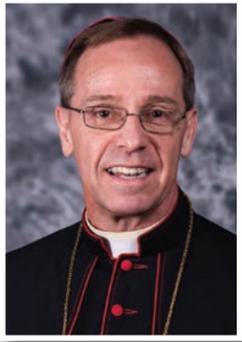


A Christmas Message

from
Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas greetings! More than 2,000 years ago, Jesus entered a very broken world. As we gather to mark the birth of the *Word made flesh*, our celebration is not without the experience of turmoil and sin. The



challenges before us today, however, exist in both the Church and the world. Even amid any sense of hurt, disillusionment and anger, we are called to give witness to the hope and joy of the Gospel.

Both challenges and opportunities abound in central and southern Indiana, as they do throughout the Church and world. In the spirit

of Christmas, we lift up all endeavors of our local Church to the transforming divine grace that has brought about salvation in and through Jesus Christ. Together, as members of the Body of Christ, may we seek to draw ever closer to God and one another through the means of accompaniment, dialogue, discernment and encounter as missionary disciples. We must not allow the failure of a few to overshadow the incredible witness of so many in the various ministries and services of the Church through Catholic education, health care, charities, stewardship and outreach.

The celebration of Christmas keeps before us how the Lord chose to enter into our hearts, families and world to bring about the healing of wounds, the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation of relationships. As we reflect on the life of the Holy Family throughout the Christmas season, may we be reminded of how essential it is to remain Christ-centered in our baptismal call to holiness.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is blessed with its own kind of gold, frankincense and myrrh; namely, the gold of amazing people among its clergy, religious and laity, the frankincense of vibrant parishes, and the myrrh of rich Catholic history. All these we offer up in honor of Jesus Christ our King.

Wishing each of you a blessed Christmas and New Year, I remain

Prayerfully yours in Christ,

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

Archbishop of Indianapolis



Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in this stained-glass window located in Prince of Peace Church in Madison. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (Photo by Laura Jayne Gardner Photography)

Mensaje de Navidad del Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Queridos hermanas y hermanos en Cristo:

¡Reciban un cordial saludo navideño! Hace más de 2,000 años Jesús llegó a un mundo muy fracturado. Conforme nos reunimos para señalar el nacimiento del *Verbo encarnado*, nuestra celebración tampoco está desprovista de agitación y de pecado. Sin embargo, los retos que enfrentamos hoy en día afectan a la Iglesia y al mundo. Incluso en medio de cualquier sensación de dolor, desilusión y odio, estamos llamados a dar testimonio de la esperanza y la alegría del Evangelio.

Los retos y las oportunidades abundan, tanto en el centro y el sur de Indiana, como en toda la Iglesia y el mundo. Siguiendo el espíritu de la Navidad, elevamos las obras de nuestra Iglesia local a la gracia transformadora de Dios que nos ha traído la

salvación en Jesucristo y a través de él. Como miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo, busquemos juntos acercarnos todavía más a Dios y entre nosotros a través de la compañía, el diálogo, el discernimiento y el encuentro como discípulos misioneros. No debemos permitir que las fallas de unos pocos eclipsen el maravilloso testimonio de muchos otros en los diversos ministerios y servicios de la Iglesia a través de la formación católica, los servicios de salud, la caridad, la mayordomía y el trabajo comunitario.

La celebración de la Navidad nos deja ver claramente que el Señor eligió entrar en nuestros corazones, en nuestras familias y en el mundo para sanar heridas, perdonar los pecados y facilitar la reconciliación en las relaciones. Mientras reflexionamos sobre la vida de la Sagrada Familia durante toda la época

de la Navidad, recordemos lo esencial que es mantenernos centrados en Cristo en nuestro llamado bautismal a la santidad.

La Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis ha sido bendecida con sus propios tesoros, incienso y mirra, a saber: el tesoro de la gente maravillosa que integra el clero, los religiosos y los laicos, el incienso que transmite el dinamismo de nuestras parroquias y la mirra de nuestra rica tradición católica. Todo esto lo ofrecemos en honor de Jesucristo nuestro Rey.

Deseándoles bendiciones para la Navidad y el Año Nuevo, quedo piadosamente de ustedes en Cristo,

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

Arzobispo de Indianápolis



Youths carry a banner at the front of the inaugural Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22, 2018. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Vigil for Life, Indiana March for Life set for Jan. 21-22 in Indianapolis

Criterion staff report

The annual Vigil for Life and Indiana March for Life will take place on Jan. 21 and 22 in Indianapolis. The events are held in solemn observance of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion in the United States. Both events draw attention to the inherent dignity and respect for the lives of all unborn children.

The Vigil for Life will take place from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 21 at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis.

This year's evening of praise, worship and reflections will feature Christian singer and songwriter Audrey Assad.

The vigil will also include eucharistic adoration, a eucharistic procession and the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation.

The event, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana and Right to Life of Indianapolis, is free, although financial donations will be accepted and split between the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity and the Lafayette Diocese's Office for Family Life.

Parking will be available at two adjacent garages—Plaza Park Garage on Capitol Avenue, or the World Wonders Garage (mall parking) on Illinois Street.

Registration is not required, although for planning purposes it is requested. To register, go to bit.ly/2EhyNW2 (case-sensitive).

The second annual Indiana March for Life will take place the next day, on Jan. 22.

Events begin with a pre-rally at 11 a.m. in the Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capital Ave., across from St. John the Evangelist Church.

Mass will be celebrated in the church at noon, with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty presiding. A memorial for the unborn, sponsored by Right to Life of Indianapolis, will take place at the same time in the Indiana Convention Center.

The march will begin on Georgia Street between the church and convention center at 1:30 p.m. It will proceed from there to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument—the downtown Circle—then on to the State Capitol building at 200 W. Washington St.

A rally with speakers will take place on the south steps of the Capitol building at 2 p.m.

All are invited to show their support for the dignity of the unborn by taking part in both the vigil and the march.

Groups planning on taking buses to the event should contact Brie Anne Varick for more information.

(For more information on the events, go to www.archindy.org/humanlifeanddignity, or call the Office of Human Life and Dignity at 800-382-9836, ext. 1521, or 317-236-1521. For groups arriving in buses, contact Brie Anne Varick at 317-236-1543 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1543, or email beichhorn@archindy.org.) †

The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 21 to Jan. 1 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which is our annual Christmas publication, is the last issue of 2018.

The Criterion will be published again on Jan. 11, 2019, and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 21 through Jan. 1 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 24 – January 15, 2018

Dec. 24 – 10 p.m.

Christmas Eve Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

Jan. 2-8

U.S. Bishops' Spiritual Retreat at University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, Illinois

Jan. 9 – 8 a.m.

Framing A Catholic Response: Sexual Identity Conference at Primo Banquet Hall, Indianapolis

Jan. 10 – 8 a.m.

Judicatory Meeting at Indiana Interchurch Center, Indianapolis

Jan. 10 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team Meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

Jan. 13 – 10:30 a.m.

50th Anniversary of Dedication Mass at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

Jan. 14 – 12 p.m.

Pastoral Planning Steering Committee at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

Jan. 14 – 7 p.m.

Mass for Vocation Committee at St. Barnabas Church, Indianapolis

Jan. 15 – 10:30 a.m.

Priest Personnel Board Meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

Jan. 15 – 1 p.m.

Council of Priests Meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

(Schedule subject to change.)

Catholics invited to venerate heart of St. John Vianney at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on Jan. 4

By Sean Gallagher

The incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney will be available for veneration by Catholics of central and southern Indiana from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Jan. 4 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.



Fr. Eric Augenstein

United States organized by the Knights of Columbus.

Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director, said the visit of this relic to the archdiocese is a unique spiritual opportunity for area Catholics.

"Pilgrimages are often great opportunities for people to grow in their faith and their connection to Jesus and the saints, but it's not always feasible for people to travel long distances to visit holy places," he said. "Having the incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney here in Indianapolis brings the spiritual fruits of pilgrimage right here to our own archdiocese as we are able to spend time in prayer in the presence of a relic of a holy priest, and ask his intercession for our needs and the needs of the archdiocese."

Father Augenstein also noted that venerating this relic of St. John Vianney is a good opportunity to pray for priestly vocations since he is the patron saint of parish priests.

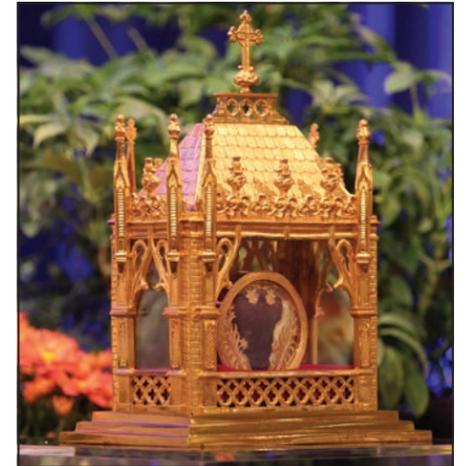
"He was known for having a heart that overflowed with love for Jesus and love for the people he was called to serve, especially through the celebration of the

sacraments," Father Augenstein said. "We need good and holy priests in our archdiocese, and there is perhaps no better way to pray for an increase in vocations than through the intercession of St. John Vianney."

Various opportunities for prayer will take place at the cathedral while the heart of St. John Vianney is available for veneration.

A Liturgy of the Word will take place at 10 a.m. At noon, the *Angelus* and the rosary will be prayed. The Divine Mercy Chaplet and litany will be prayed at 3 p.m. The sacrament of penance will be available from 4-5 p.m. Mass will be celebrated at 5:15 p.m.

For more information about the national tour of the heart of St. John Vianney, visit www.kofc.org/en/events/vianney.html. †



A relic of St. John Vianney is displayed before Mass on Nov. 12 at the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. The relic will be available for veneration from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Jan. 4 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)



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NEWS FROM YOU!

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Archdiocesan response to abuse crisis, death of Archbishop Buechlein, top local news stories

By Brandon A. Evans

The archdiocesan response to the ongoing clergy sex abuse crisis was voted the top local news story of 2018, followed by coverage of the death of Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein.

Other stories of note included the issuing of a pastoral letter on Christian anthropology by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, local coverage of young Catholics in preparation for a youth synod in Rome and the controversy surrounding a guidance counselor at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

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

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

Among the hundreds of locally produced news stories during 2018, here is our "Top 10" list:

1. The local Church responds to the ongoing clergy sex abuse crisis.

By far the largest news story in the Catholic Church in America in 2018, the clergy sex abuse crisis garnered headlines with shocking accusations against a retired U.S. cardinal and only got worse.

Archbishop Thompson wrote in August to the Church in central and southern Indiana about the headlines: "Coming on the heels of the scandal surrounding then-Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick that evidently involved at least three different large dioceses, and apparently known by more than a few people, the nearly 900 pages of the grand jury report on clergy sexual abuse in six dioceses of Pennsylvania has seemingly ripped the scab off a horrible wound that was just beginning to possibly heal."

In response to new revelations about abusive clergy—and those in power who

allowed them to operate—Archbishop Thompson called for a "Holy Hour for Prayer, Penance and Healing" at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Sept. 15, which opened with him lying prostrate before the altar.

It was an act of penance, he said, "and a pledge of doing everything in my power to do what is right, just and holy in eradicating the great scourge of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of all persons, most especially children and young people, making every effort to prevent it from happening again."

In addition to acting swiftly on new accusations of abuse on the part of a retired priest and misconduct on the part of an active pastor, archdiocesan officials also released a comprehensive list "of clergy who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor or young person."

The list dates back to the 1940s and includes both archdiocesan priests and members of religious orders, detailing the number of accusations and other biographical information.

The list also included information on how to report a claim of abuse; similar information appears every week in *The Criterion*.

2. Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein passes away.

Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein served as the head of the Church in central and southern Indianapolis from 1992 until he was forced by health concerns—including a stroke—to retire in 2011.

Since then, he spent his time in prayer for the people of the archdiocese while living at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, the place where he began his ministry to God as a monk in 1963.

On Jan. 25, he passed away in the archabbey infirmary; after a funeral Mass inside a packed SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, his body was returned to Saint Meinrad for a simple burial.



Worshippers kneel in prayer while Archbishop Charles C. Thompson lies prostrate on the floor of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Sept. 15 during a "Holy Hour for Prayer, Penance and Healing" for victims of sexual abuse. Archbishop Thompson said he laid prostrate as "an act of penance and a pledge" to do all in his power "in eradicating" sexual abuse and harassment.

(File photo by Sean Gallagher)

"Though he will be greatly missed, Archbishop Daniel's legacy of always pointing to Jesus Christ will continue among us," Archbishop Thompson said. "He was a faithful monk, priest, rector and bishop. Like so many, I will certainly miss him. He was such a tremendous model of prayerfulness, holiness and leadership. I also feel deeply blessed to have many wonderful memories of him."

Among other accomplishments during his 19 years as archbishop, enrollment in

Catholic schools increased by 30 percent; ministry to youth, young adults and Hispanic Catholics was strengthened; the permanent diaconate program was started; the Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis was founded; Catholic Charities expanded its services to include aiding 200,000 people per year; and 337 endowments worth \$109 million were established through the Catholic Community Foundation.

See YEAR END, page 9



Pope Francis' prayer intention for January

• **Young People and the Example of Mary**—That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.

(To see Pope Francis' monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popessintentions.) †

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John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

Editorial



The Nativity is depicted in this 17th-century painting by the three Le Nain brothers, Antoine, Louis and Mathieu. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (CNS/Bridgeman Images)

The birth of our savior, Messiah and Lord

“Today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord” (Lk 2:11).

That was the message the angel gave to the shepherds on the night of Jesus’ birth.

It’s obviously not every day that an angel announces the birth of a baby. But this was no ordinary baby. The angel wrapped up exactly who was born with those three words: savior, Messiah and Lord.

It’s interesting that Luke’s Gospel is the only one of the three synoptic Gospels to use the word “savior” for Jesus. As a footnote in the New American Bible says, “As savior, Jesus is looked upon by Luke as the one who rescues humanity from sin and delivers humanity from the condition of alienation from God.”

“Messiah” is a Hebrew word which means the same as “Christ” (*christos*) in Greek. It means “the anointed one.” In the Palestine where Jesus was born, some of the Jews looked for a leader, born from the line of King David, who would restore the kingdom of Israel, which was then under the control of the Roman Empire. Luke, though, used the word to refer to the one who would bring salvation to all humanity, Jew and Gentile alike.

“Lord” is the most common title for Jesus in Luke’s Gospel and in his Acts of the Apostles. This title was also applied to the Jews’ Yahweh in the Old Testament. The footnote in the Bible says, “When used of Jesus, it points to his transcendence and dominion over humanity.”

We have to marvel at how and when God decided to send his Son into the world. If you were writing this story, would you have chosen a stable in the small town of Bethlehem as the place of his birth? And would you have chosen a group of shepherds to receive the announcement of his birth and to be his first visitors? God truly works in strange ways at times.

And what about the parents of this child? Surely he could do better than a *tehton* for a father (one who works in construction). Might one of the Jewish

religious leaders, one of the Pharisees, been more appropriate? Not in God’s plan.

What about that trip that Luke’s Gospel says Mary and Joseph made from Nazareth to Bethlehem, with Mary nine months pregnant? Only mothers can really visualize how uncomfortable that trip had to be. It was 90 miles, either walking or riding on a donkey, sometimes in mountainous country. It took about a week. What kind of a trip is that for the mother of the baby who was to be the savior, Messiah and Lord?

Why didn’t God choose the second century B.C. to send his savior, Messiah and Lord? The year 167 B.C. was when King Antiochus Epiphanes was persecuting the Jews, and prompted the uprising of Mattathias and his sons. Why didn’t God choose one of those sons, perhaps Judas Maccabeus, who fought battles against the oppressors until he was killed?

But Judas Maccabeus wasn’t the kind of savior and Messiah God had in mind. Judas was a warrior, and God’s savior and Messiah was meant to bring peace to the world. That’s why the choir of angels that appeared to the shepherds sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14).

Our savior, Messiah and Lord came during the period in the Roman Empire known as the *pax Augusta*, the peace of Augustus. Caesar Augustus reigned from 27 B.C. until 14 A.D. It was one of the few times of peace throughout the empire, and Augustus was considered by the Romans as its savior and god.

But Mary’s and God’s Son, born in that lowly stable in Bethlehem, was the true savior, Messiah and Lord. He was truly God—Son of the Father, but also truly human—son of Mary. In God’s scheme to redeem mankind, that was essential.

The story of the birth of Jesus, that first Christmas, didn’t happen as you or I might have written it, but it was God’s plan to bring peace on Earth. Merry Christmas.

—John F. Fink

Making Sense of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Gene-edited babies and the runaway train of IVF

In November, a Chinese scientist named He Jankui (known to his associates as “JK”) claimed that he had successfully produced the world’s first gene-edited human babies using “gene surgery.”

The twin girls, he said, were born somewhere in China with a modified



gene that makes them immune to infection from HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. A special DNA splicing technique called CRISPR/Cas 9 was used when they were embryos to make the edits. In a series of

short videos posted on YouTube, JK offers an explanation of, and justification for, what he did.

He reminds his viewers that when scientists first began doing *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) in 1978, a number of ethical concerns were raised, but those mostly subsided over time: “The media hyped panic about Louise Brown’s birth as the first IVF baby. But for 40 years, regulations and morals have developed together with IVF, ensuring only therapeutic applications to help more than 8 million children come into this world. Gene surgery is another IVF advancement.

In another video, he puts it this way: “Look back to the 1970s with Louise Brown. The same fears and criticisms then are repeated now. Yet, IVF unquestionably has benefited families. There will be no question about the morality of gene surgery in 20 to 30 years.”

JK’s strong conclusion leads us to ask whether the general sense of revulsion that has arisen towards his gene-editing work is merely alarmist and shortsighted. Are people failing to grasp the importance and propriety of what he is doing? Is he a pioneer ushering in a new age of enlightenment where mankind will be able to make use of the powers of science to achieve good ends? Or should his gene editing work be condemned and JK branded as a rogue scientist violating significant moral boundaries?

The answer to these questions will, in fact, be linked to whether we understand IVF to be ethical or not—JK is right to draw the parallel. If we conclude that IVF is something good and ethically acceptable, we end up granting the principle that it is OK to engage in very harmful and damaging actions as long as we have a good end or purpose in mind.

Although IVF involves a litany of grave harms, like the engendering of human beings in laboratories and the freezing or destruction of embryos, if our intention is to help others fulfill their desire to have a baby, it must be OK.

By this same logic, gene editing of our children will also be considered acceptable as long as our intentions are good and we’re trying to help others, even if we’re actually causing serious harms along the way.

Adding up the grave harms from IVF gives us a long list: IVF turns procreation into “production.” It dehumanizes embryonic children, treating them as objects to be frozen, manipulated, abandoned or destroyed. Since the practice began in 1978, millions of embryos have become warehoused in liquid nitrogen, abandoned in frozen “orphanages.” Millions more have been outright discarded as biomedical waste. Instead of “loving our children into being” through the one-flesh union of husband and wife, IVF mass produces children in clinics, assembly-line style, under the impetus of market capitalism. Children born by IVF, moreover, experience roughly double the rate of birth defects of regularly conceived children.

Over the years, these kinds of concerns have been mostly glossed over or ignored. We’ve grown accustomed to frozen orphanages, and to the high toll involved in the process of assuring that a few of our embryonic children survive and successfully implant. We downplay the risk of birth defects. Our insensitivity and desires have trumped a clear sense of ethics.

As we face the daunting question of editing human embryos, we run up against the same temptation. Editing our embryonic children to be free of a particular disease requires numerous embryos to be simultaneously created (or thawed out), treated as “products” and subjected to genetic “treatments,” with many of them perishing during the experiment, in order that a few of them might survive and develop without the disease.

Editing our embryonic children may also involve risks to them that we will only understand later when they grow up. Is it ever proper to experiment on our own offspring? Moreover, gene editing in embryos introduces changes that will be passed into the human gene pool, establishing permanent and irrevocable changes to our own humanity. How does one adequately evaluate the risks of such changes?

The fact remains that we’ve been willing to tolerate an abundance of human carnage up to this point with IVF, and one of the great tragedies of our age has been our tone deafness to the evils of IVF. JK argues that we are similarly poised to accept the production of gene-edited babies as yet another variation on the theme.

Will his brazen instrumentalization of human beings call forth gasps of disbelief, serious reflection and action, or only a few more passing yawns?

(Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.) †

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

Christ comes to be our peace and calls us to conversion

“Thus says the Lord: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore, the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the Earth; he shall be peace” (Mi 5:1-4).

This weekend, we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent, our final opportunity to prepare ourselves for the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas).

The Scripture readings for this weekend call our attention to two particular places—the little town of Bethlehem, from which the prophet Micah says “one who is to be ruler in Israel” will come, and “a town of Judah” in the hill country destined to be the birthplace of the last great prophet, John the Baptist. What do these two places have in common? What do they teach us about the great feast of Christmas?

These two biblical locations—Bethlehem and a town in Judah where Mary visited Elizabeth—are by no means centers of political power or economic influence. They are humble, out-of-the-way places where, by the miracle of God’s grace, wonderful things happened. Both locations serve as signs of the very different context in which God visits us, his people.

Jesus will not be born in Jerusalem or Rome or any other major city. He will be born in Bethlehem, “too small to be among the clans of Judah” (Mi 5:1). But his humble origins will not prevent him from shepherding his flock with strength, “for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the Earth; he shall be peace” (Mi 5:1-4). His power and influence are of a totally different kind than we normally associate with earthly rulers.

He who was to be born of an ordinary woman, a woman who was nevertheless extraordinarily faithful to God’s word, revealed himself in the very first instance as an unborn child. Elizabeth’s son, himself an unborn infant, recognized his Lord and proclaimed his greatness from the

womb. “For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears,” Elizabeth said to Mary, “the infant in my womb leaped for joy” (Lk 1:44). What an amazing demonstration of God’s closeness to us! Two unborn children communicate with each other to announce the imminent reign of God and to share their joy with each other—and with us.

There are a series of divine paradoxes here. Places that are “too small” or too obscure give rise to greatness. Two women—one who is a virgin and the other who is too old to bear children—rejoice in their pregnancies and strongly support each other. Two unborn children communicate with each other, and in so doing prefigure their respective missions as evangelists and martyrs called to proclaim God’s kingdom and the need for repentance and conversion.

Each year during the season of Advent, we reverence Mary, who had the courage to believe that God’s promise was being fulfilled in her, and John the Baptist, who serves as a bridge between the ancient hope and longing of God’s people and its fulfillment in Mary’s son, Jesus.

The ultimate paradox, of course, is the fact that Christ brings peace to the world (in fact, he *is* peace) while at the very same time causing division (Mt 10:34). Christ’s peace is not an affirmation of the status quo. It is a call to conversion, a radical transformation of our minds and hearts and of our social and political systems, so that we become new people living in a new world.

The Christmas peace that we will celebrate in a few days does bring us comfort and joy. But as Pope Francis frequently reminds us, the peace of Christ also challenges and unsettles us. It invites us to let Jesus break open our hearts so that we can share his closeness with others.

No place on Earth is too small for Christ to be born there. No individual heart is too closed for Christ to enter and dwell there.

As we complete our observance of Advent, let’s make room for Jesus Christ in our hearts and homes, in our communities and our churches, and even to the ends of the Earth. Come, Lord Jesus. Help us rejoice in your closeness and share our joy with everyone!

Merry Christmas! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Cristo viene para ser nuestra paz y nos llama a la conversión

“Así dice el Señor: Y tú, Belén Efratá, tan pequeña entre los clanes de Judá, de ti me nacerá el que debe gobernar a Israel: sus orígenes se remontan al pasado, a un tiempo inmemorial. Por eso, el Señor los abandonará hasta el momento en que dé a luz la que debe ser madre; entonces el resto de sus hermanos volverá junto a los israelitas. Él se mantendrá de pie y los apacentará con la fuerza del Señor; con la majestad del nombre del Señor, su Dios. Ellos habitarán tranquilos, porque él será grande hasta los confines de la tierra. ¡Y él mismo será la paz!” (Mi 5:1-4).

Este fin de semana celebramos el cuarto domingo de Adviento, la última oportunidad para prepararnos para la Natividad del Señor (Navidad).

Las lecturas de las escrituras de este fin de semana hacen énfasis en dos lugares en particular: un pequeño pueblo de Belén del cual, en palabras del profeta Miqueas, “nacerá el que debe gobernar a Israel” y un “pueblo de Judá” en las colinas destinado a ser el lugar de nacimiento del último gran profeta, Juan Bautista. ¿Qué tienen en común estos dos lugares? ¿Qué nos enseñan acerca de la gran festividad de la Navidad?

Estos dos sitios bíblicos, Belén y un pueblo en Judá donde María visitó a Isabel, de ninguna forma son centros de poder político o influencia económica. Son lugares humildes y apartados donde, por el milagro de la gracia de Dios, ocurrieron acontecimientos maravillosos. Ambos lugares son signos de los contextos muy distintos en los que Dios nos visita a nosotros, su pueblo.

Jesús no nació en Jerusalén o Roma ni en ninguna otra ciudad importante. Nació en Belén, “pequeña entre los clanes de Judá” (Mi 5:1). Pero sus humildes orígenes no le impidieron pastorear a su rebaño con determinación “porque él será grande hasta los confines de la tierra. ¡Y él mismo será la paz!” (Mi 5:4). Su poder y su influencia son de una naturaleza totalmente distinta de la que normalmente asociamos con nuestros gobernantes terrenales.

Aquel que nacería de una mujer ordinaria pero con una fe extraordinaria a la palabra de Dios, se reveló por primera vez cuando todavía no había nacido. El hijo de Isabel, quien tampoco había nacido, reconoció a su Señor y proclamó su grandeza desde el vientre de su madre. “Apenas oí tu saludo—dijo Isabel a María—el niño

saltó de alegría en mi seno” (Lc 1:44). ¡Qué maravillosa demostración de la cercanía de Dios con nosotros! Dos bebés se comunican desde el vientre de sus madres para anunciar el reino inminente de Dios y compartir su alegría entre ellos y con nosotros.

En este relato hay una serie de paradojas: De lugares “muy pequeños” o muy ocultos surge la grandeza. Dos mujeres, una de ellas vírgenes y la otra demasiado mayor para tener hijos, se regocijan en sus embarazos y se apoyan mutuamente. Dos bebés se comunican desde el vientre de sus madres y esto representa un presagio de sus respectivas misiones como evangelistas y mártires llamados a proclamar el reino de Dios y la necesidad de arrepentimiento y conversión.

Cada año, durante la época del Adviento, reverenciamos a María quien tuvo el valor de creer que la promesa de Dios se cumpliría en ella, y a Juan Bautista quien actúa como enlace entre la antigua esperanza y anhelo del pueblo de Dios del cumplimiento de la profecía en el hijo de María, Jesús.

La paradoja suprema es, por supuesto, el hecho de que Jesús trae paz al mundo (de hecho, él es la paz) y al mismo tiempo provoca divisiones (Mt 10:34). La paz de

Cristo no es una afirmación del *status quo* sino un llamado a la conversión, una transformación radical de nuestras mentes y corazones, así como también de nuestros sistemas sociales y políticos, para que podamos convertirnos en un pueblo nuevo que habita en un mundo nuevo.

La paz de la Navidad que celebraremos dentro de unos días efectivamente nos brinda consuelo y alegría. Pero, tal como nos lo recuerda a menudo el papa Francisco, la paz de Cristo también nos desafía y nos perturba ya que nos invita a dejar que Jesús abra nuestros corazones para poder compartir esa cercanía con los demás.

Ningún lugar en la Tierra es demasiado chico para que Cristo nazca allí; ningún corazón está demasiado cerrado para que Cristo entre y habite allí.

Al concluir nuestra observación del Adviento, asegúrenos de hacerle un lugar a Jesús en nuestros corazones y en nuestros hogares, en nuestras comunidades e iglesias, e incluso en los confines de la Tierra. ¡Ven, Señor Jesús! ¡Ayúdanos a regocijarnos en tu cercanía y a compartir nuestra alegría con todos!

¡Feliz Navidad! †

Events Calendar

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

January 2

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

January 4

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Andrew Dudzinski presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, www.womenscarecenter.org.

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

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information:

317-546-7328, mkeyes@indy.rr.com.

January 5

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

January 8

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

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

January 12

New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries,

101 Saint Anthony Dr., Mount Saint Francis. **Childcare Ministry Safe Sitter Training**, topics include safety, first aid, rescue and child care skills, for students in grades 6-8, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., \$20. Register online by Jan. 3 at goo.gl/7tE51J (case sensitive). Information: Sandy Winstead, 812-923-8355, sandy@nadyouth.org.

January 13

St. Thomas Aquinas, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or acfadi2014@gmail.com.

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

January 15

St. Christopher Parish, Damascus Room, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. **Scripture Study: Psalms and Gospels**, 10 consecutive Tues. through March 19, 7 p.m., \$50 payable in installments, all are welcome. Information: Lois Jansen, mlj986@gmail.com, 317-241-9169.

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Abide" Adoration Service**, sponsored by New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries, 7-8 p.m., every third Thurs. of the month, featuring guest speaker, praise band, silence and confessions, child care available. Information and child care reservations: Chris Rogers, chris@nadyouth.org, 812-923-8355.

January 17

St. Joseph Parish, 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.

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Nature Nights: Thank You Pollinators!** 7-8:30 p.m., freewill offering. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

January 20

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Sundays at the**

Woods: A Low Carbon Footprint, Providence Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp and Lorrie Heber presenting, 2-4 p.m., free will offering, registration required by Jan. 18; space limited to 30. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 21

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Vigil for Life**, worship, Eucharistic adoration, procession and confessions, featuring Christian music artist Audrey Assad, 7-9 p.m., freewill offerings. Tickets and information: goo.gl/a6ETs3 (case sensitive), Brie Anne Varick, 317-236-1543, beichhorn@archindy.org.

January 22

Indiana March for Life, Indianapolis. 11 a.m.: **Indoor Life Rally**, Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave.; noon: **Mass**, St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Diocese of Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty presiding, and **Memorial Service**,

Indiana Convention Center; 1:30 p.m.: **March for Life**, from Georgia St., to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the downtown Circle, to the Indiana State Capitol Building, 200 W. Washington St., 2 p.m.: **Rally**, south steps of Indiana State Capitol building. Information: Brie Anne Varick, 317-236-1543, beichhorn@archindy.org.

St. Malachy Parish, 9833 E. County Road 750, Brownsburg. **Divorce and Beyond Support Group**, 7-9 p.m., six consecutive Tuesdays through Feb. 26, all faiths welcome, \$30 includes materials. Registration and information: www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily/ (choose Divorce Ministry) or Deb Van Velse, 317-236-1586, dvanvelse@archindy.org.

January 25

Immaculate Heart of Mary School, 317 E. 57th St., Indianapolis. **K-8 Open House**, for parents of prospective students, 1-2:30 p.m., private tours available. Information: Elise O'Brien, 317-255-5468, eliseobrien@ihmindy.org.

Black Catholic Ministry to host men's gathering in Indianapolis on Jan. 26

"Let the Glory of the Lord Rise Among Us" is the theme of the first-ever archdiocesan Black Catholic Men's Gathering to be held at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4052 E. 38th St., in Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Jan. 26.

Sponsored by the Black Catholic Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, the event is open to all men, young adults and high school students.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

will begin the day with praise and worship.

Jesuit Father Joseph A. Brown, a professor of Africana studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill., is the keynote speaker.

The event, which includes lunch, is free, although a \$25 freewill offering is suggested.

Registration is requested by Jan. 24 by contacting Pearlette Springer at 317-236-1474 or e-mailing pspringer@archindy.org.



Thinking cap champs

Seventh-grade students from St. Louis School in Batesville, along with their teachers, proudly display their first-place trophy received at the recent Corn Belt Thinking Cap Competition. The digital academic competition challenges students to work as a team answering general knowledge questions against other schools from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Ohio. Pictured in the front row are: Madison Wanstrath, left, Lilly Schebler, Kate Weber, Rhea Miller and Megan Batta. Back row: Marco Canessa, left, teacher Diane Jones, Sady Hirt, Claire Saner, Sadie Wachsmann and teacher Koehler Flaspohler. (Submitted photo)

Retreats and Programs

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

January 20

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 includes room for the day and lunch, spiritual direction available for \$35. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

January 11-12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **A Holy Land Retreat: Savoring the Graces**, Msgr. Paul Koetter and Father

Eric Johnson, Fri. 6:30 p.m.-Sat. 2:30 p.m., \$150 per person or \$275 married couple, includes overnight accommodations, evening snacks, breakfast and lunch. Information and registration: Kristine Meyer, 317-545-7681, ext. 101 or www.archindy.org/fatima.

January 15

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Living the Liturgical Year - Ordinary Time**, Benedictine Sister Marie Therese Racine presenting, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$25.

Information and registration: bit.ly/2G2qS0J, 317-788-7581.

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Series: Wine and Women at the Woods!** (first of three., Jan. 22, Jan. 29), Providence Sisters Jan Craven and Paula Damiano presenting, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$10 per session, \$25 for three. Registration deadline: Jan. 9. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Retrouvaille retreat for marriages in crisis set for Feb. 22-24 in Tipton, Ind.

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with your spouse? Do you argue, or have you stopped talking to each other? Do you wonder if your marriage might end?

A Retrouvaille retreat for marriages in crisis will be held at the St. Joseph Retreat & Conference Center, 1440 W. Division Road, in Tipton (Diocese of Lafayette), on Feb. 22-24.

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vai) is a worldwide program that offers tools needed for hurting couples to rediscover

a loving marriage relationship. For more than 30 years, the program has helped hundreds of thousands of couples heal their hurting marriages.

To learn more about the program or to register for the Feb. 22-24 weekend and follow-up post-weekend sessions in Indianapolis, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com or www.retrouvaille.org.

For confidential information e-mail RetrouIndy@gmail.com or call 317-489-6811.

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center to host Girls Night Out on Jan. 25

A "Girls Night Out: Women Helping Women" event will be held at the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove, from 7-9:30 p.m. on Jan. 25. Activities include pampering, shopping, arts and crafts, door prizes and a French-inspired dessert bar.

The cost is \$25 per person, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting

Beacon of Hope Crisis Center in Indianapolis to help those affected by domestic violence.

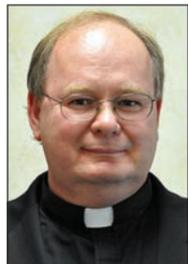
To register or for information on becoming a sponsor or vendor for the event, go to bit.ly/2RAAS2v (case sensitive) or call 317-788-7581.

To learn more about the work of the Beacon of Hope Crisis Center, visit www.beaconofhopeindy.org.

'Circle of life' at Batesville parish keeps going after 150 years

By Sean Gallagher

When Father Stanley Pondo began his ministry at St. Louis Parish in Batesville in 2015, he looked ahead to 2018, knowing that the faith community would celebrate that year the 150th anniversary of its founding.



Fr. Stanley Pondo

Planning a fitting celebration of this anniversary was a priority for him. "It's important to recognize the contributions that people have made throughout a century and a half," Father Pondo said. "The parish wouldn't

be what it is today if it weren't for the history of the families who have been here for generations, and contributed in so many ways."

A series of events at St. Louis Parish that marked the anniversary culminated in a festive Mass on Oct. 28 at which Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant.

Now Father Pondo and his parishioners have plans to put their faith community on good footing for the future by observing during the coming 12 months a year dedicated to the Blessed Mother, in order "to put the parish under the protection of Mary and of honoring Mary to start our next 150 years."

St. Louis Parish had its beginnings a century and a half ago when German Catholic immigrants settled in the area. Within a year of its founding, Franciscan friars with Germanic roots came from Cincinnati to minister in the parish. They remained there until 2002 when archdiocesan priests began leading the Batesville faith community.

Many Franciscan priests who served at St. Louis Parish returned to Batesville for the anniversary Mass. Father Pondo said that their influence remains.

"There's kind of a Franciscan spirituality among some of the parishioners," he said. "Certainly the sensitivities that the Franciscans are known to have are present here, particularly among the parishioners who have been here for a long time under their guidance."

There's also a deep life of prayer at St. Louis, which is embodied in part in

its perpetual eucharistic adoration chapel, which was dedicated in 2005.

The chapel also shows forth the parish's heritage. Its altar was taken from a side altar of the church that was removed several decades ago. Until 2005, it had been kept in the barn of a parishioner.

"When you go in there, something comes over you," said St. Louis parishioner Mary Jo Sunderman, 81. "I almost can't describe it. It's just the Spirit of the Lord."

St. Louis Parish has also been shaped by the growth of Batesville over the years, which has been spurred in large part by the development of two inter-related companies based there: Batesville Casket Company and Hillenbrand, Inc.

Both trace their roots to the 1906 purchasing of the casket company by John Hillenbrand, a member of St. Louis Parish. Although Hillenbrand is now a publicly traded company, it still has close ties to the Hillenbrand family, who remain parishioners.

The two companies together now employ more than 9,000 people in their worldwide operations.

Sunderman moved to Batesville in 1969 with her husband David and their three young daughters when David took a job at Hillenbrand. The family soon found a spiritual home at St. Louis Parish.

"It was a very welcoming community and parish, no doubt about that," Sunderman said. "This is a wonderful community in which to raise a family."

And it became part of their wider family as the Sundermans got involved in the parish, Mary Jo working in the parish school's cafeteria and serving as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion and David leading the parish's finance commission.

In 1988, Mary Jo experienced how St. Louis Parish offered support like a family when David died.

"The funeral was just amazing," she said. "People kept coming to the visitation. I thought the line would never end."

Mary Jo is now hopeful for the future of St. Louis as she sees many young families with many children, much like she saw nearly 50 years ago when she was raising her young children there.

"The circle of life just keeps going," she said.

See BATESVILLE, page 20



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and several concelebrating priests pray the eucharistic prayer during an Oct. 28 Mass at St. Louis Church in Batesville to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of St. Louis Parish. (Submitted photo)



In this undated photo, Franciscan friars pose in front of St. Louis Church in Batesville. Friars from Cincinnati ministered at the parish for 133 years—from 1869-2002. (Submitted photo)

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Twenty-four Sisters of Providence celebrate jubilees

Criterion staff report

In 2018, one member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods celebrated 85 years in the congregation, three celebrated 75 years, 12 celebrated 70 years and eight celebrated 60 years.

85-year jubilarian

Sister Marceline Mattingly, a native of Henderson, Ky., entered the congregation on Feb. 10, 1933, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1941. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in English, and from the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana with a master's degree in biology.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Anthony School (1938-40), and at St. Philip Neri School (1942-46); in Clarksville as a teacher at Our Lady of Providence High School (1968-70); in New Albany as a pastoral associate at St. Mary Parish (1983-89); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities, including as an instructor at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in the learning resource center (1991-2001). She has also ministered in Illinois and Washington, D.C.

Currently she volunteers at Providence Health Care at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

75-year jubilarians

Sister Adrian Marie Conrad, a native of Bicknell, Ind., entered the congregation on July 22, 1943, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1951.



Sr. Adrian Marie Conrad, S.P.

She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana State University in Terre Haute with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a teacher in Richmond at the former St. Mary School (1946-50), now St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School; in Indianapolis as superior and principal at St. Jude School (1965-68), as a teacher at the former Chartrand High School (1968-70), as campus director at the former Ladywood-St. Agnes Academy (1971-72), and as administrative secretary at Cathedral High School (1976-78); and in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former Sacred Heart School (1972-76). She has also ministered in California, Illinois and Nevada.

Currently, she ministers in residential services in Los Angeles.

Sister Michaela Galvin, a native of Melrose, Mass., entered the congregation on July 16, 1943, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1951.



Sr. Michaela Galvin, S.P.

She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in English, and from the University of Notre Dame with a master's degree in English.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in residential services (2000-10), and as a volunteer at Providence Health Care (2010-11). She has also ministered in Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas and Washington, D.C.

Currently, she ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Louise (formerly Sister Edward Louise) Schroeder, a native of Jasper, Ind., entered the congregation on Jan. 5, 1943, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1950. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at St. Joan of



Sr. Louise Schroeder, S.P.

Arc School (1959-62) and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in California and Illinois.

Currently, she ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

70-year jubilarians

Sister Laurette Bellamy, a native of Chicago, Ill., entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in music, from The Catholic University of America in Washington with a master's degree in music, and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a doctorate in music theory.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former Ladywood Academy (1950-52 and 1957-64); in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as a professor at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (1952-53, 1955-57, 1968-71, and 1972-2010); in Terre Haute as a volunteer at the former St. Ann Clinic (2006-11); in Bloomington as a volunteer for the St. Vincent de Paul Society (2006-14) and as a nursing home visitor for St. Charles Borromeo Parish (2013-14), and again in Indianapolis as a volunteer for the St. Vincent de Paul Society (2015-16).

Currently, she ministers as a volunteer at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

Sister Ann Marie Boyce, a native of Richmond, entered the congregation on Jan. 7, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Ann School (1950-53), and as a teacher and assistant principal at St. Jude School (1977-78); in Plainfield as a teacher at St. Susanna School (1959-64); in New Castle as a teacher and principal at the former St. Anne School (1967-77); in Sellersburg as a teacher and principal at the former St. Paul School (1978-85), now St. John Paul II School; in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former Sacred Heart School (1996-99); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in California and North Carolina.

Currently, she ministers in residential services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Helen Therese Conway, a native of Chicago, Ill., entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Andrew School (1950-53) and the former St. Catherine School (1965-67); in New Albany as a teacher at the former Holy Trinity School (1953-54); in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former Sacred Heart School (1954-55); in Greenwood as a teacher at Our Lady of the Greenwood School (1967-69); in Greenfield as a teacher and principal at St. Michael School (1969-87); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in California and Illinois.

Currently, she ministers in prayer.

Sister Eileen (formerly Sister Anita Therese) Dede, a native of Terre Haute, entered the congregation on Jan. 7, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana



Providence Sister Marceline Mattingly, center, celebrated her 85th jubilee this year. She is pictured with General Councilor Sister Mary Beth Klingel, left, and General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, right. (Submitted photos)



Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods celebrating 70-year jubilees this year, along with members of the congregation's council, include: front row: Sisters Helen Therese Conway, left, Rita Ann Wade, Laurette Bellamy and Regina Ann Lynch; middle row: Sisters Dorothy Gartland, left, Ann Marie Boyce, Joan Mary Schaefer, James Michael Kesterson, Grace Marie Meehan, Jane Michael Dwyer, Eileen Dede and General Councilor Sister Mary Beth Klingel; back row: General Councilors Sisters Jenny Howard, left, and Jeanne Hagelskamp, General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski and General Councilor Sister Lisa Stallings.



Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods celebrating 60-year jubilees, along with members of the congregation's council, include: front row: Sister Linda Kaliker; middle row: Sister Gloria Memering, left, General Councilor Sister Mary Beth Klingel, and Sisters Katherine Manley, Rosemary Ward, Brigid Ann Bonner, Donna Butler, Rosemary Schmalz and Patty Fillenwarth; and back row: General Councilors Sisters Jenny Howard, left, and Jeanne Hagelskamp, General Superior Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, and General Councilor Sister Lisa Stallings.

University in Bloomington with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Patrick School (1951-53), at Holy Spirit School (1959-65), at Immaculate Heart of Mary School (1965-67), at St. Luke the Evangelist School (1971-73), at St. Thomas Aquinas School (1973-77), as a clinical pastoral educator at Methodist Hospital (1977), and as a volunteer at St. Francis Hospital (2011-16); in Brownsburg as a teacher at St. Malachy School (1955-57); in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former Sacred Heart School (1983-84); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts and Ohio.

Currently, she ministers in departmental services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Jane Michael Dwyer, a native of Arlington, Mass., entered the congregation on July 22, 1948, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1956. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Rivier University in Nashua, N.H., with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she ministered in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former

St. Margaret Mary School (1956-57). She has also ministered in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Currently, she ministers in residential services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Dorothy (formerly Sister Margaret Eugene) Gartland, a native of St. Joseph, Mo., entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a master's degree in elementary education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Brownsburg as a teacher at St. Malachy School (1957-59). She has also ministered in Illinois and Washington, D.C.

Currently, she ministers in residential services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister James Michael Kesterson, a native of Indianapolis, entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Andrew School (1954-55 and

YEAR END

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3. Archbishop Thompson issues a pastoral letter on issues of human dignity.

On Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14) of this year, Archbishop Thompson issued a pastoral letter titled “We are One in Christ: A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy, Religious and Faithful People of Central and Southern Indiana on Fundamentals of Christian Anthropology.”

A story in *The Criterion* noted that the archbishop “explores a number of issues that are widely debated in society from the perspective of Christian anthropology, which [Archbishop Thompson] described as ‘the way Christians view human dignity and the end or purpose of human society.’”

“The faithful’s response to issues such as immigration, abortion, racism, religious liberty and drug abuse,” Archbishop Thompson said, should be “deeply rooted in the Church’s understanding of the origin, nature and destiny of the human person as revealed in Jesus Christ.”

“Where we come from, who we are and where we are headed as individuals and as diverse communities of people,” he noted, “determines our rights and responsibilities in human society.”

The pastoral letter was the first issued by Archbishop Thompson since his installation as shepherd on July 28, 2017.

4. Local coverage of young Catholics amidst the October Synod of Bishops.

In October, the Vatican hosted a synod, called at the direction of Pope Francis, with the theme “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.”

Opening up with a question-and-answer article with Archbishop Thompson, *The Criterion* launched a five-part series in preparation for the synod.

“The purpose of the synod is to ask how to better engage young people [ages 16-29] in the life and mission of the Church and its leadership and service,” the archbishop said. “The hope of the synod is to better proclaim the Church’s message to young people so that it can be better heard, understood and appreciated in today’s culture and climate.”

More than 120 youth and young adults in the archdiocese responded to an invitation by Pope Francis “to share their thoughts on their faith and their relationship with the Church,” noted a story in *The Criterion*.

A committee was formed to summarize the responses which were not only forwarded to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, but also the Holy See. The general results and a sampling of quotes were published in *The Criterion*.

“For me,” said Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis, “this process highlighted the need to keep encouraging those who serve and minister to—and with—youths and young adults. Conversations about faith can sometimes be awkward and challenging. But young folks tend to value authenticity.”

“I hope that when the Holy Father issues his teaching document flowing from the synod,” Ogorek continued, “people of various ages will read and reflect on it, taking it to heart as affirming the good in youths and challenging us all to be more fervent, loving disciples of Jesus.”

5. The suspension of a Roncalli High School counselor sparks intense debate.

After initially remaining quiet out of respect for privacy and personnel issues, Archbishop Thompson publicly responded in August to address an issue that had made headlines both in Indiana and nationally.

The debate was focused around Shelly Fitzgerald, a guidance counselor who had, up to this year, been employed at Roncalli High School.

“As has been reported in the media and discussed publicly by Ms. Fitzgerald,” the archbishop wrote in *The Criterion*, “she is living in a civil marriage to another woman that is not valid in the eyes of the Church. She is on paid



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prays over Erika Fierro outside of the Department of Homeland Security office in Indianapolis on April 24 prior to the meeting asking for a credible fear interview.

(File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

administrative leave. The issue concerning Ms. Fitzgerald’s employment is not about sexual orientation, but about the Church’s teaching that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman as established and revealed by God.

“The archdiocese’s Catholic schools are ministries of the Church. School administrators, teachers and guidance counselors are ministers of the faith who are called to share in the mission of the Church. No one has a right to a ministerial position, but once they are called to serve in a ministerial role they must lead by word and example. As ministers, they must convey and be supportive of the teachings of the Catholic Church. These expectations are clearly spelled out in school ministerial job descriptions and contracts, so everyone understands their obligations.”

“When a person is not fulfilling their obligations as a minister of the faith within a school,” Archbishop Thompson continued, “Church and school leadership address the situation by working with the person to find a path of accompaniment that will lead to a resolution in accordance with Church teaching.”

6. Deported mother of two becomes a local face for larger immigration issues.

Erika Fierro was brought to the United States 30 years ago when she was 5 years old. The 2001 graduate of Beech Grove High School in Beech Grove lived in Indianapolis where she married her husband Jesus, served in a Catholic parish and had two children.

Never a U.S. citizen, and not eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status because she was formerly deported and returned illegally in 2007, Fierro faced deportation again—while her children remained in the U.S. waiting for passports.

With her husband having already been deported, she attended a hearing to plead her case to remain with her children and away from a homeland that she was fearful of due to violence.

Archbishop Thompson, along with clergy from various denominations and other immigration advocates, met with her on the day of her hearing to show their support.

After praying over her, the archbishop offered comments at a press conference: “Pope Francis has reminded us that immigrants, migrants and refugees are not to be treated as second-class human beings. He reminds us that immigrants, migrants and refugees—just like the unborn, the poor, the elderly, the sick—are not problems to be solved, but are human beings to be loved and respected.”

Ultimately, Fierro was deported, but was allowed to drive herself to the border with her children and cross into Mexico with them.

7. The archdiocese announces final parish changes from its *Connected in the Spirit* process.

The *Connected in the Spirit* parish planning process began in the Terre Haute Deanery in 2008.

The goal of the process, which has since been implemented under the oversight of three different archbishops, “is to strengthen Catholic identity, presence and mission throughout the 39 counties in the 11 deaneries that comprise the Archdiocese of Indianapolis,” Archbishop Thompson noted.

The final decrees of the process saw the merging of three parishes in the New Albany and Tell City deaneries, as well as the linking of other parish communities.

“I realize the reality of the grieving process that goes along with change in both the lives of individuals and communities,” Archbishop Thompson said. “That grief is real and must be honored. However, there is also the reality of new life and energy that often takes root over time.”

In a story reported in *The Criterion*, Annette “Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan chancellor, said she has seen an increase in cooperation in parishes as the effort evolved.

She said the process has “made us take a hard look at things. People have been connected in some way, either liturgically or in sharing resources.”

8. The inaugural Indiana March for Life attracts hundreds who want to give witness to the dignity of life.

Approximately 500 people participated in the first Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22—the date marking the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions by the United States Supreme Court which legalized abortion across the country.

A local alternative to the massive March for Life held as a national event each January in Washington, D.C., “the event was the culmination of efforts by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life of Indianapolis,” said a story in *The Criterion*. “Their goal was to support and raise awareness of the pro-life cause, and to promote pro-life action and legislation at the state level.”

After the march, a rally took place on the lawn of the Indiana Statehouse that featured several speakers, including Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director who has become a pro-life advocate.

Prior to the march, more than 1,000 people worshipped at a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Thompson at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

“Within the common bond of our humanity,” Archbishop Thompson said in his homily, “we must recognize our responsibility to one another, especially the most vulnerable among us.”

9. Local delegates attend regional and national V Encuentro gatherings.

“Nearly 200 Hispanic ministry leaders from 13 dioceses in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana—including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—gathered

at the University of Notre Dame near South Bend, Ind., for the Region VII *Encuentro* on June 8-10,” read a staff report in *The Criterion*.

“Like other regional *encuentros*—the Spanish word for ‘encounter’—being held around the country, the gathering at Notre Dame was part of the process leading up to the Fifth National *Encuentro* of Hispanic/Latino Ministry or V *Encuentro*.”

The event offered “a discernment process that allowed the Hispanic community to understand its call in the Church of the U.S.,” said Oscar Castellano, director of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry. “It was an opportunity to [be a] voice [for] those who are not heard and part of the Church living in the peripheries.”

In September, more than 3,200 Hispanic Catholic leaders and 125 bishops gathered for the national *Encuentro* in Grapevine, Texas.

Saul Llacsas, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic ministry, attended the event with Archbishop Thompson and other local delegates.

“We are called to be bridges of an encounter of love,” Llacsas said. “We have the conviction that we are called to an encounter with Christ. The Latino/Hispanic community has the mission to proclaim the Good News wherever we go. It is embedded in our hearts and our culture.”

10. Father Jeffrey Dufresne is ordained a priest.

Each year, the ordination of one or more priests is an important moment in the life of the local Church. Father Jeffrey Dufresne was ordained on June 2 to serve the Catholics of central and southern Indiana.

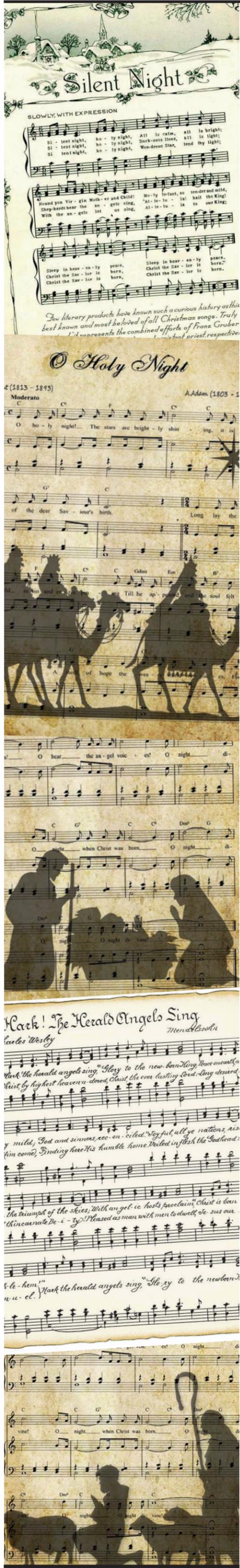
“In his homily that he offered just minutes before the laying on of hands, Archbishop Thompson, echoing the repeated call of Pope Francis, exhorted Deacon Dufresne in his priestly life and ministry to ‘cultivate a culture of accompaniment, dialogue, encounter and mercy,’” noted a story in *The Criterion*.

While the hard work of fostering such a culture takes place in the grittiness of everyday life and sometimes difficult relationships, Archbishop Thompson noted that this necessary ministry is rooted in the fundamentals of the Gospel.

The Mass featured the attendance of most of the priests of the archdiocese, who offered their prayers and support for the new priest, particularly during the laying on of hands.

“I really do admire our presbyterate,” Father Dufresne said. “They’re all men of authenticity. During that time, I was praying that the Lord would give me the strength to be a priest as good, faithful and as authentic as they are.”

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



Readers find the joy and true meaning of Christmas in their favorite carols

By John Shaughnessy

This year marks the 200th anniversary of “Silent Night,” the Christmas song that was composed in 1818 and first performed on Christmas Eve of that year in a small parish church in Austria.

Ever since, “Silent Night” has captured the true essence of Christmas—God’s gift of his son to humanity—in such a wonderful way that it has continued as one of the most-loved carols of the season for many people, including Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

“It has a beautiful story or history of being composed,” Archbishop Thompson notes. “It is also a soothing, simple melody that seems to resonate in the hearts and minds of practically everyone.”

In recognition of the anniversary of this perennial Christmas favorite, *The Criterion* invited our readers to share their favorite Christmas song, and why that song resonates with such meaning for them.

We hope our readers’ selection of songs—and the stories behind their choices—will add to your preparations for once again welcoming the Christ Child into your life.

‘I’ll Be Home for Christmas’

Marilyn Caldwell’s favorite Christmas song, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” always takes her back to her childhood—a time of war when her brother served his country.

“This song reminds me of when I was 12 years old,” says Caldwell, a member of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville. “My brother had joined the Air Force after graduating from high school during World War II.

“His first Christmas away from home was a very sorrowful time for my mother. Approaching the holiday season was the first time this song was played on our radio. My mother sat with tears in her eyes, but with loving memories in her heart. It became my favorite song.”

‘The Little Drummer Boy’

Jamie Huber says it’s hard to choose a favorite Christmas song because so many “can stir up a variety of emotions in even the most stoic people.” Still, he chose “The Little Drummer Boy” for a special reason.

“Of course, it is a cute story of a little boy meeting his baby Savior,” says Huber, a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville. “Although with a bit more thought, one can see that like many children’s stories, this one too has a much deeper meaning.

“In a way, ‘The Little Drummer Boy’ is the story of what our own meeting with the King is meant to be. ‘Come, they told me ... A newborn King to see ...’ is a reflection of our own call to Jesus. Although we may feel ‘our finest gifts’ are not worthy to ‘lay before the King,’ we go to meet him anyway. No matter our situation, we are all called to meet him.

“The Little Drummer Boy had only one thing to give Jesus. In the true fashion of a child who only knows how to show love through simple acts, the little drummer boy ‘played for him.’ Matthew 18:3 instructs us to ‘Be like children.’

“The little drummer boy is our example. Like him, we give to Jesus our best. We do this not through extravagant gifts or extraordinary acts of charity. We do it simply. Being present with Christ, loving my family, and keeping him in my thoughts are simple ways I give to Jesus. I hope, if through these simple

acts, I humbly give my best to Jesus this season—or ‘play my best for him’—he will look down and ‘smile at me.’”

‘Indiana Christmas’

In his list of favorite Christmas songs, Sean Gallagher includes Gregorian chant hymns that “are more than a thousand



Sean Gallagher

years old.” Now, that list includes a new song that was recorded about 10 years ago—“Indiana Christmas” by the male *a capella* choir Straight No Chaser.

“Straight No Chaser created the song as a tribute to its beginnings at Indiana University in Bloomington,” notes Gallagher, a reporter for *The Criterion*. “It tells of a person who feels the call to return to Indiana, where Christmas will always be real.”

“I love this song because I love my home state and long at this special time of the year to be close to my friends and loved ones who live far away.

“That, in a special sense, includes my mom who died three years ago. She, who nurtured a deep love of music in me, comes to mind when I hear these poignant words from ‘Indiana Christmas’:

*‘And I remember those who are gone
Looking down on my home from above
Deep in December, it’s where I belong
Sharing the days with the ones who I love.’*”

‘O Come, O Come Emmanuel’

In his time as the director of the archdiocese’s Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, Matt Faley has gained a new perspective of the difference that the Advent season makes in preparing people for Christmas.

“We did not grow up as a family that dug deeply into the Advent season,” Faley recalls. “Like many families, we celebrated Christmas well but did not prepare well. It was more about buying gifts and family parties, and at times the real meaning of the season would get lost. Working in ministry has allowed me the opportunity to truly experience Advent each season.

“Just a few years ago, while preparing for our annual Advent retreat here in the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, I was struck so deeply by the song ‘O Come, O Come Emmanuel.’ It was like I heard the song for the first time. The lyrics are ones of great longing and great hope, and I felt just that. That year, I remember we closed our retreat with Mass and this song. It was so powerful.

“We sang this song with great zeal, and it echoed what I had felt leading up to that moment. It was a foretaste of heaven in a lot of ways. To this day, ‘O Come,

O Come Emmanuel’ remains on the top of my list of favorite Christmas songs.”

‘Joy to the World’

For Cathy Bloom, the joy of Christmas is connected to the joy she shares with her granddaughter for their favorite song.

“I love Christmas music,” says Bloom, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. “Over the years, different songs, different arrangements were my favorites. That all changed when my granddaughter Jacquelyn attended a Bible school class. She learned a fun preschool version of ‘Joy to the World.’ It quickly became her favorite song, and mine also. Driving a car looking in the rearview mirror and seeing a 3-year-old doing a car seat dance to ‘Joy to the World’ makes joy in the heart.

“A few years later, a playmate and Jacquelyn were talking, and the friend asked Jacquelyn what her favorite song was. The friend named a Britney Spears tune as her favorite. My granddaughter happily exclaimed ‘Joy to the World’!

“Now she is a 16-year-old who helps decorate for Christmas, and as one can imagine I have lots of decorations that say ‘Joy.’ Jacquelyn is happy to place them with love. We listen to Christmas music, and when ‘Joy to the World’ comes on the stereo we can sing together in great voice, ‘Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let Earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room.’ Yes, the Lord has room with Jacquelyn and I.”

‘Mary, Did You Know?’

As much as he appreciates sports, Bruce Scifres also savors Christmas songs, including the one that he considers the most meaningful to him—“Mary, Did You Know?”



Bruce Scifres

“My favorite rendition of this song would probably be by the *a capella* group Pentatonix,” says Scifres, executive director of the Catholic Youth Organization for the archdiocese.

“This song is powerful for me because it reflects on the significance of the birth of Jesus to Mary, a teenage Jewish girl. As my wife Jackie and I are blessed with four children of our own, I have always believed that God hand-picks each of our children for us, as special gifts from him.

“It is then our primary task as parents for the rest of our lives to guide our children as they make their life journey back to God.

“In this song, Mary could not have fully realized the significance of the birth of her baby boy, and that he would one day serve as the ‘guide’ for all of humanity on our life journeys back to God. This message, along with the



Tom Nichols, left, Angie Day and Michele Perkins of *Vox Sacra*, the archdiocese’s *schola cantorum*, sing on Dec. 6 during the Catholic Community Foundation’s “An Evening of Lights” at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. *Vox Sacra* performed at the event, held to honor the memory of loved ones during the Advent season. (Submitted photo by Kim Pohovey)

beautiful melody of the song, have always warmed my heart!"



Ever since growing up in Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, Gina Fleming has always looked forward to its Christmas concert.



Gina Fleming

"Under the direction of Jerry Craney for nearly 50 years, and now echoing through Beech Grove under Dr. Joe Chrisman's leadership, this concert always puts me in the Christmas spirit," says Fleming, the superintendent of

Catholic schools for the archdiocese.

She believes that Craney would consider Pentatonix's "Mary, Did You Know?" as worthy of being sung in the parish's concert.

"What a beautiful reminder that our King and Savior came into this world a vulnerable, precious gift from God so that we could witness God's love, mercy and joy with the hope of experiencing everlasting life with him! My favorite line is, 'This child that you delivered will soon deliver you.'"

'Angels We Have Heard on High'

For Kathryn Jacobi, "Angels We Have Heard on High" evokes cherished memories of her hometown, her parish and the school where a religious sister helped develop her love of music.

"I attended a tiny Catholic school in the very small community of Charlestown, in southern Indiana," Jacobi notes.

"People there were generally farmers, factory workers and a few professionals and business owners. We had one grocery store, one five-and-dime [store], one bank, two drug stores, a community high school and a plethora of churches. The only church that mattered to me, of course, was my parish, St. Michael.

"My life in the 1960s and early 1970s revolved around my parish and school. We were small enough that we had two grades in each classroom. My sister was a year younger than I was, so every other year we were in the same classroom. When I was in the sixth grade and my sister in the fifth, [Franciscan] Sister Sylvia Moeller started our Christmas choir. I loved it. I wasn't a particularly good singer, but I loved the anticipation and rehearsals that would lead to a triumphant Midnight Mass.

"Sister Sylvia—bless her—put her heart and soul in making us singers. We could have been in a big city cathedral—and in my imagination we were—our voices soaring up into some architectural splendor. But in fact, we were in a space that had once served as a gym. It was the only church I knew. It was my church and I never thought of it as anything less than sacred.

"My favorite carol was 'Angels We Have Heard on High.' There was something so magisterial about that carol. We belted it out in two-part harmony.

"During my seventh-grade year, I was learning how to play the piano. During that Christmas performance, I actually played our little electric organ, accompanying my classmates, playing all the Christmas carols. But it was 'Angels We Have Heard on High' that always made my heart soar while I played.

"And now, as an older adult, and a member of St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville—a beautiful, traditional church with a soaring ceiling, beautiful Italian marble statues—when we sing that song at Mass during the Christmas season, I harken back to my junior high years and Sister Sylvia.

"I never quite appreciated her then, an older nun in her new shorter black habit and sandals, so intent on making us into a real choir ... our smiling parents in the pews, and all my classmates belting out those carols, especially the one carol that was our magnus opus: 'Angels We Have Heard on High.'"

'I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day'

Whenever Charlotte Bauer hears "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," she is always moved by how "its haunting lyrics of despair" set the stage for "the hope and promise that follows."

It's the hope and promise that God offers people, says Bauer, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

"God is always with us if we only listen," she says. "God loves us and wants us to live in peace with each other. I am sure God sheds a few tears when he sees the evil that people do, and he only hopes they will turn to him and ask for forgiveness, as he loves us and wants only good things for us."

Bauer says her favorite rendition of the carol is performed during the annual Christmas concert at St. Mark.

"It has been sung by Ben Briggeman under the direction of our choir director, Andy Eagan. I always have tears in my eyes, but my heart swells with hope at the end."

'O Holy Night'

The tears still come for Diane Buegler when she hears "O Holy Night," reminding her of her grandmother.

"When I was a child, my grandparents would spend Christmas Eve with my family," recalls Buegler, a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis. "One Christmas when I was 7, we were waiting to open presents after dinner. I went into the living room to ask my grandmother something. I can still see her perched on the end of our sofa, gazing intently at our Christmas tree, softly singing along to 'O Holy Night' which my father had playing on the stereo.

"I will never forget the look on her face as she sat there singing with the tree lights reflecting off of her. Pure contentment and love. It was as if she was singing to the Christmas child. As I started to interrupt, my father gently told me to wait a minute, that this was my *Busia's* [Polish for Grandma] favorite song.

"That was 50 years ago. 'O Holy Night' is my favorite Christmas song, and I still get teary eyed every time I hear it, thinking of my *Busia* and that special Christmas memory I have of her."



When Norb Schott hears "O Holy Night," the song takes him back to his past and midnight Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Indianapolis.

Once again, he sees the stars and the angels on the church ceiling, hears the organ soaring, and smiles as he watches "my dearest mother Irene" singing, "Fall on your knees! O hear the angels voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born!"

"Oh, yes, I could hear those angelic choruses and praise on the lips of children as the Christ Child is once again amidst us," recalls Schott, now a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle.

"The night of joy, the chorus of voices, the praise of the people, and once again 'O Holy Night' beams from mouths of folk needing a savior, welcoming the newborn King.

"How could I not remember 'O Holy Night' that announced a new day, a new beginning, a time of beauty—the memory of Christmas Midnight Mass at Sacred Heart? The year? Somewhere in childhood, but adolescence and adulthood, too. A forever joy. That hymn of praise and holiness always new in our hearts!"



Gina Marchino believes that "O Holy Night" captures the essence of the birth of Christ.

"When I hear this beautiful hymn, I am instantly transported to the night of Christ's birth," says Marchino, a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. "The line 'fall on your knees' nearly brings me to tears to think a tiny newborn baby would one day be worshipped the world over and be our Savior."



The Holy Family is seen in a Nativity scene made of sand in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 10. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

'Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella'

While Dan Bach first sang "Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" as a sixth-grade student in 1948, it remains his favorite Christmas carol.

"Our choir director, Mr. Fehring, taught us how to sing 'Jeanette, Isabella,' telling us to pretend we were Prancer prancing on tip toes and floating very quietly house to house, and announcing in a whisper, 'It is Jesus, good folks of the village, Jesus is born.'"

"Hush, it is very early in the morning. Don't wake him up. Jesus will cry, and Mary is tired. So sing softly."

A member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, Bach says this French Christmas carol reminds him about being silent in Christ's presence. Some of the lyrics also remind him of the beautiful scene between mother and infant, and the beautiful gift God has given to the world.

Bach closes his reflection about his favorite carol with these lyrics from the song: "Ah, Ah, beautiful is the mother! Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her Son!"

'Silent Night'

Whenever Debbie Bruce hears "Silent Night," she thinks of the night when her father was dying.

"The screams awoke me from a sound sleep. I was puzzled that I was able to sleep so well as my father was dying," recalls Bruce, a member of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville. "The night caregiver explained that Dad was experiencing 'sundowners syndrome,' a condition characterized by confusion and restlessness. He suggested talking softly to Dad, and when that didn't work, singing.

"I tried many songs we used to sing with Dad as children, even 'Daddy's Little Girl,' his song to me. No luck. He loved Christmas and made it so much fun for the three of us kids. Singing Christmas songs was a huge part of the celebration. I quietly sang 'Silent Night.' Slowly, slowly, he calmed, relaxed, and slept.

"That was almost 13 years ago. I cry every time I hear or sing 'Silent Night,' but I am thankful for the comfort of the beautiful melody and the lyrics of my favorite Christmas song."



For Maria Cossell, hearing "Silent Night" lets her imagine what it would be like to be part of that first Christmas.

"As I walk toward the Holy Family, I see the Savior of the universe resting in the arms of his mother," notes Cossell, a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. "I am in awe of how Mary motions for me to come to her. Our heavenly mother reaches out her arms and invites me to hold our Lord. As Christ is laid in my arms a warmth fills my being.

"As I gaze on this little baby, I notice my breathing begins to slow down. Peace fills my being as I am reminded once again that God became human for me. He came to show me and invite me to encounter his Divine love and unending

mercy. He is the one who longs to hold me and give me peace the world cannot give.

"As the song comes to an end, I am reminded of Mary's role with my encounter with Christ. She is a beacon of light in the midst of the darkness that guides my way to the Lord. This Advent season, may the Blessed Mother guide us all closer to her son."



During a season that he believes is too often marked by consumerism and chaotic noise," Thomas Rillo finds comfort in the soothing music and lyrics of "Silent Night."

"I imagine a silent world where the only sounds are the muffled sounds of human activity and the sounds originating in nature," notes Rillo, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington.

"Silence is golden, and it has a sound that is found in a world at peace. For silence is fueled by peaceful conditions. And so it was when the shepherds tended their sheep in Bethlehem. Silence was all about them, and the sound of the soft wind, the rustling of grass, the munching of the sheep, the soft-spoken words of the shepherds."

For Rillo, it all adds up to a reminder of "the true meaning of Christmas."

"It is the birth of Christ and not feeding at the trough of frenzied shopping at the mall or the Internet. The song reminds me to be cognizant of the true focus of Christmas, and it certainly is not on the materialistic consumerism."

'Peace, Peace/Silent Night'

One of the great gifts of music is its ability to comfort us in times of heartbreak and sadness. Annette "Mickey" Lentz has felt that comfort in two



Annette "Mickey" Lentz

Christmas songs, "Silent Night" and another version of that favorite called, "Peace, Peace/Silent Night."

"My mom died when I was a 16-year-old teenager," recalls Lentz, chancellor of the archdiocese. "She passed on Christmas Day in 1957—61 years ago. I remember so clearly attending Midnight Mass with my family, where of course many hymns were sung. When we returned home, Mom had passed on. Though I remember sadness, I felt comfort in the lyrics of 'Silent Night.' It brought peace to all of us."

She's found that same comfort in "Peace, Peace/Silent Night," especially in these lyrics:

*"This is a time for joy
This is a time for love
Now let us all sing together
Of peace, peace, peace on Earth."*

"Nothing comforts me more," Lentz notes. "May all enjoy a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!"



A Christmas display is seen on Dec. 2 at a home in Bad Tatzmannsdorf, Austria. (CNS photo/Leonhard Foeger, Reuters)



Amanda Sidebottom, Elizabeth Merrill, Grace Bernardo and Clare Maloney, members of the Choir of the Church of Our Saviour in New York City, record music at the church in October for "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding," a CD of sacred Advent and Christmas music. (CNS photo/Harold Levine, courtesy Church of Our Saviour)

CHRISTMAS SONGS

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'Christmas Eve/Sarajevo'

Mark Hummer has a list of Christmas songs that he associates with different members of his extended family through the years. "Christmas Eve/Sarajevo" by Trans-Siberian Orchestra reminds him of the larger families that have been a part of his Christmas memories.

"When I hear 'Christmas Eve Sarajevo' by Trans-Siberian Orchestra, I think of the great times at the annual Cardinal Ritter [Jr./Sr.] High School Christmas concert and how the night ends with an old-fashioned Christmas sing-along," notes Hummer, a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

"And at my hometown parish of St. Rita in Holly, Michigan, we always had a big community Christmas sing-along. It was quite a sight for a small town—like a throwback to a Victorian Christmas as the town is decked out in a theme of Dickens Days."

'Lulaize-Jezuniu' ('Lullaby to Jesus')

Mary Bednarek realizes that her favorite Christmas song isn't well known in the United States, except among Polish-American communities.

"The carol is 'Lulaize-Jezuniu, which can be translated 'Lullaby to Little Jesus' or 'Hush Little Jesus.' It's a very soft, gentle song, a true lullaby," says Bednarek, a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville who grew up in a Polish-American community in northwest Indiana.

"The song is said to date from the 13th century, and some of the lyrics reflect the custom of rocking the figure of the Baby Jesus during celebrations of Nativity scenes. Not only did we sing this carol at home, but also at midnight Mass."

'The Christmas Song'

Certain Christmas songs have a way of reminding people of the special individuals who have touched their lives. So it is for Brad Burden, a teacher and the girls' basketball coach at Our Lady of

Providence High School in Clarksville.

"I grew up listening to big band songs with my grandfather who recently just passed away," Burden notes. "Nat King Cole was one of his favorites, and 'The Christmas Song' was his and remains my favorite Christmas song."

Burden especially appreciates these lyrics:

*"And so I'm offering this simple phrase
To kids from one to ninety-two
Although it's been said many times,
many ways
Merry Christmas to you."*

"It sums up what Christmas is all about—to stay young at heart and have the joy of youth for our Savior."

(We'd like to thank all of our readers for sharing their favorite Christmas songs. We received such an abundance of responses for the songs "Silent Night" and "O Holy Night" that we had to limit the number of reflections we received about them. To everyone who shared a song—and to all our readers—may the blessings of the Christmas season be yours through the upcoming year.) †



Pope celebrates birthday with clients of Vatican pediatric clinic



Pope Francis is presented with a cake on the eve of his 82nd birthday during a Dec. 16 audience with children and families from the Santa Marta Dispensary, a Vatican charity that offers special help to mothers and children in need. (CNS photo/Giuseppe Lami, EPA)

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—If the Holy Family lived in Rome and the baby Jesus had a cold or flu, Mary and Joseph certainly would bring him to the Vatican pediatric clinic for help, Pope Francis said.

The Vatican's St. Martha Dispensary was founded in 1922 and, staffed by volunteers, it provides medical care and basic necessities to any child in need; most of the clients are immigrants.

Dozens of children, their parents and the clinic volunteers anticipated Pope Francis' 82nd birthday, singing for him and giving him a large cake on Dec. 16. His birthday was the next day.

"I wish you all a merry Christmas, a good holy Christmas, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do. Really," the pope said. "And I

also hope that no one gets indigestion from a cake that big. Thank you!"

In brief comments to the women religious who run the clinic and to the doctors and others who volunteer there, Pope Francis said, "Working with children isn't easy, but they teach us much.

"They taught me something: to understand the reality of life, you must lower yourself, like you bend down to kiss a child. They teach us this," he said. "The proud and haughty cannot understand life because they are not capable of lowering themselves."

Everyone who works at the clinic gives children something, the pope said. "But they give us this proclamation, this teaching: bow down, be humble and you will learn to understand life and understand people." †

True Christmas celebrates Jesus, who is tender, humble, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With Christmas just over a week away, visitors came to St. Peter's Square with their Baby Jesus figurines for a traditional blessing by the pope.

Many children came with small figurines for their family Nativity scene, others held delicate sculptures, and one group set a giant statue of the Baby Jesus on top of stacks of hay bales. "All the joy in a crib," said the banner in front of the display.

Blessing the statues after reciting the *Angelus* prayer on Dec. 16, Pope Francis told the little ones, "Dear children, may you feel wonder when you gather in your homes in prayer before the Nativity, gazing at Baby Jesus."

To see God is to feel amazement, "wonder at the great mystery of God made man. And the Holy Spirit will put humility, tenderness and the goodness of Jesus in your hearts," he said.

"Jesus is good, Jesus is tender, Jesus is humble. This is the real Christmas!" he said.

Before praying the *Angelus* on what is known as *Gaudete* (Rejoice) Sunday, the pope explained why the Church is invited to rejoice.

Jesus, the Emmanuel, is "God with us," and his presence is the source of joy, Pope Francis said. He came not to punish but to forgive, and this leads people to feel joyful and full of praise.

God wants to redeem and save those whom he loves, the pope said, underlining that God's love is "incessant" and tender like a father's love for his child.

Just as Mary was called to welcome and bring the Christ child into the world, people today are also called to welcome the Gospel so that it can "become flesh" and come into the world in people's actual lives.

People of faith should know they need not be anxious or feel despair, but need to "present to God our requests, our needs, our concerns with prayers and supplications."

"The awareness that when in difficulty we can always turn to the Lord, and that

he never rejects our invocations, is a great reason for joy," he said.

There are no worries or fears that can ever "take away from us the serenity that comes from knowing that God always lovingly guides our lives," the pope said. "Even in the midst of problems and suffering, this certainty nourishes hope and courage."

After reciting the prayer, the pope also highlighted the adoption on Dec. 10 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. He expressed his hope that the agreement would facilitate "responsibility, solidarity and compassion toward those who, for various reasons, have left their country." †

Eleven Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg celebrate jubilees

Criterion staff report

Eleven members of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg celebrated jubilees in 2018. One sister marked 75 years with the order, six marked 70 years, three marked 60 years and one marked 50 years.

75-year jubilee

Sister Patty (formerly Sister M. Suzanne) Campbell served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Indianapolis



Sr. Patty Campbell, O.S.F.

at the former Holy Rosary School, St. Lawrence School and Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, and in Franklin County as parish life coordinator at the former St. Mary-of-the-Rock Parish.

At the motherhouse, she has ministered in health care, pastoral care, as a massage therapist and as a retreat and spiritual director.

Sister Patty has also served in Ohio and Oklahoma.

She currently resides at the motherhouse in St. Clare Hall and continues in motherhouse ministry.

70-year jubilees

Sister Ruth (formerly Sister Rose Michael) Breig served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Batesville at St. Louis School; in Beech Grove at Holy Name of Jesus School; in Indianapolis at Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Christopher, St. Pius X, St. Simon and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) schools; in New Albany at the former St. Mary School; and in Rushville at St. Mary School.

At the motherhouse, she served as file clerk in the office of human resources.

Sister Ruth also served in Ohio.

She currently resides at the motherhouse in St. Clare Hall and ministers by prayer and presence.

Sister Marie Cecile DiTullio served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Clinton at the former Sacred Heart School; in Indianapolis at St. Lawrence and Our Lady of Lourdes schools; and in Morris at the former St. Anthony of Padua School.

At the motherhouse, she has ministered as a receptionist, phone operator and driver.

Sister Marie Cecile also served in the Diocese of Evansville, Ind., and in Florida, Missouri and Ohio.

She currently continues in motherhouse ministry.

Sister Rose (formerly Sister James Ellen) O'Brien served in the Evansville Diocese and in Illinois, Missouri, Ohio and in Mexico.

Sister Rose currently resides at the motherhouse and continues to minister there.

Sister Jean Michael Saunry served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Bedford at St. Vincent de Paul School; in Connersville at St. Gabriel School; in Indianapolis at the former Holy Trinity School; and at the former Holy Family School in Oldenburg.

At the motherhouse, she has served in the communications office, the heritage room and as a phone operator.

Sister Jean Michael has also served in Illinois, Missouri, Ohio and as a missionary in Papua New Guinea.

She currently continues in motherhouse ministry.

Sister Therese (formerly Sister M. Kenneth) Tackett served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Beech Grove at Holy Name of Jesus School; in Indianapolis at the former St. Francis de

Sales School; and as a counselor at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

At the motherhouse, she served as a team member in the Sisters of St. Francis office of personnel services and as director of life development.

Sister Therese also served in the Evansville Diocese and in Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

She currently continues in motherhouse ministry.

Sister Rita (formerly Sister Mary Anselm) Vukovic served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Indianapolis at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Michael the Archangel schools, Scecina High School and the former St. Mary Academy.

She also served in Ohio.

Sister Rita currently resides in St. Clare Hall at the motherhouse and ministers by prayer and presence.

60-year jubilees

Sister Laurina (formerly Sister Mary Clara) Schneider, a native of Batesville, served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Aurora at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception School; in Greensburg at St. Mary School; in Indianapolis at St. Mark the Evangelist and the former St. Rita schools; in Richmond at the former St. Mary School (now St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School); in Rushville at St. Mary School; and in Shelbyville at St. Joseph School.

At the motherhouse, she has worked as cosmetologist and activity director.

Sister Laurina also served in Kentucky, Ohio and in Mexico.

She currently resides at the motherhouse and volunteers in the wellness center.

Sister Joan (formerly Sister Mary Verna) Schwake a native of North Vernon, served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Greensburg at St. Mary School and in Indianapolis at the former Holy Trinity School. She also served in Indianapolis as pastoral associate at St. Joan of Arc Parish.

Sister Joan also ministered in the Evansville Diocese, and in Illinois and Ohio.

She currently resides at the motherhouse and is active in motherhouse ministry.

Sister Mary Ann (formerly Sister M. Lenore) Stoffregen, a native of Charlestown, served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Beech Grove at Holy Name of Jesus School; in Indianapolis at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School; and in Oldenburg at the Oldenburg Academy.

She served at the motherhouse as vocation director and counselor on the leadership team.

Sister Mary Ann also served in the Evansville Diocese and in Montana.

She currently resides at the motherhouse, where she ministers in the archives.

50-year jubilee

Sister Bernice Stenger, a native of St. Leon, served in the archdiocese as a teacher in Batesville at St. Louis School, and in Indianapolis at St. Lawrence School.



Sr. Bernice Stenger, O.S.F.

At the motherhouse, she has served as a nurse aide, director of adjustment/enrichment for senior sisters, and as a counselor on the

leadership team.

Sister Bernice has also served in Ohio.

She currently resides at the motherhouse and serves as pre-retirement/retirement transition minister. †



Franciscan Sisters Mary Ann Stoffregen, left, Laurina Schneider and Joan Schwake smile as they celebrate 60 years as religious with the Oldenburg order. (Submitted photo)



Six Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg pose for a group photo to celebrate the 70th anniversary of being vowed religious. They are Franciscan Sisters Therese Tackett, seated at left, Rita Vukovic and Ruth Breig, and, standing at left, Sisters Marie Cecile DiTullio, Rose O'Brien and Jean Michael Saunry. (Submitted photo)

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

February 15, 2019, issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married by a Catholic priest or deacon between Jan. 30 and July 31, 2019, or who were married between July 31, 2018, and Jan. 30, 2019, and did not have their engagement announced in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 15 Spring Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at www.archindy.org/criterion/local/forms3/wedding-form.html.

E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple's faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: cclark@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopy photos. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 25, 2016. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Cindy Clark, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
Deadline with photos: Friday, Jan. 25, 2019, at 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed	<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo		<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture
Signature of person furnishing information		Relationship	Daytime Phone

PROVIDENCE

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1965-68), and as the principal at St. Jude School (1978-2010); in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former St. Ann School (1961-65); and in Greenwood as a teacher and principal at Our Lady of the Greenwood School (1968-78). She has also ministered in Illinois and Massachusetts.

Currently, she ministers in archdiocesan archives and outreach ministries in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

Sister Regina Ann Lynch, a native of Indianapolis, entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Greenwood as a teacher at Our Lady of the Greenwood School (1955-58); in Terre Haute as a teacher at St. Patrick School (1958-60); in Sellersburg as a teacher at St. John Paul II School (1966-67); in Indianapolis as volunteer at St. Anthony Parish (2002-06); and in Beech Grove as a nurse's assistant and volunteer at the St. Paul Hermitage (1996-2002). She has also ministered in Indiana in the Evansville Diocese, and in Illinois and North Carolina.

Currently, she ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Regis McNulty, a native of Chelsea, Mass., entered the congregation on Feb. 11, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's



Sr. Regis McNulty, S.P.

degree in education, from Boston University with a master's degree in educational psychology, and from Antioch University with a master's degree in counseling psychology.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former St. Ann School (1954-55), and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as a volunteer and an

addictions consultant at Providence Health Care (2013-14). She has also ministered in Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina and New Hampshire.

Currently, she ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Grace Marie Meehan, a native of Chicago, Ill., entered the congregation on Jan. 7, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education, and from Illinois Eastern Community College with an associate of science degree in nursing.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Agnes Academy (1950-51); in Greenwood as a teacher and principal at Our Lady of the Greenwood School (1959-68); in Richmond as a teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (1968-69); in Greenfield as a teacher and principal at St. Michael School (1969-72); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in

various capacities. She has also ministered in California, Illinois and Oklahoma.

Currently, she ministers in health care in Rolling Meadows, Ill.

Sister Joan Mary Schaefer, a native of Cicero, Ill., entered the congregation on July 22, 1948, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1956. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in New Castle as a teacher at the former St. Ann School (1951-53); in Richmond as a teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (1954-55); and in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. John Academy (1956-59). She has also ministered in Illinois, Massachusetts and Missouri.

Currently, she ministers in residential services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Rita Ann (formerly Sister Rose Annette) Wade, entered the congregation on Jan. 7, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a master's degree in elementary education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered in Indianapolis as a teacher at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ School (1955-57), at Holy Cross Central School (1964-66 and 1969-71), at St. Luke the Evangelist School (1971-76), and as a chaplain in the pastoral care department at St. Vincent Hospital (1977-99). She has also ministered in Illinois and Washington, D.C.

Currently, she ministers as co-director of Miracle Place in Indianapolis.

60-year jubilarians

Sister Brigid Ann Bonner, a native of Whiting, Ind., entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education and from the University of Louisville with a master's degree in social work.

In the archdiocese, she ministered as a teacher in Greenwood at Our Lady of the Greenwood School (1967-69); in Indianapolis at the former St. James School (1970-71) and St. Philip Neri School (1977-79); and as a social worker/chaplain in New Albany at Providence Retirement Home (1982-91). She has also ministered in Illinois, Kansas and Kentucky.

Currently, she ministers for the homeless at the St. Vincent DePaul Center in Louisville.

Sister Donna Butler, a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a master's degree in education.

In the archdiocese, she ministered as a teacher in Terre Haute at the former St. Ann School (1961-62 and 1975-78), and as a religion coordinator/parish assistant at the former St. Ann Parish (1978-79); in New Albany as a teacher at the former Holy Trinity School (1964-68); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Currently, she ministers as a social justice advocate.

Sister Patricia Fillenwarth, a native of Indianapolis, entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958. She professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, from Indiana State University with a master's degree in education, and from Northeastern

Illinois University with a master's degree in community and family counseling.

In the archdiocese, she ministered as a teacher in New Albany at Holy Family School (1976). She also ministered in Illinois, Washington, D.C. and Arequipa, Peru.

Currently, she ministers as a counselor in the Chicago area.

Sister Linda (formerly Sister Marie Theodore) Kaliker, a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958. She professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education, and from Indiana University in Bloomington with a master's degree in elementary education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a teacher in Indianapolis at the former St. Ann School (1962-64) and at Holy Spirit School (1974-81), and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in Illinois.

Currently, she ministers in prayer.

Sister Katherine Manley, a native of Indianapolis, entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in pastoral theology, while also earning a master's degree in special education from Indiana University in Bloomington.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a teacher in Terre Haute at the former St. Margaret Mary School (1961-62), and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as the administrator of Owens Hall (1989-93). She has also ministered in California and Illinois.

Currently, she ministers in departmental ministry at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Gloria Memering, a native of Vincennes, Ind., entered the congregation on Jan. 6, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1965. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in music education, and from Indiana State University with a master's degree in music education.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a teacher in Sellersburg at St. John Paul II School (1962-66); and in Terre Haute as a teacher at the former St. Benedict School (1967-70) and the former St. Margaret Mary School (1967-76); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities. She has also ministered in North Carolina.

Currently, she ministers as a receptionist at Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, and as a music coordinator at Providence Health Care, both at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Rosemary Schmalz, a native of Evansville, Ind., entered the congregation on July 22, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1966. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, as well as a master's degree in pastoral theology. She also earned a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in mathematics education from Florida State University. Sister Rosemary also has a master's degree in culture/creation spirituality from Holy Names University in Oakland, Calif.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a teacher in Indianapolis at St. Philip Neri School (1963-64); as a research assistant in Indianapolis for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (2002-06); and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in various capacities, including as a teacher at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (1972-78 and 1979-81). She has also ministered in Illinois, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Currently, she ministers as the coordinator of the office of records at the congregation.

Sister Rosemary Ward, a native of Chicago, Ill., entered the congregation on July 22, 1958, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1966. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor's degree in biology, and from the University of North Dakota with a master's degree in biology.

In the archdiocese, she has ministered as a registrar at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (1961-66). She has also ministered in Illinois.

Currently, she ministers as a peace and justice advocate and coordinator of an English as a Second Language site in Bolingbrook, Ill. †



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REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point**
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- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

Jesus' birth shows that God is always close to his people

By David Gibson

We know what kind of person the infant Jesus, born on the first Christmas, would be in adult life: someone known for drawing near to others, and walking with them in their actual lives.

The Gospel of St. Luke shows the resurrected Jesus doing precisely that. He joins two disciples walking along a road toward the village of Emmaus near Jerusalem in the days after his passion, disciples troubled by what had happened and left with many unanswered questions.

"It happened that while [the two] were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them," though they did not at first recognize him, Luke says (Lk 24:15-16).

The experience of these disciples reveals that Jesus, after the death and resurrection, is not absent. Instead, he remains astonishingly active in this world. A name attached in Scripture to the newborn Jesus—Emmanuel—makes the point emphatically.

It may seem a great distance in time from Jesus' birth to his crucifixion and resurrection, but a consistent message joins these diverse periods. The birth of Jesus reveals that God is not resting quietly in a far-off hideaway, but is present and involved wherever human lives unfold, no matter how complicated or turbulent life's events may be.

The Gospel of St. Matthew, speaking of the befuddling issues Mary and Joseph confronted after he learned of her pregnancy before their marriage was finalized, comments:

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us'' (Mt 1:22-23).

The message in the name Emmanuel is not incidental for Christians today, nor was it an inconsequential, passing reference in Matthew's Gospel. As the New American Bible observes in a note, "For the Christian, the Incarnation is the ultimate expression of God's willingness to 'be with us,' truly to join with us in the flesh, that is.



A woman holds a figurine of the Christ Child during a Mass in La Paz, Bolivia. Jesus' birth at Christmas shows that God is closely involved in the lives of his people. (CNS photo/David Mercado, Reuters)

In fact, the Gospel of Matthew both begins and ends with the message that God is with us. "Behold, I am with you always until the end of the age," the resurrected Lord announces in the Gospel's final words (Mt 28:20).

The Christmas message that God is with us is a point of much more than passing interest for contemporary

Christian thinkers. Some have been at pains to explain how God could be present in the midst of our messy, and not infrequently messed-up, world. During life's most painful, complicated or difficult times, some might doubt the truth of this message.

There are times when some feel as if God is absent and uninvolved with their lives, especially when their best-laid plans fail or when their hopes wither after running into a brick wall. But is it safe to assume that God can be found only where human lives unfold in utterly peaceful and well-balanced ways—that God only awaits our human gaze under the least turbulent of circumstances?

No doubt about it, silence supports prayer and the quest for God. Surely that does not imply, though, that God is not present, is not walking with people who are trying to cope with the chaos of human living and, often enough, not feeling good about it.

Curious believers want to know not just who or what God is, but what God does, how God acts. So to affirm, as the name Emmanuel does, that God is with us is to make a huge, far-reaching statement about the kind of God Christians reverence and rely upon.

This is not "a harsh, isolated God, but the God of Jesus Christ, the one through whom we encounter" God's "tender, loving kindness," Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin commented earlier this year. He said, "The harshness of our world needs that message."

But if the Christmas message that Jesus is Emmanuel constitutes a stunning statement about the presence of the divine, it also clarifies what kinds of actions ought to punctuate his followers' lives.

"In Jesus, God himself becomes Emmanuel, God-with-us, the God who

'The birth of Jesus reveals that God is not resting quietly in a far-off hideaway, but is present and involved wherever human lives unfold, no matter how complicated or turbulent life's events may be.'

walks alongside us, who gets involved in our lives, in our homes, in the midst of our 'pots and pans,' as St. Teresa [of Avila] liked to say," Pope Francis remarked in a September 2015 homily in New York's Madison Square Garden.

"Jesus still walks our streets," and he "is part of the lives of his people," the pope observed. Remaining aware of this, he suggested, changes us and changes how we regard others.

So the Christmas message prompts Jesus' followers to learn to recognize his presence in others.

Pope Francis exhorted those he addressed in New York to structure their lives in light of this message. Go out into the city, he urged, and look for the face of Jesus in poor and suffering people. "Go out and meet others where they really are, not where we think they should be."

The pope said, "Go out to others and share the good news that God our Father walks at our side."

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



Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in this detail view of the painting of Our Lady of Brezje at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Ken Ogorek

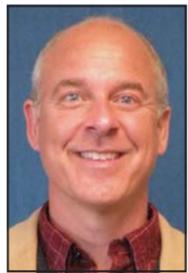
Put your life of faith at the heart of New Year's resolutions

A co-worker teases me, "You have a habit of giving unsolicited advice." On that note ...

Here are some goals to consider for 2019. If one doesn't fit, move on to the next. (More unsolicited advice.)

Mass

If you've not yet developed the habit of getting to Mass each and every Sunday and holy day of obligation



(or the evening before) make 2019 the year you take this important step. Remember—we don't go to Mass for God's sake. Rather, he commands this of us because he loves us, knows what's best for us and wants

us to be happy. Liturgy can vary in quality, but we always get something out of Mass when we participate fully, consciously and actively.

Penance

Try celebrating the sacrament of penance the first Saturday of every month. Remember that confession doesn't just address sins we've committed; it also helps us to avoid sin in the future. Even

if you miss a first Saturday, you can seek the sacrament of reconciliation shortly after that, at another time that works for you. A result is that you'll benefit from the grace of this sacrament much more than you would have with a maybe once-a-year approach.

Life

Make 2019 the year you commit to understanding, appreciating and practicing the virtue of openness to new life. A great place to start is reading and reflecting on a brief, beautiful letter by recently canonized Pope St. Paul VI. This document, whose 50th anniversary we just observed, is called "On Human Life" and can be found easily on the Vatican website (vatican.va) with a very helpful page devoted to it on uscbb.org as well.

Materialism

"The best things in life are free," goes the saying. And while material goods are not evil in themselves, we can have a tendency to let them dominate our lives at the expense of relationships, spiritual priorities and openness to new life. Material goods are important and serve helpful purposes; an overemphasis on them degenerates in to consumerism, distorted priorities and materialism.

Vocation

Many well-meaning parents, grandparents, godparents etc. ask young people, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Resolve to tweak the conversation along these lines: "God has a plan for your life. How can I help you discern whether God is calling you to marriage and family life, ordained ministry, consecrated life or remaining single for a special, God-focused reason?" Let's put our plans for young people aside in favor of honestly pursuing God's holy and perfect will for each young person we know.

If more of us attended Mass faithfully, celebrated the sacrament of penance regularly, were as open to new life as we should be, focused more on relationships than possessions and helped our young people discern honestly God's plan for their life rather than pressuring them to fulfill our vision of what their adult life should look like, our families and Church would look different in some positive ways.

Let's move the ball forward on these areas in 2019. That's the best advice I have at this moment—even if you didn't ask for it!

(Ken Ogorek is catechetical director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Christ's self-giving love began to be revealed at Christmas

On Dec. 8, 19 Catholic men and women who died for their faith between 1995-96 during a civil war in Algeria in northern Africa were declared blessed.



This is the final step before declaring them saints in the Church.

It occurred in a Mass celebrated in Oran, Algeria—the first beatification ceremony in a predominantly Muslim country.

Among these martyrs were seven Trappist monks who lived in a monastery in the Algerian village of Tibhirine. On March 26, 1996, Islamist militants took the monks from their monastery and beheaded them.

The award-winning 2010 French film, *Of Gods and Men*, powerfully told the beautiful story of the monks.

Although they had long known that their lives were in danger, they declined protection offered by the Algerian army, saying that hiding behind weapons conflicted with their dedication to a life of peace.

French government officials pleaded with the French monks to leave Algeria for their home country. Again they refused, noting that they were called to a life of loving Christian witness in Tibhirine, serving the needs of their Muslim neighbors.

Sure enough, militants opposed to the presence of Christians in Algeria eventually came and took the monks away to their deaths. Now 22 years later, the Church has declared them to be martyrs for the Gospel and one with God and all the saints and angels in heaven.

According to the wisdom of the world, the martyrs of Tibhirine were fools to reject the protection and means of escape offered them.

Seen through the eyes of faith, they are men who loved the Prince of Peace, following in the footsteps of him who did not resist the violent men who cruelly tortured him and nailed him to a cross. It was love of their neighbors—their Muslim neighbors whom they served—that moved them to stay where they were, despite the violence and terror around them.

Jesus said at the Last Supper that "no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13). He fully embodied this love the following day when he freely died for the redemption of the world.

The love that was fully revealed on Good Friday, though, began its public expression at his birth at Christmas, which we will celebrate next week. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—he through whom the entire universe was created—chose to be born into poverty as a helpless baby.

Laying down one's life as Jesus did in being born in Bethlehem, and as the martyrs of Tibhirine did in dying for the Gospel, may seem far removed from the life of families here and now. But it is not.

When parents put the needs of their family before their own desires and preferences, which is at the heart of their God-given vocation, they lay down their lives out of love for their spouses and children.

Parents are given many opportunities every day to lay down their lives in this way. And when, with the help of God's grace, they take those opportunities, they teach their children to do the same.

Now I know full well that in my 16 years as a father, I've failed many times to lay down my life out of love for my family. And yet, my faith in Christ keeps strong my hope that I will be able to do this better tomorrow than I did today.

With the help, example and prayers of the martyrs of Tibhirine, may all families at this Christmas time grow in this divine, self-sacrificial love. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity a chance for us to 'be one'

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) is annually celebrated on Jan. 18-25. This period is bracketed by the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter and the Conversion of St. Paul. This "octave" (eight days) offers an intense time for prayer "that all may be one."



First Friends Meeting, 3030 Kessler Boulevard East Drive, in Indianapolis, will host the Christian community of greater Indianapolis for our annual WPCU worship service at 6 p.m. on Jan. 20. A

reception will follow. All are welcome.

Each year, the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches choose a region of the world whose Christian leaders are invited to prayerfully prepare a prayer service.

Special care is taken in choosing the Scripture passages, symbols, gestures and songs reflective of the region's history and culture. But these must be universal enough to be used in other regions of the world.

This year's prayer service was prepared by a committee from Indonesia. The committee was comprised of representatives of the Communion of

Churches in Indonesia and the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

The planners chose the Book of Deuteronomy 16:11-20, especially verse 20, "Justice and only justice you shall pursue" as the scriptural motif.

The service was prepared by Christians from Indonesia. Eighty-six percent of the population of the 17,000 islands are Muslim; 10 percent are Christians of various traditions.

As noted in the introduction of the WPCU packet for 2019, there are "1,340 different ethnic groups and over 740 local languages, and yet, it is united in its plurality by one national language—Bahasa Indonesia."

The nation is founded on five principles called "Pancasila." Those principles are: 1) belief in the one and only God; 2) just and civilized humanity; 3) the unity of Indonesia; 4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives; and 5) social justice for all people of Indonesia.

The country's national motto is "Unity in Diversity."

Our own experience knows that such a harmony could be fragile. And it is.

The enormous pressures of decades of economic growth built on competition are the antithesis of the historic Indonesian principle of "goton royong," or "live in

solidarity and by collaboration."

Corruption in politics and business undermine justice and the implementation of law. The rich are getting richer, the poor, poorer. The richness of resources belies the number of people living in poverty. And ethnic and religious groups are too often associated with the rich or the poor.

The Christian communities which participated in preparing the 2019 prayer service were keenly aware of the lived reality of their nation. They decided to fashion the prayer to join "in common concern and common response to an unjust reality.

"Confronted by these injustices, we are obliged, as Christians, to examine the ways in which we are complicit," they wrote. "Only by heeding Jesus' prayer 'that they all may be one' can we witness to living unity in diversity. It is through our unity in Christ that we will be able to combat injustice and serve the needs of its victims."

Come join Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and the leaders of many of our local Christian denominations for this prayer service.

Let us be as one in prayer, that "all may be one."

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism. He is pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Indianapolis.) †

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

Live Nativity makes Jesus come alive and offers new perspective

"Beat this!" Lynn, 9, held a French fry aloft.

Jenna, 6, rummaging through her Happy Meal, dangled a competitor.

"Nope," Lynn said. "This one's longer." Laughing, they gobbled the food.



My husband was away on business, and McDonald's simplified dinnertime. But tonight, the food didn't satisfy my hunger.

There was something else I wanted, something else I needed.

I checked my watch. There was still time. For weeks, I'd driven past a banner announcing an upcoming live Nativity at a nearby church.

It sounded fun, but I wasn't sure. It wasn't my church. I wouldn't know

anyone. I'd get lost. I'd be without my husband.

There were a million reasons not to go, still ... a nagging inner voice insisted.

Then I noticed Stephannie, a mom from our parish, eating burgers with her children. I decided to say hello.

Within moments, I learned her husband was out of town, too. I told her about the live Nativity. "There's live animals," I said. "The kids will love that."

Stephannie agreed.

It was a beautiful night, with dark, starry skies. There, in an open field, sat a makeshift Bethlehem, complete with donkeys, sheep and goats.

"But you, Bethlehem ... out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel" (Mi 5:1). The commentator, a gray-haired shepherd with a booming voice, delivered the opening line.

Familiar scenes unfolded, as Joseph and Mary, pregnant and riding a donkey,

were turned away by innkeepers. Finally, she gave birth in a stable.

Angels appeared to shepherds. Wise men brought gifts.

Suddenly, the set darkens. The gray-haired commentator reappears, identifying himself as Joseph of Arimathea. He was a boy when the couple arrived in Bethlehem, seeking shelter. He remembers. He recalls the townspeople buzzing with wonder and excitement, thinking this child is the long-awaited Messiah.

"Years later," he says, "I saw him."

His voice cracks with emotion.

"They nailed him to a tree," he says. "I saw him."

For a moment, it's dead silent.

Suddenly, floodlights flicker on. A chorus proclaims, "O Come Let Us Adore Him." We see the manger scene. It's the grand finale, as, one by one, the actors reappear, approaching the infant and kneeling in reverence.

See NATIVITY, page 19

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 23, 2018

- Micah 5:1-4a
- Hebrews 10:5-10
- Luke 1:39-45

This weekend, the Church observes the fourth Sunday in Advent. The first reading is from the Book of Micah, who is regarded as one of the minor prophets, in large part because of the book's brevity.



It contains only seven chapters. (By contrast, the Book of Isaiah has 66 chapters.)

Very few biographical facts about the author of

Micah are known. He came from a small village some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, but nothing else is known of his background.

As did so many prophets of ancient Israel, Micah was determined to call his people, the chosen people, back to God and away from sin. He argued for piety and for loyalty to the covenant with God. Furthermore, he warned that indifference to God only led to disaster, personal as well as national.

In his day, piety was in short supply. Greed and exploitation overwhelmed the economy, merely indications of rampant personal greed. Religious practices were sparse and often insincere and poorly presented when they did occur.

Amid all this, Micah promised that a savior will come. This savior will lead the people away from sin and to God. The savior will come from Bethlehem.

Here, Micah obliquely refers to David, who was born in Bethlehem, without mentioning his name. David was important as king of Israel. His royal role was not primarily political, but rather it was religious. His task was to see that the people obeyed God.

Micah forecasted that when the savior becomes king, all will be well.

For its second reading, the Church this weekend gives us a passage from the Letter to the Hebrews. Heavy with its Hebrew symbolism, this epistle is also renowned for brilliantly extolling Jesus as Lord and as the Lamb of God.

In Hebrews, Jesus appears as the perfect victim and priest. His sacrifice on Calvary was sublime, perfect and utterly unique. It was also eternal. Its effects of reconciling humanity with God will never cease. Thus, no other sacrifices are necessary. All has been accomplished.

St. Luke's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the story of the visitation of Mary to her kinswoman Elizabeth. Mary travels from her own home to a place in the hills of Judah. Traditionally, it has been thought that this place is the site now called Ein Karem. Once a few miles from Jerusalem, it has been absorbed by the growth of the city and for all practical purposes is today a part of Jerusalem.

Mary goes to meet her cousin, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah. Elizabeth herself is pregnant. Since Elizabeth was past the childbearing age for a woman, her conception was regarded as miraculous. Her child had a special destiny. He was holy. Elizabeth's unborn child will be John the Baptist.

Elizabeth realizes that Mary is expecting a child, but Mary's child will be the Messiah. Elizabeth's unborn child understands the profound character of all that is transpiring, and he senses God in the presence of Mary and her own unborn infant. Elizabeth and her unborn testify to the Messiah.

Reflection

It is the last weekend of Advent. Christmas will be celebrated in just two days. For almost everyone, it will be a busy, hurried day, even if a day of excitement, anticipation and joy.

Nevertheless, there is time to make Christmas a personal spiritual event. So in these readings during Advent's last weekend, the Church calls us to Jesus. He is everything, the Church emphatically and joyfully declares. In the words of Hebrews, in the words of Luke, Jesus is the answer to every human need.

The writings of Micah remind us that when we allow Jesus to come to us, all peace and happiness will abide with us. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 24

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Luke 1:67-79

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-25
or Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday, December 25

The Nativity of the Lord
Christmas Night

Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20

Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Wednesday, December 26

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

Thursday, December 27

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

Friday, December 28

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

Saturday, December 29

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

See DAILY READINGS, page 19

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Sacraments' effectiveness not dependent on the holiness of the minister

Q I know of several Catholics today who refuse to go to confession because they feel that the priest might be a worse sinner than they are. Yet if they get sick, they want their parish priest to come immediately to give them a blessing. How can I explain to them their inconsistency? (Pennsylvania)



A I suspect that your question is prompted—in part, at least—by the current crisis in the Church over clergy sexual abuse. Since 2002, when the U.S. bishops adopted a policy of “zero tolerance,” no cleric credibly accused of this crime is ever allowed to remain in ministry. Thank God, the number of such cases has declined sharply since then, so it is unlikely that the priest hearing your confession today has ever been guilty of such a horrific act.

Does this guarantee that a confessor is spiritually and morally perfect? Of course not. Human beings are not perfect people, so if perfection were a prerequisite, there would be no confessors at all.

A priest, of course, should always strive to be a worthy minister of the sacraments—in a state of grace and trying his best to reflect the sanctity of Christ. But perhaps it might comfort you to know that the efficacy of a sacrament does not depend on the state of soul of the priest who administers it.

The teaching of the Church is that the sacraments act—to use a technical expression—works “*ex opere operato*,” that is to say, by the very fact of the rituals being performed. So if a priest in a state of mortal sin were to hear a confession, the penitent's sins would still be absolved because it is really Christ who forgives sins in the sacrament and not the priest himself.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic*

Church states, “From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister” (#1128).

Q I have heard of families remembering baptismal days through special family meals. What are some other ways to commemorate the day of one's baptism? (Washington, D.C.)

A Your question raises a good point. The day we were baptized marked a pivotal point in our lives, the moment when we first began to draw near to God through the power of the sacraments. Yet I think it would be safe to say that more than 90 percent of Catholics cannot tell you on what date they were baptized.

In January 2016, at a Sunday *Angelus* address, Pope Francis gave the audience what he called their “homework”: to try to find out—by asking their parents, godparents or parish—the date of their baptism. “It is the date of our rebirth as children of God,” the pope explained.

There are various ways of marking the anniversary of that date. Loyola Press has on its website the text of a “family prayer service,” using a bowl of water, a Bible and a baptismal candle.

At the ceremony of baptism, as the baptismal candle is handed to the parents or godparents, the priest or deacon says, “This light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours ... is to walk always as a child of the light.”

I usually add a few words of explanation, recommending to the parents that each year, on the anniversary of that baptism, the family might come together, light that same candle and pray for that child as he or she grows up.

(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

The Promise Fulfilled

By Hilda Buck

On that holy night a star of splendor
Shed great light to herald the birth
Of a newborn babe,
The long-awaited Prince of Peace.

Angel choirs filled the heavens with
joyous song and
Shepherds came in from the fields to
pay Him homage.

Heaven and Earth rejoiced—the
promise fulfilled.



(Hilda Buck is a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg. Photo: Luminarias glow around a creche in the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis during the archdiocesan Evening of Lights on Dec. 11, 2017. The annual event, sponsored by the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation, offers participants an opportunity to remember their deceased loved ones in a special way during the Advent season.) (File photo by Mike Krokos)

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.

ABEL, Dorothy E., 95, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Mother of Barbara Stader and Patricia VanDenbark. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of eight.

BAXTER, Dennis E., 71, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Dec. 6. Husband of Patricia Baxter. Father of Amy Daggy, Jessica, Andy and Nate Baxter. Brother of Dianne Langan, Don, Doug and Dwight Baxter. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of two.

BOGLE, Lynn T. (Williamson), 69, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Nov. 30. Mother of Michael Bogle. Sister of Katie Meadows, Anne Sweeney, Marie and Mark Williamson.

BRUMFIELD, Scotty, 87, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 6. Husband of Betty Brumfield. Father of Janet Thomas, Kim and Scott Brumfield. Brother of several. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of six.

CONNER, Jerald T., 63, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Husband of Catherine Conner. Father of Angie Watson, Angel Wetter and Derek Conner. Brother of Dawna Conner-Burris, Angela Padgett, James II and Joseph Conner. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of one.

CONWAY, Jeanne G., 86, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 27. Mother of Sandy Wenning. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of four.

ENGLEMAN, Dolores A. (Banet), 85, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Dec. 8. Mother of Cynthia Craig, Lisa Demas and Theresa Welch. Sister of Beatrice Fife, Kathleen Fritz, Nancy Lemons, Juanita Lilly, Janet Schmidt, Doris Stilger and Herman Banet, Jr. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 14.

FORS, Jack F., 91, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Husband of Dolores Fors. Father of Cheryl Hadley. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of three.

HERDRICH, Colleen, 63, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Christopher Herdrich. Mother of Cory and Jamison Herdrich. Sister of Doug and Mike Bussell. Grandmother of four.

HERTZ, Audrey J., 91, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 9. Mother of Vickie Lohrig, Cathy Voit and Connie Welsh. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 19.

PENDICK, Joseph J., Jr., 72, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Husband of Cheryl Pendick. Father of Mary, Gary, JJ and Terri. Brother of Joanne Rugg and Gloria Yerkovich. Grandfather of six.

POWERS, Betty Jean (Mattingly), 80, St. Michael, Cannelton, Dec. 3. Mother of Shari Everly, Brett and Jon Powers. Sister of Deborah Frisch and Mary Nell Huebschman. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of three.

RICHEY, Alene M., 100, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 3. Mother of Randy and Robin Richey. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of nine.

RICHMER, Violet, 94, St. Mary, New Albany, Dec. 5. Aunt of several.

SCHMIDT, Ilean, 94, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 3. Mother of Paula Miller, Carla Trent and Emily Schmidt. Sister of Emily Miller and John Henderson. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 16.



Supporting genocide victims

Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil, Iraq, holds the pen given to him by U.S. President Donald J. Trump on Dec. 11 after Trump used it to sign into law the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018 at the White House in Washington. The bill will provide humanitarian relief to genocide victims in Iraq and Syria and hold accountable Islamic State perpetrators of genocide. (CNS photo/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters)

SCHUMAN, Alene M., 85, St. Peter, Brookville, Dec. 5. Mother of Dolores Alexander, Wilma Brannan, Lisa Broun, Michelle Shumate, Arleen Wuestefeld, Diana Yee, Laura and Daniel Schuman. Grandmother of 19. Great-grandmother of 29.

Mother of Kathy Ott, Jim and Mike Tungate. Sister of Marilyn Hall. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 10.

WAGNER, Marilyn, 87, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Mother of Elizabeth Grant, Diane Rader, Sharon Roembke and Michael

Wagner. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of eight.

WILLHELM, Rita, 95, St. Michael, Brookville, Dec. 3. Mother of Karen Grubbs, Betty Sullivan, Emma Werner, David, Edward, Francis and Tom Wilhelm. Grandmother of 21. Great-grandmother of 39. †

Pilgrimage across U.S. lets peacemaker spread light from Bethlehem

By Katie Rutter
Catholic News Service

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (CNS)—Brian Duane's maroon Subaru had already covered about 1,800 miles when he pulled into the parking lot at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Lafayette on Dec. 4.

It was Duane's 18th stop in what would be a weeklong, cross-country journey for the resident of Pembroke, Mass., and his car contained precious cargo with a radiance of goodwill.

This road trip was a mission from Bethlehem carrying a message of peace, contained in a glowing lantern.

This fire had originally been kindled at Christ's birthplace, the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank. Duane is part of a national network of volunteers spreading this "Peace Light from Bethlehem" across the nation.

"It is symbolic of Christ's love for us and of the Prince of Peace," Duane told Catholic News Service (CNS). "It serves as a reminder to us."

For more than a decade, volunteers like Duane have driven this flame from coast to coast, lighting hundreds of lanterns along the route.

The effort to spread the Peace Light is spearheaded by Scouts and Scouting advisers, most often associated with Catholic churches.

The goal is to kindle peace in all hearts by remembering Christ's mission began in Bethlehem.

"It's symbolic, but it's the effort, the coming together, the dedication to peace and heading home and spreading the message, even at the family level," said Bob McLear, who lives west of Chicago.

McLear planned to take the light from Lafayette back to his parish in Batavia, Ill., and pass it off to another volunteer headed to Madison, Wis.

The Peace Light's journey can be traced back to a tradition in Austria. For the past 32 years, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF has sent a child to Bethlehem to kindle a flame from the oil lamps hanging above Christ's birthplace.

The fire, stored in two explosion-proof miner's lanterns, is then flown with a safety adviser back to Europe, where it is spread to more than 30 countries.

"The reaction of the people touched my heart," said Wolfgang Kerndler, a security expert for Austrian Airlines, who has escorted the flame for about two decades.

"Even the crew is proud to be part of the operation," Kerndler told CNS in an e-mail. "It's an honor."

The Peace Light first arrived in the United States in the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. The Austrian government and national Scouting association sent the flame with a VIP delegation to comfort the grieving nation.

"New York City really was devastated," said Paul Stanton, the international representative for New York City with the Boy Scouts of America.

"It was a great sign of kindness from the people of the world," he told CNS in a phone interview from New York City.

The light has been flown by Austrian Airlines to New York every year since. Stanton helps to organize the official reception at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

This year, about 150 adults and children gathered at the airport's Our Lady of the Skies Chapel to welcome the light of peace and kindle their own flames.

"The youth are needing to know that there is hope, but they also need to know if there is going to be a better world, it will start with them," Stanton said.

Duane was at the chapel to light his lanterns and begin his journey.

From New York, he drove as far west as Denver, before heading back to Massachusetts, logging more than 5,400 miles.

Along the way, Duane stopped at 26 locations to meet volunteers, participate in ceremonies and pass on the flame.

"I've walked into so many different places, a very liberal congregation, a very conservative congregation," he said, "and yet we all agree on the need for peace and civility."

Duane arrived in Indianapolis on Dec. 4 where more than 60 people, mostly children, gathered at Our Lady of Lourdes

Parish to welcome him and spread the flame from Bethlehem. Lanterns and candles lined the altar.

"I think that it's really beautiful, and I'm really happy that we came," said Eliza Frank, a student at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School.

"We hear about Jesus being born in Bethlehem, but we never actually see anything from there or go there, so I thought that was really cool," Eliza said.

When Duane arrived at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Lafayette later that evening, nearly 100 Scouts and parents were present to spread the light. Even the youngest were challenged to share the flame with at least three other people in their local community, spreading hope and peace in the process.

"To the people out there that don't have a chance to get the peace light," said John Niemann, an Eagle Scout and student at Purdue University, "you can still hold Christ's peace in your heart throughout this Christmas season and really strive to have that, even though you can't physically have the flame with you."

The Peace Light was set to reach California by Dec. 13 and is reported to burn in more than 30 states.

A Facebook page set up by volunteers mapped out the spread of the Peace Light and continues to field requests from individuals wishing to take the flame to their own communities.

In most cases, the lanterns lit by the Peace Light will illuminate congregations and homes through the Christmas season. Duane hopes that those lights serve as a constant reminder that small actions, like small lanterns, have the power to light a darkened world.

"We sometimes feel overwhelmed when there's major conflicts going on in the Middle East or wherever it happens to be," Duane said.

"Like, what can I do? Well, I can be kind and gentle to my family, my neighbors, the lady at the store, everybody else. Be a vehicle of peace, be a vessel of peace," he said.

(Katie Rutter is a freelance writer and member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. To watch a related video, go to youtu.be/Tz7RDj7TE04.) †



At Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 4, Natalee Darzentas, a student at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Indianapolis, holds a candle ignited with the Peace Light, a flame kindled from the place in Bethlehem, West Bank, where Christ was born. The flame was passed to hundreds of people in more than 30 states by a national network of volunteers. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)

Investing with Faith/Jolinda Moore

Like a child, find pure joy in the selfless act of giving

I heard them come in after a few hours of shopping. My young son, Joseph, was smiling ear to ear. He walked past me and headed straight for the den.

A few moments passed, and he reappeared with his smile widening. He said, "In case you are wondering, we did not get you a candle for Christmas."



I replied, "You didn't? I wonder what it could be." His face lit up even more and a small giggle escaped as he said yet again, "Well, it is not a candle."

That is the joy of giving through the eyes of a child. The anticipation is so great it can't be contained.

My son wanted nothing more than to surprise me on Christmas morning, but he could not hold it in; he had

to give a glimpse of what was to come. He had to share with me the joy that he felt about a gift he was going to give.

This sort of joyful giving is what we are called to in St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

There are many reasons why people give: it is their duty to give, they want to make an impactful difference, they were asked to give, they are looking to offset their tax liability, they feel called by the Holy Spirit to support a mission. But it is the "how" that is most important.

What is your spirit when you give? Do you find yourself simply going through the motions of giving with little reaction or emotion? Or do you give as an

act of gratitude for graces bestowed on you by Jesus Christ?

As we await the coming of our Lord and Savior this Christmas, I pray that you find time to reflect on how you give.

It is my prayer that each of us gives with the energy of a child who finds pure joy in giving. It is this type of giving that is a bright light in the day, and a reflection of the hope-filled people that we are called to be.

(Jolinda Moore is the executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development. For more information about giving opportunities within the archdiocese's Catholic Community Foundation, please call 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1482 or ccf@archindy.org. Or visit its website at www.archindy.org/CCF.) †

Daily Readings

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Sunday, December 30

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
 or *1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28*
Psalms 128:1-5
 or *Psalms 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10*
Colossians 3:12-21
 or *1 John 3:1-2, 21-24*
Luke 2:41-52

Monday, December 31

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

Tuesday, January 1

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

Wednesday, January 2

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

Thursday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus
1 John 2:29-3:6
Psalms 98:1, 3cd-6
John 1:29-34

Friday, January 4

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

Saturday, January 5

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

Sunday, January 6

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

Monday, January 7

St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest
1 John 3:22-4:6
Psalms 2:7b-8, 10-12a
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, January 8

1 John 4:7-10
Psalms 72:1-4, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday, January 9

1 John 4:11-18
Psalms 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, January 10

1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalms 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday, January 11

1 John 5:5-13
Psalms 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, January 12

1 John 5:14-21
Psalms 149:1-6a, 9b
John 3:22-30

Sunday, January 13

The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
 or *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11*
Psalms 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
 or *Psalms 104:1b-4, 24-25, 27-30*
Acts 10:34-38
 or *Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7*
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

NATIVITY

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Then, surprisingly, a family from the audience joins them. Their contemporary appearance is a sharp contrast against the ancient scene. It catches my breath as a powerful realization arises.

This story isn't for the history books. This story is for now. This story is for you. This story is for me.

For years, I attended that live Nativity, bringing family, friends and neighbors. Every "grand finale" touched me. Seeing

contemporaries kneeling alongside Bethlehem townspeople brought tears to my eyes and deepened my faith—every time.

The play is long gone, just a distant memory now. But its message remains.

Can you picture it? Maybe this offers a new perspective.

Keep those Christmas programs coming. You never know who you are reaching. Make Jesus come alive.

O come, let us adore him.

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

Classified Directory

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

Employment

Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education

The Catholic Schools Office of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Assistant Superintendent to serve as a resource to administrators, teachers, staff, students and families in the areas of curricular support, communications, business management, policy guidance and data analysis. The duties of this position also include serving as a member of the Archdiocesan Schools Team in a mission-driven, Christ-centered and student-oriented environment.

The position requires a master's degree in education, business or a related field and at least five years of educational or business leadership experience, preferably involving school leadership (paid or volunteer) and preferably in Catholic education. Applicants should be professed and practicing Roman Catholics with a deep commitment to Catholic education. Candidates should also have experience in development and/or marketing efforts and be both proponents and role models of lifelong learning. Preference may be given to individuals who are bi-lingual and bi-cultural.

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Employment



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF EVANSVILLE

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Santa visits Frenchtown

In this 1978 photo, Santa Claus visits children at St. Bernard Parish in Frenchtown. The New Albany Deanery faith community was founded in 1849.

(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.)

BATESVILLE

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Michael Brelage is proud to lead one of those families. Born and raised in St. Louis Parish, Brelage and his wife are the parents of six children, three of whom are enrolled at St. Louis School.

“There’s a strong core of young families that have really embraced the faith,” said Brelage. “We keep striving to invite more and more people in. It’s slowly growing.”

Brelage was away from Batesville for about eight years while his wife was a medical student, but both were determined to move back to their southeastern Indiana home.

Since their return, Brelage has found that St. Louis has strengthened his faith.

“From when I moved back to Batesville until now, I just feel like I’ve grown leaps and bounds in how I understand the faith, in how my wife

and I practice our faith,” he said. “I went from probably saying the rosary once a year to now my wife and I saying a nightly rosary. It’s been such a blessing for us.”

And just as Sunderman finds encouragement for the future of the parish in seeing Brelage and other young parents among its members, Brelage sees hope in the parish’s active youth group, which sponsors mission trips and trips for youth conferences at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio.

“They come back and are wanting to let you know that they’re Catholic and proud of it,” Brelage said. “It’s really encouraging to see this group of youth on fire for their faith.”

As Sunderman reflected, “the circle of life just keeps going” at St. Louis Parish.

(To learn more about St. Louis Parish in Batesville, visit www.stlouis-batesville.org.) †



Loved ones honored at Evening of Lights

Top: Luminarias glow on Dec. 6 in the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center’s Assembly Hall during “An Evening of Lights,” sponsored by the archdiocese’s Catholic Community Foundation (CCF). The event offers an opportunity for loved ones and their legacies to be remembered during the Advent season. Luminarias provided for a small donation bore the name of someone the donor wished to honor. The donations will be invested in CCF to support the growth of parish, school and agency ministries. (Submitted photos)

Middle: A picture of the late Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein stands amidst the luminarias in front of the crèche during this year’s “An Evening of Lights” event at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis on Dec. 6. The former shepherd of the archdiocese from 1992-2011 died on Jan. 25, 2018.

Right: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses luminarias as part of a prayer service he led during this year’s “An Evening of Lights” event at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis on Dec. 6.



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