

“Providing Care, Creating Hope”

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri’s 2022 Impact Report is overflowing with stats and stories highlighting human connection.

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

February 3, 2023 • Vol. 66 No. 16

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Dan Lester grateful for his time at Catholic Charities



Dan Lester, executive director of Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, stands inside the Catholic Charities Food Pantry in the agency’s headquarters in Jefferson City Jan. 31. Mr. Lester announced that he will step down from his role at Catholic Charities on April 7.

— Photo by Ashley Wiskirchen

Will step down as executive director in April, help ensure a smooth transition

Special coverage of Catholic Charities and its 2023 Lenten Appeal in this edition of *The Catholic Missourian*

By Jay Nies

Dan Lester perused the 2016 annual report from Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO).

“The work we were doing at that time — it was very meaningful,” said Mr. Lester, referring to his first year as the agency’s executive director.

“But when I compare it to this year’s report, I think, ‘Holy smoke! What a ride it has been!’ It’s truly amazing,” he said.

Mr. Lester pondered the difference after announcing that he will step down as executive director on April 6, nearly seven years after accepting the role.

He said that after years of administration, he’s ready to get back into social work, family counseling or other person-to-person services.

“Plenty of prayer and contemplation and discussion have gone into this decision, and I’m feeling very much at peace,” he stated.

Mr. Lester plans to spend the next 10 weeks helping to ensure a seamless transition.

“We have people who will continue in their roles and have great skills and abilities and will be able to serve through this transition,” he stated. “The food pantry will continue to operate. Refugees will continue to arrive and be welcomed. The work will go on.”

See LESTER, page 19

Bishop McKnight reflects on his first five years as bishop, stays hopeful, focused on the future

“It is our task, it is our mission together to go out and proclaim the joy of the Gospel to a city, a diocese and a world so desperately in need of it.”

— Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, Feb. 6, 2018

By Jay Nies

The weather was freezing, wet and overcast, although the sun did break through briefly as the grand Liturgy got under way.

Bishop McKnight was home.

“It was a very hopeful day, looking forward, toward the future,” he recalled in interviews leading up to the fifth anniversary of his ordination and installation as Jefferson City’s fourth bishop.

“I had no idea what would be before me,” he said. “But I had a strong sense of hope and trust. And that has carried me through the five years that I’ve been bishop here.”

From priest to prelate

A startling difference Bishop McKnight noticed between being a parish priest and a diocesan bishop is the rhythm of Liturgies and the Sacraments.

“Through most of my life as a parish priest, I celebrated daily Mass, usually with a small congregation of 50 or less, on a regular basis, preaching every day,” he said.

Now, he rarely has that experience.

“Because my congregation, my assembly, is an entire diocese,” he noted. “I’m asked to share myself with everyone and not just one particular parish.”

So, one of his unexpected joys is “just being able to celebrate a regular Mass with people.”

As a bishop, he was surprised to discover how much he enjoys traversing this vast diocese to administer the Sacrament

See BISHOP MCKNIGHT, page 21

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MOVING? If you are moving or changing parishes, please fill out information below. Clip and mail to THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN, 2207 W Main St, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Or email changes to dbarnes@diojeffcity.org. Allow two weeks.

NEW ADDRESS

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

NEW PARISH _____

OLD PARISH _____

02/03/23

Pray for deceased priests

Feb. 7 — **Msgr. Joseph H. Winkelmann**, Sacred Heart, Rich Fountain (1960)

Feb. 10 — **Msgr. Paul U. Kertz**, Immaculate Conception, Jefferson City (1960); **Fr. William F. Harris**, St. Boniface, Brunswick (1974)

Feb. 14 — **Fr. Bernard H. Luebbering**, St. Mary, Shelbina (1972)

Science/Religion Teacher



Visitation Inter-Parish School, Vienna, Missouri is looking for a science/religion teacher for the current semester. Please contact Mrs. Marilyn Bassett at mbassett@visitationip.org or (573) 422-3375.

Director of Religious Education/Youth Minister



Holy Family Parish in Hannibal is seeking a DRE/Youth Minister. Key responsibilities include:

- assist the pastor in the responsibility for Catholic faith formation for parish youth and adults;
- implement the bishop's Confirmation preparation policy;
- organize, schedule and oversee religious education in the parish;
- administer a formation program for catechists that leads to certification and tracks completion;
- in cooperation with the diocesan Director of Religious Education & Youth/Young Adult Ministry, order approved textbooks, liturgy materials and other works that complement the religious education efforts of the parish; and
- provide resources and programs for adult formation.

A bachelor's degree in theology or religious education is preferred. The pastor is willing to consider either one full-time candidate or possibly two part-time individuals.

Resumes can be sent directly to Fr. Alex Gabriel, Holy Family Parish, 218 S. Maple Avenue, Hannibal, MO 63401 or applicants can apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com).

Business Manager Wanted



St. Peter Catholic Parish in Jefferson City is seeking a full-time Business Manager. This position oversees all financial elements of the parish, school, lunch program and Foundation. The work schedule varies based on needs of tasks at hand. The individual must have good communication skills, experience with various forms of media, and the ability to interact effectively with a variety of religious and secular personnel. Supervision is provided by the pastor. A degree in Business or Accounting or prior parish management experience is preferred. Experience with Microsoft Word and Excel are essential. Knowledge of Paylocity, QuickBooks and Community Church Builder would be helpful. St. Peter Catholic Church offers a comprehensive benefit package including health, dental, vision, vacation, and matching 403b retirement plan. Qualified candidates should email their resume with references to jsecrist@diojeffcity.org.

For a detailed job description please visit our website at <https://www.saintpeterjc.org/employment/>

SSND discernment retreat in St. Louis for single women

The North American Vocation Team (NAVT) of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) invites single women ages 18-45 to a discernment retreat Feb. 17-20, at their Sancta Maria in Ripa campus in St. Louis.

The theme of the retreat will be "Caught up in God's love: Listening to the call."

It will include time for both personal and communal reflection. Sessions will provide an opportunity to learn — through conversation, contemplation, prayer and spiritual guidance — how to recognize God's invitations in life.

There is no cost for participation in the retreat. Private rooms with restroom are provided; all meals are included.

Assistance with transportation costs is available if needed.

Pre-registration by Feb. 6 is requested.

"This discernment retreat is a chance to step back and sink more deeply into God's love, the love that shapes who we are and what we do with our lives, and to do so in community with other young women and with our sisters," said Sister Stephanie Spandl SSND.

The NAVT accompanies young women as they discern God's call while informing them about religious life and especially the mission and charism of SSND, an international community of almost 2,000 women religious founded in 1833.

The SSND mission is to proclaim the Good News, directing their entire lives toward

that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. [org/events/retreat23/](https://www.diojeffcity.org/events/retreat23/).

More information and registration is available at [ssnd.org](https://www.ssnd.org).

Contact sisters@ssnd.org or 314-325-6364 for information.



Official Decree of Appointments

The Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, Bishop of Jefferson City, hereby makes the following appointments to provide the most effective pastoral care of the Diocese of Jefferson City:

PRIESTS

Reverend Mark S. Smith, JCL, granted a leave of absence for reasons of health, from pastor of Ss. Peter & Paul Parish, Boonville and St.

Joseph Parish, Pilot Grove, effective immediately.

Reverend Paulinus C. Aneke, PhD, from associate pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center, Columbia, to temporary parochial administrator of Ss. Peter & Paul Parish, Boonville and St. Joseph Parish, Pilot Grove, effective 12 February 2023 and until the pastor is available to resume his duties.

Given at the Chancery this 20th day of January, 2023.

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Bishop of Jefferson City

Mr. Benjamin Roodhouse, JD, JCL
Chancellor

Podcast on Benedict XVI

In this month's Podcast from the Diocese of Jefferson City, three priests of the diocese share stories of being in the presence of the late Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and how those experiences changed their lives. Find the podcast at: [diojeffcity.org/podcast/](https://www.diojeffcity.org/podcast/)

Senior Bookkeeper



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a full-time senior bookkeeper with advanced bookkeeping and elementary accounting work in the maintenance, review and analysis of detailed financial records throughout the entire accounting cycle. This individual will perform a variety of moderately complex to advanced bookkeeping/accounting tasks and procedures. Experience with general ledger, investments, insurance administration and payroll is strongly desired. Employer offers a comprehensive benefit package including health, dental, vision, and matching 403b retirement plan.

Experience with Sage Intacct accounting system would be considered a plus. Knowledge and preparation of worksheets and financial statements and general ledger account classification is required.

Qualified candidates should send their resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

The Catholic Missourian

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

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight
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Catholic Charities continues providing care, creating hope

By Jay Nies

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO) isn't just known for creating hope.

It has been witnessed resuscitating hope where it was thought to be permanently lost.

"We Catholics stand on faith, hope and love, pillars set in place by the God who is the center of our existence," said Bishop W. Shawn McKnight.

"God's Kingdom is revealed in beautiful and often unexpected ways when we combine and focus our best efforts, with his assistance, on areas of great need, beginning with the people who live closest to us," he said.

That has been an operating principle for CCCNMO, the social services arm of the Jefferson City diocese, since the agency's founding in 2011.

Catholic Charities has helped thousands of people throughout these 38 counties, "accompanying them in mind, body and spirit, with compassionate social services, valuing each person served by honoring their inherent dignity and respectfully caring for them, regardless of faith, culture or situation," the agency's recently released impact report for 2022 states.

"Whether our neighbors traveled across the globe or across the street to meet with

our caseworkers, program coordinator, interns or volunteers, the encounters we've experienced in 2022 have shaped our communities in beautiful ways," the report continues. "We have navigated everything from helping a neighbor find food security and help with chronic diseases to resettling after a decade in a refugee camp and family reunification amidst navigating the immigration progress."

The impact report sets forth helpful statistics to shed some light the scope and depth of services CCCNMO provided in its 11th year.

For instance, it points to:

- 1,095 active volunteers who performed 25,000 hours of service in 2022;
- collaboration with over 150 partner agencies and organizations;
- the resettling of 228 refugees and people with special immigrant visa status into safe, welcoming communities;
- helping 151 refugees find full-time employment and partnering with more than 300 community sponsors to help people through the resettling process;
- provided more than 2,500 immigration legal consultations, helping 416 people in filing applications, petitions or motions, with an im-

pact on over 1,600 people in households in this diocese;

- enrolled 1,577 members in the Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Jefferson City, bringing 4,063 households a step closer to food security;
- sent nearly 300,000

contributions having been made to CCCNMO.

"Behind each of these numbers" the authors point out, "are real people, real families with real needs and experiences — people, families and needs that we are blessed to serve with your

have what they need," David Mazimano, acting director for case management operations in the Catholic Charities Refugee Services program, states in the report.

Some of those stories are being shared in articles, along with a special center section and insert in this week's edition of *The Catholic Missourian*, in upcoming Catholic Charities social media posts and online at cccnmo.diojeffcity.org.

Catholics throughout the diocese are encouraged to make a sacrificial gift or pledge to CCCNMO sometime during Lent, in addition to their regular, sacrificial support of their own parish.

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri

pounds of food home to food-pantry clients;

- launched the first round of a parish ambassador program, with 74 parish ambassadors;
- and nearly 2,000 contri-

support."

"At Catholic Charities, we always treat 'cases' as individuals, looking at any avenues, resources and community support that can make sure families in situations like these

World Day of the Sick, Anointing of the Sick, Feb. 12 in Lake Ozark

DATE: February 12
TIME: 10 am

Ozark will observe the annual World Day of the Sick with the communal Anointing of the Sick on Sunday, Feb. 12, during the 10 a.m. Mass.

The Mass will be at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 2411 Bagnell Dam Blvd.

People who have serious physical or mental illness, are elderly, or are preparing for serious surgery are invited to receive the Sacrament of

Anointing of the Sick during this Mass.

Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Ozark will observe the annual World Day of the Sick with the communal Anointing of the Sick on Sunday, Feb. 12, during the 10 a.m. Mass. Father Michael Penn, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, and Monsignor Michael T. Flanagan, senior priest in residence at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia, will concelebrate this Mass and administer the Sacrament.

Members of the Knights of Columbus will escort those who will be receiving the Sacrament to pews reserved near the front of the church.

Contact Fr. Penn at 573-365-2241 for information.

Cardinal: Day of Consecrated Life is time to renew missionary zeal

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

The religious order sisters, brothers and priests and the hermits, monks and consecrated virgins who serve God and the Catholic Church are called to stoke the "missionary fire" in their souls, said Cardinal João Bráz de Aviz.

"To live mission in God's way as consecrated persons, we need the breath of the Spirit, who oxygenates our consecration, who widens our tent, who does not allow the desire to go out and reach out to others to proclaim the Gospel fade or be eclipsed," said the cardinal, who is prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

In a letter preparing for the celebration Feb. 2 of the feast

of the Presentation of the Lord and the World Day for Consecrated Life, Cardinal Bráz de Aviz noted that Pope Francis, who usually celebrates Mass with consecrated people on

the feast day, will be in Congo, where hundreds of religious minister to the people, bringing the sacraments, education, healthcare, charity and other services.



Bishop McKnight's Calendar

FEBRUARY


Feb 3	Holy Land Presentation and Luncheon for Diocesan Priests and Deacons, 11 am, Chancery
Feb 4	Public Mass, 10 am, and Holy Land Presentation, 11 am, St. Stanislaus Church, Wardsville
Feb 5	Celebration with Religious of the Diocese, 2 pm, St. Alphonsus Liguori Chapel, Chancery
Feb 7	Council of Deans Meeting, 11 am; Presbyteral Council Meeting, 1 pm, Chancery
Feb 8	Confirmation Mass, Ss. Peter & Paul Church, 6:30 pm, Boonville
Feb 11-12	Deacon Convocation, Diocese of Columbus, Columbus, OH
Feb 23	Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Board Meeting, 10 am; Diocesan Excellence in Education Fund Meeting, 1 pm, Chancery

Bishop McKnight's February prayer intention for our Local Church

For engaged couples preparing for marriage in our Church; that they may grow together in their love for one another as they seek to enrich their matrimonial commitments with the grace of God.

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

Por las parejas comprometidas que se preparan para el matrimonio en nuestra Iglesia; para que puedan crecer juntos en su amor mutuo mientras buscan enriquecer sus compromisos matrimoniales con la gracia de Dios.



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

Catholic Charities Freedom through Financial Health program offers a way out of predatory payday loan cycle

By Jay Nies

414 percent.

That, according to a 2021 Missouri Division of Finance survey of payday lenders in the state, is the average annual interest rate for a payday loan in this state.

"If your finances are in bad enough shape, it's hard to think of anything else when you're so worried about, 'Am I going to be able to pay this month's rent?'" said Kathleen Frese, a certified public accountant and financial stability specialist for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO).

"That's how they lure people in," she said. "They don't care if you can pay your other bills or not."

Ms. Frese is on a mission to help people trapped in poverty by predatory lenders through Catholic Charities' Freedom through Financial Wellness program.

"It's a way for you to break

free from the cycle of debt and learn how to manage your finances so you never have to resort to this type of option for money to buy food or get your car fixed," she said.

"We've begun to see the need for this," Ms. Frese. "And the need is tremendous."

The program, started in 2022, is available to Cole County residents, with plans to expand to other counties in the Jefferson City diocese.

It's not free money. Rather, it's a road to financial wellness for people who qualify and who agree to the terms of a new loan with much lower interest.

"You have to show that you have the monthly income to cover your basic living expenses while repaying the loan," said Ms. Frese. "You're going to meet with me monthly. We'll look at your other debt, such as student loans or medical debt,

who volunteers for River City Habitat for Humanity in Jefferson City recognized how outstanding payday or title loans were a barrier for home ownership.

"That's what sparked the interest," Ms. Frese noted.

olic Charities."

She has witnessed the effects predatory lending has on families.

"It's heartbreaking to see a young family whose dream is to own a home but they've gotten stuck in this cycle of predatory loans and they're never going to be able to improve their credit score and save money for that down payment," she said.

She's convinced that many people don't understand enough about finances to know what they're getting into with a title or payday loan.

She recently visited a payday lending office where the annual interest rate was clearly posted at 304 percent.

"But when you're in a desperate situation and have no other options and you need

to buy food or pay rent or have an unexpected medical bill or something like that, or if you lose your job or get sick and aren't able to go to work and don't get paid — the reasons are endless," she said.

Borrowers are supposed to pay off a payday loan by their next paycheck.

"But that deadline comes along and you have to pay these other bills and you can't afford to make that payment. They'll happily roll it over for you for more fees and more interest, and it's a vicious cycle that just goes on and on," she said.

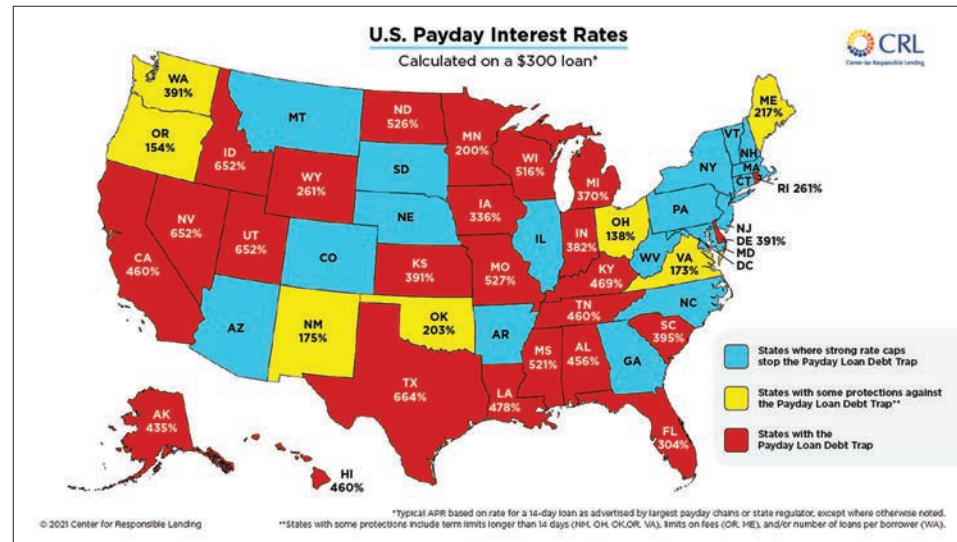
"So our hope with this program is that we can find those people that are stuck in that vicious cycle and offer them hope to break out of it," she said.

"The one driving the ship"

Ms. Frese went to Kansas City, Kansas, to shadow her counterpart at Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas.

She was present when a client went back to the payday loan office, presented the check and started the process of regaining her financial independence.

"She had ridden a bus for over an hour — and it was a really hot day in July — to meet us," Ms. Frese recalled. "She was so thankful and so appreciative."



and look at your credit report, and we'll work on your budget."

"Another requirement is, you can't take out another high-interest loan during the term of paying this one off," she said.

Once the application has been submitted and approved, Catholic Charities puts up the collateral for a new loan to be serviced through Mid America Bank.

The bank writes a check for the full amount owed to the payday lender and refinances the loan at a fraction of the original interest rate, likely reducing the monthly payment by hundreds of dollars.

The borrower sets up an automatic withdrawal from his or her bank account for the payments to be made each month.

Ms. Frese has a wealth of resources to help her clients set up a budget and set financial goals.

"Our goal is to help you get your financial health in order so you don't get into the situation where you need to resort to this kind of thing again," said Ms. Frese. "Your life can be so much better if we can help you get out of this cycle of debt and you don't have it hanging over your head anymore."

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See PAYDAY LOANS, page 11

Outreach is the goal of parish-focused Catholic Charities grant program

Grant helps convert Clarence rectory, showing how several communities can work together to help people in need

By Jay Nies

Amanda Durbin is a perennial force in the Shelby and Macon County parishes' efforts to radiate God's charity and mercy.

She understands helping and being helped.

"I know what it means to struggle, and I know what a little bit of help can do for the lives of people in that situation," said Mrs. Durbin.

She and her husband Dale, along with fellow members of St. Mary Parish in Shelby, St. Patrick Parish in Clarence, Immaculate Conception Parish in Macon and the Mission of Sacred Heart in Bevier, are converting the former Clarence rectory into a place called St. Patrick's Haven.

It will serve as transitional housing for mothers and children in need in a community where affordable family housing is acutely scarce.

The ministry recently received a \$5,000 Charity and Mercy Grant from Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri.

It will help pay for modifications to the home to maximize its flexibility and usefulness.

"I love that so much, this idea of a parish having a property that's being underutilized, and a group of parishioners saying, 'Here's a need in our community, and how can we use this space to meet that need?'" said Catholic Charities Executive Director Dan Lester.

"That is the definition of parishes as centers of charity and mercy," he said, echoing the third priority from the diocesan pastoral plan.

Charity and Mercy Grants provide up to \$5,000 to initiatives sponsored or co-sponsored by Catholic parishes anywhere in these 38 counties.

"We're always looking to take the opportunity to engage in subsidiarity — local folks addressing local issues, making a difference close to home," said Mr. Lester.

Catholic Charities has awarded over \$99,000 in Charity and Mercy Grants, including:

•St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish in Columbia, in support of the Interfaith Gar-

den Project, providing fresh produce to local food pantries;

•Sacred Heart Parish in Columbia, for its English Language Learner Program;

•St. Joseph Parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference in Edina, for charitable outreach;

•St. George Parish in Hermann, in support of the local Ministerial Alliance's charitable works;

•St. Bernadette Parish in Hermitage, in support of the ecumenical Hickory Country Community Outreach and the Helping Hands Abuse and Crisis Center;

•El Puente Hispanic Ministry in Jefferson City, for an upgrade to its phone system;

•Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Ozark, in support of the ecumenical Lake Area Helping Hands outreach;

•St. Brendan Parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference in Mexico, for its Beds for Kids program, and to help pay for prescriptions for people who recently lost their jobs.

•Immaculate Conception Parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference in Montgomery City, for its emergency assistance ministry;

•St. Pius X Parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference in Moberly, for development of a Beds for Kids program to provide mattresses for children of families in need;

•St. Lawrence Parish in St. Elizabeth and St. Anthony of

Padua Parish in St. Anthony, for expansion of the interchurch Helping Hands food pantry and thrift shop;

•St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Sedalia, in support of its Giving Garden social ministry, providing produce to local food pantries;

•St. Mary Parish in Shelby, for its St. Mary Works of Mercy parish outreach;

•St. Ann Parish in Warsaw, in support of its St. Joseph's Table social ministry, addressing local emergency assistance needs; and

•St. Joseph School in Westphalia, for its Blankets for Babies and Cozy Covers program.

The grant application includes assurance that the supported ministries uphold the Church's moral and charitable teachings.

The Parish Social Ministry committee of the Catholic Charities board of directors reviews and approves all applications.

Strength in unity

"Slowly but surely, we're helping to make a difference in the communities we serve," said Mr. Lester. "The challenge, of course, is that there's never enough to go around."

He spoke of the principles of subsidiarity — "addressing need as closely to the source as possible" — and solidarity — "all of us working together to help one another."

"No one service or entity is going to be able to be everything to everybody," he noted. "But if we can live out 'many parts, one body,' we can figure out ways to make things better, together."

He pointed to a recent Charity and Mercy Grant to the Open Table, a community nonprofit in Fulton that is working to reopen the local soup kitchen, which suspended services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is an interchurch effort, with several members of St. Peter Parish serving as officers, Mr. Lester noted.

"A good start"

A client of the Ray of Hope Pregnancy Help Center in Shelby had lost her home and was temporarily quartered in a hotel room with her four middle and high school children and a newborn baby.

She qualified for public housing assistance, but no housing was available.

"She was about to get evicted from the hotel," Mrs. Durbin noted. "She had no place to go, which meant the Department of Social Services was probably going to step in and split up the family."

"We were doing everything we could to find them a home and were hitting nothing but brick walls," Mrs. Durbin recalled.

See GRANTS, page 22



The St. Patrick Parish Rectory in Clarence, shown here on the left adjacent to the church, is being converted to transitional housing for mothers and children in need, with help from a Charity and Mercy Grant from Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri.

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HAPPY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mindy Caldwell
So thankful for all those who are faithful and dedicated to helping raise our children in the light of God. Catholic Schools are truly a blessing.

Karen Hilbrenner
Thank you for all of your hard work!

Deacon Turf Martin
Congratulations to our Catholic schools for enhancing our children's faith and academic excellence. The challenge of a society that is struggling to enhance to improve the quality of life of humans.

Doug & Carey Henke
Thank you for all that you do for our kids! God bless you!

Erin Vader
I am so proud to work with you all! Thank you for being Christ's hands and feet in the world!

Pam Porting
Thank you for the lives you have touched. You are very much appreciated. Enjoy Catholic Schools week!

Jean Ann Mechlin
Our Catholic Schools are light houses guiding our students with Faith, Love, and a great education into our Communities and further into the world.

Lindsey Eick
Thank you all for dedicating your careers to educating and providing religious education to our children! We truly appreciate all that you do!

Deacon Ray Purvis
So proud of our Diocesan Catholic Schools. May God continue his blessings on our schools.
Deacon Ray

Nicole Gregory
Thank you for all you do for our children!

Francis Butel
Our Catholic schools are super because of the great teachers that staff them.

Fr. Matthew Flatley
The faithful dedication of the IC School staff is extraordinary. The respectful, kind and friendly demeanor of the children inspires me. This Catholic school gives me hope!

Rose Lloyd
Thank you!

Andrea Burns
Thank you so much for everything you do for the students of OLLIS! You make all the difference! Blessings and love, Andrea Burns

Theresa Rege
Thank you for choosing a Catholic School to educate at. You are very much appreciated!

Father Dan Lueckenotte
Let the children come to me and do not hinder them! Thank you for all you do to bring the children to Jesus.

Mika Emerson
Thank you for everything you have done for our children! From the education aspect to the social/emotional support. We couldn't imagine sending our girls anywhere else.

Cari Hall
So blessed to have such excellent educators!

Sister Kathleen Wegman, SSND
Dear Catholic School Educators, Congratulations and Thank You for your leadership and service. Your dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated.

Dana Sleeth
Thank you so much for your time and dedication to the students. You are greatly appreciated.

Deidre Ritter
Thank you, teachers! We appreciate all you do for our children.

Amy and Michael Doorack
Thank you for your dedication and love for our children!

Ron Sayer
We are so proud of our students and those who work to educate and guide them.

Erin Polson
I love my Catholic School! Thank you to all the staff and families for their dedication to the school and parish. May the love of Christ be in your hearts always!

Patricia Lutz
As a parent of an alum of Saints Peter and Paul in Boonville and now the proud parent of a Catholic educator at Helias, thank you for your ministry to our faith and to our future.

Fr. Dan Merz
I SO appreciate the gift of Catholic Schools to our Church! Thank you!!

Linda Veit
Happy Catholic Schools Week! My husband and I truly appreciate all that are involved in providing life long experience, guidance and education to our children and grand children! Blessings be yours!

Lee and Ann Jolly
It is hard to express in words how much we appreciate all the staff at OLLIS! It is a comfort sending our child to school knowing not only is she learning but she is also loved. Thank you!

Joylynn Dawn
The children of our Catholic schools are truly blessed to have teachers who are passionate about both education and facilitating a love for God in our students!

Martina Ohiemu
Thank you to all the staff of OLLIS! You're a great blessing to our community because of all you do. Thank you ❤️

Kim Ebersol
To ALL of our OLLIS teachers...Thank you so much for your excellent instruction, kindness, inclusivity, fun activities and above all your love and caring of my girls. Thank you so much.

Edward & Deborah Portell
We are pleased with the option our Catholic schools give our children's education a possibility beyond academics. It is the third leg of our church and home environment.

Fr. Brad Berhorst
Catholic Schools are an essential part of the mission of the Church! Thanks for all the work you do supporting that mission!

Dan and Kathy Smith
Our kids attended Catholic Schools from K-12 in our diocese. They continue to be very strong in their faith and we attribute that to the wonderful teachers, administrators and pastors of our diocese.

Darby Carel
Thank you for all you do!

Stephanie Parsons
Thank you for caring for my kids throughout the years. You are all a true blessing in our lives!

Natalie Gruer
Thanks to all the teachers that teach our kids and love them like their own. You are so appreciated!!

Deacon Mike Berendzen
Thank you for greatly impacting the lives, and the faith, of not only the youth of our diocese but also their parents and our communities. You are truly helping make brighter the light of Christ!

Lindsey Benson
Thank you for all of your love, time and hard work!
The Bensons

Mike and Jami Hentges
A big thank you to all our Catholic educators!

Felix Adah
Stephanie Kleffner
Tiffany Shanks
Sr. Suzanne Walker
Julia Kisner
Jillian Sanders

Laura Forbis St. Clair
Lindsay Cordia
Terri Brown
Jim Vignola
Margaret Harder
Perry Mathes

Marcie Forck
Thanks for all you do for our students!

Tami Kacmar
Thanks for all you do!

Paula Glynn
Thank you for all you do for the students of the Diocese of Jefferson City! It is a pleasure to work with and support your efforts every day!

Cecilia Lock
Thanks to all administrators, educators, and staff who share your faith and knowledge with our children. We are so blessed to have each and every one of you!

Mary Brandel
Thank you for your more than an 8 hour day to teach our children. 🙏🙏🙏

Sister Ruth Ann Klausner
God bless you for all of your generous gift of sharing yourself with your students. My prayers are for each of you.

Barb Prasad
I am so grateful to all the teachers and school staff that helped raise our children in the Catholic church. It is a joy to now see my first granddaughter getting the same opportunity!

Donna Long
Thank you to all our Catholic Schools staff for your dedication in teaching the faith.

Michelle Leos
Thank you for all you do!

Brooke Morris
We are so thankful for our OLLIS community. The teachers and staff always go above and beyond and we are grateful for all they do for our kids.

Linda Shuster
Thank you for your dedication and support of our Catholic School Students, their parents and our parishes. You make a difference in their lives every day and we appreciate you!

Marcia Dall
Thank you so much for all you do for the students. You are so valuable! We appreciate you!

Michael and Broker
All teachers are in my daily prayers. You are the foundation of every other profession. God bless you with good health as you make a difference in the lives of our precious children.

Deacon Ric Telthorst
Thank you for keeping the faith alive in our next generation of Catholics.

JoAnn Shull
Your dedication and passion do not go unnoticed. You, along with parents, are gifting the Church by equipping the next generation of saints! Thank you!

HAPPY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Patty Miller

So proud of Holy Family Catholic School! Great Principal in Mrs. Sara Hooley. Wonderful, caring teachers and staff. Happy Catholic Schools Week to all!

Deacon Bill Seibert

In 1998, the State Patrol Superintendent called my wife first, to let her know Helias was in Jefferson City before he offered me a promotion. He heard about my wife and Catholic schools.

Liz Thompson

Thank you for all the love you put in to teaching our children each day! You are such a blessing to so many children and their families. You are truly special and we appreciate you!

Rebecca and Josh Lester

Thank you for all you do to help grow our children to be loving, caring, kind people. We appreciate and honor you!!!!

Deacon Robert Schowengerdt

God bless all the staff and students in our schools.

Pamela Mulumby

May our good Lord bless you richly for the amazing work that you do every day.

Vic and Cheryl Buechter

We are so thankful for our Catholic school teachers and staff for their dedication and the job they do teaching our children. We are proud of our daughter teaching at St. Joseph Cathedral School.

Rebecca Koonse

Thanks for all you do to provide an excellent education and experience for our children!

Kelsey Emmerich

Thank you for all the work that you put into educating our youth! "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." -Proverbs 22

Larry and Donna Mitchell

My mother's education at Holy Rosary Catholic School in Monroe City has been appreciated by her children, grandchildren and beyond. A spiritual gift that perpetuates grace to all. God Bless them!

Nancy Heberlie

Many thanks to all involved with Catholic schools. What a blessing to the diocese! May God continue to build up His kingdom through this beautiful ministry.

Pam Flaspohler

Thank you to all who help guide our children in a Catholic Education!! What a blessing!

Ted Brauker

To my fellow teachers, your dedication to our faith and students inspires me every day. Thank you for making me a better teacher and person through your examples.

Jess and Eddie Vomund Family

We are so blessed and thankful for our OLLIS family! Audrey has had a wonderful start to her educational experience because of the blessing the school has been to her. Thank you!

Kelly Rohrbach

Thank you for answering the call to teach in a Catholic School, you are appreciated!

Gala Wolfmeier

Happy Catholic Schools Week! Thank you for all that you do!

Deacon Dan Joyce

We pray for the continued growth in faith and charity of our Catholic students and their parents this Catholic Schools week.

The Vellemans

Thank you for all you do to help our children become all God created them to be!

Kathleen Basi

Thank you for all you do for our kids!

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight

Every day, you are helping families and the Church to form our young people, made in God's image and likeness, to be faithful witnesses of the light of Christ in our world.

Interchurch overnight shelter needs more volunteers

Jefferson City Room at the Inn operates in Catholic Charities Center

By Jay Nies

In its former life as a high-school seminary chapel, the Community Room of the Catholic Charities Center in Jefferson City resonated with hymns of the folk variety.

"We will work with each other. We will work side-by-side. And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride. And they'll know we are Christians by our love."

The hymn takes flesh every night as an interchurch band of volunteers provides a bed, two hot meals and a safe place to sleep for people who would otherwise spend the night in the cold.

It is Jefferson City Room at the Inn (JCRATI), now in its second winter of existence.

JCRATI is an overnight, low-barrier, emergency shelter that operates from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. each night in January and February, accommodating up to 15 adult guests.

It is community supported

and completely staffed by volunteers.

Catholic Charities provides the space, free of charge.

"The shelter opened Jan. 1, and we've seen a steadily increasing number of guests coming to stay with us each night," noted Shelly Hittner, a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City, who is one of the regular volunteers.

Three shifts of three volunteers apiece set up the shelter each night, feed and look after the guests, and clean up and transform the room back into a workspace in the morning.

"We need nine volunteers every day to make sure the shelter opens," said Deacon Ric Telthorst, who assists the pastor of St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City.

Additional volunteers provide the meals — either home-cooked or take-out.

Each shift includes a lead volunteer who has experience carrying out the responsibilities for that shift.

Deacon Telthorst and his wife, Mary, president of the



The cots are set up and ready to welcome guests to Jefferson City Room at the Inn, an interchurch emergency shelter that's open each night in January and February in the Catholic Charities Community Room in Jefferson City.

— Photo from the Jefferson City Room at the Inn Facebook page

parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference, are among the regular volunteers from a handful of local congregations.

Buses belonging to local congregations pick up guests for the shelter at the public library in downtown Jefferson City and return them each morning.

Deacon Telthorst referred to

it as a model of Christian collaboration.

"It's such a beautiful thing to see the Baptist Church bus and United Methodist Church bus arrive at the Catholic Charities Center," he stated. "It's such a visible show of unity within our diversity of faith."

He noted that several of the regular volunteers take on mul-

tiple shifts each week in order to keep the shelter going.

"Every day is kind of an adventure," he said. "We could really use more people."

Help always needed

The opening shift arrives at 6 p.m. to set up the beds, organize the paperwork, welcome the guests, place their belongings in safe storage and serve dinner.

The lights go out at 10 p.m.

The next shift arrives at 11 and stays the night.

"Helping 14 or 15 people get settled and take care of them and keep a watchful eye out for them takes a certain amount of time and energy," Deacon Telthorst noted.

The overnight crew also works on laundry and other tasks.

The morning shift arrives at 5 a.m., serves breakfast, checks the guests out and cleans the facility.

"We have to recreate the space every night, because Catholic Charities needs the

See JCRATI, page 27

QUESTION CORNER

On limbo and on silent prayer

By Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Q: What happened to Limbo? (Sacramento, California)

A: Traditionally, limbo was thought of as a “place” in the afterlife that was neither heaven nor purgatory, but which also didn’t involve the full sufferings of hell proper. Limbo was meant for the non-baptized who were innocent of any serious personal sin. Generally, limbo was seen as the destiny of young children who died before baptism, and in some cases also as the eternal home of virtuous non-Christians.

The idea of limbo was a sort of compromise between the Church’s teachings on the necessity of baptism for salvation, the reality of original sin, and our belief in God’s justice and mercy. It was posited that while God would never condemn the innocent to suffer eternal torment, the unbaptized could never enter heaven itself.

However, limbo was never official Church doctrine; it was always only a well-established but still speculative theological theory. Limbo is not included in our Creeds and is never mentioned in our current *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Our liturgical tradition also at times contradicts the concept of limbo for unbaptized infants. For instance, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Innocents every year on December 28, recognizing that these unbaptized babies who died for the sake of Christ can intercede for us from their home in heaven. The Church also has special rites for the funeral Mass of infants who die before baptism.

In more recent times, the International Theological Commission — a body of professional theologians who convene regularly to study various issues and advise the pope — addressed the question of limbo in a document published in 2007. They note that while baptism is a necessary component to our faith, “The necessity of sacramental Baptism is a necessity of the second order compared to the absolute necessity of God’s saving act through Jesus Christ for the final salvation of every human being.” And that “Sacramental Baptism is necessary because it is the ‘ordinary’ [my emphasis] means through which a person shares the beneficial effects of Jesus’ death and resurrection.”

That is, while Baptism is the usual and ordinary means through which a person is able to attain eternal life in heaven, the Church still recognizes that God is free to extend his saving grace in an extraordinary way, beyond his promises. The overall conclusion of this document from the Commission is that, with respect to the eternal fate of unbaptized infants, we can have confidence in God’s tender mercy.

Q: I live alone, and every morning and night, I say my prayers out loud, but sometimes I pray silently, just in my head. Are those silent prayers heard? (Atlanta, Georgia)

A: God is everywhere and knows everything, so it is safe to say that even our purely silent prayers are heard by God.

Additionally, we are told throughout Scripture that God knows the secrets and thoughts of our hearts. For example, in the book of Psalms, we pray: “LORD, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar ... Even before a word is on my tongue, LORD, you know it all.” (Ps. 139:1-2, 4)

Many of our greatest saints, such as Sts. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, place special value on “mental prayer,” or a silent, often wordless sharing of our hearts with God. And in the Gospel, Jesus himself tells us: “...when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will repay you.” (Mt. 6:6)

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.



Pope preaches peace, cooperation, resilience during visit to Congo

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Kinshasa, Congo

The people of Congo are more precious than any of the gems or minerals found in the earth beneath their feet, yet they have been slaughtered by warmongers and exploited by prospectors, Pope Francis said.

“This country, so immense and full of life, this diaphragm of Africa, struck by violence like a blow to the stomach, has seemed for some time to be gasping for breath,” the pope said Jan. 31 at a meeting with Congo’s President Felix Tshisekedi, other government and political leaders, diplomats and representatives of civil society.

Poverty, internal displacement, crime and violence plague the Congolese people. The United Nations and human rights organizations say more than 100 armed groups are operating in the country, sowing terror particularly in the east.

Yet, according to the U.S. State Department country report, for Africa “regional stability and security is dependent on durable peace” in Congo, “the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa,” one bordering nine other nations and home to diamonds and vast mineral reserves.

It also has the largest Catholic population in Africa and has the sixth most Catholics of any nation after Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, the United States and Italy.

Tens of thousands of people lined the streets from the airport to the city center, cheering as the pope passed by in the popemobile.

Many children and teens were dressed in their school uniforms, parishioners proudly held banners welcoming the pope in the name of their communities and many of the women wore brightly colored cotton dresses with images of the pope.

Speaking to several hundred leaders in the garden of the Palais de la Nation, his official residence, President Tshisekedi told the pope that the welcome and harmony that had characterized Congo for centuries has, in the past 30 years, “been undermined by the enemies of peace as well as terrorist groups, mainly from neighboring countries.”

“Indeed,” he told the pope, with “the inaction and silence of the international community, more than 10 million people have had

See CONGO, page 23

Vigils Feb. 7 for scheduled execution

Would be state’s 95th

The State of Missouri plans to execute Leonard Taylor at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre.

Mr. Taylor was convicted of the 2004 murders of Angela Rowe and her three children, Alexis Conley, Acqreya Conley and Tyrese Conley.

His execution would be Missouri’s third in the past three months and the 95th execution the state has carried out since reinstating the death penalty in 1989.

Catholic teaching strongly opposes the use of the death penalty because it disregards the sanctity and dignity of human life.

Several observances to give witness against the execution and in favor of reconciliation and alternatives to the death penalty will be held in Jefferson City on the day of the scheduled execution.

•A respectful protest will be held from noon to 1 p.m. in the corridor outside the Governor’s Office (Room 216) in the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City.

•A peaceful, silent vigil op-

posing the execution will be held from 5-6 p.m. on the sidewalk across from the Missouri Supreme Court Building, 207 W. High Street in Jefferson City.

The public is invited to take part in any and all of these observances.

The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC), public policy agency of the state’s four Roman Catholic dioceses, sent Missouri Gov. Mike Parson a request to grant clemency to Mr. Taylor and commute his sentence to life imprisonment without parole.

“The deaths of Miss Rowe and her children were a tragic waste of life, and our hearts and prayers are with their family at this difficult time,” the Jan. 26 letter states. “Sadly, no punishment will restore them to their loved ones.”

The co-signers note that some people are convinced that society needs the death penalty to protect life.

“We strongly believe, however, that society can adequately protect human life without capital punishment,” the letter states.

The MCC and the request’s co-signers point to significant errors by the defendant’s trial counsel that might have deprived him of an effective de-

fense and could have contributed to a verdict of guilty.

They further state that the death penalty promotes revenge as a principle of criminal justice.

“As imperfect human beings, the Grace of God is not something we receive because we deserve it; rather, it is something He gives to us freely as an act of mercy,” they state.

Paragraph 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as updated in 2018, states: “The Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,’ and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

Pope Francis stated in his 2015 address to the U.S. Congress: “I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes.”

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.”

For more information about the vigils, call 573-635-7239.

Young adult Catholics have spoken. Has the Church listened?

By Cecilia Flores



In the Church today, young adult Catholics are often given a bad rap. Data have shown that our age group is disassociating from the Catholic Church in droves, and we are sometimes perceived generationally as being non-committal, for having short attention spans and not valuing traditions. There is a bit of truth in some of that, but those sentiments fail to acknowledge that there are many young adults actively engaged in the Church, who desire to be a part of it and are committed to their Catholic identity — even when we feel like our pleas for inclusiv-

ity within the institutional Church are misconstrued as mere grievance rather than sincere zeal mixed with a need to be seen, heard and truly known.

In the last several years, Catholics throughout the country have participated in numerous gatherings inviting the faithful to share insights on the current landscape of different segments of the Church in the U.S., and to recommend pathways toward improving ministries and outreach. We have had the Convocation of Catholic Leaders, the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, the National Dialogue, the Synod on Synodality and Journeying Together — all of which collectively included numerous younger Catholic participants from throughout the country. I have personally participated in all these

enterprises, and at times felt great hope through having the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences as a young adult Catholic, to hear the stories of others, and to discuss strategies for helping to bring the Church to life for the generations that will inherit it.

In 2023, the National Eucharistic Revival will take center stage. From playbooks, to events, to billboards, there is a palpable energy from both clergy and the lay faithful who are excited about what this revival may ignite within the Church. Despite my own deep personal connection to and love of the Eucharist, I would like to explain why I am still hesitant to embrace it, and why I would describe my posture as one of cautious optimism at best, and wary apathy at worst.

gains momentum, I worry that this initiative will become just one more item on the list of projects meant to foster energy and catalyze small but vital changes in the Church in the U.S., which never develop into coherent practices benefiting (or even touching) the larger Church. The gatherings I previously mentioned all delivered myriad reports and recommendations for courses of action, but with seemingly little corresponding impact on the Church. It makes it hard, sometimes, to feel that our concerns are really being heard.

Truly, I believe we young adults who have participated with great hope in these assemblies and convocations are experiencing a bit of emotional fatigue. We have been asked repeatedly to share

As the National Eucharistic Revival

See FLORES, page 23

How the elderly help the young

By Sister Constance Veit, Isp



I attended SEEK23, the annual conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), At the beginning of January.

Our Sisters have attended this event for many years and we have seen it evolve from a modest gathering of several hundred college students in a hotel to a huge, intergenerational event with 17,000 participants.

One of the first people I encountered was a young priest who had volunteered with our Sisters as a seminarian and who currently serves in a university parish in the Rocky Mountain region.

I asked him about his ministry, thinking that a university parish must be a perfect combination of generations and backgrounds. I was surprised by his reply!

He told me that it is actually quite challenging for him and his collaborators because various age groups have different needs and aspirations and they live more or less separate lives. Whenever the parish invests time or funds in one age cohort, he said, the others seem to resent it.

How sad! I am passionate about bringing young people and seniors together and assumed this type of parish would be the ideal place for intergenerational relationships.

The young priest told me that he has succeeded in bringing teens to visit seniors in a local assisted living facility but it is more difficult to interest active seniors — those still living on their own — to get more involved in the parish where they could engage with families and young people.

We brainstormed about how he

might motivate young people to perform acts of service for seniors living in the community — from shoveling snow and helping with home improvements, to helping seniors get up to speed with the internet and social media.

We also talked about how he might draw young and old together for social events in the parish as well as how the generations might join forces to serve the community.

Pro-life work, outreach to individuals dealing with poverty and groups living on the peripheries, ecological initiatives and fundraising efforts to support refugees are just a few examples of charitable efforts that could be undertaken by intergenerational parish teams.

Finally, I shared my conviction that older people have a special calling — an authentic mission — to mentor the young and inspire hope in them by sharing their own life experiences, dreams and wisdom.

Even when they seem accomplished and self-sufficient, young people need guidance and affirmation. They want role models and wisdom figures who look on them with fresh eyes, discern their potential and accompany them on their journey.

In *“Christus Vivit,”* Pope Francis wrote, “The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years.”

Pope Francis’ words to older people shows his concern for them, but also shows his conviction that they have a

REFLECTION

What is my superpower?

By Mark Saucier

It was another silly question popping up in a wandering conversation. “What superpower would you like to have?”

Avoiding the selfish fun things like invisibility or telepathy, it had to be something for the good of others.

I recalled the comic book heroes of my youth.

There was Superman, with his lightning speed and that cool freezing thing he could do with his breath.

There was the invincible armor of Iron Man, the web-casting captures of Spider Man, and Thor’s giant hammer of justice.

But the only one I could really identify with was The Hulk and his anger-management issues.

So, if not a trait of a superhero, what power would I choose?

I thought of becoming a healer — one that gets it as a gift, of course, not one who undergoes years of arduous training.

It would be awesome to touch someone and cure their disease, remove their pain, close a gaping wound, or restore a deteriorating joint.

I thought of Jesus going about Galilee “healing all manner of sickness” — the lame, the lepers and the blind.

But healing like Jesus would be an even farther reach for me than the multi-powered resume of Superman.

I wanted something sorely needed, but also a viable option in the real world.

What about the ability to say the right thing, to know what another person needs to hear when they are suffering?

With this superpower, I would know how to comfort a parent who has lost a child.

I could engage with a teenager who hates his parents, his life, his self.

My words might bring a few rays of light into someone’s darkened world of depression.

With the power to know what another person needs to hear, I might guide someone out of loneliness without those promises which the world cannot keep.

I might convince someone that they are not defined by their failure, their looks, or their lack.

Knowing what is best to say, I would know when it is best to say nothing, when no words can console, and the only response is presence.

But this superpower seemed as far-fetched as any that a comic’s character might possess, until I heard again the Sermon on the Mount.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit ... those who mourn ... the meek ... the merciful ... the pure of heart.”

Living these Beatitudes, we will come to know another’s pain, and better understand what to say, or not to say.

It’s not a superpower, after all, just another blessing.

See SR. CONSTANCE, page 23

Encounter

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Our hearts were made for the gift of self



By Father Paul J. Clark

At the end of last year, I was invited to spend an afternoon with sixth graders from St. Joseph Cathedral School, on-site at Catholic Charities for a day of service and reflection.

It was truly a joy to be with these students — and what we talked about that day has called me to reflect on charity in a deeper way.

When I look back on our time together, the theme that the students left me with was this: charity in the face of fear is a courageous act.

The students spent their day rotating through small service projects in stations and participating in reflections on poverty and need.

They spent time in the food pantry, the pantry warehouse, writing notes to accompany care packages for neighbors, and then with me.

We began our time together talking about their day, and somehow changed course to talking about charity — love in action, gift of self.

They shared examples of what they'd been working on that day and I asked them who, in each of those stations, they were serving.

Then we talked about how that made each of them feel.

For most people, acts of charity leave us with a feeling that resonates deeply in our hearts.

When we are serving others — maybe those in our own family or those in our neighborhood — we experience peace, joy, and fulfillment.

Many of the students nodded along — they were getting it.

So I posed this question to them: why?

Why do our hearts find peace and joy in giving?

Because we were made in the image and likeness of a God who is love.

It makes sense then, for the students and for us, that our gift of charity is love in action — and our hearts respond to that in kind.

The students nodded again. But then, if that's the case, why not be charitable all the time?

Why not live a life of complete gift, as we're made to?

What keeps me from answering that call to give?

I asked, and again, hands went up.

"What if I give something of my own, and then I don't have enough for myself?"

"What if someone makes fun of me?"

"What if I don't have enough to give and it doesn't really help anyone?"

"What if I try to help someone and it actually messes something up for them?"

I was moved by their answers.

And moved that these students were able to so clearly identify what sometimes keeps them, and us, from giving freely: fear.

Fears of what others might think, fears that God's providence wouldn't be enough if they gave too much, fear of failure, of harm; fear that whatever we have to offer wouldn't be enough.

Aren't the fears named by these classmates the same fears so many of us share?

So we went deeper. I couldn't ask these students to share their own fears, but I did ask them to guess some of my fears.

Their guesses were pretty good — but none of them expected me to say speaking in public.

After all, I was speaking to their entire class in that very moment.

But I let them know, yes, even now my leg is shaking

a bit, and here I am still speaking.

So, then, how do we act in the face of fear?

We hold what we know to be true up to the lie that we are not enough, that we are isolated, that we are alone in our anxiety.

Every time I go to speak in public I know the Spirit will provide for me, and every time I survive it.

God has shown me that I can be afraid and still act — and the gift of peace and joy that comes with that far surpasses the fear that was holding me back.

Our God is speaking to the greatest depths of our hearts when He says in his Word, "be not afraid."

In my own life, I've seen this play out time and time again.

I have an opportunity to serve, I wonder if what I have to offer is enough, I have faced that fear and answered the call.

I've participated in mission trips, service projects, and have had encounters one-on-one with people in need.

And each time, it wasn't what I gave, but that I gave.

Those experiences have had a profound impact on my decision to continually give myself to God in the vocation of Priesthood.

It was no longer a question of "do I have what it takes?" but a true gift of self, charity in the face of fear, that accompanied me in my discernment of identity and vocation.

Maybe the pattern feels familiar to you, too.

You've been asked to help, volunteer, or give of your gifts before.

You, like me, have felt the weight of that request and



Fr. Paul Clark speaks to the sixth-grade class of St. Joseph Cathedral School on-site at Catholic Charities' central offices in Jefferson City for a day of service and reflection.

wondered if what you have to give is enough, if it will help, if you will be provided for after you give it.

And maybe you've said "yes" before — and then have encountered a loving God in the face of those you've served.

Is it surprising?

If it is, it is only because we forget, sometimes, that we are made in the image of God, and that image is one of love and charity.

Our lives are comfortable, and we sometimes get in the habit of making choices that are rooted in that comfort, or even in fear.

But when we answer that call to serve, we encounter His image and receive so much more than we give.

That truth of that has the power to change us.

And so, as we prepare to enter into Lent, a season of prayer, fasting and giving, I invite you to examine your own heart:

What truth do I need spoken to my heart to allow a free response of gift?

Can I name the fears that are keeping me from giving of myself to others?

How does the assurance, "be not afraid," change my response?

I had come to Catho-

lic Charities to share some thoughts on service and need and found myself moved by the wisdom of these students who prompted me to dig deeper into the reservations I have for myself that keep me from charity.

I admire that these students could articulate within themselves the movements of their hearts.

It gave me great hope to know that the Church, a Church full of young people, are already looking for ways to give the gift of themselves in service to the needs of others.

I hope that your own Lenten journey reveals to you the way that God calls you to do the same, and gifts you the grace to courageously give.

"Every vocation is a gift of the heart back to God in service of another."

Fr. Paul Clark serves the Diocese of Jefferson City as the moderator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Chaplain for Helias Catholic High School, and the Director of Vocations and Seminarians. Ordained in 2017, he has spent much of his priestly ministry among young people, encouraging them to share their hearts with the Lord and their community in true Charity.

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PAYDAY LOANS

From page 4

ciative for the help. It was wonderful. And it really gave me hope that I could facilitate that.”

On their way out, an employee of the payday lender asked for a business card, because she needed help getting out of her own payday loan situation.

“That was very powerful!” said Ms. Frese.

She noted that finances are deeply personal and that most people don’t want to open them up to someone, even if that person can help them.

“That’s why it’s essential to find out what a person values when you’re working with them,” said Ms. Frese. “They ultimately have to be the one driving the ship in order for it to be successful. I can’t tell them why they need to do this. They need to see that what

they feel, what they value, matters.”

She noted that while meeting with her at the Catholic Charities Center, clients can make use of other services there, such as the food pantry or health services.

“I’ve learned a lot about the resources that are available here and out in the community,” she said. “Just knowing what’s available can help break down barriers to getting out of poverty.”

Hope for expansion

Ms. Frese has been working with Catholic Charities’ partner agencies to explore ways to expand the Freedom through Financial Wellness program.

“We’ve had interest throughout the diocese, so we’re exploring to be able to offer it to other counties,” she said. “I’m happy to travel or talk to people on the phone.”

She has also worked to develop some educational pieces on cyclical poverty and predatory loans to use across social media in a campaign to make more people aware of this service.

She encourages people who know about the program to talk about it with people who need it.

“We have this wonderful way to help people change their lives for the better,” she said. “We want the people who need it to open their hearts and ask for the help we’re eager to give.”

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Volunteer engagement is an important part of Catholic Charities' mission

By Jay Nies

Growing up Catholic in Central Missouri, Chelle Smith-Vandergriff struggled to connect with her faith in ways she found meaningful.

Turning outward proved to be the key.

"Acts of service were ultimately how I found depth and richness and meaning within my faith life," she said.

Now, she gets to help other people discover that connection for themselves.

"I love talking to people about finding ways that they can volunteer in the community and find ways to do acts of service," said Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff, senior director of Volunteer Engagement for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO).

She is the contact point for anyone wanting to assist with any of the ministries Catholic Charities offers in the diocese.

"They can always reach out to me and we can walk through the parameters, if they have a specific interest, group size, and location, and we can always find meaningful ways to plug them into our mission," she said.

"How we share our mission varies a little by age group," she noted. "But the message of helping the poor and vulnerable in our community — that's universal."

It can also be powerfully spiritual.

"Many young people and young adults find that connection through acts of service, and through serving neighbors in need," she said.

Alongside Health & Nutrition Services staff, Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff welcomed over a dozen service groups throughout 2022, many from local Catholic schools, to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Jefferson City for on-site service experiences.

Strengthening Catholic Charities' partnership with Helias Catholic High School, she helped onboard several hundred students in preparation to perform Christian service hours at Catholic Charities.

"To date, we have 483 He-

lias Catholic faculty, staff and students in our volunteer database," Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff noted.

She works closely with Helias Catholic faculty members, including William Schatte, the school's service coordinator.

She contacted him a few weeks ago, when snow and cold weather sidelined several volunteers for that afternoon's mobile food pantry at the Jefferson City Knights of Columbus Hall.

He sent an email to students, who were home for a snow day.

"We had a great turnout for such short notice," Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff noted. "It was wonderful."

Last fall, 32 members of Helias Catholic boys' and girls' soccer teams helped move 40 years' worth of files from Catholic Charities' former second location to its central office on Edmonds Street.

"Because so many students answered the call to volunteer, they were able to move and unload over 100 boxes in under an hour," she stated.

Drawn to service

Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff is a graduate of Immaculate Conception School and Helias Catholic, both in Jefferson City.

She was introduced to service projects by Janet Hernandez, now deceased, who was the parish youth minister.

In high school, she took a Christian service class taught by Coach Ray Hentges. She performed most of her required service hours at what was then St. Joseph Home for the Aged.

"I loved every minute of encountering those folks right where they were in their lives," she recalled. "Sometimes having conversations, sometimes taking part in activities, sometimes reading with them."

After graduating from Benedictine College, she served as coordinator of youth ministry at St. Stanislaus Parish in Wardsville. There, she noticed young people being drawn to service just as she had been.



Members of the Boys & Girls Torch Club help out in the food pantry during a visit to the Catholic Charities Center in Jefferson City.

— Photo by Chelle Smith-Vandergriff

"Something about service just connects people in ways they don't find within church walls," she noted. "And once that connection is made, they're a lot more drawn to the Catholic Church."

She later worked for 9½ years for the Missouri Department of Social Services as a trainer for the child abuse and neglect hotline unit.

In 2021, her husband, Mark, went to work for Catholic Charities as warehouse coordinator for the Health and Nutrition Program.

"He came home with positive things to say every day, how it was so challenging but rewarding, how he loved the people, how he loved the mission-driven work environment," she recalled.

She found out about an opening for a senior director of volunteer engagement, a position she had the skills, the experience and the passion for.

She applied, interviewed and got the job.

Hearts awakening

While addressing students, Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff takes notice that even those who are not initially drawn to serving often become intrigued, enamored and energized with Catholic Charities after hearing about it and doing some service work.

"That happens often," she said. "I would say, nearly daily."

Several months ago, a group of students arrived at

Catholic Charities to work on an expanded service project.

"We found that if we do that beyond a couple of hours with a bunch of students, they might get a little squirrely," Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff recalled.

As a remedy, the staff worked to develop several age-appropriate, interactive activities to introduce the students to Catholic social teaching and issues such as poverty and food insecurity.

The activities have evolved and been refined over time.

Last November, a group from St. Joseph Cathedral School in Jefferson City visited the center to tour the facility, serve in the food pantry, and learn about Catholic social teaching. They also participated in small-group discussions led by Father Paul Clark, and then made greeting cards for pantry members and guests of Jefferson City Room at the Inn.

Lori Stoll, Food Programs Coordinator at Catholic Charities, worked with them on a poverty simulation that afternoon.

"Lori's activity showed students just how close anyone might be to experiencing poverty," Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff noted. "Her activity made real for the students the daily decisions that people experiencing poverty have to make."

Each of the activities can be tailored to specific ages.

"We speak about these

things in ways they can understand," she said.

Here to help

Mrs. Smith-Vandergriff also works with the Catholic Charities Refugee Services program to help organizations in the community form a co-sponsorship group to help a newly arrived refugee family.

"These groups are matched with clients for at least a six-month commitment, and they essentially help newcomers become successfully integrated into their new communities," she said.

Local businesses, civic groups, Catholic and non-Catholic churches and schools and other entities contact Catholic Charities to learn about and often help with some aspect of its mission.

She connects them with the right people.

Last spring, students from Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia did a day of service, helping the Catholic Charities Refugee Services staff clean and organize the agency's donation inventory in Columbia.

Several schools have gathered everyday necessities for refugees and assembled the donated items into welcome kits.

The Little Flower Group at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Taos put together welcome kits for newcomers and then visited Catholic Charities and learned about the services offered there.

Some young members of the Boys & Girls Torch Club in Jefferson City come on-site monthly to assist with various projects, such as sorting and stocking food items for the pantry.

She often represents Catholic Charities at volunteer fairs in local schools. Following a visit to Columbia Independent School, students wound up doing service work for Catholic Charities Refugee Services.

"There are just so many opportunities to do outreach,

See SERVICE, page 22

Providing Care and Creating Hope

2022 IMPACT REPORT CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL AND NORTHERN MISSOURI



IN 2022 CATHOLIC CHARITIES SERVED THOUSANDS ACROSS THE DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY, ACCOMPANYING THEM IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT with compassionate social services — valuing each person we served by honoring their inherent dignity and respectfully caring for them, regardless of their faith, culture or situation.

Whether our neighbors traveled across the globe or across the street to meet with our caseworkers, program coordinators, interns or volunteers, the encounters experienced in 2022 have left a lasting and positive impact on our community.

Our work presents countless opportunities to help — from bringing a neighbor closer to food security with nutritious items in our Catholic Charities Food Pantry, to helping clients manage their health amidst chronic disease. From welcoming a newcomer after years-long waits in refugee camps, to family reunification amidst the challenging U.S. immigration processes. From responding to local disasters in rural communities, to walking with new home buyers and people hoping to break the cycle of poverty with payday loan relief.

While the impact our programs have on our clients, their households, and social networks is readily evident — this work also profoundly impacts each of us who work at Catholic Charities. It also leaves an impression on many of you who give your time, your prayers and your financial support to our agency.

With this report, we invite you to see the reach that your support and our work have had on the 38 counties we serve within our diocese. While numbers can never fully express the depth of what we do at Catholic Charities, we've gathered a few that represent the effects of our work in the communities we serve. Behind each of these numbers are real people, real families, with real needs and experiences — people, families and needs that we are blessed to serve with your support.

We at Catholic Charities hope you enjoy the story of our work. An interactive digital copy of this report is available online, with feature stories that dive deeper into the personal meaning this work has on those we serve, which can be found at ccnmo.diojeffcity.org/impact.

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri

ABOUT US

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and the charitable arm of the Diocese of Jefferson City — committed to serving all regardless of race, culture, or situation — with three locations in Columbia, Jefferson City, and Sedalia.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri is committed to providing care and creating hope for the lives of the vulnerable through compassionate social services that respect the dignity of each person and engage the local community in our work.

“Charity and mercy are central to our identity as Catholics. We strive to live out these virtues in our daily lives, in our parishes and through our Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri. With your support and your volunteerism, we are helping spread these works of charity across the Diocese of Jefferson City — a beautiful reflection of the Catholic spirit as we seek to walk in the footsteps of Christ.”



**MOST REVEREND
W. SHAWN MCKNIGHT**
BISHOP OF JEFFERSON CITY

COMMUNITY SERVICES

In 2022, our Community Services Program:

- Sent **5 full-time staff** members across **3 programs** to Catholic Charities USA's annual Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence (AIDE) conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- Provided **43 clients** in the Hispanic community with case management, impacting over **150 household members**.
- Hired our **first-ever Financial Stability Specialist**, working with clients on financial stability and payday loan relief through a partnership with Mid America Bank.
- Assisted **50 clients** with HUD-certified housing counseling services, including SAFHR applications, and education in buying homes, mortgages, and renting.

What does providing care and creating hope look like for those seeking help from Catholic Charities?

For two families in Sedalia, it was a year-long journey through addiction recovery rooted in professional care, community and spiritual support. Scan the QR code to the right of this article to read more in our interactive digital impact report.



SCAN HERE TO READ MORE!

COUNSELING SERVICES

In 2022, Catholic Charities launched its Counseling Services program, aiming to provide affordable mental health counseling services that honor the whole person: mind, body and spirit.

Finding professional counseling services that value and incorporate a client's faith journey is a bit like finding buried treasure. Catholic Charities desires to make these services widely available to communities across the diocese.

In 2022, our Counseling Services program:

- Visited **5 Catholic schools** with social and emotional support curricula, impacting **over 100 students**.
- Saw **15 clients** for individual, couple or family counseling services across **105 sessions**.
- Launched the search for program director and supporting clinical staff to increase capacity in **2023**.

FAMILY IMMIGRATION

- Welcomed **2 Department of Justice Accredited Representatives**, qualified to practice immigration law.
- Provided more than **2,500 immigration legal consultations**.
- Experienced a **20% increase in applications for status change** as clients navigate pathways through the U.S. immigration system.
- Assisted **416 people** in filing applications, petitions or motions – **impacting over 1,600 people** in households across our diocese.

When Uliana and her family fled Ukraine against the backdrop of war, they couldn't anticipate the nuances of navigating a complex immigration system alongside resettlement. Scan the QR code to read more.

FUNDRAISING

Our generous donors gave nearly **2,000 gifts** to our agency, with **300 new donors** joining us in our mission for the first time in 2022. Want to join them? Here are a few ways to support our work:

- Give a gift or set up a monthly pledge online
- Mail a check to our PO Box in Jefferson City
- State Employees can designate our agency through the Missouri State Employees Charitable Contributions (MSECC code: 4058)
- Donate during our iGiveCatholic campaign this fall or the annual CoMoGives campaign in December

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We deeply value the relationships we have with the community partners who help us interweave a network of care for our clients. In 2022, we collaborated with over **150 partner agencies and organizations**, who helped us:

- Open the Catholic Charities Food Pantry
- Provide 300 clients with warm, culturally appropriate meals as they resettle in Mid-Missouri
- House our Columbia staff after extensive water damage closed our North Columbia location

HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Building relationships with clients and community partners can bring about meaningful change to those we serve. In 2022, our team:

- Enrolled **1,577 households in the Catholic Charities Food Pantry**, bringing 4,063 pantry members one step closer to food security.
- Helped pantry members bring home almost **300,000 pounds of food**, reallocating **half a million dollars** of grocery money back into family budgets.
- Taught **50 individuals** across **6 sites** to accurately measure and manage their blood pressure to meet their health goals through the Mid-MO Self-Management of Blood Pressure program.
- Provided over **50 workshops**, activity classes, and educational seminars to over **200 individuals**, addressing diverse topics in health and wellness.

REFUGEE SERVICES

Despite our Columbia location sustaining heavy water damage in December, it was still a banner year for our Refugee Services Program. In 2022, we:

- Resettled **228 individuals** from across the globe into welcoming, safe communities in Mid-Missouri.
- Enrolled **75 new students** in local schools.
- Helped **151 clients find full-time employment** on their path to self-sufficiency.
- Partnered with **300+ Community Sponsors** who have journeyed alongside newcomers to navigate resettlement together.

Navigating life with a medically fragile child is one thing — navigating those health challenges while rebuilding your lives in an entirely new country is another. Thida and Aung's story is one of exceptional services to help meet an exceptional need. Scan the QR code to read more.

We're especially grateful to these community partners whose support has gone above-and-beyond to help us provide key programs and services this year:

- SSM St. Mary's Foundation
- City of Refuge
- The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri
- Mid America Bank

RECURSOS PARA LA

COMUNIDAD HISPANICA

El Programa de servicios para la Comunidad Hispana fue establecido en el 2020 a inicios de la pandemia del Corona Virus. Se desarrolló en respuesta a una creciente necesidad

identificada dentro de la comunidad hispana.

Las personas que se acercan a nuestros servicios pueden contar con asistencia centrada en el respeto y dignidad, tomando en cuenta su entorno cultural y lingüístico. Además, podrá recibir referencias e información sobre recursos dentro de su comunidad.

Proveemos un alcance especial a la comunidad hispana en nuestra área de servicio de 38 condados con:

- Manejo de casos
- Consejería en línea
- Solicitud de ayuda por el Coronavirus
- Servicios de inmigración

Para obtener más información, comuníquese con Ilsi Palacios, Coordinadora de Recursos Hispanos: ipalacios@cccnmo.org.

In 2022 the Catholic Charities Food Pantry reallocated half a million dollars of grocery money back into family budgets.

VOLUNTEERING

In 2022, an incredible **1,095 active volunteers** contributed over **25,000 hours** of service to our agency programs.

From **Community Sponsors** to the students at **Helias High School** — our volunteers turned up with hearts ready to serve and smiles on their faces to:

- Answer calls for help on our phone lines
- Check out grocery orders for pantry members
- Teach English Language Learning at their parish
- Sponsor and mentor refugee newcomers

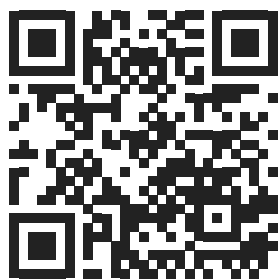
BECOMING A CATHOLIC CHARITIES DONOR IS BECOMING A PART OF OUR MISSION to provide care and create hope for the most vulnerable across our diocese. It's tempting to think that a gift of \$5 today or \$5 a month doesn't go far, but we know that if everyone reading this gave just \$5 today, Catholic Charities would be able to provide food security, counseling services and financial stability to thousands of our neighbors in need.

Supporting Catholic Charities with a monthly contribution of even \$5 or \$10 makes a big difference to families in need. Monthly giving provides a dependable source of support and allows us to plan our programs and services, thus maximizing the impact of your donation.

What else can your gift do? A gift of \$25 provides 100 healthy meals for families in our community. A gift of \$50 helps purchase blood pressure monitors for our SMBP program or provides an hour of counseling services. A lot of our favorite things are simple and small: our flavored coffee drink, our online movie rental, our ad-free streaming service, that last minute item at the checkout line. Could we give up just one of those luxuries this Lenten season to help out our neighbors in need?

Like Fr. Paul Clark mentioned in his *Encounter at Catholic Charities* article in this issue of *The Catholic Missourian*, every gift you give counts. We hope you help us answer the call to serve others and provide vital care, assistance, and services that empower individuals. Know that your gift, no matter how great or small, makes a difference. Together, we can provide care and create hope for many.

TORI STEPANEK
SR. DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



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PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Parish Social Ministry reaches into local communities to strengthen the capacity of each parish to be Centers of Charity and Mercy for their neighbors in need. In 2022, our Parish Social Ministry program:

- Established the Catholic Charities Parish Ambassador program with **74 members** from the diaconate community — committed to serving their parishes as a conduit of information and formation.
- Received and funded **5 Charity and Mercy Grant applications** for charitable works at parishes across the diocese.
- Commissioned the Parish Social Ministry Committee, comprised of **5 board members**.
- Hosted over **30 healthcare professionals** in the Faith Community Nursing group for quarterly meetings and continued our support of Prison Ministry in the Diocese of Jefferson City.

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Deacon recounts “journey on the Plane of Death ... and Life”

By Jay Nies

Deacon Edward Stroesser proclaimed the Gospel reading from John 11 with confidence and conviction.

He injected familiarity into the story of family and friends grieving for a man who had died too young.

His eyes lit up when he recounted Martha's profession before Jesus that her dead brother would rise again.

His voice thundered through the church as he echoed Jesus's command to His entombed friend: “Lazarus! Come out!”

Deacon Stroesser knew what he was reading.

He had felt the warmth and seen the light and witnessed his loved ones' tears.

He put the experience down on paper so his wife, Valda, and everyone else who had been praying for him could understand.

Familiar faces

Deacon Stroesser tested positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 26, 2021.

“My quarantine was as normal as any other COVID-19 quarantine, I suppose,” he wrote. “I had been instructed by health pros to treat symptoms with over-the-counter products and was told that, if I had trouble breathing, I should go to the Emergency Room.”

Shortly after midnight on Feb. 4, he awoke with a coughing fit.

Mrs. Stroesser tested his blood oxygen level and insisted that he go to the hospital.

“I was definitely having trouble breathing,” he recalled.

Emergency Room personnel stabilized his breathing. The hospitalist sent him from the Emergency Room to the COVID step-down ward, noting that some patients there move to the Intensive Care Unit, and not all of them survive.

“With that brutally honest prognosis, I was taken to the COVID step-down unit,” Deacon Stroesser recalled. “Valda could not accompany me because visiting hours were over. She went home and prepared to return later in the day.”

The nurses prepared him for bed and turned down the

lights.

“I drifted to sleep and began my Journey on the Plane of Death ... and Life!” he wrote.

In a dream, he awoke, lying on a smooth, dark, hard yet comfortable surface.

“The surface was wet but the water was a perfect temperature for me,” he recalled. “I couldn't see anything around me; it was total darkness. But it was not scary at all. I heard the sound of dripping water in the distance, like you might hear in a cave.”

Every once in a while came a gentle nudge of water beneath him, “moving me slowly, very slowly across the plane,” he wrote. “It was comfortable, serene.”

He doesn't know how long it lasted. Time was irrelevant to him.

“It was perhaps the most peaceful I'd been in a long time,” he stated.

The gentle nudges across the water and the plane continued.

“Still a very comfortable feeling,” he recalled. “Who knows how long this went on.”

In the dream, he was taken from the COVID unit to ICU and put on a ventilator.

“Then, I felt myself leaving the ICU and back on the dark surface, being eased across the plane,” he wrote.

At some point, Deacon Stroesser glanced up and saw three figures in the distance.

“They were bright and warm, facing my direction,” he recalled. “I thought I recognized them.”

As they became clearer, he identified his mother on one side and his wife's mother on the other, both holding the hand of a girl who looked about 10.

“Mom and Mabel died years ago,” the deacon noted.

He figured that his father and father-in-law, both deceased, would also be nearby.

“And that young girl, I thought, could have been a baby that we lost years ago,” he wrote. “We lost her before she was born, but we had planned to name her Genna Mae,” in honor of the two women he now saw standing next to the



Deacon Ed and Valda Stroesser (center) gather with their family for a photo.

girl.

Over the waves

Deacon Stroesser welcomed more easing, drifting, moving.

It eventually carried him to a funeral.

“Still, it was so comfortable, so pleasant, so calm, until I realized that the funeral was my funeral,” he stated.

He looked out and saw his wife, daughter, son, son-in-law and grandsons seated in the front pew.

“Their grief stabbed me,” he wrote. “I felt horrible because here I was still easing ... drifting ... moving across the plane, and it was just not right. I felt like I was taking the easy way out. How could I let myself go when my family needed me?”

He became acutely aware of others in the church, full of sadness.

“I thought, ‘These people have been praying for me. That's why they're so sad,’” he wrote. “I thought that if somebody there was thinking, ‘I told myself that I'd pray one more time, for Ed, and now I wonder about the power of prayer,’ I could not let that person lose his faith without some effort on my part. I knew I had to fight for my life.”

Immediately, Deacon Stroesser felt himself back on the plane — easing, drifting, moving.

“But I realized the water was flowing in the opposite direc-

tion and it was taking me back across the plane, back to where I'd come from,” he stated. “It was so comfortable, so warm, so gentle, so good. I was going back.”

A large wave suddenly lifted him above the plane and carried him a great distance.

“And then another wave. And then another. And another,” he recounted. “The waves carried me back. I realized later those waves were the prayers, best wishes, good intentions and sacrifices that all those people were offering. It was so comforting and affirming!”

He soon realized that he was in the hospital's COVID step-down unit.

“I heard nurses around me, caring for me, helping me breathe,” he wrote. “It was exciting but kind of sad, because I was leaving the plane of peace and comfort and going back to the COVID floor to work.”

And work he did, fighting for recovery in tandem with the doctors and hospital staff.

Nine days later, he was on his way back home.

“If the prayers for me during my illness were not enough, you should have felt the immediate rush of thanksgiving to God for health restored by tens, hundreds, thousands of faithful pray-ers around our city, state, country and world,” the deacon wrote. “It made the hard work that I still needed to

do to return to good health all the more worth it. To see faith, hope, and love exploding across the globe is humbling and beautiful. Thanks be to God!”

“We have God!”

Deacon Stroesser drew three conclusions from his journey through COVID: “God is good!” “Heaven is real, and it's awesome!” and “Prayer works!”

He urged everyone to keep those waves of prayer coming for people who need them, no matter how difficult or hopeless a situation might seem.

“My prayer throughout this experience was simple: ‘Jesus, I trust in You!’ — again and again,” he wrote. “That's a good idea: keep praying for people, but keep it simple.”

He thanked God for allowing him to be part of a parish, a community of believers, so eager to pray for him and for others who need it.

“That is the beauty of a parish, coming together for a common cause and seeing it through to the end,” he wrote. “Taking care of spiritual, temporal, and human needs, whatever is necessary. We have what we need, you know, because we have God!”

“I encourage you to keep your faith life absolutely glowing-hot with personal prayer, sacrifice and frequent participation in our beautiful Catholic sacraments,” he stated.

“Then, you will be ready, more energized, more able to help others in your parish.”



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Rest in peace, Deacon Joseph Mitchell of Marshall

Deacon Joseph R. Mitchell, 82 — a retired deacon of the Jefferson City diocese, who previously assisted the pastor of St. Peter Parish in Marshall, died peacefully on Jan. 12, at home with his family.

He had been battling with pancreatic cancer.

He served as an educator and school administrator in Saline County public schools for over 40 years.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 18, in St. Peter Church in Marshall.

Father Francis Doyle, pastor of St. Peter Parish and of St. Joseph Parish in Slater, presided.

Father Kevin Gormley, now retired, the previous pastor in Marshall, concelebrated.

Deacon Michael Berendzen, diocesan Director of Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, proclaimed the

Gospel reading.

“He was a kind, gentle person — very gentlemanly, I would say,” said Fr. Doyle. “He had a very peaceful presence about him.”

He was born March 22, 1940, in rural Malta Bend, a son of the late Joseph Rupert and Ella Katheryn (Sims) Mitchell.

A 1958 graduate of Mercy Academy in Marshall, he went on to earn a bachelor of science degree in secondary education from Benedictine (formerly St. Benedict's) College in Atchison, Kansas.

He earned his elementary certification through Missouri Valley College, followed by advanced degrees of masters in education and education specialist in school administration, both from the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg.

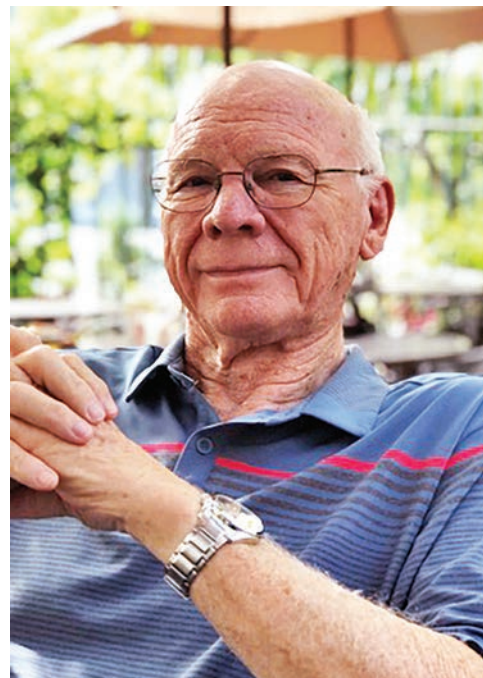
He began his career in education in 1963 teaching at Blackwater School in rural Saline County. In 1967, he went on to teach junior high math at Sweet Springs R-7 School, becoming middle school principal, as well as football and basketball coach.

He was particularly proud to serve as assistant coach for the newly formed Sweet Springs R-7 high school football program.

While at Sweet Springs, he met Vicki Sue Acklie and the two were united in marriage on Jan. 3, 1970, at Columbia United Church of Christ in Columbia.

Deacon Mitchell continued his career in education with Marshall Public Schools as an elementary principal at Benton, Eastwood and Northwest schools; and Director of Elementary Education.

He retired as a full-time administrator in 1996 but continued work part-time as Director of Title I & district



Deacon Joseph R. Mitchell (1940-2023)

Testing Coordinator.

He was a member of St. Peter Parish in Marshall and was ordained a deacon on May 4, 2002.

He served St. Peter Parish for 20 years and for a time as interim principal of St. Peter School.

He was a Third Degree Knight of Columbus, and was involved in numerous civic ac-

tivities.

He was inducted into the Sweet Springs Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013 and again in 2016 with the 1972 Sweet Springs football team and Coach John Johnson.

Deacon Mitchell was an avid reader of theology, philosophy, current issues and science fiction.

His hobbies included fishing, gardening, home projects, feeding birds, wood carving and all levels of football competition.

Friends and former students posted memories on his Campbell-Lewis Funeral Home guest page (campbell-lewis.com/obituary/joseph-mitchell).

Carol Bridges from Sweet Springs had Deacon Mitchell as a teacher in grade school.

“I remember him as being calm, patient, and knowledgeable,” she wrote. “I feel fortunate to have had him as a teacher.”

Marilyn Doyle Crawford of Excelsior Springs said she was blessed to have had him for a teacher.

“Ever kind and patient, Mr. Mitchell prepared us well to face the challenges of Marshall High and beyond,” she wrote.

“Joe had a servant's heart,” James and Sue Ann Crawford wrote from Las Vegas. “His dedication to the children of Marshall is deeply appreciated.”

Fr. Doyle said in his homily that he found Deacon Mitchell to be an adept listener and a deliberate, accommodating participant in the life and mission of the parish.

“He served at the Liturgy banquet at the altar for 20 years,” Fr. Doyle stated. “We pray that God will receive his soul and invite him to the eternal banquet in heaven.”

Survivors include Mrs. Mitchell; two children, Todd (Carrie) Mitchell of St. Louis and Erin (Scott) Madden of O'Fallon; a sister, Jean Ann Ruhl of Kansas City; two grandsons; several brothers- and sisters-in-law and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Burial was in St. Paul Cemetery in Kahoka.



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LESTER

From page 1

Blown away

Mr. Lester became CCCNMO's 17th employee when he assumed the helm in 2016.

"Today, I think we're at about 55," he said with awe.

"I've had a chance to see things really grow and expand and change," he stated. "I've been able to work with some really wonderful, caring folks. I will miss that absolutely."

What he loves most is being able to bring the fullness of his faith to work every day.

"Here, you can be unabashedly Catholic," he said. "The teachings of the Church are the very foundation of the work. Being able to make those connections and tie them all together — there's just no substitute for that."

One of the things Mr. Lester enjoys most is visiting Catholic parishes and schools and other groups, "talking about how we serve everyone, regardless of faith, culture or social situation."

He's been pleased to be a part of some of Catholic Charities' most challenging and simultaneously rewarding situations.

"I am incredibly proud of all we've accomplished with help from God and all our constituents, especially through circumstances that put us and everyone else to the test," he said.

Among these were the destructive tornado that ripped through Jefferson City and Eldon in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rush to resettle hundreds of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

"We actually expanded and provided more and varied services during the pandemic," he noted. "We've been able to navigate a whole host of challenges because of the support of our bishops and our donors and all the people who are invested in seeing Catholic Charities be as successful as it can be."

He recalled how Bishop Emeritus John R. Gaydos and his successor, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, directed Catholic Charities to cultivate partnerships and collaboration with other faith- and community-based organizations and agencies.

That was crucial throughout the aftermath of the 2019 tor-

nado.

"We played an invaluable role in the community's ability to recover from that event," said Mr. Lester. "We were instrumental in getting the short-term recovery committee and the long-term recovery committee structured and established."

"We took on the management of the warehouse of relief materials," he noted. "We provided long-term case management and were still working with some particularly vulnerable families a year and a half or two years later."

Local United Way ambassadors often pointed out that disaster recovery is a marathon, not a sprint.

"I'm very proud that we were part of running that marathon with our community, and I think we did a really good job with it," said Mr. Lester.

"Valued and welcome"

Another highlight of Mr. Lester's tenure was the year-long process of raising money, purchasing, renovating and expanding the former Shikles Community Center in Jefferson City into a Catholic Charities headquarters and service hub.

He recently entered the center's expansive food pantry one evening and found it teeming with activity.

"People were shopping and pushing their carts and selecting their food through the aisles," he observed. "There were wonderful volunteers behind the counter with our staff, signing people up and getting them checked out and making them feel seen and valued and welcome."

He walked back to the food pantry warehouse.

"I found our warehouse manager there with a group of kids from the local Boys & Girls Club, sorting and inventorying items, laughing and having a good time," he recalled.

"It's a dream come true to have this welcoming space where people in need can come and have so many services provided out of love and compassion and care," he said.

Later that night, a group of



Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri Executive Director Dan Lester, fifth from left, joins Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, fourth from left, and member bishops and staff of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on the Home Missions for a tour of the Catholic Charities Center in Jefferson City on Oct. 5, 2022. — Photo by Jay Nies

volunteers welcomed some of the city's unhoused residents into a nighttime warming shelter that uses the Catholic Charities Center's community room.

"These are people who would otherwise be sleeping on the street tonight," Mr. Lester noted. "Here, they're warm and welcome."

Nothing better

Mr. Lester recently attended the one-year anniversary celebration of three refugee families from Afghanistan arriving in the Capital City.

"I looked around at these families and this large, ecumenical group of volunteers and some of our Catholic Charities staff," he said.

"What really struck me was seeing all these children, running around and smiling and eating cake and having fun," he said.

"Together with the community, we're doing a generational work of love that will outlast all of us," he stated. "Hundreds of lives of people who haven't even been born yet will be impacted by this work."

"It just doesn't get any better than that," said Mr. Lester. "That's why we do it."

Hope for expansion

Mr. Lester said he'll miss working and interacting with the CCCNMO staff and clients and networking with other Catholic Charities agencies throughout the United States.

"I'll also miss being a part

"We're supposed to be working ourselves out of a job!" he noted. "Our work involves helping people with their immediate needs but also providing them with the skills and abilities they'll need to make long-term change that is sustainable."

"Ministry of encounter"

Mr. Lester asked the people of this diocese to pray for a successful transition of leadership at Catholic Charities "that allows for everyone to see and acknowledge the beauty of the work that we've been able to accomplish and we give that glory to God on high."

"This is all driven by the Holy Spirit," he said. "I truly believe that."

He pointed out that service and truth are attractive paths to discipleship, especially for young people.

"They want to see that the Church is walking the walk that they proclaim to walk," he said.

For himself, he requested prayers to be able to continue finding meaningful ways to help people on the margins — "to be there for 'the least of these' and to see Christ in our brothers and sisters, particularly those who are struggling the most."

To his successor, as yet unknown, he suggested viewing the role of executive director as "a ministry of encounter."

"The model that we have for this work is Christ, who went out and engaged directly with the people who needed it the most, breaking bread and having fellowship with them," he said.

"God created us as social creatures, and we need to continue to be with each other and be in encounter with each other in order to be most effective."

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ACROSS the Diocese

By Father Don Antweiler

ACROSS

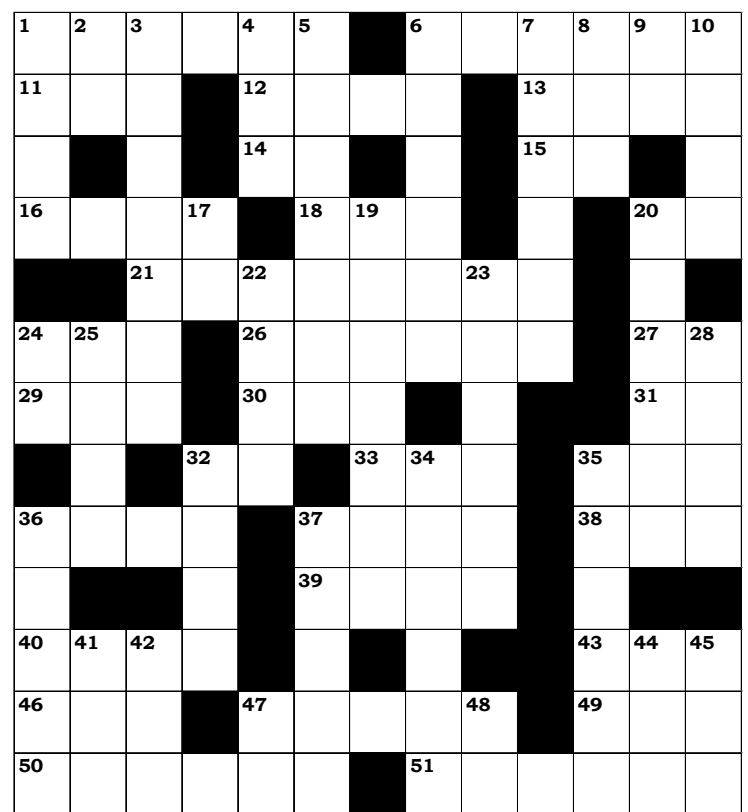
1. The ____ term for a Missouri Governor is four years but beginning in 1857, Missouri had four Governors in 10 months!
6. "On one branch there are to be three cups, shaped like ____ blossoms..." (Exodus 25:33).
11. Letters on an airport schedule board.
12. Charged particles.
13. Honolulu's island.
14. Washington, ____.
15. Abraham's ancestral home.
16. In 1857, Gov. Sterling Price's term ended. He was

18. County seat of Douglas County; closest town to the only Trappist monastery in Mo.
20. The Empire State (abbr.).
21. Price's successor as Governor was Trusten Polk, elected in a tough three-way race. In his inaugural address he ____ a reverence for the Constitution and a stronger attachment to the Union.
24. Laugh out loud in text.
26. "I don't have ____; I give them," —Harry Cohn; co-founder and President of Columbia Pictures, sometimes called the Tinseltown Tyrant.
27. To promote tourism, The Ocean State appeared on license plates of this State in 1972 (abbr.).

29. "Weightlessness is like a new ____ you get to unwrap every day," —*An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth*, Col. Chris Hadfield.
30. We are not done yet. Not ____ long shot! (2 wds.)
31. Professional licensed caregiver.
32. Abbr. for Uruguay's continent.
33. An army sergeant, for ex.
35. A witty or pithy remark.
36. Dry; withered.
37. The treacherous villain in Disney's "The Lion King."
38. ____ Jima.
39. "All of us are invited to inquire and examine during times of suffering, though our ____ may be kept from seeing God, if only for a time," —*Jesus, A Pilgrimage*, James Martin, S.J.
40. The Beehive State; contains five national parks.
43. What one does to something in a microwave.
46. Aunt in Madrid.
47. Governor Robert Steward, on the ____ day of his term in 1861, with war clouds deepening, said "Missouri will stand her lot and hold to the Union."
49. Yes, in Lyon.
50. "Almost ____, West Virginia, Blue Ridge mountains, Shenandoah River..." —"Take Me Home, Country Roads," 1971 song by John Denver.
51. "The past is past and does not ____, " —*I, Francis*, Carlo Carreto.

DOWN

1. "As for me, to be ____ God is my good," (Psalms 73:28).
2. First of the two main parts of the Bible.
3. 1857+ was a changing and tumultuous time in Missouri. The border troubles with Kansas was growing. The State was growing _____. The Civil War was nearing.
4. BAND-____; brand name of a bandage.
5. "Think globally, act ____,"



- Paul McCartney.
6. In this neighborhood it sounded like a gunshot. It sure threw ____ into me (2 wds.).
7. Candy bar brand.
8. Canoe propulsion.
9. The Granite State (abbr.).
10. Governor Trusten Polk's departure brought the Lieutenant Governor, Hancock Lee Jackson, to the Office of Governor. His sole ____ was to arrange a special election for a new Governor, which he did two months later.
17. Prefix for form or part.
19. The new Governor Trusten Polk was only in office one month when the Mo. legislature chose him to fill a ____ in Mo.'s seat in the U.S. Senate. He served the shortest term of any Governor in Missouri.
20. The fourth man to serve as Governor in 10 months was Robert Steward who won a ____ victory over James Rollins, a figure prominent in the establishment of the University of Missouri in Columbia.
22. This Crawford County town on I-44 has things to see: a display of 14 murals, both inside and out in various locations and businesses; a 35 ft. tall steel red rocking chair; a short documentary about the Osage Native Americans at the Osage Legacy Monument; and Route 66 memorabilia.
23. No runs, no hits, no ____.
24. Abbr. for Lieutenant.
25. Seep; flow in a gradual way.
28. "Why are you alarmed, because I can see ____ your mind? Surely there is nothing strange in that," —*Exile of the Eons*, Arthur C. Clarke.
32. Son of Adam and Eve born after the death of Abel (Genesis 4:25).
34. "They all act in opposition to the decrees of ____ and claim instead that there is another king, Jesus," (Acts 17:7).
35. Missouri's largest university.
36. The next Gov. elected by Mo. as the Civil War began was Claiborne Jackson, a firebrand for the ____ who did everything possible to take Mo. into the Confederacy. Missourians rejected this soundly in a specially-called convention. Jackson died in exile as Mo.'s Confederate Governor.
37. I never considered that decision as ____ stone (2 wds.).
41. Neck or bow.
42. Car club.
44. Letters for American Univ. of Rome; though only founded in 1969, it is the oldest American degree-granting university in Rome.
45. Stick, cotter, or bowling.
47. Letters for iron on the Periodic Table.
48. Possible last letters for beet or stab.

ANSWERS on page 23

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BISHOP McKNIGHT

From page 1

of Confirmation in parishes near and far.

Bishops often carry that task out at a jarringly ambitious pace during Lent and throughout the Easter Season.

“Having a full day here at the Chancery office and doing other events and attending meetings and then traveling sometimes up to two to three hours away, then celebrating the Confirmation Mass and then driving another two to three hours back can make for a very long day!” he observed.

At first a source of anxiety, those parish pilgrimages have become a source of anticipation and enjoyment.

“The time I get to spend with the youth who are excited about the faith — it rejuvenates me,” he said.

It also reminds him how receptive and appreciative the people are for the ministry of their priests and their bishop.

“Yes, what happens here at the Chancery is important, it’s needed and necessary,” he said. “But, the presence of the bishop and how much that means to people — that has lifted me up quite a bit.”

Greater communion

Upon his installation, Bishop McKnight also began acquainting himself with his requisite duties to the national and universal Church.

“Each of us has responsibility for a local Church, the diocese,” he stated, “but we also have our obligation, our duty, to assist with the national Church in terms of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and all that goes on there — and then, from time-to-time, even beyond that with

the Universal Church.

“I recognize now that I’m a hinge, if you will, in terms of our Catholic community, in representing us to the larger Church but also representing the larger Church back to our people,” he said.

That becomes especially clear to him whenever he makes an official visit to another diocese on behalf of the people here.

He has made several such journeys overseas to see and acknowledge what generous donors here have helped accomplish, especially in dioceses that allow their priests to serve here as missionaries.

“Their reception of me as the Bishop of Jefferson City is very warm and very meaningful,” he noted. “It gives me a much more profound sense of our great Catholic communion and the bond that we share, even though I don’t know them personally.”

Darkness and light

Bishop McKnight thought back to the weeks he spent preparing to move here and assume the duties of bishop while completing his work as a pastor in his home Diocese of Wichita, Kansas.

“That transition period was quite stressful,” he recalled.

If he could go back to that time and tell himself one thing, it would be: “Trust more in the Holy Spirit and trust less in yourself.”

“We are not being called to fulfill the mission of the Church on our own,” he noted. “God is always there to help us and to guide us.”

“He often surprises us with people who just happen to be there when we need them,” the bishop added. “It’s so providential. That’s happened so much in my life.”

He called to mind bitter-sweet memories of the COVID-19 pandemic — the sickness, uncertainty and loss that it brought, along with heroic and diligent responses from people in the Chancery and in parishes throughout the diocese.

“It kind of forced us to be Church in a different way, and we still constantly have to work on that,” he said.



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight surveys progress on the renovation and expansion of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Jefferson City on Oct. 14, 2022. He sees the Cathedral renovation as a good analogy to the journey the diocese’s parishes have been taking through the three-year diocesan pastoral plan — “a strengthening of our communion as Catholics in what we believe and how we pray and especially how we live.”

— Photo by Dan Bernskoetter

He recalled having to celebrate the Easter Vigil nearly alone in the Cathedral of St. Joseph that year, and the joy and relief that came with opening Masses back up to the public a few weeks later.

“I hope we never have to see that again!” he stated. “But whatever will come, God is always with us, and I have that surety of faith.”

Lights on a hill

Bishop McKnight looks forward to the completion of an extensive renovation and renewal of the Cathedral of St. Joseph, profoundly enhancing its functionality, beauty, Catholic identity and capacity for hospitality and welcome.

He sees the renovation as a good analogy to the journey the diocese’s parishes have been taking through the three-year diocesan pastoral plan, “A Steward’s Journey: Our Call to Greater Communion.”

That building-up will continue with “Shaping Our Future Together,” a new and concurrent process for planning at the deanery level.

“It’s a strengthening of our communion as Catholics in what we believe and how we pray and especially how we live,” said Bishop McKnight.

He’s convinced that effectively preaching Jesus’s Good News to new generations will require enhanced collaboration among parishes and additional formation for laypeople in ev-

ery parish.

“The better the cooperation of the parishes, the stronger the ministry we can provide, the stronger the services we can provide, not only to our Catholics but to the wider community,” he said.

That, he believes, will be a key to helping every parish become a thriving parish, which is the goal for “Shaping Our Future Together.”

Bishop McKnight also wants ensure that youth ministry across the diocese is drawing young people into a genuine encounter with the person of Christ while forming their minds for discipleship.

“They have to want to be here!” he stated. “They have to want to come, in order for us to celebrate the Sacraments with them and also to teach them about the faith.”

That, he’s convinced, will require a greater understanding of vocation — of everyone’s unique calling from God to place themselves at the service of the Church and work

together to build up God’s Kingdom.

“I’m looking forward to the day when we have a program set up where lay men and women can be instituted as acolytes and lectors and with the new office of catechist,” he said.

“Trying new things”

With his fifth episcopal anniversary approaching, Bishop McKnight asks for prayers, especially for docility and courage.

He spoke of docility as “an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit — which requires courage and fortitude, which I think is a very important gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“When you have that trust and sense of confidence in the providence of God, then you’re allowing God to have you do things you would not otherwise do or be capable of,” he said.

“So, I would ask for more prayers that I would be DOCILE to the will of the Holy Spirit and that I have the strength, the courage, the fortitude to embrace God’s will,” he stated.

He believes the people of this diocese can help God answer that prayer.

“One thing the laity in particular can do to help in achieving the life and mission of the Church is to recognize that we need to change,” he said.

He believes “we are being called to do a better job of fulfilling our mission as the Catholic Church in Mid-Missouri.”

“I don’t know the specifics of that,” he stated, “but I do know, looking at all the data and where we have been, and the state of the world, that we have to be open to trying new things to be more effective as disciples of Jesus Christ.”

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Fundraisers & Social Events

Feb. 5
Argyle, Argyle/Koeltztown Volunteer Fire Department annual breakfast, 7:30-11 am, K of C Hall

Feb. 10
Westphalia, K of C drive-through fish fry, 4-7 pm

Feb. 12
Belle, St. Alexander Parish breakfast, 7-11 am; **Westphalia**, Lions Club pancake breakfast, 7-11:30 am, Lions Den; **Starkenburg**, Church of the Risen Savior Parish breakfast, 7-11 am, Valentine Hall

Feb. 13
Westphalia, "Wine and Shrine" event with speaker Fr. Charles Samson, 6:30-8:30 pm, K of C Hall, for info or to register visit stjosephwestphalia.org

Feb. 17
Loose Creek, K of C 2027 drive-through fish fry, 5-7 pm, Immaculate Conception School

Feb. 19
California, K of C country breakfast, 8-11:30 am, Annunciation Church basement; **St. Anthony**, K of C breakfast, 7:30-11:30 am, St. Anthony Parish Hall

Feb. 24
Holts Summit, K of C fish fry, 3:30-7 pm, St. Andrew Parish's Veit Hall

Meetings/ Workshops

Feb. 4
Wardsville, "Catholics in the Holy Land" presentation by Rami Salfiti, following 10 am Mass, St. Stanislaus Church

Feb. 7
VIRTUAL, Marriage Prep Fa-

cilitators' morning refresher, 10:30-11:30 am, for info or to RSVP email faithformation@diojeffcity.org

Feb. 23
VIRTUAL, "Eucharist: The Work of Our Redemption" Lenten lecture series presented by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, noon, for info or to register visit fdlc.org/eucharistseries2023

Feb. 25
Columbia, Cursillo Grand Reunion, 8:30 am-4 pm, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School, for info visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo/

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Feb. 11-12
Jefferson City, Marriage Encounter Weekend, Best Western Capital Inn, for info or to register visit jeffcityme.com

GRANTS

From page 5

She spoke to Father William Peckman, pastor of the Macon, Shelbina and Clarence parishes and the mission in Bevier, about letting the mother stay in the vacant rectory in Clarence.

"He asked for permission from the bishop," said Mrs. Durbin, "and within 10 days of the idea being presented, we had the mom and her children moved in."

It wasn't just a matter of moving.

"Parishioners from all four parishes provided all of the furnishings — from housewares to bedding to all the beds and all the furniture," she noted.

The children are enrolled in local schools and are thriving.

Work continues on finding them a permanent place to live. Afterward, the former rectory will be divided into two, one-bedroom apartments in order to provide transitional housing to families in similar situations.

"We came up with an idea to make it versatile in order to accommodate whatever we need," said Mrs. Durbin.

It will be part of a bridge to stability, something many children and their families lack.

"It's a safe haven for shelter and support," said Mrs. Durbin, "either for single women who are pregnant and have children, or who are in an abusive situation and are trying to start a new life."

The waiting list already has three families.

Fr. Peckman met with parishioners and noted that back in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, "the Church was out in the streets, feeding the hungry and giving shelter to those without."

"I think like a lot of priests now recognize that it's time for us to get back out into the streets and be that Church of the poor again," said Mrs. Durbin.

"This is as good a start," she said.

Women of letters

The St. Patrick Rectory was once home to Monsignor John Mahoney, now deceased, whose last assignment was to be pastor of the Clarence and former Hager's Grove parishes.

"For many years, he was known for his life of service and charity to the poor," said

Mrs. Durbin.

He brought in several typewriters and gave widows and single mothers the opportunity to earn money by typing for him over each summer.

"He wrote a lot, and it was a way for these women to earn something with dignity," she recalled.

One of those women was Mrs. Durbin's mother, who had been left alone with four young children.

"Msgr. Mahoney did a lot for my brothers and me and made sure we always had a way to get to Bible school, among other things," said Mrs. Durbin.

She will always remember the St. Patrick Rectory as a place of warmth, acceptance and an authentic encounter with God's kindness.

She's convinced that Catholics working together across parish boundaries to assist people in need are making God and all of His goodness known.

As for Msgr. Mahoney, "I'm convinced that the seed he planted in that place 35 years ago will grow into something very beautiful," she said.

Feb. 17-20
St. Louis, Discernment retreat for women ages 18-45 with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, for info or to register visit ssnd.org/events/retreat23

Youth & Young Adults

Feb. 18
Monroe City, "With Great Power," Confirmation Retreat, 10 am-3 pm, Holy Rosary Parish, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/confirmation-retreat-2023

Feb. 19
Jefferson City, Young Adult Mass, third Sunday of each month, 5 pm, Immaculate Conception Church

May 29-Jun. 2
Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 1 for junior high boys, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 5-9
Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 2 for junior high girls, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 11-13
Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek

session 3 for junior high boys, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 15-17
Conway, Mo., Camp Lolek session 4 for junior high girls, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-lolek

Jun. 19-24
Conway, Mo., Camp Macabee for high school young men, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-macabee

Jun. 25-30
Conway, Mo., Camp Siena for high school young women, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/camp-siena

Health & Wellness

Feb. 7 & 14
Jefferson City, "Seasons of Hope" grief support, 6:15-8:15 pm, St. Peter Parish's Fr. Ahren's Room

Feb. 8
Jefferson City, Heartsaver CPR class, 5:30-8:30 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall

SERVICE

From page 12

to talk about what we do, the impact it has on our community, and ways for people to get involved in it," she noted.

Grateful days

Mrs. Lori Stoll, Food Programs Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, and Chelle Smith-Vandergriff, senior director of Volunteer Engagement, visit with students at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City during a service fair in October 2022.

"It's so wonderful to see young members of our community stepping up and becoming involved," she said.

She invites schools beyond Jefferson City who organize field trips the Capital City to incorporate time at Catholic Charities for an immersion experience in service.

"There's a lot to learn here that they can hopefully take back with them, wherever they live," she said.

She asks for prayers for continued strength and providence for the Catholic Charities staff.

"But more so, I would ask for prayers for those we serve," she said, "for God to keep their hope alive to help them find support and comfort."



Lori Stoll, Food Programs Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, and Chelle Smith-Vandergriff, senior director of Volunteer Engagement, visit with students at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City during a service fair in October 2022.

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

diojeffcity.org/parish-correspondence

For marriages and deaths, please use the form at **diojeffcity.org/update-information/** so that we may update our mailing lists and records.

Anniversaries

Bonnots Mill, St. Louis of France
Don & Jeanne Knollmeyer, 63 years

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows
Jim & Mary Alice Schulte, 63 years
Rob & Kim Bax, 25 years

Salisbury, St. Joseph
Carey & Mary Jo Henke, 45 years

Wien, St. Mary of the Angels
Hank & Ashlee Pennington, 20 years

Birthdays

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Mary Wieberg**, her 92nd on Feb. 3

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows — **Margaret Evers**, her 90th on Feb. 3;
Alma Koetting, her 100th on Feb. 15

Slater, St. Joseph — **Marcella Young**, her 100th on Feb. 19

Marriages

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Claudia Burcham & Garrett Luetkemeyer**

Baptisms

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus — **Ida Jane Golden**, daughter of Brian & Ellen Golden

Deaths

Brookfield, Immaculate Conception — **Everett Lineberry**

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Peter Grathwohl**

Fulton, St. Peter — **Charles March**

Holts Summit — **Mike Dolson**

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Rebecca Howard**

CONGO

From page 8

their lives taken from them atrociously. Innocent women, even pregnant ones, are raped and disemboweled, young people and children have their throats slit, families, the elderly and children are condemned to brave fatigue and exhaustion, wandering far from their homes in search of peace because of the atrocities committed by these terrorists in the service of foreign interests," who want to exploit the countries natural resources.

Pope Francis, responding to the president, added that Congo is suffering from a "forgotten genocide," one the world must recognize.

"Infinitely precious!"

Returning to his prepared text, the pope chose diamonds as the key image in his first speech in Congo, insisting that "you, all of you, are infinitely more precious than any treasure found in this fruitful soil!"

In a speech frequently interrupted by applause and shouts of "Amen," the pope urged the Congolese people to demand the respect they deserve; he pleaded with the country's political leaders to put the common good ahead of greed and a lust for power; and he begged the international community to help Congo, not plunder it.

"Diamonds are usually rare," he said, "yet here they are abundant."

"If that is true of the material wealth hidden in the soil, it is even more true of the spiritual wealth present within your hearts," he said. "For it is from hearts that peace and development are born, because, with God's help, men and women are capable of justice and of forgiveness, of concord and reconciliation, of commitment and perseverance in putting to good use the many talents they have received."

Every person in Congo has a part to play, Pope Francis insisted.

"May violence and hatred no longer find room in the heart or on the lips of anyone, since these are inhuman and un-Christian sentiments that arrest

SR. CONSTANCE

From page 9

serious responsibility to younger generations. As I feel myself aging, I sense this responsibility very personally.

In the book *Sharing the Wisdom of Age* he wrote, "What do I ask of the elders among whom I count myself? I call us to be memory keepers ... where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life."

He continued, "I also urge that we take action! ... As elders, we can thank the Lord for the many benefits we have received. ... We can remind today's young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that

a life without love is an arid life. We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome."

Clearly, the Church as a whole, and each local faith community, needs seniors who take their unique mission seriously.

If you have witnessed initiatives fostering the role of seniors as mentors or the effective partnering of young people and elders in your parish, I would love to hear from you! Please email me at serenity@LittleSistersofthePoor.org.

Sister Constance Veit is the communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.

FLORES

From page 9

our hopes and dreams, our difficult experiences and frustrations with the Church — which carry a significant emotional weight. I have heard countless young adults tell personal stories of marginalization, of racism, and of not feeling seen, heard, or taken seriously as participants

and evangelists within the faith. We've shared our dreams of a Church that is willing to address its painful history — one that works to bring about healing proactively, instead of waiting until it must; that celebrates cultural diversity where possible in the liturgy, and throughout the Church as well, and loudly stands up for the oppressed.

There is profound depth in what we have shared over the past few years, and yet somehow the Church has reduced our sacred stories and trusted conversations to jargon-loaded documents, lengthy bureaucratic reports and bullet-point lists of recommendations, all seemingly filed and then forgotten as people hastily move on to the next initiative, program or event. Sometimes it feels like the Church in the U.S. suffers from the very short attention span that we young adults are accused of having.

My prayer for 2023 is that instead of scheduling more all-talk-little-action events or expending energy discussing strategies at risk of seeming stale before they're ever tried, the Church would draw from the knowledge shared throughout these past get-togethers and that she would make some room — create an intentional space for the younger Church. Let us help to mold and form how the National Eucharistic Revival takes shape and help establish how we "do" church, together. Young Catholics carry on their shoulders the weight of the missteps and sins of past Church leaders. We also will bear the Church in the future. This is an opportune time to give those of us who are committed to our relationship with Christ, and with the Church, real opportunities to help renew and rebuild the Church we dream of.

Cecilia Flores is a first generation Filipina-American, mother and community organizer living in Sacramento, California.

Crossword puzzle answers

N	R	U	J	E	R	N	E	V	A	E	H
I	U	O	T	V	N	I	F	V	I	J	
d	V	Z	S	J	H	V	J	U			
		Z	S	E	E	J		O			
O	W	I	R	C	A	R	E	R	E	R	
J	O	M	O	C	N	V	S	Z			
N	R	R	V	L	R	L	O	J			
I	R	S	R	E	C	T	U	T	O	T	
	V	D	E	V	A	T	C	E	D		
X	N	N	V	V	V	D	I	V	R		
J	R	U	C	D	P						
U	H	V	O	S	N	O	V	J	E		
D	N	O	M	T	V	T	M	R	O	N	

Where they left off



Students from Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia return to the fire-ravaged town of Wooldridge in Cooper County to help clear debris on Dec. 29. They filled two roll-off Dumpsters full of steel and loaded four bathtubs. This was the second time students from the school spent a day helping with the clean-up.

— Photo by Tim Scherrer



Come to the water



ABOVE: Students of St. Mary School's Little Saints Pre-School in Glasgow brought their own "babies" to be baptized by Father Joshua Duncan, pastor of St. Mary Parish and St. Joseph Parish in Fayette, on Jan. 26. The priest also gave the children a tour of the sanctuary and explained the significance of each of the items he uses at Mass.

— Photos from the St. Mary School Facebook page

"Wherever you go ..."



Malaina, a student at Holy Family School in Hannibal, displays the kindness logo she designed for the school's 2023 Catholic Schools Week T-shirts. Parishioner Jimmy O'Donnell of James O'Donnell Funeral Home donated the T-shirts for all faculty, staff and students.

— Photo from the Holy Family School – Hannibal Facebook page

Gearing up for future challenges



LEFT: The St. Peter High School Youth Group in Marshall listens intently to guest speaker parishioner Jack Huston on Jan. 29 as he discusses facing activities and challenges when college time arrives, and how to keep true to the faith.

— Photo by Carol Wolfe

Bible Accent

How did Adam and Eve disobey God when they lived in the Garden of Eden?

In Genesis 3, we read that of all the animals God had created, the serpent was the most cunning. One day, the serpent spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

“Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” the serpent asked.

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die,’” Eve replied.

“You certainly will not die!” the serpent scoffed. “No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil.”

Eve saw that the tree was pleasing to the eyes, good for food and desirable for gaining wisdom.

She took some fruit from the tree and ate it. She also gave some to Adam, and he ate too.

Once they ate the fruit, their eyes were opened, just as the serpent had said.

And when they heard God in the garden, they hid from him among the trees.

St. Anne Line

Anne Heigham was born in England in 1565, a time when Catholics were being persecuted. Even so, she and her brother converted to Catholicism and were disowned by their Protestant father.

Anne married Roger Line, a fellow convert to Catholicism, but he left her penniless after he died in exile in Flanders in 1594.

Despite suffering poor health, Anne began working with Jesuits in London to operate safe houses for priests, who oftentimes were imprisoned, tortured and killed.

Since aiding a priest was a crime, in February of 1601 Anne was arrested, tried and convicted of hiding a priest and was put to death. We remember her on Feb. 27.



Cain is punished for killing his brother Abel

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic Courier

After being expelled from the Garden of Eden for disobeying God, Adam and Eve began to have children.

They named their firstborn son Cain.

“I have produced a man with the help of the Lord,” Eve said.

The couple had a second son, whom they named Abel. Abel grew up to be a keeper of flocks, while Cain became a tiller of the soil.

In time, Cain brought an offering to God from the fruit of the soil, while Abel brought one of the best firstlings of his flock.

God looked with favor on Abel’s offering but not Cain’s. Cain was very upset.

“Why are you so resentful and crestfallen,” God said to Cain. “If you do well, you can hold up your head; but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door: His urge is toward you, yet you can be his master.”

Cain did not listen to God. Instead, he hatched an evil plan.

One day, Cain approached his brother. “Let us go out in the field,” he said to Abel.

When Cain and Abel reached the field, Cain suddenly attacked his brother and killed him.

Soon after, God approached Cain. “Where is your brother, Abel?” God asked.

Cain became defensive. “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” he replied.

“What have you done?!” God exclaimed. “Listen: Your brother’s blood cries out to

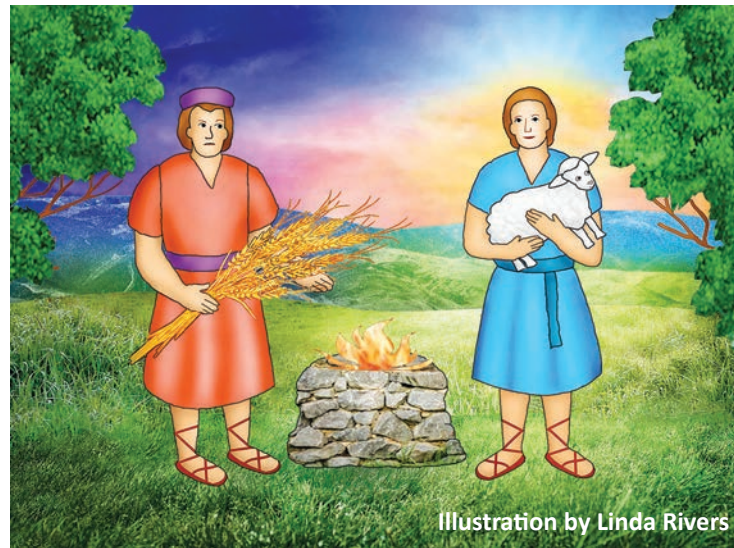


Illustration by Linda Rivers

me from the soil! Therefore you shall be banned from the soil that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. If you till the soil, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a restless wanderer on the earth.”

“My punishment is too great to bear,” Cain said. “Since you have now banished me from the soil, and I must avoid your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, anyone may kill me at sight.”

God then put a mark on

Cain so no one would kill him.

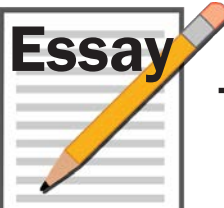
“If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,” God said.

After Abel died, Adam and Eve once again expanded their family. Eve bore another son, whom they named Seth.

“God has granted me more offspring in place of Abel,” Eve said, “because Cain slew him.”

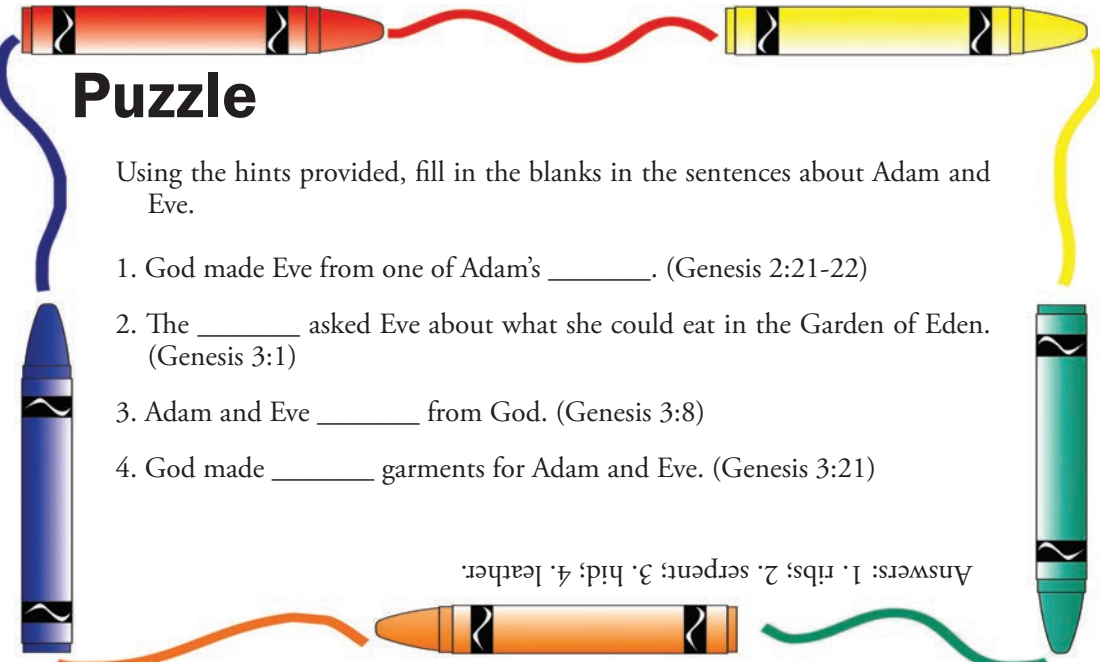
Read more about it... Genesis 4

1. Why was Cain upset?
2. What did Cain do to



Reading for Feb. 13, 2023: Genesis 4:1-15, 25

When have you received a consequence for doing something wrong?



Puzzle

Using the hints provided, fill in the blanks in the sentences about Adam and Eve.

1. God made Eve from one of Adam’s _____. (Genesis 2:21-22)
2. The _____ asked Eve about what she could eat in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1)
3. Adam and Eve _____ from God. (Genesis 3:8)
4. God made _____ garments for Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:21)

Answers: 1. ribs; 2. serpent; 3. hid; 4. leather.



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**DIOCESE OF
Jefferson City**

Review: *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I.*

Michael R. Heinlein, *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I., Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2023, 425 pages \$29.95*

By Kenneth Craycraft

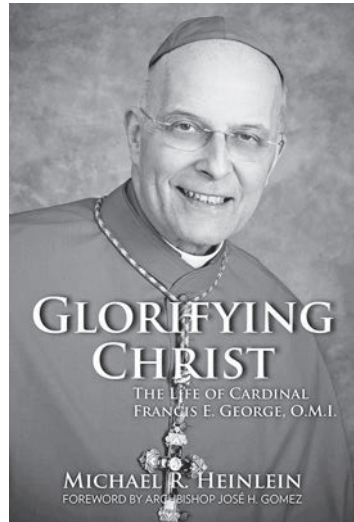
Carl Sandberg's 1914 poem, "Chicago," is a second person address to its subject, the "Stormy, husky, brawling/City of the Big Shoulders."

Sandberg tells his beloved Chicago that she is often criticized and mocked because of some of her faults and shortcomings. He acknowledges the truth of the charges, but defends his adopted home nonetheless:

"Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and course and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities ..."

If Sandberg's vivid description of "stormy, husky, brawling" Chicago is accurate, it requires a man with "Big Shoulders" effectively to bear



the burdens of leading its Catholics through the hurly-burly of life in the "wicked," "crooked," and "brutal" city toward the blessed promises of the Gospel of Christ.

To stand fast in the face of criticism, to negotiate between and among competing and antagonistic interests, to decide and act decisively and authoritatively, and, most of all, to do these things with the humility of a pastor of the Church takes an extraordinary bishop.

As demonstrated in Michael Heinlein's tightly written, perfectly paced and carefully circumspect new biography,

Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. was that man because he had those shoulders.

As documented by Heinlein, Cardinal George often said that one of his favorite childhood memories was being carried on his own father's shoulders through the Chicago snow, because it was so difficult for young "Frannie" to walk.

The cardinal does not specify whether this memory was before or after he was stricken with polio when he was 13, but the illness left him permanently disabled.

While Cardinal George avoided calling attention to his own suffering, there is no doubt it contributed to the development of his own big shoulders upon which he would bear the burdens that God later placed on them.

These were the shoulders upon which Pope St. John Paul II twice placed the pallium, first as ninth archbishop of Portland, Oregon in 1996; and then again in 1997 as the eighth archbishop of Chicago, one year before giving him the red hat of a cardinal.

In both cases, George returned to an archdiocese beset with toil and controversy. The pallia may have rested easily on his shoulders, but the burdens that they carried with them did not.

In Portland, for example, then-Archbishop George tenaciously and successfully shepherded a federal court case over

Movie Ratings

<p>Adults</p>	A Man Called Otto (PG-13)
	M3GAN (PG-13)
	Missing (PG-13)
	The Pale Blue Eye (R)
<p>Limited Adult Audience</p>	Plane (R)
	Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

the surreptitious recording of a confession in a county jail by a jail employee.

George was directly involved in the litigation, taking a strong public stand in protecting the seal of confession while simultaneously calling for forgiveness of the moral wrong in recording it. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the recording was unconstitutional, and that it could not be used for any purpose.

In Chicago, George inherited an archdiocese that his predecessor, Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin, had said was "sometimes ungovernable."

But George shouldered the burdens as successfully as any person could. Faced with a massive sexual abuse crisis, the cardinal translated his own personal suffering with polio to solicitude and accompaniment for the victims.

He aggressively rooted out bad priests, effectively negotiated the lawsuits and settlements, and reached out with pastoral sensitivity to those

who suffered the assaults.

Even though many of the crimes occurred years before he assumed the cathedra, Cardinal George took the burden on his own shoulders.

"I have to accept the blame," he said, even as he suffered from the aggressive cancer that would take his life in 2015.

Heinlein has not merely recounted the factual record of the life of Cardinal George. Rather, he has skillfully crafted a compelling narrative, framed in the cardinal's extraordinary virtue and humility befitting a true servant of God.

As a boy, Frannie was carried on his father's shoulders because he stumbled in the snow. As the archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal George carried upon his own big shoulders the stumbling church of a stormy, husky, brawling city.

Kenneth Craycraft is associate professor of moral theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology in Cincinnati.

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Aquinas' "outstanding" Lenten Meditations

There are numerous Lenten meditation books, but only one with the deep and abiding wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Aquinas's Lenten Meditations: 40 days with the Angelic Doctor helps readers encounter Our Lord with the Catholic Church's greatest theologian and philosopher. In the straightforward language he used for preaching, Aquinas reveals how to focus on eternity, reflecting on Jesus and Our Lady as models.

"The Passion of Christ is by itself sufficient to form us in every virtue," Aquinas explains. "For whoever wishes to live perfectly, need do no more than scorn what Christ scorned on the cross, and desire what he there desired."

The treasury contains 63 of Aquinas' Scripture-based sermons specially selected for the season. He breaks open various themes, from developing a deeper prayer life, to fasting, to facing temptation

See AQUINAS, page 27

JCRATI

From page 7

room as part of doing their job every day,” Deacon Telthorst noted. “We have to clean up, vacuum and mop the floor so it’s ready for the staff when they come in.”

The most challenging slots to fill are on the overnight shift.

“It would help a lot if there were more people to spread out the responsibilities,” the deacon said.

Since the shelter welcomes men and women guests, it’s good to have a mix of men and women volunteers.

Moments of encounter

The Jefferson City Homeless Task Force, with representatives from local congregations, organizations and service agencies, created JCRATI based on many aspects of the successful Room at the Inn operation in Columbia.

It’s an opportunity to stop and recognize people.

Deacon Telthorst pointed out that when passing by individuals on a street or alley, “you see them but you don’t really know them.”

“These guests — we invite them in, and you do get to know them over time,” he said. “They have a name, and we get to know their name.”

They also have stories they’re often willing to share with people they trust.

“So there have been some opportunities for really deep discussions and conversations,” he said.

“Not that we’re trying to solve all their problems,” he noted, “but we certainly are someone to talk to and lean on and try to understand what they’re going through.”

Staying connected

Organizers hope eventually to find a permanent JCRATI location that’s closer to downtown Jefferson City, where many of the clients spend their days.

Until then, Catholic Charities is home.

The Jefferson City Room at the Inn Facebook page is the primary point of contact for volun-

teers.

It includes a link to JCRATI’s SignUpGenius page, which includes descriptions of shifts, dates/times, links to the handbook, and other resources.

The Facebook page also includes an ongoing list of needed items for people to donate.

There are many ways to help.

Deacon Telthorst pointed to the recent donations of a large quantity of socks knitted by a retired gentleman, and a box of wool hats made by residents of the Moberly Correctional Center.

Catholic Charities recently donated personal hygiene packs for the guests’ use.

“Those types of things are always welcome,” he said.

The operation also needs prayers — “especially for the homeless individuals who face challenges every day just to stay warm, stay safe and stay fed.”

“They have to concern themselves with things that you and I take for granted,” Deacon Telthorst said.

Visit facebook.com/JeffersonCityRoomAtTheInn for information, or write to jeffcityrati@gmail.com.



Social ministry is ‘a work of faith’

OSV News

Washington, D.C.

Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington thanked attendees at the 2023 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering for “the service and sacrifices” they make to “preach the Gospel and share Catholic teaching in these discordant times.”

“Yours is a worthy and holy vocation, and a sign of faith, hope and love coming alive,” he said in his homily during the gathering’s “Sending Mass” Jan. 31, the feast of St. John Bosco.

AQUINAS

From page 26

and vices, to equipping oneself for the spiritual battle en route to Heaven.

A reviewer wrote, “This is a book I may re-read every Lent, as the heavenly doctor’s wisdom is outstanding. This has improved my rosary meditations and other reflections as well.”

Readers — many of whom will fully encounter Aquinas for the first time — will see stirring reflections on the

power of the Precious Blood of Jesus; why we should place total confidence in Our Divine Friend; and Christ’s Passion and anguish on the Cross, which led to his exaltation.

They will find fruitful meditations for each day of the Holy Week. Most significantly, readers will discover the greatest love story of all time — the Father who offered His only Son, and the Son who underwent every suffering and sacrificed

his life for our redemption.

As another reviewer said, “This is a wonderful collection of traditional Lenten meditations beginning with Septuagesima. The reflections are neither too long nor too short and are rich in spiritual and theological wisdom for each day leading up to the Easter celebration. This is a must-read devotional for any traditional Catholic during Lent.”

SophiaInstitute.com

Daily Readings

Sunday, Feb 5

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Is. 58:7-10
Ps. 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
1 Cor. 2:1-5
Mt. 5:13-16

Monday, Feb 6

St. Paul Miki & companions, martyrs
Gn. 1:1-19
Ps. 104:1-2a, 5-6, 10, 12, 24, 35c
Mk. 6:53-56

Tuesday, Feb 7

Gn. 1:20-2:4a
Ps. 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Mk. 7:1-13

Wednesday, Feb 8

St. Jerome Emiliani; St. Josephine Bakhita, virgin
Gn. 2:4b-9, 15-17
Ps. 104:1-2a, 27-28, 29bc-30
Mk. 7:14-23

Thursday, Feb 9

Gn. 2:18-25
Ps. 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Mk. 7:24-30

Friday, Feb 10

St. Scholastica, virgin
Gn. 3:1-8
Ps. 32:1-2, 5, 6, 7
Mk. 7:31-37

Saturday, Feb 11

Our Lady of Lourdes
Gn. 3:9-24
Ps. 90:2, 3-4abc, 5-6, 12-13
Mk. 8:1-10

Sunday, Feb 12

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Sir. 15:15-20
Ps. 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34
1 Cor. 2:6-10
Mt. 5:17-37 or 20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37

Monday, Feb 13

Gn. 4:1-15, 25
Ps. 50:1, 8, 16bc-17, 20-21
Mk. 8:11-13

Tuesday, Feb 14

Ss. Cyril, monk, and Methodius, bishop
Gn. 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10
Ps. 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9c-10
Mk. 8:14-21

Wednesday, Feb 15

Gn. 8:6-13, 20-22
Ps. 116:12-13, 14-15, 18-19
Mk. 8:22-26

Thursday, Feb 16

Gn. 9:1-13
Ps. 102:16-18, 19-21, 29, 22-23
Mk. 8:27-33

Friday, Feb 17

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order
Gn. 11:1-9
Ps. 33:10-11, 12-13, 14-15
Mk. 8:34-9:1

Saturday, Feb 18

Heb. 11:1-7
Ps. 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11
Mk. 9:2-13

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for February:

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the center, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

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Have you already remembered your parish or school in your estate plans? Please let us know!

Camdenton parish to host Catholics Returning Home program

St. Anthony Parish in Camdenton will host a six-week program called Catholics Returning Home, to assist people as they consider a return to the Catholic Church.

The group will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays for

six weeks beginning Feb. 21, in the Education Center at St. Anthony Parish, 1874 North Business Route 5.

“Are you an ‘occasional Catholic?’” the program’s organizers ask. “Perhaps you have been away from the Church

for a long time. Did you leave the Church because someone hurt your feelings? Were there misunderstandings?”

“Perhaps you never got around to joining a parish when you moved to the Lake or you just drifted away during the COVID pandemic?”

“Are you unsure about receiving the Eucharist now that you are divorced; remarried? Do you wonder if you need

an annulment? There’s a lot of confusion about marriage issues and reception of the Sacraments. Come, ask your questions. Get some answers.”

The program features friendly, informal meetings with no pressure.

Every Ash Wednesday, thousands of people flock to churches to be signed with ashes. But sadly, many will not return to church again until

Easter or Christmas.

Lent is a time to move beyond limitations, to be converted to Christ, to deepen relationships with God and neighbor. Being signed with ashes is an invitation to regular and occasional Catholics alike, to draw closer to the God who loves unconditionally.

“If you would like a little help as you consider your return to the Church, please be assured of our warm welcome,” the organizers stated. “Do something special for Lent this year and celebrate a joyful Easter.”

“No matter how long you have been away — no matter the reason — we invite you to return home to the Catholic Church,” the organizers stated.

For further information, call the parish office at 573-346-2716 or Tracy at 573-480-6886.

Knights of Columbus of Sacred Heart Parish
fish frys **Fridays, March 3 & 10**
 4:30 to 7 pm
 at Fr. Tolton High School COLUMBIA
 Dine-in and Carry-outs available
 \$15/meal, \$10/kids 10 & under — includes fish, green beans, coleslaw, cornbread, our famous chips & dessert

ARGYLE/KOELTZTOWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL
PANCAKE, SAUSAGE & EGG BREAKFAST
 Sunday, February 5 — 7:30-11 am
 Dine-in and Carry-outs available
 Argyle K of C Hall

 Proceeds go toward maintenance of all fire equipment. **\$12** Per Adult | **\$6** Kids under 12

Pancakes, Sausage & Eggs
Breakfast Westphalia Lions Den
Sunday, February 12, 7-11:30am
 Dine-in and/or Carry-out
 Adults \$12 • Children 10 & under \$6
 Bake Sale ♦ Prizes

 Sponsored by Westphalia Lions Club

Knights of Columbus Council 2027
FISH FRY
Loose Creek \$12 per meal
 Immaculate Conception School Basement
5-7 pm
FRIDAYS Feb. 17 Mar. 17
DRIVE-THRU ONLY
 Fish — Boneless & Delicious, Hush Puppies, Parsley Potatoes, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans
 Funds raised will be donated to your local Catholic Schools


PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND
 WITH FR. DAN MERZ
 September 26 - October 5, 2023
 9 days / 8 nights
 Jerusalem ✦ Sea of Galilee ✦ Nazareth
 Bethlehem ✦ Jericho ✦ Dead Sea
 Price per person based on double occupancy; Full Board
 Min. 20 — Max. 29: \$2,850 per person (1 free)
 Min. 30 — Max. 39: \$2,700 per person (1 free)
 Min. 40 — Max. 55: \$2,650 per person (2 free)
 Single Supplement is \$850
 Departing from St. Louis Lambert International Airport
 For information, contact
 Elias Abu Aita & Issa at Shepherdfieldarts@gmail.com

Knights of Columbus Council 8400
HOLTS SUMMIT
Fish Fry Dinners
Fridays—Feb. 24, Mar. 3 & 10
 Served 3:30-7 pm
 Only 3 this year, so DON'T MISS ONE!
 USA FARM-RAISED CATFISH baked potatoes, slaw, baked beans, french fries, cornbread, dessert & drinks
 Dine-in — Adults \$14 / Kids 5-12 \$7
 4 & under Free
 Carryouts \$12
 ST. ANDREW CHURCH — Use Center Street exit and follow signs

True love is Westphalia event topic

DATE: February 13
TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia will host Father Charles Sampson of St. Louis as its “Wine & Shrine” speaker on Monday, Feb. 13.

It will be from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Knights of Columbus Hall on U.S. 63 north of Westphalia.

Fr. Sampson is a seminary professor of Scripture at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary and associate pastor of the Basilica of St. Louis, King of France (Old Cathedral) and pastor of St. Mary of Victories in St. Louis.

“There is an endless fount of love available for every person!” the event’s organizers stated. “Join us as Fr. Sampson speaks on St. Paul’s famous ‘Ode to Love’ and we re-learn exactly what love has to do with it.”

This is a free event. An optional free-will offering will be accepted to cover costs.

Wine is welcome. Dessert will be provided.

Visit stjosephwestphalia.org to reserve a table of eight or an individual seat.

Call 573-694-6319 for information.