

**You're invited**

The World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life is Feb. 2, which is also the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Celebration of this day of prayer is Feb. 1-2, to allow parishes to highlight the gift of religious life and pray for those discerning a religious vocation.

The Diocese of Covington will honor its women and men religious with **Mass on Saturday, Feb. 1, 10 a.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.** Bishop John Iffert is the celebrant. A reception will follow in Bishop Howard Memorial Hall. All people are cordially invited to attend.

Pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life and be sure to thank them on this special day. May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.



**Catholic Charities of Northern Kentucky Mental Health First Aid training**

February 18

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, Covington

9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Registration required online at <https://form.jotform.com/243105347336149>.

Mental Health First Aid helps reduce stigma, teach signs and symptoms and prepare first aiders to use a 5-step action plan to use in the event of a mental health crisis.

**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."

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

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diocesis 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.

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."



January 14, 2025

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Covington,

I am writing to you today to advise you that the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist (the MSJB) has been suppressed. The group no longer has a connection with the Diocese of Covington or the Roman Catholic Church. Former members retain all the rights and obligations associated with their vocational state — layman or diocesan priest.

The MSJB were a group of men — two priests and several laymen — who hoped to establish a religious order in the Catholic Church. They were established as a public association of the faithful here in the Diocese of Covington on an experimental basis. The priests of the MSJB contributed substantially to the founding of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and members of the association ministered in the parish.

The suppression of the association has no canonical effect on the status of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The parish is a personal (non-geographic) parish that celebrates the Holy Mass and other liturgies entirely contained in the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Saint John XXIII in 1962. I intend to continue this pastoral accommodation to Catholics who are attached to this liturgy, always in accord with the direction and guidance of the Holy See.

This process began in April 2024. Between April and July, I consulted with the diocesan Presbyteral Council and members of the MSJB about the future of the association. After much deliberation and prayer, I issued a decree suppressing the association on July 1, 2024. That decree is published in this edition of the *Messenger*.

I delayed publishing the decree of suppression in the *Messenger* because the MSJB had the right to request that I reconsider this action. They had the further right to appeal the suppression prior to the decree taking effect. With the time limit for further recourse having expired, I now confirm that the decree in question has become effective, and the public association has been extinguished.

I communicated this confirmation to members of the former association in November 2024. They are released from all promises and commitments in relation to the extinguished association. Lay members are encouraged to continue to pursue their vocational discernment with a diocese or an institute of consecrated life. Priest members remain incardinated priests of the Diocese of Covington. Restrictions upon priestly ministry that were in place prior to this action remain in place.

Thank you for your prayers for the Universal Church, the Diocese of Covington, the former members of the MSJB, and all who love them and have been grateful for their ministry. Please continue to hold us in prayer.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John C. Iffert  
Bishop of Covington



**Bishop's Schedule**

**Jan. 20**  
Diocesan Curia offices closed in observance of the Martin Luther King holiday

**Jan. 21**  
Sacrament of Confirmation, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia, 7 p.m.

**Jan. 22**  
Villa Madonna Academy building blessing and ribbon cutting ceremony, Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, 9 a.m.

**Jan. 22 (continued)**  
Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, 7 p.m.

**Jan. 23**  
Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, 7 p.m.



JOHN CURTIS

BY THE GRACE OF GOD  
AND THE FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE

BISHOP OF COVINGTON

**DECREE**

The Missionaries of St. John the Baptist were erected as a public association of the faithful subject to the Bishop of Covington on September 5, 2019. The association was established with the intention of becoming a religious institute in which the celebration of the prior form of the Roman Rite was normative. In light of the apostolic letter *Traditionis custodes* and in response to the consistent disparagement of the current form of the Roman Rite by members of the association and a lack of suitable clerical leadership for the association, I have decided to suppress the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist. In accordance with can. 50 and can. 320 §3, this decision was made after consultation with all the members of the association, as well as with the diocesan presbyteral council.

Therefore, in accordance with can. 320 §2, I hereby suppress the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist.

According to can. 1734 §§1-2, the emendation or revocation of this decree may be sought within ten useful days of its notification.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Covington on the first day of July in the two thousand twenty-fourth year of our Lord.

*John C. Hoffert*  
Most Reverend John C. Hoffert  
Bishop of Covington

*Jamie N. Schroeder*  
Mrs. Jamie N. Schroeder  
Chancellor

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity to focus on Creed

Cindy Wooden  
*Catholic News Service*

VATICAN CITY — As Christian churches prepare to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will focus on affirming the Nicene Creed and its expression of the faith Christians share.

Materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25 are prepared each year by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.

Pope Francis is scheduled to close the week with an ecumenical prayer service at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls Jan. 25.

The pope and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople also have expressed a hope to mark the anniversary together in May in Iznik, Turkey, the site of the ancient city of Nicaea.

The theme chosen for the 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, underlining the importance of a profession of faith, is Jesus' question to Martha of Bethany: "Do you believe this?"

In the Gospel of John, Martha tells Jesus that if he had been there, her brother Lazarus would not have died. Jesus tells Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live," and then he asks if she believes. Martha responds with a declaration of faith: "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

In the materials for the week, the Vatican and the World Council of Churches said the Nicaea anniversary "provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the Creed formulated during this Council; a faith that remains alive and fruitful in our days."

organized a shoe drive.

"I got the idea because I volunteered at the CCRU clinic, which is through the University of Kentucky; Northern Kentucky University College of Medicine. They would see 4-5 patients a night that would come into the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky in Covington, and I noticed that one common thing among all the patients was that they really needed a new pair of shoes," said Ms. Birtcil. "The people that come to the shelter," she continued, "do a lot of walking so it felt like a really important need for them."

While the Compassion Pantry primarily serves the immediate Thomas More community, Ms. Birtcil and Mr. Francis saw this as the perfect opportunity to give back.

"We receive a lot from our greater community," said Mr. Francis, "we have partnerships with Panera, they donate all of their leftover bread every Sunday night. Master Provisions lets us come in and do some grocery shopping. We get donations from High Schools and the alumni all the time. It is all one big family in Northern Kentucky. I think that, as much as people have helped us, we should also help people."

Giving back to the community that has given the Compassion Pantry so much is a hallmark of the shoe drive. All of the shoes that are collected are going to be donated to the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky, to help them combat cold related injuries and illnesses.

The coordination of Ms. Birtcil, Mr. Francis, the Compassion Pantry team and the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky is a testament to the Northern Kentucky community and Mr. Francis said, their faith.

"I would say faith does drive us in all aspects," he said. "Ultimately, at the end of the day, Christ died for us, showing that love back into the community is our goal. I would say that is why we do everything."

For those interested in donating to the shoe drive the drop off box is located inside the doors of the Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Crestview Hills, and to the left. The Chapel is on the campus of Thomas More University. The donation box will remain in the Chapel until Friday, Jan. 24.

"I hate when my feet are cold," Mr. Francis said. "So I can only imagine what it is like for other people that don't have roofs over their heads to not have shoes and warm feet."

## TMU Compassion Pantry co-directors, organize shoe drive to help the most vulnerable

Bella Bailey  
*Multimedia Correspondent*

As part of the Diocesan-wide Campaign of Mercy, the *Messenger* has been highlighting a different work of mercy each month. For the month of January, the focus is on the corporal work, clothing the naked.

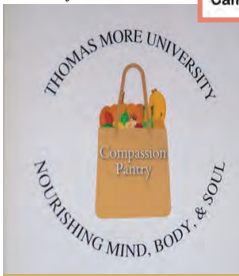
In conjunction with the



December work of mercy, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked focuses on aiding the most vulnerable. With temperatures falling, and snowbanks piling high, those without consistent shelter are at risk of frostbite and hypothermia, making warm clothes a necessity. Unfortunately, those that need warm clothes the most often have the least access. Whether it is low volume and high demand, or even cost, access to warm clothes is limited.

Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, students

MaryKay Birtcil and Noah Francis, co-directors of Thomas More University Compassion Pantry, took note and are doing what they can to help. The Compassion Pantry typically focuses on nonperishable food items for students on campus, but the heart of the organization is in giving back. Ms. Birtcil and Mr. Francis met with their team of students and, in an effort to combat the lack of access,



(above left) The Compassion Pantry sign outside of the room on campus  
(above right) Shoes that have already been donated to the shoe drive sit in front of the donation box.