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Staff of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro, Christian Public Service volunteers, and new homeowners and neighbors bow their heads in prayer on Aug. 26, 2025 during the dedication of two new homes in Mayfield, as 2021 tornado recovery continues. **Page 4**



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Bishop William F. Medley, clergy and servers process out of St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro at the conclusion of the Sept. 21 Marriage Celebration Mass, which honors special anniversaries of married couples around the Diocese of Owensboro. [Page 24](#)

Photo by Riley Greif.

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Front page main photo by Riley Greif, *The Western Kentucky Catholic*.

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

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

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

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A Word From Bishop Medley: *St. Francis of Assisi: A model for all people*

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Giovanni de Pietro de Bernardon was born in Assisi in 1881 into an affluent family. His father was a noted cloth merchant and his mother was French, also of an affluent family. His father was away in France when Giovanni was born. Upon his return home his father took to calling him by a nickname – Francisco, which means Frenchman.

With well-off parents, Francis enjoyed the good life as a child, though there are no indications that in his life this indicated any corruption, but just indulgence.

There are so many stories of Francis’ formative life. He served in the military in a war between kingdoms within Italy. He was wounded and taken prisoner and spent a year as a prisoner of war.

This event seems to have been the beginning of a conversion of spirit. He became more reflective, more prayerful. A story is related of his encounter with a beggar in which he gave the beggar everything he had with him. This infuriated his father who actually prosecuted him before the Bishop of Assisi as the gifts to the beggar were actually Francis’ father’s possessions.

Francis was known to go and pray in the Church of San Damiano on the outskirts of Assisi. The church was all but abandoned and in terrible shape. There Francis heard a message, “Francis, repair my Church.” The young man took this as a directive to physically repair the church building, and, as a charismatic young man, he engaged friends and acquaintances to join him in the project.

But Francis came to understand that the message of repairing the Church had a deeper meaning and



OSV NEWS PHOTO/SAM LUCERO, CNS
A hunter’s moon rises behind a statue of St. Francis of Assisi on the grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in Champion, Wis., Oct 8, 2022.

he began to demonstrate a life of prayer and poverty and service to those in need. This conversion further alienated him from his prosperous father.

Over time, Francis’ quiet witness attracted others, and this became the roots of the Franciscan order that serves the Church universally to this day. Francis is remembered and emulated for his love and care for all of creation. He showed a great reverence for all that God has created. Francis enjoys the esteem of Christians and non-Christians alike.

October 4 is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi and good day for all of us to consider his legacy and accept the invitation to follow Francis and “repair the Church.”

May God bless you all,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

BISHOP MEDLEY'S OCTOBER 2025 CALENDAR	
Oct 1-2	Overnight Retreat with Presbyterate – Kenlake State Park
Oct 4	11 AM Jubilee for Sr. Consolata Ojemeh’s 25th Anniversary – St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro
	1 PM Closing Mass for National Migration Week – Cathedral
Oct 5	2 PM Conferral of Ministry of Lector for Burmese Permanent Diaconate Candidates – Holy Spirit Parish, Bowling Green
Oct 8	9:30 AM School Mass – St. Mary High School, Paducah
Oct 12	11 AM Mass – Mount Saint Joseph, Maple Mount
Oct 14-16	Visit Seminarians at Conception Seminary College, Missouri
Oct 20	10 AM Priest Personnel Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center, Owensboro
	1:30 PM Priests’ Council Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center
Oct 21	9:30 AM School Mass – St. Mary Elementary School, Paducah
Oct 22	10 AM Staff Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center
	12 noon Midday Prayer and Lunch with Passionist Nuns
Oct 23-24	Brescia Board Meeting
Oct 25	11 AM Sisters’ Jubilee Celebration – St. Martin Parish, Rome, Ky.
	6 PM Brescia University Centennial Gala – Green River Distillery, Owensboro
Oct 29-31	Visit Seminarian at Divine Word College, Iowa



**The Campaign for
Senior Priest Apartments**
DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

Senior priest home campaign moves forward with strong support



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Bishop William F. Medley speaks at the Aug. 14, 2025 reception held at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro for the Faithful Foundations campaign to build senior priest apartments.

BY OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The work continues on raising the money to build apartments for our senior priests. Faithful Foundations: The Campaign for Senior Priest Apartments is an effort to start construction to build the first of three possible buildings, each building housing four apartments. Some consideration will be given to constructing two buildings with four apartments per building, but it will depend on the success of fundraising efforts.

Bishop William F. Medley spoke at five meetings hosted at parishes and open to the public in the late summer, inviting all to consider participating in this campaign.

There has already been generous support and priests throughout the diocese have pledged over \$130,000. The goal of the effort is to begin construction in the

coming weeks, but also provide enough balance to subsidize ongoing costs for the apartments.

“We are deeply grateful for the pledges and gifts already made to the Senior Priest Apartments,” said Bishop Medley. “The generosity of our families is helping us honor and care for the priests who have given so much of their lives to serving Christ and his Church.”

Those who wish to learn more, schedule a personal visit, or make a gift to the campaign are invited to contact Valeria Vessels, director of the Office of Stewardship and Development, at (270) 852-8348.

The Diocese of Owensboro thanks all who have shared their financial gifts and prayers for the success of this campaign. Together, we are laying a foundation of faith and gratitude for the priests who have faithfully guided us throughout our lives. ■

‘A peace of mind’ – Mayfield residents celebrate new homes following 2021 tornado

BY RILEY GREIF, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

“Tell me the story always, if you would really be, in any time of trouble, a comforter to me.”

These words were sung in celebration of the comfort God has provided in times of trouble for two Mayfield families at the dedication of two new homes on August 26, 2025. Christian Public Service volunteers led those present in singing the hymn, “Tell Me the Old, Old Story.” Homeowners Sebastian Hurtado and Bertha Velasquez, as well as homeowner Genie Amado, received the keys to their finished homes after two years of prayer and patience.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Fr. Darrell Venters blesses two new Mayfield houses on August 26, 2025.

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RILEY GREIF | WKC
Christian Public Service Volunteers lead dedication attendees in hymns in one of the newly finished homes. August 26, 2025.



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Bertha Velasquez hugs Weldon Bender after he hands her the keys to her new house on August 26, 2025.

Their previous homes sustained damage by the December 2021 tornados and intense flooding in recent years. The most recent flooding experience was so extreme that the families were evacuated from their homes. Homeowner Bertha Velasquez shared that the December 2021 tornado affected them in many ways, not only damaging their home but also because she worked in the Mayfield candle factory that was leveled by the storm.

The two new homes were built by the Christian Public Service Organization with Catholic Charities handling the case management for the two families. The homes were blessed and dedicated by Fr. Darrell Venters, pastor of St. Jerome Parish in Fancy Farm.

Homeowner Genie Amador expressed her gratitude for everyone who helped her along the way, specifically Catholic Charities case manager Karina Gonzalez: “We had applied with somebody else, and they had denied the application. Karina didn’t give up; she figured out a way to help out,” Amado shared.


For Amado and her four children, prayer played a large role in this process, with Amado stating, “they (the kids) prayed every single day, they prayed for the workers for every single one to keep them strong, to keep them safe”. Amado kept the date of the dedication a secret from her children, surprising them by bringing them to the dedication ceremony. The children were in disbelief and were thrilled to explore their newly finished home. The completion of the project brings Amado and her family, “a peace of mind that we are going to be safe.”

The lots the homes were built on, located across the street from St. Joseph Parish in Mayfield, were donated by the parish. Amado expressed her excitement to walk to church with her kids every Sunday. In addition to Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, and Christian Public Service, both families share that they experienced



RILEY GREIF | WKC
The Amador family walks over to the Hurtado and Velasquez home to help them move in.


profound support from the parish community of St. Joseph in Mayfield. Velasquez stated, “being in the community of St. Joseph is the biggest help, not in a material or monetary way but in a spiritual support”. ■



Welcome to the 35th Annual
Diocesan Marian Congress Prayer Service
“Pilgrims of Hope through Mary”

October 4, 2025, 8:30 a.m. – 1p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Bowling Green

- Marian Congress Mass at 8:30 a.m. in the church
- Jubilee indulgences in the Marian Shrine
- Bread and Marian Shrine history presentation in St. Joseph Hall
- Confessions available
- Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Offering
- Rosary procession
- Revivalation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet
- Presentation by Fr. Peter Stryker
- Adoration and Benediction



Keynote speaker:
Fr. Peter Stryker, CPM

With ‘solidarity, love of neighbor,’ local author collaborates on works of mercy guide

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The works of mercy are a great way to “guide our daily choices” according to a local author who recently contributed to Ascension Press’s “Pocket Guide to the Works of Mercy.”

“We all like practical guides,” said Neena Gaynor, who resides in Hancock County and with her husband and sons joined the Catholic Church in 2017. She said this new book is “an invitation to live like Christ in a suffering world.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the works of mercy as “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.”

The spiritual works of mercy are instructing, advising, consoling, comforting, forgiving, and bearing wrongs patiently; whereas the corporal works of mercy are feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.

Gaynor said this guide details all 14 of the works and provides tangible ways to live them out. For example, when it comes to the work of “burying the dead,” even if one does not literally bury the deceased, “you can attend funerals, offer to help a grieving family,” she said.

For “visiting the imprisoned,” Gaynor explained that “we can write letters” to the incarcerated, and when it comes to “feeding the hungry,” she cited St. Teresa of Calcutta, also known as Mother Teresa.

“Our world is hungry and thirsty in a lot of different ways,” said Gaynor, alluding to Mother Teresa’s awareness of the “loneliness and ache and emptiness” in the people she encountered, whether they were poor or wealthy.

The “Pocket Guide to the Works of Mercy” came to be in a roundabout way, which Gaynor now realizes was through the Holy Spirit’s guidance as she collaborated with co-authors Claire Couche and Elizabeth Marcolini.

Originally, Couche, Marcolini and Gaynor intended to write a book on modern etiquette.

“We were seeking to debunk the myth that etiquette is a ‘champagne-drenched white glove affair,’” said Gaynor. “Etiquette has always been about kindness.”

As the three friends – all of them Catholic wives and moms – brainstormed about the best way to present their material, they sought an answer to the question of where etiquette first originated.

“We were searching for an answer, and of course the answer was Christ,” said Gaynor, explaining that their search led them to Matthew 25:35-36, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”

The book had grown into something even greater than they imagined. They ultimately connected with Ascension Press to form the project into the eighth Pocket Guide (whose series includes other topics like the rosary, Adoration, and novenas).



COURTESY OF CLAIRE COUCHE
Neena Gaynor, a local author who contributed to Ascension Press’s new book, “The Pocket Guide to the Works of Mercy” is seen in a recent photo. Gaynor and her family reside in Hancock County.

Living out the works of mercy deepens “our compassion, which starts from a prayerful life,” said Gaynor, adding that this leads to “solidarity and love of our neighbors” and “connects us deeper to Christ... trying to be his hands and feet.”

“The world is desperate for relationships, people are lonely and seeking for more,” said Gaynor. The answer is “not to see others as problems, but as our brothers and sisters who need to be known and loved.”

Ascension Press’s “Pocket Guide to the Works of Mercy” is available at ascensionpress.com and wherever Catholic books are sold. ■

‘Not our work – but God’s work’

Passionists’ first Mother President, and Ky. native, looks forward with hope



COURTESY OF SR. CATHERINE MARIE SCHUHMANN
Mother President Catherine Marie Schuhmann sits in the front center with the community of Passionist nuns in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



COURTESY OF SR. CATHERINE MARIE SCHUHMANN
Pictured is an assembly of superiors and delegates from Passionist nuns’ monasteries in Italy. The priest on the far right is Fr. Antonio Munduate, CP, serving as the Passionist assistant. The priest in the back on the far left is Msgr. Michael Palud, an Oratorian canonist who facilitated the meeting.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE
WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

As a musician, Sr. Catherine Marie Schuhmann, CP, likens the expressions of the female Passionist vocation to “a symphony orchestra – all these different instruments, all contributing to the one, beautiful, melody.”

From her role as mother superior of St. Joseph Monastery in Whitesville; to being summoned to serve as a temporary superior for the Passionist community in Lucca, Italy; to being elected the very first Mother President of the newly-erected Congregation of the Nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ, the Kentucky native has witnessed this contemplative vocation

“lived in a beautiful multiplicity of ways.”

She completed her six-year term as Mother President this past spring, and at 82 years old, is finally back home at her beloved St. Joseph Monastery.

Sr. Catherine Marie – as she is once again called – recently sat down with The Western Kentucky Catholic and shared about her many journeys, all of which flowed from her vow of obedience as a Passionist nun.

“I and my dear council members were united in our Passionist charism,” said Sr. Catherine Marie of her time as Mother President, which brought both blessings and challenges. “We all believed in what the Church was asking us to do.”

“I always say, ‘This is not our work – this is God’s work,’” she said.

Questions and changes

The Holy See erected the Congregation of the Nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ on June 29, 2018, which brought all female Passionist communities across the world into the one congregation, instead of remaining in autonomous isolation without shared resources or support.

This development had been set into motion four years prior, when a questionnaire from the Holy See was sent to the 3,000 women’s monasteries worldwide regarding issues like membership, vocations, and financial security.

“When the answers began to come in, there was a state of alarm throughout the Dicastery

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for Consecrated Life,” said Sr. Catherine Marie, explaining that the survey recognized “the great decline of religious congregations and even risk of extinction among some.”

These struggles “had begun to take a toll on the physical and spiritual life of the communities,” she said. “In the face of that, the Holy See had to respond.”

For the Passionists in particular, the answer was to form them all into a monastic congregation.

Despite initial fears about ways this could impact their lives as cloistered contemplatives, “our community had the grace of God not to rebel – but to try to seek understanding,” said Sr. Catherine Marie.

This “yes” to God’s will would soon cause a ripple effect across Passionist women’s communities worldwide.

A new mother

When St. Joseph Monastery completed the 2014 questionnaire, it was noted that unlike many other Passionist monasteries, the Whitesville community was not only surviving but thriving.

This was largely credited to Sr. Catherine Marie’s time as mother superior as she helped bring about a flourishing of vibrant new vocations.

In 2018, Sr. Catherine Marie was summoned

to Lucca, Italy, to step in as temporary mother superior of the local Passionist monastery, which was attached to the shrine of renowned Passionist St. Gemma Galgani. The historic Lucca monastery had been struggling with vocations and needed a mother figure to get back on its feet.

Then-Mother Catherine Marie was just getting

As Mother President, her purpose was to “encourage and monitor each monastery as they, on their own, try to incarnate the Passionist charism in their culture,” she said.

Another significant responsibility of this role was to make canonical visitations to the Passionist nuns around the world, accompanied by one or two

council members, as the congregation continued to discern ways to assist and revitalize their communities amid today’s challenges.

In her first circular letter to Passionist nuns worldwide, the new Mother President “begged everyone to pray for a new Pentecost. I know it’s going to happen,” she said.

Heart to heart

Currently, there are more than 240 Passionist nuns residing across 14

nations. Sr. Catherine Marie, at 75 years old and undergoing several major surgeries over the next few years, nonetheless set out to meet with these communities under her care.

One of the more difficult aspects of the Mother President’s role is to make visitations to communities experiencing “diminishment” due to aging, physical ailments, and a lack of vocations, all of which negatively impact their ability to sustain



COURTESY OF SR. CATHERINE MARIE SCHUHMAN

Two officials from the Dicastery for Consecrated Life sit beside Sr. Catherine Marie Schuhmann during the spring 2025 General Chapter, which was held in Italy.

settled into this temporary responsibility in Lucca when the newly-erected congregation held its first General Chapter in early 2019. This gathering included the necessary election of a Mother President and four consultants.

“And that’s when the second-oldest person present – me! – was elected, which was mind-boggling,” said Sr. Catherine Marie. “But the grace was there!”

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COURTESY OF SR. CATHERINE MARIE SCHUHMANN
Mother President Catherine Marie Schuhmann (center, seated) visits with a community of Passionist nuns in Japan.



COURTESY OF SR. CATHERINE MARIE SCHUHMANN
Mother President Catherine Marie Schuhmann visits a Passionist community in Querétaro, Mexico with three members of her general council and Fr. James Schimelpfening from the United States, who assisted with the visitation and serving as a translator.

themselves.

“Our Lady has always intervened to solve what we could not solve,” said Sr. Catherine Marie.

Sr. Catherine Marie was present for the powerful witness of the women’s Passionist community in Genoa, Italy, which chose through prayer and discernment to ultimately join the community of

Lucca Passionists.

“This heroic community left their beautiful seaside home in Genoa to integrate with the sisters in Lucca,” said Sr. Catherine Marie. “Everyone was praying their way through, asking ‘what does God want?’ Now, they are truly one.”

She said that anywhere she and her council members went, “we were welcomed as family,” encountering “a beautiful expression of the Church – and the people living at the heart of the Church in contemplative life.”

Even when she could not speak the native language in the various countries she visited, Sr. Catherine Marie described the experience of communicating “cor ad cor” – Latin for “heart to heart” through their “life-giving, love-giving” shared Passionist charism.

There was “such a beauty in each culture that I truly cherished and love,” she said. “I was able to form some real friendships.”

Solidarity and respect

Sr. Catherine Marie said that amid these changes for the Passionists, some laypeople have asked her “Is the pope trying to destroy traditional monasteries?” by forming this new monastic congregation.

“Quite the opposite,” she said. “In all of my dealings with the Holy See, they trusted me, my advisors and councilors: they stood behind us. We did not feel abandoned.”

Instead of the Holy See ignoring the warning signs of many struggling Passionist communities, Sr. Catherine Marie said they responded above and beyond: “All my experiences with the Holy See were that they were there to help.”

“In 2014, we asked the Holy See if our sisters could have more authority in certain things that

pertain to the local communities, as our men’s communities do,” she said.

And the Holy See said yes.

Today, “the Church is trusting the nuns through the principal of subsidiarity,” said Sr. Catherine Marie, emphasizing “the trust placed that women can also do this.”

Because the Passionist nuns are more united, they can now share resources for formation, the training of novice directresses and bursars, and even have same-language support groups for their mother superiors.

Growing slowly

This past spring, the second General Chapter took place and the new Mother President was elected: Mother Gertrude Poggio, CP, an Italian nun who helped to found the first Passionist monastery in Indonesia in the 1980s.

At this gathering, feelings were different as the nuns looked to the future with hope, instead of trepidation.

“Now, we care!” said Sr. Catherine Marie. “And the young sisters are leading the way. They are catching the fire and taking it up.”

Mother Gertrude “kindly designated me as the first ‘grandmother’ of the monastic congregation,” said Sr. Catherine Marie, who continues to hold all the Passionist nuns in her heart.

“I pray for good, solid vocations because without healthy, good vocations we cannot go on,” she said. “I pray for an organic growth – because everything in nature grows slowly. If you force a rosebud open, you destroy the beauty of the rose.”

Speaking from her home in Whitesville, Sr. Catherine Marie is encouraged by the “spirit of solidarity and respect” she found among her Passionist sisters across the world.

“The congregation is in good hands,” she said. ■

Vocation Tuesday kickoff asks the Holy Spirit to help vocations flourish



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Seminarist Juan Carlos Lazo Soriano proclaims the first reading during the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 16 during the Vocation Tuesday kickoff.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Sept. 16, 2025, during the kickoff for the weekly Vocation Tuesday initiative at Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Vocations director Fr. Corey D. Bruns lifts the monstrance during Benediction at the Sept. 16 Vocation Tuesday kickoff at Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Members of the faithful gathered to pray for a culture of vocations in the Diocese of Owensboro in the evening of Sept. 16, as the first weekly Vocation Tuesday event was kicked off at Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish.

Vocations director Fr. Corey D. Bruns presided

at the bilingual 6:30 p.m. holy hour and the 7:30 p.m. Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. Dcn. Mike Marsili, assistant director of vocations, and Dcn. Ken Bennett, co-coordinator of the Office of Worship, assisted at the holy hour and Mass.

Several priests were available to hear confessions during the holy hour, which featured both sacred music and silence to assist the prayer experience of Adoration.

In his homily at Mass, Fr. Bruns said that the purpose of gathering that evening was to “pray that the Holy Spirit will sing over the Diocese of Owensboro” and help more young men and women be open to discerning the priesthood, religious life, and holy marriages.

All are invited to join the Office of Vocations every week for Vocation Tuesday with 6:30 p.m. holy hour and confessions and 7:30 p.m. Mass. ■

Conception College Seminary Come & See

The Office of Vocations is sponsoring an “Encounter with God’s Call” seminary discernment Come & See Weekend from Nov. 14-16 for high school juniors through recent college graduates (ages 16-25). There is no cost to attend. Contact Fr. Corey D. Bruns at fatherbruns@owensborovocations.com or (270) 421-7868.

Join the St. Thérèse Vocation Society and pray for vocations!

This society is an intentional prayer society beginning in our diocese on her feast day, October 1. As a cloistered nun in a Carmelite monastery, St. Thérèse of Lisieux was known especially for her prayers for priests and her desire to be “an apostle to apostles.” This is a fantastic opportunity for those who are homebound, suffering from illness, or anyone who wishes to join intentional prayer and sacrifice for vocations for our diocese at home. Contact Fr. Corey D. Bruns at fatherbruns@owensborovocations.com or (270) 421-7868.

‘Healing and Hope’ initiative tackles mental illness crisis at local level, say US bishops

BY GINA CHRISTIAN, OSV NEWS

(OSV News) ~ The nation’s Catholic bishops have launched a new effort to more closely engage the faithful in addressing the issue of mental health, particularly at the local level.

In a Sept. 16 press release, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced its “Healing and Hope” initiative as a “new component” of the USCCB’s National Catholic Mental Health Campaign.

Unveiled in October 2023, the campaign is spearheaded by Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, who leads the USCCB’s Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

Several organizations partnered with Archbishop Gudziak and Bishop Barron in developing the campaign ~ among them Catholic Charities USA, the Catholic Health Association, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability and the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers.

In their introductory message for the effort, the two prelates said their goals were threefold: to raise greater awareness of the issue, to remove the sense of stigma for those suffering from mental illness, and “to advocate a clear message to all: everyone who needs help should get help.”

The “Healing and Hope” initiative takes its name from the campaign’s introductory statement by Archbishop Gudziak and Bishop Barron, who stressed that “anyone who is suffering from mental

illness or facing mental health challenges” remains “a beloved child of God, a God of healing and hope.”

“Healing and Hope” ~ which is aimed at both those who suffer from mental illness, and those who support them ~ will feature three new elements to back that message.

A revived digital campaign for the effort will include bishops’ reflections, posted to the USCCB’s social media platforms, that will “invite all people into deeper conversation on the realities and stigmas of mental health,” said the USCCB in its release.

In addition, bishops, clergy, religious and lay people will gather for state-level conferences on “local mental health realities,” with the first such event scheduled to take place early next year in New Jersey, said the release.

Parishes are being encouraged to “raise awareness of mental health” by observing “Mental Health Sunday” and praying at Masses during the Oct. 11-12 weekend, which follows World Mental Health Day on Oct. 10.

Resources for Mental Health Sunday are available at usccb.org/mental-health-sunday

The USCCB also urged faithful to pray the conference’s Novena for Mental Health, the nine days of which commence on World Mental Health Day and conclude on Oct. 18, the feast of St. Luke, the evangelist and a patron of health care, who in the Letter to the Colossians is referenced as “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14).

Each day of the novena, which opened the USCCB campaign in October 2023, focuses on a particular aspect of mental health, addressing stigma, social relationships, and the impact of factors such

as racism and poverty. Saints and others invoked during the novena include St. Dymphna, patron of those with mental illness; St. Martin de Porres, who experienced racial discrimination throughout his life; and Dorothy Day, a servant of God who twice attempted suicide as a young woman.

Novena materials can be found online at usccb.org/mental-health-novena.

Close to 60 million U.S. adults, or one in five, experienced mental illness in 2021, with more than 14 million of them reporting a serious condition and well over 19 million battling both substance abuse and mental illness concurrently, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

The nation’s youth have been particularly hard hit: In 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy issued an advisory on the issue, citing data that showed in 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness, a 40% spike since 2009.

Among U.S. adults, anxiety disorders (19.1%) top the annual list of reported mental health conditions, followed by major depressive episodes (8.3%) and post-traumatic stress disorder (3.6%), according to data cited by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Bipolar disorder (2.8%), borderline personality disorder (1.4%), obsessive-compulsive disorder (1.2%) and schizophrenia (less than 1%) each represented less than 3% of reported conditions, said the organization on its website. ■

Note: If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call 911, or call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which also offers support in Spanish.

A vision for a future full of hope

A special message from the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

To Our Dear Neighbors,

As Catholic Sisters, vowed women religious, we deeply value the relationships and encounters we have had with so many of you while serving in schools, parishes, retreat centers, food pantries, and outreach centers. Even if we do not know each other personally, we feel compelled to reach out to you today to express our heartfelt sadness and lament as we witness the sudden and devastating changes impacting people in our communities – people we know and love, and who are our neighbors.

Many actions we observe in our nation today seem to contradict values that underlie our shared humanity, values which we have nurtured and endeavored to embody in our actions – although not always successfully – over our lifetimes as Catholic Sisters. Love, compassion, empathy, prayer, radical hospitality, mercy, and service are central to our lives. These values shared among all the world religions make us genuinely human. We firmly believe these values must ground us as a nation if there is to be a future full of hope for ALL generations to come.

Imagine a future centered on principles that allow for the full flourishing of all humanity and our common home, Earth. We know these principles as Catholic Social Teaching. Although you may use different words, the essence of this teaching transcends faith traditions and resonates in the lives of all people of goodwill. Adopting these principles can guide us in the days ahead.

We believe that:

Every person is an expression of God.

All life is sacred.

We must prioritize the needs of those who are the most vulnerable.

There is dignity in all work, and the rights of all workers must take precedence over profit.

Earth is God’s gift to us, and we have the privilege to cherish, defend, and protect her for future generations.

Justice is the path to lasting peace.

Today, we ask you to join us in living these values with courage. Love our neighbors! Welcome the stranger! Care for the most vulnerable among us! Speak the truth! Work for justice! Only when “We the people” lead with compassion and empathy will a



COURTESY OF URSULINE SISTERS
Ursuline Sisters sing “Christ Be Near at Either Hand” during the Nov. 9, 2024 religious jubilee Mass at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Sorgho.

future filled with hope for all generations be possible.

May God continue to bless us on this journey.

With love and hope, your Sisters,

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph ■

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!



Mount Saint Joseph Raffle Winners

- \$10,000Rosemary Neff of Lewisport
- \$5,000Rita Bland of Versailles
- \$2,000Michael Houser of Springfield, Illinois
- Handmade QuiltPaul and Donna Munsey of Owensboro
- 50/50 RaffleDavid Chandler of Bowling Green

The drawing took place after Quilt Bingo on Sept. 14.

More than 30 bingo winners took home quilts!

See photos of the day on our website:
ursulinesmsj.org/quilt-bingo

The Ursuline Sisters appreciate everyone who supported our raffle or Quilt Bingo. We are very grateful.

We have many quilts left over! Mark your calendars for our online Quilt Sale that starts November 3.



Ursuline Sisters
of Mount Saint Joseph

8001 Cummings Road
Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356
270-229-4103
www.ursulinesmsj.org
info.ms@maplemount.org

Protecting the vulnerable second victims of abortion

BY JASON D. HALL, CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF KENTUCKY

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 has brought our country and the pro-life movement to a new political and legal reality. The achievement of that longstanding goal requires us all to consider anew how to best protect unborn life and support families in difficult circumstances.

The Catholic Church has built on our longstanding work supporting vulnerable women and families with initiatives like “Walking with Moms in Need,” a parish-based program geared toward meeting the needs of women and families in local communities. The program “works to ensure that any woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, or parenting in difficult circumstances, can turn to her local Catholic Church and be connected with the resources she needs. Volunteers walk with moms throughout the motherhood journey, offering them authentic Christian friendship and ongoing support.” (walkingwithmoms.com)

Many parishes throughout Kentucky are participating in this program and adapting it to their local realities. I believe this is an effort, and an approach, of which we should all be proud. To build a culture of life means loving and supporting people in their real-life circumstances, whatever those may be, and ensuring they have the means to make life-affirming choices.

Others in the pro-life movement have chosen a different approach. A movement favoring so-called “Abortion Abolition” wants to criminally

prosecute women who seek abortions. If “abortion is murder,” the argument goes, then anyone procuring an abortion should be prosecuted.

It is certainly true that abortion is the taking of an innocent human life and the Church, including Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Francis, have used the word “murder” to describe it. And, the Catechism does anticipate “penal sanctions” being appropriate in some circumstances.

However, colloquially speaking of murder to highlight the moral gravity of what is happening in an abortion is quite different from the legal definition of murder.

The crime of murder (indeed, all intentional homicides) requires a mental state (premeditation or “malice aforethought”) that is simply not present in the vast majority of women seeking abortion. Women seeking abortions are almost always facing pressures arising from a relationship, financial concerns, or other fears.

As Pope Francis wrote, “unborn children [are] the most defenceless and innocent among us... this defence of unborn life is closely linked to the defence of each and every other human right.... On the other hand, it is also true that we have done little to adequately accompany women in very difficult situations, where abortion appears as a quick solution to their profound anguish, especially when the life developing within them is the result of rape or a situation of extreme poverty. Who can remain unmoved before such painful situations?”

The mind of the Church, and indeed most of the pro-life movement, has long been that women are



OSV NEWS PHOTO/VALAURIAN WALLER, DETROIT CATHOLIC

Shelly Pozos Lule poses with one of her now-2-year-old twins, outside Holy Family Catholic Church in Novi, Mich., where she found friendship and support in Roxanne Hundsrucker, the parish’s Christian service director. Pozos Lule faced a crossroads after her husband left her and she suddenly became a single parent to four kids and was pregnant with twins. Holy Family is one of many parishes in the Detroit archdiocese participating in the U.S. bishops’ Walking with Moms in Need initiative.

a second victim of abortion. Penal sanctions might indeed be appropriate in certain circumstances, for a provider or other involved person, but not the woman. Again, to impose punishment on the woman is to victimize her a second time. ■

Jason D. Hall, a native of Owensboro, Ky., serves as the executive director of Catholic Conference of Kentucky, which represents the Church and the state’s four Roman Catholic dioceses in public policy matters on both the state and federal level. Learn more at ccky.org.

Servants of the shelter: Why homeless ministries matter

BY HARRY PEDIGO, ST. BENEDICT AND DANIEL PITINO SHELTERS

Before I ever stood behind a desk as a director, I stood in line at shelters. From the age of 16 to 29, my life was defined by homelessness and addiction. Generational poverty, dysfunction, and trauma shaped my path. My father often told me I was a mistake who would never amount to anything. My mother tried to counter with hope, but when abuse, bullying, and divorce tore my childhood apart, I numbed the pain with substances.

Even in those years, God gave me glimpses of the gifts He had placed within me – creativity, persistence, resourcefulness. Addiction twisted those gifts into survival strategies that never lasted. After years of emptiness and suicidal thoughts, I reached a breaking point. I was tired of trying to die. I wanted – for once – to try living.

That decision brought me to Owensboro in 2011. I entered a long-term recovery program where God began reprogramming my mind through peer support, accountability, and grace. Nine months into sobriety, I became a peer mentor, carrying a caseload, teaching classes, and – most importantly – living proof that change was possible.

A year later, I walked through the doors of a local men’s homeless shelter. At first, I resisted. I knew



CNS SCREENSHOT/YOUTUBE

The late Pope Francis is pictured in an undated screenshot praying with a group of homeless people and members of the Lazare association in his residence at the Vatican. The Lazare association fights social exclusion, convinced that the homeless need much more than a home: they also need human relationships.

the stigma, and I carried my own judgment of what it meant to be “homeless.” But when I finally said yes, God’s Word pierced my heart through Ezekiel 36:26: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.” In that moment, I realized my own years of homelessness had prepared me for this calling.

From those humble beginnings – volunteering, AmeriCorps service, overnight shifts – God led me to become interim director within two years. I wasn’t qualified by human standards. I had no degree, no nonprofit résumé. What I had was faith, humility, and willingness. And God used that. Since then, I’ve pursued education – not for titles, but for tools – earning four degrees, including a master’s in social work.

Meanwhile, the shelters have grown from fragile overnight programs into a network of facilities bridging gaps, serving men, women, families, veterans, and expectant mothers. Hundreds of volunteers and dozens of staff have poured

themselves into these missions.

Here’s what I’ve learned: the true heroes of these facilities are not the directors. The real servants are the overnight volunteers who give up sleep to keep watch. The case managers who sit patiently for hours, helping clients navigate impossible systems. The volunteers who cook meals, fold laundry, or simply sit and listen. The board members who give generously of their time. The community partners who say “yes” when asked to step into the gap.

And of course, the clients themselves – who show courage every day by walking through our doors and daring to hope again.

Homelessness is not a statistic. It’s a father trying to reconnect with his kids, a mother protecting her children, a veteran wrestling with memories of war. Behind every bed in a shelter is a story that matters.

The servants of our shelters step into that reality not because it is easy, but because they believe people matter. They believe in the worth of every

Continues on page 15

Homeless ministries continued from page 14

soul. They believe that no one should be left outside when hope is possible.

But make no mistake – this work is costly. It demands long nights, emotional sacrifice, and faith that God will provide. I’ve worked two jobs to keep doors open. I’ve prayed desperately over budgets. I’ve carried the weight of heavy stories. And in those moments, God has reminded me: “None of the pain and trials in your life were in vain. Trust Me. Put My people first.”

That is the heartbeat of homeless ministry. Leadership is not about prestige; it is about service. It is about choosing the towel over the title, just as Jesus did when He washed His disciples’ feet.

So why do we keep serving, even when it’s hard? Because we believe the promise of Isaiah 40:31: “Those who hope in the Lord will renew

their strength.” That hope sustains us. That strength keeps us showing up.

As a community, we are all called to be servants of the most vulnerable. Maybe you aren’t called to run a shelter— but you are called to care. You can bring a meal. You can write a check. You can volunteer a few hours. You can sponsor a bed. You can share a Facebook post to raise awareness. You can pray.

And you can encourage others – your church, your coworkers, your friends, your family – to do the same. The work is too big for one agency, one leader, or even one generation. It takes a community, linked arm in arm, to remind our homeless neighbors they are not forgotten.

When you choose to serve, you don’t just meet someone else’s need – you may discover your own purpose in the process. I know this firsthand. I

walked into a shelter thinking I would help others. In reality, God used that place to reshape me.

So I invite you: come see for yourself. Visit St. Benedict’s Shelter or the Daniel Pitino Shelter. Meet the men, women, and families whose lives are being transformed. Meet the staff and volunteers who give so faithfully. Step into the story of what God is doing right here in Owensboro.

Homelessness will never be solved by programs alone. It is healed by people – ordinary servants who choose to love their neighbors. And in serving, you may find—as I did – that the people you thought you were helping are the very ones who change you the most. ■

Harry E. Pedigo is the executive director of St. Benedict and Daniel Pitino Shelters in Owensboro, Ky. Contact him at harry@stbenedictsowensboro.org.

Back to school blessings at St. Edward Parish

BY WKC STAFF

Fr. Anthony Ottagan, the pastor of St. Edward Parish in Fulton, Ky., recently gave a back-to-school blessing for the community’s schoolchildren as they prepared to begin the 2025/26 school year. The blessing took place during Mass on Aug. 24, 2025. Please continue to pray for all of our school children, faculty and staff to have a blessed school year. ■



COURTESY OF SUSIE FENWICK

Fr. Anthony Ottagan, pastor of St. Edward Parish in Fulton, gives a back-to-school blessing for the parish’s children on Aug. 24, 2025.



OSV NEWS PHOTO/SAM LUCERO

A stained glass window inside St. Thérèse Chapel at Holy Hill in Hubertus, Wis., depicts St. Thérèse with fellow Carmelite saints, John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila. All three are Doctors of the Church

Living holiness in the spirit of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. Thérèse of Lisieux

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

The Church gives us a special gift each October in the feast days of two beloved saints: St. Teresa of Jesus (Oct. 15) and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus (Oct. 1). Though separated by centuries, culture, and personality, both women share a legacy that invites us to holiness in the everyday fabric of life.

St. Teresa of Ávila, reformer of the Carmelite Order, famously described prayer as “nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends.” For her, prayer was not reserved for the learned or the mystic alone but for all who longed for God. Thérèse echoed this conviction in her “little way,” reminding us that prayer can be as simple as lifting our hearts to God with childlike trust. Both saints show us that holiness does not begin with heroic deeds, but with opening our hearts in love to the one who already calls us His own.

At the heart of both women’s spirituality is love. Teresa insisted that the fruit of prayer must be love of God and neighbor; mystical experiences mean nothing if they do not deepen charity. Thérèse found her vocation in love itself, realizing that even the smallest acts – done with great love – become treasures in God’s eyes. Their lives remind us that holiness is not measured by the extraordinary, but by love infused into the ordinary.

Teresa built her spiritual teaching on the foundation of humility, urging us to see ourselves truthfully before God. Thérèse lived this through her “littleness,” trusting not in her own strength but in God’s mercy. Both point us to the same path: acknowledging our weakness not as a barrier, but as the very space where God’s grace is most at work.

Illness, trials, and opposition marked the lives of both saints. Yet they did not allow suffering to embitter them; instead, they offered it to Christ as a means of sharing in His redemptive love. Teresa’s perseverance in reform and Thérèse’s acceptance of hidden suffering witness to us that holiness often grows quietly in the soil of sacrifice.

Celebrating their feasts in October reminds us that holiness is not an abstract ideal for a distant past – it is our call today. St. Teresa and St. Thérèse show us that whether through bold reform or quiet fidelity, whether in extraordinary vision or daily acts of kindness, the road to holiness is always walked in love, humility, prayer, and trust in God’s mercy.

As we honor these two great Carmelite saints, may we hear anew the invitation to sanctity woven into our daily lives. In the conversations we hold, the prayers we whisper, the kindnesses we extend, and the sufferings we endure, we too are called to live as saints – ordinary people transformed by extraordinary love. ■

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.

The Diocese of Owensboro invites you to

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Faith in Travel
Pilgrimages

Evangelii Nuntiandi: Evangelization in the Modern World

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, EVANGELIZATION & DISCIPLESHIP

This is a powerful reminder of the movement of the Holy Spirit in our Church in recent decades. Pope Paul VI wrote *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (abbreviated to EN) for the universal Church 50 years ago this Dec. 8 and it had been highly praised since its inception.

The following information was presented by Msgr. Roger J. Landry, national director of The Pontifical Mission Societies USA, in a September 2025 USCCB series on the 50th anniversary of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

- *Pope John Paul I said on Sept. 1, 1978, in a letter to Cardinal Ratzinger, that, "it should inspire a greater eagerness to spread in every direction the saving mission of Christ." John Paul II honored it in his encyclical Redemptoris Missio and Pope Francis in a 2013 address to pilgrims called it "the greatest document that has ever been written to this day" and urged those in the Church to read and re-read it often.*
- *EN was written 10 years after the conclusion of Vatican II, where Pope John XXIII said that the Second Vatican Council was to "go from the tranquil adherence to all the teachings of the Church" to a greater "doctrinal penetration and formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to authentic doctrine... The substance of the ancient doctrine... is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another."*

The documents of Second Vatican Council were groundbreaking and profound.

- *Msgr. Landry goes on to explain: Lumen Gentium emphasized the Church's missionary identity as people of God sent to bring "light to the nations." Gaudium et Spes prepared the Church to bring the world Jesus who fully reveals the human person to himself and makes his supreme vocation clear. Ad Gentes, is a document on mission and it emphasized anew missionary nature of the Church and urged the evangelization of all nations.*
- *Ten years later, the hopes of Vatican II were not being realized and in 1974 there was a Synod of Bishops dedicated to evangelization, which sought to answer the burning questions: What happened to the "hidden energy of the Good News?" To what extent is the Gospel capable of transforming people today? And what methods should be followed so that the effect of the gospel may have its effect?*

Pope Paul VI wrote EN following this synod. And 50 years later it is still inspiring, challenging and leading the Church forward as this is the mission of Jesus, and the mission of his Church!

Evangelization means sharing the Good News. You are loved by God, by me, and this love is waiting for you to invite the Holy Spirit into your life and to grow daily in your relationship with Jesus in the communion of the Trinity. All are welcome. All are loved. The Christian way of life works and God wants to enlighten, free and journey with you each and every day!

Want to learn more? Book a "Walk with One" training in your parish! Contact me!

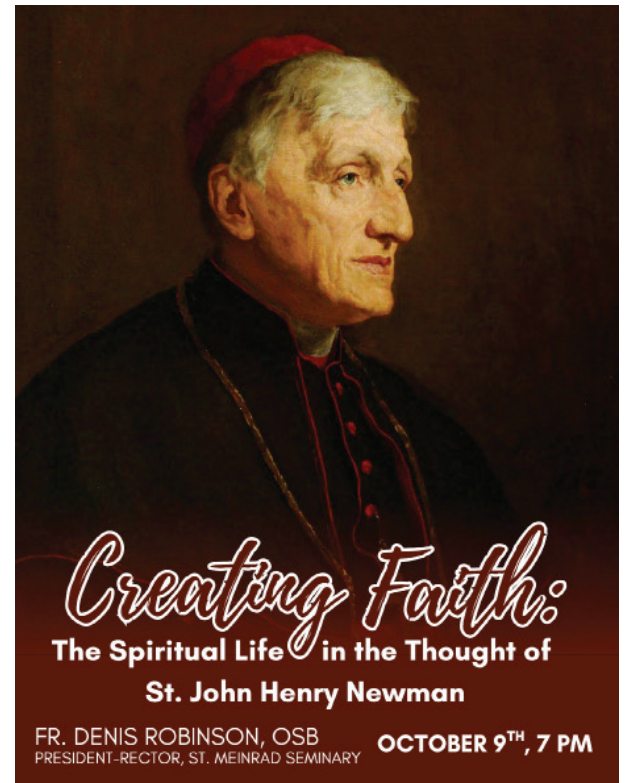
Peace,
Jeff ■

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



RILEY GRIEF | WKC

A participant in a small group for Acts 2:42 gives testimony of her experience at the appreciation dinner that took place at The Bruce in Hopkinsville May 18, 2025.



Right to Life of Owensboro holds annual Walk for Life

BY WKC STAFF

A sizable crowd participated in this year's Walk for Life event in Owensboro, which was held at 10 a.m. on Sept. 6, 2025. Participants young and old began at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, walked along Frederica Street to Wesleyan Park Plaza, and then returned to the church.

Many carried signs, including ones that read "Every baby deserves a birthday" and "Pray to end abortion."

The event was sponsored by Right to Life of Owensboro, which is a chapter of Kentucky Right to Life. Learn more at facebook.com/rtlowensboro. ■



COURTESY OF RIGHT TO LIFE OF OWENSBORO

Young people carrying a Right to Life of Owensboro banner walk along Frederica Street in Owensboro during the annual Walk for Life event, which was held Sept. 6, 2025.

OWENSBORO CATHOLIC LEAGUE
 WE'RE MORE THAN JUST BASEBALL & SOFTBALL, WE'RE A COMMUNITY. YOUR DONATION TODAY WILL HELP BUILD A NEW PLAYGROUND FOR ALL FAMILIES TO ENJOY.

FOLLOW QR CODE



COURTESY OF RIGHT TO LIFE OF OWENSBORO

Students of Owensboro Catholic School System smiles with signs during the Sept. 6, 2025 Walk for Life event which took place along Frederica Street.



COURTESY OF RIGHT TO LIFE OF OWENSBORO

Standing in front of Wesleyan Park Plaza on Sept. 6, 2025, several young people hold signs while participating in the annual Walk for Life.

Community, history, hospitality: *A pilgrimage in the footsteps of Catholicism in western Kentucky*

BY BETH HENDRICKSON, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

On Saturday, Aug. 30, 2025, pilgrims across the Diocese of Owensboro came together and enjoyed a pilgrimage to three of the sacred diocesan jubilee sites: St. Francis de Sales (Paducah), St. Leo (Murray), and the Diocesan Marian Shrine (Bowling Green). The pilgrimage was not only a spiritual journey, but more than anything, a creation of relationships and community among pilgrims from across the diocese and jubilee communities. As community is important to sustain life's journey and God calls us to community, this pilgrimage was a beautiful way of growing in community and faith.

To prepare for the pilgrimage, nine days prior, pilgrims joined together in their own homes with a jubilee pilgrimage novena. Then the physical pilgrimage began with pilgrims being greeted at St. Francis de Sales by Brenda Spees, a member of the St. Francis de Sales church tour ministry, who shared the rich history of the church, the paintings, and the Stations of the Cross. Then, pilgrims had the opportunity to explore the church facilities, the Adoration chapel, and have a quiet visio divina reflection with the art and visuals before a communal reflection.

The next site was St. Leo, which included church history, and then pilgrims went on a beautiful journey around the church grounds, processing in prayer together, bringing all present one step closer to our

Savior, Jesus Christ. St. Leo's hospitality was beautiful, as the ladies from the church prepared a wonderful luncheon of delicious salads, delectable desserts, and fresh warm hot rolls.

The final jubilee site of the pilgrimage was the Diocesan Marian Shrine. The shrine, dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church and model of all Christians, began as a dream in 1973. It is a perpetual Adoration chapel illuminated by the sunlight shining through a stained glass image of the Miracle of the Sun, Fatima, Portugal, Oct. 13, 1917. Pilgrims, alongside local adorers, gathered as Fr. Chris Kight shared a message of Marian hope.

As the pilgrims went forth from this western Kentucky Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage, each grew in their faith, walking in the footsteps of those who years ago sacrificed much to begin the journey of the Catholic faith in the diocese.

The Jubilee Year of Hope is a special invitation to pause and take a moment to experience the richness of the Catholic faith across the diocese and continue your own Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage to the Owensboro and neighboring dioceses' jubilee sites. ■



COURTESY OF ROBIN L. MURPHEY
Brenda Spees shares about the history and visuals of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah with the Adoration chapel in the background.



COURTESY OF STEVE SHOULTA
Pilgrims journey around St. Leo Parish on Aug. 30, 2025, processing in prayer together.

St. Edward parishioners honored with 2025 Sophia Awards



COURTESY OF SUSIE FENWICK
Tommie and Melinda Briggs pose at St. Edward Parish in Fulton with their awards from being the 2025 recipients of the Diocese of Owensboro's Sophia Award.

BY SUSIE FENWICK, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Tommie and Melinda Briggs of St. Edward Parish in Fulton were 2025 recipients of the Diocese of Owensboro's Sophia Award. Sophia Awards are bestowed upon individuals at least 65 years old, who received the highest number of nominations in their parish for this recognition, and who embrace and lead lives of stewardship by giving of their time, talent and treasure.

Tommie and Melinda willingly, unselfishly, and consistently give of their time treasures and talent

to serve their parish family and their community.

Tommie is in charge of the grounds and maintenance committee, spending countless hours on the upkeep of the church, social hall, and grounds. He also serves on the pastoral council.

Melinda is on the finance council and is willing to lend a hand in whatever capacity is needed. Both extend the gift of hospitality as a part of a core group of parishioners who furnish and serve refreshments after Mass each Sunday morning.

To learn more about the Sophia Awards, contact Valeria Vessels, director of stewardship and development, at valeria.vessels@pastoral.org. ■

WKC staff contributed to this report.

More than 200 participants enjoy quilt bingo fundraiser at Mount

BY MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH STAFF

More than 200 bingo players enjoyed the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph's annual fundraising event on Sept. 14, and 35 of them took home a quilt of their choosing after yelling "Bingo!" There were over 100 quilts for the players to choose from, made possible by several Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph and their quilting friends.

The extra quilts left over will be sold on the Ursuline Sisters' website (ursulinesmsj.org) starting Nov. 3. ■



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH
Elaine Strain of Owensboro was happy to become one of the lucky Quilt Bingo winners at the Sept. 14 Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph annual fundraising event. She chose the "Love My Garden" quilt as her prize. Looking on at right is Sister Jane Falke, who helped record the names of the winners.



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH
Sister Suzanne Sims smiles as she sells half pot tickets amid the crowd of Quilt Bingo players on Sept. 14 at Mount Saint Joseph during the Mount's annual fundraising event.

‘Grateful and generous hearts’

St. William and St. Lawrence celebrate new parish facility

BY RACHEL HALL, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

St. William and St. Lawrence Parishes in the Knottsville community recently celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their new Faith Community Center, a facility recently constructed by Hayden Construction, that will function as a parish hall and parish offices.

Bishop William F. Medley was in attendance to celebrate Mass and bless the new facility for the celebration, which was held on Aug. 17.

“St. William and St. Lawrence Parishes have long needed a facility like this,” said Lee Mills, chair of the St. William/St. Lawrence buildings and grounds committee. “Previously, our parish offices were in the old rectory building next to St. William Church. While it was a beautiful historic house, it was not well-suited for office use.”

Mills said that in addition to needing new offices, St. William needed a parish hall for larger fellowship gatherings. “In the past, we often used the school gym for these events; however, a gymnasium is not ideal for all occasions. Many wedding celebrations have been held outside our community in venues that better accommodate such events.”

Though St. Lawrence has a parish hall, it is too small for larger gatherings. When a funeral was held



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Along with the community, Bishop William F. Medley participates in the Aug. 17 ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Faith Community Center of St. William and St. Lawrence Parishes in Knottsville.

at St. William, they had to ask families to travel to St. Lawrence, which is about 2.5 miles away, for their bereavement meals.

“Now, we finally have a modern facility at St. William that meets all these needs,” said Mills.

“Our new Faith Community Center was a dream that took us over a decade to complete,” he said. “Throughout this journey, we faced numerous challenges, including a global pandemic and unprecedented cost increases. However, the unwavering support from our parishioners was tremendous, allowing us to come together and overcome these obstacles.

He said that from the initial planning and fundraising stages, to the design and construction, many individuals played key roles in making the dream a reality.

He said that the Catholic Church has had a presence in the Knottsville and Philpot area for nearly 200 years, and that the community’s ancestors “left us two beautiful churches and facilities that have served our community for generations.”

“The establishment of this new facility represents



RACHEL HALL | WKC

Bishop William F. Medley sprinkles holy water around the new Faith Community Center of St. William and St. Lawrence Parishes in Knottsville during the ribbon cutting and blessing event on Aug. 17.

a significant investment by our faith community to ensure that we have a place for our parishes to gather and grow in faith for future generations,” he said. “As our capital campaign prayer says at every Mass, ‘We pray that through grateful and generous hearts, this Faith Community Center will grow the ministries of worship, fellowship, education, and service.’” ■

When much is given: A Vincentian journey

BY BELINDA ABELL, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC



COURTESY OF HARRY BELLEW
Harry Bellew, first vice president of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Western Kentucky, belongs to St. Stephen Cathedral.

After 51 years working in the financial world of credit unions, serving in many financial positions, the last as president of Telco Credit Union for 21 years, Harry Bellew retired and returned to his hometown of Owensboro, Ky. Upon returning, he and his wife Peggy joined St. Stephen

Cathedral in Owensboro and began looking for ways to become involved in their parish and in their community. Harry has served on several local boards, St. Joseph Peace Mission, and Habitat for Humanity to name a few. It was during St. Stephen's annual Time, Talent and Treasure campaign that he joined St. Stephen's St. Vincent de Paul conference.

"I had always believed in St. Vincent de Paul and the work they do; I thought they were a good fit. My wife Peg and I joined at the same time," said Harry.

Harry and his wife have been SVdP members for about 14 years. He has served as a member and as president of the St. Stephen's conference and is currently first vice president of the SVdP Diocesan Council serving 32 western Kentucky counties.

SVdP-Diocesan Council CEO, Richard Remp-Morris, says, "Harry's financial expertise has been an invaluable resource to us. His guidance has moved us into a better financial position. In my career I have been blessed to have many mentors along the way and Harry is certainly at the top of the list."

When asked what he found most rewarding as a Vincentian, Harry had this to say, "I think doing home visits when I was still a part of the St. Stephen conference. That's really powerful when you go into somebody's home and you sit and talk with them, and you observe their needs: that's powerful and you know, just sitting in the office taking walk-ins and listening to people's difficulties and their financial hardships and all that. It's kind of moving; it hits

you where you live."

Kentucky's poverty rate ranks 15.6%, which is higher than the national poverty rate of 10.6%.

We asked Harry, "Do you see SVdP as vital in assistance to our Neighbors in Need?"

He said, "The numbers, especially here in Kentucky are high. You know we've got a lot of poor. We've got a lot of broken families, single parent families that they are always going to need financial help and St. Vincent de Paul really helps fill that need and I see us doing that quite well."

"I really believe that to whom much is given much is expected," he added. "And much has been given to us and so I expect to give and I have, and I will." ■

To learn more about or make a financial contribution to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's vital work, contact your parish SVDP conference or sudpwky.org

MISSIONARIES OF HOPE
among the Peoples

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World Mission Sunday 2025
October 19th

YOUR GIFT HELPS SUPPORT:

82,498 Seminarians	8,749 Shelters and Orphanages	11,992 Health Centers	843,785 Catechists	258,540 Religious sisters
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Hardinsburg students make Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage to St. Stephen Cathedral

BY WKC STAFF

On Sept. 24, St. Romuald Interparochial School made a pilgrimage from Hardinsburg to St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, as part of their observance of this year's Jubilee of Hope.

The students prayed, learned about the history of the cathedral – the mother church of the Diocese of Owensboro – and received stamps in their pilgrimage passports, which are available at all six of the diocese's jubilee pilgrimage sites. St. Romuald Parish is another diocesan jubilee site, so all the students now have at least two stamps in their passports.

The six jubilee pilgrimage sites for the Diocese of Owensboro are St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro; St. Romuald Parish in Hardinsburg; the Diocesan Shrine of Mary on the campus of St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green; St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah; Holy Redeemer Parish in Beaver Dam; and St. Leo Parish in Murray.

Those who receive all six jubilee stamps in their passports throughout this year can receive a free Jubilee of Hope tote bag by contacting the diocese's Office of Communications at communications@pastoral.org. Learn more at owensborodiocese.org/jubilee-year-pilgrims-of-hope. ■



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A young girl from St. Romuald Interparochial School smiles as her class is taken on a tour of the sacristy at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro on Sept. 24, as part of a Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A student holds her passport while praying at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, during St. Romuald



RILEY GREIF | WKC

St. Romuald Interparochial School students smile for a group photo at St. Stephen Cathedral on Sept. 24.

In memoriam: Mark Vollman, (1960-2025)



TOM LILLY / FILE PHOTO

Mark Vollman participates in the 2003 Buddy Walk.

Owensboro, Ky. – Mark Anthony Vollman, 64, of Owensboro, Kentucky, ran into the arms of Jesus on Sept. 22, 2025. Born on Dec. 28, 1960, Mark was a radiant soul whose infectious smile, boundless enthusiasm, and unwavering kindness touched the lives of everyone he met.

Mark, who was born with Down Syndrome, lived a life defined not by limitations but by his remarkable achievements and the joy he brought to others. A dedicated member of the Boy Scouts of America, Mark achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, a testament to his perseverance, leadership, and commitment to serving his community. His involvement with the Catholic Pastoral Center and his service as an altar boy at Immaculate Catholic Church reflected his deep faith and devotion.

He is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Mike and Vickie Vollman; his niece, Kristan (Richard) Higgs, and great nephew Oliver Higgs. He leaves behind countless friends who will forever cherish his memory. He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert (Bob) and Mary Vollman.

Expressions of sympathy may take the form of contributions to Special Olympics of Daviess County or Wendell Foster in Mark's memory. ■

Couples gather for annual marriage celebration Mass at cathedral



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A group of those attending this year's Marriage Celebration Mass at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro are seen on Sept. 21, 2025.

BY WKC STAFF

On Sept. 21, the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Marriage and Family Life hosted the annual Marriage Celebration Mass, presided over by Bishop William F. Medley, at St. Stephen Cathedral. Couples who were married for 5, 10, 25, 40, 50 and more than 50 years were invited to attend.

This year, 53 married couples were present, with nearly 160 total people in attendance. The longest-married couple attending the Mass this year were Jerry and Earlene Abney of St. Sebastian Parish in Calhoun, who have been married for 66 years.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life offers a wide range of services and programs to support the Domestic Church. ■

To learn more, call (270) 683-1545 or email marriage and family life director Danny May at danny.may@pastoral.org.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A man kisses his wife on her forehead during the Sept. 21, 2025 Marriage Celebration Mass at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Al and Molly Thompson hold hands during the Sept. 21, 2025 Marriage Celebration Mass at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.

October 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 50 anniversaries being celebrated for the month printed (for instance, this issue shows the milestone anniversaries for October). 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

Jack & Doris Mills, 67
John & Riley Hess, 55
Matt & Mary Bruner, 25
Steve & Gloria Baker, 55

Blessed Sacrament, Owensboro

Danny & Cindy Clark, 50

Christ the King, Madisonville

Jud & Karen Caldwell, 58

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson

Casey & Tori Todd, 5
Dean & Mary Ann Jorgensen, 60
Dwight & Diana Emerson, 61
Larry & Phyllis Bumpus, 58
Peter & Lilia Doll, 40
Richard & Lori Deckard, 50
Ronald & Dretha Weddell, 58
Soap & Sandy Wilson, 56
Yianni & Elizabeth Marlas, 10

Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam

Patrick & Cynthia Ziller, 57

Holy Spirit, Bowling Green

Andrew & Katy Cusick, 10
Brent & Libby Simon, 25
Charles & Mary Ann Wolfram, 56
Christopher & Laura Cochran, 25
Dustin & Jennifer Lightfoot, 10
Fred & Karen Bolek, 54
Jose & Sasha Zamilpa, 10
Leon & Sherry Volkert, 57
Virgil & Joyce Villanueva, 53
William & Marianne

Wilson, 40

Holy Trinity, Morgantown

Melvin & Mary Anne Bowles, 57

Immaculate Conception, Earlington

Roger & Kathy Ordal, 54

Immaculate Conception, Hawesville

James & Gwan Bickett, 56

Immaculate, Owensboro

Bill & Kay Pence, 51
Jim & Kathy Likens, 54
Joe & Ann Roth, 61
Kenny & Sheila Cecil, 53

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro

Clinton & Marsha Terry, 55
Jerry & Virginia Harper, 59
Joseph & Mary Jane Clark, 63
Reed & Katelyn Scott, 5
Robert & Debra Horton, 52

Precious Blood, Owensboro

Bruce & Sharon Tucker, 51
Gerald & Lucy Goetz, 57
Larry & Patricia Murphy, 61
Tim & Diann Shock, 52
Tony & Charlotte Powers, 51

Sacred Heart, Russellville

Dennis & Diane Nieuwsma, 54
Kerry & Sharlet Beauregard, 62
Ryan & Sharon Fuller, 57

Sacred Heart, Waverly

John & Cheryl Buckman, 54
William & Susan Buckman, 51

St. Alphonsus, St. Joseph

Coy & Katie Murphy, 5
Tony & Betty Byrne, 51

St. Ann, Morganfield

Bobby & Mary Jane Watson, 57
James & Kimberly Greenwell, 5
Mike & Rebecca Greenwell, 57
Thomas & Vicki Sheffer, 52

St. Anthony, Axtel

Chad & Rebecca Board, 5
Charles & Pat Bissinger, 60
Francis & Sue Henning, 64
Michael & Virginia Camp, 51
Perry & Patty Lee, 10

St. Anthony, Browns Valley

Matthew & Kristi Popham, 10

St. Anthony, Peonia

Ervin & Coreen Moore, 61
Milburn & Bernetta Higdon, 55
Randolph & Judy White, 61

St. Augustine, Reed

Steve & Rita Haire, 55

St. Benedict, Wax

Robert & Barbara Clark, 40

St. Columba, Lewisport

Clyde & Anita Cambron, 57
Henry & Martha Fullenwider, 10
Layman & Mary Hawkins, 60

St. Elizabeth, Clarkson

Dannie & Sheila Harris, 52

St. Francis Borgia, Sturgis

Jessie & Marcy James, 40

St. Francis de Sales, Paducah

Bruce & Sherry Vandermeulen, 52
Dan & Karen Kelley, 53
Kenneth & Rita Turner, 56
Paul & Theresa Newman, 55
Raymond & Rose Marie Smith, 61
Thomas & Janet Voigt, 10
Tim & Cathi Hard, 51
Todd & Janet Pruemer, 40

St. Francis of Assisi

Bob & Barbara Arms, 55
Ellis & Gail Settle, 55

St. Henry, Aurora

James & Vivian Montgomery, 51
Mark & Blanche Schwinn, 50

St. Jerome, Fancy Farm

Clay & Karen Willett, 60
Gary & Marilyn King, 54
Irvin & Sheila Schultz, 55
Jack & Mary Ann Purcell, 67

James & Betty O'Guinn, 54
Nathan & Lynnley Sholar, 10
Terry & Hettie Wilson, 62

St. John the Baptist, Fordsville

Joe & Eileen Fulkerson, 67
Junior & Mary Roby, 59

St. John the Evangelist, Paducah

Charles & Margaret Ballard, 65
Mike & Judy Kaufman, 58

St. John the Evangelist, Sunfish

James & Mary Lou Wilson, 58

St. Joseph, Bowling Green

Bobby & Courtney Compton, 5
Brian & Patricia Bour, 59
Jason & Amy Cabral, 10
Joseph & Sandra Miller, 52
Kenneth & Veronica Rice, 58

St. Joseph, Leitchfield

Phillip & Pam Huff, 54

St. Joseph, Mayfield

Richard & Patricia Blackman, 53

St. Lawrence, Philpot

Eddie & Marcella Wethington, 60

St. Leo, Murray

Alfred & Pat Koehler, 68
Dan & Jane Blankenship, 54
Denis & Christine Anderson, 10
John & Marie Clark, 64
Michael & Kaye Kelly, 55

St. Mark, Eddyville

David & Ann Harkins, 60
Joseph & Patricia Merimee, 60

St. Mary Magdalene, Sorgho

David & Sandi Boswell, 57
Jerry & Linda Ebelhar, 53
Jim & Kelly Goetz, 51
John & Sylvia Morton, 59
Larry & Ruth Oller, 57
Phil & Cathy Ebelhar, 51

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

David & Rose Hamilton, 58
Donnie & Paula Ward, 57

Eric & Brittney Roby, 5
James & Sharon Reid, 55
Ray & Wanda Mills, 51
Ricky & Debbie Kelley, 50
Shelby & Kay Howard, 59
Trevor & Emily Knott, 5
Val & Bernadine Payne, 64

St. Michael the Archangel, Oak Grove

James & Patricia Brink, 58

St. Paul, Leitchfield

Frank & Catherine Gawarecki, 66
Jerry & Kathleen Crawford, 54
Murrell & Ann Sims, 60

St. Paul, Princeton

Tommy & Martha Stewart, 61

St. Peter of Alcantara, Stanley

Craig & Laci Millay, 5
Ken & Edie McKay, 58
Robert & Mary Ann Alvey, 55

St. Peter of Antioch, Waverly

Bernard & Martha Alvey, 54
Donnie & Angela Bigers, 25
James & Eva Lyon, 63

St. Pius X, Owensboro

Dane & Mary Roberts, 50
Danny & Sandy Morris, 50
Gene & Margaret Boehmann, 51
Jason & Lori Weaver, 25
Joshua & Emily Campbell, 5
Michael & Ashley Roach, 10

St. Romuald, Hardinsburg

Chance & Jaclan Anthony, 10
Darrell & Rita Whitfill, 52
Everette & Carolyn Pool, 59
Jeremy & Anna Hix, 10
Shane & Tiffany Davenport, 10

St. Sebastian, Calhoun

Charles & Faye May, 59
Joseph & Victoria Hayden, 10

St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro

Terry & Theresa Potts, 51
Troy & Kara Schwartz, 5
Will & Meredith McCrady, 5

Continues on page 26

UPCOMING EVENTS

Anniversaries continued from page 25

St. Thomas More, Paducah

Alan & Bobbi Wilson, 52
Benjamin & Christine Thompson, 10
Brian & Theresa Medlin, 25
Kelly & Barbara Robinson, 67
Kenneth & Jean Merges, 25
Mark & Mary Halbmaier, 51

St. William, Knottsville

Charles & Patricia Lanham, 53
David & Helen Higdon, 52
David & Margaret Fulkerson, 50
Dennis & Joyce Burch, 50
Frankie & Priscilla Haynes, 58
Jesse & Katelyn Kaysinger, 10
Martin & Clara Johnson, 55
Marvin & Josephine Boling, 61
Shawn & Jenny Johnson, 25
Steve & Beverly Hamilton, 51
Tom & Libby Johnson, 60

Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro

Tommy & Angela Maxwell, 58

Sts. Peter & Paul, Hopkinsville

Arturo Gonzalez & Lupita Rodriguez, 10

A special message from the Office of the Bishop

Bishop Medley has received a request from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to take up a special collection for those suffering in Gaza. Christians and other innocent victims of violence in Gaza and surrounding areas are struggling to survive, to protect their children, and to live with dignity in catastrophic conditions. Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV continues to call for a ceasefire and for aid to enter the territory, noting with great sorrow that "Gaza is starving." Bishop Medley is asking every parish in our diocese to take up a special collection on the weekend of *October 4-5* or *October 11-12*. October is Respect Life Month and there is no more appropriate time to remember those who are suffering so terribly. All funds will be sent to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Both of these Catholic organizations are deeply involved in providing relief to those suffering in Gaza.

OCTOBER 2025 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.

Thirty-fifth annual Marian Congress Oct. 4

"Pilgrims of Hope through Mary." Oct. 4, 2025, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green. Featured speaker: Fr. Peter Stryker, CPM. Mass at 8:30 a.m. Opportunities for Jubilee indulgence, brunch, May crowning, rosary procession, Divine Mercy chaplet, confessions, Adoration and Benediction. Questions: Patricia Hicks at (270) 943-1812.

Fourth Day Annual Cursillo Retreat Oct. 11

Save the date: Fourth Day Retreat! Oct. 11, 2025 at Christ the King, Madisonville, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Lunch will be potluck. Come pray with friends and bring a dish to share! Our website is up and running! Please visit at www.cursillo-owensboro.org. We are taking registration for the upcoming weekends at any time. Please call or text Michelle Sandheinrich at (270) 889 3546 for more information.

Holy Name School Fall Festival Oct. 24-25

Oct. 24-25, 2025 at Holy Name of Jesus School in Henderson, Ky. Carnival rides, auctions, raffles, games, bingo, fish and chicken dinners, food booths, a haunted house and much more. All are welcome! Contact (270) 827-3425 for more information.

Denis Greene to speak at St. Ambrose Oct. 25

Free and open to the public: Hear Denis Greene, author and award-winning storyteller, share how his Catholic faith guided him through trials like his brother's death, wilderness survival, war zone escape, and cancer, to joys like 25 years of marriage and raising four children. Oct. 25, 2025 6:30-8 p.m. at St. Ambrose Parish Hall, 5194 State Route 270 W, Morganfield, Ky. Light refreshments

will be served. Contact St. Ambrose Parish office at (270) 333-1832.

Brescia University upcoming music events

On Oct. 29, Ateneo, the college choir from our sister city of Olomouc, Czech Republic, will give a free concert in Taylor Lecture Hall at 7 p.m. And on Nov. 19, Brescia's annual Fall/Christmas concert will be in Taylor Lecture Hall, 7:30 p.m. All are welcome. Questions: Brett.Ballard@brescia.edu

The Ursuline Sisters want to know about acts of kindness you have witnessed

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph are reimagining our Kindness Campaign that began six years ago, when we mailed cards to individuals. Our new campaign involves sharing the stories of those who have shown an act of kindness to you or someone you know. Each month, these will be included in our e-mail newsletter "The Pilgrimage." The Bible emphasizes hospitality as a virtue, encouraging people to welcome strangers and "love thy neighbor." We are called to show kindness to all of God's children. No matter how small, an act of kindness can make an impact, so never underestimate the difference you can make. It's particularly fitting to share these tributes during the Jubilee Year of Hope when we are called to be Pilgrims of Hope. The Ursuline Sisters challenge themselves to "Answer the darkness by being light, and to give witness that is public." We believe that love and kindness prevail, and it begins with each of us. Please submit your stories here: <https://ursulinesmsj.org/kindness-campaign>. To sign up to receive our Pilgrimage email newsletter, visit: <https://ursulinesmsj.org/subscribe>. We hope you will be inspired to show kindness to someone else.

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Catholic
Charities
DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

YOU'VE GOT THIS

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

CAP COUNSELING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Find a list of counselors
ready to listen.



Tribunal Explains

*Question: What about Catholics who married
"outside" of the Catholic Church?*

Answer: All Roman Catholics are bound by Church law to be married according to "form" (in the presence of a Catholic priest or deacon, two qualified witnesses and in a Catholic Church). A Catholic who is married "outside" the Catholic Church, without the required dispensation (permission from observing form), is not considered married in the eyes of the Catholic Church. For such cases, a "Lack of Form" can be granted by parish priests. One of the ways the Church addresses this need is through the ministry offered by the Diocesan Tribunal which is designed to help individuals in the healing process by seeking clarification with regard to their marriage. Further information will be published monthly. If you have questions, please contact the Tribunal at (270) 683-1545 or Tribunal@pastoral.org.



PRESENTS
the
12TH ANNUAL



BLUEGRASS ON (LAKE) BESHEAR

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025

11:45 AM - 5 PM

307 Island Cove Ln, Dawson Springs

FREE ADMISSION

Donations, food, merch & raffle ticket sales
support the following Pregnancy Care Centers:

Door of Hope (Madisonville)

H.O.P.E. Clinic (Benton and Eddyville)

Alpha PCC (Hopkinsville)

Pathway of Hope (Greenville)

www.BluegrassonBeshear.com



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

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

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

For example, if you give a \$25,000 Charitable Gift Annuity to the foundation, your benefits include:

- \$1,550 annual income, which you may donate to your parish or diocese for additional tax credit
- generous charitable tax deductions
- over half the income tax free
- potential reduced estate taxes

You can designate
the Diocese of
Owensboro or
your parish as
the beneficiary of
your generosity.

The 40 Martyrs: Fr. Robert Gipperich (Part 3)

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

Editor's note: The previous two installments of this three-part series can be viewed online at westernkycatholic.com/inside-the-archives.

This final installment of the story of Fr. Robert Gipperich will take up where the last one left off in our September WKC column. The good priest now fully understood that returning to serve the Church in Louisville was no longer a possibility.

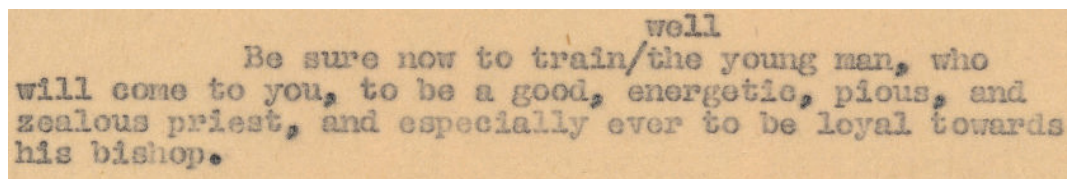
Though he accepted this and was beginning to see God's plan for him in the Diocese of Owensboro, there remained a resentment between he and his old friend Bishop Francis Cotton who refused to let him return to serve in Louisville.

On June 21, 1941, Bishop Cotton wrote Fr. Gipperich in response to his request for a new associate pastor at Holy Name in Henderson. After addressing the request the bishop stated, "It has also been reported to me that you have said some things that would have hurt me pretty much coming from you. But I have tried not to believe them." Concluding he added "Be sure now to train (later annotating in the word "well") the young man, who will come to you, to be a good, energetic, pious, and zealous priest, and especially ever to be loyal towards his bishop." The later addition of the word "well" made the exchange that much more heated.

This was the relationship between the two. They were very transparent. Few, if any, stood their

ground or spoke their mind to Bishop Cotton, like Fr. Gipperich. However, no matter the situation, they both remained loyal to their duties as servants of the Church and brothers in the priesthood. "... I have favored you and tried to be good to you many times" Bishop Cotton stated. This was true and both knew it. Bishop Cotton understood Fr. Gipperich's sadness. This is one of the few stories in which you see a more human side of Bishop Cotton, getting a glimpse behind his legendary austere image.

After the passing of Bishop Cotton, Fr. Gipperich became a very good friend of Bishop Soenneker. Writing the bishop in 1965, Fr. Gipperich beamed, "I cannot refrain from thanking the Holy Spirit



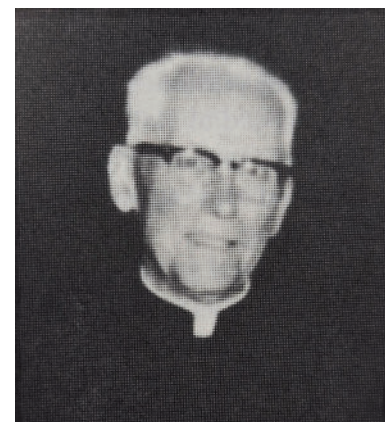
Be sure now to train/well the young man, who will come to you, to be a good, energetic, pious, and zealous priest, and especially ever to be loyal towards his bishop.

COURTESY OF ARCHIVES

A clip from a June 21, 1941 correspondence between Fr. Robert Gipperich and Bishop Francis R. Cotton is seen, reading "Be sure now to train (later annotating in the word 'well') the young man, who will come to you, to be a good, energetic, pious, and zealous priest, and especially ever to be loyal towards his bishop."

for bestowing such a wonderful shepherd on our Diocese." The feeling of admiration was mutual as the new bishop bestowed the honor of Monsignor on Fr. Gipperich that same year. An honor that the 44-year veteran priest humbly stated, "I certainly do not think I have deserved..." His final years in the diocese certainly seemed to be some of his most joyful and peaceful.

In the end, Msgr. Gipperich finally made his way back to Louisville. In 1965, Bishop Soenneker



COURTESY OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH
An undated photo of Msgr. Robert Gipperich is seen, showing the priest when he was more advanced in years.

offered the priest a year leave for rest to try and dissuade him from retirement. He accepted and moved to Louisville to live in a house owned by himself and his unwed sister. The warmth of home and family were everything that the good priest hoped they would be all those years. At the end of his leave, citing his health, he offered his resignation at Holy Name. The bishop offered him his choice of churches would he want to return but, in the end, Msgr. Gipperich was finally home. To this day, he remains in Louisville, buried in a plot by his father and mother, making up for all the time away. ■

Note: Special thanks to Holy Name of Jesus parishioner Charyl Farley for assistance in obtaining the photo of Msgr. Gipperich.

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.

San Francisco de Asís: Un modelo para todos

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Giovanni de Pietro de Bernardon nació en Asís en 1881 en una familia rica. Su padre era un destacado comerciante de telas y su madre era francesa, también de una familia rica. Su padre estaba en Francia cuando nació Giovanni. A su regreso a casa, su padre comenzó a llamarlo por un apodo: Francisco, que significa el francés.

Con padres acomodados, Francisco disfrutó de una buena vida cuando era niño, aunque no hay indicios de que en su vida esto indicara corrupción alguna, sino solo indulgencia.

Hay muchas historias de la vida formativa de Francisco. Sirvió en el ejército en una guerra entre reinos dentro de Italia. Fue herido y tomado prisionero y pasó un año como prisionero de guerra.

Este acontecimiento parece haber sido el comienzo de una conversión del espíritu. Se volvió más reflexivo, más orante. Se cuenta una historia de su encuentro con un mendigo al que le dio todo lo que tenía consigo. Esto enfureció a su padre, quien lo procesó ante el obispo de Asís porque los regalos al mendigo eran en realidad posesiones del padre de Francisco.

Se sabía que Francisco iba a rezar a la Iglesia de San Damián, en las afueras de Asís. La iglesia estaba prácticamente abandonada y en terribles condiciones. Allí Francisco escuchó un mensaje: “Francisco, repara mi iglesia”. El joven tomó esto como una directiva para reparar físicamente el edificio de la iglesia y, como joven carismático, involucró a amigos y conocidos para que se unieran a él en el proyecto.

Pero Francisco llegó a comprender que el mensaje de reparar la Iglesia tenía un significado más pro-

fundo y comenzó a demostrar una vida de oración, pobreza y servicio a los necesitados. Esta conversión lo alejó aún más de su próspero padre.

Con el tiempo, el testimonio silencioso de Francisco atrajo a otros, y esto se convirtió en las raíces de la orden franciscana que sirve a la Iglesia universalmente hasta el día de hoy. Francisco es recordado y emulado por su amor y cuidado por toda la creación. Mostró una gran reverencia por todo lo que Dios ha creado. Francisco goza de la estima tanto de los cristianos como de los no cristianos.

El 4 de octubre es la fiesta de San Francisco de Asís y un buen día para que todos consideremos su legado y aceptemos la invitación a seguir a Francisco y “reparar la Iglesia”.

Que Dios los bendiga a todos,



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro

Parroquias con misa en Español



CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY OCTUBRE DE 2025	
1-2 de oct.	Retiro de dos días con el presbítero – Parque Estatal Kenlake
4 de oct.	11 a.m. Jubileo por el 25º aniversario de la Hermana Consolata Ojemeh – Catedral de San Esteban, Owensboro
	1 p.m. Misa de clausura de la Semana Nacional de la Migración – Catedral
5 de oct.	2 p.m. Conferir el Ministerio de Lectorado a los Candidatos Birmanos al Diaconado Permanente – Parroquia Espíritu Santo, Bowling Green
8 de oct.	9:30 a.m. Misa escolar – Escuela Preparatoria Santa María, Paducah
12 de oct.	11 a.m. Misa – Monte San José, Maple Mount
14-16 de oct.	Visita a los seminaristas en el Colegio del Seminario Concepción, Missouri
20 de oct.	10 a.m. Reunión del Consejo de Personal Sacerdotal – Centro Católico McRaith, Owensboro
	1:30 p.m. Reunión del Consejo Sacerdotal – Centro Católico McRaith
21 de oct.	9:30 a.m. Misa escolar – Escuela Primaria Santa María, Paducah
22 de oct.	10 a.m. Reunión del personal – Centro Católico McRaith
	12 p.m. Oración del mediodía y almuerzo con las monjas pasionistas
23-24 de oct.	Reunión de la Junta Directiva de Brescia
25 de oct.	11 a.m. Celebración del Jubileo de las Hermanas – Parroquia San Martín, Rome, Ky.
	6 p.m. Gala del Centenario de la Universidad de Brescia – Destilería Green River, Owensboro
29-31 de oct.	Visita a un seminarista en el Colegio Palabra Divina, Iowa

‘Una paz interior’ – Los residentes de Mayfield celebran la construcción de nuevas viviendas tras los daños causados por el tornado de 2021



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Karina González, administradora de casos de Caridades Católicas, sonríe al Padre Darrell Venters, párroco de la Parroquia San Jerónimo en Fancy Farm, mientras participa en la dedicación de las casas de los clientes en Mayfield el 26 de agosto.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

La familia Amador camina hacia la casa de los Hurtado y Velásquez para ayudarlos a mudarse el 26 de agosto de 2025.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Un hombre se ríe mientras sostiene un gatito el 26 de agosto, el día en que se dedicaron dos nuevas casas gracias a la colaboración de voluntarios del Servicio Público Cristiano y Caridades Católicas de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

POR RILEY GREIF, EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

“Cuéntame siempre la historia, si realmente quieres ser, en cualquier momento difícil, un consuelo para mí”.

Estas palabras fueron cantadas en celebración del consuelo que Dios ha brindado en tiempos difíciles a dos familias de Mayfield en la dedicación de dos nuevas casas el 26 de agosto de 2025. Los voluntarios del Servicio Público Cristiano guiaron a los presentes en el canto del himno “Tell Me the Old, Old Story” [Cuéntame la vieja, vieja historia]. Los propietarios Sebastián Hurtado y Bertha Velásquez, así como la propietaria Genie Amado, recibieron las llaves de sus casas terminadas después de dos años de oración y paciencia.

Sus casas anteriores sufrieron daños por los tornados de diciembre de 2021 y las intensas inundaciones de los últimos años. La más reciente inundación fue tan extrema que las familias fueron evacuadas de sus hogares. La propietaria Bertha Velásquez compartió que el tornado de diciembre de 2021 los afectó de muchas maneras, no solo dañando su casa, sino también porque trabajaba en la fábrica de velas en Mayfield que fue arrasada por la tormenta.

Las dos nuevas casas fueron construidas por la Organización de Servicio Público Cristiano y Caridades Católicas se encargó de la administración de los casos de las dos familias. Las casas fueron bendecidas y dedicadas por el Padre Darrell Venters, párroco de la Parroquia San Jerónimo en Fancy Farm.

La propietaria Genie Amador expresó su gratitud a todos los que la ayudaron en el camino, específicamente a la administradora de casos de Catholic Charities, Karina González: “Habíamos presentado la solicitud con otra persona y nos la habían negado. Karina no se dio por vencida y encontró la manera de ayudar”, compartió Amado.

Para Amado y sus cuatro hijos, la oración jugó un papel importante en este proceso. Amado afirmó: “Ellos (los niños) oraban todos los días, oraban por los trabajadores, por cada uno de ellos, para mantenerlos fuertes, para mantenerlos a salvo”. Amado mantuvo en secreto la fecha de la dedicación para sus hijos, sorprendiéndolos al llevarlos a la ceremonia de dedicación. Los niños estaban incrédulos y estaban emocionados de explorar su casa recién terminada. La finalización del proyecto le da a Amado y su

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familia “una paz interior de que vamos a estar seguros”.

Los terrenos donde se construyeron las casas, ubicados al otro lado de la calle de la Parroquia San José en Mayfield, fueron donados por la parroquia. Amado expresó su emoción de caminar a la iglesia con sus hijos todos los domingos. Además de Caridades Católicas, la Cruz Roja y el Servicio Público Cristiano, ambas familias comparten que experimentaron un profundo apoyo de la comunidad parroquial de San José en Mayfield. Velásquez afirmó que “estar en la comunidad de San José es la mayor ayuda, no de manera material o monetaria sino de apoyo espiritual”. ■

El inicio del Martes de Vocaciones pide al Espíritu Santo que ayude a que las vocaciones florezcan

POR ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

Los fieles se reunieron para orar por una cultura de vocaciones en la Diócesis de Owensboro en la tarde del 16 de septiembre, cuando se inauguró el primer evento semanal del Martes de Vocaciones en la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo.

El director de vocaciones, el Padre Corey D. Bruns, presidió la hora santa bilingüe a las 6:30 p. m. y la Misa votiva del Espíritu Santo a las 7:30 p. m. El Diácono Mike Marsili, subdirector de vocaciones, y el Diácono Ken Bennett, co-coordinador de la Oficina de Culto, ayudaron en la hora santa y la Misa.

Varios sacerdotes estuvieron disponibles para escuchar confesiones durante la hora santa, que contó con música sagrada y silencio para ayudar a la experiencia de oración en la Adoración Eucarística.

En su homilía durante la Misa, el P. Bruns dijo que el propósito de reunirse esa noche era “orar para que el Espíritu Santo cante sobre la Diócesis de Owensboro” y ayude a más hombres y mujeres jóvenes a estar abiertos a discernir el sacerdocio, la vida religiosa y los matrimonios santos.

Todos están invitados a unirse a la Oficina de Vocaciones cada semana para el Martes de Vocaciones con la hora santa y confesiones a las 6:30 p.m. y la Misa a las 7:30 p.m. ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
El seminarista Juan Carlos Lazo Soriano proclama la primera lectura durante la Misa Votiva del Espíritu Santo el 16 de septiembre durante el inicio de la iniciativa semanal del Martes de Vocaciones de la Oficina de Vocaciones en la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo en Owensboro.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
El director de vocaciones, el P. Corey D. Bruns, levanta la custodia durante la bendición en el inicio del Martes de Vocaciones el 16 de septiembre en la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo en Owensboro.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

La Adoración al Santísimo Sacramento se llevó a cabo el 16 de septiembre de 2025, durante el inicio de la iniciativa semanal del Martes de Vocaciones en la Parroquia Santos José y Pablo en Owensboro.

Vengan y Verán al Colegio del Seminario Concepción

La Oficina de Vocaciones está patrocinando un fin de semana de discernimiento en el seminario "Encuentro con el llamado de Dios" del 14 al 16 de noviembre para estudiantes desde el penúltimo año de la escuela preparatoria (juniors) hasta los graduados universitarios recientes (de 16 a 25 años).

No hay ningún costo para asistir. Comuníquense con el Padre Corey D. Bruns en fatherbruns@owensborovocations.com o al (270) 421-7868.

Sociedad Vocacional de Santa Teresita

Esta sociedad es una sociedad de oración intencional que comienza en nuestra diócesis en su día festivo, el 1 de octubre. Como monja de clausura en un monasterio carmelita, Santa Teresita de Lisieux era conocida especialmente por sus oraciones por los sacerdotes y su deseo de ser "apóstol a los apóstoles". Esta es una oportunidad estupenda para aquellos que están confinados en sus hogares, sufren alguna enfermedad o cualquier persona que desee unirse a la oración intencional y al sacrificio por las vocaciones de nuestra diócesis desde sus casas. Comuníquense con el Padre Corey D. Bruns en fatherbruns@owensborovocations.com o al (270) 421-7868.