



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

'Standing on holy ground'



Beech Grove Benedictine sisters break ground for new monastery, page 3.

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Marilyn Webb, left, and Helen Burke, volunteers at the archdiocesan Catholic Charities' Christmas Store in Indianapolis, show their delight at the donation of a doll, knowing it will make a child's Christmas special. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Sharing gifts, making memories: Volunteers strive to give children a magical Christmas

By John Shaughnessy

For Sharon Bernhardt, her entire approach to Christmas comes down to a memory and a promise she has made to herself.

The defining memory connects to an overwhelmed mother who came to the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, the Catholic Charities' festive setting that provides toys, clothes, sports

equipment and other gifts to make the holiday special for about 4,000 people in need—most of them children—every December.

"There was one woman in particular I was taking around the store," recalls Bernhardt, who has volunteered for more than 30 years at the Christmas Store. "As we were going around, she talked to me about having three extra children at

See CHRISTMAS STORE, page 8

ICC works to support legislation outlawing death penalty as state executions set to resume

By Natalie Hoefler

With Indiana's first state execution in 15 years scheduled for Dec. 18, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is already working to promote legislation for the 2025 General Assembly—set to begin on Jan. 8—that would eradicate the death penalty in Indiana.



Alexander Mingus

Indiana Rep. Bob Morris (District 84) "will file a full death penalty repeal bill that will have the option of life without parole," says Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, which serves as the public policy voice for the Church in Indiana. Morris, a Catholic, designed the bill to adhere to Church teaching, which opposes the death penalty.

"Our effort now is to determine the appetite in the House for looking at a bill like this," says Mingus.

He notes that there have been only two bills related to the death penalty proposed in the last decade—one in 2017 to create a mental illness exception, and one in 2021 to reserve the sentence to cases of multiple murders or the death of a police officer.

"Neither bill went anywhere," says Mingus. "So, we don't have a full picture of where current legislators stand on the death penalty because there's no voting record. And there's not much on record for how someone feels on the death penalty."

To identify where state legislators side on this issue, he says the ICC is "working with partner organizations," including the

See DEATH PENALTY, page 2

Giving thanks for the work of 'angels,' the gift of a friend, the faith of grandparents

(The Criterion has invited our readers to share a special thank you for someone who has influenced their lives in a positive and powerful way. Here is the fourth part of a continuing series.)

By John Shaughnessy

When Mary Anne Barothy was searching for a new job 25 years ago, she never expected that she would get one that would put her in close contact with women doing "the work of the angels."

That connection came for her when a public relations position opened at the St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis, a ministry of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

"While working with the Little Sisters, I saw love made visible every day as they care for their elderly residents until death," says Barothy, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. "Not only did the residents become my family, but also the Little Sisters. I felt loved and needed, and I



Mary Anne Barothy

looked forward to going to work every day.

"During my 19 years working for the Little Sisters, I was able to visit at least 15 or more of their homes around the country. Each one was full of love, and I felt most welcome at each home."

Barothy has continued that close bond with the sisters in retirement, volunteering with the St. Augustine Guild and doing what she can for the residents and the sisters.

"I just want to say that I am most grateful for the love and friendship of the Little Sisters and their residents," she says. "That is an awesome blessing to me. God bless the dear Little Sisters of the Poor. They do the work of the angels."

'A great friendship evolved'

John Jones knows the joy and the value of a friend who listens, who finds the good in you, and inspires you to bring your

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DEATH PENALTY

continued from page 1

Indiana Public Defense Council and the Indiana Abolition Coalition, as well as national groups like Catholic Mobilizing Network and Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty.

“It’s still early in the process,” says Mingus. “But this is going to be a topic we’ll be hitting pretty hard this year for a number of reasons.”

‘The death penalty is not the solution’

One of those reasons is the Church’s opposition to capital punishment.

Prior to 2018, the Church allowed for the death penalty in extreme circumstances for the protection of others, as outlined in #2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

In 2018, Pope Francis issued a change to #2267—and to the Church’s stance on capital punishment.

All death penalty was declared inadmissible because “the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes” and “... more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.”

The change was not based on the current pontiff’s judgment alone.

“Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have argued against the use of capital punishment, pointing out the security of modern prison systems as well as the impact of capital punishment on society and humanity,” says Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

“Pope Francis has used words like ‘inadmissible,’ ‘contrary to the Gospel,’ ‘an attack on the dignity of the human person,’ ‘fostering vengeance rather than justice’ and ‘a poison for society’ in describing the death penalty.

“While our first concern is for victims and their families, as well as protection for all those in society, the death penalty is not the solution. It cannot bring back loved ones, heal wounds of loss or bring justice to the victims.”

Archbishop Thompson also notes the

negative impact of capital punishment on prison personnel, witnesses and families.

“Violence often begets more violence, whether criminal or regulated,” he says. “We are better than this.”

Another reason both the archbishop and Mingus cite for seeking an end to capital punishment is the possibility of executing an innocent person.

According to Death Penalty Information Center’s online Innocence Database, 200 exonerations of those on death row have occurred in the United States since 1973.

“That’s a scary thing to think that you could find innocent people on death row who could be executed,” says Mingus.

Added urgency as state executions set to resume

The reasons for seeking an end to the death penalty cited above are timeless.

A more pressing issue for the ICC to promote a bill eradicating capital punishment in Indiana (while allowing life without parole) is the June 26 announcement by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb and Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita of the resumption of the death penalty in Indiana. (Read the ICC’s response on behalf of the five Indiana bishops at www.indianacc.org/bishopsstatements.)


While several federal executions took place at the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute in 2020, the last state-ordered execution occurred in 2009.

In a Dec. 11, 2019, *Indianapolis Star* article, the Indiana Department of Correction (DOC) stated the reason for the hiatus was “the result of business decisions by pharmaceutical suppliers who now decline purchase requests” from the agency.

The supply issue recently changed. The June 26 statement noted the DOC’s acquisition of the drug pentobarbital for carrying out executions.

“Accordingly, I am fulfilling my duties as governor to follow the law and move forward appropriately in this matter,” Gov. Holcomb said in the statement, posted on events.in.gov.

On Sept. 24, the Indiana Supreme Court set a date for the first of the executions. Joseph Corcoran—a Fort



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 7–12, 2024

December 7 – 7 p.m.
Mass for the Second Sunday of Advent at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral followed by reception for Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 8 – Noon
75th Anniversary Mass for St. Lawrence Parish at St. Lawrence Church, Indianapolis

December 9 – 10 a.m.
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Mass at Marian University Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel, Indianapolis

December 9 – Noon
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

December 10 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 10 – 3:30 p.m.
Indiana Bishops’ Province meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 11 – 9 a.m.
Indiana Catholic Conference meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 12 – 8:45 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

December 12 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 12 – 11:30 a.m.
Employee Advent Gathering at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

Wayne, Ind., man convicted in 1997 of murdering four people, including his brother—is set to be executed on Dec. 18 at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

Corcoran’s attorneys filed a motion with the Indiana Supreme Court on Nov. 15 for a stay of execution due to Corcoran’s struggle with mental illness, according to the case summary at public.courts.in.gov.

“For virtually his entire life, Mr. Corcoran has been plagued by symptoms of psychosis and cognitive dysfunction,” the motion states. “These symptoms continue to this day, and numerous mental health experts have diagnosed him with paranoid schizophrenia or precursors to the schizophrenic diagnosis.”

The filing also notes “colorable evidence” that, due to his schizophrenia, both the conviction of and carrying through with Corcoran’s execution violate the federal and state constitutions’ prohibition of “cruel and unusual punishment.”

State attorneys on the case were given a deadline of Nov. 26 to reply to the

motion. Corcoran’s attorneys had until Dec. 3 to respond to the state’s reply. The Indiana Supreme Court will review both responses, although no date has been announced as to when they will issue a ruling.

‘We’re praying for hearts to be moved’

Regardless of the outcome, the state’s resumption of executions adds urgency to the ICC’s efforts to promote legislation in the upcoming General Assembly that would abolish the death penalty in Indiana.

Governor-elect and current U.S. senator Mike Braun has not issued comments regarding the resumption of state executions. Nor do his gubernatorial campaign or senate websites state his view on capital punishment.

However, according to Braun’s comments in an April 19 *Indiana Capital Chronicle* article, he does support the death penalty “for those guilty of the most heinous of crimes.”

Mingus says those involved in efforts to repeal Indiana’s death penalty are praying.

“We’re praying for hearts to be moved—of our current governor, our new governor and our legislators; for them to turn it over in their mind if this is something they’re OK with the state doing; and for them to consider the fundamental question: Can the death penalty be justly administered in our current context?”

“We say no.”

(To ask Gov. Holcomb to stop the execution of Joseph Corcoran, go to cutt.ly/StopCorcoranExecution.) †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offers a prayer on the steps of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Nov. 17 during a rally calling on Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb to halt the execution of Joseph Corcoran, scheduled for Dec. 18, the first state execution in 15 years. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



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‘Standing on holy ground’: Beech Grove Benedictine sisters break ground for new monastery

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE—The Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove gathered with dozens of their supporters on a sunny and seasonably warm afternoon on Nov. 24 to break ground for a new monastery on the grounds on which they have lived for more than 60 years.

The day in the Church was the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

“We have awaited this day with great anticipation as it marks the beginning of construction,” said Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, Our Lady of Grace’s prioress. “It seems so fitting that this feast would coincide with our groundbreaking, as our lives center around Christ, who is our king, our foundation, the one we seek to serve in this current house and the house that we are building.”

The construction of the new monastery is a \$24 million project that is expected to be completed in February 2026. The sisters are currently still seeking to raise \$4 million for the project. After the sisters move into the new structure, the current monastery will be demolished.

The new monastery will include a church, residence rooms, offices, meeting rooms, a kitchen, dining room and infirmary for the monastic community. It will also feature guest rooms which will eventually be able to accommodate a small number of overnight guests and retreatants.

In the near future, however, these rooms will be occupied by members of the monastic community. Small groups, such as parish or school staffs, will be able to schedule day meetings at the monastery once it is completed.

“For over 60 years, we the sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery have served in a variety of ministries in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis,” Sister Julie said. “We have fondly come to consider Beech Grove our home. And we believe that God is calling us to remain here to continue to live out our Benedictine life together.”

“At this time in our history, we have discerned to build a new monastery that will be of appropriate size and able to meet the needs of our community as we journey into the future. We believe this new monastery will enable us to continue our mission to seek God through prayer, work and hospitality for many decades to come.”

A long journey to a hopeful future

The journey to the groundbreaking ceremony was a long one for the Benedictine sisters.

In an interview with *The Criterion*, Sister Julie explained that the sisters have long recognized the need to

construct a new monastery because of the growing difficulty in maintaining its current building, which is also too large for the monastic community at its current and expected future size.

There are currently 45 sisters in the monastic community. The building was built more than 60 years ago to house more than 100 sisters.

The community began the planning process for a new monastery in 2019. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 put the process on pause. In the time since, the sisters have sold St. Paul Hermitage, its longtime nursing home and retirement facility, which is now Enville Healthcare of Beech Grove. They also decided to close the Benedict Inn Conference & Retreat Center.

But in the midst of all this change, the sisters’ commitment to their continued life of prayer, hospitality and service in Beech Grove and the broader archdiocese remained—and remains—steadfast.

Sister Julie noted the community’s hope that the new monastery “will free us up to concentrate more on ministry and less on caring for the buildings.”

“What we’re doing allows us to be a vibrant presence, to continue to minister,” she added. “That’s very important to us.”

Sister Julie explained that her community’s commitment to remain in Beech Grove flows from their Benedictine value of stability, which has helped Benedictines throughout their 1,500-year history to persevere in seeking God and helping others do the same in the face of many challenges.

“We are committed to be here for life,” Sister Julie said. “You can count on our prayers. You can count on always being able to come and pray with us.”

Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, Our Lady of Grace’s prioress at the start of the planning process for the new monastery, emphasized in an interview with *The Criterion* the role stability played in the planning process.

“When we were deciding what to do, the first thing was that we wanted to stay here,” said Sister Jennifer, who leads the community’s building committee. “Our roots are here, and our roots are deep. In our mobile society, I think it is really



The Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove broke ground on Nov. 24 on a new monastery. Shoveling the dirt are, from left, Brian Ziolkowski and Michael Egan of the Browning Day architectural firm, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, Beech Grove Mayor James Coffman, Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner, Father James Farrell, Connie Lund and Colleen Kenney of the monastery’s Lay Board of Advisers, and Phil Kenney of F. A. Wilhelm Construction. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

a gift for people to know that we will always be here. I think the world needs that.”

In the midst of all the changes that Benedictines in Beech Grove and beyond have lived through, they’ve also always been committed to prayer and hospitality, welcoming guests to join them for the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours.

“Our prayer is always open for people to come to,” Sister Julie said. “One of the things that people always say is that they feel so peaceful when they come here. That’s the way you want people to feel when they come to visit a monastery. It’s a quiet place where they can have a conversation with God. We want to be that for other people.”

Peace is found not just in the monastery and its chapel at Our Lady of Grace. It’s also experienced in its 40 acres of wooded and parklike grounds in the midst of a largely urbanized Beech Grove and the larger Indianapolis community.

Sister Julie explained that the decision of the monastic community to build a new monastery was motivated in part because of its desire to care for creation for themselves, their neighbors in Beech Grove and guests who come there.

“We know that the property that we own here in Beech Grove is a gift,” she said. “There are a lot of people in our neighborhood who walk on our property. We value the gift of creation that’s on our property. We steward that carefully so that, not only can we enjoy it, but others may enjoy it as well.”

‘Standing on holy ground’

The Nov. 24 groundbreaking ceremony took place in the context of prayer in a liturgy of the word.

Sister Julie noted during it that the physical construction of a new monastery symbolizes the continual spiritual building up of the sisters of Our Lady of Grace.

“During this building process, we pray that our community may be built into a spiritual house,” she said. “We build our lives firmly upon Christ our foundation, so that we may continue to live our Benedictine vocation for

the life of the Church and the world, both local and beyond.

“We are aware of God’s steadfast love. We entrust ourselves to God’s guidance and we are grateful for the abundance that God shares with us.”

Father James Farrell, who in retirement serves as Our Lady of Grace’s chaplain, also spoke during the groundbreaking ceremony.

“Whenever we look to the interest of the neighbor or the community and serve them, we are, in a sense, God’s co-workers,” Father Farrell said. “This new monastery will allow the sisters of Our Lady of Grace to continue to be God’s co-workers into the future.”

“With their life centered on prayer and building community within the walls of the monastery, they bear witness to the daily living of the Gospel, offering encouragement and contributing to the life of the local Church and community. Entrusting themselves to God’s grace, may they continue to live their lives in a manner of their calling.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blessed the ground where the new monastery will be built and was one of several people to take part in the groundbreaking.

“St. Benedict teaches us in his *Rule* that every time you begin a good work, you must pray to God most earnestly to bring it to perfection,” Archbishop Thompson prayed. “Let us pray for God’s help through this celebration, dear sisters and brothers, that he will bring this construction to a successful completion and that his protection will keep those who work on it safe from injury.”

In remarks during the ceremony, Archbishop Thompson reflected that, although he blessed the ground with holy water, all who were present were “already standing on holy ground.”

“Imagine all of the prayers that have been offered up over these many years and decades, praying for God’s grace to continue to transform hearts and minds ...,” he said. “We pray for that grace, and we give thanks for the great witness of the Benedictine sisters here, not only on this ground, but also in the many ways that you have served throughout central and southern Indiana and beyond.”

(For more information on the construction of the new monastery at Our Lady of Grace and how to contribute to it, contact Benedictine Sister Susan Reuber at 317-787-3287, ext. 3035 or at susanreuber03@yahoo.com.) †



This architectural rendering shows the layout of the new monastery that is now being constructed for the Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. It is expected to be completed in February 2026. (Submitted image)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial



A homeless man sits with his belongings along a street in San Francisco on May 19. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

This Advent, let’s expand our minds and hearts and pray for a new world

“Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters and to the desire for a new world.”
—Pope Francis, *Angelus* address, 2018

The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ’s second coming at the end of time and to the anniversary of our Lord’s birth at Christmas. It is a time of expectation and hopefulness, and it also begins a new liturgical year. While some primarily focus on family, friends and co-workers, it must be a time to focus on others as well. As we approach the second week of Advent in 2024, we believe the message Pope Francis shared above six years ago is still very relevant.

And they are words we must unequivocally take to heart. There are too many hungry and homeless people throughout society, looking for their next meal or a bed to sleep in. This way of life exists in central and southern Indiana, and we must open our minds and hearts to assist the less fortunate—especially as the brunt of winter approaches, which will bring bone-chilling temperatures and life-threatening challenges for our brothers and sisters who live on our streets. If there is ever an opportunity to expand our minds and hearts to act as our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, the coming months are it, and we must answer that call. We’ve asked before, but it’s worth asking again: this Advent and beyond, donate to Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, Catholic Charities throughout the archdiocese, St. Vincent de Paul chapters in central and southern Indiana, and other reputable charitable organizations you know are helping the needy. Our brothers and sisters especially need these acts of kindness

during this time of year. If we are to look beyond ourselves, our commitment to be vigilant must also extend across the globe. Too many of our brothers and sisters are in the midst of wars—most through no fault of their own—where they are dodging bombs and bullets and have their normal way of life disrupted. They wonder—but especially pray—that the chaos and uneasiness will soon end. We, too, must storm heaven with our ongoing petitions for peace to come to those regions, especially as we approach one of the holiest times of the year. As we prepare for the anniversary of the birth of the Christ Child, wouldn’t it be awe-inspiring to see troops drop their arms and become instruments of peace? Let us pray we move closer to this each passing day. Too many are still persecuted for their faith—including here in the U.S.—and we must bring an end to this injustice. That may be too much to ask, but we believe the “new world” Pope Francis was desiring in 2018 is that sort of world: a society where people of all faith traditions, nationalities and cultures come together as one, seeing Christ in others and being Christ for others—loving their neighbors as themselves. Six years later, there is still too much darkness in the world. Sin is a failure to love, and too many still cannot come to terms with loving the stranger. As our shepherd Archbishop Charles C. Thompson has shared on many occasions, Jesus is calling each of us to discipleship. That includes emulating Christ in all we say and do with the help of his ever-present grace. As we continue on our Advent journey toward Christmas, let us strive to be people of light. Please Lord, as we do our part to change the world, may it be so.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

Celebrating the life and the spirit of Bernadette “Bernie” Price

It’s almost impossible to capture the relentlessly positive approach to life of Bernadette “Bernie” Price in one image or scene, but let’s start with this one.



It happened just minutes after a championship game in the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). The two volleyball teams had just finished a well-played, intense championship match that had left one group of seventh- and eighth-grade girls beaming and jumping in joy while the other team slumped off the court, with some of the girls crying. Amid these polar opposite emotions, Bernie gathered the two teams together in her official role as the CYO’s director of girls’ athletics. She was there to present trophies to the two teams, and she had always lived for this moment during her 51 years of joyous, give-everything-you-have dedication to serving the CYO and the children and youths of the archdiocese.

After she brought the teams together, Bernie privately told them how proud she was of their efforts during the game and the season. Then she had them turn around and look at everyone in the stands because she wanted the fans “to see how great these kids are.” When the girls did, Bernie’s voice rose. With no need of a microphone, she roared, “If anyone wants their money back, you’re not going to get it because you’ve gotten your money’s worth and more.” And her eyes turned again to the girls on both teams.

“When you make it this far and you work that hard, there are no losers for me.” For those who got to know, share with, work with and laugh with Bernie, there is a deep sense of loss for someone who always strived during her 73 years of life to make the world better, to make friendships deeper, to love in a way that was fearless, forgiving and ever embracing. Still the reality is that Bernie would want everyone whose life she touched to focus on the gift and the joy of their time together—not on her passing after her two-year battle with cancer ended on Nov. 27. That life-affirming approach was evident in the way she made friends and touched lives at Franciscan Health Indianapolis, the setting of her surgeries and treatments for cancer. A good friend of Bernie’s, Joan Himebrook, works in the cancer center

at Franciscan and she marveled at the attitude that Bernie had in facing her treatments. “She’s walking in here with cancer, and she brightens everybody’s day,” Himebrook said back in September. “As she’s walking back for her infusion, she will say, ‘I am so excited to come here and get this today. I’m so excited I get to fight my cancer.’” Bernie displayed that same relentlessly positive attitude when, at 63, she led a high school youth group from Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis into a pitch-black cavern in Kentucky. The group had gone there for an adventure that was supposed to include zip-lining through the cavern—90 feet above the cavern floor. Looking into the minimally-lit black void ahead and below, the teenagers weren’t exactly pressing forward to be the first to go hurtling into the abyss. A few even asked, in shaky voices, “Are we going to do this?” To which Bernie responded, “I’m going first. Watch me. I can do this. You can do this!” And then she was off. “It was heart-racing,” she recalled. “There was a lot of adrenaline and a lot of fun. And everybody ended up doing it. I love that age group because I can still run with them.” The hope and the belief today are that Bernie is running and holding hands with her husband and the love of her life, Jack Price, who died on Christmas Eve in 2011. The hope and the belief are also that she is continuing, in person, a conversation with God that she had during her fight with cancer. “At one point, I remember saying to myself, ‘God put this on you. I’m glad he didn’t put it on someone who couldn’t handle it.’ That’s been my attitude,” she said on a morning two months ago. “I talk to God quite a bit. I talk about everything. I thank him for watching over me. “I do special prayers every evening. I’m praying for everything. I pray a lot for the young people, that they have good mentors, and they can continue on in a great world. I pray for all the people who have cancer and their families or people who are just dealing with problems.” On that morning, her eyes also sparkled and her smile grew wide as she shared the joy and the gift of her life. “You make a lot of friends over the years. You touch a lot of lives. That’s what keeps you going.” Do what you can to keep that spirit alive. (John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of The Criterion.) †



Even during her chemotherapy treatments, Bernie Price’s desire for fun continued. Here, the self-proclaimed “Chemo Cheez-It Queen” showed off her Cheez-It swag as she shared a smile with her close friend, Joan Himebrook, who works in the cancer center at Franciscan Health Indianapolis as the community outreach manager for the hospital’s oncology and cardiovascular units. (Submitted photo)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

This Advent, look to Mary Immaculate to see the light of God’s glory

“Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever: wrapped in the cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the miter that displays the glory of the eternal name. For God will show all the Earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God’s worship” (Bar 5:1-4).

This year, because the Second Sunday of Advent falls on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transferred to Monday, Dec. 9. We are blessed to celebrate these two beautiful liturgies in close proximity because what we joyfully await during the Advent season is revealed in Mary Immaculate.

The first reading for the Second Sunday of Advent from the prophet Baruch contains a vision of the new Jerusalem aglow with the splendor and glory of God. “The forests and every fragrant kind of tree have overshadowed Israel at God’s command,” the prophet proclaims, “for God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company” (Bar 5:9). The splendor of God’s glory is found in the coming together of justice and mercy, which is

what Advent anticipates with joyful hope.

This Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled by God through the grace given to Mary Immaculate. Her “yes” to God’s invitation to become the mother of our Savior made it possible for the glory of God to shine in our world’s darkness. Mary is the splendor of Jerusalem “wrapped in the cloak of justice from God” (Bar 5:2). She symbolizes the patient expectation that characterizes this holy season, and her fidelity to God’s word prepares the way for Christ’s coming again.

The readings for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception support this Advent expectation. As St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, and all of us:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him” (Eph 1:3-4).

God chose all of us “before the foundation of the world” to be without sin. He wanted us to be holy—as God is holy—and to be free from the corruption of sin and death.

Our first parents rejected God’s invitation and, as a result, we inherited their original sin. Only the sacrificial gift of God’s only

Son could redeem us from this curse. We are free from the devastating consequences of original sin because God loves us so much that he could not bear to see us condemned to a future without hope.

The Immaculate Conception is a profound sign of God’s love for his children. In anticipation of her divine Son’s passion, death and resurrection, Mary was conceived without sin. She was chosen to be the sign of our future glory as daughters and sons of our heavenly Father.

When the angel visited Mary in Nazareth and greeted her as one “full of grace,” God’s messenger acknowledged that “the Lord is with you.” Not only would Mary carry the infant child in her womb, but she was “blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing” and radiant with God’s splendor. The incarnation was both a physical reality and a spiritual transformation that allowed Mary to foreshadow the change that will happen to everyone who is raised from the dead on the last day.

The glory of God that is our Advent hope can be seen in the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is what we hope to become by the power of God’s grace. She is patient, humble, pure and wholly obedient to God’s will. She ponders in her heart the mysteries

of life, sacrifice and unconditional love. She serves others without counting the cost to herself. And above all, she follows in the footsteps of her beloved Son.

This Advent season, let us look to Mary Immaculate to see the light of God’s glory and to discover the truth about our vocation as daughters and sons of the same Father in heaven. Let us pray:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

May this holy season bring us closer to Mary and, through her, to her beloved Son, Jesus. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Este Adviento, busquemos en María Inmaculada la luz de la gloria de Dios

“¡Jerusalén, quítate tu ropa de luto y aflicción, y vístete de gala con el esplendor eterno que Dios te da! Vístete la túnica de la victoria de Dios, y ponte en la cabeza la corona de gloria del Eterno. Dios mostrará en toda la tierra tu esplendor, pues el nombre eterno que Dios te dará es: Paz en la justicia y gloria en el servicio a Dios” (Bar 5:1-4).

Este año, debido a que el segundo domingo de Adviento cae el 8 de diciembre, la solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción se traslada al lunes 9 de diciembre. Tenemos la bendición de celebrar muy cerca estas dos hermosas liturgias porque lo que esperamos con alegría durante el tiempo de Adviento se revela en María Inmaculada.

La primera lectura del segundo domingo de Adviento del profeta Baruc contiene una visión de la nueva Jerusalén resplandeciente con el esplendor y la gloria de Dios: “Los bosques y todos los árboles olorosos darán sombra a Israel por orden de Dios, porque él guiará a Israel con alegría, a la luz de su gloria, y le mostrará su amor y su justicia” (Bar 5:9). El esplendor de la gloria de Dios radica en la unión entre la justicia y la misericordia, que es lo que el Adviento anticipa con alegre esperanza.

A través de la gracia que Dios concede

a María Inmaculada se cumple esta profecía del Antiguo Testamento. Su «sí» a la invitación de Dios de convertirse en la madre de nuestro Salvador hizo posible que la gloria de Dios brillara en las tinieblas de nuestro mundo. María es el esplendor de Jerusalén “envuelta en el manto de justicia de Dios.” Ella simboliza la paciente espera que caracteriza esta temporada santa, y su fidelidad a la Palabra de Dios prepara el camino para la nueva venida de Cristo.

Las lecturas de la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción apoyan esta expectativa del Adviento. Como escribe san Pablo a los Efesios, y a todos nosotros:

“Alabado sea el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, pues en Cristo nos ha bendecido en los cielos con toda clase de bendiciones espirituales. Dios nos escogió en Cristo desde antes de la creación del mundo, para que fuéramos santos y sin defecto en su presencia” (Ef 1:3-4).

Dios nos eligió a todos “antes de la fundación del mundo” para que viviéramos sin pecado; quería que fuéramos santos, como Dios, y desprovistos de la corrupción del pecado y de la muerte.

Nuestros primeros padres rechazaron la invitación de Dios y, como resultado, heredamos su pecado original. Únicamente el don sacrificial del Hijo

único de Dios podía redimirnos de esta maldición. Estamos libres de las devastadoras consecuencias del pecado original porque Dios nos ama tanto que no podría soportar vernos condenados a un futuro sin esperanza.

La Inmaculada Concepción es un signo profundo del amor de Dios por sus hijos. Anticipándose a la pasión, muerte y resurrección de su divino Hijo, María nació sin pecado. Fue elegida para ser el signo de nuestra gloria futura como hijas e hijos de nuestro Padre celestial.

Cuando el ángel visitó a María en Nazaret y al saludarla se dirigió a ella como “lena de gracia,” el mensajero de Dios reconoció que “el Señor está contigo.” María no solamente llevaba al niño en su vientre, sino que estaba “bendecida en Cristo con toda bendición espiritual” y radiante del esplendor de Dios. La Encarnación fue tanto una realidad física como una transformación espiritual mediante la cual María fue capaz de prefigurar el cambio que se producirá en todo aquel que resucite de entre los muertos en el Último Día.

La gloria de Dios que es nuestra esperanza de Adviento puede verse en la Santísima Virgen María. Ella es lo que esperamos llegar a ser por el poder de la gracia de Dios. Es paciente, humilde, pura y totalmente obediente a la voluntad de Dios. Reflexiona en su corazón sobre

los misterios de la vida, el sacrificio y el amor incondicional. Sirve a los demás aun a costa de sí misma. Y, sobre todo, sigue los pasos de su amado Hijo.

En este tiempo de Adviento, busquemos en María Inmaculada la luz de la gloria de Dios y descubramos la verdad sobre nuestra vocación como hijas e hijos del mismo Padre del cielo. Oremos.

Acordaos, oh piadosísima Virgen María, que jamás se ha oído decir que ninguno de los que han acudido a tu protección, implorando tu asistencia y reclamando tu socorro, haya sido abandonado de ti. Animado con esta confianza, a ti también acudo, oh Madre, Virgen de las vírgenes, y aunque gimiendo bajo el peso de mis pecados, me atrevo a comparecer ante tu presencia soberana. No deseches mis humildes súplicas, oh Madre del Verbo divino, antes bien, escúchalas y acógelas benigneamente. Amén.

Que este tiempo santo nos acerque a María y, a través de ella, a su amado Hijo, Jesús. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

December 6-January 5

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish, 23345 Gavin Lane, Bright. **Bright Lights Drive-Thru Christmas Light Display**, Mon.-Sat. 6-10 p.m. and Sun. 6-9 p.m., free. Information: 513-788-1596, brightlightsdcc@gmail.com.

December 9

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Madonna Hall, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Confraternity of Christian Mothers**, 6 p.m. Mass followed by meeting, for all Catholic women, free. Information: 217-638-7433, paulabeechler@gmail.com.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation, no appointment needed. Info: 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

December 10

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent

and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

December 14

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Youth Volunteer Day**, noon-5 p.m., ages 12-18, assist residents in attending Christmas Fun at the Woods celebration at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Information, registration: teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org, jluna@spmsw.org, 361-500-9505.

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Fun at the Woods**, 1:30-4:30 p.m., includes crafts, alpaca visits, wagon rides, storytelling, face painting, bake sale, cake walk, tours of St. Mother Theodore Guérin Shrine and Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spmsw.org.

December 15

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat

House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Stations of the Nativity**, 2-3 p.m., Father Keith Hosey leads outdoor stations from Annunciation through Flight into Egypt, will move to chapel for inclement weather, free. Information: 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

December 15-23

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Simbang Gabi Christmas Novena of Masses**, 6 p.m., a Filipino tradition. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

December 17

Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E 10th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **An Intimate Advent Evening for Women Considering Life as a Religious Sister**, 5 p.m., includes evening prayer and supper, free. Information, registration: vocation@thedome.org.

December 18

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis.

Christmas Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Providence Hall Dining Room, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Memory Café**, 2-3:30 p.m., third Wednesday of each month, for people with early-to-moderate memory loss and their caregivers, beverages and snacks provided, free. Information, registration: events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2873, memorycafe@spmsw.org.

December 19

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

December 20

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Ken Britt, chief operating officer and chancellor of Marian University, presenting “Marian University 3.0: The Changing

Landscape of Education and the Catholic University Response,” festive holiday apparel encouraged, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Dec. 17. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

December 21

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House Chapel, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Service of the Longest Night**, 6 p.m. CT, for those struggling with loss during the Christmas season, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke facilitating, light refreshments to follow, RSVP requested, free. Information, RSVPs: info@abbeycaskets.com, 800-987-7380.

2025

January 3-5

Cincinnati, Ohio (location given upon registration). **Retrouvaille Retreat**, for those in a struggling marriage. Information, registration: 513-258-8622,

CincinnatiRetrouvaille@gmail.com, helpourmarriage.org.

January 7

Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of vulnerability. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spmsw.org.

January 8

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

January 12

Marian University, Norman Center Room 222, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **People of Peace OFS Monthly Meeting**, 12:30-3 p.m., explore Franciscan spirituality with lay Franciscans, free. Info: 317-762-6259, popofsindy@gmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

December 20

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

December 21

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Advent Mindfulness Retreat: Cultivating Peace Within**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, \$30, \$45 with CEUs. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

December 22

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Coffee Talks—Divine Presence: Mary’s Journey**, 10:45 a.m.-noon, Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, online

option available, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

December 27-29

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, 5 p.m. Fri. (vespers)-1 p.m. Sun. (lunch), for young adults ages 18-39, quiet day of reflection with spiritual direction available, includes overnight accommodations and meals, \$50 single room. Registration: 812-357-6501, yae@saintmeinrad.edu.

2025

January 9, Feb. 19

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds,

overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

January 10, Feb. 7

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

January 11

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Grieving into Love**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., chaplain and counselor Richard Brendan presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

January 17-19

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St.,

Indianapolis. **TOBIT Marriage Preparation Weekend**, 7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$330 per couple, separate rooms, includes meals and materials. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Silence, Solitude and the Presence of God**, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscan Friar of the Immaculate Gabriel M. Cortes facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$368 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Making “Soma” from “Sarx:” The Transformative Power of the Gospel**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double.

Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

January 25

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **St. Paul’s Conversion and Ours: An Experience of Metanoia**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, includes lunch, \$75. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

February 8

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **The Power of the Jesus Touch: Healed, Transformed, Saved**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., author Sandra Hartlieb presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 14-16

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Benedictine Wisdom for Married Life**, Valentine’s Day retreat for married couples, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

February 22

Mystics and Fellowship virtual program, 9-10:30 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of Providence, third of four independent sessions (March 29), register by Feb. 19, \$25 per session. Information, registration: events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spmsw.org.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Wisdom Knowing and Wisdom Jesus**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., doctor of nursing Kay Jackson presenting, \$40. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 25-27

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **A Contemplative Approach to the Lord’s Prayer**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

I Am the Immaculate Conception documentary will show in select theaters on Dec. 12, 14 and 17

An 80-minute documentary called *I Am the Immaculate Conception* will show in select theaters throughout the nation on Dec. 12, 14 and 17. The documentary seeks to answer the question of why Mary called herself “the Immaculate Conception” when she appeared to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France, in 1858. Michael Kondrat (*Faustina: Love and Mercy*, 2019) directed the film in association with the Marians of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) congregation. A press release notes that in the film “a group of eminent experts, including the Marian Fathers, analyze Greek

texts of the holy Scripture, revelations and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.” Dramatized scenes are used to help tell the story. A bonus clip following the documentary features Msgr. Walter Rossi, rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., “speaking about Mary’s historic role in American history and why the U.S. bishops urged consecration to Our Lady under the title of the Immaculate Conception,” the press release notes. For more information about the documentary, to find a local theater showing the film or to order tickets, go to www.immaculatemovie2024.com. †

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indy will relaunch its Christkindl Village event on Dec. 13-14

St. John the Evangelist Parish will host a Christkindl Village event at 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, from 5-10 p.m. on Dec. 13 and from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. on Dec. 14. The parish’s long-standing annual Christkindl Village event had been on hiatus for several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the construction of the parish’s new hall. For the event’s relaunch, the Christkindl Village will be smaller than in years past but will still offer many

familiar features: a live Nativity display, kids’ activities, ornament making and photos with St. Nicholas. German foods, roasted nuts, coffee, beer and wine will be available for purchase. A sacred music festival will take place in the church at 6 p.m. on Dec. 14 featuring the parish’s musicians and choirs. Food and beverages will be served in the new parish hall. There is no entry fee to attend the event. For more information, call 317-635-2021 or e-mail office@stjohnsindy.org. †

Parishes prepare to host Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

Criterion staff report

The following Masses and special events for the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe throughout central and southern Indiana were reported to *The Criterion*.

American Martyrs Church, 262 W. Cherry St., Scottsburg, 812-752-3693.
—Dec. 7: 4:30 p.m. rosary and adoration, 5 p.m. Mass

Holy Trinity Parish, 100 Keeley St., Edinburgh, 812-526-9460.
—Dec. 9: 6 p.m. Mass, followed by procession to parish hall
—Dec. 10: 6 p.m. rosary in parish hall
—Dec. 11: 6 p.m. Communion service followed by rosary in parish hall
—Dec. 12: 7 p.m. rosary in parish hall followed by procession to church, Mass, serenade and hospitality

Immaculate Heart of Mary School, 5692 Central Ave., Indianapolis, 317-255-5468.
Dec. 9—2 p.m. school prayer service with procession, music, apparition re-enactment, reflection

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1840 E. 8th St., Jeffersonville, 812-282-2677.
—Dec. 12: 7:30 a.m. music; 8 a.m. Mass; 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. confession available; 8:30 a.m.-8 a.m. on Dec. 13, adoration; 7-7:45 p.m. Marian music
—Dec. 13: 8 a.m. Benediction

St. Ambrose Parish, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour, 812-522-5304.
—Dec. 12: 5-7 a.m. serenade, 6 p.m. bilingual Mass followed by social in school gym

St. Anthony Parish, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis, 317-636-4828.
—Dec. 11: 9 a.m. Mass in English, 6 p.m. procession, 7 p.m. children’s choir serenade, 7:30 p.m. *danza matachines* (dancing), 8 p.m. children’s choir serenade, 8:30 p.m. Marian choir, 9 p.m. apparitions re-enactment, 9:30 p.m. general serenade, 10 p.m. Pérez Family *mariachi*, 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: midnight Álvarez Family *mariachi*, 1 a.m. vigil, 9 a.m. school Mass in English, 6:30 p.m. rosary in Spanish, 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish, 8 p.m. celebration in school gym

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus, 812-379-9353.
—Dec. 11: 9 p.m. church opens, 9:30 p.m. procession, 9:45 p.m. bilingual rosary, 10:30 p.m. *danza*, 11 p.m. Mass

—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas* followed by refreshments, 6 p.m. Mass followed by dinner

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish at St. Mary Church, 720 N. “A” St., Richmond, 765-962-3902.
—Dec. 12: 6:30 p.m. Mass followed by social in school gym

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. 317-859-4673
—Dec. 12: noon Mass, 6-7 p.m. adoration

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis, 317-291-7014.
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. rosary, 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment, dances, choirs, *mariachi*
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass in Spanish, 6 p.m. bilingual Mass, 7 p.m. *danza*, 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish, 9:30 p.m. *danza* and reception

St. Joseph Parish, 1125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville, 317-398-8227.
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary, 6:30 p.m. Aztec dance, 7 p.m. Mass, 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment, 8:30 p.m. music and *mañanitas*, 9 p.m. fellowship in cafeteria

St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis, 317-974-9226.
—Dec. 11: 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas* and *mariachi*, 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish, 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment

St. Margaret Mary Parish, 2405 S. 7th St., Terre Haute, 812-232-3512.
—Dec. 12: 6:30 p.m. procession, 7 p.m. Mass, reception following Mass

St. Martin of Tours Church, 1720 E. Harrison St., Martinsville, 765-342-6379.
—Dec. 12: 8:15 a.m. Mass

St. Mary Parish, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis, 317-637-3983.
—Dec. 11: 8 p.m. outdoor procession, 9 p.m. rosary, 9:45 p.m. *danza*, 10:30 p.m. apparitions re-enactment, 11 p.m. Mass
—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas* followed by refreshments, 6 p.m. rosary, 6:30 p.m. *danza*, 7 p.m. Mass, 8:30 p.m. fellowship

St. Mary Parish, 777 S. 11th St., Mitchell, 812-849-3570.
—Dec. 15: 8:30 a.m. Mass, reception after Mass



A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen in the courtyard of Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Tucson, Ariz., on Oct. 22, 2023. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis, 317-253-2193.
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. *mañanitas*, rosary, apparition re-enactments, *mariachi*
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass with celebration following, 6 p.m. Mass followed by procession and celebration dinner

St. Patrick Parish, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis, 317-631-5824.
—Dec. 10: 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish for feast of St. Juan Diego
—Dec. 11: 11 p.m. Mass followed *mariachi*
—Dec. 12: 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 202 E. Washington St., Greencastle, 765-653-5678.
—Dec. 12: 5:30 p.m. Mass followed by dinner †

History of Our Lady of Guadalupe touches various cultures and traditions

Special to The Criterion

(Editor’s note: This article is partly based on a document written by Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, a priest of the Archdiocese of Mexico. Since his appointment as postulator of the cause of canonization of St. Juan Diego, who was canonized by then-Pope John Paul II in 2002, Msgr. Chávez has dedicated his life to the research of the historical sources of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531.)

Also referred to as St. Mary of Guadalupe and the Virgin of Guadalupe, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe manifests the perfect inculturation of the Gospel. It is embodied in the humble *tilma* (cloak) of St. Juan Diego made of vegetable fibers of *izótl*, which is an agavaceae palm.

Appearing to St. Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill on the outskirts of what is now Mexico City in 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe takes the good and true, the seeds of the word, and takes them to fullness in Jesus Christ Our Lord. It is a true inculturation of the Gospel, that is, she knows how to distinguish these seeds in the heart of every human being, within every culture, beyond traditions and customs, and that is where she places her beloved son Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

Her image offers a true message of God’s love both for the indigenous people and for any culture, whose iconographic and theological source is what the Book of Revelation proclaims to us:
“A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman—clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child

and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth” (Rv 12:1-2).
The *mestizo* face of Our Lady of Guadalupe is of a young girl of great beauty. In it, tenderness, compassion, mercy, consolation and love are manifested. It is bent in a sign of humility, as expressed by the indigenous people: This woman is important, because she stands in front of the sun, steps on the moon and dresses herself with the stars, but her face tells us that there is someone greater than her, for she is bowed as a sign of respect.
She is the mother of all human beings; as she said to Juan Diego: “For, verily, I am honored to be your compassionate mother, yours and of all the men who live together on this Earth, and also of all the other varied races of men, those who love me” (“*Nican Mopohua*,” #29-31).
In her, all races are identified and, at

the same time, she has taken their identity from us, as the indigenous tradition of Zozocolco. Her face is neither of the Spaniards nor of the indigenous, but both. For this reason, she is affectionately called the “*morenita*” (the dark-skinned one).
The Indians used the name “*Tonanztin*,” which means “our little mother” to address her, and they joined it to her name “*Tonanztin* Guadalupe,” which we could translate as: “Our venerable Mother Guadalupe.”
The Virgin wanted to be called “Santa María de Guadalupe:” “María” of Jewish origin and “Guadalupe” of Arab origin. “Mary” means: “the one chosen by God,” “the favorite of God,” “the most beautiful” or the “illuminator.”
“Guadalupe” can be translated as: “River of black gravel” or “the bed of the

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La historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe toca varias culturas y tradiciones

Especial para The Criterion

(Nota del editor: Este artículo se basa en parte en un documento escrito por Mons. Eduardo Chávez, sacerdote de la Arquidiócesis de México. Desde su nombramiento como postulator de la causa de canonización de San Juan Diego, quien fue canonizado por el entonces Papa Juan Pablo II en 2002, Mons. Chávez ha dedicado su vida a la investigación de las fuentes históricas de las apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en 1531.)

También conocida como Santa María de Guadalupe y la Virgen de

Guadalupe, la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe manifiesta la perfecta inculturation del Evangelio. Está plasmada en la humilde *tilma* (manto) de San Juan Diego hecha de fibras vegetales de *izótl*, que es una palma agavacéa.
Aparecerse a San Juan Diego en el cerro del Tepeyac en las afueras de lo que hoy es la Ciudad de México en 1531, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe toma lo bueno y verdadero, las semillas de la palabra, y las lleva a su plenitud en Jesucristo Nuestro Señor. Es una verdadera inculturation del Evangelio, es decir, ella sabe distinguir estas semillas en el corazón de cada ser humano, dentro de cada cultura, más allá de las tradiciones

y costumbres, y ahí es donde coloca a su amado hijo Jesucristo, nuestro Salvador y Redentor.
Su imagen ofrece un verdadero mensaje de amor de Dios tanto por los pueblos indígenas como por cualquier cultura, cuya fuente iconográfica y teológica es lo que nos proclama el libro del Apocalipsis:
“Apareció una gran señal en el cielo: una mujer vestida del sol, con la luna bajo sus pies, y sobre su cabeza una corona de doce estrellas. Estaba encinta, y lloraba de dolor mientras se prestaba a dar a luz” (Ap 12:1-2).
El rostro *mestizo* de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es el de una joven de

gran belleza. En ella se manifiesta la ternura, la compasión, la misericordia, el consuelo y el amor. Está inclinada en señal de humildad, como lo expresan los indígenas: Esta mujer es importante, porque se para frente al sol, pisa la luna y se viste con las estrellas, pero su rostro nos dice que hay alguien más grande que ella, porque está inclinada en señal de respeto.
Ella es la madre de todos los seres humanos; como le dijo a Juan Diego: “Porque, en verdad, me siento honrada de ser tu madre compasiva, tuya y de todos los hombres que viven juntos en esta Tierra, y también de todas las otras razas

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CHRISTMAS STORE

continued from page 1

Christmas that she didn’t expect, and that was the reason she was here. She had taken in her brother’s children because of a situation that had happened in the family.

“She was a little overwhelmed. She was just trying to cope with everything. I think it was a relief to her that we were able to step in and accommodate the extra children in the family and make sure they got gifts.”

Sharing that memory leads to the promise that Bernhardt has made to herself as one of the longtime members of the women’s Red Apron crew of volunteers at the Christmas Store.

“I’ve been in situations where I’ve talked to kids after Christmas and expected them to be really excited, asking them, ‘What did you get?!’ And their response was, ‘Well, I got six dollars,’ ” says Bernhardt, a member of Holy Spirit Parish at Geist in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “That just makes me sad because there’s so much out there about Christmas. All the commercials. The best toys. The biggest things. But it’s just one more day to them. Nothing is special.

“You realize there are a lot of people who are a lot less fortunate than most of us are. I like that we can sometimes be the people who keep that from happening to a child. When everything in the whole world is about Christmas, I don’t want there to be a child who doesn’t have something on Christmas.”

Just the right thing to do

That feeling is shared by Diane Powers and Helen Burke, longtime Red Apron volunteers who view their efforts and the mission of the Christmas Store in Indianapolis—and the one in Terre Haute—as an extension of the Catholic faith.

“Our Church has a preference for the poor,” says Burke, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis who has volunteered for about 10 years. “So being able to help people who may be struggling and help them get back on their feet a little bit is just the right thing to do.”

Powers considers her contributions as a way of thanking God “who has been so good to me all my life.”

“For me to give back in this way, I feel like I’m carrying out his work and continuing to do what he would do if he was on this Earth helping people,” says Powers, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis who has volunteered at the Christmas Store for 10 years.

“I’m always going to have a need for God. And the

people on this Earth who are less fortunate are always going to have a need for people to help them. God has helped me in so many ways, and now I can help other people. It’s come full circle.”

It’s all part of a year-round effort to make one day special in the lives of the 800 families that are served.

Some of the Red Apron volunteers shop year-round for toys, always on the lookout for deep discounts. Numerous social service agencies provide lists of families in need of help from the Christmas Store. Donations of gifts and money come from parishes, schools and individuals, including Catholic school children who donate crunched-up dollar bills, quarters, dimes and nickels to the effort.

Then there’s the homestretch efforts of the volunteers when the Christmas Store opens.

“The ladies in this volunteer organization would do anything for anybody,” Burke says. “We test batteries. We wrap gifts. We sweep the floors. We do whatever this store needs to be successful. It’s absolutely wonderful to be with like-minded people and to really have a purpose that we’re all pulling together for. We’re from all different parishes, but we just fit together, and it’s really a nice feeling.”

All those elements haven’t changed, but the approach of the Christmas Store has, since the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020.

Smiles and tears of gratitude

To keep the Christmas Store going that year, the volunteers and the Catholic Charities staff that oversees the effort had to find an approach that minimized the potential effects of the spread of the disease when large groups gathered in one place.

No longer do the volunteers escort parents through the Christmas Store, letting them seek and choose gifts. Now, parents make a general list of the toys and items that they



Sharon Bernhardt, left, Diane Powers and Helen Burke are among the volunteers at the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, the archdiocese’s Catholic Charities setting that provides gifts for about 4,000 people in need—most of them children—at Christmas. (Photos by John Shaughnessy)

believe will add a touch of magic to their children’s Christmas. The Red Apron volunteers take that list and do the shopping at the Christmas Store for the families.

“The parents call us an hour before they’re coming,” Bernhardt says, noting that each family has a day and time scheduled to pick up their gifts. “We use that hour to put all the family’s gifts together. As much as we can, we try to give them what they want and need. Then they come and pick them up. The gifts are already in big, black plastic bags so if they have to bring their children with them, the kids can’t see what the gifts are.”

Some people arrive

in wheelchairs and use walkers. A number of people leave with smiles and tears of gratitude. As one of the volunteers who checks in the parents when they arrive at the Christmas Store, Bernhardt always greets them with the joy of the season.

“I try to make them feel comfortable,” she says. “For some of them, they don’t want to be in a place where they have to say they need help in getting things for their children. I try to make them feel that it’s no big deal, that ‘we’re happy to do what we can do to help you and your family have a really good Christmas.’ ”

It all leads to one more special Christmas gift.

This is Christmas for me

That gift is the feeling the volunteers have on Christmas morning, when they think about the children and the parents sharing the gifts and the joy of that special day together.

“In the back of my mind, I hear squeals of delight as kids find something under their tree that they weren’t expecting,” Burke says with a huge smile.

“It’s a sense of accomplishment,” Bernhardt says. “I’ve done what I can for those 4,000 people.”

Powers views the Christmas celebration from another perspective, one touched by the death of her husband Jim three years ago.

As she thinks about what the Christmas Store has done for others, she knows what volunteering there has done for her.

“This is my Christmas because I don’t have children and my husband is gone.”

She pauses for a moment as tears begin to fill her eyes. “I’m going to get emotional. Working here is my Christmas. I don’t have a Christmas morning celebration. We decorate upstairs here. It’s festive, and there’s Christmas music. And everybody is in a good mood. So, for those three or four weeks leading up to Christmas morning, this is Christmas for me. It’s very heartwarming.”

(For information about the Christmas Store in Indianapolis and how to volunteer or donate to its efforts, contact Michelle Gudger at 650-294-3033 or by e-mail at mgudger@archindy.org. For information about the Christmas Store in Terre Haute and how to volunteer or donate to its efforts, contact Danielle Elkins of Catholic Charities Terre Haute at 812-232-4978, option 1, or by e-mail at delkins@ccthin.org.) †



Piles of footballs, basketballs and soccer balls fill bins at the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, reflecting the popularity of sports to children hoping for a great Christmas gift.

Pope Francis urges Nicaraguans to trust in God amid political turmoil

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In the days leading up to the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis was praying in a special way for the people of Nicaragua, he said in a letter.

Amid upcoming constitutional changes set to further consolidate power for Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Rosario Murillo, the pope asked the Nicaraguan people to “not forget the Lord’s loving Providence, which accompanies us and is the only sure guide.



Pope Francis

“Precisely in the most difficult moments, when it becomes humanly impossible to understand what God wants from us, we are called not to doubt his care and mercy,” he said in a letter to the people of God in Nicaragua released by the Vatican on Dec. 2.

The trust of the Nicaraguan people in God and their fidelity to the Church “are the two great beacons that illuminate your existence,” he wrote.

More than 200 religious leaders and clergy members are estimated to have been expelled from the country. Bishop Carlos Herrera Gutiérrez of Jinotega, president of Nicaragua’s bishops’ conference, was forced into exile in November—the fourth Nicaraguan bishop forced out of the country since 2019.

In his letter, Pope Francis urged Nicaraguans to “be certain that faith and hope realize miracles” and to look to Mary as the “luminous witness” of this trust.

He expressed his hope that the celebration of the Dec. 8 feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast for Nicaragua, ahead of the opening of the Holy Year 2025 will give Nicaraguans “the encouragement you need in times of difficulty, uncertainty and hardship.”

The pope assured his prayers for Mary’s intercession on behalf of the Nicaraguan people. “I want to say it sternly: the mother of God does not cease to intercede for you, and we do not cease to ask Jesus to keep you always in his hand.”

Walking together while supported by Mary, he said, “makes us persevere on the path of the Gospel and leads us to renew our faith in God.”

Pope Francis emphasized the power of praying the rosary, during which he said the mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary “pierce the intimacy of our heart, there where the freedom of the daughters and sons of God is sheltered, which no one can take away from us.”

The pope ended his letter by asking the Nicaraguan people to pray with him the prayer that he wrote for the upcoming holy year, asking God to awaken in humanity the “blessed hope in the coming of your kingdom” and invoking the joy and peace of the Lord for the world. †

Seeds planted to create men’s ministry parish programs throughout archdiocese

By Mike Krokos

NASHVILLE—Steve Schelonka is not a fisherman by trade, but he hopes to become a “fisher of men” through the men’s ministry program at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

A member of the parish for 26 years, Schelonka has been a part of a men’s group at St. Monica since it began a few months ago.

He was among the 85 men in attendance at a daylong gathering at St. Agnes Parish in Nashville on Nov. 16 focused on getting more men in parishes off the sidelines and more involved in their parishes to live out their vocations as husbands, fathers and disciples of Christ.

Titled “Brotherhood in Christ: Building a Community of Disciples,” the workshop sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Ministries was about building brotherhood in Christ, identifying needs and challenges in men’s ministry and having attendees leave emboldened to build parish men’s ministry in all 126 parishes that comprise the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Schelonka said he and other members of his ministry felt it important to gain insight at the workshop “to strengthen our bonds and see where we can take [our ministry].”

“We’re on fire, so it’s going to be fun to see where the Spirit takes us,” he added.

Reflecting on Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s reference in his homily during a Mass that afternoon to St. Peter answering Jesus’ call to follow him, Schelonka said a seed was planted in his heart that he hopes will bear fruit.

“I’m wearing a shirt that says, ‘I’m going fishing,’ so when [Archbishop Thompson] talked about St. Peter I was just like, ‘Wow! He knew it!’” Schelonka said. “That’s what the call is: for us to be



Steve Schelonka, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, leads the congregation in reciting the responsorial psalm during a Nov. 16 Mass celebrated at St. Agnes Church in Nashville.



Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, delivers a keynote address as part of a parish men’s ministry workshop on Nov. 16 at St. Agnes Parish in Nashville.

fishers of men, and that’s exactly what we’re trying to do with our ministry.”

‘Called to be saints’

“We are all called to live holy lives. We are all called to be saints,” noted Clayton Nunes, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, who helped organize the workshop.

“Saints are ordinary people living ordinary lives in extraordinary ways. That’s what we’re called to do,” he continued.

“The Lord doesn’t call the empowered. He empowers the called,” Nunes added.

A strong example of what it means to be a man

In his keynote address, Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, talked about the lessons he learned from his dad, who offered a strong example of manhood.

The only child of Thomas and Margaret Robinson, the priest said that one of his most profound memories was his dad leading their extremely devout family from practicing the Baptist faith into entering the full communion of the Catholic Church.

When Father Denis was 13, he thought about becoming Catholic. His parents agreed to attend a Mass with him, and despite not being familiar with any of its rituals, the family sat through an entire liturgy.

Despite their uneasiness with what they witnessed, as they discussed the Mass afterward, his dad’s response to the Mass surprised and shocked Father Denis and his mother.

A man of few words, his father said, “I know that I’m not going back to the Baptist Church.

“I’ve been searching for my God my whole life, but I never saw him face to face until today, and I can’t go back,” he told his family.

All three joined the Church, and his father became involved in their parish, leading its St. Vincent de Paul Society and being a witness of living out his newfound faith to his family.

Sadly, he died at age 44, but he left a legacy and many lessons shared, Father Denis said.

As Saint Meinrad’s president-rector, the priest said he considers himself a father to the 118 seminarians currently in priestly formation there.

Reflecting on the lessons he learned from his father, Father Denis asked, “What does it mean to be a man?”

He cited the following:

—Men must be patient, including “being patient with ourselves.”

—Men must be gentle, “even in discipline.”



Men pray the Our Father during a liturgy celebrated on Nov. 16 at St. Agnes Church in Nashville. (Photos by Mike Krokos)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, right, and Deacon Russell Woodard raise the body and blood of Christ during a liturgy celebrated as part of a parish men’s ministry workshop on Nov. 16 at St. Agnes Church in Nashville.

—Men must be kind, “showing kindness to everyone.”

—Men must be focused. Men are goal-oriented. “The goal isn’t the thing. The way [to the goal] is.”

—Men must be people of love.

“St. Augustine once said, ‘If you love, you may be what you will.’ If we are loving people, if we show our family and children love, if we show our neighbors love, if we show our workplace love, then everything else will fall into place. If we don’t do that, then nothing will fall into place.”

—Men must have a closeness to Christ. “Your faith must be first in your life. ... We must first be men of Christ, and then everything will fall into place.”

‘Our focus must be on Jesus’

During a Mass celebrated later in the day, Archbishop Thompson encouraged the men in attendance to be Christ-centered in all they do, especially in their relationships.

“Our focus must be on Jesus ... for our ministries, for our services, in our identity, in our mission of bringing the Gospel to the world,” he said. “Our focus has to be on him: on Jesus Christ ... in our call to missionary discipleship.”

Building community

During a panel discussion led by Deacon Thomas Hosty, director of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Ministries, several men highlighted how their parish has formed men’s ministry groups through various national programs.

The list included That Man is You!, Heroic Men, Christ Renews His Parish, King’s Men, Cursillo, Exodus 90 and *Escuela de la Cruz* (The School of the Cross), among others.

Panel members shared how the groups

started at their parish, how the groups have evolved and how they hope and pray they continue to grow.

Several men talked about how important it is to have the parish pastor’s support. Others also cited the value of having a dedicated leadership team to keep the momentum of the men’s program going and having a consistent format that includes fraternity, formation and prayer. Utilizing the four C’s—confess, commit, challenge and confirm—was also listed as an integral part of programs.

Moving forward

While there are some parishes in the archdiocese that offer men’s ministry programs, Nunes’ goal is to have every parish offer some form of it.

“It was clear that each parish could benefit from having an initiative with goals to help leadership at a parish level and men’s ministry groups grow in maturity, ways to encourage men to

cultivate a brotherhood, increase their understanding of God, and how to lead their families,” Nunes said after the workshop. “Current challenges include ways of getting men to prioritize and commit, and [finding] ways to get to the below 40’s-age group involved.”

With that in mind, an archdiocesan continuing ministry team to support the parishes is being launched. For more information or to become involved, contact Nunes at nunesclayton@yahoo.com, or Deacon Hosty at thosty@archindy.org or call him at 317-235-5804. †



Clayton Nunes

Netflix’s movie *Mary* is worthwhile viewing—with some caveats

By Ann Margaret Lewis

As Christmas nears, new holiday-related films pop up on streaming services. Most are secular adventures surrounding the mythos of Santa Claus. A few religious offerings will surface as well, purporting to give a fresh take on the Nativity narrative.

The latter is the case with *Mary*, a Netflix film directed by Catholic film director DJ Caruso and produced, in part, by television evangelist Joel Osteen among others, which tells the story of Mary’s life as the chosen mother of the Redeemer.

The film is dedicated to the late Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O’Connell, who was murdered in his home in 2023. And yet the film is not necessarily made with a Catholic point of view. It is, for the most part, an adventure film that pulls elements from non-scriptural sources from the early Church that serve as a basis for many traditional Catholic beliefs about Mary and her early life. Those elements are used to tell the story of Mary’s birth to SS. Joachim and Anne and service as a youth in the Temple in Jerusalem. It then extracts from the Gospel narratives the story of her betrothal to Joseph, the annunciation and birth of Christ and the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem at Herod’s command.

What it adds to these sources is adventure—being persecuted for her questionable pregnancy and pursued by soldiers during Herod’s edict to murder the infant boys of Bethlehem.

The film has high production value. The settings and costumes are lush. The acting performances are well done, especially Sir Anthony Hopkins as Herod. Hopkins has a remarkable way of making language that most would find clunky become seamless, lending *gravitas* to his role as an aging, corrupt king. His story arc offsets and contrasts well with the journey of Mary, lovingly and effectively played by Noa Cohen (*Silent Game*, 2022).

While the film is well done, Catholic viewers should be aware that it’s not “immaculate,” and that some minor portions do not necessarily fit with Catholic teaching or tradition.

First, with Mary’s character.

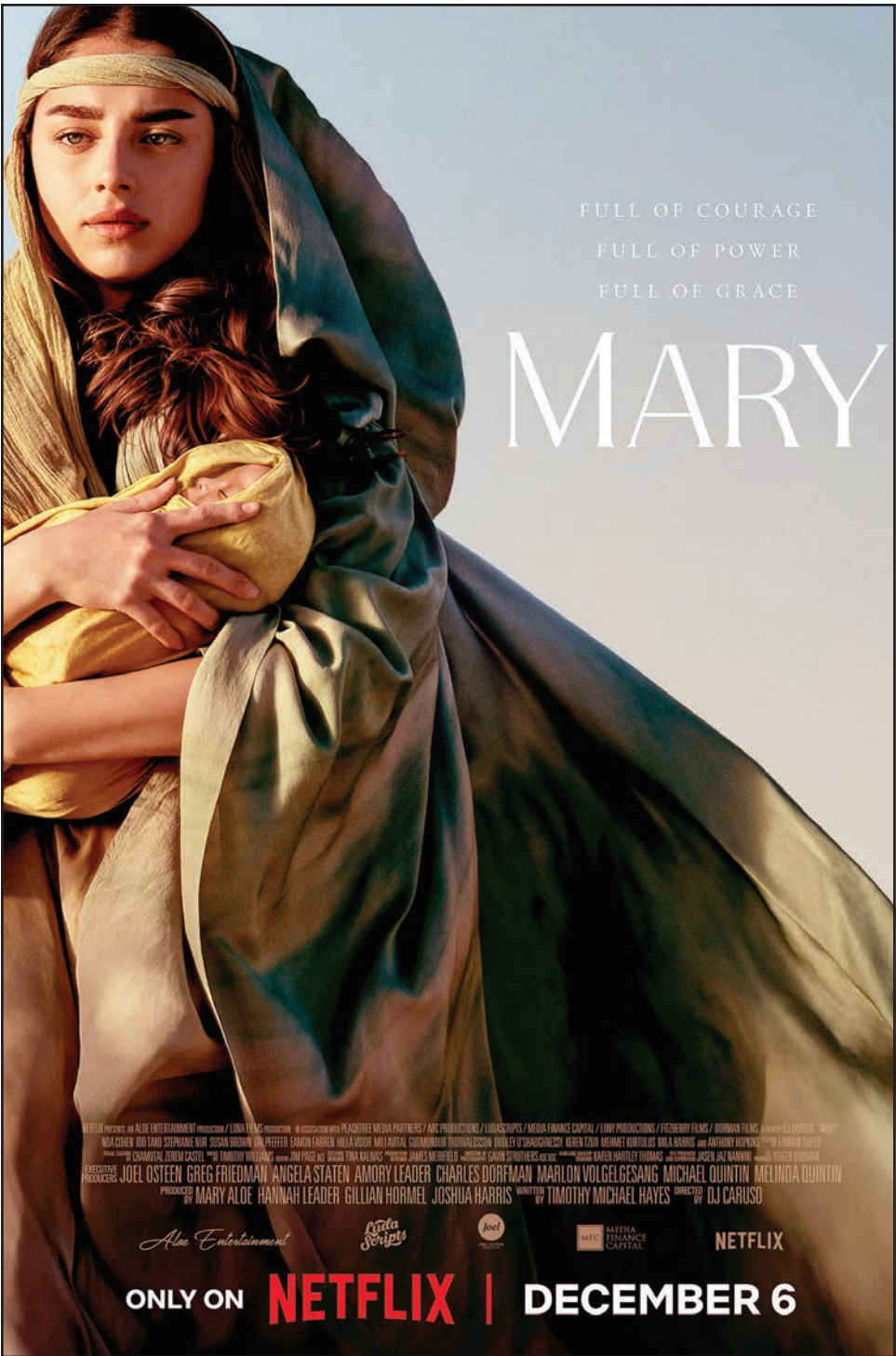
I’ve seen this often with Protestant presentations of Mary, including “The Chosen,” that she is doubtful or unsatisfied with her life as it is. For the most part, her role in this film is that of a virtuous young lady. However, she once proclaims her life as “dull,” and there is one point where she stretches the truth when questioned as to whether she was “dallying in the gardens again.” She was, and yet she implies she was not. Additionally, like in other nativity films, she gives birth in pain, pain that some might believe by pious tradition she did not experience.

Joseph, too, might give Catholic viewers pause when he states that he “can only believe what he sees with his own eyes.” I could have forgiven this line had he later experienced the dream that set him on the path of accepting Mary and his role as foster father to the Messiah. But, sadly, that was eliminated in this tale. Even so, he steps up to the role of protector, saving her from being stoned and taking her into his home out of love for her, which is admirable.

The relationship between Mary and Joseph is therefore seen as slightly more romantic between two young people. And yet, there is no physical demonstrations of it that might offend the Catholic viewer.

There were, however, a few throw-away lines that were eyerolling. One was from the prophetess Anna who tells Mary, “Trust the strength inside you.” This is typical Hollywood pablum, of course. Anna would have told Mary to trust in God. Also, an inn hostess implies that Bethlehem was crowded not necessarily because of the census, but that word of the Magi’s visit to Herod had reached the masses, and that people visited Bethlehem to witness it. One would think if that were the case, someone would have eagerly given a room to a young woman about to give birth. Certainly, having the Messiah born in your hotel would be a selling point.

Nevertheless, there are some insertions I did like, such as the appearance of Satan to tempt and taunt the Blessed Mother. Even Christ had to contend with temptation, as did many other saints. That she also would have faced temptation makes sense, and the



(Image courtesy of Netflix)

performance of Eamon Farren (“The Witcher,” 2023) as Satan is creepily effective.

Overall, I think the film is worth watching, as long as one keeps in mind it is a fictional extrapolation of

what might have occurred, and that it has imperfections from a Catholic perspective.

Mary becomes available on Netflix on Dec. 6. For more information, go to netflix.com/mary. †

GIVING THANKS

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goodness into the lives of others.

Jones has found that friend in Father Christopher Wadelton, a friendship that started when the priest was the parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.



John Jones

“He was taking a group to Honduras for a mission trip,” Jones recalls. “I have always wanted to go on a mission trip, and I felt very at ease with his personality and his way with people. I went on the trip and a great friendship evolved, along with him being a great spiritual guide in my life.”

Their connection has continued even as Father Wadelton is now the pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and a sacramental minister at Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh.

“Looking back over the years, the one thing that

always stands out is how others react to him as a person and leader,” Jones says. “He generally just connects to everyone, and he’s never judgmental. He always finds the good in everyone he meets. He’s always available to listen and guide. I know I could call him at any time, and he would listen. I always look forward to our visits.”

Summers on a farm and a growing season of faith thanks to grandparents

During his childhood and his youth, Bill Greenwald spent summers on his grandparents’ farm.

It was an opportunity for Greenwald to get to know his grandparents better. It also became a time when they shared their faith with him, and he grew in his.

“My grandmother Celestine would have me saying the rosary with her and grandpa for family and friends who were having trouble,” recalls Greenwald, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. “She would let me help her sew and crochet scapular badges and necklaces for Catholic Charities.

“My grandmother would not have a TV in the house,

so we would work on projects, read and listen to the radio in the evenings. We would get up very early to feed the animals and do chores. When it was time for me to go home, she would sprinkle holy water on our vehicle for a safe trip back to the city.”

The sprinkling of holy water—and the whole experience on the farm—left a lasting mark on Greenwald’s approach to his life and his faith.

“I think what I learned from the examples that my strict Catholic grandparents set for me, in those early years of my life, is that God truly wants us to help others.

“Over the years, I have experienced that most of the time God accepts our poor excuse of being too busy to help someone in trouble. But on rare occasions, God will insist that we use the talents that he has given us to help someone in need. And he refuses to let us off the hook, no matter how hard we try to get out of it.” †



Bill Greenwald

Preparations begin for opening Holy Doors at Vatican, Rome basilicas

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Hours after the last visitors and pilgrims left St. Peter’s Basilica for the day, a chisel clanged and dust flew as a group of prelates chanted their prayers before a simple wall marked with a cross.

In preparation for the opening on Christmas Eve of the Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the archpriest of the basilica, led the brief prayer service and ritual late on Dec. 2.

As the cardinal and other priests prayed, workers broke into the wall that has sealed the Holy Door shut since the Jubilee of Mercy ended in late 2016.

The workers removed a metal box, tied with a ribbon and sealed with wax, which contains the handles and the key to the Holy Door as well as Vatican medals, documents about the last Holy Year and four gold-covered bricks.

As the clergy sang the litany of saints, Cardinal Gambetti led them in procession to the altar over the tomb of St. Peter and paused for a moment of prayer.

In a formal meeting room, the metal box was set on a table in front of Cardinal Gambetti, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, and Archbishop Diego Ravelli, master of papal liturgical ceremonies.

The workers pried open the box and

unnailed another inside it, revealing its contents.

After Cardinal Gambetti signed a document attesting to what he found, Archbishop Ravelli took custody of the box to deliver it to the pope, the Vatican press office said.

Similar ceremonies were planned to prepare the Holy Doors of the Basilica of St. John Lateran on Dec. 3, St. Paul Outside the Walls on Dec. 5 and St. Mary Major on Dec. 6. †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Fasting in Advent can help focus on the coming of Christ

By Jeannette de Beauvoir

(OSV News)—In the past, fasting was an expectation. Prayer, almsgiving and fasting were seen by the early Church as naturally supporting and completing each other. They’ve been called, in fact, the three pillars of Christian discipline.

Jesus taught his disciples about fasting and clearly expected it of them: “But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you” (Mt 6:17-18).

He said when you fast—not if. And that’s not even close to being all: The Hebrew Bible is filled with examples of God’s people fasting, and the first thing St. Paul did upon his conversion was—you guessed it—fast. So, how is it that fasting has slipped between the cracks, as it were, of our present-day Catholic spiritual traditions? Especially at those times when the Church calls us to focus more intentionally on our spiritual lives—Advent and Lent—it sometimes feels as though fasting is simply one among many options. And not a particularly popular one, at that.

It’s true that the Church has relaxed its rules around fasting, in terms of both when and how it’s done. These days, you’re only required to fast on two days—Ash Wednesday and Good Friday—and you’re even permitted one full meal on those days, which to many people doesn’t actually feel like such a great burden at all.

Because of those requirements, most Catholics associate fasting with Lent, but it’s not the only penitential season in the Church’s calendar. Advent leads up to the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) that is second only to Easter in its importance. As such, it is good to observe Advent with penance and preparation.

But especially in Advent, penance and preparation can be difficult to achieve. Every year, the commercial celebration of Christmas seems to begin earlier and earlier, with inescapable carols everywhere and the planning for Christmas shopping as a major life focus.

And, honestly, you have to admit that the holiday season seems anything but penitential, with most people engaged in a great deal of excessive eating and drinking as they go from party to party.

But we’re called to do something else. Christians are not “most people.” We are called to be apart from the world, apart from what the world does. Christ is coming, and we use penance—prayer, fasting and acts of charity—in order to prepare ourselves as we await his birth. “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on Earth?” (Lk 18:8).

Perhaps it is precisely in the way the secular world “does” Advent that makes this season such an appropriate one for fasting. If you’ve never thought much about fasting, or if you haven’t done so in a long time, then



Milk and bread are pictured in an illustration photo. Fasting during Advent can be a way to help Catholics focus their hearts more deliberately on the coming of Christ. (OSV News photo/Thaier al-Sudani, Reuters)

Advent is an excellent time and place to begin. Fasting, more than any other discipline, does not let you forget for one moment what it is that you’re doing. You’re hungry. You feel deprived. Your body is reminding you that something is different and uncomfortable. That discomfort gives you focus. What better way is there to balance the excessive consumerism through which the world around you celebrates the season than with a constant reminder of what it is that we as Catholics are about now: the anticipation of the coming of the Lord? In a sense, fasting isn’t about food itself as much as it’s about abstinence. You could, theoretically, fast from something other than food. And, in fact, the discipline of fasting doesn’t say that consuming the food of our choice is bad—quite the contrary. Abstinence is the act of voluntarily giving up something that is good. It’s doing something that feels bad—giving up something that we like and that we might even need—for a higher purpose. It’s enabling the spirit to focus. So why choose food? Well, have you noticed how you feel after a large meal? Sleepy, possibly uncomfortable, lethargic, distracted. Notice that these are all feelings that go against the spirit of Advent. Advent is a time of anticipation and watching, of preparing yourself spiritually, of holding your breath with the longing of centuries, waiting for the Messiah to arrive. You cannot wait and watch if you’re replete from a large meal. Fasting doesn’t need to mean abstaining from all food. Though Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights, most of us would die with nothing. God wants us to survive! Fasting does mean, however, abstaining from enough to allow you to keep coming back to the discomfort and, through it, to the reason for the discomfort. It keeps you coming back to God. Have you heard the expression “give until it hurts”? Fasting is very much like that: give up until it hurts. Literally. Feel the hunger. Feel the discomfort. And feel the

spiritual longing for the Son of God singing in your body and in your heart and in your soul. There are many ways to fast. A good place to begin is by asking God for discernment: What kind of fast are you being called to this Advent? The Bible gives examples of one-day, three-day, seven-day and 40-day fasts. But you’re not required to follow any of those. You can fast on Fridays, on Wednesdays and Fridays, or (in a modified way) every day. Some people abstain from food altogether for short periods of time. Others give up one or two meals a day. Some even prefer to give up something that they love (chocolate, for example, or alcohol) while still having regular meals. So, what do you do instead of eating? Use the energy of fasting. That may sound counterintuitive: It’s food that gives our bodies energy, so how can we be energized by fasting? Yet time and time again, in various religious traditions, people report that fasting brings them clarity of mind. An experiment at the University of Chicago showed an increase in mental alertness and better schoolwork performance when participants were fasting. So, take advantage of that clarity and focus to open yourself up to new ways of being with God. You spent time preparing and consuming the meals that you’re giving up. Use the gift of time that the discipline has given you in spiritually constructive ways. You might want to spend that time in eucharistic adoration or other prayer, in reading Scripture or in organizing an Advent discussion group. You also save money on the food you’re not consuming anymore. That money could well be spent this Advent on those people less fortunate than you. Donating it to a local food bank or soup kitchen will help you address the needs of those for whom fasting is not optional, for whom the feeling of hunger is all too familiar. You are not just abstaining from food in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. You are also echoing and remembering the centuries of longing as God’s people waited for his coming. At some point during the season, you’ll be singing the haunting “O Come, O Come Emmanuel ... and ransom captive Israel/that mourns in lonely exile here.” We were indeed wandering in a barren wilderness before the good news of Christ was revealed to us. How do you feel that mourning? That sense of exile? Fasting and Advent both remind us of that journey from darkness into light, from wandering into finding our home, from law into love. The longing of our bodies for food echoes the longing of our souls for the coming of the Savior. What more fitting way to live it out in our lives during this Advent season than through a fast? (Jeannette de Beauvoir writes from Massachusetts.) †



Advent, a season of joyful expectation before Christmas, began on Dec. 1 this year. The Advent wreath, with a candle marking each week of the season, is a traditional symbol of the liturgical period. (OSV News photo illustration/Bob Roller)

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

A gift for yourself in 2025: planning a path to refresh your mind, body and soul

Growing up on a small farm, vacations were rare for Liz Gilbert. But one summer, her parents enlisted a neighbor to tend to their goats and chickens so the Gilberts could retreat to the beach for a week.



The morning they departed, Liz’s mom stripped her bed, washed the sheets and neatly remade the bed—as if she were preparing it for a guest.

Liz was puzzled. No one would be staying there that week. Why bother?

“Oh,” her mom explained. “This is just a little present I’m giving my future self. This way, when she comes

home all tired and worn-out at the end of her vacation, she’ll have the gift of fresh, clean sheets waiting to welcome her back to her own bed.”

Liz was intrigued by the idea—and the wording. Her mom had described her future self as “she,” not “I.” It felt like “a handshake of affection across time, a way of connecting the woman of this moment to the woman of the future,” wrote Liz, who went on to become the best-selling author of *Eat, Pray, Love*.

Even on the days you’re full of self-loathing, Liz mused, you can still find it in your heart to do a good deed for your future self—“a deserving visitor worthy of affection,

of sympathy,” she wrote, “a blameless stranger” who someday will live in the world you’re creating for her.

We tend to think in extremes, classifying daily practices either as acts of self-control or self-care. Both are loaded concepts. But when we frame our thinking as Liz’s mom did, we create a third, more welcoming category: compassion. In that broad space, all sorts of good deeds are inspired—from flossing your teeth to scheduling a colonoscopy.

It reminds me of a conversation I once had with Father Paul Scalia, son of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Father Scalia, 53, serves the Diocese of Arlington, Va., as episcopal vicar for clergy and as pastor of St. James Parish in Falls Church, Va.

Sensing how busy he is, I asked him what time he sets his alarm.

The answer: 5 a.m.

“That’s early!” I remarked. “You have to be disciplined about going to bed early to make that possible.”

I was thinking of all the ways I delay sleep at the end of the day—putzing, puttering, clicking, scrolling.

Father Scalia didn’t miss a beat.

“All the great spiritual writers and guides emphasize this: that the victories of today were sown last night,” he said.

I was dazzled by this conclusion. Such a profound

concept, put so simply. Such a diverse range of creeds, unanimous on this point. Win tomorrow’s battles tonight.

Wasting time at night can lead not only to inaction but sin, Father Scalia pointed out. He called spending too long on screens “one of the great vices,” which can “ruin things not just for that night, but means in the morning you’re not going to be at your best.”

That’s where discipline comes in, Father Scalia told me. “This is why the Church has a Liturgy of Hours. The whole concept of night prayer, Compline, is that we end the day well.” We wrap up our day peacefully, prayerfully—and punctually—setting ourselves up for the next morning.

As we look to 2025, we can sow some of its victories today. Identify a work-out buddy. Sign up for a weekly eucharistic adoration hour. Review your calendar and find an activity to drop.

And when the new year picks up speed, embrace those mundane evening rituals to help your future self. Turn off the TV. Brush your teeth. Apply the eye cream. Start the dishwasher. Lay out your outfit. Prep your bag. Say your prayers.

God blesses our humble, holy efforts.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

Called to Holiness/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Questions in Scripture remind us we have a faith that challenges us

The Scriptures are full of questions—by one count, more than 2,500 of them. The first is posed by the serpent in the garden of Eden, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’ ” (Gn 3:1). The last is mournfully cried out by seafarers in the mystical vision of the fall of Babylon recounted in the Book of Revelation, “What city was like the great city?” (Rv 18:18).



The hundreds of questions in between are as challenging and relevant to us as they were to the original inquirers. That is because our deepest questions do not arise in our minds, but in our hearts.

Salvation history can be told through the questions that appear in Scripture.

—In the garden, God asked, “Where are

you?” (Gn 3:9)

—Cain snarled, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gn 4:9)

—Abraham questioned, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” (Gn 15:8)

—Isaac observed, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (Gn 22:7)

—Moses wondered, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the people out of Egypt?” (Ex 3:11)

—Samuel asked, “Are all your sons here?” (1 Sm 16:11)

—David pleaded, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps 22:1)

—God inquired, “Where were you, when I laid the foundation of the Earth?” (Jb 38:4)

—God prodded, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kgs 19:9)

—Mary of Nazareth asked, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (Lk 1:34)

—The messengers sent by John the Baptist asked, “Are you the one to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Mt 11:3)

—Jesus questioned, “Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?” (Mt 6:27)

—A demon blurted out, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Mk 5:7)

—The Samaritan Woman inquired, “Where do you get that living water?” (Jn 4:11)

—Nicodemus asked, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” (Jn 3:4)

—A lawyer asked, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Lk 10:25)

—Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mk 10:51)

—The Twelve asked, “Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mk 4:41)

—The Jews questioned, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (Jn 6:52)

—Thomas asked, “How can we know the way?” (Jn 14:5)

—Mary of Bethany objected, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?” (Lk 10:40)

—Simon Peter questioned, “Lord, to whom can we go?” (Jn 6:68)

—Jesus whispered, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” (Lk 22:48)?

—The chief priests and scribes shouted, “Are you then the Son of God?” (Lk 22:70)

—Pilate probed, “Are you the King of the Jews?” (Lk 23:3) Then pondered, “What is truth?” (Jn 18:38)

—Angels questioned, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Lk 24:5)

—Two disillusioned disciples wondered, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” (Lk 24:18)

—Jesus inquired, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” (Jn 21:15)

—A voice asked, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4)

—Paul of Tarsus marveled, “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom 8:31)

—“Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” (Rv 5:2)

God is not afraid of our questions, but sometimes we are. While they may not always be expressed plainly, the questions that occupy our hearts are often what drive us forward or hold us back. Still, the questions that burn inside us do not necessarily indicate unbelief or undermine our faith. To the contrary, the questions we keep coming back to can guide us along the path that brings us to

the threshold of a faith that is not only authentic, but life changing.

If we’re too concerned with having the answers, we may well underestimate the transformative power that contemplating the questions offers us.

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

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Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Getting yourself to heaven: Possibilities to consider as you focus on the afterlife

Do you see your task in life as more of a project of getting yourself to heaven, like your own personal salvation project?



Or do you see it as just one more part of God’s larger project of building the kingdom here on Earth—the same kingdom that will continue in the afterlife?

What if it is a combination of both of these essential tasks?

You may have noticed just before Advent starts each year (at the end of each liturgical calendar year) the Church focuses its Sunday readings on those final “end of times” events. The question that comes to mind for me is: “Is life all about ‘being saved’ and each of our personal rewards?”

And, if so, how does a person get into this exclusive

group and never have to worry again that somehow his or her place in the afterlife will not be taken by another?

Is it really as easy as doing “x” and then moving to “y,” creating a perfect foolproof plan?

When you ponder the experience of heaven, what comes to mind? Will our souls just “look upon the loveliness of God” as indicated in the Book of Revelation? Or do you hope that Jesus has built you a mansion as alluded to in the Gospel of John 14:2?

Who else will be there and what will our relationship be to them in this next stage of our existence? Remember that when asked in the Gospel of Matthew about people who remarry after the death of a spouse Jesus replied, “At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven” (Mt 22:30). Therefore, when a person gets to heaven, will one recognize other people from their lifetime or will the relationship be totally different?

In St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, we read, “And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind; but God gives it a body as he chooses, and to each of the seeds its own body” (1 Cor 15:37-38). Or will we “dart about like sparks through stubble” as described in Wisdom 3:7?

Or, yet again, will the kingdom only exist after the Earth has been destroyed and Jesus has returned (the parousia)? When will this “end time” come? In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says, “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come” (Mk 13:33).

So where does this leave our responsibility for our participation in religious activity and charitable works in the here and now? It leaves much for us to ponder!

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

Second Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 8, 2024

- Baruch 5:1-9
- Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11
- Luke 3:1-6

The Book of Baruch, the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend, is relatively brief, only five chapters. It also is among the books called by Protestants scholars the Apocrypha. As such, it does not appear in the King James Version of the Bible, published in 1611 or in other translations that rely upon the thinking that led to the selection of books for inclusion in the King James edition.

It is not found in ancient Jewish translations of the Scriptures. Indeed, while some of the ancient Fathers of the Church knew about and quoted Baruch, St. Jerome questioned including it in his Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate.

For Catholics, however, most important and decisive is the fact that the Church officially long ago recognized it as part of divine revelation.

Regardless, when Baruch was written, great problems beset God’s people—not a rare circumstance. This book encouraged those who were suffering, reassuring them that God would not forsake them and that God’s justice and mercy would prevail in the end.

Always, in good times or bad, some people were lukewarm in their religious devotion. Baruch calls the indifferent to piety.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians furnishes the next reading. Sent as a letter to the Christians of Philippi, an important city in Greece in the ancient Roman Empire, the Apostle urges the Philippians loyal to the Lord to be steadfast in their faith, come what may, until the second coming of Jesus. It was a difficult challenge, as the glory of Roman paganism surrounded the Christian Philippians.

This reading says that one day, at a time unknown, Jesus will come again in triumph and judgment. Evil will be defeated, once and for all.

St. Luke’s Gospel, the source of the last reading, centers upon Jesus, although

highly visible in the reading is St. John the Baptist. Carefully constructed, the Gospel passage presents the coming of Jesus as uniquely important for human beings and in their lives.

The Lord’s coming was so important, in fact, that preceding this coming was the proclamation of God’s majesty and of human responsibility before God and of the importance of God personally to John the Baptist.

John was a prophet and a holy man. Ancient Jews thought that holiness gave people special wisdom. God used such people to reveal truth to other humans. Through John, God revealed the person and mission of Christ.

Also, to emphasize the importance of the Lord’s coming, Luke takes pains in setting the presence of John and the coming of Christ at an exact moment in history, namely by stating that it all occurred when Tiberius was emperor, Pilate his governor in Palestine and so on.

Jesus came in human time and space, in God’s mercy, fulfilling the hopes of the prophets of old who had yearned for the Redeemer who would destroy evil and death. When the Messiah comes, all will be made right. The rough ways for people would be made smooth. Now, as John the Baptist declared with such conviction, the Redeemer at last had come.

Reflection

When Baruch was written, times were bad for the Jews. When Philippians and the Gospel of Luke were written, times were hard for Christians.

On this Second Sunday of Advent, the Church speaks to us. Times are hard. We grumble about inflation. War torments many in the world. So do addiction and poverty. Today’s drift from God is spinning a deadly web.

All will be right, joy and peace will prevail when, and if, we admit Jesus into our lives. He will come to us, but we must invite the Lord into our lives sincerely by reforming ourselves with the help of God’s grace, by renouncing sin and by giving ourselves totally to God. The pronouncement of John the Baptist is addressed to us today. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 9

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Genesis 3:9-15, 20
Psalms 98:1-4
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, December 10

Our Lady of Loreto
Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalms 96:1-3, 10ac, 11-13
Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday, December 11

St. Damasus I, pope
Isaiah 40:25-31
Psalms 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zachariah 2:14-17
or *Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab*

(Response) *Judith 13:18b-19*
Luke 1:26-38
or *Luke 1:39-47*

Friday, December 13

St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalms 1:1-4, 6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalms 80:2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19
Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent
Zephaniah 3:14-18a
(Response) *Isaiah 12:2-6*
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:10-18

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Human love in this life is a pathway to the infinite love of God in the next

QI have a question about the vocation of marriage. I’m very moved by the examples of widowed



family and friends who continue to be very devoted to their deceased spouse, praying for them daily and visiting their graves often. They often speak of looking forward to seeing their spouse again in heaven.

A Practically speaking, praying daily for the repose of a deceased spouse’s soul is an act of Christian charity and a very Catholic thing to do. And it is beautiful to keep our departed loved ones’ memories alive.

But the real core of your question is a little bit more complicated. Although the Church teaches that we will be united with our loved ones in heaven (including spouses who have died before us), the Church does not

teach that marriage lasts into eternity.

That is, we as Catholics believe that marriage ends with death, full stop, which is why remarriage after the death of one’s spouse is a non-issue in the eyes of the Church.

One major scriptural point of reference for the Church’s teaching on the nature of marriage can be found in Chapter 22 of the Gospel of St. Matthew. In this passage, the Sadducees asked Jesus whom a woman, married and widowed seven times, would be married to in the afterlife. Jesus responds:

“You are misled because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the

resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven” (Mt 22:29-30).

Here, Jesus is making clear that marriage is something specifically tied to earthly life and not something that was intended to endure into eternity. In heaven, we will all be unmarried “like the angels,” that is, totally and completely fulfilled by the love of God alone.

Incidentally, this is one reason why priests and men and women in consecrated life embrace a call to celibacy. By renouncing earthly marriage, they strive to live now, here on Earth, the kind of life that all the faithful will eventually have in heaven. As Pope St. John Paul II wrote in the 1996 apostolic exhortation “*Vita Consecrata*”: “The Second Vatican Council proposes this teaching anew when it states that consecration better ‘foretells the resurrected state and the glory of the heavenly Kingdom.’ It does this above all by means of the vow of virginity, which tradition has always understood as an anticipation of the world to come, already at work for the total transformation of [mankind]” (#26).

Theologically, the purpose of married love—even sacramental married love where the spouses reflect God’s love toward each other—is to be temporary and ordered to an even higher end.

The ultimate goal for every human being is to love God with a singular purpose and to let this undivided focused love of God overflow into a radical, disinterested love of neighbor. Most people are not at a point in their spiritual life where they are able to live this reality during their time on Earth, so the majority are called to love a mortal spouse as a sort of training ground for the angelic, heavenly love we will experience in heaven.

Even with this in mind, it may still be emotionally difficult to think of a happy marriage ending with death. But as our Catholic funeral liturgy reminds us, for God’s faithful “life is changed, not ended” with bodily death.

By analogy, we can also conclude that, although the love of spouses may be changed into something different from specifically married love, this does not mean that this love no longer exists. Indeed, once subsumed into the love of God, it may become something even stronger in the life of the world to come.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

Your Will Be Done

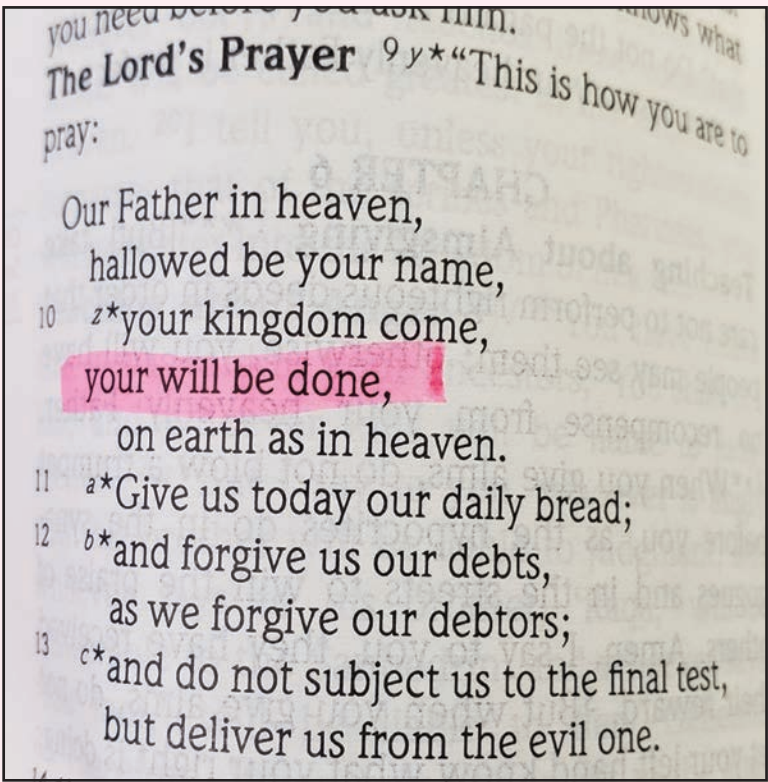
By Lauren T. Smith

All that happened, in the past, for Your Glory, no matter what, Your Will be done.

All that happens, in the present, for Your Glory, no matter what, Your Will be done.

All that will happen, in the future, for Your Glory, no matter what, Your Will be done.

Reasons for everything. Incomprehensible to me, yet Comprehensible to You. Your Will be done.



(Lauren T. Smith is a member of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington. Photo: In Mt 6:9-13, Christ instructs us to pray for—and submit to—God’s will.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

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Rest in peace

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

BOGGS, Julie M., 68, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 19. Mother of Sarah Kessen and Melissa Newman. Sister of Shari Campbell, Lisa Smith, Daniel and Doug Scott. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of one.

BRAVARD, Franklin O., 80, St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Franklin County, Nov. 15. Husband of Charlene Bravard. Father of Cara Carnes, Charlie, David and Wayne Werner. Brother of Karen Johnson. Grandfather of eight.

COFFMAN, Sharon K., 77, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 15. Wife of Steve Coffman. Mother of Christine Brooks, Catherine Quinn, Diane Spotts, Stephanie TenBarge, Mary, James, Joseph, Michael, Robert and Steve Coffman. Sister of Linda Wright and Dudley Coker. Grandmother of 28.

COLGATE, Kathleen, 87, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 14. Mother of Blithe Colgate. Sister of Marie Collins, Josephine Cleveland, Patricia Ann Daugherty, Sharon and John Galema.

DOYLE, Ruth A., 89, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 7. Mother of Janet Bishop, Christopher and Joseph Doyle, Jr. Grandmother



Pumpkins are seen on Nov. 24 in a field outside of Connersville. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

and great-grandmother of several.

DOYLE, Timothy J., 64, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Oct. 10. Brother of Janet Bishop, Christopher and Joseph Doyle, Jr. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

DREW, Jane (Clark), 80, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 8. Wife of William Drew. Mother of Jane Pisacane, James and William Drew. Sister of Joan Bolden, Rita Keckler, Mary Beth Tryon and David Clark. Grandmother of 11.

ECKRICH, Mary Helen, 95, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Mother of Betsy Glowinski, Cathy Walter, John, Mark and Tom Eckrich and Kevin Klaiber. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of 35. Great-great-grandmother of three.

ETIENNE, Jewell D., 85, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Sept. 2. Wife of Duane Etienne. Mother of Julie Sage and John Dattilo. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of eight.

JONES, Mary (Boucher), 68, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Wife of Mark Jones. Mother of Christopher and Patrick Jones. Sister of Chuck and John Boucher.

KONERDING, Ralph L., 82, St. Boniface, Fulda, Nov. 16. Father of Suzanne Mundy, Chris and Phil Konerding. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of seven.

KOORS, Sr., Douglas H., 48, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 16. Husband of Beth Koors. Father of Kayla and Madison Troville and DJ Koors. Son of Marcia Koors. Brother of Tammy Harnishfeger and Paul Koors. Grandfather of three.

LAMAR, David, 64, St. Pius V, Troy, Nov. 20. Father of Rachel Lamar. Brother of Donna Lamar.

LEISING, Carolyn R., 85, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 19. Mother of Michelle Henry, Jane Sparks, Charlene and Dale Leising. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five.

MONTGOMERY, Goldie, 97, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 18. Mother of Greg Montgomery. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 12.

POEHNER, Janet, 86, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 21. Mother of Tracy Kamleiter, David and Gregg Poehner. Sister of Michael and Steve Krekeler. Grandmother of seven.

SAULMAN, Gerald E., 86, St. Joseph, Corydon, Nov. 16. Husband of Martha Saulman. Father of Sarah Nevitt,

Jerry, Joel and Jon Saulman. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of eight.

SCHWAB, William L., 95, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Nov. 23. Father of Janet Arthur, Patty Miller, Mary Shobe, Kathy, David, Larry and Tony Schwab. Brother of Mary Ellen Wheeler and Patty Wood. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of 45.

STEINMETZ, Sharon A., 81, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Sister of Judy Good, Carol Bowron-Payne, Beverly Bowron-Staley, Susan Bowron-White, Patricia, Gregory and Michael Bowron. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

STOCKDALE, Ronald P., 80, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 23. Father of Donna Burchfield, Karen Durbin, Beverly and Rick Stockdale. Brother of Brenda Zimmerman. Grandfather of five.

THOMPSON, Ronald N., 83, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 17. Husband of Drucilla Thompson. Father of Chris and Ronald Thompson. Brother of Marilyn Griffin, Joyce Muscatello, Kathy Sperzel, Therese Winstead and Patrick Thompson. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of one.

WALKE, Allen L., 89, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 20. Father of Jane Peterson, Barbara and James Walke. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

WALTERS, Frances, 69, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 6. Sister of John Paul Walters.

WERNE, Sheila M., 65, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 19. Sister of Sharon, Gary and Wayne Werne. †

Catholic bishops decry British end of life vote: ‘May God help us’

LONDON (OSV News) —Catholic bishops in England have decried a vote for assisted suicide, with one saying it represented a “dark day” in the history of the country.

Members of Parliament voted by 330 to 275 for the “Terminally Ill [End of Life] Bill,” which will permit doctor-assisted deaths for adult patients

deemed to have less than six months to live.

Although the bill must pass through several stages in both Houses of Parliament in London, the Nov. 29 vote in the House of Commons means that it is extremely likely that the bill will pass into law.

Following the vote, Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth told OSV News that he expected the outcome.

“It leaves me sad as it will put an intolerable pressure on the elderly and the terminally ill and undermine the

trust normally placed in doctors and carers,” he said.

“I fear, too, the ever-growing expansion of eligibility to other categories of people. Britain has now crossed a line: things will not be the same again. May God help us,” Bishop Egan lamented.

Bishop Mark Davies of Shrewsbury, who in September issued a pastoral letter urging Catholics to campaign against the bill, also expressed disappointment in a message to OSV News. He said: “It is a dark day for our country when the Christian witness to genuine compassion and the value of human life is more needed than ever.”

Auxiliary Bishop John Sherrington of Westminster, the lead bishop for life issues of the bishops’ conference of England and Wales, issued a press statement on behalf of all of the bishops in which he described the bill as “flawed in principle.”

“We ask the Catholic community to pray that members of parliament will have the wisdom to reject this bill at a later stage in its progress,” the bishops said.

“We are particularly concerned with clauses in the bill that prevent doctors from properly exercising conscientious objection, provide inadequate protection to hospices and care homes that do not wish to participate in assisted suicide and allow doctors to initiate conversations about assisted suicide,” they said.

“We ask that these voices be heard in the next stages of the bill to strengthen the deep concerns about this proposed legislation.”

The bill allows medical practitioners to assist in the suicides with the approval of two doctors and a High Court judge. It will be sent to Committee Stage for scrutiny and amendments before it goes to a vote in the House of Lords, Britain’s second political chamber. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
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For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are *two* ways to make a report:

1 Ethics Point Confidential, Online Reporting www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810

2 Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

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For questions please contact us at: 317-926-3324.

LICENSE #001284

Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Advent began this year on Dec. 1. Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Advent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery

Dec. 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
Dec. 12, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County
Dec. 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
Dec. 18, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
Dec. 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
Additional opportunity for reconciliation on:
Dec. 6, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Martin Church of All Saints Parish, Dearborn County
Dec. 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
Dec. 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville

Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 11, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, all in Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center
Dec. 17, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford
Dec. 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
Dec. 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Dec. 19, 6-7 p.m. for St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, and St. Mary, Mitchell, at St. Martin of Tours

Connersville Deanery

Dec. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
Dec. 13, 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Holy Family Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 11, 6 p.m. at St. Rita
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Holy Spirit
Additional opportunity for reconciliation on:
Dec. 9, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, no appointment needed

Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 15, 2 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary
Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Luke the Evangelist

Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Barnabas
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. for St. Jude, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Mark the Evangelist parishes, at St. Jude
Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd, at Holy Name of Jesus
Dec. 21, 8:30 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

New Albany Deanery

Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany

Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Seymour Deanery

Dec. 8, 9:30 a.m. at St. Patrick, Salem
Dec. 8, 2 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
Dec. 10, 6 p.m. for Prince of Peace, Madison, and Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, at Prince of Peace
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity, Edinburgh

Tell City Deanery

Dec. 15, 2 p.m. CT at St. Paul, Tell City
Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m. CT at St. Boniface, Fulda

Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 18, 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
Recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:
Saturdays 4-5:30 p.m. at St. Benedict
Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 3:30-5 p.m. at St. Joseph University Church. †

HISTORY

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river” or “the riverbed.” The Arabic roots of this name can be traced to the Muslim influence on the Spanish language and culture because of the Muslim rule of

what became Spain from 711-1492, just 29 years before Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego.
The Mother of God introduced herself as: “Santa María de Guadalupe,” which we could translate as “the holy riverbed that carries the living Water and the true Light.” She is not the Light, but the one

who illuminates through the Light. She is not the Water, but the one who leads the Water. The Light and the Living Water are Jesus.
The name Santa María de Guadalupe is taken from two of the most important cultural roots of the world: the Jews and the Arabs, who are in constant conflict.

But in Santa María de Guadalupe, they are in harmony, in unity. They are her identity.
As we mark her feast day on Dec. 12, may the Blessed Mother intercede for humanity to bring peace to our world.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us! †

HISTORIA

continúa de la página 7

variadas de hombres, los que me aman” (“*Nican Mopohua*,” #29-31).
En ella se identifican todas las razas y, al mismo tiempo, nos ha quitado su identidad, como tradición indígena de Zozocolco. Su rostro no es ni el de los españoles ni el de los indígenas, sino el de ambos. Por esta razón, la llaman cariñosamente la “*morenita*” (la de piel oscura).
Los indios usaban el nombre de “*Tonanztin*,” que significa “nuestra madrecita” para dirigirse a ella, y lo unieron a su nombre “*Tonanztin Guadalupe*,” que podríamos traducir como: “Nuestra venerable Madre Guadalupe.”

La Virgen quiso llamarse “Santa María de Guadalupe”: “María” de origen judío y “Guadalupe” de origen árabe. “María” significa: “la elegida por Dios,” “la favorita de Dios, “la más bella” o la “iluminadora.”
“Guadalupe” se puede traducir como: “Río de grava negra” o “el lecho del río.” Las raíces árabes de este nombre se remontan a la influencia musulmana en el idioma y la cultura españolas debido al dominio musulmán de lo que se convirtió en España desde 711 hasta 1492, solo 29 años antes de que María se apareciera a San Juan Diego.
La Madre de Dios se presentó como: “Santa María de Guadalupe,” que podríamos traducir como “el lecho santo que lleva el Agua viva y la Luz verdadera.” Ella no es la Luz, sino la que

ilumina a través de la Luz. Ella no es el Agua, sino la que conduce el Agua. La Luz y el Agua Viva es Jesús.
El nombre de Santa María de Guadalupe se toma de dos de las raíces culturales más importantes del mundo: los judíos y los árabes, quienes están en constante conflicto. Pero en Santa

María de Guadalupe están en armonía, en unidad. Son su identidad.
Al conmemorar su fiesta el 12 de diciembre, que la Santísima Virgen interceda por la humanidad para traer la paz a nuestro mundo.
¡Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, ruega por nosotros! †

Employment

Executive Assistant, Office for Clergy

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking an Executive Assistant for its Office for Clergy. The Executive Assistant will be responsible for coordinating communication and providing administrative support; being of assistance to the Director of Continuing Formation of Priests and the Director of Permanent Deacons; and collaborating with other chancery staff.

This position will be expected to perform the following duties:

- Greet guests, offering hospitality, and answering phone calls, emails, and messages acting as the primary public relations contact for the offices in the Vicariate
- At the direction of the Vicar for Clergy, prepare letters, reports, remarks, and written communication for review and approval
- Manage the calendar of the Vicar for Clergy, scheduling appointments and providing information for upcoming meetings
- Other duties as assigned

Qualified applicants will meet the following specifications and requirements:

- Candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church
- Minimal requirement of a high school diploma. A bachelor’s degree or equivalent is preferred
- At least three years of administrative/general office experience
- Knowledge of Catholic organizations/structures and vocational or personnel fields is strongly preferred

Interested candidates may submit resume, cover letter and references to the Office of Human Resources, at HR@archindy.org by December 12th.

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Friday, February 7, 2025 / 5:30 pm
JW Marriott Indianapolis Grand Ballroom / 10 South West Street

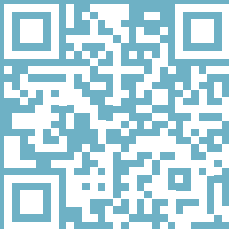
Legacy Gala

Life, Education,
and Real Presence

Join us for a special evening in support of three vital ministries in our archdiocese - Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Catholic Charities, and Catholic Schools. Enjoy a fun night of fellowship, a delicious meal, impactful ministry stories, great online and live auction items, and entertainment by this year's band, The Bishops! And this year, we have co-emcees, Grace Trahan-Rodecap and Rafael Sánchez!

Tickets are \$125 each, which can be purchased by scanning the QR Code below or visiting www.archindy.org/legacygala. If you're a young adult (ages 18-39) take advantage of our special pricing of \$75 per ticket!

This Year's Honorees are
Laura Jo & Glenn Tebbe!
Come celebrate this very special honor with them. Wear your favorite gala attire. Black tie optional.



Tickets are \$125 per person or \$1,250 for a table of 10. Scan the QR code to make your purchase online, see special young adult pricing, or to view sponsorship opportunities. Or, visit us online at: www.archindy.org/legacygala

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