



The next issue of *The Mirror* will be **February 18, 2022**. Sign up to receive the diocesan newspaper via Email in digital format: Contact Debbie Thompson at (417) 866-0841, or Email: dthompson@dioscg.org.



February 4, 2022

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI
One Church, East to West: Loving Jesus, Serving Jesus, Sharing Jesus

Vol. LVII, No. 21





#ListeningChurch

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited the Catholic Church to embark on a journey together. Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God will be called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens in understanding of Her mission and looks toward the future.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Pope Francis and Bishop Edward Rice invite YOU to join the conversation in your community!

In May of 2021, Pope Francis introduced the Synod on Synodality which is a journey of dialogue and discernment, in which **ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD** are called to pray and reflect upon the Holy Spirit's will for the Church. This synod is not just a convening of Bishops reflecting on a particular topic and advising the Pope. Through our listening and sharing, together we will seek to understand the Holy Spirit's will.

Our dialogue will focus on how your parish is currently journeying with people in their walk of faith and how the Holy Spirit may be challenging us to grow. Please come and share your experiences, insights, and concerns!

L I S T E N I N G

D I S C E R N M E N T

J O U R N E Y

M I S S I O N

F U T U R E

S H A R I N G

C R E A T I V I T Y

C O M M U N I O N

A U T H E N T I C I T Y

WATCH FOR & PLAN TO ATTEND
LISTENING SESSIONS BEING HELD IN
YOUR LOCAL PARISH!

UPCOMING SESSIONS...

Wed., FEB. 16	6:00pm
Immaculate Conception Parish, Jackson, MO	
Sat., MARCH. 5	5:30pm
Our Lady of Sorrows, Williamsville	
Sun., MARCH 6	12:00-noon
Wed., MARCH 9	6:30pm
St. Catherine of Siena, Piedmont	
Wed., MARCH 16	6:00pm
Sun., MARCH 20	9:30am
St. George, Van Buren	
Thu., MARCH. 24	6:00pm
St. Joseph Parish, Advance	

For more info on the Synod, please scan the QR code or check the website at <https://dioscg.org/synod-on-synodality-2021-2023/>





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

The fruits of my retreat, Part I

From Jan. 4-11, 2022, the Bishops of Episcopal Region IX, that is the Bishops of Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri gathered at Prince of Peace Abbey, in California, for our annual retreat. Our retreat director was The Most Rev. Peter Sartain, Bishop Emeritus of Seattle.

It is always good to gather with brother bishops but the beautiful thing about this retreat is that for the most part, it is a silent retreat. Can you imagine a gathering of bishops with no talking? It is a dream come true! We take our meals in silence, avoid any public conversations and the only time set aside for conversation is half an hour before the evening meal when we have a drink of our favorite soda. We are free to pray with the monks if we wish or we can make our own schedule. The daily schedule includes two conferences and the celebration of Holy Mass with the monks and those who attend from the neighborhood.

As I have mentioned many times before, of all the things that I read regarding the role of a Bishop, there is a common theme. The most important "thing" a bishop can do for his people is to be a man of prayer. I am certainly not perfect at it but I try to make prayer the focus of my life. So what did I learn? I don't know if I learned anything new. Overall, the conferences were a reaffirmation of things I had heard many times before. It was good to hear them again.

BLINDNESS

We are all blind in some way or

another, but God can use our blindness for his purpose. In the Scriptures, blindness was an opportunity for the Lord to manifest his healing powers. In the ways of faith, in the midst of our blindness, we are invited to move forward, hold his hand, and trust God as we move forward. It is then that miracles can happen, we can move mountains, things get accomplished that on our own would never have occurred.

PRAYER

The Archbishop assumed that each one of us has a disciplined and well-grounded prayer life but he cautioned us! A life of prayer based on discipline and structure will guarantee that we are saying our prayers but maybe our prayers can remain on the surface with no depth. When we go to pray we are invited to "rest in God." He recounted the story of St. Bernard of Clairvaux who gave advice to Pope Eugene III, his former student. St. Bernard told the pope that in order to avoid a hardened heart he needed to "rest in God." Such an approach to prayer requires detachment from one's self and keeps us free of bitterness and narcissism. He offered a beautiful little verse, "Jesus who rests in the Father, rest in me."

PREACHING

Is our preaching rooted in a sense of awe and wonder at the Sacred Scriptures? Is our homily preparation an experience of awe and delight in the Scriptures or is it simply based on a methodology?

In my preaching, do I give to the people what they are aching to hear? Does my preaching move them to conversion? Is my preaching all about me in a weekly litany of my issues? Do I proclaim Jesus in my preaching and in the programs offered through the diocese? Quoting St. Ephraim, the Archbishop reminded us: "In the name of Jesus, God has nothing more to say." Our preaching must be rooted in our experience of Jesus and then share that with the people of God.

PERSONAL SINFULNESS

Using the story of Joseph in the Old Testament, the Archbishop reminded us that God is with us when we have been "thrown in the cistern." Referring to Thomas Merton, "God goes all the way down with us" into the mud and muck of life—we are never beyond his reach. And if we feel that we are beyond His reach it is because we have closed the door to Him. We are invited at these moments to look up to Christ on the cross as he looks down upon us, and standing there at the foot of the cross, do our eyes meet? The devil wants us to think that we have disappointed God and like Adam and Eve in the garden, we must hide from him. No, we are called to gaze at the face of God, be at peace, and look into the eyes of Jesus. And it is there, at the foot of the cross, looking up at His face that we take His breath away!

In the next edition of *The Mirror*, I'll share Part 2 of what I learned on retreat. **God bless you!** ©TM



February 12-23, 2022

PUBLIC CALENDAR

SAT., FEB. 12

7 p.m. KofC Council #698 Religious Appreciation Valentine's Dinner, Springfield

MON., FEB. 14

11 a.m. Annual Valentine Party/lunch, Holy Family Parish, Shell Knob, MO;

5:30 p.m. Winter Clergy Gathering, Springfield

TUE., FEB. 15

Mass, Cause of Our Joy Convent, Springfield;

6 p.m. Project Andrew Dinner, St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Joplin, MO

WED., FEB. 16

6:30 p.m. Adoration Committee & Adorers, Holy Trinity, Springfield

THU., FEB. 17

The Catholic Center Staff Mass & Meeting, Springfield

SAT., FEB. 19

Annual Gathering of Religious Sisters, St. John Vianney Parish, Mountain View;

6 p.m. Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Ann Parish, Malden, MO

SUN., FEB. 20

8 a.m. Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Teresa Parish, Glennonville MO;

5:30 p.m. KofC Religious Appreciation Dinner, Scott City, MO

MON., FEB. 21

5:30 p.m. Winter Clergy Gathering, Cape Girardeau

TUE., FEB. 22

Young Priests Gathering, Mountain View

WED., FEB. 23

7:20 a.m. Mass, South Central Correction Center, Licking, MO;

11:45 a.m. Deans Meeting, St. John Vianney Parish, Mountain View



ANOTHER WALK THROUGH: 'WALKING TOGETHER' by Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht

Bishop John Leibrecht recently celebrated his 37th anniversary of his episcopal consecration, which was on Dec. 12, 1984. Before his retirement as the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, he wrote a standing column in *The Mirror* entitled, "Walking Together." At the end of each article, Bp. Leibrecht would normally share a funny story referencing his travels to the schools, or time with friends, family, or other bishops. *The Mirror* has decided to share a few of these in an ongoing series entitled, "Another walk through: 'Walking Together.'" We hope you enjoy them.

August 30, 1985 At their 25th wedding anniversary celebration, a couple welcomed the priest who had married them at St. Ann Church in Carthage. The priest and couple had not seen one another in all that time. 'You haven't changed a bit,' the priest said. 'If that's true,' the wife kidded her husband, 'we must have looked like heck!'

September 27, 1985 At the pot-luck dinner at St. Canera Parish in Neosho, a gentleman came up to me and, with a big grin on his face, said: 'Bishop, I sure am disappointed to see you!' 'How come?' I asked. 'Well,' he responded, 'last week my granddaughter came home from CCD classes and told me I had to come today because the Pope was going to be here.' This reminded me of the afternoon at Sacred Heart in

Florissant when, as pastor, I was walking from the church to the kindergarten building. I approached a young mother and pre-school child. Before I had a chance to say anything to them, the little girl called to me: 'Hi, God!' It all goes to show that bishops may be mistaken for the Pope, but Monsignors are mistaken for God.

October 11, 1985 Last week at St. Teresa Parish in Glennonville, I was talking with several small children. You never know what questions they will ask. 'Have you ever seen the ocean?' One little girl asked me. I turned it around: 'Have any of you ever seen the ocean?' Many hands went up. 'Where?' I asked them. 'At Galveston, Texas.' 'In California.' 'In Maine and Florida.' One child shouted joyfully: 'At Wappapello.'

Hulshof new Director of Apostolic Formation

AT THE PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE (NAC)

► **FR. DAVID HULSHOF**, a priest of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is on temporary assignment to the Pontifical North American College as the Director of Apostolic Formation. Ordained a priest in 1982, Fr. Hulshof is an alumnus (1981) of the College and studied at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. Fr. Hulshof is a native of southeast Missouri and was born into a farming family—he is the oldest of six children. He enjoys sports, exercising, and looks forward to visiting the churches and works of art in Rome that he got to know during his time as a student. A brief interview follows:

By Matthew Ludwig

Rome

Can you give us a little background about yourself?

I grew up on a farm and am native to Southeast Missouri, and I believe that my vocation developed on the farm in my work and prayer. I am the oldest of six children and my parents recently celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary. My parents and childhood pastors were a major factor in my decision to become a priest. At a young age, I was already thinking about priesthood and went to a minor seminary in Springfield, MO. In college, I continued my formation at the University of Dallas and Holy Trinity Seminary. In Rome, I graduated from the Angelicum. During three summers in Europe, I worked at two US military bases in Germany, with peace efforts between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, and served with the Missionaries of Charity in India.

When were you ordained and what have your assignments been like up to this point?

I was ordained on April 18, 1982, at my home parish of St. Eustachius in Portageville, MO. I have served at 13 parishes and missions in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in both urban and rural settings. I taught high school and was the priest liaison for the permanent diaconate program. For 14 years, I served as Vocation Director

and was humbled to serve as president of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors from 2001 to 2003. I have also worked in collaborative efforts among Christian communities in southern Missouri and Hispanic ministry.

Do you have a saint you try to model your priesthood after? Who is it and why?

St. John Vianney is one of them. However, the saint who had a major influence on me in my grade school years was St. Damien de Veuster. Although he was not yet canonized at that time, his ministry on the island of Molokai was a story I read about in fourth grade that riveted me. He was a hero to me in his ministry to those who suffered from leprosy and were considered outcasts. His compassion, service, and love were truly exemplary.

What is it like for you to return to the NAC as a member of the faculty?

Certainly, there is a difference of perspective when you are a member of the faculty with the responsibility of preparing men for the priesthood instead of the one being prepared. On the other hand, I have found that returning to the NAC offers a special spiritual enlivening and opportunity to participate



163RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF NAC—A Mass and festive banquet was held on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, which drew priest faculty, student priests, and guests to Janiculum Hill in Rome to mark the 163rd Anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical North American College. Father Hulshof is pictured on the forward right corner. (Photo courtesy of the Pontifical North American College)

in communal prayer and liturgies. Both the faculty and students have been very supportive in my transition from parish life.

What would you tell people who think Missouri is just a flyover state?

I would simply invite them to come and see! They don't call Missouri the "Show Me" state for nothing. We have bountiful farmlands, the Mark Twain National Forest, the Gateway Arch and blues music in St. Louis, and beautiful fountains and barbecue in Kansas City. In fact, ask my NAC classmates whom I hosted last summer to celebrate our 40th ordination anniversary. They came from all over the country to my parish in Branson and truly enjoyed the music, lakes, and Midwestern hospitality. I will look forward to returning to my

home state and beloved diocese when I complete my term as Director of Apostolic Formation. ©TM





lifehouse crisis maternity home | Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri
Reaching Out. Providing Hope. Changing Lives.

SAT., FEB. 26, 5:30 P.M.
Drury Conference Center, Cape Girardeau, MO

Mardi Gras Ball for Life

FOR MORE INFO or to purchase tickets, visit ccsomo.org or Email Mandy at mlong@ccsomo.org.

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) will host an evening of DINNER, MARDI GRAS FESTIVITIES, and DANCING to the sounds of "Spectrum," a nine-piece band from St. Louis!

All proceeds will benefit the new LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in downtown Cape Girardeau.



Protecting God's Children®
For Adults

Training is currently available Online.

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

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

Training sessions are for adults only. The link to updated schedules may be found at www.dioscg.org just above the events calendar.

Along with the VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" training for adults, before regularly engaging in activities involving minors and/or vulnerable adults, new volunteer or employees are also required to submit a current Background Disclosure and Authorization Form and the annual Code of Conduct, which are available on the VIRTUS Website and the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau Child and Youth Protection Webpage: www.dioscg.org/child-youth-protection/

For more information, please contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection, childandyouthprotection@dioscg.org; or Bill Holtmeyer, billholtmeyer@dioscg.org; or Rosie Francka [\(417\) 866-0841.](mailto:rfrancka@dioscg.org)



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2022

Diocesan Youth CONFERENCE



**Fr. Agustino
Torres, CFR**

Sat., MARCH 26
Carthage
*Congregation of the
Mother of the
Redeemer Monastery*
with music leader
Josh Blakesley



**Katie Prejean
McGrady**

Sun., MARCH 27
West Plains
West Plains Civic Center
with music leader
Josh Blakesley



**Sister Josephine
Garrett**

Sat., APRIL 2
Cape Girardeau
St. Vincent de Paul Parish
with music leader
Mary Kate Westrich

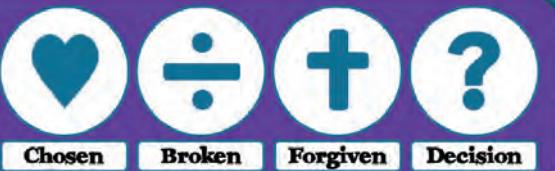


Josh Blakesley



Mary Kate Westrich

**FOR ALL
YOUTH IN
7TH-12TH
GRADE!**



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Registration is \$30 per person, per conference date.
For more info, scan the QR Code, visit dioscg.org/DYC, or contact your parish youth leader.
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Are you searching for God's call for your life?
Has the thought of becoming a priest ever crossed your mind?
Have you ever been told you would make a good priest?
If you said YES to any of the above, this is for you!
Join like-minded young men searching for what God has planned for their lives. Share a meal with Bishop Rice and our local priests, hear their discernment stories, and voice any questions you may have.
All young men, high school age through adulthood, are welcome.
Parents are invited to join us!

PROJECT ANDREW DINNER

TUESDAY, FEB 15TH, 7:00 PM

St. Peter the Apostle, Joplin | Our Lady's Hall (Basement)
RSVP to: puma2828@gmail.com



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Belleville, IL—The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows will offer a four-part video study series entitled, **"Resurrection and the Afterlife in the New Testament."** Facilitated by Fr. Mark Dean, OMI, sessions will be held at the Shrine Visitor Center on the following Tuesday mornings: Feb. 15, Feb. 22, March 1, and March 8. Cost: \$20 for the series or \$5 per session; pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, go to <https://snows.org/ministries/spiritual-programs/>, or call (618) 394-6281.

Benton—Take your sweetheart to breakfast! **St. Denis Men's Breakfast** will be held Sun., Feb. 13, 7:15-11:30 a.m., in the Parish Center. A goodwill donation for all-you-can-eat homemade pork sausage, ham, eggs, biscuits & gravy, fruit salad, and a drink.

Cape Girardeau-area—Deanery 6 Council of Catholic Women will have its **March Meeting & Retreat** on Sat., March 5, in St. Anthony Mission Church in Glennon, MO. Mass begins at 9 a.m. with Fr. Antony Thekkanth, VC, celebrant; followed by registration and breakfast. Fr. Allan Saunders will speak at 10 a.m.; a business meeting will follow at 11 a.m. All ladies from Deanery 6 Parish Council of Catholic Women are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Ruth Ann Hester, (573) 270-4844.

Jackson—The Knights of Columbus Council #6405 will have its **Annual Kettle Beef & Chicken Dumpling Dinner** on Sun., Feb. 13, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Lower Hall. Cost: \$14. For more information, please contact Dave at (573) 243-5464.

Jackson—The Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary will host a **Bunco Bash** on Sun., March 6, 1-4 p.m., at the Knights of Columbus #6405 Hall. Cost: \$10/player, snacks will be provided. Registration starts at 12:30 p.m., pre-registration is not required. Proceeds to benefit the scholarship program, Birthright, Special Olympics, Options for Women, and other supported ministries. For more information, please Email Donna at jacksoncaux@gmail.com or call (573) 243-5464.

Kelso—St. Augustine Home and School will host the **Annual Euchre Tournament** on Sat., Feb. 12, in the school gymnasium. Doors open at 6 p.m. and play begins at 7 p.m. The \$12 donation at the door includes chili, hot dogs, and Euchre. Outside food and drink permitted. For questions or more information, please call Sara Ressel, (573) 587-1591.

Oran—The 2022 **Guardian Angel School Dinner Auction** will be held on Sat., Feb. 26, at the Knights Hall. Tickets: \$40, and include dinner and auction. A hybrid option is also available, purchase a carryout meal for \$20 and/or access to the Online auction

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

for \$10. Visit the auction Website to purchase tickets and for additional information, <https://charityauction.bid/guardianangelauction2022>. All proceeds will directly support the school, including the replacement of two HVAC units.

Scott City—Knights of Columbus Council #6420 will hold a **Valentine's Dance** on Sat., Feb. 12, at the Knight's Hall. Tickets are \$110 per couple and include a social hour that begins at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., and dancing from 8-11:30 p.m. For tickets or seating, please contact Mike, (573) 450-2303, or Dave, (573) 579-3620, or call Sally, (573) 887-1375.

Scott City—St. Joseph Home and School will have a carry-out only **Sausage Breakfast** on Sun., Feb. 27, 7:30-11:30 a.m., from the school located at 606 Sycamore St. Cost: \$9 includes pancakes, sausage links, scrambled eggs, biscuits & gravy, and fruit. Pre-orders are also being taken for bulk or link sausage for pick up on Feb. 26 & 27: \$4/lb. To order, call the school at (573) 264-2600.

Scott City—The Knights of Columbus Council #6420 will hold its **Third Sunday Breakfast** on Sun., Feb. 20, 7:30-10:30 a.m., at the Knights Hall. Pancakes, scrambled eggs, biscuits & gravy, homemade pork sausage, fruit, and yogurt for your goodwill donation. Orders are being taken for homemade sausage, available in link or bulk for \$4/lb. To order, call Gary, (573) 576-6451.

Scott City—St. Joseph Home & School will host **Music Trivia** on Sat., March 12, in the school gymnasium. Cost is \$15/player, with a maximum of 8 players per table. Doors open at 6 p.m. and play starts at 7 p.m., outside food and drink permitted. Round sponsorships are available for \$100 each. RSVP or purchase a sponsorship via call or text to Ashley at (573) 450-9516, or Emily at (573) 275-3312.

Springfield—**Perpetual Adoration** in Holy Trinity Parish has a need for Adorers on Friday, 11 p.m. and Saturday at 3 p.m. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Marilyn at (417) 224-4043.

Springfield—Holy Trinity Parish has **Divine Mercy Yard Signs** for sale to help spread awareness of Jesus' divine mercy and love. Signs are made and sold by the Divine Mercy Workers of St. Francis Borgia Parish in Washington, MO, and are available in a variety of sizes. The order form is available on the parish Website; sfbparish.org, under Parish Quick Links. For more information or to place an order; contact Kenn Obermark, kenncarol7@yahoo.com or call (636) 239-7456, (636) 358-3053; or contact Bill Gegg, bill.gegg@att.net or call (636) 667-7867.

THE 3RD ANNUAL

CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Saturday
Feb. 26
2022

In cooperation with the diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Featuring DEACON HAROLD BURKE-SIVERS

at Springfield Catholic High School



Doors open 7am. Mass 8am. Ends by 3:30pm.

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PRINCIPAL SOUGHT FOR CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

St. Mary Grade School in Cape Girardeau is looking for a Principal for the 2022-2023 School Year. Applicant should be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church and with experience in Catholic

Elementary Education, preferably with a Masters in School Administration. **For more information or an application, please contact Fr. Allan Saunders at (573) 335-0649 or FrSaunders@stmarycathedral.net.**

SAVE THE DATE!

20TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Please mark your calendar for **Fri., June 24, 2022**, as we will celebrate the **20th Ordination Anniversary of Fr. Scott M. Sunnenberg**, Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Bolivar; St. Catherine of Siena Mission in Humansville; and diocesan Director of Vocations & Seminarians.

Mass will be celebrated in Sacred Heart Church at 5:30 p.m. followed by a reception of heavy hors d'oeuvres in the parish hall. **Please RSVP to sheartbolivar@gmail.com.**



Fr. Sunnenberg



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REFLECTION ON THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

What's your testimony?

Jeremiah 17:5-8;
Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6;
1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20;
Luke 6:17, 20-26

Roughly a year prior to my ordination as a Permanent Deacon in May 2018, one of our formation topics was on catechetics or, said another way, how to educate others in the faith. The instructor shared many documents written over the years on the necessity of teaching the faith and how to do it.

One of the methods that actually surprised me, yet interested me, was that of sharing our personal story on why I am a follower of Jesus Christ. To that end, the instructor had us write a two-minute testimony that each of us would share with the entire class. He stressed that a personal testimony or witness is often the most effective method of connecting with others. It comes from the heart and one's personal experiences in which others can relate.

As I considered giving my testimony, I would play over and over again in my head two great songs (at least to me) regarding giving a personal testimony about our faith



SCRIPTURE WISDOM

Deacon Mark Kiblinger

in Jesus Christ. Vestal Goodman of the "The Happy Goodmans" (yes, I am dating myself here!) belted out these lines in "Stand and Testify":

*I want to stand and testify how the Lord has brought me from a mighty long way.
 Every day I walk through this land he lights my way, guiding me in everything.
 I just have to praise him for all he's brought me through.*

The "Tally Trio" sings from their heart in "Testify":

*There's been times in my life when I was down and in despair.
 I fell down on my knees and I called on God in prayer.*

*I thanked Him for His blessings and named them one by one.
 But most of all I thank you Lord for all you've done. Somebody oughta testify...*

As I read today's second reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, I could not help but think

about the importance of personal testimony. Paul, in his customary straight-forward fashion, tells the people of Corinth, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain!" He knew there was a growing group of Corinthians that denied Jesus' resurrection. St. Paul was standing tall testifying to that stubborn group from Corinth that Jesus did in fact rise.

Jesus' resurrection is so pivotal for all followers of Christ. St. Paul speaks the truth: our faith is in vain if Jesus had stayed in the grave. The fact is that many people saw Christ alive after his crucifixion and burial...Cephas, the Twelve, 500 brothers, James, and Paul himself (1 Cor 15:5-8). Death does not have the final answer. The Preface to Eucharistic Prayer II states this reality so well:

He stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion, so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection.

The reality of Jesus' resurrection is something each of us must shout out and testify! One of my favorite quotes regarding Jesus' resurrection comes from the great theologian, St. Augustine: "The resurrection of Christ was God's supreme and wholly marvelous work." Yes indeed!! As followers of Christ, his

resurrection gives us hope that we can be with Our Lord forever and ever in eternity after we pass from this life to the next.

In the first year of his pontificate, Pope Francis wrote in "Evangelii Gaudium" ("The Joy of the Gospel"): "There is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet ... this is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation." Jesus provides many examples of "informal preaching." Like when he casually spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob (John 4:39). This conversation changed her life, and she went to other Samaritans who came to believe because of her testimony.

Good people of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, what is your testimony that will help others come to the faith? Know what it is and do not be afraid to share it! ©TM

Deacon Kiblinger is assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Cape Girardeau where he assists in the parish by coordinating the RCIA and the "Serving the Poor" committee.

We are the Light of the World

63rd (DCCW) Diocese of Springfield - Cape Girardeau

2022 Annual Spring Assembly—April 22 - 23, 2022

DRURY PLAZA HOTEL Cape Girardeau Conference Center



SCHEDULE

Friday, April 22	
8 - 9:30 am	Registration and browse time Grab bags, vendors, and purse silent auction.
9:30 - 10 am	Divine Mercy: Becca Kern
10 - 11 am	Speaker: Donna Cori Gibson
11-11:30 am	Break and Browse
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 1:20 pm	Welcome and introductions, opening prayer
1:20 - 2:20 pm	Keynote Speaker: Donna Cori Gibson
2:20 - 3:00 pm	Leadership Commission Speaker: Rev. William W. Hennecke, Jr.
3 - 3:30 pm	Break and Browse
3:30 - 4:15 pm	Bishop Edward M. Rice
4:30 pm	Drive to St. Mary Cathedral – ("Direction at the bottom")
5 pm	Mass with Bishop Rice and attending priests
6:30 pm	Bishop's blessing before banquet Cash bar available, purse auction closes.
7:15 pm	Presentation of Our Lady Of Good Council Award
7:30 pm	Banquet Entertainment: "To Be Announced"
8:30 pm	Closing prayer by Bishop Edward M. Rice
Saturday, April 23	
7:15 am	Rosary and Meditation: Becca Kern
7:30 - 8 am	Registration and Browse, Grab bags, Vendors.
8 am	Morning opening prayer: Becca Kerns
8:15 - 9 am	Spirituality Commission Speaker: Rev. Joseph Kelly
9 - 9:45 am	Service Commission Speaker: Sister Sharon Miller
9:45 am - 10:15 am	Break - Last chance to buy tickets and visit Vendors.
10:15 - 11 am	Province Director: Rita Lueckenotte
11 - 11:30 am	Drawings
11:30 am	Closing prayer and adjournment.

*Direction to The Cathedral of St. Mary of the Annunciation - 615 William Street from the Drury Plaza Hotel Cape Girardeau Conference Center - Exit Drury Center onto William Street Stay on William Street going east to the Cathedral.

Keynote Speaker:
Donna Cori GibsonSpirituality
Commission
Speaker:
Fr. Joseph KellyService
Commission
Speaker:
Sr. Sharon
MillerLeadership
Commission
Speaker:
Rev. William W.
Hennecke, Jr.

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Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Parish: _____

 Complete Assembly \$50 if mailed by **March 20** (Includes luncheon, Friday all day, banquet & Saturday) Complete Assembly \$60 if mailed **AFTER March 20** (Includes luncheon, Friday all day, banquet & Saturday) I am **ONLY** attending Banquet Friday evening \$35 I am a First Time Attendee to the Spring Assembly

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Deadline for making Hotel Reservations is: **March 20, 2022**

Please call:

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REFLECTION ON THE SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The challenge to love our enemies

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23;
Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13;
1 Corinthians 15:45-49;
Luke 6:27-38

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus tells us that the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love your neighbor. How can you love your neighbor when most of the time you do not even know your neighbor?

In the Gospel today, Jesus goes even further and tells us to "Love your enemies." Just how easy is it to love your enemies? It may be easy to say, "I love everyone, even my enemies." But how hard is it to do it? When the paralytic was lowered through the roof in Mark's Gospel, Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven. The scribes grumbled and said that only God can forgive sins. Jesus asks, is it easier to say your sins are forgiven, or to say take up your mat and walk? Of course, it is easier to say your sins are forgiven. We cannot see our sins being forgiven. But all of us can see the person get up and walk. Again, it is easier to say, I love my enemies than to actually love them.

In the first reading, David shows us how to love our enemies. This was the second time that David showed us how to love our enemies. In Chapter 24 of First Samuel, King Saul went into a cave, not knowing that David and his men were in the innermost parts of the cave. Without Saul knowing, David came up behind Saul and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. He had



SCRIPTURE WISDOM

Deacon James Sopnick

the chance then to kill Saul. His men tried to get him to do it. However, David said that he would not put his hand against the Lord's anointed.

You would think that King Saul would appreciate David for sparing his life. Here in Chapter 26, King Saul is still trying to kill David. Many think David would have every reason to kill Saul when he had the chance, so that he could save his own life. Saul has been after David for a long time. Now Abishai sees the chance to get rid of the problem. He says to David: "Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear." David replies: "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the Lord's anointed and remain unpunished?"

WHO IS THE LORD'S ANOINTED? In Biblical times, anointing was a ceremony where someone was installed into an important office. Those that were anointed were anointed to do a special job that God had assigned.

There were three different types of people that were anointed: Proph-

ets, Priests, and Kings. Prophets were anointed because they spoke for God. God gave them the message they were to deliver. They represented God to the people. Priests represented the people to God. They reconnected the people to God. Kings were anointed before they began to rule. The Kings were chosen by God.

Earlier in this book, when Samuel was to find another king, God sent him to Jesse to pick one of his sons.

Samuel went through all of his sons until he came to his

youngest, which was David. The one that God picked.

Why should we worry about the Lord's anointed in today's world? By our baptism as Christians, we are the Lord's anointed. We are baptized into Jesus' ministry as Prophet, Priest, and King. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus and sons and daughters of God. In a broader sense, we are all children of God. Those that we consider our enemies, are God's children, his anointed. Therefore, we should not harm them.

I read a story about a lady whose 20-year-old son was killed by a 16-year-old boy after a party. He was involved in drugs and gangs. He was tried as an adult. He was sentenced to 25 years. The mother of the boy who was killed wanted justice. Her son was gone! She hated this boy and his mother. She said that murder was like a tsunami. She was

in shock! She lived with hatred and anger.

The mother of the boy who was killed decided to begin a support group for other mothers whose children had been murdered. She eventually discovered through her healing that she was just like the mother whose son was in jail. They both had losses and both needed support.

After a number of years in prison, the mother whose son was murdered wanted to meet the person who killed her son. She felt compelled to see if there was a way in which she could forgive her son's killer. At first, the man in prison refused to see her. However, he did change his mind. The first thing that she said was: "Look, you don't know me. I don't know you. Let's just start with right now."

They met regularly, and when he was eventually released from prison, she introduced him to her landlord. He even moved into her building. They are now close friends. She says it is because of her strong religious beliefs: "Unforgiveness is like a cancer. It will eat you from the inside out. It's not about that other person, me forgiving him does not diminish what he's done. Yes, he murdered my son—but the forgiveness is for me."

Let us learn to love our enemies!

©TM

Deacon Sopnick is assigned to Holy Trinity Parish in Marshfield.

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK around the diocese



SECOND GRADE—Bishop Edward M. Rice visited the second graders in Sacred Heart Catholic School, Poplar Bluff, MO, on Mon., Jan. 31. (The Mirror)

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Messenger

A quarterly publication by the Missouri Catholic Conference



February 2022

A Tragic Illusion

Few issues are as morally challenging for Catholics as the death penalty. Since capital punishment was re-instated in 1976, the United States has executed 1,536 individuals. Missouri, with 91 executions, is in the top five states resorting to capital punishment. While support for the death penalty has steadily decreased over the years, the majority of Americans favor it. But what does the Catholic Church teach about capital punishment? That is the focus of this *Messenger*.

Catholic Teaching and the Death Penalty

The Catholic response to the death penalty is shaped by an understanding of good and evil, sin and redemption, justice and mercy. Catholic teaching is built on the foundation that we are created in the image of our Creator and that every life is a precious gift from God. Each of us is called to respect the life and dignity of every human being. Even when people deny the dignity of others, we must recognize their dignity is God-given and not something that is earned or lost by their actions. Catholic tradition also holds that those harmed by violence deserve both justice and compassion. Those who inflict such harm must be held accountable. Yet punishment should be consistent with the demands of justice and with respect for human life and dignity.

For many years, the Catholic Church taught that the use of the death penalty by legitimate authority was an appropriate response in extreme cases. Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of serious crimes. In addition, new prison systems have been developed that do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption. Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2267).

Pope Francis reiterated the Catholic Church’s stance against the death penalty in his 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, and called upon all Catholics to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. Pope Francis wrote, “There can be no stepping back from this position. Today we state clearly that the death penalty is inadmissible and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.” In the encyclical, Pope Francis does more than state the Church’s stance on the death penalty. He offers a vision for what justice in its broadest sense can look like: a way of being in relationship with one another that unconditionally upholds human dignity and offers opportunities for healing and transformation.



Exonerated Death Row Prisoner Joe Amrine and one of the members of the jury that convicted him, Deacon Larry Hildebrand, share their incredible stories of faith and forgiveness.

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“We cannot overcome crime by simply executing criminals, nor can we restore the lives of the innocent by ending the lives of those convicted of their murders. The death penalty offers the tragic illusion that we can defend life by taking life.”

U.S. Catholic Bishops, A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty, 1999

An eye for an eye?

Many use the Old Testament as a justification for the death penalty. The most commonly cited phrase is “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” from Leviticus 24:20. But in reality, this reference is a plea for less violence, urging people not to avenge one offense with a larger one. Catholic teaching does not support vengeance as a way to achieve justice. In the Gospels, Jesus said that retaliation was an incorrect response to violence. Rather Jesus tells us to offer the other cheek and extend our hand in blessing and healing (Matthew 5:38-48).

A tragic illusion

The U.S. Catholic Bishops have often addressed the culture of violence we live in and see the death penalty as perpetuating a cycle of violence. The bishops stated in their 1994 publication *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*, “We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing.” Catholic teaching increasingly sees the death penalty as a false promise. In *A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty* published in 1999, the U.S. Bishops stated, “Increasing reliance on the death penalty diminishes all of us...We cannot overcome crime by simply executing criminals, nor can we restore the lives of the innocent by ending the lives of those convicted of their murders. The death penalty offers the tragic illusion that we can defend life by taking life.”

As Catholics, we believe in a consistent ethic of life, from conception to natural death where the sanctity of the human person cannot be diminished. Saint Pope John Paul II stated in *Evangelium Vitae*, “Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good. We need then to show care for all life and for the life of everyone.” The death penalty violates this consistent ethic and does not conform to our pro-life teaching.

Reasons to oppose the death penalty

When the U.S. Supreme Court re-instated the death penalty in 1976, the justices believed it could be administered fairly and justly. Over the years, evidence has shown that the influence of race in the death penalty is pervasive. More than half of the people on death row in this country are people of color. Black or Latino defendants are significantly more likely to get the death penalty than their white counterparts.

Defendants who have intellectual disabilities or severe mental illness not only have to overcome societal barriers to daily living, but are also much more likely to become victims of crime and are at special risk for wrongful conviction. In 2002, the death penalty for

people with Intellectual Disability was deemed unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court, yet those with severe mental illness can still be executed. Even individuals with severe disabilities are still sentenced to death and executed. In 2017 alone, at least 20 of the 23 people executed nationally had evidence of mental illness, intellectual disability, brain damage or severe trauma.

Almost all death row inmates were unable to afford their own attorney at trial. Court-appointed attorneys often lack the experience necessary for capital trials, and are overworked and underpaid. This often results in poorly handled cases where mitigating factors and tools such as DNA evidence, severe mental illness, or intellectual disability may not be brought up.

According to a 2014 study, at least 4% of those sentenced to death in the United States are innocent. The 186 people and counting who have been exonerated due to their innocence since 1973 exemplify that fact. For every nine people who have been executed since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, one person has been exonerated after proven innocent.

How do innocent people get convicted and sentenced to die? While each case is unique, common causes include eyewitness misidentification, forensic science problems, false confessions, snitch testimony, poor lawyering and misconduct by law enforcement or prosecutors.

Care for the victim’s family

Murder often leaves a gaping wound in the victim’s family that can result in years of trauma, pain and grief. While some still cling to the belief that the death penalty sentence will bring “closure,” many victim families reject that idea. To them, too much time, energy and resources are diverted to a very few cases that ever result in a death sentence. With ongoing legal challenges and delays, the death penalty often adds to a family’s frustration and slows the healing process.

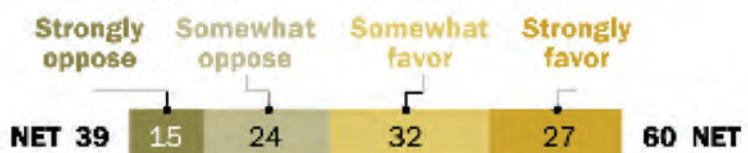
Without a costly death penalty system, resources could be available to help families with funeral costs, daily needs while grieving, counseling services, education for the victim’s children and community resources to help make everyone safer.

As Catholics, we are called to reach out to victims of violence and their families. As individuals and communities of faith, we need to show compassion and care, ministering to the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of these individuals. Our efforts, no matter how small, are appreciated. As a victim once remarked, “Sometimes a hug, a prayer, and a friendly ear can achieve wonders.”

Pope Francis called on all Catholics to oppose capital punishment in his 2020 Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*

Majority of Americans favor death penalty, but nearly eight-in-ten see 'some risk' of executing the innocent

% who support the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



% who say ...

The death penalty is morally wrong, even when someone commits a crime like murder

33

When someone commits a crime like murder, the death penalty is morally justified

64

Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes

56

White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes

41

The death penalty DOES NOT deter people from committing serious crimes

63

The death penalty DOES deter people from committing serious crimes

35

There is some risk that an innocent person will be put to death

78

There are adequate safeguards to ensure that no innocent person will be put to death

21

Note: No answer responses not shown

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

91

Missouri has executed 91 people since reinstating the death penalty in 1976

22 years ~

the average time a death row inmate serves before execution

Still Children of God

Deacon Ministers to Death Row Inmates



The light of Christ shines in even the darkest of places, and St. Louis Deacon Andy Daus brings that light to the Potosi Correctional Center every week. Daus, 75, was ordained a deacon in 2000, after retiring from a career with 3M. Assigned to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in South St. Louis County, he began prison ministry in 2007 at Potosi when he volunteered to teach a class there. Deacon Andy, as he is affectionately known, has been ministering there ever since. He sees Jesus in every prisoner he encounters. "My hope is maybe they see Jesus looking back at them when I am with them," Daus said.

During his 14 years of prison ministry, he has counseled prisoners sentenced to life in prison, as well as those on death row. Most of the men are repentant for their crimes and trying to live a good life, even establishing a hospice program for dying inmates. Daus shared a story of "Rod," an inmate serving life without parole, who took it upon himself to care for a fellow prisoner in hospice, even taking him outdoors on nice days and pushing him around in his wheelchair. "A lot of these guys feel like they have been warehoused and forgotten and they're not," Daus noted. Regardless of what crimes they may have committed, "they are still children of God."

The first time Daus met Jeff Ferguson at the Potosi Correctional Center, Ferguson impressed him as someone who really had it together. But Ferguson, who was set to be executed in 2014, was quick to correct him. "He said everyone in this room is broken," Daus remembers. Ferguson attended all of the deacon's scripture classes at the prison and RCIA. The two men formed a bond, and Ferguson asked Daus to be at his execution. Daus even helped cover the cost of his burial.

The death penalty is given to only the most heinous crimes, but doesn't define the person, and Daus questions what was gained from Ferguson's execution. "What did we gain by executing him? Jeff was funny, a leader, a positive force in prison. He was more about trying to help other guys be good citizens." Most recently, Daus ministered to Ernest Johnson, who was executed in October. Johnson was engaged in some of Daus' programs and was happy to serve others. "He was just a good guy," Daus remembered, "A gentle giant." Daus was among many, including Pope Francis and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to request Johnson get a stay of execution.

Daus hopes people in support of capital punishment will reconsider their position, noting that it is not man's job to judge the life of a person. "What these men are convicted of, no matter what they did, no matter how horrendous, by the time they are executed, they are not the same men."

"What these men are convicted of, no matter what they did, no matter how horrendous, by the time they are executed, they are not the same men." - Deacon Andy Daus

Left: Deacon Andy Daus listens to Troy Steele, a retired warden from the Potosi Correctional Center, during the 2018 screening of "An American Tragedy." The film focused on the execution of Jeffrey Ferguson, convicted of murdering Kelli Hall. Ferguson was forgiven by Hall's father, Jim Hall, before the execution. Photo Credit: Lisa Johnston, *The St. Louis Review*



Deacon Andy's perspective on capital punishment has shifted during his 14 years of prison ministry. "When you come to understand the human being, execution seems very extreme."



Potosi Correctional Center



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