



# THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

APR. 25, 2025

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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**'The Lord has anointed me to bring good news'**  
*Diocese joins together for Chrism Mass and renewal of priests' commitment*

MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Diocesan priests gather around the altar with Bishop Gerald Vincke at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, for the annual Chrism Mass on April 10.

BY LORI LEISZLER  
THE REGISTER

Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina overflowed with faithful members of the diocese excited to celebrate the annual Chrism Mass on April 10. Bishop Gerald Vincke presided over the liturgy and blessed the sacred oils, which will be used in sacraments throughout the year all around the diocese.

During the Mass, Bishop Vincke blessed three sacred oils — the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and the Sacred Chrism.

Each oil plays a unique role in the life of the Church. The Oil of the Sick is used to anoint those suffering illness or injury, offering comfort and healing. The Oil of Catechumens is used to strengthen those preparing for baptism. The Sacred Chrism is used in baptisms, confirmations, ordinations and the dedication of churches and altars.

In the year prior, the oils were used in three ordinations, three altar and church dedications, over 300 anointings, 634 confirmations and 1054 baptisms.

The Chrism Mass also offers a moment for priests to renew their vows of service. Addressing both clergy and laity, Bishop Vincke

reflected on the deeper meaning of anointing.

"'Christ' means 'the anointed one,'" he said. "And remember this: you're anointed too. We're all anointed. We've been baptized. We've been confirmed. The life of Jesus desires to live in us."

Quoting Pope Francis, Bishop Vincke spoke about the oil used at priests' ordinations, saying the anointing "flows over their garments and out into the world," symbolizing how priests are called to bring Christ's presence to those they serve.

Christ's mission and call to service was also evident in the first reading at the Mass, from 6 Isaiah, which read, "the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted ..."

That call to serve — and to bring hope to those in need — is especially meaningful in this Jubilee Year of Hope. The Chrism Mass, Bishop Vincke noted, stands as a sign of that very hope, made visible through the sacraments.

Among the many priests gathered around the altar stood Fr. Ryan McCandless, who later shared with The Register what the sacred oils mean to him as a pastor.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

## Happy Easter from Bishop Gerald Vincke

**Let us live as disciples of Jesus on mission. The stone has been rolled away! Jesus is God, Jesus is alive, and Jesus is with us! Hope does not disappoint! God bless you always.**

+ Gerald L. Vincke



See Bishop Vincke's column on page 2!



# Love's second name

I don't think I will ever forget his reaction. I was a freshman in college on my way to confession during the Lenten season. On my way out the door, I encountered Bob, a man in his thirties who served many years in the military and was known as one who "never missed a party." As we talked, Bob decided to go with me to confession at the campus center.

**GERALD Vincke**  
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



After confession, he told me that he had never experienced so much peace in his life. It had been more than 20 years since he had last gone to confession.

What he had experienced that day was mercy. And mercy changes everything.

As we approach Divine Mercy Sunday (April 26-27) during this Jubilee Year of Hope, we are reminded that God's love is mercy in action.

Pope Francis recently reflected on this idea, visibly present in Rembrandt's famous painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son." He said that it shares a central message of the Gospel: "God's love is like that of a father who goes out in search of his lost children."

"The Gospel is intended to give us a message of hope," Pope Francis said, "because it tells us that wherever we are lost, and however we are lost, God always comes looking for us!"

In Rembrandt's painting, the

younger son returns home with a shaved head—a sign of repentance, but also rebirth. "This son is being born again," the Holy Father notes.

That's what happens when mercy meets the messiness of our lives. God doesn't wait for us to be perfect—He runs to us while we're still far off.

Saint John Paul II once said, "Mercy is love's second name." That's what

we celebrate on Divine Mercy Sunday: the Father's heart poured out in love, not just for the holy, but especially for the broken. As Jesus told St. Faustina: "Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet."

The Lord desires everyone to encounter that kind of mercy. That's why this weekend is not just an invitation for you to come home—but maybe to help someone else come home, too. We all know someone who's been away from the Church or afraid to return. You might be the one who walks with them, just as I once walked with Bob.

Pope Francis invites us to look at the parable and ask ourselves: "Where am I in the story?" Am I the younger son, returning in shame? Am I the older son, bitter and distant? Or am I someone being called to reflect the mercy of the Father?"

Wherever we are, the invitation is the same: come home. Come receive the mercy that doesn't just forgive—but makes us new.



REMBRANDT'S "THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON," WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## EL SEGUNDO NOMBRE DEL AMOR

Creo que jamás olvidaré su reacción. Yo era estudiante de primer año en la universidad, y me dirigía a confesarme durante la temporada de Cuaresma. Al salir, me encontré con Bob, un hombre de unos treinta años que sirvió por muchos años en el ejército y era conocido como el "que nunca se perdía de una fiesta". Mientras hablábamos, Bob decidió acompañarme a confesarme en el centro universitario. Después de la confesión, me dijo que nunca había experimentado tanta paz en su vida. Habían pasado más de 20 años desde la última vez que se había confesado.

Lo que experimentó ese día fue misericordia. Y la misericordia lo cambia todo.

Al acercarnos al Domingo de la Divina Misericordia (26-27 de abril) durante este Año Jubilar de la Esperanza, se nos recuerda que el amor de Dios es la misericordia en acción.

Recientemente el Papa Francisco reflexionó sobre esta idea, y está visiblemente presente en la famosa pintura de Rembrandt El regreso del hijo pródigo, donde se transmite un mensaje central del Evangelio: "El amor de Dios es como el de un padre que sale en busca de sus hijos perdidos".

"El Evangelio nos da un mensaje de esperanza", dijo el Papa Francisco, "porque nos dice que, estemos donde estemos perdidos, y por la razón que sea, ¡Dios siempre viene a buscarnos!"

En la pintura de Rembrandt, el hijo menor regresa a casa con la cabeza rapada—una señal de arrepentimiento, pero también de

renacimiento. "Este hijo está naciendo de nuevo", señala el Santo Padre. Esto es lo que sucede cuando la misericordia se encuentra con el desorden de nuestra vida. Dios no espera a que seamos perfectos—Él corre hacia nosotros cuando aún estamos lejos.

San Juan Pablo II dijo una vez: "La misericordia es el segundo nombre del amor". Eso es lo que celebramos en el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia: el corazón del Padre derramado en amor, no solo por los santos, sino especialmente por los quebrantados. Como Jesús le dijo a Santa Faustina: "Que ningún alma tema acercarse a Mí, aunque sus pecados sean como la escarlata" (Diario, 699).

El Señor desea que todos experimenten ese tipo de misericordia. Por eso, este fin de semana no solo es una invitación para que tú regreses a casa, sino tal vez puedas ayudar a alguien más a hacerlo también. Todos conocemos a alguien que ha estado alejado de la Iglesia o tiene miedo de volver. Puede que seas tú quien camine con esa persona, como yo una vez caminé con Bob.

El Papa Francisco nos invita a tomar un lugar en la parábola y preguntarnos: "¿Dónde estoy yo en esta historia?" ¿Soy el hijo menor, que regresa con vergüenza? ¿Soy el hijo mayor, amargado y distante? ¿O soy alguien llamado a reflexionar sobre la misericordia del Padre?

Donde quiera que estemos, la invitación es la misma: regresa a casa. Ven a recibir la misericordia que no solo perdona—sino que nos hace nuevos.

## KANSAS CITY BISHOP NAMED

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Shawn McKnight as the new Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, succeeding Archbishop Joseph Naumann, who is retiring after serving the KCK Diocese for over 20 years.

McKnight, currently the Bishop of Jefferson City, Missouri, will be installed on May 27, 2025. Originally from Wichita, he expressed gratitude for his new appointment and said he looks forward to serving the people of the KCK Archdiocese.

### BISHOP'S MAY CALENDAR

- 2-3** K of C State Convention, Wichita.
- 3** Confirmation, St. Mary, Smith Center, 6 p.m.
- 4** Confirmation, Immaculate Conception, Solomon, 10 a.m.
- 4** Confirmation, St. John's, Beloit, 4 p.m.
- 6** St. Andrew's School Mass, Abilene, 2 p.m.
- 7** Confirmation, St. Nicholas, Hays, 6 p.m.
- 8** Women's Religious Appreciation Mass, Cathedral, Salina, 11 a.m.
- 11** Graduation, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 3 p.m.
- 14** Senior Priests Luncheon, Victoria, 11 a.m.
- 14** Confirmation, St. Joseph, Hays, 7 p.m.
- 17** Graduation, St. Xavier, Junction City, 2 p.m.
- 18** Confirmation, St. Catharine, Catherine, 9 a.m.
- 18** TMP/M, Hays, Baccalaureate Mass, 1 p.m., Graduation, 3 p.m.
- 21** Senior Priests Luncheon, S.H. Cathedral, Salina, 11 a.m.
- 26** Memorial Day, Chancery Closed.
- 28** Confirmation, Clifton/Clyde at Clyde, 7 p.m.
- 31** Priestly Ordinations, S.H. Cathedral, Salina, 10 a.m.

### MAY 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 through work, each person might find fulfillment, families might be sustained in dignity, and that society might be humanized.

#### Diocesan intentions:

We pray during this Easter season to be renewed in hope, steadfast in faith, and bold in sharing the joy of the risen Christ with all we encounter.



# Diocese to see record-number ordinations

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Ten men are on track to be ordained to religious vocations in the Diocese of Salina over the next three months.

Three will be ordained priests, while seven will be ordained deacons on two separate days. All three ceremonies will take place at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina.

This is the first time in more than 10 years that the Salina Diocese will celebrate that many ordinations in the same year. It was 2013 when 10 permanent deacons were ordained.

"People have been praying for more vocations to Holy Orders and religious life for a lot of years," said Fr. Andy Hammeke, co-director of vocations for the diocese. "Praise God those prayers are being answered."

This year's trifacta celebration will begin on Saturday, April 26, with the diaconate ordination of

Luke Friess from Sacred Heart Parish in Hoxie. This ordination is one of the last major steps to priesthood.

On May 31, three current transitional deacons – Kade Megaffin, Jesse Ochs and Adam Urban – will be ordained to the priesthood. Dcn. Kade's home parish is St. Joseph, Hays; Dcn. Jesse is from Sacred Heart, Park; and Dcn. Adam, St. Nicholas of Myra, Hays.

Then, on June 28, six men will complete their five-year diaconate discernment and formation program when they are ordained as permanent deacons.

That list is comprised of Dave DiNuzzo, St. John the Baptist-Beloit; Tim Donohoue, Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Manhattan; Harry Hardy, St. Thomas More-Manhattan; Mark LeValley, St. Mary Queen of the Universe-Salina; Bill Meagher, St. Nicholas of Myra-Hays; and Dan Wahlmeier, St. Joseph-New Almelo.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

**Transitional Deacons Kade Megaffin, Jesse Ochs and Adam Urban above at their Transitional Deacon Ordination. The trio's priestly ordinations in May will contribute to a record number of ordinations for the year 2025.**

While responsibilities are virtually the same for transitional and permanent deacons, they are referred to as such to distinguish between those transitioning to the priesthood and those who will remain deacons for life.

All deacons assist at the altar during Mass, proclaim the

Gospel and perform other liturgical functions, including baptisms.

"I'm so excited about all our deacons and our three new priests," Father Andy said. "We hope these ordinations will inspire others to be called to the diaconate and priesthood."

## Save the date: Seminarian Fundraising Dinners

Mark your calendars! The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Salina invites you to join us for the 2025 Annual Seminarian Fundraising Dinners, an opportunity to celebrate and support the future priests of our diocese. This year, we are introducing a new approach to these special evenings to ensure more people across the diocese

can participate.

The 2025 dinners will be held in Manhattan at the Hilton Garden Inn on July 30, and in Hays at the Rose Garden Banquet Hall on July 31. These events will provide a chance to meet our seminarians, hear their inspiring stories, and learn how your generosity directly impacts their formation and discernment

journey.

With the anticipated number of seminarians growing, we recognize the importance of making these events more accessible to all corners of the diocese. That's why, moving forward, we will rotate locations each year. In 2026, the seminarian dinners will be hosted in Colby and Salina, allowing more communities to have the opportunity to come together in support of priestly vocations.

"We're excited to bring the seminarian dinner to Manhattan this year!" stated Fr. Andy Hammeke, Co-Vocations Director for the Diocese of Salina. "While we'd love to host these dinners in every corner of the diocese, scheduling makes

that a challenge. That's why we're trying something new with a rotating schedule, and we look forward to heading back to Colby and Salina in 2026.

Since expanding the dinners to multiple locations in 2022, the response from our supporters has been incredible.

We can't wait to see everyone at one of our dinners on July 30 and 31!"

Your attendance and generosity at these dinners play a crucial role in helping our seminarians answer God's call without financial burden. Stay tuned for more details on reservations and ways to support this important cause. We look forward to gathering with you in 2025 to celebrate and support the future of our Church!

**CORRINA**  
*Hudsonpillar*  
CATHOLIC FOUNDATION



**SAVE THE DATE!**



BISHOP JERRY VINCKE INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE

ANNUAL  
*Seminarian*  
FUNDRAISING DINNERS

MANHATTAN

July 30 5:15PM

📍 Hilton Garden Inn

HAYS

July 31 5:15PM

📍 Rose Garden

DETAILS TO COME

## CHRISM, FROM PAGE 1

"Just the other day, I was able to offer the Oil of the Sick to people in the hospital – people that hadn't seen a priest in probably over a year," Fr. McCandless said. "To bring them Communion and to give them the Anointing of the Sick was a joy. I saw them kind of lighten up, like a burden had been lifted. To witness that is really beautiful."

Over the next few months, these same sacred oils will be used in a record number of priestly and diaconate ordinations across the diocese – a sign of continued growth, renewed mission, and enduring hope. (See story at top of page for more details on ordinations for this year.)



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

**Bishop Gerald Vincke accepts the chrism oil from Yuki Cao, a student at Sacred Heart, Salina.**



# Diocese unites for Holy Hour of Reparation



Bishop Gerald Vincke leads the congregation in a Rosary during the Holy Hour of Reparation at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina, March 28.

By LORI LEISZLER  
THE REGISTER

On March 28, incense and the sound of prayer filled Salina's Sacred Heart Cathedral, where Bishop Vincke led almost 200 members of the diocese in a rosary, followed by a prayer of consecration to Jesus through Mary. The prayer served as a response to a sacrilegious event occurring in Topeka at the same time.

The sacrilegious event, organized by a Satanic group, sparked significant unrest within Christian communities in Kansas. In early March, the group had announced plans to desecrate

Christian items, including a Bible and a cross, during the event at the state capitol in Topeka.

The Satanic group also claimed it had the Eucharist and intended to defile it during the ceremony. However, the group later testified in court that it did not possess actual consecrated hosts or wine but had instead purchased substitutes online.

The Bishops of Kansas called upon the faithful to pray for the conversion of those involved in the Satanic event. Archbishop

Joseph Naumann of Kansas City led a Holy Hour and Mass of Reparation across the street from the capitol.

Closer to home, Bishop Gerald Vincke of Salina organized a Holy Hour of Reparation and Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina.

During the Mass, the congregation heard a first reading from Hosea, fittingly about conversion, as it read, "Return, O Israel, to the LORD, your God."

Bishop Vincke echoed this call

to conversion during his homily. He encouraged the faithful to love God and their neighbors, especially the people involved in the Satanic group.

"Love them, and pray for them. That is what we're called to do."

He reassured the congregation, particularly those unsettled by the events.

"Jesus is with us, we do not need to be afraid," he said. "Pray to cling to Jesus. Satan is real, but he has no power over Jesus."

For comprehensive coverage on the event from the Kansas Catholic Conference, the voice of the Kansas bishops on public policy, visit [kansascatholic.org](http://kansascatholic.org).

**"JESUS IS WITH US,  
WE DO NOT NEED  
TO BE AFRAID."  
-BISHOP GERALD VINCKE**

## St. Pio relic at home in Victoria among Capuchins



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

On April 9, the Catholic community in Victoria marked two significant events: the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for parish youth and the installation of a relic of Saint Padre Pio. The relic was previously housed at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. It was relocated to Victoria, where a community of Capuchin friars resides—fittingly, as Saint Padre Pio was himself a Capuchin.

The move places the relic in a more central location within the diocese, making it more accessible for the faithful to visit and venerate.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

(Left) Fr. Curtis Carlson carries the relic of St. Padre Pio to the side altar of the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria on April 8. The move to Victoria, 27 miles off of Interstate-70, places the relic in a more central location in the Salina Diocese. (Right) Bishop Gerald Vincke presided over the ceremony, which took place on the same night as Confirmation at the parish.

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**Adam B. Bruna**  
Investment Advisor  
Representative  
O: 785-553-9070  
M: 785-553-9070  
E: [adam.bruna@kofc.org](mailto:adam.bruna@kofc.org)





# Encounters in Ukraine

## Bishop visits the suffering people

BY BISHOP GERALD VINCKE  
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SALINA

### Why did I go to Ukraine?

I am the chair for the Subcommittee on Aid for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe for the Bishops of the United States. My group traveled to Ukraine with a twofold purpose: first, to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine, to be with those who are enduring unimaginable hardship due to the ongoing war with Russia, and second, to witness firsthand the projects in Ukraine which the Church here in the U.S. financially supports.

### Encounters

One of the most moving parts of the trip was our visit to a refugee shelter, where families displaced by the war were being housed. We financially support small living modules, each only 12 by

16 feet in size. The simplicity of these shelters, yet the deep need for them, struck me. It was heart-wrenching to see so many families forced from their homes with so little. We also support a small shelter that provides food and meals for these internally displaced people.

An elderly woman thanked me for coming to Ukraine to be with the people. She said "It's one thing to hear that you care, but it is another for me to be able to touch you and you touch me."

In addition to these encounters, we traveled to Lviv and visited a Catholic communication studio, which serves three million regular listeners.

While there, I also met with His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the Father and Head of the Ukrainian

Greek Catholic Church. His stories were powerful.

Shevchuk shared that "charity during wartime is about saving lives, restoring hope, and the ability to perform deeds that, according to Christian tradition, are acts created in eternity."

### A message of hope

I have to admit, the trip was tense. The people of Ukraine are tired. They go on with life, but there is always the threat of danger. Many people there told me, "We believe in God, so we have hope." This experience has certainly put life into perspective for me. All the things that I worry about seem minimal compared to what the people of Ukraine are experiencing. During this trip, I witnessed both the devastation of war and the unyielding spirit of the



COURTESY PHOTO

**Bishop Vincke said a most heartbreaking moment from the trip was meeting a young woman who had been attending Liturgy every day for 16 months, praying that her fiancé would soon return home after being captured.**

Ukrainian people. I hope the war ends soon. The people need healing now, and will need a lot of healing afterwards.

I met a man in his seventies who had spent eight years in a Siberian Gulag, enduring forced labor and freezing temperatures. When we spoke about the war and Russia's aggression, he paused and said, "What gives me hope, though, is

that in the end, evil does not win." His words stayed with me, a powerful reminder that, no matter the darkness, there is always hope that good will ultimately triumph.

*The above modified reflection was shared in a recent E-News to the Faithful. The article in its entirety can be found at [www.salinadiocese.org/news-and-updates](http://www.salinadiocese.org/news-and-updates).*

# Pilgrimage leads faithful to Sacred Sites

BY LORI LEISZLER

THE REGISTER

On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, pilgrims gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina to begin a one-day pilgrimage across the Diocese of Salina. The day started with Mass, celebrated by Bishop Gerald Vincke, who sent the group off with a blessing.

"May Mary cover you with her mantle, and may you encounter Christ close to your heart on this feast of the Annunciation," Bishop Vincke said.

The pilgrims then visited four churches across the diocese: St. Isidore's in Manhattan, St. John the Baptist in Beloit, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Hays and St. Fidelis Basilica in Victoria. Although St. Fidelis is not one of the designated Sacred Sites for the diocese during the Jubilee Year of Hope, it remains a significant destination as a minor basilica and the home of the Capuchin Friars.

Additional Sacred Sites recognized for the Year of Hope include Catholic Charities of Northwest Kansas and St. Paul Church in Angelus. As part of the Jubilee year's



COURTESY PHOTO

**Pilgrims from across the diocese stand together in front of St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit. Their pilgrimage took them to four churches, three of which are Sacred Sites for the Jubilee Year.**

celebrations, the faithful can receive a plenary indulgence by making a prayerful visit to any designated Sacred Site, taking time to pray for the pope's intentions, and fulfilling the usual conditions of confession, Communion, and detachment from sin.

Karen Jurgensmeier of Salina joined the pilgrims alongside her sister-in-law, eager to experience churches she had never visited before.

"I have vision difficulties and can't drive outside of Salina," Jurgensmeier said. "When this pilgrimage came up, I thought, 'I would really like to do that.' It was a great opportunity to go be with other people who are of the same mind, and just visit churches that you don't normally get to see."

She added, "I think we were all there for the same purpose—to see beautiful churches and give glory to God."

The event was coordinated by Carolyn Berens and Diocese Ministry Leader Jamie Kuhlman, who said the journey, while long, was spiritually enriching.

"It was a long day, but a fruitful one," Kuhlman said. "I got to see so many people draw closer to God when we looked at all the churches and just the beauty of that, and seeing them pray together and make new friends. That's really what we were out

there for."

She also shared her excitement for two upcoming pilgrimages planned by the diocese: a two-day journey to the tomb of Blessed Emil Kapaun and the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, and a week-long trip to several major shrines as far as Chicago and Wisconsin.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
You can receive a plenary indulgence by praying at a Sacred Site this year!

**FYI**

**An indulgence** helps remove the temporary effects of sin, after your sins are already forgiven through confession!

### KEY CONDITIONS

**In addition** to visiting a Sacred Site, to gain this indulgence you must also:

- Be free from attachment to sin (even venial sin)
- Go to Confession
- Receive Holy Communion
- Pray for the pope's intentions

These conditions can be fulfilled within several days of the indulgenced act, though Communion and prayer are ideally done on the same day.



# Hands-on class allows St. John's students real-world experience with EWTN

By LORI LEISZLER

THE REGISTER

Students at St. John's Catholic School in Beloit are gaining invaluable real-world experience thanks to a unique media class that combines faith, technology, and hands-on learning.

The class is taught by Alan Holdren, former EWTN Vatican Bureau Chief in Rome, who lives in Beloit and still reports for the Catholic network on occasion. His class equips students with skills related to video production, editing, and more—which they are using to share stories with both their community and the world.

Earlier this semester, the class partnered up with an EWTN program called Pro Life Weekly to report on the Kansas March for Life. The students' coverage can be found on EWTN's YouTube channel, which has 1.11 million subscribers.

That partnership has since gained them even more attention from the network. This has led to them being asked to produce a video on confir-



COURTESY PHOTOS, ALAN HOLDREN

(Left) Bill Meagher and Kim Hoelting were visited by Beloit St. John's students Elizabeth Knappert, Greg Walter, Christiana Niewald, Myla Holdren, Joe Prather and Cadyn Brummer on April 7. Earlier in the day, the St. John's students visited with Sacred Heart students and worked on their video for EWTN.

mation and Carlo Acutis. It will air on EWTN during its coverage of the Jubilee of Teenagers, which takes place April 25-27 and culminates in the canonization of Carlo Acutis, a patron for youth and technology.

"It's young people creating content about other young people," Holdren said. "And in this case, it's young people the same age as Carlo Acutis was, doing this coverage. That's special."

The students and Holdren have been hard at work over the last month, interviewing Bishop

Gerald Vincke at the start of April, and then taking a trip to Salina April 7 to work on their upcoming projects.

While in Salina, they met with Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Geoff Andrews, and they joined the students of Sacred Heart for morning Mass.

Holdren said he was grateful for the experience, calling it a "way for our kids to see the reality at other Catholic schools."

After interviewing some students at Sacred Heart, the group headed over to the Chancery and met with Youth Ministry

Director, Bill Meagher, and with HR Director, Kim Hoelting.

The students interviewed Meagher about confirmation, and how young people can grow in holiness. They also discussed the potential of creating a video to play at the upcoming Eucharistic Conference in August.

Alongside excitement about their local and national coverage, the students are equally excited about how the class has allowed them hands-on access to video cameras and editing software to use for proj-

ects in their school.

"I love it," student Christiana Niewald said with a smile. "The editing is a lot of fun, just putting videos together and all the pieces that go into it."

Niewald, along with her classmates, said she is looking forward to their future projects.

Inspired by Carlo Acutis' example, may they continue to use technology to spread the faith and connect with the world.

*Saint Carlo Acutis,  
patron saint of youth  
and technology,  
pray for us!*



## Long-time secretary to four Bishops remembered

Clara Mary (Staudinger) Stithem, 81, of Salina, passed away on April 15, 2025. Born March 17, 1944, in Great Bend to Anton and Agnes (Zeman) Staudinger, she grew up on a farm near Beaver and attended St. Joseph Grade School, the Immaculate Conception Convent, and graduated from Hoisington High School.

After earning her degree from Brown Mackie Business School, Clara began her Federal Civil Service career at Fort Leavenworth. She later worked at Shilling Air Force Base and as a payroll clerk for the Soil Conser-

vation Service.

She married Jack Gail Stithem on May 8, 1965. Following the birth of their twins in 1971, she stayed home with them and cared for other children from St. Mary's School. Later, she served nearly 25 years as school secretary and bookkeeper at St. Mary's and then as Executive Secretary to four Bishops and two Diocesan Administrators of the Salina Catholic Diocese until her retirement in 2018.

Clara loved church music, Elvis, ice cream, and house plants. She treasured her family and

was proud of her children and grandchildren. A devoted Catholic, she traveled on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to Rome, was active in her parish, and faithfully served in the Adoration Chapel.

She is survived by her husband Jack; daughter Marsha (Christopher) Kalkowski; son Marvin (Brandi) Stithem; grandchildren Logan (Katie) Kalkowski, Kadi Stithem (Michael) Hogan, Cole (Alyssa Moser) Kalkowski, and Emma Stithem (David) Kanaby; great-grandchildren Faustina Hogan and Charles Kalkowski; sister Roselle (Dennis) Williams; brother Raymond; sister-in-law Mary Ann Staudinger; cousin Trisha Mills; and close friends Dale and Linda Deines. She was preceded in death by her parents, brother Leonard, and several

aunts, uncles, and cousins.

In memory of Clara, please hug your family members and tell them that you love them. Please thank the secretaries, office staff and those who pick up after you. Please donate your time, talents and your treasure to your

church and school. Please spend time with those you love and make memories while you can. Please remember someone's birthday and please pay it forward. In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial to Gentiva Hospice, St. Mary Queen of the Universe Catholic Church of Salina or the Salina Catholic Diocese.

Funeral Mass was celebrated April 21, 2025, at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Catholic Church. Fr. Keith Weber presided. Burial at All Saints Catholic Cemetery.



CLARA STITHEM

### Editor's note:

*To know Clara was to love her. She was my first introduction to the Chancery, and one of the kindest people I've ever known. Clara and my mother were dear friends during their time together at St. Mary's School in Salina, and their friendship lasted a lifetime. Because of that, I always knew Clara as "the nice woman at the Chancery."*

*I have vivid memories of being very small and Clara letting us in through the back door to visit – so long as I promised not to bother the Bishop. She would sneak away with us for ice cream, and I felt like I was part of something special.*

*The love and hospitality she showed me left a lasting impression. So, when the opportunity came for me to work for Bishop Vincke last year, I didn't hesitate – I remembered how good it was when Clara was here.*

*Her full obituary and service details can be found at ryanmortuary.com.*



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# Love N' Learn celebrates ribbon cutting

By LORI LEISZLER

THE REGISTER

Love N' Learn Early Childhood Center (LNL) on the Salina Catholic Schools campus held a ceremonial ribbon-cutting on March 25 to celebrate the completion of a major building renovation that expanded learning space. Nearby Catholic school students, many of whom attended LNL when they were younger, joined parents, service providers, and community members on the new playground turf to mark the occasion.

Geoff Andrews, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Salina Diocese, called the celebration a "milestone moment, not only for our Catholic schools, but for the entire Salina community."

The childhood center serves infants 8 weeks old through pre-K. Through the renovation, LNL has three infant classrooms, three toddler classrooms and six pre-school classrooms, with capacity to serve up to 173 children, though enrollment will likely be lower than that.

Many people and organizations have made the renovation possible, including educators, support staff, the Salina Chamber of Commerce and Salina Area United Way, which generously assisted LNL through its Early



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

**Sisters of St. Joseph originally occupied the space now used for Love N' Learn Early Childhood Center. The Sisters were well-represented at the March 25 celebration.**

Childcare Initiative Fund.

Christina Small, executive director at United Way, spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. She shared that grant funding from Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund — of \$1.87 million at first, followed by an additional \$316,000 — has had a great impact on childcare in the Salina community over the last few years. These funds helped launch and expand several centers in

Saline County, including LNL.

"These grants have not only expanded access to child care, but have also improved the quality of care and education that our children receive," Small said. "And when we invest in our children, we invest in our future."

Parent Hillary Richards is a mother of three young children and said the services at LNL have been a blessing for her family.

"When we were looking for childcare in preschool, we

wanted a place that felt like an extension of our home, where faith, learning and love were at the heart of everything, and we know we found that here," Richards said.

She continued, "As a parent, there's nothing more reassuring than knowing your child is surrounded by people who truly care for them."

To learn more, visit Love N' Learn Early Childhood Center on Facebook. To inquire about enrollment, visit [salinacatholic.org](http://salinacatholic.org) and click on Love N' Learn.

(Above) Behavioral Specialist and former Director at Love N' Learn, Olinda Power cuts the ceremonial ribbon, as students who use the center's services watch.

MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

## School Notes

### Students celebrate achievements during busy semester

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN

THE REGISTER

#### Graduation 2025 approaching

Nearly 80 seniors at the five Catholic high schools across the Diocese of Salina will receive diplomas at their respective graduation ceremonies in May. Following are the dates and times of each.

##### Beloit-St. John's (11 graduates)

Sunday, May 11 at 10 a.m. Mass at St. John the Baptist Church, followed by commencement exercises in the St. John High School gym.

##### Salina-Sacred Heart (27 graduates)

Sunday, May 11 at 3 p.m. with Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

##### Tipton Catholic (4 graduates)

Sunday, May 11 at 10 a.m. with Mass at St. Boniface Church.

##### Junction City-St. Francis Xavier (3 graduates)

Saturday, May 17 at 2 p.m. with Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church.

#### Hays/TMP-Marian (33 graduates)

Sunday, May 18 with 1 p.m. Baccalaureate Mass at St. Nicholas of Myra Church and 3 p.m. Commencement at TMP-M's Al Billinger Fieldhouse.

#### Past and present

St. Andrew's Elementary School in Abilene celebrated its 40th annual charity auction in style this year.

Some special guests attending the Ruby Jubilee in March were Sisters of St. Joseph from Concordia, including some former staff members at St. Andrew's.

Sister Marcia Allen was a former principal of the school that now serves children preschool through sixth grade, while Srs. Mary Jo Thummel and Betty Suther taught at the school.

While visiting with the Sisters, Chris Whitehair — in her 23rd year as principal at St. Andrew's — learned they knew one of her aunts, Sr. Maxine

Lutgen, also a Sister of St. Joseph.

"They all knew my aunt and worked with her years ago, so it was neat to make all those connections with them," Whitehair said, "and to take a picture with those awesome ladies who served at St. Andrew's previously."

#### Bound for nationals!

A pair of sisters at Thomas More Prep-Marian High in Hays teamed up to qualify for a national competition with their top-four finishes at the Kansas Future Business

Leaders of America (FBLA) conference earlier this month in Topeka.

Senior twin sisters Ainsleigh and Ella Bain finished second in the Social Media Strategies at state, while senior Gracyn Schippers and her younger sister, junior Claire, placed fourth in Website Design.

The FBLA National Leadership Conference is June 29 to July 2 in Anaheim, Calif.

#### Governor's Scholars

Several diocesan students were recognized by the Kansas Governor's Scholars Program, which honors the top academic 1% of high school seniors from accredited public and private schools across the state. This year's Governor's Scholars include:

- Henry Holdren — St. John's, Beloit
- Brooke Koenigsman — Thomas More Prep-Marian, Hays
- Miguel Weber — St. Francis Xavier, Junction City
- Makenna Soukup — Sacred Heart, Salina
- Max Ketter — Tipton Catholic HS, Tipton



COURTESY PHOTO

**St. Andrew's Principal Chris Whitehair, left, with former staff of the school: Sr. Marcia Allen, Sr. Mary Jo Thummel and Sr. Betty Suther.**



# CONFIRMATIONS



## Seven Dolors, Manhattan, March 8

Front (L-R): Adriana Zavala, Noeli Rodriguez Ornelas, Sandra Valeria Fuentes Toro, Alejandra Parma-Ramirez, Dexter Schmidt, Kendall Feldkamp, Elizabeth Howlett, Camila Mejia-Gould, Danae Espino Sanchez, Jilliann Gray, David Castro and Mason Huggard. Middle: Arely Zavala, Evangeline Tortella, Gabby Theubet, Regina Riley, Dayari Regules Torres, Susanna Fuemmeler, Leslie Guevara, Kevin Cortez-Pacheco and Emma O'Haver. Back: Fr. Leo Blasi, Jackson Peschel, Aiden Pate, William Schmidt, Everardo Ramirez, Jonathan Mejia and Bishop Gerald Vincke.

## BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

*call to share*

### YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION



## St. Joseph, Bird City and St. John Nepomucene, Beardsley, March 30

Front (L-R): Deacon Mark Vrbas, Adleigh Pochop, Nathan Kopriva and Kate Hanson. Back: Fr. Rich Daise, Luke Sis, Landon Schoenberger, Catechist Jolene Reeh, Ryan Micek and Bishop Gerald Vincke.



## Sacred Heart, Atwood, March 30

Front (L-R): Savannah Warning, Antoinette Brungardt and Joseph Dozbaba, Israel Aguilar. Middle: Fr. Henry Saw Lone, Payton Juenemann, Allison Rippe, Amelia Bowles, Tayten Dewey, Bishop Vincke and Deacon Mark Vrbas. Back: Roddy Dill, Rebecca Dill, Tucker Prideaux, Ryan Sramek and Tru Dewey.



## Sacred Heart, Esbon and St. Theresa's, Mankato, March 16

Front (L-R): Fr. Ryan McCandless, Merissa Coleman, Bethany Simmelink, Isabel Wilburn, Luke Simmelink and Travis Peters. Back: Jacob Cockcroft, Colin Wirth, Ethan Wirth and Eli Whelchel.




## St. Boniface, Tipton, April 2

Front (L-R): Fr. Daryl Olmstead, Jaedyn Arnoldy, Kelsey Ohnsat, Ava Brummer, Carlie Brummer, Scarlet Ellenz, Norah Ellenz and Jaedyn Arnoldy. Back: Samuel Towner, Landon Baetz, Max Ketter, Luke Germann, Grant Germann, Isaac Palen, Kaden Phillips, Luke Hollerich, Caden May and Bishop Gerald Vincke. Catechists (not pictured): Brigit Gasper, Gery Hake and Amy Ohnsat.



## St. Joseph and St. Francis of Assisi, Saint Francis, March 29

Front (L-R): Catechist Heidi Ketzner, Angel Sanchez, Danika Hoard, Gerald Lobmeyer, Carter Downey and Catechist Marian Ochsner. Back: Deacon Mark Vrbas, Bishop Gerald Vincke and Fr. Richard Daise.



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## St. Fidelis Basilica, Victoria, April 9

Front: Leah Dinkel, Joslyn Scheck and Ashtyn Washburn. Middle: Jacquelyn Stoffel, Kaylee Kuhn and Eleanor Stoffel. Back: Fr. Curtis, Mason Mauch, Weston Scherrer and Bishop Vincke.




# WHAT'S HAPPENING



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

- May 1**
  - K of C Religious Appreciation Mass and Dinner, Church of the Resurrection, Wichita, 5 p.m.
- May 2**
  - Comeau Catholic Center, Adoration Under the Stars, Hays, 8 p.m.
- May 2-4**
  - Knights of Columbus State Convention, Wichita.
- May 8**
  - Women's Religious Appreciation Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 11 a.m.
- May 11**
  - Mother's Day.
- May 14**
  - Senior Priests Luncheon, Victoria, 11 a.m.
- May 15**
  - Rural Life Day
- May 21**
  - Senior Priests Luncheon, Salina, 11 a.m.
- May 26**
  - Memorial Day, Chancery Closed
- May 29**
  - Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord
- May 31**
  - Priestly Ordinations, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 10 a.m.



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- Preschool Teacher


**Tipton Catholic**

- High School PE Teacher

**St. Mary's, Salina**

- 2nd Grade Teacher
- 5-8th Grade Part-Time Band Teacher

View these and learn more information at [jobs.educatekansas.org](https://jobs.educatekansas.org) and type in the searchbar "Diocese of Salina"



## MARIAN SISTERS SHARE HOPE FOR BELOIT MISSION

Earlier this spring, Mother Ann Marie Zierke of the Marian Sisters from Waverly, Nebraska shared the following announcement with St. John's, Beloit.

**BY MOTHER ANN MARIE ZIERKE, M.S.**

I am writing to you with the news that after much prayer and discernment on our part, we would like to begin a mission in Beloit, KS.

We have 3 sisters who believe that can be of help to you at St. John's school and parish. One sister for a possible jr. high/high school Theology position (grades 6-10). One sister to be of use at the parish in a possible secretarial type position (although she is a former teacher and could be utilized for elective classes at the high school). And one sister will have part-time availability for various parish/diocesan ministries (direction, prayer, jail, retreats etc....).

St. John's parish shared its excitement for this possibility, along with the names of the Sisters who could come to Beloit: Sr. Serena Deters, Sr. Megan Thérèse Tunink and Sr. Benedicta Hawkins. Please keep the Marian Sisters and the Beloit community in your prayers, as they explore this possibility.

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# Hundreds gather, 'Becoming Light Together'



COURTESY PHOTO, RYAN SCHUCKMAN

It was a full house for a Mass at FHSU's Comeau Catholic Campus Center earlier this month for the center's annual fundraiser.

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Hundreds of young people have been impacted for life because of their experience at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center (CCCC) at Fort Hays State University in Hays.

That was never more evident than during the Mass for the Fourth Annual Becoming Light Together fundraiser for the CCCC in mid April.

Bishop Gerald Vincke was accompanied at the altar by four FHSU graduates: Father Andy Hammeke, current chaplain at the center; Deacons Kade Megaffin and Adam Urban, who will be ordained priests in May; and Seminarian Max Megaffin.

"The campus center taught me how to live in a community of faith," Dcn. Adam said. "Really, for me, it's everything. I owe so much to the campus center and the students and peers on my journey to the priesthood."

The St. Francis of Assisi chapel at the CCCC

was overflowing at the Mass that was followed by a dinner and program.

The event, begun in 2022, has grown exponentially every year, with the nearly 250 registrations this year surpassing last year's number by almost 100.

The fundraiser is a way of helping support the Catholic Tigers organization.

More than 450 students actively participate in Catholic Tigers through various events such as Mass, bible studies, retreats, mission trips and daily prayer – to name a few. Fifteen more FHSU students joined the Catholic Church on Easter weekend.

During the program, Fr. Andy, in his fourth year as the CCCC chaplain, thanked many people and organizations for their support.

He gave credit to Fr. Fred Gatschet for his work as the CCCC chaplain for 20 years until 2019. Fr. Brian Lager took over as chaplain that year and hired a full-time development director for the center.

Dcn. Adam, who grew up in Hays as a parishioner of St. Nicholas of Myra Church, was one of the program speakers.

He likened the CCCC to the shore when the disciples met Jesus near the Sea of Galilee.

"The campus center is a place where students can drop their net and not be afraid to be the light the Lord wants us to be," Dcn. Adam said, reiterating how influential his time with Catholic Tigers was to his faith life.

Echoing those sentiments was FHSU freshman Kynlee Flavin, who had no intentions of attending FHSU, from where both her parents – Tyler and Heather Flavin – graduated.

Following her graduation from Meade High School in 2024, she was all set to pack her bags en route to the University of St. Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota.

But that all changed when Flavin, an elementary education major, visited FHSU one weekend late last summer and attended Mass at the Comeau center.

"I knew right away this is where I wanted to be," Flavin said, indicating that Catholics are a minority in Meade and how she immediately felt at home at the CCCC.

"The center brings students to a community where we can grow in our faith and where faith is accepted and supported," she said.

Anne Wheaton, current director of development for the CCCC, is also an FHSU alum.

"I truly would not be here without the Comeau Catholic Campus Center," she said. "From early on in my college career, there was a peace in that chapel that I couldn't find anywhere else on campus."

Numerous businesses and individuals help sponsor the Becoming Light Together event, with the Leo J. Dreiling and Albina Dreiling Charitable Trust providing matching funds for the first \$50,000 raised.

Donors can contribute to the fundraiser until May 1 by visiting [www.catholictigers.org](http://www.catholictigers.org) or by calling Wheaton at 785-625-7396.

## FHSU campus center fills 2 key positions

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

The patron saint of the Comeau Catholic Campus Center at Fort Hays State University is St. Francis of Assisi.

So it seemed only natural to adopt one of his sayings as the center's motto: "All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle."

Imagine how bright the light of two new candles at the center will shine.

With the growth of the student population involved at the center, the CCCC has added the position of campus minister.

Lucas Roths will join Jana Fross, another new hire, in helping the center's chaplain, Fr. Andy Hammeke, in ministering to FHSU students.

Fross will take over as development director at the CCCC after Anne Wheaton, who currently fills that position, announced she was accepting a position with the Catholic outreach program FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students).

It will be coming home, in a sense, for both Roths and Fross.

Roths was actively involved at the CCCC while attending FHSU from 2016 to 2020. Fross worked in development for eight years at the Fort Hays State Foundation in the early 2000s and often attends Mass at the St.

Francis chapel.

"I am thrilled to be back at the campus center, which played a pivotal role in shaping my faith and providing me a supportive community that continues to impact my



JANA FROSS

life," said Roths, who grew up in Ransom. "My hope is that together, we will continue making the campus center a place where FHSU students can encounter God's love and feel at home."

Fross expressed similar feelings.

"I am truly humbled and grateful to accept this opportunity to join the Catholic Tigers," said Fross, a native of Hays. "Over the years, I have watched the students worship at the campus center, and I have stood awe-inspired by their faith. It is a gift to be invited to support their spiritual journey."

Roths, currently a theology teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral Catholic School in Dodge City, is working on a master's degree in theology from the Augustine Institute.

As the CCCC's director of campus ministry, he will be responsible for expanding the student ministry and will be in charge of eight students who hold leadership roles at the center.

"Lucas was very involved during his time here, was a key member of the campus center and has remained

close with our alumni," Fr. Andy said. "We interviewed a lot of good candidates, and Lucas stood out."

Fross has a wealth of experience with a 26-year career in development. Following her stint at the FHSU Foundation, she has served as senior development coordinator the past 18 years at the Hays Medical Center Foundation.

A lifelong member of Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Hays, Fross has been involved in multiple ministries in her parish and the diocese but primarily focused her time as a catechist.

"This position was in a sense my two worlds colliding, and I was intrigued right away," Fross said. "This involves everything I love about my faith and streamlines into my job skill set. It all feels so natural."

Fr. Andy agreed.

"It's a good combination of having been involved in development for a lot of Jana's career and a faithful woman who loves the Church," he said. "With her pastoral faith and experience, we couldn't have gotten a better person for that job."

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# Diocese remembers Fr. Bill Surmeier

Father William J. Surmeier was born in Hays, Kansas on January 7, 1940, the second son of Anton and Gertrude (Fellhoelter) Surmeier and passed away on April 3, 2025.

He attended St. Paul's Catholic School in Angelus, Thomas County Grade School in Oakley and St. Francis High School Seminary in Victoria. He attended college and theology at Conception Seminary, Conception, Missouri, and was ordained a priest for the Salina Diocese on May 27, 1965, in his home parish in Oakley.

Fr. Bill took a year-long sabbatical and earned a Master's degree in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola University, Columbia, Maryland. He earned his Doctorate in Psychology from the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana.

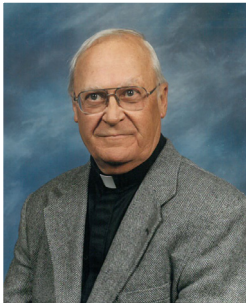
He served as an associate pastor in the Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish, Salina, from '65-'67, St. Xavier's Parish, Junction City, '67-'69, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hays, '69-'72, Sacred Heart and St. Michael Parishes in Greenleaf/Kimeo, '71, and Team Ministry, '72-'82 at Selden, Oberlin, Logan, Leoville, New Almelo and Densmore. He was pastor of St. Mary Queen of the Universe Parish, Salina, '82-91, St. Nicholas of Myra, Hays, '93-2005, Sacred Heart and St. Thomas, Plainville and Stockton, 2005-'08, and St. Mary Parish, Gorham, 2008-'14.

Fr. Bill served as Priest Council president for many terms during the 1970s and '80s under Bishops Cyril Vogel, Daniel Kucera, and George Fitzsimons. Fr. Bill was known for his dedication to the youth of our diocese. He was CYO Director from 1969 to 1984 under Bishop Vogel, developing a strong youth ministry and the first Youth Council for our diocese.

One of Fr. Bill's passions was empowering Lay Ministry in our diocese, and with the aid of the Parish Pastoral Council at St. Nick's, he was the first to hire a Pastoral Administrator, Arvilla Jueneman, for St. Nicholas of Myra Parish.

His vocation also led him to full-time counseling for Catholic Charities in Hays from 1993 to 2014 until he retired.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Tony and Gertrude, two sisters, Clara Zimmerman and Theresa Surmeier, and one brother, Alvin Surmeier.



FR. SURMEIER



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

**Bishop Gerald Vincke prays over Fr. Bill Surmeier at the Mass of Christian Burial in Hays on April 9. Fr. Surmeier was ordained in 1965 and faithfully served many parishes throughout the Salina Diocese in his lifetime.**

He is survived by two brothers, Tony Surmeier of Colby and Henry Surmeier of Springfield, Oregon, and many nieces, nephews, friends, and brother priests.

Mass of Christian Burial was held April 9, 2025, at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church. Bishop Gerald Vincke officiated,

with many priests and deacons attending. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery in Oakley.

Memorials are suggested to the Salina Diocese in care of Youth Ministry. Services were through Hays Memorial Chapel Funeral Home, and condolences and memories may be shared with his family at [www.haysmemorial.com](http://www.haysmemorial.com).

## WE LOST A GIANT

By BILL MEAGHER

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, YOUTH MINISTRY AND FAMILY LIFE

Fr. Bill was our first diocesan Director of Youth Ministry and held that position from 1969-1984. He did so much for the young people of our diocese and personally impacted many people throughout his life. His impact was so significant that when Sr. Barb took over the office in 1984, she named the unit of the year award in his honor as a way to mark the impact he had on youth ministry.

Personally, I can't tell you how much Fr. Bill meant to me. He not only married Mandy and me but also both

of our parents. My first memories of him are from when I was very young, and I would go with my dad to St. Mary's, Salina, when he practiced the organ. Fr. Bill would rescue me from my boredom and take me over to find some cookies and hang out with him and the other priest and staff.

He always said that I was named after him, and to be honest, I always hoped that he was part of my parents' decision to name me William/Bill.

Throughout the years, he was always there to answer my questions and mentor me through life. He was an incredible priest, youth minister, and man of God. He will be missed.

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# Community invited to help “Fill the Freezers”

By JEREE HUGHBANKS  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHERN KANSAS

Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas is inviting the community to help “fill the freezers” with donations of meat to support families in need across the diocese. With new freezers now in place at all three office locations—Salina, Manhattan, and Hays—the organization hopes to expand the nutritional value of its monthly food boxes by including high-quality protein items.

Catholic Charities serves individuals and families across 31 counties, offering emergency financial assistance, food and personal care support, housing assistance,

the most expensive and inaccessible items for struggling households.

Last year, Catholic Charities provided 5,800 food boxes to 1,805 households through its three offices and 26 rural outreach stops—reaching families in both larger communities and remote rural areas.

“We’re on a mission to feed those in need across all communities of the Salina Diocese,” said Megan Robl, Executive

Director of Catholic Charities. “Families with tight budgets often struggle to afford meat, and we’re working to make our food boxes healthier—not just to fill bellies, but to nourish bodies. These freezers give us the opportunity to provide more well-rounded support to those we serve—but we can’t do it without help from our generous community.”



## Fill the FREEZERS

We have freezers in all three Catholic Charities offices—but they’re empty!

**We need your help to fill them!**

By donating meat, you can provide nutritious protein to families in need across northern Kansas.

pregnancy and adoption services, mental health counseling, and more—regardless of faith background.

The goal is to fill these freezers with donated beef, pork, poultry, or venison, processed at a USDA or state-inspected facility. These items will be distributed to low-income families who qualify for monthly food assistance. Meat donations help fill a vital gap, as protein is often one of

Catholic Charities welcomes meat donations throughout the year, as freezer space allows. Those wishing to donate are asked to call ahead to schedule a drop-off. To coordinate a donation or learn more, contact Jessica Allen or Megan Augustine at 785-825-0208.

This freezer expansion project was made possible through support from the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation and the Heartland Community Foundation.

Together, we can fill the freezers and feed families across our diocese!

## SUMMER COUNSELING SERVICES AVAILABLE WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas is excited to welcome Alli Puetz, a Master of Social Work (MSW) student at the University of Saint Mary, as a summer counseling intern serving the Manhattan community and beyond. Alli is accepting new clients for in-person counseling in Manhattan and teletherapy sessions for individuals across the Salina Diocese. Her availability begins May 12 and continues through the end of July, with openings for children (ages 10+), teens, adults, couples, and families.

Originally from the Wichita area, Alli completed her undergraduate degree at Kansas State University and is actively involved at St. Isidore’s Catholic Student Center. She is passionate about providing hope and healing through compassionate care.

Alli will provide counseling services under the clinical supervision of Jessica



Sampson, LCSW, Director of Family Support Services at Catholic Charities. Jessica has more than 13 years of experience with the organization and is a licensed specialist in clinical social work.

Counseling through Catholic Charities is available to all regardless of religion, race, age, or finances. It is confidential and offered either in person at one of the agency’s office locations or via teletherapy through a secure online platform, based on client preference. To schedule an appointment with Alli, please call the Manhattan office at 785-323-0644.

Fees are based on a simple sliding scale of \$10, \$25, or \$50 per session, depending on household income. While Catholic Charities does not accept insurance, the organization is committed to ensuring that cost is never a barrier to care. For more information about the counseling program, visit [www.ccnks.org/counseling](http://www.ccnks.org/counseling).



### SR. VIVIAN BOUCHER

Sister Vivian Boucher, 94, died on March 29, 2025, at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. A Sister of St. Joseph for 78 years, she was born Rita Marie Boucher on February 19, 1931, in Zurich, to Hector and Cecelia Gagnon Boucher. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on September 8, 1946, received the habit on March 18, 1947, and made first vows in 1948 and final vows in 1952.

Sister Vivian earned an A.B. in math from Marymount College in 1965 and an M.A. in Administration from the College of St. Thomas in 1982. She taught and was principal in institutions staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph in New Almelo, Concordia, Plainville, Junction City, Beloit, Leawood and Hanover;

Illinois; Nebraska; and Missouri. She retired in 2007 and moved to the Motherhouse in 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents and six siblings. She is survived by two brothers,



SR. VIVIAN BOUCHER

Kenneth and Leroy Boucher. A Bible Vigil Service was held April 2 in the Nazareth Motherhouse Chapel with Sister Jean Rosemarynoski as the eulogist. The Mass of Christian Burial was April 3 in the Motherhouse Chapel, Fr. Barry Brinkman presiding. Burial in the Nazareth Motherhouse Cemetery. Memorials for Sister Vivian 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.

### SR. MARY AUGUSTINE

Sister Mary Augustine, 94, died March 13, 2025, at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. Born Elizabeth Mary Augustine on March 10, 1931, in Ellis, to Mathias and Regina Flax Augustine, she was the oldest of nine children. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on September 8, 1949. On March 19, 1949, Mary received the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph and was given the name Sister Virgil, later changing back to her baptismal name. She pronounced her first vows in 1950 and final vows in 1953.

Sister Mary earned a BA in Psychology and English from Marymount College in 1961 and an MS in Education from Kansas State University in 1968. She began her 29 year teaching career in schools staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Plainville, Leoville, Damar, Manhattan, Oakley, KS; Grand Island, NE and Aurora, IL. Then she worked at

St. Joseph’s Children’s Home, served as a Clergy Counselor for Chemical Dependency, ministered as a parish pastoral associate, and served as a hospital chaplain for 12 years. She

retired to Nazareth Motherhouse in 2015.

She was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers and two sisters. She is survived by one sister, Marcella Goodwin of Salina; and three brothers, Al, Salina; Virgil, Olathe; and Irvin, Salina. A Bible Vigil Service was held March 17 with Sister Anna Marie Broxterman as the eulogist. The Mass of Christian Burial was March 18 in the Motherhouse Auditorium, Fr. Barry Brinkman presiding. Burial in the Nazareth Motherhouse Cemetery. Memorials for Sister Mary Augustine 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.



SR. MARY AUGUSTINE



PARISHES SET GOALS FOR ADORATION FOR PEACE

Many parishes have responded to the Adoration for Peace campaign, which started on Ash Wednesday. Parish goals indicate an increase of 500.5 weekly hours of adoration across the diocese. Several parishes have also stated their goals are to increase participation, instead of hours. Some small parishes, which may not be increasing adoration at their church, have parishioners participating in adoration combined with a nearby town. Even if your parish isn't increasing adoration, you are all encouraged to visit your church and spend time with the Lord.

\* Indicates a parish that is increasing the number of adorers.  
\*\* Indicates a parish that is increasing adoration on a monthly, not weekly, basis.

Town	Parish Name	Households	Current Adorers	Current Weekly Hours	Weekly Goal	Increase in Weekly Hrs.
Abilene	St. Andrew	268	42	12	26	14*
Angelus	St. Paul	55	0	0	3.5	3.5**
Antonino	Our Lady Help of Christians	47	0	0	0	0
Atwood	Sacred Heart	144	24	24	40	16
Aurora	St. Peter	33	0	0	1	1
Beardsley	St. John Nepomucene	41	7	0	24	24
Belleville	St. Edward	162	10	5	7.5	2.5
Beloit	St. John the Baptist	650	84	70	168	98
Bird City	St. Joseph	25	1	0	4	4
Brookville	St. Joseph	15	0	0	0.5	0.5
Catharine	St. Catherine	79	0	0	0	0
Cawker City	Saints Peter and Paul	82	6	3	19	16
Chapman	St. Michael	103	0	0	0	0**
Clay Center	Saints Peter and Paul	244	13	13	17	4
Clifton	St. Mary of the Assumption	63	8	2	2	0
Clyde	St. John the Baptist	123	20	2	2	0*
Colby	Sacred Heart	565	48	24	96	72
Collyer	St. Michael	60	0	0	1	1
Concordia	OLPH	429	21	8	16	8
Cuba	St. Isidore	28	0	0	1	1
Damar	St. Joseph	97	0	0	1	1
Dorrance	St. Joseph	43	0	0	3	3
Downs	St. Mary	45	0	0	2	2
Ellis	St. Mary's	337	15	8	TBD	0
Ellsworth	St. Bernard	141	5	1	1	* & **
Elmo	St. Columba	30	10	0.5	0.5	0*
Esbon	Sacred Heart	25	0	0	1	1
Glasco	St. Mary	24	0	0	0	0**
Goodland	OLPH	199	15	8	15	7
Gorham	St. Mary Help of Christians	57	0	0	1	1
Grainfield	St. Agnes	68	10	1	1	0*
Greenleaf	Sacred Heart	40	0	0	1	1
Grinnell	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	74	3	0	1	1
Gypsum	St. Patrick	13	0	0	0	0**
Hanover	St. John the Baptist	256	0	0	1	1
Hays	Comeau Catholic Campus Center	196				
Hays	St. Nicholas of Myra	739	0	0	0	0

Town	Parish Name	Households	Current Adorers	Current Weekly Hours	Weekly Goal	Increase in Weekly Hrs.
Hays	St. Joseph	659	0	0	0	* & **
Hays	Immaculate Heart of Mary	1371	168	168	0	0
Herington	St. John the Evangelist	103	10	3	3.5	.5 *
Herndon	Assumption of Mary	50	0	0	0	0
Hill City	Immaculate Heart of Mary	115	20	7	14	7
Holyrood	St. Mary	19	0	0	1	1
Hope	St. Philip	50	0	0	.5	.5
Hoxie	St. Frances Cabrini	212	30	3	24	21
Junction City	St. Francis Xavier	519	23	23	33	10
Kanopolis	St. Ignatius Loyola	48	2	0	24	24
Leoville	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	48	0	0	1	1
Lincoln	St. Patrick	94	0	0	0	0**
Logan	St. John the Evangelist	55	0	0	1	1
Manhattan	Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary	732	189	168	7	7
Manhattan	St. Thomas More	890	0	0	0	0**
Manhattan	St. Isidore's	361	93	29	48	19
Mankato	St. Theresa	24	0	0	0	0
Miltonvale	St. Anthony	36	0	0	1	1
Minneapolis	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	134	0	0	0	0**
Munden	St. George	23	0	0	1	1
Munjor	St. Francis of Assisi	90				
New Almelo	St. Joseph	32	0	0	1	1
Norton	St. Francis of Assisi	166	10	0	1	1
Oakley	St. Joseph	195	0	0	0	0**
Oberlin	Sacred Heart	61	3	1	1	0*
Ogden	St. Patrick	25	0	0	1	1
Osborne	St. Aloysius Gonzaga	114	10	3	9	6
Park	Sacred Heart	131	18	3	5	2
Phillipsburg	Saints Philip and James	105	0	0	8.5	8.5
Plainville	Sacred Heart	303				
Russell	St. Mary Queen of Angels	282	0	0	1	1
Salina	St. Mary Queen of the Universe	1359	0	0	0	0
Salina	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	655	183	164	164	0*
Salina	Sacred Heart Cathedral	330				
Schoenchen	St. Anthony	56	0	0	0	0**
Seguin	St. Martin of Tours	25				
Selden	Sacred Heart	43	0	0	2	2
Sharon Springs	Holy Ghost	57	0	0	8	8
Smith Center	St. Mary	56	0	0	.5	.5
Solomon	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	62	7	1	0	0
St. Francis	St. Francis of Assisi	35	0	0	4	4
Stockton	St. Thomas	89	12	10.5	10.5	0*
Tipton	St. Boniface	125	6	3.5	3.5	0
Victoria	The Basilica of St. Fidelis	421	9	2	72	70
Vincent	St. Boniface	38	0	0	0	0
WaKeeney	Christ the King	213	0	0	5	5
Walker	St. Ann	35	0	0	1	1
Washington	St. Augustine	124	0	0	1	1
Wilson	St. Wenceslaus	107	4	1	12	11

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BAPTISMS

**Antonio R. Cruz IV**, son of Antonio R Cruz III and Amber R Bassett Cruz, was baptized October 27, 2024, by Fr. Kerry Ninemire at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Junction City. Godparents are Chris Southard and Mary Martinez

**Mila Marie Cunningham**, daughter of Matthew and Jenna (Lang) Cunningham, was baptized March 2, 2025, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis.

**Oakley DeLynn Dreiling**, daughter of Jake and Rebecca (Boger) Dreiling, was baptized March 2, 2025, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis.

**Emmett Don Willis Gregoire and Katharina Eleanor Gregoire**, twin children of Ryan and Laura (Augustine) Gregoire, were baptized February 22, 2025, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis.

**Elizabeth Marie Haug**, daughter of Travis and Kaylee Haug, was baptized March 9, 2025, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan.

**Elizabeth Lee Hughes**, daughter of Logan and Jacy Hughes, was baptized March 23, 2025, by Dcn. Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan.

**Anne Marie Koch**, daughter of Douglas and Lauren Koch, was baptized March 1, 2025, by Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Miley Ann Kramer**, daughter of Cliff and Stephanie Kramer, was baptized March 30, 2025, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan.

**Miley Jo Leiker**, daughter of Michael and Sarah (Weigel) Leiker, was baptized March 16, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays.

**Eleanor Josephine Lesser**, daughter of Evan and Codi (Bliss) Lesser, was baptized

February 16, 2025, by Fr. Rick Lesser at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis.

**Atreus Zamir Madriz Martinez**, son of Angelo Zamir Madriz Garcia Martinez and Aricela Madriz Martinez, was baptized March 23, 2025, by Fr. Rafael Campo at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan.

**Korbin Anthony Rootring**, son of Kyle and Kelsey Rootring, was baptized March 16, 2025, by Dcn. Larry Erpelding at St. Isidore's

Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Luke Jordan Toogood**, son of Jordan and Kaitlin (Stein) Toogood, was baptized March 16, 2025, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Parish in Salina. Godparents are Ben and Megan Stutterheim.

**Felix Weber**, son of Seth and Adriana Hernadez, was baptized March 22, 2025, by Fr. Aneesh Parappanattu at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

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WEDDINGS

**Kyle Joseph Bussen and Sarah Nicole Scott** were married March 1, 2025, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Suzanne and the late Joseph Bussen. Parents of the bride are Michael and Cindy Scott. Witnesses were Miles Orth and Samantha Price.

**Joseph Schmidtberger and Jasmine Zerr** were married March 1, 2025, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Greg and Lori Schmidtberger. Parent of the bride is Melissa Zerr. Witnesses were Jacob Schmidtberger and Jackie Baxter.

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## FUNERALS

**Juliann Margaret Ayers**, 93, died March 29, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated April 3 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Fr. Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery, Cawker City.

**JoAnne Josephine Balthazor** (Hockman), 87, died March 29, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. John the Baptist Parish in Clyde on April 3, 2025. Fr. Steven Heina presided. Burial in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Clyde.

**Larry Dean Blackwood**, 74, died February 19, 2025. Graveside service with military honors (Clyde VFW) was held April 5. Fr. Steve Heina presided.

**John Lee Duden**, 82, died March 22, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 29 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Fr. Andrew Rockers presided. Burial at a later date in Atwood, KS.

**Lucille "Donna" Englert**, 92, died March 2, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 10 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**James L. "Jim" Fieler**, 87, died March 7, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 11 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Paul M. Gladbach**, 63, died March 10, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 15 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Concordia. Fr. Joseph Kieffer presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, St. Joseph.

**Mary Goodno**, 77, Junction City, died on April 12, 2025. Cremation took place with no services.

**Roberta Jean "Jeanie" Gormley**, 82, died March 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated April 2 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Grinnell. Fr. Luke Thielen and Fr. James M. Thomas presided. Burial in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Grinnell.

**Ervin "Sunny" Herman**, 90, died February 14, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 21 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Judith Kay Leiker**, 77, died March 16, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 20 at St. Joseph Parish in Hays. Fr. Reginald A. Urban presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Linda Sue O'Hara**, 80, died March 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 31 at St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit. Fr. Andrew

Rockers presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Rodulfo Paje Pacumbaba**, 89, died February 22, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 22 at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan. Fr. Frank Coady and Fr. Don Zimmerman presided. Inurnment at Sunrise Cemetery, Manhattan.

**Janet "Jan" Weber**, 80, died March 6, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated March

10 at St. Mary's Parish in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Carole Ann Wolf**, 82, died January 5, 2025, at the Ascension Living Via Christi Village in Manhattan. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 29 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Grinnell. Fr. Don Zimmerman presided. Inurnment at Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Grinnell.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

Saint Isidore the Farmer lived in Spain in the 1000s. When he was very young, he started working for a wealthy landowner, and he worked for him his whole life. Isidore married a kind woman named Maria de la Cabeza, who also became a saint, just like him!

Isidore was very faithful. He would wake up early to go to church, and even while he was working in the fields, he would talk to God. He was known for helping others, especially the poor.



One day, while he was out plowing the fields, Isidore was late getting back because he had stopped to pray. His boss got upset and went to check on him. But when he got to the field, he was amazed! He saw Isidore's oxen plowing the field, but an angel was also there, helping him by guiding the oxen! The boss could hardly believe his eyes, and he realized that Isidore was so faithful that God had sent an angel to help him.



Saint Isidore is the patron saint of farmers, workers and rural life.

### SAINT ISIDORE

**FEAST DAY: MAY 15**



# "Eucharistic Adoration"

*is the greatest power in the universe,  
capable of transforming us  
and changing the face of the world."*

— St. Maximilian Kolbe



## The "yet" mindset – The formula of saints

Lately, I've been noticing more and more people walking around with a deep sense of resignation, feeling like life is just something that happens to them. Whether it's career frustration, broken relationships, addiction, debt, sin, health issues, or family burdens, many feel stuck, helpless, and worn out from fighting what feels like a losing battle.

And I get it—because I fight that same battle every day. Maybe you do too. At times, we all feel like we're knee-deep in quicksand, as if no matter how hard we try, we just can't move forward.

But here's what I have to remind myself: our mindset is a choice. The way we approach life's challenges—the lens through which we view them—is up to us. We get to decide whether we'll see life through defeat or hope. Whether we persevere or give up and quit.

And that choice is precisely what the enemy wants to steal from us.

Satan whispers the same lies over and over:

- "You'll never change."
- "You're not strong enough."
- "You'll never be holy."
- "You'll never break free."

Why? Because he's terrified. He's terrified that the very people who feel the most broken will hear God's voice, respond to His

call, and dare to believe that He loves them and will take care of everything.

Especially now in this Easter season, God is calling us to be the saints we were created to be.

Here's what I've learned: the ones who become saints aren't the ones who have it all together. They're the ones who keep going, who keep trusting, and who constantly add one small, powerful word to the end of their struggles: "yet."

It's a tiny word—but it can change everything.

- I'm not holy enough—yet
- I haven't overcome this—yet
- I don't fully trust God—yet
- I'm not praying regularly—yet
- I don't love like I should—yet

Open the Bible and look at some of the heroes of our faith—Simon/Peter, Saul/Paul, and Mary Magdalene. None of them had an easy path to holiness. They stumbled. They failed. But they didn't give up. They continued to trust God, moved forward, and lived with a "yet" mindset—believing that, by God's grace, they could become who He was calling them to be.

This Easter season, let's follow their lead. Let's choose to trust God—even when it's hard.

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Let's refuse to give up, no matter how many times we fall. And if we keep showing up, leaning not on our own strength but on God's grace, then one day—by His mercy—they just might call us saints too. What a

beautiful and comforting message that is for each of us. Unfortunately, too many people around

us do not know God's love and do not know their value. Through our baptism, we are called to be prophets who bring this message of love to all we meet. Jesus asks each of us this Lenten season to bring light into the world's darkness and show people how loved and valuable they are to God. Let's spend this Lenten season building up those around us and bringing them to Christ!

### SALINA DIOCESE FAMILY PRAYER- PRAYER FOR THE EASTER SEASON

Heavenly Father,

Our hearts rejoice throughout this Easter season, filled with the hope and promise of Jesus's victory over sin and death. As we continue to celebrate these days of resurrection joy, help us to carry the peace and love we feel now into each day of our lives.

Stay close to us, Lord, as You guided the disciples after the Resurrection. Teach us to walk in faith, to recognize Your presence in our daily lives, and to live as people of the risen Christ.

Thank You for the gift of salvation. May our hearts remain rooted in gratitude, and may the joy of Easter shape our thoughts, words, and actions until we join You in the eternal celebration of heaven.

Amen.

Cut this out and pray with your family!



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