



# THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

MAR. 28, 2025

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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## Faith, love and new beginnings

*Candidates and catechumens celebrate memorable  
Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion*



LORI LEISZLER, THE REGISTER

Candidate Aldén Knedler and his fiancé and OCIA sponsor Lauren Gleason were all smiles at the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion in Hays, March 9. Knedler had proposed to Gleason just that morning.

BY LORI LEISZLER

THE REGISTER

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion is a special event for anyone entering the Catholic Church. During the Rite, the bishop formally “elects” individuals to fully enter the church at Easter Vigil. The Salina Diocese celebrated this event in Hays March 9, and in Salina March 16.

For Aldén Knedler, the celebration in Hays marked a special day for multiple reasons.

At the afternoon ceremony, he formally declared his willingness and ability to enter the Catholic Church this spring.

That morning before, he had proposed to his girlfriend of six years, Lauren Gleason.

The two had met and started dating during high school together in Dodge City. But after graduation, life kept them in different places. Knedler came to Fort Hays State University to play football, and Gleason went to Bethany College to play basketball. When it came time for Gleason, an education major, to student teach, she was excited to do so in Hays.

Gleason was raised Catholic. She attended a Catholic school from kindergarten through 8th grade and was active in her faith after high school. More recently she served on the Prayer and Action team for the Dodge City Diocese and went on mission.

Knedler wasn’t raised Catholic, but he could see how important Gleason’s faith was to her. Moreover, he wanted to share the same faith with his future wife and family.

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## Pope moves Kansas-born military chaplain closer to sainthood

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Pope Francis has advanced the sainthood cause of Father Emil J. Kapaun, a U.S. Army chaplain who gave his life ministering to fellow soldiers in a North Korean prison camp.

Among a series of decrees published by the Vatican Feb. 25, Pope Francis recognized Father Kapaun’s sacrifice as an “offering of life,” a category distinct from martyrdom that the pope established in 2017.

The category and its requirements for sainthood are explained in the apostolic letter, “Maiorem hac Dilectionem,” which comes from the Gospel according to St. John (15:13): “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

The recognition brings Father Kapaun closer to beatification, pending

verification of a miracle attributed to his intercession.

Although Pope Francis remained hospitalized for treatment of double pneumonia, he authorized the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decrees during a meeting Feb. 24 with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, substitute secretary of state.

Emil Kapaun was born to Czech immigrant parents in Pilsen, Kansas, in 1916, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Wichita in 1940. He initially served in his hometown parish before joining the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps in 1944.

Father Kapaun served as a chaplain during World War II and the Korean War. He was captured in 1950 during the Battle of Unsan by Chinese forces after choosing to stay behind with the



OSV NEWS PHOTO/COURTESY RAYMOND SKEEHAN

Venerable Fr. Emil Kapaun celebrates Mass during the Korean war, 1950, using the hood of a Jeep for an altar.

wounded. While imprisoned, he ministered to fellow POWs, provided medical assistance and stole food to help alleviate their starvation. He succumbed to malnutrition and pneumonia on May 23, 1951, in the Pyoktong prison camp.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



## Sitting with the sinner: Embracing love this Lent

On a near-daily basis, I sit face-to-face with the sinful woman from the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel.

Permit me to explain. Within my confessional at the Catholic student center at St. Isidore's in Manhattan hangs a beautiful image of this woman and the scene from the Gospel where she bathes Jesus' feet

with her tears, wipes his feet with her hair, and then anoints them with an expensive ointment. Perhaps you have heard the story before. This all takes place at the home of a Pharisee, and this woman's actions lead to quite the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisee. The scene ends with Jesus forgiving her sins, and her being filled with great gratitude.

It is this woman who I see as I pray the words, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

It was the image of this woman I gazed upon for nearly ten hours this past Ash Wednesday, as I heard dozens upon dozens of confessions from college students.

Throughout history many have proclaimed this woman from the story to be Mary Magdalene. While we cannot say so definitively, I like to think that it is indeed her. It is easy for me to meditate upon the life of Mary Magdalene while I sit in the confessional, pondering the merciful love of our God, and I hope that all of us can become more like her.

Throughout the scriptures, and particularly in the life of Mary Magdalene, we see sinners encounter Jesus, humbly

recognize their sinfulness, receive His mercy, and then embrace a life of gratitude that transforms them.

Could we do the same?

Often during confessions, I think I need to provide instructions. I will say things such as, "If only you do this or that, you will more easily be able to stay

away from those temptations that seem to plague you." It is as if I believe I can coach someone into a sin-free life. As you can guess, this rarely works.

The answer to living a more righteous life is, as it has always been, an encounter with the love of a Savior who would go so far as to die for us. Is it possible that if we only grasped the depths of love that our God has for us—the same as the love he showed to Mary Magdalene—we would then choose to honor his love with love in return?

It is not because we have learned certain tricks that we are able to avoid sin, but because we simply want to honor the One who loves us so very much. We choose to walk in accordance with his will. My friends let us today ponder His love and His mercy, and then let us respond to that love with love.

God bless you all this Lent.



**FR. GALE  
Hammerschmidt**  
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELIZATION

### DID YOU KNOW?

One of the spiritual works of mercy is "to forgive offenses willingly." This Lent, as we ask God to forgive us for our sins, may we also forgive the people in our lives who have wronged us.



**TOGETHER**  
LET US BE DISCIPLES  
OF JESUS ON MISSION

## Pope Francis returns to Vatican after health crisis

On Sunday, March 23, Pope Francis was discharged from Rome's Gemelli hospital after five weeks there due to a severe respiratory infection. He showed signs of recovery, no longer needing mechanical ventilation at night and reducing his oxygen use during the day. Doctors confirmed his infection was under control, with normal blood tests and no fever. Despite his health issues, the Pope continued fulfilling his duties, releasing messages and guiding the Church during his hospital stay. He



will continue his recovery at his Vatican residence, Casa Santa Marta, for at least two months.

### 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 intentions:

Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

#### Diocesan intentions:

Lord, during this Lenten journey, please continue to strengthen our hearts, renew our spirit, and keep us always faithful to You. Help us persevere in prayer, fasting, and acts of charity as we seek to draw ever closer to you.

### BISHOP'S CALENDAR

#### April

- 2 Confirmation, St. Boniface, Tipton, 7 p.m.
- 5 Confirmation, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Salina, 10 a.m.
- 5 BCYO Confirmation retreat, Hoxie, noon.
- 5 Confirmation, Hill City & Damar at Hill City, 6 p.m.
- 6 Confirmation, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 3 p.m.
- 9 Confirmation, St. Fidelis, Victoria, 6 p.m.
- 10 Chrism Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 11:30 a.m.
- 12 "Becoming Light Together," FHSU Comeau Catholic Campus Center, Hays, 4:30 p.m.
- 18 Good Friday, Chancery Closed.
- 21 Easter Monday, Chancery Closed.
- 23 Confirmation, St. Andrew's, Abilene, 6:30 a.m.
- 26 Transitional Deacon Ordination, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 10 a.m.
- 27 Confirmation, St. Michael's, Chapman, 9 a.m.
- 27 Confirmation, Sts. Peter & Paul, Clay Center, 2 p.m.
- 30 Confirmation, St. Francis Xavier, Junction City, 5:30 p.m.

## SENTADO CON EL PECADOR: ABRAZANDO EL AMOR EN ESTE CUARESMA

Casi a diario, me siento cara a cara con la mujer pecadora del capítulo siete del Evangelio de Lucas.

Permítanme explicar. Dentro de mi confesionario, en el centro estudiantil católico de San Isidro, cuelga una hermosa imagen de esta mujer y la escena del Evangelio donde ella baña los pies de Jesús con sus lágrimas, los seca con su cabello y luego los unge con un ungüento costoso. Quizás hayan escuchado esta historia antes. Todo esto ocurre en la casa de un fariseo, y las acciones de esta mujer conducen a una interesante discusión entre Jesús y el fariseo. La escena termina con Jesús perdonando sus pecados, y ella llena de gran gratitud.

Es a esta mujer a quien veo mientras rezo las palabras: "Yo te absuelvo de tus pecados en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo."

Fue la imagen de esta mujer la que contemplé durante casi diez horas el pasado Miércoles de Ceniza, mientras escuchaba docenas y docenas de confesiones de estudiantes universitarios. A lo largo de la historia, muchos han proclamado que esta mujer del relato es María Magdalena. Aunque no podemos confirmarlo definitivamente, me gusta pensar que realmente es ella. Es fácil para mí meditar sobre la vida de María Magdalena mientras estoy en el confesionario, reflexionando sobre el amor misericordioso de nuestro Dios, y espero que todos podamos llegar a ser más

como ella.

A lo largo de las escrituras, y particularmente en la vida de María Magdalena, vemos a los pecadores encontrarse con Jesús, reconocer humildemente su pecaminosidad, recibir Su misericordia y luego abrazar una vida de gratitud que los transforma. ¿Podríamos hacer lo mismo?

A menudo durante las confesiones siento que debo dar instrucciones. Digo cosas como: "Si tan solo haces esto o aquello, podrás evitar más fácilmente esas tentaciones que parecen atormentarte." Es como si creyera que puedo entrenar a alguien para llevar una vida libre de pecado. Como pueden imaginar, esto rara vez funciona.

La respuesta para vivir una vida más justa es, como siempre ha sido, un encuentro con el amor de un Salvador que estaría dispuesto a morir por nosotros. ¿Es posible que si tan solo comprendiéramos la profundidad del amor que nuestro Dios tiene por nosotros—el mismo amor que mostró a María Magdalena—entonces elegiríamos honrar Su amor con amor en respuesta?

No es porque hayamos aprendido ciertos trucos que podemos evitar el pecado, sino porque simplemente queremos honrar a Aquel que nos ama tanto. Elegimos caminar conforme a Su voluntad. Amigos míos, hoy reflexionemos sobre Su amor y Su misericordia, y luego respondamos a ese amor con amor.

Que Dios los bendiga a todos en esta Cuaresma.



## OFFICIAL PRIEST ASSIGNMENTS

### Fr. James Moster, OFMCap:

Released from assignment as Rector and Pastor of the Parish community at The Basilica of Saint Fidelis in Victoria, Kansas; Pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Vincent, Kansas; and Pastor of St. Anne Parish in Walker, Kansas, to return to the Capuchin Franciscans – Province of St. Conrad in Denver, Colorado.

### Fr. Curtis Carlson, OFMCap:

Appointed Rector and Pastor of the Parish community at The Basilica of Saint Fidelis in Victoria, Kansas; Pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Vincent, Kansas; and Pastor of St. Anne Parish in Walker, Kansas, with residence in the St. Fidelis Friary beginning March 15, 2025. Beginning April 5, 2025, he will no longer be Pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Antonino, Kansas, and St. Anthony Parish in Schoenchen, Kansas.

### Fr. Job Arakkaparambil Varghese, OFMCap:

Appointed Pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Antonino, Kansas, and St. Anthony Parish in Schoenchen, Kansas with residence in the St. Fidelis Friary beginning April 5, 2025.

## RITE, FROM PAGE 1

"I grew in my faith a lot in college," Knedler said. "I went to a different church growing up, but I didn't want to raise my kids in a different church. We're gonna be a one church family."

Taking a step toward that goal, Knedler asked Gleason to be his OCIA sponsor and began preparing to join the Catholic Church. And just before the Rite of Election, he proposed to her after they attended Sunday Mass together.

Knedler joins 15 more students from FHSU's Co-meau Catholic Campus Center who are fully entering the Catholic Church this Easter, along with dozens of converts in the Salina Diocese and thousands around the world.

At the Rite, Bishop Gerald Vincke expressed his joy at the candidates' commitment, telling

them, "Your journeys to this point have all been different, but one thing is the same: you have been called by Jesus Christ."

Though Bishop Vincke couldn't attend the Rite of Election in Salina, he sent Fr. Fred Gatschet, vicar

general, to celebrate with the attendees there instead.

Gleason and Knedler weren't the only people celebrating a special occasion—on top of the joy of conversion—at the Rite of Election in Hays. Fr. Damian

Richards, pastor at St. Nicholas of Myra, was also marking his birthday, in addition to helping lead the event. Many attendees shared that he had played a key role in their conversion, citing his friendly demeanor and deep



COURTESY PHOTO

Your gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal – Call to Share helps support vital programs and ministries within our diocese. Give today via the QR code or at [join.givecfds.org](https://join.givecfds.org).



## BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

*call to share*

**YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION**



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Candidates, catechumens, sponsors and family members filled Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina on March 16 to celebrate the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

knowledge.

Fr. Richards told The Register that his birthday celebration included the Rite, the St. Nick's parish mission later that evening, and a funeral the following day.

"But who knows," he joked with a smile, "with Bishop talking and taking pictures we could be here all night."

As the Easter Vigil approaches, let us unite in prayer for all those preparing to join the Catholic Church, that they may find strength and joy in their new life in Christ.

# Lessons from Saint Patrick: Living the faith boldly

Spring is the perfect time to talk about one of my favorite saints – St. Patrick. My connection to him runs deep because of my Irish heritage and his life's lessons about faith, evangelization, and courage.

Growing up, my Irish roots were an important part of my identity. But my appreciation for St. Patrick grew through my father's job. When I was young, my dad was the assistant principal at Kennedy Middle School, whose mascot happened to be the Fighting Irish. As a kid, I thought the little leprechaun logo was the coolest thing ever.

Ironically, my first coaching and athletic director job was at that same Kennedy Middle School, still home of the Fighting Irish. St. Patrick was my go-to when I wanted to talk to kids about faith. The more I studied his life, the more I admired him—not just as a historical figure but as an example of the boldness we're called to have in sharing our faith.

Many people don't realize that St. Patrick wasn't Irish by birth. He was born in Britain, and at the age of 16, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and sold into slavery. He lived in captivity for six years, tending sheep and enduring hardship. One night, he had a

dream in which God told him to escape. He ran, found a ship, and returned home to Britain, finally free.

You'd think that would end his story—survive, escape, and never look back. But then Patrick had another dream. This time, he

saw the Irish people calling him back, asking him to return and share the Gospel. Most of us would have ignored that dream. Why go back to the very people who had enslaved you? But Patrick didn't hesitate. He left behind comfort and security to bring Christ to those who needed Him.

Ireland at the time was dominated by warlords and pagan beliefs, the most infamous of which was the worship of a deity named Crom Cruach. When Patrick arrived, one warlord issued him a challenge: if he could defeat Crom Cruach, he would be allowed to evangelize. So Patrick, armed with nothing but faith, made the journey to confront this pagan stronghold. Tradition tells us that as he stood before the shrine, a voice called out, "Patrick, I know who you are. I have longed to meet you face to face." By God's power, he defeated Crom Cruach that day and showed all of Ireland the power of the one true God.

That moment says so much

about who St. Patrick was. He wasn't just another preacher; he was a threat to the darkness that held Ireland captive. He challenged evil head-on and never backed down. He spent the rest of his life tirelessly spreading the Gospel, converting an entire nation, one soul at a time.

His story reminds me of a famous C.S. Lewis quote: "When I die, I hope all of hell rejoices that I am out of the fight." Too often, we live our faith quietly, hoping to

stay under Satan's radar. But St. Patrick didn't hide—he made sure the enemy knew exactly who he was. He lived with such bold evangelization that the forces of darkness had no choice but to take notice.

Let's remember him as a model for us all. Let's strive to be the kind of evangelists who make an impact, spread the message of Christ without fear, and live in such a way that when we leave this world, even hell rejoices!

**BILL Meagher**  
DIOCESE OF SALINA



## Salina Diocese Family Prayer

### St. Patrick's Prayer for Protection

"As I arise today,  
may the strength of God pilot me,  
the power of God uphold me,  
the wisdom of God guide me.  
May the eye of God look before me,  
the ear of God hear me,  
the word of God speak for me.  
May the hand of God protect me,  
the way of God lie before me,  
the shield of God defend me,  
the host of God save me.  
May Christ shield me today.  
Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit,  
Christ when I stand,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.  
Amen."



✂ Cut this out and pray with your family!



KAPAUN,  
FROM PAGE 1

In 2013, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Father Kapaun the Medal of Honor for his valor.

The Vatican said Pope Francis also approved the dicastery's decision to approve the canonizations of Blessed José Gregorio Hernández, the Venezuelan "doctor of the poor" who provided medical care to the impoverished and was killed by a motorist in 1919, and Blessed Bartolo Longo, an Italian lawyer who founded the Pontifical Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompei and died in 1926.

The Vatican announcement said Pope Francis had decided to convoke an ordinary consistory of cardinals to discuss their canonizations.

Pope Francis also recognized the "offer of life" of Salvo D'Acquisto, an Italian military police officer who sacrificed his life during World War II. Following an explosion that killed two German soldiers in 1943, Nazi forces threatened to execute 22 Italian civilians in retaliation. To save them, D'Acquisto falsely confessed to causing the explosion and was executed by firing squad.

The three other decrees Pope Francis signed Feb. 24 recognized:

— The heroic virtues of Miguel Maura Montaner, a Spanish diocesan priest and founder of the Congregation of Custodian Sisters of Eucharistic Worship, created to promote Eucharistic worship and support impoverished churches, who died in 1915.

— The heroic virtues of Fr. Didaco Bessi, an Italian diocesan priest and founder of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Rosary, dedicated to educating orphans and caring for the sick, who died in 1919.

— The heroic virtues of Kunegunda Siwec, a Polish laywoman who joined the Carmelite Third Order and experienced profound spiritual visions, devoting her life to prayer and service. She became known for her spiritual wisdom, with many traveling to seek her counsel and guidance before her death in 1955.

# Blessed from head to soul

## Pilgrims walk by faith along the Kansas Camino and the Wisconsin Walk to Mary

By LORI LEISZLER  
THE REGISTER

If you walked a day in Amber Davis' shoes on any random spring day, you might get a few more miles than you bargained for.

Along with a group of family, friends and community members from St. Xavier's in Junction City, Davis goes on walking pilgrimages. Each May, a group from their parish walks 21 miles in Wisconsin, and every June, they walk 60 miles from Wichita to Pilsen.

They walk, and they pray. "It's kind of funny how God works. He has a sense of humor," Davis said, reflecting on her physical and spiritual journeys.

Davis, the evangelization coordinator at St. Xavier's in Junction City, has been involved in religious education since 2005 and stepped into her current role in 2020. She teaches seventh- and eighth-grade religion part-time at St. X. Later this summer, she'll be helping Prayer & Action in July. Organizing pilgrimages has become a major part of her ministry.

She first learned about the Father Kapaun pilgrimage — an annual 60-mile walk from Wichita to Pilsen — in 2021, through what she describes as a mysterious nudge from God.

"I still don't know how I saw it," she said. "At that time, they weren't really advertising it, but I read about it and felt inclined to ask this lady from my parish, Barbie Campbell, if she'd want to go with me. And she said, 'Sure,' so we ended up going."

That decision led the two women to participate in the Kapaun Walk from Wichita to Pilsen. Sometimes referred to as the Kansas Camino, it spans



COURTESY PHOTO, AMBER DAVIS

Pilgrims at the Walk to Mary in Wisconsin, 2024. (L-R) Ricardo Gutierrez, Josie Gutierrez, Luz, Vincent Gutierrez, Amber Davis, Ryan Davis, Charlene Ross, Nanette Lamb, Barbie Campbell and Eric Page.

60 miles over four days. Pilgrims on the walk learn about Venerable Emil Kapaun, sacrifice through the pain, and have plenty of opportunities to pray.

"Until you actually get in there to do it, you don't really know what you've got yourself into," Campbell said with a laugh. "But as I was getting beat down physically, I could really feel spiritually how I was growing."

Campbell said the fruits of going on that first pilgrimage with Davis made her want to go again.

The next year, they were joined by more parishioners, with an open invitation to anyone.

"Each year I've gone back, you still learn more things and meet new people," Campbell said.

On the Kapaun Walk, pilgrims have time to talk, pray, and walk in silence with each other.

Going on that first pilgrimage also sparked Davis' interest in the May Walk to Mary, a 21-mile one-day journey to Our Lady of Champion Shrine in Wisconsin. She saw it as "a good warm-up" for the Kapaun walk, which takes place a month later in June.

"I was going into it thinking I was just going for the training aspect," Davis said.

But what started as a practical preparation became another profound spiritual experience, and it brought an unexpected answer to prayer.

She and Campbell organized a small group of seven to attend the Walk to Mary, making spontaneous stops along the way at shrines and holy places of interest.

Davis said the visits were beautiful and spiritually enriching, but that she found the most spiritual fruit in her prayer on the walk itself.

In the spring of 2023, she set out on the Walk to Mary with intentions to pray for her school and parish. During the walk, she reflected on the many blessings in her life.

"It's a very Catholic area that we were walking through, but a lot of the schools in the area are merged," Davis said. "And I just felt so blessed that we have a school that's pre-K through 12th grade. For me, it became kind of a personal mission. I thought, 'I'm going to come back and teach, lead and do what I can.' It felt like my assignment from Mary."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## STEPS TOWARD SAINTHOOD



### 1 SERVANT OF GOD

THE LIFE AND VIRTUES OF THE PERSON ARE EXAMINED AFTER THEIR DEATH, AND THEIR CAUSE FOR CANONIZATION (SAINTHOOD) IS OPENED.

### 2 VENERABLE

IF THE PERSON IS FOUND TO HAVE LIVED A LIFE OF HEROIC VIRTUE OR MARTYRDOM, THEY ARE DECLARED "VENERABLE," MEANING THEIR HOLINESS IS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED.

### 3 BLESSED

THE PERSON IS BEATIFIED, "BLESSED," AFTER ONE MIRACLE IS ATTRIBUTED TO THEIR INTERCESSION. MARTYRS ONLY NEED ONE MIRACLE TO BE DECLARED A SAINT!

### 4 SAINT

THE FINAL STEP, WHERE A SECOND MIRACLE IS VERIFIED (UNLESS THE CANDIDATE WAS A MARTYR), AND THE POPE CANONIZES THE PERSON, OFFICIALLY DECLARING THEM A SAINT.



# St. X students take memorable field trip to Pilsen

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN

THE REGISTER

Cecilia Weigel has been wanting to take a group of students to visit a certain historic site since she became the theology teacher at St. Francis Xavier High School two years ago.

Earlier this month, Weigel finally got her wish granted.

On March 12, Weigel accompanied the high school students from the Catholic high school in Junction City on a field trip to Pilsen, home of Capt. Father Emil Kapaun. Fr. Kapaun was raised in Pilsen, attended St. John Nepomucene Parish as a child and was even ordained a priest there.

The trip had special meaning for Weigel for several reasons.

The trip had special significance for Weigel for several reasons. She grew up attending St. John Nepomucene Parish, just like Father Kapaun, and she was married there. Her husband, Thomas, joined her on the school trip.

Additionally, just two and a half weeks earlier, on February 24, Father Kapaun was named "Venerable" by Pope Francis, bringing him one step closer to being declared a saint.

Weigel thinks it's important for students to learn about Father Kapaun. He was ordained in Pilsen – on the northern edge of the Wichita Diocese – but also served during World War II as chaplain of the Army Air Field in nearby Herington, which is part of



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

**Students from St. Francis Xavier High School visit the church in Pilsen to learn more about Venerable Fr. Kapaun, a statue of whom is shown at left, helping a wounded soldier.**



the Salina Diocese.

Father Kapaun, who died in a POW camp during the Korean War in 1951, saved countless soldiers by inspiring them to help one another survive. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013.

The people of Pilsen have long celebrated their local hero, and more details about Father Kapaun's life emerged after his remains were identified in a Hawaii cemetery in 2021 and later transferred to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita.

"When I was a kid, I knew about Father Kapaun, but he wasn't talked about all that much," Weigel said. "Now, he's a hero to so many."

The 17 students from St. Xavier listened attentively while tour guides gave them a glimpse of Fr. Kapaun's life, from childhood to his time in the POW camp. The students and teachers got to tour the church and the adjacent museum.

It was the first visit to Pilsen for most of the students.

Sophomore Dana Davis, who had participated in the annual 60-mile Fr. Kapaun Pilgrimage with her mother pilgrimage two years ago, said she still learned a lot more this time around.

Dana said she was impacted so heavily by the pilgrimage that she debated waiting to be confirmed until Fr. Kapaun was canonized a saint.

After some thought and prayer, however, she decided to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on schedule last year "and then closely follow his journey to sainthood."

Geoff Andrews, superintendent of schools for the Salina Diocese, attended the field trip and encourages others to take advantage of "this incredible opportunity to learn more about Fr. Kapaun's life."

"Visiting Pilsen is such a powerful and moving experience," he said. "I love that these are the types of field trips students in our Catholic schools get to go on."

## PILGRIMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4



COURTESY PHOTO, AMBER DAVIS

**Ryan Davis shows off his 10th mile completed at the Walk to Mary in 2024.**

Davis was inspired by the words of Our Lady at the apparition site in Wisconsin: "Go and fear nothing, I will help you." She took this as her own personal mantra, trusting in Mary's intercession for her life.

Later that summer, Davis was asked to take on a teaching role at St. Xavier's.

"That's not exactly what I had in mind," Davis said, "but I can't say no to Mary."

Davis said she is moved by seeing the Holy Spirit at work in people on pilgrimage. One of the things she loves about the pilgrimages is how people of all ages can participate.

"It's really open to anyone," Davis said. "My mom has gone [on the Walk to Mary], and she's not walked. She just goes to the apparition site. It's kind of cool because she still gets a spiritual experience out of it."

After going on both, Davis was struck by how the Walk to Mary and the Kapaun Walk were each unique.

"Walk to Mary was a different experience

than the one here in Kansas. The Kapaun pilgrimage tries to keep everyone together on the same time frame, whereas in Wisconsin, it's more flexible—you walk at your own pace. And while the Kapaun Walk has around 250 to 325 people, the Walk to Mary has about 12,000."

By the second year of attending the Walk to Mary, her group had grown to 10, and they planned a more structured itinerary, adding stops like the tomb of Archbishop Fulton Sheen in Peoria, Illinois, along the way. With each trip, the pilgrimage evolved into something even greater than Davis had imagined.

"It's amazing how God's providence works," Davis said. "Last year, we went back, and it turned into so much more than I'd imagined."

Now, with another Kapaun pilgrimage ahead in June and a new group preparing for the Walk to Mary in May, she's embracing the journey once again—wherever it may lead.

Anyone interested in joining St. Xavier's group this year for either walking pilgrimage can contact Davis for more information at [amber@saintxparish.org](mailto:amber@saintxparish.org).

Additionally, the diocesan evangelization team is also leading two guided pilgrimages, featuring a little less walking, later this year—one to see the Venerable Kapaun and Bl. Stanley Rother shrines in June, and

another pilgrimage to the Marian shrine in Wisconsin in October, as part of a week-long trip.

"I love evangelizing," Davis said. "I think it's a natural thing for me. Everyone has a different story and a different journey, but if I can bring people to a place where they can get away from the world and away from the busyness, to have a spiritual experience—whatever that may look like, whether they're walking 21 miles or 14 miles or 7 miles, or sitting at the apparition site, or just going to Holy Hill and feeling the quiet solace of God in nature—it's awesome to be able to take people on that. And that's why, as long as I can continue to take people on that journey, I will."

## OUR LADY OF CHAMPION

Our Lady of Champion, also known as Our Lady of Good Help, appeared to a young woman named Adele Brise in 1859 in Champion, Wisconsin.

Adele was walking when she saw a beautiful lady dressed in white. The lady was Mary, the mother of Jesus, and she asked Adele to teach the children in the area about God and to pray for their souls.

She told Adele, "Go and fear nothing, I will help you."

Adele listened to Mary's message and started teaching children about the Catholic faith. She also built a chapel in honor of the vision. One day, a big fire came through the area, killing many and damaging the area, but the chapel and its people were kept safe.

In 2010, the Vatican recognized the apparition as real, and the site became the first and only Marian shrine in the United States that the Church officially approved. Today, people visit the shrine to pray and ask Mary for help.





# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

WITH REFLECTIONS BY SEMINARIANS  
& DEACONS OF THE SALINA DIOCESE

During Lent, many churches throughout the Salina Diocese, as well as around the world, will pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays. The stations pictured on these pages are from churches throughout the diocese. Please read each meditation, view the photo of a station and take a few minutes to reflect.

## I JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



St. Philip, Hope

After Pilate washes his hands, the people exclaim, "His blood be on us and on our children." O Jesus, how good you are! You can use even our worst sins and actions to bring us closer to you. Through the action of condemning you to death, you bring us closer to you with the cup of salvation.

By Gus Hanson

## II JESUS ACCEPTS THE CROSS

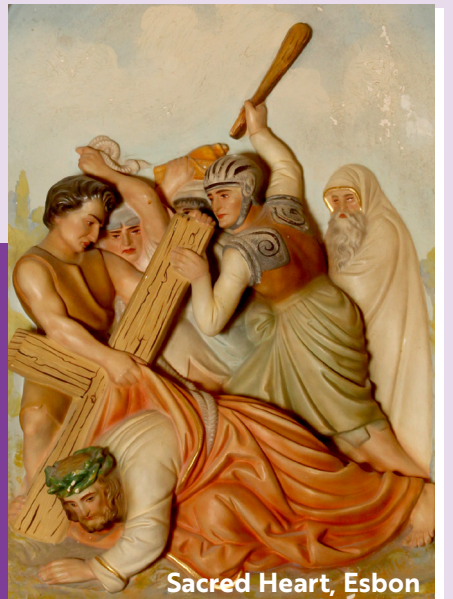
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Goodland



As Jesus willingly took up the cross for us, so we should be willing to take up our crosses for Him, and the good of others, whenever they arise. Whether it be a large cross to bear or a small one, let us take up that cross without complaint. May we allow our natural desires to go unfulfilled.

By Ethan Weiner

## III JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



Sacred Heart, Esbon

Consider Our Lord as He falls for the first time under the weight of our sins. He is exhausted and has been abandoned by all of His closest friends, but He sets an example for all of us by picking His cross back up and continuing on the road to Calvary. Lord Jesus Christ, help each of us to follow your perfect example, and to not grow discouraged by the weight of our cross, but to trust that you will always be near to lead us safely to your Father's waiting arms.

By Gabe Friess



St. Mary Help of Christians, Gorham

## IV JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Mary longed to suffer with Jesus in His Passion. In a very real way, she does suffer in seeing her only Son unjustly tortured and killed. As Jesus invites Mary to, He invites us into compassion for Him, but He also wants us to accept His suffering and death for us as a free gift that we need not repay.

By Marshall Fike



Holy Ghost, Sharon Springs

## V SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

Imagine the pain Jesus must have endured carrying His Cross. The deep wounds from the scourging would have excruciating under the weight of the Cross. His feet would have been bloody and raw, and his legs weak and battered. Seeing Jesus struggling immensely from His torturous journey to Cavalry, the soldiers enlisted Simon of Cyrene to offer some relief.

We thank you, Jesus, for enduring this suffering for our salvation. May we be constantly aware of your love and presence as we carry our own crosses in daily life, and give us the grace to help each other carry our crosses together.

By Matthew Ralls

## VI VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



St. Edward, Belleville

Jesus encounters Veronica amidst the pain and torture of His Passion. In an act of compassion, she uses her veil to wipe away the blood and filth from his holy and precious face. Veronica's simple and loving gesture offered Jesus a brief respite. Dear Jesus, like St. Veronica, I want to be a source of comfort for you. What simple, loving gesture can I offer this Lent to console the Heart of Jesus?

By Joseph Schones



**STATIONS** OF THE CROSS



St. Francis, St. Francis

**VII JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

You know this man. Jesus has made Himself known to you and told you of His hardships. These are things that a true friend does. And now, your friend is carrying a cross. Simon of Cyrene is there at His side, taking some of the physical pressure of the cross off His back. However, Jesus has had no sleep and has been betrayed--by Judas, a close friend, and by His own people. Jesus, your friend, has been brutally scourged and crowned with thorns. There is hardly any part of his body that is not a wound. On top of all these things, your friend is also carrying the weight and pain of all the sins of the world. Now, your friend falls again in agony, trying to persevere because of the friend whom He loves: you.

By Collin Thielen



Sacred Heart, Colby

**VIII JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN**

Jesus, who is exhausted beyond belief and continues to push forward after his second fall, meets the eyes of the women of Jerusalem. The women are weeping as they see this man suffering beyond compare. Their hearts ache for Jesus. Jesus, in his Divine Witness, tells them to weep for themselves and not for him. He, being the exemplar of God's servant, thinks of the women and not of himself. He is emptying himself for them, and for each of us. Allow us, Lord Jesus, to empty ourselves out for you in our daily lives of service to Our Father in Heaven through those we meet around us.

By Max Megaffin



Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Concordia

**IX JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

O Good Jesus, in meditating on Your third and final fall on the Way of the Cross, help us to understand more deeply the richness of Your mercy. In this fall, You show that You know what it is to struggle, to suffer from recurring falls, but You never let go of Your hope in the Father's plan, nor the steadfast love which led You to offer Your life for us. Help us who struggle with spiritual crosses know that, though we may fall repeatedly or struggle with chronic and habitual sins, we have no cause for shame, for no sooner do we turn to You for help than You are by our side. By falling and rising again this third time, crush any despair of Your mercy and guide us back to the Sacraments of Your merciful love, to Confession and the Eucharist. May we never tire of asking Your forgiveness, for You never tire of unreservedly pouring out Your precious Blood to cover our sins. It is the joy of Your Sacred Heart to pour out mercy extravagantly on those who ask for it in confident trust, for You have said, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Lk 15:7)."

By Holden Giefer

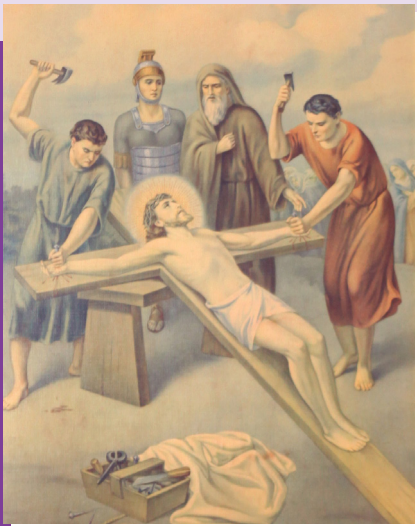


Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Solomon

**X JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS**

One of the biggest rationales behind Roman Crucifixion was public humiliation. It wasn't enough to merely torture and kill Jesus; almost every angle of His human dignity must be stripped away. This can symbolize for us the Lord's radical vulnerability and desire to draw close to us when we show Him the vulnerability of our hearts, to be with us in our shames and humiliations.

By Kyle Pfeifer



St. John the Evangelist, Logan

**XI JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

We dread the thought of being abandoned or rejected because we are inadequate or unlovable. We desire someone to remain with us in our need. By allowing Himself to be nailed to a cross, Jesus shows us that He is not going anywhere. He willingly takes upon Himself the sin, brokenness, sufferings and despair that plague us. Will we allow Our Savior to meet us in our most vulnerable places? Will we accept His merciful love which washes over us in His Blood?

By Luke Friess



## STATIONS

OF THE CROSS



St. Joseph, Damar

XII  
JESUS DIES  
ON THE CROSS

Who can truly understand the Cross? Our Lord's death is the ultimate act of sacrifice. Jesus shows he was willing to let the mockery, torture and the question, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" (Jn 18:29) find their final end. He gives himself completely over to death. All of Life and Light converges with the entire history of death and darkness on the Cross. "It is finished." (Jn 19:30)

By Deacon Adam Urban



Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hill City

XIII JESUS IS  
TAKEN DOWN  
FROM THE  
CROSS

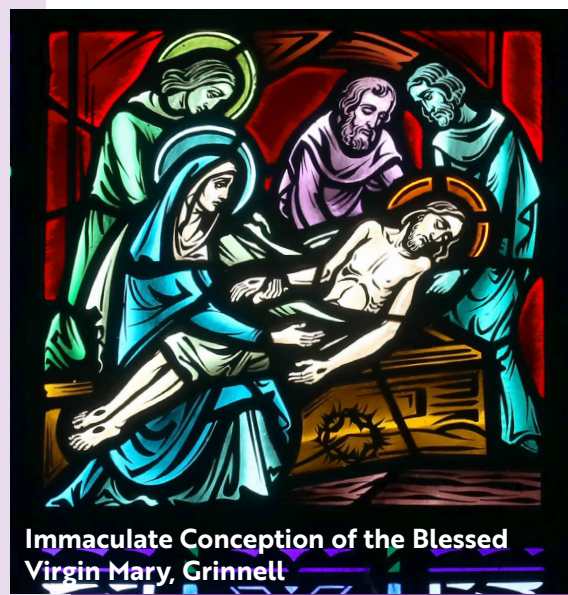
The lifeless body of our Lord rests now in his Mother's arms. Mangled and torn, cold and still, she holds him for a moment—a moment that pierces beyond the confines of time and seems to last forever. Although the world continues to turn, for Mary and the Christian world, it turns now around the axis of his cross, it turns around this painful moment of adoration where Mary and the Christians present venerate the body of our Lord and honor him, who loved them to the end. In the Eucharist this end becomes a beginning for all who adore the precious body of Jesus, the eternal son of the Father.

By Deacon Kade Megaffin

XIV  
JESUS IS PLACED  
IN THE TOMB

There is an eerie stillness on the earth: Jesus has gone before us into the tomb. He knows that we are dust, and unto dust we shall return. Our pain and suffering are not in vain, for Jesus knows the experience of human death and allows His body to be placed in a tomb. We need not fear death or the grave, for He goes before us in all things. Lord, when we die, graciously grant us an everlasting Home with You. Amen.

By Deacon Jesse Ochs



Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Grinnell

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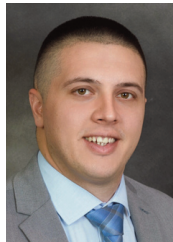
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# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday  
• Apr. 17

Good Friday  
• Apr. 18

Easter Vigil  
• Apr. 19 (after sunset)



- Apr. 4**

  - Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Minneapolis, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- Apr. 10**

  - Chrism Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 11:30 a.m.
- Apr. 12**

  - "Becoming Light Together," Comeau Center, Hays, 4:30 p.m.
- Apr. 20**

  - Easter Sunday.
- Apr. 26**

  - Transitional Deacon Ordination, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 10 a.m.
- Apr. 29-May 2**


  - Divine Mercy Radio Spring Care-A-Thon.
- St. Joseph Parish Bazaar and fundraiser, Damar, 4 p.m.
  - Denim & Diamonds, St. Francis Xavier's School Auction, Junction City, 5 p.m.
  - 51st Annual Auction for Christian Education (ACE), TMP-Marian, Hays, 5 p.m.
  - Blue & Gold Affair (Charity Auction), Sacred Heart Gym, Salina, 5:30 p.m.

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## DIVINE MERCY RADIO EXPANDS INTO HILL CITY

**BY NATHAN LANG**  
*DIVINE MERCY RADIO*

Divine Mercy Radio, Inc, a Catholic radio network based in Hays, has recently purchased a translator station in Hill City. Residents in and around Hill City can tune in to 107.3 to listen to programming from the KMDG, Hays signal.

Divine Mercy Radio is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation relying on donations and underwriters to support its programming.

Divine Mercy Radio broadcasts most of its programming from the Eternal Word Television Network based in Irondale, Ala. However, Divine Mercy Radio does produce some local programming such as Double-Edged

Sword, One Body: Stewarding God's Creation and Faith-Driven Finance. The complete schedule of programming can be viewed at [dvmercy.com/programming](http://dvmercy.com/programming).


This Catholic radio network began broadcasting in 2010 with 88.1, KVDM, Hays. It has now grown into five radio stations along with this new translator station in Hill City, 107.3. Other stations are 105.7, Hays, 88.1 Great Bend, 101.7 Salina and 89.1 Colby.

Programming on Divine Mercy Radio is also available on phone apps and Alexa through its streaming channels. Information on how to listen via streaming is at [dvmercy.com/ways-to-listen](http://dvmercy.com/ways-to-listen).

### JOB OPPORTUNITY

### SALINA CHANCERY OFFICE

### SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR



The Coordinator leads the Safe Environment Program for the Salina Diocese. A majority of the time is spent with parish & school site safety coordinators, the CMG platform where the data is held, the Diocese website, and the fulfillment of the Charter for the Protection of Minors. This position is 20-25 hrs per week.

**APPLY NOW!**

Email Kim Hoelting for the full job description: [kim.hoelting@salinadiocese.org](mailto:kim.hoelting@salinadiocese.org)

### 19TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

THE GENIUS OF JESUS, THE WORLD OF WOMEN

Saturday, April 5, 2025

St. Thomas More Parish Center, Manhattan

Cost: \$55 for adults, \$20 for students in HS/College

Guest Speaker *Kathy Coffey*



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4:30 PM | ROSARY

5 PM | MASS WITH BISHOP VINCKE  
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6 PM | SOCIAL HOUR  
LOUNGE - COMEAU CATHOLIC CAMPUS CENTER

7 PM | DINNER & PROGRAM  
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# Catholic Charities, guided by love and generosity

By JEREE HUGHBANKS  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
OF NORTHERN KANSAS

When Paul first needed help, he didn't know where to turn. A suggestion from his church led him to Catholic Charities in Hays over 10 years ago. That visit made a lasting impression—he left with the prescription he needed, plus food and toiletries to get through a difficult time.

In 2023, Paul's life changed drastically when he was hit while biking in Hays. With a broken femur, he spent weeks in the hospital. After his discharge, Paul had no stable place to stay. Family and friends helped as much as they could, but those options quickly ran out. Desperate for support, Paul moved to Salina and found shelter and meals at the Salina Rescue Mission,



where he started to rebuild his life.

In Salina, Paul needed a bag to carry his belongings and visited Catholic Charities. "They found one for me," Paul shared. "Then they told me I was allowed so many things each month."

Paul has received food, hygiene items, bus passes and a heavy-duty backpack after his old one fell apart. He also found clothing in the Catholic Charities Thrift Store. Each visit reinforced his sense of community and the generosity donors like you make possible.

One particularly tough time came during a snowstorm when Paul's boots fell apart. "I was walking through the snow, and my shoe started to flap," Paul laughed. "I thought, 'What do I do now?!' So, I went to Catholic Charities."



COURTESY PHOTO

Catholic Charities in Hays and Salina have made a kind and lasting impact on Paul's life.

When Paul arrived, the Thrift Store staff found him sturdy boots and a warm jacket. Later, as he prepared to pay for his items, a kind-hearted stranger stepped in and paid for the jacket—an act of generosity that deeply moved him.

"I was touched," Paul said.

"She didn't have to do that, but she did. It was a blessing."

The personal attention and care Paul received made a significant impact. "It's a comfort knowing there's someone on the other side of the counter willing to help," Paul shared.

Now, Paul feels hopeful for the future. He looks forward to giving back, inspired by the generosity that touched his life. His story is a reminder of the power of kindness and the incredible impact of your support.

## 'Crazy Faith' carries TMP-M girls all the way to state

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

John Linn took a leap of faith, and he landed squarely on both feet.

Linn had been out of coaching for over 10 years when he took the head coaching position for the Thomas More Prep-Marian High girls' basketball program last spring.

Linn, a business teacher at TMP-M and a lifetime sports enthusiast, had been thinking about getting back into coaching someday.

When the Monarch job opened and Athletic Director James Harris asked if he was interested, it only took Linn a couple of days to accept.

After reading the book, "Crazy Faith" for some inspiration, Linn immediately began instilling in his team to "have faith in God, faith in each other, faith in themselves and faith in the process."

"I needed them to have faith in me and my system," he said. "They bought in."

The Monarchs adopted the motto, "Crazy Faith," for the season and printed it on their warmup shirts.

It turned out their faith wasn't so crazy after all. TMP-M continued to make adjustments through a tough schedule that includ-



COURTESY PHOTO

The TMP-Marian girls defeated two higher-seeded teams in sub-state to advance to state for the first time since 2018.

ed playing teams from much larger schools and state-ranked teams.

The Monarchs defeated two higher-seeded, state-ranked teams in the sub-state tournament to reach state for the first time since 2018.

After upsetting No. 1 seed Leoti in the semifinals, TMP-M punched its ticket to the Class 2A State Championships in Manhattan with a 47-39 win over Hoxie, which had defeated TMP-M by 25 points in December.

The Monarchs went into the Christmas break with a 2-4 record.

But Linn remained

optimistic: "I always had a feeling we could have something special by the end of the year if we kept working and kept the faith."

Since joining TMP-M in 2022-23, Linn had been involved with helping the players, either in class or assisting at games.

"God blessed me with perfect timing," Linn said.

God also blessed him with a lot of leadership with six seniors in the program — five players and manager Paige Schlyer.

For a good share of the season, Linn's starting lineup featured seniors Shalee Gottschalk, Teagan Gottschalk, Brooke Koenig-

sman, Gracyn Schippers and Shyanne Yost.

He also experimented with numerous other lineups all season.

"These girls bring so many different abilities to the basketball floor," Linn said. "I had to find out what each of their strengths were, and that takes time."

All the while, they kept the faith while relying on their strong defensive game as Linn insisted, "It's only crazy until it happens."

"I remember looking over at the girls on the bench toward the end of the Hoxie game at sub-state, and said, 'It's happening.'"

The Monarchs' journey ended with a first-round loss at state to eventual state champion Moundridge. With those six Monarch seniors transitioning to spring sports, there wasn't much time to celebrate their memorable basketball season, which concluded with a 15-10 record and a trip to state.

However, as time passes, the players will surely reflect on their senior season and recognize just how special it was.

The state championship T-shirts they bought at the tournament will serve as a reminder, as will the "Crazy Faith" warmup shirts they wore with pride throughout the season.

...

The Beloit-St. John's/Tipton boys' and girls' teams both came within one win of making it to state, and Salina-Sacred Heart's boys went unbeaten in 19 games before losing in sub-state action.

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~ Directors Steven Surber, John Surber and Don Waddington ~



# Diocesan students earn scholarships

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Students from around the diocese have recently been awarded several prestigious scholarships, recognizing their hard work and dedication.

Three diocesan students were named Rudd Foundation Scholars, each earning a full-ride scholarship that covers tuition, fees, and additional expenses for four years at Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Kansas State, or Wichita State University. TMP-Marian senior Grace Schmeidler (daughter of Jon and Kim Schmeidler) was one of the recipients and plans to attend Kansas State University this fall. St. John's Beloit seniors Lily DiNuzzo (daughter of Dave and Catherine DiNuzzo) and Clare Meyer (daughter of Tony and Lindy Meyer) also received the scholarship. DiNuzzo will attend Wichita State University, while Meyer has chosen to decline the scholarship in favor of studying at Benedictine College.

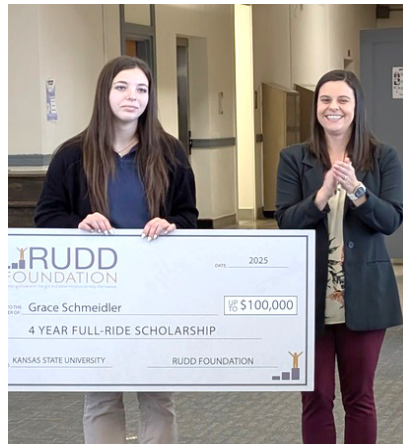
St. John's seniors Nicholas Niewald (son of Andrew and Maria Niewald) and Jonas Letourneau (son of Ben and Wendi Letourneau) were awarded the Presidential Scholarship from Benedictine College, covering full tuition for four years. They were two of only ten students nationwide selected for

this honor.

Several students from Catholic schools in the diocese were also named Hansen Scholars, receiving a \$6,500 stipend for one year with the possibility of renewal. Hansen Scholars include Gordon Schroeder (TMP-Marian), Lily DiNuzzo (St. John's Catholic), Henry Holdren (St. John's Catholic), Nicholas Niewald (St. John's Catholic) and Abram Anderson (Sacred Heart).

The Dane Hansen Foundation also awarded 70 scholarships of \$4,000, renewable for one additional year. This year's winners from the diocese include Jake Brady, Caleb Marintzer, William Robinson and Breanna Seiler (TMP-Marian); Tyson Gates, Claire Hicks, Gianna Horinek and Jonas Letourneau (St. John's Catholic); and Luke Newell, Caroline Stone and Nathan White (Sacred Heart).

Additionally, more than 100 students across North Central and Northwest Kansas received \$4,000 scholarships for career and technical education (CTE). Local winners include Faith Woods (St. John's Catholic), Ryder Allen (Tipton Catholic), and Addison Jones (Sacred Heart).



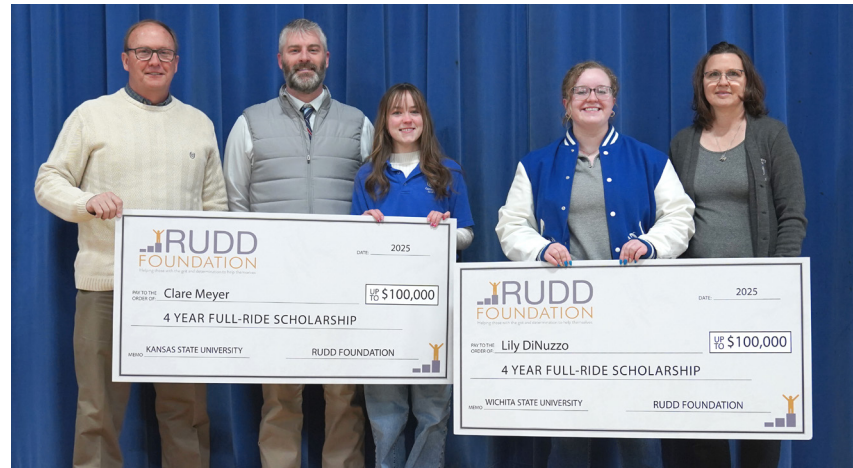
COURTESY PHOTO

**Grace Schmeidler, Rudd Foundation Scholar from TMP-Marian, Hays.**



COURTESY PHOTO

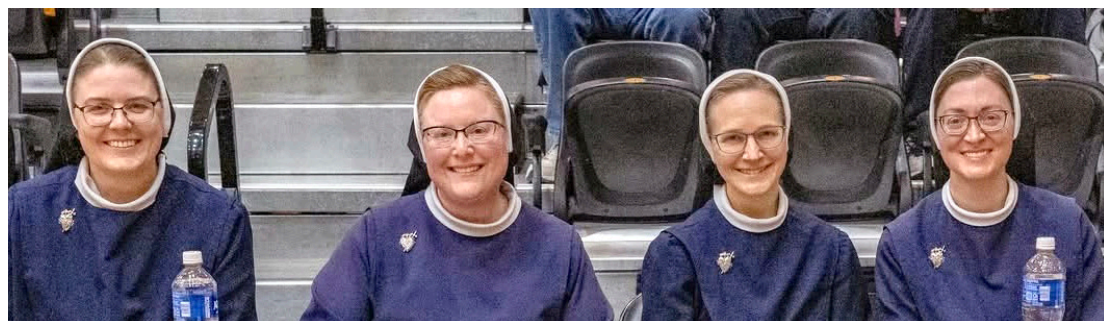
**Presidential scholars Nicholas Niewald and Jonas Letourneau of St. John's, Beloit.**



COURTESY PHOTO

**St. John's Rudd Scholars Clare Meyer (left) and Lily DiNuzzo (right) with Advisor Jeff Bates, Assistant Principal Joe Holdren and Principal Marcy Kee.**

## IHM SISTERS GET CLOSE LOOK AT TIGER TEAMS



COURTESY PHOTO, BOB DUFFY

**Sr. Rose Marie, Sr. Mary Monica, Sr. John Marie and Sr. Mary Agnes, teachers at Hays Catholic Schools, recently attended Fort Hays State basketball games.**

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

The religious sisters who are teaching in Hays Catholic Schools make it a point to attend activities involving their students throughout the year.

The four Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita got a special treat in February.

At the Education Appreciation Night on Feb. 26, the Sisters attended the Fort Hays State University basketball double-header, which featured the season's most exciting games. The FHSU women's team defeated rival University of Nebraska-Kearney 92-56, followed by a 79-57 victory by the men's team.

It was the first FHSU games the sisters had attended since arriving in Hays in the fall of 2022 to teach at Thomas More Prep-Marian Junior-Senior High School and Holy Family Elementary.

But it was somewhat nostalgic for three of them – Sr. Mary Monica Augustine, Sr. Rose Marie Weber and Sr. John Marie Zwenger – who all had attended FHSU and went to some games during their time as students.

Although it was her first game in Gross Memorial Coliseum, Sr. Mary Agnes Wasinger – a graduate of Benedictine College – also enjoyed familiar connec-

tions that evening.

She had one of the Tiger players, junior Lucas Hammeke, in class while teaching at Trinity Catholic High School in Hutchinson a few years ago.

FHSU Assistant Athletic Director Kegan Knight, whose children attend Holy Family Elementary, spotted the sisters sitting in the upper bleachers with other HSC teachers.

So he brought them down to some reserved courtside seats that were not being used that night so they could be closer to the action.

The Sisters – all former athletes themselves – said they thoroughly enjoyed revisiting some of those childhood memories while watching some quality basketball.

They also were glad to be on hand to help celebrate Curtis Hammeke's last home game as FHSU's athletic director. Hammeke is retiring in June after 21 years as the Tigers' AD.

Hammeke, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Hays, said it was "a privilege to have the Sisters down there courtside."

"It's awesome having the Sisters in our schools and in our community," he said. "Their presence makes a significant impact."

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## WORLD MARRIAGE DAY CELEBRATED AT WAKEENEY



COURTESY PHOTO

Christ the King Parish, WaKeeney, celebrated World Marriage Day February 15th and 16th during Masses celebrated by Fr. Emmanuel Mensah. (Left to right): Beth and Glennis Billinger (45 years), Tina and Brad Walt (25 years), Father Emmanuel Mensah, Richard and Nancy Flax (40 years), Doug and Laura Malsam (50 years). Honored as well were Allen and Lavonne Weigel (55 years) and Jim and Shirley Ruder (60 years).



COURTESY PHOTO

(Left to right): Peggy and Jerry White (55 years), Lisa and Terry Kuhn (35 years), Gracie and Dallas Schneider (1 year), Father Emmanuel Mensah, Donnell and Dale Pfannenstiel (30 years), Reba and Tom Bayuk (30 years), Brenda and Kurtis Brock (30 years), Barb and Mert Deines (55 years).

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## CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS



### Confirmation, St. Thomas More, Feb. 2

Front (L-R): Catechist Sean Keating, Ella Grier, Maleah Holthaus, Haley Caycedo, Eleanor Linck, Lauren Day, Sophia Hoeme, Eleanor Radi, Ella Billinger, Taylor Bryant, Brylee Sanneman, Emily Martinez, Fr. Frank Coady. 2nd row: Fr. Don Zimmerman, Dcn. Larry Erpelding, Landon Juene-man, Sophia Winston, Natalie Blanck, Mallory Pecenka, Harper Bailey, Preslee Colby, Natalie Hopper, Taylor Marks, Camryn Lister. 3rd row: Kadin Dibbini, Griffin Meusborn, Adrial Ellis, Bishop Gerald Vincke. Back: Catechist Rick Smith, Catechist Bill Kennedy, William Scharfe, Colin Moeller, Kinley Cotton, Sophia Peabody, Madison Stanard, Sophia Salmans, Gavin Howells, Benjamin Huser, London Kerr, Nolan Steeves, Liam Legleiter, Victor Valenzuela and Aiden Sonnier.



### First Holy Communion, St. John's, Hanover, Feb. 23

Second Graders at St. John's celebrated First Communion on Feb. 23, early for the season because starting Ash Wednesday they began having Mass in the school gym, due to the remodel.



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## 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mark H. and Dora (Pfannenstiel) Leiker**, members of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Munjor, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married April 4, 1975, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Hays. Their children are Marcie (Lewis) Logsdon, Olathe; Amy Leiker, Hays; Carl (Leah) Leiker, Thompson's Station, TN; Angela Leiker, deceased. They have four grandchildren: Noah Leiker, Halo Leiker, Xavier Logsdon, and Vienna Leiker.





## BAPTISMS

**Theodore Michael Bechard**, son of Austin and Kathryn Bechard, was baptized March 1, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit.

**Eugenie Laurine Bowles**, daughter of Jonas Bowles and Emma Evaristo, was baptized February 22, 2025, by Fr. Daryl Olmstead at St. Mary Parish in Downs.

**Lydia Marie Chism**, daughter of Luke and Logan

Chism, was baptized March 1, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit.

**Lenny, Erlene, Leonel and Elena Garcia**, children of Daniel and Nancy (Delgado) Garcia, were baptized February 22, 2025, by Fr. Henry Saw Lone at Sacred Heart Parish in Atwood.

**Westen Scott Hertel**, son of Patrick and Angela (Pruett) Hertel, was baptized Febru-

ary 16, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays.

**Oscar Bernard James**, son of Wesley and Lindsay (Solorio) James, was baptized December 15, 2024, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis.

**Rylee Marie Mayer**, daughter of Travis and Audrey Mayer, was baptized February 23, 2025, by Dcn. Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Walker John Miller**, son of Eric and Andrea Miller, was baptized February 8, 2025, by Dcn. Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Renlee Marie Montoya**, daughter of Kyle and Megan Montoya, was baptized February 23, 2025, by Fr. Trevor Buster at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Lily Rose Rigual-Walton**, daughter of Ryan and Lillian Rigual-Burgos, was baptized and confirmed on February 15, 2025, by Rev. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Grace Elaine Riordan**, daughter of Mark and Darcie Riordan, was baptized February 8, 2025, by Rev. Quentin Schmitz at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Archer Douglas Stanton**, son of Jarrett and Shanae Stanton, was baptized March 2, 2025, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Jessica Taylor Straight**, daughter of Brett & B. (Hartnett) Straight, was baptized February 15, 2025, by Fr. Henry Saw Lone at Sacred Heart Parish in Atwood.

**Chandler Sue Weidenhaft**, daughter of Tanner and Tegan Weidenhaft, was baptized February 8, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit.

**Emryn Kate Weigel**, daughter of Justin Weigel and Annie Vonfeldt, was baptized February 8, 2025, by Fr. Michael Elanjimattathil at St. Mary Queen of Angels Parish in Russell.

## WEDDINGS

**Quinn William Allen and Mariana Clare Lower** were married February 15, 2025, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Trevor Buster witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are David and Angela Allen. Parents of the bride are Stuart and Sharon Lower. Witnesses were Ian Allen and Anne Marie Lower.

**Kevin Patterson and Ashley LaRocque** were married March 1, 2025, at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Fr. Andrew Rockers witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Dave and Mona Langlois. Parents of the bride are Paul and Lisa LaRocque. Witnesses were Christian Doyle and Tammy Keller.

**Austin Kyle Taylor and Laura Elisabeth Robertson** were married February 1, 2025, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Gale Hamerschmidt witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Jason and Marla Taylor. Parents of the bride are Charley and Lisa Robertson. Witnesses were Devin Taylor and Meg Robertson.

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## MARDI GRAS EVENT HELD IN SELDEN

BY CYNTHIA HAYNES  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Selden held its annual Mardi Gras meal and carnival on March 2, at the Parish Hall downtown. After a spaghetti meal with salad, bread sticks and dessert, adults and children headed for the games. A quilt raffle sponsored by the Altar Society and a gifts raffle, sponsored by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), drew the adults while the children

enjoyed the fish pond, spinning wheel, dart throw and bean bag toss. Both children and adults took their chances to win home-made goodies at the cake walk, sponsored by the CCD. High schoolers helped with the meal and booths.



COURTESY PHOTO

(Above) Jace Spresser tries out the Fish Pond.

COURTESY PHOTO

(Left) Marcie Juenemann serves spaghetti at the Mardi Gras Meal.

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## FUNERALS

**Virginia "Jean" Bachand**, 75, died February 18, 2025. Celebration of Life Service and Memorial Mass was celebrated March 1 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Concordia. Fr. Joseph Kieffer presided. Burial in St. Concordia Cemetery, Concordia.

**Susan C. "Sue" Boos**, 81, died February 3, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 7 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Fr. Curtis Carlson, OFMCap., and Fr. Earl Befort, OFMCap., presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Gail (Nickelson) Brandyberry**, 66, of Republican City, NE, died February 11, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 17 at St. Joseph Parish in New Almelo. Fr. Maurice Current presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, New Almelo.

**Terry Lee Buettgenbach**, 76, died February 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 4 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Fort Collins, CO. Burial was

March 6 in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Thomas E. "Tom" Casey**, 75, died February 17, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 22 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet presided. Burial in St. Michael the Archangel Cemetery, Hays.

**Mary E. Dreiling**, 92, of Hays, died February 18, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 26 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Elizabeth A. "Betty" Feldt**, 95, of Hays, died February 21, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 27 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet presided. Burial in the Kansas Veterans' Cemetery, Wakeeney.

**Wendy Genereux**, 60, died February 28, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 7 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Clyde. Fr. Steven Heina presided. Burial at Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery, Clyde.

**Agnes K. "Aggie" Gross**, 79, of Hays, died February 27, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 4 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Fr. Brian McCaffrey presided. Burial in St. Francis Cemetery, Munjor.

**Lewis "Glenn" Hartnett**, 72, of North Platte, NE (formerly of Palco, KS) died February 26, 2025. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 14 at Sacred Heart Parish in Plainville. Fr. Michael Kothalamuthu presided. Burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Plainville.

**Lois Eileen Heinen**, 99, died February 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 3 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Fr. Andrew Rockers presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Clifford J. "Cliff" Kreutzer**, 84, died February 22, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 28 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial in Hyacinth Cemetery, Ellis County.

**Rosella Catherine Meitl**, 89, formerly of Oberlin, died February 10, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 14 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Leoville. Fr. Mathew Chacko presided.

**Jerry Jean Patterson**, 81, died February 8, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 14 at SS Peter & Paul Parish in Clay Center. Fr. Mike Leiker presided. Burial in Highland Cemetery, Wakefield.

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## ADORATION BILLBOARD DISPLAYED ON I-70



COURTESY IMAGE

A billboard on Eucharistic Adoration was set up earlier this month along I-70, with the mock-up design above, to encourage drivers to reflect on Christ's Eucharistic presence.

We are excited to unveil the newest billboard along I-70, just outside of Russell! This special sign is not only a great reminder during our Jubilee Year of Hope but also marks the beginning of our diocese spiritual campaign, Adoration for Peace 2025.

The campaign kicked off on March 5, and it encourages the people of the

diocese to spend more time in Adoration.

The billboard serves as an invitation to all to engage in the powerful devotion of Eucharistic Adoration, especially during this blessed year and as we embark on this journey in our diocese.

As we unite in prayer, let us also lift up our hearts for peace—in our families,

in our communities, and across the world. Visit [StarsOfPeace.org](http://StarsOfPeace.org) to learn more and get involved.

If you're driving by, take a moment to reflect and feel the invitation to stop, pray, and experience the beauty of adoration at your own parish. Together, let's bring hope to our world, one prayer at a time.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

St. Faustina Kowalska was a kind and loving nun from Poland. She could see and hear Jesus in a very special way. One day, Jesus appeared to her and asked her to have a picture painted of Him, just as she saw Him. In the picture, Jesus was standing with His hand raised in blessing, and two rays of light came from His heart – one red and one white. The red ray stood for His love, and the white ray stood for the water of mercy.

Jesus told St. Faustina that people could always ask Him for forgiveness, no matter what.

Jesus also asked St. Faustina to create a special day to celebrate His Divine Mercy, and that's why we celebrate "Divine Mercy Sunday" right after Easter! This year it is celebrated on April 27. It's a day to remember how much Jesus loves us and is ready to forgive us. It's a day for great hope and mercy!



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**FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 5**

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– St. Maximilian Kolbe



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
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THE REGISTER

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