Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) began construction Feb. 8 at the site of the future LifeHouse Cape Girardeau, which will serve homeless pregnant women of southeastern Missouri over the age of 18, along with their young children under the age of five, and their newborn babies. Modeled after the original LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Springfield, MO, this LifeHouse, located at 535 Main Street in Cape Girardeau, is scheduled to begin receiving clients in early 2024.

"Through this brick and mortar presence, the love of Christ will remain evident every day, with every service provided, every hand held, and with every heart led toward healing," said Ken Palermo, CCSOMO Executive Director. "Thank you for your generous consideration and prayers as LifeHouse Cape enters this very exciting phase." LifeHouse Cape Girardeau will meet an urgent need identified by local concerned residents. This new CCSOMO program will provide the region and its clients with a 24/7 residential transitional housing program that supports the birth of healthy babies and assists mothers, and fathers, when involved, to achieve lives of self-sufficiency and independence. Women enrolled into the LifeHouse program can expect safe shelter and food, comprehensive individualized case management, counseling, access to prenatal and post-delivery care, and general health education. Residents will also be able focus on self-sufficiency through participation in parenting, budgeting, nutrition, and literacy classes. Also, residents who have not completed high school will be encouraged to obtain their GED or HiSet credential. Case management, nurse education, and counseling are also provided as residents secure housing and transition to the LifeHouse AfterCare program and brighter lives founded upon long-term self-sufficiency.

LifeHouse Cape Girardeau is the outcome of countless supporters in the Heartland who wanted to meet the needs of this population, which a feasibility study determined to be substantial. "Years of planning, discussions, relationship-building, and problem-solving have led us to this moment of watching those plans rise from the ground," Palermo said.

CCSOMO and Heartland leaders began raising money for the project in 2021. Originally budgeted at $6.0 million, a successful capital fundraising campaign, along with the generous support of the Mabee Foundation, the Children’s Trust Fund, American Home Loan, and 958 private donors, have made it possible to bring this vital service to the region.

"The love of Christ, through the vision offered by Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, along with the generosity of many, will help the vulnerable women and children in need who will reside here soon," said Palermo.
The Cross is the greatest sign of love

“Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return!”

Lent is right around the corner, and as we anticipate Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, it’s good to have a plan on how you want your Lent to unfold. The traditional areas of prayer, fasting, and charity are the pillars of the 40 days, but what is the foundation of Lent? I would ask you to see the upcoming 40 days as an invitation to a deeper foundation of love culminating in the greatest sign of love—the Cross!

I’ve often preached that of all the words we can use to describe what we see gazing on a crucifix—be it suffering, pain, sacrifice—if we do not understand the Cross in terms of love, then we have failed to proclaim the Good News! Therefore, any prayer, fasting or charity should be an expression of that love of Christ on the Cross. Any prayer I may choose during Lent: additional Masses during the week, Friday Stations of the Cross, the family rosary, or time committed to Scripture reading or Adoration, should all flow from and lead to a greater love of Jesus. If it is looked upon as a burden and not an opportunity, such is not the right attitude.

In fasting, “giving up” favorite foods, TV or social media, or consumerism, the goal should be a more authentic love of Christ shown toward the neighbor in need. This year, the Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy will support the Stockton Area Ministerial Alliance (SAMA), in Stockton, MO. In Cedar County, 18.5% of the population is below the poverty line, which is higher than the state average. Over 11% of that population are military veterans. I encourage adults to support the Rice Bowl Program and I ask all of our schools and PSR programs to support the Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy. But again: if this is looked upon as a burden and not an opportunity, such is not the right attitude.

**LENTEN REGULATIONS**

Please make note of the Lenten regulations. Catholics over 14 years of age are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent. On such days of abstinence, meat may not be used at all. Catholics over ages 18 to 60 years old are bound to the obligation of fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On these days, only one full meatless meal is allowed with two smaller, meatless snacks, sufficient to maintain strength, taken according to each one’s needs. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids are.

Looking ahead, I note that March 17, a Friday of Lent, is also St. Patrick’s Day, a day of celebration for all things Irish! If desired, I offer the faithful a dispensation for meat, requesting in its exchange the praying of the 5th Sorrowful decade of the Rosary, the Crucifixion, for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life for our diocese.

The Lenten Season invites us to a deeper walk with the Lord. By planning ahead and making practical decisions on how you want your Lent to unfold, you can take better advantage of this season. It is not 40 days to lose weight or get in better physical shape. It is not 40 days of guilt for not keeping resolutions. The ashes that will mark our foreheads on Ash Wednesday are a physical reminder that we are sinners in need of God’s mercy; we are frail, on a pilgrimage to our eternal home. The Cross, the symbol of total, unconditional love, awaits us at the end of our 40-day journey and ultimately the Cross will greet us at the end of life where we will share in the victory of life over death—all through the Cross, the greatest sign of love. It may sound odd, but I hope everyone has a “happy” Lent!

**ANOTHER WALK THROUGH: ‘WALKING TOGETHER’**

by Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht

Before his retirement in 2008 as the 5th 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.

**July 8, 1988**

After the liturgy, and before the discussion the bishops were to have on the AIDS crisis, Bishop John Sullivan of Kansas City-St. Joseph, wryly said, “I hope the only time bishops stand together is not just at the Gospel of the Mass.”

**July 22, 1988**

A little girl was delighted with her dog recently. “Look at him laugh,” she said. Actually, the dog was wagging his tail!

**August 5, 1988**

I was told recently by a fellow moaning over the stock market: “For losses on the stock market, the bulls and bears are not so much to blame as the bum steers.”

**August 19, 1988**

A friend of mine teaches mentally challenged adults. Recently she was trying to help several of them understand how to use a camera to take pictures. A young man asked a question to clarify one step in the process, and to encourage him the teacher said, “That’s a very good question!” He responded immediately, “What’s the very good answer?”
When it comes to planning a funeral, there seems to be an endless assortment of options that come into play, whether one is selecting music for the funeral Mass, the readings, the location of burial, among many other things. One option takes center stage, however, and it is the way that someone is buried.

Within the Catholic Church there are currently two accepted methods of burial, one being a traditional burial, and the other is cremation. While traditional burial is commonplace, the permission for Christians to utilize cremation was not given until recently in 1963. In relation to this change, the above question cites Catechism paragraph 2301, and it acknowledges that the Catholic Church does now permit cremation. However, when considering the option of cremation, a few things should be kept in mind.

First, the Church does still prefer traditional burial. This, though potentially the more expensive option, burial pays special esteem to the integrity of the human body. Our faith reminds us that the body still is an important part of who we are, even though death temporarily separates us from our spiritual soul. The Apostles Creed reminds us that, as Catholics, we believe in “the resurrection of the body,” in that we will be reunited with our body again in time, though not immediately upon death. This is actually very significant, because it speaks to the significance of the human body and its dignity and meaning as a part of our personal identity. The body is not a prison to be escaped, but rather an integral part of who we are—even in death—and the way that we treat the body, even after death, must reflect this reverence and dignity.

Second, the Church does allow for the use of cremation, when it is necessitated with sufficient reason due to “sanitary, economic, or social considerations,” should it conform with the wishes of the deceased as they had expressed them. Thus, if there is substantial financial hardship, for example, cremation can be the less expensive option, and could legitimately be chosen for that reason. If the use of cremation, however, is to explicitly deny the resurrection of the body, the importance and dignity of the human body, or even faith itself, according to the directives and norms of law within the Church, this may preclude the availability of a Christian funeral. In fact, one of the reasons that the prohibition of cremation has existed within the Church’s tradition for so long was that cremation itself stood as a pagan rejection of the teachings of the Christian faith with regard to the resurrection of the body. We must be careful to ensure that there is not even an implied disbelief in the teachings of the Church in our departure from this world.

Finally, if cremation is chosen, the remains must be treated exactly as a body would be cared for, both in the reverence due it and in its burial. Cremains must be laid to rest in a cemetery or columbarium, or another place designated for burial by the Church. Cremation cannot be chosen as an option to allow for the final disposition of the ashes to be in a private residence or home. The burial in a public, sacred place allows not just for individuals to remember the deceased in prayer, but also for the Christian community to pray for them, allowing for a constant and unending respect and care for the deceased, even as living situations change, from generation to generation. This also means that ashes produced by cremation are due the same care and respect as is the body.

Thus, the Church does “allow” cremation, for appropriately weighted reasons, if it will not provide an occasion for a denial of faith, or the resurrection of the body, or the goodness of the body. Even as the Church allows for this practice, it requires that the remains be treated with the same reverence and care due to a body that is separated from soul, even just for this short period of time.

Much of this information may also be found in the 2016 document, “Ad resurgendum cum Christo” (To Rise with Christ), which was written by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Father Belken is the Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor) of St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau, and the Lead Chaplain at Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau. He also serves the diocese as Associate Director of Worship & Liturgy and as an Associate Vocations Promotor.

CONGRATULATIONS

Deacon Joe Kurtenbach

Deacon Kurtenbach will celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the permanent diaconate on Mar. 31. Deacon Kurtenbach serves in Deanery 5.

Happy Anniversary, Deacon Kurtenbach!

CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Daniel Hirtz

Fr. Daniel Hirtz will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his priesthood ordination on Mar. 31. He serves as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Piedmont; St. George Mission Church, Van Buren; and Our Lady of Sorrows Mission Church, in Williamsville.

Happy Anniversary, Fr. Hirtz!

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Deacon Kurtenbach serves in Deanery 5.

Happy Anniversary, Deacon Kurtenbach!
Sr. Seraphia Mato, DSF  
Congregation of the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi

50th Jubilarian Anniversary

What is one of the first things that comes to mind as you reflect on your years of service to the Church and as a consecrated religious?

Gratitude ...God has blessed me to live so many years as a religious sister.

How did you know you were called to be a religious sister?

Jesus called me to be a religious sister at the age of 14. I vividly remember I had finished primary school and was filling out applications to choose what college I wanted to attend. I can remember “hearing” and knowing I was supposed to be a religious sister. I was sitting by a girl named Mary and I told her I was not going to college, I was going to become a sister. She looked at me and said, “Why not?”

What was your journey to find and choose your religious order?

I grew up in the Soviet Union, in Czechoslovakia. Strict communism prevented open Catholicism. I did not know where any convents were, or even any sisters! I wasn’t even certain what religious sisters did because I had never met any. My family found out there was a religious sister from a neighboring family. Through them, I was able to obtain an address and began writing to ask to join them. I remember praying and praying to Jesus to show me the way. My parents, Stefan and Helena, were supportive of my decision, we just didn’t know where to find convents or how to join. Through the letters and support of family and friends, I was able to join a convent and traveled from Czech to Slovakia to the convent of St. Francis of Assisi sisters. I was 15 years old.

Who were the most influential persons as you became a Sister? Where did you find support?

My parents were very supportive.

How has your faith evolved over the years?

It has become more. It has evolved over the years?

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is seeking candidates for a new position, Director of Advancement.

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, a growing, faith-based, nonprofit social services agency, seeks a Director of Advancement to successfully create, execute, and manage a comprehensive fund development strategy for the agency. This position is responsible for the strategic process and team of professionals that advance mission-appropriate stakeholder relations and an agency-wide culture of philanthropy through the integration of fundraising, marketing and communications, volunteerism, and parish relations.

TO LEARN MORE about this open position or TO APPLY, scan the QR code or go to: morancompany.com/director-of-advancement-catholic-charities-southern-missouri/
St. Joseph Catholic Academy seeks FULL-TIME SCHOOL SECRETARY

St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Springfield, MO is accepting applications for a full-time school secretary. St. Joseph is a small, diverse school with a family-type atmosphere where all are expected to work hard to provide the very best for our students and families. Applicants must exhibit the following characteristics: Christ-like behaviors, have a positive attitude, work collaboratively with the principal, have excellent verbal and written communication skills. Applicants should be proficient in the following skills: Microsoft Office programs, Google Suite, graphic design (fliers and bulletins), and basic office skills. Catholics preferred. Bilingual skills are preferred but not necessary. Interested applicants can send their resume and cover letter to Angela Stevens at astevens@stjosephcatholicacademy.org or call (417) 866-0667 for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Aurora—The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) of Holy Trinity Parish will hold its Annual Rummage/Bake Sale inside the gymnasium on Sat., Mar. 11, 7 a.m.-12 noon. Come and shop for the many treasures and buy a variety of delicious baked goods.

Belleville, IL—The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows will offer a four-part scripture study series entitled, “The Day Jesus Died: The Passion Narratives” on the following Saturdays: Mar. 11, Mar. 18, Mar. 25, and April 1 at the Shrine Visitors Center. The presenter will be Mark Etling, PhD, an adjunct professor at the School for Professional Studies, St. Louis University. This four-part series will take a closer look at the Passion narratives in each of the four Gospels. Information and registration is available at https://snows.org/ministries/spiritual-programs/ or call the Shrine at (618) 394-6281.

Cape Girardeau—St. Mary Catholic will host an area wide Holy Hour for Vocations, Mon., Mar. 13, 7-8 p.m. This will be a quiet time of prayer for those discerning vocations and for an increase in vocations. All are invited to attend.

Cape Girardeau—In conjunction with the American Academy of Dermatology’s SPOT® screening program, Saint Francis Healthcare System will offer free skin cancer screenings on Sat., April 1, 8 a.m.-noon, at Cape Radiation Oncology, located at Entrance 6 of Saint Francis Medical Center. An appointment is required: to schedule, call (573) 331-5784.

New Hamburg, Deanery 6—The Council of Catholic Women will have a March Retreat and business meeting, Sat., March 18, at St. Lawrence Church, New Hamburg. Mass will be at 8 a.m., followed by registration and breakfast at 9 a.m. Featured speaker is Nicole Alcock, a member of St. Mary Cathedral and a Lay Oblate with the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles. A business meeting will follow the presentation and will end with a rosary at the church grotto. For more information, please contact Ruth Ann Hester at (573) 270-4844.

Salem—The Altar and Rosary Society will hold its annual dinner and basket fundraiser on Sat., April 29 at Sacred Heart Parish. For more information, please contact the parish at (573) 729-4291.

Springfield—The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will hold the quarterly meeting for deaneries 3 & 4 on Thu., Mar. 2, 9 a.m., in St. Joseph Church, located at 1115 N. Campbell Ave. The gathering will begin with a continental breakfast, followed by a business meeting, Mass, and end with lunch and entertainment. All women in deaneries 3 & 4 are encouraged to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Therese Kral at (417) 766-1453 or the26rese@aol.com.

Springfield—SAVE THE DATE: St. Bernardette’s Guild will hold a Day of Inspiration, Sat., April 01 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, located at 2200 W. Republic Rd.

Springfield—Springfield Area Perpetual Adoration, hosted at Holy Trinity Chapel, has an urgent need of Adorers: Wed., 2 a.m. & 3 a.m., and Sat., 1 a.m. Substitutes are needed for all hours, please consider joining our substitute list to experience the peace of adoration. For more information or to sign up, please contact Marilyn Gibson at (417) 224-4043.

Springfield—Immaculate Conception PCCW will host a Lenten Retreat, Sat., March 25, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Sr. Pauline Nugent, CCVI will be the speaker. A continental breakfast will be served at 9 a.m.; Sr. Pauline’s presentation will follow at 9:45 a.m. The retreat is open to all women of the diocese. For more information or to register, please call the church at (417) 887-0600.

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

T o belong to the Church is to belong to a communion the measure of which is nothing less than the whole of creation — the Church cosmic. And belonging to the Church opens up a new moral horizon. To believe in Christ and belong to the Church doesn’t just change the way one views history and the universe, it changes one’s understanding of moral possibility. It changes the way believers see themselves and other people — the good and the purpose of people.

As Paul said, each believer’s life is “hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3). That is, there’s a truth about each believer that is not visible but which is discerned only in faith. And the ethical change this effects is that now believers must measure their behavior in terms of heaven — our destiny as God’s children. When a believer genuinely realizes that his or her life is hidden with Christ in God — that Christ is to belong to each other, which is to belong to the apostolic Church, an actual, tangible body of people discernible throughout history. The Church is not some abstract paradigm or disembodied ethic. Rather, it’s an organic communion of believers in Christ constituted by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We can reach out and touch it; we can see the Church. It’s not just an idea. This is an essential claim of Catholicism.

Next Edition: What We Believe, Part 13: The Church Moral

What is the task of Christian people? To be one. How do we do that? By being like Christ to one another. Forsake rivalry, be humble, count others more important than yourself. Such humility, patterned on Christ, was something utterly new in moral thinking. Aristotle would’ve considered what Paul is recommending simply a form of dishonesty. If one is a great man, Aristotle thought — and, by the way, only a man could be great in his mind — then one should acknowledge it and strive to be what he called “magnanimous.” Jesus, though, gave believers another model. He was indeed great — in the “form of God,” Paul said — but yet he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave (Phil 2:6-7). He lowered himself to serve and save others. And because of this — because he rose from the dead and is now exalted as Lord — now everyone can be great, not just Athenian men — even those deemed lowest, those on the farthest margins of society. This radically changed society. This new moral example — the example of Jesus Christ — inspired Christians to practice humility, which ideally is the ethic of all believers, of the entire Church, for it’s how believers remain one and how they show Christ to each other and to the world. They practice humility because they believe Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, because their moral horizon now extends well beyond earthly life.

And it’s a way of life that has consequences. As John made clear. “Do not be amazed if the world hates you,” he wrote (1 Jn 3:13). Jesus, of course, said the same thing (Jn 15:18-25). The way believers live their lives is at times radically different than the way others live theirs. And, just as the way Jesus lived his life convicted and provoked others, so too will believers sometimes convict and provoke the people around them. But that, of course, doesn’t ultimately matter; by no means does the hatred of the world destroy this new way of life lived by believers. Again, because believers know they’ve entered a new and very different world, even as they remain in the old world. Remember when Jesus said he was no longer in the world? (Jn 17:11). John put it in terms of death and life and hatred and love. “We know that we have passed from death to life,” he wrote, “because we love our brothers” (1 Jn 3:14). The ethical fruit of belonging to the Church — not just sacramentally, but morally, too — is mutual love, love that endures often alone in a world that’s forgotten love. To belong to the Church, to be one and to love each other is to experience the beginning of resurrection, eternal life, heaven. Again, we see here how the cosmic shapes the moral; passing from death to life, believers love differently — with an eternal perspective.

And again, notice the Church. As John said, this love is love for the “brothers.” Obviously, this includes women. The point is to notice that the love John is talking about isn’t some disembodied abstract love; it’s not mere feeling or attitude. The love John is talking about is fully ecclesial. That is, by love, John also means the communion of the Church. As Paul said, belonging to the “body of Christ” (another image of the Church), believers are “parts of one another” (Rom 12:5). To belong to the Church is to belong to each other, which is to belong to the apostolic Church, an actual, tangible body of people discernible throughout history. The Church is not some abstract paradigm or disembodied ethic. Rather, it’s an organic communion of believers in Christ constituted by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We can reach out and touch it; we can see the Church. It’s not just an idea. This is an essential claim of Catholicism.
Archery helps build stronger, more confident youth.

By Tim Huff

On Sat., Feb. 11, Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Jackson, hosted its 7th Annual Archery Invitational Tournament with 190 students participating from 10 schools in the region, including teams from four Catholic schools (Immaculate Conception - Jackson, St. Ambrose - Chaffee, St. Augustine - Kelso, and Notre Dame Regional High School - Cape Girardeau). Students from 4th grade through 12th grade competed as individuals and as teams. Students scored points during six rounds of target shooting from 10 meters and 15 meters.

“Archery is a great program for all students 4th-8th grade. It’s a life skill,” said Immaculate Conception archery coach Ellen Koeper. “I am so proud of our archers for doing so well in last week’s tournament.”

Twenty Immaculate Conception students from 4th through 8th grade participated in the tournament, and several scored among the top three for their grade. Several Immaculate Conception School students have now qualified for the state tournament in Branson in March.

The archery program at Immaculate Conception School began in 2014 and hosting the invitational tournament started in 2017. The tournament is part of the Missouri National Archery in the Schools (MoNASP) program, which is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation, and helps build stronger, more confident, and accomplished kids through archery. Since its beginning in 2007, MoNASP has grown to over 200,000 participating students throughout the state.

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Students from 4th-8th grade participated in the Feb. 11 Archery tournament held in Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Jackson. Several of them qualified for the March state tournament to held in Branson. (Photo by Tim Huff/The Mirror)
PALMS TO ASHES: A few things to know about Ash Wednesday

By Mark Pattison  Washington (OSV News)

Ash Wednesday is Feb. 22 this year. Here are some things to know about Ash Wednesday and the kickoff to Lent:

In the Table of Liturgical Days, which ranks the different liturgical celebrations and seasons, Ash Wednesday ties for second in ranking -- along with Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, and a few others. But Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, though it is a day of prayer, abstinence, fasting, and repentance.

Top ranked in the table are the Paschal Triduum -- the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil -- along with Easter Sunday. Good Friday isn't a holy day of obligation either, but Catholics are encouraged to attend church for a liturgy commemorating Christ's crucifixion and death.

Ash Wednesday begins the liturgical season of Lent. There are hymns that speak to the length of the season -- one of them is "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" -- but the span between Feb. 22 and Easter is 46 days. So what gives?

"It might be more accurate to say that there is the 40-day fast within Lent," said Fr. Randy Stice, of the associate director of the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship from 2017-2020.

"Historically, Lent has varied from a week to three weeks to the present configuration of 46 days," Fr. Stice said. "The 40-day fast, however, has been more stable. The Sundays of Lent are certainly part of the time of Lent, but they are not prescribed days of fast and abstinence." There are six Sundays in Lent, including Passion Sunday.

The ashes used for Ash Wednesday are made from the burned and blessed palms of the previous year's Palm Sunday.

"The palms are burned in a metal vessel and then broken down into a powder. I believe ashes can also be purchased from Catholic supply companies," Fr. Stice said.

"As far as I know, palms from the previous year are always dry enough," he added. "Parishes normally ask parishioners to bring their palms shortly before Ash Wednesday, so there is no need to store them. People usually like to keep the blessed palm as long as possible."

Almost half of adult Catholics, 45 percent, typically receive ashes at Ash Wednesday services, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. You might not have noticed, but the use of the word "Alleluia" is verboten during Lent. What is known as the "Alleluia verse" preceding the Gospel becomes known during Lent as "the verse before the Gospel," with a variety of possible phrases to be used -- none of which include an alleluia.

"The alleluia was known for its melodic richness and in the early church was considered to ornament the liturgy in a special way," Fr. Stice said, adding it was banned from Lenten Masses in the fifth century.

Ash Wednesday also is a day of abstinence and fasting; Good Friday is another. Abstinence means refraining from eating meat; fish is OK. Fasting means reducing one's intake of food, like eating two small meals that together would not equal one full meal.

NEW TRANSLATION TWEAKS TO SACRAMENT OF PENANCE TAKE EFFECT THIS LENT

Washington (OSV News)

Beginning Ash Wednesday, this year on Feb. 22, the experience of the sacrament of penance in the Roman rite will be slightly different, thanks to three recently approved modifications in the English translation set to come into effect. While most faithful will not notice the minor revisions to the Prayer of Absolution, the edits continue efforts throughout Church history to ensure the accuracy of liturgical text translations from the Latin.

The revised version states: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Other recent new English translations of Roman rite liturgical books have been completed for the missal (2011), confirmation (2015), matrimony (2016), exorcism (2017), the dedication of a church (2018), the blessing of oils (2019), the baptism of children (2020), and ordination (2021). ©OSV News

ASHES - A bowl of ashes from burned palms await distribution during an Ash Wednesday liturgy. (OSV News photo/CNS file, Bob Roller)
FORCE AND SUFFERING:
Suggestions for Lenten reading

By Kenneth Craycraft

“Put your sword back into its sheath,” Jesus rebuked a disciple in the Garden of Gethsemane. “Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me … with … legions of angels?” (Mt 26:52-53) But the kingdom that Christ came to establish would not be inaugurated by suffering and paradox of Christianity, the kingdom would not be initiated by force. Rather, in a central that Christ came to establish would not

Christ eschewed the power of violent force, not simply because of its effect on the victim, but rather because of the corrosive effect of violence on the soul of the one who perpetrates it. This might be the framework for a program of Lenten reading and reflection, especially in a political culture so riven by violence and threats of violence.

Simone Weil’s classic 1939 essay The Iliad or the Poem of Force shows us how the human spirit is deformed by the force that it presumes to wield over others. First published in an English translation by Mary McCarthy in 1945, Weil’s essay explains how the Iliad demonstrates that the exercise of violent force exacts emotional and psychological violence on the perpetrator as much as the victim. No one really controls violent force, she explains. Rather, one is controlled by the force one presumes to brandish. As such, the violent will always be defeated by the violence they flaunt. Weil’s analysis of the Iliad is confirmation of the way of the desert, in which suffering -- not violence -- is the path of both the redeemer and the redeemed. “Only he who has measured the dominion of force, and knows how not to respect it,” writes Weil, “is capable of love and justice.” Put away your sword, indeed.

Evelyn Waugh’s novel Helena is in part an exercise in contrasting the soul-crushing result of wielding violence with the spirit-enriching effects of selfless service. Using considerable literary license, Waugh tells the story of St. Helen, mother of the fourth-century Roman emperor Constantine, and discoverer of the true cross of Christ. Waugh accounts for St. Helen’s triumphant expedition for the cross as the culmination of a life of quiet, painful suffering. Abandoned by her husband, Constantius Chlorus, and forced to witness her son Constantine’s descent into murderous madness, St. Helen’s triumph came only at the end of a life of sorrow and anguish. Waugh’s narrative of St. Helen’s patient suffering and quiet triumph is a sustaining guide through Lent.

The way of suffering in the face of violence is also illustrated in Shusaku Endo’s unforgettable novel Silence, a fictionalized account of the persecution of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries and their Christian converts in 16th-century Japan. The success of Endo’s novel is not found in triumph and happy resolution, but rather in spiritual struggle and moral ambiguity. Silence is a reminder that we may be called to suffer for our witness to the Gospel but that few of us ever have been. The life of Christian discipleship, while ordered toward a blessed resolution, is not devoid of sorrow. The road to joy may be the path of suffering. Endo’s “Silence” is a brilliant account of that paradox, and perfect Lenten reading.

Finally, perhaps no account of suffering is more acute than Oscar Wilde’s De Profundis, his classic letter from prison. As Wilde reminds us that suffering does not respect the season or the calendar. “Suffering is one very long moment,” he writes. “We cannot divide it by seasons. We can only record its moods, and chronicle their return. With us time itself does not progress. It revolves.” But “nothing in the world is meaningless,” Wilde continues, “and suffering least of all.” Rather, suffering reveals “something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field.” In Wilde’s case that hidden treasure was “Humility.” But De Profundis shows us that suffering can reveal our own particular faults and sins -- and maybe even purge them in the desert of Lent. @TM

Kenneth Craycraft is associate professor of moral theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary & School of Theology in Cincinnati. “Reclaiming the Time” appears monthly at OSV News.

CCM KNIGHTS PRAY 1,000 ROSARIES
Cape Girardeau—Responding to the challenge to Grow in Holiness and engage in some spiritual exercise, the St. Thomas Aquinas Knights of Columbus Council #15294 at the St. John Henry Newman Center on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, challenged its members to pray 1,000 rosaries by the end of the academic session. Launched on Oct. 9, the feast of St. John Henry Newman, Bishop Edward Rice led the Knights in praying the 1,000th rosary on Feb. 6, 2023. (The Mirror)
Letters to Bishop Rice outline youth plans for reaching heaven

By Paula Wright
Portageville, MO

This past summer, the youth group from St. Eustachius Parish, Portageville, attended the Steubenville Mid-America Youth Conference held on the campus of Missouri State University in Springfield. During his presentation at the conference, Bp. Edward M. Rice challenged the young participants to develop a plan to get themselves into Heaven. From this, and with a desire to confirm for Bp. Rice that they listened and heard his message, the youth group from St. Eustachius Parish responded back to Bishop Rice with personal, handwritten letters, outlining their individual plans.

“We wrote to Bishop to let him know we are listening to him, his messages are not falling on deaf ears,” shared Lynda Priggel, one of the Youth Leaders of St. Eustachius Parish. “We make plans for college, careers, and family; we need a plan for our eternal destination too.”

Priggel explained that the youth group met in small groups to discuss the question and to share ideas before each one wrote a letter to Bishop Rice. The youth were proud of their plans and excited to share them.

“I was surprised at how many times I heard, ‘I can’t wait to share this with _____!’ as they mentioned a parent, grandparent, teacher, or other Catholic influencers in their life,” Priggel said.

Bishop Rice responded to each letter received.

“The students were overwhelmed that he wrote to each one of them,” Priggel said, “They were so touched!”

The twenty-eight (28) individual letters to Bishop Rice offer inspiration for each one of us, they are encouraging and touching. They remind us to stop and check in on our own plan to reach Heaven, just to see how we are doing. Here is a list of activities mentioned in numerous plans:

• Attend Mass more often (and really participate, not just go through the motions)
• Go to confession regularly
• Go to Adoration and be focused
• Say daily prayers; pray more often to grow closer to God
• Spread and live the word of the Lord, spread the Gospel
• Take time for a daily reflection
• Read the bible more often
• Pray the rosary
• Encourage family and friends to grow in their faith; to grow in faith together and to hold each other accountable
• Attend Mass on Holy Days of Obligation
• Be more involved in my parish
• Treat everyone as a sibling in Christ
• Love and forgive others like God did
• Pray for others, especially those that make me upset
• Pray for people I don’t get along with
• Work on strengthening my relationship with God
• Trust in God
• Talk to God about my struggles
• Be more consistent in leading a holy life
• Invite non-Catholic friends to Mass and youth group
• To get baptized

So, as we approach Lent 2023: What is your plan to get into Heaven, and ... are you living it? <atm>
In the Gospels, Jesus typically requires an act of faith—something difficult—from anyone asking for healing. In the age of the Church, Jesus likewise asks of everyone a difficult act of faith—belief that at the command of the priest, bread and wine changes substance into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. It is as much a stumbling block today as it was for the crowds to whom Jesus and Divinity of Christ. It is as much a stumbling block today as it was for the crowds to whom Jesus spoke to in the Gospels.

Every Eucharist can be said to be miraculous. But not every Eucharist is miraculous in the full meaning of the term—namely power above nature. The bread and wine that has become the Body and Blood of Jesus still tastes, smells, and feels like bread and wine. But, there have been times when the Eucharist has been miraculous in the full meaning of the term.

In October of 2006, the pastor of the Parish of Saint Martin of Tours in Tixtla, in the diocese of Chilpancingo-Chilapa, Mexico, was celebrating Mass during an annual parish retreat. During the liturgy, as Fr. Leopoldo and another priest and a religious sister were distributing Holy Communion to the faithful, Fr. Leopoldo and another priest and a religious sister were distributing Holy Communion to the faithful, the priests informed the bishop.

Bishop Alejo Zavala Castro formed a theological commission to investigate the phenomenon, and to determine whether the host was supernatural or simply a hoax of some kind. Dr. Ricardo Castañón Gomez, who had also investigated the Buenos Aires miracle of 1996, led a team of scientists in an intensive study of the Host between 2009 and 2012. The study reported the following findings:

- The reddish substance "corresponds to blood in which there are hemoglobin and DNA of human origin."
- The blood type was found to be AB, which corresponds to the miracles at Buenos Aires and Lanciano, as well as traces found on the Shroud of Turin.
- Forensic experts found that the substance originates from the interior of the host, which would seem to discount the theory that it was somehow planted from outside.
- Part of the blood was found to have been coagulated since 2006, but further examination shows the presence of flesh blood from 2010.
- The blood contains intact white blood cells, red blood cells, and active macrophages that engulf lipids, indicating an active metabolism.
- The tissue seems to correspond to the muscle of the heart, the myocardium, as found in other Eucharistic miracles. Further, this was found to be living cardiac muscle. Normally after 48 hours, the tissue dies, but this case, three months had passed before the results could actually be obtained.

The study concluded that “the event has no natural explanation.”

On Oct. 12, 2013, Rev. Alejo Zavala Castro, Bishop of the Diocese of Chilpancingo-Chilapa, announced through a Pastoral Letter the recognition of the Eucharistic Miracle that occurred at Tixtla, on Oct. 21, 2006. In the letter we read: “This manifestation brings to us a marvelous sign of the love of God that confirms the Real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. ...In my role as Bishop of the Diocese, I recognize the supernatural character of the series of events relating to the Bleeding Host of Tixtla ... I declare the case as a 'Divine Sign'” (http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharist/mir/english_pdf/Tixtla2.pdf).

Eucharistic miracles are gifts from God to the unswerving Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Christ in every Eucharist. Eucharistic miracles serve to help people have faith in what they receive. It must be said that Eucharistic miracles are to be understood as being another way by which God signifies what it is we receive and it does so in a way which helps people believe that the Holy Spirit truly is at work with the Eucharistic species, transforming them so that they can present to us the sacramental presence and reality of Christ ©TM.
Answering the Call to a Sacred Ministry

The Catholic Church professes a consistent ethic of life. As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of all human life and are motivated by the love of Christ to improve the lives of the vulnerable. Currently, more than 14,000 children and youth are in foster care in Missouri, according to the Department of Social Services. On any given day, the National Foster Youth Institute reports there are approximately 400,000 children in foster care in the United States. The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls on all Christians to become involved in this ministry, as individuals, families, and a society:

“The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families, and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: ‘Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction...’” (2208, quoting James 1:27).

This issue of Messenger details stories about foster children, adoptive parents, and how you can embrace the call to care for some of our most vulnerable.
**God’s Timing**

Shelly Sconcé was sitting behind her desk at school when a staff email came across her screen. An emergency placement was needed for a sibling group within the South Callaway School District. Shelly texted her husband. Fostering children had been on their hearts previously, but the loss of their 17-year-old son in an icy Super Bowl Sunday car crash had put those plans on hold. Nearly two years later that tug on their hearts persisted, and it came to fruition when her phone lit up with a new message: “Let’s do it!”

The siblings were a group of four boys, ages 4, 9, 14, and 16. The staff email mentioned wanting to keep them together. “I see it as God’s way of telling me now is the time,” Shelly said. Having already raised three children, Shelly thought the process would be challenging, but similar. The math teacher, who loved following formulas, soon discovered it would take a new method to parent four boys who were not used to having rules or expectations.

More than 14,000 children and youth are currently in foster care in Missouri, according to the Department of Social Services (DSS). Caseworkers often add to their workload in order to meet the demand of children needing placement, which leads to a high turnover rate.

“Sadly, they don’t have enough people or time to sit down and hold your hand to get things done,” Shelly said. “It was trial by fire.”

Shelly found support groups on social media, which she said helped her navigate court appearances, visitations with biological parents, a child in rehab, and other unfamiliar territory. It was an emotional roller coaster for her, but also for the kids.

“You just have to work with them and ride the roller coaster with them,” she said.

Prior to placement, the boys had missed around 60 days of school. Teaching them routines, watching them thrive and develop aspirations have been a highlight for Shelly.

“That’s been really the most rewarding to see them really think about life so that they can be successful adults and break the cycle.”

Fostering doesn’t equal adoption. The goal is always reunification with biological parents whenever possible. In this case, the two oldest boys, now ages 17 and 20, were adopted by the Sconcé family. Due to having a different father, Shelly and her husband have legal guardianship over the youngest boys, now ages 7 and 12. She reminds us, life is messy and that’s okay.

“Don’t be afraid because there are kids that need love. And that’s all they want. They don’t want things. They just want love.”

She went on to say that even if foster children are only placed with you for a brief period of time, you can make an impression on them, create a safety net, and show them love.

“I think God put them into our heart to help grieve and deal with that loss,” Shelly explained. “They’re not perfect. We’re not perfect, but together, we’re pretty darn close.”

**The Sconcé Family**

“Don’t be afraid because there are kids that need love. And that’s all they want. They don’t want things. They just want love.”

—Shelly Sconcé, foster and adoptive mother
SILENT REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 19: 13-14

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, you saw in the innocence of children the attributes which make us worthy of heaven—trust, joy, humility, obedience, and faithfulness. Bless all children who are awaiting adoption. They seek love—may they find it in loving parents. They seek stability—may they find a home rooted in faith. They seek acceptance—may their gifts be recognized and nurtured. And may they always know your steadfast love for them and the true joy of loving you.

PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

Blessed St. Joseph, You welcomed the Christ Child into your home, provided for his daily needs, and helped him to grow in wisdom, age, and grace. Hear the prayers of all children who are awaiting a loving home, and intercede for them before your adopted Son and Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord.

St. Joseph, Guardian and Protector, pray for us.

Thomas

It was during October, Respect Life Month, that MCC staffer Heather Buechter first met Thomas. The 15-year-old has been in state custody for four years and has struggled to find a foster home that would take him. He has been separated from his three siblings. At the time, he was in a residential care facility, which helped him process his emotions. After all, losing your family, home, and everything you’ve known can be traumatizing. Despite all that, he was willing to chat with me about life. He likes candy, Halloween, crocheting, cross stitching, and sewing—he’s good with his hands. That could explain why he wants to be a neurologist when he’s older. He can make a lot of money and give some money away to people who need it, he tells me. Before that though, he hopes to get transferred to an individualized supported living (ISL) service. This will allow him back into a traditional high school setting. It also provides him transitional living in a place he can call home, with the benefit of staff assistance.

A Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) Public Policy Priority

Uphold and Strengthen Marriage and Family

Family is the basic cell of human society and the foundation of civilized life. Presently, the institutions of marriage and family are threatened by a culture that no longer values authentic marriage and stable families. The MCC will support legislation and funding for programs that encourage two-parent families and provide assistance to single parents and their children; promote responsible parenthood; assist victims of domestic violence; and help families who are poor or have children with health problems or disabilities.

“The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family.”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2210)
Have you ever wondered what the foster parent process looks like? Hear one mom's journey about feeling called to foster and eventually adopt a group of siblings. Shelly Sonce discusses the surprises and rewards of expanding her family in this episode of MCC from the Capitol.

Dr. Michael Meehan is the CEO of Marygrove, a child welfare agency near St. Louis that helps children, teens and young adults learn how to transcend an abusive past or overcome other life challenges and move toward a brighter future. He discusses how individuals and parishes can get involved in supporting youth and foster families, in this episode of MCC from the Capitol.

Volunteer

Contact your local Catholic Charities to learn more about specific volunteer services needed within their partner agencies.

Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer to work hands-on with foster youth.

Parish Support

Start a support system for foster families in your parish. Host a supplies drive, offer meals, respite care, or social support by creating a small group that meets regularly.

Get Involved

Learn about the efforts taking place in your community including:
- Good Shepherd Children & Family Services
- Marygrove
- The Central Missouri Foster and Adoption Association
- Lutheran Family and Children Services

Donate

Make a donation to agencies that provide foster care case management services or work with foster children.

Join the Missouri Catholic Advocacy Network! (MOCAN)

Join the 10,000+ Catholic Missourians who make up the team of advocates who help the Catholic voice ring through the halls of the Missouri State Capitol. If you want to stay updated on pro-family legislation — or any of the many other legislative priorities the MCC advocates for — you will not want to miss the opportunity to join MOCAN.

If you’re already a member, encourage your family, friends, and fellow parishioners to join! As MOCAN grows, so does the Catholic voice in Missouri’s Capitol. Visit mocatholic.org or send us an email at mocatholic@mocatholic.org for details.

Read and share the digital edition of this Messenger at mocatholic.org
NEW EPISODES OF MCC FROM THE CAPITOL PODCAST:

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https://mocatholic.org/news-and-events/mcc-podcast
MEMO TO GEN Z CATHOLICS: 
WHY VATICAN II IS STILL IMPORTANT

Mr. Adam Lucas, who is “newly married with a baby on the way” (mazel tov!) and “has a Master’s in Theology,” speaks for a depressing number of Gen Z Catholics when he writes on the Crisix Website that “the world of the 1960s is gone, and with it any real relevance of Vatican II.” The Council, he concludes, should just be ignored: “After all, aggiornamento demands it.”

This is so mind-numbingly wrongheaded that one hardly knows where to start in responding to it.

Mr. Lucas’s lament seems to be the result of a number of blogosphere contentions about the Council, ignited by two Ross Douthat op-eds in the New York Times. I hope I won’t be thought excessively self-referential, however, if I note that Mr. Lucas fails to mention my recent book, To Sanctify the World: The Vital Legacy of Vatican II, which is being read by large numbers of Gen Z seminarians and students. These men and women seem to find the book helpful in understanding why the Second Vatican Council was necessary, what it actually taught (wholly unremarked in Mr. Lucas’s article), and how it actually taught (wholly unremarked in Mr. Lucas’s article), and how

Ratzinger, in his Petrine ministries as Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. Perhaps Mr. Lucas should also have a go—and before that baby arrives, after which he will get very little sleep for a while.

But in case he doesn’t get around to the book, let me briefly outline why the Second Vatican Council, far from lacking “any real relevance” today, is utterly relevant to the chief contentions of the moment.

What is the bottom-line issue in the Catholic conflict over “synodality”? The bottom line, whether in Germany or in preparations for the World Synod of Bishops in October 2023, is whether divine revelation is real and has binding authority over time. The most vociferous proponents of “synodality,” like Cardinals Hollerich and McElroy, seem to think not; they imagine that our contemporary experience judges, and corrects, what we have been taught by Scripture and the Great Tradition of the Church. The Second Vatican Council’s, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” (“Dei Verbum”), robustly affirms that God has spoken into history, first to the People of Israel and then definitively in the person of the Incarnate Word. Do we know better than God about what makes for human flourishing and beatitude?

The Council says “No.” Score one for Vatican II.

What is the bottom-line issue in the culture war afflicting western culture across the globe? The bottom line is whether human beings are really just bundles of desires, all of which are morally equal and should be acknowledged as legitimate in the name of human rights. By contrast, the Second Vatican Council’s, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (“Gaudium et Spes”), taught that the truth about our humanity is revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. In Christ, we learn that we are creatures of a much nobler nature and destiny, and that self-giving, not self-assertion, is freedom lived in a truly human way. Score another one for Vatican II.

Where do we find answers to post-modernity’s quest for authentic human community? Wokery is a world of silos in which race-mania, “gender identity,” and “-isms” of all sorts are somehow supposed to foster living in solidarity. Second Vatican Council’s, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (“Lumen Gentium”), teaches that the Church, in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28) is the template (the “sacrament,” as the Council put it) of authentic human community, the experience of which can lead to building solidarity in society. Score yet another one for Vatican II.

How does the West rebuild the shattered foundations of its culture? The Second Vatican Council, as authentically interpreted by John Paul II and Benedict XVI, teaches that a great awakening to the truths on which our civilization was built will come through a New Evangelization, in which every Catholic (as affirmed by Lumen Gentium and by the Council’s “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” (“Apostolicam Actuositatem”) understands himself or herself to have been baptized into a missionary vocation, bringing others to friendship with Jesus Christ.

Game, set, and match to Vatican II. Dear Gen Z brethren: Please stop confusing the blogosphere with reality, and please read what the Second Vatican Council actually taught. You’ll find more “relevance” than you imagine — or that any of us can deploy in a lifetime.
The Catholic Church supports a criminal justice system in which the offender is held accountable, the victim receives support, and the community assists the offender in successfully re-entering society. The MCC will support meaningful reforms, such as allowing greater judicial discretion in criminal sentencing, along with reasonable possibilities for parole, and ensuring offenders have realistic opportunities for employment upon their release. “We believe that both victims and offender[s] are children of God. Despite their very different claims on society, their lives and dignity should be protected and respected. We seek justice, not vengeance.” (U.S. Bishops, A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, Nov. 2000)

Promote Civility and Faith in the Democratic Process
Saint John Paul II said that Democracy needs wisdom and virtue if it is to flourish. Pope Francis told Congress that the chief aim of politics is the common good. The MCC will encourage civility and bipartisan cooperation among elected officials, strong ethical standards for those in public office, respect for the rule of law, and measures that allow citizens to more fully participate in their government. “Responsible authority also means authority exercised with those virtues that make it possible to put power into practice as service (patience, modesty, moderation, charity, efforts to share), an authority exercised by persons who are able to accept the common good, and not prestige or the gaining of personal advantages, as the true goal of their work.” (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 410)
Bishop blesses Mobile Wellness at Saint Francis Medical Center

Cape Girardeau

Healthcare That Comes to You!
Justin Davison, President and Chief Executive Officer of Saint Francis Healthcare, Cape Girardeau, welcomed Bishop Edward Rice on Feb. 7 to bless and dedicate the new Mobile Wellness, Saint Francis’s 45-foot mobile healthcare coach. Among other technologies, the Mobile Wellness coach houses a state-of-the-art 3D mammography unit as its primary service offering. Mobile Wellness will travel the region 45-50 weeks of the year, removing barriers to care and ensuring residents across southeast Missouri have access to life-saving preventative breast cancer screenings, as well as other necessary healthcare services.

Need for service
Breast cancer is one of the top four cancers affecting the region. One in eight women may be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. The 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment undertaken by Saint Francis Healthcare for Cape Girardeau, Stoddard, Butler, and Scott counties identified “Cancer” and “Preventative and Screening Services” as two of the top priorities to address. Additionally, the assessment found poverty, transportation, and healthcare availability and accessibility are deterrents to receiving screenings and needed healthcare.

Mobile Wellness will address these priorities by bringing needed services to patients in their home communities, including mammography, as mentioned above. Mobile Wellness will begin accepting appointments for locations across the region in 2023. At this time, there are no scheduled dates. For more information, including access to the periodic Community Health Needs Assessment reports completed by Saint Francis Healthcare System, consult https://www.sfmc.net.

“The Little Mermaid” at Notre Dame Regional High School

Notre Dame Regional High School presents Disney’s “The Little Mermaid.” Performances will be held on March 30, March 31, April 1, and April 2. Thursday, Friday & Saturday shows will begin at 7 p.m., while the Sunday performance will be a family-friendly matinee beginning at 3 p.m. Doors will open at 2 p.m. on Sunday for face painting.

Based on one of Hans Christian Andersen’s most beloved stories and the classic animated film, Disney’s “The Little Mermaid” is a hauntingly beautiful love story for the ages. With music by eight-time Academy Award winner, Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman, and Glenn Slater and a compelling book by Doug Wright, this fishy fable will capture your heart with its irresistible songs, including “Under the Sea,” “Kiss the Girl,” and “Part of Your World.”

Ariel, King Triton’s youngest daughter, wishes to pursue the human Prince Eric in the world above, bargaining with the evil sea witch, Ursula, to trade her tail for legs. But the bargain is not what it seems, and Ariel needs the help of her colorful friends, Flounder the fish, Scuttle the seagull, and Sebastian the crab to restore order under the sea.

Tickets are $15 and go on sale Feb. 27, 2023. Tickets can be purchased Online at www.notredamehighschool.org/musical. ©TM
For almost 50 years during the summer, Catholic children and young people attending the week-long Camp Re-NEW-All sessions in the Diocese have learned about God, themselves, and what it means to be Catholic. Sessions are held in Fredericktown and prior to this 2023 season, also in Cassville.

“We are excited to move to this new facility which is owned by a Catholic Deacon and his family,” said Lynn Melendez, Director, Office of Youth Ministry. “Although the facility is available to all different types of groups, they are very accommodating and supportive of our mission. Camp Re-NEW-All staff seek to facilitate a summer camp program which:

- draws children into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the beauty of God’s creation and through Christian friendship;
- walks with children on their journey of seeking and growing in relationship with Jesus through the Catholic faith;
- encourages them to boldly live and share their faith with others.”

Surrounded by the beauty of nature, while interacting with other campers and staff members, campers deepen their relationship with God and grow in their Catholic faith, aided by the sacraments and age-appropriate religious formation. They also form life-long friendships.

This summer, Camp Re-NEW-All will host summer sessions at “Camp Carlo,” at the Osage Branch Retreat Center in Conway, MO, rather than at Roaring River State Park, in Cassville. The camp and retreat center are located along a branch of the Gasconade River in Lacelde County. The location features many fantastic amenities that include a swimming pool, beautiful and easy river access, an extra-large cafeteria, a chapel, and an outdoor amphitheater.

The campground, which has been around since the 1940s, was purchased by Deacon Mark Wand in 2019. Since that time, Wand and his family have made updates while maintaining the original charm.

“It has been a labor of love that has brought our family even closer,” said Erica Wand-Dukes, Camp Director, and daughter of Deacon Wand. “The forest, riverbed, and bluffs are so peaceful. As my dad says, ‘It’s a place you find friends and make connections.’”

Camp Re-NEW-All offers many fun activities including sports, swimming, crafts, and music. The summer camp is open to children going into the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades in the fall of 2023. There are three sessions held at Camp Carlo at Osage Branch Retreat Center, in Conway.

Registration opens Feb. 20 and some sessions do fill up quickly! For more information, and to register Online, visit the Website at https://dioscg.org/youth-ministry, or call Linda Glendenning in the diocesan office at (417) 866-0841.
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
American Catholics Make Difference in Haiti Through Support of Kobonal School

When Catholic donors give to a charity — particularly to support mission work in a country like Haiti — they often ask, “Is this really going to make a difference?” “Is this really going to have a lasting impact on the poor?”

It may surprise you, but according to Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, the answer to these questions is a resounding “Yes!” Cavnar has been working with Catholic missions around the globe for more than 20 years, and the case studies his team has compiled clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of outreaches run by priests, religious sisters and Catholic lay leaders.

One of the Catholic missions he often praises is the Kobonal Haiti Mission, founded by Father Glenn Meaux. [See related story on opposite page.]

“The Kobonal Haiti Mission has a variety of effective ministries to help the poor, and one of their most successful outreaches is the school they operate for needy children in the Diocese of Hinche,” Cavnar said. “Children in that area of Haiti had been growing up illiterate prior to the Mission’s founding, and many became trapped in a cycle of poverty that virtually assured they would remain poor for the rest of their lives. When the school opened its doors, everything changed for those kids. They got a quality education, and that blessing opened up doors of opportunity for them.”

Cavnar also credited American Catholics for the role they have played in supporting the Mission’s many programs. They have been particularly supportive of Fr. Meaux’s school and have helped it grow over the years.

“Compassionate Catholics in the U.S. provided the financial support Fr. Meaux needed to fund construction of classrooms, hire staff and maintain the school’s operation,” he explained. “Their donations continue to support the great things he is doing, and he is deeply grateful for the help they are providing. His success depends on it.”

When asked why donors are so eager to support ministries like Fr. Meaux’s Mission in Kobonal, Cavnar suggested it is because American Catholics have a high level of trust in missionary-run programs, and they want a tangible connection to the families being helped. When they give to the Kobonal Haiti Mission, they are satisfied their gift will have a direct and meaningful impact.

“For example, when someone contributes to the Kobonal Haiti Mission’s educational programs, they know they are changing a child’s life for the better,” Cavnar said. “In those cases, their gift becomes something like a scholarship. It educates a child who might otherwise have remained illiterate. The impact that it has is dramatic. In time, as those children grow up and can pursue better jobs, many are even able to lift their entire family out of poverty.”

So the question: “Will my charitable gift really make a difference in Haiti?” has been answered. Yes, it will!

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach education programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC2380, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20096-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner, or write “Monthly Mission Partner” on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Legacy Giving Provides Catholics With Unique Opportunity to Bless Others

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

“For a growing number of Catholics, this introspection has led to the exploration of ‘legacy giving’ — the use of one’s will, trust, life insurance policy or retirement to leave behind an echo of one’s beliefs, deeds and values — a blessing of others that will reverberate beyond our own lifetime, hopefully influencing our family and others we cherish,” explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, an official Catholic relief and development charity with a staff dedicated to such estate planning.

According to Cavnar, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped many Catholics establish these “legacy gifts” and expects them to play a significant role in future ministry missions.

“A will or trust can also reflect a person’s special heart for a country or for an area of need. It can be used to build houses for poor families or to build classrooms to educate children, for example,” Cavnar said. “Others simply want to help the poorest of the poor and make their legacy gift for that purpose. It’s their way of saying, ‘As a Catholic, I value life and support works of mercy. I want my family to understand that calling and believe in it too.’ And because legacy gifts can be quite large, they often achieve incredible things. A single one might build an entire school or fund the construction of dozens of homes. It’s producing an amazing impact and serves as an incredible testament to the faith of the giver.”

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

To learn more about these services, the charity recommends readers visit its special online portal at CrossCatholicLegacy.org.
Cross Catholic Outreach: “We Can Lift Families Out Of Extreme Poverty By Focusing On Education”

Ask most Catholic missionaries how they would eliminate poverty in a developing country like Haiti, and they will usually begin by talking about the value of an education. Poverty, they will often say, is born out of illiteracy and is perpetuated by the hardships and lost opportunities the uneducated must endure.

“They will also explain that in one generation, a quality education can end this downward spiral and turn everything around. That is why so many Catholic missions make it a priority to send needy children to school. They know the value of teaching children to read, write and do arithmetic - that we can lift families out of extreme poverty by focusing on education,” explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the leading Catholic ministries working to educate poor boys and girls in the developing countries of the world. “Once children break free from poverty, they tend to lift up their whole family and continue to make education a priority when their own children are born.”

When Father Glenn Meaux and his missionary team arrived in Kobon, Haiti, in 1989, he was deeply disturbed by the magnitude of poverty he saw there. Very few employment opportunities existed for the unskilled, uneducated population, so very few families were able to earn money to buy food.

Access to safe water was also a serious problem. Many families were traveling long distances to collect contaminated water from ponds or streams because no other options existed.

In addition to suffering caused by hunger and thirst, Fr. Meaux saw that families were starving for spiritual guidance. Enroached in superstition and occult practices, few had ever heard the name of Christ.

“There was no agriculture; there was no irrigation system; there was literally no hope at the time,” Fr. Meaux recalled. “With this sense of hopelessness, it is easy to see how Kobon earned its reputation as the ‘darkest corner of the Diocese of Hinche.”

Realizing that creating real and lasting improvement in Kobon would require local children to be educated, Fr. Meaux included the launch of a school in his plans to revitalize the community, and that decision is now credited with starting the incredible turnaround the area has experienced.

“The Kobon school became the centerpiece of the entire community’s transformation,” agreed Cavnar, who has helped the Mission develop its educational programs over the years. “Fr. Meaux also used the school to bring down cases of malnutrition in the area by serving breakfast and lunch to the attending children. In every project he pursues, he keeps his focus on improving lives, and the Kobon school plays an important role in that objective. It started as a way of educating the youngest kids in the area, but as children have moved through the program, it has evolved to include support for those seeking a higher education as well. As a result, it really does have the potential to break the cycle of poverty in Kobon, ending poverty for individuals and families once and for all.”

According to Cavnar, many American Catholics share Fr. Meaux’s enthusiasm for educational programs that benefit the poor, and Cross Catholic Outreach regularly receives donations to support Catholic missions educating children in Haiti, Central and South America, and the developing countries of Africa.

“There are three types of people who regularly support education. One group has been blessed by God, have children who were educated, and want that same blessing provided to others,” Cavnar said. “The second group is interested in giving to programs that break the cycle of poverty — to teach a man to fish, as the saying goes. They love educational ministries because they have that kind of life-transforming impact. The third group is drawn to our educational programs because they want to change a life and bless a poor child in a very direct and personal way. They are effectively giving a scholarship to a child and can celebrate that act of mercy will forever change a boy’s or girl’s life for the better. All of these are great reasons to support Catholic missions that educate the poor. All of them will make a world of difference.”

Above: The Kobon Hait Mission provides students with everything they need to succeed, including uniforms and supplies. The teachers at the school are committed to helping ensure children who enter the program late are not left behind. Left: Life in Kobon is hard and many families still live in poverty, so the Mission continues to seek support from compassionate Catholic donors in the U.S.

How to Help
To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s efforts to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02380, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20096-7168. 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 donations will be restricted to that specific project. However, if more is needed for the projects than needed, funds will be directed to other urgent needs in the missionary.
64th Catholic Women’s Spring Assembly
Sponsored by the DCCW
at Doubletree Inn by Hilton
2431 N. Glenstone St., Springfield, MO

Join women around the Diocese of Springfield - Cape Girardeau for two days of inspiration, faith, fellowship, and fun. Registration Fee is $55 before March 21st and $65 after March 21st, including a Banquet and Entertainment on Friday evening. Door Prizes, Raffle Tickets, Grab Bags, and Purse Silent Auction. The Service Project we are sponsoring is Whole Kids Outreach, Ellington, MO.

Friday & Saturday, April 21-22, 2023

Sr. Janine Tran
Spirituality Commission

Andrea Sachse
Service Commission

Maria Ruiz
Soaperlandia

Mary Rowley
NCCW

Whole Kids Outreach

Fr. J. Friedel
Keynote Speaker

Options for Women

SCAN to Register on our Webpage

Registration form on our Webpage at: https://dioscg.org/organizations/the-dccw/
Facebook Event Updates at: https://www.facebook.com/DCCWSCGMO