



**SACRED PRIESTHOOD**—Father Nicholas Newton, Fr. Charles Peirano, Bp. Edward M. Rice, Bp. Emeritus John J. Leibrecht, and Fr. Jesse Hiatt.  
(Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)

**On Fri., May 27, 2022, Bishop Edward M. Rice ordained three men to the sacred priesthood in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Springfield, MO. The newly-ordained shared with *The Mirror* their experiences leading to this moment and what they look forward to as priests of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. We share their stories with you:**

## FATHER JESSE HIETT

**I** was born in Duluth, MN, but raised in Springfield, MO. I have three brothers Ryan, Charlie, and Matthew (deceased). My parents, Sue and Dave, have been married for 45 years.

Prior to priesthood, I spent fifteen years in the public education school system teaching high school mathematics. I have a BSEd and MSED in Secondary Mathematics. In addition to my degrees in Secondary Mathematics, I received my Bachelor of Sacred Theology and MDiv in Sacred Theology in May 2022 from Mundelein Seminary. I am expecting to receive my Licentiate of Sacred Theology in May 2023 from Mundelein Seminary.

From 2003-2008, I taught at Pleasant Hope High School, and from 2008-2015, I was teaching at Parkview High School, Springfield R-XII. From 2015-2017, I took a position to join the administrative team leading the K-12 Mathematics Curriculum for the Springfield R-XII School District. In 2017, I made the decision to leave this work behind and pursue God's call for me to discern the priesthood. My diaconate ordination took place May 21, 2021, and – after many years of discernment, doubt, etc. – I became a priest of Jesus Christ on May 27, 2022.

Over the past year, I served as a deacon

in primarily four places: The Nativity of Our Lord Mission (Noel, MO); St. Canera Parish (Neosho, MO); Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Glenview, IL), and Mundelein Seminary (Mundelein, IL). As a deacon, I assisted at the altar, preached at least twice a month, led Eucharistic Adoration, and performed close to 15 baptisms. As a deacon, I could create a long list of memorable things. But if I were to pick one thing, it would be visiting the Holy Land as a deacon along with the rest of my class. Typically, this experience is given to the third-year students. However, due to COVID, our visit to the Holy Land was delayed.

Consequently, most of us would be ordained by this time. This provided a unique opportunity for those of us participating: Each of us were able to serve

alongside the altar at many of the holy sites as well prepare and give a homily. I served and preached at The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish in Tabgha (located along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, in Israel).

During my transitional diaconate, I found myself growing comfortable and confident in my ministry as a deacon – in particular, the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism and homily preparation. My experience over the past year has given me the necessary confidence as I prepared to enter into the priesthood.

My call to the priesthood is rooted in my prayer life and the desire to serve the Church and her people, not only by way of the sacraments, but in the messiness of day-to-day life. People are desperately seeking stability and security that the world cannot ultimately provide despite

its many feeble attempts. This search for happiness and truth within the world only leads to polarization. As a priest, I stand as a sign of contradiction, a witness to the truth to Jesus Christ. He is the only constant in our lives in a rapidly-changing world. As a priest, I can be a witness to the true happiness that only Christ can offer.

In contrast to my diaconate ordination, I was more relaxed and at ease for the ordination liturgy, and I credit much of this to God's grace and the prayers and support of many people within and outside the diocese. It was a blessing to be ordained along with two other men – Fr. Charles

and Fr. Nick – who have been on the same journey. Three moments in particular stand out to me: the laying on of hands; being vested by Fr. David Coon and Fr. Allan Saunders, and

concelebrating at the altar with Bishop Rice. The experience was surreal. This is only the beginning of a journey that started over 20 years ago. The day also held an important significance to me as it would have been the 50th Anniversary to the priesthood of Fr. Stephen Schnieder (deceased), one of many priests influential in my discernment to follow the call to the priesthood.

My biggest joy in ministry is getting to witness how the grace of God works not only in me, but in those around me – in the sacraments and in day-to-day conversations. I look forward to celebrating the sacraments with the people I will be able to serve. However, I first must go back to finish my Licentiate of Sacred Theology in Christian Anthropology. During this upcoming year, I will be taking additional classes as well as composing

**“My call to the priesthood is rooted in my prayer life and the desire to serve the Church and her people, not only by way of the sacraments, but in the messiness of day-to-day life.”**



The next issue of *The Mirror* will be **August 5, 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.





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

# Summer of Youth

In 1963, singer Nat King Cole released the song, “Those Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer,” and while I agree about the hazy and crazy, I do not agree with the lazy. The summer time here in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau is a busy time with all the programs directed toward the youth of our diocese.

### TOTUS TUUS (‘TOTALLY YOURS’)

We are blessed with two mission teams this summer, four young adults each, that have been going through the diocese evangelizing our youth through the Totus Tuus Program. Totus Tuus is a Catholic summer youth program dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through catechesis, evangelization, Christian witness and Eucharistic worship. The goal of Totus Tuus is to help young people grow in the understanding of, and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ. Each Totus Tuus “missionary” is trained, and in our diocese, they spend six weeks, —three weeks in June and three weeks in July—in different parishes reaching hundreds of youth and teens. We average about 600 kids every year. This year the camps were held at St. Eustachius, Portageville; Sacred Heart, Salem; St. Vincent de Paul, Cape Girardeau; St. Lawrence, New Hamburg; St. Ann, Carthage; St. Joseph the Worker, Ozark; Ste. Marie du Lac, Ironton; St. Canera, Neosho; St. Teresa, Glennonville; Holy Trinity, Aurora; St. John, Leopold, and Sacred Heart, Mountain Grove.

### CAMP RE-NEW-ALL

Of course, no explanation is needed for Camp Re-NEW-All! It has such a stellar reputation deeply rooted in the history of the diocese, offering faith formation in a traditional camp setting (no air conditioning!) at two locations. I am always amazed at the number of adults and counselors who schedule their summer vacation around this experience. For many of the counselors and campers, it has become a family tradition and they would not miss it for the world. It is always a highlight for me to go and celebrate Holy Mass and Reconciliation at the camps. Camp Re-NEW-All at Camp Smokey is held in Cassville’s Roaring River State Park. The campers from the Cape Girardeau area utilize the Vincentian property, Camp St. Vincent, near Fredericktown. This year, 538 were “happy” campers.



**TOTUS TUUS**—Bishop Rice visited the summer program Totus Tuus held in Sacred Heart Parish, Salem, MO, June 26-July 1. The Youth Endowment Fund is providing many opportunities for the youth of the diocese: Thank you! (*The Mirror*)

### STEUBENVILLE

Finally, we just finished the Steubenville Midwest Youth Conferences, held two weekends in a row on the campus of Missouri State University in Springfield. The entire conference is administered through the Archdiocese of St. Louis. We simply put on a smile and say welcome! This year we had 29 parishes participate with a total of 636 high school-age youth and adult chaperones. It is always my hope that every high schooler in the diocese gets to experience at least one of these events in the course of their high school years. It would be ideal if every

one of our high school kids could attend these events every year.

When you step back and look at all of these activities held during the summer, you can understand better that these days of summer may be hazy and crazy, but they are not lazy!

All of this cannot be accomplished without the leadership of Lynn Melendez, Director of Evangelization, Family Life, and Youth Ministries, as well as Katie Newton, who is now the diocesan coordinator of special events. I am grateful for the priests that give of their time at Camp to provide daily Mass and Confessions. I’m grateful for the

youth ministers and parent volunteers who accompany our youth to the Steubenville conferences. I am so grateful to the pastors and parishioners who provide lodging, food, and meals for those who participate in the Totus Tuus Catholic summer camps. It is often said that the youth are the future of the Church. Pope St. John Paul II disagreed. He said that the youth are part of the Church now. They have a vitality and energy that can help build up the Church now. If we wait until they are in their 20s to acknowledge their membership or gifts they bring to our communities, we have waited too long! That in and of itself is justification for all these programs.

### MASSES OF THANKSGIVING

As I go around celebrating the Masses of Thanksgiving, marking the end of our Diocesan Capital Endowment Campaign, I remind people that finances should never be an obstacle to any of our youth attending the above mentioned youth events. The Youth Endowment portion of the Diocesan Capital Campaign is already supporting so many of our youth financially who may not be able to pay the full cost of attending these programs see the story on p. 7 of this issue! Money should never be an obstacle—let me repeat—money should never be an obstacle to a young person who wants to attend one of our programs. ©TM

## A GRATEFUL CHURCH

*celebrates and recognizes the following ordination anniversaries in August:*

**PRIESTS:**  
Rev. Francisco “Paco” Gordillo , Aug. 5, 7 yrs.  
Rev. Emmanuel Konyeaso, Aug. 14, 12 yrs.  
Rev. Maurice Chukwukere, Aug. 23, 14 yrs.

**DEACONS:**  
Deacon Michael Fritz, Aug. 12, 5 yrs.  
Deacon James Walter, Aug. 12, 5 yrs.

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CONTEMPLATIVE



# Schools close academic year with field trips

Many Catholic school students in the diocese enjoyed year-end field trips to various sites. Some of them includes the 4th and 5th grade students from St. Eustachius Catholic School, Portageville, and 7th grade students from St. Vincent De Paul Catholic School, Cape Girardeau, that made trips to the state capital in Jefferson City. In addition, 3rd and 4th grade students from St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, Sikeston, and St. Mary Cathedral School, Cape Girardeau, enjoyed learning about Missouri history on their field trips to the St. Genevieve Historic district. ©TM



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL STUDENTS at the State Capital. (Submitted photo)



ST. MARY CATHEDRAL during a history field trip. (Submitted photo)



ST. EUSTACHIUS SCHOOL in front of the State Capital. (Submitted photo)



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER trip to Genevieve historic district. (Submitted photo)



## 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.

**March 20, 1987** “I wonder how Jesus, who was the evangelist, ever accomplished his mission without having a 1-800 phone number.”

**March 27, 1987** During my visits to CCD classes last Sunday at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Ozark, I asked the kindergarten class: “What are you learning about?” Without even a pause, one little girl shouted proudly: “Life!!”

**April 24, 1987** The bishop had been planning for some time to talk with one of his elderly pastors about retiring. He began the day of his visitation by concelebrating Mass with him. At Communion, the pastor suddenly has the ciborium, filled with hosts, fall from his hands to the floor. After Mass, the bishop gingerly began approaching the topic for which he came. “You know Father,” he said, “maybe that accident was a sign of something we ought to talk about.”

The pastor, guessing what the bishop had in mind, said, “Bishop remember that Mary and Joseph lost him for three days.”

**May 1, 1987** Recently, I visited St. Teresa Parish in Glennonville to confirm Mark Weeks, who missed Confirmation last Fall with his Confirmation class because of a serious automobile accident. The Confirmation Mass was a moving and happy occasion for Mark, his parents, his high school friends confirmed last Fall who came to be with Mark, and all his friends. After the Mass, I visited the children at the parish school. In one class, students asked questions about the holy oils. One asked if sacred oil was used when I was ordained a bishop. “Yes,” I said, “the oil was put on the top of my head.” One youngster whispered (more loudly than he realized) to his friend at the next desk: “Maybe that’s why he doesn’t have much hair.”



3 Ordinations // Continued from page 1

a thesis on the topic of “Nature and Grace.” I will be staying at Mundelein Seminary during this time, but will serve at a parish nearby in Glenview, IL. I will look forward to returning to the diocese to serve full time.

FATHER NICHOLAS NEWTON

I was born in Tampa, FL, and lived there until I was age seven. My family then traveled the country and lived in 47 of the 50 states. We settled in Colorado Springs, CO, for one year before moving to Springfield, MO, where I spent the remainder of my life until now. I am the middle son of John and Katie Newton. I have an older brother, Eric, who is married to my sister-in-law Amy, and a younger brother, Joshua. My education includes a Bachelors of Philosophy from Conception Seminary and a Masters of Divinity from St. Meinrad Archabbey Seminary and School of Theology.

Since my ordination to the diaconate, I have been serving in Sacred Heart Parish in Poplar Bluff. I have seen myself grow in my ability to be fully present to those I meet. I have found myself able to sit with the homeless and needy that come to the church.

My past year as a deacon has been filled with so many blessings. Proclaiming the Gospel and preaching has been both harder than expected, but also easier in many ways. It is harder because you have to factor in the people of God that you are serving and what it is they need to hear, but it is easier because the graces of ordination and the work of the Holy Spirit really does guide the work done in preparing. Being present at various liturgies and sacraments has helped me learn the little nuances with which each priest celebrates each sacrament. This serves as a reminder for me that in my priesthood, I just need to be “me”: I do not need to be a copy of anyone other than Christ himself.

In my ministries as deacon, I served as Director of the RCIA and the second grade First Communion teacher. In these roles, I was able to journey with both adults and children as they anticipated their reception of the Blessed Sacrament. It was an eye-opening experience as I saw these groups as my spiritual children in some ways.

I have loved teaching in the parish school. It was one of my greatest joys, along with sitting in the confessional to hear and impart forgiveness to the sins of those who seek the sacrament. I have been able to see Christ work in various ways through these two points.

As I reflect on my priestly ordination, it seems a whirlwind: It all happened so fast and much of that day was a blur, even as it was happening. However, when the priests were laying their hands on my head, and then sharing with me the sign of peace, I could feel the brotherhood of the priesthood. It was a very powerful moment. The other memory is that of the consecration on the altar: It was overwhelming.

As a newly-ordained priest, I definitely look forward to living in the brotherhood, offering the sacraments, hearing confession, and being able to be an even greater service to those I meet.

I have been asked, “What motivates me to be in the ‘business’ of saving souls in this polarized society of ours, that essentially believes the Church is not relevant or is ‘out of step with the times?’” Simply put, it is because society is wrong on this matter. The Church is all the more relevant because of that mindset. The saving of souls is more than just forgiving sins or participating in the sacraments—it is about bringing people into a genuine relationship with God, who created them. It is helping people see their own value and to what lengths God goes to show us his love.

FATHER CHARLES PEIRANO

A memory that has stayed with me since my Ordination is the moment when the Bishop and all the attending priests lay hands on each one being ordained. This moment is biblical and from the earliest days of the Church. It is through the laying on of hands that I powerfully experienced this lineage to Christ himself and the Tradition of the Church. It was an especially powerful experience to have a successor of the Apostles, the bishop, lay hands on me and invoke the Holy Spirit. Through receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders, I am now configured to Christ and am sent out to offer sacrifice and preach the Good News of our salvation.

I grew up in the small town of Conway, MO; my home parish is Sacred

Heart in Conway. I am the oldest of four siblings, and have two brothers and one sister. Following high school, I worked in public safety with licenses and certificates as a 911 Communication Specialist, Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician, and Firefighter. I graduated from Conception Seminary College, with a Bachelors of Arts; from Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, with a Master of Arts, Master of Divinity, and from Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Sacred Theology Bachelor.

This past year, I have served as a Deacon in St. Mary of the Annunciation Cathedral in Cape Girardeau under the direction of Fr. Allan Saunders. This time at the cathedral was a blessing! I was able to learn so much from Fr. Saunders about being a parish priest and the faithful were so kind and patient with me as I was learning. I will miss them all! My experience as a deacon at St. Mary’s will have a profound effect on my priesthood. What I learned from Fr. Saunders about being a parish priest will be something that will guide me as I move forward. His prayerfulness, organization, and pastoral charity is something I hope to bring with me into my pastoral ministry.

Through my year as a deacon, I learned in a new way that if it isn’t slow, it isn’t human: That myself and others do not change or handle change overnight. Rather, we must be patient with ourselves and trust in the slow work of God.

Through the witness of their lives, the Benedictine monks of Conception Abbey where I attended college seminary taught me that there is always tomorrow to get more done: Do what we can today and get back to work tomorrow.

I have also realized that my greatest joy in ministry is encountering others and being Christ’s instrument in the world. As the Apostle St. Paul says, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” I am not here on my own accord, but rather because I have received the call to the priesthood from God. I lived my life prior to seminary as my own and on my own terms. That is what society tells us to do. Society is wrong. I began to realize this over time in my early twenties and began to practice the faith more and came to better understand that God created the whole world and each of us in it. Thus, He must have some plan in mind for each of us, right?

God created me to be a priest. I would not find my potential happiness

anywhere else. I am called to be his messenger to a world that believes and enforces the message that the Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ himself is not relevant and out of step with the times. God created me for this time, no other, and what better time than now to be a priest? We might be tempted to think that our times are the worst, but in reality, there have always been bad times, the difference now is that this time is ours. We must not let these times pass us by, but rather proclaim from the rooftops the Truth, that there is only one Way, Jesus Christ. We have been given the gift of life; which many throw away nowadays, but we are called to guard this gift and to grow in holiness each day. Simply, God created us, to know, love, and serve him in this life, so that we may be happy with him in eternity. May it be so!

In my first priestly assignment, I will serve as Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor) in Immaculate Conception Parish, Springfield, and Chaplain in Springfield Catholic High School. As a priest, I look forward to saving souls from the snare of the evil one, by offering the faithful the grace of Christ in the sacraments. The sacraments today are often overlooked or brushed off as something not important, but there could not be anything more urgent than

receiving God’s grace through the ministry of the Church. I look forward to being a collaborator in Bishop Rice’s apostolic mission for the diocese, to root ourselves in the tradition of the Church,

in order to grow in holiness, become intentional disciples, and witness to the world through our words and actions. This apostolic mission of the Church seems like enough for a lifetime! ©TM

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## Let's Celebrate & Give Thanks!

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord...Let us come before him with thanksgiving... (Ps 95:1-2)*

Bishop Rice and the Priests Campaign Committee invite everyone celebrate the successful conclusion of our first-ever diocesan Capital Endowment Campaign!

Let us come together to give thanks to God for the success of the Campaign and the blessings that will be ours for years to come, as the result of the goodness and generosity of many people. To celebrate, there will be a Mass of Thanksgiving and dinner reception at the location listed below. Mass will begin at 5:30 p.m. We want everyone to come!

**Wednesday, July 27, 2022**  
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Cape Girardeau

Please RSVP for the meal by calling (573) 335-7667 or by Email: [contactus@svparish.com](mailto:contactus@svparish.com).

 **Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau**  
[www.dioscrg.org](http://www.dioscrg.org)





## Protecting God's Children® For Adults

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

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[www.dioscrg.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Register-for-a-VIRTUS-withOnline-Option.pdf](http://www.dioscrg.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Register-for-a-VIRTUS-withOnline-Option.pdf)

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

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

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

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Belleville, IL**—The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows will offer a **three-part Scripture study series** entitled, "Themes in the Gospel of Luke" on Saturdays, continuing on Sat., July 23, and Sat., July 30, 10 a.m.-12 Noon. The presenter is Mark Etling, PhD, an adjunct professor at the School for Professional Studies at St. Louis University. This program will be held at the Shrine Guild Center, the fee is \$30/series or \$10/individual session, pre-registration is required. Information and registration is available at <https://snows.org/ministries/spiritual-programs/> or call (618) 394-6281.

**Belleville, IL**—The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate invite you to attend the **79th Annual Novena to Our Lady of the Snows**, Thu., July 28-Fri., Aug. 05 at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. Each evening will begin with Mass at 7:30 p.m. This year's theme is "With Mary, Giving Thanks to God." The Novena Mass will be Live-streamed each evening. For more information, visit [snows.org/novena](http://snows.org/novena) or call the Shrine at (618) 394-6276.

**Cape Girardeau**—Attention Adult Catholic Men: You are invited to the **Southeast Missouri Catholic Man Night**, Tue., July 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m., at St. Mary Cathedral. An evening of Adoration, Confession, and a Manly Meal, with discussion to follow. To help plan for the food, please RSVP to [SEMOcatholicManNight@gmail.com](mailto:SEMOcatholicManNight@gmail.com), 'SEMO Catholic Man Night' on Facebook, or text (573) 275-5214.

**Ozark**—St. Joseph the Worker Parish Council of Catholic Women will hold the annual **PCCW Garage Sale**, Fri., Aug. 5, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sat., Aug. 6, 7 a.m.-1 p.m., in the air-conditioned Parish Hall, located at 1796 N. State Hwy NN. Saturday is half-price day and bag day. Over 500 parish families with lots of donations, items are priced to sell with something for everyone!

**Scott City**—St. Joseph Parish Rummage Sale will be held Thu., Aug. 4; Fri., Aug. 5, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sat., Aug. 6, 7 a.m.-Noon, in the Knights of Columbus lower hall.

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.

**Springfield—SAVE THE DATE!** Holy Trinity Catholic Church will host the first **Catholic Women's Conference** on Sat., Oct. 15. Please mark this on your calendar and watch for upcoming registration details!

**Springfield—Pro-life volunteers are needed** in the MO Right to Life booth for the 2022 Ozark Empire Fair located in the air-conditioned E-Plex building. The Ozark Empire Fair will run Fri. July 28-Sat., Aug. 6, and volunteers are needed for the following shifts: 10:45 a.m.-2 p.m., 2-5:30 p.m. and 5:30-9 p.m. A training session for volunteers will be held Tue., July 26, 7 p.m., at The Library Station. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Carl Schimek at (417) 551-1135.

**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., in the Parish Hall, located at 1609 N Summit Ave. Household items, clothing, books, home décor, and much more!

**Springfield**—Springfield Area Perpetual Adoration at Holy Trinity Chapel has an **urgent need for adorers & substitutes** on Tuesdays, 9 p.m. and Saturdays, 1 a.m. and 2 p.m. Please contact Marilyn Gibson, (417) 224-4043.

**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, located at 2200 W Republic Rd. 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.

**Springfield—SAVE THE DATE!** You are invited to the **16th Annual Festival of Nations**, Sat., Aug. 27, 4-10 p.m., at Sacred Heart Church. Please join us for live entertainment, international foods from 20 countries (carry-out available), games for kids, vendors, and much more.



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# Deacon McClay reflects on his time at Missouri Catholic Conference

Jefferson City

By Jay Nies

**F**or years, Deacon Tyler McClay has patiently listened to people say that the Church should “stay in your own lane” and avoid commenting on public-policy issues.

“This IS our lane!” he stated in a recent interview. “There are always legal, moral, and philosophical factors in promoting the common good, and as people of faith and goodwill, we need to be right there at the center of these important debates.

“Sometimes, our arguments are simply practical in terms of how the law will impact families and the lives and the wellbeing of the community and society as a whole,” he stated. “But yeah, we ARE in our lane!”

Deacon McClay recently stepped down as executive director of the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC), public policy agency of the state’s four Roman Catholic dioceses.

Although this has been his dream job, he and his wife recently decided to move to St. Louis to be closer to family, including two young grandchildren.

“It was a hard decision,” said Deacon McClay. “This is a special job. I like working with the bishops. For me, it was kind of a dream job — it really was. So it was hard to walk away.

“But my wife and I both believe that family comes first, and that was really the motivating factor,” he said.

In a nutshell, according to Deacon McClay, the MCC’s executive director “provides guidance to the bishops on legislative matters and interactions with other state agencies, and tries to promote Catholic values in the public square, particularly at the Capitol.”

The bishops work collegially through the MCC as its executive board of directors. The agency’s Public Policy Committee (PPC), made up of knowledgeable and engaged people appointed by the bishops from each diocese, advises them on public-policy matters and legislative priorities.

“When crafting legislative policies or statements on any of these things, you have to draw a lot of perspectives into a consensus, because the bishops are speaking collegially through the Conference, not as individuals,” said Deacon McClay.

“Our bishops are pretty good at that. They do work together to try to advance the cause at the end of the day,” he said.

He noted that the MCC could legitimately take a faith-informed position on nearly every state policy that gets proposed or piece of legislation that gets introduced.

“But we have to pick our battles and decide what issues we’re going to engage on so we can have the greatest impact,” he said, “particularly on the high-profile issues. Which is part of what makes the job so stressful, because we’re involved in some very weighty matters.”

## COMING HOME

Deacon McClay grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and was raised in a Christian faith tradition.

He married Robin McClay, who had been Catholic her whole life. They now have two adult children.

Deacon McClay became Catholic through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in 2003.

Even before then, he had thought about leaving his busy law practice, going into the seminary, and becoming a minister.

He remembers seeing the ad seeking a new chief counsel for the MCC in the *St. Louis Review*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

He and Mrs. McClay were living in Arkansas and were looking for a

chance to move back to their home state.

“I remember thinking, ‘I’m probably not Catholic enough,’ because I had only been a Catholic for like six years,” he stated. “But I guess it wasn’t a deal-breaker for them.”

The state’s bishops appointed him general counsel at the MCC in 2010.

Not only would he get to practice law for the Church, he would also have time to pursue his call to ministry.

“I’m grateful that I am at a place in my life where I have been able to participate in formation and preparation for the diaconate,” he stated.

He enjoyed collaborating with Mike Hoey, who served as MCC executive director after spending decades as a legislative specialist and then as assistant director.

“Mike was very helpful, and we worked really well together,” said Deacon McClay. “We agreed on a lot, but we came at much of it from different

perspectives. What we disagreed on was usually pretty minor — different philosophies about how to approach some things — but we were mostly on the same page.

“I’m convinced that the Catholic Church has an answer for everything that ails this country, in our teaching documents,” Deacon McClay asserted. “The challenge is helping people see it and understand it and not to reject it out of hand because it’s Catholic.

“Because the Church’s history of being 2,000 years alive means that it doesn’t just encompass Christian teaching, it also encompasses good governance,” he noted.

## WINS AND LOSSES

He entered formal discernment and formation for the permanent diaconate and was ordained in 2016.

The state’s bishops appointed Deacon McClay executive director upon Hoey’s retirement in 2018.

The formation he received prior to ordination, along with the ontological grace of the sacrament, strengthened him for what could be extremely taxing work.

“The job is not for the faint of heart,” he asserted. “There is a spiritual toll that comes with it. It requires a lot of prayer and meditation and Confession.



Deacon McClay at his farewell party.  
(Photo by The Catholic Missourian)

“Let me just say that it’s a very good thing that there’s an adoration chapel in St. Peter Church, right across the street from the Capitol,” he said. “Sometimes, you go in there and you’re just beat and you have to have a way to vent it out. And you can sit there in front of Jesus and pour your heart out to him and also say to his mother, ‘Mom! Help me out!’”

Deacon McClay was quick to point that out to the MCC staff, with

some members who have been there for decades, are incredibly dedicated, hardworking, and helpful.

Together, they have witnessed countless “wins and losses” on the broad spectrum of issues the PPC and the bishops have identified as ongoing priorities.

Deacon McClay is particularly pleased that state lawmakers passed a law last year establishing the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program, which the MCC and members of the MCC Citizens Action Network helped get passed.

The program provides tax credits to individuals and organizations that contribute to state-approved organizations that help families with low incomes or whose children need special assistance send their children to other schools if their local public schools can’t do enough for them.

“That’s something I never thought I’d see happen, given the strength of the lobby that’s opposed to school choice,” Deacon McClay stated.

He’s also very pleased with multitude of the pro-life laws that got passed in the state legislature with assistance from the MCC and its citizen network.

“The 72-hour waiting period before an abortion, the informed-consent

**I’m convinced that the Catholic Church has an answer for everything that ails this country, in our teaching documents. The challenge is helping people see it and understand it and not to reject it out of hand because it’s Catholic.**

— Deacon Tyler McClay, former executive director, Missouri Catholic Conference



provisions and the staggered part of HB 126, the heartbeat bill, that got passed in 2019 — they helped drastically reduce the number of abortions in this state,” he said.

He remembers staying up with lawmakers in the Capitol until 4 a.m. the day HB 126, also known as Right to Life of the Unborn Child Act, finally passed.

“Much of it wound up getting enjoined (by the courts), but it definitely set a tone for this state,” he said.

The law includes the trigger ban that declared elective abortion illegal in Missouri if the U.S. Supreme Court ever strikes down the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which it wound up doing with the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* on June 24.

“These are amazing things that people have been working toward for years,” he said. “I consider it a privilege to have played a role in helping get them passed.”

He also weathered numerous occasions of frustration and disappointment, brought about in large part from gridlock and legislative paralysis.

He would like to have seen state lawmakers work more on effective gun-control and increased funding for social services.

“We were successful in fighting for Medicaid expansion but we had to walk a fine line getting there,” he stated. He also regrets what he and the MCC staff have never had time to pursue.

“One thing I always wish I could have done more of was getting deeper into the budget process,” he said. “That’s the kind long-term project that often succumbs to the ‘tyranny of the urgent.’

“It’s time-consuming to get really involved in the budget process and work to slot in funding for something, such as helping organizations like Catholic Charities with their work in providing funding for the poor,” he said.

“You almost have to have a dedicated person bird-dogging that,” he noted. “But it’s one area as executive director I would like to have moved into more.”

He’s convinced that while the levers of sustainable government are designed to move slowly, they’re not supposed to keep jamming.

“Yes, it’s hard to pass legislation. That’s not a bad thing,” he said. “On the other hand, gridlock is not a good thing, either. There’s got to be a balance. I think finding that balance is the challenge.”

He believes much of the current culture of legislative stalemate comes from overall distrust of or even indifference to government at all levels.

“We still have checks and balances in this country, although some have been abused more recently, like presidential executive orders,” he stated. “But I think fundamentally, despite the common perception, the system does work if it’s operated appropriately.

“That’s the hope we have, that we can get back to the system as it was designed to work,” he said.

He’s convinced that voting term limits for lawmakers into the state’s Constitution has not been as helpful as its backers might have hoped.

“It means people in the Capitol are always looking for their next job,” he said. “And that adds up to a lot of attention-grabbing legislation that’s not necessarily the common good, but is good red meat for the constituents.”

## CARRYING THE LIGHT

Deacon McClay believes receiving the grace of Holy Orders and ministering in his parish helped him in his role with the MCC.

“It was life-giving to be part of work and participate in the Mass in that way,” he said. “It helped me remember that there’s so much more to life than pending legislation.”

He enjoyed chanting the “*Exsultet*” at the Easter Vigil and the privilege of assisting the bishop at Mass in the Cathedral.

“I will definitely miss all of that,” he said, along with helping provide music for XLT Adoration with young people of the parish.

He is eager to continue his diaconal ministry in a parish in the St. Louis archdiocese while serving as an attorney for the state attorney’s office in St. Louis.

He will continue praying for all Catholics of this state.

“I hope we can all come together to continue to be the Church to the world and not let the divisions in our country divide us,” he said. “It’s easy for us to get caught up in that, but we’ve got to be different. We’ve still got to be the Church.

“I also hope that Catholics will put being Catholic first, ahead of their political party,” he stated. “Because all too often, I see it being the other way around.”

He asks for prayers for his successor, “that he or she has all the success in the world.”

“And pray for the ongoing mission of the Catholic Conference, to carry the light of Christ to the public square,” he requested. ©TCM

*This article and its photos are reprinted with the kind permission of The Catholic Missourian.*

## YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND ACTIVELY ASSISTS YOUTH



**HUMAN SUNDAES**—Totus Tuus Missionary, Caroline Burke, and Parochial Vicar of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fr. Alex Sutachan became “human sundaes” at Totus Tuus the week of June 12-17 in Cape Girardeau. (The Mirror)

Springfield

“With the close of the diocesan Capital Endowment Campaign, we offer gratitude to our gracious God and to the generous people of our diocese for all of the new opportunities that are now available to the people of our diocese,” said Lynn Melendez, Director of Evangelization, Family Life, and Youth Ministries. “The Youth Endowment Fund, which receives one third of the money collected through the Capital Campaign, has been assisting parishes and schools with youth programs and activities over the past five years.”

The Youth Endowment Fund has assisted hundreds of youth with registration fees for things like Camp Re-New-All, the Steubenville Mid-America Youth Conferences, the Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC), National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), Notre Dame Leadership Institute, and more. These are powerful opportunities to encounter Christ and to be formed as disciples. Some families that may have previously chosen not to participate in such events due to financial constraints, now have the assistance in place to make it possible for their children to attend.

“Money should never be an obstacle—let me repeat—money should never be an obstacle to a young person who wants to attend one of our programs,” said Bishop Edward Rice, emphasizing that is the mission of the diocesan Youth Endowment Fund.

Equally important, is the ministry taking place within local Catholic schools and parishes. The Youth Endowment Fund offers financial assistance to parishes and schools when they plan retreats, guest speaker events, service projects, and other locally-facilitated activities. Further, the fund offers funding for resources and supplies. For example, grants from the Youth Endowment enabled two youth ministry programs to purchase a new smart tv to participate in

Online catechetical series and another youth group purchased a new set of Bibles for high school youth to engage in Bible study together.

“Most parishes are not able to hire a full-time, or even a part-time Youth Minister,” Melendez said. “They have wonderful volunteers who often work other jobs and have limited time for planning faith formation and youth activities.”

Totus Tuus is another highly anticipated annual summer youth program in June and July. Youth of all grade levels, first through 12th, participate in a week-long faith experience with games, skits, music, catechetical lessons, small group discussions, daily Mass, and more. The Youth Endowment Fund provides for over half of the expenses associated with this program, allowing smaller parishes the ability to participate without the concern over financial constraints.

New to Catholic schools this past year, the “Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK)” was paid for by the Youth Endowment Fund. This tool allowed Catholic schools to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current religious education programs and offered insights as to how we can work, with the help of parents, to better form young disciples in the faith.

“As the fund grows, we continue to pray and discern about how to best utilize the money to evangelize and spread the Gospel message to all children and families of our diocese,” Melendez said. “We also encourage the Catholic schools and parish ministry leaders to dream with us and be sure to submit those applications for financial assistance when planning local ministry opportunities.”

Pastors, Catholic school leaders, and parish ministry leaders may access the Youth Endowment Fund applications through the Diocesan Website at [www.dioscg.org](http://www.dioscg.org) under the Youth Formation Ministry tab. ©TM



STUDENTS SING ‘GOD BLESS AMERICA’ AT CARDS GAME



**TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME** –Students from the St. Mary Cathedral School Class of 2022 sang “God Bless America” before the St. Louis Cardinals vs. San Diego Padres game on June 1. Pictured were: Teacher Thuy Ha, students Lauren Williamsen, Gwendolyn Cleveland, TJ Bolen, Sebastian Schaaf, Ifaz Alam, Leyton Wulfers, DayJon Gray, and Principal Christine Ostendorf with daughter, Lucia. The Red birds beat the Padres that night 5-2.  
*(Submitted photo)*



Springfield  
**Pro-Life Event**  
Friday, August 26, 2022



Keynote  
**Abby Johnson**

**Abby Johnson** has always been determined to help women in need. That desire led Abby to a career with Planned Parenthood as well as caused her to flee the organization and become an outspoken advocate for the Pro-Life Movement. She went on to write the national best-selling book and movie adaptation, “Unplanned,” about her experiences. Abby is a frequently requested guest on Fox News and a variety of other shows. Today, she continues to advocate for the preborn as the Founder of And Then There Were None which helps abortion facility workers escape the abortion industry.

All proceeds benefit Vitaefoundation whose mission is to connect abortion-determined women with lifesaving pregnancy help and ultimately to change the culture.

Doors Open 6:30 PM  
Dinner & Program 7:00 - 9:00 PM  
\$75 per person (\$45 Tax Deductible)  
White River Conference Center  
600 W. Sunshine Street  
Springfield, MO



Register  
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CONGRATULATIONS



**Deacon Michael Fritz  
& Deacon James Walter**

Deacon Michael Fritz will celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination on August 12<sup>th</sup>. He serves in St. William Parish, Buffalo.

*Happy Anniversary,  
Deacon Fritz!*



Deacon James Walter will celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination on August 12<sup>th</sup>. He serves in St. Ann Parish, Carthage.

*Happy Anniversary,  
Deacon Walter!*

ST. LAWRENCE PARISH

**CELEBRATING  
175 YEARS OF  
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With The Most Reverend  
Edward M. Rice

**August 7, 2022 | 5:00pm**  
**St. Lawrence Parish, New Hamburg, MO**

Come join us as we celebrate this historical anniversary with Mass, potluck dinner, social hour, procession and prayer to the Marian Grotto, and finally, FIREWORKS!!



# A foretaste of heaven



## LIGHT ONE CANDLE

Fr. Ed Dougherty, MM  
*The Christophers' Board of Directors*

The Church dedicates the entire month of July to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. And during this past month of June, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, the US Bishops kicked off a three-year, national Eucharistic Revival. So perhaps this is a good time to reflect upon the miraculous power of the Eucharist in our lives and to consider how we might better share the good news of this tremendous gift of the Church.

When he was just 11 years old, Blessed Carlo Acutis wrote, "The more Eucharist we receive, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of Heaven."

Many now know the story of Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006 at age 15 from leukemia, and many have seen or at least heard of the traveling exhibition dedicated to his study of Eucharistic miracles throughout history. Carlo documented over 136 Eucharistic miracles approved by the Church, and he built a Website to share his findings with the world ([http://](http://www.miracolieucaristici.org)

[www.miracolieucaristici.org](http://www.miracolieucaristici.org)). What an amazing project for a young man to undertake, and we know from the stories of his life that it was his faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist that strengthened Carlo to face the crucible of illness that beset him at such a young age. It is the power of this kind of life story that has inspired the US Bishops to initiate their Eucharistic Revival within our nation because so many people today are in need of a way to grow closer to the peace of Christ.

One of the most famous Eucharistic miracles in history occurred in Lanciano, Italy, in the eighth century, when a Basilian monk with doubts about the Eucharist was pronouncing the consecration. That's when the host was tangibly transformed into flesh in the form of a heart and the wine into blood. The relics have been preserved ever since, and in 1970, extensive scientific tests revealed that the flesh is indeed human heart tissue, while the blood is human blood. And both are from the same blood type: AB.

It's important to highlight that Eucharistic miracles have continued to take place in modern times, such as the one that occurred on Christmas Day, 2013, at the Church of Saint Hyacinth in Legnica, Poland.



**BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS**—Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian teen who was beatified in 2020, has been chosen by the US bishops as the patron of the first year of a three-year National Eucharistic Revival. Blessed Acutis had a great love of the Eucharist and used his technology skills to build an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world. (CNS photo/courtesy Sainthood Cause of Carlo Acutis)



that Blessed Carlo understood the world needed to be reminded of the miraculous in our midst so that more people could find their way to communion with Christ through regular reception of the Eucharist.

The US Bishops are right to dedicate the coming three years to a Eucharistic Revival, which will culminate in a National Eucharistic Congress in 2024 followed by a year of Going Out On Mission

until Pentecost 2025. We should support and participate in this revival so that people throughout our nation can come to know the healing power of Christ in the miracle at the heart of the Catholic Mass. ©TM

These miracles are a gift from God to remind us of the truth of Christ's words when He instituted the Eucharist and promised to be with us always. It's interesting that a young Catholic like Carlo Acutis would have been drawn to study Eucharistic miracles and to dedicate himself to sharing these amazing occurrences with others. It seems

'Light One Candle' is the blog of The Christophers and Fr. Dougherty, MM, sits on its Board. Founded in 1949 by Fr. James Keller, MM, the mission of The Christophers is to encourage people of all ages, and from all walks of life, to use their God-given talents to make a positive difference in the world. The mission is best expressed in The Christophers' motto: "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." For more information: [mail@christophers.org](mailto:mail@christophers.org)

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10-Day Pilgrimage

# World Youth Day '23



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**July 29 - Aug. 7, 2023**

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**HOLY HEROES**—The Grandparents Association at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Sikeston, recognized the winners of its 'Holy Hero' essay contest on Tue., May 24. There were three (3) Honorable Mentions and their "Holy Heroes," who were recognized. Each student and their "Holy Hero" were given a Wooden Cross Necklace. Pictured were Bryan Shirk, who was the "Holy Hero" for his son, Nick Shirk, 2nd Grade Student. Betty Bollinger, Grandmother, accepted the "Holy Hero" award for Darlene Yancy, who is deceased, for her granddaughter, Beth Bollinger, 7th Grade Student. Nadia Guzman, 5th Grade Student and her "Holy Hero" is her great-aunt, Brenda Sorrells. (Submitted photo)

# WINNERS OF THE 'HOLY HEROES' ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCED

by Sarah Lee Hunter Sikeston, MO

Most children have a favorite "Super Hero" they love to watch and imitate. We know children are also watching people around them and will imitate them, as well. So, the Catholic Grandparents Association of St. Francis Xavier Parish asked the St. Francis Xavier Catholic School students to write about someone they personally knew, who lives their life for Christ, and what affect their "Holy Hero" has had on their lives. The essays were so good that the Grandparents Association found it too difficult to only have one winner. Therefore, recognition was given to a winner and three (3) Honorable Mentions.

The winner of the Essay Contest was recognized on Sun., May 22, during the 10:30 a.m. eighth grade Graduation Mass. Ms. Linda Scott, member of the Grandparents Association presented the winner, Minh Pham, 8th Grade Graduate, with a Divine Mercy Statue of Christ, and his "Holy Hero," Mrs. Toni Grojean, was presented a bouquet of flowers and a "Holy Hero" Red Cape to signify the honor. To close out the academic year, the Catholic School Awards Program was held in the church on Tue., May 24 during which the three (3) Honorable Mentions and their "Holy Hero" were recognized. Each student and their "Holy Hero" were given a wooden cross necklace. ©TM

*The Friends of Saint Francis*

# GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, August 19, 2022

## DALHOUSIE GOLF CLUB

Cape Girardeau | 6:30 am - 5:00 pm

The annual four-person scramble benefits community efforts to feed hungry children in our area through the Tiger Bites Summer Feeding Program and the Backpack Program.

REGISTRATION ENDS TUESDAY, JULY 5.

To register a team or sponsor the event, please visit [foundation.sfmc.net/golf](https://foundation.sfmc.net/golf) or contact Laura Propst, Development Officer - Special Events, at 573-331-5791.

## SAVE THE DATE - AUGUST 27, 2022

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The retreat begins at 9:00am with Mass, celebrated by Bishop Edward Rice and ends at 4:00pm with a healing service led by Fr. Bibin Mathew. \$20 suggested registration fee includes lunch.

For more information, contact Shelly Pichler at 417-838-2730 or Jan Dills at 417-763-1579

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# Encountering the Eucharist, East to West

## Diocesan Pilgrimage

The Corpus Christi processions held on June 19 served as the launch of the three-year *National Eucharistic Revival* in our diocese. Bishop Rice will make a pilgrimage across the diocese called, “**Encountering the Eucharist, East to West,**” traveling to a parish in each deanery from **Aug. 27 through Sept. 3**. Bishop Rice will begin with morning Mass at each location, then expose the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration throughout the day. School classes, families, and other parishioners are invited to sign up for a 30- or 60-minute time period of Adoration with the Blessed Sacrament. The Parish will close with Solemn Benediction at the end of the day.

### Encountering the Eucharist Pilgrimage Schedule:

**Sat., August 27                      Deanery 4                      Springfield Catholic High School, Springfield**

*Bishop Rice will celebrate the 9:00 a.m. Mass to open the Strengthening and Healing Conference in the gymnasium. The Blessed Sacrament will then be moved to the chapel by the front entrance of the school for adoration throughout the day and will conclude at 4 p.m. with a prayer service and Benediction.*

**Sun., August 28                      Deanery 6                      St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau**

*Sunday Mass at 10:30 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 5 p.m.*

**Mon., August 29                      Deanery 7                      Sacred Heart, Poplar Bluff**

*Parish/School Mass at 8:30 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 7 p.m.*

**Tues., August 30                      Deanery 5                      Sacred Heart, Willow Springs**

*Parish Mass at 9 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 6 p.m.*

**Wed., August 31                      Deanery 3                      Sacred Heart, Bolivar**

*Parish Mass at 8:30 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 6 p.m.*

**Thur., September 1                      Deanery 1                      St. Peter the Apostle, Joplin**

*Parish/School Mass at 8:30 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 7 p.m.*

**Fri., September 2                      Deanery 2                      St. Mary, Pierce City**

*Parish/School Mass at 8:15 a.m. Adoration continues until closing Benediction at 7 p.m.*

“**I encourage your parishioners to visit, especially those who are unfamiliar with Eucharistic Adoration or have never been. Together, let us do whatever we can do to bring more of our faithful to a personal encounter with our Lord in the Eucharist.**”

– Bishop Edward M. Rice

