



THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

APRIL 26, 2024

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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Saying Yes

Three seminarians ordained deacons



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

The three deacons lay prostrate before the altar while the assembly kneels to pray the Litany of the Saints.

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

One had already been accepted into medical school. Another was a few days away from taking his CPA exam. And yet another had already graduated from college and was working in the real world.

Then they all received a call, and they listened.

It wasn't the kind of call you get on a phone, but maybe more of a nudge, a feeling.

After much prayer and thought and discernment, they all answered "yes" to God's calling.

So it was indeed a joyous celebration on a Saturday earlier this month that Adam Urban, Kade Megaffin and Jesse Ochs walked with 30 priests, 10 permanent

deacons and Bishop Jerry Vincke down the aisle of the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina – en route to being ordained transitional deacons.

It was the day before Divine Mercy Sunday, and it couldn't have been more perfect.

"My heart is leaping with joy," a smiling Bishop Vincke told the nearly full cathedral. "We've been waiting for this day much like parents anticipating the birth of a baby. The day has finally arrived ... God speaks to your heart today. Do not be afraid."

That trio of deacons now will complete the rest of the spring semester at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver before serving at parishes around the Salina Diocese this coming summer.

The diaconate ordination is one of the last major steps to priesthood. Following their last year of study at the seminary during the 2024-25 school year, the deacons are scheduled to be ordained priests on May 31, 2025.

"We are blessed by the 'yes' of Deacons Kade, Jesse and Adam – 'yes' to God and to our diocese," Bishop Vincke said. "The entire diocese is looking forward to their ordination to the priesthood next year."



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Adam Urban, Jesse Ochs and Kade Megaffin listen to Bishop Jerry Vincke's homily during the ordination.

It will be a full year ahead, but this particular weekend was a time for celebrating the deacons with their families and friends who came from near and far to show support.

There were classmates from their colleges and the seminary, and fellow seminarians from several other states who helped serve during the ordination Mass. Former choir members of Jesse's at St. Isidore's Church at Kansas State University in Manhattan made up most of the choir at the celebration.

The Ordination Ceremony

The ceremony began with the presentation of the candidates to the bishop, followed by the election and examination.

Each candidate then went to the bishop to make his promise of obedience. They then lay prostrate on the floor while the congregation sang the Litany of Saints.

The bishop then said a consecration prayer followed by the laying of the hands on each candidate. Then a stole and vestment was placed on each deacon.

The bishop told the deacons that "the best you can give to people is Jesus. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach."

Bishop Vincke then gave the kiss of peace to each deacon.

In their new roles, Deacons Adam, Kade and Jesse will assist at the altar during Mass, proclaim the Gospel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

What does it mean to be on Mission?

Recently, I went to celebrate Mass at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility. Many of them told me they read the Register (at least I know someone is reading the paper!). The men there are on mission. They keep bringing their brothers to Jesus. While I was there, I baptized and confirmed one man and confirmed two others.

Our mission for the diocese is, “Together, let us be disciples of Jesus on mission.” Yes, all of us.

Pope Francis stated in his wonderful encyclical *Evangelium Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel): “In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.

GERALD Vincke
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries,”

but rather that we are always “missionary disciples.” If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!” (Jn 1:41) The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him “because of the woman’s testimony.” (Jn 4:39) So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus.” (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21) So what are we

waiting for?”

Our pope continues: “Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelizing us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: “Not that I have already obtained this or am

already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (Phil 3:12-13)

I have been visiting parishes for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The students write me letters of why they want to be Confirmed. One student from St. Francis Xavier School wrote, “I chose St. Raphael because I want to be a teacher for elementary level children in a Catholic School like mine. I want to ‘cure the blind’ (like St. Raphael did, but not literally) because children might not see God and his love outside of school, so getting the opportunity to share the Good News about Jesus is the challenge I’m willing to take.” This young woman gets what it means to be on mission. So did a couple of young women from St. Elizabeth’s Parish who wrote about how “they just want to be there for people in need and those going through difficult times.”

Together, let us be disciples of Jesus on mission!

+ *Gerald L. Vincke*

The Most Rev. Gerald L. Vincke
Bishop of Salina

VATICAN SAYS ABORTION, SURROGACY, WAR, POVERTY ARE ATTACKS ON HUMAN DIGNITY

VATICAN CITY – Being a Christian means defending human dignity and that includes opposing abortion, the death penalty, gender transition surgery, war, sexual abuse and human trafficking, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said in a new document.

“We cannot separate faith from the defense of human dignity, evangelization from the promotion of a dignified life and spirituality from a commitment to the dignity of every human being,” Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, wrote in the document’s opening section.

The declaration, “*Dignitas Infinita*” (“Infinite Dignity”), was released at the Vatican April 8.

In the opening section, Cardinal Fernández confirmed reports that a declaration on human dignity and bioethical issues – like abortion, euthanasia and surrogacy – was approved by members of the dicastery in mid-2023 but Pope Francis asked the dicastery to make additions to “highlight topics closely connected to the theme of dignity, such as poverty, the situation of migrants, violence against women, human trafficking, war and other themes.”

In February the cardinals and bishops who are members of the

dicastery approved the updated draft of the document, and in late March Pope Francis gave his approval and ordered its publication, Cardinal Fernández said.

With its five years of preparation, he wrote, “the document before us reflects the gravity and centrality of the theme of dignity in Christian thought.”

The title of the document is taken from an Angelus address St. John Paul II gave in Germany in 1980 during a meeting with people with disabilities. He told them, “With Jesus Christ, God has shown us in an unsurpassed way how He loves each human being and thereby bestows upon him infinite dignity.”

The declaration noted that the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World also listed attacks on human dignity as ranging from abortion and euthanasia to “subhuman living conditions” and “degrading working conditions.”

Members of the doctrinal dicastery included the death penalty among violations of “the inalienable dignity of every person, regardless of the circumstances” and called for the respect of the dignity of people who are incarcerated.

The declaration denounced discrimination against LGBTQ+

people and particularly situations in which people are “imprisoned, tortured and even deprived of the good of life solely because of their sexual orientation.”

But it also condemned “gender theory” as “extremely dangerous since it cancels differences in its claim to make everyone equal.”

Gender theory, it said, tries “to deny the greatest possible difference that exists between living beings: sexual difference.”

Quoting Pope Francis’ exhortation “*Amoris Laetitia*,” the declaration said gender ideology “envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.”

Dicastery members said it is true that there is a difference between biological sex and the roles and behaviors that a given society or culture assigns to a male or female, but the fact that some of those notions of what it means to be a woman or a man are culturally influenced does not mean there are no differences between biological males and biological females.

“Therefore,” they said, “all attempts to obscure reference to the ineliminable sexual difference between man and woman are to be rejected.”

“Any sex-change intervention,

as a rule, risks threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception,” it said. However, the declaration clarified that “this is not to exclude the possibility that a person with genital abnormalities that are already evident at birth or that develop later may choose to receive the assistance of healthcare professionals to resolve these abnormalities.”

The acceptance of abortion, it said, “is a telling sign of an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense, which is becoming more and more incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, even when the fundamental right to life is at stake.”

The document also repeated Pope Francis’ call for a global ban on surrogacy, which, he said, is “a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs.”

Surrogacy, it said, transforms a couple’s legitimate desire to have a child into “a ‘right to a child’ that fails to respect the dignity of that child as the recipient of the gift of life.”

Extreme poverty, the marginalization of people with disabilities, violent online attacks and war also violate human dignity, the document said.



YOU ARE INVITED

TO THE CELEBRATION OF
BISHOP GERALD VINCKE'S

25th Anniversary of the Priesthood

JUNE 9, 2024

MASS AT 3PM

THE BASILICA OF ST. FIDELIS
601 10TH STREET VICTORIA, KANSAS 67671

RECEPTION 4:00PM-6:00PM

VICTORIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM
602 10TH STREET VICTORIA, KANSAS 67671

**KINDLY RSVP AT BIT.LY/BISHOPS25TH
OR CALL CORRINA HUDSONPILLAR AT 785-639-2100**

BISHOP'S CALENDAR

May

- 1 Divine Mercy Radio Spring Care-A-Thon, 4 p.m.
- 1 Confirmation, St. Mary's, Ellis, 7 p.m.
- 2-4 K of C State Convention, Topeka
- 4 Confirmation, Sts. Peter & Paul, Clay Center, 4 p.m.
- 5 Confirmation, St. John the Baptist, Beloit, 10 a.m.
- 7 Memorial Mass for Deceased Children, St. Thomas More, Manhattan, 2 p.m.
- 8 Memorial Mass for Deceased Children, Sacred Heart, Plainville, 2 p.m.
- 8 Confirmation, St. Joseph's, Hays, 7 p.m.
- 22 Confirmation, IHM, Hays, 7 p.m.
- 23 Women's Religious Appreciation Mass, Motherhouse, Concordia, 11 a.m.
- 26 Mass at Wilson Lake, 11 a.m.
- 26 Dedicate Seguin's Parish, 4 p.m.
- 27 Memorial Day-Chancery Closed
- 29 Sr. Priest Luncheon, Salina
- 30 Sr. Priest Luncheon, Victoria

APRIL PRAYER INTENTIONS

The Holy Father entrusts the Apostleship of Prayer to publicize his prayer intentions for the good of the world and the Church.

Pope's prayer intention:

Let us pray that men and women religious, and seminarians, grow in their own vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, that leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

Diocesan prayer intention:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our newly ordained Transitional Deacons, Kade Megaffin, Adam Urban and Jesse Ochs. We pray that you may bless, protect and guide these men as they serve the people of the Salina Diocese.

BISHOP, PRIESTS CELEBRATE CHRISM MASS



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Bishop Jerry Vincke, along with priests of the diocese, say a prayer of blessing over the Holy Oils.

By Allison Ochoa
THE REGISTER

Each year, Catholics gather in dioceses across the world to witness and celebrate the sacred liturgy of the Chrism Mass. On Thursday, March 21, priests and laypeople from across the Diocese of Salina gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral to participate in this liturgy.

"The Chrism Mass is a special occasion where the bishop, together with his priests, renews the priestly promises made on the day of Ordination," said Diocesan Chancellor Corey Lyon. "This act holds great value as it allows priests to reaffirm their fidelity to Christ,

who has chosen them as His ministers. Through this renewal, priests strengthen their commitment to serving the Christian community and living out their vocation with zeal and dedication."

In his homily, Bishop Gerald Vincke highlighted the enormity of the priestly vocation.

"We are incredibly blessed to have priests who love Jesus and love you and who are willing to give their lives for you," he said. "I love this diocese and these priests – these remarkable men who said 'Yes.' At the heart of their commitment is the life of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and they are here to

renew their calling to love Jesus and their calling to lay down their lives. Know that Jesus loves you and your priest does too."

Bishop Vincke asked the congregation to live out their love of Jesus in three ways: spending time with Jesus, receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and proclaiming the Good News.

"He's asking you to be with him, spend time with him in prayer and to be in relationship with him to receive his love for us. No one loves us more than Jesus. His presence lives in us through the sacraments.

"We're sent to be the presence of Jesus to others," Bishop Vincke

continued. "Jesus asks us to love him and love his people."

Lyon explained that in addition to the renewal of priestly promises, the Mass also included the blessing of sacred oils.

"During the Chrism Mass, the oils used in various sacraments are blessed and consecrated. The oil of the sick and the oil of the catechumens, along with the sacred Chrism, are symbols of the fullness of Christ's Priesthood and the unity of the Church. These blessed oils play a vital role in the sacramental life of the Church, particularly in Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick and

Ordination."

Large vessels of each oil were presented to Bishop Vincke for his blessing. Following the Mass, the oils were distributed to each parish to be presented during Holy Thursday Mass and then used throughout the coming year.

"The Chrism Mass is a preparation for the celebration of the Easter Triduum," Lyon said. "It serves as a moment of spiritual renewal and unity for the clergy and the faithful, highlighting the importance of the priesthood and the sacraments in our journey of faith."

SAYING YES, FROM PAGE 1

and perform other liturgical functions.

Dcn. Kade spoke for all three deacons when he said, "I can't wait to be in a parish and serve the people, to share the love of Jesus in a little more intimate way now. To get to share the life of Christ with the people is a special, special thing."

Their first homilies

Following Ordination Saturday, each deacon served at a Sunday morning Mass and delivered their first homilies as deacons in their home parishes – Dcn. Adam at St. Nicholas of Myra in Hays, Dcn. Kade at St. Joseph in Hays and Dcn. Jesse at Sacred Heart in Park.

Dcn. Adam chose the word "beginning" as the theme for his first homily as a deacon on Divine Mercy Sunday.

"We can't pack all the Easter joy into one day," he said, referring to the Easter Octave. "Likewise, we need to expand our heart. Today is another Easter, another day, and I begin each and every day to celebrate."

Dcn. Kade also shared gratitude for being able to preach his first homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, "Which was being celebrated in every chapel across the world."

He talked about the promises of Divine Mercy.

"It's easy to say we believe, but to live it out takes faith," he proclaimed. "My belief in faith is helping me through my formation."

Dcn. Jesse talked about how "God prefers to work slowly with us, allowing us to grow and to be able to believe fully in the truth before He calls us into a deeper relationship with Him."

"God comes to physically dwell within us in order to heal and forgive us, and send us out into the world to bring the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection and to spread the truth of who Jesus is," he said. "What an unbelievable gift!"

Father Andy Hammeke, vocation director for the Salina Diocese who was ordained a priest in 2018, has known all three new deacons since their early days in seminary and was beaming with gratitude over the weekend.

"This is especially meaningful to me, because they were just entering or thinking about going to seminary during my last year of seminary, just before I was ordained," Fr. Andy said. "So to now be their vocation director in their final years was pretty special."

"I'm looking forward to having them as brothers when they are ordained priests. They are all going to be great priests."

Their journeys

- Dcn. Adam never followed his boyhood dream of becoming a doctor.

After a summer of working in youth ministry in the Dodge City Diocese following his junior year of college, Bishop John Brungardt offered Dcn. Adam a full-time position in that area after graduation.

Dcn. Adam took the job and while serving in that capacity, he said he felt the calling to continue a life of ministry – but in a different way.

He entered the seminary through the Dodge City Diocese and later chose to return to his home diocese to eventually serve as a priest.

- Dcn. Kade never became an accountant or even took that CPA exam.

"When I went into internships my senior year in college, I realized accounting wasn't a pure sense of what I was supposed to be doing," he said. "The Lord

put this call heavy on my heart. I felt my path should lead me to the priesthood."

- Dcn. Jesse actually is living a dream that began as that first nudge when he was in second grade while serving Mass as an altar boy in his home parish.

"I saw the priest elevate the Host, and a warm feeling went over me from my feet to my head," he said. "It was a pretty special



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Deacon Steve Urban embraces his son, Adam, after vesting him in his stole and dalmatic.

experience."

The seed was planted.

Dcn. Jesse went on to live a normal childhood in rural northwest Kansas but that feeling never went away. During college, he was very active at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center, where he said he felt the call to the seminary becoming much stronger.

He decided to finish his degree in social work and upon graduation took a job in his profession. Less than a year later, he knew what direction he should be heading and applied to the seminary.

The rest, as they say, is history.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Bishop Jerry Vincke lays his hands on each candidate's head during the ordination.

BISHOP JERRY VINCKE INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE

ANNUAL Seminarian FUNDRAISING DINNERS

JULY
31
5:15PM

SALINA, KS
HILTON GARDEN INN
3320 S 9TH ST

AUG
1
5:15PM

COLBY, KS
CITY LIMITS
2227 S RANGE AVE

AUG
2
5:15PM

HAYS, KS
ROSE GARDEN
BANQUET HALL
2350 E 8TH ST

DETAILS TO COME

Official priest assignment changes

Effective April 1, 2024:

Fr. Charlie Steier: Granted full retirement and relieved from all canonical appointments in the Diocese of Salina.

Fr. Ernest Amoako-Opare: Appointed Parish Administrator of Christ the King Parish in WaKeeney and St. Michael Parish in Collyer, in addition to his other canonical appointments.

Fr. Emmanuel Mensah: Appointed Parochial Vicar of Christ the King Parish in WaKeeney and St. Michael Parish in Collyer, in

addition to his other canonical appointments

Effective April 3, 2024:

Fr. Randall Weber: Appointed Ecclesiastical Defender of the Bond within the Matrimonial Tribunal Court of First Instance of the Diocese of Salina for marriage annulment cases.

Effective April 8, 2024:

Dcn. Kade Megaffin: Appointed to Diaconal Ministry at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan during his Transitional Diaconate Year

while he is not away completing his seminary studies.

Dcn. Jesse Ochs: Appointed to Diaconal Ministry at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Parish in Salina, during his Transitional Diaconate Year while he is not away completing his seminary studies.

Dcn. Adam Urban: Appointed to Diaconal Ministry at St. Isidore Catholic Student Center Parish in Manhattan, during his Transitional Diaconate Year while he is not away completing his seminary studies.

All in the family for new deacons

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Adam Urban and Kade Megaffin have been friends since meeting each other their sophomore year in high school at Thomas More Prep-Marian when Kade moved to Hays from Ulysses.

They were roommates during their college days at Fort Hays State University.

They are classmates at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver.

And they are on track to be ordained Catholic priests on the same day in May of 2025.

So, why not celebrate their diaconate ordination together with family and friends where it all started?

That's what Dcn. Adam and Dcn. Kade decided while planning a get-together for family and friends in Hays following their first homilies the Sunday after being ordained in Salina the day before.

Dcn. Adam grew up attending St. Nicholas of Myra church, and St. Joseph is Dcn. Kade's home parish. So they decided to hold their reception at their high school.

"Since we were from different parishes, we didn't want to leave one or the other out," Dcn. Adam said. "Because TMP played such a role in our formation, we decided to hold it there. It was a neutral site that has a lot of meaning to both of us. It was a way to give tribute to our high school days at TMP."

"It was nice to be able to celebrate as a town, knowing the community at large was supporting us the whole time," Dcn. Kade added. "And it was a good way to pay homage to TMP."

While many family members joined the deacons for their milestone celebration, there was a particularly close family connection for both.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Deacons Kade Megaffin and Adam Urban celebrate following their diaconate ordination at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Dcn. Adam is the son of Steve Urban, a permanent deacon at St. Nick's. And Dcn. Kade's younger brother, Max, also is attending seminary at St. John Vianney.

Max was able to assist at the Mass at St. Joseph's as a lead server.

"Having Max up there at the altar with me was really special," Dcn. Kade said. "We've developed a really good friendship in college. It's been a unique opportunity."

Both new deacons gave a nod to Fr. Fred Gatschet of being instrumental in their formation. Fr. Fred was chaplain at FHSU's Comeau Catholic Campus Center during their college days. And they lived in an apartment adjacent to his on the second floor of the campus center.

"Fr. Fred played a big role in a quiet way - he definitely didn't push us ... he led with a real quiet, hard-working disposition," Dcn. Kade said. "He played a fatherly role and led by example. It gave us a chance to see what life in the priesthood was like."

"Fr. Fred has an intellectual capacity that I really respected," Dcn. Adam said. "He makes the faith presentable, and that really drew me in. There's something about Fr. Fred that is magnetic. He's his own man and has his own personality."

Both new deacons will get a firsthand view of day-to-day life of a priest this summer while serving at parishes in the diocese.

In another stroke of coincidence, both have been assigned to parishes in Manhattan - Dcn. Adam at St. Isidore's campus center at Kansas State University and Dcn. Kade at St. Thomas More parish.

"It'll be wonderful to work with Fr. Gale (Hammerschmidt) and to learn from him and his pastoral experience," Dcn. Adam said. "Manhattan is a wonderful

town to do ministry. Some students are around in the summer, too. I'm excited to experience a little bit of parish life for the summer. There's so much to learn."

The road to the priesthood can be long, and Dcn. Kade said the diaconate ordination was like "an adrenaline rush of grace."

"It gives some excitement to get back to school and go out into a parish this summer," he said. "It'll give us a small glimpse of the life of a priest for the first time, what our ministry is going to be like. I'm really looking forward to it."

Park, Kansas parish small but mighty

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Sacred Heart is a small Catholic church in Gove County with about 130 registered parishioners. But the impact of the parish in northwest Kansas on young people is as powerful as a much larger congregation.

For instance, consider this. Lifetime Sacred Heart member Jesse Ochs became one of the Salina Diocese's newest transitional deacons earlier this month.

When he is ordained a priest in May of 2025, Dcn. Jesse will join two other priests from Sacred Heart serving the Salina Diocese - Fr. Kevin Weber and Fr. Luke Thielen. Another current seminarian, Collin Thielen (Fr. Luke's younger brother) also is a member of Sacred Heart.

"It is amazing to be able to have that sort of a legacy in our parish," Dcn. Jesse said. "I'm honored, humbled to be a part of it."

Dcn. Jesse said he was overwhelmed by the amount of people who attended Mass in his home parish the day after his diaconate ordination in the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina. It was estimated that a number larger than the parish registry came to hear Dcn. Jesse's first homily in Park.

Jesse's parents, Rick and Judy Ochs, said they often get asked about the secret to their parish having so many young men enter the religious life.

"I think it's the peace and quiet out here," Judy Ochs said. "It's easy to hear God's call."

Dcn. Jesse agreed, saying "I think it's just the fact we have the space and the ability to breathe out there."

Teresa Selensky, parish secretary at Sacred Heart, credits a strong CCD program for youth in the parish having an impact.

Selensky, coordinator of that program, says it's those who volunteer as teachers who make a lasting impression on young people's lives.

"We have a lot of competition for kids' time these days," she said, "so it's a priority to keep a strong CCD program going and recruit volunteers who keep it a priority."

Dcn. Jesse also points to his parish priest, Fr. James Thomas, as "a big formative part of my life." He said he was overwhelmed with the turnout for his first homily and a reception afterward.

"I really appreciate all the prayers and support over the years, not only from my parish but all of the diocese," he said. "It's absolutely phenomenal all the prayers and financial support we've been given over the years."

Sandwiched between the final weeks of this spring semester and his final year at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, Dcn. Jesse will serve in a diocesan parish this summer. He has been assigned to St. Mary Queen of the Universe Parish in Salina.

"I look forward to meeting the people of St. Mary's Parish and getting to know them," Dcn. Jesse said, "and getting to perform the roles of a deacon."

Dcn. Jesse will be familiar with one particular person immediately; the pastor of St. Mary's is Fr. Kevin Weber, who also claims Sacred Heart in Park as his home parish.



MATEA GREGG

Deacon Jesse Ochs gives his first homily at his home parish in Park, KS.

Students tour new addition at St. Andrew Elementary

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Soon and very soon, students won't have to enter the school gymnasium to check out a book on stage.

A year-long renovation and expansion project at St. Andrew Elementary School in Abilene is nearing completion, and the 2024-25 school year will begin with a whole new look.

Included in the excitement is the return of the library to its original setting. When St. Andrew's added a second preschool class several years ago, the stage in the gym was converted to the library.

Bishop Jerry Vincke took a tour of the new, 4,760-square-foot addition recently and was impressed with the progress.

"Wow," the bishop saw in awe as he looked around the room that will be home to fifth-graders next school year.

Bishop Vincke and Principal Chris Whitehair were all smiles as they looked around the room

and had to talk loudly to be heard above background noise from construction workers.

"This is amazing," said Whitehair, who was getting one of her first looks at the project in quite a while.

"This is so nice in here," the bishop said, looking down at the new carpet and glancing out a large window at the playground. "I want to come back to school here."

The \$3 million project features new front doors to the school and the addition on the southwest corner of the building that will include another set of restrooms, two new classrooms and an all-purpose room that will also double as a tornado shelter.

The all-purpose room will serve as the music classroom. In the past, music classes were held in the St. Andrew church basement across the parking lot.

The hallway/meeting rooms and kitchen/teachers' lounge renovations are scheduled for this summer, with plans to be com-



COURTESY PHOTO, DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN

Showing off the new addition to St. Andrew Elementary School in Abilene are: Back row from left, Bishop Jerry Vincke, third-grader Abigail Whitehair and second-grader Laney Hartman. Middle row: fourth-grader Will Pugh, Principal Chris Whitehair and Father Peter O'Donnell. Front row: kindergartner Camden Miller and first-grader Rawley Wuthnow.

pleted by the time students return to school from their summer break.

A student from each of the six grades (KG-5) was chosen at random to pose for a photo opp with the bishop outside the new addition.

Whitehair said the students were "very excited" to take the

photo and that some actually got to tour the addition the weekend of the St. Andrew's Annual Charity Auction this spring.

The blessing of the new addition, which will include a 1:30 p.m. Mass with the bishop and a reception afterward, is set for Sept. 4.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The month of April is always a busy time for the Safe Environment Office and for parishes and schools around the diocese.

On April 2, Laura Schwarz, safety coordinator for the parish and school DRE, and Interim Principal of Sacred Heart School-Colby, won the Safety Coordinator of the Year award.

There are many responsibilities to be a safety coordinator of a parish or school.

"Being the safety coordinator is a huge undertaking," Backes said. "But ultimately, the role of the safety coordinator is ensuring the safety of the students who have been entrusted in our care. Laura does all that and more."

Backes said Schwarz' compassion and honesty are eminent above any other qualities, along with her dedication and attention to detail.

"We are so blessed to have great, hard-working people like Laura Schwarz, who work tirelessly to ensure that every child in her school and parish is protected and safe," Meagher said after the presentation. Schwarz was presented with a certificate of recognition and a picture of St. Joseph, Patron Saint of all working people and our protector and guardian.

In addition to the special event in Colby, April 4 was Wear Blue Day at the Chancery.

"Wearing blue connects us with millions of others across the country who support child-abuse prevention efforts, strong families and healthy children," Backes said. "While the mission of the Safe Environment Office (promise to protect, pledge to heal) remains

a daily focus, during Child Abuse Prevention Month, we shine an extra light upon the continuing efforts to protect children and the most vulnerable from harm."

This year, the Chancery staff also gathered to raise awareness, and learn some practical ways they can help to prevent child abuse in the community. They discussed things such as knowing the signs of abuse, educating others, advocating for community services and if you suspect abuse call 866-752-8855, and most of all just invest in kids. Additionally, each staff member was given a pinwheel to "plant."

The pinwheel is the national symbol of child abuse prevention; a reflection of hope, health and safety, it represents the happy childhood that all children deserve, Backes said.

The Diocese of Salina has taken great strides in fulfilling its promise to protect children, educate communities and bring healing to those who have suffered abuse. For more information on how to protect children, call 785-827-8746, or visit salinadiocese.org/office/safe-environment-office.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bishop's Annual Appeal-Your Gifts in Action helps fund the work of the Safe Environment Office? Thank you for keeping children safe. To give, visit join.salinadiocese.org, mail a check to PO Box 1696, Salina KS 67402 or scan the QR code.



LORI LEISZLER

Diocese hires new editor for The Register

The Catholic Diocese of Salina is excited to introduce Lori Leiszler as the new editor for the diocese's monthly newspaper, The Register.

Leiszler will join our staff after coming from the Diocese of Wichita, where she has taught journalism and photography

for the past two years at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School.

The fourth and youngest child of Barb and John Leiszler, she grew up on a farm in Clifton, KS, and attended St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church. She joined Clyde's St. John the Baptist CYO in high school, which served as a catalyst for her faith.

"My teachers, and in particular the religious people in my community, really inspired me to want to seek joy in everyday life," Leiszler said.

Before teaching, she was involved with several publications at Kansas State University. Leiszler served as the assistant culture editor for the Kansas State Collegian, wrote for the Royal Purple yearbook and St. Isidore's magazine, and peer-reviewed for Live Ideas Journal.

"This has been a dream of mine for quite a while, and it's such a blessing that God is calling me back here," Leiszler said. "I'm excited for this new chapter, and I can't wait to share stories of faith with you all and grow closer to Christ."

Seven Altars Devotions a hit with young adults

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Hannah Wildeman had never heard of the Seven Altars Devotions until recently.

It took just 45 miles and a little less than three hours for her to add another favorite to her list of Catholic traditions.

Wildeman was one of about 40 young adults who participated in a cross-country prayer event at seven Ellis County churches on Holy Thursday.

Jake Schroeder, coordinator of young adult ministry for the Salina Diocese, learned about the devotion a few years ago when he was serving as president of Fort Hays State University's Catholic Disciples organization.

He arranged the devotion for fellow FHSU students the past two years and decided to hold it again as one of his monthly get-togethers for the young adult ministry.

The devotions are a takeoff of the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches, an ancient Roman tradition from the 16th century when pilgrims would walk to churches on Holy Thursday, giving homage at Roman basilicas.

The main mode of transportation back then was on foot, and the pilgrims would walk as far as 15 miles to churches throughout the night.

These 21st-century pilgrims of today used vehicles to drive the 45-mile distance to seven different churches in Ellis County, leaving from FHSU's



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Catholic Campus Center after the Holy Thursday Mass.

The first stop was at St. Francis of Assisi church in Munjor, where the pilgrims slowly entered the half-lit church. The only sound was an occasional creak of wooden pews as participants knelt and prayed in silence.

"It was so reverent," Wildeman said.

Next up was St. Boniface in Vincent, followed by St. Ann's in Walker and the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria.

The entourage then made its way back to Hays, where it stopped at St. Nicholas of Myra and St.

Joseph's before concluding the night at FHSU's Catholic Campus Center.

The pilgrims spent an average of 12 minutes at each church, beginning with a reading by Schroeder and followed by silent prayer. Each reading corresponded to the seven places visited by Jesus between the Last Supper to His crucifixion.

While the majority of the participants on Holy Thursday were either FHSU students or from the area, there also were some from as far away as Atchison and Manhattan in eastern Kansas.

Wildeman said it was a treat to get to see several different churches for the first time in Ellis County – home of 13 Catholic churches.

"I'm so glad I came (to Hays) for this," Wildeman said. "Those churches are so beautiful."

And seeing them in the dark of night made the experience even more impactful.

IT TAKES A DIOCESE!

NOW HIRING FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR!

Ellis

Email Patti Park, ppark@stmarysellis.net or call 785-726-3185

- Elementary Teacher, K-6 TBD

Hays

Email Mandy Meagher mmeagher@hfehays.org or call 785-625-3131

- Classroom Aid

Hays

Email Chad Meitner, meitnerc@tmprarian.org or call 785-625-6577

- Front Office Admin. Assistant

Junction City

Email Shawn Augustine augustines@saintxrams.org or call 785-238-2841

- Activities Director
- K-12 Counselor

Manhattan

Email Mike Hubka MHubka@manhattan-catholicschools.org or call 785-565-5050

- Part-time K-4 Music
- Part-time 5-8 Band

Oakley

Email Michelle Selzer mselzer@sjoakley.org or call 785-671-4451

- Elementary Teacher

Plainville

Email Sara VonFeldt at svonfeldt@schplainville.org or call 785-434-2157

- 5th Grade Teacher
- Kitchen Manager/Head Cook

Salina

Email John Krajicek John@sacredheart-knights.org

- 7-12 Industrial Arts
- .5 Spanish

Salina

Email Tym Bonilla at tbonilla@stmary.org or by calling 785-827-4200.

- Elementary Music

Tipton

Email Gery Hake, glhake@wilsoncom.us or call 785-373-5835

- 7-12 Social Studies/Religion teacher

Colby

Email Laura Schwarz lschwarz@sacredheart-colby.com or by calling 785-460-2813

- Elementary Teacher
- Full-time Secretary
- Part-time Tech Teacher

MCS teachers complete OCIA

BY LINDY MEYER
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

"Arica Alexander, a fifth grade teacher, and Maggie Schwartz, who is student teaching in first grade, both have an impact on the lives of students at Manhattan Catholic Schools, (MCS). And they both are compassionate teachers. They work for the academic growth for their children, but they also are helping the students make their way to heaven with a focus on Jesus. Both completed the OCIA process to join the Catholic Church during Saturday's Easter Vigil at St. Isidore's Church."

-Mike Hubka, Principal MCS

"Going to Mass and teaching at a Catholic school helped me decide to go through OCIA and convert to Catholicism. I look forward to giving my whole life to God. My past and present students at Manhattan Catholic School have shown me what grace, kindness, patience, and true love for



COURTESY PHOTO, LINDY MEYER

Father Gale Hammerschmidt, Maggie Schwartz, Arica Alexander and Mike Hubka celebrate after Easter Vigil at St. Isidore's, Manhattan.

God looks like. Without teaching such wonderful students my faith journey would look so different than it does today. I am so grateful for them, the faculty at MCS, and our wonderful community! I belong here in Manhattan. I am so blessed to live this life and to see what God has planned for me."

-Arica Alexander, MCS

"With lots of prayer, support, and encouragement I have felt like this is the right time for me to fully enter into the Church. Seeing Jesus work in their "little first grade hearts" and being able to walk alongside them as they learn more about their faith is such a rewarding feeling. As a teacher being able to freely and openly talk about a faith that I have come to love so much, is such an important part of my teaching. I look forward to continuing this journey alongside my students now and in the future."

-Maggie Schwartz, MCS

Meeting people where they are



By MEGAN ROBL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF
NORTHERN KANSAS

Dear Friends in Faith,

I'm delighted to share some wonderful news from Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas! As members of our Catholic community, we're called to embody

to ensure that essential services reach those in need.

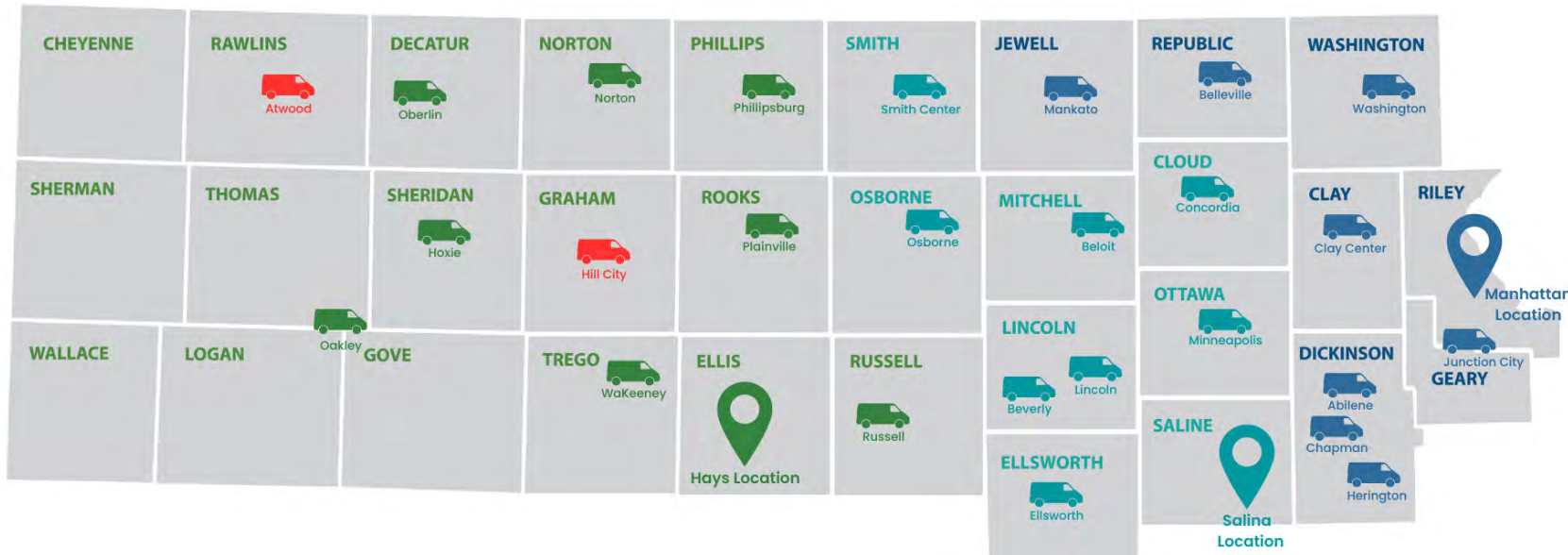
Current outreach locations include Belleville, Beloit, Beverly, Chapman, Clay Center, Concordia, Ellsworth, Herington, Hoxie, Junction City, Lincoln, Mankato, Minneapolis, Norton, Oakley, Oberlin, Osborne, Plainville,

love one another.

This outreach isn't just about material assistance; it's about meeting people where they are by being there for them emotionally and spiritually, too. In addition to material aid, we connect individuals with vital resources such as pregnancy support, counseling

values of solidarity and shared responsibility that define our Catholic faith.

I'm thrilled to announce our plans to extend our outreach further by adding Hill City and Atwood to our service locations in May, with a permanent addition planned for this summer. These additions allow us to provide essential



Christ's love and compassion, especially for those facing challenges. Let's celebrate our shared mission and explore opportunities to serve together.

Did you know that our dedicated team visits these 24 rural communities across our diocese every month? From Oakley to Junction City, we work tirelessly

Russell, Smith Center, WaKeeney, Washington, and Wilson.

At each stop, families receive vital supplies such as shelf-stable food, personal hygiene products, feminine period supplies, diapers and wipes. These items go beyond mere provisions; they uphold the dignity of every person we serve, fulfilling our Gospel mandate to

services and financial assistance. These services address the holistic needs of our neighbors, ensuring they receive comprehensive support.

The support we receive from these communities is truly heartwarming. We collaborate closely with local Catholic parishes, using their parking lots as distribution centers. This partnership underscores the unity and strength we find in community.

Through local volunteers, donated vehicles and fuel, and supplies funded by generous donors, we're able to make a real difference. This collaborative effort reflects the core

support to more families, walking alongside them on their journey toward stability and hope.

As we move forward, I invite you to consider how you can contribute to this important mission. Whether through donations, volunteering your time, or offering prayers, your involvement is crucial. Together, guided by our Catholic faith and united in service, we can continue to spread hope and compassion.

Join us for special outreach events in Hill City and Atwood on May 29, 2024:

Hill City: 11:00 am - 12:00 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary, 110 North 10th Ave.

Atwood: 2:30 pm - 3:30 p.m at Sacred Heart, 508 N Railroad Ave.

For more information on Catholic Charities Outreach Services, visit www.cnks.org/outreach.

The Little Way Intentional Living House

Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Cawker City wants to welcome four young women to their parish for the summer, starting May 10 until August 31. This is an opportunity for four young women to live their faith intentionally with support, friendship and accountability from a community seeking the same thing, to know, love and serve Christ and his Church.

How to Apply:
Contact Ashley LaRocque for an application by calling (785)545-7690 or email at ashley0904@icloud.com

WE ARE HIRING

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CATHOLIC CHURCH, CONCORDIA, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTRY LEADER FOR K-12

- EXPERIENCE PREFERRED, BUT NOT REQUIRED
- MUST BE SELF-MOTIVATED AND HAVE A GOOD RAPPORT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS
- MUST BE A PRACTICING CATHOLIC IN GOOD STANDING.

PLEASE EMAIL RESUME TO FR. JOSEPH KIEFFER AT FRJOSEPHKIEFFER@GMAIL.COM

Save the Date!
**Green Tie
CELEBRATION**

2024 Catholic Charities Annual Fundraiser
SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2024
SALINA, KANSAS
For more information: cnks.org/greentie

WHAT'S HAPPENING

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

Route to go through parts of Nebraska, Kansas this June and July

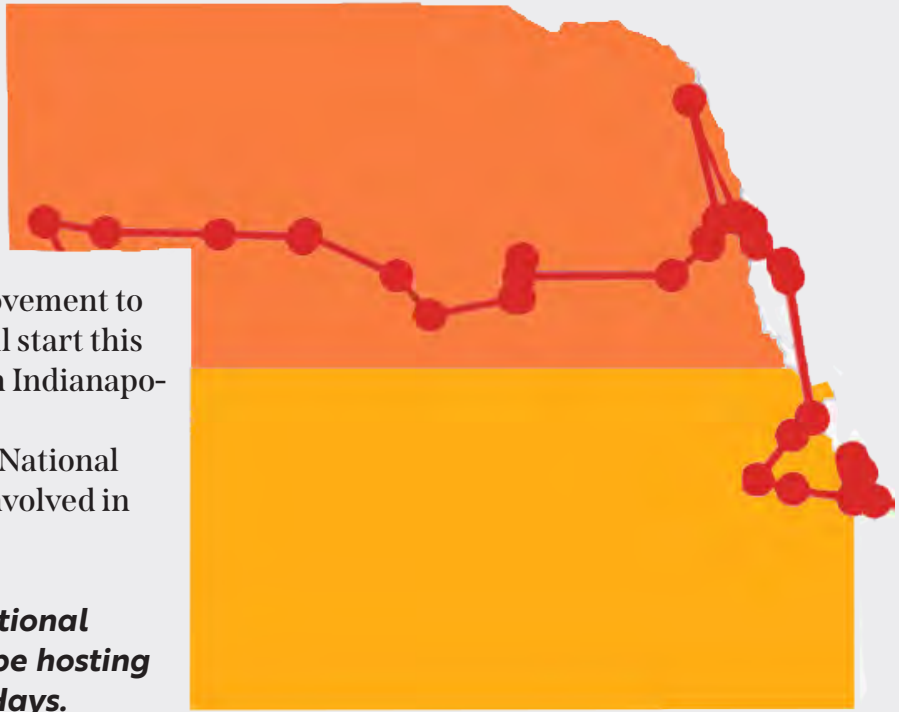
Catholics from all across the United States are invited to take part in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, a movement to accompany Jesus from city to city across the country this summer.

Each of the points on the map indicate a parish that will host a local event to celebrate as Christ in the Eucharist makes His way across the country.

The national pilgrimage is one of a two-part national movement to help the faithful grow closer to Christ. The pilgrimage will start this spring and lead up to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, July 17-21.

Visit eucharisticpilgrimage.org to learn more about the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and to discover how you can get involved in this outpouring of grace!

To help keep the fire of faith alive even past the National Eucharistic Congress, the Diocese of Salina will also be hosting a diocesan Eucharistic Congress this August 9-10 in Hays.



May 7

• Memorial Mass for Deceased Children, 2 p.m., St. Thomas More, Manhattan.

May 8

• Memorial Mass for Deceased Children, 2 p.m., Sacred Heart, Plainville.

May 15

• St. Isidore's Day Celebration Mass, 11 a.m., lunch to follow, St. Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church, Russell.

June 2

• Fr. Don Zimmerman 50th Jubilee Celebration Mass, 3 p.m., St. Thomas More, Manhattan

If you have any questions about an event listed here, please contact the parish/office/school directly.



Congrats, Graduates!

Nearly 100 graduates will be honored across the diocese in May as the five diocesan Catholic high schools hold their commencement exercises. Following are the dates, times and locations of those graduation ceremonies, which will be held during Mass unless otherwise noted.

Beloit-St. John's (9 graduates)

10 a.m. Mass, Sunday, May 12, at St. John the Baptist Church with commencement exercises immediately following in the high school gym.

Tipton Catholic (2 graduates)

10 a.m. Mass, Sunday, May 12, at St. Boniface Church.

Salina-Sacred Heart (40 graduates)

3 p.m. Mass, Sunday, May 12, at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church.

Junction City-St. Francis Xavier (8 graduates)

2 p.m. graduation exercises, Saturday, May 18, at St. Francis Xavier Church.

Hays/TMP-Marian (35 graduates)

1 p.m. Sunday, May 19, Baccalaureate Mass at St. Nicholas of Myra Church, with commencement ceremonies following at 3 p.m. at TMP-Marian's Al Billinger Fieldhouse.

Saint Pio relic veneration hours established



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER
(BELOIT, KS, MARCH 20, 2024)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Beloit, is pleased to announce that veneration hours have been established for the first class relic of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina. The relic, a fragment of gauze stained with blood from Saint Pio's side, is permanently displayed in a side chapel of the church located at 701 E. Court St, Beloit.

Hours of veneration are Monday through Friday, 7 am to 7 pm with Holy Mass being offered Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7 am, and Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 am. Veneration is available on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am to 7 pm with Holy Mass being offered at 6 p.m. on Saturdays and 10 a.m.

on Sundays. In addition, the reliquary will be removed from the side altar every third Sunday of the month providing an opportunity for pilgrims to venerate and touch the relic. For more information see www.stjohns-beloit.org/saint-pio-chapel.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

EUCCHARISTIC CONFERENCE

AUGUST 9 -10, 2024 • HAYS, KANSAS
PRESENTED BY THE COMEAU CATHOLIC CAMPUS CENTER

Catholic Rural Life celebrates 100 years

By DAVID EDELL

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

In conjunction with the national office of Catholic Rural Life, the Catholic Rural Life Office of the Catholic Diocese of Salina held their Rural Life Day Centennial Celebration at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan, on February 29th.

Along with speakers such as Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt (pastor of St. Isidore's), Deacon Ed Souza as emcee, Mr. Mike Beam (Secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture) and Bishop Gerald Vincke, Catherine DiNuzzo gave a keynote address to the 100+ person crowd.

DiNuzzo, a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice, was sought out by the Rural Life Office as a speaker who could address the growing need for mental health information and resources, especially within the agriculture industry. Unfortunately, there has been an increase in the need for mental health resources within the rural community. She spoke pointedly to the realities of anxiety, suicide and the emotional pressures of life in rural areas.

The celebration began with some words from Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt. Fr. Gale, originally from Hays, is the chaplain for St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center and priest supervisor of Seven Dolors, as well as chaplain of Manhattan Catholic Schools. James Ennis, the executive director of Catholic Rural Life, spoke next. Ennis let those in attendance know about the current efforts being undertaken by the National Office of Catholic Rural Life.

Bishop Gerald Vincke offered a special blessing for this occasion. Bishop Vincke's deep connection to rural life and his unwavering dedication to our communities made his presence that night truly meaningful.

Following a fantastic meal prepared by Ricky's Catering of Ha-

nover, the evening's program continued with Kansas Agriculture Secretary Mike Beam addressing the crowd. Beam opened his remarks with praise for the evening's host, Kansas State University.

"It only seems fitting to



Catherine DiNuzzo gives her keynote at the celebration at St. Isidore's.

meet this evening in Manhattan, Kansas, which is home of the country's first land grant university. It's here where our university researchers continue to find ways to improve efficiencies in food production, while doing so in a continuing and enhanced environmentally friendly way. And Kansas is a major ag producing state ..."

Addressing the mental health needs of the agriculture community Beam stated: "And regarding our minds...I'm encouraged there's more awareness of the mental health stress that permeates our rural communities. This seems to be a priority of the Catholic Rural Life's mission and I applaud this initiative. And our staff at the Kansas Department of Agriculture have tried to help with the creation of kansasagstress.gov, intended to provide links to resources for those in need and those seeking to help those in need."

Beam's remarks were a fitting



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Attendees enjoy the speakers at the Rural Life celebration.

lead-in to the night's featured speaker, Catherine Dinuzzo. During her talk, DiNuzzo explained the basics of anxiety, a natural response of the body to outside factors, defined as "the experience of fear, worry, or unease that results from the release of the 'animal brain's' stress hormones even though the 'thinking brain' acknowledges your safety." She used analogies and humor to express the over-arching truth that we are all created good by Our Loving Father and that just because someone experiences anxiety, does not mean that they are bad or flawed. Instead, DiNuzzo made it clear that anxiety does not define a person or does not make them "bad." She emphasized that everyone has the opportunity to invite Christ into the struggles of anxiety. Utilizing our resources, especially through the means of the Church, namely prayer, the Sacraments, and a deep relationship with God are proven ways to cope when anxiety begins to worsen. Even Jesus' own parents, Mary and Joseph, experienced

anxiety. "Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." (Luke 2:48)

The Rural Life Office of the Salina Diocese wants to extend a big "Thank You!" to all of those individuals who helped pull this event off. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to all our sponsors and supporters whose generosity made this event possible. Your commitment to the values of rural life is truly commendable, and we are grateful for your ongoing support. I would like to thank all our board members for volunteering their time for this event and other events sponsored by Rural Life.

If you or a loved one struggle with mental health or need immediate help for thoughts or feelings of suicide, please call the Suicide Prevention Hotline immediately by dialing 9-8-8. For other mental health concerns in the Diocese of Salina, you may contact the Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas office in Salina, Manhattan, or Hays by calling 785-825-0208.

Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina welcomes new CEO

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

After an extensive search, the Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina Board of Directors is pleased to announce Tyler Greenman as Chief Executive Officer. Tyler currently serves as Assistant Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Salina, a position that he has held since 2021.

Originally from Denver, Colorado, Greenman holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from Metropolitan State University of Denver. He went on to earn his master's degree in accounting from the University of Colorado Denver and became a Certified Public Accountant.

A convert to the Catholic faith, Tyler was confirmed in 2003. He and his wife, Laura, are parishion-

ers of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Salina and are proud parents to four beautiful daughters.

"I am excited about Tyler taking the position of CEO for the Catholic Foundation. He brings a unique set of skills to the position that will be immensely invaluable. I look forward to working with him in his new role, and the future of the foundation under his leadership," stated Bishop Gerald Vincke, Diocese of Salina.

Mr. Greenman will officially assume the position of CEO on July 1, 2024, upon the retirement of Katie Platten, who has served as the CEO of the Catholic Foundation since 2020.

Dr. Doug Hinkin of Manhattan, Kansas, board president for the Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina, expressed his gratitude for Katie Platten's exceptional leadership over the years. "Her dedication and tireless efforts have transformed a small idea into a vibrant, active foundation engaging so many generous donors,

schools and parishes around the Diocese of Salina. The attention to detail, long hours spent with attorneys and others to get the paperwork of the foundation in order, and then the unbelievable amount of time she has spent traveling the diocese has been remarkable. She has built a rock-solid foundation for the

future."

Hinkin also expressed excitement about Tyler's appointment, stating, "The board is thrilled to welcome Tyler from the diocesan finance office. He brings experience from investment advising and accounting that will be essential to our operations plus he is familiar with the operations of the diocesan offices and the people of the diocese. We are confident he will grow into an excellent leader and fundraiser for the Foundation."

The Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina invites the community to join them in extending a warm welcome to Tyler Greenman in his new role as CEO and expressing sincere gratitude to Katie Platten for her years of leadership and guidance.



Greenman

Bring the fire of Faith

I have been listening to a song a lot lately: Come Holy Spirit by Matt Mahar. When you listen to that song, a couple of lyrics really stick with you and cause you to do some reflecting. One of those lines repeated throughout the song is the following.

“Father God your will be done, Christ in us your kingdom come, Spirit lead us now as one, set your church on fire again.”

That line has really helped me visualize and understand an important aspect of the Holy Spirit’s role in us and this world. In a world full of division, we know that the Holy Spirit is working to unify the church, and as a unified

BILL Meagher
DIOCESE OF SALINA



church, we are sent out on fire to change the world.

Fire is often viewed negatively, but it serves a necessary and beautiful purpose for all of us as we journey towards spending eternity with God. Fire burns away the dead and allows new growth to happen where it previously couldn’t. It also

purifies things as it burns up the impurities mixed in with the valuable parts. After the fire, you have new growth and purer things.

Fire is uncomfortable, but we should not run from it. We need to embrace its cleansing power in our lives. We should ask the Holy Spirit to show us what parts of our lives are

holding us back from being who we were created to be and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help in eliminating them from our lives. It will probably be a difficult and painful growth opportunity for us since these are often the areas of our lives that we hold onto the tightest, but once we have let them go, we will be much happier.

With Pentecost coming up in a few weeks, please join me in praying that the Holy Spirit may be active in each of our lives and throughout the world. May the Holy Spirit set us on fire and help us be better disciples on a mission to grow in holiness and bring others to Christ.

FertilityCare Services introduces new interns

By LINDY MEYER

The Diocese of Salina FertilityCare Services Center is pleased to announce the addition of five new FertilityCare Practitioner Interns.

Mika Bolton (Manhattan), Amber Davis (Junction City), Samantha Hicks (Beloit), Laura Meyer (Salina) and Julia Taylor (Manhattan) began their 13-month Education Program in March by attending Education Phase I of their training. Lindy Meyer, CFCE served as the program director with Becky Knapp, CFCE from the Diocese of Wichita assisting.

The Creighton Model FertilityCare System is a program that offers couples a high degree of effectiveness to achieve or to avoid

pregnancy. Women of any reproductive age – regular or irregular cycles, breastfeeding, coming off the birth control pill, infertility, or pre-menopause – can effectively use the system. Each woman’s fertility pattern is unique and manageable with the use of the Creighton Model FertilityCare System. In addition, certain medical situations can be evaluated, monitored and managed through the system’s use and the science of NaPro-TECHNOLOGY. With the addition of these interns, the Diocese of Salina now has 14 FertilityCare Practitioners available to serve women and couples throughout the Salina Diocese. For more information visit salinafertilitycare.org.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Mika Bolton, FCPI; Amber Davis, FCPI; Lindy Meyer, CFCE, CFCE; Laura Meyer, FCPI, Samantha Hicks, FCPI, and Julia Taylor, FCPI.

COURTESY PHOTOS

(Middle) Fr. Dana Clark and Bishop Jerry Vincke visit with Lucille Kuhn and Gilbert Augustine after Mass with residents at the Ellis Good Samaritan Center.



COURTESY PHOTO

(Below) Keeley Lowery and Bailey Lowery celebrate Easter with Fr. Curtis Carlson at Our Lady Help of Christians, Antonino.



COURTESY PHOTO

(Below) First communion at Immaculate Conception, Grinnell: Camdyn Prewo, Fr. James Thomas, Regan Dickman and Leona Dickman, catechist.



COURTESY PHOTO



(Left) A core group of St. Francis Xavier parishioners and Fr. Kerry Ninemire completed the series of the guided video presentation “Jesus and the Eucharist.” It is the scriptural and theological proof of Jesus’ real presence. The videos are sponsored by the USCCB as part of a 3-year program called EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL. Several additional parishioners completed the series online where it is still available on Formed or the Salina Diocese website.

Heartland Parishes host Lenten Mission



COURTESY PHOTO

Fr. Damian Richards and Fr. Richard Daise speak with Cy Kellett during this year's Lenten Mission.

By ALLISON OCHOA
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The Lenten season provided ample opportunities for individuals across the Diocese of Salina to reflect, pray, and grow in knowledge of their Catholic faith. In Hays, the Heartland Parishes – a collaboration of six Ellis County parishes – held the annual Heartland Parishes' Lenten Mission March 18-20. The three-night event hosted at St. Joseph Parish was designed to inspire participants to dive more deeply into their Lenten experience.

This year, the mission featured speaker Cy Kellett, host of Catholic Answers Live, a daily, two-hour radio program dedicated to Catholic apologetics and evangelization. Over the course of his three presentations, Kellett focused on the cycle of the Christian life, what it means to be fully human, and St. Peter as a model for Christian lives.

In his first presentation, Kellett shared the four steps typical of the Christian life. "The first step is meeting Jesus," he explained. "Sometimes this happens over a long period of time and other times it's brief. It can happen through a person, a group of people, an event or program or a process.

"The second step is more important – more crucial – than the first, and that is to get up and follow him. The imitation of Christ is what we're talking about when we talk about conversion: we pray like he prayed, we respond like he responded, and we forgive like he forgave. Allow yourself to be converted!"

Step three, Communion with Christ, is a shared life of love with Jesus. This source and summit of the Catholic faith,

Kellett explained, is what many societies were based on prior to the Protestant Reformation. The communion of step three leads to the final step of the cycle which is going on a mission.

"If you're baptized and have received your First Communion, have been confirmed, and have a relationship of love with Jesus Christ, you're a missionary. We have to share and have to say the name of Jesus. When you share Christ with someone else, they can begin on that cycle of the Christian life and the cycle starts anew for you."

On nights two and three of the mission, Kellett examined the life of St. Peter. He also shared his perspective of the progress of the modern world.

Kellett explained that Jesus started Catholicism as a liturgical religion but during the Protestant Reformation this liturgical world was lost. During the next 200 years, people started to separate Jesus from God. In the early 19th century, he continued, people began losing contact with God.

"Then in the 1950s, the world turned on the television and we've never turned it off," he said. "Now the average student spends seven hours a day or more looking at a screen. We've had the loss of the liturgical church, the loss of Jesus, and we've lost contact with God. Now we've lost contact with reality. We experience the world through instruments, tools and theories, but we've lost touch with reality.

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Lord, in your infinite mercy, we come before you seeking forgiveness and healing for all those who have been harmed by the scourge of sexual abuse. We lift up to you the victims, the survivors, and all those who carry the burden of this injustice. May your light shine upon them, bringing comfort to their wounded souls and consolation to their hearts.

We pray that your Church may be a beacon of hope and a source of healing for all those who have suffered. Help us to foster a culture of protection, love, and respect for every individual, especially the most vulnerable among us.

May our prayers offer solace to the broken-hearted and justice to the oppressed. Through the intercession of Our Lady Mother of Mercy, may all who have been affected by sexual abuse find peace in your loving embrace.

We make this prayer in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

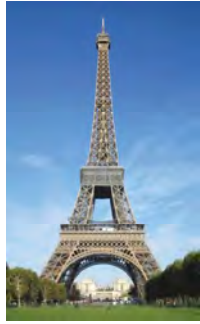
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Fr. Ben Cameron celebrates Lenten Mission at Grinnell

By LEONA DICKMAN

Grinnell's Immaculate Conception Church hosted this year's Lenten Mission for the three Gove County Catholic Parishes of Park, Grainfield and Grinnell. Fr. Ben Cameron of the Fathers of Mercy celebrated the event with daily Mass and five nights of Confession before and after his talks on "The Holy

Eucharist: "Shadows and Fulfillment," Sunday through Thursday, March 17-21st.

The event drew crowds throughout the week.

On Wednesday night, the



COURTESY PHOTO

Fr. Ben Cameron of the Fathers Of Mercy presides at the closing mass of the mission while Taryn Dickman and grandmother Leona Dickman lead songs on March 21.

CCD kids heard Fr. Ben explain the Mass, with historical background and easy to understand language. The last night was another big crowd for the closing Mass and talk, followed by a free meal for all in attendance.

Fr. Ben Cameron came from the Fathers of Mercy out of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Their primary apostolate is to conduct parish missions and retreats throughout the U. S., Canada and Australia.

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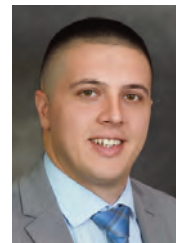
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BAPTISMS

Braden John Bange, son of Clayton and Isabel (Rosales) Bange, was baptized March 16, 2024, by Father Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish, Hays.

Braxton Alex Bange, son of Clayton and Isabel (Rosales) Bange, was baptized March 16, 2024, by Father Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish, Hays.

Myah Mae Beam, daughter of Tyler and Nicholl (Weigel) Beam, was baptized March 17, 2024, by Father Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish, Hays.

Wade Ryan Bergling, son of Blake and Hayley (Pletcher) Bergling, was baptized March 9, 2024, by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish, Ellis.

Rosalia Marie Brummer, daughter of Logan and Gemma Brummer, was baptized March 24, 2024, by Father Andrew Rockers at St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit.

Isaiah Thomas Dlabal, son of Joshua and Brenna Dlabal, was baptized March 31, 2024, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit.

Maia Joy Gunderson, daughter of Thomas and Tanya Gunderson, was baptized March 10, 2024, by Father Andrew Rockers at St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit.

Asher Banks Honas, son of Keegan Honas and Hannah Pletcher, was baptized March 9, 2024, by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish, Ellis.

Liam Thomas Kennedy-Cox, son of Caydren Cox and Kara Kennedy,

was baptized March 31, 2024, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit.

Thaddeus Lynn Lambert, son of Taylor and Madeleine (Singleton) Lambert, was baptized March 17, 2024, by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish, Ellis.

Vance Wayne Litton, son of Taner and Leanne Litton, was baptized March 31, 2024, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit.

Bridget Kathleen Loving, daughter of Shane and Rachel (Kingsley) Loving, was baptized March 16, 2024, by Father Nick Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Hays.

Aria Sophia Moya, daughter of Buddy and Chelsey Bohemier, was baptized March 17, 2024, by Deacon Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish, Manhattan.

Elias Xavier Nguyen, son of Keith and Sarah Nguyen, was baptized March 10,

2024, by Deacon Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish, Manhattan.

Colton Pruitt Price, son of Brian and Lisa Price, was baptized March 23, 2024, by Father Gale Hamerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center, Manhattan.

Legend Sacred, son of Levi Brown and Kayla Galloway, was baptized March 10, 2024, by Father Peter O'Donnell at St. Michael Parish, Chapman. Godparents are Jose Davies and Kaitlynn Mauricio.

Rosaline Marie Tatro, daughter of Travis and Silvia Tatro, was baptized March 10, 2024, by Deacon Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish, Manhattan.

Skyla Victoria Trickey, daughter of Weston and Sarah Trickey, was baptized March 9, 2024, by Father Gale Hamerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center, Manhattan.

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FUNERALS

Rita F. Alexander, 95, died March 16, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 22 at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Clifton. Father Steven Heina and Father Joseph Kieffer presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Clifton.

Patricia Ann Baalman, 75, Grinnell, died March 21, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 27 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Grinnell. Father James Thomas presided. Burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

Rose Marie (Weber) Blasing, 91, died March 2, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 9 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Father Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

Donald "Donnie" Boden, 63, died February 17, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 23 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Father Andrew Rockers presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

Rebecca "Becca" Lorene Brough, 39, died March 3, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 9 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Father Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial in Ellinwood Cemetery, Ellinwood.

Noah Christian Browning, infant, died March 8, 2024. Memorial Service was celebrated March 16 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Father Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

Vernon A. Chavey, 86, died March 12, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 18 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Clyde. Father Steven Heina presided. Burial in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, St. Joseph, Kansas.

Clarence Hubert "Sonny" Ehm, Jr., 80, died February 24, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 2 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Father Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

William Anthony Eilert, 35, died February 17, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 21 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Father Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

Jerold W. "Jerry" Frakes, 83, Topeka, died January 11, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 15 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Father Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

Theresa M. Gottschalk, 82, died March 8, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 12 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Father Curtis Carlson, OFM Cap. presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery.

John Anthony Grant, 92, died February 24, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 11 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Father Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

Elizabeth "Betty" (Gaschler) Honas, 88, died March 20, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 27 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Father Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

Herman R. Kastner, 95, died March 13, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 20 at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan. Father Frank Coady and Father Don Zimmerman presided. Interment in Sunrise Cemetery, Manhattan.

Donald L. "Duke" Kuhn, 75, died March 23, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 27 at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays. Father Nick Parker presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Peggy Jean Lee, 95, Hays, died February 29, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 6 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Father Richard Daise presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery.

Donna Leiker, 76, died March 23, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 27 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Munjor. Father Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery, Munjor.

Marilyn J. Levendofsky, 86, died February 29, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 9 at St. Edward Parish in Belleville. Father Joseph Kieffer presided. Burial in St. Josaphat Cemetery near Republic.

Verlin Francis "Frank" Miller, 83, Victoria, died February 22, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 13 at St. Catherine Parish in Catharine. Father Curtis Carlson, OFM Cap. presided. Burial in St. Catherine Cemetery.

Gladys V. Pfeifer, 88, Victoria, died February 1, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 6 at The Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria. Father James Moster, OFM Cap. presided. Burial in St. Ann Cemetery, Walker.

Bruce Carl Spellman, 72, died March 9, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 15 by Father Frank Coady and Father Donald Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan. Interment in Sunrise Cemetery, Manhattan.

Peggy Ann Stenstrom, 93, White City, died March 7, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 14 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Father Frank Coady presided. Burial in White City Cemetery, White City.

Carla Jeanne Struckhoff, 90, Grinnell, died March 23, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 26 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Grinnell. Father James Thomas and Father Brian Lager presided. Burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

Lawrence D. Tholen, 94, Grinnell, died March 18, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 22 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Grinnell. Father Michael Elan and Father James Thomas presided. Burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

Katherine Urban, 92, died March 24, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated April 2 at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays. Most Rev. Gerald Vincke presided. Burial in Holy Cross Cemetery, Pfeifer.

Timothy "Tim" Kreigh Walter, 72, died February 1, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 10 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Cawker City. Father Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery.

Mildred Walters, 98, died March 11, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 16 at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays. Father Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Helen Frances Werth, 90, died April 1, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated April 5 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Father Curtis Carlson, OFM Cap., Father Alvin Werth, Father Don Zimmerman and Father Daryl Olmstead presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Leland Joseph Ziegler, 75, died March 11, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 15 at St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Hoxie. Father Vincent Thu Laing and Father Brian Lager presided. Burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Park.


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CELEBRATING MOTHERHOOD

By LORI HARLAN

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Rebecca Eaves-Price walked into her doctor's office at 24 weeks pregnant in the fall of 2020.

She walked in like any expectant mother: nervous and excited to have her ultrasound to find out more about her first baby. She walked out of that appointment a different kind of mother.

The next few days brought countless scans, a fetal MRI and a fetal echocardiogram. The scans revealed that Rebecca's son, Anderson, had suffered a stroke in utero. Anderson probably wouldn't have movement on the left side of his body. He also had some type of heart defect.

Through a computer screen, Rebecca and her husband Parker - who had been married for less than a year - heard these words: "This baby will have no quality of life, so you should consider termination. But if you terminate, you need to do it quickly or you'll have to go to another state."

Rebecca and Parker were firm. Termination was not an option. Rebecca looks back on those days of uncertainty and knows what made the difference. "More than anything, our faith kept Parker and I grounded. Nothing that

was happening was unknown to God," Rebecca said. "All of this was in His plan, and it was for His glory and His good. While we didn't always know what was going on, He always did."

On the morning of December 23, 2020, as the operating room staff sang Christmas carols, Rebecca delivered Anderson, who tipped the scale at just under four pounds. There was a noise more meaningful than any Christmas carol. Anderson was crying.

A few days later, the doctors somberly announced that Anderson had Trisomy 21, more commonly known as Down Syndrome. Rebecca was thrilled. Until that moment, it was possible Anderson had a different trisomy that would quickly be fatal. So upon hearing her son had Down Syndrome, she exclaimed, "That's great!"

Her little boy was going to live. "Weirdly enough, I always had a feeling he was going to be okay," Rebecca explains. "I had this peace that he was going to be okay, no matter what."

Anderson spent 68 days in the NICU at Overland Park Regional Medical Center. "When you are 22 years old and you have a kid in the NICU, you grow up really fast, and that goes for your faith, too," Rebecca says. When he was nine months old, Anderson had open heart surgery to repair an atrioventricular septal defect. He spent 12 days in the hospital.

"More than anything, walking through this showed me that the experiences I had growing up were not what everybody had," Rebecca says. "Being Anderson's mom opened my eyes to see the Church as universal and

that everyone's experiences are valuable and worthy and important. Really, I feel like now I can see people and understand their pain more easily."

Anderson's list of diagnoses might seem overwhelming: Down syndrome, schizencephaly, cerebral palsy, prenatal stroke, epilepsy, and hydrocephalus. But "discouraged" is not in Rebecca's vocabulary.

"People don't understand - I didn't understand - how much more goes into being the parent of a disabled kid," Rebecca explains. "You are the mom, the doctor, the pharmacist, the insurance advocate, the therapist. Other people don't know how to interact with disabled kids, so you have to give 100 percent and be on your A-game all the time ... Nothing is simple. There is so much planning."

Rebecca's sacrificial love doesn't go unnoticed, especially by her husband. "Rebecca's selflessness is what I admire most," Parker says. "No matter what the situation, she will fight for what is right for Anderson, even if it is hard for her." Every mother has moments of immense pride, and that's no different for Rebecca.

"I'm the proudest when I see Anderson experience the world in his own way," Rebecca explains with a beaming smile. "He has figured out how to roll or crawl across the room in his own way. He is learning how to access the world in ways we would have never thought of."

Rebecca realizes that God gave her the son she needed, and she



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Rebecca, Parker and Anderson on World Down Syndrome Day, March 2024

says that is true for every family that includes a disabled child.

"Your life will never look like what you imagined, and it will always be different, but a different life isn't a bad life. The life that you will have will be the one that you didn't know you needed. And it will be so great."

Rebecca has also seen how much work needs to be done to make the world and the Church more inclusive, accessible and genuinely pro-life.

"More intentional effort to be inclusive is always needed. It helps make all families feel welcome," Rebecca asserts. "Accessibility plays a huge part in how present we can be at church and for the Mass. Anderson deserves to be able to access the church."

"I want people to know Anderson is disabled and not be afraid to say that. His life will look different, but a different life isn't a bad life or a life that is less valuable. His worth doesn't come from milestones and achievements - he has worth because he is human. It is okay for him to be who he is and he is disabled."



SAINT GIANNA, PATRON SAINT OF MOTHERS

By GIANNA HORINEK

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Rebecca Eaves-Price walked into her doctor's office St. Gianna was born in Magenta, Italy on October 4, 1922. She was the tenth child of Alberto and Maria Beretta's 13 children. As a young girl she really embraced her faith taught by her devout parents and learned the importance of prayer. Gianna Beretta saw life as a wonderful gift from God.

In 1942 Gianna began her studies in Milan pursuing a career in medicine. While in college she loved to go skiing and enjoyed climbing mountains, but above all she continued to put her faith first in her life. She became a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and pursued her faith by serving the poor and elderly. Gianna was also a supporter of Catholic Action, a movement of lay Catho-

lics dedicated to spreading the teachings of the Church. She graduated from the University of Pavia in 1949 with a degree in medicine and surgery. Then in 1950 she opened a medical office in Mesero near her home town of Magenta. In 1952 she went to the University of Milan to specialize in pediatrics and grew a great devotion to attend to mothers and babies. Gianna discerned going on a mission to serve people with her brother, but was convinced otherwise because of her poor health. Finally she discerned that her vocation was married life and proclaimed it was a blessing from God. She met Pietro Molla in December of 1954 and they got married in September of the following year. Gianna wrote to her fiance before the wedding, "Love is the most beautiful sentiment that the Lord has put into

the souls of men and women." The next four years after they were married the Mollas were blessed with three children. When Gianna was about two months pregnant with her fourth child a tumor was discovered in her uterus. She was then given the choice to abort the baby or take the risk of removing the tumor and continuing the pregnancy. The doctor performed the surgery and Gianna carried the child for seven more months. She begged God to spare the child of all pain and ensure a safe delivery. Gianna told her family, "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate; choose the child. I insist on it." On April 21, 1962 Gianna Emanuela was born, and only a week later her mother passed away. It is said that as she was enduring her last sufferings she was calling out, "Jesus, I love



you." Gianna was only 39 years old. She was beatified on April 24, 1994 and canonized by Pope St. John Paul II on May 16, 2004. Her husband and all of her children were there, making him the first husband to attend the canonization of his wife. St. Gianna's feast day is on April 28 and she is the patron saint of mothers, unborn children and physicians.

Saint Gianna, pray for us!