CAPITAL ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN CONCLUDES

by Paula Wright

This year marks the conclusion of the historical Capital Endowment Campaign, the first diocesan-wide capital campaign conducted in the 64-year history of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. What a success it has been! In 2015, three areas were identified as having a primary need for endowed funds support—Vocations, Youth Formation, and the Diocesan Priests’ Retirement. The goal of the Capital Campaign was $15 million, with the hope of having $5 million in each of the three endowments. True to form, the generosity of the people of southern Missouri was magnificent. Currently, a total of $22.2 million has been pledged to the three endowment funds.

“The biggest factor in the success of the Capital Endowment Campaign was the overwhelming participation by the Catholics in southern Missouri,” said Doug Kissinger, diocesan Director of Development and Properties.

“I’m not sure anyone anticipated how strongly the people would embrace this effort.”

“Next, you have to credit Bp. Johnston and Bp. Rice for their vision and leadership,” Kissinger said. “A big thank you goes to my predecessor, Dr. Gene Aug, for putting a great campaign team together.”

The Capital Endowment Campaign started in the Fall of 2015 with the major gift phase. This phase yielded 500 gifts totaling $8.9 million—not a bad start. About this time, Bp. Johnston was called to serve the Church of Southern Missouri was without a bishop until June 1, 2016, with the installation of Bp. Rice as its Seventh Bishop.

The Parish Phase of the campaign was conducted in three different time frames, moving across the diocese from east to west, beginning in January of 2016 and concluding in March of 2017. In total, 8,772 donors have participated in the Capital Campaign, with a 39 percent household participation, a high level for any diocesan campaign.

THREE ENDOWMENTS

The Capital Endowment Campaign supports three endowment funds: The Seminarian Endowment Fund, the Youth Formation Endowment Fund, and the Priests Retirement Endowment fund, all of which are professionally managed. As of now, the Seminarian Education Fund is valued at $7.3 million. Since September of 2018, $545,000 has been allocated to seminarian education from the Diocesan Vocations operating budget.

The diocese currently has 20 retired diocesan priests and at this time it has not been necessary to use funds from the endowment. It is anticipated that distributions from earnings will be necessary in the future as the number of retired priests grows. Currently the market value for the Priests Retirement Fund is $7.9 million.

The Youth Formation Endowment fund is at $7.4 million. The endowment has helped fund youth involvement in the Church of Southern Missouri in the past and will continue to help shape and inspire the future of our Church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go out to Bishop James V. Johnston, Bishop Edward M. Rice, and retired Bishop John J. Leibrecht for their vision and leadership, as well as to the Priests Committee, Capital Campaign Staff and The Catholic Center Staff for their hard work and dedication.

Acknowledgements go to

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Most Reverend John J. Leibrecht
Rev. David F. Hulshof, Clergy Coordinator

Priests Committee

The Very Rev. Shoby M. Chettiyath
Msgr. Thomas E. Reidy
Rev. J. Fergus Monaghan
Rev. Rick L. Jones
Rev. John “J” Friedel
Rev. Allan L. Saunders

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One Church

Preparing for Our Future

Grateful for Our Past...Prepending for Our Future

EAST TO WEST

Grateful for Our Past...Preparing for Our Future

MAPS OF THANKSGIVING—The first of a series of Masses of Thanksgiving was held July 7 in St. John Vianney Church, Mountain View. This year marks the conclusion of the historical Capital Endowment Campaign, the first diocesan-wide capital campaign conducted in the 64-year history of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. True to form, the generosity of the people of southern Missouri was magnificent. Currently, a total of $22.2 million has been pledged to the three endowment funds: Vocations, Youth Formation, and Priests’ Retirement. (The Miror)
I n a recent homily, I cited 139 attacks on Catholic Churches in the United States in the past two years, saying that these events are going to get worse depending on the Supreme Court decision regarding Roe v Wade. After Mass, a lady approached me and asked me if I ever preach on gun control and banning AK47’s. My response was from the heart – there are 23 elementary and three high schools in our diocese and along with our various parish-based PSR programs. I am sure that all parents send their children to the parish school with the expectation that while they are at the parish, they are safe. And, we do our best to provide a safe environment for religious formation and education. At the same time, we all read the headlines and know of the recent devastating loss of 19 young lives and two adults at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, TX, along with the broken families. Am I wrong to say that statement? If you do, you probably don’t have children or grandchildren. And while I don’t have children or grandchildren, I have just under 7,000 students that come to our parishes on a weekly basis for religious formation, to say nothing of the families who come to a parish on weekends for Holy Mass and other events.

May our country live up to the highest standards of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

With the various shootings in our country, people have begun to criticize the Hollywood entertainment industry for glorifying the use of weapons in movies. When we see so much violent carnage on film, we can easily become desensitized. Then, when we see the actual devastation of war in Ukraine, or hear of actual acts of violence in our own country, we become so immune that it does not affect us. It is very easy to see the images of war in Ukraine and think it’s a videogame. It is not a videogame! This is real life—life and death—played out in the lives of people who were devastated at the loss of loved ones.

The same can be said about abortion. Over the past 49 years since the 1973 Roe v Wade decision legalized abortion, we have become desensitized to this loss of life. It is not a “health care” procedure – it is the taking of a human life. And I am reminded on a regular basis of the quote of Ronald Reagan on a billboard along Highway 55 in southern Missouri, “All of those for abortion have already been born.” When we fail to see the dignity of human life in the womb, and when we fail to protect life when it is the most vulnerable, we will continue to go down the slippery slope where we all lose our dignity, all of us become impoverished and human life — whether in the womb, or special needs, or the elderly—is all the more vulnerable to being part of a throwaway culture.

The Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau does so much to help women in need. In a recent column, I outlined the many programs throughout southern Missouri such as LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Springfield, LifeHouse being built in Cape Girardeau, Mother’s House in the Bootheel, Whole Family and Whole Kids Outreach and Casa Guadalupe in Ellington, and more. I have challenged our parishes to be “islands of mercy” to respond to women in need. And, regardless of the decision of the Supreme Court, we will continue to offer not just services and goods to those in need, but more importantly, the dignity and respect that all humans deserve. Life is victorious!

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16) draw us closer to her Son.

July Prayer Intentions from Bishop Edward Rice

Life is victorious

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.

February 13, 1987 In Cape Girardeau, I had a Mass with children in grades 1-5 from St. Mary’s and St. Vincent’s. I asked the children a series of questions: Do you like being in a Catholic school? The children responded enthusiastically with yes, yes and their heads bobbed up-and-down to emphasize their yeses. Except for one little guy in the front pew. He shook his head “no” to every question I asked. And he did it with a big smile on his face while looking me right in the eye (I said a special prayer for that little fellow’s parents. I suspect they have their hands full!).

February 20, 1987 Last week The Mirror carried the story of Father Tom Donnelly’s death and burial. In his last months of growing weakness and increasing physical limitations, Father Donnelly never lost his sense of humor. Going into his room one afternoon at Mercy Villa, I found Father in bed with many tubes attached to his body and several pieces of equipment working to make him more comfortable. It was quite a maze! His eyes were closed so I touched his shoulder. Opening his eyes, he grinned: “Oh, bishop! Pardon me for not getting up.”

March 6, 1987 Ideas are funny things. They never work unless you do!

March 13, 1987 When Confirmation candidates approach me at Mass to have their foreheads anointed with the holy chrism, they began by saying: “Bishop Leibrecht, I wish to be confirmed with the name of...” (saying the name they have chosen). Or, some say: “Bishop John, I wish to be confirmed with the name of...” Recently, one young man must have been a little nervous because he began: “Pope John, I wish...”
The diocese is v ery blessed by the generous-ness of the people in the diocese, professionally providing much needed funds, Smith said. “The generosity of the people in the diocese is nothing short of amazing,” said Smith. “It’s been my privilege to see the campaign go from a hopeful prayer to a prayer answered.”

“As we bring the Diocesan Capital Campaign to a close, I, as the bishop, gather at the altar with a grateful heart,” said Bp. Edward M. Rice. “I’m grateful not for the financial success of the Capital Campaign as much as I am grateful for the generosity of our people and the consequences of that generosity. This successful campaign will stabilize our diocese for years to come.”

The diocese is very blessed by the generosity and support of each parish and mission. If you can, please join us at the upcoming Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the success of the campaign.

“We can never thank God enough for his goodness to us,” said Bp. Rice. “What we can do is gather at the altar, raise the chalice of salvation, and call upon His name in gratitude.”

MASSES OF THANKSGIVING

To celebrate the successful conclusion of the first ever Capital Endowment Campaign, Bishop Edward M. Rice and the Priests Campaign Committee invite everyone to attend a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by a dinner reception at various parishes in the diocese. Mass will begin at 5:30 pm. Please RSVP at the parish if you plan to attend dinner. Masses will be celebrated in the following parishes:

**July 14**
St. Mary, Joplin
RSVP for dinner to (417) 623-3323 or Church@stmarysparishjoplin.com

**July 19**
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Springfield
RSVP for dinner to (417) 887-6472 or parishinfo@seaschurch.org

**July 27**
St. Vincent de Paul, Cape Girardeau
RSVP to (573) 335-7687 or contactus@svparish.com

Paco” Gordillo, Fr. Alex Sutachan, Mass on the Feast of the Sacred Consecration service held during Sisters Apostolate during the annual feast day of the Sacred Heart. Right now, in our post-Christian culture, they need our support and encouragement,” said Fr. Gordillo, who also serves as Pastor of St. Ann Parish, in Carthage, MO. “I know I have a group of friends and sisters who love me and love my priesthood so much. Their prayers are critical in my life and ministry. It’s so comforting to know that when I am busy and dealing with my ministry, there’s one of the Seven Sisters in front of the Blessed Sacrament or at home praying for me. The only thing I know is that I need their prayers more than they need mine. I feel loved, cared, protected, and armed because their prayers.”

Want to form a Seven Sisters group in your parish? Just start with a visit to the Website, sevensistersapostolate.org. Then share with other ladies in the parish and find those who would like to commit. When ready, contact the apostolate and provide simple information and start praying. The apostolate also provides all its resources in Spanish. Many resources are provided for free and are printable from the Website.
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, four of which were featured in the June 24 issue. Here are the remaining two stories!

**Shouyan Tang**
Sacred Heart Parish, Webb City, and family

Shouyan Tang, a Sacred Heart Church, Webb City, RCIA candidate, was born and grew up in Asia. After college, she had a job teaching Mandarin to “Westerners.” Through this experience she gained American & European friends and was impressed with the way they interacted with her.

“The way they treat me is different, they don’t judge me,” Tang said. “This was different for me. I used to be shy about telling people where I am from, which college I went to, what my parents do, etc. But I felt very comfortable sharing it with my Western friends.”

She explained that in sharing her life experiences, they had such nice responses and always made her feel good about herself. She asked herself why this was, and determined it was because of their belief (in God).

“I didn’t have any other faith background. After I moved to US, me and my family started to go to church,” said Tang. “In Church, people pray, are good to each other, and help other people. I think that is a really good thing—it is especially good for raising a family.”

Although language is sometimes a barrier, Tang shared that in her faith journey she has enjoyed the welcome, acceptance, and kindness of those sharing her experience.

“All men and women are created equal by God,” Tang said, “I am very glad we send our son to the Catholic school. It’s good for the kids to start to have faith at an early age.”

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**Logan Pickrel**
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Nixa

“Hitting a low after a breakup, I found myself stumbling across a video from Fr. Mike Schmitz who opened the door to Catholicism,” said Logan Pickrel, an RCIA candidate from St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Nixa. “This door led to many more doors opening, and after hearing of my brother’s conversion, I decided to jump in.”

“I was baptized in the Church of Christ, then baptized again in Assemblies of God,” said Pickrel. “The Assemblies of God led me in my conversion, I decided to jump in.”

“Jordan conveyed a spectacular application of the Church’s values and lifestyle,” he said. “Faithful, always lending an ear, and proper direction to a closer relationship with God.”

“It all seemed to be a little bit intimidating at first, but the doctrine of the Communion of Saints and our Lady were the two pinnacles of Catholicism. I had the most difficulty understanding and applying to my life,” Pickrel said. “Not because my previous churches taught that such beliefs were heretical, but more so the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ was the only person I ever prayed to. Coming to not only accept the Catholic Church’s doctrine on the Communion of Saints and our Blessed Lady, but celebrate its practices, has opened the door for me to receive powerful support in my life and prayers.”

As he progressed through his RCIA journey, Pickrel enjoyed a closer relationship with God and a full realization of faith in the community of other Catholics and saints of the past.

“I really hadn’t been devoting myself fully to the Church and RCIA for that matter. Due to that, there were a few periods of being lukewarm in my relationship with Christ,” Pickrel said. “During Lent and approaching the Easter Vigil, I eagerly awaited to be in the presence of God in his sanctuary and worship with the community each week.”

His key “ah ha” moment was a verse given to him by an RCIA class visitor: “Every Saint has a past, ever sinner has a future.”

“A visitor came to RCIA one Sunday and gave me that verse and it clicked for me. There is hope for me, a sinner, a hope I’ve found in the Catholic Church,” Pickrel said.

During Lent, he decided to give up cursing.

“It wasn’t easy to kick a deeply-rooted habit, but I found myself being more at ease, stopping myself from cursing has been much easier and when those moments come I pray and say ‘yes Lord,’ and I was immediately relieved of all anger and resentment in the moment that tempted me to curse,” Pickrel said.

“God was doing his work, and I just could not wait until Easter to celebrate such a beautiful holiday unlike I ever had before.”

Pickrel finds that the biggest treasure of faith is, “Sharing it. Living each day in sanctification helps give us mastery over sin through Jesus Christ, to live in his love and joy, but getting to share it with those in the Catholic community and outside is the best.”

“Praying with other people, talking about God with other people, it all gives me joy that I can boast to God, and give him glory by sharing the Gospel,” he said.

His advice to draw souls to Christ?

“There is hope. God is not out for vengeance. God loves you and desires to receive everyone back to him.”

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July 8, 2022

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Executive Director to Retire

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) announces the retirement of Executive Director/CEO Maura Taylor in December 2022. Taylor has led the nonprofit organization for the last 11 years working with her team to expand needed services to the vulnerable of all faiths in the 39 southernmost counties in Missouri.

Under her leadership, CCSOMO has grown from a staff of two and a budget of $200,000 to an agency with 110 employees and a budget of over $11 million, operating out of nine offices throughout southern Missouri.

I have said many times that I felt called to this position to serve the need of the vulnerable and I have been blessed to have the opportunity to put my faith in action,” Taylor said. “I have been able to use my education (MBA), my past experiences, and collaborative work with community partners to address the challenges of helping our neighbors in need in order to create opportunities for long-term impact and change.”

Although the humble beginnings of Catholic Charities date to 2009, the agency itself hit the ground running in 2011 with the historic Joplin EF-5 tornado and the floods in southeast Missouri: CCSOMO and its growing staff responded and became the largest provider of disaster case management and home repair/rebuilding services in the area. Since those beginnings, CCSOMO has established over 12 programs that meet local needs, including Homeless and Homelessness Prevention Services; Veteran Services; Home Repairs for Low-income Households; Targeted Case Management for the Developmentally Disabled; LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Springfield, serving homeless pregnant women and their young children; HUD Financial Counseling; Springfield’s Rancho Temporary Shelter and Housing Programs for Homeless Families; Community Re-entry Program; Consumer Credit Counseling Services; Healthy Moms/Healthy Babies; Dedicated Dads; On the Job Construction Training, and more. The success of the Springfield’s LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home has resulted in a capital campaign and plans to build a new LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau to serve southeast Missouri. To date, over $6 million in funds have been raised and the project is expected to be completed by December 2023.

Under Taylor’s leadership CCSOMO has been recognized for its work and received the following awards:
• 2018 Nonprofit Organization of the Year - Drury University
• 2019 Springfield Business Journal (SBJ) Economic Impact Award
• 2021 SBJ Charitable Nonprofit of the Year - SBJ Economic Impact Awards

Taylor has represented CCSOMO and the community on multiple boards and committees at the local, state, and national levels. The Board will begin a national search to find a person with a mission heart, organizational skills, and experience to take the leadership role and guide an incredible team of compassionate and dedicated staff that works everyday, walking alongside those most vulnerable in our midst and guiding them on a path to self-sufficiency and success. The work of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri continues: Reaching Out. Providing Hope. Changing Lives. For more information on CCSOMO, its mission, and ministries for all persons, visit www.ccsomo.org.

For more information, contact John Farmer de la Torre, Director of Communications (417) 720-4213 Ext 103 or Mobile (417) 493-8429.
At the Feet of Jesus

I was more of a Mary. It would drive him crazy. I am married to a Martha. It makes her crazy, too. If you are a Martha, I’ll bet we Marys drive you nuts.

Look at the Gospel. Jesus shows up with the whole crew. Martha has to scramble to take care of the surprise guests. She’s the Martha Stewart of Bethany. What in the world is she going to feed everybody? Where is the extra leaf for the dining room table? The good dishes need to be unpacked. Maybe Lazarus can run to the market if she could get a list together. And where is Mary? There she is, sitting down at Jesus’ feet listening to stories! You can’t hardly blame Martha for getting upset.

“Jesus, don’t you care that I’m doing all the work while my sister lollies around listening to you?” I’ll bet she really loved Jesus’ reply.

“Calm down Martha. You’re worried too much about things that don’t really matter. Mary knows what is really important and she can sit here as long as she likes.” Maybe Martha settled down and relaxed, but personally I think she probably blew a gasket.

If you look closely at the first reading, you can spot another Mary type – Abraham. Abraham asks his visitors if he can bring them some food. He then goes to Sarah and says, “Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls.” After that Abraham picks out a stair, Scripture says he “gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it.”

I think Martha would have had a problem with Abraham. But Mary wouldn’t have. Like Mary, Abraham recognized who his visitor was. He knew he was in the presence of the Lord. He wanted to hear the message. When Sarah heard the message that she would have a son in the next year, she laughed. After all, Abraham was 99 years old and she was 98! Abraham may have had his faults, but he had faith.

I can see him standing in the cool desert air one night, staring up at the stars. Sarah calls, “Abraham, get in the tent. You’ll catch pneumonia out there. What are you doing?”

“Counting the stars,” Abraham replies. “Someday, our offspring will be even more numerous. God promised.” Practical Sarah probably shakes her head, and if you listen closely, you can hear a laugh coming from the tent.

We need the Martha, the Sarah, in us to get things done. But, we need the Mary, the Abraham, to make sure we do the right things. St. Gregory the Great compared Martha and Mary to two sides of our spiritual life. Martha is the active life that honors Christ through her work. Mary is the contemplative dimension that sits at Jesus’ feet and listens. St. Gregory states that both are important, but the contemplative is greater since, in the end, that is what will endure. While things pass away, love continues.

Abraham knew this as he sat under a tree at the Lord’s feet. Mary knew this as she sat at Jesus’ feet. Another Mary also knew it. She listened at the feet of Jesus as he hung upon the cross. She heard Him forgive those who were executing Him. She would have heard the hammer as it pounded the nails into those feet. And, for the carpenter on the cross, each swing of the hammer was a prayer, a prayer that those he loved would have the food they needed and a home to go home to.

And we do. We have the Eucharist for food and he has prepared a home for us in heaven.

Deacon Rob Huff serves the diocese as Chancellor and Superintendent of Catholic Schools. He ministers in St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape Girardeau.

16TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

**Scripture/ Diocesan News**

*Deacon Rob Huff*

**Wisdom**

**Scripture/Diocesan News**

July 8, 2022

**Obituary**

**Sr. Marian McAvoy, SL**

A funeral for Sr. Marian (formerly Sr. Marian Joseph) McAvoy SL, who grew up in Joplin, was celebrated July 7 in the Church of the Seven Dolors on the grounds of Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, KY. Sister McAvoy, who served eight years as Loretto’s president, died June 30 at Loretto Motherhouse.

She was 94 and in the 71st year of her Loretto commitment.

Born July 15, 1927, in Kansas City, MO, to Edith K (Nilges) and Bernard F. McAvoy, Sr., McAvoy was baptized Lucille Marie McAvoy. By the time little Lucille was ready for school, her family had moved to Joplin, where her father took charge of the local Sears Roebuck store. Lucille enrolled in St. Peter the Apostle Parish’s grade and high school, graduating in 1945. From high school, Lucille, now known as “Luc,” enrolled first at Joplin Junior College, then transferred to Webster College (now University) in St. Louis. There, she earned a bachelor’s degree in English, with minors in history and philosophy, in 1949. Luc then returned to Joplin and accepted work at St. Peter’s, one year as children’s librarian, the next as second grade teacher.

She was received into the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross on Dec. 8, 1951. Sister McAvoy earned a master’s in English in 1963 from St. Louis University and a master’s in pastoral theology in 1969 from Loyola University, Chicago. She lived much of her life in the service of the Loretto Community, including as Loretto’s president, serving for two terms from 1978 to 1986. In 1970, Sr. McAvoy had been asked to serve on the first staff for the newly-reorganized government of Loretto as Director of Work Development, remaining in that position until she was elected Loretto’s second president.

Sister McAvoy was interested in international matters and promoted learning in this area throughout her life, encouraging a movement from national independence to global interdependence. As Loretto’s president, she designed a project in which a number of Sisters of Loretto had the opportunity to live and work in what was then known as Third World areas. Her emphasis in broadening Loretto’s vision continued through her retirement years at Loretto Motherhouse. From 1994-1997, Sr. McAvoy served as adjunct faculty at Webster University, where she particularly enjoyed teaching a seminar on women with a global focus. She was both a member of the national board and executive committee of LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious).

Along with Barron Hilton, Sr. McAvoy initiated the Hilton Fund for Sisters and served as charter member and vice chair of its Board of Directors. For 10 years, she directed the Loretto Leadership Workshop, an annual weeklong event for elected and appointed leaders from Loretto high schools. Among her earlier ministries, Sr. McAvoy taught in elementary and secondary schools in St. Louis, Illinois, and Kentucky, served in pastoral ministry in Iowa, and was Loretto’s Community Group Coordinator from 1997-2001.

Preceding her in death were her parents and five siblings. Among survivors are her brother, Louis (Lou) McAvoy of Kansas City, MO, and several nieces and nephews. Burial was in Our Lady of Sorrows Cemetery on Motherhouse grounds.

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of Loretto for our mission, c/o Loretto Motherhouse, 575 Nerinx Road, Nerinx, KY 40049 or as an Online gift at www.lorettocommunity.org.
Be a beacon of God’s hope & optimism

SCRIPTURE WISDOM
Rev. Mr. Nick Zummo

We read in Genesis of God growing tired of wickedness and the poor choices being made by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, Abraham repeatedly intercedes on their behalf, asking God to look for goodness in the city. Abraham goes so far as to ask, “What if there are at least 10 there?” We see through the conversation that he searches for the slightest sign of goodness within Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham is persistently looking for a bright spot where, at first glance, there is only darkness.

We need that reminder to look for the good in everyone we meet. Sometimes, it can feel like there is nothing but darkness, and everyone is only looking out for themselves. Yet, there is also an invitation to see with the eyes of Abraham. He displays such hope and dedication for the people of God. That is a quality we can incorporate into our own lives. Persistence will always give way to the discovery of light and goodness. After all, light cannot hide in the dark for very long. There is goodness in each of us, so we ought to search confidently for it in those we meet.

There is no person or place beyond the redeeming power of God. We must be careful never to write anyone off or ignore an opportunity to bring God’s peace to the world. Offering encouragement and calling attention to goodness in our world can move people in the right direction. Show them that God brightens our world in a multitude of ways. That mindset of positivity makes a difference, especially for those struggling to see it. Many who are in our churches, or have left our churches, feel inadequate or unwelcome. Those lies make it hard to see the light. What are we to do? If we are to bear witness to God’s loving heart and desire for reconciliation, we must go beyond our comfort zone. We must diligently search for goodness and affirm it in those we meet, even when not immediately visible. Guiding others toward goodness is an important act of charity.

Politics and culture wars teach us to harbor disdain for others, especially those with whom we disagree, but Christ taught us to love and care for one another. We are all created in the image of God and supported by his grace, so positivity should empower us beyond any cynicism.

Persistently strive to be a beacon of God’s hope and optimism wherever you are.

OBITUARY | Sr. Mary Lapping, OSU

St. Louis, MO

Sr. Mary Lapping, OSU, died peacefully July 5, 2022. A native of St. Louis, she served many years in southern Missouri. The daughter of Vilray Francis Lapping and Roberta Iona Hamilton, she was born Aug. 20, 1942, in St. Louis. She grew up in Kirkwood, Missouri, and was educated by the Ursulines at St. Peter Elementary School and Ursuline Academy. She entered the Ursuline community on July 19, 1961, and professed her vows on Jan. 20, 1964. She earned a bachelor's degree in French from Webster University in St. Louis and a master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University in New Orleans. She also completed advanced studies in liturgy and in environmental studies.

Sr. Lapping’s first ministry was in her home parish of St. Peter, St. Louis, where she taught in the elementary school from 1966-76. She then moved on to teach in other area elementary schools: Corpus Christi in Jennings, MO, from 1976-78 and Immaculate Conception in Arnold, MO, from 1979-82.

In 1983, Sr. Lapping moved to southern Missouri to begin 15 years of parish ministry. She was a pastoral minister at Sacred Heart Parish in Verona from 1983-84; Sacred Heart Parish in Webb City from 1984-87; St. Joseph in Bennett Springs, MO.

In 1987-88; and St. Mary Parish in Joplin from 1988-91. She served two years as a pastoral associate in Holy Family Parish in Kansas City, later returning to southern Missouri as a pastoral associate in Holy Trinity Parish in Springfield from 1995-99.

In the mid-90s, Sr. Lapping began to sense a push to something called “Earth Ministry.” Although she didn’t know exactly what it was or how to do it, she pursued the idea as a dream. She educated herself in several Earth systems such as organic gardening and forest ecosystem maintenance. She did several internships, one of which led her to cross paths with Brian Swimme, who became a lifelong guide through his books and DVD series, “Canticle to the Cosmos,” and others. Her path led her from hands-on work at the Ursulines’ 144-acre property in Crystal City, MO, to an Earth spirituality office for the community, to an enduring and deepening love of Earth and care for ‘our common home.’

Sr. Lapping was also a volunteer English teacher for the Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Project in St. Louis and served 10 years as prior of the Ursuline community in Missouri. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her younger brother, Tom, and her older half-sister, Bobbie.

Burial was private. A celebration of life will be held later in July. Memorial gifts may be made to the Ursuline Sisters Retirement Fund, 353 S. Sappington Rd., St. Louis, MO 63125.

Zummo is serving in parish ministry in St. Francis de Sales Parish, Lebanon, and in the seasonal Sportsman’s Chapel at Bennett Springs, MO.
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