



Diocese hosts annual OCIA retreat

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Over 200 individuals gathered at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center earlier this month for the annual OCIA retreat.

There were 230 catechumens, candidates, sponsors and Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) team members in attendance Feb. 7 for the annual retreat. Joel Padgett, Director of Catechesis for the diocese, said the retreat "isn't so much focused on getting you ready for the Easter Vigil," stating they hope the OCIA teams at the parish level have been working with them for that.

"We want to focus a little bit more on what happens after the Easter Vigil," Padgett said. "Kind of when you feel like I'm going to be all on my own here."

During the retreat, there was one track in English for catechumens, can-



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel leads prayer at the start of the OCIA retreat Feb. 7 at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center.

didates and sponsors, and a separate English track for OCIA team members. There was also a Spanish track. Prior to splitting into groups, all in attendance joined together for the bilingual morning prayer, which was led by Bishop Joseph M. Siegel.

Bishop Siegel said it was a great blessing to have so many in atten-



The Message photos by John Rohlf

Catechumens, candidates and sponsors look on during the OCIA retreat.

dance for the annual retreat. He noted it was said several times how the Holy Spirit has blessed and touched the hearts of the catechumens and candidates to bring them to receive the Sacraments of Initiation or come into full communion with the Catholic Church. Bishop Siegel said it

is a blessing of our diocesan family to be with them. He looks forward to being with them again Feb. 22 at St. Benedict Cathedral for the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion, where they ceremonially and ritually welcome them in the final

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Advocates sound alarm on dangers of technology for teens

By VICTORIA ARTHUR
Statehouse Correspondent for
Indiana's Catholic Newspapers

Parents, educators and other advocates are imploring state lawmakers to put safeguards on social



media and other technology for young people amid what they call a growing crisis that threatens their well-being and their very lives.

The high-profile case of Fishers teen Hailey Buzbee, who was found dead in Ohio in January after allegedly leaving home with a man she had been communicating with online for a year, brought immediacy and urgency to a recent hearing on key legislation at the Statehouse. The 17-year-old's father was among those who addressed lawmakers on a proposed amendment to Senate Bill 199 — a wider education bill — that would place greater restrictions on social media use for children and teens, including stricter parental consent.

With his wife, Ronya, by his side, Beau Buzbee described how they are "living every parent's worst nightmare."

"From the perspective of a Hoosier family who lost our most precious gift from God, I assure you that the decisions you are considering today have the power to save children's lives," Buzbee said during a Feb. 9 hearing on the bill in the House Education Committee.

In his emotional testimony, which took place just days before

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Diocesan youth attend annual Indiana March for Life

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Diocesan youth and adult chaperones from the Diocese of Evansville joined faithful from across the state for the annual March for Life.

Over 150 diocesan youth participants joined adult chaperones at the ninth-annual March for Life Jan. 22 in Indianapolis. This year's March for Life included a pre-march rally, a march to the Capitol Building and a rally at the Capitol Building.

A Mater Dei High School senior and leadership team member for Mater Dei Students for Life, Ashlyn Sexton chose to attend the March for Life for the second time not only to join an important movement but also get involved in her community and be a voice for the voiceless.

She added there is a sense of unity that comes with the March for Life.

"The moment you realize you are surrounded by hundreds of adults and teens who share your viewpoint on such an important topic is when you really feel it," she said. Also a Mater Dei senior



Submitted photo

A group from Washington Catholic participates in the March for Life Jan. 22 in Indianapolis.

and a leadership team member for Mater Dei Students for Life, Natalie Bonham said through attending the event multiple times, she feels less alone in her beliefs. She noted social media and a lot of pop culture celebri-

ties would want you to think you are alone and nobody else is with you in the pro-life cause.

"There's a lot of community out there and a lot of force for this," Bonham said.

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