

Palermo hired as Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri

Springfield, MO

The Board of Directors Search Committee of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) and Bishop Edward M. Rice of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, recently announced the hire of Ken Palermo of Columbia, MO, as the agency’s new Executive Director. His start date is Jan. 30, 2023. Palermo’s hire concludes a nationwide search for a new chief executive to lead the agency after the retirement of Maura Taylor on Dec. 15, 2022. Taylor led the charitable nonprofit from its infancy through an era of expansive growth in her service of more than 11 years.

“The various initiatives of Catholic Charities are rooted in Catholic social teaching: recognizing and enhancing the dignity of the human person,” Bishop Rice said. “Ken Palermo will have to hit the ground running.”

Palermo began his career as a disease intervention specialist. He brings to CCSOMO the 27 years of public health and leadership experience he has earned since at the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) and Missouri Department of Social Services (MDSS). At those organizations, he held a series of leadership positions, including Deputy Director of the Division of Community and Public Health (MDHSS), where he helped lead the state’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While at MDHSS, he also served as the State Registrar for

Missouri’s Bureau of Vital Records. Palermo most recently served as Director of Catholic Refugee Services, a program of Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, which resettled nearly 400 refugee Afghans in the last year.

Palermo describes his leadership philosophy as that of a servant leader who abides by the Golden Rule of “doing unto others as he would want done to himself.”

His emphasis as an empathetic leader is one of relationship-building, data-informed decision-making, developing strategic initiatives, and complex project management.

“Humility in a leader leads to approachability, opportunities for mentorship, guidance, and growth, both professionally and personally,” Palermo said. “I lead by example, from engaging a team

in big-picture thinking, to building the community (and relationships) to see a concept through to success.”

As the son of a retired suburban Chicago police officer, Palermo grew up on that city’s west side. However, he has roots in Missouri’s Franklin County, where he



Newly appointed Executive Director, **Ken Palermo**
(The Mirror)

spent most summers growing up on his grandparents’ farm, at times running cattle and hay, and other times, enjoying nature. From his father, he learned the importance of a sense of community and public service, and from his mother, the importance of making himself indispensable. Along the way, he also learned the value of humor, the power of a smile, and the importance of kindness. His

personal hashtag on social media is #ChooseKind.

“Service in the name of the Church never ends. The Poor will always be with us,” said Bishop Rice. “Palermo’s expansive experience will build on the solid foundation established at Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri by Maura and the staff.”

Palermo holds a master’s degree in management from Fontbonne University, in St. Louis; and a bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in criminal justice from Truman State University in Kirksville, MO. ©TM

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is a faith-based 501(c)(3) agency whose mission is to provide quality, compassionate social services that meet local needs. CCSOMO provides a wide variety of programs throughout the 39 southernmost counties of Missouri. CCSOMO serves people of all faiths. Learn more at www.ccsomo.org.

“I lead by example, from engaging a team in big-picture thinking, to building the community (and relationships) to see a concept through to success.”

The next issue of **The Mirror** will be **January 6, 2023**. Sign up to receive the diocesan newspaper via Email in digital format: Contact Debbie Thompson at (417) 866-0841, or Email: dthompson@dioscg.org.

PARISH CELEBRATES ADVENT with CRAFT DAY



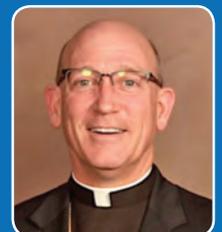
St. John Vianney Parish, Mountain View, celebrated a big turn out for the Advent 2022 parish wreath-making event. *(The Mirror)*

CONGRATULATIONS

The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice

The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice will celebrate the 36th anniversary of his priesthood ordination on January 3rd and the 12th anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration on January 13th.

Happy Anniversary, Bishop Rice!





**COME, AND
YOU WILL SEE**

Bp. Edward M. Rice

Be mindful in receiving our Lord in the Eucharist

The Church celebrates the Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton on Jan. 4. Located in Springfield, we are blessed to have a parish in the diocese under her patronage. As we enter into the new year and a new semester of school—as we continue our Eucharistic Revival throughout the Church in the United States—let us turn to her as the patron of the Eucharist.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was born and raised in the Anglican faith but converted to Catholicism after her husband died. For this decision, she was scorned by her family and friends but dedicated the remainder of her life to the service of the Church. She founded the first parochial school and the first woman's religious congregation in America. What many people do not know is that she also had a great love for the Eucharist. From her writings we hear "O, Food of Heaven, how my soul longs for you with desire! Seed of Heaven, pledge of immortality and that eternity it pants for: Come, come, my Jesus, bury yourself within this heart. It shall do its best to preserve that warmth which will bring forth the fruits of eternity. Oh, amen. Our Jesus."

While the imagery and wording may sound a little archaic to us, her points are well made. Does my soul long to receive Jesus? I was recently at a Mass where the priest, prior to the distribution of Holy Communion, explained that those not of the Catholic faith were welcome to come forward with their arms crossed for a blessing. That, in and of itself, is nothing new – it's fairly common. But then he also said that for those Catholics that were not in a state of grace, who have examined their conscience and should not be receiving communion, then they, too,

should come forward with arms crossed and receive a blessing. He said it in such a tender and thoughtful way that I hope no one took offense. But he makes a good point—we should not receive the Eucharist unworthily. If someone is aware of mortal sin, if someone has scrutinized his or her actions, examined their conscience, and concluded that they should not receive Communion, then they should come forward with their arms crossed to indicate a blessing (and take advantage of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation so as to get back to the Eucharist!).

RECEIVE WORTHILY

Prior to the reception of Holy Communion, the priest offers one of two prayers, said quietly with his hands folded, just before the reception of Holy Communion. The prayer reminds the priest that he himself must be in a state of grace in order to receive Holy Communion and avoid condemnation by receiving the Eucharist unworthily. The first prayer includes the following words: "Free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood, from all my sins and from every evil; keep me always faithful to your commandments, and never let me be parted from you." The second prayer, shorter, has the same theme: "May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through Your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body and a healing remedy." Only after reciting one of those prayers does the priest then cry out, "Behold the Lamb of God..." followed by the response of the people "Lord, I am not worthy... But only say the words and my soul shall be healed."

It is significant that these prayers

are offered just before the reception of Holy Communion. The Church wants the priest himself and then the entire congregation to ponder the significance of this moment. And if someone comes to the conclusion that they are not in a state of grace, that they should not receive unworthily.

Is this harsh? Well, is stopping a child from touching a hot stove harsh? Is stopping a child from walking into traffic harsh? Is stopping a child from running with a scissors or a knife harsh? In all these cases there is the possibility of physical harm. And how much more so would there be harm to the soul for one who receives the Eucharist unworthily.

In her little prayer, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton desired, (even!) panted for the Eucharist. In her little prayer, she invited the Eucharist to be buried in her heart. And although the wording and imagery might be a little old-fashioned, the point is well made – let us long for the Eucharist, let us desire the Eucharist, let us invite the Eucharist—Our very Lord—to take root in our

hearts. But, most importantly, let us always receive the Eucharist worthily, with intentionality and thoughtfulness, and with a clear conscience. ©TM

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LIVE NATIVITY WITH ADVENT-CHRISTMAS PROGRAM held DEC. 15



CAPE GIRARDEAU—Students, faculty, parents, and area clergy celebrated the Dec. 15 Advent-Christmas Liturgy in Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau. The program included the annual live nativity, with Bailie Johnston portraying Mary; Roddy Baz as Joseph; and Baby Jesus was portrayed by baby Scarlett Keusenkothen, daughter of junior Theology teacher Justin Keusenkothen (2014 alum) and Samantha Keusenkothen (2017 alum). Merry Christmas!
(The Mirror)

**NEW YEAR'S EVE
MIDNIGHT
MASS**

AT ST. AGNES CATHEDRAL, SPRINGFIELD
WITH BISHOP EDWARD M. RICE

DECEMBER 31
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Holy Hour
led by
Bishop Rice

JANUARY 1
12:00 AM
Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God
Midnight Mass

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VEN Y VERÁS

Obispo Edward M. Rice

Estar atentos al recibir al Señor en la Eucaristía

La Iglesia celebra la fiesta de Santa Isabel Ana Seton el 4 de enero. Tenemos la bendición de tener una parroquia en la diócesis bajo su patrocinio, en Springfield. Al entrar en el nuevo año y en un nuevo semestre escolar —al continuar nuestro Avivamiento Eucarístico en toda la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos— dirijámonos a ella como patrona de la Eucaristía.

Santa Isabel Ana Seton nació y creció en la religión anglicana, pero se convirtió al catolicismo tras la muerte de su marido. Por esta decisión, fue despreciada por su familia y amigos, pero dedicó el resto de su vida al servicio de la Iglesia. Fundó la primera escuela parroquial y la primera congregación religiosa femenina de América. Lo que mucha gente no sabe es que ella también tenía un gran amor por la Eucaristía. De sus escritos escuchamos “¡Oh, Alimento del Cielo, cómo te anhela con deseo mi alma! Semilla del Cielo, prenda de inmortalidad y esa de eternidad que anhela: Ven, ven, Jesús mío, entiérrate dentro de este corazón. Hará todo lo posible por preservar ese calor que producirá los frutos de la eternidad. Oh, amén. Nuestro Jesús”.

Mientras que las imágenes y la redacción pueden sonar un poco arcaicas para nosotros, la idea central está bien hecha. ¿Anhela mi alma recibir a Jesús? Recientemente estuve en una Misa donde el sacerdote, antes de la distribución de la Sagrada Comunión, explicó que aquellos que no eran católicos eran bienvenidos a venir

adelante con los brazos cruzados para una bendición. Eso, en sí mismo, no es nada nuevo, es bastante habitual. Pero también dijo que los católicos que no estuvieran en estado de gracia, que hubieran hecho examen de conciencia y no debieran comulgar, también debían acercarse con los brazos cruzados y recibir la bendición. Lo dijo de una forma tan tierna y considerada que espero que nadie se ofendió. Pero él tiene razón: no debemos recibir la Eucaristía indignamente. Si alguien es consciente de pecado mortal, si alguien ha escrutado sus acciones, ha examinado su conciencia, y ha llegado a la conclusión de que no debe recibir la Comunión, entonces debe acercarse con los brazos cruzados para indicar una bendición (y aprovechar el sacramento de la penitencia y la reconciliación para volver a la Eucaristía!).

RECIBIR DIGNAMENTE

Antes de la recepción de la Sagrada Comunión, el sacerdote ofrece una de dos oraciones, dichas en voz baja con las manos cruzadas, justo antes de la recepción de la Sagrada Comunión. La oración recuerda al sacerdote que él mismo debe estar en estado de gracia para recibir la Sagrada Comunión y evitar condenarse por recibir la Eucaristía indignamente. La primera oración incluye las siguientes palabras: “Librame, por la recepción de tu Cuerpo y de tu Sangre, de todas mis culpas y de todo mal. Concédeme cumplir siempre tus mandamientos y jamás permitas que me separe de ti”. La segunda oración,

más corta, tiene el mismo tema: “Señor Jesucristo, la comunión de tu Cuerpo y de tu Sangre no sea para mí un motivo de juicio y condenación, sino que, por tu piedad, me aproveche para defensa de alma y cuerpo y como remedio saludable”. Sólo después de recitar una de esas oraciones, el sacerdote proclama entonces: “Éste es el Cordero de Dios...”, seguido de la respuesta del pueblo: “Señor, no soy digno... pero una palabra tuya bastará para sanarme”.

Es significativo que estas oraciones se ofrezcan justo antes de la recepción de la Sagrada Comunión. La Iglesia quiere que el sacerdote mismo y luego toda la congregación reflexionen sobre el significado de este momento. Y si alguien llega a la conclusión de que no está en estado de gracia, no debe recibir indignamente.

¿Es esto duro? ¿Es duro impedir a un niño que toque un hornillo caliente? ¿Es duro impedir a un niño que entre en el tráfico? ¿Es duro impedir que un niño corra con unas tijeras o un cuchillo? En todos estos casos existe la posibilidad de daño físico. Y cuánto más habría daño al alma para quien recibe la Eucaristía indignamente.

En su pequeña oración, Santa Isabel Ana Seton deseaba, (e ¡incluso!) anhelaba la Eucaristía. En su pequeña oración, invitó a la Eucaristía a

ser enterrada en su corazón. Y aunque la formulación y las imágenes puedan ser un poco anticuadas, la cuestión está bien planteada: anhelemos la Eucaristía, deseemos la Eucaristía, invitemos a la Eucaristía —nuestro mismo Señor— a echar raíces en nuestros corazones. Pero, lo más importante, recibamos siempre dignamente la Eucaristía, con intencionalidad y consideración, y con una conciencia clara. ©TM



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ANOTHER WALK THROUGH: 'WALKING TOGETHER'

by Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht

Before his retirement in 2008 as the Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Bishop John Leibrecht wrote a standing column in *The Mirror* entitled, “Walking Together.” At the end of each article, Bp. Leibrecht would normally share a funny story referencing his travels to the schools, or time with friends, family, or other

bishops. *The Mirror* has decided to share a few of these in an ongoing series entitled, “Another walk through: ‘Walking Together.’” We hope you enjoy them.

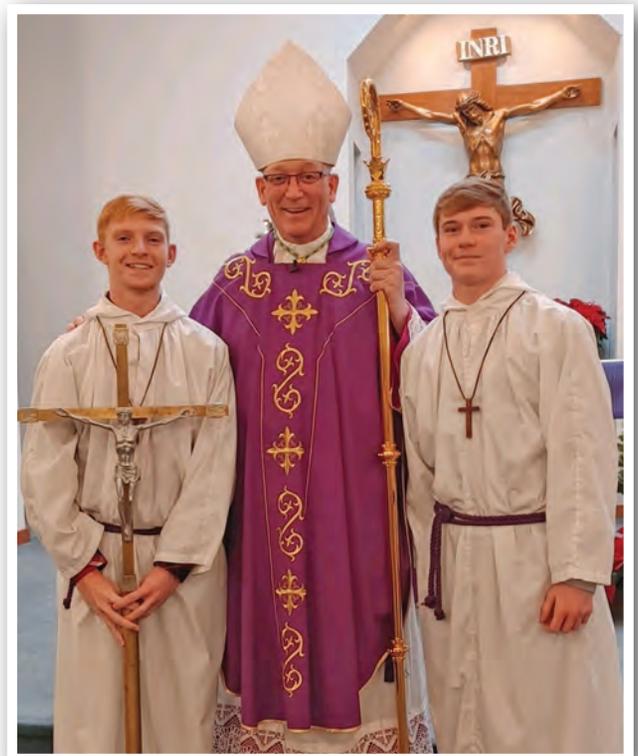
March 4, 1988 A racetrack was described by a man, who seemed as though he may have learned from experience, as a place where windows clean people.

March 11, 1988 Pope John Paul II has a good sense of humor. At the end of our luncheon during our Ad Limina visit, Bishop John Sullivan of Kansas City said, “Holy Father, we worry about how much you have to do. Tomorrow is Sunday. What will you do tomorrow?” The Pope said, “Tomorrow, I will do things to save my soul.” He paused, then added

with a big grin on his face as he gestured toward us, “Today, to save my soul, I meet with bishops.”

March 18, 1988 A TWA stewardess on the flight to Rome told us about a Protestant friend she took to see St. Peter Basilica. The tour included excavations which go back to the fourth century, under the church. It also included a visit to the tomb of St. Peter beneath the Church. With humorous reverence, the Protestant girl said, “You Catholics save everything, don’t you?!”

HOW DO YOU SERVE THE CHURCH?



MASS IN EL DORADO SPRINGS—Braxton Watts and Maverick Mitchell served at the Mass celebrated on Dec. 17 by Bp. Edward M. Rice in St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, in El Dorado Springs.

(The Mirror)



By
George
Weigel

The Catholic Difference

MARY, THE CHURCH, CHRISTMAS, AND JIMMY LAI

Now, on Christmas Day, the nine months have been fulfilled. What began on the day of Annunciation is made visible to the world in the person of the newborn babe of Bethlehem, who is both Son of God and Son of Mary. History is forever changed.

The “little flock” of whom Jesus will speak in Luke 12:32 (“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”) is already here: in Mary and Joseph, humble servants of God; in the shepherds who leave the manger rejoicing; in the Magi who will come bearing gifts; in the slaughtered innocents and their grieving parents, precursors of the white-robed army of martyrs who will follow down the centuries. In a formal sense, the Church of Christ begins with the Paschal Mystery of the Lord’s passion, death, resurrection and ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the first Christian Pentecost. Yet the Church is also present in Bethlehem in an anticipatory way.

Which is how it should be, since this axial moment in the human story, the birth of the incarnate Son of God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, began with the *fiat*, the answer of a trusting and obedient young woman to the angelic salutation and summons to motherhood. As St. John Paul II never tired of teaching, Mary’s *fiat* — “Be it done unto me according to *your word*” (Luke 1:38) — made her the first of disciples and established the paradigm of all discipleship: joyful obedience to the divine call. Everything else in the Church — evangelism, contemplation, authority, service — only makes sense in light of that Marian “yes” and the discipleship it uniquely expressed.



Mary is the beginning of the Church. And Mary remains the model of the Church forever, because her Assumption reveals the destiny that God intended for humanity “in the beginning” — eternal life with the Thrice-Holy God.

At this Catholic moment, when so many — perhaps too many — are singularly focused on and disturbed by ecclesiastical dysfunction at every level of Catholic life, from the local parish to the Vatican, it is good, at Christmastide, to reflect on Mary and the Church — and on what Mary’s initial act of discipleship, that *fiat* which came to fruition “when Quirinius was governor of Syria” (Luke 2:2), means for us today. Hans Urs von Balthasar, pondering the First and Third Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, points that meditation in the proper direction:

“From the Mother’s disposition grows the disposition of the Church. The Church is not an external assembly of people brought together by a common religious purpose, but rather a reality that exists before we do and to which we owe what we are, through God and by the grace of God. No one helps himself to the sacraments; they are bestowed on a person as graces...The Church is responsible for us before God; she is to rear us in her pure and holy spirit and not in our own...[which is how we become] ‘ecclesial souls.’”

One of the great debates in the Catholic Church today touches this issue: Does the Church, created by God in Christ and formed in the image of Mary, create us? Or do we create the Church? To even hint at the latter is to empty the Church of its supernatural

character and reduce Catholicism to an international non-governmental organization. Yet is not some part of that going on when it is suggested, in certain exercises of “synodality,” “listening,” “accompaniment,” and “discernment,” that the Church of the 21st century has the authority to modify or even correct the word of God? Or to refashion the Christ-given constitution of the Church? Or to bless in an uncritical way the spirit of the age?

Some months ago, my friend Jimmy Lai, the Catholic convert and prisoner of conscience in Hong Kong (about whose unjust persecution and imprisonment the Holy See has not managed to speak a single public word of protest) sent me from his cell in Stanley Prison a beautiful pencil-and-crayon depiction of the Annunciation entitled, simply, “Yes!” This courageous

man with a truly “ecclesial soul” knows that the Church created him in baptism. And that grace has empowered him to live the virtue of fortitude and be a fearless defender of justice, truth and freedom.

Jimmy Lai will spend Christmas in prison, but he will be free in the deepest meaning of the word. For he is free in the truth of Christ, born for us that happy morning in Bethlehem of Judea.

George Weigel is a Distinguished Senior Fellow and William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. George Weigel’s column ‘The Catholic Difference’ is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

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A GRATEFUL CHURCH

celebrates and recognizes the following ordination anniversaries in January:

PRIESTS:

Rev. Joji Vincent, Jan. 05, 17 yrs.

Rev. Karl Barmann, OSB, Jan. 21, 58 yrs.





NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL INCOMING FRESHMAN PLACEMENT TEST

The Notre Dame Regional High School Placement Test for the class of 2027 is scheduled for **Saturday, January 14, 2023**. This test is one of several criteria used to assess a student's current math abilities and assure student success in our mathematics curriculum.

All eighth graders interested in taking the exam should report to Notre Dame at **8:00 a.m.** The event should conclude by **10:00 a.m.**
Please bring two #2 pencils and a calculator.

Please register online at: www.notredamehighschool.org/placementtest/

During the test, incoming freshman parents can enjoy coffee and donuts with the Home & School Board for our Morning Mingle. Principal Tim Garner will meet with parents about the next steps toward enrollment.

If you cannot attend on this date, please contact the Counselor's Office at (573) 335-6772, ext. 327 for the availability of future testing dates.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Counselor's Office
Notre Dame Regional High School
(573) 335-6772 ext. 327



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jackson—The Jackson Knights of Columbus #6405 will host a **Fish & Chicken Dinner** on Fri., Jan. 20, 4:30-7 p.m. in the lower KC Hall. Fried fish, fried chicken, fries, hushpuppies, baked beans, slaw, and homemade mac & cheese, \$13 per person. Dine in or carry-out available. For more information, call Dave at (573) 243-5464. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Immaculate Conception Home & School Association.

Springfield—Springfield Area Perpetual Adoration, hosted at Holy Trinity Chapel, **will suspend on Thu., Dec. 22, at 8 a.m. and resume on Tue., Jan. 3, at 1 p.m.** There is an urgent need of Adorers: Wed., 2 a.m.; Sat., 1 a.m., and Sun., 11 p.m. Substitutes are needed for all hours; please consider joining our substitute list to experience the peace of adoration. For more information or to sign up, please contact Marilyn Gibson at (417) 224-4043.

Springfield—**SAVE THE DATE!** Immaculate Conception PCCW will host a **Day of Retreat** on Sat., March 25, open to all women of the diocese. Watch for further details.

Parishes and organizations are invited to submit notices of future events to be printed on a space-available basis. There is no fee.



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DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS SOUGHT FOR JOPLIN AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN MISSOURI

Joplin Area Catholic Schools seeks a Director of Schools for the 2023-2024 school year. We are seeking a dedicated Educational Leader with successful experience in Catholic School Leadership. The successful applicant will have a Master's Degree or beyond in Educational Administration as well as meet requirements for Missouri Certification.

We seek an active Catholic who is dedicated to the growth and mission of Catholic Education.

Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Oversee and coordinate the development and implementation of a strategic plan.
- Follows and Implements Diocesan and local policies as well as updates and develops effective local policies and procedures.
- Facilitate and/or participate in advisory boards and committees.
- Oversight of all aspects of the school system business office, including but not limited to: admissions and enrollment, finance, development, buildings and grounds, transportation, technology, etc.
- Build relationships with school, parish, and greater communities.
- Coordinate system calendar and events.
- Collaborate with administrative team to ensure effective school programs.
- Communicate regularly with Pastors and diocesan Superintendent.

About Joplin Area Catholic Schools

Founded in 1885 by the Sisters of Mercy, Joplin Area Catholic Schools is part of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. The system consists of St. Mary Preschool & Elementary, St. Peter the Apostle Middle School, and McAuley Catholic High School, located on two campuses in the Joplin Community. JACS is supported by the parishes of St. Mary Catholic Church, Joplin; St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, Joplin; and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Webb City.

To Apply: Applicants should send a letter of interest and resume to Doretta Fox, dfox@jacss.org, as well as complete an application, which will be sent to you upon receipt of letter of interest. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 15, 2023, or until filled.



Protecting God's Children® For Adults

The VIRTUS Protecting God's Children Safe Environment training for adults is available online.

Preregistration is necessary: If you are a new registrant please go to www.virtus.org and click on "first time registrant" on the left, and follow the prompts to register for Online training. Instructions for the registration process can also be found on the Child and Youth Protection Page of the diocesan Website.

www.dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Register-for-a-VIRTUS-withOnline-Option.pdf

Both in-person and online training sessions are for adults only.

Before engaging in activities involving minors and/or vulnerable adults, new volunteers or employees are required to complete the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children* training for adults, submit a current Background Disclosure and Authorization Form, and read, sign and submit the annual Code of Conduct, which are available on the VIRTUS Website and the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau Child and Youth Protection Webpage: www.dioscg.org/child-youth-protection/

For more information, please contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection, childandyouthprotection@dioscg.org; or Bill Holtmeyer, billholtmeyer@dioscg.org; or Shelly Ferry, sferry@dioscg.org, (417) 866-0841.





By
Dr. R. Jared
Staudt

BE FREE, LIVE DIFFERENTLY: *A New Year's Resolution for Men*

We count our years from the birth of Christ, and Christmas begins the year of the Lord 2023. The secular practice of making a resolution for the new year can find deeper meaning when connected to the birth of the savior. The focus on presents and cheer can overshadow the Christmas feast's great transformative power. A resolution for the new year should begin at the manger, asking Jesus to draw us into the grace of his birth, as we reflect on how we need saving this Christmas. The baby Jesus comes in power, and his birth frees us and helps us to start again, renewed for the new year.

Rather than petering out by February, which happens all too often with New Year's resolutions, a Catholic's resolution should only intensify by the time we hit Lent. There is more of a connection between the seasons of Christmas and Lent than we might think. Jesus came into the world precisely to save us. He was born to die, offering his very life as a gift for our salvation. A great liturgical arc moves from Christmas (which finds its completion on the Presentation, Feb. 2) to Lent and finds its culmination in Easter, calling us to make a gift of our own selves in imitation of Jesus. As we bring our need for greater freedom to the creche in prayer, we may find the answer comes precisely as we take up the battle of prayer and fasting in Lent.

Men in particular should be challenged in this new year to embrace a greater call to Christian leadership. Our culture seeks to push men to the sidelines, preventing them from fighting to protect what our culture wants to undermine: the presence of God and strong families. To this end, a good New Year's resolution for men could be, "This is the year that I will step up and embrace the fight for the good of my family and the Church!" This resolution will require getting in shape spiritually, doing the interior exercises needed to be fit and strong for a different kind of fight, one with an unseen enemy that uses all the distractions at hand to divide, distract and weaken. Rediscovering the will to enter this fight will go a long way.

Having worked in education in various capacities

— in parishes, a college, a graduate program, and within a diocese — it is easy to get caught up in the obstacles to spreading the faith. The role of fathers continues to stand out in urgency as a solution. Every study on the faith-life of youth points to parents, and especially fathers, as the primary influence. Fathers are the spiritual leaders of families and, as John Paul II taught us, "the future passes by way of the family" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 86). I have come to the conclusion that supporting men in their faith life is the most urgent task to bolster our families, society and the Church.

Following this realization, I recently made a major career change, accepting a position as the Director of Content with Exodus 90. The organization was founded in 2015, growing out of seminary formation, in order to help men to find freedom through prayer, asceticism (cold showers, fasting, media fasting) and fraternity. Taking its inspiration from Israel coming out of Egypt, the 90 days help men to make a new start, breaking out of bad habits of distraction and addiction by focusing on God with the help of other men. A 90-day period seems to be enough to make real change, beginning to form habits that can last, finding freedom and starting to live differently.

We are losing the spiritual battle because there are simply too many forces working against our spiritual and familial life. Without taking a stand, saying "no," and pulling back, we too easily get pulled away from what matters most. Exodus has found remarkable success in helping men to make a new start in pulling back from attachments to technology, overeating,

wasteful spending and other unhealthy habits. This happens not simply

by cutting these things off but by filling the empty space with a greater focus on God and others. Men have discovered a deeper prayer life as well as stronger relationships with their wife, children and friends.

Most often, men choose to start Exodus 90 so that it ends with the celebration of Easter, drawing out and intensifying the Lenten disciplines. That schedule begins this year on Jan. 9 (even though the program can be started at any time). It's hard to keep up our



resolutions and we need the support and friendship of fellow men. To do Exodus, therefore, you need to find a group of committed men with whom to journey. If you're interested in starting, ask some other men in your parish, call your friends and family, or you can find other men online through the Exodus 90 app (www.exodus90.com). Exodus may be just what is needed to make a New Year's resolution stick, to find the freedom we need for the battle, and to begin the path to living differently.

Dr. Staudt is a Catholic Writer, Speaker, Scholar and Educator for the Archdiocese of Denver.

Dr. Staudt's column is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

SANTA'S HELPERS DELIVER TO HOMEBOUND



The women of St. Francis of Xavier Parish, Sikeston, gathered for a photo prior to disbursing as Santa Elves and Helpers to make recent deliveries to the senior citizens of the parish that are homebound or in a nursing home. (Submitted photo)

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'Our Country Prospers When in God We Trust'

AN ADDRESS BY US CARDINAL TIMOTHY M. DOLAN

At the August Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention, Card. Timothy M. Dolan was the keynote speaker. I found his words to be thoughtful and offer them for your consideration.

— Bishop Edward M. Rice

Perhaps you've heard of this new terrorist cell, a reportedly dangerous group that some nations have actually deemed a threat to their national security. Nicaragua, for instance, has just expelled them, calling them treacherous. India, the country of this allegedly perilous group's origin, severely restricted them, forbidding them to receive any funds from outside allies. I feel it is my heavy duty to warn you, brother Knights, of this ominous, suspicious, menacing group: They are called the Missionaries of Charity, founded by that machete-wielding Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Why on God's green earth would the simple, serving, humble, loving Missionaries of Charity be considered a threat to any government?

We know why, don't we? The same reason the first Christians were deemed enemies of Caesar, the same reason priests in Mexico are being hounded and executed as I speak. The same reason Cardinal József Mindszenty of Hungary and Blessed Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński of Poland were arrested in the 1950s. Because these brave martyrs and confessors of the faith were convinced that absolute allegiance could only be given to the Lord.

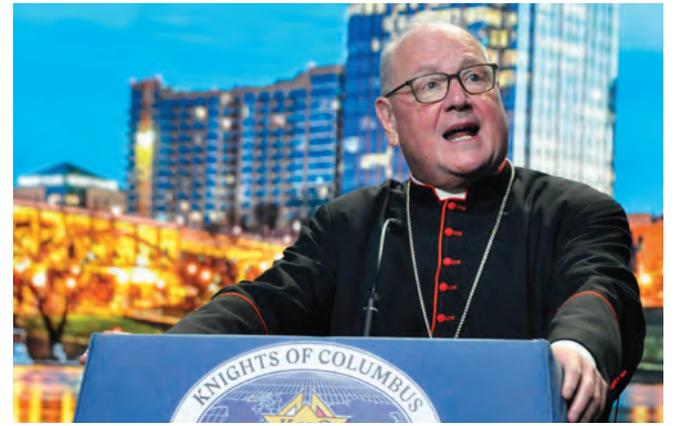
No earthly power, money, government, nation, a presumed right, a drive or a cause can claim our complete trust—only God can. Those who want total dominion over us—totalitarianism is an apt word—thus despise faith. People of faith, you see, preserve an important acre of their identity for the Lord alone, and they're willing to be harassed, exiled, or even

persecuted to protect that value. They're ready to go into the breach, and that causes totalitarians to seethe, to threaten, to go after these treacherous folks who will not be completely subservient to what Dorothy Day called "Holy Mother State." And thus, the first assault these regimes make is upon people of faith.

As chair of your bishops' Committee on Religious Freedom, to thank the Knights of Columbus for your historic defense of this, our first and most cherished liberty. You see, from the start, our Founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, believed firmly in the American foundational principle that every person, of whatever faith, had the right to hold his head high in this republic, to freely and confidently exercise his religion...

This led the sons of Michael McGivney to fight religious bigotry here in America, to coordinate the arrival of chaplains to serve our soldiers in World War I, to rise to the defense of our neighbors to the south as the Mexican government persecuted the Church, to oppose totalitarianism of the Nazis and fascists, to stand up for the Church oppressed by communism in Central and Eastern Europe, and to strengthen the Church here at home especially, in service to the poor, the oppressed, the racially segregated, the suffering in Haiti. And now, as I recently saw firsthand, those brave refugees from Ukraine...

My brother Knights, into the breach we go—into the breach we've gone, we are going and will go—for God and country, realizing



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM—Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York delivered the keynote address Aug. 2, 2022, during the States Dinner at the 140th Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention in Nashville, Tenn. (CNS photo/Andy Telli, Tennessee Register)

that our country prospers when **In God We Trust**, and our faith flourishes when our freedom to exercise it is guaranteed.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Religious Freedom, spoke at Keynote at the Knights of Columbus States Dinner on Aug. 2 during the 140th Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention. This article is reprinted from the October issue of **Columbia** magazine, a publication of the Knights of Columbus.

ATTENTION: CATHOLIC MEN
You are invited to the Southeast Missouri...

CATHOLIC MAN NIGHT
Men Meeting Jesus

Thursday, Jan. 19 | 6:30-9:00 pm
St. Francis Xavier, Sikeston, MO

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'SEMO Catholic Man Night' on Facebook or text to 573-275-5214

Cost: Free!!

"The Theology of the Body by Pope St. John Paul II: A closer look at Biblical Anthropology and the Sacrament of Marriage"
—Presented by Nicholas Koepfel, MMF

Nicholas was born in St. Louis, MO and grew up in Southeast Missouri. He obtained a bachelor of Arts in Marriage and Family from Conception Seminary College, and a Master of Studies in Marriage and Family from the International Theological Institute. He currently lives and works in Krakow, Poland teaching Theology of the Body in person and online.

Scan here to Register

Topics:

- January 7: "Overview and TOB Ch. 1: Christ Appeals to the Beginning"
- January 14: "TOB Ch 2: Christ Appeals to the Human Heart"
- January 21: "TOB Ch 3: Christ Appeals to the Resurrection and Celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven"
- January 28: "TOB Part 2: The Sacrament of Marriage"

Day/Time
Saturdays in January
9:30am-10:45am CST

Location
Zoom Video Call, link provided after registration

Contact: Shasta Beckers: sbeckers@dioscg.org OR 417-866-0841
Sponsored by the Office of Faith Formation, Diocese of Springfield- Cape Girardeau



By
Fr. Joshua
J. Whitfield

WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 8:

The Church Still Glorious, Still One

Is oneness even possible? Is the Church one today? Is Christian unity possible at all? These are all reasonable questions, which is why we must follow Jesus to the very end of John 17.

“And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one ...” (Jn 17:22-23). Notice Jesus is not letting go of the point. In John’s Gospel, it seems whenever Jesus teaches something necessary but scandalous — so scandalous that even his disciples think he should tap the breaks a bit — Jesus only presses the gas more. Like in John 6 when Jesus said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” people started to murmur (Jn 6:41). So then he said, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you,” which, of course, made the situation even more tense (Jn 6:53). But still, he made the point even more strongly, saying, “my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink” (Jn 6:55). All the while, the disciples are in the back wishing Jesus would zip it as people start to walk away. But that is not what Jesus does. He keeps hammering the point, probably because eternal life depends on it. And so, here we are again: may they be one, may they be one, may they be brought to perfection as one — just in case we were not getting it. By this stage in our close reading of John 17, do you think Jesus thinks Christian unity is important? Or, do you think it is something Jesus would say is not all that significant, take it or leave it?

But how can we even begin to imagine Christian unity is possible? Notice Jesus is still talking about glory: “I have given them the glory you gave me.” Is the glory of God insufficient? Is the glory of God weak? Did not the angel Gabriel say to Mary that nothing is impossible to God (Lk 1:37)? Is the glory of God not enough to make Christians one? What are we saying about God when we say Christian unity is not really possible? Are we saying he may not be almighty after all?

“...that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me” (Jn 17:23). Again, why struggle to be one Church? Why struggle for unity? The answer is: for the sake of love. Because we believe God created the world in love, sustains it in love and redeems it in love. And the way that love is revealed to the world is through Jesus’s disciples who are in love with each other in oneness. St.

Thomas Aquinas put it this way: the world will see “in amazement the glory of the saints” in unity and love.[1] That is how the world will see love, by seeing Christian love.

I mentioned earlier the unique love I have for my wife and children: I love them as a father should love his children, and as a husband should love his wife, loving them more than I love your wife and kids. But that is so they can learn how to love and be loved; so that they in turn can love others well, which in turn makes the world a more loving place. Again, that’s how love grows. And, thinking about this in terms of the Church, that is how the rest of the world knows God’s love — by seeing it in Christians, in the Church. So, how can we Christians more credibly tell the world God loves them? By being one. Everything Jesus has been praying about — the oneness of his disciples, the oneness of believers today — is for the sake of love, so the world may see it.

“Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world” (Jn 17:24). Jesus’s eternal glory is now revealed as love. He desires that we be one so that we may be with him. Jesus desires it. He is not indifferent about whether we are one; he is not neutral on the question — he desires it! Jesus prays to his Father desiring our unity from the deepest core of his being. Why? Simply so that we can share in the glory of God together. And, again, remember the context: Jesus is praying that his disciples be one, that they be where he is, at the disciples’ worst and weakest moment. Jesus is praying they remain with him as they are doing the exact opposite, as they are scattering in darkness. This is strangely comforting, that at our worst moments, at our moments of scattering and sin — whether personal or ecclesial — still Jesus wants us with him.

When you sin, what do you think God is thinking? Is he mad? Do you think God wants nothing more to do with you? When I get into a fight with someone, I want to avoid that person, avoid the awkward encounter. It is human to avoid the person we are in conflict with. But the problem is that we sometimes



CHRIST THE PANTOCRATOR—*Pantocrator* or *Pantokrator*, literally *ruler of all*, but usually translated as “Almighty” or “all-powerful,” is derived from one of many names of God in Judaism. (Getty)

project that very human instinct onto God, fooling ourselves into thinking God wants to avoid us after we have sinned. But that is not true. It is not in God’s nature to do that. After Jesus’s prayer in John 17, all the disciples scattered and left him alone. One of them betrayed him, and still, Jesus wants them and prays to be with them. You, at your worst moment — or me at mine — still have Jesus praying for you, loving you, wanting you. Never fool yourself into thinking that God will ever say to you, “I’m done with you.” Because he will not. “I am with you always,” Jesus said after the resurrection (Mt 28:20). He meant that. At the least, this reminds us of the good of hope. No matter what, Jesus will always want us. We can always return to him.

Which reveals God’s justice. “Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you love me may be in them and I in them” (Jn 17:25-26). Jesus ends his prayer invoking the justice of God. Often when we think of God’s justice, we think of the wrath of God, sometimes of some mean and nasty deity in the sky out to get us. We think of going to hell. But in this prayer that is not how Jesus thinks of the justice of God. He thinks of it in terms of love and knowledge. The justice of God is not the wrath of God sending you to hell. The justice of God is your communion with him, your love with him — a strange justice, because we certainly do not deserve it. God’s justice is our sharing life together with his Father with him in the Holy Spirit — in oneness and

holiness. Also notice Jesus’s promise that he would continue to make his name known. The glory Jesus gave, he still gives. And so, what was true in John 17 — the call to oneness and holiness — is just as true now as it was then. And also, the grace available to accomplish oneness is just as available now as it was then. Again, millennia removed from this prayer, still this prayer claims us. We cannot ignore it — unless, of course, we no longer believe in glory, no longer believe what Jesus said.

A great deal of what we believe is found in John 17, especially that which we believe about the Church at its deepest level. Again, John 17 reveals the DNA of the Church. The Church is a sacramental entity, a sociological

entity, an institutional and bureaucratic entity, all with a rather dusty, vibrant, glorious and squalid 2,000-year history. Yet in her essence, the Church is the oneness that the Father and the Son share in the Spirit. The Church, in its essence, is a communion — a communion in the Trinity that is open through Christ to the disciples, and which is also our communion and life together.

So, whenever you come into contact with the Church in her historical or her institutional forms — sometimes aggravating and sometimes glorious — we should always remember that the Church is first and foremost this — the oneness Jesus prayed for the night before he died.

Now of course, it is our belief that this oneness is in substance (although not entirely) the Roman Catholic Church. This, undoubtedly to many, is a scandalous claim. It certainly was to me. But we’ll explore that later, for that too is something we believe.

NEXT EDITION: WHAT WE BELIEVE: PART 9

The Earliest Church

Father Joshua J. Whitfield is pastor of St. Rita Catholic Community in Dallas and author of “The Crisis of Bad Preaching” (Ave Maria Press, \$17.95) and other books.

“What We Believe, Part 8: The Church Still Glorious, Still One” by Fr. Whitfield is from simplycatholic.com, copyright © Our Sunday Visitor; all rights reserved, no other use of this material is authorized.



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Rev. Glenn Eftink, *Director* | eftinkf@gmail.com | 573-722-3504 | St. Joseph Church, PO Box 640, Advance, MO 63730-0640

Diocesan Missionary Co-Operation Plan Report 2022 as of Dec. 2, 2022

Deanery 1: Vincentians

Carthage, St. Ann	00.00
Joplin, St. Mary	3,871.00
Joplin, St. Peter	2,143.09
Lamar, St. Mary	532.00
Neosho, St. Canera	1,574.50
Noel, Nativity of Our Lord	445.00
Seneca, St. Mary	00.00
Webb City, Sacred Heart	1,515.00
Total	10,080.59

Deanery 2: Society of Lady of Most Holy Trinity

Aurora, Holy Trinity	969.00
Billings, St. Joseph	1,015.00
Cassville, St. Edward	903.63
Greenfield, St. Patrick	157.00
Monett, St. Lawrence	1,545.25
Mount Vernon, St. Susanne	1,098.00
Pierce City, St. Mary	724.00
Pulaskifield, SS. Peter & Paul	455.00
Sarcoxie, St. Agnes	893.00
Shell Knob, Holy Family	1,403.70
Verona, Sacred Heart	731.00
Total	9,894.58

Deanery 3: Heralds of the Good News

Bolivar, Sacred Heart	1,460.35
Buffalo, St. William	59.00
Conway, Sacred Heart	00.00
El Dorado Springs, St. Elizabeth	300.00
Humansville, St. Catherine	122.00
Lebanon, St. Francis de Sales	1,179.00
Marshfield, Holy Trinity	782.00
Stockton, St. Peter	645.00
Total	4,547.35

Deanery 4a: Apostles of Jesus (STAR Academy)

Branson, Our Lady of the Lake	6,496.00
Forsyth, Our Lady of the Ozarks	448.87
Kimberling City, Our Lady of Cove	6,284.85
Ozark, St. Joseph the Worker	1,880.00

Springfield, Holy Trinity	4,427.00
Total	19,536.72

Deanery 4b: La Salette

Nixa, St. Francis of Assisi	2,394.00
Springfield, Immaculate Conception	8,251.83
Springfield, Sacred Heart	1,643.99
Springfield, St. Agnes	00.00
Springfield, St. Eliz. Ann Set.	6,588.00
Springfield, St. Joseph	1,696.00
Total	20,573.82

Deanery 5: Society of St. Paul

Ava, St. Leo	294.00
Bunker, Christ the King	290.00
Cabool, St. Michael	120.00
Eminence, St. Sylvester	289.00
Gainesville, St. William	519.00
Houston, St. Mark	333.00
Licking, St. John the Baptist	497.00
Mansfield, Immaculate Heart of M.	237.00
Montauk, St. Jude Chapel	00.00
Mountain Grove, Sacred Heart	403.00
Mountain View, St. John Vianney	438.10
Roby, St. Vincent	503.00
Salem, Sacred Heart	1,034.00
Thayer, Sacred Heart	360.00
West Plains, St. Mary	1,701.00
White Church, St. Joseph	275.00
Willow Springs, Sacred Heart	759.00
Total	8,052.10

Deanery 6A: Society of Our Mother of Peace

Advance, St. Joseph	707.00
Benton, St. Denis	1,732.00
Cape Girardeau, St. Mary Cath.	4,059.33
Cape Girardeau, St. Vincent	7,298.29
Chaffee, St. Ambrose	1,534.00
Glennon, St. Anthony	436.00
Jackson, Immaculate Conception	3,158.72
Kelso, St. Augustine	1,217.16
Leopold, St. John	1,094.00
New Hamburg, St. Lawrence	524.00

Oran, Guardian Angel	1,109.00
Scott City, St. Joseph	1,093.00
Total	23,962.50

Deanery 7A: Indian Mission Society

Caruthersville, Sacred Heart	676.00
Charleston, St. Henry	794.00
Kennett, St. Cecilia	919.00
New Madrid, Immaculate Conception	857.00
Portageville, St. Eustachius	1,153.00
Sikeston, St. Francis Xavier	2,153.75
Total	6,552.75

Deanery 7B & 6B: Mary Mother of God

Dexter, Sacred Heart	1,430.00
Doniphan, St. Benedict	00.00
Fredericktown, St. Michael	3,184.00
Glennonville, St. Teresa	1,039.00
Ironton, Ste. Marie du Lac	848.00
Lesterville, Our Lady of Sorrows	65.00
Malden, St. Ann	382.00
Piedmont, St. Catherine	958.00
Poplar Bluff, Sacred Heart	00.00
Van Buren, St. George	1,283.00
Williamsville, Our Lady of Sorrows	120.00
Total	9,309.00

Special: Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer

Sarcoxie, St. Agnes	500.00
Total	500.00

Total MCP	\$113,009.41
Total St. Peter	-\$1,130.09
Total Office Expense	-\$4,520.38
Total MCP Sent	\$107,358.94

Note: Each missionary group received the total collected from the region less five percent which was sent to the Society of St. Peter (1%) for the education of missionary priests and to cover the expenses for the MCP program (4%).

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the missionary work of the Church!



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U.S. Catholics Called On to Support Dedicated Guatemalan Priest's Mission of Mercy

Father Raúl Monterroso and the ministry team at Caritas believe they have been called by God to alleviate poverty and improve the living conditions of poor families in the diocese they serve. Their hope is that Catholics in the U.S. will support that goal by acting as God's instruments of mercy in Guatemala and by helping the mission provide sturdy homes to the most vulnerable families in the diocese.

Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic relief and development charity working on projects of that kind around the world, is also involved and is encouraging its donors to support Fr. Raúl and the ministry team.

"In Guatemala and other developing countries, Catholic leaders are eager to help the poor in their parishes or dioceses, but they lack the resources needed to launch those missions

of mercy," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "Our ministry was founded to support priests like Fr. Raúl and to bless the poor through projects like the one he is proposing. His bishop has an excellent plan to bless struggling families in the area with safe housing. Our goal is to help him achieve that important mission."

While Cross Catholic Outreach has engaged in other projects that support the diocese's work in Guatemala – efforts to feed the hungry, supply safe water and provide education to needy children, for example – Cavnar believes focusing on safe home construction should be a priority for U.S. Catholics interested in having a big impact with their donated dollars.

"The poorest families in the diocese have been living in terrible patchwork



Children often suffer the most from Guatemala's housing crisis. The patchwork structures many families use for shelter leak and offer little protection from vermin, so illnesses are common.



Fr. Raúl at the site of a new home being constructed for a needy family with help from U.S. donors and Cross Catholic Outreach. This act of mercy changes lives.

shelters they put together themselves with scraps of wood, rusty metal sheets and other discarded things," Cavnar said. "Giving them the gift of a sturdy home – even a simple one – will represent a life-transforming change and be an incredible blessing to their children."

The durable, concrete-block houses Cross Catholic Outreach hopes to fund through donations from U.S. Catholics will include a solid cement floor and a sturdy roof, giving the area's poor families a level of comfort they've never experienced before. Metal doors will provide ample security, while large shuttered windows will let in light without compromising privacy. Each house will also be wired for electricity and will include a sanitary latrine, a washbasin, and a clean-air stove that will eliminate the problem of smoke inhalation.

These simple but profound provisions will be a life-changing gift to those who have grown up in abject poverty. The homes will uphold the dignity of families that have felt forgotten by the world. These families will know their Father

in heaven has heard their prayers and has used the Church and her faithful to restore their hope.

"Caritas in Santa Rosa de Lima is the perfect partner to accomplish these goals because it is concerned with more than meeting just material needs. Its programs also evangelize and strengthen the faith of the families being served," Cavnar said. "My hope is that American Catholics will want to get behind this project and give generously to ensure Fr. Raúl is successful."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach housing programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue, or send tax-deductible gifts to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02311, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks and a staff member will contact you about setting up those arrangements.

Legacy Giving Provides Catholics With Unique Opportunity to Bless Others

If you are like many Catholics born in the 1950s or before, you have probably begun to think about the spiritual legacy your life and actions represent. What did we care about? What did we value? These are some of the things we hope will be remembered.

"For a growing number of Catholics, this introspection has led to the exploration of 'legacy giving' – the use of one's will, trust, life insurance or retirement policies to leave behind an echo of one's beliefs, deeds and values – a blessing that will reverberate beyond

our own lifetime, hopefully influencing our family and others we cherish," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, an official Catholic relief and development charity with staff dedicated to such estate planning.

According to Cavnar, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped many Catholics establish "legacy gifts" that are expected to play a significant role in future ministry missions.

"A will or trust can also reflect a person's special heart for a country or for an area of need. It can be used to

build houses for poor families or to build classrooms to educate children, for example," Cavnar said. "Others simply want to help the poorest of the poor and make their legacy gift for that purpose. It's their way of saying, 'As a Catholic, I value life and support works of mercy. I want my family to understand that calling and believe in it too.' And because legacy gifts can be quite large, they often achieve incredible things. A single gift might build an entire school or fund the construction of hundreds of homes. They produce an amazing impact and serve as

an incredible testament to the faith of the giver."

In addition to this service, Cross Catholic Outreach's staff can also support donors seeking to establish a charitable gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or special endowment. Financial planners can also obtain information to help those who seek professional counsel or have donor-advised funds.

To learn more about these services, the charity recommends readers visit its special online portal at CrossCatholicLegacy.org.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Impoverished Families in Rural Guatemala Face a Daily Struggle to Survive in Unsafe, Unsanitary Housing

Sonia Hernandez and her husband know the challenges of raising a family in unsafe, unsanitary housing. They and their four children face one hardship after another, usually due to the whims of the weather or health challenges a life of poverty creates.

Insects infest the wood of her patchwork house, and when it rains, water gushes in through holes in the roof and walls, soaking the family's few

“There were times I woke up to find myself in a puddle of water.”

Sonia Hernandez
Mother of Four

meager possessions while turning their dirt floor into a muddy mess.

“There were times I woke up to find myself in a puddle of water,” Sonia lamented.

The family's home is not only unsanitary but also insecure. Thieves can easily break in to steal the Hernandezes' few possessions, and vermin have no trouble breaching the walls. These circumstances leave the family feeling fearful and vulnerable. But since there is little chance of escaping this situation without outside help, Sonia's family has simply had to endure these trials.

“It might be a different matter if the local economy were good and families like Sonia's could save enough to make repairs or move, but that's not the situation in many rural parts of Guatemala,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic ministry working to end abject poverty in the area. “There are few employment options to earn a living wage in this particular diocese, so most local families rely on subsistence farming to survive, and that barely provides enough to put even a meager meal on the table. It will take an intervention by the Church to change their living conditions in any meaningful way.”

Sadly, the hardships the Hernandez family faces are not unique. Most of the impoverished families living in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima live hand to mouth in crumbling shanty houses, putting them at risk when harsh weather strikes. There are other hardships too. Most of the community's women must cook on indoor wood-burning stoves, causing their families to inhale dangerous smoke whenever meals are being



Poor families in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima face challenging living conditions. Sonia Hernandez, shown above, wants a better life for her family – and there is hope, thanks to Church missions supported by Cross Catholic Outreach.



prepared.

“When I go and visit these communities, I am saddened to see the families lack basic things,” said Father Raúl Monterroso, a local parish priest who works for Caritas under the direction of his bishop.

With the help of Cross Catholic Outreach, Fr. Raúl and the Caritas Santa Rosa team hope to bring radical changes to these poor communities, first by assisting families with basic necessities such as food and housing and then by working toward complete community transformation.

“Our ultimate goal is to improve the living conditions in this community

and to help these families become more prosperous so the cycle of poverty that has plagued them for generations can finally be broken,” Cavnar explained. “We've learned that providing safe housing plays a major part in improving lives [see related story on opposite page], so we are making that a priority in Santa Rosa. As families are placed in safer, sturdier homes, their hope is restored and they have a foundation for building a better life.”

Fr. Raúl and the Caritas Santa Rosa team agree, and they are thrilled to have an opportunity to tackle this important project.

“It will take a lot of support from U.S. Catholics to achieve what Fr. Raúl has in mind, but if we work together, I am

confident we can get it done,” Cavnar said. “In fact, I have found American Catholics are excited to take part in projects of this kind, whether they can contribute enough for an entire house or give toward that greater goal. They like giving to a project like this because it produces something lasting and tangible – something that can forever transform a family's life.

“My prayer is that hundreds of compassionate Catholics in the U.S. will see how much the poor in Guatemala are suffering and will step forward to help,” Cavnar said. “If they do, we can transform lives in a profound way, and God will be glorified through our mission of mercy.”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02311, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



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Questions? Comments? If you are a part of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau:

417-866-0841 | kbayman@dioscg.org | <https://dioscg.org/respect-life/>

All families of the diocese are invited to join the FAMILY BIBLE CHALLENGE!

Each Sunday, families will receive an email identifying a new passage from the Bible that they are asked to read together as a family, reflect upon, and discuss. Families will be provided with the passage, reflection, and trivia questions, as well as a link to a short introductory video for that book of the Bible. You just have to make the time to do it together as a family and Advent is a great time to start!

The "challenge" is to engage your family with Sacred Scripture. There is no contest. There are no rules. There is, however, the great benefit of falling in love with Jesus through the power of the Good News found in the Bible!

The videos are provided through a partnership with The Bible Project. The reflection and trivia questions are the work of generous volunteers and the staff of The Institute for Catholic Formation.

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