



# THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

Oct. 25, 2024

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

## INSIDE:

### PRAYING FOR THE POOR SOULS IN PURGATORY

· Remembering the faithfully departed.

Page 3



### FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

· Schmeidler family's story of choosing life for their daughter Juliette, featured above with Mary "May-May." Page 4

### SPOTLIGHT ON VOCATIONS

· Seminarian updates, Sister Mary Solanus reflects and more. Pages 6-7

### RESPECT LIFE RETREAT

· Students reflect on dignity of every person at fourth annual retreat.

Page 10

### LEAVING A LEGACY

· Diocese remembers the life of Fr. Charles Steier.

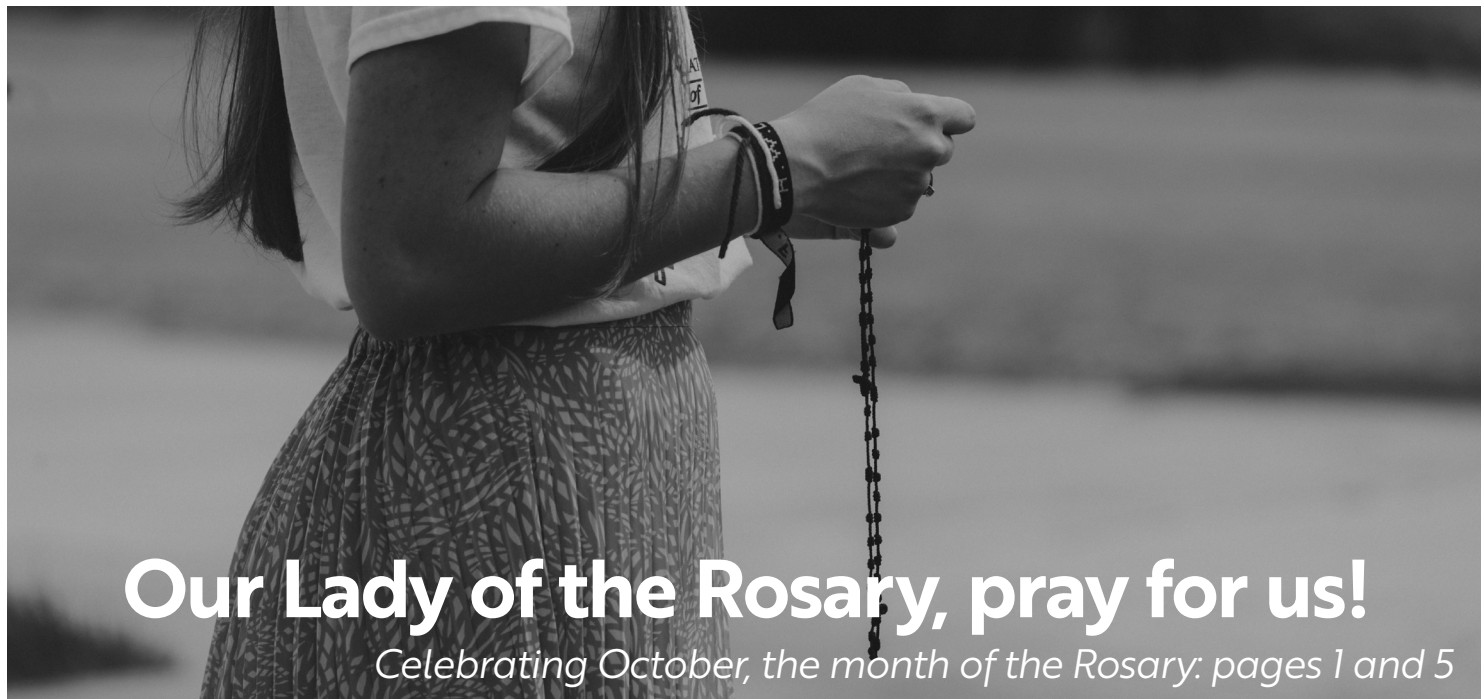
Page 12

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## Monthly rosary connects family and community

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Praying the rosary together as a family is special for Lance and Jada Sharp.

Parents of five children ages 7 to 20, the Sharps think it's a perfect way to celebrate their Catholic faith together while saying a beautiful prayer.

So the couple decided to help connect others to our Mother Mary.

On every first Sunday of the month this year, the Sharps have hosted a potluck dinner at a large limestone building in Leonardville, a small town in Riley County about 30 miles north of Junction City.

As potlucks go, the food is always good. The fellowship is great. And the feature attraction keeps people coming back month after month.

Following the meal, folks gather together to pray the rosary with intentions for families and marriages.

Jada got the idea off a Catholic YouTube channel and decided to give it a try in their hometown.

The Sharps are members of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in nearby Clay Center, but they own a large, two-story venue called the Sikes Building in Leonardville.

It seemed like the ideal location to

gather people to eat and converse and pray. Thus, the Rosary Dinner at Sikes was born.

The first attempt in January of this year brought about 10 to 15 people together with the majority of them being the Sharp family.

Jada said they decided to try it for a year "and see what kind of response we got."

The response has

October, it was a children's group ages 5 to 10 years who served as leaders. With May being the Month of Mary, children also presented roses to the Blessed Virgin after the rosary.

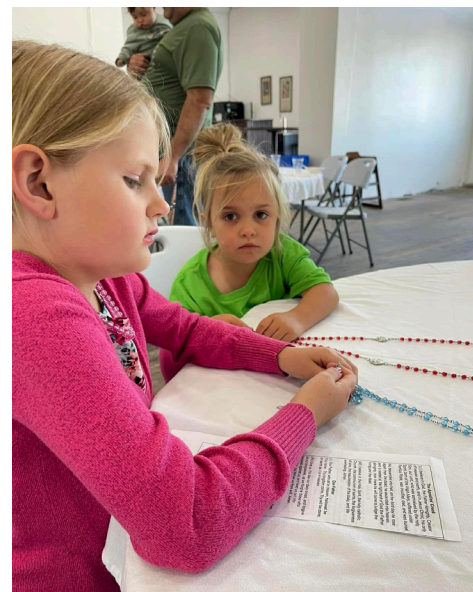
The Sharps held the July rosary dinner at their farm, and kids of all ages enjoyed the outdoors, including

playing on a huge waterslide. However, when it came time to pray, everyone showed up on time and shared space on chairs or a spot on the lawn.

The leader of the rosary on that particular evening was Amanda Speltz, a convert to Catholicism who said she "didn't even start praying the rosary independently until about a year and a half ago."

Amanda and her husband, Chris, are the parents of six young children ages 10 years to 10 months. They

COURTESY PHOTO



**Kinzie Sharp, 7, leads a decade of the rosary in May, setting a good example for 5-year-old Kora Speltz.**



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

**Gabe Bergmann, Clay Center, holds his two-year-old son, Henry, who holds tight to his rosary, during the July Rosary Dinner at the Lance and Jada Sharp farm near Leonardville.**

been encouraging. As word spread, more people began showing up month after month.

By September, about 40 people attended the rosary dinner, representing seven different area parishes.

"That was refreshing to see people from that many parishes," Jada said. "This is about fellowship. You don't have to be from any specific parish to participate."

A different family or group leads the rosary each month, and in May and

thought it was important to start saying the rosary as a family and now do so at least once a week.

The dinner rosaries let her children interact with other Catholics their age – and of all ages.

"I am hoping other young families get involved, too," Amanda said. "It helps with building faith within your own family."

The Sharps place notices in their church bulletin as well as bulletins in the three parishes in Manhattan. They also have made a Facebook page to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# The dead, and the election

November is the month when the Church especially remembers those who have gone before us, inviting us to reflect on the lives they lived and the legacies they left behind. This time of remembrance coincides with our national election on the first Tuesday of the month, a moment that calls us to make choices that impact our nation and future.

As we honor the memory of those who have passed, we are inevitably prompted to consider our own mortality. This awareness can lead us to live more intentionally and compassionately, shaping our decisions with a sense of urgency and purpose by following Jesus, the Lord of Life. However, the election season often brings division, fear, anger, and judgment, drawing us away from our Catholic values that should guide our actions.

As Catholics and Americans, we are blessed to participate in our nation's political life, where our freedoms respect the dignity of individuals and allow us to come together for the common good. Yet, this civic engagement increasingly feels like a time of anxiety and spiritual trial.

Political rhetoric is increasingly angry, seeking to motivate primarily through division and hatred. Fear can be an effective tool for raising money. The most heated arguments online often get the most clicks. (Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.)

Every choice we make, both in life and at the ballot box, can and should reflect the dignity and worth of every person, reminding us of the fragility of life and the importance of living out our Catholic faith always.

A story I once heard from a Benedictine monk highlights this well. In his community, a priest was diagnosed with terminal cancer. A couple of priests with differing views came to

talk with him. The priest said to them, "I noticed that you have been much kinder to me ever since I was diagnosed with cancer and that I am going to die in a short time. But the truth is, we are all dying."

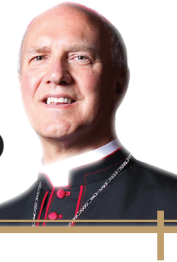
The Bishops of the United States published a guide several years ago, called *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, that we can look at in light of the upcoming election. It states:

"The threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone. Other grave threats to the life and dignity of the human person include euthanasia, gun violence, terrorism, the death penalty, and human trafficking. There is also the redefinition of marriage and gender, threats to religious freedom at home and abroad, lack of justice for the poor, the suffering of migrants and refugees, wars and famines around the world, racism, the need for greater access to healthcare and education, care for our common home, and more. All threaten the dignity of the human person.

While the bishops help form the laity in accordance with basic principles, they do not tell the laity to vote for particular candidates. It is the laity's responsibility to form their consciences and grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ.

Conscience is "a judgment of reason" by which one determines whether an

**GERALD  
Vincke**  
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



## BISHOP'S CALENDAR

### November

- 1 All Saints Day, Chancery closed
- 3 Anniversary Mass, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Salina, 2 p.m.
- 7 Memorial Mass for Deceased Priests, S.H. Cathedral, Salina, noon.
- 8 Mass, Catholic Schools Teacher Institute, S.H. Cathedral, Salina, 9 a.m.
- 9-15 USCCB General Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland.
- 24 Immaculate Heart of Mary Day of Blessing, Hays, Mass at 3 p.m.
- 28-29 Thanksgiving, Chancery closed.

action is right or wrong (See Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1778). It does not allow us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere "feeling." Conscience—properly formed according to God's revelation and the teaching of the Church—is a means by which one listens to God and discerns how to act in accordance with the truth.

The truth is something we receive, not something we make. We can only judge using the conscience we have, but our judgments do not make things true."

Please form your consciences, and most of all pray. As St. Padre Pio said, "Today's society does not pray. That is why it is falling apart."

+ Gerald L. Vincke

The Most Rev. Gerald L. Vincke  
Bishop of Salina

**Voters can become more informed about local candidates by viewing policy questions and candidates' answers on the Kansas Catholic Conference website. Visit [KansasCatholic.org](http://KansasCatholic.org) and click on the RESOURCES tab for more details.**



*Noviembre es el mes en que la Iglesia recuerda de manera especial a aquellos que nos han precedido, invitándonos a reflexionar sobre la vida que vivieron y los legados que dejaron. Este tiempo de conmemoración coincide con nuestra elección nacional el primer martes del mes, un momento que nos llama a tomar decisiones que impactan nuestra nación y futuro.*

*El honrar la memoria de aquellos que han partido nos lleva inevitablemente a considerar nuestra propia mortalidad. Este conocimiento puede llevarnos a vivir de manera compasiva y con mayor intención, moldeando nuestras decisiones con sentido de urgencia y propósito al seguir a Jesús, el Dios de Vida. Sin embargo, la temporada electoral a menudo trae división, miedo, ira y juicio, alejándonos de nuestros valores católicos que deberían guiar nuestras acciones.*

*Como católicos y estadounidenses, somos bendecidos de poder participar en la vida política de nuestra nación, donde nuestras libertades respetan la dignidad de los individuos y nos permiten unirnos por el bien común. Sin embargo, este compromiso cívico se siente cada vez más como un tiempo de ansiedad y prueba espiritual.*

*La ira en la retórica política continua en aumento, buscando motivar principalmente a través de la división y el odio. El miedo puede ser una herramienta efectiva para recaudar fondos. Los argumentos más acalorados en línea suelen recibir*

*más clics. (Formando Consciences para una Ciudadanía Fiel).*

*Cada elección que hacemos, tanto en la vida como en la urna, puede y debe reflejar la dignidad y el valor de cada persona, recordándonos la fragilidad de la vida y la importancia de vivir nuestra fe católica en todo momento.*

*Una historia que una vez escuché de un monje benedictino destaca esto bien. Un sacerdote fue diagnosticado con cáncer terminal en su comunidad. Unos sacerdotes con opiniones diferentes vinieron a hablar con él. El sacerdote les dijo: "He notado que han sido mucho más amables conmigo desde que fui diagnosticado con cáncer y que voy a morir en poco tiempo. Pero la verdad es que todos estamos muriendo".*

*Los Obispos de los Estados Unidos publicaron hace varios años una guía llamada Formando Consciences para una Ciudadanía Fiel, que podemos revisar en luz de las próximas elecciones. Afirma:*

*"La amenaza del aborto sigue siendo nuestra prioridad preeminente porque ataca directamente a nuestros hermanos y hermanas más vulnerables y sin voz y destruye más de un millón de vidas al año solo en nuestro país. Otras amenazas graves a la vida y la dignidad de la persona humana incluyen la eutanasia, la violencia armada, el terrorismo, la pena de muerte y la trata de personas. También está la redefinición del matrimonio y del género, las amenazas a la libertad religiosa en casa y en el extranjero, la falta de*

*justicia para los pobres, el sufrimiento de migrantes y refugiados, guerras y hambrunas en todo el mundo, el racismo, la necesidad de un mayor acceso a la atención médica y la educación, el cuidado de nuestro hogar común, y más. Todas amenazan la dignidad de la persona humana.*

*Mientras los obispos ayudan a formar a los laicos de acuerdo con principios básicos, no le dicen a los laicos que voten por candidatos particulares. Es responsabilidad de los laicos formar sus consciencias y crecer en la virtud de la prudencia para abordar los muchos y variados problemas del día con la mente de Cristo.*

*La conciencia es "un juicio de la razón" por el cual se determina si una acción es correcta o incorrecta (ver Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, n.º 1778). No nos permite justificar hacer lo que queramos, ni es un mero "sentimiento". La conciencia—formada adecuadamente de acuerdo con la revelación de Dios y la enseñanza de la Iglesia—es un medio por el cual se escucha a Dios y se discierne cómo actuar de acuerdo con la verdad.*

*La verdad es algo que recibimos, no algo que hacemos. Sólo podemos juzgar utilizando la conciencia que tenemos, pero nuestros juicios no hacen las cosas verdaderas".*

*Por favor, formen sus consciencias y, sobre todo, oren. Como dijo san Padre Pío: "La sociedad de hoy no reza. Por eso se está desmoronando".*

# The power of prayer for the souls in purgatory

November, often called the month of the Holy Souls, is a special time in the Church's liturgical calendar when we remember and pray for the souls of the faithful departed, particularly those in purgatory. This is a deeply meaningful practice rooted in the belief that our prayers can assist these souls on their journey toward the fullness of heaven.

As Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen so beautifully stated, "As we enter heaven, we will see them, so many of them coming towards us and thanking us. We will ask who they are, and they will say a poor soul you prayed for in purgatory." This powerful image invites us to reflect on the unseen yet profound connection between our prayers and the souls who long for the beatific vision of God.

In Catholic teaching, purgatory is a temporary state of purification for souls who have died in God's grace but still need to be cleansed of venial sins or the temporal punishment due to sin. It is not a place of eternal suffering but one of merciful purification. These souls are assured of their eventual entrance into heaven, but they rely on our prayers, sacrifices and acts of charity to speed their journey.

Fulton Sheen's words remind us that our prayers for the dead are not just a pious tradition but a real and effective way to help those in need. When we pray for the souls in purgatory, we become instruments of God's mercy. In a mysterious yet tangible way, our prayers reach beyond the limits of time and

space to aid these souls in their final purification.

During November, the Church encourages us to remember the faithful departed in a special way. Attending Mass, offering your intentions for the dead and praying the Rosary are profound ways to assist these souls. Visiting a cemetery to pray for the deceased is another longstanding tradition during this month, especially the first eight days of November, when the Church offers special indulgences for those who visit a cemetery to pray for the deceased.

But why is it important to pray for these souls? The answer lies in the understanding of the communion of saints. As members of the Body of Christ, we are all interconnected—those in heaven, on earth and in purgatory. Our prayers for the dead are an expression of this communion, a way of living out our call to love and charity toward one another. While we may not see the immediate effects of our prayers, we can trust that God in His infinite mercy hears and applies them where they are most needed.

Imagine the joy of entering heaven, as Archbishop Sheen described, and being greeted by those who have been freed from purgatory because of our prayers. What a beautiful fulfillment of Christ's com-

mand to love one another! The souls we assist with our prayers will one day intercede for us in heaven, creating an unbroken bond of charity that spans eternity.

As we journey through this month of November, let's take the time to teach our children and grandchildren this important tradition. Have them join you in praying for the souls of all the dearly departed! If you are anything like me, you will one day, too soon, need these prayers!

May all those who have died, especially this past year, share in the peace, joy and happiness of eternal life in heaven with God.

**BILL Meagher**  
DIOCESE OF SALINA



FAMILY PRAYER

## FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

O most gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on the souls of Thy departed servants. Be not severe in Thy judgments, but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames. And do Thou, O Merciful Savior, send Thy holy angels to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Amen.

Cut this out and pray with your family!



# Encountering the Lord through simple words

Hello lovely folks! Welcome, and thank you for reading The Register.

Since I was young, I've always had a love for words. And the Word. It's a blessing for me to be finally able to combine those two loves as a Catholic editor, and I couldn't do it without your support.

I want to reflect on some words I've received—words that made God, and my identity as His beloved daughter, known to me in beautiful, tangible ways. As we head into the busy holiday time of year, it's important to recognize such blessings in our lives.

One such blessing of words for me comes from my parents. They continue to tell me, even when I mess up, "We love you, no matter what."

Their loving support in my life has been unmatched. God is so good for family. I know so many of mine are reading this. One relative said that even her non-Catholic mother-in-law reads this paper, just to see my name.

Another gift of words that made me encounter Him comes from a couple of years ago, when I was living in a new city and in need of some good friendships.

Through some summer mission acquaintances, I met a lovely Catholic couple who embody Christian hospitality. I'll never forget one encounter I had with them last fall. I had spent the evening at their home and was about to leave. I said goodbye at the doorway, and then, unexpectedly, they both hugged me, and the dad said, "You're as welcome here as anyone."

And they were as good as their words, often inviting me over for Sunday suppers with their children and grandchildren, as if I were one of their own. Their

abundant kindness helped me see the depths of love and welcome we are all meant to extend to the people around us and especially those in need.

Our words don't always have to be profound or deeply emotional, or even spoken, to make an impact, either. And this brings me to another great blessing of words in my life.

I grew up reading The Register. I would read stories of things like Jr. CYO Camp and kids just like me who were having fun at Catholic events. Those stories were the starting-points for me becoming involved in those same events later on.

There was no specific line or word that stirred my heart. Rather, the entire witness of the people in the stories I read, combined with the witness of the people around me, made me want to live a holy life.

The communications team for our diocese has expanded since I first read this paper. We now bring people stories of Catholic living through *faith* Magazine, the podcasts and social media. Some things have changed, but the mission is still the same. We pray that our words help you encounter Christ.

And, after encountering Him, may you help more people encounter Him, too.

You never know when your words are going to bring Christ to someone in need. A

**LORI Leiszler**  
EDITOR OF THE REGISTER



kind word and a smile—even an invite to break bread with you—goes a long way. At least in my life, so many small words have added up to a lot, making me feel fully known and loved and at home, and pointing me towards Him.

Included in this month's Register you'll notice an envelope for the Communications and Publications Drive. Please consider joining us in our mission. Your support helps us share simple words to people in need—and hopefully bring them to encounter Christ.

I invite you to reflect and thank God today, for the words that have brought joy to your life and for the people who have said them.

*Cor ad cor loquitur,*

*Lori*

## NOVEMBER 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 intentions:

We pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community and receive peace and consolation from the Holy Spirit.

### Diocesan intentions:

We pray for all those who have died, especially this past year, that they may share in the peace, joy and happiness of eternal life in heaven with God.

# Fearfully and wonderfully made

TESTIMONY BY EMILY SCHMEIDLER, ADAPTED BY HER MOTHER-IN-LAW ELIZABETH SCHMEIDLER  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

I'll never forget how my hands trembled as I lifted up the home pregnancy test to discover it was positive! Laughing with joy, I flew into my husband Roy's arms and told him we were going to be parents. Our desire to have a marriage and family rooted in our Catholic faith had come to fruition and we couldn't have been happier.

From that moment on, we prayed for our little baby and anxiously awaited the 20-week ultrasound which would give us a glimpse of our little one, whose gender we wanted to keep a surprise. The ultrasound tech carefully examined the baby, admitting she skipped over a few things because she couldn't get a great picture, but then said everything looked good and left the room. I breathed a sigh of relief, just before the tech came back with the doctor. My heart sank. Something was wrong.

The doctor said our baby had a cyst on the brain, was extremely small, and both arms were potentially missing bones and fingers, signifying a high chance that heart defects were present and that the baby could have a variety of devastating

syndromes, including Trisomy 13 or 18, which could limit the baby's life to less than one year.

Stunned, I held back tears and squeezed Roy's hand. Just minutes earlier, we'd been told everything looked great. The intense weight of sorrow increased as the doctor explained the next steps to consider, including deciding whether we wanted to continue with the pregnancy. "You could always start over and try again..."

Those words shattered my heart. Never in a million years would I have ever thought to hear a doctor ask if I wanted an abortion. We just clearly saw our baby moving...alive.

Immediately, we declared that abortion was not an option and left. Walking to the car in silence, the words replayed in my head...NICU, cyst, trisomy, syndromes, limb abnormalities, heart defects...abortion.

I began to wail uncontrollably in the car as I held Roy tightly. We sat there for a long time crying, not knowing what to do, when I broke the silence. Through my tears, I said, "I found out the gender on accident...I saw them type that it's a girl."

Despite our grief, we shared a smile. I'll never forget when Roy said, "She's going to be so beautiful!"

This marked the moment we became determined to pray and fight for our little girl. Her life was precious, and we were head over heels in love with her.

First thing, we asked people for prayers, which helped carry us through the

ensuing months of weekly tests and ultrasounds. Although the doctors and specialists were kind, they didn't shy away from the reality that our baby's future looked grim and made sure my decision to continue the pregnancy was firm. I started to see how a woman my age, or without faith, would choose abortion, thinking it would be better for her family and child not to endure the risk and pain of all the potential diagnoses. After all, our culture preaches: Take the path with the least risk and pain.

I entered into a terribly difficult period of numbness and grief. My previous hopes and dreams for my first baby were replaced with navigating how to be a new mom and learn how to care for a medically fragile child with significant special needs.

The only thing I knew to do was pray—fiercely and continually. I told God that this baby was His and I laid her into His arms, doing my best to give Him control. Roy and I attended daily Mass because I craved to hear God's Word, especially Jesus's miracles of healing, and mostly, to receive the Eucharist. I knew receiving His precious Body and Blood could heal my baby.

We met with prayer groups and had priests pray over my belly for healing. Our amazing parents surrounded us with prayer proclaim-

ing: "Our God is a God of miracles," and that's what we prayed for. My due date was February 11th, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, so we prayed for Our Lady's intercession. Amazingly, without knowing this, several people gave us holy water from Lourdes. This gave us added confidence to ask God for complete healing for our baby if it was His will.

Since genetic testing was discouraged due to potential stress on the baby, we didn't know if she would have syndromes, additional genetic defects or intellectual disabilities. The condition of her arms and hands remained a mystery because she moved constantly, blurring the images.

These things weighed heavily on us. As her mother, how would I feel when I first held her? Would I feel grief for her and her life? What would life look like for us? Still, with time, things began to shift. An echocardiogram showed that her heart was completely normal. A month later,



COURTESY PHOTO

The Schmeidlers chose life for their daughter.



COURTESY PHOTO

Juliette Lourdes Schmeidler was born missing a bone in one arm and fingers on both hands, but with a perfect brain and a perfect heart.

an ultrasound revealed she'd grown from the fourth to fourteenth percentile and was no longer considered growth restricted! The cyst on her brain had disappeared! Only God could have done this!

The stunned doctors scratched their heads as our baby continued to shock them. Still, they never stopped warning us of potential syndromes and risks.

When the day came to have our baby girl, I was ready to meet her. I still felt nervous, but at this point, I had surrendered all. There was nothing left but the grace of God, which was with us through the pregnancy and all the unknowns. Now it was time to see what God had knitted together so carefully, just for our family.

As I gazed at Juliette Lourdes Schmeidler, born February 18th—St. Bernadette's Feast Day, I gasped in wonder. She was exquisitely beautiful! Six and a half pounds and 20 inches long—not so small after all! A powerful representation of God's love and mercy, she had no syndromes, a perfect brain and a perfect heart! Though she was born with limb differences—a missing bone in one forearm and missing fingers on both hands, she is still able to use both arms and function incredibly well!

The doctors even admitted this is truly miraculous, since generally, with two affected limbs, other comorbidities or genetic differences, especially with the heart, are usually present.

Juliette means youthful; one who inspires. Truly, her ever-ready smile and friendly nature light up the room wherever she goes. She rolled and crawled early, and is now walking, talking and showing us that nothing can stop her.

To some, it seems God did not fully heal her, but we firmly believe He still could. I believe her hands and arms look different so she can tell her story—about God's grace and miracles, how precious and beautiful life is, and why choosing life is so worth it.

Babies are never a mistake. Rather, they change people's lives and hearts, just like Juliette changed ours.

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# A pilgrimage of prayer

## Women visit all 86 parishes of the diocese to pray for peace

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

A pilgrimage is described as a journey that has religious or spiritual significance. Usually the journey is taken to an important religious place.

A spiritual pilgrimage for Jeanne Riedel and Cindy Schulte on one day every week this summer took them to a plethora of religious places as they made their way thousands of miles across the vast Diocese of Salina.

Each travel day for these parishioners of St. Joseph Parish in Hays began with an iced coffee from McDonald's and a donut from Daylight Donuts.

From there, they took off across Kansas, visiting every single parish in our diocese that spans more than 26,000 square miles.

Their load was light, carrying with them their purses, a cooler packed with their lunches – and their rosaries. But their hearts were full.

They began this voyage on June 12, and 16 weeks later, they accomplished their goal of praying a rosary at all 86 parishes in our diocese.

Jeanne and Cindy, now retired, both grew up in Victoria and have been friends since fourth grade.

They both have fall birthdays, so they take birthday trips at least once a year and go out for coffee and dinner, even more often than before since Jeanne's husband, Vern, passed away in 2022.

While driving home from a spring trip to Beloit to visit the St. Padre Pio Chapel at St. John the Baptist Church, Jeanne and Cindy came up with the idea of visiting every parish.

Making each trip even more meaningful, why don't we say a rosary at each stop, they thought. They could offer it up for peace in our country.

"We feel St. Pio guided us to do this," Jeanne said.

"Yes, he was our inspiration," Cindy echoed.

So Jeanne printed out a map of the diocese and started charting their route.

They decided to tackle the farthest west parishes on their first trip and visited Sharon Springs, Goodland, St. Francis and Bird City.

From there, each trip seemed like a breeze.

Once they reached their first destination each week, Jeanne would make her way to the doors

of the church to see if it was unlocked while Cindy took a photo of the church and/or the church sign.

They plan to print out photos for each of them to compile a booklet of their trip of a lifetime.

Jeanne joked that some of the photos would probably be of flowers outside the churches because Cindy is a huge fan of horticulture.

"I always lose her at the flowers," Jeanne laughed.

Besides the spiritual benefits, Jeanne and Cindy said they learned a lot about other parts of the state while traveling the countryside.

For instance, they found that a lot of the small towns have Dollar Generals.

"People say Kansas is flat," Cindy chimed in. "When you get off the interstate, it's not flat."

They tried to figure out what crops were growing in the fields as they zigged and zagged down uncharted territory, sometimes having to maneuver their way around road construction, detours and even farm machinery.

"There were places we had never heard of or that we knew even had Catholic churches," Jeanne said, mentioning Elmo in Dickinson County and Aurora in Cloud County.

After completing their mission the last week of September, they asked to have a photo taken in their home parish – the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria.

On the short drive from Hays, the women bubbled with excitement while revealing some of the most memorable nuggets of their trips.

"The pipe organ in Angelus was magnificent," Cindy

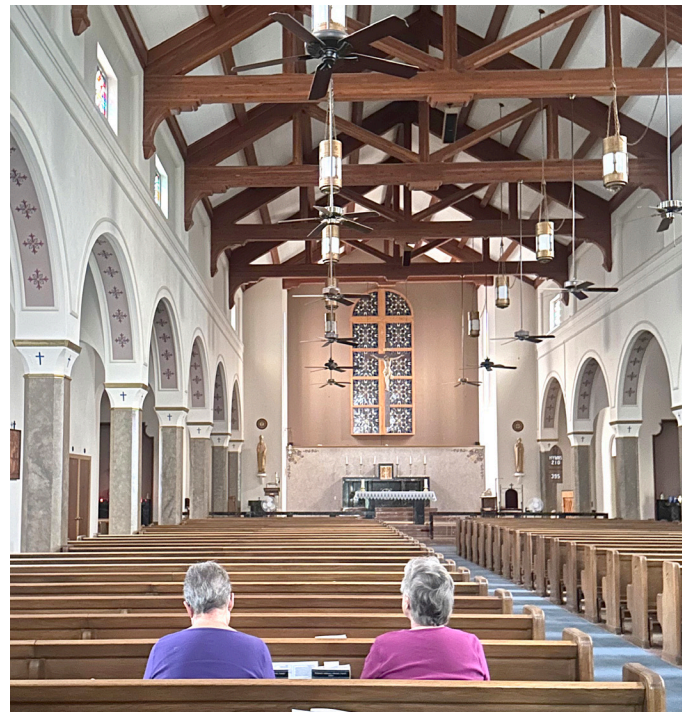
said of the unincorporated community in

Sheridan County that is home to the beautiful St. Paul church. "And I thought it was really neat to see the churches that have kept their main altars."

They said it was interesting to check out each church's Stations of the Cross as they stood in awe looking at beautiful stained glass windows.

"I had to tell myself to not get distracted, to concentrate on my rosary," Cindy said. "But sometimes it was hard because of the beauty in those churches."

"When you read the history of these church-



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

Jeanne Riedel and Cindy Schulte pray a rosary at St. Boniface Church in Tipton and take time to admire the architecture and beautiful stained glass windows.

es, you see their faith was the most important thing to them," Jeanne said.

The women decided not to call ahead to see if the churches were open but instead thought they would just accept whatever they encountered.

If a church happened to be locked, Jeanne would check the area to see if anyone was around.

If not, they parked under a shade tree and prayed their rosaries in Jeanne's car.

"We were lucky at a couple of places where the maintenance man happened to be around and let us in," Jeanne said.

Jeanne and Cindy both admitted this particular venture is something they will never forget.

"I feel that my faith has always even very strong. In good times and in bad, God was always at the center of it all," Jeanne said. "But after seeing all those older churches and to think how strong the faith of our ancestors was to build their churches without modern equipment, that has changed me."

"That's what we need to remember, that our faith is the most important thing to us," she added, "and that our strong faith will keep us going."

Cindy agreed.

"This just warms my heart so," she said. "On our trips, we would see all of God's creation on the drive and

then go into the churches and pray all those Hail Marys. The churches were so quiet, so serene."

It's a feeling she doesn't want to end.

"It's like reading a good book," Cindy said. "You get to the end, you know the story, and you're going to miss reading it. What do you do?"

You just pick up another good book.

"We plan to head back to Beloit to the St. Pio Chapel," Jeanne said, "to see if he has some more guidance for us for what we should do next."

DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

Cindy Schulte and Jeanne Riedel, Hays, are proud of their hometown parish, the Basilica of St. Fidelis, Victoria.



TOGETHER  
LET US BE DISCIPLES  
OF JESUS ON MISSION

## MONTHLY ROSARY, FROM PAGE 1

post information regarding the dinners: Monthly Rosary Dinner at Sikes in Leonardville. Anyone wanting more information can call Jada Sharp at 785-656-2685.

The dinner rosaries sometimes include clergy, too.

Walt Slingsby, a deacon at Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Anthony Parish in Miltonvale, is a frequent participant. So too is Fr. Mike Leiker, pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Anthony. And Bishop Gerald Vincke even participated one evening.

"I love to see how this has grown from one

idea to something so beautiful," Dcn. Slingsby said at the outdoor gathering in July.

Jada said, "It's a great way to get know other people of our faith."

She said that the families that come regularly say it's a real blessing.

"Besides the fellowship and getting to know more people, it's brought more people together praying the rosary," Jada said, "and that's what Mary has asked us to do."

**At right: Amanda Speltz leads the rosary while sitting on the lawn with her husband, Chris, and their family at the rosary dinner.**



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

# Answering God's call:

## New seminarians boost current cohort to 14

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Gus Hanson has dreamed of being a Catholic priest for most of his life. But for the next several years, he is embracing the title of seminarian.

Gus, one of four young men who entered the seminary for the Diocese of Salina this fall, said he was about 5 years old when he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. And he said he never changed his mind.

"I never wanted to be anything else. My mom has files of my old schoolwork, and every time someone asked what I wanted to be, I'd say a priest," said Gus, whose family confirms that resolve.

"I don't ever remember him saying he wanted anything different than this," Brian Hanson said of his second-born son.

So after 13 years of listening to Gus' commitment, the Hansons packed him up for the four-and-a-half hour drive to Wichita.

Just three months following his high school graduation from Rawlins County-Atwood, Gus began studies at the St. Joseph House of Formation in August.

It wasn't exactly the typical dropping off your 18-year-old at college.

Gus was so intent on staying focused on his mission that he deleted his social media and turned off his cell phone.

He turns on his phone for about an hour on Sundays to visit with his family back home.

"Sundays are interesting when he calls, because everyone wants to talk to him," his dad said. "It's hard not to hear from him, but when we do, it feels so great just to hear how well he is doing."

During the week, the Hansons have turned to the old fashioned way of communicating. His parents and seven siblings write him letters and send them in the mail.

"I love getting those letters," Gus said, "and I write a lot of letters, too."

In between time, Gus is able to concentrate on his discernment and his classes at Newman University, where he is majoring in philosophy for theology studies.

The Hansons are members of St. John Nepomucene parish in rural Beardsley. Gus laughs when asked to pronounce the name of his parish.

That's a name that Gus has known his entire



GUS HANSON



ETHAN WEINER



GABE FRIESS



MARSHALL FIKE

life, and it's one that will become quite familiar to the rest of the diocese the next several years. So here it is: "Nuh-POE-muh-seen."

Joining Gus at St. Joseph House of Formation is another first-year seminarian, Ethan Weiner, a member of St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Hoxie.

Gus and Ethan are two of three new seminarians from northwest Kansas. Weiner's high school friend, Gabe Friess, joined older brother Luke at St. John Vianney School of

Kade and Max Megaffin from St. Joseph in Hays both attend St. John Vianney.

Kade Megaffin was ordained a transitional deacon this past spring along with Adam Urban, St. Nicholas of Myra-Hays, and Jesse Ochs, Sacred Heart-Park.

Ordination into the priesthood for those three deacons is set for May 31, 2025.

Yet another family tie with the current seminarian group is that of Collin Thielen from Quinter, whose home parish is Sacred Heart in Park.

Collin's older brother, Luke Thielen, was ordained in 2016 and is now pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Oakley and St. Paul Parish in Angelus. Collin is in his third year at Conception (Mo.) Seminary.

Completing the list of 14 current seminarians are Kyle Pfeifer, Seven Dolores parish, Manhattan; Joseph Schones, Sacred Heart, Arkansas City; and Matthew Ralls, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Wichita.

Kyle is serving a pastoral year at St. Mary Queen of the Universe in Salina. Joseph and Matthew, who grew up in the Wichita Diocese, are now part of the Salina Diocese cohort. Joseph attends Sacred Heart Seminary in Wisconsin, and Ralls attends St. John Vianney.

Fr. Andy Hammeke, who was ordained in 2018, is now co-vocations director for the diocese and asks that we all remember the current and future seminarians in prayer, especially in the upcoming National Vocation Awareness Week, Nov. 5-11.

"We love all our seminarians and are thankful for their 'yes,'" Fr. Andy said. "Numbers do matter because we need to replace the priests who are retiring. But in the end, the number of seminarians we want is the number of seminarians God is calling. Please pray that more might be open to the call and say 'yes' if God moves them toward priesthood."



COURTESY PHOTO

**While away at seminary, Gus Hanson (second from left) communicates with his seven siblings and his parents the old-fashioned way – by sending letters in the mail.**

Theology in Denver this fall after graduating from Benedictine College in May. Luke Friess is in his seventh year of seminary and is on schedule to be ordained a transitional deacon in 2025. The Friess brothers are members of St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Hoxie.

Also attending St. John Vianney is Marshall Fike, who rounds out the list of the new class of seminarians.

Marshall's parish is St. Isidore's in Manhattan by Kansas State University, where he graduated college and discerned the call to join seminary.

The same holds true for Holden Giefer, a K-State graduate whose home parish is St. Francis de Sales in Lansing. He now attends Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in the St. Louis area as a Salina Diocese seminarian.

The Friess siblings are one of two sets of brothers in the current seminarian cohort, as

## FRIESS ACCEPTED AS CANDIDATE FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DIACONATE AND THE PRIESTHOOD

On October 3, seminarian Luke Friess was admitted as a Candidate for the Orders of the Diaconate and the Priesthood through the liturgical rite of Admission to Candidacy. Bishop Gerald Vincke presided over the Rite, held in Christ the King Chapel at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, Colorado.

Friess, a Theology III student in his seventh year of seminary, is on schedule to be ordained a transitional deacon in April of 2025. His younger brother, Gabe Friess,

entered his first year of seminary, also at St. John Vianney in Denver, earlier this year.

**Interested in Seminary?** Please contact our Vocations Directors, Fr. Andy Hammeke or Fr. Brian McCaffrey at vocations@salinadiocese.org or 785-625-7396

**Interested in making a charitable gift?** Please contact the Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina at development@salinadiocese.org or 785-827-8746

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COURTESY PHOTO

## REFLECTING ON HIS GENTLE CALL



By Sr. Mary Solanus May  
SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF THE MARTYR ST. GEORGE  
NOVICE (ENTERED RELIGIOUS LIFE SEPT. 2023),  
FORMER PARISHIONER OF THE SALINA DIOCESE

COURTESY PHOTO

One of the moments I first felt called to religious life was during Eucharistic Adoration at a Steubenville conference the summer going into my senior year of high school.

The question was asked, "What have you not surrendered to God?" It became obvious to me that anytime the idea of religious life was put on the table I would not actually let go and instead would recite a litany of excuses: "I'm too loud; I'm too energetic; I couldn't sit still that much; I enjoy prayer but not enough to pray all day; I could never wake up that early." This litany of excuses (lies) always ended with "So, if you asked me to be a sister I would, but we both know I could never be a sister."

This conversation had been one-sided and that night in adoration a few facts became obvious:

1) God made me, so He knows me better than I do and ever will.

2) God loves me more than I do. So, God knows better than I do what is best for me, and He wants it more than I do.

3) If He asks me to be a sister, He will make it possible, and it will be a joyful life.

This caused a complete 180 of my heart from "I could never do this" to "I hope he asks me to be a sister!"

Although I was pretty sure I was called to be a sister, I was not ready to enter the convent. There were areas I needed to grow in before entering a convent. Although I knew I could rely on God to be there whenever I came to Him, I didn't have a consistent daily prayer life. I would stop by a perpetual adoration chapel and read and journal on a whim more and more often and spend longer stretches of time there. In loneliness, I went there for His company, in times of temptation, I went there for refuge, to mourn, to rejoice, and all that falls between. I knew that He wanted me to share it all with Him.

The way we talk about vocations sometimes can make it sound scary, and I was afraid that he would call "Now!" and I'd be tangled in the nets He'd demand I drop and wind up breaking my fingers. That is not how He called Peter, and he didn't rush me either.

The Lord is so patient, much more patient with us than we are with ourselves. Before Peter left everything to follow Christ, Jesus met him where he was at many times. Jesus came to Simon's house and healed his mother. He asked to stand on Simon's boat to preach. He then instructed Peter, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," and provided an abundance. Jesus provided so much that their nets were breaking, and the weight of the catch was causing two boats to begin to sink. (Lk4:38-39,5:1-11)

God knows we cannot save ourselves. God does not demand that we be strong enough to leave everything behind. He offers us the grace to follow Him, and as we follow Christ, he frees us from nets that hold us from freely following Him.

## Rite of Acolyte celebration

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN

THE REGISTER

"Jesus wants us to follow him, to give our life away for others."

Those were the words of Bishop Gerald Vincke as he spoke to the congregation attending the Rite of Acolyte for permanent deacon candidates in September.

Bishop Vincke applauded the six married men from across the diocese who are ready to give of themselves for others when they are ordained permanent deacons on June 25, 2025.

The candidates were recognized at the Rite of Acolyte at The Basilica of St. Fidelis on Sept. 15 in the last rite received before being ordained deacons.

After meeting for five years of preparation, those candidates will complete their fifth year of diaconate formation next spring.

Dressed in their albs and cinctures at the Rite of Acolyte, the candidates sat together in the front pew with their wives in the pew behind them.

Following the homily, the candidates were each presented a chalice of

bread to symbolize that they are now extraordinary ministers of communion, can purify vessels and set up the altar for the priest.

For the past four years, the deacon candidates have met for one weekend every month in the historical St. Fidelis Friary, the first location for St. Francis Seminary and now home to seven Capuchin priests.

"We are very grateful to St. Fidelis for a place to spend the weekends and hold classes all in the same location," said Deacon Steve Frueh, director of deacons for the Diocese of Salina.

The current class of deacon candidates represents parishes all across the diocese.

Two candidates are from Manhattan, Tim Donohue from Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and Harry Hardy, St. Thomas More.

Completing the list of the current cohort are Dan Wahlmeier, St. Joseph Parish, New Almelo; Dave DiNuzzo, St. John the Baptist, Beloit; Mark LeValley, St. Mary, Queen of the Universe, Salina; and Bill Meagher, St. Nicholas of Myra, Hays.



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

Candidates for transitional diaconate ordination were recognized at the Rite of Acolyte on Sept. 15. Front (L-R): Harry Hardy, Dan Wahlmeier and Tim Donohue. Middle: Bill Meagher, Mark LeValley and Dave DiNuzzo. Back: Deacon Steve Frueh, director of deacons for the diocese, and Bishop Gerald Vincke.

## Sister Mary Ann Passes Away

Sister Mary Ann Flax died Sept.

10, 2024, at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia, KS. She was 86 years old and a Sister of St. Joseph for 70 years. She was born in Ransom, KS on Oct. 17, 1937, to Godfrey and Catherine Weber Flax, the eighth of nine children, and was baptized Mary Ann. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia, KS on September 8, 1953. On March 19, 1954, Mary Ann received the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph and was given the name Sr. Corona Marie, later returning to her baptismal name. She pronounced first vows on March 19, 1955, and final vows on March 19, 1958.

Sr. Mary Ann received a BA from Marymount College in Latin in 1966 and the MA in religious education in 1973. She taught in schools staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Salina, Aurora, KS and Silver City, NM. Follow-

ing her teaching career, she served as religious educator in Hoxie, Seguin, Grainfield and Grinnell. She served as coordinator of evangelization and catechesis in Northwestern Colorado from 1970 to 2003. After leaving Colorado she served in Lexington, NE until her retirement in 2023.

Sr. Mary Ann was preceded in death by her parents and all of her siblings. A Bible Vigil Service will be held September 15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Nazareth Motherhouse Chapel with Sister Marilyn Wall as the eulogist. Funeral Mass was Sept. 16 at the Motherhouse Chapel with Fr. Barry Brinkman presiding and Fr. Jose Chavez concelebrating. Burial in the Nazareth Motherhouse Cemetery. Memorials for Sr. Mary Ann Flax may be given to the Sisters of St. Joseph Health Care/Retirement Fund or the Apostolic Works of the Sisters; P.O. Box 279, Concordia, KS 66901.



# An emotional celebration: Padre Pio's relic gathers faithful from near and far

By LORI LEISZLER  
THE REGISTER

On Sept. 22, devotees from across the state gathered at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Beloit to honor a beloved saint just one day before his feast day.

The occasion celebrated St. Pio of Pietrelcina, better known as Padre Pio, who was born in Italy in 1887 and became a Capuchin friar, priest, and mystic known for his spirituality and remarkable gifts, including the stigmata—visible wounds resembling those of Christ. Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio in 2002.

Earlier this year, the Padre Pio Foundation announced plans to install a relic in five key locations across the country, forming a cross shape. One relic was installed at St. John's in Beloit, to be the center of this spiritual map.

The relic in St. John's is from the stigmata in Padre Pio's side. Jesus' side wound, which came from being pierced with a sword by a soldier, is believed by many to have pierced His heart as well. Fittingly enough, the relic is located on a side altar of the church, under a painting of Jesus' Sacred Heart.

To celebrate Padre Pio, the church hosted a special noon Mass on Sept. 22, with Bishop Gerald Vincke as the main celebrant.

The Gospel reading from Mark 9 echoed Jesus' call to service: "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

Bishop Vincke emphasized the heart of a servant exemplified by Padre Pio.

"Padre Pio is a great example of service for us, of laying down one's life," Bishop Vincke said.

Faithful Catholics gathered from all across the region and even beyond to celebrate in the Mass and to partake in venerating the relic and receiving a blessing afterwards.

Among them was Tammy Katsbulas, a parishioner from St. Matthew's in Topeka, who had a special reason for making the trip along with her husband Joseph and their children.

On August 29, 2017, Tammy's father, Alfonso, was hospitalized in critical condition.

"He was taken to the ICU, with little chance of waking up. During the night, my family and I kept vigil, and I prayed to God for the intercession of Saint Pio, who was my dad's favorite saint," Tammy said. "He really identified with St. Padre Pio in suffering."

They were scared he wouldn't wake up and

knew he didn't want to die in the hospital; but then hope emerged.

"Dad woke up early in the morning hours of September 1, and gave each of us children his blessing — there were four of us. He and I talked about St. Padre Pio," Tammy said.

"He said, 'Yes, St. Pio was right there,' and he looked up to the right. I have no doubt that St. Pio was with my dad. My dad was very weak, and I had no earthly idea how we were going to get him home from the hospital or if he could come home."

But, "thanks to the prayers and intercession of St. Pio and praise to God Almighty," Tammy said, her dad was able to come home that very afternoon.

"And he spent 24 beautiful days at home with his family," Tammy said. "He had his grandchildren and great grandchildren around him, and we stayed up that night laughing and talking and sharing stories. This was a miracle, as dad was on his deathbed in that hospital, and I am so thankful to God and thankful to St. Pio for interceding for my dad and for our family."

Her father passed away on Sept. 24 of that year, the day after Padre Pio's feast day.

"We know Padre Pio continues to intercede for so many people and in our family as well," Tammy said.

She described her visit to the relic as "very peaceful and just awesome to be here."

Another attendee, Katherine Stockard, also had a meaningful reason for attending the celebration, making the trip to Beloit from Kansas City, Missouri.

Stockard was born on his feast day and Pio is also her Confirmation name. The event was particularly significant for her.

"During the Mass, after receiving Communion, and when they brought the relic up front and center, and that whole time of having the Eucharist and seeing the Pio relic right there, I became really emotional," Stockard said. "It was really beautiful."

Stockard said she feels a deep connection to Padre Pio, viewing him as a spiritual father and intercessor.

"Every year, having my birthday on his feast day, I will feel such joy, and I feel like it's a gift from him," Stockard said. "I feel this intense thankfulness for my faith and to be able to share that day with him ... he feels like a



COURTESY PHOTO, ALAN HOLDREN

Bishop Gerald Vincke blesses the congregation at St. John's, Beloit with the Padre Pio relic.



COURTESY PHOTO, ALAN HOLDREN

Visitors on Sept. 22 were able to venerate the relic before the altar after Mass.

friend. He feels like a spiritual father to me, and being here with the Eucharist and his relic, I felt so close to him. It was really beautiful. It was emotional."

For those wishing to schedule a pilgrimage to visit the relic, more details can be found at [www.stjohnsbeloit.org](http://www.stjohnsbeloit.org).

St. Padre Pio, pray for us!

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**NOVEMBER 16, HAYS**

FULL DETAILS POSTED ON THE SALINA DIOCESE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS.


- Nov. 1**  
• All Saints Day (Holy Day of Obligation).
- Nov. 2**  
• All Souls Day.
- Nov. 3**  
• Anniversary Mass, 2 p.m., St Elizabeth Ann Seton, Salina.
- Nov. 7**  
• Memorial Mass for Deceased Priests, noon, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina.
- Nov. 8**  
• Schools Teacher Inservice, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., SH Jr./Sr. High, Salina.

- Adoption Mass, 5 p.m., Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina.
- Nov. 9-10**  
• CYO Convention, St. Mary's, Salina.
- Nov. 11**  
• Veterans Day.
- Nov. 18**  
• #igivecatholic Advanced Giving begins (to Dec. 2).
- Nov. 24**  
• IHM Day of Blessing, Hays.
- Nov. 28**  
• Thanksgiving.



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## Local writer Katie Hamel releases debut book, *The Master Potter*

### SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Katherine "Katie" Hamel, current editor of *faith* Magazine and former editor of The Register, has launched her debut children's book, *The Master Potter*, this month.

The narrative tells the story of



COURTESY PHOTO, KATIE HAMEL  
Katie Hamel dedicated her book to her husband and children (above).

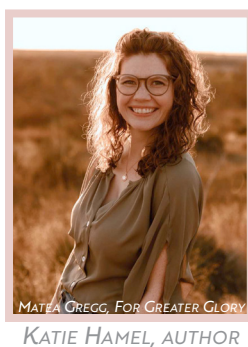
a master potter who receives heartfelt letters from individuals requesting special gifts. The potter carefully crafts these unique creations and breathes life into them.

The tale is notably faith-filled, encouraging children to know how deeply loved they are and how much detail God takes in creating each person.

The inspiration for the book struck Hamel on a profoundly personal day: "I started writing *The Master Potter* the day I found out I was expecting my first child," she said. "The

overwhelming emotions of knowing I was going to be a mom led me to reflect on the lessons I wanted to impart to my child. Above all, I wanted him to understand that he was made on purpose by a loving Father. With that hope in mind, I began writing. Two and a half years later, the book is finished!"

The illustrations for *The Master Potter* are created by Greg Holdren, a talented artist from Beloit. Like the *Master Potter*, Holdren has plenty of experience raising beloved children and crafting beautiful things. Holdren is a father of six and grandfather of



MATEA CREGG, FOR GREATER GLORY  
KATIE HAMEL, AUTHOR



Beloit artist Greg Holdren designed the illustrations for *The Master Potter*, including the cover art shown above.

23, and he spent 38 years teaching art to students of all ages. Now mostly retired from teaching, he focuses on various artistic projects, including murals, statues and book illustrations.

Readers interested in purchasing *The Master Potter* can visit [KatieHamel.com](http://KatieHamel.com).

# Catholic high schoolers gather for day of reflection, prayer



PHOTOS BY MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Catholic schools students of the diocese listen to speaker Noelle Garcia discuss hope at the fourth annual Respect Life Retreat in Salina.

By **LORI LEISZLER**  
THE REGISTER

On Oct. 9, juniors and seniors from the Catholic schools of the Salina Diocese gathered in Salina for the fourth annual Respect Life Retreat, held at the Salina Fieldhouse. The event was designed to inspire young folks to have a greater respect for life, particularly the suffering and forgotten. It featured a day full of engaging speakers and activities centered on prayer, awareness and action.

Keynote speaker Noelle Garcia addressed the importance of social justice and respecting life at all stages. Garcia, a Catholic recording artist and speaker, travels the country sharing the faith through witness, Scripture, and music.

Garcia shared about respecting life in today's world and the importance of seeing dignity in everybody. She said that when the people in her life go through trials, she advises them to turn to God and seek His will: "You have to give your

life to God."

She went on to share her experience of keeping the faith amidst suffering. Garcia said that everyone's life has meaning, and that we are called to trust in God at all times, especially the tough times.

Tynan Dowell, from Beloit, also shared with the students her story of keeping the faith. Her daughter Clara died at 14 months old in a tragic drowning accident in 2021. Tynan shared how she and her husband made the difficult decision to donate Clara's organs, coped with their grief and learned what it means to leave a legacy.

Members of Kansas State University's Fellowship of Catholic University

Students (FOCUS) group also contributed to the retreat, speaking in breakout sessions and encouraging students to continue being involved in their faith after graduating from high school.

The morning's activities included breakout sessions for the students to discuss what they had learned.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the diocese, Geoff Andrews, said he hopes those discussions and their reflections were a big part of the students' takeaways from the event.

"At the last breakout session we asked, 'How do you take what you hear today about self respect, seeing dignity in every person you meet and being Christ-like to others? How do

you take that back to your classrooms and your home? How do you do that for the person who's hard to get along with? How do you soften your heart?' So I hope they can take back some of that with them."

After the morning session, students walked to Sacred Heart Cathedral for a noon Mass celebrated by Bishop Vincke, followed by a social lunch in the Hall of Bishops. The day concluded with a rosary for life.

Andrews praised the retreat's ability to bring students together as a community in prayer.

"It was pretty special," he said. "Seeing 150 high school kids at the 12:05 p.m. Mass in the Cathedral, being reverent and spending time in prayer and receiving the Eucharist."



Students pray together in Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina during the Respect Life Retreat Oct. 9.



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# “Formed” in faith

Approximately eight years ago, in the middle of an RCIA class (now OCIA) I came to the realization that my instructions were not having the desired effects of which I had hoped. This was especially true in reference to one member of our class, we can call her Gina. In spite of my best efforts, my teaching continued to fall flat. Every answer I tried to provide to Gina’s questions, only led to more questions.



**GALE Hammerschmidt**  
PASTOR

As the year continued, I began to believe that she would decide against becoming Catholic. I found this discouraging, and I felt inept as a teacher. The weeks rolled on without much change, until one evening in mid-January. Without warning, things had changed. Instead of Gina raising more questions, this night she was beginning to answer questions asked by others in the class. Seemingly overnight, she had completely flipped her attitude in regard to the Church.

As I asked Gina the reason for this change, she quickly responded, “Formed.org.” This woman, who had been very skeptical, was transformed, not by my words, or those of other instructors, but by Formed.org: the streaming service made available to parishioners through the generosity of the Diocese of Salina. Gina told me that

she had spent much of her Christmas break searching the website, and finding satisfactory answers to her questions. She loved everything about the website.

With modern technology and media, it has never been easier to discover the beautiful teachings of the Catholic Church. Standing at the center of this information boom is Formed.org. And it’s free for everyone in the diocese to use!

At Formed.org you encounter full length movies, documentaries on saints, opportunities for prayer, a section for kids, apologetics, and much more. Referred to, on occasion, as Catholic Netflix, Formed.org is a one stop shop for all your Catholic media needs.

It is easy to start your account at Formed.org, and perhaps this could be an opportunity for you this winter. Do you want to increase your faith? Are you looking for a holier way to pass a few hours? Simply go to formed.org and once there click on Formed for Parishes, find your parish, enter your name and email, and you will have hours upon hours of content available to enjoy.

Will Formed.org change your life? I cannot say for sure, but I can tell you that it changed Gina’s life and the lives of her family members.

May God bless you all!

## PLAINVILLE CHAIN OF LIFE

Twenty parishioners and guests of Sacred Heart participated in the annual Chain of Life on Oct. 6, Respect Life Sunday. This event was initiated 30 years ago when Fr. Al Brungardt was pastor of Sacred Heart Church, and has been conducted every year since. Many of the participants have attended nearly every year.



COURTESY PHOTO, KARLA RUDER

**Standing: Michele Garvert, John Garvert, Susan Mick, Dennis Mick, Randy Hrabe, Bob Plante, Mary Jo Buresh, Fr. Leo Blasi, Kathy Vice, Mary Strutt, Janice Benedick, Gina Riley, Kathy Ramsay, Carol Parker, Pat Ferland, Fr. Michael Kothalamuthu and John Ruder; kneeling: Jenny Molina and Karen McCune.**

## CHURCH TOUR



COURTESY PHOTO

**Eighteen Jr. CYO members from Sacred Heart-Colby participated in tours of the newly remodeled churches in Seguin and Angelus.**

## CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD COMPLETERS

Jaclyn Brown and Susan Hellmer completed their Level 2 training of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in St. John, with Hope Johnson (formation leader) on August 5-9, 2024. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a hands-on faith formation program where children can grow in their faith through engagement with Scripture and the liturgy. For more information, visit [egsusa.org](http://egsusa.org).



COURTESY PHOTO

**(L-R) Susan Hellmer, Salina; Hope Johnson; Jaclyn Brown, Hays.**



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# Fr. Charlie leaves a legacy of service to the diocese



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Priests from across the Salina Diocese gathered together at St. Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Russell to celebrate the funeral Mass for Fr. Charlie Steier. Above: Bishop Gerald Vincke elevates the Eucharist during Mass.

Fr. Charles Lee Steier, beloved priest and dedicated servant of the Diocese of Salina, passed away on September 22, 2024, in Hays, Kansas. He was born on March 26, 1947, in Belleville, Kansas, to Melvin and Mildred (Kalivoda) Steier. Charlie grew up on a farm near Haddam, Kansas, as the oldest child, with five brothers and two sisters.

Fr. Steier pursued his calling with deep commitment, studying at St. Mary College in St. Mary, Kentucky; Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri; and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained on June 8, 1973, by Bishop Cyril Vogel at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Concordia, Kansas.

Beginning with his first assignment in 1973 and concluding with his most recent in 2024, Fr. Steier served in various parishes. He began his priestly ministry serving as parochial vicar from 1973 to 1977, first at St. John the Baptist in Beloit and later at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays.

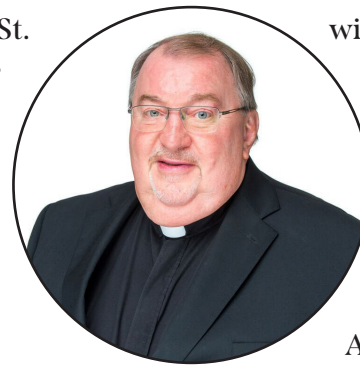
Beginning in 1977, he went on to lead numerous parishes as a pastor, including St. Joseph in St. Joseph; St. Isidore in Cuba; Saints

Philip and James in Phillipsburg; St. Mary in Smith Center; St. Francis in Claudell; St. Bernard in Ellsworth; St. Ignatius in Kanopolis; St. Mary in Holyrood; St. Mary Queen of Angels in Russell; and St. Mary Help of Christians in Gorham. His service as a pastor concluded in 2024 at Christ the King Parish in WaKeeney and St. Michael Parish in Collyer.

Fr. Charlie also served as the State Chaplain for the Kansas Knights of Columbus, Diocesan Moderator, Vicarate Moderator, and was a member of the Catholic Charities Board for many years. He was also elected to the Priests Council and the Personnel Board.

Fr. Steier's unwavering faith and pastoral care touched countless lives over his 50 years of ministry. Fr. Charlie leaves behind a legacy of love, compassion, and dedication to his communities.

He is survived by four brothers: John Steier of Canton, Texas; Ed Steier and his wife, Linda, of Wichita, Kansas; Dale Steier and his



wife, Kim, of Greeley, Colorado; and Guy Steier and his wife, Julie, of Clyde, Kansas. He is also survived by two sisters: Rita Steier of Timpson, Texas, and Denise New and her husband, Mike, of Burlington, Colorado. Other survivors include his sister-in-law, Kim Steier, of Arlington, Texas; many nieces, nephews, friends, and the many parishioners who cherished his guidance and leadership. Fr. Charles Steier will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Larry; and an infant sister, Sue Carlyn.

Visitation was held at Christ the King Catholic Church, WaKeeney, on Thursday, September 26, 2024, with a parish vigil and Rosary that evening.

A Mass of Christian Burial took place at St. Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church, Russell, on Friday, September 27, 2024, with interment at St. Bernard Catholic Cemetery, Clara (north of Clifton).

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## From the heart: Heart Choices center hosts blessing

By DAVID EDELL

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

On September 22, Heart Choices of Smith Center held a blessing for their facility and new ultrasound machine. This faith-based parenting and pregnancy center has locations in Beloit, Osborne, Concordia, and Smith Center.

The new ultrasound was funded by the Kansas Knights of Columbus, Smith County Community Foundation, local churches, and private donations.

Alice Thompson, Heart Choices Executive Director, said, "In the past 22 years this ministry has grown from one facility to four, making it possible to empower



**Blessing Celebrants: Fr. Trinity Savariyar, Glenda Rothchild, Alice Thompson, Jennifer Corbett, Art Befort, Denis Juenger, Tina Juenger and Gary Wondra.**

women and men in an even greater portion of North Central Kansas to make healthy life choices for

themselves and their children, both born and unborn ... This ultrasound is another tool we can use to fulfill

our mission."

Fr. Trinity Savariyar provided the blessing, with several local leaders, workers and community members in attendance.

Heart Choices board member Denis Juenger said, "The K of C have helped to fund 38 ultrasound machines for use in centers like Heart Choices around the state of Kansas. And, we will continue to fund projects like these in the future."

Since opening in October 2023, about 30 families have regularly used the center's services, with over 100 individuals from North Central Kansas and Southern Nebraska seeking assistance.

## Rural Life Awards celebrate faith and agriculture

By DAVID EDELL

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

On August 25, the Diocese of Salina and the Rural Life Commission celebrated Rural Life Day and presented Century Farm Awards at St. John the Baptist Church in Hanover, KS. All of the families involved expressed that the many blessings given them are the result of their Catholic Faith. Faith is one of the backbones that has contributed to the history of farming in the rather unpredictable Great Plains farm life.

Rural Life Day serves to honor not only the families who have farmed their land for 100 plus years; but this year it honored the families of agriculture-related businesses that have been in business for 50 years or more. Approximately 70 people were in attendance.

The Awards are in the memory of Monsignor John George Weber. Msgr. Weber was born Aug 10, 1916, in Victoria to Jacob and Rosa (Herrman) Weber. He was ordained on May 30, 1943, and celebrated his first Solemn Mass in Park, KS, on June 5, 1943. On Feb. 10, 1960, he was named executive secretary for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in Des Moines, IA. In June 1963, he was named Papal Chamberlain to Pope John XXIII, and in May 1968, he was named Domestic Prelate.

Msgr. Weber served in many parishes during his life and retired in Salina where he served as part-time associate pastor at St. Mary's Catholic Church and was very active at St. Mary's Grade School, where the children loved him. He died at 93 on July 1, 2010.

The Century Farm Awards were presented to: John and Lisa Zaborkrsty, James and Trudy Cole,



COURTESY PHOTO, DAVID EDELL

Mark and Diana Gugenhan, LaVern and Betty Goeckel, Ronald Goeckel, Knabe Farms, Seven Rajewskis Adventure Limited, Wilbur and Loretta Jueneman Family Farms, and Don Landoll Farms.

The Golden Business Awards were presented to: Wilbur Jueneman Construction, Ltd; Landoll Company, Ltd; Jim Jueneman Land Development Center; Terry LeDuc Family Milk Hauling, Hanover Electric, Inc.; Orval Jueneman Dozer Service, Inc; and Bruna Implement Company.

Several families have been involved in both family farming and running local agriculture related businesses. This is also testament to the faith of each family. Being able to turn their attentions to both farming and local business ventures requires an incredible leap of faith! This is also a testament to how the Catholic families in the Salina Diocese will come together to help each other succeed. Every family and business owner stated that without the help of other members of the community, their farms and businesses would not have been successful.

Nature has a way of making rural life difficult; but this can also open up other avenues for us to help one another. An example was given by

Jueneman Construction. "At the age of 18 Wilbur purchased his first dozer. He saw an ad in a newspaper for a 1939 Caterpillar in St. Joe, MO for \$2,000. Even though it might have been called a "piece of junk," he, with his father's permission, bought it." In 1951 storms had continued to cause washout holes in the bottom land around the river. This type of natural disaster could have devastated a farm. Wilbur took this opportunity to help rebuild the washed out land with his "new-to-him" dozer. Out of a disaster, and a leap of faith, one family created a business that now serves so many in the Diocese.

An example of Catholic Families coming together to help each other can be seen in the history of the Seven Rajewski's Adventure Farms. In 1905 the Rajewski family was one of seven families who wanted

to build a church nearer to them, about one-third of a mile away. The closest was St. Fidelis in Victoria, seven miles away. These

families got together, donated land and built a church and a started a prospect town in seven months in 1907. This is St. Boniface in Vincent. The town of Vincent was named for their first pastor Fr. Vincent Brant, O.M.Cap.

Unfortunately, as we have done in the past, the number of award recipients this year is was so great we cannot feature all of the admirable and fascinating family farm and business histories. The entire afternoon was filled with numerous stories of how survival in the Great Plains agriculture community must rely on family, faith, community, and lots of hard work.

Congratulations to all of the 2024 Catholic Rural Life Msgr. George Weber Awards!



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• Next issue is dated Nov. 22. • Deadline for news is Oct. 25. • Deadline for advertising is Oct. 25.

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BAPTISMS

**Lincoln Edward Augustine**, son of Cameron David Augustine and Mackenzie Paige Girardot Augustine, was baptized May 12, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparents are Shawn and Heather Augustine.

**Lark Monroe Bell**, daughter of Brandon and Haley (McCain) Bell, was baptized September 14, 2024, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays.

**Samuel X. Bernes, Jr.**, son of Samuel Bernes and Betsy Hellen Bartolome Bernes, was baptized May 12, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparent is Jessica Takasi.

**Theo Montrell Bosworth**, son of Demario Montrell Bosworth and Erlene June B. Marchan, was baptized August 18, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparent is Margie Langas.

**Mason Thomas Carlin**, son of Michael and Audrey, was baptized September 1, 2024, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Baxx Christopher Dinkel**, son of Jesse and Cassandra Dinkel, was baptized September 15, 2024, by Fr. Michael Elanjimathathil, CMI, at St. Mary Queen of Angels Parish in Russell.

**Kaleb Ray Kirkley**, son of Christopher Kirkley and Liza Balagtas, was baptized September 28, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparents are David Trammell and Allana Lagrisola.

**Kamden Lee Kirkley**, son of Christopher Kirkley and Liza Balagtas, was baptized

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September 28, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparents are Thomas and Jessie Trammell.

**Stevie Lucille Koochel**, daughter of Ethan and Stephanie Koochel, was baptized September 21, 2024, by Fr. Trevor Buster at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Beau Steven**, son of Matt and Bethanie Krinhop, was baptized September 14, 2024, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Michael Parish in Chapman. Godparents are Blaine Tharman and Aimee Henry.

**Kendall Vanessa Pena Perez**, daughter of Cesar and Adriana (Perez) Hernandez, was baptized September 15, 2024, by Fr. Nick Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays.

**Rhett Stanly Ptacek-Wilcox**, son of Ricco Jamel Wilcox and Aubrey Ptacek, was baptized September 22, 2024, by Fr. Tony Kulandaijesu at St. Wenceslaus Parish in Wilson.

**Kapaun Victor Stephenson**, son of Grant and Lindsey (Pacey) Stephenson, was baptized September 8, 2024, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in

Hays.  
**Augustine Gordon Tait**, son of Joshua Tait and Kate Augustine Tait, was baptized June 19, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparents are Colleen and Theodore Augustine.

**Dean Michael Thompson**, son of Steven Thompson and Alana Bucholtz Thompson, was baptized August 18, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Godparents are Dillon Charland and Annemarie Bucholtz-Charland.

**Jacob John Wallpe**, son of Evan and Kelsey Wallpe, was baptized August 31, 2024, by Fr. Tony Kulandaijesu at St. Mary Queen of Angels Parish in Russell.

**Tucker Kade and Zoey Jade Werth**, twin son and daughter of Leighton and Jodie (Jennings) Werth, were baptized September 29, 2024, by Fr. Andrew Hammeke at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays.

**Kyler Ryan Zerr**, son of Craig and Hannah Zerr, was baptized September 7, 2024, by Fr. Vincent Thu Laing at St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Hoxie.

WEDDINGS


**Alex Jonathan Hall and Jordann Estelle Kokoski** were married September 14, 2024, at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Fr. Kerry Ninemire witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Wayne D. Hall and Diana L. Randall. Parents of the bride are John F. Kokoski and Bridget Lorenzo. Witnesses were James Keown and Chelsey Kokoski.

**Luke Gerard Haverkamp and Brooke Kathleen Miller** were married July 27, 2024, at Seven Dolores Parish in Manhattan. Fr. Arul Carasala witnessed

their vows. Parents of the groom are Gerard Haverkamp and Teri Lynne Collins. Parents of the bride are Thomas Miller and Heather Holguin. Witnesses were John Martinez and Skyler Wright.


**Casey Heim and Nicolette Nemeth** were married August 17, 2024, at Seven Dolores Parish in Manhattan. Fr. Kerry Ninemire witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Patrick Heim and Stacy Schwarz. Parents of the bride are Ricky Nemeth and Sheli Cornelison. Witnesses were Isabella Skolout and Ben Mense.

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## FUNERALS

**Timothy Augustine, 59**, died September 5, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 11 at St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Ellis. Fr. Richard Daise and Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Josephine T. Beihl, 80**, died July 8, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated July 18 at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan. Fr. Leo Blasi presided. Interment in Kansas Veterans Cemetery, Fort Riley.

**Robert "Mike" Cleveland, 72**, died August 5, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated August 23 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction

City. Fr. Frank Coady presided. Burial at Milford Cemetery, Milford.

**Donald Crubel, 87**, died May 12, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated May 17 at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan. Fr. Kerry Ninemire presided. Interment in Sunrise Cemetery, Manhattan.

**Marvin Leo Depperschmidt, 86**, born May 15, 1938, died June 5, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated June 12 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Salina. Fr. Keith Weber presided. Interment at Roselawn Memorial Park Cemetery, Salina.

**Patricia Louise Schad Fagan, 75**, died July 14, 2024. Committal Service was celebrated July 24 at St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

**Robert G. Feldt, 70**, died August 15, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 7 at St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Interment at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Catherine Herl, 69**, died September 13, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 18 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Munjor. Fr. Curtis Carlson, OFM Cap. presided. Burial at St. Francis

of Assisi Cemetery, Munjor.

**Raymond "Ray" Kamphaus, 77**, died September 22, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 27 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Fr. Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

**Josephine Rago, 97**, died September 2, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 21 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Fr. Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

**Patricia Rosell, 70**, died June 6, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated June 17 at St.

Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Fr. Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

**Wilma Schoendaller, 93**, died June 21, 2024. Funeral Mass was celebrated June 28 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Junction City. Fr. Kerry Ninemire presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Junction City.

**Janet Wataha, 89**, died June 28, 2024. Service was July 11 at YML Funeral Home. Fr. Leo Blasi presided. Interment in Sunrise Cemetery, Manhattan.

## Igniting Hope: A Campaign for Our Neighbors in Need

By MEGAN ROBL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHERN KANSAS

This October, Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas is launching its annual campaign, Igniting Hope, to continue its mission of supporting families and individuals throughout the 31 counties of the Salina Diocese. Rooted in the compassion and generosity of our diocesan community, this campaign is an opportunity for us all to share the light of Christ with our neighbors in need.

One such neighbor is Tynan Dowell, a mother who faced a heart-wrenching tragedy that no parent should ever endure—the loss of her 14-month-old daughter, Clara, in a drowning accident. As Tynan shared, "Clara was a chubby little girl with bright blonde hair and bright blue eyes, just like her daddy." Clara's joyful personality brightened their home, but in an instant, their world was forever changed.

In the wake of this unimaginable loss, Tynan leaned on her husband and the guidance of Bishop Vincke. Yet she found herself needing

more—a place where she could process her grief in a compassionate, healing environment. It was through the counseling services offered by Catholic Charities that she found solace.

"When I stepped into the offices of Catholic Charities, I felt very warm. I felt very welcomed. I felt very secure in being able to share my trauma," Tynan recalls. With the support she received, Tynan was able to begin her journey toward healing, taking steps that would allow her to carry the memory of Clara with hope and peace.

Tynan's story is just one of many in which the compassionate care provided by Catholic Charities has made a life-changing difference. Every day, families across our diocese face challenges such as hunger, housing instability, and emotional distress. By supporting Igniting Hope, you will make an immediate and lasting impact in their lives.

Through your generosity, you will help provide food for a child, offer shelter to a family, and ensure that a mother like Tynan has the emotional support she needs. The services Catholic Charities offers are more than just

financial assistance; they bring comfort, dignity and hope to those who feel lost or abandoned. You can be a beacon of hope for those who are struggling.

This year, your gift will have an even greater impact thanks to a generous matching opportunity. Every dollar donated will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$150,000. This means your gift will go twice as far, helping families in crisis, offering counseling to those in need of healing, and providing essential items such as food and hygiene kits.

As Catholics, we are called to serve Christ in others, especially those who are most vulnerable. Igniting Hope is a chance to do just that—to respond to our neighbors' suffering with love and generosity. Together, we can ensure that no family in our diocese feels alone in their time of need. To donate or learn more about this year's campaign, visit [www.ccnks.org/ignitinghope](http://www.ccnks.org/ignitinghope). Your support will bring hope, healing, and stability to families across northern Kansas.

Through your kindness, you are not only offering a helping hand—you are sharing the love of Christ with those who need it most.

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Tynan's life changed forever when she lost her 14-month old daughter, Clara, in a drowning accident. Thanks to your generosity, she found hope and healing.



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2024 Annual Campaign**

*"Catholic Charities provides opportunities for people to grow, to heal, to process, to learn, to set goals so that they can get through the trauma or the struggles or the cross that they have to carry."*

-Tynan Dowell, Counseling Participant

Pledge cards are available at your parish or donations can be made at [ccnks.org/ignitinghope](https://ccnks.org/ignitinghope)

*Thank you for your generosity!*

