



The

Criterion

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A gift to many

Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage built community, relationships at Marian, page 3.

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Supreme Court upholds temporary stop on federal executions

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court has left in place a preliminary injunction prohibiting the Trump administration from carrying out the first federal executions in 16 years.

In an order handed down on the evening of Dec. 6, the justices unanimously denied an application by the U.S. Department of Justice to lift a federal court injunction blocking the federal government from carrying out four executions scheduled for December 2019 and January 2020. The executions were to take place at the Federal Corrections Complex in Terre Haute.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson welcomed the decision.

“The taking of life weighs heavily on the conscience of both individuals and society,” he said. “While we mourn victims of all forms of violence, stand in solidarity with grieving families and hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their crimes, let us never lose sight of the dignity as well as the possibility of conversion and redemption of every person.”

Providence Sister Barbara Battista, justice promoter for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods just west of Terre Haute, said her initial reaction to the news was “relief for all the guys scheduled to be executed.

“But then following right after was this sense that this up-and-down and up-and-down is mental torture for them, and for their families and the families of their victims,” she said. “I don’t get the impression that we as a nation really understand that these are regular human people whose lives are being held in the balance.

“So truly I was relieved. It’s a little bit of a breather, and yet our work continues.”

In November, U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan of the District of Columbia temporarily halted the upcoming executions of four federal death-row inmates who had challenged the constitutionality of the lethal injection protocol to be used in their executions.

When U.S. Attorney General William Barr announced in July that the government was reinstating the federal death penalty after a 16-year hiatus, he said the executions would use a single drug instead of a three-drug protocol used in recent federal

See EXECUTIONS, page 9

A recipe for success



Sixth-graders Yasmin Carlos, left, Miguel Macias, Jonathan Villegas and David Anzurez line up for lunch at St. Anthony School in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Are these five Catholic schools serving up the best healthy lunches in the archdiocese?

By John Shaughnessy

Flashing a smile, Cindy Greer makes a statement that’s sure to be challenged by her fellow principals and parents across the archdiocese.

Looking out across the lunchroom filled with her students at St. Anthony School in Indianapolis, principal Greer declares, “I have the cutest kids—and the best families!”

It’s exactly what you want every principal at a Catholic elementary school in the archdiocese to say. And

while there will undoubtedly be good-natured challenges to Greer’s sincere boast at the next principals’ meeting, there is another reason to brag that would be harder to dispute.

That’s the school lunch program at St. Anthony where the menu on a recent day included honey-lime chicken, rice and corn, supplemented by a trip to the fruit-and-veggie bar where the selection included celery sticks, florets of cauliflower, red grapes and slices of watermelon.

Then there are the large glass water

dispensers usually found in a trendy, healthy-food restaurant, where the water is infused on different school days with hints of cucumber, a blend of pineapple and mint, or a combination of strawberry and basil.

It’s all a revelation—and a difference-maker—for the 278 students at St. Anthony, the vast majority of whom qualify for the free meal program that is 100 percent funded by the federal government.

“We have so many healthy choices,”

See LUNCHES, page 8

Fire affects two Indianapolis pro-life organizations, but the commitment to continue the work prevails

By Natalie Hoefler

A building fire on Indianapolis’ northwest side on Nov. 30 caused severe damage to two Catholic-founded pro-life entities: Magnificat Family Medicine, LLC, and 1st Choice for Women pregnancy resource center.

No one was injured in the two-alarm late-night fire that took about two hours to extinguish. But due to the extent of damage, the suites of both the medical practice and the ministry are expected to be declared a total loss.

At the time of publication, the cause of the fire was still under investigation, according to the Pike Township Fire Department. Their report estimates property damage and content losses at \$1.25 million.

See FIRE, page 8



This overhead drone shot on Dec. 1 shows damage to an office building on the northwest side of Indianapolis that occurred late on Nov. 30. Two pro-life organizations were affected. 1st Choice for Women, which offers free peer-counseling, pregnancy tests and ultrasounds, is located below the second-floor area where the fire started. Magnificat Family Medicine is located on the second floor to the right of the fire damage. (Submitted photo by Colin Landberg/Pike Township Fire Department)

Archbishop Buechlein Award



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson receives the first-ever Archbishop Buechlein Award, presented by Dr. Lawrence V. McCrobie, media relations director of the Archdiocese of Louisville/ Diocese of Owensboro Section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre during a ceremony at St. Mary Parish in New Albany on Nov. 2. The award was given to Archbishop Thompson by the group for his work in defense of Catholic social teaching, for his work defending the teachings of the Church and for his continued pastoral approach to handling difficult situations with an understanding of canon law and the needs of the archdiocese. The group intends to give the award yearly to clergy, bishops and laity who exhibit these same qualities in Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana—all states in which the late Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, former shepherd of Archdiocese of Indianapolis, ministered. (Submitted photo)

Fifth annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference to be held on Feb. 22, 2020

The fifth annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference will take place from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 22 at East Central High School in St. Leon. Organized by members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, the conference will feature presentations by Dr. Scott Hahn, Marians of the Immaculate Father Donald Calloway and Doug Barry. The title of the conference is taken from the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, which calls on the faithful to "put on the armor of God" (Eph 6:11) in their spiritual battle against evil. In addition to the speakers, the conference will include the celebration of the Mass, the opportunity to participate in the sacrament of penance, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish, is scheduled to be the principal

celebrant of the conference Mass. Registration for the conference will begin at 6:30 a.m. Last year's conference drew more than 1,200 participants from across Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. Advance registration for the conference is \$40 per person, \$55 on the day of the conference and \$25 per person for high school and college students. Clergy and religious may attend free of charge, but must register online. Lunch will be provided for all conference participants. (For more information or to register online, visit www.e6catholicmensconference.com, send an e-mail to contact@e6catholicmensconference.com or call 812-576-4302.) †

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad announce Christmas liturgies

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

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
Dec. 24—5 p.m. Mass, then 10 p.m. Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the principal celebrant. Please note the Mass at 10 p.m. is a change from the midnight Mass celebrated at the Cathedral in

years past. Parking will be available for both Masses from 4 p.m. to midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. Dec. 25—10:30 a.m. Mass.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church
Dec. 24—Vigils (Liturgy of the Hours) 7 p.m. CT, and Mass 10 p.m. CT
Dec. 25—Mass 9:30 a.m. CT
For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 7 – 24, 2019

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|---|--|
| <p>December 7–19 "Ad limina" visit to meet with the pope and other Vatican officials, Vatican City</p> <p>December 22 – 11 a.m. Mass, installation of pastor and dedication of renovated church at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church, Indianapolis</p> | <p>December 24 – 10 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><i>(Schedule subject to change.)</i></p> |
|---|--|

Court won't take challenge to Ky. law requiring ultrasound before abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court on Dec. 9 declined to take up a challenge to a Kentucky ultrasound law that requires a physician or qualified technician to perform an ultrasound on a woman seeking an abortion and show the screen images to her. The petition to the court did not get the required four justices to sign on to hear an appeal of an April 4 ruling by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturning a lower court decision that the law violated doctors' freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment. The Kentucky Ultrasound Informed Consent Act can take effect immediately. It was passed in early 2017 by Kentucky's House and Senate and signed into law by then-Gov. Matt Bevin. A Kentucky abortion provider, EMW Women's Surgical, filed suit against the law on free speech grounds.

"March for Life applauds the U.S. Supreme Court decision today upholding a Kentucky ultrasound law," said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life. "Women facing an unexpected pregnancy deserve to have as much medically and technically accurate information as possible when they



Jeanne Mancini

are making what could be the most important decision of their lives." The law—passed by the House 83-12 and by the Senate 32-5 in January 2017—requires a physician or qualified technician to perform an ultrasound on a woman seeking an abortion and show the screen images to her. The doctor or technician will be required to inform the mother what the images show, including any organs that are visible and the size of the fetus. The provider also must seek to detect the fetus' heartbeat. The law allows the woman to refuse to view the ultrasound, and she may ask the provider to mute the heartbeat if audible. "Consistent with the Supreme Court's direction that mothers considering abortion may be given accurate, non-misleading information about abortion and the nature of human life," said Catherine Glenn Foster, president

and CEO of Americans United for Life, "today's decision confirms that women deserve the truth, and cannot give real informed consent to an abortion unless facilities are transparent and honest about what abortion really is." She added: "That's a right that was denied to me when I was 19 years old and making a difficult, life-changing decision, and I am so relieved that going forward, the women of Kentucky will have the opportunity I never did."



Catherine Glenn Foster

The Catholic Association's legal adviser, Andrea Picciotti-Bayer, and Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, likewise hailed the high court's decision. It "affirms common sense, transparency and the democratic process," said Picciotti-Bayer. "Rather than keep women in the dark, Kentucky requires all medical professionals—including abortionists—to disclose vital information related to a woman's pregnancy and her developing child. Women deserve to know all the facts before making such a consequential decision." Said Dannenfelser: "Modern ultrasound technology opens an unprecedented window into the womb, providing undisputable evidence of the humanity of the unborn child. The abortion industry has proven incapable of policing itself and will stop at nothing to keep vulnerable women in the dark for the sake of profit, which is why state laws protecting women's right to informed consent are so important." Students for Life, via Twitter, said: "This is another pro-life law that will be allowed to stand and will help protect preborn babies from abortion." This fall, the Supreme Court said it will hear oral arguments in March in a challenge to a Louisiana law—the Unsafe Abortion Protection Act—that would require abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. The case is *June Medical Services L.L.C. v. Gee*. †



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Building community and relationships, instilling Franciscan values are all part of Sister Norma Rocklage's legacy at Marian University

By Sean Gallagher

OLDENBURG—For the past three decades, Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage found great life in the youthful community of Marian University in Indianapolis.

Since the summer, though, she's lived among retired sisters of her community in their Oldenburg motherhouse. She's found vitality there, too, but one with a different focus than the college students who were her friends for so long.

"I miss the energy and the excitement of young people," Sister Norma, 86, said in an interview with *The Criterion*. "But I'm gradually moving into understanding the richness of being with people who are preparing, not for a greater career in the world, so to speak, but for something else."

Although Sister Norma no longer lives at Marian, the university community still lives in her heart.

And she's confident that the Franciscan values that have been at the heart of her life since entering the Oldenburg Franciscan community in 1951 will continue to live on at Marian as the presence of the sisters there diminishes.

She worked tirelessly at this while serving from 1989-2004 as Marian's vice president for mission effectiveness, and from 2005 until her retirement last summer as its executive director of education, formation and outreach.

During that time, she spearheaded the effort to place what are known at Marian as "sponsorship values"—the dignity of the individual, responsible stewardship, peace, justice and reconciliation—at the heart of the university's mission.

Those values aren't just inscribed on the fountain that stands in the center of Marian's campus. They are now consciously applied in the shaping of all aspects of the Marian community.

"It's a great comfort to know that the power of the Spirit is working," said Sister Norma. "It's not just Norma. And it wasn't just the sisters. It can live without us. We did our part."

'She knew how to listen'

Sister Norma worked hard for years to renew the sponsorship values at Marian by serving on committees and meeting regularly with faculty members.

It took many years for Marian to get where it is now with the sponsorship values so integrated into its life. She recalled how, when she came to the campus in 1989, the school's administrators and faculty did not have a good understanding of how the charism of the Oldenburg Franciscans should guide its mission.

But Sister Norma worked at it and wouldn't let up.

"But before long, it began to pick up



Lesley Bartone, administrative coordinator for the Office of Mission and Ministry at Marian University in Indianapolis, gives a kiss to Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage on July 15 in Marian's Allison Mansion during a farewell reception for Sister Norma, who retired after nearly 30 years of ministry at the school. She was also at Marian from 1965-74, teaching Latin and Greek and serving as academic dean. (Submitted photo)

and people began living it," she said. "I shared the Franciscan charism. That's who I was. The DNA of Marian University had always been the DNA of our Franciscan community."

For many at Marian, Sister Norma helped imbue the life of the university with the sponsorship values—and in the process becoming a pillar of its community—simply through her constant positive presence at campus events.

"She felt it was really important to be present at many things to show support," said Marian assistant theology professor Donna Proctor. "She had such a deep devotion to Marian. She'd show up to all kinds of things, even if just for a few minutes."

That impressed the students, faculty and staff a lot."

Her presence alone didn't make the difference, though, Proctor said. "She knew how to listen, and that's part of that presence. She took you seriously. You always felt like she dropped everything for you."



Donna Proctor

Sister Norma's presence to the university community, combined with her efforts to help those in need and to advocate for justice, helped others at Marian see the sponsorship values in action.

She did this in recent years by helping so-called "dreamers" become students at Marian. They are young people originally brought to the United States as minors by parents without documentation. Since 2012, they have been able to avoid deportation through the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which is known as DACA.

"She was known in the community for being somebody who is deeply concerned about people who are poor or struggling, or being abused by the justice system," Proctor said.



Maggie Stephens

That impressed Marian senior Maggie Stephens, who also saw her work for justice as inseparable from her relationship with God.

"She did so much work, especially with Latino students, helping them to come to Marian and get an education," said

Stephens, who worked closely with Sister Norma for three years as her assistant. "She was very, very trusting in the Lord. She turned to prayer all the time, whether she was anxious about something or upset, or needed guidance or help with something.

"Her closeness with God was notable to the people around her. That trusting relationship was very evident."

'Like being in the presence of a saint'

Relationships. With God. With students, faculty and staff. With people in need and those yearning for justice. And building community among them all was the way that Sister Norma said she lived out her Franciscan values at Marian and shared them with others.

"To be a Franciscan is to be interested in community and deep relationships," she said. "I felt that when you're around people, it's not so much what you say, it's that you're with them and being open to

receive from them."

"Her Franciscan simplicity is probably her greatest legacy," Proctor said. "The students, faculty and staff saw it. It was always a reminder that we have to not be so acquisitive. We have to remember that we're part of a community."

While Sister Norma sought to share her Franciscan values with the Marian community, she found that they helped her be a better Franciscan.

"As people began to realize what the Franciscan charism was, they, in their own unique ways, began to live it," Sister Norma said. "It enriched me and helped me to know ways that I could live it better. I learned so much from them."

Jim Lerner learned an ordinary yet profound holiness from Sister Norma. A professor of music and humanities at Marian for more than 30 years, Lerner sees his friend as a living saint.

"You think about being in the presence of somebody who's very holy. I would feel out of place," said Lerner. "But with Sister Norma, you just felt very much part of it. You didn't realize that you were in the presence of somebody really extraordinary. I think that was her gift."

"It was like being in the presence of a saint."

The love for Sister Norma shared by Lerner, Proctor and Stephens extends to generations of students and others in the Marian community who have known her during the past three decades.

That love was expressed in a flood of congratulations and happy memories in comments posted last summer on Marian's Facebook page when her retirement was announced.

"It surprised me and brought me to tears. I cried," Sister Norma said of reading the comments. "I didn't know that I had touched people that much. It overwhelmed me. I loved being there with them."

"I was grateful that they caught the spirit that I really loved them and valued them. I may have been a gift to them, but they were a gift to me." †



Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage smiles during a July 15 farewell reception for her held at Allison Mansion on the campus of Marian University in Indianapolis. She ministered at Marian for nearly 30 years before retiring earlier this year. (Submitted photo)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
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Editorial



Advent candles and a wreath help bring focus to each week before the coming of our Lord. The rose candle is for Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, a special time of joyous celebration as Christmas nears. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Advent is a time of ardent desire, of longing for Christ

“When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #524).

Advent is the time of year when we give voice to the ardent desire for Christ’s coming again. Advent is a time of longing for God’s love, which was made manifest in the holy child of Bethlehem. Love was born that first Christmas day, and God’s love was fully revealed in the man who was destined to suffer and die for us.

We renew our longing for God’s love each year as we anticipate Christ’s coming again. We remind ourselves that God the Father so loved the world that he sent his only Son to “pitch his tent among us” and take away the sins of the world. We cry out in prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus!” because we know that he alone can save us from our sins.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who dwell in the land of gloom a light has shone” (Is 9:1). The prophet Isaiah announces the great rejoicing that takes place when the light of Christ is allowed to shine in our weary world. He invites us to celebrate the great victory that is achieved when love conquers death, and when peace is permanently established in our hearts, homes and communities.

It’s sad but true. We are living in a time of darkness and gloom. Our politics are poisonous. Our leaders are divided and directionless. And we have forgotten how to disagree with one another without bitterness and hateful name-calling. No wonder we long for the Lord’s coming again.

Our faith tells us that our warfare is ended and peace reigns, but it often doesn’t feel that way. There is real suffering, loneliness and fear in this world’s darkness. That’s why we need this holy season of light and hope—to give voice to our very real feelings of frustration and discouragement at the same time that we wait in joyful hope for the one who has already saved us from the power of death, but who is coming again in glory.

Jesus Christ lived among us as a man 2,000 years ago. After his passion, death and resurrection, he ascended to his Father. But we Christians believe that he will come again on the last day. We also believe that he is with us here and now—in the holy Eucharist and all the sacraments, in our prayer, in the good works we perform, and wherever two or more are gathered in his name.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of history. That means that, while he is the goal or end of human history, he is not bound by the limits of time or space as we are. As a result, he can be present with us now and, at the same time, be coming again in the future.

Although we know that Christ is with us always, we still wait in joyful hope for his coming again in glory. While we believe in his Real Presence in the Eucharist, we long for the more perfect communion that we will enjoy when we are with him in our heavenly home.

God is with us—really and truly—in the Eucharist and in the infant lying in a manger. The Almighty God has emptied himself, as St. Paul says, and taken the form of the most vulnerable and dependent human being, a little child. And he has given himself to us in the most intimate way imaginable through his body and blood, which we consume during holy Communion.

So, we rejoice. We are filled with joy because the long-awaited Savior has come. We rejoice because we are not alone in a vast, uncaring universe. God is with us. He knows us—each one by name—and he loves us as his sisters and brothers in the one family of God.

But even as we rejoice at the mystery of God’s presence here and now, we also celebrate the profound hope that he will come again. We believe that the suffering and evil that we experience in this world will pass away one day. God’s kingdom will come—on Earth as it is heaven—and on that day every tear will be wiped away, and we will see God face to face.

Now, with the whole Church, we proclaim: *Maranatha!* Come, Lord Jesus! And in the weeks ahead, we will sing with joyful hearts: *Adeste fidelis!* Come, let us adore him!

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Katie Prejean McGrady

A thrill of hope and worth flows through our young Church at NCYC

The arena was perfectly silent. Twenty thousand young people knelt at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis as the Eucharist



was exposed in a monstrance on the altar in the center of a stage on the 50-yard line of an NFL football field during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

A magnetic energy pulsed through the quiet. It was a silence filled with expectant hope, as if the quiet in that place would lead to a vibrant and vocal renewal in a noisy world.

It was a joyful silence, prompted by the encouraging words of Pope Francis spoken via video the night before. It was a healing silence, inspired by the challenging words of Immaculee Ilibigiza’s powerful testimony shared that morning. It was a contemplative silence, as the young people pondered the insightful words of Mark Hart. It was a silence building to worship, as Village Lights began leading the crowd in song and praise.

It took everything in me to not cry as I listened to the deafening silence and then heard voices begin to raise in praise as we knelt before the Eucharist and sang “Lord, I Need You.”

A few verses in, I saw her. A young girl was kneeling on the floor, close to the stage, her arms lifted as she stared up at Jesus. Then I saw him, a young man, walking to the other side of the stage, kneeling down and staring straight at the monstrance.

Then they all came: The floodgates opened, and hundreds of teenagers poured from their seats and began filling the floor of the stadium, kneeling as close as they could get, to be a little bit closer to the altar ... closer to Jesus ... closer to the one they desperately need.

That joyful, healing, contemplative silence became a joyful, healing, contemplative and vibrant worship, as 20,000 voices continued to sing “Lord, I Need You,” and then began softly singing, “Here I am, Lord ... Is it I, Lord? I have

heard you, calling in the night.”

For all the problems we face in the Church—the stats showing us that more than 34 percent of Generation Z has no religious affiliation and that teenagers are twice as likely as baby boomers to say they are atheists—what I witnessed in that stadium on a Friday night in November wasn’t a problem.

No, it was a solution. It was a visible witness to the power of the on-fire, faith-filled, passionate, zealous, well-formed, in-love-with-Jesus young people who are unafraid to run to the altar to be close to the Lord because they hear his voice and want to hear it more clearly.

During NCYC, I didn’t see the disaffiliation crisis we worry about: I saw, firsthand, hope for the future of our Church.

The young people at NCYC, the ones I saw fill workshop rooms, share meals, dance, sing and fervently pray—they are the ones who will solve the problem of disaffiliation, not because they have a slick film with glitzy editing or because they have a well-produced podcast with thousands of downloads, but because they’re simply being themselves: young people who have big questions, are searching for big answers, and who are unafraid to rush forward to be close to Jesus and bring their friends along too.

The weary world rejoices as Christmas approaches; Jesus’ birth gives us the thrill of hope and worth to our souls.

But my weary soul, worried mind and heavy heart were thrilled in late November when I saw the hope of our Church rush to the 50-yard line to be close to Jesus in the Eucharist. Those young people were my thrill of hope, the ones who will help this weary world soon rejoice.

(Katie Prejean McGrady is an international Catholic speaker and author. She is project manager of Ave Explores from Ave Maria Press, and logs more than 100,000 travel miles a year speaking to audiences. She has her degree in theology from the University of Dallas and lives with her husband and daughter in Lake Charles, La.) †



National Catholic Youth Conference participants kneel during eucharistic adoration at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 22. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Letters Policy

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

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to

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

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Are you the one who is to come? Or should we look for another?

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me” (cf. Mt 11:4-6).

This weekend, we celebrate the Third Sunday of Advent. Christ is coming again, but how will we recognize him?

When our Lord comes again, he will look very much like he did the first time he came. Why would we expect anything different?

The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Mt 11:2-11) tells us that when John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to check him out, they asked, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Mt 11:3)

We might be tempted to ask the same question given all the confusion and uncertainty in our world today. Although no one knows the day or the hour, our faith assures us that the Lord *will* come again. That’s what we celebrate during the Advent season—both our Christmas remembrance of his first coming, and our Advent anticipation of his return.

Since Jesus has already suffered, died and risen, his second coming will undoubtedly be different. But there is no reason to think that his presence among us will in any way contradict the original mission he received from his Father. If we ask, “Are you the one, or should we look for another?” the answer will be the same. What you see is what you get: *“The blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them”* (Mt 11:5).

When Christ comes again, the circumstances will be different, but there’s no reason to doubt that he will once again speak the truth with love. That’s what the Last Judgment is all about.

We can be confident that Christ’s presence will heal the sick, forgive sinners and bring hope to human hearts that have lost all hope. That’s who Jesus is—our Savior, our Redeemer, our brother and our friend. He won’t come with attitude or with grandiosity or with self-serving ambitions. He will come to show God’s mercy, and to do his Father’s will, by collecting us, the lost sheep, and bringing us home.

With the first reading this Sunday

(Is 35:1-6a, 10), we envision the kingdom that is both in our midst and still to come. It is a very different world than we have experienced since the fall, our first parents’ original sin. Joy and gladness will be abundant; mourning and sorrow will flee:

*“The desert and the parched land will exult;
the steppe will rejoice and bloom.
They will bloom with abundant flowers,
and rejoice with joyful song.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to them,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God”* (Is 35:1-2).

The second coming of our Lord, which we long for in a special way during Advent, will establish once and for all the triumphant reign of God made possible by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

But this does not mean that Christ will appear in the guise of a conquering hero. If the Gospels tell us anything, it is that we should not look for a superstar, but for the humblest and most selfless person we can imagine—someone who would be willing to lay down his life for

us in order to set us free.

With Isaiah the prophet we can sing:

*“Be strong, fear not!
Here is your God,
he comes with vindication;
with divine recompense
he comes to save you.
Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared;
then will the lame leap like a stag,
then the tongue of the mute will sing”* (Is 35:4-6).

Let’s make the final weeks of Advent a true preparation for our Lord’s coming again. Since he is not limited by our conceptions of time and space, we are blessed with the knowledge that Christ is always with us—past, present and still to come.

How can we recognize him when he comes again? By looking for the signs he himself gave us!

“And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me” (Mt 11:6), Jesus said to John’s disciples. Blessed are we when we recognize Jesus in the poor, in strangers and in people who are very different from us. He comes among us exactly as he is—the one we least expect to save us and set us free. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

¿Eres tú el que tenía que venir, o debemos esperar a otro?

“Regresen a donde Juan y cuéntenles lo que ustedes están viendo y oyendo: los ciegos ven, los cojos andan, los leprosos quedan limpios, los sordos oyen, los muertos resucitan y a los pobres se les anuncia la buena noticia. ¡Y felices aquellos para quienes yo no soy causa de tropiezo!” (cf. Mt 11:4-6).

Este fin de semana celebramos el tercer domingo de Adviento. Jesucristo viene nuevamente pero, ¿cómo lo reconoceremos?

Cuando nuestro Señor venga otra vez, lucirá bastante parecido a la primera vez que vino. ¿Por qué cabría esperar algo distinto?

La lectura del Evangelio para este domingo (Mt 11:2-11) nos dice que cuando Juan Bautista envió a sus discípulos para que vieran Jesús, le preguntaron: “¿Eres tú el que tenía que venir, o debemos esperar a otro?” (Mt 11:3).

Quizá nos sintamos tentados a hacer la misma pregunta, dada toda la confusión e incertidumbre que existe en nuestro mundo de hoy. Aunque nadie sabe el día ni la hora, nuestra fe nos garantiza que el Señor vendrá nuevamente. Eso es lo que celebramos durante la temporada del Adviento: el recuerdo de la Navidad de su primera venida, y la anticipación del Adviento por su regreso.

Puesto que Jesús ya ha sufrido, muerto y resucitado, su segunda venida será indiscutiblemente distinta. Pero no hay motivo para pensar que su presencia entre nosotros contradecirá en modo alguno la misión original que recibió de su Padre. Si preguntamos: “¿eres tú el que tenía que venir, o debemos esperar a otro?” la respuesta será la misma. Lo que vemos es tal cual: *“Los ciegos ven, los cojos andan, los leprosos quedan limpios, los sordos oyen, los muertos resucitan y a los pobres se les anuncia la buena noticia”* (Mt 11:5).

Cuando Jesucristo venga nuevamente, las circunstancias serán distintas pero no hay razón para dudar que una vez más dirá la verdad con amor; de eso se trata el Juicio Final.

Podemos tener la seguridad de que la presencia de Cristo sanará a los enfermos, perdonará a los pecadores e infundirá esperanza a los corazones humanos que la han perdido por completo. Ese es Jesús: nuestro Salvador, nuestro redentor, nuestro hermano y amigo. No vendrá con afectación o grandiosidad ni con ambiciones ególicas; vendrá a mostrarnos la misericordia de Dios y a hacer cumplir la voluntad de su Padre, al reunirnos como sus ovejas perdidas y llevarnos a casa.

En la primera lectura de este domingo (Is 35:1-6a; 10), tenemos la visión del reino que está entre nosotros y por venir. Es un mundo muy distinto del que hemos experimentado desde la caída de nuestros primeros padres por el pecado original. La alegría y la felicidad abundarán, el dolor y la tristeza desaparecerán:

*“¡Que se alegren la estepa y el yermo,
que exulte el desierto y florezca!
¡Como el narciso florezca sin falta,
que exulte con gritos de alegría!
Le darán la gloria del Líbano,
la majestad del Carmelo y el Sarón;
podrán ver la gloria del Señor;
también la majestad de nuestro Dios”* (Is 35:1-2).

La segunda venida de nuestro Señor que esperamos de un modo especial durante el Adviento, determinará de una vez y para siempre el reino triunfante de Dios hecho posible a través de la pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesús.

Pero esto no significa que Dios aparecerá como un héroe conquistador. Si las Escrituras nos dicen algo es que no debemos buscar una superestrella sino a la persona más humilde y desinteresada que podamos imaginarnos, alguien que estará dispuesto a entregar su vida para liberarnos.

Junto con el profeta Isaías cantamos:

*“Sigan firmes, no teman,
que viene su Dios
a vengarlos,
él les trae la recompensa
y viene en persona a salvarlos”.*
*Entonces se abrirán los ojos de los ciegos,
los oídos de los sordos se destaparán.
Entonces saltará el cojo como el ciervo,
la lengua del mudo cantará”*
(Is 35:4-6).

Convirtamos las últimas semanas del Adviento en verdaderos preparativos del regreso de nuestro Señor. Puesto que él no se limita a nuestra noción del tiempo y el espacio, somos bendecidos con la certeza de que Cristo está siempre con nosotros: pasado, presente y porvenir.

¿Cómo lo reconoceremos cuando venga nuevamente? ¡Por los signos que él mismo nos ha dado!

“¡Y felices aquellos para quienes yo no soy causa de tropiezo!” (Mt 11:6), dijo Jesús a los discípulos de Juan. Somos bendecidos cuando reconocemos a Jesús en los pobres, en los extraños y en las personas muy distintas de nosotros. Jesucristo viene a nosotros exactamente como es: en el ser que menos nos imaginemos que nos salvará y nos liberará. †

Events Calendar

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

December 16

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish Cenacle House, 6118 Smock St., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, mwoodsworth@archindy.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, reconciliation available 9 a.m.-7 p.m., no appointment necessary. Information: Jennifer Burger, 317-545-7681, jburger@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/fatima.

December 16-24

Simbang Gabi novena of Masses in anticipation of Christmas, sponsored by archdiocesan Filipino and intercultural ministries, during regularly scheduled parish Masses as follows: Dec. 16, 6 p.m., **St. Louis de Montfort Church**, 11441 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**, 8155 Oaklondon Road, Indianapolis; Dec. 21, 4 p.m., **St. Ann Church**, 6350 S. Mooresville Road, Indianapolis; Dec. 22, 11:30 a.m., **St. Luke the Evangelist Church**, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., Indianapolis; Dec. 23, 5:45 p.m., Extraordinary Form (Latin), **Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church**, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis; Dec. 24, 10 p.m., **SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral**, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Information: Maria Solito, 317-201-0196, mariasolito@yahoo.com.

December 17

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

December 18

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

December 19

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

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

December 20

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **The Longest Night: A Mass of Consolation**, an evening of prayer, ritual, word and Scripture for those who mourn and struggle during the Christmas season, 7 p.m. Information: Tom Yost, 812-945-2374, tyost@olphna.org.

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, vice chairman of Pacers Sports and Entertainment Jim Morris presenting, Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$15 members, \$21 non-members. Register by noon on Dec. 19. Information and registration: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

December 21

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants, Indianapolis**. Third Saturday of the month, Mass at 8:30 a.m. followed by Divine Mercy Chaplet and rosary at the Clinic for Women abortion 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: peggygeis@att.net.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **Vox Sacra Advent and Christmas Concert**, featuring the

archdiocese's *schola cantorum* joined by the archdiocesan youth choir, 7 p.m., free, open to the public. Information: 317-236-1483, 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1483, ctuley@archindy.org, www.voxsacra.com.

January 3

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

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

January 4

All Saint Parish, St. John the Baptist Campus Hall, 25743 State Route 1, Guilford. **Growing the Faith: Finding Time for God**,

Stacey Sumereau presenting, Mass and catered meal, 6-9 p.m., freewill offerings accepted, registration requested by Jan. 2 online at bit.ly/2DdCxp6 (case sensitive) or by calling parish office: 812-576-4302.

John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

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

January 8

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

Light candles from Bethlehem 'Peace Light' in Indy and Nashville on Dec. 14 and 15

Members of the archdiocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting are helping spread a flame called "The Peace Light" from the grotto in Bethlehem where it is believed Christ was born.

Prayer services and an opportunity to light a candle from the flame to take to homes, churches and elsewhere will take place in the archdiocese as follows:

- Dec. 14, 6:15 p.m., at St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., in Indianapolis.
- Dec. 15, 3 p.m., at St. Agnes Church, 1008 McLary Road, in Nashville.

Each year, a child from Austria fetches the flame from the grotto. It is then flown to Austria, where it is

distributed to Scout and guide delegates to take with a message of peace to houses of worship, hospitals, homeless shelters, elder care homes, prisons and places of public, cultural and political importance.

The flame arrived in New York City, where a candle was lit from the flame. A delegate is transporting the flame to cities around the country, including Indianapolis.

To spread the message of peace, all are invited to bring a lantern or a 3- or 7-day candle to light from the flame for distribution and to keep burning in a prominent place through Christmas or the New Year.

For more information, call 317-430-4834. †

Retreats and Programs

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

January 8

Providence Hall, Havlick Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Sunday at the Woods: Dementia Basics and Helpful Tips**, Katie Harish presenting, 1:30-3:30 p.m., freewill offering. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Providence Hall, Havlick Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Dementia: Approach is Everything**, Katie Harish presenting, 6-8 p.m., \$15, register by Jan. 6. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 8, January 9

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art to Lift your Spirit!**, Wed., 9:30 a.m. or Thurs., 6:30 p.m.,

Providence Sister Rosemary Schmalz presenting, \$30 membership fee to join group, \$5 per session after. Contact Jeanne Frost, 812-535-2952 to request a brochure. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 10

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Painting with the Padre**, paint with Franciscan Father Vince Peterson, 6:30-9 p.m., \$40 includes all painting supplies and assorted cheeses, bring your own beverage. Information and registration: www.mountsaintfrancis.org/event-tickets, 812-923-8817.

January 11

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Coffee with the Mystics**, Providence Sister Jan Craven presenting, 10 a.m.-noon, \$10, register

by Jan 10. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 14

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Coffee with the Mystics**, Providence Sister Jan Craven presenting, 9:30-11:30 a.m., \$10, register by Jan. 11. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 16

Providence Hall, Havlick Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Memory Café**, 2-4 p.m., third Thursday of the month, for those living with moderate dementia, caregivers and friends, Katie Harish presenting, freewill offering. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event. †

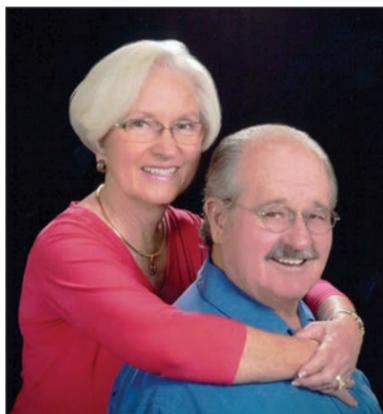
VIPs

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-236-1585.



New Providence Associates

Pictured above are 16 of the 17 individuals—plus two program co-directors—after becoming Providence Associates on Nov. 9 at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Providence Associates are individuals of faith who form an intentional relationship with the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods. Candidates are paired with a sister or other associate companion for a year of study, prayer and reflection. They then commit to sharing their unique gifts and talents with others while walking with the Sisters of Providence. Currently, more than 285 Providence Associates live out Providence spirituality in their daily lives across the United States and in Taiwan. Learn more about the program at ProvidenceAssociates.org. (Submitted photo)



Richard and Mary Ann (Tinder) Wagner, formerly of the archdiocese and now members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., (Lafayette Diocese), will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 19.

The couple was married at St. Matthew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 19, 1969. They have four children: Carmen Mendoza, Colette Myers, Kristen Schupak and Kate Swanson. The couple also has nine grandchildren. They will celebrate with a dinner for family and friends. †

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 317-236-1593.



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



Despite what some tell us, euthanasia is not merciful

“The acceptance of our body as a gift from God is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home. Whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy an absolute power over creation. Learning to accept your body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.” (Pope Francis, *“Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home,”* #155)

A commonly used euphemism for euthanasia (taking the life of someone who is considered to be terminally ill) is “mercy killing.” But as Pope Francis has repeatedly taught, euthanasia is not merciful.

Contrary to an increasingly accepted—and often legal—opinion, euthanasia does not promote personal freedom or result in a “good death” versus a death that is degrading or inhuman.

According to the Holy Father, “The practice of euthanasia, which has already been legalized in several countries, apparently is intended to promote personal freedom. In reality, it is based

on a utilitarian view of the person. They are seen as useless or equated with a cost, if from the medical point of view they have no hope of improvement or can no longer avoid pain.”

This is not a Christian view of the human person made in the image and likeness of God and, in this case, in the image of the suffering and dying Jesus. Christ suffered egregious pain and a humiliating death for our sake, and those of us who are his disciples are called to see him in every person who suffers no matter how hopeless his or her condition.

Our responsibility—first and foremost—is to love the sick as Jesus did. Countless instances and parables throughout the New Testament show Jesus and his disciples expressing their love and concern for the sick and dying.

“We are experiencing a strong universal trend toward the legalization of euthanasia,” Pope Francis says. “Even in these harsh circumstances, if the person feels loved, respected, and accepted, the negative shadow of euthanasia disappears or becomes almost nonexistent. This is because the value of his/her being is measured by the ability to give and receive love, and not by his/her productivity.” Even (or especially) in the

worst possible circumstances, the pope asks us to treat the sick with “respect for their autonomy and with a heavy burden of availability, understanding and dialogue.”

Like abortion, capital punishment and other serious life issues, euthanasia assumes that we (the family, the medical community or the state) have the authority to end a human life. This directly contradicts our most fundamental conviction as Christians. God alone is the Lord of life. He alone has absolute power over human life. We do not have the right to decide who lives or dies. In fact, we are called to be responsible stewards of this most precious gift who do everything we can to preserve human life and, ultimately, when we have exhausted all our human resources, to trust the terminally ill to God’s love and mercy.

“We are currently living in a time in which life is experimented on. ... Bad experiments,” the pope says.

“In a time in which ‘life is played with,’ beware! This is a sin against the Creator! Against God the Creator!”

Those who advocate for euthanasia often display what Pope Francis calls “false compassion” toward those who are in terrible pain as they prepare to die.

Compassion is vitally important, of course, and the pope has repeatedly called on doctors and other health care professionals to treat the sick and the dying with humanity and genuine compassion. The true meaning of compassion, the Holy Father believes, is to “suffer-with” (the meaning of *compassion*) another human being, to share in their suffering at a deeply personal, spiritual level.

No man or woman should be viewed as “useless” or “unworthy.” Regardless of their condition, the gravely ill deserve the best we can give them. Even when all medical procedures need to be discontinued, there is no excuse for withdrawing love, comfort and the presence of caring persons who can accompany them in the final stages of life’s journey.

As Christians, it is our sacred duty to give comfort and hope to all who are in danger of death. Hope may not mean a miraculous cure, but it does mean that those who are dying will find life in Christ and the fellowship of brothers and sisters who truly care for them.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.) †

“Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”

—Pope Francis, *“Misericordiae Vultus”* (“The Face of Mercy”)



“Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios.”

—Papa Francisco, *“Misericordiae Vultus”* (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Pese a lo que se dice, la eutanasia no es misericordiosa

“La aceptación del propio cuerpo como don de Dios es necesaria para acoger y aceptar el mundo entero como regalo del Padre y casa común, mientras una lógica de dominio sobre el propio cuerpo se transforma en una lógica a veces sutil de dominio sobre la creación. Aprender a recibir el propio cuerpo, a cuidarlo y a respetar sus significados, es esencial para una verdadera ecología humana” (Papa Francisco, *“Laudato Si’ : Sobre el cuidado de la casa común,”* #155)

Un eufemismo utilizado comúnmente para referirse a la eutanasia (el acto de tomar la vida de una persona que se considera que tiene una enfermedad terminal) es “matar por misericordia”. Pero tal como lo ha dicho el papa Francisco en repetidas ocasiones, la eutanasia no es misericordiosa.

Contrario a la opinión cada vez más aceptada, y a menudo legalizada, la eutanasia no promueve la libertad personal ni conduce a una “buena muerte” en comparación con una muerte degradante o inhumana.

Según el Santo Padre, “La práctica de la eutanasia, que ya se ha legalizado en varios países, aparentemente pretende promover la libertad personal; en realidad, se basa en una visión utilitarista de la persona, que se vuelve inútil o puede equipararse a un coste, si desde el punto

de vista médico no tiene esperanzas de mejora o ya no puede evitar el dolor.”

Esta no es una perspectiva cristiana de la persona humana hecha a imagen y semejanza de Dios y, en este caso, a imagen de un Jesús sufriendo y moribundo. Jesucristo sufrió un dolor abominable y una muerte humillante por nuestro bien y aquellos de nosotros que somos sus discípulos estamos llamados a verlo en cada persona que sufre, independientemente de cuán desahuciada sea su condición.

Nuestra primera y principal responsabilidad es amar a los enfermos tal como Jesús lo hizo. A lo largo de todo el Nuevo Testamento hay innumerables situaciones y parábolas que muestran a Jesús y a sus discípulos expresando su amor y preocupación por los enfermos y moribundos.

“Estamos viendo una fuerte tendencia universal hacia la legalización de la eutanasia,” señala el papa Francisco. “Aún en estas circunstancias tan adversas, si la persona se siente amada, respetada y aceptada, la sombra negativa de la eutanasia desaparece o se convierte en algo prácticamente inexistente. Esto se debe a que el valor de su vida como ser humano se mide por la capacidad de dar y recibir amor y no por su productividad.” Incluso (y especialmente) en las peores circunstancias, el papa nos pide que tratemos a los enfermos con “respeto por su autonomía y

con una gran responsabilidad de estar allí presentes, ser comprensivos y dialogar.”

Al igual que el aborto, la pena capital y otros asuntos graves que tocan la vida, la eutanasia presume que nosotros (la familia, la comunidad médica o el Estado) tenemos autoridad para poner fin a una vida humana. Esta es una contradicción directa a nuestra convicción más fundamental como cristianos puesto que solo Dios es el Señor de la vida y solo Él tiene el poder absoluto sobre la vida humana. No tenemos el derecho de decidir quién vive o quién muere. De hecho, estamos llamados a ser administradores responsables de este precioso don y hacer todo lo que esté a nuestro alcance para preservar la vida humana y, en definitiva, si hemos agotado todos nuestros recursos humanos, encomendar a un enfermo terminal al amor y la misericordia de Dios.

“Actualmente vivimos en un mundo en el cual se hacen experimentos con la vida. ... Experimentos perniciosos,” afirmó el papa.

“En una época en la que ‘se juega con la vida,’ ¡tengan cuidado! ¡Esto es un pecado contra el Creador! ¡Contra Dios el Creador!”

Los que defienden la eutanasia a menudo muestran lo que el papa Francisco denomina “una falsa compasión” hacia aquellos que sufren terribles dolores en la antesala de la muerte.

Por supuesto, la compasión es algo fundamentalmente importante y en numerosas ocasiones el papa ha hecho un llamado para que los médicos y otros profesionales de la salud traten a los enfermos y a los moribundos con humanidad y genuina compasión. El Santo Padre considera que el verdadero significado de la compasión es “sufrir con” otro ser humano (en su sentido literal “con pasión”), compartir su sufrimiento a un nivel profundamente personal y espiritual.

Ningún hombre o mujer jamás debería ser considerado inútil o indigno, ya que independientemente de su condición, los gravemente enfermos merecen lo mejor de nosotros. Aunque sea necesario interrumpir todos los procedimientos médicos, no hay excusa para retirar el amor, la comodidad y la presencia de personas que puedan acompañarlos en las últimas etapas del camino de la vida.

Como cristianos, es nuestro deber sagrado brindar consuelo y esperanza a todos los que están en peligro de morir. La esperanza quizá no implique una cura milagrosa pero sí que aquellos que sufren encontrarán vida en Cristo y entre sus hermanos que verdaderamente se preocupan por ellos.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

LUNCHES

continued from page 1

Greer says. “For many of our families, fruits and vegetables are some of the most expensive things they purchase at the grocery store so they have those choices here.

“It makes a difference. If you’re hungry, you’re not going to be able to learn as well. If you don’t have a healthy diet, you don’t feel as good and you don’t pay as much attention as you could. Good nutrition is one of the foundations for children to learn.”

As Greer shares those insights, Elizabeth Edwards stands next to her smiling. It’s the smile of someone who has spent the past five years transforming the nutrition-and-meal program at St. Anthony and the four other Indianapolis Catholic schools that are part of the Notre Dame ACE Academies—Central Catholic, Holy Angels, Holy Cross Central and St. Philip Neri.

‘Our kids love it’

At 32, Edwards is a mother of two—who strives to live a healthy lifestyle. She heads to the grocery store a few times a week to get fresh produce, which serves as the foundation for the simple, quick-prep meals she cooks for her family.

It’s a way of life she wants for the children at the Notre Dame ACE Academies in Indianapolis, beginning with an emphasis on healthy food choices.

“With all the statistics about kids being obese and overweight, schools have a vital role in teaching kids about healthy foods and how to like them,” Edwards says. “Establishing good eating habits early in life is so important to setting them up for later in life.”

There’s also the goal of making sure that the children who come from families that struggle economically have enough to eat each day to sustain them and help them grow and learn.

When Edwards started the new nutrition program five years ago,

the registered dietician inherited a system where meals were basically frozen dinners that were heated and served. Her approach—with the help of assistant director Kelly James and about 15 staff members across the five schools—is to use fresh food and make most meals from scratch in the schools’ kitchens.

“Processed food is so cheap. It takes a lot of effort and energy to make this work,” she says. “One of my biggest challenges is figuring out what they like to eat, what’s healthy and meets my ideals for what I want to serve the kids, and what meets our budget.”

There’s also the challenge of limited time for breakfast before school and a dinner option at the end of the school day. So while Edwards and her staffs usually provide sandwiches for those meals, they put their emphasis on a well-rounded, home-cooked meal at lunch.

For the honey-lime chicken entrée, the marinade was made from scratch and the chicken was soaked in it overnight. It’s just one of the 20 different hot entrees that are offered every month, part of Edwards’ plan to build variety into the program. And while the students have other daily options of a fresh salad or a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, most of them at St. Anthony choose the hot meal, followed by a trip to the fruit-and-veggie bar.

“I get the fun comments from kids about how they want tacos every week—or how they haven’t had some things before,” Edwards says. “One kid said he never had a baked potato, and others had never seen kiwi before.”

Ruth Hurrle has noticed the difference the choices have made to the 250 students at Central Catholic School.

“Our kids love it,” says Hurrle, the principal at Central Catholic. “Our fresh-fruits-and-vegetables program is really popular. It’s exposing them to something they would never have the chance to try. The other day, they had radishes that were

supposed to taste like strawberries.”

Her enthusiasm also extends to the breakfast that is offered at the school.

“That’s made a really big impact. We have 175 students who take advantage of it. We see better attention spans and student stamina in the morning.”

A recipe for success

While the health of the students is a priority of the nutrition program, so is the health of the environment. Conservation efforts at the five schools include eliminating foam cups and single-use containers, and replacing plastic utensils with silverware.

Another focus involves cutting down on food waste and composting what’s left on the students’ plates—which has been good news for the three chickens at Holy Angels School.

“We have three chickens right now, and some of the compost goes straight to the chickens. They eat quite a bit,” says Holy Angels principal Justin Armitage. “We also have outdoor gardens, and some of that compost will go out there. We want our kids to learn about sustainability.”

The chickens also do their part for the school.

“They produce a dozen eggs a week, and the eggs are used for a number of projects,” says Armitage. “Once a week, the kindergartners bake something. They’ve done pumpkin cookies, chocolate chip cookies and mini pancakes. They use eggs from the chickens.”

As always, what comes first in the nutrition program is the focus on the students. Count 11-year-old Yasmin Carlos as a big fan.



As the nutrition program director for the Notre Dame ACE Academies in Indianapolis, Elizabeth Edwards, right, always strives to create the healthiest meals for students. Here, she watches as kitchen helper Laura Lazala-Caceres serves a student. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

“The food we get here is really good,” says the St. Anthony sixth-grader, flashing a huge smile. “There are different things we need to get healthy and learn.”

Her classmate Miguel Macias nods in agreement, and notes about the fruit-and-veggie bar, “We can pick what we want—apples, oranges, broccoli or sprouts or celery. It makes me more focused.”

That result blends into the emphasis on education that the children’s parents want for their sons and daughters.

“My parents want the best for their children, and they know that education is key in making that happen,” Greer says. “They want their kids to have an easier life and more opportunity than they’ve had. I’ve heard that from every family.”

Edwards nods as Greer shares that insight, knowing she is doing her part in that recipe for success.

“When I look at these kids, it makes me feel really good,” Edwards says. “I feel the work I do really matters. This is a passion for me—knowing it’s making a real difference in their health and their education and how they will perceive food when they grow up. It makes everything we’re doing worthwhile.” †

FIRE

continued from page 1

‘It was surreal’

According to its website, Magnificat Family Medicine is “a Christ-centered family health care center” with “a focus on the whole person—mind, body, and spirit,” using “Jesus the Divine Physician as guide and example.”

The site notes founder Dr. Casey Delcoco, who is a member with her husband at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, “chose the practice name ... to honor Christ and dedicate her practice to glorifying and serving Him.”

The practice was located on the west side of the same floor on which the fire started.

“The fire was put out right before it reached our waiting room,” said practice manager Lori Pluchar.

She saw the interior of the practice while retrieving items to continue seeing patients in the temporary space offered to them at the nearby Women’s Care Center.

“It looks like it will be a total loss,” Pluchar said. “It was so weird. The lights are off, the floors are all soaked, and 100 percent of our stuff was completely black [from smoke and soot]. It was surreal. ... Everything was touched.”

She noted that Magnificat Family Medicine was “already looking at moving because of patient demand. We really didn’t have enough space to accommodate our needs. So, in a way, we’re grateful for the opportunity to move into a larger space so much sooner than we expected.”

That time might have already come. The practice started seeing patients this week in suite 416 at 8240 Naab Road in Indianapolis next to St. Vincent Women’s Hospital, where Delcoco delivers babies. The hope is for this site to become the practice’s permanent location.

“We chose suite 416 as our number because the feast of St. Bernadette is on April 16,” said Pluchar. Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France, in 1858, and provided a spring of water there

to which many miraculous healings have been attributed.

“We continue to ask the Lord to heal our patients through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes,” said Pluchar.

‘Probably need to start from scratch’

1st Choice for Women, a ministry of Great Lakes Gabriel Project (also known as The Gabriel Project), is a pregnancy resource center offering free peer-counseling, pregnancy tests and ultrasounds.

When The Gabriel Project president and director Linda Kile visited the building to check on 1st Choice for Women’s two first-floor suites, she said she was “astonished that there wasn’t actual fire damage in our suite right under where fire was.”

“Everything is very wet,” she said. “Every day it gets colder in there because there’s no power.”

And after Pike Township Fire Department discovered hot spots in the building on Dec. 6, things got even wetter.

The majority of the organization’s inventory “is furniture, plus the ultrasound machine and a really nice paper-folding machine someone donated,” said Kile.

She is still waiting on a technician to evaluate the ultrasound machine, a task complicated by the lack of power.

“From what I understand, anytime medical equipment is involved in a water damage situation they write it off [as a loss]—you just don’t want to take a chance,” Kile noted.

She said the owner of the salvage business working on the building told her he felt that the space “was probably going to be a total loss.”

The ministry’s future plans are still uncertain.

“At this point in time, we’d like to be able to reopen,” said Kile. “It’s probably going to be many months before the building will be able to be re-inhabited. ... At this point, it sounds like we’ll probably need to start from scratch.”

Yet Kile spoke of having “a huge sense of peace and comfort” as she clutched her

rosary and walked through the damaged suites.

“We’ve been pondering if it’s time to move closer to one of the other [two] abortion centers” in Indianapolis, she said.

Since Women’s Care Center opened next to the Planned Parenthood abortion facility not far from 1st Choice for Women, Kile explained, “our numbers have dropped. We’re still helping women, but we don’t get the ones who change their mind at Planned Parenthood” with the help of sidewalk counselors.

“This [fire] perhaps has opened up a possibility for us, or perhaps made a decision easier for us to make. We’re still not sure. This is a time to contemplate and start investigating that option.”

Prayers and gratitude

Both Kile and Pluchar were quick to note their gratitude for Catholic building owner Dan Baldini and their call for prayers for the office building’s tenants.

“Dan is just a wonderful man,” said Pluchar. “We’re so grateful for the space we’ve had. As soon as we’d expand, then we’d need to expand again practically the next week! He accommodated us so quickly.”

Kile noted that Baldini, who operates Polaris Real Estate in an office in the affected building, “is the reason we’re in that building.”

About 10 years ago, she said, then-Gabriel Project president Eileen Hartman spread the word that she was looking for an office near the city’s northwest side Planned Parenthood abortion facility.

“Dan and his family reached out to her,” said Kile. He asked her and her “strong, powerful prayer warriors” to pray for his success in purchasing the building. In return, Baldini said he and his family would offer space to 1st Choice for Women rent-free.

“His family is so pro-life,” Kile said. She asked for prayers for him and his family.

“This has hit him very hard and personally,” she said. As both a landlord to multiple tenants and a business owner in the building, the fire has been a “double

whammy” for him. She said the normally “jovial, happy” man “looked haggard” when she saw him days after the fire.

“My heart goes out to him,” she said.

It also goes out to the building’s tenants.

“Gabriel Project is blessed in that we’re operating a ministry out of that building,” Kile said. “All of our fellow tenants are making their livelihood, including Dr. Casey. And she’s got employees and they have families, and she’s got her patients to think about. So this is harder on them.”

But Pluchar said that, while welcoming prayers for a smooth process in finding and moving to a new location, Delcoco and her staff have been able to view the situation in a spiritual light.

At a staff gathering, she said, it was noted that “this is the beginning of Advent, and we think of Joseph and Mary fleeing into Egypt and not having a home. So we had a reflection on the experience of the Holy Family” and the practice’s current situation of being temporarily “homeless.”

Mostly, said Pluchar, Delcoco and the staff “want to send a big thank you to the Women’s Care Center. They’ve been so generous in helping us carry out our mission to provide life-affirming health care.

“So many of our patients have asked how they can help, and we tell them to send donations to Women’s Care Center—they go through so many donations this time of year.

“We’re so grateful to [have used] their space. We want to spread our thank you far and wide!”

(Donations to 1st Choice for Women can be made online at www.goangels.com, or checks can be made out to The Gabriel Project and mailed to The Gabriel Project, PO Box 1232, Columbus, IN 47402. Donations to Women’s Care Center can be made by contacting Jenny Hubbard at jhubbard.wccindy@gmail.com or 317-509-9596, or checks can be made out to Women’s Care Center and sent to Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis, IN 46268.) †

EXECUTIONS

continued from page 1

executions and used by several states. Several of the inmates challenged the use of the single lethal injection.

Chutkan said these lethal injections go against the Federal Death Penalty Act of 1994, which states federal executions should be carried out “in the manner prescribed by the law of the state in which the sentence is imposed.”

On Dec. 2, the U.S. Justice Department

asked the Supreme Court to lift Chutkan’s preliminary injunction.

The day before the Supreme Court’s order, Catholic Mobilizing Network, the national Catholic organization working to end the death penalty, delivered a petition to President Donald J. Trump and Barr opposing the restart of federal executions.

The petition was signed by nearly 3,000 Catholics, including retired Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, Auxiliary Bishop William J. Justice of San Francisco and Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille who is a longtime opponent of the death penalty.

“Catholics are profoundly concerned about the federal government’s wrong-headed move to restart executions,” said Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director of Catholic Mobilizing Network. “Restarting federal executions would be an affront to the dignity of human life and contradictory to the clear and growing opposition that Americans have

to capital punishment.”

Indiana bishops added their objection to the July decision, calling it “regrettable, unnecessary and morally unjustified.”

An Oklahoma man, Daniel Lewis Lee, was the first of several death-row inmates scheduled to be executed by the U.S. government in coming weeks. He was to have been put to death on Dec. 9, after the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals earlier in the day on Dec. 6 vacated the stay on his execution.

The other inmates whose executions are now on hold are: Wesley Ira Purkey, who was to be executed on Dec. 13; Alfred Bourgeois, on Jan. 13; and Dustin Lee Honken, on Jan. 15.

A fifth inmate, Lezmond Mitchell, saw his scheduled December execution stayed last month by the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

(Reporter Natalie Hoefler contributed to this story.) †



‘The taking of life weighs heavily on the conscience of both individuals and society. While we mourn victims of all forms of violence, stand in solidarity with grieving families and hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their crimes, let us never lose sight of the dignity as well as the possibility of conversion and redemption of every person.’

—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

What to get the person who ‘doesn’t need anything’ at Christmas

By Natalie Hoefler

When I was younger, I was baffled by people responding to the question of, “What do you want for Christmas?” with the answer of, “Oh, there really isn’t anything I want or need.” How could you ever not want *something*, I wondered.

But I get it now. The longer we journey the earthbound path, the more “stuff” we accumulate. We can even reach the point of not wanting more, whether for lack of room or from a desire to simplify our lives.

So what do you get that person who has everything or wants nothing? Here is a list of ideas that will gift such souls without adding to their “stuff”:

- **A gift certificate to a retreat center** where they can take time to grow closer to Christ. Here in central and southern Indiana we’re blessed with six Catholic retreat houses that offer gift certificates (nearby Catholic retreat centers can be found at www.archindy.org/fatima/midwest.html): Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center in Beech Grove (www.benedictinn.org, gift certificates: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581); Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality in Mt. St. Francis (www.mountsaintfrancis.org, gift certificates: retreats@mountsaintfrancis.org or 812-923-8817); Oldenburg Franciscan Center in Oldenburg, (www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org, gift certificates: center@oldenburgosf.com or 812-933-6437); Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis (www.archindy.org/fatima, gift certificates: jburger@archindy.org or 317-545-7681);

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods (www.spsmw.org, gift certificates: provctr@spsmw.org or 812-535-2945); and Saint Meinrad Guest House & Retreat Center in St. Meinrad (www.saintmeinrad.org/retreats/guest-house, gift certificates: mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu or 800-581-6905).

- **Make a donation in their name** to a charitable organization or their parish, or if their parish is in the archdiocese, check to see if their parish already has a fund set up through the Catholic Community Foundation: www.archindy.org/ccf. You can search for their parish in the most recent annual report and also donate online, or call Amy Higgins at 800-382-9836, ext. 1482, or 317-236-1482.

- **Have Masses celebrated in their honor.**

- **Give them the gift of your time.** Buy tickets for you and them to see a show or go to a museum. Promise an outing to a park, or perhaps monthly outings to get coffee, your treat.

- **Give married couples the gift of time with each other** with a gift card to a restaurant or tickets to an outing—and offering your baby-sitting services so they don’t incur that cost.

- **Give them the gift of words.** Write them a letter or series of letters given throughout the year telling the person what they mean to you, or how they’ve impacted your life.

- **Give them the gift of your prayers.**

Write them one or more certificates for you to pray for them in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Give them a card listing the specific day you’ll offer a rosary for them weekly or monthly. Give them a bouquet of real or artificial flowers, each flower representing a prayer you will say for them and how often in the upcoming year.

- If they have a baptism, first Communion, confirmation or marriage coming up, or will be celebrating a milestone birthday (18, 30, 40 or 50-100 in increments of 5) or anniversary (10-80 in increments of 5) in the upcoming year, **consider ordering them a papal blessing from the Vatican.** Most of the fee, which runs from roughly \$18 to about \$27, goes toward parchment and processing fees, and the rest goes toward “the works of charity

undertaken daily in the name of the pope by his office, in service to the poor.” (Shipping costs are handled separately.) For more information go to www.elemosineria.va/papal-blessing-parchments/.

These are just a few ideas. The gist is to consider what you know about the person. Think of how they like to show love—through quality time, words or acts of service—because how a person shows love is often how they most appreciate receiving love.

As for spiritual gifts, show me a person who says no to an offer of prayers, and I’ll show you a person who needs prayer.

May St. Nicholas offer you guidance as you seek to bring joy into the life of someone who “doesn’t need anything,” just as Christ brought joy to a world in need of so much love. †

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Seniors help lead Bishop Chatard to state championship

By John Shaughnessy

Rob Doyle's answer came instantly when the head coach of the Bishop Chatard High School football team was asked about the best part of winning a state championship on Nov. 29.

"The seniors," he said.

Four years ago, Doyle was the head coach of the freshman team at Chatard, the archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis North Deanery.

Now, in his third year as the program's varsity head coach, Doyle led that same group of youths as they won the Class 3A Indiana State High School Athletic Association championship by beating the team from Heritage Hills High School 34-3.

"We saw them from the first day as freshmen, teaching them how to introduce themselves, to seniors winning a state championship," Doyle said. "Their effort and their attitude and their ability to bring the others along was amazing. For our young guys to have that example really paid dividends. It was a credit to the seniors—the type of players they are and the type of persons they are."

The seniors' influence led to two defining traits of the team, Doyle said.

"The first thing is toughness. This is a very tough, hard-nosed group of kids. The second thing is their gratitude—gratitude for the brotherhood they have. They learned to rely on each other, play for each other and sacrifice for each other. That takes a lot for kids to look beyond themselves. When you combine that toughness with that brotherhood, you have something special."

That combination helped lead the team



Bishop Chatard High School football players, coaches, cheerleaders and fans celebrate the team's 34-3 over Heritage Hills on Nov. 29 to win the Class 3A Indiana State High School Athletic Association championship. Chatard is the archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis North Deanery. (Submitted photo)

to a 14-1 record on the season, including defeating last year's state champion in Class 3A, the team from West Lafayette High School.

Getting the opportunity to play in the state championship was "magical," Doyle said, the culmination of "something they worked so hard for."

In the days leading up to the

championship game, Doyle said he didn't get much sleep, but that changed the night before the game.

"I slept like a baby," he recalls. "I was pretty confident their effort was going to pay off. I told them, 'Just be the team you've been all year and you'll be fine.' That's exactly what happened."

After the game was won and the team

clutched the championship trophy, Doyle entered the locker room at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis where the players were in full celebration.

"I went in to talk to the boys one last time, but when I did, they were singing 'We are the Champions.' I jumped up on a cooler and joined them. They were all laughing. It was a fun moment." †

December beatification for Archbishop Sheen postponed

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS)—Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria said on Dec. 3 that Vatican officials have told him that the upcoming beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen has been postponed.

A news release from the Diocese of Peoria said it was informed on Dec. 2 that the Vatican had decided to postpone the Dec. 21 ceremony "at the request of a few members" of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The diocese added, "In our current climate it is important for the faithful to know that there has never been, nor

is there now, any allegation against [Archbishop] Sheen involving the abuse of a minor."

However, a Dec. 5 statement from the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y., said it had "expressed concern about advancing the cause for the beatification of Archbishop Sheen at this time without a further review of his role in priests' assignments."

The statement said the Rochester Diocese, prior to the Vatican announcement on Nov. 18 that Pope Francis approved the beatification, had provided documentation expressing its

concern to the Diocese of Peoria and the Congregation for Saints' Causes via the apostolic nunciature in Washington.

Archbishop Sheen was bishop of Rochester from October 1966 until his retirement in October 1969. He received the title of archbishop at retirement.

The statement from the Rochester Diocese said, "Other prelates shared these concerns and expressed them," adding that "there are no complaints against Archbishop Sheen engaging in any personal inappropriate conduct nor were any insinuations made in this regard."

"The Diocese of Rochester did its due diligence in this matter and believed that, while not casting suspicion, it was prudent that Archbishop Sheen's cause receive further study and deliberation, while also acknowledging the competency of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to render its decision. The Holy See ultimately decided to postpone the beatification," the statement continued.

The Rochester Diocese added it would have no other comment.

Calling the delay "unfortunate," the Peoria Diocese's Dec. 3 release outlined some of the activities for which Archbishop Sheen was especially known, including "his personal dedication" to a holy hour of daily prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and "courage in confronting the challenges in our society."

"Drawing strength from his personal prayer life and deep devotion to Our Lord, Fulton Sheen consistently demonstrated tremendous courage in confronting the challenges in our society," the statement said. "He was well known for his boldness in preaching the Gospel on radio and on television in the face of our secular culture. This same spirit of courage and boldness guided him as a bishop to preach the truth, to defend the faith and to safeguard the Church."

The Peoria Diocese also said "there continue to be many miracles reported" through the archbishop's intercession.

The diocese said there have been "several" miracles reported since the pope's announcement of the beatification ceremony.

confident that Archbishop Sheen's virtuous conduct will only be further demonstrated," the statement said.

"Bishop Jenky has every confidence that any additional examinations will only further prove Fulton Sheen's worthiness of beatification and canonization."

"The Diocese of Peoria has no doubt that Fulton Sheen, who brought so many souls to Jesus Christ in his lifetime, will be recognized as a model of holiness and virtue," the statement added.

Fulton J. Sheen, a native of El Paso, Ill., was ordained on Sept. 20, 1919, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Peoria. He went on to teach at The Catholic University of America in Washington and lead the U.S. branch of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. He is perhaps best remembered for his popular television show, "Life Is Worth Living."

He died in 1979 at age 84. His sainthood cause was officially opened in 2003. The Church declared his heroic virtues and he was given the title "Venerable" in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI.

In July, Bishop Jenky announced Pope Francis had approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Sheen, which led the way to the announcement he would be beatified.

The miracle concerns the healing of James Fulton Engstrom of Washington, Ill., who was considered stillborn when he was delivered during a planned home birth on Sept. 16, 2010. His parents, Bonnie and Travis Engstrom, immediately invoked the prayers of Archbishop Sheen and encouraged others to seek his intercession after the baby was taken to OSF HealthCare St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria for emergency treatment.

In general, two miracles must be accepted by the Church as having occurred through the intercession of a prospective saint, one before beatification and the other before canonization. †



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

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Mary showed courage, patience in bearing Christ in her womb

By Anna Jones

Picture an image of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Now picture her pregnant.

Imagine coming across that image on your Facebook or Instagram feed. You see a young woman bathed in the warm glow of a photo filter, eyes downcast, cradling her round baby belly. Underneath the image are the words, “Coming this December ... a baby boy named Emmanuel! He will come to rule the nations! #blessed #miracle #SonofGod.”

Maybe that daydream gave you pause. Maybe it shocked you slightly to think about Mary on your newsfeed. Maybe it made you roll your eyes. Maybe you laughed a little.

Perhaps these reactions are born out of the reality that we know this would never happen, even if the angel Gabriel had just appeared to Mary only nine months ago.

Yet on March 25, 2019, the feast of the annunciation, we heard how the angel Gabriel visited Mary to share the good news of the miraculous conception of her son. We heard Mary listen patiently and unselfishly agree to do the Lord’s will.

If you’re anything like me, you’ve reflected on Mary’s willingness to do what God asked of her, even though it was far beyond what she could have expected for herself. Perhaps you spent time thinking about whether, in her shoes, you would have been so brave.

It not only took great courage, but also incalculable patience to accept what the angel Gabriel had told her. Mary was being asked to do an incredible service for God—for us all—with little explanation.



A stained-glass window portrays the flight into Egypt of St. Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the infant Jesus. Mary showed great courage in accepting God’s will for her in becoming the mother of Christ. She also showed patience while she bore him in her womb for nine months. (CNS/Crosiers)

We continue to contemplate the great mystery of Christ’s conception and birth today. Imagine how Mary felt in the moment!

And, if you’re anything like me, after thinking about all of that on the annunciation, you promptly forgot about the fact that Mary was agreeing to be pregnant.

And not just pregnant, pregnant out of wedlock with no ordinary explanation for others of how she came to be so.

For months, Mary has been silent. Patient. All this time carrying the Son of God without the fanfare of Facebook announcements, gender reveals and baby showers we’ve come to expect in our society today.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we hear the story of the angel Gabriel’s visit again. Although it is a feast to celebrate the mystery of Mary’s being conceived without original sin, the Gospel reading instead serves as a reminder that while we are anxiously awaiting the anniversary of the birth of Christ, Mary had to be pregnant for that to happen.

As a relatively new mom myself, I’m not far removed from the intense anticipation that comes from expecting your first child. There’s excitement around setting up a nursery and experiencing the generosity of friends and family who want to contribute to welcoming your little one. The excitement level turned up tenfold for our family because our son was the first grandchild on my husband’s side.

It’s hard to remain patient amid the chaos and hubbub. While I never really minded being pregnant and secretly enjoyed the extra attention and love I received, I could not wait to hold my baby.

From the moment I found out I was expecting, I couldn’t wait to feel my baby’s first movements. Every kick, roll over or hiccup brought me such joy. That anticipation only grew more intense as my due date came and went,

and I struggled through 28 hours of labor, 10 days late.

I was proud of myself for waiting to find out the gender of my baby. My husband and I kept our name choices a secret. I thought that those things were somehow great acts of patience, in addition to “patiently” waiting 10 days past due. In some small ways, they were. But it was nothing compared to what Mary did.

There’s an easy scientific explanation for how my son came to be. I was married when I got pregnant. My family was overjoyed at our news. I could see pictures of my son every few weeks, catching glimpses of his features to help my daydreams about what my baby might look like.

I can’t imagine how much longer those nine months would have felt without that.

Aside from Elizabeth’s joy and Joseph’s decision to remain betrothed and his subsequent support of Mary, we know nothing else of how she was received during her pregnancy. We know nothing of how she felt.

What was it like for Mary to feel the baby Jesus kick for the first time in her womb? Did she have doubts that what the angel told her was true?

In our truncated version of events in the Advent season, we hear of Mary becoming pregnant, traveling to see her kinswoman Elizabeth and finally journeying to Bethlehem with Joseph to give birth in a stable.

While as the Church we ponder the mystery of Christ’s conception a couple of times a year, Mary had to think about it every day for nine months as she awaited the birth of a baby an angel told her would come.

Aside from her courage, Mary’s patience is what I will be reflecting on this Advent season.

(Anna Jones is a freelance writer.) †



A statue portrays the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. In the Advent season, we hear of Mary becoming pregnant, traveling to see her kinswoman Elizabeth, and finally journeying to Bethlehem with Joseph to give birth in a stable, all of which required much courage and patience. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Finding the gift of patience in a time of waiting



I am not a patient person. I used to pray for patience. However, when I heard the adage that when you pray for patience, God gives you opportunities to practice this virtue, I ceased that line of prayer. I believe some people are innately gifted with a patient temperament, but I would guess most of us, to some extent, struggle to be patient.

I know you are probably thinking that my lack of patience is tied up in our culture's "immediate gratification" mentality. But that's not it.

For me, it is a results-driven issue. I want to be able to make an impact, in whatever situation is at hand, as quickly and effectively as possible. I want to help others; I want to do God's will. However, I often get ahead of myself in the process.

We are well into the second week of Advent. However for me, Advent came early this year. I underwent back surgery on Nov. 4. The recovery process

requires me to wear a stiff, vest-like back brace for two to three months. I am not to bend, lift or twist my torso. I cannot drive. I am not supposed to do any house cleaning, laundry or otherwise strenuous tasks. I will be on medical leave through December. So what can I do? Wait.

I wait for my husband or son to come home at the end of the day so I have someone with whom to converse. I wait for the pain to subside while I apply ice to my back for what feels like the hundredth time. I wait for sleep to come because I've developed insomnia from napping too much during the day. When I drop something on the floor, I must wait for a family member to come by and pick it up for me. I wait for the next new Hallmark Christmas movie to premiere (because by this point, I've seen all the rest of them). But most of all, I have to wait to heal. This is supremely frustrating to me.

As November wore on, I began to see the parallels between my lack of patience, this waiting period in my life, and the season of Advent. What is Advent but a time to slow down and more quietly, and dare I say, patiently, wait for the arrival of

the Christ Child?

As the weeks wear on, I am getting better at waiting. My desire to control situations is lessening. My prayer life is increasing, not only because of an abundance of time, but I find myself more intentionally focusing on prayers for others, and on the importance of gratitude. Instead of being frustrated that my husband hasn't gotten around to something I would like done at the house, I grow more and more grateful for all he's doing to care for me. And it is during this time that I realize God's not testing my patience, he's gifting me with it.

This newfound patience bolsters me in an unexpected way. During what would normally be a hectic holiday season, I am grateful for the opportunity to wait ... for the joyous coming of Jesus and the promise he brings for love, peace and, what I will be most grateful for—healing. Just wait and see.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of mission advancement for Archdiocesan Education Initiatives.) †

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

Pray the Savior's warmth draws people in from the cold

Christmas comes each year to draw people in from the cold.

Like tiny frightened sparrows, shivering in the winter cold, many live their lives on the barren branches of heartbreak, disappointment, and loneliness, lost in thoughts of shame, self-pity, guilt or failure. One blustery day follows another, and the only company

they keep is with fellow strugglers who land on the same branches, confused and unprotected.

We try so hard to attract them into the warmth. Week after week, church bells ring. Choirs sing. Lighted churches send out their beacon. But nothing seems to bring in those who need warmth the most.

Then, as the year draws to a close, Christmas offers its wonderful message. Emmanuel. God with us. He who resided in heaven, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, willingly descended into our world. He breathed our air, felt our pain, knew our sorrows, and died for our sins. He didn't come to frighten us, but to show us the way to warmth and safety.

In spite of this, some—in fact, most—still keep their distance. It happened when he first came; it happens to this day.

Nevertheless, Christmas comes again. And again. And again. The story of Bethlehem's babe is told another time. We sing the same carols, return to the same manger, watch the same bewildered couple, Mary and Joseph, as they caress their newborn, and we stand in awe for the umpteenth time ... and it never grows old!

Why? Because we all know what it feels like to shiver on the frozen branches of our world, rejected, wounded and scared ... because each one of us can remember when we finally flew into the warmth of his love ... and because we keep hoping that maybe, just maybe, this Christmas will be the one for some sparrow we love to come in from the cold.

For many, Christmas is the loneliest or most depressing time of the year—for families of those in prison, and the prisoners themselves. Single parents. The aged. The hospitalized. The dying and those caring for them. Women and men in the military. Adults still haunted by frightening memories of their childhood. Recently widowed men and women. Students who can't go home for Christmas.

For most, Christmas can become little more than a selfish, greedy, unsatisfying

experience. When gift-buying gets out of control, the season turns into a financial, frustrating frenzy. Instead of slowing our pace, enjoying the lights, listening to the music, and sitting quietly with those we love, we fall in with the hectic hurry to find this and mail that, allowing it to eclipse the meaning.

For a few, Christmas is the only time they ever hear or think seriously about our Lord Jesus Christ. The carols include some of the finest theology in all of hymnody. The message of the Incarnation is portrayed clearly in dramatic pageants, readings and special services. Christmas cards are opened and read by those who would never otherwise entertain the Gospel story.

So, this Christmas season, I pray that the warmth of the Savior's love will spread itself over you as never before. And that whenever and however possible, you will keep reminding yourself that there are still tiny, shivering sparrows who are too terrified to come in from the cold. Maybe, just maybe, this Christmas, because of something you do or say ... they will.

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

Faith at Home/Laura Kelly Fanucci

At Christmas, remember when it comes to giving, less is more

Every year, my sister and I make the same promise to each other. "One year, we're not going to do presents at all," we declare over the phone. "And it will be the best Christmas ever."



Our kids are all still at home, eager Christmas-lovers, so we haven't yet been able to make good on our dreams of a gift-free holiday. But I daydream of a

December free from shopping lists and shipping stress.

I know I'm not alone. The average American will spend \$700 on Christmas gifts this year. This season of cheer is also an overload of consumption.

Ironically, the greatest gifts on the first Christmas were given freely. Mary and Joseph's love for Jesus. The shepherds' wonder. The angels' glorious song. The star's guiding light. The goodness of God incarnate.

Could we celebrate Christmas by giving less to each other and keeping the focus on faith and family?

It can be tricky to transform long-standing traditions, especially when it comes to the holidays. But it also brings a breath of fresh air to let the Holy Spirit inspire our exchanges of love in new ways.

Years ago, our family switched to celebrating the octave of Christmas. Now we open one present each morning for the eight days from Dec. 25 through Jan. 1. The kids love this tradition, running downstairs every morning to see what small surprise might be waiting under the tree.

Rather than buy each child eight presents, we've found that we can fill up the octave with gifts from grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles and siblings. We start with stockings on Christmas morning and then add a few gifts from us: books for everyone one day, a surprise outing another night.

Switching to the octave—from one manic morning of unwrapping—has been such a gift for our family. We get to stretch out the Christmas celebration. We avoid the Dec. 26 "letdown." We've put the focus back on enjoying time together.

If you've ever felt stressed by December shopping (or felt the regret from credit card statements in January), consider bringing this question to prayer: How does my celebration of Christmas honor the Christ Child—the humble baby born into poverty?

Might the Spirit whisper ways that you could celebrate differently this year?

Here are a few ideas to ponder.

- Give to others first. Prioritize your charitable giving before deciding how much to spend on family and friends.

- Simplify your gift-giving. Buy secondhand or fair trade items. Try homemade gifts or regifting something you own. (Our extended family has found more fun with a goofy gift exchange—limited to things we already own or purchases under \$10—than with anything else on Christmas Day.)

- Give the gift of time. Sharing an experience with a loved one brings more lasting memories than most presents we can wrap. (Hint for grandparents: A museum membership or tickets to an event can be a welcome alternative, especially when parents feel overwhelmed by the

See FANUCCI, page 15

Twenty Something/Christina Capecci

Rudolph to the rescue: the triumph of an under-deer

Robert May was painfully aware of the distance between his dreams and his reality.



The 34-year-old Dartmouth graduate had long fantasized about writing the great American novel. Instead, he was working a mediocre job as an ad man for Montgomery Ward, cranking out forgettable copy about silk sheets and white

shirts. He lived in a tiny apartment with his ill wife and young daughter.

One day in 1939, May's boss tapped him for an unexpected assignment. For years, Montgomery Ward had bought coloring books and distributed them at stores as a Christmas giveaway. This time around, executives decided to save money by creating their own booklet—and asked May to write it.

His thoughts turned to the Lincoln Park Zoo. When he took his 4-year-old, Barbara, she was drawn to the deer.

He also channeled his own childhood insecurities that remained poignant. He'd been teased as a small, shy boy. An underdog story like the Ugly Duckling appealed to him.

Then, looking out onto the flickering street lights one foggy winter night, came the inspiration: "A nose! A bright red nose that would shine through fog like a floodlight," he said.

May wanted an alliterative name for his reindeer and considered Reginald—too British—and Rollo, which sounded too jolly for a misfit. Rudolph was still colorful, but more sympathetic.

The tale had a decidedly plaintive, Depression-era tone, describing an outcast who "wept" at his peers' taunting.

May delved into the psychology of his characters, penning a more dramatic narrative arc than we find in the famous 1949 song recorded by Gene Autry and the beloved 1964 stop-action TV special narrated by Burl Ives.

Readers see Santa's fog-induced struggles: "He tangled in tree-tops again and again ..." We also see his diplomacy, recruiting Rudolph by praising his "wonderful forehead" and proving "extra-polite."

The sweetness of Rudolph's redemption is spooned out so liberally it reveals May's lingering boyhood wounds. "It was his opinion of himself that gave rise to Rudolph," his daughter, Barbara, later said.

Where Autry simply sings "then all the reindeer loved him," May offers more detail: "The funny-faced fellow they always called names and practically never allowed in their games was now to be envied by all, far and near. For no greater honor can come to a deer ..."

If that's not enough, he lets Rudolph land his Christmas-night flight right in front of "his handsomer playmates," noting that "those bad deer who used to do nothing but tease him would now have done anything ... only to please him!"

Even more: "They felt even sorer they had been bad when Santa said: 'Rudolph, I never have had a deer quite so brave or so brilliant as you ...'"

He is promptly declared "Commander-In-Chief," a title May types in capital letters.

May took great care with each stanza, running them by Barbara. When his wife died in July, his boss told him to stop working on the booklet.

May refused to quit.

"I needed Rudolph more than ever," he wrote.

See CAPECCHI, page 15

Third Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 15, 2019

- Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

The Book of Isaiah is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend.

Isaiah was between a rock and a hard place, so to speak. He realized that unwise alliances and behavior that forgot God put the Hebrew kingdom of Judah at great risk. The prophet was convinced that if the nation did not return to God in genuine obedience

and piety, then the whirlwind eventually would sweep away life as he and his contemporaries knew it.

His message was met with dispute and outrage. It must have been frustrating. Nonetheless, Isaiah unflinchingly called the people back to God, despite the angry reaction to what he said on the part of many of his contemporaries.

It was not as if God would bring a terrible punishment upon the kingdom. Rather, the people, by their impiety, would create a nightmare for themselves.

The Epistle of St. James supplies the second reading. This epistle rarely appears in the liturgy. The identity of the author is unclear. The New Testament mentions four men with this name. Which, if any, wrote this epistle?

Some insist that James, the foster brother of the Lord, was the author. Here is the other question. Did Mary have other children? Ancient Christian writers surmised that James in this reference was a son from a previous marriage of Joseph, the eventual spouse of Mary. They reasoned that this must have been the case, as they believed, with the Church today, that Mary had only one child, Jesus.

Regardless, this reading solidly establishes the author's faith that Jesus will be victorious. No power can exceed the power of the Lord. After all, the Lord is the Son of God.

However, while final victory undoubtedly will come, it will not necessarily come at a time that humans

predict, and certainly it will not come at their bidding. But it will come.

So, the epistle urges strong faith, but also forbearance.

The third reading, from St. Matthew's Gospel, centers on St. John the Baptist, whose denunciations of sin in high places led to his arrest. In time, they would lead to his death.

Despising the Roman occupation of the land, pious Jews at this time yearned for a Messiah who would rid the Holy Land of the pagan intruders.

John gave another description of the Redeemer. He saw the Savior not as a warrior, commanding armies to slaughter the enemies of the One God of Israel, but the compassionate, truly holy, leader and guide of the pious.

Jesus met this description, healing the sick, giving hope and restoring life, lovingly coming to Earth as God made man.

In the last verses, Jesus affirms that John is a prophet. In fact, John insists, Jesus is the greatest prophet.

Reflection

Ancient cultures often found the dawn awe-inspiring and also reassuring. As the sun creeps over the horizon, the sky presents a marvelous sight. It is not a sudden transition from utter darkness to bright light. Instead, everything changes to a gentle rose.

Traditionally, priests wear rose-colored vestments on this weekend to remind us that the bright light of Christ is about to burst upon the horizon of our world. It is overwhelming to consider. God so loved the world that he sent his Son to us, to give us life.

As in days of old, when the re-appearance of the sun showed that all would be good, so Christians are reassured that they are secure. Jesus lives. He is with them.

Each of us sins. Each is imperfect. Advent is the opportunity to allow God to create a dawn within our hearts, so we invite Christ to come to brighten our lives. †



Daily Readings

Monday, December 16
Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a
Psalm 25:4-9
Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday, December 17
Genesis 49:2, 8-10
Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8, 17
Matthew 1:1-17

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

Thursday, December 19
Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a
Psalm 71:3-6, 16-17
Luke 1:5-25

Friday, December 20
Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-6
Luke 1:26-38

Saturday, December 21
St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church
Song of Songs 2:8-14
or Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Psalm 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21
Luke 1:39-45

Sunday, December 22
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-6
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Armenian Orthodox Christians may receive sacraments of the Catholic Church

QI have a friend who received baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist as a child in the Armenian



Church. For the past 25 years, though, he has attended a Catholic church weekly and receives the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation. He supports the Catholic Church both financially and with

time and talent.

They were told by a nun that this is OK, but recently they heard something on a Catholic radio channel that is making them doubt that. This friend is more Catholic in his actions than most of my friends who were born Catholic. Is there any advice you can give that might relieve his anxiety? (Florida)

AI should tell you first that there is a slight possibility that your friend is already a Catholic. The Armenian Catholic Church is one of about two dozen Eastern Catholic Churches that are in full communion of the Church and accept the doctrine of papal primacy. More likely, though, he belongs to the Armenian Orthodox Church.

There are about 35,000 Armenian Catholics in the United States, while Armenian Orthodox number nearly half a million in this country.

It might be good for him to know, if he is an Armenian Orthodox Christian and there is no church in his faith tradition near where he lives, that his reception of the sacraments in the Catholic Church has been licit. The bishops of the Church specifically approved of this at the Second Vatican Council. The Vatican reiterated the same in the 1993 "Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism" (#122-128).

So what would your friend need to do to be received into the full communion of the Church if he is an Armenian Orthodox Christian?

He would need only to make a profession of faith, a declaration that he believes all that the Catholic Church teaches. Most significantly, he would not need to be re-baptized or re-confirmed, since those Orthodox sacraments he has already received are recognized as valid by the Catholic Church. Likewise, his reception of holy Communion as an Orthodox

Christian has been a validly consecrated Eucharist.

QEvery Mass I attend begins with a penitential rite, which I take to be the forgiveness of sins for those who are there worshipping. And then, just before Communion, we say, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." Why, then, does the Church require Catholics to go to confession? (Arkansas)

AIt is true, as you indicate, that at different points in the Mass, we indicate our unworthiness to participate in such a sacred act. However, none of these expressions of sinfulness and sorrow is equivalent to sacramental absolution, and they do not dispense us from the obligation of confessing grave sins before receiving holy Communion.

The Church's *Code of Canon Law* states clearly that "a member of the Christian faithful is obliged to confess in kind and number all grave sins committed after baptism and not yet remitted directly through the keys of the Church nor acknowledged in individual confession" (#988.1).

Grave, or "mortal," sins are those involving serious matter, committed with knowledge of their gravity and the deliberate consent of the will. The "General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*," which lay out the Church's norms for the celebration of the Eucharist, notes, "the priest calls upon the whole community to take part in the penitential act, which, after a brief pause for silence, it does by means of a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the priest's absolution, which, however, lacks the efficacy of the sacrament of penance" (#51).

However, venial sins are forgiven with the reception of holy Communion during the Mass. Strictly speaking, one is obliged to go to the sacrament of penance only for serious sins—although it is a certainly a good practice to take part in the sacrament of penance regularly even for lesser sins and imperfections. In 2013, Pope Francis revealed that he himself goes to confession every two weeks and considers it the best path to spiritual healing and health.

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

My Journey to God

The Child

By Charles Miller

It is now that most wonderful time of the year...

do ye hear
do ye hear

People will come to see the Child from everywhere...

do ye hear
do ye hear

They come to worship God's precious Child Mary will bear...

do ye hear
do ye hear

This blessed babe shall make God's wondrous love so clear...

do ye hear
do ye hear

This Child will teach God's love for everyone far and near...

do ye hear
do ye hear

So now let us all rejoice in God's love so pure, so dear...

For now we hear
For now we hear



(Charles Miller is a member of Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A crèche minus the manger sets the tone for Advent at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis on Dec. 4.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Rest in peace

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

AKIN, Kyndra A., 43, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 25. Daughter of Dr. Daniel and Margaret Akin. Sister of Jodi Clere, Brian and Scott Akin. Aunt of several.

BARLOW, Caitlin E., 27, St. Mary, North Vernon, Nov. 21. Mother of Jaxon Kendall and Kennedy Barlow. Daughter of Lisa Barlow. Sister of Alex, Joe and Nick Barlow. Granddaughter of Dave Shaw. Great-granddaughter of Doris Shaw.

BEAVER, Nadara J., 83, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Oct. 24. Wife of William Beaver. Mother of Gayle Alvey, Marcia Ewbank, Ann Jones and Mark Beaver. Sister of Judi Checkley and Carl Fletcher. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of five.

BENSMAN, Edward A., 82, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Husband of So Young Bensman. Father of Michelle and Edward Bensman. Grandfather of two.

BURKERT, Rita M., 81, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 26. Mother of Marti MacKinnon, Jay, Jim and Mark Burkert. Sister of Ken Luken. Grandmother of eight.

CRISS, Roxanna R., 66, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Nov. 27. Sister of Barbara Alexander, Emily and Ronald Criss.

DIDAT, Jim, 69, St. Mary, Navilleton, Nov. 23. Husband of Susan Didat. Father of Brandon and Trevor Didat. Brother of Patricia Holsclaw, Elmer, Jerome and Regis Didat. Grandfather of five.

GIERZYNSKI, Sarah E., 78, St. Mary, North Vernon, Nov. 24. Wife of Terry Gierzynski. Mother of Elisabeth Hegmann and Hugh

Partridge. Grandmother of three.

HARDY, Rose M., 90, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 28. Mother of Rose Dietrich, Mary Reel, Linda Taylor, George and Michael Hardy. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 30. Great-great-grandmother of three.

HUTSON, Phyllis R., 86, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 16. Mother of Amy Combes, Jennifer D'Andrea, Pamela Morr, Victoria Muniz, Jeffrey and Michael Hutson. Sister of Jean Chamberlin. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of five.

KELKER, Robert B., Jr., 83, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 15. Husband of Constance Kelker. Father of Eileen Hambrick, Kristina LaFleur, Renee Lykins, Kimberly Wilson and Lorne Kelker. Brother of Mary Ann Fairchild, Joe and Mike Kelker. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of eight.

KIEFFER, Joseph F., Jr., 92, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Husband of Grace Kieffer. Father of Liz Appleby, Christine Hamilton, Patricia Parker, Mary Kay Segasser, Ed and Kevin Kieffer. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of six.

KIRTLEY, Michael B., 57, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Father of Jennifer Kirtley. Brother of Elizabeth Cox and Carolyn Ibey.

SCHOENFELDER, Jerry J., 83, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Dec. 1. Husband of Janice Schoenfelder. Father of Annette Newhart and Michael Schoenfelder. Brother of Barbara Britton, Kay Isburg and Jim Schoenfelder.



Wisconsin snowfall

A snow-covered statue of Joseph and the Christ Child is pictured during a major snowstorm on Nov. 30 on the grounds of St. Mary Catholic Cemetery in Appleton, Wis. Winter officially arrives on Dec. 22. (CNS photo/Brad Birkholz)

Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of six.

SENG, Alvina E. (Renn), 88, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 28. Mother of Denise Burden, Mary Pat Butler, Alyssa Morris, Charles III and Philip Seng. Sister of Evalina Ems, Aline Krakowski, Lelia Popp, Virginia Schindler, Elvin and Harold Renn. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 18.

SHEETS, Jeffery P., 64, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Nov. 26. Brother of Joe and Tom Sheets. Uncle of two.

SPANIER, Edward J., 82, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Husband of Phyllis Spanier. Father of Christopher and Daniel Spanier. Stepfather of Kristine Kruczek Mains, Therese and R. Patrick Kruczek. Grandfather of three. Step-grandfather of nine.

STINER, Mary Catherine, 82, Most Precious Blood, New Middleton, Nov. 9. Sister of Lois Ann Drury and William Stiner. Aunt, great-aunt and great-great aunt of several.

THOMAS, Carolyn R., 82, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 22. Mother of Cynthia Knopp, Nancy O'Donoghue and Gordon Lamb. Sister of Raymond Heckman.

Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

THOMAS, James M., 68, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 26. Husband of Connie Thomas. Father of Lee Ann Cooper, James, Jr., Ray and Troy Thomas. Brother of Evelyn Arnold, Patty Byerly, Barbara Conrad, Donald, Irvin, Jr., John and Patrick Thomas. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of three. †

USCCB president urges special prayers for pope's 50 years as a priest

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Catholic faithful across the United States are being invited to pray for Pope Francis as he celebrates 50 years as a priest.

Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), has sent a letter to bishops across the country asking them to

encourage parishioners to honor the jubilee during Advent with special prayers and Mass petitions.

The letter included a prayer for the pope as well as two petitions that can be used at Mass or in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. The archbishop also invited the faithful to use any other appropriate prayer for the pope if they desire.

Four days before Pope Francis celebrates his 83rd birthday on Dec. 17, he will celebrate 50 years as a priest—a ministry he sees as being a shepherd who walks with his flock and yearns to find those who are lost.

The prayers are being sent in English and Spanish to bishops. They were developed by the USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship.

The USCCB also plans a social media effort to spread the message about the prayers.

Archbishop Gomez encouraged bishops to share the prayers with parishes, schools and other diocesan ministries.

Supporting materials sent with the letter noted that Dec. 13, the anniversary of the pope's priestly ordination, is a weekday in Advent and the memorial of St. Lucy. Church practice allows for the celebrant to use an optional special Mass for the day, including one identified as "For the Pope." The materials suggest that the Mass "would be appropriate to use in honor of the 50 years of priesthood of Pope Francis."

The text of the prayer is:

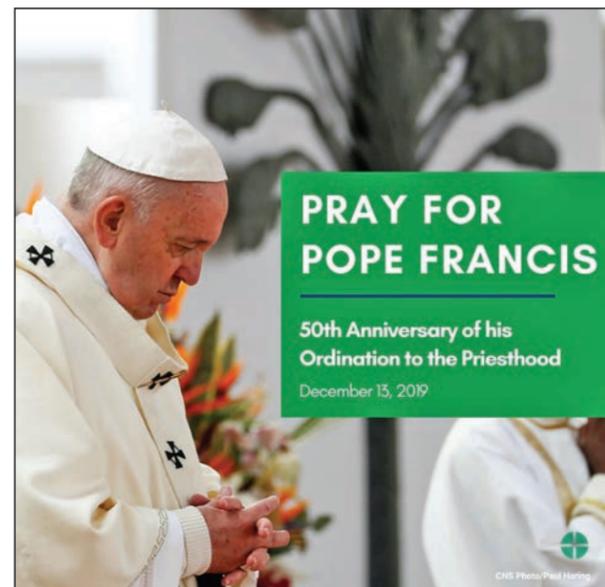
Father of mercy, / we come before you with gratitude / for the 50 years of priesthood of Pope Francis, / whom you have made Peter's successor. / Support him with the Spirit's gifts / so that he can continue to preach the Gospel with priestly zeal / and lead the Church with wisdom and strength and courage. / May his example of long and

faithful service / be an inspiration to your priests and to all your faithful. / We ask this through Christ our Lord.

The petition texts are:

—For our Holy Father Pope Francis as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, that Jesus the High Priest will continue to renew, increase, and strengthen in him the graces received at ordination as he carries out his sacred ministry in the holy Church.

—That the example of the many years of faithful priesthood of Pope Francis will be a source of inspiration for all priests, and awaken in young people their own call to service in the Church for the salvation of souls. †



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carlahill@archindy.org

New book highlights St. John Paul II's devotion to the rosary

WASHINGTON (CNS)—If the use of the rosary as a devotion fell off at some point in the past, that's not the case now, according to Gretchen Crowe, *Our Sunday Visitor's* editorial director for periodicals.

Under St. John Paul II, "we saw a real resurgence in praying the rosary," said Crowe, author of *Praying the Rosary With St. John Paul II*. "He had such a great devotion to this Marian prayer that he inspired an entire generation of Catholics to come back to the rosary."

Crowe added, "I think there's a great power to the rosary, a great devotion to the rosary. I think John Paul exemplified that. I want to do, and try, everything I can, to help people reclaim that great gift of the rosary."

The book includes chapters for each set of mysteries—Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous, the last developed by the Polish-born pope—and each mystery contains a

biographical note about St. John Paul as well as words from his writings or speeches.

It's Crowe's second book on the rosary. Her first—*Why the Rosary, Why Now?*—was published in 2017. Both are published by Our Sunday Visitor. She said her intent with the first book was to "make the case for people to have a devotion to the rosary ... to face a lot of the trouble we're facing in the world: increased secularity, troubles in the Church, the need for sanctity, our call to holiness."

Crowe still remembers the rosary she got when she made her first Communion. "It was in a white packet, it said 'My Rosary' on it. I got it from my parents," she told Catholic News Service (CNS) in a Nov. 26 phone interview from *Our Sunday Visitor's* offices in Huntington, Ind.

"I would keep it with me at my bedside, and if I had trouble sleeping, I knew the rosary was there for me to turn

to. I was 7, 8 years old, I didn't quite know what the rosary was. I didn't know the history of the saints using the rosary to grow closer to Christ."

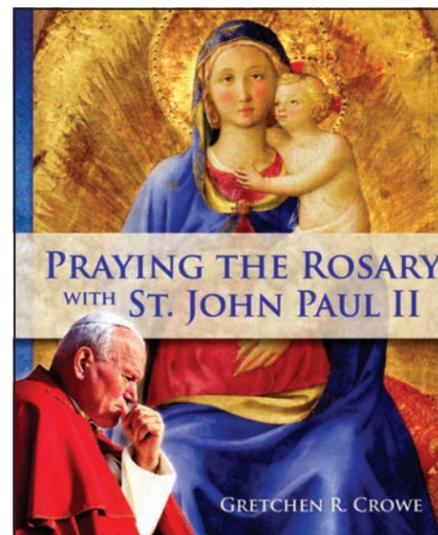
Crowe added, "I would keep the rosary under my pillow at night when I was a kid and pray a decade or two to lull to sleep. I heard somebody say, later on in life, that if I didn't finish the rosary before I went to sleep, my guardian angel would finish it for me. That's a beautiful thought."

Today, Crowe and a rosary are like most people and their cellphones: always within reach. "I have a rosary pretty much everywhere. I have rosaries in my purses, on my nightstand, in my car. I have a little rosary keychain that's on my keys. I try to keep them wherever I go," she said.

That provides opportunities for her to pray the rosary.

"If you have children, like we do, we try to pray in the car when we go to Mass every Sunday as a family. My husband and I pray, obviously, but my 2-and-a-half-year-old last Sunday piped up, 'Those are the prayers we say at bedtime!' He already understands it better," Crowe said.

"For people like me who are busy and trying to find time to pray the rosary, I think the best thing to do is to start small. If you can't work in a full rosary, start with a decade or two decades," she added. "I try to pray the rosary during my commute to work. I have an 18-minute commute to work. I find myself still



praying some of the last prayers of the rosary while I'm walking up the steps, but I find that it helps me spiritually."

And for those who haven't memorized each and every prayer of the rosary, *Praying the Rosary With St. John Paul II* includes all of them.

"We wanted to make this book invitational. That's why we included the prayers of the rosary at the end of the book," Crowe told CNS. "We didn't want not knowing the specific words to be an impediment.

"We want people to pray it. The prayers can be learned." †



'I try to pray the rosary during my commute to work. I have an 18-minute commute to work. I find myself still praying some of the last prayers of the rosary while I'm walking up the steps, but I find that it helps me spiritually.'

—Gretchen Crowe, author of *Praying the Rosary With St. John Paul II*

FANUCCI

continued from page 12

influx of new toys.)

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relief to your budget and the environment.

"Christmas is preferring the silent voice of God to the noisiness of consumerism," said Pope Francis.

When it comes to giving, we need this good news—now more than ever.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minn. She is the author of several books, including *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting*, and blogs at www.motheringspirit.com.) †

CAPECCHI

continued from page 12

In late August, he finished the story. Ward seized it as a lesson for his clerks, celebrating in an in-house memo Rudolph's "service, the right attitude and a desire to do his best."

The book was a huge hit, and the retailer printed more than 2 million copies that Christmas season 80 years ago.

May was eventually given all rights to Rudolph, which provided a good

livelihood. He experienced a dramatic arc of his own with profound spiritual underpinnings: remarrying a devout Catholic, converting to Catholicism and having five more children, one of whom became a nun.

His biography can encourage anyone who feels crippled by the gap between hopes and reality. It reminds us to trust in the bigger picture, in the One who isn't done writing your story.

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

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Assistant Superintendent
Office of Catholic Schools
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-236-1544
rrash@archindy.org

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Help Wanted – Indianapolis Council President

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Might you be that person? Interested candidates are invited to send a letter of interest to:

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Attention: Council President Nominating Committee, 3001 East 30th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46218 or email to: Nominating Committee via pjerrell@svdindy.org.

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Email: retreatdir@mountsaintfrancis.org
or mail to: 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis, IN 47146

'Ad limina' visit takes on Marian flavor for Region VII bishops

ROME (CNS)—As the bishops of Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin began celebrating an early morning Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the church was abuzz with activity and repeated banging on a bass drum.

In Rome for their visits "*ad limina apostolorum*"—to the threshold of the Apostles—the bishops celebrated Mass on Dec. 9 at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls and in a chapel of St. Mary Major on Dec. 10, the feast of Our Lady of Loreto. Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is among the bishops on the visit.

Pope Francis has declared a special jubilee to mark the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Loreto being named patron of aviators and air travelers.

As the U.S. bishops prayed in the Marian chapel, workers moved chairs and pews and decorated the railing around the basilica's main altar with pine boughs, poinsettias and other flowers. And the orchestra of the Italian air force, which claims Our Lady of Loreto as their patron, began tuning their instruments.

The rumble from all that activity carried into the chapel.

Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., the principal celebrant and homilist, noted how the bishops' *ad limina* week had a very Marian flavor: the transferred feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Dec. 9, the day's Loreto feast and the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12.

"We have been truly blessed to walk these days with our Blessed Mother," he said. "The world is in need of her intervention, her prayers, her grace and this is a time when she is reaching out to save souls and bring them to her son Jesus."

The day's first reading, from the book of the prophet Isaiah, began, "Comfort,

give comfort to my people, says your God" (Is 40:1).

Many, many people need comfort—not the comfort of material goods, he said, "but the comfort of true and genuine peace that comes only from God," Bishop Ricken said.

"Often, my brother bishops, we are called to give comfort to our people, to listen to their trials and tribulations, sometimes their anger, sometimes their hostility," he said, "and we are called to walk with them, to accompany them in their sorrow, their sense of betrayal, their sense of needing God."

"And thank God they're still coming to us for consolation, some comfort," he added.

Bishops also are called to offer solace, affirmation and consolation to their priests and seminarians. "The challenges of being a priest today," Bishop Ricken said, "are more than anything I remember in my almost 40 years of priesthood, 20 years of being a bishop."

The Isaiah reading also spoke about being a "herald of good news" (Is 40:9), and not being afraid to share the glad tidings of salvation. "Courage is needed today to engage in a mission we've all been called to, a mission that seems defeated at this point, but we know in hope and confidence that this is God's Church and the world needs the Church now, perhaps more than ever," the bishop said.

During the *ad limina* visits, Bishop Ricken said, the bishops should renew their "*disponibilita*"—radical availability—to serve God, serve God's people and proclaim the Gospel.

Cardinal James M. Harvey, a native of Milwaukee and archpriest of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, was invited by the group to be the principal celebrant and homilist at their Mass on Dec. 9 near the tomb of the Apostle.

While the bishops did pray at the tomb, the readings for the Mass were those for



U.S. bishops from Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin—including Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson—pray in front of relics revered as the crib of the baby Jesus after concelebrating Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome on Dec. 10. The bishops were making their "*ad limina*" visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses to the pope and Vatican officials.

(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The cardinal quoted William Wordsworth's poem, "The Virgin," which includes the lines: "Woman! above all women glorified, our tainted nature's solitary boast."

"We do boast about Mary," Cardinal Harvey said. "We boast when we say, 'See what the power of God has done for a member of our human race.' And herein lies our hope. If the power of God is great enough to preserve from sin a human person like ourselves, Mary, then it is great enough to cure us of the effects of sin."

Celebrating the Immaculate Conception during Advent, he said, helps Catholics "recognize with humility that we are not worthy of Emmanuel—God with us—and yet God never fails to want us" because as St. Paul said, "God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph 1:4).

Praying at St. Paul's tomb, the cardinal said, the bishops pray for a renewal of their "zeal to be missionary disciples, first and foremost by living up to our calling as those chosen in Christ to be holy and blameless in God's sight." †

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