

PRAYER

SERVICE

GENEROSITY



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024- 2025



f facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro

@ instagram.com/owensborodiocese

🌐 owensborodiocese.org



Welcome From the Bishop

My dear friends,

Our annual impact report special issue of The Western Kentucky Catholic properly gives us an opportunity to look at the engagement of the diocese and our parishes in so many good works.

This year, however, our attention has been drawn to see the Catholic Church with a global view. For several weeks we became accustomed to daily reports on the health of Pope Francis. At the age of 88 and with several chronic health issues, he suffered with double pneumonia. His strong will brought him home to Vatican City from the hospital, and during Holy Week he made multiple public appearances, but his frailty was clear for all to see.

On Easter Sunday he extended his apostolic blessing to pilgrims at St. Peter's Square and throughout the world. On Easter Monday morning we learned that Pope Francis had died.

This set in motion days of mourning but also

rejoicing that this good man had gone to heaven.

Soon after, the most diverse assembly ever of cardinals from around the world gathered to pray and dialogue over several days until they entered into a conclave to choose a new Bishop of Rome – our new pope. On just the second day of the conclave and after only four ballots, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was introduced to the world as Pope Leo XIV. And against all conventional wisdom he is an American, in fact U.S.-born, though much of his ministry has been spent in Peru in South America.

With the backdrop of this historic shift, we continue our journey of missionary discipleship here in western Kentucky. We find our Church concluding a three-year National Eucharistic Revival, the highpoint being the grand Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis last summer, attended by several hundred from the Diocese of Owensboro.

It will soon be four years since the catastrophic tornadoes tore through western Kentucky. Our Catholic Charities continues to partner with other agencies and organizations in helping survivors rebuild their lives. Just this year our

region experienced historic flooding, and so we continue to rebuild homes and lives.

Pope Francis' repeated challenges to care for the least among us, the migrants and refugees of the world, must be a measure of our discipleship. Pope Leo's choice of the name Leo, inspired by Pope Leo XIII who wrote "Rerum novarum," an encyclical on Catholic social teaching, signals that he too will speak to the world of us of bearing the Gospel of Jesus to the poor.

There are thousands of catechists, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and those who visit the sick and homebound, who carry the light of Christ forth from our parishes. Truly, the work of discipleship is entrusted to us all. Join me in prayer though that men and women will hear and answer the Lord's extraordinary call to discern special vocations to priesthood and consecrated life.

I also ask for your prayers as we launch our Priest Retirement Home Capital Campaign, an initiative to give back to our retired priests who have given of themselves throughout their lives.

This report of our Church's mission is an exciting story. It is a story that every person is



called to become a part of. As you read this story in the following pages, pray that you will be open to hearing your own special call.

I am so very proud of the Diocese of Owensboro and I thank God for our people. Be assured of my prayers for all of you and I kindly ask that you pray for me.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ William F. Medley

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

THE WESTERN KENTUCKY  **Catholic**

Official newspaper of the Diocese of Owensboro
600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301
Telephone | (270) 683-1545
Email | wkc.editor@pastoral.org
Publisher | Bishop William F. Medley
Editor | Elizabeth Wong Barnstead
Contributors | Riley Greif, Rachel Hall
Layout | Rachel Hall
Periodical #25732
Postmaster, send changes to: 600 Locust Street,
Owensboro, KY 42301 phone: 270-683-1545

By the numbers


Who We Are

Below statistics reflect the 2024 calendar year



Disciples Response Fund

Your generosity helps us witness Christ and carry out His mission. From October 2023 to September 2024, your gifts changed thousands of lives.

\$ 596,858 Raised
3,145 Donors 



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

Gratitude from the Stewardship Office

Dear Friends in Christ,

As members of our faith-filled community of the Diocese of Owensboro, we are part of a rich tradition of living our Catholic faith through service, generosity, and the gifts we received from the Holy Spirit. We see how God works through each of us to care for one another, support our parishes, and build up the Church for future generations.

One of the most powerful ways to continue that legacy of faith is through planned giving. By including your parish in your will or estate plans, you help ensure that the mission of the Church continues to thrive for generations to come. A planned gift through the Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky is a meaningful way to express your faith, support the ministries you love, and leave a lasting spiritual legacy.

We also take time to reflect with gratitude on the faithful priests who have walked with us through life's most sacred moments – celebrating our marriages, baptizing our children, administering sacraments, and providing funeral Mass during the passing of our loved ones. Their presence has been a constant source of spiritual strength and support.

We have 11 priest who are retired; it is our time to give back. This summer, we are launching the Priest Retirement Home Capital Campaign, an initiative to build four dedicated residences for our retired priests.

To share more about this important effort, we will be hosting six receptions at parish halls across the diocese. These gatherings will provide an opportunity to learn more about the campaign, ask questions, and explore how your generosity can be part of this meaningful effort.

God has blessed each of us in unique ways, and this is our time to be generous with the gifts He has entrusted to us.

If you would like more information about the legacy giving opportunities or the Priest Retirement Home Capital Campaign, please feel free to call me at (270) 852-8348 or email me at valeria.vessels@pastoral.org. I would be happy to meet in person or connect in whatever way is most convenient for you.

Thank you for your continued prayers, generosity, and unwavering commitment to the Church.

Blessings,



Valeria Vessels
 Director of Stewardship & Development



The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Comes to the Diocese of Owensboro

By Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, *The Western Kentucky Catholic*

From June 30 to July 3, the St. Juan Diego Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage visited the Diocese of Owensboro. The visit included processions, Mass, witness talks, Adoration, a mini-retreat, the opportunity to go to confession, shared meals, and fellowship – all within the theme of celebrating the National Eucharistic Revival as a community. ■

Sunday, June 30



RILEY GREIF | WKC
(left) A mural with the words “Welcome” is seen in the background as the faithful process through downtown Franklin, Ky., during the visit of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to western Kentucky. As part of the procession, two teen parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Franklin carry a banner that reads “St. Mary’s Catholic Church Comunidad Hispana.”



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Fr. Tom Buckman, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Franklin, blesses a woman during the distribution of Holy Communion in the evening of June 30, 2024. Following a solemn Eucharistic procession from the town square into the church, a 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish was held at St. Mary’s as the National Eucharistic Revival arrived in the Diocese of Owensboro. After Mass, the parish hosted a holy hour and benediction, followed by a meal in the parish hall.

RILEY GREIF | WKC
After concluding in Franklin, the Eucharistic Pilgrimage traveled to Sacred Heart Parish in Russellville for a period of Adoration, followed by lunch and witness talks given by the Perpetual Pilgrims.



Monday, July 1



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Following an early morning Mass, Fr. Tom Buckman, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Franklin, leads a Eucharistic procession through the neighborhood on July 1.

Continues on page 6

Pilgrimage continued from page 5



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Fr. Wade Menezes, CPM, offers a reflection during the visit of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the Fathers of Mercy.



RILEY GREIF | WKC
That afternoon, the Eucharistic Pilgrimage led the faithful on a 4.5-mile-long Eucharistic procession to the Fathers of Mercy chapel in Auburn, Ky. There, people had the chance to spend time in Adoration and go to confession.



RILEY GREIF | WKC
On July 2, the Perpetual Pilgrims share witness stories with the young people attending Expedition Camp for 5th and 6th graders at Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center. This day provided a needed break for the Pilgrims, who had an opportunity to rest before the next leg of their pilgrimage.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
In the evening of July 1, a Eucharistic procession enters the grounds of Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center in Bowling Green. The procession led to the camp's chapel, where campers received benediction before the Blessed Sacrament was reposed for the night.

Continues on page 7

Pilgrimage continued from page 6

Tuesday, July 2 Wednesday, July 3



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Altar servers lead a Eucharistic procession through downtown Bowling Green on July 3. Following an early morning Mass at St. Joseph in Bowling Green, the faithful processed to nearby St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center at Western Kentucky University. After exposition and a rosary, the faithful processed back to St. Joseph.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Sr. Cheryl Clemons, OSU, leads an afternoon retreat on the topic of the Eucharist in the parish hall at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green. Later that afternoon, Holy Spirit would host the concluding celebration of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's visit to the Diocese of Owensboro.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
The final Eucharistic procession takes place around the campus of Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green, on July 3, the last day of the visit of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the Diocese of Owensboro.



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Bishop William F. Medley lifts the Eucharist during the consecration at the July 3, 2024 Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green. This closing Mass concluded the visit of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the Diocese of Owensboro.

Worshipping Together as a Community of Faith

By Dcn. Ken Bennett, Office of Worship

The Office of Worship is active in various diocesan liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Some of these include the Rainbow Mass celebrating Catholic schools, Black Catholic History Month celebrations, Chrism Mass, and ordinations.

Our focus last year was the National Eucharistic Revival. The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage traveled through our diocese on its way to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, and made stops at five locations in our diocese. The Office of Worship organized Eucharistic processions, retreats and workshops at each location with hundreds of people participating along the way.

In addition to the activities surrounding the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, the Office of Worship and Music sponsored workshops for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and liturgical musicians in Owensboro and Bowling Green – with the goal of reaching more locations around the diocese this year.

The Office of Worship tracks the annual Mass counts in September and can report that for the fourth year in a row, Mass attendance is up. Also, 262 catechumens and candidates participated in the Rite of Election this year, again representing an increase from 2024.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we are reminded that our hope lies in Christ alone and it is in and through his Church we are brought to that hope. ■

What happens when Kentuckians join 60,000 participants from 50 U.S. states, 17 countries, and various Eastern and Western churches and speaking over 40 languages at the National Eucharistic Congress? Spirits are moved and hearts are set aflame.

Spirits are moved, hearts are set aflame, and a profound sense of unity in Christ emerges. Lives are transformed as the universal Church comes together, bridging cultures and languages in a shared encounter with the living Eucharist.



National Eucharistic Revival (2022–2025)

Eucharistic Pilgrimage (Diocese of Owensboro)

600+ participants joined the Saint Juan Diego pilgrimage route through our diocese (June 30–July 1)

Many parishes hosted their own Eucharistic Revival events

**Hearts on Fire
2,000+ participants in the Acts 2:42 series created by our Evangelization & Discipleship Office**

Sarah Kroger kicked off the “Walk with One” initiative in our diocese

National Eucharistic Congress (July 17–21, 2025, Indianapolis, IN)

60,000+ NEC passes claimed

200 bishops in attendance

1,176 priests

1,236 men and women religious

634 deacons

614 seminarians (including one of our own from St. Meinrad)

250+ attendees from the Diocese of Owensboro

143 speakers and presenters

83 years since the last NEC

4-foot-tall monstrance used in liturgies and Eucharistic processions

200,000+ consecrated hosts distributed

2033 is when the next NEC is scheduled

Music Office Helps Parishes, Diocese, Deepen Prayer

By Heather Greene, Office of Worship

Serving as the Director of the Office of Music for our diocese has been a truly meaningful and joy-filled experience. I stepped into this role in June 2024 and was immediately welcomed into a beautiful whirlwind of liturgical and musical activity. It has been a gift to help support the prayer life of our diocese through music and to witness how music continues to uplift and unite our faith communities.

This year, our office had the privilege of providing music for several special diocesan events. We celebrated the dedication of new altars at three different parishes, as well as the inspiring dedication of Resurrection Parish's new church — a true resurrection! We also provided music for diocesan-wide celebrations including the Chrism Mass, our priest's prayer days and convocation, Mass for couples marking significant wedding anniversaries, the Sophia Awards Mass, Black Catholic History Month, and a prayer service for healing for those impacted by sexual abuse, as well as many other prayer and Mass opportunities throughout the year.

The Office of Music is here to serve as a support system for our parish musicians and a resource for liturgical planning throughout the diocese. I am so grateful for this ministry and for all who share their musical gifts to help deepen the prayer and worship of our Church. ■



Forming and Accompanying in a Year of Mission and Hope

By Dcn. Jay W. VanHoosier, Office of Faith Formation

Over the past year, the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Faith Formation has embraced its mission with renewed hope, fostering a culture of discipleship and vocations in every form – priesthood, religious life, marriage, and lay ministry. Through dynamic support of parish catechetical leaders, engaging parish in-services, and comprehensive catechist formation, the office has strengthened the heart of faith communities across the Diocese of Owensboro. From leading Confirmation retreats that inspired young hearts, to offering enriching OCIA presentations for those seeking full communion with the Church, the mission was clear: to form and accompany.

A highlight was the Owensboro Catholic Schools All Staff Back-to-School Retreat, where educators were empowered to see their vocation as a daily witness to Christ. The office also partnered closely with the Catholic school system, ensuring catechetical certification upheld the integrity of faith education. Participation in diocesan days of reflection further deepened spiritual renewal across ministries.

Looking back, the Office of Faith Formation celebrates not just programs delivered, but lives touched – hundreds of individuals inspired to live out their unique vocations. This year stands as a testament to what hope in Christ and a commitment to mission can accomplish within our community. ■



COURTESY OF FAITH FORMATION OFFICE
Dcn. Jay W. VanHoosier, director of the Office of Faith Formation, speaks about the Blessed Mother during a March 8, 2025 formation day for catechists in Paducah.

Bringing More Hope to More Marriages



COURTESY OF DANNY MAY

By Danny May, Office of Marriage & Family Life

This Jubilee Year of Hope, we're trying to bring more hope to couples by strengthening the vocation of marriage.

Better support for struggling marriages is one of the biggest impacts we've experienced in the Office of Marriage & Family Life this past year. We refer couples regularly to Retrouvaille retreats in Nashville or Louisville, and we do have a list of counselors we can refer people to through Catholic Charities, but it's always nice to have multiple options that best fit your experience.

Today, we're thrilled to be building a "Marriage Care Team" as another option for couples or spouses having difficulty in their marriages. That care team will consist of people in our diocese who have been trained to do mindset coaching, healing prayer, and/or spiritual direction. We plan to announce the care team this summer and make it readily available.

Another option we're excited about is our new partnership with The Alexander House apostolate, which trains "Marriage Disciple" coaching couples to walk with couples who want to strengthen and restore their marriage through a series of sessions exploring God's plan for marriage. In April 2025, Alexander House founders Greg and Julie Alexander came to Owensboro and trained two more Marriage Disciple couples from our diocese. We now have three couples trained to be Marriage Disciples for couples in our diocese who would like to receive coaching. ■

Preservation, Dissemination, and Accessibility

By Edward Wilson, Archives

This year the archives worked closely with local institutions to celebrate our rich Catholic history in western Kentucky.

We displayed an exhibit in the Owensboro Museum of Science and History's primary exhibition space for four-and-a-half months. This exposed thousands of individuals to the heroic 150-year legacy of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. A display of century-old Madonna paintings was presented in Brescia University's art gallery, attracting many to view the treasures of our local Church. The program with Saint Meinrad continues in which we help our seminarians learn about our local history to better serve their future

parishioners.

In only the first four months and a few days of 2025, the diocese and Mount archives have handled more than 68 research requests, delivered over 47 photographs for photo requests, and assisted academic researchers from as far away as New York.

Each year, we digitize, archive and preserve the thousands of sacramental records from all 78 parishes, adding them to the hundreds of thousands already under our protection. We work closely with parishes, priests, and parishioners to track down sacramental records and safe environment records from across the country. We work with nearly every diocesan office for matters including blueprints for new construction; to priests' wills; to consultations



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES

of previous policy procedures. The archive also produces a monthly article for The Western Kentucky Catholic.

The goal of the archive is threefold: preservation, dissemination and accessibility – we are at the service of our Church, her people and our history. ■

Supporting Those Who Discern



COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS

By Fr. Daniel Dillard, Office of Vocations

As I transition from my role in the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Vocations, I am proud of the work that has been done to build up the future of our diocese. By the end of this summer, we will have ordained four men, had 12 men accepted into seminary, and more than 25 young men make official visits to the seminary as part of their ongoing discernment journeys. Several men have entered seminary and have successfully discerned that their vocations lay elsewhere as well.

However, the most important thing I have realized is that I am not the one who does the calling. In my time in the office and before, there have been men I was certain that God was calling to be a priest who discerned for a while and moved in a different direction. Some entered seminary and left, and some never entered at all.

Here is what is most essential: please support the men in our diocese who are discerning God's call.

This is especially crucial if you know them personally, because if a man feels the call from God and is not supported by his friends and family, it is not likely that he will respond. I leave you with this plea, to pray for an increase in vocations to our diocese and to the whole Church, and pray that those called have the courage to respond. ■

Journeys of Formation

By Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, *The Western Kentucky Catholic*

This past year, two seminarians of the Diocese of Owensboro completed in their Propaedeutic year at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, Indiana. Tommy Rhodes of St. Lawrence Parish in Philpot and Wes Wheatley of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Cloverport both

participated in this initial year of the seminary journey, which is a formation stage to develop a life of prayer, study, fraternity, and appropriate docility to formation. Meanwhile, seminarian Hunter Dickens of St. Thomas More Parish in Paducah completed his First Discipleship year at Saint Meinrad, which follows the Propaedeutic year. Dcn. Conrad Jaconette, a seminarian whose home

parish is St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green, had been ordained to the transitional diaconate on Jan. 4, 2025, and was recently ordained to the diocesan priesthood this past May 31. He will be assigned to Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville, and in several years will be on loan to the Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A., as an Air Force chaplain. ■

A Year of Growth and Grace: Celebrating the Resilience of Our Catholic Schools

By David Kessler, Superintendent of the Catholic Schools Office

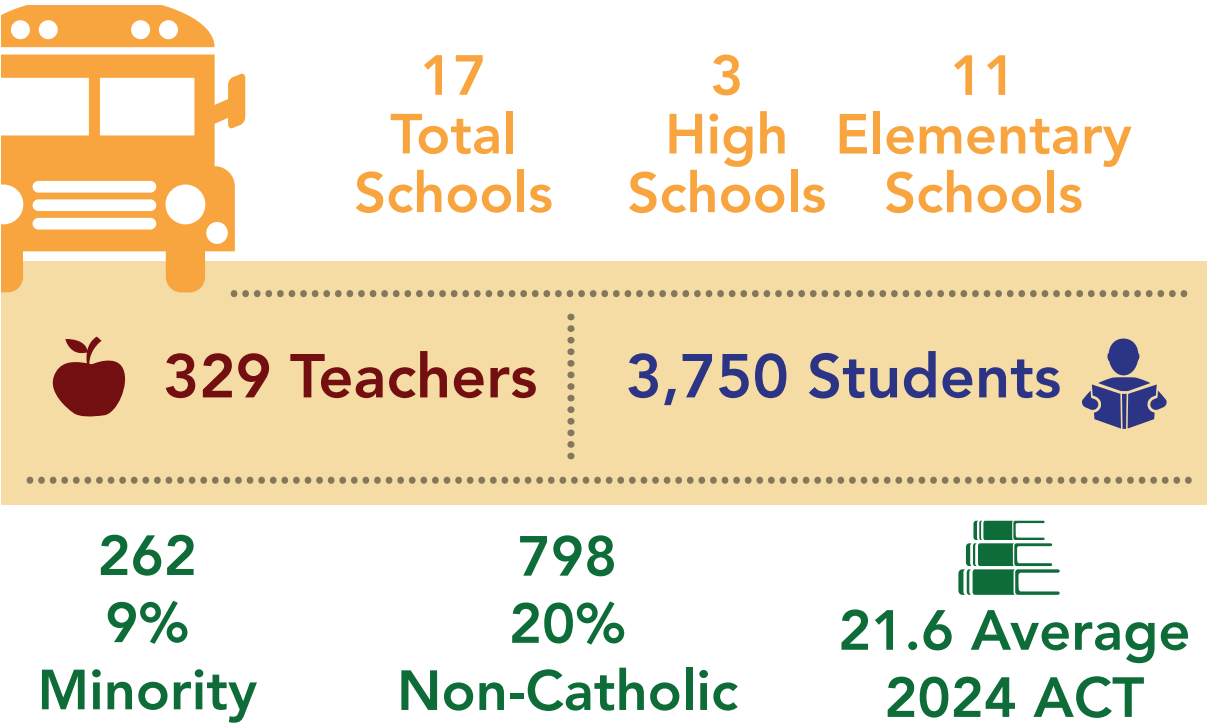
As I reflect on the past academic year, I'm filled with gratitude and pride for the many accomplishments within our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Owensboro. Our Catholic schools remain rooted in the Gospel values that



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Rainbow Mass for Catholic Schools is held on Sept. 18, 2024 at the Owensboro Sportscenter.

define our mission. This year, we strengthened our Catholic education through daily prayer, sacramental preparation, and intentional spiritual formation. Our faculty and staff served not only as educators but as spiritual mentors, nurturing a

strong moral foundation in every student. Parish and pastor support further deepened the spiritual lives of our school communities. The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. This past year we strengthened our school security by updating emergency protocols, increasing physical security measures, and providing additional training for faculty and staff to respond in various situations. Despite the financial constraints we face, our Catholic schools continue to deliver an outstanding academic experience. Standardized test scores across our system exceed both state and national averages, and our graduates consistently earn scholarships to further their education. Even with financial constraints, we have learned to be innovative and resourceful. Fundraising efforts, alumni networks, and parish support have made it possible for our schools to keep tuition affordable and continue investing in classroom technology, teacher development, and facility improvements. The accomplishments of this past year are a testament to the strength and resilience of our Catholic school community. ■



Summer of 2024

Diocese Catholic Schools Food Service



46 Summer Feeding Sites

Breakfast – 31,072

Lunch – 37,413

Supper – 4,755

73,240

Total meals served

These meals were served across Western Kentucky, in multiple counties where we operate schools under the National School Lunch and Summer Feeding Program.



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Students wave from a school bus after Rainbow Mass for Catholic Schools on Sept. 18, 2024.

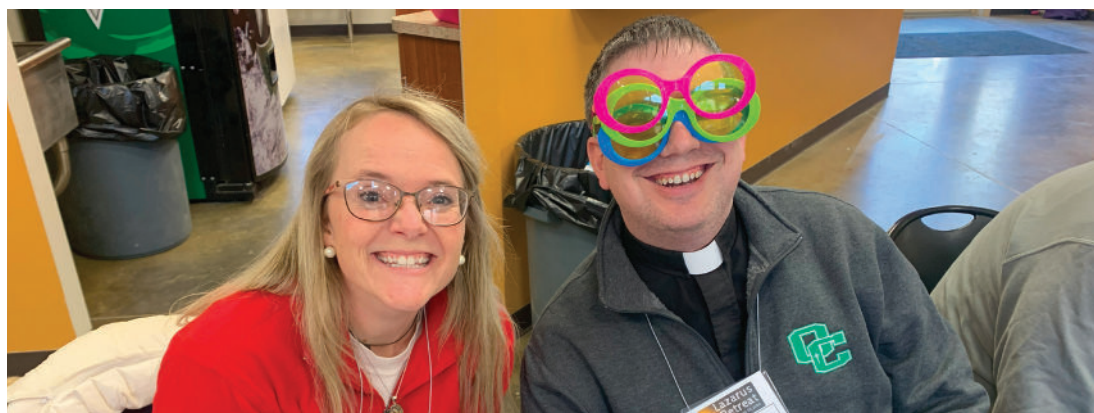
RACHEL HALL | WKC
Holy Name of Jesus School students smile during Rainbow Mass for Catholic Schools on Sept. 18, 2024.



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Jake Mills, a student of Mary Carrico Catholic School, is seen at Rainbow Mass for Catholic Schools on Sept. 18, 2024.

Helping Youth and Young Adults Find Their Identity, Belonging, and Purpose



By Charlie Hardesty, Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Fuller Youth Institute recently concluded in a study on youth and faith that the three big questions that every teenager needs answered are: Who am I? Where do I belong? And what is my purpose? Much of the work we have been doing through the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry in 2024 has been to help youth and young adults better understand their identity, belonging, and purpose through the lens of their relationship with Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith. The answers to these three questions have an enormous impact on the vocational discernment for young people.

Many of the events we hold throughout the diocese have continued to maintain strong and even increasing attendance. Our message at those gatherings continues to invite youth and young adults into relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church. We also deeply desire that young people find the answers to those three big questions in the context of their Catholic faith.

Some of the most important work that our office does is to help support and train adult leaders in the parish and schools for accompanying young people. We gather with Parish Catechetical Leaders every month for prayer, formation, networking, and community. In the fall, we held two Saturday morning workshops called “Engaging Youth,” which shared information about the current generations we are ministering to, ways to focus our ministry towards answering those three big questions, and better strategies for questions and conversations with young people. The “Engaging Youth” workshop can be brought to your parish and deanery to help equip adults who are working with youth.

At the end of the day, the secret sauce for working with young people seems to be creating a community of joy and surrounding them with adults who care. Our office will continue to help our parish leaders do that work to the best of our abilities. ■

Campus and Young Adults in 2024

Around 35 students from WKU, Murray State, and Brescia attended the SEEK Conference in January

15 young adults participated in the spring or fall Journey Hike Retreat

WKU and Murray State came together for a campus ministry retreat at Gasper River

BG Catholic, OBKY Catholic, & Paducah-Lakes Area Catholic Young Adults offer regular events



Youth in 2024

Over 30 adults attended the Engaging Youth workshops

3 youth ministry leaders attended ProjectYM's Thriveanooga Formation.

12 youth ministry leaders attended YM Overnight Retreat and Formation



29 youth & adults participated in the fifth Lazarus Retreat

500 youth & adults participated in the 27th annual YOUTH 2000 retreat

383 youth and adults attended the Owensboro Diocese Youth Conference



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

The participants of Lazarus Retreat 2024 smile for a group photo at Gasper River.

"At the end of the day, the secret sauce for working with young people seems to be creating a community of joy and surrounding them with adults who care. Our office will continue to help our parish leaders do that work to the best of our abilities."

- Charlie Hardesty

Record-breaking summer at Gasper River serves 500+ campers, continues to increase retreats



By Ben Warrell, Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center

God has blessed us again with another amazing year for Gasper River. We continue to be filled up – with no decrease – during retreat season, and each new summer of camp is larger than the last. Young people can hear and respond to God’s call here at Gasper River, and the fruit of the ministry here at Gasper River continues to grow each year.

Retreat season also includes our Christmas/New Year’s Camp, which had 42 high schoolers ending one year and beginning the next here at camp. A former camper from southern Indiana joined seminary for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Our fourth former summer staffer now teaches religion in our diocesan Catholic schools. Every year since the break during the pandemic, we have increased our number of summer campers and our total



number of retreat groups.

And for the fourth summer in a row, a camper whose family was not Catholic joined the Catholic Church after their experiences at camp.

The 2024 summer camp program was record-breaking. We served well over 500 campers (our biggest summer ever), and had 20 summer staff working summer camp, with 46 volunteers and five Staff In Training (SIT). During summer camp, we served over 15,500 meals and led ropes course and river activities daily. We also had our 11th summer staffer/camper enter religious life and one more of our summer staff entered seminary at Saint Meinrad in the fall!

We visited many parishes and schools in and outside of our diocese than ever before, including all three Catholic Newman Centers in our diocese, leading retreats, game nights and recruiting campers and summer staffers.

It was another great year for growth, outreach and evangelization at Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center. The future is exciting and bright for our ministry.

For the near future, we have updated our wish list that can be found on our website and our

Amazon wish list which many people have already generously provided for us. We are also still looking at options for a new building for retreats and conferences, and bridges/walkways across the river to Tower #68 to better accommodate our campers and retreatants. ■



500+

Summer Campers

86 Retreat Groups

46

Volunteers

20

Summer Staff



5 “Staff In Training” (SIT)

Six dioceses represented among campers

More than 15,500 meals served during camp season



Support
Gasper River
at [https://
www.gasper-
riverretreat-
center.org/
support-gas-
per-river.](https://www.gasper-riverretreat-center.org/support-gasper-river)

Retreat Statistics:

**101 Retreat
Groups Hosted**
(44 organizations: 73 Catholic,
28 non-Catholic)

50 overnight | 51 day retreats

76 groups used at least one of
Gasper's program activities, with
2/3 using more than one

4,600 meals served
during retreat season



(Photos on this page and the previous page by Riley Greif and Elizabeth Wong Barnstead.)

God's People Are Devout and Always On the Move

By Dcn. Chris Gutiérrez, Office of Hispanic/Latino Ministry

Dear friends of the Diocese of Owensboro: thank you so much for the continuous support so many of you provide and in various ways for the diocese to continue to grow and sustain its Hispanic/Latino ministry outreach. Especially now, during a difficult time of trial and uncertainty for so many immigrant families in our diocese, your love, prayers and support mean a lot.

Pope Francis will be remembered and missed by Hispanic/Latinos for many reasons and connections, but for the purpose of this 2024 impact report, I would like to just mention some aspects in connection to him, that for the last year have motivated God's people in our diocese.

Hispanic/Latino Catholics are always grateful to participate in various Eucharistic processions and events in our diocese. The National Eucharistic Revival blessed us with renewal and strengthening of devotion and love for Jesus in the Eucharist. This was especially true when the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage passed through our diocese, and Hispanic/Latino Catholics had the opportunity to celebrate devotions and beloved faith traditions.

Pope Francis in his encyclical, "Evangelii Gaudium," reminded us: "Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel" (EG #20). In connection to the National Eucharistic Revival, our diocese lived this out through the initiative of Acts 2:42 (Hechos 2,42). This fostered missionary discipleship by forming small faith-based groups/communities in homes and off church premises, friendly to those perhaps distant or hesitant about coming to a church building or hall.

I am thankful to everyone, including our wonderful communications office, for this amazing annual impact report, and for your support and love for this ministry. As we joyfully embrace the papacy of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, the Hispanic/Latino community in our diocese will continue to contribute generously and share their many talents, joy, faith, and deep love for the Church. ■



(Photos on this page by Riley Greif and Elizabeth Wong Barnstead.)

Hope Does Not Disappoint: Catholic Charities Presses Onward

By Susan Montalvo-Gesser, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro

“Spes non confundit; hope does not disappoint” (Romans 5:5). I have wrestled with this verse most of my life because my life and most of the lives of those we accompany here at Catholic Charities are filled struggle and disappointment. In this Jubilee Year, when we are called to be Pilgrims of Hope in a world filled with despair, fear, and separation, the courage to hope may seem naïve. But our hope is “grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God’s love” (Spes non confundit, Pope Francis Bull of Indication of Jubilee, May 9, 2024.)

In that spirit, Catholic Charities started working with other organizations to host community conversations in Owensboro and Henderson to gain community knowledge, gain civic faith, and learn how to implement grassroots solutions to make those communities more hopeful. We continue our work with people on the periphery of our diocese, whether it be through disaster survivors, immigrants, refugees, survivors of abuse or trafficking, homeless individuals, or those needing mental health counseling. Each one of those persons is a pilgrim of hope. ■



Dignity, Stability, and Hope Provided to Those Who Need It Most

By Harry E. Pedigo, Executive Director of St. Benedict and Daniel Pitino Shelters

As we reflect on the past year at St. Benedict’s Shelter, we recognize both the challenges we have faced and the impact we have made. While the number of individuals we serve has declined, it is not due to a decrease in homelessness – on the contrary, the need is greater than ever. The reality is that transition times are taking longer as individuals struggle with the lack of affordable housing, limited access to higher-paying jobs, and numerous other systemic barriers.

Despite these challenges, we have remained steadfast in our mission, providing critical support to men, women, children, and families through our Men’s Facility, Women and Families Day Shelter, Transitional Housing Program, and Maternal Home. These programs have been instrumental in helping individuals and families intervene and prevent homelessness, navigate shelter vacancies, and find stability in the face of uncertainty.

While the journey to housing has become more difficult due to shortages, we have seen success in the small victories. This year, we helped countless individuals obtain transitional housing, access treatment for substance use and mental health, secure vital documents, receive medications, en-

gage in case management, and attend therapy. For those able to successfully transition into permanent housing, we have helped furnish their new homes, ensuring they have the essentials to begin their next chapter.

Most importantly, we have loved as Christ would – without judgment – and with grace, mercy, and truth.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and the broader community. It has been incredibly inspiring to see past clients return, not only to give back but to serve others, reinforcing the cycle of hope and transformation.

As we celebrate 20 years of service, we are reminded that St. Benedict’s Shelter is not just an organization – it is a collective effort built on compassion, dedication, and faith. Without the tireless commitment of our staff, community members, donors, and the Catholic community, we would not have reached this milestone, nor would we be able to continue our work in the years to come.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Your generosity and partnership ensure that we can move forward, providing dignity, stability, and hope to those who need it most. ■

A Pilgrim of Hope: Survivor Uplifted Through Catholic Charities

By Susan Montalvo-Gesser, Director of Catholic Charities

I met Elisa in 2019. She was a survivor of domestic violence and lived in fear that if she called the police, her abuser would kill her or harm her daughters. It took courage for her to come forward and obtain a protective order for her and her daughters. I advised Elisa of the long process to obtain a U-visa, a process for survivors of violence, but which lasts decades without the benefit of immigration protection for several years. She bravely started the process and we submitted her petitions in 2020. And we waited.

In December 2021 she and her daughters endured another tragedy: losing everything during the infamous nighttime tornado storm. The day after the tornado, I arrived to attend Mass at Elisa's parish and look for her and my other clients to learn whether they were still alive. I found her and her daughters at Mass and gave them my Our Lady of Guadalupe statue since theirs had been destroyed in the storms. I told them Catholic Charities case managers would be back and promised that if they reached out for help, we would be there.

Elisa worked with our Catholic Charities case manager, Karina Gonzalez. Thanks to Karina, many other community partners, and St. Joseph Parish in Mayfield who donated the land, we recently got to place that statue of Our Lady in Elisa's new home. In the meantime, her protections from the immigration petitions have borne some fruit and she has a work permit and deferred action while she waits on the U-visa process.

She had every reason not to hope in 2019, 2020, and 2021. But we had the privilege to walk with her

on her pilgrimage and in 2024 through 2025 Elisa saw that hope does not disappoint. She is but one of those 4,100 human persons we have seen through the journey this year. And as we celebrate our new Pope Leo XIV, who tells us to "always be open to receive... everyone who needs our charity, our presence, dialogue and love," I am reminded that we receive the hope from the pilgrims we have the privilege to accompany. Thank you for helping us in our pilgrimage of hope. ■



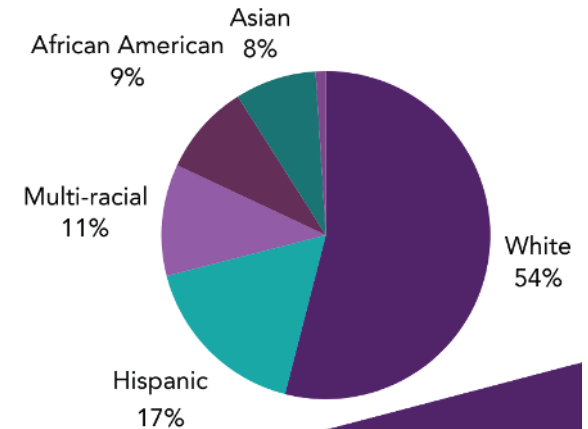
COURTESY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Standing in their new home, Catholic Charities client Elisa and her two daughters smile with their statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, given to them by Susan Montalvo-Gesser, after theirs was lost when the December 2021 tornado destroyed their home.



Catholic Charities
DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

People assisted in 2024: 4,100+

Race identified by those assisted:



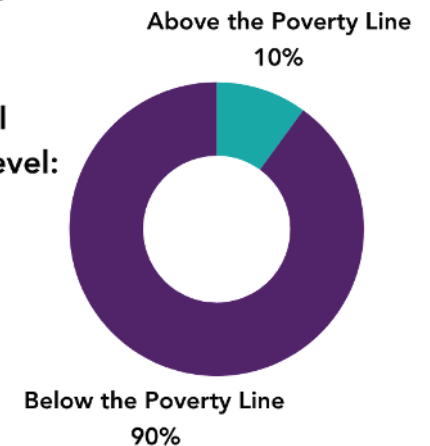
1,253

Survivors of natural disasters assisted

671

Immigration and legal services cases opened

Assisted Individual income level:



A Faith Community That Cares About Kids

By Janice Hendricks, Office of Safe Environment

This past 2024 was a year of progress for our office. We completed our three-year Safe Environment Audit conducted by Stonebridge Business Partners. Their review of our records and interviews with staff across the diocese confirmed we are in full compliance with the USCCB standards and doing well in ensuring the safety of all in our care. The audit confirmation letter is available to read on our website.

This year over 5,000 children participated in our Catholic “Circle of Grace” training program, which teaches them to understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help when needed through relationships with trusted adults. We are deeply blessed with the collaboration of Safe Environment coordinators, parish priests, directors of religious education, and countless other staff and volunteers

who make this mission successful. Their support for this program is essential in helping us protect our children and youth.

The program reinforces, in a peer setting, that their faith community cares about their safety and wants them to understand how to seek help if they feel unsafe for any reason. It helps them identify potentially unsafe situations and know how to handle them by seeking help from trusted adults. The lessons are written with great attention to the stages of child development, to ensure age appropriateness.

The annual contest for Circle of Grace posters was a success. Many children submitted beautiful artwork, some of which is proudly displayed outside the Safe Environment office at McRaith Catholic Center.

To learn more about the Circle of Grace program, visit our website at <https://owensborodiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/Common-Questions-of-Parents.pdf>. ■



Courtesy of a first-grade student at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville.



Courtesy of an eighth-grade student at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville.

Helping and Healing

By Louanne Seibert, Diocesan Tribunal

One of the ways the Church addresses the needs of divorced Catholics is through the ministry offered by the diocesan Tribunal which is designed to help individuals in the healing process by seeking clarification regarding the sacramental validity of a previous marriage. The Diocese of Owensboro's Tribunal accepted 27 formal cases for the year 2024 and rendered 33 Definitive Sentences. There were five cases suspended either by the parties or the Tribunal for lack of participation. In addition, two Privilege of Faith, three Pauline Privileges and rendered 2 Decisions, and 12 Ligamen cases were accepted and 11 Decisions were rendered. The success of the Tribunal continues this year with the training of approximately 15 new Advocates in June 2025 for ministry in parishes throughout the diocese; and with positive feedback regarding the monthly “Tribunal Explains” series in The Western Kentucky Catholic and on social media, which educates the faithful on common misconceptions regarding the annulment process. To date in 2025, the Tribunal has accepted 23 new cases, and 25 cases remain in process from previous years. ■



COURTESY OF DONNA SAUER MILLER
Delegates of the Canon Law Society of America visit with Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, future Pope Leo XIV on Feb. 28, 2025 – including Fr. Patrick Cooney, OSB, judicial vicar of the Diocese of Owensboro.

Building Up the Body of Christ with Generosity

By Valeria Vessels, Director of Stewardship & Development

In nine parishes across our diocese, Sunday offertory giving has increased by a combined \$684,342!

Over a three-year span, that translates to over \$2 million going directly to our parishes. Some parishes have seen offertory growth as high as 33%, 29%, 23% with others experiencing steady increases of 10% and more.

This is thanks to our proven and free Increased Offertory Program, offered to parishes ready to grow

their Sunday offertory collections and deepen their parishioners' sense of stewardship. The response has been remarkable.

I invite your parish to take part in this program, offered through the Office of Stewardship and Development. I will personally walk with you through the nine-week process. We have sample materials we can personalize for your parish – helping you build a prayerful and intentional culture of giving that fits your parish.

I also encourage all parishes to include a reminder in their bulletins asking parishioners to consider remembering their parish in their will. This simple act of legacy can have a lasting impact. If you need help crafting a message or would like sample language, I am happy to assist.

When we give back to our parish, we are participating in something much bigger than ourselves – we are building up the Body of Christ. For assistance with the Increased Offertory Program or legacy giving, please contact me, Valeria Vessels, at (270) 852-8348 or via email at valeria.vessels@pastoral.org. ■

A Powerhouse of Faith: Lay Leaders Serving the Church

By Dr. Jeff Andrini, Office of Evangelization & Discipleship

Consider for a moment the impact of Vatican II. It was a seminal call to the People of God to recognize that by baptism, we are all anointed to follow and live the mission of Jesus. Look around your parish and the Diocese of Owensboro and you will see what shared leadership and co-responsibility looks like!

In this past year we saw 200 adults lead Acts 2:42 small groups in 61 of our 78 parishes across the diocese. Many more adults led Bible studies, prayer groups, and service organizations like St. Vincent de Paul, plus hundreds more serve in children and

youth ministries, pastoral and finance councils, parish liturgies, and countless other ministries. Retreat ministries are also lay-led ministries and serve other adults such as Christ Renews His Parish in our Hispanic communities, Cursillo, Koinonia, and Genesaret retreats.

We also saw the return of the Catholic Men's Conference of Western Kentucky, where a team of over a dozen men hosted this 10th annual gathering for 391 men. That same weekend, the second annual Joy, Laughter & Holiness women's retreat, led by a talented team of women from St. Ann in



COURTESY OF DR. JEFF ANDRINI
Retreat participants help with landscaping during the April 2025 diocesan men's retreat held at Rough River Dam State Resort Park.

Continues on page 23

Powerhouse continued from page 22

Morganfield, sold out with 258 attending. And this past April, we hosted a men's retreat at Rough River Dam State Resort Park, which focused on the four pillars of men's ministries: worship, formation, service, and social.

We thank God for Bishop Medley and our priests who have accepted the call to the ministerial priesthood and for all the laypeople of our parishes who have accepted the call to live our common baptism as leaders in the Church. Together we are having a lasting impact in building the kingdom of God in western Kentucky! Reach out to our Office of Evangelization & Discipleship for training and growth opportunities. ■

Bringing Messages of Truth and Hope

By Rachel Hall, Office of Communications

We work hard to tell the stories of others, to inform and inspire in a way that is clear, transparent, and true. It's a balancing act, using many different tools and sources. We see this work as a vocation, a calling to be messengers, as Fr. Corey Bruns reminded us during our reflection day at St. Joseph in Bowling Green. His words drew a powerful parallel between our work and those of the archangels. (St. Gabriel is the patron saint for communications.) Like them, we are sent to bring messages of truth and hope.

Our focus is to help people see the good happening in our diocese and to keep them informed, knowing that informed people become better formed in their faith. We are blessed with a beautiful, diverse diocese, made up of parishes and schools with unique personalities, and we strive to bring these stories together so others can see the



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Bishop William F. Medley speaks at a press conference in St. Stephen Cathedral on May 8, 2025, following the announcement of the election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, who will go by Pope Leo XIV, as the 267th Bishop of Rome. Riley Greif, diocesan digital media specialist, is seen third from the left.

Good News alive in our communities.

Whether through social media, with our 6,900 Facebook followers, YouTube and other platforms, or through our diocesan website, owensborodiocese.org with over 6,400 users, we are always learning and growing, seeking new ways to reach people where they are. We publish a monthly newspaper, *The Western Kentucky Catholic*, that reaches 20,000

mailboxes. We do our best to lift stories high.

No two days in the Office of Communications are alike. Behind one door, the next edition of *The Western Kentucky Catholic* is being edited. Outside another, the "On Air" sign might be lit as Bishop William F. Medley records a video message. A third door may be closing as someone heads out to cover

Continues on page 24

Messages of Truth continued from page 23

the latest event.

We work closely with the pastoral center, parishes, and schools to help promote the mission of the local church. From translations, event coverage, website management, social media posts, even email distribution, it all adds up to effective communication in a fast-changing world. And today, that work matters more than ever. ■

Here’s a prayer for communication – now this is for you too, if you’re writing, giving a speech, or simply hoping to communicate better, pray along with us:

A Prayer for Communicators

St. Gabriel, angel of the Lord, who appeared with joyful announcements and brought clarity that led to peace, intercede for us as we stay steadfast in our mission to spread the Good Word.

Give us sharp minds, to find the words that are wise and true.

Give us hearts ready to give glory to God’s beauty. Let us plant the seeds that will one day grow. Guide us to do all things in His holy name. Amen.

RILEY GREIF | WKC
Rachel Hall, director of communications, covers 2024 Rainbow Mass for Catholic Schools at the Owensboro Sportscenter. Also pictured is Flora Hall, unofficial mascot of the Office of Communications.



COURTESY OF HOLY SPIRIT PARISH
Riley Greif, left, and Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, right, are seen at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green while covering the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage within the Diocese of Owensboro on July 3, 2024.

Office of Communications

Western Kentucky Catholic Recipients 20,000+

YouTube: Diocese of Owensboro @dioceseofowensboro7623

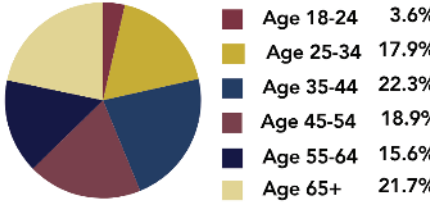
Websites: 4 Site Visits
owensborodiocese.org 308,000
owensborovocations.com 2,400
cleanheartinitiative.org 42,000
westernkycatholic.com 45,000

New Subscribers 69

New YouTube Videos 41

Top Video Views 443

Facebook Demographics



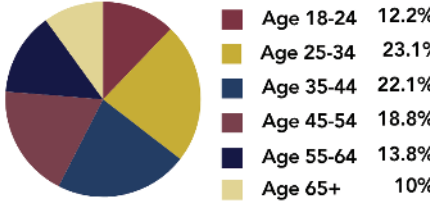
Facebook Page

New Followers 900
Total Followers 6,900
Top Post
Views 63,000
Interactions 184
Shares 93

Instagram Page

New Followers 230
Total Followers 2,233
Top Post
Views 3,000
Likes 280
Shares 25

Instagram Demographics



We know that good communication starts with good listening. If you want to connect – we’d love to hear from you! Email us at communications@pastoral.org, subscribe to our e-newsletter at <https://owensborodiocese.org/e-newsletter>, and follow the diocese on social media at facebook.com/DioceseOfOwensboro and instagram.com/owensborodiocese.

The staff of the Office of Communications are Rachel Hall, director; Riley Grief, digital media specialist; and Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, editor of The Western Kentucky Catholic and coordinator of diocesan publications.

Deposit and Loan Fund Fuels Millions in Growth

By Tom Lilly, Chancellor of the Diocese of Owensboro

As our diocese continues to plan and grow resources for the future, parishes and schools are doing the same. There are no shortages of building projects going on in the Catholic Church throughout western Kentucky. Parishes are required to park nonoperational dollars in the Deposit Loan Fund, which provides the cash flow money to help start new construction. Nearly 30 sites throughout the diocese have wrapped up or are in the middle of/gearing up to renovate, expand or simply update their facilities. This number doesn't even include the repairs to facilities that were hit by tornados, hail and recent flooding. At this very moment, the diocese itself is working on a \$2 million campaign to build apartments for retired priests behind the Carmel Home in Owensboro.

One of the largest efforts is occurring in

Whitesville, where the community has raised over \$12 million to begin the first phase of a new K-12 school building that serves the surrounding areas. In Knottsville it is a new parish hall and offices. In Union County, an effort is in place to pay off the \$1 million debt for the St. John Paul II School that serves five parishes. St. Leo in Murray is working to put the finishing touches on a new Newman Center, while St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Bowling Green recently had serious roofing repairs and built back after a fire to an adjoining structure. Owensboro Catholic High School is converting their small gym into a chapel, and the Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp and Retreat Center can finally accommodate two lanes and bus traffic! St. Gianna, a new ministry to assist homeless mothers, has opened its doors in Bowling Green. From rectories to parish halls,

schools to parishes and miscellaneous ministries, the Catholic Church of western Kentucky is working on infrastructure, expansion and growth for the future.

All the activities around these projects involve coordination and communication between the diocese and the respective ministry – and sometimes banking, insurance, construction and financial institutions. All parish dollars that extend beyond operational costs are required to be deposited in the Deposit/Loan account, since that's where the cash flow funds most of the work during construction. Meanwhile, ministry pledges are being collected over a 3-5 year pledge period. The system was instituted in the 1960s so that one parish's savings could help another parish fund building projects during pledge campaign periods. ■

List of communities considering, starting, completing building projects:

Blessed Mother, Owensboro
Diocesan Apartments for Retired Priests
Gasper River, Bowling Green
Holy Name, Henderson
Immaculate, Owensboro
Owensboro Catholic High
Precious Blood, Owensboro
Resurrection, Dawson Springs
St. William, Knottsville
St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

St. Joseph, Bowling Green
St. Joseph Mayfield
St. Jerome, Fancy Farm
St. Paul Princeton
St. Stephen, Owensboro
St. Thomas Aquinas, Bowling Green
St. Leo, Murray
St. Francis DeSales, Paducah

St. Thomas More, Paducah
St. Giana, Bowling Green
St. Mary, Franklin
St. Augustine, Reed
Immaculate Conception, Earlington
St. Benedict, Wax

ST JOHN PAUL II DEBT RELIEF:
St. Ann, Morganfield
St. Ambrose, Henshaw
St Agnes, Uniontown
Sacred Heart, Waverly
St. Peter, Waverly
St Fracis Borgia, Sturgis

Continues on page 26

Efficiently and Effectively Supporting Our Communities

By Tom Lilly, Chancellor

The numbers may be large and complicated, but our independent auditors have issued an unmodified opinion—meaning they found the Diocese of Owensboro’s financial statements to be presented fairly and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Diocesan finance staff track hundreds of accounts, record nuanced designations, and try to be models of stewardship as money is the fuel that drives efforts of ministry in our parishes, schools, shelters and other forms of support staff.

Income

For the last fiscal year, contributions and investments drove a \$1.1 million surplus. The final expenditures for the 2021 tornado that devastated areas of western Kentucky will be expended by the end of the 2026 calendar year. Because of the effective and efficient way tornado funds were administered, the diocese also provided flood relief services for parts of eastern and western Kentucky, funded by designated contributions and state/federal disaster relief dollars. The diocese received approximately \$850,000 in grants, \$700,000 from endowment income, and \$600,000 from the Disciples Response Fund. Diocesan ministries do not provide revenue, but are an essential component of the Catholic Church of Western Kentucky.

Another primary source of revenue is the \$3.9 million in income from parish assessments. The assessment percentage has not increased for seven years, mainly because of increased contributions and strong investment returns. Because of the volatility of annual contributions, they are not dependable sources of budgeted revenue, but the income from those investments has a significant impact on parish assessments.

Expenses

The primary work of the budget is to provide resources and support for the work of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Owensboro. Diocesan staff have some administrative roles, but nearly all of them are available to schools and parishes to assist in the efforts of evangelization, education, parish support, and faith formation. The major expenses are associated with support of youth and young adults at \$1.5 million, while vocations support is close to \$800,000 per year. The diocese currently provides training opportunities for parish staff, professional development for school and parish staff, and faith formation and support for small group communities. All disaster relief expenses were covered by restricted giving and disaster aid.

As we continue our mission of spreading the Gospel, diocesan staff continue to seek ways to efficiently and effectively be resources of support for parishes and schools throughout the diocese. ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

Here are some of the many mission and vocation collections the diocese coordinates to support ministries near and far. God works powerfully through our generosity!



\$44,618

CRS & Rice Bowl

Mandeville Jamacia

\$58,088

\$257,274

St Benedict's

\$29,389

Retired Religious

\$46,291

Brescia

\$33,737

Seminarian Fund

\$14,515

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

\$18,037

Home Missions

\$107,663

Flood Relief

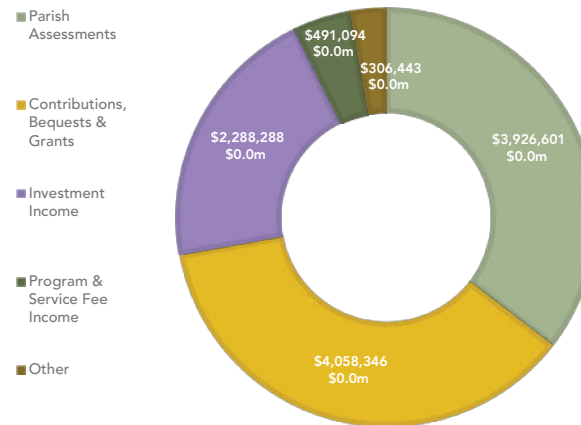
26

Diocese of Owensboro | Annual Impact Report

Operating Expenses by Ministry

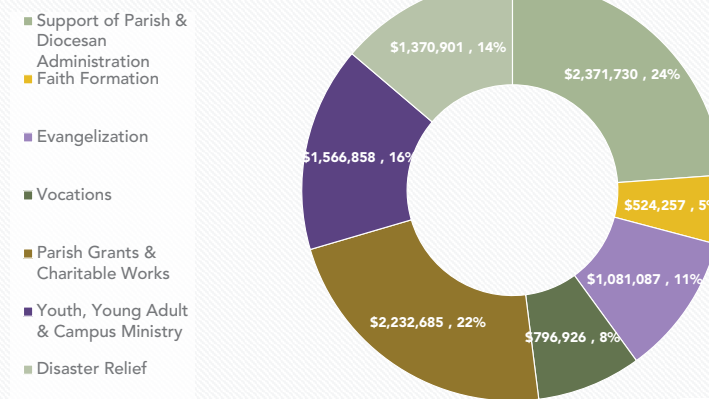
Support of Parish & Diocesan Administration
Bishop
Review Board
Chancellor
Finance
HR
McRaith Catholic Center
Diocesan Properties
Technology
Faith Formation
Faith Formation
Catholic Schools Office
Evangelization
Evangelization
Communications
Worship
Music
Marriage & Family Life
Vocations
Seminarians
International Priest
Diaconate Programs
Parish Grants & Charitable Works
Stewardship
Annual Appeal
Catholic Charities
Hispanic Ministry
Black Catholic Ministry
St. Benedict's and Other Entities
Youth, Young Adult & Campus Ministry
Safe Environment
Campus Ministry
Youth Ministry
Marian Shrine (Youth 2000)
Disaster Relief
Tornado Relief
Flood Relief

Operating Income Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024



Parish Assessments	\$ 3,926,601
Contributions, Bequests & Grants	\$ 4,058,346
Investment Income	\$ 2,288,288
Program & Service Fee Income	\$ 491,094
Other	\$ 306,443

Operating Expenses by Ministry Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024



Support of Parish & Diocesan Administration	\$ 2,371,730
Faith Formation	\$ 524,257
Evangelization	\$ 1,081,087
Vocations	\$ 796,926
Parish Grants & Charitable Works	\$ 2,232,685
Youth, Young Adult & Campus Ministry	\$ 1,566,858
Disaster Relief	\$ 1,370,901

As a part of the Diocese of Owensboro's ongoing commitment to communication and accountability, this report presents a brief summary of the financial operations of the Chancery for fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. The information presented has been derived from the audited financial statements and does not include activities of parishes, missions, and schools of the Diocese. The complete audited financial statements are available for public inspection at www.owensborodiocese.org.

Paying Kindness to Future Generations

By Tom Lilly, Chancellor of the Diocese of Owensboro

In the early 1990s the Diocese of Owensboro embarked on an education campaign that focused on the future of Catholic Church ministries. As leaders of faith, we should be as concerned with what will happen in the future Church as we are with what’s happening in the Church today. In many cases, leaders focus on their day-to-day issues. But some attention should also be paid to paying kindness forward for future generations.

What started out as \$50,000 in 1991 has grown to \$42 million today from efforts that pay kindness forward. The Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky supports 40 ministries throughout the diocese who have established accounts with the Foundation, and they receive over \$2 million a year in distributions. While \$13 million supports the work of the diocese (seminarian education, religious education, and other parish resources), over \$26 million is held in 36 accounts held for other ministries that support schools, cemeteries, and subsidizes parish efforts. Endowments distribute 5% of their income from their corpus each year in addition to growing some 4%.

Endowments are part of the reason that the diocesan assessment has not increased in over seven years!

Generous individuals support their school and parish endowments by purchasing charitable gift annuities (earning an income from a gift) or making it a beneficiary of their will or estate. A gift to the Foundation is a gift that provides an annual income to the benefiting ministry in perpetuity forever! ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky Endowment Acct. Balances

Balances at the end of of the day May 15, 2025

CFWKY - Anne Garnett Mem End	\$71,593.32
CFWKY - Annuity	\$783,896.71
CFWKY - Blessed Sacrament Chapel	\$28,593.03
CFWKY - Brady (Catholic Education)	\$123,268.30
CFWKY - Catholic Sch Education Fund	\$1,666,867.79
CFWKY - Christ the King Madisonville	\$505,348.09
CFWKY - Christ the King School Endow	\$59,929.19
CFWKY - Gasper River	\$139,202.57
CFWKY - General Diocesan Support	\$13,515,844.75
CFWKY - Henderson CRUT	\$43,713.55
CFWKY - HNCC Cemeterv Prop	\$1.237.726.57

CFWKY - HNS - Tierney Endow	\$42,779.03
CFWKY - Holy Name Cath Grade Sch	\$2,475,561.77
CFWKY - Holy Name Catholic Church	\$1,237,730.49
CFWKY - Holy Name Sch Mem Sch Fd	\$80,750.84
CFWKY - Holy Name School Facilities	\$2,409,660.93
CFWKY - Immaculate Concep Hawesville	\$57,082.40
CFWKY - John Paul II Sch	\$372,326.49
CFWKY - Milton CRUT Agt	\$569,357.62
CFWKY - OCHS - Athletics	\$1,250,060.61
CFWKY - OCS Rhinerson Ed Fund	\$289,828.93
CFWKY - Owensboro Cath HS	\$8,152,961.18
CFWKY - Owensboro Cath Sch	\$1,962,198.48
CFWKY - St Alphonsus Cemetery	\$269,592.26
CFWKY - St Ann Cem Fd	\$181,482.80
CFWKY - St Charles Cem Bardwell	\$54,276.01
CFWKY - St Charles Parish and Cemetery	\$79,642.06
CFWKY - St Columba Lewisport	\$58,674.32
CFWKY - St Denis Cemetery	\$178,777.90
CFWKY - St Edward (R W Dalton)	\$50,912.27
CFWKY - St John Cemetery Sunfish	\$331,425.55
CFWKY - St Joseph Central City	\$348,129.49
CFWKY - St Joseph Ch Bowling Green	\$196,928.98
CFWKY - St Joseph Sch Bowling Green	\$155,115.77
CFWKY - St Paul Princeton	\$25,099.52
CFWKY - St Peter of Alcantara	\$251,774.72
CFWKY - St Pius Tenth Owensboro	\$51,827.92
CFWKY - St Romuald Cemt Hardinsburg	\$441,792.84
CFWKY - St Romuald Sch Hardinsburg	\$59,297.19
CFWKY - St Sebastian Cemetery	\$12,502.73
CFWKY - St Thomas More Paducah	\$1,956,209.08
CFWKY - STS Peter and Paul School	\$478,689.98

\$42,258,434.03

Board Members, Catholic Foundation of Western Kentucky

Bishop William F. Medley
Lonnie Crowdus, President
Julie Garvin, Vice President
Fr. Pat Reynolds, Vicar General
Tom Lilly, Secretary

Voting Board Members: Travis Girtten, Scott McCain, Harold Staples, Al Thompson, Kenny Buckman, Amy Jackson, Harold Staples, Mark Thompson

All Major Funds are represented on the Board. For more information about the Foundation or its Board Members, call Valeria Vessels at (270) 683-1545.



RILEY GRIEF | WKC

Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley

Queridos amigos,

Nuestro número especial de informe de impacto anual de *El Católico de Kentucky Occidental* nos brinda la oportunidad de observar el compromiso de la diócesis y de nuestras parroquias en tantas buenas obras.

Este año, sin embargo, nuestra atención se ha dirigido a ver a la Iglesia católica desde una visión global. Desde hace varias semanas nos acostumbramos a recibir informes diarios sobre la salud del Papa Francisco. A la edad de 88 años y con varios problemas de salud crónicos, sufrió una neumonía doble. Su fuerte voluntad lo ayudó a salir del hospital y regresar a su casa en la Ciudad del Vaticano. Durante la Semana Santa hizo múltiples audiencias públicas, pero su fragilidad era evidente para todos.

El Domingo de Pascua extendió su bendición apostólica a los peregrinos reunidos en la Plaza de San Pedro y en todo el mundo. El lunes de Pascua por la mañana nos enteramos de que el Papa Francisco había muerto.

Esto desencadenó días de luto, pero también de alegría porque este buen hombre había ido al cielo.

Poco después, la asamblea más diversa jamás reunida de cardenales de todo el mundo se reunió para orar y dialogar durante varios días hasta formar un cónclave para elegir un nuevo Obispo de Roma: nuestro nuevo Papa. En el segundo día del cónclave y después de sólo cuatro votaciones, el cardenal Robert Francis Prevost fue presentado al mundo como el Papa León XIV. Y contra toda creencia popular, él es estadounidense, de hecho nació en Estados Unidos, aunque ha pasado gran parte de su ministerio

en Perú, Sudamérica.

Con el telón de fondo de este cambio histórico, continuamos nuestro camino de discipulado misionero aquí en el oeste de Kentucky. Encontramos a nuestra Iglesia concluyendo un Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional de tres años, cuyo punto culminante fue el gran Congreso Eucarístico en Indianapolis el verano pasado, al que asistieron cientos de personas de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

Pronto se cumplirán cuatro años desde que los catastróficos tornados arrasaron el oeste de Kentucky. Nuestras Caridades Católicas continúan colaborando con otras agencias y organizaciones para ayudar a los sobrevivientes a reconstruir sus vidas. Este año nuestra región también sufrió inundaciones históricas, por lo que continuamos reconstruyendo hogares y vidas.

Los repetidos desafíos del Papa Francisco de cuidar a los más pequeños entre nosotros, los migrantes y refugiados del mundo, deben ser una medida de nuestro discipulado. La elección del nombre León por parte del Papa León, inspirada por el Papa León XIII que escribió *Rerum novarum*, una encíclica sobre la doctrina social de la Iglesia, señala que él también nos hablará al mundo de llevar el Evangelio de Jesús a los pobres.

Son miles los catequistas, lectores, ministros extraordinarios de la Sagrada Comunión y quienes visitan a los enfermos y a los confinados en sus hogares que llevan la luz de Cristo desde nuestras parroquias. En verdad, la obra del discipulado nos está confiada a todos. Únanse a mí en oración para que los hombres y las mujeres escuchen y respondan al llamado extraordinario del Señor a discernir vocaciones espe-

ciales al sacerdocio y a la vida consagrada.

Este informe de la misión de nuestra Iglesia es una historia apasionante. Es una historia de la que toda persona está llamada a formar parte. Mientras leen esta historia en las siguientes páginas, oren para que estemos abiertos a escuchar nuestros propios llamados especiales.

Estoy muy orgulloso de la Diócesis de Owensboro y agradezco a Dios por nuestra gente. Tengan por seguro mis oraciones por todos ustedes y les pido amablemente que oren por mí.

Sinceramente suyo en Cristo,

+ William F. Medley

Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro



El pueblo de Dios es devoto y siempre está en camino

Por el Diácono Cristóbal Gutiérrez, Oficina del Ministerio Hispano/Latino

Queridos amigos de la Diócesis de Owensboro: muchas gracias por el continuo apoyo que muchos de ustedes brindan de diversas maneras para que la diócesis continúe creciendo y sosteniendo su acercamiento pastoral a través del ministerio hispano/latino. Especialmente ahora, durante un momento difícil de prueba e incertidumbre para tantas familias inmigrantes en nuestra diócesis, su amor, sus oraciones y su apoyo significan mucho.

El Papa Francisco será recordado y extrañado por los hispanos/latinos por muchas razones y conexiones, pero para el propósito de este informe de impacto de 2024, me gustaría mencionar algunos aspectos relacionados con él, que durante el último año han motivado al pueblo de Dios en nuestra diócesis.

Los católicos hispanos/latinos siempre estamos agradecidos de participar en diversas procesiones y eventos eucarísticos en nuestra diócesis. El Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional nos bendijo con la renovación y el fortalecimiento de la devoción y el

amor a Jesús en la Eucaristía. Esto fue especialmente cierto cuando la Peregrinación Eucarística Nacional pasó por nuestra diócesis y los católicos hispanos/latinos tuvieron la oportunidad de celebrar devociones y queridas tradiciones de fe.

El Papa Francisco en su encíclica *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos recordó: “Cada cristiano y cada comunidad discernirá cuál es el camino que el Señor le pide, pero todos somos invitados a aceptar este llamado: salir de la propia comodidad y atreverse a llegar a todas las periferias que necesitan la luz del Evangelio” (EG #20). En relación con el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional, nuestra diócesis lo vivió a través de la iniciativa de Hechos 2,42. Esta fomentó el discipulado misionero mediante la formación de pequeñas comunidades basadas en

la fe en hogares y fuera de las instalaciones de la iglesia, amigables para aquellos que quizás estaban distantes o dudaban en venir a un edificio o salón de la iglesia.

Estoy agradecido a todos, incluyendo nuestra maravillosa oficina de comunicaciones, por este increíble informe de impacto anual y por su apoyo y amor por este ministerio. Al abrazar con alegría el papado de nuestro nuevo Santo Padre, el Papa León XIV, la comunidad hispana/latina de nuestra diócesis continuará contribuyendo generosamente y compartiendo sus muchos talentos, alegría, fe y profundo amor por la Iglesia. ■





McRaith Catholic Center | 600 Locust Street | Owensboro, KY 42301

Periodical: 25732
U.S. Postage
PAID
Owensboro,
KY 42301
ISSN: 2996-8445



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

(Left to right) Fr. Mike Williams and Fr. John Vaughan concelebrate Bishop Medley's May 19 Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope Leo XIV.

On the Horizon for 2025-2026

By WKC Staff

As we continue celebrating the Jubilee 2025, with its theme of Pilgrims of Hope, you are encouraged to continue participating in our diocesan observances like visiting the parish pilgrimage sites (St. Stephen Cathedral, St. Romuald Parish in Hardinsburg, St. Leo Parish in Murray, St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah, the Marian Shrine at St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Beaver Dam). Don't forget that "passport" booklets are available and can be stamped at each location.

This coming year, our Diocese of Owensboro has several exciting new initiatives on the horizon.

One project continues the concept of Acts 2:42, a small group video reflections program that our parishes have enjoyed for the past two years, but will now focus on delving into the Sacred Scriptures. In collaboration with the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship, the Office of Communications will produce a monthly video reflection from Bishop Medley on the fourth Sunday of each month. This series, called "In the Word

with Bishop Medley," will take place from September 2025 to May 2026 and includes an accompanying booklet to guide parish small group discussions.

Another project includes the campaign launched this spring to finally build an established retirement home for our senior priests. As our stewardship & development director, Valeria Vessels, shares on page 4 of this special issue, our priests have walked us through many of life's most sacred moments. This campaign seeks to provide dedicated residences for our priests who have retired after offering their lives to our Church.

At the other end of the journey, the diocese will be welcoming incoming vocations director Fr. Corey Bruns on June 10. As Fr. Bruns shared in an interview for the May issue of the WKC, he hopes to demonstrate that the priesthood and religious life are "a life that's worth living, a life that's worth choosing" and that "we're all called to be saints and bring as many people to heaven as possible."

Please pray for our diocese that, as Pope Leo stated, we may continue facing the unique challenges of our 21st century as we continue on a journey of hope. ■