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BACK TO SCHOOL,
PAGES 10-13

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



IMITATING ST. FRANCIS
The St. Francis Evangelization Center in McArthur provides much-needed material and spiritual assistance to residents of Vinton County in the southern part of the diocese, Page 2



YOUNG WOMEN OF FAITH
Young Catholic women ages 18-30 gathered for a Saturday morning retreat in late August at the Bridgettine Sisters' convent near Columbus Holy Family Church, Page 9



Dolly West of Creola selects some oranges in the pantry at the St. Francis Evangelization Center.



Center volunteer Parker Riegel (right) helps Deborah Boyer.

CT photos by Ken Snow

St. Francis Center serves needy but needs more help

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Nestled in rural Appalachian Ohio in the small town of McArthur – about a 90-minute drive from Columbus – is the St. Francis Evangelization Center.

Many of the faithful think of the center during Thanksgiving and Christmas-time – donating food, toys and goodies are appreciated and needed, outside of the holiday season, the center can be largely forgotten.

Staff at the St. Francis Center, which is a food pantry and clothing center, includes director Lisa Keita, two full-time assistants and one part-time member. The team serves thousands of locals annually.

The center is supported by volunteers, especially during the holiday season. Summer months – one of the busiest times – are when perhaps additional help is needed most.

The St. Francis Evangelization Center opened in August 1979 a couple of blocks from its current location. The rural center was part of then-Bishop Edward Herrmann's effort to decentralize diocesan services. The center was a base for meeting the needs of non-practicing Catholics and people of all ages, especially the nonreligious.

Today, the St. Francis Center largely

relies on the generosity of the faithful in the Diocese of Columbus to continue meeting the needs of those they serve.

While Vinton County has less than 13,000 residents, Keita estimated the center serves between 15 percent and 20 percent of the county's population.

"Being a part of the diocese, you just have to put an ask out, and really, somebody's going to come through," Keita said.

She recalled a time recently that the center was low on food.

"We put a plea out in the middle of the week, next week churches told the parishioners, and then, the next week, we got filled up with donations," she said. "Really, I don't know how people do things like this without the support of a big church network."

Primarily serving Vinton County, St. Francis offers several food programs to ease poverty in the region.

Vinton County families can visit the center's regular pantry monthly. The pantry is located in the center's main building and open to the public on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The center strives to provide five to seven days' worth of food for families in emergent need.

In addition to the regular pantry, the St. Francis Center is involved with the Summer Rural Meals Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for

seniors and the Food Prescription Program, which serves families needing additional food each month.

Visitors to the center can make appointments.

"It was way more convenient for us to know how many people we were going to serve and who was coming, and we could be better prepared for the people that were coming," said Ashley Riegel, the operations manager.

The regular pantry includes four mobile sites offered each week to residents in Vinton County's four corners. Staff at the center deliver food to families in remote areas who lack transportation.

Keita, who is also director of the diocese's Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs (J.O.I.N.) in Columbus, visits the St. Francis Center at least once a month but sometimes weekly in the summer. An increase in individuals served at the center means extra assistance distributing food boxes is needed.

"I can help deliver the food because they have a lot of other work that they have to keep on doing," she said of the center's staff. "To take an extra body out to deliver food, it's not easy."

Staff have come and gone throughout the years. Keita noted that several have gone on, such as a mother who left to stay home with her growing family, a single mother, one who left due to illness and another who took a new job.

Without a steady staff, keeping the center running can be challenging. The St. Francis Center previously had a staff member who provided physical labor. His absence has made it more difficult to handle boxes of food and other items.

"He was a big part of that, and he was a strong, big guy," Keita said. "He could put stuff up high – he's like 6 (feet) 3 or 6-4 – so, that made everything easier that he could just come and move. And something like that that you don't have, it's a big deal."

"It's been difficult not having the people that we need, and so we started doing a choice pantry."

In a choice pantry, individuals are given a range of how many items they can choose in various categories depending on the number in their household.

The center orders food from Campbell's Market in Vinton County and also receives food from the Southeast Ohio Food Bank located nearby in Logan.

"That's where we get probably the bulk of our food," Keita said of the food bank. "It was really slow for a while, but it's still not as much as we want."

"We don't have the variety. You want to have certain things: You want to have peanut butter, you want to have spaghetti, you want to have soup, you want to have cereal."

See FRANCIS, Page 3



Front page photo

BACK TO SCHOOL

Father Daniel Olvera welcomes students to Lancaster St. Bernadette School. Thousands of students began the 2024-25 academic year in August at pre-schools, elementary, junior high and high schools throughout the diocese.

Photo courtesy Office of Catholic Schools

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Allen Rutter, an outreach staff member, loads a car for customers at the St. Francis Center.

FRANCIS, continued from Page 2

At one time, Vinton County had no grocery stores. Dollar General and Family Dollar were previously the only stores in the county serving as a grocery. Campbell's Market opened in McArthur in 2017.

"It was really tough going for a while, but it was because the Walmart in Jackson or in Athens or even in Logan, prices were better," Keita said. "But now, I think that we all will pay a little extra to keep a grocery store."

Near Thanksgiving, several Columbus schools collect food donations for the St. Francis Center. The collection significantly helps the center during the holiday season. Still, as many, if not more, helpers and donations are needed during summer months.

The St. Francis Center distributes school supplies before the beginning of the academic year. Some diocesan parishes collect and donate supplies to the center.

Last year, the St. Francis Center distributed school supplies to 272 children and 152 households.

The clothing center is also full of shoppers during the summer season.

"This time of year, the clothing center can be busier because people are getting clothes for their kids for the school year," Keita said.

The clothing center is open with the food pantry on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Residents of surrounding counties are invited to visit and shop at the clothing center on Thursdays.

Shoppers do not need to make an appointment. They are prompted to sign in and indicate the number of adults and children in their household.

"They can leave a donation if they want, but we don't require it," said Staci Rafferty, the community outreach coordinator. "Some people feel better if they can just leave something, and so they don't feel like they're getting it for free."

Some locals come in and leave donations, Rafferty said. Diocesan parishes will also fill truckloads of clothing dona-

tions for the center.

Also available is Summer Rural Meals, a 10-week program serving children in southeast Ohio. Children signed up for the program receive a weekly box of shelf-stable food that equates to 11 meals. They also receive fresh produce.

"The kids all down here automatically get breakfast and lunch at school for free, so that's why, the kids are home, and now the parents are providing 10 more meals per kid each week," Keita said. "They had the babies and they know they have to take care of them, but that's significant when you're working on a pretty small budget, and so, it's our responsibility to do what we can to help."

The St. Francis Center also delivers food to families who lack transportation and live in remote areas. Staff recently delivered boxes to a family who lived as far as 30 miles out in Londonderry.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program, run by the Southeast Ohio Foodbank, provides senior citizens with monthly boxes of food. The program serves people age 60 or older and residents of a participating county.

Dolly West, who lives in Vinton County just north of McArthur in Creola, receives food at the center each month as part of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. She receives a box of food that includes rice, pasta, soups, vegetables and cheese.

"It's helped me out so much," West said.

Her husband, Charlie, who was killed in an accident about a year ago, picked up boxes of food at the St. Francis Center for them. Now, West picks up the food, and she appreciates the service she receives.

"They're really nice people," she said. "I'll tell you – they've been so good to me since I lost Charlie. I think everybody knew him in there. It's like a family deal."

The St. Francis Center and J.O.I.N. are currently in need of donations, especially children's and men's casual clothing, and personal hygiene items. Dia-



Staci Rafferty, a St. Francis Evangelization Center outreach employee, oversees the clothing area.

CT photos by Ken Snow



Ashley Riegel serves as the operations manager at the St. Francis Evangelization Center.



Lisa Keita visits the St. Francis Center at least once a month as the diocese's director for J.O.I.N. in Columbus.

pers (sizes 4, 5 and 6), shampoo, lotion, deodorant, soap, toilet paper, shaving cream, razors and toothpaste are needed. Household items are also in demand, such as multipurpose cleaner, dish soap, laundry pods and sponges.

Individuals can drop off donations at their parish. Monetary donations are also appreciated and helpful for purchasing food.

For questions regarding donations or to volunteer, contact Riegel at ariegel@columbuscatholic.org.

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Men touched by faith at Ross Correctional

Outsiders might not see prison as a place where individuals encounter the love of Christ and the beauty of the Catholic faith, but that's exactly what has happened for Jesse Conner, Daniel Lynch and others.

The solitary confines of a prison have given them an opportunity to think and reflect on their lives, to draw closer to God and to pray for the Lord's intervention.

Since coming to prison, Conner and Lynch have rediscovered their Catholic faith.

And they are not alone.

Others in prisons throughout the diocese have found the beauty of the Church and its teachings through prayer, study, encouragement from other incarcerated individuals and the guidance provided by priests, sisters and laity who regularly minister to them during their confinement.

Conner, Lynch and several other men shared their stories during a visit by Bishop Earl Fernandes to celebrate two Masses and hear confessions at the Ross Correctional Institution on Aug. 23 in Chillicothe.

The imprisoned men are paying a price for their mistakes and the impact their crimes have had on others. With that in mind, the nature of their offenses and other personal details will not be mentioned here.

But these men come to Mass with the same intentions as other Catholics in society who attend parish churches. The obvious difference is the setting.

Conner was raised by devout Irish Catholic grandparents but began getting into trouble at a young age, lost his faith and ended up in the foster system. One thing led to another and he eventually became incarcerated.

In April 2023, he came to Ross Correctional and decided to attend Mass for the first time since he was seven years old. He walked into the chapel where Mass was celebrated, sat down and didn't speak to anyone.

"I was just listening and then I felt a set of hands on each of my shoulders — exactly the way my grandparents, who both passed more than seven years ago, used to do," he said. "It was chilling, and I began to cry. It was almost like the Holy Spirit was bringing me home."

Now, he said he comes to Mass every chance he gets, including the bishop's Mass.

Lynch, who served as the lector during Mass offered by Bishop Fernandes, was born and raised Catholic but fell away from the Church.

"When I came to prison, I hated God," he said. "I hated life, I hated myself."

"But then I went to Kairos (prison ministry) and experienced the love of God. I went to Bible study and then began participating in the Mass, and it's made me a changed man."

After serving sentences totaling 23 ½ years, Lynch was released two days after the Mass on Sunday, Aug. 25.

Another man who attended the Mass was Dustin "DJ" James, who is not Catholic. Raised Christian, James shared that he's considering studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

A fellow non-Catholic, Brian Baldrige, was invited by his bunkmate to come on a regular basis to share the fellowship of the Catholic community. He now prays the rosary frequently with the group.

Conner, Lynch, James and Baldrige were among 20 persons who attended a

Mass for the general population at Ross. Ten attendees took advantage of the opportunity for Bishop Fernandes to hear their confessions.

The second Mass in the afternoon took place inside a small room in another building for four of the 96 adults in the state who are on death row. Two of them went to confession before Mass.

Bishop Fernandes was assisted at both Masses by Deacon Reed Hauser.

The bishop has made visiting the incarcerated, which is one of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy, a priority during his two-plus years in the diocese. He has traveled frequently throughout the diocese to celebrate Masses and visit inmates.

His homily at the death row Mass reflected his desire to make the men realize they're not forgotten.

"I am here to represent Christ the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for His sheep ... Christ the Good Shepherd, who goes to find the lost sheep and to bring them home, rejoicing," the bishop said. "And so I want to express my own closeness, but also that of the people of God

See PRISON, Page 7

Blessed to be part of Global Leadership Summit

By Michele Williams

Being in a leadership position in prison is like walking on a balance beam. You have just enough space to do the right thing at the right time. That's it. You must work hard and find a good sense of balance to succeed.

Inmate leaders are necessary because we keep the momentum of positive change going, and we keep relatively calm in the midst of unexpected changes. We are looked to for our experience in situations and called on to explain the whys and wherefores of incarcerated life to those who are struggling with acceptance. We are expected to set a good example and be role models 24/7. We can't just talk the talk, we have to walk the walk -- or balance beam, so to speak.

Balance really comes into play because conformity in prison is of paramount importance. Taking our steps carefully, we are leaders in our little community; nevertheless, we are reminded that at the end of the day (literally, midnight count time) we are just another inmate. Those who get caught up in the euphoria of perceived power inevitably fall hard. Thud! It takes even more effort plus humility and determination to get back on the beam and start over, not necessarily from where you fell, but back a few steps. My journey to becoming a leader has included many years of work, some sweat and tears, and a couple of epic falls to finally learn how to maintain the right balance.

I accept, am proud of, and am challenged by my role. I've earned a level of respect and trust from the staff that lets me know I'm serving my time productively and living my life the right way. Although occasionally, it can become overwhelming and exhausting. That's why I'm so grateful for the Global Leadership Summit (GLS), which I was privileged to attend in early August. It gave me a chance to take a deep breath, exhale slowly and learn from proven leaders in America. The two-day event was held in Chicago, but the Ohio Reformatory for Women was a "host site" for an internet live feed. For the second year in a row, I was one of 50 inmates who attended the summit through the magic of technology.

The GLS is more than just a leadership conference. It's the tipping point for changing people's lives. It's God, business principles, team building, faith, hope, communication and relationships all rolled into one incredible, well, summit! The speakers are authors, pastors, CEOs, professors, artists, comedians and, this year, even a basketball coach (more about him in a minute).

They share their vision and approach to leadership in its many forms with the goal of inspiring and helping people recognize their potential. They acknowledge God as the center of their lives, giving them everything they need, and freely admit it is Him working through them. The summit kicks off with a prayer of thanksgiving by GLNetwork president David Ashcraft. It's amazing and brave, especially considering how contrary it is to what I see on the news every night.

Attendance in the Chicago auditorium is about 7,000 people. Additionally, the internet connects the summit to 110 other countries where it's translated into 55 languages. It's shown in thousands of host sites: business conference rooms, colleges, prisons, shelters and churches. It truly is an event and blessing of global proportions.

My favorite speaker this year was Mike Krzyzewski, aka Coach K. He is the former Duke University and Team USA Olympic men's basketball coach. Retired from coaching, he is now a professor of the practice of leadership at Duke, where he mixes in plenty of basketball stories to drive his point to the net (pun intended).

During his 30-minute talk, Coach K shared his 4 A's of Leadership: Adaptability, Accountability, Attitude and Agility. All these "A's" are intended for use in business and life in society, yet I continually drew parallels to life in prison. His Adaptability lesson was profound for me. When he was a coach at Duke, every year he got older, but the kids he was coaching were always 18-22. They stayed the same age throughout his 42 seasons of college ball, but he didn't! He had to develop communication skills that enabled him to relate to his perpetually young team.

When I arrived at ORW's gates, I'd just turned 24; now I'm 54, and there are still 19-25-year-olds arriving every

day. I have no children, so I've missed a generation. Therefore, I apply his Adaptability lesson in order to understand the lingo and mindset of these girls whose guards are up, phones are gone, and lives are wrecked.

Combining Accountability and Attitude, Coach K told us good leaders implement standards and values more so than strict rules because the team functions better. I live in a peer-driven programming unit that means we have a responsibility to hold each other accountable. We do have over 100 rules in our unit handbook, but, honestly, more emphasis is placed on standards and values. Rules are broken, to be sure, but only the rule breaker gets punished. Standards and values hold a bit stronger because "standard slackers" get everybody punished and we hate that. So inmate leaders encourage a strong level of integrity, respect and courage.

Attitude matters equally. We have to combine the unit requirements, our personal daily activities, past life experiences, egos, ideas and attitudes into an amalgam of positive rehabilitation. It can get a bit messy, but we succeed in the end. When I was a resident adviser, I mastered the "Teamwork makes the dream work" mantra!

Coach K was adept seeing when a play was going wrong and his team needed redirection, so he would call an audible. At the GLS, he referred to this as Agility. There is a certain amount of agility required to survive, let alone become a leader in here. I can read the room with speed and clarity, and redirect not only myself but whoever else needs it too. God gives me the discernment to call an audible, when necessary, or be really, really quiet.

I was so enlightened by Coach K's presentation. I saw areas that need improvement as well as those where I'm confident in my leadership abilities. The entire Summit inspired me to trust that God will continue leading me as I lead others here. I also trust He'll lead me home where I'll be equipped to lead some more. I am ready for the challenge!

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



Twenty men and Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary attend a Mass at Ross Correctional institution celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes on Aug. 23. CT photos by Ken Snow



Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrates the first of two Masses on Aug. 23 at Ross Correctional Institution in Chillicothe.



Dustin "DJ" James receives a blessing from Bishop Earl Fernandes during Communion.



Jesse Conner prays before Mass.



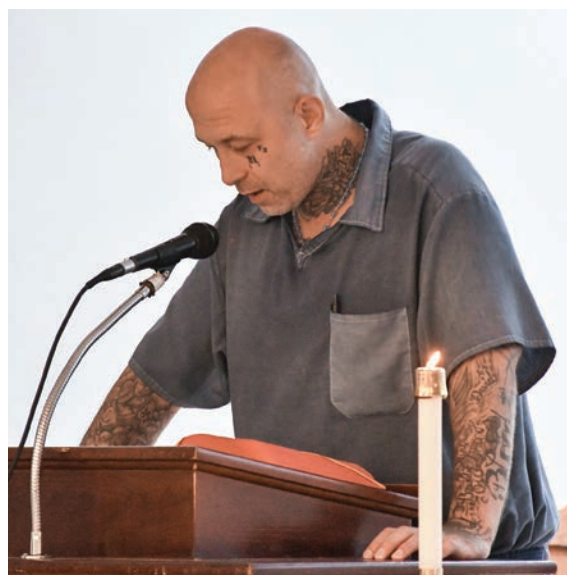
(Left photo) Bishop Earl Fernandes is assisted by Deacon Reed Hauser (left) at a Mass for four men on death row at the Ross Correctional Institution on Aug. 23. (Below) Bishop Fernandes offers Holy Communion to one of the men attending the Mass in the death row area of the facility in Ross County.



The sign of peace is extended among those who attended the Mass for the general population at Ross Correctional Institution on Aug. 23.

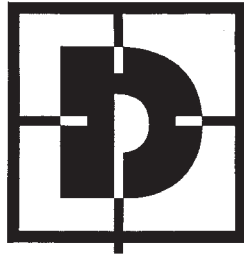


Jesse Conner prays the rosary.



Daniel Lynch serves as the lector at Mass.

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Evaluating medical marijuana use during pregnancy

In 2020, Amanda Aguilar was arrested after using marijuana while pregnant and, after her son tested positive for marijuana at birth, was charged with child neglect.

She fought the charge, arguing that she had turned to medical marijuana to treat severe morning sickness during her pregnancy, and had received a doctor-approved state license for its use in Oklahoma where she lived.

Such “doctor-approved” licenses, it should be noted, are often generalized permits for unregulated personal use rather than a medical professional’s prescribing, tracking and monitoring a patient at a tailored dose for a particular medical situation.

During the court proceedings, one of the judges stated that although Amanda had a medical permit to use marijuana, her baby did not, so a mother exposing her baby to marijuana, he concluded, should be considered an illegal act.

In 2024, however, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals ruled that current Oklahoma law, as written, would not allow women with state medical cards who use marijuana during pregnancy to be prosecuted for child neglect. The Court, in commenting on the case, nevertheless urged the legislature to consider changing and updating the law so that women in these situations could, in fact, be criminally charged for child neglect.

Amanda’s case shares some parallels with the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy, a practice strongly discouraged by medical professionals. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes, “The baby’s brain is developing throughout pregnancy and can be affected by exposure to alcohol at any time.” Similarly, the CDC emphasizes, “Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause a range of lifelong behavioral, intellectual and physical disabilities known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.”

By similar reasoning, then, if it were known that exposure to marijuana in utero would likely result in developmental delays, behavioral problems or other health issues for the child, women should avoid marijuana during pregnancy, and medical permits to use marijuana should be limited or restricted under such circumstances.

MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS | Father Tad Pacholczyk

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



es.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC all recommend against marijuana use during pregnancy. The main psychoactive component of marijuana, known as delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, has been shown to cross the placenta and can be detected in breast milk.

In recent years in the United States, cannabis use by pregnant women has been rising notably, even as alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy have been declining over the same period. The difference may reflect the success of cannabis legalization campaigns, which have increased the availability of marijuana and decreased perceived risks of use.

The body of research literature on cannabis use during pregnancy is not as extensive as it is for alcohol, and additional studies will be required to verify some of the negative effects reported for children born after in utero exposure to marijuana.

Nevertheless, a growing accumulation of research data is raising significant concerns and pointing toward a number of potential adverse outcomes from prenatal cannabis exposure. These include stillbirth, fetal growth restriction, preterm delivery, increased neonatal intensive care unit admissions, small-for-gestational-age infants, and socio-behavioral and cognitive impairment.

Especially during periods of critical neural growth and expansion in the fetal and infant brain, cannabis use

during pregnancy and lactation raises the prospect of adversely affecting not only neurodevelopment but also subsequent neuropsychiatric, behavioral and executive functioning of the child.

Given these significant concerns surrounding in utero cannabis exposure and its effects on children, following the advice of various professional medical associations to avoid cannabis during pregnancy makes good sense.

If we carefully weigh the potentially addictive nature of medical marijuana for the mother, the risks to the baby from in utero cannabis exposure, the recommendations of professional medical societies and the availability of alternative approaches to dealing with morning sickness, the arguments for encouraging pregnant women to obtain licenses for medical marijuana to treat morning sickness do not seem compelling.

Moreover, some individuals who use marijuana to treat nausea and vomiting, especially over a longer period, may experience a phenomenon called cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, in which the cannabis, rather than helping with morning sickness, actually exacerbates the situation by itself inducing bouts of vomiting and nausea.

Even in severe cases of morning sickness where fluid loss through vomiting occurs to the point that a mother may end up losing five percent or more of her pre-pregnancy body weight, various effective treatments exist that do not rely on cannabis, and these are likely to be recommended by health care professionals. Several pharmaceuticals with good safety profiles can be used during pregnancy, as well as direct rehydration interventions to help with acute dehydration symptoms.

Every pregnancy involves at least two people, each of whom deserves care and respect. While it may sometimes be necessary to subject a mother to a needed medical treatment while tolerating a second and unintended effect that results in harm to her growing baby, turning to medical marijuana in an attempt to address morning sickness appears to be neither a necessary nor a prudent course of action.

“Sinicization” is not inculturation

“Inculturation” has been a Catholic buzzword for over a half-century. It’s not the most elegant neologism, smacking as it does of sociologese. Still, it expresses a truth of Catholic missionary practice two millennia old: The Church uses whatever appropriate materials are at hand in a given culture to make the Gospel proposal come alive in that milieu. The parables of Jesus are the biblical warrant for this method of evangelization. The Lord used the familiar cultural materials at hand to drive home key truths about the Kingdom of God breaking into history – the merchant who finds the pearl of great price, the sower of seed who waits patiently for the harvest, the mustard seed that becomes a great tree, and so forth.

St. Paul was an early “inculturator” in Acts 17, where he tried to convince the skeptical Athenians that the “unknown god” through whom they hedged their religious bets had made himself known to the people of Israel and in Jesus, crucified and risen. That didn’t work out as well as Paul hoped, but the strategy was sound. And a few centuries later, it was deployed by the Church to turn the primitive Christian proclamation – “Jesus is Lord” – into creed and dogma, through the mediation of categories drawn from classical philosophy at ecumenical councils like Nicaea I and Chalcedon.

Inculturation also has a flip side: As the Church adopts cultural materials from a given environment to make the Gospel message “hearable,” a successful inculturation then results in the Gospel reshaping that environment

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE George Weigel

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



so that it embodies a biblical understanding of human dignity and solidarity. As I explain in *Letters to a Young Catholic*, the inculturation of the Gospel in Mexico as mediated through the icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a paradigmatic example of indigenous cultural materials bringing people to faith, deepening that faith and reshaping a culture.

What inculturation is not is what is happening in China today.

Under the iron rule of the dictator Xi Jinping, the religious policy of the People’s Republic of China is “Sinicization.” The gullible or duplicitous regard this as simply another form of inculturation. “Sinicization” is anything but that: It’s the perverse inversion of inculturation, rightly understood.

Catholic faith in China must be conformed to “Xi Jinping Thought;” it must not temper, much less correct, the official state ideology. Catholic practice in China must advance the hegemonic goals of the Chinese communist regime; if Catholic witness challenges those goals, or the way in which those goals are advanced through

massive human rights violations internally and aggression internationally, the result is persecution, often via the corrupt legal system of which my friend Jimmy Lai is a prominent victim.

A true inculturation of the Gospel in China would call China and the despotic regime that currently controls it to conversion. “Sinicization,” by contrast, is a call to the kowtow, to obsequious acquiescence to the regime’s program of social control, which is essentially a refinement of what George Orwell described in the dystopian novel 1984 – although the dystopia is now promoted as a utopia of abundance, married to a restoration of national honor and dignity through domination of the world.

The Vatican’s stubborn persistence in the evangelically disastrous, strategically misconceived and canonically dubious deal it made with the Xi Jinping regime in 2018 – which gives the Chinese Communist Party episcopal nomination rights, in violation of the teaching of Vatican II and the prohibition laid down in Canon 377.5 – is a countersign to the importance of authentic inculturation for the New Evangelization. That deal is not advancing the Church’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel in China. It is not putting the Church at the service of Chinese society. Rather, it is turning churchmen into de facto mouthpieces for a regime that is persecuting Hui and Uyghur Muslims as well as house church Evangelicals and Catholics. Thus recently created Cardinal Ste-

Can a priest make up his own prayer of absolution?

Dear Father,
Normally I go to Confession at my parish. But I was at St. XYZ recently and went to Confession to a priest who made up a prayer of absolution. I know it was made up because all he said was "God forgives you. Go in peace." This is not the first time that this type of thing has happened to me. Is this allowed? If not, am I forgiven? What should I do?

-Remito

Dear Remito,

It's difficult enough for many people to go to confession; I've never understood why a priest would make it harder than it needs to be. I'm very sorry for your experiences of improper absolution.

To your first question: no, plain and simple. As Vatican II taught, no priest is permitted to "add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority." I don't think that the Council could be any clearer on this instruction. Much may have changed liturgically over the decades since the Council but not this.

It's true that in some places in various ritual books, there is an instruction that the celebrant may use "these or similar words." But this never applies to the actual sacramental formulae. The words by which someone is baptized cannot be changed under any circumstances whatsoever. The same is true of the words of consecration of the Holy Eucharist and for every sacrament, including confession or penance.

The essence of the formula for a valid absolution in the Roman Catholic Church is "And I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The ritual book even prints those words in capital letters so that no priest can miss them.

If a priest doesn't think he wants to give absolution

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.



to a person going to confession, then he should tell that penitent that he is not going to give absolution and why not. But it's not a matter of making up some other words for whatever reason.

The Church safeguards her authority to determine what makes for a valid sacrament. This is because the sacraments are so essential to our getting to heaven to enjoy eternal life. Only the Church has this authority because it was given to her by Christ, her head, her Lord and God. The sacraments are the actions of God, particularly through the ministry of priests. The Church wants what Christ wants: for all of us to enjoy the beatific vision, to gaze upon the Blessed Trinity for all eternity in the company of the saints.

When a priest makes up his own words in the sacraments, he is not really performing the sacrament. If he's not performing the sacrament, then whatever the sacrament was supposed to do is not done. In the case of the Eucharist, the failure to use the words that the Church uses means that the bread stays just bread and the wine stays just wine. There is no Body and Blood of Christ. In the case of penance, when the priest fails to use the words of the Church, then there is no absolution of any sin. There is no sacrament. There is no sacramental grace.

That brings me to your next question: Were you for-

given? It's a kind of yes and no answer. Without the proper absolution, you weren't absolved sacramentally. However, we also know that as soon as we repent of our sins with the intention of confessing our serious sins in confession, God forgives us. God loves to forgive repentant sinners who go to confession.

Notice the conditional note I mentioned. When we are sorry for our sins, our sorrow must include the intention of confessing our sins in the sacrament of confession or penance, also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Why? Because God wants it that way. When Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance, He gave authority to the Apostles and the Church to make decisions about absolving sins. He didn't leave the matter to each individual to be his/her own judge.

What if a person committed mortal sins and went to confession but wasn't absolved properly? If the person confessing mortal sins recognizes that the absolution clearly is wrong, then the penitent should mention it to the priest. Now, I caution you to be careful to be certain that the absolution is invalid. If that doesn't work, then the penitent should seek another priest and explain the matter.

If the person confessing does not recognize an invalid absolution, the mortal sins may be forgiven, but no sacramental grace is given. The sacramental grace of penance is important because the grace heals the roots of the sin and helps us to avoid future sins. Sacramental grace draws us into deeper union with God. Sacramental grace only comes through the proper administration of the sacraments, authorized by the Church.

While we should be careful not to be too quick to accuse a priest of not doing his sacramental work properly, all priests (and I include myself) must remember that we become holy by faithfully administering the sacraments as the Church desires.

PRISON, continued from Page 4

in the Diocese of Columbus, to each and every one of you."

Reflecting on the first reading at Mass from the prophet Ezekiel, Bishop Fernandes reminded the men that "God never abandons His people." He went on to say that God can bring each soul back from death to life.

"Through the waters of baptism, we died to our old way of living and we rose, a new creation in God," he said. "We received the Holy Spirit, the Breath of Life, the Lord and Giver of Life, who was poured in to our hearts and we became His temple.

"We haven't always lived a life according to the Spirit. But the first word of the Holy Spirit is conversion. The Spirit helps us to get better, to learn how to do the right thing. He leads us into all Truth, and

He gives us the promise of everlasting life."

Bishop Fernandes reflected on the apostles' three years with Jesus and how they watched him perform signs and miracles, but then in a time of trial and temptation, Judas betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver and Peter denied him three times while the others fled in fear or fell asleep.

"The apostles were dead in their sin and their fear," the bishop recalled, "but He brought them back to life. And after they received the Holy Spirit they were never the same, and they went and set the world on fire with God's love.

"I don't know what you did to get in here, but just as Jesus didn't give up on the apostles, He doesn't give up on you. Jesus didn't say to the apostles, 'Where were you, you cowards, how could you?

Peter, who fled in fear and denied me three times, how could you?'"

"His first words to them are, 'Peace be with you.' He wants to give them another chance."

Bishop Fernandes continued, "But you might say, 'Well, Bishop, that's all well and good, but I'm trapped in here.' Except today we're celebrating St. Rose of Lima. She lived in a cloister and our opening prayer said, 'O God who set St. Rose on fire with your love, so that secluded from the world in the austerity of a life in penance, she might give herself to you alone.'

"You are secluded from the world, but it does not mean you can't live a life of prayer, a life of penance, and a life of goodness. She gave herself to God, alone, in love. ... She prayed and she fasted and she did penance for the salvation of the world. ...

"For you now, the important thing is to love God and neighbor here below so that you can spend eternity with God in freedom and live in dignity with the sons and daughters of God. Here below we pray, we fast, we even praise God. We can do great good."

The bishop offered the example of St. Therese the Little Flower, who prayed for the world during her short life as a cloistered nun.

"The walls of this prison are your cloister and you could do great good praying

for people out there, or for the other men who are in here," he said.

Calling the men to imitate the Good Samaritan, who stopped to help the man on the side of the road who was half dead, the bishop said, "My brothers, this is what I ask of you here, to go and do likewise, to show compassion, to show mercy toward others as you have received mercy from God. And if you see something going wrong, don't walk on by. Be like the good Samaritan who stopped to help."

Drawing a parallel to the saint of the day and prison life, the bishop explained that St. Rose lived at the same time and in the same city in Peru where St. Turibius was a bishop and St. Martin de Porres was a friend of the poor.

"This is your own city here," he said. "You're all called to work together, to love your neighbor, and to be a force for goodness and compassion. I can't always come into this prison within these walls, so I have you here to represent me and to represent Christ to all those around you. So it's a challenging mission, I know, but I believe you can do it with the power of God at work within you. ...

"My brothers, know how close God is to you, especially in the sacraments, and how much He will come and dwell in you."

WEIGEL, continued from Page 6

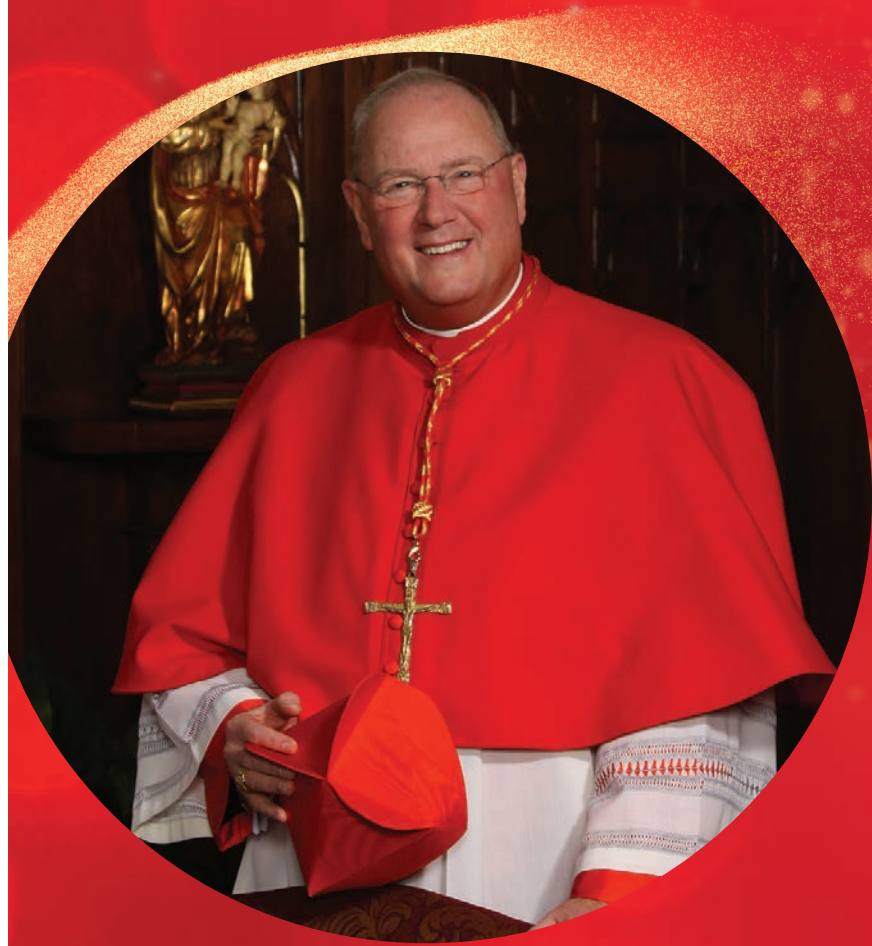
phen Chow, SJ, couldn't even bring himself to mention the words "Tiananmen" and "massacre" on the 35th anniversary of that atrocity (in sharp contrast to the courageous witness of his predecessor as bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen, SDB).

This inversion of inculturation is also damaging Catholicism's reputation internationally. The great British historian Sir Michael Howard once told me that the

Catholic Church's transformation into the world's most prominent institutional defender of basic human rights was one of the two great revolutions of the 20th century, the other being Lenin's Bolshevik takeover in Russia in 1917. Lenin's revolution continues in China. The Catholic human rights revolution has stalled in Rome over the past decade, to the detriment of both the Church and the world.

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Retreat encourages young women to look to Mary as model

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

A retreat for young women ages 18 to 30 was held on the morning of Saturday, Aug. 24 in the convent of the Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget, known as the Bridgettine Sisters, located adjacent to Columbus Holy Family Church.

The retreat, centered on truth, beauty and goodness and inspired by the Blessed Mother, offered practical ways to live out the virtues as a young woman.

The morning began with Mass at Holy Family Church, celebrating the feast of the Apostle St. Bartholomew, followed by a light breakfast and discussion in the convent's Madonna Hall.

Diocesan seminarian Deacon Joey Rolwing, who is anticipated to be ordained to the priesthood next spring, and Sister Jose Mary, an Ohio State University graduate who will make her first procession of vows this month with the Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget, served as speakers.

The Bridgettine Sisters sang Marian hymns for the women between the two talks.

The retreat was organized by several local young women who developed relationships with the Bridgettine Sisters. Avery Hays, a Columbus Bishop Watterson High School graduate, helped coordinate the retreat and served as a host for the morning.

"We just want to explore ways that we can live our lives because there's so much influence and influence around us as women," Hays said. "Sometimes, it's hard to know exactly who we're supposed to be and who we're called to be, but really, if we look to our Blessed Mother, we know."

"We know that she's our prototype. And today, Deacon Joey and Sister Jose Mary just laid it out for us, how to use Mary as our prototype to live beautiful lives as women."

In her talk with the young women, Sister Jose Mary discussed the importance of and ways to emulate Mary as a young woman in every vocation – single, married or consecrated religious.

Sister Jose Mary spent the last few years at the Bridgettine motherhouse in Rome for her novitiate, which prepares an individual for a vowed life. The novitiate stage is a time to deepen knowledge of the order's charism and spirituality while living in poverty, chastity and obedience.

She explained that the Blessed Mother's perfection of virtue should not discourage young women or make them feel distant from her. Rather, Mary's perfection of virtue keeps her close to them and helps them encounter the living God.

She told the women to look to Mary to bring God into every moment of their lives.

She also reflected on St. Maria Elisabeth Hesselblad, who reestablished the Bridgettine order in 1911. Sister Jose Mary explained St. Elisabeth's belief that Bridgettine convents are to be houses modeled after the Holy Family's house in Nazareth



Young women gather for a Saturday morning retreat in the Bridgettine Sisters' convent in Columbus.
Photo courtesy Avery Hays

– a home of prayer, work and sacrifice.

In simple, everyday tasks, Sister Jose Mary encouraged young women to think how Mary completed a task. She said the Blessed Mother's tasks would have been oriented toward the Holy Trinity.

Young women can do the same, she explained, by putting every task in the hands of Mary. She encouraged them to offer a prayer before each task, assuring them it will be a pleasing offering to God.

"We can only bring Jesus to others if we have encountered Him ourselves," Sister Jose Mary said.

Sister Jose Mary also noted that some might wonder why the Bridgettine Sisters do not teach or go out into the world, but rather, stay in their convent. She said there can be a temptation to think, "What is God going to do with that?" However, she said, such a thought pattern is "putting God in a box."

She recalled that Mary was the wife of a carpenter and spent much time in the home, yet God raised her above all the saints, many of whom spent their lives in the world outside of the home.

Sister Jose Mary noted that Mary was completely God's in all that she did. It was the Blessed Mother's receptivity to the Father's will and complete surrender to it – her "yes" – that raised her above all.

She told the women that they, too, are called to offer their daily lives and ordinary joys and sorrows to God.

Sister Jose Mary said that holiness is "every day." She iterated that a person does not become holy at a certain point or when a certain life event happens.

"You will not become holy when, fill in the blank," she told the young women.

As an example, it can be tempting for an individual to think they will become holier once they enter into a certain state or vocation. On the contrary, holiness is in the present moment.

She also noted that Jesus used the last breath He had on the cross to "make sure we know we have a mother." (John 19:27)

She asked the young women to imagine the Blessed Mother's pierced heart.

In that moment, while it might not have seemed so, she knew He would make all things good.

Reflecting on Christ's three days in the tomb, Sister Jose Mary asked the audience to keep Mary company as "we await the Resurrection of her Son." She suggested attending Mass on Saturday mornings.

In the Church, Saturdays are ordinarily dedicated to Mary because on Holy Saturday, the day before the Resurrection of the Lord, Mary awaited the Resurrection with assured hope. St. Thomas Aquinas noted that the Blessed Virgin remained unshaken in faith on Saturday after the death of her Divine Son.

Deacon Rolwing followed Sister Jose Mary with a talk on Mary as a woman of truth, beauty and goodness and how young women in every vocation can become a woman of truth, beauty and goodness themselves.

He noted that the Blessed Mother completely surrendered to the will of God in trust and obedience. Unlike the first woman, Eve, Mary knew she was loved by the Father.

She might have had reasons to doubt, Deacon Rolwing said, but inherently knew she was loved so she totally surrendered. She stood by her profession of faith, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," and surrendered not only at the Annunciation but even at the Crucifixion.

He also highlighted Mary's upbringing in the Jewish temple. She was taught the Jewish scriptures and constantly meditated on the word of God. The young Mary is often depicted with a book on her lap.

He explained that the Blessed Virgin is immaculate – she contains no selfishness or egotism. Rather, she exudes pure and uninterrupted love and a heart full of grace.

Highlighting her beauty, Deacon Rolwing said Mary was the most beautiful creature God has ever created. She is "His masterpiece."

He noted that many recorded apparitions describe the Blessed Mother as the most beautiful woman the visionary had

ever seen. Several also describe there being a beautiful fragrance about her.

However, he said, her beauty is not primarily exterior. Mary is interiorly beautiful because her soul is full of grace.

"She helps me love with a pure heart," Deacon Rolwing said of the Blessed Mother.

He then explored some ways to live as a woman of truth, beauty and goodness.

In today's world, many fill their hearts and minds with other worldly things. However, he said, every individual's mind and heart needs space to ponder God's word and what He is doing in their life.

Deacon Rolwing encouraged young women to fill themselves with good things and embrace the truth of their femininity.

He said Mary is the perfect and truest expression of what it means to be a woman. He said she is so as a spouse, both of the Holy Spirit and St. Joseph, and as a mother.

In today's climate, while many reject marriage and motherhood, Deacon Rolwing presented Mary's role as spouse and mother as the "way forward."

He said God has placed a motherly desire in each woman's heart. He noted that being a spouse and mother exists in every vocation – single and consecrated religious, too.

In religious life, women live totally consecrated to their spouse – the Lord. They are not married to any particular man, Deacon Rolwing said, but "the Man."

St. Edith Stein, in her "Essays on Woman," wrote that deepest longing of a woman's heart "is to give herself lovingly, to belong to another and to possess this other completely. This longing is revealed in her outlook: personal and all-embracing, which appears to us as specifically feminine."

St. Edith also wrote that women are infused with a feminine genius and love with a mother's heart. They nourish and cherish.

Inspired by Mary, women must be a handmaid of the Lord, Deacon Rolwing said. He encouraged the young women to live out their femininity as spouse and mother in whatever state of life they are in.

He also encouraged them to root out sin and selfishness, to transition from being person-centered – which includes vanity and focus on self – to being oriented toward others.

He also addressed common female temptations toward comparison and a desire to possess another person's attributes or talents rather than cultivate them.

In relationships, Deacon Rolwing said the other should be respected as a gift. He noted how, sometimes, women can be manipulative in relationships, manipulating how they want the other to be rather than respecting who he is, or trying to get him to think how they do.

Deacon Rolwing encouraged young women to see the other always as a gift. The Blessed Mother is the perfect example.

Growing in faith and knowledge

By Dr. Adam J. Dufault

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

The new school year is underway now across the Diocese of Columbus. These first days of the year are exciting, full of anticipation and eagerness about the months ahead. Everything is new right now – new teachers, new classrooms, new books, and more. Together, the 50 Catholic schools in the diocese welcomed just shy of 500 new students, bringing our total enrollment up to nearly 18,000, the highest count in years.

While the newness will wear off as the rhythm of the academic year resumes and routines are established, what will remain constant throughout this year is the focus of each school on living our Catholic faith. Many schools select an annual theme that frames the goals planned for the year ahead. In recent years, the Office of Catholic Schools adopted this practice and has chosen a verse from the Gospel of John as our theme for the year: “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.”

In his keynote talk with our school administrators at our Administrator Opening Meetings in early August, Father Paul Keller, O.P., reflected on this verse and the rest of the passage, explaining

that Jesus’ description draws its imagery from a vineyard, that only the fruit growing on branches connected to the vine will flourish into beautiful grapes, ready to be made into wine. The branches that become separated from the vine never develop fruit and are fit only for burning. Father Keller explained that as Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, it is only through our union and connection with Him that we will bear much fruit for the benefit of our students, their families, and our Church. He reminded our administrators that they “are crucial to Catholic education.”

Indeed, our administrators and our teachers are crucial to Catholic education, and through staying close to Jesus, they lead our students to know, love and serve the Lord. In Catholic education, this focus on remaining in and with Jesus creates a culture that is authentically and unapologetically Catholic. It allows us to lead with faith, to teach our students to see the world through the eyes of faith.

When I spoke with the 140 wonderful new teachers who have come into the Diocese of Columbus to serve in our schools this year, I quoted Pope St. John Paul II’s statement about the purpose of Catholic schools. The great saint said, “Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life,

in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom.”

Through Catholic education, we show our students the fullness of creation, inseparable from the love of God. Last year, our administrators began a study of Catholic Academic Integration – incorporating our faith and a Catholic perspective into all coursework and aspects of school life. We were guided in this by an excellent book titled *Educating for Eternity: Making Every Class Catholic* by the Canadian theologian Brett Salkeld, who visited us in Columbus last year. Dr. Salkeld makes the point in his book that every educator must choose an anthropology – how do we make the world make sense? What is our underlying framework? The schools of the Diocese of Columbus have chosen an anthropology grounded in the Way, the Truth, and the Life, bringing a Catholic worldview into every aspect of our schools.

Meghan Kuehnle, our new associate director for teaching and learning, recently shared exactly what this means. She said, “If we understand God as having created the world, and as one who illuminates our ability to understand and comprehend the world, we might understand (that a) Catholic educator serves as a lens (or even a stained glass

window) through which the brilliance of God’s work is made apparent to students. As teachers, (their) job is to embed our faith across content areas to make clear God’s work in our world so that students might do the same. (A teacher’s) curriculum shines through (them), and in doing so, it should be imbued with our faith.”

This framework is evident in our approach to develop new curricula, which is being revised to incorporate this Catholic viewpoint, in the culture we are shaping through Theology of the Body, in the renewed focus on Adoration and reverence in Masses.

These are exciting times in our diocese. More and more families, students, and teachers are coming to our schools attracted by culture. I have heard from many of the new teachers who attended our New Teacher Orientation in early August that the way that our schools live the faith drew them to teach here. They joyfully accepted this call to evangelize and to lead students to the vine. I ended my time with the new teachers by sharing an image of a sign on the wall in the lobby of Bishop Hartley High School that reads, “It will be difficult. It will be fun. It will take time. It will go by quickly. It will require sacrifice. It will be worth it.”

Great things will happen this year.

See **GROWING**, Page 11



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Q&A: Back to school with the superintendent

In recent weeks, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Columbus welcomed nearly 18,000 students for the 2024-25 academic year, the highest count in 20 years. While administrators, faculty, staff, students and families work to establish expectations and routines for this school year, Theresa Vivona, associate director for advancement in the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS), sat down with Superintendent Adam Dufault to hear his thoughts on schools' growth and continued challenges as well as his outlook on the next nine months and beyond.

Theresa: *At the administrator meetings to kick off the new school year in early August, you unveiled this year's theme grounded on John 15, "I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches: Growing in Community and Educating for Eternity." Tell me a bit about why this theme was selected and what it means for Our Catholic Schools this year.*

Dr. Dufault: This is the third school year that OCS has identified and promoted an annual theme, which helps us to succinctly capture and explain the vision and goals for the year, as well as the direction in which we are heading. This theme is then the subject of our opening meeting keynote and becomes the focus of our prayer and reflection at our annual Administrator Retreat at the end of September. Ultimately, it's purpose is to align our more than 100 administrators to our mission in Catholic education. As the leaders in their local school communities, our administrators then bring their school's staff and larger community into the same unified mission and vision.

This year's theme was actually selected in joint effort by the team at the Office of Catholic Schools through prayerful discernment at our own retreat – this beautiful passage of Scripture spoke to us. In remaining close to Jesus, in remembering our joyful dependence on Him, we thrive. That unity captures where we are in as an authentic and unapologetically Catholic school system that teaches a Catholic worldview, sharing the goodness of God throughout the educational experience in all areas and in all ways.

Theresa: *This is now your sixth school year as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Columbus. How have the schools evolved since you started? What would you say the greatest*

change/impact has been?

Dr. Dufault: We have amazing principals, teachers and staff in this diocese at each of our 50 schools. I am constantly impressed by the love of the Lord and the dedication shown by our educators to every family, every day. It has truly been a blessing and an honor to serve the Bishops of Columbus in this capacity over these years.

But, to answer your question, I've seen our schools continue to thrive. We've seen tremendous growth in enrollment, a significant increase in expansion projects to help us meet capacity, and a persistent demand for opening new schools in rapidly growing parts of the diocese. Families are seeking us out. They see the difference that a Catholic education offers and they want that for their children. Thanks be to God, this has never been more attainable or affordable than it is now.

Theresa: *The growth in Our Catholic Schools has been tremendous! Even with such growth, I'm sure you see plenty of challenges, too. What is the greatest one you're seeing in our schools?*

Dr. Dufault: As in most sectors of the economy, hiring remains a challenge. We have outstanding educators in every school in the diocese, but we do not have as many as we need and are actively looking for more. I will say that I'm constantly meeting teachers with 35, 40, and 50 years of service in our schools, as well as teachers who are graduates of our schools and went to college with the goal of returning to become a teacher in the diocese. It's such a blessing! But we still need others to join us.

The challenge is that serving in a Catholic school is far more than a job – it's a calling and a ministry. We are all teacher-ministers, witnessing to our faith, living out the Lord's Great Commission to make disciples. Our teachers have to desire to be in a Catholic school. Just last month, I had the great pleasure to address 140 new teachers at our New Teacher Orientation and was overjoyed to meet so many dedicated, on-mission, on-fire men and women eager to make a difference in our schools. The spirit of service and the joy was awesome. We're attracting great people – we just need more!

On this topic, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention at this point that we have a Virtual Hiring Event coming up in September

to draw attention to our schools and their staffing needs. Through various media channels – both Catholic and secular – we are hoping to connect those on-fire people with places where they are needed.

Theresa: *It's a new year; a clean slate, if you will. What are some of your goals for this academic year?*

Dr. Dufault: This year, we continue the implementation of our current strategic plan, but will soon be entering the development stages of our next plan. All that we are doing has been built on the framework of the 5 Marks of Catholic Schools, articulated by Archbishop Michael Miller in his *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Education*, an excellent overview of what we do in Catholic schools. His five marks – and I could go on about this for quite some time – are that we are 1) inspired by a supernatural vision; 2) founded on a Christian anthropology; 3) animated by Communion and community; 4) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout the curriculum; and 5) sustained by Gospel witness.

Much like the previous three years, our goals and our work this year remain to bring these pillars to life in every one of our schools. We are continuing to grow and thrive in an unapologetically Catholic culture, create and implement outstanding academic structures and experiences, operate in a fiscally sus-

tainable way that plans for the future, and to offer every one of our nearly 18,000 students the very best of Catholic education every single day.

Theresa: *You mention that work on the next strategic plan for Our Catholic Schools is on the horizon. Looking ahead – beyond this school year – what would you like to see our schools and our educators achieve together?*

Dr. Dufault: Very simply, more kids and their families in more schools, learning to love and serve Jesus Christ as His disciples. As Bishop (Earl) Fernandes has said, we can measure the success of our schools by our students' participation in the life of the Church. We are successful in our schools when living in faith becomes the way of life of all our families.

After all, we are not educating the future of the Church, we are educating, as Pope Francis said in *Christus Vivet*, the "Now of God." The Church is in our classrooms and in their homes. We're leading students to lives of faith for today, not just for tomorrow. This means that every minute of every class every day can be a moment of encounter with the Lord, guiding our students to embrace the great adventure of life with Jesus Christ. This is what we are working toward. A thriving, vibrant, dynamic Church. This is the beauty and impact of what Catholic education can do.

GROWING, continued from Page 10

Milestones will be reached, challenges overcome, and our students will grow in their faith and in their knowledge. Our Catholic schools have never been more sought out, never been more necessary for the formation of our students, and have never existed in a more supportive economic environment. We remain committed to our belief that Catholic education changes lives and that a life centered on the great truths of our faith leads us

to Heaven.

This essential work, while always challenging, is more than worth it. By remaining in Jesus, who is the vine to our branches, we will share the joy of the Gospel with our students and families and share in the adventure of life with Jesus Christ. Please pray for our educators, our students and their families as we begin the new school year.

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Diocesan school begins new year with new name

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

As students return for the 2024-25 academic year, there is a lot of newness – new school supplies, new teachers, new classes. Even more notable this year for some students, perhaps, is a new school name.

In August, students did not return to Columbus St. Matthias School but rather St. Josephine Bakhita School, the new name for the school located at 1566 Ferris Road in the city's north end.

The name change was the result of a parish merger that occurred in June. The former Columbus St. Anthony and St. Matthias churches merged with Columbus St. Elizabeth Church to form St. Josephine Bakhita Parish.

The former St. Matthias Church, connected to St. Josephine Bakhita School, is now known as the St. Matthias Chapel. Some ethnic Masses are held in the chapel on Sundays.

"The official name is St. Josephine Bakhita School at St. Matthias Chapel," principal Carey Wrigley said. "The parish is St. Josephine Bakhita Parish at St. Elizabeth Church, so it's a mouthful, but it's a

mouthful for all the right reasons.

"This is an opportunity. I really see this as an opportunity for growth, for the community, for our students."

St. Josephine Bakhita is an African saint, born in Sudan in 1869. She was kidnapped, enslaved in Sudan and later purchased by an Italian diplomat. In Italy, she was baptized into the Church and entered the Canossian order in 1893.

St. Josephine was known for her smile, gentleness and holiness. She was canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in October 2001.

At St. Josephine Bakhita School, students and staff are embracing their new patroness.

Unlike St. Matthias, who is briefly mentioned in the Bible as the Apostle who was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, St. Josephine is a modern saint. St. Josephine is also more relatable to the school's students and easier for them to understand.

"It's a person who looks more like the majority of our students and the majority of our community," Wrigley said. "I think that's kind of the driving force behind that."

This year, more than 270 students are enrolled at St. Josephine Bakhita. The school has students born in 15 different

countries. Many students are immigrants or children of immigrants.

The community at St. Josephine Bakhita School has notably transformed throughout the years to become more diverse today than a few decades ago.

"When I was a student here at St. Matthias in the late '80s, it was almost all white," Wrigley said. "Now, we are almost completely all non-white. We have a very diverse student population, a very diverse parish population. The pastor really wanted to lean into the diversity, so that name was chosen."

Father Tony Davis, the pastor at St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, began discussing the new name with students last school year. The parish name was announced earlier this year on St. Josephine's feast day, Feb. 8.

"He did it very delicately," Wrigley said. "I'm very impressed with how he explained it to our students."

"She is a saint who had a very difficult beginning. She was enslaved; she was sold, and those are not easy concepts."

St. Josephine is recorded saying, "If I were to meet the slave traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and religious today."

To kick off the 2024-25 academic year, the school planned a community day centered on St. Josephine.

"We're going to teach a little bit about who St. Josephine Bakhita was because she has an interesting story, and it's a story that, with our demographics, I think is relatable and inspiring," Wrigley said.

The day is set to include family groups, which are composed of a few students from each grade level led by a staff member, working together toward a goal and a service project.

Students can immerse themselves in their new patroness with hands-on activities. They will learn about their school's namesake through community building in family groups and as a schoolwide community.

"We want the kids to learn the whole story, the story of St. Josephine Bakhita, but we also want them to build community," Wrigley said.

A new St. Josephine statue is featured in the St. Matthias Chapel. Wrigley brought several new students into the chapel to show them the statue because it's "really important" to see that St. Josephine looked like them.

She also began discussing the new patroness with students after the announcement last February. The second-grade class watched a video about St. Josephine and the response was positive.

"The kids got excited," Wrigley said. "I had a little video ... a little short video about her life, and once they saw that, it made a little more sense to them."

St. Josephine Bakhita School is working to create shirts this year with the title "Founding Student" or "Founding Staff



A temporary sign reflects the name change at Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita Parish and School, formerly named St. Matthias.



The newly named Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita School has added a statue of its patroness.

Photos courtesy St. Josephine Bakhita School

Member." The idea is for people to remember that the students and staff were the first at St. Josephine Bakhita, Wrigley said.

The school colors, which were formerly red, white and black, are changing to include green. Red, white, black and green are the colors of the Sudanese flag.

The school is also in the process of changing their team nickname from "Colts" to "Stars." Wrigley and Father Davis were inspired, she said, by a St. Josephine Bakhita quote that reads, "Seeing the sun, the moon and the stars, I said to myself, 'Who could be the Master of these beautiful things?' And I felt a great desire to see Him, to know Him and to pay Him homage."

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Enrollment increases reported

It's a promising year for diocesan schools.

Enrollment is the highest it has been in nearly two decades. The Office of Catholic Schools reports growth in several schools in various parts of the diocese.

Preschool enrollment is the highest in history and more than half of the elementary schools located outside of Franklin County grew by more than 10 percent.

Enrollment is on the rise in Tuscarawas County, located in the northeast portion of the diocese. The number of students increased by 32 percent at Dennison Immaculate Conception, by 13 percent at New Philadelphia Tuscarawas Central Catholic Junior/Senior High and by 10 percent at Dover Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary.

Lancaster St. Bernadette added an additional grade level, now serving children in preschool through sixth grade.

On average, diocesan high schools in Franklin County experienced a five percent increase in enrollment.

For elementary schools, enrollment at Columbus St. Agatha was up 16 percent. Nearby, Columbus Trinity Catholic grew by 15 percent and Columbus St. Andrew increased by four percent.

The Office of Catholic Schools also measured an approximate three percent growth "year-over-year" from preschool to 12th grade.

The diocese welcomed nearly 150 new

educators and 15 administrators this year.

Eight of the 15 new administrators occupy positions created due to enrollment growth. Twenty percent of the new administrators were promoted internally.

The eight administrators filling newly created positions are assistant principals Anne DeLeonardis, Columbus Our Lady of Peace; Leslie Kraus, Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita; Kelly Dunlevy, Westerville St. Paul the Apostle; Meaghan Chapman, Newark Blessed Sacrament; vice principals Colleen Schafhausen, student learning, Columbus Bishop Hartley High School; Mike McGoldrick, student learning, Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School; principal Jake Love, Dennison Immaculate Conception; and curriculum coordinator, Austin Opperman, Portsmouth Notre Dame Junior/Senior High.

Administrators who were promoted include Rick Ey to principal and Will Gruber to vice principal, student services, at Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School and Heather Law to vice principal, academics, at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School.

Principal Courtney Caric transferred from Columbus St. Mary Magdalene to Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle School.

New administrators include principals Leigh Kane, filling Caric's previous position; Mike DeMassimo, Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator; and Rachel Cavello, St. Bernadette.

Going back to school



Columbus St. Francis DeSales students participate in a prayer service in the gymnasium.



Father Weldit Tesfazghi Abay joins students at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator School.



Columbus St. Agatha School welcomes students. Photos/Office of Catholic Schools



Students return to Columbus St. Cecilia School.



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23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B

God hears our cry

Isaiah 35:4-7a
Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10
James 2:1-5
Mark 7:31-37

We often wonder whether anyone is aware of our plight. Does anyone understand just what I am going through? Is anybody listening? Does anyone really care? We are afraid that we will always feel what we are feeling in a time of pain. We believe that we are alone.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks to a people whose world is ready to collapse. The Word of the Lord he proclaims is a word of hope: "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you."

Even more, the prophet addresses the nature of the fears, expressing what will happen when the presence of the Lord is manifested: "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing. Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water."

We do tend to expect others to see, hear and grasp what we try to share with them about our struggles. Our capacity to express what is in our hearts often fails us when we try to share. Others who should understand cannot or will

24th 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.



not. The promise of the prophet is that God Himself will make things clear and the joy that eludes us now will come. Creation itself will share in our delight in what God accomplishes for us.

I remember as a child having difficulties that seemed as big as the world. Mom's gentle words after listening to me express my grief were simple: "It will be all right." She indicated that what had happened would not seem so bad in the future. At that moment, her words did not seem to help; the pain remained. But in retrospect, it was exactly what I needed to hear. The fact that someone was with me, aware of my hurt was enough to keep me going. The fruit of that support, and even of the grief being experienced, is compassion. Now, as I try to listen to others, I do understand, and it is evident to those who speak to me, even without words.

The Gospel gives another perspective on God's power to heal the wounds that interfere with communication. Jesus lived among human beings, and He always spoke and acted in a "down-to-earth" manner. He spat, He touched, He groaned out loud, and the effect of His thorough engagement in these very earthly ways of reacting served the pur-

9/9-9/14
MONDAY
1 Corinthians 5:1-8
Psalm 5:5-6,7,12
Luke 6:6-11

TUESDAY
1 Corinthians 6:1-11
Psalm 149:1-6,9
Luke 6:12-19

WEDNESDAY
1 Corinthians 7:25-31
Psalm 45:11-12,14-17
Luke 6:20-26

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

THURSDAY
1 Corinthians 8:1b-7,11-13
Psalm 139:1b-3,13,14b,23-24
Luke 6:27-38

FRIDAY
1 Corinthians 9:16-19,22b-27
Psalm 84:3-6,12
Luke 6:39-42

SATURDAY
Numbers 21:4b-9
Psalm 78:1-2,34-38
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

9/16-9-21
MONDAY
1 Corinthians 11:17-26,33
Psalm 40:7-10,17
Luke 7:1-10

TUESDAY
1 Corinthians 12:12-14,27-31a
Psalm 100:1-5
Luke 7:11-17

WEDNESDAY
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
Psalm 33:2-5,12,22
Luke 7:31-35

THURSDAY
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Psalm 118:1b-2,16ab,17,28
Luke 7:36-50

FRIDAY
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Psalm 17:1bcd,6-7,8b-15
Luke 8:1-3

SATURDAY
Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13
Psalm 19:2-5
Matthew 9:9-13

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION

Mass Schedule: Weeks of September 8 and September 15, 2024

SUNDAY MASS

10:30am Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio AM820, Columbus, FM88.3, Portsmouth, and FM106.7, Athens., and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbus-catholic.org.

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 Breeze-line 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 WEEKS III AND IV OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

pose of healing.

The Incarnation proves God's desire to be with us in our plight. At times, the most gratifying way of responding to some difficulty that we must face is to acknowledge how much it disturbs us by

some spontaneous expression that uses our whole humanity. It is OK to groan and cry out in pain, by doing something that draws attention to our plight. God hears our cry. He comforts us in concrete ways.

God calls us to hear and listen to the truth

Isaiah 50:4c-9a
Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
James 2:14-18
Mark 8:27-35

The deepest truth of the human person can only be understood by God. We do not even understand our own persons, except when God reveals us to ourselves. Jesus Christ is God's self-revelation and He serves as the mirror in which we can discover our deepest identity. This message is profound. It is a subtle truth that can be understood only by humbly submitting to it and daring to look into the mirror with openness to whatever is revealed.

Jesus spends time with His disciples, little by little making Himself known to them. He never steps back from asking challenging questions or from responding with a harsh correction when it is needed. When He takes the twelve to

Caesarea Philippi, He is ready to confront them with the hardest truths that they must accept so that they may truly be His disciples. "But who do you say that I am?" is the question that opens up the revelation of His identity.

Peter gets it: "You are the Christ." Then Jesus goes on immediately to tell them the journey that the Christ must take: "the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days." At this point, Peter misses completely what the disciples are meant to learn, and he begins to rebuke Jesus. This calls out the most intense reaction of Jesus to his misunderstanding: "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

To get God right, we must pass through a journey of faith and even of suffering. To be in a living relationship

with Jesus means that we must understand Him in His own terms. This lesson is learned not simply by hearing it and accepting it as a truth outside ourselves, but by allowing it to be our very way of living. Jesus teaches His own disciples and everyone who hears Him. "He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.'"

Isaiah's Song of the Servant offers a perspective on the attitude that will enable us to follow through with our desire to be disciples. "The Lord God opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame."

We must hear and listen to the truth.

When we have doubts and misunderstandings, we must move beyond the temptation to turn away or to rebel, accepting the consequences, the cross that is our own to carry. Trusting in God's grace, we must strengthen our resolve by looking ahead to the fulfillment of the promise of relationship that lasts forever.

The choice that must be made is personal: "I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living." Each disciple is called to believe in Jesus as the Christ who experiences the paschal mystery, suffering, death, and Resurrection. Each disciple must follow, accepting the cross that is part of that personal choice. Each disciple must prove his or her resolve by a witness of faith that perseveres in time and into eternity.

Jesus asks: "Who do you say that I am?" Who is He to you, and who does He reveal you to be? Are you ready to follow and to walk before the Lord in the land of the living?

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| BLESSING | HARAN | Promised Land |
| COVENANT | ISAAC | Sacrifice |
| EGYPT | ISHMAEL | Sarah |
| FAITH | LOT | Son |

Adoration will be offered inside Ohio Statehouse

Ohio's Catholic bishops invite all faithful to participate in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Ohio Statehouse, 1 Capitol Square, on Tuesday, Oct. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Adoration will take place inside the Statehouse in the Governor Thomas Worthington Center located on the ground level as part of the "Year of Mission," the final year of the Church's three-year National Eucharistic Revival in the United States.

Ohio's bishops are asking for prayers for the nation, state and government leaders.

A minimum of two people are needed each half hour from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Time slots can be filled online.

Once all slots are filled, the faithful are welcome to attend any time between 10

a.m. and 2 p.m. They will be prompted to sign in at the entryway of the Governor Thomas Worthington Center.

To sign up, visit the Adoration page on the Catholic Conference of Ohio website, www.ohiocathconf.org/Adoration.

Directions to the Ohio Statehouse and parking information are also available on the website.

On Friday, Oct. 4 at 9 a.m., Bishop Earl Fernandes and Bishop Robert M. Pipta of the Byzantine Eparchy of Parma will celebrate a Mass for Life at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St.

The Mass will be followed by a Rally for Life starting at 11 a.m. at the Ohio Statehouse with Bishop Pipta offering the opening prayer and the Ohio March for Life at noon in downtown Columbus.

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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.

God help me to be the person ...

N	I	H		G
K	H	T	T	O
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THAT MY DOG THINKS I AM

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

ABRAMS-EVANS, Elizabeth "Betty" (McMullen), 86, Aug. 20
St. Joan of Arc Church, Powell

BAUM, Kimberly Anne, 50, Aug. 15
St. Mary Church, Delaware

BURCHETT, Lisa K., 66, August 13
St. Paul the Apostle, Westerville

CASANTA, Frank, 85, Aug. 17
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

COSS, Thomas A., 69, Aug. 22
Christ the King Church, Columbus

FONDRIEST, Dorothy "Sue" (Judy), 88, Aug. 14
St. Joseph Church, Dover

GRANLEE, Patricia Ann, 92, Aug. 20
St. Mary Church, Marion

HILL, Barbara J. (McTeague), 67, Aug 17
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

JOOS, Barbara Ann, 83, Aug. 17
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

LINDSEY, Rosemary, 85, Aug. 24
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville

LINGNAU, Trudy W. (Worstein), 89, Aug. 23
St. Cecilia Church, Columbus

MOSER, Jeff, 76, Aug. 18
St. Joseph Church, Dover

MURPHY, John L., 85, Aug. 21
St. Catharine of Siena Church, Columbus

PENCE, Virginia P., 89, Aug. 24
Holy Family Church, Columbus

REEF, James G. "Jim," 64, Aug. 18
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Zanesville

ROACH, Ronald M., 89, Aug. 13
St. Josephine Bakhita Parish at St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus

ROMANO, Angela, 92, Aug. 19
St. Mary, Mother of God Church, Columbus

RUPP, Elizabeth A. (Kaltenbach), 94, Aug. 14
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

SAPP, John "Jack," 92, Aug. 5
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

SCALES, Dorothy, 86, July 26
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

SEYMOUR, Julia A., 85, Aug. 17
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

SHANAHAN, Phyllis L. (Ogsbury), 100, Aug. 15
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

TEMPLE, Mary Ann, 96, Aug. 5
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

THOMPSON, Jan (Tanner), 92, Aug. 20
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Zanesville

WINGENTER, Kathleen Marie, 76, Aug. 18
Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster

ZIDONIS, Dr. Frank, 94, June 16
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

Robert H. Morosky

Funeral Mass for Robert H. Morosky, 83, who died Wednesday, Aug. 14, was celebrated Tuesday, Aug. 20. Burial was at St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus

Morosky, a retired retail executive, was a founder of The Catholic Foundation of Columbus, a similar organization in the Diocese of Miami, Florida, and the National Society of Catholic Foundations. He also was on the board of the National Catholic Stewardship Council and the Pontifical College Josephinum and received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award from Pope St. John Paul II for his service to the Catholic Church.

He belonged to several Church honor organizations: the Knights of St. Sylvester, the Knights of St. Gregory the Great, the Knights of Malta, the Knights of St. George and the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. He also was a religious artist whose works include more than 90 paintings with Catholic-related themes.

His business career began in 1964 with the Arthur Andersen accounting firm. From 1972 to 1987, he served as distribution chief and later vice chairman of The Limited, Inc. (now L Brands), then was chief executive officer of Allied Department Stores and an investment partner with the New York City private equity firm of Forstmann-Little. He formed a private investment firm in 1992.

He also was a board member of several corporations, including Safelite Auto Glass, whose headquarters he moved to Columbus. An outdoor enthusiast, he was a longtime member of the Ohio Division of Wildlife board of trustees.

He was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, attended Pennsylvania State University and received a Bachelor's degree in 1963 from Gannon University in Erie, which later awarded him an honorary doctorate for his philanthropic efforts. The university's academic center and college of health professions are both named for him. He received a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Cincinnati and did doctoral work at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Dianne; son, Michael (Carlye); daughters, Elaina Concheck and Rebecca Hoffman (Steve Cella); brother, David (Debbie); sister, Carol (Joe) Peganoff; a grandson and five granddaughters.

Mary J. "Judy" Stattmiller

Funeral Mass for Mary J. "Judy" Stattmiller, 88, who died Wednesday, Aug. 21, was celebrated Friday, Aug. 30 at Columbus Our Lady of Peace Church. Burial was at Resurrection Cemetery, Lewis Center.

Stattmiller, one of the first certified social workers in Ohio, retired from St. Stephen's Community House in Columbus, where she was its longtime executive director and served for more than 50 years. She considered setting up its day care center as her greatest accomplishment and was the first single woman in Franklin County to adopt a foreign child.

She was active in the funeral ministry and St. Vincent de Paul Society at her parish, was an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at several parishes and sang in many church and community choirs. She also was a cafeteria worker at Our Lady of Peace School and Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School.

She was born in 1936 to John and Catherine (Hayes) Stattmiller, was a graduate of St. Mary of the Springs College (now Ohio Dominican University) and received a Master's degree in social work from Ohio State University.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a brother, James. Survivors include a son, William; a daughter, Laura (Steven) Niday; a brother, Father John Stattmiller, a retired priest of the Diocese of Columbus; sisters Clarissa Asp and Kathryn Ackland; and one grandson.



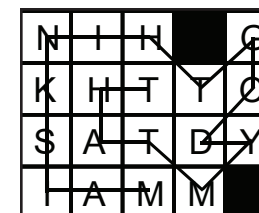
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LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Mass in Somerset to honor Ohio Catholicism's beginnings

A Rosary procession and Mass of the Virgin Mary honoring the 216th anniversary of the first Catholic Mass in Ohio will take place at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 28 at the Mass site, 5000 Stage Coach Road N.W., Somerset.

The Mass will be celebrated by Father Andre-Joseph LaCasse, OP, pastor of Somerset Holy Trinity-St. Joseph Church. Participants are asked to bring lawn chairs.

After Mass, the diocesan Catholic Record Society will discuss plans to update the site and to revise the illustrated history of the diocese written in 2001 by society member Don Schlegel. There also will be information on plans to begin the canonization process for Bishop Edward Fenwick, OP, celebrant of the first Mass at Somerset, founder of the Dominican order in Ohio and first bishop of Cincinnati.

The event will be in conjunction with a national Rosary pilgrimage sponsored on that day by the Dominican Fathers at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Catholic museum sponsoring programs, golf tournament

The Museum of Catholic Art and History will be sponsoring an "ask the priest" program, a talk on exorcism and a golf tournament in the next several weeks.

The question-and-answer event will take place Friday, Sept. 13 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the museum, 212 E. Broad St. People with questions they'd like a priest to answer about the Catholic Church are invited to email their questions to the museum at info@catholicmuseum.org or drop them off at the museum by Wednesday, Sept. 11. The questions will be made anonymous and placed in a basket, then drawn at random during the event.

There is a \$25 cost per person for the program. The reservation deadline is Sept. 11.

Father Nicholas L. Gregoris

Funeral Mass for Father Nicholas L. Gregoris, 52, a former professor at the Pontifical College Josephinum who died Wednesday, Aug. 21, was celebrated Monday, Aug. 26 at the Church of the Holy Innocents in New York City. Burial was at St. Joseph Cemetery, Toms River, New Jersey.

He was born in New York on July 26, 1972 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in classical languages from Seton Hall University and his Bachelor's degree in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 26, 1997 at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Scranton, Pennsylvania and completed graduate studies in Rome at the Pontifical North American College, receiving a licentiate in sacred theology in 1999 and a doctorate in 2001. He recently received a second doctorate in Catholic school admin-

Bishop Earl Fernandes will speak on "The Kingdom of God Prevails: Exorcism and Healing in the Church" from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26 at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., across the street from the museum. There is no charge for the talk.

The museum's inaugural golf outing will begin at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 8 at the Golf Club of Dublin, 5805 Eiterman Road, Dublin. The fee of \$200 per golfer or \$800 per foursome includes a cart, food and golf fees. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Tee times will be sent out the week before the event. To register, go to info@catholicmuseum.org. Payment by credit card or check may be made in advance or on the day of the event.

St. Timothy will host Sept. 11 Blue Mass

The diocese's annual Blue Mass for first responders will be celebrated at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 11 at Columbus St. Timothy Church, 1088 Thomas Lane, and hosted by Knights of Columbus Council 14345 of the parish. Father Leo Connolly, longtime chaplain of the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, will be the celebrant and homilist.

The Mass is an opportunity to honor and pray for all active, retired and deceased police, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel and to remember the 2,973 people who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. All active and retired police, fire and emergency medical services workers invited.

Spiritual companion training coming to diocese

Addiction comes in many forms. But whatever form it takes, addiction can be devastating to individuals and their fami-

lies. The Diocese of Columbus is joining an initiative titled iTHRIST that aims to help parishes and communities provide support resources for individuals and families impacted by various addictions.

He became an assistant professor in 2002 at the Josephinum, where he taught graduate and undergraduate courses in theology and Latin.

He also was a high school teacher and did parochial work on weekends in the Diocese of Scranton and was the first full-time chaplain at Wyoming Catholic College. Before his death, he served at St. Andrew Church in downtown Manhattan.

He also wrote many articles for Catholic publications, wrote one book and translated two others, hosted a weekly radio program and conducted lectures and workshops on a variety of topics. His special area of interest was the liturgy and relations with Eastern Catholic churches, as reflected in his possession of faculties to celebrate in the Byzantine Rite.

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Bishop Earl Fernandes has approved the iTHRIST certification program, which will train lay people, priests, religious, and deacons to offer spiritual support to those impacted by addiction, ensuring they do not have to face their struggles alone.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a spiritual companion through the iTHRIST program should contact Katy Wyatt at ktbwyatt@outlook.com.

Seton adds 5 p.m. Sunday Mass

Pickerington St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 600 Hill Road N., is adding a 5 p.m. Sunday Mass to its weekly schedule, beginning Sept. 8, in response to continued growth in the number of people joining the parish.

Its Seton Parish Youth (SPY) Mass will continue on the second Sunday of the month at 5 p.m.

Record society to meet Sept. 22

The quarterly meeting of the Catholic Record Society will be at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22 in the first-floor meeting room of the Catholic Center, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus.

Ample parking will be available in the St. Joseph Cathedral lot next to the Catholic Center and a ramp leads from ground level to the door. Doors will open at 1:30. After a presentation and a short break, there will be a business meeting that should conclude before 4 p.m.

For more information on the meeting topic, call Mark Gideon at (614) 312-8026.

Friends of the Poor Walk set for Sept. 28 at DeSales

The diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Society's annual Friends of the Poor Walk will be on Saturday, Sept. 28 at Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, 4212 Karl Road, Columbus. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m.

All proceeds raised will go to each walker's local St. Vincent de Paul conference to serve the needy in its area. Donations may be made by cash, check or credit card. The link for credit card donations is <https://events.idonate.com/fopwalk-diocesan-columbus>.

For more information, call (614) 221-3554.

Serra Club sponsors vocations essay contest

The Columbus Serra Club is sponsoring its second annual essay contest for eighth-grade boys on the question of whether God may be calling them to the priesthood.

Writers of the essays judged to be best will be awarded \$1,000 tuition assistance grants to a diocesan Catholic high school for the 2025-2026 school year. The essays

must be 500 words or less.

Announcements about the contest have been made in diocesan Catholic schools. Eighth-grade Catholic boys not attending a diocesan school may text (614) 558-0806 or email kielkopf.1@osu.edu to receive a QR code with instructions. Students will have October and November to write their essays.

The Serra Club is requesting assistance, especially from people with education experience, in processing and evaluating the essays. If you are interested in assisting, email or text the address or phone number listed above.

Shepherd's Corner announces fall schedule

The Shepherd's Corner Ecology Center, 987 N. Waggoner Road, Blacklick, an outreach of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, is sponsoring several events this fall. The sisters invite others to join them in experiencing the joys and responsibilities of caring for land, life and spirit, inspiring others to become shepherds of creation in their own corners of the world.

Registration is required for all programs. To register, call (614) 866-4302 or visit www.shepherds-corner.org/calendar.

Labyrinth walks are scheduled monthly through December. Dates and topics are: Thursday, Sept. 19, "For Everything There Is a Season"; Wednesday, Oct. 30, "End of Harvest, Triumph of Light"; Thursday, Nov. 21, "Embracing the Gratitude Within and Without"; Friday, Dec. 20, "Preparation and Celebration." Each program runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and has a suggested donation of \$5.

Learning and education programs for homeschooled children and their parents are scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon for middle-schoolers and 1 to 3 p.m. for elementary students. The cost is \$5.

Workshops on "Foraging for Jams and Jellies: Creating Jam With Invasives" will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20 and Friday, Nov. 15. Classes are \$10 each.

The sisters' annual Shepherds Fest will be from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23 and will give those in attendance a chance to walk the trails of one of eastern Franklin County's few farms in an area surrounded by suburban housing and to meet and feed the farm's sheep and other animals.

Adults and teens are invited to a twilight fall walk through the woods at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 23. The cost is \$5.

Donna Nesbitt will provide materials for an art workshop on "Psalms and the Creative Spirit" from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 29. The cost is \$10.

A program on turning plant fibers into felt using the wet felting technique is set for Saturday, Nov. 9 from 1 to 3 p.m. with Gail Maraman. The cost is \$20 and there is a maximum of 12 participants.

Joy Lawrence will lead a program on



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Golf event raises funds for Buckeye Catholic



Father Adam Streitenberger (above, center), executive director of Buckeye Catholic at the St. Thomas More Newman Center serving the Ohio State University campus, and assistant director Patrick McNulty (above, left) speak with participants in the inaugural Buckeye Catholic Open on Monday, Aug. 26 at the Ohio State University Scarlet Course in Columbus. The golf event, which included approximately 100 participants, raised funds for the continuing campus ministry outreach efforts of Buckeye Catholic, which earlier this year completed renovations at the Newman Center that included a coffee shop.

Photos courtesy Buckeye Catholic



LOCAL NEWS, continued from Page 17

“Tea Making and Yoga to Warm the Soul” at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 23. The cost is \$20. The site will be open from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 7 for a seasonal craft sale and walks along the trail and labyrinth.

Shepherd’s Corner is open to the public on most Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Exceptions are noted on the farm’s website, www.shepherds-corner.org. Rather than asking for a donation of \$2 per visitor on public days as they have in the past, the sisters request that visitors bring shelf-stable food that will be donated to the food pantries receiving produce from the farm. The site also is open on demand to small groups.

Franciscan University opens new building

Franciscan University opened its new Christ the Teacher Academic Hall and Pope St. Paul VI Conference Center on Wednesday, Aug. 21.

The 110,000-square-foot facility is the first academic hall to be built at the institution in more than 20 years and is the largest building on campus. It was built in response to consistent annual enrollment increases, the recent addition of academic programs and the necessity for a dedicated conference space. It includes two wings: one for engineering, business, and nursing students and the other for spiritual and educational conferences.

The building is the centerpiece of Fran-

ciscan’s Rebuild My Church Capital Campaign, which has surpassed its \$110 million goal. The university is still inviting campaign gifts through Tuesday, Dec. 10 to close out its financial needs for Christ the Teacher Hall, Christ the King Chapel renovations and a Washington, D.C., initiative.

Program on digital technology in church music planned

A program on “Digital Technology for the Church Musician” will be presented at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 14 in Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, 9633 State Route 37 East, by parish music director Rich Krehnovi in conjunction with the Columbus chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Krehnovi will showcase the parish’s digital organ and demonstrate how to use electronic tablets for accompanying the Mass, highlighting streaming capabilities and the use of digital hymn boards. He also will demonstrate methods of loading PDFs, marking up scores, and hands-free page turns. Organists in attendance will have a chance to practice on the instrument.

Krehnovi is a student of Dr. Jason Keefe, director and professor of sacred music at the Pontifical College Josephinum and founder and director of the Sacred Music Institute of America. There is no charge for the program and non-musicians are welcome to attend.

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A Renaissance Christmas



Sunday, December 15, 2024 | 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

A Renaissance Christmas presented by **The Magpie Consort**. Ticket price **\$25** a person. Reception will follow featuring festive Christmas fare, and an opportunity to meet the artists.

Guitar Foundation of America Victory Tour

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