



# THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

MARCH 27, 2026

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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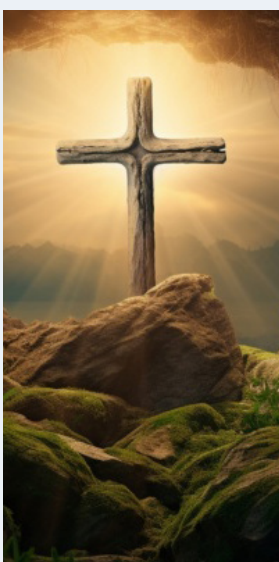
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## Record number of college students prepare to join Catholic Church

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Several hundred people will join the Catholic Church across the Diocese of Salina either at Easter 2026 or at Pentecost.

More than 150 of those are students and other area residents attending Christian initiation classes at the two university campuses in the Salina Diocese.

The numbers have more than doubled from a year ago for both Kansas State University in Manhattan and Fort Hays State University in Hays.

At K-State, there are more than 120 people who have been attending the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) sessions this year. That is more than twice as many as a year ago.

Fort Hays State's OCIA class also more than doubled from 2025 with just over 30 Elect members this year.

OCIA participants attended Rite of Election ceremonies at Salina and Hays this past month as the final step of preparation for the Easter Vigil.

Ridge Pinkston, assistant administrator at St. Isidore's Student Campus Center at K-State, said there is "no single issue" for the marked increase, saying "It's a mixture of the Holy Spirit and some cultural and social things."

"It's a return to consistency and tradition," said Pinkston, director of OCIA at St. Isidore's. "The Catholic Church has done a really good job of taking advantage of the media age, making it easier to learn about the Catholic faith."

Lucas Roths, director of the OCIA program at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center at FHSU, agreed.

"We live in the Information Age," he said, "and by the grace of God, Catholics have been really good about making information available."

"In the culture at large, there is a spiritual revival," Roths added.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Fort Hays State student Lindsey Blanks, Hill City, chats with Bishop Gerald Vincke at the Rite of Election ceremony at Hays. Blanks, along with over 150 university students in the area, plans to join the Catholic Church this year.



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Dozens of Kansas State University students attended the Rite of Election in Salina on February 22, including Gaige Knop, Chad Robinson, Nathan Chavez, Taylor Case, Grace Canuto, Allison Brummer and Daniel Hageman.

"People are wanting to be Christian again, especially people of this age."

Students at both diocesan universities will attest to that.

Fort Hays State junior Hannah Selle said she hadn't been consistently attending any church services because "I felt that wherever I went, there was no structure."

Then Hannah started attending Mass with her boyfriend, Keyan Miller. And she was attracted to the bedrock of the Catholic Church.

"With the Catholic Church, there is structure and purpose to everything that is said and done," she said.

"There is a set of rules to follow and a lot of support."

Morgan Allen, another FHSU student, said she has always "had a lot of questions about Catholicism."

"And if you look, there are answers," she said. "As those questions were getting answered, the closer I felt in my faith in Christ."

Morgan grew up in a Protestant family in Centralia and didn't attend church regularly until she started dating a Catholic.

"He convinced me to go to one Mass," she said of her boyfriend, Graham Valburg. "I went to Mass for a year and didn't tell anyone. I was so intrigued. You have to be open to what the Lord is trying to tell you, and I kept feeling an overwhelming sense of peace at Mass."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# For the sake of saving lives

A friend of mine shared with me recently how much their family enjoyed attending a play on the story of Joseph from the Old Testament. We know the story well. Joseph, the favored son of his father Jacob, was sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. While there, he became only second to Pharaoh because of his ability to interpret dreams. In one dream, he predicted that there would be seven years of abundant harvest but then seven years of famine.

**GERALD Vincke**  
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE

betrayed you out of ingratitude, out of avarice and was influenced by the evil one.

The priests and the Sanhedrin rejected you, blinded by your unexpected divine splendor. The soldiers whipped and derided you because they were brutal and knew not what they did.

Pilate handed you over to the executioners out of fear and skepticism. And the crowd shouted: 'Crucify him,' because they were aroused and had forgotten that 'you had passed among them doing good works.'

Condemned unjustly, condemned innocent.

But now I think, O Lord, that I have missed the deepest and most overwhelming truth. You were condemned justly, because you truly wanted to take upon yourself the terrible weight of all our sins, taking responsibility for them before God, our Creator and Father.

Even more so, for us and substituting for us, you wanted to "become sin for us," and became, in the sight of the world, 'like one before whom we hide our face out of shame.'

'Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.' You take them away so that you can continue to take them upon yourself and expiate them one by one.

And every day of our life is for you a Good Friday."

We thank Jesus for forgiving our sins, for being crucified justly for the sake of saving our lives.



## Happy Easter!

**May the risen Christ fill your hearts and homes with peace and joy. And may this Easter season renew your faith and inspire you to continue to live out your call as disciples of Jesus Christ on mission.**

From Bishop Gerald Vincke and the Salina Diocese Chancery Staff

### NEIGHBORS NEAR & NEIGHBORS FAR



### CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL



**TO GIVE/DONAR:**

PLACE AN ENVELOPE IN YOUR PARISH COLLECTION LABELED "CHMA" / COLOQUE UN SOBRE EN LA COLECTA DE SU PARROQUIA CON LA ETIQUETA "CHMA"

**NEARLY 40% OF DIOCESES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS CURRENT AND FORMER TERRITORIES STRUGGLE TO MEET BASIC PASTORAL NEEDS. THE CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL STRENGTHENS THE CHURCH AT HOME BY SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL PASTORAL PROGRAMS.**

**CASI EL 40% DE LAS DIÓCESIS DE ESTADOS UNIDOS Y SUS TERRITORIOS ACTUALES Y ANTIGUOS TIENEN DIFICULTADES PARA CUBRIR LAS NECESIDADES PASTORALES BÁSICAS. LA CAMPAÑA DE MISIONES CATÓLICAS NACIONALES FORTALECE LA IGLESIA EN EL ÁMBITO LOCAL MEDIANTE EL APOYO A PROGRAMAS PASTORALES ESENCIALES.**

## DID YOU KNOW?



For Catholics, Easter isn't just one day—it's a whole season! The Easter season lasts 50 days, beginning on Easter Sunday and continuing through the solemnity of Pentecost. In fact, the word "Pentecost" comes from the Greek word for "fifty."

During this time, the Church celebrates the joy of Christ's Resurrection as one long feast. The "Alleluia" returns after Lent, the readings focus on the risen Jesus and the early Church, and the Paschal candle remains lit at Mass as a symbol of Christ's light.

### APRIL PRAYER INTENTIONS

**Pope Leo's intentions:**

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

**Diocesan intentions:**

For all of us, that during Holy Week and throughout the Easter season we may grow in gratitude and truly appreciate the saving love God has shown us through Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

### BISHOP'S APRIL CALENDAR

- 3 Good Friday, Chancery Closed.
- 6 Easter Monday, Chancery Closed.
- 11 Transitional Deacon Ordination, S.H. Cathedral, Salina, 10 a.m.
- 16 Easter Mass at Ellsworth Prison, 6 p.m.
- 18 Together in Holiness Marriage Conf., IHM, Hays.

## COLLEGE CONVERSIONS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Morgan came to FHSU this year and became convinced that she wanted to join OCIA after attending the Crossroads Retreat in Munjor.

It was a leap of faith since her entire family is not Catholic.

“OCIA has been such a blessing, not only having questions answered for myself,” she said, “but it’s helped me practice how to defend my faith so early.”

Payton Dye, a K-State sophomore from Cimarron, said his curiosity about Catholicism is what drew him to the Catholic Church.

“I never understood what Catholics believed,” he said. “So I started researching the Eucharist and miracles, and it really fascinated me.”

Then he went to Eucharistic Adoration one night at St. Isidore’s Catholic Student Center.

“An overwhelming peace came over me, and I knew it was Him,” Payton said. “So I decided to do more research and learned about OCIA and definitely wanted to join.”

“I learn so much every week,” he added. “Every day I learn something new about the Church.”

Payton now attends a men’s group at St. Isidore’s and is planning on sponsoring a buddy in OCIA next year.

“So I get to go through OCIA again,” he said, “and continue to learn more about the Catholic Church.”

Roths – a cradle Catholic – is in



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

**K-State students Payton Dye, Tyler Kendrick, Samantha Joyce, Hunter Prochaska and Sam Baldwin join in praying at Salina’s Sacred Heart Cathedral. Over 120 people attended OCIA classes this year at K-State’s St. Isidore’s Catholic Student Center, more than doubling the number of participants from last year.**

his first year at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center in Hays and is thankful to have the opportunity to head up the OCIA program.

“It’s fascinating to me, because growing up in a small parish we didn’t have people joining the

church that often,” said Roths, who hails from Ransom, a small town in the Dodge City Diocese. “It’s so rewarding, getting to walk with the students who want to learn more about their faith and getting to help cradle Catholics grow in their faith.”

He said it helps provide a firm anchor, especially during the uncertain times of the world these days.

“You want to establish yourself to something stable,” Roths said, “and what is more stable than the Catholic Church?”

## Finding hope in our life’s Limbo

“He descended into hell.”

Every Sunday we proclaim these words in the Apostles’ Creed.

But what do they actually mean?

When I was growing up and learning the faith, I was often told that hell is

simply a place without God, or at least where people were separated from Him. So that always left me wondering: how could Jesus go there?

To answer that, I think it helps to go back to the Old Testament, where a lot of our understanding of the afterlife begins.

Many Jews of Jesus’ time believed that until the Messiah came, the dead couldn’t enter heaven yet. Instead, they waited in a place sometimes called Abraham’s bosom. It was a kind of waiting place for the faithful who had died before Christ opened the gates of heaven.

This place—also called Limbo—was very different from what we usually mean when we say “hell,” or Gehenna. It wasn’t a place of

punishment or rejection of God. It was a place of waiting.

So when we walk through the story of Christ’s Passion each spring, we remember the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, and we mourn Christ’s death on Good Friday. But there is a moment in

the story we do not always think about.

Where did Jesus go when He died?

The Church teaches that Christ did not descend into the hell of the damned. Those souls had rejected God during their lives. Instead, Jesus descended to the realm of the dead in limbo, to free the righteous who had been waiting for the Messiah.

That moment, when the world above seemed still but Christ was at work below, is what the Church is called to ponder on Holy Saturday.

Lent can get a lot of attention, and those forty days leading up to Easter are important. But I’ve always found myself growing closest to Christ in the quiet time

between Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

Holy Saturday. It’s a strange day in the Church calendar. Nothing happens. Everything feels still.

And yet, according to the Creed, something incredible is happening.

The place of waiting, the space for hope, becomes a place of encounter.

In some ways, the Lenten season mirrors that waiting. Our lives can sometimes feel like that, too. We live in the space between promise and fulfillment, waiting for the Savior who has already come—and who will come again.

One of my favorite pieces of literature captures this moment beautifully. It’s a poem called “Limbo” by Sr. Mary Ada, which imagines Christ’s descent from the perspective of the souls who had been waiting there.

In the poem, the grey stillness of limbo begins to shift. The old souls begin to wonder if they’re dreaming. They start to smell signs of spring—fresh flowers, newly plowed fields.

When they realize their Messiah is finally coming, they start

planning songs and greetings for Him.

But when He actually appears in their midst, all their plans fall away.

Everyone falls silent.

Everyone, that is, except for one.

“A silent man alone  
Of all that throng  
Found tongue—  
Not any other.

Close to His heart  
When the embrace was done,  
Old Joseph said,  
‘How is Your Mother,  
How is Your Mother, Son?’”

As we close out this Lenten season and celebrate Easter with joy, it might be worth reflecting on Christ’s redemptive love not only from the perspective of the people we meet in the Passion stories, but also from the perspective of those who waited so long for the Messiah to come.

And the next time you say the Apostles’ Creed at Mass and hear the words, “He descended into hell,” you might pause for a moment and remember what that means.

Even our places of waiting aren’t beyond Christ’s reach.

**LORI  
Garcia**  
EDITOR, THE REGISTER



## A heartfelt catch: K of C Fish Fry reels in funds for cardiac program

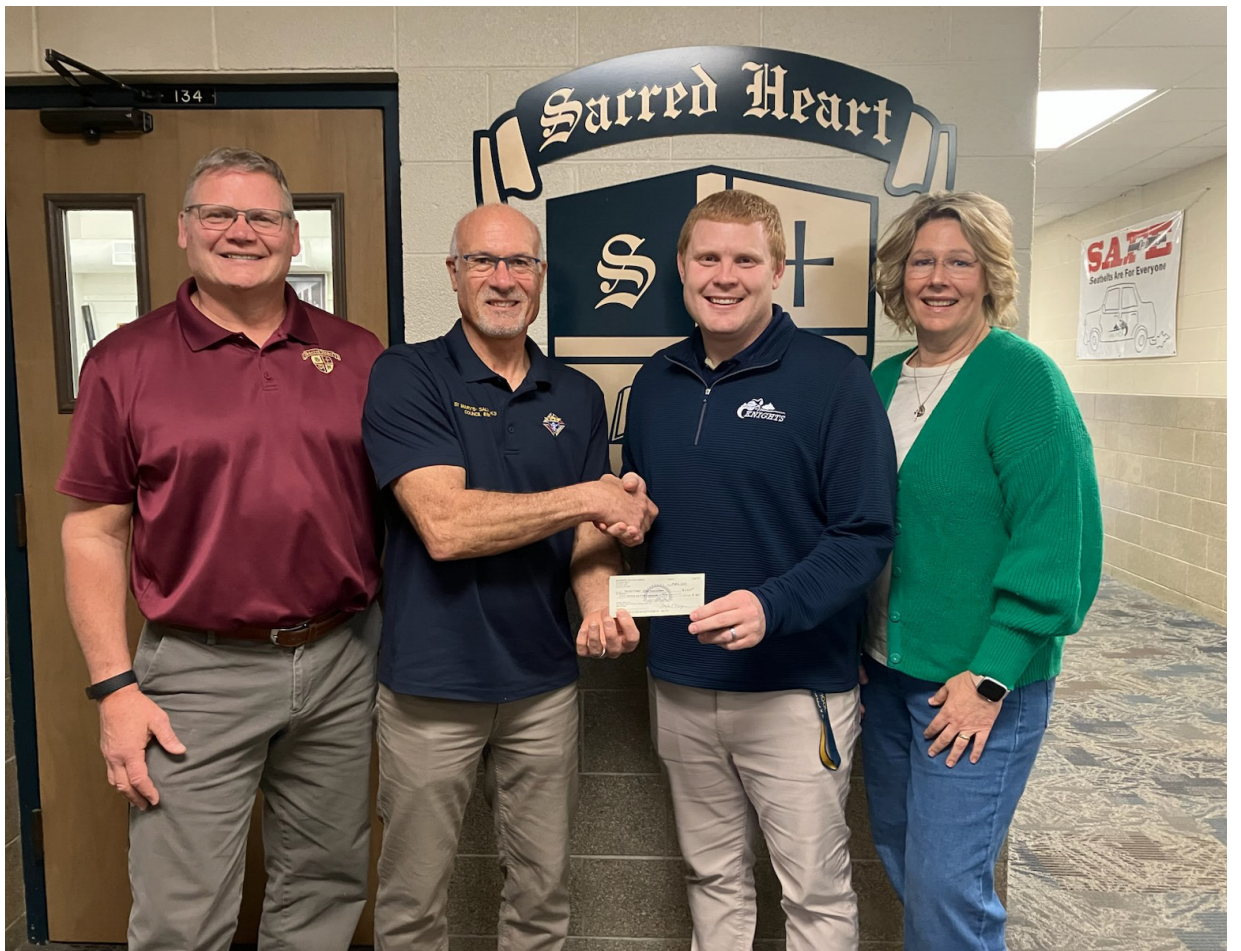
BY GREG PLOTT, KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS,  
AND JOHN KRAJICEK, SACRED HEART JR-SR HS  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Sacred Heart High School in Salina is taking important steps to strengthen its emergency preparedness and protect the health and safety of its students and staff.

On February 1 of this year, Sacred Heart High School nurse Barb Gack, in cooperation with Principal John Krajicek and teacher/EMT Tate Richards, reached out to the Knights of Columbus (K of C) Council 8196 to request funding for several AED machines along with related equipment and supplies needed to implement a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan and curriculum for students and staff at Sacred Heart Jr.-Sr. High School.

The proposed curriculum will align with standards established by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and will include staff training, designated response teams, and accessible automated external defibrillators (AEDs) located throughout the church and school campus. Their goal goes beyond compliance by embedding emergency preparedness directly into the health curriculum, providing students and staff with hands-on experience in life-saving skills supported by national best practices. These measures are intended to help ensure a quicker and more effective response in the event of a cardiac emergency.

Knights of Columbus member Doug Mergen suggested that the proceeds from the Lenten Fish Fry be directed toward supporting Sacred Heart High School's proposal. On February 27, the Knights held their first fish fry of the season, serving over 300 people and raising \$2500 to present to Sacred Heart High School to help purchase equipment for the



COURTESY PHOTO

Sacred Heart High School in Salina received a generous donation towards a cardiac plan and program, which intends to increase emergency preparedness in the building and place AEDs throughout the school and church. Above, the Knights present the school with proceeds from their Lenten Fish Fry. (L-R): Principal John Krajicek, Knights of Columbus representative Greg Plott, teacher/EMT Tate Richards and nurse Barb Gack.

Cardiac Emergency Response Plan Program. The strong turnout reflected the community's support for initiatives that directly benefit local students and staff.

This contribution marks an important step toward implementing the program and

expanding access to life-saving equipment across campus.

Anyone interested in contributing additional donations to support this effort may contact Barb Gack at [bgack19@gmail.com](mailto:bgack19@gmail.com).

## Celebration of Jesus' mercy takes place April 12

BY NATHAN LANG  
DIVINE MERCY RADIO

HAYS – The parishes in the Diocese of Salina will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday with some special prayer or service at 3 p.m. April 12.

A solemn hour of prayer and benediction will be held at 3 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays, Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina, and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Minneapolis. All services will include Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Mercy Chaplet in song, as well as prayers, music and meditation. Confessions will be heard before or during the service.

Other parishes throughout the diocese should check their parish bulletin for a service or attend a neighboring parish that may have a Divine Mercy service.

Devotion for Divine Mercy began in the 1930s when Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun, received special communications with Jesus in which he asked her to have this image painted to spread the message of his mercy.

Under the instructions of a spiritual director, Saint Faustina, as she is known, wrote down her revelations with Jesus, which is now contained in her 600-page diary. In these writings, Saint Faustina said all people are to call upon Jesus with trust, receive his mercy, and let it flow through us to others.

This mercy fulfills the message in Matthew's Gospel that states, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Saint Faustina said in her diary that we "radiate" God's mercy to others by our actions, our words and our prayers.

The Divine Mercy image is a painting of Jesus with two rays emerging from his heart representing the blood and water which flowed from the side of Jesus as his heart was lanced after he died upon the cross.

One is pale representing the water which makes souls righteous and signifies the sacrament of Baptism. The other is red for the blood, which is the life of souls and signifies the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It is from these two sacraments that Jesus founded His Church.

Saint Faustina wrote in her diary that Jesus said, "These two rays issued forth from the very depths of my tender mercy when my agonized heart was opened by a lance on the cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of my father. Happy is the one who dwells in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him." (Diary number 299.)

Saint Faustina died in 1938 at the age of 33. She was canonized a saint April 30, 2000, in Rome by the Pope at that time, Saint John Paul II. He said that the Sunday after Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, would now be an official feast day of the Church as Jesus requested through Saint Faustina.



EUGENIUSZ KAZIMIROWSKI

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated annually on the Sunday after Easter. It is a day to reflect on Jesus' mercy and how Catholics can reflect His merciful love in their own lives.

Divine Mercy is not just for Catholics – it is for all souls. All Christians share in Jesus' mercy, and all are invited in this special hour of prayer.

# Catholic Rural Life Office shares updates

## Volunteers needed for St. Isidore celebration

By DAVID EDELL

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The Rural Life Office of the Diocese of Salina is seeking participants in this year's Novena for St. Isidore. St. Isidore is the patron saint of farmers and Catholic Rural Life.

The Rural Life Office is seeking parishes that would be interested in leading one night of the Novena. Does your parish have a prayer group, Knights of Columbus, Altar Society, or Rosary group that would be

interested in leading? If so, please contact Deacon Ed Souza by email at: edsouza5861@gmail.com.

This year, the virtual Novena begins on Wednesday, May 6th. Historically, each night of the Novena is led by a different parish from across the Salina Diocese. Past leaders have included: Bishop Vincke, Salina Diocese; St. Mary's Parish, Smith Center; St. Francis Xavier, Junction City; Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia; Sacred Heart, Plainville; and St. Gregory the Great, Marysville.

Our celebration of St. Isidore will culminate with a Mass to celebrate the Feast of St. Isidore on Friday, May 15th,



COURTESY PHOTO

The Catholic Rural Life Office celebrates St. Isidore, patron saint of farmers and rural life, each year. In this file photo of the celebration from 2024, Fr. Rich Daise prepares to bless a calf held by Gary and Kayleigh Blundon and Clayton Dingle. To become more involved or volunteer for this year's celebration with the Rural Life Office, contact Deacon Ed Souza at edsouza5861@gmail.com.

2026, at a parish in the East Central Deanery.

The Rural Life Office would also like to extend an invitation to all of the parishes in the Salina Diocese to become more involved in Catholic Rural Life. More information about forming a parish-based chapter will be coming in the near future. The Diocese of Salina is also interested in any person who would like to participate in Catholic Rural Life at the diocesan level. Please contact Deacon Ed Souza at the email above if your parish is interested in forming a Catholic Rural Life Chapter or if you are interested in becoming involved at the diocesan level.

## Rural Life Office sponsors Kansas Commodity Classic

By DAVID EDELL

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

On January 30, Catholic Rural Life's outreach was felt by Kansas agricultural leaders, elected officials, and the producers of corn, soybeans, wheat, and sorghum attending the Kansas Commodity Classic. This marks the fourth year that the Rural Life Office has sponsored the KCC. Fr. Rich Daise, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis; Deacon Ed Souza, St. Francis Xavier, Junction City; and Bishop Vincke have all participated in blessing the gathering over the years.

Those in attendance learned about the resilience shown by Kansas farmers and ranchers in the wake of natural disasters, avian influenza, and other hazards that are part and parcel of a life in agriculture. In spite of these challenges, Kansas ag businesses have continued to thrive and grow.

Several CRL board members and Salina Diocese parish members attended. Deacon Ed Souza led this year's blessing before the meal.

Dcn. Souza started the blessing with a quote from Liberty Hyde Bailey, the

father of American horticulture, on why people pray before meals.

"I sow the seed. I see the tender things come up and I feel as if I had created something new and fine, that had not been seen on the earth before; and I have a new joy as deep and as intangible as the joy of religion."

Dcn. Souza continued, reflecting on the connection between faith, the land and the work of agriculture.

He said, "Bless the hands that work the soil, the minds that steward Your creation, that we might leave the land better than we found it. Bless this food before us—fruit of the earth and work of human hands. Grant us wisdom in our deliberations, courage in our challenges, and gratitude for the privilege of tending this holy earth."

The Rural Life Office continues to demonstrate how faith is a vital component of farming and ranching. It is by the grace of God that Kansas farmers and ranchers continue their work in feeding the state of Kansas, the nation, and the world.

## Fr. Metro dies

Father John LeRoy Metro, a priest for the Diocese of Salina, passed away on March 7, 2026. He was 88 years old.

Fr. Metro was born on March 17, 1937—St. Patrick's Day—in Concordia, Kansas, the oldest of six children born to John and Lillie Metro. Though his family lived in Concordia, his parents were originally from Aurora, where he was baptized on March 21, 1937, the feast of St. Benedict.

Fr. Metro often spoke with gratitude about the strong Catholic heritage of his family. The Metros were of French Canadian descent, with ancestors who had moved from Canada to Kansas generations earlier. As a child, he enjoyed hearing stories

from his grandparents about the faith of their family—including their distant relationship to St. André Bessette, who was canonized in 2010.

He attended Catholic grade school in Concordia. Fr. Metro often said that he first felt drawn to the priesthood at the time of his First Holy Communion in the second grade. As he grew older, that call continued to grow. He began attending daily Mass, serving at the altar or singing in the choir, and by seventh and eighth grade he was helping train younger altar servers.

At 13 years old, after finishing eighth grade, he entered the high school seminary in Victoria, Kansas. Though leaving home was difficult and filled with uncertainty, the friars and fellow students quickly became a second family. Fr. Metro later recalled those seminary years as a time of great growth, friendship, and faith—years that shaped both his character and his vocation.

After high school, he continued his formation at Conception Seminary College in Conception, Missouri, where he completed both college and theology studies over eight years.

Fr. Metro was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 1963, at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina by Bishop Frederick Frecking.

Throughout his many years of ministry, he served the people of the diocese in numerous roles:

1963 – Associate Pastor, Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan

1963 – Associate Pastor, Sacred Heart Parish, Colby

1966 – Associate Pastor, Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan, and instructor at the parish schools

1968 – Pastor, St. Peter Parish, Aurora, and instructor at Notre Dame High School, Concordia

1969 – Pastor, St. Philip Parish, Hope, and St. Columba Parish, Elmo; instructor at Sacred Heart High School, Salina

1971–1977 – Director of Vocations

1973 – Chaplain, Nazareth Motherhouse and Manna House of Prayer, Concordia

1984 – Pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Gypsum, in addition to duties at Marymount College

1988 – Pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Lincoln, and St. Mary Parish, Glasco

1989 – Pastor, St. Thomas Parish, Stockton, and St. Francis Parish, Claudell

1993 – Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Salina

1997 – Pastor, St. John the Baptist Parish, Clyde; St. Mary Parish, Clifton; and St. Peter Parish, Aurora

In 2007, he retired from active parish ministry, but he continued to serve the Church as a spiritual director.

Fr. Metro often said that his greatest joy as a priest was being with the people of the Diocese of Salina. In his vocation story, shared with the Diocese in 2011, he wrote simply, "I have loved being a priest."

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. Please continue to pray for Fr. Metro and for his family.



COURTESY PHOTO

Fr. Metro, Diocese of Salina

# Women's Spirituality Conference planned

By ROSIE RUNDELL  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

What is Women's Spirituality all about? Rooted in prayer and ritual, it embraces rich, egalitarian, and feminine symbolism to help women encounter God in the moments of everyday life. From caring for children to managing responsibilities at home and work, it honors qualities often described as "feminine," such as openness to mystery, attentiveness to relationships and acceptance of differences.

This spirit of faith and connection is at the heart of the Annual Women's Spirituality Conference, sponsored by the women of St. Thomas More and Seven Dolores parishes. Now in its 20th year, the conference will be held on April 18, 2026, continuing a tradition that has inspired women in the Manhattan community for nearly two decades.

The conference began in 2007 when Rosella Rainbolt, a member of St. Thomas More

parish, recognized a need for spiritual opportunities specifically designed for women.

She organized the first event with speakers from Avila College and Creighton University. As interest grew, the conference expanded its reach, inviting nationally and internationally recognized presenters, including those featured at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress in Anaheim, California.

Over the years, attendees have heard from respected speakers such as Sister Joyce Rupp, Valimar Jansen, Kathy Coffey, Sister Edith Pendergast, Megan McKenna, Julianne Stanz, and Sarah Hart.

Continuing that tradition, this year's conference welcomes back Sarah Hart as the featured speaker and musician. A leading figure in contemporary Catholic music, Hart has touched millions through her heartfelt songs of faith. Originally from Lancaster, Ohio, she earned her degree in music from The Ohio State University and is now based in Nashville, where she balances songwriting, record-

ing, and a busy national schedule of concerts and events.

Many of Hart's songs, including "Go in Peace," "You Alone," and "Sweet Redeemer," have become part of the shared worship experience for Catholics across the United States. Known for her signature blend of folk, pop, and rock, she connects with audiences of all ages. She frequently collaborates with artists such as Curtis Stephan, Steve Angrisano, and Jesse Manibusan, and her work has been recorded by well-known musicians including Amy Grant, Celtic Woman, Matt Maher, Jason Crabb, and Newsboys. Notably, Grant's recording of Hart's "Better Than a Hallelujah" received a Grammy nomination for Best Gospel Song.

With her dynamic energy, engaging sense of humor, and deep faith, Sarah Hart promises to offer a meaningful and memorable experience for those who attend. Registration for this year's conference is available through St. Thomas More's website.

## Faith in the Future:

# Why more parishes and families are starting funds

Over the past several months, I've had the privilege of visiting with parish councils and parishioners across our diocese. One theme keeps surfacing: a deep love for their parish and a desire to make sure it remains strong for generations to come.

It's a beautiful thing to witness.

More and more parishes are beginning conversations about starting a fund or strengthening an existing one, not because they are in crisis, but because they are thinking ahead. We are also seeing more individuals and families exploring how they can create funds to support the parish, schools and ministries they care about most.

So what is a fund?

In simple terms, it's a dedicated pool of resources set aside to support the long-term mission. Some funds are permanent endowments, where the principal remains invested and earnings are used each year to support ministry, Catholic education and parish needs. Others are more flexible funds designed to help with future projects or specific purposes.

Individuals and families can also establish funds that support a parish, school, ministry, or even scholarships for students. In many cases, these funds are created as a way to honor a loved one, support a ministry that

shaped their faith, or leave a legacy that continues serving the Church long after they are gone.

At its heart, a fund is simply a tool, one that helps move from year-to-year budgeting to long-term stewardship.

An endowment is not about fear of the future. It is about faith in the future.

One of the most common questions we receive is about how those funds are invested. That's an important question. At the Catholic Foundation, all funds are invested in

alignment with Catholic values. We do not invest in companies or industries that contradict the teachings of the Church. In fact, we believe strongly that our financial resources should reflect our faith just as much as our words and actions do.

Why would we do anything else?

A fund can:

- Provide steady support for parishes, schools, and ministries
- Invite legacy gifts from parishioners who love their Church
- Ensure that today's generosity continues blessing tomorrow's families

For individuals and families, a fund can also become a lasting expression of their faith and generosity, supporting the Church and the ministries they care about for generations.

And most importantly, starting the conversation is not complicated.

**HEATHER  
Hartman**  
CEO, CATHOLIC FOUNDATION  
FOR THE DIOCESE OF SALINA



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## 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.

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).

### Catholic Leadership Opportunities

- Abilene, Principal – St. Andrew's Elementary (PreK-5)
- Junction City, Principal – St. Francis Xavier Catholic School (PreK-12)
- Manhattan, Principal – Manhattan Catholic Schools (PreK-8)
- Salina, Asst. Principal/Athletic Director – Sacred Heart Jr-Sr HS (7-12)

Call or email Superintendent Geoff Andrews  
[geoff.andrews@salinadiocese.org](mailto:geoff.andrews@salinadiocese.org)  
(785) 643-4286

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

**April 2**

• Holy Thursday, Chancery Closed at 1 p.m.

**April 3**

• Good Friday, Chancery Closed.

**April 5**

• Easter Sunday.

**April 6**

• Easter Monday, Chancery Closed.

**April 11**

• Transitional Deacon Ordination for Kyle Pfeifer, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 10 a.m.

**April 12**

• Divine Mercy Sunday. **(If you have questions about a listed event, please contact the parish, office or school directly.)**

**April 18**

• Together in Holiness Conference, IHM, Hays, 9:45 a.m.

• St. Xavier School Auction, Junction City, Mass 4 p.m.

• Blue & Gold Affair, Sacred Heart School, Salina, 5:30 p.m.

**April 23**

• Catholic Charities, S.H. Cathedral, Mass, 10 a.m.

**April 25**

• ACE Auction, TMP-M, Hays, 6 p.m.

TRANSITIONAL

## Deacon Ordination

Kyle Pfeifer

April 11

10 AM @ Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina

DIOCESE OF SALINA

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APRIL 18, 2026 | 9:45 AM - 5:00 PM  
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Sacred Heart Catholic School in Emporia, KS, is seeking a dynamic and visionary leader with a passion for Catholic education. The principal will continue the school's tradition of forming disciples, pursuing academic excellence, and spiritual growth. The principal will lead by example and inspire a team of dedicated faculty and staff. Applicants must have or be eligible for Kansas licensure in educational leadership. Apply online at [archkckcs.org/apply](http://archkckcs.org/apply). For more information, contact Vince Cascone at [vcascone@archkckcs.org](mailto:vcascone@archkckcs.org).

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“Oscar’s going to have a great opportunity to grow up. If Catholic Charities wasn’t here, that wouldn’t have happened,” says Trina & Michael, adoptive parents to Oscar.

Join us in God’s work at [www.ccnks.org](http://www.ccnks.org)!

5TH ANNUAL BENEFIT EVENING  
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# He is Risen!

It's time to celebrate His greatest miracle of all!

## Happy Easter

Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas  
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# St. Mary's students in Salina carry on long-time school programs

SUBMITTED TO THE REGISTER

Students at Salina's St. Mary's Grade School have been busy this semester with various projects.

The fourth-grade students hosted the 26th annual Kansas Wax Museum, a project that was created in 2000 under then-principal Dr. Nick Compagnone with then fourth-grade teacher Anel Minneman.

Minneman is a big fan of Kansas Day, so she created the Wax Museum. The project has evolved over the years to include advancements in technology.

In preparation for this event, students researched notable historical Kansans from government, sports, arts and other fields. They portrayed these individuals in costume and presented short oral reports, bringing Kansas history to life in an engaging and educational way.

This annual event – now under the direction of fourth-grade teachers Jennifer Burr and Shirley Zink – is an important part of the Social Studies curriculum, helping students develop research, writing, speaking, and presentation skills while deepening their understanding of Kansas history and its impact on our nation. The project also helps promote confidence, creativity and pride in their learning.

The Kansas Wax Museum also has a lasting impact on the students by encouraging critical thinking and responsibility.

Through this project, students

learned how to gather and evaluate information, organize their ideas, and communicate effectively. They gained confidence in public speaking and developed a deeper appreciation for Kansas's rich heritage and the people who shaped it.

Families and friends attended this event to show support for the students as they showcased their hard work and dedication.

### Annual City Tour

Sixth-grade students at St. Mary's took part in their annual



COURTESY PHOTOS

St. Mary's Grade School students bring history to life with their Kansas Wax Museum project to celebrate Kansas Day.



Corporal Works of Mercy City Tour.

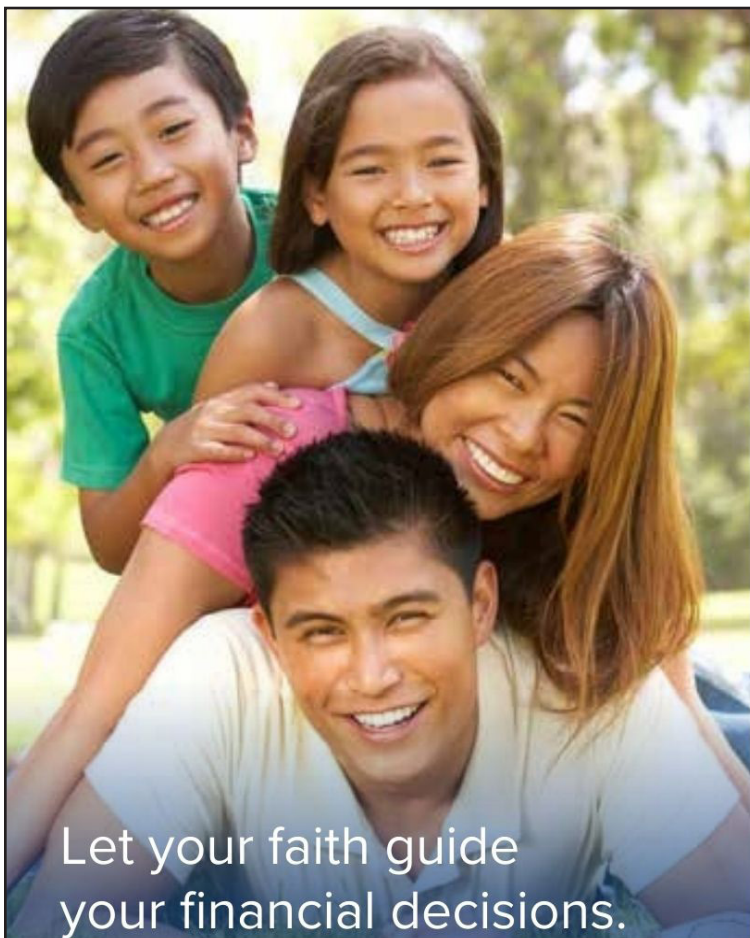
Coordinated by sixth-grade teacher Cheri Gillis, the tour is a local mission experience that has been a school tradition since 2009.

During Catholic Schools Week, students visited community organizations including Morrison House, Meals on Wheels, the Saline County Jail and the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

They learned from Catholic

Charities, the Salina Rescue Mission and the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas about serving others through the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Students and families also collected donations, created prayer cards for inmates and prepared treat bags for Meals on Wheels recipients. The City Tour, in its 16th year, helped students grow in faith, empathy and a deeper understanding of living the Gospel in the Salina community.



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# State championship weekend for Catholic cagers

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

Six seniors on the Beloit-St. John's/Tipton Catholic boys' basketball team had been working toward this season for a long time.

The Blujay half dozen finished their prep careers with a bang, claiming the state championship in Class 1A Division I in Dodge City.

Meanwhile, halfway across the state on the same day, Salina-Sacred Heart's girls also were celebrating in big fashion after winning the Class 2A finale in Emporia.

It was the first state title for girls' basketball at Sacred Heart, which came under the direction of fifth-year coach Carl Hines and his staff.

The Knights were escorted out of Salina by police, firemen and EMS as they made their way to Emporia, and they didn't disappoint, downing Ellinwood 43-34 and finishing with a 24-5 record.



COURTESY PHOTO

St. John's seniors and their teammates were all smiles after winning the 1A DI state title.

Closing out their prep basketball careers for the Knights were seniors Holly Bonilla, Skyler Douglas and Nicole Richards.

St. John's-Tipton defeated South Central, 57-53, giving the Blujays their first state title since 2014 when current Assistant Coach Parker Gates played for the Blujays.

This year marks the seventh state tournament for Lance Bergmann in his 17 years as head coach for St. John's-Tipton, which finished this season with a 24-2 record.

In the state championship game, senior Edward Horinek broke the school record for most points in a career with 1,586, surpassing the mark of 1,582 set by Davis Dubbert 10 years ago.

Blujay fans showed their support for their team both in Dodge City and back home as the team received a midnight police escort into Beloit on its return trip from the state tourney.

The players and coaches for both St. John's-Tipton and Sacred Heart teams also were honored with post-tourney celebrations in the weeks following the state tournaments.

Seniors from the St. John's-Tipton team joining Horinek in a memorable final prep season were Grant Goodaker, John Mick, Kaden Rabe, Gabriel Roderick and Greg Walter.

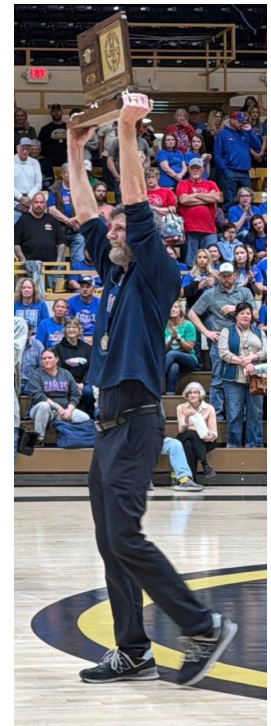
## Double the fun

Coincidentally, one of the diocesan grade schools was well



COURTESY PHOTOS

The Sacred Heart girls' team gathered for a team photo while showing off their state championship hardware. At right, their coach, Carl Hines, lifts high the first-ever state basketball championship trophy for the Knight girls.



represented at state.

The majority of Hanover's boys' and girls' teams – which both advanced all the way to their state championship games in Class 1A DII – are graduates of Hanover's St. John's Catholic Grade School. Several players and the Wildcat coaches are members of St. John's Parish.

And a third of the Wildcat teams had the same last name with multiple sibling combinations.

Junior Drew Bruna and her younger sister, sophomore Lilly, were members of the girls' team that finished as state runner-up after coming up short in an exciting overtime thriller in the title game.

Two sets of Bruna siblings represented both Wildcat teams – junior Gracie and her younger

brother (sophomore Jack) and sophomore Brooklyn and her older brother (junior Tanner).

Other Brunas on the Wildcat boys' team which claimed the 1A DII state title were distant relatives, sophomores Hayden and Cooper.

Hanover was one of only two schools in the entire state that had both their boys' and girls' teams make it all the way to their state title games. The other was Shawnee Mission South in 6A, where the Raider girls finished first and the boys, second.

## Hays/TMP-Marian

The Monarch boys advanced for the first time since 2023 but lost in the first round to St. Marys, which went on to claim the third-place trophy in 2A.

## WORK PAYS OFF FOR DIOCESAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN  
THE REGISTER

A total of 13 seniors at Catholic high schools across the Salina Diocese earned significant scholarships from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

Four of the five diocesan schools fall in the 26-county area for the Hansen Scholarship Program, and all four were represented in this year's scholarship recognition: Salina-Sacred Heart, Tipton Catholic, Beloit-St. John's and Hays/Thomas More Prep-Marian.

Leading the way for that group is Isaac Berndt from Sacred Heart, a Hansen Scholar – the level where students earn a \$6,500 scholarship annually and is renewable for three years.

Other categories involving diocesan schools were the Hansen Student and the Career and Technical Education. Each of those levels are for \$4,000 annually and renewable for one year.

Following is a list of this year's Hansen winners.

### Hansen Scholar

• Sacred Heart – Isaac Berndt

### Hansen Student

- Sacred Heart – Cody Burr
- St. John's – Lynelle Gengler, Edward Horinek, Greg Walter
- TMP-Marian – Isaac Purinton
- Career and Technical Educ.**
- St. John's – Nicodemus Clark, Grant Goodaker, Gunner Pruitt, Peter Smith, Ava Wiles
- Tipton – Luke Hollerich, Owin Jones

### State bowler

Cody Burr, a senior at Salina-Sacred Heart, finished 14th at the Class 4-1A regional bowling tournament in Buhler in February. His three-game series of 458 qualified him for the Kansas State Bowling Championships.

At state earlier this month in Wichita, Cody improved his regional total amount by 79 pins for a 537 to finish in the top 50 at 47th.

### Key Club winner

Alyssa Church, a senior at Hays/Thomas More Prep-Marian, is celebrating her final year in Kiwanis Key Club in style.

Alyssa, president of her school's



COURTESY PHOTO

Cody Burr, Salina-Sacred Heart



COURTESY PHOTO

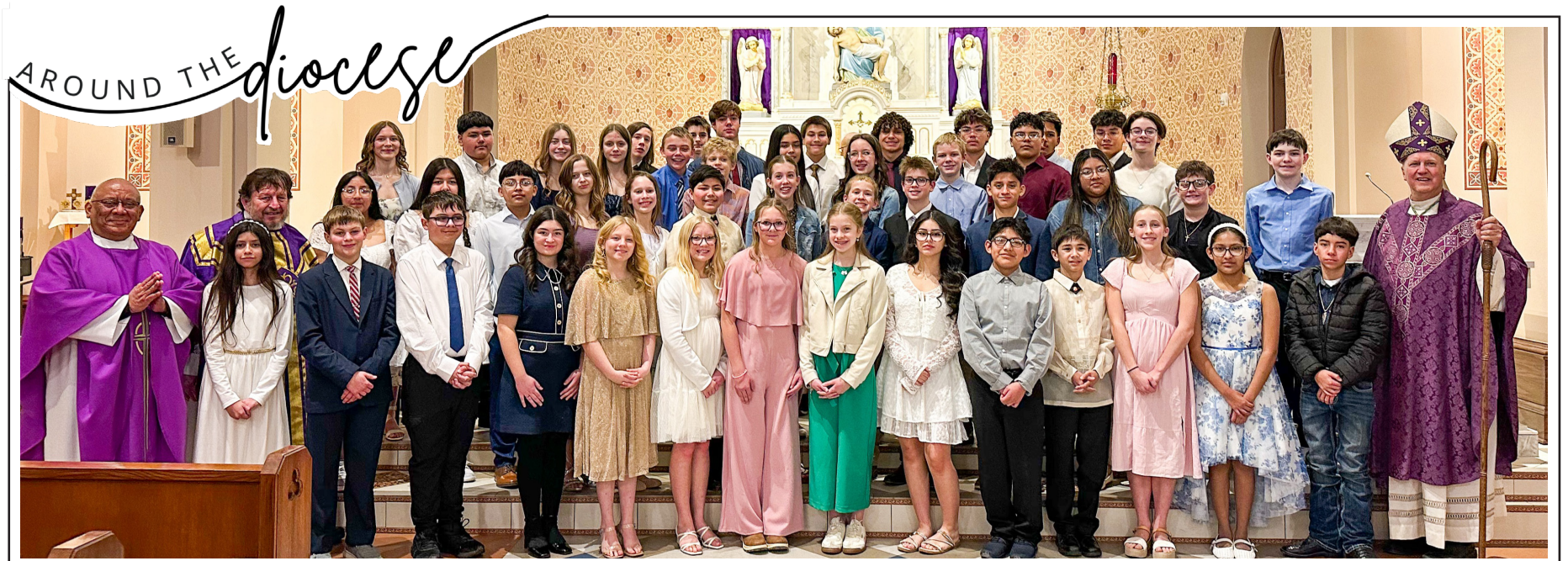
Alyssa Church, Hays/TMP-M

Key Club, took first place in the oratory competition at the Key Club District Convention March 5-7 in Manhattan. Alyssa's speech centered on how service has impacted her life.

Key Club, celebrating its 101st year in 2026, is the high school branch of Kiwanis International, which focuses on leadership, character and community service.

### 2-time state qualifier

Sophomore GERALYN STEIN from Hays/TMP-Marian made it 2-for-2 in her high school wrestling career by qualifying for the Class 3-2-1A State Championships for a second straight year. Although she lost her first two matches at state, the postseason experience surely will be a benefit the next two years.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Seven Dolores, Manhattan, Confirmation - February 21, 2026**

First Row (L-R): Fr. Rafael Indave Campos, Ivanna Coronado-Robledo, Trenton Taylor, Frank Tortella, Julie Johnson, Hope Riley, Bailey Riley, Emma Millsap, Julie Ruiz Diaz, Karyna Chavez, Jesse Francisco, Alexander Bayless, Frances Irvine, Monce Francisco, Maximiliano Galvan-Nuñez, and Bishop Gerald Vincke.  
 Second Row: Fr. Leo Blasi, Sarai Mejia-Chavez, Kimberly Mejia-Chavez, Edwin Montejo, Claire Lowry, Evelyn Schmidt, Benjamin Bayless, Ryan Vera, Nathaniel Stamm, Thad McKinley, Jonathan Espinoza, Aileen Montejo, Reid Breault, Miles Huggard  
 Third Row: Brynn Lawson, Daviel Regules-Torres, Ellen Peschel, Morgan Ferland, Logan Troyer, Logan Feldkamp, Stephanie Ramirez, Chloe Brennan, Jack KuKanich, Damian Cuevas Urista, Ellie Weiszbrod.  
 Back: Kolbe Theubet, Augustine Martin, Max McAlpine, Damien Aikens, David Arzuza, José Maria Cuevas, Jesús Cuevas Urista, Giovanni Espinoza



COURTESY PHOTO

**Sacred Heart, Colby, Confirmation**

Back row (L-R): Fr. Brian Lager, Silas Horinek, Joseph Schrick, Trae Williams, Brasen Fikan, Syler Rhymer, Bryer Reid and Deacon Tom Schrick  
 Middle back row: Cashlyn Moss, Londyn McKee, Aria Garcia, Lucy Anne Lager, Jaida Cersovsky, MaKenlea Focke, Kaylee Wilson  
 Middle front row: Noble Finley, Brennen Ostmeier, Jaxon Ohlogge, Max Juenemann, Mateo Dominguez, Bishop Vincke  
 Front row: Elan Baalman, Nathan Hernandez, Fabian Torres, Levi Schroeder, Marcus Johnson, Kyle Bremenkamp



St. Mary's School, Ellis, collected non-perishable food and monetary donations during Catholic Schools Week to donate to the Ellis Food Box Pantry. The whole school then walked to the Pantry to deliver the 64 non-perishable items and \$126 in donations. Rita Younger, who is a St. Mary's Church parishioner and a volunteer at the Pantry, graciously showed the students and staff around and explained what happens to their donations after they reach the Pantry.



COURTESY PHOTO

St. Mary's Grade School in Salina raised \$707.83 for Catholic Charities. Each classroom had a baby bottle for students to fill with coins or bills and the students participated with enthusiasm.



COURTESY PHOTO

Adele Hynek, competing in the 9-year-old girls division for the first time, earned 2nd place at the Kansas Knights of Columbus State Free Throw Championship on March 1 in Salina. She previously won 1st place at the local competition in Hanover (Jan. 25), the district competition in Marysville (Feb. 1), and the regional competition in Topeka (Feb. 15).

# Are you ready?

By **DONETTA ROB BEN**  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Are you ready to die?  
In Matthew's Gospel (Ch 24), Jesus warns us to be ready at all times. "As in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. . . for the Son of Man is coming at a time you do not expect."

Also, in Matthew's Gospel (Ch 25), there is the parable about the foolish maidens. Five had enough oil in their lamps, and five did not. When the foolish maidens said to Jesus, "Lord, Lord, open to us," Jesus replied, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you. Watch therefore, for you do not know the day or hour."

Recently, I experienced this. Before my husband and I left for our trip to Jordan and Israel, I asked my husband to have our son come over so he would know where our important papers were.

My husband thought I was crazy, but I told him that our son needs to know at some point anyway. (Personally, I think God gives women better intuition about these things.)

On the eighth day of this pilgrimage, we were in Jerusalem. We had just boarded the bus for the day's tour when we heard the sirens go off. My thought was, "It's happening."

They took us back to the hotel. When we got the all-clear, our tour guide asked if we wanted to go out to see some sites or stay at the hotel. All of us said we wanted to see more sites.

We walked the road that Jesus walked, coming into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when we heard the sirens go off again.

They asked us to take shelter in a church called Dominus Fleuit, which is shaped like a teardrop and named for the Lord weeping over Jerusalem because the people did not recognize him. Another group of pilgrims was taking shelter there as well.

Then, we heard a really loud BOOM. It was as loud as if lightning struck the block on which you live. It was a missile being intercepted quite close to us. Then the priest in our group, Father Edmund Kline, stood up and gave us



COURTESY PHOTO

On a recent trip to the Mideast, Lester and Donetta Robben renewed their wedding vows in the church built over the miracle of Jesus turning the water into wine at Cana.

all general absolution.

After the all-clear signal, we continued to The Church of All Nations built over the rock on which Jesus agonized. Our group then went to the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, where Jesus was presented to the high priest Caiaphas.

That's when the sirens went off again. Our guide received a call from headquarters at Tour 206, telling him to get us back to the hotel and shelter in place.

Within the next couple of hours, everything shut down. The borders and airports were closed. Tour 206 worked with their Israeli and Jordanian employees into the night to figure out a way to get us out of the country and back home.

The next day, they bused us to the only Jordanian border open to refugees. It took four hours at the border because our group was Christian. Christians are seen as third-class citizens. So, cars and buses that came to the border after us got to go through before us because they were Palestinians.

Finally, we got to our hotel in Amman. Sirens still went off, but not as frequently.

The next day, our tour group arranged for us to fly out of Amman, the only airport open in Jordan.

Even though Jordan is neutral in the war, Israel uses their airspace.

We didn't know whether we would be able to leave until the plane actually took off. My thought was that if the enemy wanted to blow up a bunch of Americans, they would shoot down this plane.

The pilots flew us out of the dangerous airspace as quickly as they could and took a long flight route—13 hours—to get us to Chicago.

Throughout this entire ordeal, I was unafraid. I was ready to die if that was God's will. So, maybe a good question for all of us this Lenten season is, "Are you prepared to die?" If not, get ready, for we do not know the day or hour.



Along I-70

KGOH 89.1, Colby  
Colorado border to Quinter

KMDG 105.7, Hays  
Quinter to Ellsworth

KJDM 101.7 Lindsborg/Salina  
Ellsworth to Junction City

Other Stations

KRTT 88.1 Great Bend

KVDM 88.1 Hays  
(EWTN Radio Extra)

K297AI 107.3 Hill City

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# Chosen & Cherished

## Graham's Story

McKenzie and Cameron grew up as best friends, started dating their sophomore year of high school, and walked through some of life's hardest moments side by side. During the summer of 2011, McKenzie was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder that required a bone marrow transplant. Cameron never left her side. Due to infertility from chemotherapy, they knew early on that adoption would be the path to growing their family when that time came.

In March 2020, they began their adoption journey—trusting, waiting, praying. After two and a half years, just when they wondered if the call would ever come, God's plan unfolded in the most extraordinary way.

On September 7, 2022, they learned they had been chosen by a birth family – and that their baby

boy was due in just 16 days – on the anniversary of McKenzie's bone marrow transplant 11 years earlier. A powerful reminder that God's timing is never accidental.



Their son Graham was born on October 4, 2022, and the past three years have far exceeded their wildest dreams. Graham is funny, ornery, gentle-hearted, and ALL boy – with a big love for dinosaurs, Power Rangers, sports, dirt, and bugs.

"We thank God every day for choosing us to be Graham's mom and dad. He will never go a day without knowing just how much he is wanted, chosen, and LOVED. Our hearts have never been fuller."

Adoption is a journey shaped by prayer, trust, and God's perfect timing. Below, you'll meet two families who have graciously shared their adoption stories that honor both the joy and the tender emotions that adoption brings. Your generosity is a lifeline of hope and opportunity for families like these and for birth parents seeking brighter futures for their children. Thank you for making that possible.

## Oscar's Story

In 2023, Oscar was adopted by Michael, Trina, and big brother Carter. Trina shared this update with us:

"Oscar has grown into a beautiful, playful, and to be honest, super ornery toddler! He loves going to daycare, or 'school' as he calls it, where he runs to his classroom every morning to see his teacher and classmates.

"He loves the outdoors—any chance he gets to go for a walk, visit the ducks at the pond, go to the playground, or play in the backyard—he's all about it! Oscar enjoys reading a book or two before bed with Daddy rocking him. He and Carter adore each other, but just like brothers, they get annoyed with each other if they go into the other's bedroom.

"No doubt adoption has changed our lives in unbelievable ways, but it's a challenging emotional rollercoaster when you recognize that your immense joy came at the expense of someone else's immense heartbreak and trauma. And we know we will have to navigate difficult waters as Oscar grows and has questions.

"All of it makes us so grateful that our story is what it is. To have added to our family, to have had such amazing people guiding us, to have contact with bio parents, and to have both of them say that they have great peace knowing that Oscar is loved and happy—it makes us feel so fortunate and blessed!"



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# Christ the King Celebrates World Marriage Day



COURTESY PHOTO

Back (L-R): Trevor & Tammy Hallagin married 30 years; Father Ernest Amoako-Opare. Front: Clayton & Kizmin Wilson married 25 years; Joleen & Alvin Schuster married 50 years; Cynthia & Daniel Cline married 45 years; Carla & Larry Beydler married 50 years.



COURTESY PHOTO

Back (L-R): David & Anita Schneider married 55 years; Father Ernest Amoako-Opare; Rodney Meyers (absent Teresa Meyers) married 45 years; Chane & Heidi Goff married 35 years; Christine Hober (absent Anthony Hober) married 30 years; Taylor & Alexis Riedel married 1 year. Second and Front rows (L-R): Gerard & Amy Schoenberger married 40 years; Martin & Carolyn Schoenberger married 50 years; William & Bonnie Windholz married 45 years; Leslie & Michael Goff married 1 year.

BY **BRENDA BROCK**  
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

World Marriage Day is a special observance in the Catholic Church that celebrates the gift and vocation of marriage. Held annually on the second Sunday of February, it honors the lifelong commitment of married couples and recognizes marriage as a sacred covenant rooted in faith, love, and mutual support.

The day encourages couples to reflect on the spiritual and emotional bonds that sustain their relationship, while also highlighting the importance of family life within the broader community of the Church.

Across parishes, World

Marriage Day is often marked with blessings, special Masses, and prayers for married couples and their families. It provides an opportunity for the faithful to express gratitude for the gift of marriage and to support those who live out this sacrament daily. By celebrating the beauty, challenges, and joys of married life, the Church reminds all of the central role that committed love and faith play in building strong families and thriving communities.

Christ the King Parish in WaKeeney celebrates this day each year by honoring couples at Masses throughout the weekend. This year the parish

celebrated World Marriage Day at both Masses on Saturday, February 7, and Sunday, February 8, honoring couples married 1 year, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60 years.

Let us pray for all married couples, that their love may grow stronger with each passing day. May they be guided by patience, understanding, and faith, and may their homes be filled with joy, peace, and Christ's presence. Lord, bless their commitment to one another and help them witness your love in their words and actions, so that their marriage may be a light and example to all who meet them.

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## BAPTISMS

**Charlotte June Anderson**, daughter of Kaleb Anderson and Emily Anderson, was baptized March 7, 2026, by Fr. Mike Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Nash Carter Bergling**, son of Blake and Haley (Pletcher) Bergling, was baptized February 7, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Kaideyn Michael Drake Binder**, son of Elliot Binder and Natasha Cecil, was baptized March 14, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor. Godparents are Benjamin Wiesner and Reagan Basgall.

**Tatum Wayne Broeckelman**, son of Tyler and Kaylor (Gottschalk) Broeckelman, was baptized February 14, 2026, by Fr. Nicholas L. Parker at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays.

**Anna Catherine Brown**, daughter of Justin and Hali Brown, was baptized February 21, 2026, by Dcn. Larry Erpelding at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Juliette Grace Camarillo**, daughter of Josue and Mariela Camarillo, was baptized February 8, 2026, by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Tate Michael Chapin**, son of Tanner and Brittany (Dinkel) Chapin, was baptized March 1, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Lilian Leland Coyne**, daughter of Christopher and Sarah Coyne, was baptized February 8, 2026, by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

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To submit a sacramental announcement, email [theregister@salinadiocese.org](mailto:theregister@salinadiocese.org)

**Anna Rose Ellenz**, daughter of Brad and Lyn Ellenz, was baptized February 13, 2026, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

**James Kolbe Fazzari**, son of Lucas and Anna Fazzari, was baptized February 14, 2026, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Elijah Sebastian Hernandez Garcia**, son of Jaime De Jesus Garcia Torres and Madelyn Hernandez Garcia, was baptized February 6, 2026, by Fr. Trevor Buster at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Beckham Slade Garst**, son of Zach Garst and Kendra Krier, was baptized March 8, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia. Godparents are Zach Krier and Jill Krier.

**Nora Catherine Gengler**, daughter of Justin and Shelby Gengler, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Joshua Duncan at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

**Bowen Shane Gillespie**, son of Taker and Tenille Gillespie, was baptized January 31, 2026, by Fr. James M. Thomas, CMI, at Immaculate Conception Church in Grinnell.

**Whitaker Banks Green**, son of Maverick Green and Olivia Chvatal, was baptized March 8, 2026, by Fr. Henry Saw Lone at Sacred Heart Church in Atwood.

**Merzadys Gustus**, daughter of Cody Gustus and Emily Garrad, was baptized February 21, 2026, by Fr. Tony Kulndaijesu at St. Wenceslas Church in Wilson. Sponsors are Tony Brokes and Katrina Barnhill.

**Lainey Marquerite Kolterman**, daughter of Jayde Duane Kolterman and Amanda Lynn Martin Kolterman, was baptized March 8, 2026, by Fr. Mike

Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Kamden John Linn**, son of Derek and Tara (Hertel) Linn, was baptized March 14, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

**Lainey Wren Loomis**, daughter of Jared and Bethany Loomis, was baptized March 1, 2026, by Fr. Frank Coady at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Alison Magdaleno**, daughter of Manuel and Marisol Estrada, was baptized January 24, 2026, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Archie Joe Martin**, son of Andrew Martin and Tori Morgan, was baptized March 7, 2026, by Fr. Mike Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Jethro Verne Moeder**, son of Michael Moeder and Breahna Procopio, was baptized February 28, 2026, by Fr. Daryl Olmstead at St. Mary Queen of Angels Church in Russell.

**Brody Glenn Mullins**, son of David and Casey (Stroup) Wolf, was baptized January 11, 2026, by Fr. Joshua Werth at St. Joseph Church in New Almelo. Godparents are Dcn. Brian Kirk and Stephanie Kirk.

**Daniel Urie Villeda Ramos**, son of Daniel and Yuridiana Ramos, was baptized February 15, 2026, by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Teegan Jean Riedel and Tripp Alan Riedel**, children of Clayton and Jordan (Moor) Riedel, were baptized February 1, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Colette Marie Riffel**, daughter of Donald and Kelli (Ward) Riffel, was baptized December 7, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at

St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Rhonda Ward and Daniel Riffel.

**Baylor Lyn Rose**, daughter of Trent Rose and Hannah Johnston, was baptized February 7, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Camden Ross**, son of Thomas and Monica (Smid) Ross, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

**Baker Neal Rottinghaus**, son of Cody and Megan Rottinghaus, was baptized January 11, 2026, by Dcn. Wayne Talbot at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

**Jace Charlie Sanders**, son of Travis and Sarah (Richardson) Sanders, was baptized November 2, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are James Roudybush and Jennifer Richardson.

**Jack Thomas Sanders**, son of Travis and Sarah (Richardson) Sanders, was baptized November 2, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are James Roudybush and Jennifer Richardson.

**Hunter Cole Schneewis**, son of Justin and Kaitlyn (Schwartz) Schneewis, was baptized February 1, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Jilliam and Nicholas Martin.

**Caroline Anne Schuh**, daughter of Nicholas Joseph and Michelle Marie (Fenstermaker) Schuh, was baptized January 18, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolours Church in Manhattan.

**Brantley Phillip Siebold**, son of Caleb Lanny Siebold and Megan Jean Blake, was

baptized February 22, 2026, by Fr. Michael Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Riggs Mitchell Sipe**, son of Mitchell and Whitney Sipe, was born February 15, 2025, in Lincoln, NE and baptized February 22, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia.

**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.

**June Elizabeth Speltz**, daughter of Chris Lee Speltz and Amanda Christine Pierson, was baptized February 8, 2026, by Fr. Michael Leiker at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

**Ruth Adelaide Stutterheim**, daughter of Benjamin and Megan (Stein) Stutterheim, was baptized November 30, 2025, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Kate and Jordan Toogood.

**Finn Ernest Von Busch**, son of Nicholas and Cassandra Von Busch, was baptized January 11, 2026, by Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Sebastian Michael VonLintel**, son of Colten and Hannah (Doll) VonLintel, was baptized February 1, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Kelsey Doll and Luke Doll.

**Tripp Jay Walter**, son of Zachary and Mackenzie (Helman) Walter, was baptized February 8, 2026, by Fr. Mark Wesely at St. Patrick's Church in Lincoln.

**Henry Michael Wiesner**, son of Isabella Wiesner, was baptized January 17, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Deavon Ray Wolf**, son of David and Casey (Stroup) Wolf, was baptized January 11, 2026, by Fr. Joshua Werth at St. Joseph Church in New Almelo. Godparents are Dcn. Brian Kirk and Stephanie Kirk.

**Robert Anthony Woods**, son of Scott and Kendra Woods, was baptized February 21, 2026, by Dcn. Larry Erpelding at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

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## BAPTISMS WEDDINGS

### CONTINUED

**Oliver Paul Younger**, son of Landon and Abby (Burton) Younger, was baptized February 8, 2026, by Fr. Dana Clark at St. Mary's Church in Ellis.

**Cecilia Grace Zenk**, daughter of Patrick and Arica Zenk, was baptized February 15, 2026, by Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan.

**Bryan Henry Hopper and Cali Lauren Keith** were married February 14, 2026, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. James Dieker witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Jared and Jenee Hopper. Parents of the bride are Cody and Annette Keith. Witnesses were Brett Hopper and Brooke Keith.

**Easton Joseph Irsik and Morgan Marie Spinden** were married February 7, 2026, at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan. Fr. Trevor Buster witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Bradley and Vicki Irsik. Parents of the bride are Michael and Bernice Spinden. Witnesses were Jordan Irsik and Catie Beam.



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### FUNERALS

**Rosella Mae "Rose" Augustine**, 94, died March 5, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 10 at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Dennis John Diederich**, 81, died February 14, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 20 at Sacred Heart Church in Colby. Fr. Brian Lager presided. Burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Colby.

**Gary Wayne Eilert**, 62, died December 31, 2025. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 8, 2026, at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit. Fr. Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Dale Forge, Sr.**, 89, died January 26, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 13 by Fr. Donald D. Zimmerman at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Inurnment at Mount Olivet Cemetery, Easton.

**Steven C. "Steve" Hawthorne**, 70, of Hays, died February 2, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 17 at Our Lady Help of Christians Church in Antonino. Fr. Job Varghese, OFM Cap., presided. Inurnment in Our Lady Help of Christians Cemetery.

**Helen Lenore Karls**, 96, died February 28, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 23 at Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin. Fr. Mathew Chacko presided.

Inurnment in Selden Cemetery, Selden.

**Remigia "Midge" Koerner**, 97, of Hays, died February 26, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 14 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker presided. Inurnment in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Daniel Lee "Dan" Koster**, 73, died February 12, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 19 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker presided. Inurnment in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Gisela Arlet Mandujano**, 12, died March 6, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 16 at Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin. Fr. Carlos presided.

**Imelda Alice McMillin**, 91, died January 17, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 7 at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan. Fr. Frank Coody presided. Inurnment at St. Thomas More Memorial Walls, Manhattan.

**Patricia Ann "Pat" Murphy**, 94, of Hays, died February 23, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 2 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker presided. Burial in St. Mary Cemetery, Gorham.

**Verlin F. Pfannenstiel**, 84, died February 15, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 21 at St. Francis

of Assisi Church in Munjor. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Fr. Curtis Carlson, OFM Cap., and Fr. Andy Hammeke concelebrated. Burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery, Munjor.

**Doris "Jean" Riemann**, 86, died January 9, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 16 at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit. Fr. Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Maurice J. Rohr**, 85, died February 14, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 26 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Brian McCaffrey presided. Inurnment in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Lidwina "Liddy" Ruder**, 100, died March 9, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 12 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor. Fr. Damian Richards presided. Burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery, Munjor.

**Vernon Ruder, Sr.**, 92, died February 6, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 10 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays. Fr. Job Varghese, OFM Cap., presided. Burial in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

**Mark Nathaniel Sahlfeld**, 65, died January 9, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 15 at Roberts Funeral Home in Beloit. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Lisa Diane Schroeder**, 59, died January 11, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated January 16 at Sacred Heart Church in Colby. Fr. Brian Lager presided. Burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Colby.

**John "Al" Stover**, 87, died February 20, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated February 24 at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit. Fr. Jarett Konrade presided. Burial in St. John's Cemetery, Beloit.

**Margaret Ann "Peggy" Whittington**, 90, of Hays, died March 11, 2026. Funeral Mass was celebrated March 20 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Hays. Fr. Nick Parker presided. Inurnment in St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

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# Pope reflects on family

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

On the feast of St. Joseph and the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Leo XIV announced he will convene the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences in October this year.

The announcement fittingly came on the feast of the patron of fathers and families.

Pope Leo said the announcement is, "in an effort to proceed, in mutual listening, to a synodal discernment on how best to proclaim the Gospel to families today, in light of *Amoris Laetitia* and current efforts in local Churches."



CNS PHOTO/VATICAN MEDIA

**Pope Leo XIV greets newlyweds at the end of his weekly general audience June 25, 2025. Pope Leo will convene a conference this fall to discuss the best way to share the Gospel message with families today.**

A week earlier, Pope Leo XIV reflected on St. Joseph's role and the role of the human family.

He said, "The human family is also called to preserve what has been entrusted to it: relationships, creation, and the life of our brothers and sisters, especially those who suffer and are most fragile. In this way, Joseph shows us that presence and guardianship are inseparable dimensions: it is not possible to guard without being present, and one is not present without assuming responsibility for the other."

**The human family is also called to preserve what has been entrusted to it: relationships, creation, and the life of our brothers and sisters, especially those who suffer and are most fragile.**

-Pope Leo XIV

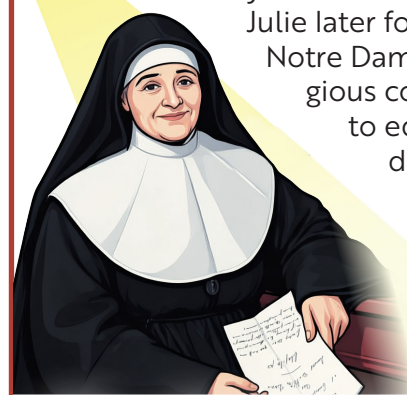
## SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

St. Julie Billiart was born in 1751 in France. From a young age, she loved God and spent much of her time teaching other children their prayers and helping those in need. By the time she was a teenager, she had memorized large portions of the Bible and was known for her kindness and strong faith.

As a young woman, Julie became paralyzed for many years. Despite her suffering, she remained joyful and full of trust in God. She became known as the "Smiling Saint" because she continued to radiate peace and happiness, even while confined to her bed. During the French Revolution, when the Church was in danger, Julie helped teach the faith in secret and encouraged others to remain strong.

After being paralyzed for many years, Julie made a novena, a nine-day prayer, for healing. On the final day, she was miraculously cured and able to walk again!

Julie later founded the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a religious community dedicated to educating poor children, especially girls. St. Julie often reminded others, "How good is the good God!"



**ST. JULIE BILLIART**  
**FEAST DAY: APRIL 8**

# Building up the domestic church

Every once in a while, a book comes along that you don't just read once—you return to it again and again. For me, that book has been *Coached by the Cure* by Kevin Wells.

I received it as an ordination gift, and since then, I've found myself going back to it repeatedly. Each time I pick it up, something new strikes me. The book centers on St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, but Kevin Wells presents him in a way that surprised me. In these pages, St. John Vianney becomes something of a coach—not just for priests, but for parents striving to build the domestic church in their homes.

Vianney is most famous for bringing the small town of Ars back to faith. When he arrived there, the Church was largely ignored, and spiritual life had nearly disappeared. Yet through prayer, sacrifice, fasting, and an intense love for the Eucha-

rist, he helped transform the entire town. What struck me while reading this book is that the same spiritual tools that renewed Ars are the tools parents need today in their homes.

We often hear that the family is the "domestic church," but St. Vianney helps show what that truly means. In marriage, a husband and wife are called to build a home where faith is lived, love is sacrificial, and children are welcomed as gifts from God. The home becomes the first place where the Gospel is taught and witnessed.

Parents are called to be the priests of their homes. Through baptism, we are anointed into the common priesthood of Christ, and that mission is lived most clearly in family life. At our children's baptism, we promise to raise them in

the faith—to teach them to know Christ, love Him, and follow Him.

Even when our children grow up and leave home, our responsibility does not end. Our influence may become less direct, but we never stop being concerned for their souls. St. Vianney pleads with us to continue supporting our children through prayer, sacrifice, and fasting, trusting that God is still at work in their lives.

There is no denying that a battle is underway for our children's hearts. The world around them is filled with competing voices, secularism, modern ideologies, indifference, and confusion. St. Vianney reminds us that parents are not powerless. God has given us powerful tools—prayer, sacrifice, devotion to the Eucharist, and love for Our Lady. He lived these realities

heroically. His humility, willingness to suffer for sinners, and perseverance through spiritual battles became the means through which God brought many souls back to the light.

If you are concerned about your children—or

family members who have drifted from the Church—I strongly encourage you to read *Coached by the Cure*. You may find St. John Vianney becoming a coach for your own spiritual life and a guide as you build a home where faith can truly flourish.



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**Regina Caeli**  
(Queen of Heaven)

V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.  
R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

V. Has risen, as He said, alleluia.  
R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.  
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

**Let us pray:**  
O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech You, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**