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CNS photo/Rodi Said, Reuters

A woman who fled the violence in the Iraqi town of Sinjar sits with a child inside a tent at a camp in Syria's northern town of Qamishli Aug. 17. Returning from a visit to the Kurdish region of Iraq, Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan called the Islamic State invasion "pure and simple religious cleansing and attempted genocide."

Cardinal pleas for solidarity with Iraq's Christians after CUA Mass

Maureen Boyle
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington made an impassioned plea for solidarity with persecuted Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria and strongly urged that voices be raised against atrocities being committed there.

"Today our solidarity with brothers and sisters of our faith and of other faiths in a part of the world where there is clearly an effort to eliminate them is something that we simply cannot in conscience ignore," Cardinal Wuerl said in closing remarks during an Aug. 28 Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to mark the opening of The Catholic University of America's academic year.

"Often we're asked, 'How is it possible that in human history atrocities occur?' They occur for two reasons. Because there are those prepared to commit them, and there are those who remain silent," he said.

The ongoing displacement of women, children and men in the war-torn countries is, "the least of the things happening to them and something that we really are not free to ignore. Sometimes all we have to raise is our voice," the cardinal told the congregation.

"I'm sharing these thoughts with you because I don't want to have on my conscience that I was complicitous in something as horrendous as this simply by being quiet," he explained.

He raised the questions, "Where are these voices? Where are the voices of parliaments and congresses? Where are the voices of campuses? Where are the voices of community leaders? Where are the voices of talk show hosts and radio programs? Where are the voices of the late night news? Where are the voices of editorial columns? Where are the voices of op-ed pieces? Why a silence?"

All people, the cardinal stated, "have the power to raise voices and be in solidarity with people distant from us, unknown to us, not a part of this campus, not a part of this family, not a part of this university, not a part of our nation. But they are a part of our human community. I think it should rest on the conscience of each one of us."

Auxiliary Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Washington, along with nearly 70 university priests joined Cardinal Wuerl, CUA's chancellor and the main celebrant, in concelebrating the liturgy. More than 2,500 Catholic University students, faculty and staff nearly filled the shrine's Upper Church for the afternoon Mass of the Holy Spirit.

In his homily, Cardinal Wuerl reminded Mass-goers about the light of faith. He said the Mass intention was to ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to guide daily life in order to make a difference in the world.

"We come together to ask...because we dare to believe we really can make a difference," he said. "We are capable of renewing the face of the earth, or at least trying to do our part with the help of God," he said.

In honor of the Archdiocese of Washington's 75th anniversary, Bishop Knestout presented the Cardinal's Award to the university. Citing the university "as an intellectual center of highest quality," he said the honor was bestowed because of the school's "authentic adherence to its founding mission."

After Mass, the university's president John Garvey said he was proud of the work of faculty and students in the pursuit of truth and beauty.

"It is wonderful to see the effects our efforts have beyond the bounds of our campus," he said. "Our work nourishes the Church and our country, as our founders hoped it would."

Quoting author C.S. Lewis, who wrote that the desire for truth and beauty is part of human nature, Garvey said it is difficult to understand why time is spent on literature and science when urgent problems exist in the world.

"The appetite for truth and beauty that craves feeding was given to us by God and God makes no appetite in vain," he said. "So satisfying our natural appetites can be a way of advancing toward God. ... The key is to keep in mind what we do these things for. As St. Paul tells us, 'whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.'"

Maureen Boyle writes for *The Catholic Standard*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.

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Bishop Foys appoints executive director for Catholic Charities, Covington

Laura Keener
Editor

Bishop Roger Foys has announced, Sept. 3, the appointment of Alan Pickett as the Executive Director for Catholic Charities–Diocese of Covington. Mr. Pickett is the eighth director for the 83-year-old Catholic social service organization. Mr. Pickett will begin his new position Sept.



Cooley photo

Alan Pickett, Executive Director
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington

22 and succeeds William (Bill) Jones who died in November 2013.

“Mr. Pickett has a tremendous love for the Church and he is enthusiastic about wanting to give back to the Lord the gifts and talents that he has received from the Lord,” said Bishop Foys. “He has a heart for the poor and he is already involved in many aspects of the Church through his parish.”

Mr. Pickett has worked 37 years in the corporate sector as human resources director, operations and administration director and senior project manager for various financial services

firms in Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio. Most recently, since 2006, he has held the position of executive director for Taft Stettinius & Hollister, a law firm based in Cincinnati.

“I always thought there would be a day in my life before I retired completely from professional work that I would do something other than climb the corporate ladder and ride on that never-ending treadmill,” said Mr. Pickett. “I realized that if I was going to do what I envisioned myself doing I should be open and be aware of the opportunities that become open. There are a number of ministries that Catholic Charities is involved with that caught my attention right way that I felt I was passionate about and would enjoy participating in a role such as this.”

Mr. Pickett holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Ohio University and a master’s degree in lay pastoral ministry from the Athenaeum of Ohio. In 2007 he moved to Kentucky and joined St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, where he is a choir member, lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. He and his wife, Donna, a teacher for Newport Independent Schools, live in Cold Spring.

A convert to the Church in 1980, Mr. Pickett completed RCIA at St. Gertrude Parish, Maderia, where he was a member. At St. Gertrude he participated in many parish programs including a men’s fellowship group and also as a monthly volunteer at Tender Mercies, Over the Rhine, serving meals to the poor and homeless. He has been a volunteer for Exodus Ministry, a prison listening ministry in Northern Kentucky. Mr. Pickett has been a member of the Diocese of Covington’s Pro-Life Commission for three years. He is a professed member of the Bishop Fenwick Chapter, Lay Fraternity of St. Dominic.

“I’ve worked in a business office setting but I’ve never been afraid to step out, whether it was at Tender Mercies or in the jails, caring about the community,” said Mr. Pickett. “I’m just looking forward to meeting people where they are and to share my faith in some way that will make a difference.”

Bishop Foys complimented Shannon Braun who has served as interim director since Mr. Jones’ death. “She stepped up into a very difficult situation. She has done more than keeping the ‘ship afloat’ and has led the organization forward.”

Adult Faith Formation Course Schedule

September 2014–March 2015

Certification Courses

Church: Vision, Mission, Ministry, Sept. 20 and 27, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Phillip DeVous, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs

Introduction to Catholic Spirituality, Oct. 4 and 11, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., TBD, TBD

Jesus (Christology), Oct. 18 and 25, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Michael Barth, St. Timothy Parish Center, Union

Catechetical Process, Nov. 18, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. John Michniuk, St. Mary Parish, Alexandria

Old and New Testaments, Nov. 18 and 22, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Tim Schehr, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, lower level meeting room

Maintenance Courses

Mariology (Marian Theology), Jan. 3 and 10, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Msgr. William Cleves, Holy Spirit Elementary, Newport, cafeteria

The Pope, Vatican and things Roman, Jan. 17 and 24, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Raymond Enzweiler, Covington Latin School

Book of Psalms, April 11 and 18, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Tim Schehr, Covington Latin School

Eschatology (Last Things), Feb. 14 and 21, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rev. Michael Barth, St. Timothy Parish Center, Union

Ecumenism, Sept. 8, 15, 22, and 29, 6:30–9 p.m., Rev. Ronald Ketteler, Thomas More College, main building, room 2206

Prayer Workshop I: Praying All-Ways, Oct. 4, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Rosanne Thomas, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell

Prayer Workshop II: The Interior Life of Parents and Teachers, praying through it using tools from St. Ignatius and others, Sept. 8, 15, 22, and 29, 6–8:45 p.m., Rev. Jeff VonLehmen, St. Patrick Church, Taylor Mill

Missiology (Mission Theology), March 7, 14 and 21, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Rev. Baiju Kidaagen, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood, meeting room 1/2

Theology of the Body, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 6–8:45 p.m., Adam and Kate Iadipaolo, Catholic Charities, Latonia, first floor conference room

Advanced Theology of the Body*, March 3, 10, 17 and 24, 6–8:45 p.m., Mo Woltering, Covington Latin School

*Prerequisite: Theology of the Body



Bishop’s Schedule

Sept. 6-8
Parish visitation, St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood

Sept. 6
“Life’s a Ball!” celebration, Airport Marriott, 7 p.m.

Sept. 9
Priests’ Continuing Education and Formation Day, St. Anne Retreat Center, Melbourne, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Sept. 10
Thomas More College meeting, 8 a.m.

Annual high school seniors’ Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 1 p.m.

Individual meeting, 10 a.m.; 3:30 p.m.

Sept. 11
SKYPE, Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell, 9:30 a.m.

Synod planning meeting, Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, 10 a.m.

Sept. 11 (continued)
Episcopal Council meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Individual meeting, 3:30 p.m.

Thomas More College annual Bishops Hughes Award dinner, Drees Pavilion, 7 p.m.

Sept. 12
Diocesan staff enrichment day, St. Anne Retreat Center, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Sept. 13
Adult education program, St. Catherine of Siena Church, Ft. Thomas, 7 p.m.

Sept. 14
Holy Cross school building 100th anniversary Mass, Holy Cross Church, Latonia, 10:30 a.m.

Sept. 14-17
Seminary visit, St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe



Cooley photo

Orientation for newly ordained priests

Father William Appel, Father Josiah Booth, Father Trinity Knight and Father Harry Settle, whom Bishop Roger Foys ordained June 22, were given an opportunity over two days, Aug. 25 and 26, to become familiar with the services offered by the Curia. (above) Father Michael Barth, judicial vicar, and Sister of Notre Dame M. Shannon Kriege explain the role of the tribunal.

Correction

In the Aug. 29 edition of the Messenger, page 2, Father Jacob Verghese, V.C., was misidentified as parochial vicar for St. Timothy Parish, Union. Father Verghese is the parochial administrator, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California. The Messenger apologizes for the error.

Conference on Sacred Scripture — a tutorial

Isaak A. Isaak
Messenger Contributor

Centuries ago a friend asked St. Jerome how to introduce the Bible to his granddaughter. He recommended the young girl begin by reading through all 150 psalms. Afterwards, Jerome advised her to read the rest of the wisdom books, followed by the four Gospels. Once she had mastered this material St. Jerome thought she should commit to memory the books of the prophets.

It is not recorded how successfully the girl followed St. Jerome's lesson plan. If she did follow it she was certainly well equipped for her spiritual journey.

Bishop Roger J. Foys and the Department of Catechesis and Formation are offering a conference to introduce the people of the diocese to the Bible. It is not as rigorous as following St. Jerome's suggestions, but it will offer a good beginning to a journey through the Bible. Bishop Foys has called for the conference because he knows that a fundamentalist, literal interpretation of the Bible can present challenges to Catholic study and interpretation of Sacred Scripture.

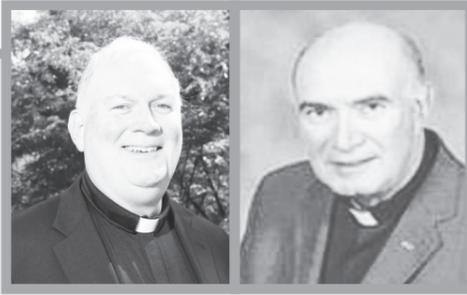
The conference will be held Oct. 25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at Receptions Conference and Banquet Center, Erlanger. If you are not familiar with the Bible come and enjoy a helpful introduction to its beauty. If you are an old friend of the Bible, come and discover even more about its glorious message.

As the day unfolds Msgr. Christopher Schreck and Father Timothy Schehr will discuss the origins of the Bible, its oldest surviving portions, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, how the Bible came to be the book it is today, the enduring influence of the reformation on the Bible, and the meaning of inspiration and its impact on the way we read the Bible.

As we read in the Book of Revelation 1:3 "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words ... and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it ..."

As good and faithful Catholics we understand that the Bible is not a book. Rather, it is a library of books containing 72 or 73 books, depending on whether the Book of Lamentations is listed as a separate book and not as a part of Jeremiah. Each book varies in length from a few hundred words to thousands. Together, these books comprise the official list or canon of the Bible.

Forty-six books of the Bible were written before the time of Christ and are called the books of the Old Testament.



Msgr. Christopher Schreck

Father Timothy Schehr

Sacred Scripture Conference

Date: Oct. 25, 9 a.m.

Place: Receptions, Erlanger

Admission: \$25

Register: visit www.religioeducation.covingtondiocese.org or e-mail catechesis@covdio.org or call (859) 392-1500, ext. 1533.

These are the five books of Moses (the Law or the Pentateuch); the 16 historical books; the seven Wisdom books and the 18 prophetic books.

The other 27 books were written after the time of Christ and are called the books of the New Testament. These are the four Gospels; the history book Acts of the Apostles; the nine Letters of St. Paul to churches; the four Letters of St. Paul to friends; the eight general letters and St. John's apocalyptic book.

I like to reference the fourth session of the Council of Trent (1546), the third session of Vatican I (1870), and the fourth session of Vatican II (1965), when understanding the books of the Bible. These three councils, as resources, truly help to better understand the origins, inspiration and history of the Bible.

The Council of Trent decreed that "those entire books

with all their parts as have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church" must be considered as sacred and canonical. In other words, though the Council Fathers did not discuss revelation as a separate topic, they came up with two definitive decrees, that is, the definitive canon of Sacred Scripture for the Church (46 books in the Old Testament; 27 books in the New Testament), the priority of the Latin Vulgate — the affirmation that God is the author of both Testaments either by the preaching of Christ or the dictation of the Holy Spirit; an emphasis on the Church's role in interpreting the Scriptures and forbidding individual interpretation. Anathemas and restrictions were placed within the context of the two decrees, including restricting what biblical texts, with notes and/or interpretations, printers may print.

The Council Fathers of Vatican I reaffirmed this. In other words, revelation was discussed in Chapter 2 of the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith," most of which reiterates the basic teaching on Scripture from the Council of Trent. In the centuries since this decree, Catholic theologians differed on two points of interpretation, as to whether matters of faith and morals alone were to be considered inspired or whether inspiration extended only to important matters.

These questions were settled by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical "Providentissimus Deus," in which he reaffirmed the decisions of the Council of Trent and emphasized that the Bible in all its parts was inspired and that a stated fact must be accepted as falling under inspiration, down to the most insignificant item — that is, the whole Bible is the Word of God.

When we come to read the fourth session of Vatican Council II in 1965, we see a dogmatic constitution fully devoted to the topic of divine revelation discussed in an introduction and six chapters, covering the topics of revelation itself, the transmission of revelation, the divine inspiration of Scripture, the interrelationship of the Old and New Testaments and the pastoral role of Scripture in the life of the Church. The dogmatic constitution, "Dei Verbum," is truly a masterful work by the Fathers of the Council. Reading this document prior to the conference will help to better understand the presenters when they speak about Sacred Scripture.

Isaak A. Isaak is director for the Office of Catechesis and Formation for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Ohio teen on journey to serve Mass in 50 states

Lenora Sumsky
Catholic News Service

HARTFORD, Conn. — Kara Jackson, a 16-year-old altar server from Holy Family Parish in Middletown, Ohio is on a quest to serve at Mass in all 50 states.

So far she has served at liturgies in 18 states after recently serving at a morning Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

Kara's endeavor is a journey of faith that began in 2013. She has traveled with her family to serve at Masses in states as far west as Nevada, as far south as Georgia and as far east as Maine.

Some people might say that beyond her engaging blue eyes, silky blonde hair and easy, joy-filled smile, God gave Kara something extra that makes her and her venture both extraordinary and heartwarming.

"Kara is special," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "(She was) born with Down syndrome and with a special love for God and all people."

Kara has served at Mass with Archbishop Kurtz and Father Michael Tobin at the Church of the Annunciation in Shelbyville, midway between Louisville and Lexington. Kentucky was the sixth state on her journey.

Archbishop Kurtz, whose late brother George had Down syndrome, described Kara as "clearly an expert server" in a blog last September. "Kara's beautiful personality and unique gifts reinforced our church's teachings about the dignity of every human being," he said.

Other people witnessing Kara's devotion have written words of gratitude, love and respect in a journal she keeps to record her travels and the people she meets. Priests and parishioners describe her as "having different abilities" or as being a "true example of God's love among us."

"When you serve at Mass, you feel you are closer to God," said Kara, who was 9 years old when she completed training to be an altar server.

She believes God told her to embark on the endeavor. Her mother, Christina Jackson, admitted being a bit skeptical when Kara told her parents what she wanted to do.

"I took her to talk with our parish priests about the idea," Christina said.

Msgr. Paul Metzger, who had known Kara for most of her life, encouraged her. He told her that it was a good idea and that it could be done. His support was not surprising. The late Msgr. Metzger, who was a priest for 70 years, had celebrated Masses in all 50 states.

Kara also spoke with Father John Civile, the current pastor, who echoed Msgr. Metzger's sentiments, Christina said.

Still doubtful, Christina and her husband, Rick, decided to help their daughter achieve her goal and contacted a parish not far away in Indiana.

"We wrote a letter," she said. "I didn't know what to say or whether I should tell them she has Down syndrome. (Even though) it shouldn't make a difference, I put it in anyway. I didn't want to get there and surprise anyone."

"Kara and I drove to the post office and together we said a prayer before Kara dropped the letter into the mailbox," Christina said. "I wondered how long it would take for a response."

Two days later, Father Kevin Morris, pastor of St. Mary Church in Richmond, Indiana, called to arrange for Kara to visit the parish. A few weeks later, on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday, Kara served at Mass with Father Morris. She arrived early, as she typically does, to become familiar with procedures that vary among parishes and to quietly reflect on and pray for the priests and parishioners of the church.

It was the first of many inspiring and unique experiences



CNS photo/Bob Mullen

Rick Jackson helps his daughter Kara light an altar candle before Mass at Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford, Conn. July 29. Kara, an altar server at Holy Family Parish in Middletown, Ohio, is on a lifelong pilgrimage to serve Mass in all 50 states.

Kara has had on her journey.

Kara's parents are proud of the way their daughter easily connects and engages with parishioners of all ages, especially elderly people. Worshippers at St. Anne Shrine in the serene lakeside setting of Isle La Monte, Vermont, hugged Kara, thanked her for serving and engaged in conversations about her experiences.

"It was not our goal to inspire others, although we may have," Christina said. "You never know who you will touch or connect with."

Kara has 32 states to go on her journey. She's back in school now but will continue during long weekends and school vacations.

Sumsky writes for The Catholic Transcript, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn.

Knowing the Trinity

Richard of St. Victor, a 12th-century Scottish theologian, is not exactly a household name in 21st-century Christian circles. Truth to tell, I only know of him because of a curious conversation I once had with my friend, the late Richard John Neuhaus, who, as only he could, told me of a friendly discussion he'd had with Rabbi David Novak one summer about the Scotsman's Trinitarian theology, which tried to establish by reason that God must be triune. (We talked about a lot of strange and wondrous things, up there on the cottage deck in the Ottawa Valley.)

To greatly simplify a complex argument, Richard of St. Victor proposed that perfect love (God) cannot remain in and by itself; it must direct itself to an equally perfect person (God the Son); and the mutual love between those two must have a third person as that to which their common love is directed (God the Holy Spirit). Or so the old New Catholic Encyclopedia sums up. Richard of St. Victor's Trinitarian theology didn't attract many followers, and in any case, it somewhat misses the point about the Holy Trinity — which most preachers also tend to do on Trinity Sunday. And that is that we "know" the

Triune God, not through abstract argument, but through history.

The first Christians, pious Jews, were strict monotheists. That Christianity came to embrace the doctrine of the Holy Trinity — indeed, that it put that doctrine at the center of its creed, along with its other key doctrine, the Incarnation — is one of the great surprises of religious history. The two are linked. And that link is found, not in the abstract speculations of theologians, but in the historical experience of the Christian community.

As biblical scholar Gianfranco Ravasi puts it, the mystery of God's triune inner life is inextricably linked to the love that communicates itself to the world "in a precise historical event, the saving mission of the only-begotten Son." And this, Ravasi continues, is the theme of the nighttime conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in the third chapter of John's Gospel — Jesus does not offer this pious Israelite, who may also stand for all those who seek the truth about God with a sincere heart, a theological treatise; he offers him a description of what is happening, in history, in himself. A new dialogue between God and humanity has begun, for "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

So the next time you see some vaguely scruffy brother holding up a "John 3:16" sign at the Super Bowl or World Series, remember that he's offering the world the answer to the speculations of Richard of St. Victor.

We know the Trinity, not because we have reasoned our way to it, but because we have been touched by the Trinity's entry into history. The gift spoken of in John 3:16, Ravasi writes, encompasses not only that which the Father gives (his Son), but also that which the Son, the suffering servant, freely offers in giving himself up to death for the world's salvation. And from that "giving" of the Father and Son comes the outpouring of the Spirit, by whose sevenfold gifts we can come to know, and we are empowered to proclaim, that Jesus, risen from the dead, is indeed Lord, and that through him we have what only God can give: the forgiveness of sins.

In strictest theological definition, the Trinity is a "mystery": a truth that can never be fully comprehended by reason, but that can be known to be true in love. That is how the early Christian community came to know the triune nature of the Holy One, the God of Israel — the truth of God-in-himself was discerned in the Christian experience of the Trinitarian love that was poured into the world in the paschal mystery. That is how we can know, however dimly, the truth about God-in-himself today — through the love of God poured into our hearts sacramentally.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.



Letter to the Editor

Dear People of our Diocese,

Recently I attended an event to celebrate the success of our Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal for 2014 (DPAA 2014). I was there representing my parish, which is St. Agnes. It was a very nice evening. As part of the program the "service awards" were given. These awards are made to a number of parishes, schools and agencies in our diocese to help fund their ministries. As each award was announced, a brief description was given of the purpose for which the grant was given. It was very impressive and humbling.

Although rather informally, I was also present at this event as a representative of the Priests' Retirement Fund. The Priests' Retirement Fund was begun in 1981. As you might imagine, our priests' retirement plan has had to do a lot of "catching up" in order to become adequately funded. Currently, the plan pays retirement benefits to 38 priests.

One source of income that has helped our retirement fund greatly is the grant that, with Bishop Foys' leadership, has been allocated for the Priests' Retirement Fund each year from the DPAA. This has greatly helped our level of funding. (Incidentally, the DPAA, through an additional grant, also helps our retired priests with health care insurance coverage and nursing care.)

Of course, it is the people of our diocese, through their generosity, their love of our Church and their commitment to our Church's ministries who have funded the DPAA so well over the past many years. On behalf of our Priests' Retirement Fund Committee, our retired priests, and all other priests of our diocese, all of whom will one day (please God) be receiving retirement benefits, our thanks to the people of our diocese for their constant and generous support of our DPAA every year.

Through your support of the DPAA, you help provide significant support for our retired priests. God bless you!

Reverend Mark Keene, chair
Priests' Retirement Fund Committee
Pastor, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright.

A city smolders: No choice but to keep investing

In the days since the fatal shooting by police of Michael Brown in Ferguson, images in the media have been riveting and heartbreaking. There have been confrontations with police, destruction and looting of stores. And then there are those glimpses of fire, the raging fire.

As I drove through the traffic jam on West Florissant Avenue on the morning of Aug. 10, I saw the damage outside the familiar Sam's Meat Market. The roof of the QuikTrip, one of my regular fueling stops, was still smoldering, just like our broken hearts. As Lesley McSpadden, Michael's mother, said, the looting and violence are disrespectful of her son's memory.

These scenes in the communities of Ferguson and Dellwood reflect the current state of our country and world. We are living in a paradoxical era comparable to Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities." These are wonderful times and these are horrible times. There is an abundance of wisdom and advancement in the quality of life, yet there is no shortage of foolishness.

What we are witnessing is reminiscent of those fateful times in the 1960s and '70s when parts of our cities erupted in flames. For many, the wounds haven't fully healed; the underlying smoldering still exists. Opportunity and untapped potential abound. Yet, there is no shortage of disparity in the widening gap between haves and have-nots.

Systemic and personal racism have taken on less overt but no less sinister forms in the past few decades. None of our institutions is immune. It is found in government, including law enforcement and the criminal justice system; business and

industry; and even in churches, regardless of denomination. These violations of the human spirit are being seen in the present generation: reactionary, disrespectful, destructive behavior within oneself, families and community. Where do we go from here? How are these insipid cycles ever broken?

Locally, our Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis (of which St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson is chairman) is publically imploring us to keep asking the hard questions and diligently move toward solutions. This must include prayer for peace as a means to healing. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parish got it right Aug. 11 when parishioners gathered around the church's Lourdes grotto to pray the rosary.

Our prayer should lead us to sound investing in our young people. We must inspire them to maintain and build their relationship with God for a greater sense of self and their role in this community and the larger world. This is the common legacy that has us praying to make us instruments of the Lord's proactive, fruit-producing peace.

I unabashedly herald the good news of faith-based programs in the archdiocese including the African American Catholic Youth Leadership Conference, Kujenga, which means "build" in Swahili, and a recent young adult retreat, both sponsored by the St. Charles Lwanga Center. These are among the programs we should support to help our young people build a culture free of violence and full of love.

We have no choice but to keep investing.

Father Arthur Cavitt is executive director of the St. Charles Lwanga Center in St. Louis and in residence at Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Ferguson, Missouri. His commentary has been provided by Catholic News Service. The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE



George Weigel

GUEST



Father Arthur Cavitt

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Real love can be a “tough” decision

The readings for the twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle “A” are: Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10; and Matthew 18:15-20.

Some time ago I had the opportunity to visit the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. I like animals and had wanted for some time to see the giant pandas.

No one, of course, could escape the charm of their white faces with eyes heavily accented in black. They are everyone's favorite. Likewise, we are all familiar with how lively and

playful these cuddly and wonderful creatures can be. As I entered the zoo, I was sure I was in for a treat.

Things did not, however, appear as I had imagined. Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing were not providing much entertainment. Instead, they mostly just lay there with their backs to us visitors. Once Hsing-Hsing started to lethargically wander about his cage, but he looked more like he was preparing to attack us rather than provide pleasant amusement.

I was wondering if they always behaved this way when I suddenly remembered that in the spring of the same year these bears had experienced the birth and, within a few days, the death of their only offspring. Their relationship to their young was such that they were still suffering.

Of course, this experience reminded me of the period of mourning that we all undergo when a loved one has died. A part of us dies with the deceased. As the great poet John Donne once reminded us: “No man is an island.” Therefore, when someone dies, we “ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

That is precisely the point being made in today's liturgy. Whenever we gather for the Sunday Eucharist we come together to form Christ's body so that in union with him we may offer fitting praise and thanksgiving to the Father. We never come to the Sunday assembly to offer our individual prayer or to assist the priest in offering prayer on our behalf.

By baptism into Christ we are joined too — we become part of his body. Our union with him and with one another through him is just as intense as the bond between any couple, between any parent and child. Because of that union with one another in and through Christ, because no one of us is an island but rather a part of the whole body, God reminds us today that we have a responsibility toward one another.

Specifically, God's Word today reminds us that we have a responsibility to warn other members of the body about their sinfulness, “If I tell the wicked man that he shall surely die, and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked man from his way, he [the wicked man] shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death.” (First Reading) In other words, our union in the body of Christ is so strong that if we stand by and do nothing to persuade other members from their sin, we become part of it.

That is why Jesus, in today's Gospel, tells his disciples that they should “point out” to others their faults, “If your brother should commit some wrong against you, go and point out his fault.” Scripture scholars have told us that the words “against you” are a later addition that were not originally part of Jesus' teaching. If that is true, our responsibility is even greater.

Correcting one another does not come easy to us. We tend to be rugged individualists. Most of us would rather claim that “if that's what he wants to do, that's his business; if that's how she wants to act, let her suffer the consequences.” Sooner or later, though, we have to face up to our Christian heritage, which reminds us that it's also “our business” and that we all will suffer the consequences.

Today's selection from Romans reminds us that the only debt we owe one another is to love one another. I can't help but think of how popular the concept of “tough love” has become in our time. Perhaps that is the love we must occasionally display.

Father Daniel Vogelpohl is pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church, Ft. Mitchell.

Work and dignity

Americans have celebrated Labor Day since 1887, when the holiday was established to acknowledge the contribution of ordinary people to the well-being and economic strength of our nation.

The dignity of work and the rights of workers are one of the principles of Catholic social teaching.

In the document “A Catholic Framework for Economic Life No. 5,” the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops states, “All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, as well as to organize and join unions and other associations.”

At Catholic Charities over the last few years we have seen the effects of the prolonged economic downturn and the unemployment and underemployment that has resulted. In our foreclosure prevention program we see people in danger of losing their homes because they have lost their jobs and have not been able to find comparable work. In our counseling program we see the stress that lack of a paycheck causes to families, with adults and children frequently suffering from depression and anxiety. We also see the plight of the homeless, including families who have lost their home or apartment following a job loss, and who are living with family or friends, often in crowded conditions that are stressful and unstable.

Among the people coming to Catholic Charities are those who have a job, but who make minimum wage or slightly more, and who are available to work full-time but are not able to do so, because their employers do not

offer 40 hours a week. The minimum wage in Kentucky is \$7.25 per hour. Even if full-time work was available, someone making minimum wage earns only \$290 per week before deductions. This is not enough money to support a family in today's world. We often meet people working second and third jobs, who are always sleep deprived, and who seldom see their children, trying to make ends meet and support their families. Both adults in a household may work punishing schedules and long hours, and are still barely getting by.

The problems of unemployment go beyond the practical matters of loss of income. Everyone likes to feel that they have some control over their lives, but when people lose their jobs they experience lack of control that can be very stressful and damaging to mental health. There is also a social loss. When people work, they are part of a group and research has shown that social relationships in the work place contribute to the overall sense of well-being. The rhythm and routine of going to work every day also has a positive effect on mental health. When people lose their jobs, they become socially more isolated, and this too can contribute to depression.

Pope Francis has spoken on several occasions about the dignity of work. Coming as he does from Argentina and not from the wealthy countries of the West, the Holy Father has spoken forcefully about the importance of work, and that lack of work is about much more than lack of income and the problems that go along with it. “The problem is not being able to bring bread to the table at home: this is a serious problem, this takes away our dignity. And the most serious problem is not hunger, even though the problem exists. The most serious problem is that of dignity. For this reason we must work and defend the dignity that work gives us.”

Mary Fleischman is program director for capacity building and parenting support supervisor for Catholic Charities—Diocese of Covington, Ky.

Old age: shipwreck or fine wine?

The month of September begins and ends with a focus on the elderly. Since 1978 the first Sunday after Labor Day has been celebrated as National Grandparents Day — this year's observance falls on Sept. 7. Later in the month, senior citizens will gather in Rome for a special celebration in their honor at the invitation of Pope Francis. The meeting, entitled “The Blessing of a Long Life,” will take place in St. Peter's Square, Sept. 28.

In announcing the event, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, stated, “The day is based on the assumption that old age is not a shipwreck but a vocation.”

A shipwreck? I suspect what Archbishop Paglia meant was not that advanced age itself is a disaster, but that society's response to this stage of life is sadly adrift. He suggested neither politics, economics nor culture has developed an adequate approach to the contemporary individual needs of older persons or the growing population of seniors as a whole.

The inadequacy of society's response to the needs and problems of the elderly is nothing new. In 1982, St. John Paul II suggested that society needed to be “jerked into awareness” with regard to the elderly in order to foster “a vision of the old which is genuinely human and Christian, a vision of old age as a gift of God to the individual, the family and society.”

More than 30 years later, the ship seems to have completely lost direction! Pope Francis has deplored our “throw-away culture” and a “hidden euthanasia” which silences and marginalizes the old. “A nation that does not respect grandparents,” he said, “has no future because it has no memory.”

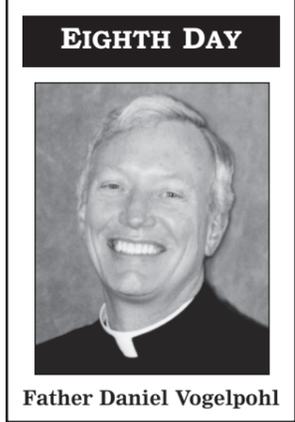
Pope Francis often evokes the memory of his own paternal grandmother, whom he visited each day as a child and to whom he credits his early spiritual formation. The pope feels that we live in a time when the elderly do not count. Yet, he asserts, “the elderly pass on history, doctrine, faith and they leave them to us as an inheritance. They are like a fine vintage wine; that is, they have within themselves the power to give us this noble inheritance.”

In a homily about the elderly Eleazar, who accepted death rather than give bad example to the young (Macc 6:18-31), our Holy Father related the following story he heard as a young child and never forgot: “There was a father, mother and their many children, and a grandfather lived with them. He was quite old, and when he was at table eating soup, he would get everything dirty — his mouth, the napkin — it was not a pretty sight. One day the father said that given what was happening to the grandfather, from that day on, he would eat alone. So he bought a little table and placed it in the kitchen. And so the grandfather ate alone in the kitchen while the family ate in the dining room. After some days the father returned home from work and found one of his children playing with wood. He asked him, ‘What are you doing?’ to which the child replied, ‘I am playing carpenter.’ ‘And what are you building?’ the father asked. ‘A table for you, papa, for when you get old like grandpa.’”

Although each of us alone may be powerless to influence policies or economic decisions regarding the elderly, we can change the culture in our own families. To begin, do not let the month of September pass without pausing to reflect and thank God for the precious legacy you have received from grandparents or other significant elders in your life.

And then, be sure to set a place at your table for the elderly, regardless of their limitations. Teach your children to reverence the old and one day you will be considered fine vintage wine in the heart of your own family. You will experience the blessing of a long life.

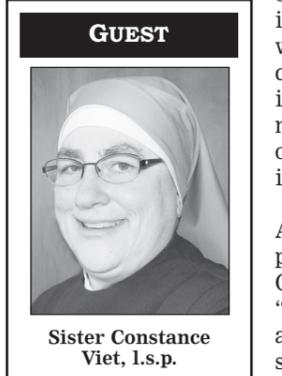
Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.



Father Daniel Vogelpohl



Mary Fleischman



Sister Constance Veit, I.S.P.

Being envious, mean-spirited may be human, but it's not Christian

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY— Envy, jealousy and meanness are human instincts, but they are not Christian, since the division they cause among believers is the work of the devil, Pope Francis said.

"Instead, God wants us to grow in the ability to come together, forgive each other and love each other in order to be ever more like him," he said at his weekly general audience Aug. 27.

A strong breeze and temperatures around 80 degrees made it possible to move the weekly event from the indoor air-conditioned Vatican audience hall to St. Peter's Square, where more than 12,000 people gathered for the pope's catechesis and blessing.

The Creed describes the Catholic Church as being "one and holy," the pope said, yet its members are sinners, who "experience, every day, their own fragility and wretchedness."

"That's why this faith we profess impels us toward conversion, to have the courage to live in unity and holiness every day," he said.

"If we are not united, if we are not holy, it's because we are not being faithful to Jesus," who is the source of all unity and holiness, the pope said.

Divisions are manifested not only in schisms or major rifts among Christians; they also frequently occur on the local level, as "parochial sins," in Catholic parishes, schools, communities and organizations, Pope Francis said.

"Sometimes, in fact, our parishes, which are called to be places of sharing and communion, are sadly marked by envy, jealousy, resentment."

"This is human, but it is not Christian!" the pope said.

"How much gossip (goes on) in parishes," the pope lamented. "We mustn't do it! I won't tell you to cut off your tongue. No. Not that. But do ask the Lord for the grace to not do it, all right?"

The refusal to gossip, in fact, is such an outstanding Christian virtue, it should make a person a saint overnight, the pope said.

He recalled the sterling reputation of an elderly woman who used to work in a parish in his former Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

People remembered her as someone who "never talked badly of others, never gossiped, was always with a smile." A woman like that can be canonized tomorrow! This is beautiful, this is a great example," he said to applause.

Conflict arises when people judge others; look only at others' defects, not their gifts; give more weight to differences than common ground; make themselves the top priority; and follow their own ambitions and points of view, he added.

"In a Christian community, division is one of the gravest of sins because it turns it into a sign not of God's work, but of the devil, who, by definition, separates, ruins relationships and instills prejudice."

The pope asked people to examine their consciences and sincerely repent "for all the times in which we caused



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis greets a girl as he arrives to lead his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Aug. 27.

division or misunderstanding in our communities." He asked people pray for the grace to better reflect the "beautiful and joyful" unity of Jesus and the Father; and the grace "to not talk badly about others, not criticize, not gossip, and to love each other."

"This is the holiness of the Church: in recognizing in each other the image of God," who calls for continual conversion in everyone.

Despite the faults of his followers, "Jesus never leaves us by ourselves, he doesn't abandon his Church. He walks with us, understands us, our weaknesses, our sins and forgives us," inspiring people to forgive each other, too.

To read the entire message of Pope Francis' general audience visit www.vatican.va.

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Mission Statement

The Pro-Life Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, guided by our Bishop, promotes the sanctity and legal protection of human life from conception to natural death through prayer, pastoral care, public policy and education.

Respect life

“What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life. All together, we must build a new culture of life”

– John Paul II, The Gospel of Life

Actively promoting respect for human life is the responsibility of every Catholic. In response to the “Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities” established by the U. S. Bishops in 1975, each parish is invited to form a parish Pro-Life Committee to organize respect-life activities that raise awareness and educate on behalf of life issues within the parish.

Resources:

Ruah Woods Theology of the Body Education Center
6675 Wesselman Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45248
513-407-8672
www.ruahwoods.org

Theology of the Body for Teens

Brittney White

As summer comes to a close and my senior year of high school starts, I have exciting plans for my final year. I'm going to be busy singing with the school choir, participating in theatre, leading clubs, applying for college, dating, attending senior prom and so much more!

One unexpected surprise that adds to my excitement for the upcoming year was finding out that Theology of the Body (TOB) is now part of the curriculum at all high schools and middle schools in the Diocese of Covington. Theology of the Body is the teaching of St. John Paul II about human sexuality, human dignity, body image, dating, marriage and other topics related to our physical and spiritual connections. It answers many of the questions that are frequently debated on social media as well as at the lunch tables at school.

How do I already know about TOB? Because last year I was lucky enough to be invited by our diocesan Pro-Life Office to attend a weekend retreat at Ruah Woods, a TOB education center in Cincinnati. I met other teens from the Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati area that shared my desire to learn more about this beautiful message of the dignity of the human person, and afterward we were invited to attend Kenosis, which is a twice-monthly follow-up to the TOB for Teens retreat. At Kenosis we enjoy fellowship and discuss how to prepare ourselves better to grow into adults who understand the real meaning of love.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend Camp Echo, a TOB camp for teens hosted by Ruah Woods and guided by Brian Butler, co-author of the “Theology of the Body for Teens” series. It was a week filled with talks, reflection, sports, outdoor activities, prayer and fellowship. Once again I was surrounded by like-minded people whose friendship lifts me up as I start my final year of high school and face the many challenges ahead.

It's because of everything I've learned at Ruah Woods and am still learning at Kenosis that I feel so excited and grateful that our diocesan schools will be teaching TOB. With so much confusion in the media and culture around us we all need help figuring out life.

As a teen I am constantly bombarded with the idea of casual sex and that I should have sex whenever I feel “ready.” Movies, TV, social media, music, friends' conversations, novels, even political ads — everyone is discussing sex and my “right” to have it. But not one of them ever tell me the truth — that waiting means saving myself for something really important.

My parents and the diocesan chastity speakers always nurtured my chastity and purity, but it took Theology of the Body to really help me understand myself — who I am and what it means to become a woman. Here are a few things that TOB taught me:

- What makes a good relationship with a guy.
- How lowering my standards for a guy betrays my dignity as a young woman.
- Why my affections are something to be treasured, not taken for granted.
- That I am worth waiting for.
- How my modesty reveals my dignity.
- That self-respect includes a healthy self-image, accepting even my imperfections.
- How society seriously misunderstands the purpose of dating and marriage.

- Why authentic love outweighs society's pressures for instant gratification.
- How sex outside of marriage is nothing like sex between a loving husband and wife.

- What makes a loving marriage between a man and a woman special.

The Theology of the Body helped convince me that sex is not just a “thing,” as one of my peers put it. TOB helped open my eyes to how I want to live — now and in the future — and it taught me the priceless value inherent in me both as a human being and as a young woman.

I am looking forward to learning more about myself through Theology of the Body this school year, and I feel blessed that my classmates will also experience its powerful vision and support. Thanks to the Diocese of Covington and Ruah Woods.

Brittney White is a senior at Notre Dame Academy, a diocesan High School Pro-Life Ambassador, and a parishioner at Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger.



Brittney White

Theology of the Body for Teens

Parishes and schools in the Diocese of Covington are implementing the Theology of the Body for Teens series in middle school and high school religion classes beginning this year. The series consists of a student guide supplemented by DVDs. Because of scheduling issues at schools and parishes, teachers are given some leeway in timing for the classes.

The middle school program is presented in sixth, seventh or eighth grade. The publisher recommends seventh grade, but recognizing the demands of scheduling, schools have the option of teaching it during any one of the three grade levels or spreading it over the three years of middle school.

The high school Theology of the Body curriculum consists of 12 lessons that teachers may cover in the way that fits best into their class schedule. In a regular 45-60 minute religion class occurring four times a week, it can be completed in about three weeks.

Most Reverend Roger J. Foys requests the honor of your presence at the annual Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Mass

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 7:00 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

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Homilist: Rev. Lawrence Schaeper, pastor, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow

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2013 Statistics

St. William, Williamstown

Baptisms: 10

First Communions: 0

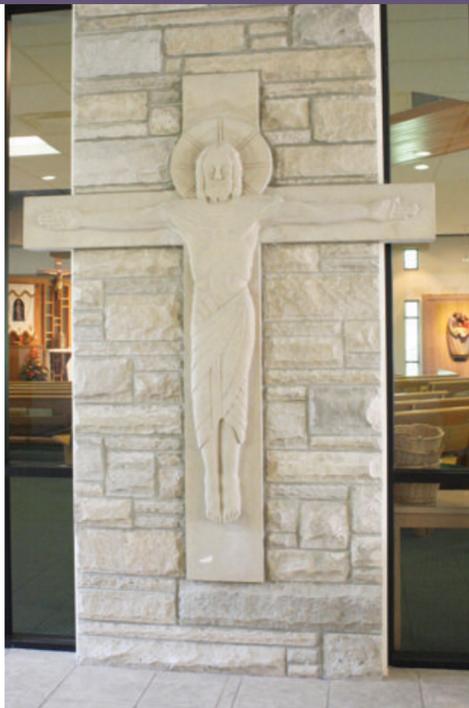
Confirmations: 3

Marriages: 1

Deaths: 5

Catholic households: 221

Mixed religion households: 36



(above, far left) The stone crucifix, the façade of the former St. William Church building, was removed and incorporated into the new church building in 2002.

(middle, left) A wooden sculpture of the Holy Family adds to the modern amenities at St. William Church.

(above, left) Parishioners worship at St. William Church.

(above, right) Bishop Foys greets parishioners at St. William Church.

(right) Bishop Foys introduces Father Damian Hills as the newly installed pastor.

(right) Deacon Michael Lyman speaks at the meeting with the parish and finance councils.

(left) A young parishioner walks through the gate at St. John Church, Dividing Ridge.

Faith 'alive and well' in Williamstown, Dividing Ridge

Laura Keener
Editor

Despite the busy weekend ahead, Bishop Roger Foys was greeted with a mood of quiet and calm as he arrived at St. William Parish, Williamstown, the weekend of Aug. 23-24 for his episcopal visit. This was Bishop Foys' 32nd such visitation on his quest, begun in February 2006, to visit every parish in the diocese.

During the weekend Bishop Foys celebrated and preached the weekend Masses at both St. William Church and its mission church St. John. He greeted parishioners, had individual meetings with the pastor, Father Damian Hills and Deacon Michael Lyman, and group meetings with the parish staff, finance and parish councils and other parish leaders. Bishop Foys also installed Father Hills as pastor, Aug. 24.

St. William Parish was established in 1912, and its mission church, St. John, Demosville, in 1882. The city in which St. John Church is located is also referred to as Dividing Ridge, aptly named as the two-lane country road boasts views of Kentucky's rolling hills on either side. Not much by way of physical structure has changed at St. John since its founding. The parish cemetery — the eternal resting place of former parishioners, many of whom were Irish — surrounds the church and a low iron fence separates the church property from Highway 3184. A large bell — hand-operated — sits on a concrete base alongside a flagpole in front of the church. The church has electricity but no running water.

Bishop Foys celebrated early morning Mass at St. John Church, Aug. 24, to the tune of birds singing as the opened windows provided the only air conditioning on what was slowly becoming a hot and humid summer day.

St. William Church, on the other hand, undertook a major building project in 2002 — placing a new church building, an education center (the former school building), a parish hall, parish offices and a parish gathering space all under one roof.

"We are in good shape. We run on a razor-thin margin," said Edward Feldmann, member of the finance committee, about the parish's finances. "Where we are challenged is if anything happens, any problems really, it puts a stress on where we are [financially] as a parish."

"St. John is in fantastic financial shape," Mr. Feldmann said. "Every year they take in more than they spend and they contin-

ue to support their parish in a very generous way."

Mr. Feldmann said that St. William Parish is still making loan payments on its renovations. "We have had three rounds of capital campaigns to help pay it off. Many people continue to give to the capital campaign even though their pledge is completed." And he praised his fellow parishioners for their generosity, noting that many contribute to the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA) over and above their weekly tithe to the parish.

Recently St. William and St. John merged their parish and finance councils. "We put them together so that we can share with each other what is going on in each parish and really try to make the parish one parish community, two locations," said Mr. Feldmann.

The St. William fish fry, organized by Sue Guenther, parish council member, is held during Lent and provides 15 percent of the parish's revenue. It is a major social event for the St. William community. "The fish fry is a time for us to evangelize, in a sense, because it brings the whole community of Williamstown to our parish community giving us the opportunity to talk to other Christians," said Judith Kirk, Deanery Pastoral Council representative.

Ms. Guenther said that in light of the success of the fish fry the parish is contemplating a fall chicken dinner. "We have put feelers out in the community and the response has been positive."

Deacon Lyman estimated that 85 percent of the people who attend the fish fry are non-Catholic, indicative of the religious make up of Williamstown and the surrounding community. Being a religious minority is a challenge for the parish, especially for its youth ministry.

"Some of our youth are going to the Baptist youth groups because their friends go there," said Sarah Campbell, parish youth minister. "There are just so many more Baptists living around here and many of our families are split — one Catholic parent and one Baptist parent."

Despite the challenge, youth ministry at St. William Parish is very active, each year sending a group of youth to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. and making a good showing at the diocese's annual YOUTH 2000 Eucharistic retreat. Ms. Campbell said that one year they were able to save up enough money to take five youth to the National Catholic Youth Conference. "It was beautiful," she said. "I don't know when we will get to go



(above) The front of St. John Church, Dividing Ridge.



back again." Of the youth that participate in the parish's youth program, "I know we touch their hearts," she said.

Parishioners are proud of its Parish Religious Education program, which has an enrollment this year of 61 students. They also have a very active St. Vincent de Paul Society that recently received a DPAA grant. "I am so grateful that we have been able to get DPAA grants for our St. Vincent de Paul Society. It really means a lot to our world," said Joyce Lyman, wife of Deacon Lyman.

Steve Bates, parish council president, praised parishioners for their cooperation. "This parish operates largely based on everyone pitching in and volunteering. The names and faces here today does not begin to make up the great deal of work that goes on day to day here, even out in the community, because whenever

there is a call or need for something, there are a lot of people who answer that call or need," he said.

And while the spirit of volunteerism is certainly admirable Cindy Noll, finance committee member and adult faith formation coordinator, is concerned that for some service might begin to feel too much like work. "I worry about people being here for the work and not being spiritually fed," she said. "We really need to feed spiritually the adult population. We are small enough that we can actually do it — have retreats, discussions and lectures. I would love to see this parish grow from the inside."

Kathy McDonough agreed. "Parents don't seem to have a deep understanding of the faith. They know they want their children here but they don't have a deep understanding of the Church," she said. "Because of the area in which we live — surrounded by

other faiths — there is a real need for knowledge of Scripture and how our faith and Church teachings are based in Scripture."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my visitation to St. William Parish in Williamstown and St. John Mission in Dividing Ridge," said Bishop Foys. "It was evident to me that the parishioners of both these places are serious about taking responsibility for their parishes. There is a tremendous cooperation among the parishioners and a wonderful corps of volunteers who take care of so many aspects of the parish."

"Their love of the faith is evident and their desire to deepen that faith is more than praiseworthy. The participation at Mass was wonderful and is a sign to me of a vibrant parish community."

"Father Damian Hills, their new pastor whom I installed at the Sunday Mass, is indeed blessed to be ministering to these two

parish communities, as are the parishioners blessed to have him as their pastor. The faithful gave him what I perceived to be a genuine warm welcome. The faith is alive and well in Williamstown and Dividing Ridge!"

Father Hills said he was very pleased with Bishop Foys' visit. "Everything was very positive, everyone was very grateful and the visitation went very smoothly. Bishop Foys understands the parish very well based on the remarks he made to me, he understands the needs of the people and the parish very well." About his new appointment Father Hills said, "I'm thrilled to be here. The people here, I have found, cooperate well, they work well, they volunteer, it is a very well-run parish."

Keener photos

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Newsworthy

In August the Washington Post named Villa Madonna Academy on its annual list of Most Challenging High Schools. After an all-school Mass, Sept. 4, high school principal Pamela McQueen announced the designation to the student body and staff and unveiled a banner and plaque to be hung in the school.

The weekly TV **Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption** will be broadcast on Sunday, 5-6 p.m. on station Me TV WLWT, on channels: over the air 5-2; Time Warner Cable 188 in Kentucky and Cincinnati Bell 23 or 291.

Have something to list in **"People and Events"**? The deadline for event notices is nine days prior to the desired publication date. Please e-mail messenger@covdio.org no later than the Wednesday before the week you would like the information to appear.

The Knights of St. John International Commandery #94 invite you to park at Mother of God Parish, Covington, for Oktoberfest, Sept. 5, 6 and 7, for a \$5 donation.

Annual Bishop Brossart alumni softball tournament, Sept. 6, Pendry Park and St. Philip ball fields. Call 240-7076.

Upcoming Cincinnati & Northern Ky. area **CCL NFP classes**: Sept. 7, Ruah Woods, Cincinnati, 6 p.m.; Sept. 7, Good Shepherd Montessori School, Cincinnati, 3 p.m.; Sept. 13, St. Timothy Parish, Union, 2 p.m.; Sept. 15, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Burlington, 6:30 p.m.; Sept. 21, St. Gertrude Parish, Cincinnati, 2 p.m.; Sept. 25, St. Patrick, Taylor Mill, 7 p.m.; Oct. 12, St. Susanna Parish, Mason, 1 p.m.; Oct. 21, Mother of God Parish, Covington, 6:30 p.m.; Nov. 9, St. Elizabeth Medical Center, Edgewood, 6:30 p.m.; and Dec. 7, Ruah Woods, Cincinnati, 6 p.m. If these don't meet your schedule, additional live online classes and local area classes for 2015 can be found on www.CCLi.org.

First Place 4 Health, a 12-week, Christ-centered weight loss program, will begin fall sessions at St. Agnes Church, Ft. Wright. Two different sessions available: Monday evenings, 5:30-6:45; Tuesday mornings, 7:30-8:45, beginning the week of Sept. 15. Call 341-5686, or e-mail nancybradley47@hotmail.com.

Observations at the Bank of Kentucky Observatory on the campus of Thomas More College. A talk will be presented one hour before viewings: Sept. 6 and Oct. 4, 9 p.m.; Nov. 1 and Dec. 6, 8 p.m. Visit www.tmc.org.

Father Jo Joy will celebrate Mass and have an inner healing service, Sept. 8, 7 p.m., St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs.

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery are offering a day of reflection entitled **"Exploring the Illuminations"**



CaSSba heats up

Catholic Charities' fundraiser **"The CaSSba — A Tailgating Good Time,"** was held Aug. 24 at the Drees Pavilion, Covington. Thanks to the volunteers, donors and staff the event was a huge success. Pictured are volunteers who manned the grill despite the 90-degree temperature. Proceeds from the event benefit the clients of Catholic Charities—Diocese of Covington, through the program and services provided.

of Hildegard of Bingen, Sept. 13, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The presenter is Sister Deborah Harmeling. Cost \$30, includes lunch; reduced rate of \$20 for Benedictine Oblates.

Adam Blai, religious demonologist from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, will offer two talks, **"Opening Doors to the Demonic and How to Keep Them Closed"** and a discussion on the book **"The Demon of Brownsville Road,"** Sept. 13, at St. Catherine of Siena Church, Ft. Thomas. Cost is \$10 at the door. Doors open at 6 p.m.; talks begin at 7 p.m. Call 441-3438.

All Saints Church, Walton, adult formation study programs begin soon. Here is the schedule: **"A Quick Journey through the Bible,"** Mondays, 7 p.m. (Sept. 15-Nov. 17); **"A Biblical Walk through the Mass,"** Tuesdays, 7 p.m. (Sept. 16-Oct. 21) and Thursdays, 7 p.m. (Jan. 8-Feb. 12); **"The Catholicism,"** Thursdays, 7 p.m. (Sept. 18-Dec. 18); **"Matthew: The King and His Kingdom,"** Tuesdays, 7 p.m. (Nov. 11-May 19); and **"The Bible Timeline,"** Mondays, 7 p.m. (Nov. 24-June 1). All studies are held in the parish hall. A cost for materials applies.

Swing'n Seniors of St Thomas trip to Bronners, Frankenmuth, Sept. 30, three days, two nights. Contact St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas.

A faith-based support group, **New Beginnings** provides separated and divorced individuals the opportunity for healing and growth. The next session will be Wednesdays, Sept. 3-Oct. 22, 7-9 p.m. Registration required, 392-1500.

St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, Oktoberfest, Sept. 13, 5-11 p.m. Ample parking on parish grounds.

St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, eighth-grade class **"Trash to Treasure" yard sale fundraiser**, Sept. 13 in church parking lot. Collecting large and small items now (no clothing or televisions). Call to schedule pick-up for items 258-4165 or 982-1193.

The United Nations International Pilgrim Statue of Fatima, visit to the Diocese of Covington, Sept. 13-18. Contact parishes for a detailed schedule of daily events. Sept. 13, St. Timothy Parish, Union, 2 p.m.-6:30 p.m.; Sept. 14, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sept. 15, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, 10 a.m. Mass-7 p.m. Mass; Sept. 16, Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, California, 8 a.m. Mass-12 p.m.; Sept. 17, St. Paul Parish, Florence, 8 a.m. Mass-11 a.m.; Sept. 17, St. Joseph Academy, Walton, 12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.; Sept. 18, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, 8 a.m. Mass-7 p.m. Mass.

Bishop Brossart Class of 2009, five-year reunion, Sept. 13, 5-9 p.m., in Hegenauer Hall. Call 462-4559.



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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

The Siena Seniors of St. Catherine, Ft. Thomas, will meet the second Sunday of each month in the church's undercroft at 12:30 p.m. for lunch and cards. Call 694-1485 for your catered lunch reservation. The next meeting will be Sept. 14.

The Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, archbishop of Louisville and president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, will present **Healing Wounds and Warming Hearts: The Vision of St. John Paul II and Pope Francis** at Ruah Woods' annual banquet, Sept. 18, 6 p.m., at Xavier University Schiff Conference and Banquet Center, Cincinnati. Reserve tickets online at www.ruahwoods.org or call (513) 407-8672.

Women's parish retreat at St. Anne Retreat Center, with Father Charlie Smeich, OFM., Sept. 19-21. Space is limited. Contact Cathy Brunner at 441-2003, ext. 325 or cbrunner@covdio.org.

Next weekend for **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** is Sept. 19-21, in Georgetown. Register online, www.wwme.org.

St. Henry School, Elsmere, Boosters 125th **anniversary golf outing** — four-person scramble — Sept. 20, noon, the golf courses of Kenton County, Independence. Call 801-2514 or e-mail abautista@twc.com.

Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Mass Sept. 27, the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul, 9:30 a.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. A reception will follow at Covington Latin School. Vincentians celebrating a jubilee will be recognized for their service. RSVP by Sept. 15 by calling 446-7720 or e-mail Carolyn.ashcraft@svdpnky.org. Donations for the Erlanger food pantry will be accepted.

The Happy Timer's senior group of St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, is looking for new members. The group meets the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. for dinner and cards. Anyone age 50 plus is welcome. Call 341-5716.

Jail ministry volunteers needed for prayer services in local detention centers to support persons who have been criminally victimized and to mentor those who are reentering society after incarceration. Training and guidance provided by Catholic Charities. Call 581-8974, ext. 117 or e-mail dphillips@covingtoncharities.org.

La Salette Academy all-school reunion, Sept. 27, Longneck's Sports Grill, Wilder, 2-10 p.m. Everyone welcome from — grade school and high school — spouses too. Don't forget to bring all your LSA memorabilia. Call 757-5556.

Wedding anniversary vespers, hosted by the Department of Catechesis and Formation, will be held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Sept. 28, 3 p.m. Anyone celebrating a 1, 25 or 50+ year anniversary who would like to attend and be recognized should contact their parish or catechesis@covdio.org.

St. Henry's Primetime Seniors' trip to Carter Caves State Resort Park, Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Cost \$300 per person based on two persons per room. Several activities will be held such as various cave tours, miniature golf and nature programs. Fishing at Smokey Valley Lake, a nine-hole golf course, guided horse trail rides and a lake with boat rental are available. Call 727-8959.

The Indian Run/Walk benefiting the Missy Goller Scholarship Fund will be held Oct. 5 at Pioneer Park starting at 9 a.m. Entry fee is \$20 adults; \$15 students and faculty. Register online at hchscov.com. For information e-mail judy.borchers@hchscov.com or call 431-1335.

The 10th annual YOUTH 2000 Eucharistic retreat weekend will be held Oct. 10-12 at Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills. YOUTH 2000 is for ages 13 to 30. Several hundred youth are expected to gather with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal for a lively, prayerful encounter with Christ. Minors (ages 13 to 17) must have a VIRTUS-qualified chaperone. Doors open 5:30 p.m. on Friday for walk-in registration. Download registration and permission forms at www.nkyouth.com. Sponsored by the Covington Youth Retreat Committee and the Diocesan Department of Catechesis and Formation.

Vendors needed at the annual **Villa Madonna Academy Fall craft show**, Oct. 18. Contact Barb Biehl at bbiehl@aemc.cc or 380-7508.

The Most Reverend Roger J. Foys D.D., Bishop of Covington, presents a conference on the origin, inspiration and **history of the Bible**, Oct. 25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Receptions, Erlanger. Speakers include Rev. Timothy Schehr, Ph.D., professor of Biblical Studies, Athenaeum of Ohio, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, and Rev. Msgr. Christopher Schreck, STD, Ph.D., rector and president of the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio. Continental breakfast is served 8-9 a.m. Admission is \$25. Call 392-1500.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center (NDUEC) is seeking volunteers to provide educational support services to young children in Covington. Tutors as well as PE monitors are greatly needed for the fall program. NDUEC is open Monday through Thursday, 3-6 p.m. Make a difference in a child's life. Call or e-mail Mary Gray at 261-4487 or nduecvolunteer@sndky.org.

The TAP program at Thomas More College provides the opportunity for working adults to further their education through keenly focused programs that enable students to make timely progress on their degree, while working full time. TAP offers degrees in Business, Communication, Education and an RN-BSN with upcoming group start dates in each area of study. Contact Frank Morano at 344-3432 or frank.morano@tap.thomasmore.edu.

The Parish Kitchen is looking for a small group of people to come the third Monday of every month to cook the main dish. All ingredients, supplies and recipes provided — just need able hands to prepare the food. Cooks can arrive any time after 2 p.m. Contact Dan Nolan at 581-7742.

The **Catholic Charismatic Community of Northern Kentucky** invites you to join them every third Tuesday of the month at St. Joseph Heights, Park Hills, for a Bible teaching or witness, 7:15-9 p.m. Call 341-5339.

Catholic Charities-Diocese of Covington is looking for a volunteer administrative support person in pre-service at our Latonia agency office. Flexible schedule, three-plus hours per week, as agreed upon with supervisor. Call 581-8974 or e-mail tbergmann@covingtoncharities.org or visit www.CovingtonCharities.org for position description.

Festivals

Holy Cross District High School, Indian summer festival and Taste of Latonia, **Sept. 5-6**

St. Matthew and St. Mary Parish Picnic, Kenton, **Sept. 7**

St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, **Sept. 12-14**

St. Timothy Parish, Union, **Sept. 19-21**

Volunteers are needed for **direct service to children to share in family life activities**. The Diocesan Catholic Children's Home Center for Children and Families has opportunities for you to share "home life" with the children as a surrogate family or mentor. Call 331-2040 or e-mail www.dcchcenter.org.

Marriage preparation 2014 program schedules are now available at www.religiouseducation.covingtondiocese.org (select "Programs for Engaged Couples").

St. Elizabeth Healthcare is looking for individuals willing to volunteer as guest guides to welcome visiting guests, walking them to their destinations and assisting with wheelchair transport as needed. Call Volunteer Services at 301-2140 or e-mail volunteer@stelizabeth.com.

Mary Rose Mission, Florence, is now serving food to those in need on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4-6 p.m. Volunteers needed, 11 a.m.-3:15 p.m. and 3:15-7 p.m. Contact us at volunteer@maryrosemission.org.

St. Vincent de Paul — Northern Kentucky is now able to **recycle any type of computer equipment** you no longer need. Drop off your equipment at any St. Vincent donation site in Erlanger, Newport, Dayton or Falmouth. Visit www.svdpnky.org or call 341-3212, ext. 5.

Project Rachel — God's greatest desire is to forgive. If you have ever had an abortion experience, the Catholic Church wants to reach out to you and offer healing and reconciliation through this confidential ministry for women and men. Please call our Project Rachel confidential telephone number, 392-1547 or e-mail projectrachel@covdio.org.

Rose Garden **"Nights of Prayer and Praise"** Wednesdays, 7 p.m. at the Rose Garden Mission, Covington.

Foreclosure counseling with options for homeowners is available. Become informed. Groups and individual sessions available. Call Catholic Charities, 581-8974.

Foster/adoptive parents needed. For information call the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, 331-2040.

The **Associate Community of the Congregation of Divine Providence** are lay men and women who, along with the sisters, share in the mission, vision and spiritual life of providence through prayer, ministry, relationship, celebration and works of mercy. This is an opportunity to grow in grace and become closer to God. For more information call 441-0700, ext. 22.



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ENTERTAINMENT

“Frank Miller’s Sin City: A Dame To Kill For” (Weinstein) This hard-boiled, excessively violent sequel to 2005’s “Sin City,” based, like its predecessor, on Frank Miller’s graphic novels, features a lewd plot, a glib noir style and a title character who spends more than half her screen time nude. Miller, who wrote the script and co-directed with



Movie Capsules

Robert Rodriguez, emphasizes lurid bloodletting amid the retro black-and-white setting of what amounts to a smutty comic-

book adaptation using competent actors as bait. Pervasive violence, frequent upper female nudity, much sexual banter and fleeting crass language. CNS: O; MPAA: R.

“A Most Wanted Man” (Roadside) John le Carre’s 2008 espionage thriller is adapted for the big screen, showcasing the extreme measures spies take to combat terrorism, and the moral compromises that go with them. Director Anton Corbijn has crafted a tense cat-and-mouse thriller set in Hamburg, Germany. Philip Seymour Hoffman, in his final leading role, portrays a veteran German intelligence agent overseeing a top-secret team working to expose terrorist cells by infiltrating the local Muslim community and obtaining information. An idealistic immigration lawyer is his link to a shady refugee from Chechnya, who may or may not be an extremist. Complicating matters are an American spy and her agents lurking in the shadows, who have another agenda in mind. The chase is on, and fans of le Carre’s novels will

know to expect the unexpected. The film’s pronounced anti-American bias and cynicism, however, may leave a bitter aftertaste. Stylized violence, frequent profane and crude language. CNS: A-III; MPAA: R.

“If I Stay” (Warner Bros.) Comatose after a car accident that claimed the lives of her parents and gravely injured her little brother, an aspiring cellist has an out-of-body experience during which she must decide whether to fight for life in order to be reunited with her rocker boyfriend or follow her folks into eternity. While director R.J. Cutler’s teen tearjerker, adapted from Gayle Forman’s best-selling novel, implicitly affirms the existence of an afterlife, its glamorization of the physical relationship between the characters make it totally unsuitable for its target audience, all the more so since its high-school-senior heroine may or may not be 18. A benign view of teen sexuality and homosexual acts, nongraphic premarital — and possibly underage — sexual activity, a same-sex kiss, at least one use of profanity, considerable crude language. CNS: A-III; MPAA: PG-13.

“The November Man” (Relativity) The only thing out of the ordinary about this espionage-themed action flick is the level of visceral violence on display. Director Roger Donaldson’s screen version of Bill Granger’s novel, “There Are No Spies,” follows a retired CIA agent’s struggle with one of his former trainees for custody of a Belgrade social worker. The social worker may be able to produce a witness to the lurid war crimes committed in Chechnya by the front-runner in the race to become the next president of Russia. The murky, conspiracy-driven story line also involves the shifting fortunes of two Langley bigwigs.

Along with the bloodletting, which ranges from skulls exploded by high-powered rifle bullets to major arteries slashed by knives, an explicitly portrayed casual sexual encounter and a visit to a strip club make for a viewing experience that frequently plays on the lowest aspects of human nature. Excessive gory violence, graphic non-marital and implied premarital sexual activity, upper female and rear nudity, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, a steady flow of rough and crude terms. CNS: O; MPAA: R.

For full reviews of each of these films — go to www.covingtondiocese.org, visit the *Messenger* page and click on www.catholicnews.com or call 1-800-311-4CCC.

Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:

- A-I — general patronage;
- A-II — adults and adolescents;
- A-III — adults;
- L — limited adult audience (films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling);
- O — morally offensive.

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Protecting God's Children for Adults

For all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Covington who in any way provide a safe environment for children:

Step 1: Complete the volunteer application and acceptance forms at your parish or school after reviewing the Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct with your supervisor.

Step 2: Register at www.virtus.org. To register, visit www.virtus.org and click on "registration" and follow the prompts.

Step 3: After registering your account you will go to your Toolbox Tab in the green column and double click on Selection.com Background Check to process your background. The results will go directly to the Diocese Safe Environment and a copy will be mailed to the address you provided. If an individual stays in compliance with VIRTUS this background check will be valid until you ask to be marked inactive.

Step 4: Choose and attend a class. Parents and other interested persons are most welcome. No children, please.

■ St. Philip Parish Center, Melbourne
Saturday, Sept. 6, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

■ St. Edward School (Brinker Hall),
Cynthiana
Sunday, Sept. 21, 1–4:30 p.m.

■ Covington Latin School
Wednesday, Sept. 24, 7–9:30 p.m.

■ St James Church (Brooksville)
Saturday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

■ Blessed Sacrament Bles Center (Bldg.
between church & school), Ft. Mitchell
Tuesday, Oct. 14, 6–9:30 p.m.

Attention parents and volunteers: Every parish and school has a VIRTUS contact person. Introduce yourself to your VIRTUS coordinator so that you can be added to the certified volunteer list for school functions or sport programs. Sign up for a VIRTUS account www.virtus.org and follow the instructions to register and attend training. Bulletins will begin only after you have completed your live training and been processed. You will receive e-mail notices that say system@pub.virtus.org unless your

computer program blocks them.

Access your bulletins (12 per year), using these directions:

– www.virtus.org

– Enter your ID and password

– Click on TRAINING at top toolbar

– Click on TRAINING COMPLIANCE on left green panel

– Click on TRAINING REPORT

– Click on (CLICK FOR DETAILS)

– Choose a bulletin to read

– Hit SUBMIT after finishing EACH article.

Bulletin:

■ Sept. bulletin: will post Sept. 7; due Oct. 7.

August is an open month in VIRTUS to individuals to read any outstanding bulletins.

Bulletins need to be read every month before the deadline posted. If not read an

individual's account will go into suspension. The individual will need to contact their primary location to get their Training Tab back and account unsuspended.

Reminder: If your e-mail address has changed remember to update your VIRTUS account with your new e-mail address.

To Update Your Account:

Do you need to change contact information or where you volunteer?

– www.virtus.org

– Enter your ID and password

– Click on TOOLBOX

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If you are having difficulties with the program, call Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or e-mail msteffen@covdio.org.

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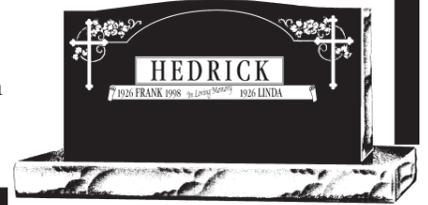
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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Pope to Gaza's Catholics: Be Christ's witness in midst of conflict

VATICAN CITY — The priest leading the Gaza Strip's only Catholic parish met with Pope Francis at the Vatican, thanking him for his support of those suffering in the war-torn territory. Argentine Father Jorge Hernandez of the Institute of the Incarnate Word had a 45-minute private meeting with the pope Aug. 29 — just days after the start of a truce between Israel and Hamas, which controls the coastal territory. The 36-year-old priest told Vatican Radio that the pope continued to offer his prayers and encouragement. He said the pope told him, "The Gospel demands the sacrifices that Jesus Christ asks of every one of us, everywhere. It's up to you to give witness to Jesus Christ there, in the land that saw him suffer, that saw him die, that also saw him, however, come back from the dead. So, be strong, have courage, keep going!" Father Hernandez and three Missionaries of Charity were the only religious left at Holy Family Church during a 50-day campaign between Israeli forces and Hamas militants. While those who could were encouraged to evacuate Gaza, the priest and three religious women stayed behind in the midst of the heaviest rocket fire to care for 29 severely disabled children and nine elderly women. They later opened up the parish school to shelter some 1,200 Palestinians who fled their homes during the airstrikes.

First wave of Iraqis, some of whom helped U.S., feel trapped in Jordan

AMMAN, Jordan — Iraqi refugees who fled sectarian violence following the 2003-U.S.-led invasion are fearful they could fall between the cracks as aid agencies scramble to help fresh arrivals escaping Islamic State brutality. One interpreter for the U.S. military in Iraq never expected to become a refugee, let alone someone who is now battling for his rightful place to receive resettlement in America after years of service aiding officers. Unlike other Iraqis who are now resettled in America due to threats because they worked with the U.S. government, the interpreter, who identifies himself only as Joseph, is languishing in the Jordanian capital. He wonders how to scrape together enough money to pay the rent and other bills for his young family. "They made big promises to me. After five years of working with the U.S. Army, why hasn't the U.S. granted me asylum?" asked the 31-year-old man, who once served on the base of Gen. David Petraeus, commander of American forces in Iraq. Militant threats against Joseph for his work with American troops and for his Christian faith forced him to flee to Jordan in 2009, while other family members escaped to Syria. "When I see terrorists, bad people getting resettled in the United States, this hurts me," said the man, who said he risked his life on several dangerous missions for the U.S. military in Baghdad and Iraq's restive Sunni Arab heartland. Joseph and other Iraqi refugees cite an example of an Iraqi kidnapper who was given the green light to settle in the U.S. It came as a surprise to all given Homeland Security's tough requirements.

Middle East patriarchs meet diplomats, call for wiping out terrorists

BEIRUT — Catholic and Orthodox patriarchs of the Middle East denounced attacks on Christians and called upon the international community to work toward eradicating terrorist groups. The patriarchs met Aug. 27 at the Maronite Catholic patriarchate at Bkerke,

north of Beirut, for a special summit to address the crisis in the region. They were later joined by the United Nations' special coordinator in Lebanon and the ambassadors of the five permanent member-countries of the U.N. Security Council. "The very existence of Christians is at stake in several Arab countries — notably in Iraq, Syria and Egypt — where they have been exposed to heinous crimes, forcing them to flee," the patriarchs said in a statement after the summit and meeting with diplomats. They lamented the indifference of both Islamic authorities and the international community over attacks against Christians, who have been in the region for 2,000 years. "What is painful is the absence of a stance by Islamic authorities, and the international community has not adopted a strict stance either," the patriarchs said. "We call for issuing a fatwa (Islamic religious ruling) that forbids attacks against others," they said. "The international community cannot keep silent about the existence of the so-called ISIS," the patriarchs said, referring to the Islamic State. "They should put an end to all extremist terrorist groups and criminalize aggression against Christians and their properties."

Syriac patriarch calls Islamic State actions 'attempted genocide'

BEIRUT — Returning from a visit to the Kurdish region of Iraq, Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan called the Islamic State invasion "pure and simple religious cleansing and attempted genocide. What we, the five patriarchs, saw in Ankawa, Irbil and other cities of Kurdistan, was something indescribable in terms of the violation of human rights and the threat of disappearing of various communities among the vulnerable minorities of Northern Iraq," Patriarch Younan said. "It is a pure and simple religious cleansing and attempted genocide. Patriarch Younan and Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II stayed in Iraq for six days after arriving as part of a delegation of Catholic and Orthodox patriarchs who visited Irbil to give moral and spiritual support to the beleaguered Iraqis from the Ninevah Plain. The displaced minorities — Christians, Yazidis, Shiite Muslims and Shabaks — sought refuge there from their besieged towns and villages, which fell to Islamic State militants in early August after they were evicted for their religious affiliation. Patriarch Younan spoke to Catholic News Service about the flood of displaced Iraqis they encountered.

Pope Francis to perform first wedding ceremony as pope

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis will preside over his first public wedding ceremony as pontiff during a nuptial Mass in St. Peter's Basilica Sept. 14. The Vatican confirmed Aug. 29 that 20 couples from the Diocese of Rome will be married by the pope, the bishop of Rome. The papal Mass celebrating the couples' marriage will come just a few weeks before the start of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family, Oct. 5-19. Since Pope Benedict XVI never publicly presided over a marriage ceremony as pope, the mid-September ceremony will be the first papal celebration of a wedding since 2000, when St. John Paul II married eight couples from different parts of the world as part of the Jubilee for Families. St. John Paul presided over another joint wedding for a group of couples in 1994 as part of his celebration of the International Year of the Family. He also married a number of other couples at private Masses during his lengthy pontificate.

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