



THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

OCTOBER 24, 2025

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN,
THE REGISTER

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St. John's welcomes Marian Sisters to Beloit

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

The 2025-26 school year is barely two months old, and newcomers to Beloit say they felt welcomed from the start by St. John's Catholic Parish and schools alike.

Three Marian Sisters from the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., arrived in town in August and hit the ground running.

"They are a breath of fresh air; they just fit in," said Marcy Kee, principal at St. John's High School.

Their arrival brings the number of sisters in our diocesan schools to seven, joining four Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters from Colwich who are in their third year teaching in Hays Catholic Schools.

Kee said St. John's was expecting to have some sisters from the Marycrest Motherhouse in Waverly, Neb., arrive in time for the 2026-27 school year.

So it was a pleasant surprise when they learned earlier this year that Srs. Benedicta Hawkins, Megan Therese Tunink and Serena Deters would be arriving in Beloit a year early.

Sr. Benedicta teaches theology classes in grades 6 through 10. Sr. Megan Therese works in the parish office. And Sr. Serena splits time



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Marian Sisters Serena, Megan Therese and Benedicta from the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb. moved to Beloit this fall to serve St. John's school and community.

between the St. John's Parish and Fiat Ministries out of Wichita, a non-

profit organization that helps promotes religious vocations.

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God blessed America Pilgrims visit sacred sites across nation

BY LORI LEISZLER
THE REGISTER

An action-packed week at the end of September saw 42 pilgrims from the Salina Diocese at the crossroads of faith and hope. The Midwest pilgrims boarded a bus and headed northeast, in a tour across the nation to visit scenes of great hope.

"When people think of going on a big pilgrimage, they tend to think of Italy and the Vatican," said Jamie Kuhlman, a diocesan youth ministry coordinator who helped plan the trip along with Carolyn Berens.

"But you don't have to go that far to go on pilgrimage," Kuhlman continued. "We are so blessed here

in America to have so many places with great hope, and they're not that far away."

So, on September 21, the group of pilgrims left Kansas, traveling through six states and visiting numerous sites of hope.

From the rolling plains of Kansas to the sacred hills of Wisconsin, the journey began Sunday, September 21, with stops in Gretna, Nebraska. The Holy Family Shrine—a glass chapel perched above I-80—offered a quiet place for prayer. Nearby, the Cloisters on the Platte welcomed the group with its life-sized bronze Stations of the Cross, spread across scenic walking trails.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

The pilgrims visited major churches in the Midwest, including (above) the Basilica of St. Josephat in Wisconsin.

Make a home in your heart for the poor

BY BISHOP GERALD VINCKE
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE

During my recent trip to Rome, I was blessed to meet Pope Leo XIV on October 1. Just a few days later, on October 7, he issued his first papal exhortation — something I had no idea was coming when we met.

I'm not sure how many of you regularly read papal encyclicals or exhortations. I'm guessing not many. But I want to encourage you to read this one. It's focused on loving the poor.

It's an easy read and very down-to-earth — just five chapters and 121 paragraphs. It all starts with God's love for us.

Pope Leo writes that his desire is "that all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ's love and his summons to care for the poor."

He then emphasizes how essential this is: "I too consider it essential to insist on this path to holiness, for 'in this call to recognize him in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate.'"

We are called to be saints.

Charity for the poor is a path to sainthood.

Pope Leo shares the biblical story of the woman who poured costly perfumed oil on Jesus' head while others complained it was a "waste." But Jesus told his disciples that the memory of her gesture would endure: "Wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (Matthew 26:13). He reminds us that likewise, "no sign of affection, even

the smallest, will ever be forgotten, especially if it is shown to those who are suffering, lonely or in need, as was the Lord at that time."

This reminds me of something a seminary professor once shared — a saint who said that whenever we help the poor, they will pray for us in heaven.

Love for the Lord, Pope Leo tells us, is inseparable from love for the poor. He beckons us to "not let our guard down when it comes to poverty."

One line really struck me: "I often wonder, even though the teaching of Sacred Scripture is so

clear about the poor, why many people continue to think that they can safely disregard the poor."

He recognizes the cynicism of some who "dismiss or ridicule charitable works, as if they were an obsession on the part of a few and not the burning heart of the Church's mission."

That, he says, "convinces me of the need to go back and re-read the Gospel, lest we risk replacing it with the wisdom of the world."

Jesus was poor, and he was also for the poor. St. Teresa of Avila's beautiful poem speaks to how we are called to continue Christ's love for the poor today:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth
but yours,
Yours are the eyes with
which he looks compassion on
this world,
Yours are the feet with which
he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with
which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours
are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are
his body.
Christ has no body now but
yours.

Pope Leo states: "God's heart has a special place for the poor."

May our hearts, too, find room for those in need — especially the poor.



VATICAN MEDIA, COURTESY PHOTOS

In his five short months as pope, Pope Leo XIV has shown a heart for the poor and for all the Church. During Bishop Vincke's October 1 general audience visit at the Vatican, he witnessed Pope Leo meet former Kansas City Royals baseball player Mike Sweeney and his wife, Shara, both of whom are devout Catholics.

Haz un hogar para los pobres

Tuve la bendición de conocer al papa León XIV el 1 de octubre. Aproximadamente una semana después, emitió su primera exhortación papal. No estoy seguro de cuántos de ustedes leen las encíclicas papales. Supongo que no muchos. Pero quiero animarlos a leer esta, pues trata sobre amar a los pobres.

Es una lectura fácil y muy directa, compuesta por cinco capítulos y 121 párrafos. Todo comienza con el amor de Dios por nosotros. El papa León dijo que su deseo es "que todos los cristianos lleguen a apreciar la estrecha conexión entre el amor de Cristo y Su llamado a cuidar de los pobres". Luego escribe cuán importante es esto para nosotros: "Yo también considero esencial insistir en este camino hacia la santidad, pues 'en este llamado a reconocerlo en los pobres y en los que sufren, se revela el mismo corazón de Cristo, Sus sentimientos y decisiones más profundos, que todo santo busca imitar.'" Estamos llamados a ser santos. La caridad hacia los pobres es un camino hacia la santidad.

El papa León comparte la historia bíblica de la mujer que derramó un aceite perfumado costoso sobre la cabeza de Jesús mientras otros se quejaban de que era un "desperdicio". Jesús les dijo a sus discípulos que el recuerdo de su gesto perduraría: "Dondequiera que se proclame esta Buena Nueva en todo el mundo, se contará también lo que ella hizo, para que la recuerden" (Mateo 26,13). Nos recuerda que, de igual manera, "ninguna muestra de afecto, por pequeña que sea, jamás será olvidada, especialmente si se brinda a quienes sufren, están solos o necesitados, como lo estaba el Señor en ese momento." Esto me recuerda a un profesor del seminario que contaba a la clase la historia de un santo que decía que siempre que ayudemos a los pobres, ellos rezarán por nosotros en el cielo.

El amor al Señor, nos dice el papa León, es uno con el amor a los pobres. Nos exhorta a "no bajar la guardia cuando se trata de la pobreza." Dijo algo que realmente me impactó: "A menudo me pregunto por qué,

a pesar de que la enseñanza de la Sagrada Escritura respecto a los pobres es tan clara, muchas personas siguen pensando que pueden ignorarlos con seguridad."

Reconoce que hay "quienes desprecian o ridiculizan las obras de caridad, como si fueran una obsesión de unos pocos y no el ardiente corazón de la misión de la Iglesia, lo que me convence de la necesidad de volver a leer el Evangelio, no sea que corramos el riesgo de reemplazarlo con la sabiduría del mundo."

Jesús fue pobre, pero también estuvo a favor de los pobres. El famoso poema de Santa Teresa de Ávila reitera la importancia de continuar con el amor de Cristo hacia los pobres:

"Cristo no tiene ahora cuerpo, sino el tuyo. No tiene manos ni pies en la tierra, sino los tuyos. Tuyos son los ojos con los que mira con compasión este mundo.

Tuyos son los pies con los que camina para hacer el bien. Tuyas son las manos con las que bendice al mundo. Tuyas son las manos, tuyos son los

pies, tuyos son los ojos, tú eres su cuerpo. Cristo no tiene ahora cuerpo en la tierra, sino el tuyo."

El Papa León afirma: "El corazón de Dios tiene un lugar especial para los pobres." Que nuestros corazones también tengan un lugar especial para los necesitados, especialmente los pobres.

BISHOP VINCKE'S CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

1	Holy Fire, BeachSchmidt, Hays, Mass 4 p.m.
4	Memorial Mass for Deceased Priests, S.H. Cathedral, 12:05 p.m.
6-8	Global 2033 Leaders' Summit, Washington, D.C.
9-13	USCCB General Session, Baltimore, MD.
20-22	2025 NCYC, Indianapolis, IN.
27-28	Thanksgiving Day, Chancery closed.

Knights of Columbus introduce leadership for Diocesan COR initiative

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The Knights of Columbus are pleased to announce the appointment of Daniel “Dan” Culbertson as the new Chairman for the COR initiative within the Diocese of Salina. Culbertson, a dedicated Knight, and U.S. Army Veteran, brings with him a strong commitment to service, faith, and fraternity as he leads this transformative men’s ministry across the diocese.

COR, which stands for “Cor” – Latin for “heart” – is a spiritual initiative launched by the Knights of Columbus to renew Catholic men in their identity as sons of God and brothers in Christ. The program focuses on three key pillars: prayer, formation, and fraternity, and seeks to build stronger Catholic men who can be leaders in their families, parishes, and communities.

Dan Culbertson has already begun outreach

across the diocese, working closely with pastors and local K of C councils to establish vibrant COR groups that meet regularly



Daniel Culbertson

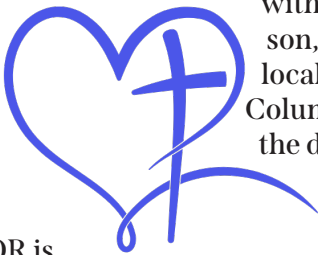
for spiritual growth and brotherhood. His leadership style is rooted in personal witness, servant leadership, and a desire to see men deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and become more active in the life of the Church.

“I am honored to serve the men of the Salina Diocese in this mission,” said Culbertson. “COR is not just another program – it’s a movement of the Holy Spirit calling men back to the heart of the Father. Through prayer, learning, and authentic relationships, we’re

equipping Catholic men to live out their faith courageously and joyfully.”

Under Culbertson’s leadership, several COR groups have already launched or are in formation, including in Salina, Hays, Concordia, and Manhattan. Each group is tailored to the needs of its parish community while remaining rooted in the mission of the Knights and the teachings of the Church.

The Knights of Columbus invite all men of the diocese – whether or not they are currently Knights – to consider joining a COR group or starting one in their parish. For more information or to connect



with Dan Culbertson, contact your local Knights of Columbus council or the diocesan office.

This new initiative for men’s ministry in the Salina Diocese reflects the vitality of the Church’s mission to form intentional disciples and strengthen the Body of Christ – beginning with the heart.

“Mission is not so much about “departing,” but instead “remaining” in order to proclaim Christ through hospitality and welcome, compassion and solidarity. We are to remain without fleeing to the comforts of our individualism; to remain so as to look upon those who arrive from lands that are distant and violent; to remain and open our arms and hearts to them, welcoming them as brothers and sisters, and being for them a presence of consolation and hope.”

The above excerpt is from Pope Leo XIV’s homily during the Jubilee of the Missionary World and Jubilee of Migrants, October 5, 2025. Full text available at vatican.va

NOVEMBER PRAYER INTENTIONS

Pope Leo’s intentions:

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

Diocesan intentions:

For all who are grieving the loss of loved ones, especially as we enter the holiday season – that they may know the love of God, find comfort in the hope of the resurrection, and be surrounded by the compassion of Christ’s Church.

OFFICIAL PRIESTLY APPOINTMENTS

Effective Sept. 8, 2025:

Fr. Charles Oppong, with the concurrence of Most Reverend John Baptist Attakruh, Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana), appointed to Parochial Administrator of St. Theresa Parish, Mankato; Sacred Heart Parish, Esbon; and St. Mary Parish, Smith Center, and the in solidum team of priests who previously pastored these parishes is dissolved.

Fr. Joseph Kieffer appointed pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Concordia; St. Edward Parish, Belleville; St. Isidore Parish, Cuba; St. George Parish, Munden; and transferred from pastor of St. Peter Parish,



Fr. Oppong



Fr. Kieffer



Fr. Leiker

Manhattan to permanent diaconal ministry at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Junction City.



Deacon Souza



Deacon LeValley



Deacon DiNuzzo

in Aurora.

Fr. Michael Leiker appointed pastor of St. Peter Parish, Aurora, in addition to his current canonical appointments.

Effective Oct. 1, 2025

Dcn. Edward Souza transferred from permanent diaconal ministry at Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish,

permanent diaconal ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Salina.

Dcn. David DiNuzzo, Sr. appointed to permanent diaconal ministry at St. Theresa Parish, Mankato; Sacred Heart Parish, Esbon; and St. Mary Parish, Smith Center, in addition to his other canonical appointments.

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PROMESA DE PROTEGER

PLEDGE TO HEAL

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Please believe in the possibility for hope, help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out. Our victim assistance coordinator is available to obtain support for your needs, to help you make a formal complaint of abuse to the proper authorities and to arrange a personal meeting with the bishop or his representative, if you desire.

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800.276.1562
reportbishopabuse.org

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Para contactar a la Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas
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www.reportandprotect.com

Servicio de Denuncia de Abusos de Obispos Católicos:
800.276.1562
reportbishopabuse.org

‘Miracle Mike’ approaches rebirthday

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Mike Hubka, principal of Manhattan Catholic Schools, has been married for more than 40 years. He is a father of two married sons and a grandfather of two.

So he has plenty of anniversaries, birthdays and special occasions to celebrate during the year.

But there will always be a day in mid November that he will remember with extreme gratitude.

On November 16, 2024, Hubka survived a life-threatening heart rhythm attack called V fibrillation. And he says he is blessed to still be around to talk about it.

He knows how different the outcome could have been when he collapsed while tailgating with family and friends before a Kansas State football game.

Without immediate treatment, a V-fib rhythm can be fatal. Hubka's doctor told him later that only one in five survive, even with successful defibrillation.

When Hubka passed out, son Jeff, who is a physical therapist, immediately began performing CPR, while oldest son, Brett, began making calls to EMS.

He was life-watched to a Topeka hospital, where he underwent a heart catheterization and a defibrillator/pacemaker implant. After a short stay in the hospital, he was back to school after Thanksgiving.

"My big thing when I came to was asking if K-State won the game," Hubka said.

Bad news was, KSU lost the game. Good news was, Hubka was getting another chance at life.

Years ago, a friend of Hubka's dubbed him "Magic Mike" because of his success during critical times in competitive yard games.

Ask Hubka these days, and he'll tell you it should be "Miracle Mike."

"It's a miracle that I survived; I'll always believe that," Hubka said. "I guess I'm not done yet."

Hubka's family made sure of



COURTESY PHOTO

Mike Hubka and this wife, Elene, center, pictured at a K-State tailgate party with their sons and their wives.

that, and their lives haven't been the same since.

"I'm mostly thankful for my family," he said, "and my kids at school."

He showed his gratitude and love for his family by purchasing miraculous medals for his sons and their wives and his two granddaughters for Christmas 2024.

Now, every holiday is a special

one for the Hubka family.

Following knee replacement surgery this summer, life is back to normal for Hubka, in his sixth year at MCS.

He still tailgates with family and friends at home Wildcat games.

This year on the mid-November Saturday schedule, K-State will be playing a road game with Oklahoma State on Nov. 15.

Hubka actually has tickets for that game, but if he doesn't make it there in person, he plans to watch the game on TV.

The next day, on the one-year anniversary of his near-death experience, Hubka will attend Mass with his wife, Elene, at either St. Thomas More Church or KSU's St. Isidore Catholic Student Center. They are members of both parishes.

Once again, he will give thanks.

"I think it will always be a special (anniversary)," Hubka said of Nov. 16. "It's a day we can give thanks for all the things we've gotten to do since then."

TMP-M celebrates anniversary, honors fallen hero

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

In an abrupt and shattering shift of emotions, the Thomas More Prep-Marian community in Hays went from jubilant celebrating one weekend to incomprehensible loss the next.

The tradition-rich Catholic school began its 100th homecoming week with numerous gatherings and reunions the weekend of September 19-20.

A week later, shock and grief smothered the city of Hays and the entire region when Sgt. Scott Heimann of the Hays Police Dept, a 2012 graduate of TMP-M, was fatally shot while responding to a domestic violence call in the city.

He leaves behind his wife, Beth; two children, 8-year-old Victoria and 7-year-old Patrick; four siblings; and numerous relatives, friends and co-workers.

Beth is also a TMP-M alum of 2012. Both she and Scott attended Holy Family Elementary, where their children are current students. And Sgt. Heimann's parents and parents-in-law also live in Hays.

Supporters turned out in droves for several services in his hometown to show respect for his family and to honor Sgt. Heimann. They began with the transport of his body from Wichita to Hays on Tuesday, September 30, when hundreds of vehicles and people lined roads and overpasses during the transfer.

A candlelight vigil at the grotto of Sgt. Heimann's alma mater the



BETH HEIMANN, COURTESY PHOTO

Hero Scott Heimann's children Patrick and Victoria spend a quiet moment by their father's patrol car outside the Hays Police Department.

next night began a three-day tribute to the city's fallen hero.

Curtis Hammeke, president of Hays Catholic Schools, knows the Heimann family well and called Scott "special beyond the badge."

A vigil service and rosary followed on Thursday as hundreds gathered in his parish church, Immaculate Heart of Mary, to offer their condolences.

An estimated 3,000 people attended his funeral service on Friday at Fort Hays State University's Gross Memorial Coliseum, including hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state.

Fr. Fred Gatschet, pastor at St. Joseph Church, Hays, presided at all three services as mourners gave tribute to Sgt. Heimann's life, service and sacrifice.

Fr. Fred taught both Sgt. Heimann and his wife at TMP-M and

also married them in St. Joseph Church in 2016.

"No words can take away our sense of loss," Fr. Fred told the congregation at Thursday's vigil at IHM church. "He cannot be replaced. But he can be imitated. We can perpetuate the good things Scott did. We've got to keep those going."

At the funeral service on Friday, which was attended by an estimated 3,000 people, Fr. Fred focused on keeping the faith.

"Sometimes we have a misunderstanding what faith is about," Fr. Fred said. "It's not a coat of armor. Faith is what assures us there is something on the other side."

Sgt. Heimann was then laid to rest in St. Joseph Cemetery, with hundreds honoring him at a service that included bagpipes and a 21-gun salute.

Homecoming 2025

TMP-M celebrated the 100th homecoming of its school in style. After a ceremony honoring the 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the school's majestic building on Friday morning, the Monarch football team pulled out an exciting, 20-19, last-minute victory over Phillipsburg later that night.

A large crowd gathered near the southeast corner of the building to celebrate the milestone.

The school actually started in 1908 and celebrated that 100th anniversary in 2008.

This particular celebration was planned after Travis Grizzell, advancement director for Hays Catholic Schools, discovered the date on the building's cornerstone was 1925. The building wasn't completed until 1931, so students attended class elsewhere for six more years after the cornerstone was laid.

Hays Catholic Schools President Hammeke said the school would keep celebrating anniversaries of all kinds for the building – which he called "majestic" – and everything it represents.

"This school is a tremendous gift to the community of Hays," he said. "It's important for our kids and our grandkids and future generations. There is nothing more important we can do than to stay focused on Christ, and this gives us an opportunity to do that."

Give thanks. Give back. Give Catholic.

By TORRIE GREGG
SALINA DIOCESE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION

Over the past seven years, #iGiveCatholic has remained a steady tradition across the Diocese of Salina. Each fall, parishes, schools, and ministries take part in this shared effort to celebrate our faith and the ministries that bring the Gospel to life in our communities. While every group approaches the campaign in its own way, they're united by a common mission — to give thanks and give back to the Church that continues to form us in faith.

Celebrated annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, #iGiveCatholic is an online giving day created to recognize and support the charitable, educational, and spiritual work of the Catholic Church. The Diocese of Salina has participated since 2018, joining dioceses across the country in turning gratitude into generosity.

This year's campaign opens

with an advanced giving period from November 17 to December 1, and culminates on #iGiveCatholic Giving Tuesday, December 2, 2025. Donors can make secure, tax-deductible gifts online at salina.igivecatholic.org, or give by cash or check directly to the ministry of their choice during the same period.

Each participating ministry has its own story and goal. Some use #iGiveCatholic to raise funds for a specific need, while others see it as a way to connect with supporters and share the story of how their ministry serves others. No matter how they participate, each ministry joins in a shared spirit of faith and generosity, reminding us that the strength of our Church lies in the people who support it. Together, the efforts of these ministries showcase the incredible diversity of the Church across the Diocese



give online at salina.igivecatholic.org

of Salina — from campus ministries and Catholic schools to parish programs and outreach initiatives. Each one contributes to the life of the diocese in its own way, reminding us that the Church's mission is alive in both large and small communities alike.

#iGiveCatholic also reminds us that generosity itself is a form of discipleship. As the holiday season approaches, Catholics across the diocese and beyond are invited to reflect on their blessings and respond with gratitude. Giving Catholic means giving with intention and supporting the people and places that carry out the mission of the Church every day.

When we come together in generosity, we strengthen the Church we love. Whether through a few dollars given online or a check dropped off at a parish

office, every gift makes a difference. By supporting a parish, school, or ministry, you can help share the Gospel in tangible ways across our diocese.

To learn more or view a full list of participating organizations, visit salina.igivecatholic.org.



Faith and Excellence: Salina Diocese Catholic Schools surpass state averages

By GEOFF ANDREWS, SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND DR. NICK COMPAGNONE, ACCREDITATION CONSULTANT FOR THE DIOCESE OF SALINA
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The 2024–2025 Kansas Assessment Program results indicate that Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salina scored above the state average in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, within a faith-based education setting.

English Language Arts

In English Language Arts, students in grades 3–10 outperformed their peers statewide in both reading and writing. Writing was a particular strength, with up to 91% of students meeting or exceeding the state average.

Reading skills were equally strong, with as many as 92% surpassing the state in Craft & Structure. These are the skills that help students think critically, communicate clearly, and grow into leaders.

Math and Science

Our math classrooms are filled with the same energy and high expectations. Students met or exceeded the state average in key areas such as Operations & Algebraic Thinking (76–82%), Expressions & Equations (75–86%), and Statistics & Probability (up to 92%).

Even in challenging areas like fractions, students are making steady growth be-

cause teachers believe in their potential and won't let them settle for less than their best.

Science results show similar success: 91% of 5th graders and 92% of 8th graders met or exceeded state standards in hands-on learning and problem-solving. These outcomes suggest classrooms foster curiosity and an appreciation for God's creation.

Joyful Classrooms and High Expectations

Walk into our classrooms and you'll notice the difference immediately. Students begin the day with prayer, teachers greet them with joy, and Christ is at the center of the learning environment. At the same time, our schools set high expectations for students. Those expectations—combined with strong instruction and family support—are leading to impressive results.

Not long ago, a third grader stepped to the ambo during daily Mass to proclaim the Word of God. She read with confidence, clarity, and reverence—an image of how faith and academics come together in our schools. That same confidence is reflected in the classroom, where students are challenged to read, write, and think deeply every day.

Together, let us be disciples

Catholic education aims to develop students as disciples of Jesus Christ, focusing on virtue, compassion, and purpose. With daily Mass, service opportunities, and faith-driven teachers, both mind and soul are nurtured.

“Catholic education is a gift to our parishes, our families, and our communities. Together, we are

raising disciples who will make a difference in the world.” Bishop Jerry Vincke

Community Stewardship

These achievements result from joyful classrooms, skilled teachers, involved families, and active parishes working together. Looking ahead, we continue to focus on growth through professional development, innovative instruction, and strong family partnerships.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salina are proof that when faith and learning come together, students thrive. They are growing not only into successful young men and women, but also into disciples ready to live their mission in the world.



Scholarship Granting Organization
for the
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

75%

State Tax Credit Available

The money donated to the Scholarship Granting Organization for the Catholic Diocese of Salina is distributed to qualifying students across the Salina Diocese to help with the cost of education at their Catholic School.

Last year \$116,699.70 was awarded to help the education costs for 94 students

Call or Email the Catholic Foundation Office to learn more

✉ heather.hartman@salinadiocese.org

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Crustbuster	Great Plains	MacDon	Westfield
Drago	Haybuster	Orthman	Woods
Demco	Kinze	Reinke	Yamaha

CROSS-COUNTRY PILGRIMAGE, FROM PAGE 1

On day two, pilgrims attended morning Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in Sioux City, Iowa, then explored Trinity Heights – Queen of Peace Shrine. Towering statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary greeted them at the peaceful prayer grounds. That afternoon brought one of the most visually striking stops of the week: the Grotto of the Redemption in West Bend.

Tuesday led the group into Wisconsin for Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, nestled in the bluffs along the Mississippi River. Each participant was given a “pilgrim passport,” which they got stamped there and at their next two Marian sites.

The following day, they saw the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion—the only Church-approved Marian apparition site in the United States—and Holy Hill Basilica in Hubertus, perched high above the surrounding

countryside. Some pilgrims even climbed the scenic tower, while others prayed on the grounds and in the chapel.

But it was Thursday’s final major stop that served as the spiritual pinnacle of the journey: the Dominican Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus in Chicago.

Known as the patron saint of hopeless causes, St. Jude has long been a symbol of unwavering hope—making the visit especially fitting for a pilgrimage during the Year of Hope. Pilgrims prayed the Rosary, attended Mass, and were invited to venerate a first-class relic.

“Seeing all of the relics was really inspiring,” Kuhlman said. “Makes you feel like you should strive hard to become a saint.”

The final morning brought one last Mass at St. Thomas More Church in Coralville, Iowa, before



COURTESY PHOTOS

At left rests a first-class relic of St. Jude, encased in a reliquary shaped like an arm. The pilgrims pictured above were able to touch it and venerate the relics of St. Jude at the shrine in Chicago.



the bus headed back toward Kansas. Alongside souvenirs and snapshots, the pilgrims carried home something much deeper: renewed hearts, deeper community, and a greater awareness of the spiritual treasures close to home.

“What a way to spend a

week—filled with faith, hope, and laughter,” said pilgrim Susan Brummer.

This pilgrimage marked the final trip in a three-part series hosted by the diocesan evangelization team for the Year of Hope. Earlier journeys included visits to sacred sites within the Salina Diocese and a combined trip to Oklahoma City and Pilsen, Kansas, to honor local heroes Blessed Stanley Rother and Servant of God Fr. Emil Kapaun.

While this marked the end of the diocesan-organized trips, organizers now encourage the faithful to continue making pilgrimages on their own—to seek out places of hope, reflect on

their journey and remember the power of intercession.

“Look at all the amount of people that are praying for you,” said Kuhlman. “Pray to them. Ask for them to intercede for you.”

Kuhlman said that the trip brought her closer to her faith and brought their whole group to witness the beauty of the Church in this country.

That realization, she said, was strengthened by interactions with older pilgrims and witnessing how young and old alike could come together in faith. Pilgrimage, after all, isn’t just about where you go—but what God does with your heart along the way.



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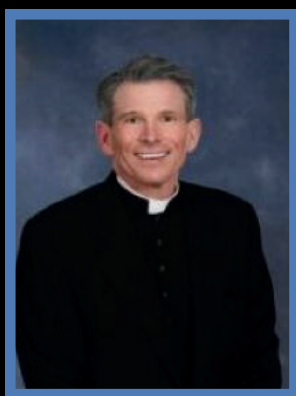
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WHAT'S HAPPENING

- November 1**

 - Holy Fire, Beach Schmidt, FHSU, Hays.

November 2

 - All Souls Day

November 4

 - Memorial Mass for Deceased Priests, 12:05
- p.m., Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina.

November 7

 - Teacher's Institute, Mass at 9 a.m., St. Mary's, Salina.
 - Catholic Charities Annual Adoption Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, 5 p.m.

November 11

 - Veterans Day.
- November 16**

 - World Day of the Poor.

November 17

 - iGiveCatholic Advanced Giving begins.

November 20-22

 - 2025 NCYC, Indianapolis, Indiana.

November 17-18

 - Thanksgiving, Chancery closed.



‘Dynamic Deacon’ speaks at Divine Mercy banquet

By Allison Ochoa
The Register

Trends in today's young people, simplifying evangelization, and the importance of Catholic radio were just a few of the many topics Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, known as “the Dynamic Deacon,” covered in his keynote presentations at Divine Mercy Radio’s 15th annual appreciation banquets. The banquets, held in Hays and Salina on September 13 and 14, respectively, also featured updates on the station and a short highlight reel of the station’s work.

In his address to the attendees, Deacon Harold shared three trends he is seeing in today’s young people that are affecting their faith: they want to hear the truth, but they aren’t hearing it from the adults in their lives; there is a disconnect between the Faith and young people’s everyday lived experience; and they have no idea how much God truly loves them.

“These young people have never truly encountered Christ, so the knowledge of his love isn’t making the transition from their head to their heart,” he said. “They don’t have that relationship of intimate, personal, loving, life-giving communion with Jesus. They need to, as Psalm 46 says, ‘be still’ and experience God.”

Deacon Harold said helping these young people, and people of all ages, experience God happens through evangelization. However, he be-



ALLISON OCHOA, THE REGISTER

“Dynamic Deacon” Harold Burke-Sivers delivered an engaging keynote speech during the 15th annual Divine Mercy Radio Appreciation Banquet.

lieves Catholics often make evangelization too hard.

“Jesus tells us about effective evangelization through the parable of the sower. Where the seed lands isn’t our problem. We just need to throw the seed! It’ll be God who tills the soil and feeds it. We participate in God’s plan of salvation by throwing the seed!”

“When we leave Mass after being fed by the bridegroom, we are called to be the Eucharist to the world,” he continued. “When you are living the Eucharist, you start to recognize opportunities to throw the seed. The first thing people need to see when they meet us is the love of Christ.”

Deacon Harold said Catholic radio stations, like Divine Mercy Radio’s family of stations, are one resource Catholics can use to scatter that seed of

evangelization in the face of the often-overwhelming onslaught of relativism and cancel culture. He said radio is still engaging people in a powerful way, noting the growth of the number of stations under the Divine Mercy Radio umbrella since he last visited Hays in 2021.

“We’re just the instruments. God is the musician,” he said. “Divine Mercy Radio is helping us become finely-tuned instruments in God’s hands!”

In addition to utilizing Catholic radio, Deacon Harold encouraged attendees to not underestimate the power of prayer, fasting, and spending time in Adoration.

“God did his part but left work for the people to do,” he said. “The battle is out there, but God gives us everything we need [to face it].”

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Seminarian vocations growing in numbers

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

There is 50 years difference between the ages of two seminarians in the 2025-26 class for the Diocese of Salina.

Ed Schmeidler, a member of Christ the King Church in WaKeeney, entered seminary at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, in Franklin, Wis., at the youthful age of 70.

"I'm definitely the oldest student there, older than some of my professors," said Schmeidler, who retired from a career in education several years ago. "But I don't think that's an issue at all."

Schmeidler is one of 16 seminarians in formation for the diocese this year and one of the new cohort of seven.

Included in the diocesan group is second-year seminarian Gus Hanson, who is still a teenager until Oct. 25.

"We are so thankful for the prayers of the faithful of the Diocese of Salina for more vocations to the priesthood," said Father Andy Hammeke, vocations director for the diocese. "It's amazing to see how God is answering those prayers with men of all ages and backgrounds."

Schmeidler, an active member of his parish for years, said he was surprised when he was approached by Bishop Jerry Vincke, asking him to consider the priesthood.

"I told him I was too old,

but (the bishop) planted a seed," said Schmeidler, who decided to contact Fr. Andy for more information.

"And now, here we are," Schmeidler said.

Hanson, who entered seminary as an 18-year-old last year, is a member of St. John Nepomucene, Beard-sley. He is attending St. Joseph House of Formation in Wichita along with another second-year diocesan seminarian – Ethan Weiner from St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Hoxie.

Because of his age and life experience, Schmeidler is following an individualized development plan set by Bishop Vincke that isn't quite as long in years as that of younger seminarians.

"It's been a lot of years on this side of the classroom," Schmeidler said. "But I'm enjoying the classes I'm enrolled in."

"I really like that we have more time for prayer here," he said, "so I'm taking it a semester at a time."

Joseph Schones, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, also is attending Sacred Heart Seminary, as are four others in their English Language year: Trung Nguyen, Dung Day, Then Nguyen and Phong Tran, all from Vietnam.

Other newcomers this year besides Schmeidler are Adam Bates, who grew up in Beloit, attending St. John the Baptist Parish, and Kale Kuhlmann, a



Adam Bates



Kale Kuhlman



Ed Schmeidler



Trung Nguyen

member of St. Thomas Parish in Stockton.

Bates and Kuhlmann are attending Kenrick-Glen-non Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., joining fellow diocesan seminarians Kyle Pfeifer from Manhattan-Seven Dolors and Holden Giefer, Manhattan/Kansas State University-St. Isidore's. Pfeifer is scheduled to be ordained a transitional deacon on April 11, 2026.

Two seminarians attending St. John Vianney school of Theology in Denver are from the same parish – and the same family.

Deacon Luke Friess, from St. Francis Cabrini in Hoxie, is in his last year of formation before being ordained a priest on June 6, 2026. Younger brother Gabe Friess, in his second year of formation, joined Deacon Luke at St. John Vianney this year after spending his first year at St. Joseph in Wichita.

Completing the list of seminarians for the 2025-26 year are Max Megaffin (St. Joseph's, Hays) and Collin Thielen (Sacred Heart, Park), who

are studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

Vocation numbers for our diocese have grown the past few years.

The number increased to double digits (10) in 2023, and there always is a chance of movement to another diocese or even another order.

However, even with

three seminarians being ordained priests this past May, this year's class increased to 16 – up from last year's class of 14.

"I am convinced that as grateful as we are for the 16 seminarians that we have," Fr. Andy said, "there are many more being called. And we are so grateful."

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SISTERS IN BELOIT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

She also is an assistant coach for the middle school volleyball program.

They also all help out with Wednesday night religion classes for the parish.

Sr. Benedicta added that she loves sports. She likes to shoot hoops, and she serves as a line judge at volleyball matches.

Sr. Serena (Harveyville, Kan.) and Sr. Benedicta (Runnels, Iowa) both grew up in small towns.

Sr. Megan Therese is from Omaha, Neb. – the largest city in the state – but she taught for four years in Wahoo, Neb., which is only a littler larger than Beloit.

And the population of Waverly, home of their motherhouse located 15 miles northeast of Lincoln, is about 4,500.

So all three have adjusted to life in Beloit quite well.

"We like going to the library and walking around town," Sr. Benedicta said.

"And there's a nice trail to go walking on," Sr. Megan Therese added.

Sr. Benedicta said she loved the school



COURTESY PHOTO, JEFF BATES

Sister Serena is a regular on the middle school volleyball team's bench as an assistant coach.

where she was teaching in Lincoln last year and was surprised when she learned she would be leaving to come to Kansas.

However, "I do really like St. John's," she said, and has found it interesting there are a lot of large families in Beloit.

"I teach a lot of siblings and a lot of cousins," Sr. Benedicta said.

Srs. Serena and Megan Therese both said they were ready for a change and welcomed the three-hour trip southwest into Kansas.

St. John's has two parish schools – an elementary school comprised of students Pre-K through 5th grade and a middle school/high school for 6th- through 12th-grade students.

Principal Kee says she sees the Marian Sisters getting more and more involved in the St. John's schools, the parish and the community as time goes by.

"They bring a lot to the table," Kee said. "They are great in the classroom; just their presence brings an increase of vocation into our school. Their love of Jesus is just radiant. Their presence has touched everyone's hearts."

Capuchin fundraiser started by diocese native

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Father John Lager has served as a priest in the Capuchin Province of Mid-America for over 45 years, but he has strong ties to the Salina Diocese.

Folks in the diocese got to hear from Fr. John – a native of western Kansas – via satellite in the 32nd annual Brown Robe Benefit in late September.

The fundraiser dinner, founded by Fr. John, was started back in the late 1990s by the Mid-America Capuchin Province based out of Denver and has been held there ever since.

The event raises money to help the Capuchins form new friars and to support their various ministries, especially serving the poor – the primary mission of the Capuchin Franciscan order.

After the annual dinner was forced to go online in 2020 during the COVID pandemic, organizers realized the benefit of having other cities in the province involved.

This year, viewers in Victoria, Lawrence and San Antonio, Texas, were able to watch as more than \$400,000 was earned in about an hour's time during the benefit.

The local event is held in Victoria in the conference room of the Capuchin Center of Spiritual Life.

Thus, it makes it convenient for retired priests living at the friary to attend.

Following a reception, dinner and fellowship with other attendees,

those in Victoria are able to watch the online auction and participate amid cheers of some substantial donations.

"It was so nice to see everyone clap and be excited about those large donations," said Mary Kay Schippers, one of the organizers of the local event along with Kathy Huser and Jeanna Wellbrock. "It makes you feel like you are a part of the whole event."

Toward the end of the auction, attendees at the satellite sites are able to participate in the bidding in certain dollar increments.

More than 500 people were in the audience in Denver this year, and between 75 and 100 were watching online.

"Now with modern technology, people can be there almost live for what is happening in Denver," Fr. John said.

Forty years ago, Fr. John was assigned duties as director of development for the Mid-America Province in Denver.

A Capuchin Gala was founded in the mid-1990s by his staff "and a group of volunteers who wanted to help us in the city and the Archdiocese of Denver."

It was later renamed the Brown Robe Benefit in reference to the distinctive apparel of Capuchin friars.

Although "home" for Fr. John has been Denver for the past 40 years, there will always be a special place in his heart for western Kansas and the Salina Diocese.



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

The Brown Robe Benefit in Victoria concluded with local and visiting friars singing the Ultima, a European German Franciscan melody, in four languages.

He grew up a member of St. Paul Parish in Angelus in Sheridan County, where one of his nephews, Fr. Brian Lager, now serves as pastor. Fr. Brian is the son of Ron Lager, Fr. John's twin brother.

Fr. John began attending high school at St. Francis Seminary in Victoria, then later spent his last six months as a deacon at St. Fidelis Church in Victoria. His first year of priesthood was also at St. Fidelis.

He then served as campus minister at Thomas More Prep-Marian High in Hays – in the first year of the consolidation of the boys' and girls' Catholic schools – before being called to Denver three years later.

He is pleased to have those reconnections with Victoria as well as other Mid-America sites via the benefit dinner's satellite format.

"It's been a wonderful

experience," Fr. John said. "A lot of this comes with cultivating those wonderful relationships we've had

in Denver, inviting them to be a part of things, helping us in our ministries."

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Life Chain draws crowd in Mitchell County

By MARYANN WALTER

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BELOIT

On Sunday, October 5, about 160 people gathered on the lawn of the Mitchell County Courthouse joining the thousands across the country to participate in the annual Life Chain.

The life chain was started in 1987. Every year on the first Sunday in October, Christians gather to stand for life.

The event in Mitchell county gathered people from across multiple denominations. Fr. Jarett Konrade of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Beloit and Pastor Chad Morton of Calvary Bible Church in Jewell both attended, leading prayers and reflections.

Participants held pro-life signs and prayed for the protection of unborn



children as well as a renewed respect for life in all stages.

"I have been a part of many Life Chain events in over 20 years of priesthood," said Fr. Konrade. "This was the largest gathering I have seen in all those years. It was such a beautiful witness in defense of and prayer for Life."

Local Life Chain coordinator Gina Lueger commented on the importance of events like this.



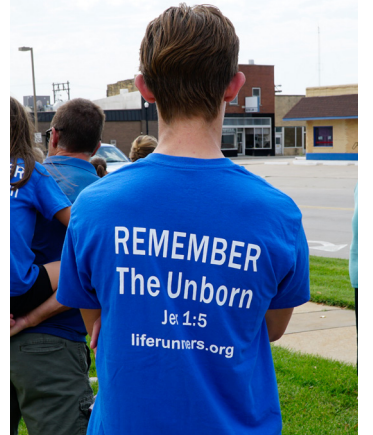
GREG WALTER AND ALAN HOLDREN, COURTESY PHOTOS

Over 160 people joined together for the Annual Life Chain outside the Mitchell County Courthouse.

Lueger said, "In spite of all the division we see in our country, I believe humans possess a shared desire to protect and care for the vulnerable. Who is more vulnerable than a baby in the womb? Those

babies are the people we came to give voice to."

There is much we can do to support their mothers," Lueger continued, "by providing them hope and resources. But it all starts with prayer because this, at its core, is a spiritual battle."



COURTESY PHOTO, CAROL PARKER

For the past thirty years, parishioners from Sacred Heart Church in Plainville have gathered to form a Chain of Life on Respect Life Sunday. The Daughters of Isabella also host a soup luncheon to raise funds for Right to Life on that day. This year on October 5, 20 parishioners gathered for an hour to pray the Rosary and stand in silent prayer for the sanctity of life from womb to tomb.



COURTESY PHOTO, AMY OHNSAT

On October 7, The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the sophomore religion class of Tipton Catholic High School gathered at the St. Boniface parish grotto to pray the Rosary together. With rosaries in hand, the grotto provided a peaceful setting for reflection. During October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, students at TCHS are taking time daily to pray the Rosary as a way to deepen their faith, build a spiritual connection with Mary, grow in personal prayer, and strengthen their bonds as a faith-filled community.

CRUCIFIX INSTALLED AT ST. THOMAS CEMETERY

By VIRGINIA LASKA

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The idea of installing a crucifix at St. Thomas Catholic Cemetery in Stockton was first discussed by the Knights of Columbus more than five years ago. But with high costs beyond what their fundraising could cover, the project was initially put on hold.

It was revived two years ago and presented to the entire parish. Generous donations poured in—more than \$15,000—making the dream possible.

The Knights worked with Leon's Welding & Fabrication of Hays to build the cross from black powder-coated steel. The white fiberglass corpus had to be ordered from Italy, with unexpected delays pushing its delivery back by over six months.

Once it arrived this

spring, final measurements were taken to ensure a perfect fit.

While waiting, the Knights poured a concrete pad and built a three-foot pedestal at the site. On July 18, they traveled to Hays to transport the completed crucifix to Stockton. The 14-foot cross, combined with the pedestal, stands 17 feet tall.

The installation of the crucifix took place early on the morning of July 21st, with assistance from Smith Monuments of Stockton. Additional lighting and decorative features for the pedestal will be completed at a later date, and a dedication ceremony will be announced soon.

The crucifix now stands as a sentinel in the St. Thomas Catholic Cemetery, honoring our Lord Jesus Christ. It stands so that all people may enjoy its beauty and meaning.



Campus Center 'family' reunites



DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN, THE REGISTER

Former FHSU roommates posed for a photo with Fr. Curtis Carlson on the porch of their college home in Hays – then the Catholic Campus Center – in August.

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

College reunions are usually a lot of fun, folks gathering for the first time in years – maybe even decades – and reconnecting with people who meant a lot to them in their formative years.

That's what four women experienced this past summer when they converged on Hays for a weekend reunion at the former Catholic Campus Center of Fort Hays State University.

Geralyn (Kraus) Allen, Debb (Neff) Jennings, Joan (Campbell) Long and Kathy (Greif) Rome had all come to FHSU from rural communities in northwest and north central Kansas.

They got involved in the campus center and ended up living together for a year.

That was in the late 1970s, when the Catholic Campus Center was

operated out of two old two-story houses at the corner of Sixth and Park Streets.

Those houses were removed in 1983 to make way for the construction of a new campus center.

The house on the east side of the double lot was torn down, but the other house is still alive and well.

Local resident John Bird bought the house on the west side and moved it to his farm just outside the city limits of Hays. He and his wife, Joann Jennings, remodeled the house in 2020 and now use it as a guest house when family and friends visit.

Bird's wife is a sister-in-law to Debb Jennings, who now lives in Wichita. Debb said that when she would visit their farm and was inside the "white house" (which it is now dubbed), something always "felt so familiar."

"Finally, I asked Joann

and John the history of the house," she said, "and when they told me, I ran up the stairs, saying 'This was my bedroom!' I was giddy."

That's when Debb came up with the idea to have a reunion in their former college residence.

She and her three housemates began planning the get-together and invited others who had either lived at the house in other years and/or had been actively involved in the campus center.

One of those was Father Curtis Carlson, who lived in the house next door and later went on to become a Capuchin priest. He is now pastor at St. Fidelis Basilica in Victoria.

"I grew up shy and quiet, and I felt accepted and welcomed at the campus center," said Fr. Curtis, who was born and raised in southeast Kansas. "Being in college and



COURTESY PHOTOS

Former students who frequented the campus center during their college days enjoyed a meal together during a reunion.

active there (at the CCC), a brand new thing in life was happening, and it was Catholic. It was so supportive."

The four women who planned the Saturday reunion spent Friday overnight in the house – in their former bedrooms – and had the time of their lives reminiscing.

"My faith grew and grew during that one year living at the campus center because I was around like-minded people," Debb said. "It gave me lifelong friends."

"It was such a formative age that we were all in," said Geralyn, who still lives in Hays. "We had all come from small towns, and here we found a new identity. It taught us a lot about ministry, about loyalty, and we built a faith community."

Susan (Meyer) Mirsky, who lived in the house for two years during her college career, came all the way from Kenosha, Wis-

consin for the reunion.

"We formed a very tight community at the center," Susan said. "When Debb contacted me about a reunion, it was a huge door opener to come back for it."

Debb and two others had recently become widows and called the reunion therapeutic.

"It made me realize how important it is to stay connected," said Madonna Reiter from Beloit, whose husband, Craig, died in December 2024. "The reunion brought back all those warm feelings about how caring everyone was when we were there in our faith group."

Kathy Rome met her future husband, Larry, while attending daily Mass at the campus center. They were married for 40 years before he died in February 2025.

"The center helped grow my faith," said Kathy, who still lives in Hays, "which carried forward in our family life."

STUDENTS HOST LOFT LUNCHES



COURTESY PHOTO

St. Mary's School in Ellis hosts LOFT Lunches throughout the school year. LOFT Lunches are a special opportunity for each class to eat in a more family-style setting around the table with special dishes other than daily lunch trays and are served a special treat. So far this school year, the 4th graders invited Fr. Dana Clark to eat with them and the 6th graders (above) invited Mr. Cletus Gross, the school custodian.

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Making the case for Rachel's Vineyard

By JANE DOE

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

I am a member of the Salina Diocese, and I confess: I have had an abortion—actually, several.

Why did I choose abortion? Because I wasn't thinking about the child in the womb. I wasn't thinking about anyone but myself. I was listening to the culture around me.

The abortion facilities I visited felt, as I recall, cold and unfriendly. I would walk in, fill out paperwork, hand over the money, and sit in the waiting room until my name was called. My most memorable experience happened at a Planned Parenthood building.

When I asked the doctor if what was inside me was a baby, he responded matter-of-factly.

"No, it's just a clump of cells."

He ended up injuring me somehow during the

procedure. Not long afterward, I began bleeding heavily. At the emergency room, I told the doctor I'd had an abortion. He didn't say a word—just jabbed me with something to stop the bleeding and walked out.

After each abortion, what I felt wasn't sadness—it was relief. I didn't think much about what had happened. That way, I could keep living the promiscuous life I wanted.

Years later, I would pass a pro-life billboard along I-70 and instinctively turn my head or close my eyes—anything to avoid being reminded of what I had done.

Eventually, though, desperation and the emotional weight of my actions crept in. I didn't care what happened to me. I could have been hit by a bus, and it wouldn't have mattered. That's when it hit me: I needed to find a Rachel's Vineyard retreat.

I tried three times. Each time, something went wrong—either there weren't enough participants, or my emails went unanswered. Looking back, I know the evil one was at work.)

I even tried signing up for a retreat in Oklahoma. But finally, in God's perfect timing, an email got through. In 2012, I attended a Rachel's Vineyard retreat hosted by the Salina Diocese.

What a relief it was to finally tell my story—to stop pretending it had never happened. The guilt and pain I had buried for over 40 years were finally brought into the light. And I realized: I wasn't alone.

That weekend gave us the chance to find freedom—to confess our abortions if we hadn't already, to speak honestly, to reflect, and to give our children back to the Lord. We even laughed. For the first time in a long time, we



laughed.

To any woman facing an unplanned pregnancy, my advice is simple: stop and pray. (It's something I never did—honestly, it wasn't even on my radar.) Really consider what it means to have an abortion, because the question "What if...?" will always linger.

And if you've already had an abortion, please pray—and don't hesitate to reach

out to Rachel's Vineyard. Start the healing process. Yes, it takes courage, but there are people you've never met who are praying for you every single day. Know this: God is merciful. He is waiting for you to come to Him and lay your burden down.

Editor's Note:

The name of the author has been changed to protect her privacy.

Igniting Hope: A campaign for our neighbors in need

By MEGAN ROBL

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHERN KANSAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

One such neighbor is Michael, whose life took a difficult turn after a painful divorce. Struggling with addiction and homelessness, he felt as though everything was falling apart. But in 2022, when Michael walked through the doors of Catholic Charities and saw the crucifix on the wall, he knew he was in the right place.

With the support he received, Michael began to take steps toward rebuilding his life. Catholic Charities was able to provide him with food, clothing, encouragement,

and help finding a safe place to stay. With support and determination, he began to rebuild. When he reached out to a local restaurant where he had previously worked, they welcomed him back with a job. Soon after, Michael was able to move into an apartment of his own. Reflecting on that time, Michael said, "You were God sent. I knew God was going to send somebody, but I didn't know it was going to be you."

Fast forward to today, Michael is thriving. He has steady work, his own apartment, and most importantly, he has been sober for two and a half years. He now looks toward the future with hope and gratitude, something he once thought was impossible. From the bottom of his heart, Michael says, "Thank you for everything. God bless each and every one of you. Keep doing what you're doing, because you're doing an awesome job helping the community, and there's a lot of people out there that need it."

Michael's story is just one of many in which the

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

Through your generosity, you will help provide food for a child, offer shelter to a family, and ensure that someone like Michael has the support they need to get back on their feet. The services Catholic Charities offers are more than just financial assistance; they bring comfort, dignity, and hope to those who feel lost or abandoned.

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

hygiene kits.

As Catholics, we are called to serve Christ in others, especially those who are most vulnerable. Igniting Hope is a chance to do just that—to respond to our neighbors' suffering with love and generosity. Together, we can ensure that no family in our diocese feels alone in their time of need. To donate or

learn more about this year's campaign, visit www.ccnks.org/igniting-hope. Your support will bring hope, healing, and stability to families across northern Kansas.

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

In Honor of
Adoption Awareness Month,
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Join Fr. John Schmeidler, along with
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adoption, and connect with others whose
lives have been touched by adoption.

*For further details or questions, contact
Megan Augustine at 785-825-0208 or
maugustine@ccnks.org.*




Catholic Charities 2025 Annual Campaign



"You were God sent. I knew God was going to send somebody, but I didn't know it was going to be you." – Michael

\$150,000 Donation Match!

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Pledge cards are available at your parish or donations can be made at www.ccnks.org/ignitinghope

Thank you for your generosity!


Scan to donate!



BAPTISMS

Eastlyn Jade Binder, daughter of Elliot Binder and Natasha Cecil, was baptized September 7, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor. Godparents are Matthew Legleiter and Stephanie Howie.

Carter James Bland, son of Garrett and Michelle (Klepper) Bland, was baptized September 21, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

Eleanor Rose Engeman, daughter of Caleb and Miranda Engeman, was baptized July 20, 2025, by Dcn. Larry Erpelding at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Charlotte Kay Everett, daughter of Lucas and Megan (Ross) Everett, was baptized September 21, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

Jonah Jose Faerber, son of Isaiah Faerber and Lindsay Smith, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

Otto William Fink, son of Anthony and Paige Fink, was baptized August 24, 2025, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Rylan Keoni Funtanilla, son of Jonathan and Rynah Funtanilla, was baptized September 28, 2025, by Fr. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Lilah Carly Gassman, daughter of Elliot and Sara (Vandervoort) Gassman, was baptized September 7, 2025, at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Jacob and Taylor Vandervoort.

Bodie Nicholas Gross, son of Brendon Gross and Kelly Marie Brummer, was baptized September 7, 2025, by Fr. Daryl Olmstead at St. Mary Queen of Angels Church in Russell.

Presley Jyl Hammeke, daughter of Kaleb and Paige (Dechant) Hammeke, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Fr. Andy Hammeke at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

Winona Catherine Hesse, daughter of Nolan and Taylor Collette, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Dcn. Buzz Harris at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Joseph River Saulon McCain, son of Ryan and Maria Katrina McCain, was baptized September 28, 2025, by Fr. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Audrey Martha Palmero, daughter of Zachary and Mazee Palmero, was baptized July 26, 2025, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Rosalyn Nicole Peterson, daughter of Boyd and Brittany Peterson, was baptized July 19, 2025, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in

Manhattan.

Rocky Tarcisius Rein, son of Alex and Jazzmin (Wahlmeier) Rein, was baptized August 24, 2025, by Dcn. Dan Wahlmeier at St. Joseph Church in New Almelo. Godparents are Anders Mikkelsen and Taylor Fortin.

Noah Mathias Honorato Rojas, son of Ismael H. Hernandez and Edith L.R. Gonzalez, was baptized September 6, 2025, by Fr. Rafael Campos at Seven Dolors Church in Manhattan.

Bernadette Lee Rhoden, daughter of Michael and Kim Rhoden, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Dorothy Jo Rhoden, daughter of Michael and Kim Rhoden, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Rhett Joseph Rueschhoff, son of Tyler and Breanna (Park) Rueschhoff, was baptized September 28, 2025, by Fr. Nick Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays.

Kaden Mateo Villacin Villa, son of Kristian and Mariel Villi, was baptized September 6, 2025, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

SEND US YOUR INFO
To submit a sacramental announcement, email theregister@salinadiocese.org

WEDDINGS

Kennedy Fortin and Taylor Wahlmeier were married August 23, 2025, at St. Joseph Church in New Almelo. Fr. Vincent Thu Laing witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Jason and Gwen Fortin. Parents of the bride are Curt and Becky Wahlmeier. Witnesses were Konner Fortin and Tessa Anderson.

Blake Robert Matson and

Mary Grace Hudson were married September 20, 2025 at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Father Gale Hammerschmidt witnessed the vows. Parents of the groom are Brian and Jennifer Matson and Dan and Lisa DePorter. Parents of the bride are Rob and Tracy Hudson. Witnesses were Jake Frietas, Hannah Nadler and Caroline Slayden.

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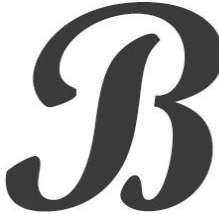
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FUNERALS

Rudolph "Rudy" Augustine, Jr., 86, died September 19, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 26 at St. Mary Church in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary Cemetery, Ellis.

Kenneth Bader, 91, died September 9, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 15 by Fr. Luke Theilen at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery.

Roger L. Barta, 79, died June 16, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated June 27 by Fr. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Interment in Fairview Cemetery, Smith Center.

Nancy Bergmann, 69, died May 21, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated May 26 by Fr. Jarett Konrade at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery.

tery.

LaVonne Boetel, 76, died July 13, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated July 28 by Fr. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Inurnment in Ft. Riley Main Post Cemetery, Ft. Riley.

Bob Delay, 73, died July 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated July 31 by Fr. Jarett Konrade at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery.

Donna Jean "Jeanie" Dreiling, 99, died September 6, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 12 at St. Joseph Church in Hays. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Joyce Duskie died May 21, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated May 26 by Fr. Jarett Konrade at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery.

Lori Ann Flesher, 59, died September 8, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 17 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker presided. Inurnment in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

James A Gormley, 60, died September 7, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 12 at Immacu-

late Conception Church in Grinnell. Fr. James Thomas and Fr. Brian Lager presided. Burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Grinnell.

Scott William Heimann, 32, died September 28, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated October 3 at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet, Fr. Nick Parker, Fr. Brian McCaffrey, Fr. Damian Richards, and Fr. Andy Hammeke presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Dolores Mae Koerperich, 91, died October 5, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated October 10 at Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin. Fr. Mathew Chacko presided. Burial in Oberlin Cemetery.

Joey Thomas LaGuardia, 43, died August 28, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 3 at Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin. Fr. Mathew Chacko presided.

Marvin Lewis, 94, Houston, TX – graveside burial was held August 8, 2025, at St. Joseph Cemetery in New Almelo. Fr. Joshua Werth presided.

Jean Rietchek, 98, died September 9, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 15 at Immaculate Conception Church in Grinnell. Fr. James Thomas and Fr. Jesse Ochs presided. Burial in Immaculate

Conception Cemetery, Grinnell.

Mary Lou Russell, 91, died September 3, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 15 at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Fr. Frank Coady presided. Inurnment in St. Thomas More Memorial Walls, Manhattan.

Alfred Joseph "Al" Schuster, 89, died September 14, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 19 at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Robert Smith, 92, died July 26, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated August 1 by Fr. Emmanuel Mensah at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery.

Jerome "Jerry" Spiess died September 24, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated October 11 at St. Mary Queen of Angels Church in Russell. Fr. Daryl Olmstead presided.

Rodney J. (Rod) Steckel, 76, died September 15, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 20 at St. Mary Queen of Angels Church in Russell. Fr. Daryl Olmstead presided. Burial in St. Mary Catholic Cemetery, Russell.

Bryce C. Stephens, 77, died September 18, 2025. Graveside services were held September 29 at St. Joseph Cemetery in New Almelo. Deacon Dan Wahlmeier presided.

Phyllis Thull, 96, died September 1, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated October 4 by Fr. Luke Theilen at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cawker City. Burial in Saint Peter and Saint Paul Cemetery, Cawker City.

Pauline Younker, 100, died August 28, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated September 6 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery, Munjor.



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ADORATION CORNER



By KARA NOBERT

PARISHIONER AT ST. JOHN'S, CLYDE

As you all know, Pope Francis has declared 2025 as a Jubilee Year of Hope.

Bishop Vinke has challenged us to 3 things here in our diocese.

First: try and Make a pilgrimage. If you can't make it to Rome, there are 6 declared holy sites here in our diocese.

The second challenge is for our diocese to collectively pray one million memorares. Praying more can certainly give us hope. Pick up a little postcard at your parish or print one from the diocese website.

The third Jubilee year challenge and the one closest to my heart is to increase the number of parishioners participating in adoration.

We have regular adoration here in Clyde on Wednesday mornings. But you can come and spend a holy hour with the blessed sacrament anytime. When I first started coming and sitting in the church alone 10 years ago or so, I re-

member my ears ringing and I thought what is that? Silence, it was silence. There is more noise in this world than there has ever been. How can we possibly hear God if we aren't REALLY listening?

Adoration for me has taken practice. I had a hard time getting my brain to stop racing. Sometimes it still does, but I keep at it, because once you sit and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit wash over you, you will long for it.

It has changed me from the inside-out. It makes me feel whole and complete. It makes me a better wife, mom, daughter and friend. I promise if you commit to it, you will never regret it. The more time we spend with Jesus, the closer we get to him, and the closer we get, the more purified our thoughts and actions become.

Some people come and read scripture, some pray the rosary or other prayers, some journal. I personally come and try to

quiet my thoughts and my mind. I try and find a stillness where I can feel my own heart beating. I usually have a pen and paper beside me so if something I forgot to do distracts me, I write it down, pray about it and deal with it later.

I ask God to forgive me for all the times I've stumbled, I pray for all those I've promised to pray for with sincere and loving intent, I thank him for my many blessings. Sometimes I ask for his help on something, and the answer always comes. But then I try to sit and just adore him. I listen. I love him and I let him love me. It feels calming, peaceful, loving, joyful, purifying and hopeful all at the same time. There is no one way to come and spend time with Jesus. It can be different each time.

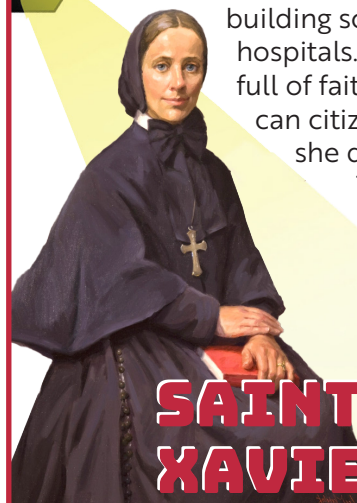
What might Jesus say to you if you came and spent time with him? How might it change you? Let this Jubilee year lead you to hope.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

Frances Xavier Cabrini was born in Italy in 1850, the youngest of 13 children. As a little girl, she loved stories about missionaries—people who travel to share God's love and help others. She dreamed of going to faraway places and doing the same one day.

When she grew up, Frances wanted to be a nun and a missionary, but many people told her she was too small and weak. Still, she didn't give up. She trusted that God had a special plan for her.

She started a group of religious sisters called the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who helped the poor and opened schools and hospitals. Then one day, the Pope told her, "Not to the East, but to the West!" He told her that she must go to America to help Italian immigrants who were having a hard time.



Mother Cabrini traveled across the U.S., building schools, orphanages, and hospitals. She was brave, kind, and full of faith. She became an American citizen and worked hard until she died in 1917.

Today she is the patron saint of immigrants, and we celebrate her feast day on the 13th of November.

**SAINT FRANCES
XAVIER CABRINI**

FEAST DAY: NOVEMBER 13

The One Who came back

We get to hear the Gospel of the ten lepers twice this year—once on the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time and again on Thanksgiving Day. That's not

just good timing—it's a gift. Because this Gospel hits at the heart of who we are and what we're called to do.

Ten lepers cry out from a distance: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." He hears them. He instructs them to present themselves to the priests. And as they go, they are healed.

But one of them stops. Turns around and comes back.

He falls at the feet of Jesus and gives thanks. And it's in that moment—when he returns in gratitude—that something deeper happens. Jesus tells him, "Your faith has saved you."

All ten were healed. But

the one who came back walked away with more than healing—he walked away with salvation.

This is not just a lovely story about gratitude. It's a challenge to the heart. It's a call to return.

And here's the truth: we are the lepers—every single one of us. We carry wounds, sins, fears—things that isolate us, things we can't fix on our own. And yet Jesus still hears us. He still responds. He still heals.

Too often, when we hear this Gospel, we fall into a subtle trap. We start thinking, "I'd be the one who came back." But that's not the point. This isn't about comparing ourselves to the other nine.

And it's an invitation—for all of us—to think about our lives and how we have responded to the gift that Jesus has given us through his life, death, and resur-

rection.

We've been healed of something far worse than leprosy—we've been saved from sin. We've been washed clean in baptism, restored again and again through confession, and fed and strengthened in the Eucharist.

That word—Eucharist—literally means thanksgiving. The man who returned gave thanks at the feet of Jesus. That's what we do every time we come to Mass. We return, we fall to our knees before Jesus, who is present to us in the Eucharist, and we give thanks.

This Thanksgiving Day Mass, as we hear this Gospel reading again, let us always remember to return to the One who rescued us. The One who came to fight for us, who laid down His life, who destroyed the power of sin, and broke open the grave.

By His life, death, and resurrection, He has defeated sin and death for each of us.

May we learn from the leper in this Gospel and

always return to give thanks. May we too fall at the feet of Jesus and say thank you—with our hearts, with our voices, and with our lives.

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Family Prayer of Thanksgiving

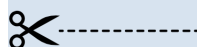
Blessed are You, Lord God, Creator of all.
We thank You for the gift of life, for the love of family and friends, and for the many blessings we cannot see.



We thank You especially for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who by His life, death, and resurrection has given us new life in You.

Help us to be good stewards of all You've given, to share what we have, to comfort those in need, and to live each day with hearts full of gratitude.

May our home be filled with Your peace, and may our lives always give You praise. Amen.



Cut this out and pray with your family!



THE REGISTER

VOLUME 88, NO. 10 OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

Publisher: Most Rev. Gerald L. Vincke, BISHOP OF SALINA | Editor and advertising: Lori Leiszler, THEREGISTER@SALINADIocese.ORG |

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Supported by an endowment established by Msgr. Raymond Menard (1912-2006), editor of The Register, 1944-1971 & 1975-2006.

The Register (USPS 397-740) is published the fourth Friday of the month by the Catholic Diocese of Salina, 103 N. Ninth, Salina, KS 67401-2503 and is mailed to all registered parishioners in the diocese. A \$35 annual subscription is required for all others. Periodical postage paid at Salina, Kansas, and at additional mailing offices.

• Next issue is dated Nov. 21. • Deadline for news is Oct. 31. • Deadline for advertising is Oct. 31.

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