A pilgrimage of faith
Jerusalem’s Latin patriarch hopes pope’s May visit to Holy Land is ‘cry for peace’

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS)—Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal of Jerusalem welcomed the announcement of Pope Francis’ May visit to the Holy Land, and said he hopes the pilgrimage will be a “cry for peace,” particularly for Palestinians, Israelis, Syrians and others beset by conflict.

Pope Francis announced his first trip as pontiff to the Holy Land, on Jan. 5, Patriarch Twal underscored that Arab Christians are badly in need of the protection of the Holy See. “They are increasing in numbers, but they are also facing economic hardship. “How great is his concern for us. And our presence, I think is one of the aspects he will mention in his speech to the people,” the Jordanian-born patriarch said.

“To stay in this land, to live in this land, to die in this land: the Holy Land is worthy to stay, to suffer and to die for,” he said.

Christians throughout the Middle East represent the oldest such community in the world. But in their ancient homelands of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, they have increasingly become targets of intimidation and killing in the midst of civil unrest and war. “The visit is intended to consolidate the good relations that bind the Muslims and Christians of these Arab countries since ancient times, as well as contribute to intensifying calls for mutual respect and redoubling efforts to respect for religious pluralism in an atmosphere of love and cooperation,” the patriarch said.

“We need the pope to bring peace to Jerusalem,” Mary Yagi, a Jerusalem native and parishioner at St. Joseph’s Church in Amman, expressed as her hope.

The Archdiocese of Washington issued a statement on marriage on Dec. 4, and it can be found at www.indianacc.org. "Our overall goal this year, as is every year, is to promote a consistent life ethic,” said Tebbe. "The Church’s teaching is clear that we support traditional marriage. We will continue that effort.” The Indiana bishops issued a statement saying the stay vindicates “the pledge of the U.S. Catholic bishops to stand in resolute defense of the first and most sacred freedom—religious liberty.”

Sotomayor’s order came in her capacity as the justice assigned to hear emergency applications from the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which includes Denver. Her two-sentence order also instructed the federal government to file its response by 10 a.m. on Jan. 3, which it did.

The injunction means the Little Sisters and their Christian Brothers will, for now, not be required to provide contraceptives, sterilizations and drugs and devices that cause abortions as part of their employee health insurance coverage.

Sotomayor’s order came as faith-affiliated groups around the nation rushed to federal courts to halt the provision. Several efforts were successful in obtaining temporary injunctions in the last days of 2013.
PILGRIMAGE

continued from page 1

for the visit.

“Our world is engulfed in war, and it desperately needs peace. More prayers must be offered to see something positive happen,” she said.

Fellow parishioner, Sameh Gurgis, an Egyptian Orthodox, said he wants the pope to “bring God’s love and stability to Arab countries,” wringing in the aftermath of the Arab Spring upheavals that saw long-time rulers toppled.

Another aspect of the papal pilgrimage aims to strengthen efforts initiated by Pope Paul VI to encourage greater unity between the Western and Eastern churches. Pope Francis will meet Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, considered first among equals by Orthodox bishops, and the three Catholic patriarchs of Jerusalem.

He is expected as well to build on reconciliation efforts by moderate Muslims, such as Jordan’s King Abdullah II, to foster better relations between Muslims and Christians. Immediately after his arrival in Jordan on May 24, Pope Francis will meet privately with the king, who visited the pontiff with his wife, Queen Rania, in August at the Vatican.

Pope Francis also will hold talks with Jordanian religious and political leaders and celebrate an open-air Mass in an Amman stadium.

Later that evening, the pontiff will travel to the site where it is believed Jesus was baptized and the “place chosen by Jesus to begin his mission,” Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, apostolic nuncio to Jordan and Iraq, told the news conference.

“The place has been ‘significantly chosen for the pope to share dinner with the ‘least,’ that is, with those living in peculiar conditions of suffering and uncertainty,” he said.

Pope Francis, who is well-known for his simplicity and humility in the vein of his namesake, St. Francis, will dine with Syrian refugees, the handicapped and the impoverished at the sacred site along the banks of the Jordan River.

Archbishop Lingua said the pontiff, much like Pope Paul, wanted to visit Damascus, Syria, to walk in the footsteps of St. Paul, but he, too, will be able “in spirit, by heart and mind, to share the suffering of that country.”

Father Rafi Badar of the Catholic Media Center in Amman said Pope Francis will travel to Bethlehem by helicopter from Amman on May 25. He will celebrate Mass in Bethlehem’s Manger Square and will meet Israeli President Shimon Peres.

Patriarch Twal expressed hope that Christians from Gaza and Galilee will also be allowed to participate in the Manger Square Mass.

Sanir Karashdeh, an aviation consultant visiting Amman from the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., said he intends to return to Jordan for the pope’s May visit just as he did for that of Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

“I won’t ask anything of the pope” he said. “Instead, I want to say. ‘Thank you for bringing faith back to everyone.’”

American Jesuit Father Alfred J. Hicks, who has served in the Middle East for decades, initially in Iraq and now Jordan, expressed a similar sentiment.

“He’s been sent by the Spirit to reform the Church. We’re very proud of what the pope is trying to do, whether in Rome or here,” he said.  

Pope Paul VI makes a historic trip to the Holy Land, and an editorial rails again against miscegenation laws

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of The Criterion.

Here are some of the items found in the Jan. 10, 1964, issue of The Criterion:

• Pilgrim pontiff seen fulfilling three-fold aim
  Jerusalem—Pope Paul VI, in the opinion of observers here, went far toward achieving the three main purposes of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land: to promote Christian unity, to foster world peace and to manifest the Church to the world. His efforts for Christian unity were highlighted by his two meetings with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, who said the meetings will “become the prelude of a mutual communion, the dawn of a luminous and blessed future epoch, containing in the same chalice of the most precious Blood and Body of the Lord, will glorify the only Lord and Saviour in charity, peace and unity.”

• [Pope Paul] was the first pope in more than five centuries to meet with a patriarch of Constantinople.
• Meeting of pope and patriarch breaks centuries-old precedent
• Pope elevates six priests of the archdiocese
• Family Day observance this Sunday
• Fr. Hoffman dies at 86; was retired
• Liturgy decree not only matter of vernacular
• Church attendance goal is conducted
• The pilgrimage returns: Triumphant welcome given pope in Rome
• Council statement on Jews will not die
• Fr. Gustave Weigel dies of heart attack
• Editorial: One human race
  “The Christian Church knows only one race, and that is the human race. … This is so basic to Christian thinking that through the centuries Church and civil law in Christian countries never even took into consideration the possibility that color of skin or national origins could in any way become an obstacle to marriage. Laws prohibiting interracial marriage are modern aberrations that sprang from an erroneous and altogether pagan notion which ignored the dignity of the human person and aimed at preserving racial stock pure and unmixed, as though men were so many cattle. … The present law against miscegenation is an evil denial of a fundamental human right. … It is way past time for Indiana to rectify a serious mistake and eliminate a law that is immoral, un-Christian and un-American.”
• Chair of Unity Octave intentions reworded
• Pope Paul emphasizes the role of the layman
• Cardinal Bea stresses renewed bishops’ role
• Marian homesteading slated this weekend
• Catholic men to return visit of Presbyterians
• Vietnamese see gets an administrator
• Churches concerned with bills in Congress
• Pope leaves gifts in the Holy Land
• Airborne greeting from pope

(Read all of these stories from our Jan. 10, 1964, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com)
‘Incredible blessing’: Catholic radio station pays off $2.25 million lease, moves to new location

By Natalie Hoefer

The paint in the renovated office space is fresh, the furniture is new and the equipment is up to date. The ink is still drying on the final of a decade’s worth of lease-to-purchase checks.

The only thing old now about Catholic Radio Indy is the 2,000-year-old message of hope and salvation being proclaimed.

The dual milestone of paying off the $2.25 million lease for the station after 10 years and moving into a larger office space was celebrated on Dec. 17 as Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin presided over a blessing ceremony at the new Catholic Radio Indy location at 8383 Craig St., Suite 280 in Indianapolis.

“I think it’s interesting to be [giving the] blessing in Advent,” Archbishop Tobin noted, “celebrating that time of waiting for the Word and then the Word taking flesh. I thought there was a happy coincidence that we’re blessing this [new location] at the very time we’re conscious of God speaking the word of salvation to us.”

Since it first took to the airwaves 10 years ago, Catholic Radio Indy leased both its office space and a license from Hoosier Broadcasting Corporation.

“Paying off the lease [for the station license agreement] is big. Now 100 percent of [listener donations] goes toward the station and not toward a lease payment, which was $20,000 a month. That’s gone, so now we can focus our attention on spreading the message even further across the state,” said Weiss, a member of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood.

Wherever the station broadcasts, Archbishop Tobin’s comments indicate he will be in support of it.

“I think there’s a mistaken idea that radio has been surpassed by the Internet and videos and Instagram and e-mail,” he said.

“They all serve purposes, but radio is kind of like an old friend that is talking to you. You’ve invited them into your home, and they have something to say to you.”

“I think it’s an important way the Word takes flesh today and reaches people the Church may not ever have a chance to speak to via another pulpit.”

(For more information on Catholic Radio Indy, their programming schedule, or to listen online from any location, log on to catholicradioindy.org.)

Archbishop Tobin to preach at Jan. 19 ecumenical prayer service at cathedral

By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin and representatives of other Christian communities in Indianapolis will pray on Jan. 19 for Christian unity, and Catholics will celebrate the opening prayer service for the Week of Christian Unity.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin presided over the service at the new Catholic Radio Indy location at 8383 Craig St., Suite 280 in Indianapolis, for Jan. 19 for Christian unity, and Catholics communities in Indianapolis will pray on representatives of other Christian communities.

“I have been blessed to have numerous opportunities to interact with other Christians throughout my life,” said Father Ginther, who also serves as pastor of St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes in Terre Haute. “Any time we can offer something, right and good is being done. I can feel it deep within me.”

Father Ginther sees an important role for the Church in central and southern Indiana in promoting Christian unity since the Roman Catholic Church, along with the Churches of the East, “is the Mother Church of all Christian churches.”

“We do not promote unity and cooperative efforts to address the needs of dignity and needs of humanity, then we are not fulfilling the Gospel mandate of the Lord,” said Father Ginther, who also serves as dean of the Terre Haute Deanery. “It is paramount, therefore, for the archdiocese of Indianapolis to be very active in promoting good relationships with our brothers and sisters of other Christian churches, but always as a partner, even in leadership.”

The ecumenical prayer service that he is helping organize will include prayers, Scripture readings, the singing of hymns and an exchange of a sign of peace.

Father Ginther thinks Christians coming together to pray is an important step in promoting unity among believers.

“Our world greatly needs a fostering of unity,” he said. “Such gatherings remind us that we must begin with our ‘sameness’ as Christians and as human beings if we are to bring about a harmony for unity from amidst our differences. Knowing of common longings, common needs, expressed in common prayer, builds trust.”

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Photos by Natalie Hoefer


Left, Catholic Radio Indy president and general manager Jim Ganley, seated to the right, explains the state-of-the-art studio equipment to people who attended the blessing of the station’s new studios and office on Dec. 17.
Following the Star of Wonder

“A star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.”

The refrain of the popular Christmas carol “We Three Kings” written by John Henry Hopkins, Jr. in 1857, speaks directly to the star of Bethlehem that inspired “wise men from the East” to travel to Jerusalem around the time of Jesus’ birth.

“How is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him” (Mt. 2:1).

Tradition attributes to these inspired travelers many different characteristics. First of all, they are of the human race and determined to go to its significance for the future of the heavens (some astronomers say it may have been a supernova). They are said to be wise. Not only did they have inner aspiration of the human spirit, in addition: they were seekers as representing the synthesis of faith and reason. “Not only do they represent the people who have found God’s grace. More than a century later, the celestial light that shone brilliantly in the year 7-8 B.C. was a miracle of God’s grace: Messianic fulfillment of the Star, the fulfillment of the Christian pilgrims. Although they had not yet found him, they were seekers.” Pope Benedict sees these wise seekers as representing the synthesis of faith and reason. “Not only do they represent the people who have found God’s grace. More than a century later, the celestial light that shone brilliantly in the year 7-8 B.C. was a miracle of God’s grace: Messianic fulfillment of the Star, the fulfillment of the Christian pilgrims. Although they had not yet found him, they were seekers.”

The process of the wise men’s journey to Jerusalem is described in the Gospel of Matthew. The “angel of the Lord” tells the shepherds about the baby Jesus being born in Bethlehem and his significance. The shepherds are then told to go and worship Jesus. The Magi (or Wise Men) follow the star to Bethlehem and worship Jesus. They offer gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The angel then tells the Magi to go to King Herod and not to reveal the place where Jesus was born. They follow the star to Jerusalem and then to Nazareth, where Jesus lived. The star shines brightly over the house where Jesus lived, and the Magi are led to it. They enter the house and worship Jesus. They make an offering to him and return to the East.

The story of the Wise Men has been interpreted in various ways. Some have seen it as a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. The star has been seen as a symbol of God’s guidance and protection. The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh have been interpreted as symbols of the divine, the divine, and the human, respectively.

Some legends even associate the Magi with earlier Christian saints. Some say they were the apostles Peter and Paul. Others believe they were the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Some think they were the Four Heralds of the Apocalypse: John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, St. John Chrysostom, and St. John Cassian. Still others say they were the Four Doctors of the Church: St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Thomas More, St. Thomas More, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

This underscores the Church’s view of the Christmas story as a symbol of the Church’s mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. The story of the Wise Men is a reminder of the importance of following the star of hope and faith to find the true meaning of Christmas.

Making Sense of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Violinist violence

In her still widely read 1971 article, “A Defense of Abortion,” Judith Jarvis Thomson sets up a thought experiment known as the “Famous Violinist Problem” to argue that abortion ought to be morally justified when a pregnancy comes out of sexual assault.

“You wake up in the morning and find yourself back in bed with a… famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Musicians has canvassed all the available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have, therefore, kidnapped you, and last night the violinist’s circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own… To unplug you would be to kill him. But never mind, it’s only for nine months. By then, he will have recovered from his ailment, and can safely be unplugged from you.”

Most people would share the intuition that they should be able to unplug themselves from the violinist because they didn’t consent to being hooked up in the first place. Others would suggest an analogy with becoming pregnant through rape, so the mother could “unplug” herself from the child by abortion.

At least two serious problems, however, exist with this analogy.

First, the famous violinist is not a good parallel for the child conceived by sexual assault. The violinist in Thomson’s thought experiment is basically a stranger to the child. The violinist is not the child’s mother. The child, therefore, does not have the same rights as the violinist. This raises the question of whether a musician or an innocent child, to direct lethal harm simply because they find themselves in a situation of great need and desperation, is morally permissible.

The second problem with Thomson’s analogy is that abortion is not like “unplugging” a tube connecting you to another person. An analogy could be set up for the case of a wounded person. For example, a soldier shot in the leg may require immediate surgery to save his life. The surgeon may have to amputate the leg to save the soldier’s life. The soldier, however, would not be able to unplug himself from the surgeon’s leg because he had no control over the situation. The violinist, on the other hand, is a fully conscious person who is in control of his own body.

In Thomson’s thought experiment, the violinist is not a stranger to the child. The child has a mother, and the mother has a right to make decisions about the child’s life. The mother, therefore, is the one who should make the decision about abortion.

In summary, abortion in cases of sexual assault is a morally complex issue that raises many difficult questions. It is important to consider the rights of both the mother and the child in making decisions about abortion.

Sources:

Views on human origin

Six in 10 Americans believe that humans and other living things evolved over time. Percent of adults saying...

Humans existed in present form since beginning

All adults 33
White evangelical 32
Black Protestant 31
Hispanic Catholic 31
White Catholic 31
Unaffiliated 30
White mainline Protestant 30

Humans evolved over time

All adults 60
White evangelical 60
Black Protestant 59
Hispanic Catholic 59
White Catholic 60
Unaffiliated 57
White mainline Protestant 57

Source: Pew Research Center survey March 21-April 8, 2013

 workforce worked in an abortion clinic and later described what happened there.

“When a later abortion was performed, workers had to piece the baby back together, and every major part—head, torso, two legs, and two arms—had to be accounted for. One of our little jokes at the clinic was, ‘If you ever want to humble a doctor, hide a leg so he thinks he has to go back in.’ Please understand, these were not abnormal, uncaring women working with me at the clinic. We were just involved in a bloody, dehumanizing business, all of us for our own reasons. Whether we were justifying our past advocacy [as I was], justifying a previous abortion [as many were] or whatever, we were just trying to cope—and if we couldn’t laugh at what was going on, I think our minds would have snapped.”

McCorvey’s comments remind us that abortion is essentially a violent and deadly act, not a euphemistic “unplugging” or “separating” of mother and child.

Thus we might wish to modify Thomson’s analogy once again in order to maintain parallelism: “A woman wakes up in the morning and finds herself attached to a violinist. To free herself from any further involvement with him, she asks a doctor to come in with a knife and to dismember the renowned musician.”

The absolute wrongness of such direct killing would remain beyond dispute, as would the wrongness of any direct killing actions by a raped woman directed against her unborn son because of the sins of his father.

In reflecting on the specifics of “The Famous Violinist Problem,” we begin to appreciate the importance of never subjecting an innocent third party, whether a musician or an innocent child, to direct lethal harm simply because they find themselves in a situation of great need and desperation, as long as they are not caused by their own actions. We might also conclude that most people would not believe that abortion is justified except in cases of sexual assault.

However, we can see that even in cases of sexual assault, most people would believe that abortion is justified only if the pregnant woman consents to it. This suggests that abortion is not justifiable in cases of sexual assault unless the pregnant woman consents to it.

In summary, abortion in cases of sexual assault is a morally complex issue that raises many difficult questions. It is important to consider the rights of both the unborn child and the mother in making decisions about abortion.

—Daniel Conway

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Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org
Pastor hopes to see new life come from merger of parishes

By Sean Gallagher

Father Sean Danda has seen the paschal mystery of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection in the recent merger of the former Holy Guardian Angels Parish in Cedar Grove with St. Michael Parish in Brookville.

The pastor of St. Michael and the final pastor of Holy Guardian Angels has witnessed it in the suffering of the former parish in Cedar Grove, which closed on Dec. 1, as a step taken as a result of the Connected in the Spirit planning process that occurred during the past two years in the Batesville Deanery.

“This closure is like the death of a very close family member,” Father Danda said. “It’s like mom or dad, or grandma or grandpa passing away.”

And just as when a close relative dies and the remaining family members mourn the loss of their loved one, Father Danda said that parishioners of Holy Guardian Angels have told him that they are concerned that they won’t see their fellow parishioners worshipping next to them at Mass as they used to do.

“That’s the hardest part, that thought that all of these people might not be there,” he said. “They might not be seeing them Sunday in and Sunday out.

“They’ve kind of grown through this. Their faith is more than just the buildings. It’s the people of God, the community that’s formed.”

Losing that community has been especially difficult for Maria Chesnut, 40, because so many of the relatives in her extended family were members of Holy Guardian Angels. Some, including her father, are having difficulty coping with the closure.

“He actually has gone to Mass only one time since this has been going on, which has been devastating [to me],” Chesnut said. “He’s been an active Catholic his whole life.”

With two young sons, Chesnut wanted to take a different approach to this emotional situation.

“I don’t want my kids to see anger...” she said. “I want them to think positively about the Church. Instead of being angry or completely devastated by this, I thought that the best thing to do was just follow our faith. And that’s what we’ve done.”

One way that she has helped them do this is to enroll them in St. Michael School. She also volunteered as a lector at the parish.

“It helps us know there is something greater,” Chesnut said. “We don’t have to be devastated by this loss because six miles up the road there’s a wonderful church and community that we can be a member of, just by getting ourselves out there.”

Melody Smith is another former member of Holy Guardian Angels Parish. She doesn’t have the deep family roots in the parish like Chesnut, having been a member there only for the past 10 years after having formerly been a St. Michael parishioner.

But she, along with Chesnut, is serving on a team of St. Michael parishioners and former Holy Guardian Angels parishioners that is working to implement the merger smoothly.

“She’s going to open up dialogue between people that may know each other by sight, but don’t know each other personally,” said Smith. “I hope what comes of this is the interaction to build a stronger community.”

Through these and other efforts, Father Danda hopes to witness the resurrection part of the paschal mystery in this merger. In fact, he views St. Michael after having merged with Holy Guardian Angels as being a new parish, just like when a family is substantially changed when it welcomes a new person into its home.

“That family that receives a new child into it becomes a new family in a lot of ways,” he said. “Everybody has to change and adapt to that new baby. Not just mom and dad, but the other brothers and sisters.”

One of the ways that the longtime members of St. Michael Parish are adapting to help welcome their new fellow parishioners is through a new weekend Mass schedule.

Father Danda thought it was important that there be a time for Mass at St. Michael that was close to the time for Mass on Sunday morning at Holy Guardian Angels.

“Holy Guardian Angels parishioners are used to a mid-morning Mass,” he said. “So I really felt that that was important to keep that at the new parish.”

Smith hopes that the hospitality efforts at St. Michael and building a new community there will help former Holy Guardian Angels parishioners feel at home in Brookville.

“Overall, I just hope that families can accept change and allow their hearts to be open to make a new faith community—or at least give it a try,” Smith said. “That’s what we’re hoping for.”

At the same time, there are some former members of Holy Guardian Angels who have filed an appeal with the Vatican that at the new parish.

“One of the people making such an appeal is a member of the implementation team. That person asked Father Danda if being on the team was hypocritical. I said, ‘No, you’re not. I understand that, in your heart, you want to do everything you can to keep your parish. But you also see the need to be there for people and that your faith needs to continue to grow,’ ” Father Danda said.

Whatever ultimately happens with the appeal, Father Danda is committed to helping the new community at St. Michael move forward in faith so that they can share that faith with others.

“We should be a parish that is constantly renewing itself, not being comfortable with the status quo,” he said. “Conversation is all about leaving behind the status quo and trying to become better disciples, disciples who love God, who love neighbor and who seek new disciples, who invite new people into the community.

“The community should always be growing and looking to the needs of the people that are coming into that community so that they can grow as well into the disciples that Jesus is calling them to be.”

(To learn more about the merger of Holy Guardian Angels Parish in Cedar Grove with St. Michael Parish in Brookville, including viewing the decree stating the reasons for this change, log on to www.archindy.org/connected.)

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Events Calendar

January 11
St. Roch Parish, Family Life Center, 3605 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Roch’s Women, 7 p.m., meeting. 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

January 17

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Charismatic Mass, praise and worship, 7 p.m., Mass, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-846-6709.

January 19
Catholic Community of Richmond, 701 N. "A" St., Richmond. Charismatic prayer group, 7 p.m. Information: 765-983-4296 or prayertogetherr@gmail.com.

January 27
Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Gianna Center, Cribbage Fertility Care introductory session, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-446-4248 or liv.giannacenter@gmail.com.

Retreats and Programs

January 24

January 25
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Soul Story: Writing the Spiritual Autobiography. Susan Yanus, presenter. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., $45 per person includes lunch. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 5

February 7-9
Benedictine Father Noel Mueller, O.S.B., speaker. "Beginning and End," "One Body, One Spirit," "Beginning Faith, Family and Career." Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, in St. Meinrad. From Jan. 8 through Feb. 28. Professor Brown’s illustrations have appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the country. At the University of Evansville, Brown was chairman of the Art Department from 1999-2011.

This exhibit, titled “Observations in Pen and Ink,” is about space, entryways and pathways, the strength of structures, interiors and exteriors, stone ornamentations and decorations. Many of the drawings are of spaces observed and recorded in Europe. They invite the viewer to share the excitement of the artist’s encounter with the space. For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or 800-987-7311, or log on to the Archabbey Library’s website at www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/hours.

The exhibit is free and open to the public. Those wishing to view the exhibit may want to arrive at least 30 minutes before closing time.

Pen and ink drawings on display at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library

University of Evansville Emeritus Professor of Art William F. Brown will be exhibiting drawings in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery, 200 Hill Drive in St. Meinrad, from Jan. 8 through Feb. 28. Professor Brown’s illustrations have appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the country. At the University of Evansville, Brown was chairman of the Art Department from 1999-2011.

The exhibit, titled ‘Observations in Pen and Ink,’ is about space, entryways and pathways, the strength of structures, interiors and exteriors, stone ornamentations and decorations. Many of the drawings are of spaces observed and recorded in Europe. They invite the viewer to share the excitement of the artist’s encounter with the space. For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or 800-987-7311, or log on to the Archabbey Library’s website at www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/hours.

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Archdiocesan solemn observance of Roe v. Wade set for Jan. 22 in Indianapolis

The annual archdiocesan local solemn observance of the Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion, will be held at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis, on Jan. 22.

The observance will begin with Mass at noon, followed by a prayerful procession along Meridian Street.

There will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for those who wish to remain in the cathedral.

Winter wonderland

Snow covers a statue of St. Francis of Assisi on Jan. 5 at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood. A winter storm that hit central Indiana that day dropped as much as 12 inches of snow on many locations. Sub-zero temperatures that had not been recorded in the area for 20 years followed the storm, bringing life to a halt for days for much of the region, including Catholic parishes, schools and agencies.
Christian mission involves growing closer to God, others

By David Gibson

What Christian “mission” means is simple and clear, right? It is a given that Christians are followers of Jesus, called to think, pray and live as he did. It seems, then, that we know what our mission is. Yet, we do not know it fully at every given moment. In times when life grows more complicated by the day and technology alters even our customary communication patterns, Christians often must go in search of their mission. What does it take to live as Jesus did when our world differs so greatly from the world 2,000 years ago? Responding to questions about life’s meaning as they are presented today can be a challenge. The causes and shapes of contemporary human predicaments can leave some doubting their ability to serve as caring companions for wounded people. It remains clear, however, that their mission pulls Christians closer to God. It pulls them closer to themselves, too, inviting them to recognize their potential to grow in the life of Christ with the help of his grace. Finally, their mission pulls Christians closer to the citizens of the world around them. Closeness, you might say, is a defining characteristic of Christian mission and vocation. The mission priority that invites Christ’s followers to draw closer to the world around them is currently the object of intense scrutiny by the Christian community. Archbishop Jean-Louis Brugués spoke in a 2012 speech about “a principle of benevolence toward the world as it is” taught by the Second Vatican Council.

“This world is loved by God,” he said. “So how could we possibly not feel concerned about it?”

In this concrete world “and not in the idealized world of utopias,” the Holy Spirit “continues to write the wonderful story of salvation,” said the archbishop, who heads the Vatican Secret Archives and Vatican Library. Whatever “mission” implies today, mission is absolutely essential for Christians in the mind of Pope Francis. He makes that clear in “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), his fall 2013 apostolic exhortation on proclaiming the Gospel today.

He says, “I am a mission on this Earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world” (#273).

In his document, the pope calls attention to the purposes and means of sharing faith, a mission fulfilled not only with words but also by living in a manner that allows faith’s value to be recognized by all.

Speaking last October to young people in Assisi, Italy, Pope Francis analyzed two vital goals of Christian mission. The first is “to awaken faith, and this is evangelization.” The second is “to transform the world so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (#27).

This word “mission” has numerous meanings. In this case, it refers to the primary task that individuals or groups are charged with accomplishing. Mission also can refer to the person or people sent, the assigned task or the work done to accomplish the task. The Church’s mission that Pope Francis mentions is found clearly in the Gospel of St. Matthew: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20).

There are many examples in the Bible of people being sent on a mission. Without question, the best example is St. Paul, whose missionary journeys are documented in the Acts of the Apostles. In the many letters he wrote, mostly to the local Churches founded as part of his missionary efforts, Paul explains how he is driven to fulfill his mission and provides guidance on how we are to live our missionary journey.

In Genesis, Adam and Eve are commanded to be “fertile and multiply” and “to cultivate and care for” God’s creation (Gen 1:28). A missionary command also is given by God to Noah, who built his famous ark to rescue God’s creation from destruction.

Throughout the Old Testament, God continually calls ordinary people and sets them to accomplish challenging tasks. Exodus presents the mission God gave to Moses and his brother Aaron to free the Israelites from slavery and bring them to freedom.

In the Book of Joshua, we hear of his mission to win the Israelites a home, free from oppression. Ruth’s mission of faithfulness serves as a sign of God’s fidelity and faithfulness, and Saul and David are called to be the leaders of God’s chosen people.

The prophets are called to fulfill a mission from God to speak truth to power and to call the Israelites away from sin and back to the Lord. Elijah and Elisha sacrifice everything to follow God’s call. Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah proclaim God’s message of repentance and forgiveness even when their own lives are in danger for doing so.

In many ways, being on a mission from God is the story of the Bible and of Christianity. God calls and the faithful respond to that call.

(Daniel S. Mulhall is a catechist who lives and writes in Laurel, Md.)

God’s has sent people on mission throughout salvation history

In his apostolic exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis calls for Catholics to work tirelessly to fulfill the Church’s mission to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone everywhere. The pope wrote, “Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission’ “ (#25).

He added: “I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulsion capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (#27).

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In times of trial, remember you are the body of Christ

As the famous song remind us, life is but a dream...
Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 12, 2013

- Isaiah 41:1-4, 6-7
- Matthew 3:13-17

As winter begins each year, the Church presents three great feasts to celebrate our salvation in Jesus, but also to teach us the meaning of salvation in Jesus. Christmas was the first of these feasts. Then came the Epiphany of the Lord. This weekend is the third—the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Each of these feasts, through its Liturgy of the Word, introduces us to a vital dimension in the identity of Jesus and to important considerations for Christians as they seek to follow the Lord. Supplying the first reading for this weekend is the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah writes about a loyal servant of God, a servant who is steadfast in his faithfulness despite enduring the hostilities of others around him and the unhappy twists of his fortune. This servant is therefore the most perfect servant. Regardless of the injustices surrounding him, and the temptation to forsake God, the servant never falters.

This reading is among four quite similar passages in Isaiah, called the “Songs of the Suffering Servant.” They form a major part not only of Scripture, but also of the liturgy as they are used in Holy Week when the faithful concentrate on the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary.

The second reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, reveals what life was like in the first generation of Christianity. It verifies that the structure of the Church then essentially was as it is today.

Peter is central. He appears before Cornelius, whose name indicates Roman origins, and Peter preaches in Cornelius, whose name indicates Jewish heritage Peter shared, but also to pagans, indeed even to the brutal Romans whose military conquest and occupation of the Holy Land had resulted in so much misery, death and despair among Jews.

Peter’s preaching leads to one conclusion. Salvation is in Jesus alone. Jesus came as God’s representative. In God’s love, Jesus went about “doing good works” and healing the sick (Acts 10:38).

St. Matthew’s Gospel offers the last reading, revealing forcibly the event of the story of the Lord’s baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, but the contingent of the event for us and for all believers.

Reflection

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord reveals the Lord’s identity to us. He is the Son of God, with the force and mystery contained in this reality. He is the Savior, rescuing us from eternal death by assuming our sins and by making amends to God for our sinfulness. He is the mediator, uniting us with God. The Church makes the words of Peter to Cornelius its own, calling us to be the Lord as our Savior.

We are sinners, the Church bluntly, but honestly, tells us. We need Jesus to reconcile us with God. He is our hope and our life.

My Journey to God

Epiphany’s Message

By Cindy Lamperski Dearing

My teenage daughter has always loved Christmas. She starts looking forward to it as early as August.

But after December 25th passes she’s sad. Laments that Christmas is over. The tree will be put up and decorated. Christmas parties and puzzles shelved. No more Christmas TV shows.

But doesn’t she know that although the season of Christmas draws to a close, the message and Person of Christmas Live on in us. And goes beyond the Magi’s gifts.

Epiphany’s message: God is at work in Jesus. Jesus comes for all. And personally. To each one of us.

Never stop watching for it. Never stop expecting it.

Daily Readings

Monday, January 13

St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church

1 Samuel 1:1-8
Psalm 116:12-19
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday, January 14

1 Samuel 1:9-20
(Psalm 1) Samuel 2:1, 4-8
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, January 15

1 Samuel 3:1-20
Psalm 40:2, 5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, January 16

1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25
Mark 1:40-45

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

At least one parent must consent to the baptism of an infant for it to be licit

A

Q

am not naive. I remember the late 1960s when you could see wonderful, devoted nuns who taught me and my friends. They were widespread the power and healing of the faith in Catholic schools in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. I feel terrible guilt now that I didn’t go through their religion texts thoroughly.

My question is this. I desperately want my 8-months-old grandson to be baptized. If I ask a priest to do so, I’ll probably be turned down. Can I baptize myself, or would that baptism be valid only if there were danger of imminent death? (God forbid) (San Francisco, Calif.)

A

Like you, I regret the days that are long gone when we had large numbers of women religious staffing our Catholic schools. I am still so very grateful for the high quality of education in Catholic schools today, which are staffed by faith-filled laypeople, using texts that are biblically, historically, and educationally sound.

As for your grandson, I, too, am bothered that he is not yet baptized, but you should not baptize him yourself. First of all, for a baptism to be done licitly, lawfully (e.g., lawfully) in a non-emergency situation, it is required by the Code of Canon Law, in #875.5, at least one parent (or the person responsible for raising the child) must consent and that there be a well-founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith.

Technically, if you were to perform the baptism yourself it would be “invalid”—i.e., it really happened, provided you had the right intention. What would void Church law? Even if it were lawful for you to perform the baptism, I would advise against it.

If the child’s parents were to find out, they could be legitimately resentful, which would drive them further from the faith and, revealing not only their own son but one son would ever be raised a Catholic.

My guess is that you are worried that, should the child die without being baptized, he could never enter heaven. You should lay that worry to rest. The Church has never defined limbo as a place, and the current Catechism of the Catholic Church suggests in #1261 that we can confidently enter an unbaptized infant to the mercy of the Lord and that God wants all people to be saved and that Jesus said, “Let the children come to me” (Mt 19:14).

Q

would like to know the Church’s official stance on the peace sign. My daughter attends an all-girls Catholic school. Recently I saw a picture on the school’s website where students and the nun who taught them had lined up to form the peace sign.

That sign has clearly had a troubling past. Even if one were to dismiss the allegations that it is satanic, why would we promote a symbol designed by a man who was an avowed atheist and communist?

Why not instead promote peace through Catholic doctrine and the symbol of the cross? (Titusville, N.J.)

A

There is no “official” Church stance on the peace sign. It was designed in 1958 by a British commercial artist named Gerald Holtom, who had been commissioned by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Holtom combined the semaphore flag signals for the letters “N” and “D” within a circle symbolizing the earth. (“N” is two flags held in an upside-down fashion and “D” is one flag pointed straight up and another pointed straight down.)

The CND was as a result at the time by the philosopher Bertrand Russell. Russell rejected Communism, which he said was an “atheistic,” but he was an admitted atheist and felt that religion served to impede the development of human knowledge. In 1970, the conservative John Birch Society published pamphlets comparing the peace sign to a satanic symbol of an upside-down, “broken cross.”

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at kdoyle@stfrancis.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.)
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 here; those who are affiliated with毕 other connections to it. Those are separate obituaries on this page.


CLARK, Mary Helen, 87, St. Paul Hermitage, Beech Grove, Dec. 20. Aunts of several.


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Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

If you are planning your wedding between Jan. 30 and July 1, 2014, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

Wedding Date  Church City State

Photographs

Pricing

Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BEER, The Criterion, 335 South Meridian St., Greenwood, IN 46143. †

You are invited to submit your photographs for consideration. All photographs become the property of The Criterion. A minimum of 200 dpi resolution and at least 3 inches or 600 pixels wide. Color photos are preferred. Please send your pictures as an attachment to the e-mail.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

Mail to: Mike McGinley, 3781-3644 366-818-2644 (toll free)

Mike.mcginley@im.com

www.mikemcgiley.com

Northwestern Mutual Recognizes McGinley with Forum Membership

The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and its subsidiaries, Northwestern Life is among the World’s Most Admired Life insurance companies in 2013 according to FORTUNE magazine and has helped clients build financial security for more than 165 years. As a mutual company with 51 billion of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual has no shareholders. The company focuses solely and directly on its clients and seeks to deliver consistent and dependable value to every client. Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries, which offer a full range of financial and investment solutions including: life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, annuities, investment products, and advisory products and services, subsidiaries include Northwestern Nutritional Planning, LLC, broker-dealers, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC, The Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company, limited purpose federal savings bank, Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company, and Russell Investments. Further information is available at www.nm.com.

About the Northwestern Mutual Planning & Progress Research

This study was conducted by independent research from Harris Interactive, and included 2,546 Americans aged 25 or older who participated in an online survey between January 9, 2013 and January 23, 2013. Results were weighted to match the current USA by gender, age, education, income, race/ethnicity, region and household income. Progress scores were later also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated if full methodology is available.
Baptism gives strength to forgive enemies, love poor, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Baptism isn’t just some formal ritual, it profoundly changes people, giving them unwavering hope and the strength to forgive and love others, Pope Francis said.

“With baptism, we are immersed in that inexhaustible source of life that is Jesus’ death, the greatest act of love in all of history,” he said during his first general audience of 2014.

The pope spent nearly two hours after the audience on Jan. 8 greeting people, blessing the sick, speaking with newlyweds and receiving notes, letters and late Christmas gifts from the crowd. He also watched a brief performance by acrobats, jugglers and clowns who were part of an international Golden Circus festival.

During his usual rounds through St. Peter’s Square in the popemobile before the start of the audience, the pope caught sight of a friend in the crowd. The pope had the driver stop the popemobile and gestured for his friend to board the vehicle.

“The friend, Father Fabian Baer, sat in the back seat, then walked to the pope to a special seating section for guests.”

Passionist Father Ciro Benedettini, vice director of the Vatican press office, said the priest works in a parish in Buenos Aires and that the pope said Father Baer was “a great confessor.”

The pope began the new year of audience talks with a new series of catechesis on the sacraments, starting with baptism—“an act of fraternity” that “grafts us as living members in Christ and in his Church.”

“Baptism isn’t merely ‘a simple rite, a formal act of the Church,’” he said. “It is an act that profoundly touches our conscience and radically changes the person.”

A baptized baby is not the same as a baby who’s not baptized. A baptized person is not the same as a person who’s not baptized,” he said.

By being immersed in the living waters of Christ’s salvation, “we can live a new life, no longer at the mercy of evil, sin and death, but in communion with God and our brothers and sisters,” embarking on a whole new life.

The pope reminded his audience that it was very important for Christians to know the date of their baptism because it was “a happy day” of celebration.

Recalling that event is important because there is always the risk people think of it as something that happened in the past or that it was something just their parents wanted, and was “not of our volition.”

Even though chances are people were just infants on that day and can’t remember it firsthand, “We have to reawaken the memory of our baptism” and live it every day as a great gift from the Lord, the pope said.

If we are able to follow Jesus and remain in the Church, even with our limitations, faults and failures, “it is precisely because of the sacrament in which we became new beings and were vested in Christ,” he said.

The power of baptism frees people from original sin, grafts them to God and makes them bearers of “a new hope” that “nothing and nobody can destroy,” he said.

“Thanks to baptism, we are able to forgive, to love—even those who offend us and hurt us; that we are able to recognize the face of Christ in the least and the poor,” he said.

The fact that baptism is always conferred by a priest in the Lord’s name shows it is a gift that is passed on from person to person “a chain of grace,” he said. It is “an act of fraternity” and becoming a child of the Church, who, like a mother, generates new children in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

For information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1454.

High School Principal

Bishop Chatard High School, the North Deanery Catholic high school of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is seeking to fill the position of principal for the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

Applicants for this position must possess an administrator’s license; be a practicing Catholic, and have a minimum of three years of administrative experience. The successful candidate will understand and embrace the Catholic mission of Bishop Chatard High School while demonstrating outstanding academic leadership in the areas of faculty and curriculum development.

Bishop Chatard seeks to fulfill the mission of forming students for a lifetime commitment to God, learning, leadership and service based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church.

For further information about this position, please visit: www.bishopchatard.org/about/principal-position

Interested applicants are invited to visit the following website to apply: http://sacredsite.edsys.edu/office-of-catholic-education/employment.aspx

Please send resume and letter of interest to: Rob Rabu
Office of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 North Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-236-1544
rabu@archindy.org

Deadline for submission is February 1, 2014. All applications and inquiries will be held in confidence.

For Sale

Calvary Cemetery (southside Indy) cremation niche. Located in the Court of the Apostles. Beautiful location on hill. Will sell for original price of $2,000. 319-351-4649.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Newport Central Catholic High School (www.ncchs.com), a diocesan high school of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, Ky., is actively seeking a principal for the 2014–2015 school year. The successful candidate should be a spiritually motivated practicing Roman Catholic with an ability to practice the Catholic faith with the students and faculty of the school. Experience in strategic academic vision, knowledge of current educational methods, and proven leadership and managerial skills. The principal has primary responsibility for the overall operation of the school and must be committed to the mission and philosophy of the Diocese of Covington and NCCHS.

With the motto “To succeed you must believe. We believe,” NCCHS provides its 372 co-educational students (grades 9-12) with a diverse, comprehensive secondary education, including general, college prep, honors and AP-level course offerings. In addition, among many things NCCHS offers an academic enhancement program to assist students with additional instructional support, a wide-ranging fine arts program, and an extensive interscholastic athletic program. In 2009 NCCHS completed a $3.5 million dollar renovation, addition to its school building that included additional classrooms, chapel and black box theatre.

Candidates for principal must be practicing Romans Catholics in good standing with a passion for being the central leader of a Catholic school. A successful candidate will understand and model the values of accomplishment or willingness to become skilled in the following areas: board relations; community and external relations; curriculum development; faculty/staff development; fiscal management; fundraising (or fundraising potential); parent and alumni relations; plant management; procurement and professional development; student activities management; student recruitment and teacher/staff evaluation. An advanced degree is highly preferred.

Applications will be accepted through February 7, 2014. Interested individuals should email, fax, or mail a cover letter, a comprehensive resume or CV, a recently prepared Ecclesiastical Certificate, transcripts of academic preparation, and a list of at least five references to Stephen Kulpay, SPIRE, 1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011-3153, FAX 859-362-1859, or skulpay@covdio.org, 2/14.
VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Welcoming in a new year, Pope Francis called for the world to stop provoking and ignoring violence, tragedy and conflict in the world, and begin building peace at all levels.

"Justice and peace at home, among us—you begin at home and then you move on to all of humanity. But we have to start at home," he said on Jan. 1, which the Church marks as the feast of Mary, Mother of God and of the world Peace Day.

Speaking to tens of thousands of pilgrims gathered at St. Peter’s Square for the noon Mass on Jan. 1, the pope referred to his peace day message, which he said called for building a world where people treat each other, accept others in their diversity and takes care of each and every one.

"People remain ‘indifferent and immobile’ in the face of violence and injustice, but commit themselves to ‘build a truly just and caring society,’ he said.

The pope referred to a letter he had received the day before from a man struggling to understand why there were still so many tragedies and wars.

"He asked me the same question: ‘What is happening in people’s hearts? What is going on in the heart of humanity’ that leads to violence?"

“It’s time to stop,” Pope Francis said. “It will do us good to stop taking this path of violence.”

May God “help all of us walk the path of justice and peace with confidence,” he said, and the Holy Spirit break down the obstinacy and barriers people construct between each other.

The pope also prayed to Mary that the “Gracious of fraternity” might “speak to everyone and kindle in the hearts of men the will that hinders enemies from recognizing each other as brothers and sisters.”

Earlier in the day, the pope celebrated Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, which was decorated with white flowers, evergreens, gold trim and posies. Together, one boy, wearing long caps and shiny gold paper crowns in memory of the magi who traveled to Bethlehem to meet the newborn Jesus, helped to bring the offerings to the gift箱.

Prayers for peace were offered in five languages. A Spanish-speaking nun asked that God “bless all women and all mothers, called to bring forth, to guard and to protect.”

In his homily, the pope said, Mary, the Mother of God, became the mother of all humanity when Jesus, dying on the cross, gave her to the world.

When she lost her divine son, “her sorrows became their power” and “entered the room for all men, whether good or bad, and she loves them as she loved Jesus,” he said.

Even before the Church officially defined Mary as God’s mother in the fifth century, the faithful had already acknowledged her divine maternity and called for her recognition, the pope said, noting the case as an example of the “sacred charity” that the faithful of all holy people, the faithful of God, who, in their unity, are never even wrong.

Mary is a source of hope and true joy and continually strengthens people in their faith, vocation and mission, he said. “By her example of humility and openness to God’s will, she helps us to transmit our faith in a joyful proclamation of the gospel to all, without reservation.”

He asked the faithful to entrust Mary their journey of faith, their hopes and needs as well as “the needs of the whole world, especially of those who hunger and thirst for justice, peace and God.”

In his homily, Pope Francis also mentioned the Marian icon “Salus Populi Romani” (health of the Roman people) in Rome’s Basilica of St. Mary Major, which he said was the first Marian shrine in the West where the image of the Mother of God—the “Theotokos”—was venerated.

According to Vatican Radio, the pope visited St. Mary Major on Dec. 31 to pray at length before the icon, repeating a pilgrimage he made on the first morning of his pontificate in March and on other subsequent occasions.

The Indiana General Assembly alternates biennially between a “long” session, or budget session, to a “short” session. This year is a short session.

The pope said that lawmakers will work at breakneck speed to meet the shorter working deadlines of this year’s session, which last only 10 weeks. Due to time constraints, the short session renders fewer introduced bills, roughly 1,000 of them.

Tebbe added that the pope’s message on peace day “will actually get hearings and move through the process. Lawmakers must complete legislative business by March 14.”

Pope Francis kisses a baby Jesus statue as he celebrates Mass in the Vatican’s St. Peter’s Basilica on the feast of Mary, St. Peter’s Basilica of the Mother of God, on Jan. 1.