



# The MESSAGE

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## Wisdom Day celebration returns to Evansville

By MEGAN ERBACHER  
The Message editor

After a several-year hiatus, Wisdom Day returned to Evansville for the South and West Deaneries April 29, hosted by St. John the Evangelist Parish in Daylight.

About 200 faithful from across the diocese gathered for a day of fun, food and fellowship, specifically celebrating individuals aged 55 and older.

According to the event's program, Wisdom Days began in 2000 by Catholic Charities for senior citizens. The mission of Wisdom Day, as it was established, is "to honor and serve the Catholic senior citizens of the Diocese of Evansville. Through sharing and celebrating the memories, perspectives and gifts of the older generation, the lives of Catholics of all ages will be enriched. The program will further the understanding that seniors are an integral part of the successful future of the Catholic Church in Southwestern Indiana."

The day began with Mass celebrated by Father Chris Forler, pastor of St. John in Daylight.

Doug Knies, planning committee chairman and Master of Ceremonies, reported that 214 people registered for the event from five counties and at least 21 parishes.

"We want to thank you for spending your day with us," Knies said.



The Message photo by Megan Erbacher

**Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, at podium, expresses gratitude to the planning committee for reviving Wisdom Day in Evansville.**

Bishop Siegel said it was great to be with everyone at Wisdom Day back in the South and West Deaneries of the diocese. He thanked the committee for their hard work in organizing and preparing for the event and expressed gratitude to them for bringing the celebration back to the Evansville area.

In light of Pope Francis' death, Bishop Siegel spoke about his ministry and hope over the past 12 years leading the Catholic Church. As Cardinal Re said in his homily during the Requiem Mass for Pope Francis, Bishop Siegel reiterated that evange-

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## Over 70 youth honored with St. Maria Goretti Youth Distinction

By JOHN ROHLF  
The Message assistant editor

Seventy-two youth from across the Diocese of Evansville were recognized May 4 with the 2025 St. Maria Goretti Youth Distinction.

The honorees, their families and others gathered at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville for a Mass and ceremony

recognizing the 2025 recipients from 37 parishes in the diocese.

Jeremy Goebel, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Evansville, said the recipients were honored during the ceremony because people in their community see them as someone special and someone who is set apart from the others.

"What specifically sets you apart? The way that your life exudes the gospel," Goebel said. "There's something special about your life, whether it be attendance at Mass or other retreats or just the way you serve. The way you carry yourself. Your kindness, your virtue, your humility. And there's something about that that deserves to be recognized."



The Message photo by John Rohlf

**Seventy-two youth were honored with the 2025 Maria Goretti Youth Distinction.**

In his homily during the Mass, Bishop Joseph M. Siegel said St. Maria Goretti is a powerful example of reconciliation in action, as we are told that on her deathbed, she expressed forgiveness of her attacker and the hope that one day she

would see him in heaven. In this and so many ways, St. Maria Goretti is an outstanding example for young people and for this reason, the diocesan youth distinction is named for her, Bishop Siegel said.

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## Faith leaders, community members come together for National Day of Prayer

By JOHN ROHLF  
The Message assistant editor

Community members and religious leaders from throughout the Evansville area gathered at the Four Freedoms Monument on Evansville's riverfront May 1 for

the annual Interfaith Observance of the National Day of Prayer.

Diocese of Evansville Bishop Joseph M. Siegel and a dozen other faith leaders offered prayers during the annual event, which has been held on the first Thursday of

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The Message photo by John Rohlf

**Community members listen to a prayer during National Day of Prayer May 1 at Four Freedoms Monument in Evansville.**

**For a list of 2025 parish summer socials across the diocese, see page 12**