Young Catholics Proclaim Gospel of Life at Generation Life

In the midst of the darkness, young people are rising up to lead a pro-life generation
— Generation Life

By Grace Tamburro

Generation Life 2023 was held Jan. 20 at St. Louis University’s (SLU) Chaifetz Arena in St. Louis, MO. The daylong event, hosted by Danielle Harrison, focused on, “encouraging and empowering young people to Christ’s call to evangelize, and lead this world to the truth that every life is precious and loved…” In forming leaders, we expand on a community that cares for life and brings hope” (Generation Life Website).

The event was organized by the Archdiocese of St. Louis and its Respect Life Apostolate and Office of Youth Ministry. It was an enriching opportunity to learn more about the dignity of life from conception to natural death and to meet other young people passionate about getting involved in the cause.

The Catholic, pro-life event was attended by approximately 1,200 people, including students, teachers, and parishioners from across Missouri. The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau brought approximately 50 students and youth leaders from St. John Parish, in Leopold; St. Cecilia Parish, in Kennett; St. Eustachius Parish, in Portageville; St. Joseph Parish, in Scott City; St. Vincent de Paul Parish, in Cape Girardeau; and St. Augustine Parish in Kelso.

The day included keynote presentations, praise and worship with Pete Buncher, Mass with Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski and Auxiliary Bishop Rittirio of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and Bishop Edward M. Rice of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Games and trivia, small group discussions, and more rounded out the experience.

Advocacy for the unborn

The 1973 Supreme Court ruling of Roe v. Wade tragically legalized abortion in the United States, resulting in the loss of over 63 million innocent lives, according to the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). After 50 years of advocacy for the unborn, on June 24, 2022, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the landmark Roe v. Wade was officially overturned, and the states were given the power to vote on the legality of abortion at a more local level.

This is why the Missouri Bishops, for one, have asked citizens to focus on pro-life ministry at the state level, in our own backyards. In recent years, there has been a growing number of young people rising up to this challenge who are hungry for more education and resources to better understand how they can serve vulnerable populations and their varying circumstances. Generation Life had a welcoming, vibrant, and passionate environment for the young people of our neighboring (arch)dioceses in Missouri to learn more about the impact they can make in this movement.

There were many influential talks given at Generation Life, including Archbishop Rozanski’s inspiring homily about our individual roles in the pro-life movement and the importance of living out a consistent life ethic on a daily basis. “How do we win as Generation Life?” Abp. Rozanski asked, speaking directly to the young people in the audience. “We have to walk with those who are finding their pregnancies difficult. Their situations may seem against them, but we have to say to them, ‘You are not alone in this. You have the support of a wider community. You have the support of each one of us, and as we reach out to you, we reach out to your baby because life is so precious. Life is so meaningful.’”

The speakers also discussed the importance of connecting with other pro-life organizations and taking action. Many of these amazing organizations were represented at Generation Life to help youth understand what resources were available to them such as Coalition for Life, Vitae Research Institute, Cardinal Ritter Senior Services, Rural Parish Clinic, Saint Martha’s, Missourians for Alternatives for the Death Penalty, Ignatian Solidarity Network, Catholic Charities of St. Louis, as well as many religious communities and missionaries. This was a great way to learn about upcoming pro-life events, discover future careers and vocations, and meet like-minded individuals with whom to collaborate moving forward.

Continued on page 9...
As I write this column, Catholic Schools Week 2023 is being celebrated throughout the diocese. Due to the weather, however, I will be able to attend only one all-school Mass to highlight the role of Catholic education, at Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau, on Fri., Feb. 3. I take these occasions as an opportunity to thank all of the teachers, principals, DREs and PSR teachers who day-after-day, week-after-week, commit themselves to passing on the faith.

In my message this year, I made note of an advertisement in The Mirror, our own diocesan paper, as well as in other publications called, “A Dozen Reasons to Choose Catholic Schools.” Those reasons included a faith-based education rooted in Catholic teachings along with academic excellence, partnering with parents, striving for high standards, imparting values, respect for the individual, and others. After reading all 12 of them, I thought of a 13th reason to choose Catholic schools: When we gather in our school communities, we gather as the Body of Christ! That is the potential for every Catholic school, that we BE the Body of Christ and TREAT EACH OTHER as the Body of Christ.

In all of our schools, in all of our classrooms, in the hallways, in church, in the science lab, or in gym class, we are the Body of Christ. And being such, we are challenged to recognize Christ in every student, every parent that partners with the school, and in every staff, teacher, principal, and administrator. Meeting this challenge, our schools will become places of encounter with Jesus. This is the 13th reason to choose Catholic schools.

Each school should be a tool for evangelization, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Do we make mistakes along the way? Certainly: but we keep striving to create a culture of encounter where faith—the very presence of Christ—is experienced simply by walking through the front doors of a school. This is actually nothing new! I’m sure all of you have heard the mission statement for Catholic education: “Let it be known to all who enter here that Jesus Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever-present teacher in all its classes, the model of its faculty, and the inspiration for its students.” a special thank you to all of your principals and teachers, staff and administrators, and to all the parents for your commitment to Catholic education.

PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH
Do you remember the Precepts of the Catholic Church? I remember them as the “Seven Precepts of the Catholic Church,” and in refreshing my memory, I found various expressions of these precepts. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 2041-2043 lists the following: attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor; the reception of Holy Communion during the Easter season (referred to as the Easter duty) and if necessary, prior confession of sins at least once a year; the observance of the days of fast and abstinence established by the Church; support the Church financially and materially, along with supporting the missionary efforts of the Church.

Many of our Protestant friends attend churches where tithing is simply expected. In fact, when they register in their churches, they are expected to bring a copy of their W2 form and from their earnings, it is determined how much they will offer each year. Most of our Catholics would have a stroke if this was the case in our faith tradition, and there would be a cry to heaven if we were to do such a thing. The principles of stewardship in the Catholic Church encourage us and challenge us to give of our time, talent, and treasure based upon a thoughtful contemplation of the gifts that we have received from God. I bring this to mind, because of our recent DDF planning committee meeting where one of the members said that if everyone would just tithe, we wouldn’t have to go through this campaign every year. That is true. However, I do know that many people who cannot afford much financially give most generously of their time and talent. I shared at the meeting a story I heard on Catholic radio where a couple was starting a new business and felt like they could not donate to the church on a regular basis. The wife, a convert, was used to tithing a certain portion of her annual income and challenged her husband that they should try it. He thought it was a crazy idea. But he agreed: they tithed and although things were tight during the first years of their business, they were able to pay all their bills with a little leftover. Although we may not be used to the tradition of tithing 10 percent of our income to the Church, I have found the generosity of our people to be overwhelming. Throughout the pandemic and beyond, you have committed to the financial support of the diocese and your local parish and I am grateful. By the way, my mom always used to say that she tithed 10 percent of her children back to the Church because out of the 10, one became a priest (me)! I thank each of you for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure to your parish and to the diocese, which supports my ministry.

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.

May 20, 1988 I was hospitalized because of some chest pains. I want to thank the many people who offered their prayers for me and sent good wishes. After tests, my doctors told me there was no heart problem or damage. While in the hospital, I received some advice I intend to follow. Again, thanks for your prayers and concern. When I started feeling ill that Thursday morning at the Chancery Office, a member of the Chancery Staff took me to the Emergency Room at St. John’s Regional Health Center. Trying to get me to relax and in order to reassure me, this person, with a big grin on his face, said to me, “Bishop, I’m sure you’ll be OK, because we have no funds in next year’s budget to install a new bishop.”

May 27, 1988 When I asked a first-grader last week at Sacred Heart Parish, Poplar Bluff, why a bishop carries his bishop’s staff, the boy said excitedly, “To kill bears!”

June 10, 1988 Did you hear about the pastor who was a patient in the hospital and his Parish Council voted 6-4 in favor of his recovery?

June 24th, 1988 In visiting a few people in the hospital recently, I talked with a patient in the same room as the woman I went to see. “What’s the problem?” I asked. “I broke my hips.” The lady responded. “Both?” I asked to make sure I had not misunderstood. She nodded affirmatively. “How did you break both hips?” I continued. She said: “I don’t think I want to tell you.” Smiling, I told her I simply had to know. “Well,” she finally said, “there was a little bug flying around me and bothering me at home. I got a swatter to kill it. It landed on the wall, but I noticed it was just a little bit out of my reach. So, I swatted and jumped at the same time. I came down hard, fell, and broke my hips.” Then she looked directly at me to add, “...And I missed the bug!”
THE PRAYERS OF BAKHITA, the hope and help of a book watch for

When she was canonized by Pope St. John Paul in 2000, Josephine Bakhita immediately became the patron saint of survivors of human trafficking.

Even a cursory read of her story more than explains why. Kidnapped from the Sudanese village where her father was a chief and ironically renamed “Bakhita” (Arabic for the “lucky” or “fortunate” one) by her captors, Josephine endured such sustained trauma that she eventually forgot her own name. Living in enslavement as both child and adult, Bakhita suffered through unspeakable physical abuses, including a horrible and repeated branding ritual where flour and salt would be rubbed into open wounds created by whips or sharp, thin blades. In a life of long suffering, she once said these memories were “the most terrifying” to recall.

She was bought and sold five times, the last being to an Italian vice consul, Callisto Legnani, who eschewed corporal punishment and who apparently treated Josephine humanely enough that when he was required to return to Italy she begged to be taken back. In Italy, Legnani gave Bakhita over to the wife of a friend, who assigned her nursemaid duties over a young daughter. When, after several years, the woman found it necessary to return to Sudan, she put both child and nanny into the care and keeping of the Canossian sisters in Venice, where Bakhita had her first encounter with Christianity. In Roberto Italo Zanini’s book, Bakhita: From Slave to Saint (Ignatius Press, 2013), she is quoted as saying that these sisters “instructed me with heroic patience and introduced me to that God who from childhood I had felt in my heart without knowing who He was.”

Eventually declared a free woman through a ruling by the Italian court, Bakhita was baptized and confirmed as “Josephine Margaret” on the very same day, deciding to remain with the Canossian sisters, whose community she eventually joined. Living mostly at the Canossian convent in Schio, not far from Milan, she worked as a seamstress and doorkeeper, which brought her into close contact with the local villagers. It was these men and women who, upon her death in 1947, extolled Josephine’s sanctity.

Writer Sarah Robsdottir dedicated her recently published Young Adult novel Brave Water (Voyager Comics and Publishing, 2022) to Josephine Bakhita. The story tells the harrowing tale of a character not unlike the saint, a young female who is kidnapped from her African village while gathering water but manages, with help, to battle her way to freedom.

Robsdottir, who is Catholic, said she first became aware of the evils of human trafficking when a flyer arrived in her mailbox a decade ago. “It described the difficulties teenagers in developing nations face in order to acquire clean drinking water and how young girls between the ages of 12 and 15 are often targeted by human traffickers while on their way to the springs. I locked eyes with the girl on the cover of the flyer, and knew I had to tell her story.”

Though the book is not based specifically on Bakhita’s story, Robsdottir shared that between her initial ideas for the book and its eventual publication, “I did a lot of research on human trafficking, and I read and reread ‘From Slave to Saint’ and sought St. Josephine Bakhita’s intercession over the project.”

The author has pledged at least 25% of the proceeds from Brave Water to charities that fight human trafficking. “Presently my ‘go-to’ organization is Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO), which fights human trafficking and also drills wells and cultivates job opportunities for those in need,” she said.

Robsdottir’s efforts are not merely material, but also spiritual. “I realize how limited I am in raising awareness about this grave evil through my book and social media, and how little money I actually have to donate,” she added, “so I take great comfort in praying the ‘Hail, Holy Queen’ every day. I trust in the powerful intercession of Our Lord’s Mother in the lives of my brothers and sisters in chains.”

Elizabeth Scalia is Culture Editor at OSVNews.com

Pope calls for protecting women, girls from trafficking, genital mutilation

Pope Francis has encouraged decisive action against human trafficking and female genital mutilation. “Faced with these scourges of humanity, I express my sorrow and I urge all those with responsibility to act decisively to prevent both exploitation and the humiliating practices that afflict women and girls in particular,” the pope said Feb. 6, 2022, the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.

“At approximately 3 million girls undergo this operation every year, often in conditions that are very dangerous to their health,” the pope said. “This practice, unfortunately widespread in various regions of the world, demeans the dignity of women and gravely undermines their physical integrity.”

He called the crime of human trafficking “a deep wound, inflicted by the shameless pursuit of economic interests without any respect for the human person.”

Each year, on Feb. 8, the Catholic Church around the world marks the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking. The theme chosen for this year is, “Journeying in Dignity,” through which the faithful are called to recognize the processes that lead to exploitation, discover the daily paths of those in search of freedom and dignity, promote anti-trafficking actions, and build a culture of encounter. Of course, these efforts are timely and evergreen.

The event coincides with the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped in her native Sudan at the age of seven, sold into slavery, and trafficked to Italy, where she was eventually freed and became a member of the Canossian Daughters of Charity. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000.

“The bishops of the United States join with the Universal Church in praying for those impacted by the sin of human trafficking, which our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has described as ‘an open wound in the body of Christ, in the body of all humanity,’” said Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration. “Let each of us, as witnesses to the Gospel of life, grow in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are exploited in this way and inspired by the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, accompany them in the pursuit of justice.”

International Day of Prayer & Awareness Against Human Trafficking observed with focus on human dignity

Washington

A tapestry of St. Josephine Bakhita, an African slave who died in 1947 and canonized in 2000. Pope Francis released a video message marking the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, which is celebrated on the Feb. 8 feast of St. Bakhita. It may be found on the vaticannews.va Website.

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Knights of Columbus present check to Christian County Enterprises

NIXA KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS presented a $650 check to Christian County Enterprises, Inc., for the Nixa Sheltered Workshop. Pictured were Mike Pace, Director of Marketing (Christian Co Enterprises, Inc.; presenting the check was Grand Knight, John Clarke, Knights of Columbus Council #13748 of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Nixa; Carl Schimek, Council Financial Secretary; and Deacon Gary Steffes, St. Francis of Assisi Parish and Fourth Degree Knight. (Submitted photo)

On Mon., Dec. 19, 2022, the Knights of Columbus Council #13748 of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Nixa, presented a check to Christian County Enterprises (Nixa Sheltered Workshop), the proceeds of which represented donations received from the October Tootsie Roll Drive for the developmentally disabled. Including this year’s check in the amount of $650, the Council has donated over $2,000 to the local non-profit. Executive Director Joy Finney provided the group presenting the check, a tour of the facility and an opportunity to visit with the staff and employees.

Founded in 1882 by Blessed Fr. Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, CT, the Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the world. There are more than 2 million members in a dozen countries on three continents.

“The Nixa Knights of Columbus Council was established in February 2005, with John H. Clarke the first Grand Knight,” said Carl Schimek, Financial Secretary for the Council.

Clarke is currently serving his second term as Grand Knight.

“We have a membership of 89 and are in partnership with the Ladies Auxiliary,” Schimek said. “We support our parish with its needs. And we help meet the needs of those in our community through many projects and programs.”

A few of those projects and programs include Lenten fish fries, which are open to the public; Parish Breakfast Club, World Missions, Seminarians, VHFA Foundation, Sunday Rosary, donations to the pastor’s “Good Samaritan Fund,” and two local college scholarships awarded annually to parish youth, just to name a few.

NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS & PROGRAMS supported by the KC Council and Ladies Auxiliary:

- The Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital, St. Louis
- Bowl-A-Thon, proceeds to Catholic Charities, Least of These, and The Kitchen, Inc.
- MO State Special Olympics
- Care to Learn, to assist Nixa disadvantaged students.
- Costs for Kids, distributing new & gently-used coats to southwest MO adults & children.
- Pregnancy Care Center, assist with funds and supplies for women and unborn children.
- LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home, a ministry of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri.
- KC MEET LIFE, providing ultrasound equipment to local and state pregnancy care resource centers.
- National March for Life in Washington DC.

FAMILY EXTENDS NOTE OF THANKS

The Very Rev. Joseph Weidenbenner and his family would like to extend their thanks for all the kindness and condolences expressed at the recent passing of Lucille Weidenbenner. The Mass of Christian Burial for Mrs. Weidenbenner was held Jan. 23 in St. Teresa Church (Glennonville). Father Weidenbenner is Pastor of St. Mary Parish, Joplin, and St. Mary Parish, in Seneca. He also serves as Dean of Deanery 1 of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau.

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.

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 Page: 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.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
2200 West Republic Road, Springfield

For questions, contact Nick Meinhardt (417) 224-2421.

The Lenten Lock-in is brought to you by the Diocesan Committee for Youth Adventure Programs | www.dioscg.org

Lenten Lock-in 2023

for members of any Youth Adventure Program
(Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, American Heritage Girls, Trail Life USA, and similar adventure groups)

Saturday March 25 - Sunday March 26
4:30pm - 9:00pm on Saturday only for K-1st grade
5:00pm Saturday - 7:30am Sunday for 2nd-8th grade

All youth 6th grade to 12th grade in a YAP program may serve on team.
*Cost is $16 for first child (K-12), $10 for each sibling. ALL adults FREE. $60 max cost per family.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
2200 West Republic Road, Springfield

*All youth must be supervised by their unit leader or parent. Adults must be in compliance with diocesan Safe Environment policies/have attended a Virtus class, have a completed background check on file, sign a current diocesan Code of Conduct).

Register using the QR code at the left or at https://dioscg.formstack.com/forms/lentenlockin
JOPLIN ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS AWARDED

Members of the St. Peter the Apostle Knights of Columbus Fr. Harter Council 979 attended the St. Peter Middle School/McAuley Catholic High School weekly Mass on Thu., Jan. 26, to present awards to the winners of the Knights of Columbus essay contest. Students wrote on the topic, “How Can Young Catholics Evangelize Our Faith to Family and Friends.”

ESSAY WINNERS—Grand Knight Mike Gordon (left), Greg Emory (right) and Fr. Brian Straus presented Margaret Kramer (2nd place), Olivia Parrigon (3rd place), and Riley Sears (1st place) with a check for their winnings.

(Submitted photo)
t its source Trinitarian, the Church is the oneness of the Father and the Son opened up to believers in the Spirit. Beginning in the Upper Room with Jesus’s prayer to his Father, the Church leads us simply to follow what began there that night — what we’ve called the mission for glory.

Tracing that mystery from another perspective, it must be noted that the Church is more than what can be traced geographically, and more than what can be described interpersonally and personally. Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome, but clearly the Church is bigger than that — immeasurably bigger.

The Church, to put it a certain way, can also be described cosmically. That is, not only is the Church spread across the globe, and not only does the Church exist as the faith and joy shared between reborn believers, but the Church mysteriously encompasses creation itself — all of it. The Church is communion in Christ, who is the creating and redeeming Word (Logos) through which “all things” came to be (Jn 1:3). The word for “fullness” is pleroma, a quite charged term in early theological debates, for instance, in St. Irenaeus’s debates with various Gnostic thinkers. In one sense it means the fullness of God; in Jesus, for instance, the “fullness” of God dwells (Col 1:19). That is, Christ is fully God. Yet God is the fullness of all things. That is, God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists. Thus, Christ is the pleroma of all things, and the Church shares in Christ’s pleroma.

Which is what I mean by cosmic, that the Church bears witness to the universal dominion of Jesus Christ.

This isn’t merely hyperbole. To understand the claims being made in Ephesians, it’s helpful to remember here how the ancients viewed the political and religious world. Politics in the ancient world was thought to be a sacred, semi-divine art. The emperor’s person was considered sacred and semi-divine, and so too the state. Also the natural world, again to the ancient mind, was sacred and semi-divine, controlled by supernatural powers both good and evil, and also by fate. For ancient minds, the world and the universe was terrifyingly enchanted. So, what Ephesians is saying is that believers, whose hearts have been enlightened, knowing that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father as both Lord of the Church and Lord of the world, of even the entire created universe, know personally a power greater than all other powers and authorities and dominions either political, angelic or demonic.

They know that Christ is Lord over all of it, the same Lord in whom they live by the Spirit in the communion of the Church.

And think how liberating that is, especially for marginalized or peasant believers. It means that — believing Jesus is truly Lord over all things, the same Lord in whom believers now live and he in them (Gal 2:20) — one needn’t any longer fear the frightening powers of the world, political or demonic or otherwise. Even fickle fate is humbled by the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s easy to see here why the Christian message was so attractive to the marginalized. It’s easy to see why
Christianity was considered subversive in the early centuries of the Church. If the Roman emperor is the semi-divine embodiment of the sacred power of the state, what does it mean for Christians to say, “No, actually Jesus is Lord”? You see the problem from the Roman point of view? This is why the early Church had so many martyrs. Imagine a young woman in late antiquity, for instance, coming to believe in Christ. Joining the Church, she decides to wed herself to Christ, embracing lifelong virginity. Immediately she’s done two quite dangerous things. First, she’s denoted the sacredness of the Roman state and the Roman emperor, thus becoming a political outcast. Second, by embracing a life of virginity, she’s rejected the patriarchy of Roman society, patriarchy more lethal and powerful than anything ever even thought of in Christian society. The father, the pater familias, wielded power of life and death over his children. And so, for a young woman to embrace virginity was an explicit rejection of the claims both of her father and society. This is why Christianity in these early centuries was considered by many a dangerous anti-family movement. Because, recognizing Jesus as Lord, Christians refused to recognize any other.

Christianity relativized all earthly authority and all earthly relationships — political, patriarchal, and so on — and so, it’s easy to see how this rustic Palestinian religion appealed to those oppressed in such a society. Christianity appealed first to the poor and the marginalized precisely because at the center of the Christian message is the story a powerless man who died on a cross but who also was raised above all powers, thus becoming a political outcast. Second, by embracing a life of virginity, she’s rejected the patriarchy of Roman society, patriarchy more lethal and powerful than anything ever even thought of in Christian society. The father, the pater familias, wielded power of life and death over his children. And so, for a young woman to embrace virginity was an explicit rejection of the claims both of her father and society. This is why Christianity in these early centuries was considered by many a dangerous anti-family movement. Because, recognizing Jesus as Lord, Christians refused to recognize any other.

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 11: The Church Cosmic” by Fr. Whitfield is from simplycatholic.com, copyright © Our Sunday Visitor; all rights reserved, no other use of this material is authorized.
World Mission Sunday: October 23, 2022

In 1926, Pope Pius XI instituted Mission Sunday for the whole Church throughout the world to publicly renew its commitment to the missionary movement, coordinated by the Pontifical Mission Societies. The Mission Sunday collection is always taken on the next-to-last Sunday during the month of October, and celebrated as a feast of catholicity and universal solidarity so that Christians all of the world will recognize their common responsibility to evangelize the world.

“The people of our diocese were very generous, again, with this collection,” said Fr. Glenn Eftink, diocesan Director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

In 2023, World Mission Sunday will be Oct. 22.

Please find below the final report on the recent diocesan World Mission Sunday collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocesan World Mission Sunday Report 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advance, St. Joseph</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aurora, Holy Trinity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ava, St. Leo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benton, St. Denis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Billings, St. Joseph</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bolivar, Sacred Heart</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Branson, Our Lady of the Lake</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo, St. William</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bunker, Christ the King</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cabool, St. Michael</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cape Girardeau, Old St. Vincent</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cape Girardeau, St. Mary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cape Girardeau, St. Vincent</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Carthage, St. Ann</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caruthersville, Sacred Heart</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cassville, St. Edward</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chaffee, St. Ambrose</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Charleston, St. Henry</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conway, Sacred Heart</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dexter, Sacred Heart</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doniphan, St. Benedict</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Dorado Springs, St. Elizabeth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eminence, St. Sylvester</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forsyth, Our Lady of the Ozarks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fredericktown, St. Michael</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gainesville, St. William</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glenon, St. Anthony</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glenonnville, St. Teresa</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greenfield, St. Patrick</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Houston, St. Mark</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Humansville, St. Catherine**</td>
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| Pulaskifield, SS. Peter & Paul**          | **269.00**   |
| **Jackson, Immaculate Conception**       | **2,959.00** |
| **Joplin, St. Mary**                     | **3,405.00** |
| **Joplin, St. Peter**                    | **2,055.00** |
| **Kelso, St. Augustine**                 | **1,300.00** |
| **Kennett, St. Cecilia**                 | **68.00**    |
| **Kimberling City, Our Lady of Cove**    | **831.00**   |
| **Lamar, St. Mary**                      | **279.27**   |
| **Lebanon, St. Francis de Sales**        | **846.00**   |
| **Leopold, St. John**                    | **1,014.25** |
| **Lesterville, Our Lady of Sorrows**     | **55.00**    |
| **Licking, St. John the Baptist**        | **280.00**   |
| **Malden, St. Ann**                      | **145.00**   |
| **Mansfield, Immaculate Heart of M**     | **150.50**   |
| **Marshallfield, Holy Trinity**          | **1,143.48** |
| **Monett, St. Lawrence**                 | **1,632.56** |
| **Montauk, St. Jude Chapel**             | **0.00**     |
| **Mount Vernon, St. Susanne**            | **612.00**   |
| **Mountain Grove, Sacred Heart**         | **161.00**   |
| **Mountain View, St. John Vianney**      | **119.00**   |
| **Neosho, St. Canara**                   | **1,034.05** |
| **New Hamburg, St. Lawrence**            | **482.00**   |
| **New Madrid, Immaculate Conception**    | **819.00**   |
| **Nixa, St. Francis of Assisi**          | **750.00**   |
| **Noel, Nativity of Our Lord**           | **0.00**     |
| **Oran, Guardian Angel**                 | **710.00**   |
| **Ozark, St. Joseph the Worker**         | **500.00**   |
| **Piedmont, St. Catherine**              | **212.60**   |
| **Pierce City, St. Mary**                | **242.00**   |
| **Portageville, St. Eustachius**         | **455.00**   |
| **Robby, St. Vincent**                   | **161.00**   |
| **Sacred Heart**                         | **35.00**    |
| **Sales, Sacred Heart**                  | **358.00**   |
| **Sarcozie, St. Agnes**                  | **665.00**   |
| **Scott City, St. Joseph**               | **240.00**   |
| **Seneca, St. Mary**                     | **189.00**   |
| **Shell Knob, Holy Family**              | **383.81**   |
| **Sikeston, St. Francis Xavier**         | **1,750.00** |
| **Springfield, Holy Trinity**            | **1,483.00** |
| **Springfield, Immaculate Conception**   | **2,347.26** |
| **Springfield, Sacred Heart**            | **861.05**   |
| **Springfield, St. Agnes**               | **914.00**   |
| **Springfield, St. Eliz. Ann Seton**     | **2,894.50** |
| **Springfield, St. Joseph**              | **1,609.62** |
| **Springfield: Campus Ministry**         | **166.32**   |
| **Stockton, St. Peter**                  | **370.00**   |
| **Thayer, Sacred Heart**                 | **205.00**   |
| **Van Buren, St. George**                | **445.00**   |
| **Verona, Sacred Heart**                 | **924.00**   |
| **Webb City, Sacred Heart**              | **997.05**   |
| **West Plains, St. Mary**                | **498.50**   |
| **White Church, St. Joseph**             | **320.00**   |
| **Williamsville, Our Lady of Sorrows**   | **13.00**    |
| **Willow Springs, Sacred Heart**         | **800.00**   |

| **Total** | **$61,040.49** |


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February 3, 2023
The keynote speaker, Krista Corbello, spoke about a particular organization that is very close to her heart. Krista is not only a Catholic pro-life speaker and songwriter, she also has a personal experience with the effects of abortion in her own family. During her presentation, she shared the powerful story of how she came to found Even This Way, an outreach for those who, like Krista, had parents that were abortion-vulnerable or those who had lost a sibling to abortion.

Corbello was incredibly engaging and involved the attendees in her presentation, using volunteers to help explain the logical defense for the humanity of unborn children in the womb. By using the acronym SLED, Corbello gave the audience a useful resource for helping to combat the idea that we can discriminate against or minimize the worth of a human being based on any of these four commonly purported characteristics: Size, Level of development, Environment, and Degree of dependency.

**Historical clemency**

The second speaker, Academic Program Director of SLU, Fr. Matthew Baugh, SJ, began his talk by referencing the groundbreaking visit of Pope St. John Paul II to St. Louis on Jan. 26, 1999. During this whirlwind 31-hour visit, Pope John Paul II met with Missouri’s then-Gov. Mel Carnahan to discuss the sentencing of convicted murderer, Darrel J. Mease, a man scheduled to be executed on Feb. 10, 1999.

Citing a personal plea by the Pope, Carnahan commuted Mease’s death sentence to life without parole the next day. During his visit, the Pontiff called on Catholics to be “unconditionally pro-life,” a stance in which he included opposition to the death penalty.

“Modern society has the means of protecting itself without definitively denying criminal the chance to reform,” the Pope said.

This was a truly historical moment, as it was the only time clemency from the death penalty was granted in the US due to influence from a religious figure. Jesuit Fr. Baugh, SJ, then spoke further about the Catholic Church’s teaching on the death penalty, creating a throughline for participants, showing that as the pro-life generation, we must aim to protect all life—from conception to natural death.

The third speaker, Dr. Hank Clever, shared a very moving testimony of mercy, forgiveness, hope, and perseverance through his personal experience with capital punishment. Dr. Clever bravely told the story of how his wife’s life was taken, and how he found himself playing the deciding role in the perpetrator’s sentencing amid a plea deal. Would he decide that his wife’s murderer receive a life sentence in prison, or be subjected to the death penalty?

With each talk, there was stillness and attentive silence as the attendees carefully listened to the stories, imagining what it could be like to be in such impossible situations. Krista, Fr. Baugh, SJ, and Dr. Clever gave the audience new perspectives on pro-life issues across the board, leaving them with much to consider and learn.

**Personal witness**

Following the keynotes, three students shared their testimonies, resulting in a well-rounded panel of topics that were covered throughout the day. Two of the testimonies noted the inhumane conditions for immigrants at the US-Mexico border and how we must strive to see Christ in them, always remembering to treat them with respect to the inherent dignity bestowed on all human beings by our Creator. From these talks, there were a number of small group discussion questions designed to help students consider how they can make a difference in their parish, in their school, and in their larger communities.

Overall, Generation Life was a very fruitful experience for young people. It was affordable, age-appropriate, engaging, and attendees from the diocese said they can’t wait to go to Generation Life again next year, which will again be held in St. Louis! If you’re interested in attending or bringing a youth group to future pro-life events in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, visit the Respect Life Office Webpage to stay up to date, www.DioSCG.org/respect-life.

**MARDI GRAS Ball for Life**

**34TH ANNUAL JACK FROST 5K RUN & 2.5K WALK**

Saturday, February 25th on the Missouri State University Campus

Race Time 9:00AM
Packet pickup 8:00-8:45AM
OR early packet pickup Friday 4-6PM

T-SHIRT AND FINISHING MEDAL FOR ALL WHO REGISTER, PLUS GOLD MEDALS FOR TOP MALE & FEMALE OVERALL AND EACH ACE CATEGORY!

Register at ccm847.org/jack-frost-5k $40 - Early registration before day of race $45 - Day of race $20 - Student $20 - Group pricing for 10+ (families, churches, families, etc.)

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The Mirror

know about 12 different languages, but I currently hold a PhD in Classics, Latin, and Greek, at the University of Texas, Austin. Having been a member of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI), San Antonio, TX for 10 years, I taught Latin, French, and German to students in Incarnate Word High School, San Antonio, and one year teaching Latin and French in Incarnate Word Academy, St. Louis. After this, I was sent to Ireland to be the Director of Incarnate Word College in Galway. There, I taught the entire French program, all six levels, for four years. Following this, I was sent back to San Antonio and taught French and Latin for four years in the Incarnate Word High School.

At that time, I was asked to obtain a Doctorate Degree and began to study for a PhD in Classics, Latin, and Greek, at the University of Texas, Austin. Having finished the Latin division early, I picked up Hebrew for diversion. I currently know about 12 different languages, but my real passion is music!


How did you know you were called to be a religious sister? In Kells Convent Boarding School, the students used to play basketball every Saturday afternoon after all the “boring” subjects were complete. I enjoyed playing basketball, I was the tallest girl and a pretty good player. One day, we had two different groups of nuns visit the school. Of course, they came during basketball time, so I did not feel very welcome toward them. As I recall, I was very angry about the timing of their visit. After their departure, my sister and I discussed the visit. My sister said she liked the “blue” ones so I felt obliged to select the opposite group and declared I liked the “red” ones, even though I had not really heard a word they had said because of my anger at missing my basketball game. The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the Red Scapular Sisters, came back again the next day, on Sunday. I heard their message this time, and I knew, ‘This is it, this is my calling.’ In other words, just like the disciples, I visited the school. Of course, they came during basketball time, so I did not feel very welcoming toward them. As I recall, I was very angry about the timing of their visit. After their departure, my sister and I discussed the visit. My sister said she liked the “blue” ones so I felt obliged to select the opposite group and declared I liked the “red” ones, even though I had not really heard a word they had said because of my anger at missing my basketball game. The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the Red Scapular Sisters, came back again the next day, on Sunday. I heard their message this time, and I knew, ‘This is it, this is my calling.’ In other words, just like the disciples, I left my “net” to follow Him!

What was your journey to find and choose your religious order? What is its charism? The Holy spirit guided me to the Kells Convent School where Mother Gertrude was a big influence on me. I loved her, she taught French at the school. It was through observing her humanity that I was able to see and know I, too, could be a nun, even with my imperfections. I saw Sr. Gertrude get angry, and I thought, if she can get angry, then I can be a Sister too!

Our charism is to translate the love of God into today’s world, showing it, making it real through one’s actions. The mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) is a life-long commitment that leads us to make the love of the Incarnate Word a reality in the ordinary events of daily life.

Who were the most influential persons as you became a Sister? Where did you find support? My parents, John and Mary Julia Nugent, were very influential in my life. I especially credit my father, whom I adored, for helping me. I knew at seven years old that God was God. He was real to me through the example of my father. I went to Holy Thursday Adoration with my dad, and watching my father pray, I knew God was real. My father translated God and faith into everyday life. I grew up in a house of prayer, we never missed Mass, and the Rosary was the last prayer my family recited every evening. Our house was a neighborhood social center, with our door always open. My family was my support as I followed my calling. I am one of 13 cousins who chose to be religious. It was just a part of my family to be called to and to respond as a religious sister, priest, or religious brother.

How has your faith evolved over the years? My prayer life has become ever more vibrant. My prayer life is my relationship with God, and it means everything to me. In my commitment to God, there is only one party who messes up and goes wrong, occasionally! Perhaps religious life is easier in a sense than married life, where two parties are fullblile! I know I have never had second thoughts about my calling to be a Sister.

What do you consider the most rewarding part of your life as a consecrated religious? The most rewarding part of my life as a consecrated religious is being a presence of God to people: affirming people, helping them recognize how wonderful life is, and what wonderful gifts we all have been given.

What is your greatest enjoyment for this jubilee year? The jubilarian celebration Mass and reception in Holy Trinity Parish, Springfield, on Aug. 18, 2022, with Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht as the main celebrant for the Mass! Pastor Fr. Patrick Nwoyoye was ecstatically happy that so many attended the Mass and reception. He had everything planned, and I am so grateful to him.

What is the biggest change that you’ve seen in your lifetime or would like to see in the Church with regard to your vocation and the ministry(ies) in which you have served her people? Our life of prayer must be vibrant and alive so children know God growing up! Families are so important for faith. Also, every Church should have a goal of “producing” at least one servant of God from their parish.

Of course, we would like to see/ hear what you’ve been doing recently—and what work do you do for our diocese? I retired this summer from MSU after 30 years. Fr. Patrick, pastor of Holy Trinity, has me lined up for a series of lectures for this fall, so I anticipate I will stay busy giving lectures and presentations in local parishes. Before my retirement, the 30 years at MSU were so rewarding. Every day was an utter joy. I taught the Biblical Languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and the medical students, and had the time of my life. I considered my time at MSU as my foreign mission experience, and I am so grateful for the Providence of God which led me to the Ozarks!
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Each Lent, Bishop Edward Rice issues a special invitation to all children of the diocese to join him in a collaborative work of mercy. Donations are collected and moments of prayer are offered in the Catholic Schools and Parish Schools of Religion to help the poor, the marginalized, or those in need of special assistance during a time of crisis in their life.

Stockton Area Ministerial Alliance
Food Pantry & Benevolence Fund

SAMA’s Food Pantry feeds an average of 150 families per month. More families are reached when donations are increased. The Benevolence Fund provides resources such as gas vouchers, utility assistance, and backpacks for school. The fund directly benefits the community.

What is a benevolence fund? Benevolence funds are established with the purpose of caring and providing for members of a community in need. SAMA also runs a self-sustaining all volunteer-staffed Thrift Store that contributes all of its profits to the Benevolence Fund.

To learn more about the 2023 Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy, scan the QR code with your phone camera, or visit www.DioSCG.org/faith-formation/lymm-2023

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