



The

Criterion

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Meeting God in the flesh

New book's images, art meant to inspire the human heart, page 7.

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Sharing the faith

Following the annual Mass for archdiocesan high school seniors on Nov. 29, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson stands by the center doors of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, greeting, shaking hands and posing for photos with seniors from Catholic schools across the archdiocese. Here, he smiles for a group photo with seniors from Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis: Erika Campbell, left, Rosemary Butler, Payten Morris, Rachel Doyle and Allan Schneider. (Submitted photo)

High school seniors encouraged to live 'on God's terms' and transform the world

By John Shaughnessy

In a world where many people play the lottery in the hope of having the life they desire, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson told seniors from Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana that they have already won that prize.

"Every one of us has won the lottery," the archbishop told the students who packed SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Nov. 29 during the annual Mass for archdiocesan high school seniors. "If you don't believe

me, just read the paper or listen to the news and see all the poverty, see all the people fleeing their country because of persecution and abuse and injustice.

"You're getting one of the greatest educations humanity has to offer. Your conscience is being shaped along with this education."

Yet that gift also comes with challenges that will test them every day, the archbishop told the seniors from the Indianapolis Catholic high schools of Bishop Chatard, Brebeuf Jesuit, Cardinal Ritter, Cathedral,

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial, Providence Cristo Rey and Roncalli, plus Seton Catholic in Richmond, Father Michael Shawe Memorial in Madison and Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

"What will you do with this gift?" the archbishop asked during his homily. "What will you do with this informed conscience when you have to meet the challenges to your faith—the challenges to what you know is right and what is wrong? How will you respond?"

See MASS, page 2

Pope expresses satisfaction with meetings on Rohingya crisis

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM BANGLADESH (CNS)—Well aware he was disappointing some people by not using the word "Rohingya" publicly in Myanmar, Pope Francis said his chief concern had been to get a point across, and he did.

"If I would have used the word, the door would have closed," he told reporters on Dec. 2 during his flight from Dhaka, Bangladesh, to Rome.

He spent almost an hour answering reporters' questions after his six-day trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, but insisted that most of the questions be about the trip.

In his speeches in Myanmar, Pope Francis repeatedly referred to the obligation to defend

the lives and human rights of all people. But he did not specifically mention the Rohingya, a Muslim minority from Rakhine state. The Myanmar military, claiming it is cracking down on militants, has been accused of a

massive persecution of the Rohingya to the point that some describe it as "ethnic cleansing."

More than 620,000 Rohingya have fled across the Bangladeshi border just since August, joining hundreds of thousands already living in refugee camps there.

For the government of Myanmar, the Rohingya do not exist. Instead, they are considered undocumented immigrants.

"I knew that if, in an official speech, I would have used the word, they would close the door in my face," the pope told reporters who asked why he did not name the group. However, "I described the situation" publicly, knowing "I could go further in the private meetings" with government officials.

"I was very, very satisfied with the meetings," the pope said. "I dared to say everything I wanted to say."

It is true, he said, "I did not have the pleasure" of making "a public denunciation, but I had the satisfaction of dialoguing, allowing the other to have his say and, in that way, the message got across."

Still, finally being able to meet some of

See POPE, page 8

Church leaders emphasize need for repentance and atonement for peace between North Korea and South Korea

(CNS)—Church leaders seeking peace on the Korean Peninsula emphasized the need for "repentance and atonement" between North Korea and South Korea.

At the first-ever conference on the role of Catholics in building peace on the



Bishop Peter Lee Ki-heon

Korean Peninsula and more broadly in northeast Asia, clergy and laypeople from South Korea, the United States, Japan and other parts of the world also called for fewer military exercises between South Korea and the U.S.

The call came just before the U.S. and South Korea opened a massive joint military air exercise on Dec. 4.

North Korea and South Korea never signed a peace treaty at the end of

the Korean War in 1953, and constant tensions have existed since between the democratic government in the south and the communist regime in the north.

In the past year, North Korea, which takes the position that U.S.-South Korea military exercises pose a threat, tested missiles multiple times. The most recent occurred on Nov. 28 and involved an intercontinental ballistic missile that flew higher and farther than others, raising grave concern among North Korea's neighbors and the U.S.

More than 320 symposium participants met in Paju City, South Korea, and heard from bishops whose dioceses border North Korea or are in contested territory as well as other Church leaders. Experts on international conflict, peace and disarmament also shared presentations from Catholic perspectives.

Bishop Peter Lee Ki-heon of Uijeongbu, South Korea, located about 20 miles south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that

divides the peninsula, told the conference that he and representatives of his diocese attended the three-day symposium with "desperate hope" for peace.

"I desperately realize it is repentance and atonement that is needed for reconciliation of the two Koreas, genuine forgiveness and peace," he said in remarks prepared for the conference.

Bishop Lee emphasized that repentance and atonement was not simply for what both sides did to cause bloodshed between them, but also that the Catholic Church in Korea needed to repent for "what we did wrong in our ill-fated history."

"We are the proud descendants of martyrs who sacrificed themselves for justice and truth, while we haven't been strong enough to arbitrate [between] the two Koreas in the context of peace within the tragic history of the nation," Bishop Lee said. "It's time to

See KOREA, page 2



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson greets students from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis following the annual Mass for archdiocesan high school seniors on Nov. 29 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The Roncalli students are Katie Kolis, left and in blue sweatshirt, Katelin Hess, Isabella Jahnke, Sierra Holtsclaw and Scout Leffler. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

MASS

continued from page 1

The archbishop said these challenges are ones he also faces, as do all people.

“Every day I get up, I have to re-commit myself to be willing to embrace the way of Christ the King, no matter what stands in my way. And each of you must do the same.

“It’s an honor to celebrate this Mass with you. It’s an honor to look out and see how our Church is forming and educating you. It’s going to be an even greater honor to see where you go from here with such a gift, such an education, with such a background of Catholic faith and teaching that points us to something beyond this world—that points us to where we find true meaning and purpose *and* life.”

For Catholics, life’s meaning and purpose must focus on sharing Christ’s message with others, the archbishop said.

“Jesus gave the Church this mission—to proclaim the Good News of mercy, light and love, of eternal salvation. And he asked each of us as members of this Church to embrace this mission, his mission of Good News—even when it’s rejected, even when it means we have to sacrifice and suffer from time to time.

“As we gather here, let us remember all those around the world who are suffering greatly, even with their lives, for the faith that we sometimes take for granted.”

Archbishop Thompson also encouraged the seniors to live their lives “on God’s terms” instead of their own.

God calls us “into the body of his Son Jesus Christ, into the mission of the Church, the mission of Christ the King,” he said.

“Let us not take our faith for granted. Let us not take for granted the grace and strength we receive here and now together with the body of Christ to face the world—a world today that is filled with a lot of abuse and addictions, a lot of problems that only God’s love can heal and reconcile.

“We are called not to be transformed by the world but by the grace of God—to be those means through which the world is transformed.”

At the end of the Mass, the archbishop shared one more message with the high school seniors:

“Please know I pray for you. I pray that you make good decisions that are life-giving and not merely pleasure-seeking—that you make decisions not only thinking about the moment but thinking beyond to what is true and good, and truly of God’s grace and that is the dignity you have as children of God.

Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego joined the trip to the DMZ. He also spoke during the symposium, hosted by the South Korea-based Catholic Institute of Northeast Asia Peace.

“It was sad and discouraging to see the depth of structural alienation between South and North Korea, which the DMZ embodies,” Bishop McElroy said in an e-mail to Catholic News Service.

The bishop said tensions over the recent escape into South Korea of a North Korean soldier, who was shot multiple times by the northern military, were still palpable at the border.

Symposium participants felt that the confrontation between the two sides could be addressed peacefully, he said, but that both South Korea and the U.S. need to refrain from taking military action against North Korea. He stressed that all parties must work to lessen nuclear proliferation and that the focus should be on the Korean



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 8-17, 2017

December 8 — 3:30 p.m.
Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Marian University Chapel, Indianapolis

December 8 — 5 p.m.
Ribbon-cutting and blessing of Paul J. Norman Center, Marian University, Indianapolis

December 10 — 11 a.m.
Mass with Installation of Pastor, Our Lady of the Springs Church, French Lick

December 11 — 8:45 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 12 — 10:30 a.m.
Priests Personnel Board Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 12 — 6 p.m.
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass, St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, Indianapolis

December 13 — 9 a.m.
Mass with students and faculty at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, Indianapolis

December 13 — 11 a.m.
Deans Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 10 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 11:30 a.m.
Catholic Center Employee Luncheon, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 5:30 p.m. (Central)
Solemn Evening Prayer—Installation of the Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel, Bishop of Evansville, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville

December 15 — 2 p.m. (Central)
Mass of Installation—Installation of the Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel, Bishop of Evansville, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville

December 15 — 5 p.m.
Little Sisters of the Poor Fundraiser Dinner, The Willows, Indianapolis

December 17 — 10:30 a.m.
Mass with Installation of Pastor, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis

December 17 — 5:30 p.m.
Mass and Dinner with Knights of the Order of Malta, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

(Schedule subject to change.)

“And I ask you to please pray for me. If we can make that deal of prayer today, I’ll have the best that I can possibly ask for. I wish the best for you.”

The archbishop’s humility and homily resonated with the seniors, based upon comments some of them made after the Mass—a time when Archbishop Thompson spent nearly 25 minutes by the center door of the cathedral, greeting, shaking hands and posing for group photos with the youths until the last one had left.

“I thought [his homily] was really interesting,” said Casie Maexner, a senior at Bishop Chatard High School. “I like how he connected it with us.”

So did Sam Hubert, a senior at Oldenburg Academy.

“He gets the youth very well. He understands how to talk to the younger generation,” Sam said. “That was a pleasant surprise because I didn’t know much about him. He’ll help get more youths into the faith.” †

KOREA

continued from page 1

reflect on our weak existence.”

The prelate said that after Japanese colonization of the peninsula from 1910 to 1945, the Church was concerned with being able to practice its faith freely to the exclusion of looking beyond to the civil war that divided the country.

Today, he said, the conflict between both sides had serious geopolitical implications, with the two Koreas caught between China and the U.S. as both countries jockey for world power.

He also warned of Japan’s territorial disputes with China creeping into Korean waters.

As part of the conference, participants visited the demilitarized zone, a 2.5-mile wide, 160-mile long stretch of neutral ground bisecting the peninsula.

people, not outside nations.

He added that there was “great desire to begin new initiatives to foster unification,” including designing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to build bridges between societies in the two countries.

In his presentation, Bishop McElroy said that Catholic teaching has not supported the increasingly hawkish

position of the U.S. toward the North Korean nuclear threat.

“The voice of the Church in the United States must continually bring to American society the recognition that national interest cannot morally violate the international common good ... that the world must move toward a stabilizing, progressive nuclear disarmament,” he said. †

Readers are invited to share favorite Christmas memories

The Criterion invites readers to submit a brief story about a special holiday memory for possible inclusion in our annual Christmas issue, which will be published on Dec. 22.

Your favorite Christmas story may be written about a humorous or serious topic related to your faith, family or friends.

Submissions should include the writer’s name, address, parish and telephone number.

Send your story to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46206 or by e-mail to editor Mike Krokos at mkrokos@archindy.org by the Dec. 12 deadline. †



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Study shows Guadalupe devotion lessens health issues caused by stress

JACKSON, Miss. (CNS)—A good talk with your mother every day could improve your health. At least, that's what's happened for immigrants in one Mississippi community.

A study out of the University of Alabama exploring the link between faith and health demonstrated that those with a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe had fewer negative health issues related to stress.

"This drives home how important faith is. In the study results, I found that people who are exposed to stress—their well-being goes down over time. Those who were Guadalupan devotees broke that pattern," explained Rebecca Read-Wahidi, the study's author.

She grew up in Forest, where the state's largest concentration of Latinos works in poultry plants. They worship at St. Michael Parish or at its mission San Martin.

A community of religious sisters, Guadalupan Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, ministers to the mix of Mexicans, Guatemalans and other Latin Americans. The sisters teach English, host consulate officials and offer workshops in what to do if people are stopped by police or immigration agents.

Constant worry about immigration raids can wear down an already poor population. Read-Wahidi has told stories of a 2012 road-block that led to the deportation of 40 people, sending a wave of fear through the rest of the community. Having a patroness, a protector and a surrogate mother helps ease that physical and mental stress.

Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego at dawn on Dec. 9, 1531, on Tepeyac Hill, in what is now northern Mexico City. She appeared to Juan Diego twice more, and the last time, on Dec. 12, filled his "tilma," or cloak, with roses. When he emptied his cloak of the roses, he found that it bore her image. The cloak is still on display at the Basilica of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe built on the site where Mary appeared.

In the image, she is dark skinned, pregnant and surrounded by stars. She stands in front of the sun's rays, a commonly known symbol of an Aztec god, symbolically eclipsing his power as she looks lovingly down on her people. Millions of pilgrims still flock to see the tilma.

Read-Wahidi studied at Mississippi State University. Her Spanish studies took her to Mexico where she was exposed to the pervasive devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast day is on Dec. 12.

"While I was there, I became interested in Mexican Catholicism because it was different than what I was familiar with," she told the *Mississippi Catholic*, newspaper of the Diocese of Jackson.

When she returned home, she began to see the Virgin of Guadalupe in her own hometown.

"It is really fascinating to me because it really is a contrast in Mississippi—which is very Protestant. Here is this Mexican feast being carried out in the streets of a Mississippi town," she said.

Read-Wahidi wrote her master's thesis about Our Lady of Guadalupe and migrant communities in Mississippi. She expanded upon her earlier thesis while studying for a doctorate in bio-cultural medical anthropology at the University of Alabama.

"I liked going there because I could continue working with the same community," Read-Wahidi said. "I went from [looking at] the celebration itself into how they use it to deal with stress, specifically immigration stress."

The sisters in Morton welcomed her, introducing her to the community and facilitating meetings. Read-Wahidi developed a survey to gauge the impact of their faith on their health.

She found that Our Lady of Guadalupe is more than just a mother figure to her people. She is their mother to them. Read-Wahidi said most of the devotees she interviewed have conversations with her throughout the day.

Mary "listens to their worries," said Sister Lourdes Gonzalez, a member of the Guadalupan Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, who helped with the study. "It's a way to pray. People talk to her as if she is alive and in the room. She has a special place in the family."

Father Tim Murphy, pastor at St. James Parish in Tupelo, calls the relationship profound and inspiring. "She is their mother in faith, in heaven and is present to them," he said.

This connection to the poor may be why people see Mary as the perfect intercessor. "They may not feel comfortable talking to God—but they can speak to the Virgin. She is the mother figure. When they are so far from home, they need a mother figure," Read-Wahidi said.

Redemptorist Father Michael McAndrew has been working in Hispanic ministry for many years and gives presentations on St. Juan Diego's experience. "When Juan Diego does not want to go to the bishop, Mary tells him, 'Am I not here? Am I not your mother? Would your mother not protect you on your journey? I am with you.'"

Read-Wahidi wrote in a journal article that immigrants place their stress in Mary's hands: "When I asked what people petition the Virgin to help them with, they mentioned: finding work and keeping their jobs, not getting deported or arrested,



Men carry an statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 2016 outside the Cathedral of St. Peter in Jackson, Miss., in celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which is on Dec. 12. A University of Alabama study exploring the link between faith and health demonstrated that those with a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe had fewer negative health issues related to stress. (CNS photo/Elsa Baughman, *Mississippi Catholic*)

the health of their family back in Mexico and here in the United States, the safety of family members who were making the journey across the border, and their own safe return back home."

These prayers offer relief from the stress of their everyday lives. "They are seen as outsiders. They are not equal [here]. They have the experience of racism. It is a way to remind themselves that in the eyes of the Virgin, all people are equal," said Read-Wahidi. This idea has spread to other immigrants through public celebrations surrounding the feast.

Every year on or around the Dec. 12 feast day, immigrants across Mississippi leave the safety of their homes and churches to take their mother to the streets and celebrate her love and protection.

Celebrations include processions,

hours-long traditional Aztec dances, meals and liturgy. Everyone, especially other immigrants, is welcome. In this way, the celebration in America is unique. Instead of being only a Mexican feast, it is a feast for all.

"They make the celebration public—it is taken out into the streets. It gives the Mexican community a chance to share her [the Virgin]. They enjoy seeing other people embrace her," explained Read-Wahidi.

"We make processions because we know as a people we are walking in life, we are on a journey—we are walking to heaven, to God," said Sister Lourdes.

(For a list of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations around the archdiocese, go to www.archindy.org/criterion/local/2017/12-01/guadalupe.html.) †

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Editorial



A boy holds a sign during a children's refugee protest in 2016 in London. Build peace by welcoming migrants and refugees, Pope Francis said in his message for World Peace Day 2018. (CNS photo/Hannah McKay, EPA)

Pope, bishops teach about justice for migrants

The Catholic bishops in the U.S. realize that many Catholics don't accept the Church's teachings about immigration. That was discussed during the fall meeting of the bishops in Baltimore the week of Nov. 13.

It happened after Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Migration, said that there needs to be a "path to legalization and citizenship for the millions of our unauthorized brothers and sisters who are law-abiding, tax-paying and contributing to our society."

When other bishops pointed out that many Catholics disagree with that approach, did the bishops back down? Definitely not. Instead, they voted to prepare and issue a statement calling for comprehensive immigration reform.

Whether those who support President Donald J. Trump's immigration rhetoric listen to the bishops remains to be seen. But a bishop's first duty is to teach the faith, and that's what the bishops plan to do.

As Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami said, "We can make America great, but you don't make America great by making America mean."

The bishops disagreed with those who think that Catholics can support Trump's views about immigrants. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that disagreement about a "justice issue like immigration" cannot be taken lightly.

A week after the bishops' meeting concluded, they got support from Pope Francis. On Nov. 24, the Vatican released the pope's message for World Peace Day, which will be observed on Jan. 1, 2018. The theme of the message is "Migrants and refugees: Men and women in search of peace."

The pope wrote, "Those who, for what may be political reasons, foment fear of migrants instead of building peace are sowing violence, racial discrimination and xenophobia, which are matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being."

International organizations estimate there are some 250 million migrants around the globe, and about 22.5 million of them are refugees who have fled war, violence or persecution. It's a major global problem.

It is true that countries have both the right and the obligation to protect their borders. That has always been Catholic

teaching, and Pope Francis acknowledges that in his message. However, he says, basic human decency requires sheltering those whose dignity is at risk.

Why would Americans look upon immigrants as a problem? Except for Native Americans, all of us are descended from emigrants—most of whom arrived before there were laws that kept particular ethnic groups out.

The Irish, for example, had to flee the potato famine that killed so many in Ireland in the mid-19th century. There were no quotas to keep them out of the United States, as there are today for Latinos who had to flee poverty in Mexico until 2008 and gang violence in Central America more recently, resulting in 11 million illegal immigrants.

Businesses enticed those illegal immigrants because they're needed for the economic health of our country. With the unemployment rate as low as it is, industry and agriculture are hurting for employees to do the work that U.S.-born citizens refuse to do.

Thus, in his message, Pope Francis points out that welcoming refugees and migrants actually benefits host countries. He said that migrants and refugees "do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them."

This is especially true of the young adults who arrived here as children and were raised as Americans even if they didn't have proper documentation.

The U.S. bishops have in the past called for comprehensive immigration reform. That hasn't happened since the Simpson-Mazzoli Act was passed in 1986, 31 years ago. That was accomplished through the recommendations of a bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform chaired by Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, who was then president of the University of Notre Dame. It granted amnesty to the 3.2 million illegal immigrants then living in the United States.

A study after the passage of that law, by the way, found that the legalization of those immigrants reduced crime by 3-5 percent, primarily property crime, because of greater job opportunities for the immigrants.

—John F. Fink

Be Our Guest/Richard Doerflinger

Freedom and the purpose of sex

It began with reports that Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, over many years, used his power over aspiring actresses' careers to sexually harass and exploit them.



The allegations soon extended to other prominent men in the entertainment industry, then to candidates and elected officials of both major parties.

Now each day seems to bring a new story about sexual misconduct—usually by men, though occasionally by a female teacher—against those more powerless or vulnerable than themselves. Most disturbingly, some reports involve seduction of minors by adults.

Ironies abound. A few weeks ago, *Time* magazine published a special issue celebrating the career of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner after his death. Now it portrays Weinstein on its cover as "predator" and "pariah." Yet Hefner also mistreated and demeaned women, and the view of sexual freedom he made a career of promoting encouraged the behavior that makes Weinstein a pariah.

The root problem here is a self-centered notion of freedom that "frees" individuals from respecting others—if such respect would get in the way of their own pleasure. That freedom, divorced from the truth about human dignity, never means freedom for everyone. It means, in the words of St. John Paul II, "the supremacy of the strong over the weak" (*Evangelium Vitae*, #23).

Such freedom is especially destructive when applied to sexuality, by which men and women relate to each other in the most vulnerable and intimate way possible.

The myth of the "sexual revolution" is that everything is acceptable if agreed to by mutual consent. But the people involved seldom have the same degree of control over the situation, so one is more "free" than the other to influence or manufacture that consent.

Certainly that is true of adults pursuing minors. And on college campuses, it seems predatory males have found alcohol

and drugs useful in making sure female students are not conscious or self-aware enough to say "No"—or to remember afterward exactly what happened. And so sexual "freedom" blurs into what is tantamount to rape.

Ready access to contraception, and then abortion, have also been seen as enabling full exercise of this freedom. Some women thought these would free them of anxiety over pregnancy and parenthood, equalizing the power in their relationships.

Instead, they often place more power in the hands of callow men, who see their own responsibility as beginning and ending with the offer to pay for an abortion. Hefner understood this, and his Playboy Foundation made large donations to the "abortion rights" movement. Unplanned pregnancies still happen, unwed childbearing has increased, and women have been left more alone than ever to cope.

Some secular feminists also understand this. Catharine MacKinnon, for example, has written that the "right of privacy" or "right to be let alone" the Supreme Court used to defend abortion is "a right of men 'to be let alone' to oppress women one at a time."

As allegations, denials and recriminations continue, it is difficult to see where this will lead. It may create a climate in which men and women distrust each other more than ever.

Another alternative would be to remember the vision of sexuality the Catholic Church has taught for two millennia. In that vision, sex is about self-giving, not selfishness; mutual vulnerability, not power; commitment, not exploitation; fulfillment, not just pleasure. It is a powerful language that says: I will always be united in love with you, and with any children we may conceive together.

Having tried the opposite approach for decades, I wonder if Americans might take another look at a vision that is ever ancient, ever new.

(Richard Doerflinger worked for 36 years in the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Washington state.) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader offers thanks for story on organization that honors veterans for their service

I read the article in the Nov. 10 issue of *The Criterion*, and I just wanted to say thanks for promoting the Honor Flight Network, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to sponsor and coordinate trips for aging veterans to see the monuments built in memory of their dedication and sacrifice.

I had taken a flight with them on April 1, thanks to the local chapter of the Honor Flight Network, which is based in Plainfield.

What a great job they do for the veterans.

Again, thanks!

**Richard Hamilton
Speedway**

(More information about the Honor Flight Network can be found at HonorFlight.org or on Facebook by searching Honor Flight BWI.)

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on

space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

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. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Mary invites us to come home to her son Jesus

“Mary, because she has entered intimately into the history of salvation, in a certain sense gathers up in her own person the great truths of the faith and awakens their resonance when she is the object of preaching and veneration; she summons the faithful to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the Father’s love” (cf. “Lumen Gentium,” #63-65).

Today, Dec. 8, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patron saint of the United States of America. This is an important day for our Church and our country because it honors Mary’s absolutely unique role in human history.

Mary is the perfect expression of what we human beings were created to be. She is “perfect” not because she possesses extraordinary intelligence or superhuman powers. Mary’s perfection is the result of God’s grace, which from the moment of her Immaculate Conception until her Assumption (body and soul) into heaven at the end of her life kept her free from the effects of original sin and the curse of human sinfulness.

Mary is perfectly good. She is

absolutely faithful to her word. She is supremely compassionate and holy. This does not make Mary less human (without worries or doubts, unable to experience pain or sorrow). It makes her more fully what all of us are called to be: daughters and sons of the living God and members of the one Body of Christ, the Church.

Many Catholics who have stopped practicing their faith say that one of the things they miss most is devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This shouldn’t be surprising. Veneration of Mary, the Mother of God and our mother, is a distinctive feature of our Catholic way of life. Without it, we feel something important is missing from our lives.

Mary was (and still is) the first Christian disciple—the first person to follow Jesus, her son, and to invite others to do the same. As St. Teresa of Calcutta frequently reminded us, we go to Jesus through Mary. She is the gateway, the sacred portal, through which we can enter into fullness of life as disciples of her Son.

Mary’s discipleship began when she freely chose to accept the absolutely unique responsibility in the history of

salvation which was communicated to her by the angel Gabriel: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:30-33).

Mary’s response was immediate and from the heart: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). She had no way of knowing exactly what was being asked of her, but she trusted that God would provide her with the grace she needed to do his will.

Mary was (and still is) the first Christian evangelist. By her words and her example, she proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ. She invites us all to come home to her divine son and to discover in him our hearts’ desire. Through Mary, we discover our true identity as Catholics. As the bishops of the Second Vatican Council said so beautifully in the “Dogmatic Constitution

on the Church,” Mary “gathers up in her own person the great truths of the faith,” and “she summons the faithful to her Son” (cf. “Lumen Gentium,” #63-65).

If we want to know what it means to be a Catholic Christian, we only have to look to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the model for life in Christ. Her openness to God’s will (in spite of its mystery), her obedience, her patience, her willingness to stand with him during his passion and death, her experience of joy at Christ’s resurrection, and her active participation in the life of the Church after Pentecost all show Mary to be someone we should imitate—and venerate—in our daily lives as Christians.

Mary, our mother, invites all Catholics to come home to Jesus, her son and our brother. May we accept her invitation wholeheartedly, without reservation or fear, no matter how long it’s been since we practiced our faith or grew in our relationship to the Lord.

May we respond, with Mary, with an enthusiastic “Yes!” acknowledging that we truly are missionary disciples of the Lord. May his will be done according to his word! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

María nos invita a regresar a su hijo Jesús

“Puesto que María está íntimamente compenetrada con la historia de la salvación, en cierta forma reúne en su persona las grandes verdades de la fe y hace que estas revivan y reverberen cuando es ella el objeto de la prédica y veneración: ella lleva a los fieles ante la presencia de su Hijo, ante Su sacrificio y el amor del Padre” (cf. “Lumen Gentium,” #63-65).

Hoy, 8 de diciembre, celebramos la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María, santa patrona de Estados Unidos. Se trata de un día importante para nuestra Iglesia y nuestro país porque en él honramos el papel fundamental que desempeñó María en la historia de la humanidad.

María es la expresión perfecta de lo que los seres humanos estamos llamados a ser. Es “perfecta” no porque posea una inteligencia extraordinaria o poderes sobrehumanos. La perfección de María viene dada por la gracia de Dios que, desde el momento de su Inmaculada Concepción hasta su Asunción (en cuerpo y alma) al cielo, al final de su vida, la protegió contra los efectos del pecado original y de la maldición del pecado que aqueja a la humanidad.

María es perfectamente buena, es

completamente fiel a su palabra y es supremamente compasiva y santa. Esto no hace que sea menos humana (que tenga menos preocupaciones o quejas o que sea incapaz de sentir dolor o tristeza), sino que la hace más parecida a lo que todos estamos llamados a ser: hijos del Dios viviente y miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia.

Muchos católicos que han dejado de practicar su fe comentan que una de las cosas que más extrañan es la devoción a la Santa Virgen María. Esto no debería sorprender a nadie, ya que la veneración de María, la Madre de Dios y nuestra madre, es una característica que distingue nuestro estilo de vida católico. Sin ella, sentimos como si faltara algo importante en nuestras vidas.

María fue (y todavía es) la primera discípula cristiana, la primera que siguió a Jesús, su hijo y que invitó a los demás a hacer lo mismo. Tal como nos lo recordaba a menudo santa Teresa de Calcuta: “A través de María llegamos a Jesús.” Ella es el portal sagrado a través del cual accedemos a la plenitud de la vida como discípulos de su Hijo.

El discipulado de María comenzó cuando eligió por voluntad propia aceptar la responsabilidad única y

absoluta en la historia de la salvación que le comunicó el Ángel Gabriel: “No temas, María, porque Dios te ha favorecido. Concebirás y darás a luz un hijo, y le pondrás por nombre Jesús; él será grande y será llamado Hijo del Altísimo. El Señor Dios le dará el trono de David, su padre, reinará sobre la casa de Jacob para siempre y su reino no tendrá fin” (Lc 1:30-33).

La respuesta de María fue inmediata y provino del corazón: “Yo soy la sierva del Señor. Hágase en mí según tu palabra” (Lc 1:38). No tenía forma de saber exactamente qué era lo que se le pedía, pero confió en que Dios le daría la gracia para cumplir con Su voluntad.

María fue (y todavía es) la primera evangelista cristiana. A través de sus palabras y de su ejemplo ella proclama la Buena Nueva de Jesucristo y nos invita a todos a acudir a su Divino Hijo y a descubrirlo en el anhelo de nuestro corazón. A través de María descubrimos nuestra verdadera identidad como católicos. Tal como lo expresaron hermosamente los Padres del Concilio Vaticano II en la “Constitución Dogmática sobre la Iglesia” María “reúne en su persona las grandes verdades de la fe” y “lleva a los fieles ante la presencia de su

Hijo” (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, #63-65).

Si deseamos saber qué significa ser un católico cristiano, solamente tenemos que observar a la Santísima Virgen María. Ella es el modelo de la vida en Cristo; su disposición para recibir la voluntad de Dios (a pesar de todo el misterio que esto conllevaba), su obediencia, su paciencia, su disposición para acompañar a Jesús durante su pasión y muerte, su alegría en la resurrección de Cristo y la participación activa de María en la vida de la Iglesia después de Pentecostés, son hechos que demuestran que es alguien que debemos imitar y venerar en nuestras vidas diarias como cristianos.

María, nuestra madre, nos invita a todos los católicos a que regresemos a Jesús, su hijo y nuestro hermano. Pidamos para poder aceptar su invitación de todo corazón, sin ningún temor o reserva, y sin importar cuánto tiempo haya transcurrido desde que practicamos nuestra fe o cultivamos nuestra relación con el Señor.

Que seamos capaces de responder, junto con María, con un “¡sí!” entusiasmado, reconociendo que somos verdaderos discípulos misioneros del Señor. ¡Que se haga Su voluntad según su palabra! †

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 11-14

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **The Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell**, parish mission presented by Father Paul Landerwerlen, talks twice daily, 8:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m., 7:30 a.m. Mass in Ordinary Form and 5:45 p.m. in Extraordinary Form, confessions at 7 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. (optional). Information: 317-636-4478 or info@holyroary.org.

December 12

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, Christmas party and pitch-in, noon. Information: 317-223-3687, vlgmimi@aol.com.

St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Sunman. **Healing Mass**, 6:30 p.m. praise and worship, 7 p.m. Mass, Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Richard McAlear presiding,

opportunity for confession. Information: 812-569-7103.

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.

December 13

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis. **Serra Club Mass for Vocations**, school Mass followed by coffee and donuts, 9:30 a.m. Information: 317-748-1478 or smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc.

December 15

Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Jim McClelland, Indiana

director for Drug Prevention, presenting, Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following. \$15 members, \$21 non-members. Information, registration: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

December 16

St. Michael Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Simbang Gabi Filipino Mass and Reception**, sponsored by Filipino Ministry and archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-261-3380.

Helpers of God's Precious Infants, Indianapolis. Mass and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 8:30 a.m. at St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., followed by prayer at a local abortion center, and continued prayer at the church for those who wish to remain.

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus.

12th Annual Concert Series: A Jazzy Christmas, featuring St. Bartholomew Adult and Children's Choirs, 7 p.m., freewill offering. Complete list of all concerts: www.saintbartholomew.org under "Music Ministry" or bminut@stbparish.net.

Sacred Heart Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. **Vox Sacra Advent and Christmas Music Concert**, free, 7 p.m. Information: 317-236-1483, 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1483, ctuley@archindy.org or www.voxsacra.com.

December 20

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On: Sacrament of Reconciliation**, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Information: 317-545-7681, ext. 107 or www.archindy.org/fatima.

December 21

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

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.

December 24

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 5 p.m. Vigil Mass, 10 p.m. Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, parking available for both Masses from 4 p.m.-midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archbishop Edward

T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 7 p.m. CT Vigil Mass, 10 p.m. CT Mass.

December 25

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

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Mass**, 9:30 a.m. CT.

December 28

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Monthly Ecumenical Taizé Prayer Service**, sung prayers, meditation and readings. 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or rectory@saintmichaelindy.org. †

Retreats and Programs

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

January 16

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Series: Women, Wine and Song!**, three Tuesdays, Providence Sisters Jan Craven and Paula Damiano, prayer, story-telling, music and wine, 7-8:30 p.m., \$10 per session, \$25 for three.

Registration deadline: Jan 12. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events.

January 20

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Poetry as Spiritual Practice: Reading, Praying and Writing, Providence Sister Mary Montgomery presenting, read, write and share poetry as prayer and life experience, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$45 includes lunch. Registration deadline: Jan. 15. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events. †

Sisters of Providence announce Christmas prayer and service times

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods have announced their Christmas prayer and liturgy times, all of which will be celebrated in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Mass on the Sundays of Advent will be at 11 a.m. on Dec. 10, 17 and 24. Advent Vespers will be offered at

4:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 and 17. The Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols will be held from 7-8 p.m. on Dec. 24 and will include Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting.

Christmas Day Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Dec. 25. All services are open to people of all faith traditions. †

'Longest Night' prayer service and Mass scheduled for those grieving during the holidays

A "Longest Night" prayer service and a Longest Night Mass of Consolation will be held in the archdiocese for those who mourn and struggle with loss during the holiday season.

Abbey Caskets, a ministry of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, will host a Service of the Longest Night at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House Chapel, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, at 6 p.m. CT on Dec. 16. Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will lead the prayer service, which will include prayer, Scripture and music.

All are welcome. Reservations are requested (but not required) by calling 800-987-7380 or e-mailing info@abbeycaskets.com.

A Longest Night Mass of Consolation will be celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Ln., in New Albany, at 7 p.m. on Dec. 20. The Mass is open to the public, and all those in attendance will be offered a keepsake.

For information about the Mass, call 812-945-2374 or e-mail tyost@olphna.org. †

St. John's hosting Christkindl Village Christmas Festival on Dec. 15-17

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis, will host its annual Christkindl Village Christmas Festival on Dec. 15-17.

The three-day holiday gathering will include booths, a live animal nativity, children and teen activities, photos with

St. Nicholas, German food, beer and wine.

The hours are from 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 15, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Dec. 17.

For more information, call 317-635-2020 or visit www.stjohnsindy.org/christkindl-village.html. †



Award winner

Sister of Providence Mary Beth Klingel was awarded the 2018 Leadership and Advocacy Award by the Guérin Outreach Ministries Board of Directors on Oct. 18. A member of the Sister of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for more than 50 years, Sister Mary Beth has served as an ex-officio member of the board and as general councilor for the Sisters of Providence for six years. (Submitted photo)



Distinguished alum

Diana Hoyt Kowalski, left, a graduate of the former St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis, receives a distinguished alumna award from Nancy Yavonovich during the Indianapolis All Girls High School Reunion held in Indianapolis on Nov. 5. Providence Sister Susan Dinnin (not pictured) also received an award. (Submitted photo by Mary Pat McElhiney)

Book's images, art meant to inspire the human heart

By John Shaughnessy

The story of Jean Zander's and Brenda Henry's special gift to their parish begins at a wedding that Zander attended in one of the many beautiful churches in the archdiocese.

On that wedding day at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis, someone not of the Catholic faith engaged in a conversation with Zander, making a point about how the church and its art work were so striking, drawing the person closer to God.

"It was refreshing for me to hear this different perspective from someone who is not Catholic, and I thought we don't talk about this enough," recalls Zander, a member of the parish, as she sits in the church. "I began to notice that visitors to the church would immediately look up when they came inside. There's so much to see here."

From that moment four years ago, Zander thought it would be great to create a 16-page booklet that would capture the beauty, sacred art and evangelization quality of this northside Indianapolis church. Yet after she enlisted the help of her longtime friend Brenda Henry, the two women decided to add another dimension to their effort—using the art work of the church as a springboard for prayers and meditations designed to lead parishioners and non-parishioners to a deeper relationship with God.

That combined emphasis on prayer and photographs of the church's art has led to their recently published, 204-page, four-year-in-the-making book, *Every Heart an Altar*.

"We just felt that in reading about sacred architecture, that it's supposed to lead us closer to God," Zander says. "We felt the best way to do that was through prayer and meditation."

Henry nods and adds, "From a faith standpoint, I'm in awe of this church. I've been here so many times, and even with its beauty, it's easy to take for granted."

It begins with an appreciation of the art and what it means to our faith, and then it leads to a deep gratitude for the history of our faith and the people who worshipped here."

The title for *Every Heart an Altar* comes from one of Zander's favorite prayer readings, a fifth-century sermon from St. Peter Chrysologus that begins, "Let your heart be an altar."

"I've always just found it to be very powerful," Zander says. "It went with the structure of the book because everything flows toward the altar, and we want every heart to be an altar."

The book serves as a terrific lead-in to St. Joan of Arc's upcoming 100th anniversary in 2021, says its pastor, Father Guy Roberts. It also captures how the church's "images and works of art are meant to inspire the human heart," he notes.

"We are truly blessed at St. Joan of Arc Church to have inherited such a beautiful structure in which to meet God in the flesh," Father Roberts writes in the foreword to the book. "Not only do we meet God in word and sacrament, but the very building itself tells the story of our Catholic faith."

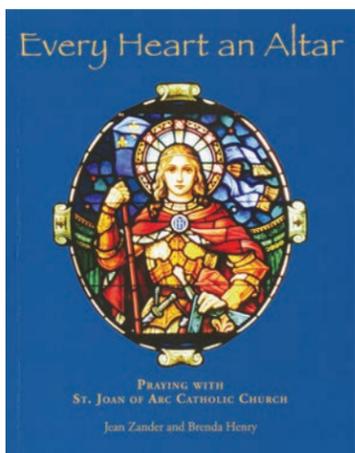
To enter the church "is as if an entire new universe opens," Father Roberts notes.

"The mundane world is left outside, and most first-time visitors immediately look upward toward heaven. This reaction is by design, to teach us that our constant habit should be to lift our hearts and minds to God."

That same inspiration guided Zander and Henry while collaborating on *Every Heart an Altar* for four years.

"To see how it unfolded is amazing to reflect on," Zander says. "I think the idea came from the Holy Spirit, was implemented by the Holy Spirit, and we were sustained in what we needed to do."

(*Every Heart an Altar* is available for \$25 by contacting the parish office at St. Joan of Arc at 317-283-5508.) †



St. Joan of Arc parishioners Jean Zander, left, and Brenda Henry pose for a photo outside the north side Indianapolis church known for its striking sacred art and architecture—the springboard that the friends used to create *Every Heart an Altar*, their book of prayers and meditations designed to lead parishioners and non-parishioners to a deeper relationship with God. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

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In Myanmar and Bangladesh, pope calls for dialogue and respect for all

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As on every papal trip, Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh included a mix of meetings with government officials and events focused firmly on the nations' Catholic communities.

The political implications of his Nov. 27-30 stay in Myanmar and his Nov. 30-Dec. 2 stop in Bangladesh grabbed the headlines mainly because of the situation of the Rohingya people, a Muslim minority being pushed from Myanmar's Rakhine state and seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

But the political and pastoral sides of his trip were interwoven, including his attention to the Rohingya and his defense of their rights.

Meeting Rohingya refugees at the end of an interreligious gathering in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1, Pope Francis said each human being is created in God's image and likeness. "Today, the presence of God is also called 'Rohingya,'" he said after listening to each of the 16 refugees briefly tell their stories.

"They, too, are images of the living God," Pope Francis told Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu leaders. "Let's not close our hearts. Let's not look away."

The Catholic communities in both Myanmar and Bangladesh are very small; Catholics make up slightly more than 1 percent of the population in Myanmar, and only a quarter of 1 percent of the population in Bangladesh. Yet, in both countries, the influence of the Church is disproportionately large because of the contributions of Catholic schools, hospitals and other ministries.

In Myanmar, the majority of people are Buddhist and in Bangladesh the majority are Muslim. On the return flight to Rome on Dec. 2, Pope Francis was asked about how a Catholic should balance a commitment to interreligious dialogue and a commitment to evangelization with the hope of welcoming converts into the Church.

The key, the pope said, always is witness. It is not a Christian's job to try to persuade someone to become

Christian. That is the Holy Spirit's job, he said, but individuals must prepare the way by offering a living witness of what it means to be Christian.

The main ingredients of witness, he said, are living according to "the Beatitudes, giving testimony to Matthew 25 [feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick], the Good Samaritan and forgiving 70 times seven."

The pope met privately with a varied group of religious leaders in Myanmar before holding a formal meeting with leaders of the nation's Buddhist community on Nov. 29.

Quoting Buddha and a prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, the pope insisted that in a land where the powerfully bonded pairing of religion and ethnicity have been used to prolong conflict, it was time for religious leaders to reclaim the greatest values and virtues of their faith traditions.

Pope Francis also held separate meetings in both countries with the nations' bishops. In Myanmar, he told the bishops that the idea that differences are a threat to peaceful coexistence is an example of an "ideological colonization" sweeping the world and trying to make everyone the same.

"The unity we share and celebrate is born of diversity," he said. Unity in the Church and in a nation "values people's differences as a source of mutual enrichment and growth. It invites people to come together in a culture of encounter and solidarity."

As Myanmar continues its transition



Pope Francis prays with religious leaders and Rohingya refugees from Myanmar during an interreligious and ecumenical meeting for peace at the archbishop's residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Women attend Pope Francis' celebration of Mass and the ordination of priests in Suhrawardy Udyan park in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis greets young people after celebrating Mass with youths on Nov. 30 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Yangon, Myanmar. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters)

to democratic rule and tries to deal with the challenges of development and full equality for all its ethnic groups, Pope Francis told the bishops to ensure that their voices are heard, "particularly by insisting on respect for the dignity and rights of all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable."

Before leaving the country, he celebrated Mass on Nov. 30 with thousands of young people from throughout Myanmar. He told them to be messengers of the Good News of God's love and mercy.

"As messengers of this good news, you are ready to bring a word of hope to the Church, to your own country, and to the wider world," he said. "You are ready to bring good news to your suffering brothers and sisters who need your prayers and your solidarity, but also your enthusiasm for human rights, for justice and for the growth of that love and peace which Jesus brings."

Witness was also the theme he highlighted at a large Mass in a park in Yangon, Myanmar's capital.

"I know that many in Myanmar bear

the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible," the pope said in his homily. The temptation is to think that "healing can come from anger and revenge. Yet the way of revenge is not the way of Jesus."

Pope Francis prayed that Catholics in Myanmar would "be faithful witnesses of the reconciliation and peace that God wants to reign in every human heart and in every community."

In Bangladesh, his only public Mass was celebrated on Dec. 1 and included the ordination of 16 priests, who came from different dioceses and religious orders. He read the prescribed homily from the rite of ordination, but then spoke off the cuff to thank the thousands of people who had traveled far for the Mass. He also encouraged them to pray for their priests.

The next day, before leaving Bangladesh, he met with priests, religious and seminarians at Holy Rosary Church in Dhaka. He told them the harmony, mutual respect and peace that should reign in relations between members of different religions must first be found between members of the Catholic Church. †

POPE

continued from page 1

the Rohingya refugees on Dec. 1 in Bangladesh was an emotional moment.

Arrangements were made for 16 refugees to travel to Dhaka from Cox's Bazar, where the huge refugee camps are, so they could join the pope and Bangladeshi religious leaders for a meeting devoted to peace.

The refugees had traveled so far and been through so much that Pope Francis said he could not just let them shake his hand and be whisked away, as some event organizers seemed to think was proper.

"And there I got upset. I yelled a bit. I'm a sinner," he said.

He had a few minutes with each of them, listening to their stories with the help of an interpreter, holding their hands and looking into their eyes.

"I was crying, but tried to hide it," the pope told reporters. "They were crying, too."

Listening to them was emotional, he said, and "I couldn't let them leave without saying something" to them. So he asked for a microphone and spoke about

their God-given dignity and the obligation believers of all faiths have to stand up for them as brothers and sisters. He also apologized for all they had suffered.

Pope Francis refused to give reporters details about his private meetings with government officials and military leaders in Myanmar, but insisted they were marked by "civilized dialogue" and he was able to make the points important to him.

The pope was asked what he thought of recent criticism by human rights groups of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and de facto leader of Myanmar's civilian government, over her handling of the Rohingya crisis. Pope Francis responded that people must take into account the challenges that are part of Myanmar's transition from military rule to democracy.

Myanmar is at a "turning point" where it will be difficult to move forward, he said, but it also would be difficult to back away from change.

And, he said, "I never lose hope."

The same God who made the meeting with the Rohingya in Dhaka possible will continue to work marvels, Pope Francis said. †



Pope Francis kisses a child as he meets Rohingya refugees from Myanmar during an interreligious and ecumenical meeting for peace in the garden of the archbishop's residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Workshop gives foreign clergy sure footing as they begin ministry in U.S.

By Katie Rutter

Special to *The Criterion*

ST. MEINRAD, IND.—A group of 14 priests sat around tables, sharing stories and laughing together. Some would stop mid-sentence to mentally translate from their native tongue into English. Each understood the struggle of learning an entirely new culture.

“American coffee is very different from Italian,” explained Father Daniele Criscione, a native of Sicily, on Oct. 19. He had only been in America for two weeks.

“I miss it, so much,” he said, prompting laughter from the whole room.

Father Crispine Adongo, who grew up in Kenya, spoke of the difficulty to execute as simple a task as bathing.

“I turned the water on, and the water is not coming from the shower, it’s coming from the spout with the tab,” he said, relating that he had to seek out another priest to show him how to operate the shower.

“I’m struggling here, how do I make this water come from above?” he laughed.

The men were gathered for a weeklong conference called the World Priest Workshop. Hosted by Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, the training aims to give clergy a sure footing as they begin ministry in this country.

Most of these priests recently arrived from international locations to serve in dioceses across the United States. Many of them will remain in America for four to six years. Some will be an associate pastor in a parish; others will have the full weight of pastoring a parish on their shoulders.

“Everything is new,” said Father Francis Joseph Kalapurackal, a native of India. “The essence of priesthood in every culture and every continent is the same, but the way we function as priests is basically different. It has to work with the systems here.”

Topics addressed during the World Priest program include the history of Christianity in the United States, the typical organization and tasks of an American parish, methods for ministering to different groups within the congregation, and common cultural norms in this country.

“There’s a cultural difference of standard of living, or the relationship between men and women or authority and the role that the priest has in the larger community,” explained Father Peter Marshall, director of the Institute for



Benedictine Father Gueric DeBona, subprior of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, celebrates Mass on Oct. 19 in St. Bede Chapel at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. Concelebrating the liturgy are priests who are ministering in the U.S. after arriving from international locations. (Photos by Katie Rutter)

Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad and a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“Then there’s a real ecclesial practice difference as well, like how is Mass commonly celebrated or how does the priest make himself available to the community,” Father Marshall told *The Criterion*.

Father Kalapurackal, who serves as the administrator at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, and Father Adongo, who is the associate pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, were two of the presenters.

Having arrived in this country several years ago, they used their own experiences to help the new arrivals understand the cultural differences between their home countries and the United States.

“They have to know that their culture is special, and they also have to know that there’s a culture here which is special and important,” explained Father Adongo. “No

culture is superior. All cultures need to be respected.”

The workshop also helps clergy to improve their communication skills. An instructor covers non-verbal cues, teaches accent-reduction techniques and outlines phrasing that will be more familiar to their listeners.

Well aware of the language barrier, one

‘We have a long experience in America of being generous to the missions. It’s helpful for us to experience the larger Church not only as a recipient of need, but to see strong, smart pastors in our local Churches and say, ‘The Church is vibrant elsewhere.’’



—Father Peter Marshall, director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad



Four international priests who are ministering in parishes in the U.S. listen on Oct. 19 to some of the challenges that others have faced while learning a different culture. The discussion was part of the World Priest Workshop at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. Pictured are Fathers Chris Jesudhasan, left, Prabhakar Kalivela, Rajesh Kumar Nettem and Anthony Ram.

native of India shared a struggle that he encountered in an everyday interaction with one of his parishioners.

“We were getting ready for the Easter celebration. I told the lady who was arranging the flowers, I said, ‘Please move the flower vase,’” related Father Jaimon Dominic, pronouncing “vase” so that it rhymed with “boss” or “toss.”

“She said, ‘What?’”

“‘Please move to the right side the flower vase,’” he recalled. This led to an extended back and forth until Father Dominic finally moved the flowers.

“She said, ‘Oh! Flower vase!’” he recalled, this time pronouncing “vase” so that it rhymed with “face.” While he finds it humorous now, the exchange

taught him to make an extra effort to learn regional pronunciations.

Saint Meinrad started the World Priest Workshop about 10 years ago in response to the growing number of international priests ministering in parishes in the U.S. In many dioceses, there are not enough young men answering the call to the priesthood to replace those priests who are retiring. Some bishops respond to this by requesting clergy from overseas.

“There was a time when Europe supplied all the priests to the rest of the world,” explained Father Kalapurackal. “Today those newly-evangelized countries, particularly countries like India, they are sending missionaries all over the world.”

More than just filling a vacancy, the World Priest Workshop aims to help these men bring their own unique gifts to the Church in the U.S. For many parishioners, the presence of an international priest might be their only exposure to his unique culture.

“We have a long experience in America of being generous to the missions,” explained Father Marshall. “It’s helpful for us to experience the larger Church not only as a recipient of need, but to see strong, smart pastors in our local Churches and say, ‘The Church is vibrant elsewhere.’”

Father Adongo suggested that parishioners of Indiana can also help these men adjust to their new home. He recommended inviting the clergy for dinner or out for a cup of coffee to help these priests learn about American culture. This would also give the parishioners an opportunity to inquire about life in the priest’s home country.

“Whether you are in India, in Africa, Japan or here in the U.S., we are one family, and we have to embrace this,” said Father Adongo. “As we share one cup, as we share one body of Christ, we need to embrace and share everything and work together in one faith community.”

(Katie Rutter is a freelance writer and member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington.) †



Father Crispine Adongo, center, relates ideas for ministering in parishes in the U.S. to a group of international priests gathered for the World Priest Workshop at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad on Oct. 19. Father Adongo is a native of Kenya and serves as the associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.

Cancer deters comedian's NCYC gig, but not her faith or humor

By Natalie Hoefler

A common sight among the excited youths and silly hats at the biannual National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is comedian Judy McDonald and her service dog Daisy.

But they were not able to make it this year, and the reason is no laughing matter. On Sept. 29, McDonald was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent a double mastectomy on Oct. 27.

The surgery was the latest in a list of issues that might make McDonald seem like a modern-day Job: an early trauma that led to ongoing post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), a ruptured disc that resulted in back surgery three years ago, and a car accident that caused Daisy, her service dog for PTSD, to develop the disorder as well, which limits where McDonald can now travel.

But the comedian, 41, is far from letting such setbacks get her down.

"What doesn't kill you gives you more material," she quips.

In fact, the very day she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she signed up with a group to train for a mini-marathon—only the second in her life—in her hometown of Vista, Calif.

"I thought my surgery would be scheduled before the mini, so I'd get to be like, 'Darn, I can't do it,'" she says with mock sincerity.

As it turns out, the race was held on Oct. 22, five days before her surgery. McDonald did run it—with her hair dyed flamingo pink in support of breast cancer awareness, and running with a friend's service dog because Daisy's PTSD kept her "hiding under a table the entire race."

McDonald is already talking about participating in another race in January "whether I run, walk or crawl. Just to have a goal is to have something to look forward to," she says.

"People tell me I'm so brave, but the way I see it, there's no other alternative—you can break your neck putting your pants on in the morning."

Instead, she counts her blessings.

"I'm taken care of," she says. "I have more [possessions] than half the people in the world. I have running water and a roof, and I'm living where I can get good medical care."

Such positivity is a natural outgrowth of McDonald's strong, lifelong Catholic faith.

"There's just been a resounding message of, 'I'm going to be OK,'" she says. "I've had that my whole life. I

think it's a deep-rooted belief that if you get hit by a car and die, you'll be OK, or if you win the lottery, you'll be OK. My faith in Jesus tells me that these trials and tribulations on Earth don't matter. There are ups and downs, but the constant is my Catholic faith—it's always steadfast."

McDonald's positive attitude was helped by the fact that her diagnosis came as no shock. With numerous relatives having cancer—including her

mother and one of her sisters having breast cancer—her doctors have been monitoring her for years, even though she was told she didn't have the gene that put her at greater risk for breast cancer.

While the diagnosis was not a surprise to McDonald, it has still taken time to process.

"It's like a [St.] John Paul II lesson on 'do not be afraid,'" she says. "I still have the occasional freak-out, but it's getting better. ..."

"I think growing up, a lot of kids think when you're immersed in your faith you have to say, 'That [particular thing] doesn't bother me.' But when you mature, you realize it's OK if you're scared. God is with you in the 'Woohoo!' and the 'Uh-oh,' and the 'This stinks.' ..."

"Now I can say, 'I've been there. I'm telling you that it's going to be OK.'"

Battling breast cancer is not McDonald's first lesson in faith—it took a lot of trust to switch from youth ministry to becoming a full-time comedian, performing for both youths and adults.

"When I started as a professional comedian 20 some years ago, I told God, 'As long as you keep getting me shows, I'll keep going out,'" she says.

"This is the first time I don't have anything booked for the next year except one [show]."

McDonald jokes that her lack of future bookings has left her "feeling confident—confident that I don't know how I'm going to pay my medical bills," she says with a laugh. Being an itinerant minister, she only gets paid when she is performing.

But, she adds on a more serious note, "I'm confident that somehow God will make the situation work. I've had an outpouring of support from my family, my friends" and her fellow itinerant ministers.

One gig she can count on in the future is NCYC 2019 in Indianapolis.

"I, like many, was shocked when she told me" about the breast cancer, says Christina Lamas, executive director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, which has NCYC as one of its ministries. "I just couldn't believe it. She's young. It hit home. She's a talented, full-of-life person."

Lamas told McDonald that "the door to NCYC is always open to you."

"She's incredible, full of life, full of passion," Lamas says. "You can see that come through in her interaction

with the young people, in the stories she shares, and how she includes humor into her lived faith experience. You can see the young people connect with her. Their eyes light up, they smile, they engage with her humor."

McDonald has some physical healing to do before getting back on the road.

In a video posted on her Facebook page on Nov. 16, the first day of NCYC, she shared that she is still quite sore from the



Judy McDonald interacts with her service dog Daisy during a past National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 25, 2013. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

October procedure. Early next year, tests will be run to see if any cancer remains. If so, she'll have chemotherapy; if not, then she'll prepare for reconstructive surgery.

But just because she isn't performing doesn't mean that McDonald isn't ministering.

"I'm not just a Catholic comedian," she says. "I'm a Catholic daughter, aunt, dog trainer, etc. Just because I'm on stage doesn't mean I have a call to only evangelize there. We have to be more in that mode all the time to evangelize, no matter where we are."

When she's ready to get back on the stage, McDonald says she'll have a lot of new material.

"I swear I have so much good material now, above and beyond what I did before," she comments in the video. "If you thought I was good before—a comedian with PTSD and a service dog—you should hear the routines I have being a PTSD comedian with a service dog who also has PTSD, and a cancer survivor!"

Meanwhile, she continues to count her blessings.



Judy McDonald runs a mini-marathon in Vista, Calif., with a friend's service dog on Oct. 22, just five days before undergoing a double mastectomy that prevented the comedian from performing at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18. (Submitted photo)

"What cancer can't take away from me is just the love I feel from my community, which isn't just in San Diego County, but all over the world," she says in her Nov. 16 video. "I'm so thankful for that."

(To contribute to a YouCaring site started for Judy McDonald by her friends to help pay for her medical bills, go to www.youcaring.com/judymcdonald-958920. To see videos of McDonald's acts, go to www.judymcdonald.net/index.html.) †

'There's just been a resounding message of, "I'm going to be OK." I've had that my whole life. I think it's a deep-rooted belief that if you get hit by a car and die, you'll be OK, or if you win the lottery, you'll be OK. My faith in Jesus tells me that these trials and tribulations on Earth don't matter.'



—Comedian Judy McDonald

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Advent is a season of promise, prophets and penance

By Father Herbert Weber

Promises are part of our lives. As kids, we extract promises from parents and friends just as we learn to make promises. Some are simple like the promise to bring a treat. Others demand more commitment, like the promise to be there when our friends need us.

The most significant promises that I witness take place at marriage ceremonies. As the officiating minister, I ask both the man and the woman if they will repeat after me. Then they say how they promise to be faithful in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love and honor all the days of their lives.

I hear these statements of promise and ask God to help them fulfill them, knowing how hard it sometimes can be.

With the image of the promise between the husband and wife in mind, we can easily focus on a still more significant promise. That is the promise of God to remain faithful to his people. It is a promise that is celebrated during Advent and reflected in the Scripture readings.

Sadly, Advent is always a short period of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is a period of promise and preparation that is easily overlooked. This year, the season is even shorter with only three weeks and a day.

That last day, which is both the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve, will be lost to many.

Nonetheless, we need this season as a time to meditate on the promise, even if it means finding a way to listen over the din of other voices.

The other day, a group gathered for a banquet was getting louder and louder. The host tried to get everyone's attention, but no one could hear him. Then someone took a spoon and tapped the side of a wine glass,

producing a high pitched ringing sound. The room quieted down.

Like the tap of that glass, Advent comes to us with a cry of the prophets over the noise of people with their own agendas and concerns. Isaiah reminds the people of Israel that their time of service is at an end and their guilt expiated. This is followed by the promise that the glory of the Lord is to be revealed.

That promise was made millennia ago. It was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled. It is the ultimate promise that should be the center of our attention.

Perhaps the world needs modern-day prophets like Isaiah who continue to declare hope during bleak times and can remind people that God has not forgotten them. God's promise lives on.

For many, Pope Francis has become that sign of hope. As a prophet, he stands up to people of power and offers humble service. Instead of searching for fame or acclaim, he reaches out to the poor and cries out for compassion for all people. His voice is like the tap of the wine glass that gets people's attention.

If we look, there are other prophets among us. Earlier this fall, an Oklahoma priest was beatified as the first American-born martyr.

Blessed Stanley Francis Rother was living and working with the Tz'utujil people, a group of Mayan indigenous people of Guatemala, when he was killed in the middle of the night by those who opposed his preaching justice for the poor. This took place in 1981, during the 36-year Guatemalan civil war.

Each year when I take a group from my parish to Guatemala on mission, I make a point of visiting the site of Father Rother's death. It is a room in the

‘... Advent comes to us with a cry of the prophets over the noise of people with their own agendas and concerns.’



Blessed Father Stanley Rother, a priest of the Oklahoma City Archdiocese who was murdered in 1981 in the Guatemalan village where he ministered and was beatified on Sept. 23, is shown baptizing a child in this undated photo. Advent is a time when the faithful are called to listen anew to prophets both new and old who seek to turn their attention back to God. Prophets, like Blessed Rother, offer hope in God's faithfulness. (CNS)

old rectory that has been converted to a humble and unpretentious shrine. I always stop and kneel in prayer.

Moved by Father Rother's willingness to stay with his people and lead them through turbulence, I always find myself praying for perseverance and courage in ministry. I also pray that I may have a prophetic voice when necessary.

Father Rother, like Pope Francis or any other prophet, did not merely oppose evil. He also offered hope by his willingness to preach that God would not abandon his people. So he would not abandon his people either. That is the promise that we recall during Advent.

There is one other aspect of Advent that we don't want to forget. This holy season is also a time of preparation through repentance, especially through the sacrament of penance. Like those in

the crowd who went out to John and were baptized in the Jordan River, we must admit our sinfulness.

Yet this repentance is not simply about all our failings or our lack of faith. Instead, it is a repentance through which we behold the face of God's promise to overcome sin and to renew humanity. It is repentance from which springs renewed hope.

Consequently, Advent becomes a time for promise, prophets and repentance. Through that combination, the world is changed now and forever. The nature of any true promise is to withstand time. It is always made in the present with the future in mind.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.) †

Prepare for Christ's coming by lowering mountains, raising valleys in your heart

By Barbara Hosbach

I dread the shorter, colder days that coincide with Advent here in the northeast. It's hard to enjoy a sunset at 4:30 in the afternoon. Fortunately, while the days grow darker, our parish Advent wreath grows brighter with light from an additional candle each week. God's light has a way of shining brighter when life seems darkest.

The Advent Mass readings also brighten my outlook—especially the prophet Isaiah's encouraging words: "Comfort, give comfort to my people" (Is 40:1). God asked the prophet to reassure the suffering Israelite exiles in Babylon.

Although God allowed his people to experience the consequences of their wrongdoing, he didn't abandon them. He promised to be with them in exile, to nurture them, hold them close and ultimately lead them back home.

Some years ago, like those Israelites, I felt exiled from all that was familiar to me, including my family and friends. I'd always prided myself on being hardworking, self-sufficient and helpful to others—or so I thought.

All that changed after a car accident, which was followed by a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. I could no longer live up to my own self-image. Who was I if I couldn't work hard? Who'd want me around if I couldn't do things for them?

I found out the hard way that many of the things I thought I did "for others" had been attempts to control, pump up my own ego and earn approval or affection. When my false supports crumbled, I felt useless, miserable and terrified.

Isaiah urged the Israelites to prepare for the Lord by making a straight way in the desert. In my darkest hour, God came into the desert of my heart. Although he

allowed me to experience my particular challenges, he didn't abandon me.

When I was ready to be honest and face my false pride, God tenderly led me through my emotional wasteland. He showed me that my abilities are gifts, not to be denied but not to be relied on in place of him. In acknowledging my limitations, I'm honoring God instead of my own capabilities.

Isaiah promised that "every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low" (Is 40:4). He didn't say we have to fill in our own valleys or knock down our own mountains.

I'd tried to fill my low self-esteem by struggling to be Wonder Woman. Then I'd knock down my pride by telling myself I wasn't so great. Neither worked.

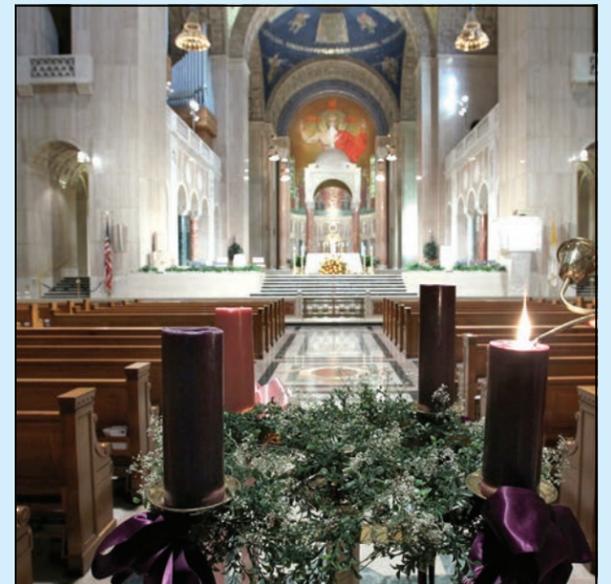
Through my challenges, God taught me that I don't have to prove anything to be worthy of love. In fact, I'm better able to give and receive love when I'm not trying too hard. My relationships with family and friends are much more relaxed and genuine now.

We all have value simply because God loves us so much that he wants to be with us. Although Isaiah said to prepare by making a straight way for the Lord, Jesus said he is the way (Jn 14:6).

So how do we make a straight way for our Savior? By getting straight with ourselves, by honestly admitting our shortcomings and recognizing how much we need him. It's safe to face this truth because we have the reassurance of God's love for us just as we are.

We celebrate our Savior's coming to be with us on that first Christmas. We also have his promise that he will come again and take us to be with him forever. God kept the first promise so we can trust him to keep the second.

Meanwhile, as we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming this Advent season, let's remember that God is



This photo illustration shows a candle being lit on an Advent wreath at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. While the days grow darker, the Advent wreath grows brighter with light from an additional candle each week. (CNS photo illustration/Bob Roller)

eternal. Eternity doesn't mean an endless extension of time, it means being beyond time.

We can trust the light of God's love to burn within us whenever life is at its darkest—whether the darkness is outside of us or within our hearts—because eternity includes right now.

(Barbara Hosbach is a freelance writer and author of 'Your Faith Has Made You Well': Jesus Heals in the New Testament.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Father Walter Cizek survived Soviet slave-labor camps

Today, Dec. 8, is the 33rd anniversary of the death of Jesuit Father Walter Cizek. But his Jesuit community had declared him officially dead in 1947, 70 years ago, because it hadn't heard from him since 1941.



Cizek, born in 1904, was a tough kid growing up in Shenandoah, Penn. He later said that he was "tough, stubborn, a bully, the leader of a gang, a street fighter." So his father was amazed when Walter announced, after he completed eighth grade, that he wanted to be a priest.

In seminaries, he kept in top physical condition. He said that he always wanted to do "the hardest thing." For that reason, too, he decided to be a Jesuit. He entered the society and was ordained in Rome in 1937.

Well before his ordination, he became enthusiastic about going to the Soviet Union as a missionary. After Pope Pius XI sent a letter "to all seminarians, especially our Jesuit sons," in which he sought volunteers to serve the communist-persecuted Church in the Soviet Union, Walter volunteered.

After his ordination, his Jesuit superior assigned him to a parish in Albertyn, Poland, where he waited for a chance to minister in Russia.

After Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland in September of 1939, Walter and a friend got false permits that allowed them to work in the Ural Mountains. Then they hopped a railroad boxcar headed for Russia.

Using the alias Vladimir Lypinski, Father Cizek got a job hauling logs from a river and piling them on shore. He and his friend celebrated Mass secretly on a tree stump. Gradually, believers learned of the priests' presence and Father Cizek and his friend gave them instructions at night.

In 1941, Soviet secret police officers arrested Father Cizek. He was surprised to learn that they knew his real name, his national origin, and the fact that he was a priest.

He was sent to the infamous Lubjanka Prison in Moscow. For four years, he was held in solitary confinement in a cell measuring 6 feet by 10 feet, with nothing in it except a bed and a bucket that served as a toilet. He was allowed out of the cell for 20 minutes daily for exercise. He spent his time praying.

After being given drug-laced tea, he confessed under duress to being a Vatican spy. He was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor, including 11 years in Siberian slave-labor camps. He was forced to work in severe conditions as a coal miner, log retriever and construction worker. In those camps, though, he was also able to minister secretly as a priest among his fellow prisoners.

Then in 1963, he and another American were exchanged for a Russian couple who had been convicted of spying in the United States. He was then 59 years old.

The Jesuits assigned him to the John XXIII Center for Eastern Studies at Fordham University, where he taught and gave retreats. He also co-wrote two books: *With God in Russia*, a re-telling of his life in the Soviet Union published in 1964, and *He Leadeth Me*, a spiritual reflection on his experiences there published in 1973. In 2016, Loyola Press published *With God in America: The Spiritual Legacy of an Unlikely Jesuit*, a collection of his writings after his return from the Soviet Union.

Father Cizek died in 1984 at age 80. The cause for his canonization continues. †

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

What is your 'joy quotient' this Christmas season?

With Christmas a little more than two weeks away, both my spiritual mooring and seasonal sentiment are



strong and buoyant. Family, health, work that brings fulfillment, money enough to buy gifts for others—I'm heading into the home stretch toward Christmas with a contented smile etched on my heart.

But I have a young friend who is undergoing delicate surgery this week. If it is not successful, her career in medicine could be over. I know a young family with a 3-year-old child who had been celebrating recent word of another baby on the way; the mother was found to have an aggressive malignancy last week. For several others whose names I call in prayer during this time of togetherness, it is the first Christmas without a dear loved one who died during the past year.

So maybe not everyone's "joy quotient" is quite as high as mine at the two-week-and-counting mark of Christmas.

The programs of Catholic Charities

often come across individuals whose "joy quotient" is low.

People like Jennifer and Steve, who were ready to start a new life after Steve left the military. When work did not come as quickly as expected, the family exhausted their funds and found themselves living in their car. Catholic Charities provided a place of refuge where the family could access the resources they needed to get back on their feet.

People like Sara, who came to Catholic Charities to escape a domestic violence situation and has been homeless for five years.

People like Jesse who has multiple sclerosis (MS). He insists, "I am not MS. I have MS, but I'm way more than that." He and his family come to Catholic Charities for a warm meal and other necessities to help make ends meet.

And how are things with you?

The late Father Henri Nouwen wrote in his journal about a Christmas he was experiencing. In his touching *The Road to Daybreak*, he writes:

"Christmas is saying 'yes' to something beyond all emotions and feelings. Christmas is saying 'yes' to a hope based on God's initiative, which has nothing to do with what I think or

feel." But sometimes, he wrote, during the Christmas season "things never look just right or feel just right." It is important to remember "Christmas is believing that the salvation of the world is God's work and not mine ... it is into this broken world that a child is born who is called Son of the Most High, Prince of Peace, Savior."

Charity is just that—saying yes to hope and believing that salvation is ours through God. Many others walk in the doors of Catholic Charities with needs similar to Steve and Jennifer, Sara and Jesse and want to experience hope. Hope so they can meet the challenges they're facing. To know that they are not alone, God is with them even when things don't feel "just right." That face of God is often a staff member or volunteer of Catholic Charities.

Even if everything isn't "just right" for you as Christmas approaches, trust God and know that this holy season affirms something larger than sentiment. It says that God is with you in every situation to supply the grace you need.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. E-mail him at dbethuram@archindy.org.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Temperance holds key to staying sane in today's crazy world

No matter with whom I converse, one word sums up their feelings about today's world: crazy. It can be because of erratic politics, senseless shootings, discontented marchers, the absence of a moral compass, bizarre weather and



other unnerving happenstances that boggle the mind.

What exactly can stop us from going crazy?

The virtue of temperance contains our answer.

Usually we think of it as discipline

in which we better control that which threatens our spiritual and physical well-being. It means that God endowed us with a sense of order we need to maintain to remain balanced. Crazy happens when chaos reigns, creating turmoil.

How then do we maintain innate order?

It is by absorbing God's awesome order and its harmonizing effect.

The virtue "fear of the Lord" usually connotes fright and terror. It is true we often fear God's justice and possibly not getting into heaven. But more important, fear means being in awe of God's gift of order and its strength to dispel life's craziness.

In the "Canticle of Daniel" (Dn 3:57-88), we possess a litany of that which orders our cosmic existence: the waters, the heavens, sun, moon, stars, showers, dews, winds, fire, heat, frost, cold, snow, as well as humanity.

The list reminds us that without this order, we wouldn't exist. It is the realization that life exists because God ordered it so.

In Romans 8:28, Paul addresses this harmonizing order in stating, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

One way to appreciate our gift of order and fend off craziness is to observe Mother Nature in action. For example, to wonder about how birds fly; to listen to rain and marvel at how it causes seeds to grow; and to be astonished by the heavenly smell and colors of flowers.

We need to get outside of ourselves and our small world, and enter more fully into God's world of wonderful order that holds us together.

G.K. Chesterton wrote we have lunacy when we become like the moon that is a circle with no outlets, causing us to be consumed by too much of self. He reminds us to counter craziness by elevating our life away from its earthliness and raising it to God's life, especially God's gift of awesome order that holds it together.

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

Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

The art of giving, the challenge of Advent

Oprah Winfrey sings and claps when presented with the \$69 lunch box that makes her 2017 "Favorite Things" list.



"I loooooove!" she belts out in mock falsetto.

She doesn't need to finish her sentence by naming the object of her love. It is expansive, and today, in a video of the selection process for her biggest gift guide, it covers 102 items,

totaling \$13,400 in value and ranging from a \$2,000 55-inch Samsung high-definition TV down to a \$10 earbud case.

"People spend the best years of their lives either trying to untangle their charger cords or track down missing earbuds," Oprah quips in the December issue of her magazine, *O*, which pictures all her favorite things.

It includes a \$600 espresso maker, a \$200 bird house, a \$200 automated dog bone and a \$250 "lip vault" by Ulta containing 25 tubes of "lip mousse."

Oprah claims to have ordered them "for every woman I know," and, incidentally, they were sold out before Thanksgiving.

There's plenty of warm-fuzzy—buffalo plaid on slippers, shirts, pajamas, blankets and boots—and frivolous, like \$50 blueberries. "My new definition of everyday luxury," Oprah writes, "a five-pound box of organic wild blueberries frozen within 24 hours of harvest from Josh Pond Farm in Maine."

It seems every so-called "influencer" now curates a gift guide if, for nothing else, the kickback from Amazon affiliate links. Online shoppers take the expert's word, making transactions that require a nanosecond of engagement.

And so goes the drumbeat of commercialism: more, more, more.

All the while, we Christians are called to answer Advent's hushed invitation for less, less, less. To clear out our closets and turn off our phones, to resist the click-and-procure in favor of the wait-and-wonder. What a challenge it is to make space for the other, for the divine. Filling sets off all our bells and whistles; emptying requires discernment and allows for quiet.

Americans prefer the former. We have so much self-storage space, the Self Storage Association once pointed out, it is physically possible that every American could stand at the same time under the canopy of self-storage roofing.

I've been reflecting on the art of gift giving—what it can do for us, at its best, and what it neglects to do at its hastiest. The more you put in, the more you get out.

My neighbor recently showed me a Christmas picture book, Holly Hobbie's charmer *Toot & Puddle: Let It Snow*, in which best friends—who happen to be pigs—struggle to determine the perfect gifts for each other. Puddle labors in his attic, painting an image of the twosome in the woods. Toot, meanwhile, spends "every spare minute in his workshop in the basement" building a sled on wheels—one that will work with or without snow.

"He knew that the best present was usually something you made yourself, a one-of-a-kind thingamajig, not just a whatsit anyone could buy in a store," Hobbie writes.

Indeed, the sweetest gifts require a commodity more precious than treasure: time. That's the gift my mom extends to me every day with her availability and assistance, delighting in the giving, expecting nothing in return. Time is the resource we try to circumvent with apps and outsourcing, but it can never be replicated.

If you want Advent to remake your heart, you must make the time for real giving, for glitter and glue and hours and minutes. Leave the lip vault to Oprah.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

Second Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 10, 2017

- Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
- 2 Peter 3:8-14
- Mark 1:1-8

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for Mass on this Second Sunday of Advent.



When this book was written, God's people were happy. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were looking forward to returning to their homeland. This

passage captures well the people's joy and relief. It certainly expresses their longing to return to their homeland.

These verses also convey well the sense that this happy circumstance has occurred as a result of God's mercy and faithfulness to the covenant.

It was not as if the people had earned God's munificence in this regard, or that they had been unusually loyal to the covenant themselves. To the contrary, their sins had brought misery upon themselves.

Nevertheless, God's mercy endured. The prophet thus insists that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem to the holy mountain where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and unwelcome possibilities in the future.

However—and this is critical—it does not predict everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come, but God always will protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the beginning of the Gospel, as the first verse of the reading states. This opening verse states the purpose of the Gospel. It is the "Good News" about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In these relatively few words, the entire reality of salvation is revealed. Something new is being proclaimed, utterly different from the sadness and dreariness of human life, unbound by the variances of earthly existence. The news, furthermore, is good. Jesus, the Son of God, both conveys this Good News and brings its effectiveness into human life.

This reading quotes Isaiah's prophecy that God will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God's forgiveness. God has been true to this pledge. He gives us Jesus.

The Gospel then tells of John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John recognized Jesus as the Son of God. Anyone can do this. Too many, however, create an unrealistic image, an invention to confirm the easy way out or excuse us from the task of genuine conversion.

Reflection

In Advent, the Church clearly, frankly and directly calls people to remember who they are as humans and to realize sin's devastating results. Such was the message of John the Baptist.

These steps require frankness and humility. We first must admit our sin and also our human limitations. We must see what sin—total estrangement from and rejection of God—actually is. It is the cause of eternal death and often of misery in earthly existence.

The ultimate message, nevertheless, is not of doom and gloom. While we are limited and have sinned, while we may well have made quite a mess for ourselves and for others, all of this weekend's readings remind us that God's mercy is overwhelming and unending. So, we have reason to hope. God will forgive us. God will strengthen us.

The key to obtaining this mercy personally is in admitting our sin and repenting. God does not drag us kicking and screaming into heaven, so we must turn to God, wholeheartedly. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 11

St. Damasus I, pope
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14
Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zechariah 2:14-17
or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab
(Response) Judith 13:18bc, 19
Luke 1:26-38
or Luke 1:39-47

Wednesday, December 13

St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Isaiah 40:25-31
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 41:13-20
Psalm 145:1, 9-13b
Matthew 11:11-15

Friday, December 15

Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 16

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
(Response) Luke 1:46-50, 53-54
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Those to receive Communion should fast for an hour before receiving it

QI'm confused about the rules regarding fasting before receiving Communion. I've been told that we are not to ingest any food or drink within one half-hour of a service. But I've also heard that water or even coffee are not included in this prohibition. Someone had mentioned to me also that this fasting doesn't apply if there are health issues involved. Can you clarify for me what the real rules are? (Indiana)



AThe current rules on fasting before Holy Communion are simple and clearly expressed in the *Code of Canon Law*. They provide that one must abstain for one hour from all food and drink, with the exception of water or medicine, prior to receiving the Eucharist (#919).

But that same canon notes that "the elderly, the infirm and those who care for them can receive the most holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour." Perhaps the fact that these rules have changed several times within my own lifetime may explain your confusion.

For centuries, Catholics were required to abstain from all food and drink (including water) from midnight of the evening before.

In 1953, Pope Pius XII decided that water or medicine no longer broke the fast. Four years later, that same pontiff—eager to make the Eucharist more easily available while still wanting to maintain proper reverence for this sacred gift—reduced the time period; no longer would you have to fast from midnight but, instead, for only three hours.

Then, in 1964, Pope Paul VI reduced it even further—to only one hour—and that is still the rule. Note that fasting is required for one hour before the actual reception of Communion, not one hour before the start of Mass. (And note, too, that coffee drinkers do not get a pass; coffee does break the fast!)

QMy question as a faithful Catholic is this: Is it wrong for me to pray daily and unceasingly for death? I have been in prison now for 25 years. I am so tired of this existence that I am seeking legal action to have my sentence changed from life in prison to the death penalty.

I have always been opposed to capital punishment, but the past few years

have made me realize the unbelievable suffering that results from a life term and what a relief death would bring. Nearly every one of my fellow prisoners—even those on death row—thinks that execution is much less cruel than life without parole.

I used to believe that God had a job for me to do here in prison, a role to play—but I've never been able to find it, and the many years in prison have hardened my heart. It is so difficult to be talked about all the time and never really talked to. Is there any help for me? Is there anybody on my side? (Missouri)

AI don't see a problem with your praying for death. There are many accounts of saints asking to be taken into the peace of heaven and to be released from the pain of the present life. I think, though, that you should not be seeking the death penalty.

The Church has historically taught that there are limited circumstances in which the death penalty can be validly applied. However, over the past 25 years, St. John Paul II and now Pope Francis have suggested that these circumstances might be so rare as to not be practically applicable.

Indeed, Pope Francis put great emphasis on how the death penalty "heavily wounds human dignity," is "an inhuman measure" and cuts short the possibility for conversion of those facing such punishment.

More than anything else, though, I would like to respond to your plaintive cry, "Is there any help for me?" I believe that there is help for you, even in the growing bleakness of your life that you describe.

Continue to seek out the guidance of a priest, chaplain or other counselor. But, perhaps more importantly, nurture a deeper relationship with the Lord. Join your sufferings to his and the grace that will flow from this to others will be great indeed.

You may never know in this life what effects that grace has on others. But in faith you can know that you in your own suffering are working with Christ to transform the world through his passion and death. That is a sure hope that can begin to dispel your darkness.

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

My Journey to God

Open Our Hearts

By Sandy Bierly

Let us open our hearts
And let Christ enter in
He is the King of kings,
Our Savior and friend.

Born as a little babe
In Bethlehem town,
He came to save us,
From all of our sins.

Let us open our hearts
And let Christ enter in.
Let him be born in us,
So that peace will win.



(Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Ginny Maher of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis kneels to touch the place revered as the site where Christ was born in a cave below the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, on Feb. 12, 2015.)

(File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

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, Margorie L., 87, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Nov. 25. Mother of Ginny Selkirk, Bev Unger, Randy and Steve Bedel. Sister of Loren Tebbe. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 15.

BROGAN, Darlene, 71, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 26. Mother of Annette Murphy, Laurie Warren, Michelle Wells, Frank, Jeff, Jeremy and Jerry Brogan. Sister of Skeeter James. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of five.

BROSIOUS, Jeanette E., 86, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Mother of Christine, Donna, Karen, Leanne, Rose, Bill, Bruce, Mark, Mike and Paul Brosious. Grandmother, great-grandmother of several.

DRAKE, Barbara E., 86, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Nov. 15. Sister of Donna Fichter, Danny, Denny and Ronnie Bland. Aunt of several.

ELMER, Albert, 79, St. Martin of Tours, Siberia, Nov. 13. Father of Darrel, Glen and Scott Elmer. Brother of Alfreda Matthews, Mildred Sander and Edwina Wendholt. Grandfather of eight.

HIGBIE, Robert W., 51, St. Gabriel, Connerville, Nov. 23. Husband of Valerie Higbie. Father of Nicole Roosa and Melaina Higbie. Brother of Kathleen Byrd, Patty Keenan, Martha Nobbe, Maggie Pitstick, Georgetta, Marvin and

Melvin Higbie. Grandfather of seven.

HOLTZMAN, Henry L., 89, St. Boniface, Fulda, Nov. 15. Husband of Mildred Holtzman. Father of LeeAnn Rasche. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of six.

KAFURE, Marjorie, 99, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Nov. 24. Aunt of several.

KLEEMAN, Charles, 91, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 12. Husband of Ethel Mae Kleeman. Father of Peggy Heubner, Ann Pryer, Amy Strobel, Jane Yancy and Randall Kleeman. Brother of Catherine Keller, Francis and Michael Kleeman. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 21.

KLEISER, Leona, 93, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 15. Mother of Linda, Kevin and Michael Kleiser. Sister of Lucille Meier, Rosella Ruschman and Melvin Schilling. Grandmother of 10.

MALDONADO, Anthony P., 41, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Nov. 21. Husband of Autumn Maldonado. Father of Alana Alexander-Maldonado, Gabrielle and Abel Maldonado. Son of David and Irma Maldonado. Brother of Monique Hemmerling.

NIKIRK, Peggy A., 75, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Nov. 12. Wife of Paul Nikirk. Mother of Lana, Brent, Brian and Steven Nikirk. Sister of Nancy Barnes, Sarah Corn, Sharon Jackson, Anna Minton,

Mary Wade, Robert, Roger and Walter Evans. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 10.

POLLMAN, Daniel J., 25, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Nov. 18. Son of Paul and Barbara Pollman. Brother of Chris Pollman.

RAAB, Paul H., 83, St. Anthony, Morris, Nov. 26. Husband of Alice Raab. Father of Rita Ludwig, Julia Nobbe, Susan Tekulve, Diana Vogel, Allen, David and Raymond Raab. Grandfather of 24. Great-grandfather of 22.

TETRICK, Rosalie, 79, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 26. Wife of Ken Tetrick. Mother of Carolyn Reed and Christopher Tetrick. Sister of Susan Laker and Kent Bauman. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two.

THOMPSON, Mary G. (Wessel), 96, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Oct. 23. Mother of Marilyn Griffin, Joyce Muscatello, Kathy Sperzel, Therese Winstead, Edward, Garry, Ronald and Terry Thompson. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 16. Great-great-grandmother of one.

VAAL, Ray, 77, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Nov. 21. Husband of Janet Vaal. Father of Schelly Songer and Jeff Vaal. Brother of Norma Amos, Ruthie Clark, Dorothy Gehlhausen, Bettye Greulich, Connie Hildenbrand, Kathy Hopf, Toni Mundy and James Vaal. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one. †



Remembering victims of persecution

Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Iraq, celebrates a memorial Mass for victims of the Islamic State at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington on Nov. 28. The Church in Erbil, led by Archbishop Warda, cared for waves of Christian refugees driven by the Islamic State when it took the nearby Mosul in 2014. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Washington Archdiocese takes transit system to court over ad guidelines

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Archdiocese of Washington filed suit in federal court on Nov. 28 over the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) advertising guidelines after the transit system rejected an Advent and Christmas advertisement.

The archdiocese seeks injunctive relief after WMATA, as the agency is known, refused to allow an ad promoting the archdiocese's annual "Find the Perfect Gift" initiative for the Advent and Christmas seasons. The suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The archdiocese contends WMATA's policy that "prohibits all noncommercial advertising, including any speech that purportedly promotes a religion, religious practice or belief," is a violation of the free speech and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment and a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

The WMATA's prohibition, the archdiocese contends, "violates the free speech rights of the Archdiocese because

the prohibition creates an unreasonable and disproportionate burden on the exercise of the archdiocese's speech without any legitimate justification."

"We believe rejection of this ad to be a clear violation of fundamental free speech and a limitation on the exercise of our faith," said Kim Fiorentino, archdiocesan chancellor and general counsel. "We look forward to presenting our case to affirm the right of all to express such viewpoints in the public square."

The archdiocese has in previous years advertised on WMATA's public buses. Up until 2015, the archdiocese purchased WMATA space for ads that, according to the lawsuit, "were explicitly religious in character."

"These advertisements included a campaign highlighting the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation during the liturgical season of Lent. This campaign, 'The Light Is on for You,' was remarkably successful for the archdiocese—and lucrative for WMATA—with advertisements on the backs of 85 buses throughout the metropolitan area."

The advertisements rejected by WMATA

highlight the archdiocese's annual "Find the Perfect Gift" campaign, which refers views to the FindThePerfectGift.org website that includes Mass schedules, reflections on the meaning of Advent and Christmas, religious holiday traditions and opportunities for charitable service. The image is a silhouette of shepherds and sheep standing on a hill.

"The rejected ad conveys a simple message of hope, and an invitation to participate in the Christmas season. Yet citing its guidelines, WMATA's legal counsel said the ad 'depicts a religious scene and thus seeks to promote religion,'" said Ed McFadden, secretary for communications for the Archdiocese of Washington.

"To borrow from a favorite Christmas story, under WMATA's guidelines, if the ads are about packages, boxes or bags ... if Christmas comes from a store ... then it seems WMATA approves. But if Christmas means a little bit more, WMATA plays Grinch."

Susan Timoney, secretary for pastoral ministry and social concerns for the archdiocese, noted that the rejected advertisement "was designed to be placed on Metro bus exteriors to reach the broadest audience and to invite everyone to experience the well-accepted joyful spirit of the season, or to share their many blessings with others less fortunate through service opportunities."

She said the ads were to convey the message that "the archdiocese wishes to encourage our society to help feed, clothe, and care for our most vulnerable neighbors, and to share our blessings, and welcome all who wish to hear the good news."

The lawsuit notes that because of WMATA's "discriminatory and arbitrary" enforcement of its policy, "the Archdiocese has suffered and will suffer irreparable harm, including the loss of its constitutional rights."

"WMATA's rejection of the archdiocese's speech amounts to a violation of the First Amendment, plain and simple," said Paul Clement of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, who is serving as counsel to the archdiocese in the case. "We are bringing this complaint to vindicate the basic principle that the government may not allow a wide variety of speech in a forum and then turn around and deny the archdiocese access because of the religious nature of its speech."

In a statement, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the neighboring Diocese of Arlington, Va., said WMATA's decision "to suppress free speech and ban the depiction of a religious scene is saddening and troubling."

"WMATA approves the commercialization of Christmas by showing ads depicting gifts and material goods, but unfortunately the portrayal of the reason we celebrate this time of year—the birth of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—is a guideline violation," he added.

He called for the "egregious action" to "be reversed," and applauded Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl and the archdiocese "for courageously addressing this issue."

"I pray that those with authority over WMATA guidelines will see reason and allow a simple, peaceful and joyful religious image to be displayed. Religious freedom must be upheld!" he said. †



The Archdiocese of Washington filed suit in federal court on Nov. 28 over the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's advertising guidelines after the transit system rejected an Advent and Christmas advertisement. (CNS photo/Archdiocese of Washington)

Priest's vocation has 'transcended' health challenges over 50 years

By Sean Gallagher

Father Joseph Mader has coped with various health challenges since he was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis 50 years ago on May 7, 1967.

Those challenges forced him into early retirement 25 years ago. And since 1999, he has lived in Florida.

Nonetheless, Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, who grew up down the street from his brother priest, says that Father Mader's call to ordained ministry transcended his physical limitations.

"He knew that the priesthood was important to the people in the Church," said Msgr. Svarczkopf, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. "To have good priests was what the Church depended on. And so he was interested in remaining a priest, forming priests and that priests be well grounded in theology."

Father Mader, who was unable to be interviewed for this article, spent 16 years seeking to form future priests at the Latin School of Indianapolis, the archdiocese's high school seminary that closed in 1978, and at the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad.

He also served for nine years in parish ministry in central and southern Indiana, ministering as pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville from 1984-88, and as associate pastor during other periods at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, St. Michael Parish in Cannelton, St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Pius V Parish in Troy.

Father Michael O'Mara, pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, had Father Mader as his spiritual director at Saint Meinrad, describing him as "an intellectual" who was "mystical" in his approach to faith.

"He always kind of left things with an open-ended question or remark," said Father O'Mara. "One of his favorite quotes I remember him saying was, 'Never say never except about God and one or two other things.' Then you'd say, 'What are the other things?' And he would just say again, 'Never say never except about God and one or two other things.'"

"He kind of liked to push your mind around a little bit."

Father O'Mara said that Father Mader helped him as a young college seminarian to gain confidence that God had called him to the priesthood.

Father Mader also helped him through challenging times when his grandmother was struggling with depression, and said that she couldn't take life one day at a time, but only one half hour at a time.

"I remember him getting up out of his chair, getting a little card and writing the fraction 1/2 on the card," Father O'Mara recalled. "He said, 'Hang that up in your room and remember that wisdom that your grandma taught you. Take it a half hour at a time, and don't try to take on everything at the same time.'"

At the Latin School, Father Mader taught math to high school seminarians. Msgr. Svarczkopf, who was a faculty member at the Latin School with

Father Mader, said that his friend in later years sometimes focused his mind on mathematics when his body began to fail him.

"He worked things out very logically and mathematically," Msgr. Svarczkopf said. "He would work math problems to keep his brain going. He would have been a lot worse off if he had not used his math skills and worked very complicated math problems to keep his brain going."

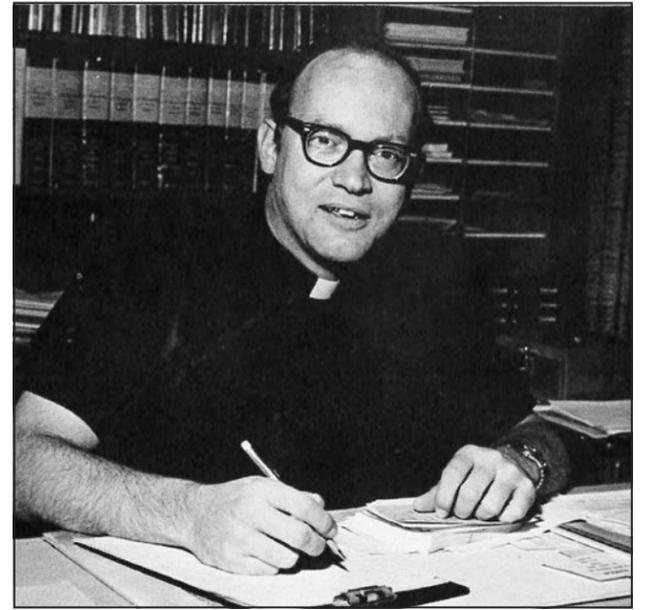
Father Mader was also interested in the intersection of faith and science.

"He would always talk about how the universe is expanding because God is limitless," Msgr. Svarczkopf said.

"And there's no limit to how much we can get involved with God. You can never say, 'Well, I've gotten about as holy as I can get.' There's always more, and the more will always be awesome and more than we'd ever thought."

As much as Father Mader was drawn to mathematics and science, he didn't dwell in abstractions from everyday life, said Father O'Mara, but instead gave of himself to the people he was called to serve.

"He didn't put up any pretenses," Father O'Mara said. "He was who he



In this photo from the 1977 yearbook of the former Latin School of Indianapolis, Father Joseph Mader is shown working as an instructor in the school that served as the archdiocese's high school seminary. Father Mader was ordained 50 years ago on May 7, 1967. (Archive photo)

was and wasn't interested in putting up pretenses for people. He was joyful. When he celebrated the Eucharist, he was joyful about it.

"He loved the priesthood. He loved his time at Saint Meinrad. He just liked wherever he was, whether that be working with people in a parish or wherever. He was there for you."

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

Advent is time to identify sin, help the poor, see beauty, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Advent is a time to be watchful and alert to the ways one strays from God's path, but also to signs of his presence in other people and in the beauty of the world, Pope Francis said.

Reciting the *Angelus* prayer on Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis told people gathered in St. Peter's Square, "Being watchful and alert are the prerequisites for not continuing 'to wander far from the Lord's path,' lost in our sins and infidelities; being watchful and alert are the conditions for allowing God to break into our existence, to give it meaning and value with his presence full of goodness and tenderness."

Like the ancient Israelites who wandered in the desert, the pope said, "we, too, often find ourselves in a situation of infidelity to the Lord's call; he indicates the right path, the path of faith, the path of love, but we look for happiness elsewhere."

Advent gives people time to review the paths they have taken and to turn back to

the ways of God, he said.

It is a time for paying attention to the needs of others, "trying to counter the indifference and cruelty" present in the world, the pope said. But it is also a time to "rejoice in the treasures of beauty that also exist and should be protected."

"It is a matter of having an understanding gaze to recognize both the misery and poverty of individuals and societies, but also to recognize the riches hidden in the little things of daily life precisely where God has put them," he said.

Pope Francis, who had returned to the Vatican late the night before after a six-day trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, also used his midday address as an opportunity to thank everyone who had prayed for the trip's success and everyone who had a hand in organizing it.

The pope said he carried with him "the memory of so many faces tried by life, but still noble and smiling. I carry them in my heart and in my prayers." †



Pope Francis waves during his *Angelus* in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 3. Advent is a time to be watchful and alert to the ways one strays from God's path, but also to signs of his presence in other people and in the beauty of the world, Pope Francis said. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters)

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May Altar at St. Catherine of Siena Parish

In this 1947 photo, Msgr. James Downey poses with the outdoor May Altar at the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Indianapolis. Msgr. Downey was the pastor of St. Catherine Parish from 1917-1948. St. Catherine Parish merged with the former St. James Parish in Indianapolis to found the current Good Shepherd Parish in 1993.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; (317) 236-1538; or by e-mail at jmotyka@archindy.org.)



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