

The CATHOLIC TIMES

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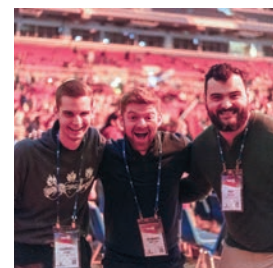
**PROTECTING, DEFENDING
SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE,**
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SEMINARIAN SUPPORT

Ahead of a special diocesan collection next month to support the education of men studying for the priesthood, several seminarians spoke about how they view their vocations as giving themselves in service to Christ and His Church as they pursue the priesthood, Page 3



SEEK THE LORD

A contingent of young people from the diocese along with Bishop Earl Fernandes and more than 20,000 others gathered in St. Louis for the annual SEEK Conference during the first week of January, Page 2

Longtime diocesan director receives papal honor

Mark Huddy was recognized for 30 years of service to the diocese on Dec. 25 when he was bestowed the honor of Dignity of a Papal Knight of the Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great.

Bishop Earl Fernandes announced the special recognition for Huddy during a Christmas morning Mass at his home parish, Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church, with his wife, Beth, and family members present.

"When I think about the Gospels at Christmastime, I think about a young family that needed accompaniment," Bishop Fernandes said. "I think about a family who had no shelter. I think of a child who was threatened when those in power (Herod) sought to destroy Him. I think about a family who was forced to flee, like refugees during persecution.

"I also think about good people who accompany young families, find shelter for the homeless, defend the unborn, and work for justice for migrants and refugees. When I think of a man who really lives his faith day in and day out, and not always in easy circumstances, and who puts his faith into practice, truly embodying the Church's Social Doctrine, Mark Huddy comes to mind. He is a true servant of Christ in the weak, the poor and the vulnerable.

"It is a grace to be able to collaborate with him, and I think everyone in our diocesan offices would agree."

The Order of St. Gregory the Great is a papal award granted by recommendation from a bishop on one of the faithful in a diocese who has served the Church on the local level.

The Order of St. Gregory was established in 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI and named after his predecessor, St. Gregory the Great. Membership in the order can be granted to persons of any faith or

gender who have distinguished themselves by their achievements that benefit society.

Huddy, an attorney who joined the diocese in 1993, has served the diocese as Episcopal Moderator for Catholic Charities and the Office for Social Concerns and on the diocesan Bishop's Council. In his multifaceted role, his primary duties are promoting the Church's social justice teachings for the poor, immigrants, human life and the elderly.

Huddy has worked with a wide range of groups, including parish respect life coordinators, parish social concerns committees, parish school of religion programs, youth ministry groups, parish senior citizen clubs, parish advocates for persons with disabilities, labor unions, interfaith groups, jail and prison ministers, family violence prevention advocates, and those serving the immigrant population.

Some of the activities he oversees include diocesan senior citizens day celebrations, diocesan respect life Masses and conferences, the annual Good Friday Downtown Stations of the Cross Walk, the diocesan family violence prevention program, rural and urban immersion programs, adult and youth retreats and days of reflection, parish missions, rural life celebrations, disabilities inclusion conferences, the parent/family network for those with children with disabilities, diversity and immigration projects, racism study circles, statewide legislative advocacy days, vigils calling for an end to the use of the death penalty and local human rights activities.

His professional affiliations have included chair of the Ohio Catholic Rural Life Conference; member of the Tri-Diocesan Mobile Ministry Steering Committee, a program to meet the needs of



Mark Huddy holds a certificate designating him as a Papal Knight of the Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great that was presented by Bishop Earl Fernandes on Dec. 25 at Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church. Huddy's wife, Beth, and Father Paul J. Keller, OP, (right) diocesan director of divine worship, were present for the ceremony. *Photo courtesy St. Matthew*

rural Catholic immigrants in northeast Ohio; a board member of the Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs (J.O.I.N.), Catholic Social Services, Inc., St. Vincent Family Centers Inc., St. Stephen's Community House, The Villas of St. Therese and Birthright of Columbus.

Huddy also has served on the governing board of Pregnancy Decision Health Centers, the Faith Community Task Force of the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence, and as chair of Office for Social Concerns of the Catholic Conference of Ohio.

He was an associate attorney for the

Columbus firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease from 1981 to 1985; real estate counsel for the Limited, Inc. from 1985 to 1987; assistant visiting professor at the Capital University Law School from 1987 to 1989; director of development in the College of Humanities at the Ohio State University from 1990 to 1992 and executive director of the Ohio Academy of Trial Lawyers from 1992 to 1993.

A Columbus native, Huddy earned a B.A. in English from the Ohio State University and a juris doctorate from the University of Cincinnati.

Bishop Fernandes stresses evangelization of Gospel message at SEEK conference

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

ST. LOUIS – January 1 to 5. "Be the light," the theme of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SEEK24 conference, inspired young men and women to let their light shine before others and glorify God.

Bishop Earl Fernandes, who served as one of the speakers this year at the conference held in St. Louis, encouraged young adults to go a step further.

The bishop challenged youth to take their light to the peripheries of the world, to let their light shine before all men and women, so that every person can experience the joy of Jesus Christ.

The SEEK conference is organized by

FOCUS, a lay apostolate with missionaries present on college campuses, for individuals to experience the love, hope and real presence of Jesus Christ through His Church. Thousands of people from across the world gather each year to encounter Christ at the conference through prayer, fellowship, talks and entertainment.

At this year's conference, Bishop Fernandes spoke about what it means to be

an evangelizing community. He reflected on Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel).

In his talk titled "Pope Francis and the Characteristics of an Evangelizing Community," Bishop Fernandes explained how the Church is called to evangelize in

See SEEK, Page 12



Front Page photo:

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Diocesan seminarian Shane Gerrity holds three-month-old Zelig McNulty during the SEEK Conference in early January, a month in which the gift of life is recognized at marches, prayer vigils, Masses and in the work being done by pregnancy help centers and various organizations. *Photo courtesy Abigail Pitones*

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Collection to benefit diocesan seminarians' studies, formation

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

For seminarians in the Diocese of Columbus, one draw to the priesthood is a desire to give of oneself.

Should the seminarians become priests, they will give themselves to their parishes and the people they minister to through the sacraments and in the daily life of the Church.

This year, the faithful in the diocese can match the seminarians' gift of self by making a gift to support men in seminary. The diocese is featuring a campaign, "A Good and Growing Need," to raise money for the cost of seminary.

A second collection will be taken at Masses during the weekend of Feb. 24-25. The growing number of seminarians has led to increased tuition costs for the diocese.

The faithful can make a monetary donation to support the men who are studying and preparing to make the ultimate sacrifice – the gift of themselves.

"There's something in the seminarians, the men that are in formation, they want to give their life to something," said Shane Gerrity, a seminarian for the diocese in his first year of theology. "The Church is such a perfect place to do that – to become a gift."

Gerrity is in the configuration stage, the third of four seminary stages: propaedeutic, discipleship, configuration and vocational synthesis. In the third stage, a seminarian is configured to Jesus Christ, the leader and priest.

Gerrity, one of several seminarians from the diocese studying at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Cincinnati, said seminary life is structured around prayer.

Seminarians begin their day at 6:30 a.m. with morning prayer followed by Mass. There are classes throughout the day, and in the evening, seminarians have evening prayer and Holy Hour.

The men also spend time with one another, he said, and diocesan seminarians studying in Cincinnati regularly meet with their counterparts at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus. Gerrity serves the community, too.

"Pope St. John Paul II talked a lot about a man who's able to be a gift, and we recognize ourselves as we give ourselves away," he said.

A key part of seminary is spiritual formation. Gerrity said seminarians need to know themselves to be a gift for others.

"We talk about self-knowledge," he said. "That leads to self-acceptance, to really understand who you are in relation to God and the people you're going to be around, and then, to be able to give yourself."

"There's this movement of self-knowledge, acceptance and gift that happens throughout the stage of seminary, but it also happens every day in every situation. You need the amount of time that we're in formation to be able to listen to yourself



**A GOOD
and
GROWING NEED**

It costs **\$55,000** per year to educate and form a seminarian.

COLUMBUS CATHOLIC VOCATIONS

The Diocese of Columbus has a **GOOD AND GROWING NEED** by virtue of **16 ADDITIONAL** young men interested in the priesthood. A contribution from you today will support this immediate need to fund future priests throughout our Diocese.

and know what's going on at that level."

Gerrity said he was drawn to seminary because of the impact priests in his parish – Columbus St. Patrick Church – had on him. He recognized them as men who dedicated their lives to God, and, he said, he felt a need to explore seminary life.

"As soon as I got there, my discernment turned into, 'What does God want?' rather than, 'What do I want?' and that allowed it to take off," Gerrity said.

Brandt Boyden, a seminarian for the diocese, said he has grown because of seminary. He is in his second year of college at the Josephinum studying philosophy, which corresponds with the second stage of seminary, discipleship.

"The amount of resources we have as seminarians is just amazing," he said.

Priests are present in seminary for human formation and for spiritual direction, Boyden said, and fraternity, living in community with the seminarians, "is probably the greatest impact."

Boyden said he had an "amazing childhood" growing up in a "strong Catholic family." He has nine siblings, including seven sisters.

Having a brotherhood at seminary has been a "formative change," he said, which has aided him spiritually. In addition to taking classes together, seminarians pray with and for one another, study together and spend time in recreation, such as playing basketball.

"You grow in so many ways, especially in self-knowledge," he said. "I have not delved in as much as I have in the past few

years to how I react or respond to things, or what my tendencies are spiritually, humanly in human interaction.

"I haven't really done that as much as I have in seminary. I've learned so much, and I've grown so much being able to know what that is exactly, and interiorly, that's probably the biggest thing."

Boyden said seminarians in the discipleship stage focus on growing spiritually, so, one day, they can sustain themselves and their parish by shepherding their flock, the people they serve.

Once outside of the seminary walls, priests might encounter corruption in secular society, and corruption can occur within a person, too, he said. Seminarians must know themselves well to withstand temptation.

"Am I able to conquer the enemy that is within?" Boyden asked. "That enemy can take the form of bad habits or imbalances in your peace."

"So, seminary, especially the priests there who've had experience with that, they've been extremely helpful in how to conquer that struggle within, that struggle of peace in the constant shepherding of a priest."

Boyden said he first took an interest in the priesthood at age 4. He did not fully understand the vocation at the time, but his interest in the priesthood remained through high school. By sophomore or junior year, he began to wrestle with the calling.

"I was struggling with this idea, 'OK, what does the Lord want me to do?'" he

said. "It really was beforehand like, 'OK, what do I want to do?' but then it shifted – 'I'm going to be the happiest doing what the Lord wants for me.'"

Boyden said he experienced a peace about priestly sacrifice – a total gift of self. He was also attracted by the idea of administering the sacraments.

Boyden continued discerning a call to the priesthood after high school by entering seminary.

"That's presently where I'm at now and wrestling with, 'OK, do I have peace with this idea of sacrificing, being a celibate man, being a celibate man for the good of the diocese, for the good of my parish, for the good of every individual I encounter?'" he said.

Deacon Tyler Carter, who was ordained to the transitional diaconate in May, is in his final year of seminary at the Josephinum. He entered the seminary in 2015 after graduating high school.

"This is my ninth year of seminary life, but it's really been a great blessing," he said. "It's really been very formative, and I knew even from the beginning this is a long journey, and I'm in for a long haul."

"It's going to be at least eight years with four years of college seminary and four years of theology, but really, every bit of it's been a joy. It's been a grace because I've learned so much, and I've grown so much through it."

Deacon Carter said he has learned a lot through his classes, bonding with the seminarians and having priests for spiritual direction and advice. All have been a great blessing to him, he said.

"They've all helped form me into who I am now and into the priest that, God willing, I'll be."

Deacon Carter said he first felt called to the priesthood around age 3 or 4. His uncle, Father Timothy Hayes, who is the pastor of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Church, answered questions about the priesthood and offered advice.

Deacon Carter said he felt "something in my heart" drawing him to the priesthood, and he spent many years in prayer and discernment.

"The sacrificial life of the priest is something that really draws me," he said. "The priest is called to be another Christ, and like Christ, to give himself, to be crucified for his people, to be given."

"Like Christ is given in the whole Eucharist to His people, the priest is called to be given to his people, to give of his time, his talent, his ministry to them, and there's something so beautiful in that, in that self-giving."

As he finishes his final semester of classes, Deacon Carter is serving at Canal Winchester St. John XXIII and Groveport St. Mary churches on weekends. He assists with Masses, baptisms and weddings.

"It's been a great blessing because it reorients me toward why I first entered

See SEMINARIANS, Page 10

'This Wondrous Gift' is theme of women's conference

In this year of Eucharistic revival across the nation, the theme of the 16th annual Columbus Catholic Women's Conference – "This Wondrous Gift" – will center on the Eucharist.

The event will take place on Saturday, Feb. 17 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Kasich Hall of the Ohio Expo Center (state fairgrounds), with the closing Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services USA and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The National Centre for Padre Pio will make St. Padre Pio's glove, a first-class relic, available for veneration throughout the conference.

Talks will be presented by Heather Khym, Father John Burns, Claire Dwyer and Father Timothy Anastos.

Khym is a co-host of the "Abiding Together" podcast. She and her husband, Jake, are the co-founders of Life Restoration Ministries. Heather Khym is passionate about evangelization, discipleship and creating an environment that leads people to a personal encounter with God. She is a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville and lives with her husband and three children in the Canadian province of British Colum-

bia.

Father Burns is a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. He is the author of the books "Adore: A Guided Advent Journal for Prayer and Meditation," "Return: A Lent Journal for Prayer and Meditation" and "Lift Up Your Heart: A 10-Day Personal Retreat with St. Francis de Sales."

Dwyer, a Phoenix resident, is the author of "This Present Paradise: A Spiritual Journey with St. Elizabeth of the Trinity." For the past three years, she has given talks and retreats on the life and teachings of this relatively unknown saint. Dwyer is also a contributor to the "New Wine" devotional and writes and edits for the Avila Foundation.

Father Anastos, of Chicago, is one of 50 National Eucharistic Preachers, a diverse group of priests who have been commissioned to enkindle the flame of Eucharistic faith and devotion in the U.S. through preaching about the Eucharist. He is the author of the book "One Hour at a Time: How to Find Jesus When You Need Him."



Heather Khym



Father John Burns



Claire Dwyer



Father Timothy Anastos

Archbishop Broglio, originally from the Diocese of Cleveland, has been archbishop for the military services since 2007. He was ordained as an archbishop in 2001 and has served in many critical positions in Central America, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

The emcee for the conference will be Jennifer Rice, director of missionary discipleship for Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church. Music will be provided by Curb records singer, songwriter and instrumentalist Marie Miller, who performed in front of 750,000 people at the 2015 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

Breakfast pastries and lunch will be available. During the lunch break, about 20 priests will be hearing confessions. There also will be a period of Eucharistic Adoration, and throughout the day, vendors from nearly 100 Catholic-related organizations will be available at tables to answer questions and offer merchandise.

To register, go to www.columbus-catholicwomen.com. Registration is \$50, with a \$35 rate for students. There is no charge for religious sisters, priests and deacons. Scholarships are available for those who cannot otherwise afford to attend.

2024 men's conference emphasizes the Eucharist

The theme for the 27th annual Columbus Catholic Men's Conference is "The Eucharist – Go Deeper." Conference organizers invite men of the diocese to "fall in love with Jesus through the Eucharist and experience a love and strength like no other as you walk with confidence on the path to sainthood."

The conference will take place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24, with Eucharistic Adoration beginning at 6 a.m., in Kasich Hall of the Ohio Expo Center (state fairgrounds). Chris Stefanick, John Edwards and Father Burke Masters will be featured speakers.

The program also will include Mass at 2 p.m. with Bishop Earl Fernandes as the celebrant, plus displays by faith-based organizations, an opportunity to receive

the sacrament of reconciliation, and breakfast and lunch.

Stefanick is an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and television host who has spoken several times in the Diocese of Columbus and has devoted his life to inspiring people to live a bold, contagious faith. His live seminars reach more than 85,000 people per year, and his television program, videos and radio spots reach millions more.

He is the author of the Chosen Confirmation program, which has formed more than 500,000 teens. A graduate



Chris Stefanick



John Edwards



Father Burke Masters

of Franciscan University of Steubenville, he also is founder and president of Real Life Catholic, a nonprofit that is the headquarters for his various initiatives.

Edwards left the auto parts business after 23 years to follow his heart into ministry in the Catholic Church. He runs Pew Ministries Inc., a Catholic nonprofit he founded with a mission of bringing the person of Jesus Christ to the person in the pew. He also is a co-founder and partner of Virtual Catholic Conferences LLC, hosts the "Just a Guy in the Pew" podcast and helps start and revitalize parish men's ministries across the nation.

Father Masters is pastor of St. Isaac Jogues Church in Hinsdale, Illinois. He is known as "The Baseball Priest" because he has served as chaplain for the Chicago Cubs since 2015, a period that includes the 2016 team that won the Cubs' only World Series championship in the

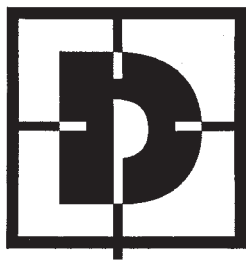
past 115 years.

Father Masters played in the 1990 College World Series with Mississippi State University. After graduation, he became an insurance actuary and was ticket manager for the Kane County Cougars minor league baseball team in suburban Chicago. He became a Catholic in 1985, began seminary studies in 1997 and was ordained a priest in 2000.

He was vocations director of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, from 2006-2018 and became its adult formation director in 2018. He also co-founded a series of sports camps the diocese conducts for young people each summer.

Registration for the conference is \$45 for adults, \$30 for students and complimentary for seminarians and members of the clergy. For more information, go to www.catholicmensministry.com/2024conference.

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Chewing gum, leaving Mass early and more

Dear Father: I liked your article on not raising our hands at the Our Father at Mass. I went through RCIA and became Catholic this past year, but we didn't learn about etiquette at Mass. Would you comment on things like drinking or chewing gum at Mass, leaving Mass before it ends and how to dress for church? Are there any rules? – P.A.

Dear P.A.: Welcome to your Catholic home!

Just as there are proper behaviors so that we can live together in peace at home and work, or while driving or out shopping, so there is a correct way to act with God.

Our comportment is shaped by the places we visit, the people in those places and the things we do. You can lounge in a bathrobe at home but not at the office. You could drink a good beer straight from the bottle at home, but you use a proper glass at a fancy dinner in the home of your CEO boss.

You might leave a concert early to beat the crowd to the parking lot, but you don't leave your own wedding early to get home to see your favorite sports team on TV.

These are not just ways of "being nice." When we act appropriately, we dignify ourselves and those around us. As human beings, not mere animals, we use our intellect to judge the suitable behavior for every time and place. The greater the person or event, the greater the respect and honor we owe.

We debase ourselves, and our culture, when we refuse to recognize the inherent dignity in another person. In the great modern demand for absolute equalization of every person, we lose sight of what makes each one unique and valuable in his or her own right.

Today, grown men pretend to be females and compete against women in sporting events, claiming that every-

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.



one is the same. We have lost our common sense.

Our demand for absolute equalization is exactly what drove Adam and Eve to rebel against God in the garden of Eden. They placed themselves on a par with God to mistakenly claim for themselves the power to decide the definition of good and evil.

News flash: We are not, and can never be, God's equal. To be like Him means we become holy human beings, not gods unto ourselves.

When we go to church, we enter a new garden of Eden, a holy place where, like Adam and Eve before their fall, we worship God. We are in God's dwelling place.

We bow down before God. We commune with God. We hear His voice through the Scriptures, and we speak to Him through the special prayers He gives us, especially at the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

A Catholic church is the house of God. We show the greatest possible respect to God in His home in every action and thought. Men remove their hats. We genuflect to the presence of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in the tabernacle. We silence our phones to hear His voice. We leave our water bottles and coffee cups and gum outside.

Throughout the entirety of the Mass, we seek to attune our minds and hearts to the mind and heart of God. Inevitably there will be distractions, but we simply bring

our attention back to God in the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist.

If we are receiving Holy Communion, we will have fasted from all food and drink one hour before communion. However, we may have a drink of water and medicine before coming to Mass.

Just as we would never leave an important dinner early unless it were an emergency, we do not leave Mass early. I've been told that one priest put signs on the inside of the doors of the church saying: "Judas left early, too." Offensive? Yes. Does it work? Probably not. Nevertheless, point taken.

The rule of thumb is to stay at least until the priest, who represents Christ, has departed. Even then, it is important to stay and make an act of thanksgiving after Mass for all the graces God has given us before we go about the day's business.

The way we dress is important, too. If you received an invitation to a formal dinner with the pope, you wouldn't wear skimpy shorts or sports clothing. Even those who go to the pope's dining room on a regular basis dress up every time.

No, it's not necessary to don a tux or gown for Mass, but there are situations where we could raise the tone. We do it for God, not to impress the congregation.

Some will undoubtedly remind me that it's what is inside that counts, not what we wear. Yes, God sees the heart. But we also show what's in our hearts by what we wear.

Imagine finding your spouse without his or her wedding ring. I suppose a wife could tell her husband that it's what is in her heart that counts, but I doubt he'll buy that line.

Bottom line: God always deserves the best!

Project's benefits extend beyond prison to foundation serving other nations

By Michele Williams

Community service is a huge part of my incarceration. It's very important to me to give back or pay forward (depending on how you look at it) and create a positive impact on the outside community as well as my own prison community.

Through many different jobs and projects, I've earned over 50,000 community service hours. My very first project was for the Catholic missions in 1994 and that lit a fire in my heart to find more ways to serve people from here. I've crocheted blankets for preemie babies and plastic mats for homeless people. I've cared for countless animals through the Wildlife and Pawsabilities programs.

My current job is with the Stitching Post, a community service-based program where we make quilts, blankets, scarves and hats for the outside community. We also make tote bags for women being released so they don't have to carry their personal belongings in a trash bag as they reenter society.

A few years ago, former First Lady of Ohio Hope Taft visited the Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW) and brought a different kind of community service project. This one was for the Tandana Foundation, a non-profit organization that offers support for community initiatives in Ecuador and Mali. It was founded in 2004 by her daughter, Anna, after she spent several months in rural Ecuador teaching English and forming strong bonds with the residents. Tandana's goal is to create and nurture respectful and responsible relationships among people of different cultures.

Hope explained that through Tandana, a team of optometrists went to villages in Ecuador to give eye exams and glasses to the residents. The reactions of the people who'd been squinting or seeing blurry for years was



Eyeglass cases and tools used to make them.

Photo courtesy Tandana Foundation

pure joy and excitement. They could finally see clearly to plow fields, thread needles to sew clothes or study educational materials.

I was awed by the story and their overwhelming gratitude. Hope asked us to make eyeglass cases and lens wipes so the people in Ecuador could better care for their precious glasses. I was thrilled to be part of the project and couldn't wait to get started.

We received an unexpected bonus as we learned the process: the chance to use actual fabric-cutting shears. Technically, they were pinking shears that help keep fabric from fraying and they were new to us and amazing to work with. The scissors we have here are rounded tip, grade-school style, so everyone involved was excited to take a turn with the "grownup scissors."

As a result, we finished 1,000 cases and wipes in re-

cord time. Hope was pleased and Anna took them to Ecuador on her next trip.

I could really relate to the residents' struggles as I worked on this project because I wear glasses myself and know how hard it is to do anything when everything is blurry. I had to wait a long time for state-issued glasses and taking care of them is a priority. Simply being able to see clearly is a blessing, so this became personal for me.

I know the people who received our eyeglass cases and wipes have put them to good use because I've seen pictures. Lots of happy, bespectacled villagers working, studying, playing together and seeing each other smile clearly for the first time. This project was a triple-win situation: My peers and I learned to make something new and serve people; the residents were able to keep their new glasses safe and clean so they could work more efficiently and have a better life; Tandana fulfilled their goal of linking two groups of people, each of whom had skills to offer others. I felt God's presence in the midst of it all.

Hope returned to ORW recently for a social visit and brought Anna with her. We had a very long and meaningful conversation. They shared their Tandana experience from inside rural Ecuador and I shared mine from inside prison fences. We connected through our love of service to all God's people.

I'd been so humbled and honored to be part of something like this. No one cared or judged that inmates made those cases and wipes. They were just happy to have them in the first place. It reminded me of Galatians 5:13: "... serve one another humbly in love." That's what we are called to do no matter where we are.

To find out even more about Tandana's work and volunteer opportunities, go to tandanafoundation.org.

Michele Williams is an inmate at the Ohio Reformatory for Women.

Thoughts turn to conversion at start of new year

I've been thinking a great deal about conversion lately, especially as we gathered over the holidays with friends and family. Time together gives many opportunities for conversations to be shared as we hear the ups and downs of each other's year.

As a parent listening, I think often how much easier the path would be if my children turned to Christ for many of their life decisions. I pray for this and for their conversion because I have seen the gift that living in a relationship with Jesus has brought to me.

I live daily in the knowledge that His plan is far better than mine and so I let Him lead the way. But the reality is that that wasn't always the case for me, and the truth is that it still isn't. I may know what's best and still struggle with doing it. That is why I have started praying more frequently for my own conversion.

There is a humility in recognizing that while we can pray for another's conversion, we must recognize the continued need for our own. Oxford's definition of conversion is interesting to me as it gives two choices.

The first describes a more active attempt at changing someone else's belief: to convert. But the other definition, the one that I am contemplating more lately, is "the process of changing or causing something to change from one form to another." This is the secret sauce for me as I recognize my need to be continually changed, formed, and re-created. Like precious metal being molded in a forge, we need the recognition, the humility, and hearts to see when we need to draw back to the Lord.

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.



But how?

Sometimes I go back to my old teaching days. The new year is reminding me of the beginning of a school year where we set the rules with the class. The metaphor I always used with my students was one of tying shoelaces. We tie them pretty tightly in the beginning and as the days progress they loosen till we know what we need to hold us together.

Conversion is a process, not a one-time deal. I know my humanity, my weaknesses, and my own need to pray for the strength to always turn my life back to the Lord.

I like control and find myself frequently taking back the reins to control how I think things should go. Hint, that's when things spiral out of control and I end up turning to God wondering why He is letting this all happen.

You see the cycle. Most likely we all have lived it. So, I begin again.

I share frequently with my kids now that they are getting older, many of the mistakes I made as a youth, young adult, and as an adult. Though hard and humbling, I share the regret, the embarrassment, the tears, the self-recrimination, and I do this because I know

they have felt similar things as they strive for goodness.

Too often the Christian life is portrayed as one that once accepted forever brings contentment, joy and bliss. There is truth in that each is found in claiming that relationship with Jesus, but it is also necessary to remember that every good relationship becomes beautiful through sacrifice, selflessness and thinking more of the other than of ourselves.

I treasure the trust given to me when loved ones share their hearts. I have learned to lead with love instead of judgment or worry; to listen and to lift their joys, struggles, successes and failures to God.

I love lifting my friends and family, those I hold so close to my heart, in prayer. I pray for their needs, their wants and for them to feel the love of God calling them toward the best version of themselves. (If I find myself in love with them as they are now, imagine how more deeply a friendship can grow when united to God's will for it.) And so, I pray for their conversion in whatever stage of faith they are in.

I am challenging myself to recognize my own need for constant conversion. I am striving to be honest with the Lord as to what I need, where I see myself in the good and the messy and inviting Him into that space.

I always try to begin and end the year with gratitude. I am proud that I've walked another year on this Earth. Each year I like this person I am becoming more and more and I think that is good. It is good to celebrate who we are becoming if who we are becoming is ever closer to whom we were created to be.

"Contextual" theology and *Fiducia Supplicans*

In the apostolic letter *Ad Theologiam Promovendam* (To Promote Theology), issued by Pope Francis on Nov. 1, 2023, the Church was urged to do theology contextually: as the *motu proprio* put it, theology must be "fundamentally contextual ... capable of reading and interpreting the Gospel in the conditions in which men and women live daily, in different geographical, social and cultural environments." How well does *Fiducia Supplicans* (Supplicating Trust), the Declaration on "blessings" issued by Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) on Dec. 18, 2023, meet that standard?

Not very well at all. Consider the "contexts" *Fiducia Supplicans* ignores.

The Media Context. According to the instantaneous media take on it, the Pope, in *Fiducia Supplicans*, authorized priests to "bless" same-sex couples, full stop — although the Declaration itself stated that such "blessings" were not to be considered liturgical, had to be spontaneously requested, involved the "blessing" of individuals, and should be conducted in such a way that the Church's teaching on marriage as the "inclusive, stable, and indissoluble union of a man and a woman, naturally open to procreation" (as Pope Francis put it last July) was not compromised. Cardinal Fernández subsequently complained that the fine distinctions in which *Fiducia Supplicans* abounded had been ignored in the initial media reporting. If the cardinal did not expect exactly that result, however, he did not reckon with the global media context in which *Fiducia Supplicans* would be received. And if the cardinal were truly unhappy with the way his document was being spun, why did he not re-contextualize *Fiducia Supplicans* (so to speak) by calling out clergy who promptly conducted same-sex "blessings" in a manner

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

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that was obviously pre-planned (not least to garner media attention), that was quasi-liturgical, and that unmistakably blurred the doctrinal and moral lines the cardinal claimed his document had drawn?

The Evangelical and Cultural Contexts. Hours after *Fiducia Supplicans* was issued, I received a phone call from an African archbishop, deeply concerned about the impact the Declaration would have on his local Church's efforts to be the Church of missionary disciples for which Pope Francis had called. As the archbishop explained, the local Christian Pentecostals were aghast at *Fiducia Supplicans*; so were the local Muslims; and the Catholic Church's evangelical mission had thus become far more difficult. Did Cardinal Fernández and his DDF colleagues take that bishop's "context" into account in crafting *Fiducia Supplicans*? In preparing the Declaration, did the cardinal and DDF consider the "different ... geographical, social, and cultural environments" of the local Churches of the Catholic "peripheries," celebrated by this pontificate and cited as sources of theological reflection in *Ad Theologiam Promovendam*? It seems not. The only ecclesiastical "context" I can discern in *Fiducia Supplicans* is that of the Church of Catholic Lite, clinging to the thoroughly falsified claim that appeasing the deconstructive Spirit of the Age is more evangelically effective than working to convert the Spirit of the Age by the forthright proclamation of the Gospel, hard bits (see Mark 1:15) and all.

The Synodal Context. The question of "blessing" same-sex couples was vetted this past October at Synod-2023, where the concerns raised by my African friend were discussed. If there was any consensus reached at Synod-2023, it was that the Church ought not authorize any such "blessings" — which is why the subject was not mentioned in the Synod's final Synthesis Report. How, then, does *Fiducia Supplicans* reflect the synodal context in which this pontificate is so invested? What does "synodality" mean if a synodal consensus can be overridden by the unilateral act of a Curial dicastery, issued without any serious consultation with the world episcopate? What does it mean for the future discussion of "synodality" that so many individual bishops — and indeed entire episcopal conferences — have severely criticized, and in some instances repudiated, *Fiducia Supplicans*?

The Linguistic Context. *Fiducia Supplicans* is being presented as a genuine development in the pastoral practice of "blessing" those experiencing same-sex attraction, yet that "blessing" "does not validate or justify anything" (as Cardinal Fernández later told *The Pillar*). As the bishops of Cameroon noted, however, "blessing" signals approval of that- which-is-being blessed in any linguistic context: a commonsense observation that underscores what can only be described as the sophistry of *Fiducia Supplicans*.

Once upon a time, and not so long ago, the dicastery charged with the defense of Catholic truth and the promotion of dynamically orthodox theology was a source of clarification. That is no longer the case. And that will be an issue during the next papal interregnum and at the next conclave.

Parishes, schools, bishop to participate in March for Life, other events

Bishop Earl Fernandes will take part in several events related to the national March for Life in Washington on Friday, Jan. 19.

He will serve as principal celebrant and homilist on that day at 8 a.m. for a Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception concluding a nightlong prayer vigil. The march, preceded at noon by a rally at the National Mall, will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. from the Mall to the U.S. Capitol.

Bishop Fernandes also will take part in Masses at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18 at the St. John Paul II National Shrine and at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 20 at the Cathedral of St. Matthew, both also in Washington.

Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., is sponsoring a pilgrimage to the march that will leave the church at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17 and arrive home at around 10 p.m. Jan. 20.

The group will attend the National Vigil Mass for Life at 5 p.m. Jan. 18 in the basilica and the national prayer service at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 19 in Constitution Hall

before taking part in the rally and march. Stops also are planned at the March for Life Expo, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the St. John Paul II shrine and national monuments. There also will be opportunities for prayer in front of a Planned Parenthood location and street evangelization.

The pilgrimage is open to families, including those with infants. Participants will be sleeping on the floor at Sacred Heart Church in Bowie, Maryland. The cost is \$150 per person to cover transportation, housing and food. Scholarships for individuals and family groups are readily available.

A \$50 deposit must be paid in advance. For more information, contact Lorraine Vance at vances@embarqmail.com or (740) 965-2674.

Granville St. Edward Church, 785 Newark-Granville Road, is sponsoring a one-day excursion to the march, with buses leaving the church at 9 p.m. Jan. 18 and returning on the evening of Jan. 19. The

cost is \$40 per person with family pricing and scholarships available. For more information, contact Paul Gassman at (740) 334-8898 or Deacon John Barbour at (740) 973-5583.

Busloads of students from several diocesan schools will be going to the march. These include Columbus Bishop Hartley, Bishop Ready, St. Charles Preparatory and St. Francis DeSales, Lancaster Fisher Catholic, Newark Catholic and New Philadelphia Tuscarawas Central Catholic high schools and Worthington St. Michael School. Ready and DeSales students will be traveling together.

Columbus Bishop Watterson High School is not sponsoring a group trip, but students from the school will be attending with their families or parent groups.

Many of the young people will be attending a prayer service from 7:30 to 9:45 p.m. Jan. 18 and a youth Mass and rally at 9 a.m. Jan. 19 at EagleBank Arena on the campus of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Anyone 18 and older traveling with a youth group must have taken the diocese's Protecting God's Children program, which includes identification and fingerprint checks.

Bishop Fernandes will celebrate the diocese's annual Respect Life Mass at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 22 at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St. It will be followed by the annual Roe Remembrance at noon on the west lawn of the Ohio Statehouse.

A march for life will take place in Newark after the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Jan. 21 at St. Francis de Sales Church, 40 Granville St.

These and the other marches and rallies mark the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision on Jan. 22, 1973, which legalized abortion throughout the United States until the court returned the power to regulate abortion to each state 49 years later.

Heartbeats provides life-affirming assistance

Assistance for expecting mothers and saving unborn babies doesn't just happen in Franklin County. Throughout the diocese, pregnancy resource centers are engaged in life-saving work every day.

In Licking, Muskingum and others counties east of Columbus, Heartbeats is making a significant impact with life-affirming care that helps women choose life instead of abortion.

With offices in Newark and Zanesville, Heartbeats in 2022 alone received requests for services from 75 Ohio zip codes and has served women and men with after-abortion support in 45 states and 18 countries.

Onsite through their two locations, they facilitated 3,477 appointments, including 729 new clients, and administered 753 pregnancy tests (590 were positive), 386 ultrasounds and distributed prenatal vitamins to moms with a positive test.

Dr. David Born, a member of Newark St. Francis de Sales Church, provides oversight of medical services as Heartbeats' medical director.

The pro-life organization reported that at least 17 babies were saved in 2022 as their mothers were intent on abortion. There were 337 babies were born to Heartbeats' clients despite 82% being initially vulnerable to abortion due to a number of factors.

And Heartbeats continues to report success stories into the new year.

"Amidst legal uncertainties, moments of profound transformation have unfolded, reflecting the hope and joy your support brings to those we serve," the organization shared recently with its supporters. "One such moment occurred on Tuesday when a young cou-

ple embraced the gift of salvation, being moved by the timeless Christmas narrative shared by their client consultant. Your support served as their guiding star, forever changing their lineage with this life-altering decision.

"In another recent encounter, a woman located over 40 miles from one of our centers searched for abortion information on her phone, leading her to our website. This exemplifies the impact of our marketing efforts, empowered by your generosity.

"Responding to her call, we provided a conversation filled with hope and support, ultimately becoming the precipice for her to choose life. She expressed, 'You were not who I set out to talk to today, but I'm glad it worked out this way.'

A few days later, the mother confirmed that she planned to give birth to her baby ... a little girl.

In yet another positive story, Heartbeats related that they are providing support, resources and encouragement to a woman facing an unexpected third pregnancy whose past experiences are marked by adversity, including court interventions and limited resources, making her especially vulnerable to abortion. Heartbeats introduced the option of adoption and she is choosing to continue her pregnancy and has begun to meet with prospective adoptive parents.

"This story highlights the transformative power of information and support in empowering individuals to make life-affirming choices," Heartbeats said. "We are incredibly moved by this courageous woman who has chosen life for her child through a deeply meaningful and selfless act."

Heartbeats' tools include HopeSync,

a program that sends information and videos to abortion vulnerable clients via text messages, and BrightCourse, a video-streaming curriculum featuring more than 220 parenting lessons.

These "Bridges" programs accompany women during a pregnancy decision and families with children under age four. In 2022, Heartbeats facilitated 1,545 in-person and 62 virtual parenting class sessions.

"These classes not only strengthen the foundation of families but also contribute to reducing infant mortality, child abuse and neglect," Heartbeats said. "Importantly, these classes are open to the general public and are often mandated by local courts in cases such as family reunification."

Participation in these classes allow individuals to earn and use points to shop in Heartbeats' boutiques that provide diapers, bottles, infant clothing and more.

Heartbeats' ministry isn't restricted to pregnant mothers.

After abortion support groups provide healing to men and women by addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of individuals dealing with a past abortion while aiming to prevent subsequent abortions. In 2022, 31 women were served through the six-week Keys to Hope and Healing or an eight-week Living in Color study, nine men participated in a six-week Repairing His Story study and 39 women were referred to a pregnancy center closer to their home.

At the core of the Heartbeats mission is prevention and outreach to local students. In 2022, at no cost to schools, 3,674 local students at 12 schools were presented with education on establishing healthy relationships; abstinence

until marriage; character development; goal setting; sexual assault, consent and human trafficking; dating violence and the abuse cycle; and the effects of addiction.

In 2024, Heartbeats' strategic efforts are poised to expand and touch the lives of even more youth.

Heartbeats was founded in 1969 by a small group of believers who foresaw the threat of legalized abortion four years before the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision, which was overturned with the High Court's Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization ruling in June 2022.

That commitment led to the establishment of Heartbeats, which began as one phone line manned by volunteers.

Heartbeats maintains strong ties to the Catholic community in the Newark and Zanesville areas. Its mission aligns with the Catholic Church to serve people at all stages of life with the love of Christ.

Newark St. Francis de Sales Church's Respect life group collaborates with Heartbeats on a number of initiatives, including a baby clothing drive in January, and the parish's Knights of Columbus has donated money for ultrasound machines.

In Zanesville, Catholic school students last fall collected more than 7,000 items, including diapers, wipes bottles and cups, for Heartbeats to make available to its clients.

"Our mission continues to exemplify the love and compassion of Christ," executive director Liz McCullough said, "with our phones still ringing as we work tirelessly to make abortion unthinkable."

Baby box available again at Sunbury fire station after legal issue resolved

By Tim Puet

For *The Catholic Times*

A box in the lobby of a Sunbury fire station that allows parents to surrender newborn children anonymously and safely without facing criminal charges is again available for use after being closed because of legal issues.

A section of the state budget approved in June 2023 amended an Ohio Department of Health regulation issued in 2022 requiring locations of Safe Haven Baby Boxes to be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The amendment allows video monitoring of the boxes, which are located in hospitals and fire and police departments.

"This means that in cases when a fire is severe enough that every firefighter in the station is needed, we don't have to leave one behind to watch the box," said Rob Stambaugh, assistant chief of the BST&G Fire District in Sunbury, the only location in central Ohio with one of the boxes. There are 11 of the boxes in Ohio, with the rest in the state's northwest and southwest regions.

The boxes work like the drop boxes found at banks, post offices and libraries. They are equipped with safeguards to protect the identity of anyone leaving an infant inside the box and an alarm to

alert firefighters or hospital workers that a newborn was placed inside.

"Our department's dispatch center and the police station are a minute or two away from the fire station, so personnel from there can go immediately to the firehouse to open the box if our station is unstaffed," Stambaugh said. "An alarm on our trucks which is linked with the station lets us know the box is being used."

At the Sunbury station and most locations, the box is built into an exterior wall. Once a newborn is placed into a bassinet in the temperature-controlled box, a silent signal is sent to 911 after the outside door closes to protect the identity of the parent.

Usually within two minutes, an emergency medical technician (EMT) or medical staff person accesses the baby through an inside door. The child is immediately evaluated and taken to receive hospital care.

The boxes are an outgrowth of safe haven laws in all 50 states that allow parents to anonymously surrender a child to authorities within 72 hours of its birth and not be charged with abandoning the child.

Monica Kelsey, an EMT and firefighter from Woodburn, Indiana, near the Ohio border, came up with the idea for the

boxes, the first of which was installed in an Indiana fire station in 2016.

Stambaugh heard about the boxes from a friend in Indiana, received approval to have one installed in Sunbury and raised \$15,000 to cover its cost. No tax money was used. Local contractors provided materials and labor and the fire district received a grant from the Discount Tire Driven to Care Foundation to help cover expenses.

The fire district serves Sunbury, Galena, Berkshire Township and Trenton Township in Delaware County.

The box was blessed in January 2021 and was shut down in the summer of 2022 for alarm repairs. The repairs were completed in October, but the box remained closed because of the state ruling.

Kelsey said state Reps. Jean Schmidt, R-Loveland, and Adam Mathews, R-Lebanon, were responsible for the law change that allowed the Ohio boxes to be reopened. "We thought the boxes as they were set up had been following the law in Ohio," she said. "When the state issued its restrictions, we were fortunate to have legislators who immediately went to work on the problem."

She said there are now 191 boxes in 14 states – Ohio, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, New Mexico, Pennsyl-

vania, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Mississippi, North Carolina, Iowa, Missouri and West Virginia – with Kansas, Texas and Alabama to be added to that list by the end of March. Arizona uses a similar system known as baby drawers.

She said that since the baby box program began eight years ago, 133 babies have been handed over under safe haven laws at sites where the boxes are located. This includes 39 placed in boxes – 17 of them in 2023 and eight the previous year.

"This also means 133 sets of parents have been saved by being able to hand over their children anonymously, safely and lovingly in crisis situations," Kelsey said. "The decision is not without pain, but it's one in which the parent wins, the child wins and the adoptive parents win."

Stambaugh said no newborns have been placed in the Sunbury fire station's box and hopes no one will feel the need to use it. "But the bottom line is that we as a fire department are in the business of saving lives, no matter what the method," he said. "Having the box available is much like having the fire department on hand – nobody thinks about most of the time, but they're glad to have it and grateful it's there when it's needed."

A pro-life challenge for Ohioans in 2024

By Rachel del Guidice

Not all too ago, we celebrated Christmas, remembering and celebrating that God became man, was born in the humblest of circumstances to a virgin, to save mankind. This month, January, the first month of the year, the Church dedicates to the Sanctity of Human Life.

In commemoration of the Sanctity of Human Life, tens of thousands will participate in the 51st annual march in Washington, D.C., held every year since the first anniversary of the now-struck down Roe v. Wade, returning the abortion debate back to the states.

Throughout the month of January, thousands of pro-life institutions and warriors across the country will hold their own March for Life events and other pro-life events to recognize and honor the sanctity of life.

As pro-life warriors in Ohio and many around the country already know, Ohio is in a troubling place when it comes to the sanctity of life. With the passage of Issue 1 in November, late-term abortion is now legal in Ohio, health and safety standards have been removed, and parental rights eviscerated. There is no other way to spin it. We are in a dark place.

As such, however, we are called and commanded to be the light and work even more diligently, more relentlessly to protect the sanctity of life. To change the tide, merely attending any of these incredible events won't be enough. We must commit to changing something as personal and perhaps seemingly insignificant as our daily habits to have the impact to change the tide in Ohio.

The great philosopher Aristotle once said regarding habit: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." If we are going to change the

culture, we must start implementing daily habits into our lifestyle that over time will reflect change.

Think about it. If every person who attended the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. took just even one day a month to pray outside an abortion clinic, passersby would notice. Clinic workers would notice. Hearts and minds would be pricked, and seeds would be planted.

If, for example, every person who went to the March for Life decided to spend an hour in adoration each week praying for an end to abortion, praying for legislators, governors, pro-life leaders, abortion doctors, and clinic workers, hearts and minds would be pricked, and seeds would be planted.

If every person who attended the March for Life decided to take even one day a month to fast for an end to abortion and intercede for the protection of the sanctity of life, we would see change. Hearts and minds would be pricked, and seeds would be planted.

In Matthew 17:20-21, Jesus reminded us of the significance of praying and fasting to end demonic activity. "I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

No one has a magic wand to wave to say if we did x, y, or z, culture would change, and society will be perfect. Quite the contrary, we live in a fallen world, and society will never be perfect. Only in heaven will we know perfection, peace and a world void of sin. Yet some of the most essential and powerful keys to change are overlooked including, prayer, fasting and witnessing for life.

Seeing as this world is a far cry from heaven, we have our work cut out for us. As Christians and Catholics, we tend to get so focused on our own lives, and even our own amazing missions and work that we forget some of the most essential and powerful keys to victory: prayer, fasting, and witnessing.

I am speaking to myself first here as it has been quite a while since I have, for example, gone consistently to pray outside of an abortion clinic. Yes, I go sporadically. But sporadic activity is no way to create change. Aristotle would agree with me on that. Consistency and repeated habits are the only way to excellence and effecting change.

God wants us to change our culture. He specifically called us to do "greater things." Actually, in John 14:12, he challenged us and said, "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

I don't know about you, but that sounds like a challenge to me. Let's take it up this Sanctity of Life month and see it through to the end of 2024. Maybe by then, it will be a habit. Even better, however, our Lord promises that our work, even if success is not seen immediately, is never done in vain. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

We just celebrated Christmas and the great gift of life. Now its time to pray, fast and witness for life as never before in 2024.

Rachel del Guidice is communication director for Ohio Right to Life.

PDHC continues to provide lifeline of support for mothers, families

By Kathy Scanlon

This month, Pregnancy Decision Health Centers (PDHC) celebrates 43 years of rescuing lives and impacting families for generations, one heartbeat at a time.

This month also commemorates the 36th year our nation has officially observed the sanctity of human life. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation designating January 17, 1988, as the first National Sanctity of Human Life Day. Since then, it is typically celebrated on the third Sunday of January each year.

"I call upon the citizens of this blessed land to gather on that day in their homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life they enjoy and to reaffirm their commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of every human life," President Reagan declared.

Since 1981, PDHC has been a safe and compassionate haven for new moms who need help facing challenging pregnancy decisions. She can reflect on her situation from a perspective of love, strength and empowerment rather than feeling alone and powerless. No woman should feel alone, coerced or so hopeless that she thinks abortion is her only option.

At PDHC, we make abortion unnecessary as we walk alongside her throughout her pregnancy and beyond through the first year of her baby's life, making sure to connect her with additional community resources to meet her personalized and ongoing needs. We care about the whole person, supporting her physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Often, her journey begins when she reaches out to PDHC's 24/7 hotline. The team provides a listening ear and gets her connected with one of our four pregnancy centers for help. In 2023, the hotline responded to over 70,000 calls, texts and chats.

Last year, over 2,200 individuals were served at PDHC through over 6,800 visits to our four pregnancy resource centers and the family empowerment center. We provided over 1,500 free pregnancy tests and more than 1,130 ultrasounds. We praise God for 825 life decisions.

The excellent work of over 120 pregnancy resource centers in Ohio is undeniable. According to a 2019 report released by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, Ohio pregnancy centers provided free services and materials valued at more than \$15.1 million, serving 126,590 women, men, youth and families.

At PDHC, of the individuals who responded to our surveys after visiting and receiving services at our centers, 96% gave us the highest five out of five ratings for friendly and prompt service, being treated with respect and showed

interest in my needs, was given the help and/or referrals needed, and would recommend PDHC to my friends. Ninety-three percent gave a five out of five rating for feeling more confident and empowered after their initial visit regarding their next steps.

One individual who came into PDHC for help said, "Most amazing place ever. The staff were amazing and made me feel comfortable and welcomed and loved."

"All the people who work there are great. Kind and very respectful. I am very thankful for their excellent service," said another individual.

According to the latest statistics from the Ohio Department of Health, in 2022, there were 18,488 abortions in Ohio. Of those, 2,746 were in Franklin County, the fifth highest total for a county in the state for abortions.

At PDHC, we believe no woman should ever feel forced to finish an abortion she regrets. Chemical abortions via the abortion pill continue to rise and represent over 50% of abortions in the United States. In Franklin County, however, chemical abortions represent 87% of abortions.

Women often take the abortion pill out of duress, when they feel they have no other options, and after doing so, they immediately regret their decision and instantly begin searching for help.

If she takes the first abortion pill and changes her mind, she has about 72 hours to reverse her abortion decision, and PDHC stands ready to help during this critical time with Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) services to give her a second chance to save her baby. APR has been proven effective 64%-68% of the time, with no harmful health effects to the mom or her baby. It has been used safely for decades to help women at risk of premature birth and recurring miscarriage.

One individual we helped said after she took the abortion pill that she immediately regretted it and PDHC was able to help save her baby.

"They gave me so much hope and encouragement," she said. "They prayed for me and my pregnancy and let me know they would be with me every step of the way. Nine months later, I gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby girl. None of this could have been possi-



"PDHC has been an amazing resource for support from the very beginning of my pregnancy," a Pregnancy Decision Health Centers client related. *Photo courtesy PDHC*

ble without PDHC. I am forever grateful for this team."

Recently, a woman who was shopping in the boutique said she wanted to tell someone how much she had been helped. She said she was so grateful for the support provided through classes and baby supplies. She had not been prepared to have a baby. Her baby is healthy, and she reported she is even finding ways to give to others.

PDHC cares about moms, babies, dads and families, and continues to be a beacon of support for parents, dedicated to empowering them with essential skills through parenting classes and the development of a supportive community with other parents, staff and volunteers.

Last year, at least 433 new moms and dads participated in over 13,600 online classes and nearly 900 in-person classes. There were over 2,100 material aid visits to our baby boutiques for resources.

Since 1984, PDHC has been teaching Sexual Risk Avoidance Education to youth in middle and high schools in Franklin and Fairfield counties through medically accurate, age-appropriate information for both public and private, faith-based schools. PDHC's Common Sense Culture Program (CSC) continues to impact the students in central Ohio with character education to help them establish healthy and vibrant relation-

ships and empower them to achieve their life goals. Last year, the team reached 37 schools and over 5,500 students.

One high school student shared, "Having a better understanding of this will impact my decision-making."

Since 1989, PDHC's Abortion Recovery (aR) program has been offering hope and healing for those who have experienced the grief and trauma from a past abortion experience.

Abortion is a deeply personal and often complex experience, one that can leave individuals and families with a sense of loss, grief and guilt. With one-in-four women experiencing abortion, it is important to provide a safe space to allow individuals to confront their grief and start or continue their healing journey.

With the increase in self-managed chemical abortions via the abortion pill, we are finding that women are immediately traumatized because of what they see and experience. They come to realize they are their own abortion provider, and they revisit the scene every day because it occurred in their own home, and they are reaching out for help much sooner. PDHC operates a 24/7 CareLine for those who need help at 614-721-2100.

"I found aR support 100% helpful," a participant said. "I was in a dark place and headed back down a dark road! I have been lifted out of a pit that could have ruined me. I cannot express how grateful I am.

"Anyone going through or sitting in a broken place, YOU CAN COME OUT! There are people who God sent to help you and they are so happy to help you with all love, and no judgment. I sat in a place of loneliness for years feeling unwanted, loveless, and broken but aR at PDHC has opened up a door that I'm walking through with confidence! I have a new mind and heart. Yes, it's hard but I am changed, and healing is my new friend."

With the passage of Issue 1 in Ohio, the work of pregnancy resource centers like PDHC becomes even more important as we meet the ever-changing culture in our state. We are here for her every step of the way. For more information, go to SupportLifePDHC.org.

Kathy Scanlon is the president of Pregnancy Decision Health Centers.

Birthright of Columbus cares for mother, child

By Barb McMullen

Director, Birthright of Columbus

Our Catholic teaching tells us that human life is sacred from conception to natural death.

Birthright was founded in Toronto by Louise Summerhill in 1968. Birthright of Columbus was founded 1972 and adheres

to Summerhill's motto: "It is the right of every woman to give birth and the right of every child to be born." Today, Birthright continues this by deeply caring for both mother and child.

Mary was an unwed, pregnant teenager. She traveled to her cousin Elizabeth for love and support. Birthright volunteers are here to help any pregnant woman needing support, friendship and love.

Just as Joseph provided for the infant, Birthright offers slightly used maternity and baby clothing, diapers and other layette needs. Being a friend to the pregnant woman, Birthright can determine the referrals she needs such as housing, food and medical and professional help.

Mary and Joseph gave the love of the world to everyone. The essence of Birthright is love.

Bottoms Up needs more deposits in Diaper Bank

Jo Welsh believes that now is the time of increase, not a time of withdrawal.

“When Tim and I founded Bottoms Up Diaper Bank, we just thought we could do something for impoverished mothers. Now, there are entire communities that rely on us to deliver enough diapers to help those moms keep their babies clean, dry and healthy.”

Bottoms Up Diaper Bank has grown to the point that it is delivering diapers and wipes to 75 community partners in 20 counties. It operates four delivery vehicles (driven by volunteers) and runs six storage facilities scattered across central and southeastern Ohio. In 2023, it delivered nearly one million diapers.

But Welsh says they need to do more.

“In 2024, we plan to double our distribution to our partners,” Welsh said. “I always ask the partners, ‘What can we do to better serve?’ and almost all say: more diapers.”

Bottoms Up encourages the food pantries, childcare facilities, domestic abuse shelters and pregnancy centers that it

serves to distribute 25 diapers per child. According to a study by the National Diaper Bank Network, the number of diapers per child can be most effective in eliminating the issues associated with diaper need is 50.

So, in 2024, Bottoms Up will be adopting that standard, effectively doubling its distribution.

Additionally, Bottoms Up will be taking on new partners in geographies that it doesn’t currently serve.

Diaper need is a growing problem. A clean diaper means a happy baby, but one-in-two U.S. families cannot afford enough diapers to keep their babies clean, dry and healthy. These babies are more vulnerable to painful rashes and urinary tract infections and have more trips to the doctor. As many as three-in-five parents miss work or school because they can’t afford the diapers required to leave their baby in childcare. Clean diapers are a basic need of every baby and toddler.

Distributing an increased number of

diapers, Welsh hopes to have a bigger impact on the lives of these babies and their moms.

“We’re meeting with our community partners we serve to map out a plan to give them more diapers to give to their constituents, but there are a lot of issues that we need to understand and solve,” Welsh said. “Logistics, storage, delivery schedules, volunteer involvement all need to be addressed for us to be able to meet our goal. Finances will be a big piece of the puzzle.”

Welsh understands that there was disappointment and even depression over the passage of Issue 1 in November, but she and her husband, Tim, are determined to continue to find ways to help women who are living below the poverty line.

“It’s heartbreaking to see how many mothers need help and don’t know where to turn,” she said. “We hope that the little bit we do can help them get by.”

And for those mothers who are grappling with an unexpected pregnancy,

Welsh hopes that the availability of diapers and wipes through the partners of Bottoms Up will make a difference. She knows that poverty and immorality are not synonymous.

Even so, Bottoms Up is not on a crusade. The mission of the organization is to be present for the mothers and their babies when and where they need assistance, Welsh insists.

“Sometimes, it’s as simple as a smile, a kind word, a hug, or even a package of diapers to resurrect the dignity of these mothers and take away one of the worries of their day,” she said. “Many times, they just need someone to help them diminish the shadow of their past and help them recognize the brightness of their future. That’s why we do what we do at Bottoms Up.”

To get involved with Bottoms Up, email Jo Welsh at jo@bottomsup.life or donate at www.bottomsup.life.

To defend human dignity, Catholics must remember who they are

By Will Kuehnle

With January pro-life activities underway, many are still wondering how Issue 1 in Ohio passed so decisively. How did decades of advocacy overturn *Roe v. Wade* only for the dignity of life to face such a harrowing defeat at the ballot?

The answer is partly Catholic political amnesia. We have forgotten who we are and how faith in Jesus Christ transforms politics.

We have forgotten that the Catholic Church has converted politics before. Christians ended the brutal violence of Roman gladiatorial games. Catholic bishops and religious sisters created the first public hospitals and poor houses. Christianity inspired the abolition of slavery, the spread of education and the recognition that race, gender and class do not determine a person’s dignity.

Ad if we are faithful to our calling today, Catholics will transform politics again. We can create a world where women, children and families are free from abortion. But to do that, we must recover a truly Catholic approach to politics.

First, we need to remember how the dignity of life touches all of politics. Catholic schools have a role to play here. Catholic schools can bring together science and civics to show young people why the preborn and the prisoner on death row both have a right to live. Catholic educators can marry the study of religion and economics to prove that dignifying labor and supporting women are questions of human dignity.

Caring for women, before and after pregnancy, helps

Catholics to remember the dignity of life. Also, Catholic ministries for women in need show the world that defending the vulnerable and protecting life in the womb are one and the same. Volunteering for Walking with Moms in Need or donating to organizations like Mommy Matter that provide assistance to pregnant women make our pro-life beliefs credible.

Second, we need to remember how to put our faith into political action. Many Catholics already try to be faithful citizens in the voting booth. But faithful citizenship also requires forming our consciences, following legislation and making our voices heard beyond the ballot. This can be a challenge.

This is why the Catholic Conference of Ohio (CCO) empowers Catholics in our state to engage with politics in the light of faith. As the official voice of the Catholic Church on public policy, the Catholic Conference educates Catholics about legislation and promotes policies that defend human dignity in the General Assembly.

As we move forward from Issue 1, the Catholic Conference of Ohio will advocate for laws that support women and make it easier to receive resources through pregnancy and beyond. For example, the Conference is supporting Senate Bill 159, which would create a tax credit for donations to pregnancy resource centers. More than ever, these organizations need support.

The CCO is also supporting House Bill 290 to create the Thriving Families Tax Credit. The cost of raising a child is one of the reasons people turn to abortion. Therefore, directly supporting each family with chil-

dren defends the dignity of life. The Conference will advocate for laws that make it easier for a woman to choose life, such as expanding Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women, establishing paid parental leave and growing networks of support.

Just as abortion takes a life to solve a crisis, the death penalty also contributes to the culture of death. The Catholic Conference has fought for 40 years to defend life from capital punishment and is urging legislators to pass House Bill 259 and Senate Bill 101, which would abolish the death penalty in favor of life without parole.

Activate your faithful citizenship by visiting the Catholic Conference of Ohio website at www.ohiocathconf.org and following @OhioCatholics on social media. The Conference helps Catholics build a civilization of love by keeping them informed on active legislation and creating action alerts to make it easy to contact your legislators.

The passing of Issue 1 certainly brings sorrow. But it cannot make us shy away from our calling as faithful citizens. Now is the time to remember how Catholics have transformed politics through the ages and we can do so again.

For decades, the political battle for life was fought with legal arguments. That time has passed. Now, Catholics must bring an undeniable moral argument. The same argument that has won in every age. The consistent example of Christian love for those in need will convert the world.

Will Kuehnle is the associate director for social concerns at the Catholic Conference of Ohio.

SEMINARIANS, continued from Page 3

seminary: to serve the people of God,” he said. “All the theoretical parts and the studies are very important, but it is hard sometimes being away from the parish life.”

Deacon Carter’s seminary formation has been important to his parish ministry. He said the beginning stage of seminary was especially formative for him.

“That was helpful, getting to know how to pray the Divine Office, how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours together, and it’s all the very basic things that seem so simple, but these are things that I’ll be doing for the rest of my life as a priest,” he said.

Developing a pattern of daily prayer was helpful, Deacon Carter said. His prayer life includes praying the rosary

and making a daily Holy Hour.

“These are the foundations that help the rest of your spiritual life to grow, and then, to eventually help and form your priesthood,” he said.

As he looks ahead to his anticipated May 2024 ordination to the priesthood, Deacon Carter is preparing to give the gift of himself.

“The world tells us we should focus on ourselves and on getting more for us, but Christ tells us we need to give of ourselves and be for others,” he said. “There’s something so beautiful in that and so countercultural in a way.

“I feel really drawn to that – to being totally Christ’s, and in Him, to be for His people.”

Teen needs support for renovation project at Women's Care Center

By Annelise Perez

As a 17-year-old junior earning my Stars & Stripes award, my heart has always been drawn to helping young women and families in need of care and support. The Stars & Stripes award is the American Heritage Girls' highest scout award and entails a project leaving a significant impact on the community and requires more than 100 service hours.

I am delighted to say that I have been blessed with the amazing opportunity to impact women and children in downtown Columbus through the renovation of the Women's Care Center's bathroom.

This is not any ordinary bathroom — around 2,300 women alone visit the Broad Street location (with a total of 9,435 women coming between this and its sister center 10 minutes away) every year, with over 3,250 pregnancy tests taken.

This is the place where women experi-

ence one of the most life-changing moments of their lives. This is where women come to console themselves, to take a minute to pause and to rejoice at the life within them. Often, women bring along some of their families, and the bathroom becomes a place of support.

Over the next three months, my project will replace the vanity, tiling and baby-changing station, install air conditioning, and repaint and furnish the room. With a fundraising goal of \$5,500, my project aims to create a warm, restful place at no cost to the Care Center.

I am here to ask for your generosity in helping fund this significant difference in so many women's lives. Any amount is truly, sincerely appreciated. You can donate through my GoFundMe at <https://gofund.me/oao7f50c>.

For a tax-refundable donation, you can donate through the Women's Care Center

at the Broad Street location. Simply go to <https://supportwomenscarecenter.org/donate/>, pick Columbus, Ohio, and at the next page check the box saying "make this donation in someone's honor or memory." In the box labeled "Honoree Full Name," write "for Annelise Perez's bathroom renovation."

If you are not able to monetarily do-

nate, I ask for your prayers throughout the next several months as renovations get underway, that the grace of the Lord may guide me in all my decisions and work, and that through this He may bless the countless women and families who will walk through this door in the future. God bless you!!

Our Lady of Peace to host speaker on Eucharist

Dr. Alan Mostrom will present a talk on "The Presence of God in the Soul and the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist" at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25 at Columbus Our Lady of Peace Church, 20 E. Dominion Blvd. The talk is part of the parish's ongoing Eucharistic revival speaker series.

Mostrom teaches seminary classes at The Athenaeum of Ohio in Cincinnati on Christian anthropology, Christology, ecclesiology, fundamental dogma and

evangelization.

He was raised in Tacoma, Washington in the Pentecostal tradition and converted to Catholicism with his wife, Sarah, in 2009. He has received a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy from Nyack College in New York, a Master of Arts degree in New Testament theology from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky and a Ph.D. in theological studies from the University of Dayton.

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March 1 - 3 | Men's Retreat with Fr. Jim Kubicki, SJ

March 8 - 10 | Women's Retreat with Nicki Verploegen

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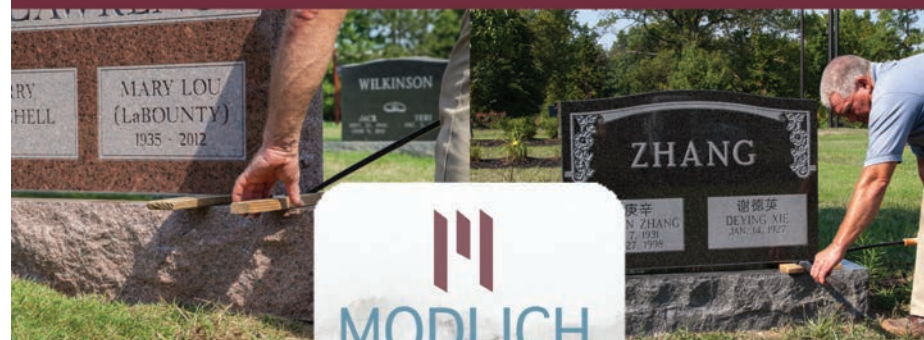
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SEEK, *continued from Page 2*

the present day.

He told those gathered that they need to have an “entrepreneurial spirit” in evangelizing to others. Every person, he said, is called to take the role of priest, prophet and king and spread the joy of the Gospel.

However, the bishop said, the context in which people must evangelize has changed. Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium* that the Gospel must be spread *ad gentes*, to the nations.

“We need to restructure our efforts around the person of Jesus Christ and making Him known,” Bishop Fernandes said.

Young men and women, and all evangelizers, must spread the Gospel message to the peripheries, or the outskirts, of the world. They must step out of their comfort zone and take the Gospel to places where people do not know Jesus Christ and share it with people who are no longer active in His Church.

Bishop Fernandes asked those gathered to contemplate what that mission entails.

“We are the one people of God who reveal the many faces of God,” he said.

The bishop told those gathered that they need to adopt a mode of mission rather than maintenance. Evangelizers must have a missionary spirit and be unafraid to share the person of Jesus Christ with others.

“We are a Church that goes forth,” Bishop Fernandes said.

He said the ultimate end of evangelization is the salvation of souls.

Bishop Fernandes considered how missionaries, such as FOCUS missionaries who serve on college campuses, go out day after day and invite college students to the Catholic Church.

Missionaries must go out and share the Good News with people. They need to “meet them where they’re at,” the bishop said, and he added that they must be bold.

Taking initiative in evangelization is a characteristic of an evangelizing community, the bishop said.

He told the audience that missionary disciples must be proactive rather than reactive. They need to seek those who have fallen away.

The bishop said that visiting people in prison or visiting people in nursing homes who have no family to visit them are ways to be missionary disciples. Bringing children to sing at nursing homes is a way to spread the beauty and joy of the Gospel.

From his experience ministering to the imprisoned, Bishop Fernandes said many people in prison have real faith and a real conversion to Christ, and they want to know that they are not forgotten.

The bishop said accompanying others is another characteristic of an evangelizing community. Every person is in a different place in their faith journey, and being a missionary disciple requires offering accompaniment and meeting a person where they are in their journey.



Bishop Earl Fernandes (left) joins the clergy procession for Mass at the SEEK Conference in St. Louis.



A large crowd attends Mass at the SEEK Conference in St. Louis. Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones



Father Michael Fulton (wearing yellow stole) processes toward the altar in the stadium for Mass at the SEEK Conference. Fulton is a parochial vicar at the Scioto Consortium of parishes.

“Jesus says to go the extra mile,” Bishop Fernandes said.

He said some people can be frightened by other people or by the prospect of encountering new people. In fear, there can be a tendency for people to build walls

around themselves, closing themselves off from others.

Bishop Fernandes said the alternative to building walls is dialogue. People will find that they share “far more in common” with other people, he said, than

differences.

Being an evangelizing community demands patience and requires discernment. It also requires joy, which, the bishop said, is the greatest experience that goes forth from evangelization.

Bishop Fernandes said people often notice him smiling while he celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He said he smiles because he knows Jesus Christ, and he knows that he is loved by Him.

“The Apostles rejoiced to see the risen Lord,” the bishop said.

Missionary disciples also need to introduce others to the joy of Jesus Christ and hand on their experience of knowing the Lord so other people can encounter Christ.

“Go forth with joy,” Bishop Fernandes encouraged the audience.

Keith Bray, a seminarian for the Diocese of Columbus, enjoyed Bishop Fernandes’ message on evangelization. Bray was one of several diocesan seminarians who attended the SEEK conference.

“The idea of going out, being an evangelizing Church but not turning in on oneself, the idea that when people stop attending Mass, people stop showing up, that’s something that we should take note of,” he said.

“I’ve heard people say that the thing they like about the Catholic Church is that you just go in and go out and then no ever talks to you and it’s great, and that’s actually a detriment. That our bishop recognizes that, I think that’s really huge.”

Bray, who is in his first year of seminary at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Cincinnati, said the Church is the Body of Christ, a community of persons. He said it is important for a person to evangelize and invest in the community at their parish. Evangelization can be taking note of who is no longer present at Mass and reaching out to them.

Samantha Alphonso, a student at the University of California, Irvine, related to Bishop Fernandes’ talk. She is involved with FOCUS on her college campus and seeks to evangelize to students.

Alphonso said accompaniment is a characteristic of evangelization that stood out to her.

“I think that part’s really important, actually getting to know a person and getting used to each other,” she said.

Alphonso, who is a California native, said it is difficult sometimes to know how to evangelize to other students.

Evangelization can be different for each person, and focusing on forming a relationship with a person first is important. Bishop Fernandes’ words about accompaniment resonated with her.

“It was reassuring in that way of – every one of us – we each have a different part of God in us,” she said. “We reflect Him differently. There’s other ways to get His love across and Who He is.”

Adoration unites 24,000 Catholics in moving experience at conference

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament brought tens of thousands of worshippers together on Jan. 3, the third night of the annual Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SEEK24 Conference in St. Louis. The experience was a highlight of the conference for many.

Approximately 24,000 people gathered to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, an increase of 5,000 attendees from last year's SEEK23 Conference in St. Louis.

The evening began with keynote speeches from Dr. Edward Sri, the vice president of formation for FOCUS and a theologian, author and speaker, and Father Mike Schmitz, the director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota and the host of the popular Bible in a Year podcast.

Reconciliation was the third theme in a sequence of keynote speeches at the conference focusing on a relationship with God, rebellion, reconciliation with Him, re-creation and response. A reported 4,500 confessions were heard that evening.

Sri spoke about Jesus' first miracle, which took place during the wedding feast at Cana when he turned water into wine. The Blessed Virgin Mary told the servants at the wedding feast to do whatever her Son told them to do.

Sri encouraged the audience to be inspired by Mary, and like her, give everything to God. He said that Jesus wants His people to give everything to Him.

He also spoke about suffering. Many Catholics do not understand the meaning of the cross, Sri said, and one drop of Christ's blood would be enough to cover the sins of all humanity. However, Jesus gives everything on the cross.

"In every cross there is a spiritual gem," he said.

Father Schmitz, who also serves as the chaplain for the University of Minnesota-Duluth Newman Center, explored the Bible story of the Prodigal Son. The Gospel recounts how the son returned to his father after leaving and sinning against him, and his father welcomed him back with open arms.

"We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and yet, He still wants you," Father Schmitz said.

Every person has inherited a broken heart, he said, and that is the truth they must accept. Sin fractures and splits a heart that then needs to be healed.

Father Schmitz said broken hearts are healed in the sacrament of reconciliation, and God holds His people during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"There's not any number of steps that Jesus Christ won't take for you," Father Schmitz said.



Bishop Earl Fernandes makes a presentation at the SEEK Conference on Tuesday, Jan. 2 in St. Louis. Photos courtesy Abigail Pitones



A contingent of SEEK Conference attendees from Buckeye Catholic and the diocese gather with Bishop Earl Fernandes for a photo. Buckeye Catholic is the student ministry at Ohio State University based at the St. Thomas More Newman Center next to the Columbus campus.

He encouraged the audience to take a step for God by letting Him hold them in Adoration or heal their hearts in confession that night.

"This last step is yours to take," Father Schmitz said.

Several priests who were present offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Adoration.

After Father Schmitz's keynote, the Blessed Sacrament was processed around The Dome at the America's Center Convention Complex, where the conference took place. Pope St. John Paul II celebrated Mass there in 1999.

Thousands of attendees fell to their knees before the Blessed Sacrament.

Peter Johanni, who is from Columbus and recently graduated from the Ohio State University, said he was convicted of his need for Christ while adoring the Lord.

"Tonight really impacted me a lot, hearing and being reminded of the need for a Savior and how we have a Savior Who loves us infinitely, and it was paid – the debt of love that we owed – so that we might have life now and life with Him," he said.

"I tried to sit with Him for two hours in Adoration and just soak in the reality that we have a Savior who loves us and Who has given us everything. To be in His presence was a huge gift, and to be here with so many other people and get-

ting to experience the same thing with them was really powerful."

Johanni said before the conference he knew he needed a savior but was "so strongly reminded" of that in his heart. He said he was convinced of that truth while sitting with the Lord in Adoration.

Mackenzie Hoog, a senior at Ohio State, has attended multiple SEEK conferences. She said she appreciates how intentionally the Gospel is presented through the different keynote speeches and talks. She also enjoyed her time in Adoration.

"I'm consistently reminded that during the Mass we have the cherubim: 'Lord, I'm not worthy You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed' and that it's a permission that we give to Him in order to do that," Hoog said.

"It's always beautiful to be reminded of that in Adoration and to sit with that and delight in the Lord as He delights in us, so it's been beautiful to experience that once again this year."

Hoog said being "constantly reminded" of God's mercy is what she loves most about the conference.

"I'm constantly reminded of the restoration that He's doing in my heart, in my family's heart, and He gives me solace in that," she said.

Ethan Williams, a member of Colum-

bus St. Patrick Church, attended for the first time this year. He said the conference gave him hope.

"I am absolutely blown away by the number of Catholics here and how much they all love the Lord," he said. "It's amazing to be in a liturgy with over 20,000 people."

During the conference, each morning began with the recitation of the rosary and celebrating the Mass in The Dome. Clergy, religious and laity gathered for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"In the liturgy that I love so much, to see everyone doing that together as the universal Church in the U.S. and beyond is very inspiring," Williams said. "It gives me so much hope."

He enjoyed time spent in Adoration. Williams said it was "extremely liberating to sit and learn from the Lord things about myself that I have not known before."

Speakers at the conference showed him different aspects of the Catholic faith that he did not recognize before, he said, "especially in knowing who you are in Christ and how to surrender to Him."

Gabriel Shroyer, a seminarian for the Diocese of Columbus, joined other diocesan seminarians at the conference. He said the experience inspired him to serve the Lord.

"It's very inspiring, and it's very moving, and it makes me want to be on mission. Even though I'm in the seminary, I still want to go out and spread the Gospel."

This year, 450 seminarians registered for the SEEK24 conference, which is more than double the number of seminarians who attended last year.

As a seminarian, Shroyer had the opportunity to volunteer to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion during daily Mass. He helped escort priests around The Dome to their assigned station for distributing communion.

"Walking through the aisles and aisles of people that just want to receive Jesus really moved my heart and inspired me, especially in my vocation and for young people and their desire for the Lord," Shroyer said.

He said he also enjoyed the hospitality that SEEK offered seminarians and clergy who attended the conference. He appreciated how they were received and he enjoyed meeting seminarians from other dioceses.

"Seeing the guys from different dioceses also really on fire and want the Lord, and the way that they've treated us also has been really good – giving us a lounge and treating us very well, it's inspiring," Shroyer said.

Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B

Teach them how to pray

1 Samuel 3:3b–10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7–8, 8–9, 10
1 Corinthians 6:13c–15a, 17–20
John 1:35–42

The call of Samuel in the night is a fitting image for what is happening often in the world today with regard to passing on the Catholic faith and the practice of prayer to the next generation. God is calling. His voice is always there, underneath and beyond all that we experience. Yet, few are they who have learned to hear the voice of the Lord. When God speaks clearly and distinctly so as to be heard, there are only a small number who know how to interpret what is said.

There was a time when virtually all people knew at least something about prayer. They may or may not have prayed, but they did recognize it and acknowledge it when they saw it. Church bells would ring and everyone would stop to bow their heads in prayer. Many knew how to “say their prayers” in many languages. I remember a high school friend whose mother was German. When he said his prayers, even in English, they would come from his lips in a slightly German accent. Later, when he was studying in England, those same prayers came out with a non-American sound, the German having been taken over by the British lilt.

Eli, the priest, ought to have been able to pray and to recognize prayer when it was called for by the whisper of Samuel’s name. Unfortunately, he had failed to impart the reverence due prayer to his own sons who were destined to be priests after him. God arranged, by ful-

Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Timothy Hayes

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



filling the prayer of Samuel’s mother and having her son raised at the sanctuary, to establish Samuel as the prophet who ushered in Israel’s Kingdom. Eli eventually figured things out and taught Samuel to say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” The God who heard Hannah’s cry taught her son to listen for His will and to fulfill it.

The first followers of Jesus were disciples of John the Baptist, who learned from their former master that they should welcome Jesus as the Lamb of God. They went to see where – and how – He lived, and they stayed with Him that day and then to the end of their lives. All John did was to point Jesus out: “Behold, the Lamb of God.” Andrew and his companion discovered for themselves that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and then Andrew took the news to his brother Simon, whom Jesus acknowledged as the “Rock” upon whose faith the Church would grow.

The answer to the lack of knowledge of prayer is not to despair. Rather, it is to enter prayer ourselves: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” and then, following through, “Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.” The generations to come will learn by example, and like Andrew and Peter, will come to understand that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the Messiah Who has come to bring salvation.

Parents and grandparents need never despair of the generations to come

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

1/15-1/21 MONDAY 1 Samuel 15:16-23 Psalm 50:8-9,16bc-17,21,23 Mark 2:18-22	THURSDAY 1 Samuel 18:6-9;19:1-7 Psalm 56:2-3,9-10a,10b-11,12-13 Mark 3:7-12	1/23-1/28 MONDAY 2 Samuel 5:1-7;10 Psalm 89:20,21-22,25-26 Mark 3:22-30	THURSDAY Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22 Psalm 117:1bc,2 Mark 16:15-18
TUESDAY 1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 89:20,21-22,27-28 Mark 2:23-28	FRIDAY 1 Samuel 24:3-21 Psalm 57:2,3-4,6,11 Mark 3:13-19	TUESDAY 2 Samuel 6:12b-15,17-19 Psalm 24:7-10 Mark 3:31-35	FRIDAY 2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5 Psalm 96:1-2a,2b-3,7-8a,10 Mark 4:26-34
WEDNESDAY 1 Samuel 17:32-33,37,40-51 Psalm 144:1b,2,9-10 Mark 3:1-6	SATURDAY 2 Samuel 1:1-4,11-12,19,23-27 Psalm 80:2-3,5-7 Mark 3:20-21	WEDNESDAY 2 Samuel 7:4-17 Psalm 89:4-5,27-28,29-30 Mark 4:1-20	SATURDAY 2 Samuel 12:1-7a,10-17 Psalm 51:12-13,14-15,16-17 Mark 4:35-41

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION

Mass Schedule: Weeks of Jan. 14, 2023 and Jan. 21, 2024

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 PROPSERS FOR WEEKS II AND I OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

learning the faith, as long as they keep doing whatever they can to share their prayer. Teach the younger ones about God and the life of grace, even if their own parents have walked away. Share the songs and prayers that you recall from your own childhood. Give them custody of the “holy things” you have cherished. Remind them of your own joy in your relationship with God.

Often as a priest, I hear a repentant

young person say something like, “I wish my Grandma or Grandpa would have lived to see this day.” I smile and say, they see it! So, keep praying and watch for openings in which you can say a simple word that will open the path to lifelong prayer. The Lamb of God has taken upon Himself the sins of the world. We have been set free to know and love and serve the Living God.

Christ proclaims the coming of the kingdom and a call to conversion

Jonah 3:1–5, 10
Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9
1 Corinthians 7:29–31
Mark 1:14–20

When Pope St. John Paul II invited us to add a new set of Mysteries to the Rosary, he chose to call them “The Mysteries of Light” or “The Luminous Mysteries.” The mysteries chosen were all from the public ministry of Jesus and they pointed to moments of the life of Jesus after the Joyful Mysteries and before the Sorrowful Mysteries.

We see the source of the Third Mystery of Light in today’s Gospel: The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion. This is the heart of the Gospel message as it was first made known by Jesus after His temptation in the desert and following the arrest of John the Baptist: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” The

call to conversion, a change of mind and heart, establishes the proper response to the news that God’s promises are being fulfilled and that the Kingdom of God is being established.

When we open our hearts to the light that comes from the Gospel, we see the world differently. The choice to follow Jesus, which is made by the first four disciples, Simon and Andrew, James and John, opens Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee. Reflecting on the Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion is meant to draw us into our own response.

To believe in the Gospel is to accept a new way of viewing ourselves and our world. Just as the fishermen leave their nets to follow Jesus, we are invited to let go of the things that bind us to our world and its values. Jesus fulfills in His own person what has been promised and He draws us into His mission of bringing about the salvation of the world. Follow-

ing Him leads to a further conversion of mind and heart that allows the Kingdom to be established in us even as we proclaim it to others.

The story of Jonah in the first reading is a highly condensed telling of the prophet’s tale. We all know that Jonah’s response to God’s call was not wholehearted acceptance. In the end, he did make the proclamation required of him, but at the end of the tale, his own heart did not yet embrace the Divine Will. God reveals His Mercy in response to the repentance of the citizens of Nineveh, the proverbial enemy of Israel and all the smaller nations of the ancient Middle East.

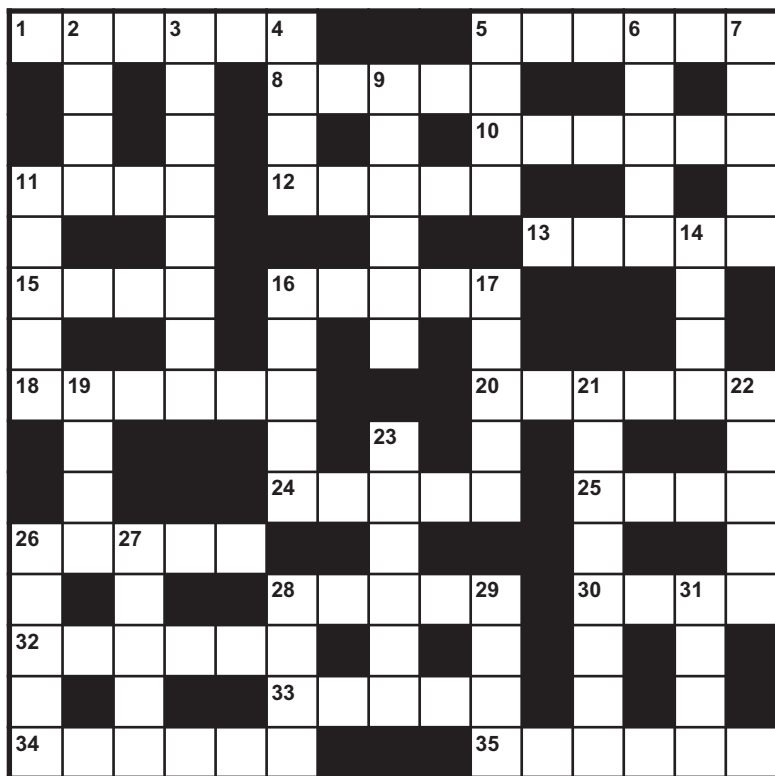
Conversion of the heart is not an easy process. It comes first from belief, putting our faith in the message that is proclaimed to us. Only gradually, in most cases, does this new way of thinking lead to an understanding of the nature of God and His Mercy. More often than

we would care to admit, we are like Jonah, only reluctantly doing what God asks of us and still wanting to see judgment of others carried out.

A good “divine smiting” is what we long for, as long as it is not directed at us. Instead, God uses others, even nations of “unbelievers” to show us the response He wants from us. When we have allowed Gospel thinking to penetrate our spirits, we do make the choice to follow. We also seek to grow in our understanding of God’s ways, ready to join the psalmist in the prayer: “Teach me your ways, O Lord.”

St. Paul reminds us that “the world in its present form is passing away.” The Proclamation of the Gospel and the Call to Conversion prepare us to live in the Kingdom and to draw others into an experience of God’s Mercy.

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

ACROSS

- 1 "...fill the earth and ___ it" (Gen 1:28)
- 5 Partner of Damian
- 8 Catholic actor of "Who's the Boss?" fame
- 10 Catholic actor of "Schindler's List" fame
- 11 Transport for Peter and Andrew
- 12 Paul was shipwrecked here
- 13 Communion wafers
- 15 Pilate ordered this above the cross (abbr.)
- 16 ___ of thorns
- 18 Series of nine
- 20 "___ this day our daily bread"
- 24 Jordan, for one
- 25 It is immortal
- 26 Administrative arm of the Catholic Church
- 28 Pharaoh refused to provide this
- 30 Liturgy
- 32 Catholic portrayer of Dracula
- 33 Catholic "Today Show" weather anchor
- 34 Sign from Jonathan that David's life was in danger in 1 Samuel
- 35 Saint ___ Tekakwitha

DOWN

- 2 Golden Rule preposition
- 3 Tenet
- 4 Esau's descendants' land
- 5 Jesus turned water into wine here
- 6 Exodus leader
- 7 What the choir does
- 9 Diocese in British Columbia
- 11 Catholic Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney
- 14 Commandment pronoun
- 16 From the ___ of Peter
- 17 The Archdiocese of Niamey is found in this African country
- 19 Diocese of Honolulu home
- 21 Alb or stole
- 22 St. Francis de ___
- 23 Catholic composer of the "New World Symphony"
- 26 Mea ___
- 27 Catholic United States Chief Justice Taney
- 28 Catholics Ted Kennedy and Alec Guinness
- 29 John Paul II's "On Human ___"
- 31 "O, ___ of wonder..."

CORRECTION

A year-end review in the Dec. 31 issue of *The Catholic Times* incorrectly stated that Diane LeMay was ordained in the diocese as a consecrated virgin in July. She was consecrated as a virgin and not ordained.

SAINT FRANCIS PASTA DINNER

FEBRUARY 10, 2024

Entertainment: SFA Choir | Barbara Ford | Nacho Street Band | Balloons by Joe | San Giovanni Folk Group | Chris Bare | Claudia Retter

ADULTS \$10 | CHILDREN UNDER 10, \$5

All meals include: Pasta, sauce, meatballs, salad, rolls, and spumoni ice cream.

Gluten free and vegetarian options available. Carry out available.

- 50/50 tickets and raffle items

- Bake sale will be back!

- 2 liter bottles of soda with mystery gift card (\$10, \$15, or \$25)

attached sold for \$10 each

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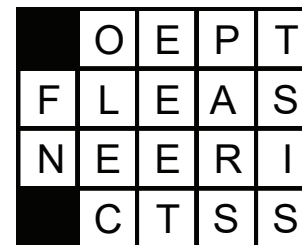
Words of Wisdom

by Pat Battaglia, aka Dr. Fun

Draw a path from letter to letter to spell the words given in capital letters that completes the wisdom statement.

Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left or diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

Failure is the path ...



OF LEAST PERSISTENCE

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BOOKKEEPER POSITION

Our Lady of Victory, Marble Cliff, is seeking an experienced part-time bookkeeper. Candidates should have experience with and will be responsible for all bank deposits, accounts payable, financial reports, reconciliation of all parish bank accounts and maintenance of automatic contributions. The person filling this position will report to the Pastor and will interact with other office staff and the Parish Finance Committee. Please submit cover letter, resume, and references to Father Jacques Kik at jkik@ourladyofvictory.cc or contact at **614-488-2428**.

PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

BEARDUCCI, Thomas, 85, Dec. 20
St. Joseph Church, Dover

BEEBE, Carol J. (Koontz), 85, Dec. 28
St. Catharine Church, Columbus

BEVILACQUA, Leno L., 96, Dec. 28
St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus

CAPOCCIA, Antonio, 88, Dec. 19
St. Joan of Arc Church, Powell

DALRYMPLE, Roxanne (Freriks), 70, Dec. 21
Church of the Atonement, Crooksville

ESSELSTEIN, James R., 88, Dec. 13
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center

ESSELSTEIN, Martha L. "Marty," 87, Dec. 21
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center

FORREST, Elizabeth "Betty" (Myles), 99, Dec. 27
St. Joseph Church, Dover

FREUND, Howard C., 90, Dec. 25
St. Paul Church, Westerville

GOMBOS, Dr. Stephen, 91, Dec. 20
St. Joseph Church, Dover

HOBART, Mary A. (Miller), 94, Dec. 19
St. Matthew Church, Gahanna

HOLMES, Lenore (Irwin), 93, Dec. 31
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus

MARINELLI, Dorothy (DiTomaso), 104, Dec. 21
St. Joseph Church, Dover

McCURDY, Kathleen A. (Dunn), of Columbus, 99, Jan. 3
St. Teresa Church, Springfield

MURPHY, Herbert J. Jr., 92, Dec. 27
St. Edward Church, Granville

PHILLIPS, Patrick S., 84, Jan. 1
St. Mary, Mother of God Church, Columbus

bus

RHEES CLARK, Susan J. (Waggener), 77, Jan. 3
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

SCOTT, Richard L., 87, of Columbus, Dec. 22
St. Sylvester Church, Woodsfield

SIEMER, Robert "Bob," 95, Dec. 26
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

WEATHERBY, Robert A., 67, Dec. 23
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

Bishops, co-workers pay tribute to longtime JOIN director

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

Some of those who worked closely with Ruth Beckman in her nearly 35 years as director of the Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs (JOIN) recall her as "a force for good" and "one of the greatest ladies I ever knew."

Beckman, 88, died on Friday, Dec. 22. Her funeral Mass was on Friday, Dec. 29 at Columbus Christ the King Church.

In addition to her work with JOIN, she was a member of the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre and the Serra Club of Downtown Columbus and was active in many other organizations. The University of Dayton honored her with its Distinguished Alumni award in 2018.

She had been an active volunteer at her home parish and Columbus Bishop Hartley when she was hired as JOIN director in 1984. She continued in that position until retiring in 2015 to take care of her husband, John "Jack" Beckman, whom she married on Aug. 24, 1957 and who died on Dec. 20, 2019.

She had been a volunteer at her parish and Columbus Bishop Hartley High School for many years when the late Father Thomas Cadden, diocesan Catholic Charities director at the time, asked her to come to work for JOIN in 1981.

JOIN is a social services agency, originally established in 1967 by 10 Columbus inner-city parishes, that now serves all of Franklin County. It provides material needs and referrals to thousands of low-income families each year from an

office at 578 E. Main St. in Columbus that it shares with the diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Society's clothing center.

Beckman served three Columbus bishops as JOIN director – the late Bishop Edward Herrmann, who retired in 1983; Bishop James Griffin, the diocese's shepherd from 1983 to 2004; and Bishop Frederick Campbell from 2005 until her retirement in 2015 to care for her husband of 62 years, Jack Beckman, who died in 2019.

"One of the most significant things that occurred in my time as bishop was JOIN's move from a small office near St. Joseph Cathedral to the building on Main Street," said Bishop Campbell, who has remained in Columbus since his retirement from full-time ministry in 2019. "It was quite a move and she handled it beautifully."

"From the minute we opened the building, we realized how much we needed to make the move. It gave JOIN about double the space it had and enabled it to do so much more for so many people."

"As a person, Ruth was one of the most enjoyable people to be with," Bishop Campbell said. "I was amazed by her organizational skills and how she could draw people into helping her."

"She was a person of great compassion, and added to that was a great power of discernment to see just what it was that people needed. She also had the ability to sniff out when something was not right. She was persistent in pursuing her plans, with a deep sense of charity."

"Also, she never lost her sense of pursuing every little detail. I remember once asking her if she would accept a contribution of pocket change because it was all I had with me. She said, 'Of course! I can use it to buy bus passes.' That was Ruth – always able to find a use for something."

Beckman served Bishop Griffin during all his 21 years as bishop of Columbus. "Ruth was one of the greatest ladies I ever knew," he said.

"I recall well all the times I used to slip across the alley from the Chancery to see Ruth. It would be a form of meditation

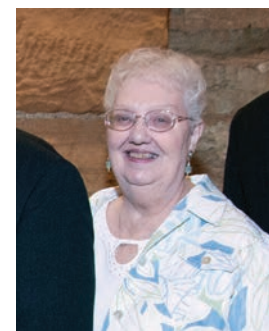
just to stand or sit quietly and watch her at work. It was a wonderful thing, seeing the words of Jesus about feeding the hungry, healing the sick and clothing the naked come alive.

"You could see by watching her that she served people by being Jesus to them. I would go back to the office having a new appreciation for those words, and I think that after Ruth died, the first words Jesus said to her were 'I was hungry and you fed me' and so forth," said Bishop Griffin, who has lived in Powell in the 20 years since his retirement.

Lisa Keita succeeded Beckman as JOIN director and has been in that position for nine years. "Ruth Beckman is the mentor that everyone should be so fortunate to have," Keita said. "Ruth saw everyone she served in the same light, and that was the light of Christ."

"The neighbors we serve at JOIN are from all walks of life. We see neighbors who are the consequence of generational poverty. We serve families who have a higher education and had good jobs until that job was lost or they became ill and couldn't work. We also serve our brothers and sisters in the middle, those who fell on hard times when their car broke down and they missed a few days of work and had to pay for the car to be fixed."

"Ruth saw each person as the individual they were and treated them with dignity and respect. Ruth lived her faith with each breath she took, not just as a Catholic but also in her personal relationship with God. She loved Him and loved



Ruth Beckman
CT file photo by Ken Snow

Sister Jean Anne Blust, SNDdeN

Funeral Mass for Sister Jean Anne Blust, SNDdeN, 90, who died Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2023, was celebrated Saturday, Jan. 13 at the Mount Notre Dame Chapel in Reading, Ohio.

She was born Mary Cecilia Blust on

Oct. 3, 1933 in Middletown to the late John and Lillian Blust.

She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Our Lady of Cincinnati College in 1961 and a Master of Education in Administration degree from Xavier University in 1986.

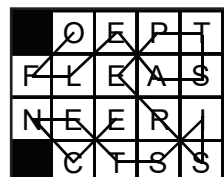
She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur on Sept. 7, 1951 and made her first profession of vows on March 12, 1954 and her final profession on Aug. 12, 1959.

She was a teacher at Logan St. John School from 1965 to 1968 and taught at schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for 58 years. She then was involved in community service in Cincinnati before retiring to a ministry of prayer at the Mount Notre Dame Health Center in Reading

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WORDS OF WISDOM SOLUTION

See BECKMAN, Page 17

A mission to share God's love through giving

Sister Zephрина Mary, FIH

Director, Diocesan Missions Office

In response to Christ's call to "go and teach all nations," the Vatican's Society for the Propagation of the Faith supports the pastoral and evangelization programs of the missions throughout the world.

The society is the main source of support for the mission dioceses worldwide. The membership drive on the weekend of Jan. 20-21 is an opportunity for us to become society members.

Our promise of support through prayer and financial help is the only requirement for membership. Mass is celebrated daily for society members at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

In 2023, the faithful in the Diocese of Columbus contributed \$47,765.38 to the society's membership drive. On behalf of the diocese, I thank you for your generosity. Donors and their intentions remain in the prayers of missionaries. I sincerely thank you on behalf of the Church's missionaries and the people whom they serve.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith offers every baptized person the opportunity to live their faith by sharing it with others and experiencing its universal dimension. To join or renew your membership, place your donation in the "Membership Sunday" envelope for the missions that is included in your parish's January packet of collection envelopes.

Mission always expresses a concern for the lives of others, and it is the holiest duty of the faithful to be witnesses to Christ through our lives and the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ. We

Support Church's missionary efforts

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, The weekend of January 21-22 is the Membership Drive for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. With our membership, we make a special commitment to the Church's mission "to all peoples and nations" by pledging daily prayer and financial help to the Propagation of the Faith. Prayer, sacrifice and charity are concrete ways for living a missionary and universal faith. Out of your generosity the SPOF continues to open the hearts of believers to engage in the vastness of the missionary horizon through spiritual and material support for the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

During the Membership Drive, let us pray for missionaries everywhere, especially who are sharing Christ's Gospel message around the globe. I

am most grateful for your continuing generosity and support for this most important task of the Church. In more than 1,150 mission dioceses worldwide, priests, religious brothers and sisters, and lay catechists rely on the prayers and financial assistance of the members of the Propagation of the Faith.

I invite you to join in prayer and personal sacrifice made to God through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. May the Lord accomplish in us what He accomplished in many missionaries before us. Grateful for your solidarity with missionaries around the world, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus

also must appreciate the families of missionaries, especially parents who have encouraged their sons and daughters to serve the Church.

According to the Second Vatican Council, the origin of the Church is from the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit as decreed by the Father, "the fountain of love," Who desires the salvation of the whole human race.

"Missions" is the term for the work of those sent out by the Church to preach the Gospel and plant the Church among people who do not yet believe in Christ.

In his letters, St. Paul often speaks of how the young churches of his time

helped one another with financial needs.

A friend in New England wrote to the Propagation of the Faith saying, "I enclose \$500 for the missions. I wish it could be more, but I am living on a fixed income, which is not large. I try to stretch it and live economically.

"I have lived alone for more than 20 years ... do my own work and get my own meals with no help. I'm past 90 now. My husband and all my brothers and sisters are gone and I'm still here. Left to pray for them. Thank God for the privilege."

Another co-missionary from California says, "I'm giving this gift outright

God for the work in the missions. There is so little I can do otherwise on account of age and poor eyesight. I'm just giving back to God what He has given to me. This is to help spread His Gospel so that others can share in our beautiful faith."

As Jesus told us, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. ... Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20) This mandate was meant for each of us because, by baptism, we became missionaries.

We are privileged to continue the mission of Jesus through our prayers, financial support and concern for the poor to reach out to those who do not know Christ. Many donors have enrolled themselves or their loved ones, living or deceased, in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. By doing so, they give an ongoing gift to members and the missions.

The Church never turns from the basic task entrusted to her, that of proclaiming the Gospel to all nations.

The unity of faith and love among Christians drives us to help others in their need. Some people give to the missions by going to mission places, and some are going to missions by giving. Without both, there is no mission.

Every Christian in every place and in every time is a missionary. All of us who have received the Gospel of Jesus Christ are charged with the task of living the Gospel in a visible way. We must carry on our true treasure, Jesus. Let us hold Him in our hearts and seek Him, find Him in every person whom we encounter every day.

BECKMAN, continued from Page 16

all He made. Having Ruth as my mentor and friend was a blessing that carries me through each day."

"Ruth was a force for good in our community," said Mark Huddy, diocesan moderator of Catholic Charities. "She had a tremendous sense of compassion for anyone in need, and that compassion was informed by that increasingly rare quality called common sense.

"Ruth acted out of her experience as a mother. She loved fiercely and she had the discernment to know when someone was not being fully forthcoming about their situation.

"Ruth, in her years of service, developed many relationships within the Catholic community which she was not shy about using to help a needy client.

"Ruth trusted in God and God rewarded her for that trust. If she needed something to help a client, she would pray about it and suddenly it would appear from a donor who knew nothing about the particular need," Huddy said.

"Like a mother, she cared deeply about her staff, her clients, her family and the

Church. We have sent home an unrepeatable gift from God. May she rest in peace."

Beckman, born on July 31, 1935 in Miamisburg, was preceded in death by her parents, Louis and Aline Wyen; husband; brother, Louise Wyen; and sister, Frances Thiele.

Survivors include sons, John and James; daughters, Jeanette (James) Kuschill, Marjorie (Brad) Luckhart, Mary (Richard) O'Mara, Marilyn (Scott) Wilson, Jacinta Beckman and Bernadette (Patrick) McGurk; brother, Fred Wyen; sister, Theresa Lauer; 25 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Beckman's eight children request that any memorial donations be sent to the John and Ruth Beckman Family Foundation, which supports JOIN and the Serra Club of Downtown Columbus, of which she was a member. Donations may be sent to The Catholic Foundation, 257 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215.ew

Newark parish to host women's retreat

Newark St. Francis de Sales Church, 40 Granville St., will be the site for a retreat for women titled "Undone: Freedom for the Feminine Heart," sponsored by the John Paul II Healing Center of Tallahassee, Florida, from Friday to Sunday, Jan. 25 to 27.

The retreat's purpose is to help untie the knots of Eve's disobedience that are "undone" through Mary's model of radical receptivity.

The three-day retreat, led by Carrie Schuchts Daunt of the John Paul II Healing Center, dives into the origin of our brokenness, tracing back to the events involving Adam, Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote in his apostolic letter, *On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*, "In Mary, Eve discovers the nature of her true dignity of women, of feminine humanity."

The John Paul II Healing Center has been reviewed by the diocesan Office of Evangelization and is in accord with the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church as outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* under Pillar 3: The

Life In Christ. An aspect of this resource is based on Pope St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

"Through a variety of insightful presentations, small group discussions, interactive and guided meditations, time for prayer and Eucharistic Adoration, we will see the hearts of the women who attend the Undone retreat unravel, heal, be restored and made whole," said Father David Sizemore, pastor at St. Francis de Sales Church. "I pray that many women decide to invest some of their precious time into this experience, which I am confident will set them free for so much more time in the future to truly become and live as restored daughters of God."

The event is being offered in person or virtually via livestream. Register online for either experience at www.jpilhealing.org.

The cost is \$165 per person. Scholarships are available. Email mkieffer@st-francisparish.net for more information.

For additional details on the conference, contact Tina Burtch at tburtch@stfrancisparish.net.

Bishop joins the Filipino Catholic Community for Simbang Gabi

The Filipino Catholic Community of central Ohio celebrated the traditional Simbang Gabi from Dec. 15 through Dec. 23, 2023.

These traditional Novena of Masses, known as Misa de Gallo (Mass of the Rooster), are votive Masses celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also a way Filipinos spiritually prepare for Christmas.

This year, the 13th year of Simbang Gabi in Columbus, all nine Masses were celebrated at Columbus St. Elizabeth Church.

The base of the altar at St. Elizabeth was adorned with parols, the traditional Christmas lanterns symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem, that were brought up by different groups and families during the processional of the first Mass on December 15.

The joyous Masses were celebrated mainly in English while the sung prayers such as the Our Father and other songs were in Tagalog.

Father Ramon Owera, parish administrator of Columbus Holy Rosary-St. John Church and pastor of Columbus St. Dominic Church who hails from Zamboanga City in the Philippines, celebrated the first eight Masses, delivering his homilies with humor and references to aspects of life and culture in the Philippines while at the same time conveying lessons of faith from the day's readings.

Finally, every night after Mass, local vendors sold different varieties of rice cakes (called kakanin in Tagalog) that worshippers purchased and enjoyed at home to further bring back fond memories of the Philippines and introduce the Filipino delicacies to those who were not familiar with them.

On Dec. 19, the fifth day of the celebration, Father Anthony Davis, pastor of St. Elizabeth, joined the community and concelebrated the Mass with Father Owera.

During the last day on Dec. 23, the community welcomed Bishop Earl Fernandes



Bishop Earl Fernandes incenses the altar during the Simbang Gabi Mass on Dec. 23, 2023, at Columbus St. Elizabeth Church. Concelebrating the Mass was Father Ramon Owera (right), assisted by Deacon Dean Racine (far left) and Deacon Jason Nguyen (left). Photo courtesy Cedric Sze

to the Simbang Gabi celebration for the first time since being installed in the Diocese of Columbus in 2022. The bishop was the principal celebrant of the last Mass, with Father Owera as the concelebrant with the assistance of Deacons Jason Nguyen and Dean Racine.

In Bishop Fernandes' homily, he expressed his delight in being with the Filipino Catholic community for this occasion and pointed out the strong and devout faith among Asian Catholics in the United States. He compared the desire of Filipino Catholics to pass on tradition from one generation to the next to those of Indian Catholics from which he descended. He also complimented the community for praying the Holy Rosary before the Mass. He continued to encourage the faithful to hand on this traditions and other practices to the next generation.

Continuing his homily, Bishop Fernandes encouraged all to "be bold and share the good news of salvation." He re-

minded everyone that as bishop his priorities are vocations and evangelization. He emphasized that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the embodiment of both vocation and evangelization: Mary is the model of the vocation to be wife and mother, and she is also the model of discipleship.

In closing, Bishop Fernandes again praised the promotion of tradition, faith and devotion of the Filipino Catholics. He further encouraged young men in the Filipino Catholic community to consider God's call to the priestly vocation.

In addition to the last Mass culminating Simbang Gabi, a potluck-style dinner was held in St. Elizabeth's Pastor's Hall. After the Mass, Bishop Fernandes joined Father Owera, Father Davis and guests to enjoy food, fellowship and entertainment. More than 200 members of the Filipino Catholic Community shared home-cooked Filipino food with their families and friends while enjoying the dancing and singing performances by

various groups.

In preparation for this annual celebration, Father Owera and the Simbang Gabi Committee (Rex Alba, Ice Batino, Mico Borromeo, Jesse Cabungcal, Luchelle Custodio, Frances Horenstein, Joy Kouns-Lewis, Minda Li, Joy Polintan, Ferly Powers, Irene Sze and Josephine and Eric Yang) met for months meticulously planning for the success of this celebration with the aim of continuing this tradition that imbues the joyous Spirit of Christmas.

In the future, the committee aims to continue this tradition in Columbus, to pass it down to future generations, and to promote and share it with other Catholics. Activities being considered by the committee include other Filipino Catholic traditions and celebrations, such as Sinulog honoring the Santo Niño or the Child Jesus, and the feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz, who is the protomartyr of the Philippines and patron saints of catechists.

The celebration of Simbang Gabi and other Catholic devotions is important to Filipinos and Filipino-Americans as its practices allows the Filipino Catholic Community to keep memories and traditions of the Philippines alive while at the same time further emphasizes the true meaning of Christmas that lies in their faith in Jesus Christ.

During the year, the Filipino Catholic Community meets every first Wednesday of the month at St. Elizabeth Church for a novena and Mass in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The evening starts with praying the Holy Rosary for the Unborn at 6 p.m. followed by the novena and Mass.

The community also meets every first Saturday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth for Mass celebrated in Tagalog, one of the major languages spoken in the Philippines.

Former diocesan missions director tells remarkable life story

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

Leandro "Lany" Tapay has lived an amazing life in his 86 years, surviving World War II in the rural Philippines, then coming to the United States, originally to study for the priesthood, and then enjoying fulfilling careers despite enduring discrimination as a high school guidance counselor and as missions director for the Diocese of Columbus.

Tapay tells his story in an autobiography titled "Fragments from the Table of Life," published in October 2023 and available on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

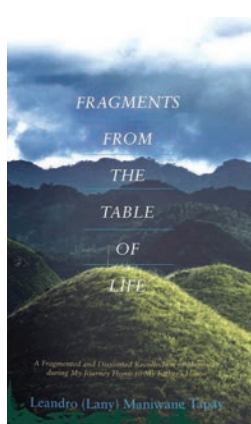
"I wrote the book not so much for widespread publication but for a way to tell my children and grandchildren about my life from the beginning," Tapay said.

"I would tell them things about surviv-

ing the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in World War II and being caught in the crossfire between Japanese and Allied forces when I was 7 or 8 years old, and about growing up in the Philippines after they gained their independence from the United States after the war.

"They wanted to know more, so I decided to put it all down. The coronavirus pandemic helped give me time to gather my thoughts."

A theme that runs throughout the book



is Tapay's strong Catholic faith and his reliance on the Virgin Mary for help in times of trouble.

"Every time I'm in a mess, like a child, I go to my mother," he said. "She never fails to give me consolation and wrap me in a warm embrace. Any time I'm in a valley, she always comes through."

"God is like a good chess player placing me in situations to accomplish His will. Many things have happened to me that I didn't understand at the time but now recognize as God putting me in a certain place at a certain time to achieve His purpose."

"God continues to have plans for me, and there's nothing powerful enough to derail them."

Tapay was educated by the Salesian order of priests for 10 years in the Philippines and became assistant principal and a trustee of an orphanage in Cebu City known then as Salesian Boys Town and

now as Don Bosco Technical College.

The Salesians were going to send him to the Holy Land to continue studies for the priesthood in 1967, but because the Six-Day War broke out in the Middle East, he was sent instead to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus — one of the many unexpected occurrences he feels were part of God's plan for him.

After discerning that he was not being called to the priesthood, he was taught for one year each at Catholic schools in North Dakota and Toledo, where he met his wife of 52 years, Dolores. He returned to Ohio to pursue a position as a school counselor, worked at Worthington Industries for a while and eventually was hired by London (Ohio) High School for a one-year counseling position that stretched into a 35-year career.

Tapay, who is 5-foot-2 and retains a

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STORY, continued from Page 18

strong Filipino accent, tells in the book that this worked against him at first, with the head of the guidance department being among those openly hostile to him. But his enthusiastic personality and willingness to talk to the young people he worked with made him popular among students and won over his critics.

He retired from his counseling position in 2007 and thought he would spend his retirement fishing in the Carolinas. But before he could move south, he saw a Catholic Times ad saying the Diocese of Columbus was looking for a missions director. He thought his experience being taught by missionary priests would be useful, so he went for an interview with Deacon Tom Berg Jr., diocesan chancellor, and was hired on the spot.

He spent 13 years with the diocese before reluctantly retiring from his second career at age 83 to become a full-time caregiver for his wife at a time when COVID was shutting down much of life in the United States.

“The biggest problem in writing the book was time,” he said. “As my wife’s caregiver, I could write down my recollections only when she was sleeping and I was about to go to bed, or whenever I had a respite from taking care of her for some reason. My train of thought was always being interrupted.”

He completed the book in April 2022 (the author of this review assisted him

with editing), and it took another year for him to find a reputable publisher – Christian Faith Publishing of Meadville, Pennsylvania – and get the book ready for release. He has nearly completed a second book that will tell of his life as a caregiver and how his faith has strengthened him in that difficult role.

The Tapays have four children, three of whom live in the Columbus area and one in Seattle. They also have 12 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. “One of my grandsons lives in the Philippines and teaches English in Subic Bay, which used to be a large U.S. Navy base and now is an international free-trade zone,” Tapay said.

“He’s been able to see much more of the Philippines than I did, and he’s been back to the village where I grew up. I didn’t include this in the book, but I feel his return completes a circle for me and that God has been responsible for everything within that circle.”

Leandro “Lany” Tapay’s book costs \$21.95 in print or Kindle form – discounts are available – and can be ordered on [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com) at <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/fragments-from-the-table-of-life-leandro-lany-maniwang-tapay/1143444034> or amazon.com at <https://a.co/d/9RsK8Bc>. All of the royalties from Fragments, Footprints and subsequent work are donated to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.



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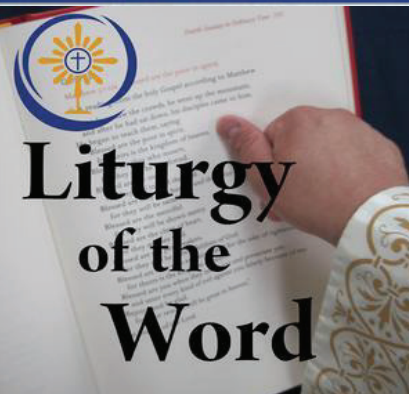
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