



# MEET FR. NICK ZUMMO

Springfield, MO

**Reverend Mr. Nick Zummo was ordained to the Sacred Priesthood by the Most Rev. Edward M. Rice, on Fri., June 23, in his home parish of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Springfield.**

**F**ather Zummo graduated from Nixa High School, Nixa, MO, 2013; he has a B.S. Geological Engineering, Missouri S&T University, Rolla, MO, 2017; an M.A. Catholic Philosophical Thought, St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, St. Meinrad, IN, 2017-2019; M.A. Divinity, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, IL, 2019-2023; Baccalaureate of Sacred Theology (STB); and is currently completing his Licentiate of Sacred Theology (STL), within the field of Dogmatic Theology. Before returning to his studies at the end of August, Fr. Zummo recently took a few moments from serving in St. Agnes Cathedral to speak to *The Mirror* regarding his recent ordination. These are his thoughts:

### Concerning your ordination to the priesthood, what stands out for you?

One moment was right after I was called, I turned around and faced the congregation. I remember how wonderful it was just to see how many people were there. It was very moving to see the support of all these people from so many places. A lot of folks from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish (SEAS) of course, my home parish, but then several people came from Poplar Bluff and several of my classmates from Seminary came from Michigan and Chicago.

Both the laying on of hands by all the priests and then receiving the sign of peace from all the priests was very moving. When the priests go by and lay hands on my head, I'm looking down so I couldn't tell who anyone was because I couldn't see their faces. It was a little funny because the only people that I knew for sure were Fr. David Baunach, because he makes his own sandals, and a couple of other priests, because I recognized their shoes. But for the most part, I had no idea who was who. Then, when it was time for the sign of peace, the priests said a few words to me, too, so I could see who they were. I recall just how happy I was to see so many of them, one after another, coming through.



▲ **PRIESTHOOD**—Richard and Anita, parents of Fr. Nick Zummo, joined their son for a photo after his ordination to the priesthood June 23 with Bishop Edward M. Rice, in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Springfield. Also pictured is Fr. Zummo's younger brother, Kendall Zummo. (Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)

### When did you discern your calling?

It was a gradual thing for me. I grew up going to a youth group at SEAS, where I always enjoyed spending time with my friends. At that point in my life, there was a little bit of me that was curious and perhaps drawn to the priesthood. I distinctly remember going to the Steubenville Mid-America Youth Conference, they always do an altar call during the event: They're like, "Anybody who feels even slightly called to the priesthood, come forward." I was very, very quiet, and I remember thinking, "I am not going up there!" That's what it was like in high school, on my mind a little bit but not very much, and definitely not enough to talk about with people or walk up in the middle of the conference. In high school, I always thought God would call somebody else to do it (become a priest). So, I ended up going to college at Missouri S&T and studying engineering. My mom was a math teacher, my grandpa was a math teacher, and my grandma was a special ed teacher. So, there are a lot of teachers in the family, and I was good at math and science, so it seemed natural to go in that direction.

In college, I was very involved in the Newman Center on campus. I spent a lot of my free time there—I was the sacristan for the college Mass so I would help set up and I would talk with the priest. I remember about halfway through college I had noticed that the desire toward the priesthood, or at least the tugging on the heartstrings, was still there and I was kind of perplexed by that. I'd been kind of hoping that it would go away and I could do what I was interested in, so I

was curious about that.

It was about that time Nick Newton (now Fr. Nick Newton), who had been in the same youth group in high school as me, invited me to come to a diocesan Seminarian Gathering over the summer. I went and got to meet a lot of the seminarians and other priests. I never really knew a lot of priests growing up. I grew up around Monsignor Reidy, but despite how great of a priest he is, he is a lot older than I am. He seemed a holy, older man to me, and I didn't know what he did in his free time. The combination of his example of piety, plus meeting other priests and seeing that a priest can be both holy and fun, was enlightening. I was again able to see that these men are serious about Church things but could also be playful when it comes to time to relax. I felt much more at home, and it opened my heart a little bit more. I was more at ease with the idea. So, I went through my last two years of college, finishing my degree, and discerning where I wanted to go from there. I kept in touch with the Vocations office and was able to attend seminarian gathering retreats two or three times before I ever was a seminarian.

I graduated with my engineering degree in May of 2017 and in the fall of 2017, I started at Seminary. It was helpful to take my time figuring out what I wanted to do. I read the classic book on discernment, *To Save a Thousand Souls*. Somewhere within the book, it basically states that there comes a point in your discernment process where you have discerned as much as you can without entering a seminary. You then have to go in and figure out from there what the next step will be. While still at college, Bishop Rice came to Rolla and had lunch with me at Panera Bread. I remember he said to just give the seminary two years and see how it goes: if things go well, you can stay, if you don't like it, you can leave, but give the Lord those two years and see what



▲ **PRAYER OF ORDINATION**—The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice prayed the Prayer of Ordination and laid hands upon the head of Nick Zummo, ordaining him a priest for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. (Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)





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

## Series on pornography to launch in this issue of *The Mirror*

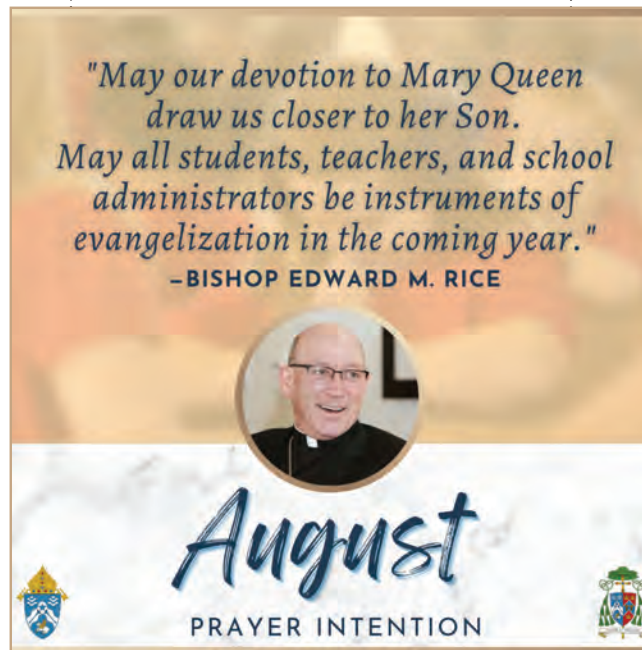
**A**s reported in the last issue of *The Mirror*, the USCCB just recently released the 2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection and Young People. This annual report includes the independent audit carried out by StoneBridge Business Partners, which is responsible for assessing the implementation of the 17 articles of the Charter, along with the updates, in each (arch)diocese and eparchy in the United States. The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau was among those dioceses that participated in the on-site audit during the 2021-2022 fiscal year and I am very pleased that the diocese remains in compliance with the articles set out in the Charter. The annual report can be found on our diocesan Website, [www.dioscg.org](http://www.dioscg.org).

Being in compliance means that we are reaching out to and offering support to victims that have been harmed by abuse at the hands of clergy. We enforce the safeguarding of our children and vulnerable adults through education and training, background screening, and current compliance with the Code of Conduct for all clergy, employees, and adult volunteers. With the dedication and efforts of our local parish and school safe environment coordinators, pastors, principals, DREs and CREs, and all of the instructors through whom our prevention and educational programs are facilitated, we create a safe environment for all. We teach our children what are safe and what are unsafe interactions and ways to have healthy and respectful relationships and we mandate high standards of behavior from the adults.

During the 2022-2023 school year, we had 5,731 out of the 6,266 children and young people enrolled in our Catholic schools and Parish Schools of religion classes that completed the safe environment training, i.e., VIRTUS@ "Teaching Touching Safety" and the "Theology of the Body" curriculum in the spring. Those not trained were either absent on the days the lessons were taught or have parents that opted out of the training. During the past 2022-23 fiscal year, we processed—that is we registered in VIRTUS@, safe environment trained, background screened, and/or updated the Code of Conduct—a total of 2,350 adult volunteers and 683 employees, along with 157 teachers, 82 priests, 24 deacons, and eight candidates for ordination. The Safe Environment Training, which is available Online to anyone through VIRTUS@, has been expanded to include the "Mandated and Ethical Reporter" training, the "Vulnerable Adults Training Module," and training entitled, "Healthy Boundaries for Adults," along with the "Protecting God's Children" training.

Of course, one of the biggest obstacles to the ongoing implementation of the Charter is "Charter Fatigue." People get tired of the constant vigilance necessary to create and maintain healthy environments for both children and adults. Yet, that is exactly what is required in order for the Diocese to have the best program for protecting children and vulnerable adults. People will ask me, "Why do I have to go

through training when I didn't cause the problem," as if to say the issue (and/or those that offend) is confined to clergy. We've learned in these past



20-plus years since the Charter was implemented that abuse occurs in every area of our society and culture, including the business world, educational institutions, sports and entertainment, and within the family. The more aware each of us becomes of the signs of abuse, the greater the possibility for prevention of abuse. I'm grateful to Shelly Ferry and Bill Holtmeyer for their good work in the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, and I am especially grateful for our parish and school Safe Environment Coordinators: each is essential in our important safeguarding efforts and the training of our children and volunteers. Let all of us keep up the good work.

### ISSUE OF PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is not something that you may expect to be addressed in a diocesan newspaper, but I think with its pervasiveness in our society, it is essential. Online pornography is a lot more dangerous than most people suspect and if we ignore the issue or don't understand its effects, it will only get worse. The evidence is in: pornography is as addictive as smoking and inflicts damage to the brain, just as smoking does to the lungs. With the average age of first exposure to pornography or explicit images reported in males to be as young as eight years of age, it also has far-reaching implications and a damaging impact on relationships. (No, that is not a typo: age 8!) In fact, numerous states have declared

pornography to be a public health issue. If that is so, why aren't more people talking about the issue of pornography and child sexual abuse materials? Well, some say it's personal, it's embarrassing, and an uncomfortable topic to discuss. And, for some, there is still the mentality that it's harmless, victimless, and no one's business.

The reality is different. We can see in the statistics noted in the Annual Report, nearly all of those that had allegations of possessing child pornography or child sexual abuse materials also had allegations of sexual abuse. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2354, states that (pornography) "...perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other." In other words, it undermines the basis of marriage and relationships, it creates a delusion, an unreality objectifying the other person for one's pleasure. Finally, it attacks the very dignity of the human person.

In the next several issues of *The Mirror*, a guest author from Jackson, MO, will explore the philosophical, theological, and human principles that guide the Church's teachings on the sanctity of the human body and the dignity of the human person. You may find the introduction to this series on p. 10.

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



### ANOTHER WALK THROUGH: 'WALKING TOGETHER'

by Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht

Before his retirement in 2008 as the Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Bishop John Leibrecht wrote a standing column in *The Mirror* entitled, "Walking Together." At the end of each article, Bp. Leibrecht would normally share a funny story referencing his travels to the schools, or time with friends, family, or other bishops. *The Mirror* has decided to share a few of these in an ongoing series entitled, "Another walk through: 'Walking Together.'" We hope you enjoy them.

**September 8, 1989** While preparing to welcome our four previous bishops to the dedication of our new The Catholic Center, I recalled the note which Bishop Helmsing sent me when I was named the Fifth Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Bishop Helmsing founded the diocese in 1956 and served as our first bishop. "Congratulations," he wrote me, "on being the new father of the people of southern Missouri. And remember, I am the great, great, great, grandfather."

**September 15, 1989** The Chancery staff made detailed

and elaborate plans to move from the old building to the new The Catholic Center. Everything was to be accomplished with precision. Every box was numbered according to a master plan. The first truck arrived, the movers loaded the elevator, pushed the button and immediately got stuck between floors for 20 minutes.

**September 22, 1989** A fellow playing the piano—and not too well—explained: "I play by ear." An onlooker said, "Unfortunately, that's also the way I listen."



**VEN Y  
VERÁS**

Obispo Edward M. Rice

## Serie sobre la pornografía para lanzar en este número de *The Mirror*

Como se informó en el último número de *The Mirror*, la USCCB acaba de publicar el Informe Anual de 2022 sobre la Implementación de la Carta para la Protección de los Niños y los Jóvenes. Este informe anual incluye la auditoría independiente realizada por StoneBridge Business Partners, que se encarga de evaluar la aplicación de los 17 artículos de la Carta, junto con las actualizaciones, en cada (arqui)diócesis y eparquía de Estados Unidos. La Diócesis de Springfield-Cape Girardeau fue una de las diócesis que participaron en la auditoría in situ durante el ejercicio 2021-2022 y me complace mucho que la diócesis siga cumpliendo los artículos establecidos en la Carta. El informe anual se puede encontrar en nuestro sitio web diocesano.

Estar en conformidad significa que estamos tendiendo la mano y ofreciendo apoyo a las víctimas que han sufrido abusos a manos del clero. Hacemos cumplir la salvaguarda de nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables mediante la educación y la formación, la investigación de antecedentes y el cumplimiento actual del Código de Conducta para todo el clero, los empleados y los voluntarios adultos. Con la dedicación y el esfuerzo de nuestros coordinadores locales de ambiente seguro de parroquias y escuelas, párrocos, directores, DREs y CREs, y de todos los instructores a través de los cuales se facilitan nuestros programas de prevención y educación, creamos un ambiente seguro para todos. Enseñamos a nuestros hijos cuáles son las interacciones seguras y cuáles las inseguras, y las formas de mantener relaciones sanas y respetuosas, y exigimos a los adultos altos niveles de comportamiento.

Durante el curso escolar 2022-2023, de los 6,266 niños y jóvenes matriculados en nuestras escuelas católicas y escuelas parroquiales de religión, 5,731 completaron la formación sobre ambientes seguros,

es decir, VIRTUS@ “Enseñar a tocar con seguridad” y el plan de estudios “Teología del cuerpo” en primavera. Los que no recibieron formación estaban ausentes los días en que se impartían las clases o tenían padres que optaron por no participar en la formación. Durante el pasado año fiscal 2022-23, procesamos —es decir, nos registramos en VIRTUS@, formamos en ambientes seguros, investigamos los antecedentes y/o actualizamos el Código de Conducta— a un total de 2,350 voluntarios adultos y 683 empleados, junto con 157 profesores, 82 sacerdotes, 24 diáconos y ocho candidatos a la ordenación. La Capacitación para un Ambiente Seguro, que está disponible en Internet para cualquier persona a través de VIRTUS@, se ha ampliado para incluir la capacitación “*Informante obligatorio y ético*”, el “*Módulo de capacitación acerca de los adultos vulnerables*” y la capacitación titulada “*Límites saludables para adultos*”, junto con la capacitación “*Protegiendo a los hijos de Dios*”.

Por supuesto, uno de los mayores obstáculos para la aplicación continuada de la Carta es la “Fatiga de la Carta”. La gente se cansa de la vigilancia constante necesaria en nuestros esfuerzos por crear un ambiente seguro. Sin embargo, eso es exactamente lo que se necesita para que la Diócesis tenga el mejor programa de protección de menores y adultos vulnerables. La gente me pregunta: “¿Por qué tengo que recibir formación si yo no he causado el problema?”, como si dijera que el problema (y/o los que ofenden) se limita sólo al clero. Hemos aprendido en estos más de 20 años desde que se implantó la Carta que los abusos se producen en todos los ámbitos de nuestra sociedad y cultura, incluido el mundo empresarial, las instituciones educativas, el deporte y el espectáculo, y en el seno de la familia. Cuanto más consciente sea cada uno de nosotros de los signos de abuso, mayor será la posibilidad de prevenir el abuso. Agradezco a Shelly Ferry y a

Bill Holtmeyer su buen trabajo en la Oficina Diocesana de Protección de Niños y Jóvenes, y estoy especialmente agradecida a nuestros Coordinadores de Entorno Seguro de las parroquias y escuelas: cada uno de ellos es esencial en nuestros importantes esfuerzos de salvaguarda y en la formación de nuestros niños y voluntarios. Mantengamos todos el buen trabajo.

### LA CUESTIÓN DE LA PORNOGRAFÍA

La pornografía no es algo que se pueda esperar que se trate en un periódico diocesano, pero creo que, dada su omnipresencia en nuestra sociedad, es esencial. La pornografía en línea es mucho más peligrosa de lo que la mayoría de la gente sospecha y, si ignoramos el problema o no comprendemos sus efectos, no hará más que empeorar. La evidencia está ahí: la pornografía es tan adictiva como fumar e inflige daños al cerebro, igual que fumar a los pulmones. Según los informes, la edad media de la primera exposición a la pornografía o a imágenes explícitas en los varones es de tan sólo ocho años, por lo que también tiene implicaciones de largo alcance y un impacto perjudicial en las relaciones. (No, eso no es un error tipográfico: ¡8 años!). De hecho, numerosos estados han declarado que la pornografía es un problema de salud pública. Si eso es así, ¿por qué no hay más gente hablando sobre el tema de la pornografía y los materiales de abuso sexual infantil? Bueno, algunos dicen que es personal, es vergonzoso y un tema incómodo de discutir. Y, para algunos, sigue existiendo la mentalidad de que es inofensivo, no tiene víctimas y no es asunto de nadie.

La realidad es otra. Podemos ver en las estadísticas señaladas en el Informe Anual, que casi todos los que tenían acusaciones de poseer pornografía infantil o materiales de abuso sexual infantil también tenían acusaciones de abuso sexual. El Catecismo de la Iglesia

Católica (CIC), 2354, afirma que (la pornografía) “ofende la castidad porque desnaturaliza la finalidad del acto sexual”. En otras palabras, socava la base del matrimonio y de las relaciones, crea una ilusión, una irrealidad objetivando a la otra persona para el propio placer. Por último, atenta contra la dignidad misma de la persona humana.

En los próximos números de *The Mirror*, un autor invitado de Jackson, Missouri, explorará los principios filosóficos, teológicos y humanos que guían las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre la santidad del cuerpo humano y la dignidad de la persona humana. Puedes encontrar la introducción a esta serie en la pág. 10.

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



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By  
Fr. Joshua  
J. Whitfield

## WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 24: *Showing Us How To Love*

**W**e have established that Scripture shows us Jesus. But why does that matter? As I have written earlier, the purpose of Scripture is to inspire belief, to reveal God's justice and to call us to holiness in faith. But, as I've hinted, there is indeed more. The purpose of Scripture is also love, and before moving on to explore tradition, we should look at this more closely.

To do so, the great spiritual master St. Augustine can help us, and in an interesting way. To think about how we relate to God, he asks us to think of ourselves as exiles, hopelessly lost and lonely for home. "Suppose we were wanderers who could not live in blessedness except at home," he wrote. Imagine, he said, that "we felt wretched in our wandering, and wishing to put an end to our misery, determined to return home" ("On Christian Doctrine," No. 1.4.4). That, Augustine said, is what it's like for humans after the fall. We're miserably estranged from God and lost. This sets up a simple question: How do we get back?

St. Augustine's answer was simple. Imagine we're on the road home, but the road is "blocked, as if by a thorny ledge," he said. What would be more merciful, then, than for someone to clear the road for us, opening a path? That's what Jesus did, Augustine said; he forgave our sins, and he himself became the path back home. We're lost, and Jesus helps us get home. But getting back to God is not a journey involving physical distance or travel; it's a spiritual and moral journey. This road Augustine is talking about is not a physical road, not a road "from place to place." Rather, it's a "road of affections" — that is, a road of loves ("On Christian Doctrine," No. 1.10.10). Jesus comes to us, Augustine said, lives among us and forgives us. He shows us the way to go and gives us the means to return to God by showing us how to love and live rightly.

Jesus quite simply shows us how to love and how not to love; he shows us through his love what it means to be fully human. And, through his passion (which we'll talk about later), Jesus gives us the means to imitate him and walk with him back to God, to "our native place."

Which is what happens when we discover Christ in Scripture — we see Jesus and learn how to love as he loves. That is, the whole purpose of Scripture is the "love of Being" — the love of God and neighbor we discover in

Jesus. That's the purpose of "the whole temporal dispensation," the point of all truth, all knowledge, and all that's contained in Scripture: to teach us how to love ("On Christian Doctrine," No. 1.35.39). That is, in the story of Jesus of Nazareth — in his life, death and resurrection — we see what it means truly to love. Specifically put, we see what it means to give up our will to God's will as he gave up his will to his Father in Gethsemane. We see what it means to forgive like he forgave. And we see what it means to be holy like his Father is holy. To learn how to love like this is to experience what we call "salvation." But, of course, Jesus not only shows us how to love, he enables us and gives us the grace to love. (This we'll talk about later when we talk about the sacraments.)

Given all of that, Scripture is a tutorial in love, yes, but it is also more. To explain what I mean by that, I should say clearly what we've only hinted at thus far: that the reading or hearing of Scripture is a mystical experience. Scripture not only shows us who Jesus is, it genuinely introduces us to Jesus. Encountering Scripture is not like reading a novel, a biography, or a textbook. The difference is that Christ comes to you in Scripture through worship or through personal reading. The belief of the Church is that in such moments we encounter not just a historical record but a "living transmission" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 78). We believe that when one genuinely hears Scripture, it's a moment of a personal encounter.

This belief is ancient. Origen, for example, said that "If the Scriptures are true," then Jesus speaks "today too, in our congregation ... not only in this congregation, but in other gatherings, and in the whole world" ("Homilies on Luke," No. 32.2). There's a contemporariness to the Christ we meet in Scripture. Among the earliest Christians, it was understood that Jesus was genuinely present in the community — especially when the Gospel was being announced. Early Christians, for instance, would likely have thought the old evangelical acronym "WWJD?" to be heretical. Never was it a question of what Jesus "would" do as if he wasn't

present. Rather, it was always a question of what Jesus "is" doing. His presence was never doubted. Never was there any sort of wistfulness that longed for the days when Jesus "was" present.

Early Christians knew that Jesus was present in word and sacrament, and that's what we Catholics still believe: that the "Father's self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit remains present and active in the

on our level, with words, images, beauty and flesh, so that we could see the divine in and beyond material things. Angels, being purely immaterial and spiritual, do not need words to commune with God; humans, however, do. We, being material and spiritual creatures, need words and images to encounter God. That's how God meets us where we are. It's why ours is a religion of incarnation and Scripture.

The Second Vatican Council summed this up wonderfully: "For the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men" (*Dei Verbum*, No. 13). In other words, we have Scripture because we're human; and God knows how to talk to humans — with words we understand.

So, Scripture, in the Christian sense, are the texts of the Old and New Testaments, believed by the Church to be the authentic and living witness of God's saving work in history. Scripture witnesses to our belief that Jesus is the perfect work of God's salvation. But it's more than that. In reading Scripture, we encounter Christ in a mystical way, not merely in a historical report. Although there is indeed historical fact in the Bible, the Christ we encounter in Scripture is not merely a historical construction or even a purely literary construction. Rather, Jesus is mystically present in the event of hearing or reading Scripture itself — a "living transmission." To put it simply, it's the Body of Christ speaking.



The baroque painting of St. Augustine/ original by Claudio Coello.  
(Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com)

Church" (Catechism, No. 79). This, of course, is simply biblical belief in the Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever — the Christ whose mind we're able by grace to make our own (Heb 13:8; Phil 2:5).

But if Christ is present among us today, then why do we need Scripture to discover the real Jesus? Why can't we just intuit the truth of God? Why can't we just close our eyes and think of Jesus? Why do we need oral and written communication, all these ancient texts? Why can't we simply conceive God and commune with him wordlessly?

Again, St. Augustine — who clearly thought a lot about this — helps us think this through. "The scriptures," he wrote, "employ no manner of speaking that is not in common human usage — they are, after all, speaking to human beings" ("The Trinity," No. 1.23). The Scripture, he said, makes use of created things like words — "like children's toys" — to help us learn how to seek what is above created things, "step by step as best we can" ("The Trinity," No. 1.2).

Anyone who's read poetry or a love letter understands this. It's lovely how Augustine thought about it. He didn't view Scripture merely scientifically or historically or even as mere literature. Rather, he understood that as humans — material and spiritual beings who speak — God lowered himself to speak

**NEXT EDITION:**  
WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 25

**Scripture's Apostolic Nature**

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

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Belleville, IL**—The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows will present the annual **"When Mental Illness Hits Home,"** conference on Fri., Aug. 25 at the Shrine Visitors Center, focusing on *"Cultivating Family Resilience: Enhancing Well-Being through Compassion, Communication, and Connection."* This Conference is for friends and family members who journey with people with mental illness and for professionals in the mental health field. Fee: \$40 per person, lunch included. Information and Online registration is available at <https://snows.org/ministries/spiritual-programs/> or call the Shrine at (618) 394-6281.

**Forsyth**—Our Lady of the Ozarks Catholic Church, located at 951 Swan Valley Dr., will hold a special **Christmas Collectables Sale**, Fri., Sept. 15, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sat., Sept. 16, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Included in the sale are over 250 Dept. 56 Christmas pieces, buildings, and accessories, all priced at half their value. Everything Christmas is the theme of this fun rummage sale!

**Lebanon**—St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, located at 345 Grand Ave, will have its annual **Rummage Sale**, Fri., Sept. 15, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. and Sat., Sept. 16, 7 a.m.-12-noon. Housewares, collectables, toys, books, records, jewelry, Christmas décor, and much more.

**Scott City**—St. Joseph School and St. Joseph Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will have a **Rummage Sale** Thu., Aug. 10, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Fri., Aug. 11, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sat., Aug 12, 7 a.m.-12-noon, in the Scott City Knights of Columbus Hall, located at 28745 US Hwy 61.

**Scott City**—St. Joseph Catholic Church will host the **Annual Fall Dinner**, Sun., Sept. 10, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., in the St. Joseph School gym. Menu for this buffet-style meal includes kettle beef, chicken & dumplings, chicken & dressing, mashed potatoes, green beans, slaw, dessert, coffee & tea. Cost: Adults, \$15; children, ages 6-12, \$7; under 5: free. Carry-out is available. The CCW will be selling crafts, religious articles, breads, and sweets.

**Springfield**—SAVE THE DATE! Holy Trinity will host a **Catholic Women's Conference**, Sat., Oct. 14, 2023. Doors open at 8 a.m. and the conference begins promptly at 9 a.m. Conference fee is \$25 and includes lunch, T-shirt, and bag. Register NOW to ensure your spot at <https://form.jotform.com/222586941597976>. More details will be available soon.

**Springfield**—Holy Trinity CCW is seeking vendors for its annual **Fall Bazaar** which will be held Sat., Nov. 11 and Sun., Nov. 12. Vendors interested in participating should contact Tina Kile, Bazaar Chair, by Wed., Aug 30. For more information or a vendor application, please contact Tina at (417) 827-3165 or Email her at [tkile5401@gmail.com](mailto:tkile5401@gmail.com).

**Springfield**—Springfield Area Perpetual Adoration, hosted at Holy Trinity Chapel, has an urgent need of Adorers on Wednesdays, 2 a.m. & 3 a.m. Join our substitute list to experience the peace of adoration. For more information or to sign up, please contact Marilyn Gibson at (417) 224-4043.

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

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**Melissa Ohden** is the Founder and Director of The Abortion Survivors Network, the only healing and advocacy organization for abortion survivors worldwide and The Education and Policy Center, which impacts policy issues relating to abortion and abortion survivors.

*All proceeds benefit Vitae Foundation, a national non-profit organization that facilitates research about life issues to create messaging strategies to share with others so that together, we can build a future where abortion is unthinkable.*

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# SAYING YES TO BROKENNESS: A Reflection on the Blessed Sacrament

By Alexa T. Dodd

A few weeks ago, I was the last to receive Holy Communion during Sunday Mass. As I came forward behind my five-year-old son, our deacon leaned toward me and whispered, “I’m going to give you a host that is slightly broken. So just be very careful with it.”

As he raised the host, I saw that it was cracked down the center, and as I brought it to my mouth, I could feel the fragile fibers of the bread. I was conscientious of how I held it, meticulous about keeping any crumb from falling.

When I made it back to the pew, I knelt in prayer for a long time, feeling as though God was trying to speak to me through this experience.

I knew our deacon had probably given me that host because I was the last person in line and he wanted to avoid putting the broken host back in the Tabernacle. But the words he’d spoken to me—how they’d startled me out of the predictable routine of standing in a Communion line—seemed almost like a riddle or a proverb. A truth about the faith I was meant to contemplate.

Indeed, the experience of receiving the broken host had rekindled my reverence for the Eucharist; the need to be so careful had reminded me of the utter sacredness of the Sacrament. My whole body seemed awakened to the truth I often take for granted: *This is your Savior.*

I’ve been thinking about this experience for weeks now. I know that it is partly in my nature as a writer to try to glean meaning from it, to see it as a sign of something more. But isn’t that exactly what a sacrament is? A sign of grace that simultaneously imparts grace. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) states, a sacrament is “the visible sign of the hidden reality of salvation” (CCC 774).

The broken host reminded me of the beginning words of the Consecration: “He said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples...” Jesus’s breaking of the bread not only points to his sacrifice on the cross—where His body is broken—but makes present the one and same sacrifice. By his words that transubstantiate the bread into His body, the breaking

of the bread *re-presents* to us the breaking of His body on the cross.

And yet, in the breaking, every piece, every fragment of that bread, and every drop from the chalice is the fullness of His body, blood, soul, and divinity. This is why I had to hold the host with such reverence—not because breaking it would somehow lessen its holiness, but because every crumb of it was the fullness of my Savior.

And herein, I think, is the paradox, the essential aspect of this experience that stands out to me: That I, who am broken—with sin and suffering—was asked to hold my broken Lord, to, in a sense, *care* for Him.

Every time I go to Mass—and not just this occasion that drew my attention—I am asked to witness my unworthiness even as I receive the King of the Universe. I am asked to remember that Jesus was broken for my iniquities and that I am only made whole by that breaking, by receiving into my body His body, broken for me. I am asked to love the Lord and to make myself vulnerable by accepting His perfect vulnerability.

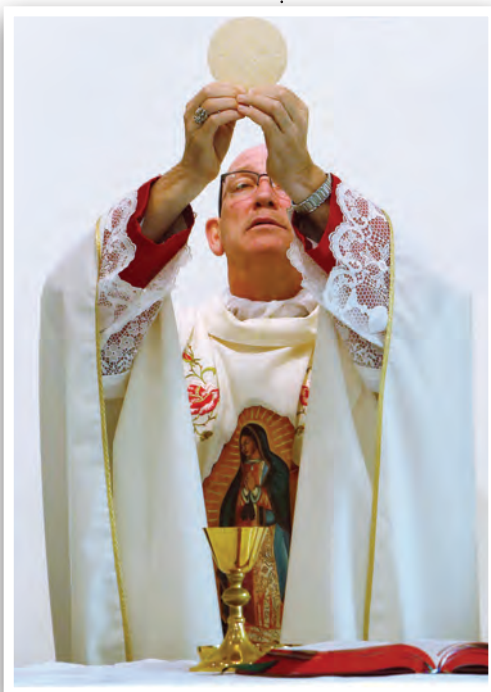
It was as though God illuminated, in that brief exchange with our deacon, the truth I often overlook. Perhaps it stood out to me all the more because, lately, I have been very aware of my own brokenness.

Last year, I suffered an early miscarriage. Since then, I’ve struggled to overcome a sense of inadequacy about my own body.

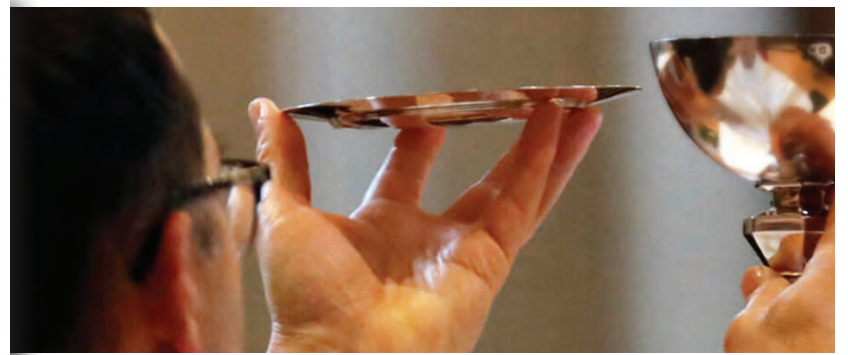
The words of Consecration—“For this is the Chalice of My Blood...which will be poured out for you and for many”—have been a source of comfort for me as I contemplate what it means to shed blood in the context of motherhood. In a sense, the blood of my miscarriage became a conduit for that child’s salvation, though it was far earlier than expected or desired.

But recognizing that child’s joy in heaven does not diminish the pain of losing him or her. Within the last year, I have asked God why. I have struggled to rebuke the half-conscious thought that I lost that pregnancy because I did not deserve another child, that I was not worthy of them and all the joy and suffering their life would bring.

But it seemed, somehow, in the moment of receiving that broken host—of specifically being asked to take our Lord carefully—that He was signaling my worthiness.



**CONSECRATION**—Bishop Edward M. Rice elevated the host while offering the Eucharistic Prayer during a recent liturgy, which states, in part, “... he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples...” Alexa Dodd states in this column, “Jesus’s breaking of the bread not only points to his sacrifice on the cross—where His body is broken—but makes present the one and the same sacrifice. By his words that transubstantiate the bread into His body, the breaking of the bread re-presents to us the breaking of His body on the cross.” (*The Mirror*)



As though He were saying, “I trust you with everything that I am. You are worthy because of me. You are enough because of me.”

As though He were asking—as He asks at every Mass—“Do you trust me? Do you trust that I am enough?”

I want my answer to be yes. ©USCCB

*This article appears in the August “For Your Marriage” resource ©USCCB. The Website was launched in 2007 as part of the National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage, an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to communicate the meaning and value of married life for the Church and for society.*

## Using A Eucharistic Vocabulary

By Fr. David Dohogne



As part of our Eucharistic Revival and Renewal, it is important to focus on the proper vocabulary in reference to the Most Holy Eucharist. As Catholics, we believe that the Holy Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Many Catholics have a tendency to refer to the Holy Eucharist simply as “bread” and “wine.” That’s what it WAS prior to the words of consecration at Mass, but that’s not what it IS after the words of consecration are prayed and the miracle of transubstantiation has occurred during the liturgy.

While some of our Eucharistic hymns make use of the terms “bread” and “wine” in the lyrics, we need to keep these terms in their proper context within the hymn itself. Even some of our prayers at Mass as well as our readings from Scripture make use of these terms (e.g. bread of life, bread of angels, bread come down from Heaven,...). Even when we use these two words, it is the assumption that they refer to the form those elements take prior to what becomes the Most Holy Eucharist!

Words have meaning and can convey a powerful message. We need to use the proper words, terms, and vocabulary when referring to the Holy Eucharist.

In his Pastoral Letter on the Sacred Liturgy, Bishop James Johnston notes in #12 that “language is important in conveying what we believe, including how we speak about the Blessed Sacrament. All should strive to refer to the Eucharist in terms such as ‘the Body and Blood of Christ’ or ‘the Sacred Host and Precious Blood,’ and NOT as the ‘bread’ and ‘wine.’” This is true for all Catholics, but especially for those who serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Our actions as well as our words should reflect our belief.

Let us make a better effort to be more deliberate and conscientious in using the proper terms for the Most Holy Eucharist. Failing to do so is a great disservice to our Lord and to fellow believers! Perhaps our casual and carefree use of the words “bread” and “wine” in reference to the Holy Eucharist has contributed to the “crisis of faith” we are now experiencing in the Church. ©TM

*Father Dohogne serves as diocesan Director of Worship & Liturgy; Co-Director of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and Coordinator of the Office of Spiritual Deliverance & Exorcism. He is the Pastor of St. Henry Parish, in Charleston.*

## ZUMMO // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

happens. I knew I needed to be there, so that was kind of where I was when I began my seminary work.

### What was the formation process like for you?

At St. Meinrad, I really enjoyed the community as a whole. Whenever we did anything together, whether it was evening prayers, a liturgy, a bishop visit, or promises before ordination, there was always a meal afterward. Meals were always immediately after some kind of communal activity. It was through these meals that I got to know so many people from the school. It was especially helpful to anyone new in the seminary, to be able to spend that time and just get to know the guys and learn their stories, how they got there, and what they did in their prayer life. You could enjoy lunch or dinner with anybody in the school, which was great because it formed a comradery. This communal aspect was really nice.

I have really enjoyed my Sacred Theology classes while attending Mundelein, and I am looking forward to more of these classes as I finish my STL degree this next year. At Mundelein, I had an opportunity to read a lot of primary sources and various theologians of the Church. There is so much to read and learn with regards to the tradition of the Church. I got a chance to dig into a lot of things that have been helpful for me spiritually and in my own prayer life. And of course, it has provided me with so much material for homilies. I am always pulling from class readings. There are really good readings from the documents of the Second Vatican Council, different theologians, and different Church fathers. It's a task because it is a lot of reading, but it's all very beneficial.

### As a priest, what do you most look forward to?

What I have always looked forward to the most is celebrating Mass and hearing confessions. Both of which I have done in the past few weeks (since ordination) and it has been very special. It's very different celebrating Mass versus participating in the Mass. A vocation to the priesthood is one that makes a man holier through the practice of carrying out the sacraments. I am beginning to experience that. It is a privilege to be able to say Mass and to be the one that speaks the word of Christ. And the sacrament of penance and reconciliation is the holy ground of listening: Listening to everything that is going on in people's lives, listening to the things for which they seek God's mercy, and trying to be attentive to what message I can share with them from the

Lord in that moment. People often need the Lord's comfort in confession. If I try to do it by myself, nothing good would come of it, the fact that the Lord does it through me is very moving. It always reminds me of what a retired faculty member, a priest from Chicago, would say, "Look what we get to do!" How is it possible I get to do these things?!

### What ministries particularly interest you?

I have always enjoyed the RCIA and youth ministry. I grew up participating in youth ministry, so it has always had a place in my heart. Youth group was fun, and important in my own journey, enabling me to get to know priests outside of just liturgy. I always appreciate being able to help because in youth ministry and RCIA, people have all these questions. We spend all this time learning and then the questions meet the studies. It's special to watch people debate or come to terms with what the Church teaches, to walk that journey with them, and to see how they grow and witness how the Lord moves them.



▲ **CONGRATULATIONS**—Msgr. Tom Reidy, Fr. Zummo's former pastor of his home parish of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Springfield, congratulated Fr. Zummo June 23 during the liturgy ordaining him a priest. (Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)

### What are your thoughts on how The Church evangelizes?

We spend an awful lot of time talking about evangelization, but I am not sure how much we do evangelize. Evangelization certainly looks different in our time, but I think people still look for one-on-one interactions and personal invitations. The best way that we can evangelize is to show people through our own lives what our faith means to us, and that it brings us joy and happiness. And just authenticity: An authentic witness moves people far more than anything else. People can sense any sort of manipulation or coercion. They just want to meet real people living out their faith and see why it is important to them.



▲ **FIRST BLESSING**—The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice knelt for a blessing from the Diocese's new priest, Fr. Nick Zummo, after the liturgy of ordination June 23 in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Springfield. (Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)

### These days of waning church attendance/sacramental decline what needs to happen to help grow faith and participation in the Church?

I don't think the relevance of the Church has ever really changed the receptivity that we as a community have, just the times change. The Church is just as relevant now as it has been in the past—whether you're talking about the 12 disciples or 1,200 families in a parish—all is relevant, but things look different in different times. I think people's hesitations toward institutions may be a symptom of growing individualism. The belief is, "I can do everything by myself, and I don't need an institution to tell me what to do." But in reality, an institution or a faith community actually helps people along the way, it doesn't hinder them. Growing in faith oftentimes requires somebody who has been there before you, who sees the ways that you've been blessed, and the ways you need to change. The Lord wouldn't have founded a church if it was going to be irrelevant

someday in the future. Giving yourself over to an institution requires a certain docility, a willingness to say, "I may not understand why you say something or why you teach something, but I'm willing to learn."

### What's next? Where are you assigned now?

I am currently assigned to St. Agnes Cathedral in Springfield. At the end of August, I start classes at Mundelein and graduate with my STL in May 2024. After graduation, I will return to the diocese for my next assignment.

### What would you share with any young man discerning their call to the priesthood?

It's important to get to know the priests of your parish, especially young priests that might be chaplains in your high school: see what their interests are and what they really do all day. And then: always strive to grow in your prayer life, because no matter where someone is called, that's going to be foundational in all things. Do not be afraid to spend time in prayer. Know that no matter what vocation they are called to, it is always one that is going to draw them outside themselves. Striving to grow into a loving

person who serves other people and is outwardly-oriented will serve them, regardless of their future vocation.

### What ideas do you have to help the Diocese meet the 25 (seminarians) by 2025 goal?

I think the Church can foster a community that grows in holiness together. There are parishes, communities, and dioceses that have a wealth of vocations and I think a lot of that is because they foster growing in holiness and various pious practices. Encourage people to go to Eucharistic adoration and spend time in prayer. If our communities, our families, our parents, and priests encourage the practice of holiness, certainly it will help foster vocations. It also helps when young people can see others living a sacramental life, taking advantage of the grace of the sacraments and what it does in their lives. I think a good faith community does that. For example, parents, adults, and catechists who go to confession are much more powerful witnesses to the importance of confession than anyone else can be because they live it.

I think priests being present and willing to talk to young people is helpful. I think young people really don't know what priests do. When I was in high school, I just assumed my priests spent all their time praying. Getting to know that priests can be athletic, watch movies, and can be talented musicians, helps young people relate to priests. Priests can help encourage that message by spending their time with the youth: Being both spiritual leaders and normal, relatable people. It goes back to that balance of being pious, reverent, and proper in the moments when it is necessary and being fun, joyful, and playful in the moments when appropriate. ©TM

# Struggling with Life

since being Widowed, Divorced or Separated?



Beginning Experience of Springfield is offering an eight-week support program, "Coping With Life Alone," designed to help individuals work through the trauma of losing a spouse through death or divorce in a Christian atmosphere.

The program will begin Thu., Sept. 14, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 2200 W. Republic Rd., Springfield, MO.

The programs of Beginning Experience offer strength and growth through a community of friendship, support, and prayer. The program's trained facilitators have themselves experienced divorce or the death of a spouse. The cost of the program is \$30, but financial assistance is available for those in need.

To pre-register, call Diane at (417) 859-0175 or cell (870) 688-8829; Barb at (417) 827-3641, or Donna at (417) 529-1085



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## Holy Day of Obligation: Aug 15

On Aug. 15, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a holy day of obligation. Please check the local parish for times of celebration of the Eucharist.

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 966).

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In honor of Conception Abbey's 150th anniversary, the Abbey Guest Center is offering a series of retreats themed in Benedictine vows, virtues, and values. Through these silent retreats, the monks will offer conferences and liturgies to guide your weekend and the sacred space to pray and reflect.

### Reflection Days on Reverence

June through November, one Thursday a month

Our practice of reverence becomes a structure for living. Elicit this reverence in your life through reflection days themed around the book, "Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living" by Michael Casey. Full list of dates at ConceptionAbbey.org.

### Stop, Look, and Listen: Benedictine and Christian Watchwords

September 8-10, 2023

Reflections on the Benedictine ways we can together stop, look, and listen to deepen our spiritual journey together. Stop as in resting in the Lord. Look as in walking by faith. Listen as in obedience.



BR. MARK NELSON, OSB

### Sabbath Rest & Benedictine Peace

October 6-8, 2023

In the prologue to the Rule, St. Benedict invites his readers to "seek after peace." Amidst the busyness of life, this silent retreat explores the peace that arises from remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy. Meditations on the Sabbath in Sacred Scripture will prepare our hearts for a prayerful encounter with the One who invites us to rest in his loving presence. Retreat led by Br. Mark Nelson, OSB.

### Obedience: Listen with the Ear of Your Heart

November 10-12, 2023

Reflections on understanding the Benedictine vow and value of obedience understood in its root meaning—listening. Ways to form and incline the ears of our hearts.

Find more info at [ConceptionAbbey.org](http://ConceptionAbbey.org)

## A Talk by Patti Maguire Armstrong

Catholic Speaker and Co-Author of:



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# NDHS grad is missionary for The Culture Project

## Restoring culture through the experience of virtue

By Paula Wright Cape Girardeau, MO

In the summer before her senior year of college, Genevieve Kulla, a 2019 graduate of Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau, had a lingering sense that God wanted her to pursue a different path than she was on.

"I kept feeling called to do something different, and I distinctly remember one evening, following Holy Hour prayers and praying for guidance to determine what I was supposed to do, an ad for missionaries for The Culture Project was the first thing I noticed pop up on my phone," Kulla said.

After learning more about them and following a thorough hiring process, she joined the organization.

The Culture Project is "an initiative of (Catholic) young people who set out to restore culture through the experience of virtue," Kulla said. "We proclaim the dignity of the human person and the richness of living sexual integrity. Inviting our culture to become fully alive."

"This is a Catholic organization,

based on Catholic teachings. As missionaries, we attend Mass daily and pray a holy hour," said Kulla.

In her new role, she will be traveling and speaking to other young people about human dignity, self-worth, and living a virtuous life. Beyond giving presentations, the Culture Project also supports an Online community that offers encouragement to young people. Their aim is "A culture of virtue restored, one person at a time."

The "dynamic presentations talk about the inherent dignity of humanity, the benefits of sexual integrity, and healthy social media use."

"The Ministry is mostly public speaking; a gift I knew I had based on my high school experiences," Kulla said. "The topics we speak about are what life and love should look like. We are trying to restore a virtuous culture. It is great



**CULTURE PROJECT**—Notre Dame Regional High School graduate and The Culture Project Missionary Genevieve Kulla (right) was pictured at a missionary banquet with Emily, her support raising coach, in Pennsylvania, this past June. The Culture Project seeks to restore the culture through the experience of virtue. It proclaims the dignity of the human person, the richness of living sexual integrity and promotes healthy social media use. (Submitted photo)

to talk to younger audiences and to share with them what it means to love your body and respect others. To let young people know their worth."

The missionaries sign on for a one-year assignment and will work within a specific diocese by invitation of the bishop. Their monthly fundraising goal is \$2,700 per month to cover living and travel expenses. Typically, the missionaries will depart in October and work through June. Prior to their

mission start-date in October, they will be training and preparing presentations for the next cycle, as well as fundraising.

"I have gained so much knowledge and skills through the organization's training and learning process. I am excited to be able to follow God's will and to speak in front of young people," Kulla said. "I have been learning so much in preparation for my ministry, including Pope St. John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body' and Catholic apologetics. The youth of our society are aching for love, but often, they search for a mistaken image. I hope to show them where to look for love, in communion with God in heaven. I want them to understand that living a chaste life is liberating."

Anyone interested in donating may go to The Culture Project Website at [thecultureproject.org](http://thecultureproject.org), click on the "Give Now" link, and donate to support Genevieve Kulla.

"There is a need for more missionaries in the field," Kulla said. "There are currently more (arch) dioceses that would like a visit and not enough missionaries. I appreciate your support." ©TM

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



By  
Drew  
Garvey

## BREAKING PORNOGRAPHY, RESTORING HOPE

Very recently, NASA's James Webb Space Telescope released its first images of the cosmic universe. Across the world, people have reacted in awe. These new galactic pictures truly were stunning and beautiful, but what if you did not have to look to the farthest parts of the universe to find breathtaking beauty? What if the human person, each and every one of us, was more beautiful than anything else one could find?

More than four decades before these pictures of deep space appeared on our devices, St. John Paul II was elected pope in 1978. Known for his teachings on the theology of the body, this great saint made the beauty of the human person a significant part of his pontificate. He wasted no time in delivering his insights on this topic with his first encyclical, "Redemptor Hominis" ("The Redeemer of Man"). The question to now ask is: how beautiful is the human person?

Let's look first at the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He worked with human hands as a carpenter. He thought with a human mind and acted with a human will, meaning He had personal interactions with people, spoke to large crowds, and even attended weddings. He loved with a human heart, feeling

the joys and the pains every one of us has felt at some point in our lives. Understanding the humanity of Jesus, who was also Divine, reveals the answer to our question on the beauty of the human person.

"How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, ...if God 'gave his only Son 'in order that man 'should not perish but have eternal life.'" These words, coming from Redemptor Hominis (RH), penetrate the heart of the question at hand. The beauty of each and every person is so great in the eyes of God that He became one of us in order to save and redeem us. The price Jesus willingly paid on the Cross for our sins reveals the unsurpassable beauty God has set for each person. By becoming man, Jesus, "the image of the invisible God" (1 Col 1:15), showed us the "greatness, dignity, and value that belong" to each person (RH, 10).

Why does this matter? It matters because Jesus saved and redeemed us, but he did not perfect us. He revealed our beauty, but did not remove the ugliness of sin from the world. One of the greater sins attacking the beauty and dignity of the human person today is pornography; and the issue of pornography sorely demands our attention.

Pornography is a sickness that cannot be ignored. Understanding the true beauty of the human person is a first step in fighting this problem. There will be a series of articles following this one on the topic of pornography. The series does not hope to solve the pervasiveness of pornography and the effects of the problem in families and society. It cannot solve it. But it will help by bringing awareness of how pornography directly attacks the beauty of each individual person; a beauty so great that God Himself became like us in every way, except sin (Heb 4:15). ©TM

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### ▶ NEXT IN THE SERIES:

## BREAKING PORNOGRAPHY, RESTORING HOPE PART I: WHAT IS PORNOGRAPHY?

1. Intro: joys, hopes, griefs, and anxieties
2. Define pornography; establish four pillars
3. Art Pillar
4. Business Pillar
5. Drug Pillar
6. Internet Pillar
7. Accessible, Affordable, Anonymous, Aggressive

## Parish experiences growth, undertakes expansion, renovation

Houston, MO

On a recent visit to St. Mark Church, Houston, MO, Bishop Edward Rice found the Church packed to overflowing. In commenting on the large crowd to the pastor, Fr. Rayappa Chinnabathini, Bishop Rice learned that there has been a steady growth in the parish over the past three years.

Built in 1952, the facilities at St. Mark Parish had, until now, served adequately. However, with a 25 percent increase in families with children, as well as more retired persons moving out of cities for the benefit of practicing their faith more freely, parishioners recently determined an expansion of the church was necessary to accommodate the growing parish roster.

"It's amazing to think that in little Houston, MO, the Catholic community is growing," said Bishop Rice. "I've met numerous new families along Hwy 60 that have moved from the urban areas for a more quiet, simpler lifestyle, including Willow Springs, Mountain View, and Mountain Grove."

The proposition resulted in several architectural plans. The most realistic,



**HOUSTON CATHOLIC CHURCH**—Experiencing an influx of families with young children and retirees to the area, St. Mark Church is undergoing an expansion and renovation project. Additional funding is needed. (*The Mirror*)

cost-effective choice was to build at both ends of the existing church, thereby re-locating the altar to the opposite end, and adding a sacristy, confessional, an additional classroom, and an ADA restroom to the other end. This plan also allowed for a needed gathering area as well.

The estimated building cost would have been covered mostly by a

generous benefactor, but by the time construction could begin, the cost of materials exceeded the available funds, due to supply chain issues and construction-related inflation costs. With monies raised through craft/yard sales, dinners, gifts and pledges, the people have raised enough to cover the basic construction and put a down payment on new pews, necessary to accommodate the 33 percent increase in seating.

"The parishioners have rallied to the cause of expansion and renovation," said Fr. Chinnabathini, who also serves as Pastor of St. John the Baptist Mission Church, in Licking, and St. Vincent de Paul Mission Church, in Roby. "For such a small parish they have done exceptionally well in sacrificial giving. It's amazing how they have come together on this project."

At St. Mark Parish, the blessed expansion will include a new artist-designed round stained-glass window of the Eucharist, new glass entry doors, and the new pews mentioned before will closely match the original beautiful wood beams. Newly installed windows above the altar will bring abundant natural lighting into the tabernacle.

Although the parish is very close

**PLEDGES to date: \$111,310  
from 30 donors**

<b>Total construction cost:</b>	<b>\$378,300</b>
New Pews:	\$ 46,300
Entry/Facelift:	\$ 24,500
Sound System:	\$ 5,500
<b>Total Project cost:</b>	<b>\$454,600</b>
Total Paid to date:	\$286,929
<b>Balance to complete:</b>	<b>\$167,671</b>
Funds on hand:	(113,011)
Unpaid Pledges to date:	(49,170)
<b>Gifts/Pledges needed:</b>	<b>\$ 5,490*</b>

\*An additional \$5,370 is needed for new concrete sidewalks at the North entrance, as well as additional gifts for a Rosary prayer garden.

to reaching their goal, additional funds of \$10,000 are needed to complete the exterior plans. To lend a welcoming appeal the parish hopes for new sidewalks and a possible Rosary prayer garden.

If anyone is interested in making a donation for the expansion and renovations at St. Mark Parish, Houston, gifts of any amount can be sent to: St. Mark Church, 117 E. South Oak Crest Dr., Houston, MO 65483. ©TM

# Saint Francis Foundation & Auxiliary awards 23 scholarships



**23 HEALTH CARE SCHOLARSHIPS**—Scholarship recipients from Saint Francis Foundation and St. Francis Auxiliary included (front) Addison Middleton, Abby Brey, Tammy Le, Mary Dirnberger, Kailey Bell, Julia Mirgoux, Emily Heberlie, and Keely Felts; (back row) Anita Williams, Mathew Woodfin, Sam Russo, Ashley Wheeler, Emma Shields, Logan Lemons, Grace Walter, Emily Landewee, and Emily Smith. Recipients were awarded during a recognition luncheon held Fri., July 28, in Cape Girardeau. *(The Mirror)*

Cape Girardeau, MO

**S**aint Francis Foundation and the Saint Francis Auxiliary honored 23 scholarship recipients at a recognition luncheon on Fri., July 28.

Twenty-three scholarships were awarded with each student receiving \$2,000 in scholarship funds toward a degree in a healthcare-related profession. Those recipients and their scholarships include:

- **Klara Beel** of Marble Hill – Lee George and Katherine Jane Cochran Memorial Scholarship
- **Kailey Bell** of Cape Girardeau – Sisters of Saint Francis Nursing Scholarship
- **Shannon Beussink** of Cape Girardeau – Raymond A. and Lillian K. Ritter Scholarship
- **Abby Brey** of Jackson – Edythe M. Davis Scholarship
- **Mary Dirnberger** of Cape Girardeau – Ken Hayden Memorial

Nursing Scholarship

- **Keely Felts** of Jackson – Lucy Ellen Towse Memorial Scholarship
- **Brendan Gross** of Jackson – Susan Kluesner-Hinkebein Memorial Scholarship
- **Emily Heberlie** of Farmington – Raymond A. and Lillian K. Ritter Scholarship
- **Emily Landewee** of Chaffee – Joseph and Harriette Hunter McCrate Scholarship
- **Tammy Le** of Cape Girardeau – Bess Estes Healthcare Scholarship
- **Logan Lemons** of Zalma – Christen Joyel Aufdenberg Memorial Scholarship
- **Collin McMahon** of Cape Girardeau – Bernadean Campbell Memorial Scholarship
- **Addison Middleton** of Cape Girardeau – Huttegger-Scherer Memorial Scholarship
- **Julia Mirgoux** of Scott City – Mark

F. Scully Nursing Scholarship

- **Sam Russo** of Cape Girardeau – Earl Jr. and Lori Wills Memorial Scholarship
- **Jade Samanta** of Cape Girardeau – Saint Francis Auxiliary Physician Honor Scholarship
- **Emma Shields** of Jackson – Saint Francis Auxiliary Healthcare Scholarship
- **Emily Smith** of Cape Girardeau – Carrie Suedekum Memorial Scholarship
- **Tra Statler** of Jackson – Saint Francis Auxiliary 125th Anniversary Scholarship
- **Grace Walter** of Evansville, IL – Mamie Hall Memorial Scholarship
- **Ashley Wheeler** of Cape Girardeau – Saint Francis Auxiliary Healthcare Scholarship
- **Anita Williams** of Poplar Bluff – Clara D. Newnam Memorial Scholarship

- **Matthew Woodfin** of Marble Hill – Evalyn and S. David Nunley Scholarship

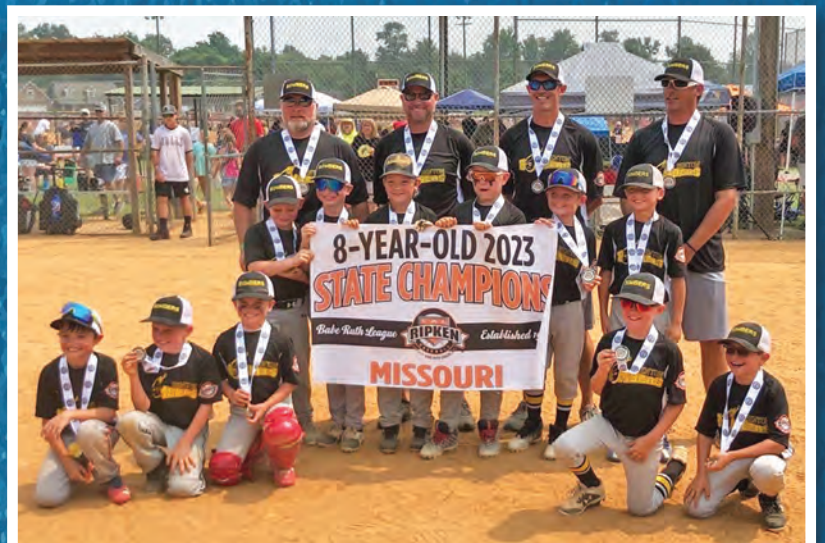
Scholarship recipients must have completed at least one year in an accredited healthcare program and be currently enrolled, maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA and complete the application and essay requirements by the scheduled deadline. They must also reside within the Saint Francis service area as defined in the application.

The Saint Francis Healthcare Scholarship Program was established in 1980: Saint Francis Foundation, Saint Francis Auxiliary, and generous donors fund the program. Since its inception, the program has provided more than \$839,000 in education scholarships to college students to encourage participation in professional healthcare careers

For more information about the Saint Francis Healthcare Scholarship Program, call (573) 331-3192 or visit [foundation.sfmc.net](http://foundation.sfmc.net) ©TM

## TEACHER CONGRATULATES BASEBALL CHAMPS

**BENTON BOMBERS**—Mrs. Welter and her family recently cheered on St. Denis Catholic School students she taught last year that were on the 8U Benton “Bombers” team. As part of the Benton Youth Baseball League, the boys recently won the 8U State Championship under four coaches, two of which are St. Denis parents: Trey Simmons and George Eftink. Congratulations Bombers! *(Submitted photo)*





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# Messenger

A quarterly publication by the Missouri Catholic Conference

## Double Effect: Catholic Teaching on the Death Penalty

America's system of law is known for being based on legal precedent – that is, it is a system of law that evolves based upon inviolable principles – principles that must function together cohesively without contradiction. This is a system our country inherited from Old English common law; however, long before England established this system of law, the Catholic Church has operated under a system of precedent of its own. People say God can do anything – specifically, God can do anything EXCEPT contradict Himself.

The Church has carried this rule of non-contradiction for close to 2000 years. Our shepherds, through apostolic succession, have taken the divinely-inspired writings of the Bible and the sacred tradition started by Christ and the Apostles, and safeguarded and used these truths to apply to the various situations they encountered in our world. Through the precedent set by scripture and tradition, the Church is able to determine which acts are moral and immoral.

In light of this rule of non-contradiction, it is only natural for some confusion to arise regarding the Church's history with capital punishment. Today the Catholic Church preaches that the death penalty is inadmissible; but we know that in the past, the Church has allowed executions to occur within the Papal States. One executioner in particular, Giovanni Battista Bugatti, served as papal executioner for six popes during the 18th and 19th centuries, and executed over 500 felons. Before the Papal States conducted its final execution in 1870, Blessed Pope Pius IX himself responded to a prisoner's request for clemency, saying that he could not grant clemency, and that carrying out the execution was a necessity. If we truly have a system of precedent and non-contradiction, how can we reconcile Pope Pius' words with current dogma?

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**“[T]he death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” – *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2267**

In order to do so, we need to understand the purpose of the death penalty in Catholic morality. The fifth commandment says thou shalt not kill; however, if we kill a would-be murderer in self-defense, that is not a sinful act. This is because of the principle of double effect. If an act produces a double effect, part good and part bad, it is morally permissible if certain criteria are met. First, the action itself must be morally good. In the previous example, the action would be to stop an assailant from committing murder. Second, you must not desire the negative consequence, and if you can produce a good result without any negative consequence, you should. Incapacitating an attacker is preferable if it's possible, but if killing your attacker is the only way to stop him or her, then it is morally permissible. And third, the good effect must be as immediate as the negative effect – because as the two effects become more distant in time from one another, the more likely it is that we are committing two separate acts, one good and one bad, rather than one action that has a double effect.

Within the past 150 years, various popes have made statements regarding the death penalty, each time referencing the death penalty in terms of necessity. In 1901, Pope Leo XIII said the death penalty was “both necessary and efficacious.” In 1908, Saint Pius X said “it is necessary to kill when fighting in a just war... and likewise, to carry out a sentence of death in punishment of a crime.”

When we see a shift in church teaching on the death penalty in the later half of the 20th century, we see more of this “necessary” language. Saint John Paul II wrote that execution is only appropriate “in cases of absolute necessity, in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society without the execution.” Pope Benedict XVI encouraged countries to reconcile keeping public order and safety with dignified treatment of prisoners, and that the death penalty is only permissible in situations where no other option is viable. This is the same view espoused by Pope Francis and the 2018 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. So, what happened in the middle of the 20th century for the popes to have such different views?

In the past century, our society has overseen the largest acceleration of affluence, technology, and standards that humanity has ever experienced in such a short timeframe. In 1910, less than 2 percent of the United States had electrical power, and now virtually every American adult has a portable phone, television, and mailbox all wrapped in a single device. With these advancements came improvements to our ability to protect victims of crime and in the effectiveness of our incarceration system. We are able to more securely contain criminals than ever before in history. And this is where the question of double effect and the death penalty’s “necessity” come into play.

### Executions per year, 1977-2023



Since the U.S Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, there have been 1564 executions nationwide, 95 of them in Missouri.

**One-fourth of the executions in the U.S. in 2023 occurred in Missouri.**



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Many will say that the death penalty is necessary to act as deterrence from more murders occurring later. Certainly, if you execute a murderer, he or she is not going to murder again. However, if you incarcerate a murderer for the rest of his or her life with no possibility of release, then he or she ALSO won't murder anyone ever again. Through the principle of double effect, you can kill an attacker in self-defense, and commit no moral wrong. However, the principle of double effect cannot apply to the executions performed in most of the developed world today because the criminals eligible for the death penalty are already incarcerated for life and unable to reoffend. As a result, the "good effect" (the criminal's incapacitation) has already occurred, leaving only the "bad effect" of the execution occurring years after the criminal has already been living a sentence of life without parole. We, as Catholics, are called to follow the path of producing as few negative consequences as possible. Because modern societies have developed more effective detention systems, the less negative consequence of life without parole is not only viable – it is morally obligatory.

**“The death penalty cannot be employed for a purported state justice, since it does not constitute a deterrent nor render justice to victims, but only fuels the thirst for vengeance,”**  
**- Pope Francis, January 9, 2023**

This understanding of the death penalty's moral impermissibility is also the basis for how the American justice system has evaluated capital punishment. American courts have noted how the meteoric rise in affluence and resources in the United States has affected what is perceived as morally permissible, and this phenomenon is commonly referred

to as “evolving standards of decency.” The court of *Trop v. Dulles* (1958) ruled evolving standards of decency played a key role in determining whether a criminal punishment violates the 8th Amendment's “cruel and unusual punishment” clause – ultimately resulting in the *Furman v. Georgia* ruling that ended the death penalty in the United States for a brief time. Even after the death penalty was reinstated

on a state by state basis, 23 states have decided to bar the death penalty within their borders, and additional states have informally suspended capital punishment via statute. More states have determined the moral impermissibility of the death penalty, which has led to only 11 states carrying out death sentences within the past decade – Missouri being one of them.

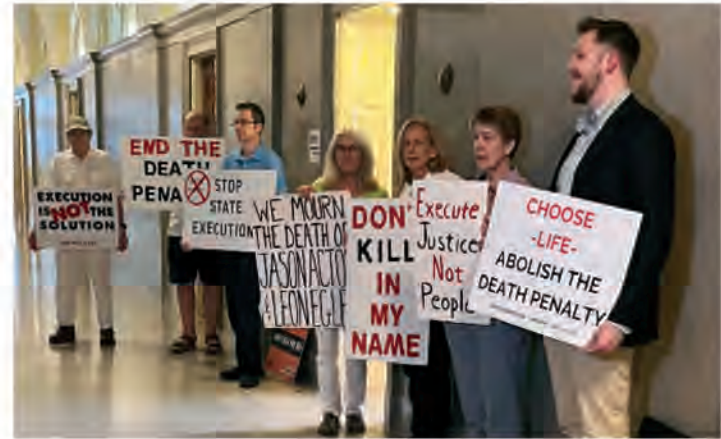
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So far in 2023, 15 inmates have been executed in the United States, three of which have occurred in Missouri. Missouri's fourth execution, scheduled for August 1, would mean 25% of America's executions this year have taken place in Missouri, giving the state the highest per capita rate of execution in the country.

Though various bills to limit the death penalty are presented in the Missouri legislature every session, it is rare for any of these bills to gain traction, let alone be passed into law. Missouri has a long road to tread before the death penalty is eliminated, which makes it all the more important for Catholics to promote mercy in the criminal justice system.

Each time a prisoner in Missouri is set to be executed, the Missouri Bishops, through the Missouri Catholic Conference, send a letter to the governor requesting clemency on behalf of the prisoner. We also organize a vigil outside the governor's office on the day of an execution, where advocates hold signs and request mercy through peaceful protest.

Proponents of the death penalty often justify the use of the death penalty by claiming it is something the convicted murderer "deserves" to receive; however, even assuming this statement is correct, is that truly the way we as Christians want punishment to be exacted? Do we as sinners strictly *deserve* God's sanctifying grace, or is it an act of mercy God exercises upon us? No action of our own can merit sanctifying grace; it is instead a gift from God that we only receive because He gives it freely – we need only accept it through faith and good works. Regardless of whether one can independently determine a prisoner "deserves" execution in a draconian sense, is it not better to emulate God's mercy when choosing whether a prisoner receives either execution or life without parole? Murder is described by the bible as a "sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance." Given the gravity of these sins, it's all the more important that, whenever possible, we give murderers as much time as possible to amend their ways and repent for their sins in the remaining time they have on this earth.



### Prayer to End the Use of the Death Penalty

Merciful Father, we ask your blessing on all we do to build a culture of life. Hear our prayers for those impacted by the death penalty.

We pray for all people, that their lives and dignity as children of a loving God may be respected and protected in all stages and circumstances.

We pray for victims of violence and their families, that they may experience our love and support and find comfort in your compassion and in the promise of eternal life.

We pray for those on death row, that their lives may be spared, that the innocent may be freed and that the guilty may come to acknowledge their faults and seek reconciliation with you.

We pray for the families of those who are facing execution, that they may be comforted by your love and compassion. We pray for civic leaders, that they may commit themselves to respecting every human life and ending the use of the death penalty in our land.

Compassionate Father, give us wisdom and hearts filled with your love. Guide us as we work to end the use of the death penalty and to build a society that truly chooses life in all situations.

We ask this Father through your Son Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen



Bishop Edward Rice, Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, and MCC lobbyist Curt Wichmer discuss the history of the Catholic teaching on the death penalty and how the principle of double effect interacts with capital punishment's validity, in this episode of MCC from the Capitol.

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