



# The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

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*'A savior  
has been  
born  
for you  
who is  
Messiah  
and Lord.'  
(Lk 2:11)*

# Immigration response tops local news stories for 2007

By Brandon A. Evans

The involvement of our local bishops in immigration reform was voted the top news story for the archdiocese this year, but it was far from being the only newsmaker.

Working in tandem with the custom of other news agencies, including Catholic News Service (see story, page 3), *The Criterion* editorial staff votes each year for the top 10 local stories that appeared in our newspaper.

Many of the stories selected this year were actually made up of several individual articles, and you can read them all by logging on to [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com) and checking out the list there.

So, amid the more than 450 locally produced news stories this year, here is our top 10:

## 1. The bishops of Indiana release a pastoral letter on immigration

As the country continues to debate the issue of immigration, the five bishops of Indiana released a joint document in January titled "I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: Meeting Christ in New Neighbors."

It was the first such document released by the bishops in recent times and was our lead story in the first issue of 2007.

The story read, in part: "Typically, statements from the bishops are done through the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Church's official public policy voice. However, the pastoral letter is a unique move by the bishops, giving the statement a distinctive teaching authority which carries more significance and weight—that of shepherds addressing the faithful."

Calling Catholics to welcome the stranger as Christ himself, the bishops called for balance between "the right of a sovereign state to control its borders," and "the right of human persons to migrate so that they can realize their God-given rights."

The pastoral said that "the state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, but the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated."

*The Criterion* also covered an immigration march in May and the progress of immigration legislation as it was discussed throughout the United States.

## 2. Three men ordained to the priesthood

The ordination of priests always seems to end up as one of our top stories, in no



CNS photo/Sean Gallagher, The Criterion

In a gesture symbolic of his promise of obedience, Deacon Rick Nagel places his hands in the hands of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein of Indianapolis during a June 2 ordination Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Deacons Thomas Kovatch and Randall Summers were also ordained during the liturgy.

small part because it marks the beginning of a long journey for these men, and for all of us who will cross paths with them in the years to come.

This year, three men were ordained on June 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral: Fathers Thomas Kovatch, Rick Nagel and Randall Summers.

"Today, you put yourself at Christ's disposal," Archbishop Buechlein told the three men during the ordination. "You offer yourselves to serve the people of our local Church, to do that in the person of Christ, the high priest and bridegroom of the Church."

Father Eric Johnson, archdiocesan vocations director, said that it was a happy day for the Church.

"We have three wonderful men that have come forward and said not only 'yes' to God's call but, in doing that, are themselves kind of an image of faith for the rest of us," he said.

Each one of the men has their own story of how God led them to the priesthood. You can log on to our Web site to read them.

## 3. St. Theodora honored at Masses across the archdiocese

Last year's top story spilled over into 2007 in the form of celebration.

The October 2006 canonization of St. Theodora Guérin—foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and Indiana's first saint—kicked off a year of special Masses celebrated by Archbishop Buechlein in each of the archdiocese's 11 deaneries.

The first Mass was celebrated on Dec. 8, 2006, at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis and the last was held at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville on Oct. 3—St. Theodora's new feast day.

"Many of us, myself included, were educated by the Sisters of Providence. ... Our heritage goes back to this saint," the archbishop said at the final Mass.

Throughout the year, *The Criterion* included coverage and photos of all the Masses as well as the details of a seminarian pilgrimage to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the dedication of a portrait and a statue of the saint, other related celebrations and a hymn written by two monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Links to all of those can be found in the online companion to this story.

## 4. Arson fire destroys St. Anne Church in New Castle

The timing couldn't have been much worse for a Catholic parish: Hours before the celebration of the holiest liturgy of the year—the Easter vigil—a fire destroyed St. Anne Church in New Castle on April 7.

Senior reporter Mary Ann Wyand wrote that the fire "guttered the interior of the 83-year-old brick church, burned through the roof and melted stained-glass windows."

"Visibly shaken," Wyand wrote, "Sister Shirley [Gerth, the parish life coordinator] said the first Mass was celebrated in the church on Easter Sunday in 1924."

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, archdiocesan vicar general, said that he and Archbishop Buechlein were "very upset, very distraught, over the loss of St. Anne Church ... but we're thankful that nobody was injured in the fire."

Five weeks after the fire, Henry County authorities arrested William L. Abbott, 33, of New Castle on felony charges of arson, burglary and theft.

Support for the parish has continued throughout the year, with parishes and individuals donating more than \$144,000 (including about \$700 raised through *The Criterion's* Web site), and people continue to pray.

Even on the day of the fire, Sister Shirley kept her spirits up: "We're going to celebrate new life tomorrow. We're going to sing our Alleluias tomorrow. It's Easter Sunday. It's the feast of the Lord's resurrection. ... Surely we'll grieve,

but at the end of grief comes new life."

## 5. Legacy for Our Mission campaign nears goal

The largest capital campaign in the history of the archdiocese continued to be a major focus of parishioners throughout central and southern Indiana.

Reporter Sean Gallagher wrote that, "When it was launched in 2004, the Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future campaign had an ambitious goal of raising \$100 million.

"By accomplishing this goal, the archdiocese hopes its parishes, shared ministries and home missions will be set on firm ground for years to come."

Each parish keeps part of the money raised toward their goal, while part goes to help the archdiocese support not only struggling parish communities, but also to fund shared ministries, such as the training of new priests and the work of Catholic Charities and Catholic education.

As of late October, nearly \$90 million had been pledged through the campaign. These pledges came from more than 25,000 participants from 115 archdiocesan parishes.

Throughout the year, *The Criterion* featured stories about how parishes have been affected by the campaign, and what they are planning to do with the money they have raised. For all these parish updates, be sure to check our Web site.

## 6. Archbishop Buechlein celebrates 20 years as a bishop

While coverage was limited to a single news story and a photo essay, it was of no small mention that Archbishop Buechlein celebrated his 15th anniversary as shepherd of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the 20th anniversary of his episcopal ordination in the same year.

Editor Mike Krokos wrote that "To celebrate his 20 years as a bishop, Archbishop Buechlein recently went on a personal retreat to reflect on his time as a

See REVIEW page 8

## On the cover

Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in an icon from the chapel of All Saints Church in Lakeville, Minn. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the birth of Christ. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 13. †

CNS photo/Crosiers

**The Criterion** 12/21/07

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# Immigration named top story of 2007, pope is top newsmaker

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The national debate over immigration issues was the top religious news story of 2007 and Pope Benedict XVI was the top newsmaker, according to the annual poll of

client editors of Catholic News Service. Catholic response to the war in Iraq took second place among the 30 news stories on the ballot, while developments in the stem-cell field came in third.

Pope Benedict dominated the newsmakers list, with 20 of the 24 first-place votes cast. U.S. President George W. Bush was a distant second, followed by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

The poll was the 46th annual survey of CNS client newspapers. This year's ballots were distributed on Dec. 4 and the deadline for returns was Dec. 13.

When the editors' poll was first conducted in 1962, the overwhelming choice for top story was the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Last year, editors chose Islam's relations with Church and society as the top religious story of the year and Pope Benedict as the top newsmaker.

Editors were asked to vote for the top 10 news stories from a list of 30 selected by CNS staff, and the top five newsmakers from a list of 20. Votes were weighted by the rankings editors gave—10 points for a first-place vote, nine points for second, etc., and five points for top newsmaker, four for second, etc.

With 24 editors in the United States and Canada submitting ballots, the maximum points a story could have received was 240. The most a newsmaker could receive on the five-point scale was 120. Some editors' ballots included ties, resulting in half-points in some cases.

The year's immigration developments included multiple efforts—all ultimately unsuccessful—to bring federal legislation to a vote in Congress. The nation's Catholic bishops called for just treatment of immigrants and joined in protests against anti-immigrant sentiments.

At the local level, Church charitable agencies were called to assist those caught up in Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids at workplaces, which often left families separated and without income.

On the war in Iraq, the bishops called the present situation "unacceptable and

unsustainable," and urged a "responsible transition" leading to the end of the fighting. The flight of hundreds of thousands of Christians from Iraq could lead to the end of a Christian presence there, they said.

A pair of breakthrough studies later in the year that showed success in creating embryonic-like stem cells without destroying human embryos brought praise from Catholic and pro-life officials around the world, along with hope that embryonic stem-cell research will soon be abandoned. Bush vetoed legislation that would have expanded federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research, and New Jersey voters rejected a bond question that would have dedicated millions of state dollars for that purpose.

Rounding out the top five for religious news stories were developments in Catholic dialogue with Muslims and Jews and Pope Benedict's ruling allowing wider use of the traditional Latin Mass.

That decision—along with his landmark letter to Chinese Catholics, his travels and an upcoming trip to the United States, his naming of 23 new cardinals from 14 countries and a new encyclical and book—earned Pope Benedict the top spot as 2007's religious newsmaker.

Bush was second for his vetoes of the embryonic stem-cell bill and legislation expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program, his first meeting with Pope Benedict and the continued criticism directed at him over the war in Iraq.

Ten years after her death, Mother Teresa was the third top newsmaker of 2007 as a new book of her writings revealed her doubts about her faith, which Vatican officials said revealed her spiritual strength. She also moved closer to sainthood when an Indian priest said he experienced a miracle through her intercession.

Also in the top five newsmakers were Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the first U.S. cardinal serving in the American Southwest, and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who often clashed with his nation's Catholic bishops.

Here is the editors' choice of top 10 stories and top five newsmakers of 2007, followed by points received in the weighted ballot count and, in parentheses, the number of first-place votes received.

- STORIES**
1. Immigration, 172 (6).
  2. War in Iraq, 136 (8).
  3. Stem cells, 123.
  4. Interreligious dialogue, 86.
  5. Tridentine Mass, 84 (2).

## 2007 TOP NEWS

### STORIES

#### 1. IMMIGRATION

*Catholic bishops call for just treatment of immigrants while Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids at workplaces leave families separated and in need of Church assistance.*



#### 2. WAR IN IRAQ

#### 3. STEM CELLS

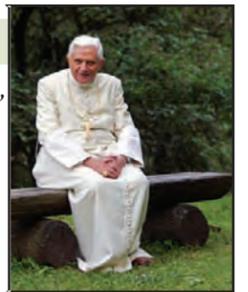
#### 4. INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

#### 5. TRIDENTINE MASS

### NEWSMAKERS

#### 1. POPE BENEDICT XVI

*The pope allows for wider use of traditional Latin Mass, names 23 cardinals, visits Brazil and Austria, publishes second encyclical, issues letter to the Church in China.*



#### 2. U.S. PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

#### 3. BLESSED MOTHER TERESA

#### 4. CARDINAL DANIEL N. DINARDO

#### 5. VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ

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6. Abuse settlements, 82 (1).
7. Papal writings, 73 (3).
8. Politics, 72 (1).
9. Environment, 64 (2).
10. Cardinals, 49.

One first-place vote also went to the Virginia Tech shootings.

### NEWSMAKERS

1. Pope Benedict, 113 (20).
2. President Bush, 60.

3. Blessed Mother Teresa, 37.
4. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, 23.5.
5. Hugo Chavez, 22.

Other first-place votes went to presidential candidates Rudy Giuliani and U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York, Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Quebec, Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago and Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash. †

## The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 21 to Jan. 1 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement on pages 13-21, is the last issue of 2007.

*The Criterion* will be published again on Jan. 11 and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 21 through Jan. 1 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 2. †



## Patroness of the Americas

Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, center, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, was the main celebrant at the 12th annual solemn Mass at the parish in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. Concelebrating priests included Msgr. Charles Koch, a retired priest from the Diocese of Evansville; Father Bernie Cox, pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville; Father John Hall, pastor of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville; Conventual Franciscan Father Leopold Keffler of Marian College; Franciscan Father Elias M. Mills of the Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center in Monroe County; Father Rick Nagel, associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, and Father Mauro Rodas, a retired archdiocesan priest who assists with Hispanic ministry at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish. In his homily, Msgr. Svarczkopf reminded those attending the bilingual Mass that "Wherever we come from ... we are all equal in dignity. There is not a best in God's eyes. ... All cultures, all people, have an equal dignity."



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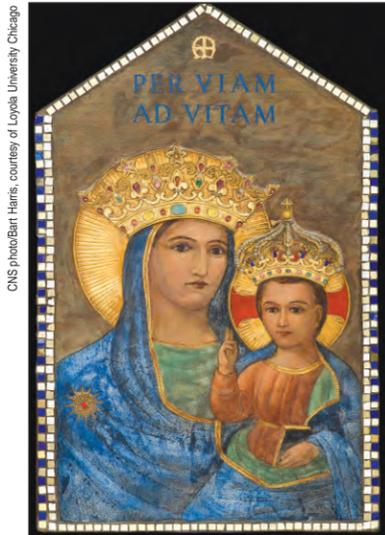


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## Editorial



CNS photo/Bart Harris, courtesy of Loyola University Chicago

This work depicting Mary and the Christ Child, by Chicago artist Melville Steinfeld, hangs in the Madonna della Strada (Our Lady of the Way) Chapel on the grounds of Loyola University Chicago. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the birth of Christ. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which is Jan. 13.

## Christmas celebrates defenselessness or vulnerability of God

"In the child Jesus, the defenselessness of God is apparent. God comes without weapons, because he does not wish to conquer from outside but desires to win and transform us from within. If anything can conquer man's vainglory, his violence, his greed, it is the vulnerability of the child. God assumed this vulnerability in order to conquer us and lead us to himself." (From a Christmas homily of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI)

God comes to us once again this Christmas in all his weakness. No chariots of fire or mighty armies. No grandeur or opulence.

Just a simple child born into a poor family with nowhere to lay his head beyond the comfort and security of his mother's arms.

No adoring crowds or paparazzi taking photographs. Just the infant Jesus with Mary and Joseph and a few lowly shepherds and farm animals.

"In the child Jesus, the defenselessness of God is apparent," Pope Benedict said. In fact, you can't get any weaker than this.

A newborn child is totally dependent on others for everything. A child comes into the world with nothing but the gift of life, and the potential to grow and learn and become what God has called him or her to be.

Every infant begins life as the most defenseless creature in the world. In fact, weakness, vulnerability and utter dependency are defining characteristics of the human person—from the moment of conception through all the stages of life until we once again hand ourselves over to God in the defenseless vulnerability of death.

We are weak creatures who, as we get older, try unsuccessfully to persuade ourselves that we are strong, independent and self-reliant.

The truth is that we are totally dependent on God's grace for everything—the air we breathe, the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the work we do, the people we love.

Christmas celebrates God's decision to share in our weakness—his voluntary acceptance of our human condition and his decision to open himself to the burdens and threats and suffering of our human condition.

The paradox of Christmas is the warmth and comfort and joy that come from celebrating our weakness, our dependence on God. We sinful people tell ourselves that self-sufficiency is the way to happiness.

We invest countless hours persuading ourselves that wealth will bring us comfort—and that security is the result of political strength and the endless warfare that we engage in with our neighbors near and far.

But Christmas exposes all our illusions (our vainglory, violence and greed) for what they are—distorted images of the simple truth that joy is found in humility, simplicity and peace.

The child Jesus reminds us of what matters most in life: trust in God, the gifts of life and family, and the ability to grow in wisdom, age and grace in a community of believers who strive to live simply and honestly for the greater good of all.

It's no accident that Christmas is everyone's favorite time of year. Christmas invites us to recall (and relive) the most basic truth of our faith: *God is with us.*

He brings light into our darkness and warmth into our cold hearts. A child is born—reminding us once again that family and friends and community are among our most precious gifts. Peace and great joy are proclaimed to people of good will everywhere no matter what their race, creed or social status may be. Vainglory, violence and greed are utterly rejected in favor of generosity, justice and the plain truth that we are always totally dependent on God's grace.

For this, we give thanks. With the angels, we sing Glory to God! Hosanna in the highest! Peace on earth! Christmas has come again, bringing peace and warmth and joy into our weary world.

Let us rejoice and be glad that our defenseless God has come again in all his weakness to save us from our illusions of strength and independence.

He comes once again to transform our troubled world into his kingdom of righteousness. To share with us the transforming gifts of faith, hope and love. And to show us the way to true joy and lasting peace.

Merry Christmas!

—Daniel Conway

## Go and Make Disciples/John Valenti

### New outreach to inactive Catholics

Most of us do not have to look very far to find "non-practicing Catholics" in our circle of family and friends.



Many of us are concerned about these loved ones, but we don't know how to help them.

Obviously, most of them are searching, but how can we help them find their way home?

St. Michael Parish in Greenfield wants to welcome home those who have been away, and will be presenting a new ministry program for those who wish to return.

If there is a message or "catch phrase" to the parish's efforts, it is simply, "We miss you," said Judy Davis-Fuller, a member of St. Michael Parish who also serves on the Archdiocesan Evangelization Outreach Committee.

"As baptized, practicing Catholics, we have a precious gift of faith and love from the Lord that needs to be shared with our non-practicing brothers and sisters," she said.

Most non-practicing Catholics are waiting for an invitation to return. Many mistakenly think they are excommunicated and are not welcome to return for a variety of reasons.

Davis-Fuller said that "the first thing we need to do is to pray for them."

"Secondly, we need to extend a personal invitation to come home to the Catholic Church."

Sometimes, we fall. Sometimes, we get overwhelmed by the ordinary. And sometimes, we are more sinner than saint.

Davis-Fuller explained how important it is to know that "the Church does not leave us!" The Spirit is truly present in the Church Jesus gave us, she said, and "we are never alone."

"Jesus Christ loves you!" she added.

He is the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep and searches for the one who is lost. When Christ finds the lost one, he places him or her on his shoulders and carries him or her home.

Davis-Fuller has prepared a new "Catholics Returning Home Guideline for Team Members" for the archdiocesan committee. The guidelines suggest a process using four well-developed programs and discusses: "Recognizing the Need, How To Begin," "Developing An Effective Approach," "Listening Skills," "Prayer," "Need For Ritual and Reconciliation," and a "Suggested Topical Outline."

An evangelization outreach Web site has been set up and offers the "Catholics Returning Home Guide" online as well as a parish PowerPoint presentation, and a "Home For Christmas" video.

"There may be many reasons why people no longer worship the Lord on the Lord's day," Davis-Fuller said. "Whatever the reasons or excuses, they melt away in the presence of God's love."

Being ready to be family with the Church is good preparation for the rest of our lives. Davis-Fuller added, "There will be rocky times, but it is better to know how to ride out the waves than to expect to be able to avoid all of them."

"Whatever the reason, you've been away—whether for a few years or a lifetime—you can always reclaim your Catholic faith," she said. "No matter what your situation or what your reasons are, with the help of our Lord, we can help you through it."

Evangelization outreach resources can be found at: [www.archindy.org/evangelization/outreach.html](http://www.archindy.org/evangelization/outreach.html).

(John Valenti is the associate director of Evangelization and Faith Formation for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. E-mail him at [jvalenti@archindy.org](mailto:jvalenti@archindy.org).) †

## Letters to the Editor

### Freedom for all means putting an end to abortion

Enduring freedom must be for all. It requires that nothing—no person and/or power—be granted permission to target innocent human life.

No exceptions!

This principle helped end slavery. It is why we can justifiably call Hitler, Stalin and other such people "monsters."

Today, this same principle is being used to justify the "Global War on Terror."

One big problem: The evil we are fighting is but a shadow of the evil we are doing. Let me explain.

Since the early 1970s, more than 48 million surgical abortions have been performed legally in the U.S. The word "legally" amazes me. The more than 48 million human lives destroyed by Americans make me cry.

Note the definition of "posterity": 1. future generations; and 2. all of a person's descendants.

Now read the preamble of the U.S. Constitution and note the use of the word posterity: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

That translates to more than 48 million American human beings (our posterity)

that "we, the people of the United States" have not shown the blessings of liberty, justice, tranquility and welfare.

Even if we win the "War on Terror"—so what!

Some final notes for Catholics:

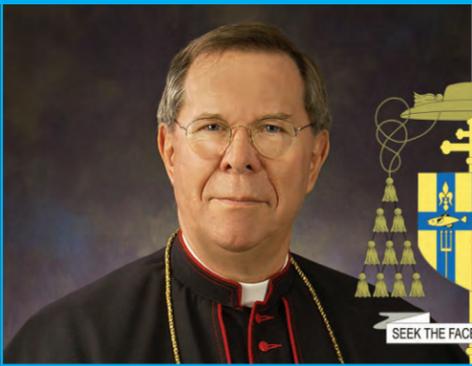
1. It is my prayer that every concerned American reading this letter will register to vote. Forms are available online. Just google your state's voter registration form and vote pro-life in 2008.

2. May we all learn to better love God and our neighbor during this Christmas season as we reacquire ourselves with the way Mary and Joseph behaved after Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

3. If you are a woman who is experiencing a crisis pregnancy or a woman or man who is suffering from the aftermath of an abortion, please call Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, at 317-236-1521 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1521. All calls are confidential.

4. If you want to make a tax-deductible charitable donation to help bring about an end to abortion during this 2008 election cycle, I encourage you to do it! Perhaps the charitable donation should be equal to or greater than what was spent on Christmas gifts this holiday. Pray about it.  
**Ron Kramer**  
**Indianapolis**

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



# SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

## BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

### A prayerful celebration of Christmas is our 'thank you' to God

**A** baby boy lying in a manger is called the Light of the World and the Word-made-flesh. How strange and how abstract: to call a person a light and a word. Yet, if we stop to think of circumstances some 2,000 years ago, maybe it doesn't seem so strange.

Then, as now, a light in the darkness meant a lot. We get upset when the electricity "goes out." That was the normal condition then. Fire went out much quicker and more often.

In the days before newspapers and books—many centuries before our instantaneous means of contemporary communication—the truth about things, the news, and just general information was learned through the face-to-face spoken word. Messengers and storytellers and rabbis (teachers) were a lifeline.

The boy named Jesus would come from God as a light in the darkness and a teacher, storyteller and messenger. He became light. He became God's Word of love.

Ever since Adam and Eve, our human family has been plagued by another kind of darkness and ignorance. Sin and tragic human error mark our lives. There is the darkness and ignorance which spawn jealousy and murder, stealing and war.

Cain hated Abel, his own brother, because of the blinding darkness of jealousy; he committed the first murder. In our cities and towns, brother kills brother for drugs and the money to

purchase painkilling drugs.

It would only be a short time before an unfaithful husband in ignorance hates his wife because he blindly loves only himself, and he discards her to use another.

Even more so today, victims of broken love discover the worst kind of darkness. Man and woman, intended to be complementary partners for life, become estranged and separated and lonely.

Distrust adds the bitter spice to the fright of darkness. Only God could bring light and knowledge to our human family hopelessly lost in darkness and ignorance.

His own Son became one of us to be the saving light and the trustworthy word of truth. He came to reveal God who is faithful love itself.

Christmas is a feast of love. In the manger in a dark stable with dumb animals, Christ began to shine as the Light of the World and the Word of truth. It began with a little boy born of a loving mother and watched over by a courageous father in a dark stable.

Those of us who know the story of the stable and the simple birth of the Savior have a special obligation to our troubled world. The torch has been handed on to us. How are we to be the light and spread the Word?

Christ once said that the world would know we were his if we have love, one for another.

"Love your neighbor as yourself," he urged. "Turn the other cheek; forgive your

enemy seventy times seven; feed the hungry; clothe the naked."

Our colored lights and Nativity sets remind us of the promise of the Christmas story and our part in it. They also remind us to thank God for his Christmas gift!

Christmas celebrates the mystery which offers the only path of human security. And it is a free gift. God is in charge of all destiny; we don't have to be. His is the master plan to make everything finally work out.

The string attached to the great Christmas gift of "God coming to live among us as light and word of love" is that we believe in and accept his love, and that we know that this life is not the whole story. It all goes together and it starts with Christmas. Jesus did something to human destiny.

When we celebrate his birth, we celebrate the remarkable fact that God came to be one of us and to show us how to live and to love and, yes, to die in this passing world. We celebrate the fact that he won for us the promise that there is so much more to this life than meets the eye.

We have much to think and pray about as we kneel before the Christmas manger.

The promise of our salvation began in the darkness of that humble cave in Bethlehem.

The greatest Christmas gift is God himself! The gift is free, and it is for all of us who are holy and unholy alike. A prayerful celebration of Christmas is our "thank you."

A warm and heartfelt "thank you" to all of you who do so much to help carry the Christmas light of truth and hope in central and southern Indiana. God bless you all! My Midnight Mass will be for all of you and your loved ones.

Merry Christmas and God's choicest blessings for 2008! †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein's prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein's  
Prayer List  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1410  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

#### Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for December

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

### Una celebración devota de la Navidad es nuestra forma de agradecerle a Dios

**A** un niño que yace en un pesebre se le llama la Luz del Mundo y el Verbo hecho carne. Qué extraño y qué abstracto: llamar a una persona "luz" y "verbo." Sin embargo, si nos detenemos a pensar en las circunstancias que lo rodeaban hace 2,000 años, quizás no nos parezca tan extraño.

Entonces, al igual que ahora, una luz en la oscuridad significaba mucho. Nos sentimos incómodos cuando la electricidad "se va." Esa era una situación normal en aquel entonces. El fuego se apagaba más rápido y con mayor frecuencia.

En la época anterior al periódico y los libros, muchos siglos antes de la aparición de nuestros medios de comunicación contemporáneos, la verdad de las cosas, las noticias y simplemente la información en general se divulgaba oralmente, cara a cara. Los mensajeros y los cuenta-cuentos, así como los rabinos (maestros), representaban una tabla de salvación.

El niño llamado Jesús vendría de Dios como la luz en la oscuridad y como un maestro, un cuenta-cuentos y un mensajero. Él se hizo luz. Se convirtió en el Verbo del amor de Dios.

Desde los tiempos de Adán y Eva, nuestra familia humana ha estado plagada de otro tipo de oscuridad e ignorancia. El pecado y la tragedia del error humano marcan nuestras vidas. Existe la oscuridad y la ignorancia que dan origen a la envidia y al asesinato, al robo y a la guerra.

Cain odiaba a Abel, su propio hermano, debido a la oscuridad envidiosa; él cometió el primer asesinato. En nuestras ciudades y poblados, un hermano mata a otro por drogas y por el dinero para comprar las

drogas que calmen su dolor.

Es sólo cuestión de tiempo antes de que un esposo infiel en su ignorancia termine por odiar a su esposa y la deseche para utilizar a otra, porque se ama ciegamente sólo a sí mismo.

Aun más hoy en día, las víctimas de un amor roto descubren la peor de las oscuridades. Hombres y mujeres destinados a ser compañeros complementarios en la vida, se alienan y se separan, quedándose solos.

La desconfianza se añade como un condimento amargo al terror de la oscuridad. Sólo Dios puede traer la luz y la sabiduría a nuestra familia humana, perdida sin remedio en la oscuridad y la ignorancia.

Su propio Hijo se convirtió en uno de nosotros para ser la luz salvadora y la palabra fiel de la verdad. Vino para revelar a Dios quien es amor fiel en sí mismo.

La Navidad es una celebración de amor. En el pesebre, en un establo oscuro con torpes animales, Cristo comenzó a brillar como la Luz del Mundo y el Verbo de la verdad. Todo comenzó con un pequeño niño nacido de una madre amorosa y cuidado por un padre valiente en un establo oscuro.

Aquellos que conocemos la historia del establo y el humilde nacimiento del Salvador, tenemos una obligación especial para con nuestro mundo tan perturbado. Se nos ha entregado la antorcha. ¿Cómo podemos ser la luz y difundir la palabra?

Cristo dijo una vez que el mundo sabría que le pertenecemos si nos amamos unos a los otros.

"Ama a tu prójimo como a ti mismo," nos exhortó. "Pon la otra mejilla; perdona a tu enemigo setenta veces siete; alimenta

al hambriento; viste al despojado."

Nuestras luces de colores y los nacimientos nos recuerdan la promesa de la historia de la Navidad y nuestro papel en ella. ¡También nos recuerdan que debemos darle gracias a Dios por su obsequio de Navidad!

La Navidad celebra el misterio que ofrece el único camino a la seguridad humana. Y es un regalo gratis. Dios está a cargo del destino; nosotros no tenemos que preocuparnos. Él es el plan maestro para lograr que todo funcione.

La condición que viene con el estupendo regalo de Navidad de "la venida de Dios a vivir entre nosotros como la luz y el verbo del amor" es que creamos y aceptemos su amor, y que entendamos que esta vida no lo es todo. Todo va unido y comienza con la Navidad. Jesús hizo algo en el destino humano.

Cuando celebramos su nacimiento, celebramos el hecho extraordinario de que Dios se convirtió en uno de nosotros, para mostrarnos cómo vivir y amar, y sí, morir en este mundo transitorio. Celebramos el hecho de que él ganó por nosotros la promesa de que existe mucho más en esta vida de lo que podemos ver.

Tenemos mucho en qué pensar y por lo que rezar mientras nos arrodillamos ante el pesebre navideño. La promesa de nuestra salvación comenzó en la oscuridad de esa humilde cueva en Belén.

¡El regalo más espectacular de la Navidad es el propio Dios! El regalo es gratis y es para todos nosotros por igual: santos y no santos. Una celebración devota de la Navidad es nuestra forma de agradecerle.

Mis cálidas y sinceras "gracias" van para todos ustedes que trabajan arduamente para ayudar a difundir la luz de la verdad y la esperanza en Navidad por todo el centro y el sur de Indiana. ¡Que Dios los bendiga a todos! Mi Misa de Gallo la dedicaré a todos ustedes y a sus seres queridos.

¡Feliz Navidad y las bendiciones más excelsas de Dios para el 2008! †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo  
Buechlein  
Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1410  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa,  
Language Training Center, Indianapolis.

#### La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

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

# Events Calendar

## December 21

St. Andrew Church, 235 S. 5th St., Richmond. **Simbang Gabi Mass**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-962-3902.

## December 23

MKVS and Divine Mercy Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Confession, 1 p.m., followed by holy hour, Mass, 2 p.m.**, groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

## December 24

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Eve Mass**, 5 p.m. and midnight, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein scheduled as celebrant for midnight Mass. Information: 317-634-4519.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **Vigils**, 7 p.m., **Christmas Eve Mass**, midnight. Information: 800-682-0988 or e-mail [news@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:news@saintmeinrad.edu).

Church of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Eve prayer service**, 7 p.m. Information: [www.sistersoprovence.org](http://www.sistersoprovence.org).

## December 25

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 10:30 a.m. Information: 317-634-4519.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **Christmas Mass**, 11 a.m. Information: 800-682-0988 or e-mail [news@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:news@saintmeinrad.edu).

Church of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Mass**, 11 a.m. Information: [www.sistersoprovence.org](http://www.sistersoprovence.org).

## December 26-28

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Kwanza program**, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## December 28

Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, Motherhouse, Oldenburg. **"Christmas Tours,"** 6-8 p.m. Information: 812-933-6491.

## December 29

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Kwanza program**, Mass, 6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## December 30

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Kwanza program**, Mass, 11 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

MKVS and Divine Mercy Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Confession, 1 p.m., followed by holy hour, Mass, 2 p.m.**, groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

## December 31

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana and Cursillo, renewal Mass of Thanksgiving**, Father Glenn O'Connor, celebrant, 11 p.m. Information: 317-592-1992 or [ccrci@holyspirit.org](http://ccrci@holyspirit.org).

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **"Winter Bird Count,"** 7:30 a.m.-lunch, pre-registration required. Information: 812-933-0661.

## December 31-January 1

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Kwanza program**, night watch service, 10 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## January 2

St. Mary Parish, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. Solo Seniors. **Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles 50 and over**, single, widowed or divorced, new members welcome, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-897-1128.

## January 4

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast and program at Priori Hall, "Mission of Medicine," Dr. Chuck Dietzen, founder of The Timmy Foundation, presenter, \$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail [LumenDei@sbcglobal.net](mailto:LumenDei@sbcglobal.net).

## January 6

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal, "Eucharistic Healing Service,"** Father Gregory Bramlage, president, reconciliation, praise and worship music, eucharistic procession, laying on of hands, 2-5 p.m. Information: 317-592-1992 or [ccrci@holyspirit.org](http://ccrci@holyspirit.org).

Saint Meinrad Archabbey and School of Theology, Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"A Twelfth Night**

**Gathering,"** 5 p.m., vespers, 5:45 p.m., festive meal, \$7 per person, 6:30 p.m., burning of the greens, dinner reservations due Jan. 3. Information: 812-357-6403 or e-mail [dmajor@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:dmajor@saintmeinrad.edu).

## January 8

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild, meeting**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-881-5818.

St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis. **Support Group for Separated and Divorced Catholics, "Question and Answer Night,"** Father Robert Gilday, presenter, 7 p.m. Information: 317-466-1399.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, St. Mary Hall, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana, prayer meeting**, 7:15 p.m. Information: 317-592-1992, [www.inholyspirit.org](http://www.inholyspirit.org) or [ccrci@inholyspirit.org](http://ccrci@inholyspirit.org).

## January 9

St. Francis Weight Loss Center, 700 E. Southport Road, Indianapolis. **"Eat for Life Wellness Program,"** 6 p.m. Information: 317-782-7525 or e-mail [weightloss@ssfhs.org](mailto:weightloss@ssfhs.org).

## January 11

St. Roch Parish, Family Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indiana-

polis. **Single Seniors meeting**, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-1102.

## January 12

Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **Makeup date for high school placement test for incoming freshmen**, 7:45-11:15 a.m. Information: 317-787-8277, ext. 234.

## January 13-March 2

St. Malachy Parish, 326 N. Green St., Brownsburg. **"Divorce and Beyond" program**, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-852-3195.

## Daily events

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Liturgy of the Hours**, Mon.-Fri., morning prayer, 7:30 a.m., evening prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-635-2021.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. **Liturgy of the Hours**, Mon.-Fri., morning prayer, 7:05 a.m., evening prayer 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-638-5551.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Tridentine (Latin) Mass**, Mon.-Fri., noon; Wed., Fri., 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478. †



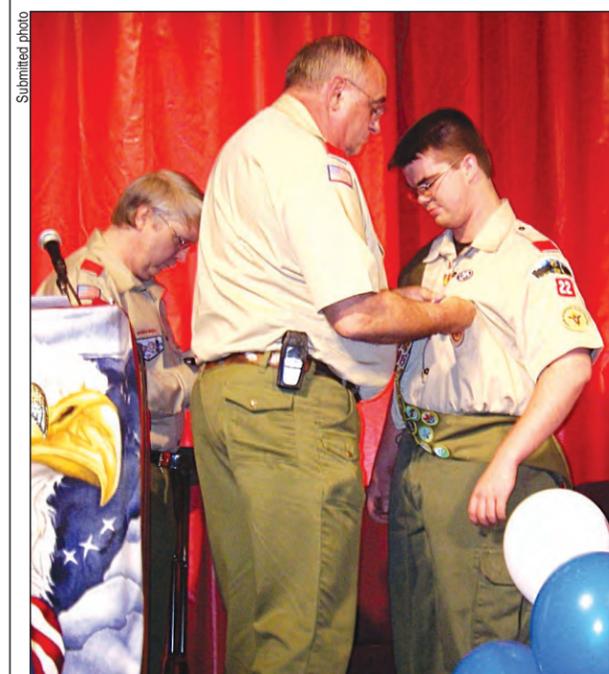
## Carriage ride

St. Augustine Home for the Aged residents Don Dewar, left, and Pat Coriden of Indianapolis pet the horse before a carriage ride on Nov. 14 provided by a Yellow Rose Carriages driver in downtown Indianapolis. The carriage ride was donated to the Little Sisters of the Poor by an Indianapolis family.



## Crèches on display

This crèche is one of several Nativity scenes on display through Jan. 7 at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library in St. Meinrad. The crèches come from the monastery's collections and the Catherine A. Smith Nativity Collection, which was donated to Saint Meinrad Archabbey in 2002. Smith began collecting crèche scenes in 1971 during her extensive travels around the world. The exhibit is free and open to the public. Exhibit hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Exceptions are from Dec. 26 through Dec. 28 when the exhibit hours are from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The library will be closed from Dec. 22 through Dec. 25 and from Dec. 29 through Jan. 1. All times are central standard time.



## Eagle Scout

Eric Burns, right, receives an Eagle Scout pin on Dec. 1 during a ceremony held at Ryves Hall Youth Center in Terre Haute. Eric, who has Down syndrome, is a member of Scout Troop #22, which is based at Ryves Hall, and a program of Catholic Charities Terre Haute. He received his Eagle Scout pin, the highest award in Boy Scouts, from Dan Snider, left, who is a Scout troop leader and the assistant director of Ryves Hall.



## Spell Bowl champions

Members of the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grades at St. Gabriel School in Connersville pose on Nov. 15 at Knightstown Elementary School in Knightstown with the first-place pins they earned for being the 2007 Elementary Spell Bowl champion in Class 2. The students are, from left in the front row, Samantha Fain, Lindsey Hackleman, Maddie Rose, Jacob Hackleman, Andrew Stine, Emily Stine and Matthew Watkins. In the back row, the students are, from left, Madison Fain, Paxytn Drew, Casey Fohl, Olivia Frazee, Kramer Moriarty, Andrew Bernzott and Logan Neukam. Coach Lisa Hauger, the fifth-grade teacher at St. Gabriel School, stands at the right end of the back row.



Comboni Father Michael Barton teaches Sudanese children about the Catholic faith at a Comboni primary school in southern Sudan in this file photo published on Oct. 18, 2002. He grew up in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. A new Internet blog publicizes his missionary work in East Africa.

## New Internet blog serves as resource for Comboni Father Michael Barton's work in Sudan

By Mary Ann Wyand

Comboni Father Michael Barton's prayers and his Christmas wish list begin with peace and an end to violence for war-torn Sudan.

He also hopes for donations to build a church and school in the village of Marial Baai within St. Theresa Parish in Nyamlell, where he serves as pastor.

Catholics in central and southern Indiana can learn more about his ministry half a world away in southern Sudan by logging on to a new Internet site created by Jane Lichtenberg, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

The weblog address is [www.nyamlell.blogspot.com](http://www.nyamlell.blogspot.com).

As Community Conversations coordinator for *The Indianapolis Star*, Lichtenberg has written about the Comboni priest's ministry.

Father Barton grew up in Indianapolis, and has served the Church as a missionary priest in Sudan from 1978 until 1986 then from 1993 to the present.

When Lichtenberg talked with him

during his home visit last summer, she learned that he is trying to raise funds to build church and school buildings in a village in Northern Bar el Gazelle State.

She decided to create the blog to keep people informed about his ministry and pastoral needs. It includes excerpts from his letters as well as stories about his ministry that were published in *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Criterion*.

Lichtenberg launched the site in September after Father Barton departed for a sabbatical in the Holy Land on his way back to East Africa. He arrived at his parish in Sudan on Dec. 10.

In an e-mail to *The Criterion*, she requested publicity for the new blog.

"He has spent the past five years based in Nyamlell, another village in the parish," Lichtenberg explained. "From there, he has traveled hundreds of miles visiting other parts of the parish, administering sacraments and spreading God's Word to

the Sudanese people, many of whom live in great poverty."

She said his goal is to raise \$150,000 for a church and school at Marial Baai.

"I suggested a blog that would help him keep in touch with his many friends in the Indianapolis area and around the world, and tell people how he would use donations and where to donate," she said. "Although when he is in Sudan he has no access to computers or the Internet, I asked him to write letters, and have another priest in the parish write as well, to keep all of us up to date on his mission."

Citing "the extraordinary work he has done in South Sudan," Lichtenberg said she plans "to continue managing the blog for him, and hope that people who visit the Web site will take time to write comments and include their own thoughts about this extraordinary man and his mission to Sudan."

During an interview with *The Criterion* last August at the archdiocesan Mission Office, Father Barton talked about answering God's call to serve the people in Sudan 30 years ago.

Saving souls for God is his first priority as a missionary, he said, and educating the children is a close second.

At the Catholic schools he established in St. Theresa Parish, children study English, Dinka, Swahili, Arabic, science, agriculture, geography, civics, history and Christian religious education, including the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles during the last three years of school.

While ministering in Sudan for three decades, Father Barton has been sick with malaria, was imprisoned for 15 days in August 1996 and had to kill a poisonous snake at the parish last year.

That is all part of serving God's people in Sudan, he said. "I just have to do something."

(For more information about how to help Comboni Father Michael Barton with his missionary work in Sudan, call the archdiocesan Mission Office at 317-236-1485 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1485.) †

## MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENT



## Be a part of our Marriage Supplement

February 8, 2008, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2008, 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 Thursday, January 17, 2008, 10 a.m. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date).

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to:  
ATTN: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Deadline: Thursday, January 17, 2008, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride: (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bride's Parents \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bridegroom: (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bridegroom's Parents \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person furnishing information \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Photo Enclosed  No Picture

# REVIEW

continued from page 2

shepherd of the Church in Memphis and Indianapolis.

“While on retreat, he responded to a series of questions from *The Criterion* that afforded him the opportunity to share his thoughts on his 20 years of ministry as a bishop.”

You can read the entire question-and-answer interview on our Web site, but here is an excerpt from a question about what the archbishop looks to in the future:

“God has not let me down in the past and present, so I am confident that his Providence will care for me in my evening years.

“With God’s blessing and the help of good priests and people, I don’t plan to carry on my ministry ‘by looking in the rear-view mirror,’ as the saying goes.

“I look forward to our celebration of our 175th anniversary [as an archdiocese] in 2009.”

## 7. Super Bowl Champion Indianapolis Colts

The Indianapolis Colts’ victory over the Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XLI on Feb. 4 was one of the major secular news stories in Indiana in 2007.

The hype and excitement was also reported in our newspaper as our staff took a closer look at one of the more low-key members of the franchise: its volunteer chaplain, Father Peter Gallagher, who also is chaplain of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis.

“I’m fortunate to have been asked to be a part of this organization and what I’m doing to promote our Catholic faith,” Father Gallagher told *The Criterion*.

This fall, the newspaper also featured a front-page story about the Catholic faith of Colts players.

Other Colts-related coverage included the renaming of the now Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent in Indianapolis, and a story about a Colts Fitness Camp at St. Anthony of Padua School in Clarksville.

## 8. Deacon Chlopecki becomes first archdiocesan permanent deacon

On May 1, a little piece of history occurred in the archdiocese.

It was, according to Sean Gallagher, “the day on which the incardination process was completed whereby Deacon John Chlopecki went from being a deacon of the Archdiocese of Chicago—for which he was ordained in 1991—to being a deacon of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.”

Thus, Deacon Chlopecki became the archdiocese’ first permanent deacon. The diaconate will grow in numbers next spring

when 25 men will be ordained permanent deacons after four years of formation.

Deacon Chlopecki served on the committee that, starting in 2002, helped develop the current archdiocesan deacon formation program.

“When I first moved down to the archdiocese, I prayed that there would be a diaconate someday,” Deacon Chlopecki said. “And I prayed, ‘Dear God, please let me be a part of it. Let me help bring this to fruition.’ And the good Lord gave me exactly what I prayed for, and more so than I ever thought it would be.”

## 9. Local Catholics observe the 10th anniversary of Mother Teresa’s death

The 10th anniversary of the death of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta was marked all over the world, including in our archdiocese in which several sisters of her order, the Missionaries of Charity, now minister to the poor.

Members of that order, along with women and children from an emergency shelter that the sisters operate and about 100 other people, gathered for Mass with Archbishop Buechlein at the cathedral on Sept. 5.

*The Criterion* also wrote a special story that shared the thoughts of a variety of local Catholics on their memories of Mother Teresa.

“Catholics throughout central and southern Indiana are drawn to this woman unlike nearly any other spiritual figure of our time,” wrote Sean Gallagher.

“Some of them are leaders in the faith or notable television personalities. Others are average people in the pews.

“No matter who they are, Blessed Teresa has a special place in their heart.”

## 10. SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral celebrates its centennial year

To celebrate the centenary of its dedication on Dec. 21, 1906, by Bishop Francis Silas Chatard, the staff and members of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis planned a year’s worth of special events.

Those events included a speakers series, concerts, liturgies and a banquet after the closing centennial Mass.

Archbishop Buechlein presided over the June 29 Mass that closed the year of celebration, and recalled “not so much the glory of the cathedral church, but of the worship given to God in it by scores of Catholics during the past 100 years.

“The cathedral has been an important place for many people throughout the archdiocese.”

Nearly 5,800 weddings have taken place there and 124 men have been ordained to the priesthood.

Father Patrick Beidelman, the rector and pastor of the parish, remarked on the

CNS photo/Mary Ann Wylard



A firefighter checks the smoldering ruins of St. Anne Church in New Castle on the afternoon of Holy Saturday, April 7. The early morning fire started in the basement and burned through the roof.

parish’s future at the June 29 Mass.

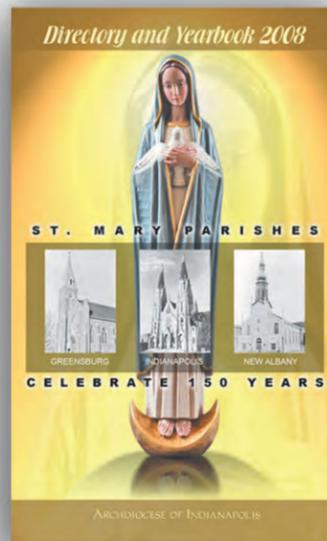
“As we remember the past today, let us look forward to a future full of hope,” Father Beidelman said, “knowing that God will guide us on a path of profound change as he fashions us into the image of his only

Son, our Lord.”

(To read more about these 10 stories, including links to all our original *Criterion* news coverage, log on to our Web site at [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com).) †

# DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK 2008

## AVAILABLE BEGINNING IN JANUARY



The new directory contains up-to-date information.

- Parishes
- Pastors
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- Telephone numbers
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- Photos of and biographical information about pastors
- parish life coordinators
- religious women and men ministering in the archdiocese
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- Hospitals
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Three ways to order your new directory

- Mail in order form
- Call 317-236-1570 or 1-800-382-9836 ext. 1570
- [www.criteriononline.com](http://www.criteriononline.com)

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# Travels, consistory, writings keep Pope Benedict busy in 2007

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI never gives the impression of being overburdened, yet a look back at 2007 reveals a long list of papal activities and achievements.

The pope's output included four major documents and a lengthy book, more than 200 speeches and sermons, two foreign trips and three in Italy, the creation of new cardinals, and encounters with a lineup of world leaders, including U.S. President George W. Bush.

In April—just before celebrating his 80th birthday—the pope published *Jesus of Nazareth*, which made the case that Christ must be understood as the Son of God on a divine mission, not as a mere moralist or social reformer. In six months, the book had sold more than 2 million copies worldwide.

In June, the pope issued a 55-page letter to Chinese Catholics, setting out new guidelines to favor cooperation between clandestine Catholic communities and those officially registered with the government.

The pope's letter strongly criticized the limits placed by the Chinese government on the Church's activities, but it invited civil authorities to a fresh and serious dialogue. Hopeful signs followed as China and the Vatican agreed on several bishops' appointments.

In July, in a long-awaited and

much-debated document, the pope relaxed restrictions on the use of the traditional Latin Mass, the liturgy that predates the Second Vatican Council.

The pope said Mass celebrated according to the 1962 *Roman Missal* should be made available in every parish where groups of the faithful desire it—though he said the new *Roman Missal*, introduced in 1970, remains the ordinary way of Catholic worship.

November saw the release of the pope's second encyclical, "*Spe Salvi*" ("On Christian Hope"), which warned that without faith in God humanity lies at the mercy of ideologies that can lead to "the greatest forms of cruelty and violations of justice."

One brief and unexpected document came in June, when the pope stipulated that a two-thirds majority is always required to elect a new pope. The document did away with a more flexible rule that allowed for a simple majority election in case of an impasse.

The pope approved publication of other documents issued at the Vatican in 2007, including a text by the International Theological Commission that critiqued the traditional concept of limbo and said there are good reasons to hope that babies who die without being baptized go to heaven.

He traveled to Brazil in May, his first papal trip to Latin America and the longest journey of his pontificate.

Opening the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, he warned against inroads by secularism, threats against the family and an erosion of traditional Latin American values.

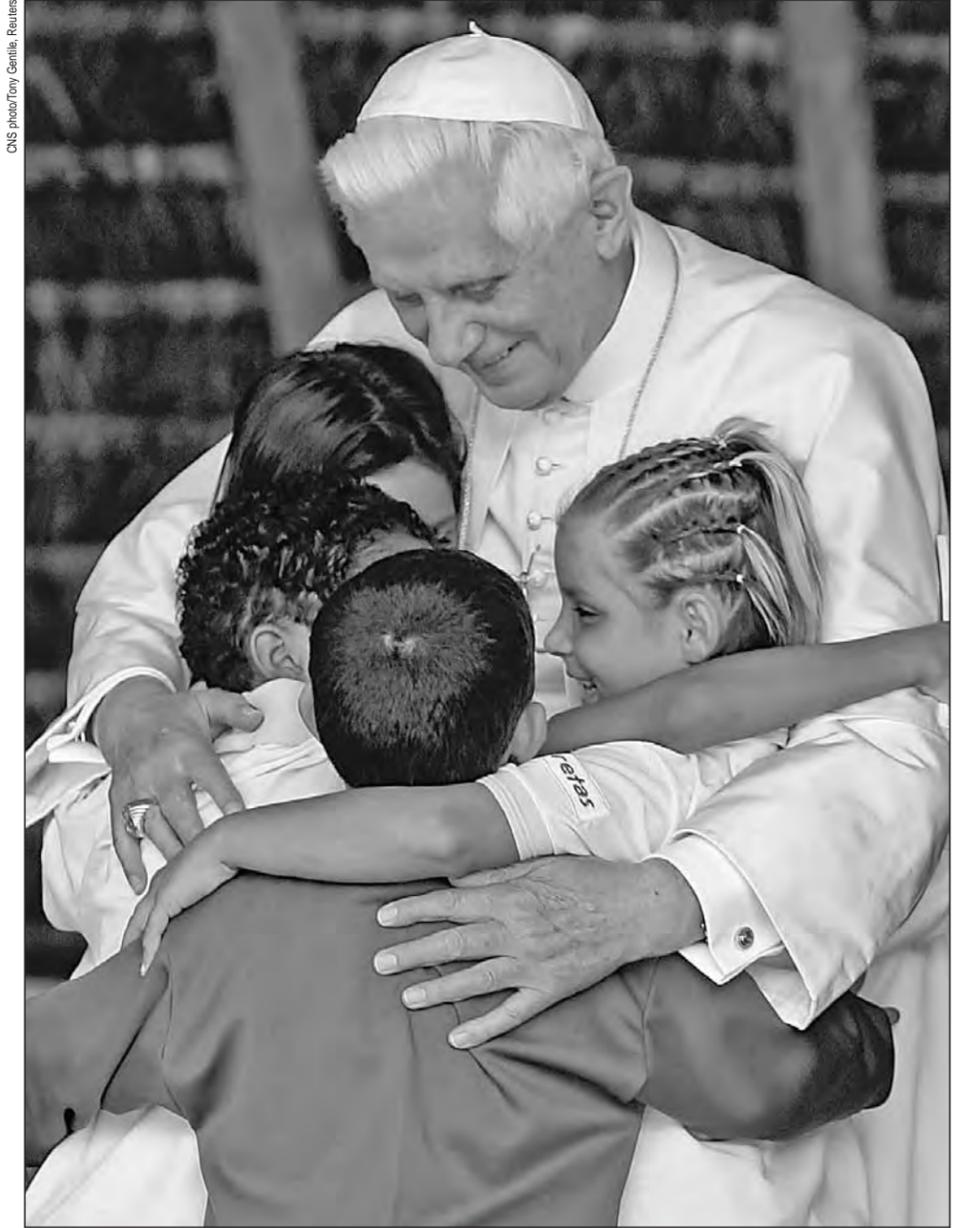
Visiting Austria in September, the pope prayed at a Marian shrine with tens of thousands of pilgrims. His Italian travels took him to Pavia, where he prayed at the tomb of St. Augustine, to Assisi in the footsteps of St. Francis, and to Naples for the opening of an interreligious conference.

The pope continued to gradually replace Roman Curia officials, but his most important set of appointments came this fall when he named 23 new cardinals. Those receiving the red hat in a November consistory included two Americans: Cardinal John P. Foley, head of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, and Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston.

In June, the pope met Bush for the first time for talks that focused on the precarious situation of Christians in Iraq and other conflicts in the Middle East. The Vatican took the opportunity to express the hope for a negotiated settlement to "the conflicts and crises that are tormenting the region."

On other issues, the pope and the

## 2007 YEAR IN REVIEW



Pope Benedict XVI embraces a group of children during his visit to a Franciscan-run drug rehabilitation center in Guaratingueta, Brazil, on May 12. It was the first of two trips outside Italy the pope made in 2007. In September, he visited Austria, celebrating Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Marizell.



Father Edward Yew distributes Communion during a Tridentine Mass at St. Therese Church in Collinsville, Okla., in September. Pope Benedict XVI this year allowed for greater use of the Latin-language liturgy that predates the Second Vatican Council.

## Vatican paper says *The Golden Compass* lacks hope and leaves viewers feeling cold

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican newspaper criticized the movie *The Golden Compass*, saying the film depicts a fantasy world that is without emotion, without hope and without love.

In that sense, the movie reflects the anti-Christian ideology of Philip Pullman, the author of the book on which the movie is based, the newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, said in a review on Dec. 18.

"It's a film that leaves one cold because it brings with it the coldness and the desperation of rebellion, solitude and individualism," the newspaper said.

"In the world of Pullman, hope simply doesn't exist, in part because there is no salvation, but only personal, individualistic capacity to control the situation and dominate events," it said.

The movie has provoked controversy in the United States. Some critics have said the film is anti-religious, for example, in its depiction of a pseudo-religious dictatorship known as the "Magisterium." Others have said that even if the film is not explicitly anti-Christian, it may lead young people to read Pullman's books and be exposed to his atheistic agenda.

The Vatican newspaper said it was clear from interviews

that Pullman despises religion and that his books are based on an atheistic ideology.

The movie, it said, shows the result of such an ideology: a world in which love is missing. As a result, the film has an emptiness and is "very far away from humanity," it said.

In the movie, human freedom is depicted as doing what one wants without obeying anyone's orders, it said. Emotions are absent, even when the young protagonist finds her father. It is a world in which machines count more than human life, it said.

"The spectator of this film, if he is honest and gifted with a critical spirit, will feel no particular emotion, except for a great coldness—which is not only due to the polar scenes," it said.

All this seems to confirm that "when God is pushed off the horizon, everything is made smaller, sadder, colder and less human," it said.

The article noted that *The Golden Compass* was not faring as well as expected at the box office, and said it appeared this could block plans for cinema adaptations of the other books in Pullman's trilogy, titled *His Dark Materials*.

"If that should happen, it wouldn't be a big loss," it said. †

president examined moral and religious questions, including "the defense and promotion of life, marriage and the family," the Vatican said.

The pope enhanced the Vatican agency that coordinates relations with Muslims, appointing Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran as head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

In October, 138 Muslim experts wrote a letter to the pontiff calling for new dialogue efforts based on the shared belief in one God, in God's love for humanity and in people's obligation to love one another. In response, the pope invited a varied group of Muslim scholars to meet with him and Vatican experts sometime next year.

The Vatican's saintmakers were busy in 2007 with 17 beatification liturgies. The pope canonized five people, including a Franciscan friar who was Brazil's first native-born saint.

One papal priority that rarely made

headlines was his weekly audience talk. In 2007, the pope focused on early Christian witnesses and theologians, in essence continuing his version of Church History 101.

Throughout the year, the pope and Vatican offices gave increased attention to environmental concerns. Global warming was the subject of a Vatican-sponsored conference, and at the United Nations the Vatican's representative said protecting the environment was a "moral imperative."

The pope also spoke repeatedly about the moral responsibility to respect creation and share resources. In Austria, he even proposed that Sunday be considered not just a day of rest, but as "the Church's weekly feast of creation."

The Vatican also collaborated in a reforestation project in Hungary designed to offset carbon emissions from Vatican City, and announced it would install solar panels to meet the energy needs of its audience hall. †

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# 'Deeper Waters'

## The Long Loneliness of social activist Dorothy Day

By Julie McCarty

Years ago, when I was teaching fifth-grade students in a Catholic school, a priest came to speak with our class about vocations.

During the question-and-answer period, one boy blurted out, "Do you ever get lonely?"



Julie McCarty

Without missing a beat, the priest responded, "Sure I do—but everyone gets lonely sometimes."

Turning to me, he said, "Isn't that true, Mrs. McCarty? Don't even married people get lonely?"

Frankly, I hadn't given it much thought, but I found myself agreeing with him aloud. Who was I to contradict a priest, especially in front of the children?

Now, in midlife, I heartily agree. All of us feel lonely now and then—for grandchildren living far away, for friends or relatives who have passed away or for hoped-for spouse or children who never materialized. Christmas-time, with its great expectations and memories of Christmas Past, may be an even more difficult time for those who feel alone.

When I feel the pinch of loneliness, one person who comforts me is 20th-century Catholic convert Dorothy Day.

Despite being a social activist, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and a woman of prayer, Dorothy Day endured loneliness so many times that her autobiography is titled *The Long Loneliness*.

In her young adult life, Dorothy experienced five long months of loneliness when she first moved to New York.

"In all that great city of seven million," she wrote, "I found no friends; I had no work; I was separated from my fellows."

Not having been raised in any particular faith tradition, Dorothy led a wild lifestyle in her early adult years, something akin to the wild youth of St. Francis of Assisi or St. Augustine.

As a result, Dorothy conceived a child out of

wedlock. Because the child's father threatened to leave her if she didn't get an abortion, she aborted her baby—something Dorothy would deeply regret for the rest of her life. Her lover abandoned her anyway, leaving her with a double loss.

A couple of relationships later, Dorothy was happy to discover that once again she was carrying the miracle of life within her. At the same time, she was growing more and more interested in the Catholic faith, and wanted to have her baby baptized. Again, the man she loved threatened to leave her unless she had an abortion.

This time, Dorothy found the inner courage to have her baby, a little girl named Tamar, despite her lover's threats and the stigma of being an unwed mother.

As a result, the man she loved left her—but she gained a daughter and the two were baptized Catholic.

Loneliness was woven like a thread through Dorothy's life even after becoming Catholic. Living in a time when unwed motherhood was considered scandalous, some people criticized her way of life.

In those days, few people would have understood the challenges that single parents face in juggling the demands of work, parenting, church attendance, prayer and service to others. Additionally, Dorothy received criticism about her moral positions and even spent time in jail more than once for taking a stand.

Despite the unpleasantness of loneliness, it can become a catalyst for reaching out to others who suffer, just as Dorothy Day did again and again.

We can build community or "family" in new places. We can look to comfort others who feel loneliness. In the process, we can also view loneliness as an opportunity to deepen our reliance upon God's love and mercy.

When we feel lonely, abandoned or rejected, we can take heart that Jesus, too, knew these experiences.

Surely he felt loneliness when his family thought him crazy (Mk 3:21), his friend was in the tomb (Jn 11:35), people rejected his



Police and farmworkers flank Catholic Worker founder Dorothy Day, seated in a farmworkers picket line in Lamont, Calif., in 1973. She was arrested that day for violating an injunction limiting picketing. Day was chosen by a group of Church historians and theologians as the 20th century's most outstanding lay Catholic.

teachings about the Eucharist (Jn 6:66) or his hometown residents tried to kill him (Lk 4:29).

On the night before Jesus died, when he most wanted companionship, his friends fell asleep. On the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; cf. Mt 27:46).

In chapter 14 of John's Gospel, Jesus promises us that loneliness is not a permanent condition: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. ... In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. ... I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be" (Jn 14:1-3).

Christmas is not only a celebration of Christ's coming 2,000 years ago, but also a reminder that Christ will come again.

In heaven, sorrow and loneliness will cease for all will be embraced in the loving arms of God.

Come, Lord Jesus!

### Reflection questions

- Which people in my life might be experiencing loneliness? How might I reach out to them?
- When I feel lonely, what positive things might I do to take care of myself?
- Can you think of other times when Jesus may have felt lonely?

To learn more about Dorothy Day, read:  
 • *The Long Loneliness* by Dorothy Day,  
 • *Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her* by Rosalie G. Riegler,  
 • *Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day* by Jim Forest.

(Julie McCarty is a syndicated columnist and author of *The Pearl of Great Price: Gospel Wisdom for Christian Marriage, Liturgical Press*. Readers can contact McCarty via her Web site at [www.juliemccarty.com](http://www.juliemccarty.com).) †

## Vatican recruits 'spiritual mothers' to pray for priests, vocations

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With a letter to the world's bishops and a 40-page illustrated brochure, the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy is encouraging eucharistic adoration for the holiness of priests and is recruiting "spiritual mothers" to pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood.

The project, launched on Dec. 8, aims to highlight the link between the Eucharist and the priesthood as well as Mary's special role as the mother of every priest, said a letter from the congregation's top officials.

Cardinal Claudio Hummes, congregation prefect, and Archbishop Mauro Piacenza, congregation secretary, said that as part of a wider effort to address the challenges facing priests today, they wanted to promote

perpetual eucharistic adoration "for the reparation of faults and sanctification of priests."

But they also hoped to promote "a commitment on the part of consecrated feminine souls," who, following the example of Mary, "might wish to spiritually adopt priests in order to help them with their self-offering, prayer and penance."

The letter asked bishops to promote in their dioceses "a movement of prayer" centered on perpetual eucharistic adoration and involving priests, religious and laypeople.

They said they hoped that "a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, praise, petition and reparation will be raised to God incessantly and from every corner of the earth."

The 40-page brochure, "Adoration,

Reparation, Spiritual Motherhood for Priests," was focused specifically on encouraging women to pray for priests.

"The vocation to be a spiritual mother for priests" is not well-known enough and so it is seldom practiced even though it is "fundamental and vitally important," said the brochure, prepared by Archbishop Piacenza.

The brochure ends with the story of the Mater Ecclesiae cloistered convent established by Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in 1994 as a center for contemplative nuns who would pray constantly for the pope and his ministry. "Through this initiative, John Paul II made a very clear statement to the whole world about the indispensable importance of silent prayer and hidden sacrifice for our modern and hectic

world," it said.

Benedictine Mother Maria Sofia Cicchetti, prioress of the Mater Ecclesiae community, is quoted in the brochure as saying, "We know that we have been called to become spiritual mothers in our silent and hidden life. Priests and seminarians have a privileged place as our spiritual sons, as do all of those who turn to us asking for support in their priestly life and ministry, in the trials and anxieties they encounter."

(Editor's note: The English translation of the letter and brochure are available at [www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2007-12/07-999999/Adoration\\_for\\_priests.pdf](http://www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2007-12/07-999999/Adoration_for_priests.pdf).) †

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# Catholic schools play a positive role in new drug report

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Although it was somewhat overshadowed by former Sen. George Mitchell's Dec. 13 report detailing drug use among dozens of Major League Baseball players, another report released earlier in the week had better news about drug use among middle and high school students.

The annual Monitoring the Future survey of eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders found that the percentage of students reporting illicit drug use in the past month is continuing a decline that began in 2001.

The percentage of those in the three grades who said they had used any illicit drug—including marijuana, Ecstasy, LSD, amphetamines, inhalants, methamphetamine, steroids, cocaine, heroin, alcohol and cigarettes—in the past month went from 19.4 percent in 2001 to 14.8 percent in 2007, a 24 percent drop. The decline was most dramatic among eighth-graders, but was also seen among those in 10th and 12th grades.

The 2007 study involved 48,025 eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders in a nationally representative sample of 403 public and private schools.

At a Dec. 11 White House event for release of the Monitoring the Future study, President George W. Bush met with law enforcement and other government officials, former teen drug abusers and the heads of faith-based and community organizations that work to help them. Also, there were representatives of schools where random drug testing of the student body has made a difference, including De La Salle High School in Kenner, La., near New Orleans.

In 1998, the 500-student school run by the Christian Brothers became one of the first schools in the country to require random drug testing for the entire student body. Initial test results found that as many as 20 percent of

the students had used drugs or alcohol, but the number quickly plunged as the program continued.

When the program was briefly suspended after Hurricane Katrina, the percentage of students found to have used drugs or alcohol went up, but the numbers came back down when testing resumed, school administrators reported.

Joshua Lavarine Jr., a 16-year-old De La Salle junior, told the president that the drug-testing program helps students resist peer pressure.

"If someone offers you drugs and you don't have any reason to say no, you can say that my school drug-tests and if I take drugs

I am at risk of getting expelled," Lavarine said. "You have a reason, and no one looks down on you."

The 2007-08 De La Salle student handbook says, "The main goal of De La Salle's drug screening is to ensure that the school is a safe learning environment. Out of concern for all the students and the larger community of New Orleans, De La Salle seeks to deter any serious drug problem by helping to ensure that no student at the school is

using illegal drugs."

Each student receives a hair-analysis drug test at least once during the school year. Once a student has been tested, his or her name is returned to the pool for possible selection again. A positive drug test is followed by a conference with parents and counseling is recommended; a second positive test results in expulsion.

The De La Salle policy also deals with another aspect of the drug problem—the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications.

The Monitoring the Future survey,

*'The goal is to deal with this as a public health problem and not a policing problem. And above all, to prevent.'*

—Bertha Madras, deputy director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Catholics move to end Illinois funds for embryonic stem-cell research

ROMEDEVILLE, Ill. (CNS)—In light of new scientific evidence demonstrating how primitive embryonic-like stem cells can be created without destroying human embryos, the Catholic Conference of Illinois is pushing for new legislation to end state-sanctioned funding of embryonic stem-cell research through the Illinois Regenerative Medicine Institute.

"Human embryos should not be used in any type of research, and that should be in the law," said Zach Wichmann, associate director of education for the conference, the public policy arm for the state's Catholic bishops.

In addition to being immoral, he said, there is no scientific reason to continue using embryos.

"We think now that science has progressed to a point where it seems that embryonic stem-cell research is no longer necessary—that we can ban that procedure," Wichmann told the *Catholic Explorer*, Joliet diocesan newspaper, in a telephone interview from his Springfield office.

Recently, two research studies independently confirmed that ordinary skin cells can be genetically reprogrammed to work as effectively as embryonic stem cells.

Wichmann said the new research poses no moral conflict since human embryos are not needed.

Dr. Patrick Stiff, director of Loyola's Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center in Maywood, said genetically manipulating a patient's own skin cells to regenerate new tissues eliminates any chance of rejection or the need for powerful anti-rejection drugs.

Speaking with the *Explorer* on the telephone, he said, "It's the ideal way of getting enough cells for anybody."

Stiff, a member of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Naperville, has done extensive work using adult stem cells from umbilical-cord blood to successfully treat

cancer.

Since 2003, the Illinois conference has battled to prevent Illinois from funding research using human embryos.

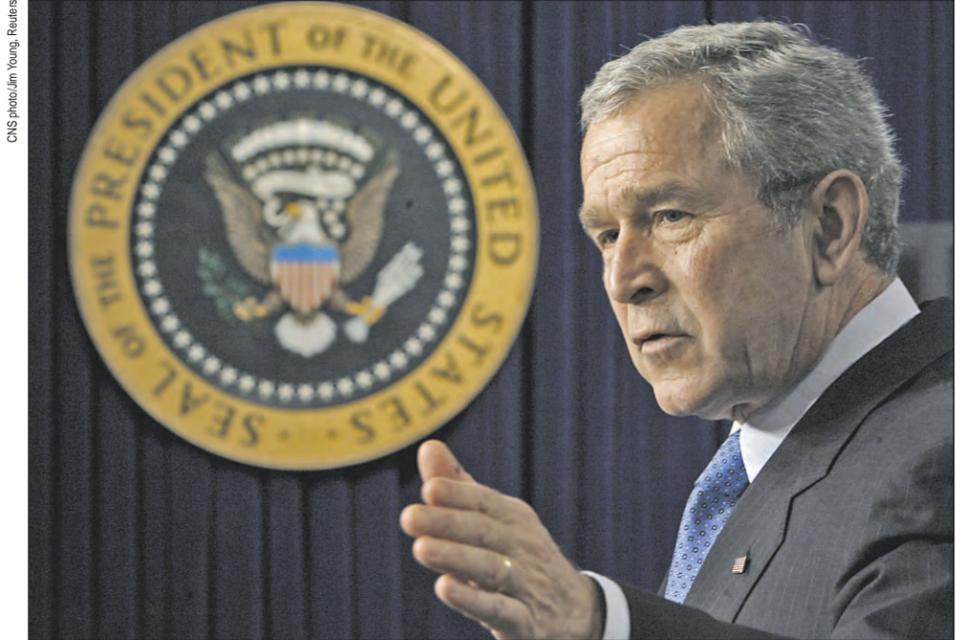
Two years ago, without the approval of the Illinois General Assembly, Gov. Rod Blagojevich used an executive order to create and fund the Illinois Regenerative Medicine Institute. The institute provides grants for adult and embryonic stem-cell research along with research on therapeutic human cloning which seeks to replicate embryonic stem-cell lines. This year, however, the General Assembly voted to approve the institute.

The Catholic conference has started gathering support for legislation preventing the institute from supporting research that destroys or clones human embryos. However, Wichmann stressed that the conference does not oppose the institute's funding of adult stem-cell research.

According to a statement issued by the Loyola University Medical Center, Stiff received \$1.4 million from the Illinois Regenerative Medicine Institute in 2006 to investigate ways of growing "both blood stem cells and immune cells from cord-blood stem cells outside the body."

Wichmann said he expects resistance to the proposed legislation. "It's not something that is going to happen overnight. It's going to take time and a lot of discussion and a lot of work, no doubt."

Stiff disputed an assertion by Richard Murphy, interim president of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, that research involving human embryos will be needed to test the safety of the reprogrammed cells. Murphy said human embryonic stem cells remain the "gold standard" because of their pluripotency, their capacity to become any type of human cell. †



U.S. President George W. Bush addresses a national summit on teen drug use in Washington on Dec. 11.

conducted by the University of Michigan for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, found that the use of prescription sedatives, tranquilizers and narcotic drugs, such as OxyContin and Vicodin, are holding steady, resisting the downward trend. The abuse of over-the-counter cough and cold medications—first introduced into the study in 2006—also saw little improvement.

"Unauthorized sale of, purchase of, irresponsible use of and/or distribution of prescription and/or over-the-counter medication is considered a violation of the school's drug policy," the De La Salle handbook says.

No firm numbers are available on how many schools—public or private—require students to undergo random drug testing. Some mandate it only for student athletes or those who participate in other extracurricular activities, while others include all students.

Notre Dame Sister Mary Frances Taymans, who is executive director of the secondary schools department at the National Catholic Educational Association in Washington, said on Dec. 14 that she did not

know how many Catholic schools have student drug testing or how many get federal funds for it.

But the programs she has heard about "take a counseling approach" and aim to provide "whatever support that young person needs" through the combined resources of the family, the community and the school.

"There's no disciplinary action" unless the student tests positive for drugs in a second test, she added.

Bertha Madras, deputy director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, said in April that 497 schools nationwide receive federal funding for drug testing and another 500 do testing without federal aid. Her office has made about \$35 million available in grants to public and private schools for drug testing since 2003, she said.

"The goal is to deal with this as a public health problem and not a policing problem," Madras told a regional gathering of educators from 18 states. "And above all, to prevent." †



Photos by Mary Ann Wyard

### Senior Mass

Roncalli High School seniors Leo Zheng, left, of Indianapolis and Nick Meyer, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, pray during the Senior Mass celebrated by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein on Dec. 10 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Seniors from private and inter-parochial Catholic high schools in the archdiocese gathered for worship with the archbishop and assisted with the liturgy as lectors, gift bearers and musicians.



# Pope says joy of Christmas season comes from Jesus' presence

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Consecrating a new parish church, blessing figurines of the Baby Jesus and reciting the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square, Pope Benedict XVI said the joy of the holiday season comes from knowing Jesus is present among people and can work through them.

The pope began on Dec. 16 by blessing Rome's new Our Lady of the Rosary Church, sprinkling the building with holy water, filling its corners with incense smoke and anointing its altar with oil.

While the third Sunday of Advent, which is called *Gaudete* Sunday, includes a special invitation to rejoice, he said, "in truth, all of Advent is a call to joy because 'the Lord is coming,' because he comes to save us."

Preparing for Christmas, the pope said, the Mass readings "constantly repeat that we must wake from the sleep of habit and mediocrity; we must abandon sadness and discouragement; we must strengthen our hearts because

the Lord is near."

Pope Benedict told the parishioners that all their hard work and sacrifice in building the church and worrying over every detail should be a symbol of the sacrifice and care with which they prepare their hearts for the Lord's coming and their lives for living as Christians.

"The living community is more sacred than the material temple we consecrate," the pope said. "And to build this living, spiritual temple—which is you—there is need for much prayer" and active participation in the liturgy, catechesis, and the charitable and cultural activities that the parish offers.

"May the care we show for the material building—sprinkling it with holy water, anointing it with oil and filling it with incense—be a sign and a stimulus for a more intense care in defending and promoting the temple of the person, which is formed by you, dear parishioners," Pope Benedict said.

Returning to the Vatican for the midday recitation of the Angelus, the pope told people in St. Peter's Square that the joy of Advent and Christmas comes from knowing that God, in Jesus Christ, became one of us.

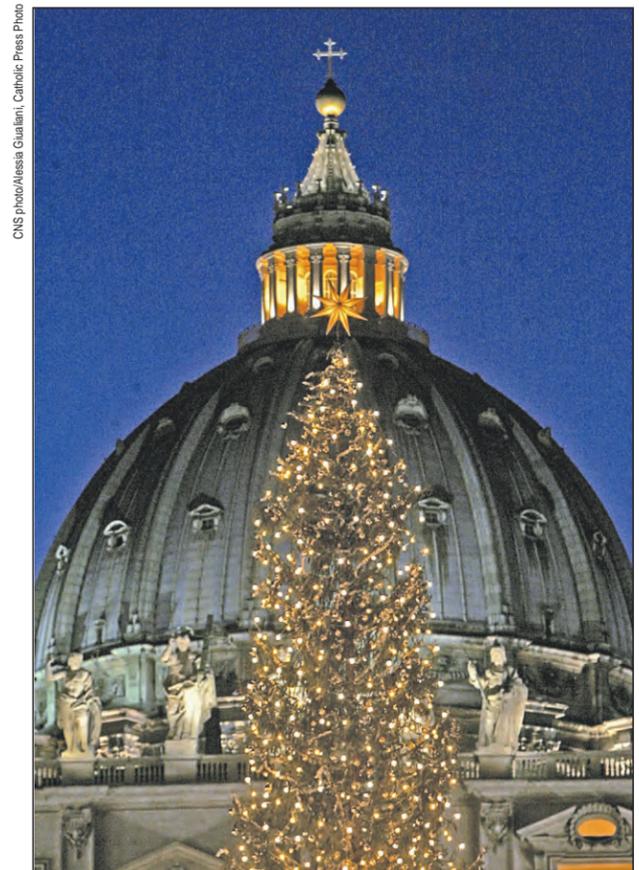
"Christian joy arises from this certainty: God is near, he is with me, he is with us in joy and sorrow, in health and sickness, as a friend and faithful spouse," the pope said.

Pope Benedict said the fact that Christian joy remains despite sorrow and struggle can be seen in the life of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who had long periods of feeling that God had abandoned her, but she continued to smile and to take God's love to the poor and the dying.

"Yes, joy enters the hearts of those who place themselves at the service of the small and the poor. In those who love that way, God takes up residence and the soul rejoices," he said.

"If, instead, one makes happiness an idol, he takes the wrong path, and the joy of which Jesus speaks is truly difficult to find," the pope said.

At the end of the audience, Pope Benedict blessed statues of the Baby Jesus that children brought to the



An 86-foot Christmas tree is seen lit against the backdrop of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 14.

square in preparation for placing them in Nativity scenes at home and at school.

While he wished the children a Merry Christmas, he asked their parents, priests and teachers "to collaborate with enthusiasm for the Christian education of the little ones." †

Pope Benedict XVI greets a baby at Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Rome on Dec. 16. The pope consecrated the new parish church.



CNS photo/Chris Helgren, Reuters

# Church official says Christians will keep hold on the Holy Land

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Despite severe economic challenges and political tensions, Christians in Israel and the Palestinian territories will continue to hold on to the Holy Land "with our fingernails" if need be, said the head of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

While the number of Catholics in Israel remains stable, the number of Christians in the Palestinian territories and the surrounding lands continues to plummet, said Franciscan Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, superior of more than 300 Franciscans who provide pastoral care at the Christian holy sites.

The Franciscan priest spoke with journalists at the Vatican on Dec. 17 in conjunction with the release of "Terra Sancta: Guardians of Salvation's Sources," a three-hour DVD about the Franciscan Custody dubbed in eight languages, including English, Spanish and Arabic.

Father Pierbattista said there were about 120,000 Christians left in Israel and the Palestinian territories. About half of them are Catholic and the vast majority are Palestinians.

The Catholic schools, especially in the Palestinian territories, are a key resource not

only for educating children, but also for keeping families rooted in their faith and for promoting peaceful coexistence between Catholics and Muslims, he said.

Since the late 1940s, he said, Catholic schools in the region have welcomed Muslim students.

Where Christians and Muslims live side by side and where their children study together, the Franciscan said, it is easier to promote interreligious dialogue and respect for the belief of others.

"The situation is completely different with the Jewish community," he said.

"Israelis do not need our schools or hospitals, but dialogue is equally important.

"This is an area where we need to invest more effort," he said. "We have an obligation to dialogue."

On an ecumenical level, he said, "there is a 'dialogue of the condominium,' because we literally live under the same roof," sharing space in several of Christianity's holiest sites, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where tradition says Jesus was buried.

But political uncertainty and the serious economic challenges coming from an unemployment rate hovering around

CNS photo/Amr Awad, Reuters



A man holds a child as he lights a candle in the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank town of Bethlehem on Dec. 16.

40 percent are forcing Christians to leave the territories, he said.

"In 1967, Christians formed the majority of Bethlehem's population," Father Pierbattista said. "Today it is less than 10 percent."

The fact that 2007 marked a boom in pilgrims to the Holy Land, including Bethlehem, has helped ease the suffering somewhat, he said, because most Christians work in jobs connected to the tourist trade.

For Church personnel working in Israel, there is still a problem with obtaining visas, especially if the priest or religious comes from an Arab country, although Father Pierbattista said some new visas were issued just before Christmas.

Archbishop Antonio Veglio, secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Eastern Churches, said the Vatican nuncio to Israel was scheduled to meet on Dec. 18 with Israeli officials to try to further ease the visa situation. †

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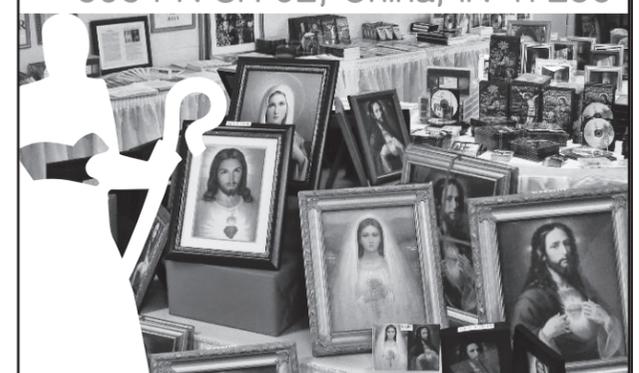
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## CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT

# Christmas Eve in the country

By Sean Gallagher

SHELBY COUNTY—A small brick church stands like a faithful witness amid the fallow wintertime fields. Lights from nearby homes and farmhouses dot the landscape that is slowly being covered by a dark, nighttime sky.

Cars filled with worshipers wind their way through the country roads to St. Vincent de Paul Church in rural Shelby County.

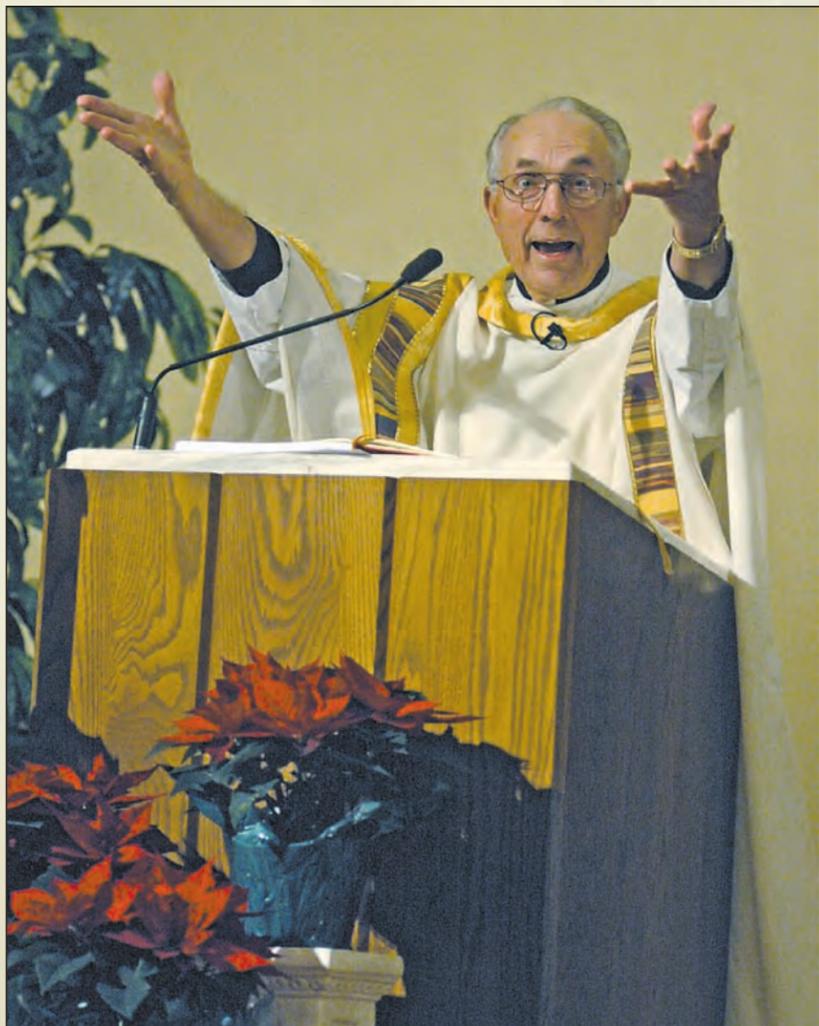
It's Christmas Eve 2006.

Everyone has finished their Christmas shopping. Throughout the season of Advent, they may have set aside a moment here or there to contemplate and prepare for Christ's future coming in glory.

Now, as they open the doors to the church and go from the darkness of an early winter night into the glow of warm lights inside, they kneel in prayer beside their family, friends and fellow parishioners.

In the hour to come, young children will show their love for Jesus. Adults, perhaps filled with the youthful joy that is a hallmark of Christmas, will listen to the proclamation of God's Word and take part in the Eucharist, the sacrifice of love that is the reason that Christ came into the world.

It is time to welcome the Christ child, the Word-made-flesh, once again. †



Father Paul Landwerlen, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, shows his Christmas joy during the homily he preached during a Christmas Eve Mass celebrated in his parish's church on Dec. 24, 2006.



Cody Smiley, a St. Vincent de Paul parishioner, carries a drawing of a crown to the front of his parish church during a Christmas pageant prior to the Christmas Eve Mass.



After the Mass is over, St. Vincent de Paul parishioner Dustin Roell talks with his daughter, Jillian, about the Nativity scene at his parish's church.



Charles Collins, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, holds his granddaughter, Lindsey Pahl, as he awaits the start of Christmas Eve Mass on Dec. 24, 2006.



St. Vincent de Paul parishioner Carol Shaw kneels in prayer during the Christmas Eve Mass.

# The Christmas story as Joseph might have written about it

By John F. Fink

Every now and then, archaeologists discover something from the time that Jesus lived.

Let's suppose that the following letter was discovered below the ancient church in the Arab village of El-Qoubeybeh (pronounced "L-Co-baby") seven miles from Jerusalem.

The village is believed to be the Emmaus to which two disciples were walking when Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection (Lk 24:13-35). One of the disciples was Cleopas, and the church is built over what is believed to be his home.

Some scholars believe that Cleopas was the brother of Joseph, Mary's husband. It was probably his wife—whom John's Gospel calls "Mary the wife of Clopas"—who stood with Mary at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified (Jn 19:25).

Dear Cleopas,

Yes, after all this time it is I, Joseph. I am sorry it has been so long since you last heard from me, and I am sure you are surprised to be getting a letter from Egypt.

So much has happened since my Mary and I last saw you and your wife, Mary, at our wedding in Nazareth. I thought it was about time that I wrote to you with news.

The best news is that our baby, whom we named Jesus, was born. I apologize for being so late in telling you about that. I am writing now, though belatedly, to explain just how marvelous God has been to us.

I did not tell anyone during our wedding ceremony, but Mary was already more than three months pregnant at the time. And no, I am not the father of her child. Obviously, there would have been no sin if I was because our betrothal, the real wedding, had taken place earlier, but the fact is that I am not Jesus' biological father. Few people know that.

Shortly after our betrothal, Mary told me that she had to visit her aunt, Elizabeth, because Elizabeth, despite her age, was pregnant. Mary was gone for three months and, after she returned, I learned that she also was with child.

Needless to say, I was shocked. Mary is the holiest person I have ever known, and it was hard for me to imagine that she would be unfaithful to me. We had, in fact, agreed that we would not have sexual relations during our marriage and that she would remain a virgin. But now, since she was with child, she apparently had had sexual relations with a man.

Mary explained that an angel appeared to her. I know this will be hard for you to believe, but this is what Mary said. The angel, whose name was Gabriel, told her that, of all the women in the world and throughout all the centuries, she had been chosen to be the mother of a man who would be known as the Son of the Most High and who would reign over the house of Jacob forever.

Mary told me that she asked the angel how that could happen since, as I said, she and I had agreed that she would remain a virgin. Gabriel said that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the child would be called the Son of God.

That is also when the angel told her that Elizabeth was six months pregnant. I had wondered how she knew about that, but had assumed that she received a letter from Elizabeth.

Mary then agreed to do what the angel asked. She replied, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me as you have said" (Lk 1:38).

The angel left her, and she immediately made plans to go to Judea to help Elizabeth.

When she got back and told me that she was with child, I did not know what to do. If I accused her of adultery, she could have been stoned to death in accordance with Scripture (Dt 22:21-23). I certainly did not want that to happen. Finally, I decided that the best thing to do was to divorce her quietly.

That is what I planned to do when an angel appeared to me, too, in a dream. You have to believe me, Cleopas, since this would not be the last time this angel appeared to me.

He told me that I should not be afraid to take Mary into

my home because it was indeed as Mary had said—the child was conceived through the Holy Spirit.

I was greatly relieved. It is not that I doubted Mary's story as that I was simply perplexed at how it could be. I had never heard of a virgin conceiving a child, and I suppose it took a visit from an angel to convince me that it was true.

The angel, by the way, told me to call the child Jesus "because he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:19-21). The angel had earlier told Mary the same thing (Lk 1:31).

As you know, Cleopas, we went ahead with the second stage of our wedding—the celebration during which I brought Mary into my home. We were glad that you and your Mary were able to be present to help us celebrate our marriage.

Shortly before it was time for Mary to deliver Jesus, Caesar Augustus ordered that census. That meant that I had to go to Bethlehem, the home of our ancestors, to be enrolled. We thought that you might be there at the same time, but apparently you had already been there, registered and returned to Emmaus. Of course, you did not have as far to travel as we did.

Mary insisted on going along because she knew that Jesus was meant to be born in Bethlehem. While she was visiting Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, they had access to the Scriptures and they discovered a passage that said, "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel" (Mt 2:6).

Mary believed that the census was God's way of providing the reason for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem.

I walked the four-day trip to Bethlehem, and Mary rode on our donkey. Once we got to Bethlehem, I had a difficult time finding a place where Mary could have her privacy since so many of our cousins were there for the census. We eventually found a dry cave that was used as a stable. We were able to have our donkey put up in the stable, and there was also an ox there.

And that is where Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

Not long after his birth, we had some visitors. Shepherds had been tending their flocks at night when, they said, an angel appeared to them—probably Gabriel again—and told them that "a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord" (Lk 2:11). He told them how to find us in the cave. Then, they said, a whole multitude of angels appeared and were singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Lk 2:12-14).

Naturally, we had Jesus circumcised when he was eight days old. By that time, I had been able to find a house for us since most of those who had come to Bethlehem to register had returned to their homes.

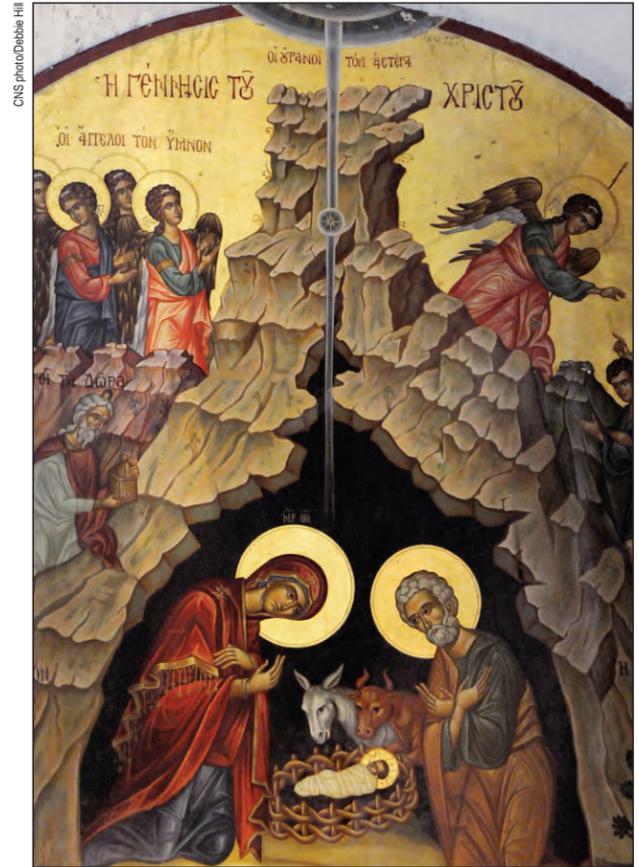
We decided to remain in Bethlehem until it was time for Mary's purification 40 days after Jesus' birth, as prescribed by Scripture (Lv 12:2-8). I managed to find some work as a carpenter.

Since we were living only five miles from Jerusalem, we went to the Temple for the purification. After Mary purified herself, we went into the Temple and offered two pigeons. Since Jesus was our first-born son, we consecrated him to the law as Scripture requires us to do (Ex 13:2-12).

While we were there, an elderly man named Simeon recognized Jesus as the Messiah and said a prayer in which he told God that he could now take him because his eyes had seen God's salvation.

Also, an 84-year-old prophetess named Anna praised Jesus to all who were around. One sorrowful thing happened, though. Simeon told Mary that a sword will pierce her soul.

The shepherds were not the only visitors we had while we were living in Bethlehem. Some men from the East



Mary and Joseph kneel at the crib of the infant Christ in this icon from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the birth of Christ. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 13.

arrived at the house. They told Mary that they were magi, or astrologers, who were searching for the newborn king of the Jews because they had seen his star at its rising (Mt 2:1-2, 9-12).

They had been to Jerusalem, where they met with King Herod. He asked the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah was to be born, and they found the same passage that Mary had found in Scripture so Herod sent the magi to Bethlehem. I was surprised that they left valuable gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

That night, I had another dream. This time, the angel told me to get up immediately and flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus because Herod was about to search for Jesus and kill him! (Mt 2:13-14).

It was a nightmare journey, taking a week, through deserts where it was difficult to find water, and I worried that Herod's men might be chasing us.

They were not, of course, as we have just learned. I am sure you know more about what happened than we do, but word has just come that Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem to massacre all of the boys who were 2 years old or younger. The soldiers were not chasing us because they thought they had already killed Jesus (Mt 2:16).

So now we are in Egypt. We intend to stay here until Herod dies. When we return, I think we will go back to Nazareth. After the massacre of the babies in Bethlehem, we would not want to return there. Besides, it is too close to Jerusalem in case Archelaus succeeds his father, Herod. I think it would be best for us to go to Galilee.

We hope to see you soon. We will keep you in our prayers.

Your brother, Joseph

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

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# Reader's share favorite Christmas memories

## Neighbor's special present thrills girl with its magic

By Helen F. Welter  
Special to *The Criterion*

As a child, I was one in a family of seven children and my parents struggled to "make ends meet."

Our Christmas was small, and most of the gifts that Santa brought us were homemade.

However, one gift that we received each year, usually a few days before Christmas, was new and came from an older couple who lived next door to us.

Their only child was grown and had moved out of the city. Every year, these neighbors would wrap an individual gift for each of the seven of us—something bought in a store that we would never have thought of asking Santa to bring us.

One year, when I was about 6 years old, my gift was a small, child-size suitcase. Even today, 50-plus years later, I remember the shiny maroon leather-like grain of the case and the zipper that held

it closed.

When my grandmother died the following fall, I remember how proud I was to be able to carry my own little suitcase—none of my sisters had such a thing!—as we traveled to another city for her funeral.

I remember the delight it was to open that zipper and "check" to see that my clothing was still in place. That little suitcase became my own secret, magic bag that carried me to far-off imaginary places.

So now, many years later, as I wrap and send Christmas gifts to a child whose single Mom struggles to provide gifts to her daughter—who is about the age I was when I received that special gift—I recall the joy and pleasure of the wonderful present I received and hope that she, too, finds some secret magic in the gifts that I send to her.

(Helen F. Welter is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.) †

## Boy surprises family with solo at Christmas Eve Mass

By Mary Ann O'Riley Lassuy  
Special to *The Criterion*

My favorite Christmas memory happened many years ago. It was Christmas Eve in 1934.

A crystal clear sky was filled with bright, shiny stars, and a soft layer of freshly fallen snow covered the ground and lined the branches of the trees. It was magical.

Mom, Dad and the five of us children piled into our—even then—vintage car, a Durand, and headed for Remington, Ind., because our town of Wolcott, Ind., did not have a Catholic church.

Sacred Heart Parish had a school for first- through sixth-grade students. Our brother, Jim, attended the parish school.

We filed into the church and settled into our pew. The altar was decorated with flowers and candles.

The Christmas crèche was awaiting the arrival of Baby Jesus, who was to be placed in the manger by Father Fitzgerald.

The organist began playing the organ and a beautiful, young voice began singing "Silent Night" then "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Ave Maria." It was extraordinary.

My sister and I turned to see who the vocalist was and we were surprised to see that it was our little brother, who was then in the fourth-grade. Only he and our

mother knew of the "special surprise."

To top it off, there was a second surprise. When we turned around, sitting behind us were our grandparents, several uncles and our favorite aunt, who had driven through the snow from Hoopston, Ill., to share in the special surprise.

That multi-talented little boy grew up, went to war in Europe, came home and went to college, studied art in Chicago then music and dance in New York, and performed on Broadway as well as in Canada, Texas, and up and down the East Coast.

He finally gave up show business, came back to Indianapolis and became a mortician. Our three brothers were all morticians.

Finally, as we always thought he would, he entered the seminary. That little boy became Father James K. O'Riley. He served as God's servant in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for more than 25 years until he joined the celestial choir in 2004.

He filled our lives with prayer, joy, laughter and music—all starting with our "special surprise" at midnight Mass and our parents' decision to send Jim to Catholic school.

(Mary Ann O'Riley Lassuy is a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.) †

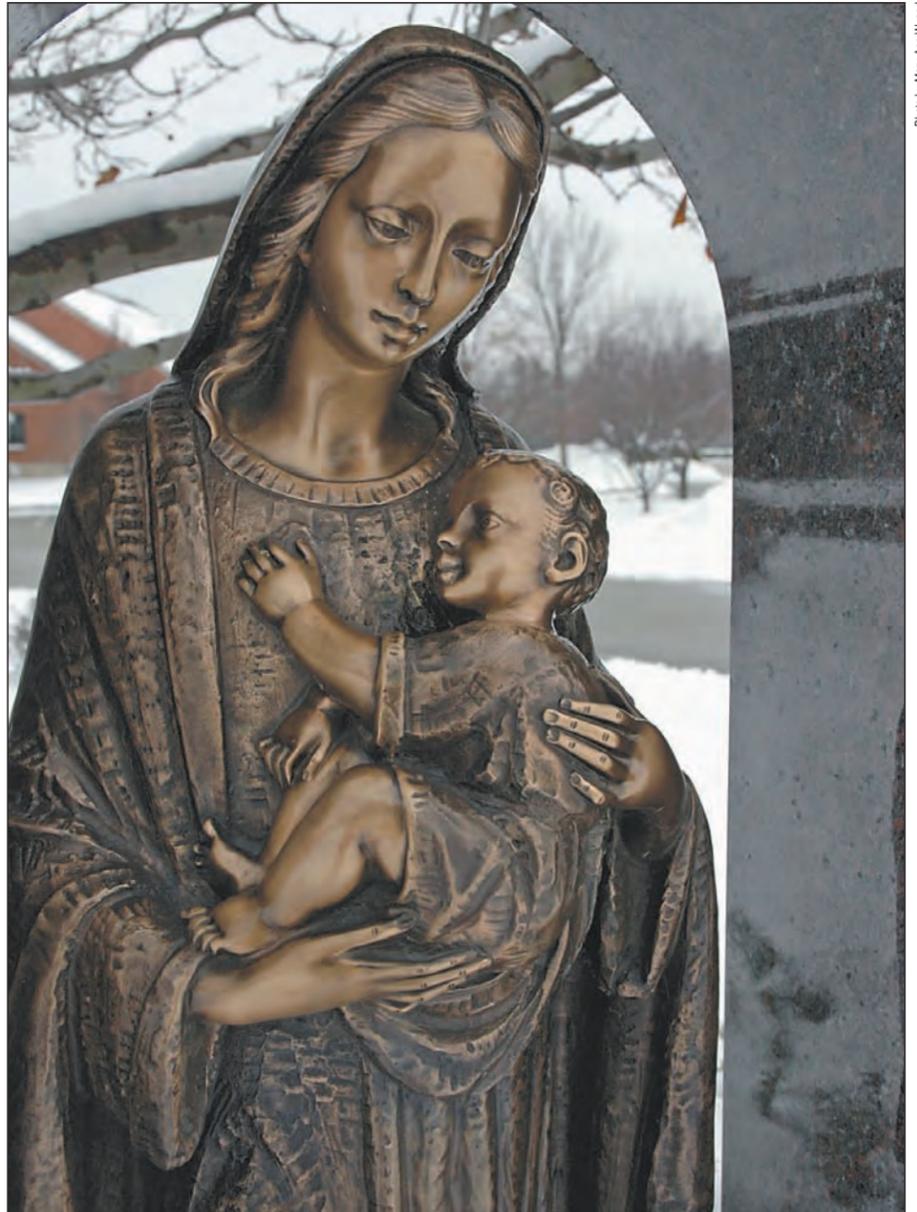


Photo by Mary Ann Ward

### Mother and Child

A bronze statue depicting the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child graces a gravesite at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis. Each section of the north side Catholic cemetery is named for a Marian image.



As we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, may this joyous season remind us anew of His enduring message of peace.



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# Child treasures memories of books, handmade gifts

By Bonnie Schott  
Special to *The Criterion*

When I was growing up in the 1950s and '60s in Indianapolis, my father was the janitor and school bus driver for St. Roch School first then Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and School for about 30 years.

Money was always tight as Mom tried to feed and clothe all 10 of us children on Dad's income and keep us in Catholic schools.

Looking back, Christmas must have been a challenge for her as she heard us pour out our heart's desires to Santa.

Even though she couldn't afford new dolls for us girls each year, she always found ways to sew beautiful new doll clothes for us from scraps of fabric that people gave her. She did the sewing after we went to bed so they would be a surprise for us on Christmas morning.

Sporting our little "overnight" suitcases of homemade doll clothes, we were the proud owners of miniature works of art, and didn't realize it until years later when we were trying to pull together memorable Christmases for our own families.

Growing up in Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, we lived near an early Goodwill Store, which was about a mile's walk north of our house. It was always an adventure to walk there with our mother and see what we could find for a nickel or two.

We would save up our earnings from redeeming glass Coca-Cola bottles found in the neighborhood then purchase some treasure at the Goodwill Store. I was always drawn to the toys and books.

Golden Books were a nickel each at the

Goodwill Store. I would get so excited if I could afford one or two, but in my heart I always wanted to get the whole big stack.

One Christmas, Santa surprised me with 20 used Golden Books from the Goodwill Store! I could hardly believe my eyes when I opened the gift. I knew that my Mom and Dad would have spent a whole dollar on just me to provide such a bountiful gift. Dollars were hard to come by in those days at our house.

I not only read the books to myself over and over, but also read them to my younger brothers and sisters as we played school, "house" and other imaginative activities.

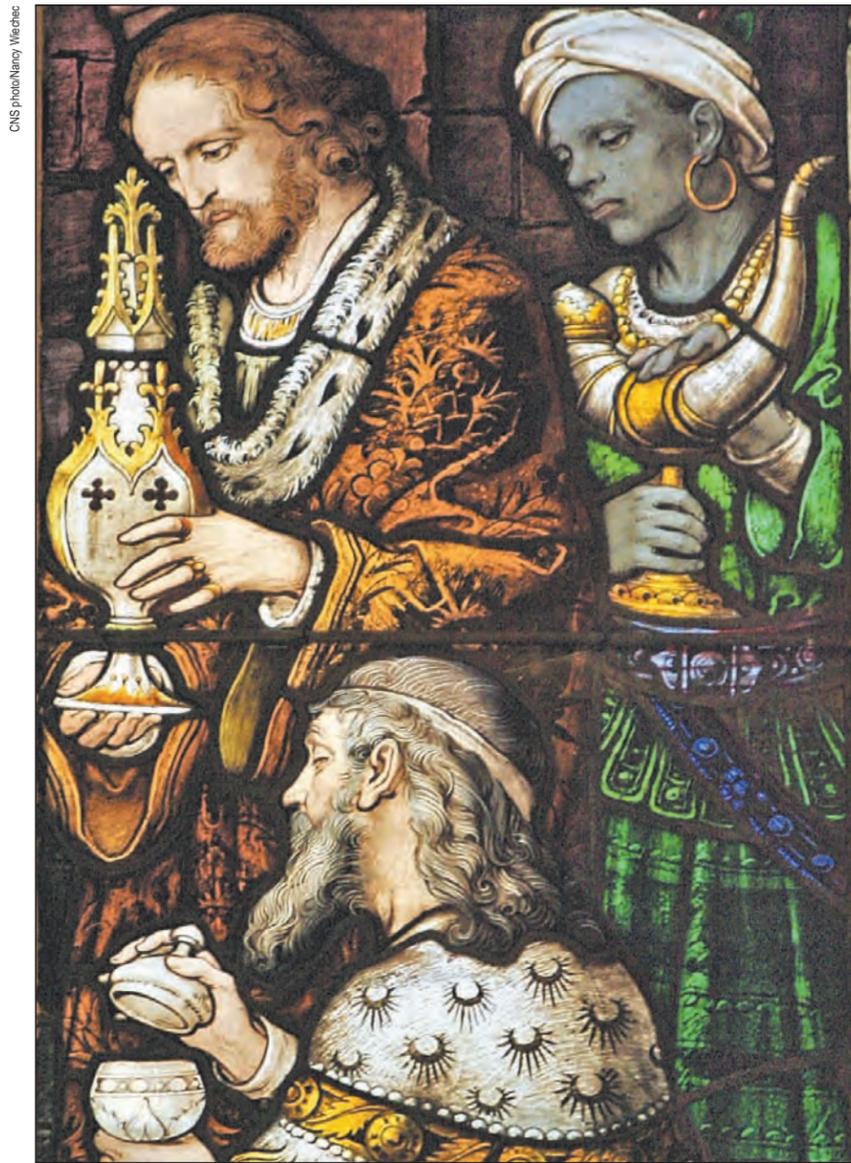
To this day, whenever I think of special Christmas gifts, I always remember my joy and surprise when I received those 20 precious children's books with their shiny gold bindings.

But more than that, I remember what a struggle it must have been for my Mom and Dad to provide Christmas presents for all of us.

And I thank God for all the generous Christmas Angels who reach out to the poor at Christmas every year and make dreams come true for children who would otherwise have nothing. Many of those Angels are my friends.

Now my Mom and Dad—Joseph and Hazel Burns—are enjoying "The Ultimate Christmas" in heaven with Jesus. May God reward them for the hard work and sacrifices they made for so many years to take care of our family.

(Bonnie Burns Schott is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis.) †



## Visit of Magi

The visit of the Magi is portrayed in a stained-glass window at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto. The feast of the Epiphany of the Lord in the Catholic Church in the West is Jan. 6, 2008. It commemorates the adoration of the newborn Christ by the Magi, or Wise Men.

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# Mother cherishes memories of son born on Christmas

By Margi Logan  
Special to *The Criterion*

The best Christmas for me was Dec. 25, 1968. God gave my husband, Mike, and I a baby boy, Tim, our third son, born on Jesus Christ's birthday.

Our day started quite early because our other two sons, Brian and Joe, could not wait any longer to see what Santa had brought them.

Sleeping in for them that day was probably around 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. Grandma had spent the night with us and she enjoyed watching the children open their presents. She made our day extra special by being there.

My Auntie Vi called before 8 a.m. to tell me that she knew I was going to have a Christmas baby. She did not know that I had been having labor pains for the past three days so I was hoping that she was right.

As the day progressed, the labor pains became a little more frequent, but not bad enough to call the doctor.

I was so grateful that I could be home on Christmas morning to see the boys open their presents. But there were still some places I wanted to go that day.

My brother and his wife were having a wonderful Christmas dinner and party. My husband's family had hosted us the night

before for another great time. I have to admit that I was really enjoying all of these family celebrations. I did not have to cook, clean up or help with anything.

By 6 p.m., my husband and I decided that it was time to call the doctor and go to the hospital.

When I informed the nurses about what a great day I had enjoying the holiday food, they were not too happy with me. I had planned to forgo anesthetic and stay awake for the birth of my baby, but I realize now how careless it was to eat meals while in labor.

God was on our side and our baby was delivered about 9:30 p.m.

Later in the evening, the nurse brought our baby to us dressed in a Christmas stocking. They also gave him a beautiful silver cup.

We were also blessed with two daughters, Beth and Trisha, in later years.

Christmas babies are special, and I feel very honored to have my son share Christ's birthday.

Our son, Tim, will be 39 this Christmas. How fast the years have gone by. Thank you, son, for the great memories and most of all for being there for us in the good and bad times. We love you.

(Margi Logan is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Photo by Sean Gallagher

## Mary in the snow

A statue of Mary stands amid newly fallen snow outside a home in Indianapolis on Dec. 16. Several inches of snow fell on communities across central Indiana during the early morning hours of Dec. 16, the third Sunday of Advent.

# Christmas Mass unites family in their love for Jesus

By Catherine Grannan McCleary  
Special to *The Criterion*

Remembering past Christmases, I recall my family—my Mom and Dad, my five brothers and me—going to Mass at 5 a.m. at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

I was very young for my first memory around the 1940s.

We would get up in the dark and drive a long time to the church. Then we would go into this big gray church with columns taller than even my parents.

Inside, there were beautiful lights and decorations and all kinds of people kneeling.

I remember the beautiful Christmas music and Mass in Latin. I didn't know much about it. As I grew older, I learned how important it all was.

There, on the side of the railing, was the Baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph and all the animals.

I learned that this was my friend, who was born on Christmas.

Every year after, to my recollection, we knelt to pray and say "hi" and how much we love Jesus, too.

When I grew older, I was also able to receive Jesus in holy Communion.

By this time, we were attending midnight Mass at the cathedral. Still, all our family attended Mass and received holy Communion.

Each year, we would go back home, have breakfast, open Christmas presents and enjoy each other's company.

This tradition still goes on. Every year on one Sunday in December, we—the sons and daughters and our families—meet at one of the parish churches in Indianapolis, Brownsburg or Mooresville.

We attend Mass and receive holy Communion. Then we go somewhere to have dinner and enjoy each other's company.

We've had aunts and uncles and cousins and other relatives join us. Sometimes we have around 75 to 80 people.

Oh, yes, we sing Christmas carols and songs, too. That was also a tradition that my parents started years ago.

So every year we all remember and thank the good Lord because we are still able to continue celebrating Baby Jesus' birthday together.

Our Mom and Dad, two brothers, my husband and other relatives join us from heaven.

(Catherine McCleary is a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville.) †

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# Children teach Santa about true meaning of Christmas

By Frank Wiseman  
Special to *The Criterion*

I have many great Christmas memories, but this one has a special place in my heart.

I have dressed up as Santa Claus each Christmas for 39 years, and visited schools, churches, an orphanage and private homes.

It was Christmas morning in 2001. I live in Floyds Knobs, and at the time my only two grandchildren lived in Franklin, Tenn. Caleb was almost 4 and Katie was 15 months old.

I had driven to within an hour and a half of their house on Christmas Eve and spent the night. I left there at 4:30 a.m. so I would be standing beside the tree as they awoke on Christmas morning.

I arrived and—as arranged in advance with my son and daughter-in-law—let myself in. I placed the presents under the tree and sat in a chair to await the sound of tiny footsteps descending the staircase.

It was not long before I heard Caleb say, “Mommy! Mommy! Santa is still here!”

As they entered the room, I acted as if I was startled. I told them that I must have fallen asleep, and that I hoped that I did not wake them up.

Caleb assured me that if I had then that was quite all right.

I got down on one knee and started handing out gifts. I helped Katie with the wrappings on her gifts then I sat each one on my knee and told them that I wanted them to take good care of their presents, and to do what their Mom and Dad told them to do, and to be good and I would come to see them next year.

Then I said my farewells and started toward the door. That is when it happened.

“Santa,” Caleb said. “Katie and me wants to show you what we did yesterday.”

He took one of my hands and Katie took the other, and they led me to the kitchen. There on the counter was a cake that I could see looked like they had indeed helped to decorate with icing.

As we got closer, I could see that it had “Happy birthday, Jesus” written on it.

Caleb told me that he, Katie and Mommy made Jesus a birthday cake.

This old Santa got a tear in his eye and a lump in his throat. Through all the glitter and glamour and the hustle and bustle of getting ready for Christmas, my son and daughter-in-law had taken the time to make sure that their children knew the true meaning of Christmas.

That three-hour drive home by myself on Christmas morning gave me time to do a lot of thinking about how proud I am of my family.

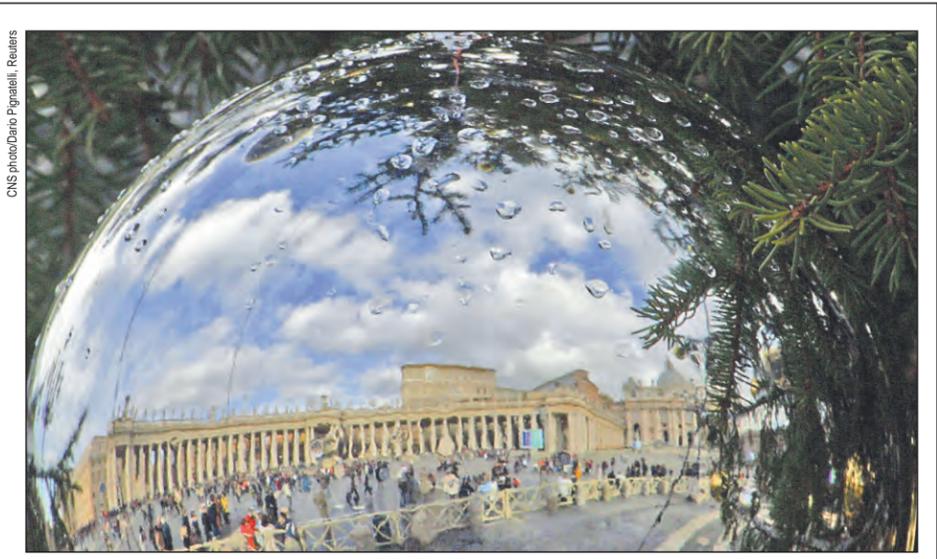
My wife is a nurse and she was working so that the nurses with younger children could be home with them on Christmas morning.

I was proud of knowing that my grandchildren were being taught what and why we celebrate at this time of year.

This Santa’s rosy cheeks were not red from the cold, but from the tears of joy that rested upon them all the way home.

“Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night! Happy birthday, Jesus!”

*(Frank Wiseman is a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyds Knobs.) †*



**Christmas at the Vatican**  
St. Peter's Square is reflected on a Christmas decoration at the Vatican on Dec. 8.

# Woman misses yesteryear and old-fashioned Christmas in city

By Mary C. Vinci  
Special to *The Criterion*

If this writer were asked today whether I like Indianapolis with all its fast life, my answer would be, “No, I prefer the beauty of our times during the early years when we were known as the city of ‘Indiana-noplace.’”

I loved our small-town atmosphere in a time when life was easy.

As a girl of 13, I would walk downtown from my home in Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish on the near south side to shop in the stores.

During the Christmas season, the downtown was all aglow with decorations, especially the L.S. Ayres department store’s front windows. I also remember the L.S. Ayres and William H. Block tearooms.

All the downtown stores were decorated. It has been 20 years since the true meaning

of Christmas was celebrated at Monument Circle with the Nativity scene, the crosses, the angels and the Star of Bethlehem as well as Santa Claus and his reindeer all decorated.

There was a shelter to house the many carolers representing groups from all over the state that came to sing at Monument Circle.

In those days, we all realized the true meaning of the Christmas season.

And, in those days, we did not need to lock our doors and windows. Now we have alarm systems. With all the crime, we don’t know if and when we may return to our homes safe and sound.

We are a growing city, but I prefer the “good old days” in the small but beautiful “Indiana-noplace.”

*(Mary C. Vinci is a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.) †*

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# Broken Nativity set leads woman to conversion experience

By Denise Bossert  
Special to *The Criterion*

Over 20 years ago, I bought an unpainted plaster Nativity set from an arts and crafts store during their after-Christmas sale.

I spent a substantial amount of time during the next year painting each little piece and constructing a stable for the Holy Family.

For years, my children used the figurines like puppets as they practiced retelling the story of the first Christmas.

Last year, the Nativity set had a little accident. During the installation of built-in bookshelves, my husband rested a large piece of wood against the fireplace mantel. It slipped, hit the coffee table and broke half of my Nativity set.

I was not happy. I had a deep sentimental attachment to that hand-painted Nativity set.

Every Advent, when I lifted the tissue-wrapped pieces from a box, I would smile and replay the memories of creating it. With one loud crash, it had all come to an end.

After some heavy sighs and an errant tear over the mishap, I began to realize that it wasn't the tragedy that I was making it out to be.

The set was far from a realistic depiction of the first Christmas. The diminutive figurines were cartoon-like little boys and girls dressed up in biblical costumes like a caricature of some children's Christmas pageant at a local community center. They had infantile smiles on their painted faces. The angel wasn't even part of the original set. I found her in a bin of ready-to-paint pieces and added her to the Nativity set on a whim.

I realized, after some reflection, that it was time to grow up. It was time to put

away childish things. It was time to buy a Nativity set that truly reflects the first Christmas and honors the beauty, the reverence and the gift of the Word-Made-Flesh. No more of the sentimental, childlike Joseph and Mary. We were ready for something more.

Conversion has been a lot like this for me. Cradle Catholics may wonder why it is so difficult for Protestants to begin to see theological truths that Catholics have always known. And once they begin to see and understand, why don't they run into the arms of the Catholic Church without looking back?

As Catholics who recognize the wellspring we have in our faith, we might respond to potential converts like my husband did when I voiced my deep sadness over the powdery mess of the broken plaster figures on my coffee table.

"What's your problem?" he had asked me. "We were long overdue for a new set anyway."

That may be the case, but it still isn't easy to see it all come crashing down before my eyes. It's so final.

Likewise, potential converts struggle with deep attachments to the past. I suppose it's because there is something very special in our previous faith journey, and we don't want to see any of it come to an end. There is comfort in familiarity. Change is painful, no way around it.

Even so, we realize that incomplete truth and familiar memories must step aside for the fullness of truth to take root, but putting away childish things isn't easy.

It takes time and a whole lot of grace to say what has happened to us is really very good.

A year has gone by, and I don't miss

the old Nativity set that much. The memories are still beautiful to me—like the memories of the spiritual journey that came before my conversion to the Catholic Church.

It isn't so much a letting go or a throwing away as it is a growing and accepting of God's full design for his Beloved. It is such a relief when we see that the faith we once cherished has not been lost, but has been converted into something more, something deeper, something fuller, something long overdue.

The original Nativity set was very special, but the one that graces my fireplace mantel today simply takes my breath away. And so it is with conversion.

(Denise Bossert is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in New Melle, Mo.) †



## Papal prayers

Pope Benedict XVI prays in front of the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the end of the annual "Te Deum" liturgy of thanksgiving in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31, 2005.

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# Dad cooks memorable breakfast on Christmas

By Michael A. Mick  
Special to *The Criterion*

My favorite Christmas memory is reminiscing about Christmas Eve as a child at our family's Mount Street home in an inner city neighborhood on the near west side of Indianapolis.

Our family had an annual tradition of opening simple gifts for each other in the late evening around 9 p.m. then getting ready for midnight Mass at the former Assumption Church.

When I was a child, we followed the three hours of fasting before receiving Communion.

After midnight Mass, we would come home and Dad would fix scrambled eggs, homemade sausage, biscuits and gravy. Then we children would go to bed exhausted, and in the morning wake up

to find gifts from Santa.

You would only appreciate this story about our traditional after midnight Mass breakfast that my father cooked—men didn't cook in this "Archie Bunker" era—if you understand that the eggs and gravy were always good, the biscuits were hard as rocks and the strong smell of garlic from the hand-ground pork, sage and garlic sausage lingered in the house for days.

To this day, our 90-year-old mother has never revealed to any of us where the gifts from Santa were hidden every year. It's still a mystery.

*(Michael A. Mick resides in Naples, Fla. He is a former member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg and the former Assumption Parish in Indianapolis.) †*

# Novices surprise sisters by singing beautiful carol

By Mary Jean Wethington  
Special to *The Criterion*

A beautiful Christmas memory that I will always cherish was my first musical Christmas concert in the convent in 1965.

The cloistered Benedictine sisters in Clyde, Mo., had never heard the beautiful carol titled "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

There were 40 young novices at that time, and their pure and clear voices soaring in the descant and arrangement that I had written and directed was truly a gifting surprise for our first Christmas

Chorale.

It was a real challenge back then to practice and practice this song without the professed sisters hearing it! This was a great part of what made the surprise so meaningful.

The Christ-centered holiness of that beautiful carol echoed the true meaning and message of Christmas for one cloistered community of contemplative nuns who lived very focused lives.

*(Mary Jean Wethington is a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright.) †*



## Christmas in Peru

Christmas decorations are seen with the cathedral in the background in the main plaza in Lima, Peru, on Dec. 11.

# Video preserves family's love and special blessings

By Pamela Domescik  
Special to *The Criterion*

It had been an extremely trying year for our family in 1999 as we had been separated geographically from my original family for a year and a half.

We were experiencing a great trial at the time, and I was sad and homesick.

With a little creativity and great loving hearts, the folks back home found a way to stay connected with us and lift our droopy spirits.

We had moved across the country, and with great difficulty left family and friends behind. I am very close to my Mom, siblings and their families so leaving them was hard.

During our time away, our family began to experience some painful contradictions. So much of it was out of our control, and I was at a low point and feeling more discouraged.

Meanwhile, back home, my family put

their heads together and decided to videotape happenings going on with them. They filmed my Mom, brothers and sister and their families, and the new dog, Bandit.

They made a special effort to include various scenes and family gatherings complete with greetings, well wishes and singing around the Christmas tree.

Before the video was finished, we were suddenly able to return home to live.

The happy finale to this recording project was that our family was included in the Christmas videotape. Now we were home for Christmas and sharing in the festivities.

I cannot help the tears that well up in me whenever I watch that video. It is a reminder of the generosity and love of God blessing us with the gift of family—not just at Christmas, but every day.

*(Pamela Domescik is a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.) †*

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# Family's Christmas dinner continues late into the night

By Hilda L. Buck  
Special to *The Criterion*

Our family is scattered all over the country so when we get together at special times we really enjoy being with each other and getting caught up on all the news.

One such time was Christmas a few years ago. We all went to midnight Mass then the next morning slept a little later than usual. There were no believers in Santa by then.

So many gifts were under the tree that we decided to open them in shifts. We had brunch then opened a few brightly decorated boxes, and had time to "Oooh" and "Aaah" and enjoy what we received.

Then there were snacks along with more gifts and socializing.

Finally, when it was time to put the finishing touches to the dinner scheduled for 6 p.m., we realized that no one had remembered to put the turkey in the oven hours before!

What would we do?

We did what any "normal" family would do. We put the turkey in the oven. We are a pretty laid-back group so it was no problem to wait for dinner.

Anyway, we thoroughly enjoyed our holiday dinner at 10 p.m. on Christmas night, maybe more so because—with the tantalizing aroma filling the house and the snack foods giving way to actual hunger—we were ready for a festive meal.

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



## Christmas greetings from Poland

A group of students from Poland sing during Pope Benedict XVI's weekly general audience in Paul VI Hall at the Vatican on Dec. 12.

# Grandma's house and Dad's stories are special memories

By Laura Stevenson  
Special to *The Criterion*

My mother's family always got together on Christmas Eve every year.

My Grandma had a big old house that was great for family gatherings. There was lots of good food brought in by everyone.

But the best part of the celebration was the opening of the living room door to see the Christmas tree, decorations and presents for the first time.

Grandma would line us up in front of the living room door by age—youngest to oldest of the grandchildren—then the door would be opened.

We never saw who opened the door. I think it was Santa since we heard him working behind the door all through dinner. I could never eat much because I was too

nervous about what was going on behind that door.

Grandma's tree was real so she did not buy it until Christmas Eve. Then the adults gathered to decorate it, put up her decorations and lay out the presents.

How did we not notice that one or more of our parents were missing while Grandma herded all 11 grandchildren through dinner to get to the best part of the night—the living room door opening?

The living room looked just like something out of a magazine and presents were everywhere.

As an adult, I realize that there really weren't that many presents and the decorations were beautiful but normal.

But as a child, it was the anticipation, the love, and the gathering of family and cousins that made this night so magical in my mind.

My Dad believed in the true meaning of Christmas. To him, it was about the love of family and time well-spent celebrating family.

Before gifts were exchanged, we all gathered around his chair in the living room to hear him read the Christmas story about the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem and a poem on the meaning of family, whether it be by blood or friendship.

He read this story and poem every Christmas for 56 years, even telling it from memory after he lost his sight in the last few years.

For the few minutes that it took to read the wonderful account of Christ's birth and the story of family, there were no differences, troubles or problems in the world or in our small family.

Although I have heard the account of Christ's birth many times over the years, nothing will ever compare to having my Dad read it to us on Christmas Eve then look at us and say, as Mary did with her Son, "Ponder this in your hearts" throughout the year, and remember how lucky we all are to be here tonight celebrating once again our family and the family of our Lord. Let's think about and say a prayer for those in our family that are not fortunate to be here with us tonight. ... Now let's open presents."

Dad has been gone for two years, but the family tradition is living on—and the memories of what Christmas means and memories of my Dad are just as bright.

(Laura Stevenson is a member of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood.) †

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# Christmas Eve procession was a tradition in Madison

By Michael Moore and Mary Ann Wyand

Special to *The Criterion*

MADISON—Childhood memories of Christmas Eve Mass at St. Patrick Church in 1938 are still vivid for Prince of Peace parishioner Marie (Behr) Hoskins.

Her family lived in a house across the street from the church, which became St. Patrick Chapel after St. Mary, St. Michael and St. Patrick parishes in Madison and St. Anthony Parish in nearby China were consolidated as Prince of Peace Parish by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein in 1993.

On Christmas Eve 70 years ago, Hoskins recalled, children in the parish dressed as angels for a procession into the church with a figurine of the baby Jesus at the start of midnight Mass.

"The weather was freezing cold," she said. "We did not have coats, but white robes. We all had ropes of silver tinsel around our necks crossed in the front and around our waists. The sponsors made a halo of the silver rope

around our heads. We marched to the church. ... I was 6 years old. ... We were holding unlit candles. We did not light them until we got inside the church. We did not need light. It was a cold, starry night."

At the church, "two real tall doors were opened and we processed in," Hoskins remembered. "... The last one in was the one who carried Jesus. ... My sister, Helen, was an angel after me. ... Father Joseph Brown would be up front at the altar looking down with the servers as we marched in. After Mass, the children were so sleepy that the parents rounded them up and carried them home."

Fifteen to 25 children dressed up as angels for the Christmas Eve procession every year, she said, and in later years they carried small flashlights instead of candles. This tradition continued until St. Patrick's Church was merged into Prince of Peace Parish 14 years ago.

Hoskins still serves as a lector for Communion services at her parish church.

Located adjacent to Pope John XXIII School and

Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School, St. Patrick Chapel is used often for school Masses, Hispanic liturgies, weddings, funerals, Communion services and rosaries.

Among the traces of Christmas past at St. Patrick Chapel is the historic manger built by Wendel Jacobs in the 1920s. It is assembled in mid-December every year then the figurines of Joseph, Mary and the animals are placed on straw. On Christmas Eve, the figure of the infant Jesus is reverently placed on a bed of straw.

The figurines trace their existence back to the old St. Patrick's Church built by Father Hyppolytus Dupontavice in 1853. Jacobs brought them to the new church in 1910.

In the 1950s, the figures of Joseph and Mary were looking a little worse for wear so parishioner Bertha Schafer paid to have them refurbished.

About 30 years later, Alice Cassity, president of St. Patrick's Altar Society, and parishioner Delores Hellman arranged the purchase of new images of the Holy Family from a store in Louisville for use at St. Patrick Chapel.

The old figurines dating back to the late 1800s were donated to Shawe Memorial High School for display there during Advent.

People die and church buildings are replaced, yet this parish community—which was founded by a French priest to restore the Irish railroad workers back to their faith—still maintains traces of the customs begun by the Irish workers and German farmers who migrated there.

(Michael Moore is a member of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison.) †



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This historic Nativity set was photographed in front of the statue of St. Joseph holding the Christ Child at St. Patrick Chapel in Madison.

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## Grasp full Christmas festival in person of Christ

By James Schellman

Try for a moment to imagine Christmas without Christ. Sadly, it is actually pretty easy.

Witness the “holiday season” as it is observed in our contemporary culture. It seems to become longer each year, now starting sometime before Thanksgiving and concluding with Christmas Day or, for those people with more stamina, lasting through New Year’s Day.

We cannot deny that there are good aspects of this experience. Our fractured society actually comes together in an unusual if partial way at this time. A sense of goodwill and solidarity takes temporary hold of us.

Even so, many Christians are in danger of losing an understanding and observance of the full season under the force of a “cultural Christmas.”

How many Christians grasp the full Christmas festival, which begins four weeks before Christmas with the preparatory season of Advent—the beginning of the Christian year?

The Christmas season reaches a climax on Christmas Day and continues for a few weeks into the New Year until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

What is there in this ancient Christmas season of extended preparation and celebration that we lose at our peril?

In short, we lose Christ, the whole person of Christ.

The Christ of the Christmas season is not simply the babe in the manger. This Christ went on to live, to die an unspeakable death and to rise from the dead.

And this same Lord will come again!

All of this history is held together in the few weeks of the Christmas season, which proclaims the beginning of the end of the world as we know it—and that end itself.

Through prayers and Scriptures, we hear again the story of our darkened world and of that world’s only salvation.

The feast of God’s first coming in Christ

is the occasion for us to long anew for that time when God will come again to make of us, and the beloved broken world we share, what God intended from the beginning—a garden place of graced communion.

This is the promise. We are its keepers and preachers. Our vocation is to embrace the story whole and leave none of it out in order to offer it faithfully to a world that longs more than it knows for the truth of this transforming story.

What is at stake here is our way of seeing things whole and of living that vision faithfully. This is our vocation, our graced purpose in this world. We fudge it at our peril.

Doesn’t Advent make this abundantly clear? The first few Sundays do not focus on the Incarnation. Rather, they—and the last few Sundays of Ordinary Time that

precede them—raise our eyes to that whole vision of Christ, who will return at the end of time.

John the Baptist becomes for us the herald, not so much of that first coming, but of the returning Lord that we are to watch for now.

Even when the focus begins to shift to the birth narrative, it is never simply on Jesus’ birth alone. The babe in the manger is already identified through sign and symbol as the royal one destined to pay the dearest price for our

redemption—thus, the Magi’s gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

No sooner is Jesus’ birth celebrated than we turn our minds and hearts to the major mysteries proclaiming his purpose and power.

The Feast of the Holy Family inserts us immediately into the full humanity of this incarnate Lord, who for three decades was formed and nurtured in the bosom of an extended family.

Then, contrary to the usual chronology, we return to the days after Christ’s birth in the feast of the Epiphany to celebrate the mystery of Jesus’ mission as the gift of God to all peoples.

No sooner have we reflected on this than we find ourselves at the edge of the Jordan River with John the Baptist, who accedes to

*The feast of God’s first coming in Christ is the occasion for us to long anew for that time when God will come again to make of us, and the beloved broken world we share, what God intended from the beginning—a garden place of graced communion.*



The birth of Christ is depicted in stained-glass at St. Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast depicts the birth of Christ. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 13. This sacramental season immerses us anew in our baptismal calling to lay down our lives for that new world where all tears will be wiped away, where broken individuals, families and communities will be made whole, and where war can never again be waged, let alone imagined.

the now mature Lord’s desire and plunges him in the waters of the Jordan. Jesus’ baptism ends his 40-day sojourn in the desert apart from all that he loved, and launches Our Lord on his brief public life and the fullness of his mission.

This sacramental season immerses us anew in our baptismal calling to lay down our lives for that new world where all tears will be wiped away, where broken individuals, families and communities will be made whole, and where war can never again be waged, let alone imagined.

Through this full seasonal celebration, we learn once again that this new world is what we pray for every Sunday: “Dying

you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory!”

It is a holy longing that is at the heart of our vocation. A longing for a God who with unimaginable humility became like us so that we might become like God.

That transforming power and grace is meant to be shared. It is Christ’s continuing mission and now it also is our mission.

(James Schellman is executive director of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, which can be accessed online at [www.naforum.org](http://www.naforum.org).) †

### Discussion Point

## Reflect on God first at Christmas

### This Week’s Question

How would you change Christmas if you could?

“See our schools getting back to the Christian idea of Christmas—not taking God out of the holiday—and getting the right lesson to the children. Our busy lives take away from sharing. ... We should get back to slowing things down, ... to enjoying and loving God ... in a more peaceful and focused way.” (Denise Duffy, Lorton, Va.)

“Not go for expensive gifts, but for something practical for families to use in their household. ... Giving one gift for one family makes you put more thought than money into it.” (Carolina Ramos, Presidio, Texas)

“... I’d change it as far as its being commercialized. I’d take that out and get back to the original meaning of the holiday as the birth of Jesus. Giving gifts is fine,

but too often that gets way out of line.” (Frank Gresmer, Upper Deerfield, N.J.)

“I’d like to be done with all the preparation and events so I could concentrate on the spiritual side. Before we open gifts on Christmas morning, we read a Scripture [passage] or a story with spiritual significance. I’d like to see more people celebrate Christmas by first acknowledging the spiritual significance.” (Patsy Guenther, Laurel, Mont.)

### Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Do you ever use the Bible in prayer or meditation? How?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to [cgreene@catholicnews.com](mailto:cgreene@catholicnews.com) or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Biblical women: The queen of Sheba

(Twenty-first in a series of columns)

The queen of Sheba is a mysterious figure in the Old Testament. Chapter 10 of the First Book of Kings narrates her visit to King Solomon. She arrived in Jerusalem with a large retinue, including camels bearing spices, a large amount of gold and other precious stones.



The reign of King Solomon was by far the most prosperous period in Israel's history so it's natural that other countries wanted to trade with Israel. Sheba, for centuries, was the leading principality in what is now Yemen and, according to eighth-century B.C. Assyrian inscriptions, there were sometimes women rulers among the Arabs.

If this caravan came from modern Yemen, they had traveled a great distance. The visit probably had mostly to do with trade and commerce, but the Bible uses it to stress Solomon's wisdom. It probably was a

very large caravan since the Bible says that "never again did anyone bring such an abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon" (1 Kgs 10:10).

In return, Solomon "gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired and asked for, besides such presents as were given her from Solomon's royal bounty" (1 Kgs 10:13). It seems obvious that he was enthralled by her visit.

The queen was equally charmed. In fact, the Bible says that she was breathless when she saw Solomon's "great wisdom, the palace he had built, the food at his table, the seating of his ministers, the attendance and garb of his waiters, his banquet service, and the holocausts he offered in the temple of the Lord" (1 Kgs 10:5). Solomon obviously knew how to do things right.

When she recovered her breath, the queen of Sheba told Solomon that when she first heard about his deeds and wisdom she didn't believe the report, but now that she had seen it with her own eyes she discovered that the report didn't tell her the full truth. She questioned him about every subject in which she was interested, and Solomon was able to

explain everything that she asked about.

So the queen said, "Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report I heard. Happy are your men, happy these servants of yours, who stand before you always and listen to your wisdom. Blessed be the Lord, your God, whom it has pleased to place you on the throne of Israel" (1 Kgs 10: 7-9).

After making their trade, the queen returned to Sheba.

This same chapter in the First Book of Kings then devotes 16 verses to describing the wealth of Solomon's kingdom. It says that he "surpassed in riches and wisdom all the kings of the earth. And the whole world sought audience with Solomon, to hear from him the wisdom which God had put in his heart" (1 Kgs 10: 23-24).

Among his possessions were "700 wives of princely rank and 300 concubines" (1 Kgs 11:3). His celebrated wisdom, though, did not keep him from turning his heart to strange gods by adoring the gods of some of his non-Israelite wives.

Therefore, God told Solomon that, in punishment, he would divide his kingdom—after his death. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

## Christmas, the time for graceful reconnection

One of the ways that we know Christmas is at hand is the volume of Christmas cards and letters that jam our mailboxes by now.



This may be our annual connection with some people we don't want to forget or just acknowledgement of a business acquaintance. At my age, it's a signal to those far away that we are still alive.

This brings to mind the dreaded generic "Christmas Letter," which I think began as a cultural phenomenon sometime in the 1960s. Until they came under public scrutiny and were reformed at some point, these missives mostly updated their recipients on the sender's thrilling past year.

And it was always a thrilling past year, usually including things like the husband's election as commodore of the yacht club or the daughter's cheerleading trophy or moving into a new McMansion. Just once, it might have been refreshing to hear that Junior was in jail for dealing drugs or Mom had gained 40 pounds, but no such luck.

Fortunately, Christmas letters have calmed down by now to being fairly accurate reports of a family's doings: nothing too

spectacular, nothing too depressing, just the ordinary stuff of people's lives. But we are grateful to have these reports, and the accompanying cards that include less information but offer nice sentiments.

Some of my dearest friends don't even send their own cards. One pal in Minnesota has Parkinson's disease so her husband signs their greetings. But she is still sharp, as I learned one year when I got my cards out late and she was on the phone immediately, asking if I was OK.

Another kindergarten colleague has beginning dementia so someone else writes her cards. But she, too, is still paying attention; she is the one who calls me when one of our classmates is ill or passes on. Apparently, the memory of friendship never fades.

Then, there are the folks we haven't seen in more than 40 years, but who keep in touch solely by Christmas letter. We met one such couple early in our marriage when "we" were all in the Army for two years.

We attended their wedding in St. Louis, and later visited them once in Maryland when we were on a family vacation. But we have kept up ever since on the doings of their numerous children, grandchildren, trips, illnesses, job changes, accidents, you-name-it. We probably know more about them than we

do some of the people we see often.

Christmas cards are also a lovely way to assuage loneliness. We exchange notes and greetings with several former neighbors or co-workers who now live alone.

While some of them have networks of friends and relatives to support and cheer them, others do not and they depend on the arrival of Christmas cards. One elderly bachelor we know lives in a Florida condo with only a distant great-nephew to visit him now and then. His widowed sister and most of his friends have died, and he loves to "talk" about old times at work with my husband.

Christmas is also the best of times to let our non-religious or non-Christian friends and relatives know how much we love them. Without proselytizing, we can share the generous spirit of this great religious holiday by offering our sincere greetings and letting them know of our hopes for joy and peace in their lives.

With Christ's birth comes God's overwhelming love for us. Christmas cards provide one more way to share that grace with others.

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

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

## The timeless Nativity story: a biblical wonder

Last year, my writer-friend Mary Rubeck Benson invited me to see *The Nativity Story* at a theater not far from my home.



She came from the east side of Indianapolis, where she and her husband are members of St. Lawrence Parish.

On that cold, windy, rainy evening, both of us wondered, "Why are we doing this tonight?"

Later, we understood.

*The Nativity Story* was billed as "the journey of a lifetime, a story for all time ... powerful, timeless and visually magnificent." We found all of this true.

The film portrayed what we are now celebrating: the Christmas story. However, it creatively fills in the gaps in the biblical passages, stressing the realistic human qualities, challenges, emotions and environment that Mary and Joseph endured. These are not the stereotypical scenes we have known through the years.

As my friend and I left the theater to face

the cruel weather, our hearts were warmed by the story we thought we knew well. The film, however, brought new depths of understanding.

My friend especially noted the "friendships that were lost and the prejudices Mary and Joseph endured because she was pregnant and unmarried."

She also better appreciated the couple's severe hardships during their Bethlehem journey.

My friend, by the way, is the author of *Follow the Warrior's Path, Life of Ohiyesa, Better Known as Dr. Charles Eastman*. More about this book, which depicts the hardships of the Dakota Sioux Indians, can be found online at [www.maryrubeckbenenson.com](http://www.maryrubeckbenenson.com).

Keisha Castle-Hughes, who played in two other films I admire—*The Whale Rider* and *House of Sand and Fog*—beautifully portrayed the Virgin Mary and Oscar Isaac wonderfully portrayed Joseph's quandary and challenges.

The biblical story was filmed in Matera, Italy, as well as in Morocco, and it became the first movie ever to stage its world premiere in Vatican City.

While watching this film, many of my previous views of the Christmas story changed to the real emotions brought about by the Angel Gabriel's pronouncements; Joseph's dream; Mary's visit with pregnant Elizabeth, who was John the Baptist's mother; the Bethlehem journey; the Magi; the rage of Herod and so much more.

Strangely, the day after seeing the film, I noticed a Chicago review in an Indianapolis newspaper criticizing parts of the film as being silly. How very wrong that was! In fact, an organization called "Christian Today Movies" rated the movie last year as the "No. 1 Most Redeeming [film]."

Even now, readers can "redeem" themselves if they are still looking for a last-minute gift. The DVD is available through book and video stores. Some readers might even choose to use the Internet to buy copies as additional gifts or stocking stuffers for next year.

Meanwhile, may the Holy Family bless our holidays.

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

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Families can spread Christmas joy

On a cold, dark, drizzly winter day nearly three years ago, my wife, Cindy, gave birth to our second son, Raphael, after having felt poorly for nearly a week.



Cindy's labor progressed quickly during our 25-minute drive to the hospital. With every bump in the road and every chuckhole we hit along the way, her pain only increased.

Raphael was born a little more than an hour after we arrived.

That evening, we welcomed grandparents and other visitors who wanted to meet the newest addition to our family for the first time. The dreary day outside and Cindy's discomfort seemed like a distant memory.

A day that began in pain ended in a joy that we were pleased to share with others.

What happened in a dramatic way on the day of Raphael's birth is, or at least can be, the story of most ordinary days for families.

Each day brings its own trials and tribulations: the household chores that go around on a seemingly endless cycle, kids that bicker and complain, and the simple build-up of the stress that comes with supporting a family in an ever-increasing challenging economy.

But if we look around us each day with grace-inspired eyes, we can find lots of little blessings that can help us feel real joy in the midst of the melancholy that can darken our days.

They can come in the form of an unexpected hug from a child or tasks that get done quickly when everybody pitches in to help.

More importantly, God offers us real joy when we give of ourselves to others. Perhaps it might be spending a little extra time reading to our kids or paying a visit for no special reason to an elderly neighbor.

All of these blessings can highlight our ordinary days with a joy that can be infectious.

Others that we rub shoulders with on a regular basis might eventually want to know what the source of our joy is. After all, our lives aren't really that different from theirs.

When we live our days with joy, others will take notice and wonder why.

This is nothing less than a form of evangelization. When families live their days in natural ways with a faith-inspired joy, they are placing themselves at the forefront of the Church's mission of evangelization.

The template for this was set for us in the very beginning.

On that first Christmas 2,000 years ago, Joseph and Mary were having a hard day. When it came time for Mary to give birth to Jesus, she and Joseph were far away from home and the friends and loved ones they probably hoped would help them.

Now the accounts of the birth of Jesus given to us by St. Matthew and St. Luke tell us little about the reaction of Mary and Joseph to the event.

But the shepherds received "news of great joy" from an angel (Lk 2:10) about Jesus' birth and the magi "were overjoyed" when they saw the star come to rest over where the Christ child was (Mt 2:9-11).

Surely it isn't unreasonable to conclude that this joyous impression was confirmed in these visitors by the joy that surely was suffused on the faces of Joseph and Mary.

The work of evangelization began on the first Christmas long ago. Families today can continue it today by living out Christmas joy year-round. †

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 23, 2007

- Isaiah 7:10-14
- Romans 1:1-7
- Matthew 1:18-24

The Church is observing the last Sunday of Advent. In only two days, joyfully and in great faith, the Church will celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord on Christmas.



For the first reading this weekend, the Church chooses a passage from the Book of Isaiah.

Central in the reading is King Ahaz of the southern Hebrew kingdom of Judah, who reigned in the last third of the eighth century before Christ. His reign is not remembered as having been particularly distinguished. He was not a great leader.

For Isaiah, the definition of a good king, of course, was that the monarch genuinely led the people to God by inspiring them to follow the Covenant.

Regardless of any other duty, confirming the Covenant and requiring submission to its terms were the principal responsibilities of the kings. Nothing else mattered.

While Ahaz was not spectacular in his role, God still used him as an instrument to bring the people back to fidelity to the Covenant.

Ahaz served God's purpose to save the people from their own sins by fathering a son. When the king's spouse, a young woman, conceived, Isaiah saw in the event a sign of God's caring for the people. What the lackluster Ahaz could not accomplish would be achieved by the son.

Thus, the coming of the new prince was a cause for rejoicing.

As its second reading on this weekend, the Church selects a section from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

No Christian today would think of challenging Paul's status as an Apostle. However, when Paul was alive, his credentials were hardly so universally acknowledged. He wrote of usurpers who

vested themselves with the cloak of being Apostles and who led the faithful astray.

Here, Paul stresses that he indeed is an Apostle because the Lord called him.

St. Matthew's Gospel is the source of the last reading.

This reading recalls the miraculous conception of Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, but the son of Mary, always a virgin. He entered human history directly as a result of God's love for humanity, fulfilling God's promise to give the fullness of life to the people who were faithful.

The Incarnation, as theologians call the mystery of the Son of God's conception and birth as a human, is beyond human comprehension. Not even Joseph, holy as he was, could understand it. God's ways are not our ways.

## Reflection

Only two days remain in Advent and, given the frenzy usually connected with preparing for Christmas in our society, these remaining two days of Advent are apt to be quite busy for people.

Nevertheless, two days will be enough for any of us to use the opportunity of Advent to cleanse ourselves of attachments to sin and instead make our souls worthy of receiving the Lord.

Christmas can be deeply personal for us because if we have made ourselves worthy, Jesus will come to us personally on this great feast.

The Church encourages us, therefore, to accept its Advent invitation to come to God. If we have conscientiously observed Advent, then the Church urges us to continue doing so until Christmas. If we have allowed Advent to slip past us, the Church calls us to use the time left to us.

God wants us to love him as God loves us. Again and again, God has reached out to people to empower them in coming in Him. He sent a son to Ahaz that the nation might have a good king. He sent Jesus to us. Jesus sent us the Apostles.

God loves us so much. He reaches out to us. He provides for us in ways we cannot understand. Even in only two days, we can reach out to God. There still is time. †

## Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 24

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12,  
14a, 16

Psalms 89:2-5, 27, 29

Luke 1:67-79

Vigil of Christmas

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29

Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

Matthew 1:1-25

or Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday, Dec. 25

The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)

Midnight

Isaiah 9:1-6

Psalms 96:1-3, 11-13

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14

Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12

Psalms 97:1, 6, 11-12

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:15-20

Day

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalms 98:1-6

Hebrews 1:1-6

John 1:1-18

or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Wednesday, Dec. 26

Stephen, first martyr

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59

Psalms 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc-17

Matthew 10:17-22

Thursday, Dec. 27

John, Apostle and evangelist

1 John 1:1-4

Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12

John 20:1a, 2-8

Friday, Dec. 28

The Holy Innocents, martyrs

1 John 1:5-2:2

Psalms 124:2-5, 7c-8

Matthew 2:13-18

continued on page 26

## Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

# God's saving grace is there for everyone who does not reject it

Q A Jewish friend tells me that, according to her rabbi, Catholics believe that if she dies without accepting Jesus as her Messiah and Savior she will go to hell.



Does this seem right? How can I reply? (Louisiana)

A If your friend is quoting her rabbi correctly, he is wrong. The Catholic Church

does not teach what is reflected in his remark.

I cannot deny that many Catholics and other Christians have believed it. I also cannot deny that some groups, even nations, calling themselves Catholic have believed this and even acted on it.

But while some official Church statements have been at best ambiguous about explicit belief in Jesus Christ and/or membership in the Catholic Church being necessary for salvation, Catholic teaching today is clear.

Within the past two generations, through a host of official documents and papal letters and discourses, the Church has repeated its position that the great non-Christian religions represent part of the sincere effort of people everywhere to find answers to the huge, haunting questions about life and death and God.

Furthermore, these efforts, sometimes noble and sometimes stumbling, represent the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. They take place, we believe, under the influence of Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, whose saving grace and love lie underneath all honest searches for truth, even if those searches do not always lead to explicit belief and faith in him.

Such belief is not new. The principle is an ancient one in Christianity: God's saving grace is there for everyone who does not deliberately place an obstacle to that gift.

One classic statement to that effect comes from Pope Leo IV (853) during a controversy with certain heretics of his day.

"Just as there is no human being past, present or future whose nature was not assumed by Jesus Christ, our Lord," said Pope Leo, "so there is no human being

past, present or future for whom he did not suffer and die."

Any failure to profit from that death would derive only from a deliberate refusal to believe when one clearly recognizes that such a belief is God's will.

The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed this position. "The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," for example, declares that, while the Church always remembers its mission to proclaim that the fullness of religious life is found in Christ, it also "looks with sincere respect on those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all people" (# 2).

Church teachings of centuries ago were hugely influenced by the assumption that all known people, mainly in Europe and a small part of Asia, had by then had the opportunity to hear and accept the Gospel of Christ.

Renaissance discoveries of vast new populations and cultures and continents and religions changed all that. The Christian Church has grown much since then in understanding its mission and in its theology of salvation.

The misunderstanding of your Jewish friend is unfortunate. It should forcefully remind us of another sentence in that same declaration: "All should take pains that, in catechetical instruction and in preaching the Word of God, nothing is taught out of harmony with the truth of the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of love and respect, not of hate and rejection" (#4).

All this applies in a particular way to our Jewish brothers and sisters, the people with whom we believe God established his first covenants, and through whom we have received so much of our Christian faith.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to him at the same address or by e-mail to [jjdietzen@aol.com](mailto:jjdietzen@aol.com).) †

## My Journey to God

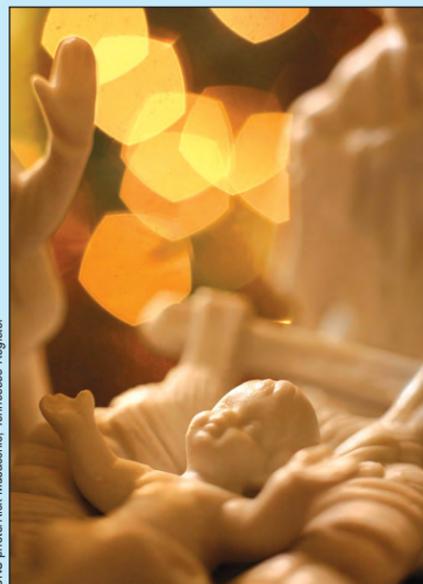
### A Child's Christmas in Vincennes

Dylan couldn't remember  
The 12 days or six nights,  
But he could remember snow,  
Much snow.  
Few flakes fell on me or mine,  
But we had Christmases  
As magical as those in Wales.

The white-flocked tree  
Became a jeweled lady  
Who watched and twinkled  
As Nana cooked in the old kitchen  
Of the old house, on the old street  
In the old town.

Aproned and flour-dusted, she  
Performed culinary wonders  
On her steaming stove.  
Green mints and flannel-red cherries  
Became small poinsettias on  
White frosted cakes.  
Raisin pies hummed from their oven  
And divinity winked from its plate  
Of lace.

Outside, a plastic Joseph and  
A plastic Mary watched over  
A plastic Baby Jesus  
In a stable made of old boards and pine.  
A radio under the crib reminded  
Neighbors strolling by



CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register

That herald angels sang praises to  
The newborn King, even if He was  
plastic,  
And that Santa Claus was considering  
Coming to town

Even if it didn't get a flake of snow.

By Susie McAllister

(Susie McAllister is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. She wrote this poem about her memories of Christmas while growing up in Vincennes, Ind.) †

# Rest in peace

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

**ANNEE, Robert J.**, 67, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Father of Diane Barton, Robert and Scott Annee. Son of Louis Annee. Brother of Janet Bradley, Barbara Huser, Joseph, Louis and Paul Annee. Grandfather of six.

**BANTA, Ila T.**, 83, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 5. Wife of Thomas Banta. Mother of Darlene Abplanalp, Teri Furr, Janice Woods, James, Joseph, Thomas Banta Jr. and Ulrich Wolnik. Sister of Rowena Pelton. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 14. Great-great-grandmother of three.

**BAUER, Raymond F.**, 78, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Dec. 1. Husband of Jean Bauer. Father of Sarah Bauer. Brother of Mary Cornelius, Leonard and Richard Bauer.

**BERRONES, Estella**, 66, St. Rose of Lima, Franklin, Dec. 8. Wife of Eustorgio Berrones. Mother of Alberto and Carlos Berrones. Sister of Mary Luisa Fernandez, Raquel Garza and Alicia Raya. Grandmother of five.

**BRENNAN, Harold**, 77, St. Mary, North Vernon, Dec. 4. Husband of Therese M. (Sorg) Brennan. Father of Debra Bowns, Bernard, Jeffrey, Louis, Phillip, Randolph and William Brennan. Brother of Betsy Followell, Hazel Nevil, James Kuntz, Melvin and Robert Brennan. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of six.

Great-great-grandfather of four.

**CHANDLER, Laura M.** (Milburn), 59, St. Mary, New Albany, Dec. 6. Wife of David Chandler. Mother of Angel Brooks, Denny and Jimmy Chandler. Sister of Chloe Arrow, Mary Jones, Charlie, Stanley and Willy Milburn. Grandmother of six.

**CRIFE, Norma R.**, 84, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Joseph J. Crife. Stepmother of Jane Sulya. Sister of Phyllis Larrabee and Thomas Redman. Grandmother of three.

**CULLINAN, Linda (McDugald)**, 64, St. Rose of Lima, Franklin, Nov. 30. Wife of George Cullinan. Mother of Amy, Christopher and Joshua Cullinan. Sister of John McDugald. Grandmother of one.

**DUPONT, Erna**, 84, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 8. Sister of Elli Weiss.

**EDGAR, Garth A.**, 43, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Brother of Tracy Schnieders and Charles Edgar III.

**ENGLE, Dorothy**, 86, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Wife of John Engle. Mother of Barb York, Mary Jo, Nancy, Susan, John Jr., Mike and Tom Engle. Grandmother of nine.

**FENOGLIO, Andrew**, 85, Sacred Heart, Clinton, Dec. 2. Father of Marty Coons, Mendy Harplod and Louie Fenoglio. Grandfather of eight.

**GATCHELL, Evelyn A.** (Wessling), 79, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Nov. 22. Wife of Sherman M. Gatchell. Mother of Cathy Bond, Renee Wampler, Chad and Duff Gatchell. Sister of Marcella Bauman and Eugene Wessling. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of three.

**HACKETT, Mary Jo (Sprong)**, 89, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Aunt of several.

**HARTLAGE, Robert A.**, 82, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 30. Father of Wenda

Bartholomai, Deborah Sheehan and Robert Hartlage II. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of two.

**HARTRICH, Margaret Elizabeth (O'Connor)**, 99, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Mother of Lois Kattau and Franciscan Father Kurt Hartrich. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of six.

**HORNBACK, Evelyn E.**, 89, St. Martin, Yorkville, Nov. 22. Mother of Linda and Larry Hornbach. Grandmother of two.

**HOWARD, Elizabeth M.**, 64, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Mother of Ashley Dirks. Sister of St. Joseph Sister Jane Frances Mannion, Father John Mannion and William Mannion. Grandmother of one.

**LAYDEN, Francis Louis**, 94, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Father of Sara Molen and Peter Layden. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

**NIEHOFF, Clara M.**, 96, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 3. Mother of Margie Clemons, Lucille Hinton, Annette and Paul Niehoff. Sister of Esther Goss and Irene Merkel. Grandmother of 12. Step-grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of 30. Step-great-grandmother of two. Step-great-great-grandmother of two.

**RAY, Carson O., Jr.**, 58, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Husband of Linda Ray. Father of Lucinda and Rosemary Ray. Son of Carson and Ora Ray Jr. Brother of Patsy Ray and JoAnn Wilcox.

**RIEMAN, Dorothy Mae**, 79, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Dec. 5. Mother of Mary Ann Shields and David Rieman. Sister of Alice Shinkle and Paul Dicus. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of eight.

**SIEGEL, Charles A.**, 85, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 6. Husband of Charlotte Siegel. Father of Deborah Grimes, Karen Singleton, Charles and Thomas Siegel. Brother of Mary A. Woodard. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of three.

**SIEFERT, George B.**, 69, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 4. Husband of Peggy (Moran)

Siefert. Father of Cindy Amos, Jennifer Ripberger and Joseph Siefert. Brother of Pauline Roll and Anna Mae Zimmer. Grandfather of six.

**SIMONS, Larry G.**, 70, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 6. Husband of Linda Simons. Father of Brenda Dembroski, Jennifer, Joe and Josh Simons. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of two.

**SOMMER, Norma**, 91, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 30. Mother of Sharon Brawner and Rita Hauswirth. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of nine.

**SPENCER, Mary Louise**, 92, St. Paul, Sellersburg, Nov. 27. Cousin of several.

**STRIBY, Henry H.**, 90, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Nov. 11. Husband of Ann Striby. Father of Mary Smith, Joan, Henry and Thomas Striby. Brother of Barbara Carr, Julia Jones, Loretta Schafer, Mary, Francis and Joseph Striby. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of one.

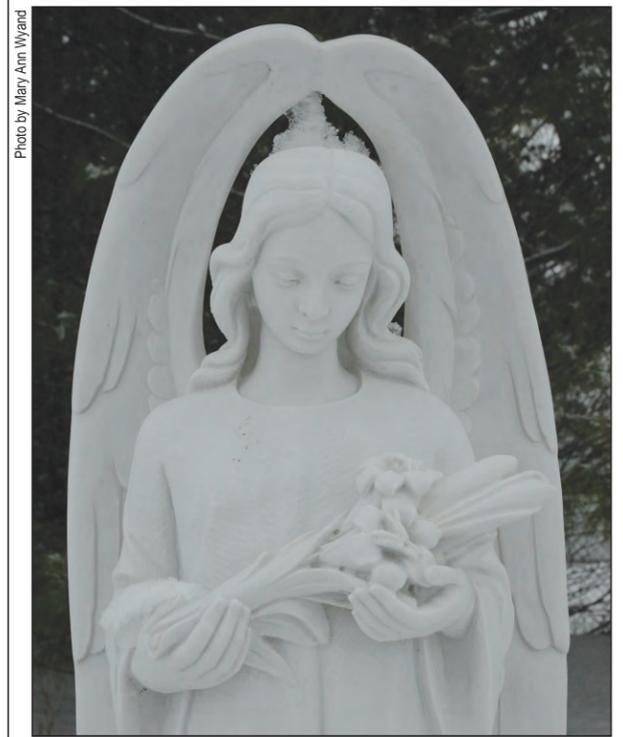
**WEAVER, Leonard Augustine**, 93, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Father of Charles and J.T. Mount. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of nine. Great-great-grandfather of one.

**WELSH, Marcia A.**, 73, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Mother of Amy, Christopher, Daniel, David and John Welsh. Grandmother of seven.

**WIEMANN, Karen M.**, 57, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 24. Wife of Dr. Michael Wiemann. Mother of Alexandra Wiemann. Daughter of Alfred Motta and Carmelito Motta. Sister of JoAnn Woods.

**WITHEM, Raymond E.**, 77, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 25. Husband of Loretta (Walker) Withem. Father of Janet Leamer, Diane Roe and Stephen Withem. Brother of James Withem. Grandfather of two.

**WYMAN, Frances M.**, 94, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Mother of Mollie Stanfield. Sister of Molly Dugan. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of nine. †



## Angelic memorial

This angel statue replaces a smaller angel as the centerpiece for a new memorial for the unborn at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis. It was made possible by several parishes and Knights of Columbus councils in Indianapolis.

## Conventual Franciscan Brother Martin Masler taught at Cardinal Ritter

Conventual Franciscan Brother Martin Masler, a former teacher at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, died on Dec. 1 at Cedar Hill Nursing Home in Missouri. He was 63.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 6 at the chapel at Mount St. Francis in southern Indiana. Burial followed at the friars' cemetery.

Frederick Gilbert Masler was born on Jan. 13, 1944, in Toledo, Ohio. He entered the novitiate of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual on July 14, 1962, and took the religious name of Martin. He professed first vows on July 15, 1963, at Auburn, Ind., and was assigned to Our Lady of Carey Seminary in Carey, Ohio, as assistant to the director of retreats.

On July 16, 1966, Brother Martin professed solemn vows at the Basilica of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio.

He served in retreat ministries in Carey, Ohio, and Prior Lake, Minn.

In the archdiocese, Brother Martin served in divorce ministry as a staff member of the Metropolitan Tribunal at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

From 1985-90, Brother Martin taught theology classes and served as a counselor at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis.

He is survived by several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis, IN 47146. †

## Daily Readings

continued from page 25

**Saturday, Dec. 29**  
The Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas  
Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr  
1 John 2:3-11  
Psalm 96:1-3, 5b-6  
Luke 2:22-35

**Sunday, Dec. 30**  
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph  
Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14  
Psalm 128:1-5  
Colossians 3:12-21  
or Colossians 3:12-17  
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

**Monday, Dec. 31**  
The Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas  
1 John 2:18-21  
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13  
John 1:1-18

**Tuesday, Jan. 1**  
The Octave Day of Christmas:  
The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God  
Numbers 6:22-27  
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:16-21

**Wednesday, Jan. 2**  
Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and doctor of the Church  
1 John 2:22-28  
Psalm 98:1-4  
John 1:19-28

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

**Friday, Jan. 4**  
Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious  
1 John 3:7-10

Psalm 98:1, 7-9  
John 1:35-42

**Saturday, Jan. 5**  
John Neumann, bishop  
1 John 3:11-21  
Psalm 100:1-5  
John 1:43-51

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

**Monday, Jan. 7**  
Raymond of Peñafort, priest  
1 John 3:22-4:6  
Psalm 2:7-8, 10-12a  
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

**Tuesday, Jan. 8**  
1 John 4:7-10  
Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8  
Mark 6:34-44

**Wednesday, Jan. 9**  
1 John 4:11-18  
Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13  
Mark 6:45-52

**Thursday, Jan. 10**  
1 John 4:19-5:4  
Psalm 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17  
Luke 4:14-22a

**Friday, Jan. 11**  
1 John 5:5-13  
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20  
Luke 5:12-16

**Saturday, Jan. 12**  
1 John 5:14-21  
Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b  
John 3:22-30

**Sunday, Jan. 13**  
The Baptism of the Lord  
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7  
Psalm 29:1-4, 3, 9-10  
Acts 10:34-38  
Matthew 3:13-17

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## Prayers Answered .....

**THANK YOU** God, Blessed Mother and St. Jude for prayers answered. Pat.

**THANK THE LORD JESUS** and St. Anthony for the return of my check and Camry coming home. H.N.

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For a detailed job description please visit [www.hspirit.org](http://www.hspirit.org)  
Please submit your résumé and salary requirements to:

Parish Administrator Search Committee  
Holy Spirit Catholic Church  
3345 Lexington Rd  
Louisville, KY 40206

We Conduct Background Checks

## Director of Worship

Saint Alphonsus Liguori Parish in northwest Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Director of Worship and Music. The growing Parish of 1000 families has a new church and is eager for development and like growth in the sacred music program. Catholic liturgy experience and a solid background in Church Music are required. The position is responsible for directing choirs, liturgy and music preparation, and training and scheduling ministers. A commitment to work with a professional Parish Staff building a community is necessary. Please send a cover letter, résumé, references, and salary requirements to:

Director of Worship Search Committee  
Saint Alphonsus Liguori Parish  
1870 West Oak Street  
Zionsville, IN 46077

Electronic mail to: [sjderocher@indy.rr.com](mailto:sjderocher@indy.rr.com)

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