In the fall of 2021, St. Therese Parish in Fort Wayne hosted a presentation by NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. As attendees mingled together afterwards, the conversation took an unexpected yet divinely-inspired turn.

“We had a gentleman who was actually talking about his situation, and for me, it was a very emotional testimony from him,” said Linda Thomas, a parishioner at St. Therese. “I said, ‘So what as a church could we do for you?’”

From that question emerged St. Dymphna’s Refuge, a men’s health peer support group beginning on Sept. 19 at St. Therese. The group’s mission is to provide a space in which people can share their mental health experiences, be assured of their value as members of the Church community, and be rooted in Christ. Six women of the parish – Thomas, Elaine Cooper, Kris Lill, Lisa Palmer, Amy Carsten, and Kayla Peat – formed the nucleus of the ministry and have since been trained as facilitators. St. Therese is one of a handful of parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to offer such a ministry, helping address mental health with a spiritual approach that’s aligned with the teachings of the Church.

“Hospitals have programs, but there aren’t very many churches that would take this on,” said Cooper. “This isn’t an easy thing to be able to promote and be a part of and understand and facilitate. I think being church-based is very helpful.”

That prayerful support is exactly what these women envisioned when they conceived the initial idea. Once the concept began to develop and take shape, it was presented to the St. Therese Parish Council for approval. That is when the Lord took over.

“After we got permission and started working on it, we were praying and researching, and we just felt led by the Holy Spirit,” said Peat. “Every time we got together and had an idea, it seemed like the resources were just laid at our feet. We just had to pick them up and run with them.”

These resources included training materials from NAMI, Formed, and Mental Health America, which enabled the group to participate in formal instruction as facilitators. They have also received assistance and direction from Catholic Charities and other diocesan figures. Most importantly, the group has benefitted from the encouragement and prayer of the clergy at St. Therese. Father Matthew Coonan and Father Keeton Lockwood (who has since been reassigned to St. Michael in Plymouth) were instrumental in starting the ministry and supporting its formation. Thomas said all of these resources were effective in preparing the group for the road ahead.

**BY ERIC PEAT**

Father Keeton Lockwood (center) led a group of St. Therese, Fort Wayne parishioners on a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Dymphna in Massillon, OH.
Twin Vocations
‘We’re Each Individuals for a Reason’

By Jennifer Barton

Johnathan and Michael Hickey share a great many things together. "We’re Each Individuals for a Reason," fraternal twins Brother Johnathan Hickey, OSB, and Brother Michael Hickey, OSB, reiterated numerous times during a recent interview. It is a well-known title for the Melchizedek Project in Fort Wayne, and it also applies to the brothers' paths to the priesthood.

Like most twins, Johnathan, left, and Michael Hickey, right, share so many similarities that most people could barely tell them apart. Even their vocational paths merged closely to the point that the brothers are now both studying for potential vocations to the priesthood at Mount St. Mary in Maryland, with only a year of study separating them.

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Today’s Catholic; just a silent, distant Christ into the probation was testing positive for drug usage and who was afraid of how parolees would react to him. But he realized he would never know if he had a calling to the priesthood if he didn’t at least give it a try, and approached Father Andrew Budzinski, the Vocation Director for the diocese, as well as his parish pastor. After the twins graduated in 2020, Johnathan immediately entered seminary. Michael, however, after his internships in parole and with the campus police department, began working as a Public Safety Officer for Parkview Hospital. The hospital campus is located directly across from St. Jude Parish, which boasts a 24-hour adoration chapel.

One particular encounter stands out in his memory. A woman was brought into the hospital in the midst of a psychotic breakdown, tightly squeezing her service dog. Everyone present tried to calm her down, but she continued screaming and asking everyone if they were Catholic. When Michael answered in the affirmative, she asked if he would pray with her. He related, “She wanted to pray the Our Father, so we started praying that out loud, she calmed down.... That was the only thing that would calm her down, so I’m walking through the ER holding her hand, praying the Our Father out loud, and in the hustle and bustle of the ER, that’s something you don’t see. Kind of a calming presence.”

He then prayed the Memorare over her and she became peaceful.

Michael applied for a city police officer job, and though he passed the test, he didn’t get an interview. That was when he knew it was time to give the seminary a chance. “I felt like I was in the car, hitting the gas, hiring the brake, and pulling the emergency brake. It’s like I wasn’t going anywhere with discernment and that was the next logical step.”

With feet no longer on the brakes, the Hickey twins are cruising along the road to their vocations, enjoying seminary life and anticipating the milestone of ordination in a few years. They hope to put their criminal justice backgrounds to work in their future priestships.

Johnathan explained the link between criminal justice and priestly ministry. “There’s a huge need for Christ in this world and I can’t help but I definitely think Christ is... giving me this experience here of probation to just, God willing, if I’m ordained a priest, to look at prison ministry.”

His internship at the hospital with people with mental illness, drug addiction, and other heavy issues has prepared Michael to “respond to calls to help people literally at the worst day of their life.”

And so being able to be that way that they can find Christ, I think that’s very helpful.” He spoke of how he often doused his hands with holy water and kept his rosary handy on those sometimes-dangerous night shifts.

While they are so similar, they can nearly speak for each other, their service to God and the Church is vastly different. Johnathan said, “We tell this all the time. We don’t need two Michaels or we don’t need two Johns; God has - we’re each individuals for a reason.”

Priesthood is a fraternity, but the Hickey twins may take that brotherhood to a new and incredible level, to one day be able to call their birth brother a priestly brother as well.

Published in Today’s Catholic, September 18, 2022.

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PHOENIX – According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than twice as many people died in 2020 by their own hand than by someone else, and while the annual suicide rate actually dropped in 2019 and 2020 – the last year that figures are available – the rate has risen sharply since 2000.

Once considered a mortal sin that could cost someone salvation, suicide is viewed by the Church today in a much more moderate way.

And going along with that development are calls by dergy, clinicians, and advocates to bring suicide into the light in the hopes to reduce it and to do more to help those left behind.

On Sunday, Sept. 4, the Diocese of Phoenix took a significant step toward both of these steps, becoming the latest in a growing number of dioceses across the United States to create an office dedicated to the ministry of mental health.

The announcement — during the diocese’s first Mass of Remembrance for Suicide Victims — came from someone well-acquainted with the issue.

Phoenix Bishop John P. Dolan, who lost both a brother and a sister to suicide in separate incidents more than a decade ago — unveiled plans for the new office of Catholic Mental Health Ministry toward the end of his homily to a standing-room-only congregation at SS. Simon & Jude Cathedral in Phoenix.

In an interview after the Mass, Bishop Dolan said a diocesan office dedicated to mental health had been a goal of his since his Aug. 2 installation, but its implementation was hastened by a gift from a local foundation, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, that supports local religious and secular projects.

Immediately after the bishop's remarks, members of the congregation who had lost someone to suicide were called to place a single carnation to each departed individual into a basket in front of the cathedral’s Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe – the diocese’s patroness.

“Ask Our Lady to accompany you with her prayers and to accompany our brothers and sisters who have gone before us, asking the Lord to hold our brothers and sisters in the palm of His hand,” he said.

Bishop Dolan said he and other diocesan leaders were overwhelmed with the number of requests to place flowers from around 100-120 individuals. The final number was around 1,200.

“There are a lot of people hurting,” he said.

The bishop said the new office will serve three purposes: education, accompaniment of those suffering, and advocacy for better policy and funding from government and other sources.

“Educating our fellow Catholic brothers and sisters who may not fully understand the depth of mental health; we accompany those who struggle … in our parishes so they are not left but that they know they have a place at the table. And we accompany those who struggle with suicide loss. Those of you who are survivors of loss; hopefully, you know the Church is here, reaching out to you, letting you know you are loved and that your loved ones are not forgotten.”

Each of the diocese’s 15 deaneries will host regular gatherings where people can share their stories and help one another.

“Finally, the office will promote a spirit of advocacy, offer a voice for those who struggle with mental health and ask those in leadership, our government, our government especially, to make sure mental health is at the forefront in the fore of all our discussions,” Bishop Dolan said.

The diocese will provide priests and deacons a mental health “first-aid kit” to guide them in responding to public requests for help.

“For example, while mental-health ground.
A Legacy of Courage and Faith Written into Family’s History

BY ERIKA BARRON

Don Dimberio has lived a full life, one marked with achievement. This includes graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1960, having a successful career in the plastics industry, owning his own company, and raising four children. All college graduates themselves. His two sons attended his alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, and his two daughters both attended Saint Mary’s College.

This is a life that most could not imagine. Dimberio says that all of this would not have been possible without the tremendous influence of his mother. “My mother never missed Mass; she was incredibly faith filled,” Dimberio remembers. “What takes place in the story is a tremendous act of selflessness, the true meaning of a family legacy for the future generations.”

Loretto and Lena, who immigrated from Italy in 1916, now sharing their story in his book, “The Sisters from Campobasso.”

This journey began in the Italian province of Campobasso, located about two and a half hours southeast of Rome. Campobasso lies in the vast hill region, not far from the Adriatic Sea. While to most, the image of such a place conjures visions of a peaceful Italian vacation, one with rest and relaxation, life was far less romantic for the people of the area. Tensions between the Northern Italians and the Southern Italians were high, so much so that between 1880 and 1914, 14 million Italians immigrated to the United States. “The rumor was the streets in America were paved in gold, but the truth is these people were the ones who did the paving,” reflected Dimberio.

The men of the family would immigrate to America first, finding work and sending money back home so that the women and children could follow. The work was hard and the pay was small, but being in the “Land of Opportunity” was enough to keep them going. Where the immigrants settled would depend on where their relatives had taken up residence, and in the case of Dimberio’s family, they would wind up like many other Southern Italians in the city of Cleveland, Ohio.

The journey to Cleveland was marked by immense hardships for the three young sisters, which Dimberio details in the book. “What takes place in the story is a tremendous act of one of the sisters does. I have told the story so many times in my life and people encouraged me to write it,” he recalled.

Even after everything the harrowing journey from Campobasso to America brought to the three sisters, their faith never faltered. They trusted in God’s plan all the way and passed that faith on to their children and grandchildren. “My mother never missed Mass; she was incredibly faith filled,” Dimberio remembers.

Once in Cleveland, the new American citizens would form clubs with their neighbors from the old country, keeping their customs and traditions alive. One such custom was the huge celebration of St. Joseph’s Day on March 19th. “Everyone else would celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. Where I come from, the party is a few days later for St. Joseph,” he recalled.

The whole town would gather in celebration of the great saint, sharing memories of life back in Italy, and of course, food, the local church being the center of the celebration. “Panne Frito” or fried bread, was a favorite on this occasion. Here the old and the new ways blended, the true meaning of being an Italian-American.

The book, which has now sold more than 500 copies, is Dimberio’s way of leaving this incredible family legacy for the future generations. A special inscription in the first 10 copies of the book reminds his family how important it is to know where they come from and the reason they are where they are now: the courage, selflessness, and faith in God’s plan for their lives is the legacy these three young sisters left behind.

The book can be found on Amazon at www.amazon.com/Sisters-Campobasso-Don-Dimberio.
Michigan Ukrainian Catholic school welcomes war refugees

BY DANIEL MELOY

WARREN, Mich. (CNS) – Imagine you are 8 years old, and overnight, you have to leave your home – never to see it again, in all likelihood.

You leave behind all your toys, your cousins, your dog, your neighborhood. Even your father stays behind to fight in the impending war.

You and your siblings, along with your mother, who doesn’t seem to have a lot of answers, travel to a foreign country where you don’t speak the language, the food is different, and you are thousands of miles away from home.

But then your mother takes you to a school in a quaint neighborhood. In front of the school is a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and behind her is a sign, “Our Lady, Protector of Ukraine,” with flags and decorations in your native national colors.

For refugee students at Immaculate Conception Ukrainian Catholic School in Warren, such a sight might be the first welcoming sign they have seen in a long time.

This fall, approximately 100 students from war-torn Ukraine will join the school, which in a normal year has an enrollment of about 200 students.

Since the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014 and invasion of the rest of Ukraine this past February, the school has opened its arms to refugee students and their families, who can feel at home in a school that has classes in the Ukrainian language and culture, teachers who speak Ukrainian, and where Mass is celebrated in the Byzantine-Ukrainian rite.

“We are asking parishioners and people of goodwill to donate to the schools to help us offset the school deficit for tuition,” said Father Daniel Schaicoski, a priest of the Order of St. Basil the Great.

The priest, who is the superior of Immaculate Conception Ukrainian Catholic School, noted the school’s #StandWithUkraine Sponsor a Child Program. “We will have over 100 students, and more than that, coming as refugees this year.”

As the war in Ukraine drags into its seventh month, Father Schaicoski said families are still trickling into the area and applying.

“We want to help those families who come here. We want to give the children a school and environment that is friendly to them, where they know the language. Our school is the best place for them to learn English and integrate into Americ,” Father Schaicoski told Detroit Catholic, news outlet of the Detroit Archdiocese.

Immaculate Conception Ukrainian Catholic School, which features a K-8 curriculum, was established in 1956 to care for the first- and second-generation Ukrainian immigrants who came to Michigan.

Along with St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church in Warren, Immaculate Conception is asking local Catholics to consider sponsoring a refugee student through its Sponsor a Child Program, which helps cover the cost of tuition for a family.

“This will require a huge effort from us,” Father Schaicoski said. “They are coming without the language; many of them have all kinds of stress. So many of these students have seen war, violence, just unspeakable tragedies. Our homeroom teachers will need help, especially from those who can translate.”

Before the war, about 70 percent of the student population was of Ukrainian heritage. Another 20 percent was Chaldean, and about 10 percent included other families looking for a Catholic education. This year, 28 percent is estimated to be refugees fleeing Ukraine, Father Schaicoski said.

“Last year we had 20 or so (refugee) students, and it was amazing to see how our students were helping those who just came from Ukraine,” the priest said. “Those kids from Ukraine didn’t understand English, but their friends would find social workers who speak Ukrainian, he said.

“We had one child, a third grader, who was crying for two weeks,” he noted. “I approached her mother, who told me, ‘Father, what she saw on her travels from the east to Poland, you will not see in your lifetime, not in movies.’"

On Aug. 23, the Ukrainian-American community gathered at St. Josaphat for a prayer vigil to celebrate Ukraine’s independence and mark the six-month anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The following day was Ukrainian Independence Day, when the country declared independence from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991.

Participants waved Ukrainian flags and held signs of support. Local officials spoke about the evils being done to Ukrainian civilians, particularly children being deported to Russia and forced to assimilate into Russian culture.

Hundreds of children in Ukraine have been killed, even more have been injured, and perhaps thousands, maybe millions, have been displaced,” Warren Mayor Jim Fouts said.

“Humanly speaking, as a Christian, what is most important is to provide these children with help,” Father Schaicoski said. “That is where this school is important. It will be easier to approach all the difficulties, the trauma they faced, in a school that feels more like home.”

He recalled how, by the end of last school year, the third grader who couldn’t stop crying was making friends and beginning to smile.

“You really can’t put into words what these kids have gone through, but I remember when it was three months in and her teacher pointed and said, ‘She’s smiling,’” Father Schaicoski said.

“That was the most rewarding thing. She wasn’t speaking English or anything, but when we saw she was smiling, we knew we were doing something right. That was the most rewarding thing.”

“It’s easy to say, ‘I stand with Ukraine,’ but this is what you need to do to help,” Father Schaicoski said of sponsoring students. “If you talk about helping Ukraine, this is a chance to help Ukraine that is at your doorstep.”

Meylo is a staff writer for Detroit Catholic, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Detroit.
The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan offered prayers for the victims of a deadly stabbing attack in the town of Nipawin on Sept. 7.

PRINCE ALBERT, Saskatchewan, Canada (CNS) – The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan offered prayers for the victims of the Sept. 4 stabbing rampage that left at least 14 people dead and 18 injured. And Catholics in the Prince Albert Diocese joined to pray, turning to the Virgin Mary in their prayer of intercession. The bishops also prayed for the priests and lay people who have been providing assistance to the survivors of the Sept. 4 stabbing spree on the Sacred Heart Church in nearby Weldon, Saskatchewan. The five bishops of Saskatchewan said they mourn “those whose lives have been lost, those who have been injured, and those whose peace and security has been shattered by these horrific events,” and invited “all to join in prayer, turning to God for comfort and healing.” The bishops also prayed for everyone across Saskatchewan who has been providing assistance, including “first responders, health care workers, and everyone offering help and support to those affected by this tragedy.”

A displaced Somali drinks water from a tap at a camp in Dollow on May 24, 2022.

Catholic Relief Services is among international agencies warning of famine looming in Somalia.

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**Bishop Luers Band Puts on a Show**

Members of Bishop Luers High School band came to St. John the Baptist School in Fort Wayne to perform a concert and spark an interest in students at the feeder school to join the high school band.

*Provided by Jeanne Hohenstein*

**Examining the Fruits of Contemplative Labor**

Viewers enjoyed the creative labors of hobby-carpenter Father Thomas Shoemaker during rectory tours on Saturday, Sept. 10 as part of Cardinal Fest. The open house showcased Shoemaker’s carpentry and painting skills, including the pictured door frame and reredos. The art is part of a chapel at the St. Charles Borromeo, Fort Wayne rectory.

*Bethany Brede*

**Around the Diocese**

**‘Main Streets’ Films at Diocesan Museum**

Host John McGivern, in blue shirt, and a film crew from his television travel program “John McGivern’s Main Streets” toured the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend’s Diocesan Museum in Fort Wayne and interviewed museum Director Kathryn Imler on Sept. 6 while filming for a show about visiting Fort Wayne. The 30-minute shows, which are produced by Plum Media of Milwaukee, explore the history, charm, and attractions of communities in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The upcoming second season of shows will be broadcast on PBS stations beginning in January. The show on Fort Wayne is expected to air in mid-March. A cradle Catholic, McGivern enjoyed seeing the museum’s many artifacts and exhibits, especially an exhibit honoring the many orders of women religious who have served in the diocese. The current season’s “Main Streets” programs are available on YouTube; via the show website, mainstreets.tv; and in South Bend at 9:30 a.m. Saturdays on TV station Fox WSBTDT2.

*Kevin Kilbane*

**St. Joseph Missions Receives Grant**

FORT WAYNE – In response to the urgent need for emergency shelter for single women, St. Joseph Missions received a $20,000 grant from St. Joseph Community Health Foundation. St. Joseph Missions Women’s Shelter is the first and only 24-hour, 7-days-a-week emergency shelter in Allen County expressly for single women who are experiencing homelessness. The emergency shelter, funded in part by the grant, provides a welcoming, homelike refuge for guests who have nowhere to call home. The ultimate goal for each guest is self-sufficiency.

**Saint Francis Welcomes Presidential Catholic Scholarship Recipients**

FORT WAYNE – The University of Saint Francis welcomed its second class of Presidential Catholic Scholarship recipients as fall classes began. The Presidential Catholic Scholarship is a full-tuition and fees scholarship. Selected students must practice the Catholic faith and embrace Franciscan values, demonstrate commitment and perseverance under pressure, graduate with a 3.0 or higher grade point average, and receive a strong recommendation from their high schools and parishes.

**Correction:**

In last week’s issue, the story “Transforming Lives, Transforming the Campus at Saint Francis’ Opening Mass”, the last paragraph of the story should read: “I have a desire to always have a crane in the air, figuratively. So we say we’re doing these things and it’s for these reasons. ... We want to offer a transformational experience for our students.”
“I thought the episodes on Formed that we were asked to watch were really helpful for me,” said Thomas. “In one episode, it did stress that when we have someone we are speaking to, what really works is if you bring faith, hope, and love into the situation, which are theological virtues of our faith.”

Next came the task of naming the group. The women turned to St. Dymphna, an Irish virgin and martyr from the seventh century who is recognized by the Catholic Church as the patron saint of those suffering with mental illnesses. “She’s a holy card on my refrigerator and has been there for many years,” remarked Cooper, who decided to “introduce” her to the group. However, they all got to know her on a deeper level in July by taking a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Dymphna, located inside St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Massillon, Ohio. Father Lockwood arranged a one-day bus trip to the shrine and extended the invitation to parishioners of St. Therese and beyond.

“I had never heard of St. Dymphna, so it definitely brought it all real for me,” said Palmer. “It was very awesome to see, and spiritually it really struck me.”

“To make a pilgrimage there with so many others and to share that experience with other people was huge,” explained Lill. “But also, to learn about how the shrine started, how it originated in a mental health facility – that was fascinating.”

St. Dymphna’s Refuge now hopes to bring the saint’s love and mercy to anyone in need, regardless of religious background or affiliation. Meetings are free to attend and are designed to allow those struggling with mental illness or those caring for such individuals to share their own mental health experiences. Team members will offer a prayerful listening ear and can direct attendees to educational resources and mental health service agencies as needed. They do not function as mental health professionals and cannot give therapeutic advice, prescribe medication, or make medical diagnoses. The ultimate vision, according to the group’s facilitators, is to provide a spiritual base for those suffering from mental illness – one that brings peace to the broken, reminds the suffering that they are valuable and loved, and removes the stigma of talking about mental health.

“I think the biggest thing that you find is that if you talk about it, it doesn’t necessarily solve it and it doesn’t go away, but it helps,” said Palmer. “Someone else might have a similar situation, and you realize you’re not alone. It could be a huge load off them just to be able to freely talk about it. They can express it in a safe, spiritual atmosphere where they won’t be made fun of or judged.”

And regardless of what God has in store for St. Dymphna’s Refuge, the experience has already had a positive impact on the six women who formed the ministry.

“Forming our group of facilitators has already been bearing fruit in our lives,” said Peat. “It’s helped us see the purpose in our sufferings. It’s a beautiful moment in time when we get to see some of the ways that God uses our sufferings for good.”

St. Dymphna’s Refuge will meet at St. Therese on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. No sign-up is required, but those with additional questions may contact the parish office at (260) 747-9199.

Warning signs of mental illness

- Recent social withdrawal
- Loss of interest in activities
- Drop in functioning at school, work, extracurriculars, etc.
- Problems concentrating/speaking
- Loss of appetite/sleep
- Apathy
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Intense concern with appearance/lack of interest in appearance
- Overuse of alcohol/drugs
- Ailments with no obvious causes
- Thinking/speaking about suicide
- Hyperactive behavior/disobedience/aggression (in children)
- Temper tantrums (in children)
- Frequent nightmares (in children)

— Dr. Susan Feathergill

If anxiety is going on for six months, you should be referring to a professional. If depression has been going on for more than a couple weeks, you should be referring.”
Unashamed: Mental Health Professionals Bring Awareness to Mental Illness Crisis

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Mental illness. Few want to talk about it. To do so is uncomfortable, distressing. But these are conversations that need to take place. With mental illness on the rise throughout the U.S. and globally, mental health is a topic that needs to be discussed, and often.

One in five Americans face mental health issues every year. One in six youths between the ages of 6 and 17 are affected by mental health disorders. Fifty percent of lifetime mental illness begins by age 14; 75 percent by age 24. Shocking? The worst, however, is this: Suicide has become the leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 34.

These statistics, taken from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website, the leading organization in the field of mental health, were quoted by Dr. Susan Feathergill, a licensed psychologist at Feathergill and Associates in South Bend. Clearly, the mental health crisis is very real, but is this a crisis? Mortimer Jerome Adler, a philosopher and educator, wrote in 1976, that mental illness is a question of education. Adler also stated, “We all have stress, anxiety, mental health needs, no matter if you’re a child or an adult. And that isn’t something to be embarrassed of or afraid to seek.”

“Luckily we have Jesus as our role model that we can use here, that we can go to Him anyways. That’s always been a piece here.”

Within the Northeast Indiana region, there are resources available to help those in need. Sometimes a priest may be able to refer a parishioner to a counselor, as Msgr. Schooler does at St. Pius X, and some parishes have seen the need to walk with those suffering from mental health crises through support groups such as St. Dymphna’s Refuge at St. Therese Parish in Fort Wayne.

Unashamed: Mental Health Professionals Bring Awareness to Mental Illness Crisis

September 18, 2022
Learning from St Monica:
Father Freiburger, Leaders Share about Parish Life

BY ELIZABETH SELF

St Monica’s Parish in Mishawaka celebrated their patroness’s feast day through the end of August with an evening novena, concluding in a festival on the last Saturday of the month. The week also featured a speaker’s visit, rescheduled from March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The events helped newly appointed pastor Father Jason Freiburger and parishioners deepen their devotion to St. Monica, “the mother of all mothers.”

Every evening of the novena, parishioners gathered in the main sanctuary for a series of prayers, including a Litany of Tears to St. Monica. Father Freiburger told Today’s Catholic that in light of these prayers, “it was good to focus each night on a different intention, such as those who might have somehow been pushed away from the Church by her leaders, family members, or misunderstanding.”

National speaker and youth minister Mary Bielski ushered the official parish mission event. Bielski presented her signature series – “Be His, Be Brave, Be You” – on the three final nights of the novena, and social gatherings followed. She tied her message into the events commemorative of St. Monica by stating that parishioners share St. Monica’s mission to invite Christ’s healing presence into their families.

Bielski hoped to inspire parishioners to grow in their spiritual lives so that they might flow out in evangelization. Bielski said the first evening, Aug. 25, “As a Church, we have to go deeper than what the world has been saying [about our identity in relationship with the Lord].”

The mission event, Father Freiburger said, was not for the St. Monica parish community exclusively, but for a mix of young adult groups and nearby parishes. “It was focused on what we need to do to strengthen our confidence, knowing we don’t need to be professors of theology to go out and evangelize; it’s our example, our love for others,” Bielski gave us some courage for doing that.”

Ministry Developer Megan Burdell said that the mission event “provided a great opportunity to focus on our sense of identity, originally described by our former pastor, Father Jacob Meyer, as a parish that ‘parties, prays, and proclaims.’” While the parish mission did not set new official parish goals and is not a yearly tradition, Burdell recounted, “Monica was not perfect; Augustine later said that if it weren’t for the education she had pushed so much, he might have come back to the faith more quickly.”

Though the parish’s many ministries require strong, faithful leadership, Father Freiburger said, “It doesn’t have to be the priest.” He asked how young adults might be engaged, knowing that they might find themselves in a state of transition, and how long-time parishioners can extend the invitation to younger generations.

Commitment to the faith, he shared, of course trumps commitment to the parish. He proposed service and giving as the paths into parish life that young people are most likely to take. Ultimately, the causes behind collections require work that belongs to the whole Church. So, Father Freiburger asked, “How do we get someone new to coordinate that, so it’s not one more task for the sister or another ministry leader?”

In a final reflection on St. Monica, Father Freiburger recounted, “Monica was not perfect; Augustine later said that if it weren’t for the education she had pushed so much, he might have come back to the faith more quickly.” A bishop had tempered the great saint’s urgent pleas on behalf of her wayward son: “The bishop told her ‘Get away, it’s not going to happen now ... God cannot ignore so many tears; your tears will save him, just not this moment.’”

Father Freiburger mentioned that Bielski had highlighted St. Monica as a patroness of conversion and evangelization, and especially patience, trust, and faith. Both he and the parish are comforted by the thought of another mother looking out for them, as they look out for each other. He shared in a homily weeks before the novena, “I can’t be everywhere. Faith has to be heard, and you need to be the feet and hands of Christ.”

St. Monica’s parish enters a busy wedding season, and RCIA and religious education recommence in the coming month. Construction for a new adoration chapel that will hopefully serve the school as well as the public continues. “More time in prayer, realizing God’s love, will help people grow in conviction and commitment,” Father Freiburger concluded.
Christ Renews His Parish is Transforming Lives

BY ANDREW JACOBS

R

enewal is a word that brings to mind a rebirth, a reawakening of something laid dormant for too long. Sometimes, that still, small voice within encourages and calls one to go deeper, to move closer to becoming the best version of oneself. Renewal can mean many things: progression, transformation, rejuvenation, and conversion. It can mean becoming more involved in the parish life, meeting people who encourage each other toward greater spiritual heights.

Renewal is the very heart of Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP).

For several decades, the Holy Spirit has been quietly renewing hearts and parishes across the nation and within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend through the CRHP process.

The process begins by attending a renewal weekend. Many who have attended describe the weekend as a uniquely and powerfully transformative experience for their faith and their life.

“My Christ Renews His Parish experience helped me to not sweat the small stuff as much and reset the priorities in my life, which are God and family,” explained Brad Barondeau, a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne. “I learned to get to know people on a deeper level, become a better listener, be a little more empathetic to the struggles that others face, and how to best support them. This led me to form a strong brotherhood with the men of my team, which in turn strengthened my Catholic faith and my involvement in the parish and the wider community.”

While the renewal weekend can be thought of as a mini-retreat, it is different from many other retreats. It’s an opportunity to step away from the pressures, concerns, and distractions of the world and spend some time getting back into what matters most: allowing the Holy Spirit to strengthen one’s Catholic faith and form strong bonds with brothers or sisters in Christ. It can be thought of as a week-end of becoming a bit less Martha, who worriedly rushed and toiled at her tasks, and a bit more Mary, who quietly sat and listened at the feet of Jesus.

In parishes where CRHP is present, renewal weekends are typically held twice a year. To avoid potential distractions that can arise, renewal weekends are held separately for both men and women, often a few weeks apart.

Attendees of the weekend spend time with a team of men or women who themselves have been transformed by CRHP and have a desire to share that transformative experience with their brothers and sisters in faith.

The weekends begin on Saturday morning and end Sunday afternoon. They are structured to encourage attendees and team members to get to know each other in ways that help form relationships that last long after the weekend ends. Scripture, prayer, and reception of the sacraments are interwoven throughout the weekend.

During his time as Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Father Jim Shafer credited the Holy Spirit acting through the CRHP process as a principal reason for the faithful stewardship and strong involvement at the parish. An ardent supporter, Father Shafer regularly participated in renewal weekends at the parish. Current Pastor Father Terry Coonan has continued this support and will be involved in the upcoming renewal weekends at the parish this fall.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner John Haines spoke of the impact the weekend had on his faith life. “The most significant takeaway for me from my Christ Renews His Parish experience was that it allowed me to reflect deeply on how I was living my life, and specifically on how I was doing on our first priority as Christians — achieving eternal salvation,” he said. “It caused me to really think about the personal relationship I had with our Lord and to refocus on what I was doing in my daily prayer life to build that relationship, which is the best way to say, ‘I love you’ to Christ.”

To Doug Anderson of the aforementioned parish, his renewal weekend was “the vehicle that started me on my path to recovery from my addiction. God used the Christ Renews His Parish process to play a big part in putting my life back together and saving my marriage and family.”

In some parishes, CRHP is now known as Welcome. This name change reflects updates and improvements in the format of both the initial retreat weekend and the formation process. It can be thought of as “CRHP 2.0,” which includes all the best parts of the original CRHP process experience but is even more dynamic, engaging, and transformative. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is one of the parishes that will be rolling out the new Welcome program this fall. Many other parishes around the diocese host fall weekends; check local bulletins for renewal dates.

“...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” – Eph. 4:23

For several decades, the Holy Spirit has been quietly renewing hearts and parishes across the nation and within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend through the CRHP process.
A Depopulated Future

I remember when people thought overpopulation would destroy us and the planet. Paul Ehrlich’s 1968 book, “The Population Bomb” popularized this idea, leading to urgent calls for “zero population growth.” Dr. Warren Hern even warned in 1993 that the human species was a global “cancer.” “We have become a malignant ecologic-...
You Never Really Pray Alone

There is no such thing as “private” prayer. There is—and certainly should be—deeply personal prayer, but really no such thing as “private” prayer. All Christian prayer, if it is true to its name, is initiated by the promptings of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism, who prays in and through the hearts of the baptized who together are constituted as the Body of Christ, the Church. Two things are worth noting here: first, all prayer begins with God’s initiative (it’s graced— in the Tradition, the Holy Spirit is often referred to as “uncreated Grace”); and, second, the Church is constituted by God’s action, not by mere human choice or conscious decision. Decision is obviously important, as the Gospel makes clear, in responding to Jesus, but it’s also important to remember that the invitation comes first. All prayer, personal or public, is done in communion with the Body of Christ, the Church, as the Spirit draws us in to an ever-deeper communion with the Father.

Public, liturgical prayer should shape, inform, and nurture our personal prayer. That is, rather than accommodating our experience of liturgical prayer to our experience of personal prayer, we should allow the public prayer of the Church continually to affect our experience of personal prayer, drawing us out of ourselves and uniting us more deeply to the self-offering of Christ to the Father. Our needs, like our tastes, should themselves be taken open to and subject to ongoing conversion.

The prayer of the Church puts “excellence” into action. The Eucharistic Liturgy, the Church tells us, is in fact the most effective thing the Church does. As Pope Benedict XVI made clear in his first encyclical, Deus Caritas Est, the entire social mission of the Church, its apostolates of the church and social justice, for example, derive their purpose and meaning—and their eschatological effectiveness—from the Sacrifice of the Altar, where the fullness of Love is revealed not as a human ideal but as a Divine Person. That’s one of the reasons Mass is offered daily, and why Catholics are encouraged to participate regularly— even daily, when possible—at Mass. Ask any one who, over the course of time, has had the opportunity to become a “daily communicant,” and each will no doubt tell you that the opportunity to celebrate the Mass daily has made a profound difference in his or her life.

At every celebration of the Eucharist, the Church invocates Himself and is present in four distinct ways: in His Word proclaimed (it’s God, not merely the word we say when the Scriptures are proclaimed), in the person of the priest or bishop (who acts in persona Christi), in the “person of Christ, Head of the Body, the Church”), in the assembled people of God, and most especially (massive) in the word used in the documents of the Church, literally, “most of all”) in the consecrated elements, the bread and wine upon which the Holy Spirit is invoked and which are substantially changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is this substantial and efficacious presence of Christ which in fact constitutes the Church and which makes Christ present among His people. So, it’s not that, because we have gathered as the Church that somehow the Eucharist reveals Christ’s presence; rather, it’s because Christ reveals Himself in the breaking of the bread (as He did to Cleopas and His other companions, Luke 24:30 on the road to Emmaus), that we recognize Him as present in the assembled people of God. It is the Holy Spirit who constitutes the Church by configuring us to Christ through our sharing in the Eucharist. St. Augustine in one of his homilies suggests to his congregation that it is “their Mystery” which is placed on the altar and that they are “to become what they receive”—their identity (and ours) is derived from the Mystery of the Lord’s dying and rising, which

Cynicism and suspicion. I will also insist that my interpretation is not Pollyannish. LaBeouf offers considerable engagement with the Faith. From his thoughts on the Latin Mass to his experiences reading St. Augustine and Thomas Merton, this is a man who seems to have undergone a genuine change of heart. His affection for the Franciscans, including Father James, Father Jude, and Brother Alex, was evident. LaBeouf marveled at how the friars invited him in to their life by laughter, joking, petting cats, and eating ice cream. And they did all of this without asking him for anything.

For me, the most powerful moment in LaBeouf’s story comes when he describes what it was like to read the Gospel of Matthew for the first time. LaBeouf undertaken the task to prepare to be St. Pio. He said John the Baptist made a deep impression, that he “felt like an old Western character.” The actor found the Forerunners “stunted and strong and masculine.”

Mrgr. Michael Heintz is on the faculty at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Mrgr. Michael Heintz

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Show Me The Honey: Maryland Sisters Find Divine Touch in Beekeeping

BY GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.

CATONSVILLE, Md. (CNS) – With an apron protecting her long, black religious habit, Sister Deborah Rose Rosado marveled at the steady stream of thick, golden goo she poured into a small glass jar.

Careful to stop the current as the sticky substance reached the container’s one-pint capacity, Sister Deborah Rose screwed on a metal top before one of her fellow All Saints Sisters of the Poor attached a label.

“This is a feat Sister Deborah Rose & bottled in Catonsville, Md., proudly proclaims. “Harvested with nature and having this honey – this beautiful, golden product is a gift from God.”

Mother Emily Ann Lindsey, Superior General of the religious community, said the sisters spend several hours each day tending the hives and extracting the honey.

“Beekeeping and the tedious process of bottling honey takes time and effort,” Mother Emily Ann said. “When you are interacting with creation, you are actually partaking in that creation in a different way. It feeds us spiritually because it brings us closer to our Lord through what He’s created. He gives us opportunities to participate almost as a co-creator as we bring forth new life and keep it going.”

The Baltimore sisters were recognized as a “diocesan institute” of women religious when it’s harvested over the summer.

The sisters have long been concerned about nature – nurturing bluebirds, rehabilitating injured or sick animals and fostering the preservation of troubled species. In recent years, they have raised monarch butterflies.

“We are a community that is part contemplative and part active,” Mother Emily Ann explained. “When you are interacting with creation, you are actually partaking in that creation in a different way. It feeds us spiritually because it brings us closer to our Lord through what He’s created. He gives us opportunities to participate almost as a co-creator as we bring forth new life and keep it going.”

The sisters’ job is to bottle the sweet product, which is divvied up among Purcell, Kersse, and the sisters.

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The beekeepers, Clement Purcell of Mount Calvary Catholic Church in Baltimore and Martin Kersse of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City, take care of tending the hives and extracting the honey. The sisters’ job is to bottle the sweet product, which is divvied up among Purcell, Kersse, and the sisters.

The raw honey sells for $20 a jar in the All Saints Sisters of the Poor gift shop, with the proceeds reinvested into beekeeping.

The honey jars on the sister’s label include an image of Our Lady of Walsingham, one of the earliest apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary especially beloved by English Catholics and many Anglicans. That’s significant to the All Saints Sisters of the Poor who came to Maryland in 1872 as an American branch of an Anglican women’s religious community in England.

The Baltimore sisters were received into the Catholic Church in 2009 by then-Baltimore Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien and are now recognized as a “diocesan institute” of women religious overseen by the Archbishop of Baltimore.

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Purcell, a biologist by training, said there are many examples of the hand of God in beekeeping. He noted, for example, that when the temperature reaches exactly 57 degrees or below, the bees’ wings stop functioning.

“So they form a cluster,” said Purcell, who wears protective clothing and uses calming smoke when handling the bee colonies. “They disengage their wings and they vibrate and they shudder. They protect the queen bee. This is the miracle of God.”

Beekeeping and the tedious process of bottling honey takes time and effort, Mother Emily Ann said. But it’s rewarding.

Matysek is managing editor of the Catholic Review, news outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Knights Host Breakfast at Most Precious Blood Parish

FORT WAYNE — St. Gaspar del Bufalo Council No. 11043 will be serving breakfast on Sunday, Sept. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold St. Carryout packs will be available. Freewill offerings will be accepted. Proceeds this month will help support the parish school. Visit www.kofc11043.org for information.

Central Catholic High School Alumni Association All Alumni Reunion and Annual Meeting

FORT WAYNE — Central Catholic High School Alumni Association is having a luncheon this month will help support the parish school. Visit www.kofc11043.org for information.

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

Understanding God’s Plan for Human Sexuality When Your Child has Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Sept 26
7:30-9 p.m.

Event online via Zoom

More information and register: diocesefwsb.org/wonderfully-made

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Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ

Poverty in the work of the Spirit

The Catherine Kasper Life Center is part of The Center at Donaldson and a ministry of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.
Catholic High School Principal Shows What’s Possible

BY GINA CHRISTIAN

PHILADELPHIA, PA (CNS) — When she was in fifth grade, Jayda Pugliese realized that “something wasn’t right.”

As a student at St. Mary Interparochial School in Philadelphia, she struggled to keep up in class. Her world was falling silent, due to a progressive disease that attacked her auditory nerves.

Adept at lip-reading, Pugliese managed to pass regular hearing exams until her condition reached a crisis point, and her auditory nerves were so damaged that she could barely hear at all.

She became my patroness,” said Pugliese. “For a long while, I didn’t even know it was due to St. Katharine Drexel. I needed it and I always say it’s due to St. Katharine Drexel. I needed it and I always say it’s due to St. Katharine Drexel.”

At the same time, Pugliese — who relies on hearing aids — describes herself as “a deaf person in a speaking world,” and “an active advocate for deaf individuals.”

While at the former St. Maria Goretti (now Neumann-Goretti) High School in Philadelphia, she launched an ASL program, threw herself into youth organizations, and “hit the ground running” with her academics, building on momentum she’d acquired in seventh and eighth grade.

At Holy Family University in Philadelphia, Pugliese earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Special Education and Elementary Education and her Master’s in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Literacy.

Her teaching skills — honed in Philadelphia public and charter schools — quickly earned her professional recognition. In 2016, she received the Milken Educator Award (often likened to the Oscars of teaching) in Philadelphia public and charter schools.

The timing was providential, since Pugliese had been temporarily forced to halt her doctoral studies at Holy Family University for financial reasons. “I remember sitting in church crying,” said Pugliese, a member of St. Paul Parish in South Philadelphia. “I said to God, ‘I don’t know what your plan is for me, but I’m going to put it in your hands.’”

With the award funding a sizable portion of her degree, Pugliese — who was subsequently named the 2018 National Science Teachers Association Sylvia Shugrue Awardee and a 2019 finalist for Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year — now expects to receive her doctorate next year.

Earlier this summer, she completed a one-week collaboration at the Kansas-based Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes as one of the organization’s 2022 fellows.

Pugliese has traveled across the world to give presentations and training on educational best practices, accessible instruction and STEAM-based technology integration for classrooms.

Regardless of the prognosis, she plans to remain in the field of education. “Maybe I can pave the way for more individuals who are disabled, and who want to go into leadership,” said Pugliese. “I want to show it’s possible.”

Thanks to two grants from the Pennsylvania-based Ambassador’s Fund for Catholic Education, the school is creating a fleet of STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, arts, and mathematics) carts for classroom use, while piloting a business education course that instills “servant learning, service leadership, and empathy,” Pugliese said.

Those qualities govern her own life, she said, noting that her level of hearing is “absolutely at its worst right now.” “I could possibly go completely deaf in five to seven years,” said Pugliese. “I will trust in God and let Him decide what will happen.”

“I want to show it’s possible.”

Christian is a senior content producer for CatholicPhilly.com, the news website of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.