



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Catholic

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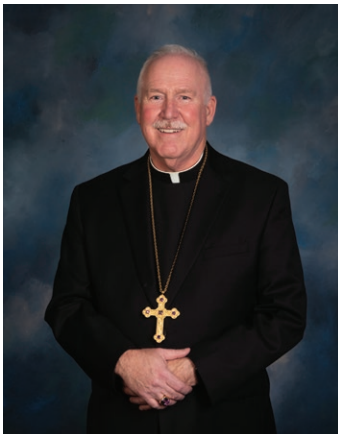
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Pilgrimages include: flights from Pittsburgh; taxes and current fuel surcharges; hotels; private bus; full-time tour guide; breakfast and dinner per itinerary; entry fees; accompanied by a bishop or priest; daily Mass, and more.

Official tour group of the Diocese of Pittsburgh

These pilgrimages are not sponsored by the Diocese of Pittsburgh or Pittsburgh Catholic magazine.





Serving in Faith and Charity

BY BISHOP MARK ECKMAN

As this school year began, I was honored to celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit at many of our Catholic colleges and high schools. What a joy it was to see the energy, smiles, and faith of the students. They remind me what a gift our young people are to the Church.

Catholic schools begin the academic year with the Mass of the Holy Spirit, seeking the Spirit's guidance and strength for everything that lies ahead in the life of each student. We pray for wisdom, courage, and for hearts open to the love and will of God. This tradition emphasizes that the purpose of Catholic education extends far beyond what students hear in class or read in textbooks. Catholic education is about becoming the people God created us to be.

As bishop and a former pastor, I am aware of the many choices and challenges that young people face. They live in a world of constant distractions and pressures – many of which did not exist when I was their age. Yet, I can see that their faith is alive and they are filled with hope and a desire to bring the love of Christ to the world. Young Catholics give me great confidence in the future of our Church and our society.

All three of our Catholic universities: Carlow, Duquesne and LaRoche, have a deep commitment to service in their communities and a desire to share that service not only locally, but internationally as well. From assisting at local food banks and fish fries to cleaning up nearby neighborhoods, they strengthen our local communities. Internationally, they work to bring water and food to poor villages and help others to understand the dignity and value of human life. The students at these three Catholic universities bring the presence of Christ to others as they live out their faith in charity.

In schools of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, students are taught that God loves them and will guide them to use their gifts in service to others. When a young person encounters Christ in

the sacraments and in interactions with teachers, families and the wider community, it can transform them and change the whole course of their lives. It certainly changed mine.

To all students, whether you are just starting school, preparing to graduate, or somewhere in between, please know this: your Church believes in you. We are proud of you. And we will walk with you in faith regardless of whether you are enrolled in a Catholic school or someplace else.

I invite every Catholic to pray for our students, asking that they will grow in wisdom, faith and charity. May they have the courage to ask questions and the trust to seek Christ for the answers. Pray that they will discover the joy of serving others and that they will always remember that God loves them infinitely. Pray also that our students remain safe so that they can learn in an environment free from stress and anxiety.

Encourage the young people in your life with a kind word or an invitation to Mass. Offer them your time and attention. Such moments remind them they are seen and supported by the Church and by Christ.

I have likewise experienced your support and prayers during these first months as your bishop. The warm welcome you have given me fills me with gratitude.

Thanksgiving is approaching, which should remind all of us to give thanks continually. I am grateful for parents and grandparents who keep faith alive at home by speaking of Jesus, holding family prayer and engaging children and teens in works of mercy. I am grateful for teachers and mentors who give so much of themselves in order to help students become servant leaders whose faith will infuse all that they do in the future. I am profoundly grateful for our students, for their openness, their joy, and their desire to grow closer to Christ. Above all, I am grateful for the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide our Church.

Please be assured of my continued prayers that we may all know God's love in our lives and share that love with one another. †



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FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Reader,

In every season of our lives, Christ calls us to love, not only with words, but also through actions that place others' needs before our own. As we move into October and November, when the Church highlights life, prayer, and gratitude, we are reminded of the beauty and power of selfless service.

The stories in this issue reflect that call.

Read about the moving witness of Deacon Tim Killmeyer, who became a caregiver for his wife, Chris, when a minor traffic accident before their wedding left her quadriplegic. His sleepless nights and devotion set him on a path he never imagined, that deepened his gratitude and brought him closer to Christ. As we mark National Family Caregivers Month in November, his story reminds us of the countless unseen acts of love happening in homes every day.

Prayer is another form of love. The Seven Sisters Apostolate, born from one mother's desire to support priests as her son was discerning priesthood, has grown into a spiritual lifeline for clergy and parishes. These women gather weekly for a holy hour, offering prayers for the strength and sanctity of our priests. They feel it is the most powerful thing they can do to support the Church, believing that the stronger and more faithful the pastor, the stronger their parishes become.

The Walking with Moms in Need initiative is also changing lives. Parish efforts to support pregnant and parenting women form a vast network of compassion. Half of our 60 parishes currently participate, and volunteers continue to step forward. It is a living sign of the Gospel, offering life-affirming hope and practical help to women in crisis.

In another parish, a rosary-making ministry has blossomed into something extraordinary. More than 100,000 rosaries have been handmade and shared around the world. Organizers say that what began as a small effort has become a global response to calls from the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother, uniting hearts through prayer beads crafted in love.

This fall marks the launch of the Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh, a new way for us to join together so that our parishes, schools, and ministries remain strong for generations to come. Through legacy giving, we can plant seeds of faith whose fruits will be felt by our children, grandchildren, and their children's children.

In this issue, we are happy to honor our jubilarian sisters, priests, and brothers who celebrate milestone anniversaries in ministry this year. Their faithfulness over decades of service inspires us all.

We also celebrate Father David Taylor, who retired after 51 years of priestly service. The first Black priest ordained in our diocese, Father Taylor explains that he was guided by his older brother, the first Black pastor here. Both brothers dedicated their lives to building bridges of faith and community. Even in retirement, Father Dave continues to pray for strength and for young men to answer God's call to the priesthood. His story is a powerful reminder that vocations grow in love, encouragement, and prayer.

And don't miss "Views from the Pews," where we reflect on Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals, and share some of the pets who bring joy to parishioners' lives.

As you turn these pages, I hope you notice a common thread: whether through prayer, caregiving, volunteering, or giving, each story reflects love poured out freely for others. That is what strengthens our Church. That is what makes our faith a living witness.

This fall, may we each find one way, big or small, to serve in selfless love. When offered to Christ, even the smallest act can be multiplied into blessings far beyond what we can imagine. †

With gratitude,
Jennifer Antkowiak
Editor-in-Chief

**“
Love poured out freely
for others is what
strengthens our Church
and makes our faith a
living witness.”**



3rd Annual

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Catholic Men**

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- We welcome tax-deductible donations. Donate at www.cmfwpa.org under 'donate' tab.



ACROSS THE DIOCESE

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

For a quarter century, adults and high schoolers from Saints Martha and Mary Parish (Saint Catherine of Sweden church) have provided meals at the East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) in East Liberty. They began after a student, Kara Zang, asked if the group could do “something different,” said Mary Weber, then a youth minister.

Initially they served homeless men in a shelter at a church, then moved to EECM’s new coed facility.

“We decided that a good Saturday breakfast would be welcomed, instead of just cold cereal. They tell us it’s the best day of the week,” Mary said.



▲ Volunteers prepare breakfast for the people at the EECM.

BEAVER COUNTY

Saint Augustine Parish celebrated the feasts of Saint Augustine and Saint Monica during three days in August.

A talk by inspirational speaker Dave VanVickle preceded the parish’s 12th annual Forty Hours devotion and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

“We invite different parish groups and demographics to participate in the Forty Hours, but all are welcome to stop by at any time,” said outreach coordinator Patricia Seaman. The celebration culminated on August 28 with Mass and a eucharistic procession through the cemetery, then back to church for a reception and fellowship.



▲ Saint Augustine parish's eucharistic procession

BUTLER COUNTY

Six ministries from the parishes of Saint Clare of Assisi and Saint Faustina co-sponsored an initiative of Cross Catholic Outreach, which provided more than 60,000 meals for hungry people worldwide.

The six are: the Christian Mothers and Women of Saint Clare; Christian Mothers and Women of Saint Francis; the Marian Guild of Saint John; the Knights of Columbus of Saint Wendelin; Saint Joseph Church in Cabot; and the Butler Knights Council.

They raised nearly \$20,000 to buy ingredients, which volunteers were scheduled to pack in September, said Jennifer Burke, an event organizer.



▲ Jennifer Burke visits an event sponsor.

GREENE COUNTY

Six high school seniors from Saint Matthias Parish received \$1,000 scholarships from the Knights of Columbus Saint Ann Council #12703.

The recipients were A.J. Donaldson, Brock Evans, Isabella Garnek, Joe Kirsch, J.J. Martinez and Dalton Taylor.

“We require scholarship, community service, high school activism and a demonstrated commitment to parish and faith as outlined in the application,” said council member Robert Goewert. “We believe we should reward worthy individuals for their hard work and commitment, and we are especially grateful for the parish and community support of our fundraising for these scholarships.”



▲ Barry Nelson (left), and Ted Belmont, Knights of Columbus, award the scholarships.

LAWRENCE COUNTY

Historian and author Robert Presnar, a parishioner at Holy Spirit Parish, recently published *The History of St. Mary Church*, a book that details the history of the church and of Catholicism in Lawrence County. The book will help celebrate the centennials of the laying of the church cornerstone in 1925 and the church dedication in 1927.

Parish pastor Fr. Benjamin Barr penned the epilogue.

“From the first moments of missionary activity to the flourishing expansion of the 1950s, Catholicism has left an enduring legacy in Lawrence County,” he wrote.



▲ Robert Presnar holds his new book with his wife Jennifer Presnar (right) and Sister Annie Bremmer (left).

WASHINGTON COUNTY

The ChristLife evangelization series “was instrumental in the success of six parishes becoming Saint Katharine Drexel Parish,” said Charlene Bozovich, a ChristLife team member since 2013. Its last series had 256 team members and participants. A seventh series is planned for spring 2026.

ChristLife, which emphasizes building relationships, led to the creation of a greeters ministry, a team that prays with people after Mass and accepts email prayer requests.

“We hope to expand or assist with outreach to elderly and shut-ins,” Charlene said. “I absolutely love the connections the ChristLife program brings: connecting your thoughts to your feelings, your head to your heart, and heart to others.”



▲ Participants pray at a ChristLife session.

Hospitality Without the Hurry

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

I love hosting. Really, I do. But if you ask my kids, they'll tell you that in the days leading up to a gathering, I make everyone just a little bit nuts. I can't help getting carried away with the prep—cleaning, cooking, decorating, and fussing over things that probably don't matter as much as I think they do.

My family rolls their eyes and says, "You're doing too much." And they may be right. By the time people start showing up, I've sometimes worn myself out before the party even begins.

I don't think I'm alone in this. With October here and the holidays right around the corner, plenty of us are already bracing for the cleaning lists, grocery runs, and endless little details that sneak into "getting ready."

Somewhere along the way, we've started believing that hospitality is about the perfect table, the perfectly staged home, and the perfectly timed meal.

But when I think back to the get-togethers that really mattered, the ones people still talk about, it's never the perfectly baked rolls or the spotless living room they remember. It's the laughter. It's the stories told late into the evening. It's the feeling of being welcomed and cared for.

In fact, during one big Thanksgiving dinner we hosted, it rained for the annual Turkey Bowl, the turkey was done later than expected, and I burned the rolls. Despite my best planning, things went sideways. I was frustrated in the moment, but later one of my sisters said, "That was one of my favorite nights at your house. We had such a good time."

It hit me: all that mattered was the love that they felt.

Real hospitality is more about presence than perfection. Our Catholic faith

has always reminded us of this. Jesus spent so much of His ministry at tables, multiplying loaves and fishes, celebrating weddings, and breaking bread at the Last Supper. In each of those moments, it wasn't about what was served. It was about who was served.

Saint Benedict told his monks to "welcome all guests as Christ." That's a tall order, isn't it? But it doesn't mean I need to have everything perfect every time someone comes to the door. It means that whether I'm serving a home-cooked feast or takeout pizza, the most important thing is how my guest feels: Did they feel at home? Did they feel loved? Did they feel like they mattered?

The season we're moving into—October with its crisp evenings and November with its spirit of gratitude—seems like a good time to shift how we think about hospitality. Instead of draining ourselves with the stress of doing too much, maybe this year we can focus on what matters most.

Hospitality can be as simple as a pot of soup and a comfy chair, a cup of tea with a friend who just needs to talk, or a smile at the door, even if the laundry pile is still on the couch.

Those small gestures, offered with love, are more than enough.

Yes, my kids will probably still tease me for overdoing it. Honestly, they're not wrong. I have two huge plastic totes filled with pumpkins and leaf garlands that somehow all make their way out and around the house in the fall. But I am going to try to laugh at myself a little more and not let the prep wear me down. People don't come for the decorations (although they are fabulous!). They come to feel welcome. And when we offer that welcome with love, Christ has a way of showing up at the table. †



JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK
executive director of the
Department of Communications
and Community Relations;
diocesan spokesperson

Meditate on the details of beloved saints' lives

BY THERESA BREITENBACH

We celebrate many popular saints' feast days in October and November. Diving into details of their lives can console and inspire us on our own pilgrimages to Heaven. Let these saints' examples guide your prayer life this fall.

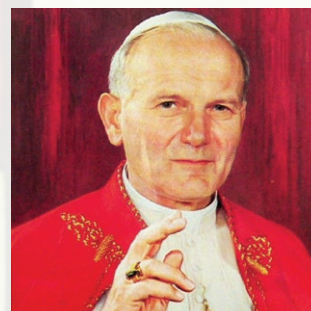
Surrender your perfectionism to God

► **Saint Thérèse of Lisieux:**
October 1 feast day

On a seaside vacation with her family, 12-year-old Thérèse Martin admired a pale blue ribbon she had tied in her hair. Terrified that this feeling offended God, she rushed to confession. While fear of offending God is virtuous, Thérèse's was so intense that it made her physically ill. For help, she prayed to her four siblings in heaven, who had died young. "Soon my soul was flooded with the sweetest peace. I knew that I was loved, not only on earth but also in heaven," she wrote in *Story of a Soul*. Do you struggle with perfectionism—in your faith life, your career, your home maintenance, or your vocation? Perfection does not earn God's love; He already gives it to you freely. Let His love remind you that you are loved as you are, and grant you peace.



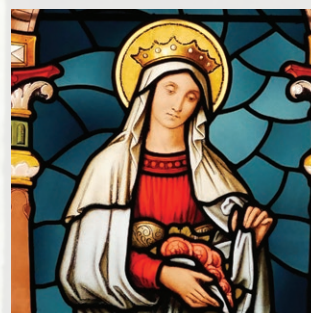
"You seem to be sad. Is this your first Christmas away from home?" When Andreas affirmed this, Pope John Paul II took his hand, looking at him as if nothing else existed. "Well, I thank you for the sacrifice you're making for the Church," he said. "I will pray for you tonight." Who around you is suffering silently and could use your compassion?



Lean on those who love you

► **Saint Elizabeth of Hungary:** **November 17 feast day**

At 14, Princess Elizabeth of Hungary married Louis of Thuringia. It was a political alliance, but their marriage was loving and happy. He supported her desire to serve the poor when others criticized her. One day, as she carried bread to the hungry in her cloak, she encountered Louis and his courtiers, the latter of whom accused her of stealing from the palace. To prove his wife's innocence, Louis asked her to open her cloak. It was filled with roses. Like Elizabeth and Louis, how can you show mercy and support the virtuous?



Listen when Jesus calls

► **Saint Faustina Kowalska:**
October 5 feast day

"How long shall I put up with you and how long will you keep putting Me off?"

Helena Kowalska stopped in her tracks when Jesus, stripped of His clothes and covered with the wounds of His crucifixion, appeared and spoke these words to her at a dance. She fled the festivities to seek solace in a cathedral. There, she heard Jesus tell her to enter a convent. She obeyed and became Sister Faustina. In the convent, Jesus revealed to her His message of Divine Mercy: His mercy and love wash away our darkest sins. What can God accomplish through your yes to Him?



Pray about what you can offer to God

► **Presentation of Mary:**
November 21 feast day

The greatest of all the saints is our mother, Mary. When she was a child, tradition holds that her parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, presented her to God in the Temple. This feast is a beautiful opportunity to pray about the ways that Mary gave herself totally to God, and how we are called to do the same. As this feast and Thanksgiving approach, reflect on how God has provided for you this year and what you can give back to Him in gratitude. †



Let no one around you escape your notice

► **Saint John Paul II:** **October 22 feast day**

As he stood at his Vatican post on a cold Christmas Eve – his first away from family – Swiss Guard Andreas Widmer held back tears. He tried to compose himself because Pope John Paul II was about to pass by en route to Midnight Mass at Saint Peter's Basilica. But the Holy Father stopped before Andreas:

FAITH FORUM

Is there a specific Catholic vision of DEATH? And if so, what is it?



A Death, because it is a universal reality, finds its way into the thoughts of most people. Many of those thoughts center around three themes: death, dying and the afterlife. Our Catholic faith tradition speaks to each of these.

The inevitability of death is one of the strongest common denominators we share as humans. While our Catholic faith teaches us that we are to take proper care of our health, our faith also reminds us that we are not made for this world but for one that is to come with Jesus in eternity. In the Gospel of John, we read of Jesus saying to the disciples: “I am going to come back to take you with me so that where I am you also will be.” (John 14:3)

Death in this world is the doorway to an eternal destiny. That reality casts a different view than that lived out in the lives of some in our culture. How often do we hear people say: “Yes, I am living my life waiting for Jesus to take me with him”? But isn’t that the truth about how we are to live?

Dying is the process which takes place at the end of our lives on earth. It will vary for each of us, but it can involve significant decision-making.

Our Catholic faith teaches that we are to employ the “ordinary” means to preserve our lives (food, hydration and shelter). “Extraordinary” means to do so – such as medical interventions – are normally left to our choice. It is important for us to make our faith-based decisions known to others who will assist in our passing from this world.

What, then, will it be like when we leave this life? In the Scriptures, heaven is described as a great banquet, a never-ending wedding feast, or a large house with many rooms.

The obvious reason why definitions of heaven are so difficult is that few have

seen heaven and come back to describe it. In fact, the Scripture says: “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)

Nonetheless, there are fundamental principles upon which our Catholic understanding rests. Among these are: a belief in the resurrection of the dead; and in a non-corporeal existence until the glorious manifestation of the Lord Jesus at the end of time. In addition, we believe in a fundamental continuity between our life lived with Christ on earth and that lived with Christ in heaven. The personal application of this belief is that we are to live on earth so as to encounter Jesus at the end of our lives, not as a stranger, but as one whose voice we know well.

In 1979, the Roman Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document entitled: “Letter on Certain Questions Concerning Eschatology.” In that document, we are reminded that: “Neither the Scripture nor theology provides sufficient light for a proper picture of life after death.” Thus, it is clear that death, while universal and unavoidable, is not something we will ever understand completely on this side of eternity. †



FATHER CHARLES BOBER
is pastor of Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish. He has written his column for the *Pittsburgh Catholic* newspaper and online since 1983.

FIRE UP YOUR FAITH



“Our goal must be infinite, not the finite. The infinite is our homeland. Heaven has been waiting for us forever.”

— Saint Carlo Acutis, canonized on September 7, 2025. His feast day is October 12.

Jubilee Celebration Calendar 2025

► *Pray with these dates of celebrations in Rome. Check your parish for events.*

- **October:** 8-9, consecrated life | 11-12: Marian spirituality | 18-19, global missions | 31-Nov. 2, education.
- **November:** 16, the poor | 22-23, choirs.

Respect Life Month

► In October the Church in the United States focuses on the sacred dignity and worth of all life from conception to natural death. For resources: respectlife.org.

Chimbote Dinner

► For 60 years, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has sponsored a medical mission to Chimbote, Peru. The annual fundraising dinner on Oct. 13 at the Sheraton Station Square will feature Father Tom Sparacino and seminarians, who recently visited Chimbote. Reception begins at 6 p.m. To register by Oct. 6 or donate, visit: chimbotefoundation.org/events/annual-peru-dinner.

Read pastoral letters addressing calamities that drive poverty in Appalachia

► Dioceses in Appalachia, including the Diocese of Pittsburgh, are observing the 50th anniversary of *This Land is Home to Me*, a pastoral letter of 25 bishops from the 13-state region. Read the letter and its follow-up, *At Home in the Web of Life*: bit.ly/CatholicAppalachiaLetter.

Food, fellowship and inspirational speakers

► Diocesan Speaker Series gatherings are held at noon and 6 p.m. on each date:

- **Nov. 6:** “The Dignity of Work,” with Jacob Williamson, diocesan director for social concerns.
- **Dec. 4:** “Prayer . . . an endless mystery to our inner journey with God,” with diocesan consultant Laetitia Bridges.

All are at O'Connor Hall, Diocesan Pastoral Center, 2900 Noblestown Rd., Pittsburgh, 15205. Refreshments provided. No cost. All are welcome. Register at: <https://diopitt.org/lay-ministry-speaker-series>.

Special Collections

- **Oct. 18-19:** The Collection for World Mission Sunday brings God's love and the sacraments to poor, marginalized and isolated people worldwide.
- **Nov. 1-2:** A collection held every three years for the Archdiocese for Military Services provides Catholic pastoral care and the sacraments to Americans in uniform worldwide.
- **Nov. 22-23:** The Collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious allows elderly religious sisters and brothers who served for decades with little or no pay, to live their later years in dignity.

Latino Ministry

- **Lord of Miracles Mass and procession:** This Peruvian observance of the miraculous survival of an image of Christ will take place Oct. 5 at noon in Saint Paul Cathedral.
- **Our Lady of Aparecida Mass and procession:** Learn how Mary brought inspiration to poor fishermen in Brazil on Oct. 12 at 6 p.m. in Saint Catherine of Siena Church (Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish).

Pray the Rosary

► The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is Oct. 7. The Rosary Ramblers pray the Rosary, walk, and chat on Tuesdays in October at 7 p.m. in the Marian Shrine parking lot at Saints Simon & Jude Church (Saint Raphael the Archangel Parish). For details: <https://straphaelcgs.org>.

Jubilee Mass for Children and Youth

► The Jubilee Mass for Children and Youth is Oct. 26 at noon at Saint Paul Cathedral. Bishop Emeritus Zubik will celebrate the Mass. Reception to follow. All children, teens, and families are welcome!

Honor all saints and all souls

► **All Saints Day is Sat., Nov. 1.** This is usually a Holy Day of Obligation, but since it falls on a Saturday, the obligation is suspended this year. It is still a beautiful practice to attend Mass on this day.

On **All Souls Day, Sun., Nov. 2**, Catholics are called to pray for all souls in purgatory, that they may soon be purified of the effects of their sins and go on to joy in heaven.

Saint Frances Cabrini's feast is Nov. 13

► In 1889 Pope Leo XIII sent Mother Frances Cabrini from Italy to New York to serve immigrants, who were widely despised. By her death in 1917 she had founded a charitable network that served immigrants and the poor worldwide. Pope Pius XII canonized her in 1946, declaring her patroness of immigrants in 1950. Her biopic, “Cabrini,” is on several streaming services.

Blessing of the Creche: Nov. 21 at 12 p.m.

► Ecumenical leaders will gather to bless and pray before the only authorized replica of the life-size Nativity scene at the Vatican. USX Tower Plaza, downtown. 600 Grant St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Take the Gratitude Challenge

► Refocus your attention from your burdens to your blessings.

Text GRATITUDE2025 to 84576 to receive daily texts all November to help you grow closer to God through gratitude.



▲ Tina (left) and Deacon Bob Marshall (right) in Walking With Moms in Need boutique at Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish

Walking With Moms in Need

A PARISH ORGANIZES TO HELP PREGNANT AND PARENTING WOMEN

BY ANN RODGERS

As they prepared to become grandparents, Deacon Bob Marshall and his wife, Tina, acknowledged it was time to shift from their longtime youth ministry and asked God what they should do next. That's when their pastor at Saint Mark the Evangelist in Butler County, Father Charles Bober, asked Deacon Bob to take oversight of the parish's Walking With Moms in Need ministry from a deacon who changed ministries.

Walking with Moms – created by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to mobilize every parish for support of pregnant and parenting women in difficulty -- was the Marshalls' answer to prayer.

"Pro-life work had always been close to my heart. We would take the youth group on a bus to the March for Life in Washington," said Tina, who does early intervention for children with hearing loss. Deacon Bob, a medical device engineer, had just retired.

Youth work had shown them the pressures young people face in a society where sex outside marriage is the norm.

"You get a whole new appreciation for life and the struggle that can be," Deacon Bob said.

Their two children, now in their thirties, were married in the enormous Saint Kilian Church in Cranberry, now part of Saint Mark. Both had attended CCD in trailers behind the little white clapboard Saint Kilian Church in Mars, where Walking With Moms now shares space with Kilian's Cupboard, a food pantry.

The ministry stores baby food, diapers and most of the children's clothing in the food pantry. Upstairs, the choir loft has been renovated as a boutique with clothes and supplies for pregnant and nursing mothers.

"This is an area that's meant to make them feel special, that says it's okay to take care of themselves at a time when they're dealing with a lot," Deacon Bob said.

Each Walking with Moms is different. The ministry is intentionally flexible, matching community needs with parish resources.

Each parish begins by surveying local resources



▲ Volunteers Laurie Kanoza (left) and Trish Dellana (right) by the baby clothes for Walking With Moms in Need

for pregnant and parenting women, then discerns unmet needs. They might organize group baby showers and social service expos, run diaper banks, or raise money for costly items such as strollers. The intention is not to replicate pro-life crisis pregnancy centers, but to support their work and the women they serve.

“Neighboring parishes that offer different kinds of ministries can share resources,” said Deacon Frank Bursic, who assists Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid with pro-life ministries.

Currently, half of the diocese’s 60 parishes have Walking With Moms.

After seeing parishes struggle to launch one, Deacon Frank approached Keith Young, a parishioner at Saint Aidan Parish in Wexford with a background in pro-life communications and organizing social services. Keith and his team created materials that simplify the process for every parish.

“It used to take a year to set up and we’ve cut that down to weeks,” Deacon Frank said.

Working with regional parishes and agencies is essential, both for accessing services and finding women who need help, Deacon Bob said.

“We’ve worked hard to get the word out, but they can still be hard to find,” he said. “When there’s another service organization that’s aware of them and can bring them in, then we can help them.”

Walking With Moms requires many volunteers. Trish Dellana and Laurie Kanoza, both empty nesters, were the first of about 30 volunteers at Saint Mark, starting two years ago under the direction of Deacon Doug Nelson.

Trish and Laurie “have done all the heavy lifting to get us here,” Deacon Bob said.

The Walking With Moms boutique is open once a week, but Trish and Laurie will open it whenever a woman needs it. They deliver to women who can’t get there, and take supplies to other agencies.

They have become close to some of the moms. Trish once approached a woman with a little boy at the food pantry,

saying she had boy clothes in the back. The woman moved her grocery bag to show a swollen belly.

She explained that she was pregnant with a girl but had no clothes for a girl, no opportunity for a shower and no resources to buy what she needed.

She was thrilled when they outfitted her for a girl.

“She’s come back quite a few times and became a friend to us,” Trish said.

Multiple committees keep the ministry on track, coordinating publicity, interfacing with other agencies and replenishing items that run low.

The prayer committee is central.

Early this year Deacon Bob, Tina, Trish, and Laurie had gathered at Kilian’s Cupboard to strategize about why women in need weren’t hearing about the ministry. They began with prayer.

“While we were meeting, a mom who was expecting walked in. It was the first time someone had come specifically

for maternity clothes, and now we’ve had so many,” Tina said.

“I know that God wants this ministry. He’s going to grow it with all these beautiful volunteers. And the parish is so generous. They love to give.”

A revered symbol of that generosity is a handmade wooden cradle that holds baby blankets. “It was donated by a parishioner who wanted it to go someplace special, so she gave it to us,” Trish said.

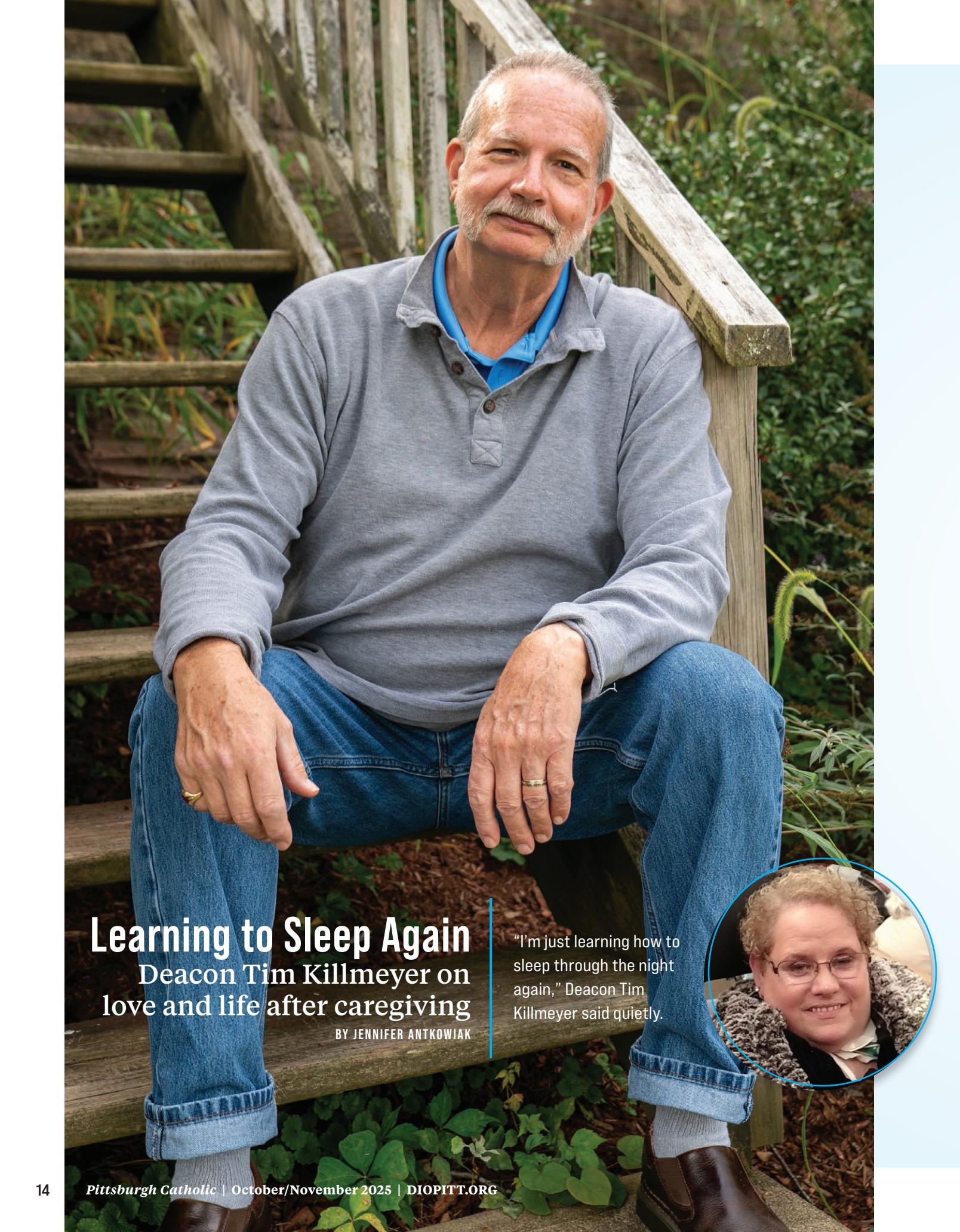
“We’re just trying to bring our experience and our love of life to Walking With Moms in any way that we can,” Deacon Bob said.

“Walking With Moms is somewhere my heart has always been, and I just had to walk the path that it took to get me here.”

Those interested in volunteering with Walking With Moms or who want to start a program at their parish should contact Deacon Frank at 412-638-5057 or fbursic@diopitt.org. For more information see <https://diopitt.org/walking-with-moms-in-need>. †



▲ Stacks of diapers and supplies in the Walking with Moms in Need section of Kilian’s Cupboard at Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish



Learning to Sleep Again

Deacon Tim Killmeyer on
love and life after caregiving

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

"I'm just learning how to sleep through the night again," Deacon Tim Killmeyer said quietly.





▲ Chris and Deacon
Tim Killmeyer

For decades, nights meant listening for the slightest change in her breathing, waking to suction her airway, dozing with one ear open. The “muscle memory” of caregiving takes time to unwind.

Tim and Chris were engaged for just a month when everything changed on a cold afternoon in January 1980, after Tim picked her up at her house on Mount Washington.

“We were getting on the parkway to go bowling,” he remembered.

As he looked left to merge, the driver ahead tapped her brakes. Tim bumped her car while driving roughly 5 miles per hour. The minor impact met a hidden weakness in Chris’ neck— a bone that had never solidified but had remained cartilage. She was left quadriplegic, paralyzed below the neck, dependent on a portable ventilator to breathe.

They married that October. Tim chose home care and learned the skills to make it possible.

“People think there’s one script for stories like ours,”

Deacon Tim says. “But everybody goes on a different path.”

Their path included insurance forms and hospital rooms, home nurses’ schedules and quiet prayers, all woven through a life of love. Deacon Tim is the first to say they were blessed.

“Our no-fault auto policy paid for everything. That coverage is not offered today in the same way,” he said. “We had help; we had nurses. But even with help, I still didn’t sleep. If Chris needed suctioning, I was up. It’s the kind of responsibility you carry with you.”

Before the accident, Tim’s faith had drifted. He grew up Catholic and attended Catholic schools. But as a young chef he “kept restaurant hours around good people who didn’t go to church,” he said.

After the injury, he longed for spiritual guidance. He called the closest parish, Holy Trinity in Robinson. Father Andy Fischer, then newly ordained, came to the house. “I went to confession for the first time in years,” Deacon Tim said. “Then I started going back to church.”

He was on fire for his faith, volunteering with RCIA (now OCIA—Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), where he sponsored people seeking to become Catholic. He helped with youth ministry and read at Mass.

An employer’s tuition program allowed him to begin theology studies at Duquesne University. “It opened something in me,” he said.

Six months after graduation, Father Ed Kryston asked Tim if he had ever considered becoming a deacon. “I went to learn more, and they accepted me. God’s timing,” Deacon Tim said.



**FIND THE MOMENTS
OF GRATITUDE. THE
SMALLEST THINGS.
YOUR CAR STARTS.
THE AIR CONDITIONING
KICKS ON. A MINUTE
OF PEACE IN A BUSY
AFTERNOON. THANK
GOD FOR THEM. THE
MORE YOU NAME
GRATITUDE, THE MORE
IT FILLS YOU.”**



▲ Tim and Chris’ wedding in 1980

Serving as a deacon, which included diocesan ministry among persons with disabilities, strengthened Tim's belief that God does not cause suffering – but never wastes it.

"There is evil in the world," he said. "God didn't cause our accident. But God brings good out of the worst things when we invite Him."

His prayer became, "'If there's any way I can take care of her and be with her, let it happen.' He made it happen."

Caregiving, Deacon Tim learned, is a mix of logistics and love. He relied on community and faith. Later training as a spiritual director taught him valuable lessons.

"Find the moments of gratitude," he said. "The smallest things. Your car starts. The air conditioning kicks on. A minute of peace in a busy afternoon. Thank God for them. The more you name gratitude, the more it fills you."

Chris died in September 2023.

"I'm still getting the house and the finances settled," Deacon Tim said. "I sit on the porch. I watch hummingbirds and deer. I have a picture of Chris here. She's with me. And I thank God."

He smiles when he talks about rest—how unfamiliar it feels, yet how necessary. He sometimes takes a tent to go camping and ride his bicycle on a trail, then comes home to read and sleep.

"More and more," he said, "simple quiet is enough. I'm wondering where the Lord is leading me now. It feels like He's guiding me to rest."

For all caregivers, he offers honesty and hope.

"You're not alone," he said. "There are people with you, and



▲ Deacon Tim performs a baptism at Holy Trinity Church (Archangel Gabriel Parish).

God is in it with you. You can practice the small habits that open your heart to grace. Start with one good thing. Tonight, before you sleep, think of one good thing, and thank God for it."

He paused. "Me? I'm learning to sleep again. And I'm grateful." †



▲ Chris and Tim in the summer of 1979



▲ Chris and Tim in their sidecar rig in 2000

CAREGIVING IN 2025: Quick Facts

- November is National Family Caregivers Month.
- About 63 million Americans are family caregivers in 2025, up from 53 million in 2020 (*AARP 2025*).
- Nearly 1 in 4 caregivers provide 40+ hours/week; about one-third have been caregiving 5+ years (*AARP 2025*).
- The unpaid value of family care was estimated at \$600 billion in 2021 (*AARP*).
- Caregivers report worse health on 13 of 19 indicators, including lifetime depression 25.6% vs 18.6% for non-caregivers (*CDC 2024*).
- Roughly 1 in 4 U.S. adults (28.7%) lives with a disability, which provides limited context for the growing number of family caregivers (*CDC 2025*).

Need support? Ask your parish about caregiver support ministries or contact the diocesan Communications Office at (412) 456-3121 for local resources and connections.

A Legacy of Faith: Launching the Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh

Empowering the Church's mission by building a bridge to the future through stewardship, service, and legacy giving



**The Catholic Foundation
For Greater Pittsburgh †**
BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

“To Serve in Faith and Charity”: A message from Bishop Mark Eckman

*Dear Brothers and
Sisters in Christ,*

With deep gratitude and hope, I am honored to introduce the Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh, a new chapter in our shared mission to serve the Church and our communities with faith, charity, and enduring commitment.

The faithful of our diocese have always responded generously to the call of Christ. Your stewardship has built churches, educated generations, supported vocations, and cared for the poor. Now, through this foundation, we have a new opportunity to ensure that this legacy continues—not just for today, but for generations to come.

Stewardship is more than financial support; it is a spiritual act of love. It is a way of participating in God's work, of planting seeds that will bear fruit long after we are gone. The foundation will help us do just that by creating lasting structures of support for our parishes, schools, ministries, and charitable outreach.

I invite you to join us in this mission. Let us build a legacy rooted in faith and charity, one that reflects the heart of the Gospel and the strength of our Catholic community.

In Christ's peace,
Most Reverend Mark Eckman
Bishop of Pittsburgh



**STEWARDSHIP IS
MORE THAN FINANCIAL
SUPPORT; IT IS A
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LOVE. IT IS A WAY
OF PARTICIPATING
IN GOD'S WORK, OF
PLANTING SEEDS THAT
WILL BEAR FRUIT LONG
AFTER WE ARE GONE.”**

- BISHOP MARK ECKMAN

Foundation Mission:

As an independent, nonprofit corporation, the Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh is committed to growing philanthropy according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The foundation promotes charitable giving to sustain the legacy of the church by serving our sisters and brothers and addressing the needs of the community for generations to come.

The Foundation will:

- Support Catholic causes in Pittsburgh in perpetuity
- Make giving easier through long-term, short-term and quasi endowments
- Ensure investments are managed with Catholic values
- Provide long-term support for individual parishes
- Provide transparency and build trust

Building Bridges to a Faithful Future

The Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh is partnering directly with parishes to help build long-term financial sustainability rooted in faith. This collaborative effort empowers parish communities to plan for the future while offering the faithful meaningful ways to leave a lasting Catholic legacy. Whether through endowments, planned gifts, or memorial funds, the foundation connects generosity today with the Church's mission tomorrow.



Here's how you can get involved:

- Pray for the Catholic Foundation's mission, that it may continue to serve faithfully and bear fruit for generations to come.
- Explore giving options and start shaping your Catholic legacy by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.cfgpitt.org.
- Contact the Catholic Foundation by emailing info@cfgpitt.org to discuss how your gift can reflect your values and support the ministries you care about.



LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code below to learn more and start your legacy today.

Contact Us:
www.cfgpitt.org | info@cfgpitt.org



▲ Left to right: Anna Kudrav-Tague, Mary Rothstein, Maria Harper, Judi Nocito, Penney Hokaj. Other sisters not pictured: Mary Ann Kushner, Priscilla Fello, Diane Faust



▲ Left to right: Lucy Hainan, Ana Tracy, Father Brendan Dawson, Lauren O'Donoghue. Other sisters not pictured: Gerri Fiore, Theresa Los, Lori Porter, Margie Schneider and Marisa Damico



▲ Father Kris Stubna, pastor, Saint Paul Cathedral Parish and Cathedral Anchoreess Diane Faust, Seven Sisters Apostolate

Seven Sisters Apostolate prays for our priests and strengthens the Church

BY PAM SURANO

IN A NOISY WORLD, THE SEVEN SISTERS APOSTOLATE QUIETLY REMINDS US THAT THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH FLOWS FROM HEARTS TURNED TOWARD CHRIST IN LOVE AND INTERCESSION.

Across Pittsburgh, women commit to a dedicated Holy Hour each week for their parish priest as part of this global eucharistic prayer movement.

Founded in 2011 by Janette Howe in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the apostolate began when Janette's son was discerning the priesthood. Grateful for her pastor's support, she began a weekly Holy Hour for him. The Holy Spirit soon stirred her to invite others. Nine months later, the Lord whispered, "Seven Sisters." She gathered six women, and the apostolate was born. Today, more than 2,700 groups pray for pastors, bishops, and the pope. Each group of seven or more women is led by an anchoress, who coordinates a schedule, ensuring seven days of uninterrupted prayer for a year.

At Saint Paul Cathedral in Oakland, Anchoress Diane Faust recalls her early hesitation to join. "I wondered if I could really commit every week," she said. "But

that hour has become the anchor of my life. It's not just praying for Father—it's drawing closer to Jesus and trusting Him with everything."

On the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, members renew their commitment as a spiritual bouquet for the priest.

Diane's Saturday holy hour includes the Rosary and specific intercessions. "I invoke the Blessed Mother to guide me in what Father needs. I pray for Father Kris Stubna's intentions—that he may serve God with humility, imitating Mary, our mother and model of the Church."

Supporting her priest, she said, is the most important thing she can do for the Church. "The stronger and more faithful he is, the stronger our parish becomes." Father Stubna's handwritten notes affirm the power of their prayers.

The apostolate is quickly expanding in Pittsburgh. "Two years ago, there were fewer than ten groups," Diane said. "Now there are more than 36—covering pastors, parochial vicars, our bishop, and retired priests."

**WITHOUT OUR PRIESTS,
WE HAVE NO CHURCH**

At Sacred Heart Church, part of Saint Jude Parish in Pittsburgh, Lucy Hainan also serves as anchoress. She first heard about the apostolate from a friend, then again at the Eucharistic Congress, and finally saw a video online. "Okay, Lord—you're speaking. I have to do this for my parish."

With help from her parish outreach minister, Lucy invited six women who all

said yes. "Each of us picked a day. My day is Wednesday, and for that hour, nothing else comes into my mind. It's a true prayer covering for our priest."

The commitment has transformed her. "I didn't realize how attached I was to my own prayer needs. But the more I pray for Father, the more I love him for who he is as a priest. Without our priests, we have no Church and no sacraments. If the evil one can get to the priest, the flock scatters."

She sees their spiritual responsibility as immense. "From my birth to my death, my priest will be there for the most important moments of my life."

Those unable to reach a chapel may pray Holy Hours from home. "I've prayed on airplanes—Jesus meets us where we are," Lucy said. Substitutes may fill in; they must be women, though a husband may stand in for his wife in an emergency.

In several dioceses, men participate through a counterpart ministry—the Fasting Brothers—who fast one day a week for priests. There is one group in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

"Sometimes I arrive at adoration feeling distracted or weighed down," Lucy added. "But by the time I finish, I feel renewed. The Lord multiplies my small offering into grace—grace not just for the priest, but for me too."

The ministry is quiet but eternal in impact. "We may never see the results," Lucy said. "But heaven does. And that's enough." †

To learn more or start a group in your parish, visit sevensistersapostolate.org.



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▲ Members of the rosary-making ministry



▲ Nick and Pat Ferrese



▲ Rosaries ready for distribution



▲ Rosary makers at work

Parish crafters ship 100,000 homemade rosaries worldwide

BY THERESA BREITENBACH

When Pat and Nick Ferrese traveled to Baltimore in 1995 to see Pope John Paul II and visit family, they cheered as the future saint passed right by them outside Camden Yards. Another spiritual surprise still awaited Pat on the trip.

A relative offered to teach her how to make chain-link rosaries, and Pat eagerly agreed.

She was immediately hooked. Pat now leads a rosary-making ministry at Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Beaver, whose members have made more than 100,000 rosaries. They have been distributed free of charge worldwide.

"We know that in the Bible it says, 'Here I am, Lord.' Any success of this ministry is in the hands of the Lord and the Blessed Mother," Pat said.

When she managed an ear, nose and throat clinic at Children's Hospital, she received many requests for her homemade rosaries. She is always ready to give them away.

After retiring, Pat joined the Marian Guild of Saint Peter and Paul Parish (now Our Lady of the Valley Parish) and hosted a meeting in 2015 to teach interested people how to make chain-link and corded rosaries.

The ministry now averages 20 members at its twice-monthly meetings at Saints Peter and Paul Church. There, members receive supplies to make rosaries at home and help to package and prepare

rosaries for shipping. They also count beads and cut cord to be crafted into rosaries.

Rosaries are often packaged with prayer cards that Nick creates. Members also make chaplets that honor saints, including Padre Pio, Saint Michael, and Saint Patrick.

Over cups of coffee and rosary beads, life-changing friendships have formed, Pat said. Members talk and request prayer. One woman began bringing her autistic son. He initially kept to himself but, over time, the young man learned to distinguish bead colors, expanded his vocabulary, and now greets Pat with a huge hug.

Pat has given rosary-making demonstrations at other parishes and teaches the craft monthly at Saint Blaise Church (Saint Augustine Parish).

Brighton First, a mental health treatment organization in Beaver, funds many rosary-making materials. Our Lady's Rosary Makers in Kentucky provides discounted supplies.

Pat's group returns completed rosaries to them, as well as to the Michigan-based Saint Paul Street Evangelization, for worldwide distribution. They have also sent 2,000 rosaries to the diocesan mission in Chimbote, Peru.

"We responded to the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother. That was the call," Pat said.

Pat knows the power of the Rosary. Three years ago, she suffered from non-Hodgkin lymphoma, clutching her rosary tightly through all treatments. During a bout of extreme pain, she fervently prayed the Rosary and meditated on the Pieta, the image of Mary holding the crucified Jesus.

"I asked her, 'Mother, is there room on your lap for me too?'" In her heart, Pat heard the reply: "Ask my Son."

The pain went away.

Through the joyful, sorrowful, luminous, and glorious mysteries of the Rosary, Pat said that she has come to better know the Lord and to see His hand in the mysteries of her own life.

"Mary gave us the Rosary to honor her son. That's what the Rosary does—it completely points us to her Son. If you want to get to know Our Lord, say the Rosary." †

Become a rosary maker

- ▶ The ministry is eager to welcome and teach new members! Attend one of its upcoming meetings:

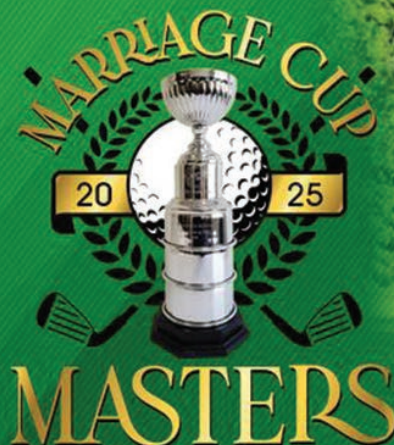
Keating Hall, Saints Peter and Paul Church (Our Lady of the Valley Parish):

- Dates: Oct. 1 and 15; Nov. 5 and 19
- Meeting time: 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Saint Blaise Church (Saint Augustine Parish):

- Dates: Oct. 21 and Nov. 25
- Meetings begin after 8 a.m. Mass in the church.

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MASTERS

With Mass celebrated by Fr. Mike Ackerman

Sat., Oct. 25th
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JINGLE



BASH!

With Mass celebrated by
Fr. Scott Seethaler

Sat., Dec. 13th

Hyacinth Epp Hall
Lawrenceville



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Or give at your local parish November 22-23.

retiredreligious.org

Visit retiredreligious.org/2025photos to meet the religious pictured.
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CELEBRATING JUBILARIAN RELIGIOUS SISTERS,

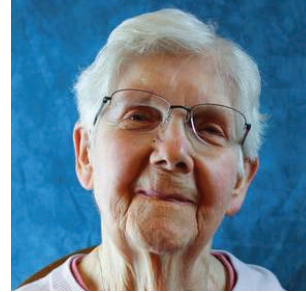
75TH JUBILEE



▲ Sister Anita Kuchera, OSF- School Sisters of Saint Francis



▲ Sister Wilma McKee, CDP- Sisters of Divine Providence



▲ Sister Marie Grace Blum, OSF- Sisters of Saint Francis of the Neumann Order



▲ Sister Georgeann Oehling, OSF- Sisters of Saint Francis of the Neumann Order



▲ Sister Jane Stephen Rosko, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph



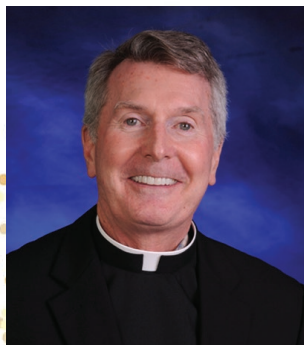
▲ Sister Celeste Hupert, CSFN- Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth

NOT PICTURED: Sister Mary Vivian McElhinny, RSM- Sisters of Mercy of Americas | Sister Maria Goretti Zamberlan, RSM- Sisters of Mercy of Americas

50TH JUBILEE



▲ Father David Cottingham, CSSp- Congregation of the Holy Spirit



▲ Father James McCloskey, CSSp- Congregation of the Holy Spirit



▲ Brother Michael Suazo, CSSp- Congregation of the Holy Spirit



▲ Sister Yolanda Escamilla, OSF- School Sisters of Saint Francis

PRIESTS, AND BROTHERS

Many religious who serve in our diocese are celebrating milestone anniversaries this year. Please say a prayer for these sisters, priests, and brothers as they observe their 25th, 50th, and 75th anniversaries, and thank God for them and their ministry.

50TH JUBILEE (CONTINUED)



▲ Sister Marcelina Navarro, SCN- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth



▲ Sister Linda Soltis, SCN- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth



▲ Sister Alice Dunlop, OSF- Sisters of Saint Francis of the Neumann Order



▲ Sister Janet Kramer, OSF- Sisters of Saint Francis of the Neumann Order



▲ Sister Diane Cauley, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph



▲ Sister Patricia Montini, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph

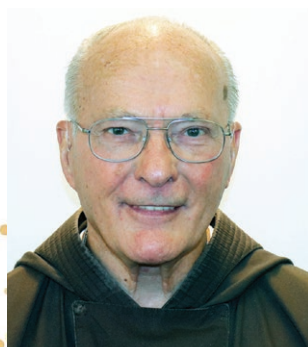


▲ Sister Jeanine Swartzlander, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph



▲ Sister Valerie Zottola, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph

25TH JUBILEE



▲ Brother Walter Robb, OFM Capuchin Friars of Saint Augustine



▲ Sister Rose Walatka, ZSJ- Sisters of Merciful Jesus



▲ Sister Kari Pohl, CSJ- Sisters of Saint Joseph

► NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC MONTH



▲ Pictured are photos from Father David Taylor's farewell Mass held at Saint Bede Church (Saint Mary Magdalene Parish) on August 31, 2025.

Inset: Father Taylor's 1974 ordination to the transitional diaconate.



'Not a Farewell': Father David Taylor Retires After 51 Years of Priestly Service

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

After 51 years of ministry, Father David H. Taylor is stepping back from full-time parish life, closing a chapter as the first Black Catholic priest ordained in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Ordained in 1974, Father Taylor most recently served as senior parochial vicar at Saint Mary Magdalene Parish, which spans Pittsburgh's East End neighborhoods. He has also served at Saint Benedict the Moor Parish in the Hill District, as pastor of the former Holy Rosary Parish and School and the former Saint Charles Lwanga Parish in Homewood, and as administrator of the former Saint James Parish in Wilkinsburg.

Born November 25, 1946, in Lexington, Kentucky, Father Taylor was the second of nine children of Evelyn and Augustus Taylor Sr. When the family moved to Cincinnati, they converted to Catholicism, which shaped the vocation of two brothers.

His older brother, Father Augustus "Gus" Taylor Jr., was ordained for the Diocese of Steubenville in 1966, later becoming the first Black pastor in Pittsburgh in 1970. He co-founded the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, which called the Church to confront racism, and spent much of his ministry on loan to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Father Gus passed away in October 2024 at age 84.

"Gus told me to always stay close to my faith because I might have a vocation too," Father Taylor said. "I probably never would have entered the priesthood without his encouragement. I had hoped to spend time with him in retirement, but that was not to be. His loss was a big one for me."

From the day of his own ordination, Father Taylor remembers a mix of awe and uncertainty. "There was a great thanksgiving to God that it had happened," he recalled, "and a lot of wondering about how it was going to work out, and how I would fit in with new assignments."

Most of Father Taylor's ministry has been centered in Pittsburgh's East End communities.

"The parishes changed, but my presence was steady. I hope that helped during the mergers," he said.

"There are fewer Catholic schools. Each parish used to have a school. I loved working with education."

The priesthood itself has also changed, with far fewer ordinations.

Through it all, he relied on a simple prayer: "Lord, I can only do what you give me the strength for me to do."

Now 78, Father Taylor is retiring from his assignment, but not from ministry.

"As I've told people, I'm retiring, but it's really not a farewell," he said. He will continue celebrating Mass at Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Academy in Wilkinsburg and Saint Bede School in Point Breeze, and looks forward to having more time to visit family across the country.

"I hope the Lord gives me strength to remain active and help in this new chapter," he said. "I love being a priest. It's been a wonderful vocation."

For young men discerning the priesthood, his advice is simple: "Think about it, pray about it, visit with priest mentors. Be open to the call of the Lord." †



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Parishes center children's formation on faith and the family

BY THERESA BREITENBACH

One boy enrolled in children's faith formation at Saint Aidan Parish in Wexford loved the lessons so much that he begged his mother, who was not Catholic, to take him to Sunday Mass.

She agreed. Now, she is becoming Catholic herself.

"That was because a 6-year-old demanded to go to church," said Darcy Osby, the parish director of faith formation.

Many parishes offer diverse children's faith formation options to meet families' varying needs and schedules, while emphasizing that all faith instruction begins at home.

Once a month after Sunday Mass at Saint Aidan, Darcy leads the Family Program, which has grown steadily for five years. Families pray together, then engage in a faith-related activity before they split for separate classes for parents and children.

Early each year Darcy asks parents what they need to learn, allowing them to dictate the curriculum. Their choices have included prayer, service, engaging kids at Mass – and learning what their children are learning. For the remainder of the month, families work on

the curriculum at home.

Saint Aidan educates nearly 400 young people through a range of ministries. Among them are weekly faith formation classes; Life Teen's "Purpose," which prepares middle-schoolers for confirmation; and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based approach that engages children in learning their faith in a hands-on way. The parish is pioneering faith-formation programs for infants and toddlers.

Just to the north, Divine Grace Parish in southern Butler County has nearly 700 faith formation students in grades K-8.

"We really believe in supporting the parent as the primary catechist," said Emma Sabados, the parish coordinator for faith formation. "That's what the Church teaches."

Jason Gawaldo, director of evangelization and catechetical ministries, oversees an



▲ First grader Brody Whitaker prays before a model of the Last Supper in Regina Coeli's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program.



▲ First graders in Divine Grace's children's formation craft blankets for the needy.

at-home program that is 100% parent-led. Using tools provided by the parish—including weekly emails featuring video teachings from Jason—families learn the faith on their own schedule.

Emma facilitates an in-person classroom-style program called "station rotation," in which students complete break-out activities including Bible scavenger hunts, songs, games, adoration and more. Parents receive regular email updates on what their children learn. Middle schoolers can attend Life Teen's "Edge" for confirmation preparation.

Like Saint Aidan Parish, Divine Grace offers a hybrid option consisting of the monthly gathering for parents and children, followed by at-home learning for the remainder of the month. Jason urges parents to prioritize faith amid the constant demands and hectic schedules of their families.

Experiential faith formation

for children and families is also the priority at Regina Coeli Parish in Bellevue/Emsworth/Franklin Park. Kelly Reed, director for religious education and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, works with a team of parish staff to offer options that serve 375 children. These include monthly family catechesis and weekly K-8 classes including the "Ignite" youth-group model for middle schoolers.

Kelly oversees Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children ages 18 months through 6th grade, helping them encounter the faith in a tangible way. Children study the Mass by setting up a small altar, dive into the parable of the Good Shepherd and explore what it means for Jesus to be the vine connecting all the faithful. The goal is to help them discern God's plan for their own lives.

"It really focuses on the children's relationship with Jesus, before anything else," Kelly said. "They fall in love with Jesus." †



▲ The Lennon Family has fun at Saint Aidan's Family Program.



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8th Grade Entrance Exam - November 22

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▲ Lauren Martin, superintendent of Catholic Schools

Catholic Schools Report 2025

The 2025 Catholic Schools Report, released in August, shows that diocesan schools continue to equip students to excel academically and grow in faith.

For grades 3-8, the Spring 2025 Iowa Assessments exceeded national standards in every subject, with students outperforming target scores by an average of 27.7% in English and 19% in math.

Read additional report highlights and scan the QR code for the full report.

The Value of a Catholic Education

► ***Rooted in faith, Catholic schools form both mind and spirit.***

Affordable & Accessible:

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Values-Based Mission:

- Catholic education is a lifelong investment in faith, intellect, and community.
- Integrating academics with moral formation, service, and faithful discipleship prepares our students not only for college but for life.
- Teachers, administrators, and staff are dedicated to the mission, as well as to the students and families in our schools.

The Catholic Student Experience: A Fullness of Life

► ***"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."***
– John 10:10

- **Integrated Formation:** Sacraments, service projects, and prayer bring faith to life.

- **Academic Excellence:** Students exceed national benchmarks on NAEP, Iowa, and ARK assessments.

- **Leadership & Recognition:** Honor League celebrates academics, leadership, service.

- **Demographics & Diversity:** Families from varied backgrounds attend Catholic schools.



Lighting the Way Forward:

- Catholic schools remain accessible, affordable, and sustainable for future generations.
- A commitment to academic excellence, faith formation, and service anchors Catholic schools.
- Together, we carry the light of Christ into our schools, communities, and world.



LEARN MORE

To read the full Catholic Schools Report, scan the QR code or visit diopitt.org/schools.



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PENNSYLVANIA EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT (EITC) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Program Overview

Pennsylvania's EITC Scholarship Program allows an individual (or business) to redirect their Pennsylvania tax dollars to support the Pittsburgh Catholic Schools Scholarship Program instead of those tax dollars going to the state. Those Pennsylvania tax dollars are turned into scholarships for eligible Catholic school students right here in our Pittsburgh area.

Pennsylvania's tax-credit scholarship program provides a 90% tax credit to taxpayers who make a donation to our EITC Scholarship Program. For every dollar you contribute, you earn \$0.90 back in a Pennsylvania tax credit. The remaining 10% may be deductible as a charitable contribution for federal tax purposes.

The EITC Scholarship Program is instrumental in providing scholarships to Catholic school families within the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Participation as an individual or business is easy!

The Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is looking to grow its EITC participation rates. Anyone with Pennsylvania tax liability who is interested in supporting Catholic education can participate with a two-year commitment. You do not need to have a child or grandchild enrolled in a Catholic school to participate.

For anyone who earns a paycheck, the first step is easy. Simply, determine how much you typically pay in Pennsylvania State taxes. This can be found on your state tax return or by multiplying your household income by 0.0307 (estimated Pennsylvania tax liability). If your income is over \$70,000 annually, you should be eligible to donate to the EITC Scholarship Program.

Next, sign an initial pledge form with the Diocese of Pittsburgh and include the amount you want to pledge (\$2,000 minimum). Once credits have been awarded, you will receive a formal agreement via DocuSign. Please complete and send donation within 60 days of receipt. Early the following year, you will receive a K-1 receipt for the contribution. Submit the K-1 receipt with your Pennsylvania tax return, and you will receive 90% of the donation back as a Pennsylvania tax refund – just in time for the second year!

Pennsylvania businesses, including those that are C-Corps, S-Corps, LLCs and Partnerships are also eligible to participate in the EITC Program.

Participating is as easy as 1-2-3!

Step 1 Sign Up / Pledge

Determine your current year PA State Income tax liability.

Complete the pledge form with intended contribution amount.

Step 2 DocuSign & Donate

Once the PA tax credit is approved for the diocese, receive & complete DocuSign, and send donation within 60 days.

Step 3 Claim your Credit

After your contribution is made, you will receive a K-1 receipt to file with your PA taxes, providing you with a 90% tax refund on the contribution you made.



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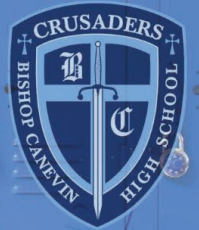
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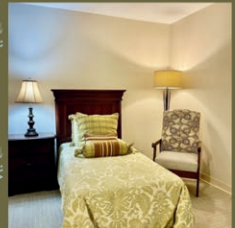
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VIEWS FROM THE PEWS: Honoring Saint Francis of Assisi and his love for animals

Who is Saint Francis of Assisi?

BY THERESA BREITENBACH



When you think of Saint Francis of Assisi, garden statues and blessings of animals may come to mind. The patron saint of animals was also a great evangelist—but he didn't start that way. Giovanni Francesco di Bernardone (renamed

Francesco—or Francis—by his

father Pietro Bernardone) was born into a wealthy merchant family of Assisi in 1181. After living a carefree—and even wild—youth, the charismatic young man sought glory by joining Assisi's military. There, he faced war and even imprisonment.

On a military excursion, God spoke to Francis in a dream, telling him to change his life and return home. This began Francis' conversion: he prayed; atoned for his sins; and even embraced a leper. While praying in the crumbling chapel of San Damiano, Francis heard Christ speak to him from the crucifix: "Repair my church, for it is falling into ruin."

Assuming that Jesus meant this literally, Francis began restoring the chapel, selling Pietro's fabric to fund the repairs. Furious about this, and his son's conversion, Pietro dragged him before the bishop in the town square, demanding that Francis return everything and renounce his inheritance.

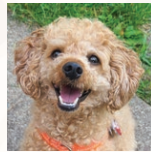
The kindly bishop encouraged Francis to return what he had taken; God would provide. Not only did Francis return the fabric; he stripped himself of the wealthy clothing his father had provided for him and declared God his true father.

Living as a poor beggar, he continued restoring San Damiano but realized that God wanted him to repair His Church—not a physical building, but the people of God who had turned to sin. He began to preach, encouraging listeners to live holy lives dedicated to God.

Eventually, other men joined him, forming the Order of Friars Minor, or the Franciscans, and evangelizing in public squares. Francis often preached about (and even to) animals and was known to rescue them. In 1224, God gave Francis the stigmata, or the five wounds that Jesus received during His crucifixion.

Francis died in 1226 at age 45 and was canonized two years later. †

In honor of Saint Francis' October 4 feast day, our social media followers shared why they are grateful for their pets:

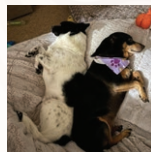
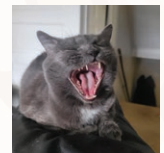


"This is Noodles. I recently got him after the loss of my childhood dog and am beyond blessed to have him part of my family. He brings us so much joy with his loveable self and his adventurous energy!"

-Sydney Parish, Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

"This is Coco. I am grateful to her because she is always entertaining."

**-Gerard Mahon,
Saint Michael the Archangel Parish**

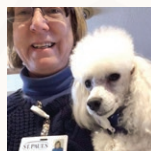


"Here are my puppies, Louie and Ginger! They've taught me a lot about patience and love. They've helped me through some difficult times and help make my day better."

-Alexa Drecnik, Saint Catherine Labouré Parish

"Our best boy, Tiger, loves life and people! Here he is with Father Mike Ackerman at Summerfest at Resurrection Parish with our son, Domenick, who attends Ave Maria Academy!"

-Natalie Podkul, Resurrection Parish

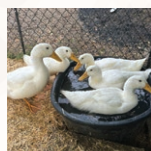


"My toy poodle, Louie, is not only a great companion for me, but we are also a registered Therapy Team with The Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Louie and I visit nursing homes residents, and school students. The joy we get from our visits is amazing – we get to hear others share about their lives and the pets they and their families have loved."

-Krista Creekpau, Saint Faustina Parish

"Our two angels Caramel and Carly are both rescues. They are the most loving and affectionate pups, and we love them both so very much."

**-Paula Delon, Mary, Queen of Saints Parish,
holding Carly on the left, with her husband Mark,
who holds Carmel, and their daughter DeAnna**



"Here are our lovely, happy ducks who make each day a little brighter with their happy quacks!"

-Joy Baldonieri, Resurrection Parish



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