The MESSAGE

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Becoming One WITH CHRIST

Encounter + Deepen + Engage

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Special supplement inside: Catholic Ministries Appeal

To learn more about how the Catholic Ministries Appeal serves more than 70,000 Catholics across the Diocese of Evansville, *look for a special supplement on the appeal, which begins on page 9.*

Pope sets Jubilee to mark 800th year since St. Francis' death; saint's body displayed

By JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
OSV News

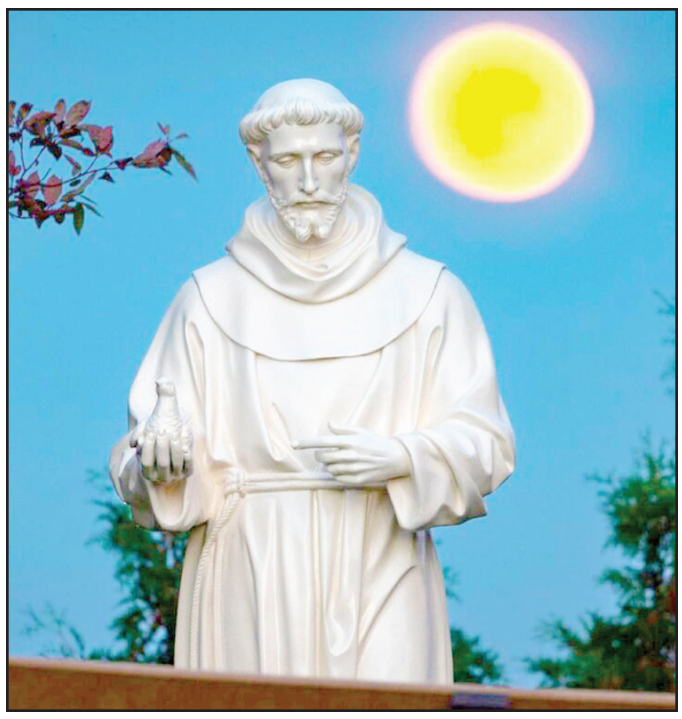
Editor's note: *Bishop Joseph M. Siegel has designated St. Joseph Church of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Dale a pilgrimage church, effective Sept. 26, 2026, (the beginning of the novena leading to the Feast of St. Francis) and continuing to the end of the Franciscan Jubilee Year on Jan. 10, 2027. During this time, pilgrims to St. Joseph Church may receive the Plenary Indulgence granted by Pope Leo XIV, under the conditions laid out by the Apostolic Penitentiary, "under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father), which can also be applied in the form of suffrage for the souls in Purgatory." For details on a Novena in Honor of St. Francis, check page 14.*

(OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a special Jubilee Year coinciding with the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience, issued a decree published by the Franciscan Friars Jan. 10, declaring a yearlong celebration in honor of the Poverello, or the Little Poor One.

According to the decree, Pope Leo has established that from Jan. 10, following the closing of the church's Jubilee Year, until Jan. 10, 2027, a special Year of St. Francis may be proclaimed, in which every Christian, "following the example of the Saint of Assisi, may himself become a model of holi-

*See **JUBILEE**, page 14*



OSV News photo/Sam Lucero, CNS

A hunter's moon rises behind a statue of St. Francis of Assisi on the grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in Champion, Wisconsin, Oct. 8, 2022.

'God's providence for me and my family was made clear'

The Message photo by Megan Erbacher

Deacon Pedro Mendez, *left*, places his joined hands between the hands of Bishop Siegel during the Rite of Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacon Aug. 8 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville.

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Deacon Pedro Mendez, who previously attended seminary in Oklahoma, believes his priestly formation in seminary was "part of the permanent diaconate calling."

Deacon Mendez, who is originally from Honduras, is one of 16 men who were ordained to the permanent diaconate Aug. 8 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. Deacon Mendez said he grew up as a Catholic in western Honduras.

Deacon Mendez said he came to the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he was a seminarian for the priesthood in that diocese.

"After pausing my priestly formation, I started dating the woman that now is my wife," Deacon Mendez said. "My wife is from Evansville. So as things got serious, as we started dating and then being engaged and then having plans for our wedding, I moved to Evansville."

Deacon Mendez, who is assigned to St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, currently serves as the Executive Director of Mission Integration for Deaconess Memorial Medical Center in Jasper.

He said in his case, having priestly formation "is so foundational."

"When we put that holistic perspective in a permanent diaconate formation, it's just amazing," Deacon Mendez said. "Everything comes together in one place. I have learned to see the church in a more holistic way. And therefore to be prepared to see the needs of the people. To have the spirit of discernment, to have that interior attitude for the mission."

Deacon Mendez said when he decided to pause his priestly formation, there was no doubt in his heart that permanent diaconate was something

*See **DEACON**, page 15*

100 Years: World Mission Sunday is Oct. 18

Special to The Message

World Mission Sunday was established by Pope Pius XI in 1926. This year, it will take place on Sunday, Oct. 18, and it will focus on the theme, "One in Christ, united in mission." It is a time for us to prayerfully and financially support work in the Mission Field. In 2026, World Mission Sunday will mark 100 years of solidarity across the globe. It is not about specific people or places. Rather, it is about taking a moment out of our busy lives to look outward and think of others, claiming a share of responsibility for the care of our brothers and sisters across the globe.

At its core, World Mission Sunday is rooted in the understanding that the Church is missionary by its very nature. The celebration highlights the interconnectedness of the global Catholic community, emphasizing that faith is not a private possession but a gift meant to be shared.

World Mission Sunday donations are collected through the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the funds are distributed universally based on equi-

*See **MISSION**, page 14*