



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

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ONS photo from Scala/Art Resource of painting by Fra Angelico

The birth of Jesus

The story of the birth of Jesus from the Gospel according to Matthew.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.

Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this

child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus. †

1999 saw start of Catholic-Lutheran healing

WASHINGTON (CNS)—For Catholics and Lutherans, 1999 was the year in which their Churches took a major step toward healing a rift nearly 500 years old.

On Oct. 31, the same day that Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in 1517, top Catholic and Lutheran officials together declared that their Churches hold the same essential belief on justification by grace alone in faith. The joint declaration added that neither sees in the present teaching of the other Church the errors on justification their Churches condemned in the 16th century.

The sign of reconciliation among two major Christian bodies marked a fitting conclusion to a millennium characterized by the two major divisions of Christian history, the Great Schism of the 11th century and the Protestant Reformation of the 16th.

It also brightened a year otherwise

darkened by natural calamities and human violence that killed thousands and displaced millions around the globe.

Looming large among the year's tragedies were:

- The Serb-led reign of terror against ethnic Albanians in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, where thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands driven out of their homeland before NATO forces bombed Yugoslavia into submission.
- Systematic attacks by pro-Indonesian militias against the vast majority of East Timorese before and after their overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia.
- Major earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan that leveled huge urban areas, killing thousands and making tens of thousands homeless, plus lesser earthquakes affecting thousands in Mexico and Colombia.



In an action reminiscent of Martin Luther's 1517 posting of his 95 Theses, Cardinal William H. Keeler nails the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" to the doors of the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore on Oct. 31. Looking on is Bishop George Paul Mocko of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

- Massive flooding in Vietnam destroying 800,000 homes, in Mexico destroying 300,000 homes and in North Carolina, following Hurricane Floyd, the worst disaster in the state's history.

- The slow, arduous digging out and rebuilding in Nicaragua and Honduras in the wake of Hurricane Mitch in late 1998, which destroyed much of the economy of

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Mother Teresa's spiritual director shares stories of her faith in God

By Mary Ann Wyand

A conversation with Mother Teresa's long-time spiritual director is a lesson in faith, hope and love.

Jesuit Father Donald McGuire of Chicago, who has served the Missionaries of Charity as their spiritual director since 1983, smiles constantly when he talks about Mother Teresa.

"Her faith was enormous," Father McGuire said during a Dec. 19 interview at Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, where he presented an Advent silent retreat. "Her spirit of hope was enormous. But her driving force was the love of Jesus Christ, and especially the love of Jesus Christ crucified."

Born on Aug. 26, 1910, the former Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu of Albania

joined the Sisters of Loreto at age 18 and later taught at the order's school in Calcutta.

In 1946, while praying on a crowded train in northern India, she received an image of the crucified Christ, who told her, "I thirst!" She decided to leave the order to found the Missionaries of Charity and minister to the poorest of the poor.

When asked how she was able to minister to the sick and destitute, Father McGuire recalled, "Mother Teresa would say, 'I am married to Jesus. I am in love with him, and I am in love with all his children. All the people in the world are God's children.'"

Mother Teresa always referred to her ministry as "a vocation within my vocation," he said. "She did not like you to say that she had a vision, although the world until the end of time and the Church will judge that Mother Teresa had a vision. But Mother herself wouldn't tolerate that. She would say, 'Father, it was a vocation within my vocation.'"

"It happened when she was on her way to make her annual retreat in the summer of 1946," Father McGuire said. "Before she would begin school again in the fall, she would make an eight-day retreat with the Jesuits in northern India. She was on a crowded train weaving up through the mountains—the foothills of the Himalayas—and was making her examination of conscience, which is always made in the presence of Jesus crucified. She closed her eyes, and there he was—the one and only time in her life—and he said to her, 'I thirst.' Then he was gone. And her whole life changed."

Mother Teresa frequently spoke of the first time she picked up a dying man from a street, Father McGuire said. "It

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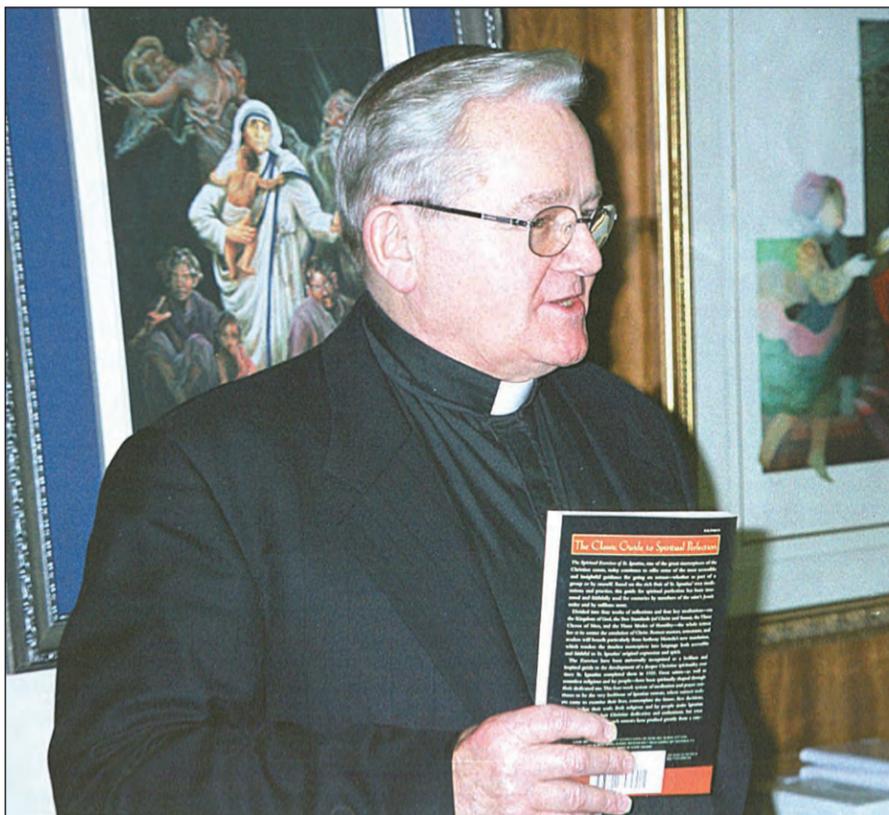


Photo by Colette Shanahan

Jesuit Father Donald McGuire of Chicago shares stories about his friendship with Mother Teresa of Calcutta during an Advent silent retreat on Dec. 18 at Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. Mother Teresa asked Father McGuire to serve as the spiritual director for the Missionaries of Charity in 1983 after he was recommended by a Carmelite prioress from San Francisco.

Pope says peace requires change in world's perspective

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A "complete change of perspective" in international political and economic structures will be necessary to build lasting world peace, Pope John Paul II said.

"There will be peace only to the extent that humanity as a whole rediscovers its fundamental calling to be one family," he said in a message for the World Day of Peace on Jan. 1, 2000.

The 22-page message was released Dec. 13 at a Vatican press conference.

Pointing out that these were the pope's first words of the year 2000, Archbishop François Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said the message went to the heart of jubilee celebrations.

"It is not an exaggeration to call this a globalization message, not of economic globalization, but of humanity," he said.

In his message, the pope said that the process of globalization, for all its risks, offers opportunities to enable humanity to become a single family.

"For this to happen, a complete change of perspective will be needed: It is no longer the well-being of any one political, racial or cultural community that must prevail, but rather the good of humanity as a whole," he said.

In an editorial, Father Bernardo

See PEACE, page 12

The Criterion's last issue until Jan. 14

This week's edition of *The Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement, is the last edition of 1999. *The Criterion* will return on Jan. 14, 2000, and resume its regular publishing schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 24 through Jan. 2, 2000. †

In new ritual, pope to push open Holy Door at St. Peter's

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope John Paul II will push open the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, inaugurating the Holy Year for the new millennium with a new ritual.

The most noticeable difference from holy years past will be the absence of a hammer, said Bishop Piero Marini, master of papal liturgical ceremonies.

The wall sealing the Holy Door shut was to be dismantled after a brief Dec. 15 ceremony, taking away the symbolic value of having the pope strike the wall with the hammer three times, Bishop Marini said during a Dec. 14 press conference.

"Elements of the old ritual which have become obsolete will be replaced by others which better express the biblical and liturgical significance of the Holy Door,"

he said.

When Pope Alexander VI opened the Holy Door on Christmas 1499, "he used a mason's hammer, and the blows were not completely symbolic; the pope tried to break through part of the wall," the bishop said.

For centuries, the opening ceremony included a long pause to allow masons to finish taking the wall down before the pope crossed the threshold.

Pope John Paul will push on the huge, ornamental bronze doors with both hands, Bishop Marini said. Because the doors are extremely heavy, workmen inside the basilica will pull on them as the pope pushes.

Another change for the Holy Year 2000, the bishop said, is the end of having the basilica's confessors wipe the threshold

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The Criterion

12/24/99

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MOTHER

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was clear that, besides the crucified Christ, a companion image for her was of Jesus, sometimes, as she would say, 'in a most distressing disguise.' She would talk about that so lovingly, and in awe of herself, in awe of him, and in awe of the event. It was always awesome for her. She would say, 'Imagine, Father, this dying man. I reached down and I lifted him up, and I have in my heart that I don't want him to die without experiencing God's love and man's love.'"

Mother Teresa's first nine Missionaries of Charity sisters were her former students, he said. "Years later, right before her death, she sat down with those nine sisters for a picture."

Mother Teresa is "the greatest example of charity" in the modern world, Father McGuire said. "Her name is a

household word that means absolutely selfless charity."

Many people think Mother Teresa chose her religious name because of St. Teresa of Avila, he said, but she picked the name because of her devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, whom she called "the little Teresa."

All of her life, Mother Teresa consulted with confessors, Father McGuire said, because she wanted to grow closer to God.

"After Jesus Christ, she loved the priesthood," he said. "I think one of her great works was inspiring priests throughout the world. Mother launched a special program to support the priesthood. Each sister was assigned a certain priest to pray for."

Mother Teresa also had "a great love for young people and a great love of marriage," he said. "She honored marital love as a sacrificial love, an everlasting love, in the image of Jesus Christ."

Throughout her life, Father McGuire said, "Mother Teresa liked to talk about

taking what God has given you—your soul, your mind and your heart—and giving it back to God. She frequently spoke of the importance of 'making of your life something beautiful for God.'"

Even as her health continued to decline, he said, "she would never stop. The sisters would say, 'Father, she obeys you. Tell her to rest.' So I would tell her, 'Mother, you're tired. You really ought to rest. Sit down.' And because of her respect for the priesthood, she always obeyed me—until I turned my back! She often told me, 'Father, I want to die with my shoes on.'"

On the day she died, he said, "Mother got up at her typical hour of 4 a.m. and completed all the work of the day. She said her prayers, attended Mass and signed all of the letters, forms and checks. There are checks floating around the world that are not cashed because they were signed on the last day of her life. Mother did all of the work of her office,

received visitors, counseled sisters, gave a little talk and, in the evening, went to her prayers, her adoration for an hour, then went to her meal, and finally went to her room to begin to die."

Father McGuire was not with Mother Teresa when she died on Sept. 5, 1997, but a medical sister in attendance later described her last day to him.

"The sister told me the doctors had arrived and were trying to do emergency treatments," he said, "but it stormed and the electricity suddenly went off in Calcutta and the medical instruments failed. I believe it happened so she could go home to God. The electricity was off long enough so the doctors could not revive her.

"It must have been an answer to Mother's prayer," Father McGuire said. "And so she went to God, as she would always say, with her shoes on. But that was her spirit. As long as there was one person in need of love, that was the driving force in her life, because to her, that person was Jesus." †

Retreat helps participants deepen prayer life

By Mary Ann Wyand

Last spring, St. Monica parishioner Natalie DeHart of Indianapolis felt God was calling her to deepen her faith, but she wasn't sure how to go about it.

DeHart decided to pray to Mother Teresa for help and continued to ask for her intercession for several months.

A few weeks ago, DeHart saw a notice in her church bulletin about an Advent silent retreat. It sounded like a good idea, so she registered for the Dec. 17-19 retreat at Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.

During the retreat, DeHart said, she found answers to her prayers and enhanced her relationship with Christ while talking with the retreat master—Jesuit Father Donald McGuire of Chicago—who was Mother Teresa's spiritual director for a number of years!

"Last spring, I felt like God was calling me to learn how to love more," DeHart said. "I thought Mother Teresa would be good to pray to about this, so I asked for her intercession to help me learn to love Christ and others and myself more.

"I prayed about this a lot during the

year," she said. "But I never made the connection with my prayers and this retreat until after I had my confession with Father McGuire and he said exactly what I needed to hear. Then it occurred to me that I had prayed to Mother Teresa for help. It was like she said, 'Why don't you talk to my spiritual advisor?'"

Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner Barb Kowich of Indianapolis thought the Advent silent retreat would be a good way to prepare for Christmas.

"A silent retreat allows you to withdraw from the world and really commune with God on a different level," Kowich said. "I needed the silence and the time. Father McGuire led us in the Jesuit exercises, so it was a renewal of our Catholic faith and belief system. He talked about the penitential rite, about God's tremendous mercy and love for us, and about what we can do for God.

"He also talked a great deal about Mother Teresa, about her work in the world, and her goodness and kindness," Kowich said. "He told us how he has worked with the Missionaries of Charity in India and Europe, and how they make

their retreats with the Jesuit exercises, which are marvelous tools to help people re-evaluate and strengthen their faith journeys. He said we are in a constant state of conversion."

Another retreatant, Mark Cudworth of Indianapolis, isn't Catholic and doesn't belong to a faith community, but he is searching for answers in his life and liked learning about the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, which focus on prayer, meditation and contemplation.

"This seemed like a good opportunity for direction," Cudworth said. "I think God is subtle. You don't see bolts of lightning these days. I think God puts people in your life as a subtle way of giving you information you need. He calls upon ordinary people to act as his messengers and say, 'Do this for me.'"

"I think God has led me to this point in my life and directed me to the people I know now," Cudworth said. "I really liked the fact that the retreat was silent. I could relax and be open to what felt right for me. Now I want to set aside some time, at least once a week, to relax and be at peace in a quiet room."

Former St. Monica parishioner Carole Johnston moved to Illinois two years ago, but decided to come back to Indianapolis to attend the retreat before her holiday visit with relatives and friends.

"Father McGuire said Mother Teresa prayed all the time, no matter what she was doing," Johnston said. "She was such an incredible role model. This Advent retreat did much more than just prepare me for Christmas. It helped prepare me for the rest of my life." †

Beech Grove tied to worldwide prayer vigil

By Margaret Nelson

The faithful are invited to join the Beech Grove Benedictines for an all-night New Year's Eve prayer vigil for peace.

Our Lady of Grace Monastery has been the hub of planning a worldwide Proclaim Jubilee, a contemplative vigil.

Benedictine Sister Mary Margaret "Meg" Funk is chairing a committee that has invited the 450 monasteries and 40,000 religious in the Benedictine and Cistercian (Trappist) communities to pray in solidarity. It is sponsored by Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (MID) and Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM).

"Because it is monastic, it will be simple," said Sister Meg. She explained that there will be three major services within the vigil.

Because many of the sisters will have the long weekend away from their ministries, "we have the great freedom to stay up," said Sister Meg. She explained that some of the 70 sisters in the house will spend the whole night in vigil.

Some sisters are flying in from other monasteries to show solidarity with the Beech Grove community.

Forty monasteries in other locations have indicated they plan to have vigils at the same time. And 100 other communities asked for the prayer service booklets, so that they can participate in their own way.

The Service at Dusk, or compline, will begin at 8 p.m. in the monastery chapel with lauds and an hour of reconciliation, using a water ceremony. Then many of those present will process to the crib.

Those present will sit in silence during the vigil, stopping for a short prayer on the hour that uses Psalm 119 and a reading.

At the midnight hour, the service will be Birth of Divine Light, celebrating God's presence in the world through the mystery of the Incarnation.

The faithful will know when the New Year comes. After songs and readings and Proclamation of Millennium, the chapel will be lit with candles and resound with bells and whistles.

The assembly will be invited to make a commitment: "I, (name), in this land of darkness, before the natural light, commit myself to seek God with all my heart." This will be followed by prayer and singing of "Joy to the World."

The Benedictine sisters will have a number of Little Hour prayer services—each with a song, psalm and reading—within the vigil.

The third service, Morning Prayer, will be held at 9 a.m. with the theme, Mary, Manifestation of Light. The 9:30 a.m. Mass will honor the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God.

The side door to the chapel will be open so that the public can join them, coming and going as they wish. †

Clarification

A story in the Dec. 17 issue of *The Criterion* gave incomplete information about The Christmas Store in Terre Haute. The store served 871 families and 3,665 individuals this year. †



Please join
Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.,
the pastor and parishioners of
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

to celebrate

the Opening of the Holy Year Door
and Christ's coming in Christmas.

11:20 p.m.

Vigil service of scripture and song
Presider: Fr. Rick Ginther, pastor

12:00 a.m.

Opening of the Holy Year Door
and
Midnight Mass

Presider: Archbishop Buechlein, O.S.B.

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Editorial

Christmas in Bethlehem

The eyes of the world will be fixed on the "little town of Bethlehem" as Midnight Mass in the Basilica of the Nativity ushers in the Jubilee Year. His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, will preside at Mass in the newly renovated Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria in the presence of hundreds of Palestinian Christians.

The residents of Bethlehem have been busy in recent months. Pilgrims have noticed a flurry of activity around the Basilica of the Nativity. Changes wrought by the Wye accord have had a tangible effect. The long-neglected infrastructure of the predominantly Arab city is being replaced now that the city is governed by Palestinian authorities. The main road used by the millions of pilgrims to Bethlehem is being replaced and resurfaced, stone by stone. Shutters and doors along main streets are being repainted in the green and white colors of Palestine. Craftsmen in the 84 olive wood factories in Bethlehem are working overtime to ensure adequate inventories of religious articles for the record number of pilgrims expected during the Jubilee Year.

Tensions between Palestinians and Israelis are noticeable throughout the Holy Land, in spite of the expansion of Palestinian jurisdiction in Bethlehem and other parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The construction of a new mosque in Nazareth has sparked a confrontation between Muslim, Christian, and Israeli leaders. Every day in Bethlehem is marked by an intense struggle for economic and social justice. Peace in the Holy Land is a commodity that is both precious and elusive.

And so the modern-day city of Bethlehem, with its struggles and its dreams, its saints and its sinners, provides an apt setting for the celebration

of the Nativity of our Lord. For Jesus is born into a world in which the poor cry out for justice and sinners cry out for forgiveness. He enters into the brokenness of our lives and abides with us in spite of the tensions and inconsistencies within. He is born not into a perfect world, but into a world in need of redemption. "Healthy people do not need a doctor," Jesus says, "but sick people do."

One enters into the Basilica of the Nativity through a doorway that stands only 4 1/2 feet tall. Designed in an earlier age to keep invading cavalry from entering the sanctuary, the diminutive portal serves as a reminder to all who stoop to enter the church of the one who first stooped to enter our world. "For he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:8)

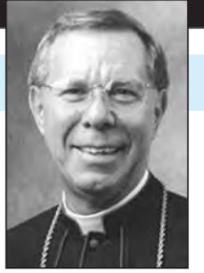
This Christmas, as images of Bethlehem are broadcast into our homes, let us remember that Bethlehem is a real city. As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember that Jesus enters into a real world—our world. He becomes a little child so that we might become children of God. "O marvelous exchange" the liturgy of the Church sings out. "Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity." (Liturgy of the Hours, Antiphon 1 for Jan. 1).

—Father Daniel J. Mahan

(Father Daniel Mahan, pastor of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis, is a member of the editorial committee of the Board of Directors of Criterion Press, Inc.) †

Seeking the Face of the Lord

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



Great Jubilee will extend Christmas all year

Christmas Day is not just another day.

One would have to be pretty hard-hearted not to be touched with a little of "the Christmas spirit," no matter what the circumstances. The long and beautiful tradition of the season, enhanced by warm music and beautiful decorations, the custom of sharing gifts and bountiful meals lend a romantic air to Christmas.

Yet, being hard of heart is not out of the question for any of us. Being without faith and hope is not beyond any of us. Indeed, Christmas is meaningless if we are without faith and hope. If viewed as a mere secular celebration, it can even be an expensive burden in more ways than one.

Are we willing to see that the tinsel decorates a spiritual meaning of Christmas? Can we trace what we experience as Christmas to the birth of Jesus? Can we genuflect to the Jesus who is born like one of us? Do we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior?

Christmas gives us pause to measure the quality of our faith. This is especially true as Christmas 1999 launches the Holy Year of Great Jubilee 2000. Reaching back to our Jewish roots, our Church views a jubilee year as a sanctified time.

Not only the Christmas season, but also the Holy Year, can give a timely boost to our faith. Is our faith a live flame or perhaps merely a spark? In every liturgical season and especially during a Holy Year, through the Church, God offers us special help to deepen our faith. Our challenge is to look for and to accept the gift God offers us through the ministry of the Church.

Surely the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas time is rooted in the fantastic gift God gave the human family when he gave his only Son for our salvation from sin and death. In the spirit of God's gift-giving, we are led to give to others as a sign of our love. The evolution of the tradition of Santa Claus is rooted in a spiritual tradition of giving in imitation of God's generous love. God's gift of his only Son is our model.

The spiritual call of Christmas is to live for God and for each other. The spiritual gift of Christmas is the help, the grace we need to do that.

We find a special Christmas gift for each of us in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. We find it in the celebration of Holy Mass. The thing about a gift is that it is not truly a gift until it is accepted.

Gift-giving cannot be consigned only to Christmas Day. The Great Jubilee 2000 is like a yearlong celebration of Christmas because it commemorates and celebrates the Incarnation of Jesus and our redemption from sin and death. The grace of the jubilee builds on and deepens the grace of Christmas.

There will be opportunities for extra prayer and extra good works. There will be opportunities to live the faith in more intentional ways. And there will be special times for confessing our sins and experiencing even greater freedom and peace of soul. Like the spirit of Christmas, we want to open our hearts to the spirit of the Great Jubilee.

Wherever we are on Christmas Day and throughout this season of special love, however distant we may be from loved ones—I think of our loved ones who have recently gone home to God—however separated we may feel from loved ones, we can truly meet them in Church, in our prayer, especially at Mass and Holy Communion. Spiritual reunion is real reunion too!

During the Great Jubilee, it is my fond hope that we will prepare the way to welcome back home to our Church those who for whatever reason have left our family of faith or simply have not felt welcome in the home of our Church. Let this Christmas season be a time when we open our hearts with a new sense of hospitality and understanding love.

Let us pray that Jesus may be born in the Bethlehem of every home that needs him; may he be born in every heart that seeks him. May Jesus be born in the Bethlehem of our family of faith. May he lift up our hearts in his love.

Know that I shall meet all of you and your loved ones in my Christmas Masses and prayer. If you like, please come and join me in the celebration of Midnight Mass and the opening of the Great Jubilee door at the cathedral.

May the peace and joy of Christ be with you all! May God bless our Holy New Year of the Great Jubilee 2000! †

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for December

Catholic Elementary Schools: that they may teach our children the Catholic faith and assist them in hearing and answering God's call to service in the Church, especially as priests or religious.




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PEACE

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Cervellera, director of Fides, the Vatican's missionary news service, called the pope's message an "examination of conscience of the 20th century."

The pope outlines the evils of the past

100 years, including war, genocide, totalitarianism, but also condemns modern errors, like powerful nations that "weaken the role and credibility of international organizations like the United Nations," the priest said.

"One reads between the lines the pope's condemnation of the NATO and U.S. interventions in Kosovo and Iraq, which took

place outside of U.N. mandate," Father Cervellera said.

In his message, the pope said military intervention was sometimes necessary, and even obligatory, to defend civilian populations against unjust aggressors, after political negotiations fail.

"These measures, however, must be limited in time and precise in their aims," the pope said. "They must be carried out in full respect for international law, guaranteed by an authority that is internationally recognized."

Full use must be made of all the provisions of the U.N. Charter, he said. He said the United Nations "must offer all its member states an equal opportunity to be part of the decision-making process, eliminating privileges and discriminations which weaken its role and credibility."

"What is needed without delay is a renewal of international law and international institutions," he said, whose "basic organizing principle should be the primacy of the good of humanity and of the human person over every other consideration."

The pope praised the establishment of an International Criminal Court because "crimes against humanity cannot be considered an internal affair of a nation."

The Fides editorial said the pope was referring to nations like China, Indonesia, Russia and Vietnam, which reject international human rights pressure as meddling in their internal affairs.

The pope, noting a worldwide increase in armed internal conflicts in which civilian populations suffer greatly, said nations have a duty "to guarantee the right to humanitarian aid to suffering civilians and refugees."

He called it a "paradox of contemporary warfare" that "as recent conflicts have shown, armies enjoy maximum security, while the civilian population lives in frightening situations of danger."

Peace-making necessarily involves caring for the development needs of the poor, he said.

"At the beginning of a new century, the one issue which most challenges our human and Christian consciences is the poverty of countless millions of men and women," he said. He noted that more than 1.4 billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty.

The earth's resources are not destined for a select few, but for the good of all its inhabitants, he said.

"This basic principle is widely disregarded, as shown by the persistent and growing gulf in the world between a North filled with abundant commodities and resources and increasingly made up of older people, and a South where the great majority of younger people now live, still deprived of credible prospects for social, cultural and economic development."

The pope suggested a rethinking of what the economy and its purposes are. He invited economists and financial professionals to "recognize the urgency of the need to ensure that economic practices and related political policies have as their aim the good of every person and of the whole person."

He said there was an urgent need to reconsider the models that inspire development policies, to include greater participation of the poor as agents of their own development.

"When seen as a sowing of peace, cooperation cannot be reduced to aid or assistance, especially if given with an eye to the benefits to be received in return for the resources made available," he said.

Fides said that the pope was criticizing self-serving international aid policies of rich countries like the United States, Japan and European nations. †

DOOR

continued from page 2

and door posts with cloths soaked in holy water.

Instead, Bishop Marini said, Catholics from Asia and Oceania will mark the doorway with perfume and decorate it with flowers while traditional Japanese music plays.

The flowers and perfume are meant to honor Christ—the gate or doorway of salvation—and to be a sign of the joy which was part of the biblical jubilee years, the bishop said.

"The joy expressed by the flowers and fragrances adorning the door replaces the penitential sign of the purifying water formerly sprinkled on the doorjamb" by the confessors, he said.

Like the Catholics from Asia and Oceania, representatives from every continent will have a special role during the ceremony as a concrete sign that Christ's birth, death and resurrection are important for the whole world, Bishop Marini said.

Representing Africa, a group of Catholics from Onitsha, Nigeria, will play traditional horns in a call to all people to join the celebration, he said. Lay men and women from the Americas and Europe will form a procession to carry the Gospel to the basilica's main altar.

Bishop Marini said that as of Dec. 14, the Vatican had received requests for 55,000 tickets to watch the opening of the Holy Door and attend the Christmas Mass



Workers remove a metal box containing keys and religious objects from the inside wall of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 15. Pope John Paul II will officially open the sealed door on Christmas Eve, signaling the start of the Jubilee Year.

at midnight.

St. Peter's Basilica, he said, can hold a maximum of 7,000 people.

The bishop said it is up to officials at the Prefecture of the Papal Household to decide who gets tickets, but he is working closely with Vatican and Italian state television to ensure the event is prayerful and dignified for everyone watching, not just those inside the basilica. †

The Richmond Catholic Community presents

Norma McCorvey

"Jane Roe" in the 1973 Supreme Court decision, *Roe vs. Wade*, legalizing abortion. Ms. McCorvey is now a PRO-LIFE CATHOLIC! Come and hear her testimony about her amazing conversion from a pro-abortion activist to a PRO-LIFE CRUSADER. As witnessed in her book, *Won by Love*, she describes her life from her involvement in *Roe vs. Wade*, to her work in abortion clinics, to her conversion in which God used a small child to change her heart.

Holy Family Catholic Church
815 West Main St., Richmond, IN
Saturday, Jan. 22, 2000
1:30 p.m.
Free admission

PUBLIC INVITED! Youth groups are encouraged to join us on Friday evening for a pro-life pilgrimage. Activities planned include liturgies, a living rosary, several speakers to discuss various pro-life topics, placement of 4,000 crosses and Eucharistic Adoration.

Contact Mary Williams, youth minister, 765-966-0134, for details on how to register. Contact Joyce Deitz for other details about the talk, 765-935-2934.

27	-	It's been 27 years since Jan. 22, 1973, beginning the legalization of abortion.
4,000	-	Over 4,000 babies are destroyed at abortion clinics EVERY DAY in the U.S.
30,000,000+	-	Babies have died since the 1973 decision.
1 in 4	-	Babies die in abortion clinics in the U.S.
42%	-	of abortions are performed on mothers who have had at least one prior abortion.

Daily Readings, continued from page 11

Monday, Jan. 3
1 John 3:22-4:6
Psalm 2:7-8, 10-11
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, Jan. 4
Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:2-4ab, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday, Jan. 5
John Neumann, bishop
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:2, 10-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, Jan. 6
Blessed Andre Bessette, religious
1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalm 72:2, 14, 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday, Jan. 7
Raymond of Penyafort, priest
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, Jan. 8
1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b
John 3:22-30

Sunday, Jan. 9
The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
Acts 10:34-38

Monday, Jan. 10
1 Samuel 1:1-8
Psalm 116:12-19
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday, Jan. 11
1 Samuel 1:9-20
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8
Mark 1:21b-28

Wednesday, Jan. 12
1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Psalm 40:2-5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, Jan. 13
Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11, 14-15, 25-26
Mark 1:40-45

Friday, Jan. 14
1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a
Psalm 89:16-19
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, Jan. 15
1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, Jan. 16
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42

Check It Out . . .

Paulist Father Bob Rivers will present a workshop on **creating evangelizing parishes for the new millennium**. He will discuss topics like the meaning of Catholic evangelization, initial considerations on becoming an evangelizing parish, vision and strategy for becoming a welcoming parish, and vision and strategy for becoming an inviting parish. The workshop will be offered at St. Ann Parish in Lafayette on Friday, Jan. 21, and will be repeated at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Carmel on Saturday, Jan. 22. The program runs from 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m., and the cost is \$7. Additional information is available from Sister Fidelis Tracy, for the St. Ann location, at 800-544-1684, and from Denise McGonigal, for the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel location, at 317-846-3475.

Little Flower Parish in Indianapolis will build a commemorative brick sidewalk in the summer of 2000 in thanksgiving for 75 years as a Catholic Church in the Indianapolis East Deanery. Engraved bricks will be placed in a pattern of a cross on the grounds. Families and businesses may purchase bricks in two sizes that cost \$75 and \$200. For more information, call 317-357-8352.

The Indiana Repertory Theatre will present a one-man play titled **"An Almost Holy Picture"** from Jan. 6–29 on the IRT's mainstage. The story is about one man's search for faith and healing. Samuel Gentle, played by Tim Grimm, is a non-practicing Episcopal priest who shares three intimate encounters with God in which he reveals his joy, pain, love and struggle to find the meaning of life. The play was written by Heather McDonald and was named "Best New Play of the Year" by the Los Angeles Times in 1995. For ticket information, call 317-635-5252.

The Indiana Office for Campus Ministries will sponsor **"Jesus Stories for Spiritual Consciousness,"** a spiritual life retreat, Feb. 24–25 at Allison Mansion on Marion College's campus, 3200 Cold Springs Road, in Indianapolis. John Shea, of the Institute for Pastoral Studies at Loyola University in Chicago, is the retreat leader. The cost for the retreat is \$60 for Thursday/Friday registration and \$40 for Thursday registration. For more information, call 317-923-4839 or e-mail at iocm@aol.com

HospiceCare, Inc. is looking for volunteers to work as a group or individually with terminally ill patients and their families for a few hours a week or month. Many volunteer positions are available at the corporate office. For more information, call 317-580-9336 or 800-517-9964.

The sacraments will be the focus of **the annual men's Lenten retreat** at Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis on March 10–12. For more information, call 317-545-7681.

"The Gift," a jazz cantata, will feature a mixture of traditional and classical Christmas songs beginning at 4 p.m. on Jan. 2 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th and Illinois Streets, in Indianapolis. Members of the St. Thomas Aquinas Gospel Choir, soloist Hazel Strong Johnson and Larry Calland and the Conga Jazz will perform during the 90-minute concert. Selections are from Handel's "Messiah" a version of "The Hallelujah Chorus" arranged by Quincy Jones, "Go Tell It On the Mountain" and "Love Came Down at Christmas." Free-will offerings are appreciated. For more information, call St. Thomas Aquinas Parish at 317-253-1461.

Tai Chi Chih will begin on Jan. 4 and continue on the following four Mondays from 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m. at The Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove. **Yoga** will begin on Jan. 10 and continue on the following five Mondays from 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m. on a morning session will begin on Jan. 11 and continue through the following five Tuesdays from 9 a.m.–10:30 a.m. For more information, call 317-788-7581, ext. 3169 or check the web site at www.benedict@indy.net

Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., in Indianapolis will host several **activities on Dec. 31 for Jubilee 2000**. The following is a list: 5:30 p.m., vigil liturgy; 6:30 p.m., candlelight service; 6:45 p.m., first holy hour; 7:45 p.m., second holy hour; 8:45 p.m., third holy hour; 9:45 p.m., fourth holy hour; 10:45 p.m., prelude music; 11 p.m., Jubilee 2000 Mass; 12 a.m., Jubilee 2000 Proclamation.

Enneagram: Basics, an introduction to the theory of personality, will be held on Saturday mornings, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, 12 and 19, from 9 a.m.–noon at the Aquinas Center in Clarksville. Bob Leonard, who has served as director of religious education/catechetical ministry for the New Albany Deanery for more than 18 years, is the presenter. Leonard has been working with the Enneagram since 1985 and is an O'Leary-Beesing certified teacher of Enneagram: Basics. The cost per person is \$28. The deadline to register is Jan. 24. For more information, call 812-945-0354.

The St. Louis Archdiocese's commemorative papal visit book is now available in bookstores and can be ordered on-line. **"John Paul II: The Pastoral Visit to St. Louis"** is a 156-page "coffee table book" commemorating the January visit of Pope John Paul II to St. Louis. The book uses a variety of color photographs and some text to tell the story of the pope's visit to the Gateway City. All homilies and speeches delivered by Pope John Paul II while in St. Louis also are printed in the book. The following is a list of bookstores that have the book currently in stock. Pauline Books and Media, 317-965-3512; Catholic Supply, 314-351-0277; St. Peter's Catholic Store, 636-970-1043; Left Banks Books, 314-367-6731; Barnes and Noble, 314-843-9480 or www.bn.com; B Dalton Bookstores, 314-821-2424;

Borders Books and Music, 314-432-3575 or www.borders.com; and Waldenbooks, 636-278-8736.

The Catholic Choir of Indianapolis will present a free concert of Christmas music at 4 p.m. on Dec. 24 at Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis. Following the concert, the choir will accompany Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general and moderator of the curia for the archdiocese, for the Christmas Eve Mass.

Mozart Vespers will be included in a weekend retreat on the music and the theology of Mozart Jan. 21-23 at Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis. Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, is the presenter. The cost for the weekend retreat is \$125 per individual and \$225 per married couple. The deadline to register is Jan. 5. For more information, call 317-545-7681 or check the Web site www.archindy.org/fatima.

A Mozart Day of Reflection will be held on Jan. 24, from 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m. For more information, call 317-545-7681. Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, is the presenter.

Single Catholic women, ages 20–40, who want to learn about religious life are invited to attend a Benedictine Life Weekend Jan. 7–9 at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand. The weekend will focus on the theme "Stability-Commitment to Life." Participants will have the opportunity to experience the Benedictine way of life as they share in prayer and the community life of the Sisters of St. Benedict. The program is free. For more information, call Benedictine Sister Anita Louise Lowe at 800-738-9999, or e-mail her at vocation@thedome.org. The deadline to register is Jan. 3. Information about the vocation program of the Ferdinand Benedictines is also available at <http://thedome.org>.

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand are turning to the newest technology to help their oldest members. Their three-year-old gift shop, **"For Heaven's Sake,"** which provides support for retired sisters, now has an online store for Internet shoppers. The address is <http://www.forheavensake.org>.

St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers annual Jump the Gun, a 1.1-mile run/walk, will be held Jan. 7 at St. Francis South Campus, 8111 S. Emerson Ave., in Indianapolis. Health fair activities will be offered from 10:30 p.m.–12:30 a.m. The run/walk begins at 11 p.m. All participants will receive special seeding for the Indianapolis Life 500 Festival Mini-Marathon set from May 6. Registration is not required. The event is open to all ages. For more information, call 317-782-7981.

A Bereavement Support Group, a series of meetings open to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one, will be held on Jan. 18 and 25 and Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22 at St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers' Hospice Office, 438 S. Emerson Ave., in Greenwood. Sessions will be held in the afternoon from 3 p.m.–4:30 p.m. and in the evening from 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m. Registration is required. To register, call 317-865-2092.

Caterpillar Kids, a bereavement support group for children ages 5–12 who have experienced the death of a loved one, will be held Jan. 26; Feb. 2, 9, 16 and 23; and March 1 at Christ United Methodist Church, 8540 U.S. 31 South, in Indianapolis. Registration is required. To register, call 317-865-2092. †



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(Not all brochures have returned from printer. They will be sent as soon as they are available.)

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- NEW ENGLAND & FRENCH CANADA CRUISE, 8 DAYS IN SEPT. FROM \$1,098
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- SWITZERLAND, 9 DAYS IN OCT. \$1,698

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- EGYPT, 9 DAYS IN NOV. \$2,388
- ROME, NORTHERN ITALY & VENICE, 11 DAYS IN NOV. \$2,382
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Mother finds safe housing for daughters

By Margaret Nelson

It's been less than two years since Marie decided she had to take her three daughters—then ages 8, 11 and 13—and move away from her husband, who was controlling to the point of abuse.

The four lived for weeks in two different shelters before she heard about the Holy Family Services' transitional housing program in Indianapolis.

Marie, whose name is changed in this story to protect her identity, applied to get into the program. She wanted her family to live in one of the nine apartments at the former south side Catholic school because the program had a support system that would help her meet her goals—finding a place for her family to live, getting a job and buying a car so she could get to the job.

Her supportive case manager is helping her meet the goal of permanent independent housing by arranging the transitional housing and referring her to full-time employment and educational opportunities. She may live in the apartment for up to two years, paying a portion of her salary. Last year, 11 families lived in the apartment building—a total of 40 people.

After working for temporary services a few months, Marie obtained the job she's had for 16 months as a security guard. And she has been able to get a car. Her former case manager drives Marie's girls to school—a task that would be difficult for her with her work schedule.

Two of her daughters go to a south side Catholic elementary school and another to a public high school.

This past August, Marie became legal guardian for her two nieces—16 and 18—when their mother—Marie's sister—lost her home.

The teens work two hours after school at a multiservice center in a peer leadership conflict management program. They also

help serve at food concessions during downtown sporting events. The teens are saving money for their education, and they travel to promote the program in other cities. Last year, they made trips to San Francisco, Mexico and Latin America. Even the 10-year-old is a junior peer leader.

Marie said that the apartment is much better than being in a shelter for more than the obvious reasons.

"Being in my own apartment gives me more self-confidence. It has raised my self-esteem to be on my own," said Marie. "I don't have to depend on anyone else."

Marie wants people who read this story to know that homeless people aren't much different than they are. She warned that it can happen to anyone if a few things go wrong. This fact has been emphasized to her by the honest, hardworking homeless people she has met since she left her husband.

"Some people don't have the skills to provide for themselves, and they just need a little help," she said. "You can be working and living from paycheck to paycheck."

"It's not like the stereotype—that the homeless are lazy and don't want to work," said Marie.

"I'm proud of my girls," she said, explaining that "their grades are always great."

Marie takes the classes that Holy Family Services offer, such as a money management workshop and a program showing survival skills against violence. She's reading *Building Blocks to Home Ownership*. In the process of checking on her credit for home ownership, she was surprised that "there was not much [bad debt] on it."

By next June, Marie hopes to move her family into their own home. She's found a south side Indianapolis developer who renovates homes for families to rent-to-buy them.



Photo by Margaret Nelson

Marie and her three daughters admire their Christmas tree in their transitional housing apartment made possible by Holy Family Services, part of Catholic Social Services.

She explained that, at the apartment building, families with smaller children can get free day care the first 30 days—until they find permanent day care.

Holy Family Services also has a crisis shelter for short-term housing. Last year, 341 families used the shelter—a total of 1,000 people, mostly children. Both the shelter and the apartment building are part of Catholic Social Services, a member agency of Catholic Charities. They help families find a safe place to live, escape domestic violence and search for jobs and other skills to begin life anew.

Marie's apartment is neat and homey, with photos of her daughters lining the

window sill. A Christmas tree dominates the living room. Decorated, it's topped with an angel.

Marie's 10-year-old daughter volunteered, "I was an angel last week in the Christmas play at school."

"Transitional housing is just like a blessing," said Marie. "It gives you a home of your own, based on your income. It allows me to save money, and I can work toward my goal of owning a home."

(Those wishing further information about how to help or obtain housing for homeless families may call Holy Family Services 317-635-7830.) †

Providence Sisters to host international Vigil 2000

Vigil 2000 will be a day-long service on Dec. 31 to welcome the new millennium at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Members of all denominations are invited to attend part or all of the vigil in the Church of the Immaculate Conception and in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

"Offering the opportunity for this vigil in preparation for the millennium carries out, in a special way, the mission of the Sisters of Providence to deepen our own relationship with God and to make God's Providence known to others as well," said Providence Sister Jeanne Knoerle, a member of the Contemplative Dimension Core Group that planned the event.

The Sisters of Providence have scheduled the vigil to coincide with prayer services of their communities in Taiwan, Sri Lanka and France.

The vigil will begin at 7 a.m. with the theme of forgiveness and continue at 9 a.m. with thanksgiving and praise.

Mass will be celebrated in the church at 11:30 a.m. Services beginning at 1 p.m. will focus on hope, then love.

After 8 p.m., the services will continue in the chapel, with themes of forgiveness, then hope and love.

At midnight, the Sisters of Providence will host a festive celebration in the Providence Dining Room. †

Grant to boost schools' computer technology

By Margaret Nelson

Those who teach technology in archdiocesan schools will have support through a two-year \$20,000 grant from the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation to the Office of Catholic Education.

The Teacher Technology Leadership Academy (TTLA) will help 16 teachers integrate technology in their classrooms this year.

Participants have met three times this year to plan ways to integrate multimedia presentations and Web pages into the curriculum. They will meet another three times in the second semester to integrate databases, spreadsheets and Internet research in their daily lessons.

The grant will pay for travel and offer stipends for TTLA participants to train their peers in the skills they have learned.

This is the beginning of the transformation, said Mark Hofer, coordinator for educational technology for the Office of Catholic Education.

"I'm grateful to Dan Elsener and the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation," Hofer said, "for allowing us to support these teacher leaders as professionals to extend technology integration throughout the archdiocese."

Hofer said that any school leader interested in having a TTLA participant provide faculty training should contact him at 317-592-4051 for information. †

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1999

continued from page 2

those two countries for years to come.

Perhaps the most shocking act of violence to Americans was the tragedy last April at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., where two students carried out the worst school massacre in U.S. history, killing 13 people and wounding 23 before killing themselves.

Pope John Paul II, who has made the celebration of the jubilee year and bringing the Church into the new millennium one of the biggest—and possibly last—major projects of his pontificate, continued his world travels in 1999 despite growing signs of fading health and strength.

The pontiff, who turned 79 in May, kicked off the new year with a January trip to Mexico and the United States in which he warned against giving in to a “culture of death.”

In Mexico City, he officially closed the 1997 Synod of Bishops for America by issuing his postsynodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)*.

Ending his trip with a one-day stop in St. Louis, he celebrated Mass and met with thousands of young people from across the nation. In a private moment with the governor of Missouri, he obtained clemency for a convicted murderer originally scheduled to be executed on the day of his visit.

During the year, the pope—who has repeatedly called capital punishment “cruel and unnecessary”—interceded for several other death-row inmates in the United States, one of the few Western nations that still imposes the death penalty.

Numerous U.S. bishops also spoke out against executions, and the bishops’ Administrative Board in April issued *A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty*.

In December, the U.S. National Jewish/Catholic Consultation issued a similar plea, saying both traditions have gradually narrowed acceptable use of capital punishment to the point that “today, we would say together that it is time to cease the practice altogether.”

Pope John Paul visited Romania in May at the invitation of Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist. Making his first visit as pope to a predominantly Orthodox nation, he paid homage to the Orthodox Church but also called for justice for the Catholic minority.

The following month, the pontiff made his seventh and longest visit to Poland, a marathon 13-day tour touching 21 cities in 16 dioceses.

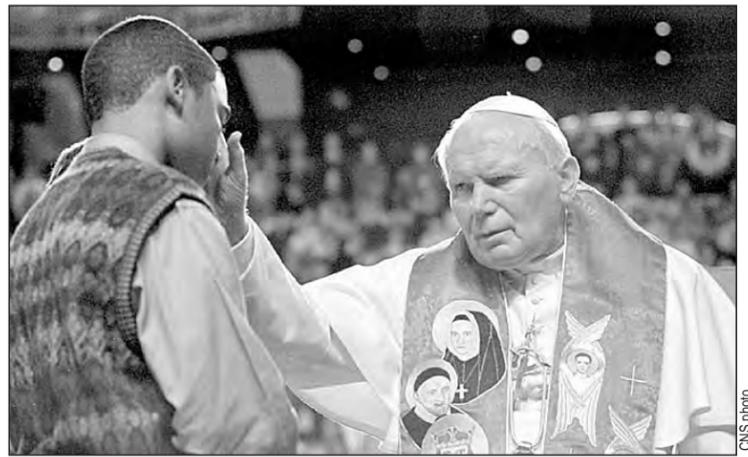
The pope presided over the Synod of Bishops for Europe in October and in November traveled to India to deliver his postsynodal document, *Ecclesia in Asia (The Church in Asia)*, synthesizing the results of the Asian synod he had convened in 1998.

During his four-day visit, Pope John Paul called for a new program of evangelization and predicted “a great harvest of faith” in Asia in the next millennium. But he told the continent’s non-Christians that they have nothing to fear from the Church, whose mission is “service and love.”

From India the pope flew to Georgia, a former Soviet republic, where he celebrated Mass in the capital city of Tbilisi, met with President Eduard Shevardnadze and Georgian Orthodox Catholicos Ilia II, and spent the night in a Catholic-run shelter for the homeless.



Pope John Paul II sits with Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist during an arrival ceremony for the pope in Bucharest on May 7. This was the first visit by a Catholic pontiff to the mainly Orthodox country.



Pope John Paul II reaches out to a young man in St. Louis in January. The pope made trips to seven countries in 1999.



Father Kenneth Leone talks with Kent Kochsmeier, 17, during a prayer service following a shooting rampage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., on April 20.

Health concerns have caused the Vatican to reduce somewhat the heavy papal schedule for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, when Rome expects 25 million tourists.

But aides say the pope, who inaugurates the jubilee by opening the bronze Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica on Christmas Eve, remains mentally alert and still plans a schedule that includes presiding over more than 70 liturgical events as well as numerous meetings, audiences and appearances simply to bless pilgrims and pray with them. He also has tentative plans to visit the Holy Land in March and Portugal in May.

The approaching religious jubilee year reached into the secular realm in an unusual way as millions of ordinary people joined religious leaders in a global movement asking governments and international monetary institutions to grant deep, rapid debt relief to the world’s most heavily indebted poor countries.

By year’s end major creditor governments and the governing bodies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank had taken major steps toward quicker, deeper debt relief for the worst-off nations—and, much more significantly from the standpoint of religious leaders’ moral concern, had made human services and poverty relief for the people within those countries a central concern in the policy-making process.

Pope John Paul, who publicly advanced the debt relief proposal in his 1994 apostolic letter on preparing for the millennium, was easily the most prominent public figure

in the global campaign.

In late October the pope turned his advancing age into a pastoral moment with a *Letter to the Elderly*, marking the United Nations 1999 Year of the Older Person. In the letter he offered his personal spiritual reflections on aging.

Three weeks later, the U.S. bishops issued their own message on the subject, *The Blessings of Age*, in which they encouraged parishes to develop programs for older Catholics and to make use of their wisdom and talents in parish ministry.

At their November meeting in Washington, the bishops dealt with a wide range of other issues as well, including decisions on restructuring their national conference and an adult faith formation plan for the country.

But the decision which most caught public attention was their approval of new norms for U.S. Catholic colleges and universities, including norms for theologians in those institutions to receive a “*mandatum*,” or mandate to teach, from the local bishop.

While theologians, bishops and university administration leaders have expressed wide consensus on the need to strengthen the Catholic identity of U.S. Catholic higher education, extensive disagreement remains whether the *mandatum* requirement will contribute to that goal or harm it. The norms must still be approved by Rome before they will take effect.

Another major controversy to hit the U.S. Church came in July when the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a public notice barring two U.S. religious who have been leaders in gay ministry for nearly 30 years from any further ministry involving homosexual people. The notice said “errors and ambiguities” in their ministry have caused confusion and “harmed the community of the Church.”

Salvatorian Father Robert Nugent said he accepted the Vatican order, but his colleague, Sister Jeannine Gramick, a School Sister of Notre Dame, said she would seek to appeal the decision.

In November, some 4,500 supporters published a national ad urging the bishops to intervene in support of the two.

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, head of the bishops’ conference, issued a detailed response in which he reaffirmed the Vatican ruling and repudiated allegations that the Vatican action was intended to diminish or discourage the Church’s ministry with homosexual people.

- Leading Catholic figures who died in 1999 included:
- Joe DiMaggio, 84, Yankee baseball legend, March 8, at his home in Hollywood, Fla., after a long illness following lung cancer surgery.
 - Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez of Santiago, Chile, 91, noted for his human rights advocacy under the military government of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, April 9, in Santiago, of respiratory and renal failure.
 - Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster, 76, England’s leading Catholic figure, June 17, in London, of cancer.
 - Anthony J. Wilhelm, 74, author of the best-selling book on Catholicism, *Christ Among Us*, July 7, in Walnut Creek, Calif., of a degenerative blood disorder.
 - John F. Kennedy Jr., 38, only son of America’s first Catholic president, July 16, when his private plane crashed at sea.
 - Archbishop Helder Pessoa Camara of Olinda and Recife, Brazil, 90, a defender of the poor and world-renowned human rights champion; Aug. 27, in Olinda, of cardiac arrest.
 - Morris L. West, 83, Australian best-selling author and lifelong Catholic whose novels, often dealing with themes of faith, included *The Shoes of the Fisherman*, Oct. 9, at his home in Sydney. †

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Christmas celebration began in fourth century

By Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

When I was a child, I assumed that Jesus was born in December. After all, that's when we celebrated his birth, and most manger scenes had artificial snow covering the ground and the stable's roof.

It was years later when I learned that many scholars believed that Christmas came to be placed on Dec. 25 in order to counteract a pagan celebration called the Birth of the Unconquered Sun. This feast of the Roman religion was established on Dec. 25 by the Roman Emperor Aurelian in 274 A.D.

Dec. 25 was observed as the date of the winter solstice, the year's shortest day, after which the days began to lengthen again. Just when the darkness of night seemed about to suppress the light of day, the sun began to regain strength. This victory was cause for rejoicing.

So Dec. 25 was the date for a popular Roman feast. Why, then, would Christians choose that as the day for Christmas? Because Jesus is the true Sun who conquers the power of darkness.

Since the 18th century, this theory of the origin of Christmas has been widely taught.

More recently, another possibility has been suggested by some scholars. This theory of the origin of Christmas relies on the Bible itself to give us clues to the date of Christ's birth.

These scholars begin with the appearance of the angel to Zachariah in the

temple to announce the conception of John the Baptist. This appearance occurred when Zachariah was serving in the temple. If this service was for the feast of Yom Kippur, that would place it near the autumn equinox, around Sept. 25.

Figuring nine months, from conception to birth, puts John's birth around June 25. We celebrate the feast of his birth on June 24.

In appearing to Mary at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel told her that Elizabeth was already in her sixth month of pregnancy. That puts the Annunciation at the spring equinox, around March 25 (which is when we celebrate that feast). Adding nine months to that date brings us to Dec. 25 as the date of Christ's birth.

This also meshes with an opinion common in the early Church that Christ died on the same date he was conceived.

Even if this second theory is correct, of course, it doesn't necessarily mean that Dec. 25 was the actual date Jesus was born. It may suggest, however, that we have the right time of the year and that these two conceptions and births (John the Baptist's and Jesus') fell near the year's four turning points: the winter and summer solstices, and the spring and autumn equinoxes.

It surely seemed appropriate to the early Christians that these key events in salvation history should occur at or near such significant points in the solar calendar.

The earliest Christians apparently did not celebrate Christ's birth on a separate feast day. At first, the Church only celebrated the weekly feast of Sunday.

Easter was the first annual feast to develop, linked to the Jewish feast of Passover.

The earliest firm record we have of the celebration of Christmas is a document written in Rome in 336 A.D. The feast may have existed somewhat earlier, of course, but it seems to have developed sometime early in the fourth century.

The feast spread rapidly throughout the Church so that it was celebrated widely in the Western Church by the end of the fourth century.

About the same time, Christians in the Eastern Church developed the feast of Epiphany on Jan. 6 to celebrate Christ's birth. The reasons for choosing that date are even less certain than those for Dec. 25, but by the end of the fourth cen-



CNS illustration by Joan Hyme

The angel Gabriel told Mary that Elizabeth was already in her sixth month of pregnancy. That puts the Annunciation at the spring equinox, around March 25. Adding nine months to that date would make Dec. 25 the date of Christ's birth.

Christmas prayer expresses excitement

By David Gibson

"The opening prayer from the Christmas Mass at dawn contains a provocative expression which brings a tone of excitement to the jubilee," said Bishop William Weigand of Sacramento.

The prayer reads, "Your eternal word leaped down from heaven in the silent watches of the night."

Bishop Weigand said, "The idea of the second person of the blessed Trinity leaping down into the arms of humankind suggests that God is enthusiastic about coming to dwell with us in human form."

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †

tury, the feast of Epiphany was widespread in the East.

As the two feasts became popular in their respective Churches, they also began to be adopted in the other region. The East adopted the Western Christmas celebrated on Dec. 25, and the West adopted the Eastern Epiphany celebrated on Jan. 6.

On Dec. 25, the East celebrated both the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi; on Jan. 6 the East celebrated Jesus' baptism and the miracle of Cana.

The West celebrated only Christ's birth Dec. 25, combining the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus and the miracle at Cana into the celebration of Epiphany on Jan. 6.

In our own time, the reforms of

Vatican Council II split the themes of Epiphany in the West. Now we celebrate the Magi on Jan. 6 and the baptism of the Lord on the following Sunday, recalling the miracle at Cana on the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time in Year C of the Lectionary cycle.

In all these calendar patterns, the Church celebrates more than the birth of the child at Bethlehem. The Christmas season also celebrates Christ's revelation to the world.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). It is he who has conquered the darkness with the light of his glory.

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

Discussion Point

Holiday focus is on faith, family

This Week's Question

What change that you made in your own celebration of Christmas—or what tradition or custom—has worked in terms of focusing attention toward the heart of this feast day?

"We've always tried to make Christmas less of a present-giving event and more of a family gathering event. Also, my wife and I have always encouraged our children to participate in volunteer activities, like working at homeless shelters or visiting the elderly in nursing homes, who might be alone for Christmas." (Mike Brodie, Des Moines, Iowa)

"I come from a Polish culture. We sing Christmas carols, or *kolędy*. Our Christmas Eve meal is a fasting meal. We put hay on the table and cover it with cloth to remind us of the manger, and we share a Christmas

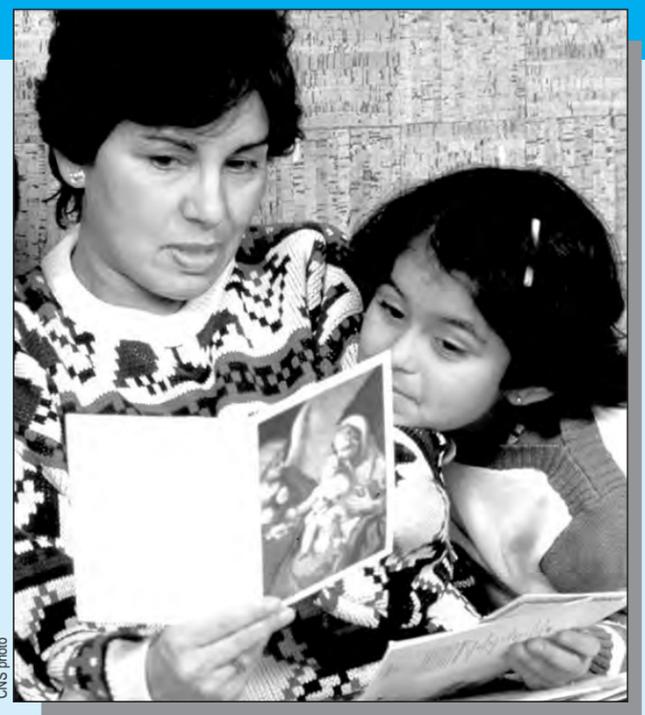
wafer, or *oplatki*, asking God for forgiveness and for blessings in the New Year." (Father Joseph Dornika, Athol Springs, N.Y.)

"On Christmas our children are all home. We usually attend Midnight Mass following a Christmas Eve dinner. Lately, we have been inviting people in the area, who don't have a Christmas Eve celebration, to join us." (Nancy Gill, Bridgeport, Conn.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Tell of a practice in your parish or diocese that fosters understanding among the Church's diverse cultural groups.

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



CNS photo

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Vatican II: Five documents approved on one day

(Tenth in a series)

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council approved five documents on Oct. 28, 1965. They were:



Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops: It spelled out the roles of bishops in the universal Church, in their own dioceses and in their cooperation with one another.

It emphasized collegiality and encouraged bishops to form national episcopal conferences.

Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life: It sought to adapt religious life to conditions of the modern world without changing anything essential to consecrated life. It said this was to be done according to five principles: 1. The Gospel must be the supreme rule. 2. Each religious institute should recover and follow the intentions of its founder. 3. All institutes should participate in the work of the universal Church according to the degree allowed by their nature. 4. All religious

should have a clear understanding of contemporary problems in order to help bring people to the Church. 5. Above all else, religious life must be understood not as an activity, but as a way of life according to the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Decree on the Training of Priests: It said that the true renewal of the Church was dependent upon the training of priests so they would be prepared for "a priestly ministry animated by the spirit of Christ." It dealt with the fostering of vocations, the importance of seminaries, the care which should be given to the spiritual formation of those preparing for the priesthood, the revision of ecclesiastical studies, training for pastoral work and the continuation of studies after ordination. All these were to serve the purpose of preparing priests to lead the renewal that was outlined by Vatican II.

Declaration on Christian Education: It emphasized the inalienable right of every human being to a suitable education and said that parents must have the right to choose the schools they wish for their children. It said that parents must not suf-

fer any direct or indirect burdens because of their choice of schools. It said, too, that education is broader than schools and that the teaching of religion must be extended to those who don't attend Catholic schools. It supported special education for the handicapped and positive and prudent education in matters related to sex.

Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: It rejected the charge that the Jews were guilty of deicide or that they were guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. The document also said, "The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or any harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life or religion." It also praised Hinduism for its search for God through asceticism and meditation; commended Buddhism for its belief in the radical insufficiency of this temporal world and its search for enlightenment; and complimented Islam for its belief in God, its recognition of Christ as a prophet and its veneration of the Blessed Virgin. †

Journey of Faith/Fr. John Buckel

Soaps and Scripture: the odd couple

Watching soap operas can be a religious experience. Scripture and soap operas can be said to "point to one another." First of



all, there are a number of stories in the Bible that read more like a script from a soap opera than excerpts from sacred Scripture.

Tales of husbands cheating on their wives (2 Sm 11), wives cheating on their husbands (Jn 8),

a woman married to a man who is not the biological father of her child (Mt 1:18-25) and drunken behavior at dinner parties (1 Cor 11) are but a few examples of the type of R-rated conduct one finds in both the Old and New Testaments.

Soap operas reflect the "human situation." Although we live in a world that is in many ways very beautiful, it is also a world that is very sinful. Soap operas demonstrate all-too-well the great capacity people have to mess up their lives. They show how people cope with life, with all of its "ups and downs." They illustrate what people sometimes do when they are confronted with loneliness, lack of self-worth, broken relationships, failure to find meaning in their lives and, worst of all, death.

Faced with such problems, many characters in soap operas fall into immoral behavior. Soap operas do a wonderful job of revealing the consequences of immoral behavior, illustrating how such conduct wrecks people's lives.

Soap operas mirror the human condition but give little or no worthwhile advice about how to cope with it. They are much better at informing us how *not* to live than how to live.

Where soap operas fail, Scripture succeeds. The Bible addresses the pain, sorrow and challenges that are often associated with human existence. It also has a great deal to say about the fundamental questions that frequently arise in life.

Scripture informs us that God has responded to the sad and sorrowful situation of humanity. It calls to mind the goodness of God and reveals that he sent Jesus Christ into our world so that we might be delivered from sin.

Christ is God's answer to the difficulties and questions of life. Sin and its terrifying effects, which are manifested so graphically in soap operas, have been overcome through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Unlike soap operas, the Bible is not timid about offering advice on how we should conduct ourselves. This sacred book points to the compassionate way that Jesus treated others and commands the followers of Jesus to do likewise.

At first sight, it probably appears rather bizarre that seemingly "opposite realities" are linked together, that is, something as unholy as soap operas with something as sacred as Scripture. However, bizarre as it may seem, Christians, in fact, profess that on the first Christmas, seemingly "opposite realities" have come together in the person of Jesus Christ.

In other words, a vitally important part of our faith is the mystery of the Incarnation, namely, the belief that the almighty and eternal God came together with frail and mortal humanity in Jesus, who is both divine and human.

One of the dominant themes of the Christmas season is that God is often found in places that one would never expect: in a manger, on the cross and even in the living room watching a soap opera.

(Father John Buckel is a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and an associate professor of Scripture at Saint Meinrad School of Theology.) †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

Rising to the occasion requires love, patience

It seems to me that rising early is unnatural. My body rhythms have never been in sync with sunrises and waking up alert and stuff like that. And by some dumb luck, I married a man with similar opinions.



Which brings me to Christmas mornings with kids in the house.

Now, it was fine when the older ones

were still babes and didn't know what to expect anyway. They would get up at their usual times and cheerfully go along with whatever we had in mind: opening presents, admiring the pretty Christmas tree, going to Mass, having company for dinner. It was all OK with them, but not a real blast, either.

However, the minute they heard about Santa Claus, things changed. They'd been told that Christmas was Baby Jesus' birthday, but what really captured their attention was the idea of Santa bringing gifts, reindeer, elves, and whatever else they picked up from TV. So, when Dec. 25 dawned (and I do mean dawned), we were in for early rising with a vengeance!

In those days I usually went to Midnight

Mass alone, ostensibly to sing in the choir, but also hoping that the kids would be soundly asleep by the time I got home. Meanwhile, their dad would announce the "6 a.m. *no sooner*" wakeup time, enforce silence, and then shift into the annual put-new-toys-together mode.

By the time I returned, he'd be muttering curses, knee-deep in packaging while he tried to figure out directions translated into English by non-English-speakers. By 2 a.m. or 3 a.m., Santa's largesse would be stacked into a pile for each child, with one unwrapped present for each indicating whose pile was probably whose.

Finally, Santa's helpers would crash into bed. And soon, in the dark, the *dark* of night, we'd be awakened by the sound of whispers and little feet pattering outside our door.

"Psst. Pssst. Shh. Psst, Will, is it 6 o'clock yet?" (Will was the only one old enough to tell time.) "Shhh. No, it's too early." Patter, patter, thump, wrestle, thud.

'Bleary-eyed, we'd stagger out of bed trying to look at least pleasant, and turn the kids loose on the living-room display.'

Bleary-eyed, we'd stagger out of bed trying to look at least pleasant, and turn the kids loose on the living-room display. We have photographs of the ensuing scene over the years. There's the bright-eyed little girl with her loot firmly in hand, and the boys astride or brandishing whatever was new that Christmas. And always a baby, as mystified and cheerful as ever.

The kids changed as time passed, their presents grew smaller and more expensive, and Santa was no longer a factor. But Mom and Dad always looked wasted on Christmas morning, with our hair askew, slumped on the couch trying hard to share the kids' enthusiasm.

Now we can sleep in as late as we want to on Christmas morning. We can focus on Jesus' birthday and forget about Santa. But you know, we wouldn't mind at all if we could hear little voices again outside our door whispering, "Psst, is it 6 o'clock yet?"

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

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Epiphany about the Epiphany: we can visit like Magi

Surely, I'm not original when I say this: During the hustle and bustle before



Christmas, it suddenly occurred to me that we're doing this wrong. Yes, we observe Advent in special ways, trying to focus on the spirit of giving in preparation for Dec. 25.

However, some of us also enjoy a plethora of pre-Christmas holiday parties, celebrating as though Christ's birthday had already come.

Granted, this flurry of festivities began decades ago when the holiday was commercialized and shopping became a central activity. Before that, celebrations began Christmas Eve. Christmas Day had the center of attention, but the 12 days thereafter were marked in happy ways until the Feast of the Epiphany itself, which commemorates the visit to Jesus by the Magi.

Once, my husband and I visited a nursing home on Christmas morning. I came out crying. Although there were

many prior holiday activities, the atmosphere that day was glum. The place was short-staffed, and few employees were cheerful, undoubtedly because they didn't want to be there. We smiled and greeted everyone we could, including staff. When we saw the woman we particularly came to cheer, we were appalled.

Whoever dressed her chose the ugliest frock in her closet. The certified nursing assistant probably thought the woman wouldn't know any better, since she was brain-dysfunctional. That drab dress reflected the entire experience.

After I came home, I immediately went alone to a nursing home nearby, where I knew no one. I needed to see if the same sad atmosphere prevailed. Instead I found not only an abundance of cheerful staff, but the administrator herself personally visiting residents. Special care was given to each person's appearance, even those with Alzheimer's. I wrote a

'I went to St. Augustine Home for the Aged, operated by the Little Sisters of the Poor, who care for their residents as if each one is Christ himself.'

complimentary letter to the staff.

Years later on Christmas Day, I went to St. Augustine Home for the Aged, operated by the Little Sisters of the Poor, who care for their residents as if each one is Christ himself. I arrived just after Christmas Mass ended, and the joy I saw and felt

was abundantly more than what I'd experienced anywhere else.

Since we can't change society's custom of partying before the Christ Child's birthday, perhaps we can allow time during the 12 days after Christmas to revive the tradition of post-holiday celebration while approaching the Epiphany. Perhaps

we could also be like the Magi, but instead, visit a nursing home, seeing Christ in each resident as the Little Sisters do.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a noted poet and author and a regular columnist with The Criterion.) †

Feast of the Holy Family/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 26, 1999

- Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
- Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19
- Luke 2:22-40

Today, the day after the feast of Christmas, the Church celebrates the great lesson given by the Holy Family of Nazareth—Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The first reading is from the Book of Sirach, one of the Wisdom books of the Bible. The authors long ago dealt with the challenge of convincing Jews who were living outside the Holy Land that their religion was not in step with the culture around them, and that their loyalty to the one, true God of Israel was required by the ancient covenant and was the utmost in wisdom.

In these passages, Sirach extols the value of family life, especially by reinforcing the role of parents in the upbringing and lives of children. Much attention is given to the place of the father in the home, but the mother is not overlooked. Both father and mother are presented as possessing power from none other than God.

In most cases, rebelliousness is a natural byproduct of maturation. Filled with a confidence born in inexperience, youth inevitably think that their way is the best way, regardless of their parents' admonitions, demands or examples to the contrary.

Such surely was the case in Jewish families for whom Sirach was written. The Scripture asserts that parents have a vital role to play in the formation of their children.

The Epistle to the Colossians supplies the second reading for this feast. Written in the latter part of the first century A.D. for the Christian community in Colossae, the epistle, and today's reading from the epistle, repeat the great theme of the Pauline school of theological thought. Each Christian, by virtue of faith and baptism, is part of Christ, the everlasting Son of God.

Its message to wives to submit to their husbands is often misunderstood, indeed resented, by those who want women to have every opportunity and to be freed

from every burden.

Actually, the epistle calls women to a dignity of considerable height. The cultural context must be remembered. Females were in every sense secondary to males. Daughters were regarded as useless, except for the fact that they might be the source of some benefit if they could be married to a man of wealth or influence.

Courtship, as it known today, never occurred. Daughters married whomever their fathers told them to marry. Under such circumstances, they usually were in unions in which they hardly had any rights, in which they were the mere objects of their husbands' wishes for gratification or to procreate.

This epistle calls women, and men, to a reality so much higher than that pertaining in the Roman Empire of the time. It instructs men to love their wives, just as it asks women to love and respect their husbands. The message here is not of subjugation, but of mutual love, regard and care.

St. Luke's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the familiar story of the Presentation of the young Jesus in the temple.

This reading is heavy with meaning. First, the religious devotion of the Holy Family is evident. Not every couple felt obligated to go to the temple in Jerusalem to present a child to God, although this was the ideal.

Yet Mary and Joseph were there with Jesus. Their gift was modest, typical of what might be given by a relatively poor family. Luke's inclusion of this information is not simply trivia. It connects the Holy Family with the poor and dispossessed, but also with the most beloved of God.

Simeon, revered as a prophet, recognizes Jesus as Messiah. Prophets spoke in the very name of God.

For himself, the encounter with Jesus fulfilled Simeon's dreams. God had not forgotten him.

Anna, one of the few female prophets mentioned in the Bible, also recognizes the young Lord.

Finally, Simeon tells Mary that heartbreak and worry at times will be her lot. Always overshadowing the story of Jesus is the Crucifixion, the great moment of the Savior's absolute gift of self to God. Simeon's prediction connects Mary with this great act of redemption.



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My Journey to God

Christmas Morning

Handmaiden of God,
You have given to us on this morning
A portion of heaven against the straw,
A measure of divinity enthroned in a manger—
His palace a stable that we be reminded
All of earth and heaven are his.

Outside the stable walls
The muted voices of the shepherds
Entreat Joseph to allow them to adore
This babe the star has found for them.
Was this the first moment you knew—
Although in the womb, he was yours
awhile—
That now he belongs eternally
To all who come to him?

Do your arms tremble when you lift him?
Do your hands falter when you wrap him?
Against your breast, does he hear
The tumultuous beating of a heart
Overcome with awe?

(Mariam Higgins is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.)

Handmaiden of God,
Your destiny foretold in the scrolls,
Do the cool breezes of apprehension
Bestir your peaceful hours?
Have you been gifted with the
encompassing faith
That assures the tranquility this child
Will need from you?

All our fears and doubts and weaknesses
We bring to the manger.
Now we choose to venerate your
immortality
And acknowledge the unique love and
favor
God endowed on you alone.
Adoration to this child completing
the Holy Trinity,
We anticipate his message,
He bears witness of his father.

By Mariam Louise Higgins

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 27

John, apostle and evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:2-8

Tuesday, Dec. 28

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

Wednesday, Dec. 29

Thomas Becket, bishop and
martyr
1 John 2:3-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 5b-6
Luke 2:22-35

Thursday, Dec. 30

1 John 2:12-17
Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Friday, Dec. 31

Sylvester I, pope
1 John 2:18-21
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13
John 1:1-18

Saturday, Jan. 1

The Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Sunday, Jan. 2

The Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:2, 7-8, 10-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

(continued on p. 12)

Reflection

In virtually every Western culture today, even in places or among those quite distant from formal religion, the celebration of Christmas brings to mind only the deepest and most admirable qualities of a human. Furthermore, the feast calls families together as does no other holiday or public commemoration.

The Church builds upon these recent experiences by celebrating the Sunday immediately following Christmas as the Feast of the Holy Family.

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Passage from Isaiah may not refer to the Messiah

Q I have been told that there is no support in the Old Testament for our belief that Jesus was conceived and born of a virgin. However, we were taught in the past that the passage from Isaiah 7 refers to Christ and Mary when it says, "The Virgin shall be with child, and bear a son."

Can we or can't we use that to help prove the virgin birth? (Illinois)

A It is true that the Church often uses this text of the prophet Isaiah in connection with the virginal conception and birth of Jesus. As does so much of this magnificent biblical book (really the "book" of Isaiah is at least two books), Isaiah 7:14 gives us rich insights into the significance of the coming of the Savior.

However, several things prevent these words from being a "proof" of the virginal conception of Jesus.

First, the original Hebrew of Isaiah, written about 600 years before Christ, does not say virgin, but young girl—"almah." When it was translated into Greek a few hundred years later, the Greek word *parthenos* was chosen—which usually does mean virgin. It was this Greek translation, for instance, which was quoted in the Gospel according to Matthew in the story of the infancy of Jesus (Mt 1:23).

Because the prophet did not actually use the word virgin, most modern translations working from the original texts use the words maiden, or young woman, in this passage. The New American Bible that you quote does say "virgin,"

Very obviously, it places before us the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary and Joseph—as the perfect family unit.

St. Luke's Gospel guarantees who the Holy Family is. It is the family into which the Lord Jesus was born, the setting in which Jesus was to grow in human nature.

The example given by the Holy Family is clear. St. Luke's Gospel is clear. The example is of absolute dedication and closeness to God. It shines not only in Jesus, the Son of God, but in Mary and Joseph as well. †

but a footnote explains the confusion over the exact meaning of the sentence.

Furthermore, there remains real uncertainty about whether Isaiah himself intended these words as a prophetic reference to the coming Messiah. He may have meant them to refer to specific persons he was dealing with politically at that time in his life. At any rate, the text apparently was not understood by anyone in reference to the Messiah, or to virginal conception, until its use by St. Matthew.

Q What is the proper arrangement for an Advent wreath? Formerly, we used three purple candles (or white candles tied with a purple bow) and one pink candle. I've seen other forms of the wreath with white candles and blue bows. (Illinois)

A There is no official form of the Advent wreath. Its arrangement is only a matter of custom.

In times past, Advent was seen as somewhat of a mini-Lent—a time of penance and self-denial but with a tinge of joy in the background—perhaps symbolized most by the rose vestments the priest wears at Mass on the third Sunday of Advent and by the rose candle that is lighted on the Advent wreath that day.

As the Church's liturgy developed over the past century or so, particularly in the last several decades, the predominant spirit of Advent is one of joyful waiting and hope. This theme clearly appears in the Scripture readings for weekday and Sunday Masses as well as in the other liturgical texts for the season.

During the past few years, the increase of the use of blue (symbolizing hope), rather than purple in liturgical color for Advent, reflects this same spirit. †

PEACE

continued from page 2

Cervellera, director of Fides, the Vatican's missionary news service, called the pope's message an "examination of conscience of the 20th century."

The pope outlines the evils of the past

100 years, including war, genocide, totalitarianism, but also condemns modern errors, like powerful nations that "weaken the role and credibility of international organizations like the United Nations," the priest said.

"One reads between the lines the pope's condemnation of the NATO and U.S. interventions in Kosovo and Iraq, which took

place outside of U.N. mandate," Father Cervellera said.

In his message, the pope said military intervention was sometimes necessary, and even obligatory, to defend civilian populations against unjust aggressors, after political negotiations fail.

"These measures, however, must be limited in time and precise in their aims," the pope said. "They must be carried out in full respect for international law, guaranteed by an authority that is internationally recognized."

Full use must be made of all the provisions of the U.N. Charter, he said. He said the United Nations "must offer all its member states an equal opportunity to be part of the decision-making process, eliminating privileges and discriminations which weaken its role and credibility."

"What is needed without delay is a renewal of international law and international institutions," he said, whose "basic organizing principle should be the primacy of the good of humanity and of the human person over every other consideration."

The pope praised the establishment of an International Criminal Court because "crimes against humanity cannot be considered an internal affair of a nation."

The Fides editorial said the pope was referring to nations like China, Indonesia, Russia and Vietnam, which reject international human rights pressure as meddling in their internal affairs.

The pope, noting a worldwide increase in armed internal conflicts in which civilian populations suffer greatly, said nations have a duty "to guarantee the right to humanitarian aid to suffering civilians and refugees."

He called it a "paradox of contemporary warfare" that "as recent conflicts have shown, armies enjoy maximum security, while the civilian population lives in frightening situations of danger."

Peace-making necessarily involves caring for the development needs of the poor, he said.

"At the beginning of a new century, the one issue which most challenges our human and Christian consciences is the poverty of countless millions of men and women," he said. He noted that more than 1.4 billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty.

The earth's resources are not destined for a select few, but for the good of all its inhabitants, he said.

"This basic principle is widely disregarded, as shown by the persistent and growing gulf in the world between a North filled with abundant commodities and resources and increasingly made up of older people, and a South where the great majority of younger people now live, still deprived of credible prospects for social, cultural and economic development."

The pope suggested a rethinking of what the economy and its purposes are. He invited economists and financial professionals to "recognize the urgency of the need to ensure that economic practices and related political policies have as their aim the good of every person and of the whole person."

He said there was an urgent need to reconsider the models that inspire development policies, to include greater participation of the poor as agents of their own development.

"When seen as a sowing of peace, cooperation cannot be reduced to aid or assistance, especially if given with an eye to the benefits to be received in return for the resources made available," he said.

Fides said that the pope was criticizing self-serving international aid policies of rich countries like the United States, Japan and European nations. †

DOOR

continued from page 2

and door posts with cloths soaked in holy water.

Instead, Bishop Marini said, Catholics from Asia and Oceania will mark the doorway with perfume and decorate it with flowers while traditional Japanese music plays.

The flowers and perfume are meant to honor Christ—the gate or doorway of salvation—and to be a sign of the joy which was part of the biblical jubilee years, the bishop said.

"The joy expressed by the flowers and fragrances adorning the door replaces the penitential sign of the purifying water formerly sprinkled on the doorjamb" by the confessors, he said.

Like the Catholics from Asia and Oceania, representatives from every continent will have a special role during the ceremony as a concrete sign that Christ's birth, death and resurrection are important for the whole world, Bishop Marini said.

Representing Africa, a group of Catholics from Onitsha, Nigeria, will play traditional horns in a call to all people to join the celebration, he said. Lay men and women from the Americas and Europe will form a procession to carry the Gospel to the basilica's main altar.

Bishop Marini said that as of Dec. 14, the Vatican had received requests for 55,000 tickets to watch the opening of the Holy Door and attend the Christmas Mass



Workers remove a metal box containing keys and religious objects from the inside wall of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 15. Pope John Paul II will officially open the sealed door on Christmas Eve, signaling the start of the Jubilee Year.

at midnight.

St. Peter's Basilica, he said, can hold a maximum of 7,000 people.

The bishop said it is up to officials at the Prefecture of the Papal Household to decide who gets tickets, but he is working closely with Vatican and Italian state television to ensure the event is prayerful and dignified for everyone watching, not just those inside the basilica. †

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1 in 4	-	Babies die in abortion clinics in the U.S.
42%	-	of abortions are performed on mothers who have had at least one prior abortion.

Daily Readings, continued from page 11

Monday, Jan. 3
1 John 3:22-4:6
Psalm 2:7-8, 10-11
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, Jan. 4
Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:2-4ab, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday, Jan. 5
John Neumann, bishop
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:2, 10-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, Jan. 6
Blessed Andre Bessette, religious
1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalm 72:2, 14, 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday, Jan. 7
Raymond of Penyafort, priest
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, Jan. 8
1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b
John 3:22-30

Sunday, Jan. 9
The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
Acts 10:34-38

Monday, Jan. 10
1 Samuel 1:1-8
Psalm 116:12-19
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday, Jan. 11
1 Samuel 1:9-20
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8
Mark 1:21b-28

Wednesday, Jan. 12
1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Psalm 40:2-5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, Jan. 13
Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11, 14-15, 25-26
Mark 1:40-45

Friday, Jan. 14
1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a
Psalm 89:16-19
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, Jan. 15
1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, Jan. 16
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42

Rejoice!

Bright star shining,
Dispelling the darkness,
Angel songs
Echoing on high
To herald the birth
Of the infant king.
Let earth rejoice!
Our Savior has come.

The promise fulfilled,
All our fears allayed
On this glorious night
When Christ is born.
Let us rejoice!
Our Savior has come.

By Hilda Buck

*(Hilda Buck is a member of
St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg.)*



The Incarnation is a magnificent mystery

Many Catholics have difficulty understanding, or totally accepting, that Jesus was as much a human as any of us

By John F. Fink

In his book *The Holy Longing*, Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Ronald Rolheiser tells this story as a way of explaining why God took on a human body in the mystery of the Incarnation:

"A 4-year-old child awoke one night frightened, convinced that in the darkness around her there were all kinds of spooks and monsters. Alone, she ran to her parents' bedroom. Her mother calmed her down and, taking her by the hand, led her back to her own room, where she put on a light and reassured the child with these words: 'You needn't be afraid, you are not alone here. God is in the room with you.' The child replied, 'I know that God is here, but I need someone in this room who has some skin!'"

Father Rolheiser concluded, "In the Incarnation, God became physical because we are creatures of the senses who, at one point, need a God with some skin."

Christmas celebrates the magnificent mystery of the Incarnation, the amazing fact that God, who created the entire universe, actually lowered himself to become a human being..

We Catholics do not believe that Jesus, the baby who was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, grew up to somehow become the Son of God. No, we believe that God, who has existed from all eternity, assumed the body and the complete human nature of that baby who was born in Bethlehem. The Incarnation was the work of the entire Blessed Trinity acting together, but only the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, was united with a human nature.

All around us there are people who deny that Jesus was God, saying that he was a wonderfully good man whose teachings we should follow, but no more than that. That doesn't seem to be the Catholic heresy though. We clearly understand that our Church teaches that Jesus was God.

However, many Catholics, it seems to me, have more

difficulty understanding, or completely realizing, that Jesus was as much a human as any of us. Oh, they recognize that he ate and drank as we do because there are a lot of dinners in the Gospels, especially in Luke's. They know that he walked around Palestine with his followers as other human leaders did, and that he finally suffered and died as a human.

But they don't really totally accept the fact that he was subject to illness, that he sweat profusely in the hot and extremely humid Galilee summers before deodorants were invented, that he had the same sexual desires and temptations that any adult man has, or that he had the same humbling bodily functions that we have. That God would assume those aspects of the human condition shows, though, how far he went in humbling himself to accept our human nature, to be like us in every way except sin.

There's another aspect of the Incarnation that many Catholics might not think about: God did not mean for the Incarnation to end with Jesus's ascension into heaven.

Quoting Father Rolheiser's book again: "The Incarnation is not a 33-year experiment by God in history, a one-shot, physical incursion into our lives. The Incarnation began with Jesus and it has never stopped. The ascension of Jesus did not end, nor fundamentally change, the Incarnation. God's physical body is still among us. God is still present, as physical and as real today, as God was in the historical Jesus."

Yes, of course, you say; Jesus is still present in the Eucharist. That is true, and we should wish that all Catholics would understand that Jesus truly is present in the Eucharist, that the eucharistic host isn't just a symbol of his presence.

But besides that, we should come to realize—not just give lip service to—the fact that we are the Body of Christ. Just as Jesus said, "This is my body," not, "This is a symbol of my body," so St. Paul said, "You are Christ's body," not, "You represent Christ's body."



Love
A painting of Mary and Christ by 15th-century Venetian artist Bartolomeo Vivarini was selected for the 1999 Christmas stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service.

The Church forms the Mystical Body of Christ, as St. Paul taught in his letters to the Corinthians, the Romans, the Ephesians and the Colossians. Although he sometimes wrote that Christ was the head of the body and other times that he was the entire body or community, nevertheless our communion with Jesus is properly identified as the unity formed by the parts of a body. It is called "mystical" because the reality of our unity is accessible only to the eyes of faith rather than to ordinary sense perception.

We are, then, really and truly, the Body of Christ. That means that it's up to us to demonstrate God's presence in the world today. If it seems sometimes that God is absent from modern society, we have only ourselves to blame. If we don't proclaim the Gospel message, it won't be proclaimed. It's up to us to be Christ in the modern world.

The Mystical Body has many parts, each with a different function and abilities. It is up to each of us to use our particular and unique abilities to be Christ's body in the world. Then God will act through us as he once acted through his Son, whose Incarnation the world celebrates this Christmas. †

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Readers share favorite Christmas memories

Toddler's interpretation of 'Mary Christmas' teaches mother true meaning of the Nativity

By Mechele Anderson

Several years ago, when my son, Jeremy, was about 3 years old, I fulfilled a dream of my adult life. I had always wanted a Nativity set. I longed to gaze upon the porcelain images of the Holy Family, in particular the helpless human form of the Word Made Flesh.

During one of my frequent resale reconnaissance outings, I "came upon a midnight clear" right there in the Salvation Army Thrift Store.

Like all human families, this one, too, was less than perfect. The Christ Child was, of course, as perfect as can be made by human hands, nestled in his little manger, but the crèche itself had some oddities within. Present at the Blessed Birth was a twin set of donkeys, identical down to their position of repose. And poor Mary obviously had experienced more of the rough life than evidenced by her serene demeanor. She appeared as if Herod had made an assassination attempt to prevent the arrival of the young king.

I haggled another dollar off the price of the Nativity set, because the Blessed Virgin was obviously not immaculate, and took my new treasure home. I prepped Mary for emergency surgery, and while my children napped, I repaired as best I could the shattered form of the Mother of Christ.

When the children awoke, I was eager to share the Nativity story with Jeremy and show him the set as I arranged it on the most honored location in our house—the entertainment center.

I showed each figure to my little fellow and asked him what he knew of the story. He could identify each figure by name, except the Three Wise Men, and the nameless shepherd boy, but I was particularly impressed by his answer when queried about Mary.

"And who is this?" I asked.

"Mary," my own little wise man replied. "Mary Christmas."

My first thought as a parent was to stifle a chuckle and correct his "mistake"—until I realized that he was exactly right.

Without the submission of Mary, her unconditional love for God and trust in the message of the angel Gabriel, there would be no Christmas. In Mary we have a beautiful example to live by in our lives of obedience to the King of Kings.

Her acceptance has enabled those until the end of time to also accept. Because with Christ we accept forgiveness, we accept accountability, we accept stewardship and we accept the love of the Heavenly Father, evidenced by the sacrifice of his Son on the cross, so that we might live forever in his house as one of his adopted children.

With God as our Father in heaven, Mary as our heavenly mother and Christ Jesus as sibling, teacher and monarch, what an inheritance we have accepted!

The beautiful thing about an inheritance is that you get it even if you may not deserve it.

"Mary Christmas!"

(Mechele Anderson is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Gifts from the magi

The three magi are depicted in a church window in Helsingor, Denmark. Matthew's Gospel recalls that the magi came to pay homage to the newborn Christ after spotting "his star."

Grandmother watches seeds of service take root in granddaughter's concern for the poor

By Cynthia Schultz

In the last five years, I have been blessed with five darling grandchildren. They call me "Nana" and think I'm pretty special, so I figure I'd better milk this time in my life for all it's worth.

I play with them every chance I get—from hide and seek in the dark with a flashlight to taking them to a small local airport to watch planes land and take off.

Our adventures offer opportunities for conversation. What an opportunity and privilege it is to impact their lives!

Several years ago, I began a Christmas tradition for the oldest girls, Adaline and Savannah, now 5. I thought it was time to plant some seeds of service and instill in the girls that Christmas should be a season for giving. I called a local agency that temporarily houses abused and neglected children, and asked if I could have the names of a couple of children who were close to their ages.

After telling them a story about how some children were sad at Christmas because they can't be with their parents, we headed to a discount store to buy

some gifts of their choosing.

Later we went back to my car to wrap the gifts. It was hard for me to keep a straight face as I watched two little girls squeezed into the back seat of the car. They were hovered over the gifts, wearing looks of determination and bent on a mission of neatness. The wrapping paper seemed to stretch for miles as they twisted and curved it, shaping it around their purchases.

Next I drove them to the agency, where they got to meet the children and give them their packages. Adaline and Savannah were speechless, but their blue eyes spoke volumes. I knew they felt good about cheering up someone else. And bingo! The roots were planted.

As I was leaving Adaline's house following our family's recent Thanksgiving gathering, she called out to me in the still of the night. "Nana, don't forget to get the names of the poor children again this year."

My eyes filled with tears. The roots had taken hold.

(Cynthia Schultz is a member of St. Mary Parish in New Albany.) †

Late-blooming rose gives relatives a priceless gift during Thanksgiving visit to cemetery

By Mary Ann Wyand

A priceless Christmas gift arrived at Thanksgiving this year—one that my family will treasure for years.

When I visited my hometown last month to celebrate Thanksgiving with relatives, we went to the cemetery to pray at the graves of deceased loved ones.

The weather was quite cold in northern Indiana, and chilly winds blew across the cemetery grounds. As we approached my sister's grave to place a Christmas wreath beside her tombstone, we were surprised to

find that a single miniature pink rose had just bloomed from a bush my niece had pruned in September.

We were speechless as we stared at the fragile flower, so unexpected this late in the season. Even more astonishing, the rose had bloomed right next to an inscription on her tombstone, as if to reinforce the engraved message: "Her spirit lives on."

(Mary Ann Wyand is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Christmas memories focus on childhood

For teen-age recipient, Christmas bell symbolizes the love of family and friends

By Theresa Smith

It was Christmas time in 1985, my senior year in high school. In addition to my studies, I was responsible for driving my brother, Peter, and a carpool of neighborhood kids to and from school in my father's old car.

There were six of us crossing all grade levels—two freshmen (Peter and Brad), one sophomore (Kurt), one junior (Lisa), and two seniors (Byron and me).

On Tuesdays, we stayed after school for Art Club meetings. We were helping make ceramic Christmas bells with the year "1985" for sale to the student body as a fund raiser for the club's spring trip to the Chicago Art Institute.

For an extra \$2, Art Club members would personalize a bell with an individual's name. Peter and I decided we would make and buy two personalized bells for our parents with "Mom" and "Dad" written on them.

Several days before the Christmas break, the bells were ready to be brought home and wrapped.

I was sitting in the driver's seat, waiting for Peter and Byron to get into the car so we could go home, when I heard a commotion from Peter in the back seat. He was saying something to the effect of "what a klutz Byron was" because he accidentally sat down on a personalized "Theresa" bell that Peter was planning to give me as a surprise for Christmas.

Naturally, I was very flattered and touched by Peter's thoughtful intention. I suggested that maybe the bell could be glued back together. Peter, who was much closer to the pieces, emphatically declared that the bell was ruined and that Byron was the reason. Byron was so sorry about what happened that he apologized over and over again during the ride home.

On Christmas Eve, my family opened our presents. My mom and dad liked the personalized bells, even though they weren't quite round on the bottom, and the holly my brother and I had painted on them wasn't perfect. Mom displayed both bells on a cabinet in the living room.

Several days after Christmas, Byron showed up on the doorstep, apologized once again for the broken bell, and gave me a store-bought bell. While I opened the package, he told me how the store had personalized bells with names like "Mary" and "Jane," but didn't have any with my name.

I looked at the bell and read, "For Sister, With Love, Christmas 1985." I thanked Byron over and over again.

The bell my brother "gave" me does not get packed with the other Christmas decorations. It remains out year-round, reminding me of the love of a brother and the kindness of a neighbor.

(Theresa Smith is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Photo by Sue Heitler

Star of Hope display

A man looks at decorated Christmas trees on Dec. 4 during the 1999 Star of Hope—A Festival of Trees, Joy and Giving held at Union Station in Indianapolis. Proceeds from the event benefited the ministries of Catholic Social Services and the St. Francis Neighborhood Clinic.

Children growing up in Vincennes orphanage were given new shoes each year at Christmas

By Richard Faust

I was 2-and-a-half years old when my mother died in 1932. There were seven children, and because of the times, my father was unable to take care of all of us.

My brothers, ages 6 and 4, and I went to live at the St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage in Vincennes in 1933.

We had everything that we needed for our well-being. We were taken care of and taught the values of religion and of life.

I remember that everyone got a new pair of shoes at Christmas. We traced the out-

line of our feet on paper, and the tracings were sent to the store with our names. My brothers traced my foot because I was too small to do it by myself.

In 1936, I remember coming to Indianapolis to the theater. After the show, we saw Santa. Everyone got a bag of candy and an orange.

I am thankful for the belief I was taught in God and his power.

Christmas was always special (with new shoes).

(Richard "Leo" Faust is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Mysterious Christmas package from England helps sisters understand the meaning of Advent—a time of joyful waiting

By Sarah A. Zabriskie

When my sister and I were growing up in the '60s, the season of Advent seemed interminable. And yet it was a season of joyful anticipation you could feel all around you.

The good Oldenburg Franciscan sisters at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Indianapolis made sure we had Advent wreaths in our classrooms, but for some reason our parents never had an Advent wreath for our home.

However, our Lord made sure that Advent's lesson would not be lost to us. He taught us Advent's meaning through a special package that faithfully arrived each year.

My mother's Auntie Mu, who lived in Marlborough, England, sent us a Christmas package every year. It arrived like clockwork around the first weekend of Advent.

Oh, the excitement of finding the package left on our porch by the postman! It was really a bundle wrapped in brown paper with strings and cellophane tape, and exotic stamps from a faraway country. It smelled of lavender and chocolates, and we thought it was the most wonderful package in the world.

But Christmas would not be rushed. My mother put this wondrous package in her closet, away from curious eyes and prying fingers. I'm sure my mother knew that we sneaked upstairs periodically to peek in the closet and touch this mysterious treasure, imagining all its wonderful contents. But she never said anything to us. I think she secretly shared our excitement.

We always decorated our Christmas tree on the second Sunday of Advent after the 8 a.m. Mass. When the tree was complete, we were allowed to bring Auntie Mu's package

out and carefully place it beneath the decorated branches.

After school, for the next two weeks, my sister and I would make a daily ritual of sitting by the tree, shaking the package, and dreaming of what wonderful contents were contained therein.

At last Christmas Eve finally arrived! Our family tradition was eating Christmas Eve dinner at a restaurant, then returning home to open Auntie Mu's present.

My mother brought out the scissors and carefully began snipping away the layers of brown paper and strings, always saving the stamps. And then she reached the second layer of wrapping. The entire bundle was sewn up in cheesecloth. After painstakingly cutting through this cloth, the individually wrapped presents came tumbling out—one for each of us. Oh, the excitement!

After tearing through Christmas paper, the contents of our presents were finally revealed. There were notebooks and pencils, chocolates and toffees, lovely little hankies edged in lace, tiny sewing kits and embroidery threads. Truly we thought we had received the treasures of the Orient. And yet, looking back, it was all so simple.

As an adult, when I recall the Christmases of my youth, I remember very few of the gifts I received. But I always remember Auntie Mu's gifts. There was something wondrous in their simplicity.

And that is God's lesson of Advent for me. What a wonderful time of expectation, culminating in the simplicity of the birth of our Savior, God's greatest gift to us.

(Sarah Zabriskie is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Photo by Sue Hezler

Christmas stories

A storyteller shares Christmas tales from the Victorian era in England with children during the 1999 Star of Hope—A Festival of Trees, Joy and Giving on Dec. 4 at Union Station in Indianapolis.

Police help nun solve mystery

By Sr. Demetria Smith, M.S.O.L.A.

Our religious community was located on 16th Street in Washington, D.C.—one of the busiest streets in the District of Columbia. It borders the White House.

Visitors to our convent were different from those who visited the White House. We often had people seeking food, clothing and shelter.

One Christmas Eve, as we were about to leave for Midnight Mass, I did a security check of the doors and windows of the convent. When I looked out the front window, I saw a large object on the porch. It was covered with a black plastic bag.

I cracked the door and called out, but there was no answer. Mother Superior suggested that I call the police. At such a late hour, they knew better where to direct the person to a shelter.

We left for the Christmas Eve Vigil liturgy through the garage from the back door.

When we returned home more than two hours later, I peeked out the front window to see the same bundle on the porch. The plastic bag was moving up and down in the fierce cold winds.

Again I was told to call the police for help. After a short time, police officers arrived, made a tour of the house and rang the doorbell to tell us they had come once before, when I called the first time, and found no one.

Then a police officer looked at me and said, "Ma'm, you might want to take the big bag of bread and Christmas goodies inside. It was here when I came before. Happy Christmas!"

(Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa Demetria Smith is a member of Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Favorite holiday memories include traditions

Christmas in the Philippines begins Dec. 16 with special traditions and celebrations

By María B. Lagadón

Childhood memories come to me at this time of the year as I remember the happy years of my childhood in the Philippines.

It is a custom in the Philippines for the Christmas feasts to start on Dec. 16 and continue until *Noche Buena* (Christmas Eve).

My brother, who was 6, and I (age 7) would go with our father to church, which we called *Misa de Gallo*. This literally means "Mass of the Rooster" because the Mass is said by three priests at 5 a.m.—the arrival of dawn.

This Mass was sung and always was very joyful, with accompaniment by violin, tambourines, etc. The church was always full.

After the Mass, we would go out to the plaza by the church, where sellers were waiting with some native delicacies—*puto bombom*, *suman*, *bibingka* and hot chocolate. For children, that is the best part of waking up early at dawn.

On *Noche Buena*, almost every house is decorated with lights and *faroles* made of bamboo and tissue paper that was shaped like a star with a lighted bulb inside.

Our mother would prepare the *cena de media noche* or "supper of midnight."

After the midnight Mass, family members would exchange gifts and partake of the midnight supper, although it was no longer midnight.

We had so much food—ham, fruits,

chestnuts, *relleno* and *paella*, etc. Then we went to sleep.

On Christmas Day, the youngsters would go to their godparents' home to receive gifts, called *aguinaldos*, kiss their hands and ask for their blessings.

After receiving their gifts, the children would be offered refreshments and candies. That's how Filipino children pass the day on Christmas.

On the Day of the Innocents, people believe they have to be careful because a friend might come and borrow money and they may never see it again. Or they might receive a present in a beautiful box, then open it to find a dead cockroach inside! Such tricks the people play on their friends!

Before the New Year, it's the custom to have all the provisions of the household, like rice, sugar, coffee, milk, salt, etc., complete.

On New Year's Day, we would go to Mass to thank God for the precious gift of life and for the blessings he has bestowed on us.

On the night before the Day of the Three Kings, the children would put their shoes on the windowsill before going to sleep. They would wake up early the next morning to find their shoes full of nice goodies.

People attend Mass on the Day of the Three Kings, then generally the next day is a school day.

That is how Christmas feasts are celebrated in the Philippines.

(María B. Lagadón is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Photo by Sue Heltzer

On duty

This toy soldier decorating a Christmas tree appears to stand guard at the 1999 Star of Hope—A Festival of Trees, Joy and Giving on Dec. 4 at Union Station in Indianapolis.

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Family's 'not-so-perfect' Christmas tree is reminder of what's really important in life

By Nancy A. O'Laughlin

Daddy insisted on a live Christmas tree (to be part of our landscape after the holidays), and he also insisted that it be "perfect" in every way.

He would spend hours finding the "best side" of the tree and putting the lights on (the large outdoor-type lights were tradition) so that each one was precisely spaced on the branches.

When it was time to trim the tree, everything had to be perfect—from the many ornaments to the tinsel rope, icicles and the traditional angel on the treetop.

Since there was little room for error, we usually spent Christmas Eve arguing and always went to bed upset with each other.

One year, we awoke in the morning to the gut-wrenching sight of our "perfect" tree laying flat on the floor! It seems that

the soil ball on the tree had thawed out overnight, with predicable results.

After a second or two of disbelief and despair, we finally saw the humor in the situation, righted the tree and really enjoyed the "not so perfect" decorations. It was the last time we let the pursuit of perfection ruin our Christmas Eve.

When the tree was planted, the wooden plaque (we always labeled our trees with the year they were used) read "1955—The tree that was Christmas!"

Daddy is gone now, and so is the tree ... but to this day, whenever I feel grouchy around this season, I remember that tree—and my world is instantly 45 years younger, with a mixture of laughter and tears to remind me what a beautiful season it is!

(Nancy O'Laughlin is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Terre Haute.) †

Woman treasures memories of Gramma's meat pies and examples of her deep faith

By Mary Jo Keegan

My earliest memory of Christmas Eve is of my Gramma making meat pies in our kitchen. She would wear a bib apron and cover her white hair with a towel pinned at the neck with a safety pin. Flour seemed to be all around her.

During the early 1940s, Dec. 24 was a fast day. Food eaten after midnight would have broken the Communion fast, so we had to wait until we had been to Mass on Christmas morning to eat the pies.

There was no recipe for Gram's pies. She made them as her mother had done in the old country—"by the touch." Stiff dough made from a mix of flour, water

and lard was wrapped around pork.

What a happy place our kitchen was on Christmas morning as the broth was boiled, the pie was steamed until the dough became soft and the feast began.

My husband has nearly mastered the art of making pies like my Gram. On Christmas Eve, he will again be kept busy bringing broth to a boil to heat the pies.

Gramma Annie also gave us the example of her deep Irish-bred faith. I can still hear her say, "Put the sign of the cross on you, Mary Jo." As I did then at her bidding, I do now in her memory.

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



St. Nick

Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell, dressed as Santa Claus, listens to the wish list of a boy during a party organized by St. Joan of Arc Parish in Boca Raton, Fla., for Haitian children from a nearby mission. The Palm Beach bishop owns his own Santa suit. He began playing jolly St. Nicholas while bishop of Knoxville, Tenn.

CNS photo

Santa Claus would ask the children to say a prayer and to be good all year long

By Frances J. Day

Growing up in a large Catholic family, there was always much fun, work and activity for us children.

Looking back, Christmas was a very big event in our home.

All the windows in the house had to be washed because the Christmas tree would be placed in front of a window.

Having relatives in the country, we were always sure one of our uncles would bring us a big tree to be trimmed.

This was done by Santa Claus, who worked on the project in the family room next to the kitchen dining area.

The door between the rooms was kept closed, but there was a transom window at the top. Santa would appear at the transom every now and then to check on us and tell us that we had better be good or we would get no presents.

Seated at the kitchen table with a large pan of popcorn, four of us children would

string the popcorn to decorate the tree. I don't think we ate any of the popcorn because Santa would check on us to see if we were doing our job.

We celebrated on Christmas Eve, and Santa would come back that night to give us our presents.

What I remember most was receiving a new writing tablet, a new pencil and a juicy orange, along with our bigger present or presents.

Santa would ask questions like, "Have you been good this year?"

And he would ask us to say a prayer.

A dish of cookies especially made for Christmas was left for Santa Claus.

Remembering that beautiful decorated tree lighted by candles—not electric lights—I realize what a treasure we had and how lucky we were not having a fire all those years.

(Frances J. Day is a member of St. Mary Parish in New Albany.) †

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Christmas in South Africa means relaxing at the beach

South African Christians enjoy holiday customs from the northern hemisphere in spite of the warm summer weather

By Bronwen Dachs

Christmas in South Africa falls in the summer, and the vacation spirit heavily influences celebrations in this predominantly Christian country.

In rural areas, where African traditions remain strong, Christmas is a community celebration lasting a few days.

Men who work in the gold mines or city factories come home for the feast, often for the first time in a year.

The day typically starts with families going to church. Rural-area priests make a great effort to get to as many of their parishes as possible.

Then the party, with music and dancing, gets underway with the slaughtering of goats, lambs or oxen, which will feed hundreds of people. These meats are cooked on an open fire and accompanied by steaming pots of vegetables and other food and drink.

Contributing to the year's biggest festival is considered very important, while giving gifts is not.

Christmas celebrations in South Africa would have begun in the late 17th century, when the country was under Dutch East India Co. rule.

Although Portuguese mariners led by Bartholomew Diaz erected a limestone pillar topped by a small cross at the coast in 1488, there is no evidence of missionary work then in what is now South Africa.

Descendants of the European settlers still celebrate Christmas with strong northern-hemisphere overtones, despite the considerable heat in South Africa at this time of year.

Pine trees—decorated with colored baubles and artificial holly and topped with an angel—are a feature in many South African homes and public places, along with traditionally garbed Santas (called Father Christmas).

Many South African Christmas cards bear images of a northern-hemisphere Christmas, though some artists have adapted these, depicting reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh across a beach.

Pretty seasonal lights attract sightseers in the main roads of most towns, including one called Bethlehem, where an enormous star guiding the three wise men is the major holiday feature.

Many Bethlehem residents leave for vacations at the coast during the Christmas season, when businesses come to a halt and schools close for their end-of-year break, which lasts six weeks.

Getting to the beach ranks a close second to gatherings of families in many South Africans' Christmastime priori-

ties. Beaches everywhere are crowded with picnicking families on Christmas Day.

Another outdoor Christmas activity enjoyed by families is "carols by candlelight." People gather in parks with picnic baskets and carol sheets, awaiting sunset before lighting candles and singing carols.

As is true elsewhere, weeks of commercialism precede Christmas, with stores extending their hours and children nagging parents for advertised toys.

Christmas is followed by a public holiday known as the Day of Good Will, when South Africans either continue their celebrations or rest.

(Bronwen Dachs has written about South Africa for Catholic News Service since 1989.) †

Christmas saved a Jewish girl's life in 1942

By Rabbi Abie Ingber

The Holocaust was one of the darkest chapters of modern history. Yet within that nightmare, there were moments of humanity and life-giving compassion.

In August of 1942, my mother was one of the last survivors of the Lutsk ghetto in Poland. Not yet 20, her life was saved by the miraculous appearance of one righteous Christian after another. No one could ever know why she was spared while her relatives were brutally murdered.

Catholic farmers and peasants, each arriving at a precise lifesaving moment, hid her in attics, cellars, chicken coops and the flue of a country oven. But on Dec. 24, 1942, a Ukrainian peasant who had saved her life understood the risk and threw her out of his house.

This time there was no savior. She wandered the dirt roads of the Polish countryside. She was freezing cold in her tattered dress. As night descended, she knew her life was at its end. She recognized the home of the county warden and walked up the path. The warden's dogs jumped on her, ripped her dress and bit her. The warden, alerted by the barking, came out with a gun in hand.

"Please shoot me," my mother begged. "Let me share the fate of my family."

"I cannot kill you tonight," responded the official.

He took her inside, fed her, gave her a dress and let her sleep there. The next morning, fearful he could be killed for saving a Jew, he gave her to a Christian family.

Three more righteous Christians were to appear magi-



CNS photo

Family time

The gift of extra time to focus on faith and family during the holidays is priceless. The weeks of Advent also remind Christians to spend more time in prayer with God.

cally in her life until she descended from an attic during the Russian liberation of Lutsk in 1944.

Only decades later did I learn of the Polish expression, "On Christmas Eve, even a stray cat is allowed to live."

Though a series of six righteous Christians had appeared miraculously to try to save my mother's life, on the evening of Dec. 24 my mother was abandoned like a stray cat in the Polish countryside. At that precise moment, God had to invoke Christmas Eve to save her life.

I am proud of my Jewish heritage and calling as a rabbi, and I am thankful that Christmas saved my mother's life.

(Rabbi Abie Ingber is executive director of the Hillel Jewish Student Center at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. He teaches homiletics at Hebrew Union College.) †

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Posada reenacts Gospel story of the Nativity

Celebrating the posada reminds participants that the birth of Jesus is a gift from God

By Alejandro and Mary Aguilera-Titus

My best friend and I had planned to meet at his house so we could go together to our youth group meeting that night.

As I arrived, he told me that a reporter had called, looking for us, because he wanted to set up an interview. He had tracked us down by calling the parish priest to find out who was responsible for the banner hanging between a light post and a tree in front of the church.

Someone from a nearby retail store also had called the priest and expressed concern about the banner.

It had been only a few days since some members of the parish youth group decided to make a statement on the real meaning of Christmas by creating a 5-foot by 12-foot banner with the words, "Jesus is born in our hearts, not in stores."

We were a bit surprised by the interest our banner generated, but felt good about it. We were making a difference.

The memory of the banner episode of my youth was rekindled at a parish function some years ago as our 5-year-old daughter handed me a button with the words, "Jesus is the reason for this season."

After 15 years of marriage and three children, Mary and I continue looking for ways to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas.

The *posada* is a tradition that has helped us keep Jesus and his message of peace and liberation as "the reason for the season."

The *posada* reenacts the Gospel story describing the journey of Mary and Joseph

to Bethlehem, and their need for a place to stay. Over the years, we have invited friends to celebrate this tradition with us. It takes place a few days before Christmas.

The reenacting consists of dividing those gathered into two groups. One group, representing the holy pilgrims and requesting a place to stay, stands outside the house. The other group stays inside, representing the owners of the inn (*posada* in Spanish). They wonder if it is a wise idea to welcome people they don't know.

After singing simple verses, alternating between the inside group and the outside group, the door finally opens, and the group inside sings, "Welcome holy pilgrims, our home is simple, but we offer it to you with sincere hearts."

In response, the pilgrims sing, "Blessed is the home that welcomes tonight our blessed mother, Mary."

As the outside group enters, they place the figures of Mary and Joseph in the Nativity scene.

Then we proclaim the Nativity story from the Gospel according to Luke and invite people to share what Christmas means to them.

We close the *posada* by singing Christmas carols and enjoying hot cider and Christmas cookies. The celebration of the *posada* provides our family and friends with an awareness that Jesus was born in a poor stable, without any comfort or nice things.

It also helps us understand that having things isn't that important and that helping others can bring more joy than possessions.



CNS photo

The *posada* reenacts the Gospel story describing the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, and their need for a place to stay. The Advent tradition helps Christians keep Jesus and his message of peace and liberation as the "reason for the season."

As a follow-up to the *posada*, our children choose a toy to give away—it must be a nice one!—as a way of showing that we need to share with others as we receive.

In the same spirit of simplicity and welcome, our family enjoys a simple dinner of soup and bread on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas morning, family members gather around the Nativity scene and place Jesus in the manger. Then each member opens one or two presents before getting ready to prepare and enjoy Christmas breakfast, fully aware of the

blessing of Jesus' presence in our lives and in our home. We take our time talking and enjoying each other's company.

Of course, if we begin to lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas, someone in the family may decide to make a sign reminding us that Jesus is not found in the presents, but is present in each other!

(Alejandro Aguilera-Titus is associate director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs. He and his wife, Mary, reside in Silver Spring, Md.) †

Mannings' millennium message promotes New Year's resolutions

By Charlotte Manning

The Manning family of Indianapolis offers this greeting for Advent, Christmas and the New Year:

Merry Christmas!
Involve yourself in life.
Listen to nature, your senses and God.
Learn to tolerate others, laugh more.
Enjoy the simple pleasures.
Never feel sorry for yourself—we may never have a next year!
New Do something new—it's a

new year and new times.

Interest yourself, read more, treasure the quiet life.

Utilize all things with wisdom.
Meditate, go to Mass, memorize a poem or prayer, learn that mistakes are part of living, mail or e-mail something to someone and make each moment meaningful because the millennium is God's message that all people are memorable!

(Dan and Charlotte Manning are members of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Pope brought Polish customs to Vatican

In 1982, pontiff asked for a Nativity scene and Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square

By Cindy Wooden

Surprisingly, in a city marked by history and age-old traditions, it was only in 1982 that St. Peter's Square was given its first bits of Christmas tinsel.

The towering tree in the center of the square is not part of Italian tradition, but it is a cherished part of Polish Christmas celebrations. By order of the Polish-born Pope John Paul II, the tree took its place before St. Peter's Basilica.

From his pontificate's beginning in 1978, Pope John Paul had fresh trees from Poland to decorate the papal apartments.

But the square was empty.

After four Christmases looking out onto a decidedly unfestive square, Pope John Paul asked the governor of Vatican City for "something Christmasy" outdoors as well.

Today a visit to the giant decorated

tree and the larger-than-life-size Nativity scene is part of Rome's yuletide tradition. Tree-lighting ceremonies over the years became an occasion for the pope to share his life-long appreciation for trees as spiritual metaphors.

"In the blooming of the springtime, in the fullness of the summer, in the fruits of the harvest and in the time of death of winter, the tree speaks of the secrets of life," the pope wrote in a message for the 1998 ceremony.

Trees, he said, are a metaphor for our spiritual lives.

"Whoever is rooted deeply enough in fruitful ground will stand fast," the pope said. "He can reach up high to take in the light of the sun and, at the same time, be protected from the winds that buffet him. However, for those who believe they can do without a foundation, their existence within time stands like roots in the air, deprived of soil."



Surprisingly, in a city marked by history and age-old traditions, it was only in 1982 that St. Peter's Square was given its first bits of Christmas tinsel by order of the Polish-born Pope John Paul II. Today a visit to the giant decorated tree and larger-than-life Nativity scene is part of Rome's Yuletide tradition.

Standing next to the manger scene, the tree symbolizes all of creation standing ready and waiting for its Redeemer, he said in 1996.

Italians claim the *presepio*, or Nativity scene, as one of their national inventions, attributing the idea to St. Francis of Assisi. Every home, school and church has at least a small display with Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the ox and the ass.

While Italians working at the Vatican long have erected Nativity scenes in their offices, the scene in the square only came as a result of the pope's 1982 request.

In churches and in St. Peter's Square, the manger scenes are kept behind wraps until Christmas Eve, but they remain on display into February, at least until the feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

Part of the Italian Nativity-scene tradition is to add small figures or to change the layout each year. During Advent, Rome's Piazza Navona is transformed into a marketplace of *presepio* accessories—shepherds and sheep, cooks and

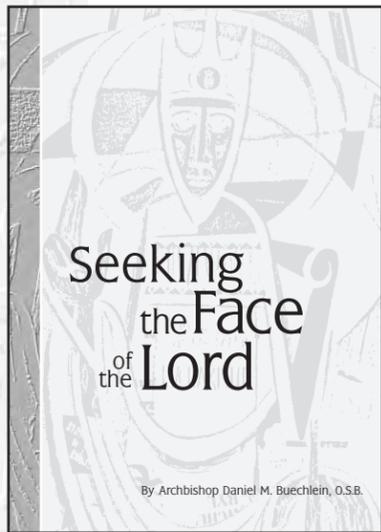
chickens, pizza makers and waterfalls.

The Vatican also has adopted this tradition of an ever-changing manger scene, although nine of the figures—including the Holy Family—are constant. Sculpted in 1842 at St. Vincent Pallotti's request, they originally were part of the *presepio* at St. Andrew Church in Rome.

When the figures were set in the manger in 1982, the Vatican added statues of two youths, an ox, an ass and a sheep to its permanent cast. Other additions last only one season; one year it was a family dressed in the traditional clothes of Poles from the Tatra Mountain region.

The *presepio* also changes during each Christmas season. On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the infant Jesus is taken out of his crib, and a toddler Jesus with hand raised in blessing is placed on Mary's knee.

(Cindy Wooden is the senior correspondent at the Catholic News Service in Rome.) †



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Christmas cards are simple and spiritual

Nuns create calligraphy style greetings that express wonder, excitement, joy and hope

SAGINAW, Mich. (CNS)—There was nothing routine about Christ coming into the world nearly 2,000 years ago.

So why, a community of four nuns in Michigan asked, are faith-filled people content with sending cards that echo the same tired clichés to their friends and families each Christmas?

Messages such as "Seasons Greetings," "Happy Holidays" and "We wish you a Merry Christmas" do little to evoke the same feelings of wonder, excitement and hope felt so many years ago.

The Sisters of St. Clare, a small contemplative community in Saginaw, have found a fresh way to ignite the true spirit of the season through their specially designed contemporary Christmas cards.

Their set of five different greeting cards utilizes abstract images and original interpretations of the scriptural promises to prompt personal Christmas imagery.

"We're looking for what is closest to our spirit—the spirit of conveying that Christ is with us at Christmas and throughout the coming year," said Poor Clare Sister Laura Hammel.

The card designs are simple, with calligraphy on the outside and simple messages inside, including "Christmas brings heavenly gifts to earth," "Peace is the gift of Christ" and "A child is born for us, Christmas Peace."

"The dialogue isn't complete; it only initiates thought," Sister Laura explained. "It opens up thought rather than closes it down. We didn't want peo-

ple to have stereotypical responses."

She said the Poor Clare nuns chose to design and sell Christmas cards done in calligraphy styles that they felt were more in line with their tradition.

The Sisters of St. Clare, were founded by St. Clare of Assisi. Their foundress was a contemporary of St. Francis of Assisi, who is credited for popularizing the Nativity scene.

"People can use the ritual as a faith experience," Sister Laura said, and send blessings for a new year.

Income from the cards helps to support the Sisters of St. Clare, who depend on alms as their major financial means.

Sister Laura said the sisters hope their cards' unique, yet simple, design will stand out among other Christmas cards in people's homes this holiday season.

"We felt it had to be something refreshing," she said, "something to refresh the spirit."

Internationally known artist Michael Clark of Richmond, Va., draws the calligraphy. Communicating through Fax and e-mail, the nuns work with Clark to design and compose the cards, which the sisters then market out of their home in Saginaw Township.

(The sisters' Christmas cards are sold in sets of 20 cards for \$15, with shipping and handling extra. For information, contact Sister Laura Hammel, Sisters of St. Clare, 4875 Shattuck Rd., Saginaw, Mich. 48603 or by phone or FAX at 517-797-0527. Their Internet address is <http://www.rc.net/saginaw/srclare>.) †

The Good Steward/Dan Conway

Dickens tale is a wonderful stewardship carol

(This seasonal column on "a stewardship carol" has been published in the Christmas issue of The Criterion for the last several years.—WRB)

We all remember the scene from old movies and TV specials. Two "portly gentlemen," as Charles Dickens calls them, enter the offices of Scrooge & Marley hoping to raise money "for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time of year."



They make their case, pointing out that "hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts," but Scrooge is not impressed.

"Are there no prisons?" the old miser asks. "Aren't the workhouses still in operation?" he snarls.

"Yes," one of the gentlemen replies, "I wish I could say they were not."

Undaunted, the two gentlemen continue. "What shall we put you down for?"

"Nothing!" says Scrooge.

"You wish to be anonymous?" the gentlemen ask.

"I wish to be left alone!" says Scrooge.

The gentlemen leave with hearts full of sadness. They grieve for the poor and the homeless "who would rather die" than suffer the humiliation of a 19th century English workhouse; but they also grieve for old Ebenezer Scrooge whose self-centered misery has blinded him to the simple joys of Christmas.

How many times have we heard simi-

lar versions of this same old story? How many times have we found ourselves playing the part of Scrooge—saying to those who ask for our time or our money, "Please don't bother me. I wish to be left alone"?

Although he never uses the word, Charles Dickens' wonderful story, *A Christmas Carol*, is about stewardship. It is about the joy of giving and about learning to care for (and be responsible for) all God's creation. And, as Mr. Dickens makes very clear, *A Christmas Carol* is about much more than just the sentimental (or commercial!) "Christmas spirit" that comes and goes each holiday season.

Scrooge is not a good steward. He hoards what he has been given (time, talent and treasure) and he buries his gifts deep within himself. He cannot give or share, and the result is a twisted, self-

absorbed misery. Along with his gifts and talents, Scrooge

accumulates and hides all the hurts, resentments and disappointments of a lonely lifetime. In the end, nothing makes him happy. Nothing gives him peace.

There is only one thing that can save this miserable old man from the hell he has made for himself. Giving. Open, generous, unrestricted giving is the only cure for the likes of Ebenezer Scrooge. As

long as he holds back—asking "What's in it for me?"—Scrooge is condemned to live the life that he has fashioned for himself through many years of lonely self-centeredness.

Fortunately, Mr. Dickens believed in a God who is generous and forgiving. Old Scrooge is given one last chance to experience life as it is truly meant to be lived. The spirits who visit Scrooge (including Jacob Marley, a former business partner now condemned to haunt the spirit world in chains of his own making) help Scrooge face painful

truths about himself. And by caring enough to confront him with his selfishness, the spirits give Scrooge something far more valuable than all his gold. They give him a glimpse of who he was, who he is now, and who he could become—if only he would let go of his bitter resentment and embrace the joy of giving.

Recall that following his change of heart, as he hurries to join his nephew's family for Christmas dinner, Scrooge encounters one of the two "portly gentlemen" who had asked him for a contribution the day before.

After greeting the gentleman so warmly that the man barely recognized the old miser, Scrooge whispers in his ear the amount of his pledge to help the poor and destitute.

"My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?" cries the gentleman as if his breath were taken away.

"Not a farthing less," says Scrooge. "A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favor?" he pleads.

And then the most amazing thing happens. As the astounded solicitor tries to express his gratitude, stammering from both appreciation and disbelief, old Scrooge says it for him.

"Thank you," says Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you 50 times. Bless you!"

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens wants each of us to discover what old Scrooge had to learn the hard way: *The only way to hold onto something is to give it away.*

This is the paradox of giving: The one who gives a gift (from substance and without counting the cost) is the one who is most grateful. Besides being a donor, the generous person is also a beneficiary. That's why Scrooge says thank you "50 times" and also why he asks the gentleman, quite sincerely, to do him a favor by accepting the gift.

Ever afterwards, Mr. Dickens says, it was said of Scrooge "that he knew how to keep Christmas well." Like any good steward, Scrooge kept it well by giving it away. And so, as Mr. Dickens observes at the conclusion of his story, "May that be truly said of us ... every one!"

(Dan Conway is a writer, teacher and consultant who specializes in the integration of stewardship principles with the practice of professional fund raising.) †

Charles Dickens' wonderful story is about the joy of giving and learning to care for all of God's creation.

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How Sweet the Sound

Following last year's successful production of **Cathedral Hymns**, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral has produced **How Sweet the Sound**, a second compact disc of beautiful church music.

Selections include:

- "Amazing Grace"
- "O Come, Divine Messiah," a French Advent carol
- "Good Christians All, Rejoice" and "Of the Father's Love Begotten," two Christmas hymns
- "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley," and "O Sacred Head, Surrounded," for Lent and Holy Week
- "Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain," a popular Eastern hymn
- Two hymns of eucharistic devotion: "Adore Te Devote," a chant, and "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"
- Two spirituals: "There Is a Balm in Gilead," and "Somebody's Knockin' at Your Door"
- Three hymns of praise: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise," "For the Beauty of the Earth," and "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven."

How Sweet the Sound has been produced under the direction of Ed Greene, music director of the Cathedral, and features fine, local artists involved with music and worship at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

This limited edition recording is now available for just \$14, plus \$2 for shipping and handling.

To order your copy, call Diana Hay, executive assistant at Cathedral parish, at 317-634-4519. Or pick up your copy after the 5 p.m. Saturday anticipation Mass or the 10:30 a.m. Sunday liturgy at the Cathedral.

Proceeds will help support SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, with \$1 of each sale being set aside specifically for the Cathedral's "At-The-Door Ministry," which meets the immediate needs of the poor and homeless in the center city.

Copies of the 1998 CD, **Cathedral Hymns**, are still available at \$13 plus \$2 shipping and handling.

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see."

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Letters to the Editor, *cont'd from page 5*

ble with socialism is socialism.”

Socialism/communism sounds great on paper. It just happens to be antithetical to human nature and has never worked, though the apologists for it always claim that it simply wasn't implemented right. They always plead, "Just give us one more chance and I'm sure we can get it right." Human beings need incentives and competition in a free atmosphere that not only multiplies the economic *pie* exponentially but also usually brings the best out in individuals who must push themselves to rise to the occasion.

Yes, there are some abuses under capitalism but so long as it is operating in a free enterprise system, buttressed by rule of law and a shared moral base, workers can always vote with their feet by going elsewhere or by setting up rival power structures such as unions to balance the power. Conversely, when the government has the power, there are no alternatives. You take what they dish out and you'd better like it because you can't lump it. Might becomes right.

As one who has traveled to the former Soviet Union a dozen times to teach the necessity for the moral foundation of democratic capitalism, I can testify that the people there would be far better off with the "rampant capitalism" decried in your lead editorial ["Rights and needs of workers," Dec. 10] than with a re-run of socialism/communism or the phony crony capitalism which has followed. The fact is that every country which has introduced true free enterprise and free trade has been enriched enormously over time, not exploited. And this gives the people true freedom having their own jobs and making their own futures, not relying on the governments to buy their allegiance with make-work projects dependent on the rulers in power at the time. If the government giveth, the government can take away.

I am now involved as a volunteer in Guatemala, where nothing could possibly benefit the people more than a little "rampant capitalism" even if it translated to so-called "slave wages" by standards here in the U.S. These countries and these people need to get started first; something is better than nothing. Or would you rather see them have nothing or have to rely on charity forever with the resultant lack of self-esteem and ability to provide for their families? Sometimes I think that's exactly what the bashers of the free market want. And you can almost hear the peoples' pleas ringing out: With this kind of "help" from such friends, we don't need enemies.

Gary A. Hofmeister, Indianapolis

Disappointed in change of holy day

I was disappointed reading in *The Criterion* recently that the bishops of Indiana have decided to transfer the Ascension Thursday holy day to Sunday in order to eliminate the holy day of obligation during the week. My disappointment stems from both the break from our traditions and blurring of our Catholic culture; and also from what the excuses proffered tell us about our priests and bishops.

The fact that parish and diocesan offices have always been open on Ascension Thursday was offered as a prime reason for the change. It is also the weakest excuse imaginable. Presumably, pastors and bishops have some measure of control over their administrative offices and can change their hours of operations to accommodate holy days. If they do not, who is in charge of the churches? Who is responsible to God for teaching the faith?

The inability of the faithful to get to Mass in the middle of the week was also cited as a reason to move the holy day.

But are the faithful unable or just inconvenienced? If a person must, with clear conscience, miss Mass, there is no sin. But if the faithful cannot ever be expected to try to attend Mass during the week, then perhaps all holy days should be moved to Sundays or eliminated. Attending Mass on Christmas is surely difficult when one is busy with the kids or opening presents.

I am fairly certain that many a hang-over has "prevented" attendance at Mass for the Solemnity of Mary [Mother of God]. By this reasoning, maybe we should release the faithful from Sunday obligation since some people have to work on Sundays or just find the trip to Mass once a week too inconvenient. If we only have a Sunday obligation so that we can put our tithe in the collection basket, allow us to mail in our contributions and stay home with a clear conscience.

I am disappointed that one more holy day has been eliminated from the calendar. The bishops contend that the laity are too confused over Monday and Saturday holy days (so most were eliminated) and now Ascension Thursday will be transferred. If our pastors and bishops cannot teach their own congregations the importance of our holy days, how can we hope to evangelize anyone? If, on the other hand, holy days have no value for the faithful, why do we have any at all? I am not trying to be sarcastic on this issue. I truly do not understand. Holy days set us apart, just a little, from the rest of society and the secular culture in which we find ourselves. They can help foster an appreciation for events in history and for spiritual matters that we cannot find during "prime time."

Whether this change will ultimately lead to a greater faith among the people or a greater indifference toward the Mass is a question I will leave to others. I can only say that I am happy that the vocation to which God called me makes me responsible for only one small family and not the spiritual well-being of an entire diocese. I hope that the bishops of Indiana are correct in their assessment.

Daniel A. Peck, Greenfield

Millennium and new millennium

As an obsessive stickler for facts, I would like to address the ambiguous reporting covering the millennium and the new millennium by much of our media.

In the recent *Criterion* publication [Nov. 26] containing the "Guide to the Great Jubilee" (which I found to be very good) and the "Special Jubilee Issue" by *Our Sunday Visitor*, reference is made to Pope John Paul II opening the Holy Year door at St. Peter's Basilica to formally begin the Jubilee Year and, on Dec. 31, ringing a bell to begin the millennium year, in one publication, and to ring in the *new* millennium in the other.

Reporting of the opening of the Holy Year door is without ambiguity. However, we obsessive sticklers for the facts know that ringing the bell to begin the millennium year is wholly understandable if by this it means that it refers to the 1,000th year of the second millennium. But to say that the bell will be rung on Dec. 31, 1999, to begin the third (*new*) millennium, one has to believe that our Gregorian calendar is one year off.

My take on the entire subject is that the pope wants us to celebrate the Jubilee Year in the millennium year (year 2000) by following his guidelines for reconciliation and indulgences to prepare for the new millennium year (year 2001) and the future.

Am I missing something?

David G. Rinck, West Harrison

Be a part of our first bridal issue for 2000!



Announcements of Weddings

To be published in the Feb. 4, 2000, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between Feb. 1 and July 1, 2000, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

Pictures

You may send us a picture of the bride-to-be or a picture of the couple. Please do not cut photograph. The picture must be wallet-size and will be used as space permits. Black & white picture preferred; we cannot guarantee the reproduction quality of a color photo. Photocopied pictures will not reproduce.

Please put name(s) on the back. Photos will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

Deadline

All announcements with photos must be received by Wed., Jan. 19, 2000, 10 a.m. (No photos will be accepted after this date). All announcements without photos must be received by the same date.

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Susan Bierman, 1400 North Meridian, Indianapolis, IN 46202
Deadline with photos: Wed., Jan. 19, 2000, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

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City State

BRIDEGROOM First Middle Last

Bridegroom's Parents

City State

Wedding Date Church City State

Photo Enclosed

No Picture

Signature of person furnishing information Relationship Daytime Phone

The Active List

The Criterion welcomes announcements of archdiocesan church and parish open-to-the-public activities for "The Active List" Please be brief—listing date, location, event, sponsor, cost and time. Include a phone number for verification. No announcements will be taken by telephone. Notices must be in our office by 10 a.m. Monday the week of (Friday) publication: The Criterion; The Active List; 1400 N. Meridian St. (hand deliver); P.O. Box 1717; Indianapolis, IN 46206 (mail); 317-236-1593 (fax); mklein@archindy.org (e-mail).

December 24

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Catholic Choir concert, 4 p.m. Msgr. Joseph Schaedel will preside at Christmas Eve Mass.

◆◆◆

Mary's Schoenstatt, **Rexville**. Christmas Eve Mass, 3:30 p.m. www.seidata.com/~eburwink.

December 25

Mary's Schoenstatt, **Rexville**. Christmas Mass, 9 a.m. Father Elmer Burwinkle to open Jubilee Door. www.seidata.com/~eburwink.

December 30

Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., **Indianapolis**. Second semester registration. Contact: development office, 317-351-5976.

December 31

St. Joseph Hill Church, 2605

St. Joe Road, **Sellersburg**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 8 a.m.–12:30 a.m. Information: 812-944-5304.

January 2

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th and Illinois, **Indianapolis**. Gospel Choir jazz cantata, "The Gift," directed by Dr. Virginia Jefferson, 4 p.m.

January 3

St. Lawrence Church, 542 Walnut St., **Lawrenceburg**. Healing Mass, 7 p.m. followed by reconciliation. Information: 812-537-1664 or 512-662-5378.

◆◆◆

St. Augustine Home, 2345 W. 86th St., **Indianapolis**. Cancer patients, family and friends prayer group, patronage of St. Peregrine, 7 p.m. Information: Ed Green, 317-876-7947 or Ester Pafford, 317-297-5966.

January 4

Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., **Indianapolis**. Second semester registration. Contact: development office, 317-351-5976.

January 8

Cardinal Ritter High School, 3360 W. 30th St., **Indianapolis**. Placement test, 8 a.m., no fee. Information: 317-924-4333.

Recurring

Daily

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish Center, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Perpetual adoration.

◆◆◆

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Tridentine (Latin) Mass, Mon.–Fri., noon; Wed., Fri., 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478.

Weekly

Sundays

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Tridentine Mass, 10 a.m.

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St. Anthony of Padua Church, **Clarksville**. "Be Not Afraid" holy hour, 6 p.m.

◆◆◆

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament,

7:30 p.m.–9 p.m.; rosary for world peace, 8 p.m.

◆◆◆

St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warman, **Indianapolis**. Rosary and Benediction for vocations, 2 p.m.

Mondays

Our Lady of the Greenwood Chapel, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Prayer group, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**. Shepherds of Christ rosary, prayers after 7 p.m. Mass.

◆◆◆

Holy Name Parish, 89 N. 17th St., **Beech Grove**. Prayer group, 2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

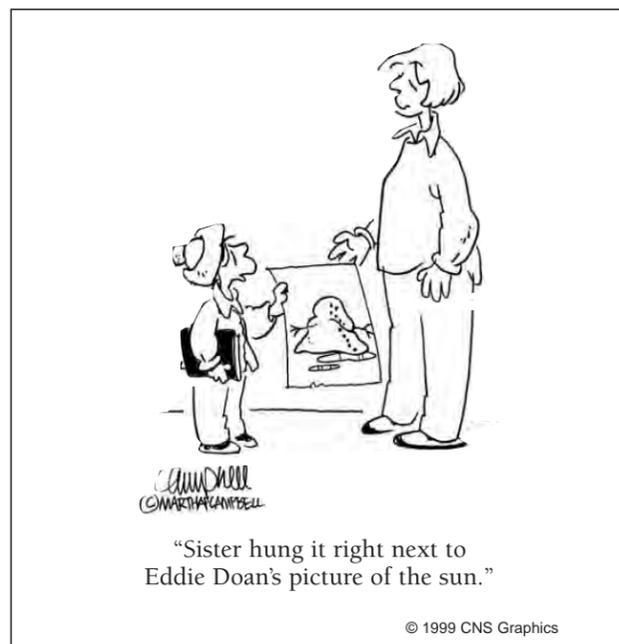
Divine Mercy Chapel, 3354 W. 30th St. (behind St. Michael Church), **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 3 p.m.–4 p.m. Information: 317-271-8016.

◆◆◆

Our Lady of the Greenwood Chapel, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy, 7 p.m.

◆◆◆

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Catholic Social Services program, 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1538.



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Thursdays

St. Lawrence Chapel, **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Mass.

◆◆◆

St. Mary Church, **New Albany**. Shepherds of Christ prayer for lay, religious vocations, 7 p.m.

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St. Patrick Church, Shelby St., **Salem**. Prayer service, 7 p.m.

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St. Malachy Church, **Brownsburg**. Liturgy of the Hours, 7 p.m. Information: 317-852-3195.

◆◆◆

Christ the King Chapel, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 5:30 a.m.–6:30 a.m.

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Fatima K of C, 1040 N. Post Road, **Indianapolis**. Euchre, 7 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

Fridays

St. Susanna Church, 1210 E. Main St., **Plainfield**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 8 a.m.–6:30 p.m.

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St. Lawrence Chapel, **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Benediction and Mass.

◆◆◆

Affiliated Women's Services, Inc., 2215 Distributors Dr., **Indianapolis**. Pro-life rosary, 10 a.m.

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St. Joseph Church, 2605 St.

Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**. Eucharistic adoration, one hour after 8 a.m. Mass.

◆◆◆

Christ the King Chapel, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 5:30 a.m.–6:30 a.m.

Saturdays

Clinic for Women, E. 38th St. and Parker Ave., **Indianapolis**. Pro-life rosary, 9:30 a.m.

◆◆◆

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Tridentine Mass, 9 a.m.

Monthly

First Sundays

St. Paul Church, **Sellersburg**. Prayer group, 7 p.m.–8:15 p.m. Information: 812-246-4555.

◆◆◆

Fatima K of C, 1040 N. Post Road, **Indianapolis**. Euchre, 1 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

First Mondays

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

First Tuesdays

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

◆◆◆

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**. Holy hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of

—See ACTIVE LIST, page 27

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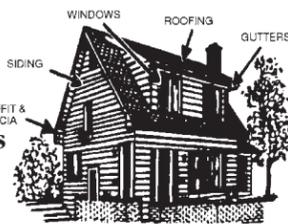
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The Active List, continued from page 26

Blessed Sacrament after 7 p.m. Mass.

First Fridays

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

◆◆◆

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

◆◆◆

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., **Indianapolis**. Adoration, prayer service, 7 p.m.

◆◆◆

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**. Eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. Mass-noon.

◆◆◆

Sacred Heart Church, 1530

Union St., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. Mass-noon communion service.

◆◆◆

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

◆◆◆

St. Joseph University Church, **Terre Haute**. Eucharistic adoration, after 9 a.m. Mass-5 p.m.; rosary, noon.

◆◆◆

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

◆◆◆

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

First Saturdays

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

◆◆◆

Little Flower Chapel, 13th and Bosart, **Indianapolis**. Apostolate of Fatima holy hour, 2 p.m.

◆◆◆

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

◆◆◆

Holy Angels Church, 28th and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sts., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m.-noon.

◆◆◆

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

Second Mondays

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

Second Thursdays

Focolare Movement, Komro home, **Indianapolis**. Gathering, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-257-1073.

◆◆◆

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

Third Sundays

Mary **Rexville** Schoenstatt (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). Holy Hour, 2:30 p.m.; Mass, 3:30 p.m. Information: 812-689-3551. www.seidata.com/~eburwink

◆◆◆

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 2 p.m.-7 a.m. (Monday); rosary, 8 p.m. Open to midnight.

Third Mondays

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

Third Wednesdays

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

◆◆◆

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, **Indianapolis**. Catholic

Widowed Organization, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-1102.

◆◆◆

Holy Family Parish, **Oldenburg**. Support group for the widowed, 7 p.m. Information: 812-934-2524.

◆◆◆

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

Third Thursdays

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

Third Fridays

Blessed Sacrament Chapel, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, **Indianapolis**. Mass for *Civitas*

Dei, Catholic business group, 6:30 a.m.; Indianapolis Athletic Club, breakfast, talk, 7:15 a.m.-8:30 a.m., \$20. Information: Shawn Conway, 317-264-9400, ext. 35; or David Gorsage, 317-875-8281.

◆◆◆

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

Third Saturdays

St. Andrew Church, 4052 E. 38th St., **Indianapolis**. Mass for Life by archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life Activities, 8:30 a.m.; walk to Clinic for Women, 2951 E. 38th St., rosary; return to church for Benediction.

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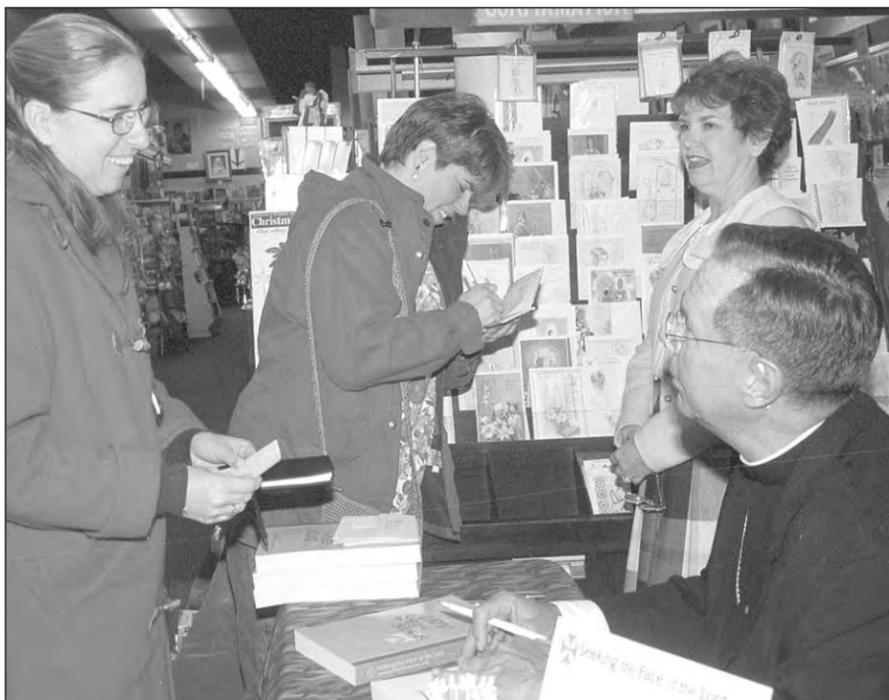


Photo by Margaret Nelson

Book Signing

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein autographs copies of his book, *Seeking the Face of the Lord*, for Catherine Ciresi (from left) and Teresa Lesch of Christ the King Parish of Indianapolis during a Dec. 18 book signing at Krieg Brothers. Mary Ann Klein, of the archdiocesan Communications Office, assists. The archbishop also signed books at the Village Dove-South. Proceeds will go to the archdiocesan Hispanic ministries. By press time, 1,000 books had been sold.

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From the Archives

New Albany champs

The year was 1938, and, the seventh and eighth grade boys basketball team from Holy Trinity Parish in New Albany were the area champions.

The priest in the photograph is the assistant pastor, Father Thomas P. Carey, who died on March 3, 1999. Following his ordination in May 1934, Father Carey was assigned briefly (four weeks!) to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. However, in June 1934, he was named assistant pastor of Holy Trinity, where he quickly established a youth ministry program.

The photo was given to the archives by Richard P. Stein, who

identified the persons pictured. Front row, from left: Paul Rainbolt, George Flynn, George Boutele, Jim Heleringer and Bob Knabel.

Middle row, from left: Bill Cummings, Jim Allen, Dick Stein, Adolph Scharf and Bob Read.

Back row, from left: Claude Eve, Howard Phillips, Paul Meisenhelder, Father Carey, Russ Daniels, Herb Barr and Pat Quinn.

Holy Trinity church, built in 1857, was destroyed by fire in 1975. Less than two blocks from St. Mary Parish, the church was not rebuilt and the parishes were merged. †



Musician to be keynote speaker for youth rally

By Mary Ann Wyand

Back by popular demand, nationally known Christian musician David Kauffman of San Antonio, Texas, will again serve as the keynote presenter for the Archdiocesan Youth Conference on Feb. 5-6 at the Sheraton Hotel on the north side of Indianapolis.

Kauffman is the first Catholic artist signed to a major record label in 10 years. His new release is called "Simple Truth."

He also was the keynote presenter for the 1993 Archdiocesan Youth Conference at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and for an archdiocesan Young Adult Conference in Indianapolis several years ago.

Marlene Stammerman, associate director of youth ministry for the archdiocesan Office of Youth and Family Ministries, said Kauffman has "a wonderful gift of sharing the message of his music. The songs he writes are very real, and young people can identify with them. He shares them in a way that glorifies God and helps young people get energized about their faith."

"Choose to Live the Road Less Traveled" is the conference theme. Registrations are \$75 for the conference, which is open to high school students. The registration fee includes conference programs and activities as well as meals and overnight lodging at the hotel, which is located at Keystone at the Crossing.

Registration packets are available from parish youth ministry coordinators and the archdiocesan Office of Youth and Family Ministries. Registrations are due at the youth ministry office by the Jan. 5 deadline.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis is closed from Dec. 24 until Jan. 3, but parish youth ministry coordinators can provide registration materials.

Stammerman said the archdiocese has sponsored an annual youth conference since the 1970s, formerly under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Organization. In recent years, teen-age members of the Archdiocesan Youth Council have assisted the youth ministry office staff and youth ministry coordinators with the conference plans.

"Youth Council members selected the theme 'Choose to Live the Road Less Traveled' because they want to promote the Gospel message to live peace, to have a living faith," Stammerman said. "Conference workshops will focus on how young people can live their faith in very real ways."

Teen-agers from all 11 deaneries in the archdiocese are expected to attend the conference.

"We're hoping to have 600 teen-agers at the conference," Stammerman said. "The youth ministry office is committed to providing an annual youth conference because some parishes and deaneries don't have the resources to provide that experience of the larger Church for young people. The conference creates opportunities for youth to explore their faith, to become confident in their faith and, most importantly, to celebrate their faith."

Conference workshops enable teen-agers to realize that "we have a joyful faith and it's OK to share that," she said. "When we share our Catholic faith with one another, we don't always know who we are helping along the way. I think young people get energized when they realize that, by living their faith, they can make a difference in someone else's life." †

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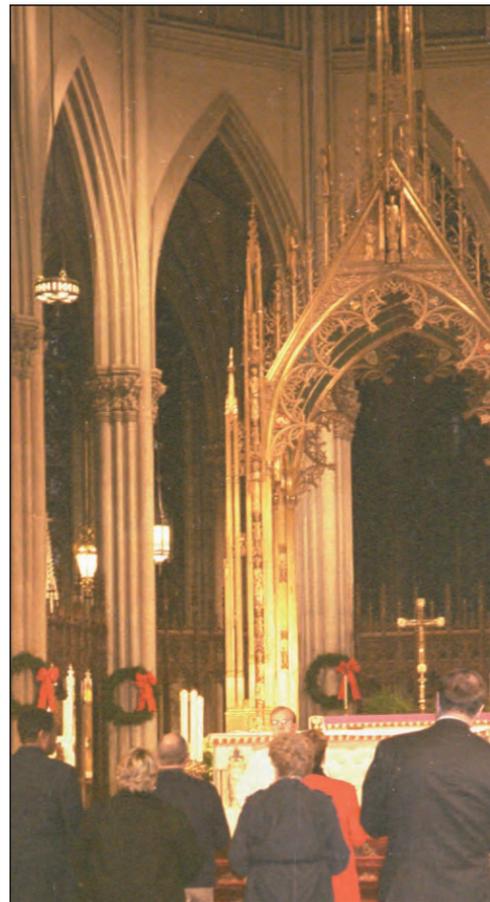
A group of 47 pilgrims from the archdiocese traveled to New York earlier this month and celebrated Mass at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary (above) and visited the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (statue at right).



Top, Father Richard Mueller (from left), Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel and Father Robert Mazzola concelebrate Mass at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary.



Bottom, pilgrims gather to pray at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Secaucus, N.J.



Above, St. Patrick's Cathedral is the largest gothic-style Catholic cathedral in the United States.

Photos by Carolyn Moore

New York parishioners make spiritual retreat by computer

CHICAGO (CNS)—The technology of the World Wide Web is allowing nearly 30 parishioners at St. Raphael Parish in East Meadow, N.Y., to participate in a spiritual retreat without leaving their own homes.

The virtual retreat is taking place over a 34-week period in a private conferencing area through the Web site of *U.S. Catholic* magazine at www.uscatholic.org. Participants can post messages and respond to one another whenever the spirit moves them.

"My pastor and I wanted to try a virtual retreat for people like myself who can't seem to find time for a 'real' retreat but want to experience some of the benefits," said John Blakeney, a parishioner at St. Raphael who helped organize the program.

Each week, Blakeney creates a new file with a different topic in St. Raphael's conferencing area. Parishioners involved in the virtual retreat, or e-treat as they call it, say they like the flexibility that the format offers them.

"Finding time to do things for me is very difficult," said Linda Roeder, a mother of four. "The idea of the e-treat was wonderful. There may be days when I cannot get to my computer, but the best thing is I don't miss anything."

Many say they find it easier to be open when posting messages instead of speaking face to face. "I feel more comfortable in expressing my thoughts in writing," said Helena Varga. "I like the idea of praying and reflecting at my own pace and in my own space, and then sharing the graces received from these reflections." †



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Rest in peace

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

ANDRES, Marcella L. "Sis" (Kruer), 81, St. John, Starlight, Dec. 7. Wife of Carl F. "Sep" Andres. Mother of Janet Regan, Ginny Balmer, Joyce Young, Jackie Colin, Judy Sullivan, Regina Cox, Connie Missi, Shelly Cox, Dr. Carl, Joseph and Marlin Andres. Sister of Irma Bierman, Virginia Andres, Martha Schmidt, Norma Johns, Bonnie Huber, Ambrose "Bud" Sr., Edward "Butch" Sr. and George Kruer Jr. Grandmother of 28. Great-grandmother of three.

AUST, Anna, 93, St. Paul, New Alsace, Dec. 16. Sister of Marge Hartman, Rose Thebo, John, Michael, Charles and Joe Klump. Aunt of several.

BLACK, Melvin "Blackie," 92, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 13. Husband of Merlene Black. Brother of Thelma Blankenship. Uncle of several nieces and nephews.

BRYDON, Douglas Paul, 38, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Son of Patricia (Ryan) and John Brydon. Brother of Lisa Hyatt, Pam Berry, Robert and

Jeffrey Brydon. Uncle of several nieces and nephews.

BUNDY, Theresa R. 76, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, Dec. 5. Mother of Robert Bundy. Sister of Stanley Rak. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of three.

BURCH, Barbara A. (Raftery), 62, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Wife of Paul J. Burch. Mother of Colleen Meguiar, Dorothy and Julianne Stenger, John, Neil and Andrew Burch. Sister of Kathy Wiggins. Grandmother of nine.

CESNIK, Martin C., 81, St. Michael, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Husband of Betty (Welch) Cesnik. Father of Shannon Harvey, Patricia Williams, Connie Gorman, Cecilia Fine, Mark, Kirk, John, Raymond and Al Cesnik. Brother of Thelma Conroy and Phillip Cesnik. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of eight.

COOMES, Lawrence A., 50, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 11. Brother of Carolyn Hilliard, Cathi Myers, James and Donald Coomes.

DAVIS, Anthony DeWayne, 39, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Father of Nicholas, Nolan, Noah, Nathan and Gloria Davis. Son of Barbara Steffey and Davis Rodimel. Stepson of Lyle Sr. and Donna Davis. Brother of Stephanie Alderson, Regina Chestnut, Rebecca O'Connor, Lyle Jr. and Drew Davis. Stepbrother of Troy and Trent

Rodimel, Mark and Michael Moriarty, Angela Christiansen, Tina Rodimel, Grandson of Lois Steffey.

EHRINGER, Mintie A., 69, St. Paul, Sellersburg, Dec. 10. Wife of Cletus J. Ehringer. Mother of Paul, Timothy and Kenneth Ehringer. Sister of Mable Roarx, Catherine Wethington, Floyd Purdue Jr., Blackburn Jr. and Warren Myers. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of one.

FELDMAN, James Edward, 76, Immaculate Conception, Millhousen, Dec. 15. Brother of Alfred Feldman. Uncle of several.

FRAME, Velma, 85, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 9. Mother of Harold, Joseph Jr., Jim and Jack Frame. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 16.

FRY, Bernadette, 78, Immaculate Conception, Millhousen, Dec. 14. Mother of Jerry and Frederick Fry. Sister of Rita Hurd and Ruth Gorman. Grandmother of four.

GERDINK, Joan N., 70, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, Dec. 7. Wife of Herbert R. Gerdink. Mother of Nancy Vrabic, Kathleen, Matthew and James. Gerdink. Sister of J. Raymond and John Stockton. Grandmother of two.

GUTIERREZ, Manuel, 80, St. Andrew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Nov. 18. Husband of Refugia Gutierrez. Father of Margarita Mesa, Linda Gardner, Gloria, Manuel Jr. and Peter Gutierrez. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of six.

HARRIS, Veronica, 60, St. Andrew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Wife of

Caesar Harris. Mother of Tina Long, Valerie and Patrice Harris, Patrick and James Lively. Sister of Elda Walton, Sally Miller, Cecilia Huffman, Louise Droeger, James, Joseph, Paul and Raymond Mattingly. Grandmother of four.

HUNTER, Steven L., 37, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 16. Husband of Kathy (Wilson) Hunter. Father of Derek and Tyler Hunter. Stepfather of Tesa, Chad and Jeremy Wilson. Son of Oliver Hunters. Brother of Timothy Hunter. Step-grandfather of one.

KIPPER, Marie S., 96, St. Mary, North Vernon, Dec. 12. Sister of Josephine Sterling and William Zohrlaut.

LINDER, Lena S., 94, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Mother of Mary Ann Grass, Frank and Phil Linder. Sister of Lucille Gassin and Hazel Scheurer. Grandmother of four.

LYONS, Tracey E., 96, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Dec. 4. Aunt of several.

MANNING, Margaret, 87, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Mother of Patty Hall and Ann Manning. Sister of Mary Pletch, Matilda Knapp and Ed Ruch. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of two.

MINK, Norman G., 71, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Husband of Anna Mae Mink. Father of Judy Cottrell and Glenda Mink. Brother of Enid Nicely, Pauline Williams and Willene Bilbrey. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of five.

MOORMAN, Donald B., 58, St. Maurice, Batesville, Dec. 15. Husband of Martha (Thole) Moorman. Father of Melany Collier, Father Dennis, Sheila, Bryan and Todd Moorman. Brother of Anna Mae Kramer, Rose Marie Wolter, Shirley

Bevers, Paul and Jerry Moorman.

POETZ, Joseph J., 81, Little Flower, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Husband of Eva (Schneider) Poetz. Father of Geraldine Seal, JoAnn Haendel, David and Gregory Poetz. Brother of Alphonse and Henry Poetz. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 13.

RICHARDSON, Edwin A., 85, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Husband of Dolores (Fussner) Richardson. Father of David, Larry and Mark Richardson. Brother of Eleanor Reimer, Joseph and Robert Richardson. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of seven.

ROBINSON, Nerina Y. (DiLeonardo), 80, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Mother of Deana Shelley and Donna Hurley. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of three. Great-great-grandmother of one.

ROTHERT, Marvin A., 79, St. Andrew, Richmond, Dec. 9. Father of John "Tony" Rothert. Grandfather of three.

RYAN, Edwin, 94, St. Michael, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Husband of Mary Ryan. Father of Sally Zahn, Judy Gough and Molly Townsend.

SCHROEDER, Catherine M. "Katie," 72, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 13. Sister of Helen Rudy and Robert Schroeder. Aunt of several.

SIMPSON, Mildred E. 83, St. Joseph, Indianapolis, Nov. 30. Mother of Jean Canatsey and Ruth Gilbert. Sister of Ralph Morton. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 22.

STEIN, Dewese O. "Dewey," 86, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 12. Husband of Helen (Powell) Stein. Father of Mary Catherine Bir and Joseph Stein. Grandfather of two.

STREETER, Margaret M.

(Hoover), 63, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Wife James E. Streeter. Mother of Ruth Perkins, Sharon Glass, Susan, James and Ronald Streeter. Sister of Robert Hoover. Grandmother of 10.

TEMPLE, Phillip J., 62, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Husband of Bonnie (Hatfield) Temple. Stepfather of Bonnie Kern and Cindy Bailey. Brother of Ann Forsgren, Kathleen Changburnocit, Marilyn Slaven, Patricia Loyal and Ronald May. Grandfather of 11. Great grandfather of 11.

VANWINKLE, Lucille, 82, St. Isidore, Bristow, Dec. 9. Mother of Judy Seifrig, Bonita Myers, Mike, Gary and Robert VanWinkle. Sister of Oscar and Charles Dotterweich. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 10.

YOUNG, Ann (Kervan), 87, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Dec. 12. Mother of Patricia Hodgson and William Young. Sister of Betty Gardner. Grandmother of two.

YOUNG, Charles "Buddy," 77, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 8. Father of C. Thomas Young. Grandfather of two.

WEDDLE, Mary Jane (Bushkuhl), 80, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Nov. 30. Mother of Carol Spillman and Jeanne Weddle-Logan. Sister of James and Raymond Bushkuhl.



Benedictine Sister Mary Geraldine was 92

Benedictine Sister Mary Geraldine Ruppel died at St. Paul Hermitage on Dec. 3. She was 92.

A funeral Mass was celebrated at the Our Lady of Grace Monastery Chapel on Dec. 6.

Born Anna Caroline Ruppel in Napoleon, she entered the community at Ferdinand monastery in 1925. She was received in 1926, took temporary vows in 1927 and perpetual vows in 1930.

A founding member of the Beech Grove monastery, Sister Mary Geraldine was a teacher or housekeeper at Bradford, Rockport, Columbus, Tell City, Siberia, Floyds Knobs, Clarksville, as well as Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. She retired in 1987, living in the Hermitage.

Sister Mary Geraldine is survived by a sister and a brother, Catherine and Joseph Ruppel.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Senior Sisters Retirement Fund. †

Benjamin Turner was father of Father William

Benjamin R. Turner, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelbyville, was the father of Father William Turner, pastor of St. Martin Parish in Yorkville and St. Paul Parish in New Alsace.

Benjamin Turner died on Dec. 12 at the age of 76.

He was also the father of Frances Campbell, Annette Crosby, Maria McNeely, Louise Ratts and Edward Turner. He is survived by a brother, Joe Turner, and three sisters, Katherine Bauman, Mary Rose Buechele and Esther Fowler. He was the grandfather of 15; step-grandfather of three; and great-grandfather of one. †

Providence Sister Rose Celine taught in the archdiocese

Providence Sister Rose Celine Sccecina, 91, died on Dec. 15 in Lourdes Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

A funeral Mass was celebrated on Dec. 17 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception there.

The former Veronica Sccecina was born in Linton and entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence in 1924, professed first vows in 1927 and final vows in 1932.

Sister Rose Celine taught in St. Mary School in Richmond, Our Lady of the Greenwood School in Greenwood, St. Michael School in Greenfield, St. Simon School in Indianapolis, as well as schools in the Evansville Diocese and in Illinois.

Sister Rose Celine is survived by two sisters, Rose Sparks and Elizabeth Sccecina, and two brothers, Frank and Thomas Sccecina. †

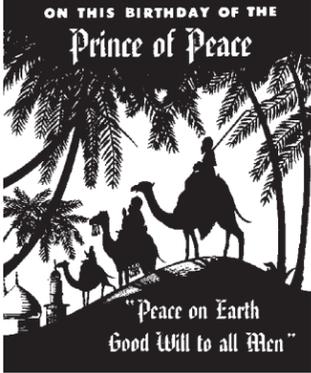


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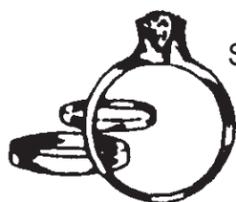
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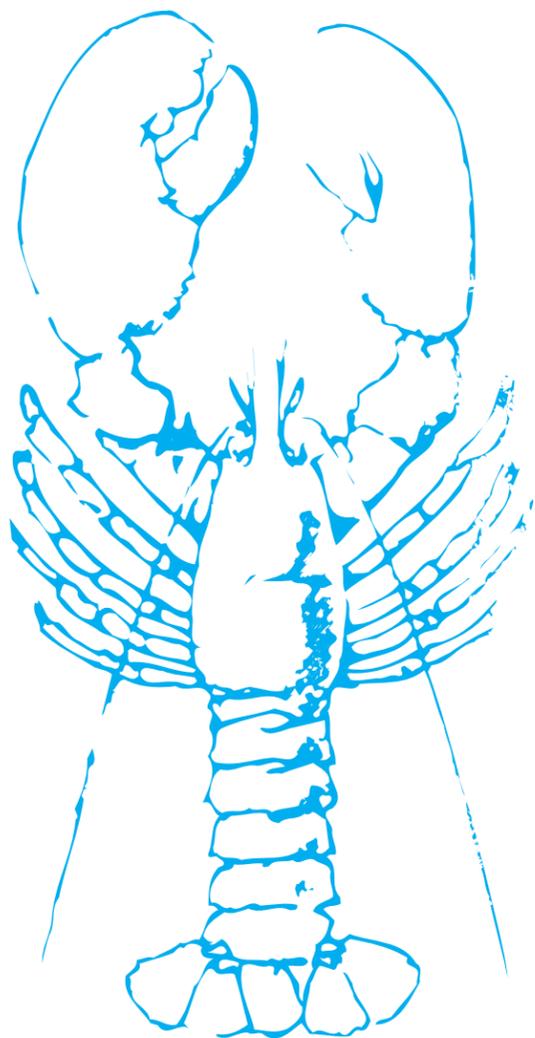
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