



Joan Heckmann (center) turns and smiles while her husband, Carl, (red t-shirt), the executive director of The Way Christian Youth Center in Trigg County, prepares to lead volunteers in prayer. **Page 6**



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On Nov. 16, 2023, Carl Heckmann explains that the area to the right of The Way's "The Barn" building will be used to construct a third facility for the ever-expanding Trigg County interdenominational ministry. [Page 6](#)

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Front page main 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 westernkycatholic.com/submissions for more information.

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A Word From Bishop Medley

Let us continue the hope and promise of Christmas into the New Year

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As the first edition of The Western Kentucky Catholic of 2024 arrives in homes across the Diocese of Owensboro, most of us have all but left Christmas 2023 behind. I am struck every year that homes and businesses that have been brightly lit with holiday lights for weeks or even months are suddenly dark on December 26. We will not hear Christmas songs or carols playing in stores or on the radio. The Salvation Army Christmas kettles have been stored away. The Christmas trees that brought such excitement to our homes are cast aside or stored in a basement or an attic.

One exception is our churches. Wreathes still decorate the doors and more focally the Christmas nativity scene still enjoys a place of prominence. However we may feel about the overnight disappearance of all things Christmas, for the most part it is good indeed that our churches choose to continue to tell the story throughout a proper season.

Christmas in our Catholic liturgical tradition envelops several stories and lessons. The feast of the Holy Innocents is on December 28 and serves as a stark reminder of the cost of discipleship. In recent years this feast has given us an opportunity to remember the modern day slaughters of the innocent, most notably the legal execution of the unborn through abortion.

The Sunday that falls between Christmas and New Year's Day is observed as the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Though lost in the fatigue that the holidays can bring, it is good to honor the family as the cornerstone of society and

civilization and to honor the holiness of the family. Ironically, with children out of school, adults home from work, and perhaps relatives still around we might all be a little burned out with family by this point in the holidays. Nonetheless, the church provides a moment to say thanks and to look to the perfect family for hope and guidance.

On the octave day of Christmas, the eighth day, the Church recalls the centrality of Mary in the story of salvation. The title of the feast celebrated on New Year's Day is Mary, Mother of God. Though Mary is hardly overlooked in Christmas art, it is important that we highlight her and her role as Mother of God with a special feast. For the past half-century this feast has also been observed as a universal day of prayer for peace. With each year we hope that New Year's Day might find the world at peace - but war and violence always seem to prevail.

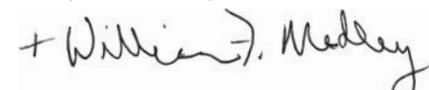
The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord is best noted by most of us for the appearance in our church manger scenes of the Wise Men, the Magi, presented in Matthew's Gospel. The characters are richly dressed and bejeweled, they are said to have come "from the east" and "followed a star," and often a camel is positioned with them. Maybe one facet of this story easy to overlook is that if these men have come from the East, they likely did not share the Hebrew faith and would not have been familiar with the Hebrew prophets who had foretold the coming of the Messiah. The Gospel tells us that these men came to follow a star, came because of an extraordinary light. Epiphany represents the manifestation of Jesus Christ to all the world.

BISHOP MEDLEY'S JANUARY 2024 CALENDAR

JANUARY 1	9 a.m. Mass for Mary, Mother of God – St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro
JANUARY 2-4	SEEK Conference – St. Louis, Miss.
JANUARY 7-11	Region V Bishops' Retreat – New Orleans, La.
JANUARY 15-18	Diocese of Owensboro Priests' Convocation – Saint Meinrad, Indiana
JANUARY 22	5 p.m. Diocesan Finance Council Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center
JANUARY 24	McRaith Catholic Center Staff Retreat Day
JANUARY 27	4 p.m. Confirmation – Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson
JANUARY 29	8 a.m. School Mass – Holy Name of Jesus School, Henderson
JANUARY 30	9:30 a.m. School Mass – St. Mary School System, Paducah
JANUARY 31	9:45 a.m. School Mass – St. Joseph School, Bowling Green

So the tinsel and lights are gone - but the message of hope and promise and salvation carry us into a New Year.

May God bless you all,



Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

Happy anniversary to the following priests:

Fr. Pat Reynolds

Ordained 1/12/1980

Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish,
Owensboro

Fr. Brad Whistle

Ordained 1/10/1981

Pastor of St. Thomas More Parish, Paducah

Fr. Tony Stevenson

Ordained 1/10/1981

Retired

Fr. Ken Mikulcik

Ordained 1/10/1998

Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Russellville;
and Sacramental Minister for St. Francis of
Assisi Parish, Todd County

Fr. Anthoni Ottagan

Ordained 1/8/2003

Pastor of St. Alphonsus Parish, St. Joseph;
and St. Elizabeth Parish, Curdsville

Fr. Shijo Vadakumkara

Ordained 1/17/2004

Pastor of St. William Parish, Knottsville; and
St. Lawrence Parish, St. Lawrence/Philpot

Fr. Suneesh Mathew

Ordained 1/2/2008

Pastor of Precious Blood Parish, Owensboro

Fr. Sinoj Pynadath, HGN

Ordained 1/6/2008

Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Leitchfield; and
St. John Parish, Sunfish

*Pray for vocations in the Diocese
of Owensboro and learn more at
owensborovocations.com*

Two years after the tornadoes, parishes and community unite in remembrance



COURTESY OF STACEY MENSER

Community members gathered outside Princeton City Hall to dedicate a monument in remembrance of the four Caldwell County residents who lost their lives in the Dec. 10, 2021 tornado.

BY STACEY MENSER, SPECIAL TO THE
WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro joined St. Paul Parish in Princeton and Caldwell County Long Term Recovery Group to commemorate the two-year anniversary of the devastating Dec. 10, 2021, tornado that ripped through that community and neighboring communities like Dawson Springs.

A special morning Mass and luncheon was held at St. Paul's, followed by a community-wide memorial service at Princeton City Hall to honor the victims who lost their lives in the Dec. 10 tornado.



COURTESY OF REGINA HOSEY

Members of Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs, who lost their church in a deadly F4 tornado on Dec. 10, 2021, gather for a special Mass at St. Paul Parish in Princeton on Dec. 10, 2023.

The parishioners of St. Paul in Princeton and St. Mark in Eddyville invited Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs to join them for morning Mass at St. Paul. Resurrection parishioners had lost their church building in the Dec. 10 tornado. Construction on the new church will not be complete until next year.

St. Paul's pastor, Fr. Jojy Joseph Olickal, welcomed members of Resurrection Parish during morning Mass and welcomed staff from Catholic Charities who worshiped with them.

"It has been my deepest desire for the past two years to have our three parishes celebrate Mass under the same roof," said Fr. Olickal, who is also the chaplain of Blessed Trinity Knights of

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FEATURES

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COURTESY OF REGINA HOSEY

Jill Giordano, a lifelong member of St. Paul and co-chair of the Caldwell County Recovery Team along with Dr. Katie Parker, spearheaded the Dec. 10 remembrance event for the parishes. Giordano said between 135 and 140 people attended the event. Here, she welcomes the members of Resurrection Parish whose church was destroyed in the storms.



COURTESY OF REGINA HOSEY

People pack the parish hall at St. Paul's in Princeton for a holiday meal on Dec. 10, 2023, held after a special Mass remembering the anniversary of the deadly tornadoes that struck the region two years ago. Resurrection parishioners, who lost their church building in the tornado, were invited to attend the Mass and luncheon.



COURTESY OF STACEY MENSER

Ashley and Deacon Mike Marsili of Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs spoke with Therese Falder of St. Paul's and Katina Hayden of Catholic Charities during a Dec. 10 luncheon hosted at St. Paul's. Community members who lost their homes in the tornado were also invited to attend and visit with Catholic Charities staff.

Columbus Council #15181. That council is comprised of men from the three parishes.

Following Mass, St. Paul's parishioners hosted over 130 people for a luncheon in the church center.

Jill Giordano, a lifelong member of St. Paul and co-chair of the Caldwell County Recovery Team along with Dr. Katie Parker, spearheaded the event for the parishes. Catholic Charities was on hand to offer information to victims. There was a catered meal paid for by Catholic Charities, and private donations. Parishioners contributed desserts.

Several families from both Princeton and Dawson Springs who lost their homes in the tornado attended the luncheon and received resource information for recovery and preparedness from Catholic Charities staff and representatives from Caldwell County Long Term Recovery Group.

At 2 p.m., community members gathered outside Princeton City Hall for a brief ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the tornado and to dedicate a monument purchased by the long term recovery group in memory of the four Caldwell County victims who lost their lives in the tornado.

Families of the victims were surrounded by fellow tornado survivors and county officials as the names were read and prayers of peace offered. ■



COURTESY OF STACEY MENSER

(From left) Jill Giordano, Deacon Paul Bachi and Fr. Jojo Joseph of St. Paul's in Princeton joined with Catholic Charities staff Tina Hawley, Katina Hayden and Stacey Menser in hosting a Dec. 10 luncheon at the church for tornado survivors and members of Resurrection Parish.

Regina Hosey contributed to this story.

To learn more about the work of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro or to find out how to assist in their ministries, call (270) 852-8328 and ask for the Catholic Charities office.

A place to ‘be,’ The Way youth center helps teens believe in Christ – and themselves

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Seventh-grader Steven Bauman just recently moved to Kentucky from Tennessee, and while he may be a newcomer to The Way Christian Youth Center in Trigg County, Ky., he has already seen the afterschool organization foster his relationship with God.

“I moved here from Montgomery County in Tennessee,” the teen told The Western Kentucky Catholic on Nov. 16, 2023. “I enjoy learning how to respect (others), how to let God into our hearts, and how to pray.”

Bauman, one of about 70 teens who attend each day, added that his favorite part of The Way is the daily devotion – as well as “hanging out with friends.”

Fellow seventh-grader Payton Brown agreed: “I like hanging out with friends and learning about Jesus, at the same time!”

First opening in 2011 in a vacant grocery store building, and then moving to the annex of Cadiz Baptist Church for several years, The Way’s permanent home across the street from Trigg County Schools’ campus opened in 2017.

The nonprofit organization provides a welcoming space for local youth to hang out, play games, do homework, and – of utmost importance for growing teenagers – enjoy a hearty afterschool meal. Everything is free, with no exceptions.

The Way takes its name from John 14:6 in which Jesus states, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,” and abides by its motto that “We Encourage Students to Believe in Christ. And Themselves.”

The ecumenical organization is Christian-led, by Catholic and non-Catholic volunteers alike, but the doors are open to any teen from sixth through 12th grade regardless of their religious affiliation, said Marsha Petro, a volunteer and parishioner of St. Stephen’s in Cadiz.

St. Stephen Parish is one of approximately 40 of the 65 churches in Trigg County that supports The Way through donations and volunteering.

Petro said her parish has helped The Way since its 2017 opening at the current location, and she is pleased to see the community support from across the region.

“As poor as Trigg County is, when it comes to the kids, people give and give and give,” she said.

The volunteer base is also impressive, considering that “nobody gets a penny for being here,” she said.

Her pastor, Fr. Greg Trawick, appreciates how The Way has “allowed local churches to come together.”

“It’s been good to watch it grow and flourish,” he said, adding that his parishioners who are in high school attend The Way, and that “it’s been a positive thing for our youth.”

He said volunteering at The Way is a part of his parishioners’ DNA: “It’s a chance to support (the youth) and get to know them.”

Fr. Trawick welcomes the ecumenical efforts, too.

He said working with the rest of the community is “very energizing” as they draw together “to serve as Christians especially in today’s world,” said Fr. Trawick. “Helping, supporting, laughing, crying – it’s been a wonderful thing to see.”

Much of The Way’s success story is thanks to executive director, Carl Heckmann, who in turn



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Local teen Forrest Goodman (far left) is checked into The Way on Nov. 16, 2023, by volunteer Jerry Brown (center, checkered shirt) while fellow volunteer Joan Heckmann (far right) looks on.

gives all the praise to God.

“It really does build the Body of Christ,” said Heckmann, explaining that prior to The Way’s establishment, “there was nothing for the kids here.”

According to Trigg County Schools statistics, approximately 61% of Trigg students are considered “disadvantaged,” whether socio-economically or living in a one-parent household, among other criteria.

“Everything is free for the students,” he said. “And oh, by the way, we can share the love of Christ with them – to show them ‘the Way.’”

Heckmann said more than 300 students attend The Way each school year, and that they have seen more than 1,000 students since 2011. Daily devotions are led by pastors, laypeople, and other volunteers, and throughout the year special programs are offered on the sanctity of life, chastity,

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suicide awareness and prevention, and the dangers of drug use.

He said a variety of volunteer-taught extracurricular classes are also offered, such as cooking, music, sewing, carpentry, self-defense, work-ready job skills, and chess club.

In 2022, *The Way* expanded to an old tobacco barn next door, which was renovated and affectionately titled “The Barn.” This freestanding second facility provides a meeting space for local American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA scouting programs, as well as a teen clothes closet serving about 20 youth a week. (Youth are allowed to choose up to five free clothing items per week.)

Even with this second building, *The Way* recognized that it needed a larger space to continue serving its growing ministry. Heckmann said the nonprofit now plans to construct a third facility from the ground up, to serve purposes of discipleship and education.

Their plan is to build a 3,500-square-foot in the lot beside *The Barn*, and have two classrooms for faith formation and job training; designated quiet spaces including a library for students wishing to read or have a more peaceful environment; a prayer room and counseling area for Christian counselors to see students; and an area to show Christian and other uplifting films.

Having two buildings will provide two separate spaces for the high schoolers and middle schoolers, who currently must share the one facility.

And as with *The Way*’s main building and *The Barn*, this third site will be fully video surveilled for youth protection.

Heckmann said they estimate the new building to cost under \$450,000. In fall 2023, they applied for and received a grant from the Catholic Foundation of

Western Kentucky, which is funded by the Diocese of Owensboro’s annual Disciples Response Fund.

Matching \$1,200 given by St. Stephen’s in Cadiz, the Catholic Foundation gave an additional \$1,200 for the new building project.

Matt Shown, senior pastor at Crossroads Fellowship in Cadiz, was one of the local

faith leaders who encouraged *The Way* to consider applying for a Catholic Foundation grant.

“I am originally an Owensboro native, so I was familiar with the diocese and the work it has done,” said Shown, a board member of *The Way*.

Shown, whose church provides volunteer and financial contributions, said he is grateful for the ecumenical collaboration, “knowing we can do more together than apart.”

“The beauty of *The Way* is that it is interdenominational – rising water raises all the ships,” he said.

He added that besides the regular afterschool opportunities, *The Way* has become a fixture in the community by providing daytime programs for seniors, has served as a voting center and a warming center, and hosts blood drives and job fairs.

Amanda Oliver has volunteered here since her



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

The *Way* volunteer Staci Rea, (far left), a parishioner of St. Stephen’s in Cadiz, serves food to teen Kadi Quiggins-Oliver while fellow volunteer Dan Kostrzebski (center) assists, on Nov. 16, 2023.

daughter, now a high school senior, was in sixth grade. Oliver considers all of “*The Way* kids” to be her kids, too.

“*The Way* gives us an opportunity to work together as Christian brothers and sisters,” she said. “We are a family with its ups and downs, across denominations.”

Her daughter, Kadi Quiggins-Oliver, said she met some of her best friends while attending *The Way*. Now as Quiggins-Oliver looks to graduating this spring, she said she would be open to volunteering every so often.

“I really enjoy how it gives people a space where they can come, a safe place where they can come,” she said. “A place where they can ‘be.’” ■

To learn more about *The Way*, visit thewayforteens.org or call (270) 522-6441.

In receiving award for empowering domestic abuse survivors, Montalvo-Gesser looks back on those who paved the way

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Susan Montalvo-Gesser, director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro, was one of two winners of the 2022 Sherry Currens Excellence in Advocacy Award during the 2023 Conference for Ending Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence, which was held Nov. 29-Dec. 1 in Lexington.

Together with co-winner Suzanne Craig, the program manager for community access projects in five counties with the Green River District Health Department, Montalvo-Gesser received the award on the final day of the conference, which was hosted by Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs and ZeroV. ZeroV (formerly the Kentucky Domestic Violence Coalition) is a nonprofit organization working in efforts to reduce violence in communities.

In her role as director, Montalvo-Gesser runs programming to address the social concerns of the Church, including tornado recovery and immigration services. Formerly, she was the managing attorney at Kentucky Legal Aid (KLA) in Owensboro where she represented clients in issues of family law, immigration cases involving domestic violence, housing, and estate planning.

Montalvo-Gesser praised the witness of her parents-in-law, William “Gus” and Helen Gesser, who founded Oasis Women’s Shelter in Owensboro with several other concerned citizens. (Montalvo-Gesser has been married to their son, Chad Gesser, for 26 years.)



COURTESY OF SUSAN MONTALVO-GESSER
Susan Montalvo-Gesser (right) with Suzanne Craig (left), co-winners of the 2022 Sherry Currens Excellence in Advocacy Award during the 2023 Conference for Ending Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence, which was

“They were such great pioneers in the work to stop domestic violence and help survivors,” Montalvo-Gesser told The Western Kentucky Catholic.

Gus Gesser was the former assistant chief of police and a longtime officer with Owensboro Police Department, and Montalvo-Gesser said he was “very frustrated with the domestic violence calls he got and lack of options to keep victims safe.”

Founding Oasis “was a very unpopular idea at the time,” she said, adding that her mother-in-law spent “countless nights” at Oasis “with survivors and children, all without pay. She was called out to dangerous situations and went.”

Montalvo-Gesser added that the Gessers were pioneers in making Kentucky safer for survivors of domestic violence.

“In the late 1980s early 1990s a bill was proposed to make marital rape a felony in Kentucky,” she

said. “Before that, there was no crime in Kentucky for raping one’s spouse.”

The Kentucky Speaker of the House at the time was from Owensboro and originally voted against the bill – until Gus Gesser, who knew him personally, invited him to Oasis to meet with survivors of marital abuse. In the next session, the Speaker co-sponsored the bill, which then passed and became a law.

“Gus and Helen made a huge difference and never received an award for it,” said Montalvo-Gesser.

Montalvo-Gesser said the first petition for a protective order that she ever filed was for her little sister, who experienced the effects of her abuser long after the relationship ended. To this day, Montalvo-Gesser sees her sister in every survivor she represents.

“Also, I dedicated the award to my clients that didn’t survive, Dami Ann and Grace,” said Montalvo-Gesser. ■

The following nonprofit organizations help in providing healing services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Oasis serves the following counties: Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Webster/Union. 270-685-0260

Sanctuary Inc. serves the following counties: Caldwell, Christian, Crittenden, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Muhlenberg, Todd and Trigg. 800-766-0000

Merryman House serves the following counties: Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken. 270-443-6001

BRASS serves the following counties: Allen, Barren, Logan, and Warren. 270-843-1183

U.S. Catholics' priest shortage faces new 'serious crisis' due to immigration law

BY KIMBERLEY HEATHERINGTON, OSV NEWS

For the global faithful accustomed to reports of an ongoing vocations crisis, the Vatican's March 2023 announcement that the worldwide number of seminarians, priests, and men and women in religious orders has declined was hardly a surprise.

But in a particularly unwelcome revelation for American Catholics, the federal government announced that same month in a Federal Register notice a procedural change in how it processes green cards for foreign-born religious workers.

Such a bureaucratic technicality may seem unremarkable, but its practical implication is that ~ combined with dwindling native vocational numbers and historically high immigration ~ some foreign-born priests and religious sisters and brothers relied upon by U.S. dioceses may not be able to remain in the country.

"We've been in several conversations with the Department of State; the Department of Homeland Security; the White House," said attorney David Spicer, senior policy adviser for Migration and Refugee Services at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "as well as meeting with members of Congress and their staff, to discuss these ongoing issues and the impact of this recent change."

To become a permanent American resident ~ and perhaps eventual citizen ~ immigrants apply for documents called green cards. For priests and religious, the application is often through the

diocese they serve. The U.S. Congress sets an annual green card limit, separating potential immigrants into categories connected to family relationships and skills.

The existing system was already complicated.

Then, as The Associated Press reported Sept. 29, the U.S. State Department revealed that "for nearly seven years it had been placing in the wrong line tens of thousands of applications for neglected or abused minors from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, and would now start adding those to the general queue with the clergy."

"Since the mid-2010s," the AP continued, "a surging number of youth from these countries have sought humanitarian green cards or asylum after illegally crossing into the U.S. This change means that only applications filed before January 2019 are currently being processed."

And if an existing visa expires in the meantime, an immigrant must leave.

"Ever since that change was made and that backlog expanded, it basically resulted in religious workers having to wait, rather than a little bit over a year, to well over five years," Spicer explained. "This has impacted planning for dioceses across the United States; religious communities; and others who are relying not only upon the priests who come from abroad, but many other religious workers as well."

In response, the USCCB is urging Congress to support the Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act (S. 1885/H.R. 4285), which was introduced in



OSV NEWS PHOTO/KEITH BEDFORD, REUTERS
People are pictured in a file photo standing on the steps of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in New York City. The federal government has made a procedural change in how it processes green cards for foreign-born religious workers, meaning some foreign-born priests and religious sisters and brothers relied upon by U.S. dioceses may not be able to remain in the country.

June.

As Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Migration, wrote in July to members of Congress, "This simple bill would significantly improve access to permanent legal status for eligible youth who now find themselves subject to a years-long visa backlog, unable to receive the protections they are due, by exempting them from the annual caps for the employment-based, fourth preference (EB-4) visa category."

"It would simultaneously," Seitz continued, "free up those limited visas for foreign-born religious workers and others who rely upon them to serve American communities."

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At present, the legislative reference website GovTrack forecasts the Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act has a “2% chance of getting past committee” and a “0% chance of being enacted.”

It’s a cruel conundrum for a church dedicated to both aiding immigrants and refugees, while also caught in the midst of its own trend of declining native-born priests and religious ~ a trend bound to continue into the foreseeable future as new ordinations and religious professions are nowhere near replacement level and the U.S.’ 62 million Catholic population increases.

“It’s difficult to understand why ~ back in 1990 ~ Congress decided to sort of lump in these vulnerable kids with religious workers and others,” said Spicer, “given that the kids themselves are not in any way employment-based immigrants. But that’s sort of how Congress, in its wisdom, decided to proceed with that.”

The USCCB is also requesting administrative changes the executive branch could enact, independent of Congress. That “would help to provide some relief,” Spicer said, “although it’s not ultimately the solution we need from Congress.”

The National Study of Catholic Priests ~ released in 2022 by Catholic University of America’s Catholic Project ~ indicated 24% of priests serving in the U.S. are foreign-born.

Of the U.S.’ foreign-born priests, a full 15% were ordained outside the U.S., explained Brandon Vaidyanathan, associate professor and chair of Catholic University’s Department of Sociology, and the study’s lead researcher.

“If we assume, for instance, that foreign-ordained priests are largely on visas ~ that’s a large chunk of your 15%, given just the priest shortage, and the

number of parish closures,” said Vaidyanathan. “A single priest is sometimes responsible for three to five parishes ~ so you can imagine with that situation, losing 10-15% percent of your priests, that becomes a serious crisis.”

Additionally, the church has a number of foreign-born priests who came to the U.S. as seminarians, were ordained in the U.S. and are also subject to visa renewals.

While the study didn’t record visa or green card status, “Anecdotally, you can see in pretty much every diocese you go to, there’s a number of foreign-born priests that are there,” observed Vaidyanathan. “Maybe they’re visiting, or maybe they’re there on a longer-term basis ~ but the diocese can’t function without them.”

OSV News’ sample of selected U.S. dioceses indicated a growing impact from the green card and visa predicament.

“We are concerned about the unexpected waiting line for our foreign-born priests,” said Bishop William M. Joensen of the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, also noting “the gifts of foreign-born vocations.”

“These priests help us serve our dynamic immigrant populations and bring a new perspective to all the faithful,” Bishop Joensen added, “often helping to keep parishes open or perform critical service, such as chaplaincies.”

The Diocese of Des Moines’ communications office informed OSV News the diocese has 35 foreign-born priests pending some level of immigration status approval; there are roughly 77 priests in active ministry.

“We are working with legal counsel to manage the government’s new interpretation of the rules relating to the immigration waiting line,” explained

Bishop Joensen. “It has created uncertainty for those in the process already and a true challenge to filling the ongoing needs of our diocese. A solution from the administration or Congress would be welcome news.”

“It’s already had an impact here in our archdiocese,” said Father Michael Tix, vicar general of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

“For example, we had one priest ~ same issue, with the green card ~ who would otherwise have had to go home for a year. He’s a religious order priest ~ and the religious order just assigned him to a parish in Canada,” Father Tix shared. “So it’s not just ‘go away for a year’ ~ he’s not coming back.”

In Oct. 2019, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that “more than 50 of the 203 full-time priests active in the St. Paul and Minneapolis Archdiocese” came from other countries.

“The international priests serving in our parishes ~ without them, we just don’t have the numbers to cover everything,” reflected Father Tix.

“You try as best you can ~ and God bless the priests that are asked to jump in and go the extra mile; because they’re doing it,” he said. “But you can only stretch people so far.”

In the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, 50 of 145 currently active priests ~ approximately 35% ~ are foreign-born, according to Anne Streitenberger, the diocese’s human resources director.

Streitenberger is blunt about the procedural change: “We will lose opportunities for good priests in our diocese.”

While student visas for those studying at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus can sometimes provide a work-around, the options are not without expense.

And as a refugee hub, Columbus has a distinctive

Continues on page 11

Priest immigration continued from page 10

need for religious workers.

“Religion is very important to the refugees here ~ I’ve seen it,” Streitenberger noted. “Religion seems to be the most important thing that gathers them all together. And if their leader can’t get in here before them, they may have a hard time adjusting.”

On the day Susan Montalvo-Gesser, a lawyer and director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky, spoke with OSV News, she had just spent almost five hours trying to help a priest resolve his expiring emergency visa.

When she first heard of the five-year green card

application processing backlog, Montalvo-Gesser admits, “I immediately kind of panicked.”^{558/0}

In 2022, Bishop William F. Medley told the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer that 30 out of 78 of his diocese’s parishes have foreign-born priests.

Montalvo-Gesser estimates the diocese may lose up to six priests, as well as sisters.

“We’ve already had to tell one of our religious sisters that we’re going to lose her ~ and she’s done great work,” said Montalvo-Gesser, noting there are no other options given her expiring visa and processing delays. “We can’t make up that gap and

she’ll have to leave for a year.”

Pastoral recruiting and planning continuity becomes almost an impossibility, Montalvo-Gesser shared.

“For our bishop to go to another diocese in a country and say, ‘Hey, come to Kentucky where we can train you and you can get used to this population and serve us ~ but you may have to go back in five years,’” said Montalvo-Gesser, “it creates insecurity, and it’s very difficult. I just hope and pray that they fix it.” ■

Kimberley Heatherington writes for OSV News from Virginia.

Epiphany of the Lord: Traditions that focus on the ‘rey de reyes’

BY MARIA-PIA NEGRO CHIN, OSV NEWS

After preparing for the birth of Jesus with posadas, live Nativity scenes, midnight Masses and Nochebuena (Christmas Eve) traditions, thousands of Latinos in the United States will continue the Christmas season by celebrating Epifanía, or Epiphany.

Epifanía, or “the manifestation of the Lord,” celebrates Jesus making himself known to the whole world, said Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, assistant director of Hispanic affairs for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church.

In many parishes, there are reenactments of the “Wise Men from the East” prostrating themselves before the child in Bethlehem, as the Gospel according to St. Matthew describes. These Three Kings or Magi ~ traditionally known as Melchior, Gaspar (or Caspar) and Balthasar ~ remind everyone of the importance of pausing to contemplate the

love and mercy of God made flesh in the Christ Child.

When the figures of the Magi approach the manger, it becomes clear ~ especially to the little ones in the house ~ that Jesus is “the king of kings,” Aguilera-Titus said.

“We come together as a community,” said Wanda Vásquez, director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry at the Archdiocese of New York. “We celebrate in prayer, reflecting on the birth of our Jesus ~ anticipating the Magi’s



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

A young boy, one of three depicting the Three Kings, bring gifts to the nativity scene at Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish for the Epiphany celebration on Jan. 8, 2017.

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Epiphany continued from page 11

coming.”

Vásquez said that in Puerto Rico and many parts of the Caribbean, all traditions focus on Jesus’ birth, rather than on characters like Santa Claus or elves.

While Christmas Eve and Christmas center on Christ’s birth, gifts are traditionally reserved for Epiphany. This tradition was inherited from Spain, and thousands of Catholics from Latin America celebrate it differently. Some children put shoes under the tree, others under beds, and even food and water are left for the Magi’s camels. What these traditions have in common is the centrality of the Christ child in the manger, prompting contemplation of how God’s promise is fulfilled.

As part of the Epiphany tradition, the Rosca de Reyes, an ornate circular loaf with candied fruit and a plastic figure of a child representing the newborn Jesus, is shared. “Whoever gets the little doll has to make the tamales on Candlemas Day,” explained Aguilera-Titus.

“For many,” Vásquez said, “Christmas doesn’t end until Feb. 2, with the presentation of the Lord at the temple,” also known as Candlemas.

In addition to the opportunity to delve into the words of the Bible, Aguilera-Titus said, Epiphany celebrations are ways to make “Christian living more present in the home and within the community of faith, in the temple.”

“Everyone is looking for God from their culture, from their tradition,” said Humberto Ramos, parish life director at Epiphany Church in South El Monte, California.

He estimates that about 2,000 people ~ not including children ~ will come to celebrate Epiphany, the parish’s patronal feast, with a big festival where people dressed as kings bring candy to the children.

He reflected on the gifts brought to the baby

Jesus, “incense for God, gold for the King, and myrrh for the one who will die,” as said the fifth-century doctor of the church St. Peter Chrysologus.

In addition to the traditional rosca, Ramos said, his parishioners observe another Mexican tradition, the “levantada,” or lifting, of the Christ Child from the crèche. A godfather or godmother ~ typically those who found the baby in the rosca ~ would dress the image of Baby Jesus in ornate clothes so that it will be ready on Candlemas Day, where it will be blessed and “lifted” from the crib amid prayers.

“It’s what we learned from our parents, in our homes, and it’s something that leads to having an experience and an expression of God, of Christ in your home,” Aguilera-Titus said.

The date of Epiphany is Jan. 6 ~ 12 days after the Nativity ~ but, in the United States, the celebration of Epiphany will be observed in 2024 on Sunday, Jan. 7.

Father Jose Cruz Alvarez, pastor of Sacred Heart in the South Bronx, New York, said that although in the past the pandemic had curtailed many of the typical celebrations, his parish was looking forward to reviving their Epiphany traditions.

With the support of a sponsoring parish, the “kings” will be able to hand out gifts at the Mass for the children in the neighborhood, many of whom come from low-income households. He added that his parishioners, who are predominantly from the Dominican Republic, are happy to keep alive the traditions they grew up with.

Beyond giving physical gifts, the day is also a reminder that “in receiving, I am called to give a little bit of what God himself has given me,” said Father Cruz. ■

Maria-Pia Negro Chin is the Spanish editor for OSV News.

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How are we being transformed by the Eucharist?



CNS PHOTO/RUPAK DE CHOWDHURI, REUTERS
A member of the Missionaries of Charity interacts with the children of a kindergarten inside the Nirmala Shishu Bhavan, a home for orphaned, destitute and abandoned children in Kolkata, India, on Aug. 30, 2016.

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, OFFICE OF
EVANGELIZATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Our Acts 2:42 Small Groups are discussing the theme of transformation and divinization this month. In Christian theology, divinization or theosis is the work of the Holy Spirit in one accepting God's gift of divine life and cooperating with it. We are meant to be changed in our encounters with God. St. Irenaeus, from the second century, stated "The glory of God is a human being fully alive" and this happens only through divine grace.

In Bishop Medley's video message to these groups, he challenges us to see the Eucharist as a gift we receive from the Lord and then to go out and live our lives as a gift to others. God's action in our lives is meant to lead to action coming forth from our lives to benefit others. The Eucharist, and our regular encounters with Jesus, are meant to change us.

I attended a parish mission led by Fr. Albert Haase, a Franciscan priest, author, and spiritual giant. He focuses on spiritual development of Catholics and is incredibly basic and profound. I recommend any of his books for someone looking to grow in their spiritual life. He was talking about the gift of the Exposition of the Holy Eucharist in helping the faithful experience the loving presence of our Savior. And then he made a statement that challenged me in a good way to allow these precious encounters to change the person I am. He said, "What good is Eucharistic Adoration, if it does not lead to Eucharistic Action."

Sometimes as Catholic we check the boxes of what we believe good Catholics ought to do:

- Attend Mass
- Donate money
- Pray the rosary
- Fast during Lent
- Pray at meals

But do we have a box that says "be like Jesus?" After all, he is our Master, we are apprentices, students, those seeking to become like the Master. To grow into a mature Christian adult is to be on a journey of transformation for our entire lives. One that is rooted in a daily personal relationship with the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in communion with one another and each disciple of Jesus. Mature faith is one that expresses dependence and trust in God's divine will, even when life gets messy. Our witness, our joy, our outward disposition to the world either leads people to see the value of following Jesus, or something less life changing.

Our transformation is God's plan for transforming

the world. We are called to be missionary disciples of Jesus, making present the kingdom of God in all we do. It may seem like a pipe dream, but it is God's dream for us. Be open to God's movement and power and watch how the Holy Spirit works. Look for a Bible study, retreat or Acts 2:42 Small Group near you this New Year and be amazed by how God works. ■

Happy New Year!

Jeff

Dr. Jeff Andrini is the director of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, and can be reached at jeff.andrini@pastoral.org.



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New Year's resolutions and the Eucharist: A deep connection

BY DCN. JAY W. VANHOOSIER, OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

The relationship between New Year's resolutions and the Eucharist is an intriguing one worth exploring. While superficially, these two concepts may appear entirely different, a deeper reflection reveals profound connections that highlight the importance of personal growth, self-reflection, and spiritual nourishment.

New Year's resolutions are commitments individuals make at the beginning of the year, aiming to improve themselves in different aspects of life. It is a time of self-evaluation and aspiration for positive change. Similarly, the Eucharist is a profound sacramental experience where the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a moment of deep contemplation, a spiritual feast, and an opportunity for transformation.

One of the fundamental tenets of Catholicism is the belief in ongoing conversion – which aligns with the essence of making resolutions. Catholics are called to continually grow in holiness, seeking to align their lives with the teachings of Christ. Just like the New Year's resolutions serve as a conscious effort to better oneself, the Eucharist is a reminder of the ongoing journey towards spiritual transformation. By receiving Christ in the Eucharist, Catholics are reminded of their need for His grace and are encouraged to grow closer to God.

Moreover, both New Year's resolutions and the Eucharist necessitate self-reflection. To make meaningful resolutions, individuals must engage in introspection, identifying areas in their lives that

require improvement. In the same vein, the Eucharist invites Catholics to pause and reflect on their relationship with God, their actions, and their reliance on His mercy. This introspection is vital for spiritual growth and for the continual betterment of oneself.

Another key connection lies in the concept of nourishment. Just as individuals strive to nourish their bodies with healthy habits through resolutions, the Eucharist provides nourishment for the soul. The Blessed Sacrament is the real presence of Christ, providing spiritual sustenance and sustenance for the journey of faith. Through the Eucharist, Catholics experience communion with Christ, deepening their relationship with Him, and finding strength and encouragement to persevere in their resolutions.

Additionally, both resolutions and the Eucharist require perseverance. Often, New Year's resolutions are abandoned after a short period due to the challenges of implementing new habits. Similarly, in the spiritual journey, individuals may face obstacles and struggles. The Eucharist reminds the faithful that Christ is present in their struggles and is ready to offer His grace and strength. The act of receiving the Eucharist can instill perseverance, encouraging Catholics to keep striving for their resolutions even



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Amber Payne (left) assists a teen camper at Christmas/New Year's Camp held at Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center from Dec. 29, 2022 to Jan. 1, 2023.

when faced with difficulties.

So, while New Year's resolutions and the Eucharist may seem dissimilar on the surface, a deeper understanding reveals their significant connections. Both call for introspection, personal growth, nourishment, and perseverance. The Eucharist serves as a profound reminder of the ongoing journey of conversion. By reflecting on these connections, Catholics can approach their resolutions with a renewed perspective, intertwining their personal growth with their spiritual nourishment, ultimately seeking to align their lives with the example of Christ. ■

Dcn. Jay W. VanHoosier is the Director of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Owensboro. For more information visit owensborodiocese.org/faith-formation, email jay.vanhoosier@pastoral.org or call (270) 852-8324.

Pickin' Life Project raises \$50,000 for pro-life pregnancy care centers



COURTESY OF LAURA SMITH

On Nov. 28, Alpha Pregnancy Care Center of Hopkinsville received a check for \$14,052 from the Pickin' Life Project, one third of the \$42,156 raised during 2023's charity music fundraiser "Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear." Pictured are (left to right) Dcn. Mike Marsili; Fr. Chris Kight from Sts. Peter and Paul Parish; Will Hancock from the Knights of Columbus Oak Grove Council; executive director of Alpha PCC Angie Crawford; Grand Knight Rich Hornbeak of the Knights of Columbus Hopkinsville Council; Grand Knight Barry Whitledge of the Knights of Columbus Blessed Trinity Council; and Fr. Emmanuel Udoh, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish.



COURTESY OF LAURA SMITH

On Nov. 29, director of H.O.P.E. Clinic of Lyon County Jennifer Wright receives a \$14,052 check from the Pickin' Life Project presented by Barry Whitledge, Grand Knight of Knights of Columbus Council 15181. The amount is one third of the \$42,156 raised during this year's "Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear" fundraiser. Also pictured (left to right) are Knights of Columbus district deputy Tom O'Hagan and Council 15181 members: Fr. Fr. Jojy Joseph Olickal (pastor of St. Mark and St. Paul Parishes), George Barber, and Dcn. Paul Bachi.



COURTESY OF LAURA SMITH

On Nov. 28, Knights of Columbus Madisonville Council Grand Knight Dr. Jim Donley presented a \$14,052 check from the Pickin' Life Project to executive director Heather Bryant of Door of Hope Pregnancy Care Center. The amount is one third of the \$42,156 raised during this year's one day charity music fest "Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear." Also pictured are (left to right) Grand Knight of Knights of Columbus Blessed Trinity Council Barry Whitledge, Brother Jackie Mathis of Dawson Springs and Pickin' Life Project treasurer Jeff Smith.

BY PICKIN' LIFE ORGANIZERS, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The 10th annual "Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear" one-day music fundraiser, created by Resurrection Parish (Dawson Springs) parishioners Laura and Jeff Smith and sponsored by eight Knights of Columbus councils in western Kentucky, set a new record on Oct. 7, 2023 by raising \$42,156. The Knights of Columbus national Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) program will add another \$8,000, making the total benefit from the event \$50,156 for life-affirming pregnancy care centers: Alpha PCC in Hopkinsville, Door of Hope in Madisonville and H.O.P.E. Clinic in



COURTESY OF PEYTON WILLIAMS

"Cutter and Cash and the Kentucky Grass" play at 2023's "Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear" charity fundraising event on Oct. 7, 2023.

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Bluegrass continued from page 15

Benton and Eddyville.

“We are truly humbled by the generosity of regular people in this part of the state, which was devastated by the December 2021 tornado. Even though our parish in Dawson Springs has yet to be rebuilt, several of our supporters suffered severe damages, and everyone is struggling with high inflation, the whole Catholic community has pulled together to create a beautiful musical event and raise impactful funds to help save babies’ lives and families’ hearts,” said co-host Jeff Smith. “In addition, Knights of Columbus councils from Murray, Bowling Green, Calvert City, Hardin/Aurora, Oak Grove, Hopkinsville, Madisonville and Princeton/Dawson Springs/Eddyville sponsored the event this year - the most ever.”

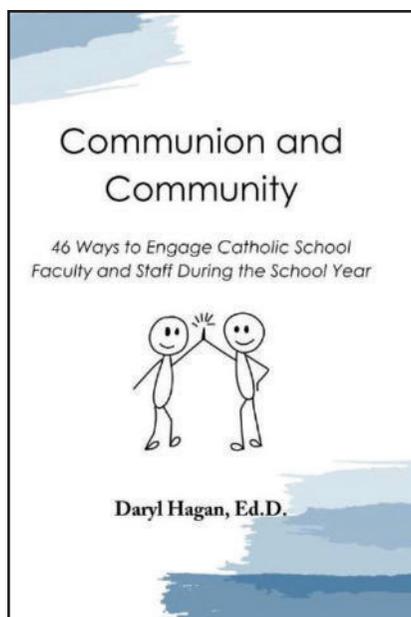
The Knights of Columbus Supreme office even sent a film crew from Spirit Juice Studios to record this year’s music fest.

The first “Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear” music event was held in 2014 and raised a modest \$2,600. Nine years later, the original idea has produced its own 501(c)(3) charitable organization, The “Pickin’ Life Project,” with a mission to support life from conception until natural death. It has raised more than \$200,000 and distributed all of it to the pregnancy care centers, who are on the front lines protecting babies and families. The 11th annual “Bluegrass on (Lake) Beshear” music festival will be held on Saturday, Oct 12, 2024. More information is available at www.bluegrassonbeshear.com. ■

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Speaker Kristy Malik




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COURTESY OF DR. DARYL HAGAN

The cover of “Communion and Community” by Dr. Daryl Hagan, a former principal of Holy Name of Jesus School in Henderson.

Former Holy Name principal publishes book

BY JILL HAGAN, HOLY NAME OF JESUS SCHOOL

Daryl Hagan, Ed. D., former Holy Name of Jesus School principal, teacher and HNS alumni has published a book for Catholic schools educators.

“Communion and Community: 46 Ways to Engage Catholic School Faculty and Staff During the School Year,” is Dr. Hagan’s first book.

Dr. Hagan currently serves as the interim director of the Institute for the Transformation of Catholic Education and the Directory of Catholic School Accreditation at The Catholic University of America. Dr. Hagan is a proud member of the Class of 1978, a HNS teacher from 1989 to 1991, and served as principal of Holy Name from 1997 to 2010. Dr. Hagan

and his wife are members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Henderson in the Diocese of Owensboro.

“Communion and Community” shares effective practices that will help Catholic schools promote genuine trust and collaboration among all members of the faculty and staff. For some Catholic educators, this is not in their comfort zone; however, this book is meant to give them the confidence to start with one activity and to experience the difference it can make in their school. “Communion and Community” includes activities that administrators can do with faculty and staff in each season of the school year, as well as activities by theme, so that they can customize the timing of the activities based on what they need.

The book is available on Amazon by visiting <https://bit.ly/414ouwd>. ■

Diocesan staff brings carols and joy to the Ursuline Sisters



COURTESY OF DAN HECKEL

(Left photo) Michelle Roberts, manager of internal audit and accounting systems for the Diocese of Owensboro, talks with Sr. Kathleen Dueber, OSU, in her room. (Right photo) The diocesan staff line one of the hallways for a rousing rendition of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."



COURTESY OF DAN HECKEL

Sr. Sheila Anne Smith, OSU, asks Danny May to play a few chords on his guitar.

BY DAN HECKEL, MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

The Diocese of Owensboro staff spent Dec. 6, 2023 – the feast of St. Nicholas – at Maple Mount, visiting the Ursuline Sisters in Saint Joseph Villa and singing Christmas carols in the hallway.

Charlie Hardesty, director of youth and young adult ministry, and Danny May, director of marriage and family life, have been coming to the Mount monthly since the spring to visit with Sr. Margaret Ann Aull and Sr. Elaine Burke, OSU. Hardesty worked with Sr. Margaret Ann at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Henderson, Ky., and May has known Sr. Elaine since he began coming to the Mount for retreats 20 years ago.

"We could listen to their stories all day," Hardesty said. "It dawned on me, we need to get everyone out here to learn these stories."

About 25 staff members from the McRaith Pastoral Center visited all three hallways in Saint Joseph Villa, singing a handful of carols and then visiting with the sisters. Afterward, they joined the sisters for the rosary, and then for Mass in the Motherhouse Chapel. Bishop William F. Medley joined Fr. Ray Goetz, the chaplain, to celebrate the Mass. ■

This story was originally published on ursulinesmsj.org.

Western Kentucky priest leads opening prayer for Ky. AFL-CIO Convention

BY WKC STAFF

Fr. Anthony Shonis, a priest of the Diocese of Owensboro, offered the opening prayer for the Kentucky State AFL-CIO Convention held in Louisville from Dec. 4-6, 2023. He was followed later that evening by Bishop John Stowe of Lexington, who offered the blessing before the evening banquet.

Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum" put the Church squarely on the side of working men and women while at the same time upholding the right of private property.

The Holy Father issued the encyclical at a time when increasing industrialization was widening the gap between rich and poor. The encyclical went on to say that "organizing a union is natural right of man." This same sentiment was echoed by the American bishops

in their 1986 pastoral letter "Economic Justice for All."

The following is copy of Fr. Shonis' opening prayer.

Dear God,

The Long Dark Night is slowly coming to an end

And we see the first streaks of a new dawn

A dawn of a rejuvenated democracy.

A democracy that we no longer take for granted

A democracy that was purchased for us by the struggles of working men and women.

And we pray for a full economic democracy where working men and women will participate in the decisions that affect their lives and families

... a family-sustainable wage, safety on the job, health insurance and pension benefits.

We remember all workers: blue collar, white collar union, non-union, employed and unemployed.



COURTESY OF FR. ANTHONY SHONIS

Pictured are (left to right) Kevin Walton, John Coomes, Fr. Anthony Shonis, Bill Londrigan (president), Charlie Hiatt, and Brian Combs at the Dec. 4-6, 2023 Kentucky State AFL-CIO Convention held in Louisville.

But especially we remember the men and women who serve in our armed forces

For they too are workers.

May all our union brothers and sisters and all workers who have died on the job rest in peace.

Amen. ■

St. Vincent de Paul makes Forbes list of top U.S. charities

PRESS RELEASE

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) reached a milestone this year, inclusion in Forbes' list of the 100 largest charities in the United States. SVDP ranked #75 out of the 100 listed. Each year Forbes reviews the nation's charities and ranks them only on private contributions received, government grants, payment for services, and investment returns are not included. SVDP also received high marks for charitable commitment and a fundraising efficiency of 95%.

National president, John Berry, noted, "This recognition is important not because of the fact that we get to brag about how big we are, but rather because it acknowledges the enormity of the work we are doing serving His people in need. It is a reflection on the hundreds of thousands of hours of dedicated service of our Vincentians across this country. And it celebrates the generosity and support of our donors and supporters who provide us the resources we need to serve."

SVDP - Diocesan Council of Western Kentucky president, Nancy Harris, reflected on the recent acknowledgement, "This is an outstanding recognition. During the last several years the Society in western Kentucky has made a conscious effort locally to leverage partnerships to make an even greater impact on our neighbors in need. I think that effort is reflected in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul inclusion on the Forbes list. May God continue to bless our efforts in assisting the marginalized and our friends needing a 'hand up.'" ■

Welcome to God's family

Carla Grant of St. Anthony Parish in Peonia writes: "Dcn. T.J. Dennison baptized my great niece, Evelyn Jaymes Braun, at St. Anthony on Nov. 11, 2023. It was a beautiful blessing to witness."

Evelyn Jaymes Braun is the daughter of Tommy and April Braun. Dcn. Dennison serves St. Anthony Parish, St. Augustine Parish in Grayson Springs, and St. Benedict Parish in Wax.

To learn more about the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Owensboro, visit [owensborodiocese.org/permanent-diaconate](https://www.owensborodiocese.org/permanent-diaconate). ■



COURTESY OF CARLA GRANT
Dcn. T.J. Dennison baptizes Evelyn Jaymes Braun.



COURTESY OF CARLA GRANT
Dcn. T.J. Dennison holds Evelyn Jaymes Braun, whom he baptized on Nov. 11, 2023.

Union County to host annual women's conference; will feature Walking with Purpose speaker



COURTESY OF KRISTY MALIK
Kristy Malik, a blogger, speaker, and content creator for Walking with Purpose, will speak at a Feb. 3, 2024 women's retreat at St. Agnes Parish in Uniontown.

BY BETH HENDRICKSON, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Joy, Laughter, and Holiness Ladies Retreat will return to Union County, Ky., on Feb. 3, 2024, at St. Agnes Parish Hall, 401 5th St., Uniontown, KY 42461 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

The keynote speaker will be Kristy Malik. She is a cradle Catholic who experienced a conversion of heart once encountering Walking with Purpose (WWP) in 2011. She jumped in with both feet, starting a WWP program at her parish and becoming a regional area coordinator a few years later. She is now a blogger, speaker, and content creator for the ministry. You may have seen her leading live Bible studies on Instagram and Facebook or on the YouTube series "Truth with Handles: The Conversation." She has spoken at various parishes in the Washington, D.C., area where she lives, and she was featured on the Embrace: Catholic Moms Conference in 2021.

She and her husband live in the country with their five children, ages elementary to high school. Her family attends St. John the Apostle Parish in Leesburg, Va. Her hope is that every woman can experience God's healing love and redemption - and fully embrace the amazing plan He has for your life. Learn more about her at www.kristymalik.com.

Registration will be held from 8-8:30 a.m., followed by breakfast and then speakers and music. The program is scheduled to end at 12:30 p.m. A local speaker will also be confirmed soon.

The cost is \$20 per person. Pre-registration is encouraged so the team can prepare properly, though walk-in registration will be accepted as well.

Register by contacting Kelly Joiner at (270) 952-0696 or kejoiner3@gmail.com. ■

Nearly 300 gather for parish-focused Eucharistic Revival event



RILEY GREIF | WKC

(Far left photo) Participants sing during morning prayer at the Diocese of Owensboro's Eucharistic Revival Gathering for the Year of the Parish on Nov. 30, 2023, which was held at the Owensboro Convention Center. (Center photo) A participant makes a comment during the Nov. 30 event. (Far right photo) Dr. Glenn Byer, the guest speaker for the Diocese of Owensboro's Eucharistic Revival Gathering for the Year of the Parish, facilitates a discussion.

BY WKC STAFF

On Nov. 30, 2023, parish staff, pastors, and other parish leaders gathered at the Owensboro Convention Center for the Diocese of Owensboro's Eucharistic Revival Gathering for the Year of the Parish, which is the second year of the National Eucharistic Revival.

A total of 296 participants pre-registered, and it is estimated that close to this number attended the free event.

This year, Dr. Glenn Byer served as the guest speaker for the annual gathering. An award-winning author and the president of the North American Academy of Liturgy, Dr. Byer is currently responsible for worship publications from Oregon Catholic Press (OCP) and teaches theology at the University of Portland.

The gathering featured morning prayer, small group sessions, group discussions facilitated by Dr. Byer, and several presentations from Dr. Byer on liturgy and the Eucharist. Lunchtime provided an opportunity for participants to meet and mingle, having come from all over western Kentucky for the gathering.

After the gathering, which lasted from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., a special gathering was offered from 2:15-3 p.m. for the coordinators and hosts of Acts 2:42 groups. Acts 2:42 groups are an initiative out of the diocese's Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, providing monthly meetings in parishioners' homes to discuss different aspects of Eucharistic living. ■

For more information about the National Eucharistic Revival being celebrated in the Diocese of Owensboro, contact mike.bogdan@pastoral.org.

QUILT SALE

Don't miss the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph Quilt Sale!

See them online:
ursulinesmsj.org/online-quilt-sale

Several quilts and shawls are still available! All are one-of-a-kind.

Proceeds provide funding for the Ursuline Sisters' ministries of education and Christian formation.

To purchase a quilt, contact Carol Braden-Clarke
270-229-2008
carol.braden-clarke@maplemount.org



Ursuline Sisters
of Mount Saint Joseph

8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY

St. Gianna's moving forward after storm damage



COURTESY OF ST. GIANNA HOME

The future St. Gianna Crisis Pregnancy Home in Bowling Green is seen several days after the Dec. 9 storm, in which it suffered damage.

BY WKC STAFF

The future St. Gianna Crisis Pregnancy Home – which is slated to open on the property of Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green in spring 2024 – sustained damages in a Dec. 9 storm, but the organizers are optimistic.

According to a press release, “Several large trees fell on the grounds, including one that was uprooted and toppled onto the house, which caused structural issues and put a hole in the roof. The detached garage and storage shed were completely destroyed. Some appliances, baby items, and furniture that were being stored in the garage for the opening of the house were also lost.”

No one was injured, and thanks to a flood of community support, most of the cleanup was accomplished in one day.

“Repairs are just beginning and while we are not

yet certain, this is possible, we still hope to open in the spring,” said Kathy Byrne, one of St. Gianna’s house directors.

Fellow house director, Missy Monroe, called the experience “a blessing in disguise” and said news about the damage has increased exposure – and support – for the home.

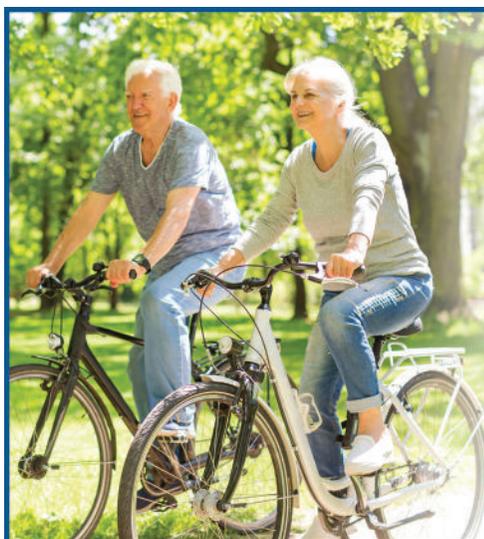
“I think God will help us use this to our advantage,” said Monroe.

The home stated in a message sent to local parish bulletins that Gill’s Tree Service, whom they used to remove the fallen tree, trimmed other trees on the property without charge to help prevent future problems. Los Mariachis, a local restaurant owned by parishioners of Holy Spirit, provided a free lunch

for the cleanup volunteers.

The message went on to share that “Along with the miracle of skid steers, tractors, and the many volunteers who came together from the Good Samaritan’s ministry, Holy Spirit Church, and St. Joseph’s Church to work on cleanup of the property, work anticipated to take a week was completed for the most part in one day. Many, many thanks to all who have labored, donated, prayed or been involved in any capacity in helping with this monumental task!” ■

To learn more about St. Gianna Crisis Pregnancy Home, visit stgiannacph.org.



For more information, call
Valeria Vessels at 270-852-8348
or Tom Lilly at 270-683-1545

You can earn 6.2% on your gift to The Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky

A 75-year-old donor can receive a guaranteed income for life by contributing to The Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky with a Charitable Gift Annuity! Rates vary based on age of donor.

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- generous charitable tax deductions
- over half the income tax free
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Was a diocesan priest responsible for one of the largest American Catholic youth movements ever?

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

In November, the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana. The event is highly praised for its ability to ignite enthusiasm and draw young Catholics closer to Christ. This is a noble pursuit as devout young people have few opportunities of this kind today. Outreach to the youth is a long-standing mission in the Church. One of the largest youth outreach organizations of this kind, may still be remembered by many in the diocese, the Catholic Students Mission Crusade (CSMC). However, few may know what impact one of our very own priests, Fr. Jolly Paschal Hayden, had on the movement.

The CSMC was a youth organization that was started in 1918. The organization is stated as being founded by Frs. Clifford J King and Robert D. Clark. Fr. Hayden is not a credited founder. However, we have accounts in our archive that claim that the initial movement had begun to flounder until Fr. Hayden, then a seminarian, stepped in to save the cause by calling the first national convention in 1918. This can easily be brushed away as hyperbolic except for the fact that the story is supported by the testimony of Archbishop Cornelius Bergan of Omaha. One of the credited founders, Fr. King, also publicly stated that the organization, in all probability, may have died out had it not been for the work which Fr. Hayden had been behind while still a seminarian at Saint Meinrad. Further, Fr. Hayden was the district

manager of the Cincinnati chapter, where the CSMC was headquartered, so he was very influential.

The organization became unbelievably large nationally as well as in our diocese. By the 1930s the organization had over 500,000 crusaders, that's one fourth the size of the current Knights of Columbus. Utilizing our diocesan activity to calculate national growth, it is not unlikely that CSMC membership matched that of the K of C before the former's end in the 1970s. In 1962, our diocese had a CSMC Rally in which nearly 6,000 CSMC members filled the sports center.

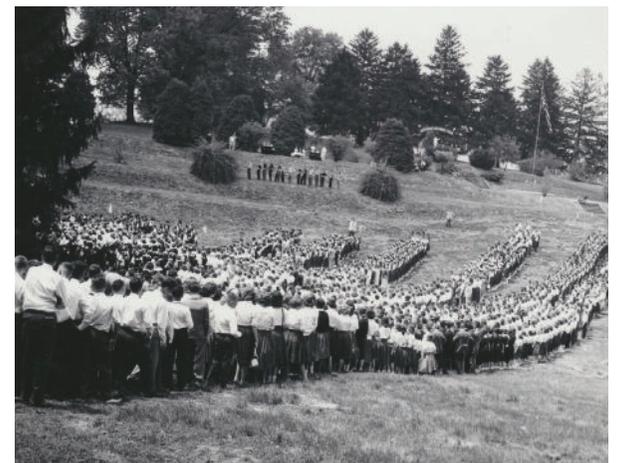
Due to a change in Church culture, the CSMC was ended in the 1970s. Though the group was basically a youth-run benevolent society, the imagery of the crusader became less favorable within the Church. The regalia, marching, and militaristic processions paid a homage to the ancient Catholic warriors that was deemed perhaps a bit distasteful for a more modern and global Church.

Fr. Hayden would not see the end of the CSMC, however, as he passed away unexpectedly in 1941 at age 50. In his short life he had accomplished a great deal for the Church. He helped establish the CSMC and was a "pioneer in the rural cooperative movement" receiving "national recognition."

Fr. Jolly P. Hayden is a shining example of the impact one young Catholic can have on the world. The final words ever written by Fr. Hayden, while reflecting on Mary and the Christ Child, echo the zeal of the good priest, "only God, only the Divine,



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES
Fr. Jolly P. Hayden, in 1919, the year of his ordination.



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES
C.S.M.C. members standing in military rank and file at a Mount Saint Joseph Rally.

eternal, everlasting Truth!" Fr. Jolly P. Hayden, pray for us! ■

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.

January Wedding Anniversaries

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

Please send any anniversary updates or corrections to Sara Lewis, Office of Marriage & Family Life, at sara.lewis@pastoral.org.

Blessed Mother, Owensboro

Kenneth & Dianne Murphy, 52
Robert & Debbie Newman, 55
Terry & Jan Storm, 56

Christ the King, Madisonville

Billy & Patty Folk, 55

Holy Guardian Angels, Irvington

Ted & Barbara Brown, 66

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson

David & Debra Gish, 40
Fred & Sue Hagan, 57
Guy & Frances Hogan, 62
Ira & Ellese Hay, 52
Jack & JoAnn Jacobs, 52
James & Sharon Drury, 62
John & Kathy Jenkins, 52
John & Phyllis Brown, 53
John & Sue Allen, 54
Mike & Lisa Thomas, 40
Steve & Patty Tweddell, 53

Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam

Keith & Hughetta Dale, 52

Holy Spirit, Bowling Green

Basil & Joann Jones, 63
George & Barbara Powers, 64
Harry & Constance Largen, 64
Jerry & Joanne Wallace, 52
Thomas & Evelyn Pettigrew, 51
Tom & Rita Parrott, 56

Immaculate, Owensboro

Gary & Carol Jackson, 60
Hal & Eleanor Renshaw, 67
Lee & Sarah Rudy, 10
Melvin & Lois Connor, 67

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro

Ken & Charlene Ackerman, 65
Larry & Charlotte Moore, 54
Thomas & Kimberly Payne, 40
William & Suzanne Blandford, 61

Precious Blood, Owensboro

George & WaNell Lanham, 51
Michael & Susan Johnson, 50

Sacred Heart, Waverly

Richard & Nancy Mayes, 66

St. Agnes, Uniontown

Marty & Marilyn Greenwell, 57
Tommy & Joycelyn Hagan, 56

St. Alphonsus, St. Joseph

Gary & Imelda Cecil, 50
Mike & Audrey Clouse, 51

St. Ann, Morganfield

Damian & Diane Alvey, 52
Daniel & Rachael Hendrickson, 10
Jimmy & Carolyn Wedding, 52
Kenny & Teresa Lee Thomas, 58

St. Anthony, Peonia

Steven & Rose Mary Kenney, 40

St. Benedict, Wax

Michael & Patsy Campiglia, 53

St. Francis Borgia, Sturgis

Don Ed & Miki Wright, 56
Jerry & Brenda Stevens, 58

St. Francis de Sales, Paducah

Chris & Tamera Green, 5
Francis & Judith Taylor, 60

St. Jerome, Fancy Farm

Charles & Shirley Rowe, 66
Chase & Hope Carrico, 5
Daniel & Emily Kimbell, 5
Scott & Mary Smith, 10

St. John the Evangelist, Sunfish

Estil & Paula Wilson, 52

St. Joseph, Bowling Green

Frank & Patricia Royal, 56
Jason & Laura Rigsby, 5
Robert & Sandra Gasperetti, 58

St. Joseph, Leitchfield

Johnnie & Nina Justis, 55

St. Lawrence, Philpot

Larry & Betty Johnson, 55
Michael & Patricia Wright, 54

St. Martin, Rome

Tom & Lucy Hines, 51

St. Mary Magdalene, Sorgho

David & Mary K Payne, 25
John & Claudia O'Bryan, 25
John & Mary Ann Ebelhar, 56

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

Charlie & Ina Mattingly, 55
Dan & Sue Howard, 65
Tony & Vickie Morris, 51
Virgil & Jackie Head, 67

St. Mary, Franklin

Larry & Michelle Anderson, 55

St. Mary, LaCenter

David & Gloria Henderson, 55

St. Paul, Leitchfield

Rodric & Earline Brady, 54

St. Peter of Alcantara, Stanley

Eddie & Jeanette Smith, 56
James & Mary Keller, 67
James & Patty Settles, 64
Jerome & Bonnie Blair, 57
Neil & Vicky Rudy, 25

St. Pius X, Owensboro

Carl & Shelia Moore, 50
Danny & Sue Castlen, 52
Don & Sylvia Hamilton, 65
James & Cheryl Gerteisen, 51
James & Connie Nalley, 53
Leon & Cecilia Aud, 61

St. Romuald, Hardinsburg

Jerry & Pam Raymer, 51
Logan & Judy Tivitt, 59
Sammy & Brenda Duggins, 53

St. Rose of Lima, Cloverport

Randy & Gerry Brown, 56

St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro

Audie & Sue Cooper, 59
Don & Carol Ralph, 58
Jim & Janet Murphy, 52
Mark & Janice Higdon, 51

St. Thomas More, Paducah

Bill & Lisa Muter, 25
Robert & Carolyn Murphey, 51
Shiraz & Melanie Patel, 25

St. William, Knottsville

Darrell & Donna Barnett, 51
David & Patricia Payne, 55
Donald & Martha Morris, 54
Patrick & Rose Meserve, 58
Vince & Irene Nealen, 52

Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro

Pete & Patty Johnson, 55

JANUARY 2024 BULLETIN BOARD

Mass and confession times in the Diocese of Owensboro

Did you know you can view Mass times on the diocese's website? Visit <https://owensborodiocese.org/find-a-parish/> for a list of parishes, Mass times and more. As confession times are subject to change, visitors are encouraged to contact the parishes directly for their most up-to-date confession schedule.

Cursillo retreats in 2024

Cursillo in the Diocese of Owensboro invites all adults to prayerfully consider making a Cursillo retreat in 2024! Gather 3-4 people from your parish and attend together. There are two English weekends scheduled and we are working on dates for Spanish Cursillo. Check our website for updates: <http://www.cursillo-owensboro.org/>. Men's Cursillo #76: February 29-March 3, 2024. Women's Cursillo #78: March 7-10, 2024. The retreats are held at Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center in Bowling Green. The cost is \$180, which includes a \$50 deposit when you register. Some financial help is available. The Cursillo Movement is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. It helps people develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be fully Catholic by being fully Christian in order to exercise their mission as baptized Catholics. Come and experience God's love and power and find others on the same journey. For more information contact Jeff Andrini at jeff.andrini@pastoral.org.

Ursuline Sisters add Eucharistic Adoration on the first Sunday

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph have added the first Sunday of the month to their Eucharistic Adoration schedule. They invite the public to join them for Eucharistic Adoration on the first Sunday from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. at the Motherhouse Chapel, 8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, Ky. (12 miles west of Owensboro on Hwy. 56). The Ursuline Sisters will continue to have Eucharistic Adoration on Fridays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. The public is also welcome to attend on Fridays.

Adoration on the second Friday of each month is dedicated to praying for vocations. The Adoration concludes with evening prayer. To see Adoration and Mass times for the Ursuline Sisters, visit <https://ursulinesmsj.org/mass-prayer-times/>

Need a meeting space? Maple Hall is available at Mount Saint Joseph

Need a meeting space for up to 200 people? Maple Hall (formerly known as Mount Saint Joseph Auditorium/Gym) is available for rent. It is located on the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph campus, 8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, Ky., 12 miles west of Owensboro on Hwy. 56, across from the park. Maple Hall is an open space with a kitchen equipped for catering. It's perfect for hosting receptions, parties, reunions, etc. There are two rental options -- a partial rental for up to four hours (\$100) and a full rental which allows use for a full day (\$200). The use of 8-foot tables and chairs is included in the rental fee (user is responsible for setup, or this can be done for you for an additional fee). To reserve Maple Hall, contact the Mount Saint Joseph Finance Office by email: ap@maplemount.org or call the switchboard at 270-229-4103 and ask to speak to the Finance Office. Normal business hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. You can find out more on this webpage: <https://ursulinesmsj.org/renting-maple-hall/>

Support groups for victims/survivors of clergy abuse

The Diocese of Owensboro would like to share some support group opportunities made available through the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. These groups are open to all victims/survivors in the United States. Learn more at <https://owensborodiocese.org/support-group/> and <https://owensborodiocese.org/safe/>.

A Scout is Reverent

It is time to begin working toward Scout religious emblems. They include for Cub Scouts: Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei and for Boy Scouts: Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius XII and Light is Life (Eastern Catholic) and for Girl Scouts and others: God is Love, Family of God, I Live My Faith, Mary the First Disciple, The Spirit Alive, and Missio. For more information on these, visit <https://owensborodiocese.org/scouting/>

The Journey

Young Adult Hiking Retreat
2 NIGHTS/2 DAYS/23 MILES

Friday Evening-
Sunday Afternoon
The North Trail at Land
Between the Lakes



[owensborodiocese.org/
journey-retreat/](https://owensborodiocese.org/journey-retreat/)

Registration is now open for
April 12-14, 2024

“Solvitur Ambulando
in walking, it is solved.”
ST. AUGUSTINE



Office of Young Adult Ministry
DIocese of OWENSBORO

Passionist nun makes perpetual profession

BY WKC STAFF

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 2023, Sr. Maria Faustina Carmichael of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and the Sorrowful Heart of Mary made her perpetual profession as a Passionist nun at St. Joseph Monastery in Whitesville. Bishop William F. Medley presided at the Mass and the monastery's chaplain, Fr. Louis Caporiccio, CPM, gave the homily.

In a letter enclosed in the worship aid for the liturgy, Sr. Maria Faustina wrote that "Like many other millennials, I must admit that for a while I experienced a fear at the prospect of binding myself for life - in my case, perpetually - to a set path."

She went on to conclude, however, that "Today, in a deeper sense, my eternal life begins. Today is my wedding day, the day of nuptial vows, and on this day in earthly time I am wed to Christ the Bridegroom in a bond that will last for all eternity." ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Sr. Maria Faustina Carmichael smiles for a photo with Bishop William F. Medley after making her perpetual profession on Dec. 8, 2023.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Kneeling before Mother John Mary Reed, mother superior of the Passionist Nuns of St. Joseph Monastery, Sr. Maria Faustina Carmichael professes her perpetual vows on Dec. 8, 2023.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Sr. Maria Faustina Carmichael smiles after being presented with the cross and crown of thorns, a symbolic expression of her Passionist dedication to God, on Dec. 8, 2023.

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Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley

Prolonguemos la esperanza y la promesa de la Navidad en el Año Nuevo

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Cuando la primera edición de 2024 de este periódico El Católico de Kentucky Occidental llega a los hogares de la Diócesis de Owensboro, la mayoría de nosotros prácticamente hemos dejado atrás la Navidad de 2023. Cada año me sorprende que hogares y negocios que han estado brillantemente iluminados con luces navideñas durante semanas o incluso meses de repente se queden oscuros el 26 de diciembre. No escucharemos canciones navideñas ni villancicos en las tiendas ni en la radio. Las calderas navideñas del Ejército de Salvación ya no están en las entradas de las tiendas. Los árboles de Navidad que trajeron tanta emoción a nuestros hogares se dejan a un lado o se guardan en un sótano o ático.

Una excepción son nuestras iglesias. Las coronas todavía adornan las puertas y, como punto de enfoque, el pesebre todavía goza de un lugar destacado. Independientemente de cómo nos sintamos acerca de la desaparición de la noche a la mañana de todo lo relacionado con la Navidad, en su mayor parte es bueno que nuestras iglesias decidan continuar contando la historia durante una temporada apropiada.

La Navidad en nuestra tradición litúrgica católica envuelve varias historias y lecciones. La fiesta de los Santos Inocentes es el 28 de diciembre y sirve como un claro recordatorio del costo del discipulado. En los años recientes, esta fiesta nos ha brindado la oportunidad de recordar las matanzas modernas de inocentes, en particular la ejecución legal de los no nacidos mediante el aborto.

El domingo que cae entre Navidad y Año Nuevo se celebra como la Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia de Jesús, María y José. Aunque a veces nos perdemos en el cansancio que pueden traer las fiestas, es bueno honrar a la familia como piedra angular de la sociedad y la civilización y honrar la santidad de la familia. Irónicamente, en esta temporada que los niños no van a la escuela, muchos adultos se quedan en casa y tal vez hay parientes de visita, es posible que todos estemos un poco agotados con la familia a estas alturas de las vacaciones. No obstante, la iglesia brinda un momento para dar las gracias y buscar esperanza y orientación en la familia ejemplar.

En el último día de la octava de Navidad, la Iglesia recuerda la centralidad de María en la historia de la salvación. El título de la fiesta que se celebra el día de Año Nuevo es María Santísima, Madre de Dios. Aunque difícilmente se pasa por alto a María en el arte navideño, es importante que la destaquemos a ella y a su papel como Madre de Dios con una fiesta especial. Durante el último medio siglo, esta fiesta también se ha celebrado como un día universal de oración por la paz. Cada año esperamos que el día de Año Nuevo encuentre al mundo en paz, pero la guerra y la violencia siempre parecen prevalecer.

La mayoría de nosotros nos damos cuenta más fácilmente de la solemnidad de la Epifanía del Señor por la aparición en los pesebres de nuestras iglesias de los Reyes Magos, presentados en el Evangelio de Mateo. Los personajes están exquisitamente

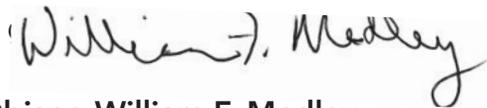
CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY ENERO DE 2024	
1 DE ENERO	9 a.m. Misa de María, Madre de Dios – Catedral de San Esteban, Owensboro
4 DE ENERO	Conferencia SEEK - St. Louis, Miss.
7-11 DE ENERO	Retiro de obispos de la Región V – New Orleans, La.
15-18 DE ENERO	Convocatoria de Sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Owensboro - San Meinrad, Indiana
22 DE ENERO	5 p.m. Reunión del Consejo Diocesano de Finanzas – Centro Católico McRaith
24 DE ENERO	Día de retiro del personal del Centro Católico McRaith
27 DE ENERO	4 p.m. Confirmación – Parroquia Santo Nombre de Jesús, Henderson
29 DE ENERO	8 a.m. Misa escolar – Escuela Santo Nombre de Jesús, Henderson
30 DE ENERO	9:30 a.m. Misa escolar – Sistema Escolar Santa María, Paducah
31 DE ENERO	9:45 a.m. Misa escolar – Escuela San José, Bowling Green

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vestidos y enojados, se dice que vinieron “del este” y “siguieron una estrella” y, a menudo, se coloca un camello con ellos. Quizás una faceta de esta historia que es fácil pasar por alto es que, si estos hombres vinieron del Este, probablemente no compartían la fe hebrea y no habrían estado familiarizados con los profetas hebreos que habían predicho la venida del Mesías. El Evangelio nos dice que estos hombres vinieron siguiendo una estrella, vinieron gracias a una luz extraordinaria. La Epifanía representa la manifestación de Jesucristo a todo el mundo.

Así que los adornos y las luces desaparecieron, pero el mensaje de esperanza, promesa y salvación nos lleva a un Año Nuevo.



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro

Parroquias con misa en Español



La Epifanía del Señor: Tradiciones que se enfocan en “el rey de reyes”

BY MARIA-PIA CHIN, OSV NEWS

(OSV News) ~ Después de prepararse para el nacimiento de Jesús con posadas y pesebres vivientes, y celebrar misas de gallo y tradiciones de Nochebuena, muchos latinos en Estados Unidos continúan la temporada navideña con la celebración de la Epifanía.

Esta “manifestación del Señor”, marca cuando Jesús se da a conocer a todo el mundo, dijo Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, director adjunto de la Pastoral Hispana de la Secretaría para la Diversidad Cultural en la Iglesia de la Conferencia de Obispos de los Estados Unidos.

Cuando las figuras de los reyes se acercan al pesebre, se hace visible ~ sobre todo para los más pequeños de la casa ~ que Jesús es “el rey de reyes”, dijo. Es la revelación de que Cristo es el salvador de toda la humanidad.

Los “magos de oriente” van a Belén a postrarse ante el niño, como dice el Evangelio de San Mateo. Estos sabios, magos o reyes ~ conocidos como Melchor, Gaspar y Baltasar ~ le recuerdan a todos la importancia de detenerse a contemplar el amor y misericordia de Dios hecho carne en el niño Jesús.

“Para muchos la Navidad no termina hasta el 2 de febrero, con la presentación del Señor al templo”, dijo Wanda Vásquez, directora de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano en la Arquidiócesis de Nueva York. Esta tradición fue heredada de España y muchos católicos provenientes de Latinoamérica tienen diversos modos de celebrarla. Ella agregó que

en Puerto Rico y en muchas partes del Caribe, todas las tradiciones están enfocadas en el nacimiento de Jesús, en lugar de personajes como Santa Claus o cosas materiales.

“Durante ese tiempo religioso, pero festivo, nos unimos en comunidad”, dijo Vásquez. “Celebramos en oración, reflexionando sobre el nacimiento de nuestro Jesús ~ anticipando la venida de los reyes magos”.

La Nochebuena y Navidad se centran en el nacimiento de Jesús, dijo, pero tradicionalmente los regalos son reservados para el día en que los sabios de oriente vienen a adorar al hijo de Dios. Algunos niños ponen los zapatos bajo el árbol, otros debajo de las camas, e incluso se deja comida y agua para los camellos de los reyes. Lo que estas tradiciones tienen en común es la centralidad del niño Dios en el pesebre, contemplando cómo se cumple la promesa de Dios.

Cada momento está lleno de significado. Como parte de la tradición se comparte la Rosca de Reyes, un pan ovalado adornado que tiene fruta confitada y un niño de plástico representando a Jesús recién nacido. “A quien le toque el muñequito, tiene que hacer los tamales en el Día de la Candelaria”, o la presentación del Señor, el dos de febrero, explicó Aguilera-Titus.

Además de la oportunidad de adentrarse en las palabras de la Biblia, dijo Aguilera-Titus, celebraciones como la Epifanía involucran maneras de hacer “más presente la vivencia cristiana en el hogar y dentro de la comunidad de fe, en el templo”.

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“Cada uno está buscando a Dios desde su cultura, de su tradición”, dijo Humberto Ramos, director de vida parroquial de Epiphany Church en el Sur El Monte, California.

Él estima que alrededor de 2,000 personas—sin contar a los niños—vendrán a celebrar la Epifanía, que es la fiesta patronal de la parroquia, durante una Kermés en donde los reyes les traerán dulces a los niños.

Se reflexiona en los regalos que se le traen al niño Jesús, “el incienso para Dios, el oro para el Rey, y la mirra para el que morirá” como dice San Pedro Crisólogo.

Además de la tradicional rosca, dijo Ramos, otra tradición mexicana de sus feligreses consiste en llevar a la figura del niño Dios del pesebre de nacimiento y en compañía del padrino o la madrina, llevarlo a vestir para que esté listo el Día de la Candelaria donde será bendecido y “levantado” del pesebre en medio de oraciones.

“Quien nos convoca aquí es Jesús”, enfatizó el

Padre Nicolás Sánchez, párroco de St. Patrick Parish en North Hollywood, California. “Nos convertimos en una comunidad”.

La fecha de la Epifanía es el 6 de enero ~ a los 12 días de la Natividad ~ pero en los Estados Unidos la celebración de la Epifanía en el año 2023 se ha transferido a domingo, 08 de enero.

El Padre José Cruz, el nuevo párroco de Sacred Heart of Jesus en el sur del Bronx, Nueva York, dice que, aunque la pandemia haya reducido muchas de las celebraciones ~ y sigue afectando planes ~ su parroquia espera con ansias revivir la tradición de Epifanía que tenían. Con el apoyo de una parroquia madrina, los “reyes” podrán repartir regalos en la Misa para niños. Él agregó que sus feligreses (ahora una población mayormente dominicana) están felices de mantener vivo el legado con el que crecieron.

“Es lo que aprendimos de nuestros padres, en nuestros hogares, y es algo que lleva a tener una experiencia y una expresión de Dios, de Cristo en tu



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

Un niño, uno de los tres que representan a los Reyes Magos, lleva su regalo al pesebre de la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo para la celebración de la Epifanía el 8 de enero de 2017.

hogar”, dijo Aguilera-Titus.

Más allá de lo material, ese día también es un recordatorio de que, “Al recibir, yo estoy llamado a dar un poquito de lo que Dios mismo me ha dado”, dijo el Padre Cruz. ■

Maria-Pia Negro Chin es la editora de español de OSV News.



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE SUSAN MONTALVO-GESSER

Susan Montalvo-Gesser (derecha) con Suzanne Craig (izquierda), co-ganadoras del Premio Sherry Currens para la Excelencia en la Defensa de 2022 durante la Conferencia de 2023 para poner fin a la agresión sexual y la violencia doméstica, que se celebró del 29 de noviembre al 1 de diciembre en Lexington.

Al recibir el premio por representar a sobrevivientes de abuso doméstico, Montalvo-Gesser recuerda a quienes abrieron el camino

POR ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

Susan Montalvo-Gesser, directora de Caridades Católicas de la Diócesis de Owensboro, fue una de las ganadoras del Premio Sherry Currens para la Excelencia en la Defensa de 2022 durante la Conferencia de 2023 para poner fin a la agresión sexual y la violencia doméstica, que se celebró del 29 de noviembre al 1 de diciembre en Lexington. (La conferencia no se celebró en 2022).

Junto con la co-ganadora Suzanne Craig, directora de programas de proyectos de acceso comunitario en cinco condados del Departamento de Salud del Distrito de Green River, Montalvo-Gesser recibió el premio el último día de la conferencia, que fue organizada por la Asociación de Programas de Agresión

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FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE SUSAN MONTALVO-GESESS Susan Montalvo-Gesser y su esposo, Chad Gesser, el día de su boda, junto a los padres de Chad, William "Gus" y Helen Gesser.

Sexual de Kentucky y ZeroV. ZeroV (anteriormente la Coalición de Kentucky contra la Violencia Doméstica) es una organización sin fines de lucro que trabaja en esfuerzos para reducir la violencia en las comunidades.

En su papel de directora, Montalvo-Gesser dirige programas para abordar las preocupaciones sociales de la Iglesia, incluyendo la recuperación después de los tornados y los servicios de inmigración. Anteriormente, fue abogada gerente de Kentucky Legal Aid (KLA) en Owensboro, donde representó a clientes en cuestiones de derecho de familia, casos de inmigración relacionados con violencia doméstica, vivienda y planificación patrimonial.

Montalvo-Gesser elogió el testimonio de sus suegros, William "Gus" y Helen Gesser, quienes fundaron el Refugio Oasis para Mujeres en Owensboro con varios otros ciudadanos preocupados. (Montalvo-Gesser ha estado casada con su hijo, Chad Gesser, por 26 años).

"Fueron grandes pioneros en el trabajo para detener la violencia doméstica y ayudar a los

sobrevivientes", dijo Montalvo-Gesser a El Católico de Kentucky Occidental.

Gus Gesser fue el subjefe de policía y oficial del Departamento de Policía de Owensboro durante mucho tiempo, y Montalvo-Gesser dijo que él estaba "muy frustrado con las llamadas de violencia doméstica que recibía y la falta de opciones para mantener seguras a las víctimas".

Fundar el refugio Oasis "no fue una idea popular en aquel tiempo", dijo, y agregó que su suegra pasó "incontables noches" en Oasis "con mujeres y niños sobrevivientes, todo sin paga. La llamaban a situaciones peligrosas y se iba".

Montalvo-Gesser agregó que los Gesser fueron pioneros en hacer que Kentucky fuera un lugar más seguro para los sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica.

"A finales de los años 80 y principios de los 90 se propuso un proyecto de ley para convertir la violación conyugal en un delito grave en Kentucky", dijo. "Antes de eso, en Kentucky no existía ningún delito por violar al cónyuge".

El presidente de la Cámara de Representantes de Kentucky en ese momento era de Owensboro y originalmente votó en contra del proyecto de ley, hasta que Gus Gesser, que lo conocía personalmente, lo invitó a Oasis para reunirse con sobrevivientes de abuso conyugal. En la siguiente sesión, el presidente copatrocinó el proyecto de ley, que luego fue aprobado y se convirtió en ley.

"Gus y Helen marcaron una gran diferencia y nunca recibieron un premio por ello", dijo Montalvo-Gesser.

Montalvo-Gesser dijo que la primera petición de orden de protección que ella presentó fue para su hermana menor, quien experimentó los efectos de su abusador mucho después de que terminó la



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE SUSAN MONTALVO-GESESS Susan Montalvo-Gesser (izquierda) con su madre, Donna Montalvo, el día que recibió el Premio Sherry Currens para la Excelencia en la Defensa de 2022.

relación. Hasta el día de hoy, Montalvo-Gesser ve a su hermana en cada superviviente que representa.

"Además, dediqué el premio a mis clientes que no sobrevivieron, Dami Ann y Grace", comentó Montalvo-Gesser. ■

Las siguientes organizaciones sin fines de lucro ayudan a brindar servicios de sanación a sobrevivientes de agresión sexual y violencia doméstica.

- *Oasis* presta servicios a los siguientes condados: Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Webster/Union. 270-685-0260
- *Sanctuary Inc.* presta servicios a los siguientes condados: Caldwell, Christian, Crittenden, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Muhlenberg, Todd y Trigg. 800-766-0000
- *Merryman House* presta servicios a los siguientes condados: Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall y McCracken. 270-443-6001
- *BRASS* presta servicios a los siguientes condados: Allen, Barren, Logan y Warren. 270-843-1183

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe celebracion

Nota: El 12 de diciembre de 2023, el Obispo William F. Medley presidió la Misa de las 7 p.m. en honor a la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo en Owensboro. A continuación se encuentra la homilía que dio el Obispo Medley en la Misa.

Esta noche quisiera repetir algunas de las maravillas que conocemos de la imagen de nuestra señora. La tilma de Juan Diego una prenda de vestir tradicional del pueblo indígena del centro de México en el siglo 16. Nada extraordinario, hecho de fibras de ixtle, que uno hubiera pensado ya se hubiera desintegrado, secado o podrido a casi 500 años.

La imagen de la Virgen sobrevive en todo su increíble esplendor, que no se puede uno ni explicar en términos humanos.

La imagen en la tilma no es obra de manos humanas. No es una pintura, no hay brochazos de ser pintada.

Si hubiera sido producido en el 2023 pudiéramos llamarle una pintura, aunque no existe una explicación o técnica conocida hasta hoy que pueda explicarla.

Y aunque la tilma ya por varios siglos ha sido tratada con mucha reverencia para protegerla, esa tilma ha desafiado la destrucción. Un derrame de ácido sobre ella en 1784 no la destruyó. Una bomba



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTOS JOSÉ Y PABLO

que explotó cerca de ella en 1921 no la destruyó.

Las estrellas que adornan la tilma alrededor de la virgen muestran una precisa replica de las constelaciones que se vieron el 12 de diciembre de 1531. No estoy seguro de cuando los astrólogos pudieron ver esto, pero no es por accidente.

Lo más increíble para mí son los ojos de la Virgen. Un estudio microscópico en el siglo XX, cuando la tilma ya tenía más de 500 años, muestra como en los ojos de María está reflejado lo que Juan habría visto durante las apariciones.

Entonces como muchos fenómenos del mundo y de la historia, no podemos ofrecer una explicación humana de estos y otros atributos de la tilma.

Como personas de fe, nos preguntamos: ¿Por qué Dios escogió intervenir en la historia humana a través de nuestra Madre Santísima, y desafiar todas las leyes de la naturaleza y toda lógica?

Esa parte es fácil. A través de la historia y desde el momento de la Inmaculada Concepción de María,



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTOS JOSÉ Y PABLO

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celebrado hace solo 4 días el 8 de diciembre, Dios llamo a Maria a traer mensajes de esperanza a toda persona en tiempos de desesperanza.

En 1531 los indígenas en México sufrían y morían en gran número. La llegada de los europeos les había traído enfermedades para las cuales no había desarrollado inmunidad. Los europeos oprimían a los nativos.

Personas morían en los miles y habían perdido la esperanza. Cuando por Juan Diego y su simple tilma Dios envía una señal.

A tan solo 7 años del suceso guadalupano, mas de 300,000 indígenas habían sido llevados a la fe y

bautizados.

¿Por qué? Por el inmenso y eterno amor de Dios por su pueblo, por eso. Por su amor por nosotros.

La imagen de la Virgen se mantiene por la misma razón: Dios nos ama.

Nosotros quienes atesoramos esta historia e imagen, debemos continuar contando la historia de la protección y amor de Dios.

¿Creen que el mundo necesita otro milagro guadalupano? ¿Será que pudiera ver hasta otras 300,000 almas esperando venir a Cristo en los años venideros?

Santa Maria - Virgen de Guadalupe- cumplió

con su parte del mensaje de Dios. Si ese mensaje debe ser milagro hoy, eso será porque cada uno de nosotros proclama la Gloria de Maria y el reinado de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

+Obispo William F. Medley
Fiesta de Ntra. Señor de Guadalupe
Santos Jose y Pablo- Owensboro
12 de diciembre, 2023



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SAN JOSÉ, BOWLING GREEN

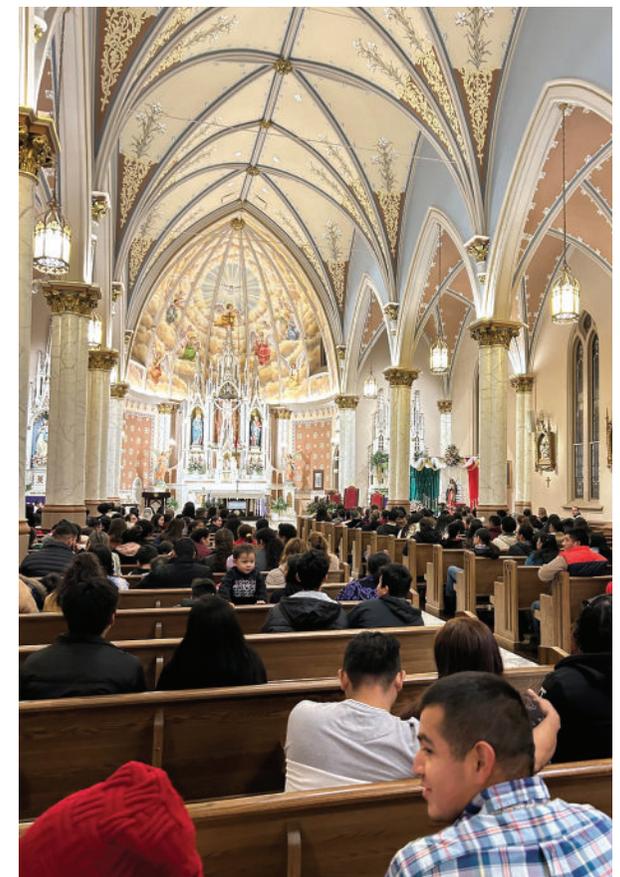


FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SAN JOSÉ, BOWLING GREEN

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FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTA MARÍA



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTA MARÍA



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTO TOMÁS MORO



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTO TOMÁS MORO