



THE REGISTER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

APRIL 24, 2026

TOGETHER, LET US BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON MISSION.

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Another step toward priesthood for Deacon Kyle Pfeifer

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Bishop Jerry Vincke said it seems like Kyle Pfeifer has been in seminary for years. Pfeifer – now Deacon Kyle – agrees. And he is more eager than ever for his priestly ordination next year. But first things first.

A big step forward

With friends and family watching both in person and online, Bishop Vincke ordained Pfeifer a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Salina at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina on April 11.

Seminarians in the Catholic Church are ordained transitional deacons as the final step before becoming priests, usually serving in that role for about a year.

“It’s certainly been a long journey, with many ups and downs. The time spent in formation was totally worth it,” Dcn. Kyle said. “I grew a lot in getting to know myself, becoming more self-confident and more joyful, especially by knowing the love that Jesus Christ has for me.”

Life was somewhat normal for the first few years of seminary for Dcn. Kyle. He had grown up in Manhattan, stayed close to home to attend Kansas State University and, after discernment, decided to join the seminary in 2018.

Then, things made a drastic turn in 2023 shortly after his parents had moved to Wichita. Dcn. Kyle’s dad, Randy, died of a heart attack at the age of 57.

His mom, Gina (who hadn’t been raised Catholic), was so moved by the outpouring of love and support by Bishop Vincke and diocesan priests and fellow seminarians during that time that Gina began researching the Catholic faith herself.

She decided to enter the OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) program in 2024. And with seminarian son Kyle by her



HEIMERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Bishop Jerry Vincke invites Deacon Kyle Pfeifer to be a herald of the Gospel during the diaconate ordination on April 11 in Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina.

side every step of the way as her sponsor, Gina joined the Catholic Church in 2025.

“Mom joining the Church after dad died was a big unexpected blessing in my life,” Dcn. Kyle said. “I look forward to seeing her continue growing deeper in her relationship

with God. This blessing was something I couldn’t manufacture; it was purely the Lord’s grace, and I look forward to the Lord to continue to shower these unexpected blessings in my life.”

The seminary where Dcn. Kyle attends – Kenrick-Glennon near St. Louis, Mo – strongly encourages their seminarians to take a pastoral year in a parish.

That year for Dcn. Kyle was spent at St. Mary Queen of the Universe in Salina, which gave him a glimpse of what day-to-day life is like for a parish priest. And it was a view he embraced wholeheartedly.

He said ever since that time at St. Mary’s, when he also taught theology at nearby Sacred Heart High School, “it has become painful to sit in a classroom.”

“I just want to get out there and preach the Gospel,” he said. “Put me in, Coach!”

Support from many

Numerous seminarians, including some from his college classes, attended the ordination Mass along with diocesan priests, and family and friends as well.

Joining Dcn. Kyle in attendance in the cathedral that day, and at the Mass for his first homily the next morning, were his mother and her stepdad and stepmom, Douglas and Shirley Curlin.



HEIMERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Newly ordained Deacon Kyle Pfeifer rejoices with his mother, Gina, in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Salina, at his diaconate ordination.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The Spirit in silence

About a month ago, I had to travel to Europe in my role as Chair of the USCCB Subcommittee on Aid for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. On my way home to Kansas, I flew out of Brussels, Belgium.

When I arrived in Brussels, I learned that it was the ten-year anniversary of the bombing at the airport. I met a man who was there to support close friends who had lost two of their sons in that tragedy.

The following day, while I was at the airport, they held a memorial service for those who had been killed in that attack ten years prior. During the service, someone on the loudspeaker asked everyone to observe one minute of silence in remembrance

GERALD Vincke
BISHOP, SALINA DIOCESE



of the victims. If you've ever been in an airport, you know how loud they can be. The sound of footsteps, luggage rolling, and intercoms going off. But for one minute, everyone was silent.

That moment was deeply moving. It was so peaceful. Everyone united with each other for the same cause. Someone standing next to me afterwards said, "I wish we could do this more often in our daily lives—just take a minute of silence."

After all, in the silence, God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit.

We must remember that the Holy Spirit is present in our lives. It is the same Spirit that led the apostles. Before he died, Jesus

told His apostles, "It is better that I go," promising them the gift of the Holy Spirit. And yet, I think the Holy Spirit is often neglected in our lives.

It was the Holy Spirit who led the apostles and disciples out into the world to proclaim the Good News. The Spirit was the game changer, the one who empowered them so profoundly that people said they had "turned the world upside down."

As we celebrate this Easter season and prepare our hearts for Pentecost in May, I invite you to reflect on the Spirit at work in your life. I want to encourage everyone to just take a moment of silence, a minute of silence, just inviting the Holy Spirit to rise up in their hearts.

May it stir us to be like the apostles and to live faithfully through the prompting of the Spirit.

EL SPIRITU EN SILENCIO

Hace aproximadamente un mes, tuve que viajar a Europa en mi función como presidente del Subcomité de la USCCB para la Ayuda a la Iglesia en Europa Central y Oriental. De regreso a casa, a Kansas, salí en un vuelo desde Bruselas, Bélgica.

Cuando llegué a Bruselas, supe que se cumplía el décimo aniversario del atentado en el aeropuerto. Conocí a un hombre que estaba allí para acompañar a unos amigos cercanos que habían perdido a dos de sus hijos en esa tragedia.

Al día siguiente, mientras me encontraba en el aeropuerto, se llevó a cabo un servicio conmemorativo por quienes habían fallecido en ese ataque diez años antes. Durante el servicio, alguien por los altavoces pidió a todos que guardaran un minuto de silencio en memoria de las víctimas.

Si alguna vez has estado en un aeropuerto, sabes lo ruidosos que pueden ser: el sonido de los pasos, las maletas rodando y los anuncios por los altavoces. Pero durante un

minuto, todos guardaron silencio.

Ese momento fue profundamente conmovedor. Fue muy pacífico. Todos estaban unidos por una misma causa. Alguien que estaba a mi lado comentó después: "Ojalá pudiéramos hacer esto más a menudo en nuestra vida diaria—simplemente tomar un minuto de silencio."

Después de todo, es en el silencio donde Dios nos habla a través del Espíritu Santo.

Debemos recordar que el Espíritu Santo está presente en nuestras vidas. Es el mismo Espíritu que guió a los apóstoles.

Antes de morir, Jesús dijo a Sus apóstoles: "Les conviene que yo me vaya", prometiendoles el don del Espíritu Santo. Y, sin embargo, creo que con frecuencia el Espíritu Santo es descuidado en nuestras vidas.

Fue el Espíritu Santo quien condujo a los apóstoles y discípulos a salir al mundo para proclamar la Buena Nueva. El Espíritu fue el que cambió todo, el que los fortaleció de tal manera que la gente

decía que habían "revolucionado el mundo entero."

Mientras celebramos este tiempo de Pascua y preparamos nuestros corazones para Pentecostés en mayo, te invito a reflexionar sobre el Espíritu actuando en tu vida. Quiero exhortar a todos a tomar un momento de silencio, un minuto de silencio, simplemente invitando al Espíritu Santo a elevarse en sus corazones.

Que esto nos impulse a ser como los apóstoles y a vivir fielmente siguiendo las inspiraciones del Espíritu.

BISHOP'S MAY CALENDAR

- 2 D of I 100th Anniversary Mass, Victoria, 5 p.m.
- 10 Graduation, Tipton Catholic, 10 a.m.
- 10 S.H.H.S. Graduation, Cathedral, Salina, 3 p.m.
- 15 Rural Life Day Celebration, St. Boniface, Tipton, 10 a.m.
- 17 TMP/M Baccalaureate, St. Nicholas of Myra, Hays, 1 p.m.
- 17 TMP/M Graduation, Al Billinger Field House, Hays, 3 p.m.
- 24 150th Anniversary Mass, St. Anthony, Schoenchen, 9 a.m.
- 31 100th Year Celebration for St. Edward Parish in Belleville, Mass at 3 p.m.

MAY PRAYER INTENTIONS

Pope Leo's intentions:

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

Diocesan intentions:

For those graduating and heading into the next chapter—May they know God's love, trust His plan, and be guided to bring the light of Christ to the world.

A prayer by
St. Augustine



Una oración
de San Agustín

Breathe in me,
O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts
may all be holy.
Act in me,
O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too,
may be holy.
Draw my heart,
O Holy Spirit,
That I love
but what is holy.
Strengthen me,
O Holy Spirit,
To defend all
that is holy.
Guard me, then,
O Holy Spirit,
That I always
may be holy.

Respira en mí,
oh Espíritu Santo,
para que todos mis
pensamientos sean
todos santos.
Actúa en mí,
oh Espíritu Santo,
para que también mis
obras sean santas.
Atrae mi corazón,
oh Espíritu Santo,
para que ame solo
lo que es santo.
Fortaléceme,
oh Espíritu Santo,
para defender todo
lo que es santo.
Guárdame, entonces,
oh Espíritu Santo,
para que siempre
pueda ser santo.

NEIGHBORS NEAR & NEIGHBORS FAR

CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

Under communism, the Church was greatly restricted and oppressed, unable to carry out its mission of forming disciples and engaging in ministries of mercy to help the needy and vulnerable. The end of the old communist order freed the Church to establish ministries that show Christ's mercy to those who face hardship today.

Your support for the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe at Mass helps the Church in Hungary and 27 other countries rebuild and continue the mission to share the Gospel with new generations

TO GIVE/DONAR:

place an envelope in your parish collection labeled "Church in Central & Eastern Europe" / Coloque un sobre en la colecta de su parroquia con la etiqueta "Church in Central & Eastern Europe"

Bajo el comunismo, la Iglesia se vio severamente restringida y oprimida, incapaz de llevar a cabo su misión de formar discípulos y de participar en ministerios de misericordia para ayudar a los necesitados y vulnerables. El fin del antiguo orden comunista ha liberado a la Iglesia para establecer ministerios que manifiesten la misericordia de Cristo a aquellos que hoy enfrentan dificultades.

Su apoyo a la Colecta para la Iglesia en Europa Central y Oriental, realizada durante la Misa, ayuda a la Iglesia en Hungría —y en otros 27 países— a reconstruirse y a continuar su misión de compartir el Evangelio con las nuevas generaciones.

DIACONATE ORDINATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Curlins are not Catholic but made the 11.5-hour trip from south-eastern Indiana for the occasion.

Dcn. Kyle was honored to give his first homily, at his home parish of Seven Dolours in Manhattan, on Divine Mercy Sunday. He talked about how we resist Divine Mercy but how it “fills us with hope and courage to persevere against sin.”

The Curlins were inspired by the rituals of the Masses and the solemn sacramental liturgy of the ordination, calling the experience “just beautiful.”

Gina smiled and told them that maybe they, too, could start exploring the Catholic faith.

“Well, maybe we will,” Shirley said as she talked about the deep love she feels for Dcn. Kyle.

“He is special,” Shirley said. “That’s the best word I can think of how to describe Kyle – special.”

Moving forward

At Dcn. Kyle’s ordination Mass, Bishop Vincke charged the diocese’s

newest transitional deacon to “preach Jesus as you go into the world as a deacon.”

The bishop thanked Dcn. Kyle for his perseverance and humility, being open and vulnerable to receive.

One of the readings talked about “companion of Jesus,” and Bishop Vincke said that is what he sees in Dcn. Kyle and told him “to let Him act through you.”

Dcn. Kyle will continue preaching the Gospel this summer while serving an internship at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays.

Then, it’s back to seminary for his final school year that will undoubtedly fly by, into his priestly ordination next spring or summer.

Dcn. Kyle earnestly looks forward to changing his title from Deacon to Father, stating, “I can hardly wait.”



HEIMERMANN PHOTOGRAPHY

Above, Bishop Jerry Vincke ordains Kyle Pfeifer a deacon for the Diocese of Salina on April 11, the day before Divine Mercy Sunday, as priests, deacons, and a full congregation look on.



At left, a cadre of friends surrounds Deacon Kyle after his ordination.

SUPPORTING DEACON KYLE FROM AFAR

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Some family and friends weren't able to attend the diaconate ordination of Deacon Kyle Pfeifer in Salina on April 11.

So they were pleased when they learned that they could watch the Mass online.

Especially Katie Eberle.

The 102-year-old parishioner of Christ the King Church in WaKeeney still lives in her own home but isn't able to travel so much anymore.

So Becky Windholz made sure Katie – grandmother of Becky's husband, Ryan Windholz – would get to participate in Deacon Kyle's ordination from afar.

Becky showed up at Katie's residence a few minutes before the start of the Mass and set up her laptop in front of Katie's chair for her to watch.

“She talked about that the rest of the day,” Becky said. “She’s very proud to claim Kyle as her great nephew and that he is a seminarian.”

Katie is a sister to the late Helen Pfeifer, Dcn. Kyle's grandmother, who lived with his family for several years and was a big influence in his religious life.

Becky said that from the time Dcn. Kyle entered the seminary, Katie has been saying that she wants him to preside at her funeral.

Dcn. Kyle's late father, Randy, is from Ellis, and he still has relatives in Oakley and WaKeeney.



COURTESY PHOTO

(Above) Katie Windholz, 102, watches Dcn. Kyle Pfeifer's diaconate ordination Mass online. At left, Dcn. Kyle visits with his great aunt in WaKeeney.

But his mother lives in Wichita, and he attends Kenrick-Glennon Seminary near St.

Louis, Mo. So he doesn't get back to western Kansas often.

So Katie was thrilled when Dcn. Kyle visited

her in WaKeeney last summer when he was in Hays for the annual Eucharistic Conference.

Katie was all smiles again on April 11 while watching Dcn. Kyle walk out of the cathedral after his diaconate ordination Mass, followed closely by Bishop Gerald Vincke.

Becky said that her grandmother mentioned again that she wants Dcn. Kyle to “do her funeral.”

But that will have to wait. For now, the family is planning on celebrating Katie's 103rd birthday on June 22.

Dcn. Kyle will serve an internship in the diocese this summer before completing his final year of seminary, then is scheduled to be ordained a priest in the spring or summer of 2027.

Katie surely will be pleased to learn that Dcn. Kyle's 2026 summer appointment will be at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays – just 35 miles from WaKeeney.

OFFICIAL
PRIESTLY
UPDATES**Appointments:**

Father Mohanrao (Thomas Steven) Songa: Appointed Parochial Vicar of St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit, Kansas with residence in the parish rectory beginning February 16, 2026. Transferred to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Concordia; St. Edward Parish in Belleville, Kansas; St. George Parish in Munden, Kansas; and St. Isidore parish in Cuba, Kansas, with residence in the Our Lady of Perpetual Help rectory on March 20, 2026.

Father Vincent Mary Carrasco, OFM Cap: Appointed Parochial Vicar of the Parish community at The Basilica of Saint Fidelis in Victoria, Kansas; St. Boniface Parish in Vincent, Kansas; and St. Anne Parish in Walker, Kansas with residence in the St. Fidelis Friary beginning March 9, 2026.

Other Decrees:

On March 23, 2026, Bishop Vincke decreed the official website of the Diocese of Salina to be the place of publication for the valid promulgation of Diocesan Acts, effective immediately (cf. Prot. No. GV 2026-010).

On March 25, 2026, Bishop Vincke decreed the establishment of the Cor Jesu Public Clerical Association of the Christian Faithful of Diocesan Right in the Diocese of Salina, approving the Statutes of the Association, and appointing Reverend Cesar Bertolacci as the Association's first Moderator (cf. Prot. No. GV 2026-012).

Editor's Note: More information about the members of the Cor Jesu group, and their work in the diocese, will be shared in the May edition of The Register.

Called to be there: Supporting the priests who walk with us

Priests are there for some of the most important moments of our lives, often in ways we don't fully realize at the time.

I was reminded of that recently.

I was talking with my mom about some of the priests I've gotten to

see lately when I mentioned Fr. David Metz. Without hesitation, she said, "You know he baptized you, right?"

What a fun thing to learn.

After hearing that, I reached out to him to share what I had learned (and to test his memory!), and we were able to connect about that special day almost 26 years ago. For him, it was likely one of many baptisms, just another moment in a life of ministry. But for me, it was the beginning of everything.

That conversation stayed with me. It made me realize that was the first time a priest was there for me, marking the beginning of my life in the Church through the sacraments.

Since then, a priest has

heard my confession. A priest has provided the Eucharist to nourish my soul. A priest has helped prepare me for Confirmation. A priest will one day

witness my vocation, whatever that may be. And, hopefully, a priest will be there at

the end of my life, offering the final prayers that commend my soul to God.

They are there for every stage.

What's incredible to think about is that some of the priests who will walk with me through the most important moments of my life are still being formed. Some are in seminary right now. Some are still discerning. Some may not even be born yet.

But one thing is certain. They will be needed.

In a diocese like ours, spread across rural communities, the presence of a priest is not something we can take for granted. These men travel miles to bring the sacraments to our parishes. They celebrate Mass, anoint the sick, hear confessions, walk with families through grief,

and share in the joys of baptisms, weddings, and confirmations. They are spiritual fathers who pour out their lives in service to the people entrusted to them.

And behind each of those moments is something we don't always see: formation, support, and care.

Through the Bishop's Annual Appeal, we have the opportunity to support the men who are preparing for the priesthood, as well as the priests who are already serving our diocese. The Appeal helps provide for seminarian formation, ensuring that those who are called have the resources they need to become faithful and well-formed priests. It also supports our retired priests, caring for them after years of faithful service to our diocese.

When you support the Bishop's Annual Appeal, you are doing more than making a gift. You are helping ensure that the

sacraments remain present in our communities. You are helping form the priests who will baptize, absolve, anoint, and celebrate the Eucharist for generations to come.

You are supporting the lifeline of the Church.

I am grateful, not just for the priests who have been there for me, but for the ones who will be there in the future.

Because of your generosity, they will be ready.

That is the impact of the Bishop's Annual Appeal. Keeping the gift of the priesthood present in every corner of our diocese.

If you would like to make a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal in support of our priests, you can do so at join.givecfds.org or via mail to the Catholic Foundation for Diocese of Salina, PO Box 1696, Salina, KS 67402. Questions may be directed to 785-827-8746 or torrie.gregg@salinadiocese.org.

**TORRIE
Gregg**

CATHOLIC FOUNDATION FOR SALINA DIOCESE

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Your gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal helps support vital programs and ministries within our diocese. Give today via the QR code or at join.givecfds.org.

**DIOCESE CELEBRATES CHRISM MASS**

By LORI GARCIA
THE REGISTER

Catholics gathered from across the diocese in Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina on March 26 for the annual Chrism Mass. During the Mass, Bishop Jerry Vincke was joined by priests and deacons of the diocese.

During the liturgy, Bishop Vincke blessed the three holy oils—the

Sacred Chrism, the Oil of the Catechumens, and the Oil of the Infirm. Following the Mass, priests carried these oils back to their parishes, where they will be used in sacraments throughout the year.

The Chrism Mass also included recognition of priestly jubilarians, highlighting the importance of celebrating the priesthood. Some notable jubilarians for the year are

Fr. Frank Coady, celebrating 50 years in June, and Fr. Dana Clark, celebrating 25 years in May.

Another key moment of the Chrism Mass is when all diocesan priests renew their promises. During this renewal, the bishop calls them to deepen their conformity to Christ, faithfully administer the Eucharist, and teach the faith with a genuine concern for souls.

MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Diocese marks Child Abuse Prevention Month

By LORI GARCIA

THE REGISTER

On April 14, diocesan chancery staff wore blue to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month. The day also included a Mass dedicated to praying for children and victims of abuse.

While the diocese participates in awareness efforts each year, this year carries special significance with the leadership of Liz Aguayo, who is nearing her first anniversary as Safe Environment Program Coordinator.

Aguayo, who lives in Salina with her family, stepped into the role after years of volunteering in schools and at church events.

"I felt a call to do something more meaningful," she said.

Around that same time, Kim Hoelting, the diocesan HR director, reached out to her about the position.

"She told me they had been praying for months to find a safety coordinator with empathy and a love for children," Aguayo said. "At first, I knew it would be a challenge, but I also knew it would allow me to serve with purpose. So I said yes."

In her role, Aguayo oversees safe environment coordinators across the diocese, reports to the USCCB and works closely with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which conducts annual data



MATEA GREGG, COMMUNICATIONS

Chancery staff participated in Wear Blue Day on April 11, as a promise to protect people in their care.

my voice to help protect and bring healing to the most vulnerable, especially our children. I'd like to continue to grow with the help of all the site safety coordinators, who are crucial in their role."

She added, "I trust that God will continue to guide each step and help me serve with faith, humility, and a deep sense of responsibility."

Aguayo emphasized that protecting children is a shared responsibility across the entire diocese.

"Please keep us in your prayers," she said. "Pray for our Site Safety Coordinators across the Salina Diocese, for the children, educators, volunteers, and our clergy."

For resources and more information, visit salinadiocese.org/office/safe-environment/ or call 785-827-8746.



collection audits and diocesan on-site audits every three years through StoneBridge Business Partners.

Aguayo said, "We work to ensure that every volunteer and adult is safe to be around our children and that they are serving from the heart."

Child Abuse Prevention Month serves as an important reminder of the need for vigilance, education, and advocacy in creating safe environments for all children.

"I just feel truly blessed to be part of this diocese and to serve in this role," Aguayo said. "This doesn't feel like a job, it feels like a calling. I believe I can use

PROMISE TO PROTECT

PLEDGE TO HEAL

PROMESA DE PROTEGER

COMPROISO PARA SANAR

If you have been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church ...

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

To contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator
866.752.8855 ext. 1067
reportabuse@salinadiocese.org
www.reportandprotect.com

.....

Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service:
800.276.1562
reportbishopabuse.org

Si has sido abusado o fuiste víctima de alguien que representa a la Iglesia Católica...

Por favor confía en la posibilidad de esperanza, ayuda y sanación. Te alentamos a que te presentes y hables. Nuestra coordinadora de asistencia a las víctimas está disponible para ofrecer apoyo en tus necesidades, para ayudarte a presentar una queja formal de abuso ante las autoridades correspondientes y para hacer una cita personal con el obispo o su representante, si lo deseas.

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Father-daughter retreat in Beloit draws crowd

BY ISABEL HOLDREN
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

On Saturday April 11, for the first time ever, the Marian sisters hosted a father-daughter retreat in Beloit. Thirty-four girls and their 23 dads attended the retreat, accompanied by 11 sisters. The father-daughter retreats provide a unique opportunity for girls to get to know their faith and their fathers better, to more deeply know of God's love for them.

The day retreat started off in Beloit's St. John the Baptist Catholic Church with a rosary and confessions. From there participants spent time between crafts, celebrating Mass, talks, and playing numerous activities, including dodgeball, kickball, and capture the flag. There were plenty of songs mixed in as well, led by Sr. Mary Francis. All together, it was time away even though they were still at home in Beloit.

"Dads and daughters can have time to focus on their relationship with God and each other," said Sister Benedicta. It's also great, said fellow Marian, Sr. Megan Therese, because, "It's important for daughters to hear

how beloved they are from their dads and spend time together." Mr. Roger Mick, a dad at the retreat, said, "It was a day filled with fun and faith and I got to spend lots of time with my daughter."

This is hopefully just the first retreat of its kind in the diocese. In the summer of 2025 the Marian Sisters of Waverly, Nebraska dedicated a mission to Beloit and since then there have been three



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN AND ISABEL HOLDREN

Srs. Benedicta and Megan Therese accompany dads and daughters during the retreat on April 11.

Marian sisters who are full-time residents there.

Sr. Serena has been doing vocations work for the



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN AND ISABEL HOLDREN

Roger Mick and his daughter, Veronica, work on a crafting activity at the father-daughter retreat in Beloit.

community and working with Fiat Ministries out of Wichita, while being present to many families and even working as the assistant coach for the middle school volleyball team this year. Sr. Benedicta is full-time at St. John the Baptist High School where she teaches religion to 6th

through 10th grades. Sr. Megan Therese works at the parish office and teaches a discipleship class at St. John's High School as well.

New assignments were communicated in early April and Sr. Megan Therese will be returning to the mother house in Waverly, Nebraska. She will be replaced by outgoing mother superior, Mother Anne Marie.

Youth leaders appreciate education opportunities

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Barb Elbracht is a lifelong teacher at all levels, from kindergarten through high school. But like any passionate educator, she is a perpetual learner as well.

That's why Elbracht, a religion teacher and CYO sponsor for St. Theresa Parish in Mankato, made sure she attended the workshop on the upcoming Restored Order of the Sacraments earlier this month in Salina.

Restored Order is restoring the sacraments to the original order of the Church (Baptism, First Reconciliation, Confirmation, First Communion).

The 2025-26 year was designated as the year to focus on education in the Diocese of Salina, preparing parishes, parents and teachers to learn about the upcoming transition, which will begin in the 2026-27 school year.

Explanation of Restored Order can be found in the August issue of The Register on pages 2-3 at <https://salinadiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/August-Register.pdf>.

With the diocese moving to Restored Order over the next few years, Elbracht knows it is vital for instructors such as herself to learn as much as they can so they can pass it on to parents and students.

"It's definitely going to be a change, so it's important for us to learn about it," said Elbracht, the music teacher for K-12 at Rock Hills schools in Mankato.

"I think we need to make sure we are providing a type of education that keeps them connected to their faith after confirmation," she said. "It's all a learning process, and it's good that we are learning together."

Elbracht also attended a retreat for youth ministers held a week earlier in Salina, where she said she appreciated the chance to learn from speakers and network with fellow youth ministers.

Deacon Bill Meagher, director of youth ministry and religious education for the diocese, said these types of retreats are essential for youth educators.

"Youth ministers, religious education directors, catechists – they are the ones normally leading kids



JAMIE KUHLMAN, SALINA DIOCESE

Attendees at the Youth Ministry retreat, held at the Chancery in Salina, were treated to a day of conversations about faith, evangelization, and renewed focus on Christ. Above, speaker Peter Stur discusses "The Map to the Eternal Life" with retreatants.

through retreats and encounters," he said. "This was a chance for them to retreat and spend some time for themselves. It was truly a gift to be together: to pray, to attend Mass and to learn alongside one another.

GRADUATIONS PLANNED

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

The five Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Salina will combined to send more than 90 graduates into the world with commencement ceremonies the second and third weekends of May. Following are the schedules for each school.

Beloit-St. John's

Sunday, May 10

10 a.m. Mass at St. John the Baptist Church; graduation ceremony following in St. John's High School gym. 14 graduates.

Tipton Catholic

Sunday, May 10

10 a.m. Mass, followed by graduation ceremony; all at St. Boniface Church. 5 graduates.

Salina-Sacred Heart

Sunday, May 10

3 p.m. Mass and commencement; all at Sacred Heart Cathedral. 28 graduates.

Junction City-St. Francis Xavier

Saturday, May 16

2 p.m. graduation ceremony in St. Francis Xavier Church. 9 graduates.

Hays/TMP-Marian

Sunday, May 17

1 p.m. Baccalaureate Mass at St. Nicholas of Myra Church; graduation ceremony at 3 p.m. at Al Billinger Fieldhouse, TMP-M campus. 37 graduates.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May 2

• Victoria Daughters of Isabella 100th Anniversary Mass, Victoria, 5 p.m.

May 5

• Catholic Rural Life Novena to St. Isidore begins. (Ending on May 14, the eve of the Feast of St. Isidore.)

May 8

• Becoming Light Together, Hilton Garden Inn, Hays, 4 p.m.

May 10

• Mother's Day.

May 15

• Rural Life Day celebration, St. Boniface, Tipton, 10 a.m.

May 24

• 150th Anniversary Mass, St. Anthony Parish, Schoenchen, 9 a.m.

May 25

• Memorial Day, Chancery Closed

May 31

• 100th Year Celebration, St. Edward's, Belleville, 3 p.m.



HAPPY
MOTHER'S DAY
May 10, 2026

♥

"THE LOVELIEST MASTERPIECE OF THE HEART OF GOD IS THE HEART OF A MOTHER."
-ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

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

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St. Mary's Grade School
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• Assistant Principal

Manhattan MCS

• 2nd Grade Teacher

Colby Sacred Heart Grade School

• Elementary Teacher

Hays Holy Family Elementary

• Kindergarten Teacher
• Kinder-Prep Teacher
• Music Teacher

Beloit St. John's

• Elementary Teacher

Junction City St. Francis Xavier

• Pre-K 4 Teacher
• Kindergarten Teacher
• 7-12 Math Teacher

Call or email Superintendent Geoff Andrews for more information
geoff.andrews@salinadiocese.org
(785) 643-4286

St. Isidore Rural Life Commemoration

Friday, May 15, 2026 - Tipton, KS

10:00 a.m. at St. Boniface Catholic Church

Mass at 10:00 a.m.

Followed by:
Blessing of the Fields, Livestock and Pets.



St. Isidore the Farmer (c. 1070-1130)

St. Isidore was a humble Spanish day laborer in Madrid known for his deep piety, charity to the poor, and spiritual devotion. He balanced intense labor with prayer, and daily Mass with legends stating angels worked his fields while he prayed. He is the patron saint of farmers.

Salina Diocese Rural Life Commission
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A break from normal: Students spend spring break in service

BY DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Spring break trips for college students often involve getaway excursions centered on socializing, sunbathing and partying.

Not so for many Catholic students in the Salina Diocese.

Students involved in the Catholic campus centers at Fort Hays State University, Hays, and Kansas State University, Manhattan, took spiritual pilgrimages and service trips instead.

The senior class from St. John's High School in Beloit did the same.

"What stood out to me most is that this wasn't something required of them. They chose this," Superintendent of Schools Geoff Andrews said of the St. John's trip to Denver, Colo. "And in doing so, they showed a genuine desire to grow, to serve, and to encounter Christ in others."

Andrews went along on the Denver trip and said he had joked with the students how his senior spring break trip in 2001 looked a lot different.

"It involved a road trip to South Padre Island with some classmates and a very different set of priorities," he said. "So to now be walking alongside our seniors as they chose a pilgrimage experience rooted in faith, service, and reflection – it says a lot about who they are and how they've been formed."

Lauren Welchel and 14 members of the Catholic Tigers organization at FHSU joined three FOCUS missionaries and Father Andy Hammeke on a trip to Rome.

"Being able to see all the sites where Sts. Peter and Paul were at and what our faith is based off of, blew my mind," said Lauren, a junior biology major who grew up attending St. Theresa Parish in Mankato.

Lauren said she is "incredibly grateful" to be able to participate in Catholic Tigers.

She had begun her college career at Hastings (Neb.) College but heard "great things about the campus center at Fort Hays."



COURTESY PHOTO

Beloit-St. John's students listen attentively as Dcn. Luke Friess of the Salina Diocese talks about a stained glass window in St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver, Colorado. The students used their spring break as an opportunity to go on mission.



COURTESY PHOTO

One of the sites that Kansas State-St. Isidore students visited during their Brazil pilgrimage was the 98-foot Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro. From left are: Simon Sutton, Logan Prichard, Ted McIlroy and Andrew Woirhaye.



COURTESY PHOTO

Fort Hays State student Andrew Pfeifer, Cimarron, snaps a selfie photo of members of FHSU's Catholic Tigers in front of St. Peter's Square during their pilgrimage to Rome.

"I was ready for a more faith-centered life," said Lauren, who transferred to FHSU and became involved in Catholic Tigers immediately. She was thrilled when she learned of the Rome trip.

"To be able to encounter Jesus on this pilgrimage with other (Catholic Tigers) and to take in all the history there was amazing," she said.

Kansas State was represented on two different pilgrimages – one to Brazil and the other to Kansas

City, Mo.

Robbie Jennings, director of campus ministry at St. Isidore's Student Center at K-State, accompanied the group, along with Father Trevor Buster, to A Simple House in Kansas City.

A Simple House is a home where missionaries live and go out into the streets and work with the homeless. St. Isidore students joined them for several days over spring break.

"Being there, seeing

people in their most vulnerable conditions, it takes a lot of courage for students," Jennings said.

Whether giving of their time in other countries and states – and often in their own backyard with various ministries – Andrews thinks students participating in these type of activities are invaluable.

"Experiences like this give me great hope," Andrews said. "These young men and women are not only prepared for what comes next. They are

grounded in something much deeper, and that will serve them, and all of us, very well."

Andrews was referring to the high school students who he is in charge of in the diocese. But Jennings pretty much summed up the feeling of joy and purpose that students and adults alike gain by serving others.

"You can only receive love," Jennings said, "when you give love."

Success at many levels for Catholic school students, staff

By DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN
THE REGISTER

Honors didn't stop coming in for the diocesan schools' basketball programs following an exciting weekend of state tournament action in March.

Players and coaches have earned all-state honors from a variety of organizations.

Heading that list was Carl Hines from Salina-Sacred Heart, who was named Girls' Coach of the-Year across all divisions from Sports in Kansas (SIK) digital media and 2A girls' coach by the KSHSAA.

Led by Hines, the Knights won their first-ever state girls' basketball championship and were even recognized on the floor of the Kansas State Senate in Topeka for making school history.

Also earning Coach-of-the-Year honors in his class was Lance Bergmann from Beloit-St. John's/Tipton, who led the Bluejays to the Class 1A, Division I state title.

Three diocesan schools will get to hang state championship banners from the 2025-26 basketball season as Tipton Catholic operates under a cooperative agreement with St. John's for several sports, including basketball.

Several players received all-state honors from various organizations, led by St. John's senior Edward Horinek, who was named the 1A, DI boys' player of the year by SIK; Horinek's classmate, Gabriel Rodrick; Sacred Heart senior Skyler Douglas and junior teammate Addie Lee; and Sacred Heart senior Will Tuttle and Hays/TMP-Marian junior Ty Schmeidler, in the 2A boys' division.

Nationals-bound

A trio of seniors from Hays/TMP-Marian qualified for the National Future Business Leaders of America competition by meeting the top-four requirement at the Kansas State FBLA Conference in March.

Derek Becker, Will Eck and Diego Fernandez placed fourth in the computer game and



COURTESY PHOTO

The Sacred Heart girls' basketball team and coaches are recognized on the floor of the Kansas State Senate in Topeka for their school-record performance at state.

simulation programming category to earn the right to compete at nationals the last week of June in San Antonio, Texas.

That trio also placed fifth at state – and just one spot out of qualifying for nationals in another event – in the data analysis competition.

Speech and Drama

Numerous TMP-Marian students have qualified for next month's Class 2A State Speech and Drama Championships with their performances at meets this season.

They will be led by four students who each qualified for multiple events at state – seniors Jenna Brull and Alyssa Church and sophomores Mia Baltodano and Jack Stoecklein.

Other state qualifiers from TMP-M: seniors Morgan Greenwood, Blaise Staab and Eli Stein; junior Ernest Pfeifer; sophomores Paul Schroeder and GERALYN Stein; and freshman Kendall Seiler.

• Also qualifying for state was junior Dana Davis from St. Francis Xavier High School in Junction City.

State science champs

Senior Isaac Berndt and junior Zac Hernandez from Salina-Sacred Heart were state champs in the small-school division of the Kansas State Science Olympiad earlier this month at Wichita State

University.

Their performance in the dynamic planet event also placed them third overall against schools of all divisions.

Isaac and Zac were two of 13 students who represented Sacred Heart, which competed in 23 different science and engineering events against the best schools in the state.

Elite speller

Seventh-grader Tommy Holdren from Beloit-St. John's Middle School performed well in last month's Kansas State Spelling Bee in Salina.

After winning the Mitchell County Bee, Tommy made it all the way to Round 6 at state before being tripped up, and he finished in a tie for 15th among nearly 100 of the best spellers in the state.

Young entrepreneurs

Three students from TMP-Marian came home big winners from the Wildcard "Second Chance" competition at Fort Hays State University this month.

Junior Emily Hipp and sophomore Faith Schmeidler both qualified for the State Youth Entrepreneurial Challenge April 28-29 in Manhattan after winning poster presentations at the FHSU event.

In addition, senior Alyssa Church won the "Most Likely to Launch"



COURTESY PHOTO

TMP-Marian seniors Derek Becker, Diego Fernandez and Will Eck qualified for this summer's national FBLA event.

business award at the FHSU competition.

All three won a \$1,000

award, and Emily and Faith also won a \$1,000 scholarship to FHSU.

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One year of LEADERSHIP

Looking back on Leo XIV's first year as pope



A year in the life

Election and early milestones

Pope Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost and formerly a Chicago-born Augustinian with extensive missionary experience, was elected the 267th pope of the Roman Catholic Church on May 8, 2025 (following the death of Pope Francis in April). He became the first American pope in history and chose the name "Leo XIV" in homage to Leo XIII and his emphasis on social teaching.

At left, he embraces tradition in his official portrait. (CNS photo)

Jubilee Year Declared

Jubilee Year 2025, originally proclaimed by Pope Francis as a "Year of Hope," continued under Pope Leo XIV's leadership. He emphasized themes of reconciliation, mercy, and renewal, encouraging pilgrimages and acts of charity worldwide.

As the Jubilee Year concluded and a new year began, Pope Leo XIV declared a new jubilee "Year of St. Francis," inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi. The pope emphasized care for the poor and stewardship of creation. He called on Catholics to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and deepen their commitment to serving marginalized communities.

Prayers for Peace and Global Leadership

Throughout his first year, Pope Leo XIV repeatedly called for peace amid rising global tensions. He led international prayer vigils and issued appeals for dialogue in regions experiencing conflict.

Notably, he presided over the Church during the early stages of a conflict involving Iran that began in February 2026. In response, he urged restraint, emphasized the human cost of war, and called on world leaders to pursue diplomatic solutions rather than escalation.

Global Outreach

Drawing from his years of missionary service in Latin America, Pope Leo XIV made outreach to the Global South a central priority of his early pontificate. He emphasized that the Church must listen more closely to Catholics in developing nations, where the faith continues to grow rapidly despite economic and political challenges.

In his first year, he increased communication with bishops and communities across Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia, often highlighting issues such as poverty, struggles of migrants and refugees, access to education, and fair economic systems.

Youth Engagement

Pope Leo XIV placed strong emphasis on engaging young people in the life of the

REFLECTING ON DILEXI TE, POPE'S FIRST ENCYCLICAL

By **ANDY BRANDT**

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

There are many frames from which to observe the leadership of a given Pope, but (as I mentioned in the piece I was invited to write last year looking back on the pontificate of Pope Francis) a good place to start is the documents the man himself put out. So, a year into the pontificate of Leo XIV, it is a useful exercise to look back at his first encyclical, *Dilexi Te*, remind ourselves what he's been teaching, and ask whether we are responding.

Of course, there is very little space here to summarize a 121-paragraph document, so I'll provide a couple of bullet points. In *Dilexi Te*, the Holy Father shows how:

1. God throughout history draws close to man, but God has in a very particular way drawn close to the poor, both in provision and care for them and in the Incarnation, when He became one of the poor. Therefore, Christ's promise to be with us always and the reminder that the poor will be with us always are not really to be read as separate: Christ is with us always in and as the poor and marginalized who we encounter in our daily lives.

2. For this reason, caring for the poor "as Christ," remembering that "whatever we do to the least of these" is also done to Him, is as central to the Christian Tradition as the creeds and litur-

gical practices of the Church. It is a core element of our identity.

3. Therefore, we do well to ask ourselves whether we are remaining true to that identity as a Church and as individual Christians. Do we imitate God's concern for the poor, marginalized, and excluded?

This document is a challenge for each of us, but it is also an encouragement. The Holy Father provides example after example of holy men and women in the history of the church, from its beginning through today, who promoted both justice and charity to the poor. He demonstrates that people facing far steeper difficulties than ourselves have, over and over again, neglected neither the structural injustices causing hunger, poverty, or marginalization, nor their own obligation to reach out in friendship and love to the individual poor person they encountered.

It's normal for us, when we first come to fully understand the urgency of Christ's reminder that "whatever we do to the least of these" is done to Him, to be dismayed. We respond like many of the figures in the gospels, whether walking away sadly like the rich young man, or arguing with Jesus like His disciples that "this is a hard teaching, and who can accept it?" The Holy Father in this document shows us who has accepted it, and that, with their example, it's not that outrageous. It's simply the

Church, recognizing them as essential to its future. In his speeches and writings, he encouraged youth to take active roles in their faith through leadership, and evangelization.

He also supported international youth gatherings and promoted greater involvement in events like World Youth Day, encouraging young Catholics to connect across cultures and deepen their faith together. Through these efforts, he aimed to make the Church more accessible and meaningful to a new generation.



CNS PHOTO, LOLA GOMEZ

Pope Leo XIV carries the Jubilee Cross as he walks to the altar before a prayer vigil with young people gathered in Tor Vergata in Rome Aug. 2, 2025, during the Jubilee of Youth.

Sr. Vera Meis dies



Sister Vera Meis died March 28, 2026 at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. She was 86 years old and a Sister of St. Joseph for 61 years. She was born in Weskan on June 27, 1939, to William and Elizabeth Schmidt Meis, the third of seven children, and was baptized Vera Louise Meis. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia, on September 8, 1963. On August 15, 1964, Vera received the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph and was given the name Sister Rose Victor, later changing back to her baptismal name. She pronounced first vows on August 14, 1965 and final vows on August 15, 1970.

Sister Vera received a BA degree in Theology in 1971 from Marymount College, Salina. From 1966-1972 she taught in Gladstone, MI; then from 1973-1977 she was pastoral minister in Grand Island, NE. In 1977 she began serving at Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center in Norton. One special joy was starting a new Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center in Parker, CO, which she did from 1989-1995. Sister Vera was elected as regional coordinator of the Congregation in 1995. After her term was over, she served in Scottsbluff, NE and Mitchell, NE as pastoral minister. In February, 2023, she retired to the Motherhouse.

Sister Vera was preceded in death by her parents, three brothers and one sister. She is survived by two brothers, Fred Meis in Minden, NE and Milton in Shelby, MT. A Bible Vigil Service was held March 31 in the Nazareth Motherhouse Chapel with Sister Loretta Jasper as the eulogist. The Mass of Christian Burial was April 1 in the Motherhouse Chapel with Fr. Barry Brinkman presiding with Fr. Vince Parsons as concelebrant. Burial in the Nazareth Motherhouse Cemetery.

DILEXI TE, CONTINUED

normal definition of what it means to follow Christ throughout history. We're not being asked to do anything that hasn't been done millions of times before, or that isn't being done every day, often directly under our noses. There are examples of Christ's love everywhere, if you know where to look.

I'm going to embarrass my wife here, briefly, by offering her as another example. We no longer live within the Salina Diocese, having moved to (gasp) New York City. This past winter, which was brutally cold, my wife began, on her way to and from the public transportation she takes to work and back, to see a homeless woman. On successive trips into the city, I found out via text that she had learned this woman's name (and the name of her dog), given her part of the food I had packed for my wife, and even-

tually given her her own pair of gloves. My wife has done a far better job than myself of internalizing what the Holy Father has tried to teach us in this year, reaching out both to provide for the needs of her friend and in the spiritual charity of friendship.

Many times I think we believe that the only "real" virtue is something dramatic, something that will go viral or will be publicly visible. While those examples can be helpful, I think that examples like my wife, or some of those the Holy Father offers to us in Dilexi Te, can be just as helpful, and certainly easier to imitate.

The final paragraph of the document says the following: "Through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support, the poor will

come to realize that Jesus' words are addressed personally to each of them: 'I have loved you.'"

Pope Leo has invited each of us to take part in the Church's mission to the poor, and shown us the way by meeting with, eating with, and ministering to them. How will we take up his challenge?

The full text of Dilexi Te, along with other exhortations and papal updates, can be found on the Vatican website at vatican.va. A revamping of the website was one of the first changes during Leo XIV's papacy. Shortly after his election, he oversaw a major redesign in May 2025, making it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. The new update provides clearer access to papal documents, homilies, and official Church teachings for a global audience.



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OCIA members celebrate Easter at St. Andrew's, Abilene.

COURTESY PHOTO



Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan welcomed 21 new members into the Church at the Easter Vigil, April 4. Fr. Leo Blasi baptized 15, had 33 First Communicants and 32 Confirmations. Above is a partial group along with their catechist, Carlos Palacian (back row, left).

COURTESY PHOTO



Confirmation, Sacred Heart, Selden — March 7

Front (L-R): Evangeline Wessel, Dally Hynek, Katie Carter and Searee Bruggeman. Back: Ryder Hynek, Solan Bruggeman, Bishop Vincke, Kelby Buehler and Koen Schaben.

COURTESY PHOTO



The Knights of Columbus Council 3033 presented the March "Family of the Month" award to the Richard and Theresa Rippe family at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Richard was deeply involved in the Knights, and today his legacy continues through his sons and son-in-law, all of whom are active members of the K of C. Standing with Theresa: Kevin, Megan, and family; Tim, Lindsey, and family; Brenda, Aaron, and family; and Rodney, Katelyn, and family.

COURTESY PHOTOS



First Holy Communion, Christ the King, WaKeeney, March 28

First Communicants: Raegan Poppert, Jax Poppert, Rilee Poppert, Kelton Bleske, and Laityn Biel. Back: Ernest Amoako-Opare (Not pictured: Religious Ed. Director Alyssa Moeder, and Catechists: Chane and Heidi Goff.)

COURTESY PHOTO



First Holy Communion, Sacred Heart, Oberlin — April 12.

Class teacher Becca Mondero and Fr. Mthew Chacko flank the top row with (L-R) Asher Larue, Camilo Favela Cruz, Shirley Derauf, Luke Mondero. Front: Heleena LaGuardia, Swayze Frisbie and Luz Maria Aguilu.

COURTESY PHOTO, CYNTHIA HAYNES



Confirmation, St. Agnes, Grainfield — April 12.

(L-R) Halle Zimmerman, Marissa Beckman, Evangeline Godek, Fr. James M. Thomas, Bishop Gerald Vincke, Jackson Foster, Deighton Herl and Luke Zerr.

COURTESY PHOTO



Several Blujay vocalists from St. John's Concert Choir spread their wings and traveled to Omaha on March 20 to participate in the Pueri Cantores Sacred Music Festival. Students spent the day learning to sing a High Mass at the Cathedral of St. Cecilia, gaining valuable experience and meaningful fellowship. Pictured (L-R): Giny Schrontz, Bonnie Weber, Cecilia Horinek, Avila Niewald, Alice Weber, Clare Weber and Maryann Walter. Directed by Samantha Hicks.

COURTESY PHOTO



Chosen & Cherished

Mikhail's Story

Since welcoming Mikhail into their family in June 2025, Devan and Lucia have experienced the joy, love, and little adventures that come with raising two young boys!

Mikhail loves his big brother Naveen, and the two are already the ultimate dynamic duo, though Naveen does have to remind Mikhail occasionally which toys are his.

Mikhail is discovering the world, giggling, crawling, grabbing toys, and soaking up all the love around him. Devan and Lucia describe both of their boys as huge blessings and a beautiful reminder of

the joy adoption brings to their family.

“Adoption to us is about love, hope, and being chosen to walk alongside a child in their journey. It’s a gift of life, of connection, and of family that grows in ways you can’t imagine until it happens.”



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.

Bryce's Story

Nearly 25 years ago, Mary welcomed her son Bryce into her heart through adoption. Today, their story continues to shine with hope, growth, and the beauty of a love that has endured and blossomed.

In May 2024, Bryce earned his Master’s in Architecture from Kansas State University and is now working at a top sports architecture firm. He enjoys staying active, spending time with friends and family, and exploring new experiences.

“Adoption to me means having a second chance at life, since I am given an opportunity to grow and live in this world when I may not



have ever had that chance,” Bryce said.

“Adoption is one of the most beautiful blessings and gifts that a person can receive,” Mary reflected. “You are entrusted with a beautiful gift of a child to nurture and raise. Bryce has brought me so much love and joy. Watching him grow into the incredible man he is will forever be the most beautiful blessing to me.”

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“The future starts today, not tomorrow. We must live each day with faith and courage.”

— Pope John Paul II

BAPTISMS

WEDDINGS

Graham Leo Anguish, son of Jordan and Arista Anguish, was baptized March 29, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Concordia. Godparents are Evan Bombardier and Kassidy Leiszler.

Jane Frances Barnhardt, daughter of Travis and Emily Barnhardt, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Church in Manhattan. Godparents are Matthew and Elizabeth Dykas.

Augustus Ignacio Beaudreau, son of Alexandre Christian Beaudreau and Maria De La Luz Beaudreau, was baptized March 21, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan.

Kaizer William Allen Baumann, son of Kaid Ryan Baumann and Christa Marie Bergmann, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Fr. Mike Leiker at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Clay Center.

Riley Todd Bowers, son of Spencer Charles Bowers and Danyel Elizabeth Rakowitz, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Church, Manhattan.

Harper Annette Brungardt, daughter of Josh and Elle (Stein) Brungardt, was baptized April 5, 2026, by Fr. Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Hays.

Clara Morgan Clennan, daughter of Nathan and Karsen (Webber) Clennan, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Jayce and Kyle McGatlin.

Elizabeth Louise Dlabal and Gianna Rose Dlabal, twin daughters of Ethan and Laura (Meyer) Dlabal, were baptized March 8, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are George and Emily Meyer.

Weston James Dysinger, son of Daniel and Kelly Dysinger, was baptized December 7, 2025, by Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap at St. Catherine Church in Catharine.

Bennett Wayne Gilbert, son of Anthony Gilbert and Emily Billings, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of

the Universe Church in Salina. Godparent is Haley Billings.

Statler Lee Hoffman, son of Nathan and Sabina Hoffman, was baptized July 27, 2025, by Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap., at St. Catherine Church in Catharine.

Colsen Stanley Irvin, son of Clinton and Heather Irvin, was baptized December 7, 2025, by Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap., at St. Catherine Church in Catharine.

Atticus Romanus Jirak, son of Ethan and Maggie (Wilson) Jirak, was baptized March 1, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Anna Jirak and Pius Jirak.

Kennedy May Karlin, daughter of Nathan Lee Karlin and Jamie Beth Karlin, was baptized March 1, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan.

Patrick Michael Lee, son of Joshua and Reagan Lee, was baptized March 29, 2026, by Fr. Peter O'Donnell at St. Michael Church in Chapman. Godparents are Grant Scaletty and Niamh Lee.

Clara Kay Litton, daughter of Taner and Leanne Litton, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Beau Rodney McCullough, son of Jason McCullough

and Kinley Hanson, was baptized April 5, 2026, by Fr. Joseph Kieffer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Godparents were Adam Light and Ariel Troutman.

Lyla Lucille Minjarez-Almeida, daughter of Azriel Minjarez-Almeida and Andrea Vierthaler, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Gerardo Holguin Almeida and Rylee Miller.

Bennett Joseph Niewald, son of Andrew and Maria Niewald, was baptized April 5, 2026, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Rowelee Pack, daughter of Adam and Shawna Pack, was baptized March 28, 2026, by Fr. Tony Kulandajews at St. Joseph Church in Dorrance. Godparents are Jayde Ortiz and Kaden Reuer.

Charlie Eloise Perez, daughter of Blake and Sarah Perez, was baptized April 19, 2026, by Fr. Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Mariana Rodriguez, daughter of Hector Rodriguez and Alma Velazquez, was baptized March 1, 2026, by Fr. Adam Urban at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Olivia and Gabriel Garcia.

Claire Elizabeth Rosenberger, daughter of Joel

and Marie Rosenberger, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Dcn. Harry Hardy at St. Thomas More Church in Manhattan.

Heston Lewis Schmidt, son of Braden and Erin Schmidt, was baptized November 16, 2025, by Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap at St. Catherine Church in Catharine.

Landon Christopher Steck, son of William and Chelsea (Thorne) Steck, was baptized February 15, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparent is Kathy Clark.

Arthur Ernest Thurlow, son of Benjamin Ernest Thurlow and Emma Christine Irvine, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan.

Drake Matthew Webb, son of Jordan and Kayla (Briggs) Webb, was baptized March 15, 2026, by Fr. Kevin Weber at St. Mary Queen of the Universe Church in Salina. Godparents are Garrett Galanski and Emily Webb.

Olivia Louise Witt, daughter of Bradley Joshua Witt and Elizabeth Frances Irvine, was baptized March 22, 2026, by Fr. Leo Blasi at Seven Dolores Parish, Manhattan.

Adrian Joseph Hoffman and Kaitlyn Jo Koch were married November 29, 2025, at St. Catherine Church in Catharine. Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap., witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are David and Ruth Hoffman. Parents of the bride are Myron and Tracy Koch. Witnesses were Seth Fuller and Bridget Knipp.

Aaron Shute and Francella Wiles were married December 6, 2025, at Sacred Heart Church in Esbon. Fr. Michael McCabe from the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, officiated the wedding, while Fr. Charles Oppong of Sacred Heart was in attendance. Parents of the groom are Steve and Jan Shute and Tom and Lisa Boston. Parents of the bride are the late Terry Wiles and the late Judy Wiles. Witnesses were Robert White and Peyton Ellis-Kim.

Garrett Carroll Wildeman and Emma Rae Pope were married June 21, 2025, at St. Catherine Church in Catharine. Fr. Earl Befort, OFM Cap., witnessed their vows. Parents of the groom are Terry Wildeman and Shiela Blackwell. Parents of the bride are Jason and Michelle Pope. Witnesses were Max Briggs and Grace Pope.

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FUNERALS

Ermeline J. "Erma" Ding-
es, 87, died April 8, 2026.
Funeral Mass was celebrat-
ed April 14, 2026 at St.
Nicholas of Myra Church in
Hays. Fr. Damian Richards
presided. Burial in St.
Francis Cemetery, Munjor..

Leona (Ploeger) Wash-
burn, 89, died March 30,
2026. Funeral Mass was
celebrated April 6, 2026 at
St. Frances Cabrini in Hoxie.
Fr. Brian Lager presided.
Burial was in St. Frances
Cabrini Cemetery, Hoxie.

Elaine Watson, 93, died
March 27, 2026. Funeral
Mass was celebrated April 1
at Immaculate Heart of
Mary Church in Hays. Fr.
Brian McCaffrey presided.
Burial in St. Joseph Ceme-
tery, Hays.

Wilma Beatrice (Simon)
Mader, died March 17, 2026.
Funeral Mass was celebrat-
ed March 23 at St. Frances
Cabrini Church in Hoxie. Fr.
Brian Lager presided. Burial
in Hoxie City Cemetery,
Hoxie.

Dave Allen Schamberger,
68, died March 29, 2026.
Funeral Mass was celebrat-
ed April 1 at St. Frances
Cabrini Church in Hoxie. Fr.
Brian Lager presided. Burial
in St. Frances Cabrini
Cemetery, Hoxie.

Lillian Agnes Schlyer, 96,
died March 30, 2026.
Funeral Mass was celebrat-
ed April 8, 2026 at St.
Joseph Catholic Church in
Hays. Fr. Fred Gatschet
presided. Burial in St.
Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Juleen R. Stecklein, 82,
died March 26, 2026.
Funeral Mass was celebrat-
ed March 31 at St. Nicholas
of Myra Church in Hays. Fr.
Damian Richards presided.
Inurnment at a later date in
St. Joseph Cemetery, Hays.

Jerome F. Vajnar, 82, died
March 22, 2026. Funeral
Mass was celebrated March
28 at St. Francis of Assisi
Church in Munjor. Fr.
Damian Richards presided.
Burial to take place in Pilson.



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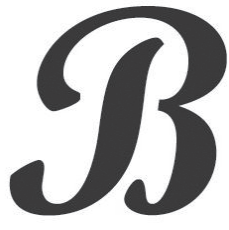
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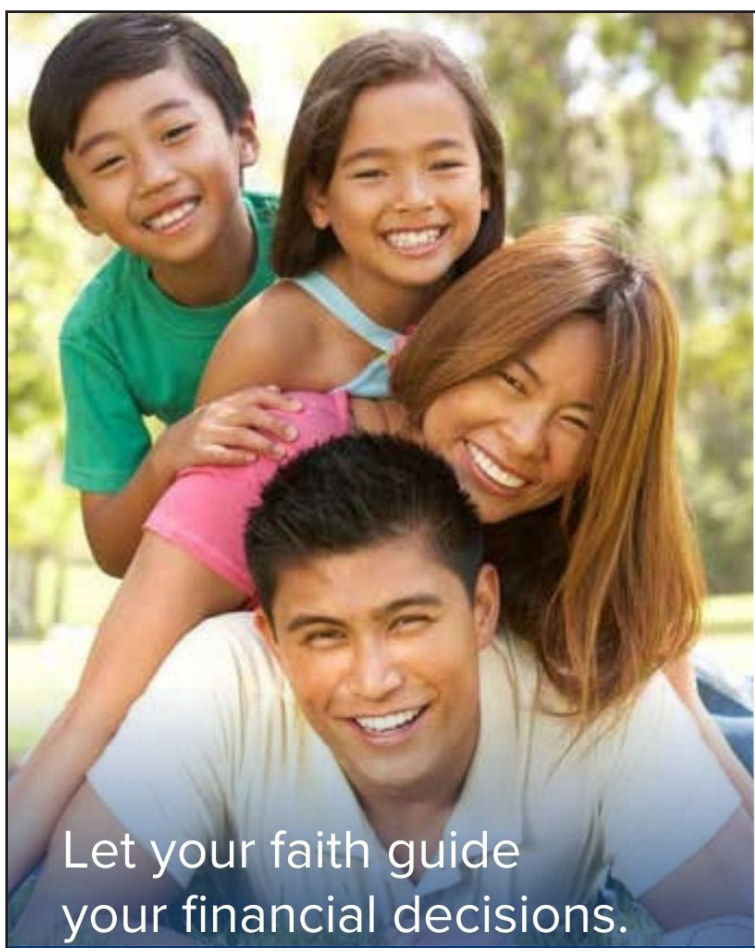
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2026 Kansas legislative session brings updates

SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Much of the action in the 2026 Kansas legislative session came in early April during the “Veto Session,” when lawmakers reconsidered bills rejected by Governor Laura Kelly. During this time, several key issues important to Catholics in Kansas saw decisive outcomes.

On immigration, Senate Bill 254 would have removed in-state tuition benefits for undocumented students, often referred to as “DREAMers.”

While the bill passed the legislature, the governor vetoed it—and, notably, lawmakers did not attempt to override that veto. As a result, the long-standing policy allowing these students to receive in-state tuition remains in place.

From a Catholic perspective, this preserves educational opportunities for young people striving

to build stable lives.

Education policy also saw a major breakthrough. Lawmakers successfully overrode the governor’s veto of SB 361, enabling Kansas families to participate in a federal tax credit scholarship program.

This opens the door for significant private funding to support student scholarships, including those attending Catholic schools, while also benefiting public school students through expanded educational resources.

The legislature also took action to support mothers and protect life. Lawmakers overrode vetoes to approve \$3 million in funding for pregnancy resource centers, which provide material and emotional support to women facing difficult pregnancies.

In addition, the CARE Act (HB 2635) became law, protecting these

centers from government interference. Further pro-life measures also passed into law after veto overrides, including HB 2727 and HB 2729, which strengthen informed consent protections by clarifying legal damages and requiring a standardized, state-approved consent process.

Following these developments and the end of the session, a major leadership change was announced as Chuck Weber, the longtime executive director and public voice of the Kansas Catholic Conference, shared his resignation.

His leadership has shaped Catholic advocacy in the state for years, and the organization has begun a national search for his successor, who will continue to represent Catholics in the public square at a pivotal time for faith and public policy in Kansas.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAINTS

Saint Rita of Cascia was born in Italy in 1381. As a baby, a swarm of bees was said to gather around her cradle and gently enter and leave her mouth without stinging her, which people saw as a sign of her sweetness and future holiness.

She wanted to become a nun, but her parents arranged for her to be married instead. Her husband was cruel and often violent, but Rita responded with patience, kindness and prayer, and he eventually changed before he died.

After his death, her two sons wanted to take revenge on his murderers, but Rita prayed that they would not commit such a serious sin, and both sons died before they could act.

Rita later tried to enter a convent. She was rejected at first, but she was accepted eventually and lived a life of prayer.

Later in her life, Rita received a wound on her forehead like a thorn from

Jesus’ crown. And, near the end of her life, a rose was said to bloom in winter for her.

Saint Rita is known as the patron saint of impossible causes, grieving mothers, loneliness and difficulty.



Bringing Light into the Darkness

One of my favorite moments of the entire year in the Church is the Easter Vigil—and this year, it took on an even deeper meaning for me.

For the first time as a deacon, I had the opportunity to carry the Easter candle into the church. As I began walking down the aisle, what I saw in front of me was total darkness. The church was quiet, still, and honestly a little unsettling. I knew candles were being lit behind me, but I couldn’t see that. All I could see was the darkness ahead.

Then I reached the end of the aisle and turned around.

What I saw stopped me.

The entire church was filled with light. Candle after candle had been lit, and what had been darkness just moments before was now completely transformed. It was striking—and it stuck with me.

That moment is a powerful reminder of what we

celebrate at Easter, the light of Christ—God’s love and mercy—breaking into the darkness of our world. It reminds us that even a small amount of light can change everything.

Think about the last time you

walked into a dark room. It doesn’t take much—a flashlight, a lamp, even the light from your phone—and suddenly things feel different, safer, and more manageable. The darkness hasn’t completely disappeared, but it no longer has the same hold.

That’s how God’s love works. And it’s also how we are called to live.

We live in a world where darkness shows up in many ways—negativity, division, gossip, discouragement, and sometimes real suffering. It can feel overwhelming, and it’s easy to think there’s not much we can do about it.

But the Easter Vigil

shows us a different truth.

We are not asked to light the whole world. We are asked to carry the light we’ve been given—the light of Christ, His love and mercy—and bring it into the places we are.



BILL Meagher
DEACON, SALINA, DIOCESE OF SALINA

Sometimes that looks small, but it matters more than we think.

It might be choosing not to join in a negative conversation and instead saying, “Let’s pray for them.” It might be having the courage to say, “That’s not right,” when something needs to be said. It might be showing up to help—volunteering, serving, or simply being present where someone is struggling. It might be sending a text to someone who’s having a hard time.

None of those things fixes everything. But they bring light—the light of Christ—and His light does make a difference.

The beauty of the Easter Vigil is that no one person lights the entire church. It happens because each person shares what they’ve been given. One flame becomes many, and the darkness doesn’t stand a chance.

You don’t have to do

everything. You don’t have to solve every problem. But you can bring light—God’s love and mercy—into the spaces you’re in. And when you do, it matters more than you realize, because even a small light, especially in a dark place, makes a real difference.

