



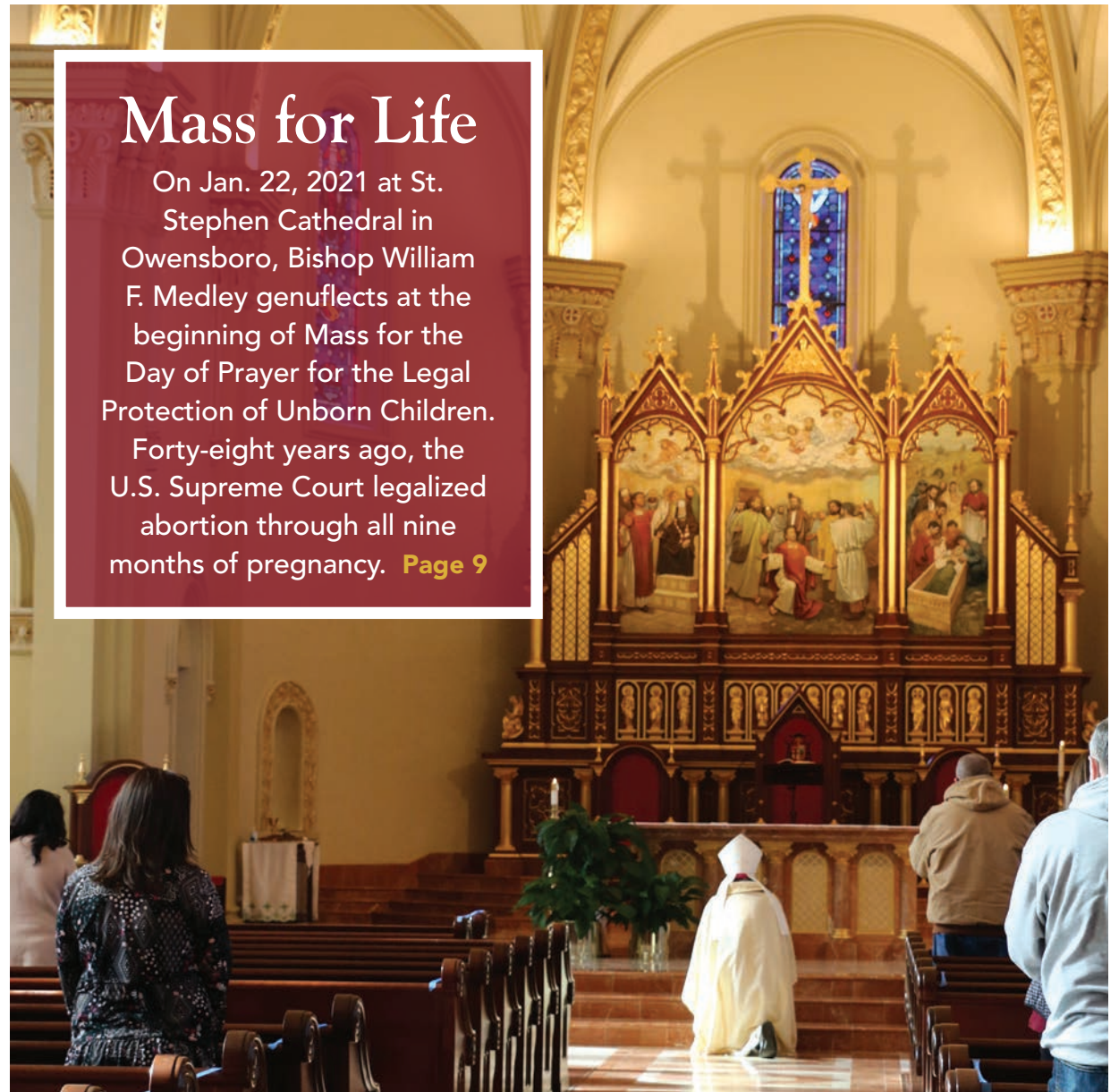
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Mass for Life

On Jan. 22, 2021 at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, Bishop William F. Medley genuflects at the beginning of Mass for the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. Forty-eight years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion through all nine months of pregnancy. **Page 9**

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Front page photo by Elizabeth Wong Barnstead | WKC

Submissions

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month prior to the publishing month. The Western Kentucky Catholic will take reader-submitted content into consideration but no submissions are guaranteed placement, due to space restrictions.

Article guidelines: The Western Kentucky Catholic will consider submitted articles pertaining to issues and events within our diocese. Please contact the editor in advance for a word limit, as space varies by month.

Photo guidelines: The Western Kentucky Catholic will consider your high-resolution digital photos showing special moments and memories from within our diocese. Photos must be a JPEG format (ending in ".jpg") and sent via email. A photo description, date, and name of photographer must be included. Please email your articles or photos to wkc.editor@pastoral.org by the 15th of the month prior to the publishing month. Visit owensborodiocese.org/wkc-submission-guidelines for more information.

THE WESTERN
KENTUCKY  **Catholic**

Official newspaper of the Diocese of Owensboro

Published monthly, 10 times a year at
600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301

Telephone (270) 683-1545

Email wkc.editor@pastoral.org

Publisher Bishop William F. Medley

Editor Elizabeth Wong Barnstead

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View current and archived issues at
owensborodiocese.org/western-kentucky-catholic/

The Western Kentucky Catholic is a member of the Catholic Media Association.

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A Word From Bishop Medley

In a time of pandemic, we turn to Mary, Health of the Sick

Feb. 11, 2021 marks the 29th annual observance by the Catholic Church of the World Day of the Sick. This date coincides, as St. John Paul II intended it when he initiated this observance, with the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Mary, under this title, and the city of Lourdes in southern France, are associated with the sick. In 1858 the young girl Bernadette Soubirous encountered the Blessed Virgin in a series of apparitions. Very early on, that encounter was marked by the discovery by Bernadette of a spring of water, and as pilgrims sought out the place, many reported miraculous healings in its waters. To this day, millions of pilgrims, especially the sick, visit Lourdes to enter into the waters of the spring. Still there are reported extraordinary healings but far more common the sick report a spiritual comfort and an acceptance of their malady at Lourdes.

Pope Francis addressed the worldwide Church regarding this year's observance noting the impact of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. As I write this column, the world wide statistics reflect that 96.2 million people have been stricken and more than 2 million have died. In the United States almost 25 million have been diagnosed and over 400,000 have died. Hospitalization rates are elevated around the world and death rates as well. This reality has only amplified the consciousness of the sick and dying.

The experience of sickness makes us realize our own vulnerability and our innate need of others, Pope Francis said. Everyone has been sick, be it a mild common cold, a childhood illness, or a serious life threatening episode. We can all relate; we can all identify. Sickness makes us feel all the more clearly

that we are creatures dependent on God. When we are ill, our vulnerabilities are magnified; we find ourselves powerless.

Pope Francis wrote, "Sickness raises the question of life's meaning, which we bring before God in faith. In seeking a new and deeper direction in our lives, we may not find an immediate answer. Nor are our relatives and friends always able to help us in the demanding quest."

In 2021, as we observe the World Day of the Sick, it is proper to express our thanks for health-care workers and first responders. These men and women have continued to serve and put themselves at risk over these weeks and months. Thousands of them have died, and this brings to mind the Gospel imperative that greater love than this has no man or woman than one who lays down life for a friend.

The Church and the world across nations and cultures often turn to Mary under her title of Health of the Sick - this year more than ever. And in this year of St. Joseph, we know him as the patron saint of a happy death. Though the Gospels do not relate any details of Joseph's life beyond the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple, we might comfortably conjecture that Joseph was cared for in his illness by the Blessed Mother and the young Jesus. Thus we might turn to him in prayer as well.

The Holy Father concludes his letter on the 2021 World Day of the Sick with this salute to Mary:

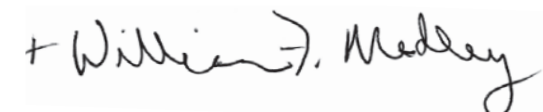
"To Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Infirm I entrust the sick, healthcare workers and all those who generously assist our suffering brothers and sisters. From the Grotto at Lourdes and her

BISHOP MEDLEY'S CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2021

Please note: The following dates are subject to change or cancellation due to the COVID-19 situation.

FEB 1	8 a.m. School Mass – St. Mary of the Woods School, Whitesville
FEB 2	9:30 a.m. School Mass – St. Mary School System, Paducah
FEB 3	6 p.m. Confirmation – St. Sebastian Parish, Calhoun
FEB 4	8 a.m. School Mass – Trinity High School, Whitesville
FEB 7	2 p.m. Confirmation – Immaculate Parish, Owensboro
FEB 9-10	Catholic Conference of Kentucky Meeting & Bishops of the Province Meeting – Louisville
FEB 10	6 p.m. Confirmation – St. Anthony Parish, Browns Valley
FEB 11	6:30 p.m. Confirmation – Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Owensboro
FEB 13	6:30 p.m. Confirmation – St. Francis de Sales Parish, Paducah
FEB 15	10 a.m. Priest Personnel Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center 1:30 p.m. Priests' Council Meeting – MCC
FEB 18	3 p.m. Meeting with Priests of the Diocese via Zoom
FEB 23	10 a.m. School Mass – St. Mary Middle School, Paducah
FEB 25	9 a.m. School Mass – Christ the King School, Madisonville

many other shrines throughout the world, may she sustain our faith and hope, and help us care for one another with fraternal love.



Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

‘Consecration to St. Joseph’ author, Fr. Donald Calloway, to speak to Diocese of Owensboro on Feb. 24

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

On Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021, the Diocese of Owensboro’s Office of Worship will host a free, live webinar in honor of the Year of St. Joseph, which was declared by Pope Francis on Dec. 8, 2020.

The webinar will feature guest speaker Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, a member of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and author of “Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders Of Our Spiritual Father,” published in January 2020.

Fr. Calloway’s presentation will unpack what it means to have a whole year dedicated to the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus – and how people can take advantage of this unique year, including how to consecrate oneself to St. Joseph.

In a Jan. 12, 2021 phone interview, Fr. Calloway told The Western Kentucky Catholic that the Catholic Church has never had a Year of St. Joseph “in our 2,000 years of history.”

“It’s important to look to him right now,” said Fr. Calloway. “There are problems in our world, in our families and even in our Church.”

With the COVID-19 pandemic, “people are out of work, anxieties are high,” and family life is more stressed than ever, said Fr. Calloway.

He said that many may perceive St. Joseph as just “some old guy in the corner” whose role could have been filled by anybody. In fact, “his role was vital to Jesus and Mary,” said Fr. Calloway.

The world needs the intercession of St. Joseph, as “the head of the Holy Family and Patron of the Church,” he said.

Fr. Calloway said he was recently talking with someone who used the term “patricide” – as in, a killing of the fathers – in reference to society’s crisis of fatherhood.

“A lot of men have been using their strength in the wrong way,” he said. But St. Joseph can be a model for the “virtuous manhood, sacrificial manhood,” that men are called to embody.

Fr. Calloway said he is encouraged to see multiple Catholic men’s groups and Knights of Columbus councils drawing inspiration from St. Joseph “in a powerful way.”

Having been a priest for 18 years, Fr. Calloway said he relies on St. Joseph as a spiritual father and an example of what it means to be a man.

“He helps me on a daily basis,” said Fr. Calloway. “He’s such a good model for me.”

Learn more about the consecration to St. Joseph at www.consecrationtostjoseph.org.



COURTESY OF FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC
Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, is a member of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, based in Stockbridge, Mass.

Register for the webinar

The Office of Worship is excited to be offering a free webinar with Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, on February 24, 2021 at 2 p.m. Fr. Calloway is the author of “Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father” and will be speaking on consecration to St. Joseph in this Year of St. Joseph. This is a free event and just requires registration. Learn more about Fr. Calloway’s talk and find the registration form by visiting owensborodiocese.org/year-of-st-joseph.

As Catholics first, ‘our priorities are never partisan’

Archbishop Gomez prays that God will give President Biden ‘grace to seek the common good with all sincerity’

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE
WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

On Jan. 20, 2021, following the inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., as 46th president of the United States of America, Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, released a statement that he is praying that God will grant President Biden “wisdom and courage to lead this great nation.”

President Biden, a Democrat, is the United States’ first Catholic president since John F. Kennedy.

Archbishop Gomez said he prays that “God help (President Biden) to meet the tests of these times, to heal the wounds caused by this pandemic, to ease our intense political and cultural divisions, and to bring people together with renewed dedication to America’s founding purposes, to be one nation under God committed to liberty and equality for all.”

He said Catholic bishops are not partisan players in the nation’s politics – that they are “pastors responsible for the souls of millions of Americans and we are advocates for the needs of all our neighbors.”

Referencing the USCCB’s “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” publication, Archbishop Gomez cited “a wide range of concerns” for Catholics, including abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, immigration, racism, poverty, care for the environment, criminal justice reform, economic development and international peace.

“We work with every president and every congress,” said Archbishop Gomez in reference to the U.S. bishops, adding that on some issues “we find ourselves more on the side of Democrats, while on others we find ourselves standing with Republicans. Our priorities are never partisan.”

“We are Catholics first, seeking only to follow Jesus Christ faithfully and to advance his vision for human fraternity and community,” said the USCCB president.

Archbishop Gomez said that working with President Biden will be “unique” as he is the first Catholic president in 60 years, and called it “refreshing” to engage with a president “who clearly understands, in a deep and personal way, the importance of religious faith and institutions.”

Nonetheless, Archbishop Gomez added, “I must point out that our new president has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender.”

“For the nation’s bishops, the continued injustice of abortion remains the ‘preeminent priority,’” he said. “Preeminent does not mean ‘only.’ We have deep concerns about many threats to human life and dignity in our society. But as Pope Francis teaches, we cannot stay silent when nearly a million unborn lives are being cast aside in our country year after year through abortion.”

Archbishop Gomez expressed his hope that President Biden “will work with the Church and others of good will,” rather than expanding abortion and contraception access, and that “we can begin a dialogue to address the complicated cultural and economic factors that are driving abortion and discouraging families.”

“President Biden’s call for national healing and unity is welcome on all levels,” said the archbishop. “It is urgently needed as we confront the trauma in our country caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the social isolation that has only worsened the intense and long-simmering divisions among our fellow citizens.”

Archbishop Gomez added that all are under the “watchful eye of God, who alone knows and can judge the intentions of our hearts.”

“I pray that God will give our new president, and all of us, the grace to seek the common good with all sincerity,” he said.



The full statement may be accessed at usccb.org/news/2021/usccb-presidents-statement-inauguration-joseph-r-biden-jr-46th-president-united-states.

Ash distribution to look different this year, but still serves as reminder of Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection



COURTESY OF EZRA ACAYAN/GETTY IMAGES

Catholic devotees wearing protective masks fall in line to have their head sprinkled with ash during Ash Wednesday services at a church on Feb. 26, 2020 in Paranaque city, Metro Manila, Philippines. The Philippines Catholic Church had recommended sprinkling ash on the heads of devotees, rather than the usual practice of rubbing it on foreheads, to avoid physical contact as a precaution against COVID-19.

BY LAUREN JOHNSON, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Ash Wednesday is one of the most highly-attended liturgies of the year. Sacramentals, like blessed ashes, are important to our Catholic faith because they are meant to serve as external aids that lead us further sanctification—a deeper conformity of our lives to Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Receiving ashes serves that purpose well because it reminds us of our mortality and need for the Gospel. When we receive ashes, we are reminded of that meaning when we hear either "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" or "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Roman Missal, "Blessing and Distribution

of Ashes").

The ritual use of ashes is not new. Putting ashes on the head is an ancient penitential practice that is found throughout the Old Testament. For example, in 1 Maccabees the community "fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their garments" (1 Maccabees 3:47). Evidence of this practice is also found in the Church as early as 960 AD, which took place at the beginning of Lent just as it does now ("The Origins of the Liturgical Year," Thomas J. Talley, p. 224).

While the Roman Missal (the large red book that contains the prayers and rubrics for the priest) never indicates that ashes are to be signed on the forehead with the Sign of the Cross (but rather that the priest "places ashes on the head" [(Roman Missal, "Blessing and Distribution of Ashes")]), this has become a popular custom in English-speaking countries because of the visible sign that is left. This custom is thought to have begun with women for practical purposes because they had to keep their heads covered in church. Rather than having ashes sprinkled on their veils, it would be imposed on their foreheads. However, sprinkling of ashes on the crown of the head is still used in Italy and other countries around the world. Regardless of how one receives ashes, the meaning remains the same, to be "disposed toward conversion and renewed Easter commitment" ("Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy Principles and Guidelines," §125).

By now we have become accustomed to adapting our liturgical traditions for safety during this pandemic. This year on Ash Wednesday, while we will be changing our local custom of how we receive ashes by instead having them sprinkled on the crown of our head, this will not be a break in the tradition of the Catholic Church. Rather, we will be doing what Rome does! Our regular practice is expected to resume next year. Until then, may the differences in Ash Wednesday 2021 serve to remind us that it is not what is seen on the outside that counts (like ashes on the forehead), but that we are to humble ourselves and allow Christ to conform us more closely to His Passion, Death, and Resurrection as we prepare for the joy of Easter.

Lauren Johnson is the co-coordinator of the Office of Worship in the Diocese of Owensboro. Learn more at owensborodiocese.org/worship.

Throughout pandemic, *there has always been a light in the tunnel*

BY SUSAN MONTALVO-GESSER, SPECIAL TO
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC



FILE PHOTO
Susan Montalvo-Gesser is the
director of Catholic Charities
of the Diocese of Owensboro.

I listened to a homily a few weeks back that talked about the phrase “a light at the end of the tunnel,” with reference to the anticipation of vaccines being available to end the pandemic. That phrase had always bothered the celebrant (as it has always made me a bit uncomfortable) and his

homily revealed why... like an epiphany... Fr. Larry Hostetter reminded us that during times of darkness and strife, there are always lights in the tunnel. If the pandemic has taught me anything, it is that we have lights in our tunnel in our diocese, and the donations to and work done by Catholic Charities illuminated the good that help lead us through the tunnel and into the light of a post-pandemic world.

At the time I heard that homily, I was anxious because we were down to \$135 in our COVID relief fund at Catholic Charities. We had given out over \$230,000 in assistance to people in the diocese affected by the pandemic and we had to turn desperate people away. Days later, Catholic Charities USA

announced that the Felician Sisters created a fund called the Francis Eviction Prevention Grant. We applied and immediately were approved for \$10,000 more for eviction relief. Then, more donations from faithful Catholics appeared. Now we stand ready to further our work. By the time you read this, we will have surpassed a quarter million dollars in aid distributed during the COVID pandemic, over triple our entire agency budget for 2019. We have done this with over \$120,000 in grants and \$75,000 in donations. In addition to the direct aid, we have partnered with the shelters to provide housing in hotels, when shelters could not take another resident due to reduced capacity. We partnered with Owensboro Health and the International Center to educate refugee and immigrant communities on COVID prevention while holding mobile food pantries. Deacons Ken Bennett and Chris Gutierrez distributed meals in immigrant communities with goodie bags containing sanitizer, masks, and blankets.

We provided parishes with sanitizer and masks. We delivered Christmas to 11 undocumented families. Miguel Quintanilla, Catholic Charities’ paralegal, has led the way working with landlords and other agencies to provide language access.

Meanwhile, we still deliver the immigration services our clients and partner organizations have come to expect. We adapted to the need for more mental health counselors who could provide teleservice or online counseling. Further, our coordination and information sharing with other agencies has

improved. We now have a much more active presence on social media to stay connected, when we still need to remain physically distanced.

Yet, we have not stopped thinking about the other unmet needs in our community. In partnership with the Bakhita Empowerment Initiative and Catholic Charities of Louisville, we will house a human trafficking case manager. The position is already posted to the diocesan website and we look forward to accompanying survivors of human trafficking while educating the community to prevent the trafficking of persons.

We try to live out our faith’s teaching by living a preferential option for the poor, the stranger, the hungry. We are always looking for people to be lights with us... you can serve on (or lead) one of our committees: Social Justice/Gospel of Life, Rural Life, Mandeville Sister Diocese, Diocesan Disabilities Awareness, Catholic Relief Services, and Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Further, we are sustained by prayer and monetary donations. To donate, you can: 1) mail a check to Catholic Charities, 600 Locust St. Owensboro, KY 42301 or 2) TEXT the word “give” to 270-200-5919 following the instructions on the screen; or 3) online go to <https://owensborodiocese.org/give/> and fill-out the giving form.

Susan Montalvo-Gesser is the director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro. Learn more at owensborodiocese.org/catholic-charities.

St. Francis de Sales families share talent, art, to reach parishioners who can't be in the pews



COURTESY OF MARIA KORTE

(Left to right) Parishioner Rebecca Nunley holds up her painting of the Sacred Heart on Oct. 25, 2020; a painting of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah by parishioner Gabe Rupp; and parishioner Lily Watson displays her painting of a rosary and the bell tower of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah on Oct. 25, 2020.

BY MARIA KORTE, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

With many quarantining and staying home during this pandemic, our parish of St. Francis de Sales in Paducah decided to revisit a wonderful project that would reach our parishioners that couldn't be in the pews.

Last year, the Daughters of Isabella in Paducah had donated supplies for a project for the St. Francis de Sales Youth Group. They donated the 8x10 canvases, paint and paint brushes for the youth to paint portraits of the church to send to the homebound as a 2019 Christmas gifts. The parishioners at home/nursing homes last year really enjoyed owning their own special painting of the church – so we decided to do it again this year!

The youth of all ages at St. Francis de Sales got together on Oct. 25, 2020 (pre COVID red zone). It was a family come-and-go event and each family pod had their own table, and supply carts were rolled around to deliver paint and supplies to each table. The youth (and a few parents) used printed photos to base their paintings from and they all got to work! The ages ranged from Pre-K to high school and it was amazing to see the talent that youth from our parish possess.

Our pastor, Fr. Bruce McCarty, said he would like the youth to do this each year from now on. Continuing the tradition from last year, one of the youths' paintings will be chosen each year for the parish Christmas card that is mailed to each parishioner and business affiliated with the church. (Last year, Therese Watson had the honor of her painting

being chosen and this year Olivia Chino's Christmas trees were chosen as our parish card front.) All of the youths' art will also be featured on the front of the bulletin cover sometime throughout the year, which will make each of them a published artist.

This year the paintings were delivered in combination with the angel tree gift bags that were donated and collected under the giving tree throughout Advent. They were delivered from the parish and social justice committee in a socially-distant and safe way to each house, and they were received very well. The hope is that this will become a treasured tradition at our parish.

Maria Korte is the Youth Minister and Director of Sacramental Preparations at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah.

Every human being is made in God's image, says bishop

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

At noon Mass at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro on Jan. 22, 2021, Bishop William F. Medley celebrated a Mass for the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.

Jan. 22 was the 48th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

"We gather today in prayer and we renew our resolve that we will do what we can in our society, culture and world, to try to reverse the tragedy of abortion," said Bishop Medley.

The bishop reminded the faithful that one of those ways is that "we treat every human being we encounter as created in the image and likeness of God."

Watch the full recorded Mass at facebook.com/StStephenCathedral/videos/420372832722856.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

People sit masked and socially-distanced during Bishop William F. Medley's Mass for the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on Jan. 22, 2021 at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.



COURTESY OF PEGGY POTEPA

Angie Thome (left) and her son, Alex Thome (right), play instrumental music before Mass on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2020.

Mother and son provide instrumental prelude for Christmas Eve Mass

BY PEGGY POTEPA, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, instead of the congregation singing Christmas carols for 30 minutes before our Christmas Eve Mass we, at St. Henry Parish in Aurora, were blessed to have Alex Thome play the cello accompanied by his mother, Angie Thome (music director), on the organ. It was beautiful. They played for the 30 minutes before the celebrations at both St. Henry and our sister parish of St. Stephen in Cadiz. The music truly added to the beauty of the celebrations.

Peggy Potempa is the secretary/bookkeeper at St. Henry Parish in Aurora.

Schedule of 2021 fish fries in the Diocese of Owensboro

Editor's Note: Canons 1250 and 1251 state that all Fridays are days of penance in the Catholic Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops requests that Catholics abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent, and practice some form of penance on the other Fridays throughout the year. Due to fish being a popular Lenten Friday option in this part of the world, the tradition of Friday fish fries has become a common activity for many. Below is information for the 2021 fish fries offered within the Diocese of Owensboro, provided by the parishes and local community organizations. All questions about the individual fish fries should be directed to the parishes and organizations.

Please note: The following information is subject to change or cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Address: 602 Sycamore St, Owensboro
 Format: Drive-thru only, off of 7th Street by St. Benedict's Shelter
 Dates: Feb 19; March 26
 Serving time: 5-7 pm.
 Contact: Sr. Jeannette Fennewald, SSND, at (270) 926-4741

Christ the King Parish

Address: 1600 Kingsway Dr, Madisonville
 Format: Carryout-only
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: 5-7 p.m.
 Contact: Parish office at (270) 821-5494

Christ the King Parish

Address: 298 Bluegrass Dr, Scottsville
 Format: Drive-thru only; also doing delivery to local businesses that pre-order
 Dates: Feb. 26; March 26
 Serving time: 5-6:30 p.m.
 Contact: (270) 776-6422

Holy Name of Jesus Parish

Address: 628 2nd St, Henderson
 Format: Drive-thru only, unless guidelines have changed by these dates
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: 5:30-7 p.m.
 Contact: (270) 748-0325

Knights of Columbus Father Carroll White Council #6743

Address: 1219 St. Anthony Rd, Clarkson

Format: Drive-thru and carryout only
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: 4:30-7 p.m.
 Contact: To order ahead (270)242-7955

Knights of Columbus Holy Rosary Council #1055

Address: 3028 Jefferson St, Paducah
 Format: Drive-thru only
 Dates: Feb. 12, 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: 4-7 p.m.
 Contact: Jeff Warren at (270) 443-3480

Knights of Columbus Fr. Ben Powers Council #1315

Address: Holy Spirit Parish, 4754 Smallhouse Rd, Bowling Green
 Format: Drive-thru only
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: 4:30-7 p.m.
 Menu: Will provide a fried and baked fish option at \$8 a meal
 Contact: Billy Mills at (270) 784-0935

Our Lady of Lourdes, Knights of Columbus Council #14290

Address: 4029 Frederica St, Owensboro, KY
 Format: Drive-thru only
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: Begins at 5 p.m.
 Menu: Fish, hushpuppies, French fries, cole-slaw, and beans
 Contact: Phil Haire at (270) 685-4923 or (270) 314-6616

St. Alphonsus Parish

Address: 7925 State Route 500, Owensboro
 Format: TBD
 Date: March 26
 Serving time: TBD
 Contact: Parish office at (270) 229-4164

St. Columba Parish

Address: 815 Pell St., Lewisport
 Format: Drive-thru only
 Dates: Feb. 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26
 Serving time: TBD
 Contact: Parish office at (270) 295-3682

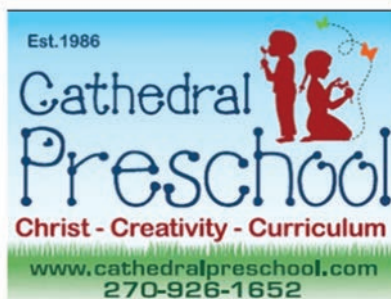
St. Peter of Alcantara Parish

Address: 81 Church St, Stanley, KY
 Format: Carryout only, unless guidelines have changed by these dates
 Dates: Feb. 26; March 12
 Serving time: Begins at 5:30 p.m.
 Contact: Parish office at (270) 764-1983

St. Pius X Parish, Knights of Columbus Council #10988

Address: St. Pius X parish hall doors, 777 E. 5th Ave, Calvert City
 Format: Call-in, carryout, pick-up or drive-thru
 Dates: Feb 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19
 Serving time: Orders and pick-up start at 4 p.m.
 Contact: For phone-in (270) 395-5747 or (270) 395-4727

UPCOMING EVENTS



600 Locust Street
Owensboro, KY 42301

**Registration for 2021/2022
3, 4, & 5-year old children**

Preschool registration begins **February 1st** for current
Cathedral Preschool families & St. Stephen Cathedral members

Registration open to the public on **February 8th**

*Childcare for enrolled students in our
WrapAround Program*

*Forms and prices available on our website:
www.cathedralpreschool.com
or call (270) 926-1652*



Ways to Give to the Disciples Response Fund

Online: owensborodiocese.org/give

Text: "Give" to 270-200-5919

Mail: Checks to 600 Locust Street,
Owensboro, KY 42301

Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph



Quilt Club

**We have new Quilt Club
tickets!** You could win a

beautiful handmade quilt! Each \$25
ticket entitles you to all 12 monthly
drawings between April 2021 and
March 2022. Get your tickets soon – last
year we sold out! Just 2,000 tickets are
available. Thanks for your support.

270-229-2009

carol.braden-clark@maplemount.org

Or purchase online: ursulinesmsj.org



Ursuline Sisters
of Mount Saint Joseph
8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY 42356



Sister Amelia

OWENSBORO CATHOLIC LEAGUE

Registration is OPEN at:

www.owensborocatholicleague.com

Divisions:

Pee Wee Baseball (5 & 6 Yr Old Girls and Boys)

8U Softball (7 & 8 Yr Old Girls)

10U Softball (9 & 10 Yr Old Girls)

13U Softball (11, 12 & 13 Yr Old Girls)

Rookie Baseball (7 & 8 Yr Old)

Minor Baseball (9 & 10 Yr Old)

Major Baseball (11, 12 & 13 Yr Old)

Registration Fees:

\$85 = 1 Player

\$130 = 2 Players from same family

\$165 = 3 or more Players from same family

Additional Fees: \$15 per player concession stand buy-out

**** All games for all divisions are played at the OCL
Complex behind St. Pius X in Owensboro**



Spring Women's Retreat...

Renewing Our Hearts: Hope and Healing with Julian of Norwich

May 21-23 at the Retreat Center

Retreat Director: Sister Cheryl Clemons, OSU, Ph.D.



The 14th-century English mystic known as Julian of Norwich chose a life of voluntary "lockdown." She lived in an enclosed cell attached to her local church during a time of medieval plague that resembles the current Covid-19 pandemic. She experienced visions she committed to writing. Her visions and insights offer contemporary seekers reason for hope even in our troubled times. She teaches us that the world is created and cherished by God who holds it in loving hands: "All shall be well."

During this weekend of prayer and reflection, retreatants will explore similarities between their own lives and that of Julian and Jesus.

Retreat begins at 7 p.m. Friday and ends after lunch Sunday. Fee: \$190 for residents or \$90 for commuters.

A limited number of scholarships are available.

Contact Maryann Joyce: 270-229-0200

To register, call 270-229-0206 • retreatcenter@maplemount.org

Or online: ursulinesmsj.org



Office of Spiritual Life for the Diocese of Owensboro



Mount Saint Joseph
Conference and Retreat Center

8001 Cummings Road
Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356

FEBRUARY 2021 BULLETIN BOARD

Please note: The following program dates are subject to change or cancellation due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

FDLc announces the Miguel Arias Scholarship

The Miguel Arias Scholarship is named for Miguel Arias (1972-2012), a pioneer in the liturgical formation of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the Catholic Church in the United States. Miguel's love for the liturgy was reflected in his dedication to studying it, his passion in teaching it, and in his joyous way of relating to everyone around him. The Miguel Arias Scholarship will provide annual grants to Spanish-speaking individuals with the hope that they will minister to the faithful in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. Students may be enrolled in diocesan or academic programs. Applications are accepted from February 1 to March 31 each year. Applications are accompanied by a sponsor testimony. These sponsors will mentor the students through their course of studies. The Miguel Arias Scholarship is funded by Liturgy Training Publications. Other individuals and organizations may contribute to it. The grants will be administered by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. For complete details and applications forms, please visit www.fdlc.org/arias-scholarship or www.ltp.org/ariasscholarship.

"Belonging to Love: Conversations on Living Prayer in the Spirit of Saint Angela" online Feb. 11

In a time of disconnection and division, many of us are experiencing a sense of separation from one another and even from our God. We turn to the prophetic wisdom of Saint Angela Merici whose foundational invitation to her community was to lead a life of contemplative presence. What is this way of abiding in God? How do we see and love God in all things? How are the Ursuline Sisters living this out? Come join us for a deep and lively conversation including prayer and story each month that will help you explore how to always abide in an awareness of God's presence. These are free online Zoom presentations, but donations are appreciated. Our next program is on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 6:30 p.m.-7:45 p.m. CST, and will be led by Ursuline Sister Lorraine Lauter, the director of Water With Blessings. These are being offered through the Mount Saint Joseph Conference

and Retreat Center, Maple Mount, Ky. To register, call 270-229-0206 or email retreatcenter@maplemount.org or sign up online at <https://ursulinesmsj.org/registration-form-for-sponsored-programs/> Note: Save these dates for future programs: March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 11, Dec. 9.

The Permanent Diaconate Class of 2026

Announcing the next formation class for the permanent diaconate: We will be accepting applications for the permanent diaconate beginning now through March 2021. Please see owensborodiocese.org/permanent-diaconate for the application and further material.

A Scout is Reverent

A reminder to Scouts BSA, Girl Scouts, Trail Life and other youth program participants: The Annual Religious Emblems Mass is scheduled for Sunday, March 14, 2021. Please see owensborodiocese.org/scouting for details.

Save the Date: Earth Care Conference June 19-20

"Honoring Earth: Celebrating the Sacred Outside and Within" will be full of insights into how we can honor God's creation of our earthly home. This event will take place on the weekend of June 19-20 at Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center. The conference begins at 9 a.m. Saturday with Kyle Kramer, executive director of the Passionist Earth and Spirit Center in Louisville, presenting "Our New Sacred Story: Finding our Place in an Unfolding Universe." With Thomas Berry as a guide, it will explore how to claim our place of belonging within our world and give ourselves to the Great Work of restoring a healthy relationship between us and the Earth. Participants have the choice of three breakout workshops. The Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning retreat are led by Emily DeMoor, faculty member at Brescia University in Owensboro. The fees are as follows: full conference and retreat with lodging and meals, \$150; Saturday afternoon and Sunday retreat only, which includes lodging and meals, \$110; Saturday morning conference only, \$40.

Watch for further details at ursulinesmsj.org. To register, call 270-229-0206 or email retreatcenter@maplemount.org or sign up online at ursulinesmsj.org/

[conference-retreat-center/registration-sponsored-programs](https://www.ursulinesmsj.org/conference-retreat-center/registration-sponsored-programs)

Please note: We will be following the physical distancing and safety guidelines recommended for group gatherings.

Register now for Gasper River

Registration for summer camps are now open at our website, www.gasperriverretreatcenter.org. Space will be limited this summer so please do not hesitate and get signed up early to reserve your spot! Summer staff applications are open our website. If you are or know a college aged young adult please apply or encourage them to apply for the chance to allow God to use them to make a difference in the life of a child! It's the greatest job in the world!

Free Natural Family Planning opportunity

Thanks to a partnership with the St. Augustine Institute, the Diocese of Owensboro is now offering FREE instruction in the Billings Method of NFP throughout 2021! This offer includes 5 sessions with one of our trained instructors and any Catholic married or engaged couple in our Diocese (where at least one spouse is a practicing Catholic) is eligible. Contact Martha Winn to begin today! 270-796-2972 or 270-791-9434.

Marital satisfaction survey seeking participants

We are seeking individuals who are married to participate in a study that will investigate the relationship among marital satisfaction, political ideology, and life meaning. This study will involve answering questions posted on-line and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study will help guide future research, the development of effective couples counseling interventions, as well as add to the public discourse related to political preferences. Additionally, the research will help guide the education of counselor trainees enrolled in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University. Participants may enter a drawing for a \$25 Amazon gift card. To begin the online survey, please go to the link: https://wku.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d5dxqmlFFOd67nD

‘It was St. Joseph all along’

Diocesan media specialist credits saint’s intercession for becoming Catholic

BY LAURA RIGSBY, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Once upon a time there was a man named Joseph. He was betrothed to the (literally) perfect woman, Mary, who was suddenly pregnant. An angel appeared to Joseph and explained that Mary’s child was the Son of God, and Joseph was being entrusted with His care. He bravely agreed and became the protector of the Holy Family that we know him as today. Although his death is not recorded in Scripture, it is fair to assume that he passed from his earthly life in the care of Jesus and Mary. But his story doesn’t end there. He remains a protector, father, and guide to us all, and God is still using him (and all the saints, for that matter) to lead us to Himself.

Fast forward to the year 2014. A young Laura is completing an internship in Amarillo, Texas. Her handsome suitor from back home in Kentucky has come to visit her, and together they’ve traveled to San Antonio to see the Alamo. They both enjoy visiting historic sites, so they decide to also see the other Spanish Missions in the area.

Their final stop is still an active parish which has just begun their Saturday Vigil Mass. Jason suggests that this historic church would be an awesome place for Laura to experience her first Mass since she’s been asking questions about it lately. Once inside, Laura takes in her surroundings and listens to the beautiful prayers. Her eyes rest on the tabernacle, not knowing what is inside, but feeling drawn to it nonetheless. What is that burning feeling she notices in her heart? Inexplicably, the experience brings



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH CLARKE DONOGHUE

(Left to right) Jason Rigsby, Joseph Warner Rigsby, and Laura Rigsby belong to St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green. Laura, who is the Diocese of Owensboro’s digital media specialist, credits her journey into the Catholic Church to St. Joseph’s intercession.

tears to her eyes. She realizes this is not just any church.

Laura eventually returns to Kentucky and begins attending Mass with Jason. She becomes increasingly curious about the Eucharist. Why can only Catholics receive it? Why is there so much kneeling and bowing? It’s almost like they’re worshipping it! In

RCIA she learns that they are in fact worshipping it, but “it” is actually “Him” – the One by whom we are redeemed, the One by whom the Mass has meaning – Jesus Christ. Laura comes into full Communion with the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil in 2016.

I am Laura. And I fully believe that God sent St. Joseph to lead me to this encounter with Christ, and

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St. Joseph continued from page 13

he continues to guide me even today.

It started with my husband (Jason, the suitor from the story) who came into the Church at St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green a few years before we met one another.

I, too, came into the Church at the same St. Joseph Parish.

We were married at St. Joseph, our baby was baptized at St. Joseph, and his first name is... you guessed it: Joseph.

St. Joseph has never failed to intercede when we have turned to him for help.

Here's my favorite part: a year or so after I came

into the Church, I told someone my story and realized I had no idea what the name of that parish in San Antonio was. I'm a Millennial, so I Googled it. Mission San José. It was St. Joseph all along.

In this special Year of St. Joseph declared by Pope Francis, I encourage you to look to St. Joseph as your guide. Ask him to lead you to encounter with Jesus. He will take you there.

Laura Rigsby is the digital media specialist for the Office of Communications in the Diocese of Owensboro and with her family belongs to St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green.

Do you have a St. Joseph story?

Your story could be featured in a future issue of The Western Kentucky Catholic! In honor of the Year of St. Joseph, the WKC is sharing stories of St. Joseph's impact and intercession on the lives of people all over western Kentucky. If you're interested in sharing your story, please contact the editor, Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, at wkc.editor@pastoral.org.

2021 Black History Month focuses on Black families through representation, identity and diversity

BY F. VERONICA WILHITE, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC



FILE PHOTO
F. Veronica Wilhite

Last year, the 2020 theme for Black History Month, “African Americans and the Vote,” marked the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment – which gave women, (including Black women) the right to vote – and

the sesquicentennial of the Fifteenth Amendment which established the right of Black men to vote after the Civil War. The Black community took this theme to heart, turned out in record numbers in 2020 to vote and became a significant part of voting

history despite continued efforts at voter suppression and actual disposal of our votes. We hope that this actual self-empowerment of Black voters will sustain Black voter participation in our nation's future and our democracy.

The theme for 2021, “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity,” focuses on the wide-ranging diversity of Black family life; from single or two-parent nuclear families to extended families. The month will also focus on the ways in which Black families were separated from their birthplaces through the atrocities of the slave trade, as well as discussing their attempted escape from persecution by the KKK and the quest for economic parity during The Great Migration from the South (1916-1930 and 1940-1970). (That was the Black History Month theme of 2019.)

Much has been written and many have studied

the Black family. The famous Moynihan Report has been noted as an attempt to discern the reason for racial inequities and Black disenfranchisement and was used as part of the basis for the “War on Poverty” by the Johnson Administration. Noted social scientists such as Kenneth Clark (“Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power”), Andrew Billingsley (“Black Families in White America”) and others have also studied this topic. The majority of studies of the Black family were conducted on inner-city families on welfare. Contrary to popular belief, these were not typical of the average Black family in America. First, Black Americans historically come from a rural background. Sharecropping was one step up from slavery and the industrial North beckoned many Blacks to the city with a promise of a better life. Blacks took their family and religious values with them to the city. Many prospered, married and had

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Black History Month continued from page 14

families, but usually both parents were employed outside the home in order to make ends meet. These families were not a part of studies as they were not on welfare. (Just as the rural Black family has not been counted; Black farmers are disappearing but do still exist.) Paradoxically, economic pressures that may pull black families apart also often unite them. This has been recognized as a major strength in our communities.

It became sociologically popular (1950-1970) to blame teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and high crime statistics on single Black mothers who were on welfare. The Black community has traditionally embraced teen mothers and especially their children. Blacks became stereotyped by these standards as the Black two-parent family was never recognized as a stabilizing force in our culture. The strength of these families attests to the resilience of our culture just as the importance of the traditions of extended family and informal adoptions. In the Black family, relationships are just as important as blood ties. Many an aunt, grandmother, brother, sister and cousin are not blood kin, but share a special love bond equal to kinship. Family reunions are a vital part of Black culture where we gather each year to experience a joyful meeting to exchange memories and family updates.

Religion and education were major forces in the stability of the Black family and in our communities. The Black Church continues to be a vital part of the Black community today. Church schools, especially Catholic, were instrumental in providing quality education to Black children where public schools failed. Tuition was nominal then and many Black families enrolled their children with hopes of preparing them for a better future. Catholic schools were the largest source of evangelization for the

Church in the Black community until most were closed during integration. The Josephites; the Sisters of the Holy Family (founded by Venerable Henriette DeLille); the Oblate Sisters of Providence (founded by Mother Mary Lange, OSP); and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (founded by St. Katharine Drexel) are Catholic communities still serving Blacks today in education and religious formation. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (“HBCU”), including Xavier University of Louisiana – the only Catholic HBCU – continue to be a vital part of the Black community, training Black professional and Black leaders.

In this year, the reality of the threat of white supremacist violence in response to Black voting puts all of us in danger. The Black community has always been a strong faith community. We have faced threats and actual violence throughout our history. Each of us learned as children of this imminent danger. We will continue to trust in God and his will. We pray for the continued blessing of the USA and especially for the conversion of hate-filled racist hearts.

Let us also continue to pray for the historic six Black American candidates for sainthood: Venerable Augustus Tolton (the first African American priest); Venerable Henriette DeLille (foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family); Venerable Pierre Toussaint (father of Catholic Charities of New York); Servant of God Mother Mary Lange, OSP, (foundress of the Oblate Sisters of Providence); Servant of God Thea Bowman, FSPA, (educator and evangelist); and Servant of God Julia Greeley (philanthropist).

F. Veronica Wilhite is the director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministry for the Diocese of Owensboro. Learn more at owensborodiocese.org/black-catholic-ministry.



A Virtual Lenten Program for the Parish

- † Feb. 23: Praying in Stillness and Silence
- † March 2: Praying with Imagination & Heart
- † March 9: Praying Over Each Day
- † March 16: Praying with Art and Nature

Tuesdays 6:30–7:30 p.m. CST
Individual in-home Zoom option offered on Tuesdays.
Programs repeat on Sundays 4–5 p.m.
Feb. 28 • March 7 • March 14 • March 21
Group parish hall option offered on Sundays.

Would you like to enrich your spiritual lives this Lenten season? We all need a fresh start for our faith in 2021.

This is a four-part adult faith formation opportunity that will be offered online. Through presentation, prayer “practice” and group discussion/sharing, participants will explore and experience praying through nature, silence, our imagination and the ordinary events of our day. It is being paid for by participating parishes. Please contact your parish office to sign up. For more information, contact Maryann Joyce at the Retreat Center: 270-229-0206.



PROGRAM PRESENTER: Sister Cheryl Clemons, OSU, has been offering retreats, parish missions, and RCIA programs for over 25 years. With extensive training in theology, Scripture, spirituality, and spiritual direction, as well as teaching and administrative experience, she brings to this Lenten program a deep love for and study of prayer and spirituality.



Mount Saint Joseph
 Conference and Retreat Center

8001 Cummings Road
 Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356

Ash Wednesday: An opportunity to acknowledge 'I am a sinner' and ask for God's healing

BY FR. RAY CLARK, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

As a priest, each Ash Wednesday I have the opportunity to exercise my artistic abilities as I trace the cross with ashes on the forehead of each person who comes before me. Not this year. Because of the pandemic, the minister will sprinkle the ashes onto the top of our heads. Though this may be foreign to us, it is actually the practice in much of the Church.

For the Great Jubilee of 2000, several members of St. Joseph Parish in Mayfield, where I served at the time, joined with members of Sacred Heart Parish in Waverly on pilgrimage to Rome. We were there for Ash Wednesday. The morning Mass, which Pope John Paul II presided over, took place in St. Peter's Square with well over 100,000 people in attendance. The cold March wind whipped around the corners of the marble buildings and chilled us.

That afternoon a few of us from St. Joseph's

were walking along when the Pope Mobile passed us, heading up a hill to a church. It was the Church of St. Sabina, where the pope traditionally celebrates Ash Wednesday evening Mass. We followed the procession and attended Mass in the church. John Paul sprinkled ashes over my head.

"John Paul sprinkled ashes over my head..."

- Fr. Ray Clark

I celebrated Ash Wednesday 2018 at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, my parish church in Jerusalem. There I also received ashes on my head.

People generally turn out in crowds for Ash Wednesday. We often think it's because we are getting something, even if it is only the ashes. But perhaps there's something more. Perhaps as I receive

the ashes, at some level I acknowledge: "I am a sinner." That's what Lent is about - being sorry for my sins so that God may remove them from my life.

This past summer a friend asked me to go to the local hospice to visit a member of his family who had been away from the Church for years. Perhaps, my friend suggested, the family member might even consent to confession. The man gladly took the opportunity to confess his sins. When it was time for him to pray the Act of Contrition, because he had been away from the Church I offered to pray the Act of Contrition so that he could repeat the sentences after me. He said to me: "Father, I've prayed the Act of Contrition every night for 20 years."

On Ash Wednesday, as I receive the ashes I am saying: "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned."

Fr. Ray Clark serves as Director for the Propagation of the Faith and Director of Ecumenism in the Diocese of Owensboro.

A message from St. Benedict's Shelter... St. Benedict's Shelter expands services, seeks monthly pledges

During the past 15 years, St. Benedict's Shelter in Owensboro has expanded its mission in size and scope, especially as a 24/7 shelter. As one of the few shelters of its type in western Kentucky, St. Benedict's now fills a regional need.

The 500 or so men who receive services there each year come from 120 ZIP Codes across the

tri-state region. Besides the men's shelter in Owensboro, St. Benedict's also operates four transitional homes for veterans and men who are recovering from substance use. Also, the nonprofit now operates a women and family day shelter and manages the St. Gerard Life Home, which gives moms in crisis pregnancies a safe place to live. And, during cold winter months, St. Benedict's serves men, women and children when temperatures fall to 15 degrees and lower.

COVID-19 canceled all of St. Benedict's 2020 fundraising events, and the worldwide pandemic caused the nonprofit to spend about \$40,000 more per month in overtime and other

expenses than the budget projected. In the first nine months of COVID-19, the shelter's reserve fund nearly emptied. The nonprofit is looking for at least 100 donors who will pledge a small monthly gift. For the price of a fast-food meal or one adult ticket to the movies -- \$10 to \$15 -- supporters can ensure the most vulnerable residents in the region have a warm bed, nutritious meals, counseling, and behavioral health services. Please consider a monthly pledge.

Simply visit stbenedictsoyensboro.org/donate. For more information about St. Benedict's and its many programs, go to stbenedictsoyensboro.org or call (270) 541-1003.

St. Vincent de Paul programs create ‘supportive environment’ through love, Gospel values

BY BELINDA ABELL AND RICHARD REMP-MORRIS, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

When someone mentions February, immediately you think of hearts and flowers... symbols of romantic love. Yet there are other kinds of love expressed during the month of February: the love of a parent for a child, a child for their parents, or love for good friends. Why stop there? The first two of God’s commandments tell us, firstly “Love your God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul,” and secondly “Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.” The Catholic community of western Kentucky has an organization that does just that – the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The governing body is The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Western Kentucky, LLC, a 501c3 nonprofit corporation established in 1961.

Western Kentucky’s St. Vincent de Paul programs are designed to support the underprivileged through trying times with gifts of shelter, food and clothing. Our purpose is to create a supportive environment where they can see their way to break through the cycle of poverty. When contacted to help, SVdP volunteers respond to requests for assistance such as food, clothing, rent, utilities and furniture. It is our hope through education, caring and prayerful support they may seek a life guided by faith.

Society founder, Frédéric Ozanam, was only 19 years old at the time he founded the group in 1833, but his vision was all-encompassing “to embrace the world in a network of charity.” What better charity than to show love and caring to those in need in



COURTESY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
Western District President, Suzanne Warren, accepts a donation from representatives of Atmos Energy.

your community? Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization and the oldest Catholic nonprofit, leads both men and women to join together to grow spiritually by giving of themselves with person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.

Members, known as Vincentians, are every age, skin color, wealthy and poor, but all are blessed with an awareness that our gifts are to be shared with others in need so as to grow in holiness together. The Society collaborates with other individuals and organization in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served because, in them, Vincentians see the face of Christ and seek to be a living reflection of the family of God.

If the Society didn’t continually seek to promote spiritual good to its members through the exercise of charity, and to those they assist in the name of Jesus Christ, it would lose its purpose. What greater



COURTESY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
Knights of Columbus District President, Ed Sullivan presents Diocesan Council President, Nancy Harris with a donation for St. Vincent de Paul.

love for another than to make sure they are provided for physically and spiritually. A long time ago I came across this thought: “Love isn’t love until you give it away.” Give your love today by becoming a Vincentian, donating unused items to our thrift stores or monthly donations to your parish St. Vincent de Paul or its Diocesan Council.

If you are interested in becoming a Vincentian or starting a St. Vincent de Paul Conference in your parish, visit svdpwesternky.org or contact svdpwky@svdpwesternky.org.

Vincentian Belinda Abell belongs to Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro, and Vincentian Richard Remp-Morris belongs to St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.

What is attraction, and how does it play a role in evangelization?

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

“The Church grows,” writes Pope Francis, “not by proselytism [i.e. forced conversion] but by attraction.” This much-repeated phrase by the pope expresses concisely and forcefully his vision for the Church and its mission in the world.

Is God “attractive” to contemporary people? The answer is absolutely! Our God calls humanity to experience abundant life. In the book of Isaiah 40:1-2, and 11, Yahweh says, “Comfort, give comfort to my people, speak tenderly and proclaim, her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated. Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs.” These expressions of tenderness, mercy and loving care are again manifest in the person of Jesus and we see our Lord reaching out to the margins and welcoming people into the reign of God, especially those with no power and no voice in society. To a hurting, frightened and estranged world, the Gospel is the good news that God cares and is walking with us. Life to the full is offered in a relationship with a God, who unconditionally loves each of us. That is indeed an attractive idea in our world, which is all too accustomed to conditional love. And more than just an idea, the power of the Holy Spirit is real and waiting for us to ask for what we need.

Is the Church attractive? Now the Church is “the people of God,” but for a moment consider that to many people, the word “church” means more than just the people. What might people who are not members of the Catholic Church think of? It is fair to say that it might not all be positive and we have some public relations work to do in this area. In fact, you might go as far to say we need a “culture change” in our Church to reflect a more attractive attitude and disposition to the world. In fact, among our members currently, for every one person who joins the Catholic Church, six are leaving. There is a mass exodus and something needs to be done. Attraction starts with a smile and a warm welcome to all people. It comes by being transparent, kind and interested in meeting the needs of others. We can work harder at being an attractive Church – and our mission of evangelization demands that we focus our energy in doing so.

Do we have a message that attracts? Hmmm. When others meet us, do they see how much we love God and how our lives, which is our message, model the



LIGHTSTOCK
Men participate in a bible study.

life and love of God? Does our joyful and loving disposition reveal to them that Catholics have something special within them which reflect God’s love?

The wonderful challenge that Pope Francis is putting before us is to focus on our core mission as a Church. The very mission of Yahweh in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament, whereby, we are called to participate in the reign of God, by being God’s presence to all we meet. As we grow as disciples of Jesus, we are transformed into being fully alive through being in right relationship with God. This transformation is real and in a world in darkness, we reflect the bright light of our attractive God.

Pope St. Paul VI said, “The Church exists to evangelize.” That was 50 years ago, so evangelization is not so new. What is new is that we understand “attraction” as a necessary part of our evangelization efforts.

Peace in Christ,

Jeff

Dr. Jeff Andrini is the director of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship. Please send comments to jeff.andrini@pastoral.org.

February Wedding Anniversaries

5, 10, 25, 40, 50 and More Than 50 Years of Marriage

Please send any anniversary updates or corrections to Charlotte Hedges, Office of Marriage & Family Life, at charlotte.hedges@pastoral.org.

Blessed Mother, Owensboro

Vince & Joan Frey, 61

John & Mary Medley, 59

Ralph & Rose Bemboom, 51

Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Owensboro

Burnell & Mabel Hamilton, 51

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson

Walter & Gail Clancy, 50

Bernard & Betty Feltrop, 66

John & Carlene Gabe, 58

Richard & Tracey Green, 40

Fred & Michaelene Guillerman, 55

Kenneth & Harriett Hite, 54

Richard & Doris Market, 58

Douglas & Jennifer McElroy, 25

Lawrence & Darlene Smithhart, 50

Mike & Bobbie Ann Willett, 58

Norman & Mary Anne Williams, 56

Holy Spirit, Bowling Green

Victor & Marti Billhartz, 52

Donald & Janet Mott, 53

Peter & Kaye Buser, 54

James & Patricia Signorello, 54

Donald & Mary Jane Scarbeau, 61

Immaculate Conception, Hawesville

Charles & Patricia Hagman, 50

Denis & Martha Wheatley, 61

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro

Christopher & Erin Fulkerson, 5

Patrick & Laura Boling, 10

George & Martha Taylor, 65

Francis & Doreen Russell, 57

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Office of Marriage & Family Life

Visit owensborodiocese.org/office-of-marriage-family-life for marriage prep, marriage & family enrichment, support & counseling services, natural family planning, and much more!

Just Need to Talk?



Catholic Charities collaborates with several counselors who offer their services at a reduced rate for parishioners of the Diocese of Owensboro.

For a list of counselors ready to speak to you, visit owensborodiocese.org/counseling.

Confidentiality assured.



The pandemic didn't stop our brotherhood; rather it helped us strengthen the bond!



COURTESY OF ST. MEINRAD SEMINARY

Fr. Stephen Van Lal Than currently serves as a parochial vicar at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.

BY FR. STEPHEN VAN LAL THAN, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Editor's note: On Jan. 14, 2021, the priests of the Diocese of Owensboro participated in a virtual Convocation experience in place of their annual week-long Convocation. A reflection about this experience is shared below by Fr. Stephen Van Lal Than, the diocese's most recently-ordained priest.

People everywhere are struggling in these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. So are the priests! However, the pandemic didn't stop our brotherhood as priests; it rather emphasized the need for us to get together. It was so important for us to be able to come together in prayer and unity in this great time of trials and difficulties, because there is something special and powerful about coming together

as brothers in Christ. In fact, the pandemic, as challenging as it was, helped us strengthen our bond.

As a young priest, I was so excited and so looking forward to my first Convocation with my fellow brother priests – an occasion to pray together, to worship together, to support one another, and to strengthen our brotherhood. In a way, I was also curious to see how it was done in this country, as compared to how it was done in my native country of Myanmar.

All this feeling of excitement was met with challenges due to the global pandemic and the protocols in place. In fact, it was so challenging and painful to not have a physical gathering. Nevertheless, God allowed us to have a virtual Mini-Convocation through the sincere efforts of the leaders of the diocese, and thanks also to the God-given gift of technology. I was so grateful for this challenging, yet fruitful convocation that helped me appreciate every minute of brotherhood more and more.

I believe it was also by God's providence that Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, gave us a presentation on the "Real Presence of Jesus in Word, Sacrament and Assembly," because that is what we most needed in this time of global pandemic where God seemed to be so far away from us. The Convocation was a great reminder that God is not far away from the reality of the world; he is the Immanuel, the God-With-Us; he is with us even in these difficult times. As the presenter reminded us, Jesus is actually and substantially present in the Eucharist (under the appearance of bread and wine) – the source and summit of our

Christian life. He is also present in the Word and in the assembly, who comes to worship and pray together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

I personally felt the presence of God and the working of the Spirit even in the very act of our gathering. It was so beautiful, so reassuring, encouraging, and so fulfilling to see the sense of community, selfless dedication and uplifting support among priests. When we come together in God and with God, there is always a special moment of His grace.

Fr. Stephen Van Lal Than is a parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green. He was ordained on May 23, 2020.

Happy anniversary to our priests!

This month we celebrate the anniversary of:

**Fr. Pat Bittel | Ordained 2/20/1982
Pastor of St. Martin Parish, Rome**

Correction: In the January 2021 issue of *The Western Kentucky Catholic*, the Jan. 12 ordination anniversary of **Fr. J. Patrick Reynolds** of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish – celebrating his 41st year as a priest – was inadvertently omitted from the priestly anniversary list. The WKC apologizes to Fr. Reynolds and sincerely regrets this error.

Christmas 2020 events show youth that despite challenging times, ‘Christ is alive!’

BY CHARLIE HARDESTY, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Editor’s note: As 2020 came to a close, youth ministry leaders from all over western Kentucky collaborated to provide several memorable Christmas-themed opportunities for young people. As Charlie Hardesty explains below, their efforts were met with great success.

ODYChristmas Party

What happens when youth ministry leaders of the Diocese of Owensboro have had enough of the pandemic and need a reason to celebrate? They organize the biggest Christmas Party the diocese has ever seen. On Tuesday night, Dec. 22, every middle school and high school youth in the diocese was invited to a time of fellowship, fun and games, prizes, and reflection, all done virtually over Zoom. The effort was a collaboration of several of the parish youth ministries and Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center.

The idea originated with Allison Steen-Baker, the youth minister at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green, and several of her youth who thought, “Wouldn’t it be neat to get all the youth of the diocese together over Zoom?”

Steen-Baker reflected: “I think that it was such a great opportunity to come together as a diocese to celebrate our young people and let them know that the Church cares about them. This year has required creativity, new paths, and collaboration in youth ministry more than ever and I think that this effort was a great culmination event for the year of 2020.”

Crissy Stevenson, the youth minister at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, shared that “the ODYChristmas Party was not ‘just another Zoom meeting!’ It provided an opportunity for youth to gather for a time to be silly and participate in a high-energy, game marathon to celebrate the season (something I think we could all have used at the time). It was great to share some laughs, see smiles and faces that weren’t hidden by masks, and to be able to check in with our youth over the holidays in a very relaxed setting. Our youth said they had a good time and were grateful for the opportunity.”

By the end of the night, we had been joined by more than 75 young people,



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

Youth ministry leaders, youth, and parents participate in the Dec. 22, 2020 “ODYChristmas Party.” (ODY stands for Owensboro Diocese Youth.)

given out more than \$300 in prizes, had representatives of more than 20 of our parishes, played 8 games, had a blast with 2 Gasper River emcees, heard from 1 bishop who expressed his love and care for the young people, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Gasper River Christmas Camp

“Christ is Alive!” was the theme of this year’s virtual Christmas Camp offered by Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center. Youth from across the diocese gathered for three nights, Dec. 28-30, for games, talks, small group discussions, and Adoration. The staff at Gasper knew their normal Christmas Camp would be greatly missed and they hoped this virtual experience would offer some sense of the annual experience. A great number of young people responded to the invitation of the virtual camp and the staff made it a huge success.

Ben Warrell, director at Gasper River, shared that “because of COVID re-

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restrictions, we were not allowed to have our annual Christmas/New Year's Camp at Gasper River. We wanted to have something to offer our campers who so greatly look forward to this camp each year. We had three nights of Zoom meetings with games, prayer, large groups, small groups and Adoration. There were almost 40 people on each night and we focused on Jesus is alive and how the Church loves and needs young people to be alive in their faith.

There was great feedback from the campers and the team about what a great time they had. Nothing beats meeting in person but when you can't, you just have to make the best of what you can do!"

Registrations for camp this summer are currently open and the camp staff is working very hard to offer a safe in-person experience. Please visit gasperriver-retreatcenter.org for information regarding camps, registration, and information regarding guidelines

and restrictions in place for this summer.

Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp is currently also accepting applications for summer staff. Please see their website for information regarding available summer positions.

Charlie Hardesty is the director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Owensboro. To learn more, visit owensborodiocese.org/youth-ministry.

With original plans cancelled, St. Francis de Sales youth honor veterans with carwash fundraiser



COURTESY OF JENNIFER ONUOHA

Holding signs, left to right: Michael Onuoha, Christiana Onuoha, Landon Willett. Back row, left to right: Nicholas Cope, Hunter Korte and youth minister Maria Korte.

BY MARIA KORTE, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

For the last 11 years, the St. Francis de Sales Parish Youth Ministry in Paducah has held a St. Francis de Sales Military and Veterans Family Dinner.

The meal has been prepared and served by all of the youth. During dinner, you would hear music and the sounds of veterans sharing stories, and a speaker from the parish would tell of their military background and history. (Our parish has veterans that span from peacetime, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf War, the Bosnian War, the War in Afghanistan,

the Iraq War and some are currently serving as far as Russia right now.)

But this year, the night that the youth have enjoyed spending their talents and treasures to celebrate our parish veterans was taken away due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Over the summer it was becoming apparent to me that this was going to become an issue when the fall rolled around. So the youth core team members, the youth, and I and started planning fundraisers. Unfortunately they were cut short by coronavirus surges in Kentucky, but the youth did manage to raise some money at a Sept. 19, 2020 carwash that was graciously held at the Auto Zone on Jackson Street.

It was a hot day and all of the kids kept their masks on and worked really hard shining up all of the generous cars that pulled over for a carwash. Nicholas Cope was one of the SFDS youth who washed cars that day. (He spent the summer washing cars for extra money and is an avid car enthusiast that hopes to someday be an auto mechanic.) Nicholas patiently taught all of the other kids how to wash cars properly. He proved that there is an art to car washing and did an excellent job. The youth group raised over \$200. That was then was donated in the name of our parish veterans and military to the Western Kentucky Hugs Project – a nonprofit that send packages to military overseas and away from home. Just like all nonprofits, they too are struggling during this time because of less fundraising, so every bit helps.

Maria Korte is the Youth Minister and Director of Sacramental Preparations at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah.

Eye-catching Papal Blessing documents show treasured blessings from the heir of Peter

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

Believe it or not, you may have received a Papal Blessing and didn't even know it. Yes, you read that correctly. I, too, think that I would know if the Holy Father bestowed a blessing upon me. This, however, may not be the case.

In the diocesan Archives, we have several Apostolic Blessings, or Papal Blessings, from years past. Most of these were given to priests, and with their passing, were given to the Archives. Given the Catholic Church's love for aesthetics, these documents are elaborate and eye-catching. Bright and beautifully-colored flowers enfold a refined image of the Holy Father who is bestowing the blessing. Carefully-inscribed calligraphy bolsters the sacred and regal origins of the document. As if these ornamentations were not sufficient, golden accents are skillfully incorporated, truly communicating to the viewer that what they are visually consuming is a treasure.

Perhaps even more intriguing than their artistic allure, however, is their subject matter. I have no doubt that some readers are familiar with Apostolic Blessings for marriages. You may have seen one of these framed at your grandparent's house, or perhaps have one of your own. These are just one of many blessings that can be received.

One of the first of these documents that caught my eye was a blessing to our first bishop, Bishop Francis R. Cotton. The document is an Apostolic Blessing and a Plenary Indulgence granted by Pope Pius XII. This ensured that if Bishop Cotton passed away without the benefit of absolution of his sins at the hour of death, his sins would be forgiven. The

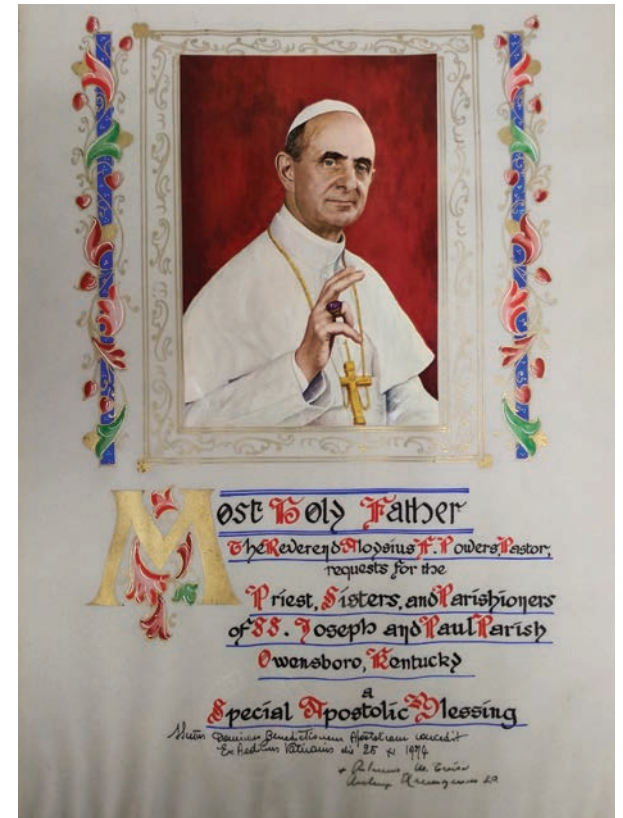
blessing and indulgence was granted August 21, 1957, roughly three years before the bishop's passing on Sept. 20, 1960. Bishop Cotton knew Pope Pius XII personally and also had a great admiration for him. There is little doubt that he was honored to have received the blessing from a man that he thought so highly of.

There are also other blessings in the collection. One that may be of particular interest to those who attend Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro is a special Apostolic Blessing that was granted to the priest, religious sisters and parishioners of the church! It was granted in 1974. The blessing was given by Pope Paul VI, with the request being made by Fr. Aloysius Powers. The document clearly illustrates that Fr. Powers had great compassion for the congregation of Sts. Joseph and Paul, which he served for seven years, from 1969-1976.

We have countless documents in the diocesan Archives but few are as visually pleasing as these. They are as much works of art as they are documents. However, even with all their grandiloquence, no worldly, outward appearance could replicate the impact of what the document embodies; the blessing of the heir of Peter, the shepherd and teacher of all Christians.

A special thanks to Fr. Will Thompson for our discussion on Apostolic Blessings.

Edward Wilson is the director of the Diocese of Owensboro's Archives and the Archives of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. Comments and questions may be sent to edward.wilson@pastoral.org.



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES

A special Apostolic Blessing to the priest, religious sisters and parishioners of Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro, bestowed by Pope Paul VI, dated 1974.



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES

Apostolic Blessing and Plenary Indulgence bestowed upon Bishop Francis Cotton by Pope Pius XII, dated 1957.

Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley

En tiempos de pandemia, acudimos a María, salud de los enfermos

El 11 de febrero de 2021 marca la vigésima novena celebración anual por la Iglesia Católica de la Jornada Mundial del Enfermo. Esta fecha coincide, como lo pretendía San Juan Pablo II cuando inició esta observancia, con la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. María, bajo este título, y la ciudad de Lourdes en el sur de Francia, están asociadas con los enfermos. En 1858, la joven María Bernarda Soubirous tuvo un encuentro con la Santísima Virgen en una serie de apariciones. Muy temprano, ese encuentro estuvo marcado por el descubrimiento por Bernardita de un manantial de agua, y mientras los peregrinos acudían al lugar, muchos dieron fe de curaciones milagrosas a través de estas aguas. Hasta el día de hoy, millones de peregrinos, especialmente enfermos, visitan Lourdes para sumergirse en las aguas del manantial. Aún se informan curaciones extraordinarias, pero es mucho más común que los enfermos compartan sobre un consuelo espiritual y una aceptación de su enfermedad en Lourdes.

El Papa Francisco se dirigió a la Iglesia mundial con respecto a la observancia de este año y recalcó el impacto de la pandemia mundial de coronavirus. Mientras escribo esta columna, las estadísticas mundiales reflejan que 96.2 millones de personas han resultado infectadas y más de 2 millones han muerto. En Estados Unidos se han diagnosticado casi 25 millones de casos y han muerto más de 400,000 personas. Las tasas de hospitalización son elevadas en todo el mundo y también las tasas de mortalidad.

Esta realidad solo ha amplificado la conciencia de los enfermos y moribundos.

"La experiencia de la enfermedad hace que sintamos nuestra propia vulnerabilidad y, al mismo tiempo, la necesidad innata del otro", dijo el Papa Francisco. Todo el mundo ha estado enfermo, ya sea de un resfriado común leve, una enfermedad infantil o un episodio grave que ponga en peligro la vida. Todos podemos relacionarnos; todos podemos identificarnos. La enfermedad nos hace sentir con mayor claridad que somos criaturas dependientes de Dios. Cuando estamos enfermos, nuestras vulnerabilidades se magnifican; nos encontramos impotentes.

El Papa Francisco escribió: "La enfermedad impone una pregunta por el sentido, que en la fe se dirige a Dios; una pregunta que busca un nuevo significado y una nueva dirección para la existencia, y que a veces puede ser que no encuentre una respuesta inmediata. Nuestros mismos amigos y familiares no siempre pueden ayudarnos en esta búsqueda trabajosa".

En este 2021, y mientras observamos la Jornada Mundial del Enfermo, es apropiado expresar nuestro agradecimiento a los trabajadores de la salud y los socorristas. Estos hombres y mujeres han continuado sirviendo y se han puesto en riesgo durante estas semanas y meses. Miles de ellos han muerto, y esto recuerda el imperativo evangélico de que no hay amor más grande que un hombre o una mujer que da la vida por los amigos.

CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY FEBRERO DE 2021:

El siguiente calendario es tentativo debido a las circunstancias de la pandemia del COVID-19.

1 DE FEBRERO	8 a.m. Misa Escolar -Santa María del Bosque, Whitesville
2 DE FEBRERO	9:30 a.m. Misa Escolar - Sistema Escolar Santa María, Paducah
3 DE FEBRERO	6 p.m. Confirmación – Parroquia San Sebastián, Calhoun
4 DE FEBRERO	8 a.m. Misa Escolar – Escuela Preparatoria Trinidad, Whitesville
7 DE FEBRERO	2 p.m. Confirmación - Parroquia Inmaculada, Owensboro
9-10 DE FEBRERO	Reunión de la Conferencia Católica de KY y de Obispos de la Provincia - Louisville
10 DE FEBRERO	6 p.m. Confirmación – Parroquia San Antonio, Browns Valley
11 DE FEBRERO	6:30 p.m. Confirmación - Parroquia Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, Owensboro
13 DE FEBRERO	6:30 p.m. Confirmación - Parroquia San Francisco de Sales, Paducah
15 DE FEBRERO	10 a.m. Reunión del Consejo de Personal Sacerdotal - Centro Católico McRaith (MCC) 1:30 p.m. Reunión del Consejo Sacerdotal - MCC
18 DE FEBRERO	3 p.m. Reunión Virtual con sacerdotes de la Diócesis por Zoom
23 DE FEBRERO	10 a.m. Misa Escolar - Escuela Secundaria Santa María, Paducah
25 DE FEBRERO	9 a.m. Misa Escolar - Escuela Cristo Rey, Madisonville

La Iglesia y el mundo en todas las naciones y culturas a menudo se dirigen a María bajo su título de Salud de los enfermos, este año más que nunca. Y en este año de San José, quien conocemos como el santo patrono de una buena muerte. Aunque los Evangelios no relatan ningún detalle de la vida de José

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más allá del hallazgo del Niño Jesús en el templo, podemos imaginar fácilmente que José fue atendido en su enfermedad por la Santísima Madre y el joven Jesús. Por lo tanto, también podemos dirigirnos a él en oración.

El Santo Padre concluye su carta sobre la Jornada Mundial del Enfermo de 2021 con este saludo a

María:

“Le encomiendo a María, Madre de misericordia y Salud de los enfermos, todas las personas enfermas, los agentes sanitarios y quienes se prodigan al lado de los que sufren. Que Ella, desde la Gruta de Lourdes y desde los innumerables santuarios que se le han dedicado en todo el mundo, sostenga nuestra

fe y nuestra esperanza, y nos ayude a cuidarnos unos a otros con amor fraterno”.



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro

Miércoles de Ceniza: Una oportunidad para reconocer que 'soy un pecador' y pedir la sanación de Dios



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE EZRA ACAYAN / GETTY IMAGES

Los fieles católicos que llevan mascarillas protectoras hacen fila para que les rocíen la cabeza con ceniza durante los servicios del Miércoles de Ceniza en una iglesia el 26 de febrero de 2020 en la ciudad de Paranaque, Metro Manila, Filipinas. La Iglesia Católica de Filipinas recomendó rociar ceniza en la cabeza de los fieles, en lugar de la práctica habitual de imponerla en la frente, para evitar el contacto físico como precaución contra el COVID-19.

POR EL P. RAY CLARK, ESPECIAL PARA EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

Este Miércoles de Ceniza, a causa de la pandemia, el ministro dejará caer las cenizas sobre nuestras cabezas. Aunque esto nos resulte extraño, en realidad es la práctica en gran parte de la Iglesia.

Para el Gran Jubileo de 2000, varios miembros de la Parroquia San José en Mayfield, donde yo servía en ese tiempo, se unieron a miembros de la Parroquia Sagrado Corazón en Waverly en peregrinaje a Roma. Estuvimos allí para el Miércoles de Ceniza. La Misa de la mañana, que presidió el Papa Juan Pablo II, tuvo lugar en la Plaza de San Pedro con la asistencia de más de 100,000 personas.

Esa tarde, algunos de nosotros de San José caminábamos cuando el papamóvil pasó a nuestro lado, subiendo una colina hacia una iglesia. Era la Iglesia de Santa Sabina, donde el Papa tradicionalmente celebra la Misa vespertina del Miércoles de Ceniza. Seguimos la procesión y asistimos a la Misa en la iglesia. Juan Pablo esparció cenizas sobre mi cabeza.

La gente suele acudir en multitudes para el Miércoles de Ceniza. A menudo pensamos que es porque obtenemos algo, incluso si son solo las cenizas. Pero quizás haya algo más. Quizás al recibir las cenizas, en algún nivel reconozco: "Soy un pecador". De eso se trata la Cuaresma: arrepentirme de mis pecados para que Dios pueda quitarlos de mi vida.

Durante la pandemia, siempre ha habido una luz en el túnel

POR SUSAN MONTALVO-GESSER, ESPECIAL PARA EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL



FOTO DE ARCHIVO
Susan Montalvo-Gesser es la directora de Caridades Católicas de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

Escuché una homilía hace unas semanas que hablaba de la frase “una luz al final del túnel”, en referencia a la anticipación de que habrá vacunas disponibles para acabar con la pandemia. Esa frase siempre había molestado al celebrante

(como siempre me ha incomodado un poco) y su homilía reveló por qué... como una epifanía... el P. Larry Hostetter nos recordó que, en tiempos de oscuridad y conflictos, siempre hay luces en el túnel. Si la pandemia me ha enseñado algo, es que tenemos luces en nuestro túnel en nuestra diócesis y las donaciones y el trabajo realizado por Caridades Católicas iluminaron el bien que ayuda a conducirnos a través del túnel hacia la luz de un mundo pospandémico.

En el momento en que escuché esa homilía, estaba ansiosa porque habíamos bajado a \$135 en nuestro fondo de ayuda del COVID en Caridades Católicas. Habíamos entregado más de \$230,000 en asistencia a personas de la diócesis afectadas por la pandemia y tuvimos que rechazar a algunas personas desesperadas. Días después, Catholic Charities USA anunció que las Hermanas Felicianas (Hermanas de San Félix de Cantalicio) habían creado un fondo llamado Francis Fund for Eviction Prevention [Fondo

Franciscano para la Prevención de Desalojos]. Solicitamos e inmediatamente nos aprobaron \$10,000 más para prevenir desalojos. Luego, aparecieron más donaciones de fieles católicos. Ahora estamos listos para continuar con nuestro trabajo. Para cuando lea esto, habremos superado el cuarto de millón de dólares en ayuda distribuida durante la pandemia del COVID, más del triple de todo el presupuesto de nuestra agencia durante el 2019. Lo hemos logrado con más de \$120,000 en subvenciones/becas y \$75,000 en donaciones. Además de la ayuda directa, hemos colaborado con los albergues para proporcionar alojamiento en hoteles, cuando los albergues no podían acoger a otro residente debido a la capacidad reducida. Nos asociamos con Owensboro Health y el Centro Internacional para educar a las comunidades de refugiados e inmigrantes sobre la prevención del COVID mientras realizamos despensas móviles de alimentos. Los diáconos Ken Bennett y Cristóbal Gutierrez distribuyeron comidas en comunidades de inmigrantes con bolsas de regalos que contenían desinfectante, mascarillas y cobijas.

Proporcionamos a las parroquias desinfectante y mascarillas. Entregamos regalos de Navidad a 11 familias indocumentadas. Miguel Quintanilla, asistente legal de Caridades Católicas, ha marcado el camino al trabajar con propietarios y otras agencias para brindar acceso en español.

Mientras tanto, seguimos brindando los servicios de inmigración que nuestros clientes y organizaciones asociadas esperan. Nos adaptamos a la necesidad de más consejeros de salud mental que pudieran proporcionar teleservicio o asesoramiento en línea. Además, nuestra coordinación e intercambio de información con otras agencias ha mejorado.

Ahora tenemos una presencia mucho más activa en las redes sociales para estar conectados, cuando todavía necesitamos mantenernos físicamente distanciados.

Sin embargo, no hemos dejado de pensar en las otras necesidades insatisfechas de nuestra comunidad. En asociación con Bakhita Empowerment Initiative [Iniciativa para el empoderamiento Bakhita] y Caridades Católicas de Louisville, contrataremos a un administrador de casos de trata de personas. El puesto ya está publicado en el sitio web diocesano y esperamos acompañar a los sobrevivientes de la trata de personas mientras educamos a la comunidad para prevenir la trata de personas.

Tratamos de vivir la enseñanza de nuestra fe viviendo una opción preferencial por los pobres, los extranjeros y los hambrientos. Siempre estamos buscando personas que sean luces con nosotros ... usted puede servir en (o ser líder de) uno de nuestros comités: Justicia social/Evangelio de la vida, Vida rural, Diócesis hermana de Mandeville, Conciencia diocesana sobre discapacidades, Catholic Relief Services y la Campaña Católica para el Desarrollo Humano.

Además, somos sostenidos por la oración y las donaciones monetarias. Para donar, puede: 1) enviar un cheque por correo a Catholic Charities, 600 Locust St., Owensboro, KY 42301 o 2) enviar un mensaje de texto con la palabra “give” al 270-200-5919 siguiendo las instrucciones en la pantalla; o 3) dar en línea en <https://owensborodiocese.org/give/> y completar el formulario de donación.

Susan Montalvo-Gesser es la directora de Caridades Católicas de la Diócesis de Owensboro. Aprende más en owensborodiocese.org/catholic-charities.

Parroquias con ministerio hispano/latino

Parroquia del Santo Redentor, Beaver Dam

107 13th Street, Beaver Dam, KY 42320
Contacto: Hermana Aida Badillo (706) 284-0996, o Padre Julio Barrera (270) 274-3414

Parroquia de San José, Bowling Green

434 Church Street, Bowling Green, KY 42101
Contacto: Sra. Gina Holmes (270) 777-5925 o Padre Basilio Az Cuc (270) 842-2525

Parroquia de San Francisco de Asis, Guthrie

7600 Russellville Road, P.O. Box 297, Guthrie, KY 42234
Contacto: Diácono Heriberto Rodríguez (270) 265-5263 o (302) 438-7335

Parroquia de Santa María, Franklin

403 North Main Street, Franklin, KY 42134
Contacto: Padre Daniel Dillard (270) 586-4515

Parroquia del Santo Nombre de Jesús, Henderson

511 2nd Street, Henderson, KY 42420

Contacto: Abraham Brown (270) 724-2172 o Padre Gary Clark (270) 826-2096

Parroquia de Santos Pedro y Pablo, Hopkinsville

902 East 9th Street, Hopkinsville, KY 42240
Contacto: Sra. Mayra Tirado (270) 498-6456

Parroquia de Cristo Rey, Madisonville

1600 Kingsway Drive, Madisonville, KY 42431
Contacto: Padre Carl McCarthy (270) 821-5494 o Padre Carmelo Jiménez Salinas (270) 881-7737

Parroquia de San José, Mayfield

702 West Broadway, Mayfield, KY 42066
Contacto: Hermana Maria Luisa Morales Solano (270) 247-2843

Parroquia de la Santísima Trinidad, Morgantown

766 Logansport Road, Morgantown, KY 42261
Contacto: Hermana Aida Badillo (706) 284-0996, o Padre Julio Barrera (270) 274-3414

Parroquia de San Leo, Murray

401 North 12th Street, Murray, KY 42071
Contacto: Hermana Esperanza Rivera (270) 753-3876

Parroquia Santos José y Pablo, Owensboro

609 East 4th Street, Owensboro, KY 42303
Contacto: Padre Will Thompson (270) 683-5641

Parroquia de Santo Tomás Moro, Paducah

5645 Blandville Road, Paducah, KY 42001
Contacto: Padre Al Bremer (270) 534-9000

Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Russellville

296 West 6th Street, Russellville, KY 42276
Contacto: Padre Ken Mikulcik (270) 726-6963

Parroquia de San Miguel Arcangel, Sebree

57 Watkins Road, Sebree, KY 42455
Contacto: Alyssa Maty (815) 207-3208 o Padre Carmelo Jiménez Salinas (270) 881-7737

Para Hacer Informe de Alegatos de Abuso Sexual

Para denunciar una sospecha de abuso, llame a la Línea Directa de Protección Infantil de Kentucky: 1-877-KYSAFE1 o 1-877-597-2331 (llamada gratuita) o comuníquese con su Fiscal Local del Commonwealth. Para reportar abuso, actual o pasado, a la diócesis por parte de cualquier persona que actúe en nombre de la Iglesia, llame a Louanne Payne, Coordinadora de Asistencia Pastoral (inglés) al 270-852-8380, o Susan Montalvo-Gesser/Miguel Quintanilla, Coordinadoras de Asistencia Pastoral (español) al 270-880-8360. También puede visitar la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro (owensborodiocese.org/safe) para obtener más información.

San José abrió el camino hacia la plena comunión en la Iglesia Católica

POR LAURA RIGSBY, OFICINA DE COMUNICACIONES

Había una vez un hombre llamado José. Estaba comprometido con la mujer (literalmente) perfecta, María, que de repente quedó embarazada. Un ángel se le apareció a José y le explicó que el hijo de María era el Hijo de Dios y que a José se le había confiado su cuidado. Aceptó valientemente y se convirtió en el protector de la Sagrada Familia como lo conocemos hoy. Aunque su muerte no está escrita en las Escrituras, es justo suponer que dejó su vida terrenal bajo el cuidado de Jesús y María. Pero su historia no termina ahí. Él sigue siendo un protector, padre y guía para todos nosotros, y Dios todavía lo está usando (y a todos los santos, de hecho) para guiarnos hacia Él.

Seguimos adelante hasta el año 2014. Una joven Laura está completando una pasantía en Amarillo, Texas. Su pretendiente guapo de Kentucky ha venido a visitarla y juntos han viajado a San Antonio para ver El Álamo. Ambos disfrutaban visitar sitios históricos, por lo que deciden ver también las otras misiones españolas en el área.

Su última parada sigue siendo una parroquia activa que acababa de comenzar su Misa de vigilia del sábado. Jason sugiere que esta iglesia histórica sería un lugar increíble para que Laura experimente su primera Misa ya que ha estado haciendo preguntas al respecto últimamente. Una vez dentro, Laura observa el ambiente y escucha las hermosas oraciones. Sus ojos descansan en el tabernáculo, sin saber lo que hay adentro, pero sintiéndose atraída de todos modos. ¿Cuál es esa sensación de ardor que nota en su corazón? Inexplicablemente, la experiencia le hace llorar. Se da cuenta de que esta no es una iglesia cualquiera.

Laura finalmente regresa a Kentucky y comienza a asistir a Misa con Jason. Cada vez siente más curiosidad por la Eucaristía. ¿Por qué solo los católicos pueden recibirla? ¿Por qué hay tanto ponerse de rodillas e inclinarse? ¿Es casi como si la estuvieran adorando! En RICA se entera de que de hecho la adoran, pero “esa” es en realidad “Él”, Aquel por quien somos redimidos, Aquel por quien la Misa tiene significado, Jesucristo. Laura entra en plena comunión con la Iglesia Católica en la Vigilia Pascual de 2016.

Yo soy Laura. Y creo plenamente que Dios envió a San José para llevarme a este encuentro con Cristo, y él me sigue guiando hasta hoy.

Comenzó con mi esposo (Jason, el pretendiente del cuento) que entró a la



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE ELIZABETH CLARKE DONOGHUE

(De izquierda a derecha) Jason Rigsby, Joseph Warner Rigsby y Laura Rigsby pertenecen a la Parroquia San José en Bowling Green. Laura, quien es especialista en medios digitales de la Diócesis de Owensboro, atribuye su camino hacia la Iglesia Católica a la intercesión de San José.

Iglesia Católica en la Parroquia San José en Bowling Green unos años antes de que nos conociéramos.

Yo también entré a la Iglesia en la misma Parroquia de San José.

Nos casamos en San José, nuestro bebé fue bautizado en San José, y su primer nombre es ... lo adivinaron: José.

San José nunca ha dejado de interceder cuando le hemos pedido ayuda.

Aquí está mi parte favorita: aproximadamente un año después de que entré en la Iglesia, le conté a alguien mi historia y me di cuenta de que no tenía idea de cómo se llamaba esa parroquia en San Antonio. Soy millennial, así que lo busqué en Google. Misión San José. Fue San José todo el tiempo.

En este Año especial de San José declarado por el Papa Francisco, los animo a que busquen a San José como su guía. Pídanle que los lleve al encuentro con Jesús. Él los llevará allí.

Laura Rigsby es la especialista en medios digitales de la Oficina de Comunicaciones de la Diócesis de Owensboro y con su familia pertenece a la Parroquia San José en Bowling Green.

Los eventos de Navidad de 2020 muestran a los adolescentes que, a pesar de los tiempos difíciles, '¡Cristo vive!'

POR CHARLIE HARDESTY, ESPECIAL PARA EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

¿Qué sucede cuando los líderes del ministerio con adolescentes de la Diócesis de Owensboro se han cansado de la pandemia y necesitan una razón para celebrar?

Organizan la fiesta de Navidad más grande que jamás haya visto la diócesis. El martes 22 de diciembre por la noche, todos los adolescentes de secundaria y preparatoria de la diócesis fueron invitados a un tiempo de convivio, diversión y juegos, premios y reflexión, todo realizado virtualmente en Zoom. El esfuerzo fue una colaboración de varios de los ministerios parroquiales con adolescentes y el Campamento Juvenil Católico y Centro de Retiros del Río Gasper.

La idea se originó con Allison Steen-Baker, ministra juvenil en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green, y varios de sus adolescentes que pensaron: "¿No sería divertido reunir a todos los adolescentes de la diócesis en Zoom?"

Steen-Baker reflexionó: "Creo que fue una gran oportunidad para unirnos como diócesis para celebrar a nuestros adolescentes y hacerles saber que la Iglesia se preocupa por ellos.



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE CHARLIE HARDESTY

Los líderes del ministerio con adolescentes, los adolescentes y los padres participan en la "Fiesta de Navidad ODY" del 22 de diciembre de 2020. (ODY por sus siglas en inglés significa los Adolescentes de la Diócesis de Owensboro).

Este año ha requerido creatividad, nuevos caminos y colaboración en el ministerio con adolescentes más que nunca y creo que este esfuerzo fue un gran evento culminante para el año 2020".

A ellos se unieron más de 75 jóvenes, con representantes de más de 20 parroquias, e incluso tuvieron una aparición especial del Obispo William F. Medley, quien expresó su amor y preocupación por los adolescentes.

Un Extracto de Comunicado del Presidente de la USCCB, arzobispo José Gomez, sobre la Toma de Posesión de Joseph R. Biden Jr., Como 46º Presidente de Estados Unidos de América

“Mis oraciones están hoy con nuestro nuevo presidente y su familia.

“Oro para que Dios le conceda sabiduría y valor para liderar a esta gran nación y para que le ayude a superar los retos de estos tiempos, a curar las heridas causadas por esta pandemia, a aliviar nuestras intensas divisiones políticas y culturales y a unificar a las personas con una renovada dedicación a los propósitos que motivaron la fundación de Estados Unidos, una nación bajo Dios y comprometida con la libertad y la igualdad para todos...

“Sin embargo, el hecho de trabajar con el presidente Biden será único, él será nuestro primer presidente en 60 años que profesa la fe católica. En una época de creciente y agresivo secularismo en la cultura estadounidense, cuando los creyentes religiosos enfrentan muchos desafíos, será refrescante interactuar con un presidente que evidentemente comprende, profunda y personalmente, la importancia de la fe y las instituciones religiosas...

“Al mismo tiempo, como pastores, los obispos de la nación tienen el deber de proclamar el Evangelio en toda su verdad y poder, a tiempo y a destiempo, incluso cuando esa enseñanza sea inconveniente o cuando las verdades del Evangelio sean contrarias a las direcciones de la sociedad y la cultura en general. Debo señalar que nuestro nuevo presidente se ha comprometido a seguir ciertas políticas que promoverían los males morales y amenazarían la vida y la

dignidad humanas, más seriamente en las áreas del aborto, la anticoncepción, el matrimonio y el género. Es motivo de profunda preocupación la libertad de la Iglesia y la libertad de los creyentes para vivir de acuerdo con sus conciencias...

“Para los obispos de la nación, la continua injusticia del aborto sigue siendo la "prioridad preeminente". Aunque preeminente no significa "única". Tenemos una profunda preocupación por las muchas amenazas a la vida y la dignidad hu-

Mensaje completo:
<https://www.usccb.org/es/news/2021/comunicado-del-presidente-de-la-usccb-arzobispo-jose-gomez-sobre-la-toma-de-posesion-de>

manas en nuestra sociedad. Pero, como enseña el Papa Francisco, no podemos quedarnos en silencio cuando casi un millón de vidas por nacer son terminadas anualmente en nuestro país a través del aborto.

“El aborto es un ataque directo a la vida que también lastima a la mujer y socava a la familia. No es sólo un asunto privado, ello genera problemáticas situaciones en aspectos fundamentales como la fraternidad, la solidaridad y la inclusión en la

comunidad humana. También es una cuestión de justicia social. No podemos ignorar la realidad de que las tasas de aborto son mucho más altas entre los pobres y minorías, y que el procedimiento se usa regularmente para eliminar a los niños que nacerían con discapacidades...

“Si el presidente, con pleno respeto por la libertad religiosa de la Iglesia, participara en esta conversación, sería de gran ayuda para restaurar el equilibrio civil y curar las necesidades de nuestro país...

“Como creyentes, entendemos que la sanidad es un regalo que sólo podemos recibir de la mano de Dios. Sabemos también que la reconciliación real requiere escuchar con paciencia a quienes no están de acuerdo con nosotros y la voluntad de perdonar y superar los deseos de represalia. El amor cristiano nos llama a amar a nuestros enemigos y a bendecir a los que se oponen a nosotros, y a tratar a los demás con la misma compasión que queremos para nosotros.

“Encomiendo todas nuestras esperanzas y ansiedades en este nuevo momento al tierno corazón de la Santísima Virgen María, madre de Cristo y patrona de esta nación excepcional. Que ella nos guíe por los caminos de la paz y nos ofrezca la sabiduría y la gracia de un verdadero patriotismo y amor por la patria.”

La pandemia no detuvo nuestra hermandad; ¡más bien nos ayudó a fortalecer el vínculo!

POR EL P. STEPHEN VAN LAL THAN, ESPECIAL PARA EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

El 14 de enero de 2021, los sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Owensboro participaron en una experiencia de Convocatoria virtual en lugar de su Convocatoria anual de una semana. El P. Stephen Van Lal Than, el sacerdote más recientemente ordenado de la diócesis, compartió sobre la experiencia.

La gente en todas partes está luchando en estos tiempos difíciles de la pandemia del COVID-19. ¡También los sacerdotes! Sin embargo, la pandemia no detuvo nuestra hermandad como sacerdotes; más bien enfatizó la necesidad de que nos reunamos. Fue muy importante para nosotros poder unirnos en oración y fraternidad en este tiempo de grandes pruebas y dificultades, porque hay algo especial y poderoso en el estar juntos como hermanos en Cristo. De hecho, la pandemia, por desafiante que ha sido, nos ha ayudado a fortalecer nuestro vínculo.

Como sacerdote joven, estaba tan emocionado y ansioso por mi primera Convocatoria con mis hermanos sacerdotes, una ocasión para orar juntos, adorar juntos, apoyarnos unos a otros y fortalecer nuestra hermandad. En cierto modo, también tenía curiosidad por ver cómo se hacía en este país, en comparación con cómo se hacía en mi país natal de Myanmar.

Todo este sentimiento de entusiasmo se enfrentó a desafíos debido a la pandemia global y los protocolos establecidos. De hecho, fue muy difícil y doloroso no tener una reunión física. Sin embargo, Dios permitió que tuviéramos una Mini-Convocatoria virtual a través del sincero esfuerzo de los líderes de la diócesis, y gracias también al don de la tecnología



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DEL SEMINARIO Y ESCUELA DE TEOLOGÍA DE SAN MEINRAD

El P. Stephen Van Lal Than actualmente está sirviendo como vicario parroquial en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green.

que Dios nos ha dado.

Personalmente sentí la presencia de Dios y la obra del Espíritu incluso en el mismo acto de nuestra reunión. Fue tan hermoso, tan reconfortante, alentador y tan gratificante ver el sentido de comunidad, la dedicación desinteresada y el apoyo edificante entre los sacerdotes. Cuando nos reunimos en Dios y con Dios, siempre hay un momento especial de Su gracia.