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(left) Bishop John Iffert holds up a copy of a Father Paul Ryan's 1953 "History of the Diocese of Covington Kentucky," which he referenced for his homily.



(right) A young student from St. Paul School sings in the choir during the anniversary Mass.

Young photos

## St. Paul School celebrates the 100-year anniversary of its reopening

**Bella Young**  
Multimedia Correspondent

Bishop John Iffert gathered with the Florence community and St. Paul Church, Florence, parishioners to celebrate Mass in honor of the parish school's 100-year anniversary. Saturday, Sept. 28, St. Paul Church was standing room only with overflow seating in the narthex, a testament to the impact that the school and church have had on the Florence community.

Bishop Iffert took a moment in his homily to reflect on the last 100-plus years of St. Paul Parish and School, using a "History of the Diocese of Covington Kentucky" by Paul E. Ryan as his main point of reference.

"There was a fellow who came here, his name was Cornelius Ahern. He moved into the Florence area, and he tried to find out

how many Catholics were here, and he could identify three Catholic households in Florence," Bishop Iffert said.

One of the Catholics living in Florence was the wife of a protestant doctor, Mrs. Scott. The others were Mr. and Mrs. Ferneding, keepers of the local tavern. Despite the absence of Catholic church in Florence, Mr. Ahern traveled to Covington where he met with the pastor of St. Mary Church, Father Thomas Butler and asked him to come back to the village of Florence and celebrate Mass for the small number of Catholics. It took a few months, but Father Butler made his way to Florence, and in 1851, in the small living room of the Ahern house, the Catholic faith had a new spark in Florence.

That first gathering was larger than expected, however. As Father Butler made his way to Florence, in those few months word  
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### Moving? Wrong address?

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(859) 392-1570

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Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at [covdio.org/messenger](http://covdio.org/messenger).

### Hurricane Helene Relief

In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, a Category 4 storm that wreaked havoc across the Southeast, **Bishop John Iffert is asking pastors to hold a second collection this coming weekend, Oct. 5-6 and/or Oct. 12-13.** The decision to hold a collection is at the pastor's discretion.

Funds collected will be directed to Catholic Charities USA, which supports local Catholic Charities



Agencies already on the ground providing crucial assistance to survivors. One hundred percent of your donation will go directly to those impacted by this disaster.

#### Ways to Participate

##### By check:

**Mail your contribution:** Diocesan Stewardship Office, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, KY 41011

**Drop in second collection basket:** at your parish the weekends of Oct. 5-6 and/or Oct. 12-13.

**Make checks payable to:** "Diocese of Covington," with "Disaster Relief Fund" in the memo line.

##### Online:

Visit [www.covdio.org/give](http://www.covdio.org/give), click "Disaster Relief"

##### Scan the QR Code:

Use your mobile phone to scan the QR code.



For questions contact the Diocesan Stewardship Office at (859) 392-1500.

## Catholics urged to vote 'yes' on amendment 2

**Marnie McAllister**  
Record Editor

In addition to the hotly contested presidential race and other local races, November's ballot will ask Kentucky voters whether they support changing the state's constitution as it relates to funding education.

Currently, the constitution states that public money may only be used for public schools. The ballot measure asks Kentuckians to weigh in, asking: "To give parents choices in educational opportunities for their children, are you in favor of enabling the General Assembly to provide financial support for the education costs of students in kindergarten through 12th grade who are outside the system of common (public) schools by amending the Constitution of Kentucky as stated below?"

**The constitution would be amended to read: "The General Assembly may provide financial support for the education of students outside the system of common schools."**

Ultimately, enough yes votes would empower Kentucky lawmakers to craft legislation that could provide funds to help students attend non-public schools or receive other educational services outside of the public school system. Supporters, including the Archdiocese of Louisville, say the amendment is good for Kentucky's students and urge voters to vote "yes."

"School choice in various forms exists in almost every single state — this is not a red state blue-state divide — 48 states and the District of Columbia have some form of school choice. We are in a very small minority," said Jason Hall, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky.

The conference represents Kentucky's bishops on matters of public policy. Its staff has been promoting need-based school-choice legislation for more than two decades and supported legislation passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2021.

That legislation, which would have created Education Opportunity Accounts for students with demonstrated financial need, was struck down by the Kentucky Supreme Court in 2022. The court ruled that the legislation vio-  
*(Continued on page 3)*

# Congregation reminded of the uniqueness of the individual, to 'see Jesus in everyone' at pro-life Mass

**Maura Baker**  
Staff Writer

The twilight of Oct. 1 brought together people across the diocese in support of life. The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, had its pews filled for the 2024 annual Pro-life Mass, organized by the diocesan Pro-life Office.

Bishop John Iffert celebrated the Mass, with Bishop Emeritus Roger Foys in choro, and concelebrated with priests from across the diocese — all having come together to reinforce the Catholic truth of the dignity of life from natural conception to natural death.

Earlier the same day, the Republic of Iran fired missiles upon the state of Israel, with natural disasters and armed

conflicts worldwide at the top of many headlines.

Father Daniel Schomaker, pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington, and director of the diocesan Office of Worship and Liturgy, served as homilist for the 2024 pro-life Mass, and brought attention to these world events as a pro-life issue.

He began his homily quoting the 1996 film “Matilda,” “Everyone is born, but not everyone is born the same. Some will grow to be butchers, or bakers, or candlestick makers. Some will only be really good at making Jell-O salad. One way or another, though, every human being is unique, for better or for worse.”

“It is that uniqueness that makes us so concerned about the preciousness of human life,” Father Schomaker said,

“because we have been made unique. There is not now, nor has there ever been, nor will there ever be again in the history of the universe another you.”

“Think about that,” he continued, “There is only ever one you and that is true for every human being God has thought into being.”

Clarifying, Father Schomaker said that existence doesn’t begin at conception — but “at the moment God thinks of you, because it is from that moment God has loved you.”

Because of this uniqueness, “there has to be a dignity in every single one of us,” said Father Schomaker, “because every single one of us brings something new into the world.”

(Continued on page 20)



(above left) A statue of the Blessed Virgin, surrounded by roses, sits on the steps of the sanctuary at the 2024 annual Pro-life Mass, Oct. 1. Our Lady of Guadalupe is venerated as the patron of the unborn.

(above center) Bishop John Iffert prays the Eucharistic prayer over the gifts

(above right) Father Daniel Schomaker, pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington, preaches the homily for the 2024 Pro-life Mass.

(right) Two young girls read from the worship aid.

(far right) A young man prays the rosary prior to Mass service.

## Praying for the dead in a communion of saints

Bishop John Iffert launched a diocesan-wide Campaign of Mercy in June 2024. This campaign invites people from across the Diocese of Covington to make a Corporal and Spiritual Work of Mercy a part of their spiritual life and then to evangelize others by inviting family and friends to join in that service. Each month, the Messenger is featuring a work of mercy. For the month of October, the Messenger will focus on the corporal and spiritual works of burying and praying for the dead.

**David Gibson**  
Catholic News Service

Some people cannot imagine praying for the dead. What is unimaginable to many others is not to pray for those who die.

To be sure, there is more than one way to pray for those who die, just as there is more than one way to pray for those in this world who share intimately in our daily lives. Our greatest hopes for others, whether in this world or the next, are what lend shape to our prayers for them, as does our appreciation of their finest

gifts.

Whatever its form, prayer for others focuses on what is best for them, what God intends for them. With that in mind, we commend the dead “to God’s mercy,” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out. Indeed, we do.

But there is something beyond petitions for mercy that I find noteworthy about praying for the dead. It is the deep-down sense of continued connection with them that these prayers appear to express.

The loss suffered when someone we love dies is not absolute, which is not to suggest it is not painful. In praying for a parent, a spouse, a child or friend who died recent-

(Continued on page 5)

### Cemetery Visitations

Families and friends of our beloved dead are invited to join Bishop John Iffert for a prayer service, **Saturday, Oct. 19**, at the following diocesan cemeteries:

- 10 a.m., St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell
- 11 a.m., St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell
- 12:30 p.m., St. Stephen Cemetery, Ft. Thomas

At each cemetery, the names of those interred from October 2023 through September 2024 will be proclaimed.

*“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.”*



# Catholics urged to vote 'yes' on amendment 2

(Continued from page 1)

lated the section of the Kentucky Constitution that prohibits the state from raising money for non-public schools.

Amendment 2 on the November ballot attempts to change that section. The church's long history of support for school choice is a matter of justice, said Hall. The church teaches that "parents are the primary educators of their children and the state's role is to support that," said Hall. "But they (the state) should do it in a way that empowers parents to make decisions."

In Catholic social teaching, the principle of subsidiarity asserts that decisions should be made at the most local level, in this case, the parents, he noted. In that sense, the state's role shouldn't be to "dominate or usurp their authority, but to assist the family."

"We have a system now that if you have the financial resources, you have the power (to choose the education that's best for your child). If your resources are limited, you don't. Our education policy should make that choice real," said Hall.

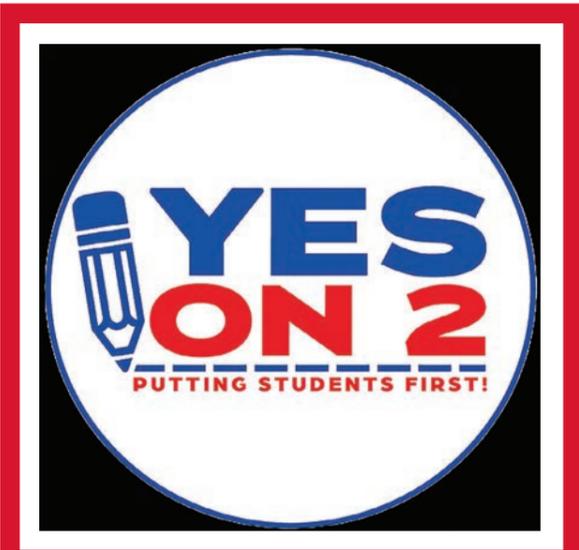
He also noted that the church's concern for justice in education extends to public schools.

"We strongly support adequate funding for our public schools," he said, adding that school choice programs should not take funding from public school systems. "I went to public schools and did great," said Hall. "But not every kid does best there. And we want resources for kids who don't thrive there."

From an educator's perspective, Dr. Mary Beth Bowling, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Louisville, said "Finding the best fit for your child can be critical for your child's development into adulthood."

"As a parent, when my child is born and I'm seeking out a health provider who best fits my child's needs, I have a choice. When I look at where I'm going to live and the needs of my child, I have a choice," she noted. "It's only when we get to school that parents don't always have the ability to choose."

For instance, she said, "If my family is receiving (government) benefits for healthcare or for basic needs, you have some choice. But when it comes to school, you can only go to this cluster or school. "It doesn't matter if that's what's best for your child," she added. "I think that can be detrimental to a child. Why do we set a kid up for a lack of development? Are we so concerned about the money that we're not concerned about what's best for our children?"



**The future of Kentucky education is on the line this November as the debate around Issue 2 heats up.** Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Covington, and Kathy Nienaber, principal, St. Augustine School, Covington, sat down and discussed what makes Amendment 2 not only important but necessary. **Watch their interview at the QR below for everything you need to know about Issue 2.**



## Update

Last week the Messenger miscategorized Holy Cross District High School's Blue Ribbon designation in its listing of Blue Ribbon Schools. HCDHS stands alone as the only Catholic school in the Diocese of Covington to earn the Blue Ribbon School Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing designation. To earn this designation HCDHS student achievement in English and mathematics are the top 30 percent of the country, with at least 30 percent of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are performing at similar levels to their peers. The Messenger apologizes for the error. Here is a reprint of the updated information.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Blue Ribbon Schools Exemplary High Performing</b>                 | <b>St. Joseph School,</b> Crescent Springs 2006, 2017                           |
| <b>Bishop Brossart High School,</b> Alexandria 2018                  | <b>St. Mary School,</b> Alexandria, 2016  |
| <b>Blessed Sacrament School,</b> Ft. Mitchell 1994, 2007, 2015, 2021 | <b>St. Paul School,</b> Florence 2014   |
| <b>Covington Catholic High School,</b> Park Hills 2007, 2016         | <b>St. Pius X School,</b> Edgewood 2001, 2015                                   |
| <b>Covington Latin School,</b> Covington 2003                        | <b>St. Therese School,</b> Southgate 2022                                       |
| <b>Immaculate Heart of Mary School,</b> Burlington 2006, 2018        | <b>St. Thomas School,</b> Ft. Thomas 2006, 2019                                 |
| <b>Notre Dame Academy,</b> Park Hills 1996, 2012, 2019               | <b>Villa Madonna Academy Elementary,</b> Villa Hills 2007, 2017, 2023           |
| <b>St. Agnes School,</b> Ft. Wright 2009                             | <b>Villa Madonna Academy High School/Jr. High,</b> Villa Hills 2002, 2003, 2020 |
| <b>St. Cecilia School,</b> Independence 2018                         | <b>Blue Ribbon School Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing</b>                     |
| <b>St. Henry District High School,</b> Erlanger 2012, 2021           | <b>Holy Cross District High School,</b> Covington 2024                          |
| <b>St. Henry Elementary School,</b> Elsmere 2016                     |   |
| <b>St. Joseph School,</b> Cold Spring 2018                           |   |

## Mentor Workshops

The Diocese of Covington, in conjunction with Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute, is offering In-person Mentor Formation Workshops. A mentor is someone who accompanies a learner through the

process of formation through encouragement, discussion, insight and presence. Build your parish and school community by becoming a Mentor.

### Being Guided and Guiding Souls

Saturday, Oct. 5, 9-11:30 a.m.  
St. Timothy Parish, Union

Explore what it means to be guided and the fundamentals of what it means to guide another soul in a catechetical context. This is a three-part Workshop.

### Personal Vocation and the Mentoring Relationship

Saturday, Nov. 9, 30, and Dec. 21, 9-11:30 a.m.  
Diocesan Curia Offices, Covington, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium

Discuss the meaning of personal vocation and the pressing need for integrating personal vocation into all Catholic formation. This is a three-part Workshop.

### Building the Mentoring Relationship: Asking Good Questions

Saturday, Jan 11, 18, 9-11:30 a.m.  
St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, Meeting Rooms, PMR 1,2&3

An important part of being a mentor is getting to know the person under your care. Explore various kinds of questions related to this work of discovery. This is a two-part Workshop.

### Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening

Saturday, Feb 8, 22, 9-11:30 a.m.  
Diocesan Curia Offices, Covington, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium

Empathic listening is the counterpart skill to asking good questions that enables mentors to truly understand

another person intellectually as well as emotionally. This is a two-part Workshop.

Register online at <https://covdio.org/register> or scan the QR code.



## Bishop's Schedule

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Oct. 5</b><br>Madonna Manor 60th anniversary Mass, Madonna Manor, Villa Hills, 10:30 a.m. | <b>Oct. 12</b><br>Religious jubilarians luncheon, Metropolitan Club, 12 p.m.                          |
| <b>Oct. 6</b><br>Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.      | <b>Oct. 13</b><br>Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.                                 |
| <b>Oct. 6</b><br>Mass, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, 8:30 a.m.                                | <b>St. Henry School Library blessing,</b> St. Henry School, Elsmere, 12:30 p.m.                       |
| <b>Oct. 6-11</b><br>Priests retreat, St. Meinrad Archabbey, Indiana                          | <b>Oct. 15</b><br>Permanent Deacon rededication Vespers, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 5 p.m. |

# Catholic Schools in Action

## Catholic Schools in Action

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, if that is the case, then what is a video worth? The achievements and communities of diocesan Catholic schools cannot be captured in a single photo — and so, this year, in collaboration with the Diocesan Schools Office, the *Messenger* invites readers to watch and learn what makes each school unique, while accomplishing a common mission — educating students in the image of Christ. Each month different schools will be highlighted — look for your school in the coming months. Scan the QR codes and discover more about this month’s featured schools.



Newport Central Catholic High School, Newport, a school set high on a hill, where students are the light of the world — their talents and true character can't be hidden. At NCCHS, students discover themselves through a multi-faceted educational experience. Up on The Hill, NCCHS believe in faith, family, academics, character, community and the whole "you."



St. Edward School, Cythiana, strives to promote the growth of Catholic values and morals while emphasizing the importance of prayer in the lives of students. They aim to provide an atmosphere that will encourage and challenge students, allowing them to experience a sense of achievement in academics. St. Edward School offers a flexible curriculum to accommodate individual needs to develop cooperative learning skills.



St. Therese School, Southgate, is dedicated to the religious, academic, social, psychological, cultural and physical development of each individual. St. Therese School provides instruction and opportunities in a Catholic community for students to embrace the Gospel, achieve academic excellence and make a positive difference in the world.



St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, partners with the family and community to live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ by educating each child using Christian values, superior academics and loving discipline in a Catholic community.

# Praying for the dead in a communion of saints

(Continued from page 2)

ly or long ago, we affirm that — though we may not fully understand how — they still matter for us in ways that add up to much more than the memories documented by old photo albums.

Our love of them remains meaningful, invaluable.

Praying for the dead was hardly unimaginable for Pope Benedict XVI. In a 2007 encyclical titled “Spe Salvi,” he wrote:

“The belief that love can reach into the afterlife, that reciprocal giving and receiving is possible in which our affection for one another continues beyond the limits of death — this has been a fundamental conviction of Christianity throughout the ages, and it remains a source of comfort today.

“Who would not feel the need to convey to their departed loved ones a sign of kindness, a gesture of gratitude or even a request for pardon?”

Those comments by Pope Benedict suggest there are various ways of praying for the dead — that this kind of prayer might even assume the form of a kind, considerate and affectionate conversation.

Petitions to God undoubtedly rank as the principal form of prayer for those who have died. The Church prays, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, that those who die “may attain the beatific vision of God” (No. 1032)

and “that no one should be lost” (No. 1058).

But does that imply that our prayers must be colored by a sense of desperate fear regarding the eternal life of someone who has died? It seems good to remember that our pleas for a loved one do not serve as God’s formal introduction to that person.

Maybe we think that after “Harvey” dies that he was hardly perfect, though he was dear to us and good in ways many did not recognize. But should we worry that God, too, did not recognize Harvey’s goodness or found no reason to care for him?

My spirituality prompts me to believe that the people I love are loved even more by God. In praying for them, I try not so much to petition God’s presence to them as to refresh my faith that somehow God always is present to them in ways that genuinely matter.

Dominican Father Brian Shanley, president of Providence College in Rhode Island, spoke in a 2012 address about praying for others.

St. Thomas Aquinas thought “that we can play a role in God’s providence for others through our freely chosen and grace-inspired prayers,” Father Shanley said.

He also said:

“When we utter a petitionary prayer for someone else,

we are not informing God of what God does not know or asking God for a gift that God does not want to give. ... It is part of the largesse of the grace of God that God allows us to cooperate with him in his providence for others.”

Beyond petitions to God, our prayer might assume the form of a meditation on the life of someone who dies. We might ponder how this person’s example constitutes a legacy able to inspire the next stages of our own life.

Our prayers might also be shaped by expressions of gratitude to God for someone who countless times was a gift to us.

Prayer for the dead is undergirded by the Church’s belief in the communion of saints. Pope Francis mentioned this in October 2013.

“There is a communion of life among all those who belong to Christ,” Pope Francis said. This “communion of saints,” he stressed, “goes beyond earthly life.”

Pope Francis pointed to “a deep and indissoluble bond between those who are still pilgrims in this world — us — and those who have crossed the threshold of death and entered eternity.”

For, he said, “all baptized persons here on earth, the souls in purgatory and all the blessed who are already in paradise make one great family.”

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COMMENTARY

# Meat — it's not for Friday

Every school year, I get the same question from many of our school communities: “Why doesn't the lunch program serve meat on Fridays?”

It's a fair question, especially in today's world where food preferences and dietary habits have evolved, and many no longer observe traditional practices as strictly as before. But the answer to this question is rooted in something much deeper than just a menu choice — it's about tradition, faith and the values we aim to pass on to our students.

First, let's start with the significance of Fridays in the Catholic faith. For centuries, Fridays have been considered a day of penance, primarily because it was the day that Jesus Christ was crucified. The Church, in its wisdom, encourages Catholics to observe this day with a spirit of sacrifice and reflection, and one of the ways we do that is by abstaining from meat. Meat was historically seen as a symbol of celebration or luxury and giving it up is a small but meaningful way of remembering Christ's

ultimate sacrifice for us.

When we make the decision not to serve meat on Fridays in our school lunch program, we're not just making a dietary choice. We're creating a teachable moment for our students. We are helping them understand the importance of sacrifice in our faith and giving them a tangible way to participate in that tradition. It's a reminder, one that happens weekly, that there's more to life than just satisfying our immediate desires. It's a reminder to reflect, to pause and to think about what Jesus did for us.

I realize that in the context of modern life, the idea of giving up meat might seem old fashioned or unnecessary. For some families, it's just an inconvenience. But the point isn't whether or not meat is a luxury anymore. The point is about discipline and intentionality. By continuing this practice in our schools, we're keeping alive a tradition that connects our students to the larger Catholic community, both past and present. It's about fostering a shared sense of identity and reminding our students that they're part of something bigger.

It's also about teaching the values of self-denial and mindfulness. In a world that often encourages indulgence and instant gratification, giving up something as simple as meat for one day reminds us that we can live without some things, and that sometimes, it's good for the soul to do so. This small act of sacrifice can teach our students that life is not always about taking, but about giving up,

even in small ways, for a greater purpose.

Of course, I understand that this practice isn't always easy. Some may feel it's an outdated tradition or simply a nuisance, especially when other dietary choices are already complicated. But it's important to remember that this act is more than just about food — it's about faith.

In a Catholic school system, we have the unique responsibility to create an environment where our students are not only educated academically but also formed spiritually. These small, seemingly simple acts, like abstaining from meat on Fridays, play a part in that spiritual formation.

So, when someone asks why we don't serve meat on Fridays, I encourage you to think about it as more than just a policy or tradition. It's an opportunity to teach our students about sacrifice, faith and the importance of thinking beyond the immediate. It's a tradition that ties us to generations of Catholics who have come before us, and one that we pass down to the next generation with pride and purpose.

In a time when the world is constantly changing, and traditions are often questioned, this practice remains a small but powerful way to keep our faith at the center of that we do. And for that reason, I believe it's worth holding onto.

*Laura Hatfield is director of School Lunch for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.*

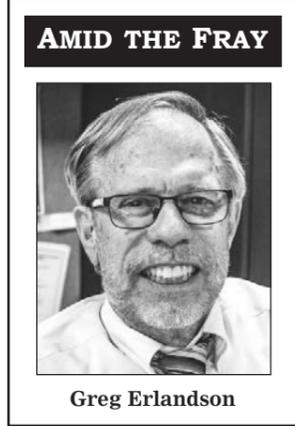


VIEWPOINT

Laura Hatfield

# The challenges of being a Catholic voter

Every four years, for as long as I've been in the Catholic press, editors get two types of phone calls come election time.



AMID THE FRAY

Greg Erlandson

The first is to complain about the perceived bias of the editor or her reporters.

Once, years ago, my paper decided to run a news photo on the cover from each convention when the candidate was chosen. The Democratic convention was first, and we received immediate complaints that our decision to run that photograph showed our bias. Two weeks later, we ran the photo from the

Republican convention, and were immediately accused of bias as well.

The second type of phone call is from readers asking who they should vote for.

Most Catholics are trying to make the best prudential decision while a lot of people are yelling at them with their opinions.

The confusion is understandable. While Catholics have traditionally leaned Democrat, reflecting their immigrant and working-class roots and distrust of a Protestant-dominated Republican Party, in recent decades this has

changed. Also, pollsters get different results if they ask if the self-identified Catholic goes to Mass regularly or is registered in a parish.

The issue that has tended to dominate any political discussion involving Catholics is, of course, abortion.

When the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973, both parties had pro-life and abortion rights wings. Over the past 50 years, and after the assiduous work of activists on both sides, the parties culled their moderates. This polarized the electorate but energized each party's base.

The Supreme Court's 2022 Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade and returning the abortion issue to the states scrambled the equation. Suddenly the outrage about a high court fiat changed sides, with even conservative states like Kansas voting to legalize abortion.

All of which tells me that we are at an inflection point as we approach the fall election. On the one hand, both parties have doubled down on their respective positions, though the Republican candidate has muddied the waters by suggesting that having each state vote is an okay compromise.

Writing in "The Atlantic," Dr. Charles Camosy suggested neither party is acceptable now: "We're a constituency without a political home. As a pro-life academic and activist who has worked on these issues for three decades, I find neither major-party candidate in this presidential election acceptable."

But rather than throwing up his hands in despair, Camosy has teamed up with other pro-life leaders to propose a way out of the political cul-de-sac pro-lifers have

found themselves trapped in.

In a June 24, 2024, article in "The Angelus," he called attention to a coalition of pro-life groups that have issued a "blueprint for life," proposing seven policy pillars that will help moms, children and families, reducing the coercive pressure on women to choose abortion and supporting another path. The proposal includes:

- Providing flexible resources to parents
- Making childcare more affordable
- Supporting healthy moms and babies
- Expanding resources for adoptive and foster parents

These proposals suggest a bi-partisan political agenda that would make real maternal choice possible, and not just a slogan.

As for the election: Well, even Pope Francis has weighed in. Asked Sept. 13 about the choice Catholic voters face between the Democratic candidate, who supports legalized abortion, and the Republican candidate, who wants to severely restrict immigration and deport millions of migrants, the pope said: Both attitudes "are against life: the one who wants to throw out the migrants and the one who kills children. Both are against life."

As for what a Catholic voter should do, he said, "in political morality, generally, they say not voting is wrong; one must vote, and one must choose the lesser evil" in accordance with one's conscience.

Which suggests editors can expect more phone calls in the next several weeks.

*Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News.*

**Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington**

Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Julie Feinauer, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confidentiality and with respect. A copy of the "Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct" is available

by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1510 or visiting [www.covdio.org](http://www.covdio.org) and going to "Sexual Misconduct Policy."

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Julie Feinauer, coordinadora diocesana para dar asistencia a las víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

**Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diócesis de Covington**

Una copia de "Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada" está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando [www.covdio.org](http://www.covdio.org) y marcando "Sexual Misconduct Policy."

Una copia de "Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada" está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando [www.covdio.org](http://www.covdio.org) y marcando "Sexual Misconduct Policy."

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# Unity and division

The readings for the twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle B — are: Genesis 2:18-24, Hebrews 2:9-11 and Mark 10:2-16

As I listened to a news briefing Tuesday afternoon, the Islamic Republic of Iran had attacked the State of Israel. That led me to do a quick Google search for how many armed conflicts were occurring in the world today. The numbers varied from between 50 to 120. This is deeply saddening. Meanwhile, I was praying over the sacred Scriptures for this upcoming 27th Sunday in Ordinary

## GO AND GLORIFY



Very Rev. Daniel Schomaker

Time, in which the Lord Jesus speaks about indissolubility of marriage. Is it possible that these wars/conflicts and marriage relate? What was the Lord trying to teach me?

My mind went to two opposing ideas: Unity and Division.

Unfortunately, the human person seems to be much more inclined towards division. Almost every conflict, from interpersonal to international, has to do with someone or some group thinking dif-

ferent, or behaving different, or believing different, or looking different, or originating from some place different. And it shouldn't be the differences that are the problem ... all of us are different, because all of us are unique. It is the allowance for differences to create a divide that is the issue.

Our uniqueness is founded in our very nature and so should be embraced. When God loved each of us into being at the moment He intentionally thought of us, He made the decision that there would only exist in the history of the universe just one of each person. That unique quality of each human person then shows forth an aspect of the divine... for we have been made in the image and likeness of God Himself. And God is a communion (a unity) of Persons. Therefore, our nature calls us to live in unity.

Jesus teaches, in the Gospel this weekend, that Moses made a concession for the Israelites because of the "hardness of their hearts" ... their sinfulness. But, this concession, a Writ of Divorce, was contrary to nature ... as things were created to be. In the joining together of a man and woman in marriage, God creates a new uniqueness (something that has never existed before, nor would ever exist again), and because it is a divine creation, no human being or human authority is capable of dissolving it.

In the Scriptures, unity and order are equated to grace, division and chaos to sin. As Catholics we understand that division belongs to the realm of the evil one. Therefore, we must strive always to live in unity. The sin of pride leads to division; the grace of charity (love) leads to unity. Division leads to destruction and death (like armed conflicts); unity to life (and in marriage, new life).

So why is Jesus so adamant with his disciples (with you and me) that marriage is permanent? Because it is the visible expression of the God-head, who is One, who is Unity. And unity leads to life, which Jesus want us to have and have more abundantly.

Let us all pray for good and strong and healthy and holy marriages. Unity in marriage, leads to unity in families, which ultimately leads to unity in societies.

*Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Covington and director, Office of Worship and Liturgy for the Diocese of Covington, Ky*

# Infinite dignity of every person

I recently went to a funeral of a friend's husband. I was struck and moved by the reverence shown to this man at his funeral. He was a Catholic, former FBI agent and Marine, husband, father. He was honored with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where his body was blessed with holy water, prayers were said over it and a beautiful white cloth was draped over the casket by his wife and children.

After Mass, six Marines carried his body out of the church with the utmost reverence and ceremony. The white cloth was removed, and the flag of our great nation was carefully draped over the casket, followed by a 21-gun salute while the soldiers saluted his body and the flag. Then they folded the flag carefully, saluting again in turn, then presented it to his wife.

As I stood there watching all these traditional gestures of reverence, I thought to myself, "They do all of this for a dead body as a way of honoring a man's life. (And rightly so, he should be honored in this beautiful way!)"

The family, the Church, the military, they weren't just honoring a dead body, they were honoring a human being through the way they treated his body after he was gone. His life was seen in the eyes of these people as having great value; to some for what he had accomplished, to others just for who he was. This is why it is appropriate that the Catholic Church takes such great care to bury the dead with profound reverence.

I then began to think about how every human person, created by God — "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." (Jer 1:4) — has, in the eyes of God, that very same dignity. He who, "holds us in the palm of His hand,"

(Isaiah 49:16), and, "from my mother's womb had set me apart and called me through His grace," cares for us with such an immense love, that he himself came and took the punishment due to us because of our sins. St. Augustine, Doctor of the Church, teaches us that, "God loves us as if there were only one of us."

Then I thought of all the babies whose lives ended in abortion. Their lives have the same infinite value and dignity to God as this man's life, or any other person's life, but were not treated with dignity, they were not even given a chance to live. One's quality of life is not what makes a person valuable or determines their dignity in any way. Every human person has infinite dignity because each of us was created by God the Father, made in his image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26).

The bodies of aborted children are not treated with dignity, they will not be given a funeral Mass, be honored or saluted. Their bodies will not have an opportunity to rest in the earth with a marker bearing their name. The bodies of these children can legally be sold by abortion clinics to people who experiment on them for the "health and benefit" of others and have made their way into at least one line — that is known — of medical grade anti-aging cream.

I have heard it said that harvesting aborted baby parts is an acceptable practice because it provides a greater good for a functional society. But that would mean that it is OK to dishonor the lives of some for the benefit of others, which means that some people's lives are more valuable than others. Isn't this discrimination, or even prejudice?

I believe that we as Catholics are called to be a "Light in the darkness" (John 1:5). This is possible if we can treat every human person, from the moment of conception until natural death with great honor and dignity as was my friend's husband. For our, "light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." (Matt 5:16)

*Mother Seraphina Quinlan is mother superior for the Franciscan Daughters of Mary, Covington.*

## VIEWPOINT



Mother Seraphina Quinlan, F.D.M.

# Why homeschooling families should support school choice

Homeschooling has surged in popularity in Kentucky and across the nation, and for good reasons. Many families, dissatisfied with the education options offered from public and private schools, have opted to do it themselves.

The reasons families choose to homeschool, and the various approaches they use, vary widely. But the one thing all these families seem to have in common is a fierce commitment to protect their right to educate their children according to their own values, principles and methods.

That's why Kentucky homeschooling parents are wisely asking thoughtful questions about the upcoming school choice constitutional amendment.

Amendment 2, which will appear on the Nov. 5 ballot, asks voters to change the state constitution clarifying that lawmakers may, at some point in the future, pass legislation providing support for eligible families to access education options outside the traditional public schools.

It's important to note that Amendment 2 does not create any new programs, contrary to the noise made by its opponents. It doesn't set up a voucher plan, fund charter schools or include provisions that affect homeschooling families.

Amendment 2 simply makes it possible for the state legislature to consider school choice policies without the interference of courts which have previously prevented the implementation of even the most modest bills that would empower parents with education options. After

Amendment 2 passes, lawmakers will have to decide what kinds of school choice will be appropriate for Kentucky, which is currently one of the only states in the country without such programs.

A handful of states have included homeschooling provisions in their school choice laws. Arizona, Florida, Idaho, New Hampshire, Ohio, Utah and West Virginia all offer vouchers, scholarships or some other form of direct payment to homeschooling families purchasing curricula, instructional materials and other expenses associated with educating their children.

Other states, including Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio and Minnesota provide a tax credit to homeschooling families, reducing their overall income tax liability to offset their out-of-pocket education costs. Some of these programs are income-based, while others are available to all families.

It's difficult to know what percentage of homeschooling families choose to participate in these programs, but many do. Families make enormous sacrifices to educate their children at home while continuing to pay taxes that support the public education system.

Naturally, homeschooling parents want to know what strings might be attached to participating in such programs. Homeschooling regulations vary widely by state, but states that include homeschoolers in their school choice programs typically do not add any new requirements for participating beyond those already established by law.

It is impossible to predict what kind of school choice program Kentucky will adopt because of Amendment 2. Whether some homeschooling families will be eligible to participate is unknown for

now. What we know for sure, however, is that if homeschooling parents for whatever reason don't like the conditions for participating in such a program, they may

*(Continued on page 21)*

## GUEST



Dr. Gary Houchens

## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

**The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally** on The CW, Sundays, 10—11 a.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

**Bishop Iffert and the priests of the Diocese of Covington will pray a Holy Hour** for survivors of sexual violence and for the sanctification of priests, 3 p.m., every third Thursday monthly, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. All are welcome.

**St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, offers Veneration of a relic of the True Cross**, on the first Friday of every month, from noon–1 p.m. Confessions are offered concurrently. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic. The monthly veneration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

**Parents of Addicted Loved Ones, (PAL)** is a support group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:30–8 p.m. at Catholic Charities, Latonia. It provides continuing education and support, at no charge, for parents with a son, daughter or spouse suffering from addiction to alcohol or drugs. No cost. Just come — 3629 Church Street, Latonia. For more information contact Client Care at (859) 581-8974.

**Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult volunteers to tutor children in grades K–8** one day a week in the Homework Plus Program, Monday–Thursday from 3–5 p.m., (openings available every day). Program begins Sept. 3 and runs through May 16.

**NDUEC also needs volunteers in the Early Learning (pre-K) Program** on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8–11:30 a.m. For information, call Brandi at (859) 630-9475, visit <http://www.nduec.org/>, or e-mail [blenihan@nduec.org](mailto:blenihan@nduec.org). Volunteers 18 and older must be VIRTUS compliant.

**The Diocese of Covington, in partnership with Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute is offering FREE in-person Mentor Training Workshops.** These workshops will take place through February 2025. Register at <https://covdio.org/register/>. For information contact Isaak A. Isaak, Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, (859) 392-1529 or [iisaak@covdio.org](mailto:iisaak@covdio.org).

Jesus' disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." St. Paul wrote that we should "Pray without ceasing." What does this mean? **Father Michael Comer will lead A Day of Prayer and Reflection**, Oct. 5, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., undercroft Mother of God Parish, Covington. The day includes a series of talks and prayer immersion, including Adoration, the opportunity for Reconciliation, and Mass. A simple breakfast, lunch, snacks and drinks will be provided. Cost \$25. Register in advance by email at [mkelly@mogcov.org](mailto:mkelly@mogcov.org). You may pay in advance at the Parish Office or the day of. Come and see.

**Rosary Coast to Coast 2024**, Oct. 6, 4 p.m., Grotto of the Two Hearts, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. Father Joseph Rielage will lead an hour of prayer. This is an international event where we all will join in prayer, at the same time, under the protective mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe, for the spiritual health of the United States. Rain or shine. Bring a chair. Visit [Rosarycoasttocoast.com](http://Rosarycoasttocoast.com).

**Bishop Brossart High School Art Gallery, Alexandria, presents E. Runyon Contemporary Basketry**, Oct. 6–27, Sundays only, noon–4 p.m. or Monday–Saturday by appointment, (859) 630-2874. The Art Gallery is on the 2nd floor and is handicap accessible. Show sponsor: BBHS Class of 1976.

**Mustang Mania for 7th and 8th graders** will be held Oct. 11, 6:30–8 p.m., Bishop Brossart High School, Seither Center, Alexandria.

**A Marriage Encounter Experience** Oct. 11, 12 and 13, Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center, Norwood. Sign up at [esharing.org](http://esharing.org) or call Andy and Melanie Reinersman at (859) 653-8464. Learn new ways to improve your relationship with your spouse and deepen your faith with God.

Donate a bike — Change a Life! **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington started a new ministry, Pickett's Corner, in 2023.** The new ministry distributes and repairs bicycles to those in need in the area. Most people receiving a bike use it for transportation to work, store or doctor appointments. Adult-size bikes needed. E-mail [pickettscorner23@gmail.com](mailto:pickettscorner23@gmail.com) if you have a bike to donate. The volunteer team will pick it up.

**Youth and families are invited to participate in the Trail of Churches Pilgrimage**, Oct. 12, hosted by the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting. Participants will learn about local Catholic history, art, and faith. You do not need to be a Scout to participate. More information at <https://covdio.org/youth/>

**St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, invites youth and families of the diocese to an encounter with Jesus and others** through music, witness, Eucharistic adoration, and confession, followed by games and refreshments, Oct. 13, 2:30–5 p.m. RSVP by e-mailing [mjohnson@stthomasnk.org](mailto:mjohnson@stthomasnk.org).

**New Beginnings is an 8-week, faith-based support group that provides separated and divorced individuals the opportunity for healing and growth.** In this group, participants find new understanding of themselves and their relationships and gain courage to discover new life. Evenings, 7–8:30; location varies. Registration is required. Visit <https://covdio.org/newbeginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1592. Fall/winter schedule is Consecutive Thursdays – Oct. 3, Oct. 10, Oct. 17, Oct. 24, Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Nov. 21, and Dec. 5; Time: 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Catholic Charities — 3629 Church St., Covington.

**The Mustard Seed Catholic Charismatic Community of NKY sponsors a monthly Third Tuesday prayer gathering, "Spirit & Grace"**, 7–8:45 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament's Parish Center, Ft. Mitchell. Join us Oct. 15 for praise and worship music, teaching, witnesses and healing prayers. For information, call Carol at (859) 341-5932.

**St. Henry Craft Show**, Oct. 19, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., St. Henry Athletic Complex, Florence. Entry fee \$5; concessions and raffles available.

**Inclusive Education Sacramental Strategies Workshop**, Oct. 19, 9–10:30 a.m., St. Pius X School, Edgewood, for catechists and all who desire to empower and minister to all learners. Presented by the FIRE Foundation and Janie Zembrodt. RSVP by Oct. 14.

**"Studying the Milky Way Galaxy with Gaia Space Telescope," with Dr. Austin Hinkel**, Oct. 19, 7–9 p.m., Ziegler Auditorium, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills. Join us for a lecture on the groundbreaking work of the Gaia Space Telescope, which has transformed the understanding of the Milky Way Galaxy. By precisely measuring the positions and motions of nearly two billion stars, Gaia has created the most detailed map of our

galaxy to date. Discover the innovative technology behind this mission, the incredible data it has collected, and the profound discoveries that are reshaping our knowledge of the Milky Way's structure, formation, and evolution.

**Campus Ministry Night**, Oct. 22, 6–8 p.m., Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University.

**High School Retreat "Rejoicing in Hope"** at Thomas More University (Not an overnight retreat). Early bird registration by Oct. 30, at <https://covdio.org/youth/>.

Are you looking to make your faith journey a part of your college experience? Do you want to learn more about the Catholic faith in a welcoming, open environment — and make lifelong friendships while you're at it? **Thomas More University's Campus Ministry invites you to this special evening event, Oct. 22, 6–8 p.m., where you can meet our campus ministers, find out about the Bishop Foy's Ministry & Service Scholarship**, and discover the many opportunities for service, fellowship, and spiritual development that we offer students of all faith backgrounds. We will encourage you to examine the meaning of life, your place in the world, and your responsibility to others ... all while having a fun and unforgettable college experience! Please RSVP by visiting: <https://tmuky.us/CampusMinistry24>



### Sacristins

Father Eric Andriot, pastor, All Saints Parish, Walton, held an investiture ceremony, Sept. 27, for two eighth-grade servers, Jeremiah and Ryan, as sacristans. The ceremony was held during the St. Joseph Academy all-school Mass. Sacristans are responsible for setting up for Mass and other ceremonies. In addition to these responsibilities, they also provide an example of faith and service to the other students.



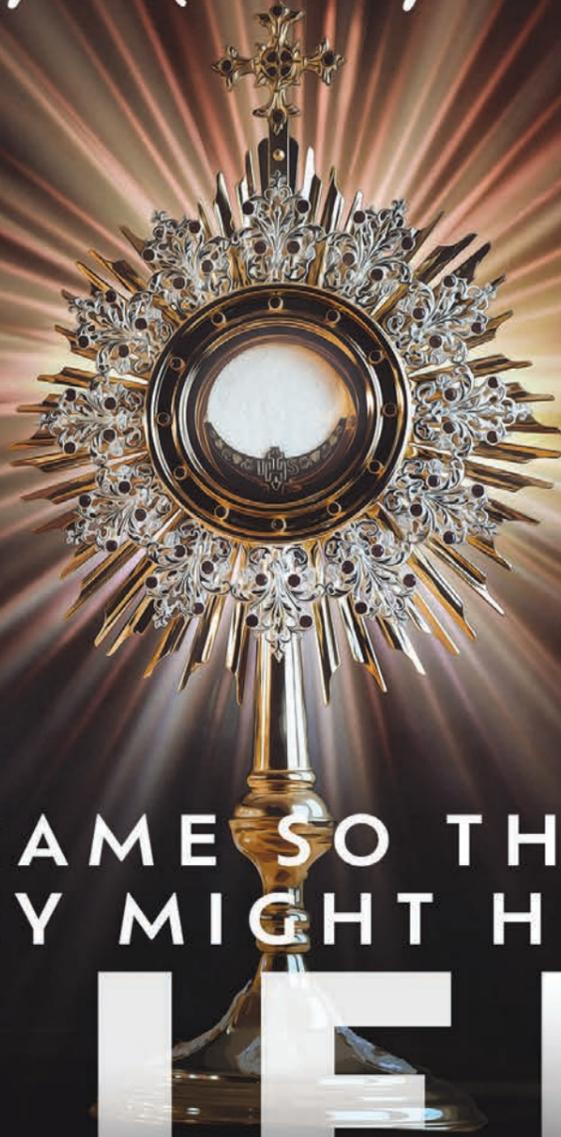
### A volley tradition continues

A St. Henry Catholic School favorite tradition is the eighth grade versus teacher volleyball game. This year's eighth graders fielded three teams to take on the teachers. However, the teachers outplayed the eighth grades two games to one.

OCTOBER IS  
RESPECT LIFE MONTH

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MESSENGER

# Respect Life Month



I CAME SO THAT  
THEY MIGHT HAVE  
**LIFE**

October 2024

## *A Prayer for Life to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament*

O Jesus, you came that we might have life — and have it in abundance. Together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you form us in our mothers' wombs and call us to love you for all eternity.

As your most precious gift of human life is attacked, draw us ever closer to your Real Presence in the Eucharist. Dispel the darkness of the culture of death, for you are the light that shines in

the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

By the power of your Eucharistic Presence, help us to defend the life of every human person at

every stage. Transform our hearts to protect and cherish all whose lives are most vulnerable.

For you are God, forever and ever. Amen.

# A witness to life

Faye Roch  
Contributor

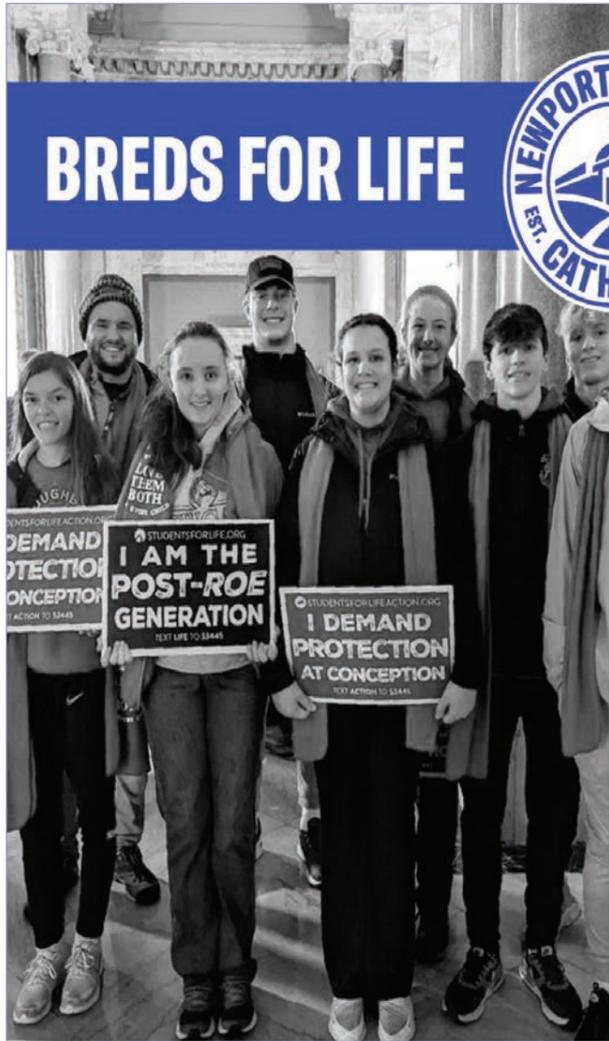
As I reflected on this year's United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's Respect Life theme, inspired by the National Eucharist Conference, "I came that they may have life," I was drawn to the crucifix above my desk. As I contemplated the crucifix, I was deeply moved thinking about how Jesus gave his life, so that we may have ours abundantly.

What are we doing in return to show our gratitude for this great gift, how are we witnessing to others that we abundantly respect the dignity of the human person?

Pope St. John Paul II's words resonate, "we are facing an enormous and dramatic clash between good and evil, death and life, the 'culture of death' and the 'culture of life' ... we are all involved and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of choosing to be unconditionally pro-life."

We are being called to witness to and inspire others to defend all life from conception to natural death in our daily encounters. This is not a small task, and it unfortunately is not popular in today's culture to defend life. Just watch all the political commercials, the number one issue that seems to rise above all other concerns is the life of the most vulnerable — life at its very beginning. The news is chock full of examples where the dignity of others is minimized. Our society struggles to look at each other as we are created in God's perfection — the weak, marginalized, elderly, disabled and most of all the unborn.

Let us pray that our efforts and witness during this Respect Life Month, and throughout the year, bring us to look at Jesus on the cross and in the Eucharist and become inspired to witness to others how he came that we may have life.



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**Respect Life.**



**CARE NET** RESPECT LIFE MONTH  
BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

Each new human life is sacred from the precise and mysterious moment of conception. At Care Net, we have the privilege of helping moms and couples recognize not only the value of their babies' lives but also their own value as parents. You can be part of our ministry.

Join our Respect Life Month Baby Bottle Campaign. Scan the code or visit [carenetnky.org](http://carenetnky.org).



Covington Catholic  
stands for  
**Life.**

Educating young men  
spiritually, academically,  
physically, and socially.



**BISHOP BROSSART**



*We Stand for Life*



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(859) 341-7800  
[middendorf-funeralhome.com](http://middendorf-funeralhome.com)

**The Middendorf Family** feels honored to have served the community for so many generations. With Dave and Noah Middendorf being fifth and sixth generation funeral directors, our family has been a part of the community since the 1860's. We intend to continue our rich heritage of serving with care and compassion and are grateful for the opportunity to do so.

We want families to know that we will do whatever it takes to have the honor of serving your family. We make funeral arrangements that work for any needs.

We do things "The Middendorf Way": with respect, attention to detail, class, and compassion. Please contact us at (859)-341-7800 anytime day or night.

Sincerely,  
Dave Middendorf, Noah Middendorf, Nick Dorman, Dave Rees, Julie Carter and Leslee Hatter



(above) A seminarian of the Diocese of Covington is interviewed and (right) a young child participates at the first annual Kentucky March for Life in 2024.



A family enlists their child's name in the memorial book at the Memorial Mass for the Loss of Child.



David and Lindsay Cooley enjoy a dance together at Life's a Ball.



At the Community Baby Shower (left) High school students volunteer at the diaper station and (below) a mom and her baby visit with the various service agencies.



Worshippers at the annual Memorial Mass for the Loss of Child present a memorial vigil candle.



# RESPECT LIFE



Honorees of the 2024 Life's a Ball are (from left) Father Jeffrey Von Lehmen, Kim Webb, ESNKY, Jim Wendeln, Parish Kitchen; Bishop John Iffert; Vicky Bauerle, Catholic Charities and Cindy Carris, Mary Rose Mission.

## Programs and Activities of the Pro-Life Office

The Pro-Life Office actively implements the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which calls upon the Church, its people and its institutions in a four-prong program in defense of human life. The Pro-Life Office employs the four components of prayer, pastoral care, education and public policy called for in this Pastoral Plan throughout the diocese through the following programs and activities:

**Parish Coordinator Gathering for Prayer and Education\*** — Parish and pro-life leadership members are invited to gather for prayer, information and education. This evening allows parish pro-life leaders to learn about resources available to them and they have the opportunity to share information, resources and ideas.

**Respect Life Program Materials** — These materials are published by the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and are distributed by the Pro-Life Office to be used as a resource in preparation for October, Respect Life Month. These resources are also for use throughout the year. This year's theme is "I came so that they may have life."

**Diocesan Pro-Life Mass** — Held during October, Respect Life Month, all in the diocese are invited to join together to show our solidarity for the cause of life by celebrating the Eucharist with our Bishop and the priests of our diocese at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

**Grade School Essay Contest and Banquet\*** — This contest is offered to all eighth graders in our diocese during the

month of October to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the Church's teaching concerning the sacredness of life from conception to natural death. A banquet is held in March honoring the top 20 contestants of the Essay Contest. The Knights of Columbus along with the Pro-Life Office provide scholarship awards to the top three essays.

**March for Life and Kentucky March for Life** — For 50 years hundreds of thousands of people gathered annually to participate in the annual March for Life which takes place in our nation's capital every January, commemorating the Supreme Court Decision that legalized abortion on January 22, 1973.

Since the overturning of Roe v Wade, all states have been focusing on bringing awareness to the sanctity of life within their community. In 2024, the first Kentucky March for Life was held. 2025 Kentucky March for Life TBA.

**Catholics at the Capitol** — Led by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, Catholics at the Capitol hosts a day giving the diocesan community the opportunity for education and advoca-

cacy around issues like the death penalty, abortion, gun violence, school choice, and criminal justice reform. In 2025, Catholics at the Capitol event will be held in the Diocese of Covington at the Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, date TBA.

**Spiritual Adoption** — The Pro-Life Office encourages all schools and parishes to offer the opportunity to pray for the health and life of an unborn baby. This program, designed for first grade on up educates children at an early age about the dignity and sacredness of all human life. The Pro-Life Office provides all the necessary resource materials needed.

**Memorial Mass for the Loss of a Child** — The intention of this memorial Mass is to offer support and God's healing embrace through prayer and community outreach to help lift the burden of grief experienced by parents and families who have lost a child.

**Cross the Bridge for Life\*** — The annual Cross the Bridge for Life takes place on the first Sunday of June. Walk across the Purple People Bridge with people from the Greater



Bishop Iffert with Pro-Life essay contestants.



Monica Kelsey, founder of Safe Haven Baby Boxes, at Ft. Mitchell Fire House baby box dedication. August 13, 2024, there are 39 Safe Haven Baby Boxes in Kentucky.



A Franciscan Daughter of Mary carries a young child at the Cross the Bridge for Life.

Cincinnati community to witness on behalf of the sanctity of all human life.

**We Choose Life** — A monthly page in the Messenger, featuring timely articles and information concerning life issues.

**Project Rachel\*** — God's greatest desire is to forgive, and the Catholic Church wants to reach out showing its mercy and offer healing and reconciliation to women and men who have had an abortion experience. Project Rachel is a confidential ministry; healing sessions are held throughout the year. For more information, please call our confidential phone number (859) 392-1547, or confidential e-mail [projectrachel@covdio.org](mailto:projectrachel@covdio.org).

**Catholic Medical Association** — The Catholic Medical Association is a growing professional organization that is committed in supporting physicians and healthcare professionals in offering health care in conformity to Christ the Divine Physician. The Diocese of Covington has established a guild of the Catholic Medical Association, the Sts. Teresa of Calcutta and Faustina Guild.

**Walking with Moms in Need** — In 2020, the USCCB asked all dioceses to participate in an initiative to create an (arch)diocesan-wide, parish-based program that supports women and families emotionally, spiritually and materially so they and their children can thrive during pregnancy and the critical first year of the baby's life.

**Pregnancy Care Network** — A network of non-profit agencies and ministries collaborating to improve the overall health and well-being of childbearing families in Northern Kentucky. Working with Walking with Moms in Need, the PCN hosts community baby showers two times a year, assisting pregnant and parenting families.

**Safe Haven Baby Boxes** — Is a national organization with a primary goal to raise awareness of Safe Haven Laws. Women in crisis can call the national 24-hour hotline and can receive counseling and assistance free of charge and offer the Safe Haven Baby Box as a last-resort option for women to surrender her baby while maintaining complete anonymity. Visit [www.shbb.org](http://www.shbb.org) for more information.

## Resources of the Pro-Life Office

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Project Rachel  
Confidential post-abortion healing  
(859) 392-1547  
[projectrachel@covdio.org](mailto:projectrachel@covdio.org)

# Kate Mueller reflects on her first-place essay — I was hungry, and you fed me



Young photo

Kate Mueller poses for a picture with Bishop Iffert holding her first place award.

**Bella Young**  
Multimedia Correspondent

“It was a morning like any other. My stomach grumbled, and I felt the deep pain of hunger in the pit of my stomach. I knew the day would bring only a few small morsels of food. I was born into poverty-stricken Ethiopia, and I lived there until the age of four when I was adopted,” wrote Kate Mueller in winning Pro-Life Essay, “I was hungry, and you fed me.”

Since the recognition of the top 20 essays on March 5, Miss Mueller has graduated from St. Timothy School, Union and is now a freshman at St. Henry District High School, Erlanger. She took a moment to reflect on what it meant to win first place in the annual Pro-Life Essay Contest.

“I was really excited,”

said Miss Mueller, “I didn’t believe that I won at first but then I got up there and took the picture, got the certificate. I was super excited,” she said.

“I am living with a wonderful family and several other adopted sisters. I am able to walk the earth today because my birth mother recognized the dignity and worth of all life. My parents also understand this, and they created a welcoming home for their children,” Miss Mueller continued in her essay.

When asked what opportunities she has been afforded because of the choice her birth mother made Miss Mueller said, “I think I’ve been able to be healthy. I am able to go the doctor, get food. In Ethiopia I probably would never have been able to have that, I probably would not have been able to thrive.”

Miss Mueller has a unique perspective on what it means to be pro-life because of the choices her birth mother made. In her essay Miss Mueller wrote, “She chose to carry and give birth to me. She put me in an orphanage and that had more resources that she could ever provide. She had tears in her eyes as she watched me leave and go to a place where she knew I would get the care I needed. Because of her selfless decision, I am able to realize the worth of life.”

“I have siblings that are also adopted so I think that gives me a different perspective of ‘pro-life,’” Miss Mueller said, “...I think it means not discriminating against people no matter who they are or whatever their background is.”

## Be merciful, as God is full of mercy

**Faye Roch**  
Contributor

Bishop Iffert has asked the Diocese of Covington Community to come together in a campaign of mercy, witnessing with our corporal and spiritual efforts.

This Campaign of Mercy gives me great hope that those within our Catholic faith and those of other faiths and those not practicing any faith at all would come to realize the beauty of the Catholic faith and the good news of God’s great mercy.

Googling Catholic Mercy brings on many different definitions, but love and forgiveness are prominent. There is so much peace in those two words.

Working in the pro-life ministry, I see many times how the media and our culture depict those who are pro-life, and especially the Catholic Church’s involvement in pro-life activities. The media certainly doesn’t seem to have much mercy on the Catholic Church and the pro-life movement. We are perceived as being judgmental and unforgiving, not, loving and forgiving. How do we let others know that as Catholics God gives us great demands in proclaiming the truth, yet he has incredible mercy when we fail?

When it comes to abortion, the media does a good job letting everyone know that the Catholic faith teaches that abortion is gravely immoral. What is not known, though, is that the Catholic Church offers a beautiful forgiving and

healing ministry — Project Rachel.

Project Rachel brings those suffering from an abortion experience to peace, forgiveness and healing through God’s mercy. Project Rachel is for all those who have been touched in any way by an abortion experience, both women and men.

This ministry serves all ages. One of the most humbling moments are when we are called to serve those who are reaching the end of their life — women residing in nursing homes and care facilities. These are women who had an abortion more than 60-plus years ago — over a decade before abortion was legal in the United States. The decision to abort was no doubt distressing for them, and like many women, still today, a decision made under a cloud of secrecy and coercion. They had lost hope and felt like their only option was abortion.

After decades of grieving and feeling broken, they find out about Project Rachel. It takes much courage for a woman to overcome her shame and fear and make that call to begin a journey towards healing. Working with wonderful leaders and a compassionate priest, those suffering come to a true sense of peace, knowing they have reconciled with God and have received his mercy and forgiveness. They experience a great joy in God’s great mercy.

As we encounter others during this campaign of mercy, please pray for those suffering from a loss of hope and bring them to believe in the good news of God’s love, mercy and forgiveness.

Faye Roch is director of the Pro-life Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky

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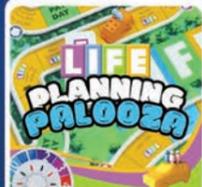
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	<p>Tuesday, 1:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>St. Henry Church</b> Elsmere, Kentucky</p> <p>“A Guide to Funerals and Funeral Planning.” Come and learn about the decisions to be made and get your questions answered.</p>	<p>Nov <b>12</b> 2024</p>
	<p>Friday, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>LIFE Planning Palooza</b> The Linnemann Event Center – Burlington</p> <p>Join us for an afternoon of fun as we navigate the real-life challenges of getting our affairs in order. For more information and to register, contact Rachel at rachel@lfhmail.com. Hosted by Linnemann &amp; St. Elizabeth Hospice</p>	<p>Nov <b>15</b> 2024</p>

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# A Catholic understanding of death and dying

Peter J. Colosi  
OSV News

If you ask people today how they hope to die, many will say, “In my sleep, painlessly and suddenly, without noticing.” Yet, there is a prayer, long forgotten now, that Catholics prayed regularly: “Oh Lord, deliver me from a sudden death!”

When it comes to dying, Catholics used to pray to God for the exact opposite of what many today hope for. Why? What happened?



OSV News photo/Manon Cruz, Reuters

A nurse touches the hand of a patient at the palliative care unit of the Clinic Saint-Elisabeth, in Marseille, France, May 31, 2024.

I think it's safe to say that most of us Catholics have lost a sense of a Catholic approach to death and dying. That approach reveals that properly living through one's dying is one of the most important acts of one's entire life, and it's worth preparing for ahead of time. As we prepare to enter into eternity to meet God, there is potential for profound depth in prayer and a fuller experience of the sacraments, as well as for deepening, healing and reconciling within human relationships.

In the world at large, there is not merely a loss of the meaning of dying but a death-averse culture in which we hide the sick and dying away from view and simultaneously enact a plethora of laws allowing physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. We have turned away from natural death surrounded by loved ones and the sacraments, and we have instead turned toward abandonment and killing as an acceptable way to leave this world, or to allow others to leave it.

There are many wonderful Catholic apostolates that help others live a truly Catholic approach to death and dying. Yet, for the most part, the Church needs to regain an explicit awareness of a Catholic ethos in this area, as well as a deeper understanding of the immorality of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. In fact, the only way to truly end these tragic practices will be not only by our arguments, but also by our witness, which could show the world a better way.

According to Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”): “Euthanasia in the strict sense is understood to be an action or omission which of itself and by intention causes death, with the purpose of eliminating all suffering. ‘Euthanasia’s terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used.’”

The method used in physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia by action is a lethal overdose of a drug. The overdose can be administered by a doctor or, in some jurisdictions, by other health care providers (euthanasia) or taken by the patient (assisted suicide). In the latter case, the patient must obtain a prescription from a health care provider. With physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia by omission, the method used is starvation and dehydration. The intention in both cases is the deliberate ending of the life of the patient.

Two famous cases illustrate the difference between action and omission. In voluntary assisted suicide or euthanasia by action, both the doctor and the patient have the intention to deliberately end the life of the patient to bring about an end to suffering; this was the case with Brittany Maynard in 2014. The Terri Schiavo case in 2005

was euthanasia by omission. Though she was disabled, she was not dying; she just needed help with eating and drinking. Her source of nutrition and hydration was removed by court order; and she died by starvation and dehydration.

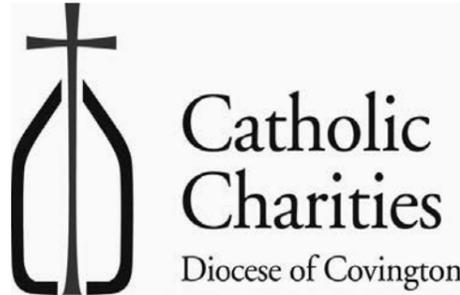
Euthanasia is legal in a handful of countries, the most well-known being the Netherlands and Belgium. It might surprise some Americans that Canada has also legalized euthanasia. In countries where euthanasia is legal, physician-assisted suicide is also legal. Assisted suicide is legal in nine U.S. states and Washington, D.C. Euthanasia is illegal throughout the U.S., perhaps because the probability of medical malpractice lawsuits is much higher if the doctor injects the lethal dose than if the patient takes it.

The “pro-choice” and pro-life sides are in agreement

that physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia is death by deliberate killing. The disagreement between them is whether that should be legal or not. They also disagree on the morality of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. In fact, the moral issues at play are the underlying basis for the disagreement on the legal question.

In words such as “homicide,” “suicide” and “genocide” the common ending comes from the Latin verb “occidere,” which means “to kill.” Of late, the pro-choice side has dropped the terms physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, and refers instead to medical assistance or aid in dying (MAiD). The purpose of this euphemism is to distance the

(Continued on page 17)



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# What does the Church teach about abortion?

Jessica Keating and Amy Welborn  
OSV News

Centuries ago, a young pregnant woman set out on a journey. She was probably nervous and scared, because her pregnancy was unexpected, scandalous and mysterious. The young woman arrived at her cousin's home, where she hoped she would find welcome and understanding. And she was welcomed not only by her cousin but also by another who "leapt in her (cousin's) womb" with joy.

The first person to rejoice in the presence of Jesus was an unborn child.

Ironically, as abortion has become commonplace in American life, our insight into the reality of life within the womb has grown. Parents can watch their children move, sleep and suck their thumbs in the womb, in real time, thanks to four-dimensional ultrasound technology.

The survival of an infant outside the womb is possible at increasingly earlier stages of pregnancy — as early as 21 weeks in some cases — with new treatments to ensure the health of these tiny children being developed all the time. In recent years, surgery on children still in utero to correct spina bifida, hydrocephalus, breathing obstructions and other problems has become more common, sophisticated and safe.

Our culture's sensitivity to the effects of a mother's lifestyle on her preborn child has grown as well. Expectant mothers are discouraged from smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs, and parents are encouraged to interact with their unborn child through talking and music.

It's worth thinking about long and hard: What kind of society goes to such great lengths to care for unborn children but at the very same time declares that they have no right to life?

The Catholic Church teaches today what it has for two thousand years: Human life

begins at conception and any deliberate participation in the killing of that defenseless life is a mortal sin.

Abortion is the willful and intentional destruction of human life in the womb. Sometimes miscarriages are referred to as "spontaneous abortions," but they are different from what we usually call abortion. A miscarriage occurs without human intervention of any kind. When a preborn child's life is deliberately taken by another human being, that is an "induced abortion." When people say "abortion," this is what they mean. In fact, statistical reporting on abortion excludes miscarriages.

Abortions are procured in a number of ways. A chemi-

ing the child in the womb. The practice called "partial-birth abortion," which involves suctioning out the brain of a child pulled partially out of the womb, was banned in a 2003 federal law, but other means of late-term abortion, such as saline abortions, are still legal.

Regardless of what stage of pregnancy at which an abortion is performed, there are physical consequences. Decades of medical research indicate that induced abortions may be associated with higher incidence of infertility and problems in future pregnancies.

There are emotional consequences, too. The death of a child is one of the most devastating experiences any parent can endure.

Whether the loss occurs through miscarriage, stillbirth or after a child is born, the grief borne by survivors is deep and painful. Abortion has the same effect, with the added dimension of guilt for one's role in the death of a child. Sooner or later, mothers, fathers, grandparents and friends are confronted with the loss of a child they will never know.

In any of these situations, we all need the sure knowledge of God's love and mercy. When we or those we love are confronting these feelings of grief and guilt, we should know that Christ is ready to welcome us through his Church, through programs such as Project Rachel, and through his presence in the sacraments, espe-



CNS photo/Gina Christian, CatholicPhilly.com

Luke Parlee and his mother, Terry, a parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Buckingham, Pa., display ultrasound images of his development at 6 weeks and 33 weeks alongside his high school senior portrait during the Philadelphia March for Life rally Jan. 23, 2021.

cial abortion results from taking medication prescribed to terminate a human pregnancy. The drug RU-486 is one of the most common forms of chemical abortion and is administered in early pregnancy. Abortion by medication accounts for more than half of all abortions in the United States.

Surgical abortion, meanwhile, involves crushing or dismember-

cially reconciliation and, once we have been reconciled, the Eucharist.

Most of us know the basic facts about unborn life and abortion. In our hearts, we know it's a tragic, terrible thing. We don't like to see photographs of the remains of aborted children. We don't even really like to say the word "abortion" or bring it up in polite conversation. We know all this, but sometimes fear, shame, pride and hopelessness discourage us from doing what we know is right.

How can we dig deeper and find the courage to live out our convictions? Jesus has the answer. Many things seem impossible for us to do alone, but there is no doubt that with God "all things are possible." When we see seemingly impossible situations through God's eyes, we find the courage to choose life.

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## Death and dying

*(Continued from page 15)*

concept of killing from physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia.

“To kill” is to do something on purpose to a being that is alive in order to make it be dead. This is happening in physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia; in fact, that is the whole point of those initiatives. Since killing the innocent is immoral, there are a slew of long-standing laws already on the books related to it. Some cases of killing have been allowed, but this has always required justification. Traditionally, examples were self-defense, just war and capital punishment, though the latter has been deemed “inadmissible” according to a recent change in the catechism as directed by Pope Francis. Whenever self-defense and just war are justified, it remains nonetheless tragic, and so we strive to avoid them, and it is best if they are never needed.

And so, while tragic, killing people because they are bad and dangerous is sometimes justified. But there is no justification to kill someone because they are sick and weak; doing so is intrinsically immoral and a crime. The pro-choice side must know that there is no justification for physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, and so they want to remove the use of the term “killing” altogether, so that people’s minds don’t go looking around for a justification and realize the horror of what we are doing.

With passage of a law permitting assisted suicide, a 180-degree shift is achieved — namely, going from a situation in which doctors never use their skills and training to participate in killing patients to one where doctors do participate in killing patients. After that change, tussling over

requirements becomes a relatively minor matter. Proposed restrictions just put a figurative fence around which sick people we have decided to kill, masking the intrinsic immorality of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia in ways that give the appearance of being sensible. But after legalization, the fence is easy to expand and eventually to knock down completely, as the restrictions begin to seem unfair to those who do not meet one or more of them and one by one they are removed. This is referred to as the slippery slope, and it always happens.

For example, in the Netherlands and Belgium, euthanasia is now legal for mental illness. In 2020, a widely reported story told of an elderly Canadian woman with no terminal condition or serious pain who, during the lockdowns, was legally euthanized due to loneliness.

We must argue for the dignity and preciousness of every person and the wrongness of abandoning any person. We should not allow our shock at the slippery slope in Canada to cause us to forget the very first person who was legally killed via physician-assisted suicide in Oregon.

With respect to the ethics of death and dying from a Catholic perspective, there is another error to avoid: overzealous treatment. Since death is inevitable, there comes a time when the disease or physical condition is ending the life of the patient, and at that point it is morally legitimate to withhold or withdraw extraordinary or disproportionate treatment. This is not to kill the patient, as

the disease is why the patient dies; and therefore, this is properly understood as the humble acceptance of the approach of death. But even in this situation, all ordinary care remains morally obligatory.

Ordinary care is care that, if removed, would either cause the death of a patient who is not dying or, in a patient who is dying, would amount to deliberately increasing the speed of their death for reasons unrelated to the disease. Simple examples would be to deliberately discontinue bed care to prevent bed sores or to refuse to give an insulin shot to provide comfort. The case of Terri Schiavo, mentioned above, is an example when nutrition and hydration via a feeding tube was ordinary care, since she was not dying and her body was assimilating food and water normally. There are some situations in which assisted nutrition and hydration may be withdrawn.

Many people want to know whether there is a list of all the things that count as ordinary care. Abstractly speaking, there is no such list because this will depend on the unique situation of each patient. Some think that this fact introduces an element of moral relativism into the teaching, but it does not. This is because, in each unique case, it

*(Continued on page 19)*

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-Pope Francis



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## Death and dying

*(Continued from page 17)*

can be determined which treatments are extraordinary and which are ordinary. Once that is clear, the patient or health care proxy can decide whether or not to remove the extraordinary treatment, but they may never stop ordinary care.

In many cases, it can take careful, difficult discernment and discussion with doctors and spiritual directors to determine whether a treatment is extraordinary or ordinary. As long as the intention is not to kill, but always to care, then the family should pray, discern and then act, trusting God with the final decision. There are many helpful Catholic guides to aid discernment in these situations.

The Catholic view includes the humble acceptance of the approach of death, which is completely different than assisted suicide and euthanasia laws, which are about

legalizing the killing of patients with an overdose.

In a poignant piece against euthanasia, French novelist Michel Houellebecq recently wrote, "I can easily imagine myself asking to die in the hope that others reply: 'Oh no, no. Please stay with us a little longer.'" The society-wide suggestion that the legalization of assisted suicide represents preempts that precious thought and replaces it with a sense of abandonment and the implication that one should be dead. Insofar as coercion is the opposite of freedom, the term "pro-choice" is a misnomer; as the so-called right to die cramps rather than frees.

In a place where physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia are illegal, on the other hand, vulnerable persons rest assured that everyone is committed to caring for them until they die a natural death, which frees them to die with true dignity, the dignity of a child of God.

Facing suffering and death can be overwhelming; John

Paul II wrote about this profoundly and sensitively in *Salvifici Doloris* ("On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering"). With the advent of modern medicine, coupled with our death-averse culture, we can say that the fear of dying alone connected to machines is a legitimate fear. To address this, we need to reevaluate our priorities as a society.

A long-forgotten and beautiful Catholic tradition is the "ars moriendi," which means "the art of dying." It included methods of preparing for a holy death, and it emphasized making the sick person the center of attention, surrounded by family, friends, health care providers and the priest. This is beautifully depicted in many medieval paintings.

We should build a society that surrounds the vulnerable with loving care until they die a natural death — an ars moriendi for the 21st century.



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## St. Paul School celebrates the 100-year anniversary

(Continued from page 1)

had reach Boone County and Taylorsport. People traveled from up to 15 miles away, across counties, to come to the celebration of Mass.

“People came from all over ... keep in mind in those days that would be 15 miles of walking, or 15 miles of horseback,” said Bishop Iffert. “Father Butler continued to send a priest out there every couple of months to celebrate Mass in this small Catholic community. In 1855 he established a parish, and the first church was built in 1856, the first resident pastor in 1873,” said Bishop Iffert.

It was that first resident pastor, Rev. Joseph Bent, who worked to open St. Paul School sometime between 1873 and 1877.

“To have the courage to go ahead and build a little room

on the back of the small church and start a school. Open to educating Catholic children, hoping to keep them from falling under the influence of the anti-Catholic Know Nothings. Can you imagine how lonely that felt, and how difficult it was,” asked Bishop Iffert. “It was a one room school along the back of the church, and it functioned until 1913, when it closed. I don’t know why it closed, but I know exactly why. It closed for the same reason that Catholic schools always close. Three things open Catholic schools, three things close Catholic schools — Catholic faculty, sufficient students and money,” said Bishop Iffert.

However, as had been made evident, the resiliency of the Catholic community of Florence shone forth once again, and in 1923 Father Herbert Egbring re-opened the

school under the care the Sisters of St. Benedict.

In 1924, 100 years ago, the interior of the church was decorated and a new altar installed. It took only two years after the reopening of the school for the number of pupils to outgrow the small one room classroom and in 1925 ground was broken for a new school building. Twenty-six years later, once again, the need for a new school building arose and in 1951, the new, modern school building was blessed upon completion of construction.

The intertwining history of St. Paul Parish and St. Paul School have left an impact on not only the city of Florence but also on the counties surrounding them. It was the bravery of Cornelius Ahern, Rev. Joseph Bent and Father Herbert Egbring, that brought St. Paul Parish and School to the city of Florence where it has shone as a beacon of faith for those near and far, for over 100 years.

## Pro-life Mass

(Continued from page 2)

During his homily, Father Schomaker recalled a child named Matthew — 24 weeks in utero when he died. When Father Schomaker entered the hospital room, Matthew’s grandfather, who was holding him, said to Father Schomaker, “Look, Father, he’s perfect.”

“That child is perfect because he had been made in the image and likeness of God, and he was unique,” said Father Schomaker.

“Every life is perfect, made as God has chosen,” he said, “which is why we uphold every life as having an innate dignity ... the sad thing is, my friends, we live in a world that doesn’t like to recognize the dignity of the human person.”

“As most of you know, there is a conflict going on in the Middle East,” Father Schomaker brought to the congregation’s attention, “and as I was listening to the radio, I hear different sides rejoicing over this conflict — yet no one on the radio seems to be mourning the fact that one group of human beings is taking out after another, and unwilling to recognize the dignity that they each have.”

Towards the end of his homily, Father Schomaker brought up one of his favorite saints: St. Theresa of Calcutta.

“She did not care if you were rich or poor,” he said, “she did not care where you were from; She cared if you were in need.”

Father Schomaker continued, saying, “she was asked

one time why she cared for everyone and anyone, and she said ‘I see Jesus in every human being ... I serve because I love Jesus.’”

“This is our call, my friends,” he said, “to see Jesus in our neighbor. To see Jesus in our family, to see Jesus in our friends, to see Jesus in the stranger, to see Jesus in the one who might be classified as enemy. It is too easy to get pulled away from recognizing the dignity of every single person who exists on Earth, everyone we are called by the Lord to love. Even those who hate us.”

“Today,” Father Schomaker concluded, “as we come together to pray for life in every stage, from the moment of conception until natural death, let us love. Let us will the good of the other, and see Jesus in everyone.”

### Protecting God’s Children for Adults Safe Environment Trainings

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**Step 2: Go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)** and click on Registration. Follow the prompts to create an account and to request a background

check. Selection.com is a secure site; the background check is posted on your account and you receive a copy if you request it during the registration process. You will sign up for a VIRTUS training class during theregistration.

**Step 3: Your account becomes active** when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at

system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

**Bulletins:**

- September bulletin posted Sunday, September 1; due Tuesday, October 1.

The monthly e-mail reminder of a new bulletin posted will come from system@pub.virtus.org.

**[www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), enter your user id and password.** If your account is suspended contact your primary location where you

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**VIRTUS Training:**

- Tuesday, Oct. 22, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington
- Tuesday, Oct. 22, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

- Thursday, Nov. 14, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

- Thursday, Nov. 14, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

- Wednesday, Dec. 4, 9–11:30 a.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

- Wednesday, Dec. 4, 6–8:30 p.m., Diocesan Curia, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington

**Note: If your Training Tab is missing** or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution. For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covdio.org

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# homeschooling families

(Continued from page 7)

decline to do so.

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paves the way for making it right.

*Dr. Gary Houchens, a Bluegrass Institute Scholar, is professor in the School of Leadership and Professional Students and director of the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Western Kentucky University*

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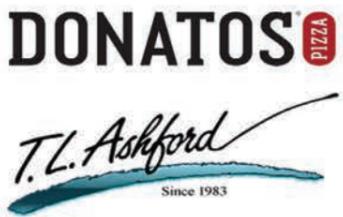
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**Pope defends decision to give women, laymen voting rights at synod**

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis opened the second session of the Synod of Bishops defending his decision to give women and laymen votes at the assembly, saying it reflects the Second Vatican Council’s teaching that a bishop exercises his ministry with and within the people of God. “It is certainly not a matter of replacing one with the other, rallying to the cry: ‘Now it is our turn!’” the pope said as the 368 synod members — including what the Vatican described as 96 “non-bishops” — began their work Oct. 2 in the Paul VI Audience Hall. “We are being asked to work together symphonically, in a composition that unites all of us in the service of God’s mercy, in accordance with the different ministries and charisms that the bishop is charged to acknowledge and promote,” the pope told the members, seated at round tables with a mix of cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and lay men and women. Pope Francis said he wanted to respond to a “storm of chattering” that had developed around his expansion of synod membership.

**Pope calls Gaza every day, lifting up suffering community**

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Since Hamas’ attack on Israel Oct. 7, 2023, and the immediate start of the Israel-Hamas war, Pope Francis has provided daily spiritual solace to Gaza Strip’s only Catholic parish. Roughly 500 people shelter in the complex of Holy Family Parish in Gaza City now, with its two priests and several religious sisters. Although the church houses mainly displaced Christians, it also aids Muslims and has treated those injured in the attacks. In May, Pope Francis told “CBS Evening News” that during his daily phone calls to the parish, the people there “tell me about what happens. It is very tough, very tough. I listen,” stressing that there is “a lot of suffering” in Gaza. As throughout Gaza, the parish also faces a shortage of food, water and medicine, and during harsh winter temperatures it also struggles with a lack of heating. On Pope Francis’ return from his recent demanding 12-day visit to southeast Asia, he again mentioned his personal calls every evening with the Gaza parish. “They tell me ugly things, difficult things,” he told reporters aboard the papal plane about the continuing crisis. Father Rifat Bader of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who directs the Catholic Center for Studies and Media in Jordan, said Pope Francis’ calls to the Gaza parish are “a sign of encouragement, a sign of paternal care” for those suffering great loss and trauma.

**New texts for Eucharistic adoration, Communion outside Mass aim to promote unity**

WASHINGTON — Three years after being approved by the U.S. Catholic bishops, updates to the ritual texts for distribution of holy Communion outside of Mass and for Eucharistic adoration will take effect. The revised version of “Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass” will be implemented on the First Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1, 2024. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had signed off on the fresh texts in 2021, with the revisions reviewed by the USCCB’s Secretariat for Divine Worship and confirmed by the Vatican in March 2023. Father David R. Price, associate director of the USCCB’s Secretariat of Divine Worship, told OSV News that “the main thing to keep in mind” regarding the revisions is that “this is a new translation of the ritual book that was given in Latin in the 1970s — so it’s a new translation, it’s not a new ritual book per se.” He emphasized that “the discipline of distribution of holy Communion outside Mass that is in place now is not changing.” The new translation “should hopefully be a way for people to continue to grow and deepen in their faith and to have a sense of unity with the universal church, in that we are praying with words in English that are similar, that are the same in meaning, as words that people are praying these same prayers in other languages — and that the translations are consistent in their meaning between these different languages,” said Father Price. “And that shows the universality of the church.”

**California AG sues Catholic hospital for allegedly denying emergency abortion**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California’s Democratic attorney general on Sept. 30 sued a Catholic hospital he accused of refusing to provide an emergency abortion to a pregnant woman despite an “immediate threat” to her life. Attorney General Rob Bonta accused Providence St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka of hav-

ing a policy that “discriminates against pregnant patients” due to its policy forbidding performing an abortion where fetal heartbeats were present. Bonta’s lawsuit seeks a court order to require the hospital to perform emergency abortions. Anna Nusslock, named in the lawsuit as the patient, alleged Providence did not perform an emergency abortion after she was diagnosed with Previae Premature Pre-labor Rupture of Membranes in February and instructed her to drive to another hospital 12 miles away to get an abortion. She said she was hemorrhaging by the time she reached it. In a statement provided to

OSV News, a spokesperson for the hospital said while it does not perform elective abortions, it does not deny emergency care and provides necessary interventions to save the lives of pregnant women in complex circumstances. Garry Olney, CEO of the Providence Northern California service area, said Oct. 1, “This was a tragic situation that did not meet our high standards for safe, quality, compassionate care. ... We are immediately re-visiting our training, education and escalation processes in emergency medical situations to ensure that this does not happen again.”

**STARS SUPPORT GROUP FOR KIDS AND TEENS**

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