

THE WESTERN
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Remembering a spiritual giant

Msgr. Bernard Powers, wearing his signature red cardigan, is seen in prayer in this 1992 photo. Msgr. Powers died on Oct. 25 at age 98.

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Bishop William F. Medley's copy of the book "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" is seen in this November 2024 photo.

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Front page main photo courtesy of Diocese of Owensboro archives.

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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's share the story of Christ's birth with our world that doesn't know Him

"The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars (even the girls) and talked dirty and hit little kids and cussed their teachers and took the name of the Lord in vain and set fire to Fred Shoemaker's old broken-down toolhouse."

So is written the opening sentence of a little book authored by Barbara Robinson first published in 1972: "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever." I first encountered this book more than 40 years ago and have enjoyed rereading it many, many times, often on Christmas Eve. Along with Christmas carols and holiday cookies, it puts me in the mood to celebrate Christmas.

This year a movie adaptation of the book has been produced and may be in local theaters. I think you might enjoy the book and the movie.

At the beginning of the book, terrible children called the Herdmans are at the heart of the story. But as with any good Christmas story, the message leads us to Jesus.

The Herdman children, six of them, were largely unsupervised. There did not seem to be a father in the picture and the mother was largely unseen. So, six children seemingly raising themselves. Needless to say the local church was not the place to expect to find them.

One day, however, the children got wind of the Christmas pageant to be held at the church. That would not have interested the Herdmans, but the possibility that there might be cookies at

the rehearsals did indeed interest them. So much to the fear and dread of all the other children, the Herdmans showed up to hijack the coveted roles in the pageant.

But, you see, they had never heard the Christmas story. So, rehearsals were spent trying to make sense of Mary, and an angel, and Joseph, and shepherds and the magi. Let's just say it was not going well – until the night of the performance, when all the town showed up to see the trainwreck they were assured the Herdmans would make of the traditional pageant.

Of course it turns out to be the best Christmas pageant ever. The lesson may be that when we really tell the story, even hopeless children like the Herdmans can be transformed. The revealing moment is when the baby doll portraying Jesus is placed in Imogene Herdman's arms, and she begins to cry. And so does all the audience.

This little book was one of the inspirations for my annual Christmas card. Over the past 15 years, I have gathered people (usually children) from different parishes or schools to join me in recreating the Christmas nativity scene. Somewhere out there are over a dozen different Mary's and Joseph's, multiple angels, shepherds and kings. The first Baby Jesus, from 2010, would be around 14 years old now. The Mary and Joseph from the first year could have children of their own now.

The story goes on. But there are still people who have not heard the story of Jesus born at Bethlehem.

BISHOP MEDLEY'S DECEMBER 2024 CALENDAR

Dec 3	9 a.m. Diocesan Evangelization Event – Owensboro Convention Center
Dec 5	10:30 a.m. School Mass – Owensboro Catholic High School
Dec 6-9	Jubilee Celebration for Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Mexico
Dec 16	10 a.m. Priest Personnel Committee – McRaith Catholic Center
Dec 20	9:30 a.m. Mass and Christmas Party for Diocesan Staff – McRaith Catholic Center
Dec 24	11 p.m. Mass – St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro
Dec 29	11 a.m. Mass for the Opening of the Jubilee Year – St. Stephen Cathedral

Will you help me tell the story?
Merry Christmas.



Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

Happy anniversary to the following priests:

Fr. Babu Kulathumkal | Ordained 12/18/1996
Chaplain, U.S. Army

Fr. John Paul Mang | Ordained 12/11/2001
Pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Owensboro

Fr. Jegin Puthenpurackal | Ordained 12/27/2004
Pastor, St. Sebastian Parish, Calhoun and St. Charles Parish, Livermore

‘Once you met him, he was praying for you’ Remembering ‘spiritual giant’ Msgr. Bernard Powers



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH ARCHIVES
Msgr. Bernard Powers is seen at Mount Saint Joseph in this July 1975 photo.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE
WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

One of Margaret Powers O'Bryan's favorite memories of her uncle, Msgr. Bernard Powers, was during his residence at St. Elizabeth Parish in Curdsville, when she would stop by the rectory on her way to or from work.

If Msgr. Powers was in the rectory, he would be watching the classic western show "Gunsmoke." O'Bryan and her uncle would sit and chat for a while, and when she rose to leave, Msgr. Powers would put on his own jacket and say, "I'm going to go visit my friend."

"If I couldn't find him in the rectory, I could always find him in front of the Blessed Sacrament," said O'Bryan – her uncle's "friend" being none

other than Jesus in the Eucharist.

Years later, during the final weeks of Msgr. Powers' earthly life, he would not consume anything apart from the Eucharist each day.

Msgr. Powers passed away at the Carmel Home on Oct. 25, 2024, at the age of 98, after living "his whole life for this moment; to see God, to live with him for eternity," according to his cousin, Fr. Carl McCarthy, during the Oct. 30 funeral Mass at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.

Fr. McCarthy, in preaching the funeral homily, said loved ones recall Msgr. Powers making hand motions as he neared the end of his life – motions that were clearly that of celebrating the Mass.

"He served as a source of light and holy strength," said Fr. McCarthy.

Born Feb. 13, 1926, to the late Joseph Hubert and Teresa Margaret McCarthy Powers as the seventh of 12 children, Msgr. Powers was one of three brothers to become a priest (his two brothers being Fr. Aloysius Powers and Fr. Richard Powers). He was ordained into the Diocese of Owensboro by Bishop Cotton in 1952.

Over the years, Msgr. Powers was recognized for his spiritual direction, retreat guidance, and leading pilgrimages, and was named a monsignor in 1972.

Ernie and Shirley Taliaferro belonged to a marriage group that Msgr. Powers led when he was at Immaculate. Their wedding had been celebrated by his brother, Fr. Aloysius Powers, in 1970.

"He was very good one-on-one or in small groups," said Shirley Taliaferro. "He was a good

listener. His gift was being able to be a counselor to people."

Her husband agreed, describing their priest friend as "very even-keeled."

Jane Thomas, one of Msgr. Powers' other nieces, said he was known as "a gentle giant" due to his height, and "the man in the red sweater" due to his signature red cardigan that he was never seen without.

"He wasn't much of a conversationalist unless you were sitting right in counseling with him," said Thomas, adding that in leading retreats he "used the blackboard a lot" and by the time he was finished "it was covered!"

Another niece, Sr. Jacinta Powers, OSU, said he taught her class of sisters when they were in formation with the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. She said many of his students over the years affectionately nicknamed him "Pope."

She and her family members remember that under the quiet exterior, Msgr. Powers was "was very competitive," especially in games like volleyball, ping pong, and cards: "He was so calm until you got him on the volleyball court!"

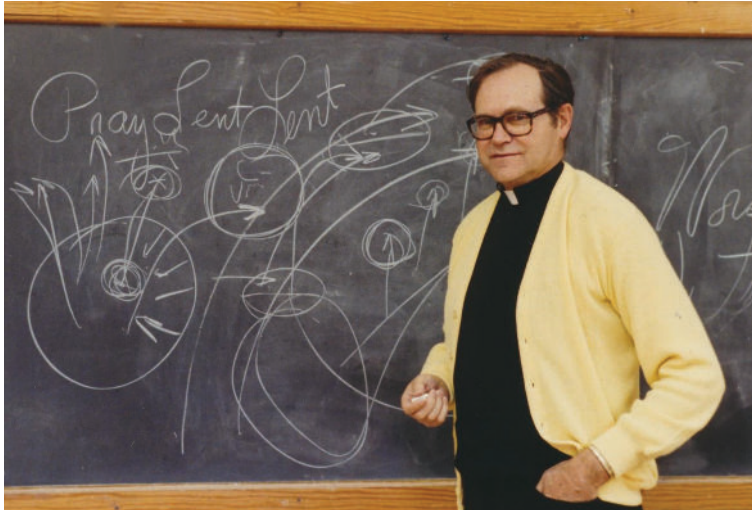
"He had a good sense of humor – he was very dry," she said. On a more serious note, she added that his spiritual insight was renown, and that during his funeral visitation, "so many people came to the funeral home and said, 'He saved our marriage.'"

Msgr. Powers was known for his written reflections and poetry, much of which was published in his books, "A Tree to Climb," "A Rock to Sit On,"

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COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH ARCHIVES

In this undated photo, Msgr. Bernard Powers is seen at the blackboard, which he had characteristically covered with circles and arrows while leading a retreat.

and “Way of the Cross.”

Debbie Thompson, a longtime friend of Msgr. Powers, said the greatest thing he taught her was “the importance of stillness” amid a busy world because “finding that stillness within is how we find God.”

“(He) always said tell your story, that laypeople have a story too,” she said. “When you were in spiritual direction, he listened to your story. He listened to you first and he helped you to understand what was going on in your spiritual life.”

“God put him there in my life – and I thank God for that,” she said. “I always knew that once you met him, he was praying for you.”

Fr. Ray Clark, the chaplain for the Carmel Home, said that when Msgr. Powers was in his final days, Fr. Clark called his friend Fr. Dave Johnson to let him know.

“Fr. Dave said, ‘The last of the giants,’” said Fr. Clark.

Fr. Clark reflected that Msgr. Powers and the other senior priests who have died in recent years

“were like the fathers of the Church for our diocese. They’re the ones who gave us who we are, like St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory the Great.”

He said he feels honored to have known these priests – as well as bearing “the responsibility to share, to embody that – for the younger priests.”

In 2015, after the death of Passionist Sr. Ann Miriam, Msgr. Bernard Powers composed a poetic reflection titled “Death of a Friend.”

In his reflection, which was inspired by Psalm 23, Msgr. Powers wrote that “May the Lord be your Shepherd picking you up in his arms, carrying you in love, bringing you home...”

Nine years later, upon hearing that Msgr. Powers had passed away, the Passionist nuns composed their own reflection for their friend. The reflection shared a story that is told, that the nuns’ foundress, Mother Mary Agnes Roche, saw that young Fr. Bernard Powers had the potential to become a skilled spiritual director.

“She began ‘feeding’ him books by the great spiritual masters along with his breakfast after he celebrated Masses at the monastery,” the nuns wrote. “Monsignor, with his inimitable sense of humor, would later joke that after a while he decided, ‘Well, I suppose I’d better read these ...!’ Mother’s foresight was accurate, and for more than half a century Father – eventually, Monsignor – Powers was a beloved spiritual director, confessor, and retreat master for our Sisters and for many others.”

“His penetrating insight in the confessional and during spiritual direction was a profound grace for those who experienced it,” the nuns added. ■

☪ Come All Ye Faithful!



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First-ever Zo American Catholic retreat held at Holy Spirit; celebrates first approved usage of Mass translated in Zo dialect

BY FR. MARTIN MA NA LING, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green in the Diocese of Owensboro has become a retreat center for Myanmar American Catholics across the United States. It is because of the warm welcome of the local Bishop William F. Medley and the parish itself. It is also because of the unity and peace among the Myanmar Catholics at the parish, even though there are various ethnic tribes of Catholics from Myanmar.

After realizing the need of having a retreat for Zo Catholics (a specific tribe within Myanmar), I talked with our pastor, Fr. Randy Howard, about the possibility of hosting it. There are 54 Zo Catholic families at Holy Spirit within the Myanmar Catholic Community. The Myanmar community is arranged into different prayer groups by tribe/language, and the Zo group is called the St. Joachim Prayer Group. The usage of their dialect still takes the priority for the first generation of Myanmar American Catholics in the U.S., because of most of them do not speak the dominant Myanmar language or English.

From Oct. 11-13, 2024, Holy Spirit Parish held the first Zo American Catholic Annual Retreat, which is organized by Zo Catholic Community (USA) through Fr. Randy Howard's approval. On Friday evening, a great line of Zo Catholics waited for the arrival of Bishop Medley with Fr. John Paul Mang Sein Yaw, Fr. Mark Ai Meng, Fr. Stephen Van Lal Than, Fr. John Mang and myself. Bishop Medley

cut the ribbon and opened the retreat by encouraging all the Zo Catholics and welcoming them in his diocese. The retreat featured confession, singing of Eucharistic songs, and short talks from two priests during Eucharistic Adoration for an hour on Friday night and Sunday night. On Friday night, there were Zo cultural dances, a bible competition, a hymn competition and singing solo Gospel songs as well.

On Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., short biblical movies were shown for the children by Esther Lawn Nu. There were four short talks for the youth from Fr. Stephen, Fr. John Paul, and myself. There were also four short talks from Fr. Stephen, Fr. Martin, Fr. John Paul and Martha Winn on Natural Family Planning. Saturday night there was a successful general meeting for all Zo American Catholics to discuss the community's future.

About 600 Zo Catholics from across the U.S. attended the Holy Mass in the Zo dialect. The main celebrant for the Mass was Fr. Mark Ai Meng, a Zo priest from India, and it was concelebrated by Fr. John Paul Mang Sein Yaw, Fr. Stephen Van Lal Than, Fr. John Mang, and myself.

This retreat was important for Zo Catholics across the world to foster their unity and peace as Catholics. One of the leaders of St. Joachim told Fr. Randy: "We thank you so much for allowing us to do this retreat at the parish. It (makes) history for (all) the Zo people in the world. (Until now) we were not able to do such thing because we are minority."

One of the happiest moments for the Zo American Catholics during the retreat was blessing the



COURTESY OF FRANCIS THAWN
Bishop Medley is vested in traditional Zo clothing during the first Zo American Catholic Annual Retreat in October 2024.



COURTESY OF FRANCIS THAWN
Eucharistic Adoration is held on Friday night of the first Zo American Catholic Annual Retreat in October 2024, held at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.

Zo Catholic lectionary for Sundays and feast days, which was approved by Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang of the Diocese of Kalay, Myanmar. The lectionary was used during the Holy Mass in the Zo dialect for the first time ever.

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COURTESY OF FRANCIS THAWN

A group shot of the lay and clergy participants of the first Zo American Catholic Annual Retreat in October 2024, which was held at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.

The impact of having the retreat is great and effective. Most Zo Catholics attending from across the U.S. shared that they grew closer to God and they felt the presence of Jesus Church during the Eucharistic Adoration and Mass because they heard the Mass in their mother tongue, the Zo dialect. Zo American Catholics across the United States of America appreciate the welcome of Bishop William Medley and his Diocese of Owensboro, and the parish as well for allowing them to have this first annual Zo American Catholic retreat.

Holy Spirit has hosted several retreats for Myanmar Catholics from across the United States. From May 31 to June 2, 2024, the parish also held the 10th Karenni Catholic Annual Retreat & Worship for the first time in the Diocese of Owensboro. It was organized by the Karenni-American Catholic Association, and over 500 Karenni Catholics attended. The annual retreat was opened by Bishop Medley, and welcomed Karenni Catholics not only from across the U.S., but also all over the world, such as Myanmar, Thailand and Canada. Currently, there are 105 Karenni Catholic families at Holy Spirit within the Myanmar Catholic Community. Their group is called the St. Anna Prayer Group.

Fr. Martin Ma Na Ling is the associate pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green, Ky. ■

150th Anniversary
Cultivating the Vine
Saint Angela
Entrusted to Us

 Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph
 1874-2024

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph thank all of you who have prayed with us and for us during this year in which we celebrated 150 years of service in Daviess County. We are grateful for your support and your willingness to work side by side with us to be Jesus to all those we meet. We look forward to all the years to come. **You can find our anniversary videos and activities online: ursulinesmsj.org/150-years**

 *We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!*





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 of Mount Saint Joseph

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Madisonville gathering emphasizes ‘sense of hope’ in the Church amid Eucharistic Revival



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Sarak Kroger, who was one of the musicians at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis this past July, leads a song during an Oct. 29 National Eucharistic Revival event in Madisonville.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Dr. Jeff Andrini, director of the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, laughs with an attendee during an Oct. 29 National Eucharistic Revival event in Madisonville.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Sherry Logsdon gives her testimony during an Oct. 29 National Eucharistic Revival event at the Ballard Convention Center in Madisonville.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Dr. Jeff Andrini has witnessed the National Eucharistic Revival bring about many graces in the Diocese of Owensboro, including fruitful gatherings like the one held the evening of Oct. 29 in Madisonville.

“It was a wonderful night of communion in the Spirit,” said Dr. Andrini of the Eucharistic Mission Event, which was held at the Ballard Convention Center in Madisonville.

The night included prayer, refreshments, small group time, an opportunity to share about experiences at the National Eucharistic Congress this past July, an overview of this past year of Revival, and a reflection from Bishop William F. Medley on his recent pilgrimage to Kenya and the Democratic

Republic of Congo.

In his reflection about his pilgrimage, Bishop Medley shared that while the United States used to send missionary priests to other countries, the reverse is now happening as Kenyan and Congolese priests are now coming to serve the U.S. He emphasized that all people are called to be missionaries, no matter their state in life.

The gathering was tied together by prayerful music led by Sarah Kroger, one of the Catholic musicians featured at the National Eucharistic Congress.

“Sarah Kroger’s music is like singing a prayer to the heart of God directly from one’s heart,” said Dr. Andrini.

Kroger, in between leading several songs, said a few words about her experience at the Congress, which was held at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

“Coming back to life – that’s what it felt like,” she said. “In this day and age, when everything feels so divisive even within the Church... everyone was in the same room in harmony with each other. I felt such a sense of hope for the Church.”

Kroger added that “being a Christian is not easy,” but that “this world so desperately needs the light of Christ in you and in me.”

Sherry Logsdon, a parishioner of St. Sebastian Parish in Livermore, shared her testimony from attending the Congress.

“It was the most amazing experience of my life,” said Logsdon, explaining that she felt called by the Holy Spirit to be a “witness” in her parish community.

She said that she is participating in year two of the Diocese of Owensboro’s Acts 2:42 video series/small group program, and that her parish is also engaging with an “invite one back” initiative, which involves

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praying for someone who has left the Church and meeting with them in person to encourage them to consider returning.

“The Holy Spirit is among us – get on board because it is a grand trip!” she said. ■



RILEY GREIF | WKC

The crowd prays and sings along with guest musician Sarah Kroger during an Oct. 29 National Eucharistic Revival event at the Ballard Convention Center in Madisonville.



Diocese of Owensboro looks forward to celebrating Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope



CNS PHOTO/VATICAN MEDIA

This is the logo chosen by the Vatican for the Holy Year 2025. Pope Francis has chosen the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope,” for the jubilee year, which is marked by pilgrimages, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of jubilees, or holy years, to celebrate the faith in various ways. This December, Pope Francis will open Holy Year 2025 with the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.”

The jubilee was proclaimed, as is tradition, via the publication of a Papal Bull of Indiction, which is an official document bearing the seal of the pope. The Papal Bull for Holy Year 2025 is titled and begins with the words “Spes Non Confundit” (“Hope does not disappoint”), quoting Romans 5:5.

The Holy Year 2025 will open at the Vatican on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2024, and close on Jan. 6, 2026, the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Pope Francis has asked bishops around the world to inaugurate the holy year in their respective dioceses on Dec. 29, 2024, and close the year locally on Dec.

28, 2025.

Bishop William F. Medley will inaugurate the holy year in the Diocese of Owensboro at the 11 a.m. Mass on Dec. 29 at St. Stephen Cathedral. All are welcome to attend.

The Diocese of Owensboro is in the process of releasing resources to help the faithful celebrate the “Jubilee of Hope,” as it has often been referred, and has established six pilgrimage sites within the diocese at which visitors may receive a plenary indulgence.

These sites are St. Stephen Cathedral, the Diocesan Shrine of Mary in Bowling Green, St. Leo Parish in Murray, St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah, St. Romuald Parish in Hardinsburg, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Beaver Dam.

More information will be coming soon from the Diocese of Owensboro, so subscribe to the diocesan e-newsletter, In the Know, at owensborodiocese.org/ e-newsletter, and follow the diocese’s social media accounts at [Facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro) and [Instagram.com/owensborodiocese](https://www.instagram.com/owensborodiocese). ■

A message from the Office of Worship

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which celebrates the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the womb of her mother St. Anne, is normally celebrated on Dec. 8. This year, however, the feast was transferred to Monday, Dec. 9 since Dec. 8 is the Second Sunday of Advent. Even with the date change, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is still a holy day of obligation to attend Mass. For Mass times in our diocese, visit owensborodiocese.org/find-a-mass.

Ministering to faith-filled young women, Fidelis presents a new way to form their own small community at OCHS



COURTESY OF OWENSBORO CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teachers and student participants of the "Fidelis program" at Owensboro Catholic Middle School are seen on Nov. 14, 2024. The program is available for both high school and middle school girls attending Owensboro Catholic.

BY ELLA JOHNSTON, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Editor's note: In continuing a project begun last year, we're happy to once again work with Owensboro Catholic High school to assign a story to a student writer. Please enjoy this article written by senior Ella Johnston.

Two Owensboro Catholic High School teachers bring the "Fidelis" program to their female students this school year as they strive for a stronger sense of community and love among all the young girls attending their school.

Lisa Higdon, senior theology teacher, and Kristin Dorth, freshmen theology teacher, introduced the program one day after Mass at the beginning of the school year. Dorth says she stumbled upon the

program at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis over the summer and thought it would be an incredible way to connect with the students at school. A total of 98 girls, aged between 14-18, signed up for the introductory meetings to learn more about the program.

"I am encouraged by even just the commitment of those who have been coming and the interest; that makes my heart happy," says Higdon, smiling at the thought of the success of the Fidelis groups so far.

Dorth goes into detail as to what exactly Fidelis is: "It is a program that is more parish-based to be an intergenerational attempt to help women to know their dignity and to expose them to truths about virtue; in particular, to build them up and encourage one another."

The program is focused on 6th-12th graders as it is being used in schools and churches across the country. Owensboro Catholic Middle School is also participating in Fidelis, and the teachers hope to create a greater connection between the two schools through the program.

Higdon and Dorth both wanted to find a way to minister to the young women of OCHS that was not in a classroom setting.

"We had recognized as a whole that we wanted to be able to create situations for more opportunity of growth related to individual students," explains Dorth. Higdon nods in agreement, adding, "The main point is about community and being able to learn and grow from each other."

So far, the meetings have been successful at OCHS. The girls have been attending during their lunch shifts about twice a week in the media center conference room. With the large number of girls participating, the teachers needed a larger space than just a regular classroom. Higdon and Dorth encourage the girls to come when they can, but they are also aware of the busy schedule many students have around this time of year. Fidelis is flexible enough for girls to be engaged when they have time, but also allows them to take a step back if needed.

When asked what they wanted the girls to leave with from Fidelis, Higdon and Dorth pondered the question for a minute. Higdon sighed and laughed a little, explaining how difficult the question was.

"I think, big picture, for me, is one, that they really and truly are loved for who they are and where they are... To know that God has made us intentionally and beautifully for a reason and to celebrate that together," she answers.

Dorth responds with, "Creating an environment that presents genuine femininity... creating an

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environment where we are striving for that together... and to give these young women the tools they need to battle the lies that will continue to come their way once they leave Catholic High.”

Higdon and Dorth are looking forward to continuing Fidelis at Catholic High throughout the rest of the school year. They vow to continue striving towards a stronger community among the young women at Owensboro Catholic High School. ■

Ella Johnston is a senior at Owensboro Catholic High School, and attends Immaculate Parish.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Musicians lead the participants of the July 17-21, 2024 National Eucharistic Congress in praise and worship during the Friday evening session at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Sent on mission!

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, OFFICE OF
EVANGELIZATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Year three of the National Eucharistic Revival “Sent on Mission” is well underway. It comes to a close on Pentecost, Sunday, June 8, 2025 and the Church will never be the same. Something shifted at the Eucharistic Congress in July. We heard from priests, religious and lay leaders about a variety of

Catholic topics, challenges and the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us. Our worship, Adoration, the sacraments and a powerful encounter with God’s living presence led to a profound unity and peace – and something shifted. We are in a new season of hope!

As the Congress ended, the final message was to “Go in peace” and to live the mission of your baptism. Every baptized Catholic is called to allow themselves to be encountered by Christ and once we experience this, we are never the same. The scriptures come alive. Our desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, and to worship him in Adoration and to spend time every day in communion with the Trinity in our daily prayer, all lead to a deeper personal relationship with the living God, and we are never the same.

While the early Church was persecuted in so many obvious ways, they were touched by the Holy Spirit and felt empowered to live lives of holiness and community with other Christians. Their fear was real, but their friendship with God was more real and intimate. They knew they were loved. They knew the good news of God’s presence and plan in their daily lives, and they wanted to share this truth with the world. It happened in very practical ways. They befriended enemies. They cared for those in need. They shared their experiences of God and witnessed to a life of joy and peace, that they did not have before becoming a Christian.

Today, as Catholics, we must understand that we are not spectators in our faith. It is not simply that it is a good thing to help others, it needs to be that we have been touched by the Holy Spirit, that we are being transformed more and more into God’s heart, because we know how close God is to us and we feel this intimate love and it spills over into all the relationships in our lives.

To be sent on mission, is to be baptized into the Christian faith, not as a spectator, but as disciple of Jesus, becoming his very presence in the world today. We are called to become little Christs. Of course we are not worthy, but in Christ, we are made worthy, and the mission is to love the world and all that is in it.

Come Holy Spirit and help all Catholics to experience the power, intimate presence and unconditional love that you share with us. Renew your Church and equip us with the mission of love and service to this beautiful world you created.

Be open to a daily encounter with Christ and have a wonderful Advent!

Peace,
Jeff ■

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

St. Mary of the Woods and Trinity High School break ground on new school campus

PRESS RELEASE

WHITESVILLE, KY – St. Mary of the Woods Parish has officially begun construction on a new, state-of-the-art campus to house both St. Mary of the Woods Grade School and Trinity High School. The new facility, located on a 10-acre site across Franklin Street from the current schools, will provide a modern learning environment designed to meet the needs of today's students and future generations.

Fr. Brian Roby, pastor of St. Mary of the Woods Parish, highlighted the project's significance for the community.

"Our current schools were built in the 1950s and 1960s and face mounting maintenance challenges," Fr. Roby said. "In addition to these issues, we've been out of space for the last four years and have had a growing waiting list each year."

Principal Emily Hernandez emphasized the necessity of expanding and updating the school facilities.

"We've reached the limits of our current facilities," Hernandez said. "Times have changed, and we don't have enough classrooms to accommodate class sizes within the current legal limits. There was a time when 54 first-grade students were packed into one room with one teacher. We're committed to providing a better learning environment for our students."

The new two-story building will feature distinct entrances for St. Mary of the Woods School (SMWS) and Trinity High School (THS), while

sharing essential spaces such as a media center, cafeteria, and gymnasium. According to Fr. Roby, the project's first phase is budgeted at \$11.2 million and includes constructing the SMWS wing, administrative offices, and common areas. Phase 2, costing an additional \$5.7 million, will focus on completing the THS wing, an auditorium, and further gymnasium space.

Currently, St. Mary of the Woods has raised \$11.6 million in pledges, with nearly \$6 million of which is in hand. The Diocese of Owensboro has approved Phase 1, but the school still seeks \$5.7 million in additional funding to realize Phase 2.

"We're asking for financial support to make Phase 2 a reality," Fr. Roby said. "There are few things we could ever do as a parish that would have an eternal impact on the Kingdom of God than giving our children, as well as the children, youth, and families of our future, a new school within which to grow and develop into productive and faithful Catholic citizens."

Assistant principal Jill Payne of SMWS expressed appreciation for the community's support in meeting the needs of today's students.

"We are incredibly grateful for the facility that served past generations, but it's time to give our current and future students a space that meets today's educational needs," Payne said. "This new campus will allow us to offer a learning environment that supports academic growth, safety, and a sense of community—everything we want to instill in our students from an early age."

The campus will also feature outdoor spaces, including playgrounds, a greenhouse for the FFA program, and areas for community gatherings. The design supports academic and extracurricular programs, from new science labs to dedicated rooms for choir, band, and drama.

Nathan West, THS assistant principal, pointed out the importance of the additional gym space.

"Our students need an environment that supports their academic and extracurricular activities," West said. "This includes not just updated classrooms but also specialized rooms like a new science lab and a dedicated FFA meeting space, both of which our current building cannot adequately provide."

Hernandez also shared her appreciation for the forward-thinking approach to education that has driven this project.

"Our world has evolved, and our facilities need to reflect that," Hernandez said. "We're grateful to those who provided for my generation's education, and now it's our turn to build something that future generations can be proud of."

Construction on Phase 1 is expected to begin in early 2025 and be completed in 18 to 24 months. Community members are encouraged to learn more about the new facilities and capital campaign.

Fr. Roby expressed gratitude for the community's support.

"Our community and parish have rallied behind this project," he said. "We are grateful for the support and are excited to provide a new space that will have a lasting impact on the children and families of our parish and beyond." ■

For additional information on the new campus and ways to contribute, please visit <https://stmaryofthewood-swhitesville.com/>.

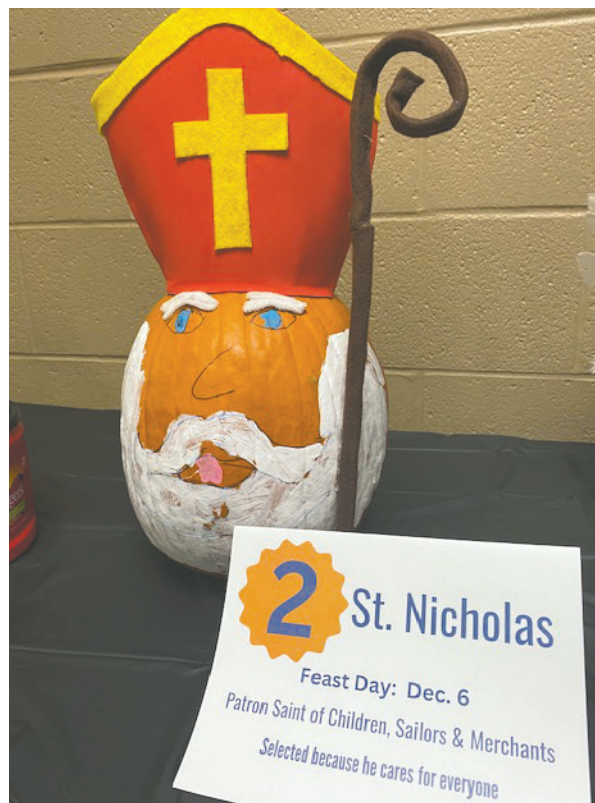
Saint-O-Lantern Contest: A colorful celebration of faith

BY MARIANNA L. ROMERO, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The Fall Festival at Mary Carrico Catholic School in Knottsville, Ky., is an annual event to gather the community for food, fellowship, and fun while raising money for the school's PTO. An addition to the Fall Festival this year was the Saint-O-Lantern Contest which combined creativity, community spirit, and faith.

Students and their families decorated pumpkins inspired by various saints, transforming ordinary gourds into extraordinary works of art. This event served as an engaging way to learn about the lives of saints and their significance in the Catholic tradition. Families expressed their creativity while reflecting on the virtues and stories of the saints they choose to represent. Families shared a variety of reasons for selecting the saint for their family's entry, from being a patron of a favorite family pastime like hunting or fishing, to being a saint whose intercession was requested when a loved one was suffering from cancer or other medical concern.

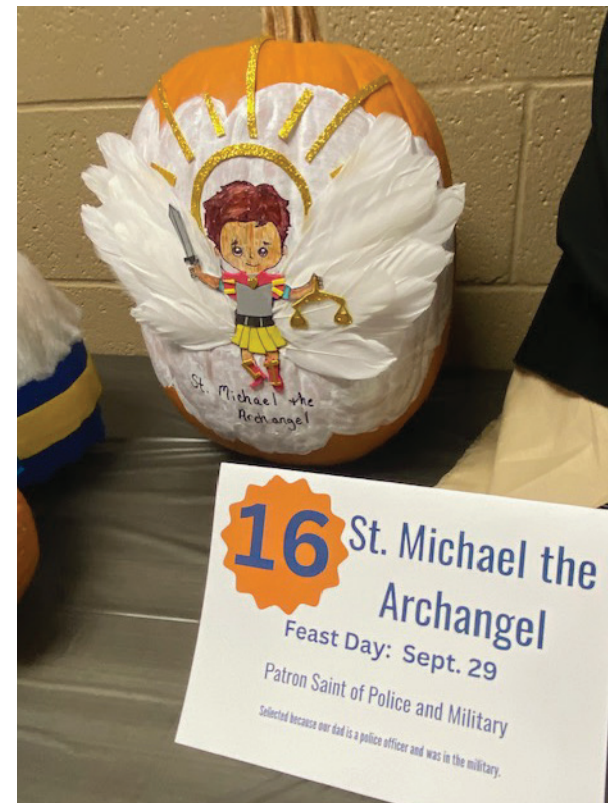
Fall Festival attendees could vote for their favorite Saint-O-Lantern entry using coins or dollars. The top three entries raising the most money won gift card prizes. In 90 minutes \$578.72 was raised by the 17 entries for the MCCS PTO. This money will go directly toward student activities throughout



COURTESY OF MARIANNA L. ROMERO
Entry #2, depicting St. Nicholas, received first place in Mary Carrico Catholic School's 2024 Saint-O-Lantern Contest.

the year. St. Nicholas, entry #2, by the Kaysinger family, raised the most money during the contest. In second place was St. Michael the Archangel, entry #16, by the Ramsey family. The third place entry was St. Peregrine, entry #13, by the Payne family. As we entered the month of November celebrating All Saints, the Saint-O-Lantern contest was a small way to celebrate the creativity and faith of our community, by shining a light on the values of these holy men and women in heaven we aspire to imitate. ■

Marianna L. Romero is the music and media teacher for Mary Carrico Catholic School in Knottsville.



COURTESY OF MARIANNA L. ROMERO
Entry #16, depicting St. Michael the Archangel, received second place.



COURTESY OF MARIANNA L. ROMERO
Entry #13, depicting St. Peregrine, received third place in the contest.

St. Paul dedicates new school annex

BY ST. PAUL SCHOOL STAFF, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

On Oct. 19, the community of St. Paul Parish and School in Leitchfield dedicated their new school annex in the presence of previous pastor, Fr. Steve Hohman, who was the driving force behind the building project. A large group of parishioners, parents and some students participated in the ceremony, including new St. Paul pastor, Fr. Suneesh Mathew; Fr. Brandon Williams; and Deacon TJ Dennison. The new school building was named the Sister Anne Michelle Mudd Annex and contains St. Paul's Pre-K through second grades. Thanks to all the volunteers and benefactors who made this addition possible. ■



COURTESY OF ST. PAUL SCHOOL
On Oct. 19, the community of St. Paul Parish and School in Leitchfield dedicate their new school annex, named the Sister Anne Michelle Mudd Annex.



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

An "Engaging Youth" workshop, led by the diocese's Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, is held on Oct. 26, 2024 at the McRaith Catholic Center.

Engaging Youth workshops equip adults in mentorship, ministry skills

BY CHARLIE HARDESTY, OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

A great need in the work of youth ministry is finding and empowering adults who care to come alongside and mentor our young people in the Catholic faith. The need is great in our diocese to find these willing adults. Sometimes we hear from adults that they do not believe they have what it takes, or that young people will not want them around, or that they are just not sure how to relate to young people nowadays. For this reason, the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry developed the "Engaging Youth" workshop to help equip adults in their mentorship and ministry with young people.

The goal of the Engaging Youth workshop is to expose adults to data and information about the population of young people we are currently

serving in the Church, and to give them practical strategies and skills for accompanying young people. In session one, we look at generational data about GenZ (current high school youth and early young adults) and GenAlpha (current eighth graders and below). This information gives us a feel for our audience and their unique experience of the world and their faith.

In session two, we look at the three big questions every teenager needs to answer about life and faith. These three questions are: Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? We also begin a conversation about making faith relevant for the lives of young people.

In session three, we learn better ways to engage young people in conversation and relationships. Adults walk away from this session equipped with great questions and strategies for growing in

Continues on page 15

Engaging Youth continued from page 14

relationships and getting young people more engaged in conversations. The last session gives parishes and like-minded ministries a chance to brainstorm and plan ways to immediately implement this information into the life of their existing ministries.

The two workshops were held in September in Paducah and October in Owensboro. Around 15 parishes and schools had representatives present to

experience the workshops.

If you were not able to attend one of the workshop options, but would like the training, we would be happy to come and present the material at your parish, school, or for a group of local parishes at no cost. Please reach out to the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (administrative assistant Robin Tomes at robin.tomes@pastoral.org) to

discuss potential options.

In the spring, we will be partnering with the Office of Hispanic/Latino Ministry to present similar workshops in Spanish. Dates and registration information will be made available in the coming months. ■

Charlie Hardesty is the director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Owensboro.

God is calling: Reflections from the Journey Hike Retreat

BY CHARLIE HARDESTY, OFFICE OF YOUTH
AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

“When I joined this hiking retreat, I was not expecting the challenges that awaited me. However, I found the challenges were worth it. I came to this retreat believing, in some way, that God was calling me for something, either big or small. I felt encouraged to try something new and take the risk of leaving my comfort zone to grow in my faith. I found just that during the journey.”

These are the initial reflections from Rebekah Thuline who joined us for the October 2024 Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat at the Land Between the Lakes. She further reflected, “Many times, I faced numerous challenges and moments of exhaustion from the amount of traversing I had never done before. I felt tempted to give up and not make it to the end. However, I also had a confident voice telling me to keep going. Keep getting over those mountains and make it to the end. It was hard, and yet, with the support of the other hikers, I made it.”



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

The participants of the October 2024 young adult hike retreat are seen during the retreat, which took place at the Land Between the Lakes.

During the beautiful weekend of Oct.18-20, 2024, six young adults joined myself and Dcn. Jay VanHoosier for the fourth Journey Hike Retreat. The Journey Hike Retreat is an ongoing effort for young adults to find time away from their busy lives to go on an adventure, find space for prayer and reflection, and find a community of fellow hikers navigating a similar season of life.

Daniel Long shared, “God, silence, laughter, pilgrimage, and friends, all things the spiritual masters recommend, were found on this hike.”

Rebekah Thuline added, “What I took away from this retreat and what God might be showing through those moments is the reality that being a Christian and keeping up with my faith is going to be hard but



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

Mass is celebrated during the October 2024 young adult hike retreat at the Land Between the Lakes.

not impossible. Just like hiking up a hill, it’s hard but not impossible. You have to get through life one step at a time, and Jesus will always be there to help you up those hills if you’re willing to push forward. Even if you feel tired and have the temptation to quit, know that the mountain will eventually stop increasing, and the satisfaction of making it to the top is worth it. God will always give us the grace to overcome challenges and do His will; it’s mind over matter.”

Our next Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat will be March 28-30, 2025. Registration will start in December. For more information about the hike retreat, go to <https://owensborodiocese.org/journey-retreat>. ■

Daniel Pitino Shelter celebrates 30 years of service with special holiday initiative: *Funding a Family*

PRESS RELEASE

Owensboro, Kentucky – As the Daniel Pitino Shelter turned 30 this year, the organization is proud to reflect on three decades of transforming lives for individuals and families facing homelessness. Founded by Catholics with a mission aligned with the prophet Isaiah, the shelter has evolved into an ecumenical ministry with a strong Catholic foundation.

Throughout its history, the shelter has become a beacon of hope in the community, helping those in need transition from emergency shelter to permanent residency. This holiday season, the shelter invites the community to join its special initiative: Funding a Family. Through this initiative, generous contributions can provide warmth, food, and shelter to those who need it most.

“Every dollar counts – whether it’s \$5 or \$500,” said Harry Pedigo, executive director. “Remarkably, 100% of all donations go directly to feeding, clothing, and sheltering individuals, helping them reclaim their dignity and strive for self-sufficiency.”

To sustain operations, the shelter needs \$15,000 each week. Government funding constitutes only 4% of the operating budget, with Catholic support dwindling to 7-10% in recent years, highlighting the importance of community

involvement. Not to mention we get zero financial support from the Pitino Family, like we did from 1994-2011.

The shelter provides a range of options for supporting families:

Any contribution: Goes into the general fund for essential support.

\$1,000: Funds a room for a family of four, offering a safe space to rebuild.

\$2,500: Funds a room for up to eight individuals, providing shelter and hope.

\$5,000: Funds the Soup Kitchen for one month, delivering approximately 6,000 meals.

Every donation is tax-deductible, and the shelter expresses immense gratitude for any amount given. As the holiday season approaches, the Daniel Pitino Shelter encourages everyone to unite to ensure that every family in the community has a place to call home. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need.

For more information on how to contribute or to learn more about the shelter’s mission, please visit www.pitinoshelter.org.org. Donations can be mailed to Daniel Pitino Shelter 501 Walnut Street, Owensboro, Kentucky, online, via Venmo (@danielpitinoshelter, or PayPal @danielpitinoshelter). For any questions, comments, or to schedule a tour, please feel free to contact executive director Harry Pedigo by texting or calling (270) 315-4419. ■



COURTESY OF DANIEL PITINO SHELTER

Meet Phylis and baby Jayce

Phylis says the Pitino Shelter gave her a safe place for her and her three children to stay, when she had nowhere else to go. This is the first time she has ever experienced homelessness. Her experience is a result of her big heart, by helping her mother and brother with a room to stay in. Little did she know that it was a violation of her lease, and she was evicted. She takes full responsibility but has learned a valuable lesson. Phylis and her three children have been with Pitino for two months now. She’s overwhelmed with gratitude and excited to be able to save money, work on overcoming barriers, and moving at the right speed to ensure this never happens again. Phylis wants everyone to see and know she’s a young strong resilient woman. She is hyper focused on using this experience to her benefit but wants people to see her as a person and not a statistic or stereotype! Phylis says to please support the Pitino Shelter “because it’s more than a shelter, it’s a soup kitchen, and because you help the whole community in so many ways I never knew until I came through their doors!”

Bl. Carlo Acutis relic comes to St. John the Evangelist Parish

BY FR. BRUCE FOGLE, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The Eucharist Revival in the United States has as one of its patron saints Bl. Carlo Acutis. Bl. Carlo knew, lived and taught that Jesus in the Eucharist is the “highway to Heaven.” Knowing that this millennial blessed, soon to be a saint, is to be an inspiration and example during these years of Eucharistic Revival for us, St. John the Evangelist Parish worked hard to make his life known to our parishioners young and older alike.

Before the fall semester began, we blessed our students, teachers and catechists for the new school year. Along with the blessing, we gave them all a graphic novel about the life of Bl. Carlo to read and ask his intercession during the school year. Later, we had a display of many of the Eucharistic Miracles that he catalogued online from his computer. Then, for All Saints’ Day and the following weekend, we were entrusted with his first-class relic from the Diocese of Trenton’s Blessed Carlo Acutis Shrine, for public veneration. During the public display, we received a visit from the 7th-12th grade faith formation classes of St. Joseph Parish in Mayfield, totaling more than 100 young people from that parish alone.

Many came for prayerful veneration and intercession of Bl. Carlo. Through his intercession, may all fall in love with Jesus, making the Eucharist as our “highway to Heaven,” along with the tender motherly love of Mary through the rosary. ■

Fr. Bruce Fogle is the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Paducah.



COURTESY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
A photo of millennial Bl. Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006, is seen behind his relic on display at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Paducah from Nov. 1-3, 2024.



COURTESY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
The 7th-12th graders of St. Joseph’s faith formation program in Mayfield ask Bl. Carlo Acutis’ intercession during public veneration of his relic at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Paducah in November 2024.



COURTESY OF APRIL DICKENS
On Nov. 6, the first and second graders participate in Eucharistic Adoration at Precious Blood Parish in Owensboro. They were each given a prayer journal to write in as well.

Precious Blood extends Adoration, incorporates into religious education program

BY WKC STAFF

This year, Precious Blood’s entire religious education program plans to participate in Eucharistic Adoration throughout the entire school year. The different grade levels are staggered throughout the hour. This ties into the parish recently extending their Eucharistic Adoration, which used to be held one Wednesday a month, to offering it now every Wednesday from noon until 9 p.m. ■



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Ursuline Sister Cheryl Clemons, right, and her sister, Ursuline Associate Kim Haire, third from left, were among the members of this hearty crew helping pack food on Oct. 26.

Ursuline sisters and friends pack 50,000 meals to feed the hungry

BY MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH STAFF

More than 160 people came to the Brescia University gymnasium in the Moore Center on Oct. 26, 2024, to pack more than 50,000 meals to feed the hungry around the world. It was the final opportunity for the public to join in celebrating the Ursuline Sisters' 150 years of service in Daviess County.

In conjunction with Cross Catholic Outreach, the Ursuline Sisters worked side by side with Ursuline Associates, alumnae of Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Confirmation students, and an array of goodhearted friends from 9 a.m. until a little past noon. They donned hairnets

and gloves, then combined rice, beans, soy, vegetables, and vitamins in vacuum-packed bags, with each bag containing enough nutrients for six meals. Then 36 completed bags were boxed and loaded on pallets for shipping. At the end of the day, the goal of packing 50,000 meals was exceeded!

The goal was also to engage 150 volunteers as a way of commemorating the 150 years since the Ursuline Sisters arrived at Maple Mount in 1874. There were 16 stations of 10 volunteers each, while other "floaters" refilled food bins and hauled boxes away, meaning there were more than 160 volunteers on hand. It was a great and rewarding day for all! ■

Black Catholic History Month Mass held at cathedral



RILEY GRIEF | WKC

A couple carries the gifts up the aisle during the Nov. 2, 2024 Mass for Black Catholic History Month at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.



RILEY GRIEF | WKC

F. Veronica Wilhite, director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministry for the Diocese of Owensboro, says a few words prior to the start of the Nov. 2, 2024 Mass for Black Catholic History Month

BY WKC STAFF

On Nov. 2, St. Stephen Cathedral hosted the Diocese of Owensboro's second annual Black Catholic History Month Mass. Bishop William F. Medley presided at the liturgy, which was followed by a meal and fellowship in the undercroft. ■

A Christmas message: Preferential regard for the poor

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

*Helpless and hungry, lowly afraid
Wrapped in the chill of mid-winter
Comes now among us
Born into poverty's embrace, new life for the world
Who is this who lives with the lowly
Sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?
This is Christ, revealed to the world
In the eyes of a child, a child of the poor
(Excerpt from "Child of the Poor" by Scott Soper
and William Chatterton Dix)*

Readers may be familiar with this Christmas song. I personally love it because it contains one of the primary themes of the Nativity: Christ's identification with the poor and vulnerable. Let me explain.

The lyrics "Helpless and hungry, lowly afraid, wrapped in the chill of mid-winter" depict Christ's humble birth in a manger, surrounded by the vulnerable. These words call us to reflect on the Church's teaching of preferential regard for the poor, a central theme in Catholic social teaching. Christ, from His birth, aligned Himself with the lowly and marginalized, setting a profound example of solidarity with the poor and suffering.

The phrase "born into poverty's embrace" highlights the circumstances of Christ's birth.

He was not born into wealth or comfort but into the heart of human suffering and need. This choice by God is not accidental but intentional, underscoring that His presence is most powerfully felt among the lowly. Catholics are called to see Christ in the poor and to treat them with the dignity and respect due to every child of God.



OSV NEWS PHOTO/DAVID MERCADO, REUTERS
A figurine of the Christ Child is displayed in a Nativity scene at a home in Chicani, Bolivia, Dec. 7, 2020.

This preferential option for the poor is deeply rooted in divine solidarity. Christ comes among us not in grandeur but as one who shares in the everyday struggles of the marginalized. His life was filled with encounters where He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and comforted the sorrowful. These actions reveal His deep connection with the poor, challenging us to do the same. We are called not to pity the poor but to see them as our brothers and sisters deserving of love and care.

The lyrics continue, asking, "Who is this who lives with the lowly, sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?" This rhetorical question captures the essence of Christ's mission. He did not merely sympathize with the poor; He shared in their sufferings and vulnerabilities. Christ experienced the same struggles many endure daily, showing He was not a distant savior but one who walked alongside those He came to save.

As Christians, we are called to imitate this radical solidarity. The preferential option for the poor is not merely an act of charity but a recognition of the inherent dignity of every person, especially the poor. To follow Christ is to "live with the lowly," sharing their struggles and advocating for justice. This solidarity with the marginalized is central to the Gospel message.

The lyrics conclude with, "This is Christ, revealed to the world in the eyes of a child, a child of the poor." Christ's identity is most fully revealed in the vulnerable and marginalized. The child born in Bethlehem reflects all the children of the poor, whose innocence and vulnerability demand our care and protection. To serve them is to serve Christ.

This call to serve the poor is not optional; it lies at the heart of the Gospel. True greatness is found not in wealth or power but in humility and service. In caring for the least among us, we care for Christ Himself. May we, like Christ, embrace the poor and bring new life to the world through love and compassion for the marginalized. ■

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.

Gratitude for vocation, Incarnation, found in faith-filled Christmas letter to a friend

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

For this month's article I, of course, looked for something Christmas-themed. I discovered what appeared to be a reel to reel containing a Christmas Mass from 1958. Exciting! However, it turned out to be a false promise. In actuality, it was a recorded performance of the Nutcracker. My disappointment was immeasurable.

I continued looking. Diving into our paper documents, I discovered how much people love to send their bishop Christmas care-packages. Let's just say, Bishop McRaith was not wanting for fruit baskets or sweet treats around the Christmas season. However, I continued to look for something more substantial to write about. That's when I came across a letter dated Dec. 23, 1978. It started, "Dear Joe."

As soon as I saw it, I knew who had written it. At the top center of the page, "JMJ" (Jesus, Mary, Joseph) was written in unmistakable cursive. This is how Msgr. Bernerd Powers marked his letters and papers. He passed away on Oct. 25 this year. As of writing this, he is our most recently deceased priest. It probably doesn't take a lot of guessing to figure out who the "Joe" he was writing to is. It is Fr. Joe Mills. Fr. Mills also recently passed in 2020. These two priests are giants of our time in this diocese. A few years ago, seeing a photo of Fr. Mills in some materials on my research desk, a young priest pointed to it and said something to the extent of, "If I end up being half the priest that man was, I will have done more for God than I

could have ever imagined." Needless to say, these men are loved and admired all around. So, why did Msgr. Powers write Fr. Mills on that cold December day?

The letter was a Christmas greeting; however, Msgr. Powers wasn't simply going to send his dear friend and brother priest a Hallmark card. He wrote to Fr. Mills as they celebrated "the coming of God into our life through the Incarnation." He penned a heartfelt letter thanking him for his friendship and for his priesthood. He reaffirmed what a gift Fr. Mills was to those he served and reminded him that his priesthood was a conduit of God's love; through the mysteries that cannot be seen by our earthly eyes, God works wonders with our service. Also, attached to this letter was a 10-page reflection of thanksgiving and celebration of Fr. Mills's priesthood, written by Msgr. Powers.

We have countless letters in our archives. Each of them gives us a glimpse into a different time. Even though both of these good priests now bask in the warmth of God's love in this cold December, we can still see their friendship. Nearly 50 years after it was written, we can read the letter and appreciate the faith and friendship these two men had. Their friendship saw many more Christmases and their service continued to bring God's love to his people. ■

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.



ARCHIVES PHOTO

Fr. Joe Mills decorates the Christmas tree at the Catholic Pastoral Center (now known as the McRaith Catholic Center) in Owensboro in this undated photo.



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

The 2024 jubilarians present for the Nov. 9 Diocesan ceremony – all Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph – gathered with Bishop Medley at St. Mary Magdalene Church. Standing in front, from left, are Sister Mary Matthias Ward (70 years) and Sister Karla Kaelin (60 years); standing in back from left, are Sister Susan Mary Mudd (70 years), Sister Laurita Spalding (60 years), Sister Mary Timothy Bland (60 years) and Bishop Medley.

Women religious honored for years of service

BY MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH STAFF

Women religious representing the many communities who serve in the Diocese of Owensboro gathered on Nov. 9, 2024, at St. Mary Magdalene Church in Owensboro to honor their sisters who are celebrating jubilees of religious profession this year.

There were 11 sisters representing three communities who were honored, but only a portion of them – all Ursuline Sisters – were able to attend. Present to receive a certificate and gift from the Most Rev. William Medley, Bishop of Owensboro, were Ursuline Sisters Susan Mary Mudd and Mary Matthias Ward, both celebrating 70 years; and Ursuline Sisters Mary Timothy Bland, Karla Kaelin and Laurita Spalding, each celebrating 60 years.

Ursuline Sisters Joyce Marie Cecil, Joan Mary Riedley and Melissa Tipmore were unable to attend. Also unable to attend were Passionist Sisters

Mary Therese Seitz (60 years) and Mary Veronica McKimmy (50 years), along with Carmelite Sister Maria Lucia Cazun (50 years).

The Steering Committee for the Council of Religious organizes the event each year. The date was moved later in the year to accommodate Bishop Medley, who has been in Africa visiting the families of some priests who serve in his diocese.

Bishop Medley spoke about obedience, saying the root word meant “listen.” He said the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of God have been in every mission the sisters were assigned to throughout their lives.

“How many times would we have to say, ‘thank you’ to pay the debt we owe to these sisters,” Bishop Medley said. “That will only be paid in full in another life.”

Following the service, the sisters were treated to lunch by the Serra Club. ■

National Religious Retirement Office announces annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection

PRESS RELEASE

OWENSBORO, Ky., Oct. 31, 2024 – The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) is announcing the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection, scheduled in parishes throughout the Diocese of Owensboro on the weekend of Dec. 7-8.

In 2023, parishioners contributed \$29,796.53 to the collection. From this collection, the Home Mission Sisters of America and Passionist Nuns received a combined total of \$30,932.42 in financial support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious.

Mr. John Knutsen, NRRO director, expresses gratitude for the “profound generosity” of U.S. Catholics, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the “comfort and dignity” of those who have served tirelessly. “As we prepare for this year’s collection,” Knutsen stated, “we invite all Catholics to join us in honoring the legacy of these dedicated women and men by contributing to their well-deserved care.”

Escalating healthcare costs and a lack of traditional retirement plans have created financial challenges for many religious communities. The Retirement Fund for Religious addresses this need, supporting more than 20,000 religious over the age of 70. In 2023, the average annual cost for their care was roughly \$59,700 per person. With skilled nursing care, the average cost was \$90,700.

Since its establishment in 1988, the collection

Continues on page 22

Religious collection continued from page 21

has raised over \$1 billion, with nearly \$870 million distributed for direct care and over \$103.5 million allocated to self-help projects.

In 2023, the appeal raised \$29.3 million, providing financial assistance for the retirement needs of 286 U.S. religious communities. Beyond financial aid, the collection supports educational programs, empowering religious communities to plan for their long-term needs. ■

The NRRO coordinates the annual national appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes financial assistance to eligible religious communities. It is sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information, visit retiredreligious.org, or contact Robin Cabral, Campaign Director, by phone at (508) 685-8899 or by email at robincabral@retiredreligious.org.

Mass attendance continues upward trend in diocese

BY DCN. KEN BENNETT, OFFICE OF WORSHIP

The theme for the Jubilee Year 2025 is “Pilgrims of Hope.” As we rapidly approach this Jubilee Year, Mass attendance across our diocese continued a steady upward trend in 2024, nearing pre-pandemic levels. The overall 2024 diocesan Mass count shows that 48.74% of parishioners attended Mass during this period and represents a 1.24% increase from 2023. By comparison 2020, the first year of the pandemic, Mass attendance was 27.72% and 2019, the last year before the pandemic, Mass attendance was 51.59%. Many parishes have met or exceeded pre-pandemic Mass attendance levels while the overall diocese attendance is only 2.85% from meeting those levels.

The continued upward trend in Mass attendance since the pandemic is encouraging and a hopeful sign for the future. Adding to this sign of hope are the numbers of people who entered the Church through RCIA/OICIA at the Easter Vigil. Based on the Rite of Election celebrated in Paducah and Owensboro, there were 257 people who entered the Church at Easter. This represents a 23.8%

Parish	City	Registered	Weekly Average	2024 Mass Attendance	2023 Mass Attendance
Blessed Mother	Owensboro	1,991	827	42.00%	39.50%
Blessed Sacrament	Owensboro	96	55	57.00%	63.00%
Christ the King	Madisonville	705	344	49.00%	45.00%
Christ the King	Scottsville	170	75	44%	39.00%
Holy Cross	Providence	15	18	120.00%	86.00%
Holy Guardian Angels	Irvington	176	132	75.00%	83.00%
Holy Name of Jesus	Henderson	2912	893.5	30.70%	29.50%
Holy Redeemer	Beaver Dam	167	232.75	139.00%	34.50%
Holy Spirit	Bowling Green	5198	1434	28.00%	32.00%
Holy Trinity	Morgantown	67	165.75	248.00%	32.80%
Immaculate	Owensboro	1676	766	45.00%	41.00%
Immaculate Conception	Earlington	93	169	108.00%	179.00%
Immaculate Conception	Hawesville	359	128	37.00%	47.00%
Our Lady of Lourdes	Owensboro	1584	687.25	43.38%	40.25%
Precious Blood	Owensboro	928	441	47.50%	44.00%
Resurrection	Dawson Springs	70	79	110.00%	77.00%
Rosary Chapel	Paducah	153	70	46.00%	47.86%
Sacred Heart	Hickman	31	33.75	108.00%	108.00%
Sacred Heart	Russellville	598	180	30.00%	30.00%
Sacred Heart	Waverly	111	104.25	94.00%	61.00%
Saint Agnes	Uniontown	607	318.5	52.00%	48.00%
Saint Alphonsus	Saint Joseph	458	199.25	43.50%	44.13%
Saint Ambrose	Henshaw	65	46	71.00%	49.00%
Saint Ann	Morganfield	631	351	56.00%	51.00%
Saint Anthony	Axtel	335	238	71.00%	79.00%
Saint Anthony	Browns Valley	356	120.5	34.00%	48.00%
Saint Anthony	Peonia	137	73	53.00%	51.00%
Saint Anthony of Padua	Grand Rivers	80	88	110.00%	156.00%
Saint Augustine	Grayson Springs	77	59	77.00%	78.00%
Saint Augustine	Reed	103	81.25	79.00%	76.00%
Saint Benedict	Wax	116	76	66.00%	71.00%
Saint Charles	Bardwell	94	67	71.00%	69.00%
Saint Charles Borromeo	Livermore	102	55.75	55.00%	56.00%
Saint Columba	Lewisport	208	85.25	41.00%	36.00%

WORSHIP

from 2023 and corresponds with an increase of people entering the Church nationwide.

We are bolstered by good news and signs of hope through increased mass attendance and an increase of those who enter our faith communities. As we enter 2025 as Pilgrims of Hope, we continue to trust the Holy Spirit and pray for a bountiful harvest. ■

Dcn. Ken Bennett is the co-coordinator of the Office of Worship in the Diocese of Owensboro.

"...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Matt. 25:40

Join Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro's Migration & Refugee Services in assisting Afghan families being resettled in western Kentucky.

These Afghan families helped U.S. troops and escaped threats from the Taliban in their home country. Today, they seek a new home in the freedom of the United States. Please help us provide these new arrivals with housing, basic furnishing, and other support. These families hope to build new lives in the safety of the American Dream.

Scan the QR code for ways to assist.



Parish	City	Registered	Weekly Average	2024 Mass Attendance	2023 Mass Attendance
Saint Denis	Fancy Farm	105	53	50.00%	62.00%
Saint Edward	Fulton	35	71	203.00%	203.00%
Saint Elizabeth	Curdsville	58	81	139.00%	129.00%
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary	Clarkson	140	107	76.40%	69.00%
Saint Francis Borgia	Sturgis	117	97	83.00%	57.50%
Saint Francis de Sales	Paducah	885	463	52.00%	52.00%
Saint Francis of Assisi	Todd County	257	352	136.00%	110.00%
Saint Henry	Aurora	145	90	62.00%	73.00%
Saint Jerome	Fancy Farm	1247	720	57.00%	51.00%
Saint John The Baptist	Fordsville	39	31.25	80.00%	93.60%
Saint John the Evangelist	Paducah	490	263	53.00%	53.00%
Saint John the Evangelist	Sunfish	85	39	45.00%	36.00%
Saint Joseph	Bowling Green	4296	1340	31.00%	31.00%
Saint Joseph	Central City	228	91.75	40.20%	69.00%
Saint Joseph	Leitchfield	593	253	42.00%	41.00%
Saint Joseph	Mayfield	1391	810	58.00%	54.00%
Saints Joseph & Paul	Owensboro	1135	953	84.00%	63.60%
Saint Jude	Clinton	31	25.5	82.26%	50.00%
Saint Lawrence	St. Lawrence	303	144	48.00%	39.00%
Saint Leo	Murray	1450	650	45.00%	42.00%
Saint Mark	Eddyville	103	113	109.00%	110.00%
Saint Martin	Rome	466	435	76.86%	75.04%
Saint Mary	Franklin	533	282	53.00%	39.90%
Saint Mary	LaCenter	163	50.25	31.30%	28.70%
Saint Mary Magdalene	Sorgho	574	315	55.00%	57.00%
Saint Mary of the Woods	McQuady	128	132	103.00%	111.00%
Saint Mary of the Woods	Whitesville	2500	2092	84.00%	87.00%
Saint Michael	Sebree	365	328.5	89.00%	85.60%
Saint Michael the Archangel	Oak Grove	763	370	48.50%	35.00%
Saint Paul	Princeton	99	65	65.00%	76.00%
Saint Paul	St. Paul	315	213	67.00%	65.00%
Saint Peter of Alcantara	Stanley	280	174.5	62.00%	59.00%
Saint Peter of Antioch	Waverly	304	201	66.00%	50.00%
Saints Peter & Paul	Hopkinsville	1410	713	51.00%	46.00%
Saint Pius X	Calvert City	290	190	65.00%	72.00%
Saint Pius X	Owensboro	1193	457.75	38.00%	45.00%
Saint Romuald	Hardinsburg	1246	691	55.00%	50.00%
Saint Rose of Lima	Cloverport	188	126	67.00%	75.00%
Saint Sebastian	Calhoun	172	115.25	67.00%	52.00%
Saint Stephen	Cadiz	272	126.5	47.00%	56.00%
Saint Stephen Cathedral	Owensboro	1352	553.5	40.90%	34.00%
Saint Thomas More	Paducah	2392	833.5	36.90%	34.18%
Saint William	Knottsville	1256	409.25	33.00%	31.00%
Saint William of Vercelli	Marion	64	47.5	74.20%	97.00%
Totals		49,927	24,362.75	48.79%	47.50%

DECEMBER 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.

Advent Sunday Vespers, Exposition, & Benediction at Immaculate

As we enter into the holy season of Advent and a new liturgical year, Immaculate Parish, Owensboro, invites you, your family, children, and friends to come pause, pray, and be present with Christ in community on Sunday evenings of Advent (Dec. 1, 8, 15, & 22) at 5:00 pm. Evening prayer will begin with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament followed by Vespers, the evening prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, and conclude with Benediction. Liturgy of the Hours, the daily prayer of the church, is the most important prayer of the Church after the Mass, and all are called to lift their voices and intentions in this prayer, especially Sunday Vespers. During this Advent season, may we embrace the season in deeper prayer, reflection, and waiting in community with one another and Christ at Sunday evening vespers! Join the church community at 2516 Christie Place, Owensboro, KY, Immaculate Parish.

Sr. Cheryl Clemons leading West Virginia Institute for Spirituality Advent retreat

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024 (9 a.m.-2:15 p.m. CST) Speaking of the Incarnation, medieval mystic Meister Eckhart, OP, quoted St. Augustine, who said, "What does it avail me that this birth is always happening, if it does not happen in me? That it should happen in me is what matters." How do we do that, continue to bring Christ to birth in our world? During this Advent retreat, Sr. Cheryl Clemons, an Ursuline Sister of Mount Saint Joseph and a West Virginia Institute for Spirituality Associate Spiritual Director, will take retreatants on a journey to understand concretely how we

can do this today. Register online at <https://www.wvis.org/registration> and select "2024 Advent Retreat" from the dropdown box. Questions: email Sr. Cheryl at cheryl.clemons@maplemount.org.

Cursillo upcoming events

Men's and women's weekends are taking registrations now. Men's weekend is Feb. 27-March 2, 2025.

Women's weekend is March 6-9, 2024. For more information or to sign up, contact Christy Allard at (270) 889-1526. And for those who have made a Cursillo, please think about Palanca and prayers offered for the team and those attending!

See the latest history videos featuring the Ursuline Sisters

As part of their 150th year celebration, the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph (Maple Mount, Ky.) have released brief new videos about their history on the 15th of each month in 2024. The Ursuline Sisters are celebrating 150 years since their arrival in Daviess County, Ky., and 150 years of service to God's people. To see links to the videos and photos of anniversary events, visit <https://ursulinesmsj.org/150-years/> You can also find the videos on the Ursuline Sisters' YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/UrsulineSistersMSJ. Be sure to follow the Ursuline Sisters on their website, social media, or by email (sign up at <https://ursulinesmsj.org/subscribe/> and click on The Pilgrimage).

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/>. You are also invited to visit <https://www.awakecommunity.org/>, a community of abuse survivors, concerned Catholics, and allies responding to the wounds of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church.

Need a gift idea? The Ursuline Sisters' history book is still available

More than 500 copies of "Hope and Firm Faith:

The Story of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph" (published in 2022) have been sold. A limited number of books are still available for purchase. This book brings to life the amazing women who have served God's people since arriving at Maple Mount, Ky., in 1874. Readers will learn how the Diocese of Owensboro grew in conjunction with the Ursuline Sisters opening countless schools, including Brescia University. They will learn about the events that unfolded for the Ursuline Sisters through the eyes of the women who lived them. To purchase a book, visit <https://ursulinesmsj.org/hope-and-firm-faith-book/> The cost is \$37.10 which includes tax. If you need the book shipped, add \$10. You can ask that your copy be autographed by the author. If you have questions, contact Dan Heckel at 270-229-2007 or dan.heckel@maplemount.org. Books can also be purchased in person at Maple Mount Monday through Friday, but please call ahead.

Join Ursuline Sisters for Adoration on Fridays and first Sundays

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph invite the public to join them for Eucharistic Adoration on the first Sunday of the month 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 also have Eucharistic Adoration on Fridays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., and the public is welcome to attend. 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/>

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>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Ursuline Sisters' online Quilt Sale continues!



The quilts are made by Ursuline Sisters, Associates and friends.

Many items are still available

You don't want to miss it!
Quilts make wonderful Christmas gifts.

You can find the quilts online at
www.ursulinesmsj.org/online-quilt-sale

Many quilts are for sale in a range of sizes, including baby quilts. All are unique. The sizes and prices are included in the captions. There is also a special afghan and a framed cross-stitched angel.



Thanks for your purchase. The proceeds provide funding for the Ursuline Sisters to continue their mission and ministries.

To order a quilt, contact Carol Braden-Clarke: 270-229-2008
carol.braden-clark@maplemount.org



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

Advent penance services across deaneries

Bowling Green Deanery

Dec 3 | St. Francis of Assisi, Guthrie | 6 p.m.
Dec 4 | Sacred Heart, Russellville | 6:30 p.m.
Dec 16 | St. Mary, Franklin | 6 p.m.
Dec 17 | Christ the King, Scottsville | 5:30 p.m.
Dec 18 | Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam | 6 p.m.
Dec 19 | Holy Trinity, Morgantown | 6 p.m.
Dec 22 | Holy Spirit, Bowling Green | 5 p.m.

Central Deanery

Dec 4 | St. Michael, Sebree | 6 p.m.
Dec 15 | St. Peter, Waverly | 3 p.m.
Dec 23 | Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson | 6 p.m.

Eastern Deanery

Dec 17 | St. Columba, Lewisport | 6 p.m.
Dec 18 | St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Clarkson | 6:30 p.m.
Dec 22 | St. Joseph, Leitchfield | 2 p.m.
Dec 22 | St. Paul, Leitchfield | 5 p.m.

Fancy Farm Deanery

Dec 8 | St. Edward, Fulton | 6 p.m.
All other reconciliation schedules are the same as usual.

Hopkinsville Deanery

Dec 5 | Sts. Peter & Paul School, Hopkinsville | 9 a.m.
Dec 15 | St. Michael, Oak Grove | 5 p.m.
Dec 16 | St. Joseph, Central City | 6 p.m.
Dec 17 | Resurrection, Dawson Spring | 6 p.m.
Dec 19 | Christ the King, Madisonville | 6:30 p.m.
Dec 22 | Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Hopkinsville | 5 p.m.

The Lakes Deanery

Dec 4 | St. Leo, Murray | 4:30 p.m.
Dec 15 | St. Paul, Princeton | 2 p.m.
Dec 17 | St. Mark, Eddyville | 5:30 p.m.
Dec 19 | St. Stephen, Cadiz | 6 p.m.
Dec 22 | St. Henry, Aurora | 1 p.m.

A 10-Day Pilgrimage to **IRELAND** *with Fr. Christopher Kight & Fr. James Dennis*

October 7-16, 2025



Contact: Fr. Chris Kight: St. Peter and Paul, Hopkinsville, Ky, at christopher.kight@pastoral.org

For more details and to register, visit: stcharlespilgrimages.com/kight-dennis

Dublin: Shrine of Our Lady of Knock * Kylemore Abbey * Connemara National Park */ Galway Galway Cathedral
* Wild Atlantic Way Cliffs of Moher Killarney * The Ring of Kerry * The Rock of Cashel *
Kilkenny Castle Glendalough Walking Tour of Dublin * St. Patrick's Cathedral * Christ Church Cathedral

Continues on page 26

UPCOMING EVENTS

Advent penance continued from page 25

Owensboro East Deanery

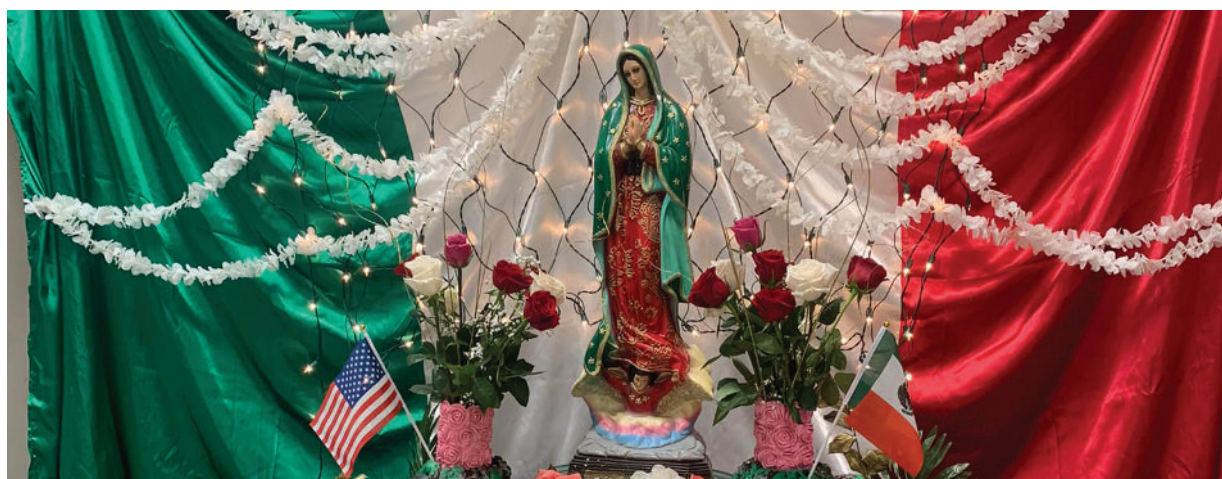
Dec 5 | Sts. Joseph and Paul, Owensboro | 6 p.m.
 Dec 8 | Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro | 2 p.m.
 Dec 15 | Blessed Mother, Owensboro | 2 p.m.
 Dec 17 | Sts. William and Lawrence, Daviess County | 7:15 p.m.
 Dec 18 | St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville | 6 p.m.
 Dec 19 | St. Pius X, Owensboro | 6 p.m.

Owensboro West Deanery

Dec 2 | Mount Saint Joseph | 6 p.m.
 Dec 10 | St. Sebastian, Calhoun | 5 p.m.
 Dec 11 | St. Martin, Rome | 6 p.m.
 Dec 12 | Precious Blood, Owensboro | 6 p.m.
 Dec 16 | Immaculate, Owensboro | 6 p.m.
 Dec 17 | St. Alphonsus, St. Joseph | 6 p.m.
 Dec 19 | St. Peter, Stanley | 6 p.m.
 Dec 22 | St. Stephen Cathedral | 2 p.m.

Paducah Deanery

Dec 10 | St. John the Evangelist | 6 p.m.
 Dec 15 | St. Thomas More | 4:30 p.m.
 Dec 16 | St. Mary LaCenter | 5 p.m.
 Dec 17 | Rosary Chapel | 4 p.m.
 Dec 18 | St. Francis de Sales | 6 p.m.



COURTESY OF ST. MARY PARISH, FRANKLIN

An altar honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen at St. Mary Parish in Franklin, Ky., in December 2023.

All welcome to celebrate Hispanic/Latino Advent traditions

Editor's note: Every December, communities across the world, including many in and from Latin America, celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe in the days leading up to her feast on Dec. 12. Please join our local parishes in celebrating this beautiful tradition.

Just Need to Talk?



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

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

Confidentiality assured.



St. Joseph, Bowling Green

Wednesday, Dec. 11:

5:30-6:15 p.m. | Procession/rosary

6:30-7:30 p.m. | Holy Mass

7:30-8 p.m. | Play about Our Lady's apparitions

8-10 p.m. | Mariachi band (Refreshments are served during mariachi)

10-11 p.m. | Music honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe

Sts. Joseph and Paul, Owensboro

- Novenas schedule: Dec. 3-11 at 6:30 p.m. in the church. Due to Mass on Saturdays, on Dec. 7 we will relocate to the parish hall that is located on 514 East 4th St., Owensboro.

- Día de Guadalupe: On Dec. 11, all are invited to attend our feast day celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We will begin our festivities at 11:30 p.m. with songs and a children's play recounting the story of Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe. At midnight, we will offer Mass and we will end our time together in the parish hall until 2 a.m. with refreshments.

- Las Posadas schedule: Dec. 16-24 at 6:30 p.m., we

will offer this year all Posadas in the homes of our parishioners. Please watch our parish bulletin and Facebook page for details on the location of each Posada (facebook.com/stjpcc).

St. Joseph, Mayfield

Novenas schedule: Dec. 3-11 at 6:30 p.m.

Please note that the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration will be on Sunday, Dec. 8. After Mass there will be a play of the apparitions, dances, and food.

Las Posadas schedule: Dec. 15-23 at 6:30 p.m. For addresses and more information call the parish office (270) 247-2843.

St. Thomas More, Paducah

Novenas schedule: Dec. 3-11 at 6:30 p.m.

Las Posadas schedule:

- Dec. 15 at 2:30 p.m. in parish hall

- Dec. 16-22 at 6:30 p.m.

- Dec. 23 at 6:30 p.m., novena in parish hall

Contact: Miguelina Young (270) 748-6818

Deceember Wedding Anniversaries

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

A note from the WKC: Make sure your anniversary is listed! The WKC recognizes 5th, 10th, 25th, 40th, 50th and over anniversaries being celebrated for the month printed (i.e. this edition shows the milestone anniversaries for August). In order to appear in the WKC's monthly anniversaries, you must be listed by your parish. Please contact your parish directly to make sure your anniversary is on file with them.

Blessed Mother, Owensboro

Bobby & Mary Stinnett, 40
David & Dava O'Nan, 40
Ed & Mae Hoskins, 55
Mark & Jan Hubbs, 56
Roger & Dodie Conder, 25
Tom & Darlene Quinn, 51
Tony & Lois Booker, 52

Blessed Sacrament, Owensboro

Kelly & Holly Hollis, 10

Christ the King, Madisonville

Bob & Floy Daugherty, 71
James & Debbie Allen, 55

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson

Christian & Jordan Klaas, 10
Christopher & Jenny Sellars, 5
Danny & Lynn DeKemper, 54
Forrest & Mary Meuth, 63
Herb & Mary Gold, 55
Jacob & Elyse Dowdy, 5
Jaime & Eve Tiu, 51
Jeff & Deborah Hauke, 25
Joseph & April McGarrh, 5
Lucio & Ramona Hernandez, 57
Michael & Shawn Royster, 40
Steve & Roxanne Sellars, 53

Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam

Steve & Dorothy Storm, 53
Holy Spirit, Bowling Green
Allen & Judy Freeland, 56
Darrell & Marcia Cassidy, 51
Derek & Emily Lehman, 10
Frank & Carol Kersting, 55
H Leon & Jane Brasher, 59
John & Mary Anne Reiss, 61
Larry & Anita Willoughby, 61
Richard & Marcia Poole, 55
Sam & Tina Rzepka, 53
William & Lynda Svanoe, 62

William & Sharon McKay, 60

Immaculate Conception, Hawesville

Ellis & Sharon Russelburg, 58

Immaculate, Owensboro

Carl & Brenda Millay, 56
Fred & Beverly Bosley, 54
Murray & Sara Pride, 60
Otis & Judy Hicks, 61
Paul & Donna Munsey, 57

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro

Anthony & Anita Mathews, 50
Blake & Lacey Hamilton, 10
Daniel & Dolores Fickas, 55
Danny & Kathi Roach, 52
James & Diane Hunter, 56
James & Linda Warren, 57
John & Kay Steele, 63
Patrick & Marilyn Pace, 50

Precious Blood, Owensboro

Gary & Lois Miller, 52
James & Dorothy Hodges, 53

Sacred Heart, Russellville

Mike & Linda Slaughter, 57
Norman Wheeler & Bernadette Mullen, 40
Robert & Sandra Williams, 40

Sacred Heart, Waverly

Mike & Marilyn Fenwick, 55

St. Agnes, Uniontown

Alvin & Betty Borup, 66
Kenny & Linda Gough, 57
Miles & Macy Clevidence, 10

St. Alphonsus, St. Joseph

Chris & Joyce Kormelink, 61
Jacob & Hannah Cecil, 5
Jim & Patsy Love, 54

St. Ann, Morganfield

Justin & Wilma Wolfe, 61

St. Anthony, Axtel

Celestine & Bonnie Hinton, 55
Denvir & Carolyn Henning, 54

St. Anthony, Browns Valley

Ron & Janice Tindall, 57

St. Anthony, Peonia

Danny & Patsy Clemons, 55

St. Augustine, Grayson Springs

Leon & Martha Hill, 57

St. Charles, Bardwell

Daniel & Wanda Hayden, 60
Jim & Sue McIntyre, 58
Michael & Denise Thompson, 51

St. Charles, Livermore

George & Carol Rhodes, 59
Larry & Patricia Hardison, 60

St. Columba, Lewisport

Anthony & Margaret Hall, 57
Jared & Lauren Taylor, 5
St. Elizabeth, Clarkson
Glenn & Patty Campbell, 56

St. Francis de Sales, Paducah

David & Edie Keeney, 65
Jeff & Mary Warren, 40
Jerry & Diane Perry, 56
Mark & Bonnie Roof, 50

St. Jerome, Fancy Farm

Bruce & Sue Turner, 55
Charles & Brenda Slaybough, 50

St. John the Baptist, Fordsville

Dennis & Peggy Tharp, 57
Laddie & Judy Thomas, 59
Wayne & Ruth Ann Higdon, 69
St. John the Baptist, Fordsville
Ray & Peggy Montgomery, 54

St. John the Evangelist, Paducah

Donald & Karol Richards, 54

St. Joseph, Bowling Green

Bill & Joey Powell, 65

Carl & Melissa Gockman, 25
Jim & Phyllis Huggins, 57

John & Rita Riley, 61
William & Linda Nesbitt, 54
St. Joseph, Central City
Donald & Bonnie Adams, 54

St. Joseph, Leitchfield

Bradley & Ali Clemons, 10
Dustin & Erin Cannon, 5

St. Joseph, Mayfield

Danny & Rose Ann Cook, 50
Saul & Maria Cruz, 5

St. Lawrence, Philpot

Jerry & Shirley Powers, 62

St. Leo, Murray

Tyson & Sue DeLoach, 56

St. Mary of the Woods, McQuady

Louis & Elaine Hinton, 57

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

Dakota & Allison
Montgomery, 5
David & Judy Connor, 60
Ivo & Martha Burch, 56
Mark & Alleen Mills, 52
Matt & Jennifer Ralph, 25
Paul & Brenda Clemons, 60
Raymond & Emma Whistle, 72
Ronnie & Patsy Mayfield, 57

St. Mary, Franklin

Lonnie & Betty Powers, 50

St. Mary, LaCenter

Clyde & Mary Kay Riepe, 57
David & Gladys Fraser, 65

St. Michael the Archangel, Oak Grove

Joseph & Marcia Schmitt, 55
Lionel & Sue McElroy, 72
St. Michael, Sebree
Daryl & Carmen Periard, 60
Greg & Lea Ann Sugg, 52
St. Peter of Antioch, Waverly
Bill & Lisa Jones, 40

St. Pius X, Owensboro

Bill & Sheila Mattingly, 50

Thomas & Janice Conrey, 55

St. Romuald, Hardinsburg

Harold & Fonda Roach, 53
Joe & Marion Oelze, 53
Ort & Barbara Critchelow, 52
Paul & Anne O'Reilly, 58
Steve & Jenny Critchelow, 52

St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro

Chris & Vickie Warren, 51
Garry & Ann Pierce, 56
Matt & Jenny Richeson, 5
Michael & Anna West, 5

St. Stephen, Cadiz

Raymond & Roberta Ward, 66
St. Thomas More, Paducah
Gerald & Mary Beth Lea, 50
James & Priscilla Hollowell, 57
Salvador & Blanca Bartolo, 25

St. William, Knottsville

Joseph & Janice Millay, 50
Oran & Nancy Bowlds, 52
Ronald & Mary Edge, 50

St. William, Marion

Donnie & Jeanette Phillips, 57

Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro

Jim & Jenny Wilson, 54
Philip & Annie Storm, 51

Sts. Peter & Paul, Hopkinsville

Anthony & Susan
Hightower, 40
Bill & Linda Harkins, 66
Jerry & Malinda Powell, 53
Joe & Mazie Mastromarino, 72

Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley:

Compartamos la historia del nacimiento de Cristo con nuestro mundo que no lo conoce

“Los niños de la familia Herdman eran absolutamente los peores niños de la historia del mundo. Mentían, robaban, fumaban cigarros (incluso las niñas), decían malas palabras, golpeaban a los niños pequeños, maldecían a sus maestros, tomaban el nombre del Señor en vano y prendieron fuego al taller de herramientas viejo y destartado de Fred Shoemaker”.

Así es el inicio de un pequeño libro escrito por Barbara Robinson y publicado por primera vez en 1972: “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” [La mejor obra navideña jamás]. Me encontré con este libro por primera vez hace más de 40 años y he disfrutado releándolo muchas, muchas veces, a menudo en Nochebuena. Junto con los villancicos y las galletas navideñas, me pone de humor para celebrar la Navidad.

Este año se ha producido una adaptación cinematográfica del libro y es posible que se estrene en cines locales. Creo que podrían disfrutar el libro y la película.

Al principio del libro, unos niños terribles de la familia Herdman son el centro del relato. Pero como en cualquier relato bueno de Navidad, el mensaje nos lleva a Jesús.

Los seis niños Herdman prácticamente no tenían supervisión. No parecía haber ningún padre presente y la madre estaba prácticamente desapercibida. Así pues, son seis niños que aparentemente se crían solos. No hace falta decir que la iglesia local no era el lugar donde esperar encontrarlos.

Un día, sin embargo, los niños se enteraron de que se iba a realizar una obra navideña en la iglesia. Eso no habría interesado a los Herdman, pero la posibilidad de que hubiera galletas en los ensayos sí les interesó. Para gran temor y pavor de todos los demás niños, los Herdman aparecieron para tomar los papeles más importantes de la obra.

Pero, como pueden imaginarse, estos niños nunca habían oído la historia de Navidad. Así, los ensayos se dedicaron a intentar dar sentido a María, a un ángel, a José, a los pastores y a los magos. Digamos que no iba bien. Llegó la noche para presentar la obra y todo el pueblo estaba allí para ver el desastre que seguramente los Herdman harían de la obra tradicional.

Pero resulta ser la mejor obra navideña jamás. La lección puede ser que cuando realmente contamos la historia, incluso niños perdidos como los de la familia Herdman pueden transformarse. El momento revelador es cuando el muñeco que representa a Jesús es colocado en los brazos de Imogene Herdman y ella comienza a llorar. Y todo el público llora también.

Este pequeño libro fue una de las inspiraciones para mi tarjeta navideña anual. Durante los últimos 15 años, he reunido a personas (generalmente niños) de diferentes parroquias o escuelas para que se unan a mí en recrear el nacimiento. En algún lugar hay más de una docena de diferentes Marías y Josés, múltiples ángeles, pastores y reyes. El primer

CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY DICIEMBRE DE 2024	
3 de dic..	9 a.m. Evento Diocesano de Evangelización – Centro de Convenciones de Owensboro
5 de dic.	10:30 a.m. Misa Escolar – Escuela Preparatoria Católica de Owensboro
6-9 de dic.	Celebración del Jubileo de las Hermanas Misioneras del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús – México
16 de dic.	10 a.m. Consejo de Personal Sacerdotal – Centro Católico McRaith, Owensboro
20 de dic.	9:30 a.m. Misa y fiesta navideña para el personal diocesano – Centro Católico McRaith
24 de dic.	11 p.m. Misa – Catedral de San Esteban, Owensboro
29 de dic.	11 a.m. Misa de apertura del Año Jubilar – Catedral de San Esteban

Niño Jesús, del año 2010, tendría ahora unos 14 años. María y José del primer año ahora podrían tener sus propios hijos.

Y así continua la historia. Pero todavía hay personas que no han escuchado la historia del nacimiento de Jesús en Belén.

¿Me ayudarían a contar la historia?

Feliz Navidad.



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro

El Domingo Mundial de las Misiones de 2024 celebrado en Santo Tomás Moro

POR LA HNA. YESSICA VÁZQUEZ CARO

El día 20 de octubre de 2024, en la Parroquia Santo Tomás Moro en Paducah, KY, celebramos el domingo mundial de las misiones, que llevó como lema “Id e invitad a todos al banquete”. Realizamos el rosario misionero a las 12:20 p.m. en la iglesia en 5 idiomas. El primer misterio lo rezamos en portugués por el continente de África, representado por el color verde, el segundo misterio lo rezamos en español y lo ofrecimos por el continente de América, representado con el color rojo, el tercer misterio por el continente de Europa, lo rezamos en Italiano y el color que lo representa es el blanco; el cuarto misterio lo rezamos en inglés pedimos por el continente de Oceanía, el color que lo representa es el azul; y el quinto misterio lo rezamos en tagalo, lo ofrecimos por el continente de Asia y el color que lo representa es el amarillo. Terminando rezamos la letanía misionera. Una vez terminado el rosario nos preparamos para la celebración Eucarística. Fue una Misa muy alegre y bonita ya que las personas del coro cantaron cantos misioneros, los adornos de las banderas con los 5 colores antes mencionados crearon un ambiente de colorido. Terminando la Misa tuvimos la comida en el salón parroquial, acompañada de música coordinada por un DJ. Conocimos una joven que canta muy bien y la invitamos

a amenizar el ambiente misionero. Cuando terminó la comida el Padre Basilio explicó un breve tema sobre el domingo mundial de las misiones: ¿Qué es? ¿Cuál es nuestro quehacer misionero? Y ¿Cuál fue el mandato misionero que nos dejó nuestro Señor Jesucristo? También su servidora Hna. Yessica Vázquez, expliqué sobre la vida misionera, sobre la congregación a la cual pertenezco, los fines y carisma de la congregación, cuántas hermanas somos, quiénes fueron nuestros fundadores, cuánto tiempo llevamos de fundación y cuál es el propósito por el cual nuestro fundador, y nosotros quisimos consagrar nuestra vida. Pienso que la gente mostró interés por este evento y colaboraron con alegría. Participaron alrededor de 100 personas. El último número que presentamos fue el de las cajitas musicales, fue un numero gracioso, pero lleno de creatividad por las participantes que estuvieron presentando. Agradezco mucho a las personas de la parroquia que siempre colaboran. Que Dios les multiplique, porque de alguna manera también están contribuyendo para la misión.

Gracias a Dios por llamarme a ser misionera, me siento contenta de ser elegida de Dios, pero también pienso en la responsabilidad que Dios pone en mis manos y de los retos que debo vencer, con su gracia. Porque tengo presente esta cita bíblica: “Al que se le dio mucho, se le pedirá mucho” (Lc 12, 48). ■



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE LA HNA. YESSICA VAZQUEZ CARO

Los feligreses disfrutaron de una comida después de la Misa del 20 de octubre para el Domingo Mundial de las Misiones en la Parroquia Santo Tomás Moro en Paducah.



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE LA HNA. YESSICA VAZQUEZ CARO

Los niños sostienen carteles que representan los diferentes continentes durante de una comida después de la Misa del 20 de octubre para el Domingo Mundial de las Misiones en la Parroquia Santo Tomás Moro en Paducah.

El Domingo Mundial de las Misiones de 2024 celebrado en Santo Tomás Moro

POR ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, EL
CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

La Iglesia católica tiene una rica tradición de jubileos, o años santos, para celebrar la fe de diversas maneras. Este diciembre, el Papa Francisco inaugurará el Año Santo 2025 con el lema “Peregrinos de la Esperanza”.

El jubileo fue proclamado, como es tradición, mediante la publicación de una Bula de convocación, que es un documento oficial que lleva el sello del Papa. La Bula Papal para el Año Santo 2025 se titula y comienza con las palabras “Spes non confundit” (La esperanza no defrauda), citando Romanos 5, 5.

El Año Santo 2025 se abrirá en el Vaticano en la víspera de Navidad, el 24 de diciembre de 2024, y se terminará el 6 de enero de 2026, fiesta de la Epifanía del Señor. El Papa Francisco ha pedido a los obispos de todo el mundo que inauguren el Año Santo en sus respectivas diócesis el 29 de diciembre de 2024 y cierren el año localmente el 28 de diciembre de 2025.

El Obispo William F. Medley inaugurará el año santo en la Diócesis de Owensboro en



CNS FOTO/VATICAN MEDIA

la Misa de las 11 a. m. del 29 de diciembre en la Catedral de San Esteban. Todos son bienvenidos a asistir.

La Diócesis de Owensboro está en proceso de publicar recursos para ayudar a los fieles a celebrar el “Jubileo de la Esperanza”, como se le ha denominado a menudo, y ha establecido seis lugares de peregrinación dentro de la diócesis en los que los visitantes pueden recibir una indulgencia plenaria.

Estos sitios son la Catedral de San Esteban, el Santuario Mariano Diocesano en Bowling Green, la Parroquia San León en Murray, la Parroquia San Francisco de Sales en Paducah, la Parroquia San Romualdo en Hardinsburg y la Parroquia Santo Redentor en Beaver Dam.

Próximamente habrá más información de la Diócesis de Owensboro, así que asegúrense de seguir las cuentas de redes sociales de la diócesis en [Facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro) e [Instagram.com/owensborodiocese](https://www.instagram.com/owensborodiocese). ■

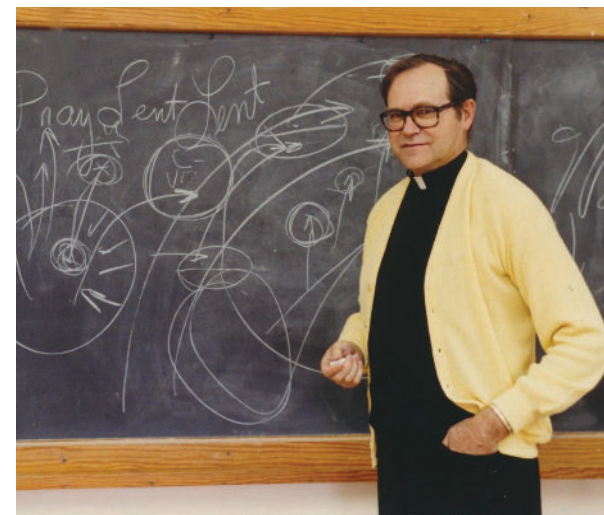


FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE LOS ARCHIVOS DEL MONTE
SAN JOSÉ

En esta fotografía sin fecha, el Mons. Bernard Powers se para junto a la pizarra mientras dirige un retiro.

El Monseñor Bernard Powers, 1926-2024

El Monseñor Bernard Powers murió el 25 de octubre a la edad de 98 años en asilo de ancianos el Carmel Home en Owensboro. Nació el 13 de febrero de 1926 y fue uno de 12 hijos. Dos de sus hermanos también se hicieron sacerdotes: el Padre Richard Powers y el Padre Aloysius Powers. Fue ordenado en 1952 por el Obispo Francis R. Cotton y sirvió en muchas parroquias alrededor de la Diócesis de Owensboro. Su funeral se llevó a cabo el 30 de octubre en la Catedral de San Esteban y fue sepultado en el cementerio del Monte San José en Maple Mount. Por favor oren por el alma del Monseñor Powers. ■

Todos están bienvenidos a celebrar las tradiciones hispanas/latinas del Adviento y la Navidad

Nota de la editora: Cada diciembre, comunidades de todo el mundo, incluyendo muchas en y de Latinoamérica, celebran a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en los días previos a su festividad el 12 de diciembre. Únanse a nuestras parroquias locales para celebrar esta hermosa tradición.

San José, Bowling Green

Miércoles, 11 de diciembre:

5:30-6:15 p.m. | Procesión/rosario

6:30-7:30 p.m. | Santa Misa

7:30-8 p.m. | Obra sobre las apariciones de Nuestra Señora

8-10 p.m. | Banda de mariachis (se sirven botanas durante el mariachi)

10-11 p.m. | Música en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Santos José y Pablo, Owensboro

- Horario de la novena: Del 3 al 11 de diciembre a las 6:30 pm en la iglesia. Debido a la Misa del sábado, el 7 de diciembre nos reuniremos en el salón parroquial que se encuentra en 514 East 4th St., Owensboro.

- Día de Guadalupe: El 11 de diciembre, todos están invitados a asistir a nuestra celebración de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Comenzaremos nuestras festividades a las 11:30 p.m. con cantos y una obra de teatro infantil contando la historia de Juan Diego y Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. A media noche ofreceremos la Misa y finalizaremos nuestro tiempo juntos en el salón parroquial hasta las 2 a.m. con un refrigerio.

- Horario de las Posadas: Del 16 al 24 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m., ofreceremos este año



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE PARROQUIA DE SANTA MARÍA

todas las Posadas en las casas de nuestros feligreses. Por favor, consulten nuestro boletín parroquial y nuestra página de Facebook para obtener detalles sobre dónde se celebrará cada Posada (facebook.com/stjpcc).

San José, Mayfield

Horario de la novena: Del 3 al 11 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m.

Tengan en cuenta que la celebración de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe será el domingo 8 de diciembre. Después de la Misa habrá una obra de las apariciones, danzas y comida.

Horario de las Posadas: Del 15 al 23 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m. Para las direcciones y más información llamen a la oficina parroquial (270) 247-2843.

Santo Tomás Moro, Paducah

Horario de la novena: Del 3 al 11 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m.

Horario de las Posadas:

- El 15 de diciembre a las 2:30 p.m. en el salón parroquial.

- Del 16 al 22 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m.

- El 23 de diciembre a las 6:30 p.m. en el salón parroquial.

Contacto: Miguelina Young (270) 748-6818

Un mensaje de la Oficina de Culto

La Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción, que celebra la concepción de la Santísima Virgen María en el vientre de su madre Santa Ana, se celebra normalmente el 8 de diciembre.

Este año, sin embargo, la fiesta se trasladó al lunes 9 de diciembre, ya que el 8 de diciembre es el segundo domingo de Adviento. Aún con el cambio de fecha, la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María sigue siendo un día de obligación para asistir a la Misa.

Para conocer los horarios de Misas en nuestra diócesis, visiten owensborodiocese.org/find-a-mass.

Para Hacer Informe de Alegatos de Abuso Sexual

Para denunciar una sospecha de abuso, llame a la Línea Directa de Protección Infantil de Kentucky: 1-877-KYSAFE1 o 1-877-597-2331 (llamada gratuita) o comuníquese con su Fiscal Local del Commonwealth. Para reportar abuso, actual o pasado, a la diócesis por parte de cualquier persona que actúe en nombre de la Iglesia, llame a Scott Ingram, Coordinadora de Asistencia Pastoral (inglés) al 270-852-8380, o Miguel Quintanilla, Coordinadoras de Asistencia Pastoral (español) al 270-880-8360. También puede visitar la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro (owensborodiocese.org/safe) para obtener más información. Para hacer un informe de abuso sexual de un menor de edad o conducta inapropiada relacionada por parte de algún obispo, visite <https://reportbishopabuse.org/es>.

Dioceses should commemorate their own saints each year, pope says

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN, CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

VATICAN CITY (CNS) ~ Starting in the Holy Year 2025, local churches worldwide will annually honor the saints, blessed and other holy figures connected to their communities, Pope Francis announced.

“It seems important to me that all particular churches commemorate their saints and blessed on a single date, as well as the venerables and servants of God of their respective territories,” he wrote in a letter published Nov. 16. “Therefore, I urge the particular churches, starting from the coming Jubilee of 2025, to remember and honor these figures of holiness, every year on Nov. 9.”

While all saints are celebrated on fixed dates on the liturgical calendar, the pope said that local churches should commemorate their own holy figures both within and outside the liturgy to promote “those figures who have characterized the local Christian path and spirituality.”

The letter stated that pastoral guidelines to facilitate the initiative should be developed by bishops’ conferences worldwide.

Pope Francis wrote that “everyone can recognize in many people they meet along the way witnesses of the Christian virtues, in particular faith, hope and charity,” praising the example of couples, workers, young people, pastors and men and women religious who live out the faith in their daily lives.

“We cannot forget the poor, the sick, the suffering who in their weakness have found support in the divine Master. It is about that ‘everyday’ holiness ‘next door,’ in which the church scattered throughout the world



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A portrait of St. Stephen the martyr is seen at the back of St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro on Feb. 17, 2024 during the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

has always been rich,” he wrote.

The pope said that Christians are “called to allow ourselves to be inspired by these models of holiness,” in particular the examples of the church’s martyrs, saints and blessed.

The many processes for beatification and canonization currently underway “show how much the witness of holiness is also present in our time in which the great witnesses to the faith shine like stars,” he said. They have “marked the experience of the particular churches and, at the same time, have been fruitful throughout history.”

“They are all our friends, companions on the road, who help us realize our baptismal vocation to the full and show us the most beautiful face of the church, which is holy and the mother of the saints,” the pope wrote. ■

All are invited to opening of jubilee year

Bishop William F. Medley will inaugurate the Holy Year 2025: Pilgrims of Hope in the Diocese of Owensboro at the 11 a.m. Mass on Dec. 29, 2024, at St. Stephen Cathedral. All are welcome to attend. More information is coming soon, so subscribe to the diocesan e-newsletter, In the Know, at owensborodiocese.org/e-newsletter, and follow the diocese’s social media accounts at Facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro and Instagram.com/owensborodiocese.