Bishop Rhoades sees providence at work in Eucharist, synodality coming together

By Sean Gallagher

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in northern Indiana was the only person from the Hoosier state to take part in the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on synodality held on Oct. 4-29 at the Vatican.

While parishes and dioceses around the world helped to prepare for this synod meeting, the Church in the U.S. launched its three-year National Eucharistic Revival and began planning for the National Eucharistic Congress to be held on July 17-21 next year in Indianapolis.

In an interview with The Criterion, Bishop Rhoades reflected on the providential nature of the universal Church’s consideration of synodality happening at the same time as the Church in the U.S. began its focus on the Eucharist.

He also spoke about the synod’s completion of its exploration of synodality when it meets next October, expressing his hope that its documents will focus more on the Eucharist and will give greater emphasis to the teaching charism of those in ordained ministry and especially bishops.

The following interview is edited for clarity and content.

Q. How might Catholics in Indiana understand the eucharistic revival and synodality in light of each other? How, on the one hand, might synodality help Catholics grow in their love for the Eucharist? And how, on the other hand, Bishop Rhoades sees providence at work in Eucharist, synodality coming together

A mother’s desperate prayer, an offer of help and a child’s birth bond two families

By John Shaughnessy

It’s a timeless challenge for all of us.

The challenge especially comes to life during the Advent and Christmas seasons in these words:

“Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.”

That challenge sets the stage for a heartwarming story involving two groups of strangers who connected in a church in the archdiocese.

As the mother of four girls—all under the age of 10 at the time—and pregnant with her fifth child, Viviane Minza knew the moment was rushing toward her when she would desperately need help.

So just as she has always done during times of great concern and immense joy in her life, she knelt and prayed to God to be there for her and the people she loves.

She had prayed to God when she and her husband Felix were married in 2009 in their homeland of West Africa.

She had also prayed to God when she vowed to name all their children after the Blessed Virgin Mary, as a way of

See MOTHER, page 9

‘Children don’t have skills or tools’ to cope with mental health issues alone

(Editors’ note: This is the third in an occasional series of articles addressing mental health, including the role of faith in seeking wholeness. Future topics will include marriage and family, addictions and the role of spiritual direction.)

By Natalie Hootter

When I was quite young, perhaps 4 or 5 years old, there was a time when I visited a woman named Mrs. Shaw at my pediatrician’s office.

She wasn’t a typical doctor. Instead, her office was warm and cozy. We’d sit on the floor and play games or sit at a table and color.

What I didn’t know at the time was that Mrs. Shaw was a children’s counselor. I was having trouble sleeping because of nightmares. My parents couldn’t figure out why, and I didn’t have the ability at that age to verbalize my emotions.

My mom tells me Mrs. Shaw used the playtime to ask me questions to help me talk about my feelings. She must have been good—all I remember was having fun, and later the nightmares stopped.

Not every child who has nightmares needs to see a counselor.

But children can struggle with real mental health issues.

On the other hand, they take faith at face value, says licensed mental health counselor associate Dana Padilla, a member of
Charles C. Thompson, Sr.—the father of Archbishop Thompson—dies at 83

Criticism staff report

Charles Coleman Thompson, Sr., the father of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, died on Nov. 24. He was 83.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 27 at St. Francis Xavier Church in Mount Washington, Ky. Burial was in St. Charles Cemetery in St. Mary, Ky. When he was installed as shepherd of the archdiocese on July 28, 2017, Archbishop Thompson described his father as “the greatest example of faith, hope and charity of any man I know.”

“And if I bear your spirit as I bear your name, this Archdiocese of Indianapolis will be blessed,” Archbishop Thompson continued, addressing his dad. “After the Mass, the archbishop spoke with The Criterion about how he and his wife Mary Joyce had always tried to be loving parents to the archbishop and his siblings. ‘We’ve tried to support him in every way we could,’ said Thompson, who was a retired inspector for General Electric. ‘We do the same for our other children, too. That’s just the way our family is.’

“In another Criterion article preceding Archbishop Thompson’s installation, the archbishop described the atmosphere of faith that his parents created in the family home as he grew up.

Spiritual adviser to synod to give presentation on Dec. 6 at cathedral

Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe, spiritual advisor to the recent assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality at the Vatican, will speak on his experience of the synod meeting at 4 p.m. on Dec. 6 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The public is invited to attend.

A scripture scholar and former master of the Order of Preachers, the British Father Timothy led synod delegates in a gathering at the synod meeting at 4 p.m. on Dec. 6

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Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 3–10 a.m. St. Maurice Parish 175th Anniversary Mass at St. Maurice Church, Napoleon Indiana

December 5 – 3:30 p.m. Indiana Bishops’ Province meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 6 – 9 a.m. Indiana Catholic Conference meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 7 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 7 – 3:30 p.m. Catholic Community Foundation Advisory Board meeting at Bishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

December 7 – 5:30 p.m. Mass for Little Sisters of the Poor’s Christmas Celebration at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

December 7 – 6:30 p.m. Little Sisters of the Poor’s Christmas Celebration at Meridian Hills Country Club, Indianapolis

Media must show, promote respect for human dignity, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—An important part of the mission of Catholic media is to forgo the shocking, sensational or superficial when such stories present the people involved as less than human and unworthy of respect, Pope Francis said.

“You have a vocation to remind, in a simple and understandable style, that beyond the news and scoops, there are always feelings, stories, flesh and blood people to be respected as if they were our own relatives,” the pope said on Nov. 23 with members of several Italian Catholic media groups.

“We see from the sad news of these days, from the terrible news of violence against women, how urgent it is to educate for respect and care: to form men capable of healthy relationships,” the pope told members of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies, the Italian Periodical Press Union, the Corallo Association and the AIART Media Citizens Association.

“Communication is to form people. To communicate is to form society,” he told those involved in print, television, radio and digital communications. “Do not abandon the path of education: it will take you far!”

Pope Francis also asked the Catholic communications professionals to advocate for measures that protect people’s privacy and protect weaker members of society—especially children, the elderly and people with disabilities—from the intrusiveness of the digital world and the seductions of provocative and polemical communication.

“Please,” he said, “do this fearlessly, like David against Goliath: with a small slingshot he brought down the giant. Do not just play defensively but, remaining ‘small’ and ‘poor’, keep clear, because you are called to a great task: to protect, through words and images, the dignity of people, especially the dignity of the small and the poor, God’s favorites.”

Citing the example of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who knew the dangers of media but also knew how to use it to promote the faith, Pope Francis urged the communicators to be creative and willing to take risks to promote Christian values.

“Go against the grain,” he urged them. “Speak about fraternity in an individualistic world; about peace in a world at war, about attention to the poor in an intolerant and indifferent world. But this can be done credibly only if you first bear witness to what you say.†”
Bishop Cozzens hopes to see ‘hearts set on fire’ with eucharistic love at congress

Second of two parts

By Sean Gallagher

For three years, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., has been the point person for U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for its three-year National Eucharistic Revival and the National Eucharistic Congress, which will be held on July 17-21 next year in Indianapolis.

He’s experienced many inspiring moments and faced unexpected obstacles in leading both. Visiting Indianapolis recently for the National Catholic Youth Conference, Bishop Cozzens spoke with The Criterion about the blessings and challenges that have come with the revival and in planning the congress. The following interview is edited for clarity and content.

Q. It was two years ago when the National Catholic Youth Conference was in Indianapolis that the bishops in the U.S. announced that the National Eucharistic Congress would be held here in July 2024. Have the intervening couple of years of preparation for the Congress been challenging and maybe fruitful for you? And how has all this activity maybe contributed to your anticipation for the Congress?

A. “In order to plan the National Eucharistic Congress, the U.S. bishops founded a [non-profit] corporation, which has a board of five bishops and four laypeople. We had to hire a staff to be able to execute the congress.

“So, anyone who’s ever done a startup knows how much work that is, and how, in the beginning, you don’t know what you don’t know. So, there has been a lot of incredible work and planning. Now, there’s a staff of 16 full-time people who are planning the congress.

“But it’s truly been an experience of the Holy Spirit just to see all the apostolates, all the parishes, all the people who’ve taken on this movement as their own across the country. The response has been much greater than I expected.

“I think there’s 16,000 organizations in the country, and we hoped to have parish point persons for the parish year [the second year of the three-year revival] in 5,000 parishes. We thought that would be really good, especially when a lot of people are competing. So, we thought that’d be roughly a third of all parishes.

“But we have 8,000 parish point persons. And we’re headed for 9,000. We might hit 10,000 before Christmas. To think that we could be in over half the parishes with our small group study, with all the materials that we’ve given for this—that’s, I think, unheard of for a USCCB initiative.”

Q. How has seeing the impact of the revival and hoping and planning for the impact of the congress had an effect on your own eucharistic faith, your own relationship with Christ and the Eucharist?

A. “I’ve always been committed to the daily holy hour, ever since I became a priest. I got convicted about that by Archbishop Fulton Sheen and his preaching about the value of prayer and devotion to the Eucharist.

“But it definitely has made it more important. And what’s been beautiful is the opportunity to teach so much on the Eucharist. God prepared me. I taught the Eucharist to seminarians for about seven years before I became a bishop.

“I loved to teach that class. I used to always ask that they put the class right before Mass, so we could go from studying the Eucharist to celebrating in the Eucharist, which we did every day.

“So, then it’s been beautiful to sort of begin to teach that to the people and to invite people to experience all the dimensions of the Eucharist.

“The Eucharist is really, as St. John Paul II said, ‘the secret of my day.’ It’s the secret of my life. It gives meaning to all my activities.

“I believe the ultimate goal of the eucharistic revival is not actually about statistics. It’s about hearts that are set on fire, that God would send the Holy Spirit upon our country in a new way, and especially on the Church in the United States so that we might be strengthened in our hearts to be who God wants us to be.”

(To read part one of this two-part interview, visit www.CriterionOnline.com. For more information on the National Eucharistic Congress, including how to get tickets for it, visit eucharisticcongress.org.)

For persons with disabilities—We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

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Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., raises his hands in personal prayer after Communion during the Nov. 18 closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Assisting at the Mass at right is archdiocesan transitional Deacon Samuel Rokits. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
Antisemitism is always unchristian.

“Every human being, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, is precious in the eyes of God and has the right to live in peace. Let us not lose hope: let us pray and work tirelessly so that the sense of human dignity prevails over hatred of heart.” (Pope Francis)

The Oct. 7 terrorist attack attacks by Hamas against Israel has triggered expressions of antisemitism here in the United States and across the globe. Why would unbreakable acts of violence occasion such deep-seated feelings of hatred against the Jewish people? Sympathy for the Palestinian people is one thing, but it cannot justify the kind of vile and hateful words and actions that are increasingly common among people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds who despise the Jews.

All Christians should condemn antisemitism unequivocally. Antisemitism is unchristian. To hate Jews is to hate Jesus. Mary, Joseph and all the Apostles. It is to despise the people chosen by God to reveal the invisible creator God to the Jewish people. They are the race chosen to reveal the invisible creator God to the world, and we Christians believe that Jesus is a human baby. Any issues regarding reproductive rights come before the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. If we can see clearly that abortion is not about to reproduce or not, it’s about brutally destroying what has already been produced—a human baby. All issues regarding reproductive rights come before the birth of the child is conceived.

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 freely-held and expressed opinion among the public.” Comments submitted online for publication might not appear due to space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and other reasons, names may be withheld. 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 freely-held and expressed opinion among the public.” Comments submitted online for publication might not appear due to space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and other reasons, names may be withheld.

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Este Adviento, preparamos nuestros corazones para la venida de Cristo

“Pero ustedes, presten atención y manténganse atentos, porque no saben cuándo llegará el momento” (Mc 13:33).

La Iglesia se renueva cada año con el tiempo de Adviento. El año viejo—con sus penas, frustraciones e intentos fallidos de cambiar los corazones y comportamientos humanos—queda atrás y comienza una nueva temporada de esperanza, en la cual depositamos esperanzas, en la cual confiamos.

El Señor viene nuevamente. Trae consigo la promesa de la paz, y sabemos que su paz es muy necesaria en nuestro mundo dividido y asolado por la guerra.

Durante el Adviento, clamamos por la paz, y por la alegría de Cristo, en nuestros corazones y en nuestro mundo. Maranatha! ¡Viva, Señor Jesús, de la Paz! ¿Qué mejor momento para reavivar nuestra devoción a la Sagrada Encarnación que esta época de grandes angustias y anticipación de la llegada de Cristo, nuestro Salvador?

En este Adviento, renovamos nuestros esfuerzos por ser una Iglesia sínodal, una comunidad de creyentes que escuchan a la Palabra de Dios con corazones generosos. En este Adviento, volvemos a comprometer a nuestra Iglesia con un renacimiento eucarístico que pretende acercarnos al Señor Jesús, que está con nosotros ahora en el gran santuario de su Cuerpo y de su Sangre, y que viene de nuevo en la gloria.

La lectura del Evangelio del primer domingo de Adviento (Mc 13:33-37) es un llamado a despertar. No nos atrevamos a quedarnos dormidos. Esto que nos advierte Jesús—. No sea que venga el Señor de la casa, si al caer de la tarde, o a la medianoche, o cuando uno no lo espera—nos toma desprevenidos. Si no nos apercibimos en este tiempo del Señor, ¡ninguno de nosotros podrá !

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December 5
Ritz Charles, 1215 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Indianas Catholic Gala. 5:30 p.m. VIP sponsor reception, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:15-7:45 p.m. seventh day of each month. Information: 317-261-1381, cheryl@archindy.org.

December 5
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Ave., Indianapolis. Solo MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Ave., Indianapolis. A holiday coffee and cookie party from 10 a.m. to noon. Information: lcoons@archindy.org.

December 5
Meinard Archabbehy, opportunity to join monastic community in their Christmas Eve and Christmas Day prayer and worship. Information: Registration: unamir003@gmail.com.

December 5
317-784-5454, Charlotte@archindy.org.

December 6
Meinard Archabbehy, opportunity to join monastic community in their Christmas Eve and Christmas Day prayer and worship. Information: Registration: unamir003@gmail.com.

December 7
Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence “ devotion on Christmas," for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-8:30 p.m., sixth day of each month. Information: Registration: SistersOfProvidence.org, 317-500-9950, sisters@sp.org.

December 8
Ohio University and Grace Catholic Church in Columbus. Participate in a Christmas ice skating rink on the street at the Archbishop Edward M. O’Malley Pavilion. Information: 614-688-1200, info@pohio.edu.

December 8
Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Christmas Events wrapping up the Woods and Providence Community Bake Sale, bake sale 12-30 p.m., Christmas Fun 1:30-3:40 p.m., event includes Santa Claus and North Pole Zone with alpacas. Information: 812-535-2812, sp.org/events/amiranda@archindy.org.

December 9
Holy Trinity Parish, 100 Kedzie Ave., Indianapolis. Spanish Women’s Conference (in Spanish only). 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., bilingual speakers include Mariano Jiménez from the University of Indianapolis. Archdiocesan Intercultural Ministry Office. Information: 317-377-0838, rosary 6:35 a.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/hocheimra@archindy.org.

December 9

December 10

December 11
University of Saint Mary of the Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Tilted Prayer at the Woods, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, virtual option available. Information: Trustees@PiusX.org.

December 11
St. Mary of the Woods, 6000 N. St. Anthony Dr., Indianapolis. Christmas Youth Jam. Information: franciscansusa.org/Jaalya@archindy.org.

December 12
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. Groceco 800, Fri. 4 p.m. Sun. p.m., retreat celebration of the 800th Nativity scene, all are invited to share with the people of Greccio, Italy, Franciscan Father Jack Clark Robinson and Third Order Franciscan Dennis Lauridsen presenting, 812-353-2952.

December 12

December 14
Southport Presbyterian Church, 7525 McFarland Rd, Indianapolis. Christmas Rememberance, 7-8:15 p.m., sponsored by Franciscan Health and Franciscan Hospice Bereavement, open to those who’ve lost a loved one, includes music, grief support group, singing of traditional Christmas carols, candle-lighting ceremony, fellowship and socials with light refreshments, attendees may bring photos of their loved ones for display at the front of the sanctuary. Information: 317-528-2565.

December 15

December 15
St. Bartholomew Parish, Parish House, 1306 27th St., Columbus. Jazz for the Season. 6 p.m. Italian meal, concert 7:30 p.m., free. Information: donations for music ministry and adult literacy program accepted. Information: 812-779-8553, ext. 1237, bmasin@archindy.org.

December 16
St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Sacred Music Festival and Caroling. 6 p.m., three parish choirs perform sacred music of Palestrina, Bairstow, Dunind, Lauridsen and more, followed by caroling through the streets of Indianapolis, hot drinks and light refreshments provided, free. Information: 317-635-2012, office@archindy.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7577 Holland Dr., E., Indianapolis. Concert by Vox Sacra; “How Far is it to Bethlehem?” 7 p.m., concert featuring archdiocesan school Vox Sacra, includes works of Anton Bruckner, Domenico Bartolucci, Gerald Nare, 4 Motes for le temps de Noël (4 Motets of Christmas) by Francis Poulenc, and more. free. Information: aomiranda@archindy.org.

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Resource helps guide Catholics on medical, end-of-life decisions

By Victoria Arthur

Illustrated and illuminated by Church teaching, a free resource is now available to help Catholics in Indiana express their health care wishes in advance if they are unable to do so for themselves. A Catholic Guide to an Advance Directive is a booklet designed to help individuals and families navigate the often complex medical, emotional and spiritual issues surrounding treatment preferences and end-of-life care.

“This resource gives clear direction about these issues from a Catholic moral teaching perspective,” said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), which produces the booklet. “We hope it can be a helpful guide for individuals, family members and even entire parishes, and we want everyone to know that it’s available free of charge from the ICC.”

The booklet, which is available upon request at icc@archindy.org, includes background on moral and ethical considerations for Catholics regarding health care decision-making. It also outlines an advance directive, which is a document expressing health care wishes in advance if they are unable to express their wishes.

In addition, the booklet includes two copies of an Indiana Catholic advance directive—incorporating a statement of faith—that can be completed and signed.

Advance directives are a way to give your loved ones peace of mind,” said Elliot Bedford, an ethicist based at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. “It’s about what you find meaningful and valuable in life,” he said. “[Advance planning] takes the decisions off the shoulders of your loved ones and allows a grace and peace to enter into the situation. Then you can focus on the right priorities and on being with each other.”

To receive a free print copy of A Catholic Guide to an Advance Directive, e-mail icc@archindy.org or call 317-236-1458. Electronic versions of the document are available in both English and Spanish at indianacl.org/bishopstatements. The printed version is available in English and will be available in Spanish soon.

To follow the work of the ICC, visit www.indianacl.org. This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s supports and resources in public policy advocacy. (Submitted Photo)

Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford
Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connorsville Deaconess Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at Methodist Ann Seton, Holy Family Church, Richmond
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connorsville
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

Indianapolis East Deaconess Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5335 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

Indianapolis North Deaconess Dec. 17, 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 18, 7 Aurora
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle

Indianapolis South Deaconess Dec. 5, 5-6 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph (West Deaconess) at St. Ann
Dec. 5, 5-6 p.m. for St. Jude, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Jude
Dec. 13, 9-9 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd Holy Name at Greenwood Church
Dec. 16, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deaconess Dec. 5, 5-6 p.m. at St. Ann (South Deaconess) and St. Joseph at St. Ann

New Albany Deaconess Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown (English and Spanish)
Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Seymour Deaconess Dec. 14, 6-8 p.m at Prince of Peace, Madison
Dec. 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour

Tell City Deaconess Dec. 10, 2-4 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City
Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Boniface, Felda

Terre Haute Deaconess Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
Recruiting opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deaconess are as follows:
Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 3:30-5 p.m. at St. Joseph University
might their experience of the Eucharist help give them their own part of a synodal Church.

A. “The Church makes the Christ. Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to experience the Christ in our lives. The Church is an essential part of our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives.”

B. “The Church is an essential part of our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is an essential part of our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives.”

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J. “The Church is an essential part of our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is an essential part of our lives. It’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives. The Church is a community, and it’s through the Church that we come to see the Christ in our lives.”
Parishes prepare to host Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

The following Masses and special events for the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe throughout central and southern Indiana were reported to The Criterion.

**Holy Spirit Parish**, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. bilingual Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 13: 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. Joseph Parish**, 1125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville.
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. Mass; 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 8:30 p.m. mariachi; 9 p.m. fellowship in cafeteria

**St. Mary Parish**, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 8 p.m. outdoor procession; 9 p.m. rosary; 10 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 11 p.m. danza
—Dec. 12—midnight mariachi; 6:30 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. danza; 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 8:30 p.m. fellowship

**St. Mary Parish**, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany.
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. rosary; 10:45 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 11:15 p.m. hymns and serenades
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. bilingual Mass, followed by dinner in Trinity Hall

**St. Ambrose Parish**, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour.
—Dec. 12: 12 a.m. and mañanitas; 5:45 a.m. Mass in Spanish; 6:45 p.m. rosary in Spanish, followed by fellowship

**St. Anthony Parish**, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 9: Feast of St. Juan Diego, 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 7 p.m. rosary in Spanish
—Dec. 10: 8:30 a.m. Mass in Spanish; 9:30 a.m. rosary in Spanish
—Dec. 11: 6 p.m. traditional dance; 6:30 p.m. serenade; 7:30 p.m. choir in church; 8 p.m. dance; 8:30 p.m. choir; 9 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 9:30 p.m. families sing, 10 p.m. mariachi; 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: midnight; 1 a.m. mariachi; 5:45 a.m. Mass in Spanish; 6:45 p.m. rosary in Spanish, followed by fellowship

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, St Mary Campus**, 720 N. “A” St, Richmond.
—Dec. 12: 6:30 p.m. Mass, social following in school gym

**St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish**, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. rosary followed by youth apparitions re-enactment, dances, choirs, mariachi
—Dec. 12: midnight mariachi and Spanish Mass; 6 p.m. bilingual Mass; 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. Joseph Parish**, 1125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville.
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary; 6:30 p.m. Aztec dance; 7 p.m. Mass; 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 8:30 p.m. mariachi; 9 p.m. fellowship in cafeteria

**St. Lawrence Parish**, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 3-11: 7:4 p.m. novena in church
—Dec. 11: 10:30 p.m. Aztec dancers; 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: midnight mariachi and mariachi; 6:30 p.m. Aztec dancers; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish, 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment

**St. Mary Parish**, 1306 27th St., Columbus.
—Dec. 12: 6:30 p.m. Mass, social following in school gym

**St. Paul Catholic Center**, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington.
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. presentation of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego followed by music
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass, followed by convivio (breakfast gathering) at 1 a.m.

**St. Monica Parish**, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. mariachi, rosary, apparitions re-enactment, mariachi; 10 p.m. Mass in Spanish with Aztec dancers; 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish followed by procession with Aztec dancers, reception in gym with music and Chinelos dancers

**St. Patrick Parish**, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 9: Feast of St. Juan Diego 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 11: 11 p.m. Mass followed mariachi
—Dec. 12: 6:30 a.m. mariachi with mariachi; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. Bartholomew Parish**, 1306 27th St., Columbus.
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass in Spanish with mariachi; 6 a.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. Monica Parish**, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.
—Dec. 12—midnight mariachi; 6:30 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. danza; 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 8:30 p.m. fellowship

**St. Mary Parish**, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany.
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. rosary; 10:45 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 11:15 p.m. hymns and serenades
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. bilingual Mass, followed by dinner in Trinity Hall

**St. Monica Parish**, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. mariachi, rosary, apparitions re-enactment, mariachi; 10 p.m. Mass in Spanish with Aztec dancers; 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish followed by procession with Aztec dancers, reception in gym with music and Chinelos dancers

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—Dec. 11: 11 p.m. Mass followed mariachi
—Dec. 12: 6:30 a.m. mariachi with mariachi; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. John Baptist De La Salle Parish**, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.
—Dec. 11: 8:30 a.m. Mass in Spanish; 9 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish
—Dec. 12: midnight mariachi; 6:30 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. danza; 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 8:30 p.m. fellowship

**St. Paul Catholic Center**, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington.
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. presentation of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego followed by music
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Elderly religious need your help.
Like those pictured, nearly 25,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests have dedicated their lives to serving others through prayer for us, ministering to us, educating the young, caring for those who are sick and more—most for little or no pay, leaving a profound shortage in retirement savings. Your donation will make a real difference by providing essential care, medicine and other necessities. Please give generously.

**Please donate at your local parish**
December 9-10 or by mail at:
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Mission Office
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis IN 46202
Make check payable to Mission Office with Religious Retirement on the memo line.

retiredreligious.org

Visit retiredreligious.org/2023photos to meet the religious pictured.
By Bert Ghezzi

Saints provide model of Advent preparation for coming of Christ

(OSV News) — Advent prepares us for Jesus’ coming at Christmas and for his coming into our lives afresh. No one knows how to get ready to welcome Christ better than the saints. They express their love for Christ by putting him first in their hearts. They make room for him by clearing out the clutter of sins and faults. The saints pursue holiness by embracing the Lord’s teaching and lifestyle. They respond to his graces by practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Scripture study, fasting and almsgiving. And the saints express their love for God by showing hospitality and being good news. They especially dedicate themselves to caring for the poor and marginalized.

So, let’s make the most of this Advent and spend it with four representative saints, imitating the ways that they opened their hearts to Jesus.

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897)

We are attracted to St. Thérèse because she was an ordinary person. Raised in a faithful Catholic family, she was doted on by her father, teased by her sisters and suffered the pain of loss. Her youth was troubled by her mother’s death and by two sisters entering religious life. But on Christmas 1887, Thérèse experienced a conversion that released her spiritual sadness. “Love filled my heart. I forgot myself, and henceforth I was happy,” she said.

The next year, when Thérèse was only 15, her bishop allowed her to join the Carmelite monastery at Lisieux. She wanted to become a missionary and a martyr, but soon realized that neither option was open to a cloistered nun.

So, she sought the Holy Spirit for another way to serve the Lord Jesus. Reflecting on Scripture, Thérèse learned to do the loving thing in every situation, which she discovered was the fuel that fired the faith of martyrs and saints. Doing the least of actions for love became the secret of what she described as her “little way.”

What does a 19th-century nun have to do with us? Juggling the duties of family, work or school, navigating freeways and keeping up with the digital world, we don’t have much time for pursuing holiness, do we?

But that’s where Thérèse sets the example for us. Her simplicity shows us that we, too, can be holy right in the middle of our everyday lives.

—Venerable Matt Talbot (1856–1925)

For 16 years, Venerable Matt Talbot was a daily drunk. Then one day, an unconverted distinction transformed him and he became a model penitent following Jesus Christ

As a child of a poor family in Dublin, Matt had to forgo school for a job. After a year of basic education, he started working for a wine merchant. And Matt started drinking heavily at the early age of 12.

His father beat him and made him change jobs—but nothing could stop Matt’s habit. He said that when he was intoxicated, he occasionally thought about the Blessed Mother and prayed an off-handed Hail Mary. Matt speculated later that she had something to do with his conversion.

One day in 1884, everything suddenly changed. Matt had been out of work several days and expected his home early, Matt, and you’re sober!” He replied, “Yes, mother, I am, and I’m going to take the pledge.” The next day he went to confession and made a sobriety pledge for three months.

But Matt extended three months of going without alcohol into 41 years. In 1891, Matt found community support by joining the Franciscan Third Order. He lived the rest of his life quietly, working and praying. St. Paul VI declared him venerable in 1975.

At a time when addictions to alcohol, other drugs and pornography are rampant, Matt Talbot stands as an exemplar of the ways to freedom and holiness through Jesus.

—Blessed Anne Mary Taigi (1873–1897)

A model woman, Blessed Anne Mary managed a large household in Rome for nearly five decades. She handled finances with little money, patiently cared for a difficult extended family and entertained a constant stream of guests. She did all this full of faith and good cheer.

At age 21, Anne Mary married Domenico Taigi, a servant in a Roman palace. They had seven children, two of whom died in childbirth. Early in her marriage, Anne Mary experienced a religious conversion. She simplified her life, initiating practices of prayer and self-denial that she pursued the rest of her life in following Jesus Christ.

Anne Mary took the spiritual lead in her family. The day began with morning prayer and Mass, and ended with reading the lives of the saints and praying the rosary.

The Taigis had little of their own, but Anne Mary always found ways of providing for those who had less. She also took in her hard-to-get-along-with parents and her widowed daughter, Sophie, with her six children. Domenico’s violent temper often disrupted the family. But Anne Mary was always able to calm him and restore peaceful relationships. In his old age, Domenico gave this touching tribute to his wife:

With her wonderful tact, she was able to maintain a heavenly peace in our home. And that even though we were a large household full of people with very different temperaments.

“I often came home tired, moody and cross, but she always succeeded in soothing and cheering me. And due to her, I corrected some of my faults. If I were a young man and could search the whole world to find such a wife, it would be vain. I believe that God has received her into heaven because of her great virtue. And I hope that she will pray for me and our family.”

We may imagine that becoming a saint requires heroics like founding a religious order or converting people in faraway places who have never heard of the Gospel. But Blessed Anne Mary shows us that the daily faithful care of a family requires more than enough heroism to make us holy.

—Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901–1925)

Pope St. John Paul II celebrated Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati as a man of the Beatitudes. Athletic and strong, he devoted himself to the weak and malformed. He was wealthy, but he lived in poverty so he could give everything to the poor. He was gregarious, but a lover of solitude. He was rambunctious, the life of every party and a practical jokester, but at prayer he was solemn, reflective and quiet.

As a teenager, Pier Giorgio made friends of the poor in Turin’s back streets and gave them whatever he had—his money, his shoes, his overcoat. “Jesus comes to me every morning in holy Communion,” he replied to a friend who asked why the hovels did not repulse him. “I repay him in my very small way by visiting the poor. The house may be sordid, but I am going to Christ.”

Pier Giorgio saw the need for social change to relieve the causes of poverty. As a university student, he decided to major in mechanical engineering so that he could work with miners, who were especially disadvantaged. He was a leader in student political organizations and actively opposed Benito Mussolini and the fascists.

At the same time, he was the organizer of student parties, games and ski trips to the Alps where he would lead his friends in prayer. Afterward, they relaxed and enjoyed food, wine, cigars and songs.

Blessed Pier Giorgio has become a hero of contemporary young adult Catholics. They recognize his high Christian ideals, still held while pursuing the same pleasures that they enjoy. They gravitate to this handsome and charming saint who delighted in reciting the poetry of Dante, praying the rosary in a booming voice and spending a night in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

—Christ’s final coming

Advent anticipates not only Jesus’ coming to us as a baby in Bethlehem. It also looks forward to his final coming in glory.

Since the heavenly Father alone knows the day of the end, the Lord cautioned us always to be watchful and to conduct ourselves in uprightness. When Jesus comes as the bridegroom to wed the Church, we do not want to be unprepared as the five foolish virgins in Jesus’ parable (see Mt 25:1-13).

So, this Advent, following the saints, may we decide always to love God above all and to do the loving thing in every circumstance.

(Bert Ghezzi is the author of many books including Voices of the Saints and The Power of Daily Prayer. He lives near Orlando, Fla.)
Transgender baptism: How the secular media misinterpreted Pope Francis

It felt like there was a seismic shift in Church teaching concerning transgenderism in recent weeks. And that’s because so many headlines got the story wrong. The New York Times, for example, reported: “Pope Francis, who has long called for LGBTIQ Catholics a hallmark of his papacy, has made clear that transgender people can be baptized, serve as godparents and be witnesses at church weddings, furthering his vision of a more inclusive Church.”

So what actually happened?

—Responding to popular demand, in a doctrinal note issued from the Vatican, Pope Francis and Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández offered a nuanced response to several pastoral questions.

The document, signed on Oct. 31 and posted on the Diocese for the Doctrine of the Faith’s (DDDF) website on Nov. 8, addresses the participation of “transsexual and other non-binary persons” in several sacraments and Church roles.

For our purposes here, I’ll just address the question of whether or not a transgender person, even one who has undergone medical intervention, can be baptized.

In the past, there has been confusion about this, but the phraseology of the DDDF directive is clear: “A person who has undergone medical intervention, because everyone can choose his or her own sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the Church, and not by the government or any other secular body.”

The pope has not reversed Catholic teaching. We receive our bodies as male or female. This is settled Church teaching, grounded in Scripture and by necessity as much as by choice, we are caught up in the experience, is a reality that the modern world rejects. The Church teaches us to sow seeds as part of our human vocation, to be sowers of life and grace. The Gospel—for example, in very large assemblies when the soil is prepared, clothes to be washed, children to be fed. But a few days later, when Father Charles Hall, the priest who had anointed Mom seven weeks earlier and who would celebrate her funeral Mass on Nov. 6, asked us: “Do you want to be a Christian means to live always with a sense of longing for, and joy expectation tinged with sorrow that comes from knowing that the greatest desire of our heart will never be fulfilled in this earthly life. That, perhaps more than anything else, is the part of the Christian experience, is a reality that the modern world rejects.

A few hours after our mother passed from this life, my father and I stood beside our mother in the church where we had first received the gift of faith, and we sang with all the saints in glory of the life yet to come. And as we prayed for the repose of my mother’s soul, we gave thanks for the years we had spent with her, and for the cookies and candy through which Mom had prepared us all for living that day and the rest of our lives in the deep longing for, and joyful expectation of, our reunion before the throne of God.

Guest Column/Scott P. Richert

Cookies straight from the oven: a powerful Advent lesson on delayed gratification

When my sisters and I were young, my mother would spend all of Advent baking cookies and making candy. That may hardly seem remarkable; after all, making cookies was a Christmas tradition in my family. But a few days later, when Father Charles Hall, the priest who had anointed Mom seven weeks earlier and who would celebrate her funeral Mass on Nov. 6, asked us: “Do you want to be a Christian?”

When my sisters and I were young, my mother would spend all of Advent baking cookies and making candy. That may hardly seem remarkable; after all, making cookies was a Christmas tradition in my family. But a few days later, when Father Charles Hall, the priest who had anointed Mom seven weeks earlier and who would celebrate her funeral Mass on Nov. 6, asked us: “Do you want to be a Christian?”

A bigger lesson

My mother entered into eternal life in the early morning hours of Nov. 1, All Saints Day. Through the days and nights before she quietly passed from us, my father and I come from a family of farmers. We sowe seeds. We don’t control what influences the surrounding environment will have on each seed as it matures.

But I have been involved in “farming.” I was blessed to have played a role in establishing a “To Encounter Christ” retreat movement in the Evansville Diocese during my 10-year professional career as a youth ministry. I planted seeds of faith and watched as many of those seeds began to sprout, grow and flourish. I still “farm” in the many relationships that I now have in retired life, but especially in the family relationships of my children and grandchildren.

My youngest sister also raised three children and now is very involved in the faith development of her four grandchildren.

To me, this is another form of “farming.” We have all been involved with sowing seeds of faith for large parts of our lives. That is the job of every baptized person: to spread and sow the seeds of faith wherever we find ourselves in life.

In the end, a farmer doesn’t have ultimate control over the soil and where the seed lands. Sometimes they won’t know the outcome of a “crop” in which he or she may have played a role in sowing. In the end, a farmer doesn’t have ultimate control over the soil and where the seed lands. Sometimes they won’t know the outcome of a “crop” in which he or she may have played a role in sowing.

As a farmer, are you doing your part?
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, December 3, 2023

- Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b, 64:2-7
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:33-37

This weekend, the Church begins Advent. It begins the use of biblical readings from Year B of its three-year cycle of Sunday Mass readings. It is also the start of a new liturgical year. Each liturgical year is carefully planned so that the seasons and major feasts give us a chance to focus our worship into a closer relationship with Christ and the Church.

The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the third section of Isaiah, composed when the Jews were in a difficult situation. Years before, Hebrews exiled to Babylon had been allowed to return to the Holy Land. But this return brought the exiles home to no paradise. Life was miserable. The prophet called for faith in God, not only as almighty but also unrelentingly true to the covenant, to the divine pledge that he would protect his chosen people.

The prophet appealed to God in the name of the people for relief, but without saying that the people are being treated unfairly. That was the case at least in terms of God’s care for them, although the prophet made clear that sin led the people away from God. This estrangement has produced their woes.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the next reading. Counseling the Christians of Corinth was a challenge for Paul. Not only did temptation and vice surround them at every turn, but they were also a quarrelsome community. Paul had to call them to faithfulness. He also had to try to influence them to put aside their differences with each other.

He saw the disciples there as having enormous religious potential, despite all odds produced by their circumstances and the human inclination to sin. He knew through the help of God’s grace that he could draw them more closely to God and infuse the goodness of Christianity into the circles in which they moved.

St. Mark’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. It offers us a theme found often in the New Testament: namely that Christ will come to Earth again. In this second coming, the Lord will be the great victor and judge of all creation.

By the time the Gospels were written, even in the case of the Gospel of Mark, considered by many as the oldest of the four as they now exist, Christians were numerous and geographically distributed enough to catch the public eye. Yet they were still too small to stand up to their enemies. The culture was an enemy. Soon, the political system would be an enemy.

Being a Christian became a capital crime, as the martyrs were horribly to know.

Undoubtedly, the atmosphere was tense, uncertain and frightening. Thoughts of the second coming naturally were appealing. Jesus will come again, but we know not when. We in fact do not know the future.

In the meantime, we must acknowledge God, live in his law and trust in our reward.

If we are with God, we need not fear.

Reflection

The prayers of the Mass are the united statements of all believers, spoken through and by the celebrant, to proclaim our faith and our trust in Almighty God.

We speak with the priest, in our faith and worship. But are we sincere? Are we good Catholics? Does the priest praying the prayers at Mass represent our genuinely authentic faith, our commitment to Christ?

Mark’s Gospel greatly assists us in forming solid faith. Only God is permanent and real. Advent is an opportunity to receive the gift of union with God, to realize that his love for us is real.

If we respond to the opportunity God gives us in Advent, then Christmas becomes not a national holiday, or even a holy religious commemoration. It becomes a moment when we encounter God, firmly believing that Jesus will come again. Here and now we can know the Lord. ♦

The Criterion  Friday, December 1, 2023

First Sunday of Advent/Mgr. Owen F. Campton

Beautiful Jesus
By Vicky Rossa

Beautiful Jesus
Wonderful Son
Born for all ages
His kingdom to come

Love never ending
Arms open wide
For you and for me
He suffered and died.

O how I love you
With all my heart

Vicky Rossa is a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, where she serves as parish catechetical leader. Photo: A teenager raises her eyes heavenward in a song of praise after receiving Communion during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18.

(My Journey to God)

Daily Readings

Monday, December 4
St. John Damascene, priest and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122:1-5
Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 5
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-12, 13-17

Wednesday, December 6
St. Nicholas, bishop
Psalm 23:1-6a
Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday, December 7
St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 26:1-6
Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a
Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Church has no set guidance on when to put up, take down Christmas trees

Q
When I was a kid, I put up the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve and took it down a day or two after Christmas. As an adult, I put the tree up a day or two after Thanksgiving and left it up until Jan. 2. Now as a Catholic, what is the best way for me to handle the Christmas tree? When does it go up and when does it come down? (Indiana)

A
Unlike certain other kinds of holiday decorations, such as an Advent wreath, a Christmas tree is neither a sacramental nor part of a liturgy. Because of this, there are no strict right or wrong answers as to when a Catholic should put up or take down a Christmas tree. Yet depending on your family’s own particular holiday traditions and spiritual needs, there are some dates that might be especially appropriate in your own household.

In terms of when to put up a Christmas tree, there is nothing that prevents a Catholic from setting up a Christmas tree right after Thanksgiving if they so choose. But for other families waiting until Christmas Eve to set up a tree could be a helpful way of respecting the season of Advent as a time of quiet and even penitential preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas. In contrast to the secular emphasis on pre-Christmas celebrations, waiting until Christmas to set up a tree makes it clear that Advent is not Christmas, but rather its own important season of waiting.

And, of course, it’s always possible to find a middle ground between these two extremes. For example, perhaps a family could set up a Christmas tree earlier on during Advent, but only start decorating it closer to Christmas. Or, you could take some cues from our liturgy as for when to set up your Christmas tree. One option would be to wait until Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent when rose vestments are used at Mass and the Church’s prayers specifically tell us to rejoice at the closeness of Jesus’ upcoming birthday.

Another liturgically fitting day to set up a Christmas tree would be on Dec. 17, one week before Christmas Eve. This is the day when the Church starts praying the “O antiphons,” which are another celebration for the Advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” They appear before the Gospel at daily Mass and before the “Magnificat” in Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours.

The beginning of the “O antiphons” marks a shift in the Church’s liturgy, where Christmas is anticipated with a more immediate sense of urgency.

You can use a similar sense of liturgically informed prudent decision-making when deciding when to take down your Christmas tree. Although, in my own opinion, it’s good to keep in mind that for Catholics Christmas Day is just the beginning of a whole Christmas season.

The Church celebrates the octave (the eight days) following Christmas as though it were Christmas day itself. So, Jan. 2, the day after the octave concludes, could be a good day to take down a Christmas tree. Still, you would be more than justified in keeping your tree up even longer.

Jan. 6 is the traditional date of the feast of the Epiphany or “Three Kings’ Day,” a feast which marks the last day of the 12 days of Christmas. But on the Church’s liturgical calendar, the Christmas season doesn’t end until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which the Church ordinarily celebrates the Sunday after Epiphany.

Finally, even if Ordinary Time begins on Monday after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the latest feast in our celebration of the incarnation is actually the feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2. This is the last day that the Vatican keeps up their Christmas tree and crèche in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican, so a Catholic who follows suit can hardly be criticized for keeping up their Christmas decorations until then.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at CNS News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com)


DEAK, Judith A., 64, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 18. Mother of John Deak. Brother of Carol Silvergock, Nick, Rob and Tom Dell.


GAYNOR, Ruth M., 97, All Saints, Dearborn County, Nov. 10. Mother of Mary Jane Stuebereng, Dennis, Jake, John and Ronald Gaynor. Sister of Ellen Bulach, Joan Hoffmeiter and Betty Ripperger. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of several.


MURPHY, Brian D., 52, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 1. Husband of Tracy Murphy. Father of Emma and Liam Murphy. Son of Judy Murphy. Brother of Maureen Lopp, Nora Schmutte, Dan and Kevin Murphy.


God plants a seed in everyone; help it flourish, pope tells chaplains

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Be courageous in caring for and accompanying others, helping them to dream big, cultivating their unique gifts accompanying others, helping them to

Pope Francis told university chaplains and pastoral workers. "The work of education is a true mission in which individuals and situations are accepted with all their lights and shadows—"their shadows, too—with a kind of 'parental' love," the pope said.

"This facilitates in a unique way the growth of those seeds that God has sown within each person," he said on Nov. 24 in an audience at the Vatican with people taking part in a conference on pastoral care in Catholic universities, sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

Pope Francis told them he had three approaches that I consider important to your service: to appreciate differences, to accompany with care and to act courageously.

"Each person must be accompanied as he or she is, and that is where the dialogue, the journey and progress begin," he said, explaining the importance of seeing and appreciating people’s different qualities with patience, openness and creativity.

"As the prophet Isaiah said, God "creates the brightness of the sun, but does not despise the flickering light of a "dully burning wick" (Is 42:3), referring to accepting people’s "lights and shadows" with love.

"Believing in the vitality of the seeds that God sows," he said, means accompanying and caring "for what is silently growing and coming to light in the, at times, confused thoughts, desires and affections of the young people entrusted to you.

"One attitude has to be more than just apologetic, dealing with questions and answers, prohibitions: do not be afraid to confront those realities," he said.

There are "certain ideological currents within the Church, in which people end up being reduced to a figure that is flat, without nuance" and without the "edges," "shadows," breadth and depth of real individuals, he said.

Uniformity does not make people flourish, he said. "If we wisely value a person for who he or she is, we can make that person into a work of art."

Jesus himself "teaches us the art of love." †

The archdiocese of Indianapolis Office of Catholic Schools, located in downtown Indianapolis, is seeking a full-time Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education to serve as a resource to clergy, administrators, teachers, staff, students, and families in the areas of Catholic education, communications, business management, policy guidance, and data analysis. The duties of this position also include serving as a member of the Archdiocesan Schools Team with the Superintendent and other Assistant Superintendents in a mission-driven, Christ-centered, and student-oriented environment.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis serves central and Southern Indiana Catholics in over 120 parishes. There are 53 parish schools, 5 archdiocese schools, 6 private/religious order schools, and 3 consortium schools in the heart of Indianapolis. These 67 schools serve over 22,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12. With open doors, open arms, and open hearts, the Office of Catholic Schools supports the formation of young people through holistic, engaging, and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture, and life as modeled by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The position requires a master’s degree in education, business, or a related field and at least five years of educational or business leadership experience, preferably involving school leadership (paid or volunteer) and preferably in Catholic education. Applicants should be proficient and practicing Roman Catholics with a deep commitment to Catholic education. Candidates should also have experience in development and/or marketing efforts and be both proponents and role models of lifelong learning. Applicants are due by January 19, 2024. Candidates are expected to be available to assume the responsibilities of the position by July 1, 2024, or sooner.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to Dr. Brian Disney, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, at bdisney@archindy.org.

Our ideal candidate will have a Bachelor’s degree and excellent organizational, interpersonal and leadership skills. The Director of Alumni Relations will have the ability to effectively communicate the mission and values of Saint Meinrad, both verbally and in writing. Knowledge of various computer software programs is also required.

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