

## Governor and parishioner

The beginning of Cathedral of St. Joseph parishioner Gov. Mike Kehoe's term in office was clothed in prayer, worship and gratitude.

Page 4



"Called By Name" . . . Page 2

Improving schools . . . Page 5

Success stories. . . .Page 10

Fr. Ekka back home .Page 11

Celebrating schools .Page 12

A heart for teaching .Page 13

# The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

January 24, 2025 • Vol. 68 No. 15

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

## Exploring power of sacred music in the Liturgy



Choir members and accompanists lead the singing at a Mass at the outdoor altar of the National Shrine of Mary, Mother of the Church, in Laurie, in the spring of 2024.

— Photo by Jay Nies

## Bp. McKnight: An invitation to share your voice

A related perspective can be found on Page 6 & 7

Este mensaje se puede encontrar en español en la página 17

When we sing together in the liturgy, the Holy Spirit moves among us.

Liturgical singing is an act of faith that resonates deeply within our hearts — it is more than just voices raised in harmony; it is the binding of hearts in worship.

*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Second Vatican Council document on the sacred Liturgy, teaches us that:

"The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other

art ... as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites" (no. 112).

It's true, most of us are not blessed with perfect voices, myself included! I understand that it can take courage to sing boldly in the presence of others. But when we raise our voices together, we participate in a profound act that celebrates our unity in faith and glorifies God.

My hope is that everyone in our diocese feels called to participate in the sacred music of our Masses and other liturgies.

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**  
Bishop McKnight

See MAKING CONNECTIONS, page 19

Surveys, listening sessions to be part of sacred music consultation called for by Bishop McKnight

The bishop's "Making Connections" column on the consultation can be found on this page

By Jay Nies

No one can dispute the power of sacred music to draw people into a deeper relationship with God and the saints in heaven.

But not all lyrics and melodies are appropriate for Catholic liturgies, and the panoply of settings for the regular parts of the Mass leaves some people silent when they visit parishes other than their own.

At the same time, continuing to use music by composers who have credible allegations of sexual abuse against them can exacerbate the pain of such abuse.

"So, we have what should be a healthy tension between the gifted artist being creative and the importance of being faithful to the teaching that's been handed down to us," stated Father Daniel Merz, chairman of the diocesan Liturgical Commission.

That tension will be thoroughly explored through a diocesan-wide sacred music consultation called for by Bishop W. Shawn McKnight.

The purpose will be to draw the local Church into a prayer-led dialogue about how sacred music can be best used to encourage active participation in the Liturgy.

"I am eager to hear from everyone, in an extensive process of listening and discernment, as we embark on this process together," the bishop stated.

The consultation will begin with a

See MUSIC, page 21

Find us online at  
**CATHMO.COM**

and  
**@DIOJEFFCITY**



**MOVING?** If you are moving or changing parishes, please fill out information below. Clip and mail to THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN, 2207 West Main Street, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Or complete the online form at [diojeffcity.org/update-information](http://diojeffcity.org/update-information). Allow two weeks.

#### NEW ADDRESS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NEW PARISH \_\_\_\_\_

OLD PARISH \_\_\_\_\_

01/24/25

## Pray for deceased priests

Jan. 27 — **Fr. Charles A. Pfeiffer**, St. Stephen, Indian Creek (1999)

Jan. 29 — **Fr. William J. Berkel**, Holy Spirit, Centralia (1959);

**Msgr. Joseph J. Morrell**, St. Patrick, Rolla (1989)

Jan. 31 — **Fr. James M. Denner**, St. Boniface, Koeltztown (1962)

Feb. 2 — **Fr. Francis J. Stangl**, St. Jude Thaddeus, Mokane (2008)

Feb. 7 — **Msgr. Joseph H. Winkelmann**, Sacred Heart, Rich Fountain (1960)

## Communications Coordinator



St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City is seeking a Communications Coordinator to provide internal and external communication support for the parish and school. This individual must have experience with various forms of media, and the ability to interact effectively with the pastor, school principal, parish and school staff, parish volunteers and vendors as necessary. Essential duties include producing the weekly parish bulletin for print and digital editions, maintaining/updating the parish website; Facebook and Instagram pages, and working with the school principal to assist with school communications. Qualified candidates should have experience with Microsoft Office Suite and preferred experience with Adobe InDesign; be able to communicate effectively, both verbally and written; ability to creatively maintain social media outlets; and respect the Roman Catholic faith and tradition. A flexible work schedule is required.

For a detailed job description please visit [diojeffcity.org/about-us/employment](http://diojeffcity.org/about-us/employment) or apply on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com).

**DIocese OF Jefferson City**

**WE'RE HIRING!**

The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is now taking applications for the following positions in our Jefferson City office:

- ▶ **Matrimonial Tribunal Judge**
- ▶ **Director of Pastoral Liturgy**
- ▶ **Database Manager**

Job descriptions and links for applying can be found at [diojeffcity.org/about-us/employment](http://diojeffcity.org/about-us/employment)

# Prayers for vocations continue

**"Called By Name," Feb. 8 and 9**

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight is urging all priests to preach about vocations the weekend of Feb. 8-9, in keeping with the Sunday readings, and invite parishioners to participate in a diocesan-wide "Called by Name" initiative.

This will involve submitting the names of young men and women who have demonstrated lives of prayer and service.

"It will be an opportunity for us as the Church to acknowledge the gifts that the Lord is pouring out on his young people, and also a chance to encourage a response to those gifts," said Father Paul Clark, diocesan director of vocations and seminarians.

The names will be submitted to the Vocations Office, so the individuals can be invited to up-

coming vocation events.

Meanwhile, Bishop McKnight is urging parishes to include the diocesan Prayer for Vocations in every opportunity to gather and worship.

Families are also encouraged to pray the prayer together.

Parishes are being asked to set aside and promote regular prayer time and Holy Hours specifically for vocations.

Pastors were directed to bring together a vocation ministry team for each parish, and to send the members to a training workshop for promoting a culture of vocation in every parish.

All of this is part of a three-part plan the Jefferson City diocese is implementing to reinvigorate vocational ministry in every parish.

The steps involve prayer, formation and service.

## Prayer for Vocations

Almighty Father, you have created us for some definite purpose.

Grant us the grace to know the path you have planned for us in this life and to respond with a generous "yes."

Make our diocese, parishes, homes and hearts fruitful ground for your gift of vocations.

May our young people respond to your call with courage and zeal.

Stir among our men a desire and the strength to be good and holy priests.

Bless us with consecrated religious and those called to a chaste single life, permanent deacons, and faithful husbands and wives, who are a sign of Christ's love for his Church.

We commend our prayer for vocations to you, Father, through the intercession of Mary our Mother, in the Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Stages of seminary formation

By Father Paul Clark

Here is a brief description of each of the stages of priestly formation for seminarians:

### Propaedeutic Stage

(1-3 years; a new stage of formation) Most men need a period of human maturation while receiving basic instruction in spirituality and Christian living. The goal is to lay a foundation for a new way of life through prayer, study, fraternity, and docility to formation.

### Discipleship Stage

(2-4 years; previously col-

lege seminary or pre-Theology)

This stage focuses on growing in relationship with Jesus Christ, with special focus on human formation and philosophical studies.

### Configuration Stage

(3-5 years; previously first to third year Theology] The man begins to take on a priestly iden-

tity as he studies theology, actively serves the poor and practices evangelization.

### Vocational Synthesis Stage

(6 months-1 year; previously fourth year theology) Primarily a time of integration and transition into one's diocese while he resides full-time in a pastoral setting.

## Director of Service and Justice

The Columbia Catholic Churches are seeking a full time Director of Service and Justice to engage with the poor of Columbia, to recruit and coordinate volunteers to serve the poor and to collaborate with other aid organizations in Columbia to fill the gaps in aid to the poor. Must be hard working, organized, have a compassionate heart and ideally speak both English and Spanish. See full job description at [www.comonewman.org/job-openings](http://www.comonewman.org/job-openings). Please submit your resume, cover letter, and professional references to Fr. Dan Merz at [frdan@comonewman.org](mailto:frdan@comonewman.org).

## New Cemetery Clean-Up Policy Catholic Cemeteries of Jefferson City

The following changes will apply to both Resurrection and St. Peter cemeteries in Jefferson City. There will be no scheduled clean-up days throughout the year.

The following rules will be enforced.

- ▶ All artificial flowers must be in a vase.
- ▶ No glass objects of any kind.

From April 1 to October 31 of each year, all objects deemed by management to hinder ground maintenance shall be removed. The management reserves the right to remove any objects that are not allowed by the rules and regulations of the Catholic Cemeteries of Jefferson City.

### The Catholic Missourian

Official newspaper — Diocese of Jefferson City  
Mailing address: 2207 W Main St, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Phone: 573-635-9127

*"A diocesan paper serves as a bond of unity by publishing diocesan happenings and promulgating official regulations and decrees. It also plays a teaching role by reporting notable events of a religious and secular nature, and interpreting them in the light of Christian principles."*

— Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

**Bishop W. Shawn McKnight**  
Publisher

**Jacob Luecke**, Director of Communications  
[jluecke@diojeffcity.org](mailto:jluecke@diojeffcity.org)

**Jay Nies**, Editor  
[editor@diojeffcity.org](mailto:editor@diojeffcity.org)

**Kelly Martin**, Advertising  
[advertize@diojeffcity.org](mailto:advertize@diojeffcity.org)

THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN (ISSN 1083-6977 or USPS 556940), January 24, 2025, volume 68, number 15. Published biweekly at 2207 W. Main St., Jefferson City, MO 65109. Subscription price \$14 a year through parish plan. Periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, Mo. and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to The Catholic Missourian, 2207 W Main St, Jefferson City MO 65109-0914.



# Bishop honors memory, vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

*Bishop W. Shawn McKnight issued the following statement Jan. 20 for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day:*

Today, we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his unwavering commitment to overcoming social divisions through nonviolence and love.

In a fractured world, Dr. King's message is still timeless as ever. As he wrote in his Letter from Birmingham Jail: "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of

destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Dr. King taught us that the path to true peace lies in justice, and the path to justice is paved with love and understanding.

As we commemorate his life and work, let us recommit ourselves to building bridges of unity and tearing down walls of hatred and prejudice.

May Dr. King's dream inspire us to continue striving for a society rooted in justice, peace and the dignity of every person.



The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Msgr. Charles Owen Rice march to the United Nations in New York in this April 1967 photo.

— OSV News photo/Pittsburgh Catholic

## World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

World Day for Consecrated Life will be celebrated in the Church on Sunday, Feb. 2.

Please pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life, and be sure to thank them on their special day.

May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.

In 1997, Pope St. John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life.

This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2.

This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world.

So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples.

Here are suggested prayers for the faithful for Sunday

Masses on that day.

•"For those consecrated to God by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience that they may seek to live their baptismal promises more intensely and have the grace to persevere in their commitment to the Lord and serve with open hearts and willing spirits. We pray to the Lord."

•"For those who have responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to be a consecrated person that they may experience the support of the Church as they continue their growth in holiness. We pray to the Lord."

## Seasons of Hope grief support in J.C.

Six consecutive Thursdays

The Seasons of Hope Grief Support Group at St. Peter Parish in Jefferson City will meet on six consecutive Thursday evenings at 6:15 p.m., beginning Feb. 6.

Meetings will be on Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27 and on Mar. 6 and 13.

Call St. Peter Parish at 573-636-8159 for more information or to sign up.

## Church leaders support migrants threatened by deportation plans

By David Agren  
OSV News

Buenos Aires

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago reassured migrants in his archdiocese that reports of a possible mass deportation by a new administration in Washington that would target the Chicago area would "wound us deeply."

Priests in Chicago's St. Rita of Cascia Parish in the city's Chicago Lawn neighborhood stood in solidarity with local immigrants, inviting them for a special Mass in their intention Jan. 19.

"It is really important to be present to let people know, we will be there wherever we can to support them," Father Larry Dowling told ABC 7 Eyewitness News.

According to ABC, priests blessed pastoral packs for families who may face deportation. The packs included a prayer shawl, rosary, and a statue of the patron saint of immigrants.

Right after Donald Trump's swearing-in ceremony as the 47th president Jan. 20, his administration ended use of a border app called CBP One. A note appeared instead on the app's website: "Effective January 20, 2025, the functionalities of CBP One™ that previously allowed undocumented aliens to submit advance information and schedule appointments at eight southwest border ports of entry is no longer available, and existing appointments have been cancelled." Nearly 1 million people legally entered the U.S. since the app has been introduced with eligibility to work.

## J.C. Marriage Encounter

DATE: February 15-16

This Valentine's Day, give your spouse the gift of your time.

A Jefferson City Marriage Encounter weekend will be held on Feb. 15 and 16 at the Best Western Plus Capital Inn in Jefferson City.

This weekend focuses on putting Christ back at the center of your marriage.

The cost is \$75 per couple and includes one night's lodging, meals and materials.

Scholarships are also available.

Register online at [jeffcityme.com](http://jeffcityme.com).





### Bishop McKnight's Calendar

JANUARY	
Jan 23- Feb 4	Diocesan Mission Delegation Meetings with the Archbishop of Kampala, Uganda and the Cardinal Archbishop of Kigali, Rwanda
FEBRUARY	
Feb 6	Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, 11 am, Chancery
Feb 11	Presbyteral Council and Council of Deans Meetings, 11:30 am, Chancery

### Bishop McKnight's January prayer intention for our Local Church

For our civic leaders, that they may be guided by wisdom and integrity in their decisions. May they seek the common good, foster unity in our communities, and lead with compassion and justice.

### Intención del mes de enero del Obispo McKnight por nuestra Iglesia Local

Por nuestros líderes cívicos, para que sean guiados por la sabiduría y la integridad en sus decisiones. Que busquen el bien común, fomenten la unidad en nuestras comunidades y lideren con compasión y justicia.

Please be so kind as to make this a part of your group and private prayer.



# Cathedral parishioner becomes Missouri's 58th governor

By Jay Nies

It was a time to celebrate, to pray and to hope.

Hundreds of friends, family members, colleagues and supporters of newly elected Gov. Mike Kehoe joined him and Bishop W. Shawn McKnight at Mass in the Cathedral of St. Joseph the afternoon before Inauguration Day.

Gov. Kehoe, a St. Louis native, is a lifelong Catholic and a member of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City.

"We have a very long tradition as Catholics to pray for those who hold offices of trust and responsibility for the well-being of the state," Bishop McKnight noted. "Because our new governor shares our Catholic faith, we are able to join in prayer together here at Mass for him."

Midday sunlight gave fiery brilliance to the Cathedral's recently installed stained-glass window depicting Moses receiving the Ten Commandments.

The same stone tablets in that image are represented in the allegorical frieze above the columns of the Missouri State Capitol, below which Gov. Kehoe took his oath of office at noon the following day.



**LEFT:** Bishop W. Shawn McKnight greets Gov. Mike Kehoe, a member of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City, at a Mass in the Cathedral of St. Joseph on Jan. 12, the day before the new governor was inaugurated. **RIGHT:** Gov. Mike Kehoe delivers his Inaugural Address after taking the Oath of Office outside the Missouri State Capitol on Jan. 13. He is the second Catholic to serve as governor in the state's 203-year history. Bishop McKnight gave the invocation at that day's Inauguration Ceremony for the state's elected officers.



— Photos by Annie Williams

There, Bishop McKnight invoked God as the Lord of History, thanking him for a glorious day of celebration for the state.

"We plead for your sacred assistance, O God of Peace and Justice," the bishop prayed in the Inauguration Day Invocation, "so that they may serve faithfully the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Missouri, which bind us all together."

"May their service to the people of Missouri protect our civil freedoms; guide and foster our unity in times of uncertainty; nurture social concord, justice and peace; and lead us all into prosperity," he prayed.

## On Jordan's bank

Several hundred people at-

tended the Jan. 12 Mass for the governor in Jefferson City.

Christmas hymns and decorations adorned the Cathedral on the last day of the Christmas season, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Joining Bishop McKnight at the altar were Father Stephen Jones, rector of the Cathedral and pastor of the Cathedral parish, and Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicky, pastor of nearby St. Peter Parish, vicar general of the diocese and chaplain of the Missouri House of Representatives, who preached the homily.

"Each and every one of us comes here today because of our love and care and desire that this man, chosen from among the people of the state

to be our executive leader, will govern successfully," said Msgr. Kurwicky.

He noted that the life of anyone in leadership is difficult, hence, the need for

**More photos from this event have been posted with this story in *The Catholic Missourian's* online edition, [cathmo.com](http://cathmo.com).**

prayers.

"As we stand on the threshold of a new executive administration in our state, we celebrate all that's been accomplished, we pray for Mike, and we have hope," the priest said.

He said it's appropriate for Catholics of central Missouri to pray and celebrate with the new governor.

"We are the people who know you, love you and care for you the most over the longest period of time," Msgr. Kurwicky told Gov. Kehoe.

"We gather to pray for you because the office you are going to enter is one that is in need of prayer," he said.

The priest advised the governor to stay close to his family, which will always be his greatest achievement and will help keep him grounded.

He predicted that Gov. Kehoe will succeed in his search for what is right and true because of the excellent example of his mother.

"She sees you from heaven and she blesses you and she's proud of you," the priest proclaimed. "She wants nothing

but the best for you, which is the same emotion each and every one of us has today, as well."

That is also true for his spiritual mother, Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Heart, he said.

Msgr. Kurwicky also noted that at that Mass, Gov. Kehoe would receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion, "which will give you strength to not only rise to the occasion when necessary, but also when days are not so pleasant."

## "Important step"

Gov. Kehoe's brother, John Kehoe, and First Lady Claudia Kehoe's sister, Sarah Umlauf, proclaimed the readings at the Mass.

Their sons, daughters and son-in-law proclaimed the General Intercessions.

Gloria Schmitz of Westphalia, and Carleen Dickneite and Annette Poettgen of Freeburg led the singing, accompanied by pianist Scott Sellner.

Deacons Dana Joyce and John Schwartze assisted at the altar.

Gov. and Mrs. Kehoe presented the bread and wine for the Mass to Bishop McKnight at the Offertory.

In informal remarks at a reception after the Mass, Gov. Kehoe said being elected to the state's highest office is a humbling experience for him and his family.

"But, we're excited to lead," he said.

See GOVERNOR, page 18

**Open a new  
checking  
account**

**Now's the time to join  
the Legends family!**

11 Locations to Serve You

**It's easy! Start today!**



**LEGENDS  
BANK**

MEMBER FDIC

[LEGENDSBK.COM](http://LEGENDSBK.COM)

*Your town. Your bank.*

**Receive a  
FREE GIFT**



## Catholic Schools Week:

# Coulson helps diocese's schools plan, collaborate, thrive

By Jay Nies

Kathy Coulson never stopped being a teacher.

Her students are quite different now.

"Just as a classroom teacher observes and assesses each student, learning their personal strengths and areas to improve to make decisions on how to help them grow to become the person God created them to be, I now do that with teachers and administrators," said Mrs. Coulson, director of curriculum and instruction for Catholic schools in this diocese.

"It may look different because of the way adults learn and the mindset they may have, but I am still someone who helps others to be the best they can be," she said.

Mrs. Coulson, who previously served for 12 years as principal of St. Brendan School in Mexico and before that as associate principal of Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School in Columbia, took on her new role with the diocese this past summer.

"Everything we do in our schools is stewardship for the goodness and glory of God," she said. "I see my role in the Catholic Schools Office to be doing the same: strengthening our Catholic schools by using the gifts and talents he has given to me."

Mrs. Coulson holds a master's degree and a specialist's degree in school administration.

Before becoming a principal, she gained experience teaching kindergarten through sixth grade in all core subject areas in public, private and parochial schools.

"I have always held a passion for curriculum and instruction and how to best meet the needs of students, no matter where they are academically," she said.

One of her talents is being able to examine the "big picture" from beginning to end, and then break it down into steps along the way, using data to inform and shape the next steps.

A lifelong learner, she spends much of her free time researching resources and teaching practices, connecting with other educators and look-

ing to solve problems teachers experience in their classrooms.

"We live in exciting times as educators, with the ability to see how students think and learn, build connections and retain information in the brain," she said.

This research has led to more effective teaching practices.

"When we know better, we do better," she stated.

Her experience with when her students and even her own children struggled in school galvanized her determination to find more effective ways to help children succeed.

"God creates us with our own unique gifts and talents," she said. "As educators, I believe it is our call to help identify those and walk with parents in addressing any struggles students may experience."

### Forging plans

Mrs. Coulson's role consists of two main areas: curriculum and instruction.

She collaborates closely with the diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools on specific goals and challenges toward updating curriculum in each elementary school.

She maintains a digital library with administrator and teacher resources to support instruction of diocesan curriculum, and provide direction and coordination for how the curriculum is taught, in keeping with diocesan initiatives and best instructional practices.

She also enters, downloads and analyzes student data to monitor and guide instructional programs in schools.

She works closely with school administrators, helping them select instructional materials, coordinating instructional support for teachers, and when needed, assisting in developing coaching plans for teachers to improve planning and pacing of lessons and as-

sessments and select best practices to meet the needs of students.

Upon hiring Mrs. Coulson, Erin Vader Ed.D., diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools, directed her to work with the diocese's professional development committees, made up of teachers and administrators, to create three- to five-year plans for several important tasks.

These include: curriculum review and updates; assessment and reporting review and updates; and the professional development needed by both administrators and teachers in order to fully implement the use of these in their schools.

Mrs. Coulson is also working with the textbook committee to identify textbook resources that provide the best support to teachers and students in mastering the diocese's standards of learning at each grade level.

"These acts help unite our schools as we hold high expectations academically for all of our students and reach those by working together," she stated.

"When we are consistent with one another and united, we can learn from one another."

She has focused on finding ways to bring school administrators and teachers together to discuss shared concerns and collaboratively solve problems.

### Different days

Mrs. Coulson said there's no such thing as a "typical" work day for her.

"Each day is different, depending on what my focus is for the day," she said.

Some days, she meets with a committee or makes calls to companies or educational leaders for future planning.

"Other days, I am creating



Kathy Coulson is coordinator for curriculum and instruction for Catholic schools in the Jefferson City diocese.

She does those things by presenting to groups of teachers on a variety of topics.

"These days bring me the greatest joy," she said.

### Family ties

Mrs. Coulson grew up on a farm in Curryville and attended St. Clement School in St. Clement, where her father and grandmother had also attended and where her mother was a kindergarten teacher.

"She actually created the first kindergarten curriculum for the diocese," said Mrs. Coulson, "so I see my

work continuing on what she started."

The teachers at the school prepared the students well.

"As a daughter of a teacher, I could see firsthand the struggles they endured, how their faith gave them strength and direction, and the importance of the parish community," she said.

All of that led her to admire and respect Catholic educators and want to reflect the same virtues she saw in them.

Mrs. Coulson and her husband, Scott, have been married for 27 years.

They have three children, all of whom attended Catholic schools in this diocese.

"It is because of their support that I have achieved all that I have in my career," she stated.

### "Faith first"

Because her job is multifaceted and sometimes overwhelming, Mrs. Coulson makes a point of stopping to pray — talking and listening so that God directs her steps.

"That patience and trust in God is something I continue to work on in my faith journey," she said.

She emphasized that each Catholic school is unique, with each reflecting a family environment.

"Each school family is unique in how it functions throughout the week, how it

See COULSON, page 16

# Consulta de música sacra: Más aue música

This message can be found  
in English on Page 7

por Teresa Pitt Green

La música nos inspira y eleva. Nos conecta con nuestros seres queridos y recuerdos especiales. Cuando escucho un himno que le gustaba mi madre o mi padre, mi corazón se llena de calidez. Es como si nos reuniéramos, a pesar de que ellos hayan partido hace mucho tiempo. En ese sentido, la música es integral a la memoria. Pero, ¿qué sucede cuando un himno querido, que ya está tejido en la trama de nuestras vidas, resulta haber sido compuesto por un abusador?

Como sobreviviente de abuso sexual infantil por parte del clero, no sé cómo debería cada persona lidiar con ese dilema, pero me gustaría invitarlos a considerar algunas preocupaciones que tienen las víctimas y algunos desafíos que esto implica.

Para empezar, tengan en cuenta que las víctimas de abuso dentro de la Iglesia no son necesariamente personas extrañas. Muchas continúan siendo católicos. Otros, como yo, se alejaron, pero encontraron el camino a casa. Muchos otros aún anhelan volver a la fe de su infancia, pero luchan por sentirse seguros dentro de la Iglesia. No es fácil asistir a la Misa dominical, a una boda o funeral, o a un servicio especial en un día santo, en un mismo entorno o ambiente asociado con el daño que marcó el final de la infancia y cambió el curso de la vida. Necesitamos sentirnos seguros, y eso no es fácil. Se necesita valentía.

Para sentirnos seguros, se necesita gente que escuche, así

ofrecen un punto de apoyo para volver a participar. Son un refugio contra nuestro miedo de que todo pueda volver a suceder. Los obispos, clérigos, ministros y todos los católicos pueden practicar la escucha y fomentar la sanación para aquellos que fueron heridos y que sufrieron en silencio.

Cualquiera que escucha víctimas de abuso descubre rápidamente que las experiencias de abuso varían enormemente, por lo que las heridas la manera de recuperarse son también diferentes. Las víctimas son muy distintas entre ellas. Sin embargo, nos une un mismo objetivo: se deben hacer todos los esfuerzos posibles para proteger a los niños y adolescentes de sufrir abuso. Es probable que usted también esté de acuerdo con nuestro objetivo. Lo que puede hacer difícil el escuchar a las víctimas es que somos muy sensibles a las señales de alarma. Tendemos a levantar la bandera roja antes de que otros vean algún riesgo en absoluto.

¿Qué riesgo podría existir cuando las familias cantan durante la Misa? Las fuerzas del orden y los expertos en protección infantil coinciden en que los niños están más seguros en entornos donde los adultos expresan de forma clara y consistente una tolerancia cero ante el abuso. Aprobar himnos compuestos por abusadores para el culto divino puede interpretarse como una grieta en la fortaleza de seguridad que rodea a los menores. Los fieles pueden no tener razones para hacer tales interpretaciones, pero el posible abusador que calcula oportunidades, ciertamente sí.

Por supuesto, cualquiera puede cantar cualquier canción

de cualquier compositor en cualquier lugar, pero los himnos que disfrutaban del honor de la aprobación para el culto divino tienen un estatus especial, que comparten con sus compositores. Aunque la mayoría de las personas no tiene necesidad de desconfiar del potencial nefasto de ese estatus, las víctimas experimentaron cómo los abusadores eran protegidos por su estatus y autoridad. Rehabilitar la reputación de un abusador también puede repetir lo peor de los escándalos del pasado, cuando los líderes de la Iglesia y los expertos devolvieron a los abusadores al ministerio activo, sumando más víctimas. Al discutir cómo los compositores podrían merecer un enfoque más flexible, los católicos corren el riesgo de hacer los mismos argumentos que se hicieron en el pasado, donde personas buenas extendieron misericordia cuando se debería haber trazado una línea firme. En su lugar, habilitaron más abuso. Por esta razón, la discusión sobre qué himnos pueden cantarse en el culto divino no solo trata sobre las cuestiones prácticas de la protección infantil, sino también sobre las reacciones personales hacia las víctimas de abuso.

Los líderes de la Iglesia de hoy, junto con todos los católicos, han heredado las dolorosas

consecuencias de las muy malas decisiones tomadas en el pasado. Aquí hay una familia con miembros que han sufrido abusos. Algunas familias se unen en el cuidado, muchas se fragmentan en la discusión. El obispo W.

violenta y sexualizada.

Ninguna solución tendrá éxito si tu idea de una víctima se limita a una estadística o a una caricatura mediática. Las víctimas son tus hermanos y hermanas que a menudo viven como

exiliados espirituales. Las víctimas de cualquier otro perpetrador — padre, maestro o entrenador — pueden

**Por supuesto, cualquiera puede cantar cualquier canción de cualquier compositor en cualquier lugar, pero los himnos que disfrutaban del honor de la aprobación para el culto divino tienen un estatus especial, que comparten con sus compositores.**

Shawn McKnight está entre los líderes de la Iglesia que se ponen del lado de las víctimas, promoviendo la seguridad infantil como una respuesta fundamental a lo que ha sucedido. Esto también proporciona seguridad para todos los menores de edad que están bajo el cuidado de la Iglesia, así como consuelo a las víctimas y a nuestras familias. Este compromiso requiere mantenerse vigilante con una tolerancia cero al abuso. También incluye escuchar como la mejor manera de fomentar la sanación entre las víctimas, sus familias, las parroquias y toda la Iglesia, para que toda la familia de la Iglesia pueda sanar, junto con las víctimas. Así es como se restaurará el santuario, no solo para las víctimas de abuso dentro de la Iglesia, sino también para todas las víctimas de cualquier otro abuso y trauma que necesitan desesperadamente saber que, a pesar del escándalo del pasado, realmente existe un lugar seguro en una sociedad cada vez más

buscar refugio del lugar del crimen en la casa de Dios. Para aquellos heridos dentro de la Iglesia, la Misa y los sacramentos a menudo están llenos de asociaciones dolorosas. Asistir puede ser un acto privado de suprema valentía cada domingo durante toda una vida. ¿Por qué regresamos? Te pregunto: ¿A dónde más tenemos que ir? Te pregunto: ¿Cómo puedes encontrar un lugar en tu corazón para las víctimas de manera que puedas encontrar una manera de amar los himnos atesorados y al mismo tiempo preservar un sentido de seguridad y bienvenida para los heridos?

No sé lo que deberías hacer para resolver este dilema, pero sé que, si abres tu corazón a la víctima que te pide escuchar, te sorprenderá la gracia al encontrar formas inesperadas de hacer que el santuario sea seguro y reconfortante para todos — para las víctimas y para ti. Ese es el camino hacia la paz que sobrepasa todo entendimiento humano.

## Holy Year pilgrimage is chance to begin again, pope says

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

Vatican City

A holy year is an opportunity to start fresh with one's relationship with God and with other people, Pope Francis told thousands of pilgrims.

The Holy Year 2025 theme, "Pilgrims of Hope," is a reminder that hope "is not a habit or a character trait — that you either have or you don't — but a strength to be asked for. That is why we make ourselves pilgrims: We come to ask for a gift, to start again on life's journey," the pope said Jan. 11.

Meeting more than 7,000 pilgrims who filled the Vatican audience hall or pressed against crowd-control barriers outside, Pope Francis began a series of Saturday general audiences designed, as he said, to "welcome and embrace all those who are coming from all over the world in

search of a new beginning."

Throughout the audience, the pope had the crowd repeat "*ricominciare*," Italian for "begin again."

The audience was held the day before the feast of the Baptism of the Lord when the Church commemorates Jesus going down to the Jordan River and joining the crowds who responded to St. John the Baptist's call for conversion.

A summary of the pope's talk, read to the pilgrims in English, said that John the Baptist's "message in calling for conversion was one of hope in the advent of the Messiah, a hope fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and his invitation to welcome the kingdom of God."

"Like the crowds that flocked to the waters of the Jordan, may all who pass through the

See PILGRIMS, page 7


[edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com) | Member SIPC





**Peter B. Myren**  
Financial Advisor

744 W Stadium Blvd Suite F2  
Jefferson City, MO 65109  
**573-635-1454**

**College and retirement — yes, you can save for both.**

Call to schedule a one-on-one.

MKT-5894M-A-A1 AECSPAD 21190209



# Sacred Music Consultation: More than music

**Este mensaje se puede encontrar en español en la página 6**

By Teresa Pitt Green

Music inspires and uplifts us.

It connects us to loved ones and special memories.

When I hear a hymn my mother or father loved, my heart is warm. It's as if we are reunited, despite their having passed away long ago.

Music is integral to memory in that way.

So, what happens when a beloved hymn, already woven into the fabric of our lives, is shown to have been composed by an abuser?

As a survivor of child sexual abuse by clergy, I do not know how each person should grapple with that dilemma, but I would like to invite you to consider a few concerns victims have and a few challenges involved.

To begin, please keep in mind that victims of abuse within the Church are not necessarily outsiders. Many have remained Catholic.

Others of us, like me, left but found a way home. Many others still long to return to the faith of our childhood but struggle to feel safe within the Church.

It is not easy to sit through Sunday Mass, or a wedding or funeral, or a special Holy Day service in the same setting associated with harm that ended our childhood and changed the course of our lives.

We need to feel safe, and that is not easy. It takes courage.

To feel safe, listeners are needed.

Listeners offer a stepping stone back in the door. They serve as refuge against our fear that it could all happen again.

Bishops, clergy, ministers and all Catholics can serve as listeners and foster healing for those who were harmed in silence and who suffered in silence.

Anyone who listens to victims quickly discovers that experiences of abuse vary greatly, so that wounds and recoveries also differ.

Victims are very different

from each other. Yet we are unified in one goal: Every effort must be made to protect children and teens from suffering abuse.

You likely agree with our goal, too. What can make listening to victims difficult is that we are very sensitive to signals for concern. We tend to raise the red flag before others see any risk at all.

What risk could possibly exist in families singing during Mass? Law enforcement and child protection experts agree that children are safest where adults clearly and consistently express zero tolerance for abuse. Approving hymns composed by abusers in worship can be interpreted as a fissure in the bulwark of safety around minors.

Worshippers have no reason to make such interpretations, but the would-be abuser who is calculating opportunity most certainly is.

Of course, anyone can sing any song by any composer anywhere, but hymns that enjoy the honor of approval for worship have a special status, which they share with their composers.

While most people have no need to distrust the nefarious potential of that status, victims experienced how abusers were protected by their status and authority.

Rehabilitating the reputation of an abuser can also replay the worst of scandals in the past, when Church leaders and experts restored abusers to active ministry, adding more victims.

As Catholics discuss how composers might somehow deserve a more flexible approach, they risk making the same arguments as were made in the past, where good people extended mercy where a firm line

should have been drawn.

Instead, they enabled more abuse. This is why the discussion of what hymns may be sung in worship is about not just child protection practicalities but also personal reactions to victims of abuse.

Today's Church leaders,

who desperately need to know that, despite the scandal of the past, there really is a safe place in an increasingly violent and violently sexualized society.

No solution will succeed if your idea of a victim is limited to a statistic or media caricature. Victims are your brothers

and sisters who often live as spiritual exiles.

Victims of any other perpetrator — father or

teacher or coach — can seek sanctuary from the scene of the crime in the house of God.

For those wounded within the Church, Mass and sacraments are often full of painful associations. Attendance can be a private act of supreme courage every Sunday for a lifetime.

Why do we return?

I ask you: Where else do we have to go?

I ask you: How can you find a place in your heart for victims so that you can find a way to love treasured hymns while preserving a sense of safety and welcome for the wounded?

I do not know what you should do in resolving this dilemma, but I do know that, if you open your heart to the victim who asks you to listen, you will be surprised by grace to find unexpected ways to make the sanctuary safe and comforting for all — for victims and for you.

That is the path to peace beyond all human understanding.

**Of course, anyone can sing any song by any composer anywhere, but hymns that enjoy the honor of approval for worship have a special status, which they share with their composers.**

along with all Catholics, have inherited the painful fallout from very bad choices made in the past. Here is a family with members who have suffered abuse. Some families unify in care, many splinter in argument.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight is among Church leaders who stand in unison with victims, promoting child safety as a fundamental response to what has happened.

This also provides safety for all minors in the care of the Church now and comfort to victims and our families.

This commitment requires remaining vigilant with zero tolerance for abuse. It also includes listening as the best way to foster healing among victims, their families, parishes, and the whole Church so the whole Church family can heal, along with victims.

This is how the sanctuary will be restored, not just for victims of abuse within the Church but also for all victims of all other abuse and trauma

## PILGRIMS

From page 6

Holy Door this year receive the grace of interior renewal, openness to the dawn of God's kingdom and its summons to conversion, fraternal love and concern for the least of our brothers and sisters," the pope's message to English-speakers said.

On a Holy Year pilgrimage and, more generally, on the journey of life, "we, too, bring many questions," the pope told the pilgrims, but Jesus replies by pointing to a "new path, the path of the Beatitudes," which proclaims how blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who struggle for justice and those who work for peace.

"Hope for our common home — this Earth of ours, so abused and wounded — and the hope for all human beings resides in the difference of God. His greatness is different," the pope said. Jesus demonstrated how greatness comes not from domination, but from learning "to serve, to love fraternally, to acknowledge ourselves as small. And to see the least, to listen to them and to be their voice."



**CATHOLIC  
SUPPLY**  
OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

RELIGIOUS GIFTS & HOME DECOR | BOOKS & BIBLES  
STATUARY | JEWELRY | ROSARIES | MEMORIAL ITEMS  
NATIVITY SETS | ADVENT ITEMS | WALL CROSSES  
SACRAMENTAL & SEASONAL GIFTS and HOME DECOR  
CANDLES | CHURCH SUPPLIES & FURNISHINGS

Family owned & operated since 1960

*We're one of the largest Catholic stores in the United States!*

We invite you to visit us next time you're in St. Louis!

*Our main store is located across from Ted Drewes Frozen Custard!*

6759 Chippewa (at Jamieson) | St. Louis, MO 63109

Monday - Saturday 9:00am to 5:30pm

Call us at (314) 644-0643 or visit us anytime, online:

**catholicsupply.com®**



**Insurance • Bonds  
Employee Benefits • Financial Services**

Offices located in Jefferson City and Columbia

**800-769-3472**

**www.winter-dent.com**

## QUESTION CORNER

## Why is Mary's perpetual virginity so controversial for Protestants?

By Jenna Marie Cooper  
OSV News

**Q: Something that's always been kind of interesting to me is how much Protestants object to Mary's perpetual virginity. I get balking at her Immaculate Conception, her as mediatrix of all graces, asking for her intercession, etc. But remaining a virgin is a thing people can and have done, a totally human thing, and it being true or false has no effect on Protestant theology. Yet there's this intense focus on it. Why don't Protestants just let that one be and agree to disagree but not get worked up about it? (Texas)**



A: First of all, I think we need to make sure we're not painting with too broad a brush. "Protestants" is a big category, and different Protestant denominations profess a wide variety of specific beliefs on different points of Christian doctrine. For example, certain traditional Anglicans or Episcopalians might retain a belief in Mary's perpetual virginity, even to the point of giving some of their parishes names like "the Church of St. Mary the Virgin."

But getting to the real substance of your question, one thought is that many Protestant denominations have a very heavy emphasis on "*sola scriptura*," or the belief that we should look to the Bible alone for knowledge of faith and morals. This is in contrast with the Catholic belief in both the Bible and the teachings outside of Scripture, which have been handed down via sacred tradition (as described in 2 Thes. 2:15).

It is true that much of our Catholic doctrine and customs pertaining to Mary's perpetual virginity find a source in tradition and the theological writings of the Church fathers, rather than from direct and explicit statements in the Bible. Yet Mary's lifelong virginity is not only not contradicted by Scripture, but the Gospel also implicitly supports this doctrine.

In Luke 1:34, at the Annunciation when the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive the Savior, Mary asks: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" As many scholars and saints over the centuries have observed, this question would not make sense if Mary had intended on having normal marital relations with Joseph at some point.

Some might point to the references to the "brothers of Jesus" (e.g., Mk. 6:3) as Scriptural evidence that Mary had given birth to additional children. But this can be refuted by considering the broader context. As St. Jerome (who is most well-known as the first Latin translator of the Bible) notes, the original scriptural word for "brothers" could also refer to cousins or other close relatives. It's also possible that the "brothers of Jesus" could have been St. Joseph's children from a previous marriage.

It's also good to keep in mind that although the church has constantly taught the belief in Mary's perpetual virginity from her very foundation, this teaching has also been somewhat of a "hot topic," even in ancient times.

For example, in the fourth century, St. Jerome wrote a treatise on the perpetual virginity of Mary, in the form of arguments "Against Helvidius." While Helvidius primarily argued that Mary did not remain a virgin throughout her life, his writing also posited that, since Mary supposedly had normal marital relations eventually, there was no reason to maintain that there was any special virtue to a life of dedicated Christian virginity or celibacy.

Connecting Mary's perpetual virginity with choices that rank-and-file Christians may make in their own lives naturally

See QUESTION, page 23

## Papal Audience

January 22, 2025

Brothers and sisters:

As we continue our Jubilee cycle of catecheses on "Jesus Christ our Hope," we now consider the trusting response of the Virgin Mary to the message of the Archangel Gabriel that she was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. Mary, "full of grace," understood and freely accepted the unique mission entrusted to her by God, and in this way cooperated with him in fulfilling the hope of Israel and in giving birth to the Savior of the nations. Filled with the Holy Spirit, she continued to cooperate in the fulfillment of God's plan, as we see from her maternal intercession at the wedding feast of Cana, which led to the first of the Lord's miracles. From Mary, may we learn to trust firmly in God's promises, to testify by our lives to the hope born of the Gospel, and to offer that hope above all to those of our brothers and sisters who are struggling and tempted to despair.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims, especially those coming from Switzerland, the United States, England and offer my cordial good wishes that the Jubilee will be for all of you a season of spiritual renewal and growth in the joy of the Gospel. In this week of Prayer for Christian Unity, I welcome the ecumenical groups present, as well as those from the Pontifical North American College. Upon you and your families I gladly invoke God's blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.



## St. Louis priest gives Invocation for Governor's Prayer Breakfast

*Father Joseph Detwiler, associate pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Wentzville in the St. Louis archdiocese, gave the following invocation at the Governor's Prayer Breakfast on Jan. 15 in Jefferson City:*

Let us bow our heads and recognize that we are in the presence of God:

Father in Heaven, Giver of all that is good: We come before you today with gratitude. We thank you for giving us another day on this earth, and we thank you for letting us live in a country that gives us the freedom to worship you.

We thank you for giving us the duty of leadership in this great state of Missouri. As we look around at the world, we see that it is chaotic. We know that we can only lead people in this crazy world with your help.

We recognize that there is a temptation in this world — to rule by money and power. There are many in our world who do so. We know that this may yield quick results, but will never lead your people to lasting fulfillment. Instead — we

ask your grace to come down upon us today, and bestow upon us TWO virtues.

We ask that you may give us Divinely inspired WISDOM ... whereby we are able to see reality from your perspective, and lead in the way that you desire. Always with the big picture in mind and not distracted by fast and easy results.

We also ask that you increase the virtue of MERCY in us. We remember that, although we try our best, no one in this government, and none of the people we serve ... will ever be perfect.

We ask for the grace to show mercy to the people we serve, just as you show mercy to us.

We thank you for listening to our prayers today. We thank you for the food to sustain us, and all those who prepared it, and we remember those who go hungry today.

We ask you to inspire us with the virtues of wisdom and mercy, as we seek to rule your people, because that is how you reign as King of the Universe: with mercy and wisdom.

We ask this through you, who live and reign ... forever and ever. Amen.

## As ceasefire starts, first Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners return home

OSV News

Jerusalem

On Jan. 19, crowds gathered in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square, celebrating the release of Israeli hostages, people crying with joy watching live feed from their road to freedom.

As the women were trans-

ferred from Hamas to the Red Cross, emotions ran high with families embracing one another, weeping and cheering.

In the West Bank, joy was delayed, but after midnight on Jan. 20, 90 Palestinian prisoners were freed from Israeli jails. Meanwhile, aid

trucks began entering Gaza, and displaced residents attempted to return home despite the devastation.

Pope Francis praised the ceasefire agreement. The deal includes phased releases of hostages and prisoners, with hopes for peace and humanitarian aid flowing into Gaza.



# In Pacific Palisades, paradise lost

By Greg Erlandson  
OSV News



I have trouble talking about the loss without tearing up, as if the smoke and ash from Los Angeles traveled across country to find me.

My in-laws were French immigrants to California, proud Americans, hard-working and simple in their aspirations. Joseph Bischetti knew extreme poverty in France, and he believed the best way to take care of his family was to work hard and buy land.

In the mid-1970s he and his wife An-

drée purchased a modest house with a big yard in Pacific Palisades. He could not have known then how that area and its prices would grow, how celebrities and other wealthy elites would move there for the same reasons he did. The Palisades felt separate from the rest of Los Angeles. It was backed up against the Santa Monica mountains, and as the population grew, newly erected houses slowly climbed the hillsides, along winding, narrow streets snaking down to Sunset Boulevard.

The neighborhood he moved into was full of little stucco houses, small and cute, modestly remodeled, with lawns and flower beds. People who lived in this neighborhood expected it to be the last move they made. They weren't rich, but they had a slice of heaven and planned to

stay. Younger couples became older couples, then widowers or widows.

When they had to sell, the people who replaced them tore down their houses and squeezed McMansions onto their lots. Two or three stories, with private theaters and pools and always a balcony or a rooftop patio pointed toward the Santa Monica Bay. People paid top dollar for the sense that one was far away from freeways and strip malls and congestion.

Joe and Andrée did not have such grandiose plans. The house was their dream, their refuge. It was a single floor, a simple stucco house — three bedrooms, a great room and a kitchen. Andrée, who was a wonderful cook, put up with a recalcitrant stove but never allowed a microwave to enter.

The windows were open most of the time, and no matter how hot Southern California was, the house would catch the breezes blowing from Santa Monica Bay. The wind blew in off the ocean, up the canyon's edge on which the house sat, over the fava beans, tomatoes and zucchini that Joe had planted, past Andrée's basil plants, and into the house, where it mingled with the smells of couscous and pasta and coq au vin.

Joe was a remodeling contractor who spent much more time working on other people's houses than on his own. Yet when he was 80 years old, he single-handedly put on a new roof. Despite his age and his arthritis, he carried the heavy shingles

See ERLANDSON, page 23

# Breathing life back into the world

By Scott P. Richert  
OSV News



*"We ... see all round us every day the living turning into the lifeless. What we never see is the lifeless turning into the living." — Owen Barfield*

When I was a child on the shore of Lake Michigan, I used to collect common fossils — trilobites, brachiopods and cephalopods, mostly. I was fascinated by their shape and symmetry, which seemed to me almost mathematical in structure. Finding fossils was so easy in part because every fossil of each species looked pretty much the same. Stripped of everything that may have made this trilobite different from that one, each fossil was distilled down to its essence.

Or so it seemed to me when I was young. Perhaps the main reason I quit collecting fossils as I grew older is that, if you've seen one, you've seen them all. Their lifeless, essentially mathematical unity was fascinating for a short while, but there's something far more fascinating about the diversity of living things, even of the same species.

The temporal end of every man may be his skeleton, stripped of flesh and awaiting the Second Coming in the grave, but outside of a few of the most obstinate and obnoxious atheists, no one would say that the skeleton is, or even represents, the essence of man. His actions, his words, the twinkle in his eye as he tells a joke, the vacant stare in that same eye as he mourns the loss of his wife: All of these things that remain in our memory when he has gone to his grave are closer to his essence than his skeleton is. And when we remember him after his passing, it is those things, and not his skeleton, that spark our imagi-

ination and bring him back to life, however briefly, for us.

What is true of the trilobite and of man is true of our language as well. What makes a word or a phrase tickle our ear or "pop" in our mind is not the collection of letters on a page — the skeleton of the word, so to speak — and certainly not its repetition, which is as likely to turn a living word into a lifeless one as picking up his hundredth trilobite fossil is to turn a young man's mind to different pursuits. Rather, the essence of a word, what excites our imagination, is its meaning.

But as Owen Barfield, the last of the Inklings (the literary group at Oxford University in the 1930s and 1940s, of which J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis are the best-known members), and Walker Percy, the Catholic novelist, psychologist and amateur linguist, both demonstrated — Barfield, in his essays; Percy, mostly in his novels — the entire thrust of the modern world is to deprive words of their meaning, to turn the living into the lifeless. Stripped of their essence, words become fossils.

This destruction wrought by the modern world has theological implications, because Christ, St. John the Evangelist tells us, is the ultimate Word, the fullness of Truth, who gives every other word its meaning and its life.

In his novel *The Thanatos Syndrome*, Percy (through the character of a priest) posits that, if words have been deprived of their meaning, there must be a Depriver, one whose entire purpose is to prevent man from finding meaning in life, to leave him stranded in a fossilized world, to gut his imagination so that he may repeat the words "Do this in memory of me" and yet never truly call to mind and enter into the living reality of Christ at the Last Supper, Christ on the Cross, Christ risen again on the third day.

All around us, the living turns into the lifeless, and only God can breathe life

into that which is not living. Only God ... and man, to the extent that we take part through grace in the life of God, participate in the Word as members of the Body of Christ, and let the Holy Spirit kindle

in us the fire of our imagination, returning meaning to a world that has been deprived of it.

Scott P. Richert is publisher for OSV.

## REFLECTION

## Fruit of the vine

By Mark Saucier

Jesus quotes Isaiah to define his mission: "He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

In this spirit of compassion, Jesus's first miracle in Mark is an exorcism at Capernaum. In Matthew, the healing of a leper.

In the later Luke and John, another sign, this one of community, sets the stage. There's an air of humor about it.

Mary goes to a wedding. Jesus is there with his "plus 12." They run out of wine. (The last two facts may or may not be related.)

The Jewish mother tells her adult son to do something. He vocally refuses, and then docilely complies.

Quicker than a Door Dash delivery, 120 gallons of a robust Cabernet appear. The Gospel of John tells us "his disciples began to believe in him."

(The last two facts may or may not be related.)

Granted, this synopsis of the story takes a few liberties. Traditional interpretations have told the Wedding Feast of Cana in terms of obedience and glory, bride and bridegroom, the presence, provision and power of God.

Those have firm scriptural foundations. But sometimes, elevated theological language can overshadow a simple truth.

In Cana, Jesus was at a party — dancing, eating and drinking in celebration of a marriage. In changing water into wine, he kept the party going, kept the joy alive.

When you think about it, what Jesus did was very natural. Over time, water grows the grapes that are juiced and fermented into wine. Jesus simply compressed the time of that process.

A wedding is meant to be a celebration of love. It is the love of the couple marrying, the love of their families, the web of love of all their friends.

What is compressed into the moment is all the daily joys that these ties produce — gathered, remembered and celebrated at a feast of life. And Jesus provided for that festival joy.

Think of that wine-filled wedding in Cana like the scene in C.S. Lewis' *Prince Caspian*:

"Thus Aslan feasted the Narnians till long after the sunset had died away, and the stars had come out ... And the best thing about this feast was that there was not breaking up or going away, but as the talk grew quieter and slower, one after another would begin to nod and finally drop off to sleep with feet towards the fire and good friends on either side."



# Encounter

## AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

### Empowering Families: Community Services success stories



By Chelle Smith-Vandergriff,  
Julia Hinton, and Tessa McIntyre

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCNMO) is committed to caring for our neighbors in need throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City.

Within the Community Services program, that mission is realized through disaster services, predatory loan relief, HUD-certified housing counseling, social-emotional care, wrap-around support services, and community connections. Catholic Charities staff Julia Hinton and Tessa McIntyre encounter community members with compassion and dignity, delivering specialized services that help individuals and families achieve stability.

This small but mighty team empowers families and strengthens communities in 38 Missouri counties, a goal that is only made possible with the support of the 91 diocesan parishes and an expanding network of partners, providers, volunteers and other contributors.

As we welcome the new year with renewed resolutions, we hope that you enjoy these stories of success that highlight our call to family, community and participation.

#### What is success?

For programs that focus on individualized services and client-centered care, defining and measuring success can be challenging.

What we do know is that providing the tools and resources for individuals to strengthen family/social relationships, become actively involved in their

community and build a safe and stable environment has a significant impact on sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) helps us understand that social relationships and community involvement have a direct impact on human dignity and development.

Participating in society in a way that considers the needs of the poor and vulnerable is at the heart of the call to family, community and participation.

Pope St. John Paul II wrote, "While building up the Church in love, the Christian family places itself at the service of the human person and the world, '...so that it does not live closed in on itself, but remains open to the community, moved by a sense of justice and concern for others, as well as by a consciousness of its responsibility towards the whole of society,'" ("The Family in the Modern World; *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 64).

Not only is this element of CST embedded in Catholic Charities mission statement, but it is also considered an integral part of service delivery.

Whether we are working to build capacity within our agency or within a specific client's social/community network, we are stronger together.

#### Housing counseling

Julia, a HUD-certified housing counselor, recently received a request from a Columbia resident who needed assistance repairing their home.

While individual counseling covers a broad range of housing topics, the scope of Janet's\*



home repairs required additional support to resolve.

After meeting with the homeowner to better understand her needs and challenges, Julia requested help from Fr. Dan Merz, who organized a response from parishioners of St. Thomas More Newman Center and Sacred Heart Church, as well as local Knights of Columbus Councils 7231 and 14414. Their prompt response and generosity are a beautiful witness of our Catholic faith (and social teachings) in action, allowing Janet to maintain safe and affordable housing.

#### Predatory loan relief

The Catholic Charities Food Pantry not only provides food security but also provides neighbors the opportunity to explore resources, develop social relationships, and strengthen community connections.

While shopping at the pantry, one neighbor learned about the agency's Predatory Loan Relief program and the upcoming group classes being offered on Saturday mornings.

This information came at the perfect time, as Susan\* was facing financial challenges after taking out a title loan to cover

unexpected vehicle repairs.

While the repairs were necessary to maintain employment, the high interest rates had caused a cycle of financial uncertainty.

With the support of Tessa, Financial Stability Specialist, Susan joined our financial education classes, determined to regain stability.

She developed a budget, eliminated non-essential spending, refinanced her predatory loan into a lower-interest personal loan through Mid America Bank, and opened a savings account.

When asked about her savings plan, Susan identified her desire to budget/save for a modest Christmas fund.

Her perseverance allowed her to not only make progress on reducing personal debt, but also enabled her to achieve her savings goal and participate in her family's holiday gift exchange (something that had not been possible for several years).

In this instance, the impact and scope of the Predatory Loan Program is strengthened by the support of the Catholic Charities Food Pantry, group class volunteers and peer par-

ticipants, a reliable banking partner, and Susan's family members, allowing Tessa to continue assisting Susan on her journey toward financial independence.

#### Disaster relief services

The importance of community involvement is often seen in disaster services.

Catholic Charities promotes cross-training, assists with preparedness and planning initiatives, and participates in local disaster recovery efforts in the Diocese of Jefferson City.

Last December, three Catholic Charities staff members attended the Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence and are now certified by CCUSA to provide Disaster Case Management.

Cross-training allows us to serve individuals and contribute to community planning initiatives, such as the formation of the Cole Co. Community Organizations Active in Disasters.

This whole community organization brings together individuals, local businesses, private sector participants, and state agencies into an integrated framework of preparation for emergency response.

A community-wide approach such as this is critical in the aftermath of a disaster.

Following the August 2023 tornado in Baring, Mo., Catholic Charities staff helped allocate over \$23,000 to recovery efforts, supporting the Baring Area Recovery Team in their road to disaster recovery.

We hope these success stories from the Community Services team inspire you to unite with your family and faith community to answer the call to family, community and participation and renew our commitment to building a society in which the dignity of each person is recognized and protected.

\*Names have been changed to honor client confidentiality.

**James O'Donnell**  
A Life Celebration® Home

*The mark of excellence  
for five generations.*

302 South Fifth  
Hannibal, Missouri

573.221.8188 • [www.jamesodonnellfuneralhome.com](http://www.jamesodonnellfuneralhome.com)  
© 2018 The James O'Donnell Funeral Home, Inc.



# Fr. Ekka, missionary priest from India, returns home after 14 years

By Jay Nies

Father Alex Ekka entrusted his health and safety to Almighty God upon arriving in Jefferson City 14 years and three months ago.

The Lord provided.

"God has kept me safe and sound and healthy, even though I am a diabetic patient," said the missionary priest from the Diocese of Jashpur in India.

"My diabetes has been all under control, and although I was completely new to driving, in all the years I've been here, I've never even had a scratch on my car or so much as a flat tire," he said.

Fr. Ekka's bishop recently summoned him to return to his home diocese, completing a mission that was originally intended to last three years.

"I'm going to miss the people here," Fr. Ekka said on Jan. 13, the morning before he departed for Kunkuri, see city of the Jashpur diocese.

"I'll miss how smoothly things are done here, especially during my time in the hospital — how courteous the doctor and nurses are," he said.

Since arriving in this diocese in the Fall of 2010, Fr. Ekka served as associate pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City; then as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Palmyra; then as pastor of St. Ann Parish in Warsaw, St. Bernadette Parish in Hermitage and the Mission of Ss. Peter and Paul in Cole Camp; then as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Eldon and Our Lady of Snows Parish in Mary's Home.

He retired from pastoral duties this past July, taking up residence in Visitation Rectory in Vienna and helping with Mass coverage whenever needed.

He said serving in this diocese taught him new ways to carry out his pastoral duties.

"In India, it's still pretty much that pastor is the boss, and he runs the whole show almost by himself," he noted.

"But here, I learned how to run the parish with the help of the parishioners — pastoral council, finance council and recently the stewardship council," he said. "This is a great learning point which will help me continue my ministry in

India."

He's also become more open-minded and tolerant of things that are different from what he grew up with, he said.

## Saintly blessings

Bishop Emmanuel Kerketta of Jashpur visited this diocese several times since Fr. Ekka's arrival here, including for the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph Parish in Palmyra in 2016.

That occasion marked the first time two bishops were present in that church.

The Jashpur diocese has a surplus of priests, as well as a bishop who appreciates the worldwide dimensions of Jesus' Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19).

Accordingly, Fr. Ekka, ordained in 1981, has spent more than half of his Priesthood ministering away from home.

He was the first from his diocese to volunteer to work among the aboriginal people of Australia in the diocese of Darwin, Northern Territory, in 2006-07.

His goal was to help lead people to Christ beyond his homeland while getting better at connecting with people who are waiting to hear the Gospel in his backyard.

He conducted mission appeals for four summers in parishes throughout the United States under the Missionary Co-op Plan of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

He assisted at a Milwaukee parish from 1983-85 while obtaining a master's degree in journalism at Marquette University.

He later served in temporary parish assignments in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Youngstown, Ohio.

As a young seminarian, he interviewed St. Teresa of Kolkata for a Catholic newspaper.

"I can still feel the touch of her saintly hand holding mine when we greeted each other," he said.

He also worked with sisters of Mother Teresa's order as a seminarian in a nearby treatment facility for people with leprosy.

"You could say she has blessed me several times," he said.

## Joys and sorrows

In 2000, during Fr. Ekka's time in Youngstown, he traveled with some friends to St. Louis for a Catholic Charismatic convention.

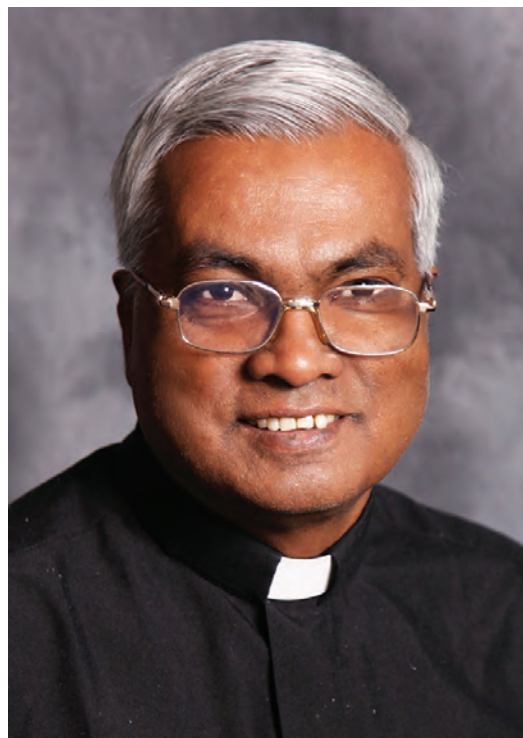
"And in the crowd, accidentally or coincidentally or providentially, I met some people from the Diocese of Jefferson City," he said.

They invited him to come to Central Missouri.

So, in 2010, after newly ordained Bishop Kerketta gave him permission to take a missionary leave of absence, Fr. Ekka applied to spend time in the Jefferson City diocese.

"I like serving others and helping others," the priest stated. "I guess I have what you'd call a missionary-orientation type of mind. I like working as a missionary. I like to work for others."

Nonetheless, being a mis-



Father Alex Ekka

## Strange language

Fr. Ekka was well accustomed to U.S. culture by the time he got to Jefferson City, but not the first time he came to the United States.

"It was a big shock in 1983," he said.

Arriving in New York, he came to an escalator in the airport terminal and didn't know how to use it.

"Then, when I was leaving, the automatic doors suddenly opened and I was scared to death!" he said.

The priest who picked him up there at the airport said, "Let's go and have a bite."

"I had never heard

that phrase in our Indian English," Fr. Ekka recalled. "I was wondering what kind of 'bite' he was talking about."

That's when he learned about hamburgers and hot dogs.

"I remember thinking, 'How can one eat a cooked dog?'" he said. "That's what I thought they were eating here when they said 'hot dogs.'"

Over time, the young priest became acclimated with local customs, phrases and cuisine,

See FR. EKKA, page 22

**Central Bank**

**DON'T WAIT UNTIL THINGS GET TOO TIGHT**

**MANAGE YOUR GROWING NEEDS**

MORTGAGE | HOME EQUITY LOAN | PERSONAL LOAN

DREAM BIGGER. BANK BETTER.

NMLS 407985  
MEMBER FDIC

**CATHOLIC GIFT ANNUITY**  
Administered by Catholic Extension

**CREATE A LEGACY THAT LASTS A LIFETIME**

**WITH A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY**

With a Catholic Gift Annuity, you can secure the future for yourself and your loved ones, and give a lasting gift for your parish, school or our diocese.

**HERE'S HOW IT WORKS**

- Fixed — rate annuity payments for life, one or two people
- Immediate and future tax benefits
- A payment schedule tailored to your needs
- Knowing that you will help Catholics in need in our diocese

**NEW RATES FOR 2024**

AGE	ANNUAL PAYOUT RATE
60-64	5.2-5.6%
65-69	5.7-6.2%
70-74	6.3-6.8%
75-79	7.0-7.8%
80-84	8.1-8.9%
85-89	9.1-9.9%
90+	10.1%

**catholicgiftannuity.org**

For a personalized proposal, contact:  
Jake Seifert  
Director of Development & Missions  
Diocese of Jefferson City  
2207 West Main Street, Jefferson City MO 65109-0914  
development@diojeffcity.org • 573-635-9127

**DIocese of Jefferson City**



## Catholic Schools Week:

# Visiting every Catholic school here yields wonder, joy, hope

**Heberlie to step down  
after six years in pivotal role**

By Jay Nies

In six years as a Coordinator of the School Improvement Process for the Jefferson City diocese, Nancy Heberlie has visited nearly every Catholic school in these 38 counties.

At each, she interviews students about what they like about their school.

"It's like a broken record," she noted. "I get to learn about Jesus! 'I get to study about God!'"

"It sounds trite, but we get to hear it over and over and over," she said.

Mrs. Heberlie will retire from her role as coordinator at the end of this school year, six years from when she began it.

"It's time for me to step aside and let someone else take it to greater heights," she said.

Mrs. Heberlie has thoroughly enjoyed her time as coordinator.

She marvels at how "beautifully different yet beautifully similar" each of the diocese's 37 Catholic grade schools, three Catholic high schools and one child development center are.

"So many different little things," she said. "They each have their own unique charism."

She spoke of schools that place little electric candles on the headstones in the parish cemetery for All Souls Day.

There was the school where a child bundled up an outdoor statue of Jesus with a scarf and hat in frigid weather.

"It's so beautiful," she stated. "The kids love to tell me about these things."

At one school, all the students shared not only the words and melody of a song of welcome, but also the Sign Language.

"One of their grandparents is hard of hearing, and her granddaughter wanted her to be able to enjoy it, too," said Mrs. Heberlie. "So, the music teacher taught the whole school how to sign it."

"It's those little things that make it so worthwhile," she said.

### "No looking back"

Mrs. Heberlie went to a rural Catholic grade school in the St. Louis archdiocese.

"The Precious Blood Sisters who were my teachers instilled in me a love for learning," she said. "It was a natural thing to go into education."

She taught Title 1 classes and served as a librarian in a public school for five years.

"Those were really good experiences," she said. "But God called me to this. There was

no looking back once I started teaching in a Catholic school."

She insisted that it's a calling: "I wouldn't be able to separate myself from God at work, it's so ingrained in me."

After 20 years in a classroom, God led her into school administration, where she served for another 20 years.

### "Nuggets and gems"

Kenya Fuemmeler Thompson was serving as interim superintendent of Catholic schools in 2019 when Mrs. Heberlie retired as principal of St. Stanislaus School in Wardsville.

Mrs. Heberlie offered her services to Mrs. Thompson, who asked her to become the diocese's coordinator of the School Improvement Process, working with the diocese's School Improvement Process program.

The process includes a visiting team, made up of Catholic school educators and administrators from around the diocese, which makes an official visit to a handful of schools each year as part of the schools' intensive self-study process.

Each school usually does a self-study every six years.

"There are standards that we look for," Mrs. Heberlie noted. "We look at their philosophy and their mission statement and their administrative outlook, instruction, curriculum, finances, facilities — we look at all aspects of the school."

They now also take specific note of the school's Catholicity and its commitment to promoting stewardship as the Catholic way of life.

"That was one of my goals," said Mrs. Heberlie, "to get the



**Nancy Heberlie has been serving as the diocese's coordinator of the School Improvement Process for the past six years.**

Catholicity piece and the stewardship piece into that, and we got it done. I'm excited about that."

Having previously been a principal for 20 years, Mrs. Heberlie knows the self-study process, culminating with a visit from a delegation of fellow educators, can be stressful.

"But, the team really comes with a heart for helping you improve the school," she said. "They also want to help you recognize those nuggets and gems, those unique things you do really well that you don't recognize because they're so ingrained in your school's culture."

"Yes, we give recommendations for improving," she noted, "but we also point out those talents, those charisms, those really good things that they often don't even realize are special."

She had a happy homecoming last spring when she led a visit to St. Stanislaus School, where she used to be principal.

"It was fun," she said. "A real joy!"

### "Dream job"

Erin Vader Ed.D., current diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools, asked Mrs. Heberlie to continue serving as coordinator.

Mrs. Heberlie gladly obliged.

"It's a dream job for me — everything God wanted me to be!" she said. "I get to travel, and I love to explore Missouri. It's kept me in contact with my colleagues, who are my friends, in the diocese."

"And it got me into every one of the schools," she said.

The workload was heavy at times. Teams visited 11 schools in a year's time after the COVID-19 pandemic subsided.

"I wasn't home for over a month," said Mrs. Heberlie. "It was tough. But, I always had a wonderful team. We knew what we were getting into, we did it, and it was a great experience."

This school year, she's leading visits to a much more manageable four schools.

Nonetheless, Jefferson City is about a three-hour drive from Perryville, where Mrs. Heberlie moved after retiring to help look out for her mother, who's 94.

"It's all worked out very well for the past six years, through God's grace alone," she said.

### Hopeful signs

Mrs. Heberlie has enjoyed learning about the Jefferson City diocese, its schools, its parishes and its people.

"The diocese is so authentic and genuine and wonderful," she said. "It's a real gem. I don't know if people realize that."

She said it's a joy to visit the schools here, "especially those little rural schools. They have a special place in my heart. And what they're doing is simply amazing."

Everywhere she goes, "in every school," she sees students, teachers, staff members, parents, grandparents, volunteers and principals working "very, very hard."

"They do a phenomenal job," she said. "And each one of the schools has its own flavor, and the prayers are so beautiful."

See HEBERLIE, page 16

**FRANK SCHRIMPF**  
PLUMBING COMPANY, INC.

- ♦ Plumbing
- ♦ Central Vacuum Systems
- ♦ Water Filters
- ♦ Water Softeners

615 A Clark Ave  
Jefferson City  
**573-636-9661**  
www.SchrimpfPlumbing.com



**Catholic Schools**  
United in Faith and Community

*Religious Gifts*  
For All Occasions:

Baptism - Confirmation - First Communion - RCIA - Wedding



**The I. DONNELLY Co., Inc.**

6601 TROOST AVE. • KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64131

Phone: (816) 363-2828

Nationwide Toll Free Order Desk: (800) 821-5372

Visit our online catalog at: [www.idonnelly.com](http://www.idonnelly.com)



# Neuner has been teaching for 50 years at S.H. Rich Fountain

By Jay Nies

"Today, we raise our hearts in gratitude and admiration for a remarkable woman who has devoted 50 years to shaping minds, nurturing spirits, and leaving an indelible mark on the community of Sacred Heart School, Rich Fountain," stated a Nov. 4 social media post written by Linda Neuner's fellow educators at Sacred Heart School.

Students and colleagues gathered that day to celebrate the golden anniversary of teaching for the long-time teacher and former principal of the school.

"All right here in her home parish!" said Father William Debo, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Rich Fountain and Holy Family Parish in Freeburg.

"Ms. Neuner, you are the very heart of this school," her colleagues stated. "As both principal and teacher, you've not only educated generations of students, but you've also inspired, guided and loved them as they navigated their paths to becoming the individuals they are today."

"Your influence stretches far beyond the classroom walls — you've helped raise and nurture an entire community," they said.

Ms. Neuner's commitment to Catholic education reflects her appreciation for all she received as a student at Sacred Heart.

She holds fond memories of her own elementary years there.

"We were like an extended family," she stated.

The teachers were School Sisters of Notre Dame, who taught their students by word and example about the Catholic faith and the "3 Rs" — "reading, writing and 'rithmetic."

Eight of Ms. Neuner's brothers and her three sisters also graduated from Sacred Heart.

"I always had a brother in the classroom with me — sometimes two — as Grades 3-5 and 6-8 were in triple-grade classrooms," she recalled.

Her interest in teaching likely started with her brother Joe, who never was able to attend school because of his special needs.

During Ms. Neuner's junior high and early high school

summers, she helped out at Head Start in Linn, which was attended by some of her younger siblings.

"Those teachers encouraged me, and during my senior year at Fatima High School, I was able to help in one of the elementary classrooms," said Ms. Neuner.

Mr. Martin, the guidance counselor, also advised her to attend the College

of the Ozarks, where all the students attend classes year-round on a work-study program which allows students to graduate without any debt.

During the summer of

1974, the pastor of Sacred Heart parish received word from the School Sisters of Notre Dame that only two sisters instead of three would be assigned to Sacred Heart School.

"Father approached my dad shortly after that and asked him how far along I was in college," Ms. Neuner recalled. "Dad told him I was to begin student-teaching that fall at Branson Elementary."

The next time Ms. Neuner was home, she interviewed with Sister Flavia and was hired.

Her first day on the Sacred Heart faculty was Nov. 4, 1974.

That year, she had 40 students in her fifth- and sixth-grade class — 20 students in each grade.

Sister Mary Christopher and Sister Flavia were two of her earliest mentors at Sacred Heart.

Some early advice she received from other teachers was: "Put it in God's hands," and "There are three sides to every story: yours, mine, and the real one."

Another helpful tidbit was: "Don't stop learning until your hair stops growing."

"A few years ago at a parishioner's funeral, I heard his wise saying, 'It's not that hard to be nice,' and I repeat that when needed," she said.

## Big, happy family

Ms. Neuner became Sacred Heart School's first lay principal and seventh- and eighth-grade teacher in September 1981.

"After forty plus years as principal, I returned to the classroom as a full-time teacher," she said.

She is grateful to Fr. Debo and to Debbie Reinkemeyer, the current principal, for their support during this transition.

"I now work part-time, beginning at 6:30 with early-morning duty," she said. "This is when I get to be with the youngest students, and I am learning lots from them!"

This year, she's teaching fourth- through eighth-grade math, seventh- and eighth-grade science, and seventh- and eighth-grade religion.

"I have a wonderful group of students, and I'm in a classroom in the new building, next door to our dear quilters, and across the hall from our PS-PK and K-1 classrooms," she noted.

She has taught five of her younger siblings, and all but two of her current students are children of former students. One is a grandchild of a former student.

"There are numerous students in the lower grades who are grandchildren of my first students at SHS," she noted.

Her other teaching experiences include summer school at Fatima Elementary and Skyline Elementary near Urbana, and serving as a camp counselor for the Christian Appalachian Project in Martin, Kentucky, and the Salvation Army in Jefferson City.

She also spent a summer teaching at St. Michael's School in Window Rock, Arizona, working with Navajo children with special needs.

Mrs. Neuner said she's been fortunate to work with many excellent teachers through the years.

"I marvel at their faith, caring, patience, problem-solving abilities, and the list goes on,"

she said.

Among the many are fellow educators who taught at Sacred Heart for 20 or more years: Peg Brune, Jackie Prenger and Annette Poettgen.

There were also wonderful secretaries, including the late Rosella Bax, Julie Siegler and Mary Lea Reinkemeyer.

"They also served as nurse, teacher, and assisted with many other duties for numerous years when I was principal," Ms. Neuner noted.

## Amazing community

Another benefit Ms. Neuner has received is growth in her faith.

"Every day, I hear and see examples of faith and love in the students and staff," she said.

Among the changes she's witnessed over the years are the technology now used every day, and the access students have to find information with just one click.

She recalled how the Sacred Heart School Advisory Board and the local Home and School Association were organized in the 1980s.

The school now has a preschool and kindergarten, early-morning care, and an after-school program.

"The generosity of our parents, other parishioners, alumni and friends continues to astound me as we were able to raise over a million dollars in a very short time, and this fall we began a new era with the addition of the St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Annex," Ms. Neuner stated.

She feels blessed to have had family, friends, present and former students, pastors, teachers

and staff, fellow principals, the Diocesan School Office, and an awesome parish community who have helped and supported her through the years.

"The generous donations of our Quilting Ladies, St. Anne's Sodality, and the Knights of Columbus are phenomenal," she stated. "Every day, I thank God for the blessings I have received here at Sacred Heart."

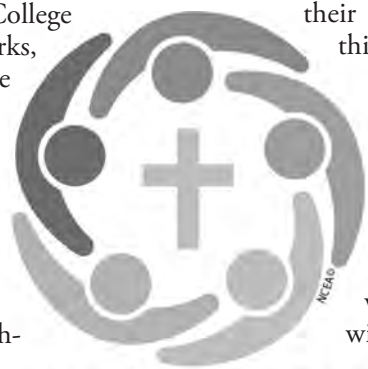
During this Catholic Schools Week, she asks for prayers for Sacred Heart School to grow and flourish as a "rich fountain" of faith for years to come.

"May God bless all our endeavors!"

## Powerful legacy

"From teaching the children of your former students to offering wisdom and kindness to all who cross your path, your legacy lives on in each of us," Ms. Neuner's colleagues stated on Nov. 4.

"The lessons you've imparted — both academic and life lessons — are felt every day in the hearts and minds of those fortunate enough to have been your students," they said. "You are truly a living testament to the power of education, passion and love."



**Catholic Schools**  
United in Faith and Community

*Schulte's*  
Fresh Foods

**JEFFERSON CITY**

**1904 Southwest Blvd.  
(573) 636-8413**

**Open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

**Edward Jones**

> [edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com) | Member SIPC



**Gina N. Muller, CFP®**  
Financial Advisor  
11 South Fairview Road  
Suite 109  
Columbia, MO 65203  
573-445-7671  
Parishioner

MKT-58940-A-A1 AECSPAD 23216280

**Make your financial future  
a priority.**

**Give us a call.**



# Fire captain makes way through ruins of incinerated church to find tabernacle intact

By Ann Rodgers  
OSV News

## Los Angeles

Four days after Corpus Christi Church was incinerated in the Palisades Fire, Capt. Bryan Nassour of the Los Angeles Fire Department picked his way over a 6-foot layer of rubble in the ashen bones of the sanctuary and recovered the tabernacle Jan. 11.

"I did it because the whole community has been decimated — it looks like a nuclear bomb has gone off and nothing is standing," Nassour told *Angelus*, the news outlet of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Nassour is a member of St. Francis de Sales Church in Sherman Oaks, and his brother belongs to Corpus Christi.

"My brother lost his home. I have close friends who lost everything but the shirts on their backs, and they belong to that church too. So, if I could save just one thing, let it be this, so they have something to believe in," he said.

That Saturday morning Nassour, whose station in Pacific Palisades is across the street from Corpus Christi, had been up all night battling other fires. As he sipped coffee at his desk and gazed at the ru-

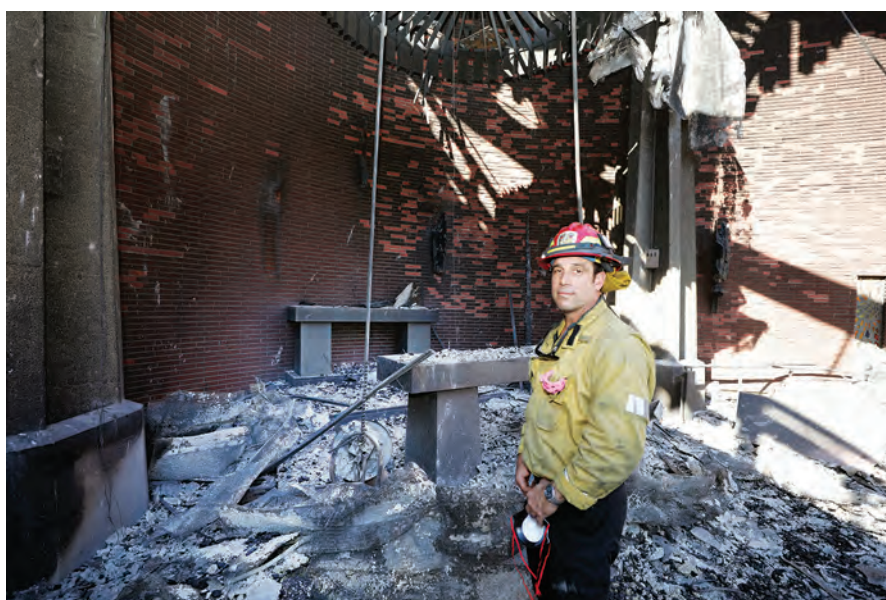
ined church, he decided to check for valuables. He wanted to protect them from looters and perhaps return something meaningful to the parish.

Scorched bricks, tiles and hunks of debris filled the nave so high that he had to crawl under the top of door frames that no longer had doors. The roof had collapsed, a burned steel frame teetered above the twisted remains of a chandelier.

The pews had been consumed. Only the granite altar remained, with the solid brass tabernacle atop it and a cross above. The Blessed Sacrament was intact.

Nassour was astounded to find that the tabernacle weighed more than 300 lbs. His crew helped him get it into the station house.

"It was one of the most uplifting things," he said. "Not everyone is religious, but they saw that and they're like, 'This is awesome.' We're doing something — at least one thing — that we can salvage for the community."



Capt. Bryan Nassour of the Los Angeles Fire Department poses inside the destroyed Corpus Christi Church in Pacific Palisades on the west side of Los Angeles Jan. 15, in the aftermath of the wildfires. Nassour and other first responders help to recover items out of the church during the fire. — OSV News photo/Bob Roller

He made many calls before he was able to reach Msgr. Liam Kidney of Corpus Christi to tell him that the tabernacle was safe and undamaged.

"He was in utter disbelief," Nassour said.

Nassour offered to search for other sacred objects and the priest told him where to find the chalices and patens. Firefighters from Station 69 helped dig for the crushed cabinet. The chalices and patens had been severely damaged.

But the firefighters recovered other sacred objects, including three unbroken containers of holy oil.

Brass withstands high heat, but Nassour suspects more was involved in the tabernacle's survival.

"Talk to any firefighter. In any religious building what usually survives is the cross and

certain specific items that are highly religious, unless they've been specifically set on fire," he said.

Gabe Sanchez, a retired FBI special agent who does contract investigations for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, was sent to retrieve the tabernacle. Firefighters helped him wrestle it into his car. He drove it to St. Monica Church, where Msgr. Kidney celebrated Mass for survivors the next day.

At that Mass, the tabernacle stood on a table by the altar. Msgr. Kidney recounted Nassour calling him to ask,

"I have found this big gold box. What would you like me to do with it?"

The Corpus Christi parishioners burst into applause.

Nassour was unable to attend because he was fighting fires.

*Ann Rodgers writes for Angelus, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.*

## NOW REOPEN In Jefferson City!

1620 Southridge Dr., Jefferson City, MO



## We can't wait to see you!

Check out our newly renovated and expanded facilities, featuring state-of-art equipment and a comfortable patient environment.

Call (573) 455-5066 to schedule your **FREE VEIN SCREENING**



Msgr. Liam Kidney, left, and Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson are pictured at St. Monica Church with the tabernacle recovered Jan. 11, 2025, from Corpus Christi Church, where Msgr. Kidney is pastor. — OSV News photo/Victor Alemán, Angelus

Supplying ice for parish picnics, weddings and any occasion you might have.





# LA deacon, parishioners save church from Eaton Fire

By Pablo Kay  
OSV News

## Los Angeles

As he drove frantically past charred buildings along the smoky streets of Altadena in his SUV early on the morning of Jan. 8, Deacon José Luis Díaz had one prayer on his mind: God, please spare my church.

A few hours earlier, Deacon Díaz and his family had been roused from their beds by a cellphone alert ordering them to evacuate as fierce, dry Santa Ana winds pushed the Eaton Fire into their Altadena neighborhood. They packed up a few belongings and went to the Pasadena Convention Center nearby, one of several public shelters set up for local evacuees.

Shortly after falling asleep in a cot, he was awakened again — this time by his wife.

“José Luis, they’re saying the church is on fire!” his wife, Maria Esther, told him.

If it weren’t for those two fateful wake-up calls — and quick thinking by Deacon Díaz a few moments later — Sacred Heart Church in Altadena would not have survived.

By the time Deacon Díaz pulled up to Sacred Heart with his son-in-law around 7:30 a.m., he found two other parishioners trying to put out a patch of flames burning the wooden roof near the church’s boiler room.

“There were houses next door, in front, and behind the church that were already on fire,” said Deacon Díaz, who has served at Sacred Heart since he was ordained a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 2015.

Deacon Díaz quickly unlocked a maintenance room and pulled out a ladder and an iron pipe. Then the team got to work: Two of them propped up the ladder so that the deacon could use the pipe to break shingle tiles on a side roof of the church, while another poured water from a garden hose on the flames.

“We almost didn’t have water pressure in the hose,” said Deacon Díaz. “So, we had to do everything we could to put it out.”

Their efforts kept the roof

fire, which had been sparked by embers flying from burning homes down the street, from spreading to the rest of the church. The four men stayed on the scene for most of the morning, breaking tiles and finally extinguishing the last of the stubborn flames.

When Deacon Díaz opened the church to look for any damage inside, he was relieved to find the sanctuary in good condition, besides some heat damage to a church door, and likely smoke damage throughout.

“We have a lot of debris but no real damage,” Sacred Heart pastor Father Gilbert Guzman told Angelus hours after surveying the grounds on Wednesday. “All of the buildings are fine, the rectory is fine. We will just have quite a bit of cleanup afterwards.”

When “afterwards” will be, of course, is anyone’s guess, as the bone-dry Santa Ana winds continued to fan multiple large fires in Los Angeles County on Thursday and Friday, spreading ashy air across the area and turning thousands of local residents into refugees in their own cities.

Driving around Sacred Heart’s neighborhood after-

ward, Deacon Díaz described an apocalyptic scene.

“It looks like we’re in the middle of a battlefield. Everything is wiped out,” he said. “There are so many burned homes gone, with only the chimney left.”

By Wednesday, Father Guzman had heard from nearly a dozen parish families who had lost their homes.

The deacon’s house, just eight blocks from the parish, has so far remained unscathed by the Eaton Fire. But as he waits at the Pasadena shelter with his family for the fires to subside and recovery efforts



A worker sweeps outside Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Altadena, Calif., Jan. 17, in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire, which began Jan. 7. Deacon José Luis Díaz and three others saved the church from the Eaton Fire with only an iron pipe and a water hose.

— OSV News photo/Bob Roller

the psalms cited by the deacon in his prayers. “Why do you hold back your hand, why do you keep your right hand in your bosom?”

Prayer, Deacon Díaz believes, can also bring about an interior “improvement” in those who suffer. Another one accompanying the deacon this week has been Psalm 85.

“Passing through the valley of weeping, he turns it into a spring,” the psalm reads. “Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

*Pablo Kay is the editor-in-chief of Angelus, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.*

*The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has established a special dedicated fund “to support parishes and schools impacted by the fires.” To donate, visit [lacatholics.org/california-fires](https://lacatholics.org/california-fires).*



**Caught up in God's LOVE**

*Listening to the call*

A discernment retreat  
for single women  
ages 18-45

**February 21-23, 2025**  
**Saint Louis, Missouri**

Experience a weekend of  
personal and communal reflection  
to learn how to recognize God's  
invitations in your life.

hosted  
by



School Sisters  
of Notre Dame

Learn more and register at  
[ssnd.org/events/retreat225](https://ssnd.org/events/retreat225)



**Mark's**  
**Mobile Glass Inc.**

**“We Come to You”**

Jefferson City 1-800-900-3875 Columbia 1-866-966-2010  
Osage Beach 1-866-966-3900 Sedalia 1-800-888-7130  
Eugene (Automotive Center) 1-573-415-8740

**RESIDENTIAL GLASS**  
**CUSTOM MIRRORS & SHOWER DOORS**  
**COMMERCIAL GLASS & STORE FRONTS**  
**AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES (Eugene location only)**



## COULSON

From page 5

addresses its own problems, the history it holds — but they each reflect this love among students, teachers, parents and the parish,” she said.

She said those who currently lead the schools are “the strongest and best group of administrators that I have worked with.”

“They show great dedication to their role as administrator and great love for their parish and school community,” she said.

“They model keeping faith first, ensuring that our schools are Catholic schools as we all walk toward sainthood in our lives,” she stated.

Likewise, teachers across the diocese want what’s best for the children in their care.

“They have all been open to hearing what else they can do

to improve their own skills and strategies because of the care they have for their students,” she said.

### By their fruits

Mrs. Coulson understands Catholic education as an important part of the Church’s mission to praise God, spread the Gospel and serve others.

“Schools help support parents in our most important role in helping one another become saints,” she said.

Children in Catholic schools get to know Jesus and walk with him each day while studying, serving and living as a community.

“Our students are not only prepared academically, but are prepared to use their gifts in service to God and to one another,” said Mrs. Coulson.

“They experience this each day as a school and classroom community in prayer, in the building of virtues to become the best version of themselves, and in giving through service,” she said.

All of this helps the students prepare to put their spirituality, knowledge and skills to work toward transforming the world.

Mrs. Coulson said it’s easy to tell upon entering a school that it’s Catholic, and not just from the sacramentals and artwork.

“You know it is Catholic by the actions of the people there,” she stated. “In interactions each day, you can see examples of charity, compassion, patience, forgiveness, self-control and generosity.”

Students learn how to recognize the dignity of each human person and live with mu-

tual respect.

“This is reinforced in the homily at Mass, in religion classes, as faith is integrated in each subject area, and as teachers help students build social skills interacting and problem solving with one another,” she said.

### Marks of success

Mrs. Coulson pointed out that all successful Catholic schools are rooted in fostering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the communal witness to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor.

“An excellent Catholic school is guided by a mission that embraces a Catholic identity where there is a focus on the Eucharist and a commitment to communal faith formation,” she said.

Since Catholic schools are a ministry of the parish, helping to fulfill its mission in the local community, “a successful Catholic school will have a strong relationship with the parish community as a whole,” she said.

There should also be a trust between the school and parents and guardians, who are the primary educators of their children.

“By holding these strong relationships, the school will have vitality with the resources it needs to provide an educational experience distinguished by excellence,” she said.

Successful Catholic schools also provide an academically rigorous education that promotes the diversity of individual talents and prepares students to be a source of leadership in the Church and the nation, she stated.

In order to ensure excellence in Catholic schools, Mrs. Coulson recommended praying for teachers, students, and families as they work to carry out the mission set before them.

“Give sacrificially to support the parish and all of its ministries,” she added. “Get to know the teachers and students by greeting them at Mass or parish activities, express you are glad they are there.

“Volunteer when you are able,” she advised, noting that of the best experiences have come when a parishioner who does not have a child enrolled in the school volunteers in the school.

“It’s a great model for families that their support does not end just because their child has been promoted,” she said.

All of this benefits the entire parish.

“A parish with a school is actively engaging in evangelization of students, their families, and the community as they see the positive impact of living the Catholic faith,” said Mrs. Coulson.

“The schools promote participating in prayer experiences, service in the parish, and living as one community,” she noted.

“Providing support to the parish school is providing support for the continuation of the life of the parish.”

## HEBERLIE

From page 12

Visiting all of these schools has given her tremendous hope for the present and the future.

“The children are so alive in their faith,” she said. “It’s great to see how they respond to God, how they respond to their teachers, how great their teachers are.”

Mrs. Heberlie enjoys staying around after Mass while visiting a parish with a school and asking some of the older parishioners about it.

“They immediately light up like a Christmas tree,” she said. “They’re so proud of the school. They probably went there themselves. Maybe their parents went there, too. They sent their kids there, and now their grandchildren go there.”

### “Alive and well”

Mrs. Heberlie said the biggest changes she’s seen in education through her career involve the explosion of technology, and the need for stronger safety protocols in the schools.

What hasn’t changed are the students and their prayers.

“Children still love to pray,” she said. “They see the power of prayer. They want prayer — going to Mass and saying the Rosary. They might not say that to anybody, but they like it. They like learning about God, learning about Jesus. It keeps them anchored.”

She has no doubt that God is present and very active in every Catholic school.

“They wouldn’t still exist if he were not there in them,” she said. “The power of God is alive and well.

“When you have a service project, the teachers and students show up,” she stated. “You see that all the time. They don’t do it because they have to. They do it because they want to. They’re living the Beatitudes.”

Every school has difficulties to overcome, “but I wish the people here could step back and see the growth and all the potential,” said Mrs. Heberlie.

The implementation of the Stewardship Model has strengthened the decades-old policy of Catholic schools in this diocese not charging tuition to families who actively and materially support and participate in their parish.

“It works because people are so committed and devoted to their faith,” said Mrs. Heberlie.

### Marks of excellence

She believes courage is what makes a Catholic school excellent, and student-led evangelization makes an excellent school Catholic.

“Being courageous enough to know to do the right thing,” she stated. “To talk the hard talks that go with instructing children, to help them develop a good moral compass in the schools.

“When you see that children have that moral compass, who are naturally living the Beatitudes and naturally going to prayer in a time of difficulty ... how they relate to the other people in the school — student to student, teacher to student, administrator to student — you know you have an excellent school,” she said.

“When the students themselves direct

or lead the rest of the school in the faith, when they say, ‘let’s pray about it,’ when a student knows they need to forgive someone, when they know they need the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that’s excellent,” she continued.

She said graduates of such schools are easy to identify.

“They’re grounded in their faith, know the tenets of their faith, have a good moral compass, and when they’re in situations that would be tempting or of the world, they know inside, through their moral compass, through their relationship with Jesus, right from wrong.”

They don’t just live their faith; they actively lead others to Christ.

“We can’t keep it to ourselves,” she insisted. “We have to be sharing our faith, to be taking Christ out into the world.”

### For it to “stick”

For parents and fellow parishioners who want to keep their Catholic schools excellent, Mrs. Heberlie advises staying involved; being supportive of teachers and administrators, especially when they make difficult decisions; praying ceaselessly; and being present to their children.

Toward that end, during Catholic schools week, her prayer will be simply “that it sticks.”

“These are good kids, and Catholic schools help put that good in them,” she said. “So, we pray that down the path, wherever it leads, that they’ll continue to give the glory to God for all the gifts he’s given them, and continue following him and helping lead other people to Christ.”



# CREANDO CONEXIONES

## obispo McKnight



### Una invitación a compartir tu voz

**This message can be found  
in English on Page 1**

Por el Obispo W. Shawn McKnight

Cuando cantamos juntos en la liturgia, el Espíritu Santo se mueve entre nosotros. El canto litúrgico es un acto de fe que resuena profundamente en nuestros corazones; no es solo la armonía de voces, sino la unión de corazones en adoración.

El documento del Concilio Vaticano II sobre la liturgia sagrada, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos enseña que: “La tradición musical de la Iglesia universal constituye un tesoro de valor inestimable, que sobresale entre las demás expresiones artísticas... cuanto más íntimamente esté unida a la acción litúrgica, ya sea expresando con mayor delicadeza la oración o fomentando la unanimidad, ya sea enriqueciendo la mayor solemnidad los ritos sagrados.” (n. 112).

Es cierto, la mayoría de nosotros no hemos sido bendecidos con voces perfectas, ¡incluyéndome a mí! Entiendo que se necesita valor para cantar con valentía en presencia de otros. Pero cuando elevamos nuestras voces juntos, participamos en un acto profundo que celebra nuestra unidad en la fe que glorifica a Dios.

Mi esperanza es que todos en nuestra diócesis se sientan llamados a participar en la música sagrada de nuestras Misas y otras liturgias. Sin embargo, reconozco que puede haber obstáculos que hacen que sea difícil o imposible que esto suceda. Por ejemplo, cuando el canto no resulta familiar puede resultar difícil cantarla. Y cuando un canto está en un idioma que no es el nuestro puede resultar aún más desafiante.

La música compuesta por personas que han sido acusadas de manera creíble de abu-

so sexual presenta obstáculos más significativos. Existe una preocupación real por lo que se transmite a nuestra comunidad, especialmente por los sobrevivientes de abusos, cuando continuamos utilizando las obras musicales de tales compositores.

Igual de importante es la

un intenso debate dentro de nuestra diócesis, en los medios de comunicación nacionales y en las redes sociales.

Aunque esta atención no era esperada, fue inspirador presenciar la pasión y el entusiasmo que las personas aportan a la conversación sobre la música sagrada en nuestra

Iglesia. Siempre que este fervor está presente entre los fieles, nuestra Iglesia nos ofrece una buena manera de responder: a través de

un proceso sinodal de discernimiento.

Abolí mi decreto original y lo reemplacé con uno que invita a todos en nuestra diócesis a participar en un proceso de discernimiento. El Espíritu Santo está obrando en cada uno de nosotros, y cuando el pueblo de Dios habla, tenemos la responsabilidad de escuchar, incluso si eso significa ajustar nuestro enfoque.

Ahora estamos iniciando este nuevo enfoque. En las próximas semanas, todos en nuestra diócesis serán invitados a compartir sus perspectivas sobre cómo podemos usar mejor la música sagrada para fomentar una mayor participación en nuestras liturgias católicas. Se les invitará a completar encuestas en persona, durante las Misas el último fin de semana de enero y en línea. Posteriormente, se llevarán a cabo sesiones sinodales de escucha en numerosos lugares de la diócesis. Aquellos que asistan a nuestros retiros de responsabilidad en español también tendrán la oportunidad de aportar sus comentarios. El Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) está ayudando a nuestra diócesis en este esfuerzo para garantizar que la encuesta tenga credibilidad científica.

Este proceso sinodal debe permitir que todos participen

en un diálogo y discernimiento en oración sobre este tema importante. Después de las sesiones sinodales de escucha, la Comisión Litúrgica diocesana presentará su propuesta al Consejo Pastoral Diocesano y al Consejo Presbiteral, quienes a su vez me ayudarán a finalizar un nuevo decreto para el otoño. Este decreto reflejará nuestro compromiso con la belleza de la música sagrada y fomentará una mayor participación en nuestras liturgias, preservando al mismo tiempo nuestros valores morales y doctrinales. Mi intención es que todos los sacerdotes revisen el borrador final del decreto durante su reunión anual de octubre antes de que se haga permanente.

No es coincidencia que muchos de nuestros planes pastorales en nuestros decanatos incluyan un llamado a la renovación de nuestra vida

sacramental. Este proceso, aunque tal vez no previsto necesariamente por quienes redactaron esos planes, fomentará esa renovación.

Creo que el Espíritu Santo habla a través de todos los miembros de la Iglesia. Es esencial que nos escuchemos mutuamente a través de un diálogo honesto, donde podamos explorar juntos estos temas difíciles y no simplemente imponiendo preferencias individuales.

Invito a cada uno de ustedes a participar de todo corazón en este proceso, compartiendo sus pensamientos, experiencias y oraciones.

Juntos, guiados por el Espíritu Santo, podemos asegurar que nuestra música sagrada siga siendo una fuente de unidad que eleve nuestras almas, profundice nuestra fe y nos acerque a los misterios sagrados que celebramos.

## Wien: Our Lady of the 'Snow' Angels



**Snow gently blankets Our Lady of the Angels Church in Wien the morning of Jan. 5.**

— Photo by  
Father Jeremy  
Secrist



## GOVERNOR

From page 4

He thanked Bishop McKnight, the priests, and everyone who had a hand in organizing the Mass and the reception.

"This is a really important step for our family to start off in church," he said.

He asked for everyone to keep praying for him.

"This is a really challenging time," he said. "If you run a family, if you run a business, if you run a farm or you run the State of Missouri, you always need prayers and people on your side who are really going to help you."

### Work and pray

Bright sun and frigid temperatures greeted the assembled spectators on the South Lawn of the State Capitol Jan. 13 for the inauguration of Gov. Kehoe. Lt. Gov. Dave Wasinger, Secretary of State Denny Hoskins, State Treasurer Vivek Malek and Attorney General Andrew Bailey.

Gov. Kehoe had his late mother's rosary with him and placed his hand on her Bible while taking his oath of office.

"I learned a lot about life, faith and relationships from her," he said in his Inaugural Address. "Every time we kids complained about something we didn't have, she had a simple answer: 'Pray harder, work

harder.'

"Mom was right," he said. "If you work hard and you love the Lord, you can get anywhere you want to go in this state and this country."

Bishop McKnight, in his invocation, petitioned the Supreme Ruler of the Universe to support the state's officers in fulfilling the awesome trust of the people.

"Through their stewardship of our resources, may they ensure opportunities for education, jobs, commerce, health and well-being of our citizens," the bishop prayed, his words condensing in the frigid air. "May they preserve and defend the physical and moral integrity of our beloved state, founded with trust in you."

The bishop's prayers echoed off historical St. Peter Church, surrounding state government buildings and the century-old, Corinthian-column-clad Capitol.

Hints of the previous week's snowfall highlighted northern rooftops.

Flags and bunting swayed in nippy bursts while the dormant trees rested.

The sky was impeccably blue.

The bishop asked God to make himself present to the



**Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicky, vicar general of the Jefferson City diocese and chaplain of the Missouri House of Representatives, greets Gov. Mike Kehoe, a member of Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish in Jefferson City, at a reception after a Mass for the governor in the Cathedral the day before his inauguration.**  
— Photo by Annie Williams

state's leaders, "especially in the lonely moments of fateful decisions which may be theirs to make for us and our world."

Using the words God instructed Aaron and his sons of the priestly order to use in blessing the Israelites in the time of Moses (Numbers 6:24-26), the bishop prayed:

"The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"

### Deep roots

Outdoor inauguration ceremonies, depending on the

weather, have been a Missouri tradition since the current Capitol was under construction over 100 years ago.

Another time-honored custom involves waiting until the Angelus bell in nearby St. Peter Church strikes at noon for the governor to take his oath of office.

Gov. Kehoe is the second Catholic to serve as governor of Missouri and the first since the late Gov. Joseph Teasdale served from 1977-81.

Gov. and Mrs. Kehoe have called Missouri home for more than 30 years.

Gov. Kehoe once said that being Catholic is "the core of who I am."

The youngest of six siblings, he grew up four doors from what was then Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in the Baden neighborhood of North St. Louis.

His father left his mother when young Mike was a year old, leaving his mother to raise the children by herself.

Gov. Kehoe was taught by Sisters of Loreto at the parish school and brothers and priests of the Society of Mary

at Chaminade College Prep near St. Louis.

Gov. Kehoe's mother, Lorraine, went to daily Mass. The family was active in parish activities.

Gov. Kehoe's sister, Carol, died young of leukemia.

The governor and Mrs. Kehoe got married in 1989.

An early and important friend and mentor gave Gov. Kehoe some important advice before dying: "Don't forget your roots."

"I will always remember where I came from," the governor stated in his inaugural address.

### "Lots of help"

Gov. Kehoe and his family have taken up residence in the historical Governor's Mansion, where once stood Jefferson City's first Capitol building.

Lawmakers in the 1840s narrowly voted against selling the former Capitol, which Irish Catholics had helped build, to the St. Louis archdiocese for use as a church after the second Capitol was completed.

Nearby stands the Upshulte House, in which Jesuit Father Felix Verreydt reportedly offered Jefferson City's first Mass in 1831.

While Gov. Kehoe was serving as a state senator in 2010, his mother gave him for Christmas a plaque containing an image of the Blessed Mother under her title Our Lady of Perpetual Help, holding the infant Jesus.

The inscription reads: "To my son, the senator, with love and prayers from Mom, with lots of help from Mary."

"It will be on my governor's desk," Gov. Kehoe told his friends at the reception. "So, she'll be with us."

## Every Day is a Gift. Take Time to Enjoy It.

*We believe every day is a gift, and so is every life.  
Take time to enjoy it, and never take a  
moment for granted.*

### Houser-Millard Funeral Directors

2613 W Main Street, Jefferson City, MO

(573) 636-3838

Funerals / Cremation / Pre-Planning

**MILLARD**  
Family Chapels, Inc.  
www.millardfamilychapels.com



**Jeff Hille**  
Funeral Director



**Annie Green**  
Funeral Assistant



**Reid Millard**  
Owner, Funeral Director

## PROVIDING COMPLETE ELECTRICAL SOLUTIONS SINCE 1968.

• CONTACT US FOR ALL YOUR ELECTRICAL AND DATA SOLUTIONS •

**Meyer**  
ELECTRIC INC.

3513 N Ten Mile Drive, Jefferson City • (573) 893-2335



# Notre Dame falls short in playoff final; faith, brotherhood shine

By John Knebel  
OSV News

The somber mood spoke volumes.

Displaying a despondent countenance before a throng of national media, University of Notre Dame football coach Marcus Freeman and two of his stalwart seniors — quarterback Riley Leonard and linebacker Jack Kiser — fielded numerous questions following a 34-23 loss to Ohio State University in the College Football Playoff national championship Jan. 20 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

“Obviously tough moment,

tough outcome,” said Freeman. “There’s reasons why we didn’t get the outcome we wanted. Credit to Ohio State and their ability to execute on both sides of the ball. ... We obviously didn’t play the way we needed to get the outcome we wanted, but as I said to the guys in the locker room, there’s not many words to say when everybody is hurting.”

Aiming for its 12th national title and first since 1988, Notre Dame started strong. Culminating a momentous 18-play, 75-yard drive that ate an unfathomable 9 minutes, 45 seconds off the clock, Leonard

powered home from the one-yard line to give the Fighting Irish a 7-0 lead.

As soon as he reached the end zone and noticed a camera directly in front of him, Leonard pointed to his wristband to share his favorite Scripture passage, Matthew 23:12: “For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

At his first opportunity to speak at the post-game press conference, Leonard said, “Before I answer your question, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the opportunity to play in

this game.”

In addition to his wristband, he wrote on his hand Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so should one man sharpen another.”

“We and Ohio State are the two teams that praise Jesus Christ the most, and I think that we strengthen each other in our faith through coming to this game and competing against each other,” he said. “I’m happy to see godly men come out on top no matter what the circumstances. I’m happy to praise Jesus in the lowest of the lows, as well.”

After the win, several Ohio

State Buckeyes publicly praised God, including quarterback Will Howard. “First and foremost, I’ve got to give the glory and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I wouldn’t be here without him,” he said in an on-field interview. Howard has celebrated his team’s post-season wins on social media with Bible verses.

Despite later throwing a pair of touchdown passes and being directly involved in a whopping 49 of Notre Dame’s 58 offensive plays, Leonard said he felt he had let his teammates down in the championship game, this despite helping the Fighting Irish climb to within 31-23 with four minutes remaining in regulation, thanks mostly to his heroics.

Reflecting on his decision to transfer from Duke University for his senior season, Leonard credited his coaches and teammates for his brief, but incredibly successful, Notre Dame career.

“It’s very easy to be a successful quarterback when, first and foremost, your coaches are setting you up for success,” Leonard said. “I’ve never been so prepared in my life. I’ve just learned so much within this past year. ... The character of this place is kind of hard to describe, and I think I’ve grown so much because of the people around me.”

Kiser, a six-year player who set a record for most games played in Irish navy blue and gold, echoed his fellow team captain.

“When you look at the six years I’ve been here, what I remember is the people,” Kiser said. “Getting to meet amazing guys ... and to go on the journey that we went on. To have Coach Freeman — yeah. It’s about the people. It’s the people that have made this place different. It just shows where this program is heading. The people in this building are the best, absolute best.”

Like a father figure making sure his flock understood his gratification for a job well done, Freeman lauded the entire Notre Dame roster. He described a team that “chose to work, we all chose to trust each other, chose to love each other, to be selfless and put the team in front of ourselves.”

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

From page 1

However, I recognize there can be obstacles that make it difficult or impossible for this to happen. For example, when the song is unfamiliar it can be hard to sing along. And when a song is in a language that is not our own, it can be even more challenging.

Music composed by individuals who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse brings more significant obstacles. There is real concern about what is conveyed to our community — especially to survivors of abuse — when we continue to use the works of such composers.

Just as important is the doctrinal appropriateness of the hymns we sing.

Music has a unique power to shape our understanding of the faith. The texts we sing must not only be lyrically and melodically beautiful, but also theologically brilliant with depth of meaning, reflecting the magnificent truths of our Catholic faith.

These are important issues which can stir up tensions and division. However, we must take seriously the famous mandate in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy” (no. 14).

In this spirit, I am compelled to address this issue in a way that fosters unity and encourages greater participation in our liturgies.

In recent years, I, along with other leaders in our diocese, have been discerning how best to address these matters. After much deliberation, I issued a decree last October.

That decree focused on three areas: it established common Mass settings for all to become familiar with, it prohibited the use of songs by composers credibly accused of

sexual abuse by their diocesan bishop, and it banned approximately a dozen songs with significant doctrinal issues.

To my surprise, this action sparked intense discussion both within our diocese and across national media and social networks.

While this attention was not expected, it was inspiring to witness the passion and

ish-language stewardship retreats will also have the opportunity to provide input.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) is assisting our diocese in this effort to insure a survey with scientific credibility.

This synodal process should allow all to engage in prayerful dialogue and discernment on this important matter.

Following the synodal listening sessions, the diocesan Liturgical Commission will make their proposal to the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Presbyteral Council, who will in turn assist me with finalizing a new decree by the Fall, that reflects our commitment to the beauty of sacred music and encourages greater

participation in our liturgies, while preserving our moral and doctrinal values.

I intend to have the entire presbyterate review the final draft decree at their October Institute before it would become permanent.

It is not coincidental that so many of our deanery pastoral plans include a call for a renewal of our sacramental life. This process, while perhaps not necessarily anticipated by those who wrote those plans, will encourage that renewal.

I believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through all members of the Church. It is essential that we listen to one another through honest dialogue where we can explore these difficult issues together, and not simply by asserting one’s preferences.

I invite each of you to participate wholeheartedly in this process, sharing your thoughts, experiences and prayers.

Together, guided by the Holy Spirit, we can ensure that our sacred music remains a source of unity that uplifts our souls, deepens our faith, and brings us closer to the sacred mysteries we celebrate.

**I believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through all members of the Church. It is essential that we listen to one another through honest dialogue where we can explore these difficult issues together, and not simply by asserting one’s preferences.**

enthusiasm people bring to the conversation about sacred music in our Church. Whenever such fervor is present among the faithful, our Church provides us with a good way to respond — through a synodal process of discernment.

I abrogated my original decree and replaced it with one that invites everyone in our diocese into a discernment process.

The Holy Spirit is working through each one of us, and when the people of God speak, we have a responsibility to listen, even when that means adjusting our approach.

We are now beginning this new approach.

In the coming weeks, everyone in our diocese will be invited to share their perspectives on how we can better use sacred music to encourage greater participation in our Catholic liturgies.

You will be invited to complete surveys, both in-person at Masses the last weekend of January, and online.

In-person synodal listening sessions will then be held at numerous locations in the diocese, and those who attend our Span-





By Father Donald Antweiler

### ACROSS

1. The Ruth and Paul Henning CA (Conservation Area) is a 1,534-acre tract within the city limits of Mo.'s music \_\_\_\_, Branson, Mo.
7. Electric stove, or "Home on the \_\_\_\_, where the deer and antelope play."
11. The \_\_\_\_ of Capri casino is located in historic Boonville, Mo.
12. Charged particle.
14. Letters for High School.
15. Possible suffix for "employ" or "trust."
16. "There's really just a good mix of open and \_\_\_\_ places there (at Henning CA). Hills and hollers and things of nature," —Mo. Dept. of Conservation forester.
18. This Buckeye State is the birthplace of 7 U.S. Presidents.
20. Abbr. for "near" or letters for "no reply" on social media.
21. Q through U.
23. Holiday or Comfort.
24. Pope St. John Paul \_\_\_\_ not only had enormous impact on the world stage but gave the Church the Luminous mysteries of the Rosary and promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
25. "...and then come and \_\_\_\_ your gift (Matthew 5:24).
27. In art, the glowing circle around a saint's head.
28. A brand of jeans.
29. Moon of Jupiter.
30. Rowboat propulsion.
31. Hockey legend Bobby \_\_\_\_.
32. "...Come, let us mold \_\_\_\_ and harden them with fire," (Genesis 11:3).
36. \_\_\_\_ Health has St. Mary's Hospital in Jeff. City with medical clinic locations listed in Belle, Holts Summit and Tipton.
37. "90% of the people that visit Henning CA ...enjoy the \_\_\_\_ overlook and the tower. Sunrise and sunset

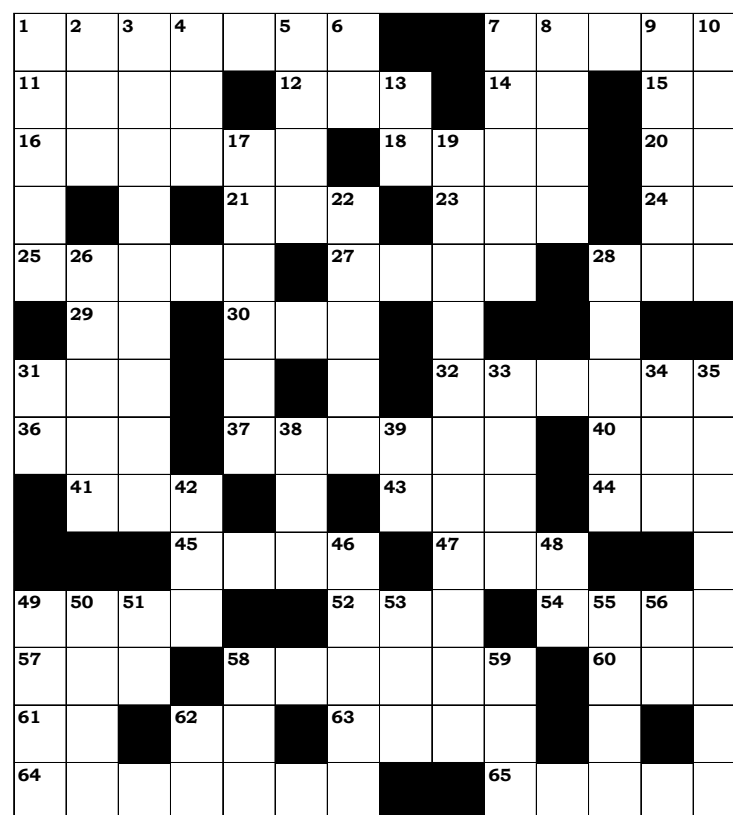
are extremely popular times to visit," —Mo. Dept. of Conservation forester.

40. "\_\_\_\_ bin ein Berliner," —JFK's famous phrase at the Berlin Wall in 1963 (i.e., "I am a Berliner.")
41. Letters for the screening and security agency at airports.
43. OT priest who raised the young prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-18).
44. He always used to wear a suit and \_\_\_\_ at the office.
45. "The Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good \_\_\_\_, that is, the coming of the Reign of God..." —*Lumen Gentium*, Vatican Council II, as found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #763.
47. Paul Henning was born in Independence, Mo. (buried in Tuscumbia, Mo.) where County Judge Harry Truman advised him to go to \_\_\_\_ school to be an attorney.
49. Preparation period before Easter.
52. Letters on the side of a car's tire.
54. "Bondi, an Austrian immigrant, hadn't expected to take up arms against slavery but fell under John Brown's spell. 'He exhibited at all times the most affectionate care for \_\_\_\_ of us,'" —Bondi in *The Zealot and the Emancipator*, by H.W. Brands
57. Possible suffix for words like "harp," "tour," or "arson."
58. Instead of studying to be a lawyer, Henning became a successful Hollywood \_\_\_\_ for the George Burns and Gracie Allen radio/TV show, and the rest is history.
60. In billiards, it can refer to a stick or a ball.
61. Chemical letters for "sodium."
62. "I have a notion that at the beginning of the war Mr. Lincoln read the Bible quite as much for its literary style as he did for its religious \_\_\_\_ spiritual content," —*Tad Lincoln's Father, A Memoir*, by Julia Taft Bayne.
63. House or home in Tijuana.
64. The trails and features of the Henning CA don't have a Jed Clampett trail or a Hooterville overlook, referring to the 1960s TV \_\_\_\_.

65. "When you sin in this way against your brothers and \_\_\_\_ their consciences... you are sinning against Christ," (1 Corinthians 8:12).

### DOWN

1. The \_\_\_\_ Kid, with his funny sidekick Pancho, was a 1950s popular Western TV show based on a fictional character created by the famous author O. Henry in a 1907 short story. The Kid was also featured in film, radio and comic books.
2. \_\_\_\_ trees in Mo. are considered very endangered due to an invasive borer beetle killing these trees across North America.
3. The Henning CA includes trails, viewing \_\_\_\_ and an observation tower that gives visitors views ranging from the Branson strip to the White River Balds Natural Area.
4. Letters for Improvised Explosive Device; a simple homemade bomb, esp. used on roads traveled by U.S. troops in Afghanistan, leading to many casualties.
5. I got some band-\_\_\_\_ for cuts and scrapes on my hands from chopping wood.
6. "On opening (the basket), she looked, and \_\_\_\_, there was a baby boy, crying!" (Exodus 2:6)
7. With bad eyes and a grouchy disposition, one might assume this tank-like herbivore would be given a wide berth. But poachers after the horn(s) on its snout have made it endangered.
8. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear \_\_\_\_" —Matthew 1:23 (2 wds.).
9. When Aladdin rubbed his lamp, out popped a \_\_\_\_.
10. "It was \_\_\_\_ coming to grips with the stark reality that he had murdered people," —*The Last Man*, by Vince Flynn.
13. "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them; there is \_\_\_\_ third," —T.S. Eliot in *From Hell To Paradise Dante and His Comedy*, by Olof Lagercrantz.
17. After 5 innings, no runs, no hits, no \_\_\_\_.
19. Paul Henning was the creator of the 1960s TV hit, *The Beverly \_\_\_\_*, based on



his camping experiences in the Ozarks near Branson. Green Acres and Petticoat Junction followed, along with Dirty Rotten Scoundrels and others.

22. "The Indians of the Americas gave the world \_\_\_\_-fifths of the crops now in cultivation," —*Indian Givers: How Native-Americans Transformed the World*, by Jack Weatherford.
26. "Thus evening came, and morning followed—the \_\_\_\_ day," (Genesis 1:5).
28. Legal; valid.
31. Bone.
33. Letters for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, now called Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.
34. "The flight path into \_\_\_\_ airport took them over the Missouri and west into Kansas," —*Zero Day*, by David Baldacci.
35. Instead of former TV shows, the features of the Henning CA pay tribute to an Ozark literature classic, Herold Bell Wright's 1907 Ozark-based novel, \_\_\_\_ of the Hills.
38. "The \_\_\_\_ and the bear shall be neighbors..." (Isaiah 11:7).
39. This border State with Mo. surprisingly has over 100 lakes and miles of water recreation, including the Niobrara River, a popular canoeing river with over 90 waterfalls (abbr.).
42. "Go to the \_\_\_\_, O slug-gard, study her ways and

learn wisdom..." (Proverbs 6:6).

46. Oregano or cilantro or cin-namon or basil or garlic, for example.
48. "Mother Teresa, who struggled with her own 'dark night,' shows us that, in the end, the saints really are like the rest of us and struggle in every way that \_\_\_\_ do. Sometimes they have to struggle even more," —clues from *My Life with the Saints*, by James Martin, S.J.
49. The \_\_\_\_; a Jeff. City exercise and recreation center jointly owned and operated by Jeff. City Parks System and Lincoln University.
50. Jacob's twin brother, whom he tricked out of his birth-right (Genesis 25:24-26; 29-34).
51. Companion to #62 DOWN.
53. For a worker, letters meaning Short Term Assignment.
55. Letters for American Civil Liberties Union; a liberal civil liberties group.
56. Letters for Catholic University (\_\_\_\_) of America, in Washington, D.C.
58. In text, letters for "Where are you?"
59. "(The Passover lamb) shall not be eaten \_\_\_\_ or boiled, but roasted whole..." (Exodus 12:9).
62. Companion to #51 DOWN.

See ANSWERS, page 23



# MUSIC

From page 1

parishioner survey as well as prayerful listening sessions in several locations in the diocese.

The short survey, conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) can be taken online in English or in Spanish at [diojeffcity.org/sacred-music](https://diojeffcity.org/sacred-music).

People who do not wish to go online will be able to fill out paper versions of the survey at church on Jan. 25 and 26.

Listening sessions will be held:

- Saturday, Feb. 15, from 10:30 am-noon, St. Mary Church, Shelbina

- Sunday, Feb. 16, from 5:30-7 pm, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Columbia

- Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 6:30-8 pm, St. Joseph School, Westphalia

- Thursday, Feb. 20, from 6:30-8 pm, Kirksville Newman Center

- Sunday, Feb. 23, from 1-3:30 pm, St. Patrick Chapel, Sedalia

- Sunday, Feb. 23, from 5:30-7 pm, St. Andrew Church, Holts Summit

Registration is not required but highly recommended for planning purposes. Register online at [diojeffcity.org/sacred-music](https://diojeffcity.org/sacred-music).

Information gathered from the surveys and listening sessions will help the diocesan Liturgical Commission formulate a draft of an updated official decree on sacred music in the diocese.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC), the Presbyteral Council and the bishop's cabinet, with input from priests of the diocese and members of the diocesan chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), will help shape the draft into final form before Bishop McKnight puts it into effect on Nov. 1.

"This is an exercise in being a Church in which we listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit," said Helen Osman, communications consultant to the diocese.

Bishop McKnight in October of 2024 promulgated a decree forbidding music by three composers with credible allegations of abuse against them from being sung at Mass;

removing 12 hymns with theologically problematic lyrics from songs approved for Mass; and calling for people in all parishes in the diocese to become familiar with four musical settings for the parts of the Mass.

The decree, written in consultation with the Liturgical Commission, was immediately controversial.

In light of comments he received, the bishop rescinded the October decree in early November and issued a second, temporary decree, prohibiting music by those found credibly accused by their diocesan bishop (but without mentioning any names), and requiring those who are responsible for the selection of sacred music to evaluate their music selections using the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) document's evaluative principles.

That second decree required the process of synodal consultation that is now getting under way. The decree will automatically expire on Oct. 31 of this year, and a new permanent decree is expected by then.

Bishop McKnight said he found the responses to the initial decree to be a reflection of how important sacred music is for people.

"There are quite a few ways the bishop could have responded to that," Mrs. Osman noted.

"For instance, he could have said, 'Too bad. I have the authority as bishop, and I have spoken, and now deal with it,'" she stated. "Or he could have said, 'Okay, we're just not going to do anything.'

"And he chose perhaps the most difficult response, which I think is also the Catholic response," she said. "That is to say, 'I have to hold this in tension. I have the teaching of the Church that I'm responsible to implement, and I have the response from the people, which suggests that we need to find a different way of implementing this.'"

She emphasized that Church teaching cannot and will not be changed through this listening process.

**IS IT REALLY TRUE,  
THOSE WHO SING,  
PRAY TWICE?**

Please join us in a diocesan-wide  
**consultation regarding sacred music**  
in two ways:

**SURVEY**  
Complete this online  
survey before Jan. 31  
Scan here or go to  
<https://bit.ly/musicdjic>

**LISTENING SESSIONS**  
Register to participate in a  
listening session in February  
Scan here or go to  
[diojeffcity.org/sacred-music](https://diojeffcity.org/sacred-music)

**DIOCESE OF  
Jefferson City**

"What we are doing is trying to understand better how people use sacred music to strengthen their faith, and how can that be deepened," she said.

With listening sessions conducted in an atmosphere of prayer, respectful silence and attentive listening, the process is not about determining what the majority of people think or want.

"It's about, 'What does the Holy Spirit want?'" said Mrs. Osman.

## Listening attentively

"The surveys will tell us a little bit about people's understanding of sacred music and how it affects them," Mrs. Osman stated. "And the listening sessions are intended to help us share our experiences — something we can't do in a survey."

The listening sessions will include a short video with information about the Church's teachings regarding sacred music, and how sacred music isn't created in a vacuum.

"And then we'll be asked in the listening sessions to reflect on what sacred music has meant to each of us, and we'll hear that from one another," said Mrs. Osman.

"And then we're asking, 'What would you like sacred music to become?'"

The discussions are intend-

ed to go beyond preferences for certain musical styles, to the very heart of music as a means of drawing people closer to Christ.

"I believe that through this process, people's hearts and souls will be touched and transformed by the Holy Spirit to be a better Church," said Fr. Merz. "And that, in the longer term, will be good for the sacred music of the Church."

## Creativity and oversight

Fr. Merz, who is also pastor of St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish and Sacred Heart Parish in Columbia, noted that there's been "a beautiful explosion of creativity" in the Church since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

"The problem is, there hasn't been as much oversight," he said. "With that, you saw all kinds of music emerge for the liturgy — some really good, some less so."

Church law says each bishop is responsible for overseeing the music that's sung at liturgies in his diocese.

To help bishops carry out that responsibility, the USCCB Committee on Doctrine in 2020 released a document titled "Hymnody in the Service of the Church."

In that document, the committee put forth specific criteria for determining whether

a piece of music is appropriate for use in Catholic worship.

Fr. Merz noted that according to Church teaching, the best liturgical music "is the music that clothes the sacred words."

Specifically, "Instruction on Sacred Music" ("Tra le Sollecitudini") states: "Sacred music ... contributes to the decorum and the splendor of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of

grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries," (no. 1).

"So whether that's Scripture or the prayers of the Church, including the 'Our Father,' the best music adorns those words and makes them come to life in a different way," said Fr. Merz. "And when we're talking about the word of God, or the Word who IS God, that's pretty powerful to make that word come alive in our lives."

## Becoming transparent

One of the desired outcomes of the listening process is a stronger presence throughout the diocese of the diocesan chapter of the NPM.

The organization gives people who lead and accompany music at Mass the opportunity to learn more about their craft and their ministry while networking with each other.

"We try to provide what's needed from smallest parish with volunteer musicians to the big parishes with paid directors, we try to help each other with what we need," said Laura Forbis St. Clair, director of the local NPM chapter. "Whether paid or not, they need to be able to network and ask questions and have the resources they need to do their ministry well."

See CONSULTATION, page 27



Need more info about an event or want to see more events?  
Visit the diocesan EVENT CALENDAR at [diojeffcity.org/events](http://diojeffcity.org/events).  
Want your event listed?  
Fill out the ONLINE FORM at [diojeffcity.org/event-listing](http://diojeffcity.org/event-listing).

## Fundraisers & Social Events

Jan. 24

Westphalia, K of C pre-Lenten fish fry, 4-7 pm

Jan. 25

Fulton, K of C Ladies Auxiliary annual candlelight lasagna dinner, 6-8 pm, St. Peter Parish multipurpose building

Feb. 2

Argyle, Argyle & Koeltztown Volunteer Fire Department annual breakfast, 7:30-11 am, Argyle K of C Hall; Jefferson City, K of C Council 12992 breakfast to benefit the Special Learning Center, 8 am-noon, Cana Hall, Cathedral of St. Joseph

Feb. 7

Westphalia, K of C pre-Lenten fish fry, 4-7 pm

Feb. 9

Starkenbourg, Church of the

Risen Savior Parish men's organization breakfast, 7-11 am, Valentine Hall; Westphalia, Westphalia Lions Club breakfast, 7-11 am, Lions Den

Feb. 22

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul Parish annual ham & bean dinner, 11 am-6 pm, St. Patrick Chapel basement

## Meetings & Conferences

Every Tuesday

Jefferson City, Divorced Catholics group, 6:30-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Emmaus Room

Every Wednesday & Saturday  
Jefferson City, 12-Step Meetings, 7-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Emmaus Room

Jan. 25

Westphalia, Planning Music for Lent & Triduum, organized

by the Jefferson City Chapter of NPM, 9-11 am, St. Joseph Church, to RSVP email [JeffersonCityMO@npm.org](mailto:JeffersonCityMO@npm.org)

Feb. 6

Boonville, Mid-Missouri Ultreya for Cursillo, 6:15-8 pm, Ss. Peter & Paul Parish

Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27

Jefferson City, "Seasons of Hope," grief support group meeting, 6:15 pm, St. Peter Parish

## Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Every Tuesday

Jefferson City, "Tuesday With Faith," small group discussions, 6:30-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info, call 573-645-2478 or email [jimkemna@gmail.com](mailto:jimkemna@gmail.com)

Every Friday

Jefferson City, Centering Prayer Group, 2-3 pm, Em-

maus Room, Immaculate Conception Parish

Jan. 31

Loose Creek, "Women of God: Uniquely Gifted, Uniquely Called," evening of music & reflection, 5:45 pm, Community Center

Jan. 31-Feb. 2

Conception, MO, Encountering Christ silent retreat for women, for info visit [conceptionabbey.org/guests/upcoming-retreats](http://conceptionabbey.org/guests/upcoming-retreats)

Feb. 1

Hannibal, "Women of God: Uniquely Gifted, Uniquely Called," morning of music & reflection, 9 am, Holy Family Parish Center

Feb. 2

Columbia, "Women of God: Uniquely Gifted, Uniquely Called," afternoon of music & reflection, 1:30 pm, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Hall

Feb. 3

Columbia, Monthly CoMo Charismatic Prayer gathering, 7-8:30 pm, Korean Martyrs Room, St. Thomas More Newman Center Parish; Rolla, "Women of God: Uniquely Gifted, Uniquely Called," eve-

ning of music & reflection, 5:30 pm, St. Patrick Parish Center

Feb. 5

Columbia, Faith, Fun, Fellowship Nite (F3 Nites), discussions for all ages about the Catholic faith, 6:30-8 pm, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish's Flanagan Hall, for info or to RSVP visit [tinyurl.com/ymw7m3ae](http://tinyurl.com/ymw7m3ae)

Feb. 15-16

Jefferson City, Marriage Encounter Weekend, Best Western Plus Capital Inn, for info or to register visit [jeffcityme.com](http://jeffcityme.com)

Feb. 21-23

St. Louis, "Caught up in God's Love: Listening to the call," discernment retreat for single women, ages 18-45, with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, for info or to register visit [ssnd.org/events/retreat225/](http://ssnd.org/events/retreat225/)

## Youth & Young Adults

First Wednesdays each month

Jefferson City, Rooted/Connected/Searching in Community young adult group, 5-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info visit [icangels.com/youngadults](http://icangels.com/youngadults)

## FR. EKKA

From page 11

just as airports in India acquired escalators and automatic doors.

One thing he continued to miss about home were the elaborate decorations and celebrations, especially at Mass.

### Looking ahead

Fr. Ekka noted that in recent years, the Jefferson City diocese has done a good job of helping missionary priests from other countries acclimate themselves to life in this country.

"Still, it may take some time for new missionary priests to get adjusted to the situations here, the food here, culture, language and especially the accent of American English," he said.

For missionary priests coming to serve in this diocese, Fr. Ekka recommends a healthy dose of open-mindedness.

"Be ready to accept the cultural differences you face here," he advised. "Otherwise, it will be very difficult for you."

Having visited home several times, he said the Jashpur diocese hasn't changed very much in the 14 years he's been here.

"It's basically the same bishop of the same diocese," he said. "Except that with help from the Mission Office (of the Jefferson City diocese), we have been able to build a few churches here and there and some schools."

Fr. Ekka said he's grateful to Bishop Emeritus John

R. Gaydos, who led the Jefferson City diocese from 1997-2018, and Bishop W. Shawn McKnight for allowing him to minister to the people here and grow with them in relationship with God.

He's also thankful for all the people who helped him minister and develop relationships between this diocese and his own.

He noted that several priestly classmates in his home diocese have passed away.

Therefore, he asked for prayers for continued health and longevity, "so that I may continue to serve God and his people for a long time to come."

He said people who plan to travel to India are welcome to visit him and his diocese.

He can be reached by email: [alexekka@hotmail.com](mailto:alexekka@hotmail.com).

## Decades after closure, Florida Catholic high school reopens

By Tom Tracy  
OSV News

### Key West, Florida

A lot has changed in the lower Florida Keys since the 1980s, when declining enrollment led to the closure of the Catholic high school in the oldest and southernmost parish of the Archdiocese of Miami.

But a surge in local economic development, tourism jobs and a renewed demand for private and Catholic education in Monroe County culminated

Dec. 13 in the dedication Mass and grand opening of a refurbished Basilica High School building and facility at the Basilica of St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish and School in Key West.

The new facility will allow for full enrollment in 2025 of all four grades under the leadership of principal and president Robert Wright and will serve as an answered prayer for local parents who had few options for private education in

Monroe County.

The nearest Catholic high school was located in Miami-Dade County, meaning some families left the Key West area in search of a Catholic education for their children, while others settled for public education.

"For the past 40 years, we have only served students through eighth grade, and families had no choice but to enroll in the public school system for high school," Angela

Wallace, spokesperson for the school, told the *Florida Catholic*, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Miami.

"However, there has been a significant thirst and demand to reestablish a Catholic high school. Thanks to our incredible community, we began that very endeavor two and a half years ago with a pilot program for ninth grade only," she said.

Last school year, the basilica school added 10th grade students to its current stu-

dent body serving grades nine through 11, "and we look forward to welcoming a senior class next fall," Wallace added.

The new high school building was renovated into a three-story classroom building complete with a state-of-the-art chemistry lab, seven classrooms, a library and multiple flex-use spaces.

Classes at Basilica High School will begin using the new building at the start of the spring semester.



To submit items for the PEOPLE PAGE, including **Baptisms, Birthdays** for ages 90 and older, **Anniversaries** of 10+ years in increments of 5 ONLY (e.g., 15, 25, 45 years, etc.), **Marriages, Deaths, Elections, Honors and Appointments**, please go to:  
**[diojeffcity.org/update-information](http://diojeffcity.org/update-information)**

Deaths

Clara “Belle” Fennessey, 94 — grandmother of Rev. Brad T. Berhorst, and parishioner of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City — on Jan. 14. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 20 with Fr. Berhorst presiding. Burial was in Visitation Cemetery in Vienna.

Argyle, St. Aloysius — Marvin Wieberg

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — Patrick Feehan

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — Laurentia Wenzel

Lake Ozark, Our Lady of the Lake — Edward Evers; Cindy Hutzler; John H. Riley

Taos, St. Francis Xavier — Cynthia Forck

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus — David Lee Reed

*A Prayer for Peace*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

In Sedalia: Sacred Heart’s Darrin Hartman leads the choir to sing as one

By Chris Howell

Darrin Hartman is the choir director at Sacred Heart School and has lived in Sedalia his whole life.

His appreciation for music began early in life and, fostered by his parents, Hartman has made it the focus of his career.

“I started taking lessons when I was about five,” Hartman said. “I received a piano as a gift from my parents for Christmas, a little toy piano, and it all begin there.”

Hartman has now been working at Sacred Heart for 13 years and his musical influence affects every student at the Catholic school.

“I teach liturgical music, I teach music appreciation, junior high choir and then music K-12,” Hartman said. “So some general music courses in there, too. We’re fortunate to have the Barbara Lamy Cooney Piano Lab, and we do some work in there, too.”

Choral students quickly learn to sing together under Hartman’s instruction hone their skills and before long are “harmonizing together.”

“We kind of start out singing two parts and then eventually we get into three and four parts,” Hartman said. “We have we have a really good number this year of about 40 high school students in the choir program. We really start in junior high with adding harmony, to the choral parts; it’s something we’re continually working on.”

**Darrin Hartman is the choir director at Sacred Heart School in Sedalia and has lived in Sedalia since birth. He has been working at Sacred Heart for 13 years, and his musical influence affects every student at the Catholic school.**

— Photo courtesy of Chris Howell of the Sedalia Democrat newspaper

Students who start off in choir typically stay with it through their senior year, so they seem to enjoy it.”

With Sacred Heart being a private



ERLANDSON

From page 9

up a rickety ladder and methodically re-roofed it to his standards.

“Greg,” he said proudly, “this roof will last 50 years.” He wanted my wife and me to live in the house. To pass on his property would have been a dream fulfilled. I would always nod noncommittally, having taken his daughter and his four grandchildren to the other side of the country.

I am thankful that Joe did not live to see what happened on January 7, 2025, for it would have broken his heart for sure.

The breezes vanished, replaced by snarling Santa Ana winds blowing westward from the desert. Somewhere a spark metastasized into a flame, and a flame into an inferno. Like marauders galloping out of the foothills, the flames swept down on the community that liked to call itself a village, as if its boutique shops and restaurants somehow protected it from a harsher world.

Not just Joe’s house was reduced to ash, but every house around it for miles. The high school his children attended,

the church where I married his eldest daughter, the hardware store he bought supplies at.

Gone in a day were the fruit trees he planted in the front yard, the canyon full of wild anise and chaparral his grandchildren would excitedly explore when they came to visit, the weathered basketball hoop, the basil, the lemon-scented Eucalyptus leaves.

No one was killed at that house that terrible day, although my brother-in-law stayed as long as possible watering that roof meant to last 50 years. Yet I find myself weeping at the loss, weeping at the remorseless erasure of a community, of a man’s dream, of a place filled with wonderful human beings who had no idea what would one day befall it.

We have our memories, my wife said. We do indeed. That must suffice, I know. But it does not.

*Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on X @GregErlandson.*

QUESTION

From page 8

“raises the stakes” for what might otherwise be a more academic discussion.

While the doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity has many layers of deep theological meaning, the possibility of imitating her life of perfect virginity can present a very concrete vocational challenge to many of today’s Christians, just as it did to the Christians of the Church’s early centuries. This could be one reason why the doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity might be a more emotionally charged topic for some non-Catholic Christians.

*Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.*

Crossword puzzle answers

D	N	O	W	E	R	E	U	L	T	U	C	
R			A	S	C	R	O	A	N			
E	C	E	R	I	T	E	R	S	I			
H	C	E	S	I	P		N	T	E			
P			L	A	S	E	N					
E	I	L	I		O		S	S				
H	C		N	C	S	C	E	M	S			
S	K	I	C	B	R		R					
		I			O	A	R	O	I			
E												
I	I	N	N		S	R	T		C			
N		O	H	O	D	A	V	H	S			
E		S	H	N	O	I	E	T	S			
G		N	A	N	T	I	P	A				



## Praying in Monroe City for the unborn



Holy Rosary School in Monroe City recently held a Pro-Life Mass, marking a special moment for the eighth-graders who have been praying for their adopted babies since the start of the school year. By the end of the year, each student will have prayed for their child for nine months, symbolizing the full duration of pregnancy. Each student selects a name for their adopted baby and hopes to meet them in heaven one day. They pray a special prayer by Archbishop Fulton Sheen: "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted, who is in danger of abortion. Amen." In addition to their prayers, the students also participated in the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Nine Days for Life Novena. — Photo by Nancy Shively

## Getting into the spirit



Fourth- through eighth-graders at Fr. McCartan Memorial School in Marceline engage in the fun of caroling after walking uptown the week before Christmas.

— Photo from the Fr. McCartan Memorial School Facebook page

## "Ringing" in the New Year in Glasgow



Students of the Little Saints Preschool at St. Mary School in Glasgow enjoy "ringing" in the New Year on their first day back from Christmas Break.

— Photo from the St. Mary School Facebook page

## Playing in the snow in Macon

Students of Immaculate Conception School in Macon play in the snow in 50-degree weather on Jan. 17.

— Photos from the Immaculate Conception School Facebook page





## Bible Accent

Jesus was with a member of his family when he performed his first of many miracles.

In John 2:1, we read that there was a wedding in Cana. Jesus' mother was there, and he and his followers also were invited.

During the festivities, the wine began to run out.

Jesus' mother went up to him.

"They have no wine," she told him.

Jesus looked at her.

"Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come," he said.

His mother went to find the servers.

"Do whatever he tells you," she instructed them.

At the wedding feast, there were six stone water jars for Jewish ceremonial washings. Each jar could hold 20 to 30 gallons of water.

"Fill the jars with water," Jesus told the servers.

After the servers filled the jars to the brim, he told them to draw some out and take it to the headwaiter.

The headwaiter tasted the liquid the servers brought him and was pleased, because Jesus had turned the water into wine.

The headwaiter called the bridegroom.

"Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now," he said.

Jesus performed this miracle as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his apostles began to believe in him.

## St. Sigfrid

St. Sigfrid was born in 10th-century England and was believed to be a priest of Glastonbury or York. He became a bishop and was prominent among the English evangelizers of Scandinavia. He built a church at Vaxjo in southern Sweden and established sees in East and West Gothland. He converted and baptized King Olaf of Sweden in 1008, and he also preached in Denmark. Sigfrid died around 1045, and we remember him on Feb. 15.



## Jesus said that all who do God's will are his family

By Jennifer Ficaglia  
Catholic Courier

One day, Jesus was in the synagogue.

The Pharisees were watching him closely to see if he would cure on the Sabbath so they could accuse him of wrongdoing.

That day, there was a man in the synagogue. He had a withered hand.

"Come up here before us," Jesus told the man.

"Is it lawful," Jesus asked as he looked around him, "to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"

The Pharisees were silent.

Jesus was angry and sad at the same time because the Pharisees' hearts were hardened.

"Stretch out your hand," he told the man.

The man's hand was immediately restored.

The Pharisees left and plotted with others to kill Jesus.

Afterward, Jesus and his followers withdrew toward the sea.

A large number of people had followed him from Galilee and Judea.

When word spread that he was curing people, many others came from Jerusalem and Idumea, from beyond the Jordan, and from the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon.

Whenever unclean spirits saw him, they would fall down before him and shout, "You are the Son of God."



Illustration by Linda Rivers

Jesus sternly warned them not to make him known.

He then went up a mountain and chose 12 of his followers to be his apostles.

He sent them out to preach and gave them the authority to drive out demons.

After he chose his apostles, Jesus went home.

The crowd was so large that it was impossible for him and his friends to even eat.

Some of Jesus' relatives came looking for him.

"He is out of his mind," they said.

"He is possessed by Beelzebul," the scribes from Jerusalem chimed in. "By the prince of demons he drives out demons."

"How can Satan drive out Satan? Jesus replied. "If a king-

dom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ... And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand; that is the end of him."

Jesus' mother and brothers arrived at the house and asked for him.

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he said while looking at those around him.

"Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

### Read more about it... Mark 3

1. How many apostles did Jesus choose?
2. Who came looking for Jesus at his home?



**What sin did Jesus call unforgivable?**  
(Hint: Mark 3:28-29)

Answer: Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

## Puzzle

Unscramble the letters in each word and arrange them to form a quotation from the children's story.

tansa    uto    ohw    stana    vedri    acn

Sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_?

Answers: Satan, out, how, Satan, drive, can; How can Satan drive out Satan?

Catholic education of our youth is essential to the foundation of your parish. Please consider making a provision in your will for your local parish school.

Have you already remembered your parish or school in your estate plans? Please let us know!



**Planned Giving**  
LEAVING A LEGACY

**Jake Seifert**  
Director of Development  
573-635-9127 x-227  
development@diojeffcity.org

DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY  
2207 W Main | PO Box 104900  
Jefferson City, MO 65110-4900  
diojeffcity.org



## 'The Rosary in a Year' podcast: 'Poco a poco' to the Lord

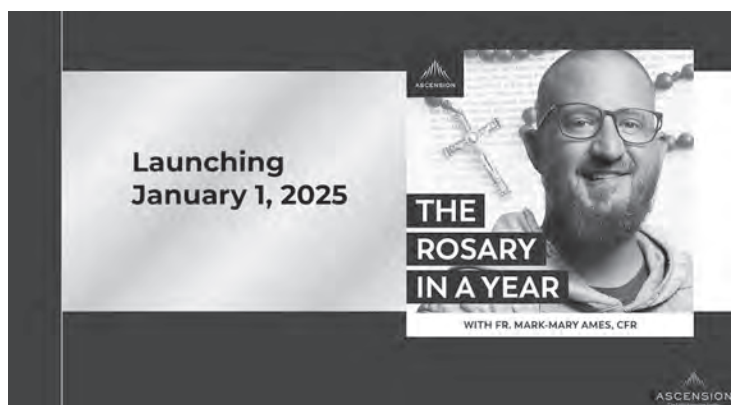
By Gina Christian  
OSV News

"The Rosary in a Year" chart-topping podcast is a step-by-step journey to a deeper relationship with the Lord, its host told OSV News.

"You don't have to become a desert monk tomorrow, but can you take the next best step towards slowing down, cultivating your interior life and experiencing the peace that only Christ can give," said Father Mark-Mary Ames, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and director of both the religious congregation's communications and priestly studies.

Launched this month, Fr. Ames's "Rosary in a Year" podcast from Ascension focuses on what he calls "the fundamentals of the prayer" — specifically, "knowing the one who is the source and end of our prayer."

The podcast, which is structured in six phases, begins by "taking the time to know that as you are praying, your loving Father is looking upon you with love and listening attentively," said Fr. Ames, who lives at a New York friary in the



Bronx.

Designed for both beginners and regular Rosary devotees, the podcast seeks to lay a foundation for a lasting habit of prayer, while enabling participants to enter more fully into meditating on the lives of Jesus and Mary.

The pace is "*poco a poco*," said Fr. Ames, citing the Italian phrase for "little by little" — which was also the title of a music album released by fellow friar Brother Isaiah, a project for which Fr. Ames was executive producer.

"The *Poco a Poco* Podcast" is also the name of another CFR podcast Fr. Ames regularly co-hosts.

The priest took a similar approach in his 2021 book *Hab-*

*its for Holiness: Small Steps for Making Big Spiritual Progress*, also available from Ascension, a Catholic publisher based in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

"It's a bit of the slogan I've taken upon my media evangelization, and it's consistent with the Franciscan-pilgrimage spirituality," Fr. Ames explained. "Take the next good step."

That message has gained traction among podcast listeners. On the Apple U.S. podcast charts, "Rosary in a Year" held the overall No. 1 spot from Jan. 1-3 and again from Jan. 8-10, a total of six days, besting comedian Joe Rogan's long-running No. 1 hit show.

As of Jan. 14, the podcast — which debuted at No. 1 on Apple's U.S. religion and spirituality chart and remains in that position — is still in the overall top five.

The podcast's immediate success mirrors that of two predecessor podcasts from Ascension hosted by Minnesota priest Father Mike Schmitz: "The Bible in a Year" which launched Jan. 1, 2021, and

## Movie Ratings



General  
Patronage

Mufasa: The Lion King (PG)



Adults and  
Adolescents

The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim (PG-13)  
Mary (not rated)  
Moana 2 (PG)  
Sonic the Hedgehog 3 (PG)  
Wicked (PG)



Adults

Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin. (PG-13)  
A Complete Unknown (R)



Limited Adult  
Audience

Better Man (R)  
Gladiator II (R)  
Wolf Man (R)



Morally  
Offensive

Den of Thieves 2: Pantera (R)  
Kraven the Hunter (R)  
Nosferatu (R)  
One of Them Days (R)  
Y2K (R)

Ratings are supplied by OSV News Service.

"The Catechism in a Year," which launched Jan. 1, 2023.

Both quickly rose to No. 1 on the Apple U.S. charts. "The Bible in a Year" is currently No. 2 in Apple's U.S. religion and spirituality chart, right behind "The Rosary in a Year."

"People are hungry for substantial, well-ordered, spiritual

formation," said Father Ames.

"I pray that 'The Rosary in a Year's' popularity is in large part because it is the Lord's response to the deep longing of so many of the faithful: Lord, teach us how to pray."

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.

### CASTROP PLASTERING CO. INC.



PLASTERING - DRYWALL  
ACOUSTICAL TILE  
STUCCO & THIN WALL  
PLASTERING

4915 Hwy. 50 West, Jefferson City (573) 893-4111

### BUILDING DEMOLITION?



Contact Us  
1-800-769-5798  
www.arsi-mo.com

### Asbestos Inspection and Abatement

Serving clients throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City since 1985  
with asbestos, lead, mold, and environmental services.

### On air

**Mustard Seed**  
Sunday Scripture readings  
and reflections

Sundays, 10:06 am, KWIX-AM 1230, Moberly  
Sundays, 8 am, KRLL-AM 1420, California

**EWTN and other  
Catholic programming  
Covenant Radio Network  
broadcasts**

KHJR 88.1 FM, Jefferson City  
KBKC 90.1 FM, Moberly  
KEFL 91.5 FM, Kirksville  
94.7 FM, Columbia  
103.3 FM, Fulton  
K216GM 91.1 FM, Canton

### JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE 2025



Father in heaven,  
May the *faith* you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of your Kingdom.  
May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.  
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.  
May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*, a yearning for the treasures of heaven.  
May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.  
To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever.  
Amen



# Winter in New Orleans



## CONSULTATION

From page 21

All of this matters because “music ministry can directly affect a person’s faith and prayer life,” she said.

Sacred music is very powerful because it “touches your heart and your soul and it tickles your brain,” she stated.

Good music draws people more deeply into worship, summoning forth the “full, active, conscious participation of the assembly,” she said, echoing the fathers of the Second Vatican Council.

Bad music, on the other hand, distracts people from that purpose.

“That’s why we rehearse so much,” said Mrs. St. Clair. “You can’t just do it on the spot and do it well. You have to prepare musically, you have to prepare prayerfully.”

She said that ideally, music ministry is transparent.

“If you do it well, the people don’t even realize it,” she stated. “It just flows seamlessly, no matter the instrumentation.”

She pointed out that new music is always being composed and published, “so, we also have to look through the lens of the Church documents at any new music that comes out to see if it’s suitable.”

She cited “Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship,” a document the USCCB released in 2007, which refers to three judgements — each to be taken into account equally

— in evaluating sacred music: liturgical, pastoral and musical judgement.

“Namely, is it appropriate for that part of the Liturgy? Is it musically sound, can people sing it? And pastorally, does it work?” she said.

She emphasized that music ministry is not performance.

“It’s sung prayer,” she said. “And if you do it right, you don’t have to worry, because everyone is singing with you, and no one is looking at you.”

### Fostering communion

Fr. Merz has been reading about recent discoveries of neuroplasticity in the brain, and how music can stimulate the brain to heal parts of itself that are damaged.

A large section of a book on the subject focuses on the effect of music.

“Music in special ways wakes up and fires up the neurons in special places and gets the brain to quiet itself, and a person instantly starts sleeping better, speaking better, the pain goes away — amazing stuff,” he said.

This is scientific validation to the Church’s teaching in the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* that “music is at the top of all the arts in terms of leading us closer to God and inspiring us.”

“The importance of music is known from the ancient world and philosophy

to modern neuroscience, and certainly the theology of the Church,” he stated.

It’s always fascinated Fr. Merz that for the last two Sundays of Advent, the Preface before the Eucharistic Prayer says of Jesus that “John the Baptist sang of his coming.”

“Prophets — their prophecies were so important because they were pointing to Christ, and music lifts them up,” the priest stated. “It’s like: ‘I need to convey this important word, so I’m going to sing it, to give it more importance.’”

Fr. Merz pointed out that the verb “to sing” in Hebrew is mentioned more than 300 times in the Bible.

And St. Augustine wrote that, “Singing is for one who loves,” the priest said. “Augustine also tells us, ‘He who sings prays twice.’”

Mrs. Osman predicted that if this Sacred Music Consultation serves its purpose, parishes throughout the diocese will settle on somewhat of a shared musical repertoire, “where you can walk into any church in the diocese and be able to participate in the singing — whether that’s the Mass settings or other songs that we share.

“And more people will be aware of how important music in the Liturgy is, and more care and intentionality will be made in the songs we are singing,” she said.

Fr. Merz is confident that

## Daily Readings

### Sunday, Jan 26

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Neh. 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10  
Ps. 19:8-10, 15  
1 Cor. 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27  
Lk. 1:1-4; 4:14-21

### Sunday, Feb 2

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Mal. 3:1-4  
Ps. 24:7-10  
Heb. 2:14-18  
Lk. 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

### Monday, Jan 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin

Heb. 9:15, 24-28  
Ps. 98:1-6  
Mk. 3:22-30

### Monday, Feb 3

St. Blaise, bishop and martyr; St. Ansgar, bishop

Heb. 11:32-40  
Ps. 31:20-24  
Mk. 5:1-20

### Tuesday, Jan 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church

Heb. 10:1-10  
Ps. 40:2, 4ab, 7-8a, 10-11  
Mk. 3:31-35

### Tuesday, Feb 4

Heb. 12:1-4  
Ps. 22:26b-28, 30-32  
Mk. 5:21-43

### Wednesday, Jan 29

Heb. 10:11-18  
Ps. 110:1-4  
Mk. 4:1-20

### Wednesday, Feb 5

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr  
Heb. 12:4-7, 11-15  
Ps. 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a  
Mk. 6:1-6

### Thursday, Jan 30

Heb. 10:19-25  
Ps. 24:1-4ab, 5-6  
Mk. 4:21-25

### Thursday, Feb 6

St. Paul Miki and Companions, martyrs

Heb. 12:18-19, 21-24  
Ps. 48:2-4, 9-11  
Mk. 6:7-13

### Friday, Jan 31

St. John Bosco, priest  
Heb. 10:32-39  
Ps. 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40  
Mk. 4:26-34

### Friday, Feb 7

Heb. 13:1-8  
Ps. 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9abc  
Mk. 6:14-29

### Saturday, Feb 1

Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19  
(Ps.) Lk. 1:69-75  
Mk. 4:35-41

### Saturday, Feb 8

St. Jerome Emiliani; St. Josephine Bakhita, virgin

Heb. 13:15-17, 20-21  
Ps. 23:1-6  
Mk. 6:30-34

### The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for January:

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

Sponsored by

Expert Care Close to Home



**SSMHealth**  
St. Mary's Hospital  
JEFFERSON CITY

the Sacred Music Consultation will serve a deep and holy purpose, possibly in ways yet unforeseen.

“Whether there will be some new brilliant insights about music that will solve the controversies, I don’t know,” he said. “The Holy Spirit tends to work in a deeper way than that. He works in a way that says, ‘Let’s foster communion and healing on a communal

and individual level here, and that will lead to something bigger.’

“The Holy Spirit says, ‘I’m more concerned with healing hearts and bringing them into deeper communion,’ and that transforms the world,” said Fr. Merz.

“And I think our bishop is convinced that that is what will transform our sacred liturgy.”



## Calm after the storm



A peaceful dusk settles on St. Raphael Church in Indian Grove, following a heavy snowstorm on Jan. 4-5. — Photo by Stacy Fox

Like Us On  **Diocese of Jefferson City**

Church of the Risen Savior Parish

**Breakfast**

**February 9**  
7-11AM

Menu includes: pancakes, blueberry pancakes, sausage, ham, biscuits & gravy, hashbrowns, scrambled eggs, baked apples, coffee, orange juice, water

ADULTS \$12 — KIDS 5-11 \$5 (4 & UNDER FREE)

Valentine Hall - 197 Hwy. P  
**STARKENBURG**

Bishop McAuliffe Knights of Columbus Council #12992

**Breakfast**

**Sun., February 2 — 8 am-noon**  
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Cana Hall  
Jefferson City

Serving regular & chocolate chip pancakes, regular & western style scrambled eggs, sausage, fruit cocktail, milk, OJ & coffee

\$10 Adults ~ \$5 Ages 6-11  
\$30 max for immediate family

*Proceeds to Benefit Special Learning Center*



## Toledo bishop: Jubilee Year gives new hope for ending, healing from abortion

By Gina Christian

OSV News

As the nation's Catholics prepared to commemorate unborn children in prayer, a U.S. bishop pointed to the Jubilee Year as a time of hope for healing from the wounds of abortion.

On Jan. 22, the Catholic Church in the U.S. marked the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.

Since 2013, the U.S. Catholic bishops have also invited the faithful to join in the 9 Days for Life novena ahead of the day of prayer, with the goal of ending abortion. The novena begins Jan. 16.

The date of the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children's annual observance recalls the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, which legalized abortion nationwide.

Those rulings were overturned by the Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which returned the issue of abortion from the federal to the state level.

In the wake of *Dobbs*, overall U.S. abortion rates appear to have increased slightly, with medication-induced abortions representing the majority (63%), according to the Guttmacher Institute. The same organization also noted that as of 2022, the annual global total for abortions was approximately 73 million.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* describes the Jan. 22 day of prayer as a time

to pray "for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life" and to undertake "penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion."

That aim takes on an even deeper meaning as the universal Catholic Church celebrates the 2025 Jubilee Year, the theme of which is "Pilgrims of Hope," said Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

"As we prayerfully continue the essential work of restoring full legal protection of all pre-born children and supporting parents facing difficult pregnancies, we also recognize our need for asking forgiveness and healing from the Lord for when we have given in to the culture of death," said Bishop Thomas in a statement released by the USCCB Jan. 13.

The Catholic Church teaches that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception," and that abortion "willed as either an end or means is gravely contrary to the moral law."

Bishop Thomas said those who have been involved in abortion — which "inflicts deep and lasting wounds on society" and "more directly on individuals and families" — should recall that "no sin is beyond" the Lord's "unfathomable mercy."

"Jesus greatly desires our repentant hearts and invites us into an encounter with Him,"

said Bishop Thomas in his statement. "For Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available for those seeking God's forgiveness, hope, and peace."

He noted that many who have been involved in abortion — some of whom have been "pressured or coerced" into ending the lives of their unborn children — experience an "often-silent grief" and "despair of being worthy of the love and forgiveness of God and others."

"To the parents of children who have died by abortion, I am deeply sorry for your loss," said Bishop Thomas in his statement. "Know that our Lord loves you as His daughters and sons no matter your actions."

The Jubilee Year offers a fresh opportunity to trust in God's mercy and to be healed in hope, said the bishop.

"As we celebrate this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope, Pope Francis invites us to experience God's love 'that awakens in hearts the sure hope of salvation in Christ,'" he said, quoting "*Spes Non Confundit*" ("Hope Does Not Disappoint"), the papal bull issued by Pope Francis in May 2024 announcing the 2025 Jubilee Year.

"Hope allows those who have been involved in abortion to turn to God and repent, confident that He will forgive and make them whole," said Bishop Thomas.

"This January 22 and beyond, we need to be reassured that Jesus Himself, who is the source of our hope, was first wounded for our offenses, and suffered for every sin of ours, including abortion," he said. "Please join me in praying that God will fill the hearts of mothers and fathers suffering the emotional and psychological wounds from abortion with the hope of forgiveness that only He can give."

Bishop Thomas also invited those suffering from the wounds to abortion to "seek support from the Church's compassionate and confidential ministries," including the national Project Rachel Ministry, diocesan healing ministries and parish supports.

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.

ARGYLE/KOELTZTOWN VOLUNTEER  
FIRE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL

**PANCAKE, SAUSAGE  
& EGG BREAKFAST**

**Sunday, February 2 — 7:30-11 am**

Dine-in and Carry-outs available  
Argyle K of C Hall



Proceeds go toward  
maintenance of all  
fire equipment.

**\$12**  
Per Adult

**\$6**  
Kids under 12