



Seminarian Nick Vincent Zummo III was ordained to the diaconate for Springfield-Cape Girardeau on Fri., May 20, in St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield. His home parish is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. This reflection is in his own words:

The road to a vocation



LITANY OF SUPPLICATION—Nick Zummo was prostrated in St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield, May 20, during the Litany to the Saints. (Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror)

The road to ordination takes time and involves the guidance of many people along the way. In the days following my ordination to the diaconate, I reflected on the influential people and places in my journey. Important moments and community members are often more apparent in hindsight. The occasion of my ordination was one such moment of spiritual hindsight.

There were people from all moments in my life at the ordination Mass. Those who have known me the longest, such as my parents Richard and Anita, brother Kendall, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles were all in attendance. Friends from my time in Nixa High School, college at Missouri University of Science & Technology, Rolla, and different seminaries were present. Not to mention the many parishioners from places at which I've been blessed to be assigned. It was a great joy to be gathered with all my favorite people that weekend. My ordination was an opportunity to see that God has blessed me with many good friends and role models on my road to my

vocation.

That path has been full of surprises, adjustments, and blessings. My experience as an adult in the Catholic Church began while I was in college studying Geological Engineering. That field combined two topics I enjoy: earth science and problem-solving. I spent four years there as a student. Looking back, I'm convinced God guided me to that place so I would become involved in the local Newman Center. The priests and people I met there prompted me to grow in faith and explore my love of the Church. Those friendships, bible studies, and moments of communal prayer became the catalyst that made me willing to try out the seminary. I wasn't sure where the road would lead, but I knew I needed to start moving.

When I entered the seminary, I quickly learned that it was a path of blessings. My classmates and mentors have been great sources of encouragement. With their help, I adjusted to studying philosophy, a field very different from geology. Then, we moved on to learn about God and the Church



CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE—After the Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Ordination began May 20 in St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield. During the Call and Presentation, Candidate Nick Zummo was presented to Bishop Rice, with the request that the Church ordain him for service as a Deacon. Zummo reacted as the faithful and Bishop Rice showed their approval with applause. (Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror)



PRAYER OF ORDINATION—Bishop Rice laid his hands upon the head of Nick Zummo and prayed the Prayer of Ordination. (Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror)



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

May our adoration never cease

Special thanks to each of you for your generosity with the Ukraine Solidarity Fund sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. As of June 13, we have made contributions totaling \$176,834.13. A recent letter from the treasurer, Ronald F. Schwarz, the Knights of Columbus acknowledged our support, and requested that we "continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine." May the Immaculate Heart of Mary protect their land and grant peace to our world. May each of us be an instrument of peace.

PRAY FOR CLERGY & FOR VOCATIONS

At this time of the year, I ask your prayers for our newly-ordained priests as well as those who are being transferred, retiring, or receiving additional parish assignments. Few of our priests have the luxury of staying at one place on a weekend. Typically, with other pastoral duties, the majority of our priests must drive to another city/to another parish and offer Holy Mass for a different community. While some of our parishes and missions are small, the size does not reflect the dedication they have for their parish or mission. Each year with the new assignments, I make people happy and I make people angry. This year is no different.

I recently mentioned to a concerned parishioner (not happy) that I have never been a parent and so I have no idea what it takes. I am always on the outside looking in. And the same applies to me as a bishop: No one can fully understand what is required (except Bishop Leibrecht). And lately, when some say "Bishop, I understand how difficult it is, ..." I reply, "No, you don't." You can sympathize with me, support me, pray for me, yell at me – whatever your reaction may be, but no one fully understands except Bishop John Leibrecht. I don't say this to elicit sympathy but simply

— ♦ —
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Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is not a program, but an opportunity for Catholics across the United States. The hope is to rediscover the Eucharist as a place of true encounter, a relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament, the Body and Blood of Christ.

During this first year, 2022-23, the "Diocesan Year," everything we

to give an insight into the difficulties of trying to staff 66 parishes and 17 missions with the limited number of clergy. All the more, we must pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life to meet the religious needs of our diocese.

Having said this, I think everyone was thrilled with the recent ordinations of our three new priests, Fr. Hiett, Fr. Newton, and Fr. Peirano. Having all three ordained together was a huge boost for Catholicism in southern Missouri. It is typical for our diocese for each man to be ordained in his home parish but I asked the men to be ordained together simply to showcase vocations with the people of southern Missouri gathered in prayer. As always, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, under the leadership of Fr. Tom Kiefer, was the ultimate host.

EUCARISTIC REVIVAL

On June 19, Father's Day, we initiated the three-year Eucharistic Revival in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. What is this Eucharistic Revival? At its basic level, the mission of the Eucharist Revival is to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the

do will be focused on our own encounter with the Eucharistic Lord. The following year, the "Parish Year," 2023-24, we will look for ways to reach out to those who have fallen away from the faith from our local parishes and are no longer with us at Mass.

I have asked all organizations to focus on the Eucharist for these coming years. Any parish mission, any speaker, any regional event, any gathering of youth, catechists, teachers, any parish Bible study or adult education event should be focusing on the gift of the Eucharist. The USCCB is offering "National Eucharistic" speakers to support the revival. Many resources are being developed at the same time as well. Many resources are available to parishes from the Franciscan University Online Catechetical Institute as well (which is free to all parishioners thanks to the Missouri Knights of Columbus). For more information, please consult the diocesan Website and search "Franciscan University," at www.dioscg.org.

In the words of St. John Paul II, "May our adoration never cease." ©TM



IN AN UPCOMING EDITION

With the latest clergy assignments and moves of the recently-ordained, one of the priests found himself unable to meet the deadline for the article that was promoted to appear in this issue of the paper on the three newly-ordained. Let us pray that we are able to pull that story together for the next edition of the paper, July 8.

Thank you for your patience and understanding!

With the Supreme Court decision in Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization, overturning Roe v Wade and the return of the issue to the states, The Catholic Church stands ready to continue providing spiritual and material support to expectant mothers and their families through our parishes and ministries, and to advocate on their behalf and on behalf of their unborn children at the state and federal level.

We care about every unborn child and every mother. The Church has consistently witnessed in word and deed that life begins at the moment of conception. As the US bishops shared in our statement Standing with Moms in Need: "We pledge 'to redouble our efforts to accompany women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies, and during the early years of parenthood, offering them loving and compassionate care through initiatives such as Walking with Moms in Need and countless others.'"

Locally, in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, this means LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Springfield and LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Cape Girardeau and the countless ministries that Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) offer to the most vulnerable among us. The budget for LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home Springfield is \$1.3 million. The cost of construction for the new LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Cape Girardeau, including fundraising costs and architectural fees, comes to a total of \$7.8 million. Once it is up and running in the late summer or fall of

2023, Catholic Charities anticipates an operating budget similar to Springfield, \$1.3 million. The Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Program at CCSOMO has an operating budget totaling \$438,160.38 (in Deaneries 6 & 7 of the diocese). This particular program works with low-income, pregnant women while they're still in their homes, some facing eviction\homelessness. They have varying social circumstances, but typically have many challenges and barriers to overcome. These women receive comprehensive case management, maternal-child education, access to many needed services, and is a service program that has been growing for years. This is an important prevention strategy to help women avoid much of what the women at LifeHouse have already faced.

For those whose lives have been affected by abortion, we have the diocesan Project Rachel, post-abortive healing ministry for men and women. Catholics across southern Missouri are involved in a variety of ministries in care of families: Birthright in Cape Girardeau, Pregnancy Care Center, Springfield, the Diaper Bank, Mother's House in Hayti, MO; Children's Haven in Joplin; Whole Kids Outreach and Casa Guadalupe in Ellington, MO, to name just a few.

We look forward to the day when every child, born and unborn, has the love and support needed to thrive and reach his or her full potential.

The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau



SENIOR IMPACT—Missouri Lieutenant Gov. Mike Kehoe is pictured with Annie and Jerry Nehl at the Webster County Food Pantry & Thrift Store June 17 after Kehoe awarded Jerry Nehl with the 2022 Missouri Lt. Governor's Volunteer Service Award. (*The Mirror*)

Volunteer Service Award given to Marshfield parishioner

Marshfield, MO

Holy Trinity parishioner Jerry Nehl of Marshfield was recently awarded the 2022 Missouri Lt. Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Nominated by Webster County officials, Nehl received the award Fri., June 17, at the Webster County Food Pantry & Thrift Store in a surprise ceremony with Missouri Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe.

This award is intended to promote and highlight the positive accomplishments Missouri's Senior citizens provide their local communities," Kehoe said.

Nehl's volunteerism includes: serving as director of the Webster County Food Pantry and Thrift Store; served on the board of directors, and continues to assist WebCo Custom Industries; a charter member and past officer of Knights of Columbus Trinity Council #10844; member of the local Ministerial Alliance; member of the Webster County COAD, serving as a board member for Webster County OACAC; helps with Share Your Christmas; supports the Webster County Victim Assistance Program and University of Missouri Extension Nutrition Program with food preparation for families; a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church where he serves as Youth Ministry Coordinator and VIRTUS Coordinator. Nehl also regularly cooks meals for youth and parish activities of Holy Trinity Church. Through all these activities, Nehl volunteers about 25-30 hours per week to support the Webster County community. ©TM

ZUMMO // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

through studying theology. At times, unexpected things happened. I had the opportunity to study Spanish in Guatemala and go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Those were two places I never expected to see and proved to be fruitful moments in my life. My time in seminary has been a great privilege in many ways.

Two months after returning from Israel to the United States, I was ordained a deacon. That pilgrimage was an incredible way to prepare for such a pivotal moment in my vocational journey. I walked the roads Christ trod and prayed in the empty tomb. Those moments instilled in me a sense of awe and the realization of how we are called to spread the Gospel boldly. Those churches, beaches, and roads of Galilee are burned into my mind in the best way possible. I can't help but share what we saw and allow it

to shape the way I pray and preach. Over time, the Spirit prompts us to grow and evolve as disciples.

We all have a vocation, so that path of discernment is one we share. Our young people searching for their vocations have much to anticipate. When we recognize the voice of God in our lives, he moves us to love others. Men and women turn from loving themselves to loving their spouses. Priests and consecrated religious learn to love and serve their communities. Each vocation thrives by relying on the support of God through prayer. Affirming that love of God and service of neighbor is one crucial way we can support those currently on the road to a vocation. May we encourage the young people of our families and communities to love generously so they can walk their own road to a vocation. ©TM



FAMILY—Reverend Mr. Nick Zummo is pictured with his brother, Kendall; his mother, Anita, Bp. Edward M. Rice, and his father, Richard, after the Rite of Ordination to the Sacred order of Diaconate in St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield, May 20, 2022. (*Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror*)



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.

January 16, 1987 A friend of mine who enjoys humorous verse shared with me the following advise on Tomato Ketchup: If you do not shake the bottle, None'll come, and then a lot'll.

January 30, 1987 With Bishop Terry Steib, auxiliary bishop of St. Louis, I discussed some differences when Mass is celebrated in a parish of mostly black Catholics. Bishop Steib, an impressive man and bishop, is one of our 11 black bishops in the United States. One of the differences, he said, is that there is more informality with Catholic black congregations. If it seems good at the time, for instance, more verses of a hymn may be sung than were first planned or an additional hymn sung which was not originally

scheduled. And, he said, sometimes members of the congregation react to a homily, during the homily. He laughed as he told about an occasion when a priest was really struggling with a homily and, in fact, was not giving a very good one. Some parishioners started praying out loud: "Help him, Lord, help him!"

February 6, 1987 Did you hear about the news editor who thought he never made a mistake? One day he received a call from a man who angrily said his name was among the death notices in the morning paper. The confident editor simply asked: "Where are you calling from?"

Cape Girardeau native ordained Jesuit priest

St. Vincent de Paul parishioner and an alumnus of Notre Dame Regional High School joins USA Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus

Cape Girardeau

David Kiblanger, SJ, was ordained June 11, 2022, in St Francis Xavier College Church, St. Louis, MO, presided by The Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski, Archbishop of St. Louis. Fr. Kiblanger is from Cape Girardeau, MO, and attended Truman State University, where he graduated with a BA degree in Physics and a BS degree in Math. Prior to entering the Society of Jesus in 2011, he completed his MA in Theology at Villanova University. After novitiate in Louisiana, he completed philosophy studies at Saint Louis University, earning his MA in Philosophy. During his regency, he taught 7th and 8th grade math at Colegio San Ignacio in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he also coached soccer and moderated a Marian sodality. He spent one year at Notre Dame doing additional philosophy coursework before completing his MTS in Theology and STL in Moral Theology from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

The Mirror asked Fr. Kiblanger to reflect on his journey to priesthood, ordination, and what he is most looking forward to in his ministry:

"I grew up in Cape Girardeau and was baptized at St. Mary of the Annunciation Cathedral, but my family moved and started going to St. Vincent's when I was young. I attended St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Grade School and Notre Dame Regional High School (class of 2004). My parents are Deacon Mark and Debbie Kiblanger of Cape Girardeau. My father serves as RCIA Director and deacon in St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau. I am the oldest of five children, my siblings are John (Salt Lake City), Matthew (St. Louis, married to Sana with son Gabriel), Theresa (Atlanta), and Elizabeth (St. Louis).

"I entered the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits, in August of 2011, so my formation for priesthood lasted almost 11 years. The first two years of formation were an intensive study and experience of the Jesuit life and charism. I went through six "experiments," each of which tested my vocation to the Society. These experiments included spending 30 days in silence doing the Spiritual Exercises of our founder, St. Ignatius Loyola; completing a three-week pilgrimage while begging for food and accommodations; and serving for three months in a Mayan indigenous parish in rural Guatemala.

"At the end of two years, I took perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the Society. In many ways, that ended the major discernment of whether or not I would be a Jesuit. Thus, I had a certain stability for the last nine years of formation, knowing that I had committed my life to be a Jesuit. The nine years included lots of study, work, and human and pastoral formation. The charism of the Jesuits is to go anywhere in the world where the Pope needs us, and such a long formation is aimed at building competencies to work in contexts that span cultural, class, and religious divides.

"During my diaconate, I served as a deacon at St. Cecilia Parish in Boston, a vibrant, inner-city parish under the spiritual care of the dynamic Fr. John Unni, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston. In addition to assisting and preaching at Masses and celebrating baptisms, I taught the RCIA class and confirmation class. Being a transitional deacon allowed me to ease my way into public, ordained ministry in the Church. Being in the sanctuary for Mass was a major change, but I found this new experience of the Mass immensely consoling. It was confirmation that God indeed is calling me to ordained ministry.

"I will cherish many memories from my diaconate year, but my favorite one will be the Easter Vigil. Thirteen members of my RCIA class entered the Church that evening, and their enthusiasm was infectious. It builds up one's own faith to see other people make a deliberate, intentional decision to be baptized or enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

"During the liturgy, I sprinkled the congregation with Holy Water to remind them of their baptisms, and I was grinning ear-to-ear while I did it.

"For the Rite of Ordination, the other ordinands and I picked 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 for our second reading. In it, St. Paul says, 'All this is from

God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.' God gave both Christ himself and a ministry to us, so at the most fundamental level, God is the one who sets all of us up in this business. It just so happens that my part to play is as a priest.

"I have experienced the mercy and reconciliation of God in Christ, and I want the rest of the world to experience it, too. We live in a polarized world, with a good segment of the people thinking the Church is not relevant or even a barrier to progress. Of course, I do not think that, but we have to be honest with ourselves: The Church has given the world many reasons for skepticism and pessimism. I hope I can contribute to a renewal of the Church, so that the Church operates with more tenderness and love, integrity, and justice. Pope Benedict, echoed by Pope Francis, has said that the Church grows not by proselytization and argumentation, but by attraction. I can think of nothing more attractive than the message of the kingdom of God preached by Jesus. If only that kingdom could take deeper root in us and transform us, then the world would see more clearly that the Church is ever relevant.

"The vocation to priesthood, like my vocation to the Society of Jesus, is a gift and a mercy of God to me. I have been looking forward to my priestly ordination



SOCIETY OF JESUS—After almost 11 years of formation, Cape Girardeau native Fr. David Kiblanger, SJ (center), was ordained a Jesuit priest on June 11, 2022. He is pictured here with his father, Deacon Mark Kiblanger, his mother, Debbie, Bp. Edward M. Rice, and Fr. Rick Jones, pastor. Father Kiblanger celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in his home parish of St. Vincent de Paul, Cape Girardeau, on Father's Day, June 19, the Solemnity of The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ. He is being assigned to Belize, South America.

(The Mirror)

for years, and the day could not have been better. There were people attending who knew me from all sorts of different times and places in my life. Seeing all these different worlds overlap in one place was incredible.

"Two highlights stick out. The first was the Litany of the Saints and the Imposition of Hands by all the priests present. I often feel that my vocation is not my own. It has been encouraged and nurtured by so many others' prayers. I know this at a deep level, but still, the knowledge that so many people are praying for you can be a little abstract. In the Litany and Imposition of Hand, you go through one-by-one the saints and the priests who have been praying for you. These lasted almost half an hour, and the saints mentioned and the priests who laid hands were but a small subset of the total number of people praying for me. It was humbling and filled me with awe and gratitude.

"The second highlight was giving my parents my first blessing as a priest. I have so much respect for them and the way they live their Christian vocation to marriage. They were my original formators. I felt like, 'Who am I to give them a blessing?' It was a vivid reminder that I am unworthy of the priesthood and what it will demand from me, but also a reminder that Jesus Christ now works through me in a particular way.

"I most look forward to living and working with my Jesuit brothers. Jesuits commonly work together in educational institutions, retreat houses, parishes, or social ministries, as opposed to working alone in parishes. Although I have great respect for diocesan priests who often must live a more solitary life, I am at my best as part of a team whose members feed off of and nourish one another. I hope my priesthood can contribute to the work of the Society in a local area, which, although fueled by the sacraments, extends far beyond sacramental ministry.

"My biggest joy in ministry has been encountering the face of Jesus Christ. When I hear of people's desires to grow in love and joy and peace by growing closer to Jesus, I know that the Spirit is moving in our world. I feel my job is not to get into the way of the Spirit's work, but to encourage and strengthen where the Spirit is already present. Where the Spirit is present, there I see the face of Christ." ©TM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cape Girardeau—St. Mary of the Annunciation Cathedral PCCW will have a **community garage sale**, Sat., July 23, 7-11:30 a.m., in the St. Mary Catholic School gym. Vendor booth cost is \$20 for four tables. For more information, to reserve booth space, or questions, please contact Judy Stricker at (573) 334-5466.

Conway—Held for over 100 years, Sacred Heart Parish will host its famous and annual **Ice Cream Social**, Sat., July 16, 5:30 p.m. Come enjoy the famous hand-cranked ice cream, silent auction, games for kids & adults, and food will be available for your good will donation.

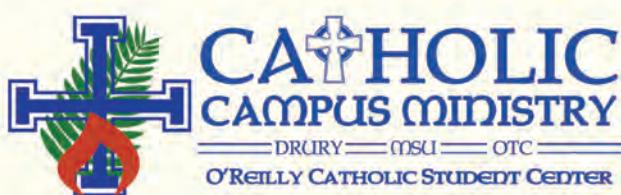
Sikeston—St. Rose of Lima ministry meets every Wednesday (except the first Wednesday) of each month in the old rectory, to tack Ugly Quilts, make **PLARN** that will be crocheted into sleeping mats for the homeless, and to prepare comfort quilts and walker bags for parishioners. ALL are welcome to join, no experience necessary! School age children, grades 4-8 are also welcome to help with these projects during the summer months. Come see what we are all about! For more information, contact Sharon Chouinard (call or text) (573) 380-4036. (PLARN—plastic yarn made from plastic bags, such as Wal-Mart; Making PLARN is simple, and can also be a home project. The need is great!)

Springfield—Current Adorers and those interested in learning more about Eucharistic Adoration are invited to join Bishop Rice and area priests in **Fifth Anniversary Celebration of Perpetual Adoration in the Springfield area** on Wed., June 29, 5:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Parish. Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m.; to follow will be a short talk about Eucharistic Adoration in the Social Hall. Light refreshments will be served.

Springfield—Sacred Heart Parish will hold its **Annual Garage Sale** on Fri., July 29, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sat., July 30, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Donations of items in usable condition and good working order are currently being accepted and can be dropped off at the church, we ask that you not bring any furniture or large appliances. Come see all the wonderful treasures!

Springfield—Revive your faith by joining with the **Praise & Worship Prayer Group** every Thursday evening, 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, or join by Zoom. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, this group has been meeting since 2016 and includes many parishioners from across the diocese. For more information, please call Shelly Pichler at (417) 838-2730.

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.



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Coffee pods for our free coffee bar, Individual snack bags of chips, cookies, breakfast bars and etc, bottled water, copy paper, toilet paper, paper towels, Lysol spray, cold drink cups, hot drink cups, stir sticks for coffee, white tea candles for candle lit Mass.

Please drop off at CCM Monday-Thursdays 8am-noon
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“Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau” @DiOSCg DioSCG



CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Chori Seraiah

Fr. Chori Seraiah will celebrate the 10th anniversary of his priesthood ordination on July 8. He is the pastor of St. George Catholic Church, the Personal Ordinariate community of the Chair of St. Peter, in Republic, MO.



*Happy Anniversary,
Fr. Seraiah!*



CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Laurent Okitakatshi

Fr. Laurent Okitakatshi will celebrate the 5th anniversary of his priesthood ordination on July 16. He presently serves as Chaplain at the St. John Henry Newman Center (Catholic Campus Ministry) in Cape Girardeau on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University.



*Happy Anniversary,
Fr. Okitakatshi!*



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The Church of Southern Missouri was blessed at Easter 2022 with the entrance of approximately 188 “new” Catholics who participated in sacraments of initiation during the Easter Vigil in our parishes and missions. Many journeyed to full membership in the Catholic Church through a local Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program. The Mirror recently spoke with six new members of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Here are 4 of their stories, read the rest in the July 8 issue!



Aaron Reed

St. Mary Parish, West Plains, MO

Aaron Reed, was an RCIA candidate from St. Mary Parish, West Plains, who recently joined Sacred Heart Parish, Thayer.

“I would never have joined the Catholic Church if I had not first looked into Orthodoxy, as I was quite anti-Catholic just two short years ago,” Reed said. “By looking into Orthodoxy by means of Reddit, my own Protestant worldview was deconstructed and replaced with a more historically Christian one.”

“After one Orthodox person told me to look into Catholicism so I could make an informed decision, I was made to consider Catholicism seriously by a Catholic I talked to over the Internet,” said Reed. “I was only convinced rationally when I finally forgave the Catholic Church for all the atrocities it had done, both real and imagined. I only began to desire conversion wholeheartedly after having learned about the Theology of the Body, primarily through the Online ministry of Jason Evert.”

“Finally, certain spiritual things which held me back from joining began to be released as I started to pray the rosary,” Reed shared. “After I had already decided I would join the Catholic Church, one day in September of 2020, I felt as if I could not delay going any longer simply because I did not have a car and nobody said they would be willing to take me, so I got up early one morning and walked to Sacred Heart Church in Thayer,” Reed said. “I was picked up halfway there by someone I knew and was driven the rest of the way. Ever since that day, I have kept myself within the community of the Church there and made clear my desire to join until I was finally able to start RCIA a year after I had gone to my first Mass in the Catholic Church.”

Prior to joining the RCIA program, Reed had been raised Protestant in the Baptist and Pentecostal traditions simultaneously, with what he described as a “heavy amount of influence” from the Church of Christ.

“The way I was raised made me feel fully a part of multiple different denominations at the same time and made me used to diversity in religious practice and attitudes,” Reed said. “I have been heavily influenced by the charismatic and evangelical movements in Protestantism for all my life and, without feeling any contradiction between them, have acted on both impulses throughout the time I was a Protestant.”

As he learned more about the Catholic Church and faith, he overcame preconceived ideas he had.

“I was raised to believe that the Catholic Church was the enemy of the gospel and a great persecutor of Christians. I thought that it had an oppressive

hierarchy, was full of idolatry, and believed in works-based salvation,” Reed said. “I have found out what I believed about the Catholic Church, which was largely influenced by writing like Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and the Pilgrim’s Progress, were completely false, and that the Catholic Church is truly built on love and true doctrine: salvation is not bought by our works, but by God forgiving us and reforming us into a holistically new creation that can be in true communion with him.”

Reed enjoyed many things about his journey into full membership within the Catholic Church.

“The friends I have made [in RCIA] are some of the best friends I have ever made, but that is only the second thing,” said Reed. “The most fulfilling thing I have been able to do is simply to kneel before Jesus in the Eucharist and pray to him knowing that he is there. God, flesh and blood, in the room with me. Above all, the prayer before the blessed sacrament that seems to have affected my heart the most, I pray fervently those words, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.’ The third thing that I was glad about is the simple practicality and community of my own parish.”

Challenges in his journey included basic resource constraints.

“At first, I did not have a car and I needed to get a ride both ways, to budget what I have to make sure I got to all the classes and services I needed to perform during the initiation process,” he said.

In addition, the challenge of starting over and not knowing anyone.

“There is also some degree of loneliness that I have dealt with, having left my old community and joining a new one,” Reed said. “Though I do not experience this loneliness as much now as I used to, I expect to experience it in the future when circumstances change again.”

Reflecting on Lent, Aaron said, “I really lived as penitently as the circumstances of my life allowed, excited for the various sacraments I would receive at the Easter Vigil and I just hoped it would all work out without too many problems.”

The Mirror asked what advice he might give to help draw souls to Christ:

“Jesus said ‘No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him,’ (John 6:44 NABRE), so there must always be a deep and abiding trust in God to bring to his son those whom he has chosen,” Reed said.

However, he said, even though God is the only one who can change souls, God also calls us to participate in his work (1 Cor 3:9). So, in order to help lead people to Christ, we must bring the truth to them and bring them into a community of love, the one which will be perfected in the new creation (Rev 21:22).

“All religions attempt to fulfill three desires: the desire to know God, the desire to be in a community of love, and the desire to know what we ought to do; even those in the secular world will talk about their destiny,” Reed said. “It is only the Catholic Church that can fulfill these desires completely because it is the only Church in which God himself fully dwells. Focus on teaching people how to pray, build a loving community, and teach the truth so that those who truly seek God will join.”

What is the greatest treasure of the faith?

“Well, it’s God, isn’t it? A full relationship with God? The Eucharist,” said Reed. “The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That life-changing salvation which makes us truly new. The ability to call God Our Father. The promise that nothing can stand between us and God. It is God, isn’t it? And the communion which finds its source in him, the communion of saints.” ©TM





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Hannah Priggel

Guardian Angel Parish, Oran, MO

Hannah Priggel, was an RCIA candidate from Guardian Angel Parish, Oran, and has been married into a Catholic family for

seven years. She finds the Catholic Church very welcoming. Prior to becoming part of the RCIA class, Priggel would go to church every Sunday with her Catholic family.

"I became even more intrigued to join with the

recent passing of my father-in-law and when Fr. [Joseph] Kelly came to our church," Priggel said.

She and her husband send their daughters to Catholic school and her daughters' growth in the Catholic faith and knowledge also inspired her to join.

Priggel is appreciative of her sponsor, who always asked her about classes and together they discussed things that Fr. Kelly would talk about each week.

"Since I've been attending Catholic Mass for many years, I feel very familiar with the teachings," Priggel said. "I enjoy how in-depth Father explains the Bible so to bring a better understanding."

"I have really enjoyed RCIA so much; the number of things we learn each week and how much my life has changed for the better when I apply these to my everyday life," she said. "I enjoy

that I can talk about everything that I was learning with my kids that are also learning it through Catholic school."

She finds that memorizing "all the prayers" was the most challenging and her biggest 'ah ha' moment was, "realizing how much typology there is throughout the Bible."

When asked what she found to be the biggest "treasure" of the faith, Priggel shared that she finds that to be the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confession.

As she experienced Lent this year and the Easter Vigil, Priggel stayed focused, "To do my best as I start this new journey." She shared the following advice to help draw souls to Christ, "I encourage them to attend Mass and listen to the message Father gives." ©TM



Cameron Buckthorpe

St. Vincent De Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau

Cameron Buckthorpe was an RCIA candidate from St. Vincent De Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau. He was led to the Catholic Church because, "I was and still am interested in learning more about God and having a better relationship

with God. I had very little background in any sort of religion. I didn't come from a family that went to church, ever that I can remember, nor did we read from the Bible as I grew up. I am finding my faith strengthened and know that I am in a community of people who share the same beliefs."

Buckthorpe has found the Catholic Church very welcoming in his search for faith. His sponsor, Paul, was helpful in just

being present and answering questions along the journey through RCIA.

Before starting the RCIA process, Buckthorpe admits to having misconceptions about the Holy Trinity. He is finding his biggest learning has been about the Holy Trinity and what it truly represents.

"Have an open mind and an open heart," is his advice to drawing souls to Christ. ©TM



Sue Fiorino

St. Mary Parish, West Plains, MO, took a 'selfie' and her family

After 30 years of being a devoted Evangelical Protestant, Sue Fiorino was seeking the Lord for an answer to a lifelong question: "What is the church?"

"I had loved Jesus a long time and did not even know the Catholic claim that Jesus had started a visible church," she said.

Fiorino was an RCIA candidate at St. Mary Parish, West Plains.

"My sister-in-law, Sharon, a faithful cradle Catholic, took a risk and told me that the Catholic Church considers everybody a Catholic: you are either a faithful Catholic, a lapsed Catholic, or a not-yet Catholic," Fiorino said. "In a conversation about having trouble at our interdenominational church, Sharon pitched the idea that 'maybe it's time for you to come home to the Catholic Church.' I rolled my eyes even harder when she mailed me a Scott Hahn book. It lived on my shelf for two years, but my world changed when I finally read it."

Fiorino admits that she was a "mild" Methodist until college, when some Catholic friends invited her to their retreats.

"It awakened something in me spiritually, but I found rich fellowship and in-depth Bible studies through a different campus ministry," said said. "Through this organization, I became a Protestant missionary to Zambia, Africa, and I eventually met my husband, an ex-Catholic, through this dynamic group of Christians. In our married life, we were highly serious about our faith and served in many roles in the variety of churches we attended."

Fiorino had never seriously considered becoming Catholic because even though she admired many individual Catholics, she had, "wrongly judged the Catholic Church to be unbiblical and corrupt."

"It has been a wonder to see that the Catholic Church is far more biblical than I could have imagined. I had my doubts about the attention given to Mary, but seeing from the Scriptures that she is present from Genesis 3 to Revelation 12 and is a type of new Eve, a new Ark of the Covenant, was beautiful and mind-blowing," Fiorino said. "I had also believed a lie that the 'true church' had to go underground in the early centuries to avoid the corruption of Catholicism. This was all unexamined misinformation. What an eye-opener to actually read the early church fathers!"

Although she does miss some of the music from her Protestant practice, Fiorino enjoys full membership within the Catholic Church.

"It feels like being rescued by a massive cruise ship when you had been born on a raft and didn't

know it," Fiorino said.

"I'm still looking around all the 'rooms' about how to practice my Catholic faith—novenas with saints, Bible study, Adoration, social justice, the rosary, theology of the body, podcasts from Catholic apologists, there is just so much," she said.

"When my core belief in the Bible alone was challenged and shifted, I knew I would eventually become Catholic," Fiorino said of her own personal 'ah ha' moment. "My husband immediately began studying and researching to prove me wrong. In that process, he was convicted and infused with grace that he needed to revert to his Catholic upbringing. What a reassurance for me!"

Fiorino finds the biggest treasure of the Catholic faith is the Eucharist.

"The Catholic teaching on the Eucharist—I don't really have words for this yet but this is so deep and beautiful," she said. "I'm excited to receive the Eucharist and be a full member of Jesus' one, holy, and apostolic church."

She shares the following advice to help draw souls to Christ:

"I think Catholics should talk more openly about their love for Jesus and His Real Presence in the Eucharist," she said.

"I would like to thank every Catholic that has ever donated to build a church or renovate a chapel," Fiorino said. "Long before I ever considered becoming Catholic, I used to seek out Catholic sacred spaces for the thick reverence and the peaceful silence that was there. Thank you for having such places and thank you for sharing them." ©TM

Msgr. Thomas E. Reidy celebrates 55th anniversary of ordination

Springfield

by Jay Mejia

Fr. Tom Reidy never stops. He's an 82-year-old dynamo priest.

Fr. Reidy is a priest's priest. Despite his age and his long ministry, Fr. Reidy remains kind, caring, humble, and, most of all, reliable.

Even though he stepped down in 2019 after serving 47 years as Chancellor and Vicar General of the diocese, he's still a hard man to catch. You can find Fr. Reidy, every day, moving fast for the good of the Church. He is presently Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Nixa. On July 1, he will become Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Springfield.

What does his day look like? He'll celebrate morning Mass for his flock; with a parish school, he'll offer school Masses when the academic session reconvenes, often visiting classrooms. He'll offer the sacrament of penance for as long the line stretches; next, he's off to tend the sick or dying at home or in the hospital, followed by visits to the those behind bars who seek Christ's redemption. That's just for openers, as his counsel is widely sought after by so many. There are plenty of other meetings, too.

In between, he prays. A lot. For all of us.

"Msgr. Reidy loves the Church so much that it is impossible for him to say 'no' if it is for the good of the Church," Bp. Edward M. Rice said. "I think with every assignment, with each new responsibility, it allows him to expand the generosity of his heart."

"I am asked why I still serve at my age," Fr. Reidy said. "It is because I feel the Lord is asking me to do so and giving me His strength. I am indebted to so many who served as staff and fellow workers—lay people, religious women, members of the clergy."

"I pray that my efforts help," he added.

If one looks at his resume, that is quite the understatement.

LEGACY OF HEARTFELT MINISTRY

Msgr. Thomas E. Reidy was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1967. A mere five years later, on Feb. 2, 1972, he was appointed Vice Chancellor for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. On Nov. 4, 1974, he would be appointed a diocesan consultant and Chancellor of the diocese. On March 15, 1979, he was appointed executive secretary of the Priests Mutual Benefit Society, for the welfare of the priests. On Dec. 6, 1981, he was appointed Vicar General for the diocese, a post he kept until 2019.

Twice in his years of service he was

appointed Diocesan Administrator: in 1984, upon the departure of then-Bp. Bernard Law to Boston, and again in 2015, with the departure of Bp. James V. Johnston, Jr., to Kansas City-St. Joseph. Of course along with all these duties, he has ministered as an associate, administrator, and pastor of various parishes throughout the diocese such as St. Agnes Cathedral, Springfield; Sacred Heart, Springfield; the Carmelites of St. Anne, Springfield; Holy Trinity, Marshfield; Holy Trinity, Springfield; St. William, Buffalo; St. Francis of Assisi

opportunity to say to his bishop, 'Yes, bishop, all of this may be a bit too much.' But not Msgr. Reidy."

Maybe that's because he grew up on the tough side of Chicago, the south side. Maybe it's because he's Irish: his mother and father both hailed from Ireland and actually didn't meet until they came to Chicago even though both were from Ballyeigue County.

FAITH FEEDS VOCATION

Thomas E. Reidy was born Feb. 23, 1940 in Chicago to the parents of Timothy

sponsor me, my pastor, Fr. Leo Devitt, got in contact with Bp. Ignatius Strecker, then Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau," Fr. Reidy said. "I became attached to this Diocese of Southern Missouri right away. With the blessing of God, I was ordained a Catholic Priest on May 27, 1967, just four years later."

In Springfield, he found the diocese to be a "place of full ministry for so many," and became aware that the young people of the Church were important. He was asked to be principal of St. Agnes School beginning that August. While principal,

he was also an associate pastor at St. Agnes with Monsignor John Westhues. When Monsignor Westhues fell seriously ill for almost a year, Fr. Reidy was named administrator to St. Agnes.

As Monsignor recovered, then-Bp. William Baum asked him to serve as vice chancellor. Fr. Reidy was named Chancellor and served in this position until 2019. He was named Vicar General in 1981.

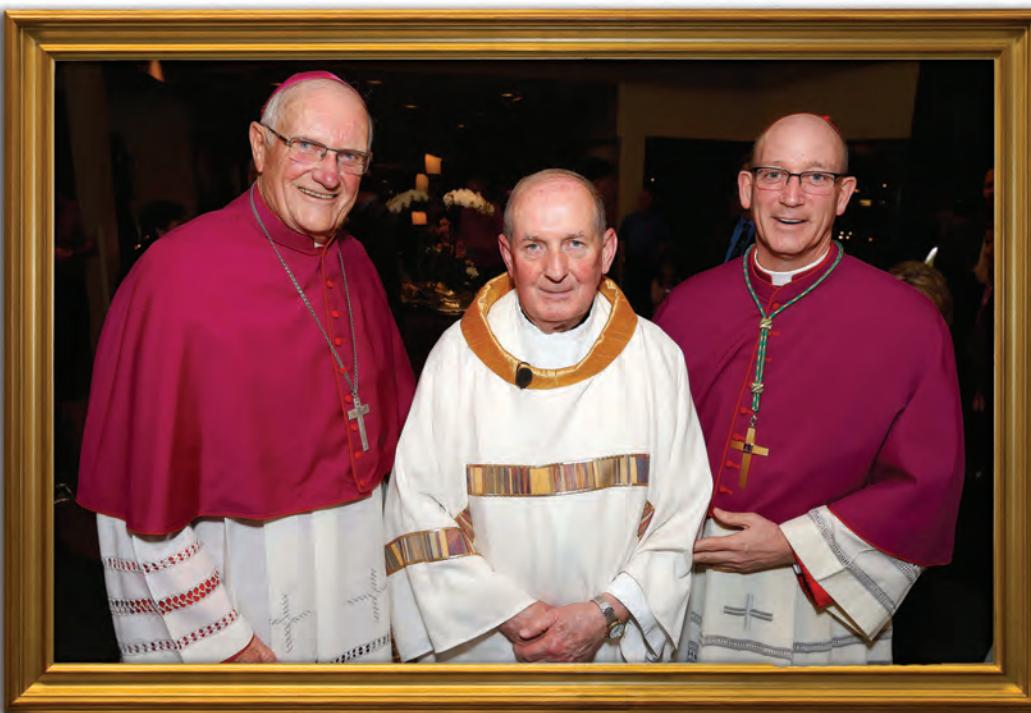
"Very simply, here is a man of service who has accepted every task that was given to him for the good of the Church," Bp. Rice said. "If it would help the bishop, if it would help the Church, then he would do it."

Here's why according to Fr. Reidy himself: "With my experience in Church leadership, I feel that handing on our blessed traditions as Roman Catholics is critical to the present needs and problems which we experience as 'people of faith,' adding that although my work in the marriage tribunal as Judicial Vicar was truly difficult and time consuming, the Sacrament of Marriage is that important to the vitality of the Church."

"And who benefited from all this?" Bp. Rice said. "Certainly the bishops to whom he gave counsel, myself included. And of course, the People of God that he loves and serves so well. He is slavishly dedicated to visiting the sick and the hospitals often times after a full afternoon in the office, having had a full morning of the parish, he would say 'I'm off to visit somebody in the hospital before I go back to an evening meeting."

And, of course, he is the go-to-guy for many, many priests, according to Bp. Rice.

"If there was a question, or concern or if a priest just needed another opinion about something going on, Msgr. Reidy would receive a call," Bp. Rice said. "That tells us he loves the priesthood and he loves his vocation. And just as he would do anything for the Church, every priest in this diocese knows that he would do



55 YEARS A PRIEST—Msgr. Tom Reidy (center) celebrated his 55th anniversary of priestly ordination on May 27. He is pictured in 2017 on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee with Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht and Bishop Edward M. Rice. (Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror)

Parish, Nixa; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Springfield; and St. Joseph, Billings. He has helped in the formation of future priests at the now closed-Sacred Heart House of Studies, and continues to serve as a diocesan consultor, the diocesan Presbyteral Council, a member of the Clergy Formation Committee, and Chaplain of the Daughters of St. Francis DeSales Associates, and Chaplain at the US Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, in Springfield. He has also brought to bear his knowledge and compassion to the diocesan Office of Tribunal.

In one letter appointing him as Chancellor and Diocesan Consultant, then-Bp. Law seemed a little concerned that Msgr. Reidy was taking on too much.

"In the letter, Bishop Law said, 'I know that the demands on your time are many, and I want you to feel free at any point to let me know if there needs to be a reassessment of your responsibilities,'" Bp. Rice said. "Any normal priest," said Bp. Rice, "would probably take the

and Mary (Harty) Reidy. Fr. Reidy credits these two devout Catholics for an upbringing that led to his formation as a priest.

"I'm proud to say that I am a Catholic Priest for 55 years," Fr. Reidy said in an interview. "When I was young and listening to what God was asking of me, it was my family's faith and ideals that raised questions which had to be answered."

He later attended St. Ambrose College in Davenport, IA, where he received a bachelor's degree in Education and Philosophy.

"I was a normal college student, but as I graduated, I felt the early stirrings of a vocation to the Catholic Priesthood," he recounted. "St. Ambrose College was very good in forming me in the ways of faith. I wish every youth in our Church today could have the same strong religious foundation that everyone needs to live a good life."

"When I was seeking a diocese to

Continued next page



By
Deacon
Dan Vaughn

Forsyth

First of all, you may be asking yourself what is First Friday?

"First Friday" is the first Friday of the month and is marked by special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The devotion dates back to 1673 when Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque and spoke to her of His Sacred Heart. Jesus promised Margaret Mary that special favors, such as, the grace of final perseverance, would be given to those who received Holy Communion on nine successive first Fridays. After Margaret Mary's death, the First Friday practice steadily spread in the Church. It was endorsed by popes and promoted by saints and greatly increased in popularity when Margaret Mary was canonized a saint in 1920 by Pope Benedict XV.

It is a popular practice among parishes to celebrate First Friday Mass devoted to the Sacred



Heart and to the Precious Blood of Jesus. Our Lady of the Ozarks Parish, Forsyth, MO, is no different in celebrating First Fridays. However, this past April during First Friday Mass, Jesus "dropped by" and winked at me. Let me explain.

I had just finished reading the prayer petitions and began setting the altar in preparation of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As I poured wine into the two chalices, the presiding priest, Fr. Samson Dorival, SMM, whispered to me that I had poured too much wine in his chalice and asked that I pour some from his chalice into the second chalice. In doing so, I was careful to use a purificator (a white linen cloth used to wipe the chalice) to catch any drops of wine from getting on the altar cloth. When I placed the purificator on the altar

next to the chalice, I was amazed by what I saw: one of the drops of wine on the purificator was in the shape of a heart.

Was this a coincidence that this occurred on First

Friday? I don't think so.

Did the wine on the purificator change into the Precious Blood of Jesus? No, the consecration prayer had not yet occurred, nor was there ever any intent by the priest to change wine not in the chalices into the blood of Christ.

Regardless, Fr. Samson and I witnessed a God moment, what is often termed a "Godwink"—a beautiful sign from God reminding us of his love.

Before the final blessing, I explained to the congregation what occurred on the altar prior to the Eucharistic prayers. As we processed out, I placed the purificator next to the baptismal font for all to see after Mass.

Although this event was not a true Eucharistic miracle, I'll never forget what happened during that First Friday Mass in April. God winked and made his presence known in a most wonderful and unexpectant way.

The month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and July to His Most Precious Blood.

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Deacon Dan Vaughn is the Director of the diocesan Permanent Diaconate. He serves in Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Branson, and Our Lady of the Ozarks Parish, Forsyth.

Continued from previous page

anything for a brother priest."

What else about the man? Parishioners and peers note several things.

Never call him Monsignor. Unless you're from out of town, the Bishop, or one of the mirthful "Irish mafia" of southern Missouri priests like Fr. Tom Kiefer, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, who served as associate pastor under Fr. Reidy at St. Agnes in 1981.

Never bring up the St. Louis Cardinals. Fr. Reidy bleeds blue.

"I will always be a Cubs Baseball Fan, no matter what," Fr. Reidy said.

Never ask for a slice of his pizza.

"He'll buy you a whole pizza," laughed Fr. Kiefer. "He just won't give you a slice of his pie."

Bishop Rice summed it up in concluding the 2019 Mass of Thanksgiving for Fr. Reidy's "retirement" as Vicar General and Chancellor:

"There is no way we can thank you Msgr. Reidy for all that you've done for us," Bp. Rice said. "I know I speak on behalf of Bishop [John] Leibrecht and Bishop [James] Johnston [attending the Mass] when I say that there is no way that we can thank you for what you have done for the bishops that you have served under. And that's probably okay because while you did it to help us, there is something more profound—you did it for the good of the Church that you love so much."

"You're not finished with your work," Bp. Rice said. "Oh, by the way, the 50th anniversary book of the

diocese may not have highlighted you, but I did. In the recent report to the Vatican, I announced to the Holy Father that after your 47 years of service, you are stepping down as Vicar General and Chancellor. And I told the Holy Father—I actually included this in the report, and I'm not exaggerating—I told the Holy Father that you are 'a sweetheart of a guy.'"

Concluding his interview with *The Mirror*, Fr. Reidy shared a blessing he received from a friend from Ireland (which to Fr. Reidy, is the Holy Land):

*May the best years you've ever had
Be the worst years you ever see
May the devil always leave your company
With a teardrop in his eye
May your faith keep shining brightly
Till you're old enough to die
May you always be as happy
As all of us here wish you to be* ©TM



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FOURTEENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIMEGod's word is a summit
of beauty around us

*Is 66:10-14c;
Ps 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20;
Gal 6:14-18;
Lk 10:1-12, 17-20*

"Let all the earth cry out to God with joy" – Psalm 66.

Lectionary guides remind us that the refrain from the responsorial Psalm gives us a unifying guide to the passages of a particular day. Today's refrain comes to light when we see the beautiful image of Jerusalem in our reading from Isaiah 66:10-14. This passage also forms the Old Testament canticle for the Fourth Thursday morning prayer of our Liturgy of the Hours. Its situation in the prayer is part of a beautiful panorama offered throughout the Bible regarding Jerusalem, and as an image of the Kingdom of God, referred to as *"The New Jerusalem, the Holy City, coming down out of heaven from God"* (Revelation 21:10).

Often on a Sunday, we are looking for a message to end in a concrete action for us, the listeners, to fulfill. Our Gospel today ends with the 72 others Jesus had sent ahead of him, reporting their success and how the spirits were subject to them. Jesus responded by saying, *"Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:20).

Occasionally on a Sunday, it is good that we simply take in the beauty and notice as God did, "It is good," and then rest as the Lord did on his sabbath day.

SCRIPTURE
WISDOM

*The Very Rev.
Bill Hodgson*

I recall my first acquaintance with the hills of southern Missouri. Fresh from high school graduation and two weeks later in summer classes at College of the Ozarks. Passing through the hills on the old highway 65, they was a great contrast from the cornfields of central Illinois. I was astounded at the beauty of the hills. Our first Sunday on campus, we were treated to the choir singing the school hymn, *"Lift up thine eyes unto the hills, for there thy strength is found,"* from Psalm 121. The sound was a match for the beauty of the countryside.

When the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* takes up the 8th commandment, the last section, #2500 – 2503, is entitled "Truth, Beauty and Sacred Art." With all the attention given today to the literal aspects of the commandment, this last one, to simply soak in the beauty, is something for which today's world longs more fervently.

There is so much beauty around us. God's word is a summit of this beauty, and a faithful guide to point it out to us as we pass through this life, looking for its fulfillment in the next.

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Fr. Hodgson is Pastor of St. Edward Parish, Cassville, and Holy Family Parish, in Shell Knob. He also serves as Dean of Deanery 2.

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Letters to the Editor from our readers

Readers: Priests are human,
should be approachable to flock

Perhaps Joe or Jill Catholic has come across the word "clericalism" a time or two. And perhaps Joe or Jill moved on without finding out what that word involved. An online article* that appeared a few years ago would have helped: "Clericalism is a disordered attitude toward clergy, an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. In the pithy description of Pope Francis, it's when 'clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.' Yet, as Pope Francis wrote, clericalism can be 'fostered by priests themselves, or by lay persons.'" The article attributes the "surely Father knows best" attitude to this frame of mind.

A recent Letter to the Editor (*The Mirror*, 6/10/2022) certainly seems to want to place priests "far from the people," in the words of Pope Francis. The writer's considerable ire was touched off by three Joplin-area priests who (harrumph!) agreed to participate in a kid's fundraiser for the American Heart Association. "Our goal was \$8,500, but we feel pretty confident that the incentive of our three wonderful priests volunteering to be SLIMED had a LOT to do with the amount we raised!" said a teacher. (They raised well over \$14,000!) I'm pretty sure that most of us in the pews would conclude that the "three wonderful priests" (whom the outraged Letter to the Editor calls "miscreants") came away with both their priestly and personal dignity intact. And connected in a fundamental way with people young and old whom they are called to serve.

*(Aleteia, 8/28/2018)

Respectfully,
Mike DePue, Springfield, MO

Our priests, having been elevated to the altar, are still human and should not be put on a platform. They must reach people on their "level," whatever that may be. The elderly (such as myself) appreciate a kind ear, listening to my troubles and perhaps sinfulness. The young, they need to be reached on another level--such as "slimming" or being "clown like." The young, seeing the priest approachable, might say: "Hey, this priest is OK!, I'm going to Mass, he is really cool". The priest reaches out to all his flock on whatever level he has to. No matter if my priest is made out to be "an ice cream sundae" by the youth, or slimed, or "clowned"--they still return to the altar, touch that bread, that wine, in all seriousness, and it becomes The Body Of Christ, The Blood of Christ. These priests are, indeed, dignified, and although I am probably considered an "old fuddy duddy," I still find amusement in the fun times of priests.

– MJ Cline, Neosho, MO

A Letter to the Editor exists to provide a forum for public comment or opinion. It does not represent or express the position or policy of the diocese, the editor, or the publisher: the thoughts contained therein represent the sole expressions of the author. Letters to the Editor may be sent to Editor, 601 S. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806-3143, or via Email to leidson@dioscg.org. Letters will be verified so please provide your name, daytime phone number, or Email address. Preference is given to letters that are direct, concise, and/or no longer than 250 words. Letters are published at the discretion of the editor and subject to editing.

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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Dt 30:10-14;
Ps 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36, 37;
Col 1:15-20;
Lk 10:25-37

As we begin our Gospel reading today from the Gospel according to St. Luke, we read that Jesus was on his journey to Jerusalem when He was approached by a Jewish scholar of the law who had decided to test Jesus and possibly trap him in a legal entanglement. The lawyer began with the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded to the question with yet another question, asking, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer who had conceived himself to be the legal entangler now found himself legally entangled as he searched for a logical legal answer. His response was to quote Deuteronomy 6:4-5, which was and still is one of the most important prayers in the Jewish faith. Twice a day, every good Jew would quote this Scripture:

"Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

The law scholar also added:

"And with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Deuteronomy 6 is a reminder to God's people of who God is, all that he has done, and the amazing opportunity that the people of God have to respond to him with love and adoration. The addition by the law scholar also affirmed the Jewish teaching to treat others as you yourself would want to be treated. Jesus affirmed the lawyer's answer quite simply by saying "Do this and you will live."

On the surface it would appear that this would have been the end of the discussion, but the lawyer recognized that he had been contained and shown up by Jesus, and he could not let the issue rest without posing one more question, "Who is my neighbor, whom I must love like myself?"



SCRIPTURE WISDOM

Deacon
James Farrar

Jewish society in the time of Jesus was a complicated affair, with 613 separate laws for daily life for many different groups of people; Jews and Gentiles, Jewish men and Jewish women, the socially clean and unclean, and the various tribal separations as well, just to name a few. Jesus told a parable which gave a beautiful response to the legal question, which is only told in Luke's Gospel. The parable of the Good Samaritan.

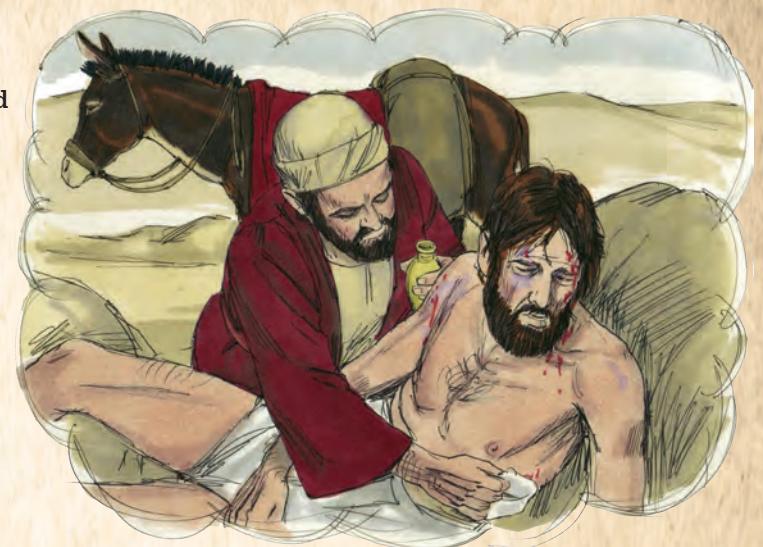
In the parable a 'certain man' was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, a journey of only about 12 miles, but one which requires a treacherous descent from about 2,300 feet above sea level to 1,300 feet below sea level, all in the space of this twelve-mile trek. This meant that the trail was not only rugged, but had many twists, turns, and pitfalls where a traveler could be attacked and robbed at any time. The unfortunate Jewish traveler in the story was attacked, stripped, beaten, robbed, and left for dead along the roadside by thieves skulking in the shadows.

Other travelers passed along the trail and observed the helpless and miserable traveler who had been accosted and robbed. Jesus chose his characters at this point of the story carefully. The victim could have been either a Jew or a Gentile; an important point that Jesus wanted to make so that the entire audience could relate to the story. The first traveler to encounter the victim, however, was identified as a Jewish priest, the pinnacle of Jewish society. This devout man noticed the destitute victim at the side of the road, and rather than help his unfortunate Jewish brother, he chose to cross over to the far side of the road to avoid any communication or contact. The second person to come along happened to be a Levite, who would have been a privileged member of Jewish society who worked for the Temple, and he

too chose to move away from and failed to assist the fallen victim. Finally, a third person happened along. Now the logical conclusion which would have been drawn by Jesus' Jewish audience would be that

this third traveler would have been a righteous Jew as well, even if his social standing might not have been equivalent with the previous travelers. This would have made perfect sense and would have allowed the story that Jesus had spun to be a criticism of the religious leadership, which all listening would have expected. No one in the crowd would have ever dreamed that Jesus would claim the third traveler to be, of all things, a Samaritan!

Samaria was Judea's most reviled neighbor. Samaritans were descended from the Israelites, but they had fallen into intermarriages with Gentile tribes and were not allowed to worship at the one true Temple in Jerusalem. They were considered less than dogs in many circles, and Jewish law even forbade any good Jew to say "Amen" if a Samaritan uttered any form of a prayer. Yet, it was this lowly Samaritan, this outsider, who took the time to stop and help the fallen traveler. The Samaritan dressed his wounds, put the man on his own pack animal, and took him to an inn for rest and healing. Once at the inn, the Samaritan asked the innkeeper to care for the man until he could proceed on his own, and even offered money to pay for the victim's care, and to send more money if the need arose. The bitterly hated and reviled Samaritan had become the compassionate neighbor who had reached out with all that he had even when the cream of Jewish society had looked away and failed to show any compassion.



Too many times in our world, hatred, bigotry, jealousy, and pure anger seem to get in the way, to use and abuse the weak and the socially-disadvantaged, from children to the elderly, from those racially, socially, and sexually discriminated and damaged; and to those whose lives are destroyed by senseless killing and suffering in war and political disruption. The solution is simple, as Jesus asked the lawyer, "Who is our neighbor?" Our neighbor can be anyone and everyone, whoever might show up either to help or to be helped by us, a neighbor is anyone who acts compassionately towards another in need. The important thing to remember is that you might have the opportunity to be a good neighbor today, but tomorrow you just might be the one in distress needing someone else to be your neighbor!

By the way, the story goes that the Jewish law scholar, when asked by Jesus who was the good neighbor, was too ashamed to mention the Samaritan by name, and only replied, "The one who treated him with mercy." Consequently, Jesus' only advice to the lawyer was "Go, and do likewise." God bless you. ©TM

Deacon Farrar serves in Sacred Heart Parish, Bolivar, MO.



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50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED JUNE 1

GOLDEN JUBILEE—Retired Fr. Fergus Monaghan (center) celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination on June 1 in Holy Trinity Parish, Springfield, the last parish he served as pastor prior to his retirement in 2019. Many area priests concelebrated the Mass of Thanksgiving, including The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice (left) and Bp. Emeritus John J. Leibrecht (right). Father Monaghan was ordained June 4, 1972, in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Nullingar County, Westmeath Ireland, by then-Bishop William Baum for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. (Photo by Dean Curtis/The Mirror)



PRIEST COMPLETES HALF MARATHON

Fr. Paco Gordillo recently completed the Joplin/Freeman Memorial Run on May 7. He ran a half marathon in 2:16:47, coming in 219th out of 390. Fr. Gordillo's training partner was Danny Simpson of Webb City. Running with Fr. Gordillo was Omar Perez of Sacred Heart Parish, Webb City, where Fr. Gordillo serves as Pastor. He is also Pastor of St. Ann Parish, Carthage, MO. (The Mirror)

**DeSales Will Be
Closed July 3-11, 2022
for employee holiday.**

Summer Hours:

Tuesday-Friday 9:30-5:30; Saturday 10:00-2:00
Through Labor Day

210-J W. Sunshine St. Springfield, MO 65807
417-831-4630



NUN RUN 2022

Saturday, July 23, 2022

- 6:30 a.m.:** Attend Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Cape Girardeau, Missouri
- 7:15 a.m.:** Depart from St. Vincent de Paul parking lot (Traveling by bus)
- 8:00 p.m.:** Arrive at St. Vincent de Paul parking lot

Come spend an adventurous day discovering the life of a nun. Visit four different convents in the St. Louis area.

The Religious communities on the agenda are

- Monastery of St. Clare - Poor Clare Franciscans
- Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph
- Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus
- Daughters of St. Paul

Cost: \$10.00 (St. Vincent parishioners)
\$50.00 (other attendees)

RSVP: 573-335-7667 or contactus@svparish.com

**Bring your own sack lunch.
Dinner will be at a restaurant (6:00 p.m.).**
Please bring funds for dinner.

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Sacred Heart Parish
Conway, MO

Saturday, July 16
at 5:30pm

- SILENT AUCTION
- FOOD AVAILABLE WITH DONATION
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- ICE CREAM GALORE!

