



# The MESSAGE

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## Bishop Siegel dedicates altar, blesses Oratory of St. Thomas Aquinas chapel

By MEGAN ERBACHER  
The Message editor

During Mass on Sept. 23, Bishop Joseph M. Siegel dedicated the altar and blessed the new chapel, now officially the Oratory of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the former convent of Sacred Heart Church in Evansville.

During his homily, Bishop Siegel commented how awesome the place was, as it is none other than the house of God, a gateway to heaven. He said the oratory is indeed to be holy, and through worship offered by our seminarians in this new space, the Lord will guide them in their priestly formation and ultimately on their pilgrim way to heaven.

Bishop Siegel said the altar is a symbol of Christ in our midst and will serve as the heart and soul of the chapel and house. On Sept. 23, he said it was solemnly consecrated as a place for which holy Mass will be offered.

Father Tyler Tenbarge, diocesan direc-

tor of vocations, and Father Christopher Droste, pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Evansville, concelebrated the Mass with Bishop Siegel.

First-year diocesan Seminarians Allen Lasher, Jake Evitts, Evan Sexton, Eli Steckler and Brett Wilkey assisted and served the Mass. Matt Miller, director of the Office of Worship, served as Master of Ceremonies. Jeremy Goebel, diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry, served as cantor.

During the Introductory Rites, Bishop Siegel sprinkled holy water on the altar, the walls of the chapel and on those in attendance. Bishop Siegel said during his homily that just as we were washed clean from sin and blessed with holy water at our baptisms, so is the altar, the walls of the chapel and all present.

Seminarian Allen Lasher served as lector.

Father Droste proclaimed the Gospel. Following the profession of faith, all



The Message photo by Megan Erbacher  
**Bishop Joseph M. Siegel celebrates the first Mass in the Oratory of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the former convent of Sacred Heart Church in Evansville. The bishop dedicated the altar and blessed the chapel Sept. 23.**

prayed the Litany of the Saints. Bishop Siegel then placed a relic of St. Thomas Aquinas into the base of the altar, signifying "that the sacrifice of

the members has drawn its origin from the Sacrifice of the Head."

Bishop Siegel then dedicated the

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## St. Ben's holds Mass for Creation

By JOHN ROHLF  
The Message assistant editor

St. Benedict Cathedral School participated in a Mass for Creation during the Cathedral's all-school Mass Sept. 19.

Father Alex Zenthoef, Diocesan vicar general and rector of St. Benedict Cathedral, celebrated the Mass Sept. 19 at St. Benedict Cathedral. Father Tyler Underhill, parochial vicar

at St. Benedict Cathedral, concelebrated Mass.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Season of Creation spans five weeks annually. It begins on Sept. 1, which is the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and concludes on Oct. 4, which is the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Diocese of Evansville is observing the Season of Creation by encouraging pastors to celebrate a Mass for Creation to thank God for the precious gift and ask His help to be good stewards of our natural resources.

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The Message photos by John Rohlf  
**Above, Father Alex Zenthoef delivers his homily during the Mass for Creation Sept. 19 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. Above right, Father Alex Zenthoef, back left, Father Tyler Underhill, back right, and the altar servers walk towards the back of the church at the conclusion of Mass.**



## St. Wendel School earns National Blue Ribbon School recognition

Special to The Message

The U.S. Department of Education has named St. Wendel School in St. Wendel a National Blue Ribbon School for 2024. DOE officials explained in the announcement that the prestigious recognition highlights schools that excel in academic performance or make significant strides in closing achievement gaps among different student groups.

St. Wendel is one of 356 schools recognized this year by the DOE, one of

50 nonpublic schools nationwide and one of 16 Indiana schools earning the honor. St. Wendel is the fourth Diocese of Evansville Catholic school named a National Blue Ribbon School in the program's history. St. John the Baptist in Newburgh was recognized in 2023, Holy Family School in Jasper earned the honor in 2013, and the DOE recognized Evansville's Reitz Memorial High School in 2002.

St. Wendel is the first non-public school and the third school (public or non-public) in Posey County to earn the

award in the past 40 years.

St. Wendel Principal Hallie Scheu said, "The National Blue Ribbon School award affirms and validates the hard work of students, educators, families and communities in striving for — and attaining — exemplary achievement. Since its inception in 1982, the goals of the program are to shine a spotlight on the best schools in the United States and to share best prac-



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