



GIVING TUESDAY—Father Tom Kiefer, pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish and Catholic School, Springfield, talked with students. Funds from the 2021 iGiveCatholic Giving Tuesday campaign will go toward the free and reduced meal program provided by "Irish Eats" for students in SEAS, St. Agnes Cathedral School, and Springfield Catholic High School as well as families in crisis for those three schools and Immaculate Conception Catholic School. Several projects in the Diocese will benefit from funds raised on Giving Tuesday through iGiveCatholic. (Photo by Kimberly Ikenroth)

Diocesan #iGiveCatholic appeal on Giving Tuesday a success

By Paula Wright

Springfield

The 2021 #iGiveCatholic appeal, held on Giving Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, was a tremendous success. Including Online gifts and offline gifts, over \$33,000 was raised in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau through the generosity of 161 donors.

The #iGiveCatholic appeal enables participating parishes, schools, and Catholic organizations additional opportunities to raise money for special projects.

The top spots on our #iGiveCatholic leaderboard:

- Sacred Heart Parish** (Bolivar) \$12,845.00
- St. Agnes Cathedral Parish** (Springfield) \$6,675.00
- Springfield Catholic School System** \$6,000.00
- Sacred Heart Parish** (Poplar Bluff) \$1,150.00
- Holy Trinity Parish** (Marshfield) \$895.00
- Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri** \$575.00
- Notre Dame Regional High School** (Cape Girardeau) \$425.00
- St. John Henry Newman Center** (SEMO University) \$350.00
- Sacred Heart Parish** (Springfield) \$300.00
- St. Francis Xavier Catholic Grandparents Association** (Sikeston) \$234.00

"#iGiveCatholic makes it easy to create our Giving Tuesday fundraising drive," said Jennifer Weber, Development Office Assistant, Springfield Catholic Schools. "It is easy to set up (the Web site page) and use; #iGiveCatholic sends out weekly Emails with tips and instructions. The ability to post goals helps motivate people to donate. The site is also easy for our donors to make their contribution, which is important for a successful campaign."

SCS is using the funds raised through the #iGiveCatholic appeal toward its free and reduced meal program provided by "Irish Eats." Not part of the National School Lunch Program, Irish Eats is an in-house food service system serving Springfield Catholic schools of St. Agnes, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and SCHS. Immaculate Conception School has its own in-house cafeteria program. SCS is also setting money aside for families in crisis within the system, to have funds available to buy a gift card, or an extra uniform, etc., for any family or staff in need.

In addition to the Springfield Catholic Schools meal program, a wide-range of special projects and Parish needs are being addressed thanks to the generosity of donors during the Giving Tuesday appeal.

"We mainly promote through social media. We post throughout the day on Facebook and Instagram, always

including the #iGiveCatholic donation link," Weber said. "It is a nice feeling to know that the Springfield Catholic Schools (SCS) system is raising money along with other Catholic organizations to better our local Catholic community. We have had three successful years of raising money using the #iGiveCatholic program."

PROJECTS FUNDED ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Sacred Heart Parish, Bolivar, promotes the #iGiveCatholic campaign to raise funds for special projects. This year, the parish is applying the funds raised for a new altar and front signage.

Holy Trinity Parish, Marshfield, will be applying the donations to help cover the increased costs for winter utilities, an upcoming insurance bill, and parking lot repairs. Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri created several new programs in recent years, including the Rancho Emergency Homeless Shelter and Housing Program for homeless families and women requiring medical respite, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, and the Non-congregant Shelter for homeless persons recovering from COVID. #iGiveCatholic donations will be used to continue to respond to the growing needs across southern Missouri.

"We mainly promote through social media. We post throughout the day on Facebook and Instagram, always

iGiveCatholic donors to help support its faculty by raising funds for the faculty tuition assistance program. The Aquinas Institute for Catholic Studies (AICS) is a new project of the St. John Henry Newman Center on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University. The money raised from the #iGiveCatholic campaign will be used to furnish the AICS classrooms for students and the community to use for continued education and accredited collegiate coursework.

This year, the focus for the Sacred Heart Parish, Springfield, was to raise funds to purchase a marble Sacred Heart of Jesus statue for the front of the parish. Catholic Grandparents Association, a new ministry at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Sikeston, helps Grandparents pass on the Faith and keep prayer at the heart of family life. The donations will enable them to work on new initiatives with grandchildren and children of St. Francis Xavier Catholic School.

"Congratulations to everyone who participated. We are grateful to have 161 donors support 23 parishes, schools, and ministries," Doug Kissinger, Director of Development and Properties. If your parish or apostolate would like to participate next year, contact Doug Kissinger at The Catholic Center, (417) 866-0841 or Email him at dkissinger@dioscg.org.

©TM

Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau, asked



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

Life & beauty, the earth & the poor

The winter edition of *Abbey Banner*, published by St. John's University, Collegeville, MN, contains an edited article from the "Joint Message for the Protection of Creation," issued by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis, and the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. In the article, the statement is made: "Biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and climate change are the inevitable consequences of our actions since we have greedily consumed more of the earth's resources than the planet can endure."

Why should we care about this in southern Missouri? I have two answers to that – the Ozarks and the Bootheel (and everything in between). Both of these areas highlight the beauty and the blessing of God's creation in nature. I drive down Highway 55 and along Highway 60 on the east side of the diocese and I see cotton, rice, corn, soybean, apples, and peaches. Along the way between Cape Girardeau and Springfield and over to Joplin, I see beautiful rolling hills spotted with cattle. I take hikes on the beautiful trails of the Ozarks along Highway 65 down to Table Rock Lake. Why should we care about this in southern Missouri? Because for many, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, their livelihood depends upon a healthy environment.

In the middle of the diocese, you will find no greater natural beauty than in the Van Buren area, where people flock during the summer for camping and canoeing. The natural beauty that I am privileged to view as I look south along Cabool reminds me of the rolling hills of Scotland. When I have the time, I stop along the way to pray the rosary in the

midst of some of the most beautiful nature God created. I have driven through the "Irish Wilderness" and stopped at the cemetery to pray. During the fishing season, we offer extra Masses at St. Jude Chapel, Montauk; St. Sylvester in Eminence, and the Sportsman's Chapel, Bennett Springs. When you consider the beauty of southern Missouri, you discover why we should care about the issues regarding the care of "our common home," as Pope Francis calls it. So many families throughout southern Missouri earn their livelihood from the land through agriculture, livestock, or recreation and tourism.

Why should we care? As stated in the Joint Message from the religious officials, "Today's children will face catastrophic consequences unless we take responsibility now to sustain our world." In other words, certainly, those of you who have children or grandchildren should care that the beauty of our area is preserved for future generations. Again, Pope Francis reminds us that this world is the only one we have, it is our common home. In the Book of Genesis, we are reminded that God created everything; all of creation was put into our hands for us to care for.

We have a responsibility to do what we can now so that we can have a positive impact on the future.

Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si" ("Praise be to you"), on the environment, has highlighted and called attention to the impact that the human family has on creation. The title of his letter is taken from St. Francis of Assisi's famous prayer, "The Canticle of Creation," where

he prays: "O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God, to You belong praise, glory, honor, and blessing. Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation...

Brother Sun...Sister Moon... Brother Wind and Air... Sister Water... Brother Fire... Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our mother who nourishes us and sustains us, bringing forth fruits and vegetables of many kinds and flowers of many colors." After reading that song of praise from St. Francis, I wonder if he was speaking about the beauty of southern Missouri!

This world is the only one we have and our Holy Father is calling on all of humanity to be good stewards of what God has created. In paragraph 246 of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis offers a prayer, an excerpt of

which is used to close this column:

"Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes... Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth..."

Good words to ponder, good words by which to live!. ©TM

Southern Missouri
highlights the
beauty and the
blessing of God's
creation in nature.

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Mass & Christmas at the SECC

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS—Bishop Edward M. Rice celebrated Mass in Southeast Correctional Center, in Charleston, MO, the afternoon of Tue., Dec. 21, 2021. The liturgy was followed by a Christmas-themed banquet. (Submitted photo)



By
Nick
Zummo

My internship: LEARNING FROM THE PEOPLE

Building friendships with the clergy and parishioners in my home Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau has been an impactful experience for me. However, doing so has not always been easy. Going to school 500 miles away from home makes it difficult to remain involved there. This distance was one of the reasons I was excited to return to my diocese for my recent internship semester. I knew I would have time with my local community.

Each seminarian in my class had this opportunity to spend time at home. In the spring of second theology, every man gets the chance to live in a parish in their diocese. It provides an opportunity to learn from one of their local priests. Last semester, I was privileged to serve my internship in Sacred Heart Parish in Poplar Bluff, MO. The parish is in the southeast corner of Missouri. During my time there, I learned from Fr. Daniel Robles, the pastor, and many kind parishioners.

Upon my arrival to the parish, Fr. Robles greeted me: "I will not do anything differently because you are here. You will get to see all my strengths and weaknesses. I only ask that you forgive me for my faults." I was both surprised and moved by the way he welcomed me. He demonstrated great authenticity and a sense of service. He often did little things for me, like preparing the coffee. Through our time together, I learned a lot about his way of life.

Living at the parish as if I was a new associate pastor was a great opportunity.



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM—Rev. Mr. Nicholas Newton, diocesan seminarian Nick Zummo, and Fr. Joseph Stoverink celebrated a recent baptism in Sacred Heart Parish, Poplar Bluff, MO. (*The Mirror*)

It allowed me to live as I might after ordination. During my time in Poplar Bluff, I visited the sick, attended various meetings, and spent time with families—each activity of which is common in the priesthood.

The way my pastor serves the community was also educational. His ministry is closely tied with his gifts and talents. Father Robles is quick to laugh and very personable. He always makes himself available. If there was a gathering, you could bet that he would be there. Those two qualities improved his relationship with parishioners. I quickly learned how much the people loved and appreciated his significant involvement.

His gregarious nature impacted my image of the priesthood. It has become something I hope to cultivate for myself. Preaching and teaching are crucial, but nothing builds bridges quite as well as a happy and holy disciple. I observed this during my internship experience.

Informal time

spent with people was impactful. Father would invite groups of people over for coffee simply to chat. This time for relaxation gave the people a chance to know him as a person. Those times built trust and comfort between them. Those little gestures helped to make the relationships necessary to lead others into a deeper relationship with God.

My time with the community also had a significant impact on me. One of the providential things about priestly ministry is that it is a two-way street. No priest can accomplish everything

by himself. The work of ministry is a collaborative effort among the priest, the Lord, and the people. When we work in cooperation, it is a graced experience. Building friendships within the parish was significant for me. I received a lot of gratitude and support. I offered my time and talents. Yet, not once was I outdone in generosity or kindness. In this way, I saw that the priest is both giver and receiver.

One of the most helpful things I received from the parishioners at my internship parish was their feedback. This process primarily came from 10 parishioners who composed the "vocation committee." They helped to guide me toward the priesthood by sharing their observations of me. Some comments I had never considered. For example, the shoes a priest wears in the sanctuary are important. They can become distracting. Others mentioned the preaching styles that have been most influential for them. Their feedback helped me to be more aware of how my actions impact the people in the pews.

Feedback on my public speaking was among the most helpful parts. During my internship, I gave several gospel reflections. The practice of speaking and frequent feedback helped me to improve my abilities. The process made me more confident. I also developed a sense of what my preaching style will be moving forward. Parishioners routinely expressed, "the less you read from notes, the more you connect with the people." As a result, I gradually moved from reading what I wrote to relying on memory and bullet points. That movement in style was well received and fits with the style I want to cultivate. I will use their feedback to connect with listeners going forward.

I learned a lot during the internship and appreciated the opportunity to spend time in my home diocese. The example of my pastor played an



INTERNSHIP—Third-year Theology student Nick Zummo recently spent a semester of his seminary studies back in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau serving in Sacred Heart Parish, Poplar Bluff, MO. (*The Mirror*)

important role in shaping my image of the priesthood. He affirmed my good attributes while also giving me goals for the future. I'm also thankful that he introduced me to many priests within the diocese. In that way, he helped me see our clergy's culture and the way the diocese works. The fraternity among our clergy is something I am very much looking forward to after my ordination.

Similarly, I am very thankful to have grown closer to the people of Sacred Heart Parish in Poplar Bluff. Their feedback was helpful, but, what's more, I enjoyed walking with parishioners on the road of discipleship. The relationships with the people are what made the internship joyful and meaningful. I've often found myself telling friends, "If Bishop Rice chooses to send me back there after ordination, that would be just fine by me." As time goes by, I'm excited to see what the adults do next and what type of individuals the kids will become. In summation, God was at work throughout my internship, and I'm excited to see what he has in store for each of us going forward. ©TM

Diocesan seminarian Nick Zummo is a third-year theology student at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois. His home parish is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Springfield.



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.*

July 5, 1985 A Jewish grandmother was walking along a beach with her grandson. He was the pride of her life. All of a sudden, a huge wave came and swept the small boy off the beach and out into the ocean. She couldn't see him anywhere and began to pray loudly: 'God, God, bring him back and I'll never stop thanking you.' An incoming wave, in the next instant, deposited the boy back on the beach. Not even a scratch on him. 'God, oh God,' the grandmother exulted, 'I thank you, I thank you, I thank you!' Then she looked again at the boy. 'But God,' she said, 'he had a hat!'

August 9, 1985 Last Sunday, I visited the parishioners at St. Francis Xavier Parish

in Sikeston. It was a heartwarming day including the following incident: After giving Communion to a young mother at Mass, I placed my hand on the head of her small boy and said: 'Hi, son, God bless you.' The young boy whispered to his mother on the way back to the pew: 'He's not my father!'

August 23, 1985 In a letter to me after the recent death of her husband, a friend of mine shared with me a few words she found comforting: 'The soul would have no rainbow, had the eye no tear.'

Benedictine priest dies at 100

Conception, MO



Father Anthony Shidler, OSB, died on Fri., Dec. 10, 2021. At 100 years old, he had been a monk for 81 years and a priest for 57 years. He served as Priest in Residence at St. Joseph Parish, Springfield, from 1990-1993, where he provided pastoral assistance

to the parish. He was named Chaplain to then-St. John's Regional Health Center in Springfield, where he served from 1993-2002. He returned to Conception Abbey in 2002, ready to enjoy the relative calm of semi-retirement.

Joseph Earl Shidler was born on Aug. 21, 1921, in Elkhart, IN, to Earl and Ursula (nee' Gettlefinger) Shidler, the fourth of their seven children. He was baptized on Aug. 25, 1921, in St. Vincent de Paul Church in Elkhart. His childhood was immersed in the agrarian Catholicism of the midwestern United States of the early 20th century; from his devout family, three brothers and a sister entered religious life.

He entered the novitiate at St. Meinrad in 1939. He professed simple perpetual vows as a lay brother in 1940, and was assigned to the bakery. He then had the responsibility of stabilizing and managing a farm the archabbey had acquired. In July 1950, Bro. Shidler was sent from St. Meinrad to Sant' Anselmo in Rome. While at Sant' Anselmo, Bro. Shidler served as carpenter and house chauffeur. Learning to navigate the infamous traffic of Rome came to be one of his most cherished and fondly-remembered achievements. It was in Rome that he began to discern a call to priestly ministry. While in his early 40s, he commenced theological studies in his second monastic community at Conception Abbey. He was ordained a priest in 1964.

Father Shidler embarked on a life of varied pastoral and work assignments. He was abbey Archivist from 1965-1991. He served as an instructor at the Mount Alverno Academy in Maryville, MO, from 1965-1966, where as a teacher he discovered a fruitful outlet for his interest in history. He was thus sent

to St. Louis University (1966-1967), where he earned a Master's degree in that subject. From 1967-1991, he was an instructor in the History Department at Conception Seminary. During these years, he also served as Confessor for the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at Clyde, MO (1970-1977). In a move that underscored the remarkable trajectory of his monastic life, he was named prior of the Conception community from 1973-1977.

Upon completion of his term as prior, Fr. Shidler was named Assistant Business Manager and Associate Infirmary (1977-1979). He then took up duties as Associate Pastor of St. Columba Church in Conception Junction, MO, where he was stationed from 1979 to 1981. He acted as Custodian of the House, Vestry, & Workshop from 1981-1983, and then served a second term as Associate Infirmary (1983-1984). In 1984, he was named Chaplain at St. Francis Hospital in Maryville, MO, in which capacity he served until 1990.

After serving in Springfield, MO, from 1993-2002, the semi-retired Fr. Shidler served as porter of Conception Abbey from 2002-2010, the first contact for guests arriving at the abbey in search of spiritual refreshment and Benedictine hospitality.

In 2010, with physical limitations imposed by his advancing years, Fr. Shidler became a resident of St. Stephen's Infirmary, at Conception, commencing an Apostolate of Prayer on behalf of the Church and the world.

His death came peacefully at around 6:15 in the morning, as the community was engaged in the office of Vigils. In the quiet peace of an Advent morning, Fr. Shidler simply set aside his earthly responsibilities and set out to anticipate his Savior's coming by going forth to meet him.

Father Shidler is survived by his sister, Sr. Elnora Shidler, OSB, of Ferdinand, IN; by his niece, Helen Shidler, of Chicago; by numerous other nieces and nephews; by a cousin, The Most Rev. Gerald Gettlefinger, Bishop Emeritus of Evansville, IN; and by his brother monks.

Vespers of the Faithful Departed were prayed on Dec. 14, 2021, and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Wed., Dec. 15, 2021. *May he rest in the peace of Christ!* ©TM

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For more information, or to apply to be a Missionary, visit the [Totus Tuus page at:](http://dioscg.org/totustuus/)

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or contact the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Youth Formation

Lynn Melendez, Director

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For the Diocese of
Springfield-Cape Girardeau



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TUESDAY, FEB 15TH, 7:00 PM

St. Peter the Apostle, Joplin | Our Lady's Hall (Basement)

RSVP to: puma2828@gmail.com



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Jackson—Immaculate Conception Home & School will host a **Sausage & Pancake Breakfast** on Sun., Jan. 30, 7-11:00 a.m. Cost is your donation and all proceeds benefit the school. Pre-selling bulk and link sausage for \$4 lb., to order contact Courtney Ruch at (573) 521-0163 or courtneyallgier@hotmail.com.

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

Scott City—St. Joseph Home and School will host its **20th Annual Trivia Night** on Sat., Jan. 29 in the St. Joseph Parish Center. Test your knowledge of obvious and obscure information and above all have a good time with your friends laughing about what you know (or don't know!) Admission is \$12.50 per person with a maximum of 8 players per team. Soft drinks and snacks are included, outside food and drink are permitted. Doors open at 6 p.m. and play begins at 7 p.m. To reserve a table or to get more information, call the school office (573) 264-2600. Come join the fun!

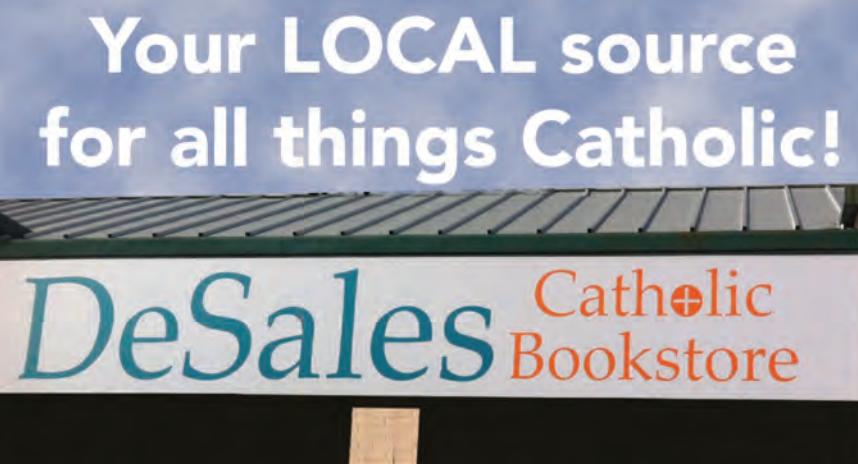
Washington, MO—Holy Trinity Parish, Springfield, has **Divine Mercy Yard Signs** for sale to help spread awareness of Jesus' divine mercy and love. Signs are made and sold by the Divine Mercy Workers of St. Francis Borgia Parish in Washington, MO, and are available in a variety of sizes. The order form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

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.



ACCEPTING APPLICANTS FOR MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

St. Patrick Church and The National Shrine of Mary, Mother of the Church, Laurie, MO are accepting applications for the position of Maintenance Supervisor. The Supervisor maintains 56 acres of land and facilities, directs staff, contractors and volunteers, performing a wide variety of maintenance duties for operation of the facilities. 3 to 5 years experience in a closely related field with a minimum of 2 years of supervisory experience. Some night and weekend work in an emergency or for snow removal, ability to work in inclement weather with physical ability to lift up to 50 lbs. working indoors and outdoors, operating tools, equipment and machinery. Salary commensurate with background and experience. Comprehensive benefit program included. **Apply by February 15, 2022 to bookkeeperstpatricks1@gmail.com.**



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McAuley Catholic Athletic Honors

JOPLIN—Joplin's McAuley Catholic High School senior Kevin Tran, junior Phillip Motazed, and sophomore Kendall Ramsey earned Missouri Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Academic All-State honors for the 2021-2022 school year. To qualify for academic all-state, athletes must participate in the state series and attain a GPA of 3.60 or above.

Senior Kennedy DeRuy reached the 1,000-point milestone on Dec. 17, 2021. (*The Mirror*)

2022 Diocesan Youth CONFERENCE

Fr. Agustino Torres, CFR

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

Katie Prejean McGrady

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

Sister Josephine Garrett

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

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Registration is \$30 per person, per conference date.

For more info, scan the QR Code, visit dioscg.org/DYC, or contact your parish youth leader.

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REFLECTION ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

'It is not you they reject, but me'

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19;
Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15, 17;
1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13;
Luke 4:21-30

Recently in the Gospel of Luke, we saw Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River by His cousin, John the Baptist. In a beautiful moment showing the unity of the Trinity, the Father spoke of the Beloved Son, while the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, all acting together to begin Jesus' ministry.

In the Old Testament, when the Holy Spirit descended upon a person, this often established them as a Prophet. The role of a prophet was to be the mouthpiece of God, that is, to speak the words of God. It certainly was not an easy role. Between the resistance of ordinary people and the manipulation of false prophets, the lives of many true prophets ended by exile or murder.

Jesus, like the prophets of old, immediately went on a mission when the Holy Spirit descended on Him. He soon came to His hometown of Nazareth and proclaimed the word of



SCRIPTURE WISDOM
Fr. Andrew Williams

God in the synagogue, telling them that the prophecy of the Messiah was being fulfilled in their midst. However, in spite of their initial excitement, He also gave them a warning from their own history. Citing examples from Elijah and Elisha, Jesus reminded the people of Nazareth that Israel frequently rejected the prophets in the past. These were challenging words that should have brought the people to repentance.

Tragically, the Good News that Jesus proclaimed often fell on deaf ears or even made people violently resistant. His preaching was

met with joy and conversion, but also by sneers, slander, and hatred. In this Gospel, specifically, the people are hateful because they knew Jesus growing up and dislike that

he is now calling them to conversion. We can imagine their secret thoughts: "Who does he think he is to come back here and tell us our faults? We would rather murder him than hear his challenging words."

We, too, may be rejected if we are going to follow in His footsteps, accepting the role of a Prophet which was given to us at Baptism. Our attempts to speak the Good News (with its call of repentance) may be rejected by others, including our own family, friends, or co-workers. Certainly, we will do

better if we become holier and more approachable ourselves. But even at our best, some people, or even many people, will refuse to listen.

However, we will find the strength to continue because there is not only rejection. One of the greatest joys, I believe, of being a prophet of the Lord and



his mouthpiece is to see the ways He accomplishes his plan through us. There is a deep thanksgiving that goes beyond doubt, frustration, or exhaustion when I think of the times Jesus has used me to draw someone to him. Jesus, too, took comfort in his disciples and had joy in his heart because of

their faith, especially when it seemed like everyone was against him. As you continue to speak the word of God, pray simply for those who reject you, and find encouragement in those who share your faith. ©TM

Father Williams is the Associate Pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Springfield and also St. Joseph the Worker in Ozark.

Robotics teams look at cargo delivery system

Cape Girardeau

On Sat., Jan. 15, the Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Jackson, MO, robotics teams, the Eaglebots and 8th Direction, competed in the First Lego League Eastern Missouri qualifier tournament at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau. They competed in Robot Design, Robot Performance (scoring 3rd place - 245 points and 4th place - 240 points), Innovation Project, and Core Values. This year's theme was "Cargo Connect," and the teams presented to a panel of judges their own innovative solutions to problems they identified in the cargo delivery system, focusing on incorporating more biodegradable materials into consumer packaging and improving the delivery of small packages using remote controlled vehicles and secure deposit boxes. Both teams did great, and the Eaglebots brought home the Champion's Award for First Place Overall and earned a ticket to the Eastern Missouri Regional Championship in St. Louis on Feb. 5, 2022! ©TM



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REFLECTION ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

We are called by God's grace, not our own merit

*Is 6:1-2a, 3-8;
Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8;
1 Cor 15:1-11;
Lk 5:1-11*

It is a rare thing in our Lectionary (the book of readings we use each Mass) that all three readings touch the same theme, but this week they do, as they talk about the question of worthiness.

In the first reading, Isaiah proclaims, "For I am a man of unclean lips." In the second reading, Paul tells the Corinthians, "I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle." And in Luke's Gospel, Peter joins in saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Isaiah, Paul, and Peter do not struggle with poor self-esteem but are focused on their unworthiness in being called to see or serve God.

These expressions resonate with the first response of Pope Francis, when asked after being elected Pope, "Who is Pope Francis?" to which he responded, "I am a sinner." I remember thinking that is an odd response, you were just elected pope, you are the holiest person in our Church! I was expecting to hear details about his life, like, "I am an Argentinian of Italian descent, our family was work-

**SCRIPTURE WISDOM***Fr. Raymond Smith, CMF*

ing class," and maybe something about his spirituality. Yet he answered, like the protagonists today, "I am a sinner."

The beautiful message for us is that in the middle of our sinfulness, God calls us as he did with Isaiah, Paul, and Peter. God does not ask us to be perfect, he only asks for us to be holy. The problem so many times in the spiritual journey is that we equate holy with being perfect, but that is not what God is saying.

Holiness or *hagios* in the New Testament means "set apart." We are called to holiness, we are called to be set apart. God set apart Isaiah, Paul, and Peter not because they were more worthy than anyone else, but because we are made in the image and likeness of God, who alone is holy and lets us share in that holiness. Saint Paul says it in this way in his letter to the Corinthians, "By the

grace of God I am what I am." We are called by God's grace, not by our own merit.

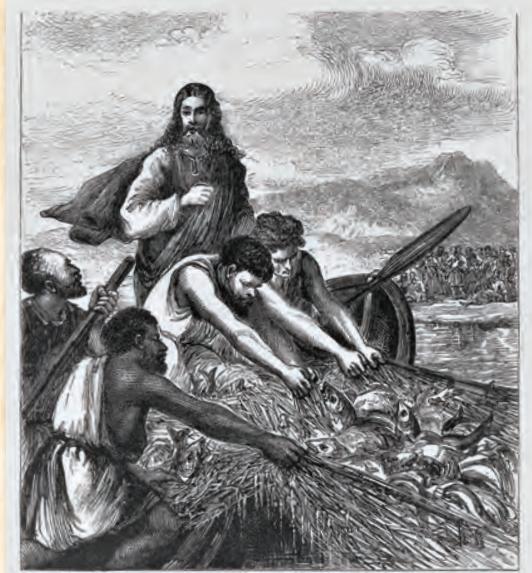
We grow in holiness as we grow in the sacraments, especially Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders. In the former, a couple sets themselves apart from all others, especially in the fidelity of chaste love. In the latter, deacons, priests, bishops, and popes

set themselves apart to help the people

of God to grow in holiness.

Holiness then does not bring us to superiority over others, it leads us to our uniqueness of who we are, and how we use this uniqueness for others, not ourselves, is what we call our vocation in life. We will never know our purpose/vocation, until we learn that we are set apart for God. This is what Peter discovers in the Gospel today.

How is God asking you to set yourself apart for him? Through marriage or religious life/Holy Orders? As a much-needed youth minister? Or one



A MULTITUDE OF FISHES.

JESUS IN BOAT WITH FISHERMEN DISCIPLES—

Jesus Christ on a boat with his apostles as they pull up fish in their full nets. (American Tract Society: New York--1890. Public Domain)

who cares for the poor? Or abandoned animals? God calls each of us in a different way and no one is unworthy of God's calling, because it is "By the grace of God I am what I am." ©TM

Claretian Fr. Smith is the Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Springfield.





Catholic Schools Week 2022
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www.dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Register-for-a-VIRTUS-withOnline-Option.pdf

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

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



Parish float wins 2nd Place in Christmas Parade

CHRISTMAS FLOAT—Sacred Heart Parish, Thayer, won Second Place in the Thayer Christmas Parade held Sat., Dec. 11, 2021. *The Mirror* staff thinks the Christmas sweaters gave the parish an edge in the competition. (Submitted photo)

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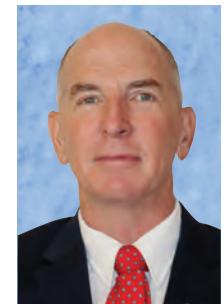


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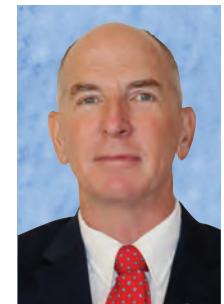
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Why Water? — Understanding the Importance of Providing Safe Water to Haiti's Poorest Families

Few of us think much about water. We want some, and we turn a tap. We drink it, and we expect to feel refreshed. Water isn't something we worry about, and with good reason. We are blessed to have safe, clean water at our fingertips.

Unfortunately, millions of families in the developing countries of the world — Haiti among them — are far less fortunate. For them, water must be found, it is rarely clean, and it can pose serious dangers if precautions aren't taken before drinking it. This is because poor families often rely on collected rain or murky streams — water sources that are almost inevitably contaminated with parasites and disease.

"That is why Father Glenn Meaux has made providing safe water to the people of Kobonal, Haiti, a priority," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the largest Catholic charities serving in Haiti. For years, Cavnar's ministry has partnered with Kobonal missionary Fr. Meaux to address the plight of the poor in Haiti by funding feeding programs, housing projects, educational outreaches, water projects and more.

"It may surprise some American Catholics, but providing safe water can literally be a lifesaving measure in a remote community. In fact, one of the first projects we did with Fr. Meaux involved capping a spring to bring clean water to a town that had lost a tragic number of children to illnesses caused by contaminated water," Cavnar said. "Fr. Meaux had seen them carrying a child's coffin down the hillside and was shocked to learn local families were losing babies and toddlers to unsafe water every month. He contacted us to see whether something could be done, and we rallied support from American

Catholics to fund the water project he needed. This gift to the community has probably saved dozens of lives since then."

The impact of unsafe water goes further, impacting older children and adults too, according to Cavnar.

"When an older child becomes ill, he or she often misses school, and sick adults can find it difficult to work steadily and secure a stable income. These may not seem like serious problems, but as sick days mount, the impact can be devastating. Children fall behind in their class work or drop out of school entirely, losing the opportunities for advancement that an education can bring. Their parents struggle to make ends meet, sometimes even finding it impossible to provide food each day. Once that downward spiral begins, it can lead to families falling into despair — and a real sense of hopelessness."

Fortunately, modern technology can provide a solution if funding is available. Well-digging rigs can be secured to reach safe water sources underground, and hand or solar pumps can be used to make water stations effective even when electricity isn't available.

"We have had a lot of experience solving water scarcity problems and developing water delivery systems in remote areas," Cavnar said. "The technology and skills are available if we can get the funding for the project work involved. That is why we are seeking support from American Catholics to help Fr. Meaux with his latest project — his plan to install two new freshwater wells and to repair several other wells in his area." (See story on opposite page.)

As Cavnar has said, managing major water projects is one of Cross Catholic



In Haiti's rural communities, water is often collected from murky ponds or other contaminated sources. It can be tainted with animal waste or teeming with bacteria and harmful parasites. For the poor, who must rely on this water, one drink can lead to serious illnesses, and infants and very young children are at the greatest risk.

Outreach's areas of expertise, and he remains confident Fr. Meaux's wells will be built, benefitting the communities he serves.

"I believe we'll succeed because Catholics in America often rally to accomplish missions of mercy like this," he said. "They are eager to help others, particularly those with an urgent need. What matters to them is that their donations are used wisely and will produce an important, tangible benefit for the poor. They support water projects such as this one because they understand the value of safe water. They would want that for their own families, and their hearts go out to poor parents who must give their sons and daughters contaminated water to

drink. I believe they will want to end that suffering and support a committed Catholic leader like Fr. Meaux."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach water programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01835, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Cross Catholic Outreach Endorsed by More Than 100 Bishops, Archbishops

Cross Catholic Outreach's range of relief work to help the poor overseas continues to be recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S. and abroad.

"We've received more than 100 endorsements from bishops and archbishops," explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "They're moved by the fact that we've launched outreaches in almost 40 countries and have undertaken a variety of projects — everything from feeding the hungry

and housing the homeless to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. The bishops have also been impressed by Cross Catholic Outreach's direct and meaningful responses to emergency situations, most recently by providing food, medicines and other resources to partners in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala impacted by natural disasters."

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, supports this mission. He writes, "What a joy it is to be part of the

Lord's redemptive work and to manifest his mercy on Earth by caring for our neighbors in need."

In addition to praising CCO's accomplishments, many of the bishops and archbishops are encouraged that pontifical canonical status was conferred on the charity in September 2015, granting it approval as an official Catholic organization. This allows CCO to participate in the mission of the Church and to give a concrete witness to Gospel charity, in collaboration with the

Holy Father.

"Your work with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a strong endorsement of your partnership with the work of the Universal Church," Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said. "By providing hope to the faithful overseas by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, delivering medical relief to the sick and shelter to the homeless, and through self-help projects, you are embodying the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

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American Catholics Rally to Provide Poor Families With Safe Water Through Fr. Meaux's Kobonal Haiti Mission

When Father Glenn Meaux and his missionary team arrived in Kobonal, Haiti, in 1989, he was deeply disturbed by the magnitude of poverty he saw there. Hardly anyone in the village owned the land their fragile huts occupied. No one grew gardens or raised animals. Very few employment opportunities existed for the unskilled, uneducated population, so very few families were able to earn money to buy food.

During the rainy season, the women and children would gather water from the plentiful streams and rivers — but the water was obviously tainted. During the dry season, people resorted to digging holes in the sand in order to find water.

“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system — there was literally no hope at the time.”

Fr. Glenn Meaux,
Haiti Kobonal Mission

In addition to suffering hunger and thirst, the people were also starving for spiritual guidance. Entrenched in superstition and occult practices, few had ever heard the name of Christ.

“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system, there was literally no hope at the time,” Fr. Meaux recalled. With this sense of hopelessness, it is easy to see how Kobonal earned its reputation as the “darkest corner of the Diocese of Hinche.”

This is the challenging ground on which the Kobonal Haiti Mission took root, and in the three ensuing decades, the mission has worked marvels, helping hundreds of families improve their lives. Still, Fr. Meaux’s heart breaks every time he sees a mother or child living in a dilapidated shack or gathering water from a murky stream.

“Fr. Meaux has already given the best years of his life to the people of Haiti (see story on opposite page), but he always has his eyes forward, looking for the next thing he can do to help relieve the people’s suffering and increase their opportunities in life,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a leading Catholic relief and development ministry that has partnered with Fr. Meaux for more than a decade and a half. “Many people are aware of the wonderful things he’s done to address the people’s urgent needs, but his ultimate goal is to break the cycle of poverty in this part of Haiti and forever change the fate of the families



he serves.”

Fr. Meaux stated his objectives even more simply.

“As Catholics, we must extend our hands to help our brothers and sisters in need,” he said.

Currently, one of the mission’s primary project goals is to bring clean water to the people of Kobonal, ending the need for families to collect unsafe water from remote sources.

“Women and children are often tasked with finding and collecting water, and the murky streams they draw from aren’t fit for animals, much less people,” Cavnar said. “At Cross Catholic Outreach, we work on many projects like this, obtaining donations from U.S. Catholics to pay for the equipment and organize the construction efforts involved. Our current goal is to help Fr.

ABOVE: In Haiti’s rural communities, poor families are often forced to collect drinking water from unsafe sources, and they can suffer serious illnesses from waterborne parasites and diseases as a result. LEFT: Fr. Meaux has a plan to provide safe water, and American Catholics can support his efforts through contributions to Cross Catholic Outreach.

Meaux put in two clean-water wells, build a community distribution point and repair five existing wells. If we can accomplish this, it will serve the daily needs of about 616 adults and 2,152 children who currently face the greatest challenges to their health and well-being. The people in these villages will not only use the water for drinking and cooking, but also to sustain important gardens they depend on for food and income.”

According to Cavnar, the wells will make use of freestanding hand pumps, and the families in each community will choose a leader to oversee and perform maintenance on the equipment. Each well will have a cement wall around it for security and be available daily during specific hours of operation. The water

will be free, but the benefiting families will be encouraged to contribute a token amount to a community fund that can be tapped if repairs are ever needed on the wells. Contributing in this way will give villagers a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

“Anticipation is mounting for this project, and volunteers have already stepped forward to offer their help with the construction of the wells. Now, all that’s needed are the funds for drilling, purchasing pumps, constructing a pump house to store supplies and training community members to handle maintenance of the new facilities,” Cavnar said. “Our goal now is to make American Catholics aware of the project and gain their support.”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01835, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions for becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.





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Thank you!