# News Notes August 2026

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON

## Office of the Bishop

### September 30, 2026 - Deepening Our Moral Witness: A Regional Gathering on the Catholic Church's Solidarity with Migrants

Dear Pastors, Parish Life Directors, Deans, Hispanic Deanery Coordinators, Congolese Ministry Leaders, Priests, Deacons, Parish Staff, Hispanic Leaders, Parish Leaders:

I warmly encourage you to participate in the regional gathering, ***"Deepening Our Moral Witness: A Regional Gathering on the Catholic Church's Solidarity with Migrants,"*** to be held on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, 711 S Northshore Dr, Knoxville, TN 37919.

Hosted by the Dioceses of Knoxville and Lexington, in collaboration with the Hope Border Institute and the Center for Migration Studies through Catholic IMMpact, this gathering will bring together diocesan and parish leaders from seven states for a day of prayer, formation, reflection, and collaboration on the Church's pastoral response to immigrant communities.

Over the past two years, through our collaboration with Attorney Emily Jones and the New Americans Initiative, the Diocese of Lexington has provided extensive formation and practical resources to Catholic school personnel, clergy, parish leaders, and our Hispanic communities regarding parish preparedness and immigration-related pastoral ministry.

In addition to the regional presentations, our diocesan breakout session will provide participants from the Diocese of Lexington an opportunity to build upon the work already underway in our diocese. Attorney Emily Jones will be available during the afternoon session to address questions about parish preparedness plans, implementation of the resources already provided, and other practical concerns that may have arisen as our parishes continue this important pastoral ministry.

I encourage you to join us for this important day of prayer, formation, and collaboration.

Registration:

Registration for Knoxville event.

With gratitude in Christ,

Most Rev. John Stowe, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Lexington

# Office of the Chancellor

We welcomed Holly Neal, Director of Communications, to the Diocese on July 16. If you have any communications needs, you can reach her at 859-253-1993 ext. 1242 or email hneal@cdlex.org. "News Notes" information from Chancery Offices are now due by 25th of each month and can be sent directly to Holly.

# Office of the Vice Chancellor

## September Mass Counts and Safe Environment: Circle of Grace

- **Annual Mass Counts –** The yearly September Mass Counts are due **Friday, October 16th, 2025.** Please list each Mass time, language, and total in attendance. The counts will cover the Vigil Mass on **Saturday, September 5th through Sunday, September 27th**. Please see the attached form. You may use the back of the form if necessary.
- **Student Safe Environment Training: Circle of Grace** – With the beginning of a new school year, please remember the use of **Circle of Grace** for all grade levels in both school and parish programs is **mandated**.

The lessons for grades 9-12 have been acquired, so alternate training lessons are no longer accepted. Catholic Schools and Religious Formation share a common link. The student training report forms are now combined for school and CCD reporting. Please be sure to include 'Parish' or 'School' when you list the location.

Due to copyright restrictions, Circle of Grace lessons are not available for download. You will need to contact Greta Hernandez directly at ghernandez@cdlex.org or Deacon John Brannen at jbrannen@cdlex.org to obtain electronic lesson files.

Please plan to teach the program in the first semester of the school year and submit audit recap forms to Greta's attention at the Catholic Center as soon as possible.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need further clarification.

Blessings,
Deacon John

# Calvary Cemetery

### August 21 at 10:00 AM Pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary
Celebrate the Patroness of the Diocese of Lexington (Mary Queen of Heaven & Earth) for the memorial of the Queenship (Coronation) of the Blessed Virgin Mary/August 22nd. All are welcome to attend this annual event at the Gatehouse, 874 West Main St. Lexington, KY

### August 31
Feast Day of Sts. Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus – Patron Saints of Funeral Directors…pray for us!

# Catholic Charities

### August 1: The People of Hope Museum
A free, traveling national storytelling experience is coming to Lexington. Mark your calendars and join us for this one-of-a-kind community event filled with inspiring stories of hope, resilience, and faith.

11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary
601 Hill N Dale Road, Lexington
Cost: FREE

What You'll Experience:

- Video stories highlighting the impact of service
- An interactive poverty simulation
- Insights into poverty and social isolation in Kentucky and across the nation
- Opportunities to connect with fellow community members
- A chance to share your own story of hope and service

Please Follow and Share **CatholicCharitiesLexington** on Facebook and Instagram! Stay Connected & Stay Inspired!

Do you want to host a drive for Mary's Closet? These items of dignity include hygiene and cleaning supplies for our clients. Contact us at 859-475-5522 or dgottfried@cdlex.org for more information.

# Development

## Diocesan Annual Appeal 2026

**August 27 - 2026 DAA Kickoff** at the CDOL Catholic Center in the Bluegrass conference room. Kick-off will start at 8:30 until 1:00. A delicious lunch will be provided with great door prizes. Pastors, Parochial Vicars, office financial staff and parish admin assistance should attend. Each parish should have a DAA Volunteer Champion to attend and help with the DAA. Please register at: **https://www.osvhub.com/diocese-of-lexington/forms/2026-daa-kickoff.**

**September 19 - 20**
The Diocesan Annual Appeal 2026 in pew weekend is September 19-20. Parishes will receive resources and links to introduce the Appeal, including a brief video that can be shown at Mass and other gatherings. Parishes will receive a supply of commitment cards and envelopes for in-pew commitments. If you are unable to attend this year's kickoff event or would like additional training, please contact Robert Watts at ext. 1049, Sara Spellman at ext. 1051 or Emma Jones at ext. 1050. *Please reserve that weekend to focus on the Diocesan Annual Appeal, with no other collection or presentations*. We will mail DAA materials to all households on record in September, and the October issue of CrossRoads will highlight the ministries and programs that the Appeal makes possible

## Second Collection

**August 15-16**
A Second Collection for Seminarian Higher Education will be observed on August 15-16, 2026. Funds from this collection will support the continuing studies of our seminarians. We are very blessed in our Diocese to have 7 seminarians who are preparing to serve our parishes and missions as true and faithful servant leaders. Thank you for your support and prayers for their efforts.

## PCI Compliance – Very Important!

Each location must complete **Payment Card Industry (PCI)** annual online compliance process to ensure that the location is meeting security requirements for credit card and ACH payments. Even if a location does not have active donations with Vanco when notified, the location must complete the process. The primary contact for the location's online giving account should have received an email reminder with the PCI link and deadline for the compliance process. The login credentials for PCI are not the same as Vanco credentials. If you did not receive that PCI reminder email or you are having difficulty logging onto the PCI site, you will need to call the compliance customer service number to troubleshoot the problem (1-855-815-4816). Vanco charges a $24 penalty for each month of non-compliance, so please take care of this process ahead of the deadline! Please call or email Emma Jones ejones@cdlex.org 859-253-1993 ext. 150 with your Vanco PCI Compliance login and password.

# Pastoral Life

## August 6th - Theology on Tap with Fr. Rob Adams and Fr. Justin Patterson

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Mirror Twin Brewing Annex
732 National Avenue
Lexington, KY

Theology on Tap is a place where young adults can come together, share a drink, and talk about things that matter. Join us on August 6th at Mirror Twin Brewing Annex (732 National Ave. Lexington KY 40502) as Catholic priest Fr. Rob Adams and Orthodox priest Fr. Justin Patterson dialogue about the differences and commonalities between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Admission is free and comes with one drink ticket.

## August 17th - New Youth Minister Onboarding starting this week

This summer we will be bringing back our New Youth Minister Onboarding. This is a 5-week course that we hold every year to get new youth ministers and volunteers up to speed with the best practices in youth ministry. This course is focused on being immediately practical, ranging in topics from programming to budgeting to pastoral practices. If your parish has a new youth minister, please encourage them to sign up by contacting Mike Armstrong at marmstrong@cdlex.org. The course is free, classes will be held over Zoom, and specific meeting times will be set after participants register, so that we can find a time that works best for everyone. **Registration is open until August 10th**

Michael Armstrong
Director of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry

# Family Life and Evangelization

### Families Invited to Share their Experiences for Pope Leo and the October Synod

As you may know, Pope Leo XIV will convene a worldwide meeting of Episcopal Conference Presidents at the Vatican from October 7–14, 2026, focusing on *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), Pope Francis's 2016 apostolic exhortation. To support this synodal discernment, Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI)—at the suggestion of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) and in collaboration with the Ignatian Encounter Ministry (IEM)—is launching a global initiative to share the lived experiences of diverse families directly with the Synod Office.

We are inviting families from all around the world to host small, informal listening sessions using the Conversations in the Spirit format to share your joys, struggles, and pastoral needs.

**How It Works**
1. Gather: Families or small groups meet to reflect prayerfully on your experiences as a family, giving each member equal time to speak.

2. Submit: Member of the family uses the short form to capture the themes that emerge - convergences (issues on which everyone agrees), divergences (issues left unresolved), and suggestions of how the Church could better guide and support you through your struggles.
3. Deliver: CCRI and Ignatian Encounter Ministry (IEM) will synthesize these global insights and deliver them to Pope Leo and the Synod Office by mid-September.

**Save the Dates for these Diocesan Masses this Fall**
October 6 - Red Mass for Legal and Political Community: 9am at St. Peter/Lexington
October 24 - White Mass/Brunch for Healthcare Professionals: 9am at Pax Christi
November 7 - Wedding Anniversary Mass: 5pm at the Cathedral of Christ the King

**August 23 - Grace Marriage Promotional Event: "Pour Into Your Marriage"**
***Could your marriage use some refreshment? Whether you've been married six months or sixty years, every marriage needs intentional tending in order to grow.***

Several parishes in the diocese have been offering "Grace Marriage" for several years, a peer ministry devoted to marriage enrichment and community-building.
"Grace Marriage," a ministry originating in Owensboro and based on a simple idea: Four focused (and fun!) half-day Saturday mini retreats over the school year, in which married couples gather together to deepen their marriages. Anyone from any parish is welcome to attend. To learn more, see cdlex.org/gracemarriage.

To promote Grace Marriage for those who would like a "sneak preview" of the Grace Marriage experience, we are having an event on Sunday evening (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM), August 23rd, at Pax Christi, with wine-tasting (featuring wines from 1922 House Winery—a winery owned by a local Catholic couple), hors d'oeuvres, and fun marriage-building activities.

"Pour Into Your Marriage" is open to married couples throughout the diocese.

Whether you've been married one year or fifty, this night is designed to help you reconnect, reflect, and pour into what matters most.

Cost is $20/couple, and registration and payment can be made at this link. **Signup deadline is August 16th.**

# Formed for Mission: Catechetical Leaders Prepare to Transform Parish Life

## BACKGROUND

Our diocese produced its pastoral plan seven years ago. Although ambitious in scope and detailed in its goals, the plan wisely declined to dictate methods. This approach allowed room for its proponents to first build the infrastructure necessary to accomplish the stated goals.

There were hints of such infrastructure in the plan itself: directives to "recruit candidates for the diaconate from under-represented communities," or to "create a diocesan faith formation committee" pointed the way to first steps. Still, there were challenges. Our diocese is not possessed of a large chancery staff or great financial resources. There were (and are) no Catholic institutions of higher learning within our bounds. Furthermore, the pandemic struck shortly after the plan's release, putting systematic efforts on hold for several years.

A key step forward, however, was found in our diocesan partnership with the McGrath Institute at the University of Notre Dame. This partnership moved us forward on many fronts: the Diaconate program, the FIAT mental health initiatives, and more. Here, though, I want to highlight the wonderful Leadership in Catechesis faith formation program created in partnership with McGrath. This program provides not only a well-formed pool of individuals for the advisory committee mentioned above, but through those individuals also addresses many of the plan's other initiatives at the parish, school, and diocesan levels.

## FORMATION

For the last two years, the program has put participants through deep, focused formation. Drawn from parishes and schools throughout our diocese, participants have worked hard through many transformative experiences. Their endeavors included four six-week online courses from Notre Dame professors, each tied to the Catechism and the Apostolic Constitutions of Vatican II. The first three courses, "Encountering and Witnessing to the Person of Jesus Christ," "Responding to the Educational Emergency in Parish and School," and "Sacraments," took place in 2024 and 2025. During that time participants also attended six day-long, in-person workshops. Half of these were run by the chancery, and Notre Dame professors came to Lexington to run the others. For their final semester, participants hit the ground running with two more workshops and a final course, "Reading the Signs of the Times." Comprised of unit topics like "Reading the Signs of the Times with Hope," "See, Judge, Act as a Means of Accompaniment," "Encounter in a Technocratic World," and "Hope in an Age of Disaffiliation," the course challenged students and oriented them toward ministry in today's challenging environment. Because the program as a whole is pointed toward capstone projects to be conducted in participants' own parishes and schools, moreover, the course included units such as "Developing a New Program in the Local Church," and "Drawing New Maps of Hope" as well. Coursework, however, is not the sum of the program. Participants have also gone to South Bend for two three-day intensive sessions on campus. The first of these was focused on formative experiences ranging from intimate talks with Notre Dame's theologians to Visio Divina at the University's new art museum. This summer, however, the second such intensive program centered on pairing students with professors and mentors to shape their capstone projects. You can see the fruit of these sessions in the project descriptions found on Crossroads Online.

**THE FUTURE**
We are very proud of our participants, who have put so much of themselves into this program. We are also grateful to the wonderful people at McGrath, whose hard work made this program possible. You can see their testimonials below as well. More than this, however, we are looking forward to the impact the participants will have across the diocese. In addition to conducting their capstone projects in local settings, this group is also part of diocesan planning going forward. They are already working to reform the Catechist Conferences and to construct a comprehensive OCIA document for our diocese. Yet these projects are only the beginning. Program participants – now program graduates – are not only the faith formation advisory committee envisioned by the plan. They are actively engaged in transformative ministry at every level of diocesan life.

## August 22 - Bilingual Parish Catechist Conference

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Lexington Catholic High School
Keynote from Dr. Veronica Rayas
Mass with Rev. Dan Noll
Presentations from the McGrath Institute at the University of Notre Dame
Breakout session in English and Spanish
Lunch provided with registration (see flyer for registration)

# Vocations Office

## August 4 - Memorial of St. John Vianney

Tuesday, August 4, is the Memorial of St. John Vianney, patron saint of parish priests. The day provides an excellent opportunity to draw upon his life and example when preaching about the vocation and ministry of the parish priest. Parishes may also wish to include an intention in the Prayer of the Faithful for priests, seminarians, and those discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

**Sample intercession:**

For our priests, that through the intercession of St. John Vianney, they may be renewed in holiness and strengthened in their ministry; for our seminarians, that they may persevere joyfully in formation; and for all those discerning the priesthood, that they may respond generously to the Lord's call, let us pray to the Lord.

Fr. G. Marc Bentley

## Peace and Justice Office

**September 12th** Love's Splendid Garden: Laudato Si' and Caring for Holy Mother Earth
9:30am to 3:00pm (see attached flyer)
Pax Christi Fellowship Hall
4001 Victoria Way
Lexington, KY
Registration Cost: $25

**October 3rd:** Walking Tour of Calvary Cemetery
10:00 AM (see attached flyer)
874 W. Main Street
Lexington, KY

**The Diocese of Lexington in the news:** Check out the great pictures of the solar at Mother of Good Counsel in Hazard- https://www.ncronline.org/news/catholic-dioceses-race-solar-credits-ahead-gop-tax-laws-early-phaseout

## Miscellaneous

### October 9: The Diocesan Clergy/Musician Dinner

Registration - 5:30 PM Parrish Hall
Dinner – 6:00 PM
Concert – 7:15 PM
Church of the Annunciation Parish Center
1007 Main Street
Paris, Kentucky 40361

Cost: $25.00 per person

We praise God for the opportunity to gather once again!
Join us for a fall evening of fine food, friends and fun!
Featuring a dinner in the parish hall at 6pm with a concert to follow in the church sanctuary at 7:15pm.

RESERVATIONS WITH PAYMENT DUE NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 5th, 2025

Send the form (see attached flyer) and payment (checks payable to “Church of the Annunciation”) to:
Church of the Annunciation
1007 Main Street
Paris, KY 40361