Archdiocese experiences generous responses, losses and miracles in 2005

By Brandon A. Evans

During 2005, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis lost several priests, but also began preparations for the future of the Church in central and southern Indiana. Nationally and internationally, 2005 was a big news year for the Catholic Church and, besides coverage of those events, The Criterion recorded several moments of local importance.

Listed below are 10 of the major archdiocesan stories from 2005:

• Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein opens the Cause of Canonization of his predecessor, Bishop Simon Bruté. The September 1, one of the dreams of Archbishop Buechlein was realized when he, along with the official postulator from Rome, opened the Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God Simon Bruté, the first bishop of Vincennes (which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis).

The process is now unfolding as investigators examine the life of the late bishop to determine if he lived a life of heroic virtue. After that, the quest will begin for materials attributed to Bishop Bruté’s intercession.

• The Cause of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin moves forward twice. The Canonization Cause of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, who passed two major milestones this year, less than a decade after she was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

John Paul II

A medical commission found no medical explanation for a miraculous cure attributed to her intercession and a theological commission approved the miracle. The theological commission also found that “there was nothing contrary to faith or morals in the life of Blessed Mother Theodore, which opens her Cause to its final phases after nearly 100 years.

• For Our Mission campaign announced. The archdiocese officially unveiled a new capital stewardship campaign titled Legacy For Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future as a way to ensure that the traditions of the Church stays vibrant in the coming years.

The resources raised in the campaign in the coming years will directly go to benefit such parishes as capital and endowment needs, Catholic education, retired priests, seminarians, Catholic Charities and Catholic cemeteries.

• The archdiocese loses eight of its diocesan priests.

The year was a difficult one for the clerical community as they saw eight of their fellow priests die. They had led lives of dedication to the Church and its teachings.

• Pope urges all nations to prohibit human cloning.

Pope, with flu and breathing problems, kites the heat away from the issue of human cloning. His comments follow President Bush’s call for a moratorium on human cloning in the United States.

In Good Friday meditations on Way of the Cross, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said that human cloning is “an expression of the cold heartlessness of our age.”

• Five Catholic schools are named Blue Ribbon Schools.

Once again, the Catholic schools of the archdiocese showed their excellence as five schools were honored as No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

With six schools honored last year and four the year before, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has more Blue Ribbon schools than any other dioceses in the United States.

• Year of the Eucharist celebration is held despite rain.

An archdiocesan celebration to honor the Year of the Eucharist to be held at Victory Field in Indianapolis was moved at the last minute to St. John the Evangelist Church due to severe storms. Despite the rains and strong winds, more than 1,000 people participated in the scaled-back celebration.

The celebration was the centerpiece of a year of Eucharist-focused news stories in The Criterion in 2005.

2005: Death of Pope John Paul II, election of Pope Benedict XVI and worldwide r e l i f e f

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Here is a month-by-month look at some of the major news events of 2005 that were of interest in the world of religion:

January

Catholic agencies join in record relief efforts for millions of Asians affected by late December tsunamis that killed more than 180,000 people. The Diocese of Orange, Calif., reaches $100 million settement with 90 clergy sex abuse victims.

Baltimore Cardinal William H. Keeler asks U.S. Senate to resist pressures for a federal death penalty for juveniles. Syria, under international pressure to end its military campaign, stops its shelling of civilians in its last major attack on Iraq.

February

Pope, with flu and breathing problems, is taken to hospital. Massachusetts jury finds former priest Paul R. Shanley, notorious figure in Boston clergy sex abuse scandal, guilty of four counts of rape and child abuse. Vatican’s doctrinal congregation bars U.S. Jesuit theologian Father Roger Haight from teaching as a Catholic theologian. Sister Dorothy Stang, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur from Ohio who worked 40 years with the poor and peasants in Brazil and defending their rights, is murdered in Brazil. Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who had announced his intention to resign after a long civil war, is assassinated. Second annual audit of U.S. dioceses on sexual abuse and child protection cities progress but warns against complacency. Broad international coalition issues statement on global warming and calls for care to environment. Galveston-Houston is made second archdiocese in Texas. Court battles over removal of feeding tube from Terri Schiavo bring national attention.

March

Pope is rehospitized for breathing problems that develop after surgery on his lung. Chicago Archdiocese announces plans to close 23 schools. St. Louis Archbishop says it will close 24 parishes, 10 schools.

Supreme Court rules against death penalty for juveniles. Syria, under international pressure, begins withdrawing troops from Lebanon. The U.N. General Assembly urges all nations to prohibit human cloning. St. George’s Diocese in Newfoudland, facinating over removal of feeding tube from Terri Schiavo bring national attention.

April

Pope John Paul II

Mrs. Schiavo dies.

John Paul II smiles as he holds a boy durinhis visit to Kampa, Uganda, in 1993. His seven-year effort to Africa and movement to local Churches as Catholicism was experiencing explosive growth on this continent.

Three-day Catholic-Lewish dialogue in Washington marks 40 years since Second Vatican Council paved the way for new Catholic approach to Jews and Judaism. Catholic Relief Services donors have given it more than $121 million for tsunami relief. U.S. bishops launch national Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty. Court-approved removal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube in Florida sparks new efforts to save her, including new law by Congress giving federal courts jurisdic- tion to hear federal courts upheld previous state court rulings. Pope issues Holy Week ceremonies for first time in 26-year pontifi- cate, marking the end of a year of celebra- tion for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the monarchy.

May

New archbishop is elected for Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

He succeeds Archabbot Lambert Reilly, who resigned after serving the community for nine years as the monks’ spiritual and temporal leader. Archabbot Stephen’s election marked the end of a year of celebration for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the monastery.

June

Pope John Paul II dies on April 2. World mourns as millions gather in Rome to conclude. Colorado governor vetoes bill that would have required Catholics and Jews to provide那次 informa- tion to rape victims. An estimated 3 million pilgrims, along with world dignitaries and thousands of AIDS mourners, attend the pope’s April 8 funeral, celebrated by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Funeral Mass is first in a line of memorial Masses. Bill to reinstate death penalty in New York is killed in Legislature. New Connecticut law allows those in same-sex unions all rights of married couples except the right to marry. Vermont bishop urges Legislature to drop assisted suicide bill. Cardinals enter con- clave. On second day, they elect Cardinal Ratzinger, 78, head of Vatican doctrinal congregation for past 24 years, as pope. He takes the name Benedict XVI. Five days later, Pope Benedict XVI is consecrated to the spiritual and administrative governance of the Catholic life.
Katrina victim receives Christmas hope through St. Rita parishioners

By Sean Gallagher

A year ago, Charlene Booker and her husband, Sean, celebrated Christmas by joyfully welcoming their newborn daughter, Kyla, into their home in Gretna, La., just outside New Orleans. In late August, Hurricane Katrina took Sean’s life and destroyed the Booker family’s home.

This Christmas, Booker and her three children are living in Indianapolis. But despite such tragic losses, Booker has hope for the future due in part to the care and generosity of many members of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis—charity for which she is very thankful.

“It’s such a beautiful thing,” Booker said. “I never thought that I would have someone looking out for me.”

The outreach that this parish has made to Booker and her family is in many ways emblematic of the charity given by Catholics across the archdiocese to those affected by Katrina.

As of the beginning of December, the archdiocese had collected nearly $900,000 in Katrina relief contributions.

More than half of that was provided to the Catholic Charities-USA’s Hurricane Recovery Task Force. More than $175,000 was given directly to parishes affected by the hurricane and to dioceses sheltering those displaced by it.

But more than $80,000 was kept back in order to meet the ongoing needs of the hurricane victims.

David Siler, executive director of Catholic Charities and Family Ministries for the archdiocese, expects that requests for aid from the Church will increase in the first months of next year as government housing assistance for Katrina victims starts to run out.

In the meantime, Catholic Charities in the archdiocese is awarding grants to individuals in need and parishes working to assist those displaced by the hurricane.

St. Rita Parish received a $5,000 grant to help cover the costs of major repairs to a home it owns where, when they are completed, the Booker family will live.

Frances Guynn, a member of St. Rita Parish, has been working directly with Booker, helping her arrange job interviews and obtain transportation for her and her family.

Despite such great material assistance from the parish, Booker said that the personal support she has received has been vital.

“It took a lot of praying and crying, but the thing that helped me through was [that God] put a lot of positive people in my life like Frances . . .,” she said. “Just being able to talk with them every day when I’m upset or when I just need to talk with someone—that helps a whole lot.”

Guynn said that she has received much by helping Booker and that it has led her to understand more deeply the fragility of life.

“She gave me strength,” Guynn said. “Listening to her gave me strength. It has just made me realize that at any moment everything that you own and cherish can be taken away from you. And [God] will be the only one that you can lean on.”

But Booker has leaned on God through people like Guynn. Help has also come through St. Rita parishioner Peter Ray of Indianapolis, who has managed the repairs to the home where the Bookers will live.

For more than two months, Ray and his team of parishioners working on the house had no contact with the Booker family. They only knew that there was a family in need and they were in a position to be of assistance. That, and their gratitude for the things that they have been blessed with.

“I feel that I have been so blessed with a good job and a healthy family and just having godly talents to be able to do things,” Ray said. “It’s more of just giving back for the things that I have been blessed with.”

Catholics across the archdiocese have been similarly motivated to reach out to those affected by Katrina.

More than 400 people who attended the annual adult choir Winter Concert at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis gave $2,400 to benefit Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Bay St. Louis, Miss., a parish in the area affected by Katrina “adopted” by St. Christopher parishioners.

Students at St. Christopher School also recently sent Christmas gifts to the students at St. Stephen School in New Orleans.

Twenty-four schools across the archdiocese have opened their doors to students displaced by Katrina.

Many parishioners at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood have been motivated to care for those affected by the hurricane.

More than $55,000 was collected in the parish for hurricane relief. The parish has sponsored five trips to New Orleans to come to the aid of Cathedral Academy and St. Anthony of Padua Parish, both in New Orleans, two communities with which the Greenwood parish has established a parish twinning relationship.

Another group of 40 members from Greenwood Parish in Greenwood have been similarly motivated to reach out to those affected by Katrina.

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The Holy Land in 2005

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, this year we find reasons for cautious optimism that the situation in the land where he was born might improve.

We never thought we’d be praising Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon because in the past he has been among the strongest opponents of the Palestinians. It was he who spearheaded the building of Jewish settlements on land confiscated from the Palestinians so that the Jewish state can be expanded into land that the international community considers to be Palestinian. Yet he has appeared in a new guise as a man of peace, returning the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians and insisting that he wants to follow the “road map” to secure a lasting peace.

The Likud Party disavowed Sharon, so he has started another party, called Kadima, a middle party between Likud and the Labor Party. Meanwhile, in the Labor Party, Ami Peretz defeated Israel’s elder statesman, Shimon Peres. Peres has now joined Sharon in Kadima. Opinion polls indicate that this centrist party will attract many voters in the elections scheduled for March.

It’s doubtful that any of these three parties will get a majority of the votes, but it’s quite possible that Sharon will be able to form a coalition and hence remain prime minister. As surprised as we are to be saying this, that appears to be the best course of action.

As for the Palestinians, they have important elections coming up on Dec. 25. Here it’s important that the Fatah Party of the Palestinian Authority’s President Mahmoud Abbas defeat most of the candidates of the Hamas Party. Abbas is more willing to negotiate with Sharon than are the Muslim extremists in Hamas. Our feeling of cautious optimism comes from the hope that Sharon and Abbas will re-elect next year and that they will continue efforts for peace. We know, though, that it’s likely members of Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade will use terrorism to try to disrupt peace negotiations.

One of the obstacles to peace remains the wall that is being built to keep terrorists out of Israel. It is cutting through Palestinian territory, preventing freedom of movement for Palestinians and creating new-on-the-ground boundaries for Israel.

In a statement on Nov. 2, the Holy See’s permanent observer to the United Nations, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, told the U.N. General Assembly that the Holy See remains concerned about that wall because it cuts access to some Palestinians’ lands and water sources, as well as to employment, commerce, education, medical care and freedom of worship.

He acknowledged the right of people to live in security, but said, “We believe that the Holy Land is in greater need of bridges than of walls.”

A new problem has arisen for Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Historically, Christian and Muslim Arabs have been able to live together in peace. In the city of Nazareth, for example, the 100,000 Arabs were about evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, was once 80 percent Christian.

Not any more. Muslim extremists are now discriminating against Christians. In that statement he made to the U.N. General Assembly, Archbishop Migliore also said, “We are obliged this year to draw attention to the growing difficulties faced by Palestinian Christians who, although they belong to a faith born in that very land, are sometimes viewed with suspicion by their neighbors. Doubly discriminated against, it is hardly surprising to learn that this tiny group, less than 2 percent of the local Palestinian population, is particularly marginalized.”

Some of that has happened in Bethlehem, where the Vatican established Bethlehem University to try to help Palestinians, Christian and Muslim alike, get an education. The purpose was to encourage Palestinians to remain in the Holy Land. Instead of keeping Christians in the Holy Land, the university has made it possible for its graduates to find fellowships or employment elsewhere.

We continue to hope, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, that the Holy Land will one day be “a home of harmony and peace” for all. Let’s pray that events next year will lead to that peace and harmony.

— John F. Finck

Letters to the Editor

Archbishop’s message about sacraments needs to be heard


The power of sacramental grace has been much underrated in today’s Catholic culture. As a parent of two teenagers and a 7-year-old, I know very well the power of the secular culture and the overwhelming pull it has on our children. It is very, very hard for families to stand against such cultural magnetism. It is especially hard for our teens who are at those crucial maturing stages of decision making.

The disparity between moral Catholic living and our culture seems to be growing every day. Society screams the message that pleasure is paramount, shock value of the provocative is exciting and sacrifice is to be avoided. There is such a need for re-education about the power of grace and a sacramental life. When we learn, correctly understand and embrace this viewpoint, our families will indeed experience the joy of authentic freedom in Christ, which gives them the courage to embrace the “Cross of Christ” and strive for the joy of the truth of Catholic morality.

In our era of media exposure, the Christian family must monitor every media source that comes into the home, and still that isn’t enough. Only God can provide the strength to withstand such temptations thrown so blatantly at our families. That strength, that gift, extra “holy energy” we receive in the grace of the sacraments works. I have seen it work in my own life and in the members of my family. We counteract the culture with grace received in prayer and, as Catholics, especially through the power of sacramental grace.

As Archbishop Burchlein pointed out, “Jesus gave us these sacraments not just as a matter of arbitrary ritual, but because we need them.” They are not just antiquated rituals to be set aside for modern psychology. There is real power behind them; power to be Christ-like, power to be holy.

This supernatural power of grace is transmitted to us by the hands of our priests, regardless of their personal character, as promised by Christ. Why hasn’t the world heard this? Do we doubt Christ’s promise? It has been working in the lives of Catholics for more than 2,000 years amid all cultural trials. All we need to do is to look at the habits of the saints and you can see their devotion to a sacramental life.

May we not forget, “But for the grace of God, there go I.” Let us all pray that our families can embrace these “dia- monds in the rough” — Sunday Mass, daily Mass, regular reconciliation. As a popular television commercial used to say, “Try it, you’ll like it!”

Eva M. Lawrenceburg

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant and expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. The editors reserve the right to reject and edit the letters based on space limitations, pertinent sensitivity and relevance.

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46294-0086.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
La sencillez de los pastores nos conduce a Cristo

El primer anuncio del Salvador llegó a los pastores de Belén. Romántizamos a los pastores de Belén que rodean nuestros pesebres, pero en realidad los pastores que nos interesan son los que vivían en el campo. Ese detalle nos encanta. ¿Acaso la gente sencilla rechazará el consumismo implica que la felicidad se encuentra en la posesión de más y más cosas? Las cosas brillantes se ofrecen en los díazos reina. La gente sencilla reconoció el comunismo porque demandaba más y más cosas. ¡Acaso y predicha el mismo postulado? La gente sencilla, al igual que los pastores, sabe que necesitamos a Cristo. Claramente somos los suficientemente sencillos para declarar nuestra libertad a Dios. De Dios leímos que los pastores de Belén pueden haber sido quienes elevaban los corderos puros que se ofrecían a Dios como sacrificio en el Templo todas las mañanas y las noches. Era una idea interesante: los pastores que cuidaban los corderos del Templo fueron los primeros en ver al Cordero de Dios que sería asesinado para redimir los pecados del mundo. Existe una conexión entre Belén y El Calvario. Treinta y tres años más tarde, en la cruz de un criminal en un monte a las afueras de Jerusalén, murió el mismo Salvador. Una sombra recibió la Tierra y el velo del Templo se rasgó. El máximo ademán del sacrificio es el padecimiento. Y acaso hay un cierto que de vez en cuando nos sorprende con alguna maravilla?

Y si se trataba, la contradicción pro sigue: en nuestro propio país, se priva a millones de bebés inocentes y sin voz de su derecho a la vida: se aborda la vida humana real. Los pobres indigentes continúan desamparados, el racismo sobrevive y muchos se sienten aterrados por la pobreza de la soledad. Permitimos la promiscuidad. Los capos de la droga victimizan a los solitarios, especialmente a nuestra juventud. Jesús se encuentra entre nosotros aun hoy en día, en estos iconos de sufrimiento.

En la posada de Belén no había lugar para Jesús. Hubo lugar para él en una cruz. Deseaba un lugar en los corazones superpodables de nuestra familia humana y no pudo hallarlo. Y su búsqueda continúa. ¿Acaso abrimos nuestros corazones para aceptarlo? Si quere mos verlo en el prójimo, primero debemos encontrarlo en la oración y en los sacramentos de la iglesia. No hay otra forma.

En la historia de Belén, Jesús, incluso en la historia de la cruz, existe un ademán divino y la razón de nuestra alegría en Navidad. El bebé de Belén fue y es el Salvador del mundo. Jesús conquistó el pecado y la muerte en la cruz. El máximo ademán divino es la victoria de Jesús sobre la muerte. Todo comenzó en ese establo en Belén.

Recemos por la sencillez de corazón, mente y alma de los pastores, para que podamos afrontarlos ante Cristo y decir: “Jesús, te necesito.”

Este es mi deseo de Navidad y mi oración para todos nosotros!
**Our Lady of Guadalupe**

Father Todd Riebe, in the middle of the back row, pastor of the three Richmond Catholic Community parishes and several children who participated in a Dec. 11 bilingual Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Andrew Church in Richmond.

**Events Calendar**

**December 23**
Marian College, St. Francis Hall Chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Catholic Charism-\natical Renewal, praise, worship, healing prayers, 7 p.m. Information: 317-709-2640.

**December 25**
MKVS and DM Center, Rexville (located on 925 South, 3 miles east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). Mass, 3-30 p.m., with Father Emer Lebouvedel. Information: 812-689-3551 or e-mail frb@mkvs.org or log on to Schollertall website at www.mkvs.org.

**December 26**
St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. Holy hour, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

**December 27**
St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. Holy hour, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

**December 28**
St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. Holy hour, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

**December 29-30**
Cathedral Ritter High School, 3360 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Volleyball camp, girls in grades 4-9, 6 a.m.-noon, $20 per person. Information: 317-927-7929.

**January 1**
St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. Holy hour, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

**January 4**
St. Albert Church, 12131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. Black Catholics Holy hour, 6:30 p.m., songs of worship, 11 p.m., fellowship and refreshments following. Mass, Information: 317-592-1912.

**January 5**
St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. Holy hour, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

**January 7**
Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. High school placement test, 7:45-11:15 a.m. Information: 317-787-8277, ext. 232.

**January 8**
Indianapolis South Deanery parishes, feast of the Epiphany, Holy Name, Nativity, Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Barnabas, Good Shepherd, SS. Francis and Clare, St. Jude, St. Maks, St. Patrick, St. Ann and Our Lady of the Greenwood churches, view the Christmas decorations, 1-5 p.m.

Holy Family Council, Knights of Columbus Hall, 200 N. Lyburn Drive, Indianapolis. Breakfast, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Information: 317-240-0760.

**January 9**

**January 13**

**Monthly...**

**Monthly First Sundays**

Marian College, 2nd Lily Student Center, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. People of Peace Secular Franciscan Order, noon-2 p.m. Information: 317-995-6775.

Sacred heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. Mass with contemporary appeal, 5 p.m. Information: 317-638-3551.

Fatima Knights of Columbus, 1040 N. Post Rd., Indianapolis. Eucharist, 5 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

St. Paul Church, 218 Scheller Ave., Sellersburg. Prayer group, 7-8:15 p.m. Information: 812-246-4555.

St. Thomas More Church, 1220 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Holy hour, adoration, prayer and praise for vocations, 9:15 a.m. Information: 317-393-8753.

**First Mondays**

Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Guardian Angel Guild, board meeting, 9 a.m. Information: 317-327-0080.

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 25th St., Columbus. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 812-379-9753.

**First Tuesdays**

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


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

**First Wednesdays**


**First Thursdays**

Immaculate Conception Church, 2001 E. County Road 820 S., Greensburg. Holy hour, 7-8:15 p.m. Information: 812-591-2162.

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 12:45-4:15 p.m., Eucharist and Vespers and Benediction, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-635-2021.

St. Mary Church, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after 5:45 a.m. Mass. Saturday, information: 317-636-4478.

**First Fridays**

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. Mass. Information: 317-636-7291.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass. Saturday, information: 317-636-7291.


St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mackey Ave., Indianapolis. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 4 p.m., rosary, 5 p.m., Benediction, 5:30 p.m., Mass, 5-45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

**Benedictus Retreat and Conference Center, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Information: 312-346-3004.

St. Joseph Church, 113 S. 5th St., Terre Haute. Eucharistic adoration, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., rosary, noon, Holy hour for vocations, Benediction, 4:35 p.m., Mass, 5-15 p.m. Information: 812-235-4996.

**First Saturdays**

Holy Angels Church, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 1-5 p.m. Information: 317-462-2246.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. Apostolate of Fatima holy hour, 2 p.m. Information: 317-557-5851.

St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis. Reconciliation, 7 a.m. Mass, 8:15 a.m. followed by rosary. Information: 317-636-4828.


St. Thomas More Church, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Mass, 8:35 a.m. Information: 317-831-4144.

**VIPS...**

Robert and Eleanor (Richardson) Reimer, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 29. The coup- le was married on that date in 1945 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Indianapolis. They have two children, Barbara Glanz and Kathleen Shunk. They also have five grandchildren. !
Filipino Catholics celebrate Simbang Gabi in Terre Haute
By Mary Ann Wyand

TERRE HAUTE—“Maligayang Pasko.” That’s the Tagalog way to wish someone a “Merry Christmas” in the Philippines.

Several hundred Filipino Catholics of all ages from Vigo County and other areas of the archdiocese gathered at St. Margaret Mary Church in Terre Haute on Dec. 19 to celebrate Simbang Gabi, a Christmas tradition of Mass and carols which is a popular Advent custom in the Philippines.

The festive liturgy sponsored by the archdiocesan Commission for Multicultural Ministry was celebrated by Father Rick Ginther, pastor of St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes in Terre Haute, and Father Kenneth Taylor, director of Multicultural Ministry for the archdiocese and pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis.

The joyful Mass with lots of music marked the fourth day of the nine-day Simbang Gabi novena for Filipino Catholics living in the archdiocese. The theme of the novena was “Family: Agent of Evangelization.”

The Multicultural Ministry Commission also sponsored Simbang Gabi liturgies on Dec. 20 at St. Gabriel Church in Indianapolis and on Dec. 21 at the St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington.

In his homily, Father Ginther asked the people to consider ways to bring life into the barren places in their families.

After blessing the Filipino foods served at the dinner in the parish center, Father Ginther said he hopes all Catholics will “listen for the Lord then try to bring some new life into the barren aspects of their lives.”

During Advent and throughout the year, he said, families also need to consider ways to serve the larger Church community.

“It means a lot to us,” she said. “The togetherness of families is very important to Filipinos. Now that we’re away from our families at home [in the Philippines], at least I can share the novena with my husband and daughter. It’s nice to be with other Filipinos.”

The Carinos moved from Cebu City in the Philippines to Terre Haute in 2003. Their 1-year-old daughter, Pia Elleana, enjoyed the celebration and was especially attracted to the brightly colored parol, or lantern, that is traditionally used during the novena to light the way for the Christ Child.

Above, 1-year-old Pia Elleana Carino celebrates her first Simbang Gabi with her father, Paulito Carino, and her mother, Ellynel Carino, not shown, during a reception on Dec. 19 at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute. They are St. Margaret Mary parishioners. Filipino foods were served during a dinner at the parish center after a Mass and carols celebrating the nine-day Advent novena that is a traditional part of Christmas preparations for Catholics in the Philippines. Pia enjoyed looking at a parol, or lantern, on the wall that is displayed by Filipino Catholics to light the way for the Christ Child.

Left, St. Patrick parishioner Idrean Lourdes Dalina of Terre Haute holds her handmade foil Nativity scene after the Simbang Gabi Mass and carols on Dec. 19 at St. Margaret Mary Church in Terre Haute.

As Granitz experienced, a majority of the work, such as home visits and phone calls, can be done on one’s own time, making it easier for busy people to get involved. The CASA program asks for a one-year commitment from its volunteers, but volunteers don’t handle more than two cases within a year.

“The children served get really attached to their volunteers, because they are a constant in their lives,” Granitz said. “We want that CASA volunteer to be that one person who always there.”

And while working with the children, the volunteers develop relationships among one another. “The volunteers are awesome. We develop really good friendships, and I just cherish them and treasure them,” Granitz said. “Due to the confidentiality, they can’t go home and talk about their cases. They have to deliberate and unmask on either me or to other volunteers, and as a result you really form some strong bonds.”

With the increase of cases assigned from judges, the CASA program needs more volunteers. But their need in help doesn’t stop them from helping God’s children, one case at a time.

“My personal philosophy is that every time we have the privilege of working with some of these troubled children, it’s a success story, because we’re there for them every time,” Granitz said.

Legacy for Our Mission: the archdiocesan ongoing capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and is dedicated to the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to organizations such as Court Appointed Special Advocates, part of Catholic Charities in New Albany.

** Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future **

Children have a voice in court through CASA

With the help of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), a vital youth-serving program of Catholic Charities New Albany, every child who has been abandoned, abused or neglected has a voice. The CASA volunteers have big hearts and a powerful, positive impact on the lives of children.

And that’s the whole idea of CASA, giving a voice in court to those who can’t speak for themselves.

Due to the 539 Indiana Senate Bill passed on July 1, it is now required for a judge to appoint a CASA volunteer in all Children In Need of Services (CHINS) cases, which can involve infants to 18-year-olds. Each year, $90,000 abused, neglected and abandoned children are involved in the U.S. court system.

“There’s no season or reason for child abuse. We need volunteers now more than ever in the history I’ve been with this program for 11 years,” said Kim Granitz, program director of CASA. “The senator bill has put a crunch on us, and we want to be able to serve all the children who need a voice.”

For each case assigned by a judge, one CASA volunteer works with the child, researches his or her background and writes a report in the child’s best interest that is presented to the judge.

“If we don’t have the volunteers, we can’t serve the children. You don’t have to have a Ph.D. or early childhood development training,” Granitz said. “You basically need to have a kind, caring and empathetic heart and be willing to devote some time.”

Training for volunteers includes 30 hours of pre-service training before being assigned to a case, as well as 12 annual in-service hours in order to inform volunteers about any changes in the law or child welfare trends. The training is held in group settings.

Granitz was in college when she first heard about the CASA program from a mentor she said “I knew right off the bat that it was something I wanted to do.” She said “I worked full time as a law firm during the day and was a full-time student at night, and then I found time to volunteer.”

(From left to right) Volunteer Annette Brager, CASA Program Director Kim Granitz, Advisory Board Member Nancy Roberts and Carla Deleon, director of Social Services, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, attended the Indiana CASA State Conference in October.

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later, he is formally installed during an inaugural Mass. Spanish government intro-
duces legislation to legalize gay marriage; Vatican official urges Spanish civil officials not to perform such marriages even if it means losing their jobs. Oregon’s bishops oppose same-sex civil unions as state Legislature considers giving them legal sta-
tus. The Parliamentary Assembly of the 46-
country Council of Europe rejects a resolu-
tion that would have approved Dutch-style assisted suicide.

May

Democrats for Life of America launches campaign for legislation aimed at reining U.S. abortions by 95 percent in coming decade. Vatican’s U.N. ambassador urges nations to re-examine morality of nuclear deterrence. Pope Benedict XVI, taking pos-
session of his Rome cathedral, says a pope is bound to teach Church doctrine, not his own ideas. U.S. bishops and other Catholic organizations launch Justice for Immigrants campaign. Pope names San Francisco Archbishop William J. Levada to head Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope waives five-year waiting period for sainthood Cause of Pope John Paul II. Federal judge in Nebraska strikes down state constitutional amendment, approved by voters the year before, defin-
ing marriage and prohibiting legal recogni-
tion of same-sex unions. Mother Marianne Cope, a Franciscan Sister of Syracuse, N.Y., and American missionary to the lep-
tus. The Parliamentary Assembly of the 46-
country Council of Europe rejects a resolu-
tion that would have approved Dutch-style assisted suicide.

June

The U.N. General Assembly is told that Church teaches run one-fourth of all AIDS care and prevention programs around the world. Diocese of Covington, Ky., agrees to set up $120 million fund to com-
pensate childhood victims of clergy sex abuse. Federal appeals court strikes down Virginia law banning parental- and-children ca-
ries. In referendum, Swiss voters uphold AIDS prevention is following Church

July

Vatican newspaper calls same-sex leg-
islative actions in Spain and Canada “violent attacks” on the natural family. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, often the court’s key swing vote, says she will retire when a successor is appointed. United Church of Christ becomes first U.S. Church to formally reject traditional definition of marriage when its general synod endorses support for gay marriages. Pope Benedict XVI urges Group of Eight summit meeting in Scotland to take “concrete measures” to

eradicate global poverty. Terrorist bomb-
ings attack London’s bus and subway sys-
tems. Pope appeals to terrorists to stop sowing hatred. Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn fuels fires of evolution-intelli-
gence design debate when he writes in The New York Times that science offers “over-
whelming evidence for design in biology.” Vatican agency says Church must play larger role in fight against trafficking of women and children for sex. Diocese of Tucson, Ariz., ends bankruptcy proceedings with agreement on $22.2 million trust fund for sex abuse victims. Vatican’s U.N. ambassador urges international coop-
eration to end scourge of illicit trade in weapons. G-8 summit affirms debt relief for poorest countries and pledges $50 bil-
ion package for poverty relief in Africa. Vatican’s Holy See Secre
tion to end armed campaign against the “basic meaning” of marriage. Pope urges parishies to welcome divorced Catholics who are civilly remarried, even though they cannot receive Communion. Irish Republican Army says it has formally ended its armed struggle against loyalists; pope welcomes the news.

August

Diocese of Oakland, Calif., reaches settlement in $56.4 million settlement of 56 lawsuits claiming clergy sexual abuse of minors. Kentucky bishops urge new commitment to poor in joint pastoral letter on economic justice. CRS begins emergency food distri-
bution in drought-stricken Niger. Brother Roger Schutz, a minister of the Swiss Reformed Church and a world-renowned ecumenist who founded the ecumenical monastic community of Taize, France, is fatally stabbed by a disturbed woman.
‘O Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the One whom the peoples await and their Savior. O come and save us, Lord, our God.’

Photo by Mary Ann Wyand of artwork in chapel at Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove.
Several feasts among this year’s 17 days of Christmas

By John F. Fink

Christians are familiar with the “12 days of Christmas,” which traditionally began on Dec. 25 and carried us liturgically through the feast of Epiphany, celebrated on Jan. 6. The liturgical calendar has changed, though, and the Christmas season continues until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, celebrated on Jan. 9. The feast of the Epiphany is now always celebrated in the United States on a Sunday and will be observed on Jan. 8. Those who celebrate the Church’s Christmas season should be aware that the feasts are a bit different this year because Christmas falls on a Sunday.

The Christmas season begins late in the afternoon of Dec. 24. There are four Christmas Masses, beginning with the Vigil Mass for the feast of the Nativity of the Lord. This is followed by Midnight Mass, Mass at dawn and Mass during the day of Christmas itself. Back in the days when there were many priests and each priest usually said only one Mass a day, priests made it a practice to say three Masses on Christmas. Today, of course, many priests say three or more Masses every weekend.

As usual, the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr, is celebrated on Dec. 26, and the feast of St. John the Evangelist is celebrated on Dec. 27. These have long been popular feasts during the Octave of Christmas.

Another Christmas feast is celebrated on Wednesday, Dec. 28—the Holy Innocents. They are the children who were killed by King Herod the Great’s soldiers after the Magi herd told Herod that they were searching for “the newborn king of the Jews.” The visit of the Magi to Bethlehem isn’t celebrated until the feast of Epiphany, but the Holy Innocents are remembered on Dec. 28.

Friday, Dec. 30, is observed this year as the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Last year, when Christmas was on a Saturday, this feast was celebrated the following day, on Sunday, Dec. 29. It was moved this year to the only day within the Octave of Christmas that did not already have a feast.

The great feast of Mary, Mother of God, is always celebrated on Jan. 1, the Octave Day of Christmas, so it falls on Sunday. Older Catholics will remember when this was the feast of the Circumcision of Jesus, and the Gospel reading for the feast includes his circumcision. This day is also a day of prayer for world peace.

North American Catholics should be aware that several of the feasts that fall during the first week of January, Jan. 4 is the feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She was a wife and mother of five children as well as the foundress of the parochial school system and the first religious order in the United States, the Daughters of Charity.

Her feast is followed on Jan. 5 by that of St. John Neumann, another American saint. He was the bishop of Philadelphia from 1852 until his sudden death in 1860. Jan. 6 is the feast of Blessed André Bessette, known as the “Miracle Man of Montreal,” who was responsible for the magnificent St. Joseph’s Oratory at the top of Mount Royal, overlooking Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Sunday, Jan. 8, will be the feast of Epiphany. As already noted, this observes the visit of the Magi to the Blessed Family, the first gentiles to honor Jesus after his birth. Since they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, it has been assumed that there were three Magi, and they have the traditional (but non-biblical) names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. In some places in the world, this feast is observed with more pomp than Christmas.

The Christmas season ends on Monday, Jan. 9, with the celebration of the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, when God the Father revealed the divinity of Jesus through his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. This year let us celebrate the 17 days of Christmas, from Dec. 24 to Jan. 9.

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

After Katrina, Christmas comes to the Gulf Coast

By Margo MacArthur

Catholic News Service

Most Americans sat before their televisions last August, transfixed by image upon image of Hurricane Katrina’s brutal attack on New Orleans. The storm also caused great destruction as it swept east along the Mississippi coast. A broad swath of waterfront towns—among them Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian and Long Beach—were virtually flattened by water and wind.

Some churches and schools that were centers for the faith but were erased from the Mississippi landscape. The people most in need of help often found themselves without the comfort of a church and school were relocated in a small place, but we will have just as much singing and celebrating as ever before, maybe more.”

There was a live Nativity scene outdoors on Dec. 17, he said, “and Santa will come to Long Beach as in years past.”

He thinks attendance at Christmas Masses will be considerably reduced this year because we are in a smaller place, but we will have just as much singing and celebrating as ever before, maybe more.”

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Many churches had been damaged and the church and school system and the first religious order in the United States, the Daughters of Charity.

Our Christmas celebration will be much simpler this year by necessity and by choice,” said Father Michael Tracey, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Bay St. Louis, a small city of 8,000 people. “It will be intended to remind us all that there is still hope.”

Many churches there were damaged so seriously that it is still unclear what the restoration process will involve and where the money for rebuilding will come from.

Our Lady of the Gulf Parish, which is waterfront, sits 24 feet above sea level. At 4:50 a.m. on Aug. 29, a 35-foot-high wave knocked down its huge doors, flooding the sanctuary, buckling the floor and sucking out the pews, which were discovered days later, broken and strewn over the landscape blocks away. The roof was severely damaged, and the church, several stained glass windows and the rectory were destroyed. Masses were held outdoors at first then moved into the partial shelter of the community hall. Father Tracey said: “While we are waiting to hear how much insurance will pay, we have begun a restoration of the roof at least, coordinated by Dan Wilkens, a volunteer from Atlanta who is a retired contractor. Every day, there’s a little bit of progress. That keeps you going.”

(Margo MacArthur is a free-lance writer in Andover, N.J.) ❧

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The Epiphany is depicted in a mural titled “Adoration of the Magi” in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception at Conception Abbey in Conception, Mo. Painted by Benedictine monks in the late 1800s, the artwork is the first appearance of the German Burenoise style in a U.S. church. Christians celebrate the Incarnation of the divine Word—the birth of Christ—on Dec. 25. The feast of the Epiphany is Jan. 8.
Readers share favorite Christmas memories

Wise men journey around house on way to Nativity
By Ray Lucas
Special to The Criterion

One of my favorite Christmas memories came earlier this year and was part of our family Advent preparations. After the lengthy task of selecting a live tree that met the approval of my 7-year-old daughter, Olivia, and my 5-year-old son, Eli, we began preparing our home for Christmas. We set up the tree, strung the lights and began hanging the ornaments. Many of our ornaments are handmade by my children, and they took great pride in pulling them out and admiring their work.

“I made this one when I was just a little kid, didn’t I, Daddy?” asked my suddenly quite mature son, proud of his own creativity. The other ornaments are from places we have visited or have a specific story about them. One of the ornaments and accompanying story enjoy most involves the skunk ornament.

“Tell us about this ornament,” Olivia demanded as she pulled the wooden skunk out of the box. “Tell us about the time that a family of skunks got under our house and lived there for a few weeks,” she said, telling most of the story already.

One by one, we hung the ornaments, recalling the history of each ornament. As we came to the bottom of our ornament box, the kids stood back and admired their work. I smiled and relented.

I had to retell the story to Olivia and Eli to explain why the wise men weren’t there yet and decided this would be a great opportunity to talk about the Catholic faith at home.

“OK, honey, we’ll leave baby Jesus there this year.” I smiled and relented.

Several weeks traveling around the room following the star. I had to retell the story to Olivia and Eli to explain why the wise men weren’t there yet and decided this would be a great opportunity to talk about the Catholic faith at home.

“Tell us about the time that a family of skunks got under our house and lived there for a few weeks,” she explained. “Without him, it would be just Mary and Joseph, and that doesn’t look right.”

One day, my 5-year-old son, Eli, was part of our family Advent preparations. After the lengthy task of selecting a live tree that met the approval of my 7-year-old daughter, Olivia, and my 5-year-old son, Eli, we began preparing our home for Christmas.

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“Tell us about the time that a family of skunks got under our house and lived there for a few weeks,” she said, telling most of the story already.

One by one, we hung the ornaments, recalling the history of each ornament. As we came to the bottom of our ornament box, the kids stood back and admired their ornaments, all hung with care.

I had to smile at the sight of the majority of the ornaments pulling down the bottom half of the tree, arranged only as high as Olivia and Eli could reach. I silently resolved to shift a few of them up higher later when they aren’t looking.

Afterward, we began putting out the remainder of our decorations with Olivia volunteering to set up the manger scene. Over the past few years, we have had a tradition—which came from a friend—that the wise men don’t start out in the manger. They spend the next several weeks traveling around the room following the star.

As Christmas was approaching, there was a lot of activity in our home. This was around September.

When all the dust settled, the shepherd and his gang were perched on the bookshelf awaiting their grand entrance. The Magi started on the coloring table and during the next few days had made it to the pink Barbie house, where they found shelter for the night.

As I recall this fresh memory of Christmas, I am reminded of all the teachable moments we have with our children. The manger scene has been transformed for our children from a static Christmas decoration to a dynamic experience of our family faith. This day of Christmas preparation has been transformed from one that I used to dread to a day pregnant with family memories and faith.

Finally, we finished arranging the suddenly sparse manger scene, and I reminded Olivia that technically even baby Jesus hasn’t arrived yet. I suggested that we take him from the manger until his birth on Christmas day.

Well, that was more than my 7-year-old daughter could bear. “Oh no, Daddy. Jesus needs to stay in the manger,” she explained. “Without him, it would be just Mary and Joseph, and that doesn’t look right.” I smiled and relented.

“Oh, honey, we’ll leave baby Jesus there this year.”

And I made a mental note of a teachable moment that I can re-visit with them next Advent.

(Ray Lucas is the director of Catholic Youth Ministries in the New Albany Deanery and is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Clark County.)
Mother's last Christmas was a lesson in the joy of giving
By Dana Van Deuren
Special to The Criterion

My mother loved Christmas—the sights, the sounds, all that it encompasses—and she was an expert at creating the perfect holiday with presents and food for family and friends. Of all the Christmases she created and we shared, my mind always drifts back to our last Christmas together. Incredibly, it was like all the other perfect holidays except for one detail. My mother was dying of breast cancer.

My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 36 when I was 9 years old, and yet—through the next six years that she battled this disease—she still managed to put together a flawless holiday. And she was always home to celebrate with us. She was given the chance to know Christmas every day that I was with her. My mom had carefully chosen and wrapped for me. She knew and practiced the importance of faith, and Christmas was a joyful celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. I was only 14 when I celebrated my last Christmas with my mom. We had the usual beautiful Christmas tree, a multitude of presents and holiday traditions. I don’t really remember what I received that year, but I do remember watching my mother’s face light up as she watched us unwrap our gifts. I remember there were more hugs than presents. I remember her eye on a particular National Football League logo coat. She had heard about the Christmas Store at her church. She also explained that the 11-year-old boy really needed a coat. I had noticed that his lightweight jacket wasn’t warm enough for this frigid weather.

I asked the mother to do her shopping, and the first items I was surprised by the number of people in the waiting room. My next family consisted of a mother and her two children. An older lady was with her and asked if she could talk to me. She explained that this young woman was her niece. The point is, that we need to bring God back to life in us, then keep Him alive, and therefore overflow Him onto others, like bursts of Life that revive the dead. - Chiara Lubich

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I have spent many Christmases now without my mother, but not one without her memory. I see her face in my little girls’ faces and her spirit in my son, and I thank God that I was given the chance to know Christmas every day that I spent with my mother.

(Dana Van Deuren is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.)

Boy’s example of service is a Christmas Store ‘miracle’
By Donna Novotney
Special to The Criterion

It was a busy day at the Terre Haute Deanery Christmas Store. The weather had turned so cold, and it had snowed during the night. We were surprised by the number of people in the waiting room.

Mr. Sullivan told him, “You sure can. Ask your mom, Mr. Sullivan told him, “You sure can. Ask your mom, ‘Who is that kid with that NFL jacket that’s been carrying the bags?’”

“Hello,” I said, “I really don’t know, but I do know that he is a special boy, and he is going to grow up to be a fine man. In fact, I bet he grows up and helps us at the Christmas Store.”

And he did!

(Donna Novotney is a member of Holy Rosary Parish in Shoeville. She volunteers at the Terre Haute Catholic Charities Christmas Store.)

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My next family consisted of a mother and her two children. An older lady was with her and asked if she could talk to me. She explained that this young woman was her niece. Her husband had been sick, and they had moved here from another city to live with her.

She had heard about the Christmas Store at her church. She also explained that the 11-year-old boy really needed a coat. I had noticed that his lightweight jacket wasn’t warm enough for this frigid weather.

I asked the mother to do her shopping, and the first items she saw were boys’ coats. I went out and told him that we wanted him to try on a coat. He politely informed me that he really didn’t need a coat, he wasn’t poor and he thought that there were poor kids that were really in need of coats.

The mother went ahead with her shopping, still keeping her eye on a particular National Football League logo coat that she knew was his favorite football team.

Just as she was getting ready to leave, the man at the checkout who helps with the clients’ bags asked the boy if he would help carry some bags to a lady’s car.

The boy jumped up and, as he passed by the coat rack, he really didn’t need a coat, he wasn’t poor and he thought that there were poor kids that were really in need of coats.

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The boy jumped up and, as he passed by the coat rack, she said, “Wait a minute. Try this coat on.”

When he saw the coat, he said, “OK.”

It was a perfect fit. He shoved his hands into the pockets and came up with a matching NFL stocking cap and gloves.

This was the first smile that I had seen from him.

“He is a special boy, and he is going to grow up to be a fine man. In fact, I bet he grows up and helps us at the Christmas Store.”

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The mother went ahead with her shopping, still keeping her eye on a particular National Football League logo coat that she knew was his favorite football team.

Just as she was getting ready to leave, the man at the checkout who helps with the clients’ bags asked the boy if he would help carry some bags to a lady’s car.

The boy jumped up and, as he passed by the coat rack, she said, “Wait a minute. Try this coat on.”

When he saw the coat, he said, “OK.”

It was a perfect fit. He shove...
Christmas means finding hay for the Nativity crib

By Helen Stephon
Special to The Criterion

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year—a time for remembering and a time for making new memories. As a child, I remember the excitement of putting up the Nativity crib every year. It was a Christmas gift from Grandma and Grandpa Cahill.

One year, when my brother, Ed, was old enough, he thought it had to have some straw so he went to Ted’s Feed Store and bought a whole bale of straw. It cost $1. We had enough straw for all the cribs in the whole town of Beech Grove.

Ed said, “That’s the only way they sold it.” During the Christmas season, we would visit Santa on Main Street in Beech Grove then shop at the Ben Franklin Dime Store. My family would always purchase a real tree from the Beech Grove Jaycees for $5.

We would attach our biggest cotton socks to our beds with safety pins on the night of Dec. 5, the eve of St. Nicholas’ feast day. He brought us tangerines, nuts and small pieces of hard candy.

My father only shopped for my mother’s gift, and he never started until Christmas Eve. As the oldest daughter, I got the hard candy.

I liked Ruby immediately. After talking to her for some time, I invited her to move into my residence to spend Christmas with fellow Americans. She was delighted.

A dear friend, Fatma, a Muslim from Zarzbar, was also coming to spend Christmas with me. In the days before Christmas, the three of us were kept busy with holiday festivities, including a huge Christmas party that I hosted for friends. We laughed a lot and had a wonderful time together.

On Christmas Day, I went to Mass after leaving tiny presents for Ruby and Fatma. That afternoon, we had a traditional American Christmas dinner at the home of another American diplomat. We held hands and prayed together.

Our holidays were steeped in traditions from Poland brought to America by my grandma and grandpa. Mom made sure that we kept the family traditions going each year.

Then mom died. A year later, dad remarried. My two younger siblings moved several states away to live with dad. Since his new wife still had her two youngest children at home, there was no room to stay there and I had no choice but to remain in Indianapolis for Christmas.

The holidays are tough when you have no family in town. Everyone around you is talking about getting together with their families while you know that you will be alone. I was in that predicament for a few years.

I was a member of an adult singles group at the time, and one member showed me what it truly means to be a Christian. Every Christmas Day, he would drive to my apartment and spend a few hours with me. He said people shouldn’t be alone on the holidays, and he was right.

One year, he came by a day earlier with two bags of groceries. Due to a recent move, he knew my finances were tight. He had another friend with him so they didn’t stay long. As he left, he said, “I’ll see you tomorrow.” He showed me what the “spirit of Christmas” is truly all about with his friendship.

Last year, I sent him a thank you note—long overdue—for the kindness that he showed me during the Christmas season. It is really hard without your family during the holidays, but my friend made my Christmas a little easier for me when I was all alone.

There is a Polish custom that involves leaving a chair vacant at the table on Christmas Eve for a guest who might come to dinner. My friend was mine.

(Barb Roettger is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.)

Christmas in Tanzania is an interfaith celebration

By Charlene Duline
Special to The Criterion

Many years ago, I had a most wonderful, unexpected Christmas in Tanzania. I was the cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam.

A few days before Christmas, an older American woman came into my office seeking information for her research. I learned that she was a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, and that she was staying at the local YWCA—a most dreary place.

That was one of the most unexpected Christmases I have ever had. Who knew that my little fold would include a Muslim, a Catholic and whatever faith Ruby professed?

Our hearts were open to receiving and giving and welcoming each of us felt especially blessed. What a memorable Christmas.

(Charlene Duline is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.)
Latin, English Masses welcome Emmanuel
By Joann Day
Special to The Criterion

I walked into the warm, dimly lit church. There was a holy silence as people began to fill the pews. The penitentiary and greenery sparkled with resurrection. The choir began to sing the familiar carols as more worshippers slipped unnoticed into the pews.

At 11:55 p.m., the lights were extinguished except for the flickering candles and the illuminated Christmas manger. The priest and servers entered the sanctuary and everyone knelt in the pews. The beautiful strains of “Silent Night” filled the church as the music flowed over and through the people.

Christmas Mass had begun in the old Church at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. The priest’s back was to the people. Everything during the Mass was said or sung in Latin. There was somewhat of a dialogue between the priest and the choir or servers. The people in the pews were observers and listeners. There was no interaction between them. Some people followed along by reading the Missal, while other people fingered rosary beads.

The reception of Communion was very devout as all the people knelted at the Communion rail. The priest placed the host on the tongue of the recipient. The people were not offered the Blood of Christ. As people returned to their seats, they knelt and spent time in deep prayer. After the Last Gospel, the Mass ended. The choir sang a jubilant song as the parishioners filed out of the church in total silence.

As a college student some years later, I belonged to the Classics Club. We planned to go caroling just before school let out for the holiday, singing time-honored Christmas songs, such as “Adeste Fidelis.”

The night set for the caroling was bitterly cold. It was snowing and the wind was blowing a gale. I had somehow forgotten a scarf and my ears were freezing. It is doubtful if any of the residents inside their warm living rooms could hear our gallant attempt at singing, but we tried. I have seldom felt such relief from snow and wind, or felt more grateful, than when we were invited in by Professor and Mrs. Conklin and given mugs of hot chocolate. We needed it.

Another time I went caroling was very different. This outing was in the 1960’s during the week before the public schools closed for Christmas.

I was teaching at Wood High School in Indianapolis. It was a joy for pupils and teachers to hear the beautiful carols sounding softly outside their classrooms as small groups of music students walked the halls singing as they went along the corridors.

One of our teachers was at home recovering from an illness. Believing that he was missing us, I wrote a get-well letter about activities at Wood and sent it to him. The in-house caroling was the outstanding pleasure I was sorry that he had to miss at school.

In spirit, the one who listens to Christmas carols bridges the years, helps Joseph prepare a place in the inn, Mary to rest, and kneels in love and wonder beside the holy babe of Bethlehem.

—Anna-Margaret O’Sullivan ∈ a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin.

Christmas in 1946 was fun with siblings

My most memorable Christmas was 1946. My brother could not have children so she and her husband decided to adopt a child and began the application process, which was long and arduous. After three years of waiting, they were notified that they had been approved to adopt a 6-month-old girl and 2-year-old boy. Their mother is a single mom and requested that her children stay together.

My mother made preparations to go to Guatemala and meet their new family. How fitting that this was December 25th. We celebrated the Holy Family.

These two little precious blessings are such a gift to all of us. When they arrived at the airport in Louisville, I think the light of joy and love in all our eyes and hearts lit up not only like a splendid sled, but also the road all the way home to Indiana.

The joy that we felt continues as we watch the children grow older. What a wonderful memorable Christmas!

—Jean Allen ∈ a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.
Singing brought healing for vocalist on Christmas Eve

By Mary Jean Wethington
Special to The Criterion

It had been three decades since I had lifted up to God the offering of my voice to the newborn Child in a choir for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. 1994 was the year of healing for me through the medium of music.

At the time, I belonged to the parish community of St. Peter in Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati. The music director asked for volunteers to sing with the cathedral choir at Christmas. Most of the choir members were from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. The audition went well, but never in my wildest imagination did I envision what all it would take for the offering of my song as a gift on Christmas Eve. The music director was a perfectionist who had chosen some of the most difficult yet most beautiful classical hymns ever written.

That year, Christmas Eve was a chilly, snowy night. When the 14-member choir gathered for the 45-minute concert before the Eucharistic liturgy, we found out that the lead soprano was sick. I was asked to take her place. Perhaps because it was Christmas, perhaps because it was time to heal, as the choir began our Christmas gift to the cathedral community, the music moved from being song to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening to being absolute prayer. As lead soprano, my heart and voice could—and had to—soar with the music. Likening

Mom finds Christmas spirit in her children’s happiness

By Lisa Marie Taylor
Special to The Criterion

It was four days before Christmas 2004. It had been a rough year, and a rough week. The flu had slowed me down.

As I drove, I thought about our small Christmas. Would the children notice? Would they be happy with the wonder of Christmas and understand the reasons we celebrate? Did I? I had checked the balance in our checking account before I left home. I still hadn’t bought a gift for John.

With just a little money to last until payday, I reminded myself that we never really spent a lot on presents for each other—just a couple things that we needed and a few surprises. We had learned during the past year that there are needs and there are immediate needs. Food and house bills came first, and all else could wait.

As I arrived at the dollar store and stepped out of the car, I heard a loud voice. “Get out of the way!” And another even louder voice, “No, you get out of the way!” There was a war in the parking lot. I walked inside the store feeling even worse. No Christmas spirit here.

Inside the store, I saw the bag of play animals—pottery incentives for our 3-year-old—and a winter hat and scarf marked 50 percent off. That’s it—a new hat and scarf for John. As I reached the cash register, I helped an elderly lady lift her laundry detergent. She replied, “God bless you!”

“I said ‘thank you’ without looking in her eyes. I was too sad inside. However, the cashier was cheerful. I asked about the discount. She said that it would be printed on my receipt. She told me that many people get angry with her.

“It is Christmas,” she said. “Everyone should be happy.” I hope this girl never experiences a hard Christmas. Yes, it’s Christmas, and everyone should be happy. Unfortunately, this is a difficult time of year. Emotions run high. Some people are grieving Christmas past. Some are missing loved ones gone to heaven or gone to war. Some are unemployed. Some have little to give. Some will receive little. Some are too busy creating the perfect Christmas that they make everyone around them feel stressed out. Some are missing the point. Some are questioning the point. Are we seeking the Holy One? Are you aware of the Holy One? And some have found him.

As I entered the garage of our home, I heard laughter and the cords to “Silent Night.” My 10-year-old daughter, Josie, was teaching herself to play the organ. My 7-year-old son, Joey, and his dad were playing cards. Four-year-old Maria and 3-year-old Mackenna were climbing all over their dad. It was a normal scene in our home. It was warm and cozy. I was still feeling sad as I turned on “Oprah” to catch the last few minutes of her show, only to hear Josh Groban’s “Believe.”

Maria and Mackenna came running into the room because they recognized the song from the Movie "The Polar Express." As we listened and I watched their sweet faces sing that song, I realized that I went looking for the Christmas spirit, but it was here in my home all the time. As tears fell down my face, I thanked God that I am truly blessed with knowing the true meaning of this season and the spirit of love that is alive in each one of us. I thought about the words to Groban’s song: “When it seems the magic slipped away, We find it all again on Christmas day… Believing what you feel inside, Give your dreams the wings to fly. Have you everything you need, if you just believe… .”

It was late in the evening on Christmas Day last year when my son came to me with a hug, explaining that this was the best Christmas ever. I will never forget that meager offering of my voice to the newborn Christ Child because it was through that experience that I found the true reason we celebrate. I found what I was looking for alive in the spirit of my children’s wonder and excitement. I found the Christ child. This Christmas—with renewed faith—we await the birth of our fifth blessing and know that in this miracle we will find God’s loving grace.

(Lisa Marie Taylor is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.)

Mother’s funeral was blessed event for family

By Catherine Cooper
Special to The Criterion

It was Christmas Eve in 1977. Our mother, Mary E. Dever, had died peacefully in her sleep on Dec. 22. Her son, Holy Cross Brother Keric Dever, was visiting for the first time at Christmas in more than 30 years. Her son, Bernard Dever, was the principal of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. He brought the choir along with beautiful music.

St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis was filled with bright poinsettias and greenery. Many family members and friends were there for my mother’s Mass of Christian Burial. Msgr. Francis Reine offered a eulogy of happiness and cheer. It was a very blessed day.

(Catherine Cooper is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.)

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We honor Jesus as the great bringer and creator of true peace

By Fr. Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M.

Among the titles we give to the one whose birth we celebrate at Christmas is Prince of Peace. We honor Jesus as the great bringer and creator of true peace.

Yet, in a world wracked and ruined by war, what does it mean to call Christ our peace?

Is peace possible? Should Christians see themselves as peacemakers and, if so, do we expect to abolish war? When thinking about peace, we need to distinguish between the different legitimate meanings of peace.

- There is the peace that the Jewish people longed for—the era when wolf and lamb will lie down together (Is 11:6-7). This is the fullness of life that comes at the end of time when all creation will be taken up into the reign of God. It entails not just peace, but also prosperity, forgiveness, justice, joy and love. The resurrection of Jesus is the pledge that this age will come.
- There is also the peace that resides within a person. This interior sense of serenity accompanies knowing by faith that one is forgiven graciously and loved generously by God. This peace can remain in our hearts even though the external circumstances of our lives are disconcerting and dangerous.

The source of this peace is the awareness that we live, move and have our very existence in Christ, who draws ever nearer to us. It is a peace rooted in our faith that Christ lives in our midst. It is the peace that the Holy Spirit brought to the early disciples as they came to understand and confess that Jesus is Lord.

- Besides the expressions of peace that stem from Christian hope and Christian faith, there also is the peace that flows from Christian love. This peace comes to be through daily efforts at building a world where neighbors resolve conflicts without turning to violence.

In a world as diverse and divided as ours, it is to be expected that conflict will be present. The challenge of neighbor-love is to find nonviolent ways to resolve the inevitable conflicts that arise. This peace relies on growth in the conviction of disciples that love can transform relationships between individuals, groups and even whole societies.

Peace in this sense results from a way of living inspired by the ministry of Jesus. He taught that love is the great commandment and that our neighbor is not merely the person who is geographically nearby. As the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6), Jesus Christ plays a role in helping to bring about all three expressions of peace.

As followers of Jesus, we also play a role in peacemaking. The nature of our role changes with the different forms of peace, but we cannot sit back and expect that God will do whatever we refuse to do.

If God has given us the freedom to act and the responsibility to use that freedom properly then we must discern what is expected of us and join in the work of making peace in our world through love of neighbor.

There is a risk when thinking of peace in the political realm that we will fall prey to one of two errors.

- The first error is to think that the peace that flows from neighbor-love is like the peace of our hoped for resurrection, namely, something that awaits us in an undetermined future.
- The second error is to settle for a false peace. This mistake confuses the absence of overt violence with peace.

However, peace in the Christian understanding is not simply the absence of war, but the establishment of a social order in which neighbors are treated with respect, justice and love. Political arrangements that oppress or threaten others may deter violent behavior, but they ought not be confused with true peace.

The follower of Christ understands that a peace worthy of the name is built not on fear or domination, but on neighbor-love. This is the earthly goal worthy of the followers of Christ.

What we need this Christmas season and throughout the year are patient and lower of Christ.

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“Whoever claims to love God yet hates his brother is a liar. For whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the command we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 John 4:20-21)

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What we need this Christmas season and throughout the year are patient and lower of Christ.

Working for peace and justice in the world should be a priority

By David Gibson

Everywhere you go at Christmastime, you hear the word “peace.”

The assumption is that this season has a lot to do with peace.

This focus makes sense. After all, Jesus’ birth is accompanied in the Gospel by a proclamation of peace.

Then again, doesn’t every season have a lot to do with peace from the Church’s perspective?

Peace is always on the Church’s mind, and working for peace and justice should be a priority for Catholics and other Christians.

It is noteworthy that the fall 2005 world Synod of Bishops, which met in Rome to discuss the Eucharist in all its dimensions, issued a concluding message titled “The Eucharist: Living Bread for the Peace of the World.”

Apparentilly, the synod envisioned a direct link between the Eucharist—the central action of Church life—and the world’s need for peace and justice.

“The martyrs have always found the strength to overcome hatred by love and violence by pardon, thanks to the holy Eucharist,” the synod said.

A set of synod recommendations for the pope included one saying that “those who share in the Eucharist must commit themselves to creating peace in our world, which is marked by violence, war and, especially today, by terrorism, economic corruption and sexual exploitation.”

The synod recommendations also emphasized that peace requires “the restoration of justice, reconciliation and forgiveness.”

It’s Christmas and, as always, it’s the season for peace.

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!)

Discussion Point

To achieve peace, put God first

This Week’s Question

What is your “take” on world peace? Is it possible?

“I think it’s possible. If we clear our agendas and put God first, we’d have peace in our world. I’m a big advocate of putting our day-planners away and focusing on the Lord again.” (Cindy Anderson, Boise, Idaho)

“It’s never been tried. It’s possible, but we’ve never followed Christ’s example on peace. Gandhi came closest. If we followed Christ’s example, it would be possible. Actually, peace is harder than war.” (Anne Burkard, St. Louis Falls, S.D.)

“Oh, of course, world peace is something we should all hope for. Whether it’s possible, I don’t know. But we should start at home first before internationally because we don’t even have peace here.” (Shelly Barrett, Colchester, Vt.)

“I sure hope it’s possible. What is there to gain other- wise? Misinformation causes us more problems than anything. If truth were preserved, we wouldn’t have the problems we have today.” (Levi Esquibel, Albuquerque, N.M.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: As an ecclesial lay minister, what do you do? How did you prepare for this role?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to CGreen@catholicknews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. © 2005 by Catholic News Service.
perspectives

Jesus in the Gospel: He predicts endings


Let’s face it: If you’ve read those chapters referenced above, you know that the author of Matthew, Mark and Luke is talking about the end of the temple and of Jerusalem and when it will come, and you are talking about the end of the world and the final coming of the Son of Man.

Ever since the time of Jesus on earth, people have talked about when the end will be when the end of the world is coming from hints in Matthew’s Gospel. We shouldn’t do that. What we should do is learn from what Jesus said: “Of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.” We must be prepared always to be ready for the end of the world at least for the end of our lives.

At the beginning of Jesus’ discourse, there is no doubt that he is talking about the destruction of the temple. The disciples remarked about the magnificence of the temple which, at that time, had been under construction for 48 years and wouldn’t be completed for another 24 years. The enormous stones that held that the Temple Mount today give testimony to how majestic it was. Yet it was all destroyed in a year, seven years after its completion.

The early Christians in Jerusalem were told by Jesus of his predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem. According to Eusebius and Epiphanius, two ancient sources, Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed 2,000 years ago and understood intuitively by everyone since, from the shepherds in Bethel to the Magi to the saints and on down to us.

This wonderful mystery is wrapped in the kernel of knowledge that in God we human creatures can relate to. There’s the good dad, the loving mom and the sweet new baby, nestled with kindly shepherds and animals in a hay-strewn stable on a cold winter night. They’re all reminders of our natural existence, not intimidating in spiritual grandeur.

Still, the baby’s divinity fills us with awe in the knowledge that in God’s time, Jesus has given us an example to follow and an inspiration that transcends time and place. Christ was sent to show us the way and to give us courage for the journey.

We enjoy seeing the boy Jesus grow up as we and our children do. He does his dad in his shop, obeys his mom’s requests and listens to his parents’ instructions. He’s a good boy.

But, when Jesus remains behind after his parents take him to the temple, we’re shown that his presence is not for ourselves, but for fulfilling his duty to God the Father. So the theme of divinity is woven into the story of Jesus’ birth. We gain the divine revelation that the just God of the Old Covenant of Moses and the prophets is also the merciful God of the New Covenant brought by Christ.

It seems that much of what Jesus taught is contrary to human nature. He didn’t always follow the rules if they interfered with loving. He associated with public sinners because they sought healing and redemption, and he condemned the Pharisees who thought themselves morally superior to ordinary people. He denounced human greed, meanness and despair.

Most importantly, Jesus came to teach us that God loves each one of us personally and wants each of us to live with God forever. That includes Christians of all kinds, non-Christians and, in fact, every one who does not reject God’s love outright.

Merry Christmas to all! (Cynthia Dews, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Family life was redeemed at Christ’s birth

In a Christmas homily delivered some 1,500 years ago, Pope Leo I, reflecting on the magn-itude for humanity of God becoming human on earth, exhorted his listeners, “Christians, do not forget to remember your dignity.” Indeed, the Incarnation is the hinge of history. From the time of the first parents’ fall onward, humanity was lost out of heaven, our ultimate homeland, the highest goal of all our striving.

God’s Redeemer appeared on the earth. By becoming one with us, he returned to us our dignity, renewing in our souls the divine image in which we are all created. Now to who we believe, this truth may seem so commonplace that it might be hard for us to find the motivation truly to celebrate it with joy. Maybe the reason why so many of us (myself included) have in the past focused so much on material things at Christmas may be that we are not giving serious conver- sation and wondrous gifts before us, it can be easy to forget that all of this finds its ultimate meaning in Christ's birth to us all through all of us by Christ when he was born. But there are other things that take cen-tre stage at Christmas. For example, we easily turn our hearts and minds to what is truly important in the least.

The redemption of all humanity came through a family. And surely just as Jesus became God through the Immaculate Conception, the Son of God taking flesh in the womb of Mary, so too the Incarnation, he also renewed the life of the family for all time to come when he wept in Gethsemane and grew up under the direction of his parents.

Perhaps this is a reason for the Church’s tremendous enthusiasm on the Sunday following Christmas.

In his homily from so long ago, St. Leo the Great declared that this day was “Holy Family day; let us remember your dignity.”

At the same time, we can’t ignore that while redemption came with Jesus’ birth, the effects of original sin remain.

We can’t ignore this because often stems us in the face most starkly in the lives of families marred by conflict, selfishness, abuse and division.

This fact need not lead us to despair, however. Flex without the redemption that came to all humanity and all families in Jesus’ birth also came the divine grace that negates our sins,逾越了我们，使我们能够繁荣。This victory will happen slowly. There will be setbacks. And we will only come completely triumphant when we are brought to the fullness of heaven.

But even in the midst of the small and large crosses of family life, we should joy this Christmas in knowing that, by grace, we are able to move step by step closer to the great and wonderful goal we are restored to us by Jesus when he was born into a family. So at Christmas this year, pray for your own family, that the grace opened to us in Christ’s birth may bless us more and more in the year to come. Pray, too, for all other families this Christmas, that they may be blessed as well. 1

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Angels in our lives: a Christmas tribute

What does it mean to be “saved?” Are our evangelical friends right to believe that only those in that happy condition somehow spiritually spiritually saved? Is that our family of angels? Are we chapped liver compared to that religious bunch?

Personally, I believe it would be better if we claimed salvation for those who are dead and gone to God’s judgment. Fundamentally, that was the object of earthly life, to keep striving to earn salvation in our humanity flawed way.

Those who say ‘we’re saved’ do so because they believe in Jesus Christ as their personal savior. They believe that faith alone is the essential requirement for salvation, and they have faith in Jesus Christ as their personal savior. They believe that if they accept Jesus Christ as God, they will enjoy it forever. That’s the object of earthly life, to keep striving to earn salvation in our humanity flawed way.

Merry Christmas to all! (Cynthia Dews, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 25, 2005

- Isaiah 52:7-10
- Hebrews 1:1-6
- John 1:18

The liturgy includes several Masses for Christmas. These readings are those assigned for Mass during the day. The third section of Isaiah is the first lesson.

To understand the reading, it helps to be aware of the historical context surrounding the composition of this part of Isaiah.

God’s Chosen People had experienced many difficulties in the past century or so. First, their land—which was regarded by the devout as sacred itself because God had given it—had been conquered by invading pagans and therefore defiled. Not only was the very land defiled, but also the social structure was destroyed. Untold numbers of people were killed. Many people who survived this conquest were taken to Babylon, the capital of their Babylonian Empire. There, they languished for four generations, far from their homeland and compelled to live in an atmosphere greatly unfriendly to their religion and to all that they had known. At long last, this enforced exile ended. However, their return to the Holy Land was a hollow achievement. The land there was poor and unproductive. Misery reigned among the people.

For much of this time, this misery had been defined in terms of personal want and abuse. Certainly, deprivation and despair produced by sin, and abuse. Certainly, deprivation and despair produced by sin, and abuse. Certainly, deprivation and despair produced by sin, and abuse.

Thus, Third-Isaiah sees the answer to this question in the restoration of the land. This response to her criticism.

Let us listen to the longings of our hearts, to the longings of the Church, to the longings of all people of good will, to the longing of the Spirit within us. With Mary, the Expectant Virgin, ... the 6th, 8-17ab. Let us come to the table of Jesus, as Son of God, the true and full reflection of the Father.

In the third reading, the Church presents the first 18 verses of the Gospel of John.

Each of the four Gospels has its own literary majesty and inspired insight into the reality of God.

While each of the Gospels, therefore, is splendid in its own literary construction, none outdoes John for depth or eloquence. Few passages, if any, in the long Gospel of John outdo the glory of the first 18 verses.

These verses, read today, are magnificent because of the soaring and profound sense they convey in relating the person and mission of Jesus. He is God’s wondrous gift to humankind, given in God’s eternal and unending love.

In all, existence has meaning. In Jesus alone, all existence has order, purpose and a future. He is the glory of God, living for and among humans. He is the light of the world. He is eternal. He is life.

Reflection

By the time the Mass during the day is celebrated, dawn has come. Daylight is evident, even if shaded in some places by the gray clouds of winter. The Church has already celebrated the marvel of Christ’s birth during Mass at midnight and Mass at dawn.

The readings of this Christmas Mass during the day occur almost as if the Church has pondered what it has celebrated at midnight and at dawn. What is the true meaning of the event of Christ’s birth? Why did the angels sing? The true meaning is that despite the deprivation and despair produced by sin, as Third-Isaiah realized, there is hope. Hope and peace are in Jesus, the Son of God, and the very glory of the Father. Jesus is not distant or inaccessible. He is near. He is of us, being the son of Mary. He is God’s gift, the bearer of all life and goodness. He has been born for and among us.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 26

Stephen, first martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6, 8abc-17
Matthew 10:17-22

Tuesday, Dec. 27

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

Wednesday, Dec. 28

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

Thursday, Dec. 29

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

Friday, Dec. 30

The Holy Family
Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14
Psalm 128:1-5

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

No one can adopt every morally important cause

Q I have always been much committed to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and to the causes of peace and justice. I’ve tried to live these out as I raised my children.

Recently, I was confronted by an acquaintance who has been much engaged with several projects in our community. She did her best, it seemed to me, to lay on heavy guilt trips for me because I am not at the point where she is in her convictions or in her “activist” lifestyle.

I do pretty well, I think, but I don’t understand her attitude or her anger. I’m not “in the trenches” with her. Is her problem or mine? (Indiana)

A I’m not sure it can come down to assigning blame, but it does raise the perennial concern about “causes vs. people.”

Some of the following comments may help to sort out her feelings and your reaction to her criticism.

It is possible, and by no means uncommon, that individuals become so dedicated to a perfectly good concern that they lose sight of the people they are dealing with. In their unrelenting zeal for the “cause,” they end up leaving a trail of good people who have hurt in the process.

It is a psychological as well as a spiritual reality that people cannot, without grievous injustice, be forced into a position they have not had the time or freedom to make their own.

Not everyone can dedicate their life to a particular cause, and no one can make every morally important cause a personal one. We just don’t have the human capacity to do that and remain mentally balanced.

No one has, in other words, a right to say to another: “Unless you are totally committed to your cause, we simply cannot accept your position unreservedly, you uncommitted idler.” Among other problems with this attitude is that it is a classical position of weakness. If we feel that, if unconverted persons were given time to think over and reason through the issue, they might change their minds.

A certain amount of passion is essential for any effort that is prestigious to humanity at all. But passion will burn itself out unless something else is present. We must be able to do more than just light a fire if we hope to change people’s thinking and sympathies.

These principles apply to countless areas of human relationships. The late Cardinal John O’Connor of New York, however, once said that in pursuit of holy causes we can never let our zeal turn into animosity toward anyone.

The cardinal was simply giving his plainspoken spin to the often-quoted words of St. Francis de Sales in his Introduction to the Devout Life. In any Christian effort to win people to our ways of thinking, the saint wrote, we will always catch more bees with honey than with vinegar. But agree to that policy may not make much noise or set off a lot of fireworks, but we’ve had ample enough evidence to learn that this is the only thing that really works in the long run.

(Catholic Q & A: Answers to the Most Common Questions About Catholicism, a 530-page collection of columns by Father John L. Dietzen, is published by Crossroad Publishing Company in New York. It is available through bookstores and costs $17.95. A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father Dietzen in care of Box 3256, Peoria, IL 61651. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jdietzen@aol.com.)
Pope Benedict visits Germany for World Youth Day, calls participation by an esti- mated 500,000 youths a sign of the Church’s vitality. Meeting with German Jews, he calls the Nazi genocidal cam- paign against Jews Germany’s “darkest period.” Meeting with Islamic leaders, he urges them to help turn back “wave of cruel fanaticism” in world. Federal bank- ruptcy judge rules Spokane Diocese is owner of parish properties, making them part of assets to be used in settling clergy sex abuse claims. U.S. Food and Drug Administration rules morning-after pill will remain available only by prescription. Hurricane Katrina causes extensive dam- age to coastal Louisiana and Mississippi; waters from hurricane-breached levees flooded nearly all of New Orleans, making it the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. New Orleans Archdiocese forms satellite office in Baton Rouge to regroup and pre- pare for rebuilding its parishes, schools, service centers and essential human net- works.

September
William Rehnquist, chief justice of the United States, dies; President George W. Bush says Judge John Roberts, already nominated for Supreme Court associate justice, is now his nominee for chief jus- tice. Catholic parishes and schools across country welcome students and families displaced by Hurricane Katrina; relief donations through Catholic Charities USA soon exceed $100 million. Spokane Diocese appeals bankruptcy judge’s ruling on ownership of parish properties. Some 90,000 Brazilians gathering at Catholic shrine in Aparecida to demonstrate for land reform and sign document by nation’s bishops calling for reform; similar protests are held simultaneously in other major cities. Pope urges U.N. World Summit to stick to Millennium Development Goals of 2000, requiring major aid increases from rich nations for development of poorer regions of world. Grand jury report sharply criticizes the way the Philadelphia Archdiocese handled clergy sexual abuse of minors for many decades. Hurricane Rita brings heavy flooding to Gulf Coast regions of Texas and Louisiana. Vatican’s U.N. ambassador criticizes U.N. World Summit for sidestepping nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Washington protest march against Iraq war draws 100,000. Canadian bishops’ task force urges that any priest who molests a child be barred from ministry for life. Growing rumors of a pending complete Vatican ban on homosexuals as candi- dates for priesthood raises concern in many quarters, including U.S. religious superiors. Chinese government denies passports to four Chinese bishops invited to attend October Synod of Bishops in Rome.

October
New Orleans Archdiocese gives prelim- inary estimate of at least $70 million in uninsured flood damage to Church proper- ties, projects negative cash flow of $40 million by end of year. World Synod of Bishops, on theme Eucharist, opens in Rome. Vatican’s U.N. ambassador says world’s nations “have a duty” to work for disarmament. Supreme Court hears argu- ments on legality of physician-assisted suicide. Bishops’ synod discusses many issues related to Eucharist, among them central role of Mass in Catholic life, Christ’s real presence in Eucharist, incul- turality of liturgy, priest shortage and pos- sible relaxation of celibacy requirement, relation of worship to work for justice and peace, parish approach to divorced Catholics who remarry outside Church. Heavy rains and floods from Hurricane Stan cause hundreds of deaths in Mexico and Central America. Massive earthquake kills more than 80,000 people in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and leaves 3 million homeless. British Catholic and Anglican leaders decry pro- posed legislation to allow physician-assisted suicide. Spokane Diocese offers bankruptcy court a reorganization plan that would separate diocese, corporations, and parishes of Church in diocese. Closing of synod marks end of Year of the Eucharist. Final synod message urges Catholics, approved in mid- October, does not provide religious free- dom. The Ferns Report, a detailed inves- tigative report on clergy sexual abuse of minors in the Diocese of Ferns, Ireland, leaves 3 million homeless. British Catholic and Anglican leaders decry pro- posed legislation to allow physician-assisted suicide. Pope urges U.N. World Summit to sidestepping nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Washington protest march against Iraq war draws 100,000. Canadian bishops’ task force urges that any priest who molests a child should be barred from ministry for life. Growing rumors of a pending complete Vatican ban on homosexuals as candi- dates for priesthood raises concern in many quarters, including U.S. religious superiors. Chinese government denies passports to four Chinese bishops invited to attend October Synod of Bishops in Rome.

November
Pope Benedict XVI says strong moral foundation is needed for democracy to work. Pope says papacy of world is an “intelligent project” of divine origin and those who think it is without direction or order “scolded by atheists.” To protest bombings in three Jordanian hotels kill more than 50 people, injure hundreds. Spokes- men for English and Welsh bishops con- demn bill introduced into House of Lords that would legalize physician-assisted suicide. At fall meeting in Washington, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approves a new “Lenten Days of Masse.” With Children,” a statement urging an end to the use of the death penalty and guide- lines on lay ecclesiastic ministry. Participants at a Pontifical Academy of Sciences meet- ing on “Water and the Environment” worry that lack of access to water could lead to wars in coming decades. Italian Jesuit magazine La Civiltà Cattolica says the Bible and evolutionary science are compatible when properly understood. In address to conference on human genome, Pope Benedict says human dignity comes from God and transcends any genetic dif- ferences or defects. Cardinal Walter Kasper, chief Vatican ecumenist, tells World Council of Churches leaders that differences in moral teaching, especially on sexuality, pose significant obstacles to Christian unity. Vatican instruction on homosexuals as candidates for priesthood says applicants should be denied if they are homosexually active, if they support a “gay culture” or if their homosexual orien- tation is deep-seated. Supreme Court hears oral arguments on New Hampshire law requiring a minor to notify a parent before having an abortion.

December
Daily Readings, continued from page 19

Tuesday, Jan. 3
The Most Holy Name of Jesus
1 John 2:29-3:6
Psalm 98:1-3, 6
John 1.29-34

Wednesday, Jan. 4
Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 3:7-10
Psalm 98:1, 7-9
John 1.35-42

Thursday, Jan. 5
John Neumann, bishop
1 John 3:11-21
Psalm 100:1-5
John 1.43-51

Friday, Jan. 6
Blessed André Bessette, religious
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Mark 1:7-11
or Luke 3:23-28
or Luke 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

Saturday, Jan. 7
Raymond of Peñafort, priest
1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b
John 2:1-11

Sunday, Jan. 8
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

Monday, Jan. 9
The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
or Acts 10:34-38
Mark 1:7-11

Tuesday, Jan. 10
1 Samuel 1:9-20 (Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8
Mark 1:21b-28

Wednesday, Jan. 11
1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Psalm 40:2-5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, Jan. 12
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11, 14-15, 25-26
Mark 1:40-45

Make a resolution to help those less fortunate than yourself!

The Crisis Office of Catholic Social Services always needs:
✓✓ Food
✓✓ Used clothing
✓✓ Paper grocery bags

Got Questions?


The new directory contains up-to-date information about parishes, pastors, parish staff, schools, school staff, religious education staff, archdiocesan administration, offices and agencies, telephone numbers, Mass times, addresses, e-mail addresses, photos of and biographical information about pastors, parish life coordinators, religious women and men ministering in the archdiocese, Catholic chaplaincies, hospitals, colleges and other institutions:
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Marriage Supplement

Be a part of our Marriage Supplement

February 3, 2006, issue of The Criterion

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2006, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

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

E-mailed photos
Photos should be saved in jpg format, be a minimum 200 dpi/ resolution and at least 3 inches or 600 pixels wide. Please send your photo as an attachment to the e-mail.

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by Wednesday, January 18, 2006, 10 a.m. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date).

— Use this form to furnish information —

City and mail to:
ATTN: BRIDES, The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206
Deadline: Wednesday, January 18, 2006, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride: (first, middle, last)
Daytime Phone
Mailing Address City State Zip Code
Name of Bride’s Parents City State
Wedding Date Church City State

Signature of person furnishing information                   Relationship                                 Daytime Phone
❑ Photo Enclosed  ❑ No Picture

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Mail to: Criterion Press, Inc., P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717
Benedictine Father Marion Walsh taught at former Saint Meinrad College

University of America in Washington, D.C., in 1950. For 25 years, Father Marion taught Latin, religion and physics classes at Saint Meinrad’s former seminary high school and education classes at the Saint Meinrad College.

His other ministries included 25 years as the custodian of the Monte Cassino Shrine near Saint Meinrad, service as monastery parson master for 12 years and work as an assistant in the Guest House office for 14 years.

In 1994, he became a chaplain at Our Lady of the Lake Monastery in Tickfaw, La., where he served until his return to Saint Meinrad in 2002. He is survived by a sister, Benedictine Sister Mary Herbert Walsh of Tickfaw, La. Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

Peter Ray, a member of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis, cauls a cabinet on Dec. 9 in a home owned by the parish. Repairs are being completed by the parish carpenter, so that Charlene can live in the family can live in the family home.

(Credit -- The Criterion)
The St. Francis Cardiac & Vascular Care Center is the only full-service heart facility on Indy's south side.

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