Holy Trinity couple find comfort, joy in collecting, displaying 1,000 crèches

By Natalie Hoefler

FAIRLAND—Larry Higdon is near 70. His wife Amy is in her mid-50s. But the Fairland couple in their utility barn this time of year and you’ll find two young souls walking among rows of treasures like two kids in a candy store.

“My favorite is the one my dad built in 1963,” Larry says, while Amy’s favorite “is a little one from Italy.”

“Sometimes I come in here and just sit, it’s so peaceful,” says Larry.

They’re talking about Nativity sets. More precisely, they’re talking about their favorites among the roughly 1,000 crèches and Nativity-related items Larry and Amy Higdon have collected, included among the couple’s display in their barn in Fairland. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

First woman to lead ICC brings wealth of experience to public arena

By Victoria Arthur

Angela Espada knows how to connect with people. Her friend and former dean of Loyola New Orleans Law School, Maria Pabón, is one of many who can attest to that. In 2002, Espada was serving as assistant dean of admissions at Indiana University’s McKinney School of Law when Pabón was hired for a faculty position there.

Unexpectedly, Pabón received a call while she was in Indianapolis to search for a house. It was Espada, extending an invitation to a woman she had never even met.

“Angela builds community,” Pabón said. “That’s who she is. She is aware of the humanity of us all.”

Espada will use these attributes in her new role as the executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), which will become effective on Jan. 1, 2020.

Since her Oct. 7 appointment as incoming executive director, Glenn Tebbe, the ICC’s executive director for the past 16 years, has been acclimating Espada to the role.

The ICC serves as the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana, requiring its leader to articulate the Church’s position on key issues and speak for the bishops of the five dioceses around the state. Espada will be the first woman at the helm of the ICC since its inception in 1966, and the first woman of color to hold a Catholic conference directorship nationwide.

The executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference is a unique position requiring a variety of skills and exceptional experience to lead ICC brings wealth of experience to public arena

Pope asks Catholics to set up Nativity scenes as a reminder of ‘God’s tender love’ for us

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A Nativity scene is a simple reminder of something astonishing: God became human to reveal the greatness of his love “by smiling and opening his arms to all,” Pope Francis said in a letter on the meaning and importance of setting up Christmas crèches.

“Wherever it is, and whatever form it takes, the Christmas crèche speaks to us of the love of God, the God who became a child in order to make us know how close he is to every man, woman and child, regardless of their condition,” the pope wrote in his apostolic letter, “Admirabile Signum” (“Enchanting Image”).

Pope Francis signed the short letter on Dec. 1, the first Sunday of Advent, during an afternoon visit to Grecchio, Italy, where Pope Francis prays during a visit to the Nativity scene of Greccio, Italy, on Dec. 1. The first Nativity scene was assembled in Grecchio by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)
Pope returns part of relic of Jesus’ manger to Holy Land

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As Advent approached, Pope Francis gave a small fragment of Jesus’ manger back to Catholics in the Holy Land.

In Bethlehem, West Bank, Franciscan Father Rami Asakrieh of St. Catherine Parish welcomed the relic’s return and called it “a great blessing.”

“This is more blessings for this place,” he said. “You can’t imagine the great joy to have this blessing.”

On Nov. 22, experts from the Vatican Museums extracted a small fragment from the relic of what has been venerated as Jesus’ manger. The relic, given to the Vatican in the seventh century, has been kept in a chapel under the main altar of St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome.

Pope Francis gave the relic fragment to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which oversees the main churches and shrines associated with the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The relic arrived in Jerusalem on Nov. 29 and was present during a Mass celebrated by the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, in the chapel of Our Lady of Peace at the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem.

After the Mass and time for people to venerate the relic, the Franciscan friars carried it in procession to the Church of St. Saviour, where they prayed Vespers.

Local Catholics in Bethlehem had the opportunity to venerate the relic at Mass at St. Catherine’s on Dec. 1 before the relic was put away until a proper location and protocol for it can be arranged.

Meanwhile, as Christmas approaches, the opening hours of the Church of the Nativity adjacent to St. Catherine have been extended by three hours to 8 p.m. to accommodate the influx of pilgrims who sometimes wait up to four hours to go down to the place, according to Christian tradition, Jesus was born.

On the first day of Advent, the wait was only about 10 minutes.

“We are going to wait as long as it takes to go in,” said David Williams, 67, a Christian he was happy to see the large crowds.

“The import of it is that there is a Christian he was happy to see the large numbers of pilgrims coming to Bethlehem,” said Williams.

Local guide Jaber Saadeh, said that as a Christian he was happy to see the large numbers of pilgrims coming to Bethlehem.

“I feel so proud and happy to welcome them. We are a peace country,” he added.

Coming out from the grotto, Claudia Huta, 44, of Romania, said she had not been an issue. Having the opportunity to visit the grotto and say a prayer there had been “good for my soul as a Christian” and strengthened her faith, she said.

Another pilgrim who identified herself only as Maria said she had been overwhelmed by the experience.

“I had an overwhelming feeling of tears of joy, but also a feeling of sadness because of the suffering of humanity, of the suffering. It is time to let that go,” she said.

And if, with this love of his, we were able to look into the hearts of people who, because of the indifference we breathe and the consumerism that flattens us, often pass before us as if nothing were wrong,” the pope said, “we would be able to see the need for God, their search for everlasting love, to ask about the meaning of life, about pain, betrayal and loneliness.

“Faced with such concerns,” he said, “prescriptions and edicts are not enough; we need to walk together, become travel companions.

In fact, people who evangelize cannot ever forget to always be on the move, seeking together with others,” the pope said. “They cannot leave anyone behind, they cannot be allowed to keep at a distance those who are limping, they cannot shut themselves up within their little group of comfortable relationships.”

Those who proclaim God’s word, “know no enemies, only traveling companions” because the quest for God is common to everyone, so it must be shared and never be denied to anyone, he said.

The pope told his audience they should not be held back by “the fear of making mistakes or the fear of following new paths,” and they should not be saddened by difficulties, misunderstandings or gossip.

“Let us not be infected by the defeatism according to which everything goes wrong,” he said.

In order to hold fast to “the Gospel’s enthusiasm,” the pope told them, call on the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of joy who keeps the missionary flame alive and who “invites us to attract the world only with love and discover that we can possess life only by giving.”

Evangelizers are like angels, bringing good news to the world, pope says

What was the best Christmas gift you ever received—or gave? Share it with our readers

The best gift that God ever gave the world arrived on Christmas. Beyond the gift of Jesus in our lives, The Criterion is asking readers to share the stories of the best Christmas gifts they have ever received—or given.

Please send your responses by Dec. 12 to The Criterion’s editor Mike Krokos by e-mail at mkrokos@archindy.org or by mail in care of Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime number where you can be reached.

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NEWS FROM YOU!
Do you have something exciting or newsworthy you want to be considered for printing in The Criterion? E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

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By Natalie Hoefer

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will lead a pilgrimage to the eastern Canadian shrines on July 15-21, 2020. He says he “became familiar with the various places on our pilgrimage” while earning his master’s degree in canon law from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada, from 1990-1992.

“During that time, I had a few occasions to travel to Montreal and Quebec City,” the archbishop says. “The sacred places that we will be visiting—such as St. Joseph’s Oratory on Montreal and the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré just outside Quebec City—are internationally known places of pilgrimage and worship.”

Archbishop Thompson appreciates the “beautiful scenery in, around and between these cities,” and says the “history surrounding the cities and other places is also fascinating.”

Encompassing the holy sites, scenery and history that the archbishop references, the pilgrimage will include daily Mass at shrines, cathedrals and basilicas in the region—including the second and third largest churches—as well as outings such as a light show, a river cruise, sightseeing and more.

The journey begins with a morning flight from Indianapolis to Montreal on July 15, where pilgrims will spend two full days. Begun as a missionary settlement and fur trading center in the 1500s, Montreal is now the second most populous city in Canada, from 1990-1992. It is dedicated to Saint Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary and is known for containing an exact replica of Michelangelo’s famous Pietà statue.

The afternoon of the fourth day will be filled with scenic outings as pilgrims visit the old region of Côte de Beaupré, the renowned Cooper art museum, the 276-foot tumbler Montmorency Falls, and the Isle of Orleans.

Pilgrims will stay in Old Quebec on day five, with a scheduled time planned to be Mass at the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Quebec, the oldest church in Canada, and the cathedral of the Archdiocese of Quebec.

The rest of day five, pilgrims are free to explore the beautiful, well-preserved city. With its narrow brick streets, quaint cafes and shops, not to mention its many historic buildings, Old Quebec is often referred to as the “Little Europe of Canada.”

The chance to explore the many sites of Old Quebec will continue through the morning of day six. Then pilgrims will enjoy a farewell dinner in Old Quebec, and on day seven pilgrims will take their return flight to Indianapolis.

The cost per person, based on a minimum of 35 paid travelers, is $3,169 per person for double occupancy, or $3,925 for single occupancy.

The cost includes estimated roundtrip flight transportation from Indianapolis to Montreal and from Quebec City to Indianapolis, deluxe motor coach transportation; a bilingual (English and French) tour leader; entrance to pilgrimage sites with guides and four private Masses; sightseeing and admission fees; two nights hotel accommodations in Montreal and four nights hotel accommodations in Quebec City; daily breakfast at the hotels; three dinners, with coffee and tea; post departure trip insurance purchased on behalf of the group; hotel portage; all taxes (local, provincial and federal) and tips on included items; onsite services of a Grueninger Travel Group travel director; and all driver tips.
Make
Making Sense of Bioethics
Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Catholics and cohabitation

It seems that every time the Pew Research Center reports the results of its latest survey, it’s bad news because it shows how far our society is abandoning traditional morality and religious practices. Pew is the research center that has reported on the growing number of “nones” (those who profess no religious affiliation) in our society, among other things.

Its latest report, in many ways, is even more alarming. A study showed that 60 percent of Americans under the age of 45 have cohabitated; that is, men and women living together outside of marriage. Even worse, 74 percent of Catholics in the U.S. now think that cohabitation is acceptable.

How can that be?

It’s hard for us to believe that only 26 percent of Catholics surveyed accept the teachings of the Church when it comes to sexual activity. Does that mean that the 74 percent were never taught what the Church teaches, or that they have been so influenced by our secular society that they reject those teachings?

We believe that the older members of our Church would be as amazed as we are to see such statistics. Cohabitation is not a phenomenon that has emerged as a new phenomenon in U.S. society. It happened during earlier generations, when it was called “shacking up,” but it wasn’t condemned. Now, according to Pew, a lot of young people are doing it.

Priests are aware of this, especially those who prepare couples for marriage in the Church. In some cases, the couples are already living together, and priests have to counsel them to stop doing so, if possible, until after their wedding, or, at least, to stop having sexual relations until then.

Somewhere along the line, young people decided for themselves that there is nothing wrong with having sex before marriage. That didn’t just happen among today’s young people; it also was the case for some of their parents. That’s the only way we believe that cohabitation could be acceptable to 74 percent of Catholics. They were influenced more by our society—and by their family and friends—than by the Church.

The Church has always been countercultural, and perhaps never more so now than when it comes to sex. Unlike our present society’s culture, which sees sexuality simply as something we should enjoy, the Church teaches that “it is a gift of God by which men and women participate in his saving plan and respond to his call to grow in holiness” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, p. 405).

The Church’s vision of sexuality, based on both natural law and revelation, sees it as involving all aspects of the human person, including the power to love and procreate, and that sexual activity should not be separated from commitments made in marriage.

It’s those commitments that differentiate marriage from cohabitation. During a wedding ceremony, the couple vow to be faithful to one another. Our society’s mores no longer require such a commitment, which is why the divorce rate is so high.

The Church also sees marriage as a covenant: “The matrimonial covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §1601).

How is it, then, that so many Catholics appear to reject those teachings? Perhaps because a smaller percentage of Catholic children now attend Catholic schools or receive instruction and formation in Catholic doctrine. We know that some parents are not fulfilling their duty to make sure that their children know what the Church teaches and practices, and why we have these tenets.

When was the last time you heard a homily about chastity? Is it true that homilies should primarily pertain to the biblical readings of the day, but priests and deacons are allowed to use homilies for catechesis, such as on the virtue of chastity?

Couples these days often consider cohabitation as a trial marriage, wanting to live together to see if they’re compatible before exchanging vows. But studies have shown that this doesn’t work: those who cohabit before marriage have a higher percentage of divorce than do those who do not live together before marriage.

Those who minister to young people have their work cut out for them to convince them that God’s plan for marriage is better than society’s.

—John F. Fink

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the free exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communion and the Public Square, fig. 160). 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 spellings and punctuation). 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.
“John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths” (cf. Mt 3:1-3).

The Second Sunday of Advent falls on Dec. 8 this year. That causes us to celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception a day later on Monday, Dec. 9.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has written that the two great Advent figures are Mary and St. John the Baptist. Both bring to conclusion the time of preparation and waiting that characterized Israel’s hope that God’s promises would be fulfilled. Both point to Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

On the Second Sunday of Advent, the first reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah proclaims the glorious vision of hope that will be fulfilled when God’s Anointed One, the Messiah, comes:

"On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicting. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cub’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all the holy mountain of the Earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea. On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for its dwelling shall be glorious” (Is 11:1-10).

An entirely different world is prophesied from anything known before. This is the world that Mary prefigured by her sinlessness, her Immaculate Conception. And it is the future that John anticipates as he calls the people of Israel to a baptism of repentance.

"I am baptizing you with water, for repentance," John says, "but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (cf. Mt 3:11-12).

What is coming (the reign of God) is a time of unparalleled peace and justice, but it will be preceded by a baptism of unquenchable fire that burns away “every tree that does not bear good fruit” (Mt 3:10). To prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus, we are invited to stay close to Christ, to prepare the way for him to be ready for the new world his coming inaugurates, we must repent.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception calls attention to the way that Mary, who was conceived without original sin, is different from us. But as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has observed, “This privilege given to Mary, which sets her apart from our common condition, does not distance her from us, but on the contrary, it brings her closer. While sin divides, separating us from one another, Mary’s purity makes her infinitely close to our hearts, to each of us and desirable of our true good.” Mary’s difference does not separate her from us; her purity makes her more open and accessible to all of us, her children.

During this special time, as we begin a new Church year and prepare for Christmas, we are invited to stay close to Mary, the mother of Jesus and our mother.

Elogio a la Inmaculada Concepción un día más de Adviento cae el 8 de diciembre, lo que desde hace varios años el papa Emérito Benedicto XVI ha señalado que el 8 de diciembre es el día en el que la Inmaculada Concepción se celebra. Durante este tiempo, es un momento de reflexión y preparación para el nacimiento de Jesús.

La Inmaculada Concepción es un primer paso hacia el nacimiento de Jesús, quien es el Mesías esperado por Israel. Durante esta temporada, es importante recordar los mensajes de preparación y espera que los profetas, como Isaías, predicaron.

El profeta Isaías habló de una figura de fuste de Jesse, un árbol que produce un nuevo brote: “El que viene después de mí es más poderoso que yo; yo no seré digno de levantarle su sandalia” (Is 11:1-2, 5). Esta proyección del Mesías es un anuncio de la venida de Jesús, quien trae la paz, la reconciliación y la curación.

La Inmaculada Concepción también es un recordatorio de la pureza de María, la madre de Jesús. María es vista como una figura de gracia, esperanza y amor, que prepara el camino para la venida de Jesucristo.

Durante esta temporada, es importante recordar el mensaje de preparación que Jesús nos da a través de su genealogía de Jesse. La Inmaculada Concepción es un signo de que Jesús es el Mesías que todos esperábamos, y que su venida trae la paz y la reconciliación.

La venida del Mesías no sólo es un evento en el pasado, sino que es algo que aún nos afecta hoy. Durante este tiempo, es importante recordar los mensajes de preparación y espera que los profetas, como Isaías, predicaron.

La Inmaculada Concepción es un momento en el que se invita a todos a prepararse para la venida de Jesús. Durante este tiempo, es importante recordar los mensajes de preparación y espera que los profetas, como Isaías, predicaron.
Longest Night service to be held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help on Dec. 20

A service called “The Longest Night” A Mass of Consolation will be held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Lane, in New Albany, at 7 p.m. on Dec. 20.

The service provides an evening of prayer, ritual, word and Scripture for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one during the Christmas season.

For more information on this free event, contact Tom Calvert at 812-945-2374 or tomcalvert@archindy.org.

VIPS

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-236-1585.

Lee and Sarah (Keough) Banks, members of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 19.

The couple was married at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis. They have five children: Karla Cazes, Tina Ervin, Sophia Harris, Jennifer and Jeffrey Banks. The couple also has 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

December 9–10
Holy Name of Jesus Church, 8117 170th Ave., Beech Grove. National Night of Prayer for Life and Adoration, uniting the first and last sacred Conception with the feast of St. Juan Diego, prayers and adoration for an end to abortion and God’s blessings. Sun. 9 a.m. to Mon. 1 a.m. Information: 317-784-5545, parishadmin@holynamecc.org.

December 8–10
St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 S. St. Bedford. Parish Ministry Days. Parishioners who seek a deeper commitment to Jesus, Missionary of Mercy Father Jim Sikko presenting. 7:8 p.m. each evening, freewill offering. Information: 812-275-6539, parish@archindy.org.

December 10–11

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

December 11
St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. Community Open House, public viewing of church's interior restoration tour guides available; refreshments, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-558-5001, marielle@ipa.org.

December 12
Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Caregiver Support Group, sponsored by Catholic Charities, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, mwoodsworth@archindy.org.

December 14
Saint Meinrad Archabbe House Guest House, 200 Hill Dr., Saint Meinrad. Service of the Last Night, Benediction Father Adrian Burke presiding, prayer and Scripture for those who mourn and struggle with loss during the Advent season, 6 p.m. CT. refreshments to follow, free parking in Guest House. Reservations requested but not required by Dec. 13. Reservations and information: igodfather@anger.com, 800-987-7580.

December 15
St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Christmas Choral Concert, 7-9 p.m. Every third Tues. of the month, featuring guest speaker, praise band, silence and confessions, church door open. Admission: free, coffee and refreshments to follow, free parking in Guest House. Information: Michelle Harmon, 317-241-6314, ext. 142, mharmon@archindy.org.

December 18

December 19
St. Joesph Church, 1401 S. Mckeeley Rd., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 900 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Christmas, Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8889 or www.catholiccemeteries.org.

December 21
St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Helpers of God's Precious Infants, Indianapolis. Third Saturday Mass at 8:30 a.m. followed by Divine Mercy Chaplet and rosary at the cottage for Women's Option Center, 3607 W. 16th St., concluding between 10:30-10:45 a.m., with continued prayer at the church for those who wish to remain. Information: event@prayerat.org.

January 3
Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 68th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., Father David Hummer presiding. optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-769-0150, wccindy@archindy.org.

January 4

January 8
All Saint Parish, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. First Saturday Mass, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer: 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

Archdiocese's schola cantorum to hold Advent and Christmas concerts on Dec. 14 and 21

Vox Sacra (Sacred Voice), the schola cantorum of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, along with the archdiocesan youth choir, will present its fourth annual concert of Advent and Christmas music at two parishes in the coming weeks as follows:

• Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis.
• Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 3333 E. Washington St., in Indianapolis. For additional information, visit www.voxsacra.com or e-mail tculley@archindy.org.

Simbang Gabi novena of Masses to be held on Dec. 16 through Christmas Eve

The Filipino Catholic community and the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry invite everyone to join in a Christmas tradition of the Filipino culture, a nine- day novena of Masses called Simbang Gabi. The novena begins on Dec. 16 and ends on Christmas Eve.

Participants will join in the following already scheduled archdiocesan Masses as follows:

• Dec. 16, 6 p.m., St. Louis de Montfort Church, 1144 Hague Road, Fishers (Lafayette Diocese)
• Dec. 17, 5:30 p.m., St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.
• Dec. 18, 6 p.m., St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis.
• Dec. 19, 6 p.m., St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Ave., Indianapolis.
• Dec. 20, 6 p.m., St. Simon the Apostle Church, 8150 Chadwick Road, Indianapolis.
• Dec. 21, 4 p.m., St. Ann Church, 6350 E. 106th St., Indianapolis.
• Dec. 22, 10:30 a.m., St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 829 E. 106th St., Indianapolis.
• Dec. 23, 5:45 p.m., Extraordinary Form (Latin), Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis.
• Dec. 24, 7 p.m., SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

For additional information, contact Maria Solito at 317-201-0916 or maria.solito@yahoo.com.
The Following Masses and Special Events for the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe throughout central and southern Indiana were reported to The Criterion:

Holy Spirit Church, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.
Dec. 10—7 p.m. rosary; 7:30 p.m. Mass, followed by re-enactment of apparitions. Dec. 11—7 p.m. rosary followed by dance and re-enactment of apparitions; 9 p.m. Mass. Dec. 12—7 p.m. rosary; 7:30 p.m. Mass followed by marachi music, dance and reception.

Holy Trinity Church, 100 Keesey St., Edinburgh.
Dec. 10—10:30 p.m. prayers and songs until start of Mass. Dec. 12—1 a.m. Mass.

St. Ambrose Church, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour.
Dec. 13—11 rosary novena in church:
• Dec. 3-6 and 9:11 at 6 p.m.
• Dec. 7 at 7 a.m.
• Dec. 12—4:6—6 a.m. marijuana, coffee, hot chocolate and sweet bread in parish center; 2:30-3 p.m. re-enactment of apparitions by St. Ambrose School students; 5:6 p.m. procession; 6 p.m. bilingual Mass followed by fellowship and dinner in the gymnasium.

St. Anthony Church, 337 N. Warmen Ave., Indianapolis.
Dec. 6—7 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 8 p.m. rosary Dec. 7—7 p.m. rosary Dec. 8 and 9—6 p.m. rosary Dec. 10—5-4:5 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 6:30 p.m. rosary Dec. 11—7 p.m.; 7:45 p.m. traditional dance; 8:45 p.m. re-enactment of apparitions; 9:15 p.m. Aztec dance; 10 p.m. serenade by St. Anthony choirs; 9:15 p.m. traditional dance; 8:45 p.m. dance; 7 p.m. dinner in lower level of church.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis.
Dec. 11—7 p.m. celebratory Mass Dec. 12—midnight Mass in Spanish; 8:30 a.m. Mass in English; 6 p.m. bilingual Mass; 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish.

St. Joseph Church, 312 E. High St., Corydon.
Dec. 12—7 p.m. Mass in Spanish.

St. Joseph Church, 125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville.
Dec. 12—6—p.m. rosary followed by Aztec dance; 7:30 p.m. Mass.

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 44th St, Indianapolis.
Dec. 3—11—7 p.m. novena in church December 12—4:30 p.m. mañanitas; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish. procession and dance followed by gathering.

St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis.
Dec. 11—7 p.m. procession; 8 p.m. rosary; 10 p.m. Mass; 11 p.m. bautismo and mariachi music.

St. Philip Neri Church, 550 N. Rural St., Indianapolis.
Dec. 11—7 p.m. rosary, singing, dancing, re-enactment of apparitions and mariachi.

50 years since White House conference on food, hunger issues remain

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Fifty years ago, the White House sponsored a Dec. 2-4 conference on food, nutrition and hunger designed to set the groundwork for a national nutrition policy and to advise President Richard M. Nixon on the best ways to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in the United States.

The conference succeeded in initiating policies to improve school lunch programs and nutrition education and to give more consumer protection—which led to the nutritional labeling food buyers are now accustomed to.

The conference also helped develop the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, which offers supplemental food assistance to low-income pregnant women and mothers and their children up to age 5, and it paved the way for the major expansion of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps low-income individuals and families buy food.

Fast forward 50 years and food policy advocates still have a lot on their plates, so to speak, in efforts to address food insecurity across the country as well as addressing food insecurity and obesity and diabetes and obesity. They also want to ensure policies that take shape 50 years ago, for instance cutting the food stamp program by President Donald Trump’s administration.

Panalists at a Capitol Hill gathering on Oct. 30 marked the White House food conference’s anniversary and discussed ways to move forward. Even though Americans are not besieged by scurry, they said, nor are there constant images of children with extended bellies from starvation, the overall lack of access to healthy food and good nutrition remains a major issue.

The event, which offered healthy snacks and water, was sponsored by the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston and Hunger Free America, a nonprofit advocacy group based in New York.


Other statistics that have been compiled by Hunger Free America include:
14.3 million American households were food insecure in 2018, meaning they had uncertain access to enough food in 2018.
More than 11 million children live in food-insecure households.

Many households that experience food insecurity do not qualify for federal nutrition programs and need to rely on their local food banks and other hunger relief organizations for support.

No one needs to tell these facts to those who work in public policy at Catholic Charities USA or its local agencies providing food to those in need—every day.

Anthony Granado, vice president of government relations for Catholic Charities USA, said there are a number of food and nutrition policies that have the support of Catholic Charities, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Health Association, Catholic Rural Life and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Those groups submitted a joint comment objecting to the Trump administration’s proposal to tighten eligibility standards for SNAP that would cause about 3.1 million people nationwide to lose their food stamp benefits.

The comment, submitted on Sept. 23, called SNAP the “first line of defense against hunger for those struggling to make ends meet,” noting that just last year the program served 40.3 million people.

They warned that the proposed policy change would impact individual and community health since food insecurity is linked to chronic conditions such as diabetes and is associated with increased risks of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke and arthritis, to name a few.

They also said the proposed changes to SNAP would bring more people to charities for help when they are already feeding millions each year.

“Our organizations already struggle to meet the needs in our communities and are forced to turn away many for lack of resources. The proposed rule, if implemented, will only add to a demand that we cannot meet,” their comment letter said.

Lizanne Hagedorn, director of Nutritional Development Services for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, an agency that feeds 40,000 people a day at the White House conference, knows all about food needs and hasn’t seen them decrease in any way.

As the head of agency that administers local federally funded child nutrition programs and a community food program, Hagedorn said those who come for help are not always typical; in recent years, the agency has served more senior citizens and college students. She also has seen a shrinking pool of volunteers to serve those in need at food pantries.

Hagedorn said over the years the agency also has changed its offerings because of clients’ health conditions and also to educate children about healthy food choices and exercises so they don’t develop health problems. “We want to make sure we are helping their lifelong existence,” she told Catholic News Service on Nov. 21.

She said she is honored to do this work, which she admits is “not always easy and the [government] regulations are ridiculous” because on any given day they have given people a meal that can help them to face the next day.

“It’s in our blood as Catholic Christians to be good stewards of food and money and to bring everybody along,” she said, adding: “Not in an overarching way but understanding ‘there but for the grace of God go I.’ ”

As she sees it, the agency’s job will remain for the long haul but with good reason. She said the employees are using their gifts and talents to “help everyone live a better life and be healthier. I know that’s what we’re supposed to do.”

The Criterion, Friday, December 6, 2019
Trajectory of hateful rhetoric led to Holocaust, say speakers

WILMETTE, Ill. (CNS)—Hate speech must be stopped “in its tracks,” Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich said in remarks during an interfaith dialogue at Loyola Education Center, asked Cardinal Cupich as a religious man, a man of God, how such things could happen. At the time, the cardinal had no answer.

About a month later, he wrote a column titled “Words Matter,” published on July 28 in the Chicago Catholic, the archdiocesan news outlet.

It took some time for him to formulate his response, Cardinal Cupich told more than 800 people who attended the mid-November dialogue in Wilmette.

“I reflected on it, and there is an answer,” Cardinal Cupich said. “It happened in the human heart when we begin to criticize people, marginalize them, and then eventually call them ‘other.’”

“Then we begin to look at the ills of society, and there’s always the tendency to scapegoat, and then we bring in those people who are other as the reason for our problems,” he said. “It becomes a lot easier to point to the ills than to look into the scapegoat. That’s what a scapegoat is.”

He explained that “there is a dynamic that happens. It just doesn’t happen overnight.

“That’s why right away we have to stop the words,” the cardinal said. “We have to stop the hate speech in its tracks, lest it begin to define people as ‘other,’ and that other becomes the enemy that we have to get rid of. There is a trajectory to those words that we can’t ignore.”

Kurbaysh said when she was learning the trip, he immediately thought it was newsworthy enough for him to a crew to try to key video.

“We have someone who is Jewish, someone who is Roman Catholic, coming together and having that shared experience at a time when, in our country and locally too, we see a rise in anti-Semitic incidents, we see a rise in intolerance that is fueled by anti-Semitism, we see worldwide an increase in the type of rhetoric and language that is being used. It’s people being called names, other groups of people into categories ... for all these reasons it felt like we must tell this story and share it,” he said.

“I also felt the responsibility for those who will never make that journey, for those who have never visited the Holocaust museum here or elsewhere,” he added.

Fritzie Fritzshall was a teenage when she was sent to Auschwitz, and part of the reason it happened was that her neighbors in the former Czechoslovakia had become anti-Semitic, and then they were spreading it even to the children in their homes.

“We had nowhere to turn,” she said. Fritzshall had returned to Auschwitz several times, first with an aunt 30 years after the fact, then with her sister as a Holocaust educator, but the fear always comes back when she sits in the camp.

She was contemplating one last trip over the summer, as she was approaching her 70th birthday, but she wasn’t sure about it. That was when Cardinal Cupich agreed to accompany her.

“When he offered to go back with me, it was a fantastic opportunity,” Fritzshall said. “I felt I was going with a friend. I was going back because I feel in years to come, the camps are not going to remain the way they are today. Even now, the camps are being torn apart. My fear has expanded, and it is today that in times to come, the young people will no longer go to see and get the story of Auschwitz and other camps.”

She fears that as survivors pass away, the story will fade. “It’s a lot better, going back, and especially going back with the cardinal, has been educational,” Fritzshall said. “It was only last October, and the church’s way, and the cardinal’s way, of saying, ‘We are there for you, I am there for you. We will never allow this to happen again. So it truly was a special, special trip.”

Cardinal Cupich had visited Auschwitz before, but this trip was different, he said. “I kept quiet for the most part because I wanted Fritz to talk,” the cardinal said.

“I wanted to see this terrible place through her voice, through eyes, that’s what really made it real,” she said. Fritzshall, as one who told him details, such as how the latrines at the death camp became holy ground because it was the only place where prisoners had the privacy to pray.

Toward the end of the war, she said, she was the youngest of 600 women taken from the camp to serve as slave labor in a munitions factory. Those women helped survive so that she could tell their story.

“I have lived all these years with the promise I made to 599 women that I would be their messenger,” said Fritzshall. “It was always, ‘Who will believe us? Who will believe that human can do such horrible, horrible things to other human beings? Someone must live. Someone must tell the story.’”

“So those women gave me the extra rest. They took care of me,” she said. “They gave me the crumbs of their bread so that I could survive. If anyone had a chance, was me because I was the youngest. If I survived, I was going to tell their story.”

While Glenn will be greatly missed by those who knew him, his personal and professional examples continue to step into this role, serving with bishops and staffs of five dioceses, engaging in dialogue with political representatives from different perspectives and both sides of the aisle, coordinating various groups and organizations, and maintaining a consistent Catholic ethos while working with people of various faith traditions and beliefs.

Archbishop Thompson noted that while women have held key leadership positions in the archdiocese and other dioceses around the state and the nation, especially in light of comments and events in recent history, he believes the work that Francis, I believe that it is very timely and appropriate to have the first woman to serve as the ICC executive director in Indiana.

The archbishop also acknowledged the importance of not only the spiritual challenges of an African-American woman in this role. “To be clear, although it is quite historic to have a woman of color in this very important position for the Catholic Church in Indiana, Angela was chosen as the best person from among several highly qualified candidates,” he said.

“While Glenn will be greatly missed upon his retirement next year—his contributions have been immeasurable, I am excited about Angela stepping into this role, and I look forward to working with her,” Archbishop Thompson said.

“Exudes confidence, compassion and enthusiasm, and along with her distinguished professional background, these qualities will serve her—and the Catholic Church in Indiana—exceedingly well.”

[Angela] exudes confidence, compassion and enthusiasm, and along with her distinguished professional background, these qualities will serve her—and the Catholic Church in Indiana—exceedingly well.

—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

From Father Thomas Seccia Memorial Holy Cross School in Indianapolis. After earning two undergraduate degrees from the University of Indianapolis, she headed to Indiana University in Bloomington, where she earned her law degree as well as a master’s degree in higher education.

Newly married to José Espada, whom she met when they were both graduate assistants, she worked as a district attorney in the Indiana Supreme Court as a staff attorney before joining the administration of Robert C. McKim, director of the Indiana University School of Medicine. While there, she had also been a board member for a younger sister, a therapeutic foster parent for a niece and nephew, and finally a parent to her daughter, Maya.

After being appointed the first African-American associate dean in the IU system, Espada was selected by the American Council on Education for its prestigious fellowships program. ACE fellows, identified as emerging leaders in higher education, immerse themselves in administration at a baccalaureate university. Espada’s fellowship year was in Nashville, Tenn. While there, the chancellor of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis appointed her to a new position: associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion.

“Angela is a very focused, compassionate, intelligent individual who is always on the right side of the issue,” Rovaris said. “And that’s not just from pro-life and legal training, but her family. She comes from a family where doing the right thing was always the expectation, and nothing short of that was acceptable. She and Jose have raised their daughter Maya, a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University, in the same fashion.”

A lifelong Catholic himself, Rovaris predicts that Espada will be “a catalyst for good” in her new role.

Those sentiments were echoed by Stephanie Whitley, director of religious education at Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, where the Espadas have been members for the past decade.

“Glenn was an incredible soul,” Whitley said.

“Glenn taught me that we should not divide people, but we should advocates for those in need of social justice.”

Making connections

Since early October, Espada has been traveling the state with Tobbe, meeting with key individuals and entities. The 2020 session of the Indiana General Assembly begins on Jan. 6, and the ICC will once again weigh in on the issues facing the legislation. Tobbe and Espada anticipate the return of many issues that have deep roots in past legislative sessions—from pre-abortion lending to pro-life matters.

The legislation continues to be protecting religious freedom, promoting the common good, and the dignity of life and dignity of the person, the president said. “Glenn has been wonderful in connecting me with key players on all the issues. I have met so many people who are passionate about their faith and who try not only to do good, but to be led by the spirit and to do God’s will. It is inspiring.”

(Victoria Arthus, a member of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion. For more information on the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org)
Mary’s WAY promotes ‘Women Answering Yes’ to God

By Victoria Arthur

Special to The Criterion

BROWNSBURG AND ST. LEON—Growing up in their Cincinnati home, Teresa Schutzman and her 10 siblings hardly heard the same message as they were rushing out the door.

“Take the Blessed Mother with you,” their mother, Rose, whose lifelong devotion to Mary grew even deeper when she suffered a brain aneurysm while pregnant with her 11th child. Schutzman, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, was a sixth-grader when she nearly lost her mother and baby brother in 1966. She remembers a hundred people—many not even related to her family—praying the rosary in the hospital waiting room on that agonizing day.

“Since I was a year-old, I have not expected to live nor only survived but went on to raise all 11 of her and her husband’s children and to welcome 61 grandchildren.

“Our life was far from struggle-free and what happened, but in that struggle and through Mary’s intercession and God’s mercy, we made it through those times,” Schutzman said. “And our faith only grew stronger.”

Today, Schutzman is dedicated to strengthening others’ faith through Mary’s WAY (Women Answering Yes), a Catholic women’s organization launched by her mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her mother was the perfect example of his mother, Mary. Schutzman again, this time involving prayer struck the lives of Winkle and Meyer. Winkle founded Mary’s WAY in her then-home parish in the Chicago suburbs in 2002. Schutzman brought it to Indiana two years later, with the first event at St. Luke.

Now, 19 parishes in Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina and Ohio offer the program. With 11 of those parishes in Indiana—seven of which have active chapters in the archdiocese—the state has by far the largest number of Mary’s WAY chapters, and a new chapter in South Bend is, is in the works.

“Indiana is the powerhouse of Mary’s WAY,” joked Winkle, who now calls North Carolina home. “We had no idea when we started how it would grow. But when women come to these events, sometimes the Blessed Mother puts it on their heart to start something of their own.”

‘Go to Our Lady’

A tragedy calling for deep faith and prayer struck the lives of Winkle and Schutzman again, this time involving Teresa’s daughter, Brigitte Schutzman.

Then a sophomore at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Brigitte was traveling to Illinois on Dec. 31, 2007, when her car lost control on an icy road and was struck by another vehicle. She was given a 1 percent chance of survival.

But with the help of many “prayer warriors” she survived she did.

“Tears, love, I walk, and I am so grateful,” the 31-year-old parishioner of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish and a junior at the Christian Brothers School in Dearborn County; next event is on Oct. 20, 2020 for more information, contact Nancy Sangl, nsangl@hotmail.com.†

Indianapolis; next event is on May 7, 2020. For more information, contact Phyllis McNamara, namam944@gmail.com.†

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Indianapolis; next event is on Feb. 6, 2020 (tentative). For more information, contact Bridget Baus, bausbridget@hotmail.com.

St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis; next event is on May 7, 2020. For more information, contact Mary Ellen Henn, nhom109@gmail.com, or Barbara Fahringer, bfdhanger@gmail.com.†

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis; next event is on Oct. 15, 2020 (tentative). For more information, contact Teresa Schultzmann, tcshutzmann@yahoo.com.

Christ the King Parish, Indianapolis; next event is in 2021. For more information, contact Phyllis McNamara, namam944@gmail.com.†

Mary’s WAY is a Catholic women’s organization whose mission is to deepen love and faith in Jesus Christ by following the perfect example of his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is achieved through candlelit dinners with inspirational speakers, prayer, fellowship and service to others. The organization has 19 chapters at parishes in Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina and Ohio, including seven parishes within the archdiocese.

Stephanie Engelmann, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, has attended many Mary’s WAY dinners at different parishes for several years, and is “impressed how each parish brings its own unique flair to the events, while remaining focused on the goal: bringing together like-minded women to support them as they strive to say ‘Yes!’ to the call to follow Mary’s example.”

Following are the parishes with an active way’s chapter, plus contact and event information (if available):

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County; next event is on Oct. 20, 2020. For more information, contact Debbie Yeager, yeagers49@hotmail.com.†

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The program is open to women of all ages. Winkle explained that the idea is for the women in attendance, many of whom spend so much time serving their own families, to relax and be fully present in the moment.

“A sight to behold”

So it was for the more than 350 who attended a Mary’s WAY dinner on Oct. 15 held by the chapter of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The parish life center on the St. Joseph Campus in St. Leon was bedecked in tones of blue and white for the event.

“It’s always a sight to behold,” said All Saints parishioner Debbie Yeager, who served as emcee for the event and has been involved in Mary’s WAY since it came to her parish five years ago. “The women are just so excited about the evening every time.”

All Saints pastor Father Jonathan Meyer brought Mary’s WAY to the parish upon his arrival in 2014. He had previously been an associate pastor at St. Luke, where he became familiar with the program and its impact.

Father Meyer said he has been amazed to witness the growth in Mary’s WAY attendance at All Saints. As he offered the blessing before the catered buffet, he thanked the hundreds of women present for saying “yes” not only to coming, but to following God’s will in their everyday lives.

That evening’s speaker, St. Luke parishioner Dr. Beth Wehlage, shared her journey of faith and hope in battling a rare form of cancer. Her story was featured in the Oct. 25 issue of The Criterion.

The most recent Mary’s WAY dinner was held on Nov. 7 at St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg—the faith community’s ninth annual event. As in previous years, the dinner was a sellout with a waiting list due to its location in a smaller hall near the church sanctuary.

“We held the event in the [school] cafeteria one year,” said St. Malachy parishioner Nancy Sangl, who has chaired the program for the past nine years. “The space did accommodate more women. But the school is not attached to the church, and ‘Mary’s WAY’ of the program believes that going into the church with the guests to pray a decade of the rosary before the Blessed Sacrament is a very important part of our evening.”

This underscores a point that Winkle emphasizes to anyone interested in adopting Mary’s WAY at their parish. While leaders should adhere to the core elements and spirit of the program, they are also encouraged to tailor it to what works best for their individual parish.

Mary’s WAY dinners at different parishes for several years, and is “impressed how each parish brings its own unique flair to the events, while remaining focused on the goal: bringing together like-minded women to support them as they strive to say ‘Yes!’ to the call to follow Mary’s example.”

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Mary’s WAY recommends ‘Women Answering Yes’ to God

By Victoria Arthur

Special to The Criterion

North Carolina and Ohio offer the program in 2002. Schutzman brought it to Indiana then-home parish in the Chicago suburbs—providence” was the only way to solace.

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to love getting out the Nativity scene at Christmas and seeing the big Nativity scenes at church,” says Larry.

The collection he and Amy have accumulated “kind of started when I wanted to replace the figures from the set we had that my dad made when I was growing up,” he explains.

“It was 1967. He searched high and low for figures similar to the ones he grew up with. Having no luck, he purchased wooden ones carved by hand at a shop in Oldenburg. But he continued his thrift shop search for other items to add to the stable his father had made more than 50 years prior.

About two weeks after visiting Oldenburg, the Higdons were at a Goodwill store.

“I saw these three camels with wise men,” he says, pointing toward the top of a cabinet adorned by the figures. "They’re the ones who started it all. I felt bad just leaving them there."

“When I was growing up, (crèches) were sacred. We had them blessed. I just couldn’t imagine people giving them away or them getting split up.”

So began what Larry calls the couple’s “mission to save” Nativity sets.

“Something was telling us to keep going”

They shopped in thrift stores in nearby towns.

“It got to be a kind of competition between us who could find more,” says Amy, looking with a playful grin at her husband.

“We bought 15 in one day,” she says, shaking her head at their exuberance.

Larry recounts the couple stopping for lunch and admittance. “We’ve got to stop doing this. It’s expensive, and we have no place to display them. We’ve had fun, and we hate to do it, but we need to quit.”

But as Larry pulled out of their parking space at the restaurant, he says Amy called out in amazement, “Is that St. Joseph?”

Larry drove around the block, returned to the scene and there, propped against a metal utility case, was a statue of Joseph and Mary with the Christ Child in a manger. Mary’s arms and one of Joseph’s arms were missing, all the more reason for the Higdons to save the statue.

“We didn’t know what to make of it,” says Amy. “We’d just talked about quitting, then here’s this scene just sitting by the side of the road like someone wanted it to be found. We were like, ‘Is this a sign? What does this mean?’”

Larry’s youngest sister, Pam Brooks, had passed away in 2015, the year before the Nativity hunt began. Pam loved Christmas.

“It felt like something was telling us to keep going,” he says. “I think she is driving this mission.”

“So much enjoyment, and we get to share it”

Unusual Nativity sightings kept occurring. The couple found a unique Joseph and Jesus statue at a Goodwill in Columbus, then found the matching Mary and the same day at a Goodwill in Greenwood.

“Another time, Amy saw a yard full of ‘free stuff.’ She stopped and found a large Nativity set.

Like the statue by the side of the road, some of the Nativities need a little tender care: “We’ve got a complete hospital kit with glue, string, tape. We call Larry, ‘Dr. Higdon,’” Amy says in a humorous tone.

Larry nods with a grin. “She’ll call me to do something, and I’ll say, ‘I’m in here with a patient performing a critical surgery—I can’t just leave my patient,’” he says, the two laughing at their inside joke.

But laying out the crèches is serious business.

“It takes about three weeks if you do it right,” Larry explains.

The staging process begins in late October or early November with help from Larry’s four grandchildren, whom the couple adopted 11 years ago.

“We were married on July 30, 2008,” says Amy. The couple became guardians of the girls—then ages 2, 3, 4, and 5—just three days later. The adoption process was completed in 2011.

Larry recalls someone telling him, “You realize one day you’re going to have a 13-year-old, 14-year-old, 15-year-old and 16-year-old all at the same time.”

That time has come, and Larry admits

[it is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it will be rediscovered and revived,” the pope said.

At the heart of even the simplest Nativity scene, he said, there is a reminder of “God’s tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness.”

Then, he said, there is the fact that this baby is “the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend at our side. He gave us His son who forgives us and frees us from our sins."

The magic of the season goes deep when someone—child or adult—gazes upon a Nativity scene, he said. And whether or not they experience into words, they come away knowing what “God’s ways are astonishing, for it seems impossible that he should forsake his glory to become a man like us."

“To our astonishment, we see God acting exactly as we do: He sleeps, takes milk from his mother, cries and plays like every other child! As always, He baffles us. He is unpredictable, constantly doing what we never expect,” Pope Francis wrote. “The Nativity scene shows God as he came into our world, but it also makes us reflect on how our life is part of God’s own life. It invites us to become his disciples if we want to attain ultimate meaning in life.”

Knowing that some families keep to the essential characters and setting while others add all sorts of characters and buildings and streams and towns, Pope Francis said even “fanciful additions show that in the new world inaugurated by Jesus there is room for whatever is truly human and for all God’s creatures."

But he focused in the letter on some key elements, starting with the starry night, the simplicity of the stable and the poverty of the shepherds.

Giving the Nativity scene a nighttime backdrop, he said, respects the Gospel account of Jesus’ birth, but also serves to remind people of times when they’ve experienced darkness. The crèche, he said, says, “Even then, God does not abandon us, but is there to answer our crucial questions about the meaning of life. Who am I? Where do I come from? Why was I born at this time in history? Why do I love? Why do I suffer? Why will I die?”

“It was to answer these questions that God became man,” the pope wrote. “His closeness brings light where there is darkness and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering.”

The simple shepherds, who were the first to go to the stable to see the newborn Jesus, are reminders that “the humble and the poor” are the first to welcome the Good News, the pope said. “In particular, a way from the time of its Franciscan origins, the Nativity scene has invited us to ‘feel and touch’ the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the incarnation.”

That, in turn, calls Jesus’ disciples “to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross,” the pope wrote. “It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need. Jesus, ‘gentle and humble in heart,’ was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognize what is essential and to act accordingly,” he said.

Mary is a model of discipleship, faithfully accepting God’s will for her life and sharing him with others, inviting them to obey him. Joseph, too, accepts the role God assigned him, protecting the baby Jesus, teaching him and raising him.

And, of course, the pope wrote, “when, at Christmas, we place the statue of the Infant Jesus in the manger, the Nativity scene suddenly comes alive. God appears as a child, for us to take into our arms.”

The whole scene, he said, reminds adult Catholics of their childhood and of learning the faith from their parents and grandparents. Each year, it should be a reminder that the faith needs to be passed on to one’s children and grandchildren.

Standing together before a Nativity scene, in wonder and awe, he said, is a simple way to start. †
Like a prophet, John the Baptist preached the coming of the Messiah

By David Gibson

The story of St. John the Baptist really begins when he ... But wait! His story is multifaceted in ways that history often over looks. How should it start?

It typically starts today with John preaching to crowds who came to the Judean desert to hear him and receive his baptism. Perhaps, though, its starting point could be located some time when Israel was younger and its people began to anticipate the future work of someone like John.

A belief developed in Israel that somehow the rather ancient prophet Elijah would return one day to announce the coming of God’s kingdom, serving as a forerunner to the Messiah by helping prepare the people for his arrival. Belief that there is just one God came under threat in Israel during Elijah’s time. There would be good reason to esteem Elijah’s legacy as a prophet of the one, true God.

“I am sending to you Elijah the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes,” the Lord says in the Old Testament Book of Malachi (Mal 3:23).

Some speculate that people were inclined to think Elijah could return because they were not certain to actually die. Scripture declares that Elijah “went up to heaven in a whirlwind” (2 Kgs 2:11).

According to Scripture, Elijah dressed in a “hairy garment” and wore “a leather belt about his waist” (2 Kgs 1:8). Similarly, John the Baptist “wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist” (Mt 3:4). Did this austere appearance of John remind many of Elijah, causing them to wonder if the moment of his return had arrived? John would serve “in the spirit and power of Elijah,” St. Luke’s Gospel affirms (Lk 1:17).

To begin John the Baptist’s story, might it help to ask why the first Christians went to such lengths to keep the memory of him alive? Scripture mentions him numerous times. Did the Gospel writers convey his story to future generations simply due to a role he had, the function fulfilled by announcing in the desert that the one coming after him, Jesus Christ, would be “mightier than I,” someone whose sandals he would not be worthy to carry (Mt 3:11), and by calling all to live justly (Lk 3:10-14)?

That was a role of great distinction. Still, it seems that for early Christians John was remarkable both in what he did and who he was at a key time in their history. Some today may know John the Baptist best for his violent and unjust execution, depicted in films and opera. Herod’s wife Herodias bore a grudge against John for considering the king’s marriage to her unlawful. Herod acceded on one occasion to her wish that he have John beheaded. Her wish was communicated to Herod by Herodias’ daughter, infinitely known to history as Salome. Scripture says John’s head was brought to the girl on a platter (Mt 14:6-11).

But surely it is less with his execution than his birth that John the Baptist’s story should begin. In welcoming their child’s birth, his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, must have sensed that his future promised something wonderful. John was touched by God from the start.

The announcement of John’s coming birth appears at the beginning of Luke’s Gospel. And guess who makes the announcement? It is the angel Gabriel, always remembered by Christians as the one who bore the news to Mary that she would become, most surprisingly, the mother of Jesus.

The angel tells Mary in Luke’s Gospel that Jesus “will be great and will be called Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:30-33). Notably, Luke’s Gospel says that Elizabeth and Mary were relatives (Lk 1:36).

Gabriel announced John’s coming birth to Zechariah. He and Elizabeth, an older couple, had no children. They hardly could imagine this news. “Many will rejoice over this child’s birth,” said Gabriel. He “will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord” (Lk 1:15-16).

It must have been no small thing for Luke to speak of the Spirit’s presence in John the Baptist’s life and work. Luke also is recognized as the author of a second New Testament volume, the Acts of the Apostles. Its opening pages describe how the Spirit “like a strong driving wind” (Acts 2:2), came to the earliest Christians on the first Pentecost. The Spirit is viewed in Acts as powerful, a unifying force enabling the many gathered in Jerusalem at that moment, from different areas, to understand each other, even though they did not know each other’s languages. To be filled with the Spirit was, for Luke, an amazing gift of God.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 3:3), words of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah are applied to John the Baptist directly, clarifying why today he is considered a model for Christians during the Advent weeks preceding Christmas.

Thus, to hear him is to hear the “voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord’” (Mt 3:3). (Photo: Gregory A. Shemitz, St. Francis of Assisi Church in Greenlawn, N.Y.)

“Prepare the way of the Lord,” says the Lord in the Old Testament Book of Malachi (Mal 3:23). The angel Gabriel announces John’s birth in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 1:5-25). John the Baptist’s story should begin when he was touched by God from the start. In welcoming their child’s birth, his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, must have sensed that his future promised something wonderful. John was touched by God from the start. The angel Gabriel announces John’s coming birth in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 1:5-25). John the Baptist’s story should begin when he was touched by God from the start. In welcoming their child’s birth, his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, must have sensed that his future promised something wonderful. John was touched by God from the start. The angel Gabriel announces John’s coming birth in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 1:5-25).
For the Journey/Effie Carladora

Allow God to be born in you and from you during Advent

It was a chilly March night in a small Midwestern town. Maybe it was windy, because in my memory those nights are always windy.

I had a room-and-board arrangement in the tiny upstairs of an old woman’s house. She was barely bordering on senility. She was probably lonely, but I was not a part of my company, but I didn’t particularly enjoy her and, at least initially, wished I could be anywhere else.

I had graduated from a Jesuit university the spring before and had just come out on a teaching job in a large Catholic school in the city. That was where I found myself as a 25-year-old teaching in this small town Catholic school needed an English and history teacher. So, here I was, seemingly at Earth’s end.

Advent began for me in that small upstairs bedroom. You might wonder what a young, lonely lady in March has to do with Advent. Advent, I think, can be more than the few weeks before the feast of Christmas. More than a season, although of course it’s all of that, too. Advent can be an idea born of hope.

Advent is the beginning. Advent is joyful expectation, when you accept that miracles happen, you understand what it means when we say we believe “in things seen and unseen.” Mostly, Advent is the time when we prepare for the birth of Jesus. What’s the point of this crazy season, this preparation, if we don’t think that this Jesus who was born in flesh on this side of the Second Vatican Council. But in the rural area where I lived, Vatican II hadn’t yet taken root. Most of the school curriculum was still infused with images of God being frightening. Yes, God was loving, but he had a brutal herald prepared for the British. His music fills the house and his art are beautiful things that give him satisfaction and are his preparation, if we don’t think that this Jesus was born in flesh on this side of the Second Vatican Council. But in the rural area where I lived, Vatican II hadn’t yet taken root. Most of the school curriculum was still infused with images of God being frightening. Yes, God was loving, but he had a brutal herald prepared for the British.

I left college thinking that God

I thought of Annie was invited to sit at the popular table today at lunch,” Margaret explained, as she walks in the door, her phone ping ping ping ping ping. “I think that if you’re a person who’s interested in what’s meaningful in her life. I’ll change the name and date the story. It’s an example of a daily rundown.

“Annie’s invited to sit at the popular kids’ table today at lunch,” Margaret explained, as she walks in the door, her phone ping ping ping ping ping. “I think that if you’re a person who’s interested in what’s meaningful in the children’s lives, you should see this. It’s an example of a daily rundown.

“Annie is reminded of her required reading assignment for this year from her Christmas wish list in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, complete with a video of a family featuring models wearing the items she’s requesting. This is quite a switch from wish lists of the past that complained to my own that I am a person with Advent because it helps remind us of the interior life of reflection, silence and preparation, if we don’t think that this Jesus was born in flesh on this side of the Second Vatican Council. But in the rural area where I lived, Vatican II hadn’t yet taken root. Most of the school curriculum was still infused with images of God being frightening. Yes, God was loving, but he had a brutal herald prepared for the British.

I was 27 years old. Three years ago, I had a small investment account managed by a broker named Phil Genusa, whom I called Effie Carladora, a member of St. Susanna School, a member of St. Susanna School, a member of St. Susanna School. She had her husband was dying of cancer in hospice at home. She said her husband, Adam, enjoyed listening to classical music and that he had been a music lover.
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, December 8, 2019

• Isaiah 11:1-10
• Romans 15:4-9
• Matthew 3:1-12

Indicating the importance of Advent and the message of these readings, the Church this week celebrates the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (This feast will occur on Dec. 8.) This weekend’s first reading is from Isaiah. The prophet was unhappy with the turn of events of his time. As so was often the case with the ancient Hebrew prophets, Isaiah saw the misfortunes facing his people as the result of their own disloyalty to God. His words, however, were neither menacing nor hostile. Rather, they were reassuring. They declared the prophet’s firm belief that, despite the sins of the people, God would not forsake them. Furthermore, in due time, God’s holy will will be vindicated. Wrongs would be righted. Errors would be corrected. Justice and peace would prevail. St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans supplies the second reading. In this reading, St. Paul repeats the basic message given earlier by Isaiah. It is a testimony to God’s love. Throughout history, St. Paul maintained, God guided the chosen people to righteousness and ultimately to union with him. Paul sees God as the source of all patience and encouragement. Human failings notwithstanding, God’s love is constant. The Apostle also counsels the Christian Romans to accept each other in love and good will. After all, he insists, Christian Romans to accept each other in spite of their own disloyalty to God. Their lack of obedience to God only strengthened the reign of sin in the land. Thus, their personal failings contributed to the burdens weighing heavily upon the entire society. Understandably, he challenged the people to purge themselves of this self-interest and sin and humbly to turn to God.

Reflection
Throughout Advent, the Church calls us to receive God in our hearts. The Lord’s coming at Christmas reveals to us that God will empower us in our quest for holiness. It frankly places before us our own sins and the sins of all humanity. John himself was stark and direct, absolutely and completely committed to God. His words are sharp and unequivocal. In like manner, for our own good, the Church calls us to a thorough examination of conscience. Using the very words and example of John the Baptist, the Church bluntly urges us to put first things first. Following worldly self-interests will lead nowhere—certainly not to God. Advent’s purpose is not just to plan for a memorial of Christ’s birth. It primarily calls us to make our hearts fitting dwelling places for the Lord. To be such fitting dwelling places, we must rid ourselves of sin. It is that simple.

Isaiah and Paul remind us that God will empower us in our quest for holiness. God wants us to live. He loves us. •

From the earliest days of Christianity, John the Baptist has been a favorite figure. His absolute commitment to the all-embracing majesty of God’s perfect order has made him a paragon of devotion. John was clearly on a mission. Testimony to this is plentiful in the New Testament. Travel in ancient Palestine was understandably rare. It was very difficult and time-consuming. It was unpredictable and risky. Very few would ever have traveled for diversion or leisure. That John journeyed far and wide evidenced his sense of mission, and he encountered many people. John was not hesitant or vague in confronting sin. He chastised their listeners, in effect, for their differences of opinion. Self-interest drove them too much. Their lack of obedience to God only strengthened the reign of sin in the land. Thus, their personal failings contributed to the burdens weighing heavily upon the entire society.

Sunday, December 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Genesis 3:9-15, 20
Psalm 98:1-4
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, December 10

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 10-13
Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday, December 11

St. Damasus I, pope
Psalm 140:23-31
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday, December 12

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

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Low-gluten hosts are available for people suffering from celiac disease

A low-gluten host is one that has been produced using grain that is free from gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. For people with celiac disease, consuming gluten can cause severe digestive problems and damage to the small intestine, which can lead to malnutrition and other health issues.

Question: Could you explain why the Church uses gluten-free hosts in communion services?

Response: The Church uses gluten-free hosts in communion services as a matter of pastoral care and pastoral accompaniment. This practice is especially important for those with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, as it allows them to receive the Eucharist in a way that is safe and healthy for them. It is also a symbol of the Church’s commitment to inclusivity and compassion for all its members.

Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic Courier

The Journeys of God
SILENCE
By M. Lynell Chamberlain

I stand in the silence of the new fallen snow. Nothing to hear but the cries of my soul. As I stand in the silence of the new fallen snow, I cannot speak regarding your specific case. It is my prayer that the Church’s grounds in the process of nullification (commonly known as an annulment) since I know only what you have told me in your question about your previous marriage.

In the Catholic Church’s view, adultery itself is not a valid reason for an annulment. For an annulment, one must be able to go back to the start of the marriage and show either that the couple was prohibited from marrying by the laws of the Church, or that the consent of one or both of the spouses was invalid.

Some common grounds for that lack of consent (from the website of the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y.) are: “inability to assume the essential obligations of marriage for psychological reasons,” or “willful exclusion of essential elements or properties of marriage, such as children, fidelity or permanence.” So, while the fact of adultery itself does not render a marriage invalid, it is possible that ineligibility could offer evidence that one or both of the spouses had not entered the marriage with the proper commitment required for a valid marriage to come into existence. Practically speaking, I would think that the sooner into the marriage the adultery took place, the easier it might be to show a lack of proper commitment at the outset.

One of the Church’s grounds in the Code of Canon Law is “error of the subject” which is “error concerning the unity... of marriage” (#1099). As the Archdiocese of Atlanta explains on its website, some questions to be raised are these: “At the time of marriage, did either you or your former spouse believe that it was acceptable to have other sexual partners after marriage? Was there anything in the family background to explain the belief that marriage was not an exclusive (totally faithful) relationship?”

And so, I would say to the writer of your question: If you simply offered the fact of your spouse’s adultery in petitioning for an annulment, I understand why it was denied. But if you can go back to the very time of the marriage ceremony and show that your spouse lacked the requisite consent to exclusivity, you might want to re-submit the case to your diocesan tribunal.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at ukfdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12201.)

Friday, December 13

St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalm 1:1-4, 8-9
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
Psalm 146:6-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11
Most Americans support life in prison over death penalty, says new poll

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Most Americans support life in prison over death penalty according to a new Gallup poll released on Nov. 24, revealing a shift in the majority support for the death penalty.

The current poll, with a margin of sampling error plus or minus 3 points, found that 57 percent of Americans believe that souls are close by and in touch. My sister is just the second more time people said they thought life in prison was a better punishment than the death penalty; in 2007, they did so by 1 percentage point, with 48 percent favoring life in prison and 47 percent favoring the death penalty.

The poll, based on results from telephone interviews conducted Oct. 14-31 with a random sample of 1,526 adults in the U.S., showed 60 percent prefer that convicted murder receive a sentence of life imprisonment, while 36 percent said capital punishment is inadmissible because it is an attack on the dignity and inadmissibility of the death penalty.
Foundation marks 25 years of supporting the Church in the Holy Land

By Sean Gallagher

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was founded 25 years ago to help native Christians of the region where Jesus was born, and to continue the Church to continue to live there under difficult political and economic conditions.

Catholics in central and southern Indiana have for many years been among the FFHL’s strongest supporters. The Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, who has led the foundation from the start, recently visited Indianapolis to meet with some of its donors.

He spoke with The Criterion about the continuing work of the FFHL, and of the conditions currently facing Catholics in the Holy Land.

“The Catholics in Indiana love their Church,” Father Peter said. “And they’ve become more informed of the situation that is happening in the Holy Land. They have a sensitivity. I think, for their Church, their heritage, their roots. They know that this is in the Holy Land. And because of that, they’re the ones who want to make sure that there will always be a Christian presence there.”

Another factor for the strength of support of Catholics in central and southern Indiana for the FFHL is that many of them have taken pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Additionally, many priests serving in archdiocesan parishes have visited the Holy Land and used their experience of the region to shape their homilies. “It’s a big factor,” Father Peter said. “Once they get there, they’re made aware of the problems facing the Christians there. It’s an important avenue if you want to know more about what’s happening.”

Over its 25 years, the FFHL has provided college scholarships to 700 Holy Land Christians so they can enter professional fields of work. “They had nothing. They were dirt poor,” Father Peter said. “Now these people are doctors, architects, nurses, pharmacists. If that isn’t helping to build up the Christian society in the Holy Land, I don’t know what we’re doing then.”

With its track record of helping young Christians build a life in the Holy Land where they can stay there, the FFHL is attracting attention from more Christians in the region. “We’re getting more and more young people coming to us every year asking to secure a college education,” Father Peter said. “We’re now very well known in the Holy Land. They know there’s an average where they can be assisted and get help.”

The FFHL also supports the ministry of the Franciscans in the Holy Land who have cared for its many holy sites for hundreds of years. “They were recently given the task for bolstering the ground underneath the ‘edicule,’ the part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem that is believed to be the place where Christ was buried,” Father Peter said. “The two-year project, Father Peter estimated, will cost between $3-$6 million. He was encouraged, though, that donators quickly stepped forward with $3 million.”

“That’s another part of the Franciscan Foundation, maintaining the tomb of Christ,” Father Peter said. “It’s a big project.”

Although Father Peter and the FFHL have been dedicated for a quarter of a century to strengthening the Church in the Holy Land, the threats to the faithful there and the motivations for them to leave are as strong as ever.

That doesn’t discourage the priest, though, because he, as a follower of St. Francis of Assisi, has taken the long view of the life of the Church in the Holy Land.

“The Franciscans have been there for 800 years,” Father Peter said. “We’ve been taking up challenges in different areas, some more serious than others. The work we are doing may seem like a drop in the bucket. But every person is important. We’re doing it slowly, but surely. There were 700 families that were going to leave. They’re not leaving.”

(For more information about the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, visit ffhl.org)

classified directory

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

Batesville Deanery
Dec. 6, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Martin Campus of All Saints, Dearborn County
Dec. 10, 7:30 a.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
Dec. 10, 10 a.m. at St. Mary, Green County
Dec. 16, 6 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Campus of St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County
Dec. 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville

Bloomington Deanery
Dec. 11, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo and St. Paul the Apostle, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center
Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
Dec. 19, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington

Connersville Deanery
Dec. 11, after 6 p.m. Mass at St. Gabriel, Connersville
Dec. 16, 8 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
Dec. 20, 6 p.m. at Holy Family Campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi, Fortville
Dec. 16, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Lourdes), at Our Lady of Lourdes
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Philip Neri
Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Greenfield

Additionally, reconciliation in the East Deanery is available on the following days:
Mon.-Fri. after 5:15 p.m. daily Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
Every Tuesday at St. Mary, 6-7 p.m.
Dec. 9, 6 a.m.-7 a.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5335 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

Indianapolis North Deanery
Dec. 15, 2 p.m. deenistry service at St. Simon the Apostle
Dec. 16, 7 p.m. deenistry service at St. Luke the Evangelist

Indianapolis South Deanery
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Jude and Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, at St. Jude
Dec. 14, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
Dec. 23, 10 a.m. at St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch, at St. Mark the Evangelist
Dec. 23, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
Dec. 23, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas More, Mooresville (West Deanery), at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Susanna, Plainfield, at St. Susanna
Dec. 23, 7 p.m. for St. Thomas More, Mooresville, and St. Ann (South Deanery), at St. Ann

New Albany Deanery
Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navillot, Floyd County
Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul Campus of St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
Dec. 22, 4 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight

Additionally, other opportunities for reconciliation in the New Albany Deanery are as follows:
Dec. 18, 10 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Every Wednesday at St. Michael, Charlestown

Seymour Deanery
Dec. 10, 7 p.m. for St. Bartholomew, Columbus, and Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, at St. Bartholomew
Dec. 11, 6 p.m. at St. Joseph University, at St. John the Baptist, Greensburg
Dec. 12, 6 p.m. at Church of the American Martyrs, Scottsburg
Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at Holy Family, at St. Anthony of Padua, Franklin
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour

Tell City Deanery
Dec. 15, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, City

Terre Haute Deanery
Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
Dec. 18, 1:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton

Additionally, other opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:
First Sunday of the month at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, 8:30 a.m., and St. Paul the Apostle in Greencastle, after 11 a.m. Mass for 3-3 p.m. Every Sunday at Annunciation, Brazil, 8:45 a.m.; at St. Patrick, 8:30 a.m.; and St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle, noon

For more information and/or to submit a letter of interest, resume, and professional references contact: Mr. Rob Rash
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Principal
Father Thomas Scicena Memorial High School, Father Thomas Scicena Memorial High School, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, East Deanery high school, is accepting applications through January 15, 2020 for the position of Principal. The ideal candidate will value and articulate the Catholic character of the school, demonstrate a thorough understanding of Indiana Graduation Pathways, and have proven skills and experience in leading and supporting faculty and programs in service to students and mission. Applicants must possess an educational administrator’s license or have made substantial progress toward this license and be a practicing Catholic.

For more information and/or to submit a letter of interest, resume, and professional references contact: Mr. Rob Rash
Assistant Superintendent
Office of Catholic Schools
1400 North Meridian Street
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317-236-1544
rrash@archindy.org

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Principal
Father Thomas Scicena Memorial High School,

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Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

School at St. Mary-of-the-Woods

The school at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in St. Mary-of-the-Woods is seen in this photo from 1967. The school was founded by St. Theodora Guérin in 1842 and operated until 1969. The school building shown in this photo was built in 1923.

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

Combatting racism

Professor Agustin Fuentes, chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Ind., delivers a Hesburgh lecture on race and racism on Nov. 13 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis. His lecture, titled “What Race Is and What Race Is Not,” drew a crowd of about 200 parishioners and guests. His visit was sponsored by the Notre Dame Club of Indianapolis and the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish community conversations committee. Fuentes’ presentation was part of the parish’s efforts to heighten awareness of racism and combat it. Under the theme “That They All May Be One” (Jn. 17:21)—Racial Justice Through Reconciliation, those efforts include hosting diversity dinners, implicit bias training and routinely offering prayers for racial healing at Mass. The lecture may be viewed on the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish website at: www.staindy.org/church/sta-community-conversations. (Submitted photo)

Like Sister de Lourdes and Sister Florence Kruczek (right), 91, some 30,000 senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have spent their lives doing the Lord’s work. Most served for little or no pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious offers vital support for necessities, such as medications and nursing care. Please be generous.

Roughly 94 percent of donations aid senior religious.

Please give at your local parish December 7–8.

To donate by mail:
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Mission Office
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Make check payable to Mission Office with Religious Retirement on the memo line.

retiredreligious.org

“Live with good humor and just do the Lord’s work,” says Franciscan Sister de Lourdes Okoniewski (left), 87.