



# THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

## INSIDE:

**POPE LEO XIV REFLECTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**  
• Pope shares message of responsibility.  
**Page 2**

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
• Read and reflect on meditations by diocesan deacons, with images from around the diocese. **Page 4-5**

**ELLIS COUNTY SEES 150 YEARS**  
• Events scheduled throughout the year celebrating 150 years for several parishes.  
**Page 6**

**ST. XAVIER SCHOOL SHARES MESSAGE**  
• Fr. Peter O'Donnell updates the diocese on the state of the Junction City school. **Page 10**



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

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## Super Sunday for Hanover parishioners

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church in Hanover have been looking forward to the 2026 Lenten season like no other because they are excited about getting to worship in their church once again.

Following a year of attending Mass in the grade school gymnasium, a remodeled St. John's is now open to the congregation.

Highlighted by a Mass with Bishop Gerald Vincke, St. John's celebrated a rededication of the church on February 8, which happened to be Super Bowl Sunday.

"When we were trying to get a date where the bishop could join us, he had this date open," Father David Metz said. "And then later we realized it was Super Bowl Sunday."

"But," he added, looking over at Bishop Vincke, "I think we nailed it!"

"There is something exciting going on later today," Bishop Vincke said in his homily. "But I'm much more excited about this. Super Bowls happen every year. This is a once-in-a-lifetime (experience)."

"Now, you're home, in a house of God," the bishop continued. "It's great to be home in this beautiful church. It marks for every one of us a renewing of our lives with Jesus, using this beautiful space."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Many of the renovations at St. John the Baptist Church in Hanover can be viewed from the front door including the freshly painted walls and ceilings, the beautiful new pews and the new altar with a 3D Last Supper inlaid in the front.

## A wintry, white Catholic Schools Week

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Mother Nature added some excitement – and a little angst – for the Salina diocesan schools during Catholic Schools Week (CSW).

A snowstorm at the start of CSW altered school schedules, and St. Andrew's Elementary in Abilene wasn't even able to start its school week until Wednesday.

Nonetheless, it was a busy week, where students and staff followed the historic Greek phrase

"neither snow nor rain nor heat nor dark of night" would keep them from celebrating Catholic Schools Week.

The 15 schools across the diocese held numerous appreciation events for students, staff, teachers and community members.

There were lunches and open houses, dress-up days and even birthday celebrations for school and parish personnel.

All the while, students continued participating in their normal various

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



COURTESY PHOTO

Recess fun at Catholic Schools Week at St. Joseph Elementary School in Oakley this year included building snowmen.

## Into the desert

During the solemn 40 days of Lent, the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.

Going to the desert doesn't sound like much fun at all. For Jesus it was an extreme physical, mental and spiritual trial immediately following his baptism. It was in the desert

that Jesus faced hunger, temptations from Satan and wild, dangerous animals. Jesus was showing us the way to have total trust and reliance on God. During the 40 years when the Israelites wandered on the way to the promised land, they disobeyed God and didn't trust him repeatedly.

Obviously, God is not asking us to go physically to a desert and eat nothing at all. But even small, little sacrifices that we do can help us unite ourselves with Jesus in the desert. What are some of the things we can do during these forty days? The Catechism mentions the following:

· Spiritual Exercises

Have you ever been on a retreat? I encourage you to go on one, even for a day. I usually make an eight-day silent retreat. No phone, no computer. People have told me that they would probably die if they had to do that. I've been doing these retreats for years. I'm still alive. Silence is essential for

our spiritual journey. Life can be filled with distractions with things that aren't that important. God desires to speak to our hearts.

· Penitential Liturgies:

Besides going to Mass on the weekends, perhaps we can find time to attend weekday Masses during Lent, especially on Fridays.

· Pilgrimages as signs

of Penance:

This year is the Jubilee Year of St. Francis. We have several Churches in our diocese named after this great saint. Why not take a trip to visit them sometime and pray.

· Voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving:

Fasting and almsgiving are what most people do during Lent. Fasting from food is a good thing, but so is fasting from spending so much time on the phone. Perhaps we can put a time limit on our use of phones (not use them to search the web after 8 p.m. during weekdays or on Sundays from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m.).

· Fraternal sharing (charitable works):

Helping and caring for the poor is what Jesus did, and since we are his disciples, we do the same.

Lent should be different from other times. Let's give Jesus permission to change our hearts to be like his heart. Blessings on your Lenten journey!

**GERALD Vincke**  
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



## POPE LEO XIV REFLECTS ON SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

*In January, the Holy Father released a message which highlights the importance of recognizing that technology, especially artificial intelligence, is a tool to be used by people, not something to replace them.*

*The following excerpts are from his speech, the entirety of which can be found on the vatican website at vatican.va.*

Dear brothers and sisters, Our faces and voices are unique, distinctive features of every person; they reveal a person's own unrepeatable identity and are the defining elements of every encounter with others. [...]

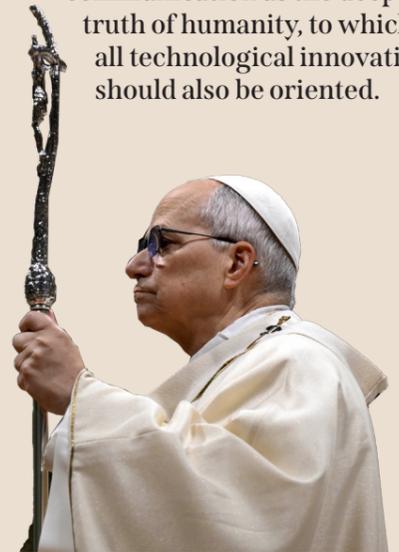
Faces and voices are sacred. Safeguarding faces and voices ultimately means safeguarding ourselves. Embracing the opportunities offered by digital technology and artificial intelligence with courage, determination and discernment does not mean turning a blind eye to critical issues, complexities and risks.

Although AI can provide support and assistance in managing tasks related to communication, in the long run, choosing to evade the effort of thinking for ourselves and settling for artificial statistical compilations

threatens to diminish our cognitive, emotional and communication skills.

Technology that exploits our need for relationships can lead not only to painful consequences in the lives of individuals, but also to damage in the social, cultural and political fabric of society. This occurs when we substitute relationships with others for AI systems that catalog our thoughts, creating a world of mirrors around us, where everything is made "in our image and likeness." [...] Without embracing others, there can be no relationships or friendships.

We need faces and voices to speak for people again. We need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented.



CNS PHOTO

## Nos adentramos en el desierto

Durante los solemnes 40 días de la Cuaresma, la Iglesia se une cada año al misterio de Jesús en el desierto.

Ir al desierto no suena nada divertido. Para Jesús fue una prueba física, mental y espiritual extrema inmediatamente después de Su bautismo. Fue en el desierto donde Jesús enfrentó el hambre, las tentaciones de Satanás y animales salvajes y peligrosos. Jesús nos estaba mostrando el camino para tener una confianza y una dependencia total en Dios. Durante los 40 años en que los israelitas vagaron camino a la tierra prometida, desobedecieron a Dios y no confiaron en Él repetidamente.

Obviamente, Dios no nos está pidiendo que vayamos físicamente a un desierto y no comamos nada. Pero incluso los pequeños sacrificios que hacemos nos pueden ayudar a unirnos a Jesús en el desierto. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas que podemos hacer durante estos cuarenta días? El Catecismo menciona las

siguientes:

· **Ejercicios espirituales**

¿Alguna vez has participado en un retiro? Te animo a que vayas a uno, aunque sea por un día. Yo suelo hacer un retiro silencioso de ocho días. Sin teléfono, sin computadora. Algunas personas me han dicho que probablemente se morirían si tuvieran que hacer eso. Llevo años haciendo estos retiros. Sigo vivo. El silencio es esencial para nuestro camino espiritual. La vida puede estar llena de distracciones con cosas que no son tan importantes. Dios desea hablar a nuestros corazones.

· **Liturgias penitenciales:**

Además de asistir a Misa los fines de semana, quizás podamos encontrar tiempo para asistir a Misa durante la semana en la Cuaresma, especialmente los viernes.

· **Peregrinaciones como signos de penitencia:**

Este año es el Año Jubilar de San Francisco. Tenemos varias iglesias en nuestra diócesis que llevan el nombre de este

gran santo. ¿Qué tal hacer un viaje para visitarlas en algún momento y orar?

· **La renuncia voluntaria, como el ayuno y la limosna:**

El ayuno y la limosna son lo que la mayoría de las personas hacen durante la Cuaresma. Ayunar de comida es algo bueno, pero también lo es ayunar de pasar tanto tiempo en el teléfono. Quizás podamos poner un límite al uso del teléfono (por ejemplo, no usarlo para navegar por internet después de las 8 p.m.

en la semana o los domingos de 6 a.m. a 6 p.m.).

· **La ayuda fraterna (obras de caridad):**

Ayudar y cuidar a los pobres es lo que hizo Jesús, y como somos Sus discípulos, hacemos lo mismo.

La Cuaresma debería ser diferente a otros tiempos. Démosle a Jesús permiso para cambiar nuestros corazones y hacerlos semejantes al Suyo. ¡Bendiciones en tu camino cuaresmal!

### NEIGHBORS NEAR & NEIGHBORS FAR



#### PLATO DE ARROZ DE CRS

Dios creó al hombre y a la mujer a su imagen, recordándonos que cada persona es sagrada y refleja el amor de Dios. Cada uno de nosotros tiene un propósito especial dentro del plan de Dios. Nuestro apoyo a CRS Rice Bowl brinda esperanza y oportunidades a familias de todo el mundo.

**DONAR:**

EN CUALQUIER MOMENTO DURANTE EL MES DE MARZO, COLOQUE UN SOBRE EN SU COLECTA PARROQUIAL CON LA ETIQUETA "CRS RICE BOWL". AGRÉGUELO A LA LÍNEA DE NOTAS DE UN CHEQUE O UTILICE UN PLATO DE ARROZ.

#### CRS RICE BOWL

God created man and woman in his image, reminding us that every person is sacred and reflects God's love. Each of us has a purpose, woven into God's plan. Our support of CRS Rice Bowl provides hope and opportunity to families around the world.

**TO GIVE:**

ANYTIME DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH, PLACE AN ENVELOPE IN YOUR PARISH COLLECTION LABELED "CRS RICE BOWL", ADD IT TO THE MEMO LINE OF A CHECK, OR UTILIZE A RICE BOWL!

# HANOVER PARISH REMODEL, FROM PAGE 1

Hundreds flocked to the church doors around the front steps on a pleasant winter afternoon before Mass, anxiously waiting to enter the building as the bishop said words of blessing.

“We get to kneel,” Josh Bruna said with a grin, glancing over at his wife. “I never thought I’d be so excited to kneel.”

Bruna, a lifetime resident of Hanover, was referring to the year-long endurance of standing throughout Mass in the gym.

Words of “wow, stunning, beautiful” were just a few heard as people glanced around the renovated space in awe.

The blue dome above the altar shone brightly with captivating gold-leaf painting.

New pews – fitted with the original refurbished ornate end caps from the old pews – were full to capacity, and chairs had to be set up in the rear of the church to accommodate the growing crowd.

A new, 1,900-square-foot addition that connects the church to the convent building now can welcome visitors in out of the elements.

There, they can look east through a wall of large windows and view the grotto that the renovation committee definitely wanted to still be visible.

Therefore, the design of the gathering space features large windows on both sides, allowing a view of the grotto from the street as well.

A large wooden crucifix that stands 10 feet high and 5 feet wide, which had been nearly hidden from view near one of the side altars, now adorns the



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Paintings of the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Spirit and Jesus accent the golden dome overlooking the sanctuary.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Three priests close to St. John’s Parish visit during the celebration. From left are Fathers Joseph Kieffer, Jerome Morgan and David Metz.

gathering space for all to see.

Several priests joined the bishop at the altar for the rededication Mass, including Frs. David Metz and Joseph Kieffer and native son Fr. Jerome Morgan, who was ordained a priest in St. John’s in 1962.

The renovation committee took shape under Fr. Joseph, who served as pastor at St. John’s before being transferred to Concordia in 2023. Fr. David was assigned to St. John’s at that time and completed the journey as

parishioners raised money through their own campaign.

“I think the only word I have is ‘Wow!’” Fr. David said in his talk at the end of the dedication Mass, glancing up at the gold-leaf painting.

During the Mass, Bishop Vincke blessed the new altar with oil, then walked down the side aisles, blessing the walls gleaming with new wainscoting made with wood from the old pews and the refurbished Stations of the Cross.

He thanked the various companies and individuals who worked on the project in any way. Most of

all, he thanked the congregation.

“We journeyed through a long Lent together,” he said. “So we thank God today, and I thank you for your patience, your understanding, your faith and your generosity.”

A few more minor projects are planned in the near future before the project is 100 percent complete.

Fr. David talked about the parish preparing for the 150th anniversary of the church in 2030, and it brought a smile to his face.

“I can truly say,” he said, “we’re ready to go.”

## Discerning a Call to the Permanent Diaconate?

The Salina Diocese invites men who are prayerfully considering a vocation as a Catholic Permanent Deacon, and any interested spouses, to attend an upcoming Diaconate Information Presentation.

This one-hour session will provide an overview of:

- Permanent diaconate ministry
- Formation and academic expectations
- Application and discernment

### Information Session:

Hays, April 25 – Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (Parish Hall), 10 a.m.

Applications to the permanent diaconate program are due June 1, 2026. No applications will be accepted after this date.

Men who feel the Lord may be calling them to serve His Church through the permanent diaconate are warmly encouraged to attend.

Learn more at [salinadiocese.org](http://salinadiocese.org).

## Rite of Election



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina was filled on February 22 for the Rite of Election. Bishop Gerald Vincke welcomed catechumens and candidates as their names were called and they signed the Book of the Elect. He expressed great hope in seeing so many young people eager to deepen their faith. More photos from this celebration, as well as the Rite of Election in Hays on March 1, will be shared on the Salina Diocese Facebook page. A full story will appear in next month’s Register.

## MARCH PRAYER INTENTIONS

### Pope Leo’s intentions:

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

### Diocesan intentions:

During this Lenten season, may God stir in our hearts a renewed desire to share the Good News of the Gospel – especially with those who have never truly heard of His love and mercy.

## BISHOP’S MARCH CALENDAR

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 7  | Confirmation, Oberlin & Selden in Oberlin, 6 p.m.      |
| 8  | Confirmation, Sacred Heart, Colby, 10 a.m.             |
| 8  | Confirmation, Oakley & Angelus in Oakley, 2 p.m.       |
| 26 | Chrism Mass, S.H. Cathedral, 11:30 a.m.                |
| 28 | Confirmation, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Salina, 10 a.m. |

# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross featured here are from churches throughout the diocese, with meditations by newly ordained permanent deacons.

## I JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

It's easy to see this station and feel anger toward Pilate or the crowd — but the truth is, I've stood in both of their shoes. I've let fear and pressure keep me silent. I've gone along with the crowd instead of doing what was right.



St. Thomas More, Manhattan

Jesus stands before a corrupt system, abandoned by His friends, falsely accused — and still, He does not defend Himself. He doesn't run. He doesn't lash out. He accepts the Cross.

Lord, give me the courage to stand for truth, even when it costs me something. Teach me to recognize the little moments in my life where I'm tempted to take the easy road... and give me the strength to follow You instead.

By Deacon Bill Meagher



St. Ignatius Loyola, Kanopolis

## II JESUS ACCEPTS THE CROSS

Jesus, in making this journey with the cross on Your shoulders, You thought of us, and offered for us to Your Father the death that you would endure. Jesus, I embrace all the trials and tribulations that come my way. By the merits of the pain You suffered in carrying Your cross, give me the necessary help to carry my crosses with perfect patience and resignation. You never give us a cross too heavy to bear. Help us to unite our crosses with Yours and in this unity, the gentleness of the burden.

By Deacon Harry Hardy

St. Joseph, Dorrance



Beloved Jesus, your body has been severely beaten, cut, spit on, and poked with thorns. Here you are falling from being so weak and as you hit the ground, your wounds are now filled with dirt and sand. Yet, you show only perfect peace and resignation. No words of complaint escape from your lips, just mercy and compassion for us all. Lord, grant us the grace to carry our own burdens with the same quiet strength and loving resignation, so that we may reflect your mercy to those around us.

By Deacon Dan Wahlmeier

## IV JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

This is a heart wrenching moment. This tender exchange between Jesus and Mary shows the deep bond between them. It expresses the love, pain, and sacrifice they share with each other. This station serves to remind us of God's love for us and how important it is to show compassion and hope for those who are suffering. It encourages us to extend mercy and comfort to those who are in need and less fortunate than ourselves.

By Deacon Tim Donohoue



Seven Dolors, Manhattan

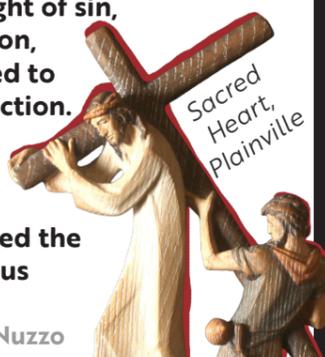
St. Joseph, Damar



## V SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

Jesus, already crushed by scourging, blood loss, and exhaustion, accepts Simon's help not because He is weak or defeated, but rather because suffering is meant to be shared, and because Simon needs this moment more than Jesus does. Simon is pulled out of the crowd, likely irritated, unwilling, and inconvenienced, and yet he is brought face to face with innocent suffering. Jesus carries the true weight of the Cross alone - the weight of sin, justice, and redemption, while Simon is allowed to shoulder merely a fraction. He does not rescue Christ, but Simon walks away transformed, having touched the cost of love, while Jesus continues forward.

By Deacon Dave DiNuzzo



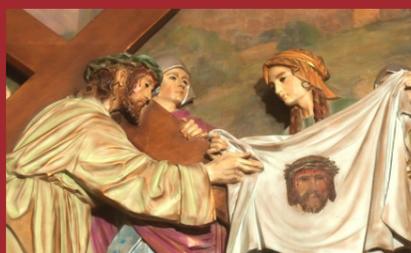
## VI VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

"Suddenly a woman comes out of the crowd. Her name is Veronica. You can see how she cares for you as she takes a cloth and begins to wipe the blood and sweat from your face."

O Precious Jesus, May your most Holy Face be imprinted on our souls every time we "wipe the face" of those around us who are troubled or in need. May we be moved by your suffering to see the needs of others and to act.

By Deacon Mark LeValley

St. Fidelis, Victoria



## VII JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Jesus has already stumbled under the weight of the Cross. But now it happens again. Another moment of weakness, another collapse.

If we're honest, we've all been here. Not just falling, but falling again. Struggling with the same sins, the same doubts, the same patterns, and it's discouraging.

But Jesus shows us something powerful: falling again isn't failure — quitting is. He gets back up. He keeps going. And so must we.

Lord, when I fall again — in sin, in weakness, in discouragement — remind me that You understand. Help me rise again, with perseverance and trust rooted in Your mercy.

By Deacon Bill Meagher

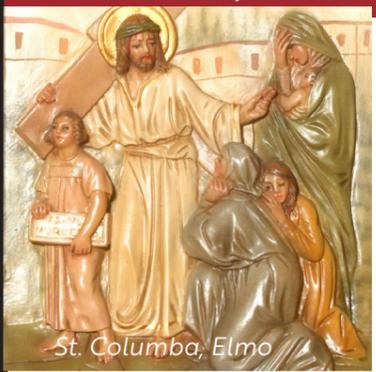
# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

## VIII JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Consider those women who wept with compassion as they saw Jesus in such a pitiable state, streaming with blood as He passed them by. But Jesus, You told the women of Jerusalem to weep not for You but for themselves and for their children. I weep for the offenses that I have committed against You because of the pains which they have deserved, but more so because of the displeasure they have caused You, who loves me so, so

much. It is Your love of me that causes me to weep for my sins.

By Deacon Harry Hardy



St. Columba, Elmo

## X JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

This is a monumental moment not only physically but spiritually as well. Jesus totally surrenders himself of his garments, but he also shows His infinite love that allows him to offer himself for the salvation of humanity. Jesus asks us to reflect on our own lives and see what needs to be stripped away in order to follow Him - the need to evaluate our priorities, humble ourselves and abandon our material ties that keep us from God.

By Deacon Tim Donohue



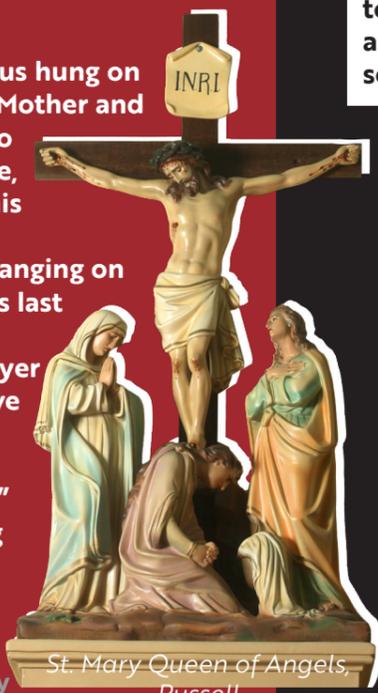
St. Patrick, Lincoln

## XII JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

For three hours Jesus hung on the Cross before his Mother and beloved Apostle, who watched on in silence, and then he closed his eyes and died for us.

"When Jesus was hanging on the Cross, he used his last breaths in complete labored agony in prayer to the Father; "Forgive them for they do not know what they do" and tells us; "I Thirst" we are the very thing that quenches the thirst of Jesus. He thirsts for us.

By Deacon Mark LeValley



St. Mary Queen of Angels, Russell

## IX JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Dearest Lord Jesus, in your third fall, you gently reveal the depth of your humanity and the strength found in humble suffering. Through your weakness, you teach us that true power is born from a heart willing to endure for love's sake. May our hearts remain steadfast in humility and mercy, never losing hope. As you fulfill the prophecy of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, bearing our transgressions and iniquities, we ask you to fill us with your grace. Help us, gracious Lord, to overcome our faults and grow in compassion, so that your love may shine through us to others.

By Deacon Dan Wahlmeier



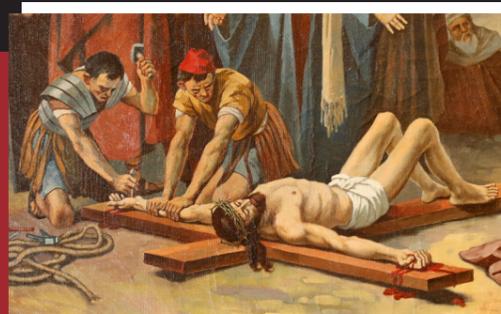
Assumption of Mary, Herndon

## XI JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

There is no movement left, no escape, no strength to summon. Jesus is fixed to

the cross, body stretched, wounds reopened, flesh pierced where nerves scream and muscles revolt. It is deliberate, physical, humiliating pain. Jesus does not fight the nails; He absorbs them. He allows Himself to be immobilized, not because He is overpowered, but because love demands it. Jesus shows that real strength is the courage to endure what you cannot change, to remain faithful when obedience costs everything. This station confronts men with an uncomfortable truth: redemption is not forged by dominance or escape, but by the willingness to hold fast to mission, even when it has no relief and ends without applause.

By Deacon Dave DiNuzzo



St. John the Baptist, Clyde

## XIII JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

This is one of the most human moments in all of Scripture. The suffering is over. The crowds are gone. And now Mary, His mother, holds His lifeless body. We can see and feel her deep grief and her love for Jesus. But even in this sorrow, there is hope — because the story isn't over.

Lord, help me to stay near to You, even when life is dark and hope feels distant. Help me to be like Mary — willing to hold pain in my arms, to sit with others in their sorrow, and to trust that resurrection is coming, even when I can't see it yet.

By Deacon Bill Meagher



St. Mary, Downs

## XIV JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Consider the disciples carrying the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by his Mother. They placed it in the tomb and then they all withdrew. Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses You. By Your resurrection, make me rise again glorious with You on the last day, to be united always with You in heaven. While we desire to be caught up in the mystery of Your resurrection, we must first, like you, endure the wait of the tomb. Help us to make our time on earth be seen as a time of transition to the final expression of the truth of the Resurrection.

By Deacon Harry Hardy



St. John Nepomucene, Beardsley

# Appreciating the gift of music

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

One of the fondest memories Dana Stanton has of her late father is of him playing his fiddle.

Dana got to experience those memories in a special way earlier this month during a Sunday Mass at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

After recently pulling the fiddle out of storage, Dana wondered if it could be restored.

Nathan Mark, orchestra director for Hays High School, sometimes accompanies musical groups at St. Nick's. One Sunday, Dana (a cantor at the church) asked Nathan if he could restore the old fiddle.

"I told her I could take a look at it and see what it needs," Nathan said. "The strings were worn out and frayed; otherwise, it was in really good shape. So I just replaced the bow and the bridge. Dana really wanted to hear it played again, so I was glad to do it."

Dana, a vocalist who can play several instruments, said she got her musical interests from her father.

Although he had no formal training in music, Oklahoma resident Adam Gokey Jr. – known as Junior to friends and family – could play several instruments, including the fiddle, guitar, ukulele, banjo and harmonica.

He had received the fiddle in the early 1960s as a Christmas gift



COURTESY PHOTOS

Above, Adam Gokey Jr. plays the fiddle he received as a Christmas gift in the early 1960s. To the right, his daughter, Dana Stanton, is pictured with Nathan Mark, who restored the old fiddle.

from his wife, and young Dana remembers the sound of country and bluegrass music wafting through the air when her dad picked up his prized instrument.

"I can still see him picking up his fiddle," she said, "and hear him saying, 'Dana Jo, let's sing a song!'"

Dana – who was adopted at birth by Adam and his wife, Carol Jo – was 8 years old when her 42-year-old father passed away from a heart attack.

She since met her biological father about eight years ago, and she said she has a loving relationship with him and her new family.

But Dana will never forget her first father, the man who got her

interested in music.

"Because I was pretty young when my father passed, I don't have lots of memories of him," she said, "but those I do have center around music."

Some of those memories are rekindled for Dana every time she plays her piano, something Gokey gave her for her birthday when she was in kindergarten. She has taught many a youngster piano lessons on that piano.

Dana said she got teary eyed while practicing with Nathan in the choir room before Mass, which was attended by her husband, Andy, her two sons and her sister, Tracie.

Andy videoed the music at that



Mass so Dana could send the recording to relatives.

"My cousins grew up loving to hear Uncle Junior's music," Dana said. "They loved hearing the fiddle being played again."

Dana also can play the clarinet and saxophone but "not the guitar or fiddle."

She had given her dad's guitar to her oldest son, Jackson Adam, a few years ago.

After that special Sunday Mass a few weeks ago, the family went out to eat, and Dana also gave the fiddle to Jackson, a self-taught guitarist who she is confident will learn how to play the fiddle, too.

Now, Dana is sure she will get to enjoy the sounds of that fiddle for years to come.

"It was special for me to have it played at church and that everyone in the church heard my dad's fiddle," she said. "It made it feel like a gift from Dad after all these years."

## Ellis County celebrates 150 years of Catholicism

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Catholic parishes in Ellis County are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Volga German settlers to the county with numerous Masses and events throughout 2026.

Father Valentine Sommereisen, a German-speaking priest from France, arrived in Hays about the same time as the Volga Germans. He is known for establishing eight parishes in the area in a 19-month time frame back in 1876 and 1877 – in Hays, Munjor, Catharine, Victoria, Pfeifer, Liebenthal, Rush Center and Schoenchen.

That was back when the parishes were part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Indian Territory East of the Rockies.

Two of those towns – Liebenthal and Rush Center, both in Rush County – are now located in the Diocese of Dodge City, while the other six are part of the Salina Diocese in Ellis County.

There is no longer a parish or church building in Rush

Center, and although the Holy Cross Parish in Pfeifer was dissolved in 1993, Holy Cross Charities was established a year later to maintain the church building, grounds and cemetery. The church is still used for weddings and funerals and also celebrates a Mass every year around Sept. 14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The other half dozen original parishes established by Fr. Valentine are still active, including St. Joseph in Hays. There are now three more parishes in Hays: Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Nicholas of Myra and the Comeau Catholic Campus Center at Fort Hays State University.

Bishop John Brungardt of the Dodge City Diocese was scheduled to celebrate the first of the sesquicentennial Masses on Saturday, Feb. 21, at St. Joseph Church in Liebenthal, whose town was established on Feb. 22, 1876.

Bishop Gerald Vincke of the Salina Diocese will celebrate Mass at four Ellis County parishes throughout the year.

There will be polka dances, picnics, lunches, celebrations and festivals galore.

Numerous secular events also highlight the anniversary year. More events will be added to a list through the Ellis County Historical Society all year. It can be found online at [www.ourpeopleourhome.org](http://www.ourpeopleourhome.org).

Another highlight will be presentations by Father Reggie Urban, a retired priest from the Dodge City Diocese who now lives in Hays. He has done extensive research on Fr. Valentine and has given several talks leading up to the sesquicentennial celebration.

The first of those talks in 2026 is set for Saturday, March 21, at the Ellis County Historical Society, 100 W. Seventh, Hays.

The final sesquicentennial Mass is set for Sunday, Dec. 13, at St. Boniface Church in Vincent. St. Boniface is home to the "Little Town of Bethlehem Nativity," which was started in 1926, thus is celebrating its 100th anniversary at the country church about 8 miles southeast of Victoria.

### VOLGA-GERMAN SESQUICENTENNIAL MASS SCHEDULE

#### Saturday, February 21

4:30 p.m. – St. Joseph Church, Liebenthal

#### Saturday, April 18

4 p.m. – Our Lady, Help of Christians Church, Antonino

#### Sunday, May 24

9 a.m. – St. Anthony Church, Schoenchen

#### Saturday, July 18

10 a.m. – St. Joseph Church, Liebenthal

#### Sunday, July 19

9 a.m. – St. Catherine Church, Catharine

#### Sunday, July 26

7:30 a.m. – St. Ann Church, Walker

#### Sunday, August 2

10:30 a.m. – St. Joseph Church, Hays

#### Sunday, August 9

1 p.m. – Basilica of St. Fidelis, Victoria

#### Saturday, September 12

4 p.m. – Holy Cross Church, Pfeifer

#### Sunday, October 4

8 a.m. – St. Francis of Assisi Church, Munjor

#### Sunday, December 13

8:30 a.m. – St. Boniface Church, Vincent

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

**March 1**

• Rite of Election, St. Nicholas of Myra, Hays, 3 p.m.

**March 17**

• St. Patrick's Day.

**March 21**

• Youth Minister Retreat, Salina

• St. John's, Beloit, School Auction, Mass at 4:30 p.m.

• St. John's, Hanover, School Auction, 5 p.m.

**March 26**

• Chrism Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 11:30 a.m.

**March 28**

• St. Mary's, Ellis, Parish/School Auction, Mass at 4 p.m.

**March 29**

• Palm Sunday.

**(If you have any questions about an event listed here, please contact the parish, office or school directly.)**

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**MARCH 29**

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# Catholic Schools Week

activities, including basketball and wrestling, Scholars Bowl, school spelling bees and Knights of Columbus free throw contests.

All ages were included in the CSW festivities.

For example, at Manhattan Catholic Schools, kindergartners made hearts to send to our diocesan seminarians attending school in several seminaries around the country and in Rome.

Students and staff also attended Mass together, several joining together with other schools.

In Hays, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church was full on Friday, with students, staff and family from four schools: Sacred Heart Elementary in Plainville and the three Ellis County Catholic schools – St. Mary's Elementary, Ellis; Holy Family Elementary, Hays; and Thomas More Prep-Marian Jr./Sr. High, Hays.

At the CSW Mass in Beloit, for both St. John's schools and Tipton Catholic High School, Bishop Gerald Vincke talked about the patron saint of Catholic schools, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

St. Elizabeth founded the first Catholic parish school in the United States in 1810 and is the first native-born American saint who dedicated her life to youth education.

He encouraged the students to “think today about those who have helped you to have the faith in Jesus Christ, which is the most important thing.”

## Serving others

Father Jarett, pastor of St. John's Parish in Beloit, told students that “the fastest way to increase love of God, of faith, is to give it away, to find ways to give of God's love.”

The St. John's student council showed its love by sponsoring the “Pass the Buck” breakfast and raising money for a fellow student.

More than \$1,000 was raised to help with the purchase of a new wheelchair and medical care for St. John's freshman Colton Pearson, who was born with a bone fragility disorder.

About once a month, St. John's sponsors Pass the Buck, where teachers bring breakfast items to sell for \$1, with proceeds going to the choice of the sponsors.



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Above, the student council at Beloit-St. John's held a fundraiser during Catholic Schools Week to help out fellow student Colton Pearson.**

**At top right, a highlight of Catholic Schools Week for many students is visiting with Bishop Gerald Vincke at Mass.**



COURTESY PHOTO

**Some of the CSW activities at Manhattan Catholic Schools included a surprise birthday party for Principal Mike Hubka.**

In Salina, sixth-graders at St. Mary's Grade School participated in their school's annual Corporal Works of Mercy City Tour, where they visit community organizations while learning how to serve others.

Included on the tour are stops at the Morrison House, a hospitality home in Salina that provides free lodging for

family members of patients at Salina Regional Health Center and cancer patients undergoing treatment; Meals on Wheels; the Saline County Jail; and the Sacred Heart Cathedral. Students also learn about Catholic Charities, the Salina Rescue Mission and the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas.

The tour, a local mission of St. Mary's

CONTINUED



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Students at St. Francis Xavier in Junction City sing during the Catholic Schools Mass for Catholic Schools Week. Bishop Gerald Vincke celebrated with Masses at various schools across the diocese.

since 2009, collected donations for some of those organizations, made prayer cards for inmates at the jail and prepared treat bags for Meals on Wheels recipients.

### Keeping the momentum

Curtis Hammeke has been involved with Catholic schools for several years, following his children and grandchildren through Hays Catholic Schools (HCS).

In his first year as president of HCS, Hammeke got to witness Catholic Schools Week from a different perspective.

He was impressed how the influence of Catholic education goes well beyond one week a year.

“Catholic schools provide the weapons necessary to engage in the spiritual battle taking place in our society,” he said. “This battle is real, and the enemy we face is dangerously subtle and deceptive, thriving on our indifference.”

However, he added, “I am encouraged by our youth, based on what I’ve seen in our Catholic schools and the (Fort Hays State) Catholic Campus Center. We’re definitely heading in a positive direction.”

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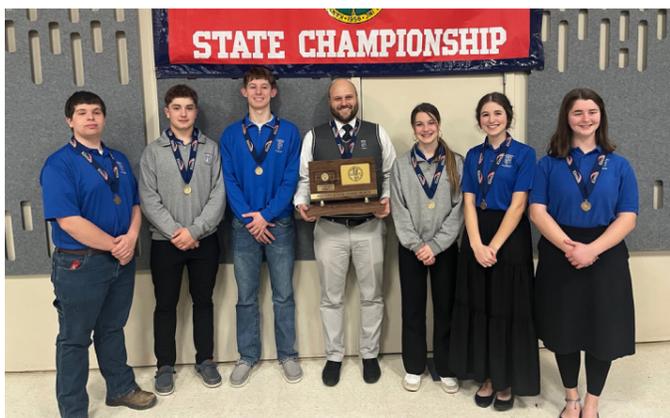
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## SCHOOL NOTES



COURTESY PHOTO

Beloit-St. John's Scholars Bowl team placed third at state.

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Catholic schools across the diocese usually kick off the second semester with Catholic Schools Week activities in late January.

However, students at the 15 schools are busy every week of the school year with a myriad of activities.

Following are just a few, highlighting students in a variety of ways.

### Scholars Bowl Success

After surviving multiple close tiebreakers, Beloit-St. John's earned the third-place trophy at the Class 1A, D-II State Scholars Bowl Championships for a second straight year on Valentine's Day.

St. John's finished in a five-way tie in pool play with all those schools recording identical 3-2 records.

Rusty Luegger said it was the first time he was ever associated with a five-way tie in his long career of coaching Scholars Bowl.

Then in the finals, the Blujays were one of three teams with identical records again, all tying for third with 2-3 records. This time, they came out on top in the tiebreaker to take home a trophy from state for a third straight year.

That completed a successful season for St. John's, which went undefeated in postseason until state, winning the Northern Plains League title for a fourth straight year with a 10-0 record, then going 10-0 in regional action.

Members of the state team were seniors Joe Prather and Greg Walter, juniors Christiana Niewald and Alice Weber and sophomores Maryann Walter and Brooks Dunstan.

Salina-Sacred Heart also came out on the short end of some tiebreakers at the 2A state tournament.

After winning its 2A regional at WaKeeney the week before, Sacred Heart made the finals at state, finishing in a four-way tie for third with 3-2 marks. The Knights actually beat the eventual state champion but wound up in fifth place overall.

Team members on the Knights' state team were juniors Ethan Schrandt, Zach Hernandez and Ethan Newell, sophomore Alan Morales and freshman Wyatt Schrandt.

Another diocesan school, St. Francis Xavier out of Junction City, qualified for the finals at the 1A, D-II season finale with a 4-1 record but wasn't able to make the top three. Members of St. Xavier's state-qualifying team were seniors Janis



COURTESY PHOTO

These Salina-Sacred Heart students placed second at the regional Science Olympiad to qualify for state.

Curit, Madison Deacon and Charles Quinton, sophomores Mya Black and Josh Welter and freshman Cassiel Perez.

Thomas More Prep-Marian, Hays, experienced similar tiebreaker madness at the 2A regional meet, where the Monarchs made the finals and tied for second with two other teams at 3-2. When the tiebreakers were figured, TMP-M wound up fourth – and one place out of qualifying for state.

### Two spellers state bound

Tommy Holdren, a seventh-grader at Beloit-St. John's Middle



COURTESY PHOTO

St. John's 7th-graders Tommy Holdren and Hope Woods finished 1-2 at the Mitchell County Spelling Bee.

School, earned the right to compete in the 2026 Sunflower State Spelling Bee March 21 in Salina after winning the Mitchell County Bee earlier this month.

Coincidentally, another St. John's seventh-grader, Hope Woods, finished second at the county competition and will serve as the alternate to state.

The winning words for Tommy were “onslaught” and “receipts” after eliminating his competition by spelling correctly “gyroplane” and “squalor.”

### Science Olympiad

Salina-Sacred Heart brought home runner-up team honors from the Regional Science Olympiad held at Fort Hays State University in Hays.

The Knights medaled in 22 of the 23 science and engineering events and qualified for the Kansas State Science Olympiad April 4 in Wichita.

Junior Zach Hernandez was part of three championship teams at regionals, two of those with sophomore Alan Morales. Other first-place finishers were sophomores Wyatt Donatell with two and six students with one each: senior Isaac Berndt, juniors Karrigan Thompson, Eliana Carrasco and Cassandra Tan-won and sophomores Tonlay In and Lucy Geitz.

# St. Xavier's School in Junction City: an update

By Fr. Peter O'Donnell  
Special to The Register

Invariably when I tell people that I'm pastor at St. Xavier's in Junction City, they will then ask, "Is that school still open?" Let me offer an answer to that – which I hope can absorb into the consciousness of the diocese.

Yes, we're open. St. Xavier's School has been open since 1871. We're a PreK-12, and despite many challenges, Bishop Vincke is in support for the school to remain PreK-12 unless the enrollment makes that absolutely impossible.

We have a great school, and we are looking to build upon the positive features that are already present. I've seen signs of a strengthened Catholic identity – without alienating those of a different faith background. There's a felt sense of belonging among the students. We wish there were more of them. What if we are on the brink of a major shift in Catholic schools, and what if St. Xavier's is about to be a successful turnaround story? With the grace of God, renewal is possible. The Lord is in the redemption business, and we've got an opportunity to be part of something truly significant and inspiring – in the smallest county (land-wise) in our diocese.

What is St. Xavier's School

mission statement? "Educating for Eternity through faith and reason." Are we focusing on heaven as our final destination or are we focusing on the present moment and the need for social order? Yes. Are we offering a compelling vision for the spiritual nature of things or how nature has tangible structures which are meant to be understood and discovered? Yes. This can all go together.

On January 10th, I announced at all Masses that St. Xavier's would remain PreK-12 rather than being downsized. Instead of the school being perceived as a financial burden, it can become a stable source of evangelization. After all, to be able to teach about Jesus and the sacraments in an open forum is what sets Catholic schools apart from other educational options. Did you know that we are the only Catholic high school between Salina and Topeka? It's well worth the monumental effort to provide an encounter with Jesus Christ. He lavishes blessings upon the entire community when we are faithful to our responsibilities.

It's a team effort to consider new ideas and objectives. Strategies are being formulated, and it's daunting yet energizing! What will it take to breathe new life in this school as well as other institu-



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Students at St. Xavier's, Junction City, celebrated Catholic Schools Week together at Mass with Bishop Gerald Vincke on January 28.

tions who suffer from a compromised reputation – even when undeserved? What will it take for the good that's present to be magnified – in order to attract more families? That's what we're wrestling with. It starts with a commitment to the Lord and to His plan for our young people.

Catholic education is written into the fabric of the Church's design. One way this is expressed is through Catholic schools. The need for renewal is more critical than ever. What if the outcome in Geary County was that more families, whether civilian or military, would desire to be part of a 155 year tradition - and part of a mission to rebuild?

How can you help? Prayer, visiting us, attending the April 18th auction, and accurate messaging: St. Xavier's School is open and we are expecting a breakthrough – even if that requires a miracle. Educating for eternity involves authentic transformation; what's more important than that? There are reasons to question this strategy, but the bishop and I believe that there are better reasons to lean in and see where the Lord is about to lead us.

Fr. Peter O'Donnell is pastor at Junction City, Abilene, and Chapman. Fr. Vincent John, CMI and Fr. Kade Megaffin are parochial vicars at these three parishes.



COURTESY PHOTO

Bishop Vincke confirmed 26 at St. Thomas More on February 15. BACK ROW (L-R): Catechists Bill Kennedy & Rick Smith, Evan Pruss, Simon Baumann, Tucker Werth, Cordell Suther, Brennan Darnell, Bishop Gerry Vincke, Harper Gladin, Keegin Hampton, Ethan Birkhead, Adam Hutzler, Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt. SECOND ROW: Dcn. Larry Erpelding, Fr. Don Zimmerman, Morgan Roberts, Savannah Heitmann, Kinslee Adams, Yael Bishop, Stella Salmans, Keira Klecan, Andie Strathman, Eeva Dunstan, Cameron Siebert, Graham Braxmeyer, Jake Snowden, Fr. Frank Coady. FRONT ROW: Ava Wollenberg, Gerin Krush, Evelyn Martinez, Lydia Wassenberg, Cortlynn Millington, Eleanor Irvine.

COURTESY PHOTO

St. Bernard's received a grant for \$4,100 to install handicap doors at the church. (L-R): Cheryl Rathbun, Laurel Davis, Office Manager Stacy Warta, Johnnie Goddard, Matt Jundt, Colby Richard and Father Stanly. Colby Richard is the Executive Director of the Smoky Hill Community Foundation in Ellsworth.



St. Fidelis, Victoria



IHM, Hill City

COURTESY PHOTOS

Local Knights of Columbus chapters held some friendly competitions with their annual Free Throw Contests this year. Above are participants and free throw champions from across the diocese.

# Student pilgrimage to Italy planned for summer 2027

By **Geoff Andrews**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR THE DIOCESE OF SALINA

The Diocese of Salina will offer a Diocesan Student Pilgrimage to Italy from June 1-10, 2027, inviting high school students and their families into a faith-filled journey of prayer, history, and encounter with the universal Church.

The pilgrimage is open to students who are currently in grades 9, 10, or 11, members of the graduating classes of 2027, 2028, and 2029, who attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salina. Students who attend public school or are homeschooled but are active in their parish CYO programs are also eligible. Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate alongside their children.

“This is not simply a trip to Italy,” said Geoff Andrews, Superintendent of Catholic Schools. “It is a pilgrimage designed to help young people encounter Jesus Christ through sacred places, the lives of the saints, and the sacramental life of the Church.”

The itinerary includes visits to Rome and the Vatican, Assisi, Siena, and Florence, offering pilgrims opportunities to pray at some of the most significant holy sites in the Catholic tradition. Daily prayer, reflection, and opportunities for Mass are woven throughout the experience.

Students and parents who participated in a previous diocesan pilgrimage shared powerful testimonies of how the experience deepened their faith. One student reflected that praying before a Eucharistic Miracle helped move him from doubt to belief. Another shared how receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Peter’s Basilica brought a sense of freedom and peace. Parents also noted how celebrating Mass in sacred spaces revealed the beauty and universality of the Catholic Church.

“The Eucharist is the same everywhere,” one parent shared. “It took traveling across the world to realize what a gift we



COURTESY PHOTO

Catholic Schools Superintendent Geoff Andrews (back right) pilgrimaged to Italy in June 2025 with a group of students and community members, praying together and walking in the footsteps of the saints.

have at home in our parishes.”

Participation in the pilgrimage is intentionally limited to 33 total travelers to foster a sense of community, shared prayer, and meaningful reflection. Spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Early Enrollment Savings are available for families who enroll by March 26, 2026. Monthly payment options are also available, making the pilgrimage more accessible for families planning ahead.

Andrews noted that the high school years are an ideal time for pilgrimage, as students are asking important questions about faith, purpose, and belong-

ing. Walking where the saints walked and praying where the Church was built offers a formative experience that can leave a lasting impact on young people and their families.

More information, including eligibility details, itinerary highlights, and enrollment instructions, can be found on the diocesan website at [salinadiocese.org/office/catholic-schools/pilgrimage-to-italy-2027](http://salinadiocese.org/office/catholic-schools/pilgrimage-to-italy-2027).

As the Diocese of Salina continues its mission of forming disciples, this pilgrimage offers a meaningful opportunity for students and families to grow together in faith and return home renewed, ready to live as disciples of Jesus on mission.

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# NFP Office expands with new Marquette instructor and FertilityCare Practitioner intern

By **LINDY MEYER**

NFP COORDINATOR, DIOCESE OF SALINA

The Diocese of Salina Natural Family Planning (NFP) Office is pleased to announce an expansion of its services, strengthening its ability to serve women, couples, and families across the diocese. This growth includes the addition of a Marquette Method instructor as well as a new FertilityCare Practitioner intern, further broadening access to medically sound, faith-centered fertility appreciation education.

Katie Tighe, RN, BSN, MMST, has joined the diocesan NFP team as a Marquette Method instructor. A Nebraska native, Katie lives in Beloit, Kansas, with her husband, Keith, and their five children. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and currently serves as the school nurse at St. John's Catholic School. Katie has been teaching the Marquette Method since 2025 and brings both clinical expertise and a deep passion for women's health to her instruction.

Katie is dedicated to helping women—young and not so young—understand the beauty and purpose of their feminine design. She offers Marquette Method instruction both virtually and in person, making this method accessible to women and couples across the Diocese of Salina.

The Marquette Method is a research-based approach to Natural Family Planning developed at Marquette University. It uses the ClearBlue Fertility Monitor to measure two key fertility hormones through a simple, at-home daily urine test. These results, combined with a scientifically validated algorithm and, when appropriate, cervical mucus or temperature observa-

tions, allow for objective and accurate identification of the fertile window each cycle. Research has shown the Marquette Method to be 97–99% effective at avoiding pregnancy when used under the guidance of trained instructors who are healthcare professionals. The method is adaptable for women in all stages of reproductive life, including postpartum, breastfeeding, perimenopause, and for single women seeking greater understanding of their cycles.

Alongside the expansion of Marquette Method instruction, the Diocese of Salina continues its long-standing foundation in the Creighton Model FertilityCare System, a standardized, medically supported approach to fertility appreciation that is closely integrated with women's healthcare.

Jessica Buessing has joined the NFP Office as a new Creighton Model FertilityCare Practitioner. Jess grew up in Hays, Kansas, and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Fort Hays State University. She has volunteered for numerous diocesan-sponsored events, including singing for Mass and Adoration. Jess resides in Axtell, Kansas, with her husband, Derek, and will serve clients in the northeastern area of the Diocese of Salina, as well as the northwestern region of the Archdiocese of Kansas City. Like all FertilityCare Practitioners serving the diocese, Jess will offer instruction both in person and virtually, making her services accessible to women and couples across a wide geographic area.

FertilityCare Practitioners are trained through a rigorous, 13-month professional education

program under the direct supervision of a Certified FertilityCare Educator. This formation includes a comprehensive curriculum with two in-person education phases, two supervised practicums, an on-site clinical visit, and a comprehensive final examination. Through this extensive preparation, practitioners are equipped to



COURTESY PHOTO

**Jessica Buessing will serve clients in the northeastern area of the diocese.**

provide standardized, ethical, and evidence-based instruction.

The Creighton Model FertilityCare System is recognized as an allied healthcare profession and relies on the careful observation and standardized charting of biological markers of fertility. These fertility charts serve not only as a family planning tool, but also as a valuable clinical resource. The system is uniquely integrated with NaProTECHNOLOGY, allowing specially trained medical professionals to use a woman's chart as a diagnostic aid in evaluating and treating underlying reproductive health concerns. In addition to supporting couples in achieving or avoiding pregnancy, the Creighton Model is widely used to ad-



COURTESY PHOTO

**Katie Tighe has joined the NFP team for the Salina Diocese as a Marquette Method instructor.**

dress cycle irregularities, infertility, miscarriage, and other gynecologic health challenges—while fully respecting the dignity of the human person and the Church's teachings on marriage and life.

Through the addition of both a Marquette Method instructor and a FertilityCare Practitioner intern, the Diocese of Salina NFP Office is better equipped than ever to meet the diverse needs of women and families across the diocese, offering compassionate, scientifically grounded, and faith-filled support.

For more information about NFP services in the Salina Diocese, contact the diocesan NFP Office or visit the NFP Office on the diocesan website.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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



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## Fr. Vincent Thu Laing

Father Vincent Thu Laing, a priest for the Diocese of Pathein – Myanmar, who served as a missionary priest in the Diocese of Salina, died on February 1, 2026, in Myanmar. He was born on October 12, 1955, in Myanmar (formerly Burma), into a Catholic farming family.

Fr. Vincent was ordained a priest on April 4, 1987, at the age of 32. Following his ordination, he served as a parish priest and later as secretary to his bishop. He was eventually appointed pastor of the cathedral. After the death of that bishop, a new bishop—now a cardinal—invited Fr. Vincent to serve in the United States. Though hesitant due to language, culture, and travel concerns, Fr. Vincent discerned God’s will and eventually accepted the invitation. Invited by Bishop George Fitzsimons, Fr. Vincent became the first Burmese priest to serve in the Diocese of Salina. Originally intending to stay for three years, he remained for more than two decades, serving faithfully and gratefully among the people of western Kansas.

During his time in the Diocese of Salina, Fr. Vincent served at the following parishes:

- St. John the Baptist, Beloit (1999)
- St. Augustine, Washington and SS. Peter and Paul, Morrowville (2000–2002)
- St. Francis of Assisi,

Norton and St. Joseph, New Almelo (2002–2015) · St. Francis Cabrini, Hoxie and St. Martin of Tours, Seguin (2015–2025)

Upon arriving in the United States, Fr. Vincent spent time in Independence, Kansas, where he studied English at a community college and learned to drive. He immersed himself in the language by watching television and listening to the radio.

After one month in Independence, he was assigned to St. John the Baptist Parish, Beloit, where he served alongside Father Henry Baxa. Beloit became his “first love” in the Diocese of Salina, a place where he found great joy and happiness. Father Baxa often teased him for reading comic strips as a way to learn English—especially his favorite, Pickles.

Fr. Vincent’s priestly motto was drawn from the prophet Micah, who says, “Love the good things and walk humbly with God.” Fr. Vincent was deeply grateful to the American Church and the Diocese of Salina, often expressing thanks for being welcomed and treated as family.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on February 4 at St. Mary Church in Marygone Village, Myanmar. A Memorial Mass was celebrated on February 7 at St. Francis Cabrini Parish in Hoxie. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.



# Where the heart meets with compassion

BY JEREE HUGHBANKS  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHERN KANSAS

After a serious car accident in Overland Park upended Tank’s life and left her without housing, she moved to Salina for a fresh start. Securing housing was a huge step forward, but it used every dollar she had—leaving nothing for food, hygiene items, or extra clothing.

That’s when Tank walked through the doors of Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas. Because of you, she received food and hygiene items that restored a sense of normalcy during a fragile time.

Because Tank’s vision and hearing impairments prevent her from driving, transportation was her next hurdle. Through Catholic Charities, she received bus passes that quickly became a lifeline.

“When you’re walking everywhere, you have to think about what you can carry,” Tank said. “Eggs break. Milk’s too heavy. The bus passes changed everything.”

With reliable transportation, Tank found relief from harsh weather and the freedom to shop without worry. Soon after, she found a job



COURTESY PHOTO

**Tank Martin, a client of Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas, receives a food box from Emergency Assistance Coordinator Melissa Herrera, who worked alongside her to identify needs and provide compassionate support.**

at Bogey’s. Donated clothing from the Catholic Charities Thrift Store helped her walk into work confident and prepared, and, in less than a year, she was promoted from the kitchen into a management role.

“I dressed for success,” she said. “It worked. It’s all thanks to Catholic Charities and the people who made that help possible.”

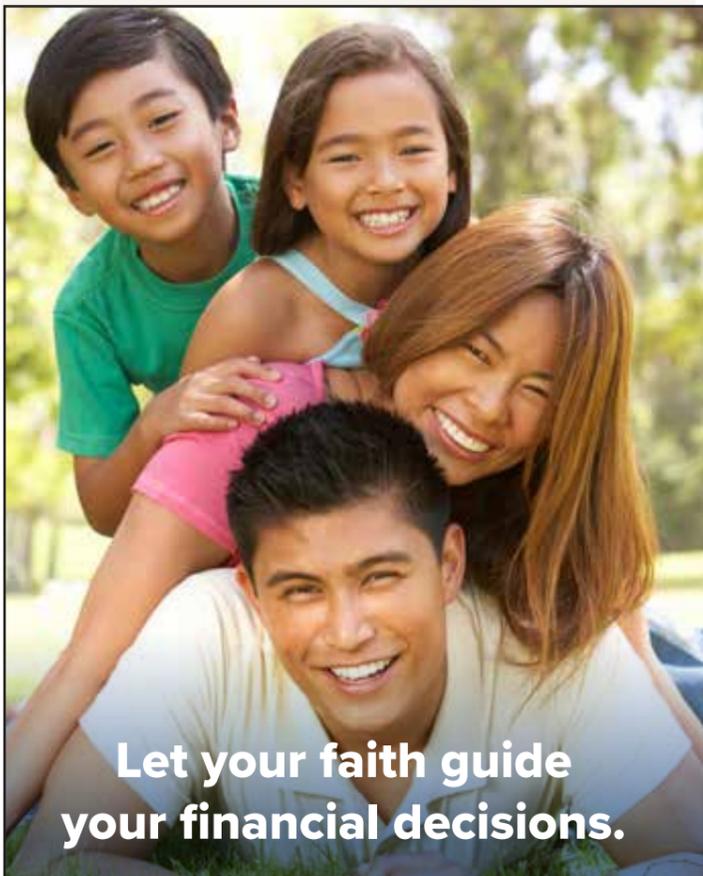
Later, Tank faced another difficult choice—paying her water bill or affording her medication. Because of your generosity, Catholic Charities covered the bill so she could access her prescription.

Today, Tank’s life looks very different. She goes to work with confidence and speaks openly about Catholic Charities so others know help exists.

“You don’t feel judged when you walk in,” Tank said. “You feel like someone genuinely wants to help you figure things out. And if life gets hard again, I know I can come back and they’ll say, ‘Let’s see what we can do.’”

Because of you, Tank didn’t face this season alone.

“Thank you to everyone who has donated,” Tank said. “You never know what a small thing can do for someone else.”



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BAPTISMS

**Wesley Dean**, son of Abby and Daniel Anderes, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Michael Church in Chapman. Godparents are Jim and Johanna Anderes.

**Beck Matthew Bennett**, child of Clayton Bennett and Sheldon Weigel, was baptized January 31, 2026, by Fr. Daryl Olmstead at St. Mary Queen of Angels Church in Russell.

**Weston Jay Brummett**, son of Brice and Casey Brummett, was baptized January 10, 2026, by Fr. Gale Hamerschmidt at St. Isidore's

Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Tucker Lane Champlin**, son of Shane and Hannah Champlin, was baptized January 25, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia.

**Maya Celia De la Serna**, daughter of Francisco and Breanna (Sander) De la Serna, was baptized December 14, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Mauricio and Jennifer De la Serna.

**Theodore Jude Dopita**, son of Nicholas and Kayla (Walker) Dopita, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparent is Kendall Walker.

**Clayton Joseph Dortmund**, son of Joseph and Samantha (Ptacek) Dortmund, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Nicholas L. Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays.

**Harper Grace Drylie**, daughter of Clay and Brittany (Dinkel) Drylie, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

**Cillian Donald Duley**, son of Michael Kingston Duley and Sarah Ann Duley, was baptized January 31, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolours Church in Manhattan.

**Rex Patrick Fahey**, son of Shawn Patrick Fahey and Hannah Marie Swihart, was baptized February 1, 2026, by Fr. Michael Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Eloise Ann Fleming**, daughter of Jacob and Caitlyn (Butts) Fleming, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at

St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Natalie Johnson and Dane Butts.

**Tucker Boone Foltz**, son of Ryan and Laci Foltz, was baptized by Fr. Peter O'Donnell on January 25, 2026, at St. Michael Church in Chapman. Godparents are Mitchell and Alex Keating. Honorary godparents are Stacy Smiley and Andrea Koster.

**Agnes Louise Francois**, daughter of Philip and Maureen (Mikinski) Francois, was baptized November 9, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Lucan and Sarah Schippers.

**Wrenley Rose Gassmann**, daughter of William and Taylor (Maxfield) Gassmann, was baptized December 21, 2025, by Fr. Joshua Werth at St. Joseph Church in New Almelo. Godparents are NaKayla Hock and Mason Schulze.

**Travis Paul Honas**, son of Samuel and Abigail (North) Honas, was baptized January 3, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Lucas Riley Hudson**, son of Noah and Kelsey Appl, was baptized January 19, 2026,

by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Addison Grace Hulett**, daughter of Tanner and Kristin (Wagner) Hulett, was baptized February 1, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

**Preston Elias Kaiser**, son of Chase Kaiser and Bonnie Sanchez, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Blaise Kaiser and Roxanne Kaiser.

**Sterling May Kaiser**, daughter of Chase and Trinity (Blundred) Kaiser, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Blaise Kaiser and Janessa Stanley.

**Keaton Douglas Kloss**, son of Alexander and Erin Kloss, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Emilio Silver Araiza Lewis**, son of Ricardo Araiza and Bristol Lewis, was baptized January 17, 2026, by Fr. Nicholas L. Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays.

**Eloise Marie Mahin**, daughter of Ethan and Elizabeth Mahin, was baptized January 25, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia.

**Mabel Sue Mahin**, daughter of Caleb and Gayle Mahin, was baptized January 25, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia.

**Makayla Nicole Maxwell**, daughter of Airen and Nicole (Zimmerman) Maxwell, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparent is Julie Niedert.




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## BAPTISMS

**Lowen Mae Miller**, daughter of Jared and Kelsey Miller, was baptized January 4, 2026, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell. Godparents are Chase Miller and Lexie Miller.

**Laura Rose Perkins**, daughter of Brandon and Marie (O'Donnell) Perkins, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Fr. Peter O'Donnell and Shannon Kinderknecht.

**Mary Marie Perryman**, daughter of: Joshua and Rianna (Venn) Perryman, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Rachel Benda and Ryan Benda.

**Jude Matthew Pyle**, son of Matthew and Rachel (Carney) Pyle, was baptized November 2, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Sarah and Colby Wetter.

**Iris Catherine Ramage**, daughter of Mason and Veronica (Lyle) Ramage, was baptized January 4, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Alexandra and Patrick Davidson.

**Lucas Jerold Reisinger**, son of Jordan and Megan (Workman) Reisinger, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Tessa Alquist and Quinten Ross.

**Josephine Kate Roenne**, daughter of Boyd and Molly Roenne, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

## WEDDINGS

**Samuel Allen DeVeny and Eleanor Melynn Lang** were married January 10, 2026, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt witnessed the vows. Parents of the groom are Brian and Jean DeVeny. Parents of the bride are John and Stacey Lang. Witnesses were Jack DeVeny and Anna Speno.

**Levi Keith Dreiling and Jaime Rebecca Luke** were married January 17, 2026, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Adam Urban witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Keith and Pamela Dreiling. Parents of the bride are James and Rebecca Luke. Witnesses were Mason Choitz and Savannah Kuhns.

**Ben Jensen and Michelle Stottmann** were married December 27, 2025, at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit. Fr. Jarett Konrade witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are

Kevin and Sheila Jensen. Parents of the bride are David Williams and Janice Stottmann. Witnesses were Brady Jensen and Morgan Garrett.

**Francis Leiker and Susan Case** were married January 24, 2026, at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor. Fr. Damian Richards witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Rosie Leiker and the late Herman Leiker. Parents of the bride are Steve and Irlana Waggoner. Witnesses were Kevin Huser and Amy Gosnell.

**Ryan Joshua Wessels and Grace Marie Schieferecke** were married January 3, 2026, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Don Zimmermann witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Rean and Katherine Wessels. Parents of the bride are Mark and Linda Schieferecke. Witnesses were Sergio Espino and Gillian Heger.

## FUNERALS

**Anita Jolene (Owens) Beckman**, 72, died October 30, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated November 5 at St. Martin of Tours Church in Seguin. Fr. Brian Lager presided. Burial in St. Martin of Tours Cemetery, Seguin.

**Doris M. Casey**, 100, of Hays died January 15, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 19 at St. Joseph Church in Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet presided. Burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Plainville.

**Edwin "Ed" Phillip Durall**, 89, died January 03, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 3 at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Dcn. Larry Erpelding presided. Inurnment at a later date.

**Donald Galen Emerick**, 99, died December 30, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 3, 2026, at St. Frances Cabrini Church in

Hoxie. Fr. Brian Lager, Fr. Warren Stecklein and Dcn. Luke Friess presided. Burial in St. Frances Cabrini Cemetery, Hoxie.

**Janice Louise Hattan**, 73, died January 28, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 4 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia. Fr. Joseph Kieffer presided. Burial in St. Concordia Cemetery, Concordia.

**Ronald "Ronnie" Herl**, 79, died January 8, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 12 at St. Mary's Church in Ellis. Fr. Dana Clark presided. Inurnment at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ellis.

**Roxana J. Marcotte**, 86, died January 18, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 23 at St. John the Baptist Church in Clyde. Fr. Andrew Rockers presided. Burial in Mt. Calvary Catholic Cemetery, Clyde.

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# Turning fasting into love

BY CHRISTINA PRICE  
THE REGISTER

As a story goes, a young nun was given a partridge by a dear friend. While she ate the dish, she was approached by someone who questioned whether it was appropriate for her to partake in it, given that she had taken a vow of poverty, and partridge was a delicacy. She quickly retorted, "When I fast, I fast. When I eat partridge, I eat partridge!"

As Lent approaches, we are all asked to step into poverty. We are called to recognize the poverty in our souls, and lean into prayer. We are called to recognize the poverty in our neighbor, and give alms. We are called to see our material excess, and fast from it... but, why?

On one side, fasting is a way to meditate more deeply with Jesus in the desert. It allows us to discern what we are inordinately attached to and practice self-discipline in breaking the attachment. Much like the ashes we receive, fasting reminds us that things in this life are passing- that we are passing.

On another side, fasting should not end in ourselves.

As with most things, it should be centered around the common good, around love for our neighbors. Matthew 6 beckons us to give alms, pray, and fast in secret. Through specific examples, the Word is cautioning us about doing things for vainglory. Fasting, if done as a challenge, to prove physical/spiritual "toughness", or as an end in itself, can become selfish- especially if we project the resulting suffering, and extra workload, onto those around us.

As we fast, we should reflect on how we can center the sacrifice in love.

It's true, there is much to be learned through suffering, yet, just as Jesus did not crucify Himself, our task isn't to self-inflict pain. As we draw closer to Christ Crucified, sorrow will find its way to us. Our task, rather, is to answer "yes" when asked if we will die for another. Pain passes away, love remains.

How, then, can we turn our fasting into love? Will we fast from sweets, and surprise a coworker with a candy bar? Will we fast from

hot showers so others' showers can be warmer? Will we fast from sleeping-in so we have time to do extra chores, allowing others to slumber longer?

Make no mistake, the earth is good. There are so many things to be enjoyed, and God wants us to delight in them. He wants us to experience goodness, so that we might yearn, and work, for others to experience it too, so that we might choose to forego tasting it if it means others will taste it too. Lenten fasting offers us the opportunity to practice intentionally – saying "yes" to loving our neighbor – steadily shaping virtue.

That young girl who enjoyed the gift of partridge was named Teresa, and she went on to become the first female doctor of the church. She so boldly shows us intentionality. Our life is to be enjoyed, and our life is to be sculpted. Throughout this Lent, might our actions be intentional, rightly ordered, and rooted in love. Might we retreat into the desert, and remain joyful. In the words of St. Teresa of Avila, "God, save us from gloomy saints!"

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

St. Óscar Romero was born in 1917 in a small town in El Salvador. From a young age, he felt called to serve God. He eventually became a priest. He was known as quiet, thoughtful, and careful in his work. Years later, he was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador during a time of great violence and injustice in his country.

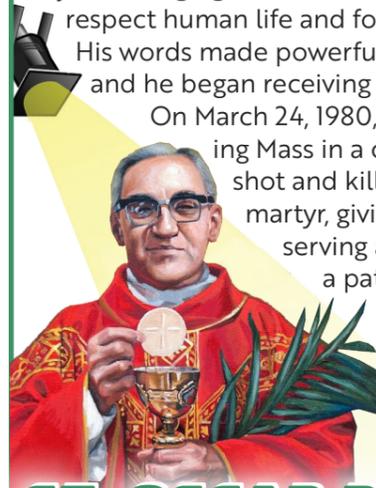
At first, many people believed Archbishop Romero would avoid conflict with the government. But after one of his priest friends was murdered for speaking out against injustice, Romero experienced a deep change of heart. He began using his sermons to defend the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering.

Each Sunday, he spoke boldly against injustice, urging soldiers and leaders to respect human life and follow God's law.

His words made powerful people angry, and he began receiving threats.

On March 24, 1980, while celebrating Mass in a chapel, he was shot and killed. He died as a martyr, giving his life while serving at the altar. He is a patron saint for

Christian communicators and social justice workers.



**ST. OSCAR ROMERO**

**FEAST DAY: MARCH 24**

# Distractions, dopamine, and the enemy

If I were Satan, I don't think I'd spend much energy trying to get people to worship me. That's not how it works anymore. Today, I'd just keep people distracted—not evil, just constantly busy and entertained. Distracted from prayer, from church, from deep thought, from asking the hard questions: Why am I here? What is God asking of me? How am I growing in holiness?

Satan doesn't need to drag us into something terrible. He just needs to keep us scrolling.

And the enemy has help. Social media companies are getting even better at keeping our attention – and keeping it for longer. They study what lights up our brain and train us to crave that next dopamine hit. The constant buzz, the endless feed, the "recommended for you" videos – it's all designed to keep us away from stillness, silence, and the presence

of God.

It's no accident. When we're distracted, we don't pray. When we don't pray, we don't change. And when we don't change, we stay stuck in patterns of sin, stress, and spiritual numbness.

We've got studies now showing the harmful effects of screen addiction on kids and adults alike. And as a deacon, coach, and parent – I see it every day. Young people can't sit in silence. Families are disconnected. Adults are overwhelmed. Our attention spans are shrinking. And the longer this goes on, the harder it is to hear the quiet voice of God.

Satan fears what happens when people wake up. He fears what happens when someone puts the phone down and really looks at their life. He fears

the soul that starts asking big questions and makes space to listen for God's answers.

Because once that happens... once someone begins to see the brokenness in the world and the hollowness of the hedonistic promises

around them... they start looking for something more. And they find it. They find God. And that's when real change begins.

We were made for more than distraction. We were made for eternity.

Let me encourage you to use Lent to – Take a hard look at your habits. Take back some silence. Prioritize prayer.

Fast from screens. Be willing to ask the hard questions about who you're becoming – and who God is calling you to be.

Thankfully, the Church gives us Lent for exactly

this purpose – To slow down. To eliminate distractions. To return to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. To reclaim our hearts and refocus our lives on what matters

most.

Let's pray for each other this Lenten Season, that we may be open to God's call in our lives and grow in our desire to seek and serve Him better.



**BILL Meagher**  
DEACON, SALINA DIOCESE

## Family Prayer for Fortitude



Dear Jesus, lay your wounded hand upon my weary head, and teach me to have courage in the paths that I must tread.

Bless me, and bless those whom I love, and give us grace to see these crosses

bravely borne by us will keep us close to Thee. And if at times a shadow falls in unexpected ways, put Your gentle Hand in mine and guide me through the days.

So bless my people, one and all, with Your protecting grace, and impart to them Your wisdom before they meet You face to face. Amen.

✂-----  
Cut this out and pray with your family!