



*The*

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

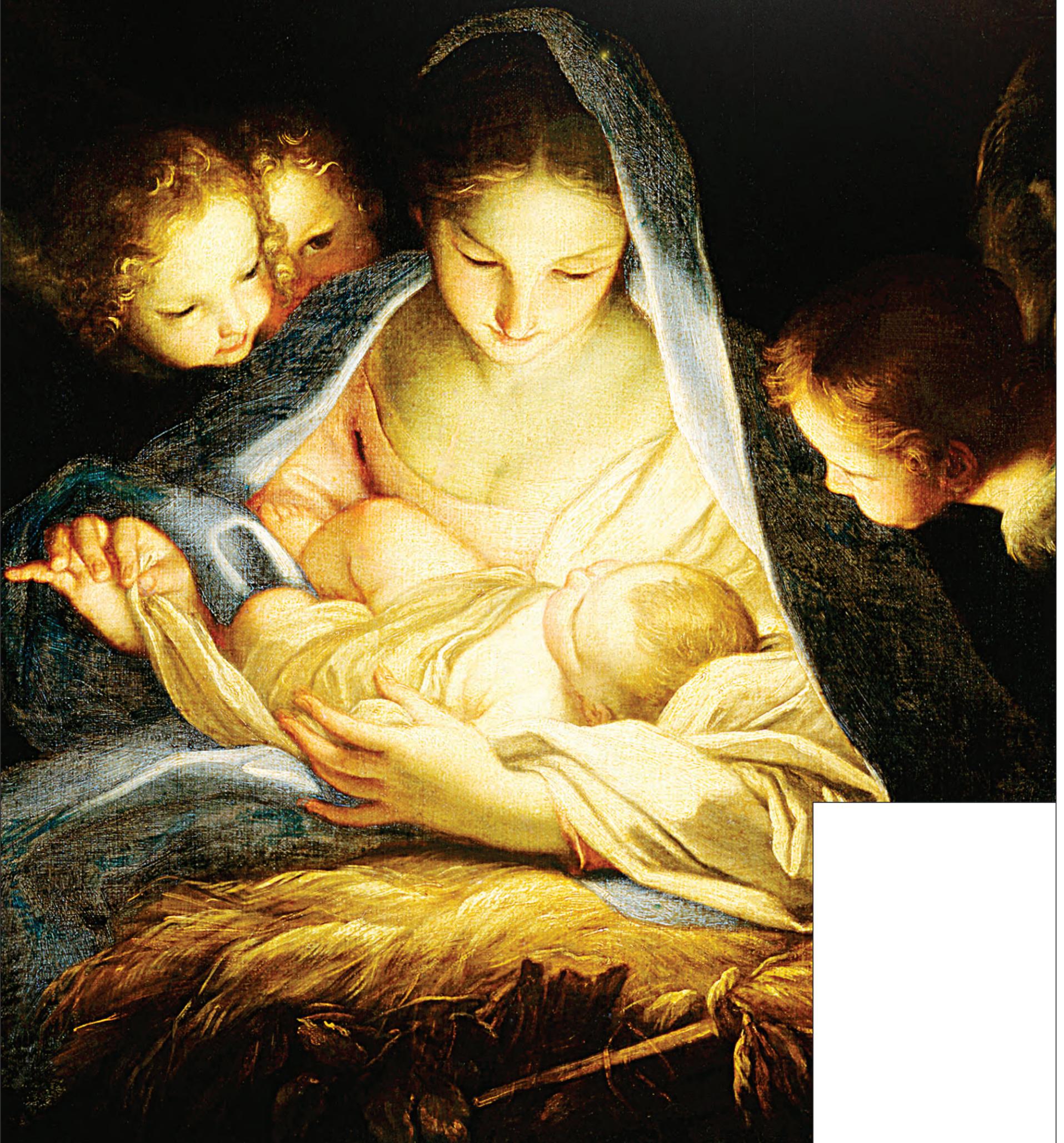
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December 19, 2008

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*'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and  
bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.'*

(Mt 1:23)



# Archbishop's cancer diagnosis tops local news stories for 2008

By Brandon A. Evans

The announcement that Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein had been diagnosed with cancer was voted the top news story for the archdiocese this year, a story followed closely by the ordination of the archdiocese's first-ever class of permanent deacons and local pilgrimages to see Pope Benedict XVI in New York and Washington.

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 stories that have appeared in the archdiocesan 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 475 locally produced news stories this year, here is our top 10:

## 1. Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein is diagnosed with cancer.

On Jan. 18, the archbishop received a medical report that he had Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer affecting the lymph nodes, which is commonly known as Hodgkin's disease.

A novena was quickly organized for Catholics in central and southern Indiana to pray for Archbishop Buechlein. Its culmination was at a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Feb. 11, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes and also the Church's observance of the World Day of the Sick.

More than 200 people also logged on to [www.archindy.org/archbishop](http://www.archindy.org/archbishop) and offered prayers and messages of support for the archbishop.

The archbishop's schedule was severely curtailed for part of the year as he underwent chemotherapy and radiation therapy treatments.

*The Criterion* published updates on the archbishop's prognosis, including the June 20 announcement that his cancer was in full remission after the completion of his treatments.

"I am humbled and profoundly grateful to all of you for the countless prayers and expressions of support you extended to me during the last five months," he wrote.

Archbishop Buechlein resumed his regular schedule in the fall.

## 2. History is made as 25 men are ordained permanent deacons.

After four years of preparation, 25 men became a part of history when they became the first class ordained to the permanent diaconate in the archdiocese during a June 28 Mass at the cathedral.

Though the permanent diaconate was restored after the Second Vatican Council, it had not yet been implemented in the archdiocese.

"The new permanent deacons will be ministering in parishes and in the broader community in such places as jails, prisons, hospitals and nursing homes," wrote reporter Sean Gallagher in our July 4 news story. "They will be able to baptize, witness marriages and preside over funeral services. At Mass, they will be able to proclaim the Gospel and preach, but will not serve as celebrant or consecrate the Eucharist."

*Criterion* coverage throughout the year, which can also be found online at [www.archindy.org/deacon](http://www.archindy.org/deacon), not only gave the background on the history of the diaconate, it explored the roles that the deacons would play and included brief biographies of each deacon candidate.

Shortly after the ordination, 18 other men began formation to be ordained deacons in 2012.

On a sad note, Deacon Ronald Stier, who was ordained in June and ministered at the Richmond Catholic Community, died on Aug. 24 after a two-year struggle with pancreatic cancer.

## 3. Local Catholics, including youths, travel to New York and Washington to see Pope Benedict XVI.

Many archdiocesan Catholics participated—either by pilgrimage or prayer—in what may have been the biggest national Catholic news story of the year: the apostolic visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States.

Our special coverage included eight stories in the April 25 issue focusing on the many people from our archdiocese who went to New York for a papal Mass at Yankee Stadium and others who attended the papal Mass at Nationals Park in Washington.

Of particular note was a group of 44 archdiocesan youths who attended a rally with Pope Benedict at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., on April 19. Their pilgrimage was captured "live" on a blog hosted on our Web site. One of the youths sent photos and updates throughout their journey.

## 4. Archdiocese launches 175th anniversary year.

In what promises to be a major news story next year as well, the Archdiocese of Indian-



The 25 archdiocesan deacon candidates lay prostrate in prayer during the praying of the Litany of the Saints just moments before Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein ordained them as the first class of permanent deacons in the history of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The ordination liturgy took place on June 28 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

apolis in the fall kicked off a year of celebrating the 175th anniversary of its founding with a September pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The pilgrimage, led by Archbishop Buechlein, was chronicled on a blog run by young adults at [www.archindy.org/holyland](http://www.archindy.org/holyland).

The anniversary celebration will culminate on May 3, 2009, with a special Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Also premiering in the final month of the year is an archdiocesan history book, written to commemorate 175 years of growth and to highlight all 151 parishes in the archdiocese.

The book is available for \$31.50 at [www.archindy.org/175th](http://www.archindy.org/175th). Additional resources for the anniversary year are also located on that site, including a special hymn composed for the anniversary.

## 5. Two men are ordained the archdiocese's newest priests.

News coverage and two online photo galleries followed the priestly ordination of two sons of the archdiocese: Fathers Aaron Jenkins and Joseph Newton.

The pair were ordained on June 7 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

"Joe and Aaron, the heart and soul of a priest is being a friend of Jesus, and being a friend of Jesus means being a man of prayer," Archbishop Buechlein told them during his homily. Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, he added, " 'always think

back to this moment' " that " 'is full of mystery because this is the origin of your new mission.' "

Our coverage also included detailed profiles of the new priests.

## 6. Archdiocese hosts National Catholic Educational Association Convention.

The archdiocese hosted, for the first time, the National Catholic Educational Association's annual convention in downtown Indianapolis at the end of March.

More than 8,000 delegates from all over the United States attended the event, which included two special supplements in our newspaper and more than 20 news stories before and after the event.

The convention was a success, and a chance for archdiocesan efforts for excellence in education—from our record-setting number of Blue Ribbon schools to the first year of Providence Cristo Rey High School, to the ongoing celebration of the 2006 canonization of education role model St. Theodora Guérin—to shine.

Everything about the convention, including more than 30 photo galleries, can be found at [www.archindy.org/ncea](http://www.archindy.org/ncea).

## 7. Carmelites leave Indianapolis and seminarians move into old convent.

After more than 75 years in Indianapolis, the Carmelite Sisters of the Monastery of the Resurrection sold their property to the

See REVIEW, page 12

### Report sexual misconduct now

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator:

Jan Link, Archdiocese of Indianapolis,  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1410  
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548  
[jlink@archindy.org](mailto:jlink@archindy.org)

### On the Cover

Angels surround Mary and Jesus in "Holy Night" by Italian Baroque painter Carlo Maratta. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Jan. 11 in 2009.

### The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 24 to Jan. 4 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement on pages 15-22, is the last issue of 2008.

The *Criterion* will be published again on Jan. 9 and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 24 through Jan. 4 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 5. †

12/19/08

### Moving?

We'll be there waiting if you give us two weeks' advance notice!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

New Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Elections, economic crisis top stories of 2008, pope top newsmaker

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The election of the first African-American president and controversy surrounding the role of Catholic voters in the U.S. campaign topped the religious news stories of 2008, and Pope Benedict XVI and President-elect Barack Obama were the top newsmakers, according to the annual poll conducted by Catholic News Service.

The global economic crisis took second place among the 31 news stories on the ballot. Pope Benedict's six-day visit to the United States in April came in third.

Most first-place votes on the newsmakers list went to either Obama or Pope Benedict, with the pontiff edging out the president-elect by a small margin. Catholic voters were a distant third.

The poll was the 47th annual survey conducted by CNS. This year's ballots were distributed on Dec. 5, and the deadline for returns was Dec. 11.

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 the national debate over immigration issues 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 31 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 31 editors and CNS staff members submitting ballots, the maximum points a story could have received was 310. The most a newsmaker could receive on the five-point scale was 155.

The 2008 campaign began more than a year before the Nov. 4 election of Obama and Sen. Joseph Biden, the first Catholic vice president in U.S. history. The U.S. bishops' "Faithful Citizenship" document, issued late in 2007, emphasized a wide range of issues and prompted debate over whether Catholics could vote for candidates committed to keeping abortion legal.

The economic crisis, which Church leaders said arose from distorted values, strained the resources of Catholic charitable agencies after the near-collapse of the U.S. financial system and the resulting mortgage crisis. Worldwide, a global food shortage had been reaching crisis proportions even before the economic downturn.

Highlights of Pope Benedict's April 15-20 U.S. visit were a private meeting with victims of clergy sex abuse, Masses at

baseball stadiums in Washington and New York and a solemn visit to ground zero to pray for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Rounding out the top five for religious news stories were abortion-related developments, including comments by Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that Church leaders said misrepresented Catholic teaching, and global tensions affecting Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

Pope Benedict took first place in the CNS poll for his travels to France and Australia, as well as the United States, and his participation in World Youth Day, the Synod of Bishops on Scripture and a year dedicated to St. Paul. Obama, who received the support of 54 percent of the Catholic electorate despite his stand on abortion, was second.

Catholic voters were the third top newsmakers of 2008, with the missionary apostle St. Paul in fourth place and Iraqi Christians, often persecuted and forced from their homeland, rounding out the top five.

Here are the choices for top 10 stories and top five newsmakers of 2008, followed by points received in the weighted ballot count and, in parentheses, the number of first-place votes received.

## STORIES

1. Elections, 272 (14).
  2. Economic crisis, 255 (10).
  3. Papal visit, 230 (5).
  4. Abortion, 129.
  5. Global tensions, 114.
  6. World Youth Day, 81.
  7. Immigration, 68.
  8. Synod of bishops, 67.
  9. Natural disasters, 66.
  10. Same-sex marriage and adoption, 59 (1).
- One first-place vote also went to the crisis in Zimbabwe.

## NEWSMAKERS

1. Pope Benedict XVI, 135 (18).

# 2008



## Top Stories

### 1. ELECTIONS

*Illinois Sen. Barack Obama defeats Arizona Sen. John McCain to become first African-American president in U.S. history. Delaware Sen. Joe Biden becomes first Catholic vice president.*

### 2. ECONOMIC CRISIS

### 3. PAPAL VISIT

### 4. ABORTION

### 5. GLOBAL TENSIONS

## Top Newsmakers

### 1. POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Makes first U.S. visit as pope, travels to France and Australia, opens year of St. Paul and leads world Synod of Bishops on the Bible*

### 2. PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA

### 3. CATHOLIC VOTERS

### 4. ST. PAUL

### 5. IRAQI CHRISTIANS



2. President-elect Barack Obama, 102 (10).
3. Catholic voters, 66 (1).
4. St. Paul, 28.
5. Iraqi Christians, 23.

Also receiving first-place votes were U.S. President George W. Bush and Archbishop Buti Tlhagale of Johannesburg, South Africa. †

# Who is God?



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS  
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

## Ecclesial Lay Ministry Academic Course Spring 2009



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[archindy.org/layministry/downloads.html](http://archindy.org/layministry/downloads.html)  
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## Class dates:

January 29  
February 5, 12, 19, 26  
March 5, 12, 1, 9, 26  
April 2

## Location

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center  
1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN  
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Cost: \$225.00

**For more information about ELM,**  
contact Ed Isakson at 317-236-1594  
or log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)



Rev. Msgr. Raymond T. Bosler, Founding Editor, 1915 - 1994

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Publisher Greg A. Otolski, Associate Publisher  
Mike Krokos, Editor John F. Fink, Editor Emeritus

## Editorial



A woman prays in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, on Nov. 30. The grotto is built over the site traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus.

# Bethlehem in 2008

As we again prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem next Thursday, what progress has been made to improve the lives of today's residents of Bethlehem, especially of the Christians who live there? Some, but not enough.

The good news is that more pilgrims have begun visiting Bethlehem again, as those did who accompanied Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein earlier this year.

The number of pilgrims increased this year by at least 50 percent from last year. The pilgrims found a peaceful city where they could visit the Basilica of the Nativity on the site of Christ's birth, and Shepherd's Fields in nearby Beit Sahour.

(Contrary to what most Americans believe, it is safe to visit Bethlehem. No tourist or pilgrim has been harmed there since the early 1970s.)

There is still more good news: Although many Christians have left Bethlehem in recent years, many are remaining—thanks in large part to efforts made by the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL). From contributions made by Americans, many of whom are archdiocesan Catholics, the foundation is providing college educations, training young boys and building houses for Christian Palestinians, among other things.

Pope Benedict XVI has stressed education as the way to maintain a Christian presence in the Holy Land. Today, this is being done by Bethlehem University, founded by the Vatican, the FFHL and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Christian Palestinians are becoming dentists, pharmacists, nurses and other professionals.

The bad news, though, is that the unemployment rate in Bethlehem is still about 50 percent, and the Christian olive-wood sculptors who once flourished can no longer find customers. Pilgrims usually are given little time to shop in the stores.

The worst news, though, is that the wall erected by Israel makes Bethlehemites prisoners in their own city. It prevents them from entering land to the north and west, and roads to the south and east can be traveled only by Jewish settlers who live in Gilo and Har Homa on land confiscated from Arab Christians.

The wall stands at the border that

separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem. Thirty feet high in places and merely a fence in other places, it was begun in 2002. If completed, it will be 480 miles long, three times the size of the Berlin Wall, encompassing 8 percent of the West Bank.

The Israelis insist that the wall is being built for security reasons—to keep terrorists out of Israel—and it does seem to be effective in doing that. But, because of the route the wall is taking deep into Palestinian territory, there can be no doubt that it is also meant to consolidate the Israeli settlements that have proliferated in the West Bank.

Last November, at a peace conference held in Annapolis, Md., the Israeli government promised to stop building settlements. It hasn't happened. More than 2,000 new homes have been built since then.

During the presidency of George W. Bush, the United States has only occasionally tried to accelerate the peace process between Israel and Palestine. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has tried from time to time, but without much to show for her efforts.

We would like to see President-elect Barack Obama take a more active role because a just peace between Israel and Palestine could solve many problems in the Middle East.

There is not much that can be done immediately because of Israeli politics. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was forced to resign because of corruption charges, but he remains in office until elections in February because Tzipi Livni, head of the Kadima Party, was unable to form a coalition government. She will now run against Binyamin Netanyahu, head of the Likud Party, and Ehud Barak, leader of the Labor Party.

Whoever wins that election will negotiate with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president. However, he leads only the Palestinians in the West Bank because those in Gaza have rejected him. Most Israelis and Palestinians seem to agree on the "two-state" solution—Israel and Palestine. Trying to arrive at that solution, though, will take a lot of hard negotiations over details.

We hope that President-elect Obama will appoint an experienced high-powered representative to help the Israelis and Palestinians reach a just agreement.

—John F. Fink

## Indiana Knights/Robert Hartenstein

# What if there were no tomorrows?

(Editor's note: This week, we begin a new occasional column titled "Indiana Knights.")

As a member of the Knights of Columbus, a thought popped into my head and I wondered where I am with my faith if there were no tomorrows.



Did I, as a member of the Knights of Columbus, honor my promise to defend the faith and the moral teachings of the Church, vote for leadership that protects life in every circumstance, give blood to save a life or feed the hungry?

If tomorrow didn't come, could I look God in the face with love or would it be with fear? That is pretty heady stuff.

What does that have to do with faith, you ask? We Knights of Columbus serve our fellow man in every way possible because we believe that we are called to serve our God.

Because of God's grace, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and the essential calling to reach out to others in need.

We are asked to evangelize all men through our actions and prayer. We are asked to form a council in every parish where possible and ask every Catholic gentleman to join our ranks. Our faith in our God drives us to love our fellow man through our actions.

The Indiana Knights of Columbus has been asked by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson to "recommit to growth in

holiness and actively participate in the Church's mission."

Our society is broken in its moral fabric, and if there were no tomorrows, where would it be? Would we as Knights have done all that we could to preserve this world we live in with charity, unity and fraternity?

As the New Year rapidly approaches, Indiana Knights must be prepared to say "yes" to our God in protecting our Church from the constant assault from our secularist society that is determined to destroy all the values we hold so dear.

On the brighter side of life, through prayer and trust in our God, if there were no tomorrows, we Knights of Columbus can be assured of a loving meeting with God our Father. Through our charity with others, unity and fraternity with our fellow Knights, we strengthen who we are and what we stand for.

As the year 2009 approaches, we must welcome new opportunities to serve others as our Lord served us and be resolute in our faith.

Indiana State Deputy Stephan Ziemba set "A call to serve" as his slogan during his term of office. All Indiana Knights are called to step forward and make a difference in the life of another through service.

The real question is: If there were no tomorrows, did we serve with love? Did our faith carry this day?

(Robert Hartenstein is state communications director for the Knights of Columbus. He is a member of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish in Fort Wayne.) †

## Letter to the Editor

# Society of St. Vincent de Paul thanks volunteers, donors and benefactors

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a faith-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the poor.

In Indianapolis, the society is a 100 percent volunteer organization—from the president/chief executive officer to the newest member.

With about \$1 million in income (donations) and expenses (aid to clients), the Indianapolis council is equivalent to a small-to-medium-sized business so you can imagine the variety of people and skills needed to run the organization.

There is not enough space to thank each volunteer role. So on behalf of the organization, here are a few examples of the type of "jobs" that contribute to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's goals:

- Food Pantry volunteers loading groceries into clients' vehicles in sweltering heat, pouring rain and snow.
  - Truck crews moving and loading heavy furniture and appliances from a donor's basement to be given to a needy family.
  - Retired accountants meticulously managing income and expenses in light of the current economic downturn.
  - Help line counselors completing an emotional four-hour shift listening to pleas for help from distressed families.
  - Stocking clerks scouring through a damaged tote of food to select items that can be stocked for client shopping.
  - Warehouse clerks going through a mountain of donated clothing to size and hang on racks so clients can choose items for their family.
  - Client interviewers exhibiting patience and respect for each person, from the first client of the day until the last in line, some four to six hours later.
- The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is also thankful for the many behind-the-scenes tasks that are required of our volunteers, such as mowing grass,

shoveling snow, sweeping floors, cleaning bathrooms and picking up trash. The list could go on and on.

Of course, our organization needs significant funds to provide services to the needy.

We are humbly grateful for the financial contributions from individuals, companies and foundations that allow us to purchase products and maintain facilities and equipment to continue and expand operations.

As mentioned, the Indianapolis council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has no paid management, staff or workers so nearly all contributions are used for direct aid to those in need.

Finally, thanks to individuals for in-kind donations of food, furniture, appliances, bedding, clothing and other household items that are distributed to needy clients free of charge.

Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas season.

**Don Striegel**  
Pantry Volunteer Coordinator  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Indianapolis

## Letters Policy

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

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content.

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

Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org).

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



# SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

## BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

### 'Do not be afraid!' is message that rings loud and clear this Christmas

One of the beautiful things about the Sacred Scriptures is that so often ancient and familiar texts seem so new and so especially timely.

As I reflect on the scriptural readings assigned to the Christmas midnight Mass, this year they seem to be pertinent to our time like no other in recent memory.

From the prophet Isaiah, we read: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest ..." (Is 9:1-2).

This year, our celebration of Christmas takes place in uncertain times, economically and socially. It comes during a time of transition in our government leadership. Transitions in political institutions come with new expectations and hopes while also generating feelings of insecurity.

Our second Christmas reading is from St. Paul's letter to Titus. We read: "Beloved: the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly and devoutly in this age as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ ..." (Ti 2:11-13).

As the people of Christian faith who believe that God is the Creator and origin of all good things and that Jesus is the Son of God, we have some concern that

godless ways in our times follow upon a secularist movement that sidelines God in the public arena.

The timeliness of the scriptural message this Christmas calls us to be awake to the effects of a culture that proposes material values as the supreme goal of human life.

To live justly in our day is to recognize the human dignity and the natural rights of all human life, including unborn human life and the entire spectrum up to and including natural death.

St. Paul's message to live temperately is surely timely in these uncertain economic times. He encourages us to live devoutly, that is, as people who live what they believe as dedicated Christians.

The Gospel for midnight Mass has especially realistic characteristics. The call to the citizens in Palestine to register in the tax rolls, and the fact that Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth in Galilee down to Bethlehem in Judea to comply with the law, is ironic. What an interesting context in which Jesus, the Savior of the world, would be born.

In these days, as we hear about the housing crisis, the fact that Joseph and Mary could not find a room in an inn for the birth of the Savior of the world strikes an especially dramatic chord.

Jesus was to be born of homeless parents in a barnyard cave. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. Sadly, these days too many of our

own people know the threat and the reality of being homeless. May there be some small consolation for them in the thought that they are in awesome company.

The announcement of the birth of the Savior of the world was first made to poor shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. The angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. It is no surprise to hear that they were struck with great fear.

But here is the message that comes down to us through the ages: And "the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid ...'" (Lk 2:10).

The angel Gabriel had given the same message to Mary at the announcement that she was to be the mother of the Savior. The same message, "Be not afraid ..." was given to Joseph more than once as he became the foster father of the Savior of the world.

"Do not be afraid!" It is the message that comes down to us and rings loud and clear this Christmas. It rings loud and true as a message of hope and joy no matter what the circumstances may be in which we live.

It is a message of hope because "in the

city of David a savior has been born for us ... a savior who is Christ the Lord. And in the heavens on this Christmas night a multitude of the heavenly host continue praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to those on whom his favor rests'" (Lk 2:11-14).

Do not be afraid. We are a people of unwavering hope because we are the people on whom God's favor rests.

After all is said and done, nothing else matters. And so we too continue to sing Glory to God in the highest. And we pray for peace for all of us on whom his favor rests.

Have a hope-filled Christmas! †

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.

### '¡No teman!' es el mensaje que resuena fuerte y claro en esta Navidad

Una de las cosas más hermosas de la Sagrada Escritura es que sus textos que se nos antojan antiguos y conocidos parecen al mismo tiempo muy nuevos y oportunos.

Al reflexionar sobre las lecturas bíblicas asignadas para la misa de gallo me parece que en este año son más pertinentes que en ningún otro que recuerde.

Del profeta Isaías leemos: "El pueblo que andaba en la oscuridad ha visto una gran luz; sobre los que vivían en densas tinieblas la luz ha resplandecido. Has aumentado su alegría y se alegran ellos en tu presencia como cuando recogen la cosecha ..." (Is 9:1-2).

Este año nuestra celebración de la Navidad se desarrolla en momentos de incertidumbre económica y social. Sucede en una época de transición de nuestros líderes gubernamentales. Las transiciones en las instituciones políticas vienen acompañadas de renovadas expectativas y esperanzas, al tiempo que producen una sensación de inseguridad.

Nuestra segunda lectura de Navidad es de la carta de San Pablo a Tito. En ella leemos: "En verdad, Dios ha manifestado a toda la humanidad su gracia, la cual trae salvación y nos enseña a rechazar la impiedad y las pasiones mundanas. Así podremos vivir en este mundo con justicia, piedad y dominio propio, mientras aguardamos la bendita esperanza, es decir, la gloriosa venida de nuestro gran Dios y Salvador Jesucristo" (Ti 2:11-13).

Como pueblo de fe cristiana que cree que Dios es el creador y el origen de todas las cosas buenas y que Jesús es el Hijo de Dios,

sentimos cierta preocupación por la instauración de métodos ateos en nuestros tiempos, en respuesta a un movimiento laico que pone a Dios al margen del foro público.

La puntualidad del mensaje bíblico de esta Navidad nos llama a estar atentos a los efectos de una cultura que propone los valores materiales como el objetivo supremo de la vida humana.

Vivir de manera justa en nuestros días supone el reconocimiento de la dignidad humana y los derechos naturales de ésta, incluyendo la vida humana no nacida y todo su espectro, que abarca incluso la muerte natural.

El mensaje de San Pablo de vivir con temple resulta ciertamente oportuno en estas épocas de incertidumbre económica. Nos alienta a vivir devotamente, es decir, como personas que viven según su creencia, como cristianos dedicados.

El evangelio de la misa de gallo posee características especialmente realistas. El llamado a que los ciudadanos de Palestina se inscribieran en el censo y el hecho de que José y María fueron desde Nazaret en Galilea, hasta Belén en Judea para cumplir con la ley, resulta irónico. El Salvador del mundo nacería en un contexto muy interesante.

Hoy en día, mientras oímos sobre la crisis de vivienda, el hecho de que José y María no pudieran encontrar albergue en una posada para el nacimiento del Salvador del mundo toca una fibra especialmente sensible en nosotros.

Jesús debió nacer de unos padres sin

hogar en un establo. María lo envolvió en pañales y lo acostó en un pesebre. Tristemente hoy en día mucha gente vive la amenaza y la realidad de no tener un hogar. Que ellos encuentren algo de consuelo en la noción de que están en excelente compañía.

El anuncio del nacimiento del Salvador del mundo llegó primero a los humildes pastores de los campos de Belén. El ángel del Señor se les apareció y Su gloria brilló sobre ellos. No es de sorprender que los embargara un gran temor.

Pero este es el mensaje que recibimos de tiempos ancestrales: Y "el ángel les dijo: 'No tengan miedo ...'" (Lc 2:10).

El ángel Gabriel le había dado el mismo mensaje a María al anunciarle que iba a ser la madre del Salvador. El mismo mensaje "No temas ..." le fue dado a José más de una vez al convertirse en el padre adoptivo del Salvador del mundo.

"¡No temas!" Es el mensaje que nos llega en esta Navidad y que resuena fuerte y claro. Resuena con gran fuerza y verdad como un mensaje de esperanza y júbilo, independientemente de las circunstancias que vivimos.

Resulta un mensaje de esperanza porque "Hoy les ha nacido en la ciudad de David un Salvador, que es Cristo el Señor. De repente apareció una multitud de ángeles del cielo,

que alababan a Dios y decían: 'Gloria a Dios en las alturas, y en la tierra paz a los que gozan de su buena voluntad'" (Lc 2:11-14).

No temas. Somos un pueblo de fe inquebrantable porque gozamos de la buena voluntad de Dios.

Al final, nada más importa. Y así nosotros también continuamos cantando Gloria a Dios en las alturas. Y rezamos por la paz para todos aquellos que gozamos de Su buena voluntad.

¡Que tengan una Navidad llena de esperanza! †

¿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 Indianápolis  
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 servir en la Iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes o religiosos.

# Events Calendar

## December 19-January 10

Saint Meinrad Archabbey and School of Theology, Archabbey Library, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **Crèches display**, free. Information: 800-682-0988 or [news@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:news@saintmeinrad.edu).

## December 20

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants Pro-Life Mass**, Father John McCaslin, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

SS. Francis and Clare Church, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. **"Voices of Christmas,"** 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-859-4673.

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Concert, "Bach by Christmas,"** 6:30 p.m., free-will donation. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 237.

## December 21

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Christmas Concert XLVII**, 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., \$5 per person. Tickets: 317-787-1682.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **"Joy to the World, Celebration of Christmas in Readings and Song,"** St. Michael Parish adult choir, 4 p.m., free-will donation. Information: 317-926-7359.

Seton East, Richmond Catholic Community, 701 N. "A" St., Richmond. **Charismatic prayer group**, 7 p.m. Information: [dicksoncorp@parallax.ws](mailto:dicksoncorp@parallax.ws).

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

## December 24

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Organ recital**, Dr. David Lamb, organist, 11:30 a.m. Information: 317-635-2021.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Misa del Gallo**, midnight. Information: 812-944-0417.

## December 27

Convent of the Immaculate Conception, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **2008 Christmas tour**, 6-8 p.m. Information: 812-933-6491 or [jwerner@oldeburgosf.com](mailto:jwerner@oldeburgosf.com).

## December 28

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

## December 31

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg.

## "Winter Bird Count,"

7:30-noon, lunch, pre-registration requested. Information: 812-933-0661.

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](mailto:ccrci@holyspirit.org).

## January 3

St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **90th anniversary kick-off dance**, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## January 4

Saint Meinrad Archabbey and School of Theology, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **Epiphany celebration, "A Twelfth Night Gathering,"** 5 p.m. free. Information: 800-682-0988 or [news@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:news@saintmeinrad.edu).

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles

south of Versailles, Mass, 10 a.m., on **third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in**, groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

## January 5

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **Catholic's Returning Home**, six-week series, 7:30-9 p.m. Information: 812-945-3112 or [www.olphna.org](http://www.olphna.org).

## January 7

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 9

St. Francis Hospital, 8111 S. Emerson Ave., Indianapolis. **Natural Family Planning (NFP) class**, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-462-2246.

## January 18-April 5

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish,

6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **"English as a Second Language,"** 8:45-10:30 a.m., \$20 for 12-week session. Information: 317-291-7014, ext. 27, or [keith@stgabrielindy.org](mailto:keith@stgabrielindy.org).

## January 19

Roncalli High School, auditorium, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **"Teens and Sexuality,"** program for parents, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-787-8277.

## January 20

St. Pius X School, 7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis. **Open house**, 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-255-4534.

## January 23-25

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Retrouvaille weekend**. Information: 317-236-1595 or 800-383-9836, ext. 1586.

## January 24

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"A Church to Believe In,"** 9-11:30 a.m., free-will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com). †



## Sister donates puppets



Left, Providence Sister Adelaide Ortelge brings to life a marionette she created at Woods Day Care/Pre-School at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The 80-year-old sister recently donated a collection of marionettes that she created, seen above, to Woods Day Care/Pre-School and trained members of the ministry's staff on how to operate them. In the past, Sister Adelaide used the puppets, which represent cultures and nations from around the world, in a "Puppets for Peace" show she would regularly perform in ministry in Chicago.

## Retreats and Programs

### December 31-January 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Following the Star: Discovering Christ in our Midst,"** Father Jim Farrell and Father John McCaslin, presenters, \$135 per person or \$250 for married couple. Information: 317-545-7681 or [spasotti@archindy.org](mailto:spasotti@archindy.org).

### January 9-11

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"The Book of Genesis: Stories of Creation and Faith,"** Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell, presenter. Information: 800-581-6905 or [MZoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:MZoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### January 11

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center,

1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Woman's Prayer, "A Morning of Grace,"** Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner, presenter, 8:45 a.m.-1 p.m., \$25 includes lunch. Information: 317-788-7581 or [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org).

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **Evenson**, 4-5 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

### January 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Meet Me at The Shack,"** Information: 317-545-7681 or [spasotti@archindy.org](mailto:spasotti@archindy.org).

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"Men's Night at the 'Burg,"** men's spirituality, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

### January 17

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"Why Be Catholic?,"** Jeanne Hunt and Franciscan Sister Kathleen Mulso, presenters, 9-11:30 a.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

Monastery Immaculate Conception, Kordes Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **"Saturday Morning at the Dome—Grieving Our Losses,"** Benedictine Sister Maria Tasto, presenter, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., \$35 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 812-367-1411 or [spirituality@thedome.org](mailto:spirituality@thedome.org). †

## Grants

The Target Corporation recently awarded a \$2,500 "Books for Bears" grant to **St. Anthony of Padua School** in Clarksville. The grant supports programs promoting early literacy and a love of reading in children from birth through the third grade. The school will use the grant to develop activities, purchase resources for teachers, and buy books for students and their families. †

## Cathedral and Saint Meinrad announce Christmas liturgies

The Christmas liturgical schedules for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis and Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church in St. Meinrad are as follows:

**SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral**  
Dec. 24—4:25 p.m. carols, 5 p.m. Mass, 11:15 p.m. vigil service of lessons and carols, midnight Mass.  
Dec. 25—10:30 a.m. Mass.  
All times for liturgies in the cathedral

are Eastern Standard Time.

**Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church**  
Dec. 24—7 p.m. vigil, midnight Mass.  
Dec. 25—11 a.m. Mass.  
All times for liturgies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church are Central Standard Time.  
For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †

# The meaning of Christmas

## Restoration of Nativity scene at cathedral transforms lives

By John Shaughnessy

Count it as one of the wonders of Christmas. When a church displays a Nativity scene, people are offered a visible reminder of the different journeys that the Holy Family, the shepherds and the three kings made that first Christmas. And when believers approach the Nativity scene to get a closer look, they make their own Christmas journey, drawing more near to the child who came to save humanity, to the woman who was humble enough to accept God's will and strong enough to live it, and to the man who put the needs of his wife and his child before his own. Sometimes, those Christmas journeys take an even more personal turn—a reality that happened to three individuals who were involved in the recent restoration and conservation of one of the most beautiful Nativity scenes in the archdiocese.

During the past year, extensive efforts were made to transform the Nativity scene at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis to the original luster and beauty it had when it was first displayed in the Cathedral about 90 years ago. In the process, the lives of three people intimately involved in that transformation were touched and transformed, too. Here are the stories of these three people, stories steeped in the meaning of Christmas.

**A new life for a source of inspiration**  
The person who knows the most about the Nativity scene at the cathedral just may be Joseph Vitale, a longtime member of the parish and the unofficial tour guide and historian of the Cathedral.

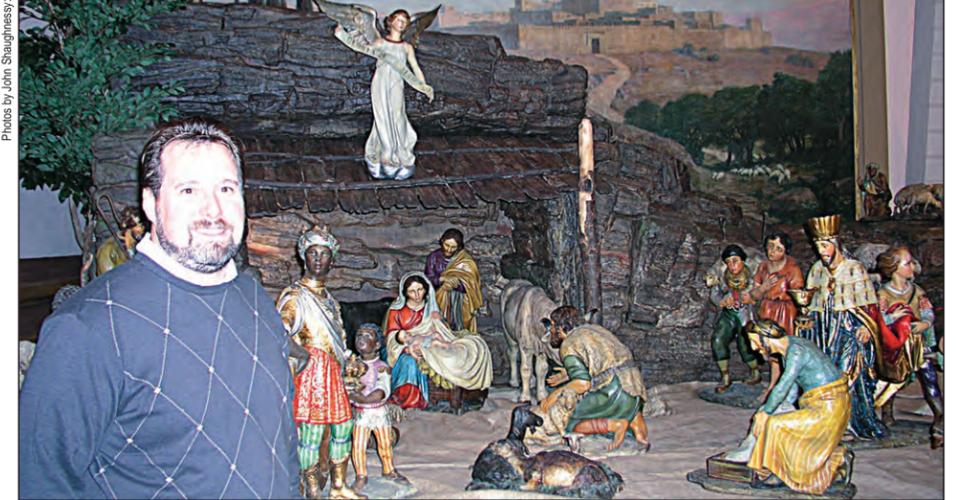
His passion for the Nativity scene shows in the tears that fill his eyes when he talks about the importance of restoring the Nativity scene to its original beauty. "I've been interested in getting this restored since 1990," he says. "I've been

setting the figures in place every Christmas for the last 10 years or so. There are 24 pieces, and it was purchased in the 1920s or even earlier in Rome by Father Joseph Ritter when he was a parish priest here. He later became the first archbishop of Indianapolis and a cardinal [in the Archdiocese of St. Louis]. During Ritter's tenure here, he was very social justice-oriented." That focus shows in the Nativity scene, Vitale says. "This Nativity has figures that are very ethnic," Vitale says. "Traditionally, Nativity sets have one king of the three who's black. And this one has four figures that are black. There are also obvious Arab and Semitic-featured figures. That's important. When this was first installed, there were a lot of signs in the city that said 'no Irish, no blacks, no Catholics.' The city and state of Indiana were run by the Ku Klux Klan then. This was quite a social statement for its time."

Vitale also has a personal connection to the Nativity scene. "When I was a little kid, we lived in Hope, Indiana," recalls Vitale, who is 57. "My mother would bring us to Indianapolis to shop and look at the animated windows at Ayres, Block's and Wasson. My mother would make side trips to the local downtown churches to view the different Nativity sets. That was my first exposure to this. We always knelt in front of it. It was more like a pilgrimage."

He encourages people to visit the restored Nativity scene. It will be on display through Jan. 11, the day which marks the baptism of Jesus. "We'd like to encourage visitors because this is the mother church of the archdiocese," he says. "The full scene, with the Holy Family, will be on display from Christmas Eve to Jan. 11. What's important for Catholics to remember is that this is not just a piece of furniture. It's a source of inspiration and a great piece of art. It's one of the grandest Nativity scenes in the surrounding area."

**A family connection**  
As he stands by the Nativity scene in the cathedral, Phil Schouten remembers another family who once made a long journey sparked by faith, hope and love. "My parents and my five older brothers and sisters immigrated to the United States from Holland in 1957," Schouten says. "The Catholic Church helped them relocate to Indianapolis. My father loved the Church for all it had done to provide a better opportunity for his family. As a way of giving back to the Church, my dad was very involved in the Cathedral, and he did a lot of work around the church, particularly in the '60s, '70s and '80s." One of his father's major volunteer efforts was setting up the Nativity scene during the Advent season. "It was a whole day affair or two," recalls Schouten, a member of the Cathedral Parish.



For Phil Schouten, the recently restored Nativity scene at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis brings back fond memories of his father, John, an immigrant who came to the United States through the help of the Church, an immigrant who volunteered to set up the crèche each Christmas as a way of giving thanks for the Church's help to his family.

"My brothers would help, and kids from the grade school at Cathedral would help. It was something we looked forward to every year. It was quite an event. The church would order 40 to 50 Christmas trees, and they had to be put up around the Nativity scene. We worked from seven in the morning to seven at night. It meant a lot to my father." It's touched Phil Schouten, too. His father, John, died about two years ago, near the time when Cathedral parish announced plans to restore the Nativity scene to its original condition. Schouten immediately asked to be part of the parish committee charged with hiring the artists to conserve and restore the scene, and raise money for the effort.

"I grew up with this. I wanted to honor my dad. It was important for me to be involved," Schouten says softly, his voice tinged with emotion. "After all those years of dirt and grime, and pieces being missing, it's been an amazing transformation to watch. The colors stand out. The details are amazing. It's authentic."

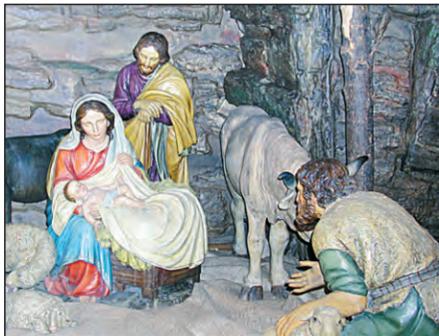
Schouten helped to set up the restored Nativity scene in early December. His daughter, Emily, worked by his side. His brothers helped, too. "Still, to this day, we talk about the days of putting it up with Dad. He would be very humbled to see what it looks like now."

**Restoring the beauty and the wonder**  
Jean Marie Easter spent much of this past year cleaning and repairing the wooden figures that make up the Nativity scene at the Cathedral. Most of the ears and some of the horns on the animals had to be replaced. Missing fingers and arms on the human figures needed to be created and attached seamlessly. The frame on the painting that serves as the backdrop for the Nativity scene required fixing and restoring. Easter shared the meticulous conservation

effort with Sharon Battista, a friend and former colleague from the Indianapolis Museum of Art. While Easter focused on the woodwork, Battista concentrated on painting the figures to their original luster. "This was really enjoyable," says Battista, the owner of S. D. Battista Paintings Conservation, Inc. "I was very sad to see it end, but I'm happy to see the Nativity scene together again."

So is Easter. "It's overwhelming," says Easter, a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis and the owner of Easter Conservation Services. "Anytime you work on something like this, you always get a sense that your talent is being used. When you work with your hands, it's very special. Whenever you're able to create beauty and art, it's not just you. There's a sort of a spiritual quality in something that's created. There are certain times when I'm doing something and I cross myself and say, 'I hope this goes well.' And it does. I bring God into my work every day."

Easter's efforts on the Nativity scene have also had the subtle impact of focusing her attention deeper on the meaning of the first Christmas. "The crèche makes you a little more aware of what Christmas is all about—the birth of Christ," Easter says. "Maybe more so this year, it's about giving thanks for the people in your life, and the people who have been a part of your life. "It brings you back to your humble roots. Here's a woman who gave birth to her child in a manger because there was no room for her in the inn. It does reduce everything to basics, to the fundamental issues of how you live your life, what's important and where you put your values. Now that it's closer to Christmas, those are the kinds of things you're made to think about." †



A shepherd bows before the infant Jesus as Mary cradles her son and Joseph watches both of them, part of the 24 figures of the Nativity scene that has been restored and conserved in the past year at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Dating to the 1920s or earlier, the Nativity scene will be on display through Jan. 11, the baptism of Jesus.

### CARDINAL RITTER HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

#### "SUCCESS IN PARENTING OUR CHILDREN"

West Deanery Parenting Workshop Series presented by Janice Gabe, LCSW, CADAC

Open to the Public – All Welcome – No Charge  
January 8, 2009 and March 12, 2009  
In the Cardinal Ritter Gym

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Questions 7:00 - 7:30 pm)  
Refreshments provided by CRHS Parent's Club

#### January 8, 2009 - VALUE BASED CONSEQUENCES

During this workshop we will talk with parents about the concern of doing the best job of parenting they possibly can. We will discuss teaching the children a value system that will help them grow to be happy, productive and contributing members of our culture.

#### March 12, 2009 - MYTHS THAT ENDANGER OUR CHILDREN

Unfortunately we often find that our parenting choices are based on popular myths vs. values and reality. This workshop will explore myths around teen alcohol and drug use, adolescent decision making, use of technology and bullying behavior.

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# Rosary is inspiration for Eagle Scout project at St. Michael School

By Mike Krokos

GREENFIELD—Chris Sosnowski remembers learning to pray the rosary in fifth grade at St. Michael School in Greenfield, and the simple yet powerful prayer left a lasting impression on him.

Four years later, Chris, his parents and his siblings try to pray the rosary as a family on a regular basis.

A freshman at Greenfield Central High School, Chris, 15, decided the rosary would play a key part in his Eagle Scout project for St. Michael's Troop #770 in Greenfield.

The result is a rosary walk that was recently completed on the grounds of St. Michael School.

"I wanted to do something that helps the community in some way," said Chris, who with his family has been a member

of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield since 1995.

"I wanted to create a quiet place for people to come and pray," he continued. "Also, it can be a place where kids can come back here and read."

Chris and his father, John, along with help from fellow Scouts, friends and members of the St. Michael Parish community, spent more than two months working on the rosary project this fall.

Most of the material for the effort was donated by individuals or local merchants, Chris noted, and people who helped with the project used their own tools.

Not surprisingly, Chris says the rosary walk was a team effort.

"I'm really appreciative of all the work these guys put in," he said.

The rosary walk has four paths—one each for the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries—and there will be placards posted along the paths with a summary of what each mystery represents.

Benches will be placed for people to sit in the garden-like area as they reflect about the mysteries of the rosary, Chris said. In the spring, flowers will be planted.

Theresa Slipher, principal of St. Michael School, said she is "thrilled" to have the rosary garden and added that it will fit in well with the school's curriculum.

"We have a time [each year] before Lent where [a group known as] the rosary ladies come in and help us [our students] make rosaries," said Slipher, who gave permission for the project along with the parish council and Benedictine Father Severin Messick, pastor of



Chris Sosnowski, standing in the back row at the left with a hat and hood on his head, said the rosary walk that he and others completed outside St. Michael School in Greenfield was a community effort. "I'm really appreciative of all the work these guys put in," he said.



John and Chris Sosnowski said their family enjoys praying the rosary together. It is one of the reasons that Chris decided to create a rosary walk for his Eagle Scout project.

St. Michael Parish. "We can actually use the new area outside [for this]."

Slipher added that she was not surprised that Chris chose the rosary walk as his Eagle Scout project because "you wouldn't find anyone who lives his Catholic identity as well" as Chris does.

The rosary walk, which will be dedicated after the school's 8 a.m. Mass on Dec. 19, "adds another element to our Catholic identity," Slipher added. "It's a prayerful place to go."

Father Severin agreed.

"I think what it does, ... it gives us another place on the church property to encourage devotion to Mary," Father Severin said, "and to take time for God in prayer."

John Sosnowski said he is proud of his son and added that his Eagle Scout project is a great faith formation tool.

"It gives us a better way to evangelization," he said. "Hopefully, maybe this will inspire some other people." †

## Proceeds from Little Flower Christmas CD to assist school families in need

By John Shaughnessy

Teresa Eckrich knew she had to do something to help ease the heartbreaking situation facing the children and families she cares about so much.

"The economy has hit people so hard in our neighborhood," says Eckrich, the longtime music teacher at Little Flower School on the near-eastside of Indianapolis.

"People are losing jobs here. When the economy hits people who are just living on what they earn, they're in bad straits quickly. We have parents who are heartsick about the possibility of taking their kids out of school because they can't pay the tuition."

Trying to help these families, Eckrich turned to a gift that has always made a difference in her life: music.

As the director of the Little Flower Christmas Choir, she led the group in creating a CD of Christmas music—with the proceeds being used for tuition assistance for struggling families.

"We always try to have a chunk in our [school and parish] budget to subsidize parishioners who can't afford Catholic schools, to help with their tuition," she says. "This year, if we even had double the amount we usually do, it still wouldn't be enough."

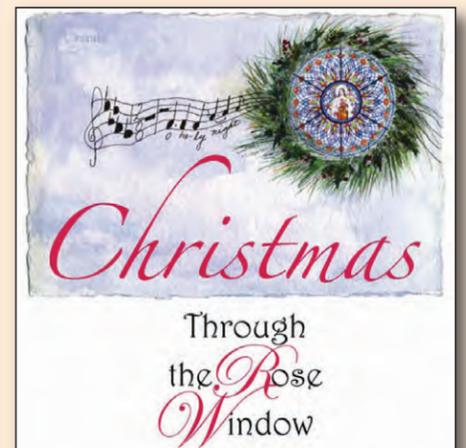
Hoping to bolster that help, the choir ordered 1,000 copies of the CD. The title of

the CD, which sells for \$15, is "Christmas through the Rose Window"—a tribute to the large circular window in the parish church that features the saint known as the "Little Flower," St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

The CD's 13 selections include *Carol of the Bells*, *Joy to the World* and *Ave Maria*.

"We thought people would buy one more Christmas CD to support our kids," says Eckrich, who is also the director of pastoral music for the parish. "Our choir is made up of people of all ages, from kids as young as sixth grade to adults in their 80s."

More than 300 of the Christmas CDs have been sold so far. Eckrich hopes the music—and the cause—will reach a larger audience. To purchase a CD, call the parish office at 317-357-8352 or e-mail Eckrich at [teckrich@littleflowerparish.org](mailto:teckrich@littleflowerparish.org).



"Other families have already had to remove children from school," she says. "We had a student who had to go to public school. Every time his school has a half-day, he comes here to be with his old class. He still wants to be part of that family." †

## Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

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## Parishioners learn new ways to bring Christ to others

By Mary Ann Wyand

Their historic church was destroyed in an arson fire on Holy Saturday, April 7, 2007, but grief-stricken St. Anne parishioners in New Castle have learned a new understanding of what it means to be Christ for others.

Parishioners also have been the recipients of amazing and unexpected blessings in the aftermath of the heart-breaking fire on the holiest weekend of the liturgical year and during their long wait for a new worship space.

"I don't think anybody realizes—until you do not have a church—what it is like," explained Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, the parish life coordinator.

"It's very hard," she said. "We stressed during Advent [2007] that we started our Advent journey in April [2007], but it is still kind of hard. We're waiting in hope.

"A few years ago, someone stole the Baby Jesus in our outdoor crib, and I said at the time that we have to make Christ present in our own hearts," Sister Shirley said. "I think that's one of the essential messages for Christmas."

Blessings quickly followed the tragedy, she said, as the New Castle community and Catholics from throughout Indiana responded with donations and countless other acts of kindness.

"I've just been awestruck by the number of folks who have given donations and been concerned about us,"

Sister Shirley said. "The longer it goes [without a church], the more we have to rely on prayers."

In the spirit of Christ and St. Francis of Assisi, parishioners began a "Rebuild My Church" campaign to raise funds for uninsured expenses for their new church. They sold crosses made from fragments of the stained-glass windows and sponsored other creative fundraisers.

"The life of the parish keeps getting stronger and stronger," Sister Shirley said. "It has made the people really evaluate what their faith means to them. We've become a blessing to one another. We have a new understanding of what it means to be Church."

St. Anne's 508 parishioners worship in the cramped basement of the former school, which functions as the Parish Life Center. Each week, they pray the "Rebuild My Church" prayer at the conclusion of Mass and look forward to breaking ground for their new worship space on March 29, 2009.

On Easter and Christmas, they gather in faith in Bundy Auditorium at New Castle High School so all of the parish's 243 families can celebrate the Eucharist at the same time.

And they continue to reach out to help people in need through social service ministries. Every month, they help about 20 poverty-stricken families with food and money for rent and utilities.

For years, St. Anne parishioners have



St. Anne parishioner Destiny Reece of New Castle, center, presents a \$500 gift for her parish to Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, right, the parish life coordinator, on Nov. 2, which was used to pay for two new vestments for Father Joseph Rautenberg, sacramental minister, and other priests who celebrate Mass with the Henry County faith community. Destiny, who is 8, wanted to help her parish with recovery efforts after an arson fire destroyed historic St. Anne Church during the early morning hours on Holy Saturday, April 7, 2007. Destiny and her grandmother, Vickie Reece, left, earned the money by making and selling pocket pouches for rosaries for several months.

## Act of giving to others spreads love and hope in the world

By Carole Norris Greene

Have you ever thought of the act of giving things to others as a loving way of sowing seeds of faith?

The people you give to are in one sense the land that you sow to and nurture with your loving care.

Looking at giving this way, you may see something that you hadn't focused on before.

Like the land that needs a rest in sowing or a rotation of crops, you may need to hold back from some sowing that is not essential to life, give something different or sow elsewhere to reap greater benefits.

Resting a portion of land every seven years or so to enable rejuvenation is

called sabbatical fallowing. But first, attention has to be given to the land's patterns and peculiarities to allow it to produce what it reasonably can!

For livestock farmers, sabbatical fallowing allows grass to grow thick, seeding several times over. This provides a rich mulch that builds up the top soil. Earthworms increase as well, negating the need for fertilizers.

Successfully applying this concept to our personal relationships this Christmas will depend on how well we pay attention to those close to us, noticing their lifestyles and peculiarities, and what gift—if any—will truly benefit them.

(Carole Norris Greene is associate editor of Faith Alive!) †

celebrated a weekly Mass at the New Castle Correctional Facility, counseled offenders and donated clothing for men released from prison.

Recently, Sister Shirley received an envelope from an inmate at the prison containing \$20 to help rebuild St. Anne Church.

Thoughtful gestures like this give them hope, Sister Shirley said, because they are small miracles.

Touched by their loss, Ball State University students in nearby Muncie, Ind., participated in a walkathon to help raise funds for their church, which will cost \$3 million to replace and include handicap-accessible facilities.

And parishioners have received extensive spiritual and material support from Protestant faith communities in Henry County, which is only 2 percent Catholic.

During his homily on the feast of All Saints, Father Joseph Rautenberg, sacramental minister, reminded parishioners crowded into the basement worship space that it is important to remember our roots in faith.

"Spend some time ... thinking about where our hope lies, thinking about the roots of family and faith out of which our faith has risen, out of which our hope is sustained," Father Rautenberg said. "Maybe thinking about these roots and these foundations can give us more peace to face our current stresses."

Seventy children in the parish donate pennies, nickels and dimes for their new church every week, and 8-year-old Destiny Reece earned \$500 by selling pocket pouches for rosaries that she made with her grandmother, Vickie Reece.

Perhaps the parishioners' greatest gifts of all are their ongoing prayers for the man charged with setting fire to their beloved church, which had been a landmark in the community since 1924.

(Mary Ann Wyand is senior reporter for The Criterion in Indianapolis. To help St. Anne parishioners with uninsured expenses to rebuild their church, address donations to St. Anne Church Fund, 102 N. 19th St., New Castle, IN 47362.) †

### Discussion Point

## Helping the poor is part of Christmas

### This Week's Question

What do you do during the Christmas season to reach out to others?

"Our CCD chooses a service to do. ... One year, it was baby bundles, filling shoe boxes with baby supplies for impoverished countries. Last year, ... kids brought in games and activity books for [homeless children from] their age group ... [who were living with their families] at local shelters." (Mary Ellen Lane, Morrisville, Pa.)

"Our family adopts a family, and we provide for them so they can have a love-filled Christmas morning." (Janet Wrabel, Fairfield, Conn.)

"I take people to church who don't have transportation—usually the elderly or handicapped. I

visit the homebound all year, and bring them each a gift at Christmas." (Marga Bohm, Akron, Ohio)

"We try to include everyone in our holiday meal, such as relatives who are not well-off. We make sure no one is alone. We also help our five kids come home for holidays, which may mean subsidizing [their airline] tickets." (Suzanne Harmon, Bothell, Wash.)

### Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Where do you go to find information about the economy and about your personal finances?

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

## Possible U.S. saints: Mary Virginia Merrick

(Thirtieth in a series of columns)

For my Christmas column, let me tell you about Mary Virginia Merrick. She served the Christ Child despite spending most of her life confined to bed or a wheelchair.



She was born on Nov. 2, 1866, to a prominent Washington, D.C. family, descendants of the Calvert family of Maryland. Her parents raised her as a devout Catholic. She often accompanied her mother on visits, with gifts, to the homes of the disadvantaged.

During her teen years, Mary Virginia fell from the window of a playhouse. The accident sentenced her to a life in a reclining position with painful and restricted movement. That didn't stop her from serving others.

In 1884, she learned that an impoverished family was expecting a baby at Christmastime. She invited her sisters and friends to join her in sewing a layette for the baby. The

baby girl, named Mary, became the recipient of Mary Virginia's first organized act of love. She continued to sew clothes for needy children and encouraged others to join her.

There was also a little boy named Paul, the son of the Merrick family laundress. He liked to run errands for Mary Virginia. When she asked him what he wanted for Christmas, he replied that he wanted a red wagon, but he knew he couldn't get one because his father was out of work and there wouldn't be any Christmas presents.

Mary Virginia suggested that Paul write a letter to the Christ Child and ask for the red wagon. The boy asked, "Who's he?" She replied, "He is the giver of all good gifts." So Paul, though puzzled, wrote his letter. A couple days later he returned not only with his letter, but also with a handful of letters written by his brothers, sisters and playmates.

Naturally, Mary Virginia and her sisters and friends fulfilled the children's wishes. When they gave them to the children, the presents all had tags on them that read, "From the Christ Child."

These first gifts to children so delighted

Mary Virginia that in 1887 she founded the Christ Child Society to assist impoverished children. By 1898, the society claimed more than 300 members. The society was officially incorporated in 1903, by which time Christ Child Centers were open throughout Washington.

In the early 20th century, branches of the society were operating as far away as Omaha, New York City and Chicago. In 1916, they were federated into a national organization. Today there are 40 chapters and more than 7,100 members in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

Mary Virginia Merrick died on Jan. 10, 1955, when she was 89. At that time, the Christ Child Society had stretched all the way across the country from New York to California. They were all founded by a woman who suffered through her paralysis with a determination to serve God by serving poor children.

Throughout her life, when she was faced with scarce financial resources for the society, she replied simply, "The Christ Child will provide." †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## The birth of a child is at the heart of our faith

In October of 2006, my wife, Cindy, and I were pilgrims in Rome for the



canonization of Mother Theodore Guérin. (I was also reporting on it for *The Criterion*.)

The day before the canonization, we visited the Basilica of St. Mary Major, one of the largest churches in the city.

We knelt and prayed before the relics of the manger in which the Christ Child was laid that sits in the heart of that church.

It was a special moment for us because, at the time, a baby was growing in Cindy's womb. Our third son, Victor, would be born the following April.

Now, two years later as Christmas is just days away, my thoughts return to the veneration shown those relics by Cindy and I and other pilgrims over the centuries.

The relics of Christ's manger are in my thoughts, in part, because my wife and I are now awaiting the birth of our fourth child, which we expect to happen near our wedding anniversary next June.

As I reflect on those relics, it reminds me of some very basic truths of our faith.

At the heart of Christianity is the birth of a child. We describe it in theological terms like the Incarnation or Nativity. But when you strip everything down, the great edifice of our faith would collapse without the revelation of the Son of God in human flesh in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

This great event is enshrined beautifully in the relics of the manger at St. Mary Major in Rome.

But, in a way, it re-echoes with even greater splendor every time a baby is born into our world.

Ours is a faith that greatly values life. We proclaim a Gospel of Life. And the fact that the birth of a baby is at the heart of our faith takes on greater and greater relevance as a culture of death continues to grow all around us.

Now in praising the birth of the Christ child and, indeed, of all babies, we Catholics are not oblivious to the great challenges that sometimes come with the arrival of new life.

Indeed, Christ's own birth shows that to us quite clearly. He was born in a stable far away from home in extreme poverty. Soon afterward, his parents had to whisk him away to Egypt to save his life from a tyrant king.

The troubles the Christ child experienced so soon after his birth, in a sense, anticipated his ultimate passion and death, that other event that, along with Christ's birth, also stands at the heart of our faith.

Today, despite the advances of modern medicine, heartbroken parents carry great crosses of children who are miscarried, stillborn or die shortly after birth. Others spend weeks keeping vigil beside their newborns as they struggle to live.

And, of course, as children continue to grow, struggles of many kinds are always right around the corner.

Yet we are called to receive the gift of life with joy even when we know that crosses will come with it. Many parents who have accepted this gift over the years have greatly inspired me. They didn't do a cost-benefit analysis before saying yes to God.

Yes, they prayed if God was indeed asking them to be open to another baby, but, in the end, they wanted to do God's will. They wanted to echo Mary's "fiat," the "Let it be" that she said to the angel long ago in Nazareth.

Let this Christmas, then, be a powerful reminder to us that in the birth of our own children, we are drawn into the very heart of our faith. †

The Joyful Catholic/Rick Hermann

## How a difficult person can be your 'assignment'

In one of my favorite movies, *It's A Wonderful Life*, small town banker George



Bailey suddenly faces bankruptcy and disgrace.

In desperation, he prepares to jump off a bridge into the frigid water below, but suddenly another individual leaps off in front of him.

Instantly forgetting himself, George strips off his coat and dives in to save the screaming stranger.

Later, as they dry their clothes beside an old wood burning stove, the stranger introduces himself as "Clarence Odbody, Angel Second Class." Clarence explains that he is George's guardian angel, assigned to help him find meaning in his life.

Furthermore, Clarence claims that he will earn his wings as a heavenly reward for helping George.

Clarence tries his best to convince George that he has a wonderful life, but George is skeptical.

For the majority of the movie, George distrusts, disappoints and mocks Clarence every step of the way.

Although he is continually rebuffed, Clarence faithfully attends to his assignment and repeatedly resorts to prayer.

Perhaps someone in your life troubles you. It may be a stranger, a trusted friend or a

family member who offended you. The offense may have been accidental or intentional, recently or a long time ago. You may feel frustrated, angry and resentful.

As difficult as it may be to believe, this person may be your assignment.

As preposterous and repugnant as it may seem, you may have been given a mission, like Clarence's, to help this person in some way.

"No way!" you may say. "This person is hopeless!"

You may think you can never forget the deep wound inflicted by this person, whether it was emotional, financial, physical or spiritual.

But if you forget yourself for a moment, and look past your hurt, you may recall Jesus' words: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44).

This may seem outrageous and disgraceful. Your tormentor may be the last person on Earth you would choose to help. Nevertheless, you may be the one person who can lead this troublemaker to God.

Your assignment may be as simple as being nice to the person for a short time.

Then again, it may require you to walk the extra mile.

You may need to practice Clarence-like virtues such as humility, patience, kindness and forgiveness. You may be surprised to discover new depths of courage, wisdom and

compassion deep within your heart.

It may be impractical or impossible for you to interact with the offender. In this case, you can always rely on the power of prayer. Pray that the person turns away from darkness and toward the light. Pray for that person's happiness. Try it now, just for a moment.

You may need to pray a little or a lot. One anxious mother named Monica prayed for her sinful son for 24 years. Thanks to her prayers, Augustine ultimately converted and became a saint.

You may never have the satisfaction of witnessing the good results of your prayers here on Earth. The person you pray for may never thank you.

Yet God works miracles beyond space and time. Your prayers may work effectively back to the past or ahead to the future. Trust that "God works all things together for good" (Rom 8:28).

You will enjoy peace of mind, knowing you have done your best when you truly commit that person to God's mercy and compassion.

Then you will feel your soul take flight, as if you were given angel's wings, liberated like Clarence to soar heavenward and free like George Bailey to live and laugh and love again.

(Rick Hermann of St. Louis is a Catholic columnist and speaker. His e-mail address is [rh222@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rh222@sbcglobal.net).) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

## Finding little treasures prior to the Christmas season

"Ah, Christmas!" Some of us think that with a sigh of contentment.



Some of us might think, "Bah, humbug!" because Advent had us over-busy with planning, cooking, shopping and attending earlier holiday celebrations.

No matter how we handle this time of year, it is still wonder-filled, mainly because we celebrate the biggest birthday party of the year—the birthday of the Christ Child.

Before the holidays, our daughter, Diane, and her fiancé, Al, came to Indianapolis from northern Indiana to help with a project that we often tackle in the fall. I say "we" lightly because, for the most part, I try to stay out of the way. The project? Making room for a car in the garage before winter since during the better weather so much stuff accumulates there!

This time, Diane came across a box that we don't recall seeing before. It

came from the attic of my husband's boyhood home in Belleville, Ill. It contained several things, including an 8-inch by 4-inch chimney made from a Golden Guernsey milk carton covered with torn crepe paper resembling bricks. At the top of the chimney is discolored white cotton resembling dirty snow. There is also a little taller, tired-looking, cone-shaped, cottonball-covered "tree" with silver sprinkles glued on it.

In their prime, these must have been charming pieces of artwork. Now they are raggedy. However, Diane and I smiled with wonder over those items and a stack of colorful homemade cards.

At first, we thought all this might have been done by my husband, Paul, for his parents. While reading the cards, however, we found that some items were projects by our three daughters for Paul's mother, their grandmother, Pauline. Most were signed, "Love, The Meister Girls."

Many readers must have similar treasures that make them smile, too. One card's message is, "Noel to you. Let us sing it ... Christ our King born of the Virgin Mary."

Another card reads: "Get a lot of gifts ... Happy New Year." A third card says: "Joy, Joy, Joy down in my heart."

I have corrected the spelling errors except one in the next paragraph.

Another card notes: "Have a Happy Christmas and do not lose the angle ... Do, Do, Do Not."

The misspelled word "angle" gave me a light-hearted jolt by reminding me of the season's commercialism. Of course, they meant "angel."

In very large print, there is one card that says: "God, my Father, I thank you for sending your Son for me. Jesus, my Savior, I love and adore you for coming on earth for me." Yet another card reads: "God, my Father, You are so nice. I'll pray all day and pray all night."

Even I cannot do that. However, I can pray that everyone enjoys a happy, healthy, holy Christmas with abundant blessings in the New Year.

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

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2008

- 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

The first reading for this weekend is from the Second Book of Samuel.



Originally, the two Books of Samuel were combined in a single volume. Translations and editions over the centuries divided this one volume into two books.

David is the principal figure in these books. The ancient Hebrews looked upon David much more than as a king. Beyond all else, he was God's chosen representative, given the kingship so that laws and circumstances might provide an atmosphere in which the people more fervently would follow God and be loyal to the Covenant.

For this weekend's second reading, the Church offers us a reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Scholars unanimously say that Paul of Tarsus indeed authored this epistle, and that this epistle was his masterpiece. For this reason, it appears first in sequence among the 14 epistles attributed to Paul and is placed in Bibles immediately following the Acts of the Apostles.

As indicated by its title, Paul sent this epistle or letter to the Christian population of Rome.

In the first century A.D., Rome was the center of the Mediterranean world in every respect—political, economic and cultural. It was also the largest city in the Roman Empire. Not surprisingly, Rome as the great imperial capital had within its borders a great array of ideas and religions, Christianity among them.

In this weekend's reading, as often elsewhere, Paul asserts his own vocation as an Apostle. His vocation from God came so that "all the Gentiles" might believe in and obey God, "who alone is wise."

For the final reading this weekend, the Church proclaims a beautiful part of St. Luke's Gospel from Luke's Infancy

Narrative.

It is the story of the Annunciation, the event when the angel Gabriel came into the presence of Mary, a young Jewish woman, in Nazareth in Galilee, to inform her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Redeemer.

The reading abounds with meaning. Luke makes clear that Mary was a virgin, and that the conception of the Redeemer would not be the result of any human relationship.

Behind this fact is the reality that God, as Creator and the provider of order to the universe, can do anything. He is almighty. The Redeemer will be the Son of God. He will be David's successor.

The Redeemer's coming will fulfill God's promises, spoken by the prophets all through the ages, to bring life and salvation to the people. The birth of this Redeemer will be the ultimate satisfaction of the ancient Covenant.

Vital to the message of the story is Mary's response: "I am the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

## Reflection

In each of these readings, speaking through the Scriptures, the Church makes a very important point. God reaches out to us. This outreach is not vague or impossible to see. Indeed, it is in the persons of individuals with whom we can relate—David, Paul and Jesus.

The outreach occurs in the face of our own inadequacy and limitations, and also in the fact that God is almighty. However, God's supreme power over all creation is not the most consoling point here. Rather, the most reassuring factor is that God's great love for us prompts the dispatch of teachers—such as David, Paul and Jesus—to guide us to union with God, and therefore to peace in our hearts and life in eternity.

The Church approaches Christmas with a message of love. God loves us. He does not leave us helpless in our own powerlessness. He reaches to us to draw us to the divine presence itself.

It now is up to us to respond. Do we accept God? Or do we turn God away? It is that simple, and that serious. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, Dec. 22**  
1 Samuel 1:24-28  
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-7, 8a-d  
Luke 1:46-56

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

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

**Thursday, Dec. 25**  
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)  
Midnight  
Isaiah 9:1-6  
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14  
Dawn  
Isaiah 62:11-12  
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:15-20  
Day  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98:1-6  
Hebrews 1:1-6  
John 1:1-18  
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

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

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

**Sunday, Dec. 28**  
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  
Luke 2:22-40  
or Luke 2:22, 39-40

**Monday, 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

**Tuesday, Dec. 30**  
The Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas  
1 John 2:12-17  
Psalm 96:7-10  
Luke 2:36-40

**Wednesday, Dec. 31**  
The Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas  
Sylvester I, pope  
1 John 2:18-21  
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13  
John 1:1-18

**Thursday, Jan. 1**  
The Octave Day of Christmas: The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God  
Numbers 6:22-27  
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:16-21

**Friday, 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

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

continued on page 26

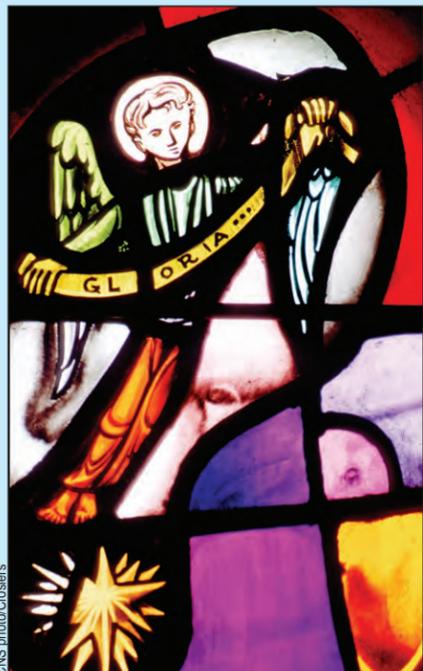
## My Journey to God

# Light of the World

This is the story of how Jesus became the Light of the World. It all began with a Father's love. And although God had already done some pretty amazing things, like telling the Earth to spin in motion, creating oceans, and setting rates and rhythms for every breath and heartbeat still yet to come, it was after sin entered in that God did His most amazing thing. Where one night in Bethlehem, under starry, starry skies, God made good on His promise—God always does—And so He bent down, smiled and whispered softly to His newborn Son, "Shine! Shine! Shine!" And, from that day on, that is exactly what Jesus did.

By Cathy Lamperski Dearing

(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. An angel is depicted with the Star of Bethlehem in a window at St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil Mass and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 11, 2009.)



CNS photo/Crosiers

## Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

# Christmas is first recorded in a Roman calendar composed in 339

**Q** Can you answer a question for our family? Our children are asking when and where people started to celebrate Christmas.

How do we know that's when Jesus was born? Can you help? (New York)

**A** I can help, but the answers may not be what you expect.

First of all, strange as it seems, we have no idea of the date or even the year of our Lord's birth. Our only source for this information would be the Gospels, and they provide little help.

From information supplied in Luke's Gospel, scholars generally believe that Christ was born sometime between the years 8 B.C. and 6 B.C. Though our present calendar was supposedly based on the year of Christ's birth as Year 1, that does not seem to be the case.

The Roman monk who in the sixth century originated the "before Christ" (B.C.) and "after Christ" (A.D.) way of designating years simply did not have at hand the historical documents now available. Thus, he missed the year of Christ's birth by six or eight years.

As perhaps most everyone knows, Easter and related feasts were the first ones celebrated by Christian people.

The first mention of Christmas comes in a Roman liturgical calendar composed in 339. By the end of that century, the feast of

our Lord's birth was celebrated on Dec. 25 in most of the Christian world.

If we don't know the date, why choose Dec. 25?

The explanation generally accepted by most scholars today is that Church authorities of that time assigned the birth of Christ to the date of the winter solstice.

In our calendar, the winter solstice is Dec. 21. In the Julian calendar, however, which predated our calendar and was in effect in those days, the winter solstice was Dec. 25.

The Egyptian calendar has it on Jan. 6, which is why this date is still followed for Christmas in some Eastern-rite Christian Churches.

The winter solstice, when days begin to lengthen in the Northern Hemisphere, was referred to by many non-Christians as the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun."

During the 200s, Roman Emperor Aurelian dedicated Dec. 25 to the sun god, whose cult was particularly strong in Rome at the time.

Even before this, Christian writers referred to Jesus Christ as the "Sun of Justice." It seemed logical then that as Christianity began to dominate the religious scene in the Roman Empire, the date of the "newborn sun" should be chosen as the birth date of Christ.

All this may be a little complicated for some of your children, but I'm sure you can "translate" it for them. It's a lovely story about how the followers of Jesus can learn to turn everything, even the seemingly irrelevant and irreligious events of life, into ways of praising and honoring our Lord. †

# REVIEW

continued from page 2

archdiocese and moved to Oldenburg.

Quoting our March 21 news story: "In recent years, the community, currently numbering 10 nuns, has found it increasingly difficult to manage the upkeep of their monastery and decided to move to the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg, where they will have their own building."

A July 16 Mass of Thanksgiving at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral celebrated the sisters' ministry.

The monastery became home to the Bishop Bruté College Seminary, which had formerly been located on the campus of Marian College. Seventeen seminarians are currently studying for the priesthood there.

Archbishop Buechlein dedicated the new seminary home on Sept. 8.

"My greatest wish for our college seminary is that it be a simple and joyful house of prayer," the archbishop said, "... surely the vestige and the ethos of the Carmelite prayer

continues to flow through these corridors."

## 8. Legacy for Our Mission campaign wraps up.

After four years of planning and implementation, the archdiocese's largest capital campaign, Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future, began to wind down amid incredible success.

As noted in an Oct. 17 news story: "Over the course of the four years of Legacy for Our Mission, many of those hopes have been fulfilled as more than 33,000 archdiocesan Catholics pledged \$104 million and more than 14,000 volunteered their time and talent to see the campaign be a success." The campaign received an additional \$10 million in corporate donations.

"Parishes across the archdiocese's 11 deaneries have constructed new activity centers, made extensive renovations to their current facilities and established new endowments or grown already established ones," the story said.

Information about the campaign, including its success stories, can be found at [www.archindy.org/legacy](http://www.archindy.org/legacy).

## 9. Area flood victims find shelter in parishes.

Flooding in central and southern Indiana on June 6-7

prompted parishes and archdiocesan agencies to reach out to support people in affected communities.

As a result, St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville was opened as a Red Cross shelter for flood victims; more than 50 households at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus received aid; parishioners at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood collaborated with the American Red Cross and the United Way of Johnson County; and Catholic Charities Terre Haute joined other groups in helping the residents of 2,500 homes in the area damaged by flooding.

In addition, second collections were taken in some parishes on June 14-15, and Catholic Charities accepted donations online and coordinated offers for help.

## 10. \$5 million capital grant is awarded to improve archdiocesan schools.

An Aug. 8 news story announced that Lilly Endowment Inc. had "made a major commitment of its resources to support archdiocesan schools in the center city of Indianapolis and in two of its urban high schools.

"The archdiocese has determined to use the \$5 million grant the Endowment awarded to make much-needed capital improvements to the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) in the center city of Indianapolis, to Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in the Indianapolis West Deanery and to Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in the Indianapolis East Deanery."

The grant was one of the largest ever awarded to the archdiocese and helped to secure the future of Catholic education in the center city, archdiocesan officials said.

(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).) †



The St. Vincent Health family  
wishes you blessings of health, hope  
and happiness this Christmas season.



[stvincent.org](http://stvincent.org)

## Criterion is now selling photograph reprints online

### Criterion staff report

Have you or someone you know attended a recent archdiocesan event?

Have you seen a photo in our newspaper that you want a copy of for a photo album or scrapbook?

Or perhaps you would like an image of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein for your home or business.

If so, then be sure to check out the newest feature on our Web site that lets you purchase reprints of staff photos that have appeared in *The Criterion*. You can access this new feature at [www.archindy.org/photos](http://www.archindy.org/photos).

Our reporting staff takes dozens of high-quality photos at many major archdiocesan events—events that either have historical significance (like the canonization of St. Theodora Guérin in 2006) or that your family might have attended (like an ordination at the cathedral).

Select photos are available as a professional quality print in one of four sizes: 4 inches by 6 inches, 5 inches by 7 inches, 8 inches by 10 inches and 13 inches by 19 inches. They will be printed at our office and mailed directly to you.

Prices range from \$4 to \$20, and prices decrease with multiple images purchased from the same gallery. The cost includes shipping and handling.

And it is more than just events: We also have photos labeled "Standard Images" that you may wish to have for your household, such as a portrait of Archbishop Buechlein or an image from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

Finally, we are making available full-size prints (11 inches by 17 inches) of front pages from *The Criterion* from major events and our Christmas and Easter issues.

To get started, simply log on to [www.archindy.org/photos](http://www.archindy.org/photos) and choose your gallery from the dropdown menus, or scroll down and click on the photos below, to begin shopping.

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For more information, send an e-mail to [webmaster@archindy.org](mailto:webmaster@archindy.org) or call 317-236-1577. †

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# 'We're No. 1!'

## Catholic high school teams earn three state championships

**Criterion staff report**

The memories and friendships from playing high school sports can last a lifetime.

So can the pride and the joy of being part of a team that wins a state championship.

This fall, three teams from Catholic high schools in the archdiocese savored the experiences and the emotions that come with winning an Indiana State High School Athletic Association championship.

On Nov. 8, the girls' volleyball team of Cathedral High

School in Indianapolis earned the 4A state championship with a victory over Muncie Central High School.

On Nov. 28, Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis defeated Sheridan High School 34-27 in the 1A state championship football game.

On Nov. 29, Cathedral's football team beat the squad from Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne 10-7 in the 4A state championship game.

As this photo essay tribute to the three winning teams shows, pure joy marks the face of a champion.

*The Criterion* congratulates the championship teams and

their fans. We also salute all the high school athletes and coaches in the archdiocese who have left their mark on their schools, their fans and each other through their hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

*(Editor's note: Photos for the Cathedral volleyball and football teams were submitted by the high school. Action photographs of Cardinal Ritter's state championship game were provided by Bob Kelly, editor of The Sports Chronicle. See more of his photos at [www.sportschronicle.net](http://www.sportschronicle.net).) †*

### Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School Football



From left, Cardinal Ritter players Jonathon Paquette, Blake Steinacker and Glen Lee celebrate their team's dramatic victory.



Cardinal Ritter's sideline and crowd explode with joy during the team's 34-27 win.



Nothing tastes better for Cardinal Ritter's players than finishing the season No. 1.

### Cathedral High School Football



Cathedral Irish head football coach Rick Streiff smiles following a shower from his players after the team's victory.

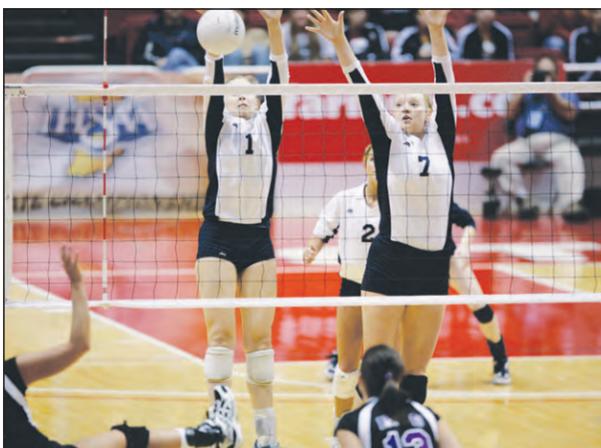


Cathedral's defense rose to the occasion during the team's 10-7 win.



Cathedral running back Nick Najem bursts into the end zone for a touchdown.

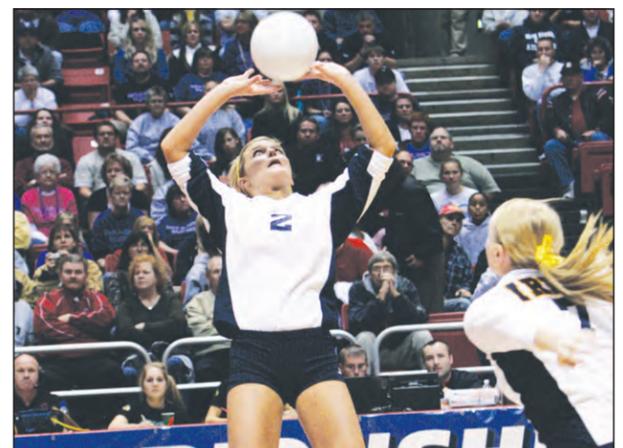
### Cathedral High School Girls' Volleyball



Cathedral seniors Lauren Dedinsky and Mary Ording rise above the net for a block in the championship game.



Cathedral's Mary Ording concentrates on a kill during the Class 4A state volleyball championship game.



Cathedral's Skylar Cuppy sets a ball in the private Catholic high school's win over Muncie Central High School.

# Fifth annual African Mass celebrates archdiocese's various cultures

By Mary Ann Wyand

Five years ago, Catholics from African countries who live in the archdiocese began celebrating their unique heritage, varied cultures and shared faith as a community.

With their children and grandchildren, they gathered at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 7 to offer thanks to God for his love, kindness and mercy during a festive fifth anniversary Mass concelebrated by nine African priests.

The Mass was sponsored by the African Catholic Ministry and archdiocesan Office of Multicultural Ministry.

"What prevents me from seeing the kindness and love of God in my life?" Father Benjamin Okonkwo, the principal celebrant and a chaplain at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital, asked the people during his homily on the Second Sunday of Advent.

"That's a question we need to ask ourselves today," he said. "John the Baptist, in the Gospel, proclaimed, 'Change your ways. Repent, and God will forgive us' " (Mk 1:1-8).

Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah in the first reading, Father Okonkwo added, which tell us to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Is 40:1-5, 9-11).

To do that, you must find a way back to love in your life, he said, because your faith and everything else that is good lives in your heart.

"If we examine ourselves, if we pray and ask God to send the Holy Spirit for us to see ourselves, we find him here," Father Okonkwo explained, placing a hand over his



Father Benjamin Okonkwo, the principal celebrant and a chaplain at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital, preaches the homily for the Second Sunday of Advent during the fifth annual African Catholic Mass on Dec. 7 at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis.

heart. "... We are made in his image."

If you cannot see the kindness and love of God in your life, he said, if you cannot feel the presence of God in your life, you must give your heart to him completely, worship him faithfully and forgive the people who have wronged you.

"My dear brothers and sisters, the kingdom of God is not far from us," he said. "It's in our hearts. Whatever you sow, you reap. And that's what John [the Baptist] reminded us. He said, 'Change your ways. Repent, and the kindness of God will be yours and the salvation of God will be yours.' ... When you turn your life over to God, he will carry you every day and lead you [to him]. And then what happens? Salvation is yours."

The word of God is a gift for us, but God is not forcing us to accept his invitation, Father Okonkwo said. Jesus lived and died for us, regardless of whether we choose to accept or reject him.

"God loves us and God cares for us," he emphasized. "Turn back to God. He will grant you salvation. And let evil go away from you—jealously, hatred, everything negative—all the evil. And when you do that, you see the salvation of God. But when there are secrets in your heart, it blocks you. You cannot see [God]. But when they're out of your heart, what fills your heart is joy and happiness, and you see salvation. ... It is for you and me to accept God's invitation of love, of kindness, of generosity, ... and we shall see God's kingdom, God's kindness and God's love in our lives."

Members of the Global Children, African Dancers in Indianapolis, the African Choir and the St. Rita Parish Choir assisted with the liturgy.

After the Mass, Divine Word Father Eusebius Mbidoaka, administrator of St. Rita Parish, said African Catholics believe that "God is the pillar of our lives, God is everything, God is our foundation, and in him we live and move and have our being. We cannot survive without him."

During these difficult economic times, he said, people who are struggling can find hope by remembering the spirit of Advent.

"I want them to trust in God, to look up to God, because



Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Sister Jennifer Otuonye, a native of Nigeria who ministers in Indianapolis, carries the Book of Gospels inside a cloth knapsack to the altar in a ceremonial dance during the fifth annual archdiocesan African Catholic Mass on Dec. 7 at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis.

God is going to be the one who provides [for their needs]," Father Eusebius said. "If we look up to him, he's going to show us a way. What we try to do with our human power, we may not succeed. But for others who trust in God, God is going to find a way to help them." †

## Final Advent penance services scheduled at archdiocesan parishes



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

**Batesville Deanery**  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris

**Indianapolis South Deanery**  
Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

**New Albany Deanery**  
Dec. 21, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

**Seymour Deanery**  
Dec. 22, 7 p.m. for St. Anne, Jennings County, and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County †

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# O Wondrous Night

By Dorothy M. Colgan

**This is a night  
Beyond surprise—  
This is the night  
Of angel cries.**

**This is the night  
A stable shares  
Its roof and warmth  
With heaven's cares.**

**This is the night  
That shepherds seek  
The child of whom  
God's angels speak.**

**This is the night  
Creation's wound  
Is fondly healed  
And grace-attuned.**

*(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad.)*

# Christmas Supplement

# The Infancy Gospels: More than the birth of Jesus

By John F. Fink

Both the Gospel According to Matthew and the Gospel According to Luke begin with infancy narratives.

They tell about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and his early infancy. But there is a great deal more than that in those Gospels.

Both Gospels were written independently several decades after Jesus' birth.

Each author chose to emphasize something different about Jesus.

In Matthew's case, it was his kingly role, while it was his priestly role for Luke. Both, though, stressed the Messianic signs—that Jesus was the promised Messiah and the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.

Both Gospels include a genealogy of Jesus. Matthew begins his Gospel with it while Luke places it after Jesus' baptism. Matthew begins with Abraham and moves forward to Joseph, while Luke begins with Joseph and moves backward all the way to God.

Matthew carefully, and artificially, arranged his genealogy into three groups of 14 generations. It is believed that he did this to emphasize that Jesus was descended from King David.

The name "David," with three consonants and a numerical value of 14, is placed in the 14th spot. Matthew counts 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 more generations to the Babylonian exile and another 14 generations to the birth of Jesus.

Unlike Luke's genealogy, Matthew's includes four women, three of them Gentiles and one married to a Gentile. Tamar, a Canaanite, seduced her father-in-law, Judah, to become the mother of Perez and Zerah. Rahab, also a Canaanite, was a harlot who lived in Jericho and saved Joshua's spies. She later lived among the Israelites and bore a son named Boaz. Ruth was a Moabite who married Boaz. And Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. She committed adultery with David and later, as his wife, was the mother of Solomon.

Since Luke traces Jesus' lineage all the way back to Adam's creation by God, to stress Jesus' divine Sonship, his list has 77 names. However, it doesn't include King Solomon and his ancestors. Rather, Luke traces Jesus' Davidic ancestry through the prophet Nathan. Therefore, there are considerable differences between the two genealogies.

Matthew's Gospel tells about the birth of Jesus in eight verses (Mt 1:18-25). He says that Jesus' mother, Mary, and Joseph were betrothed, that is, they had gone through the first part of the Jewish marriage and were considered husband and wife. The second part, some months later, consisted of the husband taking his wife into his home.

After the betrothal, Matthew says, Mary was found to be pregnant, and Joseph had to decide what to do. If he accused her of adultery, the penalty was death by stoning. Joseph didn't want that so he decided to divorce Mary quietly.

It was then that an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that it was through the Holy Spirit that the child was conceived. This dream, and the three others that follow, recalled the dreams that the patriarch Joseph interpreted for the Egyptian pharaoh in the Book of Genesis (Gn 40:1-23, 41:1-36).

Matthew says, again to emphasize the fulfillment of Jewish Scripture, that Mary's virginal conception was done to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel" (Is 7:14).

In the Book of Isaiah, the Lord made that promise to Ahaz and the Jews took the subsequent birth of the future King Hezekiah as the fulfillment of the promise.

Matthew put a new light on the prophecy.

In Chapter 2, Matthew tells us the



Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child are depicted in the "Flight into Egypt" fresco by Giotto in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast celebrates the birth of the Lord.

story of the magi, or astrologers, from the east, who traveled to Bethlehem to pay homage to "the newborn king of the Jews." This story not only alludes to Jesus' kingly role, but also the future rejection of Jesus by Israel and his acceptance by the Gentiles (Mt 2:1-12).

The magi told King Herod that they had seen the newborn king's star because it was a common belief that a new star appeared at the time of a ruler's birth. There was also the Old Testament story of Balaam, who prophesied that "a star shall advance from Jacob" (Nm 24:17).

Herod called the Jewish priests and scribes together, and asked them where the Messiah was to be born. They found a Scripture passage that pointed to Bethlehem, again showing that Jesus' birth was a fulfillment of Scripture. This consultation was also a reminder of a Jewish legend, not found in Scripture, that the Egyptian pharaoh had been warned by his scribes about the imminent birth of Moses.

The magi, of course, found Jesus with Mary (no mention of Joseph so perhaps he was working somewhere at the time). They offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which gave us the idea that there were three magi. They were then warned—again, in a dream—not to return to Herod.

The next passages show how Jesus relived the Exodus experience of Israel (Mt 2:13-2:23). Note these parallels, which would have been readily recognized by Matthew's first readers:

When the magi didn't return, Herod ordered the massacre of all the boys 2 years old or younger (Mt 2:16-18). Pharaoh commanded that every male born to the Hebrews be cast into the Nile (Ex 1:22).

But Jesus was no longer in Bethlehem because Joseph was warned to take him and Mary to Egypt so that, as Matthew says, "What the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, 'Out of Egypt I called my son'" (Hos 11:1). When Pharaoh tried to do away with Moses, he fled (Ex 2:15).

After Herod died, the angel told Joseph, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead" (Mt 2:20). After the pharaoh died, the Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go

back to Egypt, for all the men who sought your life are dead" (Ex 4:19).

"[Joseph] rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel" (Mt 2:21). "Moses took his wife and his sons, and started back to the land of Egypt" (Ex 4:20).

Matthew also writes that the massacre of the infants fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more" (Jer 31:15).

It portrays Rachel, Jacob's second wife, who was buried near Bethlehem, weeping for her children taken into exile when Assyria defeated the northern kingdom of Israel. Ramah was located six miles north of Jerusalem so Rachel's lamentation could be heard at a great distance.

When the Holy Family arrived back in Israel, Matthew says, they were afraid to return to Bethlehem because Archelaus succeeded his father, Herod, as king of Judea. Therefore, they moved to Galilee, to a small town named Nazareth.

Luke's narrative of the birth of Jesus is found in Chapter 2, except for the genealogy in Chapter 4. Luke used Chapter 1 to tell about the birth of John the Baptist, and Mary's annunciation and visitation to Elizabeth.

Luke has Mary and Joseph already living in Nazareth, but they traveled to Bethlehem in obedience to a decree from the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus that a census should be taken of the whole Roman world.

There was likely no such census, but Luke had to get them to Bethlehem somehow because that is where the Messiah was to be born, and he may have heard about a census while Quirinius was the governor of Syria.

He also wanted to tie the birth of Jesus to Emperor Augustus, who was credited with a time of peace, the *Pax Augusta*. The real peace bearer, Luke wanted to say, was the child who was born, which is why the angels tell the shepherds, "On earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests" (Lk 2:14).

Luke also wants to emphasize that Mary and Joseph were peaceful people who observed the Roman law as well as the Jewish rites.

Luke's Gospel contains stories of

Jesus' compassion to the lowly and outcasts of society, and he begins that with the story of the angels' appearance to the shepherds. They, in turn, are the first to visit the Holy Family in the cave where Jesus was born—thus giving us the crèche with which we are so familiar.

The basic message of Luke's infancy narrative is in the announcement to those shepherds: "Today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord" (Lk 2:11).

As Savior, Jesus will be the one who rescues humanity from sin and alienation from God. The Messiah is the anointed one who, as told by Luke, will bring salvation to all humanity, Jew and Gentile alike. And Lord is the title most frequently used by Luke in both his Gospel and in his Acts of the Apostles.

By writing about Jesus' circumcision and presentation in the Temple, Luke stresses that his parents were observant Jews. During the presentation, and after Mary's purification, Simeon and Anna praise Jesus, with Simeon praying to God that he could now let him die because he had lived long enough to see the Messiah.

After the presentation, Luke says that the Holy Family returned to Nazareth. There's no visitation of magi or flight into Egypt in this Gospel.

In the Church's liturgy, Matthew's infancy narrative is read at the vigil Mass. Luke's is started during the first Mass of Christmas and continued in the second. For the third Mass of Christmas, though, the Church turns to the Prologue to the Gospel According to John because it tells us who Jesus was: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1).

It was this Word, who pre-existed from all eternity, who "became flesh" (Jn 1:14). He it is whose birth we celebrate on Christmas.

"Glory to God in the highest" (Lk 2:14).

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion. Among his published books is *Jesus in the Gospels*, published by Alba House. His latest book, *St. Thomas More: Model for Modern Catholics* (St. Pauls, 2009), can be purchased by calling 800-343-2522 or by logging on to [www.stpauls.us](http://www.stpauls.us).) †

# Readers share their favorite Christmas memories

## Church ladies teach poor children about God's love

By Jim Welter  
Special to *The Criterion*

It was a rite of spring for our family. Each Memorial Day, all seven of us would walk from our farm to a little country cemetery called Eagle Creek to decorate the grave of our infant sister, Jeanette, who had died years before.

One year, when we visited the cemetery, the gate was locked. That was no obstacle for my tomboy sister, Fran, who would sometimes climb over the fence even when the gate was open!

There was a little white church beside the cemetery just across a gravel drive from Jeanette's grave.

As a child, I was sure that it was the "church in the wildwood"

mentioned in a song my mother sometimes sang.

"See that white church over there?" Fran said to me one day. "They're the ones that bring us presents at Christmas."

Mom raised seven of us on a farm just two miles from that church and cemetery. Mom was all alone. There was no electricity on the farm, no running water, no telephone or nearby neighbors.

But, during those years, we could always count on the ladies from the Eagle Creek Church remembering us at Christmas.

From our hiding place, we would hear the ladies tell Mom, "We just brought a few

things for the children."

And we knew that Santa would come that year!

How could those ladies have known that their "few things" were our Christmas celebration?

And how could we have known that, one day, both Mom and Fran would lie beside Jeanette in the country cemetery—just across the gravel drive—from that little white church?

Each Sunday evening, the good people at the Eagle Creek Church gather to give praise and sing some of the old gospel songs that my mother knew so well.

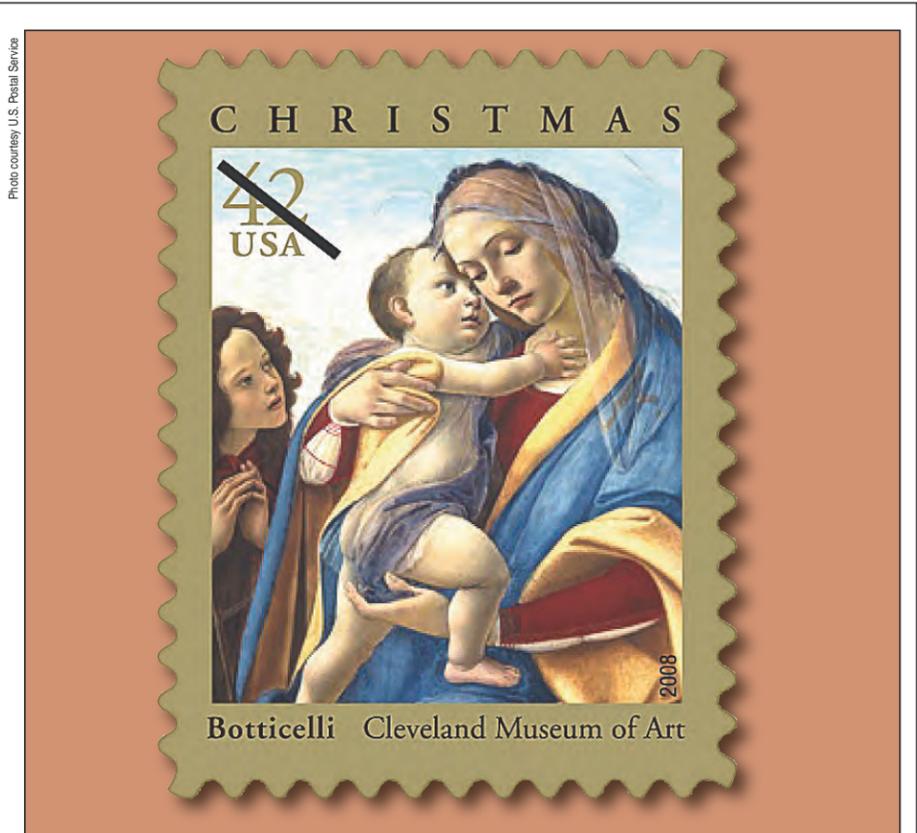
I was invited to their gathering one Sunday to share some reflections from my first book titled *When Winter Comes*.

*What a blessing it was for me to stand before that group and say "thank you" for the kindness they showed to us all those years ago.*

What a blessing it was for me to stand before that group and say "thank you" for the kindness they showed to us all those years ago.

Thank you, ladies! Thank you for touching our lives. Thank you for lifting our spirits. Thank you for helping us to carry our burden. Thank you for being Emmanuel—God with us!

*(Jim Welter is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. His books are available at Catholic bookstores in the Indianapolis area and on the Internet at [www.ascendingview.com](http://www.ascendingview.com).) †*



## Virgin and Child

The tender relationship between mother and child and a prayerful gesture by a young boy will help deliver the joy of Christmas this season. The U.S. Postal Service selected the Virgin and Child with the Young John the Baptist painting by Italian master Sandro Botticelli for one of four 2008 Christmas stamp designs. The Postal Service printed 600 million copies of the 42-cent stamp. Since 1978, the theme of the Christmas stamp has been the Madonna and Child, and the stamps have attracted a devoted following over the years. The 2008 design features an added twist with the additional figure of John the Baptist as a child. The tempera and oil on wood painting by Botticelli dates to around 1490 and is now part of the world-renowned collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio.

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# Christmas Eve Mass offers glimpse of mystery of God

By Linda Abner

Special to The Criterion

It is snowing on Christmas Eve as people come from all directions in the dark, heads bent, stepping quickly to gain the church and warmth.

There are smiles of recognition, greetings and laughter. An undercurrent of excitement fills the air on this holy night.

The sanctuary is resplendent with greenery and candles everywhere. Evergreen trees, some trimmed only with small white lights and others left completely natural, fill the front and shelter a humble crèche.

We are given a taper as we enter the church. I feel a little sad that I see no one I know on this special night as families and loved ones all around me gather for Mass.

Thank you, Lord, that my daughter is here beside me. Bless her and keep her.

The choir leads us in Christmas carols for 30 minutes before midnight. "Ave Maria" is sung by someone with an angel's voice.

Then the church is darkened but for candlelight, and at midnight the chimes begin—ringing, singing like the Heavenly Host on that night so long ago: "Christ is born! Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth!"

All across the city, the nation, the world, people are gathering to celebrate this night, this holy, magic night when peace among men actually seems possible.

I feel a small part of a very large and enduring mystery—the mystery of God.

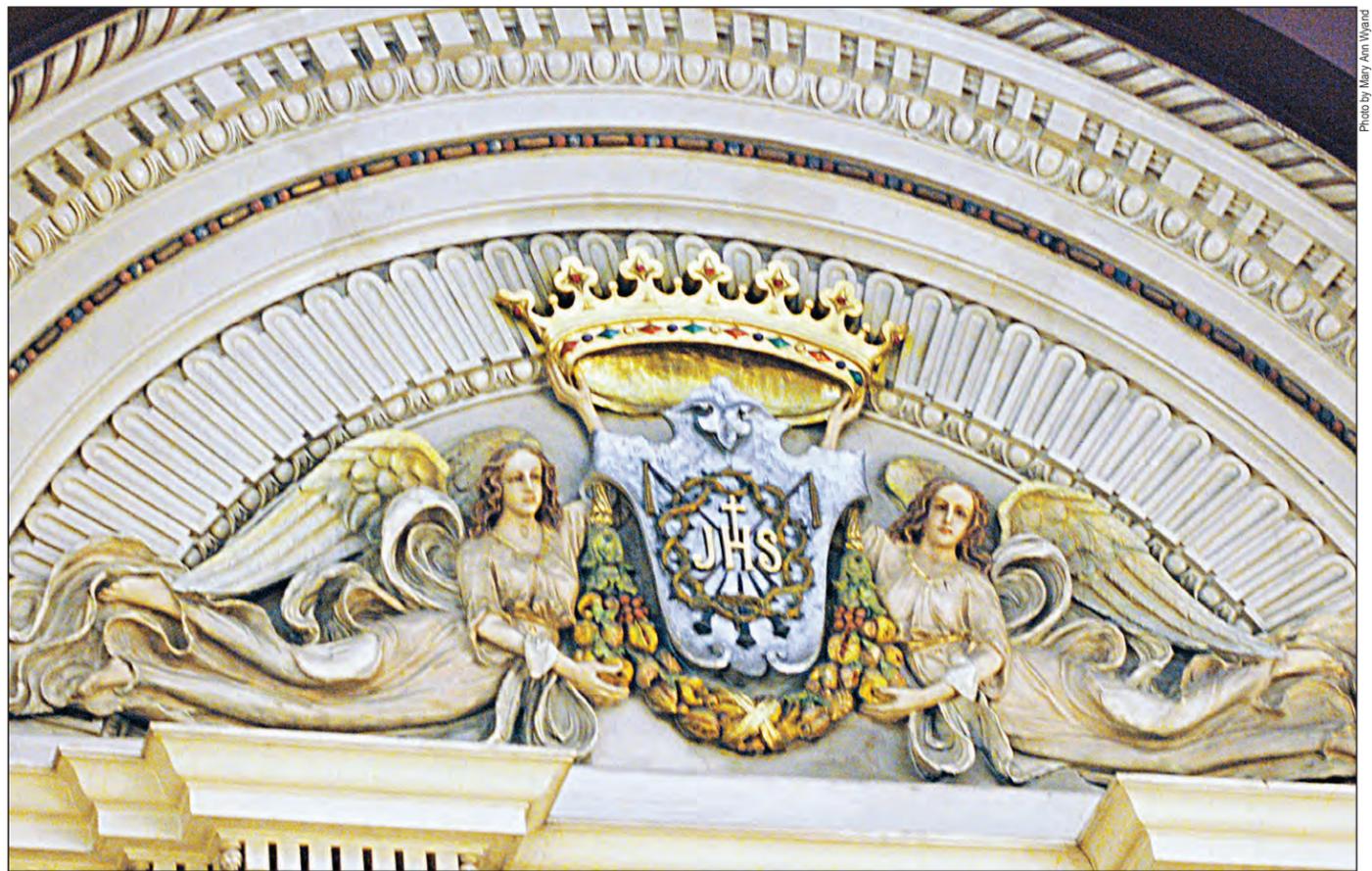
When all kneel in the darkened church at the phrase in the Creed, "For us men and for our salvation, he came down from Heaven," I feel a deep sense of reverence and gratitude—grateful to God for his great love for his creation, and grateful to be part of the larger Body of Christ.

When the Christmas Eve liturgy is over—I hate for it to be over—it is again a happy confusion of smiles and greetings and joy.

Father Jim waits to greet people at one church door, and Father Noah stands at another.

My daughter and I step out into a blessed winter night, kissed by a gentle, silent snowfall. It shimmers beneath the outside lights. Christmas is here.

*(Linda Abner is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. She wrote this reflection in her Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults journal while preparing for her entrance into the Catholic Church a few months later at Easter. "I remember how eagerly I looked forward to my first 'real' Christmas Mass as a Catholic," she wrote, "even though I would not be confirmed until Easter. And God, who is always generous with his gifts, did not disappoint.") †*



## Angels on high

Two angels are featured in a bas-relief high above the altar at historic St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis. The angels are holding up an ornate jeweled crown—above the crown of thorns—symbolizing Christ the King. The initials "JHS" and "IHS" stand for "Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews." In Latin, they are "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum."

# Christmas teaches children about gifts of faith and joy

By Lisa Marie Taylor

Special to The Criterion

As I look back at all the Christmases of my childhood, I do not remember one particular gift received although our tree was overflowing with gifts from Santa every year.

I remember the joy. I remember waiting with anticipation for Santa, for Christmas Mass, for the family gatherings. I remember looking into the manger scene with wonder at what it meant for Jesus, our Savior, to come to us as a baby.

Is Christmas only for children?

I believe Christmas teaches all of us to be like children, to look at the season with wonder and awe, to believe in the baby and to seek him without all the cares

of this world.

Our five children were given to us to teach us very valuable lessons about Christ's love for us. Our oldest, Jessi, teaches us about strength. Our son, Joe, shows us compassion. Our daughter, Maria, shows us complete joy. Our daughter, Mackenna, teaches us about determination. And the baby, Madeline, teaches us about grace.

Sometimes I wonder if our children are getting the importance of Christmas and why we celebrate. Our Christmases are small compared to the amount of gift-giving in many homes. They receive three gifts and a few stocking stuffers.

A few years ago, our finances were extremely lean. I was worried that our children would see what other kids got

from Santa and be disappointed about their own presents.

However, that evening, after all the busyness of the day, our son quietly proclaimed, "Mom, this was the best Christmas ever."

I do not remember one particular gift received in my childhood, and I hope that my children will not remember them either. I hope they will learn from each other about strength, compassion, joy, determination and grace!

Christmas isn't just for children. It is all for those who believe in the One who sent his son, Jesus, to teach us about love. I pray we all remember joy this Christmas season.

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

# Family continues tradition of decorating tree on Thanksgiving

By David Parrish

Special to The Criterion

I grew up in Kokomo, Ind., and was the youngest of five kids who were being raised by a single mother.

We were what would now be classified as "extremely low income" and lived in public housing.

Mom would make sure that we had what we needed for school before getting stuff for herself.

For the Christmas season, we would drag the box filled with the fake tree out of storage and assemble the tree as a family on Thanksgiving evening. We would look forward to this and enjoyed every minute of it.

Now, as a father, I am continuing this family tradition by setting up our fake tree on Thanksgiving evening and letting my daughter, who is 7, and my son, who is 5, help decorate it.

*(David Parrish is participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program at St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis.) †*

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## Teenager is stunned to 'get' the true gift of Christmas

By Natalie Hoefler  
Special to *The Criterion*

I recall the Christmas of 1984. I was 15 and had just "suffered" through what to my adolescent mind was the "worst Christmas ever."

I liked very few of the presents that I received, and the few gifts that I did like were clothes that ended up not fitting me.

I went to bed that night feeling bitter and crying.

As I grudgingly began to say my prayers, a question whispered inside me. Something asked me, "What is the true gift of Christmas?"

And all of a sudden, all those years of being told that Christmas was about Jesus—and not about gifts—just came

together and clicked!

They weren't just words. They were a truth that filled my whole self with joy that no material gift could ever give: God gave us his very own Son, who would in turn give us his very own life for our salvation!

Wow! What an unparalleled gift! All my immature disappointment, all the secular Christmas trees and lights and decorations, just melted away and there was only this one amazing truth that left me filled with joy and awe.

I went to sleep that night thanking God for the best Christmas ever, the joy of "getting"—of understanding and receiving—the true gift of Christmas.

(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

## Mother's sacrifice was wonderful gift of love

By William Taylor  
Special to *The Criterion*

The snowflakes glistened under the streetlights at the corner of 9th Street and Rural Street as my mother and I walked to the 5:15 a.m. Mass at St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis on Christmas morning in 1935.

As a fifth-grade choir boy, I was honored to be singing during the Mass. Only seven more blocks to go in the snow.

My father and six sisters were snug in their beds at home.

At the time, I did not realize what a sacrifice this early morning winter walk was for my mother.

She was a large woman who waddled

from side to side as she walked because one of her legs was larger than the other.

After Mass, we walked back home again, where she began to prepare Christmas dinner and I played with my one present, a Sir Malcolm Campbell Blue Bird Racer.

Many years later, a blood clot traveled from my mother's bad leg to her heart and killed her.

Only since then have I realized what pain she must have been in and what a loving sacrifice it was for her to walk to church with me before sunrise on that cold Christmas morning.

(William Taylor is a member of St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis.) †



### Woman lights candle

A woman lights a candle in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, on Dec. 17. The church is built over the site traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus.

## Connecticut abbey's centuries-old creche restored, back on display

BETHLEHEM, Conn. (CNS)—On a day in early November, Sister Angele Arbib and Mother Daniel Levi Cooke showed a visitor inside a restored 18th-century barn at the Abbey of Regina Laudis, a monastery for cloistered Benedictine nuns in Bethlehem.

Behind protective glass was a miniature Italian seaside village, made almost 300 years ago and crafted mostly from the bark of cork trees. Multistoried wooden houses seemed to teeter on the tops of cliffs. In the background was a painting of Mount Vesuvius under a blue sky with wispy clouds.

But missing from the scene were 68 figures made from porcelain and carved wood that, until the summer of 2005, had been part of a creche from Naples, Italy, that had been at the abbey for nearly six decades.

On Dec. 8, those 14- to 16-inch figures were back on display, magnificently restored by a professional team from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The creche is now open for public viewing seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. year-round.

"We had a lot of damage from the lighting, because of uneven flaring," said Sister Angele. "It wasn't [proper] lighting for an art display. It had terrible visibility. It had

scorched some of the costumes."

Mother Daniel added, "And the bugs were eating the backs of the shoes."

The creche was built around 1720 and presented to Victor Amadeus II (1666-1732) on the occasion of his coronation as first king of Sardinia, Sister Angele told *The Catholic Transcript*, newspaper of the Hartford Archdiocese.

"I don't know how long he had it," she said. "It stayed in Italy in a noble family, and then it was brought to

America in 1948."

According to Antoinette Bosco's recent biography, *Mother Benedict: Foundress of the Abbey of Regina Laudis*, the creche had been offered for sale in New York, but it was expensive and took up a lot of space (the village is 16 feet wide and 6 feet deep).

The figures portray the Holy Family, old and young women bearing gifts, merchants and peddlers, a princess, angels, the three kings, and peasants and their farm animals. †

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# Make time for others at Christmas this year and every year

By Mary Jo Pedersen  
Catholic News Service

When I was a child, I always made Christmas lists that contained toys, a variety of cookies and treats, places to go and activities that I thought would make a perfect Christmas.

I realized later that my Christmas list was all about me. I had created a Christmas monster with an appetite never satisfied even with gift cards and cash for buying whatever I wanted.

It wasn't until I helped deliver clothing and toys to families in need that I realized Christmas was really not about getting gifts, but about giving gifts of time and energy to those who were in need.

On that cold gift delivery day in December as a young teenager, I encountered Jesus in the doorway of a dilapidated house in the eyes of a little girl who was hanging on to her mother's skirt.

When she saw the wrapped presents and the boxes of food and cookies, she started to jump up and down, waving her arms and asking if I wanted to see her do her newest gymnastic trick. A leap off the sofa onto the ottoman with a rollover to the floor ending in a headstand was her special way of saying, "Thank you!"

Although I had been taught about God's gift of self in Jesus, that day it dawned very slowly on me that Christmas was really about giving myself to others like Jesus did. It was about recognizing Jesus present in me and in that little girl's toothless grin.

We honor and celebrate Jesus' birth by imitating him! As a teenager, I had totally missed the point!

How can families celebrate Christmas by reaching out to others when the season seems hectic and our schedules are already overflowing?

These suggestions may help, and accomplishing even one of them will honor the spirit of Christmas:

- Sign up for your parish or community "adopt a family" Christmas program to help with buying, wrapping or delivering gifts to families in need.

- Ask a homebound or infirm neighbor—or one of his or her family members—how you might be of help this Christmas season. Offer to pick up groceries, drive your neighbor to a doctor's appointment, do laundry, clean house, shovel snow or stop in for a visit during the week.

- When watching the news, write down the names of people who are suffering or groups of people, such as refugees or

victims of war, for whom you can pray each night before bed.

- Visit a friend or relative in a nursing home or prison, or ask the administrator if there are patients or inmates who never have visitors. Make an effort to send cards or visit with them.

- Contact a new neighbor, co-worker or parishioner and invite them for coffee to get acquainted. If they have no place to celebrate Christmas, include them at your table.

- Send a card or make a call to a relative who has been out of touch with family members. Invite this relative to your home during this Christmas season.

Your list probably already contains many acts of love and care for others in your family. Instead of doing them as duties or "have-to" chores, do them with a heart that wants to give of self out of love in celebration of the One who gave



Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York joins Catholic Charities workers in handing out Christmas presents to families with special needs in Manhattan.

himself at Christmas.

(Mary Jo Pedersen, a veteran coordinator of marriage and family spirituality programs, lives in Omaha, Neb. She is the author of *For Better, for Worse, for God: Exploring the Holy Mystery of Marriage*, published by Loyola Press in December 2008.) †

# True meaning of Christmas is giving of oneself to others in countless ways

By Margo MacArthur  
Catholic News Service

It is hard to imagine the world of the first century when the heavy foot of Roman imperialism strode through a vast empire of conquered people.

In this brutal time under the tyranny imposed by that rule on the beleaguered

little nation of Israel, the first Christmas materialized as if by magic.

During his 2007 Christmas homily, Pope Benedict XVI said that, into this harsh setting, "God [stepped] out of his concealment" to connect with mankind and promise salvation in the form of his Son.

It is an old story still relevant today, one that tells us that God's Good News is

often shut out. There is no room in the inn, and Christ's entry into the world is ignored except by the wise men, shepherds and the animals.

So, too, our modern lives are often very busy, too full of worry and self-involvement to allow us more than a passing glimpse of the miraculous birth, let alone of each other. That is, unless we make a conscious decision to make the time to reach out and connect with our neighbors, identifying the ways that we can best serve others.

Many other Christians have prepared the way for us.

Fred has regularly served lunch and dinner at his local soup kitchen whenever possible, modeling the behavior for his six children, who are now grown.

Pam is naturally vivacious, and a mover and doer. She recently spearheaded an entire neighborhood's response to the needs of a temporarily disabled member.

If you ask Pam where she finds the time with a full-time job, a spouse and two young children, she will say that it's a central part of her faith. But those around her know that Pam loves her neighbors best through cooking and encouraging others to do the same.

Lauren, in her early 20s, promised a former classmate who is in drug rehabilitation that, "When you leave there and go home, I will be your listening ear, and help you stay positive and move your life in a good direction."

Since Lauren works more than 30 hours a week and goes to college full time, her love for her friend will require the sacrifice of time. Yet she did not hesitate to offer her help when it was needed.

At 23, Chris is the youngest in his family, and he can't remember what age he was when he joined his parents, brother and sister in serving Christmas dinner to those without a dinner table of their own.

He thinks he was perhaps 12. He does know, however, that he will continue the tradition for years to come and that he will share it with his own family someday.

Dottie, who lives alone in a senior citizens building, said she quite simply enjoys doing a good turn every time she has the opportunity.

"People today don't understand that," Dottie said. "I get a kick out of their realization that extending small kindnesses to those around me is my way of sharing my faith."

There are countless ways that we Christians can contribute to good in the world by reaching out to others. A smile and a gesture that relieves another person's loneliness or lifts a heavy heart cost nothing except the recognition that another human being is helped.

As Pope Benedict reminded us, "Heaven does not belong to the geography of space, but to the geography of the heart."

(Margo MacArthur is a freelance writer in Andover, N.J.) †





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# Astounding news was brought by unexpected visitors at Christmas

By David Gibson

Catholic News Service

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they noticed several breathlessly excited shepherds arriving from the countryside to join them at the manger in Bethlehem where they were tending the newborn Jesus?

A new baby's family can be so busy and exhausted! Right after a birth isn't the easiest of times to extend a heartfelt welcome to unexpected guests. Caring for their new child may be about all a family can manage.

Do you suppose Mary and Joseph smiled warmly at the shepherds and invited them to linger a little longer at the manger than they had planned? Did Mary and Joseph listen attentively to all that these astonished shepherds reported to them?

An angel had spoken to the shepherds, and initially this terrified them. The angel calmed them, however, and then conveyed some "news of great joy" meant to be shared with everyone about a newborn child in Bethlehem.

As if that wasn't enough, "a great throng" of very vocal heavenly hosts joined the angel at that point.

The shepherds had a lot to tell! I'll bet their attempts to put into words all that had happened back in the fields took more than a few minutes.

What's more, at the manger the shepherds somehow recognized that what the angel told them about this newborn child was true. They surely wouldn't have rushed away.

We are told that Mary treasured and pondered what the shepherds said. Was the time that she, Joseph and the shepherds spent together what people today call "quality time"? Probably the shepherds felt quite welcome.

I wonder how much quality time I

accord to the unexpected "visitors" and "guests" encountered during the comings and goings of my daily routines. To tell the truth, I frequently stumble and rush through the day, hoping against hope to complete my "to-do lists" without interruption.

The unexpected visitors and guests of my daily life are not necessarily people who arrive at my doorstep like the shepherds at the manger.

Interruptions come from the unexpected phone call from a "visitor" who genuinely requires my attention, or from the friend or acquaintance who has lost a job or suffered an illness and crosses my path as I'm hurrying to an appointment, or from the person encountered by chance who deserves a word of encouragement, hope or congratulations.

The challenge as the day races along is to slow down enough so that I don't run right past these unexpected "visitors."

Pope Benedict XVI thinks Christians should reflect on the difficulty they have making time for others.

"Do we have time for our neighbor who is in need of a word from us ... or in need of my affection?" the pope asked during his celebration of the Midnight Mass last Christmas at the Vatican. "For the sufferer in need of help? For the fugitive or refugee seeking asylum? Do we have time and space for God?"

When people are preoccupied with their own lives, they think they need their time for their own purposes, Pope Benedict challenged his listeners.

Time is a problem. We have no time. Or our time is not under our control.

If this frustrates us sufficiently, we may view ourselves as victims of time pressure, always pushed by the clock's spinning hands. Possibly we'll begin to search for a big solution to our problem, inquiring how we might create the large pockets of time needed for others, for



Fieldworkers pay homage to the newborn Christ in "Adoration of the Shepherds," by Renaissance Italian painter Giovanni Francesco Guerrieri.

God and our own well-being.

I admire people who insert large blocks of time into their existence through major lifestyle and career changes. For me, though, solving the problem of time always boils down to finding better ways to approach the smaller blocks of time in the moments of the day—the moments when, as Pope Benedict said, someone needs a word from me, affection or help.

How do preoccupied people re-center their attention on others for a moment? Are there ways to convey hope to someone or express true concern in a few moments?

One friend consistently makes the most of a moment by saying convincingly, "It's always so good to see you!"

It works.

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

realized that a warm smile is a gift. If people feel they have nothing to offer another person at the moment, she thought they should give their smile.

Imagine a very busy Mary and Joseph ignoring or slighting the shepherds when they presented themselves in Bethlehem. Christmas would have gotten a much different start!

So many people want a chance at Christmas to set time apart for others—for those closest to them, for friends they don't see often enough, for people who in one way or another are poor. But finding the time is a problem.

Time also is a challenge, and repossessing some of our time is all of the essence.

(David Gibson served on the Catholic News Service editorial staff for 37 years.) †

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Katrina Kroics



# Document warns certain new research violates moral principles

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A new Vatican document warned that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to “take the place of his Creator.”

The latest advances raise serious questions of moral complicity for researchers and other biotech professionals who have a duty to refuse to use biological material obtained by unethical means, the document said.

The 32-page instruction, titled “*Dignitas Personae*” (“The Dignity of a Person”), was issued on Dec. 12 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Benedict XVI personally approved the text and ordered its publication.

The document represented an updating of the congregation’s 1987 instruction, “*Donum Vitae*” (“The Gift of Life”), which rejected in vitro fertilization, human cloning, surrogate motherhood and nontherapeutic experiments with

human embryos.

The new instruction expanded on those teachings or presented new ones in the following areas:

- **Stem-cell research**—The document said it is morally acceptable to take stem cells when they do no serious harm to the person from whom they are taken, as is generally the case when tissues are taken from an adult, from the umbilical cord at the time of birth or from fetuses that have died from natural causes.

On the other hand, it said, it is always “gravely illicit” to take stem cells from a living human embryo because it invariably causes the death of the embryo.

- **The morning-after pill and other anti-implantation methods**—The document said an embryo comes into being after fertilization, and drugs and techniques that prevent its implantation in the uterus are morally illicit because they intend to cause an abortion—even if they don’t actually cause an abortion every time they are used.

Anyone who seeks to prevent the implantation of an embryo and who therefore requests or prescribes such a drug generally intends abortion, it said. The use of such anti-implantation methods “falls within the sin of abortion” and is gravely immoral.

- **Gene therapy**—It said genetic engineering that aims to correct genetic defects by treating nonreproductive cells, a process called somatic-cell gene therapy, is, in principle, morally acceptable.

But it is not permissible to make genetic modifications that seek to transmit the effects to the person’s offspring, called germ-line cell therapy, because of potential harm to the progeny, the document said. It said that “in the present state of research” germ-line cell therapy in all its forms is morally illicit.

- **Embryo manipulation and “adoption.”**—The document repeated earlier condemnations of the in vitro creation of human embryos, first because it

See **BIOETHICS** page 24



An embryologist removes frozen embryos from a storage tank at the Smotrich IVF Clinic in La Jolla, Calif., in this 2007 file photo. The new Vatican document “*Dignitas Personae*” (“The Dignity of a Person”) warns that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to “take the place of his Creator.”

## Officials say Vatican document is not an attack on modern science

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican’s new instruction setting forth moral principles in biotechnology should not be seen as a negative attack on modern science but as a defense of the sacredness of human life, Vatican officials said.

“This is in no way an attempt to say ‘halt’ to the commitment of science in favor of life,” Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said in a statement. “On the contrary, the document offers a series of guideposts so that science is truly at the service of life and not of death, or of the arbitrary and dangerous manipulation of the human person,” he said.

The instruction, “*Dignitas Personae*” (“The Dignity of a Person”), was issued on Dec. 12 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In general, the document rejects any procedure that separates procreation from the conjugal act in marriage or

presents risks to human life from the moment of conception.

“The Church believes it must be courageous and decisive in affirming these principles. The continuity of the development of the human being from the moment of conception does not allow for uncertainty in the defense of the embryo and his dignity,” Father Lombardi said.

“This is a position in favor of small and weak human beings, who have no voice and who today, in fact, do not find many who speak in their favor,” he said.

Dominican Father Augustine Di Noia, undersecretary of the doctrinal congregation, told Vatican Radio that it would be wrong to see the new document as a series of “no’s” against prohibited services.

As Pope Benedict XVI has noted many times, these “no’s” are derived from a much larger “yes” to human life and human dignity, he said.

Father Augustine said that the document offers a number of other positive reflections, including appreciation of science and its recent developments, a “yes” to fertility treatments that overcome pathologies and re-establish the normal functioning of human procreation, a “yes” to the therapeutic use of stem cells when obtained licitly, and a “yes” to the value of every human being.

“Some of these affirmations and positive assertions have a negative side, but their principal direction is a positive account, a vision of what it means to be human, and why human life is sacred from conception to natural death,” he said.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, predicted that the document would provoke various reactions. Some will ignore it, some will deride it and others will label it another Church effort to impede progress, he told a Vatican press conference. †

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**Ryan Bernhardt**  
B.S. in chemistry  
Marian College Class of 2008

I participated in priceless undergraduate research, played collegiate golf and tennis, and studied under excellent professors. Now, I work as a high throughput robotics chemist at Coskata, Inc. What matters is that I’m helping create economical fuels from renewable resources.



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# Patroness of the Americas

## Our Lady of the Greenwood School and Parish celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12



Photos by Mary Ann Wyand



A statue and icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorate the sanctuary near the altar at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church on Dec. 12 for the parish's feast day Mass honoring the patroness of the Americas and the pro-life movement.



Above, Our Lady of the Greenwood School students, from left, first-grader Sophia Dietz, kindergartner Nathaniel Morris and first-grader Elizabeth Origer process into Our Lady of the Greenwood Church in Hispanic costumes for the school Mass on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Left, Father Rick Nagel, associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, and Father Mauro Rodas, a retired diocesan priest who assists with Hispanic ministry at the parish, pray the eucharistic prayer during the school Mass on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



Left, Our Lady of the Greenwood School seventh-grader Craig Connors prays during the feast day Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at the parish church.



Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, elevates the Blood of Christ during the parish Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at the Indianapolis South Deanery church.



Our Lady of the Greenwood School students stand during the procession at the start of the feast day Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at the parish church.

## BIOETHICS

continued from page 23

separates procreation from the conjugal act in marriage, and second because unused embryos are often discarded.

Freezing such embryos also violates ethics because it exposes them to risk of death or harm, the document said. Despite the good intentions of people who have suggested a form of "prenatal adoption" to allow frozen embryos to be born, such a proposal would be subject to medical, psychological and legal problems, it said.

• **Freezing of human eggs**—The document said the freezing of immature human eggs for some in vitro fertilization techniques is morally unacceptable.

• **Human-animal hybrid cloning**—The document rejected as immoral recent efforts to use animal eggs to reprogram human cells in order to extract embryonic stem cells from the resulting embryos. These efforts represent a grave offense against human dignity by mixing animal and human genetic elements capable of "disrupting the specific identity of man," it said. In addition, use of the resulting stem cells would expose humans to unacceptable risks, it said.

In a section titled "The use of human 'biological material' of illicit origin," the document examined ethical questions posed for people who, in research or the

production of vaccines or other products, deal with cell lines that are the result of a procedure the Church teaches as immoral.

In cases where there is a direct connection, such as embryonic experimentation that inevitably involves the killing of the human embryos, such acts "always constitute a grave moral disorder," it said.

It said the situation was more complex when a researcher works with cell lines produced apart from his research center or obtained commercially.

The document rejected the "criterion of independence," formulated by some ethics committees, which argues that using such biological material is ethically permissible as long as there is a clear separation between those causing the death of embryos and those doing the research.

The document said it was necessary to distance oneself in one's ordinary professional activities from the injustice perpetrated by others, even when immoral actions are legal, in order not to give the impression of "tacit acceptance of actions which are gravely unjust."

"Therefore, it needs to be stated that there is a duty to refuse to use such 'biological material' even when there is no close connection between the researcher and the actions of those who performed the artificial fertilization or the abortion, or when there was not prior agreement with the centers in which the artificial fertilization took place," it said.

In the wider framework, it added, grave reasons may in some cases justify the use of such "biological material."

For example, it said, the danger to the health of children could permit parents to legitimately use a vaccine that was developed using cell lines obtained illicitly. In such a case, it noted, the parents have no voice in the decision over how the vaccines are made. At the same time, it said, everyone should ask their health care system to make other types of vaccines available.

The instruction repeated earlier Vatican condemnations of human cloning, whether done to produce embryos for stem cells or to define the genetic identity of an individual person, which the document called "a form of biological slavery."

The document said couples need to be aware that techniques such as pre-implantation diagnosis, which is used in artificial fertilization and leads to the destruction of embryos suspected of defects, reflects a growing "eugenic mentality." It cited an increasing number of cases in which couples with no fertility problems are using artificial means of procreation in order to engage in the genetic selection of their offspring.

The Vatican said the new document, as a papally approved instruction of a doctrinal nature, falls under the category of the "ordinary magisterium," which is the Church's teaching authority, and is to be received by Catholics "with the religious assent of their spirit." †

# Cardinal Dulles recalled for brilliance, simplicity, kindness

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Cardinal Avery Dulles, a Jesuit theologian who was made a cardinal in 2001, was remembered by friends and admirers for his brilliant mind as well as for his “simplicity and sense of wonder.”

Cardinal Dulles died on Dec. 12. He was 90. An evening wake was scheduled for Dec. 16 and 17 at Fordham University Church in New York, followed by the celebration of Mass each evening. A funeral Mass for the cardinal was scheduled for Dec. 18 at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York followed by burial at the Jesuit Cemetery in Auriesville, N.Y.

Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired Washington archbishop, and a fellow member of the 2001 class of cardinals, described the Jesuit scholastic he first met 60 years ago as even then being “an imposing personality with his twang, his razor-sharp intellect and, perhaps more than anything else, his obviously profound dedication to his faith.

“He was one of the truly great American theologians, constantly renewing and deepening his commitment to the truth,” said Cardinal McCarrick in one of many statements issued by Church leaders, friends and colleagues after Cardinal Dulles’ death.

From his early impressions of Cardinal Dulles as a young priest whose first Mass he helped organize, Cardinal McCarrick said his friend was “a holy man, totally without guile or pretense.”

Pope Benedict XVI offered his condolences to the Jesuit community and Cardinal Dulles’ friends and family. He remarked on the cardinal’s “deep learning, serene judgment, and unfailing love of the Lord and his Church, which marked his entire priestly ministry and his long years of teaching and theological research.”

The pope said he prays that “his convincing personal testimony to the

harmony of faith and reason will continue to bear fruit for the conversion of minds and hearts and the progress of the Gospel for many years to come.”

Cardinal Dulles, the son of former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and nephew of onetime CIA director Allen Walsh Dulles, was the grandson of a Presbyterian minister.

He joined the Catholic Church in 1941 while a student at Harvard Law School. He served in the Navy in World War II, then entered the Jesuits after his discharge in 1946. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1956.

Cardinal Dulles had been the Laurence J. McGinley professor of religion and society at Fordham since 1988. He also had taught in Washington at the former Woodstock College, now folded into Georgetown University, and The Catholic University of America. He had been a visiting professor at Catholic, Protestant and secular colleges and universities.

Prominent among his many writings was his groundbreaking 1974 book, *Models of the Church*, in which he defined the Church as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, servant and community of disciples, and critiqued each model.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Cardinal Dulles’ “wise counsel will be missed,” and that “his personal witness to the pursuit of holiness of life as a priest, a Jesuit and a cardinal of the Church will be remembered.”

Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington said that Cardinal Dulles’ elevation from priest to cardinal was a sign of the particular esteem in which he was held. One of the rare nonbishops to be appointed to the College of Cardinals, he was named a cardinal in recognition of his service to the Church as a theologian.

“He presented an authentic Catholic

theology that was deeply rooted in the Church’s intellectual heritage and the American experience of that tradition,” Archbishop Wuerl said.

He added that he would cherish the opportunities he had to work with Cardinal Dulles, whom he described as “insightful and ever kind. He had a way of making complicated and sometimes opaque issues clear and intelligible. But he also always had time to listen to others who did not have his level of theological mastery and to welcome their contribution.”

Some of his fellow Jesuits recalled Cardinal Dulles for his intellect and for more mundane human traits.

“Cardinal Dulles was a man of tremendous intellectual rigor whose teaching and writing contributed greatly to the vibrancy of Catholic intellectual life,” said Father Thomas H. Smolich, president of the Jesuit Conference. “Yet for a man with so many gifts, he never viewed himself as anything more than a poor servant of Christ.”

In an article written for the Jan. 5 issue of *America* magazine, Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, editor-in-chief, quoted Cardinal Dulles looking back on his own career in “A Life in Theology,” the April 2008 lecture at Fordham which the cardinal described as his farewell address: “I do not particularly strive for originality. Very few new ideas, I suspect, are true. If I conceived a theological idea that had never occurred to anyone in the past, I would have every reason to think myself mistaken.”

The cardinal thought tradition was essential to theological development, noted Father Christiansen.

“Developments of doctrine,” the cardinal observed, “always involve a certain continuity; a reversal of course is not development.”

Father Christiansen also gave some more personal perspectives about his fellow Jesuit,



U.S. Cardinal Avery Dulles is pictured in Rome prior to the conclave and election of Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. Cardinal Dulles, a Jesuit theologian who was made a cardinal in 2001, died on Dec. 12 in Murray-Weigel Hall at Fordham University. He was 90 years old. Cardinal Dulles had been the oldest living U.S. cardinal.

describing his transition to a small Jesuit community in 1970 after Woodstock College moved from the Maryland countryside to New York City.

“Raised in a household with servants and having lived his life in institutions [the Navy and the Jesuits], small community was his first experience of domesticity,” Father Christiansen wrote. “He learned to sew—he had to be taught several times—to shop and to cook. His favorite entree: Shake ‘n Bake chicken.” †

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**Roxana Moghaddam** →  
B.S. in finance with a minor in business  
Marian College Class of 2008

I participated in different kinds of internships for experience, and not for the money. If it weren’t for that, I don’t think I’d be working as an associate financial analyst for Eli Lilly and Company. What matters is that I got the theory *and* the practice from great professors who cared about my future.



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Roxana Moghaddam

# 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.

**ATKINS, Thomas K., 77,** St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Husband of Jeanne (Wieck) Atkins. Father of Lisa Millner, Laura Strand, Jack and Patrick Atkins. Grandfather of eight.

**BAKER, Jordan Matthew, 19,** St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 7. Son of Mark and Tara Baker. Grandson of Larry and Janet Baker and Robert and Susan Begner.

**BURKE, Donald G., 81,** St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Husband of Katherine Burke. Father of Irene Cullen, Laura Hauser, Agnes Niemi, Delia Quinlan, Katherine Wietecha, Anne, Mary, Donald, John and Thomas Burke. Grandmother of 19.

**DUFFIN, John, 78,** Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Brother of Mary Jane Arbuckle, Joan Long, Pat Townsend and Jim Duffin. Father of several. Grandfather of several. Great-grandfather of several.

**DURMAN, Bernard, Sr., 64,** St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Husband of Sherron Durman. Father of Kimberly Harrington, Sherra Moore, Charles Wyatt, Bernard Jr. and Philip Durman. Grandfather of several. Great-grandfather of several.

**FEDERLE, Marie H., 62,** St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 26. Wife of Carl Federle. Mother of Lisa Abraham and Paula Perry. Sister of Alberta Messang, Rita, Emil, George and Joe Litzinger. Grandmother of five.

**FENTON, Rosalyn (O'Brien), 79,** Holy Cross, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Mother of Mary Rogier, Daniel, John and Michael Fenton. Sister of Eileen Wallace. Grandmother of seven.

**FLORES, Roberto, 29,** St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 9. Husband of Naomi Flores. Father of Adrian, Maria and Roberto Flores Jr. Son of Maria Gonzalez Cruz. Brother of Abel Flores.

**FOWLER, Ellis E., 89,** St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Oct. 30. Father of Ann Collins, Carol Luken, Katherine Wood, John, Richard and William Fowler.

**GABONAY, Margaret, 96,** St. Paul Hermitage, Beech Grove, Oct. 15. Sister of Charles and William Gabonay. Aunt of several.

**HANEY, Mark A., 43,**

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Husband of Deborah Haney. Son of Ralph and Linda Haney. Brother of Karen Jacobs and Beth Haney.

**HEPPNER, Dorothy E., 84,** Holy Family, Oldenburg, Dec. 6. Mother of Connie Moody. Grandmother of two.

**HICKS, James Clayton, 79,** St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Dec. 7. Husband of Dorothy Hicks. Father of Cynthia Howell, James, Jerry and Paul Hicks. Brother of David Hicks. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of 15.

**LOSCHIAVO, Camilli, 94,** Holy Family, Richmond, Dec. 4. Mother of Mary Ann Vogelesang and Frances Wentz. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of nine. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**MULINARO, Joseph Randall, 18,** St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Son of Timothy Mulinaro and Rosejay Breen. Stepson of Delbert Denney II and Jackie (Nibarger) Mulinaro. Brother of Baylie and Phillip Mulinaro. Stepbrother of Sara Sanders and Joshua Lewis. Grandson of John Mulinaro.

**RUTHERFORD, Mary Elizabeth, 83,** St. Gabriel the Archangel, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Mother of Diane Pitts. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of eight.

**SAUER, Beverly A., 67,** St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 26. Wife of Robert Sauer. Mother of Julie Vance, Robert and Timothy Sauer. Daughter of Frances Meisberger. Sister of Katherine Runyon and Louis Meisberger. Grandmother of three. †

## Daily Readings

continued from page 11

**Sunday, Jan. 4**  
The Epiphany of the Lord  
*Isaiah 60:1-6*  
*Psalm 72:2, 7-8, 10-13*  
*Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6*  
*Matthew 2:1-12*

**Monday, Jan. 5**  
John Neumann, bishop  
*1 John 3:22-4:6*  
*Psalm 2:7-8, 10-11*  
*Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25*

**Tuesday, Jan. 6**  
Blessed André Bessette, religious  
*1 John 4:7-10*  
*Psalm 72:2-4ab, 7-8*  
*Mark 6:34-44*

**Wednesday, Jan. 7**  
Raymond of Peñafort, priest  
*1 John 4:11-18*  
*Psalm 72:2, 10-13*  
*Mark 6:45-52*

**Thursday, Jan. 8**  
*1 John 4:19-5:4*  
*Psalm 72:2, 14, 15bc, 17*  
*Luke 4:14-22a*

**Friday, Jan. 9**  
*1 John 5:5-13*  
*Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20*  
*Luke 5:12-16*

**Saturday, Jan. 10**  
*1 John 5:14-21*  
*Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b*  
*John 3:22-30*

**Sunday, Jan. 11**  
The Baptism of the Lord  
*Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7*

*Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10*  
*Acts 10:34-38*  
*Mark 1:7-11*

**Monday, Jan. 12**  
*Hebrews 1:1-6*  
*Psalm 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9*  
*Mark 1:14-20*

**Tuesday, Jan. 13**  
Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church  
*Hebrews 2:5-12*  
*Psalm 8:2a, 5-9*  
*Mark 1:21-28*

**Wednesday, Jan. 14**  
*Hebrews 2:14-18*  
*Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9*  
*Mark 1:29-39*

**Thursday, Jan. 15**  
*Hebrews 3:7-14*  
*Psalm 95:6-11*  
*Mark 1:40-45*

**Friday, Jan. 16**  
*Hebrews 4:1-5, 11*  
*Psalm 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8*  
*Mark 2:1-12*

**Saturday, Jan. 17**  
Anthony, abbot  
*Hebrews 4:12-16*  
*Psalm 19:8-10, 15*  
*Mark 2:13-17*

**Sunday, Jan. 18**  
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time  
*1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19*  
*Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10*  
*1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20*  
*John 1:35-42*

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## MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENT

# Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Marriage Supplement  
February 6, 2009, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2009, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

### Pictures

You may send us a picture of the couple. Please do not cut the 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 the couple's names 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. Color photos are preferred. Please send your photo as an attachment to the e-mail.

### Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

#### — Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Mary Ann Klein, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Deadline with photos: Thursday, January 15, 2009, at 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 (first, last)	City State
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)	City State
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)	City State
Wedding Date	Church City State
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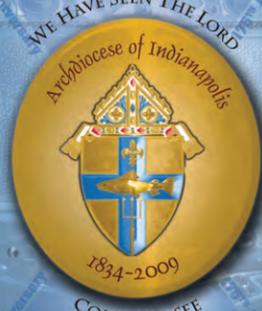
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