



A Christmas Message from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas greetings of good tidings and joy! Celebrating the incarnation of God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ, whatever one's plight in life, is a cause to rejoice. Our Savior was born into earthly poverty that we might reap the heavenly riches of eternal life.

There has been much weighing upon the spirit of humanity during this last year. We continue striving to

overcome the struggles of COVID amid an increase in violence, mental health issues, ever-increasing polarization, humanitarian concerns, impact of natural disasters and social unrest throughout our country as well as the world. Many are still struggling with health, economic, housing and justice issues. Underlying all these issues and concerns is our need for meaning, purpose and belonging.

Christmas reminds us that our deepest hungers, thirsts, desires and needs are ultimately satisfied by divine grace, mercy and love. The

celebration of Christmas marks how God provides for humanity what is beyond that which can be met by the world. After all, it is the Creator rather than created beings or things that make salvation possible for us. The Christmas event, the birth of Jesus Christ, involves nothing less than the supremely divine being of all creation breaking into the human condition in a way that exceeded human imagination and invention.



In the person of Jesus Christ, God became one like us in all things but sin. He came to us so that nothing

could prevent us from being reconciled to Him and one another.

Today's world is not completely unlike that of the first Christmas, when Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph in the humble surroundings of a cave-like manger. At that time, humanity was plagued with the scourge of war, insurrection and injustice that often resulted in the most vulnerable being cast into greater poverty and desperate for refuge. It is not by denying all the muck of our human condition, but by fully acknowledging its reality, that we are able to truly appreciate the gift of salvation offered in the coming of Emmanuel, a name meaning "God is

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Mensaje de Navidad del Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Queridos hermanas y hermanos en Cristo:

¡Saludos navideños de buena voluntad y alegría! Independientemente de la situación de cada uno en la vida, celebrar la encarnación de Dios hecho hombre en la persona de Jesucristo es un motivo de alegría. Nuestro Salvador nació en la pobreza terrenal para que pudiéramos cosechar las riquezas celestiales de la vida eterna.

El espíritu de la humanidad ha sufrido mucho durante este último año y

seguimos esforzándonos por superar las dificultades de la COVID-19 en medio del aumento de la violencia, los problemas de salud mental, la polarización cada vez más acentuada, las preocupaciones humanitarias, el impacto de los desastres naturales y el malestar social en todo el país, así como en el mundo entero. Muchos siguen luchando contra los problemas de salud, económicos, de vivienda y de justicia. En todas estas cuestiones y preocupaciones subyace nuestra necesidad de encontrar sentido, propósito y pertenencia.

La Navidad nos recuerda que nuestras hambres, sedes, deseos y necesidades más profundas son satisfechas en definitiva por la gracia, la misericordia y el amor divinos. La celebración de la Navidad destaca la forma en que Dios brinda a la humanidad aquello que está más allá de lo que puede satisfacer el mundo. Al fin y al cabo, es el Creador y no los seres o las cosas creadas quien hace posible nuestra salvación. El acontecimiento de la Navidad, el nacimiento de Jesucristo, implica nada

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Guadalupe celebration



Cardinal Marc Ouellet, president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, leads a prayer as pilgrims mark the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with songs and the recitation of the rosary in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 12. (CNS photo/Junno Arocho Esteves)

CHRISTMAS

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with us." Jesus is Emmanuel, our hope and salvation! In Him, we are able to rise from the pressing weight of despair, fear, guilt, shame and bitterness. To be drawn into a personal encounter with Him is to reverse course from the growing polarization and radical individualism of subjective truth and look to Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life of all that is good, beautiful and holy.

And so, regardless of whatever challenges or hardships we may be facing,

every man, woman and child has cause to rejoice in Jesus Christ. In Him, love prevails over hate, hope springs eternal and faith does not disappoint. I pray that each and every soul may experience the peace and tenderness of divine mercy in celebrating the birthday of our Savior, Jesus Christ, keeping in mind that the best is still yet to come.

Blessed Christmas!

+ Charles C. Thompson

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

NAVIDAD

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menos que el ser supremo de toda la creación irrumpió en el mundo terrenal de un modo que superó la imaginación y la invención humanas. En la persona de Jesucristo, Dios se ha convertido en uno de nosotros en todo, excepto en el pecado. Se hizo hombre para que nada nos impidiera reconciliarnos con Él y entre nosotros.

El mundo actual no es completamente distinto al de la primera Navidad, cuando Jesús nació de María y José en el humilde entorno de un pesebre en forma de cueva. En aquella época, la humanidad estaba asolada por el azote de la guerra, la insurrección y la injusticia, que a menudo provocaban que los más vulnerables cayeran en una mayor pobreza y buscaran refugio desesperadamente. Únicamente al reconocer a plenitud el lado abyecto de nuestra condición humana somos capaces de valorar verdaderamente el don de la salvación que nos ofrece la venida de Emmanuel, nombre que significa "Dios está con nosotros." ; Jesús es Emmanuel,

nuestra esperanza y salvación! En Él, somos capaces de levantarnos del peso apremiante de la desesperación, el miedo, la culpa, la vergüenza y la amargura. Llegar a un encuentro personal con Él es revertir el curso de la creciente polarización e individualismo radical de la verdad subjetiva y mirar a Jesucristo como el Camino, la Verdad y la Vida de todo lo que es bueno, bello y santo.

Por lo tanto, independientemente de los desafíos o dificultades que podemos enfrentar, todo hombre, mujer y niño tiene motivos para alegrarse en Jesucristo. En Él, el amor prevalece sobre el odio, la esperanza es eterna y la fe no defrauda. Rezo para que todas y cada una de las almas experimenten la paz y la ternura de la misericordia divina al celebrar el cumpleaños de nuestro Salvador, Jesucristo, teniendo en cuenta que lo mejor está aún por venir.

; Buena Navidad!

+ Charles C. Thompson

Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 18, 2021–January 13, 2022

December 18 – 2 p.m. CST
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Boniface Parish, Fulda, and St. Meinrad Parish, St. Meinrad, at St. Meinrad Church

December 19 – 11 a.m.
Dedication of St. John Paul II Church at St. John Paul II Parish, Sellersburg

December 20 – 3 p.m.
Legal Department meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 20 – 5:30 p.m.
Serra Club Dinner for seminarians and guests at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 21 – 2 p.m.
Mass for prisoners at Rockville Correctional Facility, Rockville

December 23 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 24 – 10 p.m.
Christmas Mass During the Night at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

January 4 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

January 6 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

January 9 – 9:30 a.m.
Mass at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis

January 11 – noon
Capital campaign lunch meeting at Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Parish, Indianapolis

January 12 – noon
Lunch gathering with Archdiocese of Indianapolis priests, Indianapolis

January 13 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

January 13 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

Catholics must defend rights of the weakest, defenseless, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Catholics must contribute to helping protect the rights of the defenseless, weak and rejected, Pope Francis said.

"This is an intrinsic call to our faith," and not some insignificant or "passing" moral norm, he said in an audience at the Vatican with Italian legal experts, lawyers and judges.

"Even the least, the defenseless, weak individuals have rights that must be respected and not trampled on," he said.

The pope met on Dec. 10 with members of the Italian Catholic Jurists Union who were in Rome attending a national congress on Dec. 9-11 dedicated to the legal protection of those who are vulnerable.

"Never before have Catholic jurists been so called upon to affirm and protect the rights of the weakest within

an economic and social system that pretends to include diversity but, in fact, systematically excludes those who have no voice," Pope Francis said.

"The rights of workers, migrants, the sick, unborn children, people nearing death and the poorest are increasingly neglected and rejected in this throwaway culture," he said. "Those who are not able to spend and consume seem to be worthless.

"But to deny fundamental rights, to deny the right to a dignified life, to physical, psychological and spiritual care, and to a fair wage means denying human dignity," he said, highlighting the way many seasonal workers are treated and literally "used" to pick fruit or vegetables "and then paid miserably and thrown out, without any social protection." †

Official Appointments

Effective Immediately

Rev. Thomas Schliessmann, pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, appointed administrator *pro tem* of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, while remaining pastor of St. Lawrence Parish.

Very Rev. Joseph Newton, pastor of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, and Vicar Judicial of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Metropolitan Tribunal, granted a leave of absence.

(These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



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Coming to America

Catholic Charities helps Afghan refugees adjust to life in camp, resettle in homes

By John Shaughnessy

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson remembers it as a moment filled with sweetness and joy.

The moment occurred at Camp Atterbury in Johnson County, the place where thousands of refugees from Afghanistan have lived since they fled their country after the United States withdrew all its military troops from their homeland on Aug. 30.

As the archbishop toured the camp on Nov. 4 and viewed the efforts to create a welcoming, temporary home for the refugees at the Indiana National Guard facility, he was touched by a moment when he was greeted with a loud “hello!” from about 40 refugee children who also wanted to shake his hand.

“Interacting with them was certainly a highlight of the visit,” the archbishop recalls. “Although their English was very limited, their smiles and sense of joy were quite inspiring.”

Archbishop Thompson was also impressed by the combined efforts of people from the local and national government—plus military units and religious and charitable organizations—to help make the transition to America as comfortable as possible for the Afghan refugees.

“It is well organized and very humane,” the archbishop says about the camp. “I was impressed with how everyone at the camp referred to the Afghan people as guests.”

“They spoke of the transformation that has taken place from the first arrivals until our visit, and how much interaction was taking place among various groups



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson visits with Team Rubicon members supporting Operation Allies Welcome at Camp Atterbury on Nov. 4. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops offers activities and programs for Afghan guests to boost morale as they await resettlement at Camp Atterbury. This initiative provides essential support at secure locations outside of Afghanistan. The Department of Defense, through U.S. Northern Command, and in support of the Department of Homeland Security, is providing transportation, temporary housing, medical screening and general support for at least 50,000 Afghan evacuees at suitable facilities in permanent or temporary structures as quickly as possible. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Trinity Carter/14th Public Affairs Detachment)

of peoples. They were certainly trying to provide as much safety, care and respect as possible. At one point, they had over 7,000 guests. The number was just more than 5,000 at the time of our visit, as they were working toward resettlement for as many as possible.”

In all, the U.S. Department of Defense, in support of the Department of Homeland Security, is “providing transportation, temporary housing, medical screening and general support for at least 50,000 Afghan evacuees” that have been placed in facilities across the

United States, according to government officials.

The efforts to help the refugees at Camp Atterbury—and to resettle them into homes across the country—have involved the staffs at Catholic Charities

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The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2 for Christmas holiday

This week’s issue of *The Criterion*, which is our annual Christmas publication, is the last issue of 2021.

The Criterion will be published again on Jan. 7, 2022, and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 24 through Jan. 2 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022. †



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 in St. Meinrad, are as follows:

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Both liturgies will be livestreamed at: www.sppc.org/streaming.

Dec. 24—10 p.m. Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the principal celebrant. Parking will be available from 9 p.m. to midnight behind the cathedral and at

the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. Dec. 25—10 a.m. Mass.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church

Christmas services will be livestreamed at www.saintmeinrad.org/live.

Dec. 24—Vespers (Liturgy of the Hours) 5 p.m. CT and Mass 10 p.m. CT
Dec. 25—Mass 10:30 a.m. CT, Vespers 5 p.m. CT

For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †



Remember Those We Serve This Christmas

THOSE WHO LACK THE BASIC NECESSITIES FOR LIFE

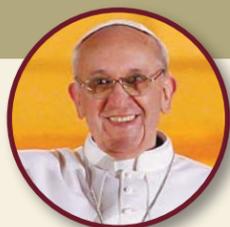
- You serve warm meals to those who are hungry.
- You teach life skills to help people stay out of poverty.
- You keep Indianapolis center-city schools open for families who cannot afford tuition but who wish for their children to receive a Catholic education.

OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE PRIESTS AND DEACONS

- You subsidize the high cost of education for our seminarians.
- You support the formation programs for future deacons.
- You care for the retired priests who served in our Archdiocese.
- You offer retreats and sabbaticals for current priests.

PEOPLE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF LIFE WHO NEED TO KNOW AND FEEL THE PRESENCE AND LOVE OF JESUS

- You keep Catholic student centers open on college campuses.
- You support teachers and students in 67 Catholic schools.
- You offer programs for young adults.
- You help young mothers choose life instead of abortion.
- You prepare catechists to teach the faith to our children.
- You sponsor faith-centered activities for youth.



Pope Francis’ intentions for January

- **For true human fraternity**—We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at archindy.org/popesintentions.

UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL

TO GIVE THE GIFT OF HOPE THIS SEASON, SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT, OR VISIT WWW.ARCHINDY.ORG/UCA

United
in the Eucharist



The Criterion

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Greg A. Otolski, *Associate Publisher*
John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

Editorial



The Holy Family at the Nativity is depicted in this digital collage by Trygve Skogrand. Christmas, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (CNS illustration/Bridgeman)

God emptied himself to become human

Christians are all familiar with the story that St. Luke and St. Matthew tell about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, along with angels appearing to shepherds, and a star alerting wise men that a new king has been born. We will hear Luke's and Matthew's readings in liturgies during the Christmas season.

But let us also meditate on the beginning of a very early Christian hymn, quoted by St. Paul in the second chapter of his Letter to the Philippians. It describes the mystery of the Incarnation:

"Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness" (Phil 2:6-7).

This hymn shows that the early Christians, certainly at the time that St. Paul wrote his letter in the 50s, believed that Jesus was God.

They sang this hymn at a time when there were a number of gods in the Roman Empire. Many of those gods, though, were humans who, their followers believed, became gods. Jesus was different. He was God, who existed from all eternity, who lowered himself to become a human being.

The hymn says that Jesus was willing to empty himself to take the form of a slave. He was emptying himself of the outward qualities of his divinity to be born as a human. For someone with the divine power of God, that is humbling himself indeed.

He did not abandon his divinity when he became human. Rather he took on the form of a slave while continuing in the form of God. He was the only one in history to have two natures, the divine and the human.

He was in the form of God, which means that he was part of the Holy Trinity, fully equal to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* says, "All three persons work together in the works of creation, Redemption and sanctification" (p. 62). Yet he was also a distinct person.

The prologue to the Gospel of St. John, calling Jesus "the Word," tells us that "the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:1-3).

And yet he emptied himself of those powers to become a human, like us. Well, maybe not completely. He showed himself capable of performing feats beyond human capacity like multiplying food, or healing the sick with only a word, or calming a storm at sea.

But he also took on the weaknesses of humans. He was truly a human. He felt pain, cried when his friend died, slept when he was tired.

This, then, is what we celebrate at Christmas—the doctrine, and the mystery, of the Incarnation. We believe that the second person of the Holy Trinity, fully God, humbled himself to become fully human, born of a human mother through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Why did he do that? Why would someone with the powers of God lower himself to become a human? In Jesus' case, because that was the will of his Father. As the First Letter of St. John says, "In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him" (1 Jn 4:9).

St. John was even more direct in his Gospel when he told us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

The Incarnation must lead to our redemption, which is what we celebrate during Holy Week. God determined that no mere human being had the power to reconcile us with God, that it had to be done by a divine person. So, he sent his Son to do it.

Let us rejoice in the fact that God's love for us was so great that he gave us his Son in the Incarnation. May you all have a merry Christmas.

—John F. Fink

Reflection/Natalie Hoefler

God guides and helps those who feel distant from him

If a day could personify my mood, this one did. Grumpy, I would call it. Gray and blustery.



I had been feeling distant from Christ for some time. It was a slow-moving train, the process that caused this feeling.

It started several months ago when, just once or twice a week, I skipped my daily prayer and

Scripture time. Soon I was only praying and reading Scripture a few times a week, and for less and less time. Before long, I fell out of the practice altogether.

I made a few feeble attempts to jump start my prayer life, but like the seeds scattered on rocky soil, the roots of my efforts withered and died.

So here I was with Advent underway, doing nothing to prepare my heart for Christ and feeling too ashamed to even try. Why would Christ welcome the approach of so lukewarm and lazy a disciple, one who chose to do basically anything rather than spend time with him?

Such were my thoughts as I drove to work when suddenly, unexpectedly, my monologue turned into a dialogue.

"Do you think you're the first person to ever abandon me?"

It wasn't a question I asked myself. It was a question being asked of me, and the voice continued.

"How many stories have you heard of people who turn their back on me, but eventually come back and find themselves wrapped in my love? Think of the prodigal son. Think of Peter. Don't be afraid to come to me."

Then just as unexpectedly, my reticence and fear simply vanished. I felt light. I felt happy, and a wide, involuntary smile lit my face.

That day on my lunch hour I practically skipped to the Catholic Center's chapel. I felt no wariness, no dread, no shame. I knelt before the tabernacle and with a grin simply said, "Thank you!"

I then looked up the day's Scripture readings. My heart raced with awe and joy as I read the first words of the first reading: "For I am the Lord, your God, who grasp your right hand. It is I who say to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you'" (Is 41:13).

I immediately had an image of myself as a child with God standing to my right, holding my right hand and leading me gently forward toward Christ, as a parent reassuringly guides an unsure child.

Those words from Scripture were an extension of the grace-filled experience I'd had earlier that day.

Some say Christmas is all about children. As Christians, we know that it is all about the Christ Child.

In the reality of God made flesh as a completely and utterly dependent infant, he gave us an image of the ideal relationship with him: as trusting children who know no fear in approaching their love-smitten maker.

Should fear, doubt or distance take hold through sin, there is no need to lose hope. Simply recall all the sinner-saints living and dead who abandoned Christ, but were welcomed back with infinite love and mercy when they sought him.

And if there is still fear or shame in approaching him, we can take comfort in the solid truth of his words: "For I am the Lord, your God, who grasp your right hand. It is I who say to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you'" (Is 41:13).

(Natalie Hoefler is a reporter for The Criterion and a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Letter to the Editor

Consent does not make an act morally acceptable, reader says

In a recent "Making Sense of Bioethics" column by Father Tad Pacholczyk in the Dec. 3 issue of *The Criterion* ("Sexual Atoms and Molecules"), the point is made that consent forms the basis of various sexual activities between humans in our "anything goes" culture.

Father Pacholczyk points out that consensual sexual relations create a bond between two people, whether they choose to recognize that fact or not. However, there is another aspect of "consent" that needs to be explored. Does giving consent for an act make that act morally acceptable?

Though consent is certainly important, it is not the green light our liberal culture seems to accept. Far from it.

Two or more persons can consent to sin. Take the bank president who would like to skim some personal funds off the top of the bank's income. This is known as the crime of embezzlement and is

simply stealing, a violation of the Seventh Commandment.

However, he needs help to pull off his scheme. So the bank president approaches the chief financial officer (CFO) about "cooking the books" to hide the loss of funds, and the CFO would also get a cut. If the CFO consents to this scheme, does that make it right? Of course not.

The same applies to sexual relations. Stipulations against various sexual acts are contained in the Bible, and the Catholic Church has gone to great lengths to outline what is healthy moral sex. Two or more people consenting to do otherwise does not excuse the sin. What it does is replace God's law with personal whim.

So the concept of "consent" as allowing all manner of sexual perversions has no logical basis and should be considered sinful rationalization.

Robert Rose
Indianapolis

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.

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

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



Christ the Cornerstone

Christ comes to us when we share him with others

“And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:43)

The longing for the Savior, which we experience most intensely during Advent, arises from our troubled hearts. We live in difficult times, and in spite of our many blessings as people chosen by Christ to be his missionary disciples, we are often anxious and fearful. We know that our Lord came to our world 2,000 years ago. We know that he is present now in his word, in the sacraments (especially the Eucharist), and wherever two or three are gathered in his name. We can see our Savior in the faces of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are most in need. And yet, we long for his coming again.

The Scripture readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent assure us that the Lord’s coming will provide comfort, healing and hope to all of us, but especially to those who need him most.

In the first reading, the prophet Micah declares: “He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God; and they shall

remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the Earth; he shall be peace” (Mi 5:3-4). Christ our peace will put an end to all that divides us from one another and from him.

The responsorial psalm gives voice to our longing: “O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us” (Ps 80:2-3). The psalm refrain—Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved—reminds us that we are not simply passive spectators in the Lord’s coming. We must turn to him, and see his face in others, in order to experience his saving power.

The second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews draws our attention to the purpose of the Lord’s coming—past, present and future. “Behold, I come to do [God’s] will” (Heb 10:7), he says, and, the letter explains, “By this ‘will,’ we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). The Savior that we long for comes to do his Father’s will and by conforming us to that same will he saves us from all our fears. He sets us free.

The Gospel reading from the first chapter of Luke illustrates how the Lord’s coming can transform us from timid, fearful and self-centered people into women and men for others. Mary opens her heart and says “yes” to God’s will for her. Then she immediately sets out on a difficult journey to provide comfort, healing and hope to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, who St. Luke tells us “leapt for joy” (Lk 1:41) while still in his mother’s womb. Two unborn children, Jesus and John, encounter each other for the first time as a result of Mary’s decision to comfort her cousin in her time of need.

Elizabeth’s response, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Lk 1:42), echoes across two millennia as the devotional prayer of Christians who acknowledge Mary as the mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We say these words now because we are confident that Mary will help us prepare for the Lord’s coming, and that her ‘yes’ to God’s will is the key to our ability to encounter him—now and in the future.

As we prepare for Christmas, let’s pray using the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the Earth be opened and bring forth a Savior” (Is 45:8).

May our fervent desire for Jesus’ coming again cause us to remember that we each play an important role in making Christ present to others. When we set aside our own needs and desires to help others, we become the face of the Lord for them. When we follow Mary’s example, and go out of our way to bring comfort, healing and hope to those who need our help, Christ comes with us. In this way, dew drops down from heaven; the clouds rain down the Just One: and the Earth opens and brings forth our Savior.

At this time of year, many of our brothers and sisters are lost, lonely or afraid. Let’s bring Christ to them. Let’s set aside our own worries, frustrations and pains long enough to bring comfort, healing and hope to family members, friends, neighbors and even strangers. When we do this, we’ll discover that our own longing for Christ’s return will be satisfied.

Have a blessed Christmas! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Cristo viene a nosotros cuando lo compartimos con los demás

“Pero ¿cómo es esto, que la madre de mi Señor venga a verme?” (Lc 1:43).

El anhelo de tener un Salvador, algo que experimentamos más intensamente durante el Adviento, surge de nuestros corazones atribulados. Vivimos tiempos difíciles, y a pesar de nuestras muchas bendiciones como personas elegidas por Cristo para ser sus discípulos misioneros, a menudo nos sentimos ansiosos y temerosos. Sabemos que nuestro Señor vino al mundo hace 2,000 años, y sabemos que ahora está presente en su Palabra, en los sacramentos (especialmente en la Eucaristía) y allí donde dos o tres se reúnen en su nombre. Vemos a nuestro Salvador en los rostros del prójimo, especialmente en los más necesitados. Y, sin embargo, anhelamos su regreso.

Las lecturas de las Escrituras del cuarto domingo de Adviento nos aseguran que la venida del Señor nos dará consuelo, curación y esperanza a todos, pero especialmente a los que más lo necesitan.

En la primera lectura, el profeta Miqueas afirma que: “Él se mantendrá de pie y los apacentará con la fuerza del Señor, con la majestad del nombre del Señor, su Dios. Ellos habitarán tranquilos, porque él será grande hasta los

confines de la tierra. ¡Y él mismo será la paz!” (Mi 5:3-4). Cristo, nuestra paz, pondrá fin a todo lo que nos separa de los demás y de él.

El salmo responsorial expresa nuestro anhelo: “Pastor de Israel, tú que guías a José como a un rebaño, tú que reinas entre los querubines, ¡escúchanos! ¡Muestra tu poder, y ven a salvarnos! Restáuranos, oh Dios; haz resplandecer tu rostro sobre nosotros, y sálvanos” (Sal 80:1-2). La respuesta del salmo (Señor, haz que nos volvamos a ti, que veamos tu rostro y nos salvemos) nos recuerda que no somos simples espectadores pasivos en la venida del Señor. Para ser capaces de experimentar su poder salvador, debemos dirigirnos a él, y ver su rostro en los demás.

La segunda lectura de la Carta a los Hebreos destaca el propósito pasado, presente y futuro de la venida del Señor. “He venido, oh Dios, a hacer tu voluntad» (Heb 10:7), dice, y, según explica la carta, “en virtud de esa voluntad somos santificados mediante el sacrificio del cuerpo de Jesucristo, ofrecido una vez y para siempre” (Heb 10:10). El salvador que anhelamos viene a hacer la voluntad de su Padre y al adherirnos a esa misma voluntad nos salva de todos nuestros miedos; nos hace libres.

La lectura del Evangelio del primer capítulo de Lucas ilustra cómo la venida del Señor puede transformarnos de personas tímidas, temerosas y centradas en sí mismas en mujeres y hombres dedicados al prójimo. María abre su corazón y le dice “sí” a la voluntad de Dios para ella. A continuación, emprende inmediatamente un difícil viaje para dar consuelo, curación y esperanza a Isabel, la madre de Juan el Bautista, de quien San Lucas nos dice que “saltó de alegría” (Lc 1:41) cuando aún estaba en el vientre de su madre. Dos niños no nacidos, Jesús y Juan, se encuentran por primera vez como resultado de la decisión de María de consolar a su prima en un momento de tribulación.

La respuesta de Isabel, “Bendita tú entre las mujeres, y bendito el fruto de tu vientre” (Lc 1:42), resuena a lo largo de dos milenios como la oración devocional de los cristianos que reconocen a María como la madre de nuestro Salvador, Jesucristo. Decimos estas palabras ahora porque confiamos en que María nos ayudará a preparar la venida del Señor, y en que su “sí” a la voluntad de Dios es la clave de nuestra capacidad para encontrarlo, ahora y en el futuro.

Mientras nos preparamos para la Navidad, recemos con las palabras del profeta Isaías:

“¡Destilen, cielos, desde lo alto! Nubes, hagan llover justicia! ¡Que se abra la tierra de par en par! ¡Que brote la salvación!” (Is 45:8).

Que nuestro ferviente deseo de que Jesús vuelva nos haga recordar que cada uno de nosotros desempeña un papel importante a la hora de ilustrar a los demás la presencia de Cristo. Cuando dejamos de lado nuestras propias necesidades y deseos para ayudar al prójimo nos convertimos en el rostro del Señor para ellos. Cuando seguimos el ejemplo de María y nos esforzamos por brindar consuelo, curación y esperanza a quienes nos necesitan, Cristo viene con nosotros. Así, los cielos destilan, las nubes hacen llover justicia y la tierra se abre de par en par para traer a nuestro Salvador.

En esta época del año, muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas están perdidos, se sienten solos o tienen miedo. Llevémosles a Cristo: dejemos de lado nuestras propias preocupaciones, frustraciones y dolores el tiempo suficiente para llevar consuelo, curación y esperanza a familiares, amigos, vecinos e incluso desconocidos. Al hacerlo, descubriremos que se satisfará nuestro propio anhelo del regreso de Cristo.

¡Que tengan una buena y bendecida Navidad! †

Events Calendar

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

December 22, January 12, 26

Group Lectio via Zoom, 7 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

December 26

Benedictine Conversations via GroupMe, 4 p.m., Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

January 5, Feb. 2

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane,

Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

January 7

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., 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 bilingual 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: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

January 8

St. 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

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, assist with retired Providence Sisters. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or spsmw.org/events.

January 11

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available at cutt.ly/Taize. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

January 15

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Most Precious Infants Prayer Vigil for Life**, 8:30 a.m. Mass, then prayer partners will carpool to Clinic for Women at 3607 W. 16th St. for vigil. Information: eric@romancatholicgentleman.com.

January 17

Sr. Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women Monthly Prayer Gathering, via Zoom, third Monday of each month, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 7 p.m. Join meeting: cutt.ly/SrTheaPrayer, meeting ID: 810 3567 0684 or dial-in at 301-715-8592. Information: pspringer@archindy.org or 317-236-1474.

January 19

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

January 20

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. Information: 317-244-9002.

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

Retreats and Programs

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

2022

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Brother Bob's Bible Study,"** Mondays 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., led by Andrew Hennessy, free. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/bible-study or 812-923-8817.

January 4, Feb. 9

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes a private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction is available for an additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance. Information and registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

January 5-June 29

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Sign Language: The Three Cs**, 1-2:30 p.m., Wednesdays through June 29, Louise Burns and Maryann Barth presenting, \$70 for 14 sessions, no book required. Information and registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

January 6, 13, 20, 27

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Cave to Mountaintop: Benedict's Vision for a Spiritual Life**, 7-8:30 p.m., virtual program via Zoom, Benedictine Sister Antoinette Purcelle presenting, four independent sessions, Jan 6: "The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict"; Jan. 13: "The Rule of Benedict: Imitating Christ's Humility and Obedience"; Jan 20: "The Rule of Benedict: Imitating Christ's Prayer and Service"; Jan 27: "Living Benedict's Vision in the 21st Century," \$25 per session or \$75 for four sessions, check-in begins 30 minutes prior to each event. Registration: cutt.ly/mountaintop22. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

January 7

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Hail Mary full of grace, come meet a sister face-to-face: Sister Jessica Vitente**, virtual, 6:30-7:45 p.m., for single Catholic women ages 18-42, free. Information and registration: cutt.ly/MeetSrJessica, 361-500-9505 or jluna@spsmw.org.

January 8

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Pilgrimage: Peace**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., walking hike pilgrimage lead by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen, bring water bottle and lunch, rain or shine, \$30. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/pilgrimage or 812-923-8817.

January 10, Feb. 14

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of the common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$28 per person, dinner additional \$9. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

January 14

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Hail Mary full of grace, come meet a sister face-to-face: Sister Arrienne Whittaker**, virtual, 6:30-7:45 p.m., for single Catholic women ages 18-42, free. Information and registration: cutt.ly/MeetSrArrienne, 361-500-9505 or jluna@spsmw.org.

January 14-16

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **TOBIT-MARRIAGE PREPARATION WEEKEND**, Fri. 7 p.m.-

Sun. 11:45 a.m., includes rooms, meals, \$298 per couple. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

January 16

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Peace Building and Creative Non-Violence: The Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, 6:30-8 p.m., Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen presenting, \$15 suggested donation. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/peace-building or 812-923-8817.

January 21

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Spiritual Resolutions: Re-energize Your Faith in 2022**, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Deacon Richard Wagner presenting, \$45. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

January 21, Feb. 18

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$70 with spiritual direction. Information and registration: 812-934-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

January 24-28

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Winter Chant Workshop**, for directors of liturgical music, Benedictine Brother John Glasenapp presenting, \$750 single, \$835 double, \$200 commuter. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

January 8

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Painting with Padre**, 6-9 p.m., last Friday of each month, led by Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen, includes painting supplies and snack, bring beverage, \$40. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/painting-with-the-padre or 812-923-8817. †

Wedding Anniversaries

HOWARD AND MARIA BRETT



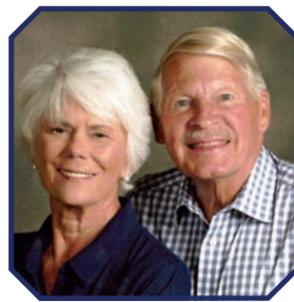
Howard and Maria (deBenito) Brett, members of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 29.

The couple was married in the Red Cross Chapel in San Sabastian, Spain, on Dec. 29, 1961.

They have two children: Teresa and Michael Brett.

The couple also has one grandchild. †

TODD AND HARRIET IRWIN



Todd and Harriet (Cotter) Irwin, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18.

The couple was married in St. Simon the Apostle Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 18, 1971.

They have three children: Amy Feldman, Aaron and Adam Irwin.

The couple also has 10 grandchildren. †

WALLY AND DEBBIE MILLER



Wally and Debbie (Gorman) Miller, members of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 16.

The couple was civilly married on Dec. 16, 1971, and had their marriage convalidated at St. Anthony Church in Indianapolis in Nov. 2010.

They have two children: Amanda Domogalik and Brian Miller.

The couple also has five grandchildren. †

WAYNE AND SHEILA ZUMHINGST



Wayne and Sheila (Shad) Zumhingst, members of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18.

The couple was married in St. Ambrose Church in Seymour on Dec. 18, 1971.

They have three children: Emma, Aaron and David Zumhingst.

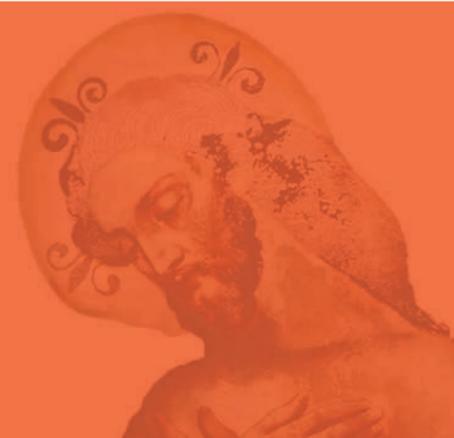
The couple also has two grandchildren. †

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



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



Pope Francis shares the ‘Beatitudes of the Bishop’

At a meeting of the Italian bishops’ conference last month, Pope Francis shared a reflection written by Archbishop Domenico Battaglia of Naples, Italy. The “Beatitudes of the Bishop” offers some striking insights into the way Pope Francis views the episcopal ministry.

Here are the eight “Beatitudes of the Bishop”:

—“Blessed is the bishop who makes poverty and sharing his lifestyle, because with his witness he builds the kingdom of heaven.”

Pope Francis has often expressed his hope that Church leaders, and the Church herself, would “be poor” and “be for the poor.” In the spirit of his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, the Holy Father urges all of us, but especially those who are in positions of leadership, to embrace poverty as Jesus did.

—“Blessed is the bishop who is not afraid to wet his face with tears, so that in them may be reflected the sorrow of the people, the work of priests, and who finds God’s consolation in the embrace with those who suffer.”

“Tenderness” and “closeness” are characteristics that Pope Francis frequently suggests are signs of the presence of God.

During this Advent season especially, the pope reminds us that the Lord “draws near,” that he is not distant or remote but “God-with-us” (Emmanuel).

—“Blessed is the bishop who considers his ministry a service and not a power, who makes meekness his strength, gives everyone a right to a place in his heart, so as to give the promised land to the weak.”

The paradox of Christian leadership is that all power and authority come from selfless, self-sacrificing service. Servant leaders follow the example of Jesus who came to serve, not to be served.

—“Blessed is the bishop who does not shut himself up in government buildings, who does not become a bureaucrat more attentive to statistics than to faces, to procedures than to stories, who seeks to fight alongside man for God’s dream of justice because the Lord, encountered in the silence of daily prayer, will nourish him.”

Pope Francis reminds us that missionary disciples of Jesus Christ must move beyond their comfort zones to meet the needs of God’s people even at the “peripheries,” the farthest ends of social boundaries.

—“Blessed is the bishop who has a heart for the misery of the world, who is

not afraid to dirty his hands with the mud of the human soul in order to find the gold of God there, who is not scandalized by the sin and fragility of others because he knows his own misery, because the look of the Risen Crucified One will be the seal of infinite forgiveness.”

Recall the pope’s image of “the smell of the sheep” that he says must identify true pastors. Bishops are not supposed to act like princes who are above the fray. They should be familiar with the dirt and drudgery of people’s daily lives.

—“Blessed is the bishop who stays away from the duplicity of the heart, who avoids every ambiguous dynamic, who dreams of the good even in the midst of evil, because he will be able to rejoice in the face of God, finding his reflection in every puddle in the city of people.”

Pastoral leaders should be pure of heart, not deceitful or dishonest in their dealings with others. Even when confronted with political intrigues or public controversy, bishops should “speak the truth with love.”

—“Blessed is the bishop who works for peace, who walks along the path of reconciliation, who plants the seed of communion in the hearts of priests, who

accompanies a divided society along the path of reconciliation, who takes every man and woman of goodwill by the hand to build fraternity: God will recognize him as his Son.”

Pope Francis describes Church leaders in three ways: walking ahead of the crowd (leading), traveling alongside their people (accompanying), and bringing up the rear (following). All three are needed. All build unity, fraternity and peace.

—“Blessed is the bishop who is not afraid to go against the current for the Gospel, and hardens his face like Jesus going to Jerusalem, without letting himself be stopped by misunderstandings and obstacles because he knows that the kingdom of God moves forth against the world.”

Bishops, pastors and all Church leaders should have the mind of Christ, undeterred by opposition or temptation as they travel together in a synodal journey to God’s kingdom. The witness of the martyrs and all the saints should help bishops negotiate the difficulties that they must face as they lead us to our heavenly homeland.

(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

El Papa Francisco comparte las ‘Bienaventuranzas del Obispo’

En una reunión de la Conferencia Episcopal Italiana el mes pasado, el Papa Francisco compartió una reflexión escrita por el arzobispo de Nápoles, Domenico Battaglia. Las “Bienaventuranzas del Obispo” ofrecen algunas ideas sorprendentes sobre la perspectiva del Papa Francisco con respecto al ministerio episcopal.

He aquí las ocho “Bienaventuranzas del Obispo”:

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que hace de la pobreza y del compartir su estilo de vida, porque construye el Reino de los Cielos a través de su testimonio.”

El Papa Francisco ha expresado a menudo su esperanza de que los líderes de la Iglesia, y la propia Iglesia, “sean pobres” y “estén ahí para los pobres.” En el espíritu de su homónimo, san Francisco de Asís, el Santo Padre nos exhorta a todos, pero especialmente a los que ocupan puestos de liderazgo, a acoger la pobreza como lo hizo Jesús.

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que no teme mancharse el rostro de lágrimas, para que se reflejen los sufrimientos de las personas, el cansancio de los sacerdotes, y que encuentra el consuelo de Dios en el abrazo del que sufre.”

“Ternura” y “cercanía” son características que el Papa Francisco sugiere con frecuencia como signos de la presencia de Dios. Especialmente en este

tiempo de Adviento, el Papa nos recuerda que el Señor “se acerca,” que no se mantiene distante sino que es “Dios con nosotros” (Emmanuel).

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que considera su ministerio como un servicio y no como un poder, haciendo de la mansedumbre su fuerza, dando a todos el derecho de ciudadanía en su corazón, a habitar la tierra prometida a los mansos.”

La paradoja del liderazgo cristiano es que todo el poder y la autoridad provienen del servicio desinteresado y abnegado. Los líderes que prestan servicio siguen el ejemplo de Jesús, que vino a servir, no a ser servido.

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que no se encierra en palacios de gobierno, que no se convierte en un burócrata más preocupado por las estadísticas que por los rostros, por los trámites que por las historias, y que busca luchar junto al hombre por el sueño de justicia de Dios, porque el Señor, al que encuentra en el silencio de su oración diaria, será su alimento.”

El Papa Francisco nos recuerda que los discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo deben ir más allá de su comodidad para satisfacer las necesidades del pueblo de Dios incluso en las “periferias,” los extremos más lejanos de las fronteras sociales.

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que tiene un corazón por la miseria del mundo,

que no tiene miedo de ensuciarse las manos con el barro del alma humana para encontrar el oro de Dios, que no se escandaliza por el pecado y la fragilidad de los demás porque él es consciente de su propia miseria, porque la mirada del Crucificado Resucitado será para él el sello del perdón infinito.”

Recordemos la imagen del Papa del “olor a oveja” que, según él, debe identificar a los verdaderos pastores. Los obispos no deben actuar como príncipes que están por encima de la contienda sino que deben estar familiarizados con la suciedad y la monotonía de la vida cotidiana de la gente.

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que destierra de su corazón los dobleces, que evita cualquier dinámica ambigua, que sueña con el bien en medio del mal, porque podrá alegrarse en el rostro de Dios, encontrando su reflejo en cada charco de la ciudad de los hombres.”

Los líderes pastorales deben ser puros de corazón, no engañosos ni deshonestos en su trato con los demás. Incluso cuando se enfrentan a intrigas políticas o a controversias públicas, los obispos deben “decir la verdad con amor.”

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que trabaja por la paz, que acompaña los caminos de la reconciliación, que siembra en el corazón del sacerdote la semilla de la comunión, que acompaña

a una sociedad dividida en el camino de la reconciliación, que toma de la mano a cada hombre y a cada mujer de buena voluntad para construir la fraternidad: Dios lo reconocerá como su hijo.”

El Papa Francisco describe a los líderes de la Iglesia de tres maneras: los que caminan delante de la multitud (líderes), los que caminan junto a su gente (acompañantes), y los que apoyan a la retaguardia (seguidores). Los tres son necesarios. Todos construyen la unidad, la fraternidad y la paz.

—“Bienaventurado el obispo que, por el Evangelio, no teme ir a contracorriente, con rostro decidido como el de Cristo en su camino a Jerusalén, sin dejarse reprimir por incomprensiones y obstáculos, porque sabe que el Reino de Dios avanza en medio de las contradicciones del mundo.”

Los obispos, los pastores y todos los líderes de la Iglesia deben tener la mente de Cristo, sin dejarse intimidar por la oposición o la tentación, mientras recorren juntos el camino sinodal hacia el reino de Dios. El testimonio de los mártires y de todos los santos debe ayudar a los obispos a sortear las dificultades que deben afrontar al conducirnos a la patria celestial.

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

ATTERBURY

continued from page 3

Indianapolis and Migration Refugee Services, a department of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

About 70 Afghan refugees have already been resettled in the Indiana communities of Indianapolis, Lafayette and Muncie, according to David Bethuram, executive director of Catholic Charities in the archdiocese.

“The first group that is being resettled are Afghans who have U.S. ties,” says Bethuram, who joined Archbishop Thompson on the Nov. 4 tour. “They have been placed near, or with, relatives and friends who are already resettled in that community. The refugees that

Catholic Charities Indianapolis will be placing are not all from Camp Atterbury. They will be resettling here from any of the camps across the country.”

Catholic Charities Indianapolis and the USCCB’s Migration Refugee Services have been involved with the efforts at Camp Atterbury since the refugees started arriving there in early September. National government officials asked the two Catholic-based staffs to lead a program focused on the “morale, welfare and recreation” of the refugees.

“We have organized educational and recreational opportunities, such as soccer and basketball, as well as providing supplies and materials for individual activities, including puzzles, coloring books, crayons, hula hoops and yarn and crochet needles,” Bethuram says.

The educational and recreational activities are all part of an overall effort to help the refugees deal with the stress and anxiety of leaving their homeland to begin a new life in a different country.

“Catholic Charities Indianapolis has worked very closely with an art therapy organization that we brought to the camp to work with adults and children in dealing with their stress and trauma that they experienced prior to coming to the U.S.,” Bethuram says.

National government officials have also asked Catholic Charities and Migration Refugee Services to lead a plan that involves training lawyers to help the Afghans with legal and cultural challenges as they transition to life in the United States.

Bethuram says he has been impressed by the dedication of the USCCB workers and volunteers at the camp, noting how they are “deeply invested” in helping the Afghans feel welcomed and safe.

In response, the refugees are “so eager to learn and assimilate in our culture,” he says.

“The Afghan guests have been very receptive to our outreach to help them with their stay in the camp and their preparation to learning more about what will happen when they leave the camp to resettle in their new home and community.

“The children are amazing. They

seem so excited to be here and learn more about their future homes, where they’ll live, what the weather is like, etc. The women are very creative and have many skills that will be welcomed in their new homes. The men are excited to work, learn English and support their families.”

About 40% of the Afghans at Camp Atterbury are under the age of 14, he notes. About 42% of the refugees are female.

After meeting some of the refugees and talking with officials at the camp, Archbishop Thompson says he repeatedly heard positive comments about “the witness and efforts of Catholic Charities’ involvement.”

His tour of the camp also reaffirmed how he believes the archdiocese and Catholics in central and southern Indiana should respond to the presence of the Afghan refugees here.

“Even prior to the visit, I was keeping the Afghans and everyone involved at Camp Atterbury in prayer,” the archbishop says. “However, having that personal contact helps to have some faces and a deeper sense of connectedness with those being lifted up in prayer.

“We must always pray and care for the poor, refugees and the most vulnerable in our midst. Where else do we encounter the person of Jesus Christ in human relationships?” †

Catholic Charities seeking donations to help Afghan refugees resettle

The Refugee Resettlement program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis needs monetary donations to help Afghan evacuees as they resettle into homes in Indiana.

For anyone wanting to help with these efforts, send your donations

to Catholic Charities Indianapolis, Afghan Relief, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Donations can also be made online at [HelpCreateHope.org](https://www.HelpCreateHope.org). On the homepage, click on the link for assistance for Afghan evacuees. †

Pope closes Year of St. Joseph with marginalized young adults

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis closed the Year of St. Joseph with a private visit to a community in Rome that helps people experiencing marginalization, crisis or substance abuse.

“Do not be afraid of reality, of the truth, of our misery,” he told volunteers and the people they assist at the Good Samaritan home on Dec. 8, the feast of

the Immaculate Conception. “Don’t be afraid because Jesus likes reality as it is, undisguised; the Lord does not like people who cover their soul, their heart with makeup.”

The Good Samaritan fraternity or home is part of the worldwide “Comunità Cenacolo,” which was founded in 1983 by Italian Sister Elvira Petrozzi to

offer “God’s tenderness to the cry of desperation of so many young people who were lost, deceived and disappointed,” and had been seeking “the true meaning of life in the false light of the world,” according to the community’s mission statement.

Dozens of guests and members of the community welcomed the pope, who listened to the experiences several of them shared and watched a segment of a film on the life of St. Joseph, which was produced by young people living at two fraternities in Medjugorje.

Among those welcoming the pope were the two children of Andrea and Antonia Giorgetti, who both recovered from drug dependencies and now run the Good Samaritan fraternity, reflecting the fact that a number of young people who find help at the fraternities go on to assist others.

The pope encouraged all the residents

to “have the courage to tell others, ‘there is a better way.’”

Pope Francis also visited and blessed the fraternity’s new chapel, built by residents out of discarded wooden beams, travertine marble and other materials reclaimed from dumpsters and landfills.

Building something new and wonderful out of things that have been thrown away “is a concrete example of what we do here,” Father Stefano Aragno told Vatican News on Dec. 8.

The pope led the prayer dedicated to St. Joseph to conclude the special year with those present. †



Pope Francis



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Did you know you could make a planned gift through the Catholic Community Foundation that you and your family can continue to grow together? Perhaps each Christmas your family collectively makes a gift in memory of a loved one, or to support your favorite Catholic Charity or Catholic school. The possibilities are endless, and it would be a beautiful tradition to start together that could carry on for generations to come.

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Many blessings from our family to yours this holiday season.



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Merry Christmas, JDub! We love you!

JDub’s letter to his mom.

Mom, if you are reading this just know nothing was your fault. You were the best mother I could of ever asked for and I love you so much. I never understood why any of this had to happen to me, but I am finally at peace with everything and all the pain and suffering is gone. You and dad gave me the best life any kid could have asked for and you guys will never know how thankful I was for everything. Even though I am no longer here, I will always be here in your guys hearts. I had 23 great years of life and wouldn't change a thing. Take care of Maebre and tell her I love her, and tell mamaw and dad I love them too. Don't be sad or hurt, just know I am happy now and in a better place. I'll always love you mom, thank you for everything. - Your son Jdub ❤️

JDub’s letter to his family and friends

If you are reading this my fight with cancer has come to an end. I gave it everything I had and never gave up one second, but God had other plans for me. I want to thank everyone who has been there for me through it all. I never knew how many people loved and cared about me, and I will never forget any of you. I am at peace now and all the pain is gone. I love everyone from the bottom of my heart, and I had the best 23 years of life anyone could ask for. One thing I learned through this all is never give up no matter what you are going through, and to go live your life to the fullest, go do those things you've always wanted to do and never hold grudges life is too short. I will see you all again one day, and I'll always be watching over all of you ❤️. -Love Jdub

Plans set for solemn *Roe v. Wade* events in Indy on Jan. 23-24

Criterion staff report

The archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, in conjunction with the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life Indianapolis, has announced the plans for the solemn *Roe v. Wade* observance events in Indianapolis on Jan. 23-24.

The events begin with a Vigil for Life at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, from 2-4 p.m. on Jan. 23, co-sponsored by the archdiocese and the Lafayette Diocese.

Local Catholic composer, singer and songwriter Francesca LaRosa will lead participants in praise and worship, and local Catholic Dr. Casey Delcoco will give a hope and healing witness on the abortion reversal protocol. Eucharistic adoration and the sacrament of reconciliation will be available.

During the free event, donations will be accepted to benefit the ministries of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity and the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind.

Vigil registration, which is requested but not required, is available at indyhld.flocknote.com/signup/76535. For questions, contact Brie Anne Varick, coordinator of the Office of Human Life and Dignity, at 317-236-1543 or bvarick@archindy.org.

On Jan. 24, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will serve as principal celebrant with Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty concelebrating during a special Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church at 10:30 a.m.

The Indiana March for Life and rally, both sponsored



Indiana March for Life participants gather for a rally on Jan. 22, 2021. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

by Right to Life Indianapolis, will take place after the Mass. The march will begin at noon starting from West Georgia Street next to St. John the Evangelist Church. It will proceed to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Monument Circle then to the south steps of the Indiana State Capitol at 200 W. Washington St.

There, a rally will take place featuring pro-life speakers. For more information on the march and rally, contact Right to Life Indianapolis president Marc Tuttle at marc@rtlindy.org or 317-582-1526. To register for the Indiana March for Life, go to indyhld.flocknote.com/signup/76537. †

Disability or chronic illness does not make life less sacred, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Every human being is precious and has a value that does not depend on his or her abilities, but on the fact that he or she is a person created in the image of God, Pope Francis said.

“If disability or illness makes life more difficult, it is no less worthy of being lived, and lived to the full. After all, who among us does not have limitations and does not, sooner or later, come up against limitations, even serious ones?” he said

during an audience on Dec. 13 in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall.

The pope was speaking to staff and students of the Seraphic Institute of Assisi, which specializes in education, rehabilitation and care for children and young people with disabilities; the institute was celebrating its 150th anniversary.

“The most important thing is the spirit with which you all dedicate yourselves to this mission,” Pope Francis told them.

“It is clear to you, as it should be to everyone, that every human person is precious, has a value that does not depend on what he or she has or on his or her abilities, but on the simple fact that he or she is a person, the image of God,” he said.

People with disabilities must be seen “as one of us, who must be at the center of our care and our concern, and also at the center of everyone’s attention and of policies. This is a goal of civilization,” he said.

A person with a disability “not only receives, but gives,” which means that providing assistance and care is not “a one-way gesture, but an exchange of gifts,” he said.

Everyone, not just Christians, can recognize this truth because it is inscribed “in our conscience, which makes us feel our condition of unity among all human beings. We are truly connected by a bond of fraternity,” he said. †

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The beauty of Advent



An Advent wreath lights the foreground of this photo of the sanctuary in Holy Family Church in Oldenburg on Dec. 4. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Prepare for Christmas by serving others, Pope Francis says during *Angelus*

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With Christmas approaching, Christians should prepare for Jesus' birth by serving those in need rather than focusing on what



Pope Francis

awaits them under the Christmas tree, Pope Francis said.

"We are so busy with all the preparations, with gifts and things that pass," the pope said on Dec. 12 during his Sunday *Angelus* address. "But let's ask ourselves what we should do for Jesus and for others? What should we do?"

Many children along with their families came to St. Peter's Square with their baby Jesus figurines for a traditional blessing by the pope.

Assuring them that he would bless their statues after praying the *Angelus*, Pope Francis greeted the little ones and asked them to take "my Christmas greetings to your grandparents and all your dear ones."

In his main address, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Luke which recalled the crowds of people who, after being moved by St. John the Baptist's preaching, asked him, "What should we do?" (Lk 3:10)

Their question "does not stem from a sense of duty," but from their hearts being "touched by the Lord," and their being enthusiastic for his coming.

Just like the preparations people make to welcome a guest to their home by cleaning and preparing "the best dinner possible," Christians must do "the same with the Lord," he said.

St. Luke's Gospel, the pope added, also encourages one to ask, "What should I do with my life? What am I called to? What will I become?"

"By suggesting these questions, the Gospel reminds us of something important: Life has a task for us. Life is not meaningless; it is not left up to chance. No! It is a gift the Lord grants us, saying to us: Discover who you are, and work hard to make the dream that is your life come true!"

The pope encouraged Christians to prepare for Christmas by continuously asking God what they should do for themselves and others in order to contribute to the good of the Church and society.

St. John the Baptist's answers, he said, responded to each individual in a way that fit his or her situation in life, a reminder from the Gospel that "life is incarnated" in concrete situations.

"Faith is not an abstract theory, a generalized theory; no!" he said. "Faith touches us personally and transforms each of our lives. Let us think about the concreteness of our faith. Is my faith abstract, something abstract or concrete? Does it lead me to serve others, to help out?"

Pope Francis said there are several ways people can serve others during Advent, including by doing "something concrete, even if it is small to help others," especially by visiting the lonely, the elderly, the sick or someone in need.

Then the pope added to the list: "Maybe I need to ask forgiveness, grant forgiveness, clarify a situation, pay a debt. Perhaps I have neglected prayer and after so much time has elapsed, it's time to ask the Lord for forgiveness.

"Brothers and sisters," he said, "let's find something concrete and do it!" †

Mourning, prayer and a resolve to rebuild follow devastating tornadoes

MAYFIELD, Ky. (CNS)—Mourning, prayer and a resolve to rebuild shattered lives, homes and businesses in Mayfield followed one of the most powerful twisters in U.S. history that leveled the city of 10,000 in western Kentucky overnight on Dec. 10.

The Bluegrass State was the worst hit as numerous devastating tornadoes traveled across it and its neighboring states of Illinois, Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri, leveling entire communities.

As of Dec. 14, at least 74 people were confirmed dead in Kentucky, including a 2-month-old infant; 109 people remained unaccounted for.

At least 14 other people were killed in the other states: six in Illinois, four in Tennessee, and two each in Arkansas and Missouri.

As members of two of Mayfield's faith congregations came together to pray on Dec. 12 amid rubble—piles of brick, metal and glass—prayers for their city and all of those affected by the ferocious mid-December twisters came from far and wide, including from Pope Francis and the U.S. Catholic bishops, and from close to home—Bishop William F. Medley of Owensboro, whose diocese covers western Kentucky.

A papal telegram conveyed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said Pope Francis "was saddened to learn of the devastating impact of the tornadoes" in the Midwest and the South.

"He offers heartfelt prayers that almighty God will grant eternal peace to those who have died, comfort to those who mourn their loss, and strength to all those affected by this immense tragedy," it said.

"With gratitude for the tireless efforts of the rescue workers and all engaged in caring for the injured, the grieving families and those left homeless, Pope Francis invokes upon all engaged in the massive work of relief and rebuilding the Lord's gifts of strength and generous perseverance in the service of their brothers and sisters," said the telegram, which Cardinal Parolin sent to Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the apostolic nuncio in the U.S.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, said the destruction and devastation was "heartbreaking" and called for prayer and assistance for all those who were in the path of the storms.

"During this Advent season where we await in joyful anticipation for the birth of our Lord, we pray for those who have been injured, for those who have lost their lives, and for their grieving families and communities," said Archbishops Gomez and Coakley. "May those who have been

impacted by these storms find peace, comfort and hope in our faith and in God's endless love.

"We also pray for the emergency responders and those who have begun the work of providing for the needs of the impacted in these communities in the recovery efforts," they said in a statement issued late on Dec. 11. "We entrust all our brothers and sisters in harm's way to our Blessed Mother, and we ask for her continued protection and for her intercession in comforting those who are suffering."

The two prelates urged Catholics and all people of goodwill to donate to recovery efforts and financial help for tornado victims by supporting the work of Catholic Charities USA at cutt.ly/disasterrelief.

Bishop Medley in a Dec. 11 statement called on the Catholic community of the diocese "to unite in prayer ... for all of the suffering that was caused by this disaster."

The bishop also took note of the leveling of Mayfield's candle factory, where 110 employees were working around the clock, which is customary during the Christmas season, according to news reports.

Initially, city officials feared the death toll among factory workers would reach 70. Late on Dec. 12, a company representative told reporters that eight workers were confirmed dead, and a day later the workers who had been missing were accounted for.

"Many of those injured in the Mayfield candle factory were parishioners, and others represented migrants and the marginalized in our communities," Bishop Medley said in his statement.

He added that through its Catholic Charities office, the diocese planned "to offer immediate help and services" for those displaced by the tornado and/or in need of immediate emergency financial help.

"I am proud of the many ways that your generosity always allows the Catholic Church to respond to the suffering and to families in crisis," Bishop Medley said. "So I thank you in advance for your generous response to this terrible devastation. God will bless our generosity."

In a Dec. 12 tweet, Bishop Medley said he visited the Catholic community of St. Joseph Parish in Mayfield: "Fr. Eric Riley, the pastor, preached on the Advent and Our Lady of Guadalupe themes of hope and joy. Neighboring parish St. Jerome of Fancy Farm welcomed them."

At a news briefing on Dec. 12 in Mayfield, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear noted one tornado traveled 227 miles. "It didn't take a roof, which is what we've seen in the past. It exploded the whole house. People, animals ... just gone.

"The very first thing that we have to do is grieve together," he said, "and we're going to do that before we rebuild together." †



A photo taken with a drone shows people working inside a destroyed home in Mayfield, Ky., on Dec. 11, after a devastating tornado ripped through the town. More than 30 tornadoes were reported across six states late on Dec. 10, and early on Dec. 11, killing dozens of people and leaving a trail of devastation. (CNS photo/Cheney Orr, Reuters)

'Gift of a lifetime'

Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp honored for work in founding Providence Cristo Rey High School

By Sean Gallagher

The seeds of Providence Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp's vocation to religious life were planted as she grew up in her faith-filled family in Indianapolis and was educated at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School and the former Ladywood School.

What she didn't realize for a long time after joining the Sisters of Providence in 1975 was that this experience also prepared Sister Jeanne for a special mission in her hometown—the founding of Providence Cristo Rey High School on Indianapolis' west side.

Since it opened in 2007, Providence Cristo Rey has provided a Catholic education, work study experience and an opportunity for a bright future to students living in poverty.

Recognizing the work of God's providence in her life is made easier for Sister Jeanne with the passage of time.

Looking back on her years growing up in Indianapolis in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, she sees the guiding hand of God in the Providence sisters who educated her at St. Andrew.

"There was a lot of talk about being of service and the mission to the poor," Sister Jeanne recalled. "It seemed like we were always collecting money for the missions. And at home the message was very much the same."

That was in part because her mother Peggy had been orphaned when she was a teenager and was then cared for by her sisters.

"She was so focused on worrying about the underdog, really," Sister Jeanne said. "Somehow, along the way, the driving force became for me Jesus' mission [that he described as], 'I came to bring glad tidings to the poor and release to prisoners' (Lk 4:18).

"That message became central to my life."

She carried out that mission for many years as an educator at Providence St. Mel School in Chicago, which serves students who live in poverty.

Later, Sister Jeanne sought to pass on the lessons she had learned about serving such students at the Jesuit-run University of San Francisco in San Francisco.

While there, the leadership team of the Sisters of Providence asked her in 2005 if she would be willing to return to Indianapolis to start Providence Cristo Rey, which the archdiocese had asked the Sisters of Providence to develop and open.

"It took me about 15 seconds [to say yes]," Sister Jeanne recalled. "That's really been my calling. I entered the Sisters of Providence with the dream that I would be able to work with low-income kids. I've been blessed to be able to do that."

But she would need a lot of help to make this dream a reality in Indianapolis.

That's why this humble religious sister turned to John Lechleiter, who in 2005 was soon to become the chief executive officer of the Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Company, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical firms.

"He was a godsend," Sister Jeanne said. "I can't overstate how influential he was."

Lechleiter was already familiar with the network of Cristo Rey schools around the country through knowing the network's founder, Jesuit Father John Foley.

The Cristo Rey network, of which Providence Cristo Rey is a member, is distinguished by having its students go to classes four days per week and one day each week do a work study job in fields in which they have an

academic interest. The businesses at which they work in turn sponsor part of the students' tuition.

"I thought it was a brilliant idea and also figured that Lilly would be in a position to host some of the work study students," Lechleiter said in a recent interview with *The Criterion*. "That turned out to be true in spades."

While Lechleiter "beat the drum" early on to get other businesses, not-for-profits and universities to sponsor students, he gives much of the credit for Providence Cristo Rey's strong beginnings to Sister Jeanne.

"She's a brilliant person and thoughtful educator," Lechleiter said. "So, from an academic point of view, we couldn't have had anyone stronger. She's also got a wonderful caring spirit."

"Yet, she was as tough as nails when she needed to be in matters that pertained to the school—regarding discipline and structure. She guided and led with a firm hand."

Sister Jeanne also shared at Providence Cristo Rey another lesson she had learned while at St. Andrew School, Ladywood and at home: holding students to a high standard.

"The sisters always expected the best that we could do. And my parents did," she said. "That's all they expected. They expected me to do my best. If my best was a C, fine. If my best was an A, fine. That was the measuring stick."

At Providence Cristo Rey that's been a challenge because many students who start there as freshmen are a grade or more behind where average students might be. Yet since Sister Jeanne's time, the faculty and staff have been dedicated to helping students get to where they should be in a four-day school week.

"It's a matter of catching them up and then moving them ahead in a compressed time," Sister Jeanne said.

"If there is one thing that has led to the school and its students being successful, it's that the school does hold its students to a very high standard," Lechleiter said. "It sets a high bar. It says, 'You are going to leave here not only prepared for college, but in most cases with college credit. We're going to do our best to ensure that you get the best post-secondary education you need and deserve.'"

Sister Jeanne stepped down as Providence Cristo Rey's president in 2013. She now serves on the leadership team of the Sisters of Providence.

She and Lechleiter were recently honored by Providence Cristo Rey with their inaugural awards that the school named after them.

Sister Jeanne received the inaugural John C. Lechleiter Award while Lechleiter received the Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp Award.

"We loved it. We both just laughed," Sister Jeanne said. "He didn't know he was getting my award. And I



Providence Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp and John Lechleiter pose on Oct. 22 during a fundraising event for Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis with awards that the school gave them during the event for their role in its founding. (Submitted photo)

didn't know that I was getting his award. It was perfect."

Providence Cristo Rey's current president Tyler Mayer said that Sister Jeanne's legacy still shapes the ministry of the school today.

"The foundation laid by her hands is the key to our success past, present and, God willing, the future," he said. "... Sister Jeanne's accomplishments are far-reaching and exceptional. However, what is most impactful about Sister Jeanne is not what she does, but the way she goes about her work. In every interaction, under the spirit of Mother Theodore [Guérin], Sister Jeanne makes you feel loved and challenges you to be better. I can think of few other leaders who inspire better outcomes than Sister Jeanne."

Eight years after she stepped away from Providence Cristo Rey, Sister Jeanne is gratified for her role in getting it started and that the school continues to carry out its special mission.

"It was a gift of a lifetime to be able to do that and work with so many like-minded women and men who wanted to see a miracle happen," she said. "To see that continue and to know that the desire to do good, to make good, quality Catholic education affordable for everybody is continuing on and to see the students after they graduate—it sometimes reduces me to tears and sends chills up my back. What a grace."

(To learn more about Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis, visit www.cristoreyindy.org.) †

Despite age, surgery, Pope Francis is still energetic, his nephew tells magazine

ROME (CNS)—Pope Francis will turn 85 years old on Dec. 17. And according to his nephew, Jesuit Father José Luis Narvaja, he is still rarin' to go.

"I see him doing very well, with so much strength; really, he doesn't seem to be 85," the Argentine priest told the Italian Catholic magazine, *Famiglia Cristiana*, for its Dec.12 issue.

Father Narvaja, who is the son of the pope's youngest sister, the late Marta Regina Bergoglio, said he visited his uncle, the pope, right after his colon surgery in July. Even then, "he was doing well but he was still in a bit of pain, and he told me, 'Don't make me laugh, the stitches hurt!'" he said.

"He is very active, enthusiastic, he doesn't stop. He said some people had hoped his illness would make him shut up a little, but it didn't. He's doing very well," said Father Narvaja, who teaches patristics and divides his time between Rome and Cordoba, Argentina.

Speaking about his uncle's approach to his ministry as pontiff, the fellow Jesuit said, "He does what he feels the Spirit is asking of him."

Pope Francis' idea of reform "is to put Christ at the center of the Church and our lives, and this is a process that takes time," he said. "Of course, sometimes he feels he has to say a harsh word, but he knows he is an instrument of God."

Making Jesus the central point "does not mean putting a statue in the center of the house, but listening to Jesus to understand what he wants from each of us, allowing him to transform our hearts," said Father Narvaja.

"The pope is not a manager. It is Jesus who, by being at the center, puts things in place," he said, and the pope feels "he has to give time to transform hearts, which is what Jesus does."

"Sometimes we think that the Spirit spoke in ancient times and doesn't speak any longer and, therefore, we do not want to change anything," Father Narvaja said. "But the Spirit continues to speak to us, he speaks to the Church, and we must make sure that the Lord continues his work through us."

"The Spirit," he said, "makes things new—not by magic, but through us." †

Christmas Prayer 2021

Today we greet the dawn of Christmas 2021 with both tears and joy welling up within our hearts.

Tears that honor and remember thousands of persons whose lives both violence and viruses have claimed this past year.

And joy that holds both the memory of Christ's birth and the mystery of God's desire to dwell among us.

So now, Creator God, we pray that You will come to dwell within our Christmas Mourning, and let love be reborn within us and through us in some new ways once again this day. That joy and gratitude may fill our hearts, as we let Your Presence within us be the present we joyfully share with those we will greet and meet this day.

—Sister Connie Kramer, S.P.

Archbishop dedicates new space at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish

By Peg McRoy Glover

Special to *The Criterion*

DANVILLE—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blessed a newly constructed narthex, parish office and religious education wing at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville on Nov. 21.

The dedication and blessing ceremony took place after the archbishop celebrated Mass in the parish's church.

"It is indeed a pleasure to welcome



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson uses holy water on Nov. 21 during a blessing at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville. Assisting him is altar server Phil Schneider. (Submitted photo courtesy of Betty Bartley, *The Republican Newspaper*)

Archbishop Thompson to our parish for the offering of the holy Mass and solemn blessing of our newly-built facilities," said Father Michael Fritsch, the parish's pastor.

About 300 parishioners gathered around Archbishop Thompson and Father Fritsch as they stood in the new narthex before a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the ceremony.

"May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, may the word of Christ dwell in you, and that all you do in work and in word you will do in the name of the Lord. May Almighty God bless and keep you all," the archbishop prayed at the beginning of the ceremony. He then visited each classroom and office, blessing the spaces with holy water.

The dedication and blessing were the culmination of a process that began in 2015. The parish council took part in a "visioning day," where they envisioned what Mary, Queen of Peace could look like in the future to enhance parish life. After much discernment, they developed plans to build a new parish office, religious education classrooms and a fellowship hall.

To bring these plans to fruition, a building committee was formed. Town hall meetings were conducted so parishioners could learn of the plans and voice their opinions. A three-year capital campaign was started in hopes of raising the \$3 million needed to begin construction.

Although the capital campaign fell short of its goal, enough was raised to begin construction on much-needed offices and classrooms. The religious education building that was built in 1954 leaked and was unsafe, and the parish offices were located in the rectory.

The religious education building was razed to make way for the new structure.

In its place is a beautiful education wing with 11 classrooms and parish offices that are attached to the church with an expanded narthex.

"The newly constructed religious education wing, parish offices and connecting narthex to our existing church are a sign of the vitality and continued growth of our parish within the larger community of Danville," said Father Fritsch. "These are tangible results of people's stewardship of their time, talent and treasure."

The parish council is already looking forward and eyeing two more construction projects that will fulfill the initial vision.

The rectory needs to be renovated where the previous offices were located. Plans are also in the works to repurpose that space into guest rooms to accommodate visiting clergy.



Father Michael Fritsch, left, pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville, assists Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the archbishop recites a prayer on Nov. 21 before blessing a newly constructed narthex, parish office and religious education wing at the parish. (Submitted photo courtesy of Betty Bartley, *The Republican Newspaper*)

And the fellowship hall will provide an excellent gathering space for parishioners and the community.

(Peg McRoy Glover is a member of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville.) †



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Court keeps Texas abortion law in place, allows challenge to continue

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Supreme Court said on Dec. 10 that clinics can continue to challenge a Texas law that bans most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, but in the meantime the law would remain in effect.

Eight justices said the challenge could go forward. Justice Clarence Thomas opposed it.

Chief Justice John Roberts, writing separately, urged the U.S. District Court judge to act quickly in reviewing the law.

“Given the ongoing chilling effect of the state law, the District Court should resolve this litigation and enter appropriate relief without delay,” he wrote.

The Texas abortion law, signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, went into effect on Sept. 1.

During oral arguments about it on Nov. 1, the justices considered whether the Justice Department and state abortion clinics can even challenge the abortion law in federal court because of the way the law was set up with citizens’ enforcement.

This was the third time the nation’s high court considered the Texas abortion law. On Sept. 1, it ruled against blocking it and on Oct. 22, it said the law would remain in effect before its expedited review on Nov. 1.

Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, said in reaction to the court’s Dec. 10 decision: “Today the court ruled on a procedural issue without addressing the merits of the case challenging the Texas Heartbeat Act.”

She said the Texas law came about because “for decades *Roe* has blocked states from being able to regulate abortion,” and added that she hopes the court’s upcoming ruling in the Mississippi case “returns this right to the people.”

When the Supreme Court first ruled against blocking the Texas abortion law, the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, said this action marked the first time since *Roe v. Wade* that the nation’s high court “has allowed a pro-life law to remain while litigation proceeds in lower courts.”

On Dec. 1, the Supreme Court examined Mississippi’s

ban on most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy and heard requests to overturn the court’s 1973 *Roe* decision that legalized abortion.

In the oral arguments, the majority of justices seemed willing to let the state’s abortion ban after 15 weeks stay in place, but it was unclear if they would take this further and overturn *Roe*.

If the court ultimately sides with Mississippi, it would be the first time the court would allow an abortion ban before the point of viability that most consider to be at 24 weeks and could lay the groundwork for abortion restrictions from other states. Viability is when a fetus is said to be able to survive on its own.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a court brief supporting Mississippi, said abortion is not a right created by the Constitution and called it “inherently different from other types of personal decisions to which this court has accorded constitutional protection.”

The day before the Supreme Court’s opinion on the Texas abortion law, a Texas state district court judge issued an advisory ruling in which he argued that the means of enforcing the state’s abortion law—involving citizens to sue its violators and receive financial compensation—was unconstitutional.

The decision, issued by Judge David Peoples, keeps



A pro-life supporter takes part in a demonstration outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on Nov. 1 as the court heard arguments over a challenge to a Texas law that bans abortion after six weeks. On Dec. 10, the Supreme Court said clinics’ legal challenge to the law can continue but in the meantime the law would remain in effect. In a separate action, a judge at a Texas district court ruled on Dec. 9 the new law violates the state’s constitution. (CNS photo/Evelyn Hockstein, Reuters)

the state’s abortion law in effect.

Abortion providers in the state called it a step in the right direction, while pro-life advocates were disappointed.

Texas Right to Life said they would “immediately appeal this unjust ruling.”

Kimberlyn Schwartz, director of media and communication for Texas Right to Life, said: “The abortion industry’s lawsuit abuses the judicial system and turns this court into a mere platform for airing criticisms against the boldest pro-life law to take effect since *Roe v. Wade*.” †

Catholic bishops decry California’s plan to become a ‘sanctuary’ for abortion

LOS ANGELES (CNS)—California’s Catholic bishops slammed a new plan endorsed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to make the state a “sanctuary” for legal abortion if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

“When families are struggling to put food on the table and pay rent, it is absurd for the state to focus on expanding abortion when the real needs of families for basic necessities remain unmet,” said Kathleen Buckley Domingo, executive director of the California Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops.

“California doesn’t need more abortion. It needs to support women and help them be the mothers they want to be,” she said in a Dec. 9 statement.

The report, titled “Recommendations to Protect, Strengthen and Expand Abortion Care in California,” was released by the California Future of Abortion Council, a group made up of more than 40 abortion providers and advocacy groups, led by Planned Parenthood, and convened by Newsom, according to The Associated Press.

“We’ll be a sanctuary,” Newsom told the AP in an interview about the proposal.

The groups’ 45 recommendations include using taxpayer money to help pay for travel expenses, lodging, child care and abortion procedures for women who come from out of state seeking an abortion in California.

Domingo noted that not one of the group’s recommendations considers alternatives to abortion, and there is no discussion of the factors that cause women to seek abortions.

She said the groups’ plan also would violate “conscience protection for medical students by forcing them to be trained in abortion procedures” in order to receive scholarships, and force Catholic hospitals to either offer abortions or go out of business.

The report came a week after the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments for and against upholding a Mississippi law that bans most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, which is what the law considers the viability of the fetus; in

other words, when the unborn baby is said to be able to survive on his or her own.

During the Dec. 1 arguments, the majority of the justices appeared willing to let the ban stay in place, although analysts said the justices seemed uncertain whether to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or limit the degree to which it ensures a legal right to abortion on the national level.

A decision on the case is expected sometime in the late spring or summer of 2022.

“As more and more states in the U.S. move toward restricting abortion, California seems only able

to talk about increasing access,” said Domingo, who reaffirmed the bishops’ support for “nonviolent solutions to issues that women face” such as affordable health care, paid family leave and the resources offered by the more than 150 pregnancy care centers in California.

“In a state as diverse as California, with a budget surplus of \$31 billion, why aren’t we exploring options that genuinely empower women instead of encouraging the ‘quick fix’ of abortion, which does nothing to solve underlying concerns,” said Domingo. †

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New Oldenburg Academy students, staff receive Miraculous Medal

By Natalie Hoefler

On Dec. 8, Catholics around the world worship at Mass in honor of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, acknowledging that Mary was born without the stain of original sin.

But for the last seven years, new students and staff at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg have enjoyed an additional ceremony in conjunction with the holy day: the reception of a Miraculous Medal.

The December feast day serves as the school's "namesake day," explained Oldenburg Academy president Diane Laake.

"To celebrate, each year new students and staff of the academy are presented with a Miraculous Medal to remind them that God's abundant graces and protection are always near, available to assist each person as they grow in the fullness of a child of God."

'Franciscans have a special bond with Mary'

Laake said the tradition started "as part of our mission effectiveness plan to be more intentional about integrating our Franciscan Catholic identity and history."

The medal ceremony takes place after Communion during the academy's all-school Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. After a priest blesses the medals, Laake and school principal Angie Parmer place one around the neck of each eligible person, saying, "The Lord bless you and keep you safe under the protection of our Mother Mary."

During the ceremony, students hear an explanation of the significance of the feast for the school, the Sisters of St. Francis, and all Franciscans, and a history of the Miraculous Medal.

The bestowing of the Miraculous Medal in conjunction with the feast of the Immaculate Conception is tied to the apparitions of Mary to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830 in France.

During one of the visions, Mary told the young girl, "I am the Immaculate Conception," the Marian title for which the academy is named.

At one point, Mary showed St. Catherine an oval frame around her image, with the words "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you," and requested that the image be formed into a medal.

According to miraculousmedal.org, Mary explained to the young saint that those who wear the medal, which honors her Immaculate Conception, "will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck."

The name of the academy—which was founded by the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in Oldenburg—reflects the academy's Franciscan roots, said Laake.

"Franciscans have a special bond with Mary, so it isn't unusual to see chapels, schools and other institutions begun by Franciscans taking on a title of Mary," she explained. "Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception is just one example."

Others include the Oldenburg Franciscan sisters' Chapel of the Immaculate Conception and Marian University in Indianapolis, which the Oldenburg order also established.

'It helps keep me safe and holy'

Oldenburg Academy (OA) freshman Ninah Lewis said receiving the medal "was special because it was for all freshmen, and it was like a medal welcoming you as a part of the OA family under the protection of Mary."



Altar server Zachary Hoff holds a basket of blessed Miraculous Medals as the school's president Diane Laake (to his left) and principal Angie Parmer (to his right) place a medal around the neck of each new student and staff member on Dec. 8. (Submitted photo by Theresa Murphy)

Her classmate Jill Witkemper considers the Miraculous Medal "a very special devotion because it relates to our school specifically since we are named Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception.

"Receiving a medal of this honor helps to remind me how God is directing me in the right path and helps me to grow closer to him and to Mary."

Not only freshman were given the medal. Will Rees, who started this school

year as a junior at the academy said the medal was "special" to him.

"When I put it on, it reminds me to pray and ask Mary to wrap her mantle around me and protect me throughout the day. I also ask her to keep me close to her Son and keep me from getting in the near occasion of sin.

"It's a special devotion because it helps keep me safe and holy, and gives me faith to believe from some of the stories that I have heard of it and from those who wear it." †



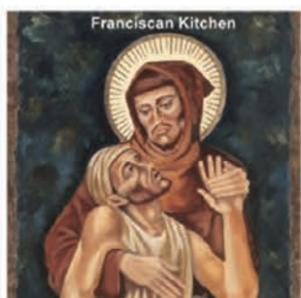
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In the spirit of St. Francis, we wish you all the joys and blessings of the Advent and Christmas seasons! Thank you!



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Faith *Alive!*

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Christmas story can strengthen hope amid today's hardships

By Fr. Herbert Weber

I took the time to reread my annual letter to the parish from Advent 2020. In anticipation of Christmas last year, I reminded everyone that we would find a way to celebrate the birth of the Lord that would help people remain safe, as well as participate in this wonderful mystery. Then I listed ways for families and individuals to be present, even if they couldn't come to church.

I wrote that our parish had been livestreaming Mass for nearly 10 years, and our new church building with three cameras and skilled volunteer technicians could provide a very powerful at-home experience for those uncomfortable with gathering in a larger group.

I encouraged families to participate as a family, and I reminded them that the local bishop had lifted the obligation of Mass attendance ever since COVID-19 had shut down our parishes the previous March.

Even at that, I told parishioners that we would celebrate a number of Masses and that every other pew was closed off, that the church air filtration was good, and that people were to wear masks to protect one another.

All of that was a year ago. When Christmas arrived, the parish music director was out due to COVID-19. So was another priest who was scheduled to help with Masses. Attendance at Mass was low, and it was hard for me to truly celebrate even though I knew many people were with me remotely.

I wondered if I had oversold my concerns, but then I also knew that the vaccines had been made available to relatively few people at that point.

A year has passed and many more parishioners are coming back to church on a regular basis. Nonetheless, there



Disclaled Carmelite Father José Fredi Arteaga Figueroa censes a figurine representing the baby Jesus during Christmas Mass at our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in San Salvador, El Salvador, on Dec. 25, 2020. It is precisely because of these challenging times, not in spite of them, that Christmas is especially important this year. (CNS photo/Rhina Guidos)

are still clouds of worry hanging over people's heads.

Some people fear mixing with others in an indoor setting. Those who are

immunocompromised have told me they continue to appreciate the quality of our online streaming of Mass.

Others are upset that people worry about COVID-19, even stating they don't want to live with that kind of fear controlling them. Then there are those who are tired and exhausted because of the way our society has become polarized over absolutely everything from race to politics to mask-wearing to immigration to Church leadership.

In short, people need a savior and they need that savior now! People are hurting and feeling torn apart.

It would be nice if we could approach this Christmas with great peace of heart and goodwill among all. Likely that will not be the case for many, even though God always freely offers us such gifts.

Perhaps it is precisely because of these challenging times, not in spite of them, that Christmas is especially important this year. After all, we are celebrating Emmanuel—God with us—in our own time and circumstances. We are not simply recalling the wondrous birth of more than 2,000 years ago.

Jesus' birth took place in a time of crisis and challenge for many people.

The Hebrew people were overwhelmed by the Roman Empire. They were surrounded by people of different cultures and values. Worship of other gods flourished. They longed for freedom and the right to be their own people. Some wanted to placate Rome while others wanted to rebel!

It was into that era and time that Jesus' birth took place. The Scriptures remind us he was born among the poor, and Joseph and Mary had to flee to protect him. Life was hard. Yet we celebrate his birth as the ultimate sign of hope.

Hope is not some artificial construct of mind that causes people to overlook reality. Instead, hope is all about reality. It admits difficulties even as it reminds people they are not abandoned or alone.

As I talk with people about the issues of our present day, I discover that many feel they're powerless, abandoned or alone. Some are hanging on to a small branch as they feel they are falling off a cliff.

A mistake that we often make is thinking of hope only in terms of the future. We even say God will protect or God will save. Hope actually is about the present. Relief is already here in the belief of this season: God truly is with us now.

Interestingly, such belief does not take away the issues at hand. What it does provide is the strength to continue to walk through the various difficulties and concerns. Hope has an element of certainty to it; with the virtue of hope, we intentionally acknowledge that God dwells in this land.

In the weeks before Christmas last year, I was tempted not to put up Christmas decorations in my own house, rather certain that no one else would be visiting or see the tree or manger scene. I was not depressed by that thought, simply aware of reality.

But I chose to decorate as much as other years because I wanted to remember that this wondrous mystery of the incarnation is real and needs to be celebrated. God truly is with us; we don't want to forget.

(Father Herbert Weber is founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio. His weekly podcast can be found at 23.church.) †



Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus are depicted in a wooden crèche at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester, N.Y. The hardships endured by the Holy Family at the first Christmas can strengthen the hope of people today who feel weighed down by life's challenges. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier)

Corrections Corner/Ed Witulski

Friendships formed through program 'change lives forever'

(This is another in a series of columns written by a person returning from incarceration who took a chance and asked to be matched with a mentor through the Trusted Mentors program, which for more than 17 years has connected and trained volunteer mentors with at-risk adults [mentees] to help keep them housed and out of



prison. The column was contributed by Ed Witulski, the Mentors Match Coordinator for Trusted Mentors who is a member of the archdiocese's Corrections Ministry Advisory Committee. He is also a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.)

My name is Jeff. I am a 2020 graduate of Changing Lives Forever (CLF), a classroom program through the Society of St. Vincent DePaul designed to assist those attempting to step out of homelessness or poverty back into society.

2020 was a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic looming over us. The year, however, allowed me to finish something of self-purpose. As classes were canceled due to the uncertainty in our lives, it gave me the pleasure of graduating from a program as helpful as CLF.

During the period when there were no classes—and then when classes were held virtually—I pondered for the longest time whether I should finish the program. I considered and reconsidered and, finally, decided to finish. As a result, I gained a great mentor in a gentleman named Ken. Anyone who knows understands that I've always been a mentor of others, but I never really considered myself to be a mentee.

Ken and I share the same interest in the food/culinary world. He runs his own business, and I operate a small catering service. Our family dynamics are very similar. Ken and I try to meet by FaceTime, via text or through phone calls with one another. Lately, it's been kind of rough keeping routine meetings due to my working out of town three days a week while working another full-time job.

I don't take our time for granted, however, once we link up. It shows me that I can continue to have faith that there are still great people in the world.

Ken is a good man. He listens to my concerns, and he also gives me input on how to grow my business on my tight schedule. Although we both come from different religious backgrounds, we believe that there is a bigger purpose for our lives.

We don't say who is right or wrong. Instead, we embrace our beliefs and learn from them. Ken shared the book *No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be* by Tony Evans as a gift. It led me to know that Ken is more than my mentor: he is my brother in Christ and he cares about my well-being and my spiritual walk.

(Ninety-five percent of all state prisoners will be released at some point. Please consider becoming a mentor by contacting Trusted Mentors at 317-985-5041. If you believe that role is not a good fit, please pray for our returning citizens as they struggle to reintegrate into society.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Let Christ transfigure family hardships into a new kind of Christmas joy

In 1734, the great classical music composer J.S. Bach penned his *Christmas Oratorio*. Most of the music is bright and joyful as is fitting for such a happy feast.



But in the middle of it, there is a chorale with the tune of the Holy Week hymn known commonly in English translations today as "O Sacred Head Surrounded."

A text related to Christmas was sung to the tune. But the message sent by the use of that tune, so well-connected in people's minds to Christ's crucifixion, was unmistakable.

While Christians do well to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child with great joy, they must keep in their hearts and minds very consciously that the holy child of Bethlehem was destined to die a gruesome death. But it was a death with jubilant meaning—a death that reconciled all humanity with God. The joy of Christmas is only a small foretaste of the endless bliss of heaven that Christ won for us in his death on the cross.

But Bach didn't discover the connection between Christmas and Good Friday. It's been a part of the Church's tradition since its earliest centuries.

It's seen in the longstanding tradition of the Church celebrating the feast of St. Stephen, the first to die as a martyr for Christ, on the day after Christmas. This is not only a clear reminder of the trajectory of Christ's life. It also suggests that we, his followers, are to place ourselves in his story with the help of his grace.

St. Paul mysteriously wrote about this only a few decades after Christ's ascension when he said we are to fill up what is "lacking in the afflictions of Christ" (Col 1:24).

The Church's tradition tells us that while Christ's sufferings were sufficient for the salvation of all humanity, he nonetheless allows us to join our sufferings to his and have them thus gloriously transfigured by his infinite love.

All of this was made possible by the Son of God—the second person of the Blessed Trinity—taking on human flesh and a human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary and revealed to the world in his birth in Bethlehem. In our Catholic tradition, we call this the incarnation.

All of this may seem like lofty beliefs far removed from our daily lives. But nothing could be further from the truth, especially at Christmas. This is an important truth for families to keep in mind at this time of year.

Living in this broken world marked by the sad effects of original sin, so many families approach the holidays with mixed emotions. Below the superficial happiness of the season promoted by our culture which is given depth by our faith, feelings of sadness and anxiety can touch the hearts of many of us.

They may be rooted in missing loved ones who have died or who are separated from us for various reasons. Job loss, health problems, tensions among relatives brought together by the season and so many other trials can also make this time difficult for families.

But when we at Christmas allow Christ to take to himself our hardships, he gives in return a new kind of joy. It may be a very different kind of happiness than what we've known in the past and what our culture tells us we should have at Christmas.

Yet this grace-inspired joy experienced in the midst of life's inevitable hardships is rock solid and can last throughout the year. This gift, offered to us by Christ, is the best that families can receive at Christmas. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a sign of universality

As the cold sweeps over us during the coming winter months, we long for the warmth of August!

My column that month highlighted an interfaith gathering and an ecumenical gathering: the Festival of Faiths and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, respectively.



The cold of January invites us to the latter.

Next month, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity's prayer service will be both in-person and livestreamed. This arrangement simultaneously cares for our hunger for gathering and allows those who are more virus-vulnerable to participate. It also provides for last-minute adjustment for inclement weather.

We will gather at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 1660 Kessler Blvd. East Drive, in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on Jan. 25. Prelude music will begin about 6:45 p.m.

The church, which is located west of Bishop Chatard High School and Christ the King Parish, has existed since 1945 as a member church of the Presbytery of the Whitewater Valley (Presbyterian Church, USA).

The service is open to all Christians. People of other faiths may also attend to witness the longing of Christians "to be one."

Leaders of worship will be the heads (judicators) of many of the Christian denominations whose regional, diocesan or statewide headquarters are located in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be among them.

The prayer service's text is a gift to the world from The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Four Church families—Evangelical, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Catholic—make up the MECC.

The Council has a multifaceted mission. It acts as a bridge: first, between Churches, removing barriers and prejudice, and building a common witness to the resurrected Lord; next, between Christians and peoples of other religions in the region, especially with Muslims; and finally, between the Middle East and the rest of the Christian world. This is accomplished in a

very challenging setting.

The Prayer Service is titled "We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him" (Mt 2:2).

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for 2022's introductory notes state that "the appearance of the star in the sky of Judea represents a long-awaited sign of hope, that leads the Magi, and indeed all peoples of the Earth, to the place where the true king and Savior is revealed."

The Magi are "a symbol of the diversity of peoples" of the time, "and a sign of the universality of the divine call," the document notes.

Commentators also see "in the Magi's eager search for the newborn king, all humanity's hunger for truth, for goodness and for beauty."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of humanity's longing for God since the beginning of creation (chapter 1). That longing finds deep expression when human beings gather in homage and for prayer.

But it also invites deeper reflection upon our simultaneous longing for unity among Christian believers. To facilitate such reflection, an eight-day (octave) booklet has been produced for individuals and small groups. The booklet has been sent electronically to all pastors, parish life coordinators and religious education leaders of the parishes in the archdiocese.

It has also been sent to the leaders of other Christian denominations to invite their members to use it.

This shared resource could provide an opportunity for neighboring Christian churches to reflect together on Jan. 18-25, either in person or electronically.

The recurring cold of winter pushes us inward. Perhaps this time could be complimented by eight days of shared reflection and prayer. We would then be drawn outward to one another in Christ!

Wouldn't that be a wonderful post-Christmas winter's gift?

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Ken Ogorek

No offense, but 'Family Catechesis' can be a copout

I don't mean to offend people; I'm just really good at it.

In past columns, I've risked rubbing folks the wrong way by tackling topics that can be emotionally charged. At the risk of upsetting the group I serve most directly—your hard-working parish catechetical leaders—I offer a few clarifying



thoughts on a trend known as "Family Catechesis."

Mom, apple pie and America

On one side of this equation, who would be against an approach to catechesis that acknowledges parents

as primary educators of their children, seeking to support moms and dads in leading the domestic Church? Not me.

But "family catechesis" is defined differently by different people. Sometimes calling an approach "family catechesis" inadvertently throws the baby out with the bathwater.

The "classroom" model

"We've got to get rid of the classroom model. It's a failure." So goes the rhetoric shared by some would-be architects of catechesis.

Effective faith formation, though, is less about rooms and more about what unfolds within them. An enormous challenge for parish catechetical leaders is orchestrating catechetical sessions with tremendous potential for positive impact on young people, yet that admittedly fall short at times.

Recruitment, retention, renewal

It's hard to recruit catechists. It's hard convincing them to study the faith and how to teach it fruitfully. It's difficult preventing the classroom from descending to a place where unengaging methods meet school-fatigued kids in a yawn-laden cocktail of apathy and alienation.

It's very beneficial, though, for parishes to complement what's happening at home by getting kids together with peers in the presence of a religious educator who's not the mom or dad of a participant. The powerful witness that parish community-based catechesis provides is an important ingredient in broadening a young person's sense of Church.

First, but not only ...

In well-intended efforts to support

See OGOREK, page 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 19, 2021

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

This weekend, the Church observes the last Sunday in Advent. The first reading is from the Book of Micah.



Micah is regarded as one of the minor prophets. It is a relatively short book, containing only seven chapters. (By contrast, the Book of Isaiah has 66 chapters.)

Few biographical facts about the author of Micah are known,

but it is thought that the author was a contemporary of the author of the first section of the Book of Isaiah and that he came from a small village some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

As was the case with so many prophets of ancient Israel, Micah saw his mission as calling the chosen people away from indifference to God and from sin to piety and loyalty to the covenant with God. He lived in a time when piety was in short supply. Greed and exploitation flawed the economy. Religious practices were sparse and often insincere, and poorly presented when they did occur.

In this weekend's reading, Micah promises that a savior will come. This savior will lead the people away from sin and to God. To be precise, the savior will come from Bethlehem.

Of course, for Micah, the reference is to a king who comes from Bethlehem. Kings had special roles for ancient Hebrews. The royal role was not primarily political. It was religious. The king's task was to see that the nation upheld the covenant, that the people obeyed God.

The Savior inherited this role. When the Savior appears all will be well because the nation will obey God.

For its second reading, the Church gives us a lesson from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Heavy with its Hebrew symbolism, this epistle eloquently extolls Jesus as Lord and as the Lamb of God.

In Hebrews, Jesus appears as the perfect victim and priest. His sacrifice on

Calvary was sublime, perfect and utterly unique. It was final because its effects are eternal, providing for humanity's reconciliation with God. The result will never cease, so no other sacrifices are necessary. All has been accomplished.

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

Mary traveled to meet her cousin, Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah. Elizabeth herself is pregnant. Elizabeth's unborn child would be John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Christ.

Since Elizabeth was past the childbearing age for a woman, her conception was regarded as miraculous.

Elizabeth knew that Mary was expecting a child, and additionally she realized that Mary's child will be the Messiah.

Elizabeth's unborn child understood all that was transpiring and sensed God in the presence of Mary and her own unborn infant. Thus, even before birth, John testified that Jesus, also yet to be born, will be the Messiah.

Reflection

It is the last Sunday of Advent. Christmas preparations are hectic. Everyone is buying gifts.

Less attention may be given to the spiritual preparation for Christmas, but the Church calls us to reality. Jesus is everything. He is the greatest gift, God's gift, given in love for us.

In the writings of Micah, the Church confidently tells us that when we allow Jesus to come to us, peace and happiness will abide with us. In Hebrews, it proclaims the everlasting mercy of God.

In the Gospel, the Church reinforces its belief in Jesus as Lord. We should welcome the Lord as Elizabeth welcomed Mary. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 20

Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-4b, 5-6
Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, 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

Wednesday, December 22

1 Samuel 1:24-28
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8d
Luke 1:46-56

Thursday, December 23

St. John of Kanty, priest
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Psalm 25:4-5b, 8-10, 14
Luke 1:57-66

Friday, December 24

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

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-15
or Matthew 1:18-25

Saturday, December 25

The Nativity of the Lord
Christmas Night
Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

Dawn

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

Day

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

See READINGS, page 19

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Title of "father" for priests is a reminder of their call to serve others

When I came into the Church a few years ago, one of the hurdles I had to get past was addressing the priest as "Father." My understanding of the prohibition against this was based on Jesus' comment in the Gospel of Matthew, "Call no one on Earth your father" (Mt 23:9). What is the wider Catholic understanding of this verse? (Indiana)



Let's put Jesus' directive that you reference into context by quoting the surrounding verses: "As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on Earth your father; you have but one father in heaven. Do not be called 'master'; you have but one master, the Messiah" (Mt 23:8-10).

The Catholic understanding of this passage is that it was not meant to be taken literally. Otherwise, it would contradict other significant verses in the Scriptures. Doesn't the Lord instruct us in the Book of Deuteronomy: "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord, your God, has commanded you"? (Dt 5:16)

So, it seems reasonable to conclude that God himself considers others to be "fathers." And doesn't St. Paul say: "Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus

through the Gospel"? (1 Cor 4:15)

The passage from Matthew to which you refer (Mt 23:9) came in the context of Christ's criticizing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of his day, the scribes and the Pharisees, because they were doing all they could to achieve rank and standing, because they "love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces and the salutation, 'Rabbi'" (Mt 23:6-7).

The focus of that entire passage was on humility and servanthood: "The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Mt 23:11-12).

So, as a priest, when parishioners call me "Father," I don't feel it grants me status; instead, it serves as a reminder that I am there to serve them, as any father is pledged to serve his family.

When grandchildren who have been living together in a romantic relationship with someone else for years without being married come to visit, do I put them in separate bedrooms? People laugh at me for this, but I have a real problem: Is living together no longer a sin? (Sorry—I can't move on from my upbringing.) (Location withheld)

I am glad that you haven't "moved on from your upbringing." The value you are upholding is a perennial one. Yes, living together without being married is still a sin and always will be. You have every right, if unmarried grandchildren come to visit you, to assign them to separate bedrooms—and you should.

It would also be helpful to explain to them the reason: that you love them deeply and are glad to see them, but not at the expense of the values you cherish and choose to live by—values that you believe they could benefit from. If they are close to you and respect you, it might also be good, once in a while, to mention the prospect of their being married in a Church-approved ceremony.

(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

Let Me Be an Advent Tapestry

By Sr. Susan Lindstrom, O.S.B.

O Emmanuel,
weave anew Your Kingdom-tapestry
in my heart this Advent season.
Penetrate and reinforce the fibers of my being.
Repair what has become frayed and worn.
Create new patterns from life-wearied threads.
Re-energize me for the journey
into Christmas and beyond,
opening my eyes
to the beauty and wonder of Your presence
within and around me.

(Benedictine Sister Susan Lindstrom is a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. Photo: This tapestry of the Nativity hangs in Notre-Dame collegiate church located in Côte-d'Or, France.) (Photo by Mattis courtesy of WikiCommons)



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.

ADKINS, Donald L., 76, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 4. Father of Alana Adkins. Brother of Judith Kuhn, Patricia Reed, Pamela Vogel and Janet Weber. Grandfather of one. Great-grandfather of one.

AMRHEIN, Alberta R., 92, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 1. Mother of Lois Barry, Debbie Gesell, Phyllis Schwegman and Dennis Amrhein. Sister of Joan Amrhein, Lillian Lay, Franciscan Sister Laurina, Quirn, Lawrence and Paul Schneider. Grandmother of nine. Step-grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of 18. Step-great-grandmother of five. Great-great-grandmother of several.

BARNES, Annette (Bell), 85, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 24. Mother of Diane King, Michelle Smith, Earle III, Kenneth and Timothy Robinson. Stepmother of Cynthia and Michael Barnes. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of two.

BAUMANN, Cletus R., 84, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Dec. 1. Father of Beth Tracey, David and Mike Baumann.

Brother of Alfred Baumann. Grandfather of three.

BECHER, Daniel, 74, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 2. Husband of Jayne Becher. Father of Greg, Jeff, Kevin and Scott. Brother of Diana, Sandie and Don Becher. Grandfather of two.

DUNBAR, Richard E., 75, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Nov. 23. Husband of Karra Dunbar. Father of Dia Page and Kurt Dunbar. Brother of Nancy Shiflet, Cathy Sparks, Carol Stancombe and Jim Dunbar. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of two.

DURBIN, Carolyn J., 77, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 26. Wife of Ron Durbin. Mother of Rhonda Gritton, Rebecca Jones, Rita Thomas, Dawn Webb, Chris, Mike and Wade Meals. Sister of Beverly Sharpe. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of eight.

DZIENCIOL, Norbert M., 86, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Husband of Phyllis Dzienciol. Father of Lisa Coville, Ann Merlenbach, Andrew Dzienciol Harte, Michael and Philip Dzienciol. Brother of Noreen Zalewski. Grandfather and great-grandfather of several.

EAKLE, Emery C., 58, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Husband of Cynthia Eakle. Father of Megan Corso, Bryan, Daniel and Steven Eakle. Brother of Sandy Stocking. Grandfather of three.

GREEN, Joseph D., 79, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Husband of Nancy Funkhouser. Father of Kelly Fascia, Beth Sauber, Dudley and Michael Green. Brother of Della McGuire and Robert Green. Grandfather of nine.

HARTMAN, Georgette B., 86, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Mother of Lorraine

Linkous, Clifford, Randy and Rick Hartman. Sister of Edith Cummings. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of six.

HASSING, Richard H., 81, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Husband of Yoko Hassing. Father of Amy Pankoke and Andy Hassing. Brother of Karen Cory, Marlene Wegner, Gene and Terry Hassing. Grandfather of two.

KIESLER, Sr., Paul J., 96, St. Mary, Navilleton, Dec. 1. Husband of Elizabeth Kiesler. Father of Kathryn Grant, Mary Horn, Laura Lampton, Paul, Jr., Phillip and Robert Kiesler. Brother of Martha Cox, Jean Dethy and Marvin Kiesler. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of nine.

MCLIN, William C., 81, St. Mary, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Husband of Barbara McLin. Father of Rebecca Seyferth and William McLin. Brother of Sandra McLin. Grandfather of five.

MENNEL, Mary P., 81, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 24. Mother of Kathleen Painchaud, David and Kevin Mennel. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of nine.

MORGAN, Susan, 70, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Wife of Wayne Morgan. Mother of Alan Morgan. Sister of Debbie Nakayama, Joseph and Timothy Burke.

MUELLER, Jr., Gerald A., 55, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 18. Father of Carol Mueller Ford and Cyrus Williamson. Son of Gerald Mueller. Brother of Ann Harrison, Kelly Saffell and Jay Bennington. Grandfather of six.

NORDHOFF, James J., 77, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Nov. 20. Husband of Shirley Nordhoff. Father of Jamie Clark, Sr., Tabitha, David and James Nordhoff, Jr. Brother of David Nordhoff. Grandfather of nine.

REDELMAN, Dixie M., 84, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 11. Mother of Brenda Nicholas and Nancy Powell.

Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 13.

REMBUSCH, Michael J., 71, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Father of Shelby Rembusch Barnes and Nicholas Rembusch. Grandfather of two.

ROGIER, Mildred R., 89, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 30. Mother of Cheryl Duke and Dan Rogier. Sister of Bill Hinkle. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of three.

ROWAN, Rita, 77, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 20. Mother of Joanilla Barker. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of one.

SCHAF, Ruth E., 98, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 20. Mother of Yvonne Claytor, John, Nick, Richard, Sam, Stanley and Tom Schaf. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 21. Great-great-grandmother of two.

SEABOLT-ETLER, Kimberly S., 56, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 20. Mother of Chris, Jeffrey and Ryan Jackson. Sister of Tina McGlasson. Grandmother of four.

SHOWALTER, Timothy, 53, St. Gabriel, Connersville,

Nov. 18. Father of Alexandra, Lauren and Cameron Showalter. Son of Tim and Debbie Showalter. Brother of Steve Showalter. Grandfather of three.

SKAGGS, Anna Lee (Banet), 95, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 25.

SMITH, Diane M., 83, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Mother of Peggy Hicks and Karen Smith. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of nine.

SOLLER, Stephen W., 82, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 29. Father of Anthony and Timothy Soller. Brother of Mary Bay and Margaret Earp. Grandfather of four.

STARKS, Therese A., 92, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, April 23, 2020. Mother of Beth Ferguson, Barbara Gilkes, Jackie Heinzelman, Clara Nehmer, Nancy Stumpp, Andy, Bob, Steve and Tom Starks. Sister of Mary Weingardt. Grandmother of 27. Great-grandmother of 43.

WALSER, Robert A., 91, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 20. Father of Theresa Elliott. Grandfather of two.

WERNER, Kenny, 64, All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, Dec. 1. Husband of Loraine Werner. Father of Ashley Wolfe, Nathaniel Werner and Matt Wattering. Son of Polly Crawford. Grandfather of two.

WIWI, Paul F., 81, St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, Nov. 20. Husband of Beverly Wiwi. Father of Melissa Posco and Eric Wiwi. Brother of Mark Wiwi. Grandfather of four.

WORLAND, John F., 69, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Husband of Diane Worland. Father of Matthew and Mark Worland. Brother of Anna Marie and Susan. Grandfather of two.

WRIGHT, Karen J., 79, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Nov. 23. Mother of Angela Wilkinson and Chris Wright. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

YANES, Mary Jean (Summers), 82, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 14. Mother of Lisa, Michael and Robert Yanes. Sister of Nancy Garza. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two. †

Providence Sister Winifred Mary Sullivan served for 45 years in Catholic schools

Providence Sister Winifred Mary Sullivan, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Dec. 3 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus her religious community's motherhouse. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 17 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Winifred Mary was born on Oct. 15, 1927, in Terre Haute where she grew up as a member of the former St. Ann Parish. She entered the Sisters of Providence on July 22, 1945, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1953.

Sister Winifred Mary earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree at Saint Louis University in St. Louis.

During her 76 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Winifred Mary ministered in Catholic schools for 45 years in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland and Missouri. She served in Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese for many years before retiring in 1993. Afterward, she stayed in Jasper, ministering as a volunteer and tutor before returning to the motherhouse in 2008.

In the archdiocese, Sister Winifred Mary served in Indianapolis at Holy Family School in New Albany from 1958-60, St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis from 1966-67 and at the former St. Margaret Mary School in Terre Haute from 1967-69.

She is survived by a sister, Rita Paitson of Vincennes, Ind.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

OGOREK

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parents in fulfilling their educational—catechetical—role, some parish catechetical leaders have essentially done away with peer-group sessions led by those answering God's long-standing call to the ministry of catechist. And pandemic-induced reliance on

parents to serve as exclusive (beyond primary) catechists has exacerbated already-challenging circumstances.

Granted, not all family-based catechetical efforts are created equal; some incorporate parish catechist-led sessions to a greater or lesser degree. But again—recruiting, onboarding and supervising catechists (including a basic certification and ongoing renewal of that credential) are among the hardest tasks of a parish catechetical leader's work.

The great, Catholic both/and

Except for moral absolutes, very few aspects of our faith (and life, for that matter!) are 100% either/or proposals. Parishes don't have to choose between supporting parents in various ways and employing the time-tested role of catechist.

Classrooms don't have to be places where either ineffective catechesis occurs, or where no catechesis at all happens. Parish catechetical leaders can encourage parents as disciples of Jesus—living that relationship in full communion with his body, the Church—and provide formation experiences for children that help them benefit from the witness of catechists as well as peers.

It's hard work. And parish catechetical leaders themselves deserve encouragement and support from pastors, parishioners and archdiocesan leaders.

Is God calling you to collaborate with fellow parishioners in evangelization, discipleship and catechetical outreach to parents, families and the broader community? Ask him, please; then act on his loving guidance.

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

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

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Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohovey

In spirit of Christmas, ask how to answer God's call to generosity

I have spent my entire career working in stewardship, development or advancement roles for Catholic churches, schools and dioceses. I am often asked how I can do this for a living, and usually those who question me quickly add that they could never do it themselves.

My reply is normally two-fold: 1) I am only successful in this profession because God is leading the conversations; and, 2) I am not asking for contributions for myself, but for the Church, schools and ministries for which I am privileged to represent.

Fundraising is not always easy, but it is incredibly fulfilling. My role, and this is true for all our staff in the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship

and Development and the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF), is to help donors match their passions with God's calling and the needs of the Church throughout the archdiocese.

Through the years, I have witnessed great generosity from the faithful. From million-dollar gifts to the sweet lady I knew who literally gave \$1 to a ministry (and I happen to know she probably could not spare even that amount), I have a first-row seat to the power of the Lord working through individuals to give of their first fruits, their surplus and, sometimes, their very last dollar. All these gifts directly impact the services, activities, education and faith enhancement we offer to the more than 70,000 households in our archdiocese as well as community members in need.

We've all heard the adage "money is the root of all evil." When it comes to charitable giving, I would challenge you to view money not as an "evil," but

an extraordinary opportunity to help bring about God's kingdom. Like every enterprise, the reality is that the Church needs funding to continue serving others. Supporting the Church and its ministries allows each of us to give, not responding to a neediness on the ministries' part, but to an opportunity to respond to God's call to transform others' lives spiritually, educationally, physically and mentally.

The great Catholic author Father Henri Nouwen wrote, "The kingdom is where God provides for all that we need." In terms of our earthly kingdom, God works through each of us to provide collectively for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Father Nouwen translates Ephesians 3:20 to mean "Even a small act of generosity can grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine."

Most often, we give to the causes that are important to us. While there is

nothing wrong with this, how many of us, in prayer, ask God where he wants us to contribute that will bring about his kingdom? Perhaps in the quiet of Advent, you can ask God to inspire you to give. And in the spirit of Christmas, ask yourself how you can answer God's call to generosity.

The CCF is the conduit for God to work through you. Our staff members are honored to serve in this role. Please contact us if we can help you serve others.

(Kimberly Pohovey is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan. For more information on the CCF, visit www.archindy.org/CCF, e-mail ccf@archindy.org, or call 317-236-1482.) †



READINGS

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Sunday, December 26

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
 or *1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28*
Psalm 128:1-5
 or *Psalm 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10*
Colossians 3:12-21
 or *Colossians 3:12-17*
 or *1 John 3:1-2, 21-24*
Luke 2:41-52

Monday, December 27

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

Tuesday, December 28

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

Wednesday, December 29

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

Thursday, December 30

Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

1 John 2:12-17
Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Friday, December 31

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

Saturday, January 1

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

Sunday, January 2

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

Monday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus
1 John 3:23-4:6
Psalm 2:7bc-8, 10-12a
Matthew 4:12-17, 13-25

Tuesday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday, January 5

St. John Neumann, bishop
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, January 6

St. André Bessette, religious
1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalm 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17
Luke 4: 14-22a

Friday, January 7

St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, January 8

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

Sunday, January 9

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

(For more daily and Sunday readings, visit bible.usccb.org/readings/calendar.) †

Employment

Saint Mary Academy (SMA), a National Blue-Ribbon School of Excellence in Louisville, Ky., is searching for an experienced Catholic principal for the 2022/2023 academic year. A parish ministry of Saint Bernadette, SMA seeks to build a foundation for lifelong learning by opening hearts to faith, minds to knowledge, hands to service, and eyes to the world so as to achieve extraordinary lives. We are a growing Catholic school community with strong parental support. Our current enrollment is 490 students from Pre-school through eighth grade.

Inquires and resumes may be sent to Principalsearch@saintmaryacademy.com. The deadline for applications is January 21, 2022.

Parish Manager

Saint Luke Catholic Church is seeking a Parish Manager. This person serves as the Operating Officer of the parish. Duties include planning and managing administrative and business functions including finance, human resources, and general administrative services. The Parish Manager reports directly to the Pastor. The job description is available from the Indianapolis Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources.

Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, resume, and any other pertinent information to Human Resources, Archdiocese of Indianapolis: HR@archindy.org or P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410.

Classified Directory

For Sale

CALVARY CEMETERY, 435 W. Troy. 5 graves in Sacred Heart section 20. Two in row 5 lot 5 numbers 1 & 2 \$3,000; 3 side-by-side graves in row 3 lot 123 numbers 1 & 2 and lot 122 # 1 \$4,500. Call 317-357-4163.

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The Criterion

Employment

RONCALLI HIGH SCHOOL WEBSITE & VIDEO PRODUCTION

Roncalli High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, is accepting applications for a position in the Office of Institutional Advancement.

The Office of Institutional Advancement is seeking an individual(s) to be a part of a dynamic team. **We are seeking a candidate to manage our school website (app management, day to day web updates, proficient at HTML, CSS, JavaScript and SQL). We are also seeking someone to do videography/video production and also do broadcast and streaming for our Roncalli Media Network.** This position(s) could be full-time or part-time and is a 12 month position. Interested and qualified candidates should contact Terese Carson at tcarsen@roncalli.org or at 317.788.4098.

Medicare Insurance

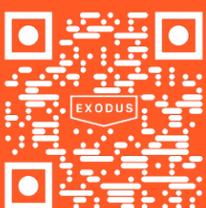
We would like to wish you and yours,
MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Thank you for considering us for your Insurance needs!

From: Dan Shea & Jennifer Wilson
 Health Insurance Professionals
danshearhu@gmail.com
 PH: 317-787-4638

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