Archdiocese, Cardinal Tobin bid heartfelt farewell to each other during Dec. 3 Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

By Sean Gallagher

On Dec. 3, 2012, then-Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin said that he and the faithful of central and southern Indiana were “under an obligation of love” to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He said this in the Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during which he was installed as the sixth archbishop of Indianapolis.

Four years later to the day, looking back on his time of ministry to and with the Catholics in central and southern Indiana, he said during another liturgy at the cathedral that “we fell in love then, and we remain that way today.”

This Mass was originally planned as a celebration of Archbishop Tobin being inducted into the College of Cardinals on Nov. 19. But when it was announced on Nov. 7 that Pope Francis had appointed Archbishop Tobin to lead the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., the Dec. 3 liturgy became a bittersweet farewell for Cardinal Tobin and the 1,000 Catholics from across central and southern Indiana who gathered in the cathedral to worship with him, and offer him their heartfelt prayers as he goes forward to lead the Church in northern New Jersey.

Both Masses four years apart were celebrated on the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the 16th-century Jesuit missionary to Asia who is the principal patron of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

In his closing remarks at the end of the Mass, Cardinal Tobin, his voice filled with emotion, made his own the words of St. Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians to describe his love for the Catholics of central and southern Indiana, and the mission he was given in ministering to and with them.

“With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so beloved have you become to us.”

(1 Thes 2:8), Cardinal Tobin said.

That emotion was shared by many people present in the cathedral. Harold Back, 80, a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville, also attended the installation Mass in 2012. During the past four years, Back has grown to love Cardinal Tobin and was sad to see him go.

“He hit our hearts,” Back said with emotion. “And when he hits your heart, he makes you cry.

“There’s joy today, but there’s also sadness. It’s been a wonderful four years of knowing Cardinal Joseph Tobin. He has meant so much to so many people in the archdiocese. It’s awesome.”

Harold and his wife Donna hope to travel to Newark for Cardinal Tobin’s Jan. 6 installation Mass there.

“We’re very sad to see him leave,” Donna said. “He’s just a very special person.”

Deacon candidate Juan Carlos Ramirez, right, recites from a prayer card as he, Marie Tobin, left, Domini Rouse and Benedicite Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner lay their hands upon and pray for Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin in front of the altar at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis as part of a prayer and blessing of him during the cardinal’s farewell Mass on Dec. 3. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
Certainly Francis Xavier in his letters didn’t sound like it was an option for him. In a letter that he wrote to St. Ignatius, he says: “Many, many people heretofar are not becoming Christians for one reason only: there is nobody to make them Christians. Again and again, I have thought of going round the universities of Europe, especially Paris, and everywhere crying out like a madman, repeating the attention of those with more learning than charity: “What a tragedy: how many souls are being shut out of heaven and falling into hell, thanks to you!”

Not sure he could coordinate the volunteers.

And then, there is the first great missionary of the Church, Paul, who in that first reading that Sara [Castillo] read so well says, “If I preach the Gospel, there is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me and woe to me if I do not preach it” (1 Cor 9:16). I don’t know about you, but it doesn’t sound to me like Francis Xavier or Paul made a cool calculation about how their lives would go.

Volunteers don’t quite describe them. What would we call them, then? It might help us to think a minute about what compelled Paul to do what he did. He talks about having an obligation that was laid upon him. What was he talking about? How would he describe it?

Well, he said it in a lot of different ways in his letters. He said, “Christ loves us and gave himself up for us.” And he would say to the Galatians, “I am no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me” (Gal 2:20). And while a prisoner writing to the Philippians he says, “I count everything, everything as loss, only to grow in knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:8).

You can glimpse the obligation. Because when one has been given such a powerful gift as the Christian faith asserts, namely salvation—salvation in Christ Jesus—one cannot hesitate or delay in announcing the Good News, in a nutshell, in evangelizing.

One doesn’t keep this gift wrapped up in a box on the shelf. Jesus came to draw people together and to form a new community no longer based solely on blood lines, race or nation, but on discipleship. Jesus came to form a family of faith. And the first Apostles would say, “We are his witnesses.” They didn’t say, “We are his volunteers.” We are witnesses that he is alive, that our Redeemer lives and that he will be with us until the end of time. Witnesses more than volunteers; witnesses more than teachers.

Paul Vi in 1975 wrote that, “Modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if modern people do listen to teachers, it is because they are also witnesses” (“Evangelization in the Modern World,” #41). My brothers and sisters, while truth is very powerful and can change the hearts of many, I believe modern men and women are very skeptical of the truth. And even more skeptical of those who pretend to preach the truth and do not live it out. On the other hand, those who live wedded to the truth and clearly show it in their actions are much more persuasive.

The world today simply will not listen to moralizing hypocrites. But they will listen to Christians who practice what they preach. The world around us will not listen to the Gospel unless we live a life of Christian joy, peace and sacrifice. If we listen to the Gospel unless we live a life of Christian joy, peace and sacrifice. If we listen to the Gospel until we live a life of holiness, our message is empty and has no weight. It does not affect the people we meet, and they dismiss it without giving it a second thought.

We cannot simply teach the truth boldly and expect that everyone will follow our Church. We must live it out first and foremost before we can become believable and change the hearts of those seduced by the world. The world will listen to people like Francis Xavier and Paul because the world will listen to witnesses.

Now brothers and sisters, the experience of the last four years has convinced me of the timeless truth of the 12th chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews: “We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses,” not simply those who have gone before us in the light of faith, our mothers and fathers who have taught us by their words and by their actions what it means to be a disciple (Heb 12:1).

I have been privileged to see the witnesses across the 39 counties of this archdiocese, people who quietly bear witness, give testimony to Jesus Christ: in prisons, in hospitals, on college campuses, in CCD classes, and links of other Advent websites. I’ve seen the witnesses of this archdiocese in the food kitchens and the shelters and the outreach of Catholic Charities, and the welcoming of refugees and strangers. I’ve seen the witness and I think it is no accident that for the four years that I presided over Easter Vigils here in the archdiocese we have welcomed 1,000 or more.”

Advent resources are available on archdiocesan Web site

During the season of Advent, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will have a special webpage at www.archindy.org/advent. The page contains various Advent resources, including links to the daily readings, reflections from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, penance service schedules, images of past Criterion Christmas issues, covers and links of interest to other Advent websites.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin delivers the homily during his farewell Mass on Dec. 3 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin will celebrate the Christmas Eve midnight Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, as his last Mass in the archdiocese. Parking will be available in the Catholic Center parking lot, 1400 N. Meridian St., across from the cathedral, from 10 p.m.-2 a.m. All are invited to the midnight Mass to welcome the Christ Child with the members of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish and Cardinal Tobin.

Readers are invited to share favorite Christmas memories

The Criterion invites readers to submit a brief story about a special holiday memory for possible inclusion in our annual Christmas issue, which will be published on Dec. 23.

Your favorite Christmas story may be written about a humorous or serious topic related to your faith, family or friends. Submissions should include the writer’s name, address, parish and telephone number.

Send your story to The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202 or by e-mail to editor Mike Krooks at mkrooks@archindy.org by the Dec. 13 deadline.

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Faith must be ‘integrated into every aspect’ of life, says archbishop

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (CNS)—Faith is meant “to be integrated into every aspect of our lives,” Archbishop Paul D. Etienne said during his installation as archbishop of Anchorage Nov. 9 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Co-Cathedral in Anchorage.

“Going to church on Sunday is not meant to be one thing we do in the midst of many other things,” said Archbishop Paul D. Etienne during his homily for his installation as archbishop of Anchorage Nov. 9 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Co-Cathedral in Anchorage.

“I think these are the values we are called to [emulate] in our faith life; these are the skills necessary to build this elegant Church,” he said. “We become that fresh water that makes the world around us a dwelling for God’s people.”

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne is seen on Nov. 9 after his installation as archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Co-Cathedral in Anchorage. (CNS photo/Phil Hatcher, Catholic Archer)

By Natalie Hoefer

Early family tragedy drives new CCF director to ‘help people and my Church’

There can be defining events in life that affect the future. For Elisa Smith, the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation’s (CCF) new director, that moment occurred at the age of 18 when her father, just 46, died suddenly of a heart attack.

“My mother had a real mess on her hands with my dad not having a will,” she said. “The laws were more complicated at that time. Things had to be done. My mom had to go to a surviving spouse… My mom had a lot of estate administration to work through.”

As she becomes more familiar with her new role, Smith plans to start a campaign to make Catholics more aware of the help CCF can offer them to leave a lasting legacy.

“Planned giving and estate planning— it’s not like your taxes that have a deadline every year and you know you have to do it,” she explains. “Estate planning is driven so much more by emotion and by life events. If someone has a death or sickness in the family, or a marriage, or a baby, or a divorce, they think, ‘I’ve got to get my will done. You never know when someone is going to wake up one morning and say, ‘I’ve got to do this now.’”

Smith adds, “A Catholic estate plan is different than a regular estate plan. It incorporates gratitude and stewardship to God for what God has given us over the years, looking at that and being grateful and saying, ‘OK, God has blessed me with this. Now I look at what I can return to you with happiness. I have to be a good steward and find the proper place for those gifts to go—to family, loved ones, my Church.’”

Smith was working an accounting firm at the time, but missing her work with the Church.

“I brought him a couple of books,” she said. “He thanked me. I said I wanted to bring him something unique from Fort Wayne-South Bend, and he said, ‘Why didn’t you bring me a Notre Dame football victory’?”

Smith recalls the first time she met the cardinal.

“Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska

“The difference in size between her former diocese and Anchorage, Archdiocese of Indianapolis does not alter Smith’s goal. Anchorage, Archdiocese.

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Smith started working for the archdiocese on Oct. 10, one day after then-Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin learned he was named to the College of Cardinals. He has since been named to lead the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.

‘It was awesome coming in, and the first thing I did was go to the press conference regarding the news of then-Archbishop Tobin’s elevation to cardinal. That was pretty exciting!’ she says.

‘I haven’t known him that long or worked with him that much, but being in his presence I could just feel that positive energy, that love that he has for God and God’s people.’

Smith recalls the first time she met the cardinal.

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Smith, who is still deciding on a parish to register at along with her son, who is a senior in college, says the archdiocese’s patroness, St. Theodora Guerin, played a role in her new position with CCF.

‘As my mother didn’t have a will, says Smith, “he couldn’t make a gift to his Church or to a charity because, without a will, assets are distributed according to state law, and state law doesn’t look at charitable interests.”

“So I decided that I wanted to help people with their estate plan give to their charitable interests. This is an avenue where can offer them to leave a lasting legacy.

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‘I think these are the values we are called to [emulate] in our faith life; these are the skills necessary to build this elegant Church,” he said.

He told the congregation that “this is my dream for our potential and possibility!”

“I am told that Alaska is known for its high tides,” he said. “That being the case, we are going to wake up one morning and say, ‘I’ve got to do this now.’”

Smith adds, “A Catholic estate plan is different than a regular estate plan. It incorporates gratitude and stewardship to God for what God has given us over the years, looking at that and being grateful and saying, ‘OK, God has blessed me with this. Now I look at what I can return to you with happiness. I have to be a good steward and find the proper place for those gifts to go—to family, loved ones, my Church.’”

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Advent begins waiting and ends now

“Advent invites us neither to lament the past nor be anxious about the future, but to give today to God. Knowing that he has not wasted our past and that the future is securely in his hands, we can assume that we arrived at the present moment by his providence and that because Jesus is Emmanuel—God-with-us—it is now that he comes to us.” —Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain

We’re used to thinking of Advent as a time of expectant waiting. We long for the coming of Christ at Christmas and at the end of the time, and our waiting takes on the character of joyful hope.

But our faith also tells us, in no uncertain terms, that the Blessed Hope we’re waiting for has already come. More than 2,000 years ago, the Word of God became one of us. (As St. John tells us, he “pitched his tent among us, staying taking on human flesh.”) The mystery of the Incarnation reveals God’s historical presence among us. The miracle of the Eucharist testifies to his ongoing presence here and now—in the sacrament of his body and blood.

So what are we waiting for? Why risk turning our attention away from God with us to look for something that is yet-to-come?

This is the paradox of Advent. It is a time when we look backward to Bethlehem, and forward to the heavenly Jerusalem without losing sight of the fact that God is with us and his kingdom is in our midst here and now.

The key to understanding this paradox is the recognition that we are never at a fixed point in our journey to heaven. Each of us has a past, a present and a future. The same is true of the Church, the Body of Christ. We are a people—immigrants seeking a new home. It’s right for us to look back to where we came from, but it’s important to look forward to where we’re headed, but we should never lose sight of Christ’s presence among us here and now as a fellow traveler, as someone who walks with us on every step of our life’s journey.

This is why the liturgical readings for this holy season remind us to “stay awake,” and to “be ready” for the Lord’s coming at times, and in circumstances, where we least expect him.

In An Advent Pilgrimage: Preparing Our Hearts for Jesus, Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain writes, “Precisely because the present moment is that time in which the Lord could come, it contains a precious treasure, and all our life has prepared us for it. Staying awake, being prepared, means that we allow the hope springing from the promises of God to inspire us to enliven the present moment with peace.”

We are invited to “stay awake” so that we can encounter Christ in the present moment. Yes, he came once long ago and, yes, he will come again on the last day, but are we paying enough attention to his coming in the present moment?

Do we recognize him sitting across from us in the kitchen table? Are we prepared for his appearance among our co-workers (even those who irritate us)? Or do we see him in the strangers we’re tempted to hurry past, or worse, to keep out of our communities?

Waiting for the Lord should never be an excuse to restrict our focus to the distant past or future. Advent waiting begins and ends now. It invites us to see what is right before our very eyes—the love of Christ incarnate in our sisters and brothers, in the Eucharist and other sacraments, in the Word of God dwelling among us, and in the secrets of our wounded and fearful hearts.

Emmanuel, God-with-us, is in the present moment as well as in the past and future. We wait in joyful hope for his coming—both here and now—and in the days to come. We celebrate his presence in Bethlehem of old, and in the new Jerusalem that is to come. But most of all, we repose that God comes to us when we least expect him often in the busiest, loneliest, most unexpected moments of our daily lives.

“Perhaps we waste time, but God does not,” Archbishop Sartain writes. “He finds a way to make profitable use even of those times when we stay.”

Advent invites us to prepare our hearts for Jesus by staying awake and paying attention to the things that matter most.

This Advent, let’s not waste our time (or God’s). Let’s look for God-with-us in the present moment—especially if we have strayed. Let’s seek his love and mercy in the present moment, and let’s welcome him joyfully into our daily lives.

Come, Lord Jesus—and here and now! —Daniel Conway

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the unfiltered exchange of fire-breathed and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communion and Progress, 116).

Letters from most House Republicans and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be relevant, informed, well-written and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic respect and courtesy.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastorial sensitivity and content considerations (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from as many readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be published.

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

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The Criterion

Be Our Guest/Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

What the pro-life community wants from the Trump administration

The last several years have clearly been challenging for the pro-life movement. The abortion industry, exposing its false rhetoric of choice, increasingly seeks to coerce Americans to be complicit with abortion, even portraying that abortion is a social good to be celebrated, subsidized and uncontrollled.

Its coercive agenda seeks to force taxpayers funding of abortion by repealing the popular, long-standing and bipartisan federal policy known as the Hyde Amendment. It includes a campaign to force health care providers and plans to participate in or pay for abortion. The abor tion industry even succeeded in getting the Supreme Court to invalidate common sense abortion clinic regulations that protect the health and safety of women seeking abortion.

Sadly, the Obama administration has been all too willing to accommodate these pro-choice policies. It imposed the so-called Health and Human Services’ (HHS) mandate, forcing even religious organizations to cover contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their health insurance plans.

It refused to enforce federal conscience protections on abortion, and it is currently pursuing regulations intended to prohibit states from denying funding to Planned Parenthood through the Title X family planning program.

All given this, it is fair to say that the presidential election offers the pro-life movement some cautious optimism. At least at the level of rhetoric, President-elect Donald Trump indicated support for legislation that would protect women and children from abortion and protect pro-life Americans from forced compliance in it.

The president-elect said he would make the Hyde Amendment permanent law, would sign a ban on late-term abortions, would defund Planned Parenthood and would nominate pro-life justices to the Supreme Court.

On his transition web page, www.regagatv.com, he promises to “protect individual conscience in health care” and “protect innocent human life from conception to natural death, offering in its place a renewed solidarity through quality end-of-life care.”

This Advent, let’s not waste our time—especially if we have strayed. Let’s seek his love and mercy in the present moment, and let’s welcome him joyfully into our daily lives.

—from Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan to the pro-life movement

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Saints for Advent: Mary of Nazareth, John the Baptist

A
dvent is one of my favorite liturgical seasons. I think the themes of ardent longing and hope-filled expectation, which are central to our celebration of Advent, speak to us in a special way today. Why? Because our time seems especially anxious, unsettled and on the lookout for some form of salvation.

It’s true that every Jewish and Christian era can be characterized as a time of expectant longing. Beginning with God’s promise to Abraham, through the Exodus experience and the trials and tribulations of God’s people up to the time of Mary of Nazareth, Israel was (and still is) a nation that longs for the salvation that can only come from God.

We Christians believe that God’s saving intervention in human history occurred through the birth, death and resurrection of Mary’s son, Jesus, whom we call the Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah.

But our rejoicing in the redemptive work already accomplished by God doesn’t totally eliminate our longing. In fact, our hope-filled expectation is intensified throughout the course of human history as we anticipate the Lord’s coming again at the end of time.

So while our understanding of this time of expectation differs from our Jewish sisters and brothers, our experience of it is no less real. Together, we wait in joyful hope for the day when the God of Abraham, whom we Christians believe is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will consummate the work of creation and make all things new in him.

The two figures who are most prominent in the Advent season are Mary and John the Baptist. We may call them Advent saints because their words and example speak directly to both our ardent longing and our hope-filled expectation.

Both of these Advent saints can be seen as “connectors” between the Old Testament promise of salvation for Israel and the New Testament experience of it in Christ.

Mary opens her heart and says “yes” to God’s saving word. She lets go of hesitation and fear, entrusting herself to the redemptive power of God’s love.

Mary’s example points us to Christ and to his coming again in glory. She foretold the arrival of the Messiah, that we are experiencing here and now—all the joys, sorrows, hopes, fears, triumphs and tragedies of our lives—mean nothing compared to the happiness and peace we will experience when her son, our Lord and Savior, unites us with him once and for all.

John the Baptist is Christ’s herald, the voice crying out in the wilderness, who seeks to prepare us for the Lord’s coming. John does not soft-peddle the wickedness and infidelity of his time (or ours). He confronts the hypocrisy and deceit that surround him by speaking the truth with love. He urges us to find true happiness and joy through repentance and a genuine change of heart.

In our day, the season of Advent is frequently overshadowed by the sights, sounds and commercial practices of a secularized Christmas. This is a shame. How can we fully appreciate the joys of Christmas without first calling attention to the intense longing for God’s love and mercy that makes the coming of Christ—2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, daily in the celebration of the Eucharist or in the future at the end of time—such a amazing gift from God?

Advent prepares us for Christmas the way St. John the Baptist prepared the people of his day for Christ. Advent invites us to open our hearts to God’s saving intervention the way Mary said “yes” to God’s messenger, the angel Gabriel, who invited her to set aside her fears and rejoice in God’s incarnation through her. I urge all Catholics in central and southern Indiana to take Advent seriously. Don’t let this marvelous season of grace slip by as you go about your daily business in the weeks before Christmas.

Let the sights, sounds and opportunities of this time of ardent longing and hope-filled expectation fill your heart with joyful waiting. Let the examples of our Blessed Mother Mary and the holy martyr St. John the Baptist inspire you with true happiness and joy through repentance and a genuine change of heart.

During this holy season of Advent, my prayers are with every member of our archdiocesan family—and all our sisters and brothers throughout central and southern Indiana regardless of their religious, economic or social backgrounds. May our anxieties and fears be experiencing during this time in our history be alleviated by the love and mercy of God. Our family show to one another as we wait in hope for the Lord’s coming again.†

Los santos del Advenimiento: María de Nazaret y Juan el Bautista

E
tiempo de mocion, como los temas del anhelo y esperanza que ocupan el núcleo de nuestra celebración del Adviento tienen una interpretación especial para nosotros hoy en día. ¿Por qué? Porque pareciera que estamos atravesando una época llena de ansiedad, de inquietud y que estamos a la expectativa de alguna forma de salvación.

Es cierto que cada era del juicio y del cristianismo se caracteriza por un anhelo excesivo. Desde la promesa que Dios le hizo a Abraham, pasando por el Éxodo y las tribulaciones que sufrió el pueblo de Dios hasta la época de María de Nazaret, Israel era (y todavía es) un país que anhelaba que la salvación que solo puede provenir de Dios.

Los cristianos creemos que la intervención salvadora de Dios en la historia humana sucedió gracias al nacimiento, la muerte y la resurrección del hijo de María, Jesús, a quien llamamos Cristo, el Ungido, el Mesías. Pero nuestro júbilo en la obra de la creación y la unificación de todo lo que Dios convierte al tiempo del Señor. Juan no le resta importancia a las tristezas, las esperanzas, la hipocresía y el engaño de su entorno (ni del nuestro); al contrario, confronta en el intenso anhelo del amor y la misericordia de Dios que convierten la venida de Cristo—hace 2000 años en Belén, diariamente en la celebración de la Eucaristía o en el futuro, al final de los tiempos—en un don de Dios realmente extraordinario.

El Adviento nos prepara para la Navidad, tal como Juan el Bautista, preparó a su pueblo en su época para la venida de Cristo—hace 2000 años en Belén, a diario en la celebración de la Eucaristía o en el futuro, al final de los tiempos—en un don de Dios totalmente excepcional. Por eso, en este tiempo de expectativa, en este tiempo de una interpretación especial para nosotros hoy en día, nuestra esperanza y júbilo se apaciguan gracias al amor y la misericordia de Dios que convierten la venida de Cristo—hace 2000 años en Belén, a diario en la celebración de la Eucaristía o en el futuro, al final de los tiempos—en un don de Dios realmente extraordinario.

Los santos del Adviento pueden considerarse como “vínculos” entre el deseo de salvación plasmado en el Antiguo Testamento y la experiencia de dicha salvación en Cristo que narra el Nuevo Testamento.

María abraza su corazón y lo dice “sí” a la palabra salvadora de Dios. De esta forma, se despojó de toda duda y temor, y se encomendó al poder redentor del amor de Dios.

El ejemplo de María apunta hacia Cristo y su regusto glorioso. Ella nos recuerda enfáticamente que lo que vivimos aquí y ahora—tanto las alegrías, las tristezas, las esperanzas, los temores, los triunfos y las tragedias de nuestras vidas—no significan nada en comparación con la alegría y la paz que sentiremos cuando su hijo, nuestro Señor y Salvador, nos una en Él definitivamente.

Juan el Bautista es el heraldo de Cristo, la voz que clama en el desierto y que procura prepararnos para la venida del Señor. Juan no le resta importancia a las verdades y trazas de su tiempo (ni del nuestro); al contrario, confronta la hipocresía y el engaño de su entorno al declarar la verdad con amor. Nos invita a apreciar la felicidad y la alegría verdaderas a través del arrepentimiento y un cambio de actitud genuino.

En nuestros días, la temporada del Adviento a menudo queda opacada por las imágenes, los sonidos y el consumismo de la Navidad secularizada. Esto es una lástima. Cómo podemos valorar a plenitud las alegrías de la Navidad si no reconocemos primero el intenso anhelo del amor y la misericordia de Dios que convierten la venida de Cristo—hace 2000 años en Belén, a diario en la celebración de la Eucaristía o en el futuro, al final de los tiempos—en un don de Dios realmente extraordinario.

El Adviento nos prepara para la Navidad, tal como Juan el Bautista, preparó a su pueblo en su época para la venida de Cristo—hace 2000 años en Belén, a diario en la celebración de la Eucaristía o en el futuro, al final de los tiempos—en un don de Dios realmente extraordinario. Durante la santa temporada del Adviento, mis oraciones acompañan a cada uno de los integrantes de nuestra familia arquidiocesana, así como a todos nuestros hermanos del centro y del sur de Indiana, sin importar cuál sea su situación socioeconómica.

Que las ansiedades y los temores que sentimos durante esta época de nuestra historia se apacigüen gracias al amor y la compasión que demuestran los miembros de nuestra familia de Dios, y que esperemos a la nueva venida de nuestro Señor.
December 13
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Christmas Open House, food and fellowship, 3-5 p.m. Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@spmw.org. online.saintbartholomew.org
December 16
December 17
St. John the Evangelist Parish, 120 W. Georgia St. Indianapolis. Christkindl Village. children’s activities. German food, beer garden, luminary walk, handcrafted gifts. Fri. 5-9 p.m., 6 p.m. youth sacred music festival in church and 7 p.m. Nativity blessing and caroling; Sat., noon-5 p.m. 5 p.m. sacred music festival in church followed by eucharistic procession, 6:30 p.m. Mass. Free admission. Information: www.munichindy.org.
December 17
St. Bartholomew Church, 306 S. 27th St. Columbus. Christmas Concert, featuring parish musicians and professional soloists. St. Bartholomew director of music ministry Bogdan Minut and his wife Mirela, 7 p.m. Free; information: Log on to www.stbartholmew.org and click on Music Ministry then Concert Series.
December 18
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Christmas Open House, food and fellowship, 3-5 p.m. Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@spmw.org.
December 21
Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. Christmas Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or provctr@spsmw.org.
December 24
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the- Woods. Festival of Lessons and Carols, scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting. 7-8 p.m.
December 27
St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Monthly Taizé Prayer Service, held monthly in the College Chapel, with readings, meditation and music, 7 p.m.

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retr

Sisters of Providence announce Advent and Christmas season Masses
The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods have announced the schedule of Advent and Christmas Masses and services to celebrate and honor the birth of Jesus. All services are open to the public and to people of all faith traditions. All gatherings take place in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, on the grounds of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.
Mass on Sundays of Advent will be at 11 a.m. on Dec. 11 and Dec. 18. Advent Vesper will be at 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 11 and Dec. 18.
The Mass for the conclusion of the Advent season will be at 11 a.m. on Dec. 24.
The Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols will be from 7-8 p.m. that evening, when the Sisters of Providence and the wider community gather for a service that will include Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting.
Christmas Day will be celebrated with Mass at 11 a.m. on Dec. 25.
The Feast of the Holy Family will be celebrated with Mass at 11:30 a.m. on Dec. 31.
The Sollemnis of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, a holy day of obligation, will be celebrated with an 11 a.m. Mass on Jan. 1, 2017.
Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of Our Lord, a holy day of obligation, will be celebrated on Jan. 8, 2017, and for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord will take place on 1:30 p.m., Jan. 9, 2017.
For more information, call 812-535-3113 or 1-800-886-1840, or log on to www.spsmw.org.

Fatima Retreat House offers free event for grandparents on Dec. 16
“A Grandparents Legacy:Praying for Our Grandchildren” will be offered at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Dec. 16. All are invited to join in a joyful time of reflection that will focus on your prayers for your grandchildren. Through music and scripture, you will be given the opportunity to step back from this busy season and focus on your family and your prayers for their future.
You will have an opportunity to create a special card or bookmark to give to them to let them know that you have been praying for them. The day will end with a light lunch.
There is no charge for this event, but your donation is welcomed. To register, call 317-545-7681 or log onto www.archindy.org/fatima and click on “Register.”

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Christmas Open House, food and fellowship, 3-5 p.m. Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@spsmw.org.
December 22
Hoosier Strike and Spare, 2310 State St., New Albany. New Albany-Clark County Youth Ministries Bowl-a-thon fundraiser. pick up a bowling pin bank at CMY office at Mount St. Francis, 101 S. Anthony Drive; Chase, 5 S. Francis, bring to event for admission, cost is $5 per person or $20 per family for two games of bowling and shoe rental, noon-2 p.m., register by Dec. 26. Information; registration, 812-923-8355, www.nadyouth.org or sandi@nadyouth.org.
December 27
Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota W., Indianapolis. Senior Discount Day, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. information: 317-926-7359, or e-mail bnewman@mission27.org.

Retreat and Programs
For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retr

December 31-January 1, 2017
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Magic of Stories for Faith, Hope and Love” New Year’s Eve retreat, Father Jeffrey Godecker presenting. Sat. 4 p.m.-Sun., noon. $145 single, $270 married couple. Information and registration: 317-545-7681 or e-mail marcija.johnson@archindy.org or www.archindy.org/fatima.

Sacrament of reconciliation offered at Fatima for 13 hours on Dec. 20
Fathers Jeffrey Godecker and Keith Hanes will offer more information at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. on Dec. 20. No appointment is necessary. For information, call 317-545-7681 or e-mail marcija.johnson@archindy.org.

Thank you, Sisters
At a Mass and luncheon for the alumnae of the former all-girls Catholic high schools in Indianapolis on Nov. 6, sisters of the religious orders—shown here—who taught the women were invited as designated guests. All proceeds from the event are destined to help with the Benedictine, Franciscan and Providence Sisters’ retirement funds. (Submitted photo)
The hundreds of high school students from across the archdiocese kept streaming toward Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, wanting to shake his hand and stopping for photos that included selfies and group pictures.

Through it all, Cardinal Tobin seemed to savor every second of the nearly 25-minute scene that unfolded at the back of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis—the setting where he had celebrated a Mass for the high school seniors on Nov. 30.

While the students left the cathedral with smiles and snapshots, Cardinal Tobin also used his homily to leave them with some guidance and inspiration for their future.

He began his homily by talking about his favorite American writer, E.L. Doctorow.

“When I thought about that image, and I was on the way home...” Cardinal Tobin noted. “He described the experience of writing.”

Cardinal Tobin noted. “He described writing a novel as like driving a car at night. You can follow your headlights. You only see a portion of the road. But what you see is enough to tell you whether you’ve lost or whether you’re on your way home.”

“When he sat down to write a novel, he didn’t always know how it was going to end. But throughout the whole experience, he could see enough to let him know he was on the way home. ‘I thought about that image, and I wonder if it doesn’t describe our lives—wonder if it doesn’t describe your life right now. You’re seniors. Being seniors means, among other things, that you’re looking forward to a date in late May or early June. Maybe you see a little beyond that. Maybe you see university or a job or time in the military. And beyond that, it gets a little fuzzy, doesn’t it?’

Cardinal Tobin told the students he could sympathize with that feeling because of the transition he is making from being the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to the spiritual leader of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.

“On January 6, I’ve got to start a new job in a city I’ve been to twice in my life—a place called Newark, New Jersey. Driving in there last month, the lights on the police car that was driving me showed in the distance the skyline of Newark. A priest in the backseat said, ‘Does that look familiar?’ I said, ‘Absolutely not.’ He said, ‘This is the opening scene of ‘The Sopranos.’ I said, ‘Great. I’ll probably get whacked on my first night.’

“The word of God can be like that, if you’re a person of faith. It can be like headlights. Not that it illuminates all of your life, but it can show you enough to say, ‘Yes, I’m on the way home,’ or ‘Maybe I’m going to a place I don’t want to go.’”

Cardinal Tobin then drew a connection to St. Andrew the Apostle, whose feast day is on Nov. 30, the day the cardinal celebrated Mass for the high school seniors.

“Andrew, we know, was one of the 12, one of the 12 who were the closest friends and partners of Jesus. According to the Gospel of John, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist who introduced him to Jesus, saying, ‘This is the lamb of God’ [Jn 1:36]. That piqued Andrew’s curiosity. He began following him. ‘There’s that wonderful scene in John’s Gospel. Andrew is kind of tagging along. At one point, Jesus turns around, and he asks a simple question. ‘What are you looking for?’ [Jn 1:38]’

“He came and stayed that afternoon. And whatever he heard that afternoon convinced him that this was the Messiah. He goes back to his brother Peter, and the first thing he says is, ‘We found him. We found the one we’ve been looking for. His name is Jesus of Nazareth’” (Jn 1:41).

“When he sat down to write a novel, he didn’t always know how it was going to end. But throughout the whole experience, he could see enough to let him know he was on the way home. ‘I thought about that image, and I wonder if it doesn’t describe our lives—wonder if it doesn’t describe your life right now. You’re seniors. Being seniors means, among other things, that you’re looking forward to a date in late May or early June. Maybe you see a little beyond that. Maybe you see university or a job or time in the military. And beyond that, it gets a little fuzzy, doesn’t it?’

“What makes Andrew special in that moment is that he told someone about Jesus, the cardinal said. He also noted that’s what all Catholics are called to do, by virtue of their confirmation. ‘I understand following and being a disciple occurs in simple ways,’

Cardinal Tobin told the high school students. “First, I kind of know Jesus, who he is. So I read about his life and his teachings in Scripture. I pray about it, to Jesus, as my risen Lord. And I hang out with others who are obviously motivated by their own faith.

“For Catholics, that means we gather at least once a week on Saturday evening or Sunday to share the Eucharist, to listen to the word of God, to learn more about this one who has called us to follow him.”

“When these ways of following and being with Jesus begin to focus our lives on serving others like Jesus did, well guess what happens? People notice. ‘What are you so happy about? What secrets do you know?’

“In those moments, Cardinal Tobin said, he doesn’t talk about himself. Instead, he talks about Jesus. ‘My brothers and sisters, if we let the word of God illuminate your senior year or my impending departure for a city I really don’t know, I think any of us who experience anxiety, maybe exhilaration, impatience and probably some uncertainty, if we believe because the headlights of our faith let us see enough that these events will be part of our following of Christ, it’s all we really need to know. ‘Because we’ll know that whatever the road is ahead, we’re on our way home.”

“Be faithful to your prayer life and have a sense of humor,” says Sister Rita Polchin (foreground), 87, a member of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius. This philosophy has served her well during nearly 70 years of religious life, especially as a teacher and principal in Catholic schools. Like Sister Rita, the senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests shown here—and nearly 33,000 more across the nation—have offered their lives in service and prayer. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide nursing care, medications, and other necessities. Please be generous.

Roughly 95 percent of donations aid senior religious.

To donate:
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Make your check payable to Mission Office with Religious Retirement on the memo line.

Or give at your local parish December 10-11.
Cathedral girls’ volleyball team wins second straight state title

By John Shaughnessy

The pressure and the challenge couldn’t have been more overwhelming at times for the 2016 girls’ volleyball team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. After all, how does a team create its own legacy when the 2015 team at your school finished its season undefeated and ranked number one in the country?

“They were in some big shadows, and they had some big shoes to fill,” says Jean Kesterson, the longtime head coach at Cathedral. “They wanted their own identity.”

So the 2016 team set the goal of winning back-to-back state championships, something that had never been done in the girls’ volleyball program at Cathedral.

That dream was realized and their legacy secured on Nov. 5 when the fourth-ranked Irish beat top-ranked Crown Point High School in the Class 4A finals at Worthen Arena in Muncie, Ind.

Kesterson says the turning point for the team’s season came in late September, during the week of practice following the team’s loss in its own early season tournament.

“We talked about embracing the process, embracing the grind. And the kids bought into it,” Kesterson recalls. “I had this calmness going into the sectionals because of what the kids did. We asked them to give their best, and they did. And the coaches kept holding them accountable.”

One of the reasons their coach relished the state tournament success was because the team avenged three of its four regular-season losses during that stretch.

“One thing that motivated me was how much the teams that beat us celebrated,” she says. “That was hard for me being an old school, CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] kid. That got my competitive juices flowing. I thought, ‘We’ll get ready for you next time.’ ”

Even more, Kesterson was thrilled because she knows how much the state championship meant to her players.

“They love each other, and they have a passion and an intensity when they play the game. When the kids love each other and they love playing the game, it’s so much fun.”

That attitude developed through the efforts of the team’s seven seniors: Cassie Brooks, Shelby Mudd, Olivia Rougraff, Maria Schorr, Evey Trausch, Payton White and Nia Robinson, the recipient of the Class 4A Mental Attitude Award.

While raving about this year’s team, Kesterson also shared the expectation she had for them from the beginning of the season.

“I expected them to win back to back. They bought into it and kept improving. It was enough to get the job done.”

Cathedral girls’ volleyball team wins second straight state title

The 2016 girls’ volleyball team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis is pictured on Nov. 5 at Worthen Arena in Muncie, Ind., after winning the Class 4A state championship. (Shaughnessy photo)

11 Day Pilgrimage to Fatima, Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela

April 24 — May 4, 2017

—Hosted By Father James Bonke—

YOU ARE INVITED to join Father Jim Bonke on an 11 day pilgrimage next year to the shrines of Fatima and Lourdes, and Santiago de Compostela in Spain, plus Avila and Madrid.

2017 is the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to the children at Fatima: Santiago is the shrine of St. James the Apostle and a famous pilgrimage spot; and Avila is the home of St. Teresa who founded the Carmelites.

Price is $3379 per person, round trip from Indianapolis, including transportation, tours, hotels and most meals.

Detailed brochures can be obtained by contacting Father Bonke by phone 317-319-6752 or email jbonke@archindy.org

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**Christkindl Village ‘brings Christ into the streets’ in Indianapolis**

By Natalie Hoefer

Seeing a camel, donkey or goat strolling along Georgia Street in downtown Indianapolis at any other time of the year would be shocking. But they’ve become an anticipated cause for smiles and joy in mid-December at St. John the Evangelist Parish’s Christkindl Village.

The animals are part of a live Nativity scene, just one of many ways the one-and-a-half day festival seeks to fulfill its main purpose: to evangelize.

“It brings Christ into the streets,” says Father Rick Nagel, the parish’s pastor. “The mission is to catechize and share the Good News of the Incarnation.”

He recalls a volunteer telling the story of overhearing a child at the event last year saying to his parents, “Mom, Dad, these people are so happy. I like this place.”

“It’s as simple as that,” says Father Nagel. “The Catholic Church gets such bad news and black eyes. This [event] turns it so that even a little kid can see the Catholic Church is alive and well and joyfully living the Gospel.”

In the festival, which is free and runs this year from 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 16 and noon-9 p.m. on Dec. 17, developed out of the parish’s 175th anniversary in 2013. “We had a planning team for the whole project,” says Father Nagel. “One of the ideas that came up was to start a festival.”

The idea of a German Christkindl (“Child Christ”) Market was offered. “The market idea added to the already existing idea because it supports the consumerism [of Christmas],” Father Nagel says. “We wanted to focus on Christmas, a real experience of Christmas with a live Nativity, kids learning about the symbols of Christmas, have caroling and sacred music. What a better way to share the Good News of the real meaning of Christ the Incarnate in the streets of Indy.”

The timing was fortuitous. When members from St. John approached the community improving non-profit organization Downtown Indy in October 2013 about using Georgia Street for a Christkindl Village event, they were told that then-mayor Greg Ballard wanted to start a holiday festival in the city that very year.

With just two months to make it happen, the parish “jumped in,” says Father Nagel. With the help of Downtown Indy, the festival came to life. But the event was plagued by bad weather the first two years. By the third year, the continuation of the Christkindl Village was in jeopardy.

“We took it in prayer and said, ‘Lord if you want this, send good weather,’” recalls Father Nagel. “We weren’t sure if people weren’t coming because of the weather, or if they weren’t interested.

“Lo and behold, the Lord blessed us with a good weather year. It was a huge success. Thousands of people came.” Scott Knust, chair of the parish’s evangelization committee, is grateful that the Christkindl Village has continued.

“It gives parishioners something to invite people to,” he says. “There’s a power of evangelization in inviting people. Maybe they know someone who is Catholic who’d be interested to go to Mass. This is a non-threatening way for people who may have never experienced the Good News.”

The live Nativity is one example of how the event evangelizes in a non-intimidating way. “We took advantage of the event to ‘open wide the doors for Christ,’” as St. John Paul II encouraged, by offering church tours.

“Out of our Super Bowl experience came our confidence to share the Good News by giving tours of the sacred space, not only showing people the beauty of the church but also weaving in how everything is used to point us to God,” Father Nagel explains. “So it’s a catechetical experience as well. We call them tours, but once people are in, it’s more than a tour.”

St. John parish pastoral council chairman Joe McGuire, who has conducted tours, explains.

“We can explain that Jesus is present in the Tabernacle, and show them the Gothic pulpit, our confessional, the different chapels, and all our beautiful stained-glass windows above our organ that dates to 1893, and how the stained-glass windows reflect different biblical images and tradition of our faith. It gives us just a great opportunity to evangelize.”

For those who cannot or do not want to take a tour, this year an “Ask-a-Catholic” booth will be available in the back of the church. The church will also be open for a youth concert on Dec. 16 at 6 p.m., followed by candlelit Christmas caroling around the live Nativity scene. An adult choir concert will be held on Dec. 17 from 5-6 p.m.

A new addition to the festival this year is an outdoor eucharistic procession on Georgia Street between Capitol and Illinois streets following the adult choir concert.

“We’ll process with Jesus out into the streets, just one of many ways the parish because we collaborate with them.”

“Any time you have an opportunity for volunteering, it’s good for the parish,” says Knust, noting that it takes about 150 volunteers to make the event happen. “You get to know the people you volunteer with. At Mass, you don’t get to talk to people, so it builds community.”

While Father Nagel admits that he is practicing for good weather again this year, he says the parish will continue hosting the Christkindl Village.

“We’re committed now,” he says. “We’re in for a lifetime.”

(Christkindl Village will be held at St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, along Georgia Street between Capitol and Illinois streets from 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 16 and from noon-9 p.m. on Dec. 17. For more information, log on to www.stjohnsindy.org/christkindl-village.html.)
Archdiocese, Cardinal Tobin bid heartfelt farewell to each other during Dec. 3 Mass
person. I think the whole archdiocese is sad. I really do.”

Other than the course of their lives, the Backs have experienced the leadership of many shepherds of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. All of them served as archbishop for many years. At nine years, Archbishop Paul C. Schulte was the shortest time as archbishop of Indianapolis prior to Cardinal Tobin, who led the archdiocese for four years.

But the love Cardinal Tobin elicited from the faithful who gathered in the cathedral on Dec. 3 was palpable. “I love this man,” said Benedictine Sister Harriet Woehler, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

Like the Backs, she has seen archbishops come and go. She professed vows as a sister in 1949 at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese and is a founding member of Our Lady of Grace, which was established about a decade later. Cardinal Tobin made an impression on her.

“He’s done in these four years is unbelievable for me,” Sister Harriet said. “He reminds me of the Holy Father—what he’s done for the world, and what this guy has done for the archdiocese.”

For his part, Cardinal Tobin expressed amazement in his homily at seeing all that Catholics across central and southern Indiana have done over the past four years to witness effectively to the Gospel.

“I have been privileged to see witnesses across the 39 counties of this archdiocese, people who quietly bear witness, give testimony to Jesus Christ in parishes,” said Cardinal Tobin.

He attributed Cardinal Tobin’s significant impact on the Church in central and southern Indiana to “his personality and the obvious depth of his faith and love for the Church.”

“That includes his love for his priests, and especially the people overall who are the Church of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis,” Father Bonke said. “He showed that in so many ways. He reached out to so many people.”

The people that Cardinal Tobin reached out to included the members of parishes troubled by his decisions to merge them for their faith in 2000 during peacemaking efforts in the island nation divided by squabbling factions. It is not to enroll in their faith and love for the Church.

“Being the personal leader that he is,” Jeanne Huntzinger was a member of Parish, the former St. Rose of Lima Parish in Knightsburg, which was merged with St. Anne Parish in New Castle earlier this year.

Despite being saddened by seeing her parish merged, Huntzinger respected Cardinal Tobin. “‘Being the personal leader that he is, having so much intelligence about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done made him the better person to make these choices,’” said Huntzinger, who came to the cathedral for the Dec. 3 Mass and waited in a long line to greet Cardinal Tobin during a reception that followed.

Her respect only grew when he visited the state prison in New Castle earlier this year to celebrate Mass with inmates.

Huntzinger joined the rest of the 1,000 worshippers in the cathedral at the end of the Mass in praying for Cardinal Tobin.

During the prayer, he stood in front of the cathedral’s altar with his eyes closed in prayer while a group of people representing the congregation stood around him and placed their hands on him.

One of those people was his mother, 93-year-old Marie Tobin, who was joined by him and placed their hands on him. The people that Cardinal Tobin reached out to included the members of parishes troubled by his decisions to merge them for their faith in 2000 during peacemaking efforts in the island nation divided by ethnic strife.

In reflecting on the deaths of the fellow members of the community, one member of it said, “We know where we stand [and] who we belong to.”

Cardinal Tobin used these words to draw out the deeper meaning of the call for him, the faithful of central and southern Indiana, and the broader Church to be witnesses to the Gospel in word and deed.

“Beyond all the history of confusion and betrayal that surrounds a lot of the Church’s history, beyond the power games that we still can play in the churches, beyond the terrible scandals that have lacerated the body of Christ,” he said, “this ‘one rocklike conviction remains, the conviction that drove the writing of every word of the New Testament.’

“It has nothing to do with conspiracies, opinion polls or the agenda of the powerful. It has everything to do with how the powerlessness, praying, risking their lives for the sake of Christ and his peace, are the ones who understand the word of God. They are witnesses.”

“And to accept that is not to sign up to the agenda of some sort of troubled, fussy human society of worried prelates and squabbling factions. It is not to enroll in a fraternity or sorority and begin paying dues. To be a witness in the Church and for the world is to choose to belong to the life-giver, Jesus Christ. To him be glory, now and forever.”

He then said, “Let the Church say,” and the congregation responded with a resounding, “Amen.”

(To view photos from the December 3 farewell Mass and a video of it, visit www.CriterionOnline.com.)
Pope recognizes martyrdom of Oklahoma priest killed during civil war in Guatemala

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Father Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, making him the first martyr born in the United States.

The Vatican made the announcement on Dec. 2. The recognition of his martyrdom clears the way for his beatification.

Father Rother, born on March 27, 1935, on his family’s farm near Okarche, Okla., was brutally murdered on July 28, 1981, in a Guatemalan village where he ministered to the poor.

He went to Santiago Atitlan in 1968 on assignment from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. He helped the people there build a small hospital, school and Carmel.

Many priests and religious in Guatemala became targets during the country’s 1960-1996 civil war as government forces cracked down on leftist rebels supported by the rural poor.

The bodies of some of Father Rother’s deacons and parishioners were left in front of his church, and soon he and Father Rother were allies of Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. He remembered a ceremony at the school a few months after the priest’s death in which a plaque was erected in his honor.

He went to Oklahoma, his family gave permission for his heart and some of his blood to be emburished in the church of the people he loved and served. A memorial plaque marks the place.

Father Rother was considered a martyr by the Church in Guatemala, and his name was included on a list of 78 martyrs for the faith killed during Guatemala’s 36-year-long civil war. The list of names to be considered for канонизация was submitted by Guatemala’s bishops to St. John Paul II during a pastoral visit to Guatemala in 1996.

Because Father Rother was killed in Guatemala, his cause should have been undertaken there. But the local Church lacked the resources for such an effort. The Guatemalan bishops’ conference agreed to a transfer of jurisdiction to the Oklahoma City Archdiocese.

News of the recognition was welcomed in Oklahoma.

“At the Criterion Friday, December 9, 2016

“...” Fr. Stanley Rother

S. Cookley of Oklahoma City told Catholic News Service on Dec. 2.

He also called the recognition of the priest’s martyrdom a gift to the Church in Guatemala.

Archbishop Cookley recalled how both he and Father Rother are alumni of Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. He remembered a ceremony at the school a few months after the priest’s death in which a plaque was erected in his honor.

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News of the recognition was welcomed in Oklahoma.

“This comes as a great joy to all of us here not only in Oklahoma, but I think it’s a great blessing to the Church in the United States,” Archbishop Paul S. Cookley of Oklahoma City told Catholic News Service on Dec. 2.

He also called the recognition of the priest’s martyrdom a gift to the Church in Guatemala.

Archbishop Cookley recalled how both he and Father Rother are alumni of Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. He remembered a ceremony at the school a few months after the priest’s death in which a plaque was erected in his honor.

“He’s been a blessing to the archbishop who now has the opportunity to bring to fruition the work on my predecessor Archbishop [José] Béltran.”

Now-retired Archbishop Béltran was head of the archdiocese when the santhhood cause for Father Rother was officially opened in 2007.

Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, author of a 2015 biography of the priest, The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run: Fr. Stanley Rother, Martyr from Oklahoma, wrote in an e-mail that the martyrdom recognition was “an incredible gift not only to the United States, but to the universal Church.

“I am delighted and grateful that more people will come to know and be changed by his beautiful story,” Scaperlanda said, “not only because of his death as a martyr, but even more significantly, because his life and his priesthood service remain a testament to the difference that one person can, and does, make.”

Scaperlanda described Father Rother’s martyrdom as a “reminder that we are all compassionate heart,” something critical to say about others and a standoffish attitude.

Judah, who was one of the Apostles but betrayed the Lord, had a “double life, that double life that many Christians have— even priests and bishops, it pains me to say,” the pope said. “We must understand the lost sheep,” he said, because “we, too, always have something small or not so small—of the lost sheep.”

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Christmas, he said, is a celebration of the coming of the Lord, “something” critical to say about others and a standoffish attitude. The good news of Christmas, the pope said, is that God never stops seeking out the lost sheep.
In announcing her decision, Bluth wrote that “the petitioner has set out for a justifiable, good, and substantial reason for moving the remains.” Among the reasons cited for disinterment is that the move will aid in the canonization process; that Archbishop Sheen’s parents are buried nearby in Peoria; and that St. Mary’s Cathedral is where Archbishop Sheen was ordained and a place he visited often during his lifetime.

The Diocese of Peoria, which has been a promoter of Archbishop Sheen’s canonization cause for more than 14 years, expressed joy at the ruling and pledged “to begin working with the Archdiocese of New York to make this process happen as soon as possible.”

Patricia Gibson, chancellor of the Diocese of Peoria, called the decision to appeal disappointing, but expressed the hope the stay would be rejected at a hearing that could occur soon. If that happened, she said, it is possible Archbishop Sheen’s remains may be present for Christmas services at St. Mary’s Cathedral.

Archbishop Sheen, who won the 1951 Emmy for outstanding television personality for his show “Life Is Worth Living,” was born in the Woodford County community of Eldorado on May 8, 1885, and shared his family with his Peoria so that he and his brothers could attend St. Mary Cathedral Grammar School and Spalding Institute. He was ordained to the priesthood in the cathedral on Sept. 20, 1919.

After brief priesthood ministry in Peoria, he would go on to serve on the faculty of St. Mary’s Cathedral in New York, where a crypt is being prepared for his re-interment.

However, five days later, lawyers representing the Archdiocese of New York and the trustees of St. Patrick’s Cathedral—who oppose the relocation of the remains—announced their intention to appeal Bluth’s ruling. They also sought and were granted the stay.

In a statement provided to Catholic News Service by the Manhattan constituent attorney John M. Callagy, newspaper of the New York Archdiocese, attorney John M. Callagy said: “We are confident that we will present substantial reasons for the appeals court to overturn the initial decision.”

In the very recent past, during ethnic tensions in 1999 and 2000 in the Solomon Islands, the Brotherhood participated in peace-making efforts which led to a cease fire among the warring factions and to a peace agreement in October of 2000. Then the brothers gathered weapons from the combatants, and they cast them into the sea. However, one rebel leader refused to accept the peace and instead kidnapped another who had been sent to negotiate with him. When the brother didn’t return, there were six others who went to see what happened, there were reports that the rebels were holding them hostage.

In October of 2003, the police commissioner of the Solomon Islands informed the Brotherhood that all six were dead. The rebels surrendered several days later, and the bodies of the seven brothers were exhumated and brought to their hometown for autopsy.

Hopes for Sheen transfer still high despite granting of emergency stay

In 2000, the Archbishop Sheen Foundation was officially organized and two years later, Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria petitioned the Vatican to open the canonization process.

Archbishop Sheen’s heroic virtue and life of sanctity were recognized in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI, who granted him the title “Venerable.” The Diocese of Peoria has said that, with progress already made in the cause and pending the approval of Pope Francis, a beatification could be celebrated in the near future after the arrival of the remains at St. Mary’s Cathedral.

The Catholic University of America in Washington for nearly 30 years and was national director of the Propagation of the Faith from 1950 to 1966. A former auxiliary bishop of the New York Archdiocese, he was Bishop of Rochester, N.Y., from 1966 to 1969 and was given the personal title of archbishop when he retired from that diocesan post. He is the author of dozens of books, including his autobiography, Treasure in Clay.

Archbishop Sheen died on Dec. 9, 1979. In 2000, the Archbishop Sheen Foundation was officially organized, and two years later, Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria petitioned the Vatican to open the canonization process.

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Authentic joy can be found in life’s difficulties and challenges

By David Gibson

It is not mysterious at all that the Church lodges a day of joy in the heart of Advent. The third Sunday of December day called Gaudete Sunday is set by the coming joyful days of Christmas, for which the Advent season is a time of anticipation and preparation. But something is a little mysterious about joy itself. The entire notion of joy mystifies many. For some, joy is defined as the happiness it resembles. Am I joyful if I do not feel wonderfully alive and excitedly hopeful at every moment? Some judge themselves harshly against an imaginary standard for joy, perhaps as they imagine it to exist in other people’s lives. Here they suspect that they do not measure up.

Pope Francis understands this. In “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), he realizes that “joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty” (#6). In the same 2013 apostolic exhortation on evangelization, the pope also noted that “joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even when the light of bright or of my personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved” (#6). It is lamentable, though, he said, “to see how many and how our culture today is largely marked by a desire for instant gratification. It seems that with every passing week, there is a new fad or product that promises faster results, shorter waits or more exciting features for those with short attention spans. In many ways, patience is no longer considered a virtue—the common perception is that patience should not even be necessary, because we should not have to wait.”

In the liturgical life of Catholics, waiting is a foregone conclusion. Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. Perhaps a more fitting word to describe waiting is “to overcome sadness” and “to strike up a new song.”

Catholics are called to seek joy in Advent in anticipation of Christ’s coming

By Paul Senz

It probably could go without saying that our culture today is largely marked by an insatiable desire for instant gratification. It seems that with every passing week, there is a new fad or product that promises faster results, shorter waits or more exciting features for those with short attention spans. In many ways, patience is no longer considered a virtue—the common perception is that patience should not even be necessary, because we should not have to wait.

In the liturgical life of Catholics, waiting is a foregone conclusion. Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. Perhaps a more fitting word to describe this season would be “anticipated.”

There is so much that we eagerly anticipate in the weeks leading up to the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord. We await the coming of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-us. We await Christmasmaste, with its family celebrations, gift-giving and general merrymaking.

And in this anticipation, we are called not simply to wait, but to be patient. The third Sunday of Advent is commonly called “Gaudete Sunday.”

“Gaudete” (the Latin word for “rejoice”) might seem an odd thing that we are called to rejoice in the midst of the anticipation. We have been waiting so long, and we are not yet at the end. Why rejoice?

We rejoice because the wait is almost at an end. We know that we are near the fulfillment of God’s promise, that he is coming to save his people from their sins. What better reason to rejoice could there be?

The second reading for Mass this weekend is from the Letter of St. James, which exhorts us to be patient. “The coming of the Lord is at hand,” James tells us, “so we must be patient, we must make preparations, as does the farmer who waits for the fruits of the Earth (Jas 5:8).”

In this passage, James also calls to mind our forebears. “The prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord were exemplary models of hardship and patience (Jas 5:10).”

And this could not be more true. If we look back at the stories recounted in the Old and New Testaments, what we hear is one overarching story of God’s providence, sustenance, trials and countless examples of the need for his people to wait patiently.

We think of Noah and his family on the ark, waiting patiently for the rains to subside. We think of Moses leading the Israelites through the desert for 40 years, waiting to reach the Promised Land. We think of Jonah in the belly of the whale, waiting for three days. We think of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Joel, Zechariah and the other prophets, calling on the people to wait patiently and trust in the Lord. We think of Jesus and his incessant reminders that his time had not yet come. We think of the Apostles and disciples of Jesus, waiting for who-knew-what after the crucifixion and, following the Ascension, waiting for Jesus to come again.

And here, in that great tradition of holy men and women, we wait patiently, for the advent of our King. Gaudete—rejoice!”
20th-century Church: The papacy of Pope John Paul II

(Twentieth in a series of columns)

Karl Josef Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II on Oct. 16, 1978. He was the first Polish pope, the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. His pontificate lasted for more than 26 years, until his death on April 2, 2005.

For the first years of his papacy, the world was introduced to an athletic pope. He took skiing vacations and he had a swimming pool put in the Vatican because, he said, it was cheaper than another condominium.

Some came to worship pope in history. More people saw him in person than the pope of the Renaissance, in order to be blessed by the pope of Vatican because, he said, it was cheaper than another one.

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As a Jimmy Durante comedy routine, but he

doggie kisses. And she remained with

hopped in and showered Dad with

she was gone for about two years.

yard when we were away one day, and

She was smart and feisty and a survivor,

in my heart. Mitzi was mostly Pekingese,

...and his support of the Solidarity labor

combined. He also canonized and

because, he said, it was cheaper than

He took skiing vacations and he had

and his support of the Solidarity labor

movement there strengthened resistance

to communism. This led to nonviolent liberation movements and the collapse of communist regimes, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union.

His 14 encyclicals showed his concern for the protection of all human life, for social justice (the Via Crucis encyclicals), for ecumenism and interreligious relations, his love for the Blessed Virgin, and his relationship with Faith and reason. He also wrote several books, and others were produced with his cooperation.

He promoted better relations with the Jews and with other Christian communities. He apologized for errors committed by the Church in the past against Jews, Muslims and others.

Twice, he called leaders of many world religions together to pray for peace—the only religious leader who could have done so.

Hugh, about his pontificate, he was extremely popular with youth. This was understandable when he was a strong athletic man, but his attraction to young people continued into his old age and infirmities.

In "Theology of the Body," developed before he was elected pope, helped many people, especially the young,

to gain a better understanding of the Church's teaching on love and marriage.

He presided over 15 synods of bishops, usually issuing apostolic exhortations after leaving the synod. When he saw the idea of a new catechism was suggested at a synod, he approved the project and then authorized the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" in 1992. He oversaw the completion of the revision of the Code of Canon Law and promulgated the new code in 1983.

He was sensitive to women's issues while continuing to insist that the Church is unable to ordain women. His continued support for priestly celibacy also rankled at odds with some people in the Church.

During his last years, as he suffered from Parkinson's disease, the effects of an attempted assassination, a broken hip, and an appendectomy, he taught the value of suffering. No longer the energetic man he once was, he nevertheless believed that his sufferings were his call from God to teach others how to offer their sufferings to God.

Many Catholics are convinced that Pope Paul VI's beatification on June 21, 2014, will go down in history as Pope John Paul the Great. 

Our first dog was Max, whom we called The Noble Dog. He was mostly Beagle, a serious dog but excellent with children. He didn't clip his nails and you'd see his tail wagging back and forth through the neighborhood field until suddenly he'd run over a rabbit or another critter right past you.

Unfortunately he had one fault: he hated a certain neighbor dog. One day absorbed in chasing this fellow, he was hit by a car coming the other way. We all cried for hours.

We had another part-Beagle named Scout. She was sweet-tempered, and not even though fish are not the most

responsible for the well-being of pets

called Chubby. I think that the

is extremely important for children.

Besides their two front teeth, all that

many kids want for Christmas is a pet.

God gave us dominion over, and resulting joy from, the animals

was a serious fellow. He was the boss,

and Herman was his dimwitted lieutenant.

Herman had blue eyes that were totally black, but he was as sweet as he could be.

Others followed, including a black
cocker spaniel named, I'm embarrassed to admit, Peke. Another Peke

called Chubby. I think that the

experience of caring for and being responsible for the well-being of pets

is extremely important for children.

And even though fish are not the most

responsible for the well-being of pets

is extremely important for children.

Gary, the author of a popular column about cats, once wrote: "If we can't think of any reason to protect animals, we should think of the children in the world who love them."

"Gary, the author of a popular column about cats, once wrote: "If we can't think of any reason to protect animals, we should think of the children in the world who love them."

This Advent, we should especially

because of its Lenten traditions, including fasting and almsgiving, and its spiritual discipline, including prayer and the celebration of Mass.

Inspiration is best when we are at

because of its Lenten traditions, including fasting and almsgiving, and its spiritual discipline, including prayer and the celebration of Mass.

First, the Adven

divide men and place them in opposition camps.

Those who are dedicated to the work of education, particularly of the young, or who guard the stability of their society, may have a unique responsibility to pass on to their children the love of learning and to teach them as children of God to be God's stewards in this world. As Jesus was a model for his parents, so we should pass on to our children the love of learning, the desire to know and to be educated.

In this way, we can pass on to our children the love of learning and to teach them as children of God to be God's stewards in this world. As Jesus was a model for his parents, so we should pass on to our children the love of learning, the desire to know and to be educated.

Suggestions for the Lenten season of prayer and fasting can be found in the "Lenten Prayers" section of the "Catholic Digest." Many parishes have a "Lenten Challenge," which encourages individuals to perform a good deed each day during the season.

Advent is a special opportunity for becoming the first-rate people God intended us to be.

"(Father Eugene Henrich writes for Catholic News Service."

Prayer box taps into spiritual hunger

The box went up on a Monday evening in August, a plain white box nestled inside a little wooden tent, mounted atop a fence post near the outermost reach of a maple.

"Prayer requests," reads the side of the tent in black, all-caps letters.

The box has a slot, like one awaiting Valentine's, and the message:

"Please write down any prayer requests. We would love to be praying for you!"

Keanu Krech didn't know what to expect when he set up the prayer box, tucking in a pen and a rock to hold down scraps of paper. The college senior, 22, positioned the box on the edge of his childhood home, which is on a busy residential road between a highway and a gas station in South St. Paul, Minn.

But Keanu knew he wanted to extend the box of prayer requests as broadly as he could, with a quiet anonymity. He was putting a twist on the Little Free Library concept that began just 20 miles west, in Hudson, Wis., and now exceeds 50,000 locations worldwide, knitting together neighborhoods with a warm and fuzzy literary fiber.

He planned to share the prayer requests, if they came up, on his Monday night Bible study, a small group of college-aged students.

The next day, Keanu peeked inside the box and discovered a handwritten note:

"For those who are walking not knowing God, heal those with addictions, and for the men and women overseas fighting for our freedom."

It was a heavy start, covering so much in such little space.

The prayer box was off and running. Keanu and his friend Arleen Hudson, both 20, in three months, the box has amassed about 100 prayer requests. Never a week has passed without someone slipping a note inside.

"Please pray for my marriage, someone wrote."

"Please pray for us that we get a roof over our family's heads before winter comes," a note stated in round, petty-lettering.

"I'm here in town with the show Cabaret. I just ran my first half marathon and have lost 270 pounds. Continue to pray for me on my health journey," a postscript wrote one month later.

"Pray for me," someone wrote with a left-handed slope. "I picked up a bad drug problem, and I'm an easy family of everyone I love and I don't know what to do. ... Please pray that God will help me with this problem."

Others are short:

"Arleen's foot to heal," "Amber's eye surgery," "For God to protect and people in Kelly's life."

Now Keanu and his friends are praying for Arleen and Amber, and Kelly, for the faces of which we only see whose hearts have been revealed.

"I'm surprised how deep the prayer requests are, how much heart and soul goes into them," he told me. "I've read some and just cried.

As a teen, Keanu felt the weight of depression and the tug of life's big questions. He didn't attend church, but he'd stay up late, clear his head, watch YouTube videos from Christians and responses from atheists in an endless loop. His head was spinning, and his heart was aching.

See CAPECCHI
Third Sunday of Advent

**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, December 11, 2016**

- Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

The Book of Isaiah is the source of this weekend’s third reading. Isaiah was breathing a rock and a hard place, so to speak. He realized that unwise allusions as a behavior that forgot God put the Hebrews’ kingdom of Isaiah at great risk. The prophet was convinced that if the nation did not return to God in genuine obedience and party, then the whirlwind eventually would sweep away life as he and his contemporaries knew it.

He met dispute and outrage. It must have been frustrating, but despite the angry reaction to what he said on the part of many people around him, Isaiah unflinchingly called the people to God.

It was not as if God would bring a terrible punishment upon the kingdom. Rather, the people, by their impiety, would create a nightmare for themselves.

The Epistle of St. James supplies the second reading. This epistle rarely appears in the liturgy. The identity of the author is unknown.

**Reflection**

Advent is approaching its close. Since Christmas is near, the Church looks ahead to the wonder of the Lord’s birth. This is the “Gaudete Sunday.” This title is inspired by the first word of the Latin text of the entrance antiphon (also known as the “introit”) for Mass of the Third Sunday of Advent, in Latin: “Gaudete” (“Rejoice”).

Priests and deacons may wear rose vestments this weekend in place of the ordinary violet of Advent, as if the rays of dawn already are brightening the dark somberness of this time of year.

The readings make several points. Isaiah warned us, as he warned his contemporaries, that by sin we bring destruction and sorrow. He met dispute and outrage. It must have been frustrating, but despite the angry reaction to what he said on the part of many people around him, Isaiah unflinchingly called the people to God.

So the epistle urges strong faith, but also forbearance. The third reading, from St. Matthew’s Gospel, centers on John the Baptist, whose denunciations of sin in high places led to his arrest. (In time, they led to his death.)

Despising the Roman occupation of the land, pious Jews at this time yearned for a Messiah who would rid the Holy Land of the pagan intruders, for whom Herod was a stooge.

John gave another description of the Redeemer. He saw the Savior not as a warrior, commanding armies to slaughter the enemies of the One God of Israel, but the compassionate, truly holy, leader of the pious.

Jesus met this description, healing the sick, giving hope and restoring life, longingly coming to Earth as Son of God. In the last verses, Jesus affirms that John is a prophet. In response, John insists, Jesus is the greatest prophet.

By Judy Lang

**A Christmas Prayer for Lost Souls**

Oh Lord, keep a close watch over these lost souls Who are struggling to find you.

Hasten their journey home To a place where they so desire, For a place of true peace and joy. Let them find it in your Son, Jesus Christ, who came to Earth On Christmas day. He will Receive them with open arms And true love for the lost.

This Advent and Christmas season Is the perfect time to return to The Lord!

**Daily Readings**

**Monday, December 12**

- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Zechariah 2:14-17
- Revelation 11:19a, 12:1-6a, 10ab
- Psalm 126:1-4, 5b-6

**Tuesday, December 13**

- St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
- Zephaniah 3:16-19
- Psalm 34:23-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23

**Wednesday, December 14**

- St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
- Isaiah 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25

**Thursday, December 15**

- Isaiah 54:1-10
- Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13

**Question Corner Fr. Kenneth Doyle**

**Canon law allows for Catholics to be buried in a non-Catholic cemetery**

Q

A Catholic may be buried wherever he or she chooses—in a Catholic cemetery, a non-Catholic or non-sectarian burial plot or, to your question, in a national cemetery where military veterans are buried.

My preference, of course, would be for a Catholic burial ground because the deceased would have the benefit of the Masses and prayers that are offered regularly for those buried there.

The notion that a Catholic need always choose a Catholic cemetery may stem from a misreading of Canon 1180 in the Church’s Code of Canon Law.

The first paragraph of that canon states, “[a] if a parish has its own cemetery, the deceased members of the faithful must be buried in it unless the deceased or those competent to take care of the burial of the deceased have chosen another cemetery legitimately.”

The word “must” was intended to place the burden on the parish, not on the deceased—that is to say, the parish is obligated to bury that parishioner if there is room and if that is the family’s choice.

The following paragraph in this same canon makes the option even more clear: “Everyone, however, is permitted to choose the cemetery of burial unless prohibited by law.”

As regards “consecrated ground,” when a Cathedral is interested in a non-Catholic plot, the priest who officiates at the committal says a prayer that blesses that grave.

This morning I went to weekday Mass, as is my custom. Due to a heavy snowstorm in the area, I was the only person there, so the priest decided not to celebrate Mass.

I asked whether I could receive Communion, and the priest said that he was unable to do that since Communion can be given only during a Mass.

I didn’t question him at the time, but simply left and went home. But on the way home, I began to wonder about it.

For more than 30 years, I have been an extraordinary minister of holy Communion in hospitals in the area where I live, bringing Communion to patients in their rooms.

If it is possible for them to receive Communion without attending Mass, why couldn’t I? (New York)

It is true that, in ordinary circumstances, holy Communion is to be received only when someone participates in the celebration of the entire Eucharist. The bread and wine are offered, transformed into the body and blood of Christ, and then returned by God to the worshipper as a full sharing in the sacrifice of Jesus.

There are, however, exceptions. One is the situation you mentioned, when a patient is visited in a hospital room by an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, who is bringing the gift of Communion.

Another is a Sunday or weekday celebration in the absence of a priest: When a priest is unable to be present, a deacon or designated lay leader may distribute Communion, after appropriate prayers and scriptural readings. In the circumstance you raise, my own choice as a priest would have been to celebrate the Eucharist. You, after all, had fought off the snow to arrive at church, and you deserved to be credited and accommodated.

What would have been lost if the priest had taken 25 minutes to say a Mass even with just the two of you present—especially since he had already set aside the time to do that? Not only would the two of you have benefited, but other people as well—since the Mass is always offered for the needs of the wider Church.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203)
Providence Sister Mary Esther Lane entered Catholic schools, retreat centers

Providence Sister Mary Esther Lane, formerly Franciscan Sister Gertrude, died on Monday, March 9, 1998, at the former Holy Trinity School in Indianapolis. She was 90. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 28 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the cemetery.

Mary Esther Lane was born on April 11, 1905, in Longsjo, Sweden, a native of Sweden. She was the daughter of Nikolaus and Agnete (Sandgren) Blomgren. She attended Catholic schools in Sweden and was awarded a bachelor of arts degree at the University of Halmstad in 1929.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Esther ministered as an educator for 43 years in Catholic schools in Michigan and Indiana. In 1975, she began ministering at several retreat centers in Michigan and Indiana before returning to the motherhouse to serve there. She dedicated herself to prayer and service during the years of her retirement.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Esther ministered at the former St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington from 1940-41, at the former St. Joseph School in Terre Haute from 1952-57, and at the former Sacred Heart School in Bloomington from 1967-75. She also served as the nurse, in communications, in transportation, and in other ministries at the motherhouse from 1987-96.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Providence Rd., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47875.

Franciscan Sister Angela Betsch served in schools for 36 years, in Papua New Guinea

Franciscan Sister Angela Betsch died on Nov. 24 at the motherhouse of the congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 90. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 1 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Dorothy Betsch was born on Dec. 10, 1925, in Cincinnati. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Oct. 4, 1944, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1950. During her 72 years as a Sister of Providence, Sister Angela ministered as an educator for 36 years in Catholic schools in California, Ohio and Missouri. She also served as a missionary in a Catholic school in Oldenburg, Indiana, and in Catholic Charities in Chicago for two years.

In the archdiocese, Sister Angela served at the former Holy Trinity School in Indianapolis from 1967-86. She also served on the nursing staff, in communications, transportation, and in other ministries at the motherhouse from 1987-96.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Providence Rd., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47875.†

Providence Sister Mary Ellen, formerly Franciscan Sister Gertrude, died on Monday, March 9, 1998, at the former Holy Trinity School in Indianapolis. She was 90. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 28 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Mary Esther Lane was born on April 11, 1905, in Longsjo, Sweden, a native of Sweden. She was the daughter of Nikolaus and Agnete (Sandgren) Blomgren. She attended Catholic schools in Sweden and was awarded a bachelor of arts degree at the University of Halmstad in 1929.

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Hello readers. I am excited to debut Investing With Faith, a new column in The Criterion that offers helpful financial tips and information to help you make wise giving and how you can create a legacy that you've invested in faith.

We hope to provide helpful insight to smart financial management so that you can support your favorite causes of the Church long after you go home to God. As you prayerfully consider creating your legacy, know that the Catholic Community Foundation is available to help you make wise giving decisions and answer any questions you may have.

While April 15 stands out in our minds for taxes, the end of the calendar year is a great time to evaluate your charitable giving for the year and look ahead to the next one. Keep in mind that questions you may have will not raise your adjusted gross income or Medicare premiums. You should consult a tax professional for tax advice.

Federal law permits gifts to religious organizations and religious schools to be deducted from your federal income tax. In 2016, you may be able to claim a deduction for gifts of up to $128,000. However, if you itemize your deductions, you can deduct only up to 50% of your adjusted gross income. In addition, the amount you had contributed to those religious organizations and religious schools is required to be reported to you on a Form 1099-R, which is included in your income tax return.

For instance, if you are age 70 1/2 or older and subject to the required minimum distributions from your traditional individual retirement account (IRA), consider using these required minimum distributions to make charitable gifts. IRA charitable rollovers are an easy tax-efficient option.

Simply instruct your IRA custodian to transfer the funds (up to $100,000 each year) directly to charitable organizations you name. The transfer counts as part (or all) of your required withdrawal. There is no deduction for your gift, but you save on taxes because the withdrawal will not raise your adjusted gross income (AGI). This is an advantage because your AGI triggers tax-provisions—the 3.8 percent surtax on net investment income, income tax on Social Security payments, and Medicare premiums.

I look forward to sharing more ideas with you throughout 2017. If you have questions or would like more information, I can be reached at jfelte@sarchindy.org or call 1-800-382-9836, ext 1482, or 317-236-1482. Have a blessed Christmas and New Year!

(Joanna Felte is director of planned giving for the Catholic Community Foundation of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. For more information about planned giving, log on to www.archindy.org/plannedgiving. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.)

For late actress Florence Henderson, Catholic faith was her foundation

CINCINNATI (CNS)— In what came to be her final interview, actress Florence Henderson told St. Anthony Messenger magazine that throughout her life, through good times and bad, her Catholic faith was her foundation.

“I don’t ever remember not praising the Lord, saying the rosary, praying for friends, relatives, for the sick and for those who had died. It was a natural part of our lives,” she told writer Rita E. Piro, who interviewed the popular actress in August. The story appears in the January 2017 issue of the magazine, published by Cincinnati-based Franciscan Media. Henderson, who died unexpectedly on Nov. 24 at age 82, was best known for her role as Carol Brady in the 1970s sitcom “The Brady Bunch.” Originally broadcast for seven years, the show was off the air and has been syndicated for people, more love,” Henderson added.

For instance, if you are age 70 1/2 or older and subject to the required minimum distributions from your traditional individual retirement account (IRA), consider using these required minimum distributions to make charitable gifts. IRA charitable rollovers are an easy tax-efficient option.

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(Joanna Felte is director of planned giving for the Catholic Community Foundation of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. For more information about planned giving, log on to www.archindy.org/plannedgiving. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.)

For late actress Florence Henderson, Catholic faith was her foundation
CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME!

Joseph Cardinal Tobin,
the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers,
your neighbors in West Park, N.Y., when you were studying at
Mount Saint Alphonsus, Esopus, N.Y.,
congratulate and welcome you to the “neighborhood”
of the local Church of Newark.

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Provincial Residence: Elizabeth
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