



THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

DECEMBER 19, 2025

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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COURTESY PHOTO


2025 JUBILEE YEAR REFLECTIONS

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The Eucharist and Bethlehem



COURTESY PHOTO, ST. ANDREW CHURCH, ABILENE, 2024

BY BISHOP GERALD VINCKE
DIOCESE OF SALINA

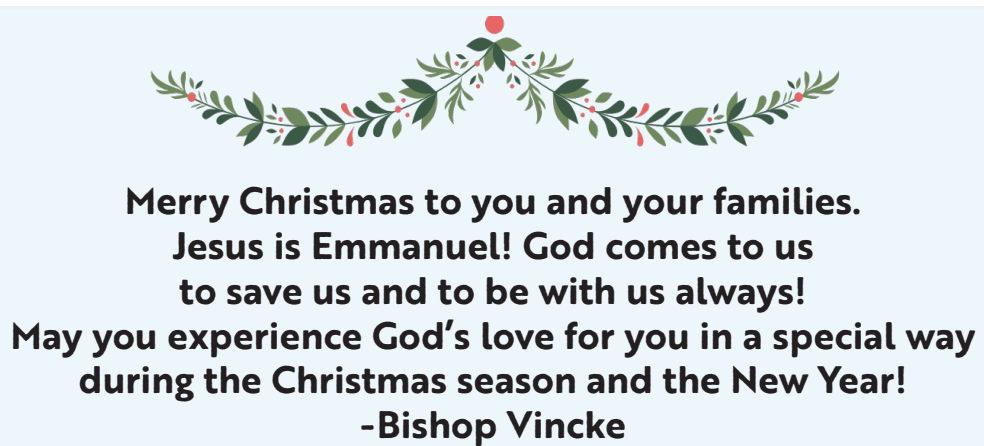
The world into which Jesus was born was harsh, violent, cruel and unstable, wrote one historian. Many people might describe the world today in the same way.

Jesus was born in a smelly and unclean environment. He desires to enter our lives, however messy they may be. Time and eternity touch and mingle in the birth of Christ. "The liturgy," Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, "is the means by which earthly time is inserted into the time of Jesus Christ and into its present."

In the Eucharist, Jesus is present to us in time, just as he was present to Joseph and Mary when he was born in Bethlehem. In Hebrew, Beth-lehem is two words and means "house" (Beth) and "bread" (lehem). Every place the Mass is offered is transformed into a sort of Bethlehem, a place where heaven touches earth, where Christ becomes our food. Jesus told us: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever" (Jn 6:51).

Another interesting tidbit is that in Arabic, the name of Bethlehem, Bayt Lahm, literally means "house of meat." The Eucharist is not simply bread, but the very flesh of Christ.

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**Merry Christmas to you and your families.
Jesus is Emmanuel! God comes to us
to save us and to be with us always!
May you experience God's love for you in a special way
during the Christmas season and the New Year!
-Bishop Vincke**

Students meet Pope Leo digitally at NCYC

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

NCYC is always special. But from first-timers to those who have attended the National Catholic Youth Conference several times, 2025 will be remembered as one for the ages.

The nearly 16,000 teenagers and their adult sponsors who converged on Indianapolis, Ind., for several days in mid-November got the opportunity to interact with Pope Leo XIV over a livestream video.

Pope Leo, elected as our Holy Father just six months earlier, grew up just a few hours north of Indianapolis in Chicago. And it seemed like he was even closer than that as he greeted the crowd on the large screen in Lucas Oil Stadium.

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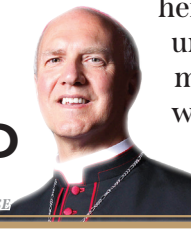
VATICAN MEDIA

Pope Leo XIV waves at 16,000 young people gathered at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis as he holds a livestreamed question-and-answer session with them from the Vatican on Nov. 21.

THE EUCHARIST AND BETHLEHEM, FROM PG 1

Jesus emphasized this when he said, "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (Jn 6:55-6). I am reminded of one of the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch who said, "I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ."

GERALD Vincke
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



something about the Virgin Mary adoring Christ in the manger that should cause all to ponder. "Is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?"

Even the swaddling clothes of Jesus tie into the Eucharist. They foreshadow Christ's death, when he was wrapped in linen again and laid in a tomb. Thus the manger becomes a type of altar, bearing the body that will be given up for us. One could add that the veil of bread wraps the divinity we receive in the Eucharist.

Finally, the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds of that region. In the Old Testament, the manna that God sent to sustain the Israelites was called the "bread of angels." As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "The Church joins with the angels to adore the thrice-holy God" (No. 335). With the spirit and joy of the angels then, we should



COURTESY PHOTO

Many moments of the Nativity foreshadow the Eucharist and the eventual sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. At every Mass, we come to adore Him and receive Him.

sing in the presence of the Eucharist, "Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

Jesus desires to enter our lives more deeply. Every Christmas is an invitation to return to Bethlehem. We come to adore him, and to receive the very bread of life at Christ's Mass on Christmas and at every Mass.

Much of this information can be found in an article by Fr. Patrick Briscoe, OP, titled Discovering the Eucharist at Bethlehem in the Our Sunday Visitor.



La Eucaristía y Belén

El mundo en el que nació Jesús era duro, violento, cruel e inestable, escribió un historiador. Muchas personas podrían describir el mundo de hoy de la misma manera.

Jesús nació en un ambiente maloliente e impuro. Sin embargo, desea entrar en nuestras vidas, por desordenadas que sean. El tiempo y la eternidad se tocan y se entremezclan en el nacimiento de Cristo. «La liturgia —nos recuerda el papa Benedicto XVI— es el medio por el cual el tiempo terrenal es insertado en el tiempo de Jesucristo y en su presente».

En la Eucaristía, Jesús está presente para nosotros en el tiempo, tal como estuvo presente para José y María cuando nació en Belén. En hebreo, Beth-lehem son dos palabras y significan "casa" (Beth) y

"pan" (lehem). Cada lugar donde se ofrece la Misa se transforma en una especie de Belén, un lugar donde el cielo toca la tierra, donde Cristo se convierte en nuestro alimento. Jesús nos dijo: «Yo soy el pan vivo que bajó del cielo; el que coma de este pan vivirá para siempre» (Jn 6,51).

Otro dato interesante es que, en árabe, el nombre de Belén, Bayt Lahm, significa literalmente "casa de carne". La Eucaristía no es simplemente pan, sino la misma carne de Cristo. Jesús lo enfatizó cuando dijo: «Porque mi carne es verdadera comida, y mi sangre es verdadera bebida. El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre permanece en Mí y yo en él» (Jn 6,55-56). Me acuerdo de una de las cartas de san Ignacio de Antioquía, quien dijo: «No tengo gusto por el alimento

corruptible ni por los placeres de esta vida. Deseo el pan de Dios, que es la carne de Jesucristo».

Además, la región que rodeaba Belén se llamaba Efratá, que significa "fértil, abundante". El alimento que se nos da en Belén, la Eucaristía, se nos da en abundancia. Recordamos la historia de Noemí y Rut en el Antiguo Testamento. Regresaron a la casa de Noemí —Belén— con las manos vacías. Sin embargo, allí Dios las colmó de muchas bendiciones.

Asimismo, es significativo que Jesús fuera acostado en un pesebre, o comedero. San Cirilo de Jerusalén dijo que «al acercarnos ahora al pesebre, que es ya Su propia mesa, no encontramos forraje, sino el pan del cielo, que es el cuerpo de la vida».

San Juan Pablo II escribió algo sobre la

Virgen María adorando a Cristo en el pesebre que debería hacernos reflexionar. «¿No es la mirada arrebatada de María, al contemplar el rostro del recién nacido Cristo y acunarlo en sus brazos, ese modelo incomparable de amor que debería inspirarnos cada vez que recibimos la comunión Eucarística?».

Incluso las mantas con que fue envuelto Jesús se relacionan con la Eucaristía. Prefiguran la muerte de Cristo, cuando fue envuelto de nuevo en lino y puesto en el sepulcro. Así, el pesebre se convierte en un tipo de altar, que sostiene el cuerpo que será entregado por nosotros. Se podría añadir que el velo de pan envuelve la divinidad que recibimos en la Eucaristía.

Finalmente, el ángel del Señor se apareció a los pastores de aquella

región. En el Antiguo Testamento, el maná que Dios envió para sostener a los israelitas era llamado el "pan de los ángeles". Como dice el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica: «La Iglesia se une a los ángeles para adorar al Dios tres veces santo» (n.º 335). Con el espíritu y la alegría de los ángeles, debemos cantar en presencia de la Eucaristía: «¡Gloria in excelsis Deo!».

Jesús desea entrar más profundamente en nuestras vidas. Cada Navidad es una invitación a volver a Belén. Venimos a adorarlo y a recibir el verdadero pan de vida en la Misa de Cristo en Navidad y en cada Misa.

Gran parte de esta información se puede encontrar en un artículo del P. Patrick Briscoe, OP, titulado Descubriendo la Eucaristía en Belén en Our Sunday Visitor.

Encountering Christ before the altar

By the time this paper prints, I will have been married for six or seven days. But as I write this, I'm still ol' Lori Leiszler.

Ever since I got engaged in April, everyone has been asking me questions. What are your wedding colors? What will your house look like? How poofy is your dress? Where are you going on your honeymoon? What's on your registry? Over the last few months, I've heard all the questions about colors and dresses and flowers. I've rarely heard the deeper questions I would much rather explore:

Where is God in all this? How is He working in my life? What is the meaning of this new sacrament? Where was He in my singleness? That last question is easy for me to answer. Christ

was blessing me even then—with faithful friends and holy friendships, several of whom I'm honored to soon have standing beside me when I say my vows.

The other questions are harder. I know I'll never fully understand in this life all that God has done for me. I've always been fascinated by the Catholic imagery of Christ the Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church. Lately, I've been reflecting on the verse where Jesus says there are many rooms in His Father's house. I think of it now as my fiancé and I make space in what will be our future home, and as a foretaste of heaven—how God prepares spaces even now in our hearts.

I've been thinking a lot, too, about transformation, and how life in Christ transforms us. When I get married, I'll be given a

new name from my groom—just as Christ gives a new name to those who love Him: His own.

The Monday after I got engaged, our former Register editor and current editor of faith magazine, Katie Hamel, sent me an email despairing over how hard it was to remember my email address because my last name is too German. I quote: "I need you to change your last name to something I can spell!"

You can imagine my mirth as I told her my news.

Many times in the Bible, God gives new names—Abram becomes Abraham, Simon becomes Peter. There is beauty in transformation and meaning in names. Often in Scripture, receiving a new name bestows a new role as well.

In John's Gospel, from the Cross, Jesus entrusts

Mary to the beloved disciple. In that moment, Mary receives a new name and role too: Mother. Our Mother. We see her embrace this role even today, interceding for all Christians. I especially love the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where Mary comforts Juan Diego and reassures him, "Am I not here, I who am your mother?"

That line has been a comfort to me as I prepare to enter this new stage of life—one that, by no coincidence, is happening the day after Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast. Even more, it is happening in December, a time when we turn toward the scene of the Nativity and reflect on the love found in the



LORI Leiszler
EDITOR, THE REGISTER

Holy Family. It's a blessing to have Mary as an intercessor. Her example reminds me that when I am given a new name, wife, I am not losing my "Leiszler." I am being made new.

There will always be a hundred little details to answer, but the questions that matter most bring me some peace in all the frenzy: Christ has been with me in my singleness, He will be with us in our marriage, and He will be with us in every chapter to come, until at last we are united with our heavenly Bridegroom in His Father's house.

"Behold, I make all things new." (Rev. 21:5)

Please pray for us—and, as always, thank you for reading The Register.

Halfway to the manger

The first thing I notice every Advent is that the Church isn't in a rush for Christmas. Outside the church doors, December is doing what it always does. Lights are blinking everywhere. Calendars jammed. People arguing in Walmart over ribbon like it's gold. But the Church quietly hands me purple candles and says, slow down. Breathe. We're not rushing this.

And I need that. Because I'm wired to treat Christmas like a deadline. Get the tree up, knock out the shopping list, get to Christmas Eve Mass, and—boom—done. But Advent says Christmas isn't something you check off. It's something you prepare for. Something you have to receive.

That's why the Church gives us Advent. It's a beautiful season—the



BILL Meagher
DEACON, SALINA DIOCESE

Church handing us a flashlight and saying, you're going to want to watch where you're walking. Because here's the truth—at the first Christmas, nobody showed up without a journey.

Mary and Joseph weren't on a holiday trip. Caesar calls for a census, and off they go. Joseph's doing the dad math—how far, where to sleep, what if the baby comes early? Mary's nine months pregnant, riding a donkey, and just trying to survive the trip. And when they finally arrive? No room. No room for the Savior of the world. But they show up anyway.

Then there's the shepherds. Regular guys working the night shift. Watching sheep, staying alert, maybe drinking bad coffee. And suddenly—angels. Glory. Light. Fear. And then a message—go

find Him. And they do. No hesitation. Just movement toward Christ.

The Magi see a star and take the long road. Foreign land. Sketchy roads. Royal drama with Herod. They could've turned around halfway through. But they keep going. And when they find Him, they kneel and offer Jesus homage and gifts.

Every one of them had to move. Had to sacrifice something. Nobody stumbles into the manger by accident.

And here we are—halfway to Christmas. Maybe your Advent's been full of prayer and quiet. Or maybe, like a lot of us, you've been swept up in the crazy and barely noticed the candles are halfway melted.

If that's you—no worries. Advent isn't about perfection. It's about preparation. And it's not too late.

These last days matter. Advent is about remem-

bering Christ's birth, yes—but it also looks forward to His return. It's a season of hope, repentance, and renewal. The Church invites us to pray, to go to confession, to give a little more, and to notice where Jesus might be

showing up in your life right now.

So light the candles. Spend time in prayer and Scripture. Help someone in need. And make room in your heart and your life to receive Jesus this Christmas.



Advent Family Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Your Son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us—a gift of love and peace, hope and joy.
Help us prepare our hearts for His coming.
Bless our Advent journey.
As we light the candles on our wreath,
may their growing brightness remind us of the light of Christ,
who is coming to bring hope into our world.
May we open our hearts to others,
especially those most in need.
Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.
Amen.

JANUARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

Pope Leo's intentions: Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.	Diocesan intentions: Let us pray that as we journey through Advent and prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, we may slow down, open our hearts with hope, and make room for Jesus—especially by recognizing Him in the poor, the lonely, and all who need peace and joy this season.
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BISHOP'S JANUARY CALENDAR

2-4	SEEK26, Denver.
5-12	Region IX Retreat, San Diego.
22-23	March For Life, Washington, D.C.
26-30	Catholic Schools Week visits.
27	Red Mass, Topeka, 12 p.m.
28	MFL Ignite Rally, Topeka, 9 a.m., Mass at 10:30 a.m.

School Notes

IT ALL ADDS UP TO VICTORIES FOR DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Just as in so many years before, diocesan Catholic schools performed well at Fort Hays State University's Math Relays last month.

Beloit-St. John's not only won the Class 1A division for a 14th straight year, but the Blujays' 66 total points also placed them fifth among all 50 schools competing in 1A-6A.

More than 650 students participated in the 46th annual event.

Tipton Catholic (1A division) and Thomas More Prep-Marian out of Hays (2A/3A) also had some top-five finishes, while Salina-Sacred Heart – like St. John's in 1A – did well as a team and individually in 2A/3A.

Sacred Heart finished second in 2A/3A team scoring with 69 points,



COURTESY PHOTO

Beloit-St. John's team won the Math relays for Class 1A at the Fort Hays State University Math Relays.

which placed them fourth overall.

St. John's dominated the 1A division, with the second-place team scoring just 18 points. St. John's is the only school to finish in the overall top five (1A-6A) for 12 of the last 13 years.

While competing against schools of all sizes, St. John's and Sacred

Heart both finished in the top five of numerous team competitions, with the Blujays winning two of those.

Leading the way for the diocesan schools was St. John's sophomore Maryann Walter, who tied for first individually in one category, placed third individually in two other events and was part

of the Blujays' championship 10th-grade geometry team.

The other championship team was the 12-grade numbers sense team for St. John's, which was comprised of Lynette Gengler, Edward Horinek and Greg Walter (who also finished second in

the numbers sense category).

Sacred Heart placed in the top five of seven different team competitions, including two seconds. In addition, a pair of freshmen (Douglas Reed and Collier Bicknell) and junior Ethan Newell also collected second-place finishes in individual events.



COURTESY PHOTO

The team from Salina-Sacred Heart, finished second in 2A/3A at Math Relays on November 13.

NCYC experience, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The stadium roared as Pope Leo appeared before them for the historic digital papal visit.

Five teenagers from around the country had been selected beforehand to ask the pope questions.

In the pope's powerful message, he acknowledged that "all of us struggle; none of us is perfect."

In his address to the crowd, Pope Leo talked about matters pertaining to the teenagers' lives, such as their faith, the importance of prayer, mental health and the use of technology.

"Technology should serve your life," he said, "not the other way around."

Following the livestream, social media posts spread immediately like never before. The digital encounter with Pope Leo can be seen on YouTube by typing in "Pope Leo live digital encounter" on an internet browser.

The video and live broadcast by EWTN and Vatican Media not only reached the thousands of youth in the stadium but many more watching from home.

Even before students reached their homes,

Facebook posts of their reactions showed multiple photos of various events and get-togethers at NCYC.

While getting to "meet" the pope surely is high on any Catholic's list, some other favorite things on the trip mentioned were Eucharistic Adoration, the final Mass with multiple bishops and priests presiding, concerts, presentations and getting to meet new people.

"Pope Leo's interaction obviously put this trip in a special category," said Deacon Bill Meagher, director of youth ministry for the diocese. "But I thought everything provided a really solid experience for the students – and adults, too."

One of those adults was Father Adam Urban, pastor at St. Mary's Parish and chaplain at Sacred Heart Jr./Sr. High School in Salina.

Fr. Adam, ordained a priest in May, had attended NCYC as a high school student at Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays and again as a youth minister while working for the Diocese of Dodge City.

He had even seen Pope Leo in person on a trip to



COURTESY PHOTO

Bishop Vincke celebrated Mass at St. John's Church in Indianapolis for students and sponsors during the NCYC conference in November.

Rome with two other newly ordained priests a month after their ordination.

But this time was different.

"As a priest, you get to see the students maybe for the first time having that spark of faith," Fr. Adam said. "They say, 'Oh, wow, maybe there is something special to being Catholic.' And having students there from my school, getting to watch them encounter their faith (sometimes in a new way) was amazing."

Geoff Andrews, superintendent of schools

for the Salina Diocese, said he felt this particular NCYC – held every other year – was more like a pilgrimage than a trip.

"To watch our young people listen so intently, laugh and nod along as the Holy Father encouraged them was something I won't forget," Andrews said. "These young disciples give me so much hope for the Church. They showed up with open hearts, generous spirits, and a hunger for Jesus."

Fr. Adam said he is blessed to be mentoring students during "a pivotal

time in these young people's lives."

"It's a powerful time to be a priest, working with high schoolers," he said. "Their life is in front of them, and they sense that."

Pope Leo voiced the same thoughts, stressing that young people are not just the future, but the present.

He told the students that "now is the time to dream big, be open to what God can do through your lives. Your voices, your ideas, your faith matter right now."

Love of faith, love of teaching, love of kids

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Three students at Kansas State University who were roommates earlier this decade wondered how they would keep in touch after graduation.

As it turns out, it's rather simple.

If Brandon Bates, Ethan Dlabal or Braden Dameron want to see how their buddies are doing, all they have to do is wait until the end of the school day. Or they might even be able to catch each other in the hallways between classes or at lunch.

In an unforeseen set of circumstances, all three landed teaching jobs at Sacred Heart High School in Salina.

Dlabal said he remembers a time while in college, they had joked a time or two about ending up at the same school but never really thought it would happen.

"We were definitely thrilled that it all worked out like this," Bates said. "This is where God placed us."

And no one might be happier about that than Sacred Heart Principal John Krajicek.

"Their love of faith, love of teaching, love of kids – it shows through in everything they do," Krajicek said. "What a blessing for our school to have them here."

Dlabal was the first to graduate from K-State in 2023 and while checking out several openings, he learned about a science teacher



COURTESY PHOTO

Dlabal, a science teacher at Sacred Heart, got married in 2024 and is expecting twins in February 2026.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Former college roommates (L-R) Braden Dameron, Ethan Dlabal and Brandon Bates were thrilled when circumstances led them all after graduation to teach classes for the Sacred Heart Knights in Salina.

position at Sacred Heart.

"Bishop (Jerry) Vincke had told me once not to leave for some other Catholic diocese, and I laughed," Dlabal said. "He said, 'I'm not joking you,' and that always stuck in my mind."

So he decided to accept the Sacred Heart job. He was excited when a year later, he learned that Bates would be joining him as a religion and social studies teacher at Sacred Heart.

"I interviewed at a few places, but I felt the calling to stay in the Salina Diocese and teach at a Catholic school. It was on my heart and seemed right."

Later in the spring the three were reunited when Dameron heard about a math position at Sacred Heart from Superintendent of Schools Geoff Andrews.

"Geoff said we'd love to have you at a Catholic school," Dameron said. "He mentioned Sacred Heart was going to have an opening,

and he reached out. I'm glad it all worked out like this."

Bates and Dameron had grown up together, attending St. John's High School in Beloit. Dlabal is a native of Wilson and had played basketball against St. John's in high school.

All had relatives who had attended Kansas State, and they all three became active members of the popular St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center.

They eventually became roommates in Manhattan. They also lived together in Salina for awhile, too, until Dlabal and Bates got married. Now, Dameron is engaged, with his marriage set for April 2026.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, the trio is also active with several other student activities, including the boys' basketball programs.

Bates and Dlabal are coaches for the junior high Knights, while



COURTESY PHOTOS

Part of the school day for Dameron (top) and Bates (below) includes coaching Knight basketball teams.

Dameron is an assistant coach for the school's high school team.

"They are quality young men, very talented educators who are devoted to their practice," Krajicek said. "The love of their faith is genuine and authentic. That model on a daily basis for our students and athletes is phenomenal."

Dlabal smiled when admitting he is adding more to his list of responsibilities.

He and his wife, Laura – a teacher across the parking lot from Sacred Heart at St. Mary's Elementary School – are expecting twins in February.

Krajicek credits landing this particular group of teachers, all at the same time, to answered prayers.

"The Holy Spirit is at work in our process," he said. "A lot of people are praying for our Catholic schools, and this is an effect of that."

Teachers applauded for making a difference

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Teachers from Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salina were treated to a dose of enthusiasm at their annual Teacher Institute in November.

The team of Fathers Gale Hammerschmidt and Drew Hoffman combined to give the teachers a spirited presentation.

Fr. Gale, a native of the Salina Diocese and a former teacher at Luckey High School in Manhattan, is now chaplain at St. Isidore Student Center at Kansas State University. Fr. Drew, former assistant chaplain at St. Isidore's, is now chaplain at St. Paul Parish at Wichita State University.

Geoff Andrews, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Salina

Diocese, said he chose that duo as speakers for this year's program because he knew they would add energy to the room.

"We wanted the day to be uplifting and rooted in joy, and both of them have such a gift for connecting faith with everyday life," he said. "They make a great team – always on the same page, complement each other well and are great individually, but better together."

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few."

"When I hear those words, I think of you," Fr. Gale told the audience. "You as teachers are vocation makers."

Fr. Drew likened the teachers' influence to that of Fr. Emil Kapaun's rallying American

troops during the Korean War as he provided hope and spiritual guidance while a prisoner of war.

"It's phenomenal what a little joy can do," Fr. Drew said.

"Joy is contagious," he added, challenging the teachers "to keep fighting."

"The good guys are winning. People are pouring into our college student centers. You are making a massive difference."

After the morning keynote and then a Mass celebrated by Bishop Jerry Vincke, teachers spent the afternoon in professional learning communities by grade level and content area.

Numerous teachers and/or administrators with five-year anniversaries were recognized for their many years of service,

including 11 who have been involved in Catholic school education for 15 years or more.

"One of the greatest strengths of our Catholic schools is stability," Andrews said. "Teachers see their work as a vocation, not just a job. That kind of consistency builds deep relationships and strong school cultures rooted in faith and family."

Also recognized at the inservice was Jennie Helget, a math teacher at Thomas More Prep-Marian Jr. High in Hays, who was named Distinguished Educator of the Year for the Salina Diocese.

See the January issue of *The Register* for a list of the teachers recognized this year for their service to the diocese, as well as a spotlight on Helget.

Thanksgiving leftovers: Blessed and grateful

Sometime near the beginning of the 2024 Christmas season, the deacon at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays gave us a challenge for the upcoming week – and holiday season.

Deacon Steve Urban talked about how among all the preparations for various parties or get-togethers for work and the hustle-bustle of trying to buy gifts for our loved ones, we can lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas.

Instead of appreciating the beauty of the season, all the busyness and stress can downright wear people out.

So, Dcn. Steve encouraged us that when people asked us during the coming week how we were doing, we should respond, “Blessed – and grateful.”

Come to find out some-time later, Dcn. Steve said he had learned that philosophy from Father Dan Scheetz.

Dcn. Steve remembers the saying from when Fr.

Dan served at St. Nicholas of Myra, where he was the founding pastor of a new parish in Hays in the early 1980s.

I never forget that message, either. It made me count my blessings once again. I have too many to count, one of those blessings

being able to record some happenings across our diocese – and share a little bit of history with our readers.

So here’s a little bit of interesting history about Fr. Dan, who celebrated his 60th jubilee year as a priest this year.

It was a special year for his younger brother, too.

Ray Scheetz and his wife, Ardith, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2025 as well.

Ray, Ardith and Fr. Dan were all honored this summer in the Scheetz family’s home parish, St. Joseph in New Almelo. Fr. Dan concelebrated the Mass along with the St. Joseph pastor, Fr. Josh

Werth.

Fr. Dan – along with his older brother, the late Fr. Joseph Scheetz – had presided at the wedding of Ray and Ardith back in 1965, just a few months after Fr. Dan’s ordination.

“They put me to work right away; I was a newbie,” he said. “I guess we were all three newbies.”

There have been many a celebration since – with families, friends and parishioners.

Fr. Dan, now 86 years old, served at numerous parishes across the Salina Diocese before retiring in 2009.

Ray Scheetz, 83, and Ardith, 79, had five children, 11 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. All were able to attend the 60th anniversary celebration.

“We were so blessed that our entire family could be there,” Ardith said.

Although retired, Fr. Dan still fills in for area parishes occasionally and still enjoys celebrating milestone anniversary Masses.

Next up for Fr. Dan is the 50th wedding anniversary Mass for Dan and Mary Kay Schippers on Jan. 3, 2026. That will take place



COURTESY PHOTO

Ray Scheetz and his wife, Ardith, on their wedding day in 1965, flanked by older brothers Fr. Joseph Scheetz, left, and Fr. Dan Scheetz, right. In the middle is Fr. Roger Meitl.

at St. Ann Church in Walker, the site of their wedding Mass in 1976.

The Schippers family is part of the charter membership at St. Nick’s and got to know Fr. Dan well during his time at that

parish. So they asked him to preside at their milestone anniversary Mass.

Dan and Mary Kay say they feel extremely blessed to be able to celebrate 50 years together.

Blessed – and grateful.

The Saints who choose us: Inside my interview with Gabriel Castillo

By **BARBIE KNAPPERT**

STUDENT AT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BELOIT

I recently had the opportunity to interview a well-known Marian missionary, Gabriel Castillo. He is a content creator, founder of True TV, and host of the Children of Mary podcast. I first came across his podcast in 2023, and I’ve listened to every episode since. His perspective is refreshing, and he is one of the few Catholic podcasters who consistently keeps my interest.

You can imagine how excited I was when I landed an interview with him during a business elective class at St. John’s in Beloit.

We corresponded by email, and while I asked him many questions, I was especially interested in his response to the one about



COURTESY PHOTO

Gabriel Castillo

his favorite saint.

Castillo told me that Jesus has profoundly impacted his life through the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

“I hadn’t had a relationship with her prior, but simply calling out her name, she extended her hand—spiritually speaking—and began the process of transforming me into her son,” he said.

As he has followed his vocation by trusting in Jesus through Mary, Castillo has in turn helped transform the lives of many brothers and sisters in Christ. “To Jesus through Mary” is at the heart of his mission.

He also feels a deep closeness to Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. He explained that she perfectly “reflected the love of God,” and that she gave him “the basis for the heart of [his] spirituality,” applying “the little way” to her every action.

After reading her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, he was struck by her purity, virtue, and beauty of spirit in a way he had never experienced before. Because of her great love for God, she desired to help save as many souls as possible. She had a profound understanding that

the Lord didn’t just suffer for her and for those who are converted, but also for the most hardened of sinners.

Castillo noted that St. Thérèse is the patron saint of missions, and she has become a major inspiration in his own missionary work.

He summed up how our favorite saints are not picked but rather we are chosen for them. He shared that his friend, Father Carlos Martin, says that you don’t really pick your favorite saints.

“It is the Holy Spirit calling them to you. Their interest has something to do with your mission,

some aspect of your spirituality that they want to take you under their wing and lead you, and they want to guide you.”

Personally, his YouTube channel, *gabifterhours*, has been so beneficial to my own spirituality. I recommend it wholeheartedly. The variety of the content Castillo creates appeals to a wide range of people. From kids to adults, there is a video for everyone.

Through the intercession of Our Mother in Heaven, Castillo uses the powerful testimonies of others to share the Word of God and inspire hearts around the world.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

January 1

• New Year's Day and Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Chancery Closed.

January 1-5

• SEEK26 Focus Conference, Denver, CO.

January 19

• Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Chancery Closed.

January 21-25

• March for Life, Washington, D.C.

January 25

• St. Mary's School Carnival, Ellis, 10 a.m.

• Holy Family School Chili Feed, Hays, 11 a.m.

January 25-31

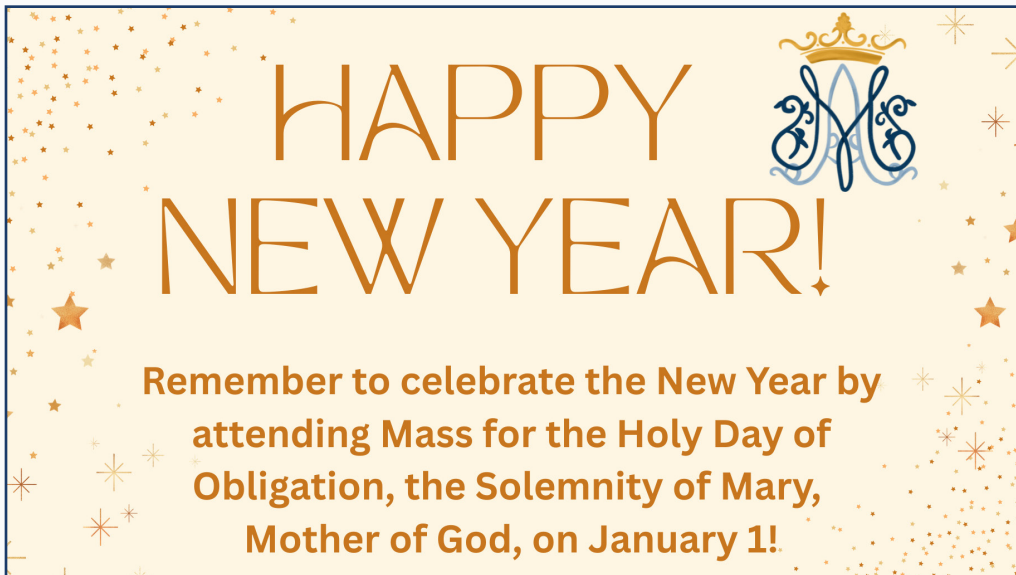
• Catholic Schools Week.

January 27

• Red Mass, Mater Dei Parish, Topeka.

January 28

• Ignite MFL Rally, 9 a.m., Mass, 10:30 a.m., Topeka.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Remember to celebrate the New Year by attending Mass for the Holy Day of Obligation, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on January 1!

In the spirit of St. Andrew: Take the next step

A number of years ago, I heard a story from a friend of mine who is planning to write a book. He was telling a well-known author about his plan for the book, going on and on about what he was thinking of writing. Eventually, after patiently listening, the author simply said, "Thinking about doing something is one thing, whereas actually doing it is a whole other thing."

When I hear this story, it makes me laugh, because that was basically my existence for about four years before I actually went to the seminary. I told everybody I was thinking about going, but I wasn't really doing anything about it.

To the young men I work with in Manhattan and across the diocese, I frequently say that it is most appropriate to consider the seminary and the priesthood. Many respond that they are

indeed thinking about it. The big question that arises is: Are they doing anything about it?

I love the story of Andrew the Apostle. In fact, I make his feast day, November 30, a big deal every year. I speak of his spirit, and I even have a sweatshirt with the letters SOSA—"Spirit of Saint Andrew." Upon hearing the call, Saint Andrew immediately dropped his nets and followed Jesus. Immediately! And in his excitement, he encouraged his brother Simon Peter to follow as well.

If only we all had the same spirit. While lowering his nets, Andrew clearly had no idea how following Jesus would end, but he was courageous in saying yes. Many times, this tendency to plan and

think without ever doing is rooted in fear of the unknown.

Often, when I speak with Father Andy Hammeke and the

Vocations team of our diocese, I hear a similar story—

young men who have felt an impulse to follow the Lord and go to the seminary, yet who are paralyzed by fear of the unknown. I get it. I lived it. But eventually, we all have to take a leap of faith.

What might that leap of faith look like? Perhaps it's just a phone call—reach out to the Vocations team. Perhaps it's visiting a seminary; opportunities arise every semester to do exactly that.

Perhaps it's attending a Quo Vadis retreat, where those discerning meet one another, ask the questions

on their minds, and are reassured that they are not alone in what can sometimes feel frightening.

Young men of the diocese, I cannot tell you exactly what your next

step might be, but I can assure you that simply thinking about the next step will never satisfy. God bless you. I am praying for you. Trust in the Lord and be courageous.



GALE Hammerschmidt
PASTOR

May God's love
and grace
shine on you this season.

Merry Christmas



Created by Mai Nguyen, CSJ Postulant

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DECEMBER 26-28- QUO VADIS DISCERNMENT RETREAT

This retreat is an opportunity to examine where your life is going and ask the Lord if you are going in the right direction. This retreat is designed for young men to discern a vocation to the priesthood, to religious life, or to marriage. On this retreat, you will take time to ask the Lord where He desires to lead you.



SCAN IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING US!

2025

year in review

Join The Register in reflecting on the past year, a jubilee year of hope. Over the last twelve months, our diocese and the global Church have experienced moments of grace, and renewal. We invite our readers to pause and reflect on where they, too, have encountered hope in their own lives this year, and to consider the ways God continues to bless and guide them.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for blessings in the Jubilee Year
Heavenly Father, as this Jubilee Year draws to a close, open our eyes to the quiet ways you have carried us. Strengthen our trust in Your love and mercy. Help us see the signs of hope which You have placed along our paths, and give us hearts that remain steadfast in Your love. Amen.

a jubilee year of hope



CNS PHOTO

On April 21, Pope Francis passed away. His successor, Pope Leo XIV, took his place on May 8, becoming the first American Pope in history.

January 29



COURTESY PHOTO

(L-R) Bishop Carl Kemme, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, and Bishop Gerald Vincke celebrated the Mass for Life and March for Life together in Topeka.

February 14



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

A crowd cuts the ribbon for the newly-remodeled Catholic Charities location in Hays.

March 12-19



COURTESY PHOTO

Bishop Gerald Vincke met with people of Ukraine as part his work on the Subcommittee on Aid for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe for the USCCB.

March 25



COURTESY PHOTO

A group of pilgrims visit major Sacred Sites across the diocese on the Feast of the Annunciation.

April 9



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Fr. Curtis Carlin carries a relic of Padre Pio to the side altar of the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria.

April 26



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Bishop Gerald Vincke ordains Luke Friess a deacon for the Diocese of Salina.

May 31



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Adam Urban, Kade Megaffin and Jesse Ochs were ordained priests at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina.





A MILLION MEMORARESfor hope

AS OF THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER, WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER 7,000 OF YOUR CARDS FROM OUR MILLION MEMORARE CAMPAIGN FOR THIS YEAR OF HOPE, WHICH MEANS

OVER 700,000 PRAYERS!

THANK YOU FOR SHARING WHAT BRINGS YOU HOPE AND YOUR PRAYER INTENTIONS!

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO SEND IN YOUR MEMORARE CARDS TO HELP US REACH 1 MILLION BEFORE THE CLOSING MASS FOR THE YEAR OF HOPE AT THE CATHEDRAL ON DECEMBER 28!

JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPEclosing Mass

DECEMBER 28, 2025

SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL, SALINA

10:30 am - English | 12:30 pm - Spanish





Kindergarten through sixth grade students participated in Sacred Heart, Plainville's Saint Parade.

COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

On Oct. 25, St. Francis Circle #232 of the Daughters of Isabella completed its annual welfare project, making nearly 240 pounds of jaternice sausage. Now in its sixth year, the project supports the circle's charitable work with help from local Knights of Columbus and friends. Members welcome anyone interested in learning the tradition. Photo ID (clockwise from center, starting with blue top): Karen Threlkel, Irene Werth, Diane Reeves (holding spoon), Linda Strella (yellow apron), Lynn Dowling, Janiece Kornmeyer (back to camera), Dorothy Brokes, Chairman Wilma Olds (hidden), Bill Dowling, Joe Keck, Ted Long, Greg Nichols (back to camera).



COURTESY PHOTO

Confirmation, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Osborne, October 26. Back row: Tate Tiernan, Ryder Lyon, Norah Kendig, Sophie Mans, Fr. Luke Thielen, Bishop Vincke, Fr. Emmanuel Mensah, Olivia Mans, Kassidy Heller Front row: Barrett Lix, Lainey Kendig, Libbie Carlin, Kirsten Mans, Tynlee Arnoldy,



COURTESY PHOTO, AMY OHNSAT

Representatives of the Salina Diocese participated in two major regional Hispanic ministry events this year. From July 25-27, a group from Salina, Hays, and Manhattan joined about 80 leaders from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska for a regional encuentro at Savior Pastoral Center in Kansas City, Kansas. Later on, from October 28-30, Salina Diocese ministers traveled to Griswold, Iowa, for the 2025 Regional Meeting of Diocesan Hispanic Ministry Directors and Ministers.



COURTESY PHOTO, MRS. OSTMEYER

At St. Joseph's School, the first grade students celebrated Thanksgiving this year as little pilgrims. (L-R)Philomena Schrick, Jonny Helus, Sylvia Bond and Maevyn Kuhlman. The students were asked when the first Thanksgiving was: These were their responses: Sylvia: 2000. Jonny: 1800. Maevyn: 1900. Philomena: 2005.



COURTESY PHOTO

Server Recognition Blessing, St. Bernard's-Ellsworth.

F

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ST. MARY STUDENTS STEP INTO WELLNESS WITH WALK TO SCHOOL WEDNESDAY

By PATTI PARK

PRINCIPAL, ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, ELLIS

Students, families, and staff of St. Mary School in Ellis put their best foot forward on a beautiful October morning for Walk to School Wellness Wednesday, an event designed to promote healthy habits, community connection, and school spirit.

Dozens of students and staff met at the mini train station between 7:30-7:40 a.m. and then walked to school following Washington St., over the bridge, to 7th St., and on to the circle drive of St. Mary's School. Together, they walked, laughed, and greeted one another on their way to school, setting a positive tone for the day.

Walking to school gives students a fun, active way to start their morning. It's about more than exercise — it's about building relationships, practicing safety, enjoying the beautiful weather and surroundings, and feeling part of something bigger than yourself.

We start every morning with Walk and Talk in the gym, but there is something extra special about starting the morning walking outside. Students come in energized and ready to learn. It's such a simple activity, and a great way to start the day.

Thanks to our Race for Education Project and Heartland Community



COURTESY PHOTO

Students at St. Mary School in Ellis started Walk to School Wednesday with a little fresh air, friends, and a lot of smiles.

Foundation, St. Mary's now has a walking trail that the students, staff, and community can use throughout the day.

Walking to school, and out on the trail, is a great way for students to boost

energy, social interaction, and improve focus in the classroom. It's a great reminder that small steps can lead to big changes — for our health, our students, and our school community.

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Catholic schools partner with Catholic Charities for Happy Bottoms Diaper Drive

This fall, Catholic schools across the Salina Diocese joined forces with Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas for the fourth annual Happy Bottoms Diaper Drive, collecting 893 packs of diapers valued at \$9,638.93. These contributions will bring relief to families in need throughout northern Kansas and reflect the power of faith-filled service in action.

The diapers collected provide an essential resource to mothers and babies across the diocese, helping ensure parents facing financial hardship don't have to choose between diapers and other basic needs.

Along with supporting families, the diaper drive gives students firsthand experience of Catholic social teaching, showing how a simple package of diapers can ease a parent's stress and protect a child's health.

"The Happy Bottoms Diaper Drive is one of those beautiful reminders that our mission isn't confined to the walls of a school building," said Geoff Andrews, superintendent of schools. "Catholic Charities and our Catholic schools share the same heartbeat: to serve the vulnerable, lift up families, and encounter Christ in those who need us most. When our students collect diapers, they're participating in the Gospel in a concrete, joyful way—exactly the kind of discipleship our mission calls us to form."

Across the diocese, efforts like this show how strong we are when people come together. Students of every age learn that compassion has a face, generosity has purpose, and faith sends us outward in love.

"Participating in the diaper drive gives students a tangible experi-

ence in bringing something they are familiar with to help other children," explained Christina Whitehair, principal of St. Andrew's Elementary in Abilene.

The drive also helps students grow as leaders and disciples of Jesus. At St. Mary's Grade School in Salina, counselor Zoe Greenemeyer guides the Student Council in leading the drive each year—creating posters, making announcements, and encouraging participation.

"Students lead every step with heart, initiative, and a deep desire to serve others," Greenemeyer said proudly. "My hope is that they seek out other opportunities to serve and to recognize that their faith calls them to care for others."

At Holy Family Elementary in Hays, principal Mandy Meagher values how the drive teaches students about service and faith. "Partnering with Catholic Charities shows students real examples of the Gospel in action," Meagher said. "It builds a sense of community and connects students to the larger mission of supporting families in the diocese."

As students enter junior high and high school, their understanding of service matures.

"Teenagers are going through that time in their life when more is being asked of them," Chad Meitner, Principal of Thomas More Prep-Marian said. "When students take action to help others and practice the virtues, they are more likely to remain faithful as they age."

The drive concluded with students and faculty delivering their donations to Catholic Charities offices in Salina, Hays, and Manhattan, where staff



COURTESY PHOTO

TMP-M students organize donations at the Catholic Charities Hays office for the 2025 Happy Bottoms Diaper Drive. Collected from Catholic schools across the Salina Diocese and delivered to all Catholic Charities locations, these donations showcase generosity in action.

sorted diapers for distribution across the diocese.

"The kindness shown by the students, families, and faculty across our Catholic schools is truly remarkable," said Megan Robl, executive director of Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas. "Every package of diapers reflects a generous heart and a desire to help our neighbors. When our schools unite like this, it reminds us how powerful faith in action

can be. These contributions will bring immediate relief to families, and we are deeply grateful."

This year's Happy Bottoms Diaper Drive stands as a powerful witness to Matthew 25:35 and the belief that when we serve the least among us, we serve Christ Himself. Through the collective efforts of students, teachers, parents, and parish communities, lives are changed, hope is restored, and communities grow stronger.

SUPPORT MOMS, BABIES WITH 70% TAX CREDIT

BY JEREE HUGHBANKS

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHERN KS,
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas is offering a special opportunity to support life and save on taxes through the Pregnancy Resource Act Tax Credit. Contributions made through December 31, 2025 to the agency's Pregnancy Support Program qualify for a 70% tax credit, directly helping moms, babies, and families across northern Kansas.

Your gift provides:

- Counseling and Support
- Pregnancy & Infant Items
- Financial Assistance
- Adoption Support

One mother shared how this support helped her family:

"Thank you so much for all of your help. You made our transi-

tion home so much smoother with the necessary supplies and clothes and car seat and diaper bag. All of it is such a blessing. Can't thank you and Catholic Charities enough."

For more information or to receive the required application, contact Megan Augustine at 785-833-9380 or maugustine@ccnks.org.

After the contribution and completed application are returned, Catholic Charities will submit all required materials to the Kansas Department of Revenue. If the tax credit exceeds a donor's state tax liability, the remaining amount may be carried over for up to five years.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to support mothers and babies in need!

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Hope does not disappoint: A year of blessings

BY HEATHER HARTMAN
SALINA DIOCESE CATHOLIC
FOUNDATION

As we come to the end of the year, I've been reflecting on the goodness I see across our 31 counties, and as always, I'm humbled by the generosity of people. Your support of the Bishop's Annual Appeal has helped advance the mission of our diocese in remarkable ways, touching hearts and renewing hope, and I truly want to thank you.

This year, we've witnessed grace unfolding across our diocese in many ways:

- Vocations are growing. Sixteen young men are

discerning the priesthood, and this spring we celebrated three new priests. One of them, Fr. Kade Megaffin, shared, "The gift you have given by allowing me to study to become a priest has radically changed my life."

- Young people are encountering Christ. From the joy of Jr. CYO Camp to the launch of Holy Fire, a new event igniting faith in middle schoolers, hope is taking root in young hearts.
- The Eucharist is

drawing us deeper. More than 1,300 participants gathered for our Eucharistic Conference, uniting in worship and Adoration. It was a day that reminded me again how hungry our people are for the Lord's Real Presence.

- Christ's mercy is reaching the margins. This year, Kolbe Prison Ministries began serving in our diocese, offering the light of Christ to our incarcerated brothers and sisters. One participant shared, "The commitment

HEATHER
Hartman
CATHOLIC FOUNDATION



to sharing the Gospel and ministering to those of us behind bars is a testament to the Church's unwavering compassion."

These moments stayed with me because they are reminders of what we can do together as a diocesan family. Your generosity helped make them possible. Truly, thank you.

If you haven't yet had the chance to support the Bishop's Annual Appeal this year, we invite you to prayerfully consider a gift before December 31. Every gift, no matter the size, strengthens the

ministries that serve families, forms disciples, and builds up the Church we all love.

You can make your gift today at join.givecfds.org or by contacting a member of our team at 785.827.8746.

I'm grateful every day for the faithfulness and generosity of the people in our diocese. Thank you for the hope you bring to our diocese. Please be assured of my prayers for you and your family during this grace-filled Christmas season.



Scan to donate.

#iGiveCatholic 2025 Brings Diocese Together

As the Christmas season invites us to reflect on gratitude and the joy of giving, the Diocese of Salina has once again lived out that spirit through #iGive-Catholic. Each year on Giving Tuesday,

Catholics join together to support the ministries closest to their hearts. 2025 proved to be another remarkable celebration of generosity throughout our diocese.

This year, 28 organizations participated, bringing people together from across our diocese (and quite a few supporters from beyond our diocesan borders). Each participating ministry showcased their mission in a creative and hopeful way. With donations surpassing \$764,422, it is easy to see that the spirit of giving is alive and well.

One of the most exciting parts of the day was the energy around both the local and national leaderboards. Ministries watched their names rise throughout the day, cheering for one another and celebrating every milestone. While the fundraising totals are always meaningful, the collective joy of seeing diocesan organizations

hold strong on the national list added a fun and unifying spirit to the day.

What makes #iGive-Catholic so fun to watch isn't just the fundraising; it's the imagination behind each project. Schools and parishes dream big, invite their

communities to rally around them, and often sprinkle in a bit of personality along the way.

Some focused on strengthening the heart of parish life — like enhancing music for worship or improving the spaces where people gather. Others highlighted the everyday needs that keep a school running: classroom supplies, updated technology, transportation, and activities that help students grow academically and spiritually. And campus ministry once again proved that college students appreciate anything that involves encountering Christ.

Many ministries also benefitted from matching gifts this year, offered by generous individuals who wanted to inspire others and multiply the impact of every donation. These matches sparked bursts of momentum, friendly goal-countdowns, and even a few late-night celebrations as ministries

crossed their finish lines.

Perhaps the best part of Giving Tuesday, though, is the way it knits our diocese together. The map of donors stretches from large towns to very small ones, and from alumni, parents, parishioners, and supporters who now live several states away but still care deeply about the ministries that shaped them.

While Giving Tuesday lasts just 24 hours, the impact of these gifts will extend far beyond the day itself. From updated classrooms and improved technology to strengthened ministry programs and better parish resources, every dollar helps build up the daily life of our Church. The generosity shown on this single day will continue bearing fruit throughout the coming year.

One thing is already certain: #iGiveCatholic continues to highlight the generosity, joy, and unity that make our diocese such a special place. Thank you to everyone who shared, prayed, gave, or encouraged a ministry this year. Your generosity strengthens our Church, and it is a beautiful reflection of the hope and joy we celebrate each Christmas season. We are grateful for every donor, every ministry, and every act of support that made this day such a success.



Meet Julia Diaz!

Our newest addition, Julia Diaz will be serving as the Donor Services and Data Collection Coordinator for the Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina.

Julia was born and raised in St. John, KS. She attended Fort Hays State University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies.

Julia is a member of Saint

Mary Queen of the Universe Parish in Salina and serves as a religion education teacher. In her spare time, she enjoys being with friends and family, gardening, working on various craft projects, and spending time with her husband, Ector.

Wish Julia Diaz a warm welcome at julia.diaz@salinadiocese.org.

MERRY CHRISTMAS 2025

This Christmas, we celebrate the light of Christ shining through your generosity. Because of you, hearts are lifted and lives are brighter. May this Christmas bring you and your loved ones comfort, joy, and the peace of our Savior.

THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES TEAM

Catholic Charities OF NORTHERN KANSAS

BAPTISMS

Alexandria Kay Burks, daughter of Blaine and Porsche Burks, was baptized November 29, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Mary Grace Elizabeth Dlabal, daughter of Joshua and Brenna Dlabal, was baptized November 26, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Tate Declan Falcon, son of Andrew and Montserrat Falcon, was baptized November 23, 2025, by Fr. Mark Wesely at St. Patrick Church in Lincoln.

Opal Ann Gray, daughter of Nevada and Laura Gray, was baptized October 18, 2025, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Andrew Church in Abilene. Godparents are Teryl Goeckel and Douglas Goeckel.

Billy Jack Haden, son of William and Genevieve Haden, was baptized November 11, 2025, by Dcn. Larry Erpelding at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Jonah Scott Henry, son of Scott and Bethany Henry, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Teddy Malachi Lydic, son of Thomas and Heidi Lydic, was baptized August 19, 2025, by Fr. George Chalbham, CMI, at St. Columba Church in Elmo.

Diego Benjamin Rodriguez Muñoz, son of Benjamin and Karla Muñoz, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Gerson Benjamin Rodriguez Muñoz, son of Benjamin and Karla Muñoz, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Bria Lynn Needham, daughter of Brock and Erin Needham, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Rylee Marie Oare, daughter of Jacob and Katelyn Oare, was baptized November 9, 2025, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Isla Grey Robben, daughter of James and Kaitlin (Fabrizius) Robben, was baptized November 22, 2025, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

Rynleigh Mae Rose, daughter of Jordan and Shelby Rose, was baptized September 7, 2025, by Fr. Vincent John. Godparents are Rodney Bass and Rachel Bass.

Theodore Louis Sexton, son of Curry and Anne

Sexton, was baptized September 14, 2025, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Andrew Church in Abilene. Godparents are Blair DeBord and Sadie Sexton.

Grace Elizabeth Stadler, daughter of Mark and Emilee Stadler, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Maisy Ann Whitehair, daughter of William and Hayley Whitehair, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Kade Megaffin at St. Andrew Church in Abilene. Godparents are Garrett Bulk and Sandra Kemper.

Maverick William Slipke, son of Easton and Morgan Slipke, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Frederick Gruber at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Hoxie.

Ellis Len Wilson, son of Christopher and Samantha Wilson, was baptized November 2, 2025, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Andrew Church in Abilene. Godparents are Trevor Brock and Devin McAfee.

Madeline Abigail Woods, daughter of Maximilian and Juliana Woods, was baptized November 23, 2025, by Fr. Kyle Berens at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

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~ Directors Steven Surber, John Surber and Don Waddington ~

WEDDINGS

Chrisxavier Cease and Carli (DeDonder) Cease were married October 25, 2025, at St. Andrew Church in Abilene. Fr. Peter O'Donnell witnessed their vows.

Aaron Sramek and Hillary Chvatal were married November 15, 2025, at Sacred Heart Church in Atwood. Fr. Henry Saw Lone, assisted by Dcn. Mark Vrbas, witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Aaron and Lacy (Vyzourek) Sramek. Parents of the bride are Scott Chvatal and Gina (Leibbrandt) Chvatal. Witnesses were Ryan Sramek and Olivia Chvatal.

Kyler Voss and Macey Steckel were married November 8, 2025, at St. Mary Help of Christians Church in Gorham. Fr. Daryl Olmstead witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Lacie and Roger Werkmeister and Walker Voss. Parents of the bride are Jacque and Brandon Jacobs and Jerod and Marcia Steckel. Witnesses were Kash Voss and Hannah Honas.

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FUNERALS

Gilbert Augustine, 91, died November 2, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 14 at St. Mary's Church in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery in Ellis.

Michael Connolly, 4 months old, died November 13, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 24 at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Fr. Frank Coady presided. Inurnment at a later date.

Julius "Sam" Gassman, 84, died October 24, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 22 at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Fr. Frank Coady presided. Inurnment at St. Thomas More Memorial Walls, Manhattan.

Randy Koerner, 79, died November 13, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 18 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Don Zimmerman presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

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

Lawrence Locker, 95, died October 25, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 1 at St. Mary's Church in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

Judith M. Pescador, 84, died October 19, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated October 24 at St. Patrick Church in Lincoln. Fr. Mark Wesely presided. Interment in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Lincoln.

Rosemary "Rosie" Pfeifer, 86, died November 15, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 24 at St. Mary's Church in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Inurnment in St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

Juanita Marie Williby, 91, died November 15, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 21 at Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin. Fr. Mathew Chacko presided. Burial in Selden Cemetery.



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ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Advent, for 84 women from Seven Dolors Catholic Church in Manhattan, started with quiet music, candlelight and fellowship. The second annual Advent by Candlelight was a huge success, growing from the 60 attendees last year to 84 this year.

The evening begins with prayer, and then time is spent socializing with

each other over a quiet meal and drinks supplied by the table hostess.

At the end of the meal, quiet sets in as selected readings from the book Theotokos: Preparing for Christmas with the Mother of God, are read.

At the end of each reading, the musicians sing a song appropriate to the reading. (Sacred Silence, Holy is His Name,

These are Enough, and Only in God).

After the last reading, a closing prayer is read from the Magnificat. Finally, all the ladies are invited to sing Hail Mary, Gentle Woman.

It was a touching evening and spiritually satisfying. Next year's event has already been scheduled for Nov. 20.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

St. Thomas Becket was born in London in 1118 to a merchant family and quickly proved himself bright and capable. His talents brought him into important church circles, and he eventually became Chancellor of England under King Henry II. The two became close friends, working side by side.

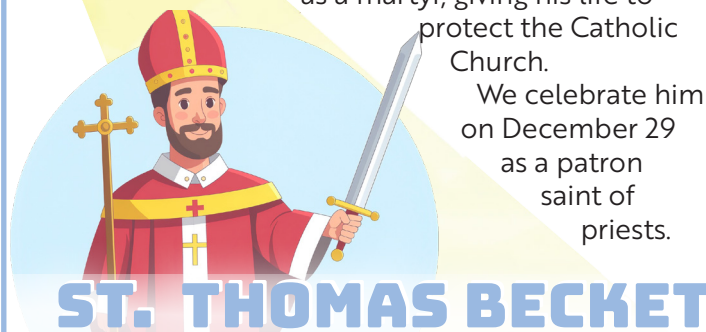
When the Archbishop of Canterbury died, Henry appointed Thomas to the role, expecting him to support the king's control over the Church.

But after becoming Archbishop, Thomas experienced a deep spiritual change. He began defending the Church, even when it meant opposing the king. This made King Henry angry, and the two friends became enemies instead.

One day, in a burst of frustration, King Henry shouted, "Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?"

Four knights heard him and thought the king wanted Thomas gone. They rode to Canterbury Cathedral and confronted him there. On December 29, 1170, they killed Thomas at the altar. He died as a martyr, giving his life to protect the Catholic Church.

We celebrate him on December 29 as a patron saint of priests.



ST. THOMAS BECKET

FEAST DAY: DECEMBER 29

Thank you

Dear members of the diocese, Thank you so much for your participation in the Adoration for Peace campaign! Thanks to you, this year we've seen an increase of over 500 weekly adoration hours offered in our parishes. May your generous sacrifice of time draw you ever closer to our Eucharistic Lord.



SALINA DIOCESE SPIRITUAL CAMPAIGN



FROM THE SALINA DIOCESE CHANCERY STAFF



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