



The

Criterion

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December 20, 2002

Vol. XXXXII, No. 12 50¢



THE INCARNATION

Then He summoned an archangel,
 Saint Gabriel: and when he came,
 Sent him forth to find a maiden,
 Mary was her name.

Only through her consenting love
 Could the mystery be preferred
 That the Trinity in human
 Flesh might clothe the Word.

Though the three Persons worked
 the wonder
 It only happened in the One.
 So was the Word made incarnation
 In Mary's womb, a son.

So He who only had a Father
 Now had a Mother undefiled,
 Though not as ordinary maids
 Had she conceived the Child.

By Mary, and with her own flesh
 He was clothed in His own frame:
 Both Son of God and Son of Man
 Together had one name.

— Saint John of the Cross

ABOUT THE COVER

Mary and the child Jesus appear in the center panel of a triptych attributed to 15th-century Italian monk and painter Fra Angelico. The artwork is a holding of the Uffizi in Florence, Italy. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the Incarnation of the Divine Word at the birth of Christ.

CNS photo courtesy Art Resource

THE WORD
 BECAME FLESH

Cardinal's resignation follows year of growing scandal

BOSTON (CNS)—Cardinal Bernard F. Law's resignation as archbishop of Boston on Dec. 13 came at the end of a year in which the burgeoning clergy sex abuse scandal practically paralyzed his archdiocese and exploded into a national crisis that consumed the energies of Church leaders across the country.

He was the first cardinal in the world to resign his post because of a failure to protect children from sexually abusive priests under his charge.

Cardinal Law, 71, had led the Boston Archdiocese since 1984. As a cardinal since 1985, he was the top-ranking member of the U.S. hierarchy. Harvard-educated, he had been a priest of the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson (now Jackson), Miss., from 1961-73, and bishop of Springfield-

Cape Girardeau, Mo., from 1973-84.

In a brief statement from the Vatican, he said he hoped his resignation would help the archdiocese "experience the healing, reconciliation and unity which are so desperately needed."

"To all those who have suffered from my shortcomings and mistakes, I both apologize and from them beg forgiveness," he said.

His departure was announced less than an hour after he met privately with Pope John Paul II at the end of a weeklong unannounced visit to the Vatican.

The pope named Boston Auxiliary Bishop Richard G. Lennon as apostolic administrator, or interim head, of the archdiocese until a new archbishop is named. Bishop Lennon, 55, has been a

priest of the archdiocese since 1973 and a bishop since Sept. 24, 2001.

He was rector of St. John's Seminary in Brighton and regional bishop for the western part of the archdiocese at the time of his new appointment. He said he would resign those posts "to devote myself to the administrative and spiritual leadership of the archdiocese."

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, "In nearly 30 years as a bishop, Cardinal Law has made many contributions to the bishops' conference." He offered prayers for the cardinal, Bishop Lennon and the archdiocese.

Barbara Blaine, president of the Survivors' Network of those Abused by

Priests, said the healing process "will be long and torturous" and warned that more painful disclosures still lie ahead on the "rocky road to recovery."

She said the resigned cardinal "is, in some respects, merely a symptom and a symbol of a much more pervasive and deep-seated clerical culture that devalues both adult and child parishioners."

Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul-Minneapolis, chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse, called the resignation another step toward "healing from this tragic chapter" in the Church's history.

In the days preceding Cardinal Law's trip to Rome and resignation, almost daily events converged to seal his fate.

See RESIGN, page 9

Cathedral Nativity set has a rich history

By Brandon A. Evans

About 80 years ago a man who would become a cardinal purchased a Nativity set on a visit to the Eternal City.

It was the 1920s, and the rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, a priest by the name of Joseph Ritter, accompanied then-Bishop Joseph Chartrand on a quadrennial visit to the Vatican.

At some point during that visit, the priest purchased a Nativity set and brought it back to the United States.

The crèche, said Joseph Vitale, a member of Cathedral Parish and a tour guide there, could have been made in Germany or Italy, though he strongly favors the latter because of the style and the clothes that the three kings and the shepherds are wearing.

"Studying it is an extremely valuable thing," he said. "I love antique things ... and I've seen a lot of Nativity sets in Europe."

"It's such a beautiful piece of art and it evokes so many feelings of faith [and] memories," said Father Richard Ginther, pastor of Cathedral Parish.

One of the features of the Nativity set, besides the enormity of it, is its realism.

The pieces are designed not only in varying sizes to create an effect of depth, but also come together to create an image of the Nativity that strives for a more accurate portrayal than most.

Piety is not exaggerated, Vitale said. The donkeys are not singing, nor are the sheep gazing lovingly at Jesus. The people assume normal poses, and even the original angel looked like a normal woman—except, of course, with wings.

"Even the animals do what critters do best," he said. They look around with curiosity and contentment."

The background is a huge oil painting with a properly placed light behind it to create the illusion of an unusually bright comet in the sky.



The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph care for their infant, Jesus, in a stable built beside a "stone" wall in the Nativity set at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The crèche was purchased in the 1920s by then-Father Joseph Ritter, who later was appointed Cardinal-Archbishop of St. Louis.

There are rocks and a crude-looking stable, and animals grazing in the general area.

Perhaps most surprising—at least for the time that the set was purchased—is that most of the figures are people of varying ethnicity.

"I think it took guts to display this thing," Vitale said. The black people in it are authentic, he said, and not just white people painted black.

For the past 10 years, the set has gone up piece by piece over the anticipatory season of Advent, ending, of course, with the addition of the baby Jesus on Christmas Eve.

"In the early days when they first got it, one family took responsibility for putting it [all] up on Christmas Eve day," Vitale said.

He suspects that the set was viewed as a complete work of art—either all of it was

up or none of it was up.

Pastors have come and gone at the Cathedral, but the crèche has remained.

The man who bought the ethnic Nativity set went on to become the first archbishop of Indianapolis, then the archbishop of St. Louis. In both dioceses, he raged against the scourge of racism and fought segregation.

In time, Joseph Ritter, a native Indiana, priest and bishop, would receive the red hat from Pope John XXIII and participate in the Second Vatican Council.

Meanwhile, the crèche continued to be visited by rural Indiana families who were spending a day in the capital city to see the Christmas decorations and visit churches.

Vitale said his first encounter with the

See CRÈCHE, page 9

Vatican grants formal approval to U.S. bishops' revised sex abuse norms

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican has approved the U.S. bishops' revised norms for dealing with clerical sex abuse, saying it is "fully supportive of the bishops' efforts to combat and prevent such evil."

The formal *recognitio* or decree of recognition, which was widely expected, was signed on Dec. 8 by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, making the norms binding on all U.S. bishops and dioceses.

The decree, released on Dec. 16 at the Vatican, was accompanied by a letter from Cardinal Re to Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Cardinal Re said it was essential that the Church "punish in a just way those who are guilty of such abominable offenses" and that it give special care to the victims of abuse and their families.

The U.S. bishops, he said, also must "devote every available resource to restoring the public image of the Catholic priesthood as a worthy and noble vocation of generous and often sacrificial service to the people of God."

In June, the bishops' conference adopted a child protection charter and the legal norms, pledging to remove permanently from ministry any priest or deacon who had ever sexually abused a child.

After concerns were raised by the Vatican, a special commission of Vatican officials and U.S. bishops met in October, putting the legislative norms into greater conformity with general Church law and stipulating that trials by Church tribunals are the ordinary way to permanently remove priests who have sexually abused children.

The U.S. bishops adopted the revised norms in November, and the Vatican approval makes them binding on all dioceses in the United States, including those of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and on members of religious orders.

Cardinal Re asked Bishop Gregory to have representatives of the bishops' conference continue meeting with representatives of the Congregation of Major

See NORMS, page 9

The Criterion

12/20/02

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.
 Box 1717
 Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717
 317-236-1570
 800-382-9836 ext. 1570
 criterion@archindy.org

Periodical Postage Paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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POSTMASTER:
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 1400 N. Meridian St.
 Box 1717
 Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Official Appointments

Effective Jan. 2, 2003

Rev. W. Joseph Brown, associate pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, New Albany, and St. John the Baptist Parish, Starlight, granted a leave absence.

Effective Jan. 22, 2003

Rev. Joseph B. Moriarty appointed sacramental minister, Good Shepherd Parish, Indianapolis, while continuing as vocations director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Rev. Martin A. Peter, currently on sabbatical, appointed associate pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington.

These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Archbishop of Indianapolis.

The Criterion's last issue until Jan. 10

This week's *Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement, is the last issue of 2002. *The Criterion* will be published again on Jan. 10, and will resume its regular weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 21 through Jan. 1. †

\$10 million Lilly grant will give schools a boost

Archdiocese raises \$6.2 million in matching funds for Project EXCEED programs

By Brandon A. Evans

This past Nov. 25 is a date that Joseph Therber, the secretary for stewardship and development, remembers clearly.

It was the date the Archdiocese of Indianapolis deposited a check for \$10 million from the Lilly Endowment.

The money was part of an educational grant that would only be awarded if the archdiocese could raise \$5 million in matching funds for its Project EXCEED.

The goals of the project are curriculum changes, better technology and new programs that will help students and teachers.

Not only did the money get raised, but even more than the minimum needed was donated: a total of about \$6.2 million.

Jerry D. Semler, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and chairman of the capital campaign for Project EXCEED, said that the money was raised as the second phase of the Building Communities of Hope campaign.

Therber said the money came mostly from corporate- and foundation- based sources, "and the reason for that is their vested interest in work force development and community development."

Not all of the money came from private sources, though. Some individuals, like Rick Pflieger, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, gave substantial amounts of money in order to help the archdiocese become eligible for the \$10 million from Lilly Endowment Inc.

"The challenge grant ... means a great deal to the archdiocese," said Annette "Mickey" Lentz, secretary for Catholic Education and Faith Formation.

"We are immensely grateful to every individual and organization that has invested in our vision," said Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein. "Truly, the advancements we are seeing are made possible by partnerships with caring and compassionate leaders in our community, people who continually display unprecedented degrees of concern and

commitment to all children."

Without the grant, Therber said, Project EXCEED would still have happened, just not as fast and as thoroughly.

"The [Lilly] endowment's gifts allowed us to take the dream into reality much quicker than otherwise," he said.

"We can give assistance to schools like never before," Lentz said. "We have done much with little. Now even the best can get better."

Pflieger, who helps advise the archdiocese on technology enhancements, said that he is grateful to the Lilly Endowment's generosity to the private institutions of Marion County.

"Many, if not most, of these recipients would not have been able to implement the many 'innovative and additive' programs that this grant enables," Pflieger said. "I am excited because this program stretches the dollars of all who contributed to the archdiocesan campaign for Project EXCEED."

Pflieger is working to help many Indianapolis center-city Catholic schools be the first to be updated with new computer technology.

From start to finish, it only takes a few months to update the school, and already around six or seven schools have been brought into the 21st century.

Kim Shurig, also a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish and the coordinator for the school's implementation of this new technology, said that each school is being networked with servers, given laser printers and IBM workstations, and has up to three computers with educational software in each classroom.

"These are kids who are potential future leaders in their communities," Pflieger said, "and I believe it is essential that they are exposed to and master the use of technology."

Using the grant money, he said that "we are going to enable and equip many generations of Catholic school children to successfully compete in all facets of an

ever-changing, ever-challenging world in which technology will be a large and important factor."

Project EXCEED also will work to provide parents with the chance to see their children's grades online at www.archindy.org, and work to review each school's curriculum to make sure that it is in line with state standards.

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), another arm of the project, will reward teachers with extra performance-based income by allowing them to apply to become a master or mentor teacher.

Other goals include better addressing the needs of students with mental or physical disabilities and the needs of special populations, such as the influx of Hispanic students that do not speak English.

"The results of professional development will impact [students'] learning," Lentz said.

"We know that quality education contributes to the work force and community development," Therber said.

Because this is part of the reason why corporations and foundations were so willing to help Project EXCEED, and because the money will go to help many schools where non-Catholic students make up a large percentage, Therber said that the project reaches across the lines of religion—which makes it truly a community endeavor.

"We're grateful for people seeing us as a community asset that's worthy of their investment and their participation," he said.

Lentz said that Project EXCEED further shows the devotion of Archbishop Buechlein to education.

"The archbishop has been committed to all our schools since his arrival to the archdiocese 10 years ago," she said.

"Project EXCEED only solidifies the archbishop's commitment, because the challenge came at a time when raising the

\$5 million match would be difficult.

"He committed much of his time and certainly his talent to this challenge," she continued. "Once again, the archbishop has challenged us to move the mission of Catholic education and faith formation to a new height."

"I think he'll go down in history ... as our educational archbishop," Semler said.

Pflieger said that the updating of the schools is going well. It is based on a successful program that his own parish instituted first—a project that won them an award for being one of the best Catholic grade schools in the country for integration of technology.

Like Therber and Semler, Pflieger said he also wishes to see Project EXCEED expand outside of Marion County and into the rest of the archdiocese as the Building Communities of Hope campaign continues into 2003.

While the works of Project EXCEED are on a five-year timeline within Marion County as stipulated by the endowment, Therber said that all hopes are for the project to expand to the other schools of the archdiocese on a timeline that intersects and surpasses that five-year span.

"We are already having an impact on those students in other parts of the diocese," Lentz said. "It is, for now, more indirect in its delivery, however, there is a definite plan in place to sustain and replicate these plans for all of our schools."

What Project EXCEED and the grant money comes down to is the goal of the archdiocese to better prepare the children it educates for the modern world.

"[The grant] allows us to put in place innovative programs that will help our children succeed," Therber said.

As Lentz said, all students across the board will benefit from the project.

"No child will be left behind," she said. †

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Editorial

Bethlehem in 2002

Luke's Gospel tells us that Joseph and Mary could find no room in the inn when they traveled to Bethlehem. Today, there are few inns left in the town of Jesus' birth. They have had to close because of the lack of pilgrims.

The 10,000 Christians who live in Bethlehem are suffering this year. Most of them have worked in the hospitality industry, caring for pilgrims, or in the manufacture and sale of souvenirs such as homemade olive wood manger sets. The hostilities in Bethlehem this year have frightened pilgrims away and income from these related businesses has dried up.

Two months ago, Franciscan Father Peter Vasco, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, was in Indianapolis. He said that we would not recognize Bethlehem today. Israeli tanks tore up the roads between Rachel's Tomb and the Church of the Nativity, and many of the buildings along that route have been heavily damaged.

E-mail messages from Christian Palestinians in Bethlehem have described the fear they felt while trapped in their homes because Israeli troops occupied the city. Curfews enforced by the Israelis allowed the Palestinians to leave their homes for only an hour or so every few days to try to buy food. But, of course, the Palestinian stores seldom had food.

This year's 39-day siege of the Basilica of the Nativity, Christendom's oldest church, built over the place where Jesus was born, was a great tragedy. The 257 people trapped in the compound from April 2 to May 10, including 208 Palestinians who sought sanctuary, couldn't show themselves without being shot at by Israeli soldiers.

Besides the church itself, the compound included the Franciscan friary and convent, St. Catherine Church (the Catholic church where midnight Mass is held each Christmas), the Casa Nova pilgrim hospice, and monasteries for monks from the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Churches.

The Franciscans cared for those confined in the basilica as well as they could, but that proved difficult after the Israelis cut off electricity and water. The Israeli troops also shot firebombs into the parish offices and other parts of the

compound, causing considerable damage. Needless to say, the church was a mess when the siege was finally ended.

The Franciscans insist that they never considered themselves to be hostages. An Armenian Orthodox monk held up a sign that said, "Help me," and the media tried to portray that as a sign that he was being held against his will. It turned out that he was a diabetic who desperately needed insulin. The Israeli military provided it to him.

It is imperative that we find a way to find peace in the Holy Land. During the past 27 months, nearly 2,000 Palestinians and 700 Israelis have been killed. Both Palestinians and Israelis live in constant fear. At the moment, the Muslim extremists seem to be winning because their objective is to prevent peace until Israel is destroyed. They don't care that Israel retaliates each time a suicide bomber succeeds in killing Israelis because each retaliation provokes another in a seemingly endless cycle.

It's encouraging that polls indicate that most Palestinians want their security forces to crack down on the militants who are attacking Israel. Somehow the moderate Palestinians must confront the extremists in their midst and say, "Enough is enough." That's much easier to say than to do, though, because the extremists execute those they believe are "collaborating with the Israelis."

A U.S.-backed plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the works, but it won't be publicized until after the elections in Israel next month. At this time, it appears that the conservative Likud Party will again defeat the more liberal Labor Party because the Israeli people believe that Likud is more willing to fight back against the militant Palestinians. If so, that would be another victory for the Muslim extremists.

This Christmas, let us pray more earnestly for peace in the Holy Land, including in Bethlehem. Pope John Paul II has entrusted prayers for peace there to the intercession of Blessed John XXIII. Let us, therefore, pray, "Blessed John XXIII, please intercede for us to achieve peace in the land of Jesus' birth."

— John F. Fink

Seeking the Face of the Lord

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



What the Nativity scene teaches us

He came in the stillness of the night. The Word of God was made flesh in utter simplicity; the light of the world slipped into our life like a secret of the night. The one who would be called the Prince of Peace was born in a small country in a faraway place, not in Rome or some other center of power.

The simplicity of the Christmas crib scenario captures our fancy. Do you ever wonder why we romanticize a barnyard scene that surely was not an ideal place for a child to be born? I think I know why.

All we need to do is look at a Christmas crib scene for a little while in order to realize that Christmas belongs to everybody. We like that. For one brief moment, Christmas brings everybody together.

Look who's there! Working shepherds represent the poor of the world. That already captures all of us because in one way or another we are all poor—whether spiritually, physically, morally, emotionally or financially.

The three Wise Men from the Orient represent the curious, the learned, the rich and the worldly powerful. That could be all of us too because we are all blessed with unique personal gifts.

Singing angels from God signal that this gathering at an animal stable is no ordinary scene. Yet it is a family scene—new parents are there and a new little baby is at the center of it all. We are all there somehow. And let's not forget the animals. After all, the setting is a barnyard stable, probably a cave near Bethlehem.

Dumb animals, beasts that carry people's burdens, give witness to a scene that was surely both common and uncommon to them as well. Even in those days, not many children were born in a stable.

Was this birth in an animal shelter simply an accident because Joseph might have forgotten to make reservations at an inn in Bethlehem? Did this happen because of poor planning? If so, isn't it like so many chance happenings in our own lives? God's mysterious workings often seem to happen "by accident"!

The Christmas crib scene lets most of our world stop for a brief moment and brings many of us together, but it does so much more. The simplicity of the animal stable masks a rich teaching, which

should be no surprise. After all, the new baby at the center of it all is the Divine Word made flesh. Jesus is God's revelation of himself to us.

The crib scene is a teaching scene, a classroom; it is a revelation. Somebody once called that animal stable Christ's cathedral. The manger was his first "cathedral"—his first teaching chair. No, I don't believe any detail of that Nativity scene is an accident.

What does the birth of the Word Incarnate tell us about God? God loves the poor. God loves the curious and the seeker. God loves the gifted. God loves simplicity. God loves the animals and God understands the burdens we carry, sometimes even like beasts of burden.

God can and does work through the reversals—"the accidents" of life—like forgetting to make reservations at the inn. God understands the pain in our lives. Like us, God's Son was born into the unfairness of life's suffering. God meets us in suffering in a special way and in any circumstance, for example in an animal shelter on a cold winter night.

Maybe we romanticize the crib scene because it would be too overwhelming for us to grasp the wonder that God could be so loving in the awkward surroundings of our own cluttered world. Do you think that, perhaps, God gave us the poetic flourish of singing angels on that cold winter night so that we could believe his grand drama of barnyard simplicity?

Pope John Paul II tells us that at "the school of Mary" we learn Jesus. The carpenter Joseph was the provider and protector of that school. In such simplicity, God came to earth to tell us that he is always with all of us.

Can we dig deep enough for the faith and the humility to learn in that school? After all, we are all there in that barnyard stable. God came into our world for everybody and the greatest message of all is that we are all equal as we kneel before the manger—Christ's first teaching chair. Indeed, let's reach for the humility to kneel before the manger of Jesus with hearts full of grateful love.

As I kneel before the crib this Christmas, I pray that you may find peace of mind and heart and soul before Christ's first teaching chair.

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year! †

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for December

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Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



Qué nos enseña la escena del Nacimiento

Legó en la quietud de la noche. La Palabra de Dios se hizo carne con sencillez absoluta; la luz del mundo entró en nuestras vidas como un secreto de la noche. Aquel que se llamaría el Príncipe de la Paz nació en una pequeña nación en un lugar lejano, no en Roma u otro centro de poder.

La sencillez de la escena del pesebre de Navidad nos cautiva. ¿Alguna vez se ha preguntado por qué romantizamos una escena en un establo que, con toda seguridad, no es el lugar ideal para que un niño nazca? Yo creo saber por qué.

Lo único que debemos hacer es detenernos a contemplar por un momento la escena del pesebre del nacimiento para darnos cuenta de que la Navidad nos pertenece a todos. Eso nos gusta. Por un instante, la Navidad nos reúne a todos.

¡Miren quiénes están allí! Pastores laboriosos que representan a los pobres del mundo. Esto ya nos cautiva porque de una forma u otra todos somos pobres: bien sea espiritual, física, moral, emocional o financieramente.

Los Tres Reyes Magos de Oriente representan a los curiosos, los instruidos, los ricos y poderosos del mundo. También podríamos ser nosotros porque todos hemos sido agraciados con dones personales únicos.

Los ángeles de Dios cantando indican que esta reunión en un establo no es una escena común. Y al mismo tiempo es una escena familiar; hay unos padres nuevos; un pequeño bebé está en el centro. De alguna manera todos estamos allí. Y no olvidemos a los animales. Después de todo, el escenario es un establo, probablemente una cueva cerca de Belén.

Animales torpes, bestias que transportan la carga de la gente son testigos de una escena que de seguro fue común e inusual a la vez. Aun en aquellos días no muchos niños nacían en un establo.

¿Acaso fue este nacimiento en una madriguera de animales un accidente porque tal vez a José se le olvidó hacer reservaciones en una posada en Belén? ¿Acaso esto ocurrió por falta de previsión? Si así fuera, ¿no sería esto como muchas otras cosas casuales en nuestras vidas? Con frecuencia, ¡las obras misteriosas de Dios parecieran ocurrir "por accidente"!

La escena del pesebre de Navidad hace que la mayor parte del mundo se detenga por un instante y nos reúne a todos; pero hace aun más. La sencillez del establo guarda una enseñanza muy rica que no nos debería sorprender. Después de todo, el recién nacido que se encuentra en el centro es la Palabra de Dios hecha carne. Jesús es la revelación del propio Dios ante nosotros.

El pesebre del nacimiento es una escena de enseñanza, un aula de clases; es una revelación. Alguien alguna vez llamó a ese establo la Catedral de Cristo. El pesebre fue su primer púlpito: su primera cátedra de enseñanza. No, yo no creo que ningún detalle de la escena de la Navidad sea una casualidad.

¿Qué nos dice acerca de Dios el nacimiento del verbo hecho carne? Dios ama a los pobres. Dios ama a los curiosos y a aquellos que buscan. Dios ama a aquellas personas con dones especiales. Dios ama la sencillez. Dios ama a los animales y Dios comprende las cargas que llevamos, a veces incluso como bestias de carga.

Dios puede y obra a través de los reveses, "los accidentes" de la vida, como haberse olvidado de hacer reservaciones en la posada. Dios entiende el dolor en nuestras vidas. Al igual que nosotros, el Hijo de Dios nació en la injusticia del sufrimiento de la vida. Encontramos a Dios en el sufrimiento de manera especial y en cualquier circunstancia, como por ejemplo en una madriguera de animales o en una fría noche de invierno.

Tal vez romantizamos la escena del pesebre porque sería demasiado abrumador para nosotros captar la maravilla de que Dios pueda ser tan amoroso en circunstancias tan extrañas en nuestro mundo tan saturado.

¿Piensa usted que, tal vez Dios nos hizo un ademán poético al enviar ángeles cantando en una fría noche de invierno para que creyéramos en su gran teatro de sencillez del establo?

El Papa Juan Pablo II nos dice que en "la escuela de María" aprendemos de Jesús. El carpintero José fue el proveedor y protector de esa escuela. Con tal sencillez vino Dios al mundo para decirnos que Él siempre está allí para nosotros.

¿Podemos hurgar tan profundo en nuestra fe y humildad como para aprender en esa escuela? Después de todo, estamos presentes en ese establo. Dios vino al mundo por todos nosotros y el mensaje más importante es que todos somos iguales cuando nos arrodillamos delante del pesebre, el primer asiento de enseñanza de Cristo. De hecho, procuremos la humildad para arrodillarnos frente al pesebre de Jesús con el corazón lleno de amor.

Al arrodillarme frente al pesebre en estas Navidades, oro porque encuentren tranquilidad y paz en sus corazones delante de la primera cátedra de enseñanza de Cristo.

¡Feliz Navidad y bienaventurado año nuevo!

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

Escuelas primarias católicas: que ellos puedan enseñar la fe católica a nuestros niños y puedan ayudarles a oír y contestar la llamada de Dios para servir en la Iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes o religiosos.

Letters to the Editor

Don't blame Vatican II for problems

In the Dec. 13, 2002, edition of *The Criterion*, Paul J. Frey makes the classic mistake of equating correlation with causation. He alleges that James Davidson's data makes the case that the Second Vatican Council caused changes for the worse in young Catholics' faith lives. Professor Davidson's data show a correlation between the post-Vatican II era and perhaps a less fervent faith, but Davidson does not allege that Vatican II caused the lapse in practicing Catholics.

More disconcerting is that some persons do argue that the Council is at the root of the Church's problems. Davidson found that younger Catholics tend to "follow their own consciences in matter of faith or morals." However, the Second Vatican Council documents do not allow or encourage willy-nilly decision-making in such matters. A decline in adherence to Church teachings may have occurred because following the Second Vatican Council, some theologians—without reading the text of the Council's documents—stated that the Council's "spirit" allowed or encouraged Catholics to make their own decisions regarding faith and morals.

While a person has an obligation to follow his conscience in matters of faith and morals, he must have a well-formed conscience (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1783). In forming our consciences, we are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and guided by the Catholic Church's teachings (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1785). Moreover, our conscience may remain ignorant because of our disobedience to God or because of sloth, causing us to make erroneous decisions (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1801). The Council documents are foundational essays for the catechism and cleave to Catholic orthodoxy.

Great councils at times take centuries to succeed. Even after the Council of Nicea in the fifth century, many in Western Europe were wedded to the heresy of Arianism, which denied Jesus' divinity, for more than 100 years. The Second Vatican Council is a fairly recent event in Church history, and I am sure it will bear fruit in years to come.

Carlos F. Lam, Indianapolis

Pray for peace

I think everyone would tend to agree that our world is in a mess. Even at this time, when we are awaiting the day to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, there is really no peace in the world. There is no peace at the highest levels between nations or groups within nations. There are snipers shooting and killing people totally unknown to them, miscellaneous other unnecessary killings and even family members killing one another.

Nations are spending millions of dollars (actually billions) to prepare to fight wars or to try and protect themselves from others. This is money that could be used for so many useful purposes, such as sharing to feed the poor and disadvantaged. If we could simply strive to understand one another and somehow develop a trust for one another, what a wonderful world this would be to live in.

This does not seem to be a realistic goal if these efforts are left to man alone. We simply need to go to a higher power. Miracles can happen. People can be converted to peace. We should bear in mind what Jesus did with Saul when he was persecuting the Christians. Nothing is impossible with God. It happened in the case of Saul (St. Paul) and it can happen again.

We should all make a concerted effort to pray for all those in positions of power, such as our president and all

government leaders throughout the world. We should pray that the Holy Spirit will reach out and touch their hearts and minds, and lead them to govern with compassion, love, justice and peace.

W. L. O'Bryan, New Albany

We need more discipline

In the wake of the terrible scandals that have been exposed in the American Church over the past year, I believe that it is very important for the bishops of the United States to take decisive action to restore discipline to both the clergy and the laity.

While at first it may be unpopular to do so, it would seem that the first and best way to begin the process of developing a sense of discipline and responsibility would be to re-introduce the Friday abstinence as obligatory throughout the year, encourage fasting throughout Lent, and make all 10 solemnities celebrated by the Church holy days of obligation, while eliminating the confusing rules about when a holy day is obligatory or not and not moving the solemnities to Sundays.

The American bishops have, over the years, discouraged the faithful from taking up any cross by releasing the faithful from obligations outside attendance at Sunday Mass. While we all should desire to do more for Christ than is required under pain of sin, it is a fact of human nature that many people need a little push and may be willing to do more when more is expected of them. It seems to me that as the faithful have become more and more relaxed in the practice of the faith, the priests have (as they come from the community of the faithful) likewise become lax and unwilling to live lives as servants of Jesus Christ.

Daniel A. Peck, Greenfield

Don't play to stereotypes

I was surprised and disappointed to read that the Vatican is considering the exclusion of gays in the priesthood in light of clerical sexual abuse in the world and in the United States in particular. I was surprised because women, children and men have all been victims of clerical abuse.

Many studies have shown gays and lesbians are no more likely to abuse adults or children than heterosexuals. The Vatican and other officials are simply playing to stereotypes.

To be consistent, the Vatican should be exploring the possibility of banning both heterosexuals and homosexuals if it is going to treat both orientations fairly and eliminate the possibility of women, children and men possibly being abused. This position is equally preposterous as in the position of focusing solely on banning homosexuals.

As the problems in Boston and elsewhere have shown, sexual abuse has been a problem within the Church for many years. The Church should stop the individual abusers rather than play to incorrect and mistaken stereotypes.

Michael Laudick, Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). Frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld. †

Check It Out . . .

The archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education is searching for **new members for the Archdiocesan Education Commission**. If you are interested in serving on the commission or would like more information, call Marcia DiGiusto at 317-236-1431 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1431.

St. Anthony Parish, 379 N. Warman Ave., in Indianapolis, will offer **two Masses on Christmas Eve**. The anticipation Mass will begin at 4 p.m. and the traditional "midnight Mass" will begin at 10 p.m. On Christmas Day, there will be Masses at 7:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. and a Spanish Mass at 9 a.m. For more information, call the parish office at 317-636-4828.

In January, the new **St. Vincent Children's Hospital** will open, marking another milestone in St. Vincent Hospital's ongoing commitment to expand their services to children and their families. The new children's hospital is located near St. Vincent Hospital at 86th Street and Harcourt Road. There will be a Community Health and Safety Fair for families from noon to 5 p.m. on Jan. 12. For more information, call Kristi Barber at 317-338-3846.

St. Malachy Parish, 326 N. Green St., in Brownsburg, will conduct an ongoing series called **Catholics Returning Home** on six consecutive Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. starting on Jan. 8. The sessions are for non-practicing Catholics who are seeking answers to questions about returning to the Church. There will be informal sharing and an update of the Catholic faith. For more information, call 317-858-8422.

The Providence Center, along with Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and the Sisters of Providence, are hosting **"Rejuvenating Mind, Body and Spirit"** at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 9. The event, held in the Reilly Auditorium of Owens Hall, will include a wine and cheese social, dinner and a special presentation by Providence Sister Barbara Doherty, former president of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. During her presentation, "Get a Life," Sister Barbara will

Awards . . .

St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers recently honored three women with the 2002 Spirit of Women Award. **Lisa Ann Miller** of Indianapolis won in the youth category. Miller is an after-school tutor to inner-city youth and a daytime helper in an elementary classroom. **Andrea Marshall** of Indianapolis won in the community category. **Dr. Mercy Obeime**, a member of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis, won in the health care provider category. Obeime is the medical director for the St. Francis Neighborhood Health Center at Garfield Park, which, under her leadership, now provides treatment regardless of a patient's ability to pay. †

discuss her views on women's spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and social needs in life. Tickets are \$25 per person and must be purchased by Dec. 20. For more information or for tickets, call 812-535-5225 or 812-535-5110, or e-mail jornduff@smwc.edu or mswick@smwc.edu.

"Psalms," a sacred dance group, is performing "Reflections," a program of Scripture and dancing, at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 21 at St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, in Indianapolis. The Advent program is designed as an evening of reflection in preparation for Christmas. Donations will be accepted. For more information, call the parish office at 317-253-2193.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, 1530 Union St., in Indianapolis, will present a **live nativity scene** at the corner of South Meridian and Morris streets on the evenings of Dec. 20-21. All are welcome. Hot chocolate, cookies and Christmas music will be offered between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. For more information, call the parish at 317-638-5551.

Members of the **Catholic Charismatic Renewal** will gather for a New Year's Eve Mass at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis. Jesuit Father Joseph Folzenlogen, evangelization coordinator, will preside at the liturgy. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal also meets each Friday from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the St. Francis Hall Chapel at Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, in Indianapolis. The meetings, which will be held on Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, include praise and worship, music, healing prayers, quiet time and Scripture. Fellowship and refreshments follow each meeting. For more information, call Len Bielski at 317-927-6900.

There will be **"An Evening of Christmas Song"** at 7 p.m. on Dec. 22 at St. Rose of Lima Parish, 114 Lancelot Dr., in Franklin. The event will feature the St. Rose of Lima adult and children's choirs, directed by David Sievers. There

VIPs . . .



Donald and Margaret Hatke, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a Mass on Nov. 28. The couple was married on Nov. 27, 1952, at St. Boniface Parish in Lafayette, Ind., in the Diocese of Lafayette. They have six children: Mary Jo Coffin, Karen Dunn, Carol Ann Eckrich, Janet Herman, Charlene Kottowski and Morey Hatke. The couple has 17 grandchildren. †

will be carols and songs from the ninth century to the present, including one written for this concert. Admission is free. For more information, call the parish at 317-738-3929.

The faculty, staff, students and friends of Cathedral High School, 5225 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, will present a **living Nativity** from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 22 on the school campus. Cathedral's choir and band will perform during the evening. The event is free and open to all. For more information, call the school office at 317-542-1481.

The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of Oldenburg are offering **Christmas tours** at their motherhouse from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 27 and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Dec. 28. There are traditional decorations as well as Christmas artifacts from the various cultures that the sisters minister in, including the Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Oriental, Papua New Guinean and rural American cultures. There also will be performances by the sisters' Chime Choir in the motherhouse chapel and refreshments. For more information, call 812-933-6464. †

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U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting movie ratings

About Schmidt (New Line)

Rated **A-III (Adults)** because of implied affairs, fleeting nudity, occasional rough language and recurring profanity.

Rated **R (Restricted)** by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

Evelyn (MGM)

Rated **A-III (Adults)** because of fleeting violence, ill-gotten gambling gains and occasional profanity.

Rated **PG (Parental Guidance Suggested)** by the MPAA.

Maid in Manhattan (Columbia)

Rated **A-III (Adults)** because of an implied sexual encounter, occasional profanity and crude expressions, and some sexual references.

Rated **PG-13 (Parents are Strongly Cautioned)** by the MPAA.

Star Trek: Nemesis (Paramount)

Rated **A-II (Adults and Adolescents)** because of stylized sci-fi violence with grotesque depictions of alien life forms, and an implied wedding-night encounter.

Rated **PG-13 (Parents are Strongly Cautioned)** by the MPAA.

Two Weeks Notice (Warner Bros.)

Rated **A-III (Adults)** because of sexual situations and references and fleeting drunkenness.

Rated **PG-13 (Parents are Strongly Cautioned)** by the MPAA. †

Reverse Mortgages

If you are a senior who owns your own home, there may be a way for you to use the equity you've built up in the value of your home to fund some of your needs, including home care and Long Term Care Insurance.

Reverse mortgages are also called FHA-Insured Reverse Mortgages or Home Equity Conversion Mortgages. Upon approval, your reverse mortgage can be set up to provide monthly cash to supplement your Social Security and retirement income. You can choose to receive special cash amounts for home improvements or for any other purpose you desire. Best of all, you won't have to make any monthly payments for as long as you live in your home.

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Ole' St. Nick

Franciscan Brother Kenneth Pinc, coordinator of family ministries for the archdiocesan Office for Youth and Family Ministries, dressed as St. Nicholas, a bishop from the fourth century, drops off some treats in the shoe of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein on the morning of Dec. 6, the feast of St. Nicholas. He left candy in the shoes of the employees at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

Our Lady of Guadalupe OBSERVANCES



Above, Father Michael O'Mara, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis, speaks to a group of children from Holy Cross Central School and St. Simon the Apostle School during a special Mass on Dec. 6 at Holy Cross Church commemorating the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Left, Markus Salazar enjoys the Our Lady of Guadalupe feast on Dec. 12 at his parish, St. Philip Neri in Indianapolis, dressed as St. Juan Diego, the Mexican peasant who was given apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1531.

A mariachi band serenades Our Lady of Guadalupe during a celebration of her feast day at St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis. Hispanics across the archdiocese celebrated the feast day with novenas, special Masses and serenades.



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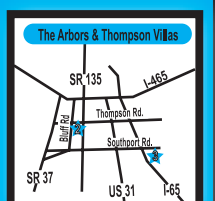


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Order promotes devotion to Mary and the Eucharist

By Brandon A. Evans

The Community of St. John was founded in 1975 by a Dominican priest in France.

Twenty-seven years later, the order has followed the will of God all over the world and grown to around 800 members—two of whom are sons of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

On Dec. 6-8, Community of St. John Father Didier-Marie Dugas Viallis, novice master at St. Joseph Priory in Princeville, Ill., spoke during Masses and at other times at Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

By his passionate words for Mary and the Eucharist, Father Didier-Marie gave witness to the heart of his community and the order's deep spirituality.

He lauded Advent as a time to draw close to the Mother of God in the hope of drawing nearer to Christ.

In Mary's heart, he said, we learn to love and adore God as in no other place.

It is this spirituality of intense filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin that two men from the archdiocese are trying to live as brothers in the community.

Brother Mary David Hoyt took his final vows earlier this year and is now studying theology in France. With the blessing of the community, he will become a priest so long as obedience guides him there.

Judy Hoyt, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis with her husband, Dan, said their son knew that he wanted to enter a religious order with a strong Marian devotion.

He studied for a year with the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, but in time felt called away from them and to the more contemplative Community of St. John.

The brothers are called "semi-contemplative," spending five to six hours a day in silent prayer and adoration, but also devoting many hours to an active apostolate, such as parish work, Newman Centers, teaching and social work.

"The scope of their work is pretty broad," said Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general of the archdiocese and pastor of Holy Rosary Parish. "They have no limited apostolate that I can determine."

Bob and Peggy Geis, members of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis, experienced that apostolate when they traveled to India for a month earlier this year to be with their son, Brother John Dominic Geis.

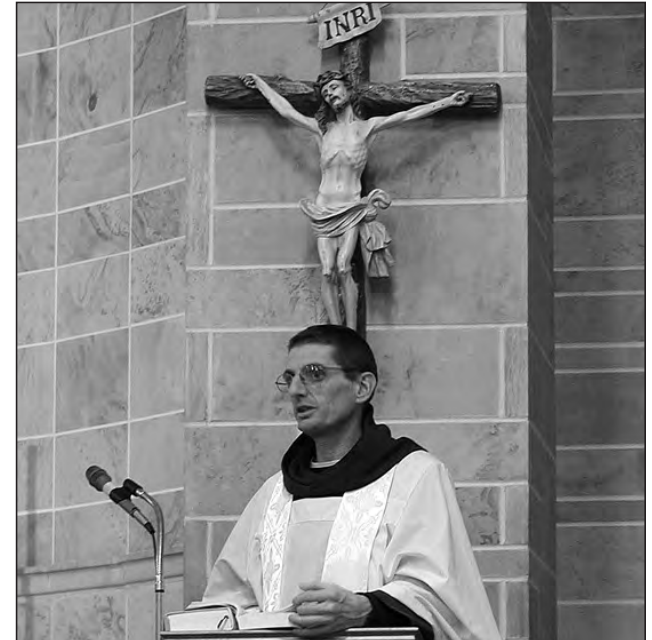
Brother John Dominic has taken three-year vows and is currently studying in France in anticipation of his final vows.

A former Army helicopter captain, Brother John Dominic was studying with the Fathers of Mercy, but heard about the Community of St. John after attending a Marian seminar and eventually ended up joining the order.

At the priory in India where he was stationed for 18 months, the brothers minister at a hospice for AIDS victims and care for orphaned boys.



Photos by Brandon A. Evans



Above, Community of St. John Father Didier-Marie Dugas Viallis speaks at Holy Rosary Church about the importance of letting Mary lead people to Jesus this Advent. He gave talks and celebrated Masses at the parish on Dec. 6-8.

Left, Father Didier-Marie Dugas Viallis kneels in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Dec. 6 at Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

Peggy Geis said trying to share the Catholic faith can be difficult in India, but the brothers do it without using words or persuasion.

"The presence of the brothers is very evident and people are drawn there," she said.

She and Judy Hoyt said the deep spirituality of the brothers is drawing people to their order and it is evidenced by their own involvement.

Bob and Peggy Geis and Judy Hoyt are oblates of the order, which entails making a promise to the community and trying to live their spirituality.

"We are encouraged to take the spirit of the community to wherever we are," Peggy Geis said. "We learn to be closer to God through the community."

The oblates are encouraged to attend Mass and adoration frequently as well as to pray, read the works of Dominican Father Marie-Dominique Philippe, the community's founder, and live the truth in fraternal love.

Each year, the oblates may renew their promise to the community or make longer promises.

Geis said she hopes the people who heard Father Didier-Marie speak at Holy Rosary Parish "will want to search for the truth deeper and grow closer to God in that search."

That is, she said, what the order wishes for all people. And it is what the community's Immaculate Patroness wishes for all people.

Father Didier-Marie compared Mary to Eve because the Mother of God helped win back for humanity by obedience what Eve lost in disobedience. Whereas Eve bore with her husband the heavy weight of all future generations and chose poorly, Mary acted wisely as all mankind hinged on her *fiat*, her "yes" to God.

In this way, Mary gives witness to the full vision of what a woman is and can be, he said.

The portrait of Mary and St. John beneath the cross of Christ reminds all Christians where they should find themselves, he said.

In a time when many Catholics are distrusting their shepherds, especially in America, he said, people need to remember that Mary and St. John did not abandon Christ even in the moment when the whole world came against

him and nailed him to the cross.

Now the Catholic Church in America finds itself on the cross, he said, and Mary urges us to stay close to her throughout this trial.

Father Didier-Marie finds no coincidence in the witness given by Pope John Paul II of Marian devotion, which has been a cornerstone of his papacy.

Msgr. Schaedel was introduced to the community in 1999 by Brothers John Dominic and Mary David while he was on a pilgrimage in France.

He visited the motherhouse of San Jodard, and since then has maintained a connection to the community and wanted to bring their spirituality here.

That opportunity came through Father Didier-Marie. Judy Hoyt knows him and contacted him about speaking in Indianapolis.

Msgr. Schaedel cited the prayer life of the community for their astounding growth and said he hopes they can convey that to others within the archdiocese.

"I think they have a deep, rich spiritual life, and I hope that people can share in that," he said. "I know that it is very much centered on the Eucharist, so if they can impart that, enkindle that in other people, that's great."

He also said that Father Didier-Marie's visit is a good opportunity for young people to think about another option for their life by being a member of the community, which has two branches of sisters—contemplative and active—as well as the brothers.

The order has not spread by its own intention, Geis said, but by the Holy Spirit working through the bishops of the world. They go where the bishops call them.

Their priory in India, she said, was started because of the request of a bishop who was asked by a priest to bring the order there.

"They're very simple people, really," she said.

Hoyt said the brothers are filled with childlike joy and live simple lives of devotion. It is this prayer, she believes, that has blessed them with many great fruits.

"The brothers have a beautiful spirituality," Hoyt said. "Their life is devoted to searching for the truth." †

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RESIGN

continued from page 2

Earlier in the year, the court-ordered releases of diocesan files on ex-priest John J. Geoghan and retired Father Paul R. Shanley, two of the archdiocese's most notorious accused child molesters, had sparked major firestorms.

Still facing more than 400 lawsuits by alleged abuse victims, in early December the archdiocese was forced to turn over to plaintiffs' attorneys some 11,000 pages of files, covering all of the other priests in the archdiocese accused of sexually abusing a minor.

The Dec. 3 release of the first 2,000 pages, covering six priests, included one priest who allegedly beat a housekeeper and sexually abused the child of his mistress, another who allegedly fathered two children and may have contributed to their mother's death, and a third who was accused of sexually abusing teen-age girls he recruited to become nuns, telling them

he was "the second coming of Christ."

The archdiocesan finance council on Dec. 4 voted to let Cardinal Law pursue Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection for the archdiocese.

On Dec. 7, according to later news reports, Cardinal Law secretly flew to Rome after conferring in Washington with Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, papal nuncio to the United States. *The Boston Globe* reported that while the cardinal was in Washington on Dec. 6 Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly sent subpoenas to him and at least five other bishops who have worked with him to appear before a grand jury later in the month.

On Dec. 9, 58 Boston priests signed a letter calling on the cardinal to resign. Another group, the Boston Priests Forum, called for a meeting on Dec. 13 at which a possible resignation petition would be discussed.

The Catholic University of America announced on Dec. 10 that the cardinal had resigned as chairman of its board of



trustees, a position he had held for nearly 12 years. His term was due to end in June.

On Dec. 12, Voice of the Faithful—a lay group that was seeking reforms but

Cardinal Bernard F. Law meets with Pope John Paul II on Dec. 13. Less than an hour after they met, his resignation as archbishop of Boston was announced at the Vatican. A Vatican press official said the pope was "deeply saddened" by the resignation.

until then had resisted calls for the cardinal's resignation—met at a church in Newton and voted overwhelmingly to ask the cardinal to resign. †

NORMS

continued from page 2

Superiors of Men "to examine more closely the various aspects of their particular situation and to forward to the Holy See whatever agreements they may reach."

In August, the superiors of men's orders said that in accord with the charter, they would remove permanently from ministry any religious priest who has abused children.

However, while the charter presented laicization of the offending priest as an ordinary response, the religious superiors said that in most cases they would be inclined to keep the man in the religious community under close supervision, rather than ousting him from priesthood and religious life.

But when the norms were revised by the U.S.-Vatican commission, religious-order priests were explicitly included by a footnote that says the norms for bishops with respect to their clergy also apply, with necessary adaptations, to religious superiors with respect to ordained members of their orders.

Conventual Franciscan Father Canice Connors, president of the U.S. religious conference, and Marist Father Ted Keating, executive director, met with Vatican officials in early December to discuss whether the inclusion of religious orders in the USCCB norms violates the orders' traditional authority to legislate their own internal governance, subject to Vatican approval.

While asking the bishops and religious orders to discuss the issues involved, Cardinal Re did not indicate any exemptions would be made for members of reli-

gious orders.

Cardinal Re told Bishop Gregory, "The universal law of the Church has always recognized" the crime of sexual abuse of children "as one of the most serious offenses which sacred ministers can commit and has determined that they be punished with the most severe penalties, not excluding—if the case so requires—dismissal from the clerical state."

The cardinal said the U.S. norms, which are more explicit than those found in canon law, "are intended to give effective protection to minors and to establish a rigorous and precise procedure to punish in a just way those who are guilty of such abominable offenses."

In Washington, Bishop Gregory expressed the U.S. bishops' gratitude for the swiftness with which the *recognitio* was granted and said it was a sign of the care

the Vatican has always shown in helping the U.S. bishops protect children and young people.

"There is no crime or sin so terrible that it takes the perpetrator beyond the bounds of God's love and mercy," Bishop Gregory said in a statement. "At the same time, sins and crimes can have long-lasting consequences in the lives both of those who commit them and those harmed by them.

"Sexual abuse of minors by clergy is an evil that has had a profound effect on our entire Church community. A number of bishops have added to the impact of this scandal by being, too often, negligent in our vigilance and insufficiently urgent in our response. Now all of us bind ourselves by the pledges of the charter and the requirements of the norms to see to it that this cannot happen again," Bishop Gregory said. †

CRÈCHE

continued from page 2

set was on such a visit. He doesn't know if people still make such visits, but he still gives tours for people.

Father Ginther said that many people today come back to the cathedral to view the Nativity set.

"Everybody who's ever been to the Cathedral at Christmas remembers this piece of art," he said. "Every former parishioner remembers this piece of art and it inspires them."

Vitale thinks that the crèche speaks of Christianity in an important way to visitors and especially non-Catholics or non-Christians.

"It has an element of evangelization to it," he said.

"It does bring ... the infancy narratives alive," Father Ginther said.

Sadly, time has brought with it not only the admiring eyes of visitors, but also the hungry eyes of thieves and the withering hand of Father Time.

Over the years, many pieces have been stolen. Fingers have fallen off some of the figures. Well-meaning people have tried "quick fixes" that involve masking tape. The oil painting is in need of repair and reframing, and the wooden pieces require attention.

But all is not lost. Vitale said that the set can be restored, but it will take work and an application of the vision of stewardship.

"It needs to be treated like a museum piece," he said. "I know it costs money, but it's kind of like having a house. You want to take care of the \$10 problem before it becomes a \$1,000 problem."

Vitale asked a friend of his, a curator, to look at the set. After the visit, Vitale said there is even a chance to replace some of the missing pieces.

"We're trying to seek ways of fundraising for it," he said. He views the work as historically important. Besides, given the age of the set and its origin, it may be worth a significant amount of



The Nativity set at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis takes up a large section of the front left side of the church. It contains many different figures of varying ethnicities and makes use of props such as a "stone" wall, hay, plants and a large oil painting that serves as the background of Bethlehem. The set is about 80 years old and in need of repair.

money.

Father Ginther said that restoration will happen sometime in the future, though what form that will take has yet to be decided.

"I very much hope to see it restored," Father Ginther said. "I'm not sure we could replace it. I've never seen one like it before or since."

As harsh as the effects of time may have been, there have been some victories for the set in its history.

The most notable was in the mid-1980s, when an art student stole the Virgin Mary and her divine Infant.

In time, the police managed to catch the villain. The two central figures from the set were recovered and returned to the crèche.

In time, perhaps some of the other pieces, such as an elephant, will be replaced and the Nativity set will be restored.

To do so, Vitale said, would be to make a strong statement about how much Catholics care not just about the crèche, but all the wonderful things that the Nativity scene stands for. †

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JOB LISTINGS



Painted adobe crèche from Arizona

CRÈCHES *from around the* WORLD

An exhibit of Christmas crèches is on display in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library at St. Meinrad through Jan. 8. The crèches, collected from around the world by Catherine A. Smith of Bloomington, were donated to Saint Meinrad earlier this year.



A crèche from Ecuador

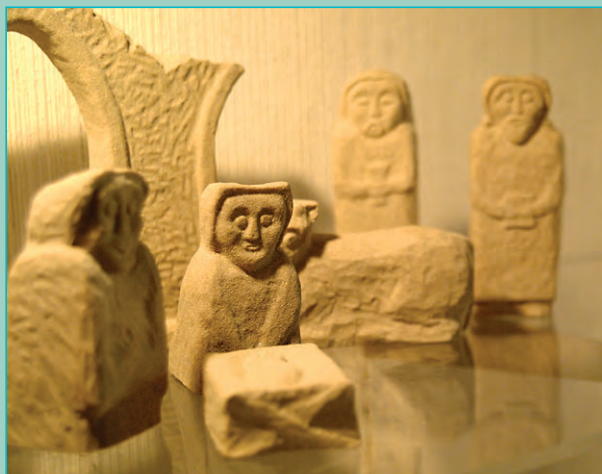
Among those on display from the Catherine A. Smith Nativity Collection, which was given in memory of Charles Patrick "Pat" Smith, is a painted wood crèche from Mexico, one carved from coal in West Virginia, a hammered

silver crèche from Jerusalem, a collection made in Kenya from banana fiber, a crystal crèche from France and many others.

Smith began collecting crèches in 1971, purchasing many during her extensive travels throughout the world. She recently decided to give the collection, which numbers nearly 200, to Saint Meinrad in memory of her brother, who studied for the priesthood at Saint Meinrad and later served as a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. In addition to displaying the collection, the Archabbey in future years will make portions of it available to churches, schools and libraries for occasional exhibits.



Painted wooden crèche from Oaxaca, Mexico



From left to right, this crèche is made of banana fiber from Kenya, a Celtic crèche is carved of stone, a painted wooden crèche is from Indonesia and a porcelain crèche is from Tuscon, Ariz.

Jesus was born in the likeness of humans

Let us rejoice in the fact that God's love for us was so great that he gave us his Son in the Incarnation

By John F. Fink

"Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of humans. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself."

This early Christian hymn, quoted by St. Paul in the second chapter of his Letter to the Philippians, explains what we are celebrating on Christmas. Of course, the well-known second chapter of the Gospel of Luke narrates the birth of the baby Jesus in the little town of Bethlehem, but the text above gives us more to meditate about. It describes the mystery of the Incarnation.

It's clear that the early Christians, certainly in the 50s when Paul wrote his letter, believed that Jesus was God. In this hymn, which circulated among Christians before Paul quoted it, they didn't exactly say that Jesus was God, as the Gospel According to John was to do. Rather, they put it more poetically: "He was in the form of God" and he was equal to God.

The amazing thing is that Jesus was willing to humble himself to become a human being. Paul says that he "took the form of a slave" because he was subjecting himself to his Father's will. He was emptying himself of his divinity to be born as a human. For someone with the divine power of God, that is indeed

humbling himself. He did not abandon his divinity when he became human. Rather he took on the form of a slave while continuing in the form of God.

The Catholic Church teaches the pre-existence of Jesus as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. He was equal to God the Father and the Holy Spirit in every way, including his eternal existence. He was not a man who became a god, as the ancient Greeks and Romans believed some of their deities did, but he was God himself who took the form of a human being.

There are some people who argue that this text does not specifically say that Jesus preexisted. It could be read, they say, to indicate that the man Jesus refused to grasp equality with God in order to attain divinity. A footnote in the *New American Bible* says that some people see an allusion to the story of Adam's fall in Genesis. Unlike Adam, who tried to become equal with God, Jesus did not reach out for such equality.

It's doubtful, though, that Paul had that in mind when he quoted the hymn because there are so many other passages in his letters that show that he believed in the preexistence of Jesus. In his Letter to the Galatians, for example, he wrote: "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4). God determined that the time had come to send his Son to us.

Similarly, in his Letter to the Romans,



This Nativity scene from the late 15th century is in the Vatican Museum's art collection.

Paul wrote (referring to God the Father): "Sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but

according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:3).

Paul was writing his letters some 40 years before John's Gospel appeared, but there was agreement between the two men about Jesus' preexistence and the mystery of the Incarnation. John, of course, was more explicit: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1), "And the Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14).

This, then, is what we celebrate at Christmas—the doctrine, and the mystery, of the Incarnation. We believe that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, fully God, humbled himself to become fully human, born of a human mother through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But why? Why would the Son of God humble himself like that? Out of obedience to his Father. As John's Gospel tells us, the Father "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17). God the Father "gave" his son as a gift.

Let us rejoice in the fact that God's love for us was so great that he gave us his Son in the Incarnation.

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion.) †

Pope John Paul II reads his breviary at the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem on March 22, 2000, during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the Great Jubilee. The pope prayed there for 20 minutes, emphasizing his role as pilgrim in the Holy Land.



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The light of Christmas overtakes Alaskan darkness

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

Winter in Alaska can be an especially dark time. Christmas, coming just after the year's darkest day, falls like a brilliant meteor into the blackness of an Alaskan night.

"A people living in darkness have seen a great light" (Is 9:1).

Every Christmas, I fall in love again with those words of Isaiah. I visualize Christ's love dawning over the Chugach Mountains near my home in Anchorage.

The longer I live in Alaska, the more the concept of Christmas as light overtaking darkness resonates for me.

There are many misconceptions about Alaska. You know all those maps of the United States that show a tiny Alaska stuck forlornly in the Pacific Ocean somewhere south of California? Those maps are the bane of every Alaskan school-child.

Everybody knows, of course, that Alaska is up north and that it's a big state. But did you know that if you stuck Alaska in the middle of the United States on the map, it would cover one-fifth of the lower 48 states and stretch from Florida to California?

Such a huge land mass has a variety of climates and a great diversity in "darkness" as well.

It's another misconception that Alaskans see no daylight in winter.

Barrow, at the very top of the state, does spend Christmas, and a two-month period, without the sun. But if you live south of the Arctic Circle, as most of us do, you experience some daylight in winter.

Juneau, our capital city, is near the same latitude as London. Dec. 21, the day of the winter solstice, brings 6:21 hours of daylight there.



CNS photo by Bill Roth, Anchorage Daily News

Alaskans, with their extra burden of darkness, are said to suffer more than other Americans from a depression linked to lack of sunlight. It's not surprising, then, that Anchorage indulges in a frenzy of Christmas lighting each year. The lights begin in October, when the mayor proclaims Anchorage "A City of Lights," and reach crescendo near Christmas.

Up north in Fairbanks, a city at the latitude of Reykjavik, Iceland, Christmas brings only about 3:42 hours of daylight.

Anchorage, Alaska's biggest city and near the same latitude as Stockholm, Sweden, has 5:28 minutes of daylight on the solstice. Children leave for school in the deep darkness, and when they return the sun already has set. The Christmas tree lights already are blazing against a "night" sky.

That brings me back to Christmas. Where would my winter spirits be without the flashy, sparkling, joyful, brilliant celebration of Christ's birth?

Memories of Christmas are always a powerful juxtaposition of light versus darkness.

Why are so many Christmases full of war and the threat of war at the time we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace?

The introduction of perfect innocence into our world heightens our sensitivity to the darkness of evil around us.

Many of us, not just Alaskans, struggle with the cold, dark and isolation of mid-winter. Alaskans, with their extra burden of darkness, are said to suffer more than other Americans from "SAD," or seasonal affective disorder, a depression linked to lack of sunlight.

It's not surprising, then, that Anchorage indulges in a frenzy of Christmas lighting each year. The lights begin in October, when the mayor proclaims Anchorage "A City of Lights," and

reach a crescendo as Christmas nears.

Cynics might see this as another consumer gambit mainly benefiting the electric utility. I choose to see every blinking bulb, every sparkling tree and each candle in every window as a reaffirmation of Isaiah's promise. I need to see light in winter, whether it's my solitary candle in predawn prayer or the birch tree ablaze with color in my front yard.

I see the cold and dark of winter as a metaphor for the challenge of evil pitted against the warmth and light of Jesus' coming. Every twinkling light reminds me that he's already won that challenge.

(Effie Caldarola is a free-lance writer in Anchorage, Alaska.) †



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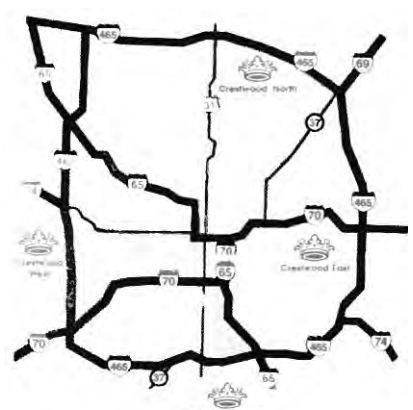


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Understanding the feasts we celebrate after Christmas

By Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

Catholic News Service

For many years, I was puzzled by the liturgical calendar in the days that follow Dec. 25.

On Dec. 26, we celebrate the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. The next day, we celebrate the feast of St. John the Apostle. Then, on Dec. 28, we remember the slaughter of the Holy Innocents.

Why, I wondered, did the Church put these three feasts right after Christmas?

I recently took time to research the history of these three celebrations and discovered that they developed about the same time that Christmas itself entered the Church's calendar—in the fourth century after Christ. Some of the earliest liturgical calendars we have list these three celebrations on the days following Christmas.

Those documents do not indicate why these feasts were placed on these days, but later commentators saw significant meaning in this juxtaposition of celebrations.

In the Middle Ages, these saints were called the "companions of Christ." The three feasts were seen as representing three forms of martyrdom.

St. Stephen went to his death voluntarily and was executed.

St. John was willing to be a martyr, but was not executed.

The Holy Innocents were not willing, but were executed.

Even without knowing why these three feasts were originally placed right after Christmas, the fact that they were linked to Christ's birth suggests that the early Church had a different perspective on Christmas than many of us do today.

Most people in our time view



Why did the Church put the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr, on the day after Christmas, followed by the feasts of St. John the Apostle and the Holy Innocents? In the Middle Ages, St. Stephen, St. John the Apostle and the Holy Innocents were called "companions of Christ." The three feasts were seen as representing three forms of martyrdom.

Christmas as a sentimental celebration. It is all focused on the helpless Infant in the manger bathed in the light of the Christmas star with "Silent Night" playing in the background.

Into such a scene, the arrival of the feasts of Stephen, John and the Innocents sounds a jarring note.

The early Church, by contrast, seemed to focus more on the significance of Christ's birth, the union of divinity and humanity in the Incarnation.

This feast celebrates the beginning of the life of the One who saved us. Thus,

Christmas is really a prelude to Easter. Christmas celebrates the birth of the One who died for us and rose to give us new life.

The feast of St. Stephen, then, reminds us that the birth of Christ might lead to our own death. Stephen is known as the first Christian martyr, the first to give his life because he believed in Jesus. His feast calls us to a similar commitment to the One born at Bethlehem.

The Gospel attributed to St. John begins with a poetic discussion of the Incarnation. That part of his Gospel is used during the third Mass of Christmas Day. Celebrating his feast two days after Christmas reminds us of this deeper significance of the events at the manger scene, which united divinity and humanity forever.

The feast of the Holy Innocents seems a bit different. It is a rather unique feast, celebrating infants who died for Christ without even knowing him, which might challenge the commitment of those of us who do know him. It might also remind us that Christ's birth had implications for the whole world. These innocent children died because Christ's birth upset the political powers of the day. His coming has implications for all those who wield power in the world.

Celebrating these three feasts during Christmas week can help us enter more fully into the meaning of this holy season. It's OK to enjoy the tenderness of the crèche, but it's also important to remember all that this child meant for the history of our world.

(Father Lawrence Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio.) †



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Eastern Rite Catholics don't celebrate Christmas on Dec. 25

By Maureen E. Daly
Catholic News Service

So many Christians celebrate Christmas on Dec. 25, but not the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

"The stubborn Armenians never change, but there is a good theological justification for this too," said Vigen Guroian, an Armenian Orthodox theologian who is a professor at Loyola College of Maryland in Baltimore and a member of St. James Armenian Church in Richmond, Va.

Following an ancient tradition, the Armenian Apostolic Church continues to celebrate both the birth and baptism of Jesus on Jan. 6.

Members of the Armenian Apostolic Church believe that Christmas "connects the birth and the baptism," Guroian said. "There is a new birth and a new creation. It is also a remembrance of the Crucifixion insofar as baptism is a connection to the death of the old life. Even as Jesus is born, he is crucified and resurrected. Even then, the infant in the crib is the resurrected Christ. There was a tradition of joining these two things early on."

Today the Christmas season in the Roman Catholic calendar begins with the feast of the Nativity on Dec. 25 and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on the third Sunday after Christmas. After that, Ordinary Time begins.

"There is a persistence of witness," Guroian said. "Theologically, it makes sense. It reflects the piety of ancient Christians who saw the Crucified One in the crib."

Armenian Christmas focuses on "theophany," which means the "revelation of God" both at the birth in Bethlehem and the baptism in the Jordan. The Christmas Day liturgy in the Armenian Church includes a blessing of water ceremony during which a crucifix is dipped into the water.

"The dipping of the cross is a reminder of Christ's baptism but also of our burial with him," Guroian said. "What is baptism? It is a burial and a resurrection. Early Christian piety understood that. The hymns that commemorate this feast make this clear."

Guroian quoted a hymn in his book *Inheriting Paradise: Meditations on Gardening* (Eerdmans, 2001) whose words, he said, were taken from an ancient Armenian sermon for the feast day. They say that Christ "was made flesh of the Holy Virgin that thou might renew afresh the lost Adam" and "today come unto baptism in order to make new by water our corrupted natures."

Icon painters also make this connection, Guroian said. "Jesus, the baby, looks like a mummy. The wrappings in the crib are the wrappings in the tomb. The swaddling clothes are the burial cloths. The faithful are expected to remember the connection between Christ's death and birth."

"One of the greatest poems of the 20th century, T.S. Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi,' makes this connection, too," Guroian said. "It connects Jesus' birth and death, the realization that that very innocent infant is also the Crucified One."

The speaker in that poem asks, "Were we led all that way for 'Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,

"We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

"But had thought they were different; this Birth was

"Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death."

As the poem ends, the speaker, no longer at ease in a pagan land, says, "I should be glad of another death."

(Maureen Daly is an associate editor for special projects for Catholic News Service.) †



The infant Jesus looks like a mummy in Armenian icons depicting Christ's birth. The wrappings in the crib are the wrappings in the tomb. The swaddling clothes are the burial cloths. The faithful are expected to remember the connection between Christ's death and birth.

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Readers share special Christmas memories

Daughter's safe return was priceless Christmas present

By Helen E. O'Leary

The most blessed Christmas in my life was when God sent my youngest daughter back to me.

She had been missing for nearly two years. After a traumatic experience, she could not take the pressure any longer and decided to run away. She did not come home from school one day.

I didn't know what had happened until later. All I knew was that she was gone! For two years, I worked and prayed to all the saints and to Jesus, God and Mary.

In October 1977, the telephone call came.

"Mom, it's me!" she said. "I'm OK. Can I come home for Christmas and bring my baby? His name is Jason."

That Christmas, the church bells rang louder and the lights were brighter.

In 2000, I became a Catholic. God led us both home!

(Helen E. O'Leary is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Son's birth on Christmas is a special gift from God

By Amy Duncan

After losing our first baby, my husband, Carl, and I were thrilled when we learned we were expecting again. Our baby was due on Feb. 25, 1983.

Except for my aggravated allergies and daily morning sickness, my pregnancy seemed to be progressing nicely. All that changed, however, when I went into labor around 4 a.m. on Christmas morning. At 8:34 a.m., Carl III came into this world crying his heart out. At 4 lbs., 7 oz., he sounded more like a baby lamb than a baby boy.

We often refer to Carl as our surprise package. How many people can claim that they came into this world exactly two months early to be born on Christ's birthday? There had to be a reason!

At six months, Carl was diagnosed with double hernias and cerebral palsy. He celebrated his first birthday in the hospital due to asthmatic bronchitis and pneumonia. The years that followed were filled with ups and downs.

Carl will be 20 years old this Christmas, and has survived numerous surgeries and hospital stays.

Because of Carl, my husband and I have been involved in things we never would have imagined. We have become known as advocates for persons with handicaps. We've been able to make improvements for the good of our community. Carl and I have met and helped people we never would have known if it hadn't been for our son.

As Carl's parents, his father and I have become aware of what really is important in life. We have learned not to take simple, everyday things for granted. It's not important to have the best of everything, but to be appreciative of what we do have. Carl and I are more aware of what we can do for ourselves as well as what we can do for others.

Looking back to that Christmas morning in 1982, we now realize that Carl III was not just our surprise package. He truly was, and is, our gift from God.

(Amy Duncan is a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.) †



Photos courtesy The Athenaeum

Jolly Old St. Nick

St. Nicholas was the special guest for The Athenaeum's annual Sankt Nikolaus Fest on Dec. 8 at the historic German club in downtown Indianapolis. The Athenaeum also sponsors an Old World Christkindl Market as part of the annual Advent celebration.

Angels bring joy to Speth family's Christmas party

By Anne C. McGown

Each year, the Speth Family Christmas brings the matriarch, Eadie Speth, and her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and spouses of offspring together for honored traditions that have grown and changed over the years. Most of the traditions began during the lifetime of "Speth Father Christmas," Leonard Speth.

The first ingredient in the Christmas recipe has always been the family. As many family members as possible still converge on Martinsville from Greenwood, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Georgia.



Megan (from left), Anna and Britta Bowers perform a patriotic song during the Speth family's Christmas party last year in Martinsville.

Midnight Mass on Dec. 24 brings blessings to the holidays, and tradition adds the joy, security and comfort.

Upon arrival for the Christmas feast, each family member over age 5 selects a chore from the job jar. Every group brings something for the meal. Food is plentiful, including Grandma Eadie's Christmas cookies. The family crowds together at a huge extended table. Grace is said, blessings are requested and glasses are raised in a toast. Old stories are retold, new stories are shared and a picture is taken at the table.

The meal is followed by a rousing off-key rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Then we sing "The Schnitzlebank Song" in German. Most of us have no idea what words we are singing.

One on-again, off-again tradition is the Christmas skit, now performed by the great-grandchildren. The biblical Christmas story has been the most performed play.

Last year, an offering titled "Three Little Angels" debuted, and the great-grandchildren were funny even when they were not supposed to be. After the skit, they gave out angel ornaments as awards and recited good things about family members. They saved their dad for last. For him, they had a special treat. He is a major in the U.S. Army, and had been deployed after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. We were fortunate that his unit returned home before Christmas. The angels sang "Proud to Be an American" by Lee Greenwood then gave him a Christmas angel for helping to keep our country safe.

God gave us to each other to cherish. What better time to show him how much we appreciate his gift than on his birthday!

(Anne C. McGown is a member of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville.) †

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Girl hopes Santa Claus will bring her a 'live pony'

By Donna J. Dezern

On St. Nicholas Day, St. Nick rewards good children with small treats. He places a tangerine, walnuts, candy and a small toy on a plate by shoes on the floor.

The fourth-century bishop is the patron saint of children. With the help of generous folks, the saint continues the German custom of bringing small gifts on his Dec. 6 feast day and larger presents on Christmas.

During my childhood, a shopping trip to Hawkins Pharmacy in Indianapolis revealed St. Nick—Santa Claus—sitting in an overstuffed chair. A tug on Santa's beard proved that he was the "real" St. Nick.

In 1953, my wishes were for a doll, a coloring book, a live pony and lots of surprises for Christmas.

In mid-December, a trek to the Indianapolis south side Farmer's Market was a must to pick a short-needle, table-top Christmas fir. Fragrant needles crunched beneath my saddle shoes. Salesmen huddled around a fire built in a trash can, rubbing their hands together for warmth. Some of the men drank hot coffee.

After we selected the perfect tree, the workmen nailed boards crisscross to the base of the tree for a stand. A \$5 bill changed hands then the men secured the evergreen

Annual Christmas doll was cherished gift from mother

By Mary Jo Keegan

World War II was finally over, and family members and friends were back home from their military service. It was Christmas 1945, and I was 12 years old.

In those exciting December days involving Christmas plans and the compilation of the yearly "wish" list, I informed my mother that I would not want a doll this year. As a replacement, I told her how much I would like my own combination radio and record player.

When Mother asked me if I was sure about this, I reminded her that I had many dolls and that, really, I was almost a teen-ager.

My childhood Christmases always included many "surprises," as we called them. I was the only child of a widowed mother, and we lived with her family in their humble home on Meikle Street. Perhaps my extended family overcompensated as they lavished on me their unfulfilled childhood dreams about Santa's sleigh full of toys.

But it was the annual doll that was always my most cherished gift. Each Christmas morning, I awoke to the sight of a new doll sitting in my little wicker rocking chair next to my bed. I just loved my dolls. They were all named, carefully handled and enjoyed immensely.

In 1945, childhood and its inevitable passage met for me, and the mingling was indeed tainted with bittersweet feelings. My thoughts and emotions were mixed before I dared to look in the direction of my rocker on that Christmas morning. When I saw it was empty, I turned away and my feelings of loss and longing produced a generous supply of tears.

I thought I had successfully kept my tears a secret when I presented myself to claim, with genuine happiness and gratitude, all of my bounty. No one mentioned the absence of a doll then or later.

Imagine my surprise when I celebrated my birthday four months later and the first joy of the day was the presence of a beautiful doll sitting in the rocker in my bedroom.

When our eyes met on that birthday, I realized that my mother had sensed my pain and felt my childish hurt that Christmas morning. I also knew she understood that I really meant it this time when I told her that I was holding my very last doll.

Growing up became much easier and now, more than a half century later, I remain grateful for all the happiness my childhood rocker held each Christmas.

That Christmas in 1945 continues to speak to me as I am reminded of how empty my life would be if my heart did not serve as a waiting manger for the Infant whose birth began our salvation.

(Mary Jo Keegan is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

in the car trunk.

At home, the frozen fir branches warmed to room temperature, relaxed their limbs outward and released their aroma. Decorating began with strands of large colored light bulbs strung on the tree. Next, a red plastic star was placed on top of the tallest branch. Then came the shiny balls, glass ornaments and garland. One by one, shiny aluminum icicles filled the tree. Finally, a full-sized white sheet was used to cover the base.

On a table nearby, candy dishes were filled with hard pieces of peppermint and spearmint. Mom poured homemade chocolate fudge onto a buttered plate, with tiny thin slivers near the edges and bigger chunks toward the center. She used the fudge recipe printed on the back of the Hershey's Cocoa can.

The buffet centerpiece was a small Nativity scene resting on soft white cotton.

Little Golden Books with Christmas themes were lined up on the shelves, their titles ranging from *Frosty the Snowman* to *The Night Before Christmas* to *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. The storybooks sold for a quarter at Murphy's, Kresge's, Grant's, McCrory's and Woolworth's downtown dime stores.

Christmas cards decked the archways and woodwork. American Greeting Cards sold at 25 cents and were mailed for 3 cents in postage. Everyone sent cards at Christmas.

Holy Childhood Christmas Seals, priced at a penny, adorned the envelopes. Parochial school students sold the seals to benefit the missions. Boys' Town and American Lung Association seals also graced the envelopes. These seals were mailed to homes with a request for donations.

My favorite holiday craft was making an old-fashioned card basket from the previous year's greetings. Another craft I enjoyed was building a toothpick Christmas tree with styrofoam balls, toothpicks and spray snow.

The "shake package" was the first and only gift opened early on the morning of Christmas Eve at our house. The custom was to shake one wrapped gift and guess what was inside the box. The "shake package" might be pick-up sticks, marbles, jacks or checkers. The suspense was half of the fun. Careful thought was put into the wrapping to disguise the sound. What could it be? Could it be red and white striped candy-cane pens, a paddleball or a small rubber squeeze ball wrapped in a large box?

The rest of the packages were opened late at night on



As a child, Donna Dezern of Greenwood would visit Santa Claus at the former Hawkins Pharmacy in Indianapolis. Like many children, she wanted a "live pony" for Christmas.

Dec. 24 after a secret visit from St. Nick. A mass of wrapping paper, torn from packages and thrown in the air, along with numerous boxes and bows revealed gifts galore.

Dad used a Kodak Brownie Camera to take black and white snapshots. I said "cheese" as the flashbulb popped.

Christmas Day was reserved for morning Mass and a family party. Aunts, uncles and cousins gathered at my grandparents' home for a Christmas party. There was always ham and rye bread, side dishes and rich butter cookies at the pitch-in dinner.

After the meal, the young cousins raced around my grandparents' dining room table with toys and laughter, excited that, at last, it was Christmas Day.

(Donna Dezern is a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.) †

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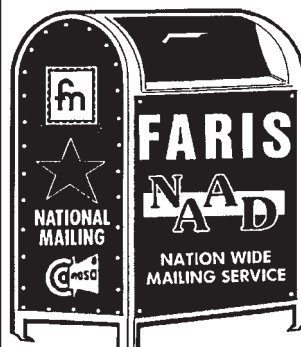
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Madonna and Child

This year, the U.S. Postal Service issued a Christmas stamp featuring artist Jan Gossaert's "Madonna and Child," a Renaissance painting which is a holding of the Art Institute of Chicago.



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Christmas comes when shepherds and magi venture forth

By Fr. Richard Rice, S.J.

It was the last day of the course I was teaching at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., comparing St. Ignatius of Loyola's "Spiritual Exercises" with the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and similar programs.

I invited the class to share what had been significant to them during the course.

A Dominican sister raised her hand and said, "I have learned that the most important word of the Twelve Steps is the first one, namely 'we.'"

No one was more surprised by her response than I, as I had not particularly emphasized that word. Her remark rang deeply true, and since then I have built the course around "we."

Twelve-steppers quickly learn that the grace of recovery is given in community. It is reinforced by meetings, sponsorship and fellowship. Such is the genius of the steps. And such is the genius of our God and our Church, especially to be appreciated in this Advent and Christmas season.

Contemplate the Trinity with me for a moment as we consider the Incarnation.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "God is community, God is relationship, God is Trinity. God cannot exist in isolation."

The community that is God overflows in love to us and joins our humanity in the person of Jesus, all for the purpose of being in union with us and of bringing us home again to the table of the Trinity.

Pope John Paul II contemplated the same mystery of the Trinity in a remarkable apostolic letter for the start of our new millennium ("*Novo Millennio Ineunte*").

In the letter, he wrote, "A spirituality

of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us. Dwelling in us and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us."

In the Jewish tradition, there is the story of a rabbi giving a final exam to his rabbinic students. He surprised them by asking only one question: "How do you know when night turns to day?"

A hand shot up. "When I can tell that a tree is a maple and not an elm."

"No," said the rabbi.

Another student ventured, "When I can tell that an animal is a sheep and not a calf."

"No," responded the rabbi again.

Finally, all hands went down.

"Night turns to day," the rabbi said with a smile, "when I can see the person coming toward me to be my brother or my sister. If I cannot see that, it is always night."

Such is the pope's awareness—that the final fruit of the Incarnation of our God in the body of Mary, in the body of the Church and in the full celebration of Christmas must extend to include all as brothers and sisters.

In that same letter, Pope John Paul II went on to describe what a "spirituality of communion" includes if it is genuine. Such a spirituality blesses us with a sense that we are each part of a larger community and a larger mission than just ourselves, something we all yearn for.

This enables us to say, "Where you go, I go." When another person composes a sonata or paints a landscape, we all do it. We all are enhanced. When one person goes to war or embezzles, we all do it. We are all diminished.

Furthermore, such a spirituality always

God offers us second chances

By Dan Luby

We picture him as coldhearted and harsh. In popular embellishments of the Christmas story, the innkeeper who turned away Mary and Joseph in their hour of need is almost always a negative figure.

Surely he could have found space for Joseph and his exhausted, pregnant wife!

At this time of year, when the Spirit of hospitality and reconciliation moves powerfully among us, I find myself wondering if perhaps, after Mary and Joseph had been sent away and lodged with farm

animals in a drafty stable, he might have had a change of heart.

Who among us does not, from time to time, turn away people in need through hardness of heart or fear or laziness? Who among us cannot find defensible reasons for staying locked up inside our comfort zones? And who among us does not have cause each day to give thanks that the God born in a stable is a God of second chances for all?

(Dan Luby is director of the Division of Christian Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.) †



Coming to the stable of the child born of Mary, we find ourselves, shepherds and magi alike, becoming companions instead of competitors, encouraging each other to vocation and mission rather than to self-centered careers, and growing in trust rather than suspicion because we realize we have nothing to fear.

offers hospitality because there always is abundance, there always is room for another and there always is food to go around.

So, coming to the stable of the child born of Mary, we find ourselves, shepherds and magi alike, becoming companions instead of competitors, encouraging each other to vocation and mission rather than to self-centered careers, growing in trust rather than suspicion, and letting go of jealousy and envy because we realize we have nothing to fear.

Is such a spirituality idealistic? Yes. It is as idealistic as the life of the Trinity.

Is such a spirituality realistic? Yes. It is as realistic as the life of the Trinity, always present in our midst.

A major issue for the Church today is how to promote a spirituality of communion in a culture that has promoted individualism, often to the extreme of

narcissism. What is our seemingly small voice in an arena of so many voices?

Fortunately, our small voice is still the voice of a Baby in a crib in Bethlehem, and nothing silences a crowd like the cooing or crying of a baby.

As a Twelve-stepper might put it, all we have to do is to be sure we ourselves are listening and responding to that Baby, and then "carry the message to others" simply by telling them what a difference Jesus Christ makes in our lives.

Sometimes, as St. Francis of Assisi said to his companions, we might "even use words" to help in the telling.

Fortunately, Christmas comes whenever shepherds and the magi are ready to venture forth in the world.

(Jesuit Father Richard Rice is a spiritual director with Loyola, a spiritual renewal resource in St. Paul, Minn.) †

Discussion Point

Spend time with Jesus in prayer

This Week's Question

How will you make Christmas different or better this year?

"By slowing down my life and spending more time with Jesus in our adoration chapel. I will continue to impress upon my children the importance of celebrating the life of Christ, and his example, every day of the year." (Stan Nill, Lenexa, Kan.)

"We are going to give fewer material gifts. We have six children, and we will send some of the saved money to charity." (Lynette Saucedo, Torrington, Wyo.)

"My cultural background is Mexican, and this year we hope to be more familial—more family-oriented—in

our celebration of Christmas." (Francisco Murillo, Union City, Calif.)

"I hope to have most of my Christmas shopping completed before Advent begins. Then our family can spend the Advent season making gifts, celebrating the various saints' feast days and doing charitable acts." (Tina Schlegel, Centerville, Ohio)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: How do you define the term "greed"?

To respond for possible publication, write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



Photo of Oberlinburg Academy illustration by Mary Ann Wyard

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Important events: The Edict of Milan

Tenth in a series

No list of the most important events of Catholic history could neglect the Edict of



Milan issued by Constantine and Licinius Licinianus in 313. The two men divided the Roman Empire between them but, more important for Christianity, they declared complete religious freedom within the empire.

The year before the Edict of Milan, Constantine had won a momentous military victory at the Milvian Bridge that spanned the Tiber River south of Rome. Before that battle, he had a vision of a cross of light in the heavens with the inscription "In this sign conquer." After his victory, he supported Christianity.

For 250 years, Christians had endured periodic persecution by Roman emperors. Now, at long last, they were actually free to practice their religion. Constantine, whose mother Helena was a Christian, started

making laws favorable to Christians.

In 323, he issued an edict that called the old religion of the Romans "superstition" and said that anyone who forced a Christian to participate in pagan worship should be flogged or given a heavy fine. What a turnaround!

In 324, Constantine warred against Licinius, going into battle with banners carrying a Christian sign. He defeated Licinius and became the sole Roman emperor. He chose Byzantium as the capital of the empire and changed its name to Constantinople.

Constantine himself did not formally become a Christian until he was on his deathbed in 337, and then an Arian bishop baptized him. He would not have made a model Christian anyway. Among other things, he ordered the deaths of his father-in-law, three brothers-in-law, a son and his wife! (Nevertheless, the Eastern Orthodox Church venerates him as a saint.)

With the emperor favorably inclined toward Christianity, those who wanted to progress in society followed suit. Christianity became the religion of the elite. Constantine, for his part, assumed that as

emperor he could dominate the Church. He did, and Pope Sylvester I, pope during most of Constantine's reign, quietly allowed him to do so.

Constantine built the first great basilicas in Rome and the Holy Land. In Rome, he opened the first St. Peter's on Nov. 18, 326, with the main altar directly above the first pope's tomb. He built St. Paul Outside-the-Walls over the burial site of St. Paul, and he built the Basilica Constantiniana (later called St. John Lateran), the cathedral of the diocese of Rome.

In the Holy Land, which had been ravaged by Constantine's predecessor-emperors, his mother supervised the construction of a basilica over the site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Constantine's grandiose church was far more magnificent than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre today. Helena also built the Church of the Nativity over the site of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, and the Church of the Resurrection atop the Mount of Olives.

If Constantine can be credited with bringing Christianity out of the catacombs, he must also receive credit for saving the Church from destruction from heresy. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

It's time for a baby around here

Recently I read Anna Quindlen's excellent novel, *Blessings*, about what happens



when an unmotivated young man and a rigid old lady suddenly find themselves raising a newborn baby left on their doorstep. It's a story of reconciliation, healing, grief and joy.

That Anna Q. sure knows her babies. Her descriptions of the

baby's tiny fists grasping an adult finger, the baby's snuffling into the caregiver's neck, the bubbles forming on the baby's lips as she lies on a blanket meditating on her surroundings, they're all on target. Any parent will recognize their sweet truth.

What is it about babies that we respond to? Is it merely a biological reaction to their need that makes us their slaves?

Unfortunately, we seem to hear more and more about people who do not respond to babies in what we consider the normal way. There are actually people, including parents and relatives, who torture their babies, abuse them physically, sexually and emotionally, and murder them with neglect

or cruel determination.

It seems to me this careless attitude reflects the lessened respect for life which is evident in our culture. Organized religion may have its faults, but at the very least it is the last holdout for honoring all of God's creatures and creations as he intended.

Which brings me to the baby who is the center of our celebration on Christmas day. Why in the world did God choose to come to us as a baby? Surely the majestic king whom most Jews expected to be their Messiah would be a more appropriate incarnation.

God is omniscient, omnipresent, omniseverything, so how can a baby represent him in human form? Babies are so vulnerable. They slobber, smile without provocation, and seem to have little or no control over anything about themselves, including their bodily functions.

Babies are entirely open to what's around them: objects, people, whatever's going on within their sight or hearing. They're full of wonder, and their astonished delight in the unexpected, which is absolutely everything, is beautiful to behold.

If babies are provided with the most

elemental necessities, such as food, dry clothes, rest and being held securely, they usually remain serene. Sometimes they're cranky just because, but they're still true innocents. Everything is a possibility for them and the possibilities are endless.

What a perfect metaphor for Christ. As the baby Jesus, God becomes the most human of humans. He is vulnerable and powerless to control his own fate without help from others. He's sweet, innocent and open to goodness. The only difference is that, unlike other humans, he will never sin.

We can relate to a baby, so it's no wonder God chose to come to us in this way. We feel love for the tiny Jesus as we would any baby, drawing us immediately into the mystery of God's incarnation. Before we know it, we're led as he was along the journey to the Father.

Anna Quindlen named her novel *Blessings*, not only for the name of the estate on which the action takes place, but for the baby who inspires it. And on Christmas day, Christ comes to us as "The Blessing."

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Recalling a Criterion Christmas blessing

In 1983, the supplement cover in *The Criterion's* Christmas issue contained a



Nativity scene with the following prose-poem, written by yours truly:

Blessed Are They Among Women

Christmas is the time for remembering an ancient story

of a young girl who learned from an angel that she was to become a mother.

The girl, Mary of Galilee, despite difficulties, accepted pregnancy with grace: "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word!"

From this acceptance was born the Holy Babe, Jesus Christ, Son of God,

foundation of Christian faith.

Now other unwed women in diverse, dissimilar circumstances also learn they are expectant.

But modern options often kill creative will. Many do not accept maternity, do not nurture a life, do not allow a new soul a place in God's world.

Blessed are they among women who, like Mary of Galilee, choose to bear the fruit of their wombs. Their decisions dignify life and complement Selfless Love: the very essence of Christmas.

Strictly speaking, this isn't technically a poem. It is too straightforward and contains no rhyme, rhythm, imagery or other poetic devices. However, "the very

essence of Christmas" is poetic, as are Mary's obedient words, "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word." So is the birth of a baby—and the Nativity story itself, which is both poetic and dramatic Biblical literature.

I wrote "Blessed Are They Among Women" nearly two decades ago in a Creative Writing class at IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis). At that time, I'd never before read anything referring to Mary as an unwed mother.

However, in recent years, I've been pleased several times to read good essays or articles with similar themes, praising Mary for having been obedient to her God-given role.

No holiday gift can compare to God's gift of his Son to us. Without Christ's coming, we would not be celebrating this holy Christmas season. More important, without the birth of Jesus, we would not have the ultimate gift of Redemption.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Stories, Good News, Fire/
Fr. Joe Folzenlogen, S.J.

Housing heaven's fire

A Jesuit friend of mine, Father John Haughey of Loyola University in Chicago, recently published a book titled *Housing Heaven's Fire: The Challenge of Holiness*.



I have only finished the first chapter, but I am already finding the book an excellent resource for Advent and Christmas reading, reflection and prayer.

Father Haughey begins by noting that holiness is a notion that can cause some people discomfort. It is sometimes viewed as a quality of super saints, and it definitely is not readily available to the likes of us ordinary folks. In fact, if we want to have even a remote hope of developing just a small amount of holiness, we would have to do lots and lots of very hard work.

Working from Scripture and the documents of the Second Vatican Council, Father Haughey makes the point that holiness is not an achievement but a "receiving." With all due respect to Smith Barney, we do not earn it. It is a gift we received when the Trinity entered our lives at baptism.

It is also a gift we are called to acknowledge and to cultivate. Holiness shares the already/not yet characteristic of Christian living. During Advent, we talk about preparing for the coming of Christ. But Christ has already come. However, one of our eucharistic acclamations reminds us that Christ will come again. In a similar way, we already have the gift of holiness, but it is a gift that is capable of growing.

The book's title talks of "housing" heaven's fire. For me, that word stirred associations with a number of passages prominent in the Advent and Christmas readings. Isaiah speaks of a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness will be at home. He talks of people from all nations streaming to find a home on God's holy mountain. The beautiful prologue to John's Gospel speaks of the Word who comes to pitch a tent and dwell among us.

In addition to these and other passages from this liturgical season, there is the section in the Last Supper scene of John's Gospel. Jesus promises the Apostles

'During Advent, we talk about preparing for the coming of Christ. But Christ has already come. However, one of our eucharistic acclamations reminds us that Christ will come again. In a similar way, we already have the gift of holiness, but it is a gift that is capable of growing.'

another advocate who will be with them forever. This is the Spirit of Truth whom they know because this Spirit abides in them. The Apostles abide in the love of Jesus as Jesus abides in the love of his father. This section of the Gospel culminates in the great prayer for unity asking that the Apostles may be one with Jesus and his father as he and the father are one.

As Father Haughey sums up: "The consoling points, therefore, are, first, that we are being made perfect/holy; we do not make ourselves perfect/holy. Second, the energy for living a holy life is already available to us. Third, we can know the particulars entailed in living this way of life by attention to the Spirit indwelling us. Fourth, that the 'perfection' that we will eventually attain is that which humanly and distinctively replicates the perfection of God as we know that from Christ."

(Jesuit Father Joe Folzenlogen is evangelization coordinator for the archdiocese.) †

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 22, 2002

- 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

The first reading for this last Sunday of Advent is from the Second Book of Samuel.



Originally, Samuel was one book. However, three centuries before Christ, when scholars translated the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, in the translation called the Septuagint, Samuel was divided

into two books. It has remained divided.

Samuel is very old. Moreover, it refers to events and to persons mentioned in very old times in the history of the Hebrew people. Samuel was written when the people of God were not necessarily living in chaos, but when their national identity was truly being formed.

Important in the development of the nation, and in the people's understanding of the nation and of themselves as part of the nation, was David.

Under David, the kingdom took its unified form. It found its identity. He was important not simply as the leader who brought all groups together and identified a common national focus, but because he was the instrument chosen by God to form the kingdom and to give it its commission.

God selected David for the task. Above all else, David's task was to unify the people with God. He was expected not just to govern, and to live, according to God's law, but to lead the nation itself to God.

Several words are critical in reading this passage. The first is the reference to Nathan, the prophet. God spoke in human terms through human instruments. He spoke not only in great natural manifestations, such as burning bushes or floods, but also in ways other than those heard silently in individual human hearts.

Secondly, David was a shepherd. God called him from the pasture to kingship.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans supplies the second reading.

In this reading, Paul insists that his teachings are not simply his ideas. Rather, they are of the Gospel of Jesus.

This Gospel was given to people by God, through Jesus, even for the Gentiles.

The Christian community of Rome, to which Paul wrote, was in the first century A.D. composed of persons who were Jewish immigrants from the Holy Land, or descendants of such immigrants, or Gentiles. Among these persons were those with backgrounds from the many ethnic and religious varieties

of the Roman Empire.

For its third reading, the Church gives us this selection from St. Luke's Gospel.

This passage is unique to Luke's Gospel. It is familiar to, and loved by, all Christians. For Catholics, it is the story of the Annunciation and the Visitation.

Gabriel, one of the archangels, is sent by God to Nazareth, to Mary, the betrothed of Joseph. The text carefully states that the message conveyed by Gabriel is from God.

Of course, it is the message that God wishes that Mary should be the mother of the Redeemer. Her child will have no earthly father. Mary makes this clear in her question regarding her relationship with Joseph, and then Gabriel gives the response, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." (Mary also makes clear that she herself is a virgin.)

To this miracle, Gabriel adds news of another. Mary's relative, Elizabeth, apparently past the childbearing age, has conceived. (Elizabeth's child would be John the Baptist, born six months before Jesus.)

To enable, and to ratify, this momentous sequence of divine events, Mary proclaims that she will abide by God's will.

Constant throughout the passage is the mention of David, the great king whose task as king was to draw the people to God and to bring God to the people.

Reflection

Advent is concluding. Christmas is near. The Church this weekend takes us to the very doorstep of Christmas. It proclaims for us Luke's marvelous revelation of the conception of Jesus. The Infant born on Christmas will be the Son of God. He was the son of Mary described in this Gospel. He will be God's gift to us.

In the reading from Romans, Paul insists that Jesus came to all. Each of us is a Gentile in some respect. For each of us, sin has separated us from God. Somehow, everyone stands apart. Sin has damaged us. It has left us outcasts.

It is of no matter. God reaches out to us. God comes to us in Jesus, the Son of God, and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Jesus is God.

Furthermore, God reaches to us through instruments we can understand, and in words of our own human language. Such has been the love of God over the centuries, manifested in the guidance given by the prophets.

God now reaches to us. He loves us with an unending, perfect love.

However, even Mary had to decide whether or not to go to God. It is our choice as well. To study this choice, and actually to turn to God, is the purpose of Advent. †

Carolers' voices raising,
Shoppers through the malls racing,
Loved ones and friends embracing.

Tinsel in the breeze swaying,
Now, greetings I'm conveying,
"Thank God!" You must be saying.

By Joseph Gallagher

My Journey to God

Sights and Sounds of Christmas

Angels from on high praising
Jesus in His crib laying,
Sheep on the hillsides grazing

Shepherds in Bethlehem staying,
The Three Kings, their homage paying,
Horses neighing, donkeys braying.

Santa through the night sleighing,
Pastors with their flocks praying,
Children laughing and playing.

(Joseph Gallagher is a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 23
John of Kanty, priest
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Psalm 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14
Luke 1:57-66

Tuesday, Dec. 24
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Luke 1:67-79
Vigil of Christmas
Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-25
or Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday, Dec. 25
The Nativity of the Lord
Christmas (Midnight)
Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14
Christmas (Dawn)
Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20
Christmas (Day)
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1-6

Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Thursday, Dec. 26
Stephen, first martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Psalm 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21
Matthew 10:17-22

Friday, Dec. 27
John, Apostle and evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday, Dec. 28
The Holy Innocents, martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2
Psalm 124:2-5, 7b-8
Matthew 2:13-18

Sunday, Dec. 29
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary
and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14
Psalm 128:1-5
Colossians 3:12-21
or Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:22-40
or Luke 2:22, 39-40

(continued on page 22)

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Columnist repeats popular reflection about Santa Claus

Dear Readers: Last Christmas, I responded to a Florida reader whose friends did not want their children to "believe in Santa Claus." They intend to tell the children the myth was made up so stores could do more business at Christmas time.

The reaction to that column was remarkable. Dozens of readers wrote or called about how much it meant to their own family. A number of readers wanted copies to send to their relatives. In response to requests that it be repeated this Christmas, the column is reprinted here.

The reader thought her friends were missing something important, but wasn't sure how to discuss it with them. She asked what I thought.

As I, too, think her friends are missing something very big. It's always risky to analyze fantasies, but maybe it's worth trying for a moment.

Fantasies, perhaps especially for children but also for adults, are critical ways of entering a world—a real world—that is closed to us in ordinary human language and happenings. They are doors to wonder and awe, a way of touching something otherwise incomprehensible. Santa Claus, I believe, is like that.

No one has expressed this truth more movingly and accurately, in my opinion, than the great British Catholic author G. K. Chesterton, in an essay years ago in *The London Tablet*. On Christmas morning, he remembered, his stockings were filled with things he had not worked for, or made, or even been good for.

The only explanation people had was that a being called Santa Claus was somehow kindly disposed toward him.

"We believed," he wrote, that a certain benevolent person "did give us those toys for nothing. And ... I believe it still. I have merely extended the idea.

"Then I only wondered who put the toys in the stocking; now I wonder who put the stocking by the bed, and the bed in the room, and the room in the house, and the house on the planet, and the great planet in the void.

"Once I only thanked Santa Claus for a few dolls and crackers, now I thank him for stars and street faces and wine and the great sea. Once I thought it delightful and astonishing to find a present so big that it only went halfway into the stocking. Now I am delighted and astonished every morning to find a present so big that it takes two stockings to hold it and then leaves a great deal outside; it is the large and preposterous present of myself, as to the origin of which I can offer no suggestion except that Santa Claus gave it to me in a fit of peculiarly fantastic good will."

Are not parents of faith blessed, countless times over, to have for their children (and for themselves!) such a fantastic and playful bridge to infinite, unconditionally loving Goodness, the Goodness which dreamed up the Christmas event in the first place?

Call Santa Claus a myth or what you will, but in his name parents and all of us who give gifts at this special time of the year are putting each other in deeper touch with the "peculiarly fantastic good will" which is the ultimate Source of it all. Plus, it's fun!

I hope your friends reconsider.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 325, Peoria, IL 61651. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@aol.com.) †

The Active List, continued from page 22

First Mondays

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Guardian Angel Guild board meeting, 9:30 a.m.

First Tuesdays

Divine Mercy Chapel, 3354 W. 30th St., **Indianapolis**. Confession, 6:45 p.m., Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Road W., **Sellersburg**. Holy hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7 p.m. Mass.

First Fridays

St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 "T" St., **Bedford**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8:30 a.m. Mass-9 p.m., reconciliation, 4-6 p.m.

Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., **Beech Grove**. Mass, 8:15 a.m., devotions following Mass until 5 p.m. Benediction. Information: 317-784-5454.

St. Peter Church, 1207 East Road, **Brookville**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. Communion service-1 p.m.

Holy Guardian Angels Church, 405 U.S. 52, **Cedar Grove**. Eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. Mass-5 p.m.

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7:15 a.m. Mass-5:30 p.m. Benediction and service.

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after 5:30 p.m. Mass-9 a.m. Saturday. Information: 317-636-4478.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer service, 7:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warman Ave., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 5:30 p.m. Mass, hour of silent prayer and reflection followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mickley Ave., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 4 p.m., rosary, 5 p.m., Benediction, 5:30 p.m., Mass, 5:45 p.m. Information:

317-244-9002.

Sacred Heart Chapel, 1530 Union St., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30-10:30 a.m., Mass, 6:30 a.m. Information: 317-638-5551.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Lane, **New Albany**. Adoration, concluding with confessions at 6 p.m. Benediction at 6:45 p.m.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., **New Albany**. Eucharistic adoration, reconciliation, after 9 p.m. Mass-midnight.

St. Joseph Church, 113 S. 5th St., **Terre Haute**. Eucharistic adoration, 9 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Benediction, rosary, noon, Mass, 5:15 p.m. Information: 812-235-4996.

First Saturdays

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Devotions, Mass, sacrament of reconciliation, rosary, mediations, 8 a.m.

Holy Angels Church, 740 W. 28th St., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m.-noon.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, Chapel, 4720 E. 13th St., **Indianapolis**. Apostolate of Fatima holy hour, 2 p.m.

St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warman Ave., **Indianapolis**. Reconciliation, 7:45 a.m., Mass, 8:15 a.m. followed by rosary.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., **New Albany**. Eucharistic adoration and confessions after 9 p.m. Mass.

St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Dr., **Sunman**. Mass, praise and worship, 8 a.m., then SACRED gathering in the school.

Second Mondays

Church at **Mount St. Francis**. Holy hour for vocations to priesthood and religious life, 7 p.m.

Second Thursdays

St. Luke Church, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., **Indianapolis**. Holy hour for priestly and religious vocations, 7 p.m.

Third Sundays

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd., E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 2 p.m.-7 a.m.

(Monday), rosary, 8 p.m. Open until midnight.

Third Mondays

St. Matthew Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., **Indianapolis**. Young Widowed Group (by archdiocesan Office for Youth and Family Ministries), 7:30 p.m. Child-care available. Information: 317-236-1586.

Third Wednesdays

Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., **Beech Grove**. Holy hour and rosary, 6 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Road, **Indianapolis**. Rosary, 6:15 p.m. Information: 317-783-1445.

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Catholic Widowed Organization, 7-9:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-1102.

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 Troy Ave., **Indianapolis**. Mass, 2 p.m.

Third Thursdays

Our Lady of Peace Mausoleum Chapel, 9001 Haverstick Road, **Indianapolis**. Mass, 2 p.m.

St. Elizabeth's, 2500 Churchman Ave., **Indianapolis**. Daughters of Isabella, Madonna Circle meeting, noon, dessert and beverages served. Information: 317-849-5840.

St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mickley Ave., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Mass, 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

Third Fridays

St. Francis Hall Chapel, Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, **Indianapolis**. Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana, Mass and healing service, 7 p.m.

Third Saturdays

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., **Indianapolis**. Helpers of God's Precious Infants monthly pro-life ministry, Mass for Life by archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life Activities, 8:30 a.m., drive to Clinic for Women (abortion clinic), 3607 W. 16th St., Indianapolis, for rosary, return to church for Benediction.

Fourth Wednesdays

St. Thomas More Church, 1200 N. Indiana St., **Mooreville**. Mass and anointing of the sick, 6:30 p.m. †

MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENT



Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Marriage Supplement

February 7, 2003, issue of The Criterion

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2003, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

Pictures

You may send us a picture of the bride-to-be or a picture of the couple. Please do not cut photograph. The picture must be wallet-size and will be used as space permits. We cannot guarantee the reproduction quality of the photos. Please put name(s) on the back of the photo. Photos will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by Friday, January 10, 2003, 10 a.m. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date).

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to:
ATTN: BRIDES, The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202
Deadline: Friday, January 10, 2003, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride: (first, middle, last)

Daytime Phone

Mailing Address City State Zip Code

Name of Bride's Parents

City State

Name of Bridegroom: (first, middle, last)

Name of Bridegroom's Parents

City State

Wedding Date Church City State

Signature of person furnishing information Relationship Daytime Phone

Photo Enclosed No Picture



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For all occasions

Clergy sex abuse was biggest religious news of the year

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The second year of Christianity's third millennium will go down in religious history as the year the clergy sexual abuse crisis rocked the U.S. Catholic Church to its foundations.

By year's end, it was widely regarded as the gravest crisis ever faced by the Catholic Church in the United States. It led to national sex abuse norms binding on all U.S. dioceses and the resignation of the senior member of the U.S. hierarchy, Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston.

2002 also was a year of continued violence in the Holy Land, famine and a catastrophic AIDS pandemic in Africa, a global U.S. war against terrorism and threats of war against Iraq.

It was a year of further travels by an aging Pope John Paul II, including a World Youth Day visit to Toronto in July. It was a year of new Church controversies over liturgy, homosexuality in the priesthood and ordination of women. Religious discrimination, Muslim-Christian conflict and Catholic-Jewish relations often made the news.

But overshadowing other religious news throughout the year were the ongoing dramas of lawsuits, arrests and removal of priests for sexual molestation of minors and the accompanying debates, from homes and coffee bars to the highest reaches of the Vatican, over the way the Church should deal with abusers, respond to victims and assure the protection of children in the future.

Boston Scandal

In January, defrocked Boston priest and serial child abuser John Geoghan was convicted of indecent assault on a 10-year-old boy—out of hundreds of allegations, almost the only case that was not barred from criminal trial by the statute of limitations. And *The Boston Globe* got a court-ordered release of archdiocesan files on Geoghan, giving a shocked public an unvarnished inside view of archdiocesan dysfunctions in dealing with abusive priests.

The released papers quickly led to the escalation of the Boston scandal into a national Church crisis—played out repeatedly in other dioceses as newspapers across the country began digging deeper into how the local diocese had handled such cases over the past 20, 30 or 40 years.

By April, the U.S. cardinals were called to a special summit at the Vatican to chart a course of action, and the world heard Pope John Paul II's statement that "there is no room in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young."

Encouraged by the changed atmosphere across the country, hundreds of clergy abuse victims who had suffered silently for years or decades came forward and

told their stories.

By June, when the U.S. bishops met in Dallas to debate a mandatory national policy to oust perpetrators and protect children, more than 200 priests had been pulled from ministry across the country and the story was making daily headlines. An unprecedented 700 journalists obtained credentials to cover the Dallas meeting and hundreds more worked the edges because of accreditation limits.

By December, the nearly 140 lawsuits the Boston Archdiocese had settled with Geoghan victims paled before the more than 400 others filed on behalf of alleged victims of other Boston priests. The archdiocese took the first steps toward filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. With new revelations almost daily and scores of his own priests openly calling for his resignation, Cardinal Law resigned as archbishop of Boston on Dec. 13 after a week of consultations in Rome with top Vatican officials and the pope. Three days later, the Vatican announced its approval of norms that all U.S. dioceses must follow to deal with and deter sexual abuse.

Also in December:

- The bishops of California warned their people to expect hundreds of clergy sex abuse lawsuits across the state in 2003 because of a new law taking effect Jan. 1 that would waive the statute of limitations on such suits for a year.
- The Diocese of Manchester, N.H., entered a settlement with the state attorney general, avoiding unprecedented criminal charges in return for admitting it probably could be convicted of child endangerment. As part of the settlement, the diocese agreed to the public release of thousands of pages of personnel files detailing how the diocese dealt with decades of accusations of sexual abuse against a number of its priests.

Charter and Norms

In June, the U.S. bishops adopted a "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" and approved a set of legislative norms to enforce implementation in all dioceses. They established a National Review Board, headed by Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, to monitor compliance, study the causes of the crisis and recommend further Church steps to protect children.

They formed a national Office for Child and Youth Protection and in November appointed Kathleen L. McChesney, third top official of the FBI, to head the office.

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., the first black president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was widely credited by Church observers with engineering Vatican consent to the idea of special national legislation to deal with the crisis, overriding the usual autonomy of each bishop in his own diocese in such matters.

At the June meeting, he squarely confronted the bishops with their own responsibility, saying, "The crisis, in truth, is about a profound loss of confidence by the faithful in our leadership as shepherds, because of our failures in addressing the crime of the sexual abuse of children and young people by priests.

"The imprudent decisions of a small number of bishops," he said, had completely overshadowed "the very solid and good work" of most bishops in confronting and dealing with the problem over the previous decade.

In August, the major superiors of men's religious orders, meeting in Philadelphia, said that in accord with the charter, they would keep permanently out of ministry any religious priest who has abused children.

While the charter presented laicization of the offending priest as an ordinary response, however, the religious superiors said that in most cases they would be inclined to keep the man in the religious community, under close supervision and perhaps contributing to the community in ways not involving ministry, rather than ousting him from priesthood and



Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., and Cardinal Bernard F. Law celebrate Mass during the meeting of the U.S. bishops in Washington in November. After the announcement of Cardinal Law's resignation on Dec. 13, Bishop Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said his prayers were with the cardinal, the Archdiocese of Boston and its new administrator, Boston Auxiliary Bishop Richard G. Lennon.

religious life.

In October, a small commission of U.S. bishops and top Vatican officials revised the June legislative norms to put them into greater conformity with general Church law, introducing criminal trials by Church tribunals as the ordinary way to permanently remove priests who have sexually abused children. The bishops adopted the revised norms in November, and the necessary final Vatican approval was announced on Dec. 16.

In their final form, the norms explicitly stated that religious priests were also subject to the norms.

Bishops Under Fire

While Cardinal Law was at the center of the crisis for past mishandling of abuse cases, he was not the only U.S. prelate to face controversy over the way they dealt with abusive priests. Among those who came under the heaviest media criticism were Cardinals Edward M. Egan of New York and Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, but numerous other bishops and archbishops found themselves forced to explain and defend past actions in a new climate where "zero tolerance" was the rule against which all policies and decisions were measured.

The sexual abuse crisis also led to the resignation of four other U.S. bishops.

- Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell of Palm Beach, Fla., resigned in March after admitting inappropriate sexual contact with a high school seminarian many years earlier.
- Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland of Milwaukee had already submitted his resignation to Pope John Paul II on his 75th birthday and was awaiting a response when it was revealed on May 23 that in 1998 he had reached a \$450,000 settlement over sexual misconduct in 1979 with an adult male. The next day, the pope accepted his resignation.
- New York Auxiliary Bishop James F.



Thousands of demonstrators take to a city square in Portland, Ore., on Nov. 17 to demonstrate against taking military action in Iraq. Catholic peace activists were among those in a crowd of approximately 10,000 that urged non-violent means to solving world problems.



Sifiso, a 2-year-old boy who has AIDS, hugs a toy at the Cotlands child sanctuary in Johannesburg, South Africa, in late November. Two-hundred babies are born HIV-positive each day in South Africa. By 2005, the country will have around 1 million AIDS orphans under age 15.

McCarthy turned in his resignation in June after admitting to affairs with several women.

- Bishop J. Kendrick Williams of Lexington, Ky., facing three accusations of sexual abuse, denied the claims but resigned in June for the good of the diocese.

The U.S. scandal led to more public discussion and revelations of clergy sex abuse in several Latin American countries where such matters were once surrounded by silence. In Argentina, Archbishop Edgardo Gabriel Storni of Santa Fe de la Vera resigned in September while denying allegations that he had sexually abused seminarians. Bishops' conferences in several countries, including Germany and Switzerland, developed new policies to handle abuse cases.

The sex abuse crisis fed new debates about what qualifications should be required of a candidate to be accepted for ordination. The charter the bishops adopted called for Vatican-sponsored visits to all U.S. seminaries, with a focus on the quality of their programs of formation for celibate chastity.

There were also revived arguments over mandatory celibacy and the admission of women or married men to the priesthood. But one question—the admission of homosexually oriented men to ordination—was debated with special vigor.

The Laity

Another issue brought to new prominence by the sex abuse crisis was the role of laity in a Church where bishops are vested with final authority over virtually all diocesan matters and pastors have a similar authority over virtually all parish matters.

The bishops recognized a need for a greater lay role in confronting the sex abuse issue by forming the all-lay National Review Board and mandating that the majority of members of every diocesan review board be lay people not employed by the Church. They also invited two prominent lay thinkers to address them publicly at their June meeting, critically assessing the conditions behind the crisis from a lay perspective.

The crisis gave rise to a new Catholic lay group, Voice of the Faithful, whose stated goals were outreach to abuse victims, support of faithful priests and lay involvement in structural change in the Church. Started in Boston, by the end of the year the group was international with a membership of more than 25,000.

More than 50 bishops concerned about addressing the conditions underlying the crisis joined in backing a proposal to tackle those issues by convening the first plenary Church council in the United States since 1884. A committee appointed to study the proposal told the bishops in November that more in-depth study and discussion among the bishops is needed before making a decision about whether to call such a council.

War on Terrorism

In the U.S. war on terrorism, President Bush's threats to attack Iraq drew criticism from religious leaders around the world, including the U.S. bishops, who warned that they could see no justification for a pre-emptive, unilateral attack.

When Iraq accepted the U.N. demand to revive weapons inspections, Pope John Paul welcomed it as a possible path away from the threat of a war that would throw the whole Middle East into turmoil.

Violence was a daily fact of life in the Holy Land as scores of Palestinian suicide bombers struck out at Israelis and Israeli soldiers retaliated for each new incident. The terror moved abroad in November as 16 were killed in a suicide bombing at a favorite Israeli resort in Kenya.

In March, the Israeli government rescinded a long-controversial building permit for a mosque adjacent to the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

In April, scores of Palestinian gunmen took refuge in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem after the Israeli army entered the city. The standoff lasted 39 days.

Christmas observances in Bethlehem were cast into doubt in late November when the Israeli military occupied the city again and imposed a curfew following a suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem.

AIDS in Africa

Even as the world community seemed finally on a path to relieve the crushing external debt burdens of impoverished nations in sub-Saharan Africa, the region's AIDS pandemic brought harsh new social and economic problems.

An estimated 28 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were suffering from AIDS in 2002, and the disease attacked mainly young and middle-age adults who should have formed the region's most productive work force.

Drought, compounded by poverty and the AIDS health care crisis, led to the start of a new famine in Africa that could surpass the famine of the mid-1980s. A coalition of 15 U.S. aid organizations, meeting at Catholic Relief Services headquarters in early December, warned that 38 million Africans risk starvation unless the international community mobilizes quickly.

Religious Violence

Muslim-Christian conflicts continued in parts of Africa and Asia.

In June, a Sudanese government plane dropped four bombs on a bishop's residence and 12 bombs on a Catholic mission where 500 children attend school.

Christian-Muslim tensions in Nigeria flared into bloody street riots in November that left more than 200 dead and 500 injured. Two Catholic churches and a Catholic diocesan center were destroyed.

In Pakistan, Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha of Lahore in early September said the past year was unprecedented for the number of extremist Muslim attacks and killings of Christians. Three weeks later, two gunmen massacred six Catholics and a Protestant in an attack on an ecumenical justice center.

The Catholic Church suffered in Russia under a strict law on new religions under which four priests and a bishop were expelled. Two laymen were arrested in neighboring Belarus for protesting a similar discriminatory law there.

A Vatican decision to raise four Church jurisdictions in Russia to the status of dioceses brought sharp complaints from Orthodox officials and a further deterioration in Catholic-Orthodox relations.

Catholic-Jewish Relations

A U.S. Catholic-Jewish consultation issued a statement in which Catholic participants affirmed that God remains faithful to his saving covenant with the Jewish people and said Christians should not engage in campaigns targeting Jews for conversion. Some Catholics took issue, calling the statement a denial of the Church's mission.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, addressed the

issue in a Boston speech in November. He said Christians, in relations with Jews, should not hide or deny the missionary dimension of their faith, but at the same time they should recognize that Jews need not be converted to Christianity to be saved.

A group of U.S. Christian scholars representing a variety of denominations also issued a statement urging Christian Churches to revise their teaching about Jews and Judaism in light of growing awareness of what it means to say God's covenant with the Jews endures.

Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II—who turned 82 in May—remained a major figure on the world scene despite physical ailments that caused him to reduce his travels and limit his public appearances.

He visited his 301st of 334 Rome parishes on Feb. 17, but in the following weeks a knee ailment forced him to cancel several other planned visits and, it turned out, to end his practice of parish visits. In October, the Vatican announced that the visits would resume in December in a different form—the members of the remaining parishes would be asked to come to the Vatican in a series of Sunday morning encounters with the pope featuring a Mass and meetings with various parish groups.

He set a new tone in the U.S. clergy sex abuse scandal by declaring to the April summit of U.S. cardinals that there is no room in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm children.

The aging pontiff traveled to Azerbaijan and Bulgaria in May, calling for religious tolerance and Catholic-Orthodox reconciliation.

In late July and early August, he traveled to Canada, Guatemala and Mexico. In Toronto, he celebrated a World Youth Day Mass before an estimated crowd of 800,000. In Guatemala, he canonized St. Pedro de San Jose Betancur, a 17th-century missionary who is now Central America's first saint. In Mexico, he canonized St. Juan Diego, the 16th-century Mexican peasant whose visions of Mary marked the start of devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. St. Juan Diego was the first indigenous person in the Americas to be declared a saint.

The pope's Aug. 16-19 visit to Poland was his 98th trip outside Italy and his ninth return to his native land since he became pope.

An estimated 300,000 people gathered for the Oct. 6 Mass in St. Peter's Square at which he canonized the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer. Four months earlier, the pope canonized the famed Italian Capuchin priest, stigmatic and mystic, Padre Pio da Pietralcina.

In October, he marked the 24th anniversary of his papacy by proclaiming a "year of the rosary" and suggesting an optional new five mysteries of the rosary, called "mysteries of light" and focusing on events in Christ's public ministry.

On Nov. 14, he made a historic first papal visit to the Italian Parliament, delivering a 50-minute speech on a wide range of challenges facing Italy, from its treatment of the poor and immigrants to its dangerously low birth rate.

Life Issues

In February, the Vatican called for a worldwide ban on human cloning. The issue divided U.S. legislators, who could not agree about whether to ban all human embryonic cloning or to permit it for medical research.

Belgium and the Netherlands legalized euthanasia in 2002. In the United States, the Hawaiian legislature narrowly defeated a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide, leaving Oregon the only state that permits the practice. A federal order seeking to prevent physicians in Oregon from using federally controlled substances to assist in suicide was being litigated in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The U.S. Supreme Court gave a boost to use of tuition vouchers for religiously run schools when it ruled that a Cleveland voucher plan was religiously neutral and constitutionally acceptable even though most of the students receiving vouchers



Pope John Paul II waves a handkerchief at the crowd during a welcoming ceremony at World Youth Day on July 25 in Toronto.

used them to enroll in Catholic schools.

Ordination of women was back in the news in June when six European Catholic women and an American, former Ohio first lady Dagmar Celeste, claimed to have been ordained priests in Europe by an excommunicated Argentine priest who claimed to have been ordained a bishop by another excommunicated priest who was ordained a bishop.

The Vatican called the women's ordinations invalid and excommunicated the seven in August after they refused to comply with an order to renounce their ordinations.

In September, Americans across the country held special worship, prayer and memorial services to mark the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

At their November meeting, the U.S. bishops took action on a number of other issues as well as the sex abuse problem. These included a joint letter with the Mexican bishops on migration, an updated plan for Hispanic ministry, approval of liturgical texts, new fund-raising norms and a new handbook on diocesan financial administration, record-keeping and reporting.

Diocesan Finances

Reserve funds of many dioceses took a severe hit from the broad decline in the stock market.

The sex abuse crisis also clearly affected diocesan finances in some places and could have more far-reaching effects than were immediately evident.

In June, the Boston Archdiocese laid off personnel and slashed its annual budget from \$24 million to \$16 million. In September, the Los Angeles Archdiocese closed several offices and laid off dozens of employees to eliminate a \$4.3 million budget deficit, but attributed the belt-tightening to investment losses, not the sex abuse crisis or the costs of the new \$189 million cathedral. When the Miami Archdiocese laid off 10 percent of the staff at its pastoral center, it cited a \$31 million loss in its investment portfolio as the reason.

A national poll of church-going Catholics in October indicated that since the crisis began 18 percent had stopped supporting national collections, 13 percent had stopped contributing to diocesan collections and 6 percent had stopped giving

to their parish.

Four-fifths said dioceses should give full public accounting of their costs related to clergy sex abuse. More than two-thirds wanted annual public audits of Church finances at all levels. Nearly two-thirds thought the bishops had done a bad job of handling the sex abuse crisis.

Notable Deaths

Among Catholic figures who died in 2002 were:

- Benedictine Father Godfrey Leo Diekmann, 93, a world-renowned liturgist who played a major role in the Second Vatican Council's reform of the liturgy and in the U.S. liturgical movement in the decades before the council; Feb. 22, in Collegeville, Minn.
- Cardinal Franjo Kuharic, 82, Croatian Church leader and symbol of resistance to communism who saw communist rule of his country give way to democracy and independence; March 11, of cardiac arrest, at his home in Zagreb.
- Redemptorist Father Francis X. Murphy, 87, who in the 1960s enthralled Americans with his *New Yorker* magazine accounts of the Second Vatican Council under his nom de plume, Xavier Rynne; April 11, of complications after cancer surgery, in Annapolis, Md.
- Msgr. George G. Higgins, 86, a national figure in social justice and labor relations for more than half a century; May 1, after a long illness, in La Grange, Ill.
- Carmelite Father Roland E. Murphy, 85, a co-author of the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* and one of the top U.S. Scripture scholars of the 20th century; July 20, of heart failure, in Washington.
- Cardinal Francois Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, 74, who suffered 13 years of imprisonment in communist Vietnam; Sept. 16, of cancer, in Rome.
- Jesuit Father Richard T. McSorley, 88, a theologian and noted peace and social justice activist; Oct. 17, in Washington, following a battle with coronary artery disease.
- Philip Berrigan, 79, a former Josephite priest whose protests against the Vietnam War in the 1960s thrust him into national prominence and a lifelong leadership role in pacifism and social ministry; Dec. 6, of cancer, at Jonah House in Baltimore. †



U.S. President George W. Bush signs the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act in Pittsburgh on Aug. 5. The legislation makes certain that babies born alive during abortion procedures are protected under federal law. Joining Bush at the signing were the lead sponsors of the bill, Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa. (left), and Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio.

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Mon. the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests and religious sisters serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it.

ADAMS, Margaret, 91, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Mother of Kenneth Jr. and Robert Adams. Sister of Shirley Anderson and Kenneth Roberts. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of three.

BERRY, Susan R. (Richter), 96, St. Paul Hermitage, Beech Grove, Dec. 8. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of seven.

CORSARO, Peter A., 89, Holy Rosary, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Father of Catherine Dezelan, Frances Moss, Santana Sullivan, Mary and Paul Corsaro. Brother of Lucille Godfrey. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 11.

CROWDER, Mary E., 66, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Mother of Kolleen Sutton and Dan Crowder. Sister of Gert Dulak and Patsy Monk.

DOERR, Marcia A., 60, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Oct. 28. Wife of Patrick Doerr. Mother of Cheryl Plourde, Kevin and Mark Doerr.

EARLY, Charlotte A., 62, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Mother of James Early Jr. Sister of Jeanine Logsdon,

Deborah Woollen and Kennie Thomas.

FENDLEY, Edith E., 85, St. Joseph Hill, Sellersburg, Nov. 26.

FIELD, Dorothy L., 86, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Mother of Joan Ellis, Paula Rossman, Dave and Ted Field.

FORD, Mary S., 77, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Dec. 7. Mother of Diana M. Worth. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of one.

GARCEAU, Bernard J., 83, St. Mary, Mitchell, Dec. 5. Father of Brenda, Brent and Kent Garceau. Brother of Agnes Germaine. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of six.

HAGGARD, Mary Rose (Zupancic), 84, St. Agnes, Nashville, Dec. 7. Sister of Frances Parsley and John Zupancic.

HARDMAN, Kenneth E., 80, St. Mary, Lanesville, Dec. 15. Father of Patti Elsler and Kenneth E. Hardman Jr. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of 11.

HARTMAN, Marcella A., 67, St. Martin, Yorkville, Dec. 4. Wife of Gilbert Hartman. Mother of Sharon Wilgenbusch, Eric, Gary, Mark and Steve Hartman. Sister of Ann Fette, Romilda Hoing, Viola Hountz, Coletta Weber, Nick and Sylvester Riehle. Grandmother of 15.

KEIM, Mildred L., 89, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Sister of Ruth Murray. Aunt of several.

LOUGHERY, Theresa Jane (Gillespie), 80, St. John the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Mother of Joan Bindner, Patty Trimble, Edward, Jim, John and Mike Loughery. Sister of Catherine Mertz, Irene Loughery and Joan Shevlin. Grandmother of 17.

McCONNELL, Mary Ann (Dant), 88, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Mother of Shirley (McConnell) Harmon, Robert and William McConnell. Sister of Rudy, Walter and William Abell. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of six.

McCONNELL, Paula M., 45, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Daughter of Mary Catherine Shellenbarger. Sister of Mary Jo Catt, Cathy Schmidt, Daniel, Joe and John Lawson.

NATALIE, Joseph, 73, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Sept. 16. Husband of Caroline Natalie. Father of Marsha, Michael and Paul Natalie. Brother of August Natalie.

REED, Agatha, 90, St. Agnes, Nashville, Dec. 8. Mother of Jim Reed. Grandmother of two.

REEDER, John V., 79, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Husband of Mary Agnes (Boehm) Reeder. Father of Teresa Pensock and Thomas Reeder. Grandfather of three.

ROGIER, Thomas, 85, St. Mark, Perry County, Nov. 30. Husband of Shirley Rogier. Father of Nanette Dupont, Christina Mangia, David, Jim, John and Paul Rogier. Brother of Gertrude Malone, Christie and Lawrence Rogier. Grandfather of 22. Great-grandfather of four.

SCHOETTNER, Robert B., 87, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 8. Father of Urban Schoettner. Grandfather of one. Great-

grandfather of one.

SCHRANK, Leonard, 68, St. Mary, Navilleton, Nov. 29. Husband of Myrna Schrank. Father of Laurie Schultz, Lenny, Scott and Tony Schrank. Brother of Mary Yeaman and Robert Schrank. Grandfather of 12. Step-grandfather of three.

SEYFRIED, Maxine (Korthaus), 84, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Mother of Mary Golding, Jo Ann Ligon, Laura Walker, Anthony and Michael Seyfried. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 11.

SHEA, Frank J., 61, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Husband of Mary Helen (Endres) Shea. Father of Lori Finnigan, Angie Huffman and Dennis Shea. Brother of Eileen Wilson. Grandfather of six.

SPURRIER, Cecelia M., 84, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 9. Aunt of several.

STULB, Gladys E., 96, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Dec. 10. Uncle of one.

TROMBLY, Eugene A., 82, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Husband of Rosemary (Commons) Trombly. Father of Vicki Little. Stepfather of David Ross. Brother of Marie Crowley, Mae Guilbault, Anita Murphy, Rita Ste. Marie, Leo, Mike and Ray Trombly.

VOIGNIER, Ruth Ann, 62, St. Joseph Hill, Sellersburg, Nov. 14. Wife of Joe Voignier. Mother of Patty Groot, Jude Thornton and John Voignier. Sister of Norma Bizzell, Pat Johnson, Nancy O'Conner and Dan Regan. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of two.

WARD, Danny, 58, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 27. Husband of Phyllis (Perryman) Ward. Father of Danny Lee Ward. Brother of Hazel Voges, Elmer, Floyd and Ralph Ward.

WEBER, Helen Marie, 82, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarks-ville, Dec. 3. Mother of Diann Hillenbrand and Robert Weber Jr. Sister of Ruth Fischer. Grandmother of two.

WEIKER, Alma (Mattingly), 88, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Mother of Judy Bisselberg, Karen Maguire and Phillip Weiker. Sister of Carl Mattingly. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of six.

WILHELM, Harold L., 69, Holy Guardian Angels, Cedar Grove, Nov. 16. Father of Delores Batchelder, Jacqueline Sims, Anthony, Melvin and Michael Wilhelm. Brother of Rita Gesell, Alma Hoffman, Alvina Meyer and Raymond Wilhelm. Grandfather of three.

WITTMAN, Carl W., 82,

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Dec. 6. Husband of Joann Wittman. Father of Charles J. Wittman. Brother of Alferida Homan and Bertha Klein. Grandfather of three.

WUENSCH, Jo Ann, 68, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Ronald Wuensch. Mother of Ronna Felber, Cheryl Mayo, Gina Meriwether, Christopher and Jeffrey Wuensch. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of one.

ZAPPIA, Charles L., 90, Nativity, Indianapolis, Nov. 17. Father of Charlene Allen, Patricia VanCleave and Stephen Zappia. Brother of Theresa Bergman, Annie Glasgow, Rose Laker, Mary Worthington, Dominic and Joseph Zappia. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of three.

ZARANZINSKI, Dorothy, 58, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Oct. 15. Wife of Leon Zaranzinski. Mother of Christine and Eric Zaranzinski. †

Pope's Christmas schedule includes liturgies, blessings

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope John Paul II plans to spend his 25th Christmas season at the Vatican much as he has in the past: celebrating midnight Mass, imparting a global Christmas blessing, ordaining bishops and baptizing babies.

The 82-year-old pontiff's yuletide liturgical agenda shows only one minor variation. He will deliver his Christmas blessing in St. Peter's Square rather than overhead in the basilica's central balcony.

In addition, his schedule, released at the Vatican on Dec. 17, does not specify the location of the baptism celebration, which traditionally has been held in the Sistine Chapel.

According to the Vatican, the pope's Christmas liturgies include:

- Celebrating midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.
- Giving a speech and the traditional blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and to the world) from St. Peter's Square at noon on Christmas Day.
- Celebrating evening prayer and offering prayers of thanks for the past year at a 6 p.m. service in St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 31.
- Celebrating Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, mother of God, and World Peace Day.
- Ordaining new bishops during the celebration of Mass in the basilica on Jan. 6, the feast of the Epiphany.
- Baptizing infants during the celebration of Mass on Jan. 12, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Another papal Christmas appointment, according to a Vatican Radio events calendar, includes a Dec. 21 meeting with Vatican and Rome clergy to exchange Christmas greetings. The pope usually uses his speech for the occasion to review the past year in the Church.

As in past years, the pope was also expected to address a gathering of Vatican-accredited diplomats on Jan. 13.

On Christmas Day and New Year's Day, both Wednesdays, the pope will not hold his weekly general audience.

The pope was not expected to make his usual brief visit between Christmas and New Year's to his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo outside Rome, according to the Vatican Radio calendar. †

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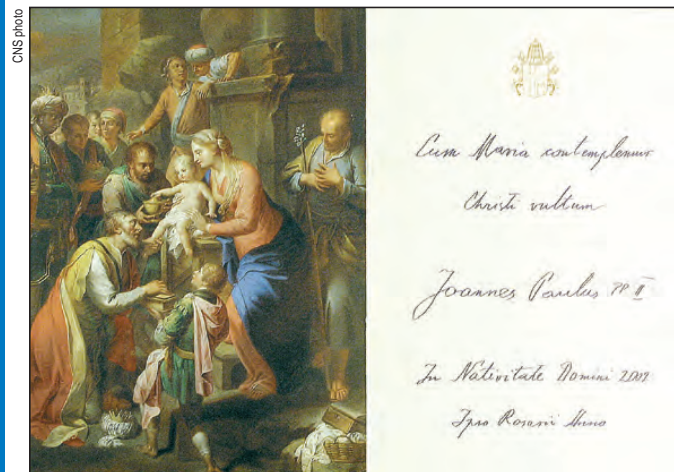
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Pope John Paul II's 2002 Christmas card features the painting "Christmas" attributed to Antonio Longo. The card, handwritten in Latin by the pontiff, reads, "With Mary we contemplate Christ's face. John Paul II. In the Nativity of the Lord 2002, this year of the Rosary."

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News briefs

U.S.

Bishop Gregory hails OK of abuse norms as sign of Vatican commitment

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The president of the U.S. bishops on Dec. 16 hailed Vatican approval of revised norms for the handling of sexual abuse cases as a “striking indication of how much the highest authority of the Church supports the efforts of the bishops in confronting the evil of child sexual abuse.” Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., said the U.S. bishops are grateful to the Vatican for the swiftness with which it approved the revised “Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons.” The U.S. bishops first approved the norms in June and sent them to the Vatican. After some revisions were worked out by a mixed U.S.-Vatican commission, the U.S. bishops on Nov. 13 accepted the revised version. The revisions put the legislative norms into greater conformity with general Church law and stipulated that trials by Church tribunals are the ordinary way to permanently remove priests who have sexually abused children.

Theologian sees post-Vatican II theology as ‘symphony of ministries’

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (CNS)—Forty years after the start of the Second Vatican Council, clergy and laity are still seeking to define a theology of ministry that can encompass the flourishing of professional lay ministers as well as the unique ministry of the ordained, according to theologian Richard Gaillardetz. A theology of ministry for the Church of the third millennium can be explained as a “symphony of ministries,” he said at a November workshop in Sacramento for both ordained and nonordained ministers. “The ministry of the pastor is like that of a conductor who leads, who discerns gifts, who makes sure that we are all following the same vision,” said Gaillardetz, a professor at the University of Toledo, Ohio. “But at the end of the day, the pastor depends on the musicians and their own competency, creativity and interpretation of the vision, and tries to bring that together as a whole.”

In Haiti, economy fails and investment freezes as masses suffer

MIAMI (CNS)—It makes no sense for the international community to hold Haiti's government hostage by withholding aid while its people starve, said Godlove Ntaw, Catholic Relief Services' Haiti representative. “Consider releasing aid to Haiti,” he urged in an interview with *The Florida Catholic*, Miami's archdiocesan newspaper. “If the politicians are not suffering as a result, the masses are.” Ntaw said the international community, led by the United States, froze all aid and loans to Haiti after disputed congressional elections in 2000. The only aid currently getting through is from nongovernmental organizations such as World Vision, Save the Children, CARE and CRS, the U.S. bishops' international relief and development agency, which has its headquarters in Baltimore. †

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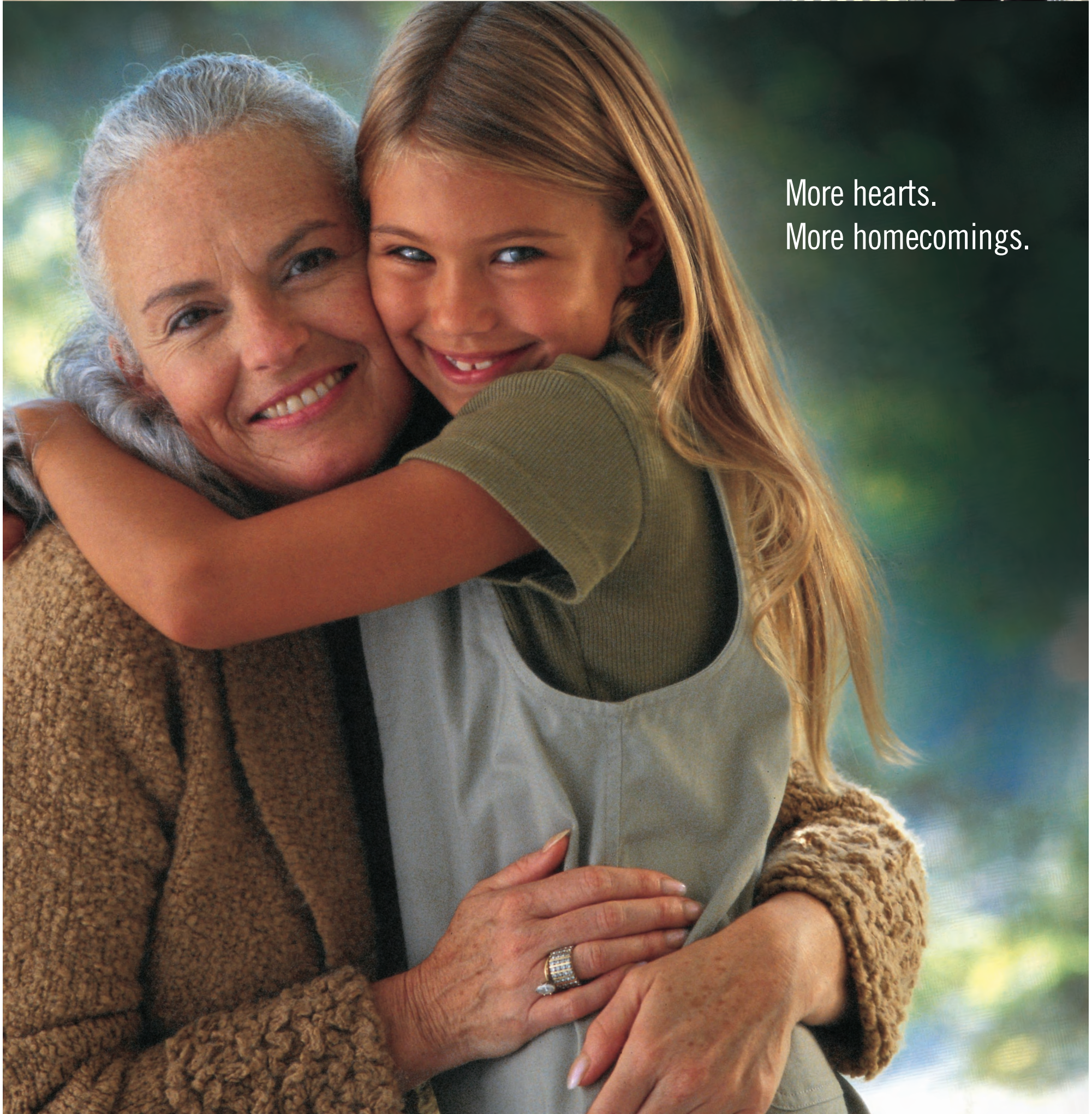
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Christmas in Bethlehem
A Palestinian child kisses the glass of a manger at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on Dec. 15. The Israeli Cabinet announced that Palestine leader Yasser Arafat would not be permitted entry to the city for Christmas and the military would remain a presence in Bethlehem.

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