

THE WESTERN
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Catholic

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Submissions

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

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

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

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A Word From Bishop Medley:

Advent, Christmas season provide many ways to celebrate Christ's love

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In December it seems that Christmas is about all we think about and all we prepare for. That's not a bad thing – so long as we do keep before us that it is not all about decorating and baking and Santa Claus. After all, Jesus is the reason for the season.

In the Church we pack a lot of very important observances in the month of December. The spiritual observance of Advent is essential to the proper celebration of the birth of Jesus.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is observed on December 8, celebrating that Mary was conceived without sin so as to be the bearer of the Word made flesh. Under this title Mary is seen as the Patroness of the United States.

The feast of our Lady of Guadalupe follows just four days later on December 12. This feast recalls the apparition of Mary to St. Juan Diego at Tepeyac in Mexico in 1531. Pope Pius XII declared that with this title Mary is the Patroness of all the Americas. And the feast is celebrated across both North and South America.

On Christmas we celebrate the Nativity of the Lord. This initiates 12 days of Christmas, and that concept predates any songs about a partridge in a pear tree or golden rings.

The real 12 days of Christmas are the days from Christmas to January 6, the Solemnity of Epiphany. And within these 12 days we celebrate several associated feasts.

The feast of St. Stephen comes on December 26.

St. Stephen is recognized as the first martyr to die for his allegiance to Jesus. This is the patronal feast of the Diocese of Owensboro and thus our cathedral is dedicated to St. Stephen. The celebration of the first Christian martyr on the day after Christmas is instructive of those who follow Jesus.



RACHEL HALL | WKC

The nativity scene at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro is seen on Dec. 29, 2024.

The feast of St. John the Apostle is observed on December 27. John is often referred to as the “apostle that Jesus loved” – in recognition of his singular faithfulness in following Jesus all the way to the cross at Calvary.

December 28 is the Feast of the Holy Innocents, though its observance is interrupted as it falls on a Sunday this year. It is a proper time recall innocent young lives lost to abortion, hunger and violence.

The Sunday that falls between Christmas and

New Year's Day is a celebration of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The virtues exemplified by the Holy Family are virtues that still ground healthy and holy families. Just days before New Year's, perhaps some will be considering New Year's resolutions. Could there be resolutions we might make to strengthen our families?

A central and essential character of our Christmas story is, of course, Mary. On January 1, the Church venerates her under the title of Mother of God and this feast is a Holy Day of Obligation in our tradition.

The 12th day of Christmas is traditionally January 6 and seen as the Epiphany of the Lord. The Church, however, transfers this feast to the first Sunday of January to invite fuller participation of the faithful in this manifestation of Christ to the whole world.

Four weeks of Advent plus 12 days of Christmas! We can choose so many ways of celebrating the Word made flesh in these extraordinary feasts during this season.

Merry Christmas,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Diocese of Owensboro

BISHOP MEDLEY'S DECEMBER 2025 CALENDAR

Dec 1	6:30 PM Pension Fund Regional Listening Session – St. Thomas More Parish, Paducah
Dec 2	6 PM Pension Fund Regional Listening Session – Holy Spirit Parish, Bowling Green
Dec 3	Advent Convocation – The Bruce, Hopkinsville
	6 PM Pension Fund Regional Listening Session – Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Hopkinsville
Dec 8	12 noon Mass – St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro
Dec 11	6 PM Pension Fund Regional Listening Session – St. Pius X Parish, Owensboro
Dec 12	8:30 AM Dedication of Altar and Chapel – Owensboro Catholic High School
	1:30 PM First Vows – Passionist Nuns Community at St. Joseph Monastery, Whitesville
Dec 16	6:30 PM Holy Hour and Mass with Seminarians – Sts. Joseph & Paul Parish, Owensboro

Happy anniversary to the following priests:

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

Fr. John Paul Mang | Ordained 12/11/2001
Parochial Vicar, Holy Spirit Parish, Bowling Green

Fr. Jegin Puthenpurackal | Ordained 12/27/2004
Pastor, St. Stephen Parish in Cadiz and St. Henry Parish in Aurora

Pilgrims felt 'enriched' while visiting diocese's Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage sites this year

BY ANDY TELLI, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

As the Catholic Church began to prepare for the Jubilee of Hope of 2025, Pope Francis chose as its motto "Pilgrims of Hope."

Members of the faithful from throughout the Diocese of Owensboro have taken the motto to heart, organizing pilgrimages to the six Jubilee sites designated by Bishop William F. Medley: St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, St. Romuald Parish in Hardinsburg, the Diocesan Marian Shrine at St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green, St. Leo Parish in Murray, St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Beaver Dam.

"For me it comes back to the journey. We're all on the journey. We're all pilgrims here," said Robin Murphey of Owensboro, who organized a one-day pilgrimage to three of the sites in the diocese and a separate Jubilee pilgrimage to Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana.

"Our life is a pilgrimage. It's a journey of journeys," Murphey said. "We're not citizens of this world, we're citizens of heaven. We're pilgrims



RACHEL HALL | WKC

On Nov. 18, Brenda Spees and Laura Gregory Shaw, two pilgrims from St. Francis de Sales in Paducah, smile with their tote bags while picking them up from the McRaith Catholic Center in Owensboro after receiving all six pilgrimage stamps.

in this world."

Murphey originally had hoped to lead a two-day pilgrimage to all six sites in the diocese, but in the end journeyed to three of the sites on Saturday, Aug. 30: St. Francis de Sales Parish in Paducah, St. Leo Parish in Murray, and the Marian Shrine at St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green.

She led a second Jubilee pilgrimage to Saint Meinrad Archabbey on Sunday, Oct. 5.

"They were very hospitable, welcoming," Murphey said.

"The purpose was to encounter Christ in the churches, the communities, and the people who were pilgriming with us," said Murphey, who was accompanied on the pilgrimage to the diocesan sites by 18 people from eight parishes throughout western Kentucky. "People really enjoyed the community and getting to know people across the diocese."

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COURTESY OF RAEANNE ALLANDE

Parishioners from Holy Spirit in Bowling Green make a pilgrimage to St. Romuald Parish in Hardinsburg, one of the Diocese of Owensboro's Jubilee of Hope 2025 pilgrimage sites.

Before the pilgrimage to the three diocesan sites, Murphey developed a novena that pilgrims could make beforehand to prepare by reflecting on the pilgrimage and the Jubilee of Hope. For each day of the novena, Murphey included a reflection about a different aspect of the Jubilee and the Jubilee Prayer.

'Enriched with prayer'

Raeanne Allande, the pastoral associate at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green, was looking for ways the parish could participate in the Jubilee of Hope. She has made pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land and wanted to give Holy Spirit parishioners a way to have a similar experience.

She organized three pilgrimages to all six of the diocesan sites, visiting St. Francis de Sales and St. Leo on one Tuesday, the Marian Shrine and Holy Redeemer Parish on a second, and St. Stephen Cathedral and St. Romuald on a third.

"Each of our three Jubilee pilgrimages contained an opportunity for a deeper spiritual renewal," Allande said. "They involved prayer, liturgy, profession of faith, plenary indulgences, and charity."

A total of 30 Holy Spirit parishioners participated in the pilgrimages, and 10 completed the pilgrimage to all six sites, Allande said.

"Each trip was so enriched with prayer, and then we would always have some sort of fun on the side," she said.

"What was really lovely, most of them had not been to many of these churches," Allande said of the Holy Spirit pilgrims. "All these parishes were enriched with history."

The pilgrimages during the Jubilee has sparked an interest in making more pilgrimages, Allande said. At Holy Spirit there have been discussions about making pilgrimages next year to the



RILEY GREIF | WKC

St. Romuald Interparochial School students visit St. Stephen Cathedral on Sept. 24 during a jubilee pilgrimage trip.

Archdiocese of Louisville's sites.

Passport to the Jubilee

"We had quite a few different groups that came," said Zach Ault, pastoral minister at St. Francis de Sales. "We had a bunch of individuals who came."

For the Jubilee pilgrimage sites, the diocesan communications office, in collaboration with the diocesan Office of Worship, developed a passport booklet with all the information that pilgrims would need to participate in Jubilee 2025. The passports included information about each of the pilgrimage sites and what makes them special, as well as information about how to earn a plenary indulgence during a person's visit to a pilgrimage site.

Also included were ways to find information about how to connect more deeply to the spiritual life during the jubilee, including Eucharistic adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and

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COURTESY OF RAEANNE ALLANDE

A group of parishioners from Holy Spirit in Bowling Green make a pilgrimage to Holy Redeemer Parish in Beaver Dam, one of the Diocese of Owensboro's Jubilee of Hope 2025 pilgrimage sites.

the Jubilee year itself. Those who collected stamps from all six sites could receive a commemorative tote bag.

When pilgrims to St. Francis de Sales, which was established in 1848, would ask to have their passports stamped, Ault said, "that gave us a chance to greet them and answer any questions about the parish and its history."

The pilgrimage passports "really encouraged people to go to these pilgrimage sites," Ault said. "It was a nice way of tracking their pilgrimage during this Jubilee year."

St. Leo was one of several pilgrimage sites that ran out of passports and requested more.

"I noticed quite a few of them were gone and most of the Spanish passports were gone," said Joy Navan, interim director of evangelization at St. Leo.

Among the pilgrims to St. Leo were individuals, couples, families, and groups, Navan said. The pilgrims, who would attend Mass during their pilgrimage to St. Leo, contributed to a 15 percent increase in Mass attendance at the parish over the last year, she said. "We consider that pretty



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A St. Paul School student listens as Eddie McFarland shows the monstrance while leading an Oct. 16 tour of St. Stephen Cathedral.

significant."

'People are searching'

"All of the sites were well visited," Dcn. Ken Bennett, co-coordinator of the diocesan worship office, said as the Jubilee nears its official conclusion on Jan. 6, 2026, the traditional date for the Feast of the Epiphany.

"I just feel like people are searching for something," Dcn. Bennett said. "We have the answer, and that is in Christ himself."

The Jubilee of Hope overlapped the Eucharistic Revival in the United States, and there was an obvious connection between the two, Dcn. Bennett said: "Our hope is in Christ, the Eucharist."

In preparing for the Jubilee of Hope, Pope Francis wrote: "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The... Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire." ■

Rising needs met with rising compassion: Diocese-wide response to help fellow Kentuckians

BY RACHEL HALL, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

"This is the heartbeat of America," said Harry Pedigo, the executive director of St. Benedict's Homeless Shelter and the Pitino Shelter in Owensboro, reflecting on the nation's resilience during hardship, "when things get tough, we pull together."

Recent weeks have shown that clearly. The Oct. 1-Nov. 12 federal government shutdown lasted 43 days, delaying crucial food assistance programs such as the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). These benefits support roughly one in eight Kentuckians – many of them elderly, children, or working families struggling to make ends meet.

Across the Diocese of Owensboro, Catholic parishes and ministries have stepped forward to help. The Church has long committed to serving those in need, following the Gospel's call to see Christ in those who suffer and are forgotten.

At the Pitino Shelter, which along with St. Benedict's operates under the umbrella of Catholic Charities, Pedigo described an increasingly common scene: a nicely dressed person walks into

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the office and softly asks to see the director.

"They are out of their comfort zone," he said. "They ask where to go for food boxes. You can tell they haven't done this before."

The shelter's soup kitchen has also seen a rise in need, jumping from 100 people a day to 150. In addition to their own increases, they have also stepped up in donating to other nonprofits in the area where they supply basic essentials which people can take with them.

Concerns about potential budget cuts continue, as people are required to reapply for benefits as part of the USDA's effort to reduce fraud.

Kim Morgan who oversees the food pantry at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro said, "We are trying to not turn anyone away."

Now operating in two-hour shifts, the pantry uses four volunteers at a time.

"In the first week of November we served 38 families in just six hours," Morgan said, which is a dramatic increase. She believed much of the increase came after the parish was added to the Facebook group "Feeding Owensboro."

Anticipating that benefits might not be dispersed at the beginning of November, Lourdes had asked parishioners after each Mass to fill a brown paper bag and return them. The response was overwhelming and soon donations overflowed into the parish hall. Soon parishioners from Immaculate and Blessed Mother were bringing in donations too.

"The word was out," Morgan said.

Morgan reflected on the relationships formed, on getting to know people and their situations, including parishioners who were quietly seeking help, she added, "It humbles you."

Beyond pantry staples, people can also seek

financial assistance through their parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society. Many of the ministries at Lourdes lean into the corporal works of mercy, and through a social concerns committee they communicate and work together.

An example is during Lent when the Knights of Columbus delivered over 25 hot fish fry plates to the homebound. Another example is their backpack program that helps local schoolchildren ensure they have food at home for the weekend.



COURTESY OF KIM MORGAN

The food pantry at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro is seen in fall 2025. Volunteers say Lourdes has seen an uptick in essential needs since the federal government shut down, and even after it reopened, the local community is still struggling to catch up.

"We want them to feel seen," Morgan said, noting an upcoming chili supper donated by The Dipper, that will be provided for those families at the parish hall: "We are here for you, and we love you."

In Paducah, Diane Stoverink volunteers with the St. Vincent de Paul Society of McCracken County. They "typically see 60 to 70 families a week," but in recent weeks had an additional 10-20 more families seeking help," she said.

Their St. Vincent de Paul includes a thrift store, financial assistance program, and a food pantry, all supported by many of the surrounding churches and community partners. One major supporter is Christmas in the Park, organized by Paducah Power Systems, which draws thousands of visitors each year.

In Hancock County, Robert Durbin, president of the local St. Vincent de Paul, said simply, "they stay busy year-round." Working with the schools, they help schoolchildren who qualify for assistance receive a free pair of new shoes twice a year, sometimes up to 300 pairs at once.

At a local assisted living facility, St. Vincent de Paul regularly supplies furniture and essentials for residents, who "a lot of times, they come in with the clothes on their backs," said Durbin.

In partnership with local factories, funds and other donations to the thrift shop help them, and in turn buy coats for those in need.

"Funds just go back into the community," Durbin said.

Back in Owensboro, Pedigo shared that "panic has gone done" since the government reopened, but people are still trying to catch up.

"It can all be gone in an instant," he said. "I challenge people to change their perspectives on things."

Amid the rising needs, there was also a surge of generosity: "Everyone was pulling for each other," he said, "sending what they had where it needed to go."

He said in total there were 30 different groups in the area all working together.

Across the diocese, the theme emerged of a shared effort. As Durbin put it:

"We will always walk with the poor." ■

A year-end gift: Lighting the way for our neighbors

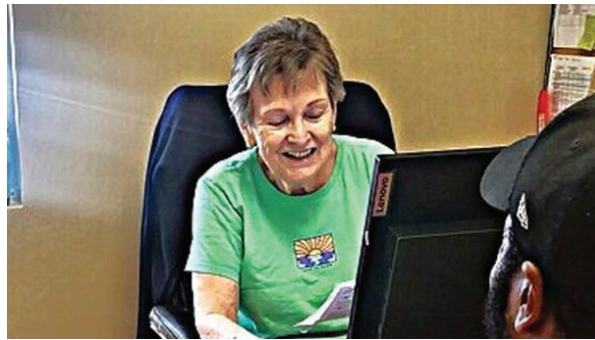
BY BELINDA ABELL, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

As the year draws to a close and the holiday season encourages reflection, many of us turn our thoughts to ways we can make a difference in our community. For more than 62 years in western Kentucky, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) has been a steadfast source of hope, offering person-to-person assistance to those facing hardships. Your year-end gift provides a crucial lifeline, ensuring that the work of the dedicated Vincentian volunteers, continues right where it's needed most: in local communities.

The SVdP Conferences know their neighbors and their specific needs. This allows your donation to be incredibly impactful, providing tangible aid such as preventing homelessness (offering financial assistance for rent and utilities to keep families in their homes), essential needs (distributing food, clothing, and other basic necessities), healing and health (connecting individuals with low-cost or free medical care and prescription medications), and building a future (providing educational resources and support to help break the cycle of poverty).

"A gift to SVdP often represents more than just a transaction; it's a 'hand up,' offering dignity and a path toward a brighter future, as seen in countless stories of individuals inspired by the help they received to later become volunteers themselves," said James Dale, SVdP diocesan president.

Beyond the powerful charitable impact, making your donation before Dec. 31 can offer significant



COURTESY OF SVDP

A member of the Paducah/McCracken County St. Vincent de Paul conference assists a neighbor in need in this undated photo.

tax advantages. Many companies offer matching gift programs that can double or even triple your donation's value. Check with your employer to see if your gift is eligible.

"The need for support is constant, and the winter months often present the greatest challenges for those facing struggles with poverty," said Richard Remp-Morris, SVdP CEO.

Your year-end gift enables SVdP to continue serving the marginalized in our communities, ensuring that vulnerable neighbors will not face the months ahead alone. Your contribution makes a meaningful difference, helping Vincentians bring Christ's presence, dignity, and hope to millions of people in poverty across the United States. Please give the gift of hope to those in need this Christmas Season.

Learn how you can help at svdpwky.org or call (270) 315-5747.

By giving before the end of the year, you not only support vital programs but also maximize your charitable tax benefits for the current tax year. To donate visit svdpwky.org/donate or mail your donation to SVdP, P. O. Box 1203, Owensboro, KY, 42302-1203. ■

U.S. bishops issue a 'special message' on immigration from plenary assembly in Baltimore

BALTIMORE - As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) gathered for their Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore, the bishops issued a Special Message addressing their concern for the evolving situation impacting immigrants in the United States. It marked the first time in twelve years the USCCB invoked this particularly urgent way of speaking as a body of bishops. The last one issued in 2013 was in response to the federal government's contraceptive mandate.

Under the regulations pertaining to statements and publications of the Conference, a "Special Message" may only be issued at plenary assemblies, and they are statements which the President of the Conference, the Administrative Committee, or the general membership consider to be appropriate in view of the circumstances at the time. To show the consensus of the body, a Special Message must receive two-thirds of the Conference members present and voting at the plenary in order to pass. In a vote of 216 votes in favor, 5 votes against, and 3 abstentions, the

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bishops overwhelmingly approved the Special Message, with sustained applause of the body following the vote.

The full text of the bishops' Special Pastoral Message follows:

As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity.

Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and nation-

al security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (Zechariah 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (Luke 10:30-37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (Matthew 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (John 13:34).

To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26). You are not alone!

We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of good will to continue and expand such efforts.

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehuman-

izing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

As disciples of the Lord, we remain men and women of hope, and hope does not disappoint! (cf. Romans 5:5)

May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all in her maternal and loving care and draw us ever closer to the heart of Christ. ■

Tribunal Explains

Question: Do I have to want to marry again in order to petition for a declaration of invalidity (annulment)?

Answer: No. As part of their personal healing process, some choose to investigate the validity of their previous marriage with no intention of marrying again. By going through the process, a person is assisted in taking an in-depth look at their previous relationship, learning from it in order to grow and move forward. 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. If you have questions, please contact the Tribunal at (270) 683-1545 or Tribunal@pastoral.org.

A guided meditation on the Nativity

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & DISCIPLESHIP

I invite you to find a quiet place and ten minutes. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Breathe in the peace of God and breathe out any anxiety or frustration from your day. Take another deep breath and breathe in the presence of love and exhale any negativity that is resting in your soul.

In your mind's eye, picture yourself walking down a dimly lit dirt street. Feel the cool night air and notice the bright stars above. Breathe deeply and feel the peace of this quiet moment. As you look up the street the silence is broken by several men spilling out of a barn door talking excitedly. As they walk toward you, one of them says to you, "You must see the promised Messiah, the baby Jesus and his parents. Go in and feel God's love." Notice their clothes, their unshaven beards and their motioning you to go in.

As they run off, you notice the door is cracked a little and you see the light coming out into the dark street. You pause and decide to enter. See your hand reaching for the door and opening it to reveal a barn setting with animals and a small family. Joseph motions to you to come in and Mary looks up and smiles. Smile back. Feel the warmth of the lanterns and notice the smell of the animals and hay.

As you look at the baby lying in the crib, hear Mary say to you, "Would you like to hold him?" Surprised, you kneel next to Jesus and respond, "Are you sure that would be ok?" She smiles and nods. You pick up Jesus and look at his precious face. Pause to take in the magnitude of this moment. Is it possible that the God of the universe is incarnate in this human baby? Cradle him in your arms and treasure the gift of this moment. Take it all in and receive God's immense love for you and for the entire human family. Realize that this baby is the fullest revelation of God's love and that he is here to show you how to live and love. Finally, you look at Mary and Joseph and say, "He is perfect and he is the answer to all our prayers." They both smile and you lay him back in his bed. Thank them and go back into the night.

As you walk down the quiet street, offer a prayer for the gift of receiving the baby Jesus in this way. Now picture yourself back in this present moment, and with your eyes still closed, feel yourself begin hugged by the adult Jesus and experience his love filling you full in this present moment. Receive this love and know the grace of God in this moment.

Wishing you and yours a blessed Advent and Christmas Season. May you truly rest in the loving presence of God.

Peace in Christ,
Jeff ■

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



CNS PHOTO/VATICAN MEDIA

A girl holds a figurine of the baby Jesus after Pope Francis' recitation of the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 11, 2022. The pope blessed figurines of the baby Jesus brought by children for their Nativity scenes.

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Christmas: The triumph of faith, hope, and love



CNS PHOTO/JUSTIN MCLELLAN
A detail of a Nativity scene displayed in St. Peter's Square is seen in an exhibit at the Vatican Dec. 17, 2024.

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

Not long ago, someone asked me to explain the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love. I paused, realizing how inseparable they are – three strands of one divine thread woven together by God. Faith gives birth to hope, and both are perfected in love. Nowhere do these virtues shine more clearly than at Christmas. In the manger at Bethlehem, we see faith in Mary and Joseph, hope fulfilled in the coming of the Savior, and love made flesh in the Christ Child. Christmas does not merely teach these virtues; it embodies them.

Faith is God's gift that allows us to recognize His presence and trust His promises, even when unseen. From this faith springs hope – the confident assurance that God, who began His good work in us, will bring it to completion. Hope anchors us in

His steadfast love and sustains us through trial and uncertainty.

Yet faith and hope both find fulfillment in love. When we truly believe in God and trust His promises, our hearts are drawn to love Him and one another. Love is the greatest virtue because it endures beyond this life. In heaven, faith will give way to sight and hope to fulfillment, but love will remain forever. As Saint Paul writes, "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

These virtues shine most brilliantly at Christmas, the feast of God's greatest gift to humanity. The birth of Christ is the moment when heaven bends to earth, when the invisible becomes visible, and divine love takes on flesh. In Bethlehem, faith is fulfilled, hope realized, and love revealed.

Faith brought Mary and Joseph to that humble stable. Mary's faith enabled her to say "yes" to God's plan, trusting His word without understanding its full unfolding. Joseph's faith led him to obedience, accepting the mystery and protecting Mary and the child. Through their faith, the promises of the prophets were fulfilled and the Word became flesh.

Hope sustained all who awaited the Messiah – the shepherds watching their flocks, the Magi journeying from afar, and the faithful of Israel longing for redemption. When the angels proclaimed, "Today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you" (Luke 2:11), hope was no longer distant; it was cradled in a manger. The long-awaited promise took the form of a child who would bring light into every darkness.

At the heart of it all is love – the love of God

made visible in Jesus Christ. In sending His Son, the Father gave the world the perfect expression of divine love: not a love that demands, but one that gives; not a love that condemns, but one that redeems. This love calls us to give ourselves to others, just as Christ gave Himself for us.

Christmas is more than a season of lights and gifts; it is a living invitation to embody faith, hope, and love. Faith opens our hearts to the mystery of the Incarnation. Hope assures us that God is with us in every darkness. And love compels us to share Christ's presence through mercy, kindness, and joy.

As we gaze upon the Christ Child, may we renew our faith, strengthen our hope, and let our hearts overflow with the love that came down from heaven to dwell among us. ■

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

Corrections: On page 17 of the November issue of *The Western Kentucky Catholic*, it was incorrectly stated that St. Francis Borgia Parish in Sturgis had acquired a new sanctuary floor. It should have stated that St. Ambrose Parish in Henshaw had acquired a new sanctuary floor.

Also on page 17 of the same issue, in the cutline for the St. Teresa Thrift Store event, the priest in the photo is incorrectly referred to as Fr. Randy Howard. The correct name is Fr. Ryan Harpole.

On page 35 of the same issue, the two cutlines for the photos of St. Augustine Parish in Reed and St. Peter of Alcantara Parish in Stanley were accidentally swapped.

The WKC apologizes for these errors. ■



SCREENSHOT

Clint Campbell applied for a Disciples Response Fund Grant for the praise and worship nights at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro, where he serves as music director. He is seen in a screenshot from a recent video interview with the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Communications.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

The band plays for the praise and worship night at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro on Nov. 13, 2025. The nights have been supported through a Disciples Response Fund Grant, which has helped the parish pay the professional musicians who lead the music.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Lee Roessler sings and plays guitar at a praise and worship night at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro on Nov. 13, 2025. Roessler is one of the musicians hired to serve at the popular gatherings, which are open to all.

Through Disciples Response Fund grant, music director hopes to ‘meet maximum capacity in people’s hearts’

BY RILEY GREIF, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

“To provide people an experience of Christ that tends to the soil of their heart,” is what Clint Campbell said they are trying to accomplish with St. Pius X Parish’s praise and worship nights.

Campbell is the music director at the Owensboro parish. He has held the role for the past year and in that time has worked to grow the parish’s once-a-month praise and worship nights with the help of a Disciples Response Fund Grant from the Diocese of Owensboro.

The grant monies received by St. Pius X go toward paying the musicians who lead the evening in what they hope to be “an atmosphere to encounter Christ,” according to Campbell.

The musicians vary from St. Pius parishioners to musicians from surrounding cities.

“It’s not easy to bring in people that have families to feed and ask them to do things for a volunteer type thing,” said Campbell, in recognition of the importance of compensating the musicians for sharing their talent.

Campbell shared his long term goal is to “meet maximum capacity in our parish hall and need a bigger space. Or, if that’s not God’s will, then to just meet maximum capacity in people’s hearts. You know, just to really provide an experience of the Holy Spirit.”

He said one attendee described the evening as “really good for my heart,” and was glad to hear the praise and worship nights would continue in the new year.

Campbell expressed his gratitude for those who made the grant possible by saying that “for anyone who’s contributed to the Disciples Response Fund. I want to say thank you so much, on behalf of myself, on behalf of so many others, we couldn’t have done this without you.”

Disciples Response Fund Grants are one of the many ways that the Disciples Response Fund supports the ministries of the Diocese of Owensboro. Diocesan parishes, schools and organizations can apply for a Disciples Response Fund Grant through the Office of Stewardship and Development for special projects or initiatives.

To learn more, watch the full interview on the diocese’s Vimeo account at <https://vimeo.com/rcdok/disciples-response-fund-grant> ■

The gift of intentional parenting

BY SUSANA SOLORZA, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

As we begin a season of gift giving, I want to cut through the “Jingle Bell Rock,” deciding whether to use last year’s wrapping paper, and the “elves,” to invite you to a place that will give your children the best gift of all: your healthy, happy, and holy parenting.

Several of our diocesan offices have come together to create the “Building a Family of Faith” workshops. We care about your parenting because we care about your kids. As a mom of three boys, and as a teacher and youth minister, I have had the blessing to be living all the experiences and teachings I will be sharing with you. I have heard from so many young people that what they want from their parents is time. They want to be with you! They like you! They want to be heard by you.

Just like you, I have messed up in my parenting journey more times than I would have hoped for when I started out. My Pinterest-perfect motherhood wasn’t playing out the way I had planned, life got messy, I got angry, and my faith-filled household descended into chaos. When my husband and I reached out to God for help, we received the support we needed from family, the joy of friends in the same stage of life as us, and we found resources and people that taught us what we didn’t know, and that healed us where we were found to be broken. As parents, God gifts us with this incredible opportunity to raise someone – to receive this person into our home and love them. We can’t fake it with our

children; they will call us out on our bluff. Our faith must be authentic because they see us when no one else is around, after the social media post has been liked, or after Mass on Sunday is over. They see what role God really plays in our lives. So let God into your parenting; give your children the gift of a relationship with the one who loves them even more than you do.

I wish I could tell you that this workshop will solve all of your parenting problems, but I can guarantee that it will point you in the right direction, toward Christ. Like the three Wise Men, we will orient ourselves toward the one who has shown how we can love each other on this earth in order that we may one day find each other in heaven.

Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, and all people who care about how our children are being raised, please share this article, and share the registration link. Grab your other friends who are parents and come



RILEY GREIF | WKC

A toddler is carried during the July 4, 2024 Eucharistic procession through the Auburn, Kentucky, area during the visit of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the Diocese of Owensboro, as part of the National Eucharistic Revival.

check out what we have to say. Parent to parent, this is the gift they will always thank you for. For dates, locations, and to register, visit owensborodiocese.org/building-a-family-of-faith. ■

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God's presence 'gently nudged' young adults on hike retreat

Reflections from the fifth young adult hike retreat

BY CHARLIE HARDESTY, OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

"This was a unique and grounding experience. To see our church family be positive, happy, pray with, and encourage one another through the whole adventure was very moving and spiritually healing. I truly feel like I have come out of these woods with a brighter heart!" These reflections come from Bernedette Chadwick of Murray, Kentucky, after her first time on The Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat.

During the weekend of Oct. 24-26, 2025, 10 young adults joined Matt Purcell from Fancy Farm, Kentucky, and me for the fifth Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat at Land Between the Lakes. This retreat, offered twice a year, is built to be an intentional space of reflection, prayer, and adventure.

Roy Murray from St. Thomas More in Paducah shared: "The journey is an excellent way to elevate one's mind and heart to God and truly come to request what is good (CCC 2559). Through the action of hiking, one uses the will to choose to keep going forward over the passions of the body to encounter God because, in this case, you are on this journey for no other reason except to encounter the Risen Lord. From this surrender of your body to the will fueled by the desire to walk with God the intellect comes to rest in Him. This is where and when you come to know Him and learn to truly pray that His will be done. The Journey is an excellent place to take that burden and trade it for the yoke of



COURTESY OF CHARLIE HARDESTY

The participants of the fall 2025 The Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat are seen while participating in the Oct. 24-26 retreat experience.

Christ and find rest."

Alyssa Nichols from Our Lady of Lourdes in Owensboro shared: "I'm grateful to have gone on this experience. It pushed my physical capabilities to the max, but I completed it. It was nice to take things at my own pace without feeling rushed. God's presence was with me the whole time gently nudging me forward when I didn't think I could move forward."

"This was my second hike experience," shared Mary Jo Payne. "God showed me how much I had

changed in a span of a little over a year. Not just in physical health, but also spiritually, and in my mental state of mind. It's easy to take for granted how we improve with our thinking patterns."

We are so grateful to the parish community of St. Henry in Aurora. Peg Potempa and Fr. Jegin Puthenpurackal are tremendous hosts and have supported each of our Journey Hike Retreats. ■

Our next Journey Young Adult Hike Retreat will be April 17-19, 2026. Please check <https://owensborodiocese.org/journey-retreat/> for information and to register.

How to ‘deepen’ communion in increasingly polarized world is focus of Saint Meinrad conference

BY OSV NEWS

Reflecting on the polarization in the United States and even the Catholic Church, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, advised that overcoming divisions requires a nuanced approach.

“My experience tells me that polarization is not an issue that you can come at head on,” he said. “You have to come at it at a 45-degree angle, because if we come at head on, conversation is entirely defensive.”

Cardinal Tobin suggested taking an approach promoted by the late Pope Francis: synodality. It’s a method of conversation marked by prayerful listening, times of silent reflection and an openness to be led by the Holy Spirit.

He made the comments during a session with Seattle Archbishop Paul D. Etienne at a Nov. 4-6 conference on “Deepening Communion in a Polarized World,” hosted by Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and co-sponsored by the seminary and the Glenmary Home Missioners religious order.

The gathering was facilitated by Glenmary Fr. Aaron Wessman, Benedictine Br. John Mark Falkenhain, and Dr. Amy Uelman, the director for mission and ministry at Georgetown Law School and a member of the Focolare Movement.

Clergy, seminarians, religious and lay Catholics from across the country participated in the three-day event, which highlighted topics like “Deepening Communion in the Catholic Hierarchy,” “Deepening Communion Through the Liturgy” and “Deepening Communion in the Implementation of Vatican II.”



RILEY GREIF | WKC

Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, the editor of The Western Kentucky Catholic, speaks with fellow Catholic media panelists on Nov. 6, 2025, during the “Deepening Communion in a Polarized World” conference at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

A final session, “Deepening Communion through Catholic Media,” was held in the morning of the last day of the conference, and featured J.D. Long-Garcia of America Media, Jeanette De Melo of EWTN News, and Elizabeth Wong Barnstead of The Western Kentucky Catholic. The conversation, facilitated by Dr. Uelman, discussed the challenges of polarization in different corners of Catholic media and the need for local Catholic news to inform local communities.

“No, one side did not leave victorious as another left defeated,” said Owensboro diocese seminarian Wes Wheatley, who attended the conference. “We more or less realized we are all on the same team. Yes, there are differences. That is true. However, the point is not to rid ourselves of our differences. Rather, we are more called to realize our differences and engage with one another regardless of them.” ■

WKC staff contributed to this report.



RILEY GREIF | WKC

The archabbey church at Saint Meinrad is seen during the Nov. 4-6 conference on “Deepening Communion in a Polarized World” which was hosted at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

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Brescia University looks forward to bright future at centennial celebration



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Susan Montalvo-Gesser and Bishop William F. Medley attend Brescia University's Oct. 25 Centennial Gala. The Diocese of Owensboro was among those honored as Diamond Level donors, who have contributed more than \$1 million to the university.



COURTESY OF LAKE'S PHOTOGRAPHY
Brescia University's president, Madison Silvert, addresses the university's Oct. 25 Centennial Gala held at Green River Distillery in Owensboro. Silvert, a parishioner of St. Pius X in Owensboro, was inaugurated as the university's sixth president in August.

BY WKC STAFF

One hundred years of education was celebrated at Brescia University's Centennial Gala on Oct. 25, concluding a lively homecoming weekend for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

Held at Green River Distillery, the gala welcomed nearly 200 guests and included addresses from presenting sponsor Owensboro Health, Student Government Association president JoJo Gesser, and president Madison Silvert. The emcee was alumna Susan Montalvo-Gesser, who today serves as the director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro.

During the program, the Diocese of Owensboro and the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph were among those honored as Diamond Level donors who have contributed more than \$1 million to Brescia University over the course of the school's history. The diocese was represented by Bishop William F. Medley and the Ursuline Sisters were represented by Sr. Sharon Sullivan, OSU. ■

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Faithful participate in works of mercy at cemetery clean-up

BY CLINT AND RACHEL WATSON, SPECIAL
TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The annual Mt. Carmel Cemetery fall clean-up day was held in Paducah on Oct. 4, 2025. This year's event was one of the most successful ever, with approximately 50 volunteers from parishes all around Paducah. Among the volunteers were students, parents, and catechists from Paducah's faith formation program.

This event is a popular one and provides a way for students of all ages to participate in the Corporal Works of Mercy. The cemetery board was very thankful for everyone's participation. ■



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GING SMITH

The group that participated in Mt. Carmel Cemetery clean-up day, an annual service opportunity held this year on Oct. 4, 2025, including students, parents and catechists from Paducah's faith formation program.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GING SMITH

A young boy rakes leaves during the Oct. 4, 2025 Mt. Carmel Cemetery clean-up day, an annual service opportunity.

The Ursuline Sisters' online Quilt Sale continues!

Many items are still available!

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

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

The quilts are made by Ursuline Sisters and friends. Many quilts are for sale in a range of sizes, including baby quilts. Sizes and prices are listed in the captions.

Thanks for your purchase. Proceeds provide funding for the Ursuline Sisters' ministries.

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

Vets honored, Ursulines thanked, during Brescia veterans monument dedication

BY DAN HECKEL, MSJ STAFF

When Ursuline Sister Mary Michael Barrow returned to Maple Mount in 1945, she realized that the Mount Saint Joseph Junior College for Women – which she had helped open 20 years earlier – had not grown as the Sisters had hoped.

At the time, Owensboro had no four-year coed college. Just a year earlier, the GI Bill had become law, giving veterans returning from World War II stipends to attend college or trade school. Sister Mary Michael voiced her opinion that returning servicemen would use the G.I. Bill to attend college, and if there was no college for them in Owensboro, they would find one elsewhere. That was an important step in developing Brescia College.

That story was relayed by several speakers on Nov. 9, 2025, at Brescia University, during a ceremony to dedicate a veterans monument on the college campus.

“Without veterans, Brescia may not exist,” said Lark Buckman, a veteran and 1969 Brescia graduate, who serves on the school’s Board of Directors. “After much prayer and planning, Brescia was opened in 1950.”

It was Frank Werner, a 1973 Brescia graduate, who was the first to ask if there were a veterans’



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Members of the veterans committee line the first row in the Brescia Chapel and listen to Brescia president Madison Silvert thank them for their service prior to the dedication of the new monument on Nov. 9, 2025 at Brescia University.

memorial on campus. That led to the formation of a veterans committee, who needed to raise \$20,000 to pay for the memorial. Instead, they raised \$27,000, Buckman said.

The ceremony, just two days before Veterans Day, featured the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 696 presenting the colors. Inclement weather forced the ceremony into the Brescia Chapel until it was time to unveil the monument.

Brescia president Madison Silvert told the veterans present that they are an example of what true servant leadership is about.

“No piece of marble will adequately thank you,” Silvert said.

Sister Sharon Sullivan, congregational leader of the Ursuline Sisters, spoke of being the daughter of a World War II veteran who attended law school thanks to the GI Bill.

Veterans and Brescia first connected when

returning veterans approached Sister Alberta Birkhead about taking her business classes in Owensboro, Sister Sharon said.

“In September 1945, Joseph Leroy Yeand was discharged from the Navy and began classes at MSJ Junior College, and Marcellus Bonaventure Oberst was discharged from the Marines in January 1946 and began attending MSJ Junior College classes in Owensboro that fall,” Sister Sharon said. The Sisters knew it was time to expand their offerings in Owensboro.

“In the closing years of the 1940s there were 76 students in the Owensboro classes, 40 of whom were men, veterans on the GI Bill,” Sister Sharon said. “When classes officially became Brescia College in 1950, there were 241 students, 60 of whom were veterans – 58 men and two women.

Ever since, Brescia University has welcomed both active and veteran service men and women in

Continues on page 19

Veterans continued from page 18



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Jake Davis, director of alumni and donor relations for Brescia University, pulls the tarp off to unveil the veterans monument near Seventh and St. Ann Streets on Nov. 9, just two days prior to Veterans Day. Assisting him were local veteran servicemembers.

all majors. I have had at least five veteran advisees who chose special education, and many others in my classes.”

“I must also add that in ways wholly unexpected, each veteran or active service member has expanded my understanding of prayer and service and commitment,” Sister Sharon said. “For I have had to learn to pray not just for an anonymous group but for men and women whom I have come to know – whose stories I have heard – who place themselves or have placed themselves in harm’s way, for me.”

Sister Sharon spoke of the similar promises and oaths that both Ursuline Sisters and service members make.

“I would not be surprised to discover – whether you are in active service or a discharged veteran – that in many ways you still feel yourselves bound by that oath,” Sister Sharon said. “For we know ‘once an Ursuline, always an Ursuline,’ and I’ve heard the same is true for you, ‘once a Marine, always

a Marine.’ I might add, that once you embrace Brescia, Brescia will always be a part of you.”

Those gathered then headed out into a blustery freezing rainstorm to unveil the monument near Seventh and St. Ann streets. It says the following:

“This monument stands in tribute to the men and women who have served our country, and to Brescia University, which has long recognized the value of their sacrifice and service. Following World War II, Brescia took pioneering steps to develop programs and classes for returning veterans, empowering them to pursue education and new opportunities. This tradition endures, with veterans continuing to attend and graduate from Brescia University, and with members of the Brescia community proudly serving in the Armed Forces. To all veterans – past, present, and future – we honor your courage, sacrifice, and commitment to the enduring bond between service and education. Dedicated in 2025, the Centennial Year of Brescia University.” ■



COURTESY OF KIM HARDESTY

Four generations of faith are pictured in this Oct. 26 photo: matriarch Lena Wheatley (right front). Her daughter Liz Hoard stands next to her. On the right rear is Liz’s daughter, Casey Davis. Next to Casey is her daughter, Bryleigh Davis.

Catholic faith carried through family for four generations

BY KIM HARDESTY, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Four generations of a family worship together at Christ the King Parish in Madisonville.

From matriarch Lena Wheatley, to her daughter Liz Hoard, to her daughter Casey Davis, and to her own daughter Bryleigh Davis, they regularly attend the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass.

Bryleigh often altar serves, and Casey and Liz often assist as welcome ministers.

“It warms my heart to see these lovely, faithful women worshipping together,” said fellow parishioner Kim Hardesty. ■



COURTESY OF PAULA ENGLERT
Paducah parishioners attend a Nov. 4 screening of "Triumph of the Heart" at Maiden Alley Cinema.

Kolbe film inspires Paducah parishioners

BY PAULA ENGLERT, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The Paducah faith community attended a Nov. 4, 2025 showing of "Triumph of the Heart," a feature film about St. Maximillian Kolbe and his companions' triumph over the darkness of Auschwitz. The screening at Maiden Alley Cinema was sponsored by St. John the Evangelist Parish in Paducah. Approximately 80 parishioners from St. John the Evangelist, St. Francis de Sales, St. Thomas More and Rosary Chapel in Paducah were in attendance. It was open to the entire community. Making these kinds of films available to our community as well as encouraging attendance of the Fathom Events showings of faith films at our larger theaters are so very important in spreading Christ's message in this digital age. The way Fr. Kolbe's devotion to Our Lady through his entire life culminates in the most rewarding moments at the end of his life inspires me to continue my journey to grow in my devotion to our Blessed Mother. "Triumph of the Heart" is now available to stream online. Learn more at triumphoftheheart.com. ■

WKC staff contributed to this report.

Your generosity is appreciated.



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— Bill Rankin

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH
December 12th | 7:00 PM

December 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.

Editor's note: The following anniversaries were accidentally excluded from last month's list:

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

-Darrell & Dana Roby, who celebrated 40 years of marriage in November 2025.

-Scott & Shelly Aull, who celebrated 25 years of marriage in November 2025.

Blessed Mother, Owensboro

Ed & Mae Hoskins, 56
Mark & Jan Hubbs, 57
Philip & Judy Day, 50
Tom & Darlene Quinn, 52
Tony & Lois Booker, 53

Christ the King, Madisonville

Bob & Floy Daugherty, 72
James & Debbie Allen, 56

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson

Danny & Lynn DeKemper, 55
Forrest & Mary Meuth, 64
Herb & Mary Gold, 56
Jaime & Eve Tiu, 52
Joseph & Kristen Hensley, 5
Lucio & Ramona Hernandez, 58
Seth & McKenzie Tucker, 5
Steve & Roxanne Sellars, 54
Tim & Donna Barron, 40

Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam

Steve & Dorothy Storm, 54

Holy Spirit, Bowling Green

Allen & Judy Freeland, 57
Darrell & Marcia Cassidy, 52
Donald & Maura Gerard, 40
Eric & Tonja Tuttle, 10
Frank & Carol Kersting, 56
H Leon & Jane Brasher, 60
James & Pamela Somers, 50
John & Mary Anne Reiss, 62
Larry & Anita Willoughby, 62
Lucas & Kari Somers, 5

Richard & Marcia Poole, 56
William & Sharon McKay, 61

Immaculate Conception, Hawesville

Ellis & Sharon Russelburg, 59

Immaculate, Owensboro

Bob & Jane Borders, 50
David & Nelda Flahardy, 25
Fred & Beverly Bosley, 55
James & Catherine Boyd, 51
Murray & Sara Pride, 61
Otis & Judy Hicks, 62
Paul & Donna Munsey, 58

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro

Anthony & Anita Mathews, 51
Daniel & Dolores Fickas, 56
Danny & Kathi Roach, 53
Gary & Nelda Grant, 50
James & Diane Hunter, 57
James & Linda Warren, 58
John & Kay Steele, 64
Patrick & Marilyn Pace, 51

Precious Blood, Owensboro

Gary & Lois Miller, 53
Heath & Kristina Devine, 25
James & Dorothy Hodges, 54
Will & Mackenzie Johnson, 5

Sacred Heart, Russellville

Mike & Linda Slaughter, 58
Sacred Heart, Waverly
Mike & Linda Williamson, 55
Mike & Marilyn Fenwick, 56

St. Agnes, Uniontown

Isaac & Keri Greenwell, 5
Kenny & Linda Gough, 58

St. Alphonsus, St. Joseph

Chris & Joyce Kormelink, 62
Jim & Patsy Love, 55

St. Ann, Morganfield

Isaac & Britney Ervin, 10
Justin & Wilma Wolfe, 62

St. Anthony, Axtel

Celestine & Bonnie Hinton, 56
Denvir & Carolyn Henning, 55

St. Anthony, Browns Valley

George & Meghan Bittel, 5

St. Anthony, Peonia

Danny & Patsy Clemons, 56

St. Augustine, Grayson Springs

Leon & Martha Hill, 58

St. Charles, Bardwell

Daniel & Wanda Hayden, 61
Michael & Denise Thompson, 52

St. Charles, Livermore

George & Carol Rhodes, 60
Larry & Patricia Hardison, 61

St. Columba, Lewisport

Anthony & Margaret Hall, 58

St. Denis, Fancy Farm

Barry & Connie Ballew, 50

St. Elizabeth, Clarkson

Glenn & Patty Campbell, 57
Richard & Patricia Clemons, 52

St. Francis de Sales, Paducah

David & Edie Keeney, 66
Jerry & Diane Perry, 57
Mark & Bonnie Roof, 51

St. Jerome, Fancy Farm

Charles & Brenda Slaybough, 51

Dennis & Peggy Tharp, 58

Jeff & Brandy Elliott, 25

Jon & Melissa Hayden, 40

Laddie & Judy Thomas, 60

St. John the Evangelist, Paducah

Donald & Karol Richards, 55

St. Joseph, Bowling Green

Jim & Phyllis Huggins, 58
John & Laura Williams, 40
John & Rita Riley, 62
William & Linda Nesbitt, 55

St. Joseph, Central City

Donald & Bonnie Adams, 55

St. Joseph, Leitchfield

Kenny & Cathy Young, 40

St. Joseph, Mayfield

Danny & Rose Ann Cook, 51
John & Christie Scarbrough, 40

St. Lawrence, Philpot

Jerry & Shirley Powers, 63

St. Leo, Murray

Tyson & Sue DeLoach, 57
Virgil & Carol Sue Dick, 52

St. Mary Magdalene, Sorgho

Bryan & Elizabeth Esparza, 5
St. Mary of the Woods, McQuady
Louis & Elaine Hinton, 58

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville

David & Judy Connor, 61
Ivo & Martha Burch, 57
Jerome & Patti Merritt, 40
Keith & Emily Singer, 10
Mark & Alleen Mills, 53
Paul & Brenda Clemons, 61
Raymond & Emma Whistle, 73
Ronnie & Patsy Mayfield, 58

St. Mary, Franklin

Lonnie & Betty Powers, 51

St. Mary, LaCenter

Clyde & Mary Kay Riepe, 58

St. Michael the Archangel, Oak Grove

Joseph & Marcia Schmitt, 56
Lionel & Sue McElroy, 73

St. Michael, Sebree

Greg & Lea Ann Sugg, 53

St. Paul, Princeton

Jim & Linda Herbek, 58

St. Peter of Antioch, Waverly

Lloyd & Georgia Smith, 50

St. Pius X, Owensboro

Bill & Sheila Mattingly, 51
Peter & Ashlie Hurley, 10
Thomas & Janice Conrey, 56
Wayne & Martha Carrico, 50

St. Romuald, Hardinsburg

Barry & Pam Hart, 25
Harold & Fonda Roach, 54
Jay & Tiffany Ramsey, 5
Joe & Marion Oelze, 54
Logan & Emma Hardman, 5
Ort & Barbara Critchelow, 53
Paul & Anne O'Reilly, 59
Steve & Jenny Critchelow, 53

St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro

Chase & Taylor Barker, 5
Chris & Vickie Warren, 52
Mark & Bianca Osborne, 40
Ricky & Julia Houston, 50
Steven & Ann Pierce, 57

St. Stephen, Cadiz

Raymond & Roberta Ward, 67

St. Thomas More, Paducah

Gerald & Mary Beth Lea, 51
Glenn & Kay Puertollano, 25
James & Priscilla Hollowell, 58
William & Casey Wurtz, 5

St. William, Knottsville

Joseph & Janice Millay, 51
Oran & Nancy Bowlds, 53
Ronald & Mary Edge, 51

St. William, Marion

Donnie & Jeanette Phillips, 58

Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro

Eric & Collette Humphrey, 10
Jim & Jenny Wilson, 55
Philip & Annie Storm, 52

Sts. Peter & Paul, Hopkinsville

Bill & Linda Harkins, 67
Bill & Pam Sweet, 40
Jaime Sotelo-López & Angelica Fernandez, 25
Jerry & Malinda Powell, 54
Joe & Mazie Mastromarino,

DECEMBER 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.

Service of the Longest Night set for Dec. 20

Abbey Caskets, a work of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, will host a Service of the Longest Night on Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025, at 6 p.m. Central Time in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center Chapel in St. Meinrad, IN. Many people find the holidays a challenging time. Instead of celebrating, they are struggling with grief. They miss loved ones and find that the usual traditions and bright lights serve only to heighten their struggle. Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, will lead the service with prayer and Scripture that acknowledge those who mourn and struggle with loss during the Christmas season. The service will be recorded and shared on Abbey Caskets' website at a later date for those unable to attend in person. Everyone is welcome. Light refreshments will follow. RSVP requested, but not required, for planning. Reply to info@abbeycaskets.com or call 800-987-7380 for further information. Parking is available in the Guest House parking lot.

Louisville school searching for PK-8 principal for 2026-2027 school year

John Paul II Academy in Louisville is searching for a PK-8 Principal for the 2026-2027 school year. We are seeking a practicing Catholic with excellent communication skills and administrative abilities to be the spiritual and administrative leader of our school, advance our mission, and foster and deepen our excellent culture. Our small school has a beautiful mission with an emphasis on arts and culture. Our students come from diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and academic backgrounds. We have the room and the desire to grow. Applicants must be strong educators with four years of classroom experience, and preferably an administrative background. They are expected

to meet the Archdiocese of Louisville qualifications for principalship. Salary and benefits will be commensurate with experience and archdiocesan guidelines. For a full job description visit: jp2a.org/principalsearch. Interviews will take place November through January. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation by Dec. 31, 2025 to the Principal Search Committee, at principalsearch@jp2a.org or call Elaine Hulsman, Committee Chair, at (502) 452-1712.

Save the dates for 2026 Cursillo weekends

It's the most wonderful time of the year! I'm not talking about Christmas, although that is a wonderful time. I'm talking about the upcoming Cursillo weekends. We are taking registration forms for candidates now. The forms can be found at www.cursillo-owensboro.org/precursillo.htm. The men's weekend will be held Feb. 26-March 1, 2026; and the women's is March 5-8, 2026, both held at beautiful Gasper River Retreat Center in Bowling Green. Remember, talk to God about the person before talking to your person about God. This is a very special weekend encounter with self, Jesus and others! For more information call Michelle Sandheinrich at (270) 889-3546. De Colores!

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. These will be included in our monthly "Pilgrimage" e-mail newsletter. The Bible emphasizes hospitality as a virtue, encouraging people to welcome strangers and "love thy neighbor." No matter how small, an act of kindness can make an impact, so never underestimate the difference you can make. 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.

Need a great local gift? Give the "Hope & Firm Faith" book featuring the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

More than 500 copies of "Hope and Firm Faith: The Story of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph" (published in 2022) have been sold. A limited number of books are still available for purchase. This book brings to life the amazing women who have served God's people since arriving at Maple Mount, Ky., in 1874. Readers will learn how the Diocese of Owensboro grew in conjunction with the Ursuline Sisters opening countless schools, including Brescia University. They will learn about the events that unfolded for the Ursuline Sisters through the eyes of the women who lived them. To purchase a book, visit <https://ursulinesmsj.org/hope-and-firm-faith-book/> The cost is \$37.10 which includes tax. If you need the book shipped, add \$10. You can ask that your copy be autographed by the author. If you have questions, contact Dan Heckel at 270-229-2007 or dan.heckel@maplemount.org. Books can also be purchased in person at Maple Mount Monday through Friday, but please call ahead.

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.

Our Lady of Lourdes Nativity showcase

Join Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro for our third annual community nativity display happening Dec. 6, 2-7 p.m. and Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. in the parish hall. Come enjoy homemade goodies, walk around listening to Christmas music and enjoy the beautiful displays. If interested in including your own nativity set in the showcase please contact Kim Morgan at (270) 315-3248.

Catholic school students remember the faithful departed

BY RACHEL HALL, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Students at Owensboro Catholic Schools 4-6 Campus participated in a Eucharistic procession on Nov. 17, following the Church's November tradition of remembering the faithful departed. Fr. Brandon Williams, chaplain of the school, carried a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament and led the procession around the building as students followed in silence carrying lanterns as an outward symbol of prayer and eternal light.

The procession served as both a moment of remembrance and a teaching opportunity during the Church's month dedicated to praying for those who have died.

Fr. Williams, in his homily to the students, reflected on the importance of remembering those who have passed away and the hope Christians hold in Christ's promise of eternal life.

"Our ultimate home will be amongst the joys of heaven," he said, "where we will be reunited with our loved ones."

Before the liturgy started the students were given a sheet of paper to guide meditation during Adoration, helping them connect Eucharistic devotion to their daily lives. They were invited to consider: How have I loved this week? How can love others better? Do I act like Christ? What is my relationship with Jesus like? How can I be a better friend to Jesus?

All Souls Day is celebrated on Nov. 2, but the Church asks that the faithful continue to pray throughout the year for all souls who have departed this life, that they may find eternal life with Christ in the Communion of Saints. ■



COURTESY OF CLARE CLARK, OCS
Fr. Brandon Williams carries the Blessed Sacrament during Owensboro Catholic Schools 4-6 Campus's Nov. 17 Eucharistic procession.



COURTESY OF CLARE CLARK, OCS
Student altar servers assist during the Nov. 17 Eucharistic procession at Owensboro Catholic Schools 4-6 Campus.



COURTESY OF BILL BLINCOE
Construction equipment is seen on Nov. 12, 2025, as the new road is started toward the site of the Diocese of Owensboro's future home for senior priests.

Paving the path to a new home

BY WKC STAFF

Thanks to successful fundraising through the Diocese of Owensboro's Faithful Foundations Campaign for the construction of new senior priest retirement apartments, work is moving forward on the future site of the facility.

Because demolition of the current building (the old Bishop Cotton Apartments) cannot start until the path to the site is properly completed according to required specifications, construction crews recently began working on a new road toward the site.

Crews began working on the road on Nov. 10 and as of press day, Nov. 19, the road's construction had been completed and the demolition process was beginning.

To stay up-to-date on the project, visit owensborodiocese.org/senior-priests-apartments. ■

O Come Let Us Adore Him: *Midnight Mass at Mount Saint Joseph in 1939*

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

(Created from the firsthand accounts of the Mount Saint Joseph annals.)

On December 24, 1939, at 11:20 p.m., Mount Saint Joseph's bell rings out across the freezing cold night in St. Joseph, Kentucky. A faint procession of headlights can be seen in the distance making their way toward the MSJ campus. Some are already near enough to begin making their way up the hill that the Mount sits atop. The first car pulls in and parks. It's a black Oldsmobile Six.

The driver's side door swings open. The heavy, cold, steel door lets out a whining creek. A man, resembling Jimmy Stewart in "It's a Wonderful Life," steps out. He makes his way around the front of the large car and opens the passenger door for his wife. As soon as she exits the car, her seat flies forward, and five small children pour out of the backseat of the sedan, laughing and full of Christmas excitement. The man laughs as well and turns just in time to see Fr. Andrew Zoeller making his way into the chapel rubbing his hands together with his frozen breath making its way into the night across his cold red cheeks. The man waves. Fr. Zoeller smiles and gives a quick wave back, throwing his bright pink hand into the frigid air, before swiftly drawing it back to avoid the cold. The priest then quickly makes his way into the chapel followed by two more priests and a line of deacons.

By now, more cars are parking and a crowd of people in hats and heavy wool coats begin heading towards the chapel. Some children wipe their eyes sleepily, having been awoken in the middle of the night; others excitedly make their way towards the chapel, having been allowed to stay up late.

Entering the chapel and shaking off the cold, the crowd is greeted with the angelic voices of dozens of sisters singing "O Holy Night." Some young sisters in white veils giggle and wave at the children as they make their way in. The children laugh and wave back, their eyes full of joy. A doting father with a large mustache picks up his little blonde-haired daughter to let her dip her tiny, raised finger in the holy water.

Soft blue lights adorn the chapel for the occasion and every humble soul in attendance is transported to the first Christmas night. The blue lights become twinkling stars above the altar, where the Savior will soon make his appearance. The High Mass is sung, followed by two Low Masses.

By 1:30, the Masses end. The large doors swing open, and the cold Christmas air begins to file into the chapel as the people begin to file out. During the Masses, snow had begun to fall and now blanketed the world outside. One of the young postulants, too excited to contain her joy, announces, "A beautiful white Christmas! Every tree a Christmas Tree!"

And the children, so excited to stay up late,



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES

The Mount Saint Joseph chapel covered in snow. Photograph is dated between the late 1920s to the early 1930s.

now leave the chapel asleep in their parents' arms, dreaming of presents, family and snowy Christmas nights in Saint Joseph, Kentucky. ■

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.

Seeing the Lord: Diocese honors women religious celebrating jubilees in 2025



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

(Above photo) The jubilarian sisters renew their vows in response to questions from Bishop William F. Medley during the Diocesan Jubilee for Women Religious on Oct. 25 at St. Martin Parish in Rome, Ky. From left are Franciscan Sister Consolata Ojemeh (25 years), School Sister of Notre Dame Jeannette Fennewald (60 years), Ursuline Sister of Mount Saint Joseph Marie Joseph Coomes (60 years), Ursuline Sister Jane Falke (70 years), and Ursuline Sister Francis Louise Johnson (70 years).



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

The jubilarians attending the Diocesan Jubilee for Women Religious on Oct. 25 at St. Martin Parish in Rome, Ky were joined by Fr. Jerry Riney, left, who is celebrating 50 years since his ordination this year. In the first row from left are Franciscan Sister Lucy Bonifas, and Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph Emma Anne Munsterman, Marie Joseph Coomes, Elaine Burke, Francis Louise Johnson and Barbara Jean Head; in the second row from left are Ursuline Sisters Ann McGrew and Mary Henning, Bishop William F. Medley, Ursuline Sister Jane Falke, Franciscan Sister Consolata Ojemeh, and School Sister of Notre Dame Jeannette Fennewald.

BY MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH STAFF

Eleven of the 14 women religious celebrating jubilees of religious profession in the Diocese of Owensboro in 2025 gathered to celebrate on Oct. 25, as Bishop William F. Medley thanked them for answering the call to serve. The Diocesan Jubilee for Women Religious was held at St. Martin Parish in Rome, Ky. The Steering Committee for the Council of Religious organizes the event each year, which is followed by lunch sponsored by the local Serra Club.

Sister Lucy Bonifas, a Franciscan Sister celebrating 70 years, read a passage from Isaiah that the Lord renews the strength of his people so that “they shall run and not be weary.”

Bishop Medley said no one could look around the church at the number of years of service and have the audacity to talk about growing weary.

“We could write chapters on when we have grown weary, but here we are,” he said. The bishop reflected on the Gospel of John, Chapter 20:11-18, when Mary returns from Jesus’ tomb to the apostles and proclaims, “I have seen the Lord.”

“You could say, “I have seen the Lord, and that’s why I’m doing what I’m doing,” Bishop Medley said. “The people we have served have transformed our lives. Thank you for seeing the Lord.” ■

Vocation awareness week provided local opportunities to talk about, pray for vocations

BY FR. COREY D. BRUNS, OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

As director of vocations I spend the majority of my time each week driving around the diocese to visit, pray, and share about vocations with our people. National Vocation Awareness Week was no different, and my odometer just kept on rolling.

In 1976, the U.S. bishops began to celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) as an intentional time to draw our attention to the courageous and radical witness of the love of God and service to neighbor that vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and diaconate entail.

Our local celebrations in the Diocese of Owensboro began digitally this year with a series of 30-60 second interviews with “Fr. Mic” (a mini microphone) as some of our seminarians and consecrated religious shared favorite parts of their vocation and the invitation to pray and celebrate NVAW with them.

Sunday brought me to Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center for a board meeting where we spoke of some upcoming vocation initiatives including next year’s new “Quo Vadis” camp for high school boys. (Mark your calendars for June 14-17 for a camp experience unlike any other!)

Monday brought me to the K-3 campus of

Owensboro Catholic Schools to speak with some of the third graders about our universal vocation to become saints, and fielding normal classroom questions like “Have you heard of Saint ‘so-and-so’ before?”

Tuesday afternoon brought me to the Passionist monastery in Whitesville for some quick video interviews with the nuns, before heading back to gather with about 60 folks at Sts. Joseph & Paul for our weekly Vocation Tuesday. (Consisting of a holy hour and confessions at 6:30 p.m. and Mass at 7:30 p.m.) Several parishes around the diocese joined us in solidarity throughout the week with holy hours as we prayed for an increase in vocations.

On Wednesday morning I returned south to celebrate and preach about loving God through the gift of our lives at the weekly school Mass at St. Joseph Interparochial School in Bowling Green. Afterwards, the middle school students joined me in the Mary courtyard for a conversation about our particular vocations over ice cream.

Thursday morning brought me to Owensboro Catholic High School to celebrate Mass as I encouraged the students to be courageous in asking and listening to where God was calling them to make sacrifices in their lives. That afternoon, I hit the road to Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green to join the Newman Center students



COURTESY OF FR. COREY D. BRUNS

Fr. Corey D. Bruns, vocations director for the Diocese of Owensboro, takes a selfie on Nov. 5, 2025 with the students of St. Joseph Interparochial School in Bowling Green. Fr. Bruns celebrated Mass and visited with the school that day as a part of celebrating National Vocation Awareness Week.

for their Night of Worship. We shared a meal and spoke about digging into discernment before joining chaplain Fr. Jason McClure in praying a holy hour and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the students.

We closed out the week as I made my fall visit to our seminarians at Saint Meinrad Seminary

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Vocation week continued from page 26



COURTESY OF FR. COREY D. BRUNS

On Nov. 6, 2025, college students participate in a holy hour for National Vocation Awareness Week in the St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel at Western Kentucky University.



COURTESY OF FR. COREY D. BRUNS

At the end of National Vocation Awareness Week (Nov. 2-8, 2025), vocations director Fr. Corey D. Bruns visits with the Diocese of Owensboro's three seminarians currently studying at Saint Meinrad Seminary in southern Indiana. (Left to right) Hunter Dickens, Tommy Rhodes, Wes Wheatley, Fr. Bruns.

& School of Theology for evaluations, fraternity time, and more filming for vocations promotional materials with them.

Watch the short videos that were filmed this week, and stay up-to-date with weekly happenings in the Office of Vocations, by following @OwensboroVocations on Instagram and Facebook. ■

National Religious Retirement Office announces 2025 Retirement Fund for Religious collection

PRESS RELEASE

OWENSBORO, Ky. – The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) is announcing that the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held in parishes throughout the Diocese of Owensboro on the weekend of Dec. 13-14.

In 2024, Catholics across the diocese contributed \$28,092.05 to the collection, mostly through their home parishes. From the collection, the Home Mission Sisters of America and Passionist Nuns received a combined total of \$41,140.05 in financial assistance.

“The generosity of U.S. Catholics continues to make a profound difference in the lives of aging religious,” said John Knutsen, NRRO director. “This year, we invite all Catholics to help provide the care and dignity these women and men of faith so richly deserve.”

Rising health-care costs and the absence of traditional retirement plans have placed significant financial strain on many religious communities. The Retirement Fund for Religious helps address this need, supporting more than 21,000 religious over the age of 70. In 2024, the average annual cost of care was about \$56,600 per person, with skilled nursing care averaging \$96,000.

Since its establishment in 1988, the collection has raised over \$1 billion, with nearly \$900 million distributed for direct care and over \$103.7 million allocated to retirement planning projects.

In 2024, the appeal raised over \$28.1 million, providing financial assistance for the retirement needs of 266 U.S. religious communities. Beyond financial aid, the collection supports educational programs, empowering religious communities to plan for their long-term needs. ■

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



OSV NEWS PHOTO/SAM LUCERO, THE COMPASS

Fr. Tom Long, then-vicar for ministers for the Diocese of Green Bay, Wis., is pictured in a file photo sharing the sign of peace with retired priests during Mass at St. Paul Elder Services in Kaukauna.

Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley: *El Adviento y la Navidad ofrecen muchas maneras de celebrar el amor de Cristo*

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

En diciembre parece que la Navidad es todo lo que que pensamos y para lo que nos preparamos. Eso no es algo malo, siempre y cuando tengamos presente que no todo gira en torno a los adornos, los postres y el Papá Noel. Después de todo, Jesús es el motivo verdadero para celebrar.

En la Iglesia hay muchas celebraciones importantes en el mes de diciembre. La observancia espiritual del Adviento es esencial para celebrar apropiadamente el nacimiento de Jesús.

La solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María se celebra el 8 de diciembre, conmemorando que María fue concebida sin pecado para ser la portadora del Verbo hecho carne. Bajo este título, María es considerada la Patrona de los Estados Unidos.

La fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se celebra tan solo cuatro días después, el 12 de diciembre. Esta fiesta recuerda la aparición de María a San Juan Diego en Tepeyac, México, en 1531. El Papa Pío XII declaró que con este título María es la Patrona de todas las Américas. Y la fiesta se celebra tanto en Norteamérica como en Sudamérica.

En Navidad celebramos el Nacimiento del Señor. Esto da inicio a los doce días de Navidad. Este concepto vino mucho antes que el canto sobre una perdiz en un peral o anillos de oro.

Los verdaderos doce días de Navidad son los que van desde Navidad hasta el 6 de enero, la solemnidad de la Epifanía. Y dentro de estos 12 días celebramos

varias fiestas relacionadas.

La fiesta de San Esteban se celebra el 26 de diciembre. San Esteban es reconocido como el primer mártir que murió por su fidelidad a Jesús. Esta es la fiesta patronal de la Diócesis de Owensboro y, por lo tanto, nuestra catedral está dedicada a San Esteban. La celebración del primer mártir cristiano el día después de Navidad nos enseña algo a los discípulos de Jesús.



RACHEL HALL | WKC
El nacimiento de la Catedral de San Esteban en Owensboro el 29 de diciembre de 2024.

La fiesta de San Juan Apóstol se celebra el 27 de diciembre. A Juan se le suele llamar “el discípulo al que Jesús amaba”, en reconocimiento a su singular fidelidad al seguir a Jesús hasta la cruz en el Calvario.

El 28 de diciembre es la Fiesta de los Santos Inocentes, aunque su celebración se ve interrumpida ya que este año cae en domingo. Es un momento

CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY DICIEMBRE 2025	
1 de dic.	6:30 p.m. Sesión de escucha regional sobre el fondo de pensiones – Parroquia Santo Tomás Moro, Paducah
2 de dic.	6 p.m. Sesión de escucha regional sobre el fondo de pensiones – Parroquia Espíritu Santo, Bowling Green
3 de dic.	Convocatoria de Adviento – Centro de Convenciones The Bruce, Hopkinsville
	6 p.m. Sesión de escucha regional sobre el fondo de pensiones – Parroquia San Pedro & San Pablo, Hopkinsville
8 de dic.	12 p.m. Misa – Catedral de San Esteban, Owensboro
11 de dic.	6:30 p.m. Sesión de escucha regional sobre el fondo de pensiones – Parroquia San Pío X, Owensboro
12 de dic.	8:30 a.m. Dedicación del altar y la capilla – Escuela Preparatoria Católica de Owensboro
	1:30 p.m. Primeros Votos – Comunidad de Monjas Pasionistas en el Monasterio de San José, Whitesville
16 de dic.	6:30 p.m. Hora Santa y Misa con Seminaristas – Parroquia Santos José y Pablo, Owensboro

oportuno para recordar las vidas jóvenes e inocentes que se perdieron a causa del aborto, el hambre y la violencia.

El domingo que cae entre Navidad y Año Nuevo se celebra como la Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia

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de Jesús, María y José. Las virtudes ejemplificadas por la Sagrada Familia son virtudes que aún hoy constituyen el fundamento de familias sanas y santas. A pocos días de Año Nuevo, quizás algunos estén considerando sus propósitos de año nuevo. ¿Podríamos tomar medidas para fortalecer a nuestras familias?

Un personaje central y esencial de nuestra historia navideña es, por supuesto, María. El 1 de enero, la Iglesia la venera bajo el título de Madre de Dios y esta fiesta es un día de precepto en nuestra tradición.

El duodécimo día de Navidad es tradicionalmente el 6 de enero y se considera la Epifanía del Señor. La Iglesia, sin embargo, traslada esta fiesta al primer domingo de enero para invitar a una participación más plena de los fieles en esta manifestación de Cristo al mundo entero.

¡Cuatro semanas de Adviento más doce días de Navidad! Durante esta temporada, podemos elegir entre muchísimas maneras de celebrar el Verbo hecho carne en estas fiestas extraordinarias.

Feliz Navidad,



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro



Parroquias con misas en Español

La esperanza empieza con J: *Mi experiencia en el retiro de jóvenes adultos*

POR JOEL VIERA

Hola, mi nombre es Joel Viera, asisto a la Parroquia de San José ubicada en Mayfield, Ky. Actualmente soy miembro del grupo de pastoral juvenil de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

Quiero aprovechar para enviar un saludo a todos los lectores y agradecer por el espacio que me permiten para transmitir mi testimonio de cómo fue vivir el retiro de jóvenes adultos el pasado mes de septiembre de 2025. Esta experiencia fue la que me dio las respuestas y el despertar espiritual que me ayudó a fortalecer y descubrir que no estoy solo, que hay un mundo maravilloso por descubrir y que es un mundo de claridad en momentos de oscuridad.

¿Qué es la esperanza? La esperanza es la seguridad y confianza plena en las promesas de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. ¿Por qué la esperanza empieza con J? Porque Jesús es la esperanza viva; empieza al conocer y seguir el camino que Él nos mostró para estar en comunión con el Padre. Pero también empieza con J de jóvenes. Es necesario saber que los jóvenes tenemos un espacio importante en la Iglesia; tenemos la

oportunidad de ser el presente y el futuro de nuestra Iglesia; tenemos la oportunidad de vivir y conocer un camino consagrado a Dios y una vida de verdad. Una vida que te permite descubrir y encontrar un propósito, que te permite desarrollar tus dones y talentos, que te permite descubrir y encontrar tu vocación y te ayuda a reconocer el ser valioso que eres.

Por esta razón me siento afortunado de haber conocido y convivido con otros jóvenes deseosos de ser peregrinos de fe y salvación: jóvenes servidores dispuestos a ayudarte y prepararte para juntos sembrar la semilla de la esperanza y florecer.

El grupo de la pastoral juvenil te invita, a ti, joven, a que conozcas y tengas un acercamiento con Dios. Queremos invitar a todos los jóvenes a nutrir su mente, alma y

espíritu mediante estos retiros y formando parte de la gran comunidad de jóvenes que existe en nuestra Iglesia, porque Dios tiene un plan para cada uno de nosotros. Él nos espera y recibe a todos con mucho amor. Te invitamos a caminar juntos en comunidad, siendo jóvenes con propósito y mensajeros de fe y esperanza. ¡Porque hoy la esperanza empieza contigo! ■

Para más información visita a <https://owensborodiocese.org/ministerio-hispano/pastoral-juvenil>.



POR CORTESÍA DE JOEL VIERA
El retiro de jóvenes adultos.

El Regalo de la Paternidad Consciente

POR SUSANA SOLORZA

Ahora que comienza la temporada de dar y recibir regalos, quiero invitar a todos los padres a que den un regalo diferente y único para sus hijos. ¿Y cuál es este regalo? Es lo mejor que podemos darles a los nuestros: una paternidad sana, feliz y santa.

Varias de nuestras oficinas diocesanas se han unido para crear los talleres “Construyendo una Familia de Fe”. Nos preocupamos por su manera de ser papá o mamá porque nos preocupamos por sus hijos. Como mamá de tres varones, y como maestra y ministra de jóvenes, he tenido la bendición de estar viviendo todas las experiencias y enseñanzas que voy a compartir con ustedes. He escuchado a muchísimos jóvenes decir que lo que más quieren de sus papás es tiempo. ¡Quieren estar con ustedes! ¡Los quieren! Quieren ser escuchados por ustedes.

Igual que a ustedes, se me ha resbalado la canica en mi camino como mamá más veces de las que me hubiera gustado cuando empecé. Mi maternidad perfecta no salió como la había planeado; la vida se puso complicada, me enojé y mi casa llena de fe se convirtió en una de caos. Cuando mi esposo y yo acudimos a Dios pidiendo ayuda, recibimos el apoyo que necesitábamos de la familia, la alegría de tener amigos en la misma etapa de vida que nosotros, y encontramos recursos y gente que nos enseñó lo que no sabíamos y que nos sanó donde estábamos heridos. Como papás, Dios nos regala esta increíble oportunidad de educar a alguien, de recibir a esta persona en nuestra casa y amarla. Con nuestros hijos no podemos fingir, ellos se dan cuenta de

todo; nuestra fe debe ser auténtica porque nos ven cuando nadie más está cerca, después de que la foto en redes sociales recibe *likes*, o después de que termina la Misa del domingo. Ellos ven qué papel juega realmente Dios en nuestras vidas. Así que, dejen que Dios entre en su forma de educar; denles a sus hijos el regalo de una relación con Aquel que los ama aún más que ustedes.

Quisiera decirles que este taller va a solucionar todos sus problemas de crianza, pero sí les puedo garantizar que los va a señalar la dirección correcta: hacia Cristo. Como los tres Reyes Magos, nos vamos a orientar hacia Aquel que nos ha enseñado cómo

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ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC

Padres cargan a sus hijos durante una procesión el 4 de octubre de 2025, previa a la Misa de clausura de la Semana Nacional de la Migración de la Diócesis de Owensboro, celebrada en la Catedral de San Esteban.

CONSTRUYENDO UNA FAMILIA DE FE

Talleres ofrecidos por la Diócesis de Owensboro

- Herramientas para cada edad y etapa
- Construya lazos familiares duraderos
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propósito en
la crianza
católica

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Para más información, llame al (270)852-8341

Continuado de la página 30

amarnos unos a otros en esta tierra para que un día podamos encontrarnos en el cielo.

Padres, abuelos, tíos, padrinos, y todas las personas que se preocupan por cómo se están educando nuestros niños, compartan este artículo y compartan la página de inscripción. Inviten a otros amigos que son papás y vengan a ver lo que tenemos que decir. De mamá a ustedes papás les digo, este es el regalo por el que siempre les darán las gracias.

Para ver las fechas, las ubicaciones y para inscribirse, visiten owensborodiocese.org/construyendo-una-familia-de-fe. ■

Los peregrinos se sintieron “enriquecidos” durante su visita a los sitios de peregrinación del Jubileo de la Esperanza de la diócesis este año

POR ANDY TELLI, EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

Cuando la Iglesia católica comenzó a prepararse para el Jubileo de la Esperanza de 2025, el Papa Francisco eligió como lema “Peregrinos de la Esperanza”.

Los fieles de toda la Diócesis de Owensboro han acogido con entusiasmo el lema, organizando peregrinaciones a los seis sitios del Jubileo designados por el Obispo William F. Medley: la Catedral de San Esteban, la Parroquia San Romualdo en Hardinsburg, el Santuario Mariano Diocesano en Bowling Green, la Parroquia San León en Murray, la Parroquia San Francisco de Sales en Paducah, y la Parroquia Santo Redentor en Beaver Dam.

Raeanne Allande, la asociada pastoral de la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green, buscaba maneras en que la parroquia pudiera participar en el Jubileo de la Esperanza. Ella ha realizado peregrinaciones a Roma y la Tierra Santa y quería ofrecer a los feligreses de la Parroquia Espíritu Santo una manera de tener una experiencia similar.

Organizó tres peregrinaciones a los seis sitios diocesanos para visitar a San Francisco de Sales y San León un martes, el Santuario Mariano y la Parroquia Santo Redentor otro martes, y la Catedral de San

Esteban y San Romualdo en el tercer martes.

“Cada una de nuestras tres peregrinaciones del Jubileo nos brindó la oportunidad de una renovación espiritual más profunda”, dijo Allande. “Incluían oración, liturgia, profesión de fe, indulgencias plenarias y caridad”.



FOTO POR CORTESÍA DE RAEANNE ALLANDE
Un grupo de feligreses de la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green realizan una peregrinación a la Parroquia Santo Redentor en Beaver Dam, uno de los sitios de peregrinación del Jubileo de la Esperanza 2025 de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

Un total de 30 feligreses del Espíritu Santo participaron en las peregrinaciones, y 10 completaron la peregrinación a los seis lugares, compartió Allande.

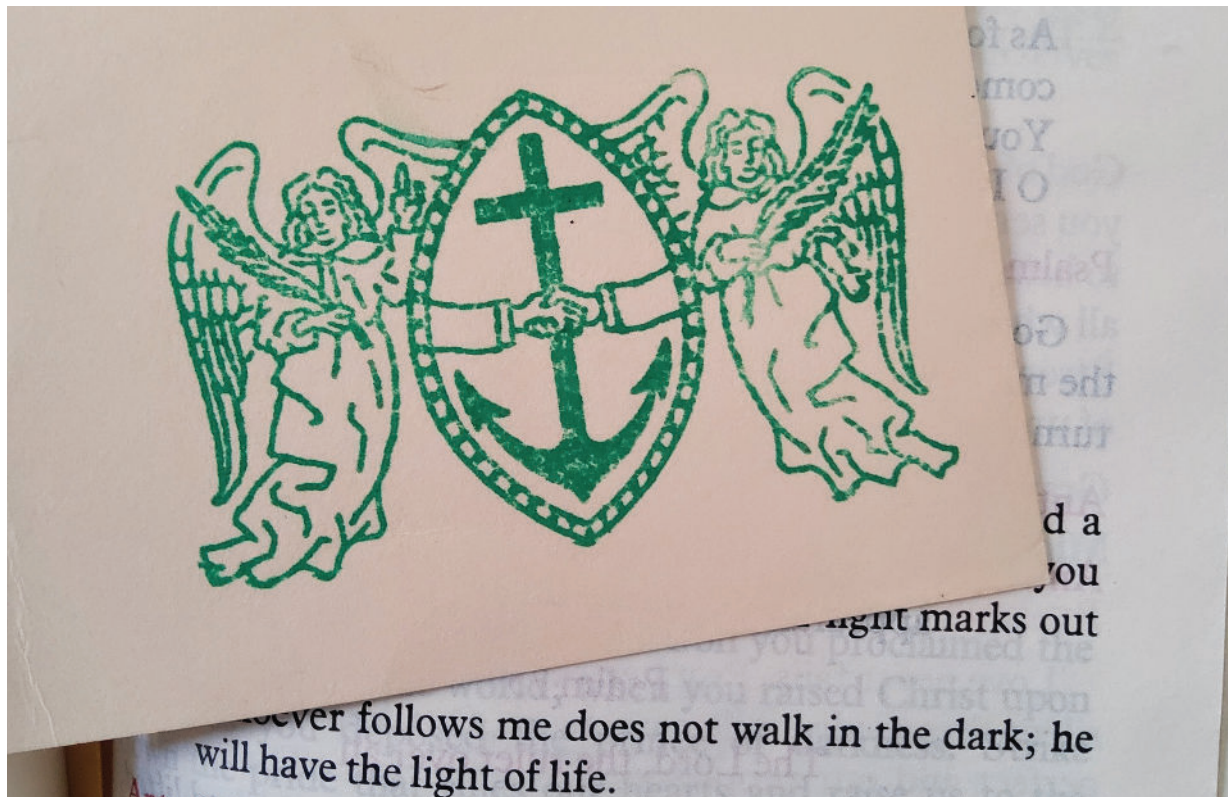
“Lo que fue realmente encantador es que la mayoría de ellos no habían estado en muchas de estas iglesias”, dijo Allande sobre los peregrinos del Espíritu Santo. “Todas estas parroquias estaban repletas de historia.”

Las peregrinaciones durante el Jubileo han despertado el interés por realizar más peregrinaciones, comentó Allande. En la Parroquia Espíritu Santo se ha hablado de realizar peregrinaciones el próximo año a los lugares de la Arquidiócesis de Louisville.

Para los sitios de peregrinación del Jubileo, la oficina de comunicaciones diocesana, en colaboración con la Oficina Diocesana de Liturgia, elaboró un folleto con toda la información que los peregrinos necesitarían para participar en el Jubileo de 2025. Los pasaportes incluían información sobre cada uno de los lugares de peregrinación y lo que los hace especiales, así como información sobre cómo obtener una indulgencia plenaria durante la visita a un lugar de peregrinación.

“Todos los sitios fueron muy visitados”, dijo el Diácono Ken Bennett, co-coordinador de la oficina diocesana de culto. El Jubileo se acerca a su conclusión oficial el 6 de enero de 2026, fecha tradicional de la Fiesta de la Epifanía.

“Siento que la gente está buscando algo”, dijo el Diácono Bennett. “Tenemos la respuesta, y está en Cristo mismo”. ■



COURTESY OF HUNTER DICKENS

A Jubilee of Hope stamp designed by Hunter Dickens is shown, featuring an anchor and angels holding palms. Dickens is a seminarian for the Diocese of Owensboro and wrote a reflection for The Western Kentucky Catholic's yearlong Pilgrims of Hope blog series.

Writers across the diocese provided year's worth of hope-filled jubilee reflections

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, Churches.”

THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC Blog reflections were written by laity, priests, and religious from across the Diocese of Owensboro. Topics

In early 2025, The Western Kentucky varied from stories of healing and forgiveness, to vocational Catholic launched Pilgrims of Hope, a discernment, to experiences of graces received during the yearlong blog series inspired by Pope Francis' jubilee itself.

Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of From local parishioner Neena Gaynor's opening blog the Year 2025. reflection on hope and surprises, to closing reflection by

In the bull, the late pontiff wrote, “My Gasper River director Ben Warrell on hope ahead of the thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope New Year 2026, every writer shared their unique perspectives who will travel to Rome in order to experience on the virtue of hope in a world that so greatly needs it.■

the Holy Year and to all those others who,

though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Read the entire series at westernkycatholic.com/peter-and-paul, will celebrate it in their local category/pilgrims-of-hope.