THE WESTERN KENTUCKY Catholic

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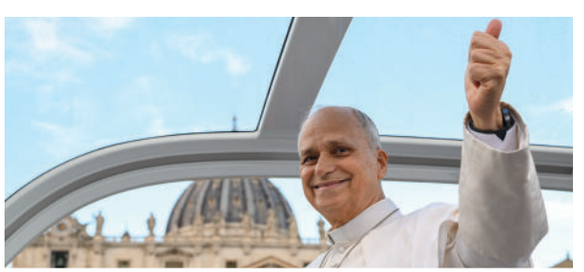
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Beatification trip Page 8



Español Página 36



Prayers answered Page 25



A woman smiles and greets Bishop William F. Medley after the Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green. Page 10

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



A historic marker denoting the nearby grave of Bishop Francis R. Cotton, the first bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, is seen at Resurrection Cemetery in Owensboro. *Page 30*

Elizabeth Wong Barnstead photo

6 'Evil is not overcome by evil'
Reckoning with Owensboro's past as site of last public hanging

16 What do parents need to know about cellphone usage and is there anything we should be doing differently?

20 Fr. Ray Goetz says goodbye after 16 years at the Mount

Front page main photo by Elizabeth Wong Barnstead, The Western Kentucky Catholic.

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A Word From Bishop Medley

Remembering all the departed in this month of All Souls

"Remember also, Lord, your servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep pf peace." Eucharistic Prayer I

In every celebration of the Holy Mass we pray for those who have died, with words similar to those noted from Eucharistic Prayer I, "those who have gone before us with the sign of faith."

The month of November is traditionally recognized within our Catholic tradition as a time to accentuate the Communion of Saints as we very consciously pray for the faithful departed. All Saints Day is celebrated on November 1. The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) is observed on November 2 and the spirit of that day of prayer for the deceased is encouraged throughout the whole month.

What does it mean to be marked with the sign of faith? Well, first it means marked by the waters of baptism and the other sacraments. It also means marked by the displays of faith, hope, and charity. Many parishes may display in some way the names of members who have died in the previous year to remind us to hold them in prayer.

We may ask, why should we pray for the dead? Would we not assume that one's judgement and fate is determined by the quality of their individual lives? By the cooperation with the Grace imparted by the salvation achieved in Jesus Christ? The Catechism of the Catholic Church, however, addresses the foundation of our belief and commitment to praying for the dead.

The Catechism states "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven." (CCC 1030)

Apart from the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose life has been so sanctified that one does not depart this world bearing some mark of our sin? The Church throughout the ages, therefore, has taught that at death there must be some measure of purification. Thus, uniting ourselves in prayer for those who have passed before us is a sign that we remain connected to them, all part of the Communion of Saints.

This purification, this atonement for the dead, is mentioned well before the life and time of Jesus. In its most radical form, this atonement is accomplished by a martyr's death. For most us this might explain what the church means by Purgatory, a final purification of those who have lived noble and holy lives. After all, we cannot know the full relationship with God of even the holist of people we may have known. So in our charity, we pray for them.

An earthly image that I read once illustrated for me some understanding of this purification. When camping in the forest one might be advised to boil river water before drinking to purify or cleanse it. We might encourage this even when to our eyes the water is crystal clear, but we know also that bacteria and impurities may be invisible to us.

One of the most exemplary manners of praying for the dead is to remember them in the Mass. There is a pious custom of naming one who is de-

Continues on page 4



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Resurrection Cemetery in Owensboro is seen in this 2020 file photo.

BISHOP MEDLEY'S NOVEMBER 2026 CALENDAR	
Nov. 2	8 AM | School Mass – John Paul II Catholic School, Morganfield
Nov. 4	10 AM | School Mass – St. Mary Middle School, Paducah
Nov. 5	10:30 AM | School Mass – Owensboro Catholic High School
Nov. 7	4 PM | Confirmation – St. Stephen Parish, Cadiz
Nov. 10	Annual Diocesan Convocation – Owensboro Convention Center
Nov. 11	8:30 AM | Diocesan Finance Council Meeting – McRaith Catholic Center
Nov. 14-19	USCCB Meeting – Baltimore, Maryland
Nov. 21	5:30 PM | Closing Mass for Owensboro Diocese Youth Conference – Owensboro Convention Center
Nov. 22	2 PM | Institution as Acolytes for Permanent Diaconate Candidates – Holy Spirit Parish, Bowling Green
Nov. 24	10:30 AM | Dedication of Altar and Blessing of John XXIII Chapel – Roncalli Home for Retired Priests, Owensboro

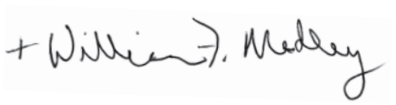
Bishop Medley continued from page 3

ceased as the intention of a particular Mass. In our parish bulletins where the schedule of Masses is listed, we typically see an intention indicated and most commonly that intention is for the repose of the soul of someone deceased. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.

In the Order of Christian Funerals, the Church tradition supplies us with a simple and succinct prayer for the dead: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord."

Response: "And let perpetual light shine upon them."

"May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace." Amen.



Most Reverend William F. Medley | Diocese of Owensboro

'It's your place to serve'

Fr. Frank Ruff reflects on retirement from decades-long ministry in diocese

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Avoiding the spotlight, and putting the faithful before himself, has been a cornerstone of Fr. Frank Ruff's ministry within the Diocese of Owensboro.

Whether he has helped to build multiple new churches, coordinated ecumenical gatherings, participated in racial reconciliation conversations, or accompanied migrant parishioners, the Glenmary Home Missioners priest insists it was never about, or led by, himself.

As a beloved figure among the rural Hispanic/Latino communities he has served, it may even come as a surprise that Fr. Ruff is not fluent in Spanish.

"My Spanish isn't good; I can't even carry on a conversation," said Fr. Ruff. Yet, he has become an indispensable figure in these communities for decades.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Fr. Frank Ruff, GHM, anoints the walls of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Todd County with Sacred Chrism during the Dec. 9, 2017 dedication and consecration of the new church building.

Continues on page 5

Fr. Frank Ruff continued from page 4

"A lot of that is my Glenmary background," he said, describing his religious community's emphasis on connecting with the heart and building relationships – and not being limited by language barriers.

Fr. Ruff, recently speaking with The Western Kentucky Catholic, described the bittersweet feeling of retiring at 90 years old as he plans to move back to Glenmary's headquarters in Ohio, leaving behind the rural community he has called home.

The diocese has seen many Glenmary priests, brothers, and sisters serve in its history. Fr. Ruff has been the sole Glenmary priest ministering within the diocese for the past few years.

Fr. Ruff arrived in the diocese in 1991, as he followed in the footsteps of the first Glenmary mission in western Kentucky (Sunfish, Kentucky, in 1942).

"Glenmary goes to places with few-to-no Catholics; usually less than 1%," said Fr. Ruff, describing his initial assignment of helping to establish parishes in locations without a Catholic church.

After serving in several parishes as sacramental minister in those early years – "not the pastor," he emphasized – Fr. Ruff nonetheless found himself assigned to be the parish administrator for St. Mary Parish in Franklin.

He helped them with the process of building a new church but pointed out that "the parishioners took a lot of lead in the parish – it was not a top-down approach."

After that assignment, Fr. Ruff was sent to Todd County in 2000 to be the pastor of both Sts. Mary and James Parish in Guthrie and St. Susan Parish in Elkton.



TINA KASEY | WKC
In this file photo from March 2016, Fr. Frank Ruff, GHM, speaks with parishioners in Todd County, Kentucky, as they anticipate the building of the future St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

Serving as pastor "includes not just taking care of the Catholics but taking care of the community and reaching out to the unchurched and those who are pushed down by the rest of society – the poor and the outcast," he said.

Fr. Ruff embraced his new role with this mindset, which included welcoming the initially 35 Hispanic parishioners – which today has increased to about 500, with 125 white parishioners in comparison.

When Sts. Mary and James burned down in an electrical fire in 2015, and in light of the growing community at St. Susan, Bishop William F. Medley approved the merging of the two parishes into a single, larger parish: St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Guthrie.

The strong relationships Fr. Ruff had formed among local non-Catholics meant that the people of the community – whether Baptists, Mennonites, or others – helped with recovery and healing after the fire.

Fr. Ruff's engagement with racial reconciliation in Todd County saw a workshop, and ongoing developments, to help Black and white communities explore needs and expectations shared by all people: "It really did change things in the county; we are all one body," he said.

At a recent ecumenical meeting for local pastoral ministers – and the final one Fr. Ruff would attend – one of the pastors said, "Let's pray for Frank."

"By the end of his prayer, a third of the people were crying," said Fr. Ruff, reflecting on how "they know me. And I respect them as my brothers and sisters."

He said that moving to Ohio "will be a change, but I'm 90 now, so the Lord's in charge. When we can accept that, it really makes life better."

"It's not your place to be in charge," he said of his vocation. "It's your place to serve." ■

'Evil is not overcome by evil'

Reckoning with Owensboro's past as the site of the last public hanging

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

"Buried from Mass at St. Stephen's."

These words were written on Aug. 14, 1936, in the daily annals of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in Maple Mount, Kentucky, following the public execution of Rainey Bethea in Owensboro.

The records and public recollection of the case are disputed. Historic reports vary on the number of people who gathered to watch the "sensation of Daviess County today," as recorded in the Mount's annals, which themselves noted 10,000 people who "witnessed tragedy."

(A 2011 story by the Associated Press, looking back on the moment in Owensboro's history, estimated, rather "as many as 20,000 strong.")

Yet the facts are clear that Bethea, who had been arrested and charged with rape and murder in Owensboro that June, and whose death was the final public hanging in the United States, died a member of the Catholic Church and received a Catholic funeral.

A hand raised for silence

Bethea, a Black man in his 20s, had received the verdict of guilty by the jury after just over four minutes. CapitalPunishmentUK.org, a site that compiles execution cases worldwide, noted that Bethea's death sentence moved forward despite his case being take up by a team of Black lawyers. The lawyers had argued that the trial was not fair due to racial discrimination.

Bethea was held in the Jefferson County Jail in Louisville – having been transferred there due to authorities' concern of a mob lynching if he remained in Owensboro – and during that time, he met with Fr. Herman Jerome Lammers.

Fr. Lammers, a young priest of the Archdiocese of Louisville ordained only three years prior and who served as the associate pastor of the Cathedral of the Assumption, accepted Bethea's request to be baptized and receive Holy Communion.

Bethea entered the Catholic Church and was recorded in the cathedral's register as "Joseph Rainey Bethea."

When Bethea was taken to his execution in downtown Owensboro on Aug. 14, Fr. Lammers was by his side. The young priest heard Bethea's confession and administered Last Rites after the trap door was released.

An Aug. 16, 1936 editorial in Owensboro's Messenger-Inquirer reported that Fr. Lammers had "held up his hand from the scaffold for silence" and that "the buzz of the multitude's conversations died down till the fall of the proverbial pin could have been heard."

The Diocese of Owensboro would only be established the following year, but the future St. Stephen Cathedral already existed as a local parish. According to an Aug. 15, 1936 article in the Messenger-Inquirer, "Requiem mass (sic) was said for Bethea by the Rev. Father Leo J. Denise (sic) at St. Stephen's Catholic church at 8 a.m. Burial followed shortly afterward."

(The 23-year-old Fr. Leo J. Dienes – the correct spelling – had himself only been ordained two months prior and was assigned at St. Stephen's.)

Bethea was buried in a so-called pauper's grave in Rosehill Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, despite his request that his remains be sent to his sister in South Carolina.

There is no record of why this decision was made, nor the exact location of his grave.

Owensboro's sheriff, Florence Thompson, who had inherited the job after the death of her husband, was herself a Catholic. She had questioned the morality of participating in the execution and had even consulted with local Owensboro priest Fr. Albert J. Thompson.

As the Catholic Church's teaching in 1936 had not yet deemed capital punishment morally inadmissible, the priest assured her that doing so was not a sin.

Yet, Florence Thompson ultimately hired someone else to spring the trap door and observed the execution from a nearby vehicle.

An Aug. 24, 1936 article in Time magazine quoted Florence Thompson as saying, "I suppose I will spend the rest of my life forgetting – or trying to forget."

Jesus died for all

Jason Hall, the executive director of the Catholic

Continues on page 6

Owensboro's past continued from page 6

Conference of Kentucky (the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Kentucky) grew up in Owensboro, and like most who did, is familiar with the basics of the 1936 case.

Hall only learned recently, however, that Florence Thompson had been Catholic – and was compelled by the apparent "crisis of conscience that the sheriff had."

"It is not a morally neutral thing – a person is changed" by killing another human being no matter the circumstances, he said.

Hall praised the Church's development in better understanding the dignity of the human person, which has led the Church to clarify that capital punishment is morally inadmissible.

"(There is a) greater realization of the dignity of the person; that the sanctity of life is not dependent on what they have done," said Hall.

The teachings of Pope St. John Paul II, especially his encyclical "Evangelium vitae," spoke of how modern society "has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform."

In 2018, Pope Francis revised the Catechism of the Catholic Church to clarify the Church's stance condemning capital punishment "because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person," said his note to the bishops.

Most recently, Pope Leo XIV quoted Pope Francis's message on his official X account on Oct. 10, which is World Day Against the Death Penalty, adding that "The common good can be safeguarded and the requirements of justice can be met without recourse to capital punishment."

Hall pointed out that "Jesus died for us all," and that "evil is not overcome because of another death... We don't make society more just if we add more killing."

He said he is troubled by the "resurgence in public leaders wanting to resume executions," such as the U.S. government's plan to livestream the execution of the 2009 Fort Hood shooter (the livestream was canceled following public outcry).

"Public execution is grounded in the idea of death as a spectacle," said Hall, but "our criminal justice system shouldn't be about vengeance and retribution – it should be about restoration... It is a lie that the public is going to benefit from this."

More steps to take

Bishop William F. Medley, who was born and raised in the Archdiocese of Louisville, also grew up familiar with the story of Rainey Bethea. In fact, as a priest ordained for Louisville, he even knew the late Fr. Lammers.

Bishop Medley said some of the most profound experiences of his episcopacy have been visiting the Kentucky State Penitentiary in Eddyville and celebrating Mass with the inmates on death row. (Currently, there are 23 people on death row in Kentucky.)

"They don't intermix with the others," he said, adding that "six or eight would come to Mass."

At the same time, "I don't live under an illusion that any of them should be released – most have committed murders and other serious felonies," he said, but underscored the necessity of respecting the human dignity of all persons.

Many of these individuals have experienced conversions of heart and embraced a Christian life, and some have become Catholic, he said.

"You talk about small Christian communities!" reflected the bishop, explaining that this small crowd of inmates "is their whole world, plus the guards."

"I'd always opposed the death penalty, but this shaped my perspective," he said.

Bishop Medley commented that "1936 is a very different time than 2026" in terms of how much of society now opposes or questions the need for the death penalty. (Kentucky abolished public hanging in 1938.)

"I was pleased at the national outcry of that possibility of a publicly livestreamed execution," he said.

A poll released by Gallup on June 9, 2026, indicated that the percentage of Americans who find capital punishment morally unacceptable has risen to 39%.

As the bishop of Owensboro, which retains the "distinction... that this was the site of the last public hanging," he said he is "encouraged" at society's reaction and hopes this could mean a future in which the death penalty is abolished in the United States.

"In 90 years, we have made some progress, but as a nation, we still uphold capital punishment," he said, adding that in order to more fully embrace respect for human life in the U.S., "there is another step." ■

Related news

Catholic Conference of Kentucky's Jason Hall:
Kentucky has not executed anyone since 2008. Let's permanently end the death penalty in the Commonwealth.

Read more on page 24.

‘Close to God’

Owensboro Catholic group attends Fulton Sheen beatification



OSV NEWS PHOTO/BOB ROLLER
The Engstrom family talks after presenting the relic of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen during the beatification Mass for the American archbishop Sept. 24, 2026, at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. Bl. Fulton’s intercession is credited for the miraculous healing of 16-year-old James Fulton Engstrom as a newborn infant, who experienced a complete recovery after spending his first 61 minutes after birth not breathing.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Mary Ruth Thompson, an eighth grader from Owensboro Catholic Middle School who attended the Sept. 24, 2026 beatification of Bl. Fulton J. Sheen, did not know a lot about the 20th-century American bishop before the trip.

But by the end of the day, she had come to realize that people who are “close to God” walk among us each day.

And like Bl. Fulton, “we can help other people be close to God,” said Thompson, who was part of a bus trip of 44 Owensboro Catholic School System middle and high school students traveling via charter bus to The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis for the historic event.

“It was inspiring to my faith because I did not know who Fulton Sheen was until I heard about the beatification,” she said. “I wanted to go because it was a beatification, and then this helped me learn more about him!”

Approximately 50,000 people – including laypeople, clergy, and religious – attended the Mass of Beatification that day, which began with a 30-minute procession of bishops, cardinals, seminarians, and others up the aisle. Concelebrating priests wore matching vestments embroidered with a gold “JMJ” (for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) in Fulton Sheen’s signature. The Mass itself lasted for about two and a half hours.

Hunter Graves, a Spanish teacher at Owensboro Catholic High School who chaperoned the school trip, said that this was “a joyous opportunity” to help bring a group from the Owensboro Catholic community to the beatification.

“Fulton Sheen inspires me as an educator because he, himself, acted before all else as an educator,” adding that he admires the bishop’s “ability to explain complex theological topics” in ways that anyone could understand.

“Before I write anything on the board (during class) I always write ‘JMJ’ at the top,” he said, in reference to Sheen’s famous cursive “JMJ” he always started his chalkboard lessons with on his television show, “Life is Worth Living.”

While Bl. Fulton was born in raised in Peoria, Illinois, which would customarily have been the location of his beatification Mass, the sheer number of anticipated people prompted the Diocese of Peoria to shift the liturgy to nearby, and larger, St. Louis. (Other beatification celebrations throughout the week, however, took place back in Illinois.)

During the Mass, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a pro-prefect for the Holy See’s Dicastery for Evangelization and papal delegate, pronounced Archbishop Sheen a blessed of the Catholic Church, to applause and cheers by the faithful.

The cardinal also gave the homily, during which he stated, “blessed are the authentic missionary evangelizers,” in reference to Bl. Fulton’s influential and pastoral approach to evangelization through his myriad writings and popular radio and television programs that reached millions.

While the archbishop, who hosted what is considered the world’s first Catholic television broadcast, gained an audience of up to 30 million, Cardinal Tagle explained that Bl. Fulton did not consider numbers to be a measure of spiritual success.

Instead, the American archbishop saw himself “simply as a porter who is sometimes able to lead people to the house of God,” said the cardinal.

Cardinal Tagle also reflected on Archbishop

Continues on page 9

Fulton Sheen continued from page 8

Sheen's care for the poor and those on the margins, as any money he made from his popular broadcasts was sent to the missions.

"Caring for the poor was not ideological propaganda, but an imperative for the following of Christ!" said the cardinal.

Cardinal Tagle also spoke of Bl. Fulton's dedication to the Eucharist and how he drew his strength from his daily Holy Hours.

"Blessed are you, storyteller of Jesus encountered in his word, in the Eucharist, in the Holy Hour and in his body, the Church," declared the cardinal.

Matt Madej, the director of faith formation for the Owensboro Catholic School System, helped coordinate the trip that day, and commented that "we can talk about 'beatification' all we want in the classroom, but taking students to a beatification Mass" is a unique opportunity.

He said that "witnessing the unity of the Church" and watching the 16-year-old boy, whose miraculous healing as a newborn is attributed to Bl. Fulton Sheen, carry the reliquary up the aisle during Mass "speaks volumes about what practicing the faith means in the Church," said Madej.

"Fifty thousand people gathered together speaks to the influence Sheen has had on others through his use of modern media and shows the perennial value of practicing our faith as missionary disciples," he said, adding that "participating in the beatification Mass with 44 students" strengthened his own hope in young people's desire to enter into deeper union with Christ.

The group from Owensboro Catholic hit the road shortly after Mass, arriving home to Owensboro around 11 p.m. that night. While the group was tired from the long day, the students and adult chaperones alike were moved by the experience, which was deemed well worth the lengthy charter bus journey.

Through this experience, Madej said he witnessed how students "deeply desire to be in a meaningful relationship with God."

"It was a great day and profoundly grace-filled," he said. ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
The group from Owensboro Catholic Schools, which traveled to the St. Louis beatification of Bl. Fulton J. Sheen on Sept. 24, stands outside The Dome prior to the Mass.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Students, teachers, and chaperones of Owensboro Catholic Schools are seen sitting in the stands and waiting for the beatification Mass to begin in the afternoon of Sept. 24, 2026. The group, which included 44 students, traveled to The Dome in St. Louis for the beatification of Bl. Fulton J. Sheen.



OSV NEWS PHOTO/BOB ROLLER
Cardinal Luis Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, concelebrates the beatification Mass for Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Sept. 24, 2026, at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis. He is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history.

‘That’s what heaven looks like’

Migration Mass celebrates ‘patchwork quilt’ of cultures across diocese



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Assisted by seminarian Hoan Tran, Bishop William F. Medley blesses those entering Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green for the Oct. 3 Migration Mass.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
People wearing shirts with the word “Mexico” kneel during distribution of Holy Communion at the diocese’s Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.



RILEY GREIF | WKC
The procession prior to the diocese’s Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass passed through Holy Spirit Parish’s parking lot.

BY ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

The communities filling Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green on Oct. 3, 2026, came from a wide variety of nations as Catholics of all ages participated in the Diocese of Owensboro’s Migration Mass.

During his homily, Bishop William F. Medley asked people to stand when he named their nation of origin – adding that he was sure to miss someone and invited the faithful to tell him of additional countries he did not list.

The countries and territories represented at the Mass included Mexico, Myanmar, Guatemala, the Philippines, Vietnam, Columbia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Micronesia, Honduras, Puerto Rico, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, and others.

Prior to the liturgy, which was open to all, the faithful had processed through the parking lot of Holy Spirit and were blessed with holy water by the bishop as they entered the church. Many wore traditional clothing and carried flags from their native countries and pictures of their country’s patron saints as they prayerfully walked together.

Bishop Medley reflected on that experience in his homily, commenting that as he welcomed the faithful, he thought to himself, “that’s what heaven looks like.”

“We represent a lot of places here today and I’m proud to welcome you as bishop,” he said. “What a beautiful patchwork quilt we form today as a Church of western Kentucky.”

The bishop added that after this day, “I will think in a different way about what heaven will look like.”

“I may not know all your names, but Jesus does,” he said. “You are all called by name.”

The multi-lingual liturgy featured Mass readings in different languages, and was followed by foods made by various cultural communities, a pickup soccer game, and face-painting for the children.

Fr. Martin Ma Na Ling, parochial vicar of St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro, said that he has only been to the United States and his country of birth, Myanmar, but that “seeing people from different cultures, with different music and different clothing, like the bishop said, this is like heaven.”

He said he believed the number of attendees had increased from last year’s Migration Mass, which was hosted at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro, and is a smaller space. According to the Office of Worship, this year it is estimated to have welcomed between 600-700 people.

Young parishioners of St. Joseph Parish in

Continues on page 11

Migration Mass continued from page 10



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Women walk in the procession prior to the diocese's Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass hosted at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green. The procession led to the doors of the church, where all were greeted and blessed by Bishop William F. Medley.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Young people carry a banner with an image of Bl. Isidore Ngei Ko Lat, a catechist who was martyred in Myanmar in 1950, while participating in a procession before the Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Young parishioners of St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green, Ximena Martinez and her friends, sisters Samantha Flores and Valentina Flores, are seen after attending the Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.

Bowling Green, Ximena Martinez and her friends, sisters Samantha Flores and Valentina Flores, had participated in a traditional Mayan dance during the pre-liturgy procession.

"It felt really special, like being a part of something, like I belonged," said Samantha. Her sister added, "I met a lot of people from other cultures, including people from my school!"

Ximena said the celebration was "interesting because everyone had a different style" in their cultural clothing, and "fun, like when everyone stood up from every country" when the bishop called on them during Mass.

"That was fun, to see where people are from!" she said. ■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Juan Carlos Lazo Soriano, a seminarian for the Diocese of Owensboro, plays in a pickup soccer game after the Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
A little girl receives a temporary butterfly tattoo during facepainting for children after the Oct. 3, 2026 Migration Mass at Holy Spirit in Bowling Green

Retreat invites men to encounter Jesus, change their lives



COURTESY OF ANDY TELLI
Fr. Kolbe Wolniakowski, OSB, of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, gives the homily during Mass at the Sons of Thunder Men's Retreat held at the farm of Joe and Mary June Cecil of Daviess County on Oct. 23-24.

BY ANDY TELLI, THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

Jesus is inviting men to have an encounter with Him that will change their lives, just as it did for the apostles James and John. That was one of the messages heard during the recent Sons of Thunder Men's Retreat sponsored by the Netbreakers Men's Ministry at Precious Blood Parish in Owensboro.

"James and John were obviously fiery people," said Dcn. Jay VanHoosier, diocesan director of faith formation and one of the speakers at the retreat. The Gospel of Mark says that Jesus named the brothers "Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder."

"An encounter with Jesus changed their lives," Dcn. VanHoosier said. "An encounter with Jesus should change your life as a man."

"How did John get from being a son of thunder to the disciple whom Jesus loved?" Fr. Ray Clark, chaplain of Carmel Home and Owensboro Health Regional Hospital, asked during his talk at the retreat. "It goes through the cross."

John saw that Jesus' greatest hour was on the cross, Fr. Clark said.

"On the cross is a man as free as a man can be," said Fr. Jason McClure, moderator of the curia, vicar for clergy, and director of St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Bowling Green, and another speaker at the retreat.

The current culture can pull us away from Christ's invitation to be closer to Him, said Fr. McClure. But the laws of the Church free us to be the person Jesus meant us to be, he added.

In his talk at the retreat, Fr. Kolbe Wolniakowski, OSB, subprior of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, looked at the crucifixion through the eyes of James and John and the other apostles.

"You had to sort of feel defeated. Like, 'Hey, I thought this was going to be the guy, this was going to be the one,' Fr. Wolniakowski said. But with the resurrection "their whole life must have just changed. ...

"To be sons of thunder is to understand how the cross changes our life," he said.

Fr. McClure urged the men at the retreat to put Christ at the center of their lives. "If Christ is at the center of your life, everything is balanced," he said.

"Sinning is not the worst thing," Fr. McClure said. Worse is choosing to stay in the sin. But when we fall, Jesus is there urging us to get up, added Fr. McClure.

In his talk, Fr. Suneesh Mathew, pastor of St. Paul Parish in Leitchfield, pointed to St. Thomas. "Jesus does not abandon Thomas because he struggled to believe," Fr. Mathew said. "He met him in the middle of his struggle."

"Reaching out to people who are struggling is so important," he said. "When you're reaching out you see the goodness in people." ■

Myanmar community celebrate 15 years within the Diocese of Owensboro

St. Pius X hosts Mass, celebration with bishop

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

Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026 was a great joy and blessings for the Myanmar Catholic Community at St. Pius X Parish in the Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky. That day, they celebrated the 15th anniversary of their presence at the parish.

Bishop William F. Medley celebrated the Thanksgiving Mass, and was joined by concelebrating priests Fr. Larry Hostetter, pastor of St. Pius X; myself, the associate pastor; and the two former St. Pius pastors: Fr. Tom Buckman and Fr. John Paul Mang Sein Yaw. Two diocesan seminarians, Juan Carlos Lazo Soriano and Griffin Honeycutt, assisted at Mass.



COURTESY OF AWI & YOUNG

Priests concelebrating the 15th anniversary Mass of the Myanmar community at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro are seen after Mass on Sept. 27, along with many parishioners. (Right to left) Fr. Larry Hostetter, pastor; Bishop William F. Medley; Fr. Martin Ma Na Ling, parochial vicar; Fr. Tom Buckman, a previous pastor; and Fr. John Paul Mang Sein Yaw, a previous pastor.

Because there were about 333 people attending the special event and Mass (without even counting the kids), the Church was full of the faithful at Mass.

The event of 15th anniversary was celebrated in four parts.

Part one: Welcoming the bishop

The welcoming of Bishop Medley ceremony took place outside of the church at 3:30 p.m. According to the tradition of Myanmar Catholics, the welcoming the bishop ceremony is one of the most important things to celebrate during such event. These are the special moments when they can extend and give their love, appreciation, the prayers for him and closeness with the local bishop as their shepherd. In such time, they can see their bishop in-person and receive the blessings from him as one of the successors of the apostles. The Myanmar kids of the parish gave sets of flowers in his honor, and Myanmar traditional musical instruments were played, showing their respect and love of their bishop. Bishop Medley was happy to see all the children and the faithful waiting for him and blessed the participants during the procession.

Part two: Mass of Thanksgiving

This part is the highest point of the event because the Myanmar Catholics who arrived 15 years ago were able to thank God for his goodness in their lives. During Mass, they thanked the diocese, bishop, parish, and priests and sisters who welcomed them. All the readings were read in Burmese, and all the liturgical hymns were sung in Burmese by the Myanmar Choir of St. Pius X Myanmar Catholic Community.

During the Mass, Bishop Medley gave the homily in English, which I translated in Burmese. During the homily, the bishop said, "I celebrate the presence of the Myanmar Catholic refugees in my state, in my Diocese of Owensboro, and in my city, especially at St. Pius X for these past 15 years."

He also encouraged them to be strong in their faith as well even in times of difficulties and uncertainties.

Before the final blessing, the Myanmar Catholic

Continues on page 14

Myanmar continued from page 13

refugees presented small gifts to the priests and seminarians. They presented to Bishop Medley and the current priests at St. Pius three special gifts, which were images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with gem art made of a special type of small stones and sand from Myanmar; an art style traditionally gifted to officials like bishops, governors and presidents.

Fr. Larry Hostetter, pastor of the parish, congratulated St. Pius X Myanmar Catholic Community for their celebration and thanked them for working hard for the event and for their presence at the parish and involvement in the parish as their home.

He also thanked all who came to the celebration, especially the Anglo-Americans who worked hard to welcome the new refugees from Myanmar at the parish 15 years ago. He thanked the Knights of Columbus who were participating in the procession before and after the Mass, and also thanked all the Anglo-Americans for their coming and supporting the Myanmar Catholics at the parish, as there were a good number of them present.

Part three: Celebration with traditional food and dance

This part was filled with much fun. The St. Pius X Myanmar Catholics sang a group song, and the young women performed a traditional dance. Myanmar Catholics visiting from Bowling Green sang a group song as well. I showed a short video about the activities of the community at St. Pius X parish from 2011 to 2026. Fr. Larry presented certificates to leaders of St. Pius X Myanmar Catholic Community for their sacrifices and those who donated meat to cook and serve for the celebration.

A lot of participants at the 15th anniversary said they were impressed with the singing of the Myanmar choir and the beauty of the thanksgiving Mass by Bishop Medley.



COURTESY OF AWI & YOUNG
Members of the Myanmar community at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro welcome Bishop William F. Medley on Sept. 27, during the 15th anniversary celebration of being at the parish.



COURTESY OF AWI & YOUNG
Members of the Myanmar community at St. Pius X Parish in Owensboro sing a group song during post-Mass festivities on Sept. 27, as a part of the community's

Martha Ma Mo and Cecilia Kee Meh from Bowling Green said, "The Myanmar choir sings wonderfully, and the keyboard player also plays well. We are very happy for them."

A lot of Myanmar Catholics at St. Pius X shared, "We were very happy to see Bishop Medley in person at the 15th anniversary. That means he never forgets about us and that he cares for us like he does for everyone in the Diocese of Owensboro."

They added that "Fr. Larry Hostetter, our pastor is a wonderful priest who really cares for our spiritual needs. We feel home at the parish because of the welcoming of the parishioners as well."

I would like to thank my pastor, Fr. Larry, for his love and care for the Myanmar Catholics at the parish. It is because of his support and his willingness that we could celebrate the 15th anniversary at the parish. He encouraged all the Anglo-American parishioners to show their support and love for the Myanmar Catholics, and because of his encouragement, all the parishioners welcomed them and came to the celebration as a parish event.

I would also like to thank Bishop Medley for his coming to celebrate the thanksgiving Mass for us. He has never forgotten about the Myanmar Catholics, just like he cares for all his sheep in his Diocese of Owensboro. May God be praised! ■

Editor's note: The Myanmar Catholic parishioners of St. Pius X also expressed this additional comment of gratitude for Fr. Martin Ma Na Ling's leadership in planning the event: "We thank Fr. Martin for organizing the 15th anniversary celebration. We did not even know how long we have been at St. Pius X Parish. When Fr. Martin was assigned as associate pastor, he revisited our history and invited all of us to celebrate our presence and thank God. We also thank all the priests and sisters who have helped us a lot, especially Fr. John Paul Mang Sein Yaw for his efforts."

WKC staff contributed to this article.



Bishop visits with college seminarians in Missouri

PHOTO COURTESY OF VOCATIONS OFFICE

From Oct. 25-27, Bishop William F. Medley and vocations director Fr. Corey D. Bruns traveled out to Conception Seminary College in Missouri to visit with the Diocese of Owensboro's college seminarians. Pictured from left to right: Fr. Bruns; Thomas Jarboe, who is in his propaedeutic year and is from St. Mary of the Woods Parish in Whitesville; Bishop Medley; William McCarty, who is in his propaedeutic year and is from Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish in Owensboro; and Caleb Neitzel, who is in Discipleship II and is from St. Joseph Parish in Bowling Green.

Learn more at owensborovocations.com.

Fr. Jaconette takes Oath of Office as a Chaplain for U.S. Air Force

BY WKC STAFF

On Saturday, Sept. 26, after the 5 p.m. vigil Mass, Fr. Conrad Jaconette, parochial vicar of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville, took his Oath of Office as a Chaplain for the United States Air Force.

Chaplain (COL) Fr. Paul Weberg, administered the Oath of Office. Fr. Jaconette's parents surprised him by traveling down from northern Kentucky and attending the ceremony that day, and pinned his chaplain cross and new bars for his promotion.



COURTESY OF LARENA LAWSON

On Sept. 26, Fr. Conrad Jaconette, parochial vicar of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville takes his Oath of Office as a Chaplain in the United States Air Force. The Oath of Office was administered by Chaplain (COL) Fr. Paul Weberg.



COURTESY OF LARENA LAWSON

Fr. Conrad Jaconette's parents pin his chaplain cross and new bars on his uniform during his Oath of Office as Chaplain on Sept. 26, following the 5 p.m. vigil Mass at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Hopkinsville.

"I am now officially a Chaplain in the United States Air Force," said Fr. Jaconette, who was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Owensboro in January 2025. "I have been a chaplain candidate since 2021 while I was in seminary. Now that I am a priest I was promoted and assumed the role of Chaplain. I will be in the United States Air Force Reserves for an additional year serving at Beale AFB in California."

Fr. Jaconette added that he will transition to regular active Air Force before the summer of 2028.■

What do parents need to know about cellphone usage and is there anything we should be doing differently?

BY CHARLIE HARDESTY, OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

I am jumping right in feet first into one of the more common conversations that parents wanted to have as we gathered in the initial in-person "Building a Family of Faith" sessions. And before I get too far into this answer, I want to make sure to highlight that this question is deeply layered, challenging, and unique to the individual young people and their technology habits. I do, however, believe there are some useful strategies to help cellphone use be as healthy an experience as possible.

Quite a bit of research is being done right now on cellphone use and adolescents and not all the data coming out is as predictable as one might assume. It is not automatic that cellphones and social media use cause young people to be more anxious or depressed. It is also not necessarily proven that removing this technology from your young person will increase their mental health. There are just so many factors at play, and so it is essential for parents to stay involved and informed before setting their children free with a handheld computer more powerful than the desktop computer I started college with.

Our number one suggestion is to help young people see access to a cellphone as using a tool; much like the home phone from my teenage years was a tool. I knew this tool was not mine. I knew this tool really was not private and that at any moment my parents might pick up on the other line in the house to listen in or tell me to go to bed. For this reason, I wonder what would happen if we stopped giving young people phones at major milestones like birthdays or Christmas. It seems confusing for a gift not to be personally owned, so perhaps introduce a cellphone at a time when the utility of it makes more sense than the desire for it.



OSV NEWS PHOTO/HOLLIE ADAMS, REUTERS
A 14-year-old displays her cellphone in Sydney Dec. 10, 2025, as a law banning social media for users under 16 in Australia takes effect.

Another suggestion we have is for all cellphones, including your own, to be charged somewhere other than in bedrooms. If strong research on this topic exists anywhere, it is in the idea that cellphones are drastically impacting quality sleep. We hear story after story of young people exhausted at school from "doom scrolling" all night or answering texts. We suggest a charging spot in a public place in your home for all phones and we suggest you model this behavior as parents for your own phone challenges.

Lastly, for now, we suggest you be deeply engaged in monitoring cellphone use with your children. Again, if it is a tool, then this is not an invasion of privacy, and besides, I do not recall my parents being too deeply concerned with my privacy! (As a parent myself today, I see that now as an expression of care and love.)

I do find it concerning how quickly cellphones seem to induce lying for many teens. Your young people are smart and will quickly learn how to clear browsing histories and hide things. The more you can stay engaged, the harder it becomes for young people to wander into unhealthy spaces and create unhealthy habits.

I am confident we will spend more time looking at technology in the future, but for now, tell us what you think at familylife@pastoral.org. For more parent-to-parent conversation like this, along with faith-sharing tips and plenty of laughs, check out "Building a Family of Faith" podcast hosted by Rachel Hall, Charlie Hardesty, Susy Solorza, and Danny May. Available now wherever you get your podcasts. ■

The "Building a Family of Faith" column is a collaborative effort among the Offices of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, Marriage & Family Life, and Communications. Access more resources at owensborodiocese.org/building-a-family-of-faith.



COURTESY OF JOSEPH DANIEL TRYGIER
On Oct. 21, 2026, during the general audience in St. Peter's Square in Rome, baby Max, the daughter of Stephanie Woods and Joseph Daniel Trygier of St. Leo Parish in Murray, Kentucky, gets to meet Pope Leo XIV.

Murray infant meets Pope Leo XIV

BY WKC STAFF AND JOSEPH WOODS

A special moment involving parishioners of St. Leo in Murray recently took place in Rome, Italy – with none other than Pope Leo XIV.

Stephanie Woods and Joseph Daniel Trygier were married on Oct. 10, 2026, during a Spanish-language Mass at St. Leo. During their honeymoon in Italy, their infant daughter, Max, had an extraordinary encounter with Pope Leo XIV at the Oct. 21 general audience in St. Peter's Square in Rome.

Members of the papal security detail brought baby Max to the Holy Father, who personally blessed her. Joseph captured the touching encounter in photographs.

The experience is particularly meaningful for this young Catholic family. Joseph entered the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil earlier this year, and just six months later, he and Stephanie celebrated their marriage at St. Leo. During their honeymoon, their daughter received a blessing from the first U.S.-born pope, who shares his papal name with their home parish.

The meeting was also underscored by the fact that this was the Pope Leo's first general audience following a successful surgery to remove a cancerous tumor from his right lung. During this audience, the pope spoke on Vatican II document "Gaudium et Spes," and emphasized the dignity of marriage and the family in light of contemporary challenges.

"Let us, therefore, pray for God's blessing and protection upon all families," said the pope. ■

Joseph Woods serves as the administrative assistant for St. Leo Parish in Murray, Kentucky.

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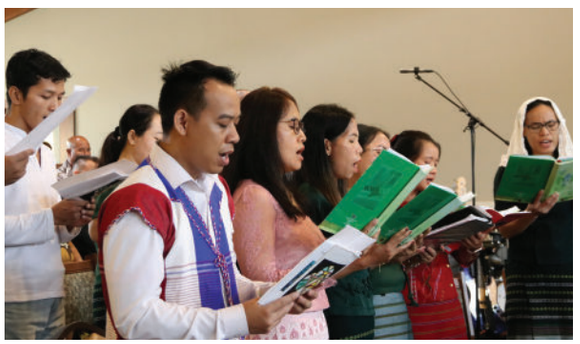
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The sacred gift of co-responsibility: Living the mission of Christ together



RILEY GREIF | WKC
Members of the choir sing during the Oct. 3, 2026 diocesan Migration Mass at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green.

BY DR. JEFF ANDRINI, EVANGELIZATION & DISCIPLESHIP

For centuries, a persistent misconception shaped the practical life of the Catholic Church: the idea that the clergy held sole responsibility for the Church's mission, while the laity were mere passive recipients of spiritual care. The Second Vatican Council fundamentally challenged this dynamic, calling the Church to rediscover its identity as the unified people of God. At the core of this modern ecclesial renewal lies the concept of co-responsibility – the conviction that all the baptized, ordained and lay alike, share a common responsibility for carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

The theological foundation for co-responsibility rests firmly on the sacrament of baptism. Through baptism, every Christian is incorporated into Christ, configured to His life, and given a real share in His triple office as priest, prophet, and king. Baptism is not merely a private purification or an initiation into an organization; it is an active commissioning into the divine life and salvific mission of the Church. As the Council stresses in Lumen Gentium (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), the faithful are called as living members to dedicate their energy to the continuous growth and sanctification of Christ's Body.

A central emphasis of Vatican II is the universal call to holiness. Chapter V of Lumen Gentium explicitly teaches that holiness is not the exclusive domain of priests, bishops, or religious communities. Rather, every Christian, regardless of state in life, occupation, or circumstance, is called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. Because holiness and mission are intrinsically linked, the obligation to proclaim the Gospel and transform society belongs to every single believer.

Co-responsibility requires a profound shift in mindset regarding how clergy and laity relate to one another. As Pope Benedict XVI observed, the lay faithful must not be treated merely as "collaborators" who assist the clergy in their tasks but rather recognized as people who are truly "co-responsible" for the Church's being and action. While the ordained clergy exercise an essential, distinct ministry of word, sacrament, and shepherdly oversight, their authority exists to equip, serve, and empower the whole Body of Christ. The laity, in turn, possess a unique vocation to sanctify the secular world: bringing the light of the Gospel into family life, politics, economics, science, and culture, where the ordained cannot easily reach.

In contemporary Church life, this vision of co-responsibility finds its fullest expression through synodality. Synodality – literally meaning "walking together" – is the structural and spiritual process by which the Church practices mutual listening, discernment, and shared responsibility across all levels of ecclesial life. By cultivating spaces where the voices of the laity, religious, and clergy are heard in dynamic dialogue, synodality ensures that the gifts bestowed on every baptized believer by the Holy Spirit are woven together to serve the one mission of Christ.

Co-responsibility is a profound expression of ecclesial communion, where ordained ministers and laypersons embrace their shared baptismal dignity and serve the mission of Jesus. ■

Dr. Jeff Andrini is the director of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship. Contact him at jeff.andrini@pastoral.org.



The Holy Spirit: The forgotten gift

Editor's note: This column is part four in a monthly WKC series, "Ten Matters of Faith Every Catholic Should Know: A Journey From Belief to Discipleship."

For many Catholics, God the Father is familiar. We pray the Our Father. We speak often about Jesus – His birth, His ministry, His death and Resurrection. But when it comes to the third Person of the Trinity, we sometimes struggle. Who exactly is the Holy Spirit, and what difference does He make in our lives?

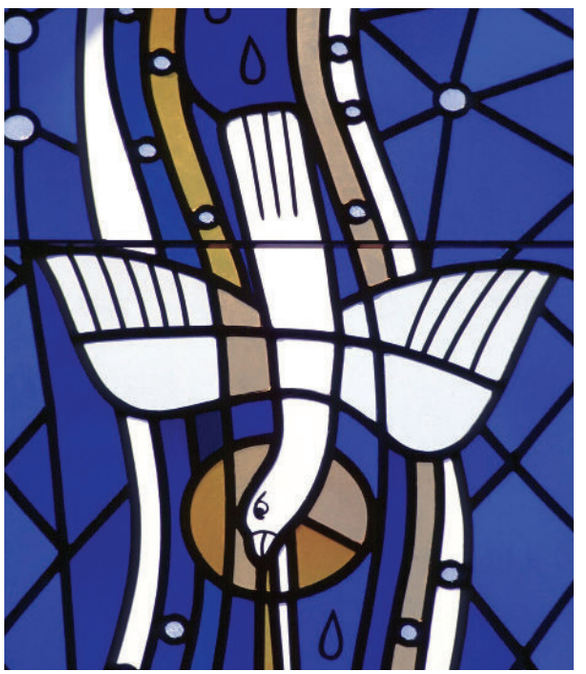
Perhaps that is why the Holy Spirit can sometimes seem like the forgotten Person of the Trinity. Yet He is one of the greatest gifts God has given us.

Before His death, Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them alone. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to remain with them, guide them, and give them strength. That promise was fulfilled at Pentecost when the Spirit descended upon the apostles.

Consider what happened next. These were largely the same disciples who had scattered when Jesus was arrested. Peter had denied even knowing Him. After the Crucifixion, they gathered behind locked doors because they were afraid. Then came the Holy Spirit.

Suddenly, those frightened disciples opened the doors and went out into the streets proclaiming Jesus Christ. Peter, who had once been afraid to admit that he knew Jesus, boldly preached the Gospel to thousands.

What changed? They had received the Holy Spirit. And so have we.



CNS PHOTO/CROSIERS
The Holy Spirit, traditionally depicted as a dove, is pictured in a window of St. Mary's Church in White Bear Lake, Minn. Pentecost is May 23, 2021.

Through Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is not simply someone we learned about in religious education. He dwells within us. The same Spirit who strengthened the apostles has been given to us to help us become the people God created us to be. Yet how often do we actually call upon Him?

We face difficult decisions and immediately begin trying to solve them ourselves. We struggle to forgive someone and rely upon our own strength. We want to share our faith but worry that we will not know what to say. We encounter suffering and wonder how we will possibly endure it.

In those moments, we can pray one of the simplest prayers in the Christian tradition: "Come, Holy Spirit."

Come, Holy Spirit, when I don't know what to do. Come, Holy Spirit, when I don't know what to say. Come, Holy Spirit, when I am afraid. Come, Holy Spirit, when I need the courage to follow Christ more faithfully.

The Holy Spirit does not necessarily remove every difficulty from our lives. Instead, He gives us what we need to face those difficulties as disciples of Jesus. His gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord help shape us into people who can recognize God's presence and respond to His call.

And when we allow the Spirit to work within us, something begins to change. St. Paul tells us that His presence bears fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Those fruits offer us a good question to consider: Can others see evidence of the Holy Spirit working in me?

The Holy Spirit was never intended to be the forgotten gift. He is God's presence dwelling within us, quietly transforming us and giving us the courage to live as disciples.

Perhaps we simply need to remember to ask: Come, Holy Spirit. What do You want to do in me today? ■

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

Fr. Ray Goetz says goodbye after 16 years at the Mount



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH
Fr. Ray Goetz celebrates Mass at the Motherhouse Chapel at Mount Saint Joseph. He retired from serving as chaplain in Maple Mount on Sept. 30, 2026.

BY DAN HECKEL, MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Fr. Ray Goetz walked into the Rainbow Room of Saint Joseph Villa on Sept. 28, 2026, and with his trademark sense of humor said, "I don't know how to act. Everyplace else I've left, they had the party afterward."

After 16 years as the chaplain at Mount Saint Joseph – the second longest consecutive tenure of any priest – Fr. Goetz retired, with his last Mass on Sept. 30.

The Ursuline Sisters had a party for Fr. Goetz on Sept. 28 to share their thoughts and appreciation. The sisters filled a basket with cards, and watched a video of his time at the Mount. Among the visitors were two Vietnamese sisters, a Franciscan sister, Fr. John Vaughan, and the man who replaced Fr. Goetz, Fr. John Okoro.

Sr. Sharon Sullivan, congregational leader, said she first encountered Fr. Goetz when she was academic dean at Brescia University, where he was teaching theology part time.

"I was asked if it was possible to split you in three pieces – one-third teaching theology at Brescia, one-third pastoring St. Alphonsus, and one-third at Mount Saint Joseph," Sr. Sharon said. "That was 16 years ago, and that one-third has grown into so much more. You've shared your rich faith, your spirituality, and your deep conversations. And you harvested and shelled all those black walnuts. Many walking sticks have blossomed thanks to you. We have been deeply enriched by your presence among us."

Sr. Mary Matthias Ward recalled that she was leaving community leadership in 1996 and accepted a position at the Newman Center at Murray State University.

"Two days later the bishop called and asked me to consider also being the administrator at St. Leo Church in Murray," she said. "He said, 'I want to send Fr. Ray there, but he won't go without an administrator.' We worked together for seven years, then I moved to New Mexico. I think Ray visited me every year I was there. We've been friends for 30 years. I will miss you greatly."

Fr. Goetz is known for his skill as a homilist. Sr. Ruth Gehres praised him for the Masses he's led.

"I've been amazed and grateful for your fidelity to the Liturgy," she said. "It is the center of our life, and you are aware of that. We are all grateful for that."

Sr. Vivian Bowles said, "You are one of the most giving people I have ever known."

When Sr. Judith Nell Riney said she still had the homilies that Fr. Goetz wrote for both of her parents' funerals, he replied, "Your mom and my mom were best friends." Fr. Goetz's mother, Mary Blandford Goetz, graduated from Mount Saint Joseph Academy in 1937. She was among the first people to be named a recipient of the Maple Leaf Award, which honors graduates who personified the values of their Mount Saint Joseph education.

Fr. Goetz told all those gathered that he appreciated their comments.

"I'm very grateful for you and what you do," he said. "I tell people, 'It's the best job in the diocese.' When people ask, 'Are you taking care of the nuns?' I say, "No, they take care of me." ■

Fr. John Okoro begins as the new chaplain for the Ursuline Sisters

BY DAN HECKEL, MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH



COURTESY OF MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH

Fr. John Okoro greets some of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph during chaplain Fr. Ray Goetz's farewell party on Sept. 28, 2026. From left are Sr. Pat Rhoten, Sr. Kathleen Dueber, Sr. Mary Matthias Ward, and Sr. Cecelia Joseph Olinger. Fr. Okoro will serve as the new chaplain.

Fr. John Okoro has served in multiple parishes in the Diocese of Owensboro since arriving from his native Nigeria 21 years ago. His latest change in assignment is taking him just across the road.

On Oct. 1, 2026, Fr. Okoro became the 26th priest to serve as chaplain for the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, a line of succession that began with Fr. Paul Joseph Volk in 1874. Fr. John replaces Fr. Ray Goetz, who concluded 16 years as chaplain on Sept. 30. Like Fr. Goetz initially, Fr. Okoro will be sharing the role of chaplain while continuing as pastor at St. Alphonsus Church just across the highway from the Mount.

"I'm looking forward to serving the sisters," he said. "I talked with Fr. Ray after speaking with the bishop. His guidance has been topnotch. He said the sisters are so caring. My role is pastoral."

Fr. Okoro is a priest of the Diocese of Okigwe, Nigeria. He has been ordained a priest for 31 years, with the past 21 years serving in the Diocese of Owensboro. His bishop made serving in America an option for his priests, and Fr. Okoro applied.

"Bishop (John) McRaith was open to accepting international priests," Fr. Okoro said. "Where you find the people of God, that's where you pitch your tent. The former and current bishop are such good people. They always made it easy for us to fit in and work."

Serving with women religious is nothing new for Fr. Okoro. Ursuline Sr. Vivian Bowles serves in faith formation at St. Alphonsus. When he was a pastor in Nigeria, he asked sisters from the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy to run the school at his parish for four years. The Daughters of Divine Love also serve in his village in Nigeria.

"I feel at home," he said. "I've seen many of the sisters at different places. It's not a strange place for me."

All of Fr. Okoro's service in the Diocese of Owensboro has been within an hour of the Mount. He spent six months at Holy Name of Jesus in Henderson, two years at St. Stephen in Owensboro, six years in McLean County at St. Sebastian and St. Charles, five years at St. William and St. Lawrence parishes in or near Knottsville, and six years sharing time at three parishes – St. Francis Borgia in Sturgis, St. Ambrose in Henshaw, and St. William in Marion. Two years ago, he came to St. Alphonsus and St. Elizabeth in Curdsville. With his new duties at the Mount, St. Elizabeth is now being served by Fr. Jamie Dennis, the pastor at St. Mary Magdalene in Sorgho.

His new arrangement means some changes at St. Alphonsus. Daily Mass is now only being offered at 7:30 a.m., on Wednesdays, because Mass at the Mount is at 11:30 that day.

Otherwise, the dozen or so people who attended daily Mass at St. Alphonsus have been invited to come to the Mount for 7:30 a.m., Mass on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

In his spare time, Fr. Okoro likes to work in his garden, take daily walks, and listen to classical music. He likes singing with the choir and watching soccer.

"I've only been here a week, I think it will work well," he said. ■

Corrections

In the October 2026 issue of The Western Kentucky Catholic, on page 5, it was incorrectly stated that Carl Lewis entered the Catholic Church in 1995. However, Mr. Lewis is a lifelong Catholic. The WKC apologizes for this confusion.

Mahjong fundraiser supports Bowling Green pregnancy home

BY SYLANN SMITH, SPECIAL TO THE WESTERN KENTUCKY CATHOLIC

On Sept. 19, we held our inaugural fundraiser, Mahjong in the Morning, at Holy Spirit to benefit St. Gianna Crisis Pregnancy Home. It was a great success! We had 80 participants, only 20 short of a sellout, who enjoyed several hours of either open play or instruction. They were also treated to fabulous food prepared by our resident chef, Becky Elder, and 30 won door prizes worth in total of $2,500. These prizes and our raffle prize were donated by Glasgow and Bowling Green businesses and private donors. The event expenses were covered by sponsors and donors, with 100% of the event ticket sales going directly to St. Gianna's. Over $6,000 was raised in support of the women and babies served by the ministry! The response to our post event survey was overwhelmingly positive and plans are already underway for Mahjong in the Morning 2027. Hope you will join us for our second annual event. ■

Learn more at www.stgiannacph.org.



COURTESY OF MIKE NOLAND
Women attend the Mahjong in the Morning fundraiser, hosted at Holy Spirit Parish in Bowling Green, to support St. Gianna Crisis Pregnancy Home on Sept. 19, 2026.

St. Teresa Ministries awards $156,000 to support food access

BY JENNIFER BAILEY, ST. TERESA MINISTRIES

St. Teresa Ministries marked World Food Day on Oct. 16 by awarding $156,000 to five local organizations working to improve food access in Bowling Green and Warren County.

Held at St. Teresa Thrift Store, the event brought together nonprofit partners, volunteers, board members, community leaders, elected officials, donors, shoppers and friends of the ministry to celebrate the organizations serving neighbors across our community.

The Holy Spirit Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul received $75,000 in total support, while the St. Joseph Conference of St. Vincent de Paul received $67,000. MEALS, Inc. received $10,000, Christ Episcopal Church's Wednesday Community Lunch Program received $2,000, and the WKU Student Government Association received $2,000 in support of the WKU Student Food Pantry.

Guest speaker Dave Miner, producer and director of Learning Hungry: Food Insecurity on Campus, spoke about food insecurity among college students and the importance of helping students access basic needs.

St. Teresa Ministries does not operate a food pantry of its own. Instead, funds generated through St. Teresa Thrift Store are used to support local organizations already serving neighbors in need.

"Sometimes people don't realize how much good starts right here in the thrift store," said Patty Polston, store manager. "Every time someone donates an item, shops with us or volunteers their time, they are helping us give back to people in our own community." ■



COURTESY OF SABRINA NERO
Representatives from the St. Joseph Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul accept $67,000 in total World Food Day of Giving support from St. Teresa Ministries on Oct. 16, 2026.

Local pastor serves as guest preacher for National Shrine of St. Jude



COURTESY OF ST. MARTIN PARISH
Fr. Daniel Dillard, pastor of St. Martin Parish in Rome, Ky., serves as a guest preacher at the National Shrine of St. Jude in Chicago in October 2026.

BY NICOLE GRAY, ST. MARTIN PARISH

Fr. Daniel Dillard of St. Martin Parish in Rome, Ky., recently returned to the National Shrine of St. Jude in Chicago to serve once again as a guest preacher for the Solemn Novena to St. Jude in October 2026.

"I was asked to preach the novena there last summer because the director of the shrine is a good friend of mine, Fr. Byron Macias," said Fr. Dillard. Fr. Macias, who is a member of the Claretian Missionaries, who administrate the St. Jude shrine, was ordained within the Diocese of Owensboro by Bishop William F. Medley in 2017.

Fr. Dillard said Fr. Macias "likes my preaching" and that "the people who attended and watched the novena (online) asked him for me to come back."

He said that he does not particularly have a devotion to St. Jude, "but I do love how he represents hope in hopeless situations."

Fr. Dillard first preached the novena there in June 2025, when the theme was "The Necessity of Hope." This year, he returned with another message centered on hope: "From Darkness to Light: A Journey of Hope."

The Feast of St. Jude is celebrated each year on Oct. 28, together with St. Simon the Apostle. St. Jude was one of the 12 apostles and over the centuries, Catholics have especially turned to his intercession during difficult or seemingly hopeless situations.

Throughout the nine-day novena, Fr. Dillard preached to those gathered at the shrine and to those following online. The novena concluded on Oct. 28, the Feast of St. Jude. Pilgrims also had the opportunity to venerate the shrine's permanent relic of St. Jude and take part in the closing procession.

For St. Martin parishioners, it was meaningful to see their pastor share a message of hope with people from outside their own parish – a message that is just as important in their own lives back home in Kentucky. ■

WKC staff contributed to this report.





Kentucky has not executed anyone since 2008. Let's permanently end the death penalty in the Commonwealth.

BY JASON D. HALL, CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF KENTUCKY

The recent failed execution of Christa Pike by the State of Tennessee has highlighted many grave questions surrounding the continued use of the death penalty. These questions warrant urgent consideration as Kentucky officials move to resume executions.

While a number of death sentences have been handed down, the Commonwealth has not executed anyone since 2008. This is largely due to a series of legal challenges to the methods and administration of the death penalty that have been winding their way through the courts. The approaching conclusion of those court cases and recent actions by the legislature are rapidly moving us toward a resumption of executions.

In recent decades, the legislature has acted to both limit and expand capital punishment in various ways.

In 1998, passage of the Racial Justice Act made Kentucky the first state to expressly prohibit seeking or imposing the death penalty on the basis of race. In 2022, the legislature excluded from the death penalty defendants who were diagnosed with any of four serious mental illnesses at the time of the offense.

On the other hand, the legislature has also expanded the list of offenses for which a defendant could be executed. That list of aggravating circumstances also apply to a sentence of life without parole, and several legislators voted for those bills while publicly stating they supported the exclusion of parole but would also support abolition of the death penalty if it were being considered on its own.

Earlier this year, legislators passed SB 251, which could bring further legal challenges to a halt. The ongoing litigation largely concerns the Department of Corrections regulations that govern the administration of the death penalty. SB 251 would allow the Department to adopt or amend policies immediately, without going through the administrative regulation review process, which can take some time.

The core constitutional claims in the current litigation are approaching a trial and seem likely to be decided on the legal merits. In the event of future legal challenges, however, the Department of Corrections will, under SB 251, have the ability to more quickly respond to court decisions, with less opportunity for legislative oversight and public comment, and move forward with executions.

Because of the longstanding moratorium, the death penalty has receded as an urgent political issue in the minds of many in Frankfort. With the prospect of a resumption of executions, perhaps several in a short period of time, interest and urgency should increase. It has been over 10 years since there was a legislative committee hearing and debate on abolition of the death penalty. The change in circumstances makes it likely there will be an opportunity to renew that conversation.

Each session, there are bills in both the House and Senate, with bipartisan support, that would abolish capital punishment. Our hope for 2027 is that those bills can be seen more as serious proposals that deserve serious consideration. We have many legislators who have stated publicly their support of abolition. There is no doubt of more who would be in support but have not made that clear.

Please join us in asking members of the House and Senate to cosponsor legislation to end the death penalty in Kentucky. If we can show strong bipartisan support for these bills, that will bring this issue to the forefront and spark a real debate about the future of capital punishment in Kentucky. ■

Jason D. Hall serves as the executive director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in Kentucky. Learn more at https://ccky.org.

Related news

'Evil is not overcome by evil' *Reckoning with Owensboro's past as the site of the last public hanging*

Read the story on page 6.

Pope Leo needs 'no further treatment' following lung cancer surgery

BY GINA CHRISTIAN, OSV NEWS



OSV NEWS PHOTO/SIMONE RISOLUTI, VATICAN MEDIA

Pope Leo XIV gives the thumbs up as he arrives in his popemobile in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Oct. 21, 2026, to hold his first weekly general audience since cancer surgery on Oct. 13. In an Oct. 21 message, the Holy See Press Office announced that Drs. Luigi Carbone and Stefano Margaritora confirmed Pope Leo needs "no further treatment" following his Oct. 13 surgery for lung cancer.

(OSV News) – Doctors have confirmed Pope Leo XIV needs "no further treatment" following his Oct. 13 surgery for lung cancer.

In an Oct. 21 message, the Holy See Press Office announced that Drs. Luigi Carbone and Stefano Margaritora said "the final histological examinations and molecular biology tests on the material removed" during the surgery confirmed the tumor was a "localized lung adenocarcinoma."

The doctors said that "subsequent oncological evaluation confirmed that no further treatment is necessary."

"This is really good news," Dr. Nirmal Veeramachaneni, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine, told OSV News moments after the Vatican released the papal health update.

Although not part of the pope's care team, Veeramachaneni – an oncology expert who also serves as medical director for lung cancer screening at SSM Health – said that based on his experience and the Holy See statement, Pope Leo's prognosis seemed to be "excellent."

Now, said Veeramachaneni, the pope will simply need "long-term radiographic follow-up to look for recurrence."

Typically, he said, that entails a regular CT (computed tomography) scan, which uses multiple X-ray images to create a 3D composite of bones, organs and tissue.

He estimated the scanning intervals to range from "every six months" to "once a year for several years."

Based on his own clinical and research experience, Veeramachaneni said the Vatican's news was "actually what I was expecting" and "the most likely scenario."

Veeramachaneni said that "the fact that they (Pope Leo's medical team) proceeded straight to surgery told me a lot."

"If they were concerned about the imaging, or if they thought this was a more advanced state of the disease, modern care would have meant chemotherapy up front," he said.

Continues on page 26

Pope continued from page 25

The Vatican has not disclosed whether Pope Leo received any presurgical, or "neoadjuvant," cancer treatment before entering Rome's Gemelli Hospital Oct. 13 and undergoing a 90-minute video-assisted surgery that same day.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said Oct. 14 that prior to surgery, Pope Leo had undergone several diagnostic procedures – a robotic bronchoscopy with biopsy, a chest CT scan with contrast and a PET scan – which indicated the need for the operation.

The pope announced after leading the Oct. 11 Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square that doctors had found a "small, localized nodule" in his lung and had recommended intervention.

Following the video-assisted surgery – which saw the removal of the lower lobe of the pope's right lung – Carbone, the pope's personal physician, and Margaritora, chief thoracic surgeon at Gemelli, "confirmed the diagnosis of lung adenocarcinoma, as suspected by the preoperative tests."

Veeramachaneni noted that cancer was at an "early stage."

Chemotherapy would normally be advised "if this tumor was greater than four centimeters in size or the lymph nodes were involved," he said.

"As part of a standard oncological examination, the surgeon would have either sampled or dissected out the lymph nodes that hug the central airway, as well as taking out the lymph nodes in the lobe itself," he said.

Adenocarcinomas are cancers that begin in the glands lining the body's organs, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

Lung adenocarcinoma is "the most common subtype of lung cancer," and "falls under the non-small cell category," said Dr. Stephen Liu, associate professor of medicine, director of thoracic oncology and director of developmental therapeutics at Georgetown University's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Almost 9 out of 10 lung cancers are of the non-small cell type, growing more slowly than its small cell counterpart, which typically attacks the airways and spreads rapidly, according to the National Foundation for Cancer Research.

Liu added that lung adenocarcinoma is also "the most common" type of lung cancer "in people without a strong smoking history." ■

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.



OSV NEWS PHOTO/VATICAN MEDIA

Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass on the 10th floor at Rome's Gemelli Hospital Oct. 16, 2026, following his cancer surgery Oct. 13. Pope Leo sent a message to San Francisco dated Oct. 1, as the city and archdiocese mark the 250th anniversary of Misión San Francisco de Asís.



November 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. In order to appear in the WKC's monthly anniversaries, you must be listed by your parish. Please contact your parish directly to make sure your anniversary is on file with them.

Blessed Mother, Owensboro
Billy & Evanna McBride, 50
Dan & Anna Bilderback, 40
David & Jerri Rudd, 64
Gene & Linda Howard, 62
Henry & Bernadette Hayden, 62
Hugh & Lisa Bittel, 50
James & Monica Payne, 56
Joseph & Beverly Carrico, 57
Randall & Ruthie Payne, 59
Van & Shirley Brown, 53

Blessed Sacrament, Owensboro
Philip & Joyce Moorman, 69

Christ the King, Madisonville
Randall & Kimberly Hardesty, 40

Christ the King, Scottsville
Mark & Denise White, 52

Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson
Billy & Sandy Haynes, 65
Bryan & Allison Konsler, 5
Chester & Julie Watson, 52
Gary & Brenda Crawford, 57
James & Debra Dunaway, 50
Larry & Jane Denton, 67
Michael & Gina Alvey, 50
Neal & Patricia Sigler, 54
Steve & Debby Hayden, 54
Steve & Pam Austin, 60
William & Pam Crawford, 60

Holy Spirit, Bowling Green
Bernard & Lois Schwitzgebel, 67
David & Christine Keltner, 10
David & Lori Lewis, 50
Don & Judy Dobernic, 61
John & Linda Meyer, 62
John & Sharon Barnett, 52
Randy & Jean Thompson, 65
Timothy & Martha Vogel, 58
Wesley & Gail Simone, 58

Immaculate Conception, Hawesville
Mike & Sheila Ogle, 61

Immaculate, Owensboro
Bill & Martha Mills, 65
Hubert & Janet Terry, 10
Joe & JoAnne Mason, 59
John & Becky Neal, 54
Josh & Jessica Fisher, 10
Larry & Becky Horsman, 53
Larry & Jean Sims, 58
Link & Marsha Bell, 55
PJ & Sarah Hayden, 60
Preston & Amanda French, 5
Scott & Victoria Strayton, 5

Our Lady of Lourdes, Owensboro
David & Trudy Thomas, 52
Donald & Janice Crask, 59
Estil & Dianne Woodward, 63
Gary & Regina Hagan, 58
Gene & Shirley Zoglman, 66
Grant & Kayla Tichenor, 10
James & Deborah Payne, 51
Roy & Virginia Stevens, 55
Stephen & Patty Johnson, 62
Stephen & Sherry Jones, 52
Thomas & Carol Hulsey, 51

Precious Blood, Owensboro
Donald & Lucy Hare, 71
Larry & Linda Jollay, 59
Larry & Paulette Boswell, 56
Mike & Vicki Howard, 57
Sherman & Dolores Roberts, 63
William & Shelby Martin, 59

Resurrection, Dawson Springs
Jimmie & Patricia Solomon, 58

Sacred Heart, Russellville
Kenneth & Karen Brown, 57

St. Agnes, Uniontown
David & Beverly Clements, 55
Kimball & Fay Alvey, 57
Larry & Connie Turner, 54
Larry & Nancy Hancock, 53
Mike & Nita Clark, 10
Robert & Denise Buckman, 50
Ross & Jane Thomas, 67

St. Ann, Morganfield
Eddie & Mary Jo Steward, 61
Gary & Cathy Welden, 58
Mike & Brenda Thomas, 57
Robert & Nancy Roush, 10
Tim & Beth Cheatham, 40
Wes & Hilary Wolfe, 10

St. Anthony, Axtel
Kenneth & Mary Baurle, 61

St. Anthony, Browns Valley
Alex & Sarah Marks, 52

St. Charles, Bardwell
Dan & Janie Thomas, 60
Walter & Ethel O'Neill, 62
Wayne & Diane Wilson, 56

St. Charles, Livermore
James & Margie Logsdon, 63

St. Denis, Fancy Farm
Ray & Sue Potts, 56

St. Elizabeth, Curdsville
Rick & Birgit Jones, 52

St. Francis de Sales, Paducah
Harry & Jane Junkerman, 53
Irvin & Jean Langston, 54
Sherman & Saundra Hall, 50

St. Jerome, Fancy Farm
Charles & Mary Ann Thomas, 68
David & Susan Newhouse, 52
Edward & Lyndia Elder, 63
Hardy & Joyce Hayden, 57
Jerry & Linda Hari, 54
Joe & Angie Burgess, 52
Mark & Debbie Monroe, 51
Philip & Teresa Hobbs, 54
Raymond & Rosie Hayden, 54
Tommy & Nancy Ballard, 58
Zachary & Kelsey Morgan, 5

St. John the Baptist, Fordsville
Leo & Jo Ann Kauffeld, 56

St. John the Evangelist, Paducah
Marvin & Marie Willett, 58

St. John the Evangelist, Sunfish
Bill & Cathy Canty, 55

St. Joseph, Bowling Green
Cole & Brett Lanham, 10
Dexter & Victoria Pedigo, 5
Joseph & Sandra Miller, 58
Joseph & Sarah Murphy, 10
Michael & Elizabeth May, 40
Stan & Cody Young, 64

St. Joseph, Leitchfield
Alton & Sheila Cannon, 53
Eddie & Laquita Clemons, 40

St. Joseph, Mayfield
Fred & Nancy Lancaster, 57
Glenn & Olga Hayden, 40
Howard & Rita Darnell, 63

St. Lawrence, Philpot
James & Pam Higdon, 52

St. Leo, Murray
David & Margaret Perez, 60
Mike & Bronagh Sykes, 10

St. Mark, Eddyville
John & Karen Finnegan, 40

St. Martin, Rome
Bobby & Mary Reisz, 54
Wayne & Betty Hamilton, 61

St. Mary Magdalene, Sorgho
Jim & Martha Kamuf, 63

St. Mary of the Woods, McQuady
Gary & Patty Carwile, 57
Steve & Karen Sue Schafer, 53

St. Mary of the Woods, Whitesville
David & Melissa Mills, 25
Dennis & Barb Evans, 54
Evan & Kara Burch, 5
Gary & Sylvia Howard, 57
Pat & Doris Waldeck, 55
Tim & Stacie Meyer, 40
Tony & Sandra Johnson, 64
Wilson & Linda Nash, 50

St. Mary, LaCenter
Kenny & Norma Anselm, 57

St. Michael, Sebree
Artemio & Maria Gabriela Barco, 66
Irvin & Johana Joaquin-Munoz, 10

St. Peter of Alcantara, Stanley
Brian & Lauren Neltner, 10
Jonathan & Natalie Hall, 5

St. Peter of Antioch, Waverly
Denny & Gayle Hancock, 53

St. Pius X, Calvert City
Jerry & Gayle Seay, 73

St. Pius X, Owensboro
Dennis & Charlotte Gatton, 67
Don & Linda Logsdon, 57
Gary & Beverly Estes, 56
Ray & Sherry Lynn Jenkins, 51

St. Romuald, Hardinsburg
Allen & Angie Wheatley, 25
Byron & Valerie Dowell, 10
Freddy & Mari Townshend, 56
George & Nancy Walz, 61
Jim & Gail Pollock, 56
Jim & Sheila Sills, 53
Mike & Brenda Elder, 50
Nick & Ashlie Carwile, 5
Paul & Debbie Flood, 55

St. Sebastian, Calhoun
Tony & Cindy Searcy, 52

St. Stephen Cathedral, Owensboro
Dennis & Beverly Cecil, 53
Jordan & Megan Bickett, 10
Matthew & Sandra Carrico, 10
Tyler & Mary Jackson, 5

St. Stephen, Cadiz
Joe & Janie Anderson, 62
Wayne & Margie Olech, 50

St. Thomas More, Paducah
Galen & Nicole Stegman, 53
Jim & Sharon Godec, 64
John & Camille Warden, 56
John & Mary Ann Graves, 57
Ken & Kim Olsen, 25
Mark & Gretchen Thompson, 40
Mike & Yvonne Bosch, 60

Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro
James & Joyce Logsdon, 60
Kelly & Becky Ward, 54
Randy & Lesa Hurm, 25

Sts. Peter & Paul, Hopkinsville
Andrez Angel & Blanca Teofilo, 10
David & Peggy Watzek, 52
John & Margie Cook, 60
Ronny & Darlene Fuller, 62
Wayne & Elizabeth Allen, 5

NOVEMBER 2026 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.

2026 Franciscan Jubilee Year Pilgrimages

On Oct. 3, 2026 the Church celebrated the life of St. Francis of Assisi on the 800th anniversary of his passing from his earthly presence to eternal life. On Jan. 10, 2026, a special Jubilee Year of St. Francis was proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV, ending Jan. 10, 2027. Inviting you and your friends, family, neighbors, and parish communities to embark on a journey as we grow in faith and community on pilgrimage with St. Francis of Assisi encountering Christ in the people, beauty, culture, and history present amongst us.

Saturday, Nov. 7: Franciscan Jubilee of Presence Pilgrimage, Sts. Francis & Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, IN (https://tinyurl.com/20261107francispilgrimagein); Saturday, Dec. 5: Franciscan Jubilee Living Lectio Pilgrimage, St. Francis of Assisi, Guthrie, KY (https://tinyurl.com/20261205francispilgrimageky).

Questions contact Robin Murphey, pilgrimage facilitator, St. Meinrad alum, asimplesmilejourney@gmail.com. https://tinyurl.com/2026jubileepilgrimages

St. Henry annual Christmas bazaar

Saturday, Nov. 7 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. St. Henry Catholic Church, Hardin, Ky. Contact: (630) 253-0681, jseego@comcast.net. Homemade baked goods, silent auction and raffle, and arts and crafts vendors.

All invited to Brescia's fall concert

Brescia University presents its Fall Concert, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel, featuring the Brescia Choir, Brescia Band, and Brescia Handbell Choir. Admission is free. Music for Fall, Advent, and Christmas. Questions: Sharon.Hudson@brescia.edu

Saint Meinrad Young Adult Retreat Weekends

Jan. 29-31, 2027; May 28-30, 2027; August 20-22, 2027; November 12-14, 2027. The cost is $50 and includes lodging and meals. This is an unstructured retreat. These retreats are run by Saint Meinrad, and you also register through Saint Meinrad at the provided link. For ages 20-35 years. Reserve your spot at https://www.saintmeinrad.org/retreats/young-adult-retreats.

St. Martin Parish 52-Week Raffle

St. Martin in Owensboro is holding its 52-Week Raffle! Tickets are $52 and give participants opportunities to win throughout the year while supporting St. Martin Parish. The raffle is a fun way to support the parish and its ministries while having a chance to win weekly prizes. For tickets or more information, contact St. Martin Catholic Church at (270) 685-0339 or visit the website www.stmartinowensboro.org

St. Martin Parish Cookbook

St. Martin Catholic Church in Owensboro is excited to offer the new St. Martin Catholic Church Parish Cookbook, featuring approximately 160 recipes shared by members of our parish family. From longtime family favorites to delicious dishes worth adding to your own table, the cookbook celebrates the food, traditions and fellowship that bring our parish community together. Cookbooks are available through St. Martin Catholic Church. For information or to order a copy, call (270) 685-0339.

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.



The first priest to be laid to rest in the Diocese of Owensboro: Fr. Hugh O'Sullivan

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

On July 26, 1938, inside of St. Joseph infirmary in Louisville, Ky., Msgr. Hugh O'Sullivan exhaled his final breath. The warmth of God's love embraced his soul, as he became the first priest of the Diocese of Owensboro to pass from this world and enter into eternal life.

With November being the month that we as Catholics dedicate to the remembrance of the deceased, I thought that this would be a good time to recount a powerful moment and trial in the early days of our diocese, the first death and burial of one of its priests. The passing of any priest is a powerful moment for any diocese. However, this passing was a particularly hard blow for the very young Diocese of Owensboro. After less than a year of existence, it lost Msgr. Hugh O'Sullivan, a beloved and experienced priest, domestic prelate, and the first vicar general of the diocese. His position made him the second in command in the diocese and his passing sent waves of shock and sadness throughout Kentucky.

Msgr. O'Sullivan's sickness began shortly after Archbishop John Floersh came down from Louisville to officiate a ceremony elevating him to domestic prelate. The ceremony took place on May 3, 1938 at St. Mary of the Woods, in Whitesville, where Msgr. O'Sullivan had pastored for 45 years. Bishop Cotton took the occasion to announce Msgr. O'Sullivan as the vicar general. However, exactly 11 weeks later he was checked into St. Joseph infirmary and one week after that, passed from this world.

On Tuesday, July 26, the day of Msgr. O'Sullivan's death, the analyst (who recorded the historic annals) of Mount Saint Joseph wrote, "Bishop Cotton called to tell us Father O'Sullivan is very low at St. Joseph's infirmary." The next entry read "Message received at 9 o'clock p.m...." and, underlined in red, "Father O'Sullivan died!" On Wednesday the 27th, Msgr. O'Sullivan's remains were transported to St. Mary of the Woods and laid in state until the funeral two days later.

Letters poured into the bishop's office containing condolences and "heartfelt sympathy" following the passing of the good priest. Masses were said for Msgr. O'Sullivan from within and without the diocese. Dom Frederic Dunne, abbot of Our Lady of Gethsemani, let the bishop know that he would be saying a Mass for Msgr. O'Sullivan and requested the entire community very particularly to remember him in prayer, referring to the late monsignor as "so dear a friend."

The funeral was attended by countless priests from within and without the diocese. Both Archbishop Floersh and Bishop Cotton were there. In Msgr. O'Sullivan, the two had lost a brother priest, friend, and as he was a much older priest from the Diocese of Louisville stock, a mentor. His body was taken back to Louisville and buried beside his father and mother in St. Louis Cemetery.

Years ago, I was asked to pick several photographs to hang in the hallway leading to the archive in the McRaith Catholic Center. Across the door from the archive hangs one of those pictures, Msgr. Hugh O'Sullivan and his two priest brothers, Msgr. St. John O'Sullivan and Fr. Anthony O'Sullivan. It is one of those silent, everyday memorials. It stands as a reminder that in becoming the first priest of the diocese to pass, he also became the first priest to be remembered. ■



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES
The O'Sullivan brothers, left to right: Msgr. St. John O'Sullivan, Msgr. Hugh O'Sullivan, and Fr. Anthony O'Sullivan. The O'Sullivan priest brothers were some of the earliest priests serving the Diocese of Owensboro.

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.

Silent markers of lives lived: *Archives explores the burial locations of the priests of the Diocese of Owensboro*

BY EDWARD WILSON, ARCHIVES

One of our priests recently suggested the idea of featuring a burial listing of all the priests of the Diocese of Owensboro for the November issue of The Western Kentucky Catholic, in light of the month of All Souls. The WKC brought this request to the diocesan archive, which did some digging and compiling.

This list will be interacted with differently by different people. Some will slide their finger down the list, earnestly searching for a priest or priests that are particularly special to them. They will see their listing, and it will comfort them, reminding them of priestly warmth and friendship. Others will look over the entire list, seeing names familiar and unfamiliar, and reminiscing about the lives of those they knew and wondering about those they did not.

This list is very simple: a name, a date range, and a place. The barest information of a life and where that life was laid to rest. Bizarrely, such minimal information can invoke so many thoughts and questions. Such a long life. Such a short life? That's a Nelson County name. That name's not from Kentucky. Why were they buried there? The questions are limitless. Some questions are obviously more glaring than others. I will share the stories of some of these names, places and dates that I found while amassing this information.

Italy. Yes, you read that correctly and it is not a misprint. Msgr. Louis Beruatto, pastor of St. Joseph in Leitchfield for nearly 50 years, is buried in Italy. The story of how this came to be is a grand story in itself. However, the short of it is that Msgr. Beruatto took a retreat to his hometown of Rivara (Torino) in 1956, in his 50th year at St. Joseph, Leitchfield. He had not been in the best health and while he was on the trip, requested to stay in Italy. This request was granted. Apparently, the Italian sun did him well because God blessed Msgr. Beruatto with another 15 years of life in Italy.



COURTESY OF ARCHIVES
In this undated photo, Sr. Mary Eva Thompson, OSU, walks through the cemetery of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. Many priests, including Bishop John J. McRaith, are also buried there.

Another listing that may stick out is that of Fr. Thomas Delphin, who was buried in El Paso, Texas. My first assumption was that perhaps Fr. Delphin was from Texas and requested to be buried there with his family. (As you can see, with several priests buried in Louisville, this is not uncommon.) However, this was not the case. Fr. Delphin was not in good health and it was recommended that he be moved to a dryer climate. He was moved further south. For the remainder of his life, he was assigned to parishes in New Mexico and Texas and was often in and out of hospitals in the Southwest.

These are just two short stories but each of these listings is a silent marker of a life lived. Each of these names has a history. Between the birth and death dates, there are countless untold stories. This list is just a starting point. If any names spark interest or memories, please feel free to reach out to the archive. We will be happy to guide and accompany you down memory lane or to histories unexplored.

The deceased priests of the Diocese of Owensboro

Note: This list is limited to diocesan priests. Order priests who served are not included.

Name	Birth	Death	Burial Site
O'Sullivan Msgr. Hugh	11/04/1858	07/26/1938	Saint Louis Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky
Norman, Rev. James F.	08/02/1875	11/02/1938	Family Lot, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island
Helling, Rev. Anthony	09/07/1863	11/13/1938	Motherhouse Cemetery, Nerinx, Marion County, Kentucky
Smith, Rev. Francis J.	03/15/1895	06/27/1939	Saint Joseph Cemetery Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky
Hayden, Rev. Jolly P.	07/07/1890	01/05/1941	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Clements, Rev. Lucian E.	09/28/1872	11/02/1942	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Hayes, Msgr. Thomas Jr.	07/01/1858	03/19/1946	Saint Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky
Zoeller, Msgr. Andrew	04/01/1871	03/11/1948	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Barrett, Msgr. Paul	11/10/1890	08/12/1949	St. Mary of the Woods Cemetery, Whitesville, Daviess County, Kentucky
Higdon Rev. James	06/11/1884	06/29/1954	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Mills, Rev. James W.	10/18/1885	07/10/1955	Mater Dolorosa Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Carrico, Rev. Charles Rudolph	08/04/1904	02/10/1957	Saint Jerome Cemetery, Fancy Farm, Graves County, Kentucky
Libs, Rev. Thomas	11/25/1912	08/15/1957	Mater Dolorosa Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Cotton, Most Rev. Francis R.	09/19/1895	09/25/1960	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Glenn, Rev. John	05/25/1901	10/20/1960	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Tompkins, Rev. Anthony J.	03/06/1896	05/11/1962	Saint Louis Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky
McAleer, Rev. Joseph	02/21/1887	06/11/1962	Saint Alphonsus Cemetery, Saint Joseph, Daviess County, Kentucky
Connor, Rev. Robert	04/20/1912	10/31/1963	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Spalding, Msgr. Joseph L.	09/17/1901	02/08/1965	Saint Ann Cemetery, Morganfield, Union County, Kentucky
Huff, Rev. Benedict	05/06/1900	08/16/1969	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
White, Rev. Carroll L.	02/03/1941	12/28/1969	Saint Joseph Cemetery, Leitchfield, Grayson County, Kentucky
Thompson, Msgr. Albert J.	08/03/1889	01/05/1970	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Saffer, Rev. Joseph W.	05/01/1906	01/24/1971	Mount Carmel Cemetery, Paducah, McCracken County, Kentucky
Beruatto, Msgr. Louis	11/12/1883	07/18/1973	Cemetery of Rivara (Torino), Rivara, Turin, Piedmont, Italy
McAtee, Rev. William M.	07/03/1916	08/22/1976	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Durbin, Rev. Lawrence	11/26/1897	03/05/1977	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Murphy, Rev. Thomas A.	09/08/1915	01/13/1978	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Russell, Msgr. Edward	09/04/1895	03/14/1978	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Nahstoll, Rev. Martin	12/22/1901	06/20/1978	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Powers, Rev. Ben	11/14/1936	09/15/1978	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Gipperich, Msgr. Robert J.	11/24/1895	05/14/1979	Saint Michael Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Continues on page 32

Deceased priests continued from page 31

Name	Birth	Death	Burial Site
Hallahan, Rev. John C.	10/03/1900	07/25/1979	Saint Louis Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky
Beruatto, Rev. Barth J.	11/24/1905	08/01/1979	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Bowling, Rev. Charles P.	10/08/1896	02/11/1980	Saint Catherine Cemetery, New Haven, Nelson County, Kentucky
Hunter, Rev. Donald	07/07/1934	04/07/1980	Sacred Heart Cemetery (Saint Vincent Cemetery) Saint Vincent, Union County, Kentucky
Edelen, Rev. Pius	05/05/1907	12/30/1980	Saint Joseph Cemetery, Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky
Hill, Msgr. Raymond G.	02/21/1907	05/28/1981	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Wilson, Rev. Robert T.	12/16/1910	03/14/1982	Saint Joseph Cemetery, Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky
Elliott, Rev. Hildebrand	12/09/1899	05/17/1983	Saint Jerome Cemetery, Fancy Farm, Graves County, Kentucky
Whelan, Rev. Robert A.	07/20/1911	01/07/1984	Saint Louis Cemetery, Henderson, Henderson County, Kentucky
Ward, Rev. Frank M.	09/11/1911	08/09/1984	Earlington Cemetery, Earlington, Hopkins County, Kentucky
Jarboe, Msgr. William B.	03/13/1901	09/13/1984	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Higgins, Msgr. John M.	10/17/1889	01/23/1985	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Thomas, Rev. Delphin	07/09/1909	06/10/1985	Mount Carmel Cemetery, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
Braun Msgr. Peter J.	05/30/1901	11/13/1986	St. Mary's Cemetery, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania
Borntraeger, Rev. William	08/17/1907	12/06/1986	St. Michael Cemetery, Jefferson County, Louisville, Ky.
DeChristopher, Rev. Carmen	09/09/1910	06/07/1987	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Soenneker, Most Rev. Henry J.	05/27/1907	09/24/1987	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Saffer, Rev. Charles Allard	05/08/1914	09/08/1989	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Glahn, Rev. Gerard Jerome	01/14/1933	01/18/1990	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Armbruster, Rev. Boniface	03/27/1922	04/09/1990	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Dienes, Rev. Leo J.	12/19/1919	07/24/1990	St. Michael Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky
Pettit, Rev. Clarence	08/09/1913	05/10/1991	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Higdon, Msgr. Anthony	08/19/1911	08/19/1992	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Willett, Rev. Ernest Ezra	04/14/1919	12/09/1992	St. Jerome Cemetery, Fancy Farm, Graves County, Kentucky
Boarman, Rev. Victor	05/16/1910	06/22/1993	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Goff. Rev. Daniel	03/22/1958	03/05/1994	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Bomensatt, Rev. Joseph	11/23/1918	09/09/1994	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Tucker, Rev. Howard L.	03/19/1903	05/20/1995	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Lauzon, Rev. Peter E.	07/08/1953	08/11/1995	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Boehmicke, Rev. George P.	04/24/1910	11/06/1996	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Ziegler Rev. Anthony T.	12/31/1933	02/09/1998	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Clark Rev. Thomas	07/25/1927	06/26/1998	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Allard, Rev. William Edward	12/27/1927	07/30/1998	Lewisport Cemetery, Lewisport, Hancock County, Kentucky
Wolford, Rev. Charles	11/12/1923	05/17/1999	Saint Joseph Hill Cemetery, Sellersburg, Clark County, Indiana
Willett, Rev. Henry	08/19/1916	07/17/1999	Saint John Catholic Church Cemetery, Saint Johns, McCracken County, Kentucky

Continues on page 33

Deceased priests continued from page 32

Name	Birth	Death	Burial Site
Hite, Rev. James C.	02/20/1925	12/11/2000	Saint Agnes Cemetery, Uniontown, Union County, Kentucky, USA
O'Bryan, Rev. Henry	12/24/1914	08/13/2001	Saint Anthony Church Cemetery, Browns Valley, Daviess County, Kentucky
Willett, Rev. J. Robert	06/12/1942	11/06/2001	Saint Jerome Cemetery, Fancy Farm, Graves County, Kentucky
Hayden, Rev. Lucian	01/07/1924	12/30/2001	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Clements, Rev. Richard	09/05/1919	07/09/2002	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Fischer, Rev. Charles G.	06/07/1924	07/02/2003	Saint Anthony Church Cemetery, Browns Valley, Daviess County, Kentucky
Mattingly, Rev. Martin	04/24/1925	09/09/2003	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Hagman, Rev. William J.	08/23/1929	03/23/2004	Mount Calvary Cemetery, Hawesville, Hancock County, Kentucky
Arcilesi, Rev. Leonard	07/12/1928	04/23/2004	St. Michael Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky
Danhauer, Rev. Richard	11/13/1931	09/26/2008	Mater Dolorosa Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
DeNardi, Rev. Charles A.	12/25/1909	05/25/2010	Saint Paul Catholic Cemetery, Saint Paul, Grayson County, Kentucky
Rhodes, Rev. Joseph V.	03/11/1915	12/16/2010	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Reisz, Rev. Leonard	04/28/1923	02/17/2011	Saint Martin's Cemetery #1, Centerville, Spencer County, Indiana
Tiell, Rev. Maurice	04/03/1923	10/15/2011	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Hughes, Rev. Peter	02/13/1950	01/05/2012	Saint John the Baptist Cemetery, Central City, Somerset County, Pennsylvania
Hayes, Rev. Martin	09/16/1958	07/10/2012	Calvary Cemetery, Cloverport, Breckinridge County, Kentucky
Alvey, Rev. Leonard	03/21/1933	11/24/2012	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Calhoun, Rev. Gerald	12/13/1935	06/01/2014	Mater Dolorosa Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Riney, Rev. Charles Philip	11/05/1924	12/10/2014	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Glahn, Rev. Carl Joseph	03/16/1925	01/11/2015	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Miller, Rev. Joseph	09/06/1922	02/07/2015	Saint Michaels Cemetery, Spring Hill, Stearns County, Minnesota (Incardinated)
Luther, Rev. Benjamin	12/14/1931	08/01/2015	Saint Anthony Catholic Church Cemetery Axtel, Breckinridge County, Kentucky
Willett, Rev. William David	06/29/1946	04/20/2016	Saint Jerome Cemetery, Fancy Farm, Graves County, Kentucky
McRaith, Most Rev. John Jeremiah	12/06/1934	03/19/2017	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Powell, Rev. Paul Pike	02/01/1923	04/26/2018	Saint Agnes Cemetery, Uniontown, Union County, Kentucky
Powers, Msgr. Aloysius	01/04/1921	09/04/2019	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Mills, Rev. Joseph	09/06/1927	04/04/2020	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Clemons, Rev. Delma	01/09/1939	02/16/2021	St. Benedict Parish Cemetery, Wax, Grayson County, Kentucky
Hancock, Rev. George	02/02/1919	11/08/2021	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Riney, Rev. Maury	03/18/1951	09/16/2022	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Powers, Rev. Richard Martin	10/06/1932	02/13/2023	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Powers, Msgr. Bernard Alphonsus	02/13/1926	10/25/2024	Mount Saint Joseph Cemetery, Maple Mount, Daviess County, Kentucky
Buckner, Rev. Mark	12/29/1958	04/26/2024	Resurrection Cemetery, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky
Bradley, Rev. Edward	04/24/1943	11/30/2024	St. Anthony Catholic Cemetery, Peonia, Grayson County, Kentucky

Undecided Catholic voters a dependable but swing voting bloc, report finds

BY KATE SCANLON, OSV NEWS

WASHINGTON (OSV News) – Undecided Catholic voters are a swing voting bloc, but reliably show up to the polls, a new report found.

The report, conducted by Untold Research on behalf of Network, a Catholic social justice lobby, found "Catholics are swing voters in the truest sense of the term." It found that just 4% of respondents who described themselves as Catholics and as undecided, uncommitted voters in this election cycle did not vote at all in the past three presidential elections.

Laurie Carafone, Network's executive director, told OSV News in an interview the group commissioned the report because "many voters, including Catholic voters, are undecided even close to the election, and we wanted just to have a better insight into what issues and factors motivate undecided Catholic voters."

The report, released Oct. 28, filtered focus – group participants for those who identified as Catholics and said they were undecided in the upcoming elections. Most of the respondents resided in Michigan, they said, a battleground state with a key Senate race ranked as a toss – up by the nonpartisan Cook Political Report.

Catholics are a reliable voting bloc in terms of casting a ballot, the Network report found, but "what they offer in terms of dependability to show up at the polls, they lack in predictability for whom they will pull the lever."

Nearly three – quarters of respondents said they have voted for both former President Barack Obama and President Donald Trump, "and majorities of uncommitted, undecided Catholics, as a whole, supported both presidents, despite the candidates' vastly different policy priorities and approaches to governing," the report said.

Data showing these voters "crossing party lines to vote over the past two decades," shows they are "open to solutions from both parties," Carafone said.

The Network report came after a recent Pew Research Center survey found that among all Catholics, 42% said that if the election were held today, they would vote for the Democrat in their House district, 39% said the Republican, while another 19% said they were unsure or would select another party's candidate. But it also found white Catholics and Hispanic Catholics divide sharply over which party's candidates they plan to support in the midterms.

Among white Catholics, the Pew survey found, 50% said they would support the Republican candidate, and 32% said the Democrat, with another 18% unsure. Among Hispanic Catholics, 59% said they would support the Democrat, 19% said the Republican candidate, and 21% said they were unsure.

Polls of the general public have consistently found that voters in the 2026 midterm elections report being most motivated by economic or cost–of–living issues. The Network report found undecided Catholic voters are also concerned about these issues, with 80% describing economic issues as having an influence in their decision–making, followed by healthcare at 78% and issues affecting older adults at 77%.

Carafone said the report found "these undecided Catholic voters that were surveyed care deeply about the issues that are at the heart of Catholic social teaching: feeding our families, caring for our loved ones, decent jobs with fair wages, just to name a few."

"These are issues that are affecting voters and their communities across the country in a very real way," she said.

Undecided and uncommitted Catholic voters who attend Mass more frequently, she added, "do stand out from the others in this survey group."

The report found that group "decides whom to vote for later, and they do report stronger religious influence on their views and on the issues that are weighing most, especially if it involves family and children's issues, and they do lean more Republican and name immigration and race as important issues for them," she said.

The midterm elections are scheduled for Nov. 3. Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement Oct. 14 reminding the faithful that "for citizens in a representative democracy such as our own, participation in public life – including voting – is both a right and a responsibility.■

Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.

Diocese of
OWENSBORO

Online Retirement Workshops

November 17, 2026 | 1:00 PM CST
November 19, 2026 | 6:00 PM CST

You Are Invited to the Diocese of Owensboro All-Employees [Priests, Laity, Parish Employees, Diocesan Employees, School Employees (Certified, Classified and Food Service), Full-Time, Part-Time, Vested & Retirees] Retirement Information Workshops.

The first half of each meeting will discuss the changes to our current pension plan; the second half of each meeting will discuss our 403(b) plan. These meetings give employees and retirees a chance to learn more about their retirement benefits and ask questions.
Attendance is strongly encouraged.

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https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/tTDAhpaQ45

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Un Mensaje del Obispo Medley: Recordando a todos los difuntos en este mes de Todos los Santos

"Acuérdate también, Señor, de tus hijos que nos han precedido con el signo de la fe y duermen ya el sueño de la paz". Plegaria Eucarística I

En cada celebración de la Santa Misa oramos por los difuntos con palabras similares a las de la Plegaria Eucarística I: "que nos han precedido con el signo de la fe".

El mes de noviembre es tradicionalmente reconocido en nuestra tradición católica como un tiempo para poner de relieve la Comunión de los Santos, ya que oramos conscientemente por los fieles difuntos. El Día de Todos los Santos se celebra el 1 de noviembre. La Conmemoración de Todos los Fieles Difuntos (Día de Muertos) se celebra el 2 de noviembre y se fomenta el espíritu de ese día de oración por los difuntos durante todo el mes.

¿Qué significa estar marcado con el signo de la fe? Bueno, en primer lugar, significa estar marcado por las aguas del bautismo y por los demás sacramentos. También significa estar marcado por manifestaciones de fe, esperanza y caridad. Muchas parroquias exhiben, de alguna manera, los nombres de los miembros que fallecieron el año anterior para recordarnos que debemos tenerlos presentes en nuestras oraciones.

Podríamos preguntarnos, ¿por qué deberíamos rezar por los difuntos? ¿No cabría suponer que el juicio y el destino de cada persona están determinados por la calidad de su propia vida, mediante la cooperación con la gracia impartida por la salvación alcanzada en Jesucristo? El *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, no obstante, se ocupa de los fundamentos de nuestra fe y del compromiso de rezar por los difuntos.

El Catecismo afirma: "Los que mueren en la gracia y en la amistad de Dios, pero imperfectamente purificados, aunque están seguros de su eterna salvación, sufren después de su muerte una purificación, a fin de obtener la santidad necesaria para entrar en la alegría del cielo" (CIC 1030).



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
En esta foto de archivo de 2020 se ve el Cementerio Resurrección en Owensboro.

¿Quién ha llevado una vida tan santificada —a excepción de la Santísima Virgen María— que no parta de este mundo sin llevar consigo alguna huella de nuestro pecado? Por lo tanto, la Iglesia, a lo largo de los siglos, ha enseñado que al morir debe haber algún grado de purificación. Así, unirnos en oración por aquellos que nos han precedido es una señal de que permanecemos conectados con ellos, todos somos parte de la Comunión de los Santos.

Esta purificación, esta expiación por los muertos, se menciona mucho antes de la vida y la época de Jesús. En su forma más radical, esta expiación se logra mediante la muerte de un mártir. Para la mayoría de nosotros, esto podría explicar lo que la

Continúa en la página 37

CALENDARIO DEL OBISPO MEDLEY NOVIEMBRE DE 2026	
2 de nov.	8:00 a.m. | Misa escolar – Escuela Católica Juan Pablo II, Morganfield
4 de nov.	10 a.m. | Misa escolar – Escuela Secundaria Santa María, Paducah
5 de nov.	10:30 a.m. | Misa escolar – Escuela Preparatoria Católica de Owensboro
7 de nov.	4 p.m. | Confirmación – Parroquia San Esteban, Calhoun
10 de nov.	Convocatoria Diocesana Anual – Centro de Convenciones de Owensboro
11 de nov.	8:30 a.m. | Reunión del Consejo Diocesano de Finanzas – Centro Católico McRaith
14-19 de nov.	Reunión de la USCCB - Baltimore, Maryland
21 de nov.	5:30 p.m. | Misa de clausura de la Conferencia de Adolescentes de la Diócesis de Owensboro – Centro de Convenciones de Owensboro
22 de nov.	2 p.m. | Institución como acólitos para candidatos al diaconado permanente – Parroquia Espíritu Santo, Bowling Green
24 de nov.	10:30 a.m. | Dedicación del altar y bendición de la capilla Juan XXIII – Hogar Roncalli para Sacerdotes Jubilados, Owensboro

Continuado de la página 36

iglesia entiende por Purgatorio: una purificación final de quienes han vivido vidas nobles y santas. Al fin y al cabo, no podemos conocer plenamente la relación con Dios ni siquiera de las personas más santas que hayamos podido conocer. Por eso, movidos por la caridad, rezamos por ellas.

Una vez leí sobre una imagen terrenal que me ayudó a comprender, en cierta medida, esta purificación. Cuando se acampa en el bosque, se recomienda hervir el agua del río antes de beberla para purificarla o limpiarla. Se debe hacer incluso cuando, a nuestros ojos, el agua sea cristalina, porque sabemos que las bacterias y las impurezas pueden ser invisibles para nosotros.

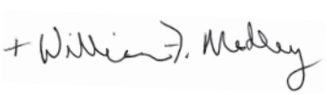
Una de las maneras más ejemplares de orar por los difuntos es recordarlos en la Misa. Existe la piadosa costumbre de mencionar a un difunto como intención de una Misa en particular. En los boletines parroquiales donde se publica el horario de las Misas, solemos ver una intención indicada, y lo más común es que sea por el eterno descanso del alma de alguien fallecido. La Iglesia también recomienda la limosna, las indulgencias y las obras de penitencia realizadas en nombre de los difuntos.

En el Ritual de Exequias Cristianas, la tradición de la Iglesia nos ofrece una oración sencilla y concisa por los difuntos:

"Concédeles, Señor, el descanso eterno".

Respuesta: "Y brille para ellos la luz perpetua".

"Que sus almas y las almas de todos los fieles difuntos, por la misericordia de Dios, descansen en paz". Amén.



Obispo William F. Medley
Diócesis de Owensboro

El Padre Frank Ruff se jubila y regresará a la sede de Glenmary en Ohio.

POR ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD,
EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
El Padre Frank Ruff, GHM, unge las paredes de la Parroquia San Francisco de Asís en el condado de Todd con el Santo Crisma durante la dedicación y consagración del nuevo edificio de la iglesia el 9 de diciembre de 2017. A sus 90 años, el Padre Ruff se jubilará y regresará a la sede de Glenmary en Ohio este otoño. Durante sus años de servicio en la diócesis, a menudo acompañaba a familias inmigrantes hispanas/latinas y les ayudaba a sentirse como en casa en el oeste de Kentucky.

Mantenerse en un segundo plano y priorizar a los fieles por encima de todo ha sido fundamental en el ministerio del P. Frank Ruff dentro de la Diócesis de Owensboro.

Ya sea construyendo múltiples iglesias nuevas, coordinando encuentros ecuménicos, participando en diálogos de reconciliación racial o acompañando a feligreses migrantes, el sacerdote de los Misioneros Católicos Glenmary insiste en que nunca se trató de él ni fue impulsado por él.

Siendo una figura muy querida entre las comunidades rurales hispanas/latinas a las que ha servido, puede incluso resultar sorprendente que el Padre Ruff no hable español con fluidez.

"Mi español no es bueno; ni siquiera puedo mantener una conversación", dijo el Padre Ruff. Sin embargo, se ha convertido en una figura indispensable en estas comunidades durante décadas.

"Gran parte de eso se debe a mi formación en Glenmary", dijo, describiendo el énfasis que su comunidad religiosa pone en conectar con el corazón y en construir relaciones, sin dejarse limitar por las barreras del idioma.

El Padre Ruff, en una entrevista reciente con El Católico de Kentucky Occidental, describió la sensación agridulce de jubilarse a los 90 años, ya que planea regresar a la sede de Glenmary en Ohio, dejando atrás la comunidad rural que ha considerado su hogar.

El Padre Ruff llegó a la diócesis en 1991, iniciando su ministerio en la primera misión de Glenmary en el oeste de Kentucky (Sunfish, Kentucky, establecida en 1942).

Después de servir en varias parroquias de la diócesis, el Padre Ruff fue enviado al condado de Todd en 2000 para ser párroco de la Parroquia Santa María y Santiago en Guthrie y de la Parroquia Santa Susana en Elkton.

Continúa en la página 38

Continuado de la página 37

El Padre Ruff asumió su nuevo cargo con esta mentalidad, que incluía dar la bienvenida a los 35 feligreses hispanos iniciales, cifra que hoy ha aumentado a unos 500, en comparación con los 125 feligreses blancos.

Cuando la iglesia de la Parroquia Santa María y Santiago se quemó en 2015 tras un cortocircuito, y ante el creciente número de feligreses en Santa Susana, el Obispo William F. Medley aprobó la fusión de ambas parroquias en una sola parroquia más grande: la Parroquia San Francisco de Asís en Guthrie.

Dijo que mudarse a Ohio "será un cambio, pero ahora tengo 90 años, así que el Señor está a cargo. Cuando podemos aceptar eso, la vida realmente mejora".

"No te corresponde estar al mando", dijo refiriéndose a su vocación. "Tu papel es servir". ■

'Así debe verse el cielo'; *La Misa Diocesana de la Migración celebra el "mosaico" de culturas de toda la diócesis*



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Las jóvenes feligresas de la Parroquia San José en Bowling Green, Ximena Martínez y sus amigas, las hermanas Samantha Flores y Valentina Flores, aparecen en la foto después de asistir a la Misa Diocesana de la Migración del 3 de octubre de 2026, en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo, en Bowling Green.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Personas con camisetas con la palabra "México" se arrodillan durante la distribución de la Sagrada Comunión en la Misa Diocesana de la Migración, celebrada el 3 de octubre de 2026 en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green.

POR ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD, EL CATÓLICO DE KENTUCKY OCCIDENTAL

El 3 de octubre de 2026, católicos de todas las edades y de una gran variedad de naciones participaron en la Misa Diocesana de la Semana Nacional de la Migración de la Diócesis de Owensboro, llenando la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green.

Durante su homilía, el Obispo William F. Medley pidió a los presentes que se pusieran de pie cuando mencionara su país de origen y añadió que seguramente se le escaparía alguien, e invitó a los fieles a informarle de otros países que no hubiera mencionado.

Entre los países y territorios representados en la Misa se encontraban México, Myanmar, Guatemala, Filipinas, Vietnam, Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Micronesia, Honduras, Puerto Rico, la República Democrática del Congo, Nigeria, Chile, Brasil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina y otros.

Antes de la liturgia, que estaba abierta a todos, los fieles habían recorrido en procesión el

Continúa en la página 39

Continuado de la página 38

estacionamiento de la Parroquia Espíritu Santo y habían sido bendecidos con agua bendita por el obispo al entrar a la iglesia. Muchos vestían ropa tradicional y portaban banderas de sus países de origen e imágenes de los santos patronos de sus países mientras caminaban juntos en oración.

El Obispo Medley reflexionó sobre esa experiencia en su homilía, comentando que, al dar la bienvenida a los fieles, pensó a sí mismo: "Así debe verse el cielo".

"Hoy estamos aquí representando a muchos lugares y me enorgullece darles la bienvenida como su obispo", afirmó. "¡Qué hermoso mosaico formamos hoy como Iglesia de Kentucky occidental!"

La liturgia multilingüe incluyó lecturas de la Misa en diferentes idiomas, seguida de comidas preparadas por diversas comunidades culturales, un partido de fútbol informal y pintura facial para los niños.

Las jóvenes feligresas de la Parroquia San José en Bowling Green, Ximena Martínez y sus amigas, las hermanas Samantha Flores y Valentina Flores, participaron en una danza tradicional maya durante la procesión previa a la liturgia.

"Fue una sensación muy especial, sentí que formo parte de algo, que pertenezco", dijo Samantha. Su hermana añadió: "¡Conocí a mucha gente de otras culturas, incluyendo gente de mi escuela!".

Ximena dijo que la celebración fue "interesante porque cada uno tenía un estilo diferente" en su vestimenta tradicional, y "divertida, como cuando todos se pusieron de pie según sus países de origen" cuando el obispo los nombró durante la Misa.

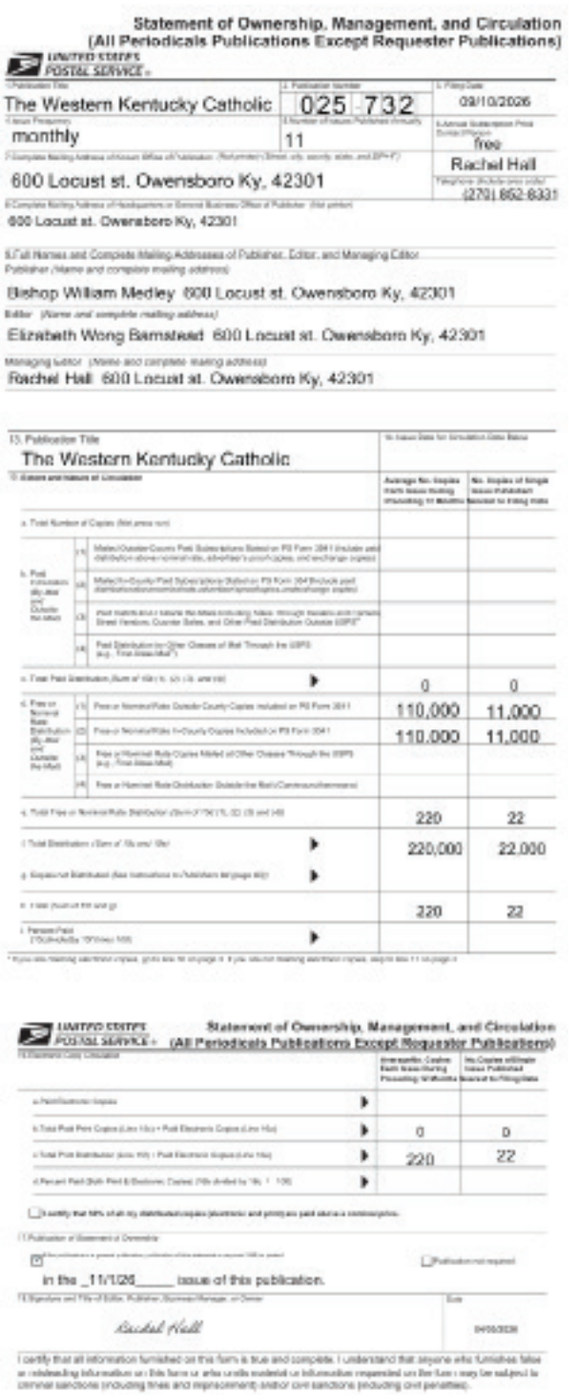
"¡Fue divertido ver de dónde venía la gente!", dijo.■



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Juan Carlos Lazo Soriano, seminarista de la Diócesis de Owensboro, participa en un partido informal de fútbol después de la Misa Diocesana de la Migración del 3 de octubre de 2026 en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo en Bowling Green.



ELIZABETH WONG BARNSTEAD | WKC
Una niña recibe un tatuaje temporal de mariposa durante una actividad de pintura facial para niños, después de la Misa Diocesana de la Migración del 3 de octubre de 2026, en la Parroquia Espíritu Santo, en Bowling Green.



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RACHEL HALL | WKC
A family participates in the fall block party at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026.

Parishes host fall block parties for local families

BY WKC STAFF

Over the weekend of Oct. 25, multiple parishes hosted fall block parties open to all in the community.

The purpose of the family-friendly gatherings is to welcome everyone for an afternoon of fun, games, and fellowship. ■



COURTESY OF KARINA ROMERO
A family dresses as saints and angels while participating in the Oct. 25 fall block party at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro.