



# Cider adds *joy* to St. Augustine Catholic School

By Paula Wright

Kelso, MO

A new face and wagging tail is greeting students and staff in the halls and classrooms of St. Augustine Catholic School, Kelso, MO: “Cider,” the Therapy Dog is making an impression! Cider is a one-year-old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel-Poodle mix (CavaPoo) therapy dog brought to the school by principal Katie Hendricks to help support the staff and students.

Cider is available in the principal office for at-risk students and students with anxiety that need a calming space, and a friendly face, to help them.

“With growing mental health issues, I am seeing a lot of students struggling with anxiety and it has been really nice to see the smiles on their faces when she is around,” Hendricks said.

Cider will stay in the counselor’s office on Wednesdays and will visit classrooms when needed.

“We only have our counselor one day a week, and Cider is there for all the meetings,” Hendricks said. “Teachers will also come to borrow her for behavior assistance in class. There are times of the year when kids are bickering or having a hard time enjoying each other. Cider helps take the tension out.”

Trained as other assistance dogs, Cider knows 48 different commands: She can open a door, turn on a light, sit, and stay. She can even be trained to go find people.

“If I had a student that was a runner,

I can train her to track that specific student,” said Hendricks.

Hendricks applied for a therapy dog in 2021 through CARES Incorporated, Concordia, KS. There is an approximate wait time of two years for a dog. According to their Website, CARES was founded in 1994 and has placed more than 1,400 dogs across 41 of the 50 United States and Puerto Rico, and in seven international countries: Peru, Panama, Canada, Belgium, and Latvia, England, and Germany. CARES is one of the only schools that acts as a center for independent living and accepts applications for children and people with multiple disabilities.

“With growing mental health issues, I am seeing a lot of students struggling with anxiety and it has been really nice to see the smiles on their faces when she is around.”

- PRINCIPAL KATIE HENDRICKS

“CARES program is unique. They work with prisons to help care for the puppies, a benefit to both the dogs and the prisoners,” Hendricks said. “They will then go to a social setting with a family for greater socialization and interaction before finally going

to the CARES facility for more intensive training. The therapy dogs are ready in about one year.”

As part of the final training, Hendricks spent a week of training with Cider at the CARES facility.

“Cider has only been here a week [at interview time], but has already been doing a lot of work and we really enjoy



▲ PRINCIPAL KATIE HENDRICKS AND “CIDER,” of St. Augustine Catholic School, Kelso, MO. (The Mirror)

her,” said Hendricks. “I have had a couple of staff members lose a friend last week and Cider went and spent time sitting beside them, offering comfort. She just knew. It was really neat.”

Looking toward the future, Hendricks shared that she looks forward to Cider helping to bring the school community together.

“It’s been fun to have expanded conversations with people,” Hendricks said.

“They want to come over and pet Cider and learn about her. I’ve already had conversations with [more] parents from these exchanges. That’s been fun.”

When not at school, Cider lives with Hendricks and her family.

Unique to Cider than other service animals, “When she has on her vest, she is trained to be available to be pet,” Hendricks said. “She just lays down on the floor and has kids surround her and pet her.”

For more information about the Therapy Dog program through CARES Incorporated, visit their website at <https://www.caresks.com/>. ©TM





**COME, AND YOU WILL SEE**  
Bp. Edward M. Rice

# Lenten Youth Project: Children feeding children

*“This is the acceptable time for you to arise and begin your journey, dear friend. This long, often dark, and usually strange journey—which all in search of God must undertake—is a journey inward; for He dwells within you. He is within all who have been baptized in His name, and who abide in the state of His grace.”*

Above is the opening paragraph from an article entitled, “Now is the Acceptable Time,” written by Catherine Doherty in 1955, reprinted in the January 2024 issue of the publication *Restoration*.

Catherine goes on to reflect on the journey of Epiphany, using the images of gold, frankincense, and myrrh along with the “surrender” necessary to imitate Mary. Catherine ends the article with a rather poignant thought, “There is no way to Jesus but through Mary. Without Mary, there would be no Christmas, nor Epiphany. No magi, no kings ...The star is Mary. Without Mary, we would have no Golgotha, nor Cross, nor Easter! Without Mary, you would not be a Catholic, nor would I.”

As we enter into the **Lenten Season on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024**, let Mary be our companion along our 40-day journey that leads us to the Cross and the empty tomb! Now is the acceptable time to enter into prayer with Mary. I suggest the Stations of

the Cross, a beautiful Lenten tradition in so many parishes (an article on the Stations of the Cross may be found in this issue on p. 10). Look also for opportunities for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or for reading the Sacred Scriptures.

## MARY, OUR COMPANION

Now is the acceptable time to enter into fasting with Mary. Whatever form your fasting may take —fasting from food,

television, social media, or socializing during Lent, fill up that time with Mary, praying the rosary. Now is the acceptable time to enter into acts of charity with Mary.

Recall her words at the Wedding in Cana, “Do whatever He tells you.” Let not some random act of kindness go undone.

Don’t turn away from the person in need on the street corner.

Look for some way to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing and housing to those who lack the things we often take for granted: Lent 2024 is full of promise!

On January 5, Pope Francis challenged a group of pilgrims from Florence, Italy: “Be close to the people we help. ... When you give to the poor, do you look in the eyes of the person, touch their hand, or throw the money there? Touch,

touch poverty, touch, encourage them to develop a heart that touches, to look and to understand.” These words are similar to what he said on his first visit to South America, “When you see the poor, look them in the eyes and talk to them.” Now is the acceptable time because the works of mercy never end!

## 2024 LENTEN YOUTH PROJECT

In that spirit, the funds raised in this year’s Lenten Youth Project will be used to feed the poor of southern Missouri directly through five food pantries scattered “from east to west,” in southern Missouri. Those pantries include Sacred Heart, Webb City; Saint Joseph, Springfield; Saint Sylvester, Eminence; St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau, and Ste. Marie du Lac, in Ironton. As so many of our parishes participate in local food pantries, it was difficult to decide which ones to support, but I think these particular pantries are a good representation of the commitment of our diocese in serving the poor and feeding the hungry.

It may be hard

to believe but statistics tell us that 21% of children in the Ozarks face food insecurity. That figure, one in five children, is higher than the Missouri average. These children often go to bed hungry and wake up the next morning not knowing when they will have their next meal. They go to school hungry and have difficulty learning because of being hungry. They may or may not qualify for a reduced lunch and when they come home from school, the refrigerator is empty. I call upon all the youth of our diocese during this 2024 Lenten Youth Project to rise to the challenge and do what you can to raise funds for these hungry children and the pantries scattered throughout our diocese that serve them. Let’s make a difference in childhood hunger.

*“O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment Thine.”* ©TM



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*“May our prayer, fasting, and works of charity draw us closer to the risen Christ this Lenten season.”*

BISHOP EDWARD M. RICE

**February**

PRAYER INTENTION



## 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.

**September 14, 1990** A priest asked one of his parishioners, a lawyer, to draw up a will for him. When the work was completed, the lawyer mailed the will to the priest with a brief note: “Thy Will Be Done.”

**September 21, 1990** One of those attending the outdoor groundbreaking Mass for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church was a neighborhood dog. It seemed quite at ease at Mass and brought big smiles to many faces. At the end of Mass, I told the people about my priest-classmate, who had a dog wander into church one day during Mass. During the homily, the dog lay down next to the pulpit and promptly went to sleep!

**September 28, 1990** During the Young Ministry Conference, Fr. James Brown said, “A nice thing happening now is that Catholic bibles are not nearly as dusty as they used to be.”

**October 5, 1990** A week ago, I was in Sacred Heart Parish, Verona, to celebrate with pastor Fr. Peter Morciniec and his people the beautiful new redecoration of the church’s interior. A boy named Chris was there. I had met him this past summer at Camp Re-NEW-All when I had gone to celebrate Mass and campers for dinner. Thinking of all the activities available at camp, I asked Chris, “What did you like best the whole week at Camp Re-NEW-All?” He shocked me and brought a laugh to those around, when he said, “You!”



**VEN Y VERÁS**

Obispo Edward M. Rice

# Proyecto Juvenil de Cuaresma: Niños alimentando a niños

*“Este es el momento aceptable para que te levantes y comiences tu viaje, querido amigo. Este largo, a menudo oscuro y normalmente extraño viaje, que todos los que buscan a Dios deben emprender, es un viaje hacia el interior; porque Él habita en ti. Está dentro de todos los que han sido bautizados en su nombre, y que permanecen en el estado de su gracia”.*

**A**rriba está el párrafo inicial de un artículo titulado “Ahora es el momento aceptable”, escrito por Catherine Doherty en 1955, reimpreso en el número de enero de 2024 de la publicación *Restoration*.

Catalina continúa reflexionando sobre el camino de la Epifanía, utilizando las imágenes del oro, el incienso y la mirra, junto con la “entrega” necesaria para imitar a María. Catalina termina el artículo con un pensamiento bastante conmovedor: “No hay camino hacia Jesús si no es a través de María”. Sin María, no habría Navidad, ni Epifanía. Ni magos, ni reyes... La estrella es María. ¡Sin María, no tendríamos Gólgota, ni Cruz, ni Pascua! Sin María, tú no serías católico, ni yo tampoco”.

Al entrar en el **Tiempo de Cuaresma el Miércoles de Ceniza, 14 de febrero de 2024**, dejemos que María sea nuestra compañera a lo largo de nuestro viaje de 40 días que nos lleva a la Cruz y a la tumba vacía!

Ahora es el momento aceptable para entrar en oración con María. Sugiero el Vía Crucis, una hermosa tradición cuaresmal en tantas parroquias (un artículo sobre el Vía Crucis puede encontrarse en esta edición en la pág. 10). Busca también ocasiones para orar ante el Santísimo Sacramento o para leer las Sagradas Escrituras.

## MARÍA, NUESTRA COMPAÑERA

Ahora es el momento aceptable para entrar en ayuno con María. Sea cual sea la forma que adopte tu ayuno —ayuno de comida, televisión, redes sociales o socialización durante la Cuaresma—, llena ese tiempo con María, rezando el rosario. Ahora es el momento aceptable para realizar actos de caridad con María. Recuerda sus palabras en las Bodas de Caná: “Hagan lo que Él les diga”. Que no se pierda ningún acto de bondad al azar. No des la espalda a la persona necesitada en la esquina de la calle. Busca alguna forma de dar comida al hambriento, bebida al sediento, ropa y vivienda a quienes carecen de las cosas que a menudo damos por sentadas: ¡La Cuaresma 2024 está llena de promesas!

El 5 de enero, el Papa Francisco desafió a un grupo de peregrinos de Florencia (Italia): “Estar cerca de las personas a las que ayudamos, ser cercanos. Cuando, en las confesiones, a veces pregunto a la gente: ‘¿Das limosna, ayudas?’ - ‘Sí, sí’ - ‘Y dime, cuando das limosna, ¿miras a los ojos de la persona, le tocas la mano, o le tiras

el dinero ahí?’. Toca, **toca la indigencia**, un corazón que toca; mira y comprende. No lo olviden”.

Estas palabras son similares a las que dijo en su primera visita a Sudamérica: “Cuando vean a los pobres, mírenlos a los ojos y hablen con ellos”. Ahora es el momento aceptable, ¡porque las obras de misericordia nunca terminan!

## PROYECTO JUVENIL DE CUARESMA 2024

Con ese espíritu, los fondos recaudados en el Proyecto Juvenil de Cuaresma de este año se utilizarán para alimentar directamente a los pobres del sur de Missouri a través de cinco despensas de alimentos repartidas “de este a oeste”, en el sur de Missouri. Esas despensas incluyen la del Sagrado Corazón, en Webb City; San José, Springfield; San Silvestre, Eminence; Catedral Santa María, Cape Girardeau, y Santa María del Lago, en Ironton. Como tantas de nuestras parroquias participan en despensas locales de alimentos, fue difícil decidir a cuáles apoyar, pero creo que estas despensas en particular son una buena representación del compromiso de nuestra diócesis de servir a los pobres y alimentar a los hambrientos.

Puede ser difícil de creer, pero



2024 ANNUAL Lenten Youth Project

las estadísticas nos dicen que el 21% de los niños de los Ozarks sufren inseguridad alimentaria. Esa cifra, uno de cada cinco niños, es superior a la media de Missouri. Estos niños a menudo se acuestan con hambre y se despiertan a la mañana siguiente sin saber cuándo tendrán su próxima comida. Van a la escuela con hambre y tienen dificultades para aprender por estar hambrientos. Pueden o no tener derecho a un almuerzo reducido y, cuando llegan a casa del colegio, la nevera está vacía. Hago un llamamiento a todos los jóvenes de nuestra diócesis durante este Proyecto Juvenil de Cuaresma 2024 para que estén a la altura del desafío y hagan lo que puedan para recaudar fondos para estos niños hambrientos y las despensas repartidas por toda nuestra diócesis que les sirven. Marquemos la diferencia en el hambre infantil.

*“Oh Sacramento Santísimo, Oh Sacramento Divino, toda la alabanza y toda la acción de gracias sean en cada momento tuyos”.* ©TM



## BISHOP'S MASSES AT SACRED HEART PARISHES during the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year • Dec. 27, 2023- Dec. 27, 2024

Wed.	February 21, 2024	6:00 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish	Webb City
Sun.	March 3, 2024	10:30 a.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Sunday Mass	Mountain Grove
Fri.	March 15, 2024	6:00 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Followed by Stations of the Cross	Bolivar
Thu.	April 4, 2024	5:30 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish	Willow Springs
Wed.	May 22, 2024	5:30 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish	Salem
Sat.	June 8, 2024	4:00 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - 150 <sup>th</sup> Parish Anniversary/Sunday Vigil Mass	Verona
Thu.	August 15, 2024	11:30 a.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Feast of Assumption	Thayer
Wed.	August 21, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Adoration before Mass 5:30 p.m.	Conway
Sun.	September 8, 2024	8:30 a.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Sunday Mass	Caruthersville
Wed.	October 23, 2024	12:00 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish	Dexter
Tue.	November 5, 2024	6:00 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish - Closing Mass	Springfield



By  
Fr. Joshua  
J. Whitfield

## WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 36:

# Confirmation Completes Baptism

The sacraments of baptism and confirmation belong together. It can be confusing, of course, because people experience confirmation in different ways. If you're baptized as an adult, for instance, you will be confirmed immediately after baptism. However, if you're baptized as an infant, then you'll not be confirmed until many years later.

Here is the reason for this. Christian initiation is understood historically in the early Church as one event, wherein the two sacraments of baptism and confirmation, along with the Eucharist, were celebrated together. This was broken up for a variety of practical reasons, giving us the diverse ways in which we can receive confirmation today. It's critical to know, though, that these two distinct sacraments belong together — and, alongside the Eucharist, form one initiation experience.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way: "Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the 'sacraments of Christian initiation,' whose unity must be safeguarded" (No. 1285). Their unity arises from the fact that these sacraments work together to form the believer into the person of Christ — or as the New Testament puts it, into "the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

In baptism, a person is born in Christ — grafted, to put it another way,

into Christ himself. Confirmation, on the other hand, names the experience of the Holy Spirit shedding his grace upon a Christian even more perfectly,

development — a broadening of the meaning of confirmation and not the way Catholics always thought about the sacrament.

John are sent to Samaria, because although believers there "had accepted the word of God," the Holy Spirit "had not yet fallen upon any of them." Before

the two apostles arrived, believers in Samaria "had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Later, Peter and John laid hands on them, giving them the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). Although in the New Testament, we do not find a systematic sacramental theology — that would take centuries of synthesis and tradition — we do find the basic elements and ingredients, as it were, of sacramental theology, including the elements of our Catholic belief about baptism and confirmation. We see that their relationship is a relation of presence to perfection and action. In baptism, we're made present to Christ.

In confirmation, we're perfected and pushed into action by the Spirit.



(CNS file photo/Chris Heisey, The Catholic Witness)

catalyzing the grace already present in the baptized person. The words used by the Catechism are "completion," "more perfectly bound," "enriched." After confirmation, the baptized person is "more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed" (Catechism, No. 1285). One can begin to see from this, of course, how confirmation came to be viewed as a sacrament of adolescence, a sacrament marking one's growth and development. Confirmation came to be seen as an opportunity for a young person to take ownership of his or her baptism, to be "more strictly obliged" to live the Christian life. This, though, is a later

This twofold pattern is recognizable in the Bible. We see it in the story of Jesus' baptism and temptation. After Jesus was baptized by John, after the voice broke from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son," we learn in Mark that "the Spirit drove him into the desert," where he was tested by Satan (Mk 1:9-13). Some of the early Church Fathers saw this passage as a symbol of confirmation. They saw that, like Christ, when we are baptized, we too are called sons or daughters of the Father. And, again like Christ, after baptism, the Spirit drives us out into the wilderness to fight the devil.

In Acts of the Apostles, Peter and

**NEXT EDITION:**  
WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 37

**Anointed and Sealed in Confirmation**

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 35: What About Infant Baptism?" by Fr. Whitfield is from *SimplyCatholic.com*, copyright © Our Sunday Visitor; all rights reserved, no other use of this material is authorized.



## FREDERICKTOWN WELCOMES PRIEST

**PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR**—Father Alex Sutachan was greeted during a Welcome Dinner held Jan. 28, in St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Fredericktown. Bishop Edward Rice appointed Fr. Sutachan Parochial Administrator of the parish effective Jan. 17. Father Sutachan most recently served as Parochial Vicar of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau. A Question and Answer time at the dinner afforded parishioners the opportunity to better know their new priest, who continues his role as Chaplain of Notre Dame Regional High School, in Cape Girardeau, and as a diocesan Regional Vocation Promoter. (Photo by

Kathy Miller/The Mirror)



## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT / MARRIAGE PREPARATION COORDINATOR

**The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau seeks qualified applicants to fill a permanent, non-exempt, 40 hour/week Administrative Assistant position in the Offices of Family Life and Respect Life at The Catholic Center in Springfield, MO.** This position will report to and work in collaboration with the Diocesan Directors of Family Life and Respect Life.

Applicant must be a practicing Roman Catholic. Qualified individuals will have excellent written and verbal communication

skills, proficiency with Microsoft Office Products, including Word and Excel, and be detail-oriented. Must be able to work independently but cooperatively. Position is open and will remain so until filled. Compensation includes competitive wages and benefits.

To request an application packet, including a detailed job description, please contact Doug Kissinger at The Catholic Center, [dkissinger@dioscg.org](mailto:dkissinger@dioscg.org), (417) 866-0841, or go Online at [www.dioscg.org](http://www.dioscg.org).

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**J**oin Bishop Rice on the First Friday of each month to pray for an increase in Vocations to the Priesthood and religious life in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. The Rosary will be prayed following the liturgy on the following dates and at the following locations:

- Fri., Mar. 01**     **St. Agnes Cathedral**  
Springfield, 5:30 p.m.
- Fri., April 05**   **St. John Henry Newman Center**  
Cape Girardeau, 12-Noon
- Fri., May 03**     **St. Agnes School Mass**  
Springfield, 8:30 a.m.
- Fri., June 07**    **Mercy Conference and Retreat Center**  
St. Louis
- Fri., July 05**     **O'Reilly Catholic Student Center**  
Springfield, 10 a.m.
- Fri., Aug. 02**    **St. Peter the Apostle Parish**  
Joplin, 9:30 a.m.  
**Mercy Hospital; Joplin, 12-Noon**
- Fri., Sept. 06**    **TBA**
- Fri., Oct. 04**     **TBA**
- Fri., Nov. 01**    **St. Mary Cathedral**  
Cape Girardeau, 5:15 p.m.
- Fri., Dec. 06**    **St. Agnes Cathedral**  
Springfield, 5:30 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Belleville, IL**—The National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows will offer a day of reflection, **“Grace and Gratitude–In the Grief of Our Everyday Lives,”** on Mon., March 18, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., with resenter Sr. Madeleine Lane. The cost is \$50 and includes lunch. For more information, visit [www.snows.org/grief](http://www.snows.org/grief) or call (618) 397-0584.

**Dexter**—The Father’s of Mercy will present a **Parish Mission** at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, located at 102 E Castor St., Sun., Feb. 18-Wed., Feb. 21, 7-8 p.m. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will be from 6-7 p.m., the mission priest will be available for the Sacrament of Penance during this time and immediately following the nightly presentation. All are welcome for this opportunity of spiritual growth and renewal. For more information or questions answered, please contact the Sacred Heart Parish office at (573) 624-7333.

**Jackson**—The Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary will host a **Bunco Bash**, Sun., March 17 in the Upper KC Hall, located at 2205 N High St. Doors open at 12:30 and game begins at 1 p.m. No pre-registration is required. Entry fee is \$10/player. Snacks provided, drinks available for purchase. Proceeds will fund our scholarship program and other organizations such as Birthright, Options for Women, and Special Olympics. For more information contact Donna at [jacksoncaux@gmail.com](mailto:jacksoncaux@gmail.com) or call (573) 243-5464.

**New Hamburg**—St. Lawrence Ladies Sodality will hold a **Brown Bag Fundraiser** on Sun., March 3. Price is \$12 for chicken and dumplings, slaw, green beans, a roll and cookie. Order forms are in the back of church and need to be turned in by Feb. 18.

**Sikeston**—Grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and anyone who offers prayers for children are invited to join the **Grandparents Association of St. Francis Xavier Parish**. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the St. Joseph Room.

**Sikeston**—St. Francis Xavier School will have its 30th annual **Dinner Auction**, Sat., March 9. The theme this year is “Monopoly,” and promises to be a wonderful evening of delicious food and great fun! If you would like to donate an item,

a service, or become a sponsor, please contact the school office at (573) 471-0841, or Email [secretary@stfxsikeston.org](mailto:secretary@stfxsikeston.org) or [cookbarber@yahoo.com](mailto:cookbarber@yahoo.com). Most importantly, we need attendees! Tickets are \$40 per person and include dinner, beverages, and everything you need for an exceptional evening. Tickets are available for purchase, make plans to attend!

**Sikeston—Seasons of Hope Grief Support Groups**, a new outreach ministry offering the Catholic approach for finding comfort in grief, will begin at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. This support group will explore mourning through Scripture, prayer, reflection, sharing of stories, and listening. Leaders will offer small-group support, focusing on a relationship with Jesus, and the many ways the Catholic Church offers consolation. Plans are being made to start the support groups during the Lenten season as a six-week course. Anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one, whether it be a spouse, child, (including a pregnancy loss), grandchild, parent, other family member, or friend is encouraged to attend. Sessions will be held in the St. Joseph Room; dates and times will be announced once the recruitment has been completed. If you or someone you know is interested in more information, or would like to sign up, please contact St. Francis Xavier Parish office at (573) 471-2447 and leave your name and phone number for a callback to provide more details. Seats are limited, so please call soon.

**Springfield**—Come and be present before our Lord during **Springfield’s Area Perpetual Adoration**. Hosted at Holy Trinity Chapel, there is an urgent need of Adorers on Wednesdays, 3 a.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.; and Sunday, 11 p.m. Substitutes are needed for all hours. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Marilyn Gibson at (417) 224-4043. Please consider spending time with our Lord in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Springfield—Praise & Worship Prayer Group** offers a great opportunity to come together in praise, fellowship, inspired teaching, Adoration, and is a wonderful way to learn more about our faith. This group meets every Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m., in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, located at 2200 W. Republic Rd. All are welcome – please join us! For more information, contact Shelly Pichler at (417) 838-2730.

*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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# SEMO NEWMAN CENTER ERECTS MARIAN GROTTO FOR FORMER STUDENTS

By Paula Wright

Cape Girardeau

A new Marian Grotto was dedicated Dec. 8 on the grounds of the St. John Henry Newman Center on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) in honor of two SEMO students, Audrey Smith (20) and Mallory Carter (19), who tragically died in a car accident Dec. 3, 2022. Also deceased as a result of the accident was Andrew Marzucio (20), who was not a SEMO student but whose twin sister, Maria, attended SEMO, and was a very active member of the Newman Center.

“The accident happened on Dec. 3, 2022, just over a year ago,” said Deacon Tom Schumer, Director of the St. John Henry Newman Center and Aquinas Institute for Catholic Studies. “There were three people that died in the accident, two of those were very active student leaders here at the Newman Center and one was a brother of a third student active at the Newman Center. Audrey, Mallory, and Andrew were the ones called home to the Lord on that tragic night.”

“Audrey and Mallory were two of our shining stars, just beautiful souls that had an incredible presence here at the Newman center,” said Deacon Schumer.

## BUILDING A GROTTA

In the summer of 2022, the two young women and eight other SEMO students had participated in an 11-week immersion in Maine called “Summer Projects.” This working mission immersion program had created

extremely close bonds of friendship, a fire for the faith and increased desire to share it with others.

“The accident was devastating to myself and Fr. Laurent [Okitakatshi, Chaplain, St. John Henry Newman Center],” Deacon Schumer said. “There was deep mourning with the students who participated in the Summer Projects program. The sister of Andrew had been one of the students that had attended. She lost a brother and two close friends that night.”

“Within the Catholic Church, when tragedy happens, we come together in the grieving and mourning process,” Schumer said. “I called upon the Blessed Mother to help me with my grief and leadership. At the time, the Newman Center did not have a grotto to the blessed Virgin Mary. It was placed upon my heart that this is what we needed to do for a memorial to Audrey and Mallory. Everyone got behind this idea. A simple letter was sent to contacts outlining the plans for a Marian Grotto Memorial and thousands of dollars came in from just that one letter. ... The Blessed Mother’s hand was in all of it.”

Alex Harold, a general handyman and aspiring stone mason, who had been at Summer Project with Audrey and Mallory, was asked by Deacon Schumer to undertake the building of the grotto.

“He accepted the task with great ambition and with deep understanding that the undertaking



**MARIAN GROTTA CONSTRUCTED, DEDICATED TO FORMER STUDENTS**—Pictured in front of the Marian grotto dedicated Dec. 8 to the memory of Mallory Carter and Audrey Smith were: (front) Alex Harold, Fr. Laurent Okitakatshi, Chaplain, St. John Henry Newman Center, Cape Girardeau, and Eli Oberle; (back) Deacon Tom Schumer (dressed as St. Nicholas), Director, St. John Henry Newman Center, on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau. (The Mirror)

would be a healing balm for his suffering and loss,” said Deacon Schumer.

“That fall we came back to Missouri from Summer Project, and that winter, we lost both Mallory and Audrey, as well as Andrew,” said Harold. “It was the worst night of everyone’s life. We were struggling. Sometime in the late spring, Deacon came to Eli (Oberle) and I and asked if we could build a grotto in memory of Audrey and Mallory. We were honored that he asked.”

“We said yes, we would take it on. I am glad I didn’t know what all went into building a grotto, or I may not have said yes!” Harold said. “I would have doubted myself a lot more.”

Over the course of several months, the beautiful grotto came together. The footer for the grotto was dug in early August.

“It was the first step we had taken,” Harold said. “We had been in analysis paralysis and finally had moved forward. It took a lot of digging; it was a big hole. We were so proud of it: nice squared-off sides, it was a small victory.”

Then it proceeded to rain for the next 11 days.

“We couldn’t pour concrete and our hole slumped,” said Harold, “so when the rain stopped, we dug it back out and continued along.”

## IMPACTFUL EVANGELIZATION

“I compulsively talk to people. One night, the nursing school let out on campus and the students walked by,” Harold said. “I asked if they wanted to lay stone with us. Some did. Eventually, one guy came into the Newman Center. He had fallen away from the Church, but he came in and he had laid stones with us that evening.”

“I feel there was some amount of the Holy Spirit, or divine intervention, guiding us with the project. Things went smoothly and we got it done. I know it couldn’t have been done with just me and my friends,” stated Harold. “It was great to have our Knights (Knights of Columbus Council #15294 – SEMO) help with the project. I think the beauty in it for me was seeing how much God has healed us over the past year. All the guys getting together and working on it and having a unified purpose to do something for those girls was just such a blessing for us.”

The grotto team decided to use the Our Lady of Grace and Miraculous Medal for the image of the grotto statue. Because of the beauty of the grotto at the Association of the Miraculous Medal, Perryville, MO, the team reached out to them for guidance in procuring the



► **MARIAN GROTTA** // *Continued...*

statue. The association not only helped, but they also donated the 50-inch tall statue of Our Lady of Grace for the project.

The stone that comprises the base and back of the grotto was left over from the construction of the Newman Center chapel (2021). Two pallets of stone remained in the construction company's yard and having the stone available seemed providential.

As the project progressed, the Blessed Mother's hand continued to be revealed.

"As I reached out for details about the young women to include on the

memorial plaque for the grotto, I went back to look at their birthdays and full names," Deacon Schumer said. "Mallory was born on March 25, on the Solemnity of Our Lady of the Annunciation, and Audrey, whose middle name is Marie, was born September 12, the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary." Another connection to Mary: Andrew's twin sister, is named Maria.

"The grotto was completed within one year of the accident and dedicated on Dec. 8, 2023, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception," Deacon Schumer said. "The occasion transpired when 30 Newman Center students had just completed 33 days of Solemn

Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, 'to Jesus through Mary,' said Schumer.

"It's really a wonderful coming together of God's good and faithful people in the wake of something that happened that was so tragic. I honestly could not be more pleased with how everything turned out and how our students, our benefactors, the families of those who tragically went to God, came together in a beautiful way," said Deacon Schumer.

"We have a beautiful tribute on our grounds. I am quite confident as students visit or walk by the grotto, Our Lady of Grace will be showering them with the grace that will, and does,

improve lives," said Deacon Schumer. "I lean on Romans 8:28: 'We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.' God is going to do that by this beautiful statue. God will inspire others to do good in their lives that might not otherwise be accomplished. As tragic as [the accident] was, God will make good things come of it." ©TM



**Ava**—St. Leo Parish will have a **Fish Fry**, Fri., Feb. 23, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Cost is \$10, dine-in or carry-out available.

**Billings**—St. Joseph Men's Club **Lenten Fish Fry Fridays**: Feb. 16, March 1, and March 15, 5-7 p.m., in the parish hall, located at 320 NW Washington Ave. Dinners include fried fish, grilled cheese, French fries, coleslaw, vegetables, brown beans, cornbread, dessert & drink.

**Fredericktown**—St. Michael the Archangel Parish, located at 400 W. Main St., will have a **Fish Fry**, Fri., Feb. 16, March 1, and March 15, 4-7 p.m. Catfish, fries, slaw, potato salad, baked beans, dessert & drink. Dine-in or carry-out available. Cost: \$15-adults; \$7-ages 5-12; under age 5-free.

**Gainesville**—St. William Parish will have its **Lenten Fish Suppers** on Fri., Feb. 16, March 1, and March 15, 4-6 p.m. Two filet of swai, french fries, green beans, green salad, dessert & drink. Cost: \$10.

**Jackson**—The Knights of Columbus #6405 will have a **Fish & Chicken Dinner** on Fri., Feb. 16, and continuing every Friday through March 22, 4:30-7:30 p.m., in the lower KC Hall. Dine-in or carry-out.

**Joplin**—The Knights of Columbus at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church will have **Fish Fry Fridays**, beginning Fri., Feb. 16, and continuing every Friday through March 22, 5-7 p.m., in Our Lady's Hall, located below St. Peter the Apostle Church. Fried fish, French fries, grilled cheese, mac & cheese, green beans & coleslaw. Cost: \$10-adult; \$5-child, over age 4; \$30-family.

**Joplin**—The Knights of Columbus will have a **Lenten Dinner** on Fri., Feb. 16 and Fri., March 8; 5-7 p.m., at St. Mary Catholic Church, located at 3035 S. Central Rd. Baked tilapia, grilled cheese, vegetable stew, cheesy potatoes, green beans, coleslaw, dessert & drink. Cost: \$10-adults; \$8-children; \$30-family; under age 5-free.

**Nixa**—The Knights of Columbus will have its **Lenten Fish Fry** beginning Fri., Feb. 16 and every Friday through March 22, 4:30-7 p.m., at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, located at 844 S. Gregg Rd. Fried or baked fish, French fries, hush puppies, coleslaw, potato salad, pea salad & dessert. Cost: \$12-adults; ages 5 and under-free; \$40-family of 4. For more information, call (417) 551-1135.

**Ozark**—The Knights of Columbus **Fish Fry-Days** begins Fri., Feb. 16, 4:30-7 p.m., and continues all the Fridays of Lent at St. Joseph the Worker Parish. Fried catfish or cod, served with hush puppies, fresh potato chips, green beans, mac & cheese, okra, coleslaw, dessert & drink. Cost: \$13-adults; \$10-ages 6-12 yrs. A spaghetti plate is available for \$6.



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**Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau, is taking applications for a school accountant.** An Online

job description may be found at: <https://www.notredamehighschool.org/jobopenings/>. Notre Dame is a Roman Catholic school, so preference would be given to practicing Catholics. Bachelor's degree in Accounting or Finance with a minimum of five years of accounting experience required; school finance experience preferred. Interested candidates should send their resume, cover letter, and list of references to [paulunterreiner@notredamecape.org](mailto:paulunterreiner@notredamecape.org).

**Application deadline: Feb. 23, 2024.**

[www.notredamehighschool.org/jobopenings](https://www.notredamehighschool.org/jobopenings)

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# THE PROFESSION CLASS OF 2023: Consecrated Life builds up of the Body of Christ

Washington

Consecrated persons advance the mission of the Gospel in the Church today by bringing the light of the Gospel to those they encounter, said Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing. In preparation for the celebration of the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life by the Catholic Church on Feb. 2, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations (CCLV) commissioned a study on newly-professed men and women religious through the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University.

The survey, *Women and Men Professing Perpetual Vows in Religious Life: The Profession Class of 2023*, commissioned annually since 2010 provides valuable insight into the demographics, family background, education history, occupational and ministerial experience, and vocational discernment of religious who professed perpetual vows in the past year.

"In their work, ministry, and community, men and women in consecrated life make a direct and tangible contribution to building up of the body of Christ," said Bishop Boyea, who serves as chairman of the CCLV committee. "Whether it be serving the poor, teaching, providing medical care, or assisting with professional administration, consecrated men and women, in the rich array of their vocations, bring the light of the Gospel into the hearts of all those they encounter."

Some of the major findings of the report are:

- The average age of responding religious of the Profession Class of 2023 is 36. Half of the responding religious are age 33 or younger. The youngest is 24 and the oldest is 78.

- Two in three responding religious (67%) are Caucasian, European American, or white followed by Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (12%), Hispanic/Latino(a) (9%), African/African American/black (7%), and mixed race/other (5%).
- Almost all (99%) of respondents were raised by their biological parents during the most formative part of their childhood. Besides, one in sixteen (7%) report being raised by their grandparents during the most formative part of their childhood.
- Most respondents (84%) served in at least one Church ministry before entering their institute. The most common ministry experiences were altar server (51%), youth/campus ministry (50%), faith formation, catechetical ministry, RCIA (48%), and lector (46%).
- About eight in ten (82%) respondents report that someone encouraged them to consider a religious vocation. The most common sources of encouragement were parish priest (45%), religious sister/brother (44%), and friend (41%).

The full CARA report and profiles of the Profession Class of 2023 may be found by scanning the QR code.



Bishop William A. Wack, CSC, of Pensacola-Tallahassee, a member of the CCLV committee, spoke recently about his experiences as a bishop and how being a religious order priest has impacted his ministry: <https://youtu.be/x3vV7dCdzN8>. @TM



**CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS**—The Sisters of St. Elizabeth pose for a photo with Bishop Edward Rice and The Very Rev. Shoby Chettiyath, JCL, V.G., on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi 2023. A new report outlines the demographics of The Profession Class 2023. (The Mirror)

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**Ivy Almon** Support After Abortion  
**Dr. Wes Fowler** Missouri Baptist Convention

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**Information:** Springfield Diocese: [jtran@dioscg.org](mailto:jtran@dioscg.org)  
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# MERCY SOUTHEAST blessed and dedicated in Cape Girardeau

Cape Girardeau

“In 1891, the Sisters of Mercy brought healthcare to Springfield; Five years later, in 1896, the sisters undertook healthcare in Joplin, MO. We are now in the year 2024—what took you so long to get to Cape Girardeau?” said The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice to much laughter Jan. 11 at the blessing and ribbon-cutting of Mercy Hospital Southeast. Among the hundreds present at the blessing and ribbon-cutting were local business leaders, city officials, and Mercy staff, among others.

The event took place on a Thursday morning at Mercy Clinic Women’s Health, on S. Mount Auburn Rd., and made official the Dec. 20 SoutheastHEALTH acquisition, the second Mercy merger in the last few months. It integrated Perry County Health System, now Mercy Hospital Perry, in October 2023. SoutheastHEALTH’S Dexter facility also joined Mercy as Mercy Hospital Stoddard.

Mercy Southeast is a 244-bed hospital while Dexter’s Mercy Stoddard is a 48-bed hospital.

“For us going down to Jefferson (County), Perry County, then down here and into Stoddard (County), all of those represent opportunities for us to better serve those immediate communities and bring health care more comprehensively so care can remain local,” Mercy president and CEO Steve Mackin said.

Mackin said Mercy’s goal is to make southeast Missouri a regional hub for health care services.

“The whole I-55 corridor, we feel that there’s a lot of great health care that’s delivered down here, but it would benefit from a more consistent, singular model of care,” he said.

“By the grace of Your Holy Spirit, make this place a house of mercy, a blessing and center of love, where the Mercy team will practice the art of healing, serving the sick with care and helping to

bring about more abundant life,” Bishop Rice said during his blessing. He also sprinkled holy water over 100 Mercy leaders, who assembled to commemorate the occasion and blessed the Mercy cross for the facility, the symbol of the Sisters of Mercy, which founded the Mercy health system in 1986, regionally headquartered in St. Louis.

“Before the Holy Father sent me to southern Missouri, I was in St. Louis, where some 30% of the population is Catholic. In the Diocese of Springfield Cape-Girardeau, some 5% of the population is

Catholic,” said Bishop Rice in his remarks. “That means roughly 95 percent of those who work in our Catholic institutions are not Catholic, and 95% of the people that utilize our Catholic institutions, in this case our hospitals, are not Catholic. Because of that, we have to get it right, because coming to one of our Catholic hospitals may be the first contact that somebody has with the Catholic Church. So, how we treat them is important so that when they walk away, they feel like they’ve been treated with dignity and with the healing hand of Christ.”

Ryan Geib is the new President of Mercy

Southeast. Geib has been in the Mercy health system for the last four years, most recently the COO of its Fort Smith, AR, location.

“A Sister of Mercy who served in health care for 65 years in Springfield, Sr. Mary Roch (“Rock”) Rocklage, once said, ‘We work in buildings that have crosses on them. People expect something better, something different from us,’” Bishop Rice said. “That is the continued challenge to the Mercy System here in southeast Missouri.”

As reported in the *Southeast Missourian*, with Mercy’s entrance into Cape Girardeau, the city’s two largest employers are now its two Catholic healthcare institutions, which includes Saint Francis Healthcare System, founded by the Franciscan Sisters in 1875. ©TM



**MERCY CROSS**—Bishop Edward M. Rice, Sr. Katherine Glosenger, RSM, and Ryan Geib, president of Mercy Southeast in Cape Girardeau, hold the Mercy Cross that was blessed by Bp. Rice on Jan. 11 during the blessing, dedication, and ribbon-cutting commemorating the merger between Mercy Healthcare and the former Southeast HEALTH hospital. The Mercy Cross will hang in the hospital, a nod to the Sisters of Mercy who undertook healthcare and education in southern Missouri as early as 1891. (Photo by Fr. Patrick Nwokoye/The Mirror)

## MERCY'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

On Jan. 3, 2024, Steve Mackin announced Mercy’s leadership team.

“We have an experienced team to take us into 2024 and beyond that consists of leaders from both SoutheastHEALTH and Mercy. I want to introduce just a few from the much larger and talented team”:



- **Eric Ammons, regional president**, has served Mercy for more than 30 years and the last decade as president of Mercy Hospital Jefferson.
- **Ryan Geib, Mercy Southeast community president**, joined Mercy in January 2020, serving as Mercy Fort Smith’s chief operating officer and brings more than a decade of health care leadership experience.
- **Ken Bateman, Mercy Southeast Community CEO**, has served the area since 2014, and will remain until late 2024, working with Eric on external strategic opportunities.
- **Dr. Naresh Agarwal, vice president and chief medical officer**, joined SoutheastHEALTH in 2023, having previously served as associate chief medical officer, primary care, with Intermountain Healthcare in Utah.
- **Krista Berry, chief financial officer**, has most recently served as controller and brings 10-plus years of experience serving SoutheastHEALTH in numerous finance and accounting leadership roles.
- **Shauna Hoffman, vice president of marketing and business development**, has served in her role for nearly a decade and will continue to lend her operational expertise in service to the communities there.
- **Mike Nichols, vice president and CIO**, has served since 2015 and will be key in ensuring our technology integrations go as planned.
- **Erin Pfeifer, vice president of human resources**, has served since 2011, managing compensation and benefits before assuming her current responsibilities in 2016.
- **Andy Runge, vice president of provider development and integration**, previously served as chief operating officer and vice president in Mercy’s clinic operations for more than 20 years.
- **Kathy Vickery is vice president of ancillary services** and has served SoutheastHEALTH since 2007.

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# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

## HELP US MAKE SENSE OF SUFFERING

By Michael R. Heinlein

OSV News

Christians know the life of a disciple will not be easy. Christ did not mince words about this—telling his disciples they must take on life’s sufferings as in the form of capital punishment that would later be used to take his life: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

How do Christians make sense of the crosses they bear? The question of why suffering exists finds its answer in Christ’s transformation of suffering through love. Christ’s cross makes sense of our own, hence the universal appeal of popular devotions like the Stations of the Cross.

### ROOTS OF THE DEVOTION

The Stations of the Cross finds its roots with the Franciscans who helped rebuild the Christian sites of the Holy Land following the medieval Crusades. Given the prominence of Christ’s passion within Franciscan spirituality, the order encouraged pilgrims in Jerusalem to journey along Christ’s way to Calvary. While it began as a pious devotion, its enduring relevance in the Christian life, however, caused the devotion to spread. Over time, the pope gave Franciscans the prerogative to erect “stations” of the cross for popular devotion in parishes the world over. Eventually, the role of the Franciscans was eliminated, and yet it is hard to find a parish building or complex that does not have the Stations of the Cross.

The universal reality of suffering makes devotions inspiring meditation on the passion and death of Jesus particularly relevant in Christian life. Such prayer forms like the Stations of the Cross are popularized particularly in the season of Lent. They should not necessarily be restricted there alone, however, since the Stations of the Cross have become a primary opportunity for the faithful to learn the purpose of their crosses.

Through fostering communal celebration of the Stations of the Cross, priests have the privilege of accompanying their flocks in this understanding. Assisted by praying with the Stations of the Cross, the faithful enter into the experience of Christ and others—such as Pilate, Mary, Simon, Veronica, the women of Jerusalem, or those who crucified the Lord. In this way, devotions like the Stations of the Cross assist the faithful in appropriating the fruits of Christian suffering.

### SUFFERING’S PURPOSE ROOTED IN LOVE

It makes sense, then, that those who have “put on Christ,” becoming members of his body through baptism—a bond renewed and strengthened in

each reception of holy Communion—should expect nothing less than a share in Christ’s own passion and cross. In light of Christ’s passion, it likewise makes sense to understand suffering’s purpose as rooted in love. “If you really want to love Jesus,” St. Gemma Galgani said, “first learn to suffer, because suffering teaches you to love.”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). God is love, and love is the source of all that is. “Love is also,” Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical on suffering, “*Salvifici Doloris*,” (“*On the Christian meaning of Human Suffering*”), “the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the Cross of

Jesus Christ” (No. 13). Out of love, Christ gave of himself completely, even unto death—handing over his spirit out of obedience to the Father’s will (see Lk 23:46).

Christ’s own suffering and death has untold value and immense purpose—whereby God bought us back from the slavery of sin and death. So, too, does ours, because, as St.

John Paul II described it, “each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ” (“*Salvifici Doloris*,” No. 19).

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen wrote: “The great tragedy of the world is not what people suffer, but how much they miss when they suffer. Nothing is quite as depressing as wasted pain, agony without an ultimate meaning or purpose.” The Stations of the Cross make real every imaginable aspect of human suffering that was on full display at Christ’s passion. And they teach us to see the fruits of suffering.

### FRUITS OF SUFFERING

On his way to Calvary, Christ experienced the sufferings ordinary men and women experience every day throughout the world. He showed not only how to deal with them, but through the power of love, how to transform suffering’s destructive power into something life-giving. In Christ’s passion and death, St. John Paul II wrote that Jesus “has taken upon himself the physical and moral sufferings of the people of all times, so that in love they may find the salvific meaning of their sorrow and valid answers to all of their



**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**—Christ told his disciples they must take on life’s sufferings: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23). Christ’s cross helps us make sense of our own, hence the universal appeal of popular devotions like the Stations of the Cross. (eCatholic stock)

questions” (“*Salvifici Doloris*,” No. 31).

Meditating on the Stations of the Cross exposes Christ’s suffering heart—“sorrowful even to death” (Mk 14:34). In his condemnation to death, Christ teaches that we have the freedom to accept life’s sorrows. He does not let condemnation be levied upon him, but rather he chooses it out of love. Taking up his cross, Christ models how to accept suffering as an act of love in obedience to God’s will.

Christ falls three times on the way to Calvary. The sufferings due to sin in our lives continually cause failure. In falling himself, Christ shows that, despite suffering’s tendency to bring us down, discouragement can be overcome by dependence on God’s grace. Christ teaches us how to persevere through the failure and exhaustion through which our suffering inevitably leads and be of one heart and mind in pursuit of the Father’s will. Such is redemptive suffering—as the old saying goes, “no pain, no gain.”

Christ’s way to Calvary illustrates, too, how God graces us with models of love in the midst of our suffering. But like Christ, we must be attentive and receptive to them. The compassion, cooperation and generosity of others—such as Christ experienced in the fourth, fifth, and sixth stations—are examples of how



STATIONS OF THE CROSS // Continued...

love is returned to love. And when unburdened by our own sufferings, through love, each of us can be channels of God's love through service, like Mary, Simon, and Veronica. "In the face of evil, suffering, and sin, the only response possible for a disciple of Jesus is the gift of self, even of one's own life, in imitation of Christ; it is the attitude of service," Pope Francis said during World Youth Day in Poland in 2016.

Since life's road must pass by way of Calvary, this journey of love ultimately entails that we strip ourselves of all that keeps us from God and his will. At the end of his road to Calvary, Christ shows that abandoning ourselves to the hands of providence comes with detachment from all earthly power, pleasure, wealth, and honor. The Christian must be unhesitant to cast aside anything necessary to advance the kingdom of God. In this way, suffering is a gift that enables us to focus on the new life in Christ that awaits believers. Through the pain of suffering we gain the joy of heaven itself—eternal happiness with God—the gates to which Christ opened for "the many."

THE PATH OF TRUE LOVE

In meditating on Christ's passion and death, through devotions like the Stations of the Cross, comes the realization that life's sufferings can be joined to Christ's—by which one learns that love forms suffering's foundation. "The road is narrow," St. John of the Cross said. "He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things."


Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, weeks before he was elected pope following the death of Pope St. John Paul II, referenced this when he said that Jesus not only taught us how to pray the Stations of the Cross, but also their meaning. "The Way of the Cross is the path of losing ourselves," he said, "the path of true love."

Suffering expresses love's total self-emptying required of the disciple. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9:24).

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Michael R. Heinlein is editor of *Simply Catholic*. Follow him on X @HeinleinMichael.

**DURING THIS EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL, FR. DAVID COON OFFERS THE FOLLOWING QUOTE FOR THE REFLECTION ON THE EUCHARIST:**



**"My sweetest joy is to be in the Presence of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. I beg that when obliged to withdraw in body, I may leave my heart before the Holy Sacrament. How I would miss our Lord if He were to be away from me by His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament."**

**—ST. KATHARINE DREXEL**

**▲ KATHARINE DREXEL**—The likeness of St. Katharine Drexel, founder of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, is seen at the Katharine Drexel Shrine in Bensalem, PA. (OSV)

*Father Coon is Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Dexter. He serves the Diocese as Priest Minister for Spiritual Deliverance & Exorcism and the Confraternity of Priest Adorers of the Eucharistic Face of Jesus.*





# Anima Christi '24

## March 10 - 17

### Joplin to Cape Girardeau

**A traveling pilgrimage in the year of Eucharistic revival! Christ invites you to encounter Him in adoration, procession, and Mass with this unique journey across the diocese, coming to a parish near you!**

<p><b>Sunday, March 10</b>                      JOPLIN St. Peter's Church                      BILLINGS St. Joseph Parish                      SPRINGFIELD St. Agnes Cathedral                      SPRINGFIELD O'Reilly Center</p> <p><b>Monday, March 11</b>                      KIMBERLING CITY Our Lady of the Cove                      MARSHFIELD Holy Trinity Parish</p> <p><b>Tuesday, March 12</b>                      HOUSTON St. Mark Parish                      MOUNTAIN VIEW St. John Vianney Parish                      WILLOW SPRINGS Sacred Heart Parish</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, March 13</b>                      WEST PLAINS St. Mary Parish                      VAN BUREN St. George Mission Church</p> <p><b>Thursday, March 14</b>                      FREDERICKTOWN St. Michael Parish                      POPLAR BLUFF Sacred Heart Parish</p> <p><b>Friday, March 15</b>                      GLENNONVILLE St. Teresa Parish                      PORTAGEVILLE St. Eustachius Parish                      SIKESTON St. Francis Xavier Parish</p>	<p><b>Saturday, March 16</b>                      BENTON St. Denis Parish                      ORAN Guardian Angel Parish                      SCOTT CITY St. Joseph Parish                      CAPE GIRARDEAU SEMO Newman Center</p> <p><b>Sunday, March 17</b>                      CAPE GIRARDEAU SEMO Newman Center                      CAPE GIRARDEAU St. Mary's Cathedral</p>
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Scan the code for details and to register for events along the pilgrimage route!  
 Want to travel with us? Visit [semocatholic.org/sanctify-us](http://semocatholic.org/sanctify-us)

The map shows a route starting in Joplin on Day 1 (Sunday, March 10) and ending in Cape Girardeau on Day 8 (Saturday, March 16). Key stops include Springfield, Marshfield, Houston, Mountain View, Van Buren, Fredericktown, Poplar Bluff, Portageville, and Sikeston. Each day's route is color-coded and includes the day number and date.

### TUNE IN TO LOCAL CATHOLIC RADIO AROUND THE DIOCESE!

<b>K232FF</b>	<b>94.3 FM</b>	CAPE GIRARDEAU
<b>KHJM</b>	<b>89.1 FM</b>	DEXTER & THE BOOTHEEL
<b>KFSS</b>	<b>94.5 FM</b>	JOPLIN
<b>KQOH</b>	<b>91.9 FM</b>	SPRINGFIELD



**Cursillo**

### Cursillo Weekends

**Women's Weekends**  
 Feb. 29-March 03, 2024, Fredericktown  
 April 11-14, 2024, Carthage

**Men's Weekend**  
 February 22-25, 2024, Fredericktown

Sign up online to attend at <https://dioscg.org/cursillo/>

# 2024 Distinguished Graduate: Lisa Nice

Jackson, MO

**I**mmaculate Conception Catholic School Board in Jackson recently announced that Mrs. Lisa Nice is the recipient of the 2024 NCEA Distinguished Graduate Award. The award was presented at an all-school Mass on Wed., Jan. 31, 2024, as part of National Catholic Schools Week.



Nice is a 1998 graduate of Immaculate Conception Catholic School and a 2002 graduate of Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau. She attended University of Central Missouri where she earned a BS in Communication Disorders. She also attended Southeast Missouri State University for two years, and earned a MA in Speech Pathology. She is a wife, mother, and missionary.

Accolades included, "Lisa lives her Catholic faith in the numerous life choices she has made. She chose to listen to God's call in serving her family as primary educator in the Catholic faith. She and her husband prayerfully felt God calling them to a missionary life with Family Missions Company to serve the poor in General Cepeda, Coahuila, Mexico for nearly three years. After returning to the US, her husband served as a parish missionary in Illinois before returning to the secular work world."

"Going to Catholic schools gave me the opportunity to attend and participate in daily Mass frequently while growing up to learn so much about our faith," Nice said. "I am grateful!" ©TM



## Busy Moms: This series is for you!

### CREATING CATHOLIC EXPERIENCES IN MOTHERHOOD

Mothers of young children can find themselves feeling isolated today. This series is designed to encourage community, connecting mothers in similar life situations around the country, tethered by our Catholic faith. The format of this program encourages mothers to observe, connect, share, and learn from one another – offering an engaging opportunity for inclusion and true community!

**Jenna Mayo**, professional coach and Catholic mom of three, will facilitate each session to encourage community and provide moms with ideas, tools, and resources to begin creating or growing the number of Catholic faith-filled experiences their children and families have.

**REGISTRATION**

While this program focuses on mothers with children at home, all moms are welcomed, wherever you are in your faith and parenting journey!

Attending the live sessions is the best way to get the most out of this program, but life gets busy! We want every mom to join us for as many or as few sessions as she can – sessions will be recorded, and we'll be in touch in between sessions.

**Sign up today:** A one-time \$50 registration fee gives you access to all ten live and recorded sessions!

**For more details and to register, visit [mothersshrine.com](https://mothersshrine.com), or scan** 

573-374-MARY (6279) | 176 Marian Drive | Laurie, Missouri 65037  
[www.mothersshrine.com](http://www.mothersshrine.com)



## Protecting God's Children<sup>®</sup>

*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](http://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](http://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/](http://www.dioscg.org/child-youth-protection/)

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

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**FEB. 11, 2024**

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## Priest's Success in Haiti Proves Faith-Filled Action Can Bless Thousands of Lives

When Father Glenn Meaux established the Kobonal Haiti Mission in 1989, families living in that region were trapped in material and spiritual poverty. Seeing their extreme needs, he felt called by God to make a difference in their deeply impoverished villages and developed a plan to provide help. His first outreaches were small, but they quickly expanded as others joined his cause and offered their support.

The impact of his faithfulness to God's calling has been inspiring to see. Through his obedience to the Lord and unwavering commitment to follow the Holy Spirit, thousands have been blessed beyond anyone's expectations.

"An incredible transformation has taken place in Kobonal, Haiti, and it all began with a bold decision to respond to God's calling and to serve as the Lord's instrument of mercy," confirmed

Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the largest and most effective Catholic relief and development ministries working in the region. "That's really how every effective ministry begins. Someone encounters a situation that breaks their heart or challenges them spiritually, and then God tells them, 'I want you to be a part of the solution!' At times like those, we need to step out in faith and let God work through us. Those are acts of obedience and merciful service that both glorify God and bless lives."

Sagarino knows Fr. Meaux well because the ministry she leads has been championing his efforts for more than two decades. During that time many U.S. Catholics have also become aware of the Kobonal Haiti Mission and have joined the cause too.

"While I celebrate the many



Fr. Meaux celebrates Mass with students at the Kobonal Haiti Mission.



The new homes being built for needy Haitian families are seen as an answer to prayer.

wonderful things that have been accomplished at the Haiti Kobonal Mission, I'm currently focused on helping the children and families there that still have extreme needs," Sagarino said. "For example, I know there are children in the region who are still illiterate and desperately want to go to school. I want to be sure they get that opportunity. Then there are the families who will be going to sleep tonight in a ramshackle, unsanitary dwelling. I want them to have a safe place to live. Fr. Meaux has created a powerful ministry to support Haiti's poorest families, but the individuals he is trying to reach can't be supplied with what they need unless we step forward to fund those works of mercy. That's how we can make a difference and bless lives."

According to Sagarino, Cross Catholic Outreach's current and specific goal is to help Fr. Meaux's team provide another group of needy families with new homes. (See related story on the

opposite page.)

"His house building ministry has become very popular with U.S. Catholics because it provides struggling families with simple but sturdy homes — a foundation for building a better life. People want their charitable donations to produce major benefits and have an impact that will last. My hope is that as people learn more about what Fr. Meaux is accomplishing in Kobonal, Haiti, they will experience the same calling he has to help the poor and will also want to be a part of the solution."

*Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach's work for the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC03054, 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.*

## Catalog of Merciful Gifts Provides Catholics With Unique Lenten Almsgiving Options

The long-held tradition of almsgiving during Lent has always been a blessing to Catholic households, but there have been times when families longed for ways to extend their compassion to international communities where the ravages of poverty are often more extreme. We know those needs exist. The challenge is in finding a way to address targeted needs in specific places.

This year, the respected relief and development ministry, Cross Catholic Outreach, has offered a solution — its

Easter Catalog of international mercy projects in need of funding. Through the catalog, individuals, families and parishes can build homes for the homeless, provide meals to combat malnutrition, sponsor educational scholarships for poor children, address urgent medical needs and undertake many other acts of compassion, all under the supervision of respected Catholic leaders in the countries being served.

The opportunities listed in the catalog truly span the globe, including missions of mercy in the Caribbean, Central and

South America, Africa, and beyond.

"And because the projects listed in the catalog are very specific, those who donate will know exactly how their alms are being utilized," explained Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "That creates some wonderful opportunities for parents with young children being taught the importance of almsgiving. Imagine the excitement of your son or daughter knowing their contribution at Lent built a home for a struggling family or ensured an illiterate child would finally

be able to attend school. These are not just symbolic charitable efforts. The projects being accomplished are life-transforming."

This unique Easter Catalog is easy to access. Readers will find a link for it at the ministry's website (CrossCatholic.org), or they can reach it directly by entering the web address: CrossCatholic.org/Easter.

"Lenten almsgiving is always a blessing, but its impact is even more significant when it blesses those with the greatest needs," Sagarino said.

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# US Catholics Having Major Impact on Poverty by Building Simple, Sturdy Homes for Needy Families

Sadly, Rosetithe Augustin's two sons are growing up in conditions no child should ever experience. Their family's tiny dwelling in Haiti has a leaky scrap metal roof, and its mud-and-wood walls are slowly melting away with each passing rainstorm. In the summer months, the air inside often becomes so oppressive it can be challenging just to breathe.

"When it rains, I would look up to see where the water was coming from. Then, I would look down and see a river at my feet," lamented Rosetithe. "The children would get wet, and their books would get wet and were destroyed in the water."

"Like any mother, Rosetithe wants the best for her sons, but she knows her family's living conditions are creating a lot of roadblocks to their success. It's almost impossible to create a stable, healthy home life for young children in a house like hers. I know I would struggle to do it," said Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the largest and most respected Catholic relief and development ministries serving in the Caribbean region. "That's why we have made it a priority to build and repair the homes of poor families in places like Kobonal, Haiti. When someone like Rosetithe receives that helping hand and can raise her children in a safe, sturdy home — well, it's life-transforming. There's no other way to describe it."

Asked why home security is so important, Sagarino detailed how that foundational support radiates blessings to many other areas of a family's life.

"A safe home improves health by creating a dry and sanitary place for people to eat and sleep. It has educational benefits too. Children don't lose school days due to sickness, and they have a productive place to read and study," she said. "Then there's the security and peace it provides. Families are safe from intruders and vermin, and they no longer need to worry about the dangers posed by tropical storms. Imagine the relief it is to have all those burdens lifted from your shoulders."

This year, in its effort to improve the living conditions of families like Rosetithe's, Cross Catholic Outreach has launched a special national campaign called "Children of Light," a name chosen to reflect the powerful call to service God makes in Ephesians 5: *For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light — for the fruit of the light is found*



Above: Many fragile, single-room homes in Kobonal, Haiti, have dirt floors and leaky roofs, making them unsanitary and unsafe. Below: The Augustin children face tremendous challenges in life. The poverty in their region of Haiti is extreme.



*in all that is good and right and true.*

"There is actually a double meaning in this particular campaign title," Sagarino said. "We Catholics stand as children of light when we serve the poor, and the boys and girls we're helping — are also children of light. They have incredible potential to shine for the glory of God if we can just help them overcome the hurdles poverty has placed in their lives."

To accomplish its home building goals in Haiti, Cross Catholic Outreach will be working with the Kobonal Haiti Mission, located in the country's Central Plateau region. The director of

the mission, Father Glenn Meaux, has a goal of building 50 homes to provide 336 children and 109 adults with a safe, sanitary place to live. Catholics in the U.S. are being asked to contribute to the project by sponsoring a house at a cost of just \$11,920 or by giving a smaller donation that can be combined with others to accomplish the same goal.

"I know it's a significant amount to ask someone to give, but a number of people are eager to fund an entire house," Sagarino said. "They have generous hearts, and they appreciate the fact that the contribution they are giving will provide a very specific blessing and will have a far-reaching impact. Of course, we're deeply grateful to those who give any amount to this goal. Every dollar is important in helping Fr. Meaux

achieve his goal of building 50 homes for families in need."

Sagarino added that she hopes those who participate in the "Children of Light" campaign will also use the opportunity to learn more about the Kobonal Haiti Mission and its other outreaches to the poor.

"Too few Catholics in the U.S. are hearing about the incredible work being done in the developing world by our priests, religious sisters and Catholic lay leaders," she said. "We want to get the word out. We want to celebrate the wonderful things the Church is doing in the world — as well as to encourage U.S. Catholics to support important missions of mercy. One way they can do that is by building homes in Kobonal."

## How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, scan the QR code, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC03054, 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.





# Feeding the Hungry in Southern Missouri

This year, Bishop Edward Rice is inviting the youth of our diocese to help raise money in support of five different local food pantries as they provide food, clothing, and other necessities to those in need. Please join us in the mission to feed the hungry in our diocese!

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” – Matthew 25:35



## Food Pantries supported by the Lenten Youth Project:

- Sacred Heart Food Pantry - *Sacred Heart Parish, Webb City*
- St. Joseph Food Pantry - *St. Joseph Parish, Springfield*
- St. Sylvester (Eminence Food Harvest Pantry) - *Eminence*
- Ste. Marie du Lac Food Pantry - *Ste. Marie du Lac Parish, Ironton*
- Catholic Social Ministries Food Pantry - *Cathedral of St. Mary of the Annunciation, Cape Girardeau*

