



50 DAYS of Easter spirit

By Lorene Hanley Duquin OSV News

Most people don't think in terms of Easter spirit. Yet the Easter season is a time that is filled with a spirit of joy and hope.

During the 50 days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday, we proclaim and sing the word "Alleluia," which means "praise the Lord." We are reminded that Jesus has overcome death. We are given the assurance that our lives have meaning and purpose. And we have the promise of eternal life with Jesus in heaven.

Now that's something to celebrate. But there's even more!

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised his disciples they would never be alone, because he would send the Holy Spirit to guide them. Then he commissioned his followers to spread his message all over the world and make disciples of all people.

Ten days later, on Pentecost Sunday, the apostles heard a loud noise, and the Holy Spirit descended upon them in tongues of fire. When that happened, they received spiritual gifts that transformed their lives and gave them the power to touch the lives of others. They ran into the streets and began to tell people about Jesus. Each person in the crowd understood them in his or her own language. Thousands became believers that day.

So, Easter spirit is more than just experiencing joy and hope. It's also a special call to share the Easter message with others.

Good news is contagious. Here are ways you can spread the good news this Easter season:

- **Host a neighborhood gathering on Sunday afternoons.** As the weather warms up, send the kids out to play and meet and greet the people who live next door. Ask everyone to bring a dish or beverage to share. What a great way to live out Jesus' command to "love



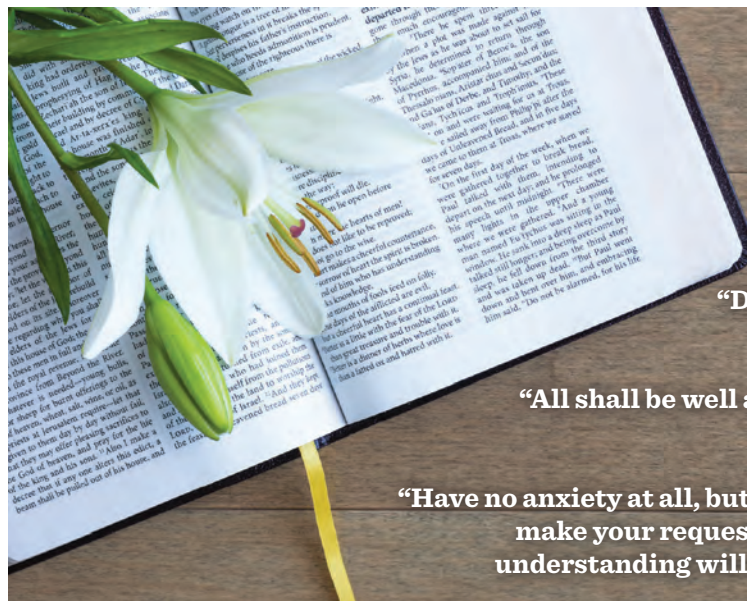
HOLY SPIRIT—Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised the disciples that they would never be alone, and he sent the Holy Spirit to guide them and the power to touch the lives of others. (Artwork: 'The Descent of the Holy Spirit-Pentecost' painted by Rev. Bonaventure Ostendarp & Rev. Raphael Pfister, Public Domain).

our neighbor."

- **Make Friday night movie night.** Pick your favorite streaming service and watch a movie as a family every Friday night through the Easter season. Eat popcorn and movie snacks and talk about the takeaway lessons each person learned from the show.
- **May Day basket.** Put together a small basket or box of goodies and deliver it to neighbors, shut-ins, grandparents or a young couple with a new baby. Be sure to stay anonymous -- leave

the basket on the front steps, ring the doorbell and run. Kids can make homemade greeting cards or cookies, or pass on a gently used toy that they've outgrown. Pluck some flowers or herbs from your spring garden, add a prayer card and all of a sudden you can be spreading the good news of Easter joy. ©OSV News

Lorene Hanley Duquin is a Catholic author and lecturer who has worked in parishes and on the diocesan level.



ATTAINING THE PEACE OF GOD: QUOTES TO PONDER

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin" (Mt 6:28).

"Do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will take care of itself" (Mt 6:34).

**"All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."
- Blessed Julian of Norwich**

"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7).



**COME, AND
YOU WILL SEE**

Bp. Edward M. Rice

Let us continue to fast, pray, & give during Easter & beyond

I believe everyone is familiar with the missionaries that visit our parishes throughout each summer seeking financial support for their mission work. These visits are part of the Missionary Cooperation Plan, an effort that occurs in all parishes throughout the United States, typically during the summer months. The Missionary Cooperation Plan is part of the initiative of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (SPOF) under the direction of the Dicastery for the Evangelization of Peoples. Through the support of Catholics worldwide, donations provide ongoing support for the pastoral and evangelizing programs of the Catholic Church in Africa, Asia, the Pacific islands, and in remote regions of Latin America. This also includes aid for the education and support of seminarians, religious novices, catechists, and for the works of religious communities in the areas of education, health care, and social services. Since 2017, Fr. Glenn Eftink has been the diocesan Director of the SPOF as well as being a full time pastor. Through his work, \$700,567 has been raised for missionary efforts throughout the world. Father Eftink has also been responsible for promoting World Mission Sunday, which has raised \$377,215 from the diocese. That's over a million dollars in our missionary outreach: Congratulations Fr. Eftink and to our generous donors!

While most of us have never been to the Pacific Islands or Africa or Asia, through our financial support we share in the work of the missionaries who spread the faith in these areas. Our financial support of World Mission Sunday, typically the 3rd Sunday of October, continues the efforts of Pope Pius XI who in 1926, instituted Mission Sunday so that the entire Church would

never forget that we are called to be missionaries: all of us are called to share in the work of evangelizing the world. Again, while most of us will not be actual missionaries in these remote areas, through our financial support we share in their efforts.

I would like to thank Fr. Eftink for his good work in this area. While there are many local and national causes that we can support, we must never forget that being missionary is part of the essence of the Church. In Matthew 28:19 we are commissioned, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." Thank you, Fr. Eftink! And as he steps down from this important role, I thank Deacon Mark Kiblinger who takes on this additional responsibility to his ministry at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, in Cape Girardeau. I ask all the pastors to support Deacon Kiblinger, just as you did Fr. Eftink. More on Fr. Eftink's work with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith may be found on p. 8 of this issue.

HOLY LAND SUPPORT ON GOOD FRIDAY

Speaking of other causes to support, traditionally the collection taken up on Good Friday is for the support of the Catholic institutions in the Holy Land. Its official title is the Pontifical Good Friday Collection. All of us are aware of the political, military, and religious difficulties the Catholic Church is currently facing in the Holy Land. The annual Good Friday Collection helps support the 23 parishes, three schools, orphanages, and weekly food distribution to the small Catholic community in the Holy Land. Through our support of the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, we let our Catholic brothers and sisters in the Holy Land know that they are not forgotten. They

need our prayers and financial support now more than ever. Please remember to donate to the Good Friday Collection in your parish. You can also do so Online at <https://myfranciscan.org/donate/>.

As we wind up our 2024 Lenten journey, let us recommit ourselves to the three works of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in the 50 days of Easter. By this time maybe some of your initial fervor from Ash Wednesday has worn off. The beautiful thing about our faith is that every day is a new beginning. If your Lent has not been what you had hoped it would be, begin anew, begin now. I recall the words of Mother Teresa, "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

As we continue with the Eucharistic Revival, I think it

HOLY WEEK REMINDER FROM POPE FRANCIS

Christ is alive and He loves you with an infinite love. He gave His life for you, so in His love for you, He does not wait for you to be perfect. Look at His arms outstretched on the cross, and let yourself be saved over and over again. #ChristusVivit

imperative that we also have a revival of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrate it frequently. Consider the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his homily at the Nationals Stadium on April 17, 2008, highlighting the importance of Confession; "To a great extent, the renewal of the Church in America and

throughout the world depends on the renewal of the practice of Penance and the growth in holiness which that sacrament both inspires and accomplishes." I encourage you to frequently take advantage of the times of confession offered in your parish or mission. Happy Easter!

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



Join Bishop Rice on the First Friday of each month to pray for an increase in Vocations to the Priesthood and religious life in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau:

Fri., April 5 12-Noon	St. John Henry Newman Center Cape Girardeau
Fri., May 3 8:30 a.m.	St. Agnes School Mass Springfield
Fri., June 7	Mercy Conference and Retreat Center St. Louis



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.

December 21, 1990 I got a kick out of the attempt at friendliness in a (computer-generated) letter I received: the envelope was addressed "Arch Bishop." The letter inside began, "Dear Arch:"

January 11, 1991 A group of men struggled to hold a telephone pole straight up into the air. As they strained to balance it, one of the groups was shimmying up the pole with a tape measure in his hand. "What are you doing?" a bystander asked. "Measuring the pole to see how high it is," came the response. "Why don't you just lay it on the ground

to measure?" the bystander continued. One of the men said: "We don't want to know how long it is, but how high!"

January 18, 1991 A priest out for a walk noticed a group of small boys on the front porch of a large Victorian home. Apparently, they were trying to ring the doorbell but couldn't reach up to it, even though they took turns jumping up in an effort to do so. The priest thought he would help. He went up on the porch, greeted the boys, and rang the doorbell for them. "Thanks, Father," they said, "now run like hell!"

Easter Hope IN HARD TIMES

By Woodeene Koenig-Bricker OSV News

As Christians, we are called to be a sign of the resurrected Christ to the world. Let's stop for a moment and consider how we can find hope—even in life's hard times.

BE NOT AFRAID

Pope St. John Paul II's lifelong admonition of "be not afraid" needs to become ours as well. If we truly believe that God is the source of all, then we know that God can and will provide for us in every situation. But how do we turn our fear into faith? By following the advice St. Paul gives us: "Take every thought captive in obedience to Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). We have the ability to control our thoughts; they do not need to control us. When fear begins to creep in, breathe deeply and say with Blessed Julian of Norwich, "All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well." Then act as if you believe it.

STOP WORRYING

If Jesus had issued an order to worry constantly, many of us would have achieved complete compliance. Jesus' command is just the opposite: "Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself" (Mt 6:34). Jesus isn't saying that we shouldn't think about the future, but he is telling us that we must not let worry about things that haven't happened—and may never happen—run and ruin our lives. One way to stave off apprehension is to memorize (and then live by) St. Paul's words in Philippians 4:6-7: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."



CHRIST RESURRECTION—The resurrection of Christ is depicted in a mural in the sanctuary of Holy Family Church in the West Bank city of Ramallah. (OSV News photo/Debbie Hill)

OFFER THANKS IN ALL THINGS

Sometimes we think that giving thanks in all things means being thankful for all things. It doesn't. You don't have to jump for joy if you've lost your job or your savings account has vanished. What we are asked to do is express gratitude for what we have at this very moment. No matter how bad things are, there is something good in your life, so take a few minutes and make a gratitude list. Start with the basics: food, clothing, shelter. Move on to relationships, health and material possessions. Try to come up with at least 10 things you are grateful for—and think of maybe 10 more after that.

ASK ... AND BELIEVE

All too often, we consider prayer a measure of last resort. Instead of waiting until panic prevails, ask God for help in every situation. Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7). Ask with hopeful confidence ... and then look expectantly for his answer, for Jesus followed that advice with, "For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

When things are going well, it's easy to feel uplifted, but hope and joy are not contingent on the economy. They come not from bank accounts and financial prosperity but from a deep and abiding relationship with the Lord. Seek that first and, as the Lord says, "all these things will be given to you" (Mt 6:33). ©OSV News

Woodeene Koenig-Bricker writes from Oregon.

HOLY WEEK CALL TO PRAYER for an END to the ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Washington

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, and president of the US Conference of Bishops (USCCB), and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, the chairman of the USCCB's Committee on International Justice and Peace called on the faithful to renew their prayers during Holy Week for an end to the Israel-Hamas war.

"As the Church enters Holy Week and Christ's suffering on the cross and his resurrection are made present to us so vividly, we are connected to the very source of hope. It is that hope that spurs us to call on Catholics here in the United States and all those of good

will to renew their prayers for an end to the raging Israel-Hamas war.

"Thousands of innocent people have died in this conflict, and thousands more have been displaced and face tremendous suffering. This must stop. As the Holy Father recently said, 'One cannot move forward in war. We must make every effort to negotiate, to negotiate, to end the war.' To move forward, a cease fire and a permanent cessation of war and violence is absolutely necessary. To move forward, those held hostage must be released and civilians must be protected. To move forward, humanitarian aid must reach those who are in such dire need.

"As Christians, we are rooted in the hope of the resurrection, and so we pray for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land." ©OSV News



HOLY WEEK JERUSALEM—Catholic tourists from Rome carried a cross along the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross, in the Old City of Jerusalem March 23, 2024, the eve of Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week. (OSV News photo/Debbie Hill)

Holy Face of Jesus relic venerated in Guardian Angel Church

Oran, MO

Guardian Angel Parish, in Oran, recently hosted friends of Fr. Joseph Kelly, Stan & Janet Schwent of Bloomsdale, MO. Over 100 people came for veneration and prayers on Thu., March 14, as the couple brought with them the relic of the Holy Face of Jesus to Oran. This picture has been touched to the Veil of St. Veronica, the True Cross, and to the lance that pierced Our Lord's side.

The Schwents have a daughter who is a cloistered nun at the Poor Clare Monastery in St. Louis. The relic was given to the Schwents from the monastery. It was produced in 1893, made its way to Indiana and then on to St. Louis. There is a wax seal on the bottom right of the relic's frame and the Vatican stamp on the bottom left of the picture. Behind the picture, they found a certificate of authenticity in Latin. The Schwents now give presentations to spread devotion to the Holy Face. This devotion is focused on making reparations to Our Lord for the many offenses committed against Him.

After the presentation was given by the Schwents, Fr. Kelly led the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady. Afterward, those in attendance were able to kneel before the relic, pray, and touch rosaries and medals to the relic. During the veneration, Fr. Kelly led the Chaplet of the Holy Face, the Golden Arrow prayer, and the Litany to the Holy Face.

HISTORY

The Veil of Veronica was preserved by Veronica herself until her death. It was next



HOLY FACE OF JESUS—The Holy Face of Jesus relic was brought to Guardian Angel Parish, in Oran, on March 14, by Stan & Janet Schwent, of Bloomsdale, MO. The relic has been touched to the Veil of Veronica, the True Cross, and the lance that pierced Jesus' side. *(The Mirror)*



LETTER OF AUTHENTICITY—The letter of Authenticity that was found in the frame behind the Holy Face of Jesus relic. *(The Mirror)*



PRAYERS & VENERATION—Father Joseph Kelly, pastor of Guardian Angel Parish, in Oran, and St. Ambrose Parish, in Chaffee, is shown with Stan & Janet Schwent, the owners and presenters on March 14 of the Holy Face of Jesus relic. *(The Mirror)*

placed under the care of Pope Clement I, where it was secretly stored in the catacombs by popes for the next centuries. In the 7th century, the Veil was placed in St. Mary of the Martyrs Church. Over time, the Veil had faded to just a faint outline of Our Lord's face. In the mid 1800's, the "Golden Arrow" prayer was given to Venerable Sr. Mary of St. Peter, a Carmelite nun, as a remedy for blasphemy committed against Our Lord and to make reparation. She received visions of Jesus and Our Lady about this devotion over a three-year span. She died July 8, 1848. Not long after her death, Pope Pius IX fled from Rome. The Church was enduring the ravages of revolutions and many evils, so the Pope asked for special prayers from the people and publicly displayed the Veil of St. Veronica for three days. On the last day, Jan. 6, 1849, a miracle occurred: The Veil glowed from noon to 3 pm. After the three hours passed, the image of Our Lord returned to being just a faint outline. Jesus' face was life-like,

very distinct, and weeping and bleeding. Following this miracle, copies of the Veil, with the life-like face of Jesus, were made over a 75-year period. Once printed, they were each touched to the relic of Veronica's Veil, the True Cross of Jesus, and the lance that pierced Our Lord's side.

A friend of Sr. Mary of St. Peter, Venerable Leo DuPont, made the devotion even more well-known. He hung an image of the miraculous image in his house with an oil lamp burning in front of it. He would pray with friends the Golden Arrow prayer and the Litany of the Holy Face and miraculous healing began when people would place the oil on themselves.

An interesting fact that the Schwents shared for those gathered in Guardian Angel Parish was that if you place the Veil of Veronica, the Shroud of Turin (the burial cloth the Body of Jesus was wrapped in), and the Veil of Manoppello (a miraculous cloth that bears the face of the resurrected Christ) on top of each other, the face of Jesus is the same, except that his eyes are open on the veil of Manoppello. These three relics are from the Passion, the Death, and the Resurrection of Our Lord. ©TM



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PROJECT RACHEL

Abortion Healing Ministry

What is it?

Project Rachel is the Catholic Church's ministry of love, support, and healing for those who have been involved in abortion. To implement that ministry, our Diocese has created an integrated network of services, including pastoral counseling, support groups, retreats, opportunities for sacramental forgiveness, and referrals to licensed mental health professionals.

Why are we doing it?

It's normal to grieve a pregnancy loss, but the loss of a child by abortion can create a hole so deep in one's heart that it may seem the emptiness can never be filled. With the forgiveness, hope, and healing provided through Project Rachel Ministries, many women and men have returned to a loving relationship with God.

Hurting? Confidentially call (417)242-9300 or email ProjectRachel@dioscg.org.

How do people get help?

Women and men who have been involved in abortion are invited to contact the diocesan Project Rachel Ministry to receive free, compassionate and confidential help. Call (417) 242-9300 or Email projectrachel@dioscg.org to learn more. A list of ministry resources is available at hopeafterabortion.com.

For more information,

Contact **Kim Brayman**, Program Coordinator
Office of Family Life
Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
601 S. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806-3143
kbrayman@dioscg.org
417.866.0841 (office) | 417.866.1140 (fax)

Joplin Area Catholic Schools names new director of schools

Joplin, MO

Joplin Area Catholic Schools (JACS) welcomes **Jess Sickman** as its new Director of Schools.

Sickman brings more than 15 years of experience in marketing and business development to her new role.

“We are thrilled to add Jess’ expertise to our school’s admin team,” said Fr. Brian J. Straus, pastor of St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Joplin. “Her business background and her faith are key assets as we grow and look to the future of Catholic education in Joplin.”

Sickman will work with the JACS business office and principals on the strategic plan as well as building the school’s relationships with various corporate and community partners. She will also focus on enrollment efforts for the system.

“I’m thrilled to be an ambassador for the JACS family within our community,” said Sickman. “It is my prayer that together we can amplify our collective spirit to showcase the exceptional qualities that make us unique - all while being faithful servants of Christ.”

Sickman currently serves as learning development specialist for OWN, Inc – formerly Anderson Engineering. She grew



SICKMAN

up in Southern Illinois and attended Eastern Illinois University where she studied Hospitality & Business Administration. Her career in hotel management initially brought her to Joplin where she has remained

connected professionally for the last 18 years.

The Director of Schools position opened up with the announcement of the resignation of Dr. Emily Yoakam, who accepted the position of Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning in the Seneca School District. Sickman officially starts on July 1. ©TM

ABOUT JOPLIN AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Founded in 1885 by the Sisters of Mercy of St. Catherine McAuley, the Joplin Area Catholic Schools serves the greater Joplin community to educate Catholic and non-Catholic children from Early Learners (two-year olds) through grade 12 at St. Mary Preschool and Elementary School, St. Peter Middle School, and McAuley Catholic High School. Joplin Area Catholic Schools provide an outstanding academic and Christ-centered educational foundation that forms its present students of today into remarkable servant-leaders of tomorrow. For more information or to inquire about enrollment, visit www.JACSS.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advance—St. Joseph Parish Council of Catholic Women will have its annual **Indoor Yard Sale**, Fri., April 26, 7 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sat., April 27, 7 a.m.-noon. Clothing, plants, furniture and household items. The Knights will host a Swap Meet outside at the same time. For more information, call Sharon at (573) 576-5537, or Leo at (573) 576-1166.

Cape Girardeau—**Divine Mercy Sunday** will be celebrated April 7 in Old St. Vincent Chapel of Ease. Confessions & Eucharistic Adoration at 2 p.m., followed by a Holy Hour at 3 p.m. All are welcome!

Carthage—St. Ann Catholic School will have **St. Ann’s Auction 2024** on Sat., April 6, at CRM Auditorium, located at 1900 Grand Ave. Silent & Live Auctions, Food, drinks and Fun! Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. Tickets are available at St. Ann Church office and stannsauction.com. For additional information, contact (417) 358-1841 or stannscharityauction@gmail.com.

Forsyth—Our Lady of the Ozarks Catholic Church will hold its **Spring Rummage & Bake Sale**, Thu., April 25, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Fri., April 26, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Sat., April 27, 8 a.m.-noon (bag day). Household goods, including a large donation of matched place settings, glassware and new linens, furniture, décor, jewelry, clothing, books, holiday items, antiques, and much more. We also have a room full of delicious homemade baked goods! Don’t miss this one. It will be big!

Glennon—St. Anthony Parish will have its **Annual Spring Dinner**, Sun., May 5, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., in the Parish Hall. Kettle beef, dumplings, dressing, all the trimmings & dessert. Cost: \$14-adults; \$8-children, ages 6-12 yrs.; ages 5 and under eat free.

Kimberling City—Our Lady of the Cove Catholic Church will have a **Spring Garage Sale**, Fri., May 10, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., and Sat., May 11, 8 a.m.-noon. Clothing, furniture, appliances, and much more. Something for everyone! For more information, contact the church office at (417) 739-4700.

Leopold—St. John Parish Council of Catholic Women will have a **Rummage Sale** at the

Knights Hall in Leopold, Thu., May 9, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; Fri., May 10, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Sat., May 11, 7-11 a.m. Items are priced to sell! All proceeds to support the many activities of the PCCW. For additional information, contact Geri Geringer at (573) 208-6445.

Marshfield—Holy Trinity PCCW will have a **Rummage Sale** on Thu., May 2, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri., May 3, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sat., May 4, \$1 Bag, 8-11 a.m. **Donations will be accepted on Sun., April 28, 12-3 p.m.; Mon., April 29 and Tue., April 30, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m.**

Monett—St. Lawrence Parish Council of Catholic Women will host its annual **Spring Salad Luncheon**, Wed., April 24, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., in the St. Lawrence Parish Hall. Cost: \$10, seniors-\$8. Shop with local vendors. Proceeds to benefit Barry-Lawrence County Development Center and St. Lawrence Catholic School. Dine in or carry-out available.

Springfield—Holy Trinity PCCW will host a **Trivia Night**, Sat., April 13, in the Holy Trinity Social Hall, for ages 21 and older. Doors open at 6 p.m.; Trivia begins at 7 p.m. Form a team, up to eight players or we will group you with other players. Cost is \$10 per person; pay at the door. Prizes for winners, losers, and best theme! Bring your own refreshments; cash for mulligans, dessert auction, and other games. Team captains may register Online at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080E45ACAD2AA4FA7-47920376-holy#/> or by calling Margaret at (417) 840-8949.

Springfield—St. Bernadette’s Guild will host a **Ladies Day of Inspiration**, Sat., April 6, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. The day will begin with Mass at 8:30 a.m., followed by breakfast, program, and will conclude at 11:30 a.m.

Springfield—Sacred Heart Parish will hold its annual **Trivia Night**, Sat., April 27, in the Parish Hall. Entry is \$10 per person; maximum of 8 per table. Come early and enjoy the best Reuben sandwich; along with cheeseburgers, hamburgers, and hotdogs served beginning at 6 p.m. Trivia begins at 7 p.m. To sign up, please call the parish office at (417) 869-3646.

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



JACKSON STUDENTS PRESENT LIVING STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The 8th graders of Immaculate Conception Catholic School, in Jackson, presented a Living Stations of the Cross on Fri., March 15, highlighting events surrounding the Passion of Christ, from his condemnation by Pontius Pilate to his entombment. The parish and school communities were invited.

(Submitted photos/The Mirror)



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Business and Editorial Offices: 601 S. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806-3107; Accounting and Circulation Offices: Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, 601 S. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806-3107. To subscribe, call (417) 866-0841 or Email dthompson@dioscg.org. Periodical postage is paid at Springfield, MO.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Mirror, 601 S. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806-3107. Vol. LIX No. 25 March 29, 2024 Single copy price, \$0.50 Subscription: \$14 per year. Digital subscriptions available as an option to USPS delivery with paid subscription. For more information, contact dthompson@dioscg.org.

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SMELL *Like* BREAD



By Deacon Rob Huff

I love the smell of bread. Not the bread we buy at the supermarket, but fresh baked bread. It takes me back to my Grandma's house. Grandma would mix the ingredients together, kneading the dough on a flour-dusted table, with her wrinkled, sun-spotted hands, contrasted against the white dough. She would place the ball of dough

in a large, crock bowl covered with a towel, and would wait for it to rise. The waiting continued as the bread baked in her old oven. Finally, as we waited at the Sunday supper table, Grandma would bring the finished product from the kitchen. You could smell her coming, the smell of bread.

I love the smell of fresh baked bread. I'm reminded of my first teaching job. I was teaching in a tiny school in central

Missouri. A hint for anyone working anywhere that has a cafeteria, be nice to the cooks. The cooks at that little school decided I could use a little fattening up. (I was a bit thinner back then). They knew I loved fresh bread, and as soon as it would come out of the school oven, they would top a couple of steaming rolls with butter and deliver them to my classroom. I knew when they were approaching. I could smell them coming down the hall. It was the smell of bread.

How about us? What do we smell like? When we walk out of Church into the world, can they smell us coming? Pope Francis said priests should be shepherds that smell of the sheep. But what about us "sheep"? How should we smell? I think we should smell like bread. After all, we are Eucharistic people. They should be able to smell us coming, and it should be the fragrance of bread.

We are in the midst of a National Eucharistic Revival: affirming our belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ—body, blood, soul, and divinity; reigniting our love of the Eucharist. Many believe that Communion is a sign of God's presence among us, a symbol of our unity in Christ, but many reject the real presence. However, the purpose of the Most Holy Sacrament is not to allow us to feel good, but to permit us to feel God. That is why we should smell like bread.

The Church smells like bread

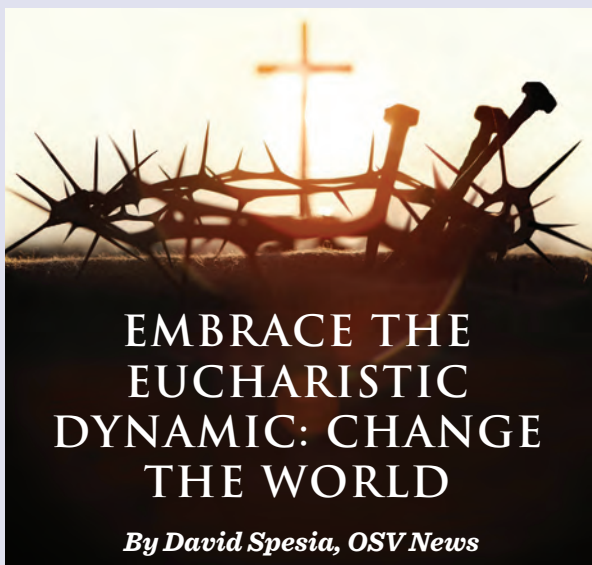
From its beginning, the Church has smelled like bread. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" In about 100 AD, St. Ignatius

of Antioch said, "I have no taste for the food that perishes nor for the pleasures of this life. I want the Bread of God which is the Flesh of Christ, who was the seed of David; and for drink, I desire His Blood which is love that cannot be destroyed." Fifty years later, Justin Martyr asserted, "For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Savior being incarnate by God's Word took flesh and blood for our salvation." In 200 AD, St. Clement wrote of the Eucharist, "renowned and glorious grace; and those who by faith partake of it are sanctified both in body and soul." In 350 AD, St. Cyril wrote, "Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and Wine as simply that; for they are according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ."

From its beginning, the Church smelled of bread. However, many say we have progressed beyond irrational faith. Skeptics maintain that belief in the Real Presence is as old-fashioned and out of date as, well, homemade bread. Faith in the Eucharist, they say, is for grandmothers and children. They argue that science has allowed us to put away such "primitive superstitions." It is suggested that—in this age of enlightenment, this age of reason—an intelligent person shouldn't believe that Jesus is really present in the bread and the wine.

Faith & Science

Roger Bacon, one of the earliest proponents of the scientific method, was a Franciscan friar and believed in the Eucharist. Roger Grosseteste, father of the scientific method, was a bishop and believed in the Real



EMBRACE THE EUCHARISTIC DYNAMIC: CHANGE THE WORLD

By David Spesia, OSV News

Jesus' entire existence was Eucharistic. If you and I are going to live as His disciples and respond wholeheartedly to the gift of His grace, our lives need to be marked by a Eucharistic dynamic.

This Eucharistic dynamic is as simple as it is profound. It emerges most clearly on the night before Our Lord enters into his passion, but it marks Jesus' whole life, death, and resurrection. In a catechesis on

the Road to Emmaus, Pope Francis observes that:

"[Jesus] repeats for the disciples the fundamental gesture of every Eucharist. He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it. Does not Jesus' entire history perhaps lie in this series of gestures? And is there not in every Eucharist, also the symbol of what the Church should be? Jesus takes us, blesses us, 'breaks' our life—because there is no love without sacrifice—and offers it to others; he offers it to everyone" (General Audience, May 24, 2017).

Jesus received every day of his earthly life as a gift from the Father and raised it up in blessing; then he allowed himself to be broken open and given away for others. Throughout his public ministry, Jesus takes who and what is before him, blesses them as they are, breaks them open to a new experience of the kingdom of God which is at hand, and then offers the fruit of this encounter back to the Father in and through the Spirit.

A LOVE STORY

Jesus wants us to enter into this dynamic and dramatic love story. He deeply desires that we offer him our very selves—our sometimes put-together but often messy selves; our broken and yet repaired, limping, and yet loving selves. He wants to take and bless all of it, and then break it open so that we

might be able to make our own sacrificial offering for others—giving away what we have received.

This might all sound nice in the abstract, but here's a concrete way that it would change the world: Let's ask Jesus to take that one person or situation that poses the greatest challenge for us right now into his holy hands. Let's dare to let Jesus bless that person or situation (yes, that one). Let's invite Jesus to break open our hearts to offer some prayer or some penance, some gesture or some grace, for that person or that situation. And then let's watch Jesus deliver light and new life where it seems like there is only darkness and even death.

Jesus wants to change the world. Jesus wants to transform all those relationships and situations which cause us pain, and he waits for us to invite him into this redemptive work. Jesus wants us to know that we are infinitely loved, and he waits for us to embrace the fact that "there is no love without sacrifice." Our Lord longs to empower us to embrace this Eucharistic dynamic through the bread which he gives—his flesh for the life of the world (Jn 6:51).

Jesus, loving in the Eucharist, come and love in us! ©OSV News

David Spesia is the USCCB executive director of the Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Presence. Alessandro Volta invented the battery and believed in the power of the Eucharist. Andre Ampere, discoverer of electromagnetism, believed. Andreas Vesalius founded the study of human anatomy and believed in the Body and the Blood. Paschal, the great mathematician, believed. Father Secchi, originator of astrophysics, believed. Father Steno, father of geology, believed. George Agricola, founder of mineralogy, believed. Henri Becquerel, discoverer of radioactivity, believed. Jesuit Father Bosovich, originator of the atomic theory, believed. Father Lemaitre, creator of the Big Bang Theory, believed. Brother Mendel, author of genetics, believed. Louis Pasteur, inventor of pasteurization and the rabies vaccine, believed. The originators of modern chemistry, calculus, embryology, and entomology all believed in the Real Presence. From St. Albert the Great to Sir Alexander Fleming, they were scientists and they believed. These scientists saw no conflict between science and faith. Pope St. John Paul II explained it well: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." These scientists searched for God's revelation in the wonders of creation and found God's presence in the Eucharist. They were men of science, yet they smelled of bread.

Of course, skeptics are nothing new. In John's Gospel, Jesus tells the crowd, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the whole world." Immediately the cynics chime

in, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus doesn't jump in and say, "No, you blockheads, it's just a metaphor." Jesus doesn't explain that he is simply using a symbol. No, Jesus repeats his claim over and over—five, six, seven times—Jesus tells them, "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." Those listening didn't understand it all, but they understood that Jesus meant

what he said. Jesus recognized that some did not believe. Many of Jesus' followers left. Jesus didn't

call them back and explain that it was only an analogy. Instead, Jesus asked the 12 Apostles if they were going to leave, too. Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Skeptics are nothing new, but neither are those with faith.

One More Bearer of Bread

Another woman, along with my grandma and the school cook, also brought me bread. My wife brought me to the Catholic Church where I found the Bread of Life. She and I had only been married a month when I met a fourth woman who smelled like bread. I was lying in a hospital bed, one leg and one arm paralyzed. I was broken physically and spiritually. I believed in the Eucharist, at least in my head, if not in my heart. I understood the theology, though I had not yet embraced the mystery, when a woman carrying a pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament entered my hospital room and asked if I would like to receive Communion. As she held up the bread and said, "Body of Christ," it was the first time I knew beyond a doubt that that was what it really was: the Body of Christ.

Sometimes it takes our brokenness

to see Christ in the breaking of the bread. Sometimes, we need to be hungry before we can even smell the bread.

We've all heard the phrase, "the best thing since sliced bread." However, you may not have known that the first effective bread-slicing machine was put into service in 1928 by the Chillicothe Baking Company here in Missouri. "The best thing since sliced bread," was a phrase derived from advertising for "Wonder Bread," the first producer of pre-wrapped, pre-sliced bread. Personally, I'm not sure it was such a great advancement. Grandma's bread didn't have a fancy wrapper, it wasn't perfectly sliced, it had mis-shaped holes, and the crust was a little tough. But, unlike what we have today, it tasted better and you could smell its goodness. Church can be like that. We like all the fancy wrappings, but, even if the

music is off-key, the sermon is too long, and the temperature isn't quite right, that's ok, as long as you can smell the bread. Sometimes we are like that. We have empty spots, we can be a bit uneven at times, and some of us are just a little too crusty. But that's ok as long as you can smell the bread.

At Mass, we partake of the Real Wonder Bread, the Body of Jesus. So, when you leave church, make sure they can smell you coming. Make sure it is the smell of bread. ©TM

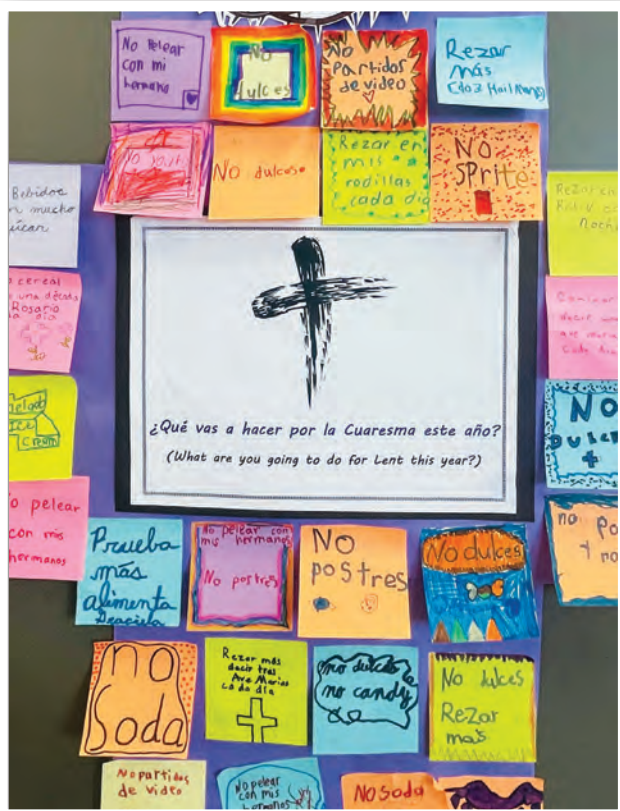


Deacon Huff serves the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau as its Chancellor and Superintendent of Catholic Schools. He, and his wife, Rose are members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau, where Deacon Huff ministers.

SACRED HEART PILGRIMAGE
 Dec. 27, 2023 – Dec. 27, 2024

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JOIN THE
Diocesan Sacred Heart Pilgrimage Challenge!



STUDENTS POST LENTEN PROMISES IN SPANISH

¿A QUÉ RENUNCIASTE PARA LA CUARESMA?
 Students in grades 1-5 at St. Mary Catholic School, in Joplin, shared their Lenten promises in Spanish and posted them for all to see. What did you give up for Lent? (Photo by Margie Black/The Mirror)



PASSPORT COMPLETED—Fr. David Coon, Pastor, and Bishop Edward M. Rice congratulated **Michael J. Warren** (center) on his completion of the diocesan Sacred Heart Pilgrimage to all 12 of the diocese's parishes named for the Sacred Heart. Warren is a member of Sacred Heart Parish, Dexter, and undertook the pilgrimage Jan. 20, 2024-Feb. 4, 2024. Upon submitting his completed pilgrimage "passport," Warren was given a plaque of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Bishop Rice. He is the first to complete the diocesan pilgrimage, commemorating the 350th anniversary of the first revelation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. The 350th anniversary began Dec. 27, 2023 and will conclude on Dec. 27, 2024. (The Mirror)



Diocese makes over \$1.7M impact in worldwide missions

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20).

By Paula Wright Advance, MO

Since 2017, Rev. Glenn Eftink, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Advance, served as the diocesan Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (SOPF), his assignment concluded in January, with Deacon Mark Kiblinger of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau, taking over the reins as Director.

Under Fr. Eftink's leadership these past eight years, an impressive \$1,077,782 was collected from many generous donors within our diocese to support the mission work of the Society.



“I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the missionary communities and all the different parishes,” Fr. Eftink said. “I wanted people of the diocese to experience and meet firsthand the different mission communities and know about their efforts. I always enjoyed the work. Being asked to serve in this role, well, I just think it was a blessing.”

“Our diocese has been very generous,” Fr. Eftink said. “People give to people, and when the missions come to a parish and share their stories, people get to meet people from many different places, all over the world. It makes you stop and think that the Church is much larger than just right here. It raises your awareness.”

“We have our own needs, no question about that,” Fr. Eftink said, “but if we can do our part to help spread the faith around that world, that is very important too.”

As director, Fr. Eftink was responsible for planning and coordinating mission visits to each deanery in the diocese. This work included various logistical demands such as travel, timing, and ensuring languages aligned.

“I made sure the mission visitors have the time commitment needed to reach all the parishes within a deanery. I always confirmed they spoke English, or Spanish, as needed, [that they] had a license and could drive, and I worked

with them on travel and flights into the nearest airports,” said Fr. Eftink. “The missions often don't understand the layout of how spread out our diocese is.

As Director, I had to work with all sorts of things that needed to be done to make the visits happen.”

In addition to the logistics of the visits, Fr. Eftink was also responsible for ensuring that all donations were distributed correctly to the mission programs.

Missionary mandate

The Society for the Propagation of Faith is part of the Pontifical Mission Society, the official missionary arm of the Church. This essential global network, under the guidance of the pope, provides resources to underserved populations in over 1,100 mission territories around the world. According to its Website, the goal is to “offer and provide support for pastoral and evangelistic programs: catechists and catechetical work, the building of new churches, health care, education, communication, and transport needs.”

“In support of the bigger causes of the Pontifical Mission Society, some of the monies collected during The World Mission Sunday Collection go to the Pontifical Mission Society and are distributed all over the world under the Pope's guidance,” Fr. Eftink explained. “Part of the money also goes to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association program (started in 1926 by Pope Pius XI), which is part of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. These funds are provided all over Eastern Europe, Asia, Northeast Africa, the Holy Land, Ukraine, anywhere needing missionary funds to support war-torn areas, helping to make sure they have food, clothing, housing, as well as evangelization, teaching them about the Catholic faith.”

“Regarding the Missionary Cooperation Collection, most of that money goes to the missions that come in to visit [the diocese over the summer], but a portion of it goes to the Society of St. Peter,” Fr. Eftink said. “Another part of the Pontifical Mission Society,

Evangelization is the essential mission of the Church.¹

The Society of St. Peter is a seminary program that is sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of Faith to train priests for mission countries. The main seminary program takes place in Rome, the seminarians come from all 1,100 mission locations to be trained and sent back to the missionary places to do the

work that needs to be done.”

Founded as a mission territory, the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau currently does not receive funding from the Society, thanks to the financial success enjoyed from generous donors and the vibrancy of our annual Bishop's Appeal, the Diocesan Development Fund. But the Society for the Propagation of Faith played a key role in Catholicism in Southern Missouri, and we were included in the **very first foreign mission donation** sent by the Society.

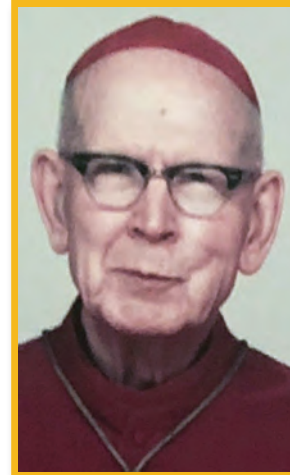
Southern Missouri benefited from first mission donation

In 1815, inspired by her brother who was a missionary priest, Blessed Pauline Marie Jaricot gathered a group together in Lyon, France, to pray the rosary out loud, the first “Living Rosary” in support of missionary work. At the end of the prayer, everyone was asked to set aside a penny donation. From this, The Society for the Propagation of Faith began.

During this time in the United States, The Most Rev. Louis DuBourg, Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana, was responsible for a vast diocese which ranged from the Mississippi River to beyond the Rockies, and included territory that is now the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Focused on providing evangelization, catechesis, and education to his large diocese, Bishop DuBourg visited Europe and France, inviting religious communities to help settle and bring the faith to his territory. Bishop DuBourg met with Blessed Pauline requesting her help.

As a result, in 1822, the very first foreign mission donation was made by The Society for the Propagation of Faith. The three missions receiving funding from this very first foreign donation were China, the Diocese of Kentucky, and the Diocese of Louisiana (us!).

Because of this support, Bishop DuBourg had funds available to expand evangelization and mission work. The funding enabled the works of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, who would later become our co-patron, and a small group of Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus religious sisters, who traveled from France to the St. Louis area to establish



In speaking on the Diocese's closeness to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Bishop Charles Helmsing, said in his first Pastoral Letter, “On Directing Our Intention,” Dec. 27, 1956: “...The missions, both foreign and domestic, represent the greatest needs of souls and of the Church ...” Bishop Helmsing served as the First Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, (1956-1962).

FUN FACTS

The territory of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau was one of three missions that benefited from the very first SPOF mission grant.

When named Bishop of the new Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Helmsing was serving as Director for the Propagation of the Faith in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Providentially, he was being sent to head up what was then known as the “Missouri Missions,” southern Missouri.

schools, an orphanage, and a novitiate. It also enabled Bishop DuBourg to relocate his Episcopal See to St. Louis. The funding supported the arrival of Fr. Joseph Rosati, who devoted himself to mission work and evangelization, and who became the First Bishop of the Diocese of St. Louis. Funding built the first cathedral in St. Louis, now the oldest cathedral west of the Mississippi, and so on.

“Even though our diocese did not yet [officially] exist, our diocese was a part of it [this first donation] because the money was used to make sure we had missionaries in this area,” Fr. Eftink said. “We are a part of the story from the very beginning and owe the growth of the Catholic Church in this area to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.”

The importance of the Society to support evangelization, catechetical work, new churches, education, and healthcare, had taken root.



“By 1833, the United States started taking up collections for The Society for the Propagation of Faith and submitted \$6 for their first collection. Now, the United States is among the largest donors to the Society for the Propagation of Faith,” said Fr. Eftink.

The Society for the Propagation of Faith has played an important role in the growth and establishment of Catholicism in Southern Missouri, and we are reminded of the continued importance of its role in support of the missions.

“Be aware that when you donate to the Society for the Propagation of Faith—directly or through the World Mission Sunday Collection or the Missionary Cooperation Collection—the money goes to support catechetical work, schools, seminary training for

priests, drinkable water,” Fr. Eftink said. “Catechesis is available, and they may be sharing a priest that covers 100s of miles without roads. Think how vast the missionary work of the Church is: it is absolutely necessary to do this, or these folks would not have anything, certainly not like we do.”

“These groups go into other countries as a nicety,” Fr. Eftink said, “they are meeting basic essential needs of people. Think back in time in the US to Bishop DuBourg days and [our territory within the Diocese of Louisiana] and imagine what it would have been like then. That is how it is

now in present-day Africa and Asia: They are struggling to have Mass or to have a parish. It’s the same scenario as it would have been here 200 years ago.” ©TM

Fr. Eftink serves as Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Advance, MO.

¹On “Evangelization in the Modern World” (“Evangelii Nuntiandi”), no. 14

Lindsay Wright named Assistant Principal of Immaculate Conception School

Springfield, MO

Springfield Catholic School System is pleased to announce **Lindsay Wright** as the new Assistant Principal for the 2024-25 academic session at Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Springfield, MO.



WRIGHT

Wright has been a classroom teacher for 21 years, serving 16 years in Springfield Public Schools and five years at Immaculate Conception School. During this time, she has served on numerous committees and curriculum teams.

“I am deeply honored and humbled by the privilege of serving our students, faculty, and community in this role,” Wright said. “Immaculate Conception is

a great place to be.”

Wright is married to Andy Wright and together they have two children that attend Immaculate Conception School: Mylah, who will be in 8th grade, and Cormac, who will be in 5th grade. The Wrights are parishioners at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church,

and as a family they enjoy golf, travel, and being outdoors.

“We look forward to collaborating with Mrs. Wright as we continue to strive to be faithful to our Catholic school mission and unapologetically Catholic in our practices of educating the whole child,” said Sr. Cecilia Ann Rezac, MS, Director of Springfield Catholic Schools.

Wright begins her duties as Assistant Principal on July 1, 2024. ©TM

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bollinger County disaster recovery continues

Cape Girardeau

Disaster recovery efforts continue in Bollinger County through a partnership with East Missouri Action Agency (EMAA) and Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO). At the request of the Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC), EMMA was asked to take the lead on case management services for those impacted by the April 5, 2023, tornado. CCSOMO has agreed to partner with EMMA to provide previous cases and notes and to assist with onsite case management services.

“Our role is to work with affected families to collect and verify information about damages caused by the tornado and flooding events,” said Ken Palermo, CCSOMO’s Chief Executive Officer. “As documentation and verification needs are continually sought, EMMA’s physical presence in Bollinger County will allow for greater one-on-one contact with affected families.”

“EMAA is committed to working diligently with those impacted to understand their needs and present their cases to the LTRC in a timely manner, as well as help through other programs, services, and avenues that may be of help,” said Keri McCrorey, Executive Director. “We are dedicated to helping the Bollinger County community as we have for more than 50 years.”

Funds donated to the Bollinger County LTRC will be distributed following appropriate federal and state guidance. The LTRC will honor donor intent to the best of the committee’s ability. Disaster case management is a complex process that involves assessing disaster-caused damages, creating a long-term recovery plan, and identifying available resources. August’s major flooding event and the subsequent federal buy-out further challenged response and documentation efforts.

“While we always strive for timely

responses, especially during times of heightened trauma and emotion, requirements to ensure equity and fairness are often challenging,” said Jeremy Rowland, CCSOMO’s Chief Regional Officer. “EMMA’s long history of local service and knowledge of the area will provide a needed boost.”

The LTRC will continue to review cases presented to them by EMMA on behalf of the case management team of EMMA and Catholic Charities.

Informational meeting April 3 Affected families have until **April 11, 2024**, to contact EMMA about their needs and provide information needed for the LTRC to make decisions. For more information, please call Debbie McFarland at (573) 238-4220, or visit the outreach office at 104 High Street in Marble Hill Mon. -Thu., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The EMMA Mobile Unit will also be staffed Mon. -Thu., 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., until April 11, 2024, and is located at 606 MO-34 West.

All families and individuals



impacted are also welcome to join the LTRC, EMMA, and SEMO Regional Planning Commission at the **informational meeting** slated for **April 3, 2024**. The meeting will be at **5:30 p.m., in the Bollinger County Health Department safe room.** ©TM



By George Weigel

The Catholic Difference: EASTER, CREATION, AND HOLINESS

What came first: Creation, or God's covenants with the People of Israel and the New Israel, the Church?

The question may seem odd, even silly. Chronologically, it's obvious that the divine act of creation preceded the divine acts of covenant-making: no creation, no "People" with whom God could enter a covenant relationship. But our sense of time is not God's. For as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, all that we know as "time" is an eternal present to God.

In *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, Pope Benedict XVI explains that God's covenant relationship with his chosen people in both the Old and New Testaments is not an add-on, a divine afterthought — or, as it's more often understood, a fix for something that had gone wrong. Rather, Benedict writes, God's covenantal bond with his people — the Jewish people and the people of the Church — is the very reason why God "created" in the first place:

"According to rabbinic theology, the idea of the covenant — the idea of establishing a holy people to be an interlocutor for God in union with him — is prior to the idea of the creation of the world and supplies its inner motive. The cosmos was created, not that there be manifold things in heaven and earth, but that there be space for the 'covenant,' for the loving 'yes' between God and his human respondent."

Throughout the Lenten itinerary of conversion we have lived for six weeks, the Church has asked us to reflect on God's thirst for us. Thus, the paradigmatic Lenten gospel reading of Jesus and the woman at the well on the Third Sunday of Lent points to prayer as a "gift of God" (John 4:10): Prayer is our

divinely-empowered response to God's burning desire for our holiness. Other paradigmatic Lenten Sunday gospels strike a similar note: The cure of the man born blind (who is empowered to see Jesus as the Light of the World [John 9, 5, 38]) and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (which follows Martha's act of faith in John 11:27). God creates or



"The Pillars of Creation are part of the Eagle Nebula and are made of interstellar dust and gases" by Corey Ford (Getty images)

"speaks" the world into being through his "Word" (John 1:3) and redeems the world through the Word incarnate (John 1:14) to share the divine holiness. God yearns, God "thirsts," for the holiness of the human creatures he has created, so that he might be in covenant relationship with them.

The Redemption wrought in Christ is not, therefore, some sort of addendum to Creation. The paschal mystery of Christ's passion, death, resurrection and ascension is the axial point of the entire drama of Creation: the decisive, definitive turning point that reveals why there is "Creation" at all. Thus, the answer that Christian faith, which

is Easter faith, gives to a question philosophy has pondered for millennia — Why is there something rather than nothing? — is, in a word, holiness. The Thrice-Holy God created so that the holiness shared among Father, Son and Holy Spirit might be shared *ad extra*: in a world brought into being to experience the eternal giving-and-receiving of love that is God's inner-trinitarian life.

Like many others, I have been mesmerized by the extraordinarily beautiful pictures of the cosmos made available by the Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope; I recently bought a print reproducing a small portion of what astronomers know as Messier 16, the "Eagle Nebula" (which the more lyrically inclined call the "Pillars of Creation"). Some might consider this vast factory of new stars, 5,700 light-years away, as a benign accident rather than what biblical religion calls a "creation." Those who think that way tend to think of human beings the same way: We're accidents produced by billions of years

by fortuitous cosmic biochemistry.

Easter faith invites us to think differently — and more deeply.

Easter faith and the optic on reality it creates suggests that the burden of

proof lies with those who imagine that everything from the Eagle Nebula to the mysterious workings of human cognition and human altruism is just accidental.

Easter faith — the faith that the Incarnate Word overcame death and was raised to a new and superabundant form of life — confesses we live in a cosmos that is purposeful because it is Christocentric: "In him all things were created...and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17).

Easter faith summons us to think of ourselves as creatures capable of eternal life, for that is what Christ promised to those who embrace his cause (John 3:15, 17:3). And in friendship with him, the Risen One, we can experience that life, that holiness, here and now. ©DC

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

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CONGRATULATIONS


Deacon Bill Keller & Deacon Mark Wand

Deacon Bill Keller will celebrate the 20th anniversary of his ordination to the permanent diaconate on April 24. Deacon Keller continues to serve St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield.






Happy Anniversary, Deacon Keller!

Deacon Mark Wand will celebrate the 20th anniversary of his ordination to the permanent diaconate on April 24.



Happy Anniversary, Deacon Wand!

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

WHAT IS IT?

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is Sunday, and on this day we join together to pray especially for **PRIESTS, DEACONS** and **RELIGIOUS SISTERS** and **BROTHERS** and their ministries and work for God.

PRAY IT!

God our Father, we thank you for men and women who serve You as priests, deacons and religious men and women. Send your Holy Spirit to help us respond to your call. May we all support their work and ministries. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.


THANK THEM!

This is the perfect time to **WRITE A LETTER** to the priest or deacon at your church, or to a religious sister or brother! Thank them for giving their life to God and helping His people. You can also **THANK THEM IN PERSON** when you see them.

Word Find


BROTHER	MONK	PRIEST
CONSECRATED	NUN	RELIGIOUS
DEACON	ORDAINED	SISTER
HOLY ORDER	PRAYER	VOCATIONS

E	T	V	E	P	E	M	P	K	D	X	E	Z	W	V
H	T	S	E	I	R	P	V	A	E	C	N	H	X	M
T	O	K	S	V	P	M	V	R	T	O	O	V	X	T
R	E	L	I	G	I	O	U	S	A	R	C	T	F	Z
Y	E	C	Y	V	L	B	X	S	R	D	A	J	T	T
V	L	T	H	O	R	Y	N	B	C	A	E	M	D	S
G	Y	B	S	O	R	O	M	L	E	I	D	X	S	R
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O	E	N	A	Y	R	R	O	R	O	D	A	N	E	P
R	R	C	X	L	C	M	N	N	C	R	C	Q	U	V
Z	O	C	L	V	J	X	K	G	P	M	O	N	K	N
V	L	D	E	M	M	G	M	Z	D	C	O	A	I	Y
J	G	E	A	K	H	Y	K	K	H	E	I	X	X	W
P	H	N	E	Q	V	L	D	Z	I	P	W	F	R	Q



TUNE IN TO LOCAL CATHOLIC RADIO AROUND THE DIOCESE!

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KFSS	94.5 FM	Joplin
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CORRECTION:
In the March 15 edition of *The Mirror*, p. 9, this caricature of G.K. Chesterton was incorrectly identified as having its source listed as St. Mary Cathedral. In the Public Domain, the caricature was a graphic used with permission of OSV News. We regret this error and any confusion it may have caused.

Save the Date

MidWest March for Life



WEDNESDAY
MAY 1, 2024



To honor and glorify Jesus Christ and defend innocent life.

MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL LAWN

Jefferson City, Missouri

Activities starting at 8:00 a.m. • Rally starting at 9:15 a.m.
March Immediately Following

Speakers:

- Bishop Edward Rice** — Diocese of Springfield - Cape Girardeau
- Melissa Ohden** — Abortion Survivors Network
- Reagan Barklage** — Students for Life
- Brandy Meeks** — Vitae Foundation
- Ivy Almon** — Support After Abortion
- Dr. Wes Fowler** — Missouri Baptist Convention
- Bridget VanMeans** — CEO Vision Leader, Thrive Nation

(More speakers to be announced)

Break-out Sessions:

- 12:15 p.m. Youth Rally — Capitol Steps South Lawn
- Ballot Initiative Update — Capitol Rotunda
- 1:30 p.m. Holy Mass — Saint Peter Church
- Ecumenical Prayer Session — Capitol Rotunda



Diocese of Springfield - Cape Girardeau: jtran@dioscg.org

Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph: sheppard@diocesekc-sj.org

Archdiocese of St. Louis: prolife@archstl.org

Diocese of Jefferson City: kathy@midwestmarchforlife.com

Bus Info:

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Courage and EnCourage

Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau



Faithful to the teaching and pastoral guidelines of the Roman Catholic Church, **EnCourage** is a ministry dedicated to the spiritual needs of parents, siblings, adult children, and other relatives and friends of persons who identify as LGBTQ+, or who experience same-sex attractions, or gender discordance. **Courage** is a ministry that offers pastoral support and fellowship opportunities to men and women experiencing same-sex attractions or gender discordance, who choose to live a chaste life.



If you are experiencing same-sex attractions or gender discordance, or if you know of someone who is struggling with these experiences, contact the diocesan chaplain, Deacon Al Stoverink, at southernmccourage@gmail.com or call/text him at (573) 987-0551. You can also access information resources and help through the Courage International Website at www.couragerc.org, or by contacting the Courage International Offices at office@couragerc.org or (203) 803-1564.

The Springfield - Cape Girardeau Diocese Council of Catholic Women Presents ...



Here I am, Lord

Isaiah 6:8

Patty Schneier
Keynote Speaker



65th Catholic Women's
Spring Assembly

April 19-20, 2024

Drury Plaza Hotel &
Conference Center

3351 Percy Drive,
Cape Girardeau, MO



*Rare and Treasures
Fiction Boutique*






Deacon Thomas Schumer
Leadership Speaker






Fr. Daniel Belken
Spirituality Speaker

REGISTER TODAY!

Scan the Code Below





Sara Dockins
Service Speaker

Sponsored by the DCCW



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