matter will host its annual Fall Fundraiser on Thursday, Oct. 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Bridgewater Banquet & Conference Center, 10561 Sawmill Parkway, Powell.

The event will include food, beverages and a silent auction in support of single mothers.

To purchase tickets or sponsor the event, visit mommiesmatter.org.

Mommies Matter was founded on the fact that 75% of women who chose abortion say they would have chosen life for their unborn child if they had been offered support and a community to walk with them during and after pregnancy.

Mommies Matter provides the financial, emotional and spiritual support every pregnant mother needs, for as long

as she needs, so she can choose life and support herself and her children. This is done with group support during monthly enrichment nights, life coaching, legal assistance, respite care, long-term goal planning, therapy with trusted partners and more.

In one week, Mommies Matter walked alongside mothers who:

- Lost jobs due to car issues.
- Could not find affordable child care to go back to work full-time.
- Became homeless because of an injury that prevented them from working.
- Are suffering through domestic violence.

When a single, pregnant mother comes to Mommies Matter, she is invited to join a community that will help her navigate these challenges while embracing her dignity and value as a woman.

Within one week, the Mommies Matter family assisted in the following ways:

- Paid rent during unpaid maternity leave to stabilize the financial picture so a mother could bond with her baby.
- Provided support during labor and delivery.
- Drove downtown to submit paperwork to seal an eviction and request child support.
- Cared for children so a mother could attend a job interview.
- Drove kids to school because a mother's car wouldn't start.
- Reviewed several mothers' finances and determined the next steps to move forward with financial goals.

Since the overturn of Roe v. Wade, the pro-life community has found itself at a defining moment to rise to the occasion and walk with single, pregnant

mothers by giving every mother facing an unwanted pregnancy the support she needs.

This can include hosting a baby shower for a single, expectant mother; becoming an ally and walking with a mother through the challenges of single motherhood; providing a meal or child care at our monthly Enrichment Gatherings so that the mothers can recharge and connect with other single moms; providing a meal for a mother and her children after birth; or working as a community liaison to communicate the needs of Mommies Matter to your church community.

To learn more about how you can get involved, visit mommiesmatter.org.

ENCOURAGE, continued from Page 11

unloving by society and family members, these Courage members give us hope and affirmation that we are doing the right thing as parents by speaking the truth to our sons and daughters and loving them as the children of God that they are.

"Several members (at the national Courage conference) have shared with us that they truly believe that it was their parents' prayers that helped bring them back to the Church and that we should never give up hope for our children. This apostolate is such a blessing from God."

More recently, gender dysphoria has become an issue in society, and parents are seeking help when a child is confused about his or her God-given sex.

"We are watching all the developments as closely as we can," Father Schnippel said. "With EnCourage, our ministry to parents and family members, the experience is quite similar whether the loved one is active in a same-sex partnership

or the experience of gender dysphoria. Pastorally accompanying persons with the experience of SSA vs. gender dysphoria is different, and we are discerning how best to walk with both communities of persons."

Anyone interested in learning more about EnCourage or connecting with the local group can contact Father Ferguson.

"I want to gently encourage anyone who is experiencing SSA – or who has a loved one with SSA – to not be afraid to reach out and learn more about Courage and EnCourage," he said. "Jesus really does love you, and there is nothing to be ashamed about."

"You will find great support from both Jesus and from the members and will discover that we're all on a journey in life. So, definitely take the step to get involved. Everything is kept confidential."

Father Ferguson can be reached at wferguson@columbuscatholic.org.



ST. LEONARD
CATHOLIC CHURCH

OCTOBER 8TH at 1:00PM

Mass will be celebrated prior to the picnic.

Bring a covered dish, chicken and beverages provided by the parish.



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Packet pickup: 7:30am

Start time: 9am

Swag: All participants receive bread and a bottle of wine, or bread and a jar of Trappist Monastery jam.

Family rate: Save \$5 per person when registering at least 3 participants at one time.

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Embrace God on His terms

Isaiah 55:6-9
Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18
Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a
Matthew 20:1-16a

God is un-reasonable. That is, God is beyond anything that our reason can encompass. As the Author of all that is, God is beyond reason.

Those with a philosophical bent will no doubt recall St. Anselm's dictum that "God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived." For such a Being to be conceived of at all, that Being must have an existence beyond understanding. This is known as the ontological argument for the existence of God.

The prophet Isaiah presents not an argument, but a proclamation of God's Word in a much more personal way: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. ... As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts." God affirms that our minds and our choice of behaviors cannot be compared to His. He is beyond us.

Yet, we also hear from the psalmist: "The Lord is near to all who call upon him." We are invited to a direct relationship with the God Who is beyond our understanding. All that we need to do so that we may discover that He is near is to call upon Him.

The Catholic word for such truth is "mystery." When we relate to God, we discover that the One Who is beyond all our thoughts speaks to us with an intimacy that is more profound than any-

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Ezekiel 18:25-28
Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Philippians 2:1-11
Matthew 21:28-32

Mercy is love offered again after it has been rejected. God gives us room to respond even after we refuse His love. There is time. There is room. There is a capacity for repentance. In our relations with one another, we must learn to allow for this space for active, enlivening, loving mercy.

Instead, we measure. We can be envious of the mercy others receive. We see those who have hurt us repenting and being forgiven. We hold onto our woundedness: "The Lord's way is not fair!"

Often, we want God to show His justice to our enemies and His mercy to ourselves. Instead, God shows mercy to the ones who have harmed us at times. Life changes for the better for them. We do not rejoice in their good fortune or their change of heart. We cling to our pain.

St. John of the Cross is famous for a line

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Timothy Hayes

Rev. Timothy M. Hayes is the pastor of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Church.



thing else we can experience.

Paul expresses this truth with the assertion that in Christ, life and death – two other mysteries we encounter in our human journey – do not change our relationship with God. "Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain." God's mystery contains the whole of human existence.

Through a parable, Jesus presents God as One Who is generous and just. The God and Father of Jesus relates to each of us according to a measure that is beyond our understanding. What we are to receive at the end of the day, that is, at the end of our journey in this world, is not according to our way of measuring, but according to God's.

We are to labor with whatever time is allotted to us. If we live, we are to work in the heat of the day. If we have less time, our work will nonetheless be rewarded by a generous and loving Father.

The post-communion prayer of the Mass today expresses the key insights of the Scriptures: "Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life."

We are invited to enter into a living relationship with God Himself, not seeking to put Him in a box, as if we can

God's mercy gives us a second chance

that is painful to hear: "Pain is in proportion to the need for purification." When we allow our pain to put others into a box labeled "destined for punishment," we may find that we are sorely disappointed. "The Lord's way is not fair!"

The biblical journey of understanding God and His ways is a path to mercy. The Hebrew Scriptures are often caricatured as having a God of justice and vengeance. But this is not the real story.

As the psalmist invites us to relate to God, we are reminded of the abundance of mercy. "Remember your mercies, O Lord." This is a cry of the heart, asking God for mercy toward us, but at the same time reminding us to allow such mercy to reshape our own way of thinking.

Jesus gives the example of two sons who are told to do the will of their father. The response of the second is not a full response. It is a matter of words alone. He says he will do the father's will, but he fails to do so. The first son reacts badly in the first instance, refusing in words to do what the father asked. But then, he

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS			
9/25-9/30	THURSDAY	10/2-10/7	THURSDAY
MONDAY	Haggai 1:1-8	MONDAY	Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12
Ezra 1:1-6	Psalm 149:1-6, 9	Zechariah 8:1-8	Psalm 19:8-11
Psalm 126:1-6	Luke 9:7-9	Psalm 102:2, 16-23	Luke 10:1-12
Luke 8:16-18	FRIDAY	Matthew 18:1-5, 10	FRIDAY
TUESDAY	Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or	TUESDAY	Baruch 1:15-22
Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20	Revelation 12:7-12a	Zechariah 8:20-23	Psalm 79:1-5, 8-9
Psalm 122:1-5	Psalm 138:1-5	Psalm 87:1-7	Luke 10:13-16
Luke 8:19-21	John 1:47-51	Luke 9:51-56	SATURDAY
WEDNESDAY	Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a	WEDNESDAY	Baruch 4:5-12, 27-29
Ezra 9:5-9	Jeremiah 31:10-13 (Ps)	Nehemiah 2:1-8	Psalm 69:33-37
Tobit 133:2, 3, 4-7, 8 (Ps)	Luke 9:43b-45	Psalm 137:1-6	Luke 10:17-24
Luke 9:1-6		Luke 9:57-62	

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION

Mass Schedule: Weeks of Sept. 25 and Oct. 1, 2023

SUNDAY MASS

10:30 a.m. Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org.

10:30 a.m. Mass from Portsmouth St. Mary Church on St. Gabriel Radio (FM 88.3), Portsmouth.

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

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

(Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight).

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

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

DAILY MASS

8 a.m., Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Birmingham, Ala. (Encores at noon, 7 p.m. and midnight). See EWTN above; and on I-Lifetv (Channel 113, Ada, Logan, Millersburg, Murray City, Washington C.H.; Channel 125, Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; Channel 207, Zanesville); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

12:05 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. Saturdays, Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org (Saturdays on radio only).

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

WE PRAY THE SEASONAL PROPERS FOR WEEKS I AND II OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

expect Him to conform to our ways, but rather allowing Him to reveal Himself to us in mystery. Once we have embraced the mystery, then we are further called to live with a new form of measuring. We are made capable of living God's mercy.

It is not easy to accept this way of thinking, which is truly beyond anything that this world offers. We are all influenced by the measures of this world

and by our own envy of what we believe others have that we "deserve."

If we can attend to the way God responds to us all, we will realize that there is room for all in the kingdom that is promised. The reward that is offered to those who can embrace God on His own terms is beyond our understanding. This is truly the mystery of faith.

thinks again. He chooses to repent and to act upon the will of the father.

This parable makes clear that God knows us. He understands our inability to make a full response to the invitation that He offers to be instruments of His love and mercy. Our self-centeredness is a part of the human reality we experience every day. And yet, God also calls us to recognize that He has mercy on our situation and gives us a new opportunity.

The first movement may be from our fallen human nature and our habitual way of reacting to things contrary to our own will. But there is always open to us a second movement, supported by grace, to make a new choice.

We can acknowledge our false reaction and make a true response. If one falls into a mud puddle, there is no real disgrace, as long as we choose not to lie there and do our best to get out of it. God's mercy is available to us.

St. Paul appeals to the Philippians to live up to the example of Jesus Christ as expressed in an early Christian hymn:

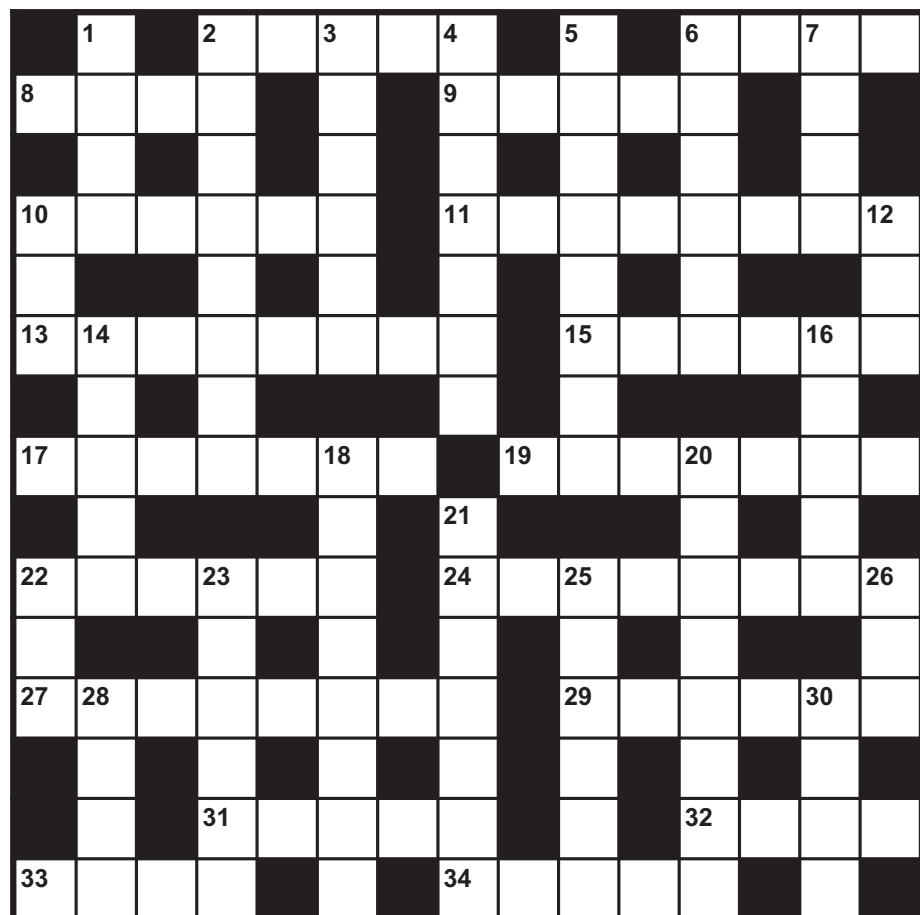
"(H)umbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others. Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

"Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

The hymn continues beyond the unfairness and cruelty of the sort of death Jesus suffered:

"Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name." When we create room in ourselves, as Christ did, glory is the result. God's mercy, flowing through our hearts and lives, leads us to proclaim: "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

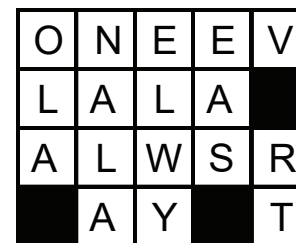
- ACROSS**
- 2 People St. Patrick converted
 - 6 Catholic horror actor Lugosi
 - 8 Catholic Brazilian soccer great
 - 9 Wealthy biblical land
 - 10 Italian city of St. Clare
 - 11 "... thy help or sought thy intercession..." (Memorare)
 - 13 A street in Damascus mentioned in Acts
 - 15 "___ Fideles"
 - 17 The Nicene Creed and the Hail Mary
 - 19 At Mass, the entrance prayers or song
 - 22 One of the Twelve
 - 24 Perfumes the altar
 - 27 ___ sin
 - 29 Miracle of the ___ and fishes
 - 31 Abbr. for two NT epistles
 - 32 Grandmother of Timothy
 - 33 Medieval English monk
 - 34 Wife of Abram
- DOWN**
- 1 Diocese of Honolulu necklaces
 - 2 Certain vow
 - 3 ___ on of hands
 - 4 Holy Name ___
 - 5 Priest for the military
 - 6 Diocese in the Province of Perth
 - 7 Eternal ___
 - 10 Jesus entered Jerusalem on this type of animal
 - 12 A parish position (abbr.)
 - 14 Father of Abram
 - 16 Reuben or Gad, for example
 - 18 Turned away from sin
 - 20 John XXIII's surname
 - 21 Describes Mary
 - 22 "Ora ___ nobis"
 - 23 Papal emissary
 - 25 A priest wears a Roman one
 - 26 Female members of religious orders (abbr.)
 - 28 ___ of Christian Initiation
 - 30 "Sufficient for a day is its own ___" (Mt 6:34)

Words of Wisdom

by Pat Battaglia, aka Dr. Fun

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

People on ego trips ...



ALWAYS TRAVEL ALONE

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Sacred Heart Congress will include children's programming

Children's programming has been added to the 12th annual diocesan Sacred Heart Congress, which its organizers describe as the largest Sacred Heart-themed event in the nation.

The congress is scheduled for 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 4 at Westerville St. Paul Church, 313 N. State St.

The children's activities will be led by the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus, who have a community at St. Therese's Retreat Center in Columbus and serve in campus ministry at St. Paul School. It will include the rosary and resemble their DOYMAR program, which focuses on the opportunity to seek, know, love and serve the Lord in a prayer movement.

The theme for the adult program will be "Reviving the Family through the Sacred Heart and the Eucharist."

"The Congress is for those searching and wanting to go deeper with the heart of Christ and the 12 promises He made to those who are devoted to His Sacred Heart," organizers of the event said.

"We will learn about Jesus' messages

to St. Margaret Mary and hear testimonies of how devotion to Jesus' Sacred Heart has saved families and led people to a deeper, more fervent love for Him. When we change our hearts to honor Jesus in all things, we impact the family, which impacts the parish and the community at large."

The event will include a Mass celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes and talks by Msgr. Frank Lane, former pastor of Columbus Sacred Heart and St. John the Baptist churches; Emily Jaminet, national executive director of the Sacred Heart Enthronement Network; and Father Stash Dailey, vice rector of formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum and spiritual director of Sacred Heart Columbus.

The mini-retreat also will include Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the sacrament of reconciliation will be available.

The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 per family, with financial assistance available. For more information, visit www.welcomehisheart.com.

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

ALVARADO, Jose A., 66, Aug. 29
St. Peter Church, Columbus

BOYLAN, John, 94, June 18
St. Colman of Cloyne Church, Washington Court House

BREWER, Thomas A., 66, Sept. 3
Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Glenmont

BYRLEY, Robert, 81, Sept. 4
St. Paul Church, Westerville

FEENEY, Michael L., 77, Sept. 12
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

HAMMOND, Jacqueline (Klinker), 82, Sept. 5
St. Peter Church, Columbus

HIGDON, Charles W. Jr., 59, Sept. 1
St. John XXIII Church, Canal Winchester

HOWELL, Dinah L. (Baker), 79, Sept. 10
Ss. Simon and Jude Church, West Jefferson

HOYER, Genevieve (Mitchell), 96, Sept. 1
St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus

MAYS, Mescal D., 87, Sept. 2
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

MEERS, Helen, 92, Aug. 3
Holy Cross Church, Columbus

POPPIA, Shirley A. (Traxler), 92, Sept. 7
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

RESSA, Anna B. (Reinhard), 96, Aug. 30
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus

RILEY, Mary Lou, 78, Sept. 12
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

RODENFELS, Raymond M., 90, Sept. 6
St. Leo the Great Oratory, Columbus

ROESCH, James R., 93, Aug. 20
St. Mary Church, Delaware

SPECHT, Dr. Daniel F., 94, Sept. 7
St. Patrick Church, Columbus

STOKES, Florence M. (DeMatteo), 80, Sept. 3
Holy Family Church, Columbus

TEACH, Mary E. (Bowes), 88, Sept. 11
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

THIBAUT, Lawrence E., 80, Aug. 25
St. Mary, Mother of God Church, Columbus

THOMAS, William R., 98, Sept. 6
St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg

WARNER, Charles G., 57, Aug. 30
St. Charles Preparatory School, Columbus

WISEMAN, Faye, 95, Sept. 7
St. Paul Church, Westerville

Sister Kathleen Andrews, OP

Funeral Mass for Sister Kathleen Andrews, OP, 86, who died Thursday, Aug. 31, was celebrated Tuesday, Sept. 12 at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Burial was at St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus.

She was born on Nov. 11, 1936 in Albuquerque, New Mexico to Daniel and Julie (Spolar) Andrews.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 1961 from St. Mary of the Plains College in Dodge City, Kansas and a Master of Science degree in nursing in 1974 from the University of Colorado.

She entered the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, Kansas (now part of the Dominican Sisters of Peace) in 1955 and professed her vows on June 13, 1958, taking the name Sister

Mary Eugene.

From 1958 to 2017, she served in nursing and housing ministries, mainly in Kansas and Colorado. She was vice president of patient care services at Central Kansas Medical Center, chair of the health science department at Barton Community College in Great Bend, Kansas, and an apartment manager for single parents and senior housing in Denver.

She moved to the Columbus Motherhouse upon retirement in 2017 and became a resident of the Mohun Health Care Center earlier this year.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a sister, Marilyn Adams. She is survived by a sister, Dolores Bernard, and several nieces.

Father Ciaran Fergus, OP

Funeral Mass for Father Ciaran Fergus, OP, 91, who died at the Mohun Health Care Center in Columbus on Saturday, Sept. 2, was celebrated Wednesday, Sept. 13 at Columbus St. Patrick Church. Burial was at St. Gabriel Cemetery, Marlboro, New Jersey.

He was born Thomas James Fergus on Sept. 14, 1931 in Brooklyn, New York to the late Michael and Margaret Fergus. After graduating from high school in Brooklyn, attending the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and working in a bank, he served in the U.S. Army in 1952 and 1953. He graduated from St. Francis College in Brooklyn in 1957 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting.

He entered the Dominican novitiate in 1958 at St. Joseph Priory in Somerset, made his first profession of vows on Aug. 16, 1959 and his final profession three years later on the same date, and was or-

dered to the priesthood at St. Dominic's Church in Washington on June 10, 1965 by Bishop William McDonald, auxiliary bishop of Washington.

He spent most of his career as a priest in campus ministry, serving at the University of Miami, Florida; Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia; Frostburg (Maryland) State University; Providence (Rhode Island) College; Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey; and Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He also was a faculty member at Seton Hall University, West Orange, New Jersey, and Caldwell (New Jersey) University.

In 2017, he was assigned to St. Dominic's Priory in Youngstown to assist with parochial ministries. He became a resident of the Mohun center in 2021.

Lucille E. Milano

Funeral Mass for Lucille E. Milano, who died Monday, Sept. 11, was celebrated Tuesday, Sept. 19 at St. Mary, Mother of

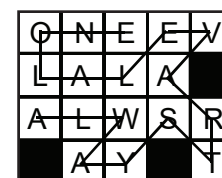
God Church in the German Village neighborhood of Columbus. Burial was at St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus.

She worked for Nationwide Insurance for 20 years after raising her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Pietro and Mary (D'Ippolito) Lombardi. Survivors include her husband of 61 years, Pasquale; sons, Nicholas (Kelly) and Peter (Paula); daughters, Maribeth (Todd) Marxen and Anita Milano-Gay; sister, Marianne (Ed) Pirik; three grandsons; four granddaughters; and nieces and nephews including Michael Pirik, operations manager of the Diocese of Columbus office building.

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Young Adult Conference set for Oct. 14 in Sunbury

The fifth annual diocesan Catholic Young Adult Conference will take place Saturday, Oct. 14, at Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, 9633 E. State Route 37, beginning at 8:15 a.m. The theme will be "Trust in Him" (Psalm 37:3-5).

Keynote speakers will be Dr. Ralph Martin, president of Renewal Ministries in Detroit and longtime host of The Choices We Face on EWTN radio and television, and Sister Mary Grace, SV, of the Sisters of Life in New York.

The program also will include breakout sessions, small-group discussion, an Adoration chapel, exhibits by Catholic ministries, time for the sacrament of reconciliation and lunch.

The day will conclude with Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction at 2:45 p.m., the rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:15, Mass at 4 and dinner, with a barbecue and bonfire (weather permitting), at 5:15.

Tickets are \$38. Child care will be available. For more information, go to www.ccyac.org.

Bradford on tap to speak to men's luncheon club

John Bradford, founder and president of the Wilderness Outreach outdoor ministry, will present a talk titled "What is a Man? The Hunt for Manhood" at the Friday, Oct. 6 meeting of the Catholic Men's Luncheon Club at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., fol-

lowing the 11:45 a.m. Mass.

No reservations are necessary. A \$12 donation to cover the cost of the lunch is requested.

The club's next meeting is Friday, Nov. 3 and will feature a talk by Father Peter-Claver Kasasa Kiviiri, who was ordained to the priesthood in May and is parochial vicar at Gahanna St. Matthew Church.

To sponsor one of the club's lunches, contact Jim Gernetzke at jimgernetzke@noslumine.com.

Serra Club sponsoring vocations essay contest

The Serra Club of Columbus is sponsoring a vocations essay contest for eighth-grade boys and is offering 10 prizes of \$1,000 in Catholic high school tuition assistance for the best-written entries.

The deadline for submissions is Thursday, Nov. 30. The diocesan Office of Catholic Schools is coordinating the competition in diocesan grade schools, and the Serra Club is reaching out to parishes to give boys in Parish School of Religion programs the opportunity to participate. Names of the award winners will be announced in February.

The club hopes to expand the program, adding one grade each year, ultimately offering 40 scholarships – 10 each year to boys in grades eight through 11 – by 2026.

There is money in a Catholic Foun-

dation endowment fund to support the program for three years. Additional donations are needed if the club is to attain its goal.

Donations may be sent to the foundation at 257 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215, with checks made out to the foundation and the words "Serra Club of Columbus Priestly Tuition Assistance Fund #320FEO" in the "For" line.

The club also needs new members to help with the program. To become a member, contact club president Carl Faehnle at carl@faehnle.com.

St. Michael Church adding Sunday evening Mass

Worthington St. Michael Church, 5750 N. High St., will add a 5 p.m. Mass to its Sunday schedule on Oct. 1. The Mass for that day will celebrate the parish's patronal feast of Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael (moved for parish celebration from Friday, Sept. 29).

With the addition, the parish weekend Mass schedule will be 4 p.m. Saturdays (Vigil Mass) and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 and 5 p.m. Sundays.

St. Michael also offers weekday Masses at 8:15 a.m. Monday through Saturday and at 6:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.

St. Agatha sets Mass for people dealing with breast cancer

Columbus St. Agatha Church, 1860 Northam Road, will sponsor a special

Mass at 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15 for those who have been affected by breast cancer.

October is breast cancer awareness month. St. Agatha is the patron saint of breast cancer.

Franciscan University to host criminal justice career day

Franciscan University of Steubenville will host its annual criminal justice career day on Friday, Sept. 29 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the J.C. Williams Center. College and high school students and the general public are invited to attend.

Representatives from more than 30 government agencies and other employers will be on hand to talk to potential employees about their work.

The agencies include the Drug Enforcement Agency; Border Patrol; Secret Service; Marine Corps; Internal Revenue Service criminal investigation unit; Federal Bureau of Prisons; Michigan, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania state police; Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Cincinnati city police; U.S. Capitol Police; Duquesne, Cleveland and Ave Maria law schools; prosecutor's offices; forensics units; and many more.

Dr. Charles Nemeth, director of the university's criminal justice program, will answer questions about the program and educational requirements, applications and hiring processes.

For more information, contact Nemeth at (740) 283-6203.

COURAGE, continued from Page 10

ships without getting involved with unhealthy exclusive and active relationships – that God loves them and wants to work through them in powerful ways as disciples."

Adult members are free to pursue outside counseling from a therapist such as Mary Ann Jepsen, who has worked with impacted families and individuals in the Columbus diocese through her Covenant Integrative Counseling Services.

"It's not like we're targeting people with same-sex attraction and somehow in need of specialized attention because they're somehow more evil than anybody else," Father Ferguson said. "People might be struggling with other kinds of sexual issues, be it pornography or contraception or different heterosexual marital issues.

"We want to have everyone see the positive outlook of the truth of the human body and human desires and human sexuality."

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

"St. John Paul II did a great job helping us to appreciate the positive meaning of the human body with his reflections called 'The Theology of the Body,'" Fa-

ther Ferguson said. "John Paul observed that the sexual difference of male and female is not happenstance; it allows a man and a woman to make of themselves a radical 'gift' to each other in marital love as whole persons – soul and body – in a way that images the even deeper total 'gift' of mutual love that describes the Persons of the Trinity – God!"

As a parish priest, Father Ferguson developed an interest in John Paul's Theology of the Body to guide him in pastoral ministry as he dealt with parishioners' questions about human sexuality, how to handle one's desires in a healthy way and understand marital love in an authentic manner.

He discerned after a 30-day Ignatian retreat that he wanted to explore the topic in more depth and enrolled in the Theology of the Body certification program designed to equip clergy and laity with a deeper understanding of John Paul's teaching on the human person.

Two years ago, former Columbus Bishop Robert Brennan asked Father Ferguson to take over the Courage and EnCourage chaplaincy from Father Toner, who had served in that role for many years.

"Father Toner did a great job, and I

appreciate his work in both ministries," Father Ferguson said. "And I really appreciate how the Catholic Church has proactively over the years seen a need to address the real pastoral issue of same-sex attraction."

CONFUSION

Actions and comments from the Church in the past few years, particularly the German Bishops' Conference, have indicated a softening of Church teaching on chastity and an openness to bless so-called same-sex unions. Media reports ahead of the Synod on Synodality next month in Rome have heightened speculation.

"Unfortunately, I think the lesson is that when we are unclear and/or imprecise in our language, it causes greater confusion and uncertainty among the faithful," Father Schnippel said.

"I have had members express to me in the past that when the Holy Father meets with Father James Martin, SJ (an outspoken advocate for homosexuals in the Church), it causes our members anxiety and distress: 'We are striving hard to live this life, and when the "other side" is seemingly endorsed what are we to

make of that?"

"In our work with Courage, even just in serving as a pastor, we know that living the life that we are called to live leads to a fulfillment and grace that is not otherwise available. Holding up the beauty of a life well lived in accordance with Church teaching does not seem to be in vogue right now, but we know it is beautiful and the most fulfilling option."

RESOURCES

Courage International, which is based in Trumbull, Connecticut, provides a wealth of information for the same-sex attracted and their family members at www.couragerc.org.

The website includes details about the organization, programs, chat groups, events, resources and contact information. Local chapter contacts also can be found there.

The Diocese of Columbus' Office of Marriage and Family Life provides listings for same-sex attraction and gender-identity support in the family healing section at www.columbuscatholic.org.

Father Ferguson can be reached at wferguson@columbuscatholic.org.

Christy Steffy, Development Officer at The Catholic Foundation

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Our Lady of Peace festival, chili cookoff set for October

The Columbus Our Lady of Peace Church and School Festival will be held Friday, Oct. 13, from 6 to 11 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 14, from 5:30 to 11 p.m. The festival will include kids' bouncy houses and games, pumpkin painting, food, a silent auction, bake sale, beer tent, bingo and a chili cookoff on Saturday.

Many people at the parish have fond memories of the festival, which was held annually for many years. But during the past four years, events have resulted in a new look for the much-loved Clintonville-Beechwood neighborhood tradition.

First, in 2019, the parish welcomed a new pastor, Father Sean Dooley. "It was my first year as a pastor, and one of the first things I encountered was the parish festival," he said. "It was great but very overwhelming. My plan was to take a year to get more involved and get my bearings."

Then, in 2020, the coronavirus shut down the festival. "Navigating COVID became everyone's top priority," Father Dooley said. "A parish festival was not even on the radar."

In 2021, with the pandemic easing, the parish opted for a one-day fall festival. This gave the parish time to not only recover from COVID restrictions, but also to ease back into a new normal.

Parishioners also wanted to host a chili cookoff, and fall seemed the best time.

But then came the Real Presence, Real Future initial recommendation to close Our Lady of Peace, and the focus shifted again.

"In 2022, instead of figuring out how to navigate a COVID world, we were simply wondering what the future held for our parish and school," Father Dooley said. "The festival last year became necessary for bolstering spirits and fostering community. We knew we had to do it."

The festival committee, mostly new faces, recognized the importance of bringing the event back but wanted to start slowly.

In the final proposal from the Real Presence, Real Future study, Our Lady of Peace Church and School were found to be vibrant, thriving and growing. "Now," Father Dooley said, "we can finally look ahead! I feel like it's the first time since I arrived here as pastor in 2019, we're making plans for the future, thinking big, moving forward."

For more information about the festival, for sponsorship information or to enter the chili cookoff, visit www.olp-parish.org/fall-fest. Our Lady of Peace is located at 20 E. Dominion Blvd. in north Columbus.

Immaculate Conception School commemorates 100 years of education



Bishop Earl Fernandes blesses students and the grounds with holy water at Columbus Immaculate Conception School after a Mass on Wednesday, Sept. 6, celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding. Photo courtesy Abigail Pitones


Opening Mass at Newman Center



Bishop Earl Fernandes consecrates a new altar at the St. Thomas More Newman Center adjacent to the Ohio State University campus during a Mass to open the school year on Sunday, Sept. 3. Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones



Bishop Earl Fernandes blesses the congregation with holy water during a Mass on Sunday, Sept. 3 at the St. Thomas More Newman Center serving the Ohio State University campus.

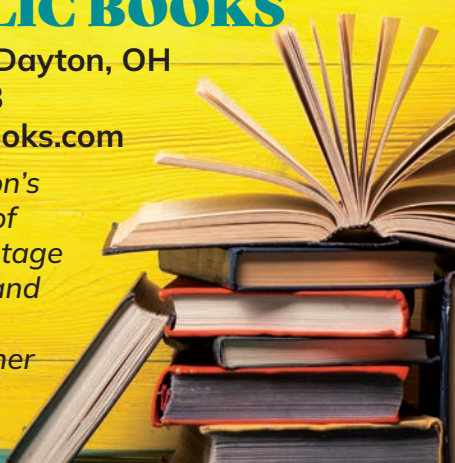


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THE
RED
MASS
OCTOBER 3, 2023
5:15 P.M.

CELEBRANT: THE MOST REVEREND BISHOP EARL K. FERNANDES

SAINT JOSEPH CATHEDRAL
212 EAST BROAD STREET, COLUMBUS

ALL ARE WELCOME

MASS WILL ALSO BE LIVESTREAMED AT
WWW.COLUMBUSCATHOLIC.ORG

Bishop offers Healing Mass, anointing of the sick

“Suffering is real. Jesus Christ gave us seven sacraments, one being anointing of the sick. We pray that the Lord will restore them to good health and offer to God the worship He is due. This evening, we thank God for their faithful witness.”
 – Bishop Earl Fernandes

Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrated a Healing Mass for the Columbus Catholic Renewal (CCR) on Sept. 13 at Sunbury St. John Neumann Church and offered the sacrament of anointing of the sick to those in need.

Nearly 400 people attended, with about 100 receiving the sacrament. The sacrament is for those who have a serious or terminal illness, are facing surgery or are frail or weary from the burden of years.

Those who were to receive the anointing were seated in a special area. After his homily, the bishop moved among them, laying hands on all. Then the bishop and the concelebrating priests, Father Pat Toner, Father David Arroyo, CR, and Father Jins Devasia, anointed each with chrisem oil.

In his closing remarks, Pat Shroyer from the CCR said, “One of my favorite quotes from Pope Francis is when he told bishops to get out of their offices, that a ‘shepherd needs to smell like his sheep.’ Tonight, you witnessed the shepherd of our diocese moving among and



Father David Arroyo, CR, administers anointing of the sick. Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones

tending to his sheep.”

After Mass, prayer teams were available for individual prayer.

CCR was established in Columbus in 1979 by Bishop Edward J. Herrmann. It offers events and programs to make known the action and experience of the Holy Spirit. For more information, go to ccrcolumbus.org, or call Shroyer at (614) 886-8266.



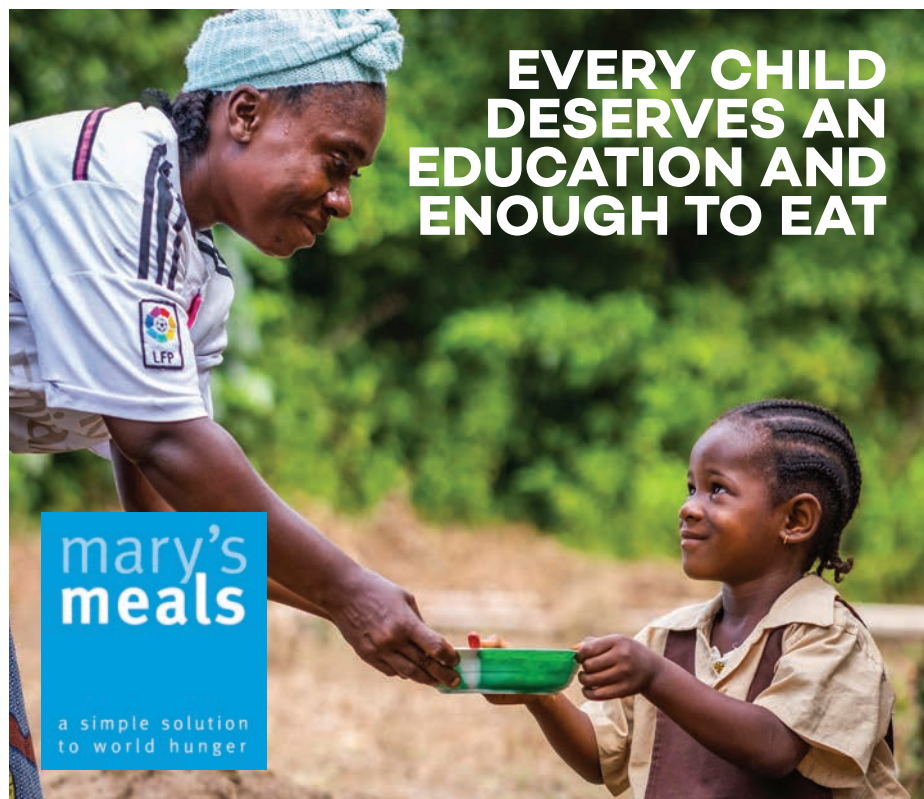
Bishop Earl Fernandes (top photo) moves through the congregation laying hands on individuals who attended a Healing Mass (bottom photo) on Sept. 13 at Sunbury St. John Neumann Church.

Mount Carmel Nursing president installed



Todd F. Ambrosia was installed as the 18th president of the Mount Carmel College of Nursing on Thursday, Sept. 14, at a ceremony that included a Mass celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes. Ambrosia was presented with a mace, which comes from a medieval tradition that symbolizes governing authority for university officials, and the presidential medallion that includes the college seal. The seal represents the Catholic heritage of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who founded the Mount Carmel School of Nursing in 1903 before it became the College of Nursing in 1990 after a fully accredited Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program was established at what has become one of the largest undergraduate nursing programs in Ohio. Ambrosia comes to Mount Carmel from Mount Sinai Health System in New York, where he served as vice president of nursing academic affairs and dean of the School of Nursing since August 2015. He previously was a program director and assistant professor at the University of Miami and the University of Maryland. Ambrosia is a board-certified family nurse practitioner who has a doctorate in nursing practice from the University of Miami and a Master of Science in nursing from Vanderbilt University.

Photo courtesy Abigail Pitones



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Mass for Life

Friday, October 6 at 9:00 am

St. Joseph Cathedral

Columbus, OH

Celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes

*Ohio March for Life
to follow at 11:00 am*

