



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Season of sharing

Readers share their favorite Christmas memories, pages 8-10.

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A Christmas message from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin



Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in this 17th-century painting by Giovanni Battista Salvi. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (CNS/Bridgeman Images)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

After all the carols have been sung, after all the sitcoms have blared banalities or irreverent Yuletide yowls, after we stumble the final steps towards the 25th of December, an angel still whispers a name: “*Emmanuel, God-with-us*” (Mt 1:23).

After an autumn of anxiety and bitter partisanship, when many people feel forgotten or unwelcomed, the Word assures us that “*the grace of God has appeared, saving all ...*” (Ti 2:11).

After four years of sharing love, encouragement, laughter, tears, triumphs and defeats, after all the goodbyes have pierced our hearts and obliged us to begin again, we must exult, since “*from his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because ... grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (Jn 1:17-18).

After all is said and done, we remain in Christ Jesus, who is Emmanuel and grace and truth, and we will continue to recognize Him—and each other—in the breaking of the bread.

Rejoice in the Lord!

Merry Christmas!

+ *Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.*

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

P.S. Thank you everyone for your kind messages, e-mails and cards. I’ve read all of them, but in this busy time of transition I’m afraid I can’t respond to each of them individually. I will take your kindness with me.

Mensaje de Navidad del Cardenal Joseph W. Tobin

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Después de que se hayan entonado todos los villancicos, después de que todos los programas televisivos hayan pregonado banalidades o irreverentes aullidos navideños, después de dar los últimos pasos que nos acercan al 25 de diciembre, hay un ángel que sigue susurrando un nombre: “*Emmanuel: Dios con nosotros*” (Mt 1:23).

Después de un otoño plagado de ansiedad y amarga división política, cuando mucha gente se sentía olvidada o rechazada, la Palabra nos asegura que “*la gracia de Dios se ha manifestado, trayendo salvación a todos los hombres*” (Ti 2:11).

Y después de cuatro años de compartir amor, palabras de ánimo, risas, lágrimas, triunfos y derrotas, después de todos los adioses que nos han desgarrado el corazón y nos han obligado a empezar otra vez, debemos regocijarnos ya que “*de su plenitud todos hemos recibido, y gracia sobre gracia, porque [...] la gracia y la verdad fueron hechas realidad por medio de Jesucristo*” (Jn 1:17-18).

Y al final, después de que todo ha pasado, seguimos habitando en Jesucristo, el Emmanuel de la gracia y la verdad, y seguimos reconociéndolo a Él —y a nosotros mismos— al partir el pan.

¡Alégrense en el Señor!

¡Feliz Navidad!

+ *Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.*

Cardenal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

P.D.: Gracias a todos por sus amables mensajes, correos electrónicos y tarjetas. Los he leído todos pero, durante esta época tan ajetreada de transición, me temo que no podré responder a cada uno de ellos. Me llevo su generosidad en el corazón.

Office of Intercultural Ministry celebrates 20 years of creating 'richer experience for everybody' in local Church

By Natalie Hoefler

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin has mentioned frequently in the last month that the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., where he will soon be installed has Mass celebrated in 22 languages each weekend.

It's a large number, yes. But it might be a surprise to some that across central and southern Indiana, Mass is celebrated in as many five languages.

That opportunity is just one of the many accomplishments of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, which celebrated 20 years of service this year.

The story begins in 1994. A volunteer group called Archdiocesan Black Catholics Concerned existed, as did a Hispanic apostolate operated out of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis. But there was no official archdiocesan ministry for Catholics of ethnic backgrounds.

But when St. Bridget Parish in Indianapolis—one of three predominantly black parishes in the city—was closed, then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein tapped Father Kenneth Taylor, then-pastor of St. Bridget and Holy Trinity parishes, to start an archdiocesan multicultural ministry.

"I think Archbishop Daniel wanted to figure out a way to be sure that the various ethnic communities were still ministered to by the archdiocese," says Father Taylor, now pastor of St. Rita and Holy Angels parishes, both in Indianapolis.

In January of 1996, Archbishop Buechlein commissioned the archdiocese's first Multicultural Ministry Office, with Father Taylor as director.

The office focused on addressing the spiritual needs of the Hispanic and black Catholic communities, whose needs varied in certain ways from Anglo Catholics based on cultural backgrounds and customs.

"Elsewhere in the country what was happening was the office of Hispanic Ministry and the office of Black Catholic Ministry—and if they had any Asian offices—were all being combined," recalls Father Taylor. "People were feeling that things were being taken away."

"But here it was different because we never had [either ministry], so it was like a step forward for us."

According to Father Taylor, the Office of Multicultural Ministry, which in 2014 became the Office of Intercultural Ministry, serves two primary purposes.

"One is to develop ministries to the various ethnic groups within the archdiocese," he explains. "The other

is for the archdiocese to have a conduit to what's going on nationally. We are representatives on the national level through the office. ... So we can take what's happening here to the national groups, and whatever is happening nationally gets back into the archdiocese."

In time, a ministry was developed for the Vietnamese Catholic community, which worships at St. Joseph Church in Indianapolis. They would later be combined with ministries for Burmese, Filipino and Korean Catholics under the archdiocesan Asian/Pacific Islanders Ministry.

The milestones over the last two decades are many, says Father Taylor. One was the creation of a special Mass to celebrate the Vietnamese Tet, or lunar New Year.

"One of the first times they did it, they invited Archbishop Daniel and pulled out all the stops," recalls Father Taylor. "He said to me, 'Celebrating Vietnamese New Year in Indianapolis—I never would have figured that would happen!'"

Another milestone was the institution of a Mass to celebrate the Filipino tradition known as Simbang Gabi, a nine-day spiritual celebration leading up to Christmas.

In 2004, the first annual Mass celebrating the feast of St. Martin de Porres on Nov. 3 was held. The saint shared Hispanic and black heritage.

"The idea was to bring particularly the African-American and Hispanic communities together around St. Martin de Porres for common worship," says Father Taylor. "It was a time when there was a lot of tension in Indianapolis between the African-American and Hispanic communities. ..."

"Over the years, I found out that other communities revere [St.] Martin de Porres as well, so other communities are now involved."

Maria Pimentel-Gannon of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis has been involved with the archdiocesan office since its inception, and has served several terms as president of the ministry's board. She helped start the annual St. Martin de Porres Mass.

"I think it has brought us closer as an archdiocese," she says of the Mass. "I think it has helped us to realize the richness we have in our archdiocese in the different cultures, to see that we are very intercultural, and to see that as a good thing, an asset."



During the inaugural archdiocesan Intercultural Ministry Awards Dinner on Nov. 15, 2014, the members of the Committee of Intercultural Ministry Coordinators at that time gather for a photo. They are Franciscan Brother Moises Gutierrez, former Intercultural Ministry director, left; Myanmar/Burmese Ministry coordinator Rita Si Si Lwin; Divine Word Missionaries Father Sam Cunningham, former Hispanic Ministry coordinator; Franciscan Sister Jeannette Pruitt, former Black Catholic Ministry coordinator; former French-speaking Ministry coordinator Dabrice Bartet; former Philippine Ministry coordinator Marlon Alfonso; and Vietnamese Ministry coordinator Father Minh Duong. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

In 2012, Father Taylor led the ministry in a major effort to host the National Black Catholic Congress. Then during 2013, plans were underway to host the National Association of African Catholics, another great accomplishment for the ministry.

By that time, Father Taylor had been heading the ministry for 14 years in a part-time capacity while still serving as pastor and administrator of one to two parishes.

It was a lot to take on, he admits.

"From the day [Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin] landed in the archdiocese" in 2012, the priest recalls, "he said, 'I see this as a very important part of the archdiocese.' And he wanted [the director] to be full time."

In August of 2013, Franciscan Brother Moises Gutierrez, then-Hispanic Ministry coordinator, took on the role as full-time director of what was later renamed the Intercultural Ministry.

Many new projects were undertaken during Brother Moises' leadership from 2013-15. He began a leadership certification program to grow pastoral leaders in the Asian/Pacific Islanders, Black and Hispanic communities—the first of its kind in the United States; started the Intercultural Pastoral Institute at the former St. Bernadette School in Indianapolis to house the leadership classes and for other intercultural use; developed a program to certify Hispanic spiritual directors;



Father Kenneth Taylor, former director of the then-named archdiocesan Multicultural Office, celebrates the annual St. Martin de Porres Mass at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 3, 2013. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

and started an annual Intercultural Ministry Awards Dinner.

Also during his tenure, Archbishop Tobin approved a request from the Communauté Catholique Francophone d'Indiana—predominantly consisting of French-speaking African Catholic immigrants—to have a Mass celebrated monthly in French.

Brother Moises stepped down in December of 2015 to pursue a doctoral degree in leadership philosophy at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash.

Just last month, former Hispanic Ministry coordinator Oscar Castellanos took on the role as director of Intercultural Ministry. (See article on page 15.) If he

See INTERCULTURAL, page 15

The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which is our annual Christmas publication, is the last issue of 2016.

The Criterion will be published again on Jan. 13, 2017, and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 23 through Jan. 2 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2017. †

Official Appointment

Effective immediately

Rev. David Bu Nyar of the Diocese of Loikaw, Myanmar, appointed associate pastor of St. Pius X and St. Mark parishes, both in Indianapolis, with particular ministry to the Burmese community, and part-time coordinator

of Asian Ministries in the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry.

(These appointments are from the office of Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archdiocesan Administrator.) †



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Archbishop Tobin becoming a cardinal tops local news stories

By Brandon A. Evans

The naming of Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin as a cardinal—and his subsequent appointment to lead the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.—was voted the top local news story of 2016, followed by the ordination of six new priests and the archdiocesan celebration of the Holy Year of Mercy.

Other stories of note included the archdiocese's new partnership with Notre Dame ACE Academies, the 50th anniversary of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), decisions from the *Connected in the Spirit* parish planning process, and the election of a new archabbot at Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Following the tradition of other news agencies, *The Criterion* editorial staff votes each year for the top 10 local stories that were published in our newspaper.

Many of the top stories selected this year were covered in multiple articles. Read this article online to browse the links to all the original coverage.

Among the hundreds of locally produced news stories during 2016, here is our "Top 10" list:

1. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin is named a cardinal of the Catholic Church.

In an announcement that was a surprise even to him, Archbishop Tobin was named one of the world's newest cardinals on Oct. 9.

The honor, described as a "shock," was unexpected and became an instant source of celebration for Catholics in central and southern Indiana. In a press conference the next day, the cardinal-designate shared his thoughts with employees of the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis and local news media, which included his apprehension of any spotlight the new title would bring.

A second shock came less than two weeks before the consistory in Rome that would make his new title official: Pope Francis was moving Archbishop Tobin to lead the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.

The joy of the previous weeks became bittersweet, as the cardinal-designate wrote of sleepless nights and tears.

Thinking of his years here, Archbishop Tobin wrote, "I remembered how you welcomed me, offered your support in so many ways, forgave my mistakes and limitations and always assured me of your love and the precious backing of your prayer. The thought of leaving you devastated me."

Nevertheless, many lay faithful and priests from central and southern Indiana traveled to Rome to be with Cardinal Tobin as he officially joined the College of Cardinals; many more followed the events online.

A local celebration—which was also a farewell—was held on Dec. 3 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, during which Cardinal Tobin recalled his time here.

Quoting Scripture, he said, "'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).

All our coverage of Cardinal Tobin's appointment can be found at www.archindy.org/archbishop.

2. Six men are ordained priests for the archdiocese.

It is normal that a couple of men are ordained to the priesthood each May or June. But this year, six men—one of the largest classes in recent times—were ordained as new priests for the archdiocese.

During a Mass on June 25 at the cathedral, Fathers James Brockmeier, Anthony Hollowell, Douglas Hunter, Kyle Rodden, Matthew Tucci and Nicolás Ajpacajá Tzoc all took their first steps in a new life as priests.

Noting the Holy Year of Mercy, Archbishop Tobin spoke to them: "We have turned to God, begging for

mercy and have been strengthened as ambassadors of reconciliation. Since we recognize that God has torn down each and every barrier that could really divide us, we have deepened our commitment to build bridges, not walls."

"Pope Francis described the heart of the priest as a heart pierced by the love of the Lord," Archbishop Tobin said. "For this reason, he no longer looks to himself or should look to himself, but is instead turned toward God and his brothers and sisters."

"A priest," he said, noting the preaching of the pope, "is changed by the mercy that he gives."

3. Catholics across central and southern Indiana join to celebrate the Holy Year of Mercy.

Pope Francis declared an Extraordinary Jubilee Year dedicated to mercy that began on Dec. 8, 2015, and ended on Nov. 20, 2016.

During that year, individual parishes, schools and agencies worked to put mercy in action; special times were set aside for confessions during Lent; and the Holy Doors at the cathedral and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad were opened.

The culmination of the year for the archdiocese came on Oct. 8, during a special Marian Jubilee at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus.

Eight hundred people from around the archdiocese attended the event, which featured recitation of the rosary, a Marian procession, a reflection from then-Archbishop Tobin and two presentations by best-selling Catholic author and speaker Dr. Scott Hahn.

"God's mercy is what happens when you coordinate all of his attributes," Hahn said. "His power, which is unlimited. His knowledge, which is infinite. His goodness and his love."

"When you coordinate all of those attributes, you discover that mercy is God's all powerful love in action."

4. Archdiocese announces new partnership with Notre Dame ACE Academies.

The growing relationship between the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the University of Notre Dame deepened on March 29 when it was announced that five center-city Catholic schools in Indianapolis will become part of the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Academies network starting in the 2016-17 school year.

The five schools—Central Catholic, Holy Angels, Holy Cross Central, St. Anthony and St. Philip Neri—joined the growing network of Catholic schools that operate through ACE.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin praised this latest partnership connecting the archdiocese and Notre Dame.

"The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has long been a leader in finding innovative ways to serve the educational and spiritual needs of children from some of the lowest income areas in Indianapolis," said Archbishop Tobin.

"Partnering with the Notre Dame ACE Academies will strengthen these five schools by providing students even more resources and opportunities. I'm committed to seeing that these children have the same chance I had to grow up in a community of faith and to receive an excellent Catholic education."

5. Indiana Catholic Conference celebrates 50 years of advocacy.

In October of 1966, a small group of dedicated Catholics met in Indianapolis to do what their counterparts in only a handful of states had accomplished—to formalize a way for the Catholic Church to speak on both state and national issues. That was the genesis of the Indiana Catholic Conference [ICC], which this fall marked the 50th anniversary of its establishment as the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin embraces Pope Francis after the consistory that made him a cardinal on Nov. 19 in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. (Photo courtesy L'Osservatore Romano)

"The Church was beginning to see its role in how it impacts the culture," said Glenn Tebbe, the fifth and current executive director of the ICC, in an Oct. 21 story. "The goal then was the same as it is today—to reflect on Church teaching and offer its wisdom for people to consider in a way that will benefit society."

The ICC has been the voice of public policy for the Church in Indiana on issues that range from the poor and immigration to abortion and school choice.

"My job is to make sure the Catholic perspective is part of the discussion," Tebbe said. "I try to be the voice of our five bishops, and also to enable the Catholic faithful and all people of good will to help shape public policy for the best interests of the common good."

6. Archbishop Tobin announces changes for three deaneries; two parishes to be merged.

Speaking on Feb. 4 at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus before Catholics from across central and southern Indiana, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin announced decisions that will affect 31 parishes in the Bloomington, Connerville and Seymour deaneries.

"As a result of the decisions, two parishes will be merged into neighboring faith communities."

The changes were part of a 15-month consultation with pastoral leaders and lay representatives, and part of a larger, years-long parish planning process called *Connected in the Spirit*.

Archbishop Tobin said the process is "an effort to discern where God is leading the Catholic Church in central and southern Indiana, and determine how the Archdiocese of Indianapolis should change its structures in order to carry out its mission today and in the future."

7. Saint Meinrad Archabbey gets a new archabbot.

In January, Benedictine Archabbot Justin DuVall announced that he was resigning as abbot of the monastic community, effective on June 2.

That day, an election was held that saw Benedictine Father Kurt Stasiak named the 10th abbot in the 162-year history of the community.

Speaking of his brother monks, the new archabbot said, "They're looking at me as their abbot. Not that I'm better, but more is being asked of me now. They're expecting more. That's a humbling thing and certainly a privileged feeling."

The resignation and election occurred almost exactly 50 years after the resignation of still-living Archabbot Bonaventure Knaebel, who guided the monastery through the years of the Second Vatican Council.

8. Former Anglican priest makes history as first married priest in archdiocese.

Ordained a priest on June 29, Father Luke Reese was a former

Anglican priest with a wife of 24 years and seven children.

Though serving in the archdiocese at Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, he does so as a member of the Houston-based Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, which was established in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. The ordinariate functions like a diocese for former Anglicans and Episcopalians in the United States and Canada.

As reported, "in full communion with the Church, the ordinariate is able to maintain its Anglican spiritual heritage in its worship—and in having married men ordained as priests."

"I'm really excited about it," said Father Reese shortly before his ordination. "I look forward to the adventure of it all."

9. Former archdiocesan priest, Bishop Paul Etienne, is named Archbishop of Anchorage.

Having served since 2009 as the Bishop of Cheyenne, Wyo., Bishop Paul Etienne was named by Pope Francis on Oct. 4 to be the Archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska.

Addressing his new flock, the former priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis said, "Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, really means it when he says that he wants bishops to travel to the peripheries to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ and God's love to strangers. With today's appointment, he is sending me among you, in the name of Jesus Christ, as your new archbishop, to be your servant and shepherd. I humbly accept this commission, with great gratitude to Pope Francis."

Archbishop Etienne was installed on Nov. 9 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Co-Cathedral in Anchorage.

10. The longest-serving priest in the history of the archdiocese dies at 101.

Father Hilary Meny, the longest serving priest in the history of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Oct. 7 at his home in Haubstadt, Ind., where he had been cared for by his extended family for many years. He was 101, and had been a priest for 76 years.

Cardinal Tobin praised the life of the priest: "Father Hilary leaves a precious testimony of faithfulness. Though he retired decades ago, he retained a priestly heart and a keen interest in the parishes where he served. The archdiocese is grateful for his witness, and thanks his wonderful family for the tender, faith-filled care they lavished on Father over the last years."

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Oct. 12 at SS. Peter and Paul Church in Haubstadt, Ind., in the Diocese of Evansville.

(To read the original coverage, including additional links of interest, click on the headline for this story on our website at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †



The Criterion

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Editorial



A boy holds his Nativity scene as Pope Francis leads the *Angelus* from the window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 11. In an annual tradition, Roman children brought their figurines of the baby Jesus to the *Angelus*. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

The awesomeness of Christmas each year

Aren't you awed by the feast we celebrate on Christmas?

Think about it: Almighty God became a human being, with all our limitations, without losing his divinity. As St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians says, quoting an early Christian hymn, "Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself" (Phil 2:6-8).

He most assuredly humbled himself. As the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, he was and remains all powerful. As St. John's Gospel says: "All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:3).

But he "emptied himself" when he became human. He began as an embryo like all other human beings, then a fetus and finally the baby whose birth we celebrate on Sunday. A baby completely dependent upon other humans to care for him. That's how much God the Son humbled himself.

Why did he do that? Here's what St. Pope Leo the Great wrote: "In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind" (from the Office of Readings for Christmas).

St. Athanasius put it more succinctly when he wrote, "God became man so that man might become God." He meant that someday, after we die, we will actually share in God's divinity in heaven. It's what we pray for in every Mass when, during the Offertory, the priest adds a drop of water to wine and says, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

However, we could not share in Christ's divinity if he had not taken on our human nature. Since the sin of Adam

and Eve, humans had been shut out of heaven. We had to be reconciled to God, and it was God himself who determined how and when that would take place, as the quotation from St. Leo the Great above said.

That reconciliation could not be accomplished by just any human being, but it required a human to do it. So God the Father sent his Son to become fully human to achieve that reconciliation.

As John's Gospel explained, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17).

Our Scriptures tell us that Jesus has existed from all eternity, from that quote in the second paragraph to the one immediately above. He was not a man who somehow became God. He was God who became man, because of God's love for us. Isn't that amazing?

It's true that we mere humans have difficulties understanding how someone can be both human and divine. Trying to figure that out is what caused all sorts of beliefs early in Christianity, some of them emphasizing Jesus' divinity at the expense of his humanity and others his humanity at the expense of his divinity. He was both at the same time.

As a human, he "advanced in wisdom and age" (Lk 2:52). He knew hunger and thirst, and slept when he was tired. He wept. And, of course, he suffered and died. When he prayed, he didn't pray to himself, but to his Father.

But, of course, he also did things that humans can't do: He walked on water, calmed a stormy sea, multiplied food, raised the dead, and forgave sinners. This was his divine nature.

So let us rejoice at Jesus' birth. We see him in a lowly manger in a cave in the small town of Bethlehem, on the outskirts of the Roman Empire. But we know that he is the Savior of the world. We're awed.

—John F. Fink

The Human Side/Father Eugene Hemrick

A new year of hope

Some have suggested with the closing of the Holy Year of Mercy, 2017 should be a Year of Hope.



Weary, disillusioned and depressed describe best the feelings of many people I know. The cause is not only our political malaise, but a world of violence and contradictions.

Add to this the fact that we have entered a pharmaceutical age in which commercials constantly remind us of illnesses we might contract and medicines to counter them; that is, if you don't get reactions more detrimental than the promised cure.

Where do we find hope that counters a seemingly hopeless 2017?

The first reading of the Mass from the second Sunday of Advent contained our answer. In it, Isaiah cries out, "On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord" (Is 11:1-3a).

It is from the line of Jesse, the father of David, that Christ comes, possessing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Two of those gifts

in particular contain the hope we desire: wisdom and fear of the Lord.

Wisdom promotes good judgment, i.e., desiring truth and pursuing it to the best of our ability. More important, it includes enlisting God's wisdom in seeking truth.

It is said that each time St. Thomas Aquinas composed a part of his magnificent work, the *Summa Theologica*, he raised it to God, seeking God's wisdom in his pursuit of truth. To succeed, truth needs humility and its gift of docility.

Unfortunately, the crowd's voice often crowds out God's voice.

What is particularly disillusioning presently is bashing truth. Worse than this, is the spirit in which it is done: vicious and godless. No wonder many are depressed. The human spirit depends on trustworthiness: Marriages, governments and churches can't succeed without it. When it is missing, failure follows.

Fear of the Lord doesn't imply being frightened. Rather, it is being in awe of God and God's wonders. It reminds those fulfilling heavy responsibilities that they aren't working for their own aggrandizement, but they are carrying out God's work on Earth, pointing them heavenward and away from self.

Living the Spirit of the Lord is 2017's best shot at a hope-filled year.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

Letter to the Editor

Catholic War Veterans looking to increase presence across Indiana

I am a U.S. veteran deeply wanting to share the Catholic faith.

I have recently returned from a very memorable trip to Liberty, Mo., celebrating and commemorating the cause for canonization of the heroic battlefield Navy Chaplain, Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, MaryKnoll Missionary, Servant of God, and posthumous recipient of The Congressional Medal of Honor. I recommend that you go to capodannoguild.org to follow the account for canonization.

An account of the battlefield situation in which Father Capodanno served valiantly attending to the U.S. Marines of Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, can be found in the book titled *Swift Sword* by Doyle D. Glass. Father Capodanno was killed in action on Sept. 4, 1967.

I introduced to Bishop Charles C. Thompson of Evansville last February my desire to establish the first presence of the Catholic War Veterans (CWV) organization within Indiana. Bishop Thompson readily endorsed and blessed this initiative, appointing my pastor, Father J. Kenneth Walker as post chaplain.

I was elected to the position of Post Commander, Post 1976, in Martin County. I am asking all diocesan newspapers in Indiana to notify all veteran service organization posts and chapters within Indiana.

The purpose is to spread the word about this prominent 81-year-old federally chartered veteran service organization, which was founded by Father Edward J. Higgins, in the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., on May 19, 1935.

Having convened several World War I veterans concerned about the "isms" of that time, notably communism and Naziism, Father Higgins traveled to Rome and received a papal blessing from Pope Pius XI on June 11, 1935, for this new organization.

The CWV, similar to the Knights of Columbus in spreading the Catholic faith by word and example, continues to gain new membership in both posts and auxiliary.

The CWV mandates, as its primary responsibility, to diligently cooperate with all veterans service organizations

in providing for the needs, benefits and welfare of all veterans and their families.

If you would like to ask questions about how to become a member of a CWV Veterans Post, seek requirements for joining the Auxiliary, or perhaps petition information for forming a Post (a minimum of 15 veterans is required), please e-mail me at buderler@gmail.com.

The requirements to become a CWV member of a post include:

- Being a baptized Catholic, who was at least honorably discharged, and served at least 90 days of active duty.

The requirement to become a CWV member of an auxiliary include:

- Being related to a veteran within two degrees.

George (Bud) Erler, Jr.
Post Commander,
The Catholic War Veterans of The U.S.A., Inc.
Bishop Simon Bruté, Servant of God,
Memorial Post 1976
Martin County

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

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

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

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

Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.



REJOICE IN THE LORD

ALÉGRENSE EN EL SEÑOR

God is closer to us than we dare admit

This is my final contribution to *The Criterion's* "Rejoice in the Lord" column. I don't know about you, but I will miss these weekly opportunities to share with you my reflections on diverse Church teachings as they impact the events of our time. But if there has to be a final column, I'm happy that it is being published just a few days before the wonderful celebration of Christmas.

In this season of joy, we become aware once again that God is closer to us than we dare admit. The immense, all-powerful, all-knowing God who created the universe has become one of us (and one with us) in the incarnation of Jesus, the Word made flesh. God's most profound intervention in human history—and in the lives of each one of us—shows beyond any doubt how much God cares for us.

The fact that Jesus is born so humbly, in a stable surrounded by his loving family and by social outcasts (shepherds) and domestic animals, is a scandal by any human standard. We are conditioned to look for God among the wealthy and powerful, the "important people" who govern our society, who drive our economy and who control

institutions of influence such as the media, our businesses, schools and health care agencies, and, yes, the Church.

But God surprises us. God inverts our values, showing us that the first will be last, the lowly will be raised up, the rich will be sent away empty, and the poor will inherit the Earth and all its treasures.

God's ways are not our ways. High is low. Rich is poor. Power is service. These are God's ways, not our ways. Most amazing of all the divine paradoxes is the fact that the all-powerful God comes to us in the absolute vulnerability of a newborn infant, who can do nothing for himself and is completely dependent on the loving care he receives from his mother and his foster father.

Jesus, who is both divine and human, can be held in the arms of his parents, nursed by his mother, and protected from the elements by a mere stable. His life can be threatened by a jealous and cruel despot who slaughters the innocent, and after narrowly escaping and being forced to flee to another country as a homeless refugee, he can

return to his native land to "grow in wisdom, age and grace" in a community that nurtures and supports him and his family according to the ancient faith of Israel.

This is a strange story that has become so familiar over the years that we risk losing sight of its power. The Christmas story is so much more than the quiet, domestic tale we have turned it into. Yes, there is plenty of warmth, beauty and hope here. In the dead of winter, when days are short and nights are long, we are right to be comforted by the Christmas story. And in tense and uncertain times such as ours, it is good to be reminded that God does not abandon us or keep us at arm's length.

But the fact of God's intimate closeness makes demands on us that are uncomfortable. Do we live the Christmas paradox in our daily lives? What are we doing to care for the poor and homeless? How are we working to transform cultural, political and economic structures that are oppressive and unjust? Do we welcome strangers—especially those who have been cast out of their homeland? Do we insist that the most vulnerable members of our

society, including the unborn, the aged and infirm, are protected and cared for in the same way that Mary and Joseph cared for the newborn child entrusted to their care?

Christmas is a season of joy and hope. It's a time for giving and sharing all that we have ourselves received from God's abundance. The material gifts that we exchange at Christmas are symbols of the much deeper sharing God invites us to embrace. We are called to follow God's example, gratefully giving ourselves out of love for God and for the human family.

As I celebrate my last Christmas in central and southern Indiana, I pray for the strength to live the Christmas paradox in my new ministry as Archbishop of Newark, N.J. I am deeply grateful for all that you have shared with me during the past four years. Your love and prayerful support have helped me become a better man and, I hope, a more faithful bishop.

So, with some sadness but even more joy, I wish you, and everyone in our beloved Hoosier state, a Merry Christmas and God's peace in the New Year! †

Dios está más cerca de lo que nos atrevemos a reconocer

Esta es mi última columna de "Alégrense en el Señor" para *The Criterion*. No sé si a ustedes les pasará igual, pero yo voy a extrañar la oportunidad semanal de compartir con ustedes mis reflexiones sobre las distintas enseñanzas de la Iglesia y sus repercusiones sobre los eventos de nuestros tiempos. Pero si hubiera tenido que elegir el momento para publicar mi última columna, me alegra que haya sido unos días antes de la maravillosa celebración de la Navidad.

En esta época de alegría tomamos conciencia una vez más de que Dios está más cerca de nosotros de lo que nos atrevemos a admitir. El inmenso, todopoderoso y omnisciente Dios que creó el universo se ha convertido en uno de nosotros (y en uno con nosotros) a través de la encarnación de Jesús, el Verbo hecho carne. La intervención más grande de Dios en la historia humana, y en las vidas de todos nosotros, nos demuestra sin lugar a dudas lo mucho que Dios se preocupa por nosotros.

El hecho de que Jesús hubiera nacido tan humilde, en un establo rodeado de su amorosa familia, de los marginados de la sociedad (los pastores) y de animales domésticos constituye un escándalo desde cualquier perspectiva humana. Estamos condicionados a buscar a Dios en la riqueza y en el poder, en "las

personas importantes" que gobiernan nuestra sociedad, que guían nuestra economía y que controlan instituciones influyentes, tales como los medios de comunicación, las empresas, las escuelas, las organizaciones médicas y, por supuesto, la Iglesia.

Pero Dios nos sorprende. Dios revoluciona nuestros valores al demostrarnos que los primeros serán los últimos, los más humildes serán ensalzados, los ricos regresarán sin nada y los pobres heredarán la Tierra y todos sus tesoros.

Los caminos de Dios son distintos de los nuestros. Lo alto es lo más bajo. El rico es pobre. El servicio es el poder. Estos son los caminos de Dios, no los nuestros. La más maravillosa de todas las paradojas divinas es el hecho de que el Dios todopoderoso viene a nosotros en la más absoluta vulnerabilidad de un recién nacido quien no puede valerse por sí mismo y depende por completo de los cuidados amorosos de su madre y de su padre adoptivo.

Jesús, que es tanto divino como humano, se acurruca en los brazos de sus padres, su madre lo amamanta y tan solo un establo lo protege contra los elementos. Su vida se ve amenazada por la envidia y un cruel déspota que masacra a los inocentes y, tras escapar por poco y verse obligado a huir a otro país como un refugiado sin hogar, puede regresar a su tierra natal para "crecer

en sabiduría, edad y gracia," en una comunidad que lo cuida y lo apoya, tanto a él como a su familia, de acuerdo con la antiquísima fe de Israel.

Estamos tan familiarizados con esta curiosa historia que con el paso de los años corremos el riesgo de olvidarnos de su grandeza. La historia de la Navidad es mucho más que el relato tranquilo y doméstico en el que la hemos convertido. Por supuesto que encierra muchísimo afecto, belleza y esperanza. En pleno invierno, cuando los días son cortos y las noches son largas, ciertamente el relato de Navidad nos brinda consuelo. Y en una época tan tensa y llena de incertidumbres como la nuestra, resulta oportuno recordar que Dios no nos abandona ni se mantiene distanciado de nosotros.

Pero la presencia tan cercana de Dios genera exigencias que nos resultan incómodas. ¿Vivimos la paradoja de la Navidad en nuestras vidas cotidianas? ¿Qué hacemos para cuidar a los pobres y los indigentes? ¿Qué hacemos para transformar las estructuras culturales, políticas y económicas opresivas e injustas? ¿Les damos la bienvenida a los extraños, especialmente aquellos que han sido expulsados de sus patrias? ¿Nos empeñamos en que los integrantes más vulnerables de nuestra sociedad, inclusive los bebés en gestación, los ancianos y los enfermos, estén

protegidos y cuidados de la misma forma que María y José cuidaron al recién nacido que fue confiado a sus cuidados?

La Navidad es una temporada de alegría y esperanza. Es una época para dar y compartir todo lo que hemos recibido de la abundancia de Dios. Los obsequios materiales que intercambiamos en Navidad son símbolos del más profundo compartir que Dios nos invita a que aceptemos. Estamos llamados a seguir el ejemplo de Dios, entregándonos agradecidamente por amor a Dios y a la familia humana.

Mientras celebro mi última Navidad en el centro y el sur de Indiana, rezo para tener la fuerza para vivir la paradoja de la Navidad en mi nuevo ministerio como Arzobispo de Newark, en Nueva Jersey. Me siento profundamente agradecido por todo lo que ustedes han compartido conmigo a lo largo de estos cuatro años. Su amor y piadoso apoyo me han ayudado a ser un mejor hombre y, espero, también un obispo más fiel.

Así que con un poco de tristeza, pero con muchísima más alegría, ¡les deseo a todos en nuestro querido estado *hoosier*, una feliz Navidad y la paz del Señor en el Año Nuevo!

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

December 27

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, held monthly on fourth Tuesday, candle-lit service with readings, meditation and music, 7 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359, rectory@saintmichaelindy.org.

December 28

Hoosier Strike and Spare, 2310 State St., New Albany. **New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries Bowl-a-thon fundraiser**, pick up a bowling pin bank at CYM office at Mount St. Francis, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mt. St. 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. 27. Information, registration: 812-923-8355, www.nadyouth.org or sandy@nadyouth.org.

2017

January 3

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

January 4

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

January 6

SS, Peter and Paul Cathedral chapel, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei Catholic Business Group**, 6:30 a.m. Mass, 7:15-8:30 a.m. breakfast at Lincoln Square Pancake House, 2330 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Information: 317-435-3447 or lumen.dei@comcast.net.

Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **First Friday devotion**, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 5:30 p.m.; reconciliation, 5:45-6:45 p.m.; Mass, 7 p.m.; Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers for the Holy Father, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9:30 p.m., sacrament of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@olgreenwood.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian, Greenwood. **Serra Club, Mass for Vocations**, 7:30 a.m., followed by coffee and donuts. Information: 317-748-1478 or smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc.

Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Serra Club Dinner Meeting**, 6-8 p.m., dinner meeting followed by speaker, \$15. Information: 317-748-1478 or smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc.

January 7

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**,

Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

Terre Haute Helpers of God's Precious Infants, 7:30 a.m. Mass at the Carmelite Monastery, 59 Allendale, Terre Haute; 8:45 a.m. car pool from St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute, to Bloomington Planned Parenthood, 421 S. College Ave., arriving 10:15 a.m.; return to St. Patrick Parish around noon. Information: Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060, mcbroom.tom@gmail.com.

January 8

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 1 p.m. Information: acfadi2014@gmail.com.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

January 10-March 28

St. Christopher Parish, Damascus Room, 5301 W. 16th St., Speedway. **Gospel of John Scripture Study**, meets weekly for 10 weeks, 7-9 p.m., open to all, \$75 payable in installments, scholarships available, registration required by Jan. 8. Information and registration: Lois Jansen, 317-241-9169 or mlj986@gmail.com.

January 10

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé**

Prayer Service, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts", 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

January 14

The Willows, 6729 Westfield Blvd, Indianapolis. **Marriage on Tap**, One in Christ facilitators Dr. Konrad and Sonia Maria Szymanski presenting, \$40 per couple includes dinner, cash bar available, 7-9:30 p.m., register by Jan. 7. Registration:

www.stluke.org. Information: 317-259-4373.

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Perfect Pastry at Home**, techniques of making pastry in a home kitchen, 1-5 p.m., \$45, registration deadline Jan. 9. Information: 812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org, events.sistersofprovidence.org.

January 18

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m.

Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

January 19

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc. †

Retreats and Programs

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

December 31-January 1, 2017

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"The Magic of Stories for Faith Hope and Love" New Year's Eve retreat**, Father Jeff Godecker presenting, Sat. 4 p.m.-Sun., noon, \$145 single, \$270 married couple. Information and registration: 317-545-7681, ext. 107, marcia.johnson@archindy.org or www.archindy.org/fatima.

2017

January 6-7

Otter Creek Retreat Center, 5165 Old Mill Rd., Bradenburg, Ky. **New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries "The Walking Dead" College Winter Retreat**, Sat., 4 p.m.-Sun., 4 p.m., \$40. Register by Dec. 28. Registration and information: 812-923-8355, www.nadyouth.org or jennifer@nadyouth.org.

January 6-8

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Tobit Marriage Preparation Weekend**, \$298 includes separate room accommodations for couple, meals, snacks and materials. Information, registration: www.archindy.org/fatima/calendar/tobit.html, marcia.johnson@archindy.org or 317-545-7681, ext. 107.

January 13-14

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Cana Preparation Conference**, \$255 with overnight accommodations (two rooms), \$185 for commuters, includes meals, snacks and materials. Information, registration: www.archindy.org/plfl/marriage-precana.html.

January 16

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St.,

Indianapolis. **Ignatian Spirituality Project, monthly evening of prayer and community**, 6-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima.

January 21

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **The Power of Forgiveness**, Providence Sister Ann Sullivan presenting, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$45 includes lunch, registration deadline Jan. 16. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org

January 30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Evening of Reflection**, 6:30-9 p.m., \$35 includes light snacks and refreshments. Information and registration: 317-545-7681, ext. 107, marcia.johnson@archindy.org or www.archindy.org/fatima. †



Hoosiers students supporting Haiti

Students from various grades at St. Louis School in Batesville pose with posters of Haitian children they and their classmates supported through St. Anthony Haiti Ministry, which helps provide education, food and medical supplies to the people of Gandou, Haiti. In just 12 days, the school children collected nearly \$3,000. To make a donation to the St. Louis/St. Anthony Haiti Ministry, log on to www.gandouministry.com. (Submitted photo)

Catholics Returning Home to be offered at St. Malachy Church starting in January

An ongoing series called "Catholics Returning Home" will be held at St. Malachy Church, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., in Brownsburg, on six consecutive Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. beginning on Jan. 3. These sessions are for

non-practicing Catholics who are seeking answers to questions about returning to the Church. There will be informal sharing and an update of the Catholic faith.

For more information, call 317-650-5751. †

Documentary on Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg to be shown on Jan. 18

A special screening of *A Sign of the Cross*, a documentary on the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, will be shown in Marian Hall Theater at Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Road, in Indianapolis, from 6-7:30 p.m. on Jan. 18.

The event will kick off a yearlong celebration honoring Marian University's

80th year in Indianapolis. The university was founded by the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

The event is free of charge and open to all.

For more information, call 317-955-6213. †

Presentation on Catholic families offered at Christ the King Church on Jan. 18

A presentation titled "Being a Catholic Family in a Busy World" will be offered at Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., in Indianapolis, from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 18.

The evening features nationally known Catholic motivational speaker Mike Patin, who uses energy, humor and stories to affirm God's goodness and

presence, while inviting others to take the next step on their journey toward God. He will share his own toolbox for raising a family of faith.

The event is sponsored by parishes of the Indianapolis North Deanery.

For more information, call Christ the King Parish office at 317-255-3666. †

Workshop helps pastoral leaders 'look deeper' at what they do

By Natalie Hoefer

When Father Daniel Bedel became a parish administrator for the first time this summer, he admits that, "with only two years of priesthood under my belt, I was scared to death!"

He cites a long list of skills he needed to hone, including "how to manage a staff, how to maintain a healthy schedule and avoid burnout, how to inspire vision and mission at the parish to help it grow in holiness and strength, [and] how to be a well-rounded priest who could teach, sanctify and govern."



Fr. Daniel Bedel

Fortunately for Father Bedel, he had an opportunity in September to learn about these

areas at the Toolbox for Pastoral Management workshop. It was sponsored by the Empowering Pastoral Leaders for Excellence in Parish Leadership and Management project, funded by a three-year grant from the Lilly Endowment.

Father Bedel, administrator of St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes in Terre Haute, lauds the pastoral management training he received while in formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Saint Meinrad. But he admits that "there's a big difference from the theory of the classroom and the reality of the parish."

He was joined by 18 other priests from the archdiocese and one from the Diocese of Saginaw, Mich., for the five-day workshop on Sept. 26-30 at Saint Meinrad.

"It was great to attend a workshop that directly spoke to the issues and worries I was experiencing as a new administrator in the midst of parish work," he says.

"I walked away with about 50 pages of notes that I'm still referencing and using months after the fact.

"Not only did the workshop bring in knowledgeable speakers that presented topics of great interest and utility to pastors, but it also brought together under one roof a wide range of ages and backgrounds from within our own presbyterate.

"There were new guys like me who were simply happy to sit in the back row and take in as much information as possible. And then there were veterans with decades of firsthand experiences who shared their stories about what worked and what didn't work for them."

Father Thomas Clegg, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg, is one such priest, with 26 years of parish pastoral experience.

But even he benefited from the Toolbox for Pastoral Management workshop.

"There's always things to learn. To me, being a pastor is an art. As with any art, there's always another way to look at things, another avenue to reach the target," he says. "It's the exciting part of being a pastor—learning more and different ways to accomplish the mission of God's work.

"In some ways, [the workshop] helped me to feel good about some of the stuff we've been doing at St. John Paul II."

The workshop was created by the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management. The group also created and offered a separate two-day Toolbox workshop for parish life coordinators and business managers, held in November at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth has been a parish life coordinator for 25 years, currently serving in that role at St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon. Like Father Clegg, Sister Shirley was open to learning new strategies despite her years of experience.



Sr. Shirley Gerth, O.S.F.

In addition to being impressed by the presenters, she appreciated the faith perspective from which they approached their topics.

"They themselves were people of faith," she says. "It's more taught than caught. If you live the faith, that can be picked up by people without saying anything. I appreciated them being people of faith, and that came across in their sessions."

Molly Ellsworth, business manager of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, found the workshop helpful not just in a practical sense, but also as a reminder of "the big picture," that "what my job is, is to support the mission of the Catholic Church."

She appreciates the opportunity not just to learn best practices for her line of work, but also to network with her peers.

"When you put however many of us in a room, it's really nice to get feedback from other folks, to see what they're doing and let you know you're not alone, that you're facing the same challenges."

The results from both workshops were overwhelmingly positive. According to Matt Hayes, Empowering Pastoral Leaders project manager, the workshop for priests received an overall rating of 4.9 on a scale of one to five, and the shorter workshop received a rating of 4.88.

"One of the things a number of them said in both groups was it was like



Priests listen to a presenter at the Toolbox for Pastoral Leaders workshop at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Saint Meinrad on Sept. 29. The workshop was made possible through the archdiocesan Empowering Pastoral Leaders for Excellence in Parish Leadership and Management project, which is funded through a Lilly Endowment grant. (Submitted photo)

drinking from a firehose, because there was so much great information," he says. "And I heard a number of priests say, 'This was the best workshop I've ever gone to.'"

All of those interviewed expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity to focus on the management aspects of their pastoral jobs.

"I think it's very important, because it's a time to step back from the desk and day-to-day routine, [to] look deeper at what it is we do every day to make sure we're doing the right things for the right reasons," says Ellsworth.

Father Clegg agrees. "Any continuing education opportunity, especially good ones like this, is such a blessing to help keep us motivated, to help keep us on track, to help us hone in on our purpose and our mission. To make those things available is a blessing that our archdiocese has taken advantage of through this grant program."

Sister Shirley believes that "any new person in pastoral leadership would benefit from attending something similar to this."

Continuing to make this and similar workshops available was a goal that retired Father Jeffrey Godecker had in mind when writing the application for the Lilly Endowment grant.

"A part of the grant work is how do we sustain what we started, how does it

continue," he explains. "We're already looking at that.

"We were overdue, I think, to do something like this. ... Management has gotten so complicated and requires a good many more skills than it did 30-40 years ago [when] there was hardly any lay staff. Now priests [and parish life coordinators] must manage, evaluate and motivate their staff, help their staff to do a better job. How [do they] do that in a way that is effective and good for the parish and good for each minister?"

Those were just the type of questions Father Bedel was hoping to have answered at the Toolbox for Pastoral Management.

"Contrary to popular belief, we're human too, and we need opportunities to grow and learn just like anyone else," he says. "Perhaps more than anyone else, because we're in the business of saving souls and bringing people to Jesus Christ."

(The next Toolbox for Pastoral Management is scheduled for Sept. 5-8, 2017, at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. For more information on the Empowering Pastoral Leaders project and its offerings, log on to www.archindy.org/leadership/index.html or contact Matt Hayes at 317-236-1562, 800-382-9836, ext. 1562, or mhayes@archindy.org.) †

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Readers share their favorite Christmas memories



A crèche titled "Jesus the Global Refugee" is seen outside Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church in Wyandanch, N.Y., on Nov. 27. The structure, designed as a refugee's lean-to, was created to call public attention to the biblical mandate to welcome immigrants and give shelter to refugees. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Unique Christmas crèche a treasured family heirloom

By Karen Gerhart

My grandfather received one of his most cherished possessions in December of 1937. His friend and co-worker at the St. Meinrad Archabbey Printing Press won it at a Christmas party bingo game. This friend gave it to my grandfather, a small-town humble man whose calmness and wisdom was palpable as a gift. This cherished present was a crèche, a crib set made in Germany.

The wooden stable, woolen sheep and Nativity figures were all crafted and painted with precision. My grandfather proudly displayed it year after year in his small house under a Christmas tree that he would decorate for his family of five children every Christmas Eve.

The years passed, and he would lose his wife to cancer. His five children would move away and have children of their own. However, the crib set was always on display as new grandchildren discovered it every Christmas, and his quiet house became alive with activity around it each year.

I was his youngest grandchild and only spent a few Christmases at his house before he passed away. However, my dad inherited the crib set. So, one December in 1987, my dad set up the crib set for the first time in his own home with me and my siblings discovering the magic of it all over again.

Every Christmas, my dad tells the story of the origin of the crib set, and now my own two young sons hear this same story and imagine and wonder as they stare at those same woolen sheep and painted Nativity figures that my grandfather handled with such care year after year.

With each year that passes, my grandfather's crèche has been a backdrop for so many Christmases. And, again this year, as we gaze in wonder at this most memorable heirloom, we remember my grandfather's love and the stillness of a winter night with a baby in a manger more than 2,000 years ago.

(Karen Gerhart is a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

Fifty years later, manger from faraway place a family tradition

By Lana Hoffman

A long time ago, in a faraway land (Florida), I spent Christmas. Having run away from home (Philadelphia) at the ripe old age of 18, I felt lost and lonely. Where was the snow, hills, ice, cold and winter coats? Surely this wasn't "the season."

Walking downtown in St. Petersburg, I passed a Kresge Five and Dime store and decided to go in. There it was—a manger complete with a donkey, three sheep, cow, three wise men, Mary, Joseph, baby

Jesus and an actual wooden manger for \$4.99. I was elated until I dug in my purse and had only \$4.53. The clerk that helped me, to this day, I think was an angel. Now it truly felt like Christmas. Yes, the clerk bagged up the manger and sold it to me for \$4.53!

That was 50 years ago! To this day, my family celebrates Christmas with my manger from that faraway place!

(Lana Hoffman is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis.) †

A sign of faith and mercy in a place of tragedy and sadness

By Sherie Berg

On Dec. 8, 2015, Pope Francis opened the doors to St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and announced a Holy Year of Mercy. On Dec. 9, 2015, my 13-year-old grandson was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. He was admitted that day to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Thus began a most difficult journey. This was not what we wanted for Christmas.

Only a generation ago, this most common of the childhood cancers claimed all its children. Mercifully, that is no longer the case and the prognosis is good, although the treatment is most difficult.

Mercifully, too, Ian lives not far from Riley, so much of his treatment could be outpatient. Hospitals are not fun places to spend your teenage years. In the best case scenario, this was going to be a three-year ordeal.

It would be impossible to say how wonderful the folks at Riley are. Hope happens here, as they say. Doctors, medical students, nurses (most especially pediatric oncology nurses), technicians, support staff, volunteers, even the people who clean the rooms are awesome. No one leaves a patient's room without asking if there is anything you need. But the fifth floor of Riley, Hematology/Oncology, is a terrifying place to be. So many children, so much pain.

Ian spent the next seven days at Riley on the fifth floor. The rooms are large. They have to be because sometimes there are a lot of people working on a single child in distress. The doors to the rooms are glass with blinds for privacy. Sometimes, patients or their families and friends decorate the rooms and doors, writing things like "Warrior Princess,"

"Going home tomorrow," "Pokemon spoken here" and "No vampires need apply" on the outside of the door.

The rooms have a couch, a reclining chair, a TV and Wii game. They are pretty comfortable, but then too often stays are long. The more decorated the room, the more likely it is that the child has been there a long time.

After Ian was released from the hospital, he was scheduled for weekly chemotherapy at the Riley clinic next door to the hospital. On Dec. 24, he and his parents went to the clinic for his weekly chemo. We expected he would be sick on Christmas from the chemo, but at least he would be home. That did not happen.

Blood tests came back with bad news, and he was admitted to the hospital. We were all very distressed. As I walked to his room that Christmas Eve, not in a hopeful Christmas mood, I noticed something written on one of the doors. Someone had drawn a Christmas tree with a star on top. Written inside the tree were the words: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary."

There on the children's cancer floor, in a place of tragedy and sadness, was faith. This was my Christmas miracle.

It has been a year now since our day of infancy. There have been other hospital admissions, some longer, some when Ian was much sicker, but I will remember that one as a sign of faith in a difficult time. A time of mercy, in a Holy Year of Mercy.

(Sherie Berg is a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Granddaughter, Father Noah create special Christmas Eve memory

By Jená Hartman

When Father Noah Casey was pastor at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, he had a very special tradition for Christmas Eve Mass. Father Noah would select a young child from the parish to carry the statue of Baby Jesus during the entrance procession to be placed in the beautiful crèche at the front of the church.

For several years, my husband Dale, and I were ushers for the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. Often, we would have our granddaughter Maigan with us since her mother was working 12-hour shifts as a nurse. Maigan would smile and greet the worshippers with me, and helped with the bulletins at the conclusion of Mass. Maigan would always bring her favorite doll with her to Mass, lovingly placing the doll in our back pew and covering her with the blanket which I had knitted for it.

The year Maigan was almost 5, she was selected to be the child to carry Baby Jesus for Christmas Eve Mass. With great anticipation, we purchased the traditional red velvet dress, matching hair accessory and new shoes. Maigan was excited and we, as proud grandparents, were looking forward to the honor.

On a very cold, starry night, we arrived for Christmas Eve Mass with our Maigan looking like a "Christmas princess," and her ever-present doll was also dressed in a new outfit and warmly wrapped in her blanket. Father Noah came to the narthex with the beautiful statue of Baby Jesus. I have no idea where Father Noah had had that statue, but it was frigid! He gently placed the statue in

Maigan's arms and explained to her how the procession would be and what she was to do.

While he was talking to her, I noticed her occasionally looking at her doll securely wrapped in the knitted blanket. After his instructions, Father Noah turned to speak with the altar servers and the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion. Maigan said to me, "Oma, Baby Jesus is cold; do you think that he would like my baby's blanket?" Knowing that Father Noah would have had a "spell" and a chuckle for the beautiful statue to have been covered with a knitted blanket, I assured Maigan that Baby Jesus would soon be laying in his warm manger at the front of the church close to his loving parents, Mary and Joseph.

Maigan processed up the aisle, sweetly carrying Baby Jesus with all of the dignity and adoration that an almost 5-year-old could have had. But, I really think she proceeded to the altar and symbolically brought the Christ Child into our midst, that maybe she had the right idea of carrying and sharing and loving what Jesus came to proclaim to all of us. Maybe that night she grasped the true concept of worshipping the Babe of Bethlehem.

Maigan is now in high school. I doubt that this Christmas Eve memory is as vivid for her as it is for Dale and me. But it was special that cold night, and it is still very special to us these many years later, remembering our special granddaughter and our beloved Father Noah Casey.

(Jená Hartman, archdiocesan Birthline coordinator, is a member of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood.) †

For a poor little girl, a Christmas wish comes true in children's home

By Darlene Davis

Up until that year, Christmas had been pretty lean for my family. In fact, many years it had been just another day.

That year when the country song "I Saw Momma Kissing Santa Claus" had become a hit, my family had been too poor to be able to afford Christmas presents or to hope for Santa at all.

See more memories on page 10.

Because of our poverty and problems in the family, several of us children had been placed in Kentucky Children's Home for our own safety. It was a strange and scary thing for me, a child of six and the youngest child in the orphanage at that time. The unfamiliar routine, discipline and regulations were bewildering to me. But soon I adjusted, as children do, and I began to enjoy the security and the dependability of the place.

As Christmas approached, there was a new kind of current in the air. Children who had been there for past Christmases began to share their excitement. "Ask for anything you want!" they told the younger ones of us. "You will only get one thing, but make the list long anyway. You never know!"

I had watched many of the girls in the orphanage skating out on the sidewalks, and I had longed to have a pair of roller skates so I could join them. Unaccustomed to asking for gifts, let alone receiving them, I limited my list to one thing—roller skates.

A few weeks before Christmas we children, dressed in our Sunday best, were loaded onto a bus and taken to a beautiful place in Louisville for a Christmas party. (Many years later, I learned that it was the Brown Hotel.) I just remember thinking how glamorous the place was. Crystal chandeliers, beautiful carpet, enormous Christmas trees and dazzling decorations gave this little 6-year-old the impression of a Christmas wonderland. I had never been in such a luxurious place in all my short life!

We were treated to a meal of hot dogs and macaroni and cheese. Excitement grew as bells began to jingle, and suddenly, Santa

appeared, handing out little stiff, red, mesh stockings stuffed with candy and little trinkets and coloring books and crayons. There was one for each child! I remember being so excited that it did not have to be shared with others! I supposed that this surely was the one gift that we were to get for Christmas. And it was so much more than just one gift! It was stuffed with gifts! My little mind wondered, "How could Christmas get any better?" I clung to my little scratchy, stiff, red stocking all the way back to the orphanage, and hung it carefully in my locker after having eaten most of the candy.

As Christmas Day approached, there was a noticeable change in the appearance of the Christmas tree that stood in the corner of the living room in the girls' quarters. Packages began to appear under the tree in all sizes and shapes, wrapped and ribboned with colorful paper and bows. Though it was fun to watch this expansion of the Christmas tree, it did not occur to me, a child unaccustomed to receiving gifts, that any of these pretty packages were for me.

On Christmas morning, everyone gathered in the living room after breakfast, and all of a sudden the beautiful gifts began to be distributed. My anticipation began to grow as child after child received a gift to open. Maybe one of these lovely packages was for me after all!

Paper and ribbon flew in all directions as squeals of delight filled the room. Then suddenly a package appeared in my lap. It was so beautiful that I hesitated a moment to open it, but not for long. As I tore into the box, I realized that my best wish for Christmas had come true. There in my lap was a shiny new pair of clamp-on roller skates!

As I have reflected on that Christmas over the years, I have thought of how easy it is to get caught up in all that Christmas has come to entail. Then I remember how a simple pair of roller skates and a cheap little red stocking were once all I needed to have the best and most joyful Christmas of my young life.

(Darlene Davis is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.) †

Feast of the Seven Fishes has special Christmas meaning for family

By Thomas Rillo

My father and mother were both born in Torecuso, Italy. It was a small Italian village north of Benevento, a medium-size Italian city. According to my son Tom, the three most dominant names in Torecuso were Iannella, Zotti and Rillo. My mother spent her early childhood in the United States, returning for her teen years and then returning to the United States. Both were steeped in the traditions of Meso Giorno, (middle or Southern Italy). One of these traditions was *Festa dei Sette Pesci*, or the Feast of the Seven Fishes.

As a young boy, I remember how my mother prepared the Feast of the Seven Fishes. It was not a feast as such, but rather a fasting or abstaining from meat and dairy products. It was always prepared on *La Vigilia* or Christmas Eve. It was OK to eat seafood before going to midnight Mass because it was not meat. We could eat meat only after receiving Communion.

My brother John and I would return home from Mass, and Mom would have hot meatballs on crisp Italian bread. It was a treat, although she would want to see the Church bulletin as proof that we were actually there. I can remember helping mom with preparing the food for the feast. It was my job to kill the eels that were one seafood item. Nonna, my maternal grandmother, would kill the eels in the bathtub. When she was too old for this, I took over the job.

The Feast of the Seven Fishes had its origin in the southern region in places

like Naples and Sicily. It was not known in northern Italy. The Feast of the Seven Fishes was really all about seafood and family.

The number seven is revered in the Scriptures. *La Festa dei Sette Pesci* includes the seven fishes because of the seven sacraments, the seven virtues of Christ theology, the seven days it took for Joseph and Mary to reach Egypt, and the seven days it took God to create the Earth.

Some Italian families include 13 fishes to represent the 12 Apostles plus Jesus. Some families just include 11 fishes, and exclude Jesus and Judas Iscariot. Other families just have three fishes to represent the three wise men or the Holy Trinity. Other families just put the seven fishes in a stew called *clupino*.

My family always did just the seven fishes. My mother would say that seven was important because of the seven sacraments. Now my son Kevin carries the tradition forward. He has accepted the responsibility of preparing the feast, and he has kicked me out of my own kitchen. I can appreciate his doing so. His carrying out the tradition has lifted my heart. If my heart had wings, it would soar across the sky taking advantage of the family updrafts of love and familial unity.

It is the best Christmas gift that I could ever wish for—bringing the entire family together in mutual love and reverence for the birth of Jesus Christ.

(Thomas Rillo is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington.) †



Pilgrims pray on Dec. 17 in the grotto of the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

Homeless man shares in celebration of Christ's birth

By Arleen Krebs

On April 27, 2001, our beloved Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Indianapolis suffered a \$1 million electrical fire. For almost two years, we were forced to celebrate Mass in our parish hall down the street. On occasion, a homeless person from nearby downtown would amble in and halfway participate in the Mass. But, more often than not, they would leave after a short time.

On Christmas Eve, the snow was falling at a fast pace. The parish hall was full, and Mass had just started when two homeless men came in and sat down. One was obviously Catholic and followed along perfectly, while the other just sat there

quietly and finally left early.

When the Mass was over, the other man left and was walking toward downtown in the falling snow.

As we passed him in our warm car, I had my husband stop, and I went up to the man with \$20 in my hand. I hugged him, and said I was glad to see him in church tonight. He immediately started crying, and said he didn't want this kind of life anymore but didn't know what to do. He asked me to pray for him, and off he went.

Fifteen years later, I still wonder what happened to him.

(Arleen Krebs is a member of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Family continues much-loved Christmas tradition full of fun

By Cecelia Kiley

We had a Christmas tradition that Mom and Dad started years ago, and now my siblings and I continue to carry it forth.

Red, green, blue or white balls are formed with copious wrappings of crepe paper. Inside each ball, one might find a note saying, "Sorry, better luck next time," or better yet, a \$20 bill!

As family members choose a ball to unwrap on Christmas Day, excitement

builds as tons of paper fills the room and the lucky recipient yells out a win!

I remember the smile on Dad's face as he witnessed the fun created by this little tradition. And now, it is my turn to smile as I watch my children and grandchildren explode with delight when I bring out the much-loved Christmas balls!

(Cecelia Kiley is a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.) †

Roncalli, St. Jude families help make special Christmas wish come true

By Kathleen Lynch

In November of 2009, our 15-year-old daughter, Kaitlin, was hospitalized for 30 days recovering from a stem-cell transplant for recurring Hodgkin lymphoma. She had been battling the disease since September of 2008, just weeks into her freshman year at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. She was released from Riley Hospital on the day before Thanksgiving, but the quarantine period for recovery was approximately six months.

There were two things Kaitlin really wanted for Christmas that year. One was to attend the Christmas choir program at Roncalli, and the other was to attend midnight Mass at our home parish of St. Jude. While both of these seemed out of the question since she was supposed to stay away from large crowds, I made the contacts to see if her wishes were possible.

I shouldn't have been surprised when Chuck Weisenbach, the principal at Roncalli, made arrangements for her and me to be in the loft of the auditorium before any of the students arrived for the Christmas concert at Roncalli. This way, she could be a part of the program and see her friends while staying away from personal contact.

The smile on her face as the kids looked up and waved, cheered and blew kisses to her was priceless! The whole school rallied around her being there and making it a good Christmas for her!

It was also not surprising that Father Steve Banet and the St. Jude family made arrangements for our whole family to be at Mass early and to be in the front by the chapel area—again away from a lot of people, but a part of the beautiful celebration.

At Communion, Father Steve brought Communion to Katie so that she was able to stay protected from the crowds. But this special place at Mass allowed her to see so many people that had been praying for her and to, once again, feel the love of waves, blown kisses and prayers.

These two events made Christmas 2009 one of the most special to our family. It allowed us to witness the true meaning of Christmas, and the special love from the wonderful people at Roncalli and St. Jude.

It made Christmas wishes come true for a 15-year-old girl and a lasting memory for her entire family.

(Kathleen Lynch is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Men's conference participants offer public witness to faith

By Sean Gallagher

Some 800 men from across Indiana and beyond filled a cavernous hall on Nov. 19 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis for the 10th annual Indiana Catholic Men's Conference.

Inside that building, the men were renewed in their faith through prayer and hearing inspiring presentations on the faith and how to live it out in their daily lives.

And in the middle of the conference, these men took their faith to the streets of downtown Indianapolis on a cold, blustery day in a long and winding eucharistic procession that went by the Indiana Statehouse and ended at St. John the Evangelist Church.

The attendees then filled the large church to capacity for a midday Mass celebrated by Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese and concelebrated by several priests.

Jason Frey, a young husband and father from St. Louis Parish in Batesville, has attended most of the men's conferences and was impressed by the eucharistic procession.

"It was a powerful walk of faith and witness of faith," said Frey. "With 800 men, it was like unlike anything that I'd ever seen."

David Gorsage, a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, has likewise attended most of the conferences.

As the men walked in prayer by the Statehouse, he couldn't help but think of the many officials who will soon be working there because they were chosen in a historic election days earlier.

"It's what our country needs," said Gorsage of the procession. "It's about Catholic men who oversee families, businesses, communities. They're coming

together to pray for those that we've elected.

"We need healing. And this is a great gesture of our faith to help them know that we're here to pray for our nation, our leaders and for healing."

Bishop Doherty reflected on the election in his homily, saying that the conference "comes at a good time, because some people felt compelled to let go of themselves in order to become part of our political process. And that would be the worst crime and theft ever."

He expressed his hope that the conference would help Catholic men to renew their convictions about their faith and hold it strongly, no matter how much the world might tempt them to compromise them.

Bishop Doherty urged his listeners to make their own the teaching of St. John Paul II that Jesus' Incarnation brought about a heightened brotherhood among all humanity.

"If you think this is a glib piece of theology, think about what it means in terms of our national conversation right now," said Bishop Doherty, "about the dignity of other people, whether they are documented or not, whether they are of our political party or not, whether they are from a non-Christian country or still living there or not."

Conference speaker Father Larry Richards, a priest of the Diocese of Erie, Pa., also had the election on his mind when he spoke in the convention center, encouraging attendees to not judge people with whom they have sharp disagreements.

"We make them evil," said Father Richards, a best-selling author and popular speaker. "Right? Instead of judging each other, we've got to start loving each other. We've got to do this.



Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, holds a monstrance while leading a eucharistic procession on Nov. 19 past the Indiana Statehouse during the 10th annual Indiana Catholic Men's Conference. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

"We're not truly what it is to be a man or woman of Christ until we start praying that the person that we hate the most on this Earth gets to sit next to us forever in heaven."

Walking over to a large crucifix on a stage in the hall, Father Richards said that sacrificing oneself for the good of another is what true masculinity is all about.

"This is graced masculinity," he said. "This is what it is to be a man. Be strong enough to lay down your life in love. That is the light in the darkness. This is what it is to surrender yourself completely to the will of God. This was when Christ was most powerful, when he was most weak.

"This is what brought you salvation. Without this, you would be damned. This is what saved us. And so, when we're showing the light in the darkness, we're showing the power of love—God's love. Not a weak love."

See CONFERENCE, page 14



Popular Catholic author and speaker, Father Larry Richards, discusses the power of "graced masculinity" during the Nov. 19 Indiana Catholic Men's Conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Father Richards is a priest of the Diocese of Erie, Pa.

Pope to visit Fatima in May 2017

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican confirmed that Pope Francis will visit Portugal in 2017 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions of Fatima.



Pope Francis

The pope, who accepted the invitation made by President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and the bishops of Portugal, "will go on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima from May 12-13," the Vatican

announced on Dec. 17.

The pilgrimage will mark the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions, which first began on May 13, 1917, when three shepherd children reported seeing the Virgin Mary.

The apparitions continued once a month until Oct. 13, 1917, and later were declared worthy of belief by the Catholic Church.

Father Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Fatima shrine, told *Agencia Ecclesia*, the news agency of the Portuguese bishops' conference, that the visit was a "cause for joy" for the shrine. †

Guadalupe Mass leads to special memory for teacher and family

Dr. Susan E. Israel

During Christmas of 1996, I was given the special Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe to prepare for at St. Luke the Evangelist School where I was a fourth-grade teacher.

This was the very first time I did this Mass, and I knew it was a very special one.

That year, I had a student named Michael Feeser. Michael was a very good boy, and only on occasion would he challenge my level of patience. He had a good sense of humor, but by no means was a natural actor. I really contemplated who to choose to act the part of Juan Diego in the Mass.

When I selected Michael, he said he just didn't think he could do it and he thought others would be so much better at it. I reassured Michael that I really wanted him to do this more than anyone else in the class. I told him he would do a great job.

It turns out Michael did do a

wonderful job. He knew all his parts, and I can still envision him today gathering up the real roses we had in the Mass. This was a really special Mass for me that no one really knows about. I am not sure why I selected Michael. It could have been Providence.

I recall vividly watching Michael's mother watching and really enjoying that play about the story of Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The following summer, Michael died. To this day, I feel like Michael's mother received the most special gift to watch her son at the Mass play the most important part of Juan.

This Christmas memory has always touched my heart. I could not have known what the summer was going to bring with the unexpected death, but somehow the Blessed Mother did, and she wanted that Mother to have this very special gift.

(Dr. Susan E. Israel is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Memories of grandmothers, and a Ritter holiday tradition

By Mark Hummer

My dad used to tell me "you are your Grandma Hummer's favorite," and one year when I was in Cub Scouts, I made her a candle holder for a Christmas candle. A few years later, I made her a pheasant in shop class. She kept both of those on her display case for everyone to see right up until she passed away in 1987. Everyone who came into contact with her quickly agreed that she had the patience of a saint.

My mother's mother—my grandmother Aubell—used to like to say

"that birds of a feather flock together, and we need to count our blessings." She also said, "It is indeed true that what goes around comes around, and blessed are the pure of heart."

For our family, the Christmas and holiday season kicks off with the Cardinal Ritter annual Thanksgiving feast where we help out. It is a huge event where volunteers feed staff, students and clergy, and a full-course lunch is enjoyed by all. It is a truly joyous event.

(Mark Hummer is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Christmas celebrates mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God

By David Gibson

The Christmas story is vibrant and fast-moving, replete with vivid images of angels celebrating an infant's birth and shepherds going "in haste" to find this newborn child, astonished to discover him "lying in the manger" (Lk 2:16).

Christians happily listen to this story every year. Can you imagine Christmas without it?

Some may think it resembles children's stories in certain ways, and sure, it is a marvelous story for children. But there are compelling reasons for adults to hear it again and again as well.

Without the story of the birth in Bethlehem of an infant named Jesus—without his birth as a real child needing a place to sleep peacefully, as all babies do—Christianity would be a different kind of faith.

The familiar scene of Jesus lying in a manger, cared for by Mary and Joseph, points beyond itself to remind believers that this child is the Word of God, who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14).

Yes, he is "the Word of God."

Yes, he is the Word "made flesh."

So the story of Christmas proclaims the incarnation of God's Son. It reveals, as the Second Vatican Council said, that the Son of God "born of the Virgin Mary" truly has been "made one of us, like us in all things except sin" ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," #22).

"The incarnation of the Word in a human family, in Nazareth, by its very newness changed the history of the world," Pope Francis wrote in *"Amoris Laetitia"* ("The Joy of Love"), his apostolic exhortation on marriage and the family released earlier this year (#65).

"We need to enter into the mystery of Jesus' birth," said the pope. We need, as well, "to contemplate the joy of the shepherds before the manger, the adoration of the Magi and the [Holy

Family's] flight into Egypt, in which Jesus shares his people's experience of exile, persecution and humiliation" (#65).

It also would be good, Pope Francis continued, "to peer into those 30 long years when Jesus earned his keep by the work of his hands, reciting the traditional prayers and expressions of his people's faith and coming to know that ancestral faith until he made it bear fruit in the mystery of the kingdom" (#65).

All of this, said the pope, "is the mystery of Christmas" (#65).

Notably, it exudes "the beauty of family life," filling families today with hope (#65).

In fact, a point Pope Francis wanted to emphasize was that "Jesus' own family, so full of grace and wisdom, did not appear unusual or different from others. That is why people found it hard to acknowledge Jesus' wisdom" (#182).

Living at St. Joseph's side, Jesus apparently acquired valuable carpentry skills. "During his days in the trade," Jesus the carpenter "doubtless would have been at home in any local 'men's shed,'" Australia's Catholic bishops said in a fall 2016 statement.

The message of the Incarnation was not always welcomed by all who considered themselves followers of Jesus. Some were convinced over the course of Christianity's first few centuries that human flesh was unsuitable for God—that it would debase divinity for God's Word to be made flesh.

Some doubted, therefore, that the Lord could be divine or one in being with God the Father. Early Christians debated such issues, and some battled over Christ's identity.

There were those who found the Incarnation a bitter pill to swallow. They wondered how the divine Word of God could enter this world as fully as the birth of Jesus informs us he did.

For Christianity's early centuries witnessed many who, viewing our physical, earthly world as a place deserving to be fled, did not believe that



A Nativity scene and Christmas tree decorate the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican on Dec. 15, 2014. The familiar scene points beyond itself to remind believers that Christ is the Word of God, who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

there is goodness in the world or in the human body—a goodness that Jesus' birth as a child affirmed.

"The Son of God coming in our flesh and sharing the joys and sorrows, the successes and failures of our life ... testifies to the astonishing love of God for all people and to the inestimable worth that he sees in them," Pope Francis wrote in a 2013 letter to an Italian journalist named Eugenio Scalfari.

The utterly charming story of Christmas is treasured by Christians for much more than its charm. It stirs thoughts of the Incarnation of the Son of God and stimulates a conversation about incarnate faith—the faith of believers today who find goodness in the world and in all human

life, and set out to bring all that goodness into the light.

So, while the Christmas story is about Jesus, it really is about us too.

As Pope Francis wrote to Scalfari, "Christian faith hinges on the Incarnation." Because of the Incarnation, moreover, "each one of us is called to make Christ's gaze and love his own."

Christian faith does not profess an "insurmountable separation between Jesus and everyone else," said the pope. Instead, "in him we are all called to be children in the one Father," and thus "brothers and sisters to one another."

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

The birth of Christ in Bethlehem pours light into a world marked by darkness

By Effie Caldarola

The first reading for midnight Mass on Christmas Eve (Is 9:1-6) is one of the most beautiful and consoling passages from the prophet Isaiah.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone" (Is 9:1).

The juxtaposition of darkness and light is a common literary and biblical theme. In the very beginning of Genesis, God sees that there is "darkness over the abyss," and by the third verse, he proclaims, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:2-3).

"God is light," 1 John 1:5 tells us, "and in him, there is no darkness at all."

In a purely physical sense, darkness is not always a bad thing. Sometimes, in the still of night when we most need rest, we embrace the darkness. Scientists tell us that our world suffers now from "light pollution." Very few places on Earth—at least in the developed world—are totally free from the glow of artificial light in the nighttime.

But we welcome darkness only because we trust that light is coming. We are confident of the dawn; eager, if we rest well, for the sunrise. In Genesis, God separates the night from the day, as if to give meaning to each by its co-dependence on the other.

In Anthony Doerr's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*, the author imagines the life of a blind French girl during World War II. Her inability to see light physically does nothing to diminish the enlightenment of her soul.

But the darkness of which Isaiah speaks is an entirely different kind of blackness than the

restfulness of night or a physical inability to see. Isaiah's darkness calls to mind the darkness that can envelop one in the depths of depression—"the land of gloom," Isaiah terms it (Is 9:1).

It is a darkness that has swallowed hope, a darkness where one has forgotten the sun's promise to rise. Walking in darkness is a terrifying metaphor. Imagine traveling over unknown terrain in total blackness, unsure of where your foot might land next.

There are moments in every human life when we are enshrouded by this kind of darkness. Perhaps that's why Isaiah's Christmas reading is so powerfully inspiring and so conducive to quiet prayer.

As Isaiah tells us of the great light that shines in this terrifying, gloomy darkness, he becomes almost ebullient with excitement and hope. Note his descriptions of our coming Savior: "Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (Is 9:5).

His words take on the cadence of finest poetry as he offers us abundant hope: "Every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for fire" (Is 9:4).

These are words of enormous promise. These are the words we breathe in, we shout, we proclaim as we experience the great light of Christ.

"For a child is born to us," Isaiah exults, "a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests" (Is 9:5).

(Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †



Palestinian Catholic Susan Abu Qubei lights a candle on Dec. 20, 2015, with her 3-year-old grandson, Luciano Barham, in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity, where tradition holds Christ was born in Bethlehem, West Bank. Christians believe the birth of Christ brought the light of God into a dark world. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

The Incarnation: This is what we celebrate this Christmas

"The heavenly Word proceeding forth, yet leaving not his Father's side."

Readers might recognize that quotation as the beginning of one of St. Thomas



Aquinas' eucharistic hymns. It is usually sung on Holy Thursday because it goes on to speak of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper.

So why did I choose that quotation for a Christmas

column? Because it seems to briefly sum up what we celebrate at Christmas: first the mystery of the Incarnation, and then the reason for the Incarnation.

In the mystery of the Incarnation, we believe that God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, actually humbled himself to become a human being without ceasing to be God.

That little baby who was born in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago was a human boy, but he was also God.

He wasn't some kind of a mixture of God and man, or part God and part man.

He was truly a human being with a human soul, but he didn't stop being God. He had both a divine nature and a human nature in the one person, Jesus.

The prologue of St. John's Gospel makes it clear that Jesus was God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1). To make it absolutely clear, John continued, "He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:2-3).

Then, "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). He didn't just put on flesh like some sort of a disguise; he "became" flesh. He was a human being just like you and me, in every way except sin.

This was the belief of Christians from the beginning. About 40 years before John wrote his Gospel, St. Paul told the Galatians, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal 4:4).

At around the same time, perhaps during the mid-50s, Paul wrote to the Philippians, quoting an already existing hymn: "Though he was in the form of

God, [Jesus] did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness" (Phil 2:6-7).

Then the hymn went on to allude to the reason for the Incarnation: "And found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:7-8). God took on a human nature to die for us in order that we might have eternal life.

St. Peter wrote that the Word became flesh to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pt 1:4). St. Athanasius wrote, "The Son of God became man so that we might become God"—a poetic expression that, because of our communion with Christ in his humanity, we now share in the qualities of God.

Back to St. Thomas Aquinas, where we began with his column: "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods."

That's what we celebrate this Christmas. †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Reflecting on childbirth can draw us closer to God

Christmas carols and cards often romanticize the birth of Christ. But it



doesn't take much consideration of what happened 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem to realize that it was incredibly difficult for the Holy Family.

Traveling over the often rugged territory from Nazareth to Bethlehem was

challenging then. It was especially so for Mary, who was nine months pregnant, to ride on a donkey in such a setting.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the only place they could find to stay was in a primitive stable, probably a nearby cave. No comfort in giving birth there.

Mary and Joseph were also separated from family and friends, who would likely have supported them in many ways had Mary given birth in Nazareth.

This seems a world away from our experiences of childbirth in the developed world, marked by professional medical competence and as much comfort given to mothers as possible. Still, if we consider child birth in our lives prayerfully, it's possible to make connections between them and the experience of the Holy Family in Bethlehem and have this strengthen our faith.

On Christmas of 2005, my sister, Kelly, her family and my parents were at our house for dinner when my sister announced to us that she was due to give birth to her and her husband's second child the following June.

My wife Cindy was nine months pregnant at the time with our second child, Raphael. With tears in her eyes, she immediately got up from her seat to give Kelly a hug and share their joy together.

The moment was reminiscent of the happiness that Mary and her kinswoman Elizabeth must have shared when Mary visited her when both were expecting the births of their miraculous children.

Twelve days later on Jan. 6, it was time for me to drive Cindy to our hospital to give birth. It was about a 25-minute drive over a crowded city street, marked at that time of the year by many potholes.

I know that every time we hit one, the pain Cindy was already experiencing in her contractions only increased. Could it have been something like the discomfort Mary endured as she rode on a donkey on the mountainous path to Bethlehem?

The pain of Cindy's labor came to a relatively quick end, though, when she gave birth to Raphael about an hour after our arrival at our hospital.

When that happened, something of what Jesus told his disciples on the night before he died was renewed in our own experience. He knew they were deeply troubled by the sense of foreboding that marked the Last Supper.

So Jesus told them, "When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world.

"So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you" (Jn 16:21-22).

Could it be that, sometime as he was growing up, Mary told Jesus about the difficult circumstances of his birth and that he then drew on that reality to give comfort to and strengthen the faith of his disciples in their time of need?

Childbirth is an intense and meaningful experience in the human condition. That was true for Christ's birth in Bethlehem and the birth of all of us.

There are other powerful moments in every human life. Receive the grace that God offers us to see those defining experiences as pathways to come closer to him at Christmas and all through the year. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

This is the day the Lord has made, so rejoice and be glad

No one seems to tire of hearing the Christmas story. Every year, we are told about the sweet baby Jesus' arrival, not only in Scripture but in many versions, including some that boggle the mind. Still, we can empathize with the poor young couple compelled by governmental edict to make a dangerous journey across country.



The wife is heavily pregnant, uncomfortable at best, being jogged along on a donkey led by her weary husband. The couple is also burdened with the mysterious knowledge that their baby was conceived by divine rather than human love, and that he is destined to fulfill the Messianic prophesy of the Jewish religion.

Naturally, as another result of being poor and humble, they can't find a shelter for the night and must sleep on the hay in a stable with the animals. While there, the young mother gives birth to a baby boy, and then the wonder begins. Visitors from the highborn three kings to the lowly shepherds arrive to pay homage to Jesus.

Non-believers sense the importance of this story, and are awed by it. Even non-religious people love it. After all, who doesn't love a baby? Or knowing that exceptional things will happen in his life, things that have affected the course of history every since?

Over many years and many retellings, the Christmas story has been embellished occasionally. We've had drummer boys and jugglers and red-nosed reindeer and who-knows-what thrown into it to add new interest. But in the end, it's still the story of Beginning, of Promise, of Hope.

With the birth of Christ comes the possibility of salvation and release from the sins of being human. Jesus comes to bring us the Good News, and to show us how to live by its tenets. His 33 years on Earth as a man gives us the example of how to live so as to gain eternal life with him in heaven. We can hope to see God.

Jesus teaches us in parables which enable us to understand profound truths. We learn that we must always think of the good of others before ourselves, that we must be generous and kind and helpful. It's easy to rattle off a list of virtues, but harder to practice them, but Jesus shows us how.

Christmas is the beginning of our

Good News, and Easter is its culmination. Both are joyous occasions and should be celebrated. Many customs have developed in all countries to do just that. As Americans, many of ours are English or German in origin, but we are a nation of immigrants and keep gaining more ways to express our joy.

In our family we enjoy the traditional Christmas fun, reading *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and *A Christmas Carol*, watching movies such as *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Story* so many times that we know the dialogue by heart, and singing Christmas carols.

We wrap gifts for those we love and send cheery messages to family, friends and acquaintances. It's a time to share joy. We take the kids to tell Santa what they want for Christmas, and then try to answer their requests or think of a way to tell them that Santa couldn't oblige them.

Most important of all, we attend the Christmas Mass and are inspired by its story all over again. Indeed, this is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

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

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

Make time beyond Christmas to stay in touch with God

Although I'm a writer, I never send Christmas letters describing the family events of the past year.



Rather, I struggle with ticking deadlines counting the days awaiting my Christmas column. Tossing and turning, I wonder: Who am I to write about such a miraculous occasion? How can I capture the glory of the season?

What can I say that hasn't been said? Lord, help me.

But, just as Christ was born in a humble manger, it is in the most ordinary events of our lives that our Lord appears and, for me, that's just how the following story came alive.

Inspiration appeared in the form of a simple e-mail, which I received one recent Christmas season. At the time, I wrote this story. With my fervent prayers, I now share it with you:

I had just finished reading an e-mail from a dear friend named Ann. Our paths hadn't crossed in months, and Ann

expressed sadness about that, closing with the following statement: *Please stay in touch, I think of you so often.*

It might as well have been penned by the hand of God himself.

He thought of us over 2,000 years ago when he sent his Son to redeem the world. He thought of us while we were yet in our mother's womb. He thinks of us today, in each moment of our lives, in every circumstance of our day.

The question is: Do we stay in touch?

In these days leading to Christmas, as I crawl in traffic snarls around shopping centers, race from department stores to specialty shops, and spend hours online making holiday purchases, I wonder if my preparations have been more about consumerism than the One whose birth we are to celebrate.

There are meals to be planned, parties to attend and gifts to be wrapped. The "to-do" list is long. I stop at the local mall, and suddenly, everything changes.

Unexpectedly, I hear resilient trumpets squeal 'Joy to the World' amidst tinkling Salvation Army bells. A fellow shopper extends a courtesy, and dusk delivers a

chorus of lights shimmering from nearby rooftops. *Please stay in touch*, I hear our God say, *I think of you so often.*

Later, I open my Bible and study the birth of Christ in the first chapter of Luke. The account captures a sense of joy and expectation, excitement and wonder. As I begin to read and pray, my focus shifts. I ponder Mary and Joseph's trust in God and the unassuming beginnings of his plan of salvation.

As I contemplate the story, the endless "to do" list loses its importance. Instead, the Christ Child arrives in the manger of my heart, delivering harmony and stillness, tranquility and goodwill.

This Christmas, may you discover peaceful joys, quiet moments and the everlasting love of Christ. Born in humble surroundings, his presence transcends all ages and reaches into our times, our activities and our hearts. Christ is eternally present to us, God's gift to all mankind.

And let's promise to stay in touch.

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Florida. She can be reached at dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com.) †

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord/Christmas/Msgr. Owen Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 25, 2016

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

The Church's liturgy includes several Masses for Christmas. These readings are those assigned for Mass during the day.

The third section of Isaiah supplies the first reading. To understand the reading, it helps to be aware of the historical context surrounding the composition of this part of Isaiah. God's Chosen People had suffered much in the previous century. Their land, regarded by the devout as sacred itself because God had given it to the people, had been conquered by invading pagans and often devastated.

In addition, all the turmoil had destroyed the social structure. Political independence was gone. Untold numbers of people were killed. Many survivors were themselves taken to Babylon, the capital of their Babylonian Empire, where they languished for four generations, far from their homeland and compelled to live in an atmosphere greatly unfriendly to their religion, scornful of all that they had known.

At long last, this exile ended, but returning to the Holy Land was a hollow achievement. The land was poor and unproductive. Misery reigned.

For much of this time, this misery had been defined in terms of personal want and abuse. Indeed, deprivation and want were everywhere. The prophets, such as Isaiah, saw deprivation in another dimension, gnawing want within the human heart for peace, hope, and a sense of strength and worth, the result from sin.

This piercing want is not inevitable. It is relieved by grasping the reality of the almighty God of Israel, the source of all peace, joy and hope, and by living accordingly. Only this matters.

For its second reading, the Church offers a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle is a marvelous revelation of God as the Trinity, and of

Jesus as Son of God, the true and full reflection of the Father.

In the third reading, the Church presents the first 18 verses of the Gospel of St. John. Each of the four Gospels has its own literary majesty and particular, inspired insight into the reality of God and salvation. But none outdoes John for depth or eloquence. Few passages, if any, in the long Gospel of John outdo the glory of these first 18 verses.

These verses, proclaimed in this Mass, are magnificent because of the soaring and profound sense they convey in relating the person and mission of Jesus. He is God's wondrous gift to humankind, given in God's eternal and unending love. He reigns in a realm far beyond the human ability to comprehend.

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

Reflection

The key to deciphering these readings, and Christmas itself, is in admitting that at the birth of Jesus, and in the reality of Jesus, circumstances and powers utterly beyond our human capacity of knowledge occurred.

Human life can be difficult. Our times testify to this fact, with all the terror and agony of so many people. Yet relief is at hand if we seize the opportunity.

The opportunity is to turn to God. He provides this opportunity marvelously and mercifully by giving us, as our own, Jesus, the Son of God.

We thus obviously, appropriately, logically celebrate the birth of Jesus. He is human, the son of Mary. Son of God, Jesus came to us as one of us. He reconciled us with God, repairing a relationship broken by human sin.

So, with the ancient Hebrew prophets, we can be hopeful and assured. Our eternal fate is guaranteed, if we take the opportunity to accept it. In Christ, we can live, truly, now and eternally. †



Daily Readings

Monday, December 26

St. Stephen, the first martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6-8b, 16bc, 17
Matthew 10:17-22

Tuesday, December 27

St. John, Apostle and evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:1a, 2-8

Wednesday, December 28

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

Thursday, December 29

Fifth Day within the Octave
of the Nativity of the Lord
St. Thomas Becket, bishop
and martyr
1 John 2:3-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 5-6
Luke 2:22-35

Friday, December 30

The Holy Family of Jesus,
Mary and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
or Colossians 3:12-21
or Colossians 3:12-17
Psalm 128:1-5
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Saturday, December 31

Seventh Day within the Octave
of the Nativity of the Lord
St. Sylvester I, pope
1 John 2:18-21
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13
John 1:1-18

Sunday, January 1

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy
Mother of God
Octave Day of the Nativity of
the Lord
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

See DAILY READINGS, page 16

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Military chaplains can lead ecumenical services but not celebrate most sacraments

QI have long been a fan of the television series "M.A.S.H." that took place during the Korean War. In a couple of the episodes, the priest on the show is asked by a soldier if he can perform a Methodist, a Jewish or a Presbyterian service for him.



In each case, the priest answers that he is allowed to perform services for all

denominations. From what I gather, this type of service was also offered during World War II as well.

My question is this: Were ministers of all faiths permitted to celebrate Mass, distribute Communion and hear confessions of Catholic servicemen during those battlefield and hospital-stay conditions? (Minnesota)

AIn wartime situations, it has always been common to have interfaith services offered by chaplains of various religious denominations.

Needless to say, not every religion can supply a member of the clergy for every military outpost. So regularly, for centuries, clergy have presided at services—open to members of all religions or of none—consisting of scriptural readings, "sermonettes," words of spiritual comfort and prayers of blessing.

To your specific question, though, ministers of other faiths have never been permitted to celebrate Mass or hear the confessions of Catholic servicemen and women. The Church's *Code of Canon Law* explains that "the minister who is able to confect the sacrament of the Eucharist in the person of Christ is a validly ordained priest alone" (#900.1).

Likewise, another provision notes that "a priest alone is the minister of the sacrament of penance" (#965), and Canon 1003 stipulates that "every priest and a priest alone validly administers the anointing of the sick."

Of course—and this happens regularly—clergy of any faith may offer prayers of blessing and words of comfort over a sick or dying Catholic, but they may not absolve or anoint.

An exception to this sacramental strictness comes with baptism: Canon

861.2 provides that "in a case of necessity any person with the right intention" may confer the sacrament of baptism licitly.

So if a serviceman dying on the battlefield wanted to be baptized a Catholic, a member of the clergy of any denomination (or a layperson, for that matter) could do so by pouring the water and saying the words of baptism.

QA discussion that is common among the various members of my parish is whether the faithful should use the "orans" posture during the Our Father.

I remember being instructed several years ago that we were to start stretching out our hands while praying the Lord's Prayer at Mass. I felt odd doing this at first, but decided that I needed to follow along as instructed.

Years later, I noticed that a religious sister and deacon serving in the parish did not observe this. So are we supposed to stretch out our hands during this prayer or not? (Missouri)

AThe U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is quite concise on the issue, saying in its guidelines that "no position is prescribed in the *Roman Missal* for an assembly gesture during the Lord's Prayer." There is simply no "rule" or guideline.

As you say, though, it has become common in some congregations for the faithful to adopt the "orans" posture—with hands extended to the side and facing up or out. The priest, by contrast, is directed specifically in the rubrics to adopt the "orans" posture during the Our Father.

Some liturgists have pointed to this as a bit of an anomaly: Generally, the celebrant extends his hands during the parts of the Mass when he is praying aloud and alone, on behalf of the congregation. During the Our Father, he is praying not on behalf of the congregation but along with them—as in the Gloria and the creed, when his hands are joined.

Perhaps future liturgical guidelines will clarify this.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Drive, Albany, N.Y., 12203.) †

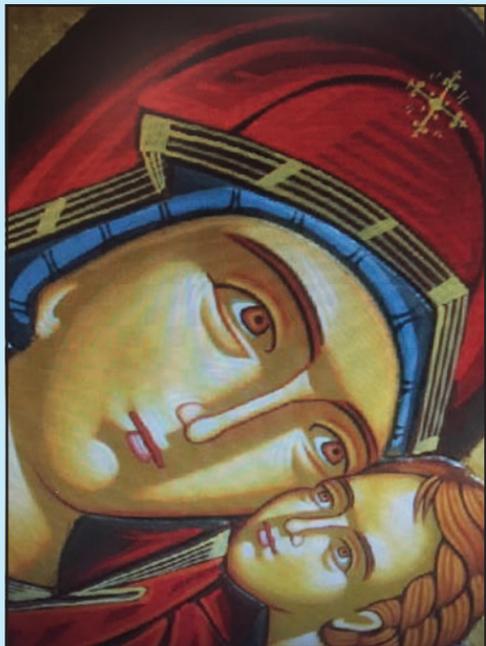
My Journey to God

First Christmas in Bethlehem

By Cathy Lamperski Dearing

I meditated for some time
On the Madonna and Child icon
Specifically their gaze
Jesus' eyes as if to say
"Look at her!"
Mary's eyes as if to say
"Look at Him!"
A Child making it all about
His mother
A mother making it all about
her Son
First Christmas
In Bethlehem

This Christmas
May we look at Mary and Jesus
And see



(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. The photo of this icon, found online at goo.gl/NWf2LJ, depicts "Our Lady of Tenderness." It is also known as "The Virgin of Vladimir," based on its one-time location in Vladimir, Russia.)

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BEDEL, John J., 89, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 11. Husband of Thelma Bedel. Father of Annette Faust, Rose Remmler, Margie Williams, Vernon and Victor Bedel. Brother of Lou Bedel. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of eight.

BUCKHORN, Florence R., 96, St. Gabriel, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Mother of Barbara Harnedy and Beverly Buckhorn. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of four. Great-great grandmother of one.

CHANEY, Elizabeth (Agesta), 93, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Mother of Dennis, Gregory and Robert Chaney. Sister of Mary Ann Amore. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of one.

DOWNES, Ora S., Jr., 89, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Husband of Jacqueline Downes. Father of Mary Watt, Christopher, Matthew, Michael, Ora III, Timothy and Thomas Downes. Brother of Jack and Paul Downes. Grandfather of 23. Great-grandfather of 34.

FIRSICH, James J., 93, St. Gabriel, Connersville,

Dec. 5. Father of Karen Lingo. Brother of Mary Ann Wilhelm and Leon Firsich. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of three.

FIX, Geraldine, 92, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Dec. 5. Mother of Lori Dagley. Grandmother of three.

FRITSCH, Edward G., 92, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Father of Judy Cleland, Margie Gillespie, Betty McKinley, Barbara Turk and Ted Fritsch. Brother of Francis Fritsch. Grandfather of 15. Great-grandfather of 13.

HARGADON, Donald J., 98, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Father of Cindy and Scott Hargadon. Grandfather of four.

HELLINGER, Martin F., Jr., 85, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Dec. 8. Husband of Carol Hellinger. Father of Terri Hibbs, Lisa Leister, Gina Ober and David Hellinger. Brother of Norma and Sylvia Crowe, Janice Groce, Barbara Young, Butch and Pete Hellinger. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 15.

KUNTZ, Emil A., 85, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Dec. 13. Husband of Patricia Kuntz. Father of Kathryn Dietz, Mary Pat Frey, Carol Lecher, Jim, Stephen and William Kuntz. Brother of Luella Bogenschutz and Ralph Kuntz. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of four.

MCKINLEY, Michael D., 41, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Husband of Michelle McKinley. Father of Madysen Salisbury, Hayden and James McKinley. Son of Joan McKinley. Grandson of Irena



80th birthday

Pope Francis accepts a birthday cake from chefs during his general audience in Paul V Hall at the Vatican on Dec. 14. The pope turned 80 on Dec. 17. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Rode. Brother of Calvin, Glen and Guy McKinley.

MUELLER, Marybeth, 95, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Mother of Joseph and Robert Mueller. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 15. Great-great-grandmother of three.

MURPHY, James L., Sr., 91, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Father of Mary Newkirk, Dan, James and John Murphy. Brother of Ann Bucholz. Grandfather of 10.

NELSON, Shirley, 89, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Mother of Ann Hartman, Mary Sweeney, Bill and Don Nelson.

Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five.

PAGE, Robert E., 87, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 7. Husband of Marcia Page. Father of Deborah Rademacher, Brian, Jeffrey, Michael and Scott Page. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of five.

ROESCH, Patty L., 89, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Mother of Barbara Roesch-Johnson, Jane, Margaret and John Roesch. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of nine.

ROSE, Jason A., 44, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 9. Husband of Bettina

Rose. Father of Jayden, Huntly and Jaeger Rose. Son of James and Rickie Rose. Grandson of Alden Rose. Brother of James Rose.

SMITH, Vicki J., 55, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 26. Mother of Sadie, Shay and Sydney Smith. Daughter of Greta Solgere. Sister of Gary and Scott Solgere.

TODD, Fern L., 91, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 6. Aunt of several.

TORRELLA, Rene J., 76, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Nov. 2. Husband of Marlene Torrella. Father of Abigail Chauhan, Carrie McCord, Tracy Snell and Andrew

Torrella. Son of Hilda Torrella. Brother of Roxann Tanner, Regina and Carlos Torrella. Grandfather of six.

UPANO, Emerito F., 76, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 23. Husband of Matilde Upano. Father of Jocelyn, Katherine, Maria, Nicole, Edilberto and Emerito, Jr. Upano. Brother of Nunilon Hermogenes, Eleanor Isada and Violeta Reyes.

VANMETER, Catherine D., 63, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Dec. 7. Mother of Jamie Chastain and Terri Keith. Daughter of Lucille Pearson. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 19. †

CONFERENCE

continued from page 10

The conference also occurred on the day before the conclusion of the Holy Year of Mercy, and Father Richards reminded his listeners of the importance of mercy in their lives.

"The definition of mercy is giving something good to someone who doesn't deserve it," he said. "Who is that, first of all? Us. We don't deserve it. And so [Christ] gives us mercy. ... We need to be men of forgiveness."

In the afternoon session, Father Ronan Murphy, a priest of the Camden, N.J., Diocese and a native of Ireland, spoke about the power of different stars in the universe and how astronomers had discovered the Pistol Star, which is believed to be the strongest star in the Milky Way.

It gives out more energy in six seconds than the sun, which Earth orbits, gives out in a year.

"The stars differ in magnitude," Father Murphy said. "Some clearly excel others. And so, too, the spiritual stars."

"Of all the spiritual stars, one outshines them all, namely, Our Lady. And we call her, 'the Star of the Sea.' Not only does she outshine them all, but she is the queen of all the other spiritual stars, ... and the angels and the saints."

Father Murphy encouraged men to call upon the saints, especially Mary through praying the rosary, in their daily lives.

The gathering ended with a presentation by Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Father James Blount, a popular speaker and preacher.

As men were lined up in the back of the hall to experience God's forgiveness in the sacrament of penance—as they were during much of the daylong conference—Father Blount reminded all who could hear him of the power of God's mercy.

"We are all broken," he said. "We're all sinners. Put that behind you. When God forgives your sins, he throws them into the deepest part of the ocean, the ocean of mercy. He throws them into the ocean and then he puts up a sign that says, 'No fishing allowed.'"

Following up on the procession and Mass, Father Blount recalled the power the Eucharist can have in the lives of the faithful.

"If you have a quandary in your life, something that you don't know the answer to, Jesus is waiting for you in the Eucharist," he said. "It's not for no reason that saints call it the bread of the strong. It's not only at Mass that we receive the Lord in Communion, but also in adoration. In adoration, there are many graces present."

Gorsage was happy to attend the conference with four of his five sons.

"It's our faith," he said. "Being a parent, I'm a first educator of my children. It's an example that I need to provide them. It's not just an event. This is our life. Our faith is our life." †

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Shrinking the Monster helps others, author heal from child abuse

By Natalie Hoefler

In the 1950's, Norbert Krapf was sexually abused—along with scores of other boys—by a priest of the Evansville, Ind., Diocese who was loved and respected by the community. After five decades of silence, Krapf—a retired



Norbert Krapf

professor, author and award-winning former Indiana Poet Laureate—confronted the monster of his past both by outing the then-deceased priest to the bishop and, in 2012, publishing a book of poems called *Catholic Boy Blues* to help

himself and other victims heal.

This year, Krapf published *Shrinking the Monster: Healing the Wounds of Our Abuse*. In Krapf's own words, the book is a "prose memoir about the experience of writing those poems, with an emphasis on the process of my recovery from the abuse." That experience, as outlined in the book, was a journey of pain, struggles, victories and healing.

Before reviewing the book, I'd like to address an important question: Why? Why write on such a dark, painful topic that many would, as he admits, rather not read about?

The answer is two-fold. First, as Krapf reiterates at several points, the book is to help other victims of child abuse heal, and to further his own healing. But that doesn't mean the book is only for victims.

Rather, it serves the additional purpose of raising awareness and prevention of the lifelong pain and damage caused by child abuse, wounds that Krapf reveals can be managed but never fully heal, wounds that can be reopened at any time.

The book has a "round the kitchen table" feel, like that of a friend sharing his heart with the reader over coffee in cozy quarters. That feel comes from the level of honesty and openness with which Krapf writes.

In the spirit of revealing the depth of the pain and the balm of healing from sexual abuse, he takes the reader through his eight-year journey from the point of knowing his story must be told, through the pain of facing "the monster" of his past after 50 years of silence, to the struggles and healing process of writing and publishing *Catholic Boy Blues*—which is helpful but not necessary to have read in order to follow the journey of *Shrinking the Monster*.

Through an accessible story-telling style, several processes come to light in the memoir.

First are the actual steps Krapf took in making his abuse known to the bishop of Evansville. Through several chapters, interwoven with the struggles abusers face in confronting their past, can be found the wheels that were set in motion at the ecclesial level once the sexual abuse by the priest was officially confirmed. Krapf acknowledges gratitude for efforts made from the local level to Pope Francis in helping victims of priest abuse and addressing the crime of such "trusted shepherds," while at the same time

expressing concern that more concrete actions need to be taken.

Second is the process of how Krapf wrote *Catholic Boy Blues* as a means of his own healing, and to speak for the voices of all children who have suffered abuse at the hands of an authority figure.

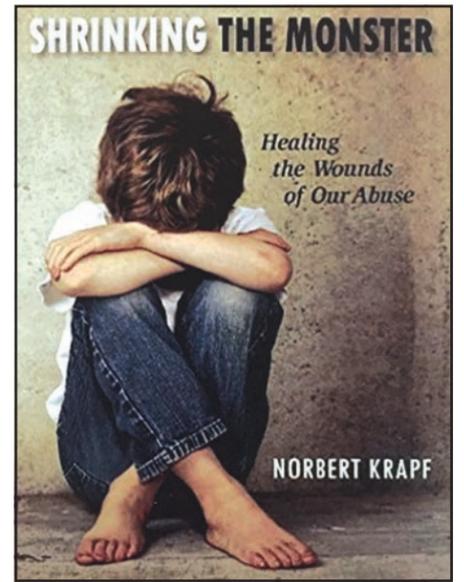
He shares how, once the vein of pain was tapped, the poetry exploded in the surprising form of various voices—the boy who was hurt, the man who carried the child within him, a helpful mentor named Mr. Blues, and eventually the voice of the priest himself.

The reader also learns of the process of publishing the poetry book—the struggles, the re-opening of wounds, and the friends who brought healing to the journey, including his wife Katherine, his former pastor Father Michael O'Mara and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin.

For readers who are victims of child abuse, look for advice throughout the book on how to shrink your own monster. Krapf shares words of his counselor that proved life-changing for him, such as, "If you remain angry at your abuser, it means he still controls you"; "If you keep the monster silent inside of you, it could grow bigger and bigger until it starts to eat you alive," and "Every time survivors tell anyone we trust something about our abuse, we heal just a little."

He also shares what he has learned about forgiveness—a step that takes a long time for victims of child abuse, he admits.

"In wondering if someone had abused [my priest abuser], in considering whether he had been victimized and wondering if he therefore victimized me and many others as a consequence,"



says Krapf, "I was making an effort to see him not simply as a moral monster, but as a human being who had serious problems and perhaps suffered from an uncontrollable illness."

Through 236 pages divided into two parts and 32 chapters, *Shrinking the Monster* is one more effort by Krapf to contribute his "small part in the larger collective effort to prevent child abuse."

Readers, prepare to hurt over the truth, gain insight into ecclesial and personal processes of dealing with the devastating effects of child abuse, and rejoice in each small victory in Krapf's effort to help others and himself in shrinking the monsters of abuse.

(Natalie Hoefler is a reporter for The Criterion.) †

Former Hispanic Ministry coordinator named director of Intercultural Ministry

By Natalie Hoefler

Oscar Castellanos, former archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry coordinator, assumed the role of director of the Office of Intercultural Ministry in November.



Oscar Castellanos

He sees the role as that of "facilitating an encounter, a faith experience, more than actually directing, ... someone that is going to facilitate the encounters, the celebrations and

especially the dialogue" among those of other cultures in the archdiocese, represented by the Asian/Pacific Islander, African-American, French-speaking and Hispanic ministries.

"It's not just going to [a group] and helping them along—it's empowering people and expanding that notion of who

we are as a Church and not so much just cultures."

Some of the new events he would like to implement include a Pentecost concert, an ethnic dinner gathering and an intercultural children's Mass.

Castellanos, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, sees intercultural ministry as vital to all Catholics, not just those of various ethnic backgrounds, "because as Catholics we believe that culture is the first way you hear the Gospel.

"Anyone who comes from a different background, we need to acknowledge and embrace that and support that. A lot of times we think it's the tip of the iceberg, that the culture is just food, music, vestments and language.

"But really it's what underneath that iceberg—values, notions of leadership, understanding the vision of the Church you were brought up in—those elements of culture that are really important."

Castellanos hopes to help build a sense of "cultural competency" in the archdiocese.

"That's something that both cultures need to do to come together before we can even pray together sometimes," he says. "I think for the folks in the pews, it's important to recognize that it doesn't come by nature. There needs to be some type of sharing, some type of listening, before we can really approach the hot issues on the table, or even the easy ones.

"A lot of people think, 'Oh, let's do a bilingual Mass.' People don't realize that it's very difficult to put together a good bilingual Mass. You have to have people that not only know liturgy, but also know about culture. How do we plan in a good way so that everyone has

a good experience and not just a clash of cultures?"

Deacon Michael Braun, director of the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministries—the umbrella under which the Intercultural Ministry Office resides—says that since joining the archdiocese as coordinator of Hispanic Ministry about a year ago, "Oscar has demonstrated commitment to servant leadership in organizing ministries and programs for Hispanic/Latino communities.

"His compassion for peoples of all ethnicities shines through in his ministry to parishes who are striving to develop unity in diversity. His experience and competence working in these settings make him an excellent choice to serve as director of the Intercultural Ministries Office." †

INTERCULTURAL

continued from page 2

could communicate anything to his predecessors, Castellanos says he would say "thank you for your perseverance and saying 'yes' to this particular ministry. You planted the seed so that others could continue the harvesting."

His vision for the ministry is to have "more communities embracing diversity, and opening their doors and hearts to other ways of thinking, organizing, celebrating and praying.

"I see this ministry promoting intercultural competency through awareness, knowledge and skills that would allow our offices, schools and parishes to be enculturated in a Church that is more diverse than ever."

That vision falls in line with what first motivated Father Taylor in creating the ministry.

"My idea was to strengthen the archdiocese so that [these cultural groups] can come to the table and be part of the archdiocese along with the majority community and be able to contribute just as much," he says.

"I think the impact in the archdiocese is that a variety of voices have been added to the picture. People have been able to witness the liturgy expressed in a variety

of ways—the same faith, the same Mass but different expressions."

Throughout central and southern Indiana, Mass in Spanish is celebrated in 19 parishes in 12 cities and towns, as well as in Vietnamese in Bloomington and Indianapolis, and also in French and Korean in the capital city.

And more cultural voices can be heard on archdiocesan office boards, another goal of the Intercultural Ministry—not just to minister to Catholics of other cultures, but to bring those voices to all aspects of the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Such intercultural participation is simply practical, says Pimentel-Gannon.

"Our world and this country are changing," she says. "The majority will be the minority, and in some cases already is. The more readily you are open to this, the more you're going to enjoy the journey. It's like fighting something that we have no control over, but rather being able to appreciate that we're all God's creation."

She likens intercultural efforts in the Church to "bringing together a prism where no one light or color is better than the other. Each one alone is brilliant, but together it makes a phenomenal look and presence and feel.

"It's a richer experience for everybody." †

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C.M.F.

Daily Readings

continued from page 13

Monday, January 2

St. Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the Church
 St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and doctor of the Church
 1 John 2:22-28
 Psalm 98:1-4
 John 1:19-28

Tuesday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus
 1 John 2:29-3:6
 Psalm 98:1, 3c-4, 5-6
 John 1:29-34

Wednesday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
 1 John 3:7-10
 Psalm 98:1, 7-9
 John 1:35-42

Thursday, January 5

St. John Neumann, bishop
 1 John 3:11-21
 Psalm 100:1b-5
 John 1:43-51

Friday, January 6

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

Saturday, January 7

St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest
 1 John 5:14-21
 Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b
 John 2:1-11



Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in this icon by Ayman Fayeze, who is exhibiting his artwork at the Sheen Center for Thought & Culture in New York City through Jan. 1. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Sunday, January 8

The Epiphany of the Lord
 Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
 Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
 Matthew 2:1-12

Monday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord
 Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
 or Acts 10:34-38
 Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10
 Matthew 3:13-17

Tuesday, January 10

Hebrews 2:5-12
 Psalm 8:2ab, 5-9
 Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, January 11

Hebrews 2:14-18
 Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
 Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, January 12

Hebrews 3:7-14
 Psalm 95:6-7c, 8-11
 Mark 1:40-45

Friday, January 13

St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church
 Hebrews 4:1-5, 11
 Psalm 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8
 Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, January 14

Hebrews 4:12-16
 Psalm 19:8-10
 Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, January 15

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
 Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
 1 Corinthians 1:1-3
 John 1:29-34

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Organizers announce 'The Power of One' as theme for 2017 March for Life

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Organizers of the March for Life made it clear on Dec. 13 that although they're "cautiously optimistic" about eventually overturning the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision with a Donald Trump administration and a Republican-controlled House and Senate, they don't expect to be in lockstep with other aspects of the new president's agenda.

"We're nonpartisan," said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life, adding, "We always advocate that people vote pro-life" without regard to party label. "Difficult as it is, we always try to have a Democratic speaker at the March for Life as well," she said.

Referring to the president-elect's volatility on social media, Tom McClusky, the march organization's vice president of government affairs, remarked: "You always have to worry about the 3 a.m. tweet that's going to knock your whole agenda off."

The annual march, which in some years has drawn as many as 100,000 participants, always including busloads of teens from Catholic schools from across the United States, is scheduled for Jan. 27, one week after Trump's inauguration and five days after the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion virtually on demand.

One of Trump's initial tasks will be to nominate a new Supreme Court justice to replace Antonin Scalia, a strong pro-life jurist, who died in February. That appointment alone is not expected to result in a repeal of legal abortion, but is expected to restore a 5-4 conservative majority on the court.

Mancini also expressed optimism for legislation called the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which has passed the House but remains stalled in the Senate. It would block abortions after the fetus is at least 20 weeks old.

"It is our hope that in this administration, late-term abortions will be outlawed," Mancini said.

Initially, Mancini and McClusky said their expectation is that the Hyde Amendment, considered a temporary fix to block federal funds from paying for abortions, could be made permanent law.

That measure prohibits federal funding of abortion except in cases of rape, incest or threat to the woman's life. Proposed by the late Republican Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois and first enacted in 1976, it is an amendment on an appropriation bill Congress must pass each year. It prevents taxpayer funding of abortions in various federal health programs run by the Department of Human Services, which oversees the National Institutes of Health, Medicaid and Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, among others.

Mancini said of Trump's election, "I think in a way we're recovering from the shock—in a good way. I think there's such an unexpected sense of hope."

As for the pre-march rally on the Washington Monument grounds, Mancini said they've invited a few individuals they expect to be working in the Trump White House to address the marchers, but have not received confirmations.

Speakers the organizers have confirmed include Karyme Lozano, a star of Mexican telenovelas; Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who is chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee, and possibly a Hollywood performer, whom Mancini declined to name but described as "open to our issues."

This year's theme is "The Power of One." Mancini said it references both to the impact of a single vote and to a quote from J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote in *The Fellowship of the Ring*: "Even the smallest person can change the course of the future." †