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Diocesan Green Mass highlights Season of Creation



By **TIM LILLEY**
The Message editor

The Diocese of Evansville joins the larger Church in celebrating the Season of Creation, which runs annually from Sept. 1 to Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. As part of that celebration, Sts. Mary and John Parish in downtown Evansville hosted the 2023 Diocesan Green Mass Sept. 16. Father Alex Zenthoefer, Vicar General of the Diocese of Evansville and rector of St. Benedict Cathedral, concelebrated the Mass with Father Eugene Schmitt, pastor of Sts. Mary and John Parish.

In his homily, Father Alex said that God is an unfailing stream, "the source of hope, the source of mercy and justice." He continued, "God is always moving toward us, not like a tiny trickle of grace, but (like) a mighty river that rushes over us to the point that we can be overwhelmed by his power. But far too often,

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The Message photo by Tim Lilley

St. Mary Church in Evansville hosted the 2023 Diocesan Green Mass Sept. 16. Shown at the altar are Deacon Dennis Russell of Sts. Mary and John Parish, left, Father Alex Zenthoefer, vicar general of the Diocese of Evansville and rector of St. Benedict Cathedral Parish, Father Eugene Schmitt, pastor of Sts. Mary and John Parish, and server Sheryl Lemmer. Father Alex and Father Eugene concelebrated the Mass.

St. Meinrad gathering fills The Bauerhaus

By **TIM LILLEY**
The Message editor

Alumni and friends of St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology filled the dining room of The Bauerhaus in Darmstadt Sept. 14 for the 2023 edition of St. Meinrad's annual Evansville-area gathering. In comments to the large crowd, Evansville Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, a St. Meinrad alumnus, observed that those in atten-

dance were there because they had been impacted in some way by St. Meinrad.

Several Diocese of Evansville priests and deacons attended, as did lay graduates of the theology program and friends of St. Meinrad.

Deacon Ron Pirau of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, who serves as Director of the Permanent Deacon Formation Program at St. Meinrad, delivered the keynote and discussed the history of the program, which is observing its 25th anniversary. Deacon Ron, a graduate of the program, was ordained in June 2012 and serves at Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, Indiana.

He explained that the program started in 1999. Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, who now serves as President-Rector of St. Meinrad, came up with the idea of developing a program that would provide formation to deacon candidates in dioceses that were unable to send men to St. Meinrad in person. The first to participate was a group of nine men from the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia.

Instructors from the Seminary and School of Theology travelled to dioceses to teach on weekends, and Deacon Ron said the program had participation from eight dioceses in its first five years. Benedictine Father Godfrey Mullen, former Rector of St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville, next directed the program for several years as it continued to grow. He initiated a summer gathering at the Archabbey for adjunct lecturers and directors of formation serving in dioceses.



The Message photos by Tim Lilley

St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology welcomed a large crowd of alumni and friends to The Bauerhaus in Darmstadt Sept. 14.

When Father Julian Peters became director of the program, he created a path to a Master's Degree for those interested in pursuing it. Courses also were developed to form and support candidates for whom Spanish was their primary language.

Another element that came into being was an intensive week of homiletics instruction at St. Meinrad, which Deacon Ron said some students referred to as Homeletics Boot Camp. Participants travel to St. Meinrad to learn how to preach, he said, noting that a group from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia recently completed the week.

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Bishop Joseph M. Siegel offered closing comments before the final prayer and blessing. He noted that those in attendance had accepted invitations to the gathering because St. Meinrad had impacted them in some way.