Lasting gifts of Christmas

A small boy sits on the lap of Santa Claus during a Christmas party at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, where the staff and volunteers work hard to make Christmas special for homeless families. (Submitted photo)

A sense of hope shines through for residents of Holy Family Shelter during season of giving

By John Shaughnessy

Brittany Nickerson knows that our most special Christmas gifts become etched in our memories. The mother of two also knows there’s an added emotional power to these gifts when we share them with the people we love—and maybe even more so during a painful time in our lives.

As Christmas approached a year ago, Nickerson was enduring a “very humbling” and unsettling time in her life. She had lost her home to foreclosure, and she had nowhere to live with her son and her daughter. The reality of being homeless overwhelmed her.

“It was mostly a feeling of anxiety,” she says. “I didn’t want my kids to feel ashamed. My son was upset. I had more anxiety for my kids than for myself.”

In the midst of that turmoil, Nickerson made a desperate phone call to a place she had never heard of previously—the archdiocese’s Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis. Even when she was told there was a room for her family to stay, she didn’t know what to expect.

A journey of dignity: Combined effort promotes palliative and hospice care as ‘embodying Catholic teaching’

(Editor’s note: The Criterion is running a series of articles on senior-related issues through the lens of the Catholic faith. This final installment will focus on the new Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative, a collaborative effort of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ascension St. Vincent and Franciscan Health to support, raise awareness of and educate on palliative care and hospice care. To read the three previous installments of this four-part series, go to www.CriterionOnline.com)

By Natalie Hoeter

On Jan. 6, 2016, archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz was present in an official capacity for the blessing of a new building conducted by then-Indianapolis Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin. She’d been to many such events before. But this one was different.

“I was so impressed,” she says emphatically. “It felt like a sacred place.”

The building being blessed was not a church, chapel or shrine. It was Franciscan Hospice House, a 12- (soon to be 16-) bed medical facility of Franciscan Health on the south side of Indianapolis. There, the terminally ill can receive around-the-clock care with the primary goal being the comfort and dignity of the person and their family.
transparencia y responsabilidad: Antes, durante y después de Baltimore

Los últimos meses han sido muy difíciles para muchos en la Iglesia, tanto integrantes del clero como seglares. Algunos han expresado su descontento con la falta de acción tras la reunión de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB), celebrada en otoño. Otros han reconocido que se sienten tanto avergonzados de identificarse como católicos ante personas de otras tradiciones de fe. Para aclarar, si el abuso sexual ha sido un problema para la Iglesia católica, no es exclusivo de esta.

Aunque buena parte de la frustración y la rabia resultan comprensibles, también es evidente que muchos sencillamente no están conscientes de lo que ya se ha hecho para abordar el problema del abuso sexual en la Iglesia. Si no pudimos votar en las diversas medidas de acción propuestas durante la reunión en Baltimore, tal como se ha escrito, el problema de la Junta Examinadora para todas las diócesis de Estados Unidos incluye la falta de acción tras la reunión de obispos. No creemos que estas medidas demuestren ser beneficiosas no sólo en los Estados Unidos, sino en todo el mundo.

Las medidas de acción propuestas incluyen una línea telefónica independiente para que personas se comuniquen con el Vaticano de Responsabilidad para Obispos, un Protocolo para los Obispos Separados y la creación de algún tipo de comisión laica nacional o metropolitana. El cardenal Daniel N. DiNardo, actual presidente de la USCCB, compartió estas medidas en la reunión mundial de presidentes de conferencias con el papa Francisco, y se celebrará en Roma en febrero de 2019. Colaboro en uno de los comités que preparó una de las medidas de acción propuestas, a saber, el de la Normas de Responsabilidad para Obispos. El tiempo y el esfuerzo que le dedicamos a este documento comenzó mucho antes de viajar a Baltimore e incluyó extensas reuniones antes y durante la Asamblea General de la USCCB. No creo que nuestra labor haya sido en vano. De hecho, sospecho que el trabajo de los obispos estadounidenses en definitiva tendrá un impacto sobre la Iglesia universal. Aunque las medidas de acción propuestas enmarañadas anteriormente implican supervisión por parte de obispos, no se han realizado numerosos avances desde que entraron en vigencia en las diócesis de todos los Estados Unidos las políticas y los procedimientos de los “Estatutos para la protección de niños, adolescentes y jóvenes” de 2002.

A igual que en la mayoría de las diócesis de todos los Estados Unidos en la Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis confiamos en la labor de profesores laicos que se desempeña como coordinador de asistencia para víctimas y en miembros de la Junta Examnadora para todas las diócesis de abuso sexual, en conformidad con los estatutos de 2002. El coordinador de asistencia para víctima recibe todas las quejas o alegatos, este, a su vez, transmite a las autoridades civiles y reúne información para que la Junta Examnadora analice la credibilidad del caso. Ha resultado ser un proceso bastante eficaz, según consta en nuestra publicación de octubre en la que figuran los nombres de los sacerdotes contra los cuales pesaban acusaciones consideradas fundamentadas. La fecha más reciente de un presupuesto, esto, se indica en la lista publicada, es 1997. Además de los esfuerzos detallados aquí, se ha puesto gran empeño en garantizar que la arquidiócesis se beneficie de dos de los mejores seminarios del país. Tenemos la bendición de contar con programas de formación bien establecidos, tanto en el seminario universitario Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, en Indianapolis, como en la escuela de teología Saint Meinrad Seminary, que tiene una School of Theology en el sur de Indiana. Por supuesto, que debemos seguir vigilando y procurar formas para mejorar la protección de todos, la formación de futuros sacerdotes y la supervisión adecuada de aquellos que prestan servicio a nuestra Iglesia. Nuestra principal preocupación siempre deberá ser proteger a los inocentes, cuidar a las víctimas y separar a aquellos que resulten penosos para los demás. Tal como se ha dejado muy en claro: la transparencia y la responsabilidad son aspectos esenciales. Sinceramente suyo en Cristo,

RJCS

Reverendo D. Christopher Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianápolis

BISHOPS

continued from page 1

Bishops continued from page 1

document began well before traveling
to Baltimore, and included rather
detailed lengthy meetings before and during
the General Assembly of the bishops’
gathering. I do not believe that our work
has been in vain. I suspect that the
work of the U.S. bishops will ultimately
have an impact on the universal Church.
While the proposed actions steps
above involve oversight of bishops, many
strides have already been made since
the policies and procedures of the 2002
“Charter for the Protection of Children
and Young People” went into effect in
“Charter for the Protection of Children
and Young People” went into effect in
postmarked will be available for both Masses
during the last week of December
in Indianapolis.

The Christmas liturgical schedules for
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347
N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, and
the Archabbbey Church of Our Lady of
Immaculn, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, are
as follows:

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
Dec. 24—5 p.m. Mass, then
10 p.m. Mass with Archbishop
Charles C. Thompson as the principal celebrant
Please note the Mass at 10 p.m. is
not a change from the Midnight Mass
celebrated at the Cathedral in years past.
Please note the Mass at 10 p.m. is
not a change from the Midnight Mass
celebrated at the Cathedral in years past.

Dec. 25—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 25—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 25—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 25—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 25—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 26—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 26—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 26—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 26—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 26—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—9:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—10:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 27—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—9:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—10:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 28—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—9:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—10:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 29—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—9:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—10:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 30—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—9 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—9:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—10:30 a.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—12 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—12:30 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—1 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—2 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—4 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—5 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—6 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—7 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—8 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—9 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—10 p.m. Mass.
Dec. 31—11 p.m. Mass.

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Moving?

724-938

The Criterion
Friday, December 14, 2018

Moving?

The Criterion
Friday, December 14, 2018
SEEK conference changes the lives of young adults

By Sean Gallagher

A “turning point.” That’s how Bobby Vogel described his experience of a national conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) in 2016.

“It was there that I encountered Christ,” Vogel said. “Everything changed right after that.”

That would be an understatement. In a period of months, Vogel dove headfirst into his faith, applied to become a FOCUS missionary and began serving on the campus of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Now he is an archdiocesan seminarian in his first year of priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

All of that was the “crazy journey” that began for him at the FOCUS conference in 2016.

A “crazy” little ‘yes’

“I would literally not be sitting here if it wasn’t for a FOCUS conference,” said another FOCUS missionary and college campus Ministry Office with Madison Kinast and Rebecca Kover, Madison Kinast, who serves in the Young Adult and College Campus Ministry Office with two other former FOCUS missionaries.

Kinast was not practicing the Catholic faith when she was a freshman at Ball State University in Muncie in 2009.

But, like Vogel, she met a FOCUS missionary at IUPUI. She was a freshman at Illinois at Chicago.

Faley serves in the Young Adult and College Campus Ministry Office with two other former FOCUS missionaries.

Madison Kinast and Dana Padilla served for a year as a FOCUS missionary at IUPUI. After serving another year at Columbia University in New York and working in the New York Archdiocese, she returned to Indianapolis for graduate studies in psychology at the University of Indianapolis.

“Crazy” is also the word that Matt Faley, director of the archdiocesan Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, uses to describe the journey he’s been on since attending a FOCUS conference in 2007.

At the time, he was just beginning to practice his faith again after being away from the Church as a young adult.

“It’s just crazy when I step back and think about what God has done in my life through that little ‘yes’ back then 10 years ago, to think then that I was called to ministry and this is my avenue to get started,” said Faley.

He has served young adults and Catholic college students in the archdiocese since 2010 after serving as a FOCUS missionary at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Faley serves in the Young Adult and College Campus Ministry Office with two other former FOCUS missionaries.

Madison Kinast and Dana Padilla served for a year as a FOCUS missionary at IUPUI. After serving another year at Columbia University in New York and working in the New York Archdiocese, she returned to Indianapolis for graduate studies in psychology at the University of Indianapolis.

Faley recalled. “That was a crazy journey.”

All of that was the “crazy journey” that began for him at the FOCUS conference in 2016.

A ‘crazy’ little ‘yes’ to God

“I am a member of FOCUS because of the SEEK conference in 2016 in Dallas.”

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See related editorial, page 4.
The work—and struggle—of respecting human rights continues

It’s been 70 years since the document came to fruition, and sadly, many are still waiting for it to arrive into human hearts and become the norm in our world. On Dec. 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It detailed core principles that guaranteed the fundamentals rights of every person.

Decades later, Pope Francis and many others are still striving to have the fundamental rights of all people—especially the most vulnerable—to be respected and protected in every situation. “While a part of humanity lives in opacity, another part sees their dignity denied, ignored or infringed upon and their fundamental rights violated or violated,” the pope wrote on Dec. 10 in marking Human Rights Day.

“The pope’s message, according to a Catholic News Service story, was read aloud by Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, at a Dec. 10-11 conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome discussing the “achievements, omissions and negations” in the world of human rights today. “So a contradiction,” the Holy Father wrote, leads one to ask “whether the equal dignity of all human beings—solemnly proclaimed in the past—has merely been affirmed, is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every circumstance.”

One only needs to look at the unborn, those forced to live in poverty, and those being persecuted for their religious beliefs, among others, to understand how “numerous forms of injustice,” as Pope Francis noted, still exist in the world today. With that mindset, many seem to have no qualms about exploiting, rejecting, and even killing human beings.

We’ve heard Pope Francis share the message on numerous occasions, and our shepherd, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis, has echoed it consistently as well. Young people are the key to the life and mission of our Church. And while in years past, some have stated young people are the “future” of our faith, we, like our Holy Father and Archbishop Thompson, know the time is now to get teenagers, college students and young adults fully involved in participating in our Church as disciples of Christ.

Such an opportunity is presenting itself here in central and southern Indiana on Jan. 3-7, 2019, when the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) is holding its SEEK2019 conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. The gathering is geared primarily for Catholic college students and young adults. Although the deadline for registration has passed, passes for commuters and one-day or weekend-only participants are still available. For more information about the conference, visit www.seek2019.com.

On page 3 of this week’s issue of The Criterion, you can read about how this biennial conference has changed the lives of several young Catholics.

If you’re a young Catholic who has fallen away from the faith, consider yourself a lukewarm Catholic, or feel you need a spiritual reawakening, we encourage you to consider signing up for a commuter, weekend, or day pass.

As you flip the calendar into a new year, wouldn’t this gathering of faith be a great way to jump-start your 2019?

—Mike Krokos

Letter to the Editor

‘Quirky’ Advent reflection appreciated by reader

This letter is in reference to John F. Fink, editor emeritus of The Criterion, and his Advent reflection in the Dec. 7 issue of The Criterion.

“Those are an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the universe and about 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone, each star perhaps with planets,” Fink wrote.

“That is not a ‘quirky’ idea, it is science,” he concluded.

I am a great fan of “YouTube” videos on the universe. I can watch an hour, then get up to relax my brain. It is mind-expansive to “enter into” that amount of “space.” And just what is on the other side of “black holes”? A whirlpool of infinity.

Are there other folk out there, perhaps without an Adam and Eve “fallenness” story,” other planets that have been tested and some how? Can we know? But then the “souls of the just” ... just where do they go? There’s got to be room somewhere because a lot of folk, civilizations, people, have come and gone and have “travelled on,” as Native Americans would say.

So thank you, Mr. Fink, for your quirks. And for all your stories and ideas and your “quirkiness.” To keep thinking on these things.

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil 4:8).

Norb Schott
Rosedale

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 views among the People of God” (Communion et Progressus, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people as possible, but not more than one per “issue” of the paper. Each letter will be limited to 300 words. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed. Letters must be signed, but, for serious errors, names may be withheld.

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—Mike Krokos

Abortion trumps any other ‘signal’ issue, Criterion reader says

In a recent Criterion editorial, editor emeritus John F. Fink mentioned that some people are still single-issue voters. I am one of those people. I’d like to explain my reasoning.

I guess it’s obvious that a single-issue pro-lifer thinks this issue is more important than any other issue, and further, that it is more important than an administration of other issues. That’s exactly the way I feel.

Abortion is my single issue, and the single issue of many others. For the last 40 years, I’ve never pulled the lever on a pro-choice candidate. Do I care about other things? Of course I do.

In my life, I have worked with the inner-city poor, with immigrants and with the handicapped, and when I’m not giving my time, I’m giving my money.

But abortion is different. Recently published statistics from 2015 tell us there are 1,748 abortions every day in the U.S. That number used to be more than 3,700. Pray God we are going in the right direction!

The Monday after you read this letter, 1,748 human beings are going to be killed, and the next day, 1,748 more, and the next day, 1,748 more. Why is this phenomenon not equivalent to the people cremated every day during the Holocaust? Because we can’t see them? Because they’re small? Because it doesn’t affect me and my family? Would you not have become a single-issue voter to end the crematoriums?

In 2016, I had a chance to go to the polls and vote for a person who was one of the most pro-abortion candidates ever to run for president, Hillary Clinton. I could not do that because in my mind I had to make the clear image of tiny aborted babies. I cannot turn my head. But millions of Catholics voted for her. Where is the climate change issue more important than human life, or possibly immigration reform? President Donald J. Trump is arrogant, a bimbo, and not my favorite person, but he promised us an anti-abortion administration and that is what he has given us.

The day that the next 1,748 children are killed via an abortion, there will be 1,748 mothers who have killed their children and 1,748 fathers who lost their child—whether they agreed with the abortion or not—and thousands of doctors and nurses and administrators who made the abortions happen. Will these people eventually repent and ask for forgiveness? It’s not only lives that are being lost, it is souls. We are becoming a nation of killers.

I care about many social justice issues. I do. But only one issue makes me cry.

When I picture that small innocent human being losing its life, I vow again to remain a single-issue voter until the day I die or until abortion becomes illegal.

Take note: Every Saturday a group of Catholics prays the rosary outside the Planned Parenthood clinic on Georgetown Road in Indianapolis at 9:30 a.m.

Come join us single-issue prayers!

—Stephen Martin is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.†

Young adults, focus on your faith at SEEK2019 conference on Jan. 3-7

We’ve heard Pope Francis share the message on numerous occasions, and our shepherd, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis, has echoed it consistently as well. Young people are the key to the life and mission of our Church. And while in years past, some have stated young people are the “future” of our faith, we, like our Holy Father and Archbishop Thompson, know the time is now to get teenagers, college students and young adults fully involved in participating in our Church as disciples of Christ.

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—Mike Krokos
Gaudete Sunday reminds us Advent is a season of joy

Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near! (Phil 4:4-5)

Advent has an element of penitence to it in that it is a time for watchful waiting and preparation for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. But on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday), we are reminded that we are called to “rejoice heartily in the Lord...” (Phil 4:4) and “pray without ceasing.” If we take St. Paul seriously, we will recognize that these two instructions have a lot in common—-and that both are more easily said than done.

Life is hard, filled with sorrow and bitter disappointments. We know this especially during this time of hurt and scandal in Church we love. How can we realistically maintain an attitude of constant rejoicing? Similarly, how can we “pray without ceasing” when our busy lives require so much of our time, effort and attention? Even clreted monks and nuns find it challenging to pray always.

The season of Advent is a powerful reminder that the reign of God, which is present now but still incomplete, is a reign of joy, a time of mercy and forgiveness, an experience of true peace and harmony among all members of God’s family.

When the Lord comes again in the fullness of time, ancient hatreds will be forgotten completely and the exploitation of our most vulnerable sisters and brothers will be totally eliminated. Every tear will be wiped away. No more bitterness or fear. No more hunger or homelessness; no more sickness or death. No more emotional wounds or scars.

Unfortunately, cynicism is deeply embedded in our culture and in our own attitudes about life. Our expectations are no longer great. We tend to settle for the least common denominator. Advent stirs us to break out of apathy—-to be converted, change our thinking and become people of hope and joy. The Lord is coming! We should rejoice and be glad.

During this time of year, Christians look not only to the past and what has been but also to what is coming. We are joyful people because we know that the Lord is near at hand. We give thanks to God the Father for sending us his only begotten Son. And we implore the Holy Spirit to help us be ready for the Lord’s coming again—-this Christmas time and at the end of the world.

“The world is not a futile commotion of drudgery and pain,” Pope Benedict says. And in words that are now frequently repeated by Pope Francis, the retired pope goes on to say, “for all the world’s distress is supported in the arms of merciful love; it is caught up and surpassed by the forgiving and saving graciousness of our God.”

Mercy, forgiveness and the resulting experience of joy are what Christianity is all about. We celebrate our salvation in Christ, not our enslavement by sin, and so we rejoice! “The person who celebrates Advent in this spirit will legitimately be able to speak of the joyous, blessed and grace-filled season of Christmas,” Pope Benedict says. “He will know that there is much more truth to these words than is believable or imaginable to those people for whom Christmas is just a time for picturesque sentimentality or a sort of simplified carnival.”

Are we celebrating Advent in this spirit? Or have we allowed the many distractions of this secular holiday season to turn our attention away from the Lord who alone brings lasting joy?

Let’s celebrate this Gaudete Sunday, and the rest of this Advent season, with renewed joy and hope. Let’s set aside whatever “drudgery and pain” we experience on a daily basis, and look to the Lord’s coming again with a genuine sense of rejoicing.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near!” (Phil 4:4-5).

ARCHBISHOP / ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON

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The Criterion Friday, December 14, 2018
November 10

On Nov. 10, 23 people made their commitment as Providence Associates of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The retreat will be held at Fatima Retreat House on Jan. 11-12.

The retreat will be led by Mgr. Paul Koetter, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, and Father Eric Johnson, current pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel in New Albany who will become the archdiocesan vicar for clergy, religious and parish life coordinators, archdiocesan vice-chancellor, and sacramental minister of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville in January. The cost to attend is $150 per person or $275 for married couple. The cost includes overnight accommodation, meals, and retreat materials.

Registration is required online at www.archindy.org/sisters/registration.html. For more information, contact Katherine Meyer at 317-545-7681, ext. 101, or e-mail kmeyer@archindy.org.

Christian-Muslim prayer service set for Dec. 16 at St. Philip Neri Church

The second annual Christian-Muslim Prayer Service will take place at St. Philip Neri Church, 550 N. Rural Street, in Indianapolis, at 4 p.m. on December 16.

Co-presiders will be Father Christopher Wadelow, pastor of St. Philip Neri Church, and Imam Ahmed Al-Amane from Masjid Al-Farag of the Islamic Center of Indianapolis. The event is free and open to the public.

New Albany Catholic Youth Ministries to host Safe Sitter class on Jan. 12

A Safe Sitter class for students in grades 6-8 will be held at the New Albany Catholic Youth Ministries Office, 101 Saint Anthony Dr., in Mt. St. Francis, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Jan. 12.

The instructor-led classes use games and role-playing exercises to prepare students to be safe when they are alone, watching younger siblings or baby-sitting.

Topics include safety, first aid and rescue and management skills. The cost to attend is $20. Registration is required by Jan. 3 and can be done online (case sensitivity).

For additional information, contact Sandy Winstead at 812-923-8355 or e-mail sandy@nadyouth.org.

VIPS

Robert and M. Kathleen (Fagan) Sherrman members of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 21.

The couple was married in St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 21, 1968. They have four children, Mackey, Blane, Jason and Kyle Sherman. The couple also has nine grandchildren.

Christian-Muslim prayer service set for Dec. 16 at St. Philip Neri Church

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.
Marking feast day, pope asks Mary's care of families seeking refuge

ROME (CNS)—In the heart of Rome, near streets of fancy shops already blinged out for Christmas shopping, Pope Francis prayed for Romans struggling to survive and sometimes feel the neglect of nations to control their borders.

“Instead of making a speech near the statue, the pope composed and read a prayer, and he left a basket of rose petals at the statue’s base.

In the prayer addressed to Mary, he said, “In this Advent time, thinking of the days when you and Joseph were anxious for the imminent birth of your baby, worried because there was a census and you had to leave your village, Nazareth, and go to Bethlehem—you know what it means to carry life in your womb and sense around you indifference, rejection and sometimes contempt.”

“So, I ask you to be close to the families who today in Rome, in Italy and throughout the world are living in similar situations,” the pope continued. “He asked Mary to intervene ‘so that they would not be abandoned, but safeguarded with their rights, human rights that are the same before God, other, even legitimate, demand,’ an apparent reference to rights of migrants and refugees and the right of nations to control their borders.

Earlier, under brilliantly sunny skies, some 30,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square to recite the midday Angelus prayer with Pope Francis.

Before leading the prayer, he offered a meditation on the Bible readings for the day’s feast, highlighting the difference between Adam, who sinned and then hid from God, and Mary, who was conceived without sin and offered her life totally to doing God’s will.

“The ‘Here I am’ is the key to life,” he said. “It marks the passage from a horizontal life focused on oneself and one’s own needs, to a vertical life, reaching toward God.”

Openness to God and to doing God’s will “is the cure for selfishness, the antidote to an unsatisfying life where something is always missing. Here I am’ is the remedy to the aging of sin, the therapy for remaining young at heart.

‘Why don’t we begin each day with a ‘Here I am, Lord?’ It would be beautiful to say each morning, ‘Here I am, Lord, may your will be done in me today.’” he said.

Turning one’s life over to God and to doing his will does not mean life will be free of troubles and problems, Mary’s wasn’t.

“In fact, the pope said, for Mary, the problems began immediately. ‘Think about her situation, which according to the law, was irregular, and the torment of St. Joseph, the life plans that were overturned, what people would say. But Mary put her trust in God.’”

The ‘wise attitude’ of Mary, which all Christians should try to imitate, is not to concentrate on the succession of life’s problems—‘one ends and another presents itself’—but to trust in God and entrust oneself to him each day,” Pope Francis said.
**INITIATIVE**  
continued from page 1

“As we took the tour and learned about hospice care,” says Lentz, “I thought, ‘I don’t know anything about this, I’ve been a caregiver three times. If I don’t know this, what do my kids know, what does my great-grandma know?’ What are the ethical things to say? We need to arm people with this information.”

She and a half later, the Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative was under way.

**Spiritual vision and energy**

After the eye-opening blessing, Lentz shared her thoughts with Archbishop Tobin, the short, director of development for the Franciscan Health in Indianapolis.

“He suggested we talk about Franciscan Health (now Ascension St. Vincent) and the archdiocese coming together to do some fundraising,” says Lentz. “Not an event, but something to draw attention to the challenges [of raising awareness of hospice and palliative care] and how we might meet them.

Short recalls dinner conversations with friends about the subject, including with Archbishop Tobin, who had a spiritual energy and vision for our Roman Catholic archdiocese, wishing we could bring together the two missions [camps] for a project with the archdiocese.”

A plan began to develop. It was based on an integration of “principle programs” and parishes in hospice and palliative care, drawing upon the notion that every family in support of their loved ones’ end-of-life journey or serious illness seeks the wisdom and prayers of their parish priest or neighborhood minister. Short.

Lentz knew such an effort “was going to take a lot of money, a lot of work and a lot of money,” she says.

Archbishop Tobin and others conducted a private fundraising event. Nearly $150,000 was raised to launch the initiative, with the majority of funds donated by Michael Browning of Browning Investments construction firm in Indianapolis. He is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

**There is a battle being fought**

The enthusiasm for the hospice and palliative care stemmed from one key principle: the dignity for the sick and the dying that hospice and palliative care offers, and how such care embodies the Church’s teaching on respect for all life.

“Every day there is a battle being fought in our culture,” said Anne Varick, coordinator of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity.

“Our vulnerable sick, elderly and elderly are being fed the lies that they are a burden.

“People are afraid of death and the dying process. Many are afraid of being a burden to our loved ones. They are afraid of intolerable pain and suffering, losing their freedom with loss of control over their bodies, a fear of being abandoned and alone, or the fear of being left in a state of limbo with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia.”

Society’s answer to such thoughts and fears, says Varick, is physician-assisted suicide.

It has been spun as “death with dignity” and “death with peace.” But it has already been legalized in three countries and seven states, plus the District of Columbia.

The Church’s response to physician-assisted suicide is an approach of “love, support and companionship.”

Bishops wrote on the subject in their 2011 statement “To Live Each Day”:

“Our society should embrace what Pope John Paul II called ‘the way of love and true mercy’—a readiness to surround patients with love, support and companionship, providing the assistance needed to ease their physical, emotional and spiritual suffering. This approach must be anchored in unconditional respect for their human dignity, beginning with respect for the inherent value of their lives.”

It is just such an approach that hospice and palliative care offer—in personal residences, nursing and assisted living facilities, in hospitals or in specialized facilities run by hospitals.

But not all people are aware of this approach, or how it works. “There is a battle being fought,” says Lentz, “I thought, ‘How can we be more clear on misconceptions and misinformation,’ says Dr. David Mandelbaum. He is medical director for palliative care services at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis, and co-director of Franciscan Visiting Nurse Service Hospice.

“The problem facing hospice and palliative care is that people don’t understand the difference between hospice and palliative care, so they use the terms interchangeably,” he says.

Same approach, but “two populations”

Mandelbaum says there is an approach that “provides collaboration of the patient’s doctor with other physicians, nurses, social work, chaplains and caregivers. The same approach is used to serve two populations.”

The first populations are those who receive palliative care, which he defines as “an umbrella of care that is all about quality of life and team support of patients and their families through a serious or life-threatening—but not necessarily terminal—illness.”

Such patients are “undergoing curative therapy,” he says. “They’re not terminal, but they may benefit from the input of a palliative care team giving spiritual [from a chaplain] or psychological support [from a counselor] or symptom management” from a pain specialist, such as easing pain while receiving chemotherapy or radiation for cancer.

The second population are the terminally ill. They receive a subset of palliative care called hospice.

With hospice care, Mandelbaum says, “the illness is incurable or the patient is no longer pursuing a cure. It’s all about the patient’s comfort and dignity and quality of life for however many days they have left.”

Mandelbaum, who represents Franciscan Health in the joint initiative, says, “We raise awareness of and educate others on palliative and hospice care, is excited about the effort.”

He notes that such a collaborative form of health care is being promoted by the joint efforts of the archdiocese and two health care systems—in a world where hospitals are in competition for business, he says.

“How appropriate that such a collaborative form of health care is being promoted by the joint efforts of the archdiocese and two health care systems—in a world where hospitals are in competition for business,” he says. “Focusing on palliative and hospice care, advance care planning and end-of-life issues is a goal of expanding this ministry to all hospitals or otherwise non-verbal patients, so as a communication tool for ventilated patients and others who are sick and suffering. Hospice and palliative care does this.”

**Foundational elements of Catholic health care**

Elliott Bedford, director of ethics integration for Ascension St. Vincent, is the initiative’s representative for the hospice and palliative care.”

“Under the leadership of our archdiocese and archdiocesan Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, O.F.M., we have a goal of expanding this ministry to all hospitals or otherwise non-verbal patients, so as a communication tool for ventilated patients and others who are sick and suffering. Hospice and palliative care does this.”

**Topics and goals of palliative care and hospice care initiative**

**Citation staff report**

A case study was developed to state the reasons for creating a collaborative initiative by the archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ascension St. Vincent and Franciscan Health to raise awareness of and educate others about palliative and hospice care. And it outlines the goals of the initiative.

The document notes that for patients receiving palliative care or hospice care, it is “a time for listening, praying, reassuring, and often, a time for emotional healing,” and that providing such “compassionate ... care is a ministry that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ascension St. Vincent and Franciscan St. Francis Health are uniquely able to fulfill, because of our commitment to carrying out the healing ministry of Christ.”

The following are the areas to be addressed, and some of the actions hoped to be taken by the initiative, as listed in the case study.

**Provide education**

Provide structured training opportunities ... on how to support families as they are faced with end of life decisions.

**Develop content for Having Difficult Conversations, a lecture series ... [that] seeks to reduce the unnecessary pain and suffering often associated with inadequate advance care planning.

**Educational efforts focusing on legislative issues that may arise**

**Enhance education on palliative care and end-of-life discussions ... through**

Feedback from the conference indicated there was an overwhelming desire for more,” says Varick. Consequently, the same conference will be offered again on March 11 at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington.

She is also pursuing the creation of videos “to promote the truth, beauty and goodness of hospice and palliative care,” she says.

The initiative is in its infancy stage. But as Varick notes, “The threat to the dignity of our vulnerable, our elderly, our disabled, mentally ill, sick and suffering is not going away anytime soon.

“Our families, community and medical professionals need to rise up and support those who are sick and suffering. Hospice and palliative care does this.”

**For more information on palliative care and hospice care, or to donate funds toward the initiative to raise awareness of and educate others about palliative and hospice care, go totinyurl.com/ v8hzjlg [case sensitive]. To register for the palliative care and hospice care conference at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington on March 11, go to tinyurl.com/ v8hzjlg [case sensitive]. “

**Support of palliative medicine and hospice care**

• Support specialized patient comfort and care services such as massage therapy, aromatherapy, art therapy and music therapy, [and] to purchase iPads for use as a communication tool for ventilated or otherwise non-verbal patients, so that they can better communicate with their families.

• Financially assist hospice and palliative care patients and their families who may not meet strict criteria for charity care, but are still struggling with expenses related to gas, meals, and/or groceries.”

**Chapel used for Mass on special occasions in Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis serves as “an umbrella of care that is all about quality of life and team support of patients and their families through a serious or life-threatening—but not necessarily terminal—illness.”**
**Sisters launch Advent with the light appearing in darkness**

By Katie Rutter

Catholic News Service

**BEECH GROVE (CNS) — A few purple hangings and an Advent wreath were the only signs of the season in the dark chapel of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.**

In the hallway just outside, the Benedictine sisters quietly assembled, intentionally stopping to gather their thoughts and silently reflect.

The light appearing in darkness served as a metaphor for the 38 women religious during their Dec. 1 evening prayer as they marked the beginning of Advent, four weeks of preparation before Christmas.

Outside of the monastery walls, Christmas decorations, shopping and celebrations were in full swing. Silent, sparse and contemplative, the religious house was a stark contrast.

“We need times to contemplate and to await the coming of that which is to come, and we need time to celebrate that which is here,” said Timothy O’Malley, academic director for the Center for Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana.

“In a kind of perpetual cycle of wanting to move from event to event, to have no preparation but just to celebrate and move, Advent is a radical critique,” O’Malley told Catholic News Service.

For these monastic sisters, the period of preparation began with their Dec. 1 evening prayer service. They first observed “statio,” a short period of silent prayer and reflection before their communal service.

Then their prioress, Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, led the way into the dark chapel carrying a single lit candle. The sisters’ hand-bell choir and a florist played the haunting melody of “O Come! O Come Emmanuel” as the women filed into their seats.

“For us, it’s really a time of opening up so that we’re really ready to receive Christ when he comes at Christmas,” Sister Jennifer Mechtild said.

“I’m waiting for Christ to come and be my light and give me a few more hints on how to live, how to live better,” added Benedictine Sister Harriet Woehler.

The candlelight procession into the dark chapel, they said, symbolized Christ breaking through the darkness of the world.

Sister Jennifer Mechtild led the sisters in a blessing before using the flame to light the first candle of their Advent wreath. The four candles serve as a visual reminder of the time passing before Christmas.

“For me, seeing those candles lit each week, it’s a way for me to look ahead and say, ‘Oh, where are we?’” said Benedictine Sister Marie Therese of St. Charles Borromeo Parish (in Chicago).

One candle of the Advent wreath, the candle that will be lit on the third week, is pink to symbolize joy. The remaining three candles are purple. This color, prevalent in the seasons of Advent and Lent, is meant to represent penance.

“It actually was a very rich color, so it was a sign of this desire to pour out the fullness of one’s heart to God,” O’Malley told CNS.

“It was an expensive color, so it was a sign of real commitment,” he said.

During their evening prayer, the voices of the sisters echoed through the chapel as they chanted passages from the Book of Psalms. They also listened to a reading from the Book of Isaiah, a prophet who predicted the Messiah’s coming.

Readings from the biblical prophets are frequently contained in Advent liturgies, as are passages about Mary O’Malley explained that Mary serves as the model for the “threecomings” of Christ anticipated by Advent.

“There’s Christ coming at the end of time, there’s Christ coming as the baby, there’s Christ coming into the heart of each and every Christian who prepares a space for Christ to come,” O’Malley said.

For the sisters, the presence of their environment pointed to the need for this interior preparation.

“We walk around our monastery now, it’s still that quiet waiting time. You walked into our lobby and you saw the purple, it’s just a reminder that we’re not quite there yet, and we need to be prepared so we really can enter the Christmas season fully,” Sister Jennifer Mechtild explained.

Neither O’Malley or the sisters criticized the many Christmas-oriented activities that often take place during Advent, such as decorating, baking and Christmas card-writing. However, both suggested that the lay faithful integrate the spirit of penance and prayer into their Christmas commitments.

“I know for myself, yes you have to write the Christmas cards, but it’s the spirit that you do it in,” she added.

**Racine, the director of liturgy at the monastery.**

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“I know for myself, yes you have to write the Christmas cards, but it’s the spirit that you do it in,” Sister Jennifer Mechtild said.

“For me, [I] think of people and pray (over) the cards as I’m writing them, not just get them done. Not that I don’t do that toward the end,” she added with a laugh.

“This preparation is the real thing, the main thing of Christmas,” Sister Harriet said.

“It’s not all the tinsel and the elaborate—that’s nice, but the main part is the inside, the heart. To me, Advent is the heart of Christmas,” she said.

(Katie Rutter is a freelance writer and member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. To watch a related video, go to youtube.be/2ASSVc_y0 & [cave sensitive].)

**Algerian martyrs bear witness to dialogue, peace, Pope Francis says**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The list of 19 religious men and women martyred during the Algerian civil war are a testament to God’s plan of love and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, Pope Francis said.**

In a message read on Dec. 8 at the beatification Mass for the six women and three religious brothers and 10 clerics, Pope Francis said it was a time for Catholics in Algeria and around the world to celebrate the martyrs’ commitment to peace, but it was also a time to remember the sacrifices made by all Algerians during the bloody war.

Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, celebrated the Mass in Oran, Algeria, for the martyrs who were killed between 1994 and 1996.

Both Christians and Muslims in Algeria “have been victims of the same violence for having lived, with faithfulness and respect for each other, their duties as believers and citizens in this blessed land. It is for them, too, that we pray and express our grateful tribute,” the pope said.

Among those who were beatified were Blessed Christian de Cherge and six of his fellow Trappists—Fathers Christophe Lebreton, Bruno Lemarchand and Celestin Ringard, as well as Brothers Luc Duchier, Michel Fleury and Paul Favre-Miville—who were murdered in 1996 by members of the Armed Islamic Group in Tlemcen, Algeria.

Their life and deaths were the subject of the movie Of Gods and Men, which won the grand prize at its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010.

Several months after their deaths, Blessed Pierre Claraire, bishop of Oran, was assassinated along with his driver by an explosive device. According to the website of the Order of Preachers, his death was mourned also by Muslims who considered him “their bishop.”

Pope Francis said that all Algerians are heirs of the great message of love that began with St. Augustine of Hippo and continued with the martyred religious men and women “at a time when all people are seeking to advance their aspiration to live together in peace.”

“By beatiifying our 19 brothers and sisters, the Church wishes to bear witness to her desire to continue to work for dialogue, harmony and friendship,” the pope said. “We believe that this event, which is unprecedented in your country, will draw a great sign of brotherhood in the Algerian sky for the whole world.”

A nun lights a candle next to a photograph of Bishop Pierre Claraire at his grave in St. Mary’s Cathedral, where a vigil was held in Oran, Algeria, on Dec. 7. The vigil was to prepare for the Dec. 8 beatification of Claraire and a total of 18 others, who were martyred in the course of the Algerian civil war. (CNS photo/Maximilien Kampan)

**Benedicte Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, prioress of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, lights the first candle of an Advent wreath on Dec. 1 in the monastery’s chapel. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)**

**The Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove pray together on Dec. 1 during their first service for Advent. The sisters sang Psalms and heard a reading from the prophet Isaiah, who predicted the coming Messiah. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)**
Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

The people who work there are very compassionate and committed to helping the residents better themselves.

“It’s sure made me appreciate the blessings I have—and to not take what I have for granted. The kids are so cute. And your heart breaks for them because they really don’t know what’s going on.”

One of her favorite parts of volunteering at the shelter is being involved in its Christmas Store, which is stocked with donated items that include books, puzzles, games, dolls, toys, clothes and even handmade wooden trains.

“It’s very heartwarming,” says the mother of three grown children.

First of all, they’re overwhelmed with all the items in there and how many items they’re allowed to pick. Every parent gets to pick two items for each child. In that moment, they feel they are shopping for their Christmas. It’s not us providing it for them. It gives them satisfaction to do that.

Even when she’s with her own family celebrating Christmas, O’Brien says she thinks of the families at the shelter on that holy day.

“They are my always in my prayers’ Lasting gifts have also come to Theresa O’Brien in her four years of volunteering at Holy Family Shelter.

“ar them, who are concerned about them. What’s also interesting is that former residents call to say, ‘I’d like to volunteer or financially support the work.’”

These of help touch Bickel, who says the shelter needs such generosity throughout the year to help families who suddenly become homeless.

“We are in crucial need of financial support to serve our homeless families not just during the Christmas holiday but all year long,” he says. “Family homelessness knows no season. As more and more, homeless families look to us for help, we are dependent on the generosity of our community to serve them.”

That year-round generosity leads to one of Bickel’s favorite scenes at this time of year—watching the children at the shelter enjoy the Christmas festivities. You could take your own kids and put them in the middle of our families and you wouldn’t know who is homeless. The same is true of the kids’ reactions to seeing Santa Claus.

“We are all the same. The only difference is that these families don’t have a permanent night-time residence.”

That’s the gift that everyone who works and volunteers at the shelter wants to make a reality for these families, Bickel says.

“A home of their own. “We’re working very hard to make that happen for them.”

(To donate to Holy Family Shelter, 907 N. Holmes Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46222. Donations can also be made online on the shelter’s website, www.holyfamilyshelter.net, and then clicking the “Give Now” button. To volunteer at the shelter, go on the shelter’s website and click on “How You Can Help.” Or call 317-635-7830 and ask for the volunteer coordinator.)

During a Christmas party at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, David Bickel, executive director of the archdiocese’s Catholic Charities, reads a story to children whose families have come to the shelter to live. (Submitted photo)
Joy can be experienced in the midst of sadness, trials

By Susan Hines-Brigger

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”

That iconic line from the 1986 film Ferris Bueller’s Day Off seems pretty off-base just a little more than a week away from Christmas, doesn’t it? Stop and look around? There’s no time for that.

There’s shopping and wrapping to be done. The house has to be cleaned, and Christmas cards have to be mailed. Cookies need to be baked, plated up and distributed. We get too busy trying to make the season perfect.

Does any of this sound familiar? Unfortunately, it probably does for far too many of us. But, wait, isn’t this supposed to be a season of joy? After all, isn’t the whole purpose of this season to prepare for the amazing gift of the birth of Christ? Luckily, we have something that can get us back on track.

This week, we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. Literally translated from Latin, the word “gaudete” means “rejoice.” And that message comes through loud and clear in the readings for Mass this weekend.

This mid-Advent celebration offers us a short timeout to stop, catch our breath and refocus on the joy and purpose of the season. And if we didn’t notice the change in the Advent message this week, the rose-colored candle and vestments we see for this week only during Advent certainly provide a subtle stop—or at least a slow down—sign for us.

The message of “rejoice” comes through loud and clear starting with this week’s first reading from the Book of Zephaniah (Zep 3:14-18a). In fact, within the first three lines, we hear the words “joy,” “joyful” and “glad.” And it doesn’t stop there, further encouraging us to “sing joyfully” and “be glad and exult with all your heart.” And it doesn’t stop there, further encouraging us to “sing joyfully” and “be glad and exult with all your heart.”

The second reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians offers even more ways to embrace the joy of the season, instructing us that “your kind­ness should be known to all,” and “have no anxiety at all” (Phil 4:5-6).

Great, you might be thinking, but the reality is that right now there are quite a few challenges to being joyful, of which the stress of the season is the least pressing. In fact, these days, joy or a cause for joy doesn’t seem to be a season of joy? After all, isn’t the whole purpose of this season to prepare for the amazing gift of the birth of Christ? Luckily, we have something that can get us back on track.

This week, we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. Literally translated from Latin, the word “gaudete” means “rejoice.” (CNS photo/Balazs Mohai, EPA)

By Harry J. Dudley

What I love about the Advent season is that it captures the mixed reality of our lives. Our moments of joy and sorrow are often closely woven together.

We lose a loved one in our family and soon after celebrate the birth of a newborn. We remain caught between longing for the more that God promises us and the joy that comes from knowing that God has already revealed his love for us in his only begotten Son.

This Sunday gets its name from the first Latin word in the entrance antiphon “Gaudete,” drawn from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: Rejoice! The Lord is near!” (Phil 4:4,5).

Paul wrote these words from prison. He was no naive optimist. He knew real suffering. Despite the intense unhappiness of imprisonment, Paul was joyful anyway. The reason? He knew that God’s presence was near—literally that “the Lord is near”—in the midst of those sorrows.

Reflecting on his own experience of the commingling of joy and sorrow, the late spiritual author Father Henri Nouwen wrote: “I remember the most painful times of my life as times in which I became aware of a spiritual reality much larger than myself, a reality that allowed me to live the pain with hope. ... Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.”

Now that we are at the halfway point of the Advent season, let us focus on how close we are to celebrating the One who came on the first Christmas and who will come again.

The excitement of how close we are to that celebration can no longer be held back. We choose to focus on the fact that our God has come, continues to show his unconditional love for us in the sacraments and offers food for the journey to the fullness of his kingdom yet to come.

This is the Sunday to make St. Paul’s words written so long ago our own in the midst of our mixed life of joys and sorrows: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!” (Harry S. Dudley, recently retired from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Catholic Education, lives in New Castle, Pa.)

Gaudete Sunday invites Catholics to ‘choose joy’

Third Sunday of Advent invites Catholics to ‘choose joy’

By Susan Hines-Brigger

‘Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved …’

—Henri Nouwen

Third Sunday of Advent invites Catholics to ‘choose joy’

As a Church, we have known great sorrows this year. We experienced our sinfulness revealed and our need for greater conversion. This Gaudete Sunday reminds us of a deeper reality of God’s love for us.

We are called to accompany victims and their families toward Emmanuel’s healing presence. He has set his tent among us—in the midst of these sorrows.

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Embracing divine revelations and accepting the unknown

As a member of the Chicago Tribune's Religion & Spirituality team, I have been privileged to interview and author articles on faith and spirituality. It’s an exciting time to be a writer in this field, where the boundaries between faith and science are blurring. The interplay between the divine and everyday life is more than just a topic of conversation—it’s a source of inspiration and comfort.

The articles I’ve written cover a range of topics, from personal experiences to broader trends in spirituality and religion. One recent article, for example, explored the idea of spiritual awakening and how it can transform our lives. Another article delved into the role of spirituality in mental health and its potential to reduce stress and anxiety.

In my interviews, I’ve had the opportunity to speak with experts in the field, such as psychologists, theologians, and spiritual leaders. These conversations have provided me with a deeper understanding of the ways in which spirituality can impact our lives, both individually and collectively. I’ve also had the chance to attend conferences and events related to spirituality, which have been incredibly informative and inspiring.

Overall, my work as a writer in the field of religion and spirituality has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It’s given me the chance to explore and share ideas on how faith and spirituality can enrich our lives, and I’m looking forward to continuing to write on this exciting and ever-evolving topic.
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, December 16, 2018
• Zephaniah 3:14-18a
• Philippians 4:4-7
• Luke 3:10-18

An atmosphere of delighted expectation overtakes this weekend’s liturgy. It is “Gaudete Sunday,” a name taken from the Latin rendition of the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, “Rejoice.” The Lord is near! Priests and deacons may opt to wear rose vestments. These vestments symbolize that the brightness of the Lord’s coming already is creeping across the horizon. Night is ending.

It is the third Sunday of Advent. The Book of Zephaniah furnishes the first reading. It is a short book, only three brief chapters. This much is known about Zephaniah. He was the son of Chusi and traced his ancestry to Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah of Judah. Evidently, the book was written between 640 and 600 BC, and that makes the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was an important center in the Roman Empire, and prosperity upon themselves. Locals had to be induced to do the work. Local tax collectors were seen as greedy tyrants. They surrendered all honor and loyalty to their own for monetary profit, achieved through the crooked process of Roman taxation. When the messiah is acknowledged, goodness and peace will prevail.

Reflection
These readings all predict the coming of God’s power and justice. Such is the Lord’s promise, however, that even while the Scripturists look forward to a sudden, dramatic coming of Jesus in glory, these readings this weekend also remind us that we can bring Jesus into our lives and into our communities by living the Gospel. In the long run, Advent’s advantage is the exhortation to be joyful. Advent is the time to prepare for the coming of Jesus, to make sure we can bring Jesus into our own hearts and surroundings.

With Jesus in our lives, sunbeams of hope and peace will pierce the blackest of moments. Jesus, the Messiah, came—and comes—as the light of the world. He is near! Christmas is near! Gaudete! Rejoice!†

Daily Readings
Monday, December 17
Genesis 49:25-26; 8:10
Psalm 72:3-4b, 7-8, 17
Matthew 1:1-7

Tuesday, December 18
Jeremiah 23:5-8
Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19
Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday, December 19
Judges 13:1-2, 24-25a
Psalm 71:1-3, 5-6b, 16-17
Luke 1:25-31

Thursday, December 20
Deuteronomy 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-6
Luke 1:26-38

Friday, December 21
St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church
Song of Songs 2:8-14
Psalm 5:1-3, 11-12, 20-21
Luke 1:39-45

Saturday, December 22
Samuel 1:24-28
(Responsorial Psalm 1:2, 4, 7, Bade)
Luke 1:46-50

Sunday, December 23
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Micah 5:1-5
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Single parents could benefit from more support from the Church

Q My question centers on the physical appearance of the body of Jesus as he hangs on various crucifixes. I have yet to see one which conveys the suffering that Christ must have experienced during his scourging, when strips covered with iron hooks penetrated the flesh and tore off large pieces of flesh. (Georgia)

A Certainly the suffering of Jesus during the passion went beyond what we could ever imagine. I remember many years ago, as a seminarian, reading a book entitled A Doctor at Calvary. It was written in 1950 by a French surgeon named Dr. Pommery. He described the passion in detail, including the scourging. Scourges have been found in the catacombs made of brass chains tipped with lead, and the Shroud of Turin would indicate that Jesus was struck with such scourges more than 100 times.

Interestingly, the crucifixion does not appear regularly in Christian art until the sixth century. Early Christians were reluctant to portray their Savior in that way because crucifixion represented the most ignominious and degrading death in the Roman world, a fate reserved to slaves and criminals.

During the Middle Ages, the crucified body of Christ began to be shown more realistically. A 1503 painting by Lucas Cranach displays blood spouting out of Christ’s nailed feet, the hideously twisted together and shapeless. Such depictions were offered during a time when plagues ravaged Europe, wide-scale death was a daily occurrence and criminals were actually executed. Artistic tastes change, and we in the 21st century seem to shy away from such graphic images, but it helps to be reminded of all that Christ went through on our behalf.

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

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to nhoefer@archindy.org.†

My Journey to God
O Divine Savior, Come
By Katie Rahman

O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, Come, resound in the valleys of my mind and make new again as you speak to me of you.

O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, Come, seek your wandering servant and guard me from the master of lies.

O Flower of Jesse’s stem, Come, rescue my soul from shame and heal me with the balm of forgiveness.

O King of David, O Prince of Israel, Come, unlock me from the habits that imprison and free me from the fears that trap.

O Radiant Dawn, Come, light my way when darkness veils and warm me with your indwelling love.

O King of all the nations, Come, reclaim your creation and establish your rule as my desire.

O Emmanuel, Come, be with me now and come, be with me at the end.

(Katie Rahman is a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. Photo: The Holy Family is depicted in a wooden creche at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester, N.Y. This poem is based on the “O Antiphons of Advent, sung during Evening Prayer from Dec. 17-23 since at least the eighth century. Messianic imagery proclaims the coming Christ as the fulfillment of both Old Testament and present hopes. CNS photo/Mike Cragg, Catholic Courier)
FOCUS and its conferences to be leaders in the Church.

“I grew in greater understanding of my mission as a Christian, it showed me the importance of vibrant team and staff life and most of all rooted all of my ministry work in my daily prayer,” said Faley. “I’ve been time as a ministry. I have the gift of bringing all of those things to my ministry with the archdiocese.”

Vogel thinks the approach to ministry taken by FOCUS can help him if he is ordained a priest. FOCUS missionaries work on the organization’s principle of “spiritual multiplication” in which they build up relationships and share the Faith with a few students at a time, and then have those students go out and do the same with a few more students and so on.

“Building community and forming intentional disciples are two of the most important things a pastor can do,” said Vogel. “Just do as it Jesus did. Invest in a few and have them go out and invest in a few you’ll reach the whole world.”

Padilla says the same formation has helped be a leader in the secular world and be a life and a mother as a wife.

“No matter what you’re being called to—married life, single life, parenthood, work in the Church, working out in the Church, being a student—FOCUS gives you the skills and the tools to have a stronger faith in the Church that Jesus truly calling you to live,” she said. “The mission of FOCUS is the mission of the Church.”

(Knowledgeable about FOCUS, www.focus.org. For information about SEEK, visit www.seek2019.com.)

Indianapolis to host SEEK2019 on Jan. 3-7

Catholic college students and other young adults, there is a “lifelong mission” track at the conference for adult Catholics.

More than 16,000 people are expected to attend the five-day event.

Other tracks include one for college students and another for campus ministry leaders.

Note: speakers will include Dr. Scott Hahn, Curtis Martin, Dr. Edward Sri, Chris Stefanich, Leah Darrow and Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Sister Marianne Heidland. Musicians playing at SEEK2019 will include Matt Maher and the Christian band NEEDTOBREATHE.

Mass will be celebrated daily throughout the conference. Eucharistic adoration and opportunities for the sacrament of penance, reflection and discounten will also be available each day.

Commuter and day passes will be available throughout the conference. For more information about SEEK2019, including registration, visit www.seek2019.com.

Founded in 1998, FOCUS invites college students into a growing relationship with Christ and the Church, inspiring and equipping them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization, discipleship and friendships in which they lead others to do the same.

In the current academic year, FOCUS has nearly 700 missionaries serving full time on 153 college campuses in 42 states and five international locations. In the archdiocese, FOCUS has missionaries at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana University in Bloomington and Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis in Indianapolis.

The last SEEK conference, held in 2017, drew 1300 participants, including students and chaplains from more than 500 colleges. Nearly 5000 priests attended, celebrated Mass daily and heard more than 5000 confessions.

The Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) will hold its SEEK2019 conference on Jan. 3-7, 2019, at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Although geared primarily for Catholic college students and other young adults, there is a “lifelong mission” track at the conference for adult Catholics.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis marked the fifth anniversary of his election in March in the midst of a firestorm over his handling of clerical sexual abuse and bishops’ accountability in Chile.

Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, had been widely lauded over the years for his handling of clerical sexual abuse and drew intense criticism in 2018 for his handling of some priests, religious and laitypeople, perpetrator upon you or other young people just like you, and the terrible damage that has done.”

He apologized “for the failure of too many bishops and others to respond appropriately when abuse was identified, and to do all in their power to keep you safe; and for the damage thus done to the Church’s credibility and to your trust.”

U.S. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, chairman of the synod council that planned the gathering, had asked Pope Francis in August to cancel the synod and focus instead on the abuse crisis.

In his speech to the synod, he urged his fellow bishops to respond strongly and clearly Catholic teaching on sex, sexuality and sexual morality.

“Fostering clear Catholic teaching about human sexuality is true, and why it’s ennobling and merciful, seems crucial to any discussion of anthropological issues,” the archbishop told the synod.

“The clergy sexual abuse crisis is precisely a truth of our self-understanding and confusion introduced into the Church in my lifetime, even among those tasked with teaching and leading,” he said. “And minors—our young people—have paid the price for it.”

While each of the 14 working groups at the synod reported having discussed the abuse scandal, in the end the final document removed a reference to “zero tolerance” of abuse that had been in the draft document.

Bishops retained a passage saying, “The Synod expresses gratitude to those who have had the courage to denounce the evil of anthropological errors and who help the Church become aware of what has happened, and of the need to react decisively to ensure abuse does not continue to occur.”

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

Batesville Deanery
Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. at St. Martin Campus of All Saints, Darmstadt
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Campus of St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Bloomington Deanery
Dec. 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Joseph, Bloomington

Connersville Deanery
Dec. 14, 6-8 p.m. at St. Mary Campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond
Dec. 19, 6 p.m. Mass at St. Gabriel, Connersville

Indianaapolis East Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis

Indianapolis South Deanery
Dec. 15, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel, Speedway

New Albany Deanery
Dec. 12, following 8 a.m. Mass at Holy Family, New Albany
Dec. 16, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Shepherdsville
Dec. 16, 4 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul Campus of St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

(Additionally, the following New Albany Deanery parishes offer evening opportunities.)
Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
Dec. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
Dec. 20, 5:30-7:30 p.m at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Seymour Deanery
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour

Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
Dec. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
Dec. 20, 5:30-7:30 p.m at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Columbus
Dec. 20, 1:30 p.m at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute
Woman who once assisted with abortions to address March for Life on Jan. 18

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Abby Johnson, who early in her career assisted in carrying out abortions, will be among the speakers during the 2019 March for Life rally on Jan. 18 on the National Mall in Washington.

Johnson, a one-time Planned Parenthood clinic director, is the founder of And Then There Were None, a ministry that assists abortion clinic workers who have left their positions.

“We’re going to be thinking a lot about the first five months of the baby’s life,” said Johnson. “When you’re faced with the reality of what a baby looks like, you can’t help but see that it’s a human being. TheMarch for Life is an opportunity to share the humanity of the child at a very early stage in life in large part because they focus on the scientific discoveries that have led to new understanding about life in the womb.

“Science and technology are on the side of life in a very large part because they show the humanity of the child at a very young age,” Mancini told Catholic News Service after the briefing.

“We have seen and we hear a baby’s heartbeat now at six weeks. There are blood tests to know a baby’s gender at seven weeks. Now that’s changed enormously over the course of the last few years,” she said.

The annual march for Life events continue from page 2.

Grotto dedication at St. Agnes

On Aug. 15, 1982, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara celebrated the dedication Mass for the Blessed Virgin Grotto at St. Agnes Parish in Nashville. An Archbishop O’Meara can be seen at the center of the photo. St. Agnes Parish was founded in 1940 and was at the north end of the town when this liturgy took place. The parish relocated to a new location at the west end of Nashville in 2001.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesanarchive archivest Jotyka at 800-382-9858, ext. 1558; 317-226-1538; or by e-mail at jmotyka@archindy.org.)

Reading of edict opens canonization cause for Sister Thea Bowman

JACKSON, Miss. (CNS)—Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz of Jackson read the edict to open the sainthood cause for Sister Thea Bowman at Mass on Nov. 18 at the Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle in downtown Jackson.

The church was packed with people who loved Sister Thea and can’t wait to see her become a saint.

Days before the Mass, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops unanimously voted in support of the cause moving forward during their fall general assembly in Baltimore.

Sister Thea, a Mississippi native and the only African-American member of her order, the Wisconsin-based Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, was a widely known speaker, evangelizer and singer who died of cancer in 1990, at age 52. She even made a presentation at the U.S. bishops’ spring meeting in 1989, moving some prelates to tears.

Some of the songs she sang at that bishops’ meeting took center stage during the Mass.

Phyllis Lewis-Hale, a professor from Jackson State University sang “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” as a prelude to the Mass and brought the congregation to its feet with “We Shall Overcome” after Communion.

Everyone in the church spontaneously joined hands and swayed as they sang with Lewis-Hale—much like the bishops did in 1989.

Members of the choir from Sister Thea’s home parish of Holy Child Jesus in Canton offered “Be Encouraged” during Communion.

Benedetta Otto-Russell, one of the singers, first sang in Sister Thea’s choir when she was in the third grade.

““This was awesome. This is an enjoyable and memorable moment—I’m getting full just thinking about it. I think the people that know Sister Thea—they know who she is, and they will always cherish her and also her memories. She will never die,” said Otto-Russell, adding that it was a joy and an honor to sing for her childhood teacher.

The postulator for Sister Thea’s sainthood cause, Ambassador Andrea B. Rome, and his assistant, Nina Borstland, sat in the front pew with representatives from the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Sister Eileen McKenzie, president; Sister Marla Lang and Sister Helen Elsbeth, both classmaters of Sister Thea; and Sister Dorothy Kundinger, Sister Thea’s assistant during her illness.

“Sister was my sister and my friend,” said Sister Dorothy, who was all smiles after the Mass, greeting friends and enjoying the moment.

A delegation of students from Sister Thea Bowman School in Jackson handed out prayer cards after Mass. The students were thrilled to be a part of this historic moment for their school’s namesake.

Sixth-grader Alexander Mason said he and fellow students know the story of her life and have learned many lessons from Sister Thea’s mantra that she wanted to live until she died.

“She taught me to always have perseverance and that I should never give up—even if I am close to death, I should keep on pushing myself to try,” Alexander told the Mississippi Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Jackson.

In his homily Bishop Kopacz quoted the old testament reading for the day from the Book of Daniel, “The wise shall shine like the splendor of the firmament. Those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.” He spoke of Sister Thea’s wisdom, joy and holiness, saying that today “her holiness shines upon us.”

The Diocese of Jackson has launched a website detailing Sister Thea’s life and the cause for her canonization at sistertheabowman.com.