

Hispanic Resource Coordinator for CCCNMO

Ilsi Palacios has a gift for listening to people, recognizing Christ present in them, praying for them and helping them get what they need.

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

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Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Celebrating Catholic schools in a year like no other



Students at Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville work on their assignments in the school library.

See related article on Pages 6 and 15

By Jay Nies

It has been a year for meeting challenges, adapting to changes, seizing opportunities and vastly exceeding expectations.

Now, in the midst of hardships offset by blessings too numerous to count, it's time to celebrate Catholic schools.

"At no time in recent memory has the impact of Catholic education been more evident," Bishop W. Shawn McKnight stated in anticipation of the national Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 31-Feb. 7).

"All of our Catholic schools have continued to pursue excellence through the hardships of the pandemic," he said. "We thank God and we celebrate all the people who make it possible."

This year's Catholic Schools Week theme is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service."

The 37 Catholic grade schools and three Catholic high schools in the Jefferson City diocese will make creative observance of the week, mixing old and new traditions with necessary health and safety protocols.

Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville will still have its perennial favorite "Pajama Day," as well as treats and daily "Stop, Drop and Pray" calls throughout the week.

Students will try to identify photos of Mary Immaculate School graduates — including teachers and parents.

"A lot of these things have to happen in the individual classrooms this year because we're social distancing," said Principal Ann Gray. "The staff is really stepping up to make each room special."

See CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, page 14

Bishop McKnight welcomes new Church law recognizing women's roles as lectors, acolytes

By Jay Nies

Women have been proclaiming Sacred Scripture and assisting at the altar at Mass for many years, but only in a "temporary" way, as defined by the Church.

That will change under a revision to Canon Law made by Pope Francis on Jan. 11, allowing lay women to be instituted by their bishop as lectors and as acolytes.

The offices of lector and acolyte were previously reserved to adult lay men.

"This update ensures that all laity — women and men — are able to use the gifts God has given to them for the good of the Church, exercising appropriate co-responsibility in building up the Body of Christ," said Bishop W. Shawn McKnight. "We will be able to provide catechesis, training and formation for lay women and men who are called to

these ministries, so they can be good stewards of these gifts from God."

The change reflects the Church's recognition of a particular grace bestowed on each person at baptism.

"It's a natural development stemming from the Second Vatican Council and its recognition of the Universal Call to Holiness, through which everyone is summoned to full, conscious and active participation in the life of the Church," said Bishop McKnight.

Pope Francis made clear that the change is not a move toward ordaining women as deacons or priests. Rather, it is an affirmation of a calling received both by men and women within their vocation as laypeople.

See LAYPEOPLE, page 17

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Prayer for a Communion of Desire

My Jesus, I believe You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I de-sire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, renew my heart now with the power of Your Spirit. I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You. Unite me more closely to Your Body, the Church. And never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Pray for deceased priests

Jan. 27 — **Fr. Charles A. Pfeiffer**, St. Stephen, Indian Creek (1999)
Jan. 29 — **Fr. William J. Berkel**, Holy Spirit, Centralia (1959); **Msgr. Joseph J. Morrell**, St. Patrick, Rolla (1989)
Jan. 31 — **Fr. James M. Denner**, St. Boniface, Koeltztown (1962)
Feb. 2 — **Fr. Francis J. Stangl**, St. Jude Thaddeus, Mokane (2008)

Position Openings - Chancery Office



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City has several positions open in the Jefferson City office at 2207 West Main Street:

Administrative Assistants — Two opportunities for experienced, take-charge, confidential administrative assistants supporting multiple Directors within the Chancery office. This is a great fit for someone who enjoys variety in their work day, setting priorities, composing correspondence and scheduling. The ideal candidate will have at least 5 years' experience supporting an executive level leader. Candidates are encouraged to apply through [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) and complete Word and Excel assessments.

Director of Religious Education and Youth/Young Adult Ministry — Administer the curriculum approval process for parish-based religious education. Provide direct support for, and development of, parish-based young adult leaders and youth ministers in the outreach, evangelization, faith formation and pastoral care of their youth; serve as liaison between Newman Center campus ministers and the Chancery; oversee the coordination of diocesan-supported youth ministry events at the diocesan, regional and national levels; and exercise diligence and oversight for assigned budget. Bilingual candidate (English/Spanish) with the capability of ministering across cultures preferred, with well-developed social media skills. Master's degree in catechetics, religious education, theology or youth ministry required. Qualified candidates should email resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Payroll Specialist — Responsible for all payroll processes including management of employee data, confirming accuracy of timekeeping records, computing wages, ensuring employees are paid correctly and on time, and serving as back-up to the Benefits Coordinator. Experience in processing payroll for a large employer with multiple divisions. Apply online at [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com).

Respect Life Week virtual observance

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight invites people throughout the diocese to join him on a digital pilgrimage for Respect Life Week in lieu of this year's March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Information and video reflections for each day's theme can be found online at diojeffcity.org/respect-life-week-2021.

Bishop McKnight gives an introduction,

calling the pilgrims to respect the lives of the unborn and all people who are vulnerable and marginalized.

"In all these situations and many others, we have a wonderful opportunity to be witnesses of God's tender mercy and compassion to others, no matter what their circumstances are," the bishop states.

Heavy security, ongoing pandemic mean D.C. March for Life will be virtual

Catholic News Service
Washington, D.C.

For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home.

Like the satellite events connected to the annual National Mall rally and march to the Supreme Court, including the Rose Dinner, a youth conference and the Mass for Life, the rest of it will be online only Jan. 29.

March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and to enforce mask wearing and social distancing. But the plan was still to have as large a live rally as could be

arranged.

Many of the bus caravans from the Midwest, long a staple of the event, were canceled last fall as a result of the pandemic, and the assault on the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 and threats of subsequent violence by domestic terrorist groups, as reported by the FBI, made security impossible.

"The protection of all of those who participate in the

annual March, as well as the many law enforcement personnel and others who work tirelessly each year to ensure a safe and peaceful event, is a top priority of the March for Life," Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund, said in a statement issued late Jan. 15.

marchforlife.org/statement-on-2021-march-for-life/

The Gospel of Mark in nine Zoom sessions

You are invited to a nine-session Bible adventure with Mark, the earliest of the four gospels and some would argue the most important book in early Christianity.

Participants will meet online via Zoom due to the pandemic.

Sessions will be held from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m. on alternating Mondays: Jan. 25, Feb. 8 and 22, Mar. 8 and 22, Apr. 5 and 19 and May 3 and 17.

Mark's gospel is stark and powerful. It expresses that something extraordinary is happening in human history. It is the stunning Good News

of God stepping into the world in the person of Jesus.

But it is Good News steeped in mystery, misunderstanding, rejection, betrayal and tragedy.

"Mark's picture of Jesus is complex and paradoxical," stated Carolyn Saucier, who will lead the study. "He is both suffering servant and miracle healer Whose identity is hidden and only gradually revealed as we learn to see and receive the gift of God beyond our wildest imaginings."

Contact Mrs. Saucier at casaucier@juno.com or call 573-644-4270 for information or to sign up.

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— Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight
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WINTER CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

Monday, January 25
Resurrection & St. Peter Cemeteries
Jefferson City

All floral arrangements and decorations must be removed before this date, and should be done by a person designated by the family. Unauthorized persons found removing flowers and decorations from graves will be prosecuted.

NOTE: Items in permanent vases that are part of the monument will not be removed. Cemetery reserves the right to remove any damaged items or faded flower arrangements.

info@rccjc.org — www.rccjc.org

Bishop McKnight calls for all to build a “more perfect union” in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, bishop of the Diocese of Jefferson City, issued the following statement for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which was observed this year on Jan. 18:

“Today we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Christian who sacrificed his life in enabling our country to come to a ‘more perfect union.’ His words are perhaps more urgent today, as we struggle with what we can do to heal the terrible divisions and to cease the violence happening in our country.

“A strong advocate of peace-making and nonvio-

lence, he said in 1958, ‘Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love.’

“Later in his ministry, he said, ‘Love is creative and redemptive. Love builds up and unites; hate tears down and destroys. The aftermath of the ‘fight with fire’ method...is bitterness and chaos, the aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of the beloved community...’

“Each one of us has a role in reconciliation, in redeeming our communities. Each one of us can use the

gifts God has given us — our creativity, our compassion, our charity — to build up our ‘beloved communities.’

“Today, may we also remember the words of the psalmist, words we as Catholics heard at our Sunday liturgy: ‘Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.’ Let each of us consider what we can do to love one another, regardless of the other’s skin color, political ideology, where they live or who they ‘follow’ on social media. Let us not tear apart, but build up our communities, for we are Better Together.”

Pope says he was ‘astonished’ by violence at U.S. Capitol

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of the United States “shaken by the recent siege on Congress” and prayed for the five people who lost

their lives “in those dramatic moments” when protesters stormed the Capitol Jan. 6.

Remarking on the events after reciting the Angelus prayer Jan. 10, the pope insisted that “violence is always self-destructive. Nothing is gained by vio-

lence and so much is lost.”

The pope urged government leaders “and the entire population to maintain a high sense of responsibility in order to soothe tempers, promote national reconciliation and protect the democratic values rooted in American society.”

And he prayed that “Mary Immaculate, patroness of the United States of America,” would “help keep alive the culture of encounter, the culture of caring, as the way to build together the common good; and may she do so with all who live in that land.”

Pope Francis’ remarks came one day after the release of clips of an interview in which he said he was “astonished” by the violent breach of the U.S. Capitol, especially because the people of the United States are “so disciplined in democracy.”

The interview with Italy’s Canale 5 was scheduled for broadcast Jan. 10, but some clips were aired Jan. 9.

Violence, he told the interviewer, must always be condemned, but it also is true that in even the most “mature” societies, there are violent minorities, “people taking a path against the community, against democracy, against the common good.”

“But thank God this erupt-

ed and people could see it well. That way it can be remedied,” he said.

“No nation can brag about never having a case of violence — it happens,” he said. “We must understand it, so it is not repeated — learn from history, right?”

In the interview, Pope Francis also spoke about the COVID-19 vaccine.

From an ethical point of view, he said, “I think everyone must take the vaccine; it’s the ethical option because you are playing with your health, life, but you also are playing with the lives of others.”

Sometime in the week beginning Jan. 11 the Vatican expects to begin vaccinating resi-

dents and employees who have asked to be vaccinated, “and I signed up; it must be done.”

Pope Francis recalled that when he was a child, polio was a real threat, “and many children were left paralyzed and people were desperate for a vaccine. When the vaccine came out, they gave it to you with a bit of sugar.”

“I don’t know why some people say, ‘No, the vaccine is dangerous,’ but if physicians present it to you as something that will do good, that doesn’t carry particular dangers, why not take it?” he said.

Pope Francis said he could not explain “suicidal denialism,” but “people must take the vaccine.”

Bishop McKnight’s January prayer intention for our Local Church

For those seeking employment; that through the intercession of St. Joseph the Worker, they may find dignified work in supporting themselves and their family.



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

Para quienes buscan empleo; que por intercesión de San José Obrero, puedan encontrar un trabajo digno para mantenerse a sí mismos y a su familia.

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



Bishop McKnight’s Calendar

The following appointments are tentative, depending on the pandemic.

JANUARY

Jan. 28 Diocesan Finance Council meeting, 11 am, Catholic Center

Jan. 30 Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, Virtual, 10 am

FEBRUARY

Feb. 3 Confirmation ceremony, St. Anthony Parish, 6:30 pm, Camdenton

Feb. 4 Priests Mutual Benefit Society Board meeting, 1 pm, Catholic Center

Feb. 9 Very Reverend Deans meeting, 11 am; Presbyteral Council meeting, 1 pm, Catholic Center

Feb. 10 Confirmation ceremony, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Folk, 6:30 pm, St. Joseph Church, Westphalia



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Catholic Charities' Hispanic resource coordinator helps break down barriers to help throughout the diocese

By Jay Nies

"Estoy aquí para ti."
"I am here for you."

Ilsi Palacios embodies those words of assurance to Spanish-speaking people in need throughout the Jefferson City diocese.

She is the Hispanic Resource Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO).

Headquartered at the agency's Hispanic Resource Office in Sedalia, she serves as a point of contact, a purveyor of assistance and an ambassador for Christ and His Church.

"With any need people of the Hispanic community are facing, I am here to help," she said.

Hispanics are among the people who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, chronic poverty and other issues.

They also often face linguistic and eligibility barriers to accessing services.

The coronavirus pandemic highlighted for Catholic Charities the need to eliminate barriers to serving the Hispanic community.

"That's the main reason they decided to hire me," said Mrs. Palacios, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish of Pettis County. "They recognized a lot of need in the various Hispanic communities, but there wasn't anyone available at Catholic Charities who speaks Spanish and understands the Hispanic communities' needs."

Made for this

Mrs. Palacios was born in El Salvador and moved to Marshall with her parents when she was in high school.

She holds degrees in psychology and education with an emphasis in teaching Spanish.

She moved to Sedalia in 2010, when Dr. Mark Register encouraged her to join the Sacred Heart School faculty.

She taught Spanish there for 10 years, all the while taking care of her four children and serving as Hispanic coordinator of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the diocese.

Through moments of prayer, she began to realize that God was calling her to do more for the community and for His Church.

"After school, I would receive calls from people in the Hispanic community, even people who didn't know me, but they were looking for guidance," she said. "They wanted to talk to someone about what they were going through."

One day, she was listening to a woman who was in shock over a traumatic experience.

"I prayed with her," said Mrs. Palacios. "We started praying, praying, praying."

In a moment of silence and peace, a clear message came to her mind.

"I truly believe it was God talking to me," she recalled. "The phrase was, 'You were born to do this. I made you to do this!'"

Shortly thereafter, she found out about the new position at Catholic Charities and applied for it.

Abundance of need

Mrs. Palacios hears from people all over the diocese.

"With COVID-19, I receive many, many calls for assistance," she said. "They are looking for help on rent or utilities."

Others need help finding housing or advice on legal, immigration or medical concerns.

Sometimes, they just need



Ilsi Palacios stands outside the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Jefferson City shortly after becoming the Hispanic resource coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri.

to talk about what they're going through.

"There's a lot of listening from my side," she said.

What can be very difficult at times is trying to help people find housing while they're still working out their immigration status.

The shortage of rental housing in and around Jefferson City, exacerbated by the tornado, has made it all the more difficult.

"They need a good credit score, they need a Social Security number, they need a decent income," she said. "And some people don't have that."

She brings more than her credentials to the table.

"My roots are Salvadorian," she said. "El Salvador went through a disastrous, 12-year civil war."

She understands the stories of the many who have fled violence and poverty in search of opportunities for a better life for them and their families.

"My role is to help them and give the guidance they need to overcome obstacles and have a better quality of life," she said.

That often includes helping them connect with a faith community, "where they feel safe, where they feel welcome, where they can also serve the Church and help provide support to the whole community."

Great location

Catholic Charities worked with Fathers David Veit and Joseph Corel, pastors *in solidum* of St. Vincent de Paul Parish

of Pettis County, to establish Catholic Charities' Hispanic Resource Office in Sedalia.

"They've both been so great for us," said Mrs. Palacios. "We're very grateful for them."

Her office is in the Sacred Heart Parish Center, which is connected to the chapel and a short distance from Sacred Heart School.

It's also close to where many of her clients live.

"There is a great need within this area," she said. "The Hispanic population is large around here. And we are close to Marshall and to California, which have significant Hispanic populations, as well."

She's looking forward to visiting with clients face-to-face, but she now must work exclusively by phone due to the pandemic.

"I'm getting a lot of calls!" she said. "Every day at the end of the day, I have to charge the phone. It's busy!"

All who are burdened

Her duties include case management for Spanish-speaking clients of Catholic Charities' disaster assistance program.

"I'm currently working with two different families," she said. "One of them came to us when they found out that someone speaks Spanish in Catholic Charities."

They called in September 2020 — a year and four months after the tornado turned their lives upside-down.

"They tried to find assistance everywhere else but

couldn't, so we are assisting," said Mrs. Palacios.

Many are surprised to learn that they don't have to be Catholic to receive services from Catholic Charities.

She tells them, "This service is for you! The Catholic Church, our services are open to everyone, and you are welcome here."

The agency's goal for all of its services is to decrease barriers to access, increase self-sufficiency, and promote physical and emotional wellness.

This involves guiding victims of natural disasters through the labyrinthine process of securing a safe, secure, sanitary place to live.

Using resources from Catholic Charities and other agencies, she helps them through the process of getting their damaged homes rebuilt or finding a new place to live.

She'll also work with parishes that have Spanish-speaking populations to prepare for disasters before they happen — what to do ahead of time, during and after a cataclysmic event.

Counseling services

Mrs. Palacios is also working with Deacon Enrique Castro, diocesan director of intercultural and marriage ministries, on an online counseling service.

It is a partnership between parishes, the diocese, Catholic Charities and a group of licensed, culturally knowledgeable, Spanish-speaking counselors in the nation of Colombia who meet with clients over livestream.

Parishes provide a secure space and schedule the online appointments. Catholic Charities provides the equipment and administrative oversight.

"It's very exciting," said Mrs. Palacios. "I'm looking forward to combining my psychology degree with bringing people closer to God and seeing people healing from so many wounds that they are carrying."

Hope in God

She makes a point of helping her clients recognize God's



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Parishes to implement diocesan marriage preparation policy

Will involve extensive collaboration among clergy, laypeople

By Jay Nies

Clergy and laypeople will collaborate to help engaged couples throughout the Jefferson City diocese prepare for sacramental marriage, under a new diocesan policy.

The policy, which will become mandatory in all parishes July 1, is designed to bring uniformity to marriage preparation and lead couples toward happy, holy marriages and strong Catholic families.

"It's really the best of both worlds," said Father Francis Doyle, the diocesan moderator for marriage ministry.

Priests and/or deacons in each parish will collaborate with specially-trained Marriage Preparation Facilitators.

These typically will be couples in strong marriages who have what it takes to help engaged couples reach the same goal.

Through this collaboration, engaged couples will enter the Sacrament of Marriage with the best preparation possible.

Lay collaborators

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight has instructed pastors throughout the diocese to identify Marriage Preparation Facilitators for each parish.

They typically will be Catholic couples who are married in the Church, have healthy marriages and are practicing their faith.

Single or widowed Catholics who have experience working with couples or have special qualifications, such as counseling experience, may also serve with the pastor's consent.

All clergy of the diocese and the laypeople who will collaborate with them as Marriage Preparation Facilitators are required to participate in a diocesan training session this spring.

The training for laypeople will take about six hours and will be offered in English and Spanish.

It will be offered simultaneously in person and online over Zoom.

It will provide the information and resources needed to properly and effectively imple-

ment the formation for engaged couples, as described in the diocesan Marriage Preparation Policy.

Deacon Enrique Castro, diocesan director of marriage and intercultural ministries, and Deacon Burdett Wilson, the diocese's parish outreach coordinator for marriage preparation, are organizing the sessions.

The right questions

Fr. Doyle noted that until now, there has really not been a standardized protocol for marriage preparation for the diocese.

Bishop McKnight created a diocesan Office of Marriage Ministry two years ago to support the existing marriage preparation and marriage enrichment programs.

He appointed Father Anthony Viviano to serve as moderator, Deacon Castro to serve as director, and several other deacons and their wives to coordinate various aspects of marriage ministry.

Last summer, Fr. Doyle succeeded Fr. Viviano.

A survey was sent to priests, deacons, parish religious education directors, and representatives of Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter, people who help with marriage preparation, and several models of Natural Family Planning (NFP) in the diocese.

The goal was to find out what's already taking place for marriage preparation and what should be included in a diocesan policy on the subject.

The surveys revealed that parishes are having couples who are preparing for marriage take some sort of pre-marriage inventory, talking about their answers with a priest or deacon, attending an Engaged Encounter or Pre-Cana retreat, and learning about NFP.

"The issue was, some parishes were doing one or two of these things, but not all of them," said Fr. Doyle. "There really was no standard from parish to parish."

That's a problem, because the Church wants every couple who's seeking marriage to have the best, most complete preparation possible.

Several people who answered the survey noted that

people preparing for Priesthood, the diaconate or religious life, or even for some of the other sacraments, usually receive extensive preparation.

But some couples preparing for a life-long union in the Sacrament of Marriage were receiving little or none.

"The same page"

Bishop McKnight, Fr. Doyle, Deacon Castro and several other advisors set about formulating a standard policy for people seeking marriage in all parishes.

"That way, we know we're all on the same page and that we're supporting each other in this effort," Fr. Doyle stated.

Bishop McKnight was adamant that laypeople, especially married couples, should be involved in the process.

"Who knows more about marriage than married people?" Fr. Doyle stated.

Deacons and priests can help address the spiritual and theological aspects of marriage, which are very important, while married couples or single people with experience or special credentials such as a degree in counseling can help with the practical aspects of being married.

"It shouldn't be either/or," Fr. Doyle stated. "You want the perspective of the Church's proper teaching on marriage and the history of marriage, but also people who experience marriage — married couples."

This fits very well into the philosophy of a parish being run as a community.

"It makes sense for the priest to want help and cooperation with sacramental preparation," he said. "Because there are people who can bring things to the preparation that we cannot, such as the experience of being married."

"Worth the effort"

Fr. Doyle is convinced that the diocesan policy calls for reasonable, constructive preparation that doesn't put an undue burden on couples.

He pointed out that these are more than rules or "hoops for people to jump through."

"This is really about helping

people lay the groundwork for happy, holy marriage," he said. "It has a real benefit. It's worth the effort."

"It should...be viewed...as a joy to want to work on and preserve something as beautiful as a marriage."

— Fr. Francis Doyle

He said the very act of making time to prepare for marriage shows the future husband and wife that they are committed to building and maintaining a strong marriage.

"It should not be viewed as burdensome, but as a joy to want to work on and preserve something as beautiful as a marriage," he said.

He said the main goal is to strengthen families and family life throughout the diocese.

"A family is the domestic Church," he noted. "What's more, it's also a domestic society, because we're not just trying to raise and form good Catholics, we're trying to raise good members of society."

Parents with solid marriages and a clear understanding of their roles as spouses and parents will help create a stronger Church and society, he said.

Ideal candidates

Marriage Preparation Facilitators will lead engaged couples through the standardized online portions of the program.

This will include a new, interactive online inventory couples take together, leading to discussions about their beliefs and expectations about various aspects of marriage.

Facilitators will also share insights from their own experiences living out their married vocation.

Therefore, it is highly recommended for couples chosen to serve as Marriage Prepara-

tion Facilitators to have been married for at least five years.

They should also:

- be active Catholics and faithful to Catholic doctrine;

- have good communication skills with their spouse (if married) and be open to sharing their marital experi-

ences;

- have effective interpersonal and social skills;

- be able to inspire trust and maintain confidentiality;

- have knowledge, experience and/or gifts that will empower, help or inspire engaged couples;

- be open to work with and collaborate with the priest and/or deacon of their parish;

- be open to the necessary time commitment of training and working with couples; and

- feel called to serve through this ministry.

Giving and receiving

The number of Marriage Preparation Facilitators needed for each parish will depend on the need of the parish, considering the number of sacramental marriages that take place there each year.

Fr. Doyle also believes these facilitators will find their own marriages and their own relationship with God being strengthened in helping others.

"It's really about drawing all the talents and gifts of everyone in the parish and everyone in the Church," he said.

"That's how God made us," the priest stated. "He gave us different gifts, and we have the opportunity to draw on all those gifts from one another."

The new policy and related information can be found online at:

diojeffcity.org/marriage-preparation/

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Diocesan superintendent: Catholics schools are truly a love story

The following reflection for Catholic Schools Week is by the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Jefferson City diocese:

By Dr. Erin Vader



I would like to tell you a love story — not a romance, or an ode — but a story about real, messy, boots-on-the-ground, walking-through-fire love.

I have been blessed to be here in the Diocese of Jefferson City for nine months now, and there are many things I am enjoying. A few I am getting used to; but there is one I love: our Catholic schools.

In this time, in this place, God has put competent, faithful, generous and loving people in our diocesan schools, who are leading our students and one another to Christ.

Imagine, if you will, being a teacher this past year. Normally, you are responsible for the physical safety, the academic growth and the spiritual formation of your students, while supporting their parents as their first teachers.

It's a big job.

Now, add physical safety in the time of a pandemic, mental and spiritual health during social unrest, support of families

who are facing all sorts of COVID related issues — that is a tremendous responsibility.

Now do it with a smile and an open heart, knowing you are called to be an example of Christ's love for all you encounter.

Our teachers and school staff do all of this. They have taken on this challenge of keeping our schools open and in-person and done it all with grace and love.

Imagine having all the responsibilities above, in addition to the financial wellbeing of the school, working with local health department officials, filling out paperwork, calming worried parents, dealing with discipline issues, handling facility issues, keeping the pastor and the community informed and making sure nothing falls through the cracks.

That is what our Catholic school administrators have been doing, and doing exceptionally well.

They came into the school year with an open heart and a flexible attitude, understanding that the best place for our students is in school, where they can continue their education based in Gospel values.

They are examples of love in action every day.

And our students and their families? Our students come

to school joyful and ready to learn. And although there are always bound to be some challenges, they are truly grateful to be there.

It has been a year of changes on top of changes, and our students, with that remarkable

vital necessity of Catholic education and its place among all the amazing outreach opportunities provided through the diocese, is a gift.

Bishop McKnight provides all the support and guidance we could possibly need,

parishioners and supporters.

Because of you, our schools are able to stay open, but more than that: our students are gifted the best possible technology, our faculty and staff are able to be compensated more fairly for their work, our teachers are able to learn and grow through professional development, and so much more.

It is not an understatement to say our existence as schools depends on you all. Bless you all for your kindness, your generosity and your love!

With all the sad and scary stories in the world today, the story of the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Jefferson City is one of hope.

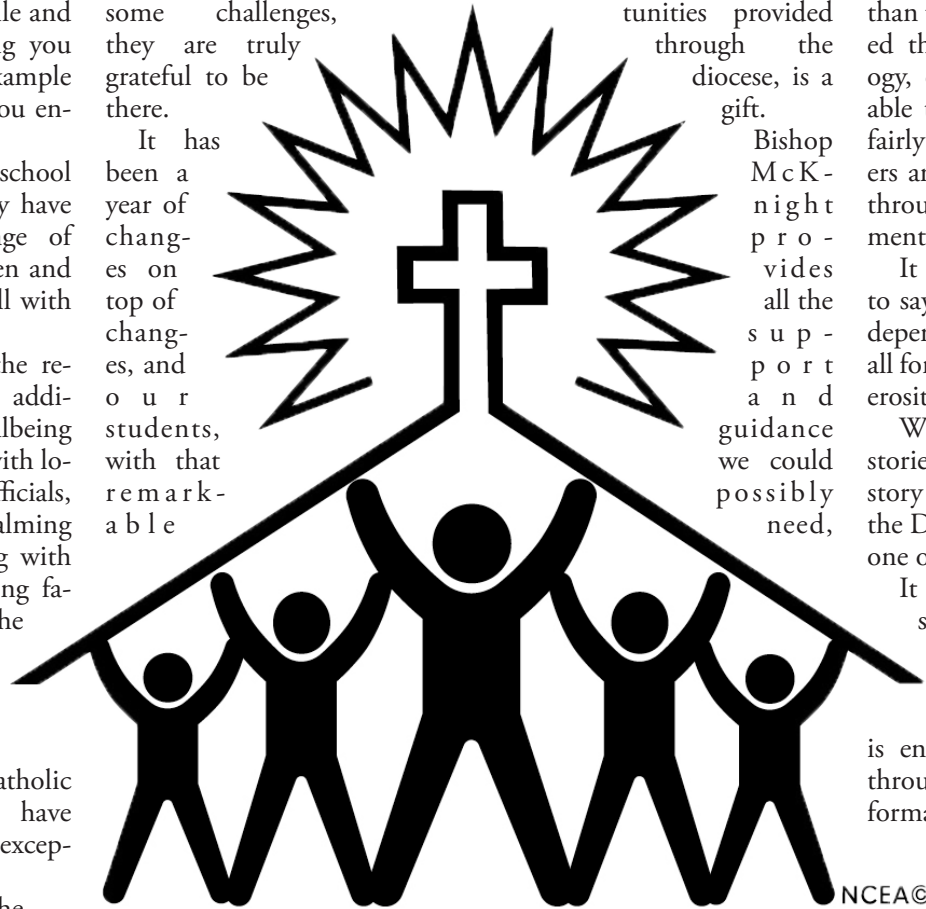
It makes sense that our story is different; Catholic schools are meant to be different. Our schools are places where Christ is encountered every day — through prayer, through joyful formation, through the people.

Our schools are where students are empowered, supported, challenged, engaged and inspired by their teachers, their studies and by Jesus.

Our schools are where we serve students, serve families, serve our faith and serve God.

Our schools are where we are able to show our love of God and our love for one another.

Our story — the story of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Jefferson City — is a love story. I am grateful to be a part of it.



Catholic Schools Faith. Excellence. Service.

resiliency of youth, have taken each change on and thrived.

The support our parents (and grandparents) show our schools is beyond what any of us could hope for, especially in times where challenges seem to come from all sides.

To all our parents who do so much, and give us your support: thank you! You understand that a Catholic school is much more than a school; it is where the youngest disciples of Jesus are formed into tomorrow's servant leaders. We are proud to be a part of your child's journey.

I am so grateful to the shepherds of our journey: our pastors and our bishop.

Our pastors have so much on their plate, and yet they encourage our administrators and teachers while selflessly serving all of us.

The time and love they give our schools is so very important to the life and future of our Church. And to have a bishop who understands the

and more. We are blessed to be led by a shepherd who understands that Catholic schools must be affordable and accessible to all families who desire a Catholic education, and who is going the extra mile to make sure that happens.

Finally, there is not enough love and gratitude to give to our

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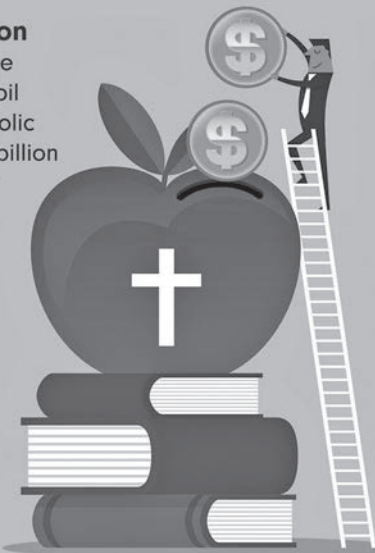
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Source: U.S. Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2019-2020: The Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing (NCEA).

Bp. McKnight gives blessing at Missouri inauguration, opening of state's bicentennial celebration

By Jay Nies

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight summoned the Supreme Ruler of the Universe to bless and guide the newly sworn officials of Missouri's executive branch.

"In profound humility, O God, we pray that Your blessing may rest upon our governor and all associated with him in our government, which we the people have set in authority," the bishop prayed at the end of the Jan. 11 inauguration ceremony outside the State Capitol for Gov. Michael L. Parson and other members of Missouri's executive branch.

It was also the beginning of the state's 200th anniversary celebration.

Church bells and train whistles punctuated the bishop's words, which echoed off historical St. Peter Church, surrounding state government buildings and the century-old, Corinthian-column-clad Capitol.

"You to Whom alone belong the dominion and the power, be their support in the fulfillment of this awesome trust of the people," the bishop prayed.

He entreated the Lord to give the state's officers strength and enlightenment, "so that they may lead us, not merely with the power of their office, but with the moral authority founded on personal integrity and character."

He asked God to keep them filled with awareness of His presence, especially when they are making difficult decisions that affect many people.

Using the words God instructed Aaron and his sons of the priestly order to use in blessing the Israelites in the time of Moses (Numbers 6:24-26), the bishop prayed:

"The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"

"With all perseverance"

Joining Gov. Parson in being sworn into office were Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe, a member

of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City; Secretary of State John R. "Jay" Ashcroft; State Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick; and Attorney General Eric Schmitt.

Dr. Ray Linneger, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church in Bolivar, led the invocation. He asked God to bestow His richest blessings on the day's proceedings, and for "the solemnity of the occasion (to) leak over into the days ahead, where matters of state are taken care of."

"And bless us each," he prayed, "to be honorable citizens, to be citizens that appreciate and express gratitude for the freedom that is ours under God, here in the State of Missouri."

Rabbi Yosef David, executive director of Aish HaTorah of Greater St. Louis, called to mind a passage from Exodus

More photos from this event will be posted in *The Catholic Missourian's* online edition, www.cathmo.com. Select "Photo Galleries" from the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar.

(2:11), in which Moses "went out to his brethren and saw their burdens."

"Moses personally felt their emotions and pain," Rabbi David noted. "Only then was Moses capable of leading and making a difference in the lives of others."

"We must lead by putting effort into seeing and feeling," the rabbi stated, "and then God will help us to find the solutions to the challenges within our great state."

Pastor John Modest Miles of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Kansas City, proclaimed a passage from the Letter to the Ephesians (6:11-18), calling upon the faithful



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, gives the Benediction at the end of the inauguration ceremony for members of Missouri's executive branch outside the State Capitol in Jefferson City on Jan. 11. With him is newly sworn Gov. Michael Parson.

— Photo by Dan Bernskoetter of Bernskoetter Photography

to "put on the whole armor of God," including truth, righteousness, faith and peace, in order to stand against the snares of the devil.

"And take the helmet of salvation," he read, "and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

"Show the world"

Dr. Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri, spoke of the significance of Missouri's 200th anniversary of statehood.

"For 200 years, Missouri has been the heart of the heart of the nation!" said Dr. Kramer, a member of St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City and a fifth-generation native of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Frankenstein.

He mentioned a handful of the great and influential figures of history who were born in Missouri.

"They drew upon their Missouri roots and Missouri values to rise in prominence in their respective fields and to influence the nation and the world," he said.

He challenged the people to embrace and celebrate the

state's diversity of "geography and topography, religion and race, customs and culture, ethnicity and origins."

"As we enter this bicentennial year, we have great opportunity as the Show-Me State to show the rest of the country and the world how diversity can be a source of strength," said Dr. Kramer.

"Perhaps that is our destiny, one for which both time and history have prepared us," he said.

In ages past

Outdoor inauguration ceremonies, depending on the weather, have been a Missouri tradition since the current Capitol was under construction over a century ago.

Another time-honored custom involves waiting until the Angelus bell in nearby St. Peter Church strikes at noon for the governor to take his oath of office.

That and a swift advance through the program resulted in about a 10-minute pause in the festivities this year.

Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicky, vicar general of the Jefferson City diocese and chaplain of the Missouri House of Representatives, observed the proceedings from among the House delegation.

"It was impressive in many ways, most notably the empha-

sis on history and the state's bicentennial, and the emphasis on family," he stated.

He noted that all the officials taking oaths of office did so in the presence of their families — "including their children, which is something you don't always see."

Father Jeremy Secrist, pastor of St. Peter Parish, watched the ceremonies from the top perch of the 150-foot-tall construction scaffold encasing the bell tower and steeple.

"Considering that this was the first and probably the last

chance to witness an inauguration in-person from this perspective, I thought, 'Carpe diem!'" he stated.

The view from above got him thinking about how much history is shared between the city's oldest parish, which will celebrate its 175th anniversary this year, and the seat of the state's government.

"Another thing that went through my mind was how much I love this state and how grateful I am to be from Central Missouri," he said.

Deacon Tyler McClay, executive director of the Missouri Catholic Conference, said he was happy to witness the smooth beginning to the state officials' new term of office.

"I was pleased to see how calm it was, how respectful it was and how smoothly everything went," Deacon McClay said.

Two previous governors — one from both parties — and State Auditor Nicole Galloway, who ran against Gov. Parson in last year's election, attended.

"It bodes well for the republic when people can move forward after a hard-fought election," Deacon McClay stated. "That united sense of purpose will hopefully be a hallmark as our lawmakers and state officials go about their work this year."

QUESTION CORNER

Who raised Jesus? / Consequences of remarriage

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service



Q. Something I heard recently at Mass bothered me. The priest, reading from the Scriptures, said: "God raised Jesus from the dead." While this statement doesn't exactly dispute Jesus' divinity, it certainly doesn't affirm it — and it could easily be construed as a denial of Christ's divine nature. Could you comment? (Marietta, Georgia)

A. You heard the priest correctly. He may have been quoting from Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (2:23-24): "This Man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify Him. But God raised Him up, releasing Him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held by it."

Neither this quote — nor any scriptural passage — negates the divinity of Jesus. The belief of the Church is that the resurrection of Jesus involved all three persons of the Trinity.

Galatians 1:1 speaks of "God the Father Who raised Him (Jesus) from the dead"; Romans 8:11 attributes the resurrection to the Holy Spirit; and in the Gospel of John (2:19), Jesus — speaking of His body — says: "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up." So the act of raising Jesus from the dead was not accomplished by only one person of the Trinity but was the work of all three.

Q. I recently learned that my ex-wife is going to remarry in a ceremony to be officiated by her sister, who is a minister of the Universal Life Church. My children have many questions as to how this affects them and their souls regarding heaven, and I have some questions as well.

If we became one during our Catholic marriage ceremony, were later divorced and the marriage was never annulled by the Church, how will this affect our chances for paradise, and what scandal is brought about by this type of behavior?

Also, will my wife be considered in good standing by the Catholic Church, and can she receive Holy Communion? (I certainly understand the legal and civil consequences of all this, but it is the sacramental effects that concern me and my children.) (Baltimore)

A. I appreciate your question and your concern, but please put your mind (and especially your children's minds) at ease. Your wife's decision to remarry will have no effect on your children's chances for heaven — or on yours. We are morally responsible only for our own behavior, and neither you nor your children will have prompted your ex-wife's decision to remarry.

As you correctly understand, the Catholic Church's view is that marriage is a lifelong commitment and covenant. Since your marriage was never annulled by the Church, your former spouse is not eligible in the Church's eyes to remarry.

If she does so, her new marriage will not be recognized by the Catholic Church; therefore, she will not be in good standing in the Church and will no longer be eligible to receive Holy Communion at a Catholic Mass.

Finally, I should point out that you and your children do have a continuing obligation to your former wife and your children's mother — and that is to continue to pray for her, that God will bless her with His grace and draw her more closely to Himself.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.

Papal Audience January 20, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

From 18 to 25 January each year, we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In these days, all Christ's followers are asked to pray in a particular way to the Father for the gift of unity, in order to proclaim the Gospel to a world torn by conflict and division. Our response to discord and division must first and foremost be to pray for the healing and reconciliation that Christ won for us by His saving Passion. We are called to share in Jesus' own prayer at the Last Supper "that all may be one... so that the world may believe" (John 17:21) and find salvation. In these troubled times, Christians are called to bear witness to the Lord's reconciling love and persevere along the path to full and visible unity. The theme for this year's Week of Prayer, "Abide in My love and you shall bear much fruit" (see John 15:5-9), reminds us that the love of Christ is the basis of all communion between Christians and the inspiration for our efforts to recognize our rich diversity in the Holy Spirit, to overcome our divisions, and to work together in the service of God's Kingdom of concord, justice and peace.

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful. In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, let us ask the Father for the gift of full unity between all Christ's disciples, for the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of the world. Upon you and your families I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!



2021 Legislative Session Opening Prayer for the Missouri House of Representatives

Monsignor Robert A. Kurwiczki, chaplain of the Missouri House of Representatives, led the members in prayer at the opening of their 2021 Legislative Session on Jan. 6:

"My presence shall go with thee."

— Exodus 33:14

Almighty God, our Heavenly Protector, Who are from everlasting to everlasting, Whose truth endures forever and Whose love never fails, we pause before You this moment as we turn another page in the history of our beloved People's House and in the story of our lives together as the representatives of this great state.

Awaken within us the realization that You have a purpose for each one of us, that You are not only the sustainer of the rolling spheres but also the supporter of our own human spirits.

As we launch upon the new session, may Your presence strengthen us, Your spirit guide us and Your wisdom make us wise.

Bless our governor, our new speaker, and the newly elected

and veteran representatives of this House, plus their families. and for the well-being of Missourians.

Together may they strive for peace in the Show-Me State. And the House says, "Amen!"

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord



A new sign and gate adorn the entrance to St. Joseph Cemetery in Clifton City in December.

— Photo by Carolyn Twenter Aggeler

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Christian unity urgent for a suffering world

By Mary Marrocco

Catholic News Service

A spiritual director once surprised me by asking: “What does your little voice have to say?”

“Little voice?” I thought. “I don’t have a little voice.”

So I was astonished to find myself listening to my little voice. I did have one; how had I not noticed all these years? Suddenly I was invited to “walk in a larger place” (Ps. 31). The only way to find out the truth of it was to try it — led and supported by the community.

A century and more ago, Christians in various parts of the world began listening to their “little voice” telling them that divided Christian churches needed each other, and that being hostile to one another was hard on them and hard on

the world.

Many not only listened to that little voice, but also acted on it. They found ways for Christians not in communion with each other to talk and listen at high levels and grassroots levels. Together, instead of in isolated camps, they read Scripture, worked, studied church history and early Church theologians. Most important, they prayed for each other and even prayed together in ways they could.

As Cardinal Walter Kasper has written, the impetus of working toward reconciliation and full Christian unity is clearly a response to the one Holy Spirit, who roused many people in many different places to do things never done before.

Could various people listen to the

same “little voice”? In the case of the ecumenical movement, the Catholic Church has said “yes” — officially, since 1964. Catholics are urged not to fear other Christian churches and communities, but to be active agents of fostering unity with them.

Undoubtedly, mistakes have been made along the way. Much has been learned. Ecumenism, the quest for full Christian unity, looks and sounds different from its early days. Those early pioneers risked and accomplished much.

Imagine facing 2021 — this new year that breaks in on a shaken world — without the little voice of peace and reconciliation that fortunately haunts us all, and is stronger and richer because Christians have dared to sing it together, for decades now. Can a fractured world be healed by a fractured Christian witness? Complete Christian unity is urgent for the life of the suffering world.

Having dared to abide in Christ’s love, those pioneers have borne much

fruit (Jn. 15:5-7) — the text chosen for 2021’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan. 18-25) by a working group at Grandchamp, Switzerland, an ecumenical monastic community.

The annual Week of Prayer itself is an example of how different people responding to the one Spirit can bring about change they couldn’t have imagined alone.

It’s the child of two Pauls, dreamt up in 1908 as the Octave of Christian Unity by Father Paul Wattson with Sister Lurana White. Fr. Wattson founded the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, their charism the unity of all Christians. The octave was the fruit of Fr. Wattson’s certainty that Christian unity could not be simply a human creation, but must be a work of God, and therefore depended on prayer.

The second Paul, Abbé Paul Couturier, saw that ecumenism must be a spiri-

See MARROCCO, page 18

Stepping back from the brink

By Greg Eerlandson

Catholic News Service



Jan. 6, 2021, was an epiphany of sorts for Americans who watched in horror as a mob breached the U.S. Capitol, assaulted police and vandalized offices. It was both shockingly unexpected and

shockingly unsurprising given growing extremism, a polarized electorate and the relentless marketing of allegations that a huge, if unproven, conspiracy had stolen the election.

This has been an age of conspiracies, so the soil has been well prepared by such weirdly gnostic phenomena like “Q,” and outrageous allegations of perversion and murder on the part of political opponents. Was anyone surprised that almost as soon as the Capitol was cleared, voices on social media were asserting that antifa — the anti-fascist *bête noire* of various nationalist and white supremacist factions — had cleverly engineered the debacle?

Yet what unfolded before our eyes was obvious and terrible: Confederate flags waving from the halls of the Capitol. Signs reading “Jesus saves” being held above the rioting crowd. Attackers battling the police and committing acts of vandalism while lawmakers cowered. At times it had the eerie look of a zombie apocalypse movie.

Those cowering lawmakers and their parties, collectively, bear some of the blame for the state we find ourselves in. Many Catholic leaders and others have been warning of the perils of polarization. As each side demonizes the other — making dialogue, compromise or even mutual understanding impossible — the gulf between us has grown.

With it is added a toxic mix of self-righteousness and victimhood. Because we believe ourselves both in the right and unfairly treated, we confer on ourselves a special status that obviates any need to understand, much less compromise with, those we believe are to blame.

The attack on the Capitol was both the nadir of this polarized state that imprisons us and a foretaste of how bad it will become if we don’t commit to a different path.

Unfortunately, if we look to social media for this different path, we are unlikely to find much solace. Social media has become the psycho playground of the nation’s id. The level of discussion is not much loftier than two kids yelling at each other: “You started it!” “No, you did!”

If we continue to frame every issue in apocalyptic terms, we leave no room for anything other than an apocalypse. It is the antithesis of what a democracy should be, and it is the antithesis of Christian dialogue and charity.

Despite the hand-wringing, despite President-elect Joe Biden’s stated intention to unite not divide, the forces of greed and division seem stronger than the pull of unity.

There is money to be made in extremism, not moderation or dialogue. Feeding the sense of entitlement or grievance pays. Too many people across the ideological divide are too financially committed to division. In a universe of facts and alternative facts, too much money is being made reinforcing the prejudices and base instincts of their audiences.

The Church is being subjected to these same gravitational pulls. We have our own extremists on both sides, well-funded and willing to challenge anyone from pope to pastor with whom they do not agree.

See ERLANDSON, page 18

REFLECTION

In the form of a question

Mark Saucier

In the gospel of John, the very first words of Jesus pose an eternal question.

Andrew and another apostle-to-be were disciples of John the Baptist. One day, when their paths crossed, the Baptizer pointed to Jesus, saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

The two disciples went after Jesus. He turned and said to them, “What are you looking for?”

They didn’t respond, but two verses later, Andrew tells his brother, Simon Peter, “We have found the Messiah.” But, honestly, neither had the slightest idea of what that meant.

We should remember something about Andrew and his friend. If we believe the story of the temple tax in Matthew, only Jesus and Peter had to pay the fee required of males age 20 and older. The others were just teenagers.

Ask a teenager today, “What are you looking for?” If you are lucky enough to get a response, you’ll probably find that, like Andrew and the other, they are looking for meaning in life.

Many youth, as well as no small number of their elders, see meaning as a soul mate, the perfect job, the right thinking or the true creed.

Too often, we discover the elusive treasure we longed for is less than we intended it to be. We can’t burden another with our need for meaning, and as perfect, right, or true as something may be, it still comes up short.

Jesus answers the question He poses as He guides His disciples through the Palestinian countryside, ministering to the poor, the hungry, the desperate and the oppressed.

The life He modeled was care for the other.

Jesus didn’t find meaning, but created it by responding to the conditions of life with love and active concern.

Meaning ultimately depends on how we play the cards we’re dealt.

Sue Burns drew a hand of osteosclerosis, a bone disease that left her with movement in only her arms and feet. Imprisoned in a bed, she built a global support network for others whose lives had crashed against the rocks of fate.

In 1987, Bono sang, “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for,” but that changed when he applied his fame and fortune to the fight against poverty.

But no less is an elderly woman calling homebound neighbors to check on them. Or school children making Christmas cards for prisoners. Or a mother creatively using her meager pantry to make the best meal possible for her family.

So, what are you looking for?

Couple honored during Mexico parish's 25th Christmas dinner

By Jay Nies

Sister Angela made a suggestion, and Tom and Dr. Mary Ellen Mullen made haste to carry it out.

They prepared a Christmas feast to serve to people who were homebound, unemployed, alone, working the holiday shift or otherwise in need of a good meal on the most joyous day of the year.

It became an annual tradition for St. Brendan Parish in Mexico, with the Mullens and a hearty band of volunteers gathering donations, preparing the food and serving it to visitors on Christmas Day and delivering it to homes and workplaces.

Requests for deliveries come from local motels, gas stations, the Audrain Medical Center, the Sheriff's Department and many people at home.

"People who are working are especially amazed that we would bring them a Christmas dinner," said Mr. Mullen.

"This is an open dinner," he emphasized. "Whoever you are, you're welcome to come and get food."

Each year, a tight group of volunteers arrives at the kitchen of the parish hall at about 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve to begin preparing the meal.

"We cook all night," stated Mr. Mullen, a former restaurateur who moved to Mexico in 1975. "We just kind of visit and enjoy each other's company."

That includes 16 20-plus-

pound turkeys, seven or eight 20-plus-pound boned hams, 150 pounds of potatoes, and copious quantities of dressing and vegetables.

Then, after the 9 a.m. Mass on Christmas, volunteers crowd the gym to start serving and delivering the food.

"Some stay until we shut down. Others come in and spend an hour or two. We're grateful for all of them," said Mr. Mullen.

The menu includes turkey or ham "or both," mashed potatoes, candied sweet potatoes, corn and green beans.

"And dressing," said Mr. Mullen. "You can't forget the dressing!"

Each meal comes with a cross-shaped flyer containing a prayer and some basic information about the parish.

They served 150 meals the first year, 565 meals in 2019.

Donations from parishioners, local businesses and friends in the community cover the approximately \$1,200 cost of ingredients, bought at a substantial discount from the local Moser's grocery store.

Mr. Mullen said Christmas is a perfect day for a feast.



LEFT: Volunteers from St. Brendan Parish in Mexico prepare and pack up Christmas dinners for pick-up and delivery. RIGHT: Father Dylan Schrader, pastor of St. Brendan Parish, presents Tom Mullen a plaque in recognition of his years of service and devotion to the annual Christmas dinner.

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

"For one, it's a holy day," he stated. "Two, it's a time when families usually gather together. But there are a lot of elderly people who don't have families. And there are people who are at work that day and wouldn't normally get a meal, so we make sure they do."

Seeing the light

Mr. Mullen and Sister Angela Ashby, a Sister of the Living Word who was a pastoral minister and religious education director at the parish in the 1990s, began the St. Brendan Christmas Dinner in 1996.

Mr. Mullen remembers that something didn't seem right when he was driving around Mexico to look at decorations on Christmas Day of the previous year.

"I kept noticing people walking around like they were lost," he said. "I started to realize that there wasn't a single restaurant in Mexico open on Christmas Day. A lot of people simply had no place to go."

Other people were working at places such as the hospital, police department and ambulance district. Others were at home without the means to pay for dinner. Some didn't have transportation to go anywhere.

Mr. Mullen saw a need and convinced the parish that the need could be met.

He and Sr. Angela, who is now stationed in Marrero, Louisiana, started calling on their networks of numerous Catholic and non-Catholic



To help things go smoothly, Ron and Brad Diehl at Dagwood's made and donated the mashed potatoes, and Randy Barnes and Randy Macintosh at Moser's Grocery sliced all of the ham.

"It was all truly heartwarming," said Mrs. Fisher. "My heart was so incredibly full at the community support that was shown that day."

"Christian love"

Clean-up commenced a little after 3 in the afternoon. Volunteers got the hall back into ship shape and delivered the leftovers to local organizations.

contacts in and around the Mexico area.

Pressing ahead

Mr. Mullen is recovering from a stroke and could not be present for the 2020 dinner. He's been making a good recovery and is eager to be back in the thick of things by

More photos from this event will be posted in The Catholic Missourian's online edition, cathmo.com. Select "Photo Galleries" from the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar.

the time the 26th Christmas dinner rolls around.

In years past, volunteers have delivered meals as far as Martinsburg, Laddonia, Vandalia, Auxvasse, Centralia and Wellsville.

With 2020 came the 25th annual dinner, restricted to carry-out and delivery within the Mexico city limits, due to the pandemic.

Parishioner Amy Fisher, who coordinated all of the volunteer efforts this time around, was initially concerned about whether COVID would limit the number of people stepping forward.

"Quite the opposite happened!" she said. "Everyone wanted to help and spread the love during a year where so many seemed to be hurting."

Monetary donations poured in, and she wound up with more volunteers than she knew what to do with.

Father Dylan Schrader, pastor of St. Brendan Parish, presented the Mullens a plaque in recognition of their 25 years of service.

"I am so proud of our parish for this work of charity and mercy," said Fr. Schrader. "Thanks to Tom and Mary Mullen for starting this and leading us for 25 years! Thanks to all who donated and who helped deliver hot meals."

Parishioner Sara Jane Duffner commented that evening on a social media post touting the dinner's success.

"Our parish community really modeled Christian love and caring," she stated online. "Thanks for all you do!"

"I'm very proud of our parish and all the volunteers who made this happen," said parishioner Alice Leonatti. "We live in a special community."

Mr. Mullen said he finds himself repeatedly awestruck by the number and quality of the volunteers who make each St. Brendan Christmas Dinner a success.

"The people who volunteer and the people who donate — they're who make this work every year," he said. "They're the backbone of this, and they come from all over."

He believes they realize they're part of something important, even holy.

"The Lord took care of everybody," he said. "Shouldn't we try to be like Him?"

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Millie Aulbur receives Mo. Bar award for promoting civic virtue

By Jay Nies

Carrying on a civil debate doesn't come naturally to most people.

They need all the opportunities they can get to observe and practice, preferably at a young age.

Millie Aulbur spent nearly a quarter-century promoting civil discourse and showing teachers how to create those opportunities for the children in their care.

"That was a deliberate track I took, working with teachers to bring civility to the classroom," said Mrs. Aulbur, a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City and retired citizen education director for The Missouri Bar.

In December, she became the 2020 recipient of that organization's Dr. Warren H. Solomon Civic Virtue Award.

This award is given in recognition of people who exemplify and promote civic virtue among Missouri's teachers and students.

Mrs. Aulbur's successor at The Missouri Bar, Citizenship Education Director Dr. Tony Simones, said Mrs. Aulbur is a natural choice for this honor.

"Millie created a citizenship education program that impacted a generation of students and prompted many to pursue a career in the law," Dr. Simones stated.

"In addition, she empowered teachers to create educational opportunities that were learner-focused and challenged students to think analytically and critically about our constitutional system," he said.

The program she created has been nationally recognized for its excellence, and she has helped Missouri maintain a greater commitment to the principles enshrined by the founding fathers and those who created the Constitution.

Opportunity knocks

Mrs. Aulbur is passionate about providing teachers a clear method and framework for teaching and modeling proper civic discourse to their students.

"You can have the debate but you don't violate people's personal space," she insisted.

She said that when then-Executive Director Keith Birkes of The Missouri Bar hired her in 1994 as the new citizenship education director, she "had no idea what an opportunity had landed in my lap."

That work ended up putting her into contact with dedicated teachers who inspire students each day to become engaged citizens.

"These teachers' passion for civic education and lawyers' dedication to the law made for a perfect marriage," she stated. "Preparing materials and programs for these teachers was something I never tired of doing."

She would organize several workshops and in-services each year.

"And at every institute, every seminar, we had something we called 'civil conversations,'" she said. "We taught teachers how to do an exercise with their students about having a civil discussion about current events and respecting each other's opinions."

She grew to love the method so much that she started using it in her own everyday interactions.

"It's refreshing," she said. "There's so much ugliness. Access to 24/7 news with all of those vitriol voices can make people become really uncivil."

Source of civility

Mrs. Aulbur called to mind the repeated warning of 18th-century U.S. statesmen James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, authors of the Federalist Papers, that this nation's system of government will only work if civic virtues are accepted and widely practiced.

"That means subverting your own individual needs to the greater good," she said, "which happens to be what a good Christian does."

As a Deist, Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, believed in God but thought that an enlightened society could practice civic virtue apart from Him.

"But he ultimately realized that that would not work," said Mrs. Aulbur. "First of all, you have to have belief

in something greater than yourself."

She noted that people are often searching for a better way to distill their principles and put them into practice.

"They want to see goodness and civility in the world," she said. "And for me as a Catholic, I believe that means going through Jesus Christ."

Shown and grown

Mrs. Aulbur believes Judeo-Christian values can and must elevate public discourse in this country.

Through her Catholic upbringing and her involvement in Cursillo, she learned about the importance of inviting people into the Christian experience by first modeling her faith in everyday life.

"We talk about giving witness wherever you are," she said. "In the workplace, if you are a good, decent Christian person, people are going to connect the dots. They're going to notice what's good about you trying to be the best Catholic you can be."

God uses that kind of everyday witness to draw people



Millie Aulbur

to Himself.

Mrs. Aulbur believes civic virtues are "caught" in a similar fashion.

"John Locke spoke of life, liberty and pursuit of property," she said. "The caveat is that your pursuit cannot interfere with another person's. That's why we have to have government in the first place."

"But it has to be civil, civil, civil!"

She pointed to the decades-long friendship of the Su-

preme Court Justices Anton Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

"They could not have been more diametrically opposed on the bench," Mrs. Aulbur noted. "They were of different religious backgrounds and of two completely philosophical mindsets in interpreting the Constitution."

They disagreed vigorously, but then they put that aside and could enjoy playing bridge and having dinner together.

"It doesn't need to be, 'you're either with me or against me or you're a bad person,'" said Mrs. Aulbur. "We need to be setting a better example for each other and the future leaders of our nation."

She's proud of all the young people she got to see putting their knowledge and values into practice during The Missouri Bar's Center for Civic Education's programs.

"I firmly believe those of us who got caught up in the perfect storm of teachers and lawyers coming together have produced some incredible leaders for our country," she said. "And they know civics!"

Catholic Extension receives \$1.5 million grant for Puerto Rico recovery work

Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

A \$1.5 million grant awarded by the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions will support Catholic Extension's ongoing disaster recovery work in Puerto Rico three years after two devastating hurricanes.

The money will be used for startup expenses in the six dioceses of the island territory as Church officials seek funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to rebuild properties damaged during the 2017 storms that caused widespread damage.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) said Dec. 30 the initiative is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid for rebuilding schools and churches as parishes strive to continue pastoral ministry, especially in poor and vulnerable communities.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, subcommittee chairman, said in a statement that the USCCB "appreciates the innovative groundwork that Catholic Extension's

staff has undertaken in the rebuilding efforts."

"We are pleased to be able to support its work to seek additional funding through FEMA and to continue our shared efforts to rebuild the Church in Puerto Rico," he said.

The grant was funded by donations to special collections coordinated by the USCCB following widespread devastation in Puerto Rico caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria. The funds are in addition to \$3.3 million given directly to five dioceses that requested support from the USCCB collections.

Catholic Extension, since its founding in 1905, has financially supported the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico by rebuilding and repairing churches and supporting ministries in marginalized communities.

The subcommittee oversees the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal in parishes. It funds various pastoral services, including those that focus on evangelization, religious education, ministry training for priests, deacons, women religious, brothers and laypeople, as well as support of poor U.S. parishes.

World Day for Consecrated Life to be celebrated Feb. 6-7

In 1997, Pope St. John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life.


This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2.

This feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ Who is the Light of the World.

So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples.


The celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life is transferred to the following Sunday in order to highlight the gift of consecrated persons for the whole Church.

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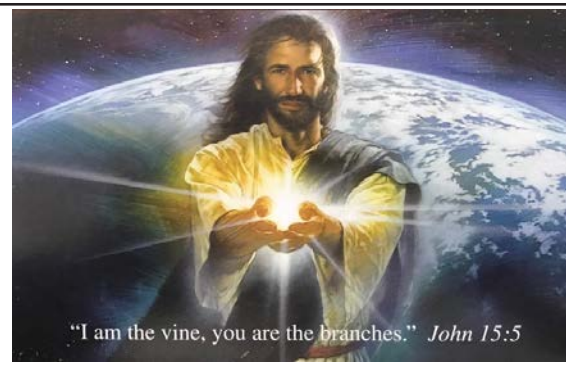
When you need to talk to someone who will listen? Try God

Mary's Call

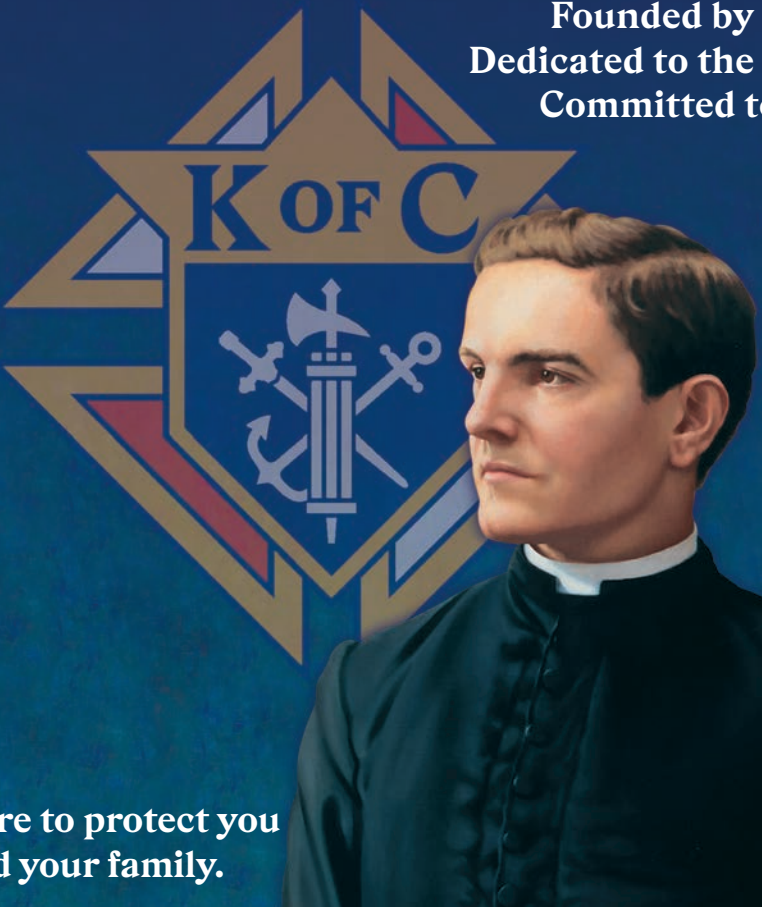
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R.I.P., Sr. Stephanie Mertens ASC, educator, social-justice advocate

By Jay Nies

“How does the Church stand as a sign for justice in a suffering world?”

That question stirred deeply in Sister Stephanie Mertens’s heart and was never far from her mind.

“She was truly committed to people on the margins, and she went about it in a very quiet and unassuming way,” stated Barbara Ross, a friend and colleague from the Jefferson City diocese.

Sr. Stephanie, 87, of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC), a former educator and director of social concerns for this diocese, died on Jan. 7 at the ASC Ruma Center in Ruma, Illinois.

A St. Louis native, she had been a vowed member of the ASC congregation for 69 years.

She served as a Catholic-school educator and parish catechist in several parishes in Missouri, Illinois and Iowa, including Visitation Inter-parish School in Vienna.

She served as Religious Education Coordinator for the St. Louis archdiocese before spending a decade as head of the Jefferson City diocese’s Social Concerns Office.

In that role, she advocated and demonstrated for farmers suffering in the national farm crisis and served as the convener of the Farm Alliance of Rural Missouri.

She held a bachelor’s degree in theology from Saint Louis University in St. Louis and a master’s degree in religious education from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Ross, who worked with Sr. Stephanie on several projects and eventually succeeded her as diocesan social concerns director, remembers her as a woman of compassionate wisdom.

“She was a great teacher and mentor,” said Ms. Ross. “She was so mild-mannered and organized, and she worked very hard.”

“She was very intelligent,” Ms. Ross stated. “Her sense of social justice was broad and deep, and she had a sharp understanding of what was wrong in the world.”

Sr. Stephanie served here in the throes of the great farm crisis of the late 1970s and early ’80s.

“At that time, our diocese, as it still is to this day in many ways, was a very rural place,”

said Ms. Ross. “We had many, many family farmers, and a lot of them were failing.”

Sr. Stephanie understood the inseparable relationship between charity and justice and applied that to her advocacy work, including rural life, poverty issues, prison ministry and criminal justice reform.

She worked not just to help people in their current condition but also to address the broader issues that contributed to getting them there in the first place.

She was committed to promoting social justice through the lens of faith and the teaching of the Church.

“That was where her heart was,” said Ms. Ross.

Sr. Stephanie was well read and very wise to the ways of the world.

“She was not puritanical or Pollyanna-ish,” said Ms. Ross.

“She was always ready to face the world as it really is. When you were alone with her, she



Sr. Stephanie Mertens ASC (1933-2021)

spoke her mind clearly to you, and you know she understood the evils of this world.”

Yet, she never became jaded.

“She always had a lightness to her,” said Ms. Ross. “She could smile very easily. You knew she understood and was committed to this work, no matter how

difficult it was, but she was not weighed down by it.

“She knew there was something above and beyond it — and for her, I know that was her faith,” said Ms. Ross.

Sr. Stephanie was kind and patient with people who were not as well informed or who saw things differently from her.

“But she knew how to stick to her principles,” said Ms. Ross.

Sr. Stephanie went on to serve for 18 years in a similar role for the Adorers, promoting social justice on their behalf.

In 1993, she testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s Subcommittee on African Affairs, about the 1992 murders of five missionaries from her congregation in Liberia.

She was living in community at the former ASC motherhouse in Ruma, Illinois, when she died.

See SR. STEPHANIE, page 18

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DIOCESE OF Jefferson City

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

From page 1

The students will hold an in-school fundraiser to benefit people who need help with their utility bills.

"They're good kids," said Mrs. Gray. "And they're very faith-filled."

Leading and led

All 37 schools began this academic year with in-school instruction, including changes to daily routines to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Most have made it this far with few interruptions from the pandemic.

The combination of in-person faith formation, service projects and communal worship has helped keep students close to the sacraments and progressing in their faith.

That's good for them and their families.

"Some of the greatest evangelizers are the children in our schools," said Dr. Erin Vader, diocesan Superintendent of Catholic schools. "More often than not, they are leading their parents closer to Christ."

It's part of a process of encounter and revelation dating back to Jesus's ministry on earth.

"We are safekeeping a tremendous legacy," Dr. Vader noted. "We never lose sight of that."

"A lot going on"

COVID-19 has not stopped the Catholic schools from pressing forward in the quest for excellence.

"We're still doing the things that are foundational and important to continue to move the schools forward," stated Dr. Vader.

Accreditation visitations and in-place standardized tests have continued as scheduled. School families have helped with the diocesan pastoral planning pro-



Students learn in a faith-filled environment at Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville.

cess and the recent 10-county initiative to address staffing at parishes.

All of the schools have been doing self-assessments based on national standards and benchmarks.

"We're analyzing the results now to help us see our strengths and opportunities for improvement," said Dr. Vader.

On top of all of that, each school devised its own individual plan for conducting in-person instruction, in cooperation with local health departments and public school districts, and updated its technology with money from an anonymous donation.

"We have not been resting on our laurels," said Dr. Vader. "We've got a lot going on."

Positive atmosphere

Mike Aulbur, principal of St. Pius X School in Moberly, said the school takes its motto seriously: "Be respectful, be responsible, be safe and live your faith."

"I think right now, living your faith is a very important aspect of what we do here at St. Pius," he said. "We provide a high-quality education, and we get to bring religion into the

school.

"I think we've created a very positive atmosphere, and that's why I love working here," he said.

Everyone — from the school advisory board to the parents, students, teachers, staff and administration — has a role in maintaining that climate.

"I think we have something to be really proud of," he said. "We are providing a great education for our students."

That benefits the entire community.

"We're very noticeable," said Mr. Aulbur. "Our graduates are very often in the running for valedictorian and salutatorian in the local public high school."

It also sends waves through the Church. Mr. Aulbur noted that with their parents' blessing, seven St. Pius X students who aren't Catholic are preparing to receive Sacraments of Initiation at Easter.

"Deacon John Hill is teaching them the classes," said Mr. Aulbur. "He's meeting with them once a week. We're very proud of them."

Eternal lessons

Father Matthew Flatley, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Hannibal and St. Joseph Parish in Palmyra, holds that the greatest mission of a Catholic school is to love.

"Yes, we must strive to teach them reading, writing and arithmetic," he said. "But most of all, we must model for them how to love one another, the way that Christ loves us."

Fr. Flatley often reminds parents that they are the primary teachers of their children.



A Catholic school can never take the parents' place in leading their children to Christ, "but our little faith communities can and do model it for them in the most beautiful, communal way," said Fr. Flatley.

"A Catholic school and all of the incredibly dedicated disciples who minister therein can be partners with the parents, not only teaching academics, but most of all, helping to form disciples of Jesus Christ," he said.

This year has brought unprecedented challenges. Fr. Flatley believes there's an opportunity in every crisis.

"The opportunity for extraordinary grace is in how we respond to the crisis," he said. "Are we striving to trust God in the midst of it? Are we turning to fervent prayer? And perhaps most of all, are we surrendering to the will of God through it all?"

"If we can do these things, we will come out on the other side with greater faith and trust in God and in His mercy," he said.

"For the kids"

Mrs. Gray said Mary Immaculate School plans to take out a Catholic Schools Week ad in a local newspaper that everyone in Kirksville receives, highlighting the students and their achievements.

It's part of a larger, year-round marketing effort. Staying connected with parishioners and alumni is one of the keys to the school's success.

Mary Immaculate students help produce a video about the school each year to show parents before Mass.

The school presents blue and

white "onesies" marked "Future Mary Immaculate Student" to parents of newborn babies.

Mrs. Gray said it takes tremendous work and commitment on everyone's part for a parish to maintain a quality Catholic school.

She believes it's well worth the effort.

"It's for the kids — for their faith development, for the growth of their minds," she said. "We love the kids and want them to succeed."

The first time she visited Mary Immaculate School, a student dropped his tray in the lunchroom, sending food in all directions.

"Seven kids got up to help him clean up the mess," she recalled. "I knew right then that this place is special."

It's like a family: "Parents, parishioners, everybody works together to do what's best for the kids," she said.


Safeguarding the truth

Father Jason Doke believes Catholic schools are even more essential today than in the past.


"It's about passing on the practice of our faith in an ever-changing world," said Fr. Doke, pastor of St. Martin Parish in St. Martins and moderator of the curia for the Jefferson City diocese.

Young people are now routinely exposed to things that were unimaginable to previous generations.

"We need to proclaim all the more adamantly the truth that our faith gives us," said Fr. Doke. "Because they're going to have a hard time finding it outside of the Church."



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Cathedral School principal promoting a life of stewardship

All gifts flow from the gift of God's Son and the Universal Call to Holiness

By Jay Nies

The team of teachers and staff at St. Joseph Cathedral School in Jefferson City has been helping fellow parishioners and school families develop a proper Catholic perspective on stewardship.

It is nothing short of a restoration of a proper relationship with Christ.

Principal Spencer Allen said parishes' and schools' biggest obstacle to reaching that goal is helping people understand that stewardship does not mean "fundraising."

Rather, "stewardship is an acceptance, cultivation and sharing of those gifts from God, the primary one being the gift of His Son, and our call to holiness," he said.

All other gifts flow from that primary gift, "which is

why our conversations about stewardship have to be built on the foundation of providing resources and opportunities for our families to deepen their walk in discipleship," Mr. Allen stated.

Toward this end, St. Joseph Cathedral School has held worship assemblies for students, facilitated prayer and catechetical events for adults, and provided regular resources based upon the four pillars of stewardship.

The pillars are hospitality, service, prayer and formation.

The school is planning an event for school fathers. There, in the context of Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, participants will hear from a diocesan priest and a fellow parent

about embracing their role as a Christ figure for one's family.

"We also have set up our new families with ambassador families to accompany them into the parish/school community and support them through a comprehensive process of initiation, orientation and invitation into a culture of stewardship," said Mr. Allen.

Once individuals practice stewardship in their call to holiness, they can apply it freely to all of their other gifts, including thoughts, lives, families, homes and careers.

"Even our struggles and

sufferings, such as the journey through the (coronavirus) pandemic, must be seen as allowed by God so that he can gift us with growth in perseverance and adherence to His grace," said Mr. Allen.

All of this filters down to the gifts of time, talent and treasures.

"In addition to sharing these things with others in love and justice, we are called to return them to God," Mr. Allen noted. "This happens most powerfully through our parish and diocese, where all of the dimensions of our lives converge, especially through the Sacrifice of the Mass."

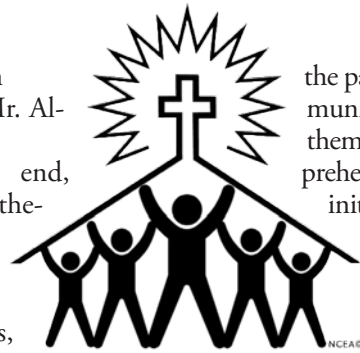
That is why supporting one's parish is paramount.

"The parish is where one's marriage becomes a sacrament, where our children are brought

into the Body of Christ, and where we encounter the holiness we then bring into our homes — our domestic churches — and our workplaces and relationships," he said.

He pointed out that Catholic schools exist to support parents in their roles as the first and best educators and the first heralds of Christ to their children.

"By enrolling their children in an educational program immersed in the Gospel, parents are offering these young disciples the gift of a Catholic worldview," he said. "It is an investment that pays exponentially as, through the partnership of home and school, young people grow into their full potential and into their mission to transform the world with the Good News of Christ."



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Exemplary cooperation among Catholic schools, public agencies

By Jay Nies

Public and private schools have been weathering the storm of COVID-19 side-by-side.

Dr. Erin Vader, diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools, said Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and most of the local education agencies in the diocese have done "an amazing job" of distributing federal funds from the 2020 CARES Act.

This money worked exactly as the lawmakers intended: helping the schools continue operating and paying their employees.

Principal Mike Aulbur of St. Pius X School in Moberly said a spirit of cooperation among St. Pius and the Moberly School District helped expedite the process locally.

Mr. Aulbur previously worked for the public schools for 27 years — 12 as a principal — before coming to St. Pius three years ago.

He believes maintaining

a good working relationship among private and public schools and local health departments is always to everyone's advantage.

When he was a public school administrator, he always wanted to work with St. Pius in matters ranging from curriculum to athletics to helping ensure a smooth transition from Catholic elementary school to the public high school.

"The value of that kind of partnership has never been more evident than it has been this year," he said. "My advice to administrators throughout the diocese is always to keep building that relationship."

Similarly, Mr. Aulbur appreciates how Catholic school principals throughout this diocese can lean on each other and offer support during these frustrating times.

"That trickles down into our schools and helps everyone do their job better," he said. "That's been something I will remember forever about this pandemic."

a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools





By Father Don Antweiler
ACROSS

1. This puzzle presents 7 “come back” kids: birds and animals that once called Mo. home, then became ____ or non-existent here, but now are settled “back home” in Mo.
5. “The (moon’s) ____ seems quite close to you because the curvature is so much more pronounced than on earth. It’s an interesting place. I recommend it.” — Neil Armstrong.
11. Mo. was once home to an ____ black bear population. By the early 1900’s, because of habitat loss and unregulated hunting, the bears were basically gone. But, from the 1960s, spillover from successful bear restoration in Arkansas & Oklahoma has caused Mo.’s bear population to grow, in 2019, to approx. 540-840 bears. Bear management & “bear aware” guidelines accompany the return of this native animal.
12. “This world is neither heaven nor hell, but it is preparation for ____ or the other,” —from *My Descent Into Death* by Howard Storm.
13. The coach ____ down his player’s injured arm.
14. One member of the third plague’s swarms (Exodus 8:12-14).
15. Fargo, at 124,600 pop., is this State’s largest city (abbr.).
16. Coastal mountain in Israel from which the Carmelite Order gets its name.
18. Slangy no.
20. In text: of course.
21. “____ I walked down the streets of Laredo...”; “Streets of Laredo,” also called “Cowboy’s Lament,” was sung by a score of folk and country singers; Johnny Cash was one of the more popular.
23. Sooner State (abbr.).
25. Mo. almost lost the sights and sounds of migrating ____ and ducks and shorebirds. With the restoration of wetlands beginning in 1989, millions of migrating waterfowl now stop to feed and rest in Mo. to the delight of hunters and birdwatchers alike.
27. ____ Lanka; island off the coast of India which surprisingly had a larger Christian population than Ireland at one time.
28. “...for through your goodness we have received the ____ we offer you; fruit of the vine and work of human hands...” —prayers over the gifts at the offertory of the Mass.
29. 5th book of the Bible.
30. Mo.’s tallest tree, as per 2020, is a scarlet ____ near Lake Wappapello. It towers 150 ft. above the

- forest floor, the same as four utility poles stacked end-to-end.
31. Prefix for mind or wind.
33. St. John Vianney, the Cure (parish priest) of ____, is the patron saint of parish priests.
34. In 1925, only 400 deer remained in Mo. In 1937, deer hunting was made _____. In 2019 over a million whitetails roam free in Mo. and hunters commonly check more than 100,000 deer in the Nov. firearms season alone.
37. The ____, sometimes called the pulpit or lectern, is the formal name for the stand from which the gospel is read in a Catholic Mass.
40. Mo. has been called the Saudi Arabia of _____. It’s been mined here since the 1700s. The main source of this ore, galena, is Mo.’s state mineral. Even today some of the largest remaining deposits of this ore in the world are located in southeast Mo.
41. Pack animal of the Andes.
43. The ____ Church, or Latter Day Saints, also called Mormons, are centered in Utah. The Mo. branch of the Church, The Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, is headquartered in independence, Mo. In 2001, this branch changed their name to Community of Christ.
44. The name of an ancient (Old Testament) inhabitant of Israel is called an Israelite. A citizen of the modern State of Israel is call an _____.

DOWN

1. A bow (i.e., ____) in the clouds was God’s covenant sign with Noah which promised that “waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings,” —see Genesis 9:13-17.
2. The first four of twenty-six.
3. Regret.
4. Though the bald eagle was adopted as America’s symbol in 1982, it has struggled nationally and here in Mo. In 1963, due to loss of habitat and pesticides, only 487 nesting pairs were left nationwide, and eagles were declared _____. In Mo., young bald eagles began being released into nesting habitats from 1981-1990. Today there are approx. 500 just in Mo.
5. Like the bald eagle, the Peregrine Falcon disappeared from Mo. in the mid-1900s, mainly due to pesticides. But they have returned and found an unusual new habitat: the skyscrapers and smokestacks of St. Louis & KC. In the past 7 years, 196 young falcons were ____ from 14 nesting pairs, the highest pop. ever documented in Mo.
6. “For the man ____ whom this sign of healing had been done was over 40 years old,” (Acts 4:22).
7. ____ (formerly Russia Today) is a state-controlled internet, TV & radio network funded by the Russian gov’t.
8. Though elk once roamed throughout most of North Am., by 1886 they had been hunted out of Mo. There was no herd in the Show-Me State in the 20th cen. In 2011, elk were reintroduced to Mo. into a restricted _____. The herd has settled into its Mo. home. The benchmarks for a very limited hunting season were reached in 2020.
9. He did it ____; i.e., on the spur of the moment (3 wds.).
10. “The kingdom of heaven is like a ____ thrown into the sea which collects fish of every kind,” (Matthew 13:47).
14. This car company discontinued its gas-guzzling Hummer in 2010 but the name will appear on a new all-electric vehicle in 2022.
17. Fish eggs.
19. Am. English (____) is different from British English mainly in vocabulary (the trunk of a car in the US is the boot of the car in the UK) and spelling (color in the US; colour in the UK).
22. Yes for Pablo.
24. Early Mo. was thick with wild turkeys. But by 1937 all but 2,500 had been _____. In 1954, Mo.’s Dept. of Conser. began restoring and restocking the birds. Mo.’s environment is perfect for them and today the wild turkey is available and often plentiful in all of Mo.’s 114 counties.
26. “Solomon had four thousand ____ for his twelve thousand chariot horses,” (1 Kings 5:6).
27. The internet country code for Saudi Arabia.
30. Bin Laden; terrorist leader.
32. For example; from the Latin, *exempli gratia*.
34. The posse caught the bank robber before he could stash his ____-gotten gains.
35. ____ Vegas.
36. Muhammed ____ is considered one of the greatest boxers of all time.
38. ____ West, the “bad girl” of Hollywood in her day.
39. Japanese sash.
42. Prefix for range or my.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LAYPEOPLE

From page 1

Pope Francis explained his decision in the context of the gifts and talents given by the Holy Spirit “through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist” to all members of the Church so that they can contribute “to the building up of the Church and to the proclamation of the Gospel to every creature.”

“The Priesthood of the baptized and service to the community represent the two pillars on which the institution of ministries is based,” the pope said.

Lay men and women will continue to be allowed to serve as lectors and altar servers at their parishes without being instituted as lectors or acolytes. But their ability to serve in those roles will remain temporary and restricted to their own parish.

Instituted lectors and acolytes receive a permanent mandate to carry-out the responsibilities of their office.

“It’s for life,” said Bishop McKnight. “And it’s effective throughout the entire world. If the person moves to another parish or diocese, they take it with them.”

For that reason, only a bishop can install someone in the office of lector or acolyte outside of clerical institutes of consecrated life.

New paths to leadership

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states the role of instituted acolytes and lectors at Mass:

- “The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. It is his place principally to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an extraordinary minister.”

- “The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the universal prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings.”

Both descriptions will soon be updated to include women.

Bishop McKnight noted that both offices have unique roles. Whenever a canonically

instituted lector is present at Mass, he or she, rather than a priest, deacon or bishop, should proclaim the readings other than those from the Gospel.

Likewise, whenever an instituted acolyte is present, he or she should be the one to prepare the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

“I like the fact that they both are given roles that only they can do whenever they are present,” he stated.

Until now, the office of lector and acolyte have usually been limited to men who are preparing to be ordained to the Diaconate or Priesthood.

Bishop McKnight is looking forward to instituting more laypeople, women and men, as lectors and acolytes in the diocese.

He emphasized that the official offices of lector and acolyte and the responsibilities that come with them flow from a person’s baptism, not from a calling to ordination.

“It’s not a calling beyond baptism,” Bishop McKnight explained. “It’s a summoning forth of a ministry from within, already given by God and revealed by people having the proper skills for carrying-out the ministry and a desire to do so.”

The bishop said the revised canon will create new pathways to leadership both for lay men and lay women in the Church.

“This gives us a new and visible example of lay leadership in the Church that will be present at the Liturgy,” he said.

He emphasized that the institutes of acolyte and lector aren’t simply honorary titles.

“They’re actually going to have already proven ministry experience in the Church,” he said. “They’re people who are already DOING that work, that sacred work, that is represented by those liturgical roles in the celebration of the Mass.”

Necessary preparation

Pope Francis granted bishops’ conferences throughout the world the authority to adopt standard norms for putting these new changes into practice.

The U.S. Catholic bishops

will work on creating those norms this year and will likely approve them at their fall meeting in November.

Bishop McKnight will then seek guidance from his priest advisors on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and from the Diocesan Pastoral Council, made up mostly of laypeople, on implementing the norms in this diocese.

He believes that those who are instituted to be official representatives of the laity at Mass should also be active in related lay ministries beyond the Liturgy.

“Especially with our first cohort of instituted lectors, I want them to be people with proven ministry experiences in catechesis or involvement in RCIA or teaching in the Catholic school system — something related to proclamation of the Word outside the Liturgy,” he said.

Likewise, he believes candidates for the institute of acolyte should have extensive experience visiting the sick or shut-ins, “since they’re also the ones to assist with bringing viaticum to the dying and Holy Communion to those who are not present at Mass.”

Instituted acolytes automatically become extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, at Mass and out in the community.

“Laypeople are allowed to do that at Mass with a temporary mandate,” he explained. “As an instituted acolyte, they hold that privilege permanently by virtue of having been instituted.”

Pastors will nominate parishioners to serve as instituted lectors and acolytes. Those parishioners who accept that invitation will be required to have solid theological and liturgical formation. If they don’t already have formal education, coursework will be required.

“It will be more than just learning the techniques for performing tasks in the Liturgy,” said Bishop McKnight. “There will also be theological

and liturgical training.”

For instance, candidates for the institute of lector would have to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the Sacred Scriptures from a Catholic perspective, as well as the *Cat-*

parishes.

In other words, not every active, adult Catholic would become an instituted lector or acolyte.

“Rather, those who are instituted should be seen as representatives of all laypeople of the Church, serving alongside the priests and deacons,” he said.

“It’s important to have a visible representation of that in the Liturgy,” he added, “so people actually see a diversity of charisms coming together — which is what brings about the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist.”

Contributing to this report were Helen Osman, diocesan communications director for the Jefferson City diocese, and Cindy Wooden of Catholic News Service.

“It’s a natural development stemming from the Second Vatican Council and its recognition of the Universal Call to Holiness, through which everyone is summoned to full, conscious and active participation in the life of the Church.”

— Bishop W. Shawn McKnight

echism of the Catholic Church and the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

Bishop McKnight hopes each parish in the diocese will eventually have at least one instituted acolyte and at least one instituted lector.

“They would serve in leadership, assisting the pastor in the formation and training of the temporary readers at Mass or the temporary altar servers,” he said.

“Diversity of charisms”

Bishop McKnight emphasized that being instituted as an acolyte or lector is “a calling within a calling.”

“This isn’t a general vocation like marriage, religious life or the ministerial Priesthood,” he said. “It’s a way in which someone who is baptized can live out their baptism.”

He cautioned against allowing these offices, which are meant to be avenues for humble service in the Church, to become a means for promoting elitism or separation in



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Things To Do

Fundraisers & Social Events

Jan. 22

Westphalia, K of C drive thru fish fry, 4:30-7 pm

Jan. 23

Mary's Home, K of C corn-hole tournament, 11 am-6 pm, Our Lady of Snows parish center gym, for info visit ourladyofthesnows.diojeffcity.org

Feb. 5

Westphalia, K of C drive thru fish fry, 4:30-7 pm

Feb. 6

VIRTUAL, St. Thomas the Apostle parish Winter Fantasy, 6:30-9:30 pm, for info visit stthomasapostle.net

Feb. 9

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate School "Give Back" night, 5-9 pm, Bellacino's Pizza & Grinders

Feb. 14

Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am; St. Anthony, K of C carry-out breakfast, 7:30-11:30 am

Feb. 19

Jefferson City, K of C #12992 drive-thru fish fry, 4:30-7 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph Undercroft

Meetings & Conferences

Jan. 8-Jan. 26

Jefferson City, Free nutrition counseling, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, Tuesdays 5-6 pm, the LINC, to register, visit www.jcparksregistration.com and search "nutrition"

Feb. 10

VIRTUAL, Catholic Charities refugee resettlement program orientation, 5:30-6:30 pm, for info or to register, contact Diana Twombly at 573-442-7568 or dtwombly@cccnm.org

Retreats & Spiritual Renewal

Feb. 13-14

Jefferson City, Marriage Encounter Weekend, for info or to register, email jeffcityme@gmail.com or visit jeffcityme.com

Youth & Young Adults

Feb. 16-18

Sedalia, Kindergarten readiness screenings for children who will be 5 years old by July 31, 2020, Sacred Heart School, call 660-827-3800 to schedule an appointment

Health & Wellness

Jan. 24

Columbia, Blood drive, 8 am-1 pm, St. Thomas More Newman Center MPR

Feb. 3

Sedalia, Blood drive, noon-5:30 pm, Sacred Heart School gym

Planning an event?

To request an advertisement, or have your event listed in the Things To Do and diocesan website calendar, go to diojeffcity.org/event-listing

MARROCCO

From page 9

tual ecumenism. He helped the octave develop into the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, praying that all come closer to Christ, and therefore to one another.

Pope Benedict XVI remarked, while a cardinal: "In any case it should be clear that we do not create unity, no more than we bring about righteousness by means of our works, but that on the other hand we should not sit around twiddling our thumbs." Some inter-church issues have been resolved, including a key theological conflict of the Reformation between Lutherans and Catholics (1999). Many need more work. Those who went before did their part. Who will do ours?

A challenge is held out to us by the bold hands of Christians who preceded and opened a larger place for us. Will we enter a sleepy next phase of ecumenism, comfortable in our separate cubicles sending emails and twiddling thumbs? Or will our clergy and pastoral leaders pray and work with other Christian communities, learning to receive their gifts while

sharing ours? Will seminarians be encouraged to plan their response to the large percentage of "mixed" marriages in their flocks?

Will our bishops heed the Spirit speaking through the Vatican's April 2020 document, "The Bishop and Christian Unity," released specifically to them? Will we help our bishops follow this new directive? Will we wake up and listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church?

We can take concrete steps to move toward other Christian churches in joyful welcome, daring to move from a once-a-year prayer with strangers to at least a dialogue of charity. Many are responding across Church divisions to needs created by the pandemic.

We are not alone. As a late American bishop exhorted, we don't need to wait for full communion to do the many things we already can do together.

Marrocco can be reached at marrocco7@sympatico.ca

SR. STEPHANIE

From page 13

A private vigil service was held there on Jan. 12, followed by burial in the convent cemetery.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated later with family, friends and fellow sisters.

Condolences may be sent

to the Adorers of the Blood of Christ at 4233 Sulphur Ave., St. Louis, MO 63109 or online at adorers.org.

At national memorial, Cardinal prays for all who died of COVID-19

By Richard Szczepanowski
Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

Saying the nation "reverently pauses in supplication to remember and to pray for the many thousands of people who have died from the coronavirus during this past year," Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory offered the invocation at a pre-inauguration memorial service Jan. 19 to honor and remember the more than 400,000 Americans who have succumbed to COVID-19.

"We turn to the Lord of all to receive these, our sisters and brothers, into eternal peace and to comfort all of those who grieve the loss of a loved one," Cardinal Gregory said in his invocation at the memorial service, attended by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. "Let us, with one heart, commend those who have died from this virus and all of their loved ones to the providential care of the One Who is the ultimate source of peace, unity and concord."

The memorial service — held the day before the presidential inauguration — included prayer, music and a lighting of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool with 400 lights in honor of lives lost in the pandemic.

"To heal we must remember," President-elect Biden said just prior to the lighting. "It's hard sometimes to remember, but that's how we heal. It is important to do that as a nation. Between sundown and dusk let us shine the lights along the pool to remember all the lives we have lost."

Cardinal Gregory said the gathering was a time to "pray for those who have died and the families and loved ones that they left behind ... not as strangers or disinterested persons, but as fellow citizens who share some limited portion of their grief and sorrow."

In his invocation, the cardinal said the coronavirus has left Americans with "a sobering awareness that we are all united in the sorrow that we recognize today."

"Our sorrow unites us to one another as a single people with compassionate hearts," the cardinal said. "May our prayer strengthen our awareness of our common humanity and our national unity at a time when harmony is a balm that seeks to comfort and strengthen us as a single people facing a common threat that is no respecter of age, race, culture or gender."

In his prayer, Cardinal Gregory also remembered "the countless families and relatives who had to surrender their loved ones without the comfort and the consolation of a familiar funeral ritual according to their religious traditions or selection" because of quarantining and other strict preventative measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"That privation only added to the sadness engendered by the death of a friend, a relative, or a colleague," he said.

"May our prayer this evening ... be a resounding gesture of gratitude for all those who have cared for the victims of this virus and their loved ones," Cardinal Gregory prayed.

ERLANDSON

From page 9

And the line between political and ecclesial extremism is blurring. The conservative and liberal political agendas are driving Church agendas, and the same apocalyptic rhetoric is being adopted as well.

This is a tough time to be a leader in the Church, whether pope or pastor or parent. Yet we need those who can speak for humility, for selflessness and for the common good. We need to focus on those in need, not those aggrieved, and we need to find ways to dismantle the barriers so many of us have helped erect.

Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

Anniversaries

Argyle, St. Aloysius
Alan & Kathy Smith, 49 years

Brinktown, Holy Guardian Angels
Scott & Amy Veasman, 18 years

Camdenton, St. Anthony
Marvin & Peggy Johnson, 59 years
Don & Alice Koviak, 44 years
Steve & Sandra Neiger, 27 years
Ron & Karen Witt, 27 years
Brian & Angie Schuster, 26 years
Cesar & Jessica Jaramillo, 10 years

Freeburg, Holy Family
Dan & Neva Redel, 44 years
Paul & Anita Backues, 43 years
John & Mary Brandel, 22 years
Ryan & Erica Libbert, 19 years

Hannibal, Holy Family
Bob & Christy Cavanagh, 50 years

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph
Father Stephen & Kerri Jones, 21 years
Luke & Maureen Quinn, 13 years

Koeltztown, St. Boniface
Alan & Kathy Smith, 49 years

Montgomery City, Immaculate Conception
Steve & Kathy Holtz, 48 years

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart
Greg & Melissa Stephens, 26 years
Jacob & Brittany Neuner, 12 years

Rolla, St. Patrick
Arlo & Barbara Robb, 66 years

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul
Fran & Ann Koetting, 69 years
Ruben & Pat Twenter, 69 years
Robert & Virginia Hoskins, 66 years
Earl & Sharron Perkins, 52 years
Ken & Billie Hake, 45 years

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus
Paul & Ann Berendzen, 50 years

Marriages

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Kylie Mulholland & Zachary Michieli**

Initiations

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate — **Evelyn Lily Leyden**, who received Sacraments of Initiation on Dec. 24

Names for the People Page

Information for the People Page comes from parish correspondents and individual parishioners, as well as bulletins and newspapers. Submissions for anniversaries (10 years or more), birthdays (90 years or more), and baptisms, deaths, marriages and initiations of local parishioners may be e-mailed to editor@diojeffcity.org; faxed to 573-635-2286; or mailed to: *The Catholic Missourian*, 2207 West Main Street, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914.

Baptisms

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Carter Jeffrey Rustemeyer**, son of April Steinman & Zachary Rustemeyer

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Elorna Meyer**

Frankenstein, Our Lady Help of Christians — **Clayton Joseph Kever**, son of Ryan & Michaela Kever

Hermann, St. George — **Irene Christine Bruckerhoff**, daughter of Cullen & Beth Bruckerhoff

Holts Summit, St. Andrew — **Susannah Rose Keeven**, daughter of Clinton & Jill Keeven; **Ansley Mane and Harper Rose Meyer**, daughters of Ryan & Harper Meyer

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Brock Henry Jennings**, son of Derrick & Katherine Jennings; **Madison Musholt**, daughter of Ben & Kelsey Musholt; **Benjamin Felix Schmitz**, son of Joseph & Christine Schmitz

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **Kiahn Mateo Manalo Woolery**

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate — **Murphy Jo Mortenson**, daughter of Jove Mortenson & Amy Schwend; **Ava Lucille Schwend**, daughter of Andrew & Tiffany Schwend; **Henry Thomas Schwend**, son of Joe & Kara Schwend

Marceline, St. Bonaventure — **Collins Cate Linneman**, daughter of Mitchell & McKenzie Linneman

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **Jameson August Falter**, son of Eric & Katrina Falter

St. Elizabeth, St. Lawrence — **Gloria Sonny New**, daughter of Ryan & Bethany New

St. Thomas, St. Thomas the Apostle — **Colton James Otto**, son of Austin & Abigail Otto

Taos, St. Francis Xavier — **Eustace Jacob Yeager**

Tipton, St. Andrew — **Waylon Warren James Tuttle**, son of Jonathan & Taylor Tuttle

Birthdays

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Jane Bonnot**, her 96th on Jan. 25; **Harriett Ochs**, her 100th on Jan. 18

Marceline, St. Bonaventure — **Viola Drescher**, her 90th

Marshall, St. Peter — **Paul Collier**, his 96th

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **Louise Fick**, her 97th on Jan. 8

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Mary Ann Holzer**, her 90th on Jan. 8

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul — **Marie Gramlich Bodenhamer Jones**, her 100th on January 22

Deaths

Incarnate Word Sister Joan Cecelia Moran (Formerly Sister Alverna), 86 — a former principal of Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City — on Dec. 23 in San Antonio, Texas.

Lois Stewart, 93 — mother of Dominican Sister Mary Catherine Stewart, principal of Fr. McCartan Memorial School in Marceline — on Jan. 3, in Taylor Springs, Illinois.

Boonville, Ss. Peter & Paul — **Beverly J. Nichols**

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Frances Pikowski**

Cuba, Holy Cross — **Raymond J. Lindemann**

Hannibal, Holy Family — **Jeanette Rupp, Twila Wojcik**

Hermann, St. George — **Shirley Busken, Rita Gawer**

Holts Summit, St. Andrew — **Francis J. Heet Sr.**

Indian Creek, St. Stephen — **Nick Hays**

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Elenora A. Block, Patrick N. Boyle, Judith M. Lewis**

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **Bill Abbott, Betty Cardwell**

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate — **Cindy Hix, Robye Spalding**

Marceline, St. Bonaventure — **Dean Edgar**

Mary's Home, Our Lady of the Snows — **William M. Abbott**

Mexico, St. Brendan — **Maria Del Carmen Rodriguez**

Moberly, St. Pius X — **Ann P. Orscheln**

Montgomery City, Immaculate Conception — **Don Benney**

Owensville, Immaculate Conception — **Gary W. Wenkel**

Palmyra, St. Joseph — **Robert Hirner, Joseph Rothweiler**

Rolla, St. Patrick — **Mary Krause, Eleanor Sutton**

St. James, Immaculate Conception — **Nadine M. Manor**

St. Martins, St. Martin — **William P. Woods**

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul — **Jan Huhman, Judy Meyer**

Shelbina, St. Mary — **Delores Thrasher**

Tipton, St. Andrew — **Regina K. Orscheln**

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus — **Norman A. Derkum, Shirley J. Kolb, Paul J. VanLoo**

Wien, St. Mary of the Angels — **John Marcotte, Alfreda M. Mossbarger**

Elections

Brinktown, Holy Guardian Angels — **Dave Haller, Mike Kleffner, Sandra Kloepfel, Matt Rowden, Will Rowden, Dianne Veasman**, to the Parish Pastoral Council

Linn, St. George — **Debbie Lumpkin, Carla McDaniel, Debra Oliveras**, to the Parish Pastoral Council

Palmyra, St. Joseph — **Denise Dodd, Kevin DeHaan, Justin Krekemeyer, Veronica Thomas**, to the Parish Pastoral Council

Joe Scheidler was 'godfather of pro-life activism'

Catholic News Service

Chicago

Joe Scheidler, 93, founder of the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago and one of the towering figures of the pro-life movement for decades, died of pneumonia Jan. 18 surrounded by his family at his home on Chicago's Northwest Side.

Widely known as the "godfather of pro-life activism," Scheidler began his life's work fighting abortion in 1973, shortly after the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing it.

He founded the league in 1980 to recruit and equip pro-life Americans to be a voice for unborn children in their own communities.

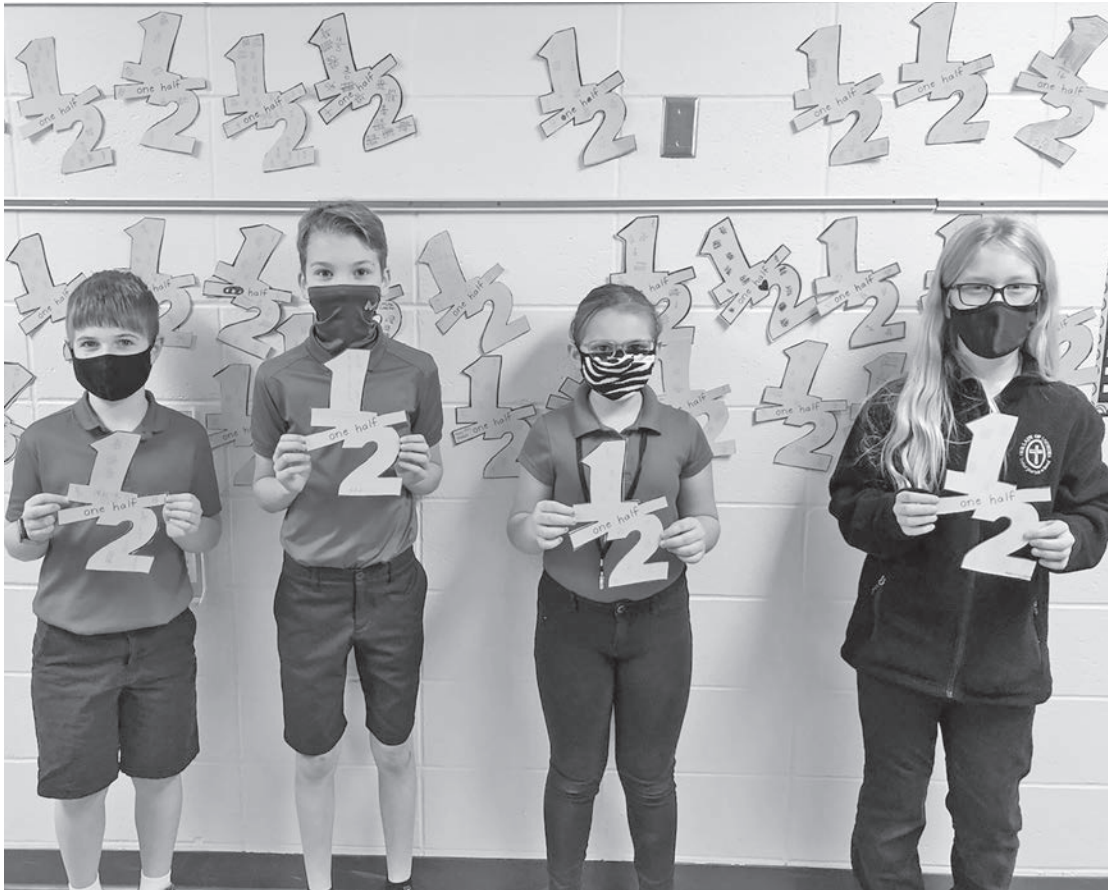
"My father's proudest accomplishment was the pro-life work of those he inspired to take an active role in the fight against abortion, the greatest injustice of our time," Eric Scheidler said in a statement.

"For years, people have been telling me about the talk or protest where they met my father, and how his words and example prompted them to do more than just talk, but to take responsibility for addressing the injustice," he said.

Crossword puzzle answers

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

Halfway there, living on a prayer



Students of Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School in Columbia celebrate having made it halfway through the school year with in-seat instruction by decorating hats and enjoying half-chocolate cookies. — Photos by Sheri Barnes, Principal Elaine Hassemmer and Angela Lawlor



Visiting the Capital City



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Juniors from Troop 3980 of Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri attend Mass at St. Peter Church in Jefferson City while on a Sunday field trip from St. Joseph Parish in Imperial in the St. Louis archdiocese. — Photo by Amie Kaiser

Celebrating a brand-new year



Pre-kindergarten students at Holy Family School in Hannibal celebrate the New Year and the Feast of the Epiphany their first week back at school after Christmas. "Their joy and excitement is contagious," their teachers stated. — Photo from the Holy Family School - Hannibal Facebook page

God tells Jonah to preach against Nineveh

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic News Service

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

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

Instead, Jonah tried to flee from God. He decided to board a ship bound for Tarshish.

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

“Come, let us cast lots to discover on whose account this evil has come to us,” the terrified sailors decided.

The lot fell on Jonah.

Jonah explained to the sailors that he was a Hebrew who was fleeing from God. He also suggested that he be thrown



overboard to calm the sea.

The sailors did what Jonah suggested, and the sea stopped raging.

God sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in

the fish’s belly for three days and nights.

After Jonah prayed to God, God caused the fish to expel Jonah onto dry land.

Then, for the second time,

God called Jonah to be His prophet.

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

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

As he walked, Jonah announced God’s message.

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

The people of Nineveh believed God’s message. They declared a fast and put on sackcloth to show repentance.

When the king heard God’s message, he too put on sackcloth, and he also sat in ashes to show his repentance.

“By decree of the king and

his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water,” the king declared.

“Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. Who knows? God may again repent and turn from His blazing wrath, so that we will not perish.”

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

Read more about it...

Jonah 3

1. Whom did God call to be His prophet?

2. Where did God want Jonah to go?

Bible Accent

There are many places in the Bible that talk about the ancient custom of demonstrating repentance or intense mourning by wearing sackcloth or ashes, or sometimes both.

For example, in the Old Testament, we read in Esther 4:1 that upon learning that the Persian King Ahasuerus was going to allow all the Jews to be killed, Mordecai wore sackcloth and ashes and cried loudly and bitterly.

In Job 2:8, when Job was afflicted with severe boils, he sat

among the ashes. In Job 42:6, Job prayed to God for forgiveness: “Therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes.”

And in Daniel 9:3, the prophet said that he “turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.”

There are references to sackcloth and ashes in the New Testament as well.

For example, in Matthew 11:21, Jesus reproached two towns that did not repent.

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes,” He said.

Trivia

How did Jonah feel about God sparing Nineveh? (Hint: Jonah 4:1)

Answer: He felt displeased and angry.

Saint Spotlight

St. Felix of Nola was born near Naples, Italy, in the third century. He was the son of a Syrian-born Roman soldier but decided against army life. Instead, he was ordained a priest by St. Maximus of Nola. Felix was imprisoned and tortured during Emperor Decius’ persecution of Christians that began in 250. According to legend, an angel freed Felix, and a spider’s web helped him elude capture. The people wanted him to succeed Maximus, but he instead performed pastoral work from a small farm. He died around the year 260, and we honor him on Jan. 14.



Puzzle

Using the hints provided, put a T next to the sentences from the Book of Jonah that are true and an F next to the ones that are false. If a sentence is false, put the correct answer on the line provided.

1. ___ Jonah was the son of Job. _____ (1:1)
2. ___ Jonah boarded a ship in Joppa. _____ (1:3)
3. ___ A palm tree gave Jonah shade. _____ (4:6)
4. ___ Jonah built a hut outside of Nineveh. _____ (4:5)



Answers: 1. F (Amittai); 2. T; 3. F (gourd plant); 4. T.

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Saints intercession forms the basis for 'faithful and pro-life movie'

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

New York

A miracle story about St. Brigid proves pivotal to the emotionally complex Irish drama "Herself" (Amazon).

It's one of several details in director Phyllida Lloyd's powerful profile in endurance that faithful and pro-life movie fans will appreciate.

Potential patrons should be aware, however, that repeated depictions of a harrowing physical assault, though dramatically justified, make the film challenging material even for grown-ups.

Victimized by that attack is working-class Dublin wife and mother Sandra (Clare Dunne, who also co-wrote the script with Malcolm Campbell). In its aftermath, she succeeds in escaping the perpetrator, her abusive husband, Gary (Ian Lloyd Anderson). But Sandra's struggles, it turns out, are just beginning.

Dissatisfied with life in the cramped government subsidized hotel room assigned to her and her two young daughters, Molly (Molly McCann) and Emma (Ruby Rose O'Hara), Sandra soon discovers that the prospect of obtaining better housing by working with the bureaucracy is remote. So she strikes on the idea of building her own modest home.

The thought is originally kindled by a video Sandra comes across on the internet. But she's also inspired by an incident in the life of the Emerald Isle's female patron saint recounted to her by Emma.

According to this well-known



Clare Dunne and Ruby Rose O'Hara star in a scene from the movie "Herself."
— CNS photo

legend, St. Brigid asked the King of Leinster for land on which to establish a monastery. When the monarch proved reluctant, she restricted her request to only as much ground as her cloak could cover. The sovereign agreed to this apparent trifle, only to see the holy woman's initially small garment miraculously expand in all directions.

Sandra's ambitious project gets a boost from Peggy (Harrriet Walter), the affluent doctor for whom she works as a housekeeper, as did her mother before her. Based on her close friendship with Sandra's mom, Peggy, whose gruff exterior disguises a kind heart, volunteers to give Sandra part of her suburban property and lend her the capital she'll need.

Others help too, most prominently building contractor Aido (Conleth Hill). At first, Aido discourages Sandra, but he finds his outlook transformed by a gesture on the part of his grown son Francis (Daniel Ryan), a lad

whose generous nature is unmarred by the Down syndrome to which he's subject.

Thus the tale of Sandra's aspirations also becomes one of infectious community spirit as the proceedings take on the tone of an old-fashioned barn raising. This is not the kind of crowd-pleasing movie, however, in which a happy ending is achieved with unrealistic ease.

The film contains harsh scenes of spousal abuse, several uses of profanity, about a half-dozen milder oaths as well as much rough and occasional crude and crass language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R — restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.

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Movie Ratings

 General Patronage	Gunda (G)
 Adults and Adolescents	The Croods: A New Age (PG)
 Adults	All My Life (PG-13) Greenland (PG-13) Half Brothers (PG-13) Herself (R) Monster Hunter (PG-13) News of the World (PG-13) Soul (PG)
 Limited Adult Audience	Fatale (R)

Ratings are supplied by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Film and Broadcasting Office. Visit www.usccb.org for current reviews.

Children's book shows saints were 'relentlessly human'

Catholic News Service

Baltimore

Serenely peering out from stained-glass or standing atop pedestals while piously presenting the instruments of their martyrdom, the saints can often appear otherworldly in Church art.

Carey Wallace's new children's book, *Stories of the Saints: Bold and Inspiring Tales of Adventure, Grace and Courage*, shows that holy men and women — whose miraculous deeds, charitable works and battles with armies, beasts and demons she chronicles with gusto — also were what Wallace calls "relentlessly human."

"The saints are often scared," said Wallace, a novelist based in Brooklyn, New York.

"The saints often don't know what to do. The saints are often running away from responsibil-

ity. They don't feel like they are qualified for what they've been asked to do. The saints are very, very much like us."

Wallace pointed out that some popes, including St. Gregory the Great, fled when they were elected to the papacy. Other saints, such as St. Jean Vianney, failed in academic work. St. Teresa of Kolkata, the great 20th-century missionary who founded the Missionaries of Charity, often felt alone and sometimes wondered if God loved her.

Yet the saints refused to let their shortcomings stop them from doing God's work in a great diversity of ways.

"You get some saints who refused to fight in battles because of their faith and some saints who lead people into battle because of their faith," said Wallace.



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Pope: Every call of God is a call of love

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Vatican City

When a person senses God's call, it can be intimidating or frightening, Pope Francis said, but Christians can be sure that the call flows from God's love and that responding to the call will be a means of sharing God's love.

"Each one of God's calls is an initiative of His love," the pope said Jan. 17 before reciting the Angelus prayer. "God calls to life, He calls to faith and He calls to a particular state in life: 'I want you here.'"

Livestreaming his Angelus address from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis focused on the day's Gospel reading, which recounted Jesus calling Andrew and Simon Peter to be His disciples.

Pope Francis said it is interesting to note that when the two ask Jesus where He is staying, Jesus does not respond with information, but with an invitation, "Come and you will see."

And another thing "that catches our attention: 60 years later, or maybe more," St. John wrote in his Gospel that "'it was about 4 in the afternoon' — he wrote the time," the pope said. "Every authentic encounter with Jesus remains alive in the memory; it is never forgotten."

Life is a series of God's calls, the pope said. "God's first call is to life, through which He makes us persons; it is an individual call because

God does not make things in sets. Then God calls us to faith and to become part of His family as children of God.

"Lastly," he said, "God calls us to a particular state in life — to give of ourselves on the path of matrimony, or that of the Priesthood or the consecrated life. They are different ways of realizing the plan God has for each one of us, always a plan of love."

"The greatest joy for every believer is to respond to that call, offering one's entire being to the service of God and one's brothers and sisters," the pope said.

God's call, he said, can "reach us in a thousand ways — including through other people or happy or sad events."

Sometimes people are tempted to say "no" to God's call out of fear or because "it seems to be in contrast to our aspirations" or they believe it may be too demanding, the pope said.

"But God's call is always love," he said. "We need to try to discover the love behind each call, and it should be responded to only with love."

At the end of his Angelus address, Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of Sulawesi, Indonesia, where an earthquake Jan. 15 and dozens of aftershocks left at least 46 people dead, hundreds injured and thousands homeless.

The pope also encouraged Catholics to participate in the Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

HISPANIC

From page 4

presence, even in the middle of their difficulties.

"One of my favorite phrases to tell people is, 'Christ is our hope' — that they are not alone, that the Church is walking with them," she said.

The word "we" is essential.

"I speak in the plural," she said. "Not 'you,' as in 'you will do it,' but in terms of 'we.' This is OUR process, our battle, and we are going to get through it together."

After listening to a client's story, and knowing they have become comfortable talking to her, she asks if she may pray with them.

"Most of the time, they are willing to do that," she said.

The Holy Spirit makes Himself known in that moment.

"It's amazing how someone's body language and mood will change with the prayer," she said, "because they regain their spiritual strength, and they regain hope."

"That reassurance that they are not alone," she said. "For someone suffering from COVID-19 or a job loss, just having that conversation over the



Ilsi Palacios, Hispanic resource coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, joins Father Joseph Corel, pastor *in solidum* of St. Vincent de Paul Parish of Pettis County, and José Palacios, Ilsi's husband, on Dec. 11, the day Fr. Corel blessed her office in the Sacred Heart Parish Center.

— Photo by Alissa Marlow

phone and praying — it helps them feel better, it helps them have hope."

Answered prayers

Mrs. Palacios recharges her own batteries with a daily regimen of prayer — including time in Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

"I think it's beautiful that God has placed me in this building where I can go downstairs and pray," she said.

"I go wherever the Holy Spirit takes me with it," she said. "I mention the names of each of my families that I will be working with and that I have concerns about, and that

Daily Readings

Sunday, Jan 24

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jon. 3:1-5, 10
Ps. 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
1 Cor. 7:29-31
Mk. 1:14-20

Monday, Jan 25

The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22
Ps. 117:1bc, 2
Mk. 16:15-18

Tuesday, Jan 26

Ss. Timothy and Titus, bishops
2 Tm. 1:1-8 or Ti. 1:1-5
Ps. 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 7-8a, 10
Mk. 3:31-35

Wednesday, Jan 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin
Heb. 10:11-18
Ps. 110:1, 2, 3, 4
Mk. 4:1-20

Thursday, Jan 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church
Heb. 10:19-25
Ps. 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Mk. 4:21-25

Friday, Jan 29

Heb. 10:32-39
Ps. 37:3-4, 5-6, 23-24, 39-40
Mk. 4:26-34

Saturday, Jan 30

Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19
(Ps.) Lk. 1:69-70, 71-72, 73-75
Mk. 4:35-41

Sunday, Jan 31

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Dt. 18:15-20
Ps. 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9
1 Cor. 7:32-35
Mk. 1:21-28

Monday, Feb 1

Heb. 11:32-40
Ps. 31:20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Mk. 5:1-20

Tuesday, Feb 2

The Presentation of the Lord
Mal. 3:1-4
Ps. 24:7, 8, 9, 10
Heb. 2:14-18
Lk. 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

Wednesday, Feb 3

St. Blaise, bishop and martyr; St. Ansgar, bishop
Heb. 12:4-7, 11-15
Ps. 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a
Mk. 6:1-6

Thursday, Feb 4

Heb. 12:18-19, 21-24
Ps. 48:2-3ab, 3cd-4, 9, 10-11
Mk. 6:7-13

Friday, Feb 5

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr
Heb. 13:1-8
Ps. 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9abc
Mk. 6:14-29

Saturday, Feb 6

St. Paul Miki and companions, martyrs
Heb. 13:15-17, 20-21
Ps. 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Mk. 6:30-34

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for January:

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for February:

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

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the Lord can open doors and provide what they need."

She asks for people to join her in praying for strength to do God's will and the ability to open more doors to the people she's been sent to help.

She believes everyone can assist with this important work by simply being good neighbors.

"Get involved in your community," she suggested. "If you see someone who looks different, the first thing you can do is smile. They might not recognize it right away if you're wearing a mask, but even our body language tells people if we are open, if we are welcoming.

"My invitation to all is: Let's be people of hope!" she said.

Bishops call for an end to the federal death penalty

Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight joined Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of St. Louis and their fellow U.S. Catholic bishops in calling for a halt to executions by the fed-

eral government and an end to the death penalty in the United States.

"I call on the U.S. Department of Justice and government leaders to stop these executions, and in doing so I echo the words of Archbishop

Paul Coakley and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann in saying that 'We can accomplish justice without (the death penalty) and strengthen respect for the sacred dignity of every human life, which is so needed today,'" Archbishop Rozanski stated Jan. 11.

This followed a joint statement from Archbishop Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

In that statement, both archbishops said ending the federal use of the death penalty is "long past time."

"We renew our constant call to President (Donald) Trump and Acting Attorney General (Jeffrey) Rosen: Stop these executions," they stated.

The two archbishops noted that in 2020, the federal government, for the first time, executed more people than all 50 states combined.

Federal executions resumed in 2020 after a 17-year reprieve.

Archbishops Coakley and Naumann also called on President-elect Joe Biden and Congress to "make this a priority. One vehicle to accomplish this in federal law is the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act. In addition, we ask President-elect Biden to declare a

moratorium on federal executions and to commute current federal death sentences to terms of imprisonment."

President Biden succeeded President Trump on Jan. 20.

"It is long past time to abolish the death penalty from our state and federal laws," the archbishops stated.

Ten times in the past two years, bishops, groups of bishops, or the full U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had either spoken out against capital punishment, asked the faithful to add their voice on the issue, or sought to end its use in the courts.

Also Jan. 11, the Catholic Mobilizing Network launched an online petition campaign asking President-elect Biden to make an end to federal executions a priority once he is sworn into office.

"After six months of needless death from what will soon amount to 13 executions, the Trump administration has driven home why an end to the federal death penalty is so urgently needed," said a Jan. 11 statement by Krisanne Vailancourt Murphy, executive director.

During a Jan. 6 Georgetown University-sponsored forum on capital punishment, Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, cited the "throw-away culture" line frequently used by Pope Francis and said, "We let people die or we kill people, in the death penalty's

case, to solve problems. And the Church is simply saying: Enough blood. Stop."

The petition urges the incoming administration to "uphold the sacred dignity of every person" and make good on its promises to dismantle the federal death penalty system.

It names several possible avenues toward abolition that the president-elect could pursue, including declaring an official moratorium on federal executions, commuting the death sentences of all those currently on the federal death row, and advocating to end the death penalty in law.

Pope Francis in 2018 called for a revision to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, on the death penalty in a manner that affirms that "no matter how serious the crime that has been committed, the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and the dignity of the person."

He reaffirmed that the death penalty, regardless of the means of execution, "entails cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment." Furthermore, it is to be rejected "due to the defective selectivity of the criminal justice system and in the face of the possibility of judicial error."

Pope St. John Paul II, while offering Mass in St. Louis in 1999, called for a consensus to end the death penalty, declaring it to be "both cruel and unnecessary."

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