

The MESSAGE

Southwestern Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

March 21, 2025

Volume 55, Number 27

www.evdiomessage.org

Church continues to walk with refugees despite federal roadblocks



By VICTORIA ARTHUR
Statehouse Correspondent for
Indiana's Catholic Newspapers

Catholic Charities offices in Indiana are continuing to serve hundreds of newly arrived legal refugees amid the chaos and confusion triggered by the Trump administration's abrupt halt of funding for a resettlement program the U.S. government had sponsored for decades.

Through an executive order on day one of his second term, President Donald Trump paused all federal funding for domestic and international foreign aid. A month later, the administration canceled the reception and placement contract for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which had been managed for years through the State Department with local implementation by longstanding partners including Catholic Charities offices nationwide.

"It left all resettlement agencies in the lurch," said Gabrielle Neal, service line director for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, who has been involved in refugee resettlement efforts for 16 years. "So we have had to pivot and transition quickly because we felt we had a moral and legal responsibility to continue to serve these clients

See **ICC**, page 8

Third annual Deo Gratias Society Mass and celebration

By MEGAN ERBACHER
The Message editor

More than 150 members of the Diocese of Evansville Deo Gratias Society gathered March 16 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville for Mass celebrated by Bishop Joseph M. Siegel.

The third annual event began with Mass, followed by a catered reception and brief program in St. Benedict Cathedral's Woodward Center. Diocesan Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Jeremy Goebel gave a talk during the reception.

Father Alex Zenthofer concelebrated Mass with Bishop Siegel, while Diocesan seminarians and members of the diocese's Savio Group were servers for the Mass. Transitional Deacon Nick Biever assisted and proclaimed the gospel. Diocesan Director of Worship Matt Miller served as Master of Ceremonies.

During Mass, Diocesan Director of Stewardship Joe Paul Hayden and his



The Message photo by Megan Erbacher

Bishop Joseph M. Siegel celebrates Mass March 16 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville for more than 150 members of the Diocese of Evansville Deo Gratias Society.

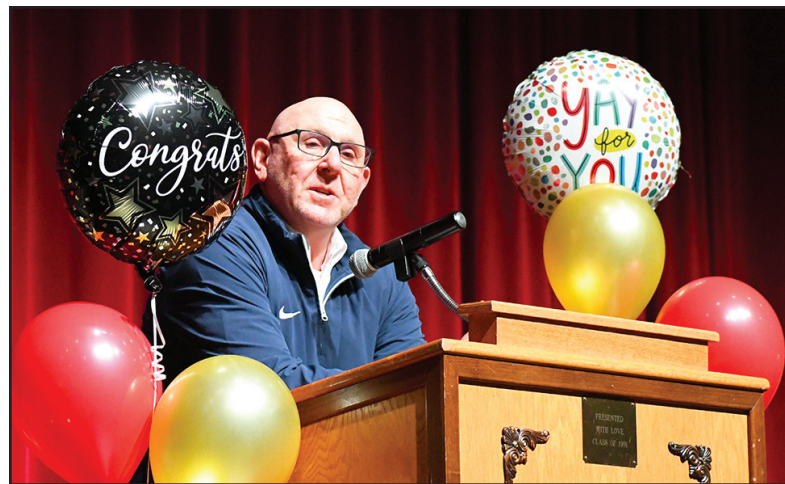
wife Ellen served as gift bearers.

The Deo Gratias Society was established in 2021 to recognize those who have financially invested in the mission of Jesus Christ in the Diocese of

Evansville. Members are those who give annual, unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more toward the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

See **MASS**, page 2

Mater Dei's Knight named Administrator of the Year



Mater Dei Principal Darin Knight speaks to students and staff during an assembly March 10 at Mater Dei High School in Evansville. Knight was recognized at the assembly for being named the Indiana Association of Student Councils Administrator of the Year.

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Mater Dei High School Principal Darin Knight was recently named Administrator of the Year by the Indiana Association of Student Councils.

A 1985 graduate of Mater Dei High School in Evansville, Knight was selected as this year's Administrator of the Year at the Indiana Association of Student Councils state convention March 7-8. He was one of several individuals honored at a March 10 assembly at Mater Dei High School.

Chase Griese, Mayor of Mater Dei, said the work Knight does at Mater Dei does not go unnoticed.

"He has also been to every event, supported every initiative and always

trusted and approved our decisions as a council," Griese said. "His dedication to our school and his belief in student leadership make a huge impact and we are incredibly grateful for him."

Knight said individual awards such as this one are really team awards. He credited the team of administrators in the office, the teachers, the team of the student council, the students and the community. The school is nothing without the students in the building, he said.

While she did not attend Mater Dei, Knight said his mother supported Catholic education. She supported Knight in becoming a teacher at Mater Dei "when she was told not to do that," Knight said.

"It's not always easy but mornings like this make it all worthwhile,"

Knight said. "And I so appreciate Mrs. (Jeanne) Thomas and Chase for nominating me. And for all those that are in the building that possibly wrote letters, that supported this endeavor . . . I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support for Mater Dei High School."

Thomas also received an honor from the IASC. She received the Pillars of Leadership Award. Griese said this is a well-deserved honor for her dedication to the program. She has led the council for 30 years, shaping countless student leaders along the way, Griese said.

"Such a well-deserved honor to be in the Hall of Fame," Knight said. "And that means she's there forever. Every year, when they go to the convention, Mrs. Jeanne Thomas will be on that

See **KNIGHT**, page 5



The Message photos by John Rohlf

Mater Dei Principal Darin Knight, right, greets Mater Dei teacher Jeanne Thomas after Thomas was recognized for receiving the Pillars of Leadership Award.